ETHNOGRAPHY

SAVARAS:

Origin:

The different scholars citing puranic, archaeological and historical evidences have established that the Savara belong to a very ancient tribe. Sitapati (1938-43) have particularly examined the references to the Savara in the epics and puranas. Mention of them has been noted in Ramayana and Mahabharata. As per the reference made in Ramayana, they inhabited the modern Chatisgarah in the neighbourhood of the upper stream of Mahanadi (Sitapati, 1938). Authorities on Indian archeology like Sankalia (1962) and anthropologists like Haimendorf (1943) considered the Savara as one of the indigenous tribes of Pre-historic India.

Historical accounts indicate that the Savara country was very extensive, spreading on either side of the Vindhyas up to the Ganges in the north and the Godavari in the South. Some accounts indicated that they inhabited the country as far south as Penna river and also along the valleys of the Krishna river. Sitapati and Munro believed that these people fled from their original habitat because of the on slaught of the Aryans and settled initially along the basis of Vamsadhara River. Later they were invaded by the Hindus from the East and this forced them to splee to the
hills and forests. Hanumantha Rao, (1972) mentioned that the names of certain villages in the plains of Srikakulam district were derived from Savara words. Similarly, mention has been made by him about how the drawings on the wall of Siva temple at Mukhalingam, in Srikakulam district, indicate the early inhabitation of the Savara in the plains of the Srikakulam district.

The Savaras or Saoras are an important tribe of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts. The name is derived by General Cunningham from the scythiam sagar, an axe in reference to the axe which they carry in the hands. But in the present study the axes are seem to be absent with savaras.

In Sanskrit, Sabara or savara means a mountaineer barbarian or savage. The savaras are identified by various authorities with the suari of pliny and sabarai of problems.

One of the south Indian inscription granted by Nadivama Pallivamalla, a pallava king claims to release a hostile sabara king. The Rev. T. Foulker identified the sabaras (belong to the central provinces) with savaras of the eastern ghtas. But Dr. E. Hultzch, who has re-edited the grant is opened that these sabaras are different from savaras of north east coast.
There are interesting stories about the origin of savaras in the Indian holy books. The Aitareya Brahmana of “Rig-Veda” makes the savars the descendants of the sons of Vishwamitra, who were cursed to become impure by their father for an act of disobedience.

Another story from Ramayana described them as having emerged from body of Vasishata’s cow to fight against the sage Vishwamitra.

But it is identified in the field that most of the savaras of the present study area do not know about the origin.

A Brief History:

By observing the literature the author came to a conclusion that the British officials view the savaras very wrongly. The old literature showed them as a criminal tribe. But at the same time we can understand from most of the incidences that savaras are peace lovers. They do not harm their neighbor and live in their own world of sacrifices, drinking and dancing.

In a report on his tour through the savara country in 1863, the agent to the Governor of Madras reported as follows. At Gunupur I heard great complaints of the thievish habits of the soura tribes on the hills dividing Gunupur from Pedda kimedya. They are not decoits, but very expect
burglers, if the term can be applied to digging a hole in the night through a mud wall. If discovered and hard pressed, they do not hesitate to discharge their arrows, which they do with unerring aim, and always with fatal result. These people in this way perpetrate three or four murders since the country has been our management. I arranged with the S.P. of police station a partly of reserved army in the ghaut leading to soura country. One or two cases of seizure and conviction will suffice to put a check to the crime.

It is recorded in the Gazetteer of the Vizagapatnam that there are some troubles with the savaras (1864) where the police of pottasingi improperly arrested savara village headman. The disputes were continued up to 1866.

They become suspicious tribe up to 1874. After 1905 their relations with plain people become very good.

Religion:

Concerning the religion of the savaras, Mr. Fawcett notes that their name for deity is sonnum or sumam and describes the following.

1. Jalia: In some places thought to be male and in other female. The widely know deity or causing illness or death. In some places said to eat people.
2. Kitung: They believe that he is the creator of savaras and who brought them along with animals to the jungle.


