

CHAPTER - III

CASTE

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the discussion was focussed on the village, that is the location of the present study as a whole. It included on the one hand its geographical and historical background while on the other, the village was introduced as a unit in terms of social, economic and ritual activities. This serves the background for the present chapter.

The focal point of the present chapter is the caste. Other topics and concepts related to this central theme are the identity of caste and the economic and political interests of the individuals. From this point of view, the concept of caste, its features, that is, the hereditary occupation, **commensality**, and endogamy will be described in this chapter.

3.2 The concept of caste and the context of *varna* and *jati*

The word '**caste**' comes from the Portuguese word *Castas*, meaning '**species**' or '**breeds**' of animals or plants, and '**tribes**', '**•races**', '**class**', or '**lineages**' among human beings (see, Dubois 1996:14; Dumont 1970a:21-22; Hutton 1946:47; Klass 1987; Marriott & Inden 1974; Pitt-Rivers 1971). This means the term '**caste**' has no equivalent in any of the Indian languages. It refers, at one time, to the *varna*, at another to the groups known as *jati* (see, Quigley 1993).

Varna is the **four-fold** division in Indian society, as it is defined in the ancient sacred texts. The four divisions are, *Brahman* (traditionally, priest and scholar), ***Kshatriya*** (ruler and soldier), ***Vaisha*** (merchant), and *Shudra* (peasant, labourer and servants). The first three are called '**twice-born**' (***dvija***) as the men who belong to these categories are entitled to don the sacred thread, while *Shudra* is not. In the *varna* scheme, the '**untouchable**' is outside or *panchama varna*.

The ***varna*** scheme refers only to the broad categories of the Hindu society, not to any functional and effective unit. That is, *varna* is only a reference category not a real group (see, Dube 1990:48; Srinivas 1962b, 1966a, 1984, 1989). In the *varna* model of caste, there is a single - **pan-Indian** hierarchy without any variation between one region and another, in the sense that the *Brahman* is placed at the top¹ and the criteria of ranking are based upon the ritual purity given in religious texts. But, in the matter of spread of these *varnas* and caste compositions within the ***varna*** model, there is a variation from region to region. In South India, it is said, there are no indigenous and authentic *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishas* (see, Dube 1990:49; Srinivas

1962b:66). In these areas, these two categories refer to the local castes which claim the status of Kshatriyas and Vaishas (**varnas**) by the virtue of their traditional occupation and their dominant positions. In this scheme, the category of Shudra subsumes the majority of castes (*jatis*) which have little in common. It includes, at one end, a rich, powerful and highly **Sanskritised** group while at the other end the tribes who submerged and assimilated into the Hindus marginally (see, Srinivas 1962b:65) .

jati, on the other hand, is a local system. While in the varna scheme there are only four sub-divisions (or five, if 'untouchable' included), there are a number of castes (*jatis*) in a single local area. And the 'untouchable' is an integral part of *jati* system. *Jati* is characterised as the hereditary, occupational, and **endogamous** group which forms a hierarchy in the local rather than universal **context**. Each *jati* has its name and certain kinds of attributes and commonly the term '**jati**' is translated as 'caste' (see, B eteille 1996:46). Therefore throughout the description that follows the term '**caste**' stands for *jati*, and not for the varna.

The *jati* model of caste is characterized by separation, interdependence and hierarchy. Relations between castes are hierarchically expressed in terms of pollution and purity, but the concept of purity or pollution is a disputed criterion and does not order the groups in a strict sense. The position of many castes in the local hierarchy is **ill-defined** and often controversial. However, in most areas of the country Brahmans are placed at the top and the '**untouchables**' at the bottom. But in the middle range between the Brahman and the 'untouchables', the caste system shows lack of clarity in the hierarchy (see. Srinivas 1962b:66) . And the criterion of ranking is not only derived from religious consideration but also has reflected secular power, i.e. economic wealth or political dominance (see, Srinivas 1966a:5; van der veen 1972:18) .

Each *jati* is characterized by a set of regulations to **keep** its own identity as well as to separate it from others. It is clear that certain rules are being prescribed regarding the exchange of food, women, and services. These *jati* regulations are, the rules of **commensality**, endogamy, and traditional *jati* occupations. The rules regarding marriage, i.e. exchange of women, are an expression of one's own identity and extreme separation from other *jatis*. The other distinctive character of the *jati* is the special and exclusive occupation claimed by or attributed to it. There are such *jatis* as '**Barber**', '**Carpenter**', '**Blacksmith**', '**Washerman**', '**Weaver**', '**Potter**' etc., whose names indicate their primary occupations. The commensality or the

pattern of food exchange represents the ritual hierarchy. The restrictions regarding food refer to separation. Thus the acceptance of food is restricted to one's own *jati* and this reaffirms the separation and distance between *jatis*.

The membership of castes is determined not by selection but **by** birth. In the traditional system the only way to become a Hindu was to belong to a caste, so the unit of mobility was actually a group not an individual or a family. Although an individual cannot improve his caste affiliation, a caste group can try to move upward by coping, imitating or adapting the behavior of either the ritually high castes, such as the Brahman or the economically and politically powerful castes called 'dominant castes'². To move up its rank, a caste group may change its name or occupation, follow the way of life of high or dominant caste, and claim its long-lost membership of a higher caste.

The introductions of adult franchise and '**Panchayat Raj**' (local self government) since independence of India have resulted in giving self-respect and power to lower castes, including **Harijans**³ who enjoy reservation seats in academic institutions as well as government jobs. Therefore, caste mobility moves not only forward for ritual ranking but also backward for economic and political benefits, i.e. reservation seats. In other words, each caste on the one hand maintains its ritual identity and tries to move up its hierarchical position in the caste system by changing name, occupation and life styles. On the other hand, each caste pursues the economic and political interests by claiming its backwardness or insisting its traditionally exploited position. This quality of caste mobility is spurred after the introduction of the Mandal Commission by the Central Government, in 1990 (see, Engineer 1991; **Heuzé** 1981; Srinivas 1996).

However, the traditional system allowed individual castes to move up or down by the King or rulers, but the tendency of upward mobility increased with the survey of census⁴. The census record was treated as a **government-sponsored** channel of caste mobility (see, Srinivas 1966b:94-100). While the census report gave an opportunity to move up or to fix the relative position of different castes, the Mandal Commission proposed to offer economic and political benefits to those castes or class who belong to certain categories, i.e. OBCs (The Other Backward Castes and Classes), SCs (Scheduled Castes) and STs (Scheduled Tribes).

So, it is said, the Mandal Commission would keep Indian society divided along caste lines, and the governmental caste **classification** - Forward, Backward, and Scheduled Castes - roughly parallels the *varna* ranking. Table - 11 shows the similarity

between the *varna* scheme and the government caste (or class) classification.

TABLE - 11
VARNA, JATI AND GOVERNMENT CLASSIFICATION

<i>varna</i> scheme		Jatis of the Village		Govt. Classification
Twice born	Brahman Kshatriya Vaisha	Brahman Thakur Komati Reddy	Lingayat* Muslims	(Forward Castes or or Classes)
Non-twice born	Shudra	Yadav, Muduraju, Mera, Goud, Are-kitika, Padma-salle, Sara Gandla, Kammari, Medari, Waddera, Chakalli, Mangalli, Dasari, Budigajangam	Vishva-Brahman Katika (M) Fakir**	Backward castes or classes
Out of Varna	Out castes	Dore, Mochi, Mala, Madiga		Scheduled Castes
	Tribe	Erukalla		Scheduled Tribes

* The Lingayat and the group of Vishva Brahman traditionally rejected the Brahman oriented classification. But gradually they have been included in the formation of caste hierarchy. However, their positions are ambiguous in the hierarchical order.

** Fakir does not officially belong to CBC category, however, some of them reported as the name of Noorbasha, or Dudekullar which are the same category of the Fakir.

So, the caste system can be characterized by segmentation of several orders, either by ritual criteria based on the birth or by artificial classification of the Government. A caste may be seen as a segment occupying more or less a specific position in the different orders or classifications (see, Beteille 1996:46-47; Carter 1975: 133-134; Dumont 1983:37). But the boundaries of units in segmentary caste system and the relationships between them are largely based on their group identities as well as their economic interests. In other words, the caste system is composed of discrete castes which separate from each other, whereas individual caste becomes a legally recognized group, with state-allocated benefits and privileges. With segmentary structures and relativity of identity, the castes or the caste systems are empirically various and varying integrated social orders.

In the following **subunits**, the main features of caste system, i.e. hereditary occupation, **commensality** and endogamy, will be described, especially with a focus on the mechanism of social boundary maintenance. That is, how people comply with norms or code of conduct, or how individuals cope with, formulate, follow or break rules to gain the benefits in a social context.

3.3 Hereditary occupations and the context of caste division

In the caste system, there is a division of labour between castes. Traditionally, a hereditary specialization is ascribed to each caste, the profession became the obligatory monopoly of the families of each caste. To perform it was not merely a right but a duty imposed by birth upon the children (see, Bougie 1958:8). Therefore the caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary occupational groups. Theoretically each group has a profession imposed traditionally and its member can depart only within certain limits from it, but in practice, a caste's traditional occupation does not restrict all members of it to that calling.

Each caste has been integrated into the economic system as a professionally specialized group, the exchange of goods and services between families of different caste and/or for the village as a whole has been regularized by such systems as **watan-dari** and **pethubai** in the village. The interdependence between the different caste occupations has been based on hereditary ties. Rewards in terms of agricultural produce, and quantities were fixed.

Now the occupational specialization is tending to diminish, with castes being economically linked more through competition than through functional interdependence (see, Mayer 1960:88-91). In the village the changes of traditional occupation are common at present day when members of all castes are seen opening shops, cultivating lands, driving buses or auto-rickshaws. Moreover, some activities such as agriculture and trade are common to a very large part of population, and can neither be considered as an actual '**division** of labour', nor as a specialization. However, there are some totally distinct groups engaged in the same activity (e.g. fishery) while claiming to be in different castes (see, Meillassoux 1973:91).

The broad and durable relations are essentially those **between** a **food-producing** family and the families that supply them with goods and services. These links are confined to only some families of certain castes, rather than caste as a whole. This

relationship is supposed to be durable, exclusive and multiple. The stability of relationship is enforced by family inheritance. That is, the right to serve a particular family is treated as a heritable and divisible right (see, **Mandelbaum 1970: 161-162; Srinivas 1987a:74-75**).

3.3.1 Traditional occupations and castes in the village

Each caste is traditionally associated with a particular occupation, however it does not mean that all members of the caste have to do their hereditary-assigned calling. Moreover, as Gough (1960a) indicates, the caste community is no longer in occupation and wealth due to a series of political and economic changes. Caste is, now, merely a limiting rather than a determining factor in the choice of occupation. A good many members of different castes and, in some cases the caste itself, have given up their traditional occupations, especially with the increase in immigrants and new **caste-free** occupations, the development of new industries which give the opportunities of **caste-free** employment, the expansion of trade, and the establishment of democratic political system.

Castes are, nowadays, obviously no longer characterized by the practice of hereditary occupations, but only by the nomenclature itself, that is, to put in **Dumont's** (1970a:74) terms, "heredity is more important than function". Under such condition, it is clear that the heterogeneous caste members do not share any common economic interest which is based on the hereditary occupation itself. Caste interest is defined as ritual and social, that is, caste members share common ritual and/or social identity. Nowadays, the individual's economic interest is prior to the caste interest to some extent. Therefore, the caste appears as 'a collective **individual**', with the process of '**substantialisation**' in which competition substitutes for interdependence between castes, and each individual confronts other individuals within/out castes. With such processes of the break-down of hierarchical interdependence between castes, and the increase of socio-economic **differentiation** within the caste, any moral obligation to follow an ancestral occupation is practically extinct, and caste membership is seen as unconnected with the means of livelihood (cf. **Dumont 1970a:222; Fuller 1996b**).

