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INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

Caste is the most unique form of social stratification of Indian society. As opined by G. S. Ghurye, foreign visitor to India may not understand the full working of the caste system but he/she is aware of the fact that Hindu society is divided into groups, known as castes with varying degrees of respectability and circles of social intercourse. Its resilience is very famous as Max Muller said thus: “Caste cannot be abolished in India and to attempt it would be one of the most hazardous operations that were ever performed in a political body. As a religious institution caste will die: but as a social institution, it will live and improve” (Max Muller 1869:353).

Owing to ubiquity and strangeness the caste system found many scholars who devoted to its study. Caste studies have become very popular after independence. These studies include caste and religion, the impact of British rule on caste and social mobility, caste and politics etc. But defining caste is not an easy task because of the complexity of the phenomenon. Generally a sociologist would define caste as a hereditary, endogamous usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of caste. According to M.N. Srinivas “A caste is usually segmented into several sub-castes and each sub-caste is endogamous. This segmentation is probably the result of a long
historical process in which group continually fissioned off”. Bougle said that caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: separation in matters of marriage and contact, division of labour, each group having in theory or by tradition a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits, and finally hierarchy which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another.

Louis Dumont observes that caste cannot be interpreted and understood from the point of western ideas of egalitarianism, individualism, and pre-eminence of politics and economics in society. The most important notion in his approach to the caste system is hierarchy, which is understood as the superiority of the pure over the impure.

Bailey (1960) has referred caste system as “a closed organic stratification in contra-distinction with the class principle which is based on segmentary stratification”. Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines caste as an “endogamous and hereditary sub-division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem, in comparison with other such sub-division”.

It was said that English speaking Indians frequently refer to their caste as their community. A community is a self conscious social unit and a focus of group identification. The word ‘jati’ is most often used as the Hindi or Kannada word for caste. But it has many meanings. However the term ‘jati’ could include all three of the transformation suggested – tribe, caste and kin- community (P. Kolenda, 1968, p.10). Andre Beteille states that when the term ‘jati’ is used in a caste context
it may refer to a sub-caste, caste, and caste-category or to a caste association.

There are many perspectives of the study of caste system like indological, socio-anthropological, sociological etc. The Sociological perspective views caste system from the social stratification point. It refers it as a phenomenon of social inequality. The sociological studies of caste deals with various matters such as features of caste system, changes that occurred in it, recent trends etc. Attempts have been made by sociologists to provide a consistent view on the new changes, new roles, and social mobility in the Indian caste system.

There are a number of sizable castes and sub-castes in India. Up to data census count are not available in caste membership, it was said that in each linguistic area of India, there were about 200 castes with distinct names which were divided into more than 2000 smaller units generally known as sub-castes fixing the limits and consisting specific cultural traditions. Dress, food-habits, and customs regarding birth, marriage, funeral etc., change from caste to caste.

The present sociological study is about one such castes of undivided Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state namely “Billawa”.

**Review of Literature**

Caste Studies become very popular after Independence. These studies include caste and religion, the impact of British rule on caste, caste and social mobility, caste and industrialization, caste and politics etc. However on Billawa community as such, there is no such in-depth and sociological study. Only some general works throw light on its
some aspects. Therefore some general studies on caste system and some studies which throws light on the Billawa community has been reviewed briefly in the present study.

G.S. Ghurye in his book "Caste, Class and Occupation" (1961) expressed the opinion that, caste is the most general form of social organization in India and it presents a marked contrast to the social grouping prevalent in Europe or America. The book focuses on the outstanding features of Hindu Society, when it was ruled by the social philosophy of caste, unaffected by the modern ideas of rights and duties; and also future of caste. According to him, to get a sociologically correct idea of the institution, one should recognize sub-caste as real castes. He gave the picture of nature of caste-groups presented by facts mostly taken from Central province and Bombay presidency, as he said both of which regions are outside the centre of old Brahmamic culture. He also rightly mentioned that the British brought with them a casteless culture and a literature full of thoughts on individual liberty; only some Hindus acquiesced in changes took place in the practice of caste. The orthodox Hindus did not like the modifications. Ghurye was of the opinion that caste system has shed only some of its features. It has not lost its hold on its individual members. He believed that its vitality in social life is as strong today as it ever was.

A.R. Desai’s "Rural Sociology in India" (1969) attempted to outline caste system in rural India and its unique significance. According to him, a very peculiar type of social grouping found in India is the caste grouping. His opinion is that caste largely determines the function, the status, the available opportunities, as well as the
handicaps for an individual. This study focuses on the fact that caste differences determine the difference in modes of domestic and social life, types of houses and cultural patterns of the people. It also discusses how the modern means of communication, the introduction of the British system of administration, laws and the growth of modern capitalist competitive economy undermined the functional basis of caste. The author's belief is that the student of rural society should study social, economics, political and cultural life of rural society within the matrix of caste structure.

J.H. Hutton's 'Caste in India' (1946) deals with nature, origin, functions of caste system in Indian Society and relations of caste to race and religion. It points out that each caste is a social unit in itself; the custom by which it lives on generally different in some respects from those of other caste. It also throws light on the aspect that in Southern India many castes are regarded as polluting by proximity and are not allowed to approach within certain distances of Hindu Temples. According to the author, the degree of pollution observed during menstruation, birth, death etc. varies with the caste.

Iravathi Karve's "Kinship Organization in India" (1965, p.68) made an effort to provide a comparative picture of kinship organization in different parts of India. It also analyses the kinship system of Tulu community. The author points out that some important facts about caste need to be borne in mind to understand many features of kinship organization; caste system and the kinship organization conform to certain patterns found in wide geographical areas called linguistic regions. It observes that no two castes possess identical relationship behaviour.
"Ancient Karnataka - History of Tuluva", Vol-I, 1936 by B.A. Saletore is a book of the whole history of Tulunadu, till 12th century. It includes information about origin of Tuluvas, legendary beginning, the political relationship of Alupa Dynasty with the royal family of South India, the origin of *Aliya Santana system* etc. It narrates about agriculture, handicrafts, toddy tapping etc. The study highlights some important customs and manners of Billawas. It indicates that in Tuluva, 'Aliya Santana Kattu' received royal sanction under an Alupa ruler only in the first half of the 15th century. In this work, it is mentioned that of all people of Tulunadu, the Billavas and Bunts have enjoyed the most prominence. The 'Paddanas' or folksongs concerning heroes like Koti-Chennaya are a valuable source of information for the study of the life of Billawas in early and medieval times. It observes that they are always described as the age-long and privileged toddy-drawers of the land. Here it is mentioned that there are differences in customs such as child marriage, widow-remarriage, prevalent among the Brahmans and those which were common among the Billavas.