4. Kanni: Lives in big trees, so they are never cut in groves which this deity is supposed to haunt. And causes illness to the youth.

   Savaras sacrifices buffaloes to induce the deities, spirits to leave the people. They think that the spirit, which is not satisfied after the death of a person, causes lot of damage. To avoid the spirit they go for sacrificing buffaloes.

**Physical profile:**

The savara people are distinct and can be easily identified by their physical profile. They are short stature and dark coloured people with oval face, prominent zygomatic arch, high forehead, wide nostrils, and aesthetic body built scant body hair and wavy head hair. Some of the traditional old savaras round their hair in the back of their head. Most of the eyes are lightly oblique. The savaras face is identified as Mongolians by Mr. Fawcett.

**Language:**

The savaras speak savara language which is included in the munda family by Mr. G.A. Grierson. He wrote “it has been largely influenced by Telugu and is no longer an unmixed from the speech. It is most closely
related to Kharia and Juang, but in some characters differs from them, and agrees with the various dialects of the language which has in this survey been described under the denomination of Kherwari.

The savara language of present study area is seems to be mostly influenced by Telugu language.

**VILLAGE AND HOUSE**

The housing pattern of the Savara is of linear type. The villages where Savara live are usually at the hilltops of Eastern Ghats (Palakonda Hill ranges) between Vamshadhara and Nagavali rivers Vizianagaram and Srikakulam Districts respectively. The villages are relatively small with ten to twenty families. The Savara always live in exclusive settlement of their own. They never build their houses in the company of either the other tribal or non-tribal groups. Villages are homogenous, exclusively inhabited by Savara People.

A typical house is square or rectangular single room with mud plastered walls supported with bamboos. The roof is thatched and covered by locally available Dhabba grass. All other supporting structure is made of bamboo, collected from adjacent forest. The roof slopes down to front and back side of the house. Usually the roof is further extended on one side of house to form a small verandah. The room has no windows except one entrance door. It appears that the low roofs without any ventilation are for
protecting themselves from cold winds during winter season and to avoid damage to mud walls due to rains. They cook food outside the house i.e., in verandah. They divide the verandah into two portions and use corner place for cooking and other portion to accommodate/entertain guests. They decorate walls by applying red coloured mud and they also apply cow dung on floors and on mud walls to keep house clean. They believe that this type of arrangement keeps the insects, terminates, flies etc., away from the house.

Another significant feature of the Savara settlements is the presence of half a dozen or more Jeelugu (salpam) trees. An area with abundant Jeeluqu trees is readily preferred in case of establishment of a new settlement. In rare cases, Jeelugu trees are grown after the establishment of the village. If there are more number of Jeelugu trees, the villagers can honour their guests well. In marriage negotiations too, people proudly point out the number of Jeelugu trees in their village.

The cattle sheds in the settlements are built a few feet away from the house. Since all the households do not require cattle sheds, their number is few. The houses are surrounded by these cattle sheds. Any space left between the cattle sheds is used to store the fire wood or grass used for thatching the houses. In some villages, on the backyard of the dwelling place, kitchen gardens are also grown. At the outskirts, under the trees, one finds menhirs erected in the name of dead persons of the village.
The Savara villages are situated in the most in-accessible areas and in many cases lie hidden in forest clad hills making it difficult to reach them except through zig-zag steep hill paths. They build their houses on the slope or foot of the hills.

Food habits:

The savaras are basically non-vegetarian people. Their main food is rice. The savara people mostly consume cereals like rice, maize, ragi and millets. They also consume seasonal vegetables like brinjal and beans, potato, tomatoes. They take pulses like red gram, very rarely they consume meant (festivals) they eat tubers and edible roots.

They consume mostly rice with starch twice a day. In the morning they eat curry as stuff, whereas they consume rice with curry in the nights.