But contrary to the internal changes of caste system, each caste group is emerging as political interest group based on caste membership rather than on the manifestation of caste because there is an increased awareness of one's own group as a political or economic entity, while the pollution complex or the idea of hierarchy is weakening. **Shah (1985:1)** says, "the caste

system has become weak and its traditional structure has been eroded in more than one way. At the same time, caste sentiments in terms of '**we-ness**' among the members still persist".

In the village, there are Muslims and twenty nine Hindu castes. The occupations and functions of the different castes are not wholly exclusive, but the nomenclature of castes is founded on their traditional specializations. For example, agriculture is one of the caste-free or '**open**' occupation, but it was formerly assigned as the task of the Reddy caste. Similarly, several other castes have taken trading as their means of livelihood, though it was designated to the **Komati** caste only. However, a large number of crafts and occupations in the village still remain the monopoly of specific castes. Besides this they are free to take certain other subsidiary sources of livelihood also. With this reality existing in the village situation what follows will be a description of different castes and their traditionally assigned occupations and the present situation of their occupational holdings⁵. Also a point worth noting here is that the ordering of the castes in the following delineations is more or less according to the accepted ritual hierarchy, though there are many controversial points regarding the intervening castes between two extremes, i.e. the Brahman and the '**untouchables**'.

3.3.11 The Brahman

Apart from the immigrants, there are only three Brahman families in the village. Each of them had enjoyed different status and office, for instance, one that of the feudal lord (or the **office of *Deshmukh***), the other that of priesthood (*pujari* of the village temple), and the third one that of a local ritual specialist (*purohit*), respectively. The *Deshmukh* and *pujari* belong to the Madhav subsect, and the village priest belongs to the **Smartha subsect**. However there is no record of intermarriage between these subsects. Of them, the *Deshmukh* family had lost its powerful and prestigious office before independence of India (**cf.** 2.9.11). But, still he is the largest land-owner, and has maintained a reputation and authority among the villagers through ritual functions, i.e. Dasara and Temple festival as well as by landowning. Nowadays, he stays in Hyderabad city for the most part of the year with his two married sons, one of whom is the businessman and the other the general manager of a private company.

The *pujari* family, also gave up the office since the father or head of household expired in 1971. The late father, had educated his three sons (one of them is the head of the at present household and two of his brothers) and made them to take

other jobs. The present head of family is working for a private company, his younger brother is a government officer and his elder brother who expired in 1994 worked for a government office at Hyderabad city. However, the family takes a key role as a priest during the annual function of the temple of the **Deshmukh** family. It is, they claim, the **dharma** of his family. Though they abandoned the temple priesthood longtimes ago, the male members of the family are still being called as '**pujari**' or '**phanthullu**' by the people with somewhat respective manner. Moreover, the family have retained the **inamlands** which was donated by the Nizam to the family for its temple priesthood. Nowadays, the charge of the temple priesthood is taken by a Brahman family who recently immigrated in the village for the livelihood.

The third Brahman family is the local priest who performs rituals for the marriage and other functions (except those of death) as well as an astrologer. The head of this family enjoys considerable local prestige not only due to his ritual status and office, but also for his secular position as a high school teacher and a substantial landowner. He inherited the ritual office of this family as a son-in-law, because his wife was the only daughter of her father. The family's sphere of ritual services as the local priest crosses the boundary of the village, that is, the village and a part of Sangareddy town are the heritable area of the family. People consult the priest regarding the suitability of proposed marriage, and an auspicious date and time for the wedding. His main duty as a priest lies in performing marriage ceremonies for the villagers. He officiates at the marriage ceremonies of the local people, including those of the '**untouchables**' and Tribes. But in former days he had not officiated the other low castes such as the 'untouchables' and the Tribes. He explains the reason for such changes: "Originally there was no religious difference, but in accordance with the tradition the difference was introduced. For instance, the *Harijans* used to clean the whole village, remove the dead animals and used to eat the meat of carcass following their custom. Therefore, they were being looked down and treated as '**untouchables**'. But nowadays, circumstances have changed. They do not take the meat of carcass any more, and follow 'our' customs. As they come to 'our' society, we should go to 'their' society. There is no separation between them and us any more. The *Harijans* follow the Hindu dharma. So I officiate at their marriage ceremony". This situation has been accepted also as a token of change by the other high castes as well .

On childbirth the Brahman is consulted about the fortune of baby concerned with the planetary position at the actual time of baby's birth. Similarly, after a death too he is consulted. If

it is found that the time of death was inauspicious, the members of the household may be asked to vacate the residence temporarily, for a period of weeks to several months, according to the advice of the Brahman. These consultations on the occasions of birth and death are generally sought by the people of higher castes and those who are well-to-do. In addition to the rites of passage, the Brahman conducts a kind of the **family-welfare** function (or *Sa tyanarayana puja*) of the people in the village. But he does not conduct any kind of agriculture-connected ritual functions in the fields or in the house of farmers, as reportedly found Coastal Orissa (see, Lerche 1993) .

3.3.12 The Thakur (or Rajput)

The Thakurs have been defined as the warrior and landowning caste of Northern India. They assert that they are true Kshatriyas who came from Rajasthan. They served for the **Deshmukh** as the security guard in the village. **With** the abolition of the feudal system, the family lost its office. Since then they have no specialized function there. However, they have maintained the identity of family as a Rajput, through a ritual ceremony ('*shastra puja*¹) which is connected to the worship of sword. The sword which is the mark of the Thakurs represents symbolically the military tradition. If the '*shastra puja*' represents the **Thakur's** military legend, the '*Manik prabhu puja*¹' symbolizes the status of Thakur in the hierarchical order and its character as generosity. By offering food cooked by a Brahmin during their *Manik prabhu puja* to the Brahman separately they identify themselves as Kshatriya which ranks just below the Brahman, and by supplying foods for a lot of people whoever gathers at the function, they show their generosity (cf. 3.4.3) . Moreover, they speak Hindi as their mother tongue, and their names always end with '**Singh**' which retains their identity. Now, only four households are left in the village. Of them two are teachers (one retired), the other two are working privately as **electricians**. They are the substantial landowners of the village.

3.3.13 The Komati

The Komatis are traders. They keep small permanent shops at the main point in the village, and also function as money-lenders. The Komati seem to have lost their monopoly of trading by the change of times. They have to face the competition of some of the comparatively richer **Reddy**, Sara and the Muslims. There are eight Komati families. Of them five keep general shops, one is money-lender and agent of several chit funds, and he has a rice-mill in other place as well, another manages a building-construction business, and the eighth family runs a rice-mill and an

oil-mill in the village. Among eight heads of households, two are teaching and three are retired-teachers. The prestigious position of a teacher helps him to mask his second personality as a money lender, or miser or usurer.

3.3.14 The Reddy

The Reddys are mostly agriculturists and the most powerful and dominant landowning caste of the Telangana. Once they were generals in the armies of the Kakatiya Kings of Warangal. Among them, one family held the office of police *patel*, another held the office of *mali patel*; both were hereditary offices. Even after abolition of the institutions, they are still important leaders in the new political set up. Thus they came to higher position in the secular hierarchy of the village in particular. Recently, two Reddys took the *Sarpanchship* of the Gram Panchayat, of them one is the son of ex-police *patel*. And a son of *mali patel* is in charge of Village Administration Officer whose role is similar to that of former *patwari* office. Their distinguishable secular power and rank have been derived from their political power and economic **status**.

3.3.15 The Lingayats

The position of the Lingayats is somewhat peculiar in Hindu caste system. The Lingayat is a religious sect of Saivaites which aims to abolish the caste, but gradually the Lingayat itself is drifting into the caste system with its endogamous divisions. The Lingayats wear a image of **the lingam** which is the emblem of the God Shiva, either fastened to the left arm or suspended from the neck. In the village, there are two endogamous sub-groups of the Lingayats, i.e. **Jangam** and **Baliya**. Traditionally the **Jangam** is the priest of the Lingayat sect, he officiates at their religious rites. Two of the Jangam families in the village, however, no longer officiate at the religious rites. Therefore, the Lingayats of the village rely on a Jangam of other village. Unlike the **Jangams**, the **Baliyas** are engaged in one form of trade or another. For instance, they are **shop** keepers, grain dealers, bankers and tailors. Also, the majority of them are agriculturalists.

The Lingayats reject the ritual service of the Brahman, while they receive **the** services of the craft castes and other service castes (e.g. the Chakalli, the **Mangalli**, the Mala or the Madiga, etc.).

3.3.16 The **Padmasalle**

The **Padmasalles** follow weaving as their traditional profession. However, they are wholly distinct from other Telugu weavers, such as the Devangas or Carnatic weavers, and Patkarsalle or **Khatris**. The term '**Salle**' is of Sanskrit origin, being an occupation of the Sanskrit and '**Salika**', a weaver, while the title '**Padma**' seems to be prefixed as a mark of distinction. The Padmasalles in the past used to weave only cotton cloths and manufacture *saris* of different patterns with silk or cotton borders.

By late 19th century, however, their coarse, **hand-loom** made cloths could not compete with foreign made goods which were extensively imported into the country, and their comparative fineness and good qualities were more acceptable to the mass of the people. Thus many of them had been forced to give-up weaving and take up other pursuits. They became, therefore, agriculturists, labourers, shop-keepers, and etc.

But this occupational mobility was collective rather than individual. In 1921 the Padmasalles organized '**All India Padmasalle Mahasabha**' at Pullampet, Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh. With the activities of the Padmasalle **Sangam** of Hyderabad City, and Telangana, the Padmasalle Community tried to change the ways of life, such as, to remove child marriage, to remove bad habits of drinking or smoking, to read **vedas**, to cultivate good manners, and etc. Through these reform movements, they united themselves and encourage the members to be proud of being a Padmasalle. Besides they claim that the ancestor of Padmasalle originated from the God Shiva (Narayana). Nowadays, all the male members of Padmasalle don the sacred thread, to represent their higher status and Sanskritized life style.

The Padmasalle have, now, practically abandoned their traditional occupation, i.e. weaving. In the village, there are twenty-eight households, but none of them engages in weaving. Most of them are working as the trader of vegetables, meals or other eatables, cloths or bangles. Some members are Government employees, teachers, **bus-conductors** agriculturist, and other job holders.

3.3.17 The **Yadav**

The Yadavas consist of two sub-groups, namely the **Golla** and the **Kurma**. The **Golla's** traditional occupation was herding cows and/or buffalos, and that of the Kurma was keeping sheep and goat. While the Golla took agriculture as subsidiary job, the Kurma did not. Nowadays, the main sources of livelihood for both

of them are agriculture (either as tenants or owners), the milk production, and other caste-free employments. Among them, only two families earn a main source of income by keeping goats and sheep, but almost all of them keep one or two cows and **buffalos** as a subsidiary means of livelihood. Even though they are no longer engaged in shepherdhood, they retained their social identity by organizing themselves as a **Shepherds'** Co-operate Society on the basis of the Yadav caste committee in which each family becomes member. Through this organization, externally, they seek benefits or loans from the Government and, internally, they unite the members as a group. So, the organization functions as a socio-political interest **group**. In the village, with the effect of '**Yadav Movement**' (see, Rao 1987), the Yadavs worship Lord Krishna as the God of caste, instead of the local God ('**Virapa**') or Goddess ('**Malamma**') whom they worshiped traditionally in the local area, particularly in this village.

3.3.18 The Muduraju (or Mutrasi)

The Muduraju seems to belong to '**jati-cluster**' rather than a single caste. In the village, the Muduraju have four sections - Muduraju, Tenugu or Tellaga, Manne, and Bestha, besides one ritually specialized sub-caste or family, that is, Tallari. These sections are called as '**Kulla Urthi**' (occupational names), while the Muduraju as a whole is called '**Kullam**' (caste).

The **Mudurajus** are engaged in agriculture as owner or tenant, landless **daily-labourer (coolii)**, or fishermen. They are peculiar for the absence of any traditional occupation among them except the Bestha (fishery), although their members were engaged as village watchmen (as Machikuri or Neerudi) under the Nizam and they still maintain the job under the village administration.