Panikkar K.M. in his "Hindu Society at. Cross Roads" (1955) tried to analyze the importance of caste system by saying that the hold of the caste on the Hindu mind has been astonishingly firm since the Hindus came to be organised as a people. According to him, 'Caste is a Sociological fact and not a religious institution'. Focusing on the impact of thought in social institutions, he said, the awakening of thought in women has led to their increased participation in all fields of work.

Kingsley Davis in his book, "Human Society" (1948, 49) reports that India had most extreme caste system, where the social system was based entirely on inherited inequality. He focused on the uncertainty in
classifying castes and sub-castes. He said that in India, the chief line of
distinction runs between the twice-born or 'clean' Caste on the one
hand, and the 'once-born' or 'unclean' castes on the other. This work
made it clear that the Hindu attempt to construct a system of absolute
social inequality is inherently contradictory. It is because the very scale
of values by which one caste is judged better than another motivates
people to try to improve themselves. A change of occupation, a shift of
economic fortune, an alteration in the observance of moral rules and
taboo - any or all of these will affect the standing of the group in the
community. He further pointed out that the moment there is social
change; there is also social mobility for two reasons:

(a) Any society, simply by the interaction within its structure,
generates internal frictions that inevitably lead to a change of the
structure,

(b) The external conditions in which the society lives and to
which it must adjust if it is to survive, are constantly changing.

Andre Beteille's "Castes: Old and New" (1969) consists ways
on social structure and social stratification. The author is not satisfied
with Dr. Bailey's four-fold scheme. For him, the word caste does not
refer to one thing, but to several aspects. There are so many castes that,
it is virtually impossible to determine their exact number. He tried to
view the caste system in a new way, i.e. viewing it as a segmentary
system. According to him, this way of viewing the caste system
provides a clue to the understanding of the new forms and functions,
which caste is acquiring in India today. It is mentioned in the book that,
caste is a segmentary system means that people view themselves as
belonging to units of different orders in different contexts. According to
the author, the endogamy tends to expand in terms of alignments traditionally associated with the structure of caste; economic and geographical mobility, easier communications, as well as other factors have led to a certain standardization of its traditional practices. Minor details of customs, which in the part differentiate the sub-caste from another, tend to be dropped. The limits, within which intermarriage, commensality, and co-residence were formerly convened, have been extended. The different occupational strata are no longer as homogeneous in their caste composition as they used to be. He observes certain significant changes in the attitude of political leaders and intelligentsia regarding association of caste with politics.

Yogendra Singh's "Modernization of Indian Tradition" (2002) is a comprehensive sociological study of the processes and problems of modernization in contemporary India. It refers to the vast range of changes that are taking place today in the forms and function of the Indian social structure and tradition. It examines the ways in which caste, family, and village systems responded to the forces of modernization. It reveals that for both the Hindu and Islamic Traditions modernization implies a psychic - normative challenge to break away from hierarchy to equality, from holism to individualism, from continuity to historicity and from transcendence to secularism. The author views that 'Sanskritisation' as an empirical process of cultural changes may symbolize an orthogenetic (primary) response to change in the little tradition of the Hindu culture. According to Y. Singh, a structural analysis of change consists of demonstrating the qualitative nature of new adaptations in the patterned relationships. He believes that a structural analysis of caste in India should concentrate on how
castes and sub-castes in different regional settings maintain or deviate from their traditionally established pattern of activities and also in respect of interaction with other castes. He maintains that Sanskritisation fails to account for many aspects of cultural changes in past and contemporary India, as it neglects the non-sanskritic traditions, which often are a localized form of sanskritic tradition. It noted that introduction of universal suffrage through democratization of political structure from the village level (panchayat) to the state and the nation have added a new dimension to the functional differentiation of caste; even land reform in villages have further enhanced the pitch of the new changes. He points out that the demographic feature of caste in the South was a latent social structure, which now manifests itself, because of changes in its external environment through democratization, education, and politicization etc. His belief is that now caste functions as an important structural network in the process of modernization.

"Karnataka State Gazetteer", (Part I, 1982) presents the views that Karnataka has it own regional castes and sub-caste; dress, food habits and customs regarding marriage, funeral etc. change from caste to caste. It is also mentioned that in every caste, there are different sub-castes, based on religion, region, language, or usage. There is a mention of 'Idigas', who call themselves as Halepaika, Deevaramakkalu, Billawa, Namdhari in different parts of the state. It has also given the importance to their hereditary occupation i.e., "Toddy Tapping". It focuses on the fact that they have several totemic divisions known as 'Bali', which are exogamous. This article notes that, the term "Billawa" as in Dakshina Kannada literally means a ‘bowman’; they also officiate as priests at the temples of village deity and are therefore called as
'Pujaris'. In Tulu, they are also called as 'Biruvas' and 'Baidyas'. It points out that, the Tulu speaking Billawa follow 'Aliyasantana' and they are grouped under '16' balies or septs; widow-marriage in the form of 'Kudike' is practiced among them and divorce is prevalent. It draws the attention to the 'Aliya Santana' as a system of inheritance through the female line and the descent is reckoned from the deceased property holder to his sisters' son.

It is mentioned in the "Karnataka State Gazetteer-South Kanara District" (1973) that the castes in the district are divided into septs called 'balis'; traditionally members of the same 'bali' cannot intermarry. It gives the idea that, the majority of these balis' are named after deceased ancestors generally women, because the 'bali' follows female line in South India. According to it, toddy tapping has been a hereditary occupation of the Billawas, who are preponderant in the South Kanara District. It views that, the derivation of the word 'Billava' is a contraction of Billinavaru (Bowmen), which shows their hunting and military traditions. It also points out that many of them are physically well built and are planters of coconut gardens, ordinary agriculturists, and labourers. But in recent decade they have taken up several other occupations and have progressed in various fields. This work throws light on the prevalence of a special feature of inheritance in this district, that is, 'Aliya Santana' or 'Aliyakattu' in which descent is traced in the female line. In the Aliya Kattu law, the eldest brother of the woman becomes the head of the family and the property is inherited by his sister's son. It is clearly mentioned that even though, this law postulates inheritance through the female line, the principal figure is
always the sister's son. It is said that this law is older than the 'Marumakkttayam' system.

Edgar Thurston's, "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" (Vol-I, 1909) is based on his ethnographic survey of South India during the British rule. This work notes that the Billawas are the Tulu-speaking toddy-drawers of South Canara District; they are the numerically largest caste of the district and form close upon one-fifth of the total population. The writer mentions that the work 'Billava' is derived from "Billinavaru", bowmen as the men of that caste were formerly employed as bowmen by the ancient native rulers. He wrote that 'Baidya' and 'Pujari' occur as their caste names; some Billavas officiate as priests ('Pujaris') at bhutas thanas and 'Garidis'. Many of these priests are credited with the power of invoking the aid of 'bhutas' or spirits and curing diseases. There is a mention in this work that, the Billawa, like the Bunts had a number of exogamous septs ('balies'), running in the female line and also the caste has a headman called 'Gurikar'. He discussed about marriage and death ceremonies, religious rituals, other customs, and practices of Billawas.