In the unfavourable condition they take mango seed juice. Both savara males and females take liquors, which are locally available namely “jeelugu kallu” “vanta sarai”.

ECONOMY:

Savara are the best terraced cultivators. Agriculture, especially podu or shifting cultivation is the mainstay of the Savara. Terraced cultivation is mainly practiced by those living along the foothill areas of Palakonda hills or near the plains of hill streams. Hunting and gathering, forest labour,
collection and sale of minor forest produce are other important sources of livelihood.

Their economy is still largely subsistence oriented and production is for self-consumption rather than for the market. Their method of agriculture is terraced cultivation and they also called shifting cultivation as podu (slash and burn or swidden cultivation), which is supplemented by hunting and gathering. The technology is still simpler, as swiddening does not need any sophisticated technological input.

The major crops raised by Savara are paddy and cashew. Savara also raise pulses like red gram (kandhulu), green gram (pesalu); vegetables like brinjal (vanga), chillies (mirupa) etc., Although there is hunting and gathering in Savara society, the bulk of their diet comes from foods that are cultivated. Perhaps 90% or more of the diet consists of domesticated rather than wild foods. Paddy is by far the most important food in the diet.

The forest on the hills is considered as a communal property. Unilateral decisions in the selection of plots for podu cultivation are not approved. The members make a collective decision with regard to selection of podu lands. The sites for Podu are selected according to a number of criteria, some ecological and some social. With regard to ecological criteria, they restrict site selection by excluding certain kinds of land as agriculturally not fit for Podu. Excluded is the land that is too rocky
or too steep. Of land that is suitable, the Savara prefer, sites covered by well developed forest growth. Vegetation serves them as an index of the fertility of site. The thicker the forest vegetation of an area, the more years it can be kept under cultivation and the larger its yields. But at the same time, the hillocks which include too many huge hardwood trees which would require too great an amount of labour to cut, is also not preferred by them.

Some other factors which influence the choice of the site for podu cultivation are, its distance from the village and the distance between it and other fields. The selection of sites adjacent to each other facilitates one to maintain close watch on his fields. Another very important feature is, even if a site is considered favourable for podu cultivation, they do not go for podu cultivation unless at least two other households of the village are willing to join them. It is strongly stated: "Whether good or bad, we should do it in the company". This requires prior consultations and group decisions.

Further, the selection of more than one site depends upon the numerical composition of the households. The Savara consider that it is not possible to undertake podu cultivation at more than one site when the numerical size is less than five members. This is because; the cultivation of each plot of land (about one and half acre) requires the services of at least three adult members to work as a unit.
Before the start of activities related to Podu cultivation the heads of all households (or a representative of the household) formally assemble (as in case of ChadhunuGuda) or informally discuss (as in case of AppannaGuda) to take collective decisions. The site for Podu cultivation, the extent of area, etc., are all decided to the maximum satisfaction of all. Once the decisions regarding the sites of Podu cultivation, are finalised, next step would be to get the agricultural implements like barisim, gitti, todu, goddali, pandre kola, nagali, nolla etc., ready. Most of these tools have two components; a wooden part and an iron part. The wooden part consists of a handle and it is prepared by the Savara themselves. The iron component is prepared by Panodu., a Jatapu crafts man.

Thus there requires a lot of pain to raise and maintain a podu plot. Hence shifting cultivation become less important and tendency towards podu is decreasing day by day in Savara society. The main problem of shifting cultivation is its irrigation. It is not possible to irrigate the podu plots; hence one has to depend on rainfall to raise the successful crops. Failure in rainfall results in failure of crops. So Savara prefer settled cultivable land near hill streams than podu cultivation.

Savara raise pulses, pineapple, turmeric and grams in podu land. The settled cultivable plots near hill streams gets water from it. Thus irrigated stretches of cultivable land increases the crop yield per season than podu cultivation.
Apart from cultivation, hunting and gathering plays an important role in Savara society by supplementing them with meat protein. Savara hunt wild sheep, wild goat, wild boar, rabbits, fowls, birds etc., in the nearby hilly forests. Of late due to deforestation and restrictions on human activities in reserve forest areas the game of hunting is gradually discouraged.

Traditionally, Savara use common bow and arrow to hunt animals. Nowadays they are using guns, pistols etc., to hunt the speed game. Usually during summer months i.e., between April and June, Savara spent most of their time in collecting forest produce and food gathering. The minor forest produce gathered include adda leaves for leaf plates; yams like adavi vaimu, savadi dhumpa, donda dhumpa; and other produce such as sheekai, soapnuts, hill brooms, tamarind and honey. They also collect mango, jack fruit, citrus fruits, cashew fruits, etc., from the forest.

**Economic organization:**

The economy of the savaras is based on agriculture. Generally they cultivate their lands by nearby passing hill streams. They go for “Konda podu” in the hill slopes. They collect the tamarind from the trees and sell them in the G.C.C. They collect honey and leaves, roots and tubers from the forest and some of them send to G.C.C.

They are growing cashew, pine apple, custard apple and trees with the help of the government bodies (ITDA) to lift their economy levels.
Generally women collect roots, leaves, tubers and other minor forest products where as the males go for the cultivation.

**Political organization:**

There is a head man for every savara village Gomong (great man) supported in office by his colleague Boya. The Boya is the magistrate, and also holds the duties of high priest. The village council under the leadership of Gomong settles the disputes among the individuals.

These two offices are hereditary, and the rules of primogeniture regulate succession, subjected to the principle that inceptable individuals should be excluded.

According to Mr. Ramana Murthy Pantulu who wrote, the presence of these two offices is compensatory in all the festivals, marriages, sales of land and liquor yielding trees, passion and disputes on property and the cases of divorce.

All cases of a civil and criminal nature are heard and disposed by them and fines are imposed, oaths are administrated.

**Family:**

Father is the head of the family. A majority of savara families are one of the nuclear type. Only sons inherit the father’s property through male
equigentive rule of the inheritance. Savara/ Jatapu have patrilocal residence and patrilegal descent and if to a patriarchal society. The young couples like with the boys’ parents tell the birth of the first child and establish a separate family.

**Dress and Ornaments:**

The Savaras wear very less clothing compared to Jatapus. The older savara males round just a piece of cloth to their waist. The young people wear *lungi*/*pancha* and vests. A considerable percentage of males were seen without wearing shirts. The older savara females wear sarees without jackets, but it is observed that most of the young females wear blouses.

Ornaments of the females are generally made of bronze. But, some of the young females are also wearing the golden ornament. These ornaments generally are rings worn on nostrils, nasal septum and earlobes. They wear bangles made up of bronze and very less percentage of people wear glass bangles.

A considerable percentage of males and females are shown with tatoo marks.
FAMILY

Family is a primary social group, universally recognized to be basis of all human endeavour and activities. The concept of family has been found to exist since time immemorial and at all the levels of culture. In Savara society father is the head of the family. Descent is patrilineal or agnatic descent. Inheritance of property is also through father line.

The rule of residence is patrilocal. However, when a man acquires his mate through marriage by service (Kinarsung or Illarikam), the son-in-law agrees to stay either forever or for a fixed period in his father-in-law’s house after marriage looking after his assets. Usually, this practice is confined to families having no male children.

Traditionally, extended families were common, but nowadays the nuclear families are predominant among the Savara. Neolocal residence is common after marriage. All sons share the father’s property equally i.e., male equigeniture.

Monogamy is a rule but polygyny is also observed occasionally. So one can notice polygynous family along with monogamous families in the Savara societies. Among Savara family plays a key role unlike the other tribal groups of the region in view of the absence of the usual exogamous
clans. This single unit of their social structure thus constitutes the nucleus and hub of their social life. Family is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal.

The father or eldest male member enjoys the authority. Full authority vests in the hands of male. Women have no decision-making power, but she is consulted by men while taking certain important decisions. Every decision regarding household either it is economical, social, religious or ceremonial, the decision making power is vested with man. Even though women contribute to family income they have little or no control over family expenditure. Thus decisions regarding family affairs are taken by father or eldest male member of the family in consultation with family members.

Though the family, as an institution is permanent and universal in all human societies, it has undergone certain changes within itself as an association. Thus, compositional and structural changes sometimes take place within a family organization. The modern type of family found among Savara, is a typical example of this kind of change. The traditional extended family has changed over to the small extended family or nuclear family in the recent decades of this century, but this change has been basically structural. The functions of the family, however, have not been much disturbed in spite of the structural changes in the family. Under the impact of acculturation and increase in contact with caste population and other processes of change, the concept of family has undergone drastic
transformations not only in Savara but all over the tribes of India. But in spite of the changes in the form and structure of the family, family as an institution continues in one way or the other.

The Savara families with surnames are classified into prescribed and proscribed families for entering into marital alliances. The social organization of the Savara is based on exogamous surnames (intiperlu). Each Savara family has a surname and follows strict exogamy at surname level. Some of the surnames of Savara are Areka, Konda Gorre, Biddiki, Mandinga, Puvvula, Kadraka, Emeriki, Cheemala etc., The surnames are associated to patri-clan.

KINSHIP

The Savara kinship terminology is mostly classificatory, through a few of their kinship terms are descriptive. The terms of kinship applicable to relatives, consanguineous and affinal, are strikingly the same. All the male grand parents of the speaker both from the maternal and paternal side are classified by the only term ‘Jojong’. All the female relatives of the third generation above the speaker are indicated by the term ‘Yoyong’. The collateral and the lineal relatives are not kept distinct, but they are merged together and a single kinship term expresses the relationship.
Inspite of the fact that most of the Savara kinship terms are classificatory, a few descriptive terms are also noticed. The following are a few such terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Term</th>
<th>Savara Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Vang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yeng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Dukkiri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Ammonla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father’s elder brother</td>
<td>Thatha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wife’s sister’s husband</td>
<td>Saddu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elder brother’s wife</td>
<td>Bonni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Younger brother’s wife</td>
<td>Koina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s elder sister</td>
<td>Kinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s younger sister</td>
<td>Erriboi</td>
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The classificatory nature of the Savara kinship terminology has been shown by analyzing the Savara kinship terms and listings the number of relationships to which a kinship term applies. It has be found that relationship is traced not between individuals but between groups of individuals.

In this perspective, Savara society can be viewed as an ensemble of elementary family units. The Savara family is a social unit comprising of
the immediate kinsfolk like mother, father and children. Demographic and ecological factors have their role in shaping of the Savara society as every member in the Savara society is directly or indirectly linked to each other in the social network. Institutionalized relations within the social web are reflected in their kinship terminology.

Some of the usages, which have social sanction and convention are considered necessary for keeping order and decorum in society. Those usages which are related to behaviours between kin relations are called as kinship behavior. In the society, there are different types of families and various degrees of kin groups that exhibit different types of behavior by cutting joke with each other or perform avoidance relationship, and such usages, verbal or non-verbal, constitute kinship behaviour, some of kinship behaviour which is universal in many societies such as avoidance and joking relationship is also found in Savara.

Savara observe avoidance relation towards daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, younger brother’s wife etc., and clear cut distance is maintained between younger sister-in-law and elder brother-in-law (husband’s elder brother) and elder brother-in-law and younger sister-in-law (wife’s younger sister). Similarly, avoidance is observed between son-in-law and his mother-in-law.
An extreme degree of familiarity expressed through joking relationship between certain kin relations by way of cracking a satire, taunt, exchange of abuse, obscene and vulgar references to sex, etc. Savara observe joking relationship between consanguineal groups such as grandchildren and grandparents, younger brother-in-law and elder sister-in-law (elder brother’s wife) and, wife and husband. A joking relationship, when not reciprocal, exercises a social control as it exercises correction through ridicule. Radcliffe Brown regards the joking relationship as having a symbolic meaning. Joking relations may be only a kind of friendliness expressed by a show of hostility.

In Savara kinship can be based on unilateral descent i.e., to patrilineal. The Savara may have found that in the male, work solidarity is more important for them. This is, clearly seen in their control of allocation of goods and their role in offence and defense, which are most critical to the maintenance and protection of their ways of life. This seems to be directly reflected in the high incidence of the virilocal residence rule which ultimately produces the patrilocal family among Savara.

Savara have extensive kinship networks. They have kins in more than five villages. The kinship relations between villages are established through affinal relations i.e., marriage links. Marriage plays a very important role in kinship networks of Savara. Some Savara families in
several villages such as PubbadaGuda, KilladaGuda, ChadhunuGuda etc., have kins in more than ten villages.

**MARRIAGE**

Marriage, a publicly recognized and culturally sanctioned union between a male and female, which is intended to be enduring, to give primary (but not necessarily exclusive) sexual rights in each other to the couple, and to fulfill further social functions.

The Savara follow strict endogamy at community level. One does not marry outside the community. The community endogamy is commonly approved and sanctioned by the Savara society, the breach of which is considered the breach of law. The sanctions may range from excommunication from tribe or from village, if the village is homogenous Savara village. The tribal council or tribal head impose sanctions and order tribesmen not to talk, exchange things, maintain relations etc., with the excommunicators, breach of which face several sanctions.

In marriage, endogamy is allowed at village and community level but not at lineage/gotra/surname level. Exogamy is allowed at village level, gotra level, clan level and surname level but exogamy is strictly restricted at community level. Any breach of the above marriage rules may lead to sanctions by society head.
Serial monogamy is practiced by Savara and limits themselves to one wife at a place. In case of divorce or death of wife, a Savara marries again and again, and remains to be monogamous. Polygyny exists in two specialized variations, sororal polygyny and non-sororal polygyny. In sororal polygyny the multiple wives of Savara are sisters. In non-sororal polygyny the multiple wives of a Savara are not sisters.

In the sororal polygyny form of marriage the wife of Savara encourages him to marry her sister(s) in order to avoid the division of parental property. This arrangement is to avoid unnecessary clashes between sisters regarding the property. But this happens only when all the siblings are females without a single male to inherit the property. But this is not the universal case in Savara society. Consanguineous marriages between parallel cousins i.e., among brothers children or among sisters children are prohibited. Cross cousin marriages (FSD and MBD) are more common and occasionally maternal uncle-niece marriages are also observed.

The preferential method of acquiring a mate among the Savara is by Marriage by Negotiation and mutual agreement (Penkui) which involves long procedure depending upon the talks of either party. The other methods of acquiring mate among the Savara are by Marriage by elopement (Dingdengboi or Dandaboi), Marriage by service (Kinarsung or
Illarikam) and Marriage by exchange (Ulaibo). Except for marriage by negotiation, for other methods there seems no ceremonial attachment. It is very interesting to note that among these primitive people, marriage by capture involving the elements of surprise and brute – force is absent.

Economic considerations are mainly responsible for the less number of marriages through negotiations and the large number of marriages by elopement as the former is very costly involving considerable expenditure on gifts, liquor etc., to would be father-in-law and the ensuing series of feasts during the marriage ritual while in the later case besides bride-price, liquor is served only on one occasion, thus involving less expenditure.

LIFE CYCLE CEREMONIES

At every stage of life from birth and infancy, through adolescence, youth and married stage, to death an individual is considered to pass through a critical interaction period in his group life requiring some super human powers to cope up with the life in the new social environment. Like his advanced neighbor the tribal also tries to tie over these crisis periods and plans to gain the necessary strength to face the new situation by enlisting the help of supernatural powers through performance of ritual ceremonies, magical rites and by observing certain taboos in a manner benefitting the situation. Further, these crisis periods are believed to be plastic times during which a man is more susceptible to evil influences of
malignant with confidence and toward off the evil spirits, the various religious and magical practices have been evolved.

The Savara perform many a ceremony and magical rite to protect the man at every from birth to death and even after death to facilitate the fixing up of the departed soul in the neither world of spirits and tutelary’s. Even though Savara understand the relationship between conception and sexual inter–course, still they believe that human effort should also be sufficiently strengthened by the blessings of gods for the proper procreation of the race.

The Savara generally do not indulge in sexual inter–course during night time as they believe that female organs sleep during night times. The forest is preferred to the house for sexual inter–course during day time. When a couple is engaged in sexual activity in the forest two wooden poles or three branches are placed “x” shape indicating to others nobody should disturb them by going that way. But now – a- days the practice is on the wane and many of them are preferring night times for sexual intercourse in their own houses.

A woman is considered to have conceived when she misses her menstrual cycles (aganathi). Sexual intercourse is continued till the third or fourth month of pregnancy. Thereafter, it is prohibited as it is considered to
be injurious to the health of the pregnant woman and the fetus. Neither food taboos nor work taboos are imposed on the pregnant woman but for restraining her from doing heavy manual labour. But a pregnant woman invariably avoids burial grounds and other places of spirit haunting to escape the haunting of evil spirits and the consequent abortion or still – birth. For suspected abortion magico – medicinal treatment is given by the “kudan or kudanboi”.

Delivery is always conducted outside the main house, either in the verandah or in the cattle shed. An enclosure is constructed by closing all the sides of the verandha or the cattle shed to provide privacy for conducting delivery. As soon as the expectant mother feels labour pains, she comes out of the house sits on a stone in the delivery enclosure, holding a strong rope or a rope sling that is hanging from the roof of the verandah with her legs stretched wide apart. The ‘kudanboi’, or, or any other elderly woman of the village conducts the delivery. Generally on such occasion, all the men folk of the village are asked to leave the village except on or two men who stand at distance in order to ready to help in case of an emergency. In case of difficult labour, one of the male members is sent to the ‘kudan’ or ‘Buuya’ to fetch some medicine. If a woman is suffering from difficult labors either the ‘kudanboi’ or any elderly woman inserts a kind of leaf in the hair of the suffering woman. It is
claimed that as soon as the leaf is kept in the hair of the woman, delivery occurs without any further difficulty. It is very interesting to note that the Savara expertise in psychotherapy as exemplified in performance of the act of coconut–breaking intended to ensure easy delivery. In the psychological approach, the medicine-man stands out–side the delivery. In the psychological approach, the medicine–man stands out–side the delivery enclosure and holds a coconut in his hand and chants some hymns. He orders loudly (so that the woman in difficult labour may hear him) that the woman should deliver the child as soon as he breaks the coconut. He purposefully delays the breaking of the coconut on the pretext of counting numbers 1,2,3 and then breaks the coconut. As soon as the coconut is broken the woman usually delivers the baby.

If the ejection of the after–birth is delayed, the ‘Buuya’ or the ‘kudan’ is again approached. The ‘kudan’ gives the root of ‘Vuttaren’ (acharanthes aspera ) plant and it is kept in the mouth of the woman thrice with the belief that the after–birth may come out without any delay. The ‘kudanboi’ cuts the umbilical cord with the help of a knife or an arrow–head (arm) and the placenta is buried at the outskirts of the village in dung pit.

Their hand to mouth living makes it imperative for every family member to work in the field or forest whatever may be their physical
condition. Sometimes a pregnant women working in a field may deliver the child in the “podu” field or in the forest. At such times, if there is no other woman to help her, she herself cuts the umbilical cord with a broken piece of pot and brings the baby home. Immediately after delivery both mother and child are given hot water bath. On the day of delivery the mother is taken hot cooked rice without any curry. After having her meals, the mother starts sucking the neonate. The hot food served is believed to increase the milk yield with castor oil and gives hot touch to clear her bowels, everyday for a week or ten days from the day of delivery.

After delivery a women is considered to be under birth – pollution, the period of which usually extends to 9 days or until the “desari” fixes the day of purification bath. Until that time the woman is not allowed to touch anything in the house. The female child and fifthday in the case of male child, during which periods she continues to stay in the enclosure in the verandah. Afterwards the women allowed to entire the house. But she should not touch any of the household articles. She is permitted to sleep on a cot confined to one corner of the house.

The disari fixes the auspicious day for giving the lactating mother the purification bath and ceremonially introducing her to the household work for the first time after delivery which usually falls on the 9th day of delivery. On the fixed day, the ‘ kudanboi’ shaves the child head. The woman
collects all her clothes and goes to the stream. After thoroughly cleaning her body, she washes the clothes and returns home. She keeps the neonate before the ‘lingor’ figure drawn on the wall, sprinkles turmeric rice and bows before it. From then onwards she is free to use all the household possessions and move about the house any restriction.

Savara custom of name giving is devoid of elaborate ritual. But for a few villages there is no special ceremony for name giving in general. Usually the child is named after the day on which it is born. The name of the child end with “a” if it is male child and “I” if it is a female child.

However, in some instances ancestral spirits are believed to disagree with name given neonate. This is expressed in the loud and continuous crying of the child after naming it. In spite of mother’s cozying, if the child continues to cry it is believed that one of their ancestors is reborn and satisfied with the name given to the child as it should be named after the reborn ancestor.

To identify the particular ancestor reborn in their family, the ‘kudan’ is approached with a ‘solla’ of rice and a small pot of liquor. The ‘kudan’ keeps the rice in a winnowing fan and starts uttering some hymns and falls into a trance. In the trance the ‘kudan’ loudly utters the name of the
ancestor reborn. He also gives out the demands of the ancestor spirit which invariably includes a goat or other animal sacrifice.

The Savara marriage is not an elaborate affair. It is rather queer that the who spend most of their resources in observing a chain of festivals and ceremonies celebrate their marriage in a very simple way. There are various forms of marriage for acquiring mates. To mention a few of them are, marriage by service. Of all these types, marriage by arrangement is most common and held prestigious in the society as the Savara have negotiation is made between two parties having equal economic and social status. For a son of gomang (secular headman) another gomang's daughter may be arranged and a royat (commoner) may not venture to propose for a gomang’s daughter.

The Savara do not observe village exogamy except where the village is inhabited by the members of one birinda. In big villages having more than one birinda marriage are often arranged within the village.

Since a woman does not change her birinda after marriage as it happens in other tribal societies where the woman adopts the clan or gotra of her husband’s family. Marriages are possible between a man and woman of his maternal side. But the Savara are not quite fond of arranging marriage with maternal uncle’s daughter. Only those who fail to arrange
girls for their sons elsewhere select one of maternal cross-cousins for marriage (mother’s brother’s daughter). The father’s sister being a member of the same birinda there is little scope for marriage with her children.

The Savara cremate their dead but persons dying of cholera, smallpox and snake bite are buried. As cremation is a family function birinda members participate in it. Some members collect wood for the pyre and the girls who are trained to act as assistants in funeral rites fetch water and prepare turmeric paste. Then, the corpse is carried to the cremation ground in a procession accompanied by a musical band. The next day they visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes with a view to find the sign of the cause of death. In the same day evening a fowl is killed in the cremation ground and cooked with rice which is shared by the members of the village. Then after a year or two the Guar ceremony is performed. On this occasion, Menhirs are planted and large number of buffaloes is sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive Karya ceremonies in every second or third year to commemorate and to honour the deads of that particular period.