3.3.19 The Goud (or Gaondla)

The Gouds are **toddy-tappers**. This caste as a co-operate unit has the monopoly of tapping the different kinds of palm trees, and also selling the toddy (or **kallu**), or fermented palm juice in the village. The villagers in this area are very much fond of drinking toddy, especially, after the prohibition of other liquors in the State, in 1995.

The Gouds first mark out the trees to be tapped, then tie earthen pots at the points where each tree has been tapped to collect the dripping juice, in the afternoons and evenings. Early next morning and noon they collect the juice and bring back to the main shop where they dilute the juice with water in large pots. Then they fill them in the bottles, and distribute through

three retail toddy shops where the toddy is sold to the customer by **bottle**. Even though, only the Gouds have the right to tap and sell the toddy in the village, several persons belonging to other castes or other villages also work for tapping and diluting the toddy for the Goud Co-operative society. And, moreover, like other castes, the Gouds also have other jobs, of a tenant-farmer, or of a labourer as well as other skilled or **non-skilled** employments. The Gouds as a whole worship the Goddess **Pochamma**, **Durgamma** and some others. While worshiping the **Durgamma**, a large function takes place with a sacrifice of goat in front of the temple of the goddess which is owned by the Gouds.

3.3.110 The Sara

The Sara was traditionally *arrack* (**local-made** liquor) maker and seller. The Sara says, its formal name is Bou Sara Kshatriya. There are five Sara families in the village. No one had been engaged as *arrack* maker and seller, since last 100 years. Among them, one family runs a general shop, two work for Government offices, one is working for private company, the last one is an agriculturist.

3.3.111 The **Mera** (or Chipollu)

The **Mera** is a Hindu tailor caste. In the village, the Mera is called '*chipollu*' while the Muslim tailor is called '*Darji*', but incidentally the tailors whether they are the Hindus or Muslims are called '*Darji*' without distinction. With the increase in population, the tailors have a good business in the village. Except the well-to-do-people, all others get their tailoring done by the Village tailors. There are nine tailor shops in the village, of them five are run by the Mera, three by the **Baliya** (Lingayat), and only one by a Muslim.

3.3.112 The **Medari** (or Medara)

By tradition, the Medaris are skilled craftsmen in bamboo works who weave sieves, fans, baskets, cradles, mats, boxes, and tatties (screen, etc.). In the village, except a single family that keeps this job, all the rest live as a daily-labourers or tenant or owner of small pieces of land.

3.3.113 The Satani

Traditionally the Satanis were engaged as temple workers, for wreathing garlands, carrying torches during the god's procession, and sweeping the temple floor. They claim to be the descendants of the Brahmin disciples of **Ramanujacharya**. The Satani

is a sect of **Vaishnavites**. In the village, there used to be only one Satani family worked as Ayurvedic medical doctor. But in the course of this survey, they left the village after the death of head of the household.

3.3.114 The **Kummari**

The Kummari is potter. In the Village there are eleven Kummari families. Of them only four are actually working at the wheel. Since the introduction of steel and plastic wares and vessels, they have lost the clientele of the village and their monopoly in the market. Today, each of these families is attached to some agriculturists in the village, and it periodically supplies them with a certain number of earthen pots of domestic use. But if they supply the earthen pots for the marriage and death ceremony purpose, they are paid for the extra pots in cash. Although the tradition has prescribed the minimum payment, on happy occasions people often give a little more. Non-agriculturists and the people who do not have arrangements with the potter buy their requirements from them for a cash price. And the potters used to sell various types of pots in the occasions of village festivals.

3.3.115 The **Kammari, Vaddla** and Ausalli

These people form a group of artisan castes who designate themselves as Vishwa Brahman (or Panch Brahman) and maintain a certain degree of exclusiveness **from** the other Hindu **castes**. Out of these, two groups the Vaddla (carpenter) and Kammari (blacksmith), maintain the permanent and hereditary relationship with the agriculturists. Under this system they have to repair and supply agricultural implements whenever the clientele need. In return for their services they get a fixed amount of the crops of their agriculturists clientele. However, all their services to non-clientele as well as their services of a non-agricultural parts, used to be paid for the other group. The **blacksmithry** and carpentry are interchangeable occupations and intermarriage between these groups of people is acceptable (see, 3.5.1), for example. Ausalli (goldsmiths) specialize in the field which have nothing to do with the agriculture, and they carry on their craft independently.

3.3.116 The **Waddera (or Waddar)**

This caste regards the excavation of stone from quarries, and working in earth to be its original occupation. The Wadders are also engaged in tank digging, road making, building stone walls, making **mill-stones**, and many kinds of **out-door** labours.

Nowadays, they have taken to the agriculture as tenants or owners, or they work as the milk-suppliers or the daily-labourers for their livelihood.

3.3.117 The **Arekatika**

There are three families of Arekatika (Hindu butcher) in the village. '**Katika**' in Telugu means '**cruel**', and refers to the butchers, while the prefix, '**Are**' is the generic name by which all the **Maratha** castes are known to the Telugu people. The occupation of the caste was that of selling sheep and goat meat. Now only one of them slaughters goats and sheep, and sells the meat to the villagers Hindus every Sundays. The other is a medical practitioner, and the third one has no male member in the house; they are working as daily labourers. The villagers, both Hindus and Muslims, buy mutton usually from the Muslim butchers, who open their shops everyday.

3.3.118 The Dasari (or Dasri)

The Dasaris catch fish, work as **daily-labourers**. The women-folk sell the miscellaneous articles such as comb, mirror, **kum-kum**, hair pins, purse, needle, thread, neckwear, razor, and other coarse plastics goods. Previously, they used to go from place to place carrying those articles on their heads as hawkers. Today the menfolk have taken up as agricultural labourers or unskilled workers. Also they have little pieces of land.

3.3.119 The Gandla (or Ganiga)

The name '**ganiga**¹' is derived from the Telugu '**ganugu**', meaning an oil-mill. Their occupation is oil-pressing for the villager. There are two Gandla families related to father-in-law or son-in-law for each other in the village. Both of these families have chosen business as their main occupation. So the villagers produce their oil at oil-mill run by a **Komati**. They belong to Lingayat Gandla who have a tradition of burying their dead in a sitting **posture**. **Though** their priests are Jangams under whose presidency all their sectarian and ceremonial observers are conducted, in marriage and other ritual functions, the Brahman is employed as a priest.

3.3.120 The **Chakalli** and the **Mangalli**

The Chakalli (washermen) and the Mangalli (barbers) have no direct contributions to produce the agricultural outputs, but their services are required by the agriculturists as well as non-agriculturaists. Particularly, in the **socio-religious** ceremonies

and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death, the agriculturalists as well as the non-agriculturalists find it more convenient to have the permanent relationship with the families of those castes. Their **socio-religious** services during the ritual **functions** are regarded more important than their normal **services**. Such **socio-ritual** services are generally provided for in the rites of passage. In return these castes have to be given something, either in cash or in kind. In the ritual functions, usually both the Chakalli and the **Mangalli** jointly offer their ritual services for the family of their common clientele. On the marriage ceremony, they together make a pedestal ('**kalyana mandapam**' or '**pollu**') on which the wedding function is solemnized, and a bier for the funeral rite. Similarly, on the '**pochamma**' function, they sacrifice the scapegoat to the Goddess. However like other castes, they also work independently outside the hereditary relationships, and take other jobs as a subsidiary means of livelihood. Between them there is no **service-exchanges**.

3.3.121 The Budigajangam

There are two **Budigajangam** families in the village, whose traditional occupation is begging. They rely on mat making with the leaves of palm tree hunting of wild animals, and working as a **daily-labourer** for their livelihood.

3.3.122 The Dore (Dhor)

The Dore is the tanner caste of Maratha origin. The term '**Dhor**' stands for '**horned** cattle¹', bestowed upon this caste with reference to its occupation of tanning and dressing cattle skins. They speak **Marathi** as their mother tongue, and the Marathi title of '**jhi**' is also affixed to their name (e.g. **Dauljhi**, **Vitojhi**, etc.). In the village, there are fifteen households, but all are connected by the blood or affinal relationships. It is said that they immigrated to this village around 200-250 years ago. Among them, only three persons work for their traditional calling, that is, tanning and curing hides. They buy raw hides of goats, sheep, oxen, and buffaloes from the butchers. The dressed hide is sold at the markets or to the regular buyer who is the Muslim. And they have kept the permanent relationship with the agriculturists for whom the Dores repair or supply new harness of yoke and other leather items. Although they are engaged in leather-works, their ritual position in the village is ranked above '**untouchability**'.

3.3.123 The Mochi

The Mochi is shoemaker, cobbler and leather worker. In their trade they use the hides of the bullock, buffalo, goat and sheep.

They never dress freshly skinned hides of any of the animals, but purchase them ready tanned from the Dores or from the market. There is only one **Mochi** family who migrated to this village about a century ago. This family works independently without any traditional or permanent relationship with the others. It runs a petty shoe store at the crossroads. Like the Dores, the **Mochis** too are treated as '**non-untouchables**' although they have a '**low**' job of leather works.

3.3.124 The Mala and the Madiga

The Mala and the Madiga by their birth occupy the lowest and the most degraded position, that is '**untouchables**', in hierarchical order of caste division. Only these castes are referred as the '*Harijans*¹', amongst other **SCs**. The Mala is, it is said superior to the Madiga in general, but in the village, the Madigas claim that they are superior to the Mala. But they are living in the same dwellings away from other settlements. In former times they were engaged as farm labourer, servants, grooms and the village watchmen. As the forced labourers (*vetti*) of the lands, they were cheap. They used to be under compulsion, and being in no position to protest, they were enslaved by their masters. Now, the conditions have changed, they do no longer put up with indignities. They cultivate their own lands, work as a tenant or a daily-labourer for wages, while some of them associate themselves to the households of the substantial agriculturists in the village. However, a lot of members of these castes are employed **for Government services**.

In terms of occupation, there is little difference between the Madiga and the Mala in general. But internally, there are considerable differences between sub-groups of them. The Begari, a subsect of the Mala, is engaged as grave-digger for the village as a whole, and only the Begari has right to officiate at the Pochamma **pooja** for the **Malas**. Similarly the Pedda Madiga, a sect of the Madiga who is a scavenger has the right to dispose of the carcasses for the village as a whole, and they also officiate at the Pochamma function for the **Madigas**. The Bindlas (or *dapu*), another sect of the Madiga, are engaged as '**priest**' in the marriage ceremonies of the *Harijans*, and they serve as musicians at the marriage and other ceremonies for other high caste Hindus such as Mala and Madiga of the village and occasionally, for the Muslims as well. The Bindla also work as village-criers announcing by beat of drum ('*dapu*') any public order of the village. That is, not the whole Mala is engaged in **grave-digging**, also not the whole Madiga is working as the scavenger. Though these are extremely degraded occupations, some of these subcastes are still engaged in these works. Moreover, they insist that they have

worked from generation to generation as grave-digger or scavenger. It is not only because those subsidiary but monopolised works help their daily livelihood, but also because they wish to get some economic or social benefits from the Government by insisting that they are engaged in such degraded works.

3.3.125 The Erukalla (or Erakalla)

The Erukalla was traditionally a vagrant gypsy tribe, bearing bad reputation as professional criminal or burglar. They have settled in the village long times ago. Today they earn their livelihood through, mainly, basket making with palm tree, and working in agriculture as tenant or owner, and **daily-labourers**. Presently, there are sixteen - Erukulla families in the village. Among them, one manages a small grain oil shop at the main market street of the village. They rear pigs around the village, eat pork on the occasions of weddings or annual festival season.

3.3.2 General observation on caste and occupation

In summary, the hereditary occupations which have been assigned to each caste, remain more or less as the nomenclature of respective castes. Nowadays, might be previously also (see, Silverberg 1968; Srinivas 1966b; Thapar 1979;), it is not the caste obligation, but the socio-economic interest to maintain the hereditary occupations as livelihood of the people. In the village, a lot of castes desert their hereditary occupation, either totally (such as, the **Padmasalle**, the Sara, or etc.), or partially (such as, the Yadav, the **Kummari**, the Dore, or etc.). This has happened mainly due to the change of socio-economic environment, and the increase in job opportunities other than in the domains of their traditional occupations. They choose their livelihood among certain alternatives, such as, agriculture, trade, business, or others. However, certain castes till present maintain their traditional occupations by monopolization; such as the service castes - the Chakalli, the Mangalli and the crafts - the Ausalli, the Vaddla, the **Kammari**, while certain occupations become '**caste-free**', such as the Tailoring, the Trading, or the Agriculture.