P. Gururaj Bhat in his book, "Studies in Tuluva History and Culture" (1975) focuses on the social history of Tulunadu, including various significant castes of the area. According to him, social history of Tulunadu should begin with certain significant facts of three classes of its people - The Billavas and Mogers; the Nadavas and Nayars, and the Brahmins and Jains. In his opinion the role of these three strata of Tuluva Society in the variegated activities of social and cultural life has been more marked than those of the rest of the communities of people. He also pointed out that Billawas were numerically the largest
community in the district of South Canara. For him, term 'billava' seems essentially a genetic term and it simply means a bowman or a hunter. He said that it is really difficult to decide whether these Billawas represent the hunting stage of civilization, because, there appears to have been much of blood inter-mixture. According to him, 'Baidya' and 'Pujari' are the surnames employed by them. He further says that it was the two Billawas, Koti-baidya and Chennayya-baidya, who after their heroic end, were deified and these have been enshrined in the 'Sthanas' known as 'Baidarkala garadi'. Even he said that in spite of the numerical strength of this community, epigraphs of Tuluva are few and far between in referring to them. This may be because of their inferior position in society. He also illustrates the 'bali system and Aliya Santana system in this work.

K.P. Bahadur, in his "The Castes Tribes and Culture of India" (Vol, 7, 1981) studied about Halepaiks, who are also called as Billawas. He pointed out that they are a caste of toddy drawers residing in the Canara district. It seems to him that, they are in some way connected with the kingdom of Vijayanagar and perhaps at one time employed in the service of the kings of that empire. Many of them were most likely soldiers in the armies of the Hindu kingdoms of the South. As he wrote, they were brave and able soldiers. He said that they are also interesting because of their unique totemistic organization. According to him, the caste consists of the endogamous divisions: the Tengina Divar or Tengina Makkalu, who also known as the 'Children of the coconut tree', live on the costal area, and Baina Divar or Kan Divar, who take their name from the sago -palm ('bainu') live above the Ghats. He views that, the coastal Halepaiks consider themselves to be superior and so
there is no intermarriage between the two divisions. He analyses 'bali' system, organization, occupations of Billawas. He mentioned in this work that, each exogamous section of the Halepaiks is known as 'bali' and is named after some animal or tree, which is considered to be sacred and is worshipped by them. He further wrote that they were originally agriculturists and they used to draw toddy, later on they turned to minor occupation like quarrying, carpentry, stone-cutting and trade. He also studied about their social customs related to birth, marriage, and death.

Prof. G.K. Karanth in his article "Idigas - Redefining their identity", in New Indian Express (dated 01-12-2002) wrote that an important feature of castes in post-independence India, has been to forge a common identity, a process that may be referred to as 'broadcasting' the castes. He pointed out that Idigas as a caste community have come together, although they are known by different names in different parts of Karnataka like Bhandari, Billava, Belachada, Deevaru, Desha Bhandari, Devaramakkalu, Iliga, Izhava, Gaundla, Halepaikaru, Illavan, Kalar, Namdhar, Tiya, Guttedar, Shindhya etc. It was during the mid-1950s that, according to him, the process of broadcasting began, largely as a result of First Backward Class Commission listing a set of caste name as synonymous with Idiga. It is mentioned that, during 1990, their population was estimated to be 10,17,828 persons. It is also pointed out that Idigas followed the trend of mobilizing numbers by forming an association of their own as early as 1944. But they did not achieve success. In this article, the author also discussed about their occupational and their participation in politics, journalism, cinema etc. He expressed the view that, changing
policies - prohibition, banning of toddy sale, promotion of arrack and liquor, new rules governing auctions - lead to significant changes in the lives of Idigas. He also observed that the major challenges faced by this community today are establishment of professional college and also the gulf between the rich and the poor Idigas is growing.

In a book "Karnataka Parampare" (Vol. I, 1992) edited by P.S. Ramanujam, it is observed that Tulu speaking and toddy drawers Billawas constitute a major section of population of Dakshina Kannada district. Like Bunts, they also had many 'balis'. It also mentioned that, even today, Aliya Santana system prevails among them; still they have a practice of 'Kaidare' at the time of marriage and 'Bidudare', system for widow's marriage. They also worship 'bhutas'.

The book "Folk Rituals" (2002) of U.P. Upadhyaya and Susheela P. Upadhayaya gives valuable insights about the significance of the Folk rituals as religious performances, community traditions of the Tuluva region of Coastal Karnataka. It includes description of the various stages of the rituals along with the examples of the 'paddanas' or folk epics. It is depicted here that Billavas are the original dwellers of the Tuluva soil. It is mentioned in this book that, among the religious faiths observed among the inhabitants of South India, ascribbed to Dravidian racial origins, the spirit-cult, involving worship of semi-divine spirits appears to be the most primitive one. It is also stressed that 'Bhuta' worship needs to be viewed not simply as a religious observance, but also as a social phenomenon involving every member of the village community, across caste barriers or religious denominations. It is observed that there are instances of association of spirits with certain castes - For instance, Koti and Chennaya are
supposed to be the guardian angels of the Billawa tenant class. According to the authors, each caste has its own role to play in the 'bhuta' worship; differences of caste and community are discarded; usually Bunts are the organizers and Billawas are priest. They observe the importance of Tulu 'Paaddans' as the expression of the downtrodden men and oppressed women. The cultural heroes like Koti- Chennaya revolt against the caste system.

K.K. Kudva in his book 'Dakshina Kannadada Ithihas" (1948), had discussed about 'Aliyakattu Santana' system and also about Billawas. He pointed out that in Ballals' kingdom the work of toddy tapping was accorded to Billawas, who are not afraid of blood-shed. Because of their occupation, they attained lowest position.

In "Antiquities of South Kanara" (1969) P. Gururaj Bhat expressed the view that the Billavas and the Mogeras originally belonged to the same stock. And they must have been important stratum of original settlers. He pointed that, all the castes of South Kanara, except the Brahmins, seemed to have belonged to one 'bali' or the other.

In a book "Tuluva Darsana" written by Peter J.Clauss, translated to Kannada by A.V. Navada, (1987), there is description of kinship system of undivided Dakshina Kannada district. There is analysis of Kinship terminology, kin groups of the matrilineal castes. It is said here that Billavas, who are toddy drawers, constitute one of the influential castes of Dakshina Kannada. There is similarity as far as structure of family is concerned between Bunts and Billawas. It is observed that using of Kinship terminologies differ in accordance with the nature of family system.
"Koti Chennaya Paaddana Samputa", edited by Damodar Kalmady (2002), deals mainly with the origin of Billawa caste, as depicted in 'Paaddanas'. It is a good collection of Paaddanas related to the two cultural heroes of Billawas, Koti and Chennaya, which has been sung during different occasions. It shows that these two historical heroes fought for injustice and gave very much importance for truth. It is reported in this work that the "Paaddanas' of Koti-Chennaya display cultural activities, and feelings of people of Tulunadu.

Vishwanath Kamad's "Tuluvara Mumbai Valase" (1994) analyses the historical background of Tulunadu, Tulu language, some important features of castes and mainly examines the migration of Tulu people to Mumbai in large number. It also deals with the migration of Billawas to Mumbai and how it affects their social and economic life, and associational activities. It notes that Billavas one of the famous social classes of Tulunadu, are called by different names as Biruvaru, Baidyaru, Pujaris etc. According to the author, they could not be 'Idigas' of Bangalore. He also goes on to say that they had matrilineal system of family, they are well-built, courageous people and also ignorant and simple. That is why; still they remained as backward community. He says that in 1932 'Billavas' association was formed, and then in 1952, it took a shape of unified association, after merging of four other small associations, with a slogan 'Progress through Unity'. He had given complete picture of the activities of the association to deal with the various problems of community.

In the "Directory of Karnataka Business Houses, Karnataka Organizations and Kannadigas in Greater Bombay and Suburbs" (1961) it is mentioned that, the Billawara Association established in the year
1932 at Bombay, with the objects such as promotion of education, helping and rehabilitation of destitute men and women, working for the all-round progress of the community. Being an eminent Kannada Association in Bombay City, its strength of members is high. It is said that ever since its inception the Association has embarked in many welfare scheme for the good of the community and the country.

Laxman Telagavi in his book "Hindulida Vargagalu and Dalitha Chalavaligalu", (1999) had given some statistical information about representation of Idigas in public services and politics. It shows that the representation of Idiga community in public services and political activities is very less.

The study of L.S.Ainapur "The Dynamics of Caste Relations in Rural India" (1986) analyses the social change in rural India to discover the reality. Here the critical group relations constituting social structure are identified as inter-caste relations in the rural setting. These relations are examined by taking into account the sub-structures such as social, economic, religions, political and educational. The study also raises a vital question about the alternatives to be adopted in transforming the traditional Indian rural social structure to meet the growing needs of a secular and socialistic social order. It highlights that the changes in India, that are accommodated so far are organizational and not structured. The author's opinion is that for adequate empirical generalizations regarding the caste system, each region and village has to be studied individually. According to him, caste is a system incorporating within it a structure and organization and is based on endogamy, hierarchy, and commensal restrictions. Here 'Sanskritisation process was illustrated on the basis of two villages he studied, citing
examples as: the observance of fasts, the performance of "satynarayana pooja" and the dowry system have now been incorporated into the religions and marriage practices of the Lingayats and other low caste Hindus. Further, to study the problems of continuity and change, he made distinction between concepts of social structure and social organization, as developed by Raymond Firth. This criterion is formulated thus any social change which seeks only rearrangement and re-formulation within a given structural framework is identified as an organizational change. On the other hand, any social change which attempts the radical transformation can be termed as a structural change.

Bhat, T.K.V in his article "Socio-cultural Change in Dakshina Kannda" in 'Samaja Shodhana', Journal of the Mangalore Sociology Association (Vol. 2, March, 1993) expressed that, as a social - cultural region. Dakshina Kannada is marked by unity in diversity; diverse castes and communities speaking a variety of languages and observing a variety of customs and traditions have lived in harmony. In his opinion one of the unique features of "Tuluva" Society is the practice of matrilineal system by most non-Brahmin Hindu castes. Further he says that groups like Bunts, Billavas, Mogaveeras, Holeyas seem to have become castes through "Sanskritization" and the kind of service they rendered to the local chieftains. Analyzing socio - cultural change among the caste groups, he viewed that rapid growth of population resulted in migration from D.K. to Cities and towns in other parts of the country; persons belonging to the castes like Bunts and Billavas began to migrate to Bombay as early as the 1930s in search of better opportunity. The remittance of these migrants to their families has led
to an improvement of the conditions of the villagers. He observed that socio-cultural change in the case of Billavas differs in some aspects from that of the Mogaveers, a fishermen castes; it is because of the difference in their structural pattern in Hindu society. The Billavas are traditionally not permitted to enter the temples, where no such restriction existed for Mogaveers, and this led to the Billawas taking upon the reform movement of Narayana Guru for their upliftment. He further goes on to say that though migration to cities has helped those, who left their homes and their traditional occupation of toddy-tapping could not help those who remained in the district. Talking about the present situation it is viewed that social legislations against untouchability; reservation for SC, ST and other Backward Classes, the successful implementation of Land Reforms, universal franchise and other development have brought about radical changes in the social systems of Dakshina Kannada.

Joel M. Charon's book "The Meaning of Sociology" (1996) is an introduction to the perspective of Sociology, which is useful for understanding society, social change, and social problem. In this it is viewed that social mobility refers to change in the individual's class either in relation to his or her parents or during his or her own lifetime. Society has high mobility, when individuals are likely to change their positions. According to the author, class, race, and gender are part of special social structure called 'social stratification system'. He has emphasized the complexity of social change, which results from many factors such as, persons attempting change, social conflict, the social and physical environment, technology, population change, and changes
in the patterns themselves. He views that each society's unique social patterns make it difficult to generalize about change between societies.

A.R. Desai's "Social Background of Indian Nationalism" (1976), provides multisided account of the structural transformation that took place in India, under the impact of British Rule. According to the author, Indian society experienced a qualitative structural transformation during British rule, which led it on a new and different path of development; it generated forces, which directly or indirectly gave a mortal blow to the very root of the caste system. It is mentioned here that caste system was 'the steel frame of Hinduism' and was more ancient than the Vedas, it divided the Hindu community into a multitude of almost hermetically sealed groups; while Hinduism made for the cultural unity of all Hindus in the past, it socially disintegrated them into an ever increasing number of groups and sub-groups; The caste system thrived and persisted for many centuries primarily because of the low level of economic existence of the Indian people; It lost whatever usefulness it might have in the past under the new social, economic and political conditions created by the British rule. The author also observed that the growth of the national movement and the class struggle drove a section of the wealthy classes to support the caste system as the weapon to sabotage growing unity of the people. Caste charity and mutual aid organizations in a caste basis were also factors in retarding the process of the dissolution of the caste. Analyzing its future trend, the caste privileges practically vanished in the legal sphere, but in the social sphere, they survived because of customs and force of inertia among the people; the tendency had been towards the progressive dissolution of caste. He predicted that, accumulating anti-
caste consciousness of people was sure to burst into large-scale practical anti-caste actions, even in the matter of marriage; and with the disappearance of endogamy, its last formidable pillar would collapse.

The book "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies" of Abbe J.A. Dubois translated by H.B. Beauchamp (1959), deals with traditional origin of caste, the ceremonies practiced by the sudras and, Brahmins, rules of conduct for married women and so on. It views that there are few castes, which are distinguished by some special custom, apart from the peculiar religious, usages, and ceremonies. It is mentioned here that, of all kinds of punishment, the hardest for a Hindu is that which cuts him off from his caste.

In the book "Marriage and Family in India" (1958), K.M. Kapadia attempted to study Hindu marriage and family in greater detail. He views that the marriage rites differ in performance from caste to caste. He emphasized that the study of marriage or family in India involves the study of different patterns in their social and physical background. In his opinion it is only with Raja Ram Mohan Roy that a movement in favour of social change organized on the ideal of social justice. Then it is said that, with the advent of modern industrial organization two major changes in the caste system have taken place that is, freedom in the matter of choice of occupation, mitigating caste distinctions in the matter of food and increasing social intercourse among members of different castes; Now there is a struggle among castes to improve their relative status in the hierarchy, each caste below challenging the position of the caste above and at the same time being unprepared, to concede the same right to the one below it. In his analysis of present situation, the author viewed that the weakening of
some features of caste has not produced any over-all effect on the systems as a whole, the area of social intercourse has widened not as a result of the acceptance of the idea of social justice, but as a result of the inability of the higher groups in the hierarchy to maintain the status quo. He further expressed the opinion that Hindu sentiments are even today in favour of the joint family, education for women brought about a tremendous change in Hindu marriage and in family ideals and practices.

Kuppuswamy's book "Social Charge in India" (1972) is concerned with general view regarding social change and also the traditional as well as the modern social values which are at the basis of contemporary Indian life, various factors which led to social change and also the way in which changes have been taking place in particular areas of social life in India such as caste system, position of women, position of labour etc. In his opinion, social change to be real and lasting must be based on individual change; it takes place when there is a structural change in society. He viewed that caste system is one of the most unique features of Indian social life and also one of the most persistent features, which has evaded the various attempts to eliminate it, right through the ages. Here, it is mentioned that one significant feature in the 20th century has been the weakening of the barriers between the sub-caste and the barriers arising out of pollution; Higher education, Government employment, and urbanization have led to the crumbling of these barriers. The author of this book observed the lack of any organized movements on the part of the lower castes against the upper castes for the removal of their social disabilities. His studies on the attitude of the college students in the composite Madras state in
1949-50, toward the caste system showed clearly that the resentment against it is very much higher in the south than in the north. In conclusion, he said that as far as the Hindu is concerned, whether in the village or in the city, he has accepted all the changes, but continues his life as a member of his caste group. It is also viewed that the backward castes have been trying to improve their social status and their marital condition, either by sanskritization, by adopting vegetarianism, or by westernization, going to modern educational institutions, adopting western style of living etc.

S. Rajashekar in his book "Bharathiya Samaja, (2001), wrote that caste system is not unique to India. It is only one type of systems, which is universal in nature. But compared to other places it is continued to exist in a clear way in India. There is a mention of contribution of Shri Narayana Guru in the eradication of untouchability and organization of movements against caste system. At this point the author says about the conditions of Billawas of Dakshnina Kannada. Similar to Ezavas and Pulayas of Kerala, Billawas suffered from economic exploitation and evils of untouchability, Even though their size of population is good enough, the condition of Billawas was very critical as there was a lack of leadership; During this period Sri Narayana Guru came to Mangalore and encouraged them to build temple of their own and organize themselves. According to the author by this way Sri Narayana Guru played an important role in reformation of this backward community.

T. Scarlett Epstein's Study 'South India - Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow' (1973) lays emphasis on the effect of economic opportunities on social institutions. It presents a small scale study of
development at micro level in order to examine the interaction between
economic and other variables within a social system. It was said in the
book that economic expansion in under-developed rural communities is
normally the result of an interaction between external stimulus and
internal response. She observed that caste is still very much a living
social institution not only in village but also in the urban environment.
The policy of giving relief on the basis of caste membership reinforces
inter-caste links and removes any chance of diminishing the importance
of caste as a principle of social organization. Infact it provides legal
justification for citizens to ignore equality before law and
discrimination. Author's opinion is that even if the caste system does
die some day, there is no assurance that it will not be re-incarnated in
some other shape or form. The author also expressed the view that
recent economic growth in rural India has increased economic mobility.
She found out from her case studies of two villages Government
incentives for Scheduled castes, Tribes as well as backward classes has
helped to strengthen caste, Therefore administration should substitute
economic criteria for caste as the determining qualification for
preferential treatment namely landlessness. Instead of caste,
landlessness as an economic condition is not tied to caste and may
indeed cut across caste lines.

K.L. Sharma in his book "Social Stratification and Mobility"
(1994) provides a comprehensive and critical review of the studies on
social stratification, particularly from sociology of knowledge
perspective. The debates regarding caste and class are presented with a
refreshing analysis in terms of their nexus and continuity and change.
The book provides profiles of social stratification in specific settings
such as urban - industrial, rural - agrarian and tribal. Here social mobility in caste structure in terms of levels such as individual, family and group is discussed on the basis of the author’s study of six villages in Rajasthan. Role of constitutional safeguards and welfare measures and socio-cultural movements is analyzed in relation to social mobility among the scheduled castes. The book includes the view that caste and class are not polar opposites. It was said that class has been an inbuilt mechanism within caste and it has often influenced by the institution of caste. The author felt that 'sanskritization' covers only socio-cultural aspects of change and confirm to group mobility of castes, it does not take a note of individual frontiers of mobility. Analysis of mobility in caste structure at different levels, namely family, group and individual helps in delineating the extent of mobility and also its quality and quantity. It was said that mobility at the familial level could be better explained in terms of repercussions of structural reform; Reference group theory helps in the analysis at the individual and corporate mobility is better understandable by the concept of ‘Sanskritization’ and other related concepts; mobility at these levels takes place simultaneously. The author concluded that mobility in caste structure is both inter-related and discrete. The author also discussed about patterns of mobility in caste structure such as marginally going up, marginally going down, and maintaining status quo. He also analyzed downward social mobility, which is a complex process involving social and economic, cultural and motivational factors.

The Book “Caste in Modern India and Other Essays” of M.N.Srinivas (1962) embodies his ideas in problem of academic sociology such as the nature of caste, rural and urban communities,
Hinduism, and methods of research in sociological and anthropological studies. It also deals with the political, social, and intellectual problem of modern India such as the role of caste in politics, the removal of casteism and untouchability, the egalitarian and secular ideals of the Indian constitution, the conflict between traditional Hinduism and westernization, and the transformation of Indian villages. Here the author's aim is to show that a caste is usually segmented into several sub-castes and each sub-caste is endogamous. However, the endogamous circle is widening, especially under the impact of the dowry system, which is specially characteristic of high caste, the greater mobility brought under British rule, the movement to the cities for higher education and employment, urban cosmopolitanism and westernization; In the case of the lower castes, political factors have been responsible for weakening of the barriers between sub-caste. It was emphasized here that for purposes of sociological analysis, a distinction has to be made between caste at the political level and caste at the social and ritual level. Here, it is mentioned that, 'Sanskritization' is both a part of the process of social mobility as well as the idiom in which mobility expresses itself, For him, "it means the adoption of new customs and habits, exposure to new ideas and values which have found frequent expression in the vast body of Sanskrit literature, sacred as well as secular, ‘Dominant castes’ have played an important role in either advancing or retarding this process. He further emphasized that the non-Brahmanical castes are generally less sanskritized than the Brahmins and where they dominate, non--sanskritic customs may get circulated among the people, and occasionally they may even mean the 'de-sanskritization' of the imitating castes.
The book 'India's Villages' (1955) edited by M.N. Srinivas is a collection of essays by eminent sociologists, which presents descriptions of selected villages and the socio-cultural changes taking place in them. It includes the idea that, - the number of castes living in a village is an important thing; each caste has culture of its own, which is to some extent different from the culture of the others; the structure becomes more complex as the number of castes increases. In this David G. Mandelbaum in his essay mentioned that caste structure has close ties with village economics; the economic interdependence is strictly regulated by social and religious patterns, which keep the caste groups segregated in certain respects; however the changing nature of caste has effect in village social organizations and on agricultural output.

The subjects discussed in the book ‘The Dominant Caste and Other Essays’ of M.N. Srinivas (1987) centered on village, caste and joint family, the '3' basic institutions of Indian society. It reveals the continuities amidst changes taking place in Indian society. There are insights into methods used by the social Anthropologists to identify basic social processes through meticulous empirical investigation. According to the author a caste may be said to be dominant when it preponderates numerically over the other castes and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power; a large and powerful caste group can more easily be dominant of its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too low.

Muddu Moodubelle(1998), in his book ‘Kanthabaare-Boodabaare’ (Twin Folk Heroes of Mulki of Tulunadu) deals with two cultural heroes of Billawas. He viewed that among the original inhabitants of undivided Dakshina Kannada, Billawa constitutes one of
the important caste communities since olden times. According to their occupation, they were called as Biruva, Baidya, Halepaika, Poojary, etc. This book also stresses the fact that there is no such literary document to know about their history, as they were backward community; only 'Paaddanas', historical monuments, and rituals help in this regard, which reveal that Billawa community had a very rich 'parampare' and history of thousands of years.

M.Chenna Poojary in his article "Billawara Aarthikabivridhi- ondu chintane" in 'Sinchana' a special magazine of Yuvavahini (1997) discussed about the economic activities of Billawa community and its economic backwardness. He expressed the opinion that much of the Billawa families continued as agricultural workers and land reforms did not do much to improve their economic condition, they also unaware of the various measures of economic development taken up by the Government for backward communities. The author felt for them the necessity of participating actively in every field in the present time.

The Book "The changing Rural Stratification system" of K.L.Sharma (1974) is a comparative study of six villages in Rajasthan. It presents a sociological analysis of the changing patterns of rural stratification. It is based on intensive field study of various facts of stratification systems, such as the caste, class, and power structures, which has been analysed from a basically dynamic point of view. The direction of social mobility and its impact on the community structure is also discussed. It attempted to find out the variations in the structure and direction of the emerging changes in the caste structure, status system, and class, on the basis of the controlled variations in the historical background of the villages. In his study, the author found
The book further viewed that vast changes have been taking place in the ideas of purity-pollution and particularly the inheritance of father's occupation by the son, but still caste remains an effective and significant agency of status determination.

S.C. Dube's "Understanding change-Anthropological and sociological perspectives" (1992) is about complex processes of cultural, economic, social and technological changes. It gives an account of understanding of change by sociologists and Anthologists. According to the author the analysis and explanation of change occupy
an important place in the sociological tradition He opined that in view of human cultural variability and complexity of social life, any one factor cannot explain all varied phenomena of change, multi-causality of changes has to be accepted.

The book of M.N.Srinivas – “Social change in Modern India” (1966) considered the subject of social change in modern India as vast and complex. In this the author discussed about concepts such as ‘sanskritisation’ and westernisation, as important factors of social change. Discussing about these two processes, the author viewed that caste is undoubtedly an all-India phenomenon, in the sense that there are everywhere hereditary endogamous group which form a hierarchy, and that each of these groups has a traditional association with one or two accompanied by upward mobility, results only in positional changes in the caste system and does not lead to any structural change. According to him western education, jobs in the administration and urban sources of income are all significant in contributing to the prestige and power of particular caste groups in the villages; the introduction of adult franchise and ‘panchayat raj’ has resulted in giving a new sense of self-respect and power to low castes; He observed two distinct tendencies which are implicit in the caste system- the first is an acceptance of the existence of multiple cultures, accompanied by a feeling that some institutions, ideas, beliefs and practices are relevant to one’s group; the other tendency is the imitation of the ways of higher castes.

In Kolenda, Pauline’s “Caste in Contemporary India” (1987), the constancies and the adaptations of the Indian caste system was discussed. According to the author, the constant feature in caste is its
kinship or descent-group structure; on the other hand a key feature, which adapts is occupational specialization. In this book it is opined that the traditional caste system as a set of occupationally specialized, interdependent castes ranked by purity and pollution, shows signs of disappearing. It discussed about many things such as caste as a system of descent-group, traditional caste system and its decline, and the characteristics of the emerging new caste system etc. It viewed that the institution of caste is composed of certain universal Hindu ideas like pollution concept, the social units of 'jatis' etc., According to the author of this book, the idea of pollution-contagion is universal in Hindu India, which is expressed in rules about giving food and water, touching persons and their belongings. The same book also described social and cultural mobility within the caste system. Regarding this it exhibits that competition for rank in terms of the purity-pollution values effectively fragmented society so that substantial numbers of lower caste-men were unlikely to join together to change the caste system itself or to overthrow those in control; in modern contexts fusion of caste contiguous in rank is more likely to occur; Access to modern education by the caste members is one of the preconditions to understand 'sanskritisation'. This book also observed various influences of caste association like- through it urban politically literate elite were linked with the less literate villages belonging to the same caste, it linked members of the same caste within a region, it increased effective participation in politics etc., The book predicted that if all castes started to participate in politics, contending for power through election and governmental institutions, there would be a new caste system based on a principle of competition.
"Homo Hierarchicus" by Louis Dumont (1988) is a major contribution to the general sociological theory of Indian caste. It is concerned with the traditional social organization of India from the point of view of theoretical comparison. It is a study of the caste system and its implication for Hindu society and allied groups. The author made it clear in this book that caste cannot be interpreted and understood from the point of western ideas of egalitarianism, individualism, and pre-eminence of politics and economics in society. The author opined that the caste, unified from the outside, is divided within; a particular caste is a complex group of a successive inclusion of groups of diverse orders or levels, in which different functions are attached to different levels. He is of the opinion that the caste, far more than a 'group' in the ordinary sense, is a 'state of mind'.

In his article “Social organization and Planned Culture Changes in India”, David G. Mandelbaum in the book “India villages” by M.N. Srinivas opined that the large scale development plans which are now underway in India are plans for technological and economic change. According to the author caste structure has close ties with village economics, caste ranking and economic status were closely linked, that is, a caste which was economically well could acquire ritual hallmark to raise its relative position in the hierarchy.

**Research Gap**

Billawa constitutes one of the significant castes of undivided Dakshina Kannada District. But there is no such in-depth scientific study on it. Some of the studies throw light on only historical development of Billawa community. So far no systematic study is done
on certain important aspects like its social, economic, educational, and religious patterns, their unique customs and traditions, present condition of their social institution, social mobility among Billawas etc. Therefore the present study is an attempt in this direction. It made an effort to fill up this gap.

Statement of the Problem

The caste system is embedded in the Indian social system. It is a deep-rooted form of social stratification of India. It is one of the most persistent features of Indian social life, which has evaded the various attempts to eliminate it right through the ages including contemporary times. M.N.Srinivas observes “caste is an institution of prodigious strength; it will take a lot of beating before it will die.” (1955.p.133) However, nothing is static in this world. Therefore, Indian caste system has also undergone various changes and social mobility as a process has become more active in it in recent times.

The present study deals with a sociological study of one of the important caste- communities of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts called Billawa community. This study examines socio-economic, political, and religious life of the community. The investigation focuses on the customs and practices of Billawas. The study also aimed to document the present-day changes, which took place in their social institutions, customs, and practices. The present investigation is focused on the basic question, what is the nature of educational and occupational mobility among the Billawas? The study would also inquiry into the influences of migration of Billawas to cities, their associational activities and process of politicization on its social
mobility, educational and occupational mobility. It also verifies the Billawas' own perception of their status in the society and their attitude towards the government facilities given to OBC. The levels of status of Billawa women, their political participation, and associational activities are explored in the study. It also had made an effort to find out the factors involved in the changes in socio-economic pattern of life and sources of social mobility of Billawa community.

Objectives of the study

Billawa constitutes one of the significant castes of Tulunadu. But there is no such in-depth scientific study on it so far. Therefore the proposed study on such a community has taken up with following objectives.

1. To portray the structure of social institution such as family, marriage and status of women; and explore the changes, which are taking place in them.
2. To understand the regional differences with regard to the rituals, practices followed at the time of birth, death, marriage etc.,
3. To analyze their social, economic and cultural life, on the basis of education, occupation and migration.
4. To unveil and grasp the attitudes of Billawas towards hereditary occupation, emancipation of woman, inter-caste marriages, dowry system, associational activities, and political participation.
5. To focus on the process of social mobility from a systematic sociological perspective.
6. To delineate the impact of migration, political activities and caste-associations on the community as a whole.

7. To record the unique customs and traditions of the community, before they get themselves transformed.

METHODOLOGY

1. Universe of the study

Billawas as a caste community is dispersed throughout the Karnataka state. In different parts of Karnataka they are known by different names: - Billawas, Idigas, Belchada, Devaru, Halepaikas, Namdaris, Tiyas, Guttedars, etc., But the major concentration of Billawas is found in undivided Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka State. Therefore the universe chosen for the present study is undivided Dakshina Kannada district, the western coastal strip region of Karnataka which is popularly known as Tulunadu.

In this universe historically and culturally significant places of Billawas, highly populated and least populated areas are selected for the study. The households from Bantwal, Belthangady, Karkal, Kundapur, Mangalore, Puttur, Sullia and Udupi Taluks were selected. To examine the impact of associational activities and migration, some units from some important cities of Karnataka and from Bombay are chosen as per requirement of the study. Before the selection of areas for study the researcher visited some historical places of the community like Padumale, Yenmur, Panja etc., consulted office-bearers of some Billawa associations, and also discussed the proposals for research with several significant personalities of various areas.
2. Sample Scheme

Adequate and representative samples are selected for the proposed Sociological study of the Billawa community. The researcher of the study, selected ‘250’ households. The selection of the samples is done on the basis of purposive ‘multi-stage sampling’ in order to obtain a representative sample. The areas of study were classified into two—‘developed area’ and ‘backward area’. Here ‘developed area’ means—an area where Billawas are educationally and economically advanced, and also active in political and associational activities; On the other hand ‘Backward’ area is meant for such areas where Billawas are economically and educationally backward, and least participation in political and associational activities is found.

The distribution of the sample from the universe of the study is as follows...

Table: -1.1 Sample of the study
(age-wise Classification of Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Backward</th>
<th></th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>66-75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>76-85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 1.1 exhibits that ‘66’ households (26.40%) from so called ‘backward area’ and 184 households (73.60%) from ‘developed...
area' were selected as samples for the present study. These 250 households consisted 85.2 percent of male respondents and 14.8 percent of female respondents.

The table also shows the age distribution of the respondents. Out of the total sample, 14.40% of the respondent belongs to the age group of 25-35 years; 26% belong to 36-45 years age group; 30.40% belong to the 46-55 years age group; 19.60% belong to the age group of 56-65 years; 7.20% belong to the 66-75 years age group 2.40% belong to the age group of 76 years and above. Thus the age of majority respondents is between 36 to 55 years. This age distribution of the respondents indicates that the proposed study had maximum data and views of young and middle-aged respondents and also some data from older persons.

Much care had taken in the selection of the samples. Respondents from different strata of various age-groups were chosen to fulfill the requirements of efficiency of the research and also to represent properly the field of the study.

3. Tools of data collection

In-depth and scientific data is one of the important features of the sociological investigation. For the present study established sociological methods were used. The major techniques used for data collection are- participant and non-participant observation, structured interview schedule, unstructured interview and questionnaire. Detailed description of the activities, attitudes and opinions of the respondents was collected through duly pre-tested ‘structured interview schedule’ which is comprised of both pre-coded and open ended questions.
targeted to the problem of the research. Data is also collected from the office-bearers of the different caste associations, caste- headmen of various villages, aged persons, knowledgeable and active persons of the community by having formal and informal discussions at various stages of the study.

Secondary data regarding the Billawa community was gathered from various sources such as reports of various backward class commissions, Gazetteers, souvenirs of various Billawa associations, magazines and news papers published by Billawa associations, community web sites etc.

Tape- recorder and camera was extensively used mainly to record the information about customs and traditions, rituals etc.

Much care has taken by the researcher in field work for the present research-work. Initially pilot study was conducted in the selected areas, which helped to find out mistakes and unwanted questions in the schedule, and later intensive field- work was done. Furthermore as the researcher belongs to the same community made the researcher to have easy access to the community-people for the collection of data

4. Processing of data

The data collected through the interview schedule were processed in a systematic way. The collected data were edited for checking their completeness and accuracy, and then data is tabulated and processed in the table by using computer.
Theoretical Perspectives

The present study concentrates on Billawa caste-community and its sociological study. Caste can be looked upon as a structural as well as a cultural phenomenon. As a structural phenomenon, it refers to statuses, patterned interaction among castes on the basis of different restrictions, and a stable set of social relations. As a cultural phenomenon it can be viewed as a set of values, beliefs, and practices.

It was said that caste system in India has been studied with three perspectives - indological, social-anthropological and sociological. The indological perspective takes its cue from the scriptures about the origin, purpose, and future caste system. According to this approach the object of origin of caste was the division of labour. These studies attempted to understand the complexities of the caste system within the framework of the traditional varna scheme. ‘Socio –Anthropological’ perspective have viewed caste from the cultural point of view. It ramifies itself in ‘3’ directions; structural, institutional and relational; the structural views focuses its attention on the origin of the caste system, its development and the processes of change in the structure; the institutional approach (John Rex) views it as a unique phenomenon to India; The relational approach finds caste situations in army, business, factory management, politics and so further.

On the other hand the ‘Sociological Perspective’ views caste system as a phenomenon of social inequality. In sociological literature, it is generally discussed as one form of social stratification. Sociologists have noted that all societies from the simplest to the most complex have some form of inequality.
Theoretical interest in caste studies has been overwhelming. In their analysis of caste stratification Max Weber, Kroeber and others have understood caste as an extreme form of the stratification system, where castes are considered as “closed communities”. In the writings of Hutton, G.S.Ghurye and Hocart socio-religious and ritualistic considerations have been delineated as the central feature of caste hierarchy. M. N. Srinivas writes that purity-pollution is the basis of the caste hierarchy, and this principle governs inter-cast relations.

Thus different thinkers viewed caste system in a different way and various approaches are there to the study of caste system. However the present sociological study on Billawas incorporated ‘exploratory perspective’. Structural functionalist and conflict perspectives are not followed in the present study. The major emphasis in this study is to get new insights of the community through the exploratory perspective; it made an effort to deal with social change and social mobility in the Billawa community of Tulunadu.

Various theories of change had powerful influence in sociological thinking. Some of them are - Evolutionary theories, cyclical theories, Conflict theory etc. For Functionalists and Conflict theorists, the starting point of sociological analysis of change is structure. Social change, thus, was at the core of the foundation of sociology as a discipline. The preoccupation with social change, moreover, prompted the early sociologists to conceive of developmental schemes to account for the transformation of society.

Mobility is a part of the general and broad process of social change. Pitrim Sorokin defined social mobility as “any transition of an individual or social object or value, anything that has been erected or
modified by human activity from one social position to another.” K.L. Sharma (1974, p129) observed three important levels at which mobility takes place in caste structure. They are:

a) Mobility of one family within a caste to higher or lower positions,

b) Mobility of a group of families within a caste to higher or lower positions

c) Mobility of individual member within a family belonging to certain caste to higher or lower position.

M.N. Srinivas is one the earliest sociologist to deal with phenomenon of social mobility in Hindu caste system. To examine this; he employed the concepts of ‘sanskritisation’ and westernization.

In the present investigation social change and social mobility is analyzed on the basis of avenues such as education, occupation, migration, political participation, sanskritisation, westernization, modernization etc.,

**Importance of the study**

The present investigation is justifiable from the critical as well as practical point of view. At the present situation there is a necessity of sociological study of Billawa community. There is no such in-depth and scientific study of the community so far. Therefore the proposed study helps to fulfill this gap. In near future as there is a fear of extinction of unique customs and practices of Billawa community, the present study would focus on them and made efforts to record it permanently. It also verifies about social changes and social mobility in the community, which helps to grasp its present position in the region. The study would also examine the cumulative impact of a number of
dependent and independent variables such as new social identity, education, occupation, income, level of political participation, migration, associational activity etc., in order to understand the social mobility among Billawas. Thus at the theoretical level the investigation would help to get conceptual clarification of various things, social changes and also social mobility. At the practical level the present research-study would help in understanding the Billawas' expectations, aspirations, and ambitions about modern life. It would also help to identify various changes and continued elements within the community. As Billawas belong to the category of Other Backward Classes the study definitely provide the basis for Government policies and also other developmental activities. It is because the present study gives information about their levels of participation in government services and political fields. Moreover this study enables one to understand the Billawa community, which is one of the important and interesting communities of Karnataka in a better-way.

Limitations of the study

The present sociological study of Billawa community in spite of researcher’s efforts to make it complete objective study, had some limitations which can be listed as below-

1. The study is exposed to a difficulty of getting most reliable information about educational levels and income levels of families over generations as many of the respondents do not know about it.

2. There is a limitation of getting complete valid information about certain aspect such as taking dowry, status of women, following traditional customs etc. This is because nowadays most of Billawas
involved in public activities and they are trying to exaggerate their opinions about such things.

3. The present study depends on only a few aged persons of the community to derive information about customs, practices, and rituals related to birth, marriage, and death as many Billawas of present generation do not know about it.

**Scheme of the Study**

The present study has been divided into following chapters:

**Chapter I**

**Introduction**

This chapter concentrates on review of literature, research gap, statement of the problem, objectives of study, methodology, and theoretical perspectives. It also deals with the importance of the study and limitations of the study. It also provides chapter scheme.

**Chapter II**

**Historical Profile of Billawas of Tulunadu**

This section of the study reports the demographic aspect of the district, origin of the Billawa community and its spread.

**Chapter III**

**Situational Analysis of the Community**

This chapter deals with historical profile of Billawas of Tulunadu and portrays an account of social, economic, religious, and educational pattern of Billawa Community.
Chapter IV

Present condition of social Institutions

This chapter examines the structure of social institutions like family, kinship system, marriage, status of women etc. Traditional customs and practices related to menstruation, pregnancy, birth, death etc. are also examined in this section. It also focuses on changes, which had taken place in these social institutions and social customs.

Chapter V

Socio-Political Mobilization of Billawas

This chapter provides an account of social mobility among Billawas. It verifies the role of migration, role of the association in the development of Billawas as a whole. It also evaluates the influence of SNDP and political activities of Billawas.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

It presents the summery and some of the major findings of the study.

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