LIFE STYLE
INDIAN TRIBES
(Locational Practice)
LIFESTYLE INDIAN TRIBES
(Locational Practice)

Vol. III

Dr. S.T. DAS

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PREFACE

ANTHROPOLOGY has waited a hundred years for a full account of the different tribes of India, but Verrier Elwin, J.H. Hutton, H. Risley and S.C. Ray has paid the debt as fully as any other author, who had to work on many Indian Tribes after its tribal life and organisation had largely gone.

The people of India include a very large number of primitive tribes who subsist on hunting, fishing or by simple from of agriculture. These people are called Aboriginal tribes. The tribal groups are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sector of the national population. The term ‘Adivasis’ has recently become current to designate these groups. These groups are the earliest inhabitants or indigenous people of our country.

There are apparent cultural differences and locational practices between the life-styles of Indian Tribes but historically there is a basic unity in thought and philosophy among these people, born and brought up in environment of diversity through the length and breadth of the country. What these differences are? And what threads of fundamental commonness are inherent in the overall tribal system, custom and locational practice? Can the questions be answered by a study of this book?

There are hundred of aboriginal tribes in India who are still living with their ancient life style happily and joyfully.

It is not possible to give in a single book the locational pra-
ctices of each and every tribe of India. Only about those few tribes have been discussed, whose peculiar characteristics of locational practice in general differs from other tribes. This book in three volumes has been written to highlight the following features of the tribes:

(a) The principles of distinct elements of tribes have been discussed.
(b) Those tribes have been included on which the effect of welfare schemes and the acculturalization due to plains people are much visible.
(c) The effect of ill-conceived tribal reforms and the conflict created in their way of life have been highlighted.

It is not yet too late to save the tribes from the fate which an over-hasty and unregulated process of uplift and civilization has brought upon tribal people. Most of the tribes still live as far as possible on forest produce and the spoils of the chase. But due to ever-increasing restriction on the use of the forest, these forest tribes are slowly but surely dying out, partly from famine and partly from loss of interest in life.

These tribes are compelled to leave their attractive and charming traditional local practices and life style. Due to the effect of various factors not only we are destructing our basic tradition but we are also nourishing or creating a culture in which the very existence of these colourful tribes will be lost.

During the last twenty two years that have elapsed since the publication of my several earlier works on the tribes of India, I have continued my investigation into the locational practice and life-style of different tribes. The considerable portion of the result of these investigations are embodied in three volumes of this book.

Since last two decades I was thinking of writing a sane, clear, scientific, sympathetic, and comprehensive book on locational practice of the most important tribes of India. This is of prime importance to the students of anthropology and to the administrator who seeks or should seek to understand the forces which govern human civilization and activities and it is full of charm and interest for the general reader who-
desires to know something at once accurate and intelligible of
the people of India.

The students of anthropology soon learn that the secret of
his science is “to see life steadily and to see it whole.” No
belief exists in isolation. Every custom is but a part of a whole
and neither the whole nor the parts can be justly appraised
unless their functions, interdépendence and organic relations
are made clear, recorded faithfully, synthesised, intelligently
surveyed and explained. The nature of man, the nature of
spiritual beings, the nature of phenomena and natural pro-
cesses, as viewed and understood by the tribes are of deepest
interest and are faithfully presented here.

In presenting the third and concluding volume on Life Style
Indian Tribes in the hands of social scientists after a lapse of
three years of the publication of first volume, I feel fully con-
tented that to some extent I am able to add another brick in
the vast literature of Indian Tribes. Hope this volume will
receive more readers and I am fully confident that the aim with
which these three volumes have been written has been justified.

In a book like this, I must acknowledge the assistance I
have received from various authorities, writers and critics, who
have afforded valuable suggestions and those whose works have
helped me to draw inspiration. Omission if any was not
deliberate.

In presenting this book, I cannot refrain from expressing
my profound gratitude to J.H. Hutton, Verrier Elwin and
Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy whose works and census
reports made my work easier.

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Among those who encouraged me in this work, the Chief was Prof. K.K. Majumdar, Deptt. of Geography, Kirori Mal College, Delhi University. He not only has given me his fullest cooperation but inspired me to write a book on the locational practices of Indian Tribes. I am also indebted to my classmate Dr. B.K. Roy, Deputy Registrar General of India. He lent me many tribal works from his office.

I have also to mention my deep love and affection that I owe to my loving daughters Nivedita, M.A., M. Phil. and Sunandita for their unending help and cooperation throughout the preparation of this book. My wife Mina has shared the challenge of rethinking and reworking on the manuscript at every stage. My deepest love, intellectual and personal are to her. I should also like to tender my deepest affection to Nivedita for writing final chapters of each volumes.

I am also thankful to my friend and publisher Shri B.P. Garg, for his continuous encouragement in writing this volume.

Without their sincere help, it would not have been possible for these volumes to see the light of the day.

133—E  
Kamla Nagar  
Delhi—110007  

S.T. DAS
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DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSE TYPES 1961

BOUNDARY, INTERNATIONAL
ZONAL
STATE
DISTRICT

100 50 0 100 200 300 400 500 MILES
KILOMETRES 100 50 0 100 200 300 400 500

GRESH, LEAVES, BANBOOS
AND TIMBERS

MUD, UNBURNED BRICKS,
CORRUGATED SHEETS ETC.

BRICKS, LIME, CEMENT
CONCRETE AND STONE

N.A. DATA NOT AVAILABLE
Purpose: This map shows the distribution of rural population living in villages classified by the number of Census houses in them as revealed by the 1961 Census.

Method: The villages are classified into seven categories according to the number of Census houses they contain, viz. i) 5 & below; ii) 6—15; iii) 16—25; iv) 26—35; v) 36—50; vi) 51—100 and vii) 101 and above. The percentages of population living in villages in the seven ranges of number of houses to the total rural population have been calculated and these are shown by bar graphs. Absolute figures on the top of each bar graph indicate the total rural population of each State and the Union Territory.

Salient Features: It will be seen that while 53.95% of India’s rural population lives in villages containing more than 100 houses, a very insignificant proportion (0.12%) lives in villages with 5 houses and below. This is the general pattern of distribution of rural population in almost all the States and the Union Territories.

In all the States except Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa where the figures are low, more than 60% of the rural population lives in villages having more than 100 houses. It is interesting to note that in Kerala State, the entire rural population (14 millions) lives in villages with more than 100 houses. In the States of Madras and Andhra Pradesh and the Union Territories of Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands and Goa, Daman and Diu, more than 90%, of the rural population lives in villages having more than 100 houses.

The percentage share of rural population living in villages having 51—100 houses is relatively larger in Madhya Pradesh (27.4%), Orissa (25%), Jammu and Kashmir (25.9%), Rajasthan (22.8%), Assam (22.8%) and Uttar Pradesh (21.0%). Among the Union Territories, Andaman and Nicobar Islands (30.5%) ranks first followed by Himachal Pradesh (23.4%), Nagaland (20.9%) and Tripura (20.2%) in the said category.

In the next range (36—50 houses), the percentages of rural population are generally low (below 10%) in all the States and Union Territories except in Himachal Pradesh (15.2%) and Andaman and Nicobar Islands (11.5%).

The mountainous region of Himachal Pradesh has 13.9% of rural population living in villages falling in the next range (26—35 houses). The other areas have very low percentages of rural population living in villages having fewer houses. Out of 16 million rural folk of Orissa, only 3.1% of the people live in villages with 26—35 houses. Jammu and Kashmir comes next with 4.7% of its rural population in this range followed by Madhya Pradesh (4.5%) and Rajasthan (3.3%).

The four Union Territories, viz., Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Manipur have quite large proportions of rural population living in villages containing 16 to 25 houses per village.

All the States and Union Territories except Himachal Pradesh and Tripura have very low percentages of rural population living in villages having 6 to 15 houses. The States of Kerala and Madras and the Union Territories of Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Goa, Daman and Diu practically do not have any rural population living in villages of this category.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE PEOPLE of India include a very large number of primitive tribes who subsist on hunting, fishing or by simple form of agriculture. Various authorities have described them by different names. Sir Herbert Risley and Lacey, Mr. Elwin and Shri A.V. Thakar called them 'Aboriginals'; Sir Baines included them under the study of 'Hill Tribes'; Mr. Grigson regard them 'Aborigines'. They have been regarded as 'Animists' by Tallents, Sedgwick, Martin and Dr. Hutton calls them as the 'Primitive Tribes'. The eminent Indian anthropologist and sociologist, Dr. Ghurye calls them 'Backward Hindus'. Dr. Das and Das renamed them as 'Submerged Humanity'.

The tribal groups are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sector of the national population. The term 'Adivasis' (Adi=original; Vasi=inhabitant) has recently become current to designate these groups.

The origin of Indian Scheduled Tribes has been traced to such races as the Proto-Australoids, who, at one time, covered practically the whole of India; the Mongolians who are still located mostly in Assam and North-Eastern India; and finally, to a limited extent, also to the Negritos strain as indicated by frizzly hair, among the Andamanese and the Kadars of the South-West Asia.
The scheduled tribes of India are the earliest inhabitants or indigenous people of the country, who were unable to defend themselves and were gradually forced to recede before the invading hordes of such people, as the Dravidians, Indo-Aryans and Mongolians coming from the West, North-West and North-east respectively, who were not only superior in numerical strength but also in mechanical equipment. The indigenous people thus took shelter in the mountain depths and thick jungles, where a considerable number of them are still found and have been estimated to be about ten million. Those who were left behind on the plains gradually disappeared either by absorption or by acculturalization.

Though these original tribes in India have been divided and subdivided into a large number of Sub-tribes, all mutually exclusive, each having the endogamous and exogamous clans with their own names and their own culture, customs, locational practice and life style.

The most common features of all these tribes are:

1. They live away from civilized world in the inaccessible parts lying in the forests and hills.
2. They belong to one of the three stocks—Negritos, Australoids and Mongoloids.
3. They speak their own tribal dialect.
4. They follow primitive occupation.
5. They are largely carnivorous,
6. They live either naked or 'semi-naked.
7. They have nomadic habits and a love for drink and dance.
8. They profess primitive religion known as 'Animism' in which worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element.

We know that religion, in the abstract, can and must be handled dispassionately—and we are learning that despite controversy and sectarianism-Religion in the concrete, is "a mode of behaviour, a system of feelings" held by and current among human beings who form a society, live in a definite part of the world and are therefore, to be studied by constant
reference to history, geography, social and economic conditions and to the universal facts of psychology. The tribes of India live in different parts of the country which has special characteristics and their views as to the nature of Nature, of the world in which they live and move and have their beings, are based upon their experience, personal and communal, of their peculiar environment.

They speak different languages which belong to different language families. They are in constant contact with Hindu and Hinduized groups. There are features in their intellectual beliefs, their traditional beliefs, their tacitly assumed and unquestioned beliefs, which—apart from resemblances due to the common elements of the universal pattern—are unmistakably borrowed from their tribal and Hindu neighbours. We must endeavour to know why this feature and not another was selected for adoption, and whether or in what direction the features so selected have been modified and adapted.

To understand the main currents in Indian culture, one has to probe the colourful world of the tribal people in different parts of the country who are generally considered the original inhabitants of the land. The legends, literature, customs and traditions, speak volumes about the wealth of splendour and creativity of these people that have, concomitantly, influenced even those in the vicinity who have chosen to don the garb of sophistication.

There are apparent cultural differences and locational practices between the life styles of the tribal people of India but historically, there is a basic unity in thought and philosophy among these people born and brought up in environments of diversity through the length and breadth of the country. What these differences are? And what threads of fundamental commonness are inherent in the overall tribal system? Can the questions be answered by a study of this book?

Anthropology has waited a hundred years for a full account of the different tribes of India, but Mr. Verrier Elwin has paid the debt as fully as any single author who had to work on many tribes after its tribal life and organisation had
largely gone. Even the tongue the tribal people now speak is not their own, for there seems to be no doubt but the different speech which they carried with them from the plains to their fastness in the hills, and that mixture of their language with Indo-Aryan, Indo-Mongoloid or Dravidian, are the result of linguistic borrowings which have supplanted and effaced an earlier language.

Language, of course, is no safe indication of race and the primitive tribes of India, even if the Mongolian fringes be diminished, show very great variation when examined by the test of the co-efficient of Racial Likeness.

The Co-efficient of Racial Likeness is by no means an entirely satisfactory criterion on of racial affinity, but one would have expected a greater degree of propinquity between such tribes as Bhils, Gonds, Gaddis, Pangwals, etc. than is actually found. In any case, the tribal people of India clearly belong to one of the oldest strata of race in India. There is much to suggest that these tongues entered India from the North-West, North and from South-east and East.

Other items of culture appear among different tribes in India, sometimes very distant, suggesting isolated survivals of some very ancient culture or cultures now submerged except in remote corners of India, many of which offer links with similar survivals in south-east Asia and Oceania. Thus the case of stilts at one of their festivals of the agricultural year, possibly originating in an attempt to make the crop grow high by the force of goodly example, appears again among the Lepcha of the eastern Himalayas, the Angami Nagas of Nagaland and in the Indian Archipelago. The use of tattoo with the idea that it is necessary for the sake of recognition in another world appears again in Chota Nagpur, in North-eastern states of India and in Borneo. Probably, if it were known, this association of tattoo is frequent in India. A big and pendulous ear seems to have once been greatly admired at any rate from North-eastern India to Formosa and South-eastwards far into the Pacific.

But perhaps the most striking of these survivals of ancient culture among the tribe is the 'social organization which makes
Introduction

it proper for grandparent to marry grandchild. The occurrence among the Chota-Nagpur tribes and in the North-eastern tribes and in other societies in India, of a "joking relationship" between grandparents and grand children, which makes possible a freedom and even licence in conversation that would be quite improper between parents and child, has led to the inference being drawn that at some earlier date a marriage system was in force in which, like the four-class system of Australia, made marriage between grand-parent and grand-child not only permissible but socially approved. In the Baiga of India, we find a man still marrying not only his classificatory granddaughter generally, it seems, his wife's sister’s son's daughter—but actually his own daughter’s daughter, while the union of a woman with her son's son is also mentioned as a regular practice.

In other respect the Baiga marriage system appears to be in a state of disruption or at least of transition. There is a division into localized and, to some extent, endogamous groups which are spoken of by the word ordinarily used by Hindus for caste. These endogamous groups are divided into exogamous territorial divisions, but also into clans which are theoretically exogamous but practically not so. Mr. Elwin considers that the exogamous clan is a recent borrowing from the Gond and that the territorial division is the older exogamous grouping, but he also finds traces of an older exogamous clan which, like those of the Gonds, is totemic, while even among the Gond totems there seems to be traces of two system, for the Markam clan is named after the mango but has the tortoise for its totem. Perhaps it is of some significance that the Gond totems seem to be all animals while the Baiga totems, that survive, are vegetables.

The remarkable thing about the Baiga endogamy is that it exhibits some of the features of the caste system in what is perhaps a more ancient from than that familiar to us from Hinduism.

Generally speaking, the rules of commensality and inter-marriage between the Baiga tribal groups suggest rather the sort of society from which the caste system may have arisen,
than the society which is characterised by and is dependent on caste today.

No doubts Adivasi culture is intrinsically linked to the economic, social and environmental aspects of Adivasi life. There is a clear evidence of changing trends in Adivasi art forms. Some have retained the purity of the original, mainly because of their isolated existence, but the influence of urban culture was evident in the dress, dance and social comments of many others.

The mute message of Adivasis, relayed through their art form, is clear. They do not want computers. They want the forest, the wild animals and birds that have inspired them and sustained them through centuries. Despite their surface urbanization, every song, dance and other art form of the Adivasis eloquently speak of the circle of life and harmony therein.

The life of the tribal people is simple and placid and often hard. But they have a rich cultural legacy—a myriad, myths and legends which interesting though rather strange. In the same manner as other communities cherish the stories of their epic or religious books, the tribal people like to relate or listen to the stories of their history. They have usually emotional reactions to their environment, but to older generation, their mythological tales appear to cover almost every aspect of their life.

The ghotul—the village dormitory—is a central institution in the life and culture of the Muria, a tribe in Madhya Pradesh. But unlike dormitories found among primitive people elsewhere, it is a highly disciplined and democratic organization. It is one of most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. It is a school which provides co-education in every sphere of tribal life, and it is here that boys and girls, at an early age, are trained for marriage. For what is a village guardroom for the Nagas, a boy’s club among the Oraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

But according to differences in climate and vegetation which lead men to one kind of activity, type of society and even of religious belief in one region and to different activities, social institutions and beliefs in other
regions. Social change is not a mechanical addition or subtraction but the integration of the new among the old. Every advance therefore, depends on the pre-existing pattern and must fit into it, and in doing so an intrusive element will probably undergo change itself, so that any practice however similar in its general character will play a different part in the general life of each separate people.

It is clear that both the spread of knowledge and customs from one people to another, that is diffusion, and the part any element plays in the life of the people, that is its functional relation, are extremely important in influencing the final pattern of human life in any one region or among any group. These active cultural factors operate on the relatively static materials of race and physical environment. In order to appreciate these matters it is necessary, however, to obtain a fairly full and balanced picture of actual people. By considering as a whole the life of a number of tribes, grouped according to their region, some of their life style and locational practices in relation between the triology—habitat, economy and society—will be exploded.
CHAPTER 2

TRIBES: A DISTINCT ELEMENT

J.H. HUTTON, the renowned anthropologist believed that the tribals if not the exterior castes who were as backward—formed a distinct element in the Indian population which was not amenable to normal constitutional process but which required a strategy of intervention by the government to protect their rights and promote their welfare. So he enumerated in 1931 census all primitive tribes “whatever their number and irrespective of the percentage provision for individual tabulation of caste. This made him possible to give the accurate number of an identifiable tribal unit, though it was not easy to indicate the extent to which such unit remained primitive in its habit. But Hutton was prone to describe tribal religion as the “surplus material not yet built into the temple of Hinduism” and to highlight the process of the tribes being swallowed up by this religion. But according to latest report about one-third of tribes adhere to tribal religion. The majority of the remainder is Hindus, there are also some Christians, Buddhists and Muslims.

But there are other factors, too, of which the consensus authorities were only dimly aware, namely, the transformation of the tribe into the peasant, as a result of transfer of technology by and the acceptance of the fact of Jati more of the latter. The economic dimension which did not fall within the ambit of the British census authorities to explore was as
important, if not more, than the social. According to 1981 census, Hinduism claims 87 per cent and Christianity 7 per cent of adherents among tribes. Even so, Hutton, J.P. Mills and those who have written about this subject seem to have underestimated the autonomy of tribal society and of its religion.

Tribal religions have not disappeared. Many elements of tribal religion are as alive, even vigorous, as ever. As studies have recently shown, tribal religion has not lost its distinct identity in spite of its long years of interaction with Hinduism and Christianity. It has maintained its system of religious beliefs and practices including propitiation of spirit, magic and witchcraft and the priesthood. Recent trends even suggest revival of many of pristine elements of tribal religion by those who have gone out of its fold. Thus, the prevalent assumption that the survival of tribal religion is at stake needs to be reconsidered.

Much the same observation may also apply to the status of tribal languages, in spite of the dominance of the languages of various states and increasing evidence of bilingualism among tribes. The role of economic factor appears to have been over-emphasized by Hutton and that by acculturization somewhat ignored by him. Today, non-tribals are also turning bilingual, picking up a tribal language or two. Non-tribal languages have emerged as the language of trade, exchange, and the underworld of magic and witchcraft.

In areas of tribal preponderance, tribal languages have survived. The Munda languages still hold sway; the number of speakers of Gondi fell slightly. The Oraons of Madhya Pradesh have regained the linguistic status in 1961, they had lost it earlier but Bhumji of Orissa have lost theirs. Many tribal movements in recent years have demonstrated renewed interest in their language and script.

It has been found that their position in the surroundings of a more developed culture present certain problems for academicians. As long as a primitive tribe remains in isolation conducting its own affairs according to its own laws and customs, it presents no problem except that required to prevent raiding or other forms of aggression on more civilized or less warlike neighbours.
Where communication are meagre or non-existent contact with the outer world will be so slow that the effect of its impact will not be rapid enough for observation and no change will take place in the primitive community except the gradual adaptation and alteration resulting from the intercourse on the fringes of the area inhabited. Changes of this kind involving a very slow change of environment and outlook are familiar enough in remote North-east, North and in Central India and have been going on for centuries. No serious problem arises until this process of slow adaptation is interfered with by a development of communication and a sudden increase of contact.

Even excise laws, although in many ways to the benefit of primitive tribes, may operate as a hardship and would be found excessively severe if the very proper restrictions on distilling were extended to PACHWAI and TARI made for household consumption and forming a very important part of the diet of tribes that cannot grow sugar and are too poor to buy it. For three months in the hot weather the Marias of Chanda live almost exclusively on a very mildly alcoholic beverage, much as the Angami Naga does to a less degree in Nagaland. The prohibition of distilling itself may be a hardship, as for the Gond who must affer to his god liquor distilled by the family of worshippers, but this is probably one of those that must be borne in the interests of the community, like the game-laws that prevent a Kachha Naga or a Kuki from offering game at the grave of the dead during the close season.

Conflict of Contact

The rapid opening up of communications involving contact at many points and after the practical settlement of tribal country, entirely alters the aspect of any gradual changes that may have been taking place. Generally speaking, it substitutes conflict for contact. Not necessarily a conflict of arms but of culture and of material interest. Attempts to develop minerals, forests, or land for intensive cultivation can only be made at the expense of the tribe whose isolation is thus invaded.

The customs which regulate the ownership, or transfer of
Tribes: A Distinct Element

land among primitive tribes are generally at variance with those observed by more sophisticated communities and in the conflict between the two, the tribal custom is normally superseded by a code which is neither valued nor understood by the tribe and in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, generally in the name of law, either by alienation to foreigners or by transforming the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind quite foreign to the customs of the tribe. This has beenfallen both the Mundas and other hill tribes.

Application of Alien Law

A similar application of alien law also usually disturbs the tribal custom of debt. Tribal customs of debt are frequently perhaps normally, stated in terms of extravagant usury. Such terms, however, represent less the real customs observed in practice than the ideal which the lender considers ought to be the return and in point of fact they are qualified for very important considerations. In the first place, there is commonly no law of limitation and thus borrower may not expect to repay before the next generation while the lender is very often so placed that there is a moral compulsion, to lend under certain circumstances even if no return is expected in his lifetime. Thus it is often the custom for a chief to lend paddy to the most indignant and unprofitable of his villagers in times of scarcity though he knows repayment to be extremely unlikely.

In any case when repayment does take place there is normally a settlement by accommodation between both parties which bears little relation to the payment due on a strict interpretation of the laws of usury as formally stated by the tribe. It is only natural that tribesmen whose views of debt are dictated by this sort of vague custom are perfectly ready to subscribe without demur to the most flagrantly usurious agreements exacted by foreign moneylenders who intend to invoke a foreign code to compel repayment on the letter of the agreement and at the time when it suits them to do so instead of at such time as the debtor finds himself in a position to pay.

Similarly the criminal law of a civilized community is often entirely at variance with what is felt to be just and
proper by tribal custom. Afforestation again is a frequent grievance, and in forests which were common property under a tribal regime it becomes a punishable offence to exercise what the tribe regards as an inalienable right. But this land has by the great majority of hill tribes been regarded for many generations as their most valuable real property. Such an action would in some tribes have been almost enough to cause a rebellion by itself. In the Tamil Nadu again the same attitude has been taken towards jhum, there called podu and has been carried to the extent of the prohibition of cultivation, twice bringing the Sawara tribe to the verge of open rebellion.

Primitive systems of agriculture are frequently extremely wasteful of forest land and may, in hill country, prove damaging to adjoining plains on account of denudation, the too rapid escape of rain and consequent inundation below. At the same time wasteful cultivation of this kind is very often the only known means of subsistence.

Again the exploitation of minerals not only involve the taking up of tribal land but generally the introduction of an alien population, usually of an extremely mixed character and not infrequently exceptionally dissolute. This impinges on tribal life in a number of disconcerting ways. Even the invasion of missionaries is liable to produce as much evil as good, if not more, for their conduct with tribal religion and with taboos of all kinds, and their point of view, readily comprehensible to an alien administration which understands the tribal position very vaguely if at all and backed as if so often is by influentially vocal societies at a distance, is much more likely to obtain the support of the authority than taboos which are on the face of them unreasonable to all except those to whom they are the most vitally important things in life.

A similar misunderstanding of the tribal point of view is apt to arise in the case of many customs, and it may be enough to mention that of marriage by a form of capture common to both Bhils and Gonds, and although quite familiar to the tribesmen themselves, often capable of being treated by British courts as cases of abduction. Apart from
laws in themselves their manner of application may be extremely severe on people whose methods of dealing with antisocial actions or persons is entirely different.

Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy said, "The British system of administration of justice......has unintentionally produced certain deplorable effects on the moral character of the aborigines. This complicated system of law, which is......suited to advance people, was naturally not comprehended by the people, the simple aborigines and was not suited to their level of culture. And thus this complicated system of administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people in many cases." He further said, "The British system of law and administration has further tended to impair the social solidarity of the tribes and has weakened the authority of the social heads or Panches and the respect they formerly commanded.

It is easy to see how a combination of anti-tribal forces is likely to create a condition of excessive discomfort in tribal life, the most serious aspect of which is the complete breakdown of the communal organization. A tribe living in comparative isolation will usually be found to have developed on adaptation to its environment which, within certain limits, approaches perfection, an adaptation which may have taken many millennia to accomplish and the breakdown of which may be the ruin of the tribe."

Again it is not in its devotional aspect that Hutton was concerned with religion, but in its social, and it cannot be denied that society in India is still largely organized on a basis of caste and religion and social conduct is much influenced by local practices which may not be in themselves religious but which are subject to religious sanctions. The age of marriage, the practice of remarriage, the occupations of women, the inheritance of property and the maintenance of widows, even diet, to name a few obvious cases, vary according to the caste and religious community of the individual tribes.

It cannot also be denied that Bhils and Thakurs, living in isolated groups in Hindu villages are gradually yielding to the influence of association and conforming to the rites of Hindu worship as practised locally. My personal view is
that the process of assimilation is very slow, much slower than commonly believed to be the case, even in areas where individual members of the Aboriginal tribes have descended into the plains and are brought into contact with all the influence of village life. In India as a whole the tribesmen who changed Tribal religion to Hinduism numbered several million.

Still we find very ancient and primitive beliefs continuing under the guise of Hinduism in many tribes. The sanctity of the fig tree for instance is possibly to be associated with the beliefs of the Negrito inhabitants who appear to have formed the earliest population of India. It is probably on account of its milk like sap that the *ficus* is associated with fertility cults in Africa, Italy and New Guinea as well as in Assam and in southern India and it is generally also connected with the spirits of the dead. This cult appears to be shared by the Andamanese who are an approximately pure Negrito race.

Again the flesh of cattle is tabooed by certain clans among primitive tribes of North-eastern India, who do not appear to have come even remotely under the influence of Hinduism, while on the other hand the cow is regarded as completely tabooed by the Shins of Chilas, who are described by Leitner as a Hindu tribe.

The head-hunting and human sacrifice are intimately associated with agriculture and the line is hard to draw at the point at which a purely magical fertility rite begins to develop into ceremonial of a genuinely religious nature. At any rate the tribal cult ceases to be purely tribal and is identified with some definitely religious festival so that the magical, ceremonial and devotional aspects become merged.

The Hindu rites of the *Shradh* provide for the creation of a new body to house the soul of the deceased. In the tribal religion this cult of the dead is seen in precisely parallel form but at a very much more matter of fact and materialistic stage of the development of the idea. Thus in Myso the Hasalar tribe redeem the soul with a pig from the magician who has caused the death and domicile it in a pot where it is supplied with food and water. The Nicobarese and some Naga tribes fashion wooden figures on which the skull of the
deceased is placed in order that the soul may leave it and re-enter the wooden figure. It is for a time kept supplied with all worldly necessities. A similar practice must formerly have obtained among the Garos of Meghalaya. Further the Sawara of Ganjam district of Orissa uses a similar but more conventionalized wooden figure to accommodate the soul of his cremated dead during the interval between death and cremation and the time for the erection of a stone for the souls of the dead during the past year, which is done annually about the time of the sowing of the crop. In Madhya Pradesh, the Kunbi make an image of their dead in brass which is kept until the superfluity of such images necessitates their deposit in the water of some sacred river.

The theory, however, on which it is based that the soul matter is specially located in the head, may be detected elsewhere. Thus the Andamanese attach special importance to the Jaw and the Skull in mourning and at any rate one case is recorded of their carrying off the cranium of a victim killed in the war.

One phenomenon of primitive religion which cannot be ignored when writing on Indian tribes is totemism, traces of which are shown by primitive tribes in all parts of India. From Bhils in the west to the Chakma in the east; from Kanets of the Simla hills to Telugu people of South India, clear traces of totemism are found to survive. The Ao Naga try to influence the rice by planting a root or two in the earth, put in the hollow top of the bamboo and so raised above the rest of the field which is thus induced to grow high.

All these tribal customs, locational practices and life styles, well suited to tribal people. Any departure by way of imposing modern system of law, justice and administration will ruin the colourful tribal people. In the alternative, they may retain a sort of emasculated tribal life, deprived of the customs and festivals that gave it meaning and cohesion and fall into that psychical apathy and physical decline which has decimated so many tribal communities elsewhere.

The rapidly approaching extinction of the tribes of Great Andaman has largely been due to diseases imported into the
penal settlement and communicated to the Andamanese by convicts.

The use of distilled liquor, of opium and even of mercury (as a drug) is performing a similar disservice for other tribes and is likewise the result of the improved communications which corrupt good manners.

Hence the introduction of anti-tribal forces is definitely likely to create a condition of excessive discomfort in happy tribal life and their old communal organisation. It is likely to proceed at a far greater rate than either the gradual change in physical environment or than the still slower process of adaptation to that change.
CHAPTER 3

LIFE STYLE—ANDAMAN ISLANDS

EVEN AS the mainland marches towards the 21st century, just about 1100 kms. off the peninsular coast time seems to have stopped still for the Andamanese tribals. An encounter with these tribals is a journey down history. It takes you to the days when men wore fig leaves, ate roots and berries and led a nomadic life.

Not all the tribals of the Andamans live in the pre-historic days. In fact, meeting some of the tribals from the Nicobar islands in the offices of the Andaman and Nicobar Administration was quite an interesting experience. Many of them are graduates working for government departments! But for their distinct Mongoloid features they could be mistaken for any of the ‘locals’ of Port Blair. For all practical purposes, they have been absorbed into the ‘civilised’ culture of the mainland.

Close on their heels in terms of ‘development’ are the great Andamanese tribals, a classic example of a ‘transitional’ ‘culture.’ Fear of extinction has made this tribe more responsive to government aid. They have been initiated into agriculture and are in constant interaction with government departments and local traders for their basic amenities. This exposure has raised new hopes and aspirations and the transition shows. An Andamanese child, now demands Campa-Cola (never mind if its locally made aerated water sold under the same brand
name), young men want to have their hair cut à la Bachchan and the women want aluminium utensils and fancy hair clips.

However, although the material culture is changing, the quintessential Andamanese remains the same. Every evening at the Great Andaman Island, the tribe gets together to worship ‘Baleku’: old legends and myths are perpetuated; an old man can still be seen under a tree ‘yearning’ about his hunting exploits to avoid young listeners.

Though faced with extinction, the Andamanese will not dream of marrying a non-tribal. At present there are three eligible bachelors in the community but no potential bride. I suggested to one of them to marry a local Tamil girl. He shuddered as if I had committed blasphemy.

However, he is not averse to marrying an Onge girl from a neighbouring area.

The Onges are the inhabitants of Dugong Creek and Bay Island. Their interaction with the outside world has not been as intense as that of the Andamanese. Also, social censure and control was more effective in their case because of their larger number. Hence, they have clung to their mores and traditions with tenacity. A peep into their culture is like looking into a kaleidoscope. One can see communal huts built on stilts with the entrance on the floor. Every house has a ‘Koreau’ (spirit scarer). The tribe has been provided with concrete houses to live in but except for two to three months during monsoon season, the houses remain vacant. They also have a hospital and a school. But the Onges would any time prefer their herbs to the suspicious looking white tablets and the school wears a perpetual deserted look.

In the remote parts of the Bay Island, Onge men and women can be seen wearing human mandibles around their necks to ward off the evil eye. The dress of the women is a string of palm leaves put together by bark threads and wax, called nakunyege. The men wear strips of cane leaves. On ceremonial occasion, both wear the Koachuge (forehead band) and smear their faces with a kind of white clay.

Such occasions are aplenty, for the Onges have an ela-
borate custom of rites and rituals associated with birth, puberty, marriage and death. A pregnant woman is subjected to several taboos pertaining to food and movement. She is segregated for ten to fifteen days before child-birth and about a month thereafter, till the purification rites are performed. Her shadow is not to fall on any male during the period. Similarly, on coming of age, the Onge man goes through an adult initiation ceremony which lasts for forty-five days. During the period he undergoes rigorous training in the ways and means of earning his livelihood and is taught the facts of life by his guru. He has to prove his prowess as a skilled marksman and hunter before he can be bestowed the privileges of manhood.

Marriage calls for rituals. Promiscuity is the rule rather than an exception before marriage. They boys and girls choose their own mates although marriages are formalised by the parents. The girls have to prove their mettle as food and honey gatherers in order to win the approval of elders. The family system is graduating to the nuclear form although in times of distress the strong community sentiment is still evident.

Death is one such time. The entire village mourns the death of a member. No food restriction is observed although hunting is prohibited. Every Onge wears two leaves of the Pandanus on his arm as a token of his grief. The dead body is taken out for burial through the rear door lest that spirit "re-enter the house." In the evening, the ceremonial dance is performed.

Ceremonial dancing in fact accompanies all occasions. It is a symbolic expression of life for them and it reinforces their collectivity. The rhythmic tapping of feet and the incessant beat of the drums speak of diverse sentiments. The war dance of the Jarwas is a thing to be feared. This tribe is (in) famous for its hostility.

Their worst enemies are the poachers. In them, they see a potential threat to their survival. This is but natural, for the Jarwas and Seniteneese survive on hunting and fishing. They are skilled marksmen and can kill a fish at a distance of ten to twelve feet with a bow and arrow. They are also excellent
swimmers. A Jarwa child is not even two when he learns to swim in the sea with a basal float. These tribals move about stark naked. They live in communal huts and sleep on the floor.

Because of their hostile nature and non-communicative disposition not much is known about these two tribes. Whatever little one knows is through the 'contact part' members who visit the tribals every month after the full moon with gifts and provisions. The Jarwas have started responding to these gestures by allowing boatsmen to land on the shores of their island and leave the goods behind. However, it will take quite some time for them to lower their defences built over the years. Only then can any fruitful information be gained of their culture and life.

Knowledge about the Shompens, the last of the six Andamanese tribes, is also limited owing to their geographical concentration in the interior of the Great Nicobar island. They live a semi-nomadic life, moving from one place to another in search of food and game. Home for them is where sweet water is. They live in make-shift huts built on poles, usually five to ten feet high and roofed with areca palm leaves. They grow bananas, coconuts, yams etc. but their only agricultural implement is a digging stick! Snakes, lizards, frogs, fish and monkeys are delicacies on their menu. They also collect bulb roots, fruit, honey and larvae of insects. Their sole preoccupation seems to be what, where and when to eat. A shy and withdrawn people, they are at peace with themselves and the world at large.

LIFE STYLE—THE ANDAMANESE—JARAWA—ONGE—SENTINELESE

The Andamans lie between 10°30' and 13°30' north latitude and between 90°15' and 95°15' east longitudes. The extreme length and width are 219 miles respectively. At the extreme north is the Landfall island followed by the three main islands of the Andamans—The North Andamans, the Middle Andaman and the South Andaman, all of them being
separated off from each other by shallow seas. Further south at a distance of 40 miles from the South Andaman lies the Little Andaman. Besides these there are number of small Islands—Ritchie’s Archipelago and the Sentinel Islands may be worthy of mention.

The Andaman Islands comprise a large number of islands amounting to as much as 302, cover an area of 6340 sq. kms. The total inhabited islands are only 26 in the Andaman group. These group of islands with the other ones in the South, known as the Nicobar Islands, are the only Indian islands in the south eastern ocean frontier.

The islands were inhabited entirely by the aborigines. Mention of these island dates back to the 2nd century A.D. in the writings of Claude Ptolemy. The map referred to, indicates the islands of Buzacata to be in the place of the Andaman and it is said that this island produces quantities of shells and the inhabitants go naked and are called Agmatae. It is believed that the Island of Buzacata means to refer to the Andaman Islands and such a peculiar name has been given by the travellers.

Later mentions of these islands are found in the collection of early Arab notes of the 9th century on India and China and the people of the Andaman have been called Angamanians. Further mention of the islands is made by the two Moham-medan travellers, Chinese Buddhist Monk I ‘Tsing (672 A.D.), Marco Polo (1280 A.D.), Nicolo Conti (1430) etc. It is evident from their writings that islands were inhabited by very ugly people. These types of early notes by different travellers are largely written from second hand knowledge. The islands have been ravaged by the Malay Sea pirates from very early times. These sea pirates, through their exaggerated propaganda made the islands a monopoly ground of their own and in consequence, people used to know it as a land of horror.

Probably the name Andamans of the islands is a corrupt form of the name “Hanuman” or Monkey people, the aboriginal antagonists of the Aryan immigrants in India. In the earliest Hindu mythology, the Ramayana, these islands were
believed to be a land of the Hanumans. Malayans used to refer to them as "Handuman" which is even a corrupt form of Hanuman and from Malaya the knowledge of the Andamans first spread into the different parts of the world.

Factual records of the history of the Andamans can be had since 1877 with the action taken by the British government to find a penal colony in the island. Later Lord Cornwallis sent Lt. Blair to study the possibilities there in 1788. Accordingly, the first settlement was established on Chatham Islands at Port Cornwallis (now Port Blair). The sepoy Mutiny or first War of Independence of India in 1857 compelled British Government to change this island to penal colony in March 1857. The Andaman entered into second phase of the history as a penal settlement with the first lot of prisoners.

Later the world war II darkened the horizon of Andaman and no other part of India was so deadly affected by the war as were the Andamans. The Japanese army landed here on the 21st March 1942 and these islands were under the occupation of Japanese till 1945.

Since the 15th August 1947 the Andaman and Nicobar islands have shared independence with India. At present they are under the Union Territory. The erst-while East Bengal refugees are being rehabilitated in these islands and all round development is being carried out.

The situation of the Andamans between 10°30' and 13°30' north latitude and 92°15' and 95°15' east longitude makes the climate of these islands of the tropical type which closely approximates to the Equatorial one in the south.

The islands being 219 miles long and 23 miles wide, when maximum with a number of bays and creeks penetrating deep into the interior of the islands make no spot on the Andamans more than 10 miles from the sea.

The Andamans present much variety in soil formation and there is accordingly a corresponding diversity of the vegetation. The whole of the island has an almost unbroken tropical type of forest. The general botanical aspect of the islands is a deep cover of forest throughout the whole of the islands. The average height of the trees being 100 ft. The forest resources hold a key position in the list of the resources of the islands.
The soil in the hilly region is low in organic matter, strongly leached, rich in clay and more or less yellow in colour. The texture is clayey. The soil of the valley region is also clayey having more than 5% clay. It is rich in silica and the soil of the coastal region is highly saline in character giving rise to halophytic types of vegetation.

The mineral resources in the Andaman are very limited. So far the minerals in the neighbourhood of Port Blair has been discovered. They are chromium, copper, iron and sulphur. But unfortunately no important deposit of any mineral has been found to occur except some traces of lignite deposit and band of pure limestone. But none are found to be economically exploitable. But Japanese carried out a survey and are reported to have found deposits, of coal, iron and precious stone.

Coal is of very poor quality and no coal is economically exploited. But it will be in the interest of the country if immediate measures are taken for proper mineral investigation of the islands.

Off shore drilling undertaken recently near Havelock island 19 km. off Port Blair has proved rich deposits of gases. Possibility of oil deposits also cannot be underestimated in the off shore area of these islands.

*People*: The most interesting and exciting treasure of these islands, however, is its aboriginal inhabitants. One fifth of Islands’ total population constitute of Tribals. The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may be described as a race by themselves, and can be divided in two groups, i.e. Negrito stock which includes the Andamanese, the Onges and the Sentinelese. This group is found in the Andaman group of Islands. The second group is Mongoloid in origin, includes the inhabitants of Nicobar group of islands, i.e. the Shompens and the Nicobarese.

The population of the Andaman and Nicobar islands has remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity—it has three strands—a number of tribal group, descendants of criminals under sentence of transportation for life from India and Burma, and recent immigrants from India. The islands remained as an abode of the aborigines, the negritoes.
The aboriginal population belong to the negrito stock and therefore has an affinity with the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Sri Lanka and other negrito groups of Southeast Asia.

It is believed that these aborigines came down from the lower regions of Burma. On their arrival at the islands, they moved to the different parts of the islands and very likely, because of the different types of physical environment, they developed different traits. They are—

(a) The Jarawas
(b) The Onges
(c) The Andamanese
(d) The Sentinelese.

All these groups though physically akin to each other, have developed different social and economic traits and the way of earning their food and constructing their shelters.

The Jarawas are today confined to the western part of the South, Middle, and North Andamans. The Andamanese who are extremely limited in number are along the coastal areas.

The Onges live in the Little Andamans and Rutland Island and the Sentinelese in the Sentinel Islands.

The relation of aborigines with the foreigners became one of deep distrust and hostility with some of the groups, especially the Jarawas and the Sentinelese, as an outcome of the unfriendly attitude of the foreigners. The Onges and the Andamanese have however become very friendly with the foreigners.

The aboriginal population of the Andamans is fast declining in number and there is apprehension that in spite of the best of attempts the chances of the survival of the aborigines for long age are extremely limited.

Undoubtedly the aboriginal population of the Andamans is an object of interesting study. Such an interest grows out of its being the only purest Negrito group in the world. A primitive economy of hunting and collecting has not changed appreciably in spite of the foreign impact.

All the people of the islands have got mixed up irrespective
of the caste, creed and religion with a fair degree of homogeneity. They are known as Andaman Indians.

Aboriginal Population

The aboriginal population of the Andamans belong to the Negrito group which is spread over the different parts of South-east Asia e.g. the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Lanka, the Tapiro of New Guinea etc. The pygmies of the Equatorial Africa also show very close resemblance to the Negritos in physical as well as cultural characteristics but the latter are taller, dark skinned and also hairy than the former.

The presence of such a small group of Negritos in the deep solitude of physical separation from the other countries obviously arouses the question as to how and wherefrom they came. The attributes of the Andamanese, prove very well their affinity with the Negrito groups. But the tribal people of the Nicobars Islands do not show any affinity with the Andamanese culturally or materially and such contrasts are important aspect of anthropological study.

However, the distribution of the Negrito group in these isolated islands have been explained by some as the passage of the people from the lower reaches of Burma.

It is believed that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were connected by land with the Arakan folds of Burma in the late Tertiary period. But according to Brown, the authority on the anthropology of the Andamans the Negritos migrated from the Arakan regions of Burma if there had been any land connection and if not, they migrated not by land but by sea from the Burmese coast (Pegu of Arakan). Brown said that the N.E. monsoon could drift them thence on to the Andamans. It is conceivable that they might have travelled from Sumatra by the way of the Nicobars but the N.E. Monsoon would have appeased their progress in this direction while the S.W. Monsoon would have driven them to the Coast of the Andamans.

It is probably that the Negritos moved from Burma either at a time when a direct land connection was achieved or when shallow waters in the sea facilitated movement by the rafts of the aborigines.
There has been an attempt of linking up some of the tales of Hindu Mythology Ramayana, with the land and people of the Andamans. Shri S.K. Gupta has been a strong advocate of the opinion that the aborigines of the Andamans are the “Kiratas” of Ramayana. He writes according to modern anthropology that they are of the negrito stock. But according to Ramayana they are Kiratas. These Kiratas have been described in our literature as Shiny black with a copper coloured head of hair, bulging eyes, strong teeth. The description recorded several thousands years ago, holds good today.

The affinity of the Andamanese has been further confirmed by citing some native appellations of the Andamanese which show a striking phonetical similarity to those of The Kiratas i.e. Aka-Kora (da), Aka-Kede (da), Aka-Kal (da) etc. and also the phonetical similarity of the Onges word Boan with Santhal word Bonga both signifying God.

Sri Gupta, has been tempted to emphasise with firm conviction that the Andamanese are, therefore, very probably a remnant of the dwellers on the marshes of Bengal and the uplands of Santhal Parganas of the dense forests of Burma and Malaya.

The Andamanese follows a long series of food privations which is absent among the Semangs. The outrigger canoes of the Andamanese are more improved.

Much to the curiosity of the observers, the tribal people of the Nicobar Islands do not show any affinity with the Andamanese culturally or materially. However, two broad divisions of the aboriginal population can be made—

(1) Aborigines of the Great Andaman group except Jarawas living in the southwestern part of Andamans.

(2) Aborigines of the Little Andaman group—the Onges of the Little Andaman, the Jarawas of South Andaman and the Sentinelese of the North Sentinel island.

The Great Andaman Group

Andamanese: Andamanese were the most widespread and the largest in number. They had split up into a few sub-groups:
from the north to the south. The different groups are Aka-Kora, Aka-boa, Aka-geru and Aka-bea. There had been a deplorable decline in the number of these aborigines. At present the number is only 23.

Because the Andamanese inhabit the coastal areas of the Andaman, the fishing is a well known art to them. Still now the headman of the Andamanese in the Middle Andaman, Loka is found doing turtle hunting in their canoes and climbing up the coconut trees without any rope. The original culture is virtually lost and now they have been brought under government help. All of them wear clothes and live in the huts made by the forest department.

Till the recent past, Andamanese were a typical hunting and food gathering tribe, leading a semi-nomadic existence within their respective territories. They can no longer be held as hunters and food gatherers. Now settled in Strait Island, they live in government built quarters. This tribe has adopted and greatly responded to the modern way of life.

Andamanese are the most advanced group among the Negrito tribes.

On June 20, with great fanfare Strait Islands' sole nubile has been wedded to a Great Andamanese youth, raising the tribe's hopes of survival.

As the 15 year old Lacho was pronounced married to 17 year old Golat, the only surviving 23 members of the tribe rejoiced over the first match in the community in 15 years.

The Little Andaman Group

Jarawas: Contact was first made with Jarawas in 1790 during the foundation of the first settlement when they occupied the south side of Port Blair harbour. The year 1872 marks the first record of Jarawas raid on settlement and from then to the present day scarcely a year has passed without raids being made on the settlement in order to obtain food, iron implements etc. The Jarawas are implacably hostile and best of efforts to bring them under terms of amity have proved futile. Still now of course a person penetrating deep into the forest of the eastern parts of South Andaman should always be on guard against an attack from the Jarawas.
The Jarawas live in the western part of South, Middle and North Andamans. They are not very friendly with the modern civilization. Efforts to befriend them have been going on for the last 100 years. Only a small group of Jarawas has responded to this overtures. The first such contact was made in the year 1974. This tribe still follows their primitive way of life. Their main occupation include food collecting, hunting and fishing. In other words, they still continue to enjoy the jungle life. However, the contact with one group has opened the doors for establishing dialogue with the tribe with a view to bringing them ultimately to the fold of civilization.

They left the eastern part for want of seclusion. Their movements are restricted between Port Anson on the North and Constance Bay on the South. They are also reported from the western part of the island of Baratang—an island completely separated from south and middle Andaman.

The later group therefore use some kind of water craft to cross over one island to the other. The extreme northern tip of the south Andaman island was until recently used by the Jarawas for crossing over to Middle Andaman through the two intervening islands of Spike and Bluff with help of bamboo rafts.

The Jarawas are believed to be a section of the Onges of little Andaman who found their way to the great Andaman long ago. The difference is that while the Onges know how to make canoes, the Jarawas do not seem to be knowing the technique of making the dug-outs.

It is seen that the taming of the South Andaman Jarawas has been a moot problem in view of their occasional raids on the forest camps and offices. On this score the North Sentinel Jarawas appear to have an important function.

Physically they belong to the Negrito Race, as can be seen from the few natives captured from time to time by the governent. The punitive expedition from 1863 to 1915 have also brought to light some facts of their material culture.

Material Culture of Jarawas
In March 1911 (Lowis 1912) near Pap-lunta-Jig, a big communal hut was found which had been erected on the ridge of a hill. This hut was measured $45' \times 30' \times 15'$. It was
raised high above the ground and was supported by stout piles.

The structure was different from the Onges communal huts in that the floor was raised. Also natural nodes were found next to the fire-place. They are used for carrying water. A dark coloured modern glass bottle, probably acquired during raid was also found. One fire-place had a small compartment enclosed by a few wooden posts. Beneath a tree a circular mat, sewn out of three pieces of long palm like leaves was spread out. On its branches was found a beautiful specimen of an unstrung bow. The bow was a straight piece of wood tapering at both ends. The iron blade of the arrowhead is 17 cm. long and 4.9 cm. broad at the base. It is mounted on a wooden shaft 86.7 cm. long.

It is believed that the primary cause of the restlessness of the Jarawas is the shortage of game and other food material.

Habits

The Jarawas are not interested in smoking. They prefer to eat Yams, fish, pig’s flesh and not the deer’s flesh. They are fond of coconuts, bananas and pendanus when it was given to them. They drink water but did not care for milk or tea. They do not like sugar or anything like sweet or salt. They like fresh honey. Andamanese are not able to understand a word of the Jarawas language nor can Jarawa understand the language of Andamanese. They are capable or evincing pronounced emotions of any kind either of grief or astonishment of pleasure. From the study of index of various measurement, Jarawa of Andaman island are akin to Andamanese on one hand and to the Semang of East Sumatra on the other.

The Onges

The Onges having experienced the impact of the foreigners at the latest period are at present the most wide spread of all the aborigines of the Andamans. The attempts for bringing them under closer ties have proved successful, though the essential traits of their social, cultural and material life remain unaltered.

The contact of the Onges with the outsiders can only be-
traced since the efforts of M.V. Portman to establish a friendly relation with these tribes from 1886 onwards. In the initial stage of the attempt for establishing a friendly relation by Portman, the Onges proved themselves hostile. Later on the friendly treatment and the presents that these Onges had received from Portman, paved the path of establishing friendly relations with the Onges much easier.

Habitation

Living exclusively in the Little Andaman and a few of them in the Rutland island, the Onges, live in groups on a Septal basis with clear cut boundaries of hunting group for each group.

There is no permanent habitation or village of the Onges in any part of the Little Andaman. Their huts are of two types—(1) the permanent type of communal hut called *bera* (2) the temporary type of shelter called *Korade*.

Community Life

The abundance of food and water has made the life of the Onges completely easy-going. All the groups are headed by a leader and each group is assigned a fixed territory.

The community life seems to be extremely democratic in character which entertains and also maintains a perfect individual freedom. It is very amusing for them to think that a man gives order to others. This means they have no real chiefs. A so-called Onges chief or raja, is only the head of a group of families living in the same communal hut and giving not orders but only advice. In other words no real chief exists in the Little Andaman.

Till recently they were a hunting and food gathering tribe. Now they live in quarters built for them by the Administration in Little Andaman Island. They still remain to be good hunters and fishermen. They work in their plantations raised in their habitat by the government. The Onges are looked after by autonomous body—Andaman Adim Jan Jati Vikas Samity—set up by the administration. Special care is taken in the health and multiplication of this tribe.
Food Habits

The hunting and collecting are the basis of their economy. The domestication of plants were not known to them. But now they have learnt agriculture and domestication of dogs. They keep dogs for chasing the pigs, their main prey. Apart from small agriculture, the natural products of the sea and the forest provide them with all their items of diet. Animal and vegetable products and honey are the main items of their diet. So far no introduction of salt in their diet reported.

The most important item of their diet is pig and turtle. The cooking of the fish, meat, roots, tubers, jackfruits are done by putting them under fire. Preservation of foodstuffs is not widely practised except the jackfruit seeds which are tied up in a small net inside water on the banks of some stream and taking out during rainy season.

It is believed that the Onges are the happiest people of the world, who in spite of their primitive economy are not the miserable victims of poor health and oddities of life.

Craftsmanship

Some artistry and craftsmanship have developed among these people. A canoe can be constructed by a man all by himself from the felling of the tree. Buckets and baskets are also constructed by them. The small baskets are known as *toboaga* and bigger one as *tob-laya*. They also use dahs, chisels and iron files. The other important piece of their craftsmanship are the beautiful weavings of fibre, tussel of yellow fibre used by women.

Customs

All the Onges, men and women, shave their heads with flakes of glass. The body of the Onges are also painted with white clay which save their skin from insect bite while red paint serves medicinal purposes if some individual is having fever. In times of mourning red ochre paint is a taboo.

Early marriage is the custom. The widows are looked down upon by the society. In the married life, the husband is devoted to his wife and both the husband and wife work for collecting their food.
Dances and songs are in vogue and there are practically songs for every occasion and activity. Most of the songs are more or less plaintive rather than joyous.

Types of Onges

There are three macro—divisions of the Onges of the Little Andaman—

(a) Giremaka—Gobeule—inhabiting the north eastern coast of the Island.
(b) Engakwale—live in the interior of the island.
(c) Girearagobedu—live in the southern and western coast of the island.

With all limitations the Onges have been considered as one of the happiest people of the world. They have plenty of food and water to eat and drink with very few social cankers to fight with. But as is common to all other aborigines, their number is decreasing gradually.

Onges Culture

The little Andaman island is situated 66 nautical miles south of Port Blair. It is about 26 miles long and 16 miles at its maximum breadth enclosing an area of 280 sq miles approximately. The island is almost flat and covered with dense semi-tropical forest.

The mainstay of onges economy centre around hunting, fishing and collection. Pigs and turtles are the chief animals hunted. A large variety of tubers, wild jack-fruit and honey is collected from the forest. These are their staple diet. From the nearby sea and creeks, apart from fish, a few varieties of edible shells crabs are also procured. The entire food requirement of the Onges is met from the forest and sea. Their economy thrives completely on natural environment.

The Onges family consists of a man, his wife and the children born of the union. The average family size is three or four members. But majority are childless.

After marriage the wife leaves her parental hut and goes to live along with her husband in his communal hut. Children
live with their parents, but adolescent boys dislike to stay with their parents and may stay separately.

There is a division of labour in hunting and collecting activities between the sexes. Man does the hunting and woman collecting of roots, tubers, eggs and shells. Fishing with small nets is usually done by women. Men collect the honey. The family operates essentially as its own food procuring unit but when a pig or turtle is hunted or honey is collected the article is shared by other families in the communal hut.

Each family is primarily identified with a communal hut which may contain a large number of sleeping platforms.

Change

But now considerable changes have taken place in primeval character of the island. The good part of the island has been cleared to settle Nicobarese and refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. There is such Nicobarese village of 124 families 4 km away from Hut Bay.

It is commonly said that the settlement of 'outsiders' in the island has adversely affected the ecological balance of the Onge techno-economic life.

There was no sign of painting on the face and body as used to be seen previously. Now-a-days Onges are encouraged to bring coconut, resin, honey etc. for sale to the co-operative store. Even one could not find baskets or wooden buckets, bow and arrow in their camps.

Due to inactivity and listlessness in Onges, the tribe has been showing a rapid decline in their number since 1901. In the case of Onges it is observed that the decline in the population roughly coincides with the increase in their isolation from other Andamanese tribes. The prolonged isolation had led to close in-breeding and consequent change in the gene pool to the disadvantage of the population.

Dietary Habits

The dietary habits of the Onges have also undergone profound changes. With the restriction of the forest area and possibly due to the depletion of animal protein available from the forest they now depend to a large extent on rice, flour, tea,
sugar etc. supplied by the administration. Coconuts hitherto unknown, have become an important item in their diet. Sometimes they do go for hunting of pigs and turtles but they are not easily available now-a-days because of the poaching by the settlers and also the inability of the emaciated dogs to catch the pigs. The number of dug-out canoes of the Onges seems to have gone down with the population.

It is commonly said that the settlement of outsiders in the island has adversely affected the ecological balance of the Onges' techno-economic life.

The Great Andamanese—Dying

Originally the great Andamanese constituted of 10 tribes distributed in various parts of north, middle and south Andaman. The earliest estimate of their population was around 5000 in 1858. In 1901 they were 625 and in 1971 only 23 and now they are only 19 people. The rapid decline in the population was mainly due to culture contacts and clashes of varied types. At present these families are exclusively looked after by Andaman administration at Strait island.

Economic Life of the Onges

The Onges are one of the most primitive tribes of India. They belong to the Negroid racial stock and are now exclusively confined to the island of Little Andaman. They are diminishing very fast in number. They live in a remote corner of the country in small pockets along the sea shore and completely cut off from the main stream of civilization. Their total number has been reduced to 112 only in the census of 1971. They are semi-nomadic tribe and solely dependent on the food provided by the nature. As a consequence they move from one place to another within the island. Thus a visitor in the Little Andaman may find Ongie hut (Bera) all over the island yet the density of the population is more on the littoral side than in the forest. On the coast there is a greater possibility of catching fish from the sea and from the jungle.

Setting

The Little Andaman (10°30' —10°35'N and 90°20'—92°35'E)
is situated about 60 nautical miles south of Port Blair, capital and headquarters of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. It covers an area of about 731.4 sq. kms. The maximum length and breadth of the island being roughly 43.2 kms. and 24.0 kms. respectively.

It takes about four to five hours to reach Little Andaman from Port Blair by a police boat. Apart from this two small cargo-cum-passerenger ships "Yerwa" and "Onge" also touch the Little Andaman on their way from Port Blair to Campbell Bay in the Great Nicobar.

Being situated nearer to the Equator, the climate of the island is of tropical type. The maximum temperature varies between 30°C-33°C. The high temperature coupled with high relative humidity gives rise to high sensitive temperature. The weather is always warm and sultry but is tempered to some extent by pleasant sea-breeze.

The Andaman archipelago as a whole experience fairly good rainfall from both the south-west and north west monsoon. The average rainfall in the island is about 150 inches.

The high annual rainfall helps the growth of thick vegetal cover. The density of the vegetation in some places is so high that it is very difficult to penetrate the forest without cutting the boughs and climbers. Along the coast of the Little Andaman are seen rows of beautiful casuarinae (whistling pine) north of Dugong Creek. In some areas swamps may be found and these are covered with mangroves. A good many springs and streams can be seen in the thick jungles.

Economy

The Onges are basically collectors of food and not cultivators. Even today they are primarily dependent upon the forest produce. Onges do not stay at a particular place for a long time. In the thick forests of the Little Andaman they are constantly on the move with their equipments as soon as they exhaust the natural products of a particular place. They may rightly be described as nomadic people. The Little Andaman forest is full of wild pigs which form an important item of food of the Onges. The sea shore also provide a good stock of
edible fish, crabs, bivalve shells, turtles etc. Men and women actively take part in day to day economic life.

There is a clear cut division of labour among men and women in hunting and collecting. The hard labour i.e. pig and turtle hunting and collecting honey are done by men only. On the other hand, the women collect wild roots and tubers and do fishing in the shallow streams and creeks.

The Onges’ economic activity can be divided into three parts:

(a) Hunting
(b) Fishing
(c) Collecting

Hunting

A pig hunting party usually consists of more than one person but sometimes most skilled hunters also go singularly for hunting.

In pig hunting they take with them a number of dogs who help the hunters in tracking the animals.

Before hunting operation, mostly the dogs are left hungry. They are very keen in finding out every pig in the deep forest and when one is available all the dogs surround the animal from different directions. In dry seasons when food is scarce and pigs are less aggressive they can be caught by one dog. The hunter kills the pig either with arrow (Tena) or with a spear (Loa).

Turtle hunting is also an adventure. They go out for turtle hunting in the late evening with big torches in their hand. These torches are prepared out of palm leaves tightly bound with fibres. A mixture of resin and embers are put inside it which when lighted burns with a very bright flame.

The turtles are shot with the harpoon from the canoe. Once struck by the harpoon the turtles trapped by the cord tied to the head of the harpoon while the shaft detached by the blow floats on the water till it is picked up. Large number of turtle eggs are also collected from the sandy beach.
Fishing

It is practiced both by men and women. Long ago only bow and arrow were used for this purpose but since last few decades fishing nets and fishing line and hook are used very frequently. Deep sea fishing practised by men only. Women always prefer to catch fish in creeks and streams with the help of small net, locally known as Chiko. These are knitted by the Onges themselves out of bark fibres and are fitted with circular frame made of twigs. But with the introduction of nylon, fishing line and hook have become very much popular. They procure these things from the co-operative society in Hut Bay.

Among the creatures, the Onges hunt on the shores are cray fish which are available in plenty in the streams. Besides fish the women catch molluscs, crabs and bivalve shells.

The crabs found in the Little Andaman are very heavy and sometimes they weigh more than one kilogram. Lobsters are also available in plenty.

Collecting

Besides hunting and fishing the Onges collect a number of wild roots and fruits. Nigam (1963) has given a list of these edible roots which are as follows:

(a) Edible roots and tubers: Cendalu, Toredalu and Gigi.

(b) Edible fruits: Naregaro, Tajanya, Totketa, Marale, Buludanghe, Gine, Dungjeco, Balioto, jungene, Tajapto and Tekwakaco.

(c) Edible Stem or branch: Titekala and Tamboala.

The collection of these forest produce is the main job of the women folk while male are chiefly engaged in hunting and fishing in the deep sea.

The Onges also consume a large quantity of honey which is found abundantly in the forest of Little Andaman. Cripriani (1966) has noted two varieties of bees which are found in the Little Andaman, the larger yellow Apis dorsata and the smaller brown Apis nigrocinta. Its honey is the best, clear and golden though less plentiful and containing a great deal of wax.
Movement of the Onges

So far as the movement of the local groups of Onges from one region to another and their right of hunting in a particular region is significant but to some extent contradictory observations have been made by Chatterjee (1953) and Bose (1961). According to Chatterjee "if a member of a particular region or group crosses the boundary and enters the jurisdiction of other then a feud would invariably arise, which may ultimately culminate into a great fight between the two groups."

Bose holds a completely different view. He is of the opinion that the Onges generally roam in a jungle within a limited region in search of food but there is no territorial division as such of each region. When they feel that the region is unable to supply food they abandon that place temporarily and shift to some other region.

However there is no such binding that a member of one local group must restrict its economic pursuits within the adjoining locality, contrary to it, every Onge is free to hunt in any part of Little Andaman. It is quite likely that the member of a particular local group may not like if Onge of other region encroaches their territory.

In the Little Andaman, the nature is full with sufficient amount of food articles for the Onges and they never have to face a scarcity. Onges do not have any idea and necessity of storing of food articles. It is done only when they migrate from place to place for short time.

Whatever they collect, consume within a day or two and go for hunting and collecting. Until recently they did not have any idea of any kind of exchange or barter. Consequently their economic system was marked by the absence of any medium of exchange.

Changes

Few years ago for the support of the Onges the administra-
tion has established a coconut plantation at Dugong Creek. The Onges collect coconut from this place and with the help of their dug-out canoe come to the government co-operative society for exchanging of coconut for sugar, rice, flour, tea, etc.
Also a welfare scheme was started in 1961-62 for the Onges under which horticultural gardens were raised in the island at four different places, namely, South Bay, Dugong Creek, Western Coast and Badibalu (eastern coast) where seeds of various fruits and vegetables such as tapioca, sweet potato, banana and papaya were planted. The Onges were taught the method of growing such fruits so that they could cultivate them for their own consumption. Apart from this, in November 1971, a garden has been started just beside the coconut plantation at Dugong Creek where Onges are taught to cultivate vegetables like brinjal, lady’s finger, gourd and papaya.

The wind of change are being significantly started changing the economic life of the Onges. To protect such a colourful primitive tribe of our country, serious efforts should be made by the ecologist. Otherwise they will soon become extinct from this land.

The Sentinelese

The Sentinelese are the least known of all the aborigines of the Andaman. They live in the north Sentinel island and Portmen had only made a few observations in the abandoned settlement of these aborigines. The affinity of the Sentinelese with the Onges have been detected but the language of the Sentinelese is different from the Onges. Sentinelese are different from the Onges. Sentinelese are the only tribes with whom friendly contacts are yet to be established. The Sentinelese continue to follow the hunting and food gathering way of life and resist all endeavours on the part of civilization in influencing them.
CHAPTER IV

LIFE STYLE—ANDHRA PRADESH
THE CHENCHUS

CHENCHUS IS a Scheduled Tribe of Andhra Pradesh. They are mostly found in the districts of Kurnool, Mahbubnagar and Guntur of Andhra Pradesh. There are different and varied explanations about the origin and derivation of the name Chenchu. Manusmrithi (Chapter X, 48) makes a mention of a tribe Chunchus and treats the same on a par with Andhras; presumably they are the same as the Chenchus of today. An ecological meaning is sought to be attributed to the word ‘Chenchu’ by interpreting that a person who lives under a chettu (tree) is a Chenchu (Aiyappan 1948, p. 148). The Chenchus of Amarabad and Mannanur are aware of this derivation. An old Chenchu of Mannanur narrates a legend how the name was derived. This legend is connected with the Lord Mallikarjuna of Srisailam temple. Once there lived a man and his wife in a small hut in the forest near about Srisailam temple. They were living happily and peacefully without any problem except for the sorrow that they had no children. They worshipped all deities and made sacrifices in the hope of begetting children but in vain. One day both husband and wife went for hunting in the forest. While returning they met Lord Mallikarjuna in the forest and prayed for his blessings to beget children. Lord Mallikarjuna granted their wish on the condition that
they should dedicate their child to him. After nine months the women gave birth to a female child and both husband and wife felt very happy and dedicated the child to Lord Mallikarjuna as desired by him. When the girl attained the age of three she left her parents and started living in the forest all alone, under a tree, eating wild fruits and leaves. Because she was living under a chettu (tree) she was called Chenchita. One day while she was roaming in the forest she came across Lord Mallikarjuna and fell in love with him. Lord Mallikarjuna was also very much attracted by her and married her with the permission of his queen. The descendants of this girl are called Chenchus meaning the children of a girl who lived under a chettu (tree). But this story is not current among the Chenchus of Kurnool and Guntur districts. According to another version, these people were in the habit of eating a kind of rat which is locally known as Chunchu and the same term was applied to designate the people. Aiyappan gives another explanation to the origin of the term:

"The name 'Chen Chu' may be derived from Chunchu meaning forelocks... The name may also be a corruption of 'Chunchu' which is a suffix meaning 'renowned' or 'celebrated' or skilled in as in 'Akshara Chen Chu' or 'Chara Chen Chu'... From the strategic place their home lands occupy, the Chenchus may well have been Charas of the old kings of the south whose one pre-occupation was the protection of Krishna and Tungabhada frontiers". (1948, p. 148).

But the Chenchus of no region are aware of the above derivation and they neither remember nor recollect having heard from their forefathers that they ever served under the old kings of the South.

There is an interesting story, which is known among the Chenchus of Kurnool District, about the reason for the dark complexion of Chenchus. According to this story Lord Narasimha (Man-lion God) married a beautiful damsel 'Chenchulakshmi' of this tribe. After some years she was let down by her Lord because of the adamant stand taken by his senior queen 'Adi-Lakshmi' to desert 'Chenchulakshim'. Then having
been thrown away from her Lord, the heart broken ‘Chenchu Lakshmi’ smeared the faces of Chenchu women with the juice of *bilva* (*Aegle marmelos*) leaves and cursed that all the Chenchu women would be dark and ugly in future.

The Chenchus of all the three areas, *i.e.*, Mahbubnagar, Kurnool and Guntur claim that the female deity Bhramaramba of Srisailam also hails from their tribe and Lord Mallikarjuna fell in love with her. It is said, the cattle belonging to a King called Chandragupta of Srisailam area were looked after by Chenchu herdsmen. There was a black milch cow among the cattle, which used to disappear into the forest often and never gave milk at home. After much observation, the Chenchus found out that their cow was milked by a young man in the forest, who was later identified as Mallikarjuna. The people tried to catch him but he entered into a cave and never returned. When the efforts of Chenchu males failed, the Chenchu damsels came forward to catch that young man. In their pursuit, one beautiful and enchanting damsel succeeded. The young man immediately fell in love with her and married her as second wife, the first wife being Goddess Parvati. Later when the site emerged as a holy shrine, the Chenchus were employed as helpers to the Brahmin priests engaged in conducting religious ceremonies at Srisailam temple. Even today, four Chenchu helpers are employed at the shrine. Besides this, particularly the Chenchus of Kurnool district acquired the right to collect a fee of one anna called *metta* from each pilgrim who passed through their abodes in return to the safety assured and guidance given to the pilgrims by the Chenchus in the Nallamallai forest.

Not related to the deities and shrines, is another folk tale-current among the Chenchus of Byrlutigudam. This was narrated by Arthi Guravudu, aged about 75 years and his wife Arthi Palankamma, aged about 50 years. Long ago, there was a family belonging to the Sugali (Lambadi) tribe and they did not have any children. They prayed and made vows of gods and goddesses. They had a female dog which also did not bear any pup. One day a saint visited them. The family approached him with reverence and respect and requested him to bless them to have children. Pleased with their piety and
hospitality, the sage gave them two morsels of food to be taken by the wife and four morsels of food to be given to their dog. Having boundless craving for children, the wife ate the four morsels meant for the dog and the dog was instead given two morsels meant for the woman. After some months, the dog gave birth to two little beautiful girls and the woman gave birth to a puppy. The couple were surprised and distressed by this turn of events. They could not reconcile themselves with this unexpected turn of events and they turned out the dog with its pretty kids and they themselves left the place once and for all. The dog found out a nice shelter for the kids in the forest. She perpetually supplied everything needed by the kids, either by stealing from the neighbours or by scaring away the traders and grocers. As time passed and years rolled on, the two kids grew into womanhood. They were very beautiful and attractive. One day, the twin sisters were watching the water course near their home. A man who had come for hunting saw these two twin sisters suddenly caught hold of the elder one and took her away with him. The younger one ran away into the forest with fear. Afterwards the younger sister went in search of her elder sister and at last reached her sister by following the beads, flowers and personal things thrown by her sister along the route. She found out that her elder sister was living with a man and she accepted to live with her sister. After some days she was married to a man living nearby. The mother dog, having returned to her place, did not find her daughters. Getting concerned about their welfare, she went in search of them. At last, after hazardous travels, she reached her eldest daughter's house. The eldest daughter received her mother with much love and affection and treated her as best as she could. After a few days the dog started for her younger daughter's house. The younger daughter could not recognise her mother and drove her away. But, the dog persisted and began forcibly to go near her. The daughter became wild and angry and beat her so severely that dog succumbed to the injuries. The elder daughter after waiting for some time for the return of the mother dog, started in search of her mother and to her great shock, found her lying dead. With great sorrow she brought the dead body of the
dog and tied it up to the roof in her house in the upper storey. When the younger sister came to know her mistake, she begged her elder sister with deep sorrow to pardon her. When both the sisters went up to see her mother, surprisingly they found that the body of the dog had turned into gold. The sisters were delighted but felt sorry for the loss of their mother, who always guarded them with affection and even in her last breath bequeathed wealth in the form of gold for happy life of her children, even though one of her daughters ill-treated her and caused her death. The Chenchus claim that they are the descendants of such a worthy dog. Even now the Chenchus give much importance to their dogs. The dog is free to live with them as one of the members of the family and they even share their food with it. The dog faithfully accompanies its master in the hunting expeditions and other journeys.

But this story is current among the Chenchus of Byrlutigudem only and not in other areas. Even at Byrlutigudem very few people know this story. It seems this story is a rationalisation in response to culture contact and reflects the aspirations and motivations of the people concerned. The narrator of the story is an old and experienced Chenchu who had maintained contacts with the neighbouring plains people from his earliest days. Byrlutigudem is a road side village at a distance of eleven miles from Atmakur, the taluk headquarters. The Chenchus of Byrlutu regularly come in contact with the plains people of neighbouring villages in connection with their economic pursuits. Many of the Chenchus of Byrlutu regularly visit Atmakur either for marketing or purchase of some condiments, or to see pictures in the local theatre. These provide the setting for culture contact.

Physical Environment

Chenchus are spread throughout Andhra Pradesh but are found in greater numbers in the districts of Kurnool, Mahbubnagar and Guntur. Their main concentration is in the Nallamallai forest. It forms one continuous block of mountainous nature with rugged and fairly steep hills with an average elevation of 2,000 feet, running in the south and south-westerly directions. Nallamallai forests are located mostly in Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. This strip also extends to
parts of Kollapur and Achampet taluks of Mahbubnagar district, Devarakonda and Miryalguda taluks in Nalgonda district, and Palnad and Vinukonda taluks of Guntur district. Almost parallel to the Kurnool-Cuddapah forest belt, another strip of forest belt occurs engulfing parts of Giddalur taluk in Kurnool district, Badvel and Siddhout taluks in Cuddapah and parts of Podili, Kanigiri and Udayagiri taluks of Nellore district. Chenchu settlements are found in almost all the above places wherever the Nallamallai forest belt occurs. But the majority of them are found in Amarabad plateau of Achampet Taluk, Atmakur Sub-taluk in Kurnool district and Palnad taluk of Guntur district. The Nallamalais of Kurnool and Mahbubnagar are densely forested with steep valleys and high hillocks, whereas the forest in Palnad becomes thin with small hillocks. The Krishna river at Srisailam divides the forests of Mahbubnagar from those of Kurnool.

The climate of these forests is generally dry. March to May are the hottest months. With the break of the south-west monsoon early in June the temperature drops and thereafter the climate is somewhat mild and pleasant. The cold weather sets in towards the middle of November. The first three months of the year are usually fine with practically no rain.

This region is subject to the influence of the south-west monsoon. The period between July and September is the heaviest rainy season in the year. However, considering the altitude and the general condition of the forest it is quite likely that the rainfall may be more than 40 inches in certain areas like the Amarabad plateau.

The forest is of the deciduous type with many species. At the foot-hills of the Nallamalais the rainfall is comparatively scarce and growth is very poor. To a height of about 1,400 feet the forest is of an inferior deciduous type. The culture of Chenchus can only be understood when viewed against the background of the forest and its species. Among the trees yielding minor forest produce, tamarind is the most important.

The forest is inhabited by wild animals and birds. There
are considerable number of bears, tigers, panthers, wild cats and wild dogs besides sambar, spotted deer, wild goat, nilgai, four horned antelope and wild pig, which are hunted by the Chenchus now and then. Peacock and jungle fowls, parrots, doves, pigeons, wood peckers are commonly found.

The soils of the region consist of black cotton, red and brown sandy loam types.

**Clan and Kinship**

According to the Chenchus of Mahbubnagar, Kurnool and Guntur districts, the tribe can be broadly divided into four groups. They are (1) Koya Chenchus inhabiting the regions of Bhadrachalam in Khammam district, (2) Konda Chenchus found in the Nallamallai forest of Kurnool and Mahbubnagar districts, (3) Chenchu Dasaris of Kurnool district and (4) Ura Chenchus who are found in towns and well settled villages.

Formerly the Ura Chenchus were known as Konda Chenchus. Since they have left their original abodes, i.e., kondalu (hills) and are now residing in urulu (villages) they are called as Ura Chenchus. Marriage relations and social intercourse exist between the Ura Chenchus of Guntur and Konda Chenchus of Kurnool. There are many cases where persons from Ura Chenchus of Palnad married among Konda Chenchus of Markapuram taluk of Kurnool district. The clan system, names of the clans, social and religious customs are one and the same among both the groups of Chenchus. “Konda” and “Uru” show only a difference in the place of residence but not any other distinction. Even in Mahbubnagar district the Chenchus living near to the plains are called Ura Chenchus though actually there is no difference between Konda and Ura Chenchus.

The term “Koya Chenchu” refers to Konyas of Bhadrachalam. Neither inter-marriage nor inter-dining is practised, between Konda Chenchus and Koyas. Konda Chenchus claim that they are superior to Koya Chenchus of Bhadrachalam, but they are unable to give any reason why Koya Chenchus are considered inferior to them.

There is some confusion among the Chenchus themselves, regarding the position and identity of Chenchu Dasaris.
While the Chenchus of Kurnool and Guntur district claim that Chenchus Dasari is a separate sub-division among the Chenchus whose profession is begging and who have neither commensal nor connubial relations with other Chenchus. The Chenchus of Mannaour and Amrabad of Achampet taluks of Mahbubnagar District feel that Chenchu Dasari is not a separate sub-division of the Chenchus. According to them, the Dasaris constitute a functional group who are traditionally given to priestly avocation and mendicancy like the similar groups among the Malas, Madigas etc. and that socially and ritually they are not differentiated from the other Chenchus.

The Chenchus marry among themselves only. But they are divided into a large number of exogamous clans which are analogous to the gotra divisions of their other Hindu neighbours. In fact now they use the term "gotra" for these exogamous clans. Altogether 26 gotras are found in the three districts of Khammam, Mahbubnagar and Kurnool. They are: (1) Marrepalle; (2) Mandal; (3) Thokala; (4) Nimma-la; (5) Chigurla; (6) Nallapothula; (7) Eravala; (8) Pulicherla; (9) Udutaluri; (10) Dasari; (11) Mayillu; (12) Kotraju; (13) Balmuri; (14) Kannimunne; (15) Bhumani; (16) Kudumula; (17) Garaboyana; (18) Gulla; (19) Topi; (20) Arthi; (21) Bojja; (22) Mamidi; (23) Gaddmollu; (24) Pittollu; (26) Jolla; (26) Chavadi. All the above gotras do not exist among the Chenchus of each of the three districts. The following table gives the names of gotras as found in each district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the district</th>
<th>Gotras found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kurnool</td>
<td>Arthi, Balmuri, Bhumani, Chigurla, Dasari, Garaboyana, Gulla, Kudumula, Mandal, Pulicherla, Tepi, Udutaluri Table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Guntur</td>
<td>Udutala, Kudumula, Mandal,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jollollu, Nallapothula Gaddamu, Pittollu, Bojjollu, Chigurla, Pulcherla, Dasari, Chavadi.

There is some confusion regarding the existence of large exogamous divisions or Phratries among the Chenchus. Haimendorf feels that all the clans among Chenchus are grouped under four larger exogamous divisions, but he did not give the names of these divisions (1948). The Chenchus are not aware of any such division among them; but they have a notion that some clans are closer to one another with which marriage is prohibited.

All the clans are not found all over the district. Generally three or four clans are found in a tract though individual households of other clans may live in their midst.

Some clan names of the Chenchus relate to plants, animals etc., but they neither venerate nor propitiate the objects indicated by the names. Some of the names of the gotras and the etymological meanings of the same are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Gotras</th>
<th>Object associated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthi</td>
<td>Plantain tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimmala</td>
<td>Lime tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudumula</td>
<td>Kudumu (a kind of sweet preparation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udutala</td>
<td>Squirrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokala</td>
<td>Tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nallapothula</td>
<td>Black goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bojjja</td>
<td>Stomach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a few stories current among the Chenchus regarding the origin of the gotras.

Once the Gods and Goddesses in heaven arranged a feast and invited all the Chenchus to partake of it. They accepted the invitation and went there on a day fixed for occasion. They expected to be served with non-vegetarian food, but were disappointed to find that only vegetarian items were served to them. They, however, concealed their feeling and started
taking their food. While eating they found a uduta (squirrel) running hither and thither amidst them. Suddenly, an elderly Chenchu sprang on his feet, caught hold of the squirrel, killed and ate it raw. From then onwards the Gods and Goddesses called him uduta (squirrel) and his descendants are called Udutala.

The villagers told a story of how the name of the gotra pull cherla came into existence. "Long ago there were seven brothers and a sister. This family had a reputation for doing magical feats by spells and sprinklings. This created wonder and curiosity among the people around. The magic feats were such wonderful acts as converting themselves into tigers, or taking any shape they liked and so on. The seven brothers got their sister married. The brother-in-law who had also heard of such magical feats done by his wife's brothers became curious and asked her one day whether she also knew the art of magic. He became still more curious on being replied in the affirmative and asked her to demonstrate. She agreed to this and handing over the child to her husband gave some instructions to him as to the things he should do. She gave him some ash saying that when he feels satisfied of the form she takes, before any untoward thing happens the ash should be sprinkled on her and he must protect himself and the child from any danger that may occur. He said he would do his best. Accordingly, she announced that she would turn herself into a tigress and he should take precautionary measures. By her magical feat she converted herself into a tigress and began roaming about ferociously. He watched for a while with interest, but when the tigress began her onslaughts on him and the child, he frantically climbed a nearby tree keeping the child in a sling hanging down on his back. For a while he was stunned at the scene and became panic stricken. He began searching for the ash to sprinkle on the tigress. In his frightened mood, the child slipped away from his sling in the back and fell down. The tigress devoured the child. With this he lost his balance of mind and did not know what to do. The tigress ate the child and moved about growling ferociously and after a long time went away into the jungle. Then he came down
the tree with great fear and grief and reported what all had happened to his brothers-in-law. All of them went in search of the tigress. Having found her in the deep forest they sprinkled the ash to convert her into a human being. But alas; the upper half of the body showed a human form and and the lower half of the form of the tigress. They realised that because the tigress had already eaten a human being the efficiency of their magical spell and sprinkle did not have the complete effect and they failed to rescue their sister. Finding no other way she got converted herself into a full fledged tigress, and went out into the forest for food. This tragic incident connected with the magical feat converting human beings into tigers by a family gave the name of Pulicherla (tiger makers) to that family. From that time onwards it is believed that the gotra name Pulicherla came into vogue."

At Veldurti an elderly Cherenu explained how the name of the gotra "Kudumula" was derived. A Cherenu woman gave birth to a male child while preparing kudumulu (a sweet preparation). That child was named as Kunumula and his descendants formed into a separate gotra by that name.

People belonging to Tokala (literally means tail in Telugu) gotra at Mannanur claim that their gotra is named after a man who was fond of the tail of every animal killed in the game.

Haimendorf gives an interesting story regarding the origin of Eravalu gotra.

"A long time ago there was a man of Nimal clan, who although looked everywhere could not find a wife and so at last married his own sister. This incestuous marriage made all his relatives very angry and when a son was born they refused to recognise him as a clan member or to accept him into the Nimal clan, but gave him the name Eravalu after the edible tuber eravalu gadda. This happened in Pulijelma and even now the Eravalu people who are his descendants are only to be found in Pulijelma and the neighbouring villages, while distant villages disclaim even knowledge of such a clan. It said that in the old times all people of Eravalu clan died as soon as their hair turned
grey, as punishment for the incestuous act of their ancestors but now they live as long as other Chenchus. Nimal and Evalu do not inter-marry for they are related clans and should they do so either husband or wife would meet with an early death."

Even now the Chenchus belonging to Nimmala gotra say that the Eravaru gotra is a sub-gotra of Nimmala though they do not clearly remember the legend connected with it. At present the people belonging to Eravaru are not only found in Pulicherla and around but also they are dispersed hither and thither sporadically throughout the Amrabad plateau.

**Family :** Among the Chenchus family is the most important social unit and it influences the individual in every phase of life and is more powerful than the clan or gotra. The nuclear family with husband, wife and their unmarried children is predominant among them. After marriage the couple begin to stay in a separate house built by themselves. They are neolocal but patrilegal. Sometimes the husband may migrate to his wife's village; even there, they invariably stay in a separate house. Extended families, particularly collaterally type where married brothers along with their wives and children live together pooling their resources, are almost absent among the Chenchus.

A woman acquires her husband's gotra after marriage. Property, inheritance and reckoning of descent are also along the male line.

Kinship system among the Chenchus is classificatory and bilateral. The kins of both mother's and father's side have important social and ritual roles to play particularly during the social ceremonies like child birth, marriage and death. Sometimes, affinal kins like sister's husband, have also some part to play during the social and economic ceremonies activity.

**Inheritance :** Among the Chenchus there is some difference between what they say and what they actually do regarding bequeathing their property to their heirs. For instance they say that the property would be inherited by the eldest son; but in fact it is enjoyed by all the male children of the deceased, though the eldest son has the largest share. If a woman
dies the ornaments originally received from her parents are
distributed among the daughters. If there are no daughters,
sons take the ornaments. In case of cattle, the eldest son
gets an additional share. The daughters may get one or two
goats or sheep each, depending on the generosity of their
brothers. If a man or woman dies childless, the property is
handed over to the nearest blood relations in the father’s line.
It, however, goes to the people in the mothers’ line if the
deceased had been residing with his mother’s kins.

Dwelling, Food and Dress

A few decades ago Chenuchs used to migrate from one
place to another in the forest according to the changing
seasons. At present this habit is restricted only to the
Chenchus living in the interior. The place of migration always
depends on the availability of water and plenty of edible
tubers and minor forest produce. At present many of the
Chenchus settlements are situated at the edges of the forests,
in certain places, as in Palnad taluk, many Chenchs families
are living in the plains. The Chenhu of Veldurty, a village
in the plains in Palnad taluk, explain that their forefathers
migrated to this village from the forests because of the dearth
of forest produce and games and also because of restrictions
imposed by the forest department on the utilisation of the
forest products. After settling down in the plains they took to
agricultural labour and other manual works for their livelihood.

Three factors, viz., availability of perennial source of water
fruit bearing trees particularly mahua trees and edible roots
and tubers influence the selection of sites for settlement by
the Chenchs of the interior.

Dwellings: Chenuchs traditionally live in conical and
oblong huts. The hut is small and compact. It is erected
by the owners with the assistance of their kith and kin. The
required materials for raising the huts are secured freely from
the forests. They do not observe any formality regarding
the selection of a site for construction of the house. After
selecting the site, they mark off a fairly elevated circular area
about 10 to 12 feet in diameter and then erect on the same a
central pole. Along the periphery of the circular area of the hut they fix short posts of about four feet in height. These side posts are then connected with the central pole by bamboo pieces.

Some huts, particularly the oblong ones are so constructed that there is no wall except a bamboo mat hung as a side screen. The thatched roof touches the ground. In a conical hut invariably a wattle wall is made with thin bamboo splints. This wall is secured to the vertical posts erected on the circumference of the site. While erecting the wall, an opening is left for the door. The door consists of another piece of bamboo wattle more closely woven than the wall itself. The door is merely secured to the opening by means of a string or a strip of cloth. The roof is made up by covering the bamboos with layers of forest thatch which they themselves collect from the forest.

The only difference between the houses of Chenchus living in forests and of those living in villages is that the walls are constructed with stones in case of the latter.

The Chenchus settlement provides a pleasant sight to the visitor with conical huts dispersed hither and thither in a large area. Sometimes the distance between one hut and another is more than 50 yards. The grouping of huts is invariably based on kinship pattern. Close relatives like brothers and cousins build their huts very near to each other. The picturesque traditional conical huts of Chenchus are in some places replaced by the oblong ones.

No definite pattern is followed by the Chenchus in internal arrangements of their huts. The houses are almost empty, except for a few earthen utensils for cooking and such other materials. Some Chenchu houses are divided into two parts with a thatti. In one part sometimes their cattle are accommodated and some others use that part for liquor making. Some households build separate conical huts for accommodating cattle. Chenchus, generally, keep the inside of the hut clean and periodically sweep and smear the same with cowdung. The roof is always dark, covered with black soot emitting from the hearth. The hearth consists of three stones kept
together over a hollow made in the ground. This hearth is usually located in the northern corner of the house. Domestic utensils are arranged close to the hearth. A cot prepared with bamboos and a broom stick are the other common things which are generally found in the houses of the Chenchus.

Some formalities are observed by the Chenchus when they first enter a newly built hut for living. The central pole is marked with vermilion and a cocoanut is broken or a fowl is sacrificed to their family deity. Mondays and Thursdays are considered as auspicious for house warming ceremony. Sometimes relatives are invited for a dinner. People from other communities are invited very rarely.

**Dress**: It is true even today that some of the Chenchus dress very scantily. The men are nearly in a state of nudity, having only a piece of cloth round their loins. The women dress more decently than men, in the style of the wandering female basket-makers, and resemble in features more than the neighbours, the Telugu people of the plains.

E. Thurston has the following to say about their dress.

"Some Chenchus bear on the head a cap made of wax cloth, deer or hare skin. By the more fashionable the tufted ear or bushy tail-end of the large Indian squirrel (Sciurees Indicus) is attached by way of ornament to the string with which the hair of head is tied into a bunch behind. Leafy garments have been replaced by white loin-cloths and some of the women have adopted the ravike (bodice) in imitation of the female costume in the plains."

The dress of men particularly of the older generation, living at present, continues to be as scanty as it was in olden days. It consists of a mere strip of cloth called gochi batta passed in between the legs to cover the nudity and the ends of the cloth are secured by passing it over a waist thread. Several have, however, been putting on an upper cloth during the cold season. The younger generation is gradually changing their habits of dressing. They are taking to the wearing of shirts, which they get from the merchants of the plains. The
dress habits of women have not changed much since the beginning of this century. A short saree is wound round the body in an uncouth way without many folds and pleats. A simple bodice or ravike is worn to cover also during the cold season.

The Chenchus have started dressing their children like those of the children of the plains area. The school-going children are provided with a set of dress for boys (a set of knickers and bunian), and for girls parikhil (skirt) and jackets.

"Many men have broad leather belts in which to stick their knives and these generally have small pouches attached though separate leather pouches are sometimes worn slung over the shoulder on a leather thong. Both these articles the Chenchu buys when he has the means from the Madigas (cobbler) of the plains".

Even today the older generation in Amrabad plateau wear these broad leather belts, whereas these are not found among the Chenchus of Kurnool and Guntur districts.

Even though the Chenchus were having good contacts with the plains people for a considerable time their adaptability to the ways of the plains people has been very low and staggering. Regarding the use of dress there are two factors which are coming in their way. One is their traditional conservatism which is more perceptible among the older generation and the second one is their poor economic condition. The old generation feels that they are not accustomed to wear shirts and dhotis like the plains people which are very uncomfortable to them. Another reason given by them, is that, since they are always on the move in the forest, any dress which is loosely worn will be torn off quickly. The older generation of Chenchus living in plain areas are still seen in their traditional dress. For this they advance another kind of reason. They feel shy of moving in the village wearing shirt and dhoti in front of the village ryots; at the same time they complain that the villagers ridicule them and talk sarcastically if they see them in shirt and dhothi. But the most important consideration
is their poor economic condition. Even today, one rarely finds a Chenchu with surplus amount that can be spent on necessities of life, other than food and meagre clothing.

The women comb their hair in the backward direction and tie it into a knot, called koppu. They were not in the habit of using any oil as the extraction of oil was not known to them. They are now accustomed to the use of coconut oil as the same is supplied by the Women’s Welfare Centre. Men apply coconut oil to their hair twice a week. Some men of the older generation allow their hair to grow without trimming and it is merely secured at the back by a knot. The younger generation, however, started getting their hair cropped by the barbers at the weekly shandy at Atmakur. A few young men even have learned to use razors for shaving.

Generally speaking, men do not wear any ornament except small rings made of brass, white metal or silver which are worn in the helix and lobes of the ears. Some men wear spiral rings round their fingers.

The ornaments of women are very few and of very poor quality. Chenchu women invariably have a few chains of coloured beads hanging round their necks.

Tattooing: Chenchu women bear tattoo marks on their forehead and foreheads. These are done by professional tattooers called ‘Pachcha Bottollu; cost of tattooing varies according to the figure. No significance, whatsoever, is attached to these marks, except that they are considered to serve purpose of decoration. But some persons of the old generation believe that if they get the joints of body tattooed, pains thereof will be relieved.

Food and Drink

They eat cholam, ragi and millet, which they get sometimes by stealing the ryots’ crop, sometimes by bartering the jungle produce, and sometimes by purchasing the grain with the money obtained by the sale of the jungle produce. They eat also a species of wild tubers called Chenchu gadda and the flesh of all animals killed in chase, excepting tiger, cheetah and wolf. They do not boil the meat, but
heat it over the fire and eat. The flesh of the monkey called lungar or kondamuchu is much relished by them; in the hot months a species, lizard guana (udumu) is in great request.

The above statement does hold good to some extent even today. Besides their traditional food, they have recently taken to the eating of rice and cereals. They are finding it difficult to subsist on forest produce only. They are forced to deviate from their traditional food habits because of a few reasons: Firstly now-a-days the roots and tubers are very scarce even in the forest and there is considerable competition from the plains people in collecting honey and forest eatables. Licenses are issued to plains people in respect of tamarind only and they are prohibited from collecting other forest produce. However, the forest department is not able to check illegal collection of forest produce by the plains people. Secondly, games have become very scarce due to constant hunting, expeditions organised by shikaris (huntsmen) from the plains. The rules and regulations made by the forest department restricting indiscriminate killing of animals, have also come in the way of the Chenchus. Besides these, they have stopped eating the flesh of monkey (kondamuehu), probably due to the influence of plains people. Plains people consider eating of monkey's flesh as very mean and degrading and against religious sentiments. However, the Chenchus still eat flesh of lizard guana (udumu), which is considered to be delicious even by the plains people.

Every Chenchu village has got a traditional hunting ground of its own around the village. Trespassing into another's hunting ground is strictly forbidden. It is said that formerly if any one was found trespassing into the hunting ground of another Chenchu villages he could be put to death by the villagers even without bringing it to the notice of Tribal Panchayat. But the position regarding traditional hunting grounds has changed and now trespassing is not considered as a great offence.

The Chenchus do not seem to keep any food in store except mahua or ippa flowers. The generally take their food twice
a day. The morning meal called udaya bhojanam is usually taken in the morning and the following meal or the mapati bhojanam is taken in the evening.

Drinks: The Chenchus are not fond of beverages like tea and coffee. Only very few Chenchus take tea and coffee; that too, when they visit shandies. Their favourite drink is country liquor. For many of the Chenchus the day will never be complete without a drink in the evening. Both husband and wife take the drink during the evening times. It is said that even if the wife is not addicted to drinking at the beginning in course of time she takes to it as a result of constant persuasion by her husband. Every Chenchu household have a distillery of its own. Drinking and distilling are so rampant among the Chenchus that many of them are actually ruined consequently. The most favourite liquor of the Chenchus is the one made from mahua flower. But now-a-days liquor made from chekka and jaggery is replacing mahua liquor, since the former attracts the people from the plains also.

Economic Life

Till recently, the Chenchus were mainly dependent upon the collection of jungle products for their livelihood. They used to roam about in the forest, collect wild tubers, green leaves and honey, and occasionally hunt wild animals. They had hardly developed any technique of preservation of food, perhaps it reflected a world view whose perpetual concern was "today" and not "tomorrow." But this picture of food gathering economy and uncommitted world view is a partial picture only. In Kurnool district the pilgrimage route to the famous sacred shrine Srisailam passed through the Chenchu area. As a result, frequently the Chenchus came in contact with the pilgrims and acted as their guides and porters. This enabled them to earn some cash. Later on, they started to collecting melta fee (protection fee) of one anna (6 paise) per pilgrim. With the cash thus earned, they could purchase some of their requirements from the market. It is therefore obvious that even the wild life of the Chenchu had a dimension of symbiotic relationship with the surrounding civilization.
Agriculture

From the beginning, it was the aim of the administrator to turn the food gathering and nomadic Chenchu into agriculturists. They have been provided with land, bullocks, and are exempted from the levy of land tax. Many special schemes have been adopted by the Government to persuade the Chenchus to take to plough. But the response has not been encouraging.

It would, however, be wrong to consider that cultivation is completely a novelty for the Chenchus. Though cultivation by plough was not in vogue among them, cultivation by dibbling method is in existence among them for generations.

For their traditional cultivation usually they select a plot of land near their gudem where cattle herds were tended during the previous season. The land is cleared by plucking grass and weeds and scraping the earth with bamboo scrapers. The plot is then fenced with bamboo pieces for protection of the crop from cattle and other animals. At the time of showing the person concerned moves in straight line making holes at regular distance from one another with a digging stick and dropping seed of jowar, millet and other corns in the holes.

Collection of Honey

Collection of honey is one of the most fascinating activities though with some element of danger among the Chenchus. It may be said that it is the only activity where a group of people collectively embark on collecting honey in the forest. The collecting season commence in March-April and lasts till June. A group consists of 2 to 3 persons all of whom are related to each other in one way or the other. The activity spreads about a week round about fullmoon day. Generally, during the season they leave the habitation areas and camp in the forest itself moving from one place to another in search of bee-hives. The bee-hive is locally called tene para which is found on trees, bushes, gorges and ravines. The operation on ravines and gorges is a difficult and dangerous one.

For collecting honey from the ravines and gorges a minimum number of 3 persons are necessary. Invariably among the three, at least two are close relatives. Generally, Chenchu
takes along with him, his brother-in-law (wife's own brother) in such expeditions. It is because of the great confidence that they have that no person would let down the brother-in-law during the dangerous and life risking operations.

Collection of Mahua Flower

During the month of April the collection of *ippa* flower starts. All the members of the household go to the forest for the collection of *ippa* flower. The main use of the *ippa* flower is in preparation of liquor. Every Chenchu household during this season after keeping some quantity of *ippa* flower for their domestic use disposes of the remaining stuffs to the plains people. They are not accustomed to preserve it for morrow. This habit of the Chenchus helped the plains people in exploiting Chenchus. The villagers who purchase *ippa* flower from the Chenchus never use for their home consumption, instead they preserve it until the flower is completely exhausted from the forest. As the Chenchus are habitual drinkers they again purchase the flower from the villagers paying them double the price than they have received from the same quantity of flower they have disposed of it to the villagers.

Hunting

Chenchus are not experts in hunting. Their game consists of birds, rabbits and other small animals. Meat does not form a regular item of their diet except now and then when they go for hunting. According to them the game in the forest has become very scarce due to the constant invasion of *shikaris* from the plains. Their main hunting instruments consist of bow and arrow. The Chenchus of Guntur, besides bow and arrow, also use nets to catch birds and small animals. The average bow is about 44'' to 55'' long, made out of a slightly flat and thick bamboo splint of about 2'' to 2½'' width slightly tapering at both ends which are notched. The bow is strung with a strong thin split bamboo which is secured to the ends of the bow by means of a strong cord made out of deer or sheep sinew. The flat and thick bamboo split is decorated by badges of *iguna* sin. The arrow consists of a thin strong bamboo stick with an iron point, the tip of which sometimes is said to be poisoned.
The other end of the arrow has feathers inserted. These types of arrows are used by them. Goraka also known as pothambu which has a solid point is used to shoot small birds, rats, squirrels, etc. Another type billambu which has slightly flattened shape tapering into a sharp end is specially suitable to shoot rabbits. The third type of arrow which is flattened and sharp on both the sides tapering into a sharp end is known as ambu as is used to shoot bigger animals like panther and tiger.

Animal Husbandry

It appears that Chenchus are somewhat interested in rearing animals like sheep, goats and some of them are keeping poultry also. Very few Chenchus are rearing buffaloes. Majority of the Chenchus are rearing goats and sheep. If the goats are less in number they share the living quarters of their hosts. If they are more than a dozen or so they construct a separate pen for them. The Chenchus acquire these goats and sheep by a system called palu meaning share. Under this system they bring goats from the farmers of the nearby villages and rear them. All the responsibility of rearing and looking after these animals fall on the Chenchus only. When these animals breed the mother and half the number of the lambs born are given to the farmer and the remaining are retained by them. These animals are reared for sale only.

Life Cycle

Life Cycle: The customs and traditions followed by the Chenchus relating to rites de passage are more or less the same except for minor variations here and there. Though their economic life and material culture was affected to a considerable extent due to coming into contact with plains people, the incidence of change in their social customs is very little. Chenchus of all the regions still follow their age-old social customs and traditions.

Birth: Chenchus consider the birth of a child as a blessing of God. No preference is given to either of the sexes. They welcome both male and female children with equal joy and enthusiasm. Miscarriage during the child birth is not only considered as ill luck to the family but also punishment given to her by God for a grievous sin committed in the previous life.
Chenchus consider nausea and stoppage of menses as indications of pregnancy. No ceremonies are performed connected with pregnancy. If the parents of the woman are alive and could afford to maintain their daughter for some time during and after child birth, the daughter is taken to their home for the first delivery. Otherwise, the delivery takes place in the house of the husband. Chenchu women believe that the pregnancy period lasts for nine months in case of a male child and for ten months in case of a female child. They give their own explanation for this discrepancy on the basis of sex. They believe that male child is born earlier, because it has an instinctive liking for outdoor work to earn its livelihood. Female children stay longer in the womb of the mother because females by nature wish to stay at home longer and in comfort.

No minute restrictions are placed on a pregnant woman with regard to diet. But some believe that taking meat of wild boar harms her. It is considered that in case she does her work and goes about her business as usual delivery would be easy. The pregnant woman works till the time when she begins to complain of labour pains. There is no separate hut or screened apartment in the house, specially arranged for delivery. Body posture, at the time of delivery, is in the sitting position. As a support to the labouring woman, a hanging rope from the roof rope is provided. It is not uncommon to come across instances of the Chenchu women giving birth to a child while in the forest, in their usual food-gathering activities. When the pregnant woman feels labour pains, an experienced Chenchu midwife is called upon to assist her. The midwife is guided by her experience. The child's umbilical cord is cut with a knife and is carefully deposited by putting it inside the hole of a bandicoot. Sometimes they adopt the practice of tying it to the roof also.

Soon after the delivery, the mother is given some liquor. On the second day, Kashayam (decoction) is prepared by boiling vepachakka, nelavenu leaf, garlic and pepper and the decoction is given as drink early in the morning, even before she washes her face. For about 5 to 8 days food is given to her only once a day. No pollution is observed by them. Any one can visit the child and the mother at any time.
It is very interesting to note how the Chenchus perform some *pujas* to the deities for the speedy birth of the child. If there is any delay in the delivery the husband prays and discovers by divination whether any supernatural influence has been the cause of obstruction. After knowing which deity is causing the delay, the husband promises to call the child by the deity’s name. They suppose that this vow speeds the birth of the child. If the evil spirit causes the trouble, the expectant mother is given incense to smell, and a wise man is called to utter some magical formula to ward off the danger. If all these attempts fail, they pray *Garelamaisamma* and take a vow to offer one seer of millet in fulfilment of their wish.

The women are now availing themselves of the facilities provided by the modern maternity services. In the initial period, they did not come forward to engage the services of the midwife. But, now, their customs and beliefs are in no way hindering the community to avail itself of the modern maternity service.

The normal duration of suckling varies among Chenchus up to four years. There are cases in which mother feeds her two children; the first and next born on her breast. At the time of weaning away the child they use the juice of neem leaf to smear on the mamilla. No ceremony is observed to initiate the first feeding of the child. After the completion of the first year the child is habituated to eat all kinds of food that the elderly members take. Least attention is bestowed to regulate the child’s food habits or the habits of defecation and general cleanliness.

**Abortion and Contraception**

Abortion is practised by the Chenchu women if they indulge in illicit sexual contact, to avoid the the fury of the husband or the community. The methods practised to effect abortion are using *asofetida* and *papai fruit* in the first month of pregnancy. They use some herbs and leaves of the jungle to induce abortion.

**Naming Ceremony**: Sometimes they name the child even before its birth. It happens when the parent have no children and take any vow in the name of some deity or saint. In all other cases, the Chenchus do not give any name to the child until the child attains the age of 5 years or more. A general
name Mugenna for boy and Mugemma for girl is given from the day of birth till the day on which the specific name is given. If the child is dull in its activities and continues to cry and if it does not properly suckle the milk, it is attributed to be the act of some God or ancestral spirit or evil spirit. Then they invite a magico-religious person, known as gadde cheppavedu (meaning a person who would diagnose the situation through the magico-religious method). This person goes on fast for one day and beats tappeta (drum) uttering the names of deities, and ancestral and evil spirit. Their belief is that this successive repetition of the names of these deities and spirits will give a clue to the name of the deity of spirit that is supposed to be possessing the ailing child. He prepares a twisted thread out of the velithuru nara (a kind of fibre) and nine knots are made to this thread after performing some magico-religious activities with lemon, coconut, sambrani, scented sticks, vermillion, turmeric, betel leaves and nuts and korinda nara (a kind of fibre). After invoking the spirit of the ancestor or deity, he ties the twisted thread around the neck of the baby. When the child gets into normal moods, they suppose that the spirit of the ancestor or deity is satisfied. It is also not uncommon that an elderly member of the family gives the name of some family member or the name of liquor or a departed ancestor without consulting Gadde-cheppavedu.

Generally, the male Chenchu name ends with ‘adu’ or ‘lu’ or ‘aiah’ or ‘anna’ like Lingadu, Rajagadu Palankau, Chinnanna and Mugenna. The female names terminate in ‘amma’ as for instance Guruvaamma and Mugemma. Most of their names are derived from the deities just as the name of Lingadu is derived from the deity Lingamaiah.

Tonsure Ceremony: When the child attains the age of 3 or 4 years it is taken to the shrine of any one of their deities like, Lingamaiah, Guruvaiah and Bayyanna etc. for tonsure. The tonsure ceremony is initiated by the maternal uncle who removes some hair. The ceremony is completed by a man proficient in hair shaving. For boys the head is completely shaved leaving a lock of hair on the scalp and for girls only a few locks are removed on the scalp. The maternal uncle is given
one head gear and a cloth to cover his shoulders and he in turn presents a saree to his sister and new clothes to his nephew.

**Puberty**: Usually by 14th year, a girl attains puberty. This is locally known as *ediginadi* of *paduchu samarthainadi* meaning the girl has attained maturity. The girl is kept in a corner of the house. The room is cleaned and is plastered with cowdung. She is given an arrow smeared with turmeric powder. An old Chenchu woman helps and assists her in wearing a cloth coloured with turmeric and in applying turmeric powder to her body. She is not allowed to go anywhere, lest some inauspicious thing should befall on her. In the evening, the girl wears all of her ornaments and the other women gather there, and sing.

**Marriage**: There are two types of marriages existing among the Chenchus, marriage by negotiation, locally known as *pelli* and marriage by elopement termed as *raji* (marriage by love). Generally, marriage within the clan or *gotra* are not allowed. Cross-cousin marriage is in vogue. There is no taboo in choosing a partner within the village; however, young people are not willing to marry within their own village and they are rather inclined to choose their partners from other villages. Customarily there is a strict taboo for marrying younger or elder brother's widow. Chenchu widow generally marries the brother of her deceased husband. It is also stated that this custom might have been borrowed from the Lambadis.

When a boy reaches adolescence, parents will be on the look out for a suitable partner. If they come across any suitable girl they visit the girl's village and approach her parents along with some friends and relations for negotiations with the girl's family. This visit is not accompanied by any ceremonies, or feastings. If the negotiations are successful, the father of the groom offers liquor to the girl's father and in some cases to some tribal elders and close relatives who include the girl's mother's brother and those who attend the discussions. There are some cases, where some Chenchus, addicted to drink but have no means to acquire liquor, promise in advance to give his daughter or in exchange for liquor or to any person who is having a liquor shop or the man who supplies money to buy liquor. If the father gives his daughter to another man against
his promise, his act is considered as thappu (offence) and is liable to pay compensation to the promised party.

Generally, consent of the boy is taken and much weight is given to the opinion of the boy. As a matter of fact, the boy himself chooses his partner and brings pressure on his parents to celebrate the marriage.

*Marriage rituals*: If the negotiations are successful any Sunday, Monday or Thursday is fixed for celebrating the marriage. Marriage takes place at the residence of the bride. A pandal is erected in front of the bride's house though it is not a universal practice. The bridegroom's party arrives at the bride's place in evening with their kith and kin to the accompaniment of a thappeta and manglimelam, local orchestra comprising band pipe and dolu (a kind of drum). The latter is a recent feature. After their arrival the bridegroom's party presents the bride price, clothes and ornaments, to the bride. After the presentations, the groom's party is entertained to a vegetarian dinner. This is locally known as pellikuthuru cheyuta. After the ceremonial bath, the bride wears the ornaments and clothes presented by the groom. Similarly, the bridegroom is also prepared for the marriage; he wears a shirt and gochi, a headgear, and shoulder wear. Then the bride and groom sit under the pandal. Pillepeddalu and other relatives sit around the couple. Under the pandal, the Kolagallu (Uttaluri gotra elders) place a staff separating the bridal pair. Aligning the staff on either side are placed betel leaves and betel nuts in the name of the family deities and the ancestors are invoked for blessings on this occasion. Under the direction of the Kularaju, the Kalagallus place the hand of the bride in the hand of her mother's brother and he in turn is asked to put the hand of the bride into the hand of the bridegroom. The menamama (maternal uncle) ties the end of the shoulder wear of the groom to the end of the sari folded on the shoulder of the bride. After this, the Kularaju and his assistants ask the tribal elders gathered around "barrappannandpella kulama, talibottu kattutaku selevena" meaning "Oh! all the elders of the kulas over the age of 12 years, will you agree to invest the bride with talibottu?" All those present say "selava selava (meaning yes, yes). Then the Kolagallu ties
the *talibottu* around the neck of the bride. After this, *nalugu* (green gram flour and water) is smeared to the newly wedded couple by the *Kolagallu*. Then one of the *Kolagallu* gives a set of neatly folded betel leaves and nut in the hands of the bride to keep it in her mouth. Then the bridegroom is asked to bite the projecting end of the folded betel leaf held in the mouth of the bride. As he bites the whole assembly claps in ovation and approval. Then the *Kolagallu* asks the assembly whether every one present heard the sound of biting the betel leaf. If any one says ‘no’ (invariably they say ‘no’ for two or three times), then this is repeated again. Now the initiative is taken from the girl’s side again. After this, some of the friends and relatives present cash or cloth to the newly wedded couple. Following this, the newly wedded boy beats *thappeta* (drum), while to its accompaniment his sweetheart dances. During this time, liquor is abundantly used. Sometimes, both the husband and wife dance together in intoxicant mood to the tune of *thappeta* beaten by another person. This is a sort of recreation and amusement for the marriage party and formal way of introducing the newly wedded couple to a life of intimacy and harmony. On the next morning, after first meal, the newly wedded couple are taken to the bridegroom’s house accompanied by relatives and friends. The newly wedded couple continue to move with their upper clothes tied. The bridegroom holds a spear or a *chenchukatti* (knife) in his right hand, and while he walks along with his wife white long cloth is spread over them to form a canopy. As the party returns to the bridegroom’s house, some presents in cash are made to the bride and the bridegroom by the friends and relatives.

Consummation takes place immediately after marriage but it is not followed by any elaborate ceremony. The whole party is treated to a feast. It is a custom among the Chenchus that once marriage is over and if the girl has attained puberty by then, she must always live with her husband. The couple invariably set up a new household after marriage.

Marriage by elopement is also in vogue. When a young man and a girl decide to live together and their parents oppose their decision they sometimes run away and live in the jungle until the parents are reconciled or they join another local
group where they have sympathetic relatives and in such cases asylum is seldom refused. Once the couple are blessed by one of their villagers and are accepted as married couple then their status is in no way inferior to those married with full ceremony. In Palnad taluk when the eloped couple return to their village after a lapse of some time they are duly married once again. Sometime the father of the boy sends invitation to the couple to return to the village without any fear. In the case of orphan male and female youngsters who have a few chances for a regular marriage ceremony, marriage by elopement is necessary.

Widow remarriage is allowed in this community. The various ceremonies are dispensed with in this case.

Divorce: Both man and woman can freely initiate the divorce. When a woman goes with another man, her husband moves the tribal elders to sanction the divorce. When the terms of relationship is not cordial between the couple and the woman fails to adjust with these strained relations, she goes to her parent’s home or prefer to live with a sympathetic man. When the husband finds his wife is living with another man, he can claim compensation through the tribal elders. Moving the Tribal Council to get sanction for claiming his compensation is locally known as nasab pettadam. The assembly is known as kulapanchayat. The aggrieved husband informs the tribal elder of his village about the case and presents the facts over a sumptuous dinner and liquor. In the end, the new partner of the woman has to pay the compensation fixed by the tribal elders and meet all the expenses spent on food and liquor. The woman has to return all the ornaments that are presented by her former husband. The children at the breast are allowed to be taken along with her only to be returned after they attain their maturity.

Death: Any death which is sudden is attributed to the malevolence of a deity or to the wrath of the deceased kinsman. No ceremonies are performed to counter such evil influences. When a person dies the Chenchus say the ‘Jivam’ (Atma), has left the body of the person. They say when a person dies his ‘Jivam’ goes to ‘Swami’ meaning God.

As soon as life is extinct, the corpse is washed by permissible relations (sons, brothers and maternal uncles), the feet are
smeared with turmeric and legs with ashes, the hair is loosened and anointed with ghee or oil after washing it. Finally, the corpse is wrapped in the deceased’s own cloth and a four anna (25 paise) or eight anna coin (50 paise) is tied to it. In case of women all ornaments are removed while glass bangles and other trinkets are buried with the body. It is observed among all the Chenchus that the corpse is kept until all the people belonging to the gotra of the deceased living in the same gudeme call on the family and join in the funeral. If any one fails to attend the funeral, it is considered as thappu and he is heavily fined. If a married woman dies, her parents never touch the corpse. They explain that they have no right or claim over her as she was given away to another man as his wife. Immediately after the death of a person a messenger is sent to all the relatives belonging to the gotra of the deceased living in surrounding villages.

Each clan or gotram among the Chenchus has separate spot (scattered on the same site) to bury or cremate the dead. Chenchu families belonging to Desari Chigurla, Kudumula, Gulla, and Mandla gotra cremate their dead. Haimendorf observed that burning the body is a recent innovation followed by the Chenchu under the influence of peasantry from plains. He also says that traditionally the Chenchus cremate the person killed by tiger due to the belief that the tiger may unearth the body if it is buried (1943, 137). The Chenchus could not explain why people belonging to particular gotras only are practising cremation.

Before the corpse is taken to the burial or cremation ground all the persons participating in the funeral procession drink Mahua-liquor. On the way, they stop the corpse and place a little quantity of Jowar on the corpse and then carry it to the burial ground. If it is a child it is simply taken to the burial or cremation ground or shoulders of some relatives. The adults are carried on bier. No musical instruments are used during the entire death rites.

On reaching the burial or cremation ground the case may be it is a custom that the people of that gotra alone should dig grave or prepare the pyre or at least formally begin the the digging of the grave or preparation of pyre. After this any
person from among the relatives, that follow the funeral party can complete the work. If it is a burial a gunny bag is placed in the pit and the corpse, covered with a piece of cloth is placed and then the pit is refilled with earth. Before the grave is closed the wife or husband of the deceased (the chief mourner) or the nearest blood relation takes two handfuls of earth and throws it into the the grave. If it is cremation the corpse is made to lie down on the pyre with the face upwards and the chief mourner lits the pyre. After the body is disposed off people return to the village. Only those persons who carried the corpse take bath at the house while the other members wash their feet and drink the Mahuwa liquor once again.

The pollution lasts for three days. In some cases it shall last till the 15th day known as peddaehvasamu when final obsequies are performed. During the period of pollution the neighbours do not touch the bereaved members.

In case of death of a married person, on the third day after the cremation of the body, the ashes and the remaining are collected and buried. A heap of stones are placed over it after offering non-vegetarian food in the name of the dead. This is called chinnadivasamast. After 15 days of a month from the date of death, peddadiyasamu takes place. On this day, non-vegetarian food is offered to the dead by mixing it in a hill stream or a pond in the name of the departed. Drinking is as inevitable feature on this occasion. On this day the bangles, tali matte, black beads of the widow, etc, are removed and she is now eligible to marry again.

Religion

Chenchus worship and believe in many deities and spirits. Besides worshipping their own deities, they have adopted some of the Hindu deities and ceremonies. With the ever increasing contacts with the people of the plains, the original Chenchu religion and deities have disappeared to an extent and in their place, Hindu gods and goddesses have come into existence. He even says that some of the Chenchu deities acquire Telugu names.

There are some deities which are traditionally associated
with each *gotra*. The following statement gives the names of the *gotras* and deities worshipped by them.

### Details of Clan Deities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of <em>gotra</em> (clan)</th>
<th>Name of deity worshipped as Kuladevatha by the <em>gotra</em> shown in column (1)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male deity</td>
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<td>Avula</td>
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<td>Utaluri</td>
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The above particulars show that there are more male deities than female deities and some deities are worshipped by more than one *gotra*. These deities are symbolised in stones, dispersed hither and thither in the forest. The Chenchus could not explain or narrate any story how these *gotras* have come to be associated with these deities.

The most important deity is *Lingamayya* (Lord Eshwara). During the month of Sravan (July-August) each Chenchu household erects a small stone in their fields and sacrifices are made to this deity according to their economic status.
Chenchus worship the deity ‘Bayyanna’ to achieve success in the hunting expeditions. The Bayyanna deity is supposed to be an expert in archery. It is believed by the Chenchus that Bayyanna is a Chenchuman who was a staunch devotee of Lord Eswara. Lord Eswara pleased with Bayyanna’s prayers appeared before him and presented him an arrow and conferred on him that Bayyanna would never miss any target with this arrow. Bayyanna in turn conferred his blessings on all the Chenchus saying that all of them would become expert hunters. So, whenever Chenchus go for hunting first they go to the deity Bayyanna symbolised in a stone and either they break a coconuot or sacrifice a fowl.

They also propitiate the female deities like Maisamma, Sunkalamma, Peddamma, Magulamma and Ammathalli. Peddammm, Maisamma and Ammathalli are supposed to be malevolent deities who cause diseases like cholera, small-pox and chicken-pox. To appease them each Chenchugudem sacrifices a goat or a fowl once in a year during the month of March.

The deity Maisamma is supposed to help the Chenchus in punishing their enemies. Sometimes the Chenchus threaten the deity itself with fire if she does not grant their wishes. They believe that because of the fear of fire the deity kills the enemies of Chenchus in the guise of a bear or a tiger or a snake.

The same deity is also called Garla Maisamma. They also believe that this deity is also having control over wild animals in the forest. Before leaving for hunting expeditions they worship this deity for the success of hunting expedition. Bhagavataru is another popular deity with the Chenchus of Amaravadi plateau. They believe that this deity resides in the sky and they pray to him for protecting them from dangers in the day to day life. Bhagavataru is the creator of thunder and rain. There is a belief among them that the Jive (soul) of every man which originates from Bhagavataru returns to him after death. The deity refuses to allow the Jiva (soul) of a man whose actions in the life are evil, and such an evil Jiva turns into a deyyamma (malignant ghost).

The Chenchus living in plains villages of Mahbubnagar
and Guntur also worship Lord Siva, Lord Rama and Hanuman. The pictures of the above deities are hung on wattled walls of some Chencelu houses. The Chencus now and then visit the nearby temple of the deity Hanuman. The people from the surrounding plains villages also visit this temple occasionally. They also propitiate a Muslim saint called Daragaih, whose name has been derived from ‘Dargao’ an Urdu word meaning a tomb of a Muslim saint. The proper name of the saint is Murthuja vali. It is supposed that the remains of this saint were buried at Nagalutigudem. It is said that this sion lived near Nagaluti and Byrlutigudems subsisting on forest produce like roots, tubers and fruits and used to treat Chenches very kindly and affectionately.

There are no religious functionaries who conduct sacrifices and ceremonies among Chencus, whomsoever propitiate the deity, he himself beheads the sacrificial animal.

A few educated of the younger generation keep the picture of Lord Rama, Anjaneya, Lord Krishna and Venkateswara on the wattled walls of their huts. The Chencus identify their deity “Lingamayya” with Lord Siva.

Superstitious Beliefs

Chencus believe in luck, and in superstitions. If they happen to see any animal whose flesh is edible, or a cow or dog coming without shaking the ears but shaking the tail, it is considered a good omen. When they go on some work, crossing children or hearing sneezing twice is considered auspicious whereas seeing a buffalo or a widow or a dog shaking its ears in the morning or crossing a rokali (pestle) or gaddapara (crowbar), hearing sneezing once or falling of a water pot are considered inauspicious. If they hear a tiger roaring during April/May they suppose that the coming year will bring them good rains, while the cry of cudlaguba (owl) and gup tannkka (fox) in the night will forecast some undesirable happening. Number ‘7’ is associated with ill-luck. Falling of food from hands is an omen indicating the arrival of relatives. There is no luck attached to the cutting of hair or nails. They believe that April to August is the lucky period for marriages. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Satur-
day are considered as bad days for starting on a journey or undertaking any business. Monday, Thursday and Sunday are considered auspicious.

To ward off the evil effects of evil eyes, they mix turmeric powder in boiling water. If it turns out red, they consider that the evil eye has affected the person and they wave the coloured water before him to ward off the evil. If the mixed water does not turn into red and assumes yellow colour, then it is believed that there is no effect of evil eye.

Another method to ward off the effect of evil eye is to put chillies, salt and a hair plucked from the head into a chembu (small water vessel) and after waving it down the person two times each in front and back, invert it in a plate containing water. If the water in the plate is sucked up into chembu it confirms their belief that the evil eye has affected; otherwise, it is believed that there is no evil effects. This is done both in the morning and evening and water in the vessel is thrown in the street. Some sort of mascots obtained from the Koya Chenchus of Bhadrachalam who visit periodically the Chenchu gudemus and Peddintigollalu (a nomadic tribe) are worn around the neck of the persons who are supposed to be suffering from the effects of evil eye.

Festivals

The Chenchus celebrate majority of the Hindu festivals. It is believed that they have been much influenced by Hindus of the neighbouring villages. They celebrate Ugadi, Nagulachavithi, Dasara, Sankranthi and Sivarathri. A few of them celebrate Deepavali festival also. On the festival day of Ugadi (March-April) som of them visit Srisailam to witness the Amba festival associated with the name of Bhramaramba deity. On the same day they sacrifice a fowl in the name of Peddamma and include it in their feasty meal. On Nagulachavithi (August-September), they take bath in the early hours of morning and worship Nagamaiah (Serpent-God). During the Dasara festival (September-October), they worship jammi tree. At the time of worship on festive occasions, they break new cocoanuts and burn incense. On these occasions, they wear new clothes if they can afford, Otherwise, they put on
washed ones. The observance of the Hindu festivals is imparted by the teachers through the students studying at the local school.

As a special item for the festive occasion, they cook rice adding jaggery and cocoanut or they cook Bengalgram with jaggery. Indulging in drinks in the evenings is an essential feature.

Inter-Community Relations

The Chenchus are not considered untouchables and they freely mix with the people from plains. All the upper caste people except Brahmins and Komatis accept food and water from them. Ritualy they suffer no disability. They receive traditional services from dhobi and barber, they can enter into the Hindu temples and fetch water from a common well without any objection from the upper castes. Chenchus also consider castes like Mala and Madiga as untouchables and they never partake either food or drink from their hands. They also do not take cooked food from the hands of Lambadis, Muslims, Kamsali and Yenadis and they consider them lower in social status.

Brahmins and Komatis will not take food from Chenchus.

The relations between the Chenchus living along with plains villagers in Mahbubnagar and Guntur districts and the local ryots seem to be somewhat strained. The Chenchus complain that they are always harassed by the village Patel and some other persons of the village due to one reason or another. The Chenchus living in the village to obey the orders of village Patel and other Chenchus have to supply fire-wood, honey, flower etc., to them free of cost whenever they require. If the Chenchus refuse this traditional custom they will be put to many difficulties like not allowing them to draw water from common source; not employing them in agricultural labour and economic activities. Sometimes the ryots also ask them in illegal felling of forest wood and if they are caught by any Forest Official the blame will be thrown on any Chenchu family of the village.

Social Control

Formerly, Chenchus had a very elaborate system of
Kulapanchayat which has now disintegrated due to various reasons. The traditional Panchayat used to consist of male elders from each gotra and was headed by an elderly person known as Raju (literally meaning king who hails from Bheemani gotra) and is assisted by (1) Pradhani (meaning minister) an elderly man from Kudumula gotra, Kolagallu (meaning whips, attenders or servants) who were generally two in number each one belonging to Udata and Mandla gotras respectively assist Raju and Pradhani in conducting hasab (Panchayat). The posts of the Raju, Pradhani and Kolagallu were hereditary. Its jurisdiction was limited to cases that occurred within the village.

At present in its place another system has come into existence. Each Chenchugudem will have one elderly man called Peddamanchi, whose word is final in every dispute. Chenchus approach him for all sorts of advice and guidance. This Peddamanchi may come from any gotra the only consideration being that he should be an elderly experienced man and must be able to tackle any problem. Sometimes he is assisted by five or six elderly persons.

The Lambadi: Sugali (Lambadi) is declared as a Scheduled Tribe in Andhra area according to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list Modification Order 1956 and as a Denotified Tribes in Telengana area of Andhra Pradesh. They are also found in other states like Bihar, West Bengal, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Mysore and Orissa where they are called as Banjara. The Lambadis of Mahboobanagar and Khammam (as a matter


2. Telengana area comprises the districts of Hyderabad, Mahbubnagar, Hidilabad, Nizamabad, Medak, Karimnagar, Warangal, Kamman and Nalgonda.

3. Banjara declared as Scheduled Tribe in, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal (In case of West Bengal, it is, S.T. in the Purulia district and the territories transferred from the Purnea district of Bihar) declared as Scheduled Caste in Mysore State and Union Territories of Delhi and Himachal Pradesh and Denotified in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

4. Henceforth they will be called by the same name throughout the report.
fact throughout Telegana) call themselves as Banjara and they believe that Banjara, Lambada and Sugali are one and the same, rather they are synonymous, whereas many Lambadis of Chittoor, Anantapur and Kurnool districts are not aware of the name Banjara and the existence of their counterparts in other parts of India. In all the above three districts they call themselves as Sugali and are well aware of the name, 'Lambada.' Aiyer is of the opinion that Banjaras are also called Labanis, Lambadis and Sugalis, (1928; 135-136). Thurston treats Lambada as synonym of Brinjari or Banjari, Boipari, Sugali or Sukali (1901; 207). According to Grierson, "The Banjaras are the well known Tribe of carriers who are found all over Western and Southern India. One of their principal sub-castes is known under the name of Labhani, and this name (or some related one) is often applied to the whole Tribe. The two names appear each under many variations, such as Banjari, Vanjari, Brinjari, Lambhani, Kabani, Labena Lambadi, and Lambadi" (Thurston 1907: 207), Hutton (1951; 275) and Russel (1916; 162) treat Lambada as synonym of Banjara. Enthoven is of the opinion that Lamanis, Vanjaris, Banjaras, Banjaris, Brinjaris, Lamanas. Lambadis, Lambars and Sukalis are one and the same (1922; 331). According to Census of India 1911, Lamanis, or Vanjari, Lambhanas and Sukalirs, Hanjaras, Banjaris, Brinjaris, Lamans Lambadis, Labhans are one and the same (1911; 282). In Telengana the other neighbouring castes generally call them as Banjara and in Andhra area the most popular name which they are known as 'Sugali'.

But there are some authors who differentiate between Banjara and Sugali. For instance as stated by Thurston according to Rev. J. Gain that "the Sukalily do not travel in such large companies as the Banjarilu nor are their women dressed gaudily as the Banjari women. There is but little friendship between these two classes, and the Sukali would regard it as anything but an honour to be called a Banjari, and the Banjari is not flattered when called Sukali" (Vol. IV 1909; 211). It is found that Lambadis of Telengana who are also called Banjaras and Sugalis of Andhra area are one and the same. Their clan division, way of dressing, customs and traditions are identical in every aspect.
Various explanations are given as to how the names Banjara, Lambada and Sugali have been derived. They believe that the name 'Banjara' is the corruption of 'Vanachara' which means those who live or roam in the forests. They connect the origin of their name with Prithviraj Chauhan who was defeated by Ghori. Immediately after the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan many of the Rajput soldiers ran into the forests with their families and hid themselves to escape from the hands of Ghori and from then onwards, forest became their abode, and their people called them 'Vanacharis'.

They were not able to give sufficient information how the name Lambada has been derived. Except saying that the word might have been derived from 'Lavana' meaning salt, since their forefathers were traders in salt. A young man named Dama Naik in Khammam derives the name 'Lambada' from the word 'Lamba' meaning 'tall'. He says that Banjaras are very tall and handsome so they have been called 'Lambada' meaning, 'people who are tall'. Many Lambadis believe that the name Sugali has been derived from 'Supari' meaning, 'Betelnut', since they believe that their forefathers traded in Supari. Aiyer is of the opinion that the word Banjara might have been derived from the Sanskrit 'Vanija' meaning trade from which the words Banija and Banjara (trader) have been derived. The name may also be derived from 'Vanachara' meaning wanderer in jungle (Vol. II, 1928 ; 133-136). According to Enthoven the name might have been derived from the Punjabi word 'Banaj' or 'Vanaj' meaning bargain or trade and 'Vanaj' or 'Banaj' is derived from the Sanskrit 'Vanijya' meaning 'trade', and he feels that the name 'Lambani' is derived from 'Lavan' (Vol. II, 1922 : p. 331, 332). Read and Laid Macgregor derive the name 'Vanjara' itself from the word 'Lavan' since the tribe carried salt to different place before the introduction of railway and road transport. They attribute the origin of the tribe itself to their trade. It was the demand of the armies for grain carriers to move along with them which created a separate group called Vanajaris called according to their occupation (Census of India 1911, Vol. VII, Bombay Part I, Report p. 82). A. Rose writing on Banjara says, "This
and the Labana caste are generally said to be identical*, being called Banjara in the eastern districts and Lambana in the Punjab proper. But ‘Banjara’ derived from ‘banf’ a trader, or perhaps from 'banfi' a pedlar’s pack, is used in the west of the Punjab as a generic term pedlar. ‘Wanajara’ is doubtless only another form of the name” (1911 ; 62). Grierson did not agree with the derivation of the name ‘Lambada’ from Lavan. According to him this “goes against several phonetic rules, and does not account for the forms of the word like Lambani or Lambhani” (Aiyer, Vol. II, 1928 ; 136). Thus, it is agreed by all the authors as well as the people themselves that the names Banjara, Lambada and Sugali are in one way or the other connected with their traditional occupation, namely, trading.

The origin and history of Lambadis is very vague and ambiguous. There are many legends which explain their origin. They themselves claim that they are of Rajput origin and are Kshatriyas. Lambadis of Telengana claim that they are from warrior race and have fought against the Muslim rulers. Many other elders claim that their forefathers were the soldiers who withstood the onslaught of Mohammad Ghori the invader from Afghanistan, during the 12th Century under the able leadership of Prithviraj Chauhan the then ruler of Delhi. When Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated by Ghori, in collusion with the treacherous Jayachandra, the invader ordered the wholesale massacre of the Rajput soldiers. The soldiers to escape the wrath of Ghori ran helter skelter throughout India and some went into hiding in forests also. They changed their name as Banjara and Lambada so that Ghori may not find out their identity, they say this incidentally explain their migration to the Deccan. They also point out that they are having a clan by name Chauhan which shows their connection with Prithviraj Chauhan. Enthoven states that "the tribe clearly has been recruited to some extent either from Rajput sources or from followers of Rajput clans who have adopted the clan names of their masters. According to Crooke, the Rajput

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*In southern India the Banjara is also called Lavan or Lambana (Fr. Lun Sanskar Lavan, ‘Salt’).
origin is admitted in their traditions” (Vol. II, 1922; 331, 334). It is felt that the tribe is of a mixed origin, an amalgamation of various other groups who have taken the same profession of carrying grains to the armies (Sir Alfred Lyall, as mentioned by Enthoven Vol. II, 1922; 331, 345). Enthoven himself feels that the Tribe, besides Rajputs, may also consist of other castes like Maraths, Mahars, and a number of other well known tribes (Vol. II, 1922; 331, 345). Lambadis are vehement in denying the mixed origin of their community, they say that theirs is pure Rajput blood without any admixture of any other caste. But the purity of their blood is doubtful. They have admitted that previously they had a ceremony by which they could admit outsiders particularly from higher castes into their caste. Most of the persons admitted were women. It was necessitated by their way of life. In the beginning this group might be of a Rajput origin which had taken up the occupation of supplying grains to the armies. They had been constantly moving also with the armies which was very hazardous and were liable to take their women along with them and the custom might have been devised as a stop-gap arrangement. It is also said that they used to kidnap children, and bring them up and only after three generations they were considered full-fledged members of the community.

Another story is popular among the Lambadis of Mahbubnagar, Khammam, Chittoor, Anantapur and Kurnool districts regarding the origin of their community. According to this they are the descendants of Mola and Mota two brothers who were in the court of Lord Krishna. The story of Lambadis is as follows: Mola and Mota two brothers were in the service of Lord Krishna, who were very close to him. One day Lord Krishna thought of leaving this place and called all his servants to meet him in the chamber. When they came to have a last look at their beloved Master, Krishna informed them about his decision and assigned one Gopika to each of them to look after and to enjoy family life. At this juncture Mola was absent and away from the city on some official work. When he returned he came to know about his master’s deeds and felt very angry as he had not given any gopika. He approached Lord Krishna and talked to him angrily. Lord Krishna took it
very lightly and consoled him by telling that he has put aside ‘Radha’ his most precious and beloved for sake of Mola, but told him as Radha was very sad and most liked by him Mola should not have any sexual connection with her and he has to look at her very delicately. Mola very gladly accepted Radha with this condition and from then onwards they started living as husband and wife without having any physical involvement. Mola was an expert in acrobats and taught Radha the art and they started earning their livelihood by it. After some time they felt very much about the lack of progeny who can continue their tradition after their death. They mutually agreed to accept 3 boys from some higher castes. With this aim in mind they have a performance of acrobatics in the presence of the Raja of Ramghaud. Raja was very much pleased and told them to name any thing from his place with the promise that he would give the same to them as present. Mola and Radha unhappily requested Raja to give his son for adoption to and Raja had to agree. Since the boy was from Ramghaud he was named Rathod; likewise Mola and Radha charmed two more Rajas named Raja of Chawgbad and Pamghadh with their acrobatic feats and took the boy from each Raja for adoption and they named their boys as Chowhan and Pamar. After a few years, when his three sons came of age, Mola thought of celebrating their marriages. Mola, with his troupe of acrobats was camping in a village. There was a poor Brahmin living in the same village with three grown-up daughters. The Brahmin was so poor that he could not get bride-grooms to marry them off. Because of this he was subjected to many abuses and insults by the villagers. At that time the custom was that if girls who were not married immediately after puberty their parents were looked down upon by the community and were insulted and ridiculed, at every stage. The Brahmin could no more withstand all these abuses and thought of abandoning his daughters in a nearby forest. Accordingly he retired to the forest along with his daughters. Mola who was on a stroll met the Brahmin on the way and enquired where the Brahmin was going. The Brahmin frankly explained the truth, without hiding any fact. Mola after hearing the story thought that it was a blessing in disguise for him and requested the Brahmin if he
would give the three girls in marriage to his three sons to which the former readily agreed. Lambadis claim that they are the descendants of Mola's adopted sons, and the three Brahmin girls. So they claim that they are a mixture of Rajputs and Brahmans and the three main clans among them are called Rathod, Chowhan and Pamar, after the names of the three adopted sons of Mola. The same story is current among the Lambadis of Anantapur, Chittoor and Kurnool with one minor variation. They believe that it was Rukmini the wife of Lord Krishna who was assigned to Mola but not Radha. A drama called Radha and Mola was written and published by the then Social Service Department, Government of Hyderabad. This drama is in Banjara language but the script is in Hindi. The drama explains the same story with some minor variations. (The text of the drama is given in the appendix IV). Aiyer also gives the same legend regarding their origin and according to him Banjaras claim their descent from Sugriva who married Tara and 'Thida' was their son and the Mola who was attendant of Lord Krishna was a son of Thida. (Vol. II, 1928; 137).

Early History

Ptolemy in his list of Indian castes has made a mention of a caste Lambatai which is considered to be same as Lambadi. Hecrindle feels that "these were the inhabitants of Lamshan, a tract lying along the northern banks of the Kabul river, but it seems equally probable that Lambatai is merely a form of the modern name Lambadi (Enthoven, Vol. II, 1922; 331-334). According to Russel and Hiralal the Banjaras are first mentioned by Asian in the 4th Century B.C. who were leading wandering life, living in tents and letting out for hire their cattle (Vol. II, 1916; 162). Again according to Crooke the first mention of Banjara was made in the history of Mohammasdans during Sikindar's attack of Dholpur in the year 1504 A.D. (Russel and Hiralal Vol. II, 1916; 162). Another problem with them is their migration to South India. It is agreed by all that the Lambadis of Deccan are migrants from North but the exact period of migration is not clearly known.

According to Briggs the first historical mention of Lambadis
of Deccan is found in the work called "A History of the Rise and Progress of the Mohammedan Faith in the Country of Hind" written by Mohammed Kasim Firishta. He records that in the year 1417 a large convoy of Banjara bullocks was seized by Khan Khanan the brother of Feroz Shah Bhamini, when the former rebelled and made an attempt on the throne of Gulbarga (Aiyer, Vol. II, 1928; 138). It is a general belief that Banjaras came to South or Deccan along with Mughals when the latter overran the South with their mighty armies. Their main source of foodgrains was Lambadis with their packed bullocks. On the strength of the Banjara population in Central Provinces, Berar, Hyderabad and Bombay in 1911 Rnsse1 and Hiralal are of the opinion that the caste belongs rather to the Deccan than to northern India. (Vol. II, 1916; 162). It is believed that the Banjaras might have come to the Deccan in and around 1639 with Asafjan, or Asafkhan, the vazir of Shajehan. They accompanied Asafkhan, carrying his provisions during his raid against Bijapur (L.R. Aiyer, Vol. II, p. 139). When the Mughal Emperors consolidated their position in the South, the Banjaras settled in different parts and continued their trade and served as connecting links between the South and the North. It is believed that Banjaras acquired their criminal habits when they provided commissariat services to the Mughal and British Armies. According to Thurston the Lambadis of Bellar had first came to Deccan with Mughal armies as commissariat carriers. Banjaras were the people who supplied grains to the English armies during the war with the the great Tippu Sultan of Mysore. It is mentioned in the Gazetteers of the Vizagapatnam district that during 15th century Vinayka Deo the then ruler of Jeypore crushed the revolution in his dominion and regained his throne with the help of a Banjara leader. (Vol. IV, 1909, 207, 210). At present the Lambadis are aware that their forefathers were migrants from North and but they are not definite whether they came along with the Mughal armies. But some in Chapancheruvu Tanda claim that their forefathers were actually soldiers in the armies of Mohammadan kings and that they fought their way in to the south. One Lambada in the Tanda is possessing complete armour of war consisting 2 old swords, shields and one
armour. He keeps them as proof that their forefathers knew the art of war and explains that they not only supplied grains but also participated in actual fighting. Many households in the Tanda possess old swords. There may be some truth in their assumption, but the swords, armour, shields and other material cannot completely prove their participation in the wars as regular soldiers. Even the people who were following the armies from place to place supplying grains during the war required some equipment to protect themselves from the enemies who might try to disrupt the commissariat services which were as important as any other withdrawal of war for efficient functioning of the army. It is interesting to note that the Lambadis of Telengana are quite aware that they were migrants from North, whereas the Lambadis of Andhra particularly of Chittoor, Kurnool and Anantapur districts are ignorant about their migration. It is very difficult to explain this difference occurring in the districts which are contiguous with the districts of Telengana. It may be due to, as believed by them, the Banjaras of Telengana were always in the picture even during the time of Nizam providing commissariat service to the Nizam armies and they were more well known in Telengana due to their criminal activities than in Andhra. In Andhra they were more inactive and concerned with themselves only. Till late in the 20th Century in Telengana, it is reported that, they were moving along with Nizam’s armies. When their services were discontinued due to the development of road transport and railways the Nizam took many welfare measures to rehabilitate and wean them away from criminal activities. So they have got a tradition of continuing the occupation of their forefathers, whereas in Andhra once they settled no demands were made on them for commissariat service and their was no continuation from the past to present.

Distribution and Population Trend

According to 1961 Census ‘Lambadis or Sugalis’ are found in all the districts of Andhra area of Andhra Pradesh; but their number is insignificant in the districts of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and East Godavary. However, from personal observation it can be said that Lambadis are distributed throughout Telengana.
Family, Clan, and Kinship

It is observed that nuclear families are popular among Lambadis. Invariably father is the head of the household, and his authority must be respected; he can reprimand any member of the family if the latter commits any mistake. He is the main bread winner. In collateral joint families usually the elder brother is considered important and he directs the functioning of the house, but considerable weight is given to the opinion of other brothers as well. They all combinedly earn their livelihood.

After marriage a Lambada woman always goes and stays with her husband. In the past it was the practice with them that once a girl is married, she never returns to her parents’ house, not even for a short period, throughout her life. This was necessitated by their way of life, since they were constantly moving from one place to another on their business they rarely used to meet their parents again who were also in the same avocation. But at present they are well settled in villages in separate Tandas after having given up their nomadic habits, with the result that the Lambada women after marriage can visit their parents with the permission of their husbands. Generally the parents themselves take their daughters on festivals and on social ceremonies like marriage, birth, death. Even in case of those who are not settled properly their orbit of movement is very limited and both parties meet each other quite often.

Tendency to form nuclear families is more common. A son, immediately after his marriage, tries to set his separate household of his own after having taken his share of property from the joint family. It is observed that when the brothers separate they never set up their family in another Tanda and that too as neighbours to their siblings and parents. The reason for the popularity of nuclear families according to Lambadis are many. According to them the present day youth are impatient and aggressive and they do not submit to the authority of their parents and elders as before. The joint families break up, according to them, not because of men but because of women in most cases, they cannot adjust themselves with the co-daughters-in-law and parents-in-law. Sometimes
differences arise among members of the joint family regarding property, sharing of household work. Even petty quarrels among children may sometimes assist serious proportions resulting in the breaking up of joint family into a number of nuclear families. The problem of accommodation also makes people to set up independent households.

Descent is reckoned through the male line. When girls are married they are considered belonging to the husband's clan. Sons acquire the house name of their father. It is the responsibility of the sons to perform last rites and annual ceremonies when their father pass away. Property is bequeathed to the sons only. The principle of primogeniture or ultimogeniture is followed. All the sons equally share both movable as well as immovable property of their father. A woman gives ornaments and clothes and any other personal belongings equally to all the daughters or any one to whomever she likes much. Adoption is practised, usually brothers' son is preferred for adoption. If brother’s son is not available they prefer any boy from their relations particularly from their own clan.

Sub divisions

Sherring is of the opinion that in the Deccan the Banjaras are divided into four branches. They are (1) Mathuria Banjaras, (2) Lambana Banjaras, (3) Charan Banjaras and (4) Chori Banjaras (1832; 298). Aiyer is of the opinion that Banjaras are divided into three divisions, they are Mathurias, Labhans and Charan (1928, Vol. III, 149, 150). Russel and Hiralal had mentioned the above three main divisions and Dha as the fourth main division who are half Hindus and half Mohammadans (1916, Vol. II, 162). The Lamban as of Deccan belong to Charan Banjara division.

According to Thurston Tamburis are found in Mysore State and they are also called as Dhadis. They are Mohammadans, practice circumcision and dress like the Lambadis. They are the genealogists and bards of the Lambadis (Vol. IV, 231-232). Syed Siraj ul Hassan further states that the Dhadis profess themselves to be bards and genealogists of the Charans from whom they are probably an offshoot. They are
a hybrid tribe, half Mohammedan and half Hindu; they observe circumcision like Mohammedans but worship the Hindu deities, especially the goddess Saraswati. They subsist by begging from the Charans and singing songs in praise of their Charan ancestors and the emperors of Delhi. It is believed that they embraced the faith of Islam during the time of the Emperor Humayun. (1920, Vol. I, 21).

Clan System

There are three main exogamous groups among them, they were created according to the adopted sons of Mola; they are (1) Rattod, (2) Pamhar and (3) Chawhan. Later another exogamous group was created namely ‘Vaditya’. Again these four exogamous divisions are divided into a number of subsections.

They put the clan (goth) organisation in the form of a couplet.

"Sath Goth Rattod (seven gotras of Rattod)  
Che Goth Chawhan (six gotras of Chawhan)  
Bara Goth Pamhar". (twelve gotras of Pamhar)

They give the following sub goths of main exogamous divisions.

(1) **Rattod clan** (Rattod clan is sometimes called Bhukia also).

- (1) Ramavat  
- (2) Khinevat  
- (3) Deengavat  
- (4) Dhomvat  
- (5) Khetavath  
- (6) Nenevat  
- (7) Pathavat

(2) **Chowhan clan** (sometimes this clan is also called as ‘Mude’).

1. Kalavath  
2. Bhilavath
3. Hansavath
4. Kheluth
5. Ralavath
6. Sabhavath

The above six are the original sub groups of Chawhan, but later on another seven sub groups were added. They are:

1. Ranavath
2. Domavath
3. Hanavath
4. Jhatrath
5. Popathav
6. Paltya
7. Novadya

(3) *Pamhar* (it is also called ‘Jrabala’).

1. Sayath pamar
2. Bonee pamar
3. Thorvani pamar
4. Ayoth pamar
5. Jarbada pamar
6. Vishalvath pamar
7. Vadthiya pamar
8. Andarji pamar
9. Shugloth pamar
10. Indravath pamar
11. Rinjravath pamar
12. Wankloth pamar.

The fourth main clan ‘vadtiya’ consists of only sub group called Ajmeera Dharma Naik of Jadav, palle gives a legend as to how these clans and other important clans were created among them described earlier, the story starts with Mola and three main clans were created in the name of his three adopted sons’ marriages with the three Brahmin girls mentioned earlier, he was short of money and took loan from Brahmin of the same village keeping one of his servant as surety. Even two years after marriage Mola could not repay his loan. The Brahmin was very angry and sent a Rajput servant to Mola’s
house to collect the loan. The Rajput was making frequent visits to the house in pursuilk of his aim. In course of his frequent visits the Rajput developed intimacy with the wife of Ratood the eldest son of Mola. This relationship came to the notice of Mola. Mola being debtor could not say anything to the Rajput but Ratood was not willing to maintain any relations with his wife. The Rajput being very much in love with the woman was willing to take her away with him, Mola being wiser married him in his house and treated the Rajput as fourth son and permitted the couple to stay in his house. The Rajput was already having a wife from whom he had six children. She also came along with her children to live with the Rajput. Six sub clans under Ratood refer to the six sons and later on he begot another son to his second wife i.e. the wife of Ratood whose name was also added to the six sub sections making it seven in number. Chawhan the second son of Mola was blessed with 6 sons and 6 sub clans were established on the name of these six persons under the main head Chawhan. Later on another 7 sub clans were added to this making it 13. The legend of the creation of these 7 sub goes thus:

Chawhan one day along with his six sons went for hunting expedition to a nearby forest. When Chawhan was tracking a wild cheetah, the six sons together hunted a wild pig and cut it into 7 parts and roasted them and ate the six parts leaving one share for their father. When Chawhan returned his share was given to him. He felt that his sons disowned him and thought they could have as well eaten shares along with him. He developed contempt towards his sons and married another woman through whom he was blessed with seven children and these seven names were added to the main clan of Chawhan.

The third brother Pamhar was blessed with 12 sons and with them arose 12 sub clans. People belonging to Chawhan clan superiority over Rattod and Pamhar clan.

**Creation of Vadtiya clan**

Long long ago there were some Lambadi families living in a Tanda. The Naik of the Tanda was having three daughters.
A Brahmin living in a neighbouring Tanda had developed illicit connection with the daughter of the Naik. No one in the Tanda was aware of this, but it became public when the girl became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. The Lambadi Panchayat consisting of all the Naiks of neighbouring Tandas was summoned to discuss and decide this case. Since the Naik was very influential and also good at heart, the Panchayat took a lenient view of the affair and decided to admit the Brahmin boy into their community. They also decided to establish a new clan to accommodate the newly born boy. They named the new clan as 'Vadtiya' meaning 'banyan' since the Panchayat deliberated the case under the 'Vadtiya' tree.

According to Syed Siraj ul Hassan Lambadis have five exogamous sections (1) Rathod, (2) Panwar, (3) Chawhan, (4) Fadtiya or vadtiya, (5) Tori, all of eponymous character, being the names of their founders. Of these founders, the first three were the adopted sons of their legendary ancestor Mola; the fourth, Fadtiya, was believed to have been the offspring of the grand-daughter of Panwar by a Brahmin. Tori the last, while an infant, was found by Mola exposed in a farm and brought up him as own son (Vol. 1, 1920, 19).

General Briggs gives the following story accounting for the origin of the Vadtiya clan among Lambadis. "In the course of the travels of the povurs (Pamhars) they one day discovered a male infant lying under a tree, so far situated from any habitation as to lead them to conclude that it was left there to perish. But a charitable female of the horde took it up, adopted and reared it, and from the circumstances of being found under a Bur tree it was called Burtteah......... At the age of puberty he became enamoured of a beautiful povuary but as the Banjaras do not intermarry in their own tribe, the girl refused to listen to his vows, as it was impossible that they could be married............ At length the time arrived when the secret of their connection would soon have been apparent .............. They one night left their tents and fled: on the morrow, the news of their elopement was noised abroad they were pursued and taken. A Panchayat (council of five persons) was held, and expelled the povuary from her tribe. They at last, indeed to acknowledge the pair as the head of an out-
caste tribe to be denominated after the fondling. Burteeah; but they are on this account only allowed to claim Banjara origin from the mother’s side” (Aiyer 1928, II, 151). The account which the Vadtiyas themselves give of their origin is that they are the progeny of a Brahmin from a Banjara clan (Aiyer, Vol. II; 151, 152).

According to Aiyer Rattod clan, besides being divided into original divisions, again split up into two groups called Jongi and Bhangi. Jongi contains fourteen gods and Bhangi thirteen. According to him Vadiya contains 13 sub divisions (given in Appendix II) (Vol. II 152-153).

Each of the clans is exogamous in nature and persons belonging to the same clan are considered blood relatives and marriage between the two blood relatives is strictly prohibited. Ex-communion is the punishment for the violation of this rule.

Dwelling, Dress, and Food

Dwellings: It is a common phenomenon among Lambadis, in almost all places, to have their settlements outside the main village—exclusively inhabited by them. Sometimes Lambadi settlements may be as far away as one or two miles from the main village. They call their settlement as Tanda, so much so that in Anantapur district, people call Lambadis as ‘Tandavollu’ meaning people who live in Tandas. The trait which was acquired during their days of nomadism still perists with them. In the past they were nomads moving from one place to another, and naturally used to settle outside the main village where they could find plenty of space to keep their cattle and exclusiveness to carry on their nefarious activities without any hindrance from outsiders. Even after they had property settled, leaving behind their nomadism, they still continued to raise their settlements outside the main villages. Aiyer observes that the consideration of health, convenience of grazing, housing their cattle and immunity from epidemics are also other factors in their choice of residence (Vol II, 159). In most of the Lambadi settlements the houses are arranged in rows facing each other with a street in between the two rows. Majority of the dwellings of Lambadis are oblong
whereas the local type can be said to be square and sometimes oblong shape. Though each house is a separate structure by itself the houses are built side by side in two three parallel lines. In Chapancheruvu and Pallegadda Tandas the above type of settlement pattern is found, but in Jadvaraopalle Tanda the pattern is not planned and therefore built in a zigzag way. Again the settlement pattern is planned in a linear way in Singampalle and Sugalimitta Tanda. In Palyampalle the houses are built by the Social Welfare Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, where a linear pattern has been adopted.

It is not common for Lambadis to have their settlements as a part of the main village. There are, however, exceptions, where one or two Lambadis with their families have settled down in the main village along with the people of other castes.

The most common and traditional types of house is called Zupda in their language. The Midda type called Male, is also found among them. The difference between these two types is that Zupda is built of mud walls with a few stones or wattle walls with a thatched roof whereas Male is built of stone walls and a pucca roof. The Zupda is oblong in shape and Male is square in shape; but neither type is found fitted with windows. The doors are made of wood for Male and wattle or bamboos for Zupda.

Generally the oblong hut is divided into three portions with thattis, one portion is used as kitchen, the middle portion is used for sleeping, sitting and gossipping or to accommodate guests; and the third portion is used as store-room where they store their grain, metal boxes and other valuable materials. Entrance to the hut is very low and one has to bow one's head while entering into the hut. The interior of the house is very dark without ventilation and the soot emitted from the hearth is deposited on the sloping roof made of date-palmleaves as well as on the walls. When the members are inside, they keep the entrance-door always open so that some light may enter into it. The floor of the house is kept clean by bedaubing with cowdung once in a fortnight or in a month and on festive occasions. The walls are generally white-wahsed once in a year and also on occasions of social
ceremonies and festivals. The threshold is plastered with red earth. The front yard of the house is swept clean and sprinkled with water mixed with cow dung once in two days and some women make 'muggu' (decorative lines drawn with a white flour) in the front yard to give a better look to the house.

To build a Zupda type of house it takes minimum three days for a person along with his wife and two other labourers engaged on daily wages. They start their work in the morning at about 8 O'clock and have short break of one hour or for lunch and again they continue their work up to 6 O' clock in the evening. The housebuilder requires three to four cart loads of date palm leaves for roofing, 25 to 30 bamboos and 10 to 15 wooden rafters, some ropes, a few thatties and a cart load of stones. The roofing material is acquired from a nearby forest, free of cost, and all the other materials are purchased. The cost of construction of a Zupda type of hut, including labour charges, range between Rs. 200 and 250.

First they raise the four walls with stones and mud to a height of 5 to 5 feet. After this two side walls take a conical shape with an extra height of 4 to 5 feet. One big rafter is placed connecting the side walls and it is supported by two wooden pillars stuck in the ground. Bamboo frame is spread from rafter to front and rear walls sloping downward. This frame is thatched with date palm leaves.

The ground plan of Male type of house is very simple and is divided into three portions i.e., the Kitchen, store room and verandah. Verandah can be rightly called living room where the members sleep take rest in the afternoon and entertain guests. The floor is cleanly swept and plastered with cow dung. The walls are white-washed and red earth is applied to the threshold. The doors are made of wood and no ventilation facilities are provided. The cost of construction of this kind of house may range between Rs. 1,200 to Rs. 1,500. All the materials like stones, wood and rafters and pillars have to be purchased. At least 4 to 5 labourers including a mason on daily wages have to be employed for the successful construction of a house. Every house invariably will have a front yard which is kept clean and occasionally sprinkled with
water mixed with cowdung. They either have separate cattleshed by the side of their house or they will have at some distance outside the habitation area where they keep their fodder also.

For building a Male type of house, first they raise the walls with stones simultaneously fixing the wooden doors also. These walls are raised only after laying of the foundation of at least 3 to 4 feet. After this they fix sturdy wooden pillars over which they place wooden beams horizontally connecting the walls. Over which they place small wooden rafters covering from wall to wall making it a big wooden frame. They cover this frame with the stones of $3 \times 2$ feet. Some people connect the stones with mud or cement so that water may not seep through the openings. A few cover these stones with a thin layer of mud.

At present some of the economically better off Lambadis have built improved houses at a considerably greater cost with proper ventilation and more accommodation.

All the five rooms including kitchen are having windows which allow sufficient air and light inside. The doors and windows are made of wood and the walls are built of stone, the roof is supported by wooden pillars.

For roofing, wooden beams, rafters and thin stones are used. The wooden beams, pillars and rafters are polished and nicely prepared by a skilled carpenter.

In Tandas the pattern of settlement is always according to the kinship relations. Though a Tanda consists of many houses belonging to many Lambadis the tendency if for all the relatives cluster at one place. It is also observed that at certain places all the brothers live side by side.

Dress: The Lambadi women are conspicuous by their way of dressing, and with their numerous heavy ornaments.

The pattern of dress for the male is very simple and resembles that of others in the locality. The men wear a shirt mill-made or handloom cloth (half sleeves), a dhoti and a rumal (pugdi) or turban on their head. They wear their dhoti above their knees. First they tie half the dhoti at the waist with one end the other end is taken between the two legs and tucked in at the back. There is no hard set rule
that turban should have a particular colour but it is observed that most of them use red turban or at least a turban with red strips on it. It is believed that the red colour brings them good luck. Some elderly persons while going to neighbouring villages or visiting some important people put on their old overcoat. During the marriage celebrations the bridegroom wears new dhoti, a shirt (full sleeves) with a new overcoat and a red turban and a cloth called Pachchadam, preferably with a border, spread on his shoulders and a pair of foot-wear which are locally made or purchased from a nearby town. Most of the men wear foot-wear made locally by a cobbler, which are considered durable and cheap.

Boys upto the age of 5 or 6 sometimes go naked or they wear only a shirt (half sleeves) and afterwards they start wearing shorts, when they reach the age of 14 they change over to dhotis. The children attending schools, always wear shirt and shorts.

The teenaged girls wear Langa (a type of skirt) and after they come of age they start wearing their traditional dress. In a few cases even a girl of 10 years wears the traditional dress but with some variations. The traditional dress of a Lambadi woman is very elaborate and colourful. The dress consists of a Phetta (skirt) of coarse red cotton cloth embroidered nicely on the border and hung from the waist in many folds. This skirt is very short and reaches up to the ankles only exposing all the ornaments of the leg. Some round pieces of small mirrors are fixed all over the Langa, as well as stitched around the waist. On the right side of the waist, adjacent to the right thigh, they hang a cord called gero, ornamented with cowries and beads, which reaches up to the knee. Only older women now-a-days are found having this gero, but not younger women. On the upper side of the body they wear a blouse called ‘Kanchidi’ which covers their front portion leaving the back exposed. This bodice is rich in embroidery work and red in colour, and is tied at the back with flat strips attached to both the ends of the Kancheidi. Sometimes these strips covered completely with cowries and the Kancheidi full of glass pieces stitched to it; Kancheidi itself don one which is made of glass Choutia or the cover piece is a red cotton
cloth measuring 2 yards, embroidery, one end of which is tucked at the waist and the other end is thrown on the left wide over shoulders and on the head. This cloth covers naked back.

It is observed that a kind of change seems to be taking place, slowly in their pattern of dress because of various influences. At certain places like Jadvaraopalle, Mahbubnagar proper and Kha mam proper, some Lambadi women have completely discarded their traditional dress and adopted local pattern, consisting of saree and blouse. This change is coming not because of interest of the women in modern dress but because husbands want it. Some educated and enlightened people among them are making continuous to change the pattern of dress of the womenfolk their community. They even visit different Tanda persuade the people to change their dressing. Bat Rooplal of Mahbubnagar who is a pioneer in this says that it is very difficult to convince his people regarding the advantages in discarding their old of and acquiring new tradition.

The women who have discarded their traditional dress have also discarded their traditional ornaments along with them. They are wearing the same ornaments. Some Lambadi women along with their traditional dress also wear glass bangles which are popular among the local women of the other castes. Except of these bangles no common ornaments are found.

The hair style of Lambadi women is quite differed from that of local women. They part their hair side ways so that they may fall on both cheeks; on these they fix their hair ornaments. Young women who have changed the dressing pattern follow the local pattern of hair style. They comb their hair backwards and plait it or tie it in a lock. Old men usually keep long hair like women and tie a knot at the back. The hair style of the girls is the same as that of elder women, whereas most of the boys have modern type of hair crop.

**Tattooing**

Tattooing is very popular and common particularly with Lambadi women. Men usually get their names tattooed and the figure of scorpion is commonly seen on their forearms.
They believe that if they have the figure of scorpion tattooed on their body, scorpion will never bite them and if by chance it bites them; it will not be fatal. Women have tattoo marks on their hands, forearms, legs and also on their basks. It is said by some Lambadimen that some women have tattoo marks on their breast also. Different kinds of designs are drawn, some are very complicated and some very simple. They are drawn only for the purpose of decoration, no other motive is attributed to it. The people belonging to a community called Pachabottallu who are experts in tattooing visit the Tandas once or twice in a year. They are paid according to the design they tattoo. If the design is complicated they demand more and vice versa. The charges are paid generally in kind. Some old persons explained that tattooing relieves the body joints from pain and exertion.

Food and Drink

The staple diet of the Lambadis consists of ragi, jowar and rice. These three are equally used by them. With jowar and ragi they prepare an item of food, which is locally called ‘Sangati’. First these grains are made into flour by grinding them. They boil some water in a big pot. Then the flour is put into it and mixed thoroughly with the addition of some salt.

After boiling the flour they take the paste out of the pot and make small round balls of it. Some people eat the paste without making round balls. One ball of this sangati is quite sufficient for one man. Along with sangati they take some chutney prepared out of groundnuts or chilies or they take it with buttermilk along with either mango pickle or lime pickle.

Both in Telengana as well as Andhra area Lambadi language has no script of its own. In Andhra area neither the Government, nor any individual has taken any interest in developing their dialects, whereas in Telengana, the Welfare Department of the former Nizam’s Government had taken some interest and published a drama called ‘Radha and Mola’ (which described the origin of Banjaras) in Lambadi dialect using both Hindi and Telugu scripts. There is also a collection of devotional songs called Mamavadas Bhajanavali, by one Sri
Maniram, using Telugu script. The texts are given in the Appendices).

Language and Literacy

The Lambadis speak a language of their own, known as Lambani or Lambadi. In Telengana area they call it as Banjari. Thurston, writing about Banjari, says "Banjari falls into two main dialects, that of Punjab and Gujarat, and that of elsewhere, of which we may make the Labhani of Bera as the standard. There is a general belief that the different dialects of the Lambanis have been derived from Western Rajasthan. It has, however, been noted by Grierson that the Banjari dialect of Southern India is mixed with the surrounding Dravidian language" (1901, V; 208).

It was found that in Andhra area, Telugu words had been incorporated in Lambadi dialect to a considerable extent, in Telengana area there were borrowings both from Telugu and Urdu.

During 1961 Census 87.01% of the Lambadis returned Lambani or Lambadi as 12.57% returned Telugu and the rest returned other languages as their mother tongue. 58.57% of the Lambadis were found to speak a subsidiary language in addition to mother tongue. The most important among the subsidiary languages is Telugu, which is spoken by 56.11% of the total speakers of the tribe. A statement giving the distribution of the speakers of subsidiary languages is furnished below:

The percentage of literacy rate among the Lambadis of Andhra area is as low as 4.7%. If the two sexes are considered separately, it comes to 7.68% among the males and 1.61% among the females. This shows that there is great disparity in the spread of education among males and females.

Compared to the general literacy of the state (24%), literacy among the Lambadis is very low.

Economic Life

It is believed that the traditional occupation of Lambadis was trade and business. Even the name Lambadi or Banjara or Sugali is derived from their traditional occupation. Lambadis
and Banjaras used to attach themselves to the armies of the Moghuls and the British and supply grains to them during the wars. They purchased grains from rural areas and transported them on their bullocks. In a way they were pastoral people who raised big herds of bullocks and maintained them. Even today after shedding their old way of life, some Lambandis are interested in cattle breeding and cattle raising at certain places. It is alleged that they had acquired criminal habits when they used to move about place to place in search of their livelihood. Abbe Dubois states that they attached themselves to the army where discipline was least strict. They came swarming in from all parts hoping in the general disorder and confusion to be able to thrive with impunity. Speaking about their occupation he says, "They hire themselves very useful by keeping the market well supplied with the provisions that they have often stolen on the march. They hire themselves and their large herds of cattle to whichever contending party will pay them best acting as carriers of the supplies and baggage of the army" (Thurston, Vol. IV, 213). When internal communications improved by the introduction of railways and improvement in road transport they lost their position with the armies which preferred fast moving transport system, with the result they were forced to abandon old and well established occupation and seek other avenues for their employment and a few increased their criminal activities like dacoity, robbery murder and kidnapping. The displacement of their occupation by the railways and roadways may be said as a blessing in disguise for them in certain spheres of life. Though they have suffered economically they have abandoned their hazardous and nomadic and migratory life, and settled down in groups permanently to eke out their livelihood. Besides this, some changes have taken place in the sphere of marriage and other social customs due to this development. Now the family life is more compact and stabilized.

Making the field ready for sowing is the males' job whereas sowing, weeding, transplanting and harvesting are mostly done by women labourers. Men usually attend to hard works like ploughing, levelling the land etc. If they find more
remunerative work they even go to other villages. For weeding, harvesting and transplanting, one needs delicacy and skill which the women are expected to possess and they are most sought after by the ryots for these operations.

Many of the Lambadis are engaged in manufacturing of lime which is used for whitewashing the houses. The same industry may also account at least for a few people engaged in trade and commerce, as they themselves sell the finished product in the neighbouring villages without the help of any middle man.

The Lambadis of Telengana region are well settled in rural areas and majority of them are engaged in agriculture and agricultural labour.

Some Lambadis possess a few acres of land each. This however, is not sufficient to make their both ends meet, so they have to engage themselves in other subsidiary occupations like agricultural labour and selling firewood etc. In Jadavaraopalle Tanda only one Lambadi is self-sufficient in land. Besides having land, this household is engaged in other occupations like money lending and trade. No household industry is found among them. However, a few households are found engaged in petty business like selling salt and maintaining kirana shop (small provision shop). Construction of Nagarjuna Sagar Dam on Krishna river in Guntur district has attracted many Lambadis to its site from both sides of the river i.e., Guntur (Andhra areas) and Nalgonda and Mahbubnagar districts (Telengana area). Many new Tandas have come up around the Dam. The Lambadis living in these Tandas are engaged in earth, quarrying and other construction works. Likewise urban areas like Hyderabad, Mahbubnagar and Khamman also are attracting many from outlying areas in connection with road construction and other works. The Government of Andhra Pradesh in recognising the contribution of Lambadis in building the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam on Krishna river had erected a statute of a Lambadi belle at the dam site.

Agriculture

The persons engaged in agriculture follow the local pattern of cultivation, and raise the same crops as is done by other people of the region. In most of the places Lambadis are
dependant on dry cultivation. They are at the mercy of nature. If rains come at suitable time, their expectations go high regarding the harvest while if it fails they look forward for hard days to come. The agricultural season starts in the month of May. In April, whenever they find time, the elder members of a Lambadi household both men and women, go to the field and remove the stubble or waste of the previous year. For this purpose whereas the big landlords belonging to other castes engage labour including that of Lambadis for doing this work, the Lambadis never engage any hired labours. Ploughing also starts in the same month. By the end of May they keep the fields ready for sowing and wait anxiously for the rains to come. Cow dung is the only manure applied to the fields. In Jadavaraopalle, Pallegadda, Chapancheruvu, Sugalimetta and Pampur Tandas many of them are aware of the use of chemical fertilizers, and also know that they can get chemical fertilizers from the Block Head Quarters; but very few of them are interested in the same. They produce ragi, (millets), jowar, gingelli, chillies and pulses. Watching the crops is important work of the agricultural operations. When the crop ripens the elder members of the family keep watch on the crops throughout the day. During the night they leave the fields without any watchman. During the weeding seasons, besides attending to their fields, they participate in the weeding operations in the fields of others in lieu of daily wages. Harvesting is mainly the job of women. Usually for harvesting the farmers engage as many labourers as possible as it is to be completed within a short period. During the ploughing season some Lambadi households with bullocks of their own, plough the fields of others on rental basis, the rent being Rs. 5 for ploughing 1 acre of land. A pair of bullocks may complete 2 acres of ploughing in one day. Thus one may earn Rs. 50 by ploughing in the fields of others during the ploughing season.

In recent years in the wake of land reform some Lambadi tenants have been evicted from their lands by the landlords recently on one pretext or the other. In Palayampalle most of the Lambadis were cultivating the lands of one wealthy landlord of the same village on share cropping basis for the
past 50 to 60 years. But at the time of the survey the landlord was trying to evict them from his lands on the pretext that he wanted to dispose of the same. The Lambadi ryots were arguing that they were cultivating his lands, from the past so many years and as such, either the landlord should show some consideration in fixing the prices of land if wanted to dispose them off, so that they could purchase the same or else he should continue with them as tenants, without being evicted.

Agricultural Labour

Agricultural labour is another important occupation in which Lambadis are engaged in. Labour is required for weeding, harvesting, sowing and transplanting. The work starts at about 8 O clock in the morning and continues up to 5 O clock in the evening with lunch break of an hour or half. Majority of the people taking part in agricultural labour are women though now and then men also participate, if they have no other work. Normally, remuneration is paid in kind. The female labourers get 1½ seers of paddy and the males get 2 seers of paddy.

Men with skills in agricultural operations like ploughing, driving the seed-plough and levelling the land engage themselves as permanent workers with the landlords on yearly basis. The wage given to this type of work purely depends on the skill of the person. This kind of activity is very common in Anantapur district. Generally the contract is for one year starting from one Ugadi (Telugu New Year’s Day) to another Ugadi. No leave is allowed to the permanent workers. At the end of the year, the money for the days of absence is deducted from his salary or he is asked to continue the work until he clears the number of days on which he was absent. The yearly wage of a person ranges between Rs. 80 and Rs.350, besides three free meals everyday, tobacco and beedies are also given to him. In addition to the agricultural operations the labourer has to do many other odd jobs in the house of the landlord; he has to look after the cattle and feed them, has to keep the house clean, fetch fuel for cooking, draw water for the use in the household and so on. Sometimes the
master gives him three sets of dress in a year consisting of a
dhoti and an upper cloth in each set, if it is stipulated in the
agreement. His wife also works in the fields of the master
on daily wages and assists the master’s wife in cleaning the
utensils in the kitchen; she also does other sundry works for
little favours like, rice, buttermilk, dal etc. If the labourer
is not provided with food, tobacco and beedies everyday,
according to the agreement he gets more pay, this may range
between Rs. 250 to Rs. 600. This pay is also decided besides
other things taking into consideration the skill of the person.

Trade and Commerce

Very few Lambadis are at present engaged in trade and
commerce which is their traditional occupation. In Anantapur
district some of the Lambadis are engaged in manufacture and
sale of lime.

This lime is used for whitewashing the houses. A superior
quality of lime used along with chewing pan is made in small
quantities and Lambadi women carry headload of the same
in baskets and sell in the neighbouring village in exchange
of grains. Usually they give 2 measures of lime for one
measure of grain, sometimes they also give 3 measures for one
measure of grain. Lime used in pan is costlier than that used
in whitewashing. They give only 1½ measure of the superior
variety for 1 measure of grain.

They manufacture lime in large quantities when they get
previous orders and transport the same to the required place
on donkeys maintained by some of them. It was observed
that a few Lambadis were competing with other communities
in business and were having pan, beedi and cigarette shops, a
few were also engaged in fruit and vegetable selling. The
sales are however carried on by women only. This is a new
development in their economic avocation, in fact none of the
shop is older than 10 years. One Lambadi woman explained
that they had got the inspiration from the people of other
castes. Previously all of them were engaged in labour
but some of them could in course of time accumulate small
savings to open shops. At present though they are not rich,
the income from the business and other activities of their men is just sufficient to maintain them.

Liquor making

Though liquor making is prohibited in Andhra area, in Palyampalle, Sugalimetta, Singampalle of Chittoor, Kurnool and Anantapur districts boot-legging is quite rampant and is a lucrative occupation with the Lambadis. Particularly in Palyampalle every Lambadi is believed to have an illicit liquor making distillery for personal consumption as well as for sale to outsiders. It is observed that even in this business they are not prospering; being themselves heavily addicted to drink they themselves consume bulk of the liquor distilled. With the rise in the price of jaggery, the most important ingredient for making liquor, the price of liquor has also gone up bringing in decline in the number of customers. The Lambadis engaged in the illicit distillation of liquor therefore find themselves in a tight corner.

Forestry

The main forest produce that the Lambadis extract are fuel for domestic purpose as well as for sale. Generally, Lambadi women go to the forest whenever they get time and collect a headload of fuel and sell the same in the neighbouring villages. The price varies according to the bulk of the load. The maximum price that a headload of fuel may fetch is Rs. 2 and minimum is 50 paise. It takes only one or two hours to collect a headload of fuel. Sometimes, the males go to the forest in the night and fetch cartloads of fuel illegally for sale in the neighbouring villages. If they are caught they have to face the arrest and confiscation of goods along with the bullocks as well as the cart. Another forest produce which is most important for them is the bark of Thumma tree (Acacia ferrugenia) which is a must for making house. No restrictions are placed by the Forest department for getting this bark from the forest. As they are also allowed to get wood just sufficient for the construction of their huts and for making agricultural developments.
Live stock

Though Lambadis were to some extent a pastoral people in the past, at present very few tend cattle. Almost every Lambadi household keeps a chicken for their own use. The Lambadis are still living a pastoral life, and each Lambadi household is keeping a few milch cattle and the milk is sold at taluk headquarters which is only 6 miles away and also in the neighbouring villages. The Forest Department has given permission to graze their cattle in the forest. Some Lambadis in Kurnool and Mahbubnagar district living in the fringe of the forest to take the advantage of grazing permission given by the forest department and graze the cattle for some remuneration. The plains people send their cattle, both milch as well as draught, to the Lambadis for grazing on the condition that the person has to take the entire responsibility of the cattle for about one or two years as stipulated and return them to the owner for which the owner pays the Lambadi 10 or 15 seers of grain per cattle per year. In this manner Lambadi may have 30 to 40 cattle under his responsibility at a time. The owner has to depend completely on the honesty of the Lambadis as they can at any time say that any one of the cattle has been eaten by the wild animals. Here it is to be noted that it is not binding on the part of Lambadis to replace the lost cattle according to the contract. But it is said that they very rarely deceive their patrons because of the fear of losing credentials for the same work in future. To have the responsibility of the cattle is not a problem for them. Sometimes the youngmen in the house take their provision sufficient for a week or two and go with the cattle into the interior of the forest and camp near a hill stream, cooking their own food and looking after the cattle. When they exhaust the provisions they come back to their Tandas along with the cattle, take rest for some days and again they start for the forest; this goes on year in and year out. Noting their interest in cattle, the former Nizam’s Government had introduced some welfare schemes to teach the Lambadis modern method of cattle breeding under Amarabad Rural Welfare Scheme. The scheme was mainly meant for the
welfare of the Chenchus but provision was made for a cattle breeding farm at Amarabad Plateau in Mahbubnagar district for the Lambadis.

Criminal Activities

Lambadis were declared as a Criminal Tribe in the year 1896 and the Act was replaced in the year 1952. At present the Banjaras of Telengana are considered as a Denotified Tribe whereas the Lambadis of Andhra area as Scheduled Tribe have been included in the list. Banjaras in the past were notorious for their criminal activities. They used to move about from one area to another area in organised gangs supplying grains to the armies and they were placed at the fag end of the army where discipline was very loose. It is said that it provided them an opportunity to loot and commit robberies and blackmail isolated way farers. It is on record that the Banjaras enjoyed certain immunity by the orders of the Muslim rulers from being troubled for crimes of certain nature. To carry the grains Banjaras maintained herds of bullocks. It was very difficult to find fodder to feed all those animals and the Muslim rulers under whom they served issued orders to the effect that they could commit certain offences to get fodder for their bullocks. In Berar Gazetteer it is mentioned that "The Chars (Banjaras) evidently came to the Deccan to Asafjan, sometimes called Asafkhan. Bhangi and Jhangi Naiks had with them one hundred and eighty thousand bullocks and Bhagavandas the Burthia (Vadtiya) Naik only had fifty two thousand. They accompanied Asafjan, carrying his provisions during his rain into the Deccan (against Bijapur).

It was the object of Asafjan to keep these bullocks well up with his force, and so much were they prized by that vazir that he was induced to give an order to Bhangi and Jhangi Naiks, as they put forward excuses regarding the difficulty of obtaining grass and water for the cattle.

It is found that Lambadis supplied grains to the British.

1. Another Hill Tribe living in the same area.
army when they were at war with great Tippu Sultan. Before and during the war the price of rice was soaring, selling at 2 rupees per seer, and British tried to relieve the miseries of the people by purchasing grains from the Lambadis and selling the same in the city at a considerably cheaper rate (General Briggs Aiyer—Vol. II, 141). Though the Lambadis helped army, the civil administration set up by the British had to take an unfavourable view of the Banjaras, as they became a menace to the peace loving people, by their nefarious activities like plundering and looting the villages, committing murders, causing greater annoyance to the Britisher than to their enemies.

It appears that during the troublesome days of the medieval period, and the transitional phase of the establishment of the British rule, the Lambadis had a good time. With the establishment of the rule of law, introduction of the railways and development of road transport, the Commissionaire service of the Lambadis became dysfunctional. They suffered a loss of economic role, and they could not adjust themselves to the new conditions. They took to crime almost as a regular profession. As stated by Somasundaram. "The Bedars, or the Lambadi trading caravans which were far away from their homes, could not and did not like to return to their original country as, even there, they had no settled homes and as such could not make a living there. Hence they decided to settle down wherever they had camped. Thus they had to eke out their livelihood in such surroundings where the inhabitants were strange, where the tongue was different and naturally their existence was precarious under these unfavourable and desperate circumstances, what could these gangs of strangers to exist? They resorted to crimes such as highway and plunder."

The criminal activities of Lambadis were many and of various types. They kidnapped children, performed human sacrifices, conducted traffic in female slaves besides other crimes like murder, looting and plundering. Malcolm in his "Memoirs of Central India" states that at one time they conducted a regular traffic of female slaves between Gujarat and Central India selling in each country the girls whom they had kidnapped in the other (Ibid 1961' 18). On human sacrifice it
is recorded by the Rev. J. Cain that many of the Lambadis "Confessed that in former days, it was the custom among them before starting out on a journey to procure a little child, and bury it in the ground up to the shoulders, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the unfortunate victim, and, in proportion thoroughly trampling the child to death", (Thurston, 1909; 147). Thurston again says that at the time when human (meriah) sacrifices prevailed in the Vizagapatam Agency tracts, it was the regular duty of Lambadis to kidnap or purchase human beings in the plains, and sell them to the hill tribes for extravagant prices (1903 ; 149).

Human sacrifice, laceration of tongue and kidnapping though are not at all indulged in at present, a few even today, indulge in dacoity, highway robbery, cattle lifting and house breaking. Of all the crimes, cattle lifting is frequently indulged in by the Lambadis at present. It is stated by some old Lambadis that previously they had a rule that a young man who wanted to marry must at least know the art of cattle lifting and must have committed at least one cattle theft.

Between 1896 (declaring Lambadi as criminals) and 1952 (repealing the act and declaring them as denotified tribes) the Government tried to wean Lambadis away from criminal activities by various methods. The then Nizam's Government introduced some social welfare measures with the aim to improve their economy, and to put an end to their criminal activities. Police adopted strict measures by keeping surveillance on all the Tandas in general and on certain characters in particular. This shifted some Tandas which were the fringe of forests to the plants for better surveillance and supervision. All the bad characters were asked to report at the nearest police station every day, give attendance and the police were given powers to arrest any Lambadi who did not possess the pass given by the Nizam's Government without giving any reason. Whenever a Lambadi went out of his Tanda he had to carry the pass along with him and if any official accosted him he had to show the pass, which declared his bonafide. Only to those Lambadis who were considered honest by the Government were issued passes. The following is one such pass issued by the Nizam's Government.
Certificate for exclusion issued by the Director of security Department of District, of His Highness, Nizam’s Government (established vide No. 1345, F. No. 1—61880).

Name—Bhimla s/o Porsia; age: 22 years caste/Tribe—Lambada declared as criminal of village Madoor-Station House Madoor; Taluqa Kodangal, District, Gulbarga Sharif.

As you have been proved to be a person of good conduct so accordingly on the basis of powers laid down under the Act No. 5 and indicated at No. 7 of the criminal Tribes Act vide No. 13-22, you are being excluded from the list of criminal tribes, register on the condition that you adopt a good behavioural way of life and earn your livelihood through honest means, so that you may not subject yourself to any kind of allegation under suspicion, crime or misbehaviour. In case you are found alleged with suspicion, crime or misbehaviour then the certificate of exclusion from the criminal tribes issued under the above mentioned conditions and terms will be withdrawn from you immediately.

Right hand thumb impression

Identification as observed by the Director of Administration

Sd/II-34
As Director Administration Security
Department of Districts of His Highness Government

Old Lambadis say that the life in those days was miserable for them, they were victimised and mercilessly treated by the police as well as the public. If any theft, robbery or murder was committed somewhere without any proof or any reason the nearest Tanda to the crime spot was swarmed by the police and all the persons were beaten without giving any opportunity to explain or show their alibi. Only after getting satisfaction from the Lambadis the Police used to carry on investigation in other quarters. But the Lambadis strongly resent and oppose the appellation of criminal applied to their community. They say that most of them were and are honest persons and never committed any theft or robbery, it was only due to-
the activities of a few miscreants that they had acquired the bad names. They point out that the people of other castes take advantage of this state of affairs and whenever an occasion arises they try to throw the blame on the Lambadis even though they are not even remotely connected with the same. A few old persons however admit that there was much crime among them in the past. Talking about methods, they say that they never used to commit crimes single handed. Whether it was dacoity, murder or robbery, or housebreaking they used to go in gangs. Members of a gang were not from a single Tanda but from different Tandas and the size of the gang depended on the size and method of operation. If all the members of the gang were from a single Tanda it usually created some suspicion among the police as well as among the people since these operations were conducted during the night and the absence of so many persons from a single Tanda would easily be noticed. Members of a gang never used to go together to the operational spot but each member reached the spot at the appointed time taking different paths. Some Lambadis maintained permanent gangs with one leader, who the gang usually was an old, experienced and tough person. To become member of a gang one must be experienced in robbery, dacoity and housebreaking. After dacoity or robbery all the members of the gang used to share the booty equally. These gangs were not stable organisations, their personnel changed from time to time according to the circumstance.

At present the incidence of crime among the Lambadis seems to have decreased because of the measures taken by the government and various social organisations. The police department also is taking some steps to wean them from the criminal activities. The Superintendent of Police Mahbubnagar informed that he was recruiting as many Lambadis as possible into his Police force. For this purpose he had relaxed the rules regarding the qualifications and he felt that the result was quite encouraging. But according to him in spite of considerable improvement on the position, the Lambadis had not completely given up their criminal activities, frequently they indulged in cattle lifting, and housebreaking. There were a few cases of murder also.
Life Cycle

Birth: The first confinement of a woman invariably takes place in her husband's house only. In the past, even for the subsequent confinements a woman never used to her parents' house. They were nomads migrating from one place to another in connection with trade and other purposes. Once a girl was married out, she was considered to be lost to her parents as they very rarely could meet each other. When they meet it was only for a brief spell.

Shedding of their nomadic habits and settling down permanently has brought about a perceptible change in this matter. Many Lambadis at present send their wives to their parents' house for subsequent deliveries. But on no account the first delivery takes place at the house of her parents as a question of prestige for her husband as well as for her. Even a poor Lambadi does not like that his first issue should be born at his father-in-laws house. If this happens he and his wife are considered very mean and teased by his community people. Aiyer and Nanjundayya reported in 1928, that the Lambadis were adopting the practice of bringing their women to parents' house (Vol. II, p. 171). But during the present study, this change did not appear to have struck root. During subsequent pregnancies, however, the parents of the girl themselves evince some interest to take their daughter for delivery to their house. If their son-in-law agrees to their request, the father or the brother of the girl takes her to their house or village during the 7th month.

Confinement takes place not in the living house but in a cattleshed or in a hut separately built by the side of the living house for the purpose. When the labour pains start the women is shifted to the hut meant for her and she is made to lie down on a cot or on the ground on mattresses. A midwife called 'Lomsonil' from their tribe attends to the delivery. If she thinks that the delivery is going to be a protracted one, she uses some of the age old methods, to give relief." She warms the hips and waist of the woman with hot stones held in a piece of cloth, while another woman simultaneously rubs her chest. They believe that by adopting this process they generate some heat in the body of the confined woman which would
make the delivery easy and comfortable. The midwife is paid Re. 1 and 24 paise besides food on the days of attendance. Some economically well-to-do Lambadis present her with a saree costing between Rs. 10 to Rs. 15. The Sugalis of Palayampalle have completely discarded the service of their community midwife as one Maternity Assistant is stationed in their Tanda. Almost all the delivery cases in the Tanda are attended to by her only. If she comes across any difficult case she makes arrangements to take the woman to the government hospital at Pungannur, the Taluk Headquarters. Immediately after delivery, the umbilical cord of the child is cut with sickle by the midwife and is buried along with placenta in front of the house and the child as well as mother is given a hot water bath on the same spot. Everyday in the morning the boy is bathed at the same place. According to Aiyer “The navel cord is cut and tied to a thread, smoke with incense and buried with a three pie piece at the foot of the mother’s bed” (Vol. II, 1928; 171).

Birth pollution is observed for three days by the households concerned among the Lambadis of all the Tandas where the field investigations have been done. Though a woman can enter the main house three days after the delivery, she is prohibited to touch the cooking utensils for about 15 days. It is also said that in some Lambadi houses, where there are some helping hands, partial pollution is observed for about 1½ month to two months.

The period of pollution seems to vary in different regions. Russel and Hiralal observes, ‘pollution is observed for 5 days after delivery’ (1916; 165). According to Aiyer the Lambadis observe pollution for days after delivery (Vol. II, 1928; 171, 172).

On the third day after delivery at Palayampalle they perform a ceremony called Jalva Dokhano. On the morning elders of the family break coconuts in the name of ancestors, praying for the speedy recovery of health and strength of the newly delivered woman. A pit is dug in a corner of the house and is filled with water. The mother of the newly born baby, with seven kinds of grain in her hands or tied in one corner of her cloth tucked in her waist, goes to the pit dropping grains, in the
way. All the womenfolk assemble there and lit a pramida
made of rice flour and welcome her with a song, the meaning
of which is “come to the pit weeping and go away from the pit
with smiles.” After the woman reaches the pit she is given a
sweet liquid, prepared out of jaggery and water by the women
assembled. The woman, while returning, gets some ‘Payasam’
sweet liquid) and the same is distributed to the children
assembled there. After the ceremony is over, all the invitees
are treated to a vegetarian meal when liquor is also served.

The following case study gives a fairly good idea as to how
the ceremony is performed at present. Lakshman Nayak of
Palayampalle village stated that when his wife delivered a male
child 5 months back he had spent nearly Rs. 150 towards the
ceremonies and feasting. The Maternity Assistant attended
the delivery. Her services were dispensed with immediately
after the delivery and Lambadi women took charge of the baby
as well as the mother. The umbilical cord was cut by a sickle
by an old experienced Lambadi woman and was buried along
with the placenta in the front yard of the house and the
mother as well as baby were given bath on that spot. In
the evening, both of them were again bathed on the same spot.
The delivery took place in his cattle shed which was by the side
of his main hut. In the morning of the third day he broke 10
coconuts in the name of the ancestors and no ‘Jalva Dokhan’o
ceremony was observed, but a vegetarian dinner with liquor
was given to his community people. In the evening of the
third day the mother entered the main house and not even
partial pollution was observed. Since no one was there in
the house to do domestic work, she took rest hardly for 5
days.

At Mahbubnagar proper a few Lambadi families were found
not to observe the cited Lambadi rites connected with child-
birth. There was a tendency among them to adopt the customs
of the neighbours’ castes. This new trend developed under the
influence of the educated members of the community, who were
anxious to climb the social ladder by imitating the so-called
higher castes.

For about one month after delivery the woman is forbidden
to eat much of chillies, and spices as well as non-vegetarian
dishes, and curds, but she is encouraged to eat more and more of garlic and pepper with the food as some medicinal values are attributed these items.

**Child rearing**: Some sanctity is attached to the breast milk by the Lambadis. They say that when milk is available with the mother, it is a sin to use the milk of a cow or a buffalo. According to them a child will be strong and would grow up very quickly only if it is breast fed. Breast feeding continues is most all Lambadi families until the child comes to be of 1 years or till the child is accustomed to take sufficient solid or liquid food like rice, rice gruel etc. whichever is earlier. Lambadi mother starts feeding the child with rice or rice gruel either mixed with ghee or curd or with addition of some salt. For weaning the child, they apply two different kinds of pastes, one prepared out of neem leaves and the other out of cactus leaves which taste very bitter. If a woman wants to wean the child from the breast milk, she applies either of these pastes on her breasts and the child develops dislike for the milk because of its bitterness. Till the child is able to sit, the mother, wherever she goes, takes the child along with her; she even carries it to the agricultural field during the agricultural operations. She makes the child lie down under a tree on a bed of clothes, feeds the child and keeps one of her grown up sons or daughters incharge and works in the field. Whenever the child cries she goes there and comforts by fondling, kissing and feeding. When the child is about one year old it is left in the home, in charge of a grown up boy or girl. Before leaving for the field the mother makes sure that the child has been fed properly. If the field where she is working is very near she comes to the house in the afternoon and feeds the child and returns to the field again. If the field is very far away the brother or sister, incharge of the child, takes it to the mother in the afternoon for feeding.

For disciplining the child corporal punishment is rarely administered by the mother. It is the job of the father.

The life of boys till they attain the age of 12 or so is more or less free without much responsibility. If at all they are entrusted with any work, it is to look after their small brothers and sisters when their parents are away in the agricultural field.
Mahbubnagar and Khammam District when a Lambadi boy attains the age of 12 or 13, he is entrusted with some economic activity in the house. He has to look after the cattle, take them to the forest for grazing and carry food to his father in the afternoon who is working in the field or some where else, carry errands to his father, and bring water from the well or from a nearby hill stream to the kitchen etc. In Kurnool, Anantapur and Chittor districts a 12 or 13 years old child earns living for himself and also contributes to the family fund. At this age his parents invariably employ him in a ryot's house as a full time worker doing some miscellaneous jobs like looking after the cattle, grazing them in forests, bringing water for the cattle, as well as for domestic purpose, serving food to the other employees of the house, and looking after the children of the master etc. He takes his food in his master's house and sleeps there itself. His master provides him with bedding material and 4 or 5 pairs of clothes every year and he also gives certain amount of money to his father of stipulated in the contract. This period may be considered as a training period for the boys in various fields of work. Whenever the boy finds time he goes to the agricultural fields of his master along with the senior employees and learns the techniques of ploughing, weeding, harvesting etc. By the time he comes to the age of 18 or 19, he is fully trained in agricultural operations and his employment potentiality increases many folds. Whereas in Mahbubnagar and Khammam districts, though a few Lambadis employ their sons as said above, majority of them give special training in agricultural operations. After acquiring sufficient skill in the technique of cultivation the boys engage themselves as permanent labourers in the house of a ryot or they take over the responsibility of cultivation from the fathers.

The bringing up of girls is quite different from that of boys. Girls enjoy little liberty in the house. In every activity preference is given to the boys over the girls. Even during the formative years, girls are trained by their mother, how to behave and conduct themselves properly in front of elders and strangers. They have to look after their small brothers and sisters, when their parents are away, help their mother in the
kitchen, bring h, Before
a girl attains s of cooking and other domestic activities. She also learns the agricultural operations like weeding, harvesting etc. in the field along with her mother.

Lambadis prefer male children to female. Sons contribute to the well being of the family and they remain in the house and look after their parents when they become old; whereas one day or the other they have to send their daughters away from their houses after marriage and they never really contribute their mite for the well being of the family.

*Naming ceremony*: The child is named on the third day called performing *Jalva Dokhano* ceremony. The child is brought in a basket or winnowing fan filled with jowar or paddy to the plit and the name given usually by the midwife who attended the delivery in consultation with father and grand parents of the child. A few Lambadis consult a Brahmin astrologer for giving a name to the child. For instance Bhima Naik of Jadavaraopalle village named his sons and daughters only after consulting a Brahmin astrologer. The most popular names for the boys are, Rana Naik, Lachma Naik, Hande Naik, Somla, Hceta and Mongia and for the girls Lakshmi, Sophia, Bheekia etc. The names like Ramayya, Lakshamayya. Subbaiah among males and Managamma, Somamma, Lakshmamkka, among females are also popular, which clearly indicate the influence of the names of the neighbouring castes. Generally the other caste people of the region ‘suffix’ ‘Ayya’ or ‘Anna’ etc, for the names of the males and ‘Amma’ or ‘Akka’ for the names given to the females. No rites are performed when the child is initiated into learning or sent to school.

*Tonsure ceremony*: Only a few Lambadi households perform tonsure ceremony for both boys and girls when they attain the age of 9 or 10 years. Lambadis say that in the past they were not in the habit of performing this ceremony. This is a newly acquired trait, from the neighbouring castes. Tonsure ceremony, among those who perform it, is very simple. It is performed in the name of the god ‘Balaji’ (another name for Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati). They consult a Brahmin for fixing up the auspicious day and time for the ceremony.
On the fixed day, the boy or girl made to sit in front of the house on a small wooden plank and the maternal uncle cuts a few hair and the rest is removed by the barber. The maternal uncle gets a new shirt and dhoti from the father of the boy. The barber is paid Re. 1 for his services. Then the boy/girl is given hot water bath and draped in new clothes specially stitched for the occasion. Then the host serves vegetarian dinner to the invitees; no liquor is served on this occasion. Altogether the expenses may come to Rs. 100.

Puberty: When a girl comes of her age, she is segregated in a corner of the house and is considered unclean for five days and not allowed to move or touch anything in the house. She is given an earthen plate (chippa) and a tumbler (muntha) for eating food and drinking water respectively. On the evening of the fifth day or early in the morning of the 6th day she is given bath with the water mixed with jajikaya Kunkudukaya and cow’s urine and the pollution is removed. Lambadis never announce publicly when any girl comes of her age and very few people in the Tanda come to know of this. They neither serve food or liquor or the people nor they perform any ceremony. For regular menstruation on pollution is observed; only the girl is required to take bath on the third day. It is said that in the past they used to observe pollution for three days and the woman was not allowed to touch any utensil in the house, though she used to stay in the living hut itself. This change according to Lachmanaik the Reserve Police Sub-Inspector, of Pallegada Tanda has been necessitated by their economic condition. Lambadis are so poor that they cannot afford to loose the services of an earning member of the household very frequently. In this house his wife takes bath daily during the regular menstruation. According to Iyer at the time of first menstruation a girl is considered impure for seven days and she is segregated in a separate hut erected with green leaves outside the house as they believe that a girl in menses is an easy pray of spirits. To ward off this they stick some margosa leaves on the door way. She takes bath on the 7th day, and even after the 7th day she is considered to be under partial pollution for a few days. For regular
menses pollution is observed for one or two days and take bath and change their clothes (Vol. II 1827 ; 168).

*Pre-marital sex relations*: Any pre-marital sex relations between boys and girls is strictly prohibited and if any one violates this rule, a serious view is taken of it. Unmarried girls rather than un-married boys are always reminded by their parents to be careful about such affairs. After puberty, of girl is considered mature physically as well as mentally and her movements in the Tanda as well as outside are restricted. Her parents particularly mother, keep a watch on her lest she should take a wrong step and harm her chances of marriage. Inspite of the restrictions premarital sex relations do take place now and then. If a girl is known to have become pregnant before marriage, the Naik of the Tanda sends for her and her parents, and after reprimanding them asks the girl to reveal the name of her partner. If she reveals the name, the person concerned is summoned and asked to marry the girl and at the same time he is required to pay fine as decided by the Naik. If the person refuses to marry the girl he is forced to pay her a compensation of Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 out of which she pays a fine of Rs. 50 or to the Naik. The boy born outside wedlock is not however considered illegal; if any person belonging to the caste marries the woman, he takes over the responsibility of the child as well.

Aiyer and Nanjundayya mention that "Adultery on the part of the wife is not a serious fault, if the husband is willing to pardon it. It is said that if a man is convicted and is undergoing imprisonment his wife may live with another man of the same caste, bearing him children and after the release of her husband, she may return to him along with the children of her paramour (Vol. II 1928 : 171). At present in no part of Andhra Pradesh this custom is prevalent. It appears that this custom arose in response to the precarious conditions of their life. Since they were declared as criminals even for small faults, the police used to arrest and put them in jail. Left in this helpless condition their wives had frequently to attach themselves to other males who looked after them and their children till the husbands come out of the jail."
Marriage

Permissible Partners: Among the Lambadis marriage within the same gotra or clan is prohibited. Cross cousin marriage is practised in all the parts of Andhra Pradesh among Lambadis. No restrictions or taboos are placed regarding marrying inside or outside their Tandas or villages. Marrying one's own sister's daughters is also becoming more common now-a-days. According to the Lambadis in the past consanguineous marriages were not allowed in their community, but during the last three or four generations, they have adopted the customs of their neighbours among whom they have permanently settled down.

Types of marriages: Monogamy is the general rule in the community but a few Lambadis go in for polygynous marriages. Though there is no customary bar against the number of wives that a person may have, in practice none is found to have more than two wives at a time. If a person marries two women no separate accommodation is provided to each of them. They have to settle and live in cooperation in the same house.

The most important cause to induce a person to acquire a second wife is said to be the barrenness of the first wife. In such cases sometimes a person marries one of the sisters of the first wife.

Girls are married usually after they attain maturity. The age at marriage may vary between 16 and 18 for females and 18 and 25 for males. Though after a girl reaches her puberty, the parents are eager to marry her off, they never take the initiative to seek a bridegroom. The proposal must always come from the boy's side.

Marriage by negotiation among the Lambadis is the popular mode of acquiring bride though, now and then, love marriages and elopements take place. Love marriages are popular with the educated Lambadi boys.

According to the elderly Lambadis, previously they used to celebrate marriage for about eight days and sometimes it used to extend up to 3 months. At present the duration of marriage celebrations are only for three days.

Negotiations for marriage always start from the boy's side.
When the parents decide to acquire a wife for their son, they are on the lookout for a suitable girl. Their relatives and other family friends brief them about the unmarried girls in the neighbouring Tandas. When the parents of the boy consider that a certain girl is suitable for their boy they inform the Naik of the Tanda and fix up a day to visit the girl's Tanda. This decision is not, however, formally communicated to the parents of the girl. Along with the Naik and some other elders of the Tanda, the father of the boy starts for the girls' Tanda on a fixed day. When they reach the girl's house they are cordially invited by the girl's father with the greeting 'Ram Ram' and he gives them water to wash their feet and requests them to take rest on cots. After knowing the reason of their visit, the girl's father will send a word through his son or some other person to the Naik of their Tanda requests him to participate in the conclave. If the Naik is in his house, it is almost obligatory for him to come. After the arrival of the Naik the boy's party directly asks the father of the girl whether he is agreeable to the alliance. Initially the girl's father puts up a face, as if he is not interested to this alliance and shows his hesitation by keeping mum for sometime. After a little persuasion by the Naiks and others of both the Tandas he usually agrees. If he is not interested, he immediately spells out his opinion without keeping it in abeyance and there the matter ends. If the girl's parents agree to the proposal, the boy's party invites them to visit their Tanda. The boy's party on their first visit takes no food in the house of the girl as they believe in the local saying Gathikithe Athakadu (if you take food the alliance will not materialise). After a few days, according to the convenience of the girl's party including the Naik of the Tanda visits the house of the would be bridegroom. Both the parties together fix a day for solemnising the marriage in consultation with the Naik of the Tanda. Some Lambadis consult a Brahmin priest for determining the mukurtam (auspicious moment) and usually the same Brahmin priest presides with performances in the marriage. On this occasion the boy's parents serve the girl's party and the other invites with vegetarian food and the girl's party bears the expenses on liquor. Before the marriage is actually
solemnised both the parties meet once again either in the Tanda of the boy or that of the girl. In this meeting the girl’s father publicly pronounces before the Naiks and elders of the two Tandas, that he would give his daughter in marriage to the boy and on no account would go back on his words. Certain amount is fixed by the Naiks as a fine if any one of the parties backs out of the arrangement. On this occasion the boy’s father distributes betel leaves and nuts among the participants, sometimes he even entertains them with food and also serves liquor. Again, after one week the boy’s party including the Naik of the Tanda, parents of the boy, close relations and the boy himself visits the girl’s house taking along with it some quantity of ghur, betel leaves, nuts and a *hukka* (hubble bubble). Immediately after reaching the girl’s house, they distribute ghur, leaves and nuts to the person present. Then the boy with a rupee coin in his hand touches the hands of all the assembled with the greeting ‘Ram Ram’ and hands over the rupee coin to the Naik of the girl’s Tanda. This rupee coin is called *Sokeno rupia*. After dinner, the bridegroom pays the bride price (voli) to the parents of the girl. Traditionally the bride price should consist of Rs. 41/- and four bullocks. In practice, however, bride price paid varies from family to family according to the economic conditions. Generally, the tendency is to pay a higher bride price as it is considered to be a question of prestige for both the families. Sometimes more than Rs. 500/- may be paid in cash as bride price, in such cases the bridegroom’s party need not give four bullocks; in kind. The payment of bride price accompanied by bantering and jokes on both sides. The bride’s party would say that they have extracted a big amount from the bridegroom’s party, which shows the worth of the girl. On the other hand, the bridegroom’s party would contend that they have purchased the girl by paying a large amount, and that they have to see after marriage the abilities of the girl and judge whether she is worth the amount or not. This kind of jokes in no way affect the relationship between the two parties, it is taken in a lighter sense,

One day before the actual celebration of the marriage, *muhurtham* (Sade Thomar) *Mnde Veedo* ceremony is performed.
This ceremony precedes the departure of bridegroom for the bride’s house. The bridegroom attired in new clothes and with a red turban on his head along with his 'letra' (companion). Usually the younger brother greets all the persons assembled in front of his house with the customary words of greeting ‘Ram Ram’. On this occasion a tent is erected, with a bamboo pole in the centre over which a cloth with attached rings (phulia) is placed and then the four ends of the cloth are tied on the ground with ropes tied to wooden pegs planted in the ground. Two brass pots filled with water are kept on the phulia which are called ‘kallosu’.

The bridegroom, called vettuhad, and his letra are made on sit inside the phulia tent on a mat and their forearms are slightly scalded with a small needle dipped in hot ghee. This is called ‘Vadaidag’. Aiyer has given a slightly different description of the ceremony as follows: “A tent is erected on two poles, ornamented on the top with inverted brass vessels. In each of these vessels a rupee is concealed which becomes the pre-requisite of the Naik. The youngman bathes and dresses himself in clothes peculiar to the caste, namely a pair of red trousers, along red turban measuring 60 cubits, and a pan supari pouch. While entering the tent he has to pass under a new cloth held up in the door way of the house. As he passes the door, two unmarried girls throw rice on his head, singing songs. Within the hut he takes his seat on Kambil, before an assembly consisting of guests of his and neighbouring Tandas. On the four corners of his seat four quarter anna piece are placed with betel leaves and nuts, and a dish with rice. Two married women smear the boy with turmeric paste and throw rice on him. He has now become a “Madavaniga” or vetudu (a bridegroom). He stands up and remains in that posture with folded hands. A boy and a girl both unmarried, stand on either side of him, the boy to the left and the girl to the right. At the bidding of the head of the caste, they take handful of rice from the basin, throw it on the bridegroom, head and retire. Then on the second pair (a boy and a girl) repeat the procedure. The bridegroom then steps out of his seat and bows before the members of the assembly, repeating the ‘Ram Ram’. The guests then arrange themselves for
dinner, after which the bridegroom distributes pan supari to them. Five duster pieces are given to the Naik on behalf of the Guru of the Caste. The bridegroom with a coconut in his hands, seeks permission of the assembly to set out for the bride’s house” (Vol. II, 156, 157). While doing ‘vadadlag’ to the bridegroom and his younger brother with needle as said earlier the women sing the song.

On the following day before the daybreak the women prepare ‘panakam’ (a sweet liquid prepared with jaggery). After the preparation of ‘panakam’ the bridegroom dressed in full wedding dress and with a dagger tucked in his waist comes to the tent where all the people of the Tanda would have already assembled. The bridegroom greets all the assembled uttering ‘Ram Ram’ and distributes ‘panakam’ and requests them to partake.

Again the bridegroom stands up and requests all the participants to give him permission to proceed to the girl’s Tanda for the celebration of the marriage. So all the participants nod their heads with the words. ‘Ram Ram’. Taking leave from his parents and other elders the bridegroom starts along with his companion to the would be father-in-law’s house. The women weep loudly. Usually the bridegroom and companion only go to the bride’s house. Sometimes a few elders may follow them.

The bridegroom with his party after reaching the outskirts of the girl’s Tanda, sends his companion alone into the Tanda to convey his arrival. The companion as a mark of friendship offers his tobacco pipe to the girl’s party and they in turn offer him, hukka. The Naik and some males and females start for the place where the bridegroom is waiting, taking with them some food and water. The bridegroom distributes the sweet dish which he has brought with him to the people who have come to welcome him. The bridegroom’s party partakes the food then and there, while the bride’s party checks the articles brought by the bridegroom. The bridegroom presents Re. 1 to each of the women who has come to welcome him. After taking the permission of the Naik the bridegroom is escorted to the Tanda. In front of the girl’s house he is given
water by the girl’s mother to wash his feet and after this he is escorted inside the house where all the women of the girl’s Tanda surround him and check the articles brought by him. The girl’s brother serves him with a sweet dish prepared out of rice flour, jaggery and ghee. The bridegroom in return presents the girl’s mother with Rs. 2. Aiyer mentions that the women start weeping loudly immediately the bridegroom enters the house as they feel that they have welcomed a stranger into their midst who will be depriving them of their girl after some time (1925 Vol. II; 157). The ceremonies end for the day with the presentation of Rs. 2 to mother-in-law by the son-in-law. All the people of the Tanda are entertained with a vegetarian feast.

For the ceremonies of the following day a pandal is erected. It is supported by four bamboo poles and covered by big blankets.

The bridegroom and the bride get up early in the morning, take bath and dress up in new clothes. Panakam is prepared and served to all the people present. After drinking the panakam the brother of the girl, brings a big brass plate and holds it in front of the groom and requests him to put in the plate all the articles brought by him from his house. The groom, besides the articles, also puts Rs. 3 in the plate. The articles are taken to the bride and shown to her. Of the Rs. 3 one goes to the Naik, one goes to the bride’s parents and the third one is kept as share for the bridegroom. In the evening the central portion of the marriage pandal is neatly swept and smeared with cowdung and on each corner of the square they pile 9 earthen pots. In the centre of the square they keep one wooden plank, which is called pendilipeeta, or ‘kotoott’ in their language. In between the pots they keep two wooden pegs which are decorated with mango leaves.

In the evening both the bride and the bridegroom are given oil bath separately and the women smear their feet, hands and face with turmeric paste. After they have put on their wedding clothes, they are escorted into the marriage booth. First the bridegroom is escorted by the women into the booth and made to sit on a wooden plank. The women and children tease him by flinging old clothes and torn blouses of the bride
at him, sometimes it is said that the women manhandle him, though jokingly. He has to withstand all these pranks for about five minutes without raising a single word against them. After the arrival of the bride all these pranks are stopped and every one, including the women, assumes respectable demeanour towards the bride and the bridegroom. The bride always sits to the left of the bridegroom. The bridegroom with an axe in his hand, along with the bride, goes to a nearby cowdung heap and put a four anna coin on it, bends his head in respect and returns to the pandal and takes his seat. The women again smear the bridal pair with turmeric and apply oil on their heads. Meanwhile the Brahmin Purohit who comes to preside over the marriage ceremony stands in a corner facing the abusive behaviour of the Lambadi women. They beat him, pluck his hair and sometimes they spit on him. He has to face all these attacks with a smiling face. The treatment meted to the Brahmin priest is said to be vicarious enactment of the vengeance against the Brahmin, by the Lambadi women for mercilessly leaving his three daughters in the forest, as said in the legend of Mola and Mota. Before the couple is made to sit on the wooden plank, four earthen pots are kept on the four corners inside the square and a thread is wound round the pots 7 times touching all the pots.

When the bridal pair sits on the wooden plank, the Brahmin Purohit removes the thread around the pots and hands over it to the groom who in turn invests the thread in the neck of the bride with seven knots. The groom is given a tali (silver marriage locket) who shows the same to all the assembled and with their consent invest the bride with the same. Afterwards a fire is kindled in front of the pandal and the Brahmin priest pours oil and ghee in it. He requests the bridal pair to walk around the fire seven times. With this, the main marriage celebrations are over. The couple is then led inside the house and made to sit facing each other. Some sweet balls (prepared with rice flour, ghee and jaggery) are put in the middle and the assembled women ask them to feed each other. Usually the groom takes the initiative and the bride remains shy
and reluctant. While the husband and wife feed each other the women around them go into ecstasy of merry making.

Next day, early in the morning, the newly wed bride and groom take their bath and put on new clothes. The mother-in-law touches the shoulders of her son-in-law seven times and requests him to look after her daughter properly and affectionately. The son-in-law presents her with Rs. 2. The father of the bride presents her with one bullock out of the four bullocks received as bride price and sufficient number of skirts. The couple distribute coconuts among the assembled and starts for the groom’s Tanda. At the time of their departure the girl’s mother and other women of the Tanda weep loudly and sing some songs conveying their pangs of separation. The girl also weeps loudly and makes no movement to follow her husband who virtually has to drag her. Aiyer records the following songs by the girl while taking leave of her father.

"Chuta giyay mari bapuri haveli
Khoyesi pivasi mangri
Mari Nayaka bapuri mangri."

"My father’s house I leave. May they feed well and drink well, our Nayak and my father." She also repeats the song.

Guzaratini Yadi
Ummariyadu bhapu
Kesariyadu Viranalu
Havel chodiyalu yadi.

My mother is a Guzeratini. My father is ummariyav. My brother is Kesaiya. They will leave me here (Vol. II: 168). The girl will be weeping until she passes the outskirts of the Tanda. Her husband never tries to comfort her when they are still in her Tanda. He says a few kind words and comforts her only when they leave behind the people of his wife’s Tanda. The girl takes some presents to her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and to the wives of her husband’s brothers. Generally the gifts consist of skirts and upper clothes. The couple is received warmly in the Tanda by the parents of the boy. The girl immediately presents the gifts to her mother-in-law, sister-in-law
and wives of her husband’s brothers. The consummation of the marriage takes place on the same night. The groom’s sister arranges the bed for the couple in a separate room and the groom sleeps on it keeping a coconut under his head. Meanwhile his wife sleeps in a separate room. At about mid night her sister-in-law comes to her and wakes her up and informs that her husband is waiting to talk to her in the other room and that she may go and talk to him. The sister-in-law escorts her into the room and the groom makes a pretence that he is getting up from a deep sleep and presents his sister with the coconut along with a rupee. His sister withdraws from the room. With this all the ceremonies connected with the marriage are over.

The above is a description of the ideal pattern. But at present many changes are taking place in their marriage practices, due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindu castes and the desire of the Lambadis to cut short the long procedures involving heavy expenses.

Love Marriage

It has become common among the educated Lambadi boys to select their own spouses and intimate their parents later. It is found that generally they select their spouses among the Lambadis only to which their parents readily give their consent. Some rich Lambadis themselves are looking for educated boys to give their daughters in marriage. Sometimes it is reported that they themselves move the matter first with the boy, after taking the consent of the boy they negotiate with his parents. Educated boys are fond of marrying in rich and educated Lambadi families. In some cases the boys develop intimacy with the girls even before the marriage. After their college or high school education they secure government jobs and were posted far away from their villages whereby they develop intimate relations with the local Lambadis families ultimately leading to marriage ties with the girls of those families. Lachamma Naik of Chapancheruvu Tanda after completing college education, was employed as a Reserve Police Sub-Inspector, stated that usually the parents gave their consent for such kind of marriage; there were however, cases where the
parents refused to give their consent. In some of these cases the boys broke away from their parents and married the girl of their choice.

**Widow Remarriage**

Widow remarriage is practised, and no social stigma is attached to the widow after marriage. If a woman becomes widow the first preference is given to her husband’s younger brother to marry her. If the younger brother is not interested then only she can marry any other person according to her wish. In such cases a widow is expected to marry a widower, but there is no objection to her marrying any other person. It has been claimed by some Lambadis, that in the past, the rule of junior levirate was very strictly enforced. If the younger was not of age, the widow could stay with another person and bear him children, until her deceased husband’s younger brother came of age when she was expected to join him with her children. Thurston observed “if an elder brother marries and dies without offspring the younger brother must marry the widow and raise up children being regarded as those of the deceased elder brother; if however, the elder brother dies leaving offspring, and the younger brother wishes to marry the widow, he must have fifteen rupees and three oxen to his brother’s children. Then he may marry the widow. The custom here referred to is said to be practised because the Lambadis ancestor Sugriva married his elder brother Valis widow” (Thurston Vol. IV, 1909, 225). But at present they have discarded this custom and even marrying husband’s younger brother is not considered an obligation on the part of the widow. The Lambadis seem to have struck a golden mean between the two extremes. At present if the widow is not willing to marry her husband’s younger brother she can marry any other person from their castes provided the person pays some compensation in cash to her deceased husband’s younger brother. If any person wants to marry a widow, there are two ways; one is to approach the widow directly and the second is to approach the Naik of the Tanda. If a person approaches a widow for marriage, and if she agrees, both of them together inform their decision to the Naik of the Tanda who formally gives his approval. If on the
other hand a person approaches the Naik of the Tanda first, the Naik ascertains the widow and informs the concerned person. If the widow is willing to take some voli (bride price) it is fixed, which is usually Rs. 200, in consultation with the Naik and the amount is paid to the parents of the widow. After paying the voli the person concerned brings the widow to his Tanda without any ceremony. In Anantapur district the person presents the widow with a new saree and a blouse piece in the presence of the Naik and relatives and he offers liquor at his own expense to those who are present. This ceremony is called Bhannu in their language and they also call it as Cheerakattinchadam in Telugu. After reaching his Tanda he invites all his community people to a vegetarian meal and serves them with liquor also. The widow after marriage is allowed to wear all type of ornaments and the children born to her second husband enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other member of the society. She can also bring her children by her former husband along with her with the consent of her second husband. If the person concerned does not agree, the widow invariably refuses marry him and she waits for a person who would agree to take her along with her children. It is the responsibility of the second husband to look after the children until they are settled in life.

Divorce

Divorce is allowed among the Lambadis, the usual causes being unfaithfulness of the partners, barrenness of the women and quarrels between the families of the wife and the husband. The cases of divorce are settled by the caste panchayat. Both the husband and the wife can move the caste panchayat. The panchayat consists of the Naik of the Tanda and some elderly persons. The decision is taken only after giving a hearing to both the parties. Generally, the Naik advises the couple not to separate. But if his persuasion fails then only the case is taken up for hearing. If the wrong lies with the husband, he is fined sometimes to the extent of Rs. 150, and with this amount the Naik and the elders of the panchayat enjoy a sumptuous non-vegetarian feast. In such case the wife need not return her bridé price to the husband. If the panchayat decides that the wrong
is with the woman, either she has to return the bride price herself or the person who marries her.

After the divorce has been effected the woman has to return to her former husband all the ornaments and clothes given to her by him; she can, however, take along with her those articles which are strictly considered personal. If she has any suckling baby, she can take the same with her. If her former husband agrees, she can also take with her other children aged below 6, but are required to be sent to him after they grow up. The responsibility of bringing them up, settle them in life and getting them married rests with the father.

Death

When death occurs in a Lambadi family, the body is brought out of the hut and placed outside in the front card on a cot. Immediately a messenger is despatched to inform the relatives, and friends of the deceased. The body is given a hot water bath, smeared with turmeric powder and wrapped in a new cloth. Generally married persons are cremated and unmarried persons are buried. After giving bath to the body, jaggery and ghee mixed together is put into the mouth of the deceased and a four anna coin is tied in a corner of the cloth spread on the corpse. The deceased person’s wife comes in front of the corpse weeping and removes her ornaments. Meanwhile a bier is made with bamboos and some straw is spread on it. After the arrival of all relatives and others who wish to pay their last homage to the deceased, four kinsmen carry the body on their hand and keep it on the then they take it on their shoulders and move to the cremation ground. The chief mourner, the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front of the bier carrying fire in a pot in one hand and some cooked rice in the other. All the relatives follow the bier. After reaching the outskirts of the Tanda or half way to the cremation ground they stop the procession and the bier is kept on the ground and the cloth with coin is torn and thrown in a bush. The chief mourner puts some rice on a nearby stone or under a tree. If a crow touches the rice they believe that the person had died without any wish unfulfilled. Again they start the procession and after reaching the cremation ground the bearers take the
bier three times round the pyre and place the corpse on the pyre, the head facing towards the north. After covering the body with firewood the chief mourner lits the pyre and touches the head of the deceased as a mark of respect. All the persons sit around the pyre until the body is completely consumed by the fire. While returning from the cremation or burial ground they do not go to the Tanda through the same path by which they had come. They take a zig zag route, sometimes going round a few bushes and trees. It seems that there is a traditional belief that the spirit of the dead may return along with them to the Tanda if they go directly, so they resort to this kind of tactics to mislead the spirit. While returning from the cremation ground they take bath in a nearby well or hill stream. They keep a pot of water at the spot where the person breathed his last. It is explained that there is a belief that the spirit of the dead in case it feels thirsty, can drink from the pot.

The obsequies are performed on the third day after the death. The chief mourner and some other relatives go to the cremation ground and pour some milk, and then keep some quantity of cooked rice on the spot where the person was cremated. After their return they take bath and change their clothes. They are offered a vegetarian feast provided by the household of the deceased and with this pollution is removed. L.A.K. Aiyer observes that Lambadis conduct some tests to see whether the deceased has gone to heaven, reborn somewhere. According to him when the elders go to the cremation ground on the third day they examine the ashes. If there are no foot marks they presume that the deceased has gone to heaven. If they see any foot mark they presume that he has been reborn and if the foot marks belong to animals they believe that he has taken the form of an animal. If the marks are indistinguishable they presume that he has turned into a ghost (Vol, II ; 1928, pp. 120-191).

Children and unmarried people are buried. As in case of cremation in case of burial also, the pollution period is only three days. It is reported that in all places at present many Lambadis are resorting to burial both in the case of married as well as unmarried. It is mainly due to economic reasons. They
say that cremation is costlier than burial. Cremation requires at least 1 cart load of fuel, which may cost near about 30 to 40 rupees, whereas burial is very simple and a grave can be dug at a cost of Rs. 5.

The Lambadis believe that a person dies when his jeev (soul) leaves his body. According to Roop Singh of Khammam even a person suffering from a dreadful disease will not die as long as his jeev is there is his body, then only he dies. Even a man without any disease may die when his jeev leaves his body. After death one’s jeev may either go to heaven or hell or he may be reborn according to his deeds when he was alive. Sometimes if a person dies with some unfulfilled desires he may turn into a ghost and try to satisfy his desire.

Religion

The Lambadis mostly claim themselves to be Hindus and worship many of the deities of Hindu Pantheon. The Lambadis of Andhra Pradesh show special reverence to the deity Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati whom they call as ‘Balaji’. Most of them have infinite faith in him and keep a picture of Lord Venkateshwara and worship him every Saturday by offering him fruits and milk. Besides Lord Venkateswara, they also keep the pictures of Lord Krishna, Rama and Siva. Of the above three they show some special reverence to Lord Krishna. Many Lambadis houses are having pictures of Lord Krishna decorated with garlands and vermilion.

Besides the Hindu Pantheon they also worship local gods and goddesses for different purposes. These deities are also worshipped by local Hindu castes. Following are some of the deities propitiated by the Lambadis.

Maramma

She is considered a malevolent deity and is supposed to have power over epidemics like cholera and small pox. Unless she is appeased once in a year she may ravage the Tandas by spreading epidemics. Lambadis look at her with fear and reverence. They sacrifice a goat in the name of this deity during the month of May.
Tulchamma
She is considered a benevolent deity and is believed to have power over crops and welfare of the Tanda. They worship her in the month of September by sacrificing a goat.

Bhumi Lakshamamma or Bhumi Devatha
She is supposed to have powers over the fertility of land. If she is worshipped once in a year, they believe, she increases the fertility of land. She is strictly a vegetarian deity and is worshipped in the month of December. On the day of worship the Lambadis take bath early in the morning and put on washed clothes. The women prepare puri and moi, go to their respective fields and put puri and mai on all the four corners of the field. They partake puri and moi in the field itself and return home.

Besides the above important deities they also show reverence to the following deities (1) Gangamma (2) Peddamma (3) Elaramma (4) Huliamma, (5) Mallalamma and (6) Ankalamma. These deities are more popular with the people of other castes of the region and are not worshipped by Lambadis every year but once in three or four years.

Maramma, Tulchamma and Maisamma are represented by stones at some distances from the Tanda. Before the worship they whitewash these stones and put vermilion marks on it. Whenever they make a sacrifice to a deity all the people of the Tanda together purchase a sacrificial animal and offer it. The meat is distributed among all the families of the Tanda. Each Lambadi family in the Tanda must contribute for purchasing the sacrificial animal whenever the Naik and elders of the Tanda decide it. Only after contributing to it, the individual households are free to sacrifice their own birds or animals individually.

Lambadis have their own caste deities to whom they show respect and reverence. People belonging to Mude clan worship three Saktis called Hunasakti, Kosasakti and Manisakti. In the past these three were worshipped very frequently but at present they rarely worship them. Thurston has quoted Stuart according whom the Sugalis of Punganur and Palammer in the North Arcot District, “Worship the Triupathi Swamy
and also two saktis called Kosa Sakti and Manisakti. Some three hundred years ago, they say that there was a feud between the Bukia and Mudusugalis, and in a combat many were killed on both sides, but the widows of only two of the men who died were willing to perform Sati, in consequence of which they have been devoted and are now worshipped as Saktis by all the divisions” (Vol. IV, 1909 : 24).

Lambadi women worship three female deities called Agarasi, Nagarasi and Khagarasi. These three women deities are supposed to be the three daughters of the Brahmin whom the three adopted sons of Mola married.

Bhavani is another deity which Lambadis alone worship. They say that their dances are performed only to appease the Goddess Bhavani. They feel that if they stop their traditional dancing, the Goddess may be angry, with the result that the Lambadis may be afflicted by natural calamities and epidemics. They say that they appeal to the goddess in time of difficulties and dangers and the appeal never go unheard. The goddess is represented by a big stone placed on a heap of stones outside the habitation area. Once in a year they worship her by sacrificing a goat. On the day of the worship they smear the stone with lime and put vermillion marks on it.

Every Tanda has got a religious flag, either red or white in colour in triangular shape. This flag sometimes is fixed in the centre of the habitation or at the outskirts of the habitation tucked in a tree. There is no hard and fast rule for the location of the flag. The Lambadis say that this flag was created by Mola himself. When he established three gotras in the name of his three adopted sons, he decided that all of them together should have a common flag so that their Tandas can be identified from others. For maintaining the connexion among the people in a Tanda the office of Naik or headman is also believed to have been created by Mola himself.

They celebrate all the Hindu festivals like, Diwali, Dussera, Sri Rama Navami, and also the Telugu New Year’s day ‘Ugadi’ which are in vogue among other castes also of the region. They celebrate Holi festival with great zeal and pomp, few days prior to the Holi festival the women of the Tanda go to the neighbouring villages and dance in front of the houses
of big landlords and collect money and grain as gifts. One
day prior to the Holi festival the Naik of the Tanda observes
and worships two clay images representing Manmadha (the
love god of cupid) and his wife Rathidevi. On the morning
of the festival day, all the households of the Tanda worship
these two images and after offering cooked food consisting of
rice, dal and one sweet dish. From morning to evening they
engage in dancing and merry making by throwing coloured
water and powder on each other. Men and women freely mix
and make fun, cut jokes and dance in groups, giving full expres-
sion to their hilarity. In the night they perform **Kamadahanam**
i.e. burning of the images. They collect some fuel and make a
pyre of it and put the images on it and set fire to it with loud
noises. They relish non-vegetarian food on this day and con-
sume enormous quantities of liquor. According to Aiyer, "just
before the Hili feast Banjara women go out in parties to collect
money for the occasion. They go to the surrounding village
and dance and sing before persons likely to give them presents.
They beat time with short stick (kolat) in their hands, and
sing indecent songs but are fortunately unintelligible to most of
the hearers. They spend the money in feasting, for which they
kill one or two goats. The males celebrate their part of the
feast in a different way, but no meat is allowed on that day."
(1928, 188).

On the day of Holi festival itself the Lambadis of Palayam-
palle, Singampalle and Sugulimetta celebrate a ceremony called
"Pagaceremony" ((turban ceremony). All the people of the
Tanga together purchase a big turban and go to the house of
the Naik. One elderly person ties the turban on the head of
the Naik as a token of their affection towards him.

Many Lambadis visit Tirupathi the abode of Lord Ven-
kateshswara at least once in a year, either to fulfil their past
vows made to him or ask for some new favours. Whenever
they visit Tirupathi Hills they invariably offer some money
and their hair to the God. They have got staunch faith in
the powers of Lord Venkateshwar and in every kind
of difficulty they ask for his intervention. They believe
that Alvelumanga, the wife Lord Veakateshwar, or Balaji
as they call him, was a Lambadi woman, and because of this
they say that Venkateshwara has got a soft-corner towards his wife’s relatives and community people.

Their concepts of heaven and hell are similar to those of other Hindus of the region. The believe that heaven is a reward given to a person after his death if he has done good deeds when he was alive; likewise hell is a punishment meted to a person if he was bad in his life.

They identify soul with jeev. They say a person dies when his jeev leaves his body and the same jeev is responsible for the rebirth of a person or transmigration. Again they apply the same standard to say who takes rebirth and the form they take. The person who has done ‘punya’ may be reborn in a higher caste, otherwise he may turn into the form of an animal.

They believe in evil spirits. Whenever a person falls ill, they believe that some evil spirit has attacked him. They sometimes also feel, that evil looks of another person affect a person and makes him sick. They call it ‘Dristi Tagilindi’. To counteract this they take some grain, chillies, betel leaves and nut and move these things three times around the sick person and throw it in the street with the belief that if any person crosses these things he will be affected and the sick person will be cured. This they do to counteract ‘Dristi tiyuta’.

Belief in witchcraft and sorcery is found to prevail even among some educated Lambadis. When a person suddenly falls ill or is visited by misfortune, there is a tendency to attribute the same to black magic perpetrated by an enemy. Earlier ethnographers have also mentioned about this belief among Lambadis. Aiyer has quoted Lyoll as follows: “The Banjaras are terribly vexed by witchcraft, to which their wandering and precarious existence especially exposed them in the shape of fever, rheumatism and dysentery. Solemn inquiries are still held in the wild jungles where these people came but like gypsies, and many an unlucky has been strangled to sentence by their secret Tribunals (1928, 179). A.B. Aiyer, writing in Mirror, says that the Banjaras have a strong belief in witchcraft. Women are generally supposed to be proficient in black art, and are often accused of having caused sickness to a person or brought calamity on a family. Witch doctors are employed in
driving the witches and a woman dubbed as a sorcerer is secretly done to death. Many a Banjara woman has been tortured to death under this horrid suspicion” (1963, December).

**Inter-community Relationship**

Lambadis are not treated as untouchables in any part of Andhra Pradesh. No restrictions are placed on the community in the matter of entering into the temples or other places of worship, nor are they restricted against drawing water from a common well in the village. It appears that not only at present, but even in the past, there were no restrictions regarding the admission into the temples or drawing water from a common well. They are served by the Brahmin purohit, village barbers and washermen. In their ritual status they are considered to be lower than Brahmins. Lingayats, Komatis and Reddis, but at par with service castes like, washermen, barbers etc. They are considered to be definitely higher than castes like Mala, Madiga, laggali etc. The Lambadis however cannot enter into the inner house of Brahmin, Komatis and Lingayats even for cleaning the kitchen; but some Reddy households allow Lambadis even inside the kitchen for cooking as well as cleaning the water for domestic purposes also.

Excepting Brahmins, Komatis and Lingayats all the other caste people accept food from the Lambadis. In Anantapur and Kurnool districts, Reddis do not accept kachcha food though they accept pucca food (coffee, milk etc.) from Lambadis on their part accept food from all the higher castes, but do not touch food given by the scheduled castes like Mala and Madiga. They consider them as untouchables and their touch is considered polluting.

The Lambadi are a migrant community and keep aloof from the main villages. They have not yet been fully integrated in the regional social structure. Though economic cooperation between Lambadis and other neighbouring communities exists, social interaction is sometimes rather meagre. Lambadi labourers, both male and female are engaged by the ryots of neighbouring villages. During agricultural operations borrow-
of agricultural implements and exchange of services among Lambadis and others are normal. But as regards the social life in the village, it may be said that Lambadi settlements with their inhabitants stand aloof from the main villages. This trend is still more perceptible with the women folk of the Lambadis. They live in their own world without mixing with other women in the main villages, except in agricultural fields. Though the males now and then go to the main village in connection with their economic pursuits or some formal aspects of community life, they rarely go there for informal social visits. Even the Lambadi members in village panchayat rarely attend the panchayat meetings when these are held in the main village to discuss the problems of the main village.

Particularly in Andhra area, even the castes which are on par with Lambadis in their social status never invite them to participate in social performances connected with birth, marriage and death nor do the Lambadis invite them on such occasions. Even though the social aloofness is gradually disappearing in many fields, it is most rigidly observed in the matter of intercaste marriage. During the field investigation, not a single case of such marriage involving the Lambadis was reported.

In Telengana area the position is slightly different. As mentioned earlier here efforts are being made by individuals and organisations to raise their social status by changing their dress and some of the customs, particularly those relating to marriage procedures.

In the matter of inter-community relation involving the Lambadis in Telengana area wealth and education count very much. In Jadavaraopalle Tanda the Naik, a wealthy man, is invited by Brahmans, Reddis and other so-called higher castes to their marriages and other ceremonies and in turn he also invites them to participate in the ritual performances in the house.

He is invited when a decision concerning welfare of the village is taken and it is said that sometimes he is even invited to participate in the deliberations of the panchayats of other castes. But even in his family, the women folk live in isolation, and rarely mix with the women of the other caste.
In the urban areas, the educated young Lambadis, sometimes have close personal contact with persons belonging to other caste; but rarely such contacts are crystallised to change the traditional inter-group relations.

Social Control, Leadership

Every Lambadi Tanda has got its own traditional Panchayat consisting of the Nayak and the Karabari, and a few experienced elders. Social control is exercised in the Tanda through various sanctions like fine, pressure of public opinion, etc. The Nayak or headman presides over all the deliberations and announces the decisions in all the cases which comes under his jurisdiction. He represents the collective goodwill and authority of the community on occasions like marriage, death and on various festivals. Without his presence no function or ceremony is complete. He is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the Tanda. Generally, he personally knows all the people in the Tanda and their affairs. Ideally he is expected to possess the qualities of honesty, truthfulness, integrity, bravery, and in addition he must have an understanding of all the problems connected with his Tanda. There is, however, always the big gap between the ideal and the real.

Nayak is assisted by Karabari in all the matters. In the absence of Nayak, he officiates for him.

The posts of Nayak and Karabari are hereditary, but this rule is applied in a flexible manner. Generally the elder son of the Nayak succeeds the father, but if the Nayak thinks that the eldest son is not capable of shouldering the responsibility, he may name any other son to succeed him. Sometimes the people of the Tanda themselves may take the initiative and suggest to the Nayak whom he should nominate as his successor.

If the Nayak dies without any male issue, the people of the Tanda elect any person from the Tanda whom they consider to be capable and intelligent; but generally preference is given to the persons of the Naik’s clan (goth).

In the past, the Lambadis used to perform a special cere-
mony called page during the installation of a new Nayak. They used to invite all the Nayaks of that neighbouring Tandas to participate in it. In the presence of those Nayaks and the villagers a few Lambadi elders used to place a new incumbent to this post. After this, the new chief would entertain all the assembled persons with a non-vegetarian feast accompanied by plenty of liquor. At present the ceremony of succession is rarely performed. Even when it is performed, the Nayaks from the neighbouring Tandas are not invited. The reason gives for this change is that at present, with the establishment of statutory panchayats, the importance of the post of Nayak has very much gone down.

The post of Karabari is also hereditary. When it Karabari dies generally his eldest son succeeds to the post. But, as in case of the Nayak, in the case of Karabari also, the rule is not applied rigidly. At the discretion of the Karbari any of his sons can succeed to the post. Besides, the Nayak also has some say in this matter. He may even suggest a person, not belonging to the heir of the Karabari, to succeed to the post. But such cases, ignoring the heirs of the Karabari, are extremely rare.

If the Tanda is a very large settlement, with many streets, each street may have its own Nayak and above each of them there is another Nayak for the entire settlement called Pedda Nayak (Big Nayak). If the settlement contains people of other castes as well, very frequently they have their own heads called 'Kulapedda' or 'Pedda manishi'. When the panchayat considers any case concerning the village as a whole these heads are also invited to take part in the deliberations.

There is a state organisation of the Lambadis called Banjara Sevak Sangh, with its branches in the districts. But this organisation is more concerned with welfare activities among the Lambadis than with settling of disputes and other matters of purely local interest.

Any person can approach the Nayak to convene a meeting of the panchayat to settle a dispute in which he is interested. It is said that in the past the panchayat used to decide cases relating to land disputes, crimes and other matters. One old man in Chapancheruvu Tanda commented that in the past even
Police could never interfere with their internal matters because the Nayak and the village elders could enforce their decisions effectively. Usually a fine was imposed on the guilty party which was mainly used to compensate the aggrieved party. Sometime the fine could be as high as Rs. 900/-. It, however, appears that this is an idealised version of the institution.

At present the fine imposed by the traditional panchayat rarely exceeds Rs. 300/-. It appears that though there is a tendency among many not to accept the decision of the panchayat, they are forced to abide by it under the pressure of public opinion.

According to Aiyer: "Formerly the Nayaks had powers of life and death, which of course have fallen into disuse in recent times. Whenever a guilty person was tried for a very serious fault, such as witch-craft, the Nayak was assisted by a panchayat, who gave the accused an opportunity to defend himself. Under the Nayak, is a man styled Karabari, locally known as Budhivant, who presides over meetings of minor importance in the absence of the Nayak. .......... Their code of laws prescribes punishments for all breaches of caste discipline and crimes and the decision of Nayak on the several points submitted to him can never be called in question." (1928; 174).

He further reported, "Banjaras do many modes of trial by ordeal which have all nearly gone out of practice. One of them is to ask a woman suspected of incontinency, to take up in her hand a twig of the margosa tree, which is specially associated with Mariamma; the guilty woman was afraid of touching for fear of bringing on her the wrath of this cruel goddess.* Ordeal by fine was also much practised. Another method of testing the character of woman is to ask her to allow the man suspected of improper intimacy with her, to suck her milk, an act which none but the most hardened would agree to do, since it would be considered equivalent to an incest of a particularly revolting type. They believe in the efficacy of oaths, and the oath most sacred to them is one taken in the name of Sevaya Bhaya" (1928: 177).

Lambadis are aware that in the past they had trial by
ordeal, and they mention the following methods which were used quite often:—

To prove one's innocence they used to ask the accused to dip his hands in boiling water, or oil. If his hands were burnt he was considered guilty, the hands remained unscalded, his innocence was established. The second method was to ask the accused to catch the fire with his hands. These methods have been completely discarded now.
CHAPTER 5
LIFE STYLE—KARNATAKA & KERALA
THE KORAGAS

THE KORAGA is regarded as one of the most backward communities of South India which until recently led the life of agrestic slaves—bought and sold with land. According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956, Koraga is notified as a Scheduled Tribe in Malabar area of Kerala State and throughout Tamil Nadu except Kanya Kumari District and Shenocotta Taluk of Tirunelveli District. In Karnataka the community is notified as a Scheduled Tribe in a very small area, viz., the South Kanara District and the Kollegal Taluk of Mysore District. It would seem that it is a marginal community. While some regard it as a tribal community, the other consider it a Depressed Caste. In fact, in the 1931 Census the Koraga was treated as a Depressed Caste in the Districts of Bellary, Mysore and South Kanara and according to the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936, and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, it was notified as a Scheduled Caste in the same area. It was only in the Presidential Order of 1956 that the community has been accorded the status of a Scheduled Tribe. Scholars like Aiyappan (1948, 114) have expressed the opinion that the community although classed among the depressed classes is so backward that no other tribe is in a more primitive stage than the Koraga.
The name Koraga, it would seem, has many phonetic variations. Campbell (1883: 370-71) refers to them as ‘Korars’ or ‘Korgars’ while Buchanan calls them ‘Corar’ or ‘Corawar’ (Vol. II 1801: 271-272). It would appear that due to the Tulu accent of the term the Koraga might have been referred by Buchanan as ‘Corar’ or ‘Corawar’. Thus, the earlier writers have used Koraga, Koragas, Korar, Corar, Corawar and Korgars to mean the same community. Koragar is the plural of ‘Koraga’ in Kannada language and as such some authors have used ‘Koraga’ in the singular form, while the others have used ‘Koragar’, the Kannada plural for Koraga. Likewise some authors have referred to the tribe as ‘Korgars’, the plural form in English. It came to light that the community is mostly referred to as ‘Korrū’ or ‘Koragu’ by the members of their own community as well as outsiders.

The etymological meaning of the word ‘Koraga’ is not very clear. However, Aiyappan (op. cit.) has observed that ‘Koraga’ may be a corruption of ‘Kuruvar’ of hill-man. But he has further observed that the first part of the name has a new significance. He has stated that ‘Kora’ is a name applied to sects among some northern tribes—the Gadaba, Muka Dora and Rona and implies sun. He believes that this term is indicative of the sun worship carried on by the Koraga which is also reflected in the practice of naming their children after days in the week in the fashion of Tulu hill tribes of north. Although the custom of naming the children after the days of a week still continues among the Koraga, it is not certain whether the name of the community has also been derived from ‘Kora’ associated with the tribes which worship sun and name their children after the days of week. Further, at present there is no strong evidence of sun worship among the community.

It would appear that the Koraga have also been sometimes associated with ‘Korama’ and ‘Koracha’ which are separately notified as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe in certain parts of Karnataka. The ‘Korama’ as well as ‘Koracha’ each is notified as a Scheduled Caste in the old Mysore state while ‘Korama’ is treated as a Scheduled Tribe in Coorg District of Karnataka. (Cambell op. cit.) groups Koraga, Korama
and Koracha. But it is doubtful whether Koraga is actually synonymous with Korama and Koracha. The Korama who are treated as Scheduled Tribe in Coorg District of Karnataka are considered as district from Koraga. It would appear that the similarities in the names as well as the traditional occupation of Koraga, Korama and Koracha led to their being identified with each other. Sturrock has given the explanation that it is, perhaps the similarity of their name and common traditional occupation of basket making that has resulted in the Koramas, Korachas as well as Korars or Yerukalas being considered as allied communities, (1894 : 176-178). In this connection it may be mentioned here that even today basket making is carried on as the traditional occupation by the Koraga as well as others mentioned above. Kakade believes that besides their similarity of occupation their common habit of nomadism might have also contributed to the Koraga being clubbed with the others (1949 : 144).

But Venkataraman has recorded an interesting legend stating that Koraga have their own story about the origin of the world and their community. The legend as recorded by him goes as follows:

“Once there was a big deluge and nothing survived except a youth and a maiden. They caught hold of a log of wood which they found inside a big cave and spent three days in that precarious condition. On the forth day God appeared before them. By then the flood had also subsided. Addressing the youth God enquired of him in what relation he stood to the maiden. The youth was silent probably due to hunger. Then God gave both of them food and went away. The same thing was repeated on the third day also. On the fourth day when the same question was repeated by God, the youth after some hesitation said that they were both husband and wife. God smiled and blessing them disappeared.” (1951 : 97-98)

The second part of the legend relates to the origin of the Koraga themselves and it is started:

“Long after God appeared again before the couple. By that time the work of creation was completed; the world
was full of green plants, colourful flowers, beautiful birds and animals and the couple were the parents of as many as three hundred children. God smiled within himself and gathered all the children around him. Then he divided them into groups and assigned them different functions. In this way four castes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras were created. In the end four boys and four girls remained. These he addressed thus, 'you eight will form the caste of Korgas with your parents depending on your brothers for your sustenance'. This is the explanation offered by the Koraga of South Kanara for eating the leaving of other castes. Even today this is a common sight in the streets of Udupi and Mangalore'" (Ibid).

The above legend apart from attempting an explanation for the origin of the community also gives reason for its low status, viz. depending on food left over by other communities.

Rao (Vol. III, 1874 : 195-199) has referred to a view that the Koraga are of 'Chandala' origin, born of an illegitimate union of a high caste woman and a Sudra man. But at the same time he has attributed their present conditions to the 'Brahmanical despotism'. Earlier, Walhouse, as quoted by Thurston, had also taken a similar view. In this connection he has recorded:

"After the four principal classes who sprang from Brahmin came six Anuloma, castes which arose from the intercourse of Brahmins and Kshatriyas with women of the classes below them respectively. The term Anuloma denotes straight and regular hair, which in India characterises the Aryan stock. After these came six Pratiloma castes originating in reverse order from Brahmin and Kshatriya women by fathers of inferior classes. The third among these was the Chandolas, the offspring of Sudra father by Brahmin women. The Chandala or slaves were sub-divided into fifteen classes, none of which might inter-marry, a rule strictly observed. The two last and lowest of the fifteen classes, are the Kapata or ragwearing, and, the Sappu or leafwearing Koragas" (Thurston, vol. III 1909 : 425). But Walhouse himself expressed his reservations about the above hypothesis. In this
connection he has observed that probably these lowest slave castes are descendants of the primitive population which the Aryan invaders from the north found occupying the soil, and, after a struggle of ages, gradually dispossessed, then driving some to the hills and jungles and reducing the others to the condition of slaves. (Thurston: *ibid*). The later version of Walhouse appears to be more plausible as it is a well known fact that the number of Koraga community have been living in servile condition for centuries.

Campbell (*op. cit.*) has quoted Buchanan, according to whom the Koraga or Korar once ruled South Kanara under a chief named Habashika. There are a few recorded legends which although differing in details connect the Koraga with the Habashika. According to Aiyappan (*op. cit.*) a certain Habashika invaded Tuluva and conquered it from Mayura Sarma, King of Vanavasi. In this connection he has further observed, "this Mayura Varma is evidently the scholar of Kanchi who founded the Kadamba empire. The Habashika was treacherously murdered after a reign of twelve years. The Kadambas now attacked Habashika's followers, overthrew them and subjected them to slavery.

The Koragas appeared to have accepted the slave's position on condition that they are fed day after day without having to bother about the next day's meal" (*ibid*.). Rao (*op. cit.*) has recorded a legend which is a slight variation of the account given by Aiyappan. He has given the following details:

"About 930 years or more B.C. the Habashi brought an army from Anantapur, consisting of the Berar, Mundal, Karmara, Maila, Holeya and Koraga. With these troops, whom the learned Dr. Buchanan calls savages, the Habashi warded against Angara Varma, the son of Vira Varma. They first came to Darkur and from thence they proceeded to Mangalur where they were attacked by small-pox and generally troubled by ants. They went to the Southward of Manjeshwar. There the Habashi established his capital and put his nephew Sidda Bairu on the throne in lieu of Vira Varma. He reigned only twelve years and both, he and the Habashi died owing to the enchantments used by
Vira Varma who went to Banaway. After their death Vira Varma returned and drove the aforesaid army into the jungles where they were pursued to such extremities that they consented to become slaves and serve under the former landlord. A Kamara was sent to watch the crops and cattle belonging to the village. The headmen who had been appointed by the Habashi to the most responsible posts under his nephew's government were taken naked to the seashore in order to be hanged, being ashamed of their naked condition, they gathered the leaves of Nekki plant and made a small covering for themselves. Thereupon their conductors took pity on them and let them go, since when they have, it is said, continued to wear no other covering than the leaves of the saod." Rao (Ibid.)

Rao has further observed that it is possible that the Habashi and his successors ruled cruelly and invited upon themselves the wrath of Hindu destitutes. Sturrock (op. cit.) has also given a more or less similar version but he has pointed out that according to one tradition the army of the Habashika composed of Koraga, while according to another, it composed of Holeya and on this basis believes that it is possible that these two communities were closely connected in the past although they have separated now. In any case, the Koraga and Holeya are considered as distinct communities without having a tradition of common origin or affinity. The legend recorded by Walhouse only slightly differs in detail from the one given by Rao quoted above. The former, however, mentions that the Habashika invaded Lokadiraya in about 1450 B.C. Further, apart from the legend about the demise of the Habashika through enchantments devised by Angara Varma, he makes a mention of another legend whereby a neighbouring ruler treacherously proposed a marriage between his sister and the Habashika and later on caused wholesale massacre of the Aabashika and his community-men during the 'neptual' which signalled the return of Angara Varma who drove the invading army to jungles. Thereafter, the legend runs on the similar lines as recorded by Rao.
From the legends recorded by earlier writers it would seem that once Koraga were in a proud position of being rulers but were later reduced to the status of slaves on being subdued or conquered by communities belonging to other ethnic groups in South Kanara. The reference to Habashika or Habashi perhaps also hints to their diverse ethnic origin, (Negroid) which seems to have differed considerably with Hindu castes of especially the Brahmin and the Kshatriya.

Sub-Divisions: The Koraga are reported to have a few endogamous sub-divisions or sub-tribes. But the number and the names of the sub-divisions varies in different accounts available on the community. According to Sherring, (Vol. III, 1872: 206-210) the Koraga have three sub-divisions, viz., (i) Ande Koragars, (ii) Vastra Koragars and (iii) Sappu Koragars. These divisions are mostly named after the different kinds of dress put on by them. According to him, the Ande Koraga in the past kept a pot suspended from their neck as they were considered so low that they were not allowed to spit on the public way. The Vastra Koraga were so called as they put on such clothes as were used to shroud, a dead body. The Sappu Koraga derived their name from their past practice of wearing leaves for clothes. Sturrock (op. cit.) also divides the Koraga into above mentioned three sub-divisions. But he regards Soppina Koraga as synonymous with Sappu Koraga. He has stated that according to another account the three sub-divisions are (i) Kappada—those who wear clothes, (ii) Tippi—who wear coconut shell and (iii) Vanti—who wear a peculiar kind of ear-ring. But according to Luiz (1962: 95-99) the Koraga have five divisions. These are (i) the grass-skirt wearing Sappu Koraga, (ii) Kuntu Koraga—who use kapalas or vastras (clothes), (iii) Tippi Koraga—who make and wear ornaments of bones, (iv) Vanti Koraga—who wear large circular earing in their dilated ear-lobes and (v) Kapputus Koraga consisting of the descendants of the army of Habashika. Luiz has, however, observed that there has been a good-deal of admixture which has resulted in liquidation of these sub-divisions of the tribe. Rao has also reported the three sub-divisions, noted by Sherring and Sturrock. But he has further mentioned that the tribe was having five divisions,
which have not been mentioned by others. But Rao himself acknowledges that two of these do not exist today even in name. The other three sub-divisions mentioned by him are (i) Bangaranna, (ii) Kumarananna and (iii) Mungranna. Bangaranna is looked upon as superior to others in the social scale and consulted by other classes on every occasion, marriage or other such matters. At the same time the Koraga of the highest class is in no way prevented from marrying a girl of the lower tribe. (Rao op. cit.). The account given by Rao regarding the sub-tribes of Koraga is somewhat confusing and does not fully conform to that given by other authors mentioned in the preceding account.

From the preceding account of sub-tribes discussed on the basis of available literature on the community, it is seen that the following names have appeared as the sub-tribes of the Koraga in one source or the other.

1. Ande Korga
2. Soppina or Sappu Korga
3. Vastra Korga
4. Kuntu Korga
5. Kappada Korga
6. Tippi Korga
7. Vanti Korga
8. Kappatus Korga
9. Bangaranna
10. Kammaranna and
11. Mangaranna

From the account given in respect of Vastra, Kappada and Kuntu sub-divisions it would appear that these are one and the same. Although according to Rao (op. cit.) the different sub-tribes claims precedence over each other, the Ande Korga are obviously lowest in social scale. In this connection Thurston (op. cit.) has observed that the Ande Korga are the lowest in so much so that they were required to suspend a pot from their neck as they were not allowed to spit on the public way. He has further stated that in the earlier British days the Ande Korga had to take up a licence to go into
the towns and villages by day. At night their mere approach was forbidden. He has further stated that the Ande Koraga of those days could cook their food only in broken vessels. Thus, the Ande Koraga sub-division appears to be the lowest in the hierarchy of the sub-tribes of the community. Yeats (Madras Census Report, 1931, Vol. XIV : 344) has, however, recorded that no such extreme social disabilities were noticed during the nineteen thirty but Rao (op. cit.) believes that since the establishments of British rule the Ande Koraga is rarely seen in South Kanara. It would also appear that the term Kuntu, referred to by Luiz, as one of the sub-divisions of the Koraga is the Koraga word for cloth and, therefore, it is synonymous with Kapaddada or Kappada. The informants in Udipi town also clarified that once certain Koraga used to wear a large Vanti or circular ear-ring in the ear lobes and the Tippi, ornaments made of coconut shell. It seems that Vanti was more popular than Tippi and the present day Koraga are more informed of the former than the latter. From the explanation given by the local informants it would seem that the Vanti Koraga and Tippi Koraga were really functional terms derived from the type of dress or ornaments put on by the members of the community and did not form endogamous groups and, therefore, could not be regarded as sub-tribes in the strict sense of the term.

FAMILY, CLAN AND KINSHIP

The Koraga are divided into a number of exogamous clans or sects, locally known as bali. The following bali were found among the two sections of Koraga.


It may be mentioned that this list does not contain the clans Haledennaya and Kumaradennya, reported by Sturrock (op. cit.) as common among Koraga as well as Mari and Mundala Holey. It is also noticed that the clans among the two
sub-tribes differ. The clans listed at serial nos. 1 to 5 were recorded among the Soppina Korga only, while the others among the Capadda section. Of these Odiyarru was reported from Koteshwara village, while Kunkarini, Talin and Banger clans were recorded in Karkal town.

It is said that each clan is associated with the bhuta or the spirit of the ancestor of the clan which is represented by animate or inanimate objects. For instance, the Upparu clan representing Dumadi bhuta is symbolised by a wooden bench. The Aleru clan which symbolises ammanoru bhuta is represented by a wooden idol of a female deity; Paddama is represented by a bronze image of a pig and symbolises Panjurah bhuta regarded as one of the most important bhuta among the members of the community; Cherkadi clan is represented by a stone and stands for Gattiga bhuta. One the other hand Muka which is also represented by stones stands for Chavandi bhuta.

As stated elsewhere the clans are strictly exogamous. It is said that traditionally there is no rigid hierarchy of status among the clans in South Kanara. It is substantiated by the fact that the tirue (bride price) for the girls belonging to this clan is higher than in case of the others. But in social and ritual matters no order of precedence was observed among these clans including the Konara clan. The members of the community could not give any satisfactory explanation regarding the esteemed status enjoyed by the Konara clan. It is possible that it is representative of the erstwhile ruling section among the tribe. In any case the higher status of the Konara clan was found limited to the clans belonging to the Kapaddada section and not Soppina who are regarded as inferior to the former.

The Family

It would appear that the institution of the family among the Koraga is passing through a transitional stage as it has features which are associated with traditional matriliney, found among the Tulu-speaking communities as well as with patri-liney. Venkataraman (op. cit.) had observed that the children adopt the mother's boli (clan) and mother's brother is the head of the family; he alone has the right to have a girl or boy married, and not the father. But it would appear that much
water has flowed under the bridge during the last few decades the matrilineal institutions are fast giving way to patrilineal ones, particularly in the cities and towns. In urban areas the residence is mostly patrilocal; and after marriage the woman goes to stay in her husband's family-home or a new house set-up by him. They are, therefore, mostly neo-local though patrivicinal. They have also mostly become patripotestal as the father or the eldest male member in the neo-local or patrilocal set-up generally looks after the family affairs and his authority is respected by the other members of both the sexes in the household. The matrilineal character of the family is however, still reflected in certain social and ritual ceremonies where the females play a significant role. The same is discussed in a subsequent account.

It appears that the Koraga families are generally medium to large sized. The size varies from four to thirteen persons per household, the mean being eight persons. This would suggest that the family is having orientation towards a larger size. The comparatively large size of the Koraga family is often due to the presence of agnatic as well as affinal kins of certain type. While it is common to have nuclear households comprising a married couple and their unmarried children in many cases the families could be termed as nuclear with adhesion in the sense that generally the widowed father or mother of either the husband or the wife stayed with the family. In fact, it is quite common to have the the widowed mother of the wife share the household with her daughter's husband and his family. The extended families and the families which can be termed as nuclear with adhesion show different configuration. In a few cases it was seen that in addition to the mother of the wife the latter's sister's daughter also lived in the same household. In another case it was found that a widow was staying in the same household with her unmarried sons, a widowed daughter and latter's daughter. The extended types of household also show the partilineally oriented linear-cum-collateral type of extension and one such typical case was found among the eight households mentioned above.

Thus, the family among the Koraga, although having a neo-
local or patrilocal orientation, particularly in towns—often betray a combination of affinal and agnatic relations.

But there is now a tendency to have smaller families of nuclear type as the Koraga often migrate to urban centres in search of employment, splitting the traditional extended household.

**Kutumba**: Notwithstanding the shift to partilocality or neo-locality the institution of Kutumba, governing a wider social dimension of the Koraga kinship and family binds the brothers and sisters customarily and ritually. Even though after the marriage now the sisters go to stay with their husbands, they observe certain ceremonies and ritual in their natal home. This is reflected not only in social and rituals, functions but in the enjoyment of ancestral Kutumba property as well. Under the Kutumba framework the head of the household—usually a male member—looks after the property of the Kutumba in the capacity of a trustee. He has no personal claim over the property and only his sister or sisters and their children are entitled to enjoy this property. His wife and her children have no right to the property. She and her children are heirs to the Kutumba property located at their natal home. Thus, there is a sort of bilateral descent in the sense that the married females have their affiliation, firstly with the Kutumba—particularly with references to ancestral property as well as performance of certain ritual and religious rites and, secondly, in the family of her husband where she resides with the latter and her children.

It is often found that the members of the Kutumba do not reside in the same village or town and are separated by space. But during certain important religious functions and ceremonies they are bound to join and meet at the head-quarter of the Kutumba, particularly in the matter of annual worship of the bhuta or spirits which are associated with the ancestral head of the Kutumba. It is particularly obligatory for the members of the Kutumba to participate together in the purificatory rites and in observing pollution period in case of death of a member of the Kutumba.

It would seem that in the matter of property the sister's son had the right of inheritance among the Koraga. The aliya sathanam or the matrilineal system has been until recently the-
original feature of South Kanara followed by Tulu-speaking communities from time immemorial and the Koraga were no exception to it as is evidenced from earlier literature on the community. In this connection Thruston has observed "the greater number of slaves belong to Ali Santanam castes, (inheritance in the female line) and among these people is sold for three pagodas (fourteen rupees) and a female slave for five pagodas, whereas a few slaves who belong to the Makkala Santanam castes (inheritance in male line) fetch five pagodas for the man slave and three pagodas for the female. This is because the children of the latter go to the husband's master, while those of the former go to the mother's master who has the benefit of the husband's service also". (Thurston, op. cit.) It would also seem that from the very beginning a few Koraga also followed makkala santhanam or makkla kattu law of inheritance under which the property is inherited in the male line. This led Rao to observe, "it is an undecided question as to the law that governs them i.e., either the Aliya Santanam law or Makkala Santanam law simply because the deceased leaves behind him no goods or chattels so as to agitate this important question, and his heir, either a nephew or son has to succeed to a bare Koppu. But it may be rightly surmised that the majority of them are governed by Aliya Santanam law, whereby the highest grades of Sudras are ruled". (Rao op. cit.). As stated earlier, after the death of the head of the family or household his wife and children are debarrred from the property which was acquired by the deceased sisters and their children. But according to the provision the acquisition of personal earnings by the head of the household could be registered in his wife's name during his life time. This entitled a person to pass on his earnings and the property acquired from this income to his wife and his children, but after paying a certain share of the acquired property to the Kutumba. There appears to be no rigid rule in regard to the proportion of the acquired property required to be shared by the Kutumba members and the members of his own family. This was largely due to the limited property the Koraga enjoyed on account of his proverbial poverty. But many Koragas have broken from the past tradition. They are no longer sold as slaves and in the wake of changes in the economic system of the
community changes are also reflected in their social institutions. Further, a significant number have migrated to urban areas and are employed there in municipalities, etc. Therefore, an individual has acquired much more capacity to earn and acquire new property. With the present change in the economic system as well as the social change in the region the matrilineal institutions are slowly but surely giving way to patriliny.

**HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENTS**

The household possession of the Koraga are few. These mostly include utensils for cooking. But these are mostly earthen wares except a few aluminium plates. Apart from utensils they keep a wooden pestle for pounding rice in a mortar fixed in the ground. Those who are cultivators possess a few agricultural implements. Some of them also own axes, billhooks, scythes etc. for cutting wood and for similar other purposes. The billhooks are very useful for splitting the bamboos required for preparing baskets as well as in the construction of their houses. A few who used to function as musicians possess musical instruments like cymbals, flutes and some percussion instruments. The percussion instrument is known as dudi and prepared by themselves, while the other are purchased from the market. A few keep improvised flutes made by them from bamboos. There is hardly any almirah or table. They mostly keep their clothes hanging on a cloth line tied in the room or verandah.

**DRESS AND ORNAMENTS**

**Dress**

Their traditional dress has undergone a change over the last nine or ten decades. According to Campbell (*op. cit.*) a section of the Koraga did not put on any cloth except a leaf apron. In this connection a legend as to how the Koraga had taken to the dress of leaves has been recorded in the preceding pages. Sherring (*op. cit.*) in 1874 had stated that the men gird a piece of cloth round their loins, while the dress of the females comprised a bunch of leaves tied around their waist. His
observations have been substantiated by Sturrock, Walhouse, as quoted by Thurston and Rao. But Sturrock has recorded “Females formerly used no clothing except a leaf apron, but they now tie a black cloth round their waist, leaving the bosom bare.” (Sturrock, *ibid.*)

Whatever may be the practice in the past, in conformity with the regional pattern the male Korga wear a *mundu* or *lungi* of narrow width, as the lower garment, which is just sufficient to cover the body up to the knees. They put on a shirt, with or without an under-garment to cover the upper portion of the body. Some persons also put on underwears of stripped cloth as nickers. When they go to the *shandi* or market they generally tie a piece of cloth round their head. While working in the field the Koraga put on a cap made of a leaf of betel plant or a spathe of arecanut called *kombara*. Earlier scholars like Stuart, as quoted by Thurston, *(op.cit.*) have also made a mention of this practice. But it may be mentioned here that this is not peculiar to Koraga only as it is also commonly put on by the other communities, particularly the working classes in the area. The *Kombara*, apart from protecting them from sun and rain, provides them support for carrying headloads. Occasionally, it also serves as a cup for drinking water or toddy. The Koraga employed by the municipalities in cities and towns are provided liveries which include khaki nickers and shirts.

The women now usually put on the saree and blouse made of coarse cloth. In the remote areas, however, a six yard saree is often cut into two pieces, one piece being used as *mundu* in the same way as the men do. The elderly women, particularly in the rural area, do not always cover their bosoms but the younger women put on blouse to cover upper part of the body.

While, by and large, the dress of the Koraga is generally of poor quality it is found that in certain urban areas, such as Udipi and Mangalore towns where they are employed as sweepers, scavengers or orderlies, their dress is of a fairly high standard. Apart from the uniform they receive from their employers they seem to be particular about their day-to-day dress. In fact, some of the young Koraga employees in hospitals, etc., put on shirts or bushshirts and trousers made
of cheap terylene or synthetic fibre. Their women folk also put on under-garments under the saree and blouse. Some of them even use the commercial brand of braziers bought from the local market. In fact, they appear to be quite conscious of their dress and go in for sophisticated 'hair-do' besides putting on cosmetics, like vanishing cream, face powder and talcum powder.

It may be pointed out here that generally the Koraga female shows a preference for black clothes or clothes of darker shades particularly in respect of the lower garments. The use of black colour has also been mentioned by earlier writers like Stuart as quoted by Thurston (Ibia). The reason may be that the black and the dark shades do not get soiled easily. Specific enquiries on the cost of dress revealed that the saree usually put on during ordinary occasions costs twelve rupees while the blouse, which is mostly stitched at home, costs one rupee and fifty paise to two rupees and fifty paise. The mundu put on by the male Koraga does not cost more than four rupees, while the shirt can be purchased for an amount varying from seven to eight rupees.

The children up to the age of five or six, particularly in the rural areas, usually go without any dress. But the children enrolled in the Ashram Schools set up by the government usually put on the dress supplied by the State Tribal Welfare Department. The girls between the ages of thirteen or fourteen or adolescent ages put on a frock locally called langa and a blouse like upper garment known as polka.

Ordinarily, Koraga do not put on foot-wears but those engaged in municipalities as scavengers or sweepers sometimes use chappals made of rubber or cheap leather.

The Koraga who are considered lowest in the caste hierarchy do not receive the services of the village barber and, except in the towns and cities like Mangalore, Udipi and Manipal where they are served by public saloons, they cut each other's hair with scissors. The males keep their hair short and the female, who keep long hair, seem to give a good deal of attention to their 'hair-do'. They usually knot their hair at the back of their head known as muddi. The young girls usually plait their hair. The women often apply coconut
oil before combing their hair. It may be observed that the change in dress and ‘hair-do’ is being brought about at a faster pace in the younger generation which is attending schools, especially the residential schools, where they try to imitate the dress, etc., of their class-fellows belonging to other communities.

**Ornaments**

Their poverty did not permit them to have a large collection of ornaments. They usually possess a few ornaments and that too of comparatively cheaper materials, such as brass, silver or gillette. By and large, in day-to-day use the women mostly put on a pair of rings usually made of brass and locally called as bendole. Some elderly women, however, put on a large ear-ring known as onti. It would appear that this is one of their traditional ornaments which is no longer popular and, excepting a few elderly women, the younger women folk have more or less given it up altogether. As hinted in the preceding discussion on dress some of the earlier writers have made a mention of certain large sized ornaments put on by the Koraga women which also served the purpose of covering the upper part of the body. In this connection Sherring (*op cit.*) has mentioned that women bedeck themselves with thirty or forty strings of beads to which a necklace of pendent bells was sometimes added. The other common ornaments mentioned by him and others are a chain of zinc suspended from the hair and attached to a long boss stuck in the ear, bangles, made of iron or zinc or brass or tin, an ear-rings of brass or rarely gold. Sturrock, (*op. cit.*) has made a mention of an interesting ornament made of bone, strung on a thread and tied round the waist. But most of these ornaments specially the one which are large sized, have become more or less obsolete. Only a few elderly women sometimes put on the traditional ornaments, like the iron bangles or large, ear-rings, so common in the past.

These days the young and unmarried girls mostly put on glass or plastic bangles only. A few women also put on brass necklaces or white beaded necklaces. Some go in for nose rings, locally known as *battu,* The married women sometimes
put on a tali (marriage badge). But unlike the other Caste Hindus of the area, it is not obligatory in their case.

_Tattooing:_ The Koraga—males as well as females—are sometimes seen having tattoo marks on their body. These marks are locally known as _kochchuradu_. It appears that in the past the practice of tattooing was very popular among the community men. In this connection Venkataraman has observed, “till a few years ago both men and women were fond of decorating their bodies with tattoo marks. They in fact prided themselves on the beauty of the tattoo marks on their body. Women have half-moon shaped or round shaped tattoo marks on their forehead. Men have tattoo marks of various designs on their left hands.” (Venkataraman, _op. cit._ 107). But it would appear that the once popular practice of tattooing is on decline. It seems the young women folk and the girls below the age of fourteen or fifteen were rarely seen having tattoo marks on their body. Further, they did not appear to be keen to acquire these marks.

**FOOD AND DRINKS**

The Koraga are traditionally non-vegetarians having no compunction against taking various varieties of flesh including mutton, pork and fish. In fact the earlier writers have mentioned a number of non-vegetarian dishes, including beef or flesh of dead cattle as forming part of their diet. In this connection Sherring, Campbell and Sturrock have all agreed that they eat the flesh of dead cattle and fish besides drinking liquor lavishly. Sturrock (_op. cit._) has also stated that they take the flesh of wild animals. Rao (_op. cit._) is, however, categorical that they used to take flesh of cows, the object of veneration and worship among the Brahmin. Venkataraman (_op. cit._) has included tortoise and hare in the list of animals consumed by the Koraga as their diet. In the past they used to eat flesh of whatever animal on which they could lay their hands on. But at the same time the Koraga residents of Conddapur stated that they refrain from taking flesh of dogs, reptiles, horses, elephants, as alleged by some of the earlier writers. However, they indicated their fondness for non-
vegetarian diet, specially various varieties of fresh water and saline fish. Those residing in the coastal areas also expressed their fondness for oysters, locally referred to as mali. Some even went to the extent of admitting their fondness for the flesh of bukka, or munju, the black monkey found in the area. Notwithstanding their fondness for non-vegetarian diet in actual practice they consume only limited quantity of flesh as they cannot afford to purchase meat as often they would like to. Even for those living in the remote rural areas which abound in jungles, the facility of hunting the wild animals there is no longer available.

Even today they drag the carcasses of dead cattle and relish its flesh after flaying the hide for sale. It also came to light that when in Coondapur town a cattle dies the owner informs the Koraga of the nearby locality who in a group of five or six persons drags the carcass outside the boundary of the town for flaying. They share the flesh equally among themselves and sell the hide to Mappila merchants who are engaged in the trade of hides and leather. For dragging dead cattle they receive rupees six to ten from the owner of the dead cattle. They share this amount as well as the money realised from the sale of the hide, among themselves. It is said that the flesh is kept for three or four days and consumed daily. In certain towns and villages they have a conventional division in respect of the area and the rights over the dead cattle under the supervision of their head man. The residents convey the news of the death of the cattle to the Koraga headman who in turn informs the members of his community, having the rights over the area for dragging the cattle, sharing the price of the hide and consuming the flesh. The headman, usually, receives a larger share of the flesh as well as the cash obtained from the sale of the hide.

The earlier writers, like Thurston (op. cit.) have stated that the Koraga accept food which is left over after feasts held in various castes. This practice is in vogue among them even today. Many of them receive or pick scraps and offals from the leaf-plates left over by other during the marriage parties and feasts arranged on various occasions. A few Koraga primarily depend on begging for their daily food. Some of
those who are engaged in the menial occupations generally beg or receive food from their masters. It is said that even those who are employed in municipalities and are having regular income make the children beg whenever they are in short supply of food. Koragathees or Koraga women collect their children and they also wait outside the public eating places or hotels and temples to collect offals from the leaf-plates thrown out. It is said that they do not mind collecting the offals even from garbage pits. They store the left over food after drying the same in the sun by spreading over a piece of cloth for three to four days continuously. The dried food is kept in an earthen pitcher to be taken during the lean period.

In the areas where the Koraga do not primarily depend on begging for their food their staple diet comprises parboiled rice. The ragi (Eleusine coracana) which was regarded as the common food in the past by Campbell (op. cit.) is no longer important. It is mostly taken in the form of porridge, called ambli. Sometimes, they prepare dough from boiled water and flour of ragi locally known as mudde or hittu. Though ragi being an inferior variety of grain, is cheaper than rice, the Koraga prefer rice gruel more as it is nourishing as well as economical in the sense that unlike ragi gruel, it can be prepared from a small quantity of rice to which water can be added in large quantities. They also take pulses with rice or ragi mudde. The green vegetables are rarely taken, so is the case with the milk or milk products. As a result their diet lacks nutritive value, particularly in view of insufficient in-take of protein. During the season tapioca also forms regular part of their diet. Those in the rural areas sometimes take certain local edible varieties of roots and tubers, as and when available. This is about all in so far as their ordinary food or day-to-day diet is concerned. But on certain festive occasions they prepare sweet payas and idli cakes made of rice and blackgram. Sometimes, they also prepare dosa.

It would seem that the Koraga cannot, or do not, stick to a strict time schedule in so far as their meal hours are concerned. Those who go out for regular work during the day take their full meals in the morning which comprises the left over food from the previous night. The others who do not
go far from their home for work, usually take their first meal around noon. The second principal meal is taken after dusk, around 8 p.m. or so.

They do not appear to observe strict social etiquettes regarding serving or precedence in taking meals among the family members. But generally males and children take their meal first and the women folk later. The meals are usually cooked and served in aluminium or earthen utensils.

The Koraga are also known to be fond of liquor or intoxicants, but they can hardly afford their consumption daily. It is said that in the past liquor formed a very important item in their social and religious rituals. But now, for various reasons they have had to limit its consumption. Those who can afford still spend a significant portion of their earnings on liquor. Otherwise, they mostly consume tea or coffee daily as a beverage.

Smoking is common among the males who mostly smoke bidi and rarely cigarettes. However, betel nut is commonly chewed by men and women alike.

From the earlier accounts on the community it would seem that Koraga were agrestic serf, who passed from one master to another along with the land until recent times. Sturrock (op. cit.) had in fact stated that they were formerly slaves; in practice they still remain in servile position though of course they are legally free to work as labourers wherever they like. Rao has given an interesting account how Koraga passed from one master to another. According to him “the destined slave is washed and anointed with oil and new clothes are given to him. The master takes a ‘batlu’ or plate, pours some water into it and drops a piece of gold. The slave drinks the water and takes some earth from his future master’s estate and throws it on such a spot as he chooses for his use, which is then given over to him, with the trees thereon” (Rao, op. cit.) Rao, however, is of the view that although living in a degraded condition, the members of the community were not very badly off as their interests were looked after by their masters. About the terms and conditions of work, Rao observed “a male slave gets three ‘hanis’ of paddy or a hani and a half (pakka seer) of the rice daily, besides a small quantity of salt. The female
slaves get two hantis of paddy or one hani of rice, and if they be husband and wife they may easily sell a portion of their rice and procure their necessaries. They are also allowed one cloth each every year, and besides when transferred from one master to another, they get a coconut, jackfruit and a spot in which they can sow 1/4 or 1/2 mura of Paddy." (Ibid.)

It would seem that from the beginning or after release from servile position the Koraga followed a number of medical occupations, including basketry, performing the role of musicians (drummers), scavengers, sweepers and flaying the skin of dead animals or similar other degraded occupations. Regarding the occupations followed by them Campbell has observed that they skin dead animals and sell the hides to Chambhars. They also split bamboo baskets and mats, work as labourers and sweep the sheets and act as scavengers, (Campbell op. cit.). According to Sturrock (op. cit.) the chief means of subsistence for the community is basket making. He has confirmed that in addition to basket making the members of the community employ themselves as scavengers and drummers, and some collect the hides and horns of dead animals. But, according to him, the majority of them are labourers. Thurston also regarded their principal occupation as basket making and rendering labour to their masters. He has further observed, "in some towns they are employed by the sanitary department as scavengers and they remove the hide, horns and bones of cattle and buffaloes which die in the villages and sell them mainly to Mapilla merchants. They accept food which is left over after feast held by various castes. Some are skilful in the manufacture of cradles, baskets, cylinders to hold paddy, winnowing and sowing baskets, scale pans, boxes, coir (coconut fibre) rope, brushes for washing cattle, etc. They also manufacture various domestic utensils from soapstone which they sell at a very cheap rate to shopkeepers in the bazar". (Thurston, op. cit.).

In the past they were sold and bought like slaves and they still carry this stigma with them. They also follow the various menial occupations recorded by earlier scholars and discussed in the preceding account. Basketry is their traditional occupation. During the 1961 census, statistical data in respect of
the occupational pattern of the community are recorded. The same throws some light on the present nature of occupations followed by the community.

The largest number of workers is found in the household industry which in their case by and large relates to the traditional sector of the economy. More than half the workers (51.26 per cent) are engaged in household industry relating to the traditional occupation of basket making. These cover 40.25 per cent of the male workers and 65.17 per cent of the female workers. A noteworthy point is that the females outnumber males in the household industry. This is so as basketry is mostly carried on by women folk while men, as far as possible, try to seek outside jobs. Next to household industry, the industrial category of agricultural labour accounts for the largest number of Koraga workers. In other words, 23.20 per cent of the male workers and 15.63 per cent of the female workers are engaged as agricultural labourers. Those who are cultivators account for 6.25 per cent workers only. Together the agricultural sector which covers cultivators as well as agricultural labourers, account for nearly 30 per cent of the working force. But it may be observed here that most of the workers in the agricultural sector, are in the none-too-happy position of being labourers. Except those who are covered under 'other services', the other workers are distributed in small numbers in the remaining industrial categories. These include 5.15 per cent workers engaged in manufacturing other than household industry. A handful of workers are engaged in construction work, in mining and quarrying, etc; a few in trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication. But "other services" account for a significant population of Koraga workers (11.88 per cent).

It is a well known fact, recorded by earlier scholars, that the Koraga are also engaged in the 'degrading' occupations of flaying or currying of skins and hides of dead animals and acting as scavengers of sweepers. But the data on industrial classification does not show any person from amongst them as engaged in tanning and currying of hides or working as scavengers or sweeper. It is so because the special occupations were recorded in respect of only Schedule Caste communities.
Basketry

Although they are not found to make coir-ropes, as they used to do in the past, they mainly prepare baskets of different varieties for which the raw materials viz., creepers and twigs of various species and bamboo or rattan are collected, from the forests. The creepers and bamboo required for basket making. A few more common varieties and species of the local creepers and bamboo used as raw-material for basket making tharalige, there, dhoopa, kuntala and nandi etc. It is said that in the past they did not face much difficulty in collecting raw-materials from the near-by jungles and large areas of uncultivated waste land available, where they could collect the forest produce without much restriction. But now many of the jungles or uncultivated waste land have been cleared and used for the various other developmental activities, such as industries, housing etc. This as a consequence, has restricted the supply of different varieties of creepers etc. in sufficient quantities.

The Koraga are deft in handling creepers and splitting bamboo. They weave the baskets with crude implements like the katti (a special billhook) and dabbana (a thick needle.) It seems, their main clientele are the agriculturists as most of their baskets prepared by them are used by cultivators during the agricultural operations, particularly for carrying headloads. As stated earlier although both the sexes are engaged in making baskets, this work is mostly carried on by women folk while the men sell them in the local shandi or carry them door-to-door for sale against cash payment or barter with rice and other cereals.

Unlike agriculture and employment as scavengers, etc. which are confined to the rural and urban areas respectively, the occupation of basketry is equally followed in both the areas as household industry or manufacture other than household industry. But the Koraga are increasingly finding it difficult to follow this occupation as they are facing stiff competition from the basket made of synthetic fibre which have flooded the countryside. As stated elsewhere the difficulty of obtaining raw-materials from forests is contributing to the problem faced by them in this respect.
Agriculture

The agricultural sector attracts a significant proportion of Koraga workers, almost exclusively from the rural areas. But it would seem that due to their tradition of working as labourers in the agricultural sector or other miscellaneous occupations they have not acquired the requisite skill for agricultural operations. Even today most of them are engaged as agricultural labourers and there too they generally do not render major agricultural operations, like ploughing and sowing. They undertake more laborious and unskilled tasks such as digging, transplantation and similar other activities. According to earlier scholars the Koraga have a superstitious belief in regard to engaging anything on four legs and, accordingly, they are said to abjure the use of cattle in ploughing.

Scavengers and Sweepers

The members of the community are engaged as sweepers or scavengers in the cities or towns. The members of the community engaged in this occupation are referred to by the generic term thoti, while sweepers are generally referred to by the name Jadmalli. The Koraga are employed by the sanitary departments as sweepers or scavengers in Mangalore, Karkal and other towns having panchayats or municipalities. The lot of these Koraga appear to be somewhat better as they are getting a regular monthly salary.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth

The Koraga state that they consider the birth of a child as a divine blessing. But it would seem they prefer male children. The first delivery usually takes place at the natal home of the expectant mother. During the seventh month of the first pregnancy the Koraga, like other Hindu castes of the region, perform a ceremony called basira bayake (also called bachangi). Sometimes, if they can afford, they also present her a variety of sweets, fruits and comb known as seeranigi and a new dress. On this occasion they also perform a ritual which entails filling the lap of the expectant mother with a few coins and performing her aarati. Later, they feed relatives and
other invited guests, a few of whom sometimes also give some token present to the expectant mother. After a few days of this ceremony, which is performed at her husband's place, she goes to her parental home for delivery.

The delivery takes place in a warm corner of the apartment during delivery the parturient is usually assisted by her mother or any elderly woman or women of the locality. In the cities and towns, however, the facility available in the maternity homes or hospitals is often availed of by the Koraga. Soon after the delivery, the musku, or the umbilical cord, is severed with a knife by the woman who assists the parturient. It was reported that a piece of the navel cord is kept near the mother for six days by some Koraga families, before it is buried. Next, they plant a sapling of the Rubia (Besilla alba) species, locally called bassale, on the spot where the cord has been buried.

They keep the kasa (placenta) in an earthen pot which they cover with a lid. They smear the pot with a mixture of cowdung and clay. Thereafter, they dig up an amehonda (a pit) about two feet deep either at the usual place of bathing or any other convenient place inside or outside the hut suitable for giving bath to the mother of the new born. They carve out a niche inside the pit where they place the earthen pot containing the placenta in a manner that the water used for taking bath falling in the pit does not touch the pot. The mother of the newly born takes a ritual bath on the spot where placenta is buried for each day during the pollution period. According to Thurston (op. cit.) the pollution period lasts for five days and the inmates of the Koppu abandon it for five nights. However, during the field investigation no such practice of abandoning the home was found and the pollution period was reported as seven days, rather than five as observed by Thurston.

On the eighth day the pit is covered with earth in a ceremony called ame muchchuvadu. The same day a coconut is broken by them. The prasad comprising fruits and sacred water, locally known as tirtha, is collected by them from the temple priest or a Bhat and the house is consecrated with the latter. The tirtha is also sprinkled on the bhuta, worshipped
by the Koraga. Although a bath is given to the new born child and the mother with warm water daily, they are considered ritually pure only after the seventh day when the ceremony of ame muchchuvadu is performed for putting an end to pollution associated with birth in the family.

Naming Ceremony

The Koraga perform two more ceremonies on the seventh day which marks the end of the pollution period. These are the ceremonies associated with cradling the baby and naming it. The cradle is locally known as totala. Before cradling, the female relationsoint the body of the baby with coconut oil. In addition to close relations they also invite the Gurikara to attend the ceremony. They also give a feast to the relations.

Generally, the first born male child is named after his grandfather and the first born female child after her grandmother. On this occasion a black string is tied round the waist of the new born baby, if he happens to the made child; no such string is tied in case of female child. The relations and neighbours who attend the ceremony offer some quantity of rice and coconut to the new born child. If they can afford it, they also present a set of clothes or some small present to the new born. The rice collected as present is cooked and fed to the invitees. Thurston (Ibid) has also reported the naming ceremony among the Koraga but he has given more detailed rites and rituals which were not found in vogue among them during the field investigation. The only important ritual seems to be the string of a black thread around the waist of the male child.

According to Rao (op. cit.), the Koraga generally name their children after the different days of a week. Usually, the child is named after the day on which it is born though the name is is slightly modified. For example, according to Ajyappan (op. cit.) ‘Altha’ (Adithya) is the name given to a child born on a Sunday, and ‘Toma’ to one born on Monday. He has further observed, ‘the interchangeability of ‘Ta’ and ‘Sa’ in Tamil is a well-known fact. ‘Toma’ is therefore, ‘Soma’ which means Moon, ‘Angra’ for Tuesday, after Angaraka or Mars; Gurva for Thursday, after Guru or Jupiter; ‘Tanya’ or ‘Sani’ or Saturn
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and 'Tukra' for the day of Sukra—Friday. It is noteworthy that the names of the planets, sun, moon, mars, etc. are Sanskrit names and not the Tamil ones” (Ibid.). It may, however, be clarified that the practice of naming the child after the days in a week is not limited to the Koraga community alone but is also found among certain other communities of the area, such as the Halakki Vakkal. According to Rao the naming of the children after the planets is a vestige of the sun worship prevalent among them in the past.

Puberty

Although the Koraga do not observe tonsure and ear-boring ceremonies, they do perform puberty rites, or Jevanthe as it is locally called. On attaining puberty, when there is onset of first menstruation, a Koraga girl is considered impure and segregated from others for four days. She is made to sit in a section or in a corner of the hut or the apartment. She is particularly not allowed to enter the kitchen and also debarred from Bhuta worship or any ritual performance. On the 5th day she applies coconut oil to her body before taking bath, when five women relations pour water on her. It is said that Panchagavya, which they corruptly pronounce as panchagal, comprising a mixture of five products of the cow, viz., cow’s urine, cow’s dung, milk, curd and ghee, is collected from a Bhat and administered to her in small quantity. Next, the girl puts on new clothes, if her family can afford. But in any case she is supposed to put on clean and washed clothes before she sits on a low wooden stool when relations throw rice on her and perform her aarti. If the parents of the girl are economically well off, they also feed the close relations invited on the occasion.

Sex-taboos and Marriage

The Karaga do not approve of pre-marital or extra-marital sex relations and the offenders are punished suitably. The punishment, according to them, may vary from imposing fines to ex-communication, depending on the gravity of offence and the circumstances thereof. If a case of pre-marital relations involving a Koraga unmarried girl and a boy of another com-
munity of similar status or higher status comes to light, the
girl’s parents have to pay a nominal fine before they are
permitted to marry off their daughter to a boy of their own
community. But it is interesting that in case a woman belong-
ing to a higher section Kappadada commits adultery with
a man belonging to a lower section (Soppina) the offence is
regarded as more serious, calling for severe punishment, which
including shaving the head of the culprit woman in addition to
imposing a fine, varying from rupees twenty to twenty five and
feeding the tribemen besides offering special worship to the
family bhuta as penance. The earlier writers, such as Walhouse
as quoted by Thurston, (op. cit.) have made a mention of an
elaborate purification ceremony or undergoing ordeals in case
of involvement of a married woman with another person. But
this could not be confirmed as during the rapid survey for the
present study deep and penetrating investigation regarding the
attitude and reaction of the community towards sexual lapses
could not be carried on and only general observances made by
the members of the community were recorded.

**Age at Marriage**

It would appear that although the Koraga do not commonly
practise infant or child marriages, the girls are married some-
what at an early age. According to Campbell (op. cit.) the
Koraga girls were married between the ages of ten and fourteen,
while the Koraga boys between sixteen and twenty five. The
most common age group for marriage for the girls is 13-16
years, while the boys generally marry after they have attained
the age of fifteen. This seems to be substantiated by the 1961
census data on age and marital status of the community. It is
seen therefore that no male is married in the 0-14 age group,
while thirteen females are married in the same age group.
Further, when the marital status data are considered in respect
of Koraga males and females falling in the 15-44 age group it
is seen that only 14.4 per cent of them in this age group, were
unmarried. This would seem to substantiate that the girls
marry between the ages 13-16 and the boys at a latter age,
mostly between 14-18.
Dibhana or Marriage

Marriages among the Koraga is regarded as a simple affair. Although polygamy is allowed under special circumstances, in actual practice monogamy is the general rule. As stated elsewhere, the Koraga have two or three sub-divisions. The marriage usually takes place within the endogamous sub-caste or sub-tribe but outside the clan, as is the usual practice among the other communities of the area, the Koraga being no exception to this rule.

Further, as per the custom among certain other communities of the area, cross-cousin marriages are also performed though these are not necessarily considered as preferential. But in case of cross-cousin marriages, one's mother's brother's daughter is preferred to one's father's sister's daughter. This is true of all the sections of the Koraga.

Mode of acquiring a Mate

Though a few instances of love marriage or marriage by elopement do occur in the Koraga society, the marriages are mostly arranged by the parents which sometimes involve protected negotiations. The initiative for arranging the marriage is usually taken by the boy's relations and the formal proposal for marriage too comes from the latter who accompanied by the gurikara of his village visits the girl's parents for this purpose. The usual considerations in selection of a life partner for a son are girl's looks as well as her capacity to do hard work, while for a life partner for a girl the major factor is his health, family status and capacity for earning.

After the negotiations are successfully concluded, a suitable day is fixed for the performance of betrothal ceremony. During the betrothal ceremony, which is known as Khandita maduvadu or nischita maduvadu, the terms of marriage including the bride price are settled. Certain rites and rituals are also performed during the ceremony in which the arecanut flowers play in important role. The boy's party, which includes a few friends and relations, visits the girl's house for the ceremony and carry along with them some hingara (are canut) flowers along with them and offer the same to the girl's parents. The girl puts on these flowers on her hair when she appears before the gathering.
This signifies that the girl henceforth belongs to the boy's family. Thereafter, betel nuts and betel leaves along with small quantity of sugar are distributed to the participants and, if possible the occasion is made lively by drinking toddy, failing which at least tea is taken.

Irrespective of the sex, the first marriage in a family is celebrated with much more enthusiasm and show than the subsequent ones, therefore, much more expenditure is incurred in the first marriage. The actual marriage is usually performed during the months of April or May, towards the beginning of the rainy season. It is said that they solemnise their marriage in these months because they are comparatively free from the agricultural operation, etc. and the pre-monsoon weather is considered ideal for the purpose. They cannot delay the marriages any further as the coastal area of South Kanara district makes it difficult to perform social functions without trouble during the monsoon season when the heavy rains and gale lash the area. The Koraga believe it is all the more difficult for them to arrange marriages during the heavy rains as they mostly live in huts and secondly it becomes difficult for them to travel outside the village for performing marriage. They like to perform marriages on Sundays which is considered more auspicious although solemnisation of marriage may take place on any other day as well.

The essential marriage rites are generally performed at the bride's house which is visited by the groom's party for the purpose. But in some cases the marriage rites may actually be performed in the house of the boy, where the girl, accompanied by close relations and villagers, comes for the purpose. A day or two before the actual marriage day, marriage booths are erected in front of the house of the bride as well as the groom where the marriage rites are performed. But generally a bigger booth is constructed at the bride's place as the main rites and rituals for the marriage ceremony are usually performed there and, therefore, require more space. The marriage booths are usually square in shape and constructed with bamboo poles which are tied to each other by rope; or thread and covered with green leaves. A canopy of green leaves is also provided at the top.
Early in the morning of the actual marriage day, the bride as well as the groom are given a nuptial bath in their respective homes when water is poured over their body by their relations. Before the nuptial bath they apply a paste of turmeric mixed with coconut oil over the body. After taking bath they put on new clothes and the bride bedecks herself in the special bridal dress. She also adorns her hair with hingara and Jasmine flowers. In addition to his special dress the bridegroom puts on a mundasa or a headgear to which a coronet locally called as basinga, is attached towards his forehead. The basinga is made of dried pith of jawar (Sorghum species) and coloured paper. A few arecanut flowers are fixed on the coronet in such a way that their tips fall towards the face of the groom and particularly cover it from either side. But it may be mentioned here that the practice of putting on the turban is now on decline.

The bridegroom’s party leaves for the bride’s place in a procession with the accompaniment of musicians who mostly belong to their own community, and play on a dholki (drum), chanda (a drum having only one playing surface), clarionet and tala (cymbals). The bridegroom usually walks in the middle of the party which has to often travel a distance of 20 kilometres or more on foot. Sometimes, when the distance is more, and if they can afford it, they hire a bus. On reaching the bride’s house, the groom’s party is ceremonially welcomed by the bride’s relations, friends and villagers headed by the gurikara. The welcome ceremony is locally called as edruganisuva shastra. They are next taken to a pandal (canopy) erected on the occasion. There the bride’s father and mother sprinkle some rice on the marriage party which is supposed to herald good omen as well as signifies the ceremonial reception of the marriage party.

The bride price, locally known as tiruve is paid in cash and kind. It includes seven kilos of rice and seven patti betel leaves (one patti is equivalent to three betel leaves), one betel nut and seven chakra (one chakra is equivalent to 25 paise). As stated elsewhere, in addition to the above items, a few ornaments recorded in the section on dress and ornaments’ are also presented to the bride. But it is said that in case the bride belongs to Kullaru clan, then more bride price is paid which
comprises 42 patti betel leaves, one mudi of rice and a chakra each.

The gurikara of the localities of the bride as well as the groom play an important role and actually officiate during the marriage ceremony. Before the important ceremonies are performed the bridegroom takes a ritual bath, known as balami-suvadu. During the bath, the gurikara of the groom’s side first pour water over the groom’s head and next each of his relation by turn pour one tumbler of water on his head. After the groom has taken his ritual bath, a paste of a small quantity of turmeric powder is applied on his face. The above rites are also performed in the case of the bride as well, who, thereafter, puts on dhare-socre and is escorted by the gurikara of her village to the marriage both where the important marriage rite of dhara or Kanyadan (gifting away of the daughter to the groom by her father) is performed. In the marriage booth the bride and the bridegroom are seated beside each other on a mat, the bride being always seated to the left of the groom. Next their palms are joined together by the bride’s father and mother in the important rite of dhare. Next the groom puts out a ring in the bride’s index finger. During the time when these rites are performed, an earthen lamp is kept in front of the couple. Some sheshe rice (rice which are coloured yellow with turmeric) are kept on a low wooden stool placed before the couple. All the married persons present during the ceremony throw these rice over the couple. The unmarried persons do not throw rice on the couple and children do not participate in this ceremony. It is, particulary, kept in view that no widow or widower is present during this ceremony. After this ceremony, the couple gets up and pay their respect to the elders by bowing before them. Next they are made to sit in a room in the company of the groom’s best friends and bride’s maids known as tettegar. The main tettegar in case of the groom is his brother-in-law, and her sister-in-law in case of the bride. They give constant company to the groom and the bride during the marriage ceremony.

In a Koraga marriage the satpati (circumambulations) are not performed and unlike many other regional societies neither tali (marriage badge) is tied nor mangalsutra is worn by the
bride. But a few ornaments referred to earlier, are essentially presented to her.

Thereafter a feast is served to the guests. For the convenience of the friends and relations who wish to present mujyi (presents) to the couple, the sprinkling of rice ceremony (maru shesh) is repeated after the meals are served. During this ceremony mujyi or presents are offered to the couple by the friends and their relations. Thereafter, the married couple holds each other’s hands and the marriage party along with the couple leaves for the groom’s village. As stated earlier, in the past they used to almost invariably walk all the distance but now-a-days, if the distance is considerable they hire a bus. During her journey to her husband’s place the bride particularly carries with her a mat and a plate of bell-metal and a lamp. On reaching the bride-groom’s house, the couple is ceremonially received and the relations shower rice on the couple. Some of the friends and relations may also give presents in cash or kind to the couple. Usually, the guests are entertained by a feast.

As stated earlier, a widow or widower can remarry. A marriage of a widow or a widower is a simple affair and performed with minimum of pomp and show. Only the gurikara and a few friends and relations attend the ceremony. The widow may remarry her deceased’s husband’s younger brother but it is not obligatory on her part. A widow has to necessarily marry a widower only and likewise a widower does not marry a virgin.

According to some of the earlier authors the Koraga society does not permit divorce. Now-a-days divorce is freely permitted to the husband as well as the wife for a variety of reasons. As in the case of widows or widowers, the divorces are permitted to remarry. Such marriages are also a simple affair calling for minimum rites and celebrations.

Death Rites

Sturrock (op. cit.) categorically stated that the Koraga practise burial and never cremate the dead. Walhouse, as quoted by Thurston, (op. cit.) has also observed that although on death the bodies of all the slave castes used to be burnt to avoid
pullution now from long past burial is universal. However, they practise burial as well as cremation, the former made of disposal being more common. Considering the status of the community, it is unlikely that they practise cremation, the latter practice seems to have been indicated by them in an attempt at social climbing.

When a person dies, his corpse is brought out of the hut or the dwelling and given a bath by family members who apply of paste of turmeric powder and coconut oil on the body. In case the deceased happened to be a mutaide, a woman whose husband is alive, her body after being given bath is applied a vermillion mark on her forehead and bedecked with flowers before disposal. The corpse is then carried outside by four persons, usually the close relations of the deceased, on a bamboo bier which is prepared by the members of their own community. A coconut is also broken.

When the news of death is known in the village or the locality, the gurukara summons a few persons of the community for making necessary arrangements for digging the grave. Three or four Koraga undertake this task and dig up a grave five to six feet deep. Before lowering the corpse inside the grave the persons who carried the bier to the burial ground, circumambulate the grave thrice along with other mourners, as well as the grave diggers. Next, they lower the corpse into the grave in a horizontal position, the head directed towards the tenku (South) and the face upwards. When the body is placed in the grave in the proper position, the grave diggers stand at the edge of the grave in opposite direction, facing each other, and exchange the billhooks used for digging the grave three or five times. It is believed that by doing so the spirit of the deceased becomes confused and fails to recognise them and, therefore, does not harm or haunt them. The clothes of the deceased are kept inside the grave before covering it with earth.

Sometimes, three stones are placed over the grave to mark the position of the head, stomach and the feet of the deceased. But it would seem that this is not a universal practice. In fact, at Coondapur, some Koraga reported that they would not even think of putting the stones over the grave as it tantamounts to
throwing stones on the deceased person and thereby cause offence. Instead, it was claimed, they implant a sapling of nikki (Vitex negundo) over the grave. It is believed that if the plant sprouts the deceased is considered to be a nice person who performed good deeds in his life time and therefore entitled for a better future after death. If the plant fails to sprout, the deceased is regarded as a bad person. In some cases before leaving the grave a few flowers are placed on the grave by the chief mourner, who may be the son, brother or the husband of the deceased as the case may be.

On returning from the burial ground the members of the community participate in the funeral procession take a purificatory bath. The house of the deceased is also purified by sprinkling a mixture of cowdung and water. It would, however, appear that the objects used for purification may differ from place to place. For instance, in Karkal town it came to light that after taking bath the members of the funeral party are sprinkled with coconut water with the help of a mango leaf.

The other Koraga families do not accept food or water from the family in mourning for nine days in case the deceased happened to be a child and fifteen days in case of an adult. Further, no social intercourse is observed and the family in mourning does not participate in any religious or social function in the community. After fifteen days they generally collect some soil from the grave of the deceased and erect a small mound near the house on which a sapling of taruli is planted.

The pollution period is observed from twelve to thirteen days. But the purificatory rites, locally known as bojja, are observed on the fortieth day of the death of a person. On this occasion the close relations are fed and, in the evening, a Patni or soothsayer is called to perform certain rites. He spreads a small quantity of ash in the corner of the hut of the deceased and keeps a low wooden stool over it. Next he spreads some cooked rice and water on the stool and there sacrifices a fowl. The soothsayer receiving the sacrificed fowl as a gift declares that Jakani Bhuta, or the spirit of the departed soul, has accepted the offering and is happy with the family members. He also receives one or two rupees for his service.
While the concepts such as *karma*, *moksha*, *dharma* and *punya* are not so very clear to them, the Koraga generally believe that the spirit of the persons who perform good deeds in their life time go to the heaven, while others go to the hell. They also have some idea about the indestructibility of the soul. They believe that soul never dies or perishes. It simply changes its form and hovers around in the atmosphere in an ethereal form.

All the Koraga enumerated in Karnataka during the 1981 Census returned themselves as Hindus. But the brand of Hindu religion followed by them at present has certain overtones of religious practices which have been termed as ‘devil worship’ or ‘bhuta cult’. In this connection Sturrock (*op. cit.*) has stated that the Koraga worship some devils, like *panjural* in whose honour the festival of *Tambitu* is celebrated. On the subject of Koraga religion Walhouse, as quoted by Thurston, (*op. cit.*) has recorded that like the other low castes, the Koraga worship Mari-amma, the goddess presiding over small-pox, which has been regarded as one of the most popular and powerful deity in Kanara and worshipped with a number of sacrifices of goats, buffalos and pigs. Rao (*op. cit.*) however, regards *kata* as their chief deity which is mostly worshipped in the months of May, July and October under a *kasarkana* tree. But he has added that now they have changed their original object of worship to the worship of *bhuta* in conformity with religious observances of *Bant* and other Sudra communities of South Canara. Sherring has also mentioned about the worship of *kata* performed by them at consecrated spot under the *Kasarkana* tree. Rao as well as Aiyappan have also alluded to sun worship practised by the Koraga. In support of their contention they have mentioned the Koraga practice of naming their children after the days of the week. The blessings of the sun invoked during the marriage ceremony, as reported by Rao also hints at the sun worship which might have been followed by them.

The Koraga worship gods and goddesses and other deities which can be broadly grouped into two categories. The first category comprises the more popular gods and goddesses of all India spread or regional import. These include such gods as
Rama, Krishna, Vithoba, Ganesh, Shiva, Lakshmi and Hanuman. The second category comprises the various bhutas or spirits. They also seem to have an idea about a Supreme-Being who is regarded as all important and powerful but the Supreme-Being is venerated and not worshiped as it is considered something far above, having no interest in day-to-day life of the members of the community. The other gods of all India spread are also not important in their day-to-day religion. They have no temples of their own in respect of these gots nor are they free to visit the temples and shrines of the others on account of their low social status. The worship is usually performed at the household level by the seniormost male member, without the assistance of a priest.

The bhuta worship is more important in their day-to-day life. In fact, the religious fabric of the Koraga society is deeply influenced by the bhuta cult which, is by no means, a phenomenon peculiar to the community. In fact, in South Kanara District, bhuta cult is found among a number of communities, particularly of low social status. The bhuta or davra can be divided into two categories. The first category include, those which are common for the community as a whole and worshipped with utmost reverence. The second category of bhuta are associated with the spirits of the dead ancestors and are supposed to exercise a great influence on the wellbeing of the family concerned. Among the dead ancestors' bhuta, a mention may be made of the bhuta of the grand-father, known as Ajjana bhuta and the spirit of the dead grand-mother, the Ajji bhuta. Although the earlier writers have mentioned that Panjurali is their chief bhuta during the field investigation neecha was given out as their principle bhuta which is regarded as the kuladeva or 'patron-deity' of the tribal community. All the important bhutas of the community are worshipped on all important occasions in the life cycle, such as birth and marriage. The other bhutas worshipped by the community are regarded as subordinate to neecha bhuta. These are discussed in the subsequent account.

The earlier writers have mentioned Panjurali as the chief bhuta of the Koraga. It is represented by a figurine of a pig made of wood, metal or stone. Next to neecha bhuta, it appears to be the most important one. The other important bhuta are
Heiguli, Guliga, Rahu, Jatiga, Salada Haiguli; Jugada panjurali Marsur, Shivarayo and Bobboriya. These are represented by images of stone symbolising different animals. For instance, Haiguli is represented by an image of a bull. Some of the bhutas are regarded as females. These include Chavandi, Kallurti Ammanoru and Pilchandi which are mostly represented by stone images. These are some-times dressed in women’s clothes.

The family bhutas are kept inside the house over a wooden bracket known as bhutasthun. Each family has its distinctive set of bhuta in addition to the other bhuta such as, Punjurali Ammanoru and Neecha etc. These are worshipped collectively by the members of the kutumba, at least once a year with offerings of fruits, flowers and sacrifices of fowls. All the members of the kutumba if they reside in distant places are supposed to join in the annual worship of the family bhuta.

Like the worship of the family bhuta by various individual families, all the important bhuta in the community are collectively worshipped at least once a year. It will be worthwhile to give some details of the annual collective bhuta worship performed by the members of the community. In this ceremony, which is known as kola, the important functionaries are the pathri, the gurikara and the vottugurikara, there is no fixed day or time of the year for observing this ceremony. It is arranged by the gurikara etc., on any day during the year which is convenient to the people. Each Koraga household contributes five to ten rupees to meet the expenses of the ceremony. The worship is usually performed at a consecrated spot under a tree mostly kasarkana tree (strychnos nuxomica)—on a platform formed by erecting two stone slabs side by side at a distance of about one foot from each other and placing another stone slab over them to form the platform. The stone or wooden images of the various bhuta are then placed on the consecrated platform.

Elaborate preparations are made before the ceremony is performed. Two days before the scheduled day for the worship the gurikara the vottu gurikara and the pathri maintain ritual purity by daily taking a cold water bath, observing fast and sleeping in separate quarters to maintain sexual abstinence. They first clear the spot for worship, wash the stone images of
the various bhuta and decorate them with flowers and mango leaves. They keep a plantain leaf with some quantity of cooked rice mixed with turmeric powder before the image of the bhuta. Next, they place five betel leaves in the mouth of a clean washed kalsa or a brass pot. Before keeping it in front of the bhuta, they apply a coating of the paste of turmeric on it. Besides, kallu (liquor extracted from palmyra tree) which is kept in earthen pot is also placed near the kalsa. Next, they burn incense and worship the bhuta with sacrifices of fowls and pigs. After the worship is over, the members of the community participate certain divination rites when question are put to the bhuta by the members of the community regarding their personal problems and the solution thereof. The ceremony begins with the pathri and gurikara dancing around the bhuta to the accompaniment of musical instruments played by a few musicians from amongst the community. The females do not participate in this ceremony, but form a crowd of silent spectators standing at a distance. After dancing for sometime one of the pathri goes in a trance, on being possessed by one of the bhuta. The manifestation of possession by the bhuta is seen in his shaking his body rigorously, jumping and shouting and later becoming absolutely calm. This is the time for the members of the community to one by one put their problems before the bhuta and seek answers or advice through the medium (patarti). The enquiries mostly relate to the cause of sickness in the family, the identity of the thief who might have stolen the crop and the expected court decisions, etc. Since these questions and answers take quite some time, two or three pathri change place with each other, after being possessed by the bhuta.

As already stated the earlier authors have mentioned that the Korga have a great faith in sorcery. In fact, some of the other communities are said to be afraid of the Koraga on the account of their so-called expertise in black magic or sorcery. The faith of the Koraga in black magic and witch-craft is reflected in the performance of pathri. They are a very superstitious people and are always afraid of the machination or bhuta or black magic. When a Koraga gets frightened or falls sick, he calls for a pathri for divining the cause of his trouble
and for suggesting its remedy. The pathri sometimes gives an amulet or a charm to the patient on receipt of one or two rupees. The Koraga go in for large scale purchase of such charms or amulets as they appear to have firm belief in their efficacy. The Pathri is also regarded as an expert in divining the causes of sickness and its cure. In connection with the divination for the cause of sickness and its cure by the pathri Venktaraman has given the following interesting account.

"Illness is supposed to be brought about by the displeasure of the Bhutas. So whenever there is illness in the family, the head of the family, i.e., the uncle is informed of it by the father and the mother of the patient. Immediately the head of the family lives apart from his wife and children. Then the headman comes and prays to the Bhutas for the recovery and makes sumptuous offerings to them, of fowls and coconuts which are in plenty in South Kanara. This kind of offering goes on till the illness persists. Sometimes, the headman invokes the bhutas through a person who is supposed to be representative of the bhutas. He is called 'Pathri'. He comes in the morning. With empty stomach he bathes, dresses himself in white dhoti, and goes with the headman and his family members to the particular bhuta stone which he is pleased to invoke. Lights are kindled near the bhuta stone, a coconut is broken and a fowl is killed. The 'Pathri' stands facing the bhuta stone and all of a sudden his whole body trembles violently. This means that the bhuta is on him. Drums, flutes and cymbals are played for sometime. Then the headman enquires the Bhuta (Pathri) why he has caued illness in his family. Then the Bhuta(Pathri) says that either he had been displeased with a particular thing or that the family was not showing him due respects, or such and such offering or homage has not been paid to him. The headman promises to make good his omissions and please him. Then once again drums and flutes are played and the Bhuta leaves the bodyof the pathri. At the time of 'Bhoga' several Patris are engaged, as many bhutas have to be invoked. Arecanut flower is one of the essential articles for the Bhuta worship." (Venkataramman, op. cit.)
The Koraga are looked down upon by the Caste Hindus and are socially kept at a distance. But on certain occasions they are considered to be helpful and auspicious. It is believed by some that the Koraga are capable of thwarting prolonged or protracted disease in the family and, therefore, the members of the community are offered sweets, cash and food by way of alms, particularly on Saturdays which is regarded as the day of Hanuman worship in South Kanara region. The Caste Hindus also believe that a new born child touched by a Koraga or named after him lives a long and prosperous life. In households where the children have died in infancy the head of the household observes the practice of naming a new born child after the Koraga or having the former touched by him. It is on this account that one finds such names as Kogga Kanthi, Koraga Shenoy, and Koraga Bahandri etc. among the Caste Hindus of the area.

An interesting custom known as Neecha Balli is also observed in connection with getting rid of illness through the Koraga. It is said that if a member of a Caste Hindu family suffers from protracted illness or the family is passing through bad days the head of the household sends for the Koraga headman of the village who may either come himself or sends another Koraga with an empty basket. The Koraga receives some items from the household in question on demand which include a basket full of cooked rice and eight to ten earthen lamps dipped in sweet oil or ghee, a coconut, some vermilion and turmeric, incense and kempuneeru. The Koraga lights the earthen lamps and places them over the cooked rice. He, next, places the coconut on the rice after smearing it with vermilion and turmeric. Next, he lights a few sticks of incense and fixes them on the rice. Thereafter, he takes earthen vessel containing kempuneeru or red water. This is actually lime-water mixed with turmeric. He also keeps this pot on the rice. Sometimes, he sacrifices a fowl in honour of the neecha deity. On completion of these rites and rituals he keeps the basket on his head and takes three rounds of the house uttering incantations in the name of neecha bhuta and thereafter, leaves for his house along with the basket containing the above items. It is believed that by observing these rites the misfortune or illness
in the family of the Caste Hindu is transferred to the Koraga. But he in turn has to offer special worship to neecha bhuta to get rid of the misfortune or illness passed on to him.

The Koraga are reported to have a few endogamous subdivisions which claim precedence over each other. But it is agreed that Ande Koraga section was considered as the lowest among all the sub-divisions. Among the endogamous divisions viz., the Soppina Koraga and Kappadada Koraga, the latter was acknowledged as superior to the former. Though these two sub-divisions permit inter-dining and inter-commensal relations they do not inter-marry.

As regards the relation of Koraga with other communities it is obvious that these are governed or influenced by the social status accorded to the community. The Koraga are the most backward community. They have a very low social status. Although, treated as a Schedule Tribe, the Koraga have never been physically isolated from the others. They have been living in the same villages along with other castes of the area. But although they were not physically isolated, for all practical purposes, they have been leading their life as ‘social isolates’.

The Koraga have been assigned a chandala status and lived in serfdom performing menial occupations of scavenging, dragging carcasses of dead animals and eating the leftover food of the others. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that the community occupies the lowest rank among the castes and tribes of the area, including the Holeya. They are considered even below those other castes which are also engaged in the menial occupation of scavenging.

While they accept food or water from other communities including Holeya, no other community accepts foods or water from their hands. The social disabilities from which the Koraga suffer are innumerable. In the past they were not allowed the use of high-ways after dark as their very shadow was supposed to cast evil on others. The Koraga belonging to the erstwhile section of Ande Koraga were required to put on an earthen pot around the neck to spit since they were considered too low to be allowed to do so on the highway. Even now their settlements are located at the periphery of the village. Even in towns they live segregated from others. Although
they are employed as agricultural labourers and work in the fields of Caste Hindus, they have no access to the houses of their master. Their touch carries pollution even to such castes of low social status as Koosa, Holeya and Mundala. They have no free access to the common village well. They are, therefore, required to draw water from their own wells. Even the wells sunk by the Government welfare departments are said to be almost exclusively used as no other caste would draw water from the same. They encounter similar social disabilities in the matter of use of public bathing ghats and tanks, etc. They are not rendered personal service by the village barber or washerman. But in the towns and cities, where their identity is not known, they are served by the public saloons. During their marriage and other religious ceremonies the village headman officiates at the rites and rituals performed. Though they worship some of popular Hindu gods and observe festivals like, Gokul Ashtmi and Chowti, they seem to have no free access to temples of other places of worship. Sometimes, however, their offerings in the form of cash and flowers are accepted by the temple priest on their behalf. But the latter would not accept the offering in kind, as, sweets, for the deity. The Bhat or Brahmin priest who serves the role of astrologer, however, gives them the necessary advice about auspicious dates for performing marriage, etc. and accept remuneration in cash. In the villages and small towns they also appear to face restrictions in the matter access to public eating places and are often served tea or snacks in separate cups or saucers specially kept for them and members belonging to Scheduled Caste communities.

In the field of education the Koraga children attend schools like others. But it is seen that in most of the cases their children are either attending schools meant exclusively for them or for Scheduled Caste and other backward communities of the area, at least in the rural areas.

The Koraga have been living the life agrestic serfs rendering menial services to their masters. These include laborious jobs in the agricultural field as well as other menial work in addition to acting as sweepers or scavengers. They were also required to lift dead cattle from the jurisdiction of the village-
or locality. For their livelihood the Koraga depended on the other communities. Even now they receive alms particularly during the religious festivals. Besides, during marriage ceremonies or other social functions in the village they were required to clean the place and receive the left over food in leaf plates as their remuneration or customary right. Being treated as the lowest of all they served the Caste Hindus in other ways as well. In case of illness in the family of a Caste Hindu, they agreed to have the illness transferred to themselves for a bare consideration of some monetary gift or gift in kind.

The lowest social status which the community ‘enjoys’ is reflected in the unpalatable epithets such as ‘the black legged ones’ ‘the chandala’ or ‘the out-caste’ used for the members of the community and their treatment as ‘the untouchables among the untouchable’.

SOCIAL CONTROL

In the past they had a fairly effective tribal council, locally called as Sabha or Kooduvalike which governed the socio-political affairs of the community. But it is no longer so powerful. However, it still tries to regulate the affairs of the community in as best a manner as it could, despite shrinkage in the sphere of its activity, authority and influence.

Each Koraga village or locality has a tribal council which is presided over by a headman, known as the gurikara or budiyant, as he is locally called in North Kanara District. He is assisted by a person known as vottu gurikara who functions as a messenger or a go-between for convening and conducting the meetings of the tribal council. A similar organisation is found among the neighbouring Scheduled Caste communities such as the Mundala, Holeya and Koosa who refer to their headman as yajamana and his assistant as kolkara. Due to their contact with these communities the Koraga also sometimes refer to their headman as yajamana. From the account given by the earlier writers it would appear that all social disputes involving the members of the community were settled by the headman who used to be very powerful. In this connection Campbell has stated, “disputes are settled by their headman, who has-
power to call caste meetings to settle social disputes. Serious transgressions are punished with loss of Caste and ordinary offences by fines, the proceeds being spent on buying liquor which is drunk by the caste." (Campbell, *op. cit.*) The office of the headman operates on hereditary principle though, in case he is found unfit, he can be replaced by a capable person selected by the elderly members of the community by mutual agreement. But whatever the past practice, before announcing the judgement, the headman now invariably consults members of the council, comprising all the adult males of the community who wish to participate in its deliberation.

The council hears such disputes as the sexual offences such as pre-marital and extra-marital relations involving a member of the community, or breach of caste norms or etiquettes. Whenever a case is brought to the notice of the *gurikara* he informs the members of the community through the *Vottu gurikara* and convenes a meeting of the council on any convenient day to hear the dispute. Sometimes, the council meets periodically to settle all the outstanding disputes. The council holds its meeting mostly in the evening in an open space and members of the *Panchayat*, presided by the *gurikara*, listen to the testimony of the complaint, the defendant and other witnesses. Though the judgements are delivered by the *gurikara* he first ascertains the views of the members of the council and makes notes of the consensus arrived at. The punishment varies according to the gravity of the offence. The useful punishment is imposing fines, the amount realised therefrom being mostly spent on serving liquor to the members of the council. In extreme or serious cases of the breach of caste norms, the guilty person is ex-communicaed. If a woman belonging to Kappadada section commits adultery with a Soppina Koraga, she is punished by shaving her head and made to throw a feast to the community men besides being asked to pay a fine of twenty five rupees. Further, he is directed to offer special worship to the *bhuta* for condoning her sins. But in case a married woman commits adultery with a person belonging to the same sub-tribe, the amount of fine is reduced to rupees ten or twenty. Involvement of a Koraga woman with a person belonging to a Caste
Hindu community does not invoke any serious reaction from the community men. But she or her father is levied a fine of rupees two and fifty paise, before she is permitted to marry a boy of her own community. In serious cases of breach of sexual norms or adultery, the guilty person is ex-communicated. However, it is not difficult for the excommunicated person to be accepted back as a respectable member of the community after he undergoes penance and punishment which includes shaving the head, paying the fine as decided by the council, and feeding the community men. From the account given by Walhouse, it would appear that a woman proved as an adulteress had to undergo certain ordeals. In this connection he had stated that in case a Koraga woman committed adultery with a member of another community of the same rank, she was required to marry him.
CHAPTER 6

LIFE STYLE—MADHYA PRADESH

THE MURIAS

The GREAT plain of Chhatisgarh in Madhya Pradesh stretches down past Raipur and Dhamtari in hot and dusty monotony till it spends itself against the hills of Kankar. As the traveller moves towards the Baster plateau the countryside breaks into song about him, he is greeted by hardy, smiling woodmen singing at their work. All around is the evergreen sal forest. Suddenly he sees coming up before him a row of sharply rising hills, the sentinels that stand on guard before the country of the Muria—the land of ghotul.

Baster is roughly bisected by the great Indravati river which flows west from Kalahandi through the Jagdalpur Tahsil and South of the Abujhmar Mountains to the Chanda border.

The territory north of the Indravati is divided into three administrative divisions. The first, in the north-east, is the Kondagaon Tehsil; the second in the north-west, is the Narayanpur Tahsil and the third to the South, is the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Of these only the first two are inhabited by the type of Muria, whose institutions are ghotul. In the heavily populated and fertile low lands of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. The Muria have no ghotul.

The Kondagaon Tahsil occupies the great north-eastern
plateau of Bastar, which is some 2,400 ft. above the sea-level. The Narayanpur Tahsil is much larger than the Kondagon. The Narayanpur Tahsil has much more diversity than Kondagaon; to the west it is dominated by the wild and majestic scenery of the most striking landmark of all Bastar, the great mass of The Abujhmar Mountains, an impregnable fortress, wild, lonely, exalted, exhilarating, home of the hill Muria.

Hill Muria: The Hill Muria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the Abujhmar Mountains. They are both shy and friendly and attractive people.

The word Muria is used in Bastar to mean, generally, a tribesman. In this sense it has long been applied by State Officials to all the tribes except the Maria of Abujhmar. In recent years all people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the South many of the people whom Grigson calls "Bison-horn Maria" returned themselves as Muria at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Here I have used the word Muria tribal folk of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsil whose culture centres around the ghotul.

The name Muria has been derived from mur, the Flame of the Forest tree or from mur, a root. There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the Flame of the Forest, which is neither a totem nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their country. But the derivation of the word from mur, a root, has much to commend it. Mur may also mean 'permanent', as in mur podor, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname; the Muria in contrast to the Hill Maria have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'. In their villages the houses are arranged in streets and open on to one another, but they have substantial gardens behind. The women often dress in almost Muria fashion, exposing the breasts but wearing few ornaments and the men imitate the fashion of the Chanda District.
The ghotul is used mainly by boys and men, in Maria fashion it is the centre of the male life of the village a tendency which the external influence across the border tend to strengthen.

There is a striking contrast between these mother Muria and the people South of Narayanpur. This is the country of the best, most beautiful, most charming of all the people of Baster, the so-called Jhoria Muria. These Muria are, according to their own account, Marea of the Abujhmar who have settled in the plains. They have retained a great deal of their original Maria culture but where they have altered, they have improved and developed it—an interesting variant of the normal result of culture-change. According to Verrier Elwin 'probably Hill Maria who have descended from the Abujhmar and have come into cultural contact, not with any 'superior' outsiders but with a symathetic and allied people. The Muria of the plains taught these Hill Maria to develop their ghotul system; the Muria taught them new dances, but preserved the old hill dances for the worship of the gods. The new and exciting theory of a "co-educational" ghotul, which become possible with the break down of the former territorial clan arrangements, stimulated these Marias; it made them wash—the Jhoria are some of the cleanest people in Baster, though their anestral Maria are among the dirtiest, it awoke their artistic sense, impelling them to make ever better necklaces and combs, wooden supports for the hair of their motiari, tobacco pouches, so carved that they would inform a girl at a glance of your intention.'

Muria Clans: The Muria are divided into clans and phratries, the rules of which are of real importance to the children in the ghotul, for a breach of the clan-rules may merit not only the vengeance of the departed but severe punishment from the leaders of the ghotul and of the tribes. The clans regulate the absorbing question of marriage and the still more absorbing relationships of Chelik and Motiari. The clan festivals are among the most exciting and colourful incidents in the ghotul's life.

The clan system of the Muria is now greatly confused. In the old days it seems probable that the inhabited territory of
Life Style—The Muria

north Baster was divided up among the different clans of Maria and Muria and each had its own particular bhum or clan area. In each Bhum there was a spiritual capital, a village which was the home of the clan—god or Anga with a clan-priest to tend him and mediate between him and his kinsmen.

Traces of this organisation exist. But many Muria have never visited their clan-god, many are living on lands that really belong to other clans, most clans have bhum—rights in villages that are widely apart. There are no longer compact clan areas, and in every village—though each is regarded as the bhum of some special clan—there live members of several other clans.

Among the Hill Maria, were the old one-clan-to-one-village system still survives, the girls are not allowed to share the dormitory with the boys because of the obvious danger of clan incest.

The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for race, vans. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kacchimvans or the Tortoise Race; the Bakravans or the Coat Race; the Baghvans or the Tiger Race; and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are dadabhai or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are dadabhai to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is akomama, a combination of the words, ako, which means a man’s mother’s father, daughter’s son or daughter’s daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and mama, which means a man’s mother’s brother, his father-in-law or his wife’s brother’s son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

A Chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the akomama clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one’s own ghotul or near at hand.
Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as dadabhai. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the akomama relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning.

The Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue; with yet another marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of its classificatory aunts or nieces. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife’s elder sister his mother-in-law, his younger brother’s wife of widow and any woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grand mother or grand daughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship.

The great majority of Muria marriage are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother’s brother’s daughter or his father’s sister daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross—cousin marriages, a chelik has special hence to joke and flirt with his mother’s brother’s daughter or his father’s sister’s daughter (both mandani in Gondi). A Motiari can equally be free with her fathers sister’s son or her mother’s brother’s son (both manriyo in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married.

So long as these cousins are not engaged however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl’s breast and he may have intercourse with her.

The connection between a man (dewar) and his elder
brother's wife (ange) is the central theme of the Lingo legend (Lingo Pen is the noblest of the Gond cult-heroes). This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance.

The women, especially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breast and exchange the coarsest jokes.

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. The clan retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs.

*The Muria Village*: Generally the houses are scattered about sometimes widely scattered to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are even in a special or recognised position though the ghotul is often at one end of the village.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small country and, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the last of Kondagaon the verendoh of the main house is often deeper than the room inside where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abejhumar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanliness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of mother earth, and a love of animals. The houses themselves are cosy and homely crammed with every sort of basket, leafbundles and utensils. Inside, in a inner room is kept the mysterious pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the homes only of the married. For the
Chelik and motiari they are mostly work-rooms where the day is spent. The night must be spent in the ghotul. The life and interest of Chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

_Cultivators_: The Murias are essentially cultivators and they have a saying that "it is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to ship from a branch." They have permanent fields and at the same time, depending on the locality, they practice the axe-cultivation which is widely known to the tribal people of Madhya Pradesh. The axe, they say, is 'our milk-giving cow' and with it they cut the trees and branches, set fire to them and then sow their seed in the ashes after the first rain have fallen. For their permanent cultivation they keep bullocks and have many other domestic animals. They serow millets, rice and pulses, ceremonies are held at the time of preparing the field, sowing the seed and reaping the crop. They also maintain gardens which surround the houses and they pay a great deal of attention to them. Here they sow oil seed and vegetables and grow a few first trees. There a special feast, when the first crops are eaten.

In some villages, the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the Chelik a piece of land for cultivation. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village.

The Muria supplement the profits of agriculture by collecting honey, extracting oil hunting and fishing and gathering all manner of forest produce.

To the Muria the drinking of liquor is both a duty and a pleasure. The spirit extracted from the flowers of the mahua (Bassia Latifolia) is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at two naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm and the rice-beer, which is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar, are only used for pleasure.

_Status of Women_: The girls, of course have the major
part of the house work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the building with cowdung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the grain-bin. A motiari, before the menarche may go into the room where the pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband’s family.

The Chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the women folk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fishing, they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many changes for sharing of labour between Chelik and Motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. She must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife or thrust the plunge—traps into the water.

On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work, together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

The Ghotul: There is nothing unusual or extraordinary about the ghotul (the night dormitory). The origin of the ghotul, as described by Muria is follows, “It is due to their
desire to segregate the youth of the tribe and thus prevent them being an embarrassment to their parents; other emphasize the need of providing a sort of Boy scout troop which will always be available to look after visitors to the village. But actually ghotul was established to keep the tribe together to maintain its culture and to protect its girls from the seduction of outsiders. The ghotul certainly achieves this end. It is an ideal instrument of the laws of endogamy. It is a powerful preservative of the old culture. It was also suggested that the ghotul was founded to get the girls used to it. We ourselves are so accustomed to the idea that a girl should be a virgin on her wedding night that it is hard for us to realize that many primitive people would very much prefer her not to be. Hence the ceremonial deflowering of girls by men other than their husbands. It may also be said that the ghotul have arisen from a desire that husbands should not have to face the magical infection of by hymenal blood.

A very old Muria said “the ghotul began because we did not know what to do with these children. We were tired of settling their quarrels and we did not want their noise. So we said, you all go off and play and spend your time together. You can do what you like provided you do the work we want from you, bring wood and water, tend the cattle, nurse the babies. So gave them a special house to live in away from the rest of us.”

The Lingo legend suggests that the ghotul serves the useful purpose of removing the younger brothers of a household from their dangerous proximity to the elder brother’s wives. But the fundamental reason for the ghotul is to prevent children watching the primal scene and to the elder boys and girls the task of educating the younger children for which the parents have no time or inclination. They are apt to surprise the intimacies of marital life. At the age of six or seven, a child begins its dormitory life. Most of the little children have elder brothers and sisters there who can look after them.

One of the reasons given by Maria to the existence of the ghotul is that, “it is sinful for parents to sleep in the presence of their children”. As soon as a child understands what it is, we send it to the ghotul.
Another villager said "the ghotul was made simply to stop children watching their parents copulating."

All parents actually know everything that goes on in ghotul, but the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. The father and mother both advise their children to be very careful in their relation in ghotul. Do not make a girl pregnant. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial. The parent say 'We are poor. We shall not be able to pay the fine. You have to work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way'.

On the whole the relation of children and parents is happy one. This may be at least one reason why there is so little conflict and jealousy, so little strain, among the Muria.

*Types of Ghotul*: There are two different types of ghotul. Both are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is explained we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between Chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *Jodidar*. (A jodi or jori is the word for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife or yoking ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally married to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own; divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such a motiari is his girl; if any one sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time he is punished.

The second type of ghotul is a modern. In the jodidar ghotul, the pairing off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage
or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most
villages there is a custom of ghotul marriages, which is cele-
brated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and
received their names or titles. But divorce is allowed.
A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of
her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with
girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed
and both behave naturally.
The ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion.
The boys and girls live in closest contact and enjoy sexual
intimacy in one another's presence.
In modern ghotul everything is arranged to prevent long-
drawn intense attachments. There is no ghotul marriage, there
are no ghotul partners. Every one belongs to every one else
in the very spirit of new world. A Chelik and Motiari may
sleep together for three nights, after that they are warned; if
they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of
possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he
sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at
her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she
refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is
forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he
has no right over her, she is the property of the whole ghotul,
and if he looks like that he will be finished.
This type of ghotul is sometimes called the mundi-badalna
because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change
your rings from finger to finger.
This type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical
Jodidar dormitory system. There are many reasons—too
much love before marriage will mean too little after it.
Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long
union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-
nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular
marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—
which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old
alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient
debts. The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital
sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of con-
ception.
A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness and to any kind of possessiveness. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. They say in a ghotul all the girls should be the wives of all the boys. The change of object undoubtedly stimulates the sexual instinct and makes ghotul life more exciting.

The average ghotul is small, with not more than twenty members. Of these twenty several are bound to be closely related or of the same clan. Moreover, these boys and girls have grown up together from boyhood. Therefore when we read that a Chelik has to sleep with a new girl every three days, we are not to think of him as being able to pick and choose from an endless procession of new girls. He is going to spend his time in rotation among a little group of girls every one of whom he knows very well.

Further, a boy is not generally able to choose his partner at will. It is the Kotwar in consultation with the Belosa (Belosa—head of the girls; Kotwar—head of the boys) who decides how the chalik and motiari are to couple and when they are to change their partner.

A remarkable thing about these arrangements is that they interfere with the normal course of sexual selection. The beautiful girl and the ugly or even deformed girl has exactly the same sexual opportunity, exactly the same sexual privilege. So with the boys.

Ghotul names: These names are of great significance. Until they receive them, the children have no standing; they cannot get 'ghotul mates'. But once they are named they enter into the full equality of the ghotul fellowship. They now almost forget their murpodar or home name, which must never be used in the ghotul or by other children and is indeed hardly ever used except at home by parents and close relatives.

An ordinary name is often ugly or unkind but the ghotul title has the tenderest and happiest associations, charged with romantic memories. For this reason it is never used by parents, who must pretend not to know it. A boy may sometimes tell his father his name but the girls never reveal it in
the home. After marriage, a boy goes on using his title as indeed he continues for a time to exercise his old office, but a girl never allow people to address her by a name which has many memories of the free days of youth. But when a group of old women who were once members of the same ghotul get together, they call each other by their ghotul names to remind themselves of happiness'. Lingo Pen, greatest of the Bond cult-heroes, gave the boys and girls names and duties.

As the children grow older, they are promoted from rank to rank in the ghotul hierarchy and their titles are often changed. In different ghotuls it has been found that the leader is called variously Sirdar, Katwar, Malik, Diwan, Joria, Malguzar, Silledar, Salya and Gaita. Elsewhere these titles may be given to quite junior boys. On the other hand, the majority of girls call their leader Belosa. In other villages, they are called Manko or Suliyaroo.

Here one example is given from Kabonga ghotul which will clarify the duties of boys and girls, in order of precedence:

**Chelik**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diwan</td>
<td>Supreme council which controls the affairs of boys and girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirdar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukhwan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotwar</td>
<td>Seeing to the attendance and behaviour of the girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munshi</td>
<td>Keeps an account of all that is done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamadar</td>
<td>Sees the girls have a proper supply of combs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandki</td>
<td>Entertains visitors from other ghotul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defedar</td>
<td>Cleanliness of the ghotul and keep the roof thatch in order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajanti</td>
<td>Attend to the tobacco supply and offer to the visitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bara Pahadar</td>
<td>Seating arrangements. They give mats to the visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nani Pahadar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamdar</td>
<td>These are subjects. Their function is to do what they are told.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beldar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chowkidar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkhen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motiar

Belosa: Leaders of all the girls who arrange how everyone is to sleep and to see their subjects perform their duties properly.

Tiloka
Nirosa
Piosa
Janko: From Tiloka to Alosa all have to clean the ghotul, tearing leaves, make them into plates, cups, leaf-pipes, comb and massage the boys and any other task.

Malko
Janky
Mankay
Junki
Alosa

Entry age: There does not seem to be any fixed age at which children can claim admission to the dormitory; it depends on their relations with their parents. When they reach the stage of going about with other children, forming gangs and playing with them instead of staying at home, there is a natural desire to go to the ghotul. The first entry is very simple, especially for boys, who simply slip in almost unnoticed with the rest. A girl does not go until she covers her shoulders. This does not suggest that she is mature, but there comes a stage when she wants to wear a little more clothing than is usual in infancy and this marks her entry into her ghotul phase. When coming to the ghotul is delayed due to family circumstances, the older girls or boys go and fetch her or him, saying to the mother ‘your children is now grown up, you must let them come or you will be fined’.

In any case there is no taboo on even the youngest children going to the dormitory; a father may take his two year son to sleep there when the mother is away at a wedding or in her catamenial period. But very little girls and boys are not allowed to sleep in the ghotul.

The children are now called *nuna* or *noni* till they get their names or titles. They generally play and sleep together. The older boys and girls teach them manners of ghotul. Regularity,
obedience and habits of work are taught and tested. The titles are generally given at the next Dassera or Diwali. In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa.

A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. A Chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast.

_Evening in Ghotul:_ The ghotul is very literally a night-club. After an hour or two of dancing, singing, games or storytelling, the serious business of the evening begins. The younger boys, those who have not yet been given titles, go round to every senior boy, beginning with the leader, saluting each with Johar. When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way. Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes tobacco. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. Then each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. After massage boys and girls prepare for bed. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the ghotul compound. In the early morning, the Belosa gets up and goes round the ghotul rousing her girls.

_Hair dressing:_ The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render to a Chelik.

_Attitude to Sex:_ The Muria have a simple, innocent and natural attitude to sex. The Muria believe that sexual congress is good thing; it does you good, it is healthy and beautiful. The saying that the penis and Vagina are _Hossi ki nat_, in a 'joking relationship' to each other. Sex is great fun; it is the best of ghotul games; it is the dance of the genitals.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young
children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction.

A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy does not know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, “You only pressed me last night nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure”. The boy replies “Today I am really ready, now I know what to do”. Thus from a very early age the young Chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique.

The Ghotul and Religion: The ghotul is itself a religious institution and has its share in the worship of the gods, while many of the Chelik and motiari are already being trained as priests.

The ghotul is a Tirthasthan, a holy place, as described by Muria; you cannot commit sin within its walls. It was founded by Lingo Pen, noblest of Gond cult-heroes and so no evil dream or power of witch or warlock can invade its sanctuary. Chelik and Motiari undertake dancing expeditions in honour of the gods; they attend the great clan festivals and dance at them; at the New Eating ceremony Chelik are employed as cooks and motiari gather leaves for plates and cups. In the ceremonial hunts before certain festivals the Chelik play a major part and they have special duties in connection with the first ritual cutting of forest clearings. Dussera and Diwali are observed by the ghotul members in their own way and they keep other special festivals.

Muria religion is undoubtedly a religion of the Hindu family with special affinities to its Shaivite interpretation. It acknowledges a large number of deities whom it pictures in a simple and homely manner. It has a definite priesthood and a body of medicines (these are siraha or Gunia, who fall into trances and divine by egg, they have special functions for the cure of diseases) who communicate with the gods while in the state of trance. It erects Shrines and temples to the gods and bents small huts for the tendance and placation of the dead.
It consecrates every rural activity by sacrifice and a sacramental meal. It purifies and protects the village by a series of ceremonies.

The Muria pantheon is very large. The Supreme being has the Hindu names of Bhagyva or Mahapurule, but the Great God of Gonds, who is not however, specially worshipped by the Muria, is Bara Pen. Then there are the Earth-Mother, gods of trees, stream, gods of sky and rain, gods of home and a host of several deities. The most remarkable of the clan-god, the Anga Pen, who is often invoked in divination.

Most of these gods are honoured in a little temple of mud and thatch on the outskirts of the village; they are not represented by images, but the temples are furnished with various symbols and the impediments of worship.

The dead also have an important part in Muria religion. Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is its emphasis on the continuity of all existence, its belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are associated with the fertility of the land. They are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary.

In the religious life of the tribe the Chelek play an important part. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for coming harvest.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect. So long as the tribes and its institutions hold together, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations.

Some people in India tend to regard her primitive population as something to be regretted. This account may perhaps help to show that her hills and forests hold a rich human treasure, natural to her soil, part of her great culture, which she should not despise.
LIFE STYLE BAIGA (M.P.)

The Baiga appears to be a branch of the great Bhuiya tribe of MADHYA PRADESH. The Baiga call themselves Bhumiaraja or Bhumijan. Baiga, the name, also means a sorcerer or medicine—man. It is applied in this sense to the priests of Chotanagpur tribe, Khairwar. The name Baiga also applies to anyone who serves as a village priest in the Central Provinces.

Tribal Divisions

The Baiga tribe is strictly endogamous although women of other tribes who marry Baiga may be admitted after the appropriate rites have been performed. The tribe itself is divided into a number of endogamous jat, the rules about intermarriage vary from place to place and members of some jat may intermarry while others never do so. The main difference between these jat is one of distribution. Each jat occupies a separate block of country, and inevitably takes some colour from its neighbours, the geographical situation, the attitude of the administration.

The Binjhwar Baiga are the most civilized in the Hindu sense. Some of them dress like ordinary peasants, use plough, and observe some Hindu feasts and customs.

The Muria Baiga who live in Niwas and Mandla distinguish themselves from other Baiga by shaving their hair. They have been greatly influenced by the Gond among whom they live.

The Bhaina Baiga are to be found in Bilaspur and Rewa. There are three kinds of Bhaina Baiga—Dudh bhaina, Kath—bhaina and Rai-bhaina. There is little difference between them.

The Kondwan Baiga of Balaghat eat monkeys and beef, and are looked down on by other Baiga in consequence.

Hair-Dressing

Baigas usually wear their hair long or shave the front part of the crown, cutting it back into a perfectly straight line. In both cases, the hair at the back is allowed to grow very long and is tied into a jura, or bun, which hangs down on the left side of the head. Some of the older Baiga have immensely long pigtails that are tied up in this way.
The Narotia and Binjhwar do not tie the hair in a bun, but simply keep a small tuft or chutti hanging down in Gond fashion. The Muria shave the head altogether, leaving a small tuft. Only a fellow Baiga shaves the head of a Baiga, no Nai (barber) may touch a Baiga's head. The chin is usually shaved, but at present little goatee beards are fashionable among the Baiga of Panda-ria. Moustaches are generally worn.

Women do not cut their hair. The younger women have various methods to tie their hair but the older women simply make a jura (bun) like men.

Baiga girls are very fond of wooden combs which they put in their buns. Ghi is rubbed into the hair to make it glossy but oil is seldom used. Armpits are shaved and pubic hair removed by both men and women. The comb is used for removing lice.

Tattooing

Baiga women are very fond of tattooing. Tattoos are a form of sexual expression and a powerful sexual stimulant.

Men are seldom tattooed, but they sometimes put the chandrama (moon) on the back of the hand the bichhu (scorpion) on the fore-arm. Sometimes they tattoo themselves on the affected parts in order to cure rheumatism.

Tobacco

The most treasured part of the Baiga's hari (house) is his tobacco patch. It is very carefully fenced off, placed near the house for fear of thieves, watered and weeded with a care that no other crop can claim. This care reflects the Baiga's great attachment to tobacco.

The Baiga grow several kinds of tobacco. The dihai is the most common. The Baiga seldom need to purchase if, for their crop is planned to last them through the year.

Fire

The Baiga use both the fire-saw and the fire-drill for making fire. The latter is more common in Pandaria and Dindori, the former in Baihar. The fire-drill is generally worked by two men. They make a small hollow in the middle of a flat piece of bam-
boo, and put a few pieces of grit into it. One of the men holds this hearth firmly by its ends with his feet, and the other takes a thin, dry, sharpened bamboo, inserts the pointed end in the hollow, and revolves it rapidly by rubbing it between the palms of his hands. His mate takes turns with him. The friction makes wood dust in the hollow and this soon smoulders into fire.

For the fire-saw, a piece of bamboo is split down the middle for a third of its length and wedged open with a bit of stict, to form the hearth. Another bit of split bamboo is sharpened all along its length. The hearth is placed slanting slightly against a stone and under it is placed the tinder, dry leaves or cotton from the semur tree. One man holds the hearth firmly with his hands and feet, while another saws across the split bamboo with the sharp edge of his saw, pressing down as hard as he can sawing as rapidly as possible. Very soon smoke rises, and soon a spark falls on the wood-dust and other tinder. The sawing is stopped and the men blow carefully on the spark till the tinder is well kindled.

Food

The Baiga eat three times a day. First, in the early morning about eight, at the meal called juara, they usually drink pej of kodan, kutki, siker or rice. The second meal, which also consists of pej, is taken about four in the afternoon, and is called marriaiya. The third meal called biyari is taken rather late at night and may consist of kodan and dal, with vegetables and sometimes bread of wheat or marria. In Mandla Tehsil, these meals are known as murgal, marria and biyari.

Pej is the foundation for other food. Baiga eat varieties of jungle leaves and herbs first washing them and them boiling in pej or a sour curry of gram or cutting it into pieces of curry.

Among fruits the most popular is the mango. Other fruits are jamun (eugenia jambolana), bel (aegle marmelos), bar (ficus bengalensis), bohar (cordya myxa) and many others.

Baigas do not care much for fish since they regard them as unsatisfying. The fish is washed but not cleaned and is cooked in a pot with oil, butter milk, turmeric, chilli and salt. If they want to preserve the fish for a day or two they burn it, and keep the parched shrivelled flesh for future use. They eat
flesh of nearly all kinds of animals and are said to distinguish twenty-one different varieties of rat. Meat is generally prepared by being first boiled in water, and then either cut up and made into curry, or fried in ghi or oil. Eggs are boiled, the shell is removed and they are made into curry with haldi, chilli and any vegetable available. Children eat crows as the flesh has a good effect on the eyes since crow is very sharp-sighted.

Language

Baiga speak the language of their neighbours. In Bilaspur and along the Maikal hills they speak ordinary Chhattisgarhi, in Mandla and Jubbulpore they talk Eastern Hindi with Awadhi modifications and a few words borrowed from Gondi; in Balaghat, they talk in Marathi, Hindi and Gandi—or a mixture of all three—and the mysterious language called Baigani.

"Baigani is now recognized as a variant form of Chhattisgarhi but it was once supposed to be a real language with a large number of speakers.

The Baiga Pantheon

The Baiga pantheon is exceedingly varied and elastic. It differs from village to village. There is no exclusiveness about it. The Baiga naturally worships everything he can, in order to be on the safe side.

Since Baiga have lost their own language, they can only describe their deities by Sanskrit or Hindi words. This gives their pantheon a spurious air of civilized theology and Hindu respectability.

The Baiga does not generally show very great reverence towards his deities. He laughs and jokes, very obscenely sometimes, during the ceremonies, intercepts them at critical moments for a few pulls at his pipe, abuses those gods who fail him in the roundest terms. The Baiga show a certain respect for the deity whom he now calls by the Hindi word "Bhagavan". Bhagavan is the creator, and it is to him that many aspects of the social and economic life of the tribe trace their origin.

In addition to the great gods of the tribe, every family honours a number of household gods. Chief among these are the AJI—DADI, the ancestors, who live behind the hearth.
DULHA DEO, the deified ghost of a young Gond bridegroom who was killed by a tiger on his way to the bride's house, also lives behind the hearth. He guards and blesses the sagai (engagement) and the marriage-bed, RAT MAI, goddess of night, lives in the house and makes children happy. She gives fever if she is angry, but is easily appeased by the offering of a black cock. PANIHARIN lives by the water-pots in a corner of the house. When the women go to get water, she protects them. The Baiga offer her pulse and new rice sprinkled on the fire, MASWASI, lord of the chase, lives in the bow and arrow. KANSASUR MATA lives in the lota (pot) or thali (brass plate). LOHASUR MATA lives in the axe. NARBADA MAI lives in an iron chain hanging from the wall. BASINLAIYA finds a home in a bit of bamboo. BEHARBASU or PHARKAIN lives in the gate.

All these deities are, in relation to man, benevolent or at least neutral. The essence of Baiga religion is to mobilize these forces of neutrality or benevolence against the forces of evil. Baiga religion is not a dogma, it is a war where the priest fights a desperate battle against the unseen powers of disaster and disease with the help of the benevolent deities.

Rules of Social Intercourse

The Baiga have always been rather strict in matters of food and drink. They consider it safer to avoid social intercourse with people who eat beef. A Baiga may take certain kinds of nourishment from anyone, even from a Mussalman like boiled milk, cooked sweetmeats, fresh fruits, mahua liquor, tobacco and cigarettes, and all kinds of dry and uncooked food.

Children can eat with anyone and anywhere until they are married.

Women do not eat not only with anyone outside the tribe, but also avoid eating with anyone outside their own sub-tribe.

The Laws of Kinship

The kinship system of the Baiga is of the usual classificatory type although this is not immediately apparent owing to the fact that they speak a dialect of Hindi and in consequence
use some of the customary Hindi words for their relations. The kinship term *mama* is used for the father's sister's husband and mother's brother. The father's sister and mother's brother's wife are described by the same term, *mame*.

The step father, father's younger brother and mother's younger sister's husband are all called *kaka*.

The mother's brother's daughter and the father's sister's daughter are called *mahina bahin*, and similarly the father's sister's son and mother's brother's son are called *mahina bhai*. These cross-cousins may marry. But a man may not marry his mother's sister's daughter, father's brother's daughter and wife's younger brother's wife who are called *bahir*.

Most men of the same generation, a man's own brothers, his mother's brother's sons his mother's sister's sons, his father's brother's sons, his father's sister's sons, are classed together as brothers. The term *bhai* is used if they are younger than the speaker, *dada* if they are older. A woman calls her husband's elder sister's husband *soudhua*, and his younger sister's husband *bhai*.

**Birth of a Child**

The child gives greatest pleasure to the Baiga. It is considered a reproach for a woman not to have a child. It is bad to see her face in the early morning. It is considered as a punishment for incest in her family or due to witchcraft. During pregnancy a number of precautions must be observed. The favourite *kamhia handa* should not be eaten as it is liable to cause abortion, but there are no other food restrictions. A pregnant woman must not cross the rope by which a horse is tethered; if she does there is a danger that as a horse is pregnant for twelve months, her own pregnancy may be similarly extended. She must also be careful not to step across the little rough threads of the rope that is used to make beds or seats. If she does, though the child will be born the placenta will not come out and she will die.

Baiga believe that the child is possessed by the *jlv* of some one who was once connected with the family and it is important to find out who it is. When the child smiles for the first time, the parents wash its feet with water which has some silver in
if, and then drink the water. The гunia then proceeds to find out which jiv has been reborn in the child. He takes the names of all conceivable ancestors in his family. He looks for some swelling of the eyes or head that would remind them of the dead. They offer it rings and ornaments to see if it recognizes any of them.

When they discover which ancestor has come back to earth in the person of the child, they proceed to name it. This is done by mother’s father or the maternal uncle. First he cuts the child’s hair. Then he gives the child its name. This must not be the name either of parents or grandparents or of the ancestor who has been reincarnated. It may be taken from the month or the day of the week or from some physical peculiarity of the child. This is the pedinam. Later on, the child is often given a nickname (daukinam).

If a child is born with teeth, the Baiga call it Rakshasa. They put it in an earthen pot and bury it alive, for otherwise if would eat the mother.

There are many magical charms and practices designed to better the child’s future. To make him walk better, the parents put little bells on his ankles or round his waist.

To make him a good dancer, they cook rice and dal together with milk in a wooden spoon so that as the milk dances in the spoon and makes if wriggle to and fro, so the boy will dance wriggling his body.

To make a child swim well, a little chip of wood is taken from a boat and washed in water which is given to the child to drink.

If they want the child to be expert in climbing trees, they give him a squirrel to eat.

If a child is dumb, they give him the ever-trembling pipal leaves mixed with milk and rice, so that his tongue will begin to tremble.

**Development of the Sexual Consciousness**

Baiga children grow up free and unrestrained. Their sexual consciousness is developed very early. Parents may insist on their children going to work, but they rarely interfere with their pleasures.
There is no regular initiation into the mysteries of sex; no gotulghar (children's dormitory) where the child may learn. The child simply picks up its knowledge in the ordinary casual way.

A tradition of friendship

The Baiga are capable of the most passionate and faithful friendships. The covenants of friendship are of two classes. There are five great friendships, the mahaprasad, the narbadajal, the sakhi, the jawara and the bhajli; and there are lighter phul friendships.

These alliances must normally be made between members of the same sex, though old men and women sometimes become sakhi. The friendships may be made only between members of different goti and different garh, that is of one another. Once the friendship has been inaugurated, neither party may take the other's name.

Position of Women

In Baiga society, women enjoy an excellent position. The Baiga woman go about alone; she generally chooses her own husband and changes him at will; she may take her wares to the bazaar and open her own shop there; she may own property; she may drink and smoke in her husband’s presence.

Women play a leading part in the marriage ceremony and at the birth of a child.

It is her reputation for witchcraft that is the strongest element in the position of the Baiga women. Her curse may be as powerful as that of a sadhu.

There is no clear division of labour between men and women. Both men and women cook—the husband always cooks during his wife's menstruation cycle. Both men and women fetch water and go for fishing. With a few exceptions like hunting, women do the same work as men.

But women must not thatch the roofs of houses. They must not take part in sowing. They may kill fish, but not pigs, goats or chickens.

Thus, in general social life of the tribe, there is a very great measure of equality between the sexes.
Place of sex in tribal life

An intensive research into the lives of Baiga suggest that sex is not the primary interest of this tribe. Husbands are changed because they do not provide sufficient food. A woman may be turned out of the house because she is not a good cook. Food and magic are the predominant concerns of the Baiga, but sex must no be underrated. Warm, vigorous, direct, phallic enjoyment is as necessary as food, but as it is more readily available, if does not seem more important.

It is considered wholly impossible for anyone to live without a jodi, or mate. It is not expected that a widow will remain faithful to the memory of her dead husband. If she were to do so, and stay unmarried, the gravest doubts would be cast on her moral character.

The Baiga’s idea of Attractiveness

Baiga women, as a rule, are not attractive. They are often stout and stumpy, with thick limbs and coarse features. But in the eyes of their men folk, Baiga women are beautiful, while the men are themselves entirely charming.

Baiga analyse a person’s beauty by taking apart the features and not as a whole. They analyse if, giving as it were so many marks for each feature until from the aggregate they can say whether it is beautiful or not.

Social significance of Marriage

In Baiga society, marriage is of great significance socially and economically. The necessity of paying a bride-price is an incentive to family thrift, and a stimulus to youthful labour. There can be no economic progress without the creation of wants.

Socially, an unmarried woman is unheard of the spinster does not exist: there is a mere handful of widows: the unmarried man is doomed to become a Raksa after death.

In Baiga society, a boy and girl may be formally engaged at any age sometimes in childhood, more frequently soon after puberty. The bride-price is called Sukh in Mandla and Bilaspur and Kharcha elsewhere. It generally amounts to Rs. 18 or Rs. 25, and is often paid in kind. At the time of payment, the
boy's parents give a feast known as the Barokhi. It is now
that they fix the date of marriage.

The chief actors in the marriage ceremony are the two Doesi
and the two suasin. The Doesi are usually old men who stand
in the relation of father or uncle to the bride and bridegroom,
they perform most of the religious rites. The suasin are young
unmarried girls, sisters or cousins of the bridal pair. They have
to remain in constant attendance.

When a marriage party comes to the bride's house, bride
and bridegroom go round the pole three times, and when they
go to the bridegroom's house, they repeat the ceremony four
times.

At most marriages, gifts are made at the time of the tikawan
by the bridegroom's father to the bride's paternal grand-mother
(aqi-bondri), to her mother (mal-odna), to her brother (bhai-
bani), to the Doesi and to the suasin.

It was formerly the tradition that the newly-married couple
must not consummate the marriage in a house, but spend their
first night together in the jungle. This still observed by those
who desire a little privacy.

There is a secondary marriage known as haldi-pani which is
legal as the ceremonial marriage, sat-bawar. The children of
haldi-pani or churi-pairana marriage are legitimate and can
inherit. This is an some way like a registered marriage as
compared to a full-dress ceremonial wedding. It is cheaper,
quicker and simpler.

Normally, both parties to a haldi-pani marriage should have
been married already by full sat-bawar rites to other partners.
The haldi-pani rite is used for the marriage of widows. It is
also used after divorce, in many cases of elopement, or where
the parents are not in favour of the marriage.

When a man takes a second—or third—wife, the marriage is
as expensive as any other if the girl is unmarried. If the
chhotki (second or junior wife) has been married before, then
only the haldi-pani ceremony is performed.

The custom of serving for a wife is common to many castes
and tribes in the Baiga country. The youth who gives his
services is called the Lamsena or Gahnia.

There is no formal engagement, but on the day he begins
his work, the lamsena brings a rupee's worth of liquor to his prospective father-in-law, and he is formally accepted. He works for two to five years according to the contract, and during that time he lives as one of the family, and receives food and clothing. If he earns anything during that period, the money must be handed over to the father-in-law.

Sometimes, if the Lamsena is old enough and the girl is willing, they are married first and the boy does his work later.

If the girl runs away with another man, after the lamsena has done two to three years' service, he should be given Rs. 40 as compensation.

**Baiga sentiment about Death**

The Baiga sentiment about death is one of fear for its unseen malignant cause, and of deep sorrow for the dead. They seem to be more afraid of the cause of death itself. A necessary part of every funeral is the divination designed to discover what this was. One method is to carry the body to the nearest stream, where the gunia takes oil in a leaf and puts three drops in the water, one for Thakur Deo, one for Bhagavan and one for 'Sin' (breach of a tribal taboo). If the drop of oil turns blood-red, they know the dead man has broken a tribal law; if it goes upstream, it is Bhagavan who has called him; if it goes "like crossed fingers", his death was due to a witch.

Another famous test is to took for the level of the grave when it is filled in. If it is in level with the surrounding ground, the death was due to Bhagavan. If it rises above, it was caused by a witch. If it sinks below, it was the punishment for the breach of a tribal taboo.

But fear is often entirely swept away by a most genuine sorrow.

After death, say the Baiga, the soul goes direct to Bhagavan. But a number of ceremonies and customs seem to contradict it. For example, the bearers carrying the corpse to the burial ground take a zigzag course to prevent the soul finding its way back to the house. This contradicts that the soul goes directly to Bhagavan after death.

But if we try to understand the Baiga philosophy, there
does not seem to be any inconsistency. According to their belief, a man disintegrates into three spiritual forces after death. The first is his *JIV*, soul or life-essence, which is capable of leaving the body in sleep and experiencing what we call dreams, and which may return to earth in some future incarnation. The *JIV* directly goes to the Bhagavan. Secondly, there is man's *CHAAYA*, or shadow, which is represented by a fish or a frog, and is brought home to live for ever behind the hearth. Thirdly there is his *BHUT*, or ghost, almost the perpetuation of his lower or evil self, dangerous and hostile to men, whose proper dwelling is the burial-ground, and which must at all costs be prevented from finding its way back to the house.

According to this tribe, Bhagavan lives on this earth, to the east of the Maikal Hills. He lives in a great palace on an island enclosed by two rivers of fire, Agnadi and Dagnadi.

When a man dies, Bhagavan sends his chaprasis to fetch the *JIV*. These chaprasis belong to the Kol tribe. If the dead man was well-to-do, they carry him in a litter; if he was poor, they kick him along the road. When he reaches Bhagavan's island, he finds an exact replica of the house he had on earth. If he had a big house on earth, he will have a big house on Bhagavan's island; if he wore rags in life, he will wear rags after death. All the food that he gave away during his lifetime is stored up in the house, and it is on this that he has to live; its quality determines the length of time that he will be able to stay in this happy place before being sent down to earth again.

There is no hell. But near Bhagavan's palace there is a pond full of crawling worms, and very wicked people are thrown into this. When there is just a scrap of them left, they are sent back to earth into the bodies of pigs. When a witch dies, her *JIV* is covered with tar and Bhagavan stops her from coming back to earth again.

The *JIV* of animals also go to Bhagavan and may be re-born.

A pregnant woman or a woman dying in childbirth is not re-born, nor is a witch or a man killed by witchcraft.
Funeral Rites

The ordinary funeral rites of Baiga are not elaborate. When they see a man dying, the relations gather round him, and his wife washes the floor with a cloth dipped in sambhar-dung water. She must do it with a single sweep and not rubbing to and fro. Then they lift the dying man off the bed and put him on the ground.

After death, his wife removes his cloth and bathes him. A son may do this for a widow. If it is a woman who is dead her mother or sister bathes her, and parents care for their children. After bathing, they wrap the body in a new cloth if possible, or a clean old one if not. They anoint the body with oil and turmeric.

When the hurdle is ready, the dead man’s son, standing with his back to the house, pulls some thatch out of the roof above the door, and they spread this on the hurdle and lay the body upon it.

Then four men lift it up and carry it away, going by a zigzag route to the nearest stream in order to divine the cause of death, or they may take the body directly to the burial ground.

If the man dies suddenly or after two days of illness, they bury him so that the infection does not spread. If he died after fifteen or more days of suffering, they burn him.

The bearers carry the corpse round the grave or pyre three times, then they set down the hurdle on the ground a little way away, pick it up again and bring it by a roundabout route back to the pyre or grave. They lay the corpse face downwards, if a man, and face upwards, if a woman; and the samdhi with a sudden movement strips it of the cloth that covered it.

Then the deadman’s son, or some youth of that generation, ties a small bit of new cloth round his waist and plunges into the nearest stream or pond. He comes shivering, and stands with his back to the grave and shovels a little earth into it with his hands. If there is a pyre, someone puts a bundle of blazing grass into his hands, and he lights the wood with it.

Then all the mourners gather round and each throws a little earth into the grave or a handful of twigs on to the fire.
The Samdhi walks round the pyre or grave with a basket of grain, scattering it on every side.

On the tenth day, all the mourners bathe. If the deadman has been cremated, his son and son-in-law gather the ashes from the pyre, and the son ties them in a bundle round his neck and goes to to bathe in the river.

If the deadman has been buried, the women bring water sprinkle it on the grave.

The Marghat or burial-place, is generally on the boundary-line of the village. Each grave is covered by a heap of stones, surmounted by a carved post and a Trisul fixed on the top. Trees are felled over all the recent graves and allowed to lie upon them in order to prevent hyenas digging up the bodies.

LIFE STYLE—THE DORLA (Madhya Pradesh)

The Dorla are a tribe of South Bastar in Madhya Pradesh. The word Dorla, appears to have been derived from the Telugu word Dora meaning Lord. In Telugu, the term Dora is singular and Doarlu plural. The Koyas of Andhra Pradesh adjoining Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, are called Koya Doralu or Koyalords.

Hemingway (1907) also speaks of the self importance with which the lowland Gonds of the Godavari district, knowing that the title Dora means lords, dislike being called Koyas. Another interpretation of the word has been offered by Grisson (1938). He states that the people of the lowlands or plains are referred to by the Hill Marias as Kor Koito and by other words, all of which mean lowland Koito. According to him Dorbhum or Dor Koito is probably the source of the expression Dhur Koito, which has been assimilated as Dhur Doito or Dhur Gond. At another place in his book (p. 55), he suggests that the word Dorla is obviously a corruption of Dor Koito, their lands being that of the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara and Jagalpur plateau, Dorbhum or lowland. He further writes that the lowland Koya “knew he was despised by the highlander, and with the self-assertiveness that is the typical fruit of the inferiority complex, palmed off his name Dor Koi
or lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dor Koi; and has proceeded to object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dyra or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.” (1938: 55-56).

Whatever may be the interpretation of the word—Dorla—the tribe is called by others as Dorla, Koya Doralu, Koya etc. But the people belonging to this tribe generally describe themselves by the name Koitor.

The Koitors or Dorlas, who reside in South Bastar are very much influenced by Telugu Koyas of the Godavari area, who are generally considered to be a sub-tribe of Gond. Now there is a tendency among Dorlas to call themselves as Koyas, and they (Dorlas) look down upon the Gottikoitors (Bison horn Mania).

According to Glassfouriord (1868-69) the Koya, Dorla, Cotti-koitor and Maria are the same people who are known differently in different contact situations. Thus the Koitor living among the Telugu the Telugus and acquiring Telugu manners and customs are called Koitor, Koyadoralu or Dorlu.

Grigson (1938) has given the following description regarding the affinities of the Dorlas. “It is important to remember that the Dorla also use Bison-horn or Buffalo-horn dancing head dresses, and in the other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn-Marias as indeed the traditions of both people have to be seen to assert.” Though similarity in dress is not the only criterion to establish the identity between two ethnic groups, it at least shows the sort of cultural linkage. It is, however, to be noted that neither the Dorlas nor the Marais agree that they are one and the same. The Dorlas look down upon the Marais as inferior and do not have any connubial or commensal relations with them. On the other hand, they have free relations with the people known as Koya in Telugu area. Not only their existing social relations but also the traditions of the past seem to suggest that the Dorlas and the Koyas are the segments of the same society known by two different names. Thurston (1909-38) has recorded that the Koyas of the plains have a tradition that they were driven from the plateau of Bastar by famine and disputes about 200 years ago. This provides an indirect support to the
view point of those, who see in the Koyas an extension of the social identity of the Dorlas and *vice-versa*. There are however others, who have a different point of view. For instance Mahboob Hussain (1946) is of the view that Koyas are of the same stock as the Khis i.e. Khandas of Cuttack district and have nothing to do with Gond group of tribes.

Notwithstanding this view on the contrary, the prognosis seems to be that in their search for social identity the Koyas and Dorlas will look towards each other for a long time to come. If there is adequate motivation to expand the orbit of their social identity they may even include Marias, within it, notwithstanding the social distance that they are maintaining at present on a vertical scale.

In Madhya Pradesh the Dorlas principally inhabit the Southern and the South Western parts of Bastar district *viz.* in Kota and Bijapur Tehsils. According to Hazra (1959, p. 25). “Their territory may be said to start about 25 miles South of Sukma in Kant Tehsil, the river Kolab or Sabri which separates Bastar from Orissa forming the eastern boundary of the tract. They extend Southward up to Kota. To the West they are distributed in a number of villages and spread over in the adjoining Tahsil of Bijapur”. He further states that “the Dorlas are also found in the adjoining parts of Andhra and Orissa States. In Andhra they are popularly known as Koya. The majority of them are distributed in Andhra in the East Godavari, particularly in the Bhadrachalam taluq, and also in Warangal, Karimnagar and Adilabad districts of the former Hyderabad State. In Orissa, they are mainly found in Malkangiri taluq.”

In 1901-21, the tribes of Bastar were all lumped together under the generic name Gond. In the 1931 Census, separate enumeration had been made and 9988 Koyas were returned in Bastar. But according to Grigson, (1938, 55-56) “the 9988 persons returned at the Census as Koyas are not the Dorla lowland Koyas. They are the Bison-horn-Marias living at the foot of the passes in Kota and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu Contacts.”
Family, Clan and Kinship

Simple family is the norm among the Doras. Soon after marriage the husband erects a separate hut for himself and his wife with the help of his close kins. But living separately does not necessarily mean, severance of all economic ties with the husband’s natal family. In fact he continues to work along with other members of the family in the fields and share the crops and other produce. The tribe is pater oriented and though generally the households are neo-local, they are patri-vicinal. Only rarely, the marriages are uxorilocal. There are generally cases of marriage by adoption, where a man without a son require his son-in-law to stay with him and help him in his agricultural activities.

Sons inherit the property after the death of their father. The eldest son gets slightly larger share of the property including the family-gods and other sacred objects kept by the father. Where a man has two or more wives, he builds a separate house for each of them. In case of the parents becoming too old, infirm or disabled it is the duty of all the sons to support them.

Sub-divisions

The Dorlas of Bastar can be broadly divided into three territorial division i.e. Dorlas of Konta tehsil, Dorlas of Bhopal patanam tract and Dorlas of northern areas of Bijapur and Kutru tracts. Because of the fact that these territorial groups are separated from one another in great distance, the marriages of the Dorlas generally take place with their respective territorial groups. But in recent times due to the expansion of communication facilities in the area, intermarriages among the Dorla of different territorial groups are becoming more common.

The Dorlas are divided into a number of exogamous clans; there are also a number of intermediary organisations, phratries, formed by grouping of number of clans. The phratries are five phratries in Bijapur area. These are as follows, after the number of Gods that they worship; Mudum Peen (three god division) Nalum Peen (four god division), Aium Peen (five god division), Arum Peen (six god division) and Yedu Peen (seven
god division). In Bhopal patanam tract also identical phratry divisions are found. In Konta tehsil, the word used for phratry division is *Gatta*, in place of *Peen*. There are five *Gattas* in that area. They are as follows: parendgatta (two gatta), Mudugatta (three gatta Aido gatta (five gatta), Arogatta or Paramboi (six gatta) and Yedu gatta (seven gatta). Here it may be mentioned that in Telugu, ‘Rendu’ (Parendgatta) means two, ‘Mudu’ means three, ‘Nalugu means four, ‘Aido’ means five ‘Arro’ means six and ‘Yedu’ means seven.

Though *Peen* organisation Bijapur and Bhopal patanam tracts and *Gatta* organisation of Konta tehsil are analogous to one another, it is not possible to say whether they are identical in nature. According to Hussian (1946), the word *Peen* means God in Dorli dialect. Similarly the word *Gatta* means God among Koyas of Andhra. But it was found that *Gatta* was considered to be a distortion of one word *gotra* The field investigation in Bastar also indicated the existence of a conceptual dichotomy. Here it is to be noted that the Gonds and the Marias of the northern region also have *Peen* division. The Dorlas of Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopal patanam tracts who are more in contact with the Gonds and Marias, do not visualise that their *Peen* divisions are homologous to the *gotra* divisions of the non-tribal Hindu neighbours: on the other hand, the Dorlas of Konta tehsil, have no difficulty to discern such a homology. It is not unlikely that a process of double syncretism has taken place in case of *Gatta* division. At the first stage the term has been superimposed on *Peen* organisation, as a part of the process of social vicination with the Hindu neighbours; at the second stage the meaning, identical with that of *Peen* has been imputed to the term, so as to maintain the old unity with the rest of the Dorlas. The present analysis is however only an exercise to trace the logistic of the organisation. Before arriving at any conclusion, deeper analysis with the support of empirical data is necessary.

The *Peen* divisions and some of their exogamous septs founds in Bijapur area are as follows:

1. *Mundum Peen* (three god phratry): This is divided into a number of exogamous totemic septs like Cherla, Chapa, Chidem and Madkam etc. All these septs consider tortoise as
their totem. All the members belonging to this phratry are considered as brothers and sisters to one another.

2. Nalam Peen (four god phratry): Members of Yalam, Tati, Kaditi, Telam etc., septs consider themselves to belong to the four God phratry. Except Telam, others consider iguna (Goie), an animal, as their totem. Telam sept members consider crocodile as their totem.

3. Aium Peen (five god phratry): This is also divided into a number of exogamous totemic septs, like Anganapali, Swayam, Kurusam etc. Members of Anganapalli and Kurusam septs consider cobra as their totem and do not touch or eat it. It is believed that killing of a snake by members of these septs would invite divine displeasure. The Swayam sept has black sparrow as its totem.

4. Arro Peen (six god phratry): This is divided into a number of exogamous septs, like Erma, Durva, Paddam, Koram, etc. Erma sept is believed to have originated from squirrel, which is the totem of that sept. The totems of their divisions are not known.

5. Yedu Peen (seven god phratry): This phratry is again sub-divided into a number of exogamous totemic septs, like Pulsi, Madvi, Punam, Batsi etc. Pulsi and Madvi septs have porcupine (oiee) as their totem, the totems of Punam and Batsi are not known.

The Gatta divisions found in Kota tehsil are also divided into a number of exogamous septs. Some of these found in Kota area are as follows:

1. Parendgatta (Two-gatta): This is divided into a number of exogamous divisions such as Soyam, Madvi, Barishe, Semala Kahati, Kangal, Tamu, Doddi, Pusam and Payam.

2. Mudugatta (Three gatta): This is divided into a number of septs which are strictly exogamous. Some of the septs found near Kota are, Madkam, Turram, Kurasmer, Boddir, Jaddir, Pesam, Tateer, Dochider etc.

3. Aidugatta (five gatta): This is divided into exogamous septs and some of these septs found near Kota are, Oder, Ulka, Gujjar, Ithalor, etc.

4. Arogatta or Peramboi (six gatta): This is divided into a number of exogamous sub-divisions like Kuram, Vetti, Salavan, Podiym, Komaramu, Kattam and Birdar etc.
5. *Yedu gatta* (seven gatta): Though this division was not found in Ganganpalli village, where the field study was conducted, they are found in the adjacent parts of Bijapur and Kota Tehsil. It is divided into six to eight exogamous septs, Kovvasi, Vanjam, Muchhki, Padam, Luddam and Dudi.

The names of the gods worshipped by the septs of different phratries in Kota area are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phratry</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Name of God or Velpa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenthood</td>
<td>Soyam</td>
<td>Gadikamu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madvi</td>
<td>Andalakosu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barishe</td>
<td>Andalakosu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semala</td>
<td>Nangabima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kahati</td>
<td>Indala Gangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kangal</td>
<td>Indala Gangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pusam</td>
<td>Dularaja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudugatta</td>
<td>Madam</td>
<td>Erama Raju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turram</td>
<td>Katural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kurasmer</td>
<td>Indalagangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boddir</td>
<td>Chinnayaruvamaraj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pesam</td>
<td>Chinnayaruvamaraj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tater</td>
<td>Katul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dechider</td>
<td>Chinnayaruvamaraj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aidugatta</td>
<td>Oder</td>
<td>Tulamuttu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Galer</td>
<td>Tuldokiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uika</td>
<td>Tulamuttu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gujor</td>
<td>Tuldokiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ithalor</td>
<td>Tulamuttu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arogatta or</td>
<td>Karma</td>
<td>Darelu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peramboi</td>
<td>Kuram</td>
<td>Jalasinga Raju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vetli</td>
<td>Adama Raju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salvam</td>
<td>Gadigonda, Edidokiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Podiyam</td>
<td>Bangaru papos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Komaramu</td>
<td>Pedaramu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kattam</td>
<td>Chinaramu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budar</td>
<td>Mayalmalli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kovvasi</td>
<td>Sirisiram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yedugatta</td>
<td>Vanjam</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muchhki</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Padam</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luddam</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dudi</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above list gives the different *Gattas* or phratries along with the septs under each *Gatta* and the deities or *Velpas* worshipped by each sept. The *Velpa* worshipped by the different septs are in most cases different though in a few cases common *Velpa* is worshipped. All the septs of the Yedugatta phratri worship Sirisiram.

It has been observed that during rituals all the septs of the same phratri venerate the same number of cowdung cakes (pidaka), symbolising the number of gods in the phratri. Thus the septs belonging to Parendgata keep and worship two cowdung cakes and so on in their rituals.

The kinship pattern of the Dorlas is identical with that of the Koyas. As in the Koyas, among Dorlas, the affinity with the agnatic relations is stronger than the uterine relations. An exception to this rule is found in the case of maternal uncle or *Mava* whose role is very much appreciated and thus recognised in the kinship structure. The pattern of kinship among the Dorla is classificatory in nature. This can be illustrated by the following kinship terminology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dorli</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mava</td>
<td>Mother's Brother and Husband's father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poye</td>
<td>Mother's Brother's Wife, Wife's brother, and Father's sister's son and Son-in-law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ande or Ande-mari</td>
<td>Sister's daughter and Daughter-in-law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolyad or Koddiyad or Adimiyadu</td>
<td>Father's younger brother's Wife and Mother's Younger Sister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinava</td>
<td>Father's younger brother and Mother's younger brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinayayya</td>
<td>Father's younger sister's Husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yerond</td>
<td>Wife's younger Brother and Younger Sister's Husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bato</td>
<td>Wife's Elder Brother and Elder Sister's Husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dado</td>
<td>Father's Father (or Mother's Father).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kako</td>
<td>Mother's Mother (or Father's Mother).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the other common kinship terms used by the tribe are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dorli</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutti</td>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yawva</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yayya</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammud</td>
<td>Younger Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Elder Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalad</td>
<td>Younger sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakka</td>
<td>Elder Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Son &amp; Brother’s son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayyad</td>
<td>Daughter &amp; Brother’s daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babal</td>
<td>Father’s Younger Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pep or Berayal</td>
<td>Father’s Elder Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podad</td>
<td>Wife’s Elder Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaudad</td>
<td>Wife’s Younger Sister.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common rules of avoidance and joking are, observed by the Dorlas between certain relations. A person may avoid his younger brother’s wife as well as his daughter-in-law and vice-versa. Thus they are not expected to joke with or even take the name of these persons who by custom observe avoidance. Privileged familiarity is not only permitted but encouraged between cross-cousins. The cross-cousins can, therefore, have joking relations among themselves.

Dwelling, Dress and Food

Dorlas are a well settled people and live in permanent villages. A village is established taking into account the availability of agricultural land, source of water supply and grazing fields. Normally, therefore, plain areas are chosen and villages established near a water source like a river, stream or tank. A Dorla village may comprise a number of hamlets or paras spread over a large area each one of which may sometimes be a couple of miles away from the main village site. Establishment of a para may not have any correlation with the clan organisation. Houses in this paras are constructed either linearly on the sides of food paths or sprinkled without any particular pattern.
Dorla villages are generally uni-caste villages. However, some over-grown villages and urbanised ones are found to be multi-caste. In Gangapalli, a few houses of Maria, Kammara and Doli are also found. Even here, these communities live away from the main Dorla settlement, as the former are considered to be lower in social status. Some urbanised villages, particularly those found on the road side, besides other local tribes and castes, have immigrant Hindu castes particularly the trading communities.

No fixed pattern is followed in the layout and plans of the houses. According to convenience the frontage is directed to any direction. No particular direction is considered ritually desirable in facing a house. Generally, the houses of the village head-man (Padda) and the priest are located in the central part of the settlement. In mixed tribal villages, tribe-wise segregation is discernible and in such villages, the Dorla houses are generally situated in a cluster.

As is the general practice in the whole of Bastar, every village has a thana gudi or chavidi, (a resting hut for visitors) which is constructed by the combined efforts of the whole village, the central ward of the settlement. An Athpaharia is appointed by the villagers from among them to look after the visiting officials during their stay in the village. He is paid in kind by each household of the village during harvest.

Every village has a separate hut meant for the village Goddess, Gamam, who is worshipped at the time of festivals (Pandum). Besides this there is a separate place for the deities worshipped by the tribe. This is called Deva gudi or Mata gudi. Many Dorla villages have bamboogates erected at the entrance of the village. These gates are bedecked with fresh green mango leaves and flowers at the time of festivals.

Selection of house site: The Dorlas consider Mondays and Saturdays as auspicious days for the selection of a house site. The site should not be haunted by evil spirits and therefore, to ensure this, on the tentatively selected site, on any of these days, the head of the household, in consultation with the priest Vadde, keeps threehandsful full of rise of Jowar Jonna mixed with turmeric powder and cover the same with a basket. These three heaps are supposed to represent three important
aspects of their life, *viz.*, the crops (*Panta gutti*), the life (*Jeevaniki gutti*) and hunting (*Veta gutti*). In the morning the heaps of grains are examined and if they are found undisturbed the site is considered to be devoid of spirits and therefore auspicious for habitation. Otherwise, the same test is repeated on alternative sites till a suitable one is finally chosen.

*House construction:* The house pattern of the Dorla is more or less similar in all areas. Before constructing a new house, the building material such as timber and thatching grass called *Inta gaddi* are collected. After this is done, the priest is consulted who fixes a day for the sacrifice and worship to be made at the site. On the appointed day, a chicken is sacrificed on the site and its blood is sprinkled on the land. This is supposed to ward off any evil spirit that may be residing on the land. After this, the construction may commence on any day.

*Bari or Vellum Medata* (Kitchen garden) is a common feature in Bastar. Every house has a *bari* around the house with an improvised bamboo gate in front. Here vegetable like brinjal, lady's finger, chillies, gourds etc. are cultivated.

Most of the households have their cattle pan (*Goddu Doddi*) in their fields. It is an unroofed structure constructed with bamboo and wooden poles. Goats are generally kept in the verandah of the house or in an elevated out-house made of wooden poles with wattle bamboo slides and thatched roof. The goats are led up to the room through a wooden ladder which can be lowered after use. Pigs are sheltered in *Pandikottam* (pig) located close to the dwelling houses.

*Dress:* The Dorla, men and women dress scantily. The usual dress of the men is a *langoti*. Towels or pieces of cloth are used as *langotis* which cover the private parts. *Dhoties*, shirts and baniyans are also used by the men folk in those areas where they live along with the plains people. Well-to-do Dorlas use shirt (*Kusam or angi*) and *dhoti* (*Pancha*) occasionally, when they go to an urban place for marketing or for other purposes. The women wear, *Batta*, a piece of cloth wrapped around the loins and cover their bosom with another piece of cloth by slipping one end of it under the right armpit looping the other end round the left shoulder. Those few who wear sarees (*Chira batta*) cover their bosom with one part of
it. To be bare bosomed is not considered immodest among Dorlas. This is evident from the fact that in the village many women go half naked with only a loin cloth wrapped around their waist. The dress that the bride and bridegroom put on differs from one area to another. In the Bijapur area the dress of the couple consists of simple white clothes. In Bhopal patanam and Konta areas the bridegroom wears a turmeric coloured dhoti (Pancha), a shirt (Angi) and a white turban (Tulapaga). The bride too wears a turmeric coloured Sari (Chira batta) and a blouse (Raika). Nothing special in the dress of the priest and other office bearers is observed.

Personal decoration: The Dorla men shave a part of their heads in front, keeping a tress of hair at the back. This lock is dressed with wooden combs and tied to a knot. Male children also, similarly shave their head and tie the hair into knots. However, in some areas now-a-days like Konda, due to urban influence, the boys crop their hair. The girls devote much attention to their hair. The hair is anointed with mahua seed oil and tied into a knot at the back.

Tattooing (Beradabottu) is not very much common. One's own name or designs of ornaments are usually got tattooed by some males and females on their arms. Males and females belonging to the Korraju caste from Andhra Pradesh used to come to Bastar in batches and do tattooing. The Dorias do not attach any special significance to tattooing. It is done only, they say, for decorative purpose.

Food

Jawar (Holens Sorgam) and Rice (Oryza Sativa) constitute the the staple food of Dorlas being the main cereals they produce. According to the availability of these cereals their food habits vary. Paddy is harvested in the months of October and November. They consume rice till the Jowar crops are harvested in the months of December—February, then onwards they consume Jowar. Dorlas are very fond of toddy and it is reported, that in the toddy season most of the people live on it, including women and children. Toddy season starts from December and it lasts up to April. Mahua flower, or Ippayuvvu, (Bassia latifolia) which is also available
abundantly in the months of February—April, is used as food by the Dorlas. They dry the flower and consume it in lean months. Among pulses _dal_ (Red-gram) is commonly used. The common cooking medium is the oil extracted from Mahua seeds. Spices are not in common use but tamarind, which is available locally in large quantities, is very commonly used with pulses and vegetables. The tribe is non-vegetarian in their habits and the animals and birds relished by them are the domesticated goats, pigs, and fowls; and wild animals like rabbit, deer, wild bear, sambar, Jungle fowl, green pigeon, grey pigeon, cranes and doves. The Dorla have no inhibition to beef which they freely eat.

Drinks

The Dorla are very fond of rice beer (_Sara_), toddy (_Gallu_ or _Kallu_) and Mahua liquor. During the period from November to April they get considerable quantities of toddy and in this season the poorer Dorlas live on toddy alone. Most of the families own some Palm (_Barassua flabellifor_) (Toddy-Palm) trees in the village. The toddy is collected 3 times a day, before sun rise, at noon and in the evening. _Mahua_ liquor is brewed by them from _Mahua_ flowers. In the months of February, March and April, _Mahua_ flower is available abundantly. They collect the flowers and dry them for four or five days. The dried flowers are then fermented in a pot for 6 days. It is, now distilled and consumed. They relish it more than any other liquor as it is more intoxicating.

Smoking

Smoking and chewing of tobacco is very much prevalent among Dorlas, irrespective of sex and age. Women and children smoke and chew tobacco as frequent as the men. In this connection Hazra mentions: “During the months of March-April, when villagers are more or less free from agricultural labour, they, in batches go to Andhra for procurement of tobacco from Telugu cultivators who plenty of tobacco in their fields. They thus take great pains in travelling distances of about 50 to 60 miles, sometimes even more, for procuring tobacco which will last them for a whole year” (1959, 77).
Hunting and fishing is a subsidiary occupation for the Dorlas which they follow in their leisure time. Some of the common implements used by them in hunting are *Villu* (bow), *Lodda* (arrow), *Gorka* (spear) and *Mitta* (arrow with wooden head). But for the arrow head and spear the other implements are made by themselves.

*Mitta* is a special type of arrow with a wooden head used for shooting birds. This type of arrow is common among all the tribes of Bastar. *Lodda* is an ordinary type of arrow used for slaying animals.

For fishing they use nets and traps. *Addaguda* is a conical fish trap made out of split bamboo pieces. This is used to trap fish in shallow waters. *Sanguda* is the common fishing net which is made use of in running deep water. *Ettuvala* is a special type of fishing net fixed on a wooden square frame and is operated by four persons.

A very common article used not only by the Dorla, but also by other tribal communities of the region, is the *Buraka*. It is a bottle-gourd, used as a bottle to carry water or toddy when they are on a journey. Very few people move far from their homes without a *Buraka*, filled with water or toddy.

Like many other forest tribes, the Dorlas believe that spirits (Ammawaru) cause diseases if they are not properly propitiated periodically. They believe that *Odde* or *Vodde* (priests) and *Mattinonlu* (magician) can create illness with the aid of malevolent spirits. In such cases the *Odde* or *Vodde* is invited to perform necessary rituals and thereby remove the wrath of the malevolent spirits. The *Vodde* recite some *mantras* to drive away the evil spirits and often offers a fowl or a goat or sometimes both, to appease the evil spirits. If he fails to effect a cure, another *Vodde* of the neighbouring area may be summoned to handle the case and this process may continue till the patient is recovered from the ailment. Along with the common worship and appeasement of spirits, the Dorlas also resort to indigenous herbs for curing minor ailments. There are a few Dorlas who are experts in this art. Lately some of the literate and advanced families of the Dorlas have started visting the government dispensaries to treat diseases. Even among them appeasing the spirits is not uncommon.
Language

The dialect spoken by the Dorlas is named after the tribe. *Dorli* has not been found mentioned in Grierson’s Linguistic Survey of India. In the 1961 Census, Dorli has been tentatively classified in the newly constituted group “Central Dravadian” under the main speech “Gondi” (Census of India, 1961. District Census Handbook, Bastar District ; Madhya Pradesh, p. I). The Dorli dialect appears to be a mixture of Gondi and Telugu languages, but nothing can be said about it until a proper survey is carried out. It has been reported by some of the informants that the ancestral language of the Dorlas is Koya Basa (Koyo Bhasha). It may be mentioned here that the Dorlas of both Konta and Bijapur tahsils easily follow Telugu and also the Koya Bhasha spoken by the Koya tribe of Andhra Pradesh. They also can understand the dialect of the Gottiwars or the Bison-horn-Marias of the north whose dialect the Koyas of Andhra Pradesh cannot follow.

In this context, though not directly applicable to Dorlas, the references made by Rev. John Cain and Hemmingway about the Koi language are worth mentioning. John Cain reports, “In these parts the Kois use a great many Telugu words, and cannot always clearly understand the Kois who come from the plateau in Bastar”, (1879, 35). Cain further states, "Its connection with the Gond is very apparent, and also the influence of its neighbour Telugu. This latter will account for many of the irregularities, which would probably disappear in the language spoken by the Kois living farther away from the Telugu country” (1881, 259). Hemmingsway, (1907, 60) makes analogies of the Koi language with Tamil and Telugu and states “their language called Koya is Dravidian and bears analogies to Tamil and Telugu. Most of the men, however, can speak Telugu, though the women know little but their own vernacular”.

Economic Life

The economic activities of Dorlas, by and large, centre round agriculture. Gathering of minor forest produce like bamboo, fire wood, thatching grass, adda leaves, edible fruits, roots, mushrooms, honey, mahua flowers and seeds etc., from
a subsidiary source of income for them. These minor forest produce are used either for consumption or for sale.

The Dorla are mainly settled cultivators and they invariably use plough. They raise crops like Jowar or (*Holcus Sorghum*), paddy, soma (*Pennisetum mentale*) and ragi (*Eleousine coracana*), red gram or kandi (*Dolichos lablab*) etc. Jowar is the main crop raised by them and therefore it is the staple food for the tribe. Rice too form a major food.

The wealth of the Dorla is gauged by the number of cattle they own. Many of them invest a lot of money in livestock though normally the cattle are not very much in need for agricultural operations. The Dorla of Bijapur area possess less number of cattle when compared to their counterparts in the Kota area. Besides, cattle (cows, bullocks and buffaloes) they also rear sheep, goats, pigs, fowls and ducks. These are mainly meant for domestic consumption. Till recently cows and she buffaloes were seldom milked as they believe that it is wrong to deprive the calves of their mother’s milk. This belief is widely prevalent among the tribes of Bastar. Now, however, mainly due to the plains’ influence they milk the cattle and prepare milk products like ghee, curd, butter etc. The ghee thus made is sold to businessmen, mostly the Komati and Naidu castes of Andhra Pradesh who are settled in their vicinity. The nearabout jungles and grazing fields provide enough fodder for the cattle. Grazing facilities are also available in the unreserved forest areas neighbouring their dwellings.

The forest around them contain valuable timber trees like Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Tamarind (*Tamarindus Indica*), Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*), Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) and variety of fruit bearing trees. It also abound in wild life such as wild buffalo (*Bos bubalus*), Bison (*Bos gaurus*), deer, bear, panther and forest cats. Besides these, numerous species of birds abode in these forests. As per the forest rules, the Dorlas are permitted to make use of the timber in the forest areas for the construction of houses as well as for the preparation of agricultural implements. They may also, as mentioned earlier, collect minor forest produce for their own consumption or for sale in the market. They may also sell these forest produce to the traders who visit their locality occasionally.
After agriculture comes collecting of forest produce and hunting. In this occupation the participation rate of females, is more than that of the males.

In the Bijapur area, women are engaged in basketry weaving mat making and rope making; while some men are engaged in carpentry and making of fishing nets and traps. These are mainly for their own use.

There is an artisan section among the Dorlas of Bijapur known as Kammara whose main occupation is blacksmithy. The Kammara repair and sharpen agricultural implements, like plough, sickle, knives, axes, hooks, doorbolts, bullock cart wheels, arrow heads, plough-share etc. They are paid either in kind or in cash depending upon the nature of job accomplished. They serve not only the Dorla agriculturists but also the other agricultural castes in the village.

Some sort of patron client relationship exists between the Kammara and the rest of the village folk. The Kammaras are paid 20 seers of paddy or millets per plough per season. Besides, 2 seers of rice on each festive occasion is also given by their patrons.

The Kammara of the Kotwali area are considered as a separate community by the Dorlas of the locality. Besides, the Kammara, the other two persons in Dorla villages who share the crop with the village folk are Atpaharia and the Kotwal. The former has to look after the visitors to the village while the latter helps the headman.

Agricultural Practice
In spite of the impact of modern techniques in agriculture, the Dorlas continue to follow their own traditional methods of agriculture. Immediately after the first shower, generally in the month of June, the fields are ploughed twice or thrice according to the nature of the soil. After having prepared the field, they broadcast the seeds. Transplantation of paddy, though is known to them recently, is not resorted to by them. After sowing seeds, the Dorlas very seldom pay attention to the field till the crops are ready for harvesting. Majority of them neither weed the field nor put sufficient manure. A few of them prepare mancha (a watch tower built on wooden poles)
near the fields and stay in it in order to protect the crops from damage caused by birds and animals.

No strict division of labour on the basis of sex is followed by the tribe though ploughing and sowing form the main duty of the males. Harvesting is done jointly by the males and females or occasionally by the females only.

Paddy is harvested towards the end of December. After that till the end of February short term crops like vegetables are cultivated in the fields adjoining the banks of streams. Besides, they may also cultivate vegetables in the baris around their dwellings. During August-September, pulses like green grams, black gram, horse gram etc., are also cultivated.

It is reported that they were used to practise shifting cultivation (Podu) in the past in which Jowar and other small millets were cultivated. At present none of them has been reported practising Podu cultivation as a source of income.

No system of irrigation is followed by them. The rain is the only source of water supply to agricultural fields. No special methods are adopted for controlling insects, pests etc.

Major portion of their income comes from agriculture. Next to agriculture is labour followed by collection of forest produce. Some information collected regarding their expenditure pattern has shown that the most important item of expenditure is food. Next comes intoxicants. Mahua liquor, toddy, followed by the expenditure on clothes and tobacco for chewing. Agriculture being the main source of livelihood, they may also spend some amount on the maintenance of agricultural implements and cattle.

A system of joint cultivation, locally known as Kamatam, is practised among the Dorlas of Konta area. Under this system, both the landless as well as the land-owning Dorlas join on a co-operative basis. The participant members put in equal labour including the females and each member is entitled to get a share of the crop produced in the land irrespective of whether he owned land or not. It is reported that this system is functioning very well in this area.

Many of the Dorlas are indebted and the money thus borrowed is incurred in social ceremonies like marriage, funeral etc. Loans are either taken in kind, such as grain and
occasionally cattle, or very rarely in cash. No security is to be given for the loans taken but they generally carry high rates of interest. In case of grain, double the principal amount is to be returned if the borrower is not in a position to repay the loan within a year. He may even do labour to square up the principal amount provided it is agreed upon by the creditor. These are many instances where the creditor has employed the borrower in agriculture and other operations.

Economic Pursuits

Hunting or Veta is occasionally indulged in by the tribe for supplementing their economic resources. The Veta is mainly done during the summer months when they are free from the agricultural operations. Individuals, or occasionally groups, carry out hunting expeditions. The game which may consist of ibex (Wild Goat) or Kond Gorri, Sambhar or Kanusu, Tiger or Puli, rabbit etc., may be shared equally by the participants of the Veta.

Though in a small scale, fishing is done by the members of the Dorla community. The catch is only used for household consumption.

Life Cycle

Stoppage of menstruation is considered as a sign of pregnancy. The expectant woman is neither given any special food nor any restriction imposed on her movements. However, she is not allowed to consume coconut pulp, meat of peacock and rabbit. They believe that the above said things, if consumed, would affect the child in the womb. No special rites or ceremonies are observed during the prenatal stage.

The first delivery of a woman is expected to take place in the house of the husband. Subsequent deliveries can be arranged either in husband’s house or in her natural home. The expectant woman is kept confined in a separate room, wherever, the same is available. Otherwise a temporary partition is constructed out of bamboo mats in the living room itself to provide room for the expectant woman to confine herself. When she complains of labour pain, an experienced Dai, who normally belongs to their own community, is called
in to attend to her. In complicated cases, however, the village *Vodde* is also called in. The delivery takes place on a mat spread for the purpose and attended by the *Dai*.

In some areas, particularly where government maternity homes, are available, as for example in Ganganpallai, the trained mid-wife attached to the maternity home attends delivery cases.

After delivery the *Dai*, attending on the mother, severs the umbilical cord with a sharp edge of an arrow (*Lodda*) or a knife (*Majja*). The placenta is then buried in the backyard of the house.

The mother and the new born baby are served with a mixture of turmeric and oil and given a warm water bath. The mother and the child are supposed to be under ritual pollution for a few days. In the Konta area, the ritual pollution period extends for eight days while in the other areas it is for five days. At the end of the pollution period, a purificatory ceremony is held when the mother and the child are given a purificatory bath presided over by the *Vodda*. On this day the mother and the child are anointed with oil and turmeric paste and bathed in warm water. Usually depending on the economic position of the family, a feast is arranged on this day in which all the kiths and kins, including the head of the village, are invited. The dishes served on this occasion include, rice and mutton or pork curry. Soon after the purificatory ceremony is over, the mother resumes her normal duties in the house.

The male child is often preferred to a female child. Barrenness is considered to be a misfortune. The enquiries revealed that the Dorlas do not have any idea about family planning methods. The child is supposed to be a boon bestowed by the almighty and hence they say, “we are none to say yes or no when a child is bestowed upon us by the God.” Normally name giving ceremony of the new born child is also performed along with the purification ceremony. At times, however, the name giving ceremony may be postponed till a child is two to three months old. Tonsure ceremony is performed when the child becomes two to three months old. On this day, the female relatives are invited and depending upon the economic position, a feast is also held.
Suckling of the child may continue for about two years. The child is often carried by the mother when she goes out in the fields. At home when the mother is busy in household duties, the child is either entrusted with the elder children or may be put in a Uyyal (bamboo cradle) suspended inside the house.

Puberty

Like many other forest tribes, the Dorlas attach much importance to the puberty ceremony of their girls. In the Bhopal Patnam area, a girl menstruating for the first time is confined for 11 days while in the Konta area the same is done for 13 days. During this time nobody is allowed to see the defiled girl. Only elderly ladies are allowed to attend to the girl and during this period of segregation she is not given any bath. At the end of the segregation a ritual purificatory bath is given, when her body is anointed with turmeric paste and oil. After the purificatory bath she becomes ritually pure and can attend to her normal duties. The clothes which she used during segregation period would be thrown away and new clothes put on.

Except in the areas adjoining the Maria tract, the Dorla do not have separate menstruation huts. However, menstruation huts are used in the adjoining areas of the Maria tribe in which the menstruating girls are segregated.

Pre-marital sex relations are strongly condemned among the Dorlas. However, if a girl becomes pregnant due to such relations, the person responsible for it is made to marry her even if he belongs to a lower caste or a higher caste. Subsequently the defaulting woman is expelled from the tribe. In case the affair is with a person belonging to the tribe, the mistake on the part of the girl is condoned by the society after her father gives a feast to all the elders of the tribe. During investigations, however, no case of ex-communication due to such defaults, has come to our notice.

Marriage

The girl is considered eligible for marriage when she comes of age while a boy can marry after the moustaches sprout.
However, adult marriage has been the norm in the tribe. In a couple of cases, the boys have married in between 10 to 12 years while their spouses were of the 6 to 10 age-group.

One cannot marry from the same clan. Cross-cousin marriages are preferred and sometimes adhered to provided girls and boys of the marriageable age are available.

Various methods are adopted to acquire a spouse. Marriage by negotiation is the common practice. Instances of marriage by elopement have also, however, been reported. In this case when intimacy grows between a boy and a girl, they force their parents to approve of their marriage by running away into the forest and subsequently brought back, when formal marriage ceremony is conducted. Marriage by service is also prevalent in which case, the boy stays with his would be father-in-law and serve him for a stipulated period, at the end of which if the girl's parents are satisfied, the girl is given in marriage. This custom is locally known as Illatam.

In the case of marriage by negotiation, the same is initiated by the boy's parents. His father and a few of his relatives approach the prospective bride's father and other relatives and negotiate. If the bride's parents agree, they all sit together for a feast, the expenses of which are borne by the boy's father. He also presents some new clothes to his prospective daughter-in-law. After the feast, they negotiate the amount of bride price to be paid, usually in the form of goats or pigs. After having reached an agreement regarding the bride price, they may also tentatively fix up a particular month when the wedding should take place. Generally, March, April and May are preferred, when they are a little free after the harvest.

Once the marriage is settled, the parties exchange frequent visits. The auspicious day for the marriage is fixed in consultation with the Voddes of both the villages.

A day before the wedding, the bride price agreed to, namely goats and pigs, rice, toddy etc. are sent to the bride's father by the groom's father.

Small pandals locally known as Madwa are erected and decorated both at the place of bride as well as of the groom. The Madwa is invariably decorated with green mango leaves which are supposed to be auspicious.
With the arrival of the groom’s party at the bride’s village, the marriage ceremony starts. The groom’s party is received at the outskirts of the village and then brought to a camp or a shed erected for the purpose at one part of the village. The party includes, besides the parents of the groom, other related men, women and children. On the previous evening of the marriage, some female members including the groom’s mother of their party go to the girl’s house and anoint her with dry turmeric paste and oil. On this occasion they may be singing songs both in praise of their revered deities as well as on the couple. The bride is now brought to the madwa and got seated on a wooden plank. The members of the bride’s party and the groom’s party take their seats facing one another in the Madwa. Mahua liquor or toddy as the case may be, is served to the members of both the parties. After this men and women form separate groups and dance, the bride and the groom being placed in the centre of the dancing group. As soon as the dance is over, 4 men from among the relatives of the groom come near the couple with a sheet of white cloth held spread over them. The bride and the groom then go round the 4 men three times. After which they also join the dancing groups. While they dance, two men in the case of bridegroom and 2 women in the case of the bride, hold a piece of cloth each, tied to small bamboo sticks and hold like an umbrella over the couple. Dancing and singing, and occasionally sipping of liquor, goes on for the whole night.

Towards the dawn, the couple bathe in warm water, put on new clothes and enter the house where they pound paddy grains and collect the rice in a place. All this time they stand together. As they stand, men and women from both sides come one by one and take a few grains from the plate and throw them on the couple. They may also put a little money—two or four annas—in a plate as a token of present to the couple.

The following day a feast is held to culminate the wedding. Liquor forms a prominent item in this feast. After the feast, the groom’s party returns to their village along with the bride if the village happens to be near. Otherwise they may stay on
till the next morning. The bride is usually accompanied by a
girl friend or a relative and after staying their for two to three
days returns to her father’s house accompanied by the groom
in case the bride has attained maturity. The consummation
ceremony takes place now. The date for the consummation is
fixed in consultation with the Vodde. On this occasion no
special ritual is held except that all the village elders are
invited to bless the couple when liquor is also served, to them.
Since then the couple lives as man and wife in a separate
house of their own. If the bride is not mature at the time of
marriage, she may live with her parents till she comes of
age.

Widow remarriage is permitted among the Dorlas. Generally a widow is married to the younger brother of the
deceased husband, if there is any; otherwise she is allowed to
marry any one in her community barring prohibited relations.
The children of the widow after her second marriage are left
to the parents or guardians of the deceased husband. However,
she is allowed to take the children at breast to her new
husband's place. Such children are brought back to their
father's house after they are sufficiently grown up.

No ceremony is held when a widow is married. Her new
mates, however, has to give a feast to the villagers and will
also pay compensation to the previous husband of the woman
as determined by the village elders. If the widow marries the
younger brother of her deceased husband, nothing has to be
paid as compensation.

Divorce

Divorce or separation locally known as Vidiitatappu though
discouraged, is permitted among the Dorlas. Divorce is
decided upon by the caste panchayat. Both males and females
are at liberty to initiate divorce proceedings without any fault
on the part of the female, the caste panchayat imposes fine on
him which is collectively spent on a feast, including liquor by
the elders of the caste panchayat. The ornaments are retained
by the woman. Unless a person finds his wife guilty, he would
not go for divorce. In that case, the caste panchayat penalizes
her and the penalty is generally borne by her parents or the
person with whom she elopes or having illicit relations. Generally the woman does not initiate the divorce proceedings on her own accord but prefers to elope with a person whom she likes which ultimately leads to divorce. The penalty to a woman, if found guilty, is generally double the amount spent by the earlier husband on their marriage. A portion of his fine is spent on the caste elders.

The children of the divorced parents, as stated earlier, are always retained by their father and only those babies at breast are taken by the woman on the condition to return them after certain age. For the maintenance of such children, the father has to pay some money which is agreed upon by both the parties.

Death

Dorla believe in the concept of rebirth. If a child is born in the deceased person’s family having the same mark or cut on its body, which the dead person had on himself at the time of his death, it is believed that the dead person is reborn in the family. They also believe that if a person dies due to pain or black magic, he may likely to become an evil spirit.

Both cremation and burial are in vogue among the Dorla. In the Konta area, however, the former practice is more commonly followed. In case of a person who dies of some disease, the corpse is buried. Soon after the news of death, beating of drums at regular intervals symbolizing the death toll is continued till the corpse is removed from the place of death. The relatives of the dead person are informed by a person belonging to their own community and the arrangement for cremation are made. The body is kept until all the relatives have arrived. Members of the family anoint the corpse with turmeric paste and oil and wash it with warm water. The corpse is now placed on a bamboo bier, prepared for the purpose, and covered with a new piece of cloth. The bier is then carried to the burial ground by the members of the family, assisted by other relatives. If the deceased is a well-to-do person, a cow or a buffalo or sometimes a pig, is decapitated and the liver (kalcja) along with some other food is placed at his head and the tail in his hand. The Dorlas could not
account for this practice but they simply say that this practice is followed since long.

Meanwhile some persons go ahead to collect fuel from the forest and arrange a pyre. The funeral procession, accompanied by a few aged women, along with the men folk, reaches the cremation ground and the bier is placed on the ypre. The first person who lits the pyre is the priest who is followed by those assembled there except the dead person's sons. After the pyre is lit all the mourners return to the dead man's house where they are sprinkled with turmeric water to remove pollution and attend to a feast given by the bereaved family which consists of dishes prepared by the sacrificed animals. If the deceased person is a poor man, no feast is given during this time.

No pollution as such is observed by Dorla of both Konta and Bijapur area. A token mourning is observed for three days in Konta area while the Dorlas living in Bhopal Patnam have a mourning period of 13 days. At the end of the mourning period the members of the deceased family take bath and purify their houses. All the relatives and neighbours are invited for a feast in which some liquor is also served along with rice and curry. Invariably non-vegetarian food, consisting of meat of goat, pig or cow, is served.

Normally no memorial stones are erected. For the caste elders and priests, however, large stone slabs are planted on the spot where the corpse is cremated.

The unmarried are generally buried. If the deceased happens to be a pregnant woman, the body is cremated outside the village and not in the regular burial ground.

Religion

The religion of Dorla can be described as an admixture of Hindu and Tribal beliefs and practices. The cult of ancestor worship is present among them, though in a degenerated form, when compared to their immediate neighbours, the Maria. The Dorlas believe that soul is immortal and rebirth inevitable. This is borne out by the fact that as soon as a child is born, his body is examined to find out whether or not it has marks or cuts which the deceased person of the family had on his
body. Further, at the time of worship of the clan Gods, some liquor is left in an earthen pot supposed to be for the consumption of ancestral spirits. There is also a general belief that a person, meeting an accidental or untimely death like suicide, murder, death due to burning, drowning or by wild animals, becomes a ghost. In order to prevent the wrath of such ghosts, sacrifices are offered to the clan deities.

Though the Dorla do not worship all the Hindu pantheon, they have faith in a few deities like Rama of Bhadrachalam, (a pilgrimage centre of the adjoining area of Andhra Pradesh) and Lord Shiva. In quite a number of villages, it has been observed that conch shells, tridents, metal bells etc., symbolizing Lord Shiva are kept along with the tribal deities. At some places images of Lord Shiva are installed in the village temple and they are identified with Peddapen, the supreme deity.

Belief in evil spirits is also widespread. They believe that diseases are caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Evil spirits, are, therefore, driven off from the body of the patient by the Vodde through hischantings and offerings.

Besides Peddapen, a host of other deities are also worshipped by the Dorla. However, these deities vary from one region to another. In Bijapur area, the deities usually worshipped are Jibbokate and Ede-Marri, while in Bhopalpatnam area, they include Pagdidars, Tulamutti, Pamarayya and Ernal Musalaya and in Konta area, Jaisingaraj, Gadigunda, Pedaramu, Chinaramu, Gadikama, Nangabhima, Tool-Dorkri, Irmaraj, Andala Kosa etc. are venerated.

The deities worshipped in the Konta area are clan gods, and their seats are located in different villages. All the above-mentioned deities are propitiated once in a year, in the months of April-June. Special Jataras are organised when special offerings are given to these deities particularly when there is an outbreak of epidemics in the region. The sun and the moon are considered as the God of day and night respectively by the tribe. Earth is revered and as such is worshipped occasionally.

Dorlas celebrate, besides their own festivals, some of the regional ones as well. Kurmi Pandum is the most important of their festivals. It is celebrated in the month of Kartika.
(November-December) when new rice is cooked and consumed. The Dorla of Bijapur area attend Jaitalpur fair every year which is held sometime in the month of January. They believe that new green vegetables or fruits of the season cannot be consumed till these are first offered to the deities at Jaitalpur. Dorlas of the Bhopal patnam area attend Sakalvarayan fair, held at Medded in Bijapur tahsil on the Ramnavami day. A few of them even go to Bhadrachalam on this day to offer worship there. From Konta area a few Dorlas visit Bhadrachalam. It has also been reported that a few of them, besides Bhadrachalam, also visit Venkatapuram and Nandi-Mandaran, all in Andhra Pradesh.

Community Relation

The Dorla tribe is divided into different Gattas (divisions). The relation among the different Gattas is quite cordial and they enjoy almost the same social status. Inter-Gatta marriages are prevalent except for Yedu Gatta Division. Other Gattas such as Perend Gatta, PermaboiGatta, Mudu Gatta and Pidu Gatta consider that the members belonging to Yedu Gatta are comparatively lower in social status and as such would not like to have either material relationship or commensalism with them. In the case of Yedu Gatta division, the members marry from among themselves. The other Gattas as has been stated above, are strictly exogamous.

In some areas, a religious movement, known as Lingadar Movement, is catching momentum among the Dorlas. The intensity of the movement is more among the Dorlas of Bijapur living on the fringes of the border with Andhra Pradesh. In this area it is very common among the Royas. As a result of this movement, two divisions are formed among the Dorlas; namely Lingadari section and the Dorla proper.

The Lingadaris can be distinguished from others as the former wear a silver box containing Rudraksha beads and a Shiva Lingam. This box is attached to a thread and worn round the neck. The Lingadari do not eat beef while the same is not a taboo to the non-Lingadari. Because of the fact that the Dorlas take beef, the Lingadaris do not accept food from
the former. Marital relations, however, exist between the two groups. If a Dorla marries a Lingadari girl she will follow the same social and religious life of her husband except taking beef. On the other hand, if a Lingadari Dorla marries a girl from among the non-Lingadari Dorla, the girl has to undergo some purificatory rites just after the marriage.

The Dorla society is controlled by the elderly male members of the community. They are held in great respect by the youngsters. Decisions on vital matters are always arrived at after mutual consultations among the elderly members.

Women enjoy equal status as that of men. However, they always accept guidance from the male members.

In Konta area, the Soyam family of Ganganpalli village, belonging to the Parend Gatta division enjoys comparatively greater social prestige and wield much political influence. One ex-member of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly by name Soyam Jogyya belongs to this family. He takes much interest in the cultural, educational and economic conditions of the tribe and as such respected very much.

By and large the Dorla villages are uni-caste villages. However, in tahsil headquarters like Konta and Bijapur, as well as in some urban influenced villages on the road side, like Medded, Bhopal patnam etc., multi caste villages are commonly met with. In the uni-caste villages, concept of ritual pollution and intercaste relations are very much vaguely conceived. In multi caste villages, on the other hand, the constant relations with other castes have paved the way for crystallizing some of the concepts regarding ritual purity and secular relations with higher castes. Some of the important castes found living along with the Dorlas are Brahman, Raut, Kamsali or Viswa Brahman or Sonar (Goldsmith), Chakali (washerman), Mangali (barber), Kumar (potter), Telanga, Reddi, Oddi, Golla (all Andhra castes), Muslims and tribes like Halba, Maria, Kamnan and Doli. These communities maintain cordial relations with the Dorlas. Except from Kummara, Maria and Doli, the Dorla accepts all types of food from the rest of the communities mentioned above. In the Bijapur area, however, the Dorlas accept toddy and water from the Kammara and like their counter-parts in the Konta area,
the Brahmans, Raut, Kamsali, Oddi, Telanga, Kummar, Mangali and Reddi, do not accept food from the Dorla. Maria, Kummar and Doli however accept from them.

The Dorla consider Maria, their immediate neighbour, as a lower caste and have no marital relations with them in the normal course. If, however, any such marriage takes place, the person concerned is ex-communicated. This may be true with other communities also. During the field investigations, however, such instances have not been reported. Service of the functional castes like washerman, barber or Brahmnn are not required by the Dorla in their rituals and practices. On the other hand they often require the assistance of Vodde (priest), or Matinonoda (medicine man) belonging to any caste or tribe. The Voddes are very keenly sought after persons. In almost all the the rituals the Vodde is consulted. Lately some of the well-to-do Dorlas consult Hindu astrologers to fix up dates for marriage.

Another important caste with whom the Dorlas have intimate relation is the Doli (drummers). The Dolis are engaged by the Dorla, particularly, in those villages where the clan god (Peen) resides. The Dolis are expected to beat drums whenever worship is offered to the clan god. The remuneration is collected from among the members of the particular clan whether they reside within the village or outside. The remuneration may be either in kind or occasionally in cash.

Social Structure

In the realm of social control, the Dorla has no centralized tribal authority for the tribe as a whole. However, Samtu Panchayats having a jurisdiction of about 40 to 50 villages, headed by a Samtu Doraval (Lord of the Samtu) are functioning in the area which by and large control the Dorla society residing in its jurisdiction. The office of the Samtu Dorava is hereditary. In Konta area, this office is held by a member of the Soyam family. The Soyam family has been holding this office since long. One Chinna of the Soyam family is holding the post of Samtu Doraval at present. The headquarters of this Panchayat is at Errabor, a village on the Jagdalpur-Konta road and it is about 15 miles north of Konta. The Samtu
Doraval is assisted by a Samtu Seemantu (deputy leader), a Gumasta (servant) and a Bantroth (peon). The function of the different functionaries are based on conventions, and no set rules and regulations are laid down either for the functioning of the organisation or for the conduct of the panchayat. The common problem settled by the Samtu Panchayat are social disputes, including divorce, widow remarriage, ex-communication, readmission into the community and so on. The Panchayat imposes suitable fines on the wrong doers.

The constituent villages of the Samatu Panchayat have their own village panchayats. As the Dorla villages consist of a number of Paras or Gndems, the Panchayat of the village comprises the representatives of each Para or Gudem. The person representing a Para goes by the name Naten Gndebaretor (Para member). The head of the village is known as Naten Pedda or Petel and he is assisted in his duties by a Naten Femb Pedda and a Kotwal. All the offices are hereditary in nature. In case, however, a particular family is unable to provide the required leader some other suitable person may be selected.

Besides the above hereditary leaders of each village, there may be an Atpahorya who is attached to the Thanagudi or Savidi (village dormitory) who is responsible to look after the comforts of the visiting officials and others to the village. The primary function of the village council is to settle disputes which are referred to it. The Naten Pedda presides over the deliberations in which besides the other village elders, the parties involved in the dispute are also asked to attend. After hearing both sides the village Council takes a decision which is binding on both the parties. In case the village council fails to arrive at a decision the case would be referred to the Samtu Panchayat.

Besides settling petty disputes in the village mostly connected with the social behaviour of the community, the Patel is responsible for collecting land revenue for the government. For this job he gets a commission at the rate of Rs. 36 for the collection of Rs. 100 to Rs. 500.

The Samtu Panchayat is the appellate institution of imparting justice as far as social behaviour of the community concerned. Problems which cannot be solved by the village Panchayat or
if the dispute is between two villages the Samtu panchayat is approached. Following is the general procedure adopted by the Samtu Panchayat in respect of the complaints referred to it. As soon as complaint is referred to the Panchahat, the Samtu Daraval, head of the Samtu Panchayat, fixes the date for hearing in consultation with the Naten Peddas of the village from where the case has been referred. He also informs the other Naten Peddas or Patels of all other villages about the hearing. On the day fixed for the purpose, all the Naten Peddas along with the Samatu Doraval and Samatu Seemantu arrive in the village where the proceedings are to be held. The concerned Naten Pedda summons both the accused and the complainant through the Kotwal of the village. After having assembled, the Patel reads out the complaint before the invited tribal leaders. The accused is now asked to explain his position. After discussions the Samatu Doraval arrives at some decision in the light of the arguments made by both the parties and also taking into consideration the suggestions made by other leaders. The award given by the Panchayat must be obeyed by both the parties. A person who does not comply with the decisions of the Panchayat may be ostracized. A portion of the fine collected may be given to the aggrieved party as decided by the Samatu Doraval. Out of the remaining amount, a part is given to the panchayat and the rest is spent on the spot for a feast to all leaders. While awarding the fine, they take rice, goats, toddy etc. which can be utilized for the feast.

Another important duty, as has been mentioned earlier, of the Samatu Doraval and the Patel, is to organise festivals and conduct marriages. The presence of Naten Pedda or Patel is sine-qua-non in every marriage ceremony performed in the village.

Though not a local functionary, either as a village patel, or as a Samatu Doraval, Sovan Jogayya an ex-member of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly enjoys wide influence in that region. He is a special invitee in panchayat proceedings. Because of his awareness of the developments taking place outside their own area, he tries to take the lead in social and technological change as well as gives a lead in political action and in other activities in his community. However, his in-
fluence is limited to the Konta area and is not hitherto extended to the Bijapur area where a bulk of the tribe lives.

No symbol of prestige is attached with any of the functionaries. One can see the Samtn Dorawat and the Naten Pedda having the same attire as that of any other member of the Dorla community.

LIFE STYLE—THE BHILS (Madhya Pradesh)

It is commonly held that the word Bhil is derived from a Dravidian word for a bow (Tamil and Kanarese bil) which is the characteristic weapon of the tribe. The ancient Tamil poets termed certain savages of the pre-Dravidian blood as Villavar (bowmen) who may 'possibly be identical with the modern Bhils.] If that be so, the name may have been given to the Bhils by the Dravidians. In common with the various Munda tribes, such as the Kols, Santals, etc. the tribal name, is not used by the members of the Bhil tribe among themselves. They employ the usual titles of relationship or position such as Bap (father), Travi (headman), Nahal or Naik (an honorific term). When addressing entire strangers the polite prefix da is added as Da Rupa, Da Walji, etc. When the Bhils came in contact with the Aryans, they again figure in the Sanskrit literature. Thus the word Nisada which occurs in the early Vedic literature is sometimes held to mean a Bhil or Bhilla though others hold that 'the word seems to denote not so much a particular tribe but to the general term for the non-Aryan tribes who were not under Aryan control.'† In the later system the Nisada is the off-spring of a Brahman and of a Sudra woman. According to Mr. Enthoven the earliest mention of the word Bhil occurs in Katha Sarit Sagara of Gunadhyya wherein mention is also made of a Bhil chief opposing the progress of another king through the Vindhyas. These references show that the Bhils ara one of the earliest races in India and they have been brought into contact with all the great racial migrations into India.

*Cambridge History of India, Volume I, page 596.
†Vedic Index, Volume II, Nisada.
*Vedic Index, Volume II, Nisada, foot-note.
*Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Volume I, Art. Bhil.
In the present state of our anthropological knowledge we cannot say whether the Bhils are autochthonous or not. At best we can only surmise and hazard some views leaving it to further scientific research to prove or disprove them. There is no doubt they represent a race which inhabited India earlier than the Aryan and the Dravidians. Very possibly they are a proto-mediterranean race who spread far and wide when a climatic crisis occurred in the grass steppes of Sahara and it is this race which is responsible for the industry associated with the final Caspian culture in the Vindhayas. The Bhils are one section of the great Munda race which occupied the pre-Dravidian India and had for its home the central regions across the peninsular India with possible extensions into the Gangetic plain. The home of the Bhils has been the western Vindhayas and it is perhaps in contact with the Dravidians on the other side in Gujarat they acquired their present appellation. If we accept the view which is gaining ground in recent years, that the Dravidians, a branch of the Mediterranean race, entered India through north-west then it is reasonable to suppose that Gujarat was on the way of the immigrant Dravidians in their march towards the Deccan and south. Gujarat was a Dravidian tract before it was Aryanised. It is again significant to note that the home of the Nisadas as shown in the Vedic Index exactly fits in with the historically known habitat of the Bhil tribe. There the Nisadas are shown as dwelling south-east of the Aravalli hills between the Banas and the Mahi rivers and up to the Chambal. The position shown is no doubt approximate but its significance cannot be underrated. The Bhils lay on the path of the conquering and the migrating Aryans towards Gujarat and Malwa. The impact of the Aryans must have caused the displacement of the Bhils along the Vindhayas and into the Satpuras but any such movement was restricted because they were flanked by the presence of other tribes of the Vindhayas and not Satpuras. In these hills the Bhils have maintained considerable independence, glimpses of which we get when we read of a Bhil Chief in the Sanskrit book already quoted and also of the forest king who assisted the Emperor Harsha in the search of his sister in the Vindhyyan forest of Malwa. The Bhils, however, never appeared to have
become effectively masters of the plain because Malwa was colonised in very early times and in spite of political conclusions civilization never so fell as to facilitate the extension of tribal rule. Malcolm records that, according to the Bhil tradition, their home is in the country to the north-west of Malwa from where they were ousted when the Rajputs began to conquer their country. This again meant a further displacement of the Bhils along the Vindhyas. The tradition of the Bhils in Malwa points to immigration from a western home but the story of their change of habitat does not appear to have clearly survived. The Jhabua Bhils still retain some dim and incoherent outlines of their migration. Their story is that the first Bhils were the Damor. Another section of the Bhila were the Warkrya who were living with the Damor. One Warkrya committed violence on the daughter of a Damor as a result of which war sprung between the two people. The Damors fared badly in the struggle and they had to migrate. They stopped at a place called Dholka in Kushalgarh State (Rajputana Agency). This is supposed by the Bhils to be their original home and other tribes are said to have sprung from the Damors. The Bhils have their own traditions of their origin. One relates that a dhobhi who used to wash his clothes in a river was one day warned by a fish of the approach of a great deluge. The fish informed him that as he had always fed those of his species he had come to give him this warning and to prepare a large box which would enable him to escape. The dhobi prepared the box and got into it with his sister and a cock. After the deluge Rama sent out his messenger to inquire into the state of affairs. The messenger heard the voice of the cock and so discovered the box. Rama then had the box brought before him and asked the man who he was and how he had escaped. The dhobi told his tale. Rama then made him face in turn north, east and west and swear that the woman with him was his sister. The dhobi remained firm in asserting she was his sister. Rama then turned him towards the south, upon which the dhobi contradicted his statement and said she was his wife. Rama then asked who told him how to escape and on hearing at once had the fish’s tongue cut, and since then that kind of fish has been tongueless. Rama then told the dhobi to set about
repopulating the world, and he therefore married his sister by whom he had seven sons and seven daughters. Rama presented the first born son with a horse but the recipient of this gift, being unable to ride, left the horse on the plain and went into the forest to cut wood, he and his descendants becoming foresters and starting the Bhil tribe.

Another tale relates how on the creation of the Bhil, five men went to see Mahadev. Parvati seeing them approaching, said to her spouse, "Here come five of my brothers to ask dahej (bride-price) of you consequent on my marriage with you." Mahadev gave them a feast and then explained that except for his bull Nandi and his Kamandalu he had nothing to give. They therefore went home. In order to give them something, however, Mahadev placed a silver stool in their way, but they were incapable of seeing this. Parvati noticing how they had missed the gift, sent for them and told them what had happened pointing out that as they were not able to see the stool, there was little hope of their prospering, but she would do what she could, and so informed them that they must be very careful of the Nandi whose hump was full of wealth untold. On reaching home one of the five suggested slaying the Nandi and obtaining the wealth, the others demurred, but he prevailed. No wealth was found in the hump and the five were dismayed. Parvati now appeared and told them that she should have yoked the bull to the plough and thus gained wealth from mother-earth, but that as they were so foolish as to slay the sacred animal she would never look on their faces again, and left in high displeasure. For thus killing the sacred animal the Bhil has ever lived a miserable existence and been of no caste.

The Puranik origin of the Bhils traces descent from the thigh of Vena, son of Anga, a descendant of Manu Swayambhuv. Vena was childless and the sages therefore rubbed his thigh and produced "a man like a charred log, with flat face, and extremely short." He was told to sit down (Nishada). He did so and was known as Nishada, "from whom sprang the Nishadas dwelling on the Vindhyan mountains, distinguished by their wicked deeds."

*See Mahabharata, Vishnu Puran, Hari-Vanta, etc.*
The Rajputs have had a very long connection with the Bhils. Forced by circumstances to make an alliance with the denizens of the Vindhyan hills, the Rajputs did not hesitate to take women from the tribal ranks and this was responsible for the disintegration of the Bhil tribes into various Hinduised sections, such as Bhilalas, Batlias etc. The infusion of Rajput blood has led in some instances to a distinction among the Bhils. For in some places the Bhils are split up into Ujale or pure and Mela or impure with a third or lower status the Madalye who are musicians and singers by profession. The Ujale Mele Bhils are separate endogamous groups with septs which are exogamous.

Caste and Tribal sub-division: The Bhils consequently are a very mixed lot at the present day. Besides the Bhil proper, the other tribes are Bhilala, Barela, Mankar, Nihal, Patila and Rathia. The description given in the following paragraphs relates to the Bhils as a whole. The other tribes are described briefly at the end of these notes. The divisions or the septs are very variously given and no two lists agree. They are summarised in a tabular form in a separate section. The usual reverence appears to be paid to any object which is regarded as a sept totem, it being never destroyed or injured, nor is its effigy ever tattooed on the body.

Marriage: The Bhil tribe being an endogamous group no Bhil can marry without it. The septs again are all exogamous and no member of a sept can marry another from the same sept. This prohibition is extended for 3 generations to any sept into which a man has already married. A man cannot also marry into the sept from which his mother came for 3 generations as the members of this sept are held to be the brothers and sisters of such man. The same rule is extended to the septs of grandmothers, maternal and paternal. A man can marry two sisters but the exchange of daughters between fathers is not usual. Certain occupations are now looked upon with as though, due to Hindu influence, and certain families are inclined to reject marriage with a family which has taken up the following professions: manufacturing of winnowing fans and sieves, of a butcher, of a tanner, of a professional mendicant, of a Rawal, or dancer and singer. Sometimes, though it is not a formal restriction, the village Bhil does not like to take a wife from among the
Bhils living near the bazar or in the town. The rural Bhil has a low opinion of the town dweller and he does not think much of the morals of the bazar Bhil girl.

Marriage is adult and infant marriage is non-existent unless Hindu ideas have overpowered the tribal practice. The earliest age for marriage of girls is 12 years, while most are married between 15-40. Puberty has no place in determining the age at which the girl is to be married. In accordance with the Hindu ideas the parents settle the marriage, and courtship, though apparently by no means uncommon, is not in general vogue.

Where pre-nuptial sexual intercourse takes place with the affianced husband, no penalty is incurred, except that the regular marriage ceremony is omitted, the girl being simply made over to the man. If the sexual indulgence by the is girl with another person than her fiance, she is, if the fiance still desires it, made over to him but the support of the child born of the irregular intercourse is born by the real father.

Marriage ceremonies: Four persons from the boy’s side go to the girl’s house to settle the betrothal. If the girl’s guardians are willing a sum of Rs. 7 is paid to the panches who purchase gud and wine and entertain the caste people. The betrothal then becomes irrevocable. When means permit some persons from the boy’s side go to the bride in the company of some guests and entertain the members of the caste with wine and gud worth Rs. 9. The party is then entertained by the girl’s father and thus end the rites of Badi Sagai.

When marriage preparations begin a party consisting of 5 to 25 guests starts for the bride’s house. After mutual entertainments the boy’s father pay Rs. 41 for the dowry and the celebration of marriage is settled. The party then returns home.

The boy and girl in their respective houses are anointed with oil and turmeric. This marks the commencement of marriage ceremony which is known as “Bana Baithana.” This ceremony is performed at the bride’s house on the day next to that on which it is performed at the boy’s. They are daily taken in procession at their own residences when their relatives give money varying from an anna to a rupee. As soon as these Banas have finished the marriage shed is erected. Four poles
are located in the ground and the shed is covered with jamun leaves. It is decorated on its sides by the hangings of mango leaves. One post is fixed in the mandap which crosses the roof and goes high above the house with leaves of Jamun tied to its top. Four unmarried boys and girls first dine under the Mandap and then the whole caste is entertained with "Makka Thuli." The relatives then give clothes to the members of the family which is called "Perawain." The bridegroom is attired in marital costume of red and white. Round his waist a scarf is tied. He takes dagger and sword in his hand. Well clad and ornamented, he puts on his head the marriage crown of imitation pearls and stands under the mandap where his mother moves rice-pounding pestle, arrow, and grain thrasher etc., round his face and throws four cakes in four quarters; this ceremony being called Padachhana ceremony. Placing a coconut at the feet of Mata, the wedding party starts at night for the bride's village and stops at that place where fire is kindled for them by the bride's people before the dawn.

The bridegroom then touches the ornamental hanging on the door with the sword he carries and is seated under the booth. A pair of clothes and shoes, and a bodice are presented to the girl early in the morning. The bride is bathed and dressed in those clothes. The same "Padachhana" ceremony is repeated here by his mother-in-law. A long piece of cloth is put round his neck and his mother-in-law draws him on to the picture of their family deity, by holding the ends of that cloth.

No sooner does the bridegroom reach that place than the bride extinguishes the lamp burning there. The boy again lights it and worships the Mata. The ends of the upper garments of the couple are knotted and the bride's brother joins their hands. Subsequently he separates the hold and is given some gud for his service. A caste dinner is given after which the whole party goes to a stream or river to clean their hands and mouth, the females dining at home. The auspicious "Kankan," and copper ring are tied round the wrist of the bridegroom there. After the party returns from the stream the clothes of the couple is knotted and the couple seated on a piece of cloth. The hand of the one is locked in that of the other and this is called
“Iagan.” A Brahman or any caste member in his absence, assists in the performance of “hom,” in which oblations of ghee, oilseeds, etc., are offered. With their hands joined the couple give 7 turns round the nuptial fire. Then follows Kanyadan. Some cloths, silver ornaments and cash varying from one to five rupees are given. The hold of the hands is separated.

A few days after that the members of the bride’s family come to the boy’s house to fetch the bride. When they come they ask the boy’s parents whether they are asleep or awake. When the boy’s father hears this he brings a cock or a goat, which is killed by the bride’s party. The guests are then entertained and the bride taken to her parent’s house. The same custom is observed when the boy’s party goes to fetch the bride. These rites are called “Ana” rites. Generally one rupee is paid to the Government as a marriage fee.

Other forms of union: Thy description given above applies to the orthodox form followed by well-to-do and the completely Hinduised section of the Bhils. The Bhil knows to his cost that the adoption of Hindu customs is extremely expensive. The whole series of the marriage customs amount to a total of at least Rs. 350, which is a minimum. Many boys cannot afford such a sum of money. So sometimes after formal betrothal they take away their betrothed by surprise, by force or by mutual secret consent. They thus save a great deal of money and incur few expenses. Sometimes the girl of her own accord goes to the house of a young man and declares her intention to remain there. The union is regularised by the recognition accorded by the Panchayat. When a man has not enough money to perform a solemn marriage he searches for a girl whose price is cheaper. A girl who has had a child or a rejected girl, would be his likely bride. She is given a “Lugra” and ‘Ghagra’ and some money. The girl becomes his wife without any further ceremony.

Ghar Jamai: The payment of bride-price by means of personal service is often met with. Where the girl’s father is well-to-do the young man undertakes to serve a term for his future father-in-law. This is commonest where the girl has no brothers to assist the father in his work. The usual term of years is seven. It is reported that in recent times it has become the
practice of making him serve for 9 years. Though not seldom, the Ghar-jamai often escapes with his wife after 2-3 years. Ordinarily the two live as husband and wife but cannot leave the bride's home until the period of service is complete. If the two live amicably but after 2 years have no issue, the father-in-law has them anointed as if for a regular wedding and they are made to do 7 'Pheras' as in ordinary marriages. The father-in-law provides the young couple with means to start their own home.

Marriage by capture: Marriage by capture or ghiskarlejana is still common. The usual time for abducting a girl is on the Bhagoria festival, the day before the Holi is burned. The young man assisted by his friends enters the village and makes off with the girl. Occasionally the union is regularised by going through a short ceremony which is also performed in the case of a girl who falls in love and goes off with the man of her choice.

Re-marriage of widows: There marriage of widows is permitted. There is, however, no obligation for her to marry any particular person such as her husband's younger brother (dewar). When the consent of the lady is known the suitor goes to her village with some clothes as presents and attended by four or five friends. He pays seven pice to the widow's brother's wife (bhabi) or to her paternal aunt (phuwa), provided they have husbands living. A general drink is then indulged in, in which the Tarvi of the widow's village takes part, and the ceremony is complete. This re-marriage is always done by night. The widow never enters her new home by day, as this will, it is believed, produce famine. Any person who accompanies the man marrying a widow is bound to carry out this duty seven times.

The widow, and children by the re-marriage, have no interest in the property of the first husband after re-marriage.

THE BHIL TRIBE

In a case where she marries her deceased husband's younger brother, should there be already a son by the first husband, children by the second have no rights in the property of the
first husband. If, on the other hand, there was no child by the first husband, children of the second inherit the property of the first husband.

Divorce: Among the Bhils divorce is frequent. The man who keeps a woman who has left her husband has to pay her former husband whatever expenses the latter has incurred in marrying her. Any reason is sufficient for a divorce. To effect a divorce the injured man calls together his village panchayat and in their presence tears off a piece from the end of his turban which he hands to his wife, stating that her conduct was bad he is divorcing her and that from this day forth she will stand to him in the relationship of a sister. The divorcee takes the piece of cloth and hangs it carefully on a rafter of her father's house for a whole month. This shows that her former husband has no further rights over her and she can re-marry.

The Bhils are very suspicious of their women folk, and not without reason as the majority of criminal cases which are brought by Bhils concern their women. This is a reason why they do not build their houses close together.

Funeral ceremonies: The Bhils cremate their dead. They bury young babies whose teeth have not yet appeared, lepers and persons dying of small-pox and of suicide. All these are buried in sleeping position. An ascetic is buried in the sitting position. On the occurrence of death notice is given by firing off guns before the deceased's house, while the village dhobi sounds his drum. The corpse is bathed in cold water and dressed and in the case of unmarried adults some turmeric is thrown on the dress. It is placed on a bier with the face upwards and covered with a cloth. Two coconuts are hung at the head of the bier. The eldest son or a near relative, if there is no son, takes an ignited cake of cowdung in his hand and the corpse is carried to the cremation ground, the man with the fire leading the way. Sometimes music played softly, accompanies the bier. The corpse is always carried so as to lie north and south, the feet pointing to the south. In the meanwhile, in the deceased's house a small lamp is placed upon the spot where the person died, sprinkled with maize and covered with a bamboo basket.
On coming to a ber tree (Zizyphus jujuba) the corpse is set down, while all the persons present proceed to take up stones with which a heap is made. A piece of cloth is then torn off the dead man's garment and thrown over the tree. The corpse is then picked up, those formerly at the head going to the feet. Tradition has it that the rest under the ber is made for this reason. Once the son of an aged dame died. The old woman carried his corpse as far as a ber tree but could not go on further. She then decided to appeal to the gods by fasting, for the restoration of her son's life, and sat for three days fasting beneath the tree. This was not the fruit season, but seeing her piety the gods gave the tree fruit, and also caused hunger to attack her. She could bear her pain no longer and rose to seize the fruit. Suddenly the tree grew and raised the fruit beyond her reach. At length she propped the corpse against the tree and standing upon it reached the fruit. She had broken her vow and the village people took and cremated the corpse. To avert any such evil each corpse is now halted under a ber tree, and a piece of the garment is offered to the god. The earthen vessel containing water to wash the corpse is taken and broken under this tree on the heap of stones.

Burning ghats are situated anywhere near a stream or tank. The body is placed on the pyre with its head to the north and burnt together with the man's bow, club, etc., and in the case of a woman some favourite ornament. The unconsumed bones are carefully collected from the pyre and separated from the ashes. The bones are placed in an earthen vessel and buried near the house. There they remain till the 12th day ceremony is performed. If there is no chance of carrying out the ceremony they are thrown into the nearest river, usually the Narbada. The deceased is provided with food and drink on the 3rd day, the provisions being placed under the ber tree where the corpse rested. The stones heaped up there are scattered.

Belief in a future life: The Bhils have some definite ideas about the future of the departed soul. The floor round the lamp is examined and by the shape of the marks, it is determined what animal the spirits of the dead will next inhabit. If it is like a human footprint a man is his next abode; if like a
hoof, a horned animal; if like a bird's foot, a bird; if like a scorpion or snake, one of these animals. It is also believed that Yama comes from the south and carries the soul of the dead man to the north. On the way the soul passes over a thorn-strewn plain. Hence shoes are given as gift on the day of the funeral feast or else his spirit suffers greatly. He then passes between two heated pillars; the spirit then encounters a bhayari (keeper of cook shop) who offers him hot cooked food. He then reaches a river. A cow is given as a gift. It is supposed this animal providentially appears and by treading on its tail, the departed gets across, otherwise he suffers agonies and is half drowned. On reaching the end of the journey, Yama determines which of the three hells (lit, kunds or tanks) he is to enter; one being full of nectar, the others of varying degrees of foulness (worms, blood, etc.,) until he is born again. Those who die a violent death become inimical spirits (bhut), as do Badwas or medicine men; others become Khatris, who however cannot harm human beings but only animals, and others Deos who are beneficent spirits. A sinner is also believed to be transformed into an insect.

Memorial stones to the dead: When a man is killed in a fight or by a wild animal away from his home, a stone monument is erected at the spot where he died. A man on horseback is generally carved on the stone. Such monuments are common in the Bhil tracts to the north of the Vindhyaas. Among the Satpura Bhils—the Tadvis mainly—memorial stones to a person of importance are quite common. The commemorative monument is usually of stone but wooden ones are also found. If stone is unavailable for any reason wooden monuments are erected. These Satpura monuments are somewhat elaborate. First of all there is an upright stone monument of about 3½ feet high on which the figure of the person in whose memory it is erected is carved i.e., a man or a woman. In front of it are two wooden posts, 4½ feet high with a bar placed across them on the top. Suspended from this bar is a small wooden swing. This is followed by two small wooden posts, not more than 2 feet in height and finally there is a small stone slab about 1 foot high and 9 inches in breadth. The most distinctive feature of these monuments is the wooden awning.
This is meant for the soul of the departed. It comes and perches on the swing and enjoys itself. On the smaller wooden posts, a cross bar is placed on which food and offerings are left for the spirit of the departed. In times of distress and trouble the spirit is invoked and it is believed that a childless woman will be blessed with progeny by offering prayers at the monument.

Religion: It is difficult to describe precisely the religion of the Bhil. He has been in contact with Hinduism for a long time and in spite of his preference for Hindu gods and godlings, his outlook is essentially animistic. The Bhils call themselves Hindus, invariably asserting that they are the followers of Mahadev and they have appropriated all the well known gods of the Hindu pantheon. Bada deo is a generic term for the village tutelary deity. In Shraavan he is specially worshipped. All the village collect at the forest where he is making his abode and offer liquor, grain and fowl. Many other forest, woodland and mountain deities are worshipped. Local gods vary with almost each village.

Brahmans are not as a rule employed for religious or ceremonial purposes. The Badwa or the medicine man is an important person in their tribal life. He evokes spirits and tells them the results. On such occasions the Badwa or which is supposed to be possessed and goes through a performance consisting of various contortions of the body and rapid movements of the head, the eyes roll in their sockets while the nostrils are distended and in the excitement the few rags worn are often thrown off. The possessed being then half incoherently blabbers out what the spirit has told him, and soon after calms down and for a time becomes as helpless as a child, doubtless owing to the exertion he has undergone.

In casting out disease or an epidemic from a village, after a sacrifice to the principal deity, the Badwa will visit all the sacred spots within the precincts of the village, chanting in a droning tone some invocation, followed by drummers; at each spot he will offer a little red ochre and a piece of coconut, while at the principal entrance into the village limits, he will show by various antics and rapid gestures of hand and body.
with his back turned to the village, that the spirit to which the disease was due has been cast out into the adjoining territory. Another form of casting out an epidemic is to sling some baskets, that have contained corn, and earthen pots that have been used for water, on a bamboo pole which is carried on the shoulders of men who run along the main road shouting at the top of their voices *todka*; *todka*. On hearing the shouts, the next village sends out men to meet the procession at the boundary and these take over the burden and so the process is repeated. Thus the epidemic is carried away often to great distances, until eventually it is thrown into some stream or river which stretches across the path or is deposited in the forest. If no one from the next village is present to meet the procession at the boundary, the bearers are at liberty to deposit their burden in the village precincts. Sometimes a young he-goat is similarly carried on the shoulders of men or tied on to a light bier. The origin of Bhilat Deo worshipped by the Rathia Bhils is as follows:

Bhilat Deo was the son of Ruparela Gaoli and his mother's name was Mheinda Rani. He was a great simpleton when young, and in consequence was always being chaffed and made fun of by every one. Accordingly disgusted of life, he left his country and after wandering far and wide arrived in Gaur Bengal where he met a spirit Karanda Jogan by name who taught him magic. He studied the art to perfection and then returned to his native place to pass the remainder of his days. On one occasion while many people were collected together, he took his harp and began playing when a snake came out of a mole-hill. The snake was so huge that the earth vibrated beneath the lashings of his tail. Bhilat Deo, however, caught the snake and took it to Indar Raja (Indra) who was greatly pleased to see his marvellous strength and power and ordered the people to reverence him as a Deo (god) in future; thus his worship started. Indar Raja gave him Bheru Deota for a personal attendant, and also presented him with some cows as a reward of his merit. Bhilat Deo selected a spot under a tree on Mangalawari hill near Sendwa in Indore State, to settle. His cows increased daily in number, so much so, that he employed 900 cowherds to look after them, each man taking
up his abode with his cows on a separate hill. Thus each of
these spots represents the site of Bhilat Deo, the gods being
kept under a tree or under some rude cover or in a small
temple.

The Bhils have great reverence also for hill tops difficult of
ascent, as being the abode of spirits which must be propitiated
during sickness or to obtain offspring. In such cases, after
the usual offering the forest is often set alight.

Charms and witch-craft: Sometimes a newly-born baby
has an elongated skull which may be due to the pressure of a
too narrow opening of the womb. But the superstitious Bhils,
seeing that the baby had a queer head believed it is an evil
spirit and killed the baby at once, or if the newly-born baby
looks queer and is queerly shaped, it is also killed thinking
it is an evil spirit. It is reported that such murders are not
rare.

The belief in magic and witchcraft is universal. Should
any person fall sick without clear cause the Badwa is called
into exercise the evil influences at work and discover the
origin of the illness. With care he can usually discover some
wretched old beldame who lives in the sick man’s village and
falling into a trance describes her accurately to the inquirers.
The witch would be placed on one end of a yoke with cow dung
cakes on the other in a pond. If she sank she was a witch.
If she swam she was innocent. Red pepper would be
put into her eyes; if no tears came she was a witch. In
cases of serious illness it is almost invariably considered to
be due to a witch taking possession of the patient’s heart. A
Badwa’s charms are the only remedy. The sick man is often
subjected to fumigation with the leaves of plants, a charmed
thread is tied on his neck while a special dance in which the
gods are invoked, is performed round him. He is then often
carried from village to village. A few grains of jowar mixed
with a copper coin are passed round the sick man’s body and
then sent to a Badwa. The Badwa then places over them
a leaf of the Butea frondosa and floats the whole collection on
water. He then picks out the grains and slowly drops them
one by one into the water saying bhut, deo, dakini (witch),
successively. When a grain floats he is thus able to determine
which of these evil influences is at work, by the name which fell to the grain which floated. If it is determined to have been caused by a witch, he then repeats the process calling out the names of all the witches known to him. Should no grain float, the sickness is put down to natural causes. Another process is to take a handful of grain, chips of wood or leaves and throw them away counting each piece or grain as it falls and repeating this process for every known witch until an odd number falls to one of the names; the name so determined is that of the offender.

The belief in witch-craft is not only common amongst the Bhils but is widespread from the highest to the lowest classes. An excellent account of its prevalence in former times in Central India will be found in Sir J. Malcolm's Memoirs. A reported case of witch-craft occurred nearly 45 years ago. In 1888 a Kachhi called Rata complained that his mother Issa had been, by order of the Rao of Bhatkheri, mounted on a donkey by a scavenger, beaten and turned out of the village as a witch; had then been made to drink water offered by a mochi, and beaten. The woman died from this treatment. Her body was burnt and the complainant's house broken into and Rs. 2,000 taken away. Complainant was away at the time, and on his return was told to leave the village.

Inquiry followed, on which the Rao admitted that Issa had been thus treated because she was a witch, and had caused the death of the wife and son of a rich Bania. Issa was 'named' as a witch and driven out of the village. She, however, came back and was seized. It was alleged that on being seized she was said to have asked for a leopard to stride on but as no leopard was forthcoming they put her on the donkey, blackened her face, made her eat from a scavenger's hand and expelled her from the place. The Rao stated he himself heard her barking like a dog, and saw her making attempts to bite like one, and that after her expulsion she remained outside Bhatkheri for some days barking and flying at passers by like a dog, till she died.

Oaths and trial by Ordeal: Trial by ordeal is common, though in places it is now dying out. Some of the forms employed were the swallowing of live coals in the hand, pierc-
ing the palm of the hand with an arrow, saying poisonous herbs or fruits etc. The simplest form consist in making the man take a solemn oath and then waiting for seven days. If (within this period) any mischance befalls him, or his family, or possessions, he is considered to have perjured himself, and the case goes against him. One common form of oath in such cases is this. The man is brought before the Sarkari Gaddi. This is simply a chair in the nearest Tahsil office. A clean white cloth is thrown over it and it is placed in full view. This represents the ruler of the State and is in fact the emblem of authority. The man touches the chair with both hands and swears by Barabij. The Tarvi, who is administering the oath, turns to the east, and draws a circle on the ground with the point of a sword, commencing on the east and passing round by the north and west. Within this circle two lines are drawn joining north and south and east and west. The sword is then placed in the circle with its point to the east. The Tarvi then turns to the man and says: “if your cause is a good and true cause, raise Bhavanimata in your hand (i.e. the sword).” The man does so exclaiming “Barabij visit me with evil within seven days (or other period) if I swear untruly.” He then lifts the sword, bows and replaces it. The Barabij are the twelve bij or second day of each month, on which the new moon is usually first visible, and is a day held in reverence. Other oaths are laying the hand on a son’s head and swearing; taking up one of the village gods (image) in the hand and swearing; in boundary disputes a goat is beheaded and then skinned and the skin placed on the man’s head, who with his face to the east, swears his cause is good, and then drags the skin along the line of the boundary. Certain oaths are inviolable. One is that of the dog. A Bhil swears with his hand on a dog’s head calling out that the curse of the dog should fall on him if he swears falsely. It appears that the dog as the companion of the god Bhairon is specially looked up to.

Omens: These are very numerous. Same are given in the Table on page 269.

If a peacock cries before dawn on the third Valsakh his cries are counted as it is believed there will be as many months of rain as there are cries. This is considered a most reliable
A list of common omens observed at starting from the house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Omens</th>
<th>Auspicious</th>
<th>Auspicious</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beda-pani calls</td>
<td>On the left</td>
<td>On the right</td>
<td>Any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cry of the Devi-Chiriya</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Caw of crow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cry of the Chiwara</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A deer crossing the path</td>
<td>Left to Right</td>
<td>Right to left</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Call of the Sara</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cry of the Saras</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cat crossing path</td>
<td>Left to Right</td>
<td>Right to left</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Snake crossing path</td>
<td>In either direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cry of the Kanahari</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Braying of a donkey</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bellowing of a bull</td>
<td>From either side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lowing of a cow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hooting of an owl</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Howling of a jackal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-omen. The appearance of a lark, calling just before rain is due, is a good sign. When sparrows constantly bathe in the dust, rain, even if just commenced will soon cease. The croaking of frogs is another sure prediction of rain. The calls of certain birds are held to foretell success in the pursuit of game. Again when starting on an errand if a horse should neigh on the right side, it bodes success: if on the left side, failure. It is usual to seek knowledge of the return of a member of the family. This is done by going to an old woman versed in such lore, who takes a winnowing fan which she balances on the little finger of her two hands, 5 grains of wheat or maize being placed on it. She then addresses the fan asking if the wayfarer will return. If the fan moves in answer all is well.

In former times when the Bhils seized a whole herd they sometimes offered a human sacrifice to the Mata of the thieves. They then killed the shepherd near the Mata as a sacrifice. The sacrifice was also conducted in another way. The shepherd was taken to the top of a steep hillock. His legs and arms were tied and he was rolled down the hill. These practices have been abandoned now. A common vow taken in honour of the Mata is to burn seven hills or to burn seven houses. When the grass in the jungle is dry they set fire in seven different places so as to destroy great amount of grass in every one of these seven places. These acts are done presumably to obtain help of the Mata or thank her for the success of a plundering expedition.

Appearance and character and social rules and customs: There is a classic description of the Bhil attributed to the much maligned Bengali Babu! “The Bhil is a black man but more hairy. When he meets you in his jungle, he shoots you in the back with an arrow and throws your body into the ditch. Thus you may know the Bhil.”* Malcolm describes the plundering or wild Bhils who reside in the hills, as a “diminutive and wretched looking race whose appearance shows the poverty of their food: but they are nevertheless active and capable of great fatigue†.” The

* Sir Michael O’Dwyer, India as I knew it.
* Memoir; 179.
typical Bhil has a broad nose, thick lips which are 'opened' and the upper jaw is somewhat strong and prominent. He is dark but owing to much intermixture there are varying shades of darkness among the Bhils of different localities. Their hair is black but not woolly, and straight but not wavy. Many men, especially the young ones, like to keep long hair. The eyes are straight and usually black.

Character: The Bhils in villages and in more settled parts have lost much of their suspicion of strangers and live like the lower castes. In the wider and inaccessible parts they are still very timid. They vacate a village on the least provocation such as sickness or a rumour of probable harsh treatment. Though they have given up their predatory habits, the propensity to take to plunder is still lurking in them. Some of them are enlisted in the Malwa Bhil Corps where they have proved faithful and loyal. They are capable of great endurance and it is recorded in 1858 some women of the Malwa Bhil Corps walked over fifty miles without once stopping, most of the way lying through heavy jungle. They are truthful unless spoilt by being 'civilised.'

Admission of outsiders: A Chamar or Bhangi is not admitted to the caste. Others if eligible are admitted. Under Hindu influence, a ceremony has been devised for such admissions. The man is called before a panchayat. He then prepares a tirth as it is called of cow dung and Ganges or other holy water in a dish. This is presented to the Patel or Tarvi presiding. The patel drinks it, and the same ceremony is then performed with the members of the panchayat. Rice boiled in goat's blood is then presented and eaten. A payment of four or five rupees to the Patel concludes the ceremony; save for the inevitable carouse which winds up all Bhil ceremonies. Social position is determined by food, admittedly an importation from Hindu ceremonies. Thus the too near approach of a man of the sweeper or Gachha caste to food which is being cooked defiles it. If a man of these castes touches a Bhil's clothes they must be washed.

Balasis and Chamars, "whom" it is naively remarked "we must have about us to do the village work," are allowed to
take water from the village well, but not Gachhas or sweepers. It is amusing to note the Bhil observe untouchability. The high caste Hindu does not consider a Bhil an untouchable.

Panchayat: Before the organisation of a judiciary in the States, the panchayat used to decide cases of all natures. The panches now try and decide such cases as pertain to the caste. Petty disputes are settled by the panches. The tribunal constitution however appears to be disintegrating in recent times according to the report of some observers. The charge of the headman, the Tarvi, remains hereditary. The Nat Patels in former days exercised considerable authority but the tendency now is to reject their authority. Nobody seriously obeys the decision of the panchayat.

Tattooing: This operation is generally performed at ten to twelve years of age on girls, on the cheeks, forehead, arm below the elbows, chin and wrists, and the calf of the leg and feet. Men are tattooed between 8 and 9, on arms, wrists and chests. Men operators tattoo men, women and girls. The object of tattooing is said to be this. After death each individual is asked whether he has been pricked by thorns in the jungle; the presentation of these tattoo marks is considered as affirmative answer, without this they would have to be pricked with thorns in after life.* Designs are numerous and are made to the fancy of the person operated on. Boys, it should be added are in the habit of burning marks on each other on the back and wrist in either five or seven distinct places. This is done with a piece of smouldering cloth or the match of a match-lock. The custom is called dhamila and appears to have the same object as tattooing. Females are never branded in this way.

Occupation: The Bhil always states that agriculture is his original occupation. If so, he can scarcely be credited with much recollection of it, as at this day he does but little cultivation even when every endeavour is used to include him to settle and he given land and pecuniary assistance. Tradition has it, however, that the Bhil at his creation was given by Mahadev a plough, sickle, harrow and a pair of bullocks and

* C.E. Luard, Tattooing in Central India, Indian Antiquary 1904.
was promised that if he sowed two Seers of cereals he should reap two Manis. Gradually the States are getting the Bhils to settle and become regular cultivators and many now hold leases from the Darbar like ordinary agriculturists but as a rule on very easy terms. Where regular settlements exist the Tarvi or headman generally contracts for the revenue of the village making what he can out of the inhabitants. Cultivation is often done by outsiders who are paid a share of the produce. Sometimes a man agrees to work for 3 days for another, cultivating his own land on the fourth day. Hindu ideas as to propitious days, etc., have become general, with some modifications, in the observances followed. Thus before sowing a cultivator sets up a stone at the top of his field and anoints it with red lead breaking a coconut over it; this stone represents Ganesh. The evil eye is thus averted from crops. Two sticks are planted in the ground with a piece of conspicuous coloured cloth tied to them or heap of stones are raised and white-washed. The onlookers’ gaze thus falls first on these objects. After the reaping is completed, the evil spirits are appeased by the offering of a cock and liquor. Before a well is sunk a stone is set up and anointed with red lead and propitiated with offerings, the stone standing in this case for the water deity of the locality.

Except in the case of such few who have taken to cultivation, the Bhils are still a wandering population and as a rule have no fixed village. Without migrating far away, they keep wandering within certain limits in the States of the Vindhyas. Many find occupation in reaping the harvests on the uplands of Malwa from March to April. If the Bhils were encouraged to build pacca houses they would become less wanderers. Many of them, every third or fourth year desert their village and settle elsewhere. So long as they have the spirit of wanderlust they will never become good agriculturists. Some take up the work of village watchman and a great many addicted to plunder and theft. One observer who has 22 years’ experience among the Bhils writes that the majority of them go in for theft. A hundred years of peaceful rule in Central India has not completely reformed them, weaned them away from their former habits. They are no longer turbulent as they were in
the days of unsettled rule in Malwa. But still they remain low and degraded. Malcolm wrote “that the common answer of a Bhil when charged with theft or robbery is ‘I am not to blame; I am Mahadev’s thief’. In other words my destiny as a thief has been fixed by God”.

_Inheritance_: Tribal custom determines inheritance. Of the property half goes to the youngest son, who is responsible for the payment of all expenses incurred on his father’s _nukria_ (the feast given after his death, usually on the 12th day after). He has also to make provision for his sisters. The other half is divided between the elder sons. If they all live together, a very rare occurrence, they share equally in the property. In the case of the deceased being a Tarvi or headman, his position is assumed not necessarily by the eldest son, but by the most fit, who is chosen by the _Panches_. He then becomes entitled to the usual rights pertaining to the position, as well as its responsibilities, such as entertaining strangers of position, etc. In the case of a Tarvi dying childless, his successor is chosen in the family. A widow is mistress of her husband’s property for life, provided she conducts herself properly. It is not uncommon, however, to divide the property in order to prevent disagreeable quarrels. A daughter can under no circumstances inherit her father’s property. Only those who are _sagotra_ (of the dead man’s sept) can inherit. If there are no heirs, the _Panches_ consider the case, and no relatives being traceable, the property goes to the Darbar.

_Festivals, music and amusement_: The Bhil observes the principal Hindu festivals. A mock marriage of two dolls representing the deities who control the rain is sometimes performed. Just before the _Holi_ a great fair called _Bhagoria hat_ is held. The men put on their best clothes and carrying bows and arrows dance in a circle; women cannot take part in it. If it can be called so, the drum is their chief musical instrument. On this three predominant notes are used; for Joy, Grief, and Fear. For Joy the drum is beaten at both ends, for Grief only at one, the end being previously muffled by rubbing it over with moistened _Urad_ flour. In the case of

† _Memoir I, 526._
alarm it is beaten at both ends a continuous loud note being emitted while screams often add to the commotion. This note is at once picked up by the next village and in an incredibly short space of time the whole district is aroused, all gradually collecting at the spot where the first alarm was sounded. Cymbals of brass or pewter and bamboo flutes are also used. Dancing and singing form part of all important ceremonies such as wedding and other festive occasions. In all mixed dances men and women dance in separate circles. Dancing is always performed in two groups, men in one group and women in the other. The movements are rhythmic and in many cases accompanied by the beat of sticks in time to the somewhat monotonous chant to which the dance is performed. A special performance takes place in Holl. A man is blackened with charcoal and dressed in a blanket and is called Budelya, another man dressed as a woman being called Raiyi. These two dance while one sing obscence songs, much liquor is drunk and practically all present gradually become inebriated.

Language: The Bhils speak Bhili and other cognate dialects which are detailed in Imperial Table XV. Whether the Bhils had a language of their own is now difficult to say. The Bhili dialect is mainly derived from Gujarati and is influenced by Malwi, Nimadi and other dialects of Malwa in accordance with the proximity of these to the Bhil tracts. Sir George Grierson is of the the opinion that Bhili shows ‘traces of a non-Aryan basis which are too few to be certainly dentified. The basis may have been Munda or it may have been Dravidian—perhaps more probably the former—but has completely been overlaid by an Aryan superstructure’. It is now thoroughly an Aryan language. The same authority assumes early Dardic influence in the Bhil languages.

Bhilala: The Bhilalas are closely related to the Bhils. Patlias and other tribes which inhabit the Vindhyas and Satpuras. They have a considerable admixture of Rajput blood in them. They claim Rajput descent and are considered to be of higher status than their neighbours. The name of the tribes is said to be derived from Bhilara (or Bhilala), i.e., those accused of being Bhils from ara a fault. They consider this appellation
derogatory. They always style themselves Thakur, Bhumia, Rawat, Patel, Mukhui, etc.

The traditions of the tribe state that their Rajput ancestors lived at Delhi, and were Chauhans, members of the family of Prithviraj, the last Hindu king of Delhi. When the Chauhans were finally driven out by the Muhammadans† 200,000 of them migrated to Mewar and settled at Chittor in Udaipur State. On the capture of Chitor by Ala-ud-din in 1303 a larger number fled to the Vindhya hills for refuge. Here they formed marriage connections with Bhil women and so lost caste. Their superior status is always admitted and they form the local aristocracy of the Vindhayas, the Raja of Mandhata, as he is called, being the head of the clan. Malcolm says that in his day the Bhilalas and Sondhias were the only robbers in Malwa whom no traveller could trust, as no oath, however sacred, restrained them. He concludes with the remark that they combine “with the pride and pretensions of Rajputs the cunning and roguery of the Bhils, “while they are destitute of any of those feelings of chivalry which occasionally redeem the vices of true Rajputs. In the beginning of the 19th century some members of the clan rose to importance during the confusion which the Pindari depredations caused in Central India. Nadir Singh, a Bhilala of Jamnia village near Mandu, assisted Jaswant Rao Holkar in his campaign to recover the family estates. Nadir Singh Bhilala’s name soon became a terror in southern Malwa. By 1818 he had collected a body of 200 horses and 700 footmen, and his power was such that Hate Singh, a Khiochi Rajput, Thakur of Naulana, actually consented to dine with the Bhilala Chief-tain, in order to save his estate from ravage. When Sir John Malcolm asked Hate Singh about this, he replied that his having dined with Nadir Singh did not degrade him, but raised the Bhilala. There are now ten estates held by Bhilalas under the British guarantee and others held without a guarantee, from Dhar and other Darbars.

The tribe is divided into two main sections but no marriage distinctions are made, the Badi and Choti Jats only differing as regards eating, and drinking, the septs in the Badi Jats never eating fowls or drinking liquor. In marriage relations they are
on the same footings as the septs in the Choti jat. As regards septs the usual difficulty has been experienced in obtaining a list. No two persons ever give the same name or the same number of septs. Lists are given in another section. From these lists it will be seen that practically no septs are now traceable to totemistic origin, though possibly there were totemistic reasons for many names: others are Rajput names; and many local.

The Bhilalas form one big endogamous group divided into 42 septs which are exogamous. No two members of the same sept can marry. Sexual license before marriage is not recognised at all. Where connection has been made with a man of superior caste, such as Rajput, Brahman or Bania, the children may be admitted to the Bhilala caste but not if the girl has lived with a low caste man. The marriage ceremony is like that of the Bhils, greater importation of Hindu customs. The practice of ghar jamai, abduction and the choice of husband are also in vogue. Widow re-marriage is recognised among the Bhilalas but the higher classes now prohibit it owing to Hindu influence.

They cremate their dead. In matters of religion they consider themselves Hindus. And though they undoubtedly have as much claim to be considered so as members of the lower classes of the recognised Hindu community, they borrow a certain number of the more animistic of their Bhil neighbours. They consider the deity Onkar Mahadev, on the island of Onkarnath in the Narbada, as their special tutelary god, while they accept all the other members of the Hindu pantheon. They also reverence the tombs of Musalman saints. In fact they are in all essentials Hindus and they are admitted to be so as shown by their being allowed to enter temples and generally take part with Hindus in all religious ceremonies. Priests are not necessarily employed by them, although when possible Brahmans are engaged, particularly by the well-to-do such as the Bhumia land-holders. An elderly and respected member of the family can always act as Pujiari.

Once they were as predatory and turbulent as the Bhils. They are now peaceful agriculturists and their position more and more approximates to that of the lower Hindu castes. The land-owners have considerable pretensions to be ranked as Raj-
puts and are slowly transforming themselves into well-known Rajput clans.

Patlias: The Patlias are principally found in Jhabua State and in small number in Ali-Rajpur, Dhar and other minor State of the Southern States Agency. They are almost on the same footing as the Bhilalas and have an admixture of Rajput blood in them. In appearance there is little to distinguish them from Bhilalas. The name Patlia is derived from bitte or “polluted” owning to their being outcast.

The tradition connected with the formation of the caste is this:

Originally the caste being a section of the Paramaras clan dwelt at Abu, but were driven by famine to migrate to Gujarat and settled at Pavagrah in the Panch-mahals. Here one day at the Navaratri festival the goddess Kali joined the women of the clan in chanting garbatis (songs) in praise of Devi. The great beauty of the goddess struck a barber who at once rushed off to the chief of Pavagrah, Parthi (Prithvi) Singh, and informed him of his find. The Raja fired by the account hurried to the spot and without beating about the bush at once advanced to the lovely dancer and requested her to become his wife, offering her the rank of Patt-rani. The goddess was highly incensed and cursed the Raja and his people, vanishing as the last words of her curse fell on the Raja’s ears. From this moment misfortune dogged the steps of the clan, a severe famine eventually forcing them to migrate once more. They retreated to Nalwai village in the Dohad district. Here one of the clan driven by hunger killed a roz (nilgai, Bos elephas targo-camelos) which they ate. This act of sacrilege outcast this section of the clan and they were stigmatised as impure (bitle) becoming known ultimately as Patle or Patlia. They were forced to leave Nalwai and took to the hills. Another tale narrates how, when thus driven into Gujarat, they accepted food of the Tentiya Rajput clan, of spurious origin, and hence lost caste. Apart from the legend, there is no doubt that they came originally from Gujarat as the connection with this district is still kept up, serious caste matter being to this day referred to the patel of Gangedi village in Gujarat.

The Patlias from a single endogamous group or tribe divi-
ded into exogamous septs. Nearly 12 sept names have Rajput appellations with local affixes such as Pipria Parmar called after Pipria village in Baria State, Tandia Parmar called after Tanda village in Amjhera district of Gwalior and so on. This supports their Paramara descent.

Their marriage customs are like those of the Bhilalas. The practice of ghar jamaai is prevalent. It is not uncommon for a man to work for his bride acting as the servant of his father-in-law. Seven years is the usual period. No payment is made for the bride in this case. After 7 years the couple are given a separate house and means to cultivate whereas up to then clothing and food only are given. If no child is born after twelve months from their taking up a separate residence the usual marriage ceremony is performed at the expense of the girl’s father. If the couple elope before the seven years is complete, the man has to pay a bride price. Abduction and elopement are also common in obtaining a wife. The re-marriage of widows is practised. All ancestral property is divided equally between the sons. In the case of joint family, even where one individual is a larger contributor, the total earnings or belongings are held to belong equally to all. In the case of a hereditary Patel or Tarvi the son (if any), best qualified, becomes Patel and receives the customary dues and also any inami land which belongs to the Patelship; these things are not considered common property. A widow with no male heir is sole mistress of the property which passes on her death to the nearest of kin. In cases where she has a son, who is living apart from disagreement, the widow is held to be a son for the purposes of inheritance and gets an equal share with her son or sons. Daughters have no rights of inheritance. Where there is no next-of-kin the property passes either to the Darbar or the Panches of the village.

Oaths, omens and charms followed and practised are similar to those of the Bhils. These are carried out by the Badwas who become “possessed” under favourable conditions and foretell the future; the exercising of deities of disease is one of their special functions. In the cases of cholera the rogta procession or procession of health is practised. The Badwas are called in and all collect at a central spot in the village. After a time they become “possessed” and heave and sway about and com-
mence to chant songs in praise of the goddess continuing to sing throughout the night. Early in the morning they take some parched gram and some balls of dried gram flour and a threat of many colours, a tiki (the piece of tinsel worn on the forehead by women) and some boiled wheat and the head of the freshly killed cock. These are placed in an earthen jar broken into two halves. Some liquor is poured over these objects and they are placed in a small wooden toy cart. This is dragged to the border of the village, the Badwas following dancing and twisting and heaving under the influence of the goddess. At the border the cart is taken by men from next village and similarly passed on to the next. When dysentery becomes epidemic, another process is followed called totka. Every case has an inverted earthen jar full of burning cowdung cakes placed on a brass dish put below the patient's bed. In the case of an ailing child the mother makes a leaf dish and in it puts a few hairs from her own head, some salt and chillies, and a small lump of flour. Cowdung cakes sometimes take the place of the leaf dish. This dish is then carried up to the sick child and passed down seven times over it from the head to the feet; it is then taken at once out of the house and put down in a spot where three thoroughfares meet. Another cure consists in placing the hair, salt and chillies with some wheat in the fold of her head-dress passing this over the child. Another method is to make two dolls of coloured cloth, swing these above the child and then cast them into a running stream. When a child suffers from the evil eye, an earthen pot is made red hot and put into a dish half full of water, mouth downwards, the bubbling and steaming which ensues carries off the evil effects.

In all important ceremonies Brahmans are employed. The Patlias worship the Hindu deities but in particular Kalika Devi. The reason for this that at Abu they were special worshippers at her shrine and they believe that it was through her the Ponwar (i.e., Paramara) Marathas got Dhar. The minor deities are identical with those of the Bhils but they have two warrior gods, Nahar Singh and Makua Paramara who are much revered. They were certainly former leaders of the tribe. The dead are cremated and the usual ceremonies are observed.

The Patlias are prone to wander and cultivate only to a
small extent. Like the Bhils, dancing, singing and a good deal of liquor-drinking are their chief recreations. They appear to join in Bhil games to a certain extent. The recitation of the past glories of the tribes is done by their special Bhat who comes over from Gujarat yearly. He will not feed with them or take food prepared by them.

Rathia: The Rathia are a section of the Bhil tribe. They have been exclusively returned from Barwani State, numbering 37,260 (19,028 males and 18,232 females). They appear to have acquired their appellation owing to their long sojourn in the Rath country which now forms a great part of Ali-Rajpur State. The Rathias of Barwani date their advent from more than a century and a half when one Bhima Patel and other came from Rath and settled at Pati in Barwani State in the time of Rana Chandra Singh. Then the country was full of forests and suited to Bhil immigration.

Marriage ceremonies are simple. At the time of betrothal the boy's father with some relatives goes to the girl's house and presents a small amount to the girl. Then they eat and drink together. At the time of marriage the bridegroom's father accompanied by his male and female relatives goes to the bride's house and pays Rs. 50—60 to her parents. The bride and the bridegroom are made to sit together, while the men and women sing and dance to the strains of Bhil music. No elaborate ceremony is performed. Re-marriage of widows is permitted.

Brahmans are not employed for ceremonial purposes. A casteman of the tribe performs the ceremonies. Their religious beliefs, etc., have been noticed under the Bhils. They are indifferent agriculturists like the Bhils. Some work as labours. They are usually distinguished by their rude dress. The peculiar usage in respect of dress is the loin cloth which is allowed to hang low down behind almost to the knees and flap in the wind like a tail. They are always armed with bows and arrows.

Mankar: The Mankar Bhils have been principally returned from the States of Indore, Dhar and Barwani. A class of Bhils famous as trackers, they now form a separate group. The Mankars are also called Dhankawas by other Bhils but are amongst themselves styled Nahals or Naik. The name Mankar
is an occupational term, these men being under the orders of the village headmen; the term Dhankawas is form Dhanukh, a bow. The term Nahal means simply 'one of mean appearance.' The title of Naik was conferred on them by the State authorities in early days. They say they are the descendants of Rajputs and Bhil or Bhilala women. They form two endogamous groups with twelve exogamous septs, the Chokaria (or superior), Mankars and the Nahal Mankara. Some of the septs are totemistic. Thus:—

Mori : Called after peacock. The sept worship the peacock and never injure it.

Sanyar : Called after a goddess of this name whose temple is at Bal-Kuwan village, eight miles from Barwani. The goddess rides on a cat and this animal is revered and never injured by them. Any vessel from which a cat has drunk is at once put aside as sacred and never used again.

Soliya or Khas Soliya : Called after a bird of this name. This bird is never injured and is worshipped. Any injury done is believed to be punished by the blinding of the man doing the injury.

Semlia : Called after the semal (Bambax malabaricum) which they reverence and never injure.

Tarvis : This (or Tadvi) Bhils of Barwani do not return themselves as Tarvis and hence the Caste table does not contain them. Two septs of these Bhils came into Barwani. One from the Rath and another from Dohad in Bombay Presidency. The Rathvi speak Rathvi; the others Bhagori, a corrupted from of Gujarati. They are divided into two endogamous divisions, Tarvis and Natra-Tarvis. Many of the septs are totemistic. Marriage must take place within the division but outside the sept. Marriage with a girl of the maternal uncle, maternal aunt, mother-in-law is prohibited. Exchange of daughters is practised. Sexual intercourse before marriage is tolerated, is not considered disgraceful, and is often encouraged. Marriage ceremonies are simple. As soon as the girl is found the man proceeds to the girl's house and takes a pitcher of liquor with him. Omens are carefully considered and a bad sign on the road is sufficient to break off the wedding. When the betrothal takes place a feast is held of all relatives.
The day for the marriage procession is settled and the wedding is celebrated with much singing and consumption of large quantities of liquor. Widows are allowed to remarry and divorce is a simple matter.

They do not employ Brahmans. They do most of the ceremonies themselves. Badwas are requisitioned when necessary. Like other Bhils the Travis are animistic in their beliefs. Hanuman is their tutelary village deity and they observe Hindu festivals. They cremate their dead.

*Barela*: The Barelas have been exclusively returned from Indore State. A detailed account of them could not be obtained from the State authorities. It is hoped the gap in the knowledge will be made good before the next Census.
CHAPTER 7

LIFE STYLE—NICOBAR ISLAND

THE SECOND group of Islands lying south of the Andaman Islands known as the Nicobar Islands, present a distinct geographical personality of her own. It is distinctly different from the Andamans. The people and their attributes are, unlike the Andamans, more improved than the aboriginal population of the Andamans.

Though the Island which is nearest to the Andamans is only 120 miles apart, the cultural voyage is obviously much greater which will be exemplified appreciably in different characteristics of these two groups of islands.

The tribal people of the Nicobars do not belong to the same family of the Andamanese as is manifested not only in the physical characteristics but also in the material culture of these people. Secondly the Andamans which is inhabited by thousands of aborigines all over the islands have experienced a decay within a short time in contrast with Nicobars where some of the islands are extremely overcrowded and are experiencing healthy increase of their numbers. The people of Nicobar have experienced neither the decay of their indigenous economy and pristine culture nor they have experienced a much greater amount of self-sufficiency with improved techniques of economy as of Andamans.
From northwest to southeast, the Nicobar Islands extending over a length of 163 miles and a maximum width of 36 miles. There are in all 19 islands of which the northern-most island is Car Nicobar and the southernmost one is the Great Nicobar. The Nicobar group covers an area of 1953 sq. kms. In the Nicobar group of islands of which the most important ones are Great Nicobar, Car Nicobar, Nan Cowry, Katchal and Chowra.

This group of islands is separated from Andaman Islands by the Ten Degree Channel having a depth of 400 fathoms and from Sumatra by the Great Channel having depth of 750 fathoms. The biggest island is the Great Nicobar followed by the Little Nicobar, then Camoria and Car Nicobar.

Of the 19 islands, 12 are inhabited and rest are not inhabited. The islands being a continuation of the Arakan Yoma show some important features of the relief. The island of Batti Malv has the minimum height of 150 feet. As one moves towards the northern or southern islands the height gradually increases. The Car Nicobar is hilly compared to the other islands.

The islands experience a heavy amount of rainfall and high temperature due to their location in the low latitude. Climate is typically hot and humid and these conditions have given rise to the predominance of malaria in many parts of the islands. The natural vegetation is obviously tropical.

Legend

These islands according to Nicobarese legend were formed earlier. Two fishes cut them into two pieces and hence the present location came up. As regards the origin of people themselves, they think to be descendent of man and a bitch. Another story goes on that an unwed pregnant princess came drifting in the sea and settled at Big Lapati of present Car Nicobar. She bore a son, when he became an adult she had relations with him, hence these Nicobarese are the product of such Oedipus complex. The residents of different islands are racially same, though their separation has brought variation in their custom and language, and lately in physical appearance, too, due to racial mixture with natives of South East Asia.
History

The islands have been brought to the limelight from a sufficiently old date and the earliest records of these is lands can be gathered from the notes of Ptolemy in the 2nd century A.D. The islands show a remarkable affinity with the mainland which is evidenced partially in the origin of the people and also from the names of a few rivers and villages such as Ganga, a stream in Great Nicobar, Lakshmi the name of village in Teressa. Though the islands have been colonised by the missionaries since the 17th century, their attempts have been futile.

The islands ultimately came under the British government in the year 1869 and a penal settlement, subordinate to that at the Andamans was established. But it was withdrawn in the year 1888. Since the independence of India, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been grouped under the Union Territory.

The people of the Nicobars are distinctly different from that of the Andamans inspite of the closeness to each other. But the historical evidences prove their affinity with the Indians coming from the eastern part of India. The fantastic legend prevailing in Car Nicobar depicts the canine origin of the Nicobarese. One such legend apprehends the occurrence of one cataclysmic flood which caused a complete devastation of all the people excepting one person only who saved himself by climbing upon a tree and subsequently the sexual union with a bitch, the only survivor of the mammals, gave birth to be Nicobarese race.

No doubt these legends are sheer tales of impossibilities causing a considerable undermining of the dignity of the Nicobarese.

There are some remarkable evidences of the affinity of the Nicobarese with the people living in the Submontane regions of Eastern India. Mention about these people—the Lojenke is found in the notes of I. Tsing in 672 A.D. the Lankabhalus of the Arab Mariners and Neeouveram of Marco Polo. In all such notes the primitive mode of life of these naked people living on roots of trees have been mentioned.
The Hindu Mythology provides a satisfactory clue to the origin of these people. They are supposed to belong to the great race of Vanaras and some of the remarkable affinities with the Vanara have been pointed out by Sri Gupta.

The Nicobarese being secluded and confined to a small group of islands have developed considerable distinctions in the different groups of the Islands. The difference in their languages are conspicuous. Two broad divisions are remarkably well-defined, the Nicobarese and the Shom-Pens. The latter inhabiting the highlands of Great Nicobar have remained virtually within their own crude economy because of their complete isolation. There has been a rapid decline in their numbers very much unlike the Nicobarese, who are experiencing a rapid growth in numbers.

The Shom-Pens

The biggest of all the islands, the Great Nicobar is the abode of the Shom-Pens. The existence of these aborigines was detected in 1831 by a Danish Missionary. The first recorded visit is of Admiral Steam Bille in 1846 and followed by others in successive years.

The Shom-Pens of Nicobar Islands are confined along the eastern and southeastern coast of Great Nicobar island where their movements are restricted. They are also reported from the bank of Dagmar, Alexandra and Galathea river respectively.

Timid and shy and withdrawn by nature, they live in deep in the wood. Effective communication could not be made due to their reserved nature. Nomadic in nature, Shom-pens are more like Andamanese than the Nicobarese. The Shompens depend on horticulture, as agriculture is still foreign to them. Efforts are being made for bringing them closer to a settled way of life.

Appearance

The difference in appearance of the Shompens from that of the Nicobarese are the darker complexion, smaller stature and growth of hairs in different shades from being curly to straight in the case of the former. The difference has been accounted
for by the admixture of the foreign blood with the Nicobarese. It is believed that a party of the Andamanese was detained in this island and gradually mixed up with the local people giving birth to the Shompens. Another belief which is more probable is that the Dravidian mariners in their voyages to the eastern archipelago got mixed up with these people.

**Mawas Shompens**

A small group of Shompens known as Mawas Shompens, meaning quiet and tame Shompens lives in area close to the coastal regions along the river valleys of Jubilee, Dagmar, Alexandra and Galathea. They are friendly and timid in nature. All the past contacts with the Shompens have been with these people.

Whereas the larger section of the Shompens, inhabiting the interior of the islands are hostile and have been all the time in constant feuds and arrogance with the other group and with the Nicobarese who live in the coastal areas.

The widespread occurrence of Shompens is evident from the presence of a large number of abandoned gardens which were previously devoted to the production of crops.

**Small Community**

It is reported that the Shompens are divided into a number of small communities or Septs, each sept lives within its own territory and rarely leaves it except in times of danger. They differ from the coastal Nicobarese tribe both racially and linguistically.

The Shompens present themselves in several different types. The research of Boden Kloss in 1896 showed a dark skinned people with curly or wavy hair, indicating a Malay type with possible pre-Dravidian character. Observations made by Bonnington in 1932 in connection with the census party which encountered a village on the Alexander River, found no sign of curly or wavy hair. But a dark skinned people with features among adults reminiscent of the North American Indian.

As in other Nicobarese, communal spirit exists among them. In their habits they are as nomadic as the Jarawas of Andaman island and move from one place to other in search of food.
Life

The mode of living of Shompens people are undoubtedly very primitive. Domestication of plants and animals is practised besides the fishing and hunting. Craftsmanship has also developed. Production of crops like rice is in practice. Further characteristics of their economy are evidenced from the practice of bartering a number of commodities with the coastal people.

No Permanent House

As these people wander from place to place, no permanent houses are built by the Shompens as in the case of the Nicobarese. The shelters are huts of very crude form which are built up on piles varying in height from 3 ft. to 8 ft. with roof of palm leaf. It is noticed that the sites for permanent habitation are always well chosen for defensive purpose are surrounded by a slight stockade a fact which affords the evidence of intersęp warfare among the Shompen. Another type of hut is also built on the tree.

There are three types of hut among them. They are (1) a big bee-hive type of hut raised on a platform of about 8 ft to 9 ft. from the ground and roof is thatched with coconut leaves. Wall are made of bamboo splits. These are of permanent nature. (2) The second one is also small bee-hive type raised on small platform of about 2 ft to 3 ft from the ground. These are of semi-permanent nature and constructed in the interior forest to get their hunting game. (3) The third type on a big tree in the forest. These are constructed only in rainy season. This is purely a temporary one and used for group hunting expedition.

Family life

These hut consists of Single room. They do not maintain any privacy and it is usual to find two or more married couples staying, sleeping in the night and commit sexual intercourse in the single one roomed hut. They are lustful. They commit sexual relation to any one they like.

They used reed mats. Pillow is made for short wood. All cooking is done in the hut. The cooking pot is made of stout bark. Long bamboo piece with pierced internode are used for
the storage of water. Beneath the hut a type of fencing is often erected to act as cage for any wild pigs captured.

The family cooking pot of the Shompen is ingeniously constructed from large strips of bark of two distinct kinds. One strip is folded lengthwise with rough surface outwards to form a large trough, the folded ends being inserted into split stakes. The sides are then built up with the other strips in pairs and the open ends also inserted into split stakes and the whole tightly bound, strips of cane being passed rounded from stake, along the overlapping edges as well. The stakes are driven into the ground in such a distance apart as to cause a bulge in the bark. The edges are bound with leaves of Sterculia. A small cane basket inserted into the bottom of the vessel to complete the structure.

Cultivation
Method of cultivation is of an extremely crude and a primitive type. A sharp stave with the point hardened in the fire, serves as the sole agricultural implement. Yams, edible roots, a few coconut, pandanus and areca nut trees are usually planted and small fence being erected around the plantation. As they have no permanent house and move from place to place, they have no such definite type of cultivation.

Pandanus are their staple food besides pigs, chicken and fish.

Clothes
The Shompen prepare their clothes from the bark of two species of Ficus.

A fairly good number of foreign articles have been incorporated by these people by bartering with coastal Nicobarese, the splitting of canes in exchange of commodities like garments, beads, knives, axes, tobacco etc.

They also made small canoes 6ft to 10ft in length. They use them on the rivers and never venture out to the sea. In 1932 it was pointed out by Bonnington that neither the bow nor the Nicobarese arrow or cross-bow was known to Shompons. But now they can make bow and cross-bow as the coastal people. Their most important weapon is a wooden
pointed spear of areca wood which is notched on the upper parts to serve as barbs.

Recently iron spear head is introduced. They make their arrow-heads as sharp as razor blades. They also make outrigger canoes hollowed out of trees. Their one subject is to hunt for food during the day and dance at night.

On the whole the economy of the Shompens represents a primitive subsistence economy, which is however higher than the stage of hunting and collecting, as practised by the Andamanese.

The Nicobarese

The Nicobarese inhabiting these small islands have however attained considerable individuality in each group. It is very important development in areas of isolated culture which are conditioned by the local geographical environment and historical incidents. There distribution is also highly uneven in nature and only in the two islands, the Car Nicobar and Chowra that the density of population is quite high.

Like Andamanese they also belong to an ancient race. But now they have accepted the values of modern civilization and life and are in pursuit of acquiring modern technology and education. The Nicobarese can be regarded as a highly developed tribe among the six tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

These has been a differential amount of foreign influence leading to a considerable influence of the foreign languages on their own and today there are such great difference in their languages that one group does not understand the other group.

The Nicobarese are distributed in almost all the inhabited islands of Nicobar group excepting Great Nicobar which is traditionally is the domain of the Shompens. The Nicobarese are economically most developed people. The ecology provide them coconut in such an abundance that they have developed a socio-economic complex around coconut, supported by Pandanus, Arecanut and plantation of Banana and other fruits. Here one can see of group of thriving villages with all the amenities of a sub-urban town, a single metalled road and bus
service. An overall superiority over other islands of Nicobar has made the people of this island an example of tribal elite. The Nicobarese of other islands like Nancowrie and Teressa are just following the suit.

Custom

The marriage which takes place due to continued affection resulting from courtship is performed through the negotiation of the parents of both the sides. After the marriage the couple may either live in the bride's or bridegroom's house depending on the need of the helping hand in any family. Dowries are given to the wife's people. As a religious rite, their heads are shaved off during the marriage and are confined in an enclosed place for 7 days. Adultery is considered as a grave crime against the society.

The religion is undistinguished animism. In their community life there is abundance of ceremonies and festivals which are mostly aimed at exercising and scaring spirits. They are highly afraid of the spirits and ghosts (iwi) and the festivals are held during the night. The superstition is so deeply ingrained among Nicobarese that the efforts of eradicating them have proved fruitless.

Community law

The persons who are charged for serious offences such as murder, habitual theft and public annoyance are put to death with great cruelty in public. However such devilish murders of the Nicobarese are gradually decreasing. Still now, however, a large number of taboos condition their activities. Witches and witch-finders still now abound in numbers.

Language

Although they speak their own tribal language, they understand other language too. Of many languages, Portuguese, English, German, Malay and Chinese, which had been in vogue in the islands, English, Burmese and Hindustani are well understood.

The uneven distribution of the population is a distinct feature of the islands. Some of the smallest islands, the Car
Nicobar and Chowra have the maximum agglomeration and in consequence, the highest density.

**House Pattern**

The houses are clustered together in one place and are very neat and clean. In all the villages, a guest house “All panam” is built on the sea beach for the use of the travellers. A co-operative trading society called “Panam Hineng” exists in Car Nicobar for the sale of the village produce and such facilities are extended in the other islands by the government agents.

However, for the southern islands the trade was in the hands of Malay people. But now government is improving the situation. The Nicobarese are very peaceful people having great fascination for colourful dresses, dances and other social recreations.

**Economy of Nicobarese**

The Nicobarese economy can easily be classified as productive one: for they produce or they have more than their requirement for subsistence and use the extra for other economic needs. There are four basic items in their economic life:

1. Plantation of Coconut, Arecanut, Pandanus, Banana and Sugarcane, now Rubber and Cashewnuts also.
2. Fishing and shell collecting
3. Pig rearing with poultry and domestication of dogs. Other animals almost totally absent.
4. Hunting pigeons.

But among all coconut is the soul of Nicobarese economy. The trunk, the branches, leaves, juice and fruit of this tree can be turned into no fewer than 350 uses. For Nicobarese coconut is the main food and supplier of fresh water; today cooking oil, broom, stakes for foundation pillar and leaves for roofing, drinking cup and even idea for making waterproof conical hut. It has prominent place in every magico-religious rites, in feast, welcoming a guest, in feeding animals, in making bulk of property etc.
Religion and Rites

As usual the religion is the most fascinating aspect of Nicobarese life. There are Animists, Christians and lately Muslims among Nicobarese. It can be said at the outset that the change of religion has only touched the outer garb of Nicobarese the daily worship at Church and Namaz at prayer room and ways of marriage. But the core of traditional Nicobarese religion which revolves round the transition rites, what von Genep in 1909 called "Rites-de-Passage" is followed by the Christians and Muslims too.

The traditional religion does not have any universal festival on any fixed date throughout the year among the Nicobarese. All the festivals or Baradin among Nicobarese are related to economic activities or life cycle-rituals.

The presence of Kariyawa or Spirit God in their Baradins make Nicobarese religion truly animistic. So far ancestor worship is concerned, it is a family affair to perform rebural ceremony—Kindrauk of their immediate dead.

The Birth ceremony, Tumking or Intening (Purification ceremony for child), Name giving ceremony (Leyan Kurua) Andamaham (Initiation ceremony), marriage and most important of all Burial and Reburial ceremonies are such occasions.

Restriction of food and movement of pregnant women, precautions at child birth, bathing of child in Chowra pot are commonly followed. The puberty rites incorporate fasting, isolation and prohibition. This calls for Anaha-maham-initiation ceremony to induct the young into full life of an adult. Now they are allowed to move with the opposite sex, culminating into marriage ceremony. There is no religious function in marriages. It is purely a social or civil contact. It could be known as ‘common law marriage’ which is founded on consent of both the parties, adoptive marriage which calls for man’s adopting into his wife’s family, or ‘marriage-Beena’ when a man is required to leave his home and live with wife’s family which is also called matripotestal marriage. These days the consent of parents are also usually taken though not binding. The divorce is also not uncommon.

The burial rites are in form of extended burial (the face of
corpse upward) and bundle burial followed by secondary burial. They wrap red clothes all round the corpse to make a big bundle before burying it. A long process of rites covering nine to ten stages follow the initial burial custom.

The Christianity has spread in Car Nicobar. At Namcowry about 50% leading families have become Christians. There are only three families of Muslims including that of Rani.

Changing Life Pattern

The material culture of Nicobarese have changed rapidly after the Japanese occupation in 1942 and opening of Akuji trading Co., now Nancowry trading Co. in 1945. The company supplies almost everything modern, gives them service, have introduced them to monetary system, enables them to see films and given opportunity to travel even outside India. The company keeps regular contact with all the Islands where it has its branches, through its own motor boats. It acts as medium between mainland and Nancowry group of islands.

The Nicobarese have shown interest in school education too. There is one senior Basic School and Balvadi. The course of study follows the Central Board of Education and has standard books prepared by NCERT.

The folk tales and folk songs form the base of folk creativity. There is only one type of dance—KIRUM and mock fighting-Malang. All the songs are quite low-voiced. Even they talk in low pitch.

Naming

The most amusing and interesting Nicobarese characteristics is the idea of personal naming. They do not simply think over acquiring name. It could simply be any word which they may like. Some example are: Second, Sabundani, Tablelamp, Larai-India, Jhooth mooth and Friend of England.

The old houses are now giving way to houses with two sided sloppy roof. The traditional dress before the war was only loincloth which would round his waist with one end passing between his legs and a long tail like cloth hanging behind. The women folk usually wear only Sarong, leaving the breast bare. This form of attire is now rarely seen. Men wear shorts and women have added blouse. Sewing machines have come to
Nicobarese home and skill of tailoring is a new value of respect. They wear silver ornaments and watches.

With the introduction of wheat flour, rice and tea, the substance and frequency of eating has changed, so has the mode of preparation and cooking. Most people now partake of at least one cooked meal with rice or chappati.

These days a Nicobarese house has aluminium vessel for cooking, metallic buckets for water, cups and saucers for tea and iron plates to eat.

The Nicobarese had from time immemorial their own medicines for all sicknesses known to them. But due to Japanese occupation in world war II and soon after independence, clinics and dispensaries started functioning, giving away medicines to swallow to produces instant effect.

The school system teaches plenty of hygiene. Hence the medicine rites of the Nicobarese are on the way of disintegration.

The family alignment has lately changed to considerable extent. The men of service often refuse or do not find time to share the labour required for traditional economic system.

ECONOMY

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands constitute one of the remotest part of the country once dreaded as Kalapani, the Islands are inhabited by primitive communities like Andamanese, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Onge, Nicobarese and Shompens, who led a completely isolated life cut off from mainland for hundred of years. The new settlers are composed of descendants of prisoners, sons and grand sons of Moplas of Malabar, refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, Korens from Burma and ex-soldiers of Indian army. The people inhabiting the Nicobar group of islands are called Nicobarese. Thus unlike those tribals of Andaman group, this nomenclature seems to be geographical in origin. The Nicobarese have their own tribal names of different islands, for example Teressa is known as Taihlong, Tillanchong as Loak, Trinket as Laful and Katchar as Tehnyu etc. The residents of different islands are racially same, though their separation has brought island variations in their customs and language and lately in physical appearance too, due to racial admixture with natives of South East Asia.
The Nicobarese economy can easily be classified as productive one, for they have more than their requirement for subsistence and use the extra for other economic needs. Their main items of economic life are as follows:

(a) Plantation—coconut, arecanut, pendanus, banana and sugarcane, rubber and cashew nuts.

(b) Fishing and shell collecting

(c) Hunting

(d) Animal Husbandry—pig, poultry and domestication of dogs.

Coconut Tree

But foremost is the coconut Plantation. The trunk, branches, leaves, juice and fruit of this tree can be turned into no fewer than 350 uses. It grows very well in the climate which is warm but not too hot and very damp, which has light winds and heavy and regular rainfall. For Nicobarese coconut is the main food crop and supplier of fresh water, cooking oil, brown, stakes for pillar and leaves for roofing drinking cup and even for making a water proof conical hut. It has prominent place in every magico-religious rites, in feast, welcoming a guest, in feeding animals, in making bulk of property etc.

Nicobarese

Out of the 19 islands of Nicobar group, this community occupies all the twelve populated ones. The people have mongoloid character. They are well built with muscular bodies. They have high cheek bones, and flat nose and jolly face. The hair is heavy and skin colours vary from dark brown to very fair. Their height varies from 169 to 180 cms. Lately due to intermixture of outsiders like traders, administrators and military people, the physical features have undergone many changes.

Eco-System

The island ecology makes the Nicobarese dependent on sea, land and air (monsoon) upto a stage of helplessness. There could be no escape from the plantation and sea life. The island of Nancowry is a centre of economic exchange
especially between Northern and Southern Nicobar. There are two schools of canoe building art, chowra design and kondul design. The other skills which count are house building and pot making. Almost every village have expert or experts of housebuilding. But the pot making is the monopoly of the people of Chowra Island. These pots are considered to be most auspicious, hence no other islands develop the skill of pot making. Now-a-days they use money for exchange but in pre-war days it was pure barter. Every item is to be exchanged with coconut e.g. a cycle would cost a Nicobarese 2500 coconuts. The people of Nancowry islands were in regular trade with the merchants of south-east Asia. The Chinese, traders used to come and provide them with silk, rice, silver, cutlery, glass, vases etc. Such a system came to an end in 1945 by the Britishers. Now Nancowry Trading Company is dealing with every item. It has given service to a number of Nicobarese and supplies the villages with the modern items like condensed milk, fruit juice, tinned nonvegetarian items, iron implements for boat and airgun for hunting. Also ready-made clothes and all type of cereals and spices.

Political set-up

It is difficult to recall the political set up before 1941-42 when the present institution of Rani had begun. It is said that the first Rani Islon married a Tahsildar of Nancowry Mewalal. The Tahsildar being British administrator helped his wife to command respect from the Nicobarese. Any dispute was brought before Tahsildar who asked people to follow her decision. This gradually held roots. The Japanese also paid special attention to Rani and her brother Ram Krishna who was Chief Captain. Rani Islon died in 1954, then her daughter Rani Lakshmi took over. She made her brother Zeem Chief Captain who has 14 other captains to run the political set-up of this group of islands. The idea of Captain and Chief Captain may have come up from Navigating vessels. When Rani Chang of Katchal died in 1969 her son Harry was made Chief Captain under Rani Lakshmi. This forms the total political set up in central group of Nicobar Islands. Though Rani has changed her religion to Islam (now she is Mrs. Julakha) still...
she commands respect from animists and Christian Nicobarese alike. Christians at Nancowry have also formed a committee headed by Rev. Fred with 5 other members. Only Christians go to this for obtaining any decision. But inter-community or inter village disputes go to Rani Lakshmi. The cases of rape, adultery, divorce, breach of taboo and other anti social events come before the Council of Rani. She is the link between administration and Nicobarese of different islands.

Marriage

The traditional marriage system of Nicobarese do not have religious function. It is purely a social or civil contact. It could be known as "common law marriage" which is founded on consent of both the parties, adoptive marriage which calls for man's adopting into his wife's family or "marriage-Beena" when a man is required to leave his home and live with wife's family which is also called matri-protestal marriage. These days the consent of parents are also usually taken, though not binding. The divorce is also not uncommon.

Rites

The burial rites are in form of Extended burial (the face of the corpse upwards) and bundle burial followed by secondary burial. They wrap red cloths all round the corpse to make a big bundle before burying it. The medicine rites of the witch doctor—Meluana is the core of magico-religious beliefs. The medical activity of Maluna is dependent for success of contact with supernatural forces, involving plants or herbs and mantras.

Christianity

The Christianity has spread most in Car Nicobar, at Nancowry about 50% leading families have become Christians. The marriage procedure in Church is the most marked change which is added with general outlook. There are only three families of Muslims including that of Rani. They follow a taboo of pork eating and keep Roza—Mutoanaha. For many social function, religion does not act as barrier to social solidarity.
Houses

The houses on stilts with conical roof on a raised platform are now giving way to houses with two sided slopy roof. The new model is easier to build and less costly. The skill for conical hut was known to few who commanded respect, now almost every village has a number of such people who can construct a rectangular house.

Dress

The traditional dress was loin cloth which would round his waist with one end passing between his legs and a long tail like cloth hanging behind. The woman folk usually wore only Sarong, leaving the torso bare. This form of attire is now rarely seen. Men wear shorts and woman have added blouse. Sewing machines have come in the islanders home and skill of tailoring is a new value of respect. They wear silver ornaments, like chains, bangles, earring and also watches, waist-band and head dress.

Food Habit

With the introduction of wheat flour, rice and tea, the substance and frequency of eating has changed, so has the mode of preparation and cooking. These days a Nicobarese house has aluminium vessel for cooking, metallic buckets used as water container, cups and saucers for tea and porcelain or iron plates to eat. So far as the medicine is concerned they have changed to modern medicines. Dispensaries and clinics have opened in the islands.

The family alignment has lately changed to considerable extent. The new monetary economy has given an idea of money value at every stage breaking economic solidarity.

The description of the salient features of Nicobarese life gives us a clear picture of their self-sufficient ecosystem. Just opposite to that of Andaman tribes who faced extinction and are vanishing after coming into contact with outsiders, the Nicobarese had little opportunity to mingle with outsiders. Even when they came into contact their strong and well developed eco-system helped them to restrain in the face of innovation and they carried on their traditional life.
**Ethnic Diversities**

The population of the Andaman and Nicobar islands has remarkable ethnic and cultural diversities. It has three base-tribal people, descendents of criminals under sentence of transportation from India and Burma and latest immigrants and association with the criminals, evoke a wrong image of these islands.

After 1947, the exploitation of the forest resources and the activities of other departments were accelerated. This helped the process of migration of the people from mainland to the islands force. The decisions to rehabilitate the East Bengal refugees in the Andaman Islands, to allow Chotanagpur and south Indian labourers to settle in certain pockets of the North, Middle and South Andamans and to settle ex-servicemen of the Sikh regiment in the Great Nicobar, have helped the pace of development in the Andaman and Nicobar island.

It was in the late nineteenth century when E.H. Man (1883, 1932, 1933) and M.V. Portman (1888, 1889, 1893) published first hand accounts of these islands. After that many anthropologists visited the island and published many papers.

**Location**

From the latest information it appears that there are 348 islands of various sizes which are located in the South-eastern Bay of Bengal in the north to south direction between 14°N and 6°N latitude and between 92°E and 94°E longitude. Geographically, they can be grouped in Andaman and Nicobar islands. The 10°N channel separates the two groups. The total area of these islands is nearly 8,136 sq. kilometres Andaman Islands 6,491 sq. kilometres and Nicobar Islands 1,645 sq. kilometres. The principal islands of the Aadam an group viz. the North Andaman, the Middle Andaman, the Baratang island, the South Andaman, and Rutland Islands are separated by narrow straits. The southern most important islands in Andaman group is the Little Andaman. In the Nicobar group, three distinct assemblies of islands can be recognised, from the north to the south, these are the Car Nicobar, the Nancowry and the Great Nicobar groups.

The northern most point in the Andamans located in the
Landfall Island is 901 kilometres from the mouth of the Hooghly river, and about 190 kilometres from the Burma coast. The southern most tip of the Indian territory, known as 'Pygmalian' point is only 90 miles north of the Sumatra coast.

Vegetation

The significant feature of the Islands is luxuriant vegetation. These islands have preserved one of the richest of flora in the world. The coastline is irregular, all round and the islands are rugged with ridges and valleys. The Car Nicobar Islands are relatively more flat, suitable land is easily available for habitation.

Climate

The average rainfall is 313 cm is a big hurdle to the development. Due to heavy rainfall there is luxuriant growth of forest all over. Because of the proximity to the equator, the difference between the summer and the winter temperature is not much. The average temperature ranges between 23°C to 30°C. Consequently, due to geographical location, the vegetation and the environmental factors have so far resisted large scale migration from India and growth of population.

Population

However in the Car Nicobar Islands, there has been a steady growth of internal population. But the growth of population in the Andaman Islands has been adversely affected due to various geographical factors. In 1951, the total population of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was only 30,971. During the year 1961 it rose to 63,548. According to 1971 census the total population comes to be 1,15,133.

Towns

In the whole of the Andaman and Nicobar, Port Blair is the only town which has amenities, such as an urban market, a network of public transport and good population of about 10,000 people. Now new colonies of settlers, offices and some factories are coming up. Such places are Mayabandare in the North Andaman, Rangat and Bakuntala in the Middle
Andaman and few places around the islands and located near Port Blair. The biggest government saw-mill in Asia, the Wimco Match Factory, Andaman Plywood Factory, administrative buildings the cathedral centre and other amenities are available here.

The gradual development of Port Blair has influenced the progress in the Nicobar islands also. They learnt the techniques of agriculture from the penal settlers of Port Blair. Their population has been on the increase and it has gone up from 6,501 in 1901 to 12,000 in 1951. In the coming decades it rose from 15,563 in 1961 to 27,174 in 1971. The increase in Car Nicobar has been very high and there have been demand to settle Car Nicobarese to other islands of Nicobar islands and in Little Andaman. Consequently, a settlement of the Car-Nicobarese has come up in Little Andaman. This has created forces of ecological imbalance for the Onges.

Tribes

Consequent upon the increase of population in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, some of the aboriginal tribes are threatened with extinction. Once upon a time Andamanese were a flourishing tribes but now they have undergone a steady decline from 625 in 1901 to 23 in 1951 and only 19 in 1961. Similarly, the Onge tribe which showed a population of 672 in 1901 has been reduced to only 129 in 1961. The actual number of Jarawas, the Sentinelese and the Shompen is not known but it is believed their populations have also gone down.

The Andamanese have been re-settled in small island, strait island and all the 19 surviving individuals depend on government rations. The Andamanese present a situation of complete disintegrating community which is fast becoming extinct due to contacts with so-called forces of modern civilization.

Previously, the Jarawas who used to occupy the forest of South and Middle Andaman and shared these islands originally with the Andamanese, now occupy less portion of the interior dense forests of the South and the Middle Andaman. Owing to breach of trust at the hands of outsiders, the Jarawas have turned aggressive from contacts with the rest of the population.
Since 1968 efforts have been made to contact with Jarawas and today a small section of the Jarawas has been befriended.

The Onge live in the Little Andaman. Some Onge live near the sea-coast and have become friendly with the authorities. While others continue to live in deep forests. The Sentinelese live in the Sentinel Islands. An effort was made to see the Sentinelese but they disappeared in the forest.

The Shopmen is scattered in the forest of Great Nicobar near Camp Bell Bay. Recently a few Shompen have started visiting the Camp Bell Bay with a view to getting food, tobacco, pieces of iron, etc. They have their own language.

**Nicobarese**

These are also known as Holchu, live in organised villages in the three groups of north, central and southern island. Among the northern group falls the island of Car Nicobar where they live in 15 villages. In the central, they live in the islands of Chowra, Terrasa, Bomlpoka, Katchal, Kamote and Trinket. The southern group consists of Noncowry, Pulomilo, Kondul and Great Nicobar including the Shompen area.

It is evident that the Andaman and Nicobar islands do not have one but many cultures. First, there are tribal culture of the Negrito and the Mongolid ethnic group. Secondly, there is the composite culture of the penal settlers who have now joined together in marriage ties and give birth to a new culture. Thirdly, the Burmese migrants have added new dimensions to the culture.

Ranchi labourers have also played a vital role in the development of the islands. The East Bengal refugees have also established a new culture in these islands. They are producing different types of vegetables in the Nil islands on a large scale. Rice production has also gone up due to Bengali refugees.

For the running of smooth administration there is need for a daily air service as well as more frequent ship service. Also the Department of Tourism can make these islands attractive to the tourists. The inter-island service is very unsatisfactory. Apart from this, the islands need a detailed survey of their industrial potential and areas of economic development. Here
large scale timber industry, fishing and cottage industries can be developed. The huge quantities of conches and beautiful shells are brought to Calcutta and further efforts by the administration would be necessary to encourage such cottage industries in the island so that the local people are able to earn better prices for their goods.

Tourists’ Islands

No doubt, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a tourists’ paradise. Here we have blending of hills and the deep blue sea. The hills are covered with lush green vegetation. Harriet Hill is the highest about 1200 ft. around South Andaman. The scenery all along is magnificent with thick mangrove forests and tall gurjan trees in the background. It is difficult to find an area really denuded of vegetation and there is real tropical profusion and abundance. There are coastal areas in the islands, but the sea does not envelop them all, covering everything as it does in these islands. The sea is both forbidding and intimate and one has to live in the islands to understand it. This knowledge is denied to many people who know very little of its changing phases and moods, of its depth and fury, of the freedom of vast open space, stretching up to the horizon, of the grandeur of its sunrise and its sunset and the frightening beauty of its star-studded dark nights across which the milky way trails its path.

Pigs and chitals are in abundance. Deer abound in North and Middle Andamans to an extent that no restrictions have been placed on their shooting. The Andamans represent a deer hunter’s paradise.

It is also a good place of study for the anthropologist. The islands are inhabited by the original inhabitants, i.e., Andamanese, Jarawas, Onges, Sentinelese and Shompens. But recently refugees from East Pakistan have been settled here.

Several guest houses and tourist homes prove sizeable accommodation. There are two guest houses with 17 beds, one tourist home with 24 beds and one circuit house at Port Blair, besides guest-houses at Ranghat, Mayabunder and Car Nicobar.
These islands could be made into a veritable heaven for those who want to escape the din and noise, the hustle and bustle of the crowded cities of the modern world. In beauty and natural scenery it would be difficult to find any other place in the world to surpass these lush green islands, surrounded by deep blue sea. It is among the most beautiful regions of India.

Nation's pride—miniature India

Apart from tribal inhabitants, there are yet another group of settlers in these islands. They are Kains from Burma, erstwhile east Pakistan refugees, labourers from Ranchi and lately retired persons from the Indian Army.

The language of communication is a simple form of Hindi. Inter-communal marriages are common. They all observe their festivals jointly and share the traditions and heritage of India.

In spite of great diversity in languages the cultural unity prevails, and this has been particularly due to the same type of geographical environment that the islands have to encounter. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands the distance from mainland has not stood in the way of the formation of cultural unity with India.
CHAPTER 8

LIFE STYLE—THE BHUINYAS (Orissa)

Among the more populous tribes of Orissa is that of Bhuinyas. It is among the most reasonable, accommodating and adjusting tribes of the country.

Culturally and physically all tribes of Orissa have a marked affinity. All are simple, innocent and generally untouched by modern civilization.

Male apparel is limited to loin cloth and a tiny piece of cloth covering the head. Almost all men carry an axe and use the bow and arrow for hunting. Women wrap themselves in a sari-like garment, from waist to knee, which also cover their breasts. Their hair, kept long and well oiled, is usually made into a bun. These women are very fond of ornaments, mostly of bronze and beads.

A magnificent leisureliness characterises their attitude to life. The word urgency is unknown to their truant hearts and saving is alien to their nature.

Dating among youth is an accepted social phenomenon. Boys and girls mix freely and sex is not frowned upon. Most youngsters have had sex by the time they reach puberty. Cheap ‘Gillet’ rings are an indication of the number of affairs one has had.

Marriages, however, are performed only after obtaining the consent of the couple. Prior to marriage the bride-to-be shifts
to her fiancé's hut for a week or so. After this ritual, the marriage is performed with all pomp and show.

Marriage by elopement is not uncommon. In the arranged marriages gifts are exchanged and bride-money paid in the form of utensils, rice, goats, oxen and liquor to the girl's family. Monogamy is the rule though instances of polygamy do occur.

Divorce is common. Girls can leave their husbands whenever they so desire, without fear of social opprobrium or scandal; children, if any are the responsibility of the husband. Divorces are decided by the local councils and recourse to a law court is unheard of. However, the bride money increases with each subsequent marriage.

Dancing to the sound of flutes and drums is extremely popular. Young couples later retire discreetly into the surrounding jungles and fields to make love.

The Bhuinys worship the sword. Every tribal village has its own god and goddess—Devata and Devi which are installed in the abode of the Nayak—the secular headman. The religious headman is called Dehuri or Kolu. Other villagers are just Parja. The Nayak is the guide. He represents the village in the dealings with outsiders. He also acts as a judge for the village pachayat. The Dehuri performs Puja and takes an active part in socio-political affairs.

The most conspicuous place in the village is the Mandaghar the bachelor's dormitory. Some villages have Dangriabasa—the girl's dormitory—as well. Unmarried girls share Mandaghar in villages where Dangriabasa do not exist. Some boys and girls sleep in the huts of the lone widows. The open space in front of the Mandaghar or Dangriabasa is used for holding panchayat meeting or a dance.

The Paudi Bhuinys have stubbornly stuck to shifting cultivation. They clear the hill slopes and deep combustible matter at the base of the sal trees and put fire to it. This process kills the trees in the patch of land under shifting cultivation. The dead trees serve as been-stalk.

The hill Bhuinys sow biri, koltha, jutang, castor-seeds and cotton and plant pumpkins, bottle gourd, brinjals, black-gram and sweet potatoes. On alternate years they grow paddy. They
consume their produce and purchase salt and cloth from the local market. Liquor distilled from Mohua flower, rice and date-palm is their favourite drink.

They are greatly exploited by the local baniyas, who lend them money on such high rates of interest that the Bhuiyas soon become bonded labour. Generally they are not left with a thing to live upon within a fortnight of the harvest. Baniya is the worst abuse they can give anyone.

Bhuiyas are at various levels of social, cultural and economic development. The prevalence of poverty and inequality, virtually unchanged over the years, can be seen most clearly in the conditions of life of these tribals. The social disabilities are largely connected with their economic status, and lack of bargaining power marks their role as landless agricultural workers. Therefore, they deserve special care and attention.

Poverty and ignorance are the hallmarks of tribal life. The primitives manage a precarious living from agriculture. The tribals remain, as Verrier Elwin underlined, “even more distant, more unreal than any other from the educated population of India.”
CHAPTER 9
TRIBAL RIGHTS AND CONFLICTS

SPEAKING BROADLY it can be said that there are two polar orientations towards tribal development in India. The first can be called pragmatic and the second integral.

The first raises no ideological question and tries to tackle the tribal problem within the confines of a bureaucratic administrative framework. The second bases itself on ideological affirmation, presumes that the pragmatic approach is the end-result of a hidden power drive.

Looked at more closely, however, the real situation presents itself in a much more untidy guise than these two polar orientations would have us believe. This become manifest when one looks at the tribals in India and the manner in which they have been treated from a historical angle.

When the Aryans first entered India and found that the aboriginal populations were largely dark-skinned and more backward than themselves, they used the contemptuous term ‘Dasyus’ for them. But men like Risley, Grierson, Russell, Thurston, Enthoven and many others, despite their colonial interest, laid the foundations of tribal and linguistic studies in their vast compilations.

It is true that in the post-Independent phase India has become more conscious of her responsibilities, towards the underprivileged segments of the country, that funds and personnel have been increasingly allotted to the task of tribal
uplift, and that some measure of progress, social, economic and even political, has occurred among the tribal population of India.

On the other hand the London anthropologist and Indologist, Professor C. Fuerer-Heimendorf, has listed in a recent book a number of disadvantages from which the tribals have begun to suffer and to which, it seems, the authorities have been rather indifferent. Perhaps this is one reason why there is much talk these days of integrated tribal development projects.

More specifically, one notes that in Madhya Pradesh a special budget document on the tribal sub-plans was prepared to correspond with the needs of the tribal areas, that these areas were divided into three zones in accordance with the tribal concentration of population and that responsibility and accountability were located in each development department in order to prevent the diversion of funds from the tribal to the non-tribal areas.

Furthermore, agriculture development was given the highest priority and attention was directed to the restoration and preservation of the tribal rights in land, to make shifting cultivation more scientific, and to the improvement of other agricultural practices. So far as shifting cultivation was concerned, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes had suggested a multi-disciplinary approach to it; but the state government, it appears, dragged its feet in the implementation of this idea, and so lost the opportunity of bringing much land under permanent cultivation.

Apart from efforts at developing animal husbandry, at improving the cooperative movement, at expanding educational, medical and health facilities, at setting up cottage and village industries and the like in the plans, perhaps the most vital efforts were those aimed at improvements in the personnel and administrative set up. Jawaharlal Nehru's directive, given long ago, that the tribals themselves should be trained to take up the work of tribal uplift still remains, by and large, to be fulfilled in all the tribal areas of the country.

Granting that funds will continue to be allocated for tribal development in India in a fairly generous measure, the tribal
problem then becomes basically one of injecting in the non-tribal personnel, the Gandhian spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice in the first instance; and in the second, of speeding up the implementation of Nehru's directive without these two desiderata, neither the pragmatic nor the integral approach will be of much avail.

The Tribal Welfare Committee recommended the following classification of the existing tribes of India:

1. Tribal Communities or those who are still confined to the original forest habitats and follow the old pattern of life.

2. Semi-Tribal Communities or those who have more or less settled down in rural areas and have taken to agriculture and allied occupations.

3. Acculturated Tribal Communities or those who have migrated to urban or semi-urban areas and are engaged in modern industries and vocations and have adopted modern cultural traits and

4. Totally Assimilated Tribals in the Indian population.

*Distribution*: The chief home of the tribes is in the barren and sparsely populated tracts of hills and jungles, corresponding in extent fairly closely to east Satapurias but encroaching eastwards and westwards along the Vindhyan range through the South of Madhya Pradesh Plateau on the eastern extremity as Gujarat. The only other tract where they are numerous are the outlying parts of Greater Assam range and the hilly country that divides Assam from Burma. The geographical distribution of aboriginals in India is reported as falling into three main regions in which they are concentrated:

Firstly, the tribal people are distributed all over the sub-Himalayan region and the mountain valleys on the North-east India which merge imperceptibly with those of Burma in the south-east, i.e. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram.

Secondly, the other major groups of the aboriginal tribes occupy the mountain belt between Narbada and the Godavari—the central barrier that divides the North from the
Peninsular India has provided a shelter for these tribes from very ancient times. This region extend to the Santhal Pargana in the east, Hyderabad in the South and Rajasthan-Gujarat with a strong Bhil population in the west or north-west.

Thirdly, the third group is found chiefly concentrated in the southern most parts, of the western Ghats stretching from Vyndhyas to Cape Comorin, i.e. South of the Krishna river below latitude 16° north. From the fact that they occupy the marginal areas and also from the records in the oldest Tamil literature of the Sangam period, they appear to be one of the most ancient and primitive inhabitants now living in India having been pushed by the intrusion of more advanced people into their present habitats, where safety and shelter were found against increasing pressure.

In addition to these three major zones, there are small groups in some parts of the country or within the Indian political boundaries. Of these the Andamanese and the Nicobarese who live in the Islands bearing their names, though separated from the mainland, are ethnically connected with them.

It has been observed that the aboriginal population has been decreasing rapidly. It may be pointed out in this connection that while the aboriginal population is under ordinary circumstances exceedingly prolific, the majority of them inhabit those parts of the country which are exposed chiefly to the ravages of malaria.

Secondly, there has been a real absorption of the tribes into Hinduism in the North-east plains and North-Cachar Hills.

Thirdly, the spread of Christianity among the tribes in Lushai, Khasi and Jainta hills as well as in the Madhya Pradesh and Travancore-Cochin has also helped in reducing their strength.

Fourthly, through acculturation—which is the process of change due to the contact with other people and it involves acceptance and adoption—when a tribe comes into close contact with civilization it may accept some of the traits of its neighbours so that their original traits gradually disappear and the tribal dialects are being replaced by Aryan languages and
the tribal beliefs are giving way to the direct onslaught of the inhabitants of the plains.

It would not be inappropriate to deal here in brief with the factors which have made the contact of tribes with their neighbours easy. This contact may result from the following factors:

Existence of the mines and minerals in tribal areas in various parts of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and North-eastern India—coal bearing districts and iron ore mines encourage immigration of alien people, part of which must settle down and live in their new homes.

Emigration of tribal labour to mines and factories situated far away and to the distant plantations in Assam and West Bengal, which have attracted a considerable amount of contractual labour, the main cause of such immigration being land alienation or expropriation of the aboriginal peasant proprietorship.

The opening up of the tribal areas by a net-work of communications, railways and roadways has reduced the shyness of the tribal people with astonishing quickness and many landless families have settled down along the roads, while others make their living by catering to alien people domiciled in their midst.

The administrative officers, personnel of the Public Health Services, the forest officials and their agents, contractors, traders, merchants, touts, litigants, lawyers, the police and the Patwari's or revenue agents and others whose control with the tribal people has been effective enough in producing discomforts and disintegration of the indigenous culture.

Amongst the new status symbols of the Gond adivasis are gods such as Krishna and Ganapati, which have replaced adivasi deities and animistic tribals. Country liquor such as mosambi and naragni has replaced the gentler, home brewed mahu. The traditional langoty, now looked upon as a dress of the country yokel, is being replaced by the more expensive pant and shirt.

The incidence of "dowry marriages" amongst the fast developing Gonds tribals, one of the three major tribal groups in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, is increasing. The
custom was once alien to the Gonds but is now seen as a status symbol by educated adivasis who are trying to "keep up" with their non-tribal counterparts. The Gonds, like many other tribes of the Central India adivasi belt are torn by conflicting values. Mr. N.B. Naitam, regional Manager, Tribal Development Corporation of Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, a Gond tribal himself, is aware of the identity crisis of his people. He makes it clear that for them, adopting a lifestyle is part of the struggle for economic development and the struggle to compete with the rest of society.

The plus points in Naitam’s life today are that he has a fridge, a television set and a radio at home and he is able to afford 'convent' education for his son. The minus points are that his son cannot speak the Gond dialect, and cannot live for even one day in their ancestral village, so used is he to urban comforts. Naitam himself cannot recall the traditional dress of his people, which he said is now only seen in pictures.

There is reason to believe that lopsided government policies are responsible for destroying the basis of adivasi culture. While on the one hand the government mouths slogans about preserving adivasi culture and encouraging development in tune with the adivasis’ needs, in reality it is forcing them into the mainstream of Indian life at the cost of their distinct identity and culture.

In the Chandrapur area of Maharashtra, for example, three tribes—Bhil, Mahadev Kohli and Gond. Their problems according to Naitam, are largely economic, social and educational. Only 20 percent own between one and a half to five acres of land, and they cannot grow enough food to sustain themselves throughout the year. The only alternative occupation is building roads under the employment Guarantee Scheme.

In the past Chandrapur area of Maharashtra was densely forested. Living on the products of the forests to which they had free access, the adivasis ate according to their needs, maintaining harmony with the environment and ensuring its replenishment. With the enforcement of new forest laws and restriction on their entry into the forest, the basis of the
adivasis survival has been shaken. This has encouraged the illicit felling of the trees though a major share of forest denudation is caused by timber merchants and the illegal activities of forest officials. Some adivasis who still have agricultural land, have become increasingly indebted to money lenders, others have lost their land to money lenders. The few acres they owned could not sustain their increasing numbers. Although the land Restoration Act recently enacted by the Maharashtra government has sought to restore the tenancy rights of the adivasis. They have not yet found freedom from bondage. The land is in the tribal's name, but money lenders continue to take a share of the harvest.

Despite the many provisions for scheduled tribes in government services, only a handful of adivasis are educated enough to take advantage of them. Only 11 per cent of Maharashtra’s adivasis are literate. In Chandrapur, only two percent are literate says, A.V. Bodhankar, retired Joint Director, Social Welfare, Maharashtra, who had worked as an administrator in adivasi areas. There are at least half a dozen graduates in most adivasi groups in Maharashtra, but they are now mostly clerks—their services are not being utilised for their community. Instead, uninterested officers have been sent to these tribal areas.

Recalling the proposal to write primary school textbooks in the adivasi dialects, Bodhankar says that this could have been used as a tool to strengthen adivasi culture. To this day, these textbooks are being mulled over by the scholars. Of the 200 primary schools for tribals in Maharashtra, 48 are run by the Tribal Development Corporation. Here an attempt has been made to employ trained local adivasi teachers who speak the dialects. In the other schools, non-adivasi teachers continue to teach in Marathi.

The Corporation's only other major activity is providing interest free loans for buying sewing machines or setting up repair workshops. These activities do not strengthen traditional tribal occupations. Mr. Bodhankar reveals that 30 percent of the funds allocated for adivasis are being used by fraudulent groups claiming to be tribals. For example, a small Community of Thakkars in Maharashtra have remained below
the poverty line, while Thakkars from Rajasthan and UP have taken advantage of resources meant for them.

Similarly Lal Shan Shah, a raja of the Gond tribe and former independent M.P., spoke of the threat posed by the gigantic inchampalli and Bhopalapatnam dam projects in Madhya Pradesh, which will threaten the survival of Thousands of adivasis. Not only are the projects going to benefit Andhra Pradesh more than M.P., they are also going to displace Thousands of adivasis and destroy the only surviving natural teak forest in the world.

The tribals are deeply disturbed by the government’s continuing policy of destroying natural forests and replacing them with monoculture teak plantations of commercial value. This has destroyed the precious biosphere reserves of the country, not to mention the many rare jungle plants that hold medicinal value. “If forests are destroyed for the dams, we will die, our culture will die. Our gods are in these trees. The mahua tree flowers not only provide our liquor but also our food. These forests are breeding ground of wild bison. Where will they all go? The Madiya and other tribes of Madhya Pradesh have not yet tasted the tea and sugar nor they have seen a train.

No doubt adivasi culture is intrinsically linked to the economic, social and environmental aspects of adivasi life. There is a clear evidence of changing trends in adivasi art forms. Same have retained the purity of the original, mainly because of their isolated existence, but the influence of urban culture was evident in the dress, dance and social comments of many others. The hill Madiyas for example, reacted with spontaneous pleasure when they came to the city stage, gasping at the sight of the vast audience and the bright lights. These slow moving rhythmic dance and song, which conjured up images of the wind in the forest and the call of birds, would, however, can prove more enchanting in their village setting, rather than on a stage. The adivasi’s performances can reveal their keen observation of nature. The creeping lizard, the lumbering walk of the elephant, the loping stride of deer and the bird pecking at grain can be marvellously mimicked by them.

As the adivasis move into the 21st century, their
message, relayed through their art form, is clear. They do not
want computers. They want the forest, the wild animals and
birds that have inspired them and sustained them through cen-
turies. Despite their surface urbanisation, every song, dance
and other art form of the adivasis eloquently speaks of the
circle of life and harmony therein.

Though the government makes statements about preserving
adivasi culture, the very basis of the adivasis' existence is being
shaken. They being torn by alien and conflicting values. But
their songs and dances show that they don't want the harmoni-
ous circle of life disturbed.

It is not yet too late to save the tribes from the fate which
an over-hasty, and unregulated process of uplift and civiliza-
tion has brought upon peoples in other parts of India. Most
of the tribes still live as far as possible on forest produce and
the sports of the chase. But with ever-increasing restrictions
on the use of the forest and the gradual deforestation of the
country, these forest tribes are slowly but surely dying out.
partly from famine and partly from loss of interest in life.

This decline is accelerated in another way by the opening
up of communications. Many new diseases are imported
against which no immunity has been evolved, since they did
not form part of the environment to which the tribe is adapted
and the result is a staggering mortality from which there may
be no recovery. The importation of venereal disease into the
tribal districts of the country by outsiders has resulted in a
disastrous infection of the Gond in that area.

In an admirable article, Mr. J.P. Mills discusses the evil
effects of a narrow Christian Missionary policy. He points
out how the American Baptist Mission in Assam has sup-
pressed all the ceremonies of the Naga such as the great "feasts
of merit" and all sacrificial feasts.

Unfortunately, the Indian aboriginal is all too ready to
respond to the slightest hint that he should abandon his old
culture and interests.

The undermining of old-established authority, of tribal and
customs tends on the one hand, completely to demoralize
the natives and to make them unamenable to any law or rule,
while on the other hand, by destroying the whole fabric of
Tribal Rights And Conflicts

tribal life, it deprives them of many of their most cherished diversions, ways of enjoying life, and social pleasures. The rapid dying out of native races is due more to wanton interference with their pleasures and normal occupations, to the marring of their joy of life as they conceive it, than to any other cause.

The life has gone from many villages. Due to the influence of Hindu reformers child-marriages have started, untouchables are despised, in some villages the women have lost much of their freedom. In the year 1939, J.H. Hutton suggested that to save the fascinating tribes in India, the first necessity is the establishment of a sort of National Park in each tribal district of India. These areas would enclose a wild and largely inaccessible part of the country that might have been created for the very purpose. This area should be under the direct control of a tribal commissioner. I see no reason why the tribal areas should be excluded or partially excluded as they are at present.

Inside the area, the administration should be so adjusted as to allow the tribesmen to live their lives with the utmost possible happiness and freedom. Courts and lawyers could be largely superseded and wide powers given to old tribal panchayats. The headmen should be leaders of the tribe, not agents of Government. Non-aboriginals should be required to have licences to visit them. No missionaries of any religion should be permitted to break up tribal life.

Many people in India suffer from the curious belief that the anthropologist wishes to keep primitive people "as they were" as materials of his research. But this is not true, the scientist is not interested in any particular grade of civilization. The anthropologist who has come to know and love the people he has studied will naturally desire the best for them.

What the tribe needs above all else is the restoration of the freedom of the forest. The Game Act has pressed heavily upon the tribe and has served still further to devitalize tribal life. It is a shame and a disgrace that a tribe that has lived for millennia by hunting should now have to witness the spectacle of any town people who can afford a licence coming into its country and slaughtering its animals for pleasure, while
they who depend on their bows and arrows for food should have to hide them in their huts.

It would be a very good thing if the tribe were at least allowed an annual hunt. It would have a revivifying effect on tribal life. The killing of hares should be permitted, and it should not be illegal to carry bows and arrows. Fishing should be freely permitted throughout the tribal areas. At present, subordinate officials get many a good meal by confiscating the tribe's catch. The dictatorship of these subordinate officials must come to an end.

This gloomy future could be averted by the creation of the National Park, or at least by the handing over to the tribal part of the great tracts of forest that can never be exploited commercially. They should be allowed great freedom within their borders, provided that they observe the following conditions:

1. Trees should only be cut in mixed forest or bamboo forest, more or less clear of sal.
2. It should be cut only on hill-tops and the middle and upper slopes of hills, and a protective belt should always be kept between the forest zone and shifting cultivation area line.
3. Each hill-slope should be laid out in small alternated strips, leaving untouched jungle in between.
4. Shifting cultivation should not be cut on ridges enclosing the head waters of important streams.
5. A rotation of ten years should be observed.
6. No jungle should be used either more or less than two years at a time.
7. The trees should be cut flush with the ground, and with a clean, not jagged, section.
8. The stools should be kept clear of combustible matter when the lees are fined.
9. A number of trees may be stripped of their branches, but a tuft of green should be left at the top of the tree.
10. All the end of third year, every tribal should undertake to plant a number of trees of special selected varieties in the jungle before he leaves it.
At least these remarkable tribal people deserves more kindness and consideration than they have hitherto received. The grim example of the fate of the Australian aboriginal is before us. The findings of scientific anthropology should save India from repeating the mistakes of other nations.
Appendices
APPENDIX I

PLIGHT OF THE BHILS

THE BARE, lunar-like countryside around Jhabua in a Madhya Pradesh Village, is striking. So is the highway dotted with little Bhil children demanding cigarettes in sign language—the aboriginal’s confused response to the onslaught of modernisation. The thin veneer of pebbled soil cover here is obviously the result of an undulating landscape with a high run-off rate of rainfall and failure of afforestation efforts over the years. The loss of this resource base, the forest. Stripped of most of its green cover, the land stopped supporting its people long ago, “so that ever after a good harvest,” Bhuria, the M.P. says, “they get to eat for only three or four months in the year, and each year between 60,000 and lakh of people leave the district to work contract labourers elsewhere.” Adds a non-tribal resident of Jhabua town. “The official claim is that we have 1.6 lakh hectares of forest land but in reality only 10,000 hectares remain.”

It is the tribal who is directly hit by this denudation, and he knows it. At a congregation of Sarpanchs, much bitterness and exasperation surfaced: Ratan Singh, Sarpanch of Kali said “we used to collect and sell gum from dhavra and karais trees, but this has stopped as the trees have all gone.” Said Pahar Singh, a Chief of Jhiri, “we once obtained beedi leaves from the timru tree, made musical instruments from the
bark of the mango, and got honey, chronji, herbs and even game for meat from the forest, but none of this is left now.” Finished Melto of Thanla Terka: “Tiles can no longer be baked for want of wood, ploughs and roofbeams are scarce; the broom and basket trades are hit. We don’t even burn a man’s house along with his corpse, as tradition demands, for want of wood.”

Bhuria says that the pace of deforestation has been so fierce that in five years the water table has fallen by 200 to 250 feet, “and I fear that if it falls another 100 or 200 feet, our numerous handpumps will become useless.” Ironically, it is the tribal himself—the chief victim of the ecological carnage—who actually chops the trees down, either for his personal use or for labour wages from the illicit feller. According to knowledgeable Jhabua residents, though the licenses of all lumber contractors were cancelled over three years ago, they maintain two sets of account books: they rightly claim,” says a citizen sarcastically, “that their mills are slicing wood from outside Jhabua. What they do not reveal is that for every truckload received from outside, they send out many truckloads of local wood to their cronies in Gujarat and elsewhere.”

The administration, on its part has ambitious plans to put 18,000 hectares of land under fast growing, income generating trees, 50 percent of which will be cash crops, like bamboo, 10 percent will be fodder trees and 40 percent fuelwood trees and over 60 lakh seedlings are already being distributed. They are seedlings of trees which no tribal will ever destroy at any cost, and they include the mahua (whose seed, flower and wood provide edible oil, fuel, food and liquor), the mango (which can fetch Rs. 700 per season), bamboo and others. Tragically however, the trees that affect the women-folk are the ones usually lopped: “Everyday,” says Kalma, a weary old matron from Choti Juwari, “I walk further and further for wood to burn. There is less and less time and energy for other chores now.”

The timber traffic, says a permanent resident of Jhabua, is blessed by state level politicians, is conducted with the help of contract men-tribals in different villages-who persuade fellow—villagers to cut and deliver the wood. Timber then travels along.
interior roads much of the time, whilst on the main highway fraudulent transit passes are displayed. “Crossing the lumber lobby,” reveals a dairy official, “can be dangerous. Just few months ago, an honest forest official, Salia, was commonly believed to have been murdered, though the case was dismissed as a suicide. And last year a forest officer in Harinagar, was killed and strung up on a tree. All these factors have played an inglorious role in the denudation saga.

The “cattle protection trenches” seen all over the district are no proof against the ruminants, as tribal live stock is often permitted to graze on reserved forest land through political pressure and when tribal lop green branches (they are allowed to collect only dried ones for domestic needs) and get caught, they can always appeal to an MLA in return for a vote. The relative prosperity of the tribal MLAs (Jhabua is a reserved constituency) manifests itself in the prevalence of polygamy, with most of them maintaining very large families.

Although there is no people’s movement, no influential voluntary organisation to work in tandem with the government district officials are keen to encourage fledgling groups of tribal youngsters who have formed Van Vikas Samitis in their villages in the hope that they can instil a feeling of possessiveness amongst the tribal about their trees. Enacting street plays is propaganda play used by such groups, who could hopefully be used to channelise the government’s forestry programmes in their areas. Whether these youngsters will be able to involve women in their efforts, however, is a question that come to mind.

However, to counterpoint pessimism, there is the Bhils’ record for rejecting other species of exploiters. The money lender, for instance, is no longer a local god the way he once was. In fact, ever since Jhabua’s cooperative bank started accepting tribal jewellery as collateral against loans, some six years ago, the Bhils have pledged as much as Rs. 30 lakh of jewellery with it. “The Bhils,” says Vesta Rawat, president of a sub-divisional fruit mandi, “are no longer gullible by non-tribal traders. They knew their rights and sell their fruit only at good prices.”
Nevertheless, helping tribals is difficult because of their live-for-today philosophy. When chickens, coops and chicken-feed were distributed to them in the past, the birds were sold off at the next weekly market for immediate gain and a similar fate awaited cattle and forestry schemes. "What also happened," Says District Collector "was that our standard models for development did not always suit their realities. For instance, modernisation once meant building roads, bridges and buildings, the logic being that the benefits would trickle down to the tribal too. But this did not happen." The new thinking he asserts, is to leave the tribal and his suboptimal agriculture at the care of planning to restore his symbiotic relationship with nature and increase his income.

But the dilemma remains. How does one persuade the tribal to use the schemes and assets the government creates for him? In Jhabua communication is specially difficult because Bhils live in scattered settlements and do not believe in large joint families. They do, however meet unfailingly at their weekly markets (haats) for shopping, trading and entertainment purposes. The haat is thus a powerful nodal institution amongst the Bhils.

It is at haats that the score of government units in tents have been set up. Manned by both revenue and development officials, they offer single window help to tribal petitioners, who are otherwise put off by compartmentalisation within the government. Since officials, including functionaries like parwaris all sit together in the tents the chances of corruption are minimised and a system of accountability also exists, as people who are unable to get their problems solved at one haat are given acknowledgement and can be attended to at the next haat.

In Jhabua, however, there exists another deterrent to development that is a crime rate that is said to be the highest in Asia. According to a surgeon in the hospital in Alirajpur (the worst-affected tehsil) he performs between one and five autopsies on bow and arrow deaths per day, depending on whether it is the toddy season or not. Adds a Joint Director of health, "when I was there, I learnt to improve my surgery technique in arrow cases, through constant practice." The
crime is neither motivated by greed nor by logic. For instance in one case a man, irritated about his wife lagging behind on the road shoots her dead. In another a friend tells his companion that his weapon looks blunt, and the latter kills him with the weapon to prove him wrong. In a third case, a marksman, annoyed that some one has come and stood in the line of his fire, shoots him. Such instances can be multiplied.

The quality tend to readily confess to the first available persons in authority, such as doctor baba or the police, but the rate of convictions in court is extremely low, as the tribal invariably have out-of-court settlements with one another and prosecution witnesses turn hostile.

The crime rate is expected to decrease with the gradual increase of job opportunities. Among other things, a 200 hectare industrial estate is coming up in Jhabua. But meanwhile, the rare genius of Bhil tribal art—which depended on vegetable and mud dyes procured from the forests—is slowly fading into oblivion and these days, Bhil artists are turning increasingly to artificial paints. Equally alarming is the steady eclipse of the use of valuable medicinal herbs, which was once the forte of the Badwa or priest.

The traditional artists and creators of artefacts have had to join the ranks of the dispossessed, as every year the trees diminish, and the sterile earth progressively fails to produce even the one maize crop typical of the area. Hence unless the ecological disaster that has overtaken the Bhils is somehow reversed all efforts will remain an essential cosmetic exercise.

Effect of modern regulations on Marriage

Although marriage among the Bhils remain essentially tradition bound, certain institutions, such as bride price have made concessions to modernity. For instance, whenever a couple elopes during the Bhagoria festival (literally, the running away festival), the bride’s father, these days, invariably files a kidnapping complaint with the police. The reason: he wants to locate his son-in-law to ensure that the latter pays his bride price faithfully. No sooner, does the police locate the young man than an amicable settlement is worked out and the police case falls through.
The Bhagoria ritual itself has undergone changes. Whereas traditionally a man simply made off with the woman of his choice, now the woman's consent is more and more being required. "My wife and I" says Mansingh Kalia, a young Bhil bridegroom who works as a chowkidar at the Jhabua Circuit House, "had been meeting at a worksite for sometime and had decided to marry. We then waited for the Bhagoria festival. When she arrived at the Bhagoria venue, we spent the day in merry-making—playing a drum, eating paan and generally enjoying each other's company. We then ran off to the forest for the night and the next day visited a friend's house, where her parents came and located us."

Nowadays, the ceiling of the bride price for a good-looking Bhil maiden is Rs. 8000 and the bottom acceptable price is Rs. 2,500. Kalia says that of the Rs. 5000, demanded of him, he has paid Rs. 4,300 plus the mandatory Rs. 100 to the village headman (tadvi) and Rs. 100 to the bride's maternal uncle; I will pay the rest in easy instalments."

There are three very interesting social laws prevalent in the Bhil community. One is that in case the bride dies before the bride price has been paid in full, the girl's people will not permit the removal of her body from the marital home until it is paid. Secondly, if the girl becomes pregnant before the official Bhagoria ceremony, no social stigma attaches to her. She is not discarded and the bride price is paid as always. Thirdly, a bride's parents tend to spend the bride price they receive on jewellery which they then present to their daughter.

Divorce can be remarkably free of rancour. If a man loses his wife's affections to another, the second man must reimburse the first one for the exact amount of bride price the latter had once paid for the woman. Polygamy, however, continues amongst the affluent, who these days tend to consist largely of politicians.
CHHATTISGARH is a tribal and Harijan dominated (nearly 45 percent of the population) area of Madhya Pradesh and is largely forested. Nearly half the villages do not have primary schools, 97 percent have no health centres, 70 percent have no metalled roads and 14 percent lack even unmetalled roads.

Poverty is deep rooted and modern agricultural techniques have not yet made a dent. While Madhya Pradesh has a tractor for every 810 hectares of cultivable land on an average, Chhattisgarh has one for every 1560 hectares. All the area has only 2408 tractors and 133 rahats according to 1986 agriculture survey. Illicit banks run by money lenders at weekly village haats still suck the blood of poor villagers, extracting exorbitant interest of 300-500 percent. There have been instances of money lender's musclemen beating borrowers to death. A decade ago, in Saraipahi—Basana area also, the business of some 2700 money lenders was stopped and 143 bank managers were put behind bars. A respite for a year or two and the banks have been thriving again.

Side by side with education, the only measure which could have been destroyed the strong belief in witchcraft is the introduction of modern medical treatment. Curse for diseases and preventive measures to check outbreak of epidemics are part of the answer. At present the villages by and large have no doctors.
Magic grew out of such rituals and so did magicians who began to claim supernatural powers. The tribals peopled their world with gods and deities, they worshipped forms of the mother goddess Shakti and of Shiva. And they stood in awe of their medicinemen and witch doctor who interceded with the spirits and gods on their behalf.

Centuries ago, in these distant forest areas, primitive tribals faced with the harshness of nature began to worship natural elements and to propitiate them with various rituals.

Initially magic was used for healing the sick and bringing blessings upon the people. But with growing material interests, inter-personal and inter-family anxieties and tensions between individuals, magic also began to be used for causing harm to enemies.

"The Baiga is manipulated by villagers to take revenge on enemies," said a police inspector. In nearly every case of punishment one can find deep rooted enmity between the complainant and the accused. Each family keeps suspecting that women of an enemy family might cast an evil eye on it any moment. When a person falls sick the Baiga forces the patient to remember who had cast an evil spirit on him. The patient reveals the name of the suspect. It is significant that practitioners of black magic are always said to be women—the Baigas are always male.

In a classic case in Bade Pinjori village of Bastar district the village Baiga Baidyanath was slapped by the village head Bimdo Manijhi. Later when the Manjhi family went to attend a marriage ceremony in a neighbouring village, Baidyanath allegedly sacrificed some gods and waited for their return. Manjhi's young daughter in-law Amli, who left the wedding early and walked home alone, died mysteriously on the way. An exceptionally beautiful woman, Amli was a highly-rated singer in the area. Over 3000 people from Bade Pinjori and surrounding villages are said to have attended her funeral. Later Bimdo allegedly got Baidyanath killed in an isolated area "through black magic."

In another similar incident enmity between former sarpanch Ram Asre and present sarpanch Sohan Lal of Goji village in Raipur district led to the humiliation of Ram Asres’
mother, Bahura Bai. The 20 year old daughter of a close friend of Sohan Lal. Meena, was suffering from paralysis for some time. As there was no hope of her getting cured, the village Baiga one day named Bahura Bai and two other old village women, Tulsi Bai and Dumala Bai, responsible for Muna’s condition.

Sohan Lal mobilised the entire village, held a meeting and got the three women produced before it. As the punishment was announced the villagers stripped them naked made them stand on their knees on stone chips for half an hour and beat them up. "Ram Asre is a dirty man" said a bitter Sohan Lal, many times he had threatened to humiliate me in public”.

Literacy, at a low pace, has not warded off superstition. On the other hand people from Bihar, Bengal, U.P., Punjab and Rajasthan who staff government and educational institution and run business here are gradually affected by belief in witchcraft. None of the 56 urban centres of Chhattisgarh is immune to such inhuman incidents. One rarely finds an educated man here who does not believe in magic. Every week, every city or urban police station receives complaints of superstitious harassment.

On January 11, 1986, another incident in Hincha village under Mahasamund tehsil 40 year old Fekon Bai, mother of three children, was brought to a similar village meeting. She was held responsible for casting evil spirit at another village meeting. She was held responsible for casting evil spirit on another village woman and sentenced to death. The villagers dragged her under a peepal tree, smeared chilli powder in the eyes, flogged and beat her with sticks till she died.

Not only illiterate villagers, but even educated persons participate in these village meetings. They share the same belief in witchcraft and magic. The word of Baiga in these meetings carries greater authority than a normal panchayat judgement.

“To outsiders, this (Chhattisgarh) is known as the land of witches and the evil reputation has persisted till now," wrote a British bureaucrat, Hewitt, in 1809 in his report on the area. Even 178 years after Hewitt’s observation and 40 years after independence, the villager’s outlook has not changed. Belief in
evil spirits and black (harmful) and white (beneficial) magic persists.

Villagers still attribute illness, accidents, misfortune, failure of crops, sudden death and calamities to black magic. The best cure for these, they believe is to detect the black magician and eliminate her influence with counter white magic. Witchcraft is a global, phenomenon in primitive and rural societies. The villagers face a host of miseries and distresses and rational solutions are few. If amenities like health services had been sufficient, superstition would have given way to rationality.

HUMAN ASPECTS OF BASTAR TRIBES

The development debate of the last two decades has thrown open several new formulation regarding alternative designs for living and brought into sharp focus a number of new concerns. The accent now is on human—centred development. This concept of development emphasises the quality of life, not the pursuit of wealth, it takes note of deeply held cultural values and seeks to promote ingenuous creativity. The new concerns, among others, are focused on environment, energy and food security, all three being interconnected and interdependent.

The strategies of tribal development adopted in India appears to bypass most of these pivotal issues or at least pay only lip service to them. In consequence, weak and vulnerable tribal groups undergo a loss of identity and an erosion of cultural values, sink deeper into the quagmire of destitution and dependence, and gradually lose the zest of life. Some groups take a diverse forms of protest; others languish in a life with out hope.

Tribal of Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh have lived relatively undisturbed for centuries in their geographical isolation. They had to suffer in some measure, the cultural arrogance of their non-tribal neighbours. The encounters with the front runners of civilization—excise, forest, police and revenue officials—were not particularly happy. But their traditional links with ruler of the erstwhile princely state offered them a degree of protection; interference with their
traditional ways of life was minimal and never crossed the limits of tolerance. They experienced mounting pressures after the attainment of independence and in the process, they were badly rattled. The aggressiveness of the non-tribal neighbours increased and petty officials became more exploitative and rapacious.

Development programmes brought little tangible benefits to a majority of Bastar tribals. In point of fact, the neediest tribal groups got the least benefit; those more advantageously in terms of population size, economic strength and better education cornered most of the gains of development. Many projects are not need- oriented. They were built around the development workers’ conception of refashioning tribal life, and not on a realistic assessment of the need perception of the tribal themselves. Decorative frills and show projects were allowed an ascendent position.

Because of lopsided priorities, unwanted reforms were foisted and the cultural idioms of the people was ignored while pushing through schemes of dubious merit. Impressive gains were registered in official reports, but the tribals remained lukewarm towards them. Growing tribal unrest, mistakenly attributed to radical political activist, had at its roots the economic failures and cultural inadequacies of the tribal development policy. Pangs of hunger, rather than political indoctrination, provided stimulus for the turbulence that manifested itself in the area.

Many programmes were initiated in Bastar and neighbouring tribal areas, ostensibly in the national interest. Some of these were necessary, but their quality would have improved immensely had they taken better account of tribal needs and anticipated their impact on the tribes. East Bengal refugees had to be rehabilitated and the Dandakaranya project had to find space and resources for them. No one grudges the hospitality extended to the Bengal refugees, but tribal exploitation should have been foreseen and some imaginative schemes for tribal resettlement and development should have been concurrently thought of. This did not happen.

Large scale industrial programmes such as Bailadila iron are project, also failed to take note of the need for providing
new economic opportunities to the tribes on a stable basis. In reality, the tribals were further marginalised and their sub-ordination was increased. They were exposed to new forms of exploitation and degradation.

Because of the timely intervention of Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi an ecologically disastrous project was mercifully halted. The idea was to cut down large tracts of natural forest and replace them with commercial forest—monoculture of species, useful for industries. Had the project gone through, the loss to the environment would have been incalculable and cultural damage to the tribes horrendous.

_Bodhghat Project:_ It is developmental dream, with lethal consequences for the tribal population of a vast area.

This project is aimed at harnessing hydel power for the industrial needs of Bastar and Madhya Pradesh. The surplus can go to other states. According to present estimates, the Bodhghat Dam would involve submerging of some 5704 hectares of land, covered with prime forest—mostly _sal_. This figure possibly includes settlement sites and cultivated land. The number of persons to be effected, again according to government figures, will be 9460—the overwhelming majority (6109) being tribals.

The government proposes to replace the last forest by after native afforestation, in approximately double the area of the submerged land. Altogether the new forests will cover some 11,000 hectares. It is claimed that in 1,000 hectares, plantation has already been done. Of the 1712 affected families, 452 are landless. For rehabilitation of the uprooted, 6478 hectares of land has been earmarked. Each landless family will be given five hectares of land and a house will be built for it, at government's cost. One person from each family will be admitted to the Jagdalpur industrial training institute to qualify for gainful employment. Approximately Rs. 200 crore will be invested into the project or replacement forest.

The Bodhghat project is deceptively attractive. But a closer scrutiny reveals the ugly side of its face and exposes the tremendous environmental and human costs it involves.

Consider first the environmental damage. Mr. T.N. Seshan (environmental secretary to the government of India), who
headed the high level Central Committee to assess the situation, envisaged that some invaluable forest would inevitably be lost. The prospects of its replacement are bleak. Some of the land earmarked for it has been under cultivation for several generations, some of it is unsuitable for plantian, and some of it falls under the category of village forest to which people have customary rights. Can more land be found?

Even if it is possible to do so, several disjointed patches of man made forest will not equal one contiguous natural forest. Then there is the problem of replicating a natural forest by an artificial one. Delicate ecological balance is bound to be disturbed. Growing of Sal trees, though not impossible, is nonetheless difficult. Survival rate are likely to be low and we do not know if adequate arrangements can be made to replace casualities.

Tribals need forest

The human costs too are immense. The tribals need the forest more than the power, even if, it is given free of charge to them. Their habitat can never be duplicated for it has some special features. The land receives irrigation in the shape of minuscule drops in the early morning hours. Despite the primitive methods of cultivation, the area has never known drought or famine. They build sprawling dwellings with many fruit-bearing trees in their vicinity. The government cannot give them comparable agricultural land or dwellings. Besides, the tribals have cultural links with the forest. Their earth gods (Bhoom deota) and ancestor spirits (gata dooma) reside in it. It is pointless to ask who these gods are and what their worth is, for they are a matter of deep-seated faith to the tribal people. A hamhanded approach is likely to be counter productive.

Management of the population transfer and resettlement will not be easy specially when the task is to be handled by none too competent lower level official, known to be corrupt. Simple and unsophisticated tribals—many of whom can count only up to 20—may find it difficult to manage large sums given in compensation to them. Greedy operators will be there, to deprive them of their money and leave them resourceless
destitutes. This will be a double tragedy, for the move to an alien and inhospitable setting would already have unnerved them.

The warning is loud and clear. The voiceless can turn unpredictably hostile when there is a threat to their survival. Bastar has already experienced much disquiet and some violence. The Bodhghat project is providing a new rallying ground against unwarranted interference. Public anger has been aroused. Even the normally docile women are forming protest groups.

The government who in the past has demonstrated a sensitivity to both environment and tribal cultures, will be well advised to have an indepth appraisal of the project. Its inept dealings is bound to prove a costly misadventure.
APPENDIX III

TRIBAL ANGER ON THE BOIL IN MADHYA PRADESH

POVERTY, SHORTAGE of water, denial of access to forest resources and highhandedness of government functionaries are some of the issues currently agitating the tribals in Hoshangabad and Betul districts of Madhya Pradesh. Demonstrations and protest marches signal a process of politicisation of the tribals. The Kisan Adivasi Sangathan, which is led by young Lohia Socialists, is spearheading the movement.

The tribals of Kesla held their first demonstration in 1985 to demand water for their fields. This miniscule political event had a snow-balling effect and what is locally known as the “water movement” came up. Hundreds of tribal villages have now joined forces to fight for water. A “Bring Water Struggle Front” has come into being. Towards the close of 1985 thousands of tribals met in a conference and resolved to fight for their basic rights including the right to water.

In 1986, the entire tribal belt experienced a severe drought and crops absolutely failed, causing widespread starvation. No relief work was undertaken by the administration even though the tribals were suffering. In desperation, the latter held a long march to Bhopal protesting government’s indifference to their plight.

The continuance of loan recovery drives by banks and
other government departments during this period fuelled the anger of the tribals. When their demand for suspension of these went unheeded, they launched a “remove poverty and drought” movement.

“That water has been the most fundamental problem in this tribal area goes without saying. The local movement has mainly been focussed on this issue. The Kisan Adivasi Sangathan holds that availability of water is not only the key to their economic development but is also needed to avert their extinction”, says Surendra Jha, a prominent worker of the organisation.

The Sangathan has suggested long term and short term solutions to the problem. The Sangathan says that since there is heavy rain in the area, water impoundment can be an effective long-term solution. Rain water can easily be stored in enclosures. The local terrain is rocky and use of underground water through wells is difficult, so irrigation projects are necessary. The Sangathan claims that in the Kesla block area alone small irrigation projects can be set up at least at 30 points without much difficulty, ensuring irrigation of vast local agricultural lands.

The organisation maintains that not only is the government refusing to undertake such measures to relieve the misery of the tribals, it is also shelving infrastructural projects which could boost the local economy. Smaller projects which can be more useful are rejected in favour of the bigger ones and there is an excessive zeal for gigantism. When big projects are sanctioned, vested interests invariably thrive because they get sizeable cuts. Refusal to sanction a medium irrigation project at Hither river at Golandih, for example, confirms this tendency. If it is taken up the project would irrigate nearly 10,000 acres of land. But such a project is not in keeping with the flawed priorities of the government.

The local tribals are also miserable because of their repeated eviction from their homelands. The siting of big projects in the area has disturbed the environment and robbed them of their traditional life-style. They are losing their cultural moorings. A big scheme like Narmada Sagar for instance, caused a massive displacement of the local population. The
plunder of tribals gets still worse when compensation paid for lands taken away for big projects is paltry. In some cases it has been a mere Rs. 20-30 an acre.

The tribals have thus been impoverished and have only precarious sources of livelihood, such as gathering empty bullet shells from the proof range located in the area and selling them in the local market for a pittance. The work is extremely risky as many of them get killed by bullets.

The tree plantation drive undertaken by the government creates yet another problem for the tribals whose lands are being indiscriminately alienated. The plantation drive provides forest officials unlimited scope for mischief. In some cases, even homestead lands are taken over. Plantation is employed as a threat to terrorise them into submission.

The exercise is also counter-productive because it has mainly been a promotion of eucalyptus—a plant that is economics aplenty for the capitalists but a threat to the ecology. When early this year the tribals demonstrated in front of the collector’s office in Hoshangabad, opposing the plantation drive, they were mercilessly beaten and some of the protesters were thrown into jail.

Much of tribal life revolves round forestwood and its shortage or disappearance threatens their very survival. Their homes are made of wood, their kitchen utensils are made of wood, their agricultural technology is wood based and their solitary source of energy is forestwood. The forest is thus the most fundamental element in their life and any move aimed at tearing it away amounts to killing them.

The tribals in India are still subject to the Indian Forest Act enacted by the British in 1927. Under this antediluvian law, taking even a single piece of wood from the forest is defined as a criminal act and is liable to punishment. Armed with this law, unscrupulous forest official often frame up innocent tribals.

Every tribal is a walking accusation against our society. He keeps reminding us how violent and predatory our so-called civilisation in its relationship with what it chooses to call “uncivilised” tribals.

Ever since the Kisan Adivasi Sangathan began mobilising
in this belt, the tribals are growing politicised and asking the authorities uncomfortable questions. This is not happening in isolation. The oppressed sections in this country have lately been getting more organised and these tribals form a part of that growing radicalism.

TRIBES OF BHUSARPADA (Maharashtra)

An unmarked grave off the road leading to Jawahar, a small town in Maharashtra’s Thane district, and a bloodstain covered by a basket in Bhusarpada in Chamarshet village in the same district—these are the only reminders of an adivasi woman who died on February 10, 1987. Jamnibai Bandhaya Bandre, about 26 years old and mother of four children, was shot by the local police as she ran towards a truck which was carrying away the timber intended for her near-completed house.

When the police party, accompanying the officials of the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) arrived in Bhusarpada on the morning of February 10, the village was inhabited by only women and children. Out of fear, arising out of previous encounters with the police, the men had run away and hidden in a small wood on the slopes of a hill near the village.

Constructing a house as in most tribal communities, is a communal effort. When the FDCM party visited the village Bhusarpada in Maharashtra on the previous day, they noticed piles of timber and other building material lying around. The FDCM proceeded to confiscate this material, calling it stolen timber. When the villagers protested, the policemen accompanying the forest corporation party shot in the air. On both days, the FDCM successfully removed a substantial amount of timber belonging to the adivasis.

It is a poignant statement of our times that the people who have lived and coexisted with the forests, for centuries are today accused of thieving even if they use what grows around them for their immediate personal needs. Given the abysmal economic conditions of these men and women, the only possible way in which they can afford a roof over their heads is if they are permitted to take wood for building purposes, apart
from firewood, grass and other minor forest produce (MFP) which they are allowed free, in restricted quantities and at particular times of the year, in most states.

The traditional rights of tribals, over 50 per cent of whom live within or in the vicinity of forests, vary from state to state. While in Arunachal Pradesh, they are allowed to fish, hunt and take wood and other products freely from the forests, in most other states these rights are regulated and do not constitute a legal rights. At any point they can be withdrawn "in the national interest."

The concept of wider national interest clashing with the traditional rights of the forest dwelling tribals was introduced in 1952 with the amended National Forest Policy, first introduced by the British in 1894. Before that and the Forest Act of 1855, their access to forest was unrestricted.

Over the years more and more restriction have been placed. Today in most states, while tribals and inhabitants of forest villages can collect firewood and minor forest produce from the forests, they have the right to do so only from protected or unclassified forests and not from reserved forest. In other words, the forests under government control are more or less closed to forest dwellers except under strictly regulated conditions, and as is well known the other forests have practically no free cover and are forests only on paper.

This has resulted in an enhanced level of hardship for people already living at the margin. While their fire wood and fodder needs and also the food that they obtain from the forests during the months of scarcity, have been acknowledged their need for housing material is often over looked.

The houses in Bhusarpada, for instance, are made entirely of wood. A frame of wooden beams is lined on the sides with a bamboo 'wall' and the roof is covered with thatch. Wet mud is spread on the floor and beaten with flat wooden sticks by the women. A hole is made in the centre of the hut, to be used for pounding the grain. The stove consists of three bricks or stones. A gap between the thatch roof and the sides of the hut provides ventilation. Most homes have a heavy log which is used as a tether for the animals, who occupy the hut with the family at night.
Although the beams in these huts are very sturdy and according to the people of Bhusarpada, can last for as long as 25 years, each year the thatch has to be replaced and at least one or two of the smaller wooden beams. And in the most parts of the country, tribals cannot take free wood for housing, they are reduced to stealing it. And as a consequence, during the forest departments swoops on these tribal villages, in their search for stolen timber (which in fact is being illegally felled in large quantities by outsiders under the nose of the forest department), the tribals lose not just the one or two logs of wood they may have felled, but even the old seasoned wood.

The tragic aspect of the incident at Bhusarpada is that Jammibai was merely reconstructing her old house in a new location; the question of new wood did not arise. Given the difficulties that a tribal has to encounter to get replacement logs, the level of Jammibai’s desperation when she ran after the truck to rescue the logs from her house can well be imagined.

Yet the tragedy of such a situation fails to touch the hearts of the policy-makers, those who decided long ago that the real destroyers of the forest are those who live near it. The fact that the very existence of these people is dependent on the forests, and therefore they would be the first to conserve them, has never, been acknowledged.

Thus while the National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) report of the early 50s states: ‘Restriction would have to be imposed on the rights and privileges of the tribals in the collection of forest produce, such a fuel wood and small timber, where lack of such restriction may damage the forest,’” a note on forest dwellers prepared by the forest department of the Maharashtra government makes out a case for not just regulating but stopping altogether the few rights that are granted to the tribals. The NCA report also mentions the harm done to forests by Jhum (shifting) cultivation and the shortened cycles that are the consequences of a growing population, but dismisses the tribals tendency to resort to Jhum because of their continuing condition of land less ness as a “psychological urge.” Why certain systems such as Jhum, which were ecologi-
Appendix III

cally sound, developed and what is required to substitute Jhum with settled cultivation.

A new forest policy is reportedly on the anvil. A significant gesture will have to be made if in the new forest policy, the traditional rights of the tribals, including their right to collect material for housing is recognised and allowed in all the states of India uniformly.
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Fig. 3. (A) The Chencnu Males (B) The Bhil Males
Fig. 4. The Nicobarese Youths performing a traditional dance.
Fig. 5. Oraon mother with child.

Fig. 6. A Nicobarese Woman deftly weaving a basket.
Fig. 7. A traditional Andamanese hut.

Fig. 8. A traditional Nicobarese hut.
Fig. 9. Two Andamanese Youths in traditional attire
Fig. 10. Chatham Sawmill: Andaman.

Fig. 11. Racing Canoes: Nicobar.
CATALOGUES

Life-style - Indian Tribes
Indian Tribe - Life style