In a certain case, a caste has been asserted of monopoly, not only the occupation itself, but also the materials which connect to perform the occupation. For instance, the Gouds who are **toddy-tappers**, have monopolized the right of the palm trees in the village territory. The Goud caste itself has become a kind of '**cooperative**' society in terms of economic activity. The

Goud caste **committee** has control over all dealings on toddy in the village.

While in other case, when it was not any specific caste for certain occupation, the individuals or families who have been engaged in that occupation for a long time, organize themselves as an occupational association to protect and monopolize their own interests from others. For example, in the village the fishery was not assigned to any specific caste, instead some individuals or families engaged in the fishery as their alternative means of livelihood. There are 22 fisheries, most of them are the **Mudurajus - Manne** and Bestha - and a Dasari and two Muslims. Before 1983, they were under the control of Sangareddy Mandal Fisher Cooperative Society, as registered members. However, after some conflicts between the fisheries of the village and other members in regard to fish, they organized a separate association with the fisheries of the village as the member. At the time of separation, they paid **Rs. 11.000**. Though they have a separate association, officially they are under the control of the Cooperative Society, so they pay Rs.3,000 per year as a rental fee to that Cooperative Society. **In** return they get a right to fish in the three lakes which are locate in the village **boundary**.

That is, this fisher's association named the '**Bestha Sangam**', was organized mainly for their own economic interest. And it was based on the occupation, rather than on certain caste on the one hand, and the village boundary on the other.

However, the '**untouchable**' caste status has been decided by birth, not by the possession of certain polluting **occupations**. **In** the village, the Mala and the Madiga have been categorized as '**untouchables**', but among them only a few families or sections (or sub-castes) have hereditarily been engaged as Scavenger (Pedda Madiga) or Gravedigger (Begari). While the majority of both castes are engaged as agricultural or other menial labourers, without any specific, hereditary occupation.

Moreover, the '**untouchables**' have possessed somewhat distinctive socio-cultural forms. The most '**polluted**' families or sections, i.e. Pedda Madiga and Begari, officiate the ritual ceremony at the **Pochamma pooja** of their respective caste. And both of them are called '**pedda**' or '**peddamanchi**' among their caste members. It means that they occupy '**high**' position, ritually as well as socially, among their caste members.

This fact is contrary to Moffat's insistence; "**untouchables** do not necessarily possess distinctively different social and

cultural forms as a result of their positions in the system" (Moffat 1979:3). Moreover, to some extent, the categorization of the 'untouchables' seems to be connected to a certain locality. For instance, the Dore has been ranked above the 'untouchability', in ritual domains as well as social context of the village. The Dore whose traditional occupation is tanning and dressing cattle skin, migrated in this village from Maharashtra. The Dore has been classified as SCs in the government reservation, and is living in the main settlement of the village, not outside. It seems that the immigrants are 'free' from the categorization of pre-existing 'untouchables'.

3.3.3 The relations among various occupational castes

The character of economic and ritual relationships in Indian villages is largely determined by the specialized traditional occupations based on the castes, and by the particular pattern of service exchange relations between the families of different castes. A major feature of the exchange system is that the relationships between the agriculturists and the families of craft or service castes are usually hereditary, and the rewards are paid in forms of fixed amount of grains or cash.

This kind of hereditary relationship of service exchange between the families of different castes is popularly known as 'the *jajmani* system' following Wiser's (1936) study⁷. But confusions exist concerning the scope of the system, and its relevance to other aspects of the caste (see, Kolenda 1983a). A number of the *jajmani* studies dispute whether it is an **all-Indian** system⁸ or a variety of the specific region, Gangetic plain (see, Fuller 1989; Good 1982; Lerche 1993; Mayer 1993; Simon 1983) .

In addition to the **farmer-service** caste relations, there is another relation between the village as a whole and specific family and class of the castes in the village in particular (cf. 2.9.2), and in South India in general (see, Benson 1976; Dube 1955; Fukazawa 1984, 1972; Good 1982; Karanth 1987; Raju 1980). Moreover, the *jajmani* system is by no means exclusive to Hindus, as the Muslims also are partly engaged in the *jajmani* relations (see, Aggarwal 1978; Bhatt^y 1978; Madan 1984). And the origins of the term '**jajman**' applied to the master of household who employs a Brahman priest as ceremonial specialist, so the existence of the Brahman priest presupposes the existence of the *jajmani* value system (see, Dumont 1970a: 97-98; Gould 1987; Mayer 1993:359; Pocock 1962) .

In the village, the traditional relationships between the agriculturists and the craft or service castes have been called

'pethubai' relation. Basically, in the *pethubai* relation, the Brahman *purohit* is not involved in any ritual service in relation to the agricultural activity, neither is he involved in the field nor in the house of farmer, as to be found in the Coastal Orissa (see, Lerche 1993). The rites concerning to agricultural cycle are performed by the farmer himself. The *purohit* officiates at the wedding ceremony and other family welfare functions, but not during death purification ceremony. He provides services for all the villagers regardless of occupation, and the village as a whole. In return for his service to the villagers, the Brahman *purohit* receives money, eatables, grains or clothes as ***dakshina*** ('gift to a ***guru***') (cf. Thapar 1979), immediately at the time of each ritual ceremony or after some days, but he does not receive other types of yearly presentation. On the other hand the Brahman customarily receives the services from other services castes such as **Chakalli, Mangalli**, etc.

The relation between the agriculturists and the craft or services castes who serve them is locally seen as a relation between '***asami***' (patron, agriculturist) and '***pannollu***' or '***paniwaru***' (worker). But such patrons (***asamis***) can be the members of any castes regardless of ritual or secular **status**. Agriculture is largely considered to be '**caste free**' occupation, that is, agriculture is in no sense a caste monopoly, and all castes down to the lowest '**untouchables**' do practice cultivation (see, Gould 1987:159; **Mathur** 1958:51; Srinivas 1987a). In practice, the **Erukalla**, the '**untouchables**', and the Muslims are involved in the *pethubai* relations as agriculturist, that is, ***asami*** position, in the village. But traditionally the **Chakalli** and the **Mangalli**, had not done any **socio-ritual** service for the '**untouchables**' and the Muslims. Nowadays, the latter, however, get certain services, that is, hair cutting, washing or ironing clothes from the **Chakalli** or the **Mangalli** on the payment of money but not ritual services **yet**.

The status of *asami* or agriculturist either of Hindu or Muslim refers to the land-cultivator regardless of its ritual status and position in the caste hierarchy, and of its religious belief, while the position of *pannollu* solely relies on its specialized occupation of the caste. That is, the *asami* is not a homogeneous group, but economically it is a category of agriculturists. This means that there is no connection between the *asami* and the caste.

However, relatively few castes are involved in the *pethubai* relations, and the services rendered within the relations are limited on the specific domains. For instance, the relation between the agriculturist and the carpenter or the blacksmith is

restricted within the economic sphere. The carpenter and the blacksmith whose works are directly relevant to agriculture, are paid semi-annually in grain payment of fixed amount by the agriculturists. However, the *asamis* are charged cash or extra-grain for such works as house-constructions, bullock-cart construction or other production of non-agricultural equipments. The leather workers also supplies his service with the leather goods for his **asami** whenever it is needed. If the families have sufficient land and are cultivating it themselves, or though they have not sufficient land and are cultivating as tenants, they pay for the **agriculture-related** services of the carpenter, the blacksmith, or the leather-worker in grain. But if they are not cultivating, they have no need of these services. The potter supplies various kinds of pots to his *asami* during the year. Virtually, there is no limits to the number of pots, but it is around fifteen pots for the domestic purpose only. The *asamis* have to pay in cash if additional pots are supplied for the ritual purpose either at the wedding ceremony or at the funeral rites or any other similar occasions.

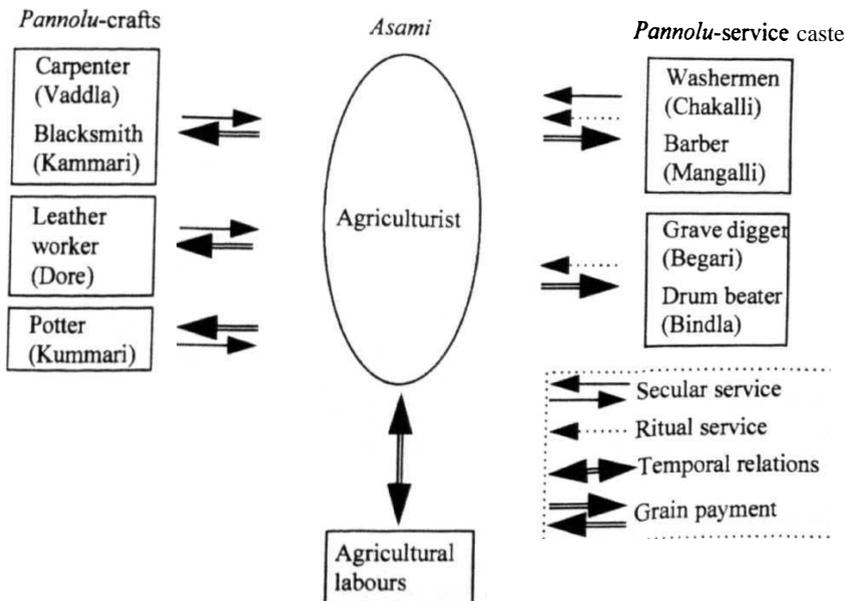
The positions of the barber and the washermen are different in the **petubai** system however. They are not engaged in a direct bearing on the agricultural-related activities. Their services **for** the *asami* are concerned with both secular and ritual **domains**. The barber does the **hair-cutting** and shaving of the members of the agriculturist's family. The washerman, similarly, works for the washing clothes of the family of his *asami*. The barber routinely visits the houses of his *asamis*, the washerman also collects clothes every second or third days and washes them. But the family is charged in cash for the ironing of the clothes if they need, i.e. ironing is treated as an additional job. In addition to these routined services, the barbers and the washermen have specified functions in the rites and ceremonies connected with the major rites of life, such as birth, marriage and death, etc. They perform these jobs routinely without any direct negotiations or prearrangements regarding to wages that they may expect in return **for** their **services**. Those concerned with the ritual services are paid in cash or **clothes**. Depending on their status and financial position, people sometimes pay more for these services at the completion of the ceremony, though the convention has fixed the basic minimum. In addition to cash and grain payment, the washermen are offered a day meal in the patron's house. Unlike other service castes, most of washermen's daily-routine services are carried on by their wives or women **members**.

It is worth noting in the context of the village that only two **Mangalli** families provide all the villagers regardless of their caste hierarchies, to Hindu as well as Muslim, with the

midwifery service (for getting their babies delivered). The **Mangalli** women derive this skill traditionally from their mother-in-laws. In return for their service they are paid in cash. The **midwives** offer their services at the time of delivery and massage woman who delivers a child and bathes the newborn baby. But they do not massage for the **Harijan**. Customarily they take higher charge if it is boy. During the survey, they get Rs.200 for a boy, **Rs.150** for a girl baby. However, nowadays, the rich villagers use hospitals, in Sangareddy, for delivery.

The grave-digger and the **drum-beater** are not engaged in any **daily-routine** work for the agricultural pursuits or for members of the agriculturist family. Their services are limited upon the domains of **socio-religious** rites and ceremonies. For these occasions, the agriculturists have maintained the relationship with them. In consequence, the bonds between the agriculturists and the grave-digger or the drum-beater are based on the mutual obligation and expectation.

Chart - 2
PETHUBAI RELATIONS



The occupation of agricultural labourer (**cooli**) corresponds but little to caste affiliation. Some members of lower-middle castes work either as independent day-labourer or as obligatory labourer who have borrowed money from agriculturist and have promised to work off the debt. In return for the labour work, they are paid in cash or occasionally in kind as per the piece of each work. Between the agriculturist and the labourer, there is no permanent relationship like in the cases of other craft or service castes, but a kind of mutual expectation exists between them. Chart - 2 given below shows the *pethubai* relationship of the village.

All **pannollu** call the patron as **asami**, while the **asamis** call a specialist as **paniwaru** with prefix caste names for example, Vaddla *paniwaru* or **Kammari paniwaru**. There is no special term for an individual servicemen who work for the *asami*.

Categorically, all servicemen are termed as '**pannollu**' or '**paniwaru**' of the agriculturist, however, they have no special or mutual relationship between *pannollus* of an agriculturist. But '**pannollu**' is a reference term rather than a term of address.

3.3.31 The *pethubai* relations

The payment of grain to the specialist is in relation to the number of ploughs used by the agriculturist, and the extent or quality of land owned, or the number of family members in the patron's house. Table - 12 represents the rate of payment and criteria for the services of each specialist.

However, the total amount of grain payment fluctuates depending upon the year of abundance or failure of crops though the basic rate of payment has been fixed by the custom. In addition to the fixed grain payments in main foodgrains which are known as '**dhanyam**' or '**katinam**' in local term, all the servicemen receive some quantity of other agricultural products, such as, chilli, onion, groundnut, etc. by a '**bhitcham**' ('alms') or a '**gulla**' (basket).

In order to get the full amount due and more *bhitcham*, the service caste members present themselves at the harvest or threshing floor, if they receive at patron's house they will not get some more extra-amount, apart from the fixed.

TABLE - 12
PAYMENT OF **PETHUBAI** RELATION

Occupations (Castes)	Rates of payment (per harvest)	Criteria of payment
1. Carpenter (Vaddla)	16 Addas* Paddy*/ Jowar (or 1/2 Quintal)	1 plough + extent of land owned
2. Blacksmith (Kammari)	16 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 plough + extent of land owned
3. Potter (Kummari)	8 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 household
4. Leather-worker (Dore)	8 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 plough
5. Washermen (Chakalli)	8 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 household+ family members
6. Barber (Mangalli)	8 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 house + family members
7. Grave-digger (Mala-Begari)	2-3 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 household
8. Drumb-beater (Madi- ga-Bindla) or Dappu	-3 Addas Paddy/ Jowar	1 household

* All service castes also receive other agricultural products, at each harvest time.

** 1 Adda is roughly 3 kg. 1 Quintal = 1 **Tummadi** = 97 kg.

The value of grain is constant or relatively so. Thus wages and rewards if given in kind remain constant and it is possible for substantial relationship to operate in terms of permanent and mutual reliance. Moreover, the payment in kind for the servicemen contains a moral responsibility for the condition of grain or agricultural production on the one hand, and for the continuation of reciprocal relationship on the other. In addition to grain payment, cash payment is made for all extra services. Thus always cash and kind payments co-exist. It is evident from this that the institution of this relation has adapted itself to suit for the changing needs of the people both in the past and in the recent times.

In the village, apart from the above **pethubai** system, there are certain castes or subcastes who work for all the villagers without permanent relationship with certain families or castes. They are Brahman priest, Mangalli **midwives**, and Pedda Madiga or Scavenger, as well as watan holders (cf. 2.9.2). The former offer their services whoever need. But previously, the Brahman

priest did not offer any services for low castes and the Harijans. The Hindu services castes, generally, offer their services for Hindus **only**, however the **midwives** work for the Muslims also. They receive cash and other gift in return for their service, piece by piece at the time of service. There has been no prolonged relationship with certain clientele.

And the other service castes, the crafts also take cash for their service or goods for the person who has no pethubai relationship with them. Traditionally, an exchange of service between artisans or between service castes has not existed. They do work for each other in return; they are paid in cash or in grain either on a piece work basis, or on a monthly basis.

3.3.32 Changing perspectives in the relations

The penetration of a monetary economy, urban-oriented trade, and expanding industries as well as alternative occupational opportunities outside agriculture, and capital accumulation opened up outside the traditional profession roles and interaction. It is because they created new employments outside agriculture for the agriculturists on the one hand and new means of acquiring land for previously landless group on the other. In addition to these, a high rate of population growth has increased the pressure on the land, and the establishment of political and bureaucratic system have led to the fragmentation of traditional ties.

For instance, a barber who inherited forty-two households as his **asamis** from his father, now maintains only eight through the *pethubai* relation since the remaining thirty-four ceased to be the agriculturist, whether because they joined **non-agricultural** jobs or became landless. The barber is paid in cash for his hair-cutting and shaving from the **thirty-four** former **asami** families like other common people who have no permanent relationship. As the barber himself is engaged in the agriculture now, he cultivates three acres of land through *pethubai* relations with other service-castes, that is, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the potter, the grave-digger, the drum-beater, and the washermen, in the village.

There is another situation emerging under which if the agriculturists are not cultivating, they have no need for the craft's service, therefore they break off the relationship with the latter except with the washermen (and the potter). While they pay in cash monthly or in grain annually with fixed arrangement. Usually, non-agriculturist also have maintained the relationship with the washermen, and paid in cash every month that is fixed

or negotiated previously. The services of washermen are essential to the villager whether it is for secular or ritual purpose.

In addition to these effects, due to natural disasters such as drought and flood, the changes occur in the relationship and the payment system in the **pethubai** relation. During a period of drought which lasted from 1971 to 1973 in the Telangana region, the social system, not only economic, changed tremendously (see, Rao 1974) . In the village, also, due to the failure of crops and the price increase on agricultural products during the drought, a lot of agriculturists were forced to pay in cash instead of grain payment. For instance, a **Padmasalle** who has cultivated 20 acres of land, has now been paying in cash for the services of other castes except the blacksmith and the carpenter, since the time of drought .

On the contrary, occasionally the servicemen ask to change the payment system from the permanent and fixed amount of grain payments to the cash on a piece work basis. Usually the barber prefers the cash payment for the **hair-cutting** and shaving services.

A commonly held view is that the ties between the **asami** and the **paniwallu**, once established, are inherited agnatically by both parties and that upon the partition of joint family **asamis** are subdivided among coparceners in the same manners as other property. The right to serve for the **asamis** is usually enjoyed by the patrilineal descendants of the original holder or by other relatives. When the holder has no male offspring, it can be transmitted to his son-in-law who joins his family through **iller-ikam** marriage in lieu of other relatives. But there is no periodical **reallotment** as reportedly found in other village of local area (see, Bronger 1975).

The residential location can sometimes be as important as kinship ties in affecting the choice of specialists. For instance, the **Mangalli** have taken charge of the village Kandi and a hamlet **Chimnapur**. The households of Kandi have been subdivided and inherited by the five families of Mangalli. While those of the Chimnapur, similarly, have been subdivided and inherited by other three families.

3.3.33 Farmer-agricultural servants relations

In addition to the **farmer-service** caste relations, the farmer-agricultural servants relation has existed as a vital institution for the agricultural productions. In the village, like in other Telangana area, agricultural servants are called

'*jeetagallu*'¹. The *jeetagallu* works only for one farmer, and is bonded as long as the relation lasts. The *jeetagallus* of the village are mostly 'untouchables', commonly belonging to **Madiga** caste. However, some of the *jeetagallus* are Chakalli, **Waddera**, **Reddy**, or Muslim as well.

The *jeetagallus* mostly work for the same farmer for several years, though they are, in principle, engaged on a yearly contract basis orally. The *jeetagallu* is bound to work for his farmer everyday of the year, at the field or the house. In return he gets a yearly or a monthly sum of money plus meals and a daily allowance ('**batta**'). The number of meals and the amount of *batta* (generally two Rupees per day), are decided by the time of contract. Usually, the *jeetagallu* who works on a monthly basis gets money higher than that earned on a yearly basis, but he has no security for the period of rain or slack season. The **farmer-jeetagallu** relation is purely concerned with non-ritual services, and is **temporal**.

3.3.34 Landowner-tenant relations

There is, moreover, the landowner - tenant relation which is called '**watadarullu**' in the local term. The landowner is called '**yajamani**', while the tenant as a cultivator is called '**raithu**' in the village. Broadly, nowadays, two tenantry systems are operating, one is **share-tenantry** ('**bathai**'¹), the other is rent-tenantry ('**gutta**'). The *bathai* system applies in the wet-land or black soil ('**nallari egari**') on which the food crops ('**thari pantha**') are cultivated, while the *gutta* system applies in the dry-land or red soil ('**chelkal**') on which the commercial crops ('**kusiki pantha**') are produced. In the *bathai* system, the landowner and the tenant share all the agricultural productions and expenditure which include fertilizer, pesticide, seeds, and other charges.

The *gutta* (or *kaullu*) system has been introduced in the village since last decade. As a lot of landowners who previously cultivated themselves or got it done by the tenants, nowadays have a job or are employed outside agricultural production, it is difficult to manage or control the agricultural works. So, they prefer the rent system to the share system in which one has to manage all the agricultural process and the expenditure for the cultivation. In the *gutta* system, the rent charge of the land is normally fixed. For example, two and half quintal of rice is paid for the rent charge of one acre of wetland. Particularly, this rice-rent charge is called '**biyam-gutta** (rice rent) in the village, whereas, the **cash-rent** applies to the **dry-land** based on the quality of land and other facilities, as bore-well or road, etc.

The duration of tenantry is normally one year. Both the landowner and the tenant have no obligation for each other, therefore, the relations are easily broken off and new relations are established with others easily. The landowner as well as the tenant would like to establish the relations with several persons, if possible, for preventing the tentative collapse of the relationships from both sides. And there is no specific 'rule' regarding the choice of the relationship between the landowner/tenant and certain castes. For instance a Reddy cultivates the land that belonged to the **Lambadi**, and conversely an Erukulla is the tenant of a Muslim landowner in the village.

3.3.35 *Hamalli*, the **non-agricultural** labourer

In addition to the agricultural labourers, there is another type of labour such as the porter in the village. While the former is called as '**cooli**', the latter called as '**hamalli**' who works at the market place of the village. The *hamallis* are engaged for either in long-term or temporarily basis by the merchants. Most of the *hamallis* of the village are the Fakirs (Muslim) and the Madigas, while some of them are the Mudurajus, the **Medaris**, the Mangalli, and the Waddera. Like the *jeetagallu*, the *hamallis* are engaged in only non-ritual services.

3.4 Commensality

The caste system has been characterized as a system of hierarchically ordered units, but caste hierarchies are discontinuous. Caste system is maintained by defining and maintaining boundaries between castes. It is threatened when boundaries are compromised. Even though cultural differences between different castes are minimal, the ideal and mutual distinctiveness is maintained. This subsection will delineate an important signal of caste boundary, that **is** commensality and its importance as well as its existence in the modern, changing society within the confines of the village.

It is said that the interactions of the castes with regard to the giving and taking of food are one of the criteria of caste ranking (see, Freed 1963; Kolenda 1983b; Marriott 1965, 1992; Mayer 1960,1996). The restrictions regarding food refer to separation. Thus the acceptance of food is restricted to one's own caste or to castes higher than his/her own and this reaffirms the separation and distance between castes. So, those who '**eat together**' are considered to be of the same ritual status. Both Marriott (1965) and Kolenda (1983b) have taken the food transactions between castes as important clues to understanding of the

ritual position of different castes in the caste hierarchy. But Das (1992:76) insists that this restriction of food exchange would be understood in terms of as the concept of purity, not as the principle of hierarchy. She says, "it is forbidden to accept food from certain categories of people, not because they are 'lower' but because they are 'polluted', and hence have to be 'separated'".

Neither of these view-points can explain the whole context of commensal practices. On the one hand, it is forbidden to accept food from certain categories of people because they are 'lower', while on the other, because they are ritually 'polluted'. However, this rule of food exchange indicates that **different** castes have to be separated, either because they are polluted or lower. The concept of pollution (or purity) and the rank are not totally independent or separable, in real life of local area, the 'polluted' castes are regarded as **inferior**. In this regard Mayer (1960:33) says, "the commensal hierarchy is based on the theory that each caste has a certain quality of ritual purity which is lessened, or polluted, **by** certain commensal contact with castes having an inferior quality".

3.4.1 The food types

The distinction between '**kacca food**' that is food cooked in water and/or salt, and '**pakka food**' that is prepared with *ghee* (clarified butter) or sugar, is not clear in this village compared to the distinction maintained in other parts of India (see, Mayer 1960:33-34). This is, probably, due to the difference of life style as well as the main crops grown in this area. The main grains cultivated for the food purpose in the village are rice and sorghum (**jowar**). And almost all of the people take rice as a daily diet that is as staple food, sorghum is taken more as a **between-meal** or a simple breakfast than as main meals. The *pakka* types of foods, such as sweetmeats and parched grains, peanuts, pulses, etc. sell at the tea shops or the petty restaurants.

In the village, the cooked foods include both the *kacca* type such as boiled rice (**annam**), cakes of unleavened sorghum, as well as the daily run of curries and **chutneys**, and the *pakka* types. The *pakka* food is called **payasam** in local area, which is cooked with milk, sugar, or sesame oil. The food that is cooked with mango, groundnut oil, tamarind, chilli, lemon, etc. is called *pulihora*. And another type of food is *biriyani* (or *bagara*) made with rice, spices and lemon - if chicken is mixed '**chicken biriyani**', mutton mixed '**mutton-biriyani**', etc. Only the first type of food (*payasam*) can be offered to the God, others cannot be. All these types of food belong to the category of cooked

food, while uncooked foods include milk, grains, seeds, fruits and vegetables. Toddy is, also treated as uncooked food among the people of middle and low castes, but the Brahman, **Komati** and Lingayat do not consume it at all. The rule of **commensality** is not strictly observed or neglected in the exchange of uncooked **items**.

All cooked foods are divided into two categories that is, vegetables and non-vegetables. The non-vegetarian eater are treated as '**polluted**' or '**lower**' than the vegetarians. As a whole, the vegetarian castes occupy the higher position in the hierarchy and the vegetarianism is adduced as an evidence of the purity. Drinking of liquor and eating pork and beef, are considered the characteristics of the lower castes. But it is difficult or useless to order caste ranking based on the kind of food consumed. For example, the **Thakurs** (Kshatriyas) have taken non-vegetables, but their ritual position is higher than those of **Komat**is (Vaishas) who are vegetarians.

Nowadays, the consumption of non-vegetarian food to a great extent relies on the individual opinion or interest because it is no longer valued as castewide conduct. In the village, only the Brahman, Komati and Lingayat are strictly maintaining the vegetarianism in order to keep ritual purity of castes. But, whenever there are opportunities to eat non-vegetables outside the village, one of young Komati informant said, they are not so much hesitant to eat **non-vegetarian** food. He said, surprisingly, he has tasted even beef, too. In this case the phenomenon of '**compartmentalization**' take place not only between office and home, but within and without the village as well (see, Singer 1968).

3.4.2 **People's** attitude towards **commensality** and the context of the village

During the survey, those whoever were asked about commensality replied, "there is no caste bar connected to eating". The observation of Mayer (1960:48) also confirms this, "there is no caste left" regarding the rule of commensality. He is right because the evaluations of commensality are mainly made in private not in public; in public people claim to be equal, and the inequality and caste hierarchy can no longer be legitimately defended in public. Moreover, in the village environment, there is very rare opportunity to eat together between different castes at home. Even in the public occasions like marriage, the people scarcely express caste ranking regarding the consumption of food. The hierarchical values based on purity remain in private or domestic domains only.

In the village, all castes are able to eat together the food offered on such occasions as wedding feasts or ritual feasts. But this situation does not mean the end of all distinctions of higher and lower. While, in public places, there are no accepted distances or separated seats for each other. Therefore high castes or high class people if they wish can escape such an opportunity of mixing with lower castes, particularly with 'untouchables' by avoiding the situation. But occasionally some high caste people accept eating together with lower caste persons who happen to be their **friends**. A **Padmasalle informant** reported that once he, together with his other caste friends, attended a wedding feast of his '**untouchable**' friend's daughter where they ate together regardless of caste boundary, although separate places were set there in the dining hall so as to keep distance from other 'untouchables'.

This process can be explained by the notion that 'one or **two**' individuals are acceptable, however more numerous and **caste-wide** eating together without a little consideration of caste difference has not taken place there. Gradually scattered events of eating together will help to decrease the caste separation, since it slowly becomes customary to allow greater numbers to eat together (see, Mayer 1996). On the public feasts, the feedings take place over a period several times. At the start of first feeding, there can be a little consideration of seat and position between the members of different castes. But later, everybody simply sits down where there is a place in no particular order. Especially young generation hardly consider about caste differences at least in public **feast**. Generally, in village, the public feasts take place in the wedding feeding which starts after marriage ceremony. In the feasts, all guests sit on the feeding place without much consideration of caste difference. But, for higher caste or elite group of villagers, specially sitting chairs are offered. And if the hosts belong to non-vegetarian caste, they may prepare separately for their vegetarian guests.

3.4.3 Real picture of a ritual feeding in the village

In the ritual feast (in village there is only one ritual feast sponsored by the Thakur family), a separate place is prepared only for the **Brahmans**. And the elite group of villagers or **important** guests are allowed to eat on the table. But other common people sit on the floor where they are served by the hosts. In other words this case can be interpreted as the separation of caste in terms of caste hierarchy. Since the Thakurs belong to the Kshatriya they serve the Brahman separately to reconfirm their caste position in front of the others. On the

other hand, the separation of elite guests from common people indicates the change of ideological **norm**, from ritual hierarchy to secular status. The following is the description of a ritual feeding offered by Thakur.

The ritual feast which is offered by the Thakur is performed annually for eight days in the month of **Margashirsam** (which falls usually around the months of mid-November-mid-December). The ancestors of Thakur once worked for the **Deshmukh** as a personal security-guard. About 70 years ago, the story goes that, one of an issueless Thakur built the **Manika** Prabhu temple in his garden, and offered a prayer for being blessed with a son. After he got a son, Manika Prabhu became a god of the Thakur. Since then they have been offering annual worship and public feeding to date which takes place in the garden of the temple.

During first six days, the food cooked by a Brahman is offered to only those **Brahmans** whoever stays in the village. Next, on the 7th day, all of guests who attend the feeding feast take food offered by the Thakurs, without considering the boundaries of castes or villages. However, a separate place is prepared for the leaders of village and other important guests who came from outside the village. The **Thakur's** friends take food with the host families in the specially prepared place with dining tables. They are well educated Government **Officials**, local leaders of political parties or persons of other high status.

In the public feeding place numerous people who attend to feast sit and eat together on the same seats without caste or status differences. This reflects as if nobody would like to separate or insist on having different seats for each other who comes from different castes. This applies not only with Hindus but also with Muslims and Tribes (**Lambadi**) as well who attend the feeding. But the Muslims and Tribes, usually, arrive late, so they escape an unease or awkward situation. Almost all of the Muslims who attend Hindu ritual feeding belong to the lower-category (such as the Fakirs), among the Muslims. These Muslims and Tribes themselves try to escape uncomfortable feeling by coming late or sitting in their own group on the same line or **row** this has gradually helped to reduce the restrictions put on eating together.

3.4.4 Factors that are forcing relaxation in commensality

The other factor which helps to decline the rule of **commensality** is the existence of restaurants and tea shops in the village. The people who live in village or in the vicinity, sit together with others on the long chair without any caste differ-

ences and eat **with** them meanwhile they are waiting and taking tea. In the restaurants or tea shops, the caste restrictions are not observed while having tea or food. These contexts have produced a good opportunity for the villagers to remove or ignore the psychological barrier of caste hierarchy or the idea of purity or pollution. However, the villagers are observing the commensal restriction in private circumstances. There is almost no opportunity to eat together between two families that belong to different castes. Even though both families come from the same caste, they seldom eat together. For instance informant A who belongs to the Waddera and B who belongs to the Dasari, are friends as well as working-partners and both are **non-vegetarians**, but A never eats the food cooked by B, while B eats all the food cooked by A, however both usually share a **beedi** (a kind of local-made smoke). At the individual level there has been little relation of commensal restriction, but there is the possibility of individual choice.

3.4.41 The role of the tea stalls in the village

There are nine tea shops in the village, seven of them are at national highway sides, the other two are at the temple road near market-place. These tea shops are places where people wait for bus or autorickshaw, come to read newspaper or simply to kill time. Among them, one is run by an '**untouchable**', one by a Muslim, one by a Bestha (a **sub-sect** of **Muduraju**), one by an immigrant (**Komati**), and the rest five are run by the Padmasalles. To some extent they attract different clientele, the Muslim's clientele are the Muslims; the '**untouchables**' the '**untouchables**' and the youths; the immigrant's the lower and other immigrants; the Padmasalles' high and middle castes, old people. But this distinction indicates general distribution of clienteles based on their selection; it means that any body can go to any shop. For instances a few '**untouchables**' who are middle aged, are the daily customer of a **Padmasalle's** tea shop, every morning they come to this stall and take tea with other castes.

3.4.42 The **dhabas** and caste-free eating situation

The tea shops, therefore, are a part of public domain, as are the five roadside restaurants (**dhaba**) that flourish **due** to the heavy lorry traffic on the national highway. These establishments which are located at about one kilometer away from the main village along the highway, have a place to eat, open almost at **all** hours together with the washing facilities and telephone booths. All of them are run by the immigrants, who came from the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. It is said that the first **dhaba** was started in 1980s by a Sikh who came from the Punjab. The **clien-**

tele as well as the cooks and dishwashers there include various castes. But on the whole, the **dhabas** are not the places for casual village gathering because of the higher cost of food and the distance from the village however, they offer a further element of caste-free eating situation.

3.4.43 The toddy shops and the consumption of hard liquors

Until 1994, there were two wine shops, one in the village owned by a Padmasalle (now he is a tea shop owner); the other near a dhaba. After the introduction of prohibition in 1995, both shops were closed. There are three toddy shops in the village. Though formerly drinking toddy has been treated as a token of low castes or menials, a lot of villagers who belong to the middle level castes drink toddy either in the toddy shops or at their dwellings. Nowadays mainly due to the prohibition rule, drinking toddy is popular to the villager. All toddy shops are managed by the Goud Caste Association (**Sangam**). The lower castes or the menial workers, generally, drink toddy in the shop yards, but the people of middle caste or class take it home, mainly because except low caste or menial workers, those who drink it feel ill at ease, especially at public and open places.

3.4.44 The meat shops and the **non-vegetarian** consumers

In addition to toddy shops, there are several meat shops run by the Muslims. Two of them are beef shops which open alternately a week about, two mutton shops and one chicken shop. Apart from these, there are four mutton sellers who sell only on Saturdays (for the Muslim) and on Sundays (for the Hindus). The beef shops are located at the end of new kandi residence, near Shenkarpalle roadside just opposite a Harijan settlement. However, the mutton shops lie in the midst of main residence of both old and new Kandi, especially the shop in new kandi is located at the entrance point of temple road. Both mutton shops are owned by the Muslim Chinna Katika brothers. The weekly mutton sellers, both the Muslims or Hindus, open their business by road sides or near toddy shop. The chicken shop is near the mutton shop in new Kandi roadside.

Unlike drinking toddy, meat-eating is not so much strongly rejected by the villagers. But **beef-eating** is strongly prohibited to almost of all Hindus, at least in the village level. Both meat-eating and drinking mix up the values and concepts of castes formerly distinct, and these further weaken commensal distinction between castes. And, now, both are left to the individual's choice rather than caste wide coercion. In addition to above factors, the establishment of factories near village and the

employment of a lot of villager in there, do more to ease inter-caste relations as well as to reduce commercial restrictions.

3.4.5 General observations and **commensal** rules

Several anthropologists and sociologists (see, Freed 1963; Hiebert 1969; Kolenda 1983; Marriott 1965; Mayer 1960) have determined the relative caste-ranking by applying the rules of **commensality**. Mayer (1960:33) insists that the ritual status among castes expressed through the commensal behaviors of the people are clear. It is said that there is a hierarchy in diet to which the caste hierarchy is related, and that this commensal hierarchy is based on the theory of purity or pollution (see, Srinivas 1984b). But the caste hierarchy in the village is not represented as a single, discrete scale along which all castes are ranked. Moreover, the rule of commensality is waning and relaxed, even though it has not totally disappeared even in the public places. Now, in the village as well as at the urban areas, the restriction of commensality does not rely upon the authority or coercion of each caste. Rather, it is left to the individual's choice. That is, the relative ranking of caste in the village cannot be justified by the position of each caste according to their behavior of eating and drinking.

Several villagers who were enquired about the commensal behavior of their caste, replied that, "nowadays, there is no strict rule connected with eating; we eat with anybody without regarding to his caste background, even though he belongs to **Harijan**". A Thakur in the village who is a retired teacher, informed that the better opportunities of education availed by the lower castes than before explains for the reason for eating together by different castes. Due to education, he said, the children of lower castes, including the '**untouchables**', automatically get mixed up with those of higher castes. Therefore, the friendships between the children of different castes have formed and continued for quite a few decades. Moreover, they have exposed the ideology of equality among men through the school. So, the education, it is said, has contributed and is still contributing to remove the caste barrier.

Regarding the rule of commensality, another informants told that there is no caste bar now as far as eating and drinking are concerned; everyone can eat with the another. But in daily life, almost of them agree that there is some degree of separation or hesitation to eat food cooked or served by lower caste, especially the '**untouchables**'. The restrictions of dietary customs between different castes exists unclearly and involves a lot of

complexity. There is no single, clear order applicable to this compared to the form of hierarchy.

For the purpose of **simplification**, the castes are classified into eleven divisions, including the Muslims, specifically with regard to the exchange of cooked food between them. And these divisions concern to the commensal rules applicable across castes as a whole not limiting them to the individual level.

TABLE - 13
DIVISIONS OF COMMENSAL RELATIONS*

Vegetarian Castes	Non-Vegetarian Castes
Division 1 Brahman	
Division 2 Komati (Vaisha) Lingayat, (Baliya , Jangam)	Division 3 Thakur (Rajput) , Reddy
Division 4 Ausalli (Goldsmith) Vaddla (Carpenter) Kammari (Blacksmith)	Division 5 Padmasalle , Muduraju Yadav, Goud, Mera , Sara, Arekatika
	Division 6 Waddera, Kummari (potter) Medari , Dore Chakalli, Mangalli
	Division 7 Dasari, Erukalla (Tribe or Semi-Tribe)
	Division 8 Mochi , Budigajangam
(Untouchable)	Division 9 Mala, Madiga
(Muslim)	Division 10 Syed, Sheik, Khan
	Division 11 Fakir, Katikas

* In this analysis the Satani caste is omitted, it migrated to other town after the head of house expired during the field work time.

** These divisions are based on the interviews taken with the middle-aged and old sales excluding women and the young. Because the rule of **commensality** between different castes is not so much strict to youths, compared to the then old folks, and it represents an irregular form or a matter of individuals choice for them, while to women, the rule limits or narrows down the choice to the neighbour and adjacent castes.

To describe the situation presented in the Table above, first comes the undisputed position the Brahman. He will eat cooked food only with his family or the member of his own caste, which is cooked by some of them. But the young generation of Brahman does not observe the rule of **commensality** so strictly as the old generation does. For instance, a young Brahman, who is a political leader and the owner of fertilizer shop in the village, usually takes tea or some eatables with a group of youths and the clientele of his fertilizer shop regardless of their caste hierarchy, including the Harijans. However, the position of Brahman concerning to the rule of commensality is recognized and confirmed by all the castes.

Below the Brahman, the hierarchy branches into two directions, Division 2 and Division 4, which belong to the vegetarian castes, and other divisions are non-vegetarian ones. Division 2 takes food only from Division 1, that is, the Brahman, while Division 3 takes it **from** both Division 1 and Division 2. But this does not mean that Division 2 is higher than Division 3. Just because of the vegetarianism of Division 2, nor because of the order of hierarchy between them. Division 2 do not accept food from Division 3. However, Division 2, recognizes the higher position of Division 3. And Division 3 also mutually agree with the ritual hierarchy by accepting the cooked food from Division 2. Within Division 3, the Reddys, it is said, do not accept the cooked food from the Thakur, but the Thakurs agree, that they accept the **food from the Reddys**. The Reddys whose position has been dominant in the village as well as in the local area, treat the Thakur (whose **varna** position belongs to the category of Kshatriya) as potential competitor for the dominant position in the village.

As the Reddys do not receive the **cooked-food** from the Thakur, they reject **the** idea that the position of Thakur is higher than their own in the hierarchical order. Moreover, a Reddy who was enquired about the position or category of the Thakur in the reservation seats, replied (even though he knows very well about the categories of other castes), that the Thakurs belong to the category of S.T., not to the Forward Castes, surprisingly.

The Lingayats in Division 2 are divided into two groups of castes, **one** is Baliya (whose traditional occupation is merchandise) the other is **Jangam** (whose occupation is priesthood for Lingayats). But in the hierarchical order, the Baliya occupies higher position than the Jangams do, while both can eat together. The **Komati and the** Lingayat acknowledge the comparatively equal position of each other as far as the exchange of food is con-

cerned. Though the Lingayat claim equal status with the Brahman, there is no **reciprocity** in terms of food exchange between them and the **Brahmans**.

However, the position of Division 4 is placed in, somewhat, straightened circumstances. The Vishva Brahmins or **Kammalan** (see, Hutton 1946:12) or **Vishvakarma** Brahmins (see, Srinivas 1962b:69), that is, Ausalli, **Kammari**, Vaddla, Kasha, and Kanchari belong to this division. In this village, only Ausalli, Kammari and Vaddla inhabit there. They are vegetarian castes, don the sacred thread, and intermarry between Kammari and Vaddla but not with Ausalli, though they can eat together with them.

The Vishva **Brahmins** insist that they do not accept any **cooked-food** from any caste other than their own, while when they offer the food, Brahman, **Komati**, Lingayat, Reddy, Thakur and some other castes do not accept. In other words, though they are the vegetarian castes, the hierarchically higher castes or the pretend-to-be-higher castes do not accept any cooked food from the Vishva **Brahmins**. It means that among different castes the concept of 'vegetarian' or 'non-vegetarian' is not the only or main criteria for the exchange or the acceptance of cooked food. The hierarchy, ritual as well as secular positions are also regarded as important criteria in commensal **relations**.

Concerning the exchange of food, it is not clear whether the Vishva Brahman as a whole or each caste is a unit. The higher castes consider themselves as one unit, while the lower or equal level castes separate the Vishva Brahmins. The Kammari, particularly, is treated somewhat as lower than the other two.

For example, the Thakur treats the Vishva Brahmins as one category, that is, a vegetarian group, while the **Padmasalle** and the **Muduraju** treat them as separate units of each other. The Padmasalle and the Muduraju take food which is offered by the Ausalli and the Vaddla, while they do not take any by the Kammari. However, the Waddera, it is said, never accept any food cooked by the whole Vishva Brahmins. Srinivas (1987a:82) explains the ambiguous position of the Vishva Brahman with the division of Left-hand cast and Right-hand **castes**¹⁰. But, these concepts cannot totally explain, the reasons why, except the Waddera, the rest of Division 6,7,8 and 9 accept the food cooked by the Vishva Brahmins, and why the **Kammari** is treated lower than the Ausalli and Vaddla by the people of certain castes. It depends not only on the ritual position of the Vishva Brahman as a whole, but also on the secular power of each caste. As the vegetarian castes, they can not take any food from the non-vegetarian castes, while the others treat them separately based

on the secular criteria, that is, the numerical power and economic wealth.

Another explanation regarding the ambiguous status of Vishva Brahmins is that once they changed their names to Vishvakarma Brahmins in pre-British times through the Sanskritization of their rites and customs, claiming descent from **Visvakarma** (the architect of the Gods), and equality with the Brahmins, but they did not get the approval of the others instead of gaining the state what they wanted (see, Hutton 1946:12; Srinivas 1962a:67; Gupta 1991:123). The reason why they have not taken any food from Brahmin, **Komati** and Lingayat who are all vegetarians, is that they (the **Vishva** Brahmins) they have claimed their status as high as that of the Brahmin.

The remaining five divisions (i.e. division 5 to 9) except that of the Muslims, represent somewhat a successive order as far as the commensal rule is concerned, even though the distinction of divisions is arbitrary and, in some cases, its boundary is blurred. The Sara and the Arekatika are often recommended to the Division 6, instead of 5, by certain castes of Division 5 as well as those of Division 6. Similarly, the Chakalli and the Mangalli are treated statuswise slightly lower than the other castes of the Division 6.

Within the Division 5, the Padamasalle and the Yadav have been oriented towards **upward-movement** for establishing their status in the hierarchical order. A **Padmasalle**, for instance, insists that there is no caste inequality nowadays so every one can eat together without caste separation. But in practice, later he confided that he never ate together with the *Harijan*, the Muslims, Tribes, Chakalli and Mangalli. In the cases of the Yadav, the Goud and the **Mera**, their attitudes for the equality of castes are not so much different from those of the Padamasalle. They want equality with castes above them, while they insist hierarchy or, at least, the difference in their relations to the lower caste, particularly to the '**untouchables**'.

However, concerning **commensality** the **Mudurajus** represent two different situations based on the contexts, inside and outside. The Muduraju castes as a whole, take food from castes above or equal to them, that is, Division 1 to Division 5, but they do not take food from castes lower than their own. While, in the relations of food exchange there exists the status difference among them. Until recently, the Bestha which is one of **sub-caste** of the Muduraju, is treated slightly lower than others. While they share cooked food among other **sub-castes**, they did not allow the Bestha to join them, neither did they marry the Bestha. The

position of the Bestha within the **Muduraju** is similar to that of the **Kammari** within the Vishva **Brahmans**. In the village, there are only three Bestha households; they are a father and two married sons, moreover, their economic status is very low.

However the **Mera** in Division 5 insists that he can take food only from Brahman, **Komati**, Lingayat, **Padmasalle**, Reddy, Thakur, Goud and Yadav, and when he offers the cooked food all of the castes accept it, except the Brahman, Komati and Lingayat because they are vegetarian castes. The economic position of the Mera is better than that of other castes grouped under Division 5. Therefore, they pretend (or insist) to belong to higher position by rejecting cooked food from other castes which are ranked equal or lie below economically as well as ritually.

The relative positions between Division 6 and Division 7, as concerns the commensal hierarchy, are not clear. They are almost similar status or the Division 7 locates slightly lower than the Division 6. But this does not mean that the castes within a division show the equal status among them. While each caste accepts the positions of higher castes above it, each caste does not allow others, within same division, to insist equal status with its position. For example, both the Chakalli and the Mangalli insist that their status is higher than that of the others. In practice they never exchange food cooked by each other, but each of them insists that the food offered by one caste (e.g. Mangalli) will be accepted by the other (e.g. Chakalli) however, it will not do so. In this way, by projecting oneself as a 'giver' and not 'taker' and rejecting the possibility of mutual food exchange between these castes, each tries to assume superiority over the other.

The Waddera asserts his position as equal to that of the Padmasalle, the Goud and the Yadav though, lower than the Brahman, Reddy and Komati, and he takes food from these (higher) castes. The Dore, Medari, Erukalla, and Dasari, express similar opinions regarding food exchange between themselves the other castes within the Division 6 and Division 7. That is, they assert their superiority in relation to their inferiors, especially to the 'untouchables', in terms of traditional hierarchy, whereas they would like to be equal in relation to their superiors in terms of modern ideals of equality and democracy. Such opposing views are ordinarily carried with the assertion: nowadays, there is no distinction or difference between castes, we can eat together with any caste except the *Harijan* (or Tribes), while we offer the food cooked by our member, every caste accepts, except the Brahman, Komati or Reddy.

The **Mochi** and the Budigajangam also hold similar opinions. Although they don't share food with the '**untouchables**' and the Tribes or Dore, almost every caste except the Brahman, **Komati** and **Reddy** accepts the food offered by them. As regards the situation of other Divisions, Division 9 also lacks clarity of relation between the Mala and the Madiga in the village. Each of them insists that one is higher than the other, while they share and exchange the food cooked by each other. Both agree that no caste other than their own accepts or shares the cooked food with them.

The position of Muslims is not **fixed** in any place as **far** as the food exchange is concerned. The Muslims are out of the Hindu ritual hierarchy, so their relation to the other Hindu castes is ambiguous if there are opportunities to take or give **foods**. A Hindu takes food only from a Muslim who has close friendship or is higher politically or economically. But, generally, all of the Hindu caste are reluctant to accept foods from the Fakir, because of its ritual position (of being beggar) and secular state (being poor).

3.4.6 Concluding remarks

To sum up, one of the most striking features of the caste system, as Srinivas (1962b:66) says, is the lack of clarity in the hierarchy. Therefore it is difficult or almost impossible to order exact caste ranking based on only the rule of food exchange. First of all, the evaluation of **commensality** is made mainly in private not public domains. Moreover, all of the castes, except two opposite poles, that is the Brahman and the '**untouchables**', use two different norms to justify or assert equality with castes above them and to stress hierarchy in relation to their inferiors (see, Berreman 1979:10). Regarding such attitude of the double standard, Srinivas (1966b:92) well summed up; "I am equal to those who think of themselves as my better, I am better than those who regard themselves as my equals, and how dare my inferiors claim equality with **me**?". So, the hierarchical values which are based on the concepts of purity or pollution remain in the private, domestic domain as well as in relations with lower castes, while the modern ideals of equality and the secular criteria (e.g. wealth, education) are emphasized in the public domain, and in relation to higher castes.

Having delineated on important topic of commensality here, the following subsection will dwell on endogamy which is one of the main mechanism of maintaining caste boundary and the main source of social identity.

3.5 Endogamy

One of the characteristic features of the caste system has been said to be the regulation of marriage. Each caste is characterized by the obligation to marry within the group, by endogamy. Marriage is the time when caste boundaries are considered most importantly, and typically one is allowed to go for marital relations only within one's own local caste group. To put this fact in **Mandelbaum's** (1970:16) word, "Marriage is the relation that demarcates each *jati* most clearly. All marriages are supposed to be between a bride and groom of the same *jati*; no marriage may be made outside it".

Though there are numerous exceptions to the rule of endogamy (see, **Dumont** 1983; Gough 1961; Parry 1979, etc.), castes are generally associated with rules which require endogamy. Stressing on the importance of caste endogamy **Srinivas (1987a:79)** says, "the effects of caste endogamy are, on the one hand, to deny a powerful means of forging solidarity among different castes and, on the other hand, to increase solidarity within each caste". The status of a group in the caste system is based on endogamy, therefore, the children of an **endogamous** marriage reproduce legally or socially the status of their parents.

But the reality is more complex and flexible than the ideal. A caste group is generally endogamous, but occasionally endogamy is found to coexist with hypergamy. Approved intercaste marriage or alliances (see, **Dumont** 1968) are generally hypergamy not **hypogamy**. **Yalman** has observed that, "ideally there should be no give and take of women between **castes**. When there is give and take, it should be asymmetrical so that men of high status may take women of low status but not the reverse" (quoted in **Das** 1992:73). In the village, formally intercaste marriage itself has never been allowed by both the bride and groom side, whether it is **hypergamous** or **hypogamous**, though intercaste alliance exists there. Nowadays, however intercaste '**marriage**' or alliance has taken place as a form of individual affair rather than marriage between families or castes.

The membership to a caste is determined by birth. An individual is assigned his unalterable and permanent status according to his/her parentage. That is, the individual's place is determined by the **kin-group** into which he is born; this is a part of sub-caste or caste to whose collective status he is ascribed. However, the status of the child of an unapproved alliance is nowhere in the caste system. In **Harper's** (1968:61) opinion, "the child of a prohibited alliance in India could (1) emigrate from that area, (2) remain in the region where his ancestry was known

but join an untouchable caste, or (3) remain in the region and become a truly marginal man - an individual without caste affiliation". But these methods are by no means **universal**. Sometimes the membership of caste is assigned unilineally or according to more complex rules based on birth. In the village, the offspring of unapproved alliance is generally admitted, as a member of the women's caste, in the case of hypergamy rather than admitting him/her to an '**untouchable**' caste or a marginal man. But the child of '**approved**' intercaste marriage or alliance takes the right as legal descent of the father, and is treated temporarily as a member of father's caste until the time of his/her marriage.

With the relaxation of commensal restrictions among different castes, and the spread of egalitarianism and democracy, the earlier restrictions on marriage have become flexible, and **endogamous** groups now include some castes or sub-castes that were outside the sphere of endogamy earlier. Moreover, education, urbanization, the effects of cinema and case of migrations have helped to increase instances of intercaste marriages, though such numbers are marginal in the **village**. In the following subsections the unit of endogamy and its change, the cases of intercaste marriage and the mechanism of acceptance or the rejection of these unions and/or their offsprings will be described.

3.5.1 The units of endogamy

Most of the endogamous units are castes (*jatis*) or sub-castes, occasionally they are allied castes or caste-clusters as well. Caste barriers, as **Yalman** (1960:89) indicates, are not fixed like rigid fences, these caste barriers are resilient, and rely upon the situation. The boundary of endogamous unit has not been fixed forever, it changes through time in conformity to circumstances or situations.

In the village, **usually**, the unit of endogamy is *jatis*, but in some cases it is **sub-caste** or **jati-cluster**, too. For instance, the Reddy which is the dominant caste in the village, as well as in the region and in this local area, is divided into two sections, that is '**Kudhati Reddy**', and '**Modhati Reddy**'. The former had migrated here from another village, following one of his ancestor who had got job under the Deshmukh, as a supervisor of **Deshmukh's** own agriculture. However, the Modhati Reddys have lived and dominated this village since the beginning of the existence of the village. While there has been no remarkable difference between them in their life styles, it is said, the women folks of the Kudhati Reddy wore sari differently, that is, they previously made the sari pass over the right shoulder instead of doing it from the left as usually. However now-a-days

they also wear to confirm with the others. The **Modhati** Reddys consider themselves as superior to the Kudhati Reddys. Infringement of the endogamy between them has not been reported and taken place in this village, though the changes have occurred in the social, economic, and political spheres of the village as well as in its environs. Unlike in other villages of this district the Modhati Reddys enjoy the overwhelming position compared to the Kudhati Reddys, economically and politically, as well as numerically in this village (cf. Rao 1974).

The Vishva Brahmans are treated as one category in terms of their ritual position and the rule of **commensality**. This group comprises five divisions. The Vaddla (carpenter), the **Kammari** (blacksmith), the Ausalli (goldsmith), the Kanchari (**brasssmith**), and Shilpi or Kasha (idol maker with wood, stone). Of these only the first three jatis (or sections) are found in the village. However, they agree that they eat together the food cooked by any of them, but there is no agreement about inter-marriage among them. Though they insist they belong to one '**caste**' both the Kammari and the Vaddla separate the Ausali from them, so far as inter-marriage is concerned. Inter-marriage is possible only between the Kammari and the Vaddla, the Ausali is outside the sphere of inter-marriage. In fact, there are inter-marriage cases between the Kammari and the Vaddla, and both of their occupations are **inter-changeable** or combinational.

For example, Eshwaraya, a Kammari in New Kandi, takes carpentry as an additional job. And **Malleya**, a Kammari was born on a Vaddla family, but he was related to the daughter of a Kammari by '**illitam**' (or **illerikam**) marriage. In this form of marriage the bridegroom leaves his natal home and takes up residence with bride's parental household (see, **Mudiraj** 1970). After his father-in-law expired, he took his father-in-law's hereditary occupation, since then he has been called and become Kammari Malleya, instead Vaddla Malleya. But no intermarriage has taken place between the Ausalli and the Kammari (or the Vaddla) in the village.

The Muduraju have four sections (or sub-castes) in the village - Muduraju, Tellaga (or Tenugu), Manne, and Bestha. Of these sections, the first two hardly represent as particular sub-castes while viewed from the nomenclature as well as from the unit of the residential territory. Both Muduraju and Tenugu terms are interchangeably used as a caste name, moreover the status of both **sub-sections** is appropriate to '**category**' rather than 'group'. But the next two, that is, the Manne and Bestha, represent as groups than **categories**. The members of both groups attach Manne or Bestha to their personal names, such as '**Manne**

Shivaya' or '**Bestha Ragaya'** , etc. Almost all of the Marines dwell in a limited area in the village. The Besthas have only one **family** comprising three **households**.

Ritually and socially the Mudurajus are identified by others as one caste. Among them, the Bestha has been treated inferior to other sections, till recently he was not allowed to inter-marry and inter-dine with others. Whenever the Mudurajus refer to themselves as a unit of caste, that is '**Muduraju'**', they exclude or omit the Bestha from it consciously or unconsciously. Though they agree that nowadays they can inter-marry and inter-dine with the Bestha, still they separate the Bestha from the conversation and feel reluctant to accept the fact, that the Bestha is equal to them. It means even though they accept the Bestha ritually and socially as equal in status to them, but the psychological barrier is **left** without any substantial change at **all**.

Figure - 2
MARRIAGES BETWEEN
MUDURAJU AND BESTHA

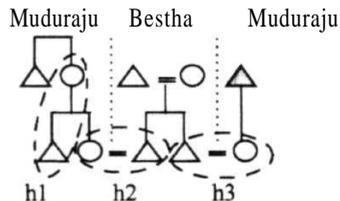


Figure - 2 shows the cases of inter marriage between the Besthas and Muduraju. All three households are living in the village. Nowadays, there is no prohibition concerning marriage and **commensality** between the Bestha and others. That is, the Bestha has been accepted as an equal section of the Muduraju as far as inter-marriage and inter-dinning are concerned. But, in the Reservation seats, their positions are different, while the Bestha belongs to the Backward Caste or Class Category-A, the others belong to Category-D. It means, the Bestha represents its ritual or social identity as a Muduraju, but it keeps or maintains its separation as far as economic benefits are concerned. According to the contexts, either caste (or **jati**) identity or sub-caste identity is emphasized.

The Yadavs provide another instance of how two previously distinct castes can now marry each other and become one endogamous unit. Yadav is a category consisting of several allied castes which are to be found in different parts of India. The Yadavs insist that they are the descendants of **the** Lord Krishna. The Yadav category encompasses a whole range of related castes who have a set of occupation centering round cattle (see, Rao 1987:124; Cox 1948:424).

In the village, there are two divisions of the Yadav, that is, the **Golla** and **Kurma**. The **Golla** was 'cow-buffalo herd - and agriculturist, while the Kurma was sheep-goat herd - and blanket weaver. They didn't inter-dine and inter-marry, traditionally. The Kurma was regarded as inferior compared to the Golla. But most of their members have abandoned their traditional occupations; therefore there is no occupational distinction between these two divisions. Moreover, nowadays there is no difference between them whether socially or ritually, at least in the village; and they prefer to call or be called as Yadav rather than Golla or Kurma.

The terms Golla and Kurma are interchangeably used to refer to the Yadav as a whole. An informant, who is a teacher belonging to the Golla division, informed that his caste name was Kurma. It is not because he is ignorant of the distinction between the Kurma and Golla, but because the distinction is meaningless, either Kurma or Gollas, or both indicate and represent the Yadav as a whole, not just a certain division. There is only one Golla family divided into two households, the rest of Yadav belong to the Kurma.

Caste itself is, more or less, a unit of endogamy but in certain cases this unit is expanded into a **jati-cluster** such as in the cases of the Vishva Brahman, Muduraju and Yadav. While in some other cases, a caste has more than one unit of 'endogamy' such as the Reddy. As a norm, no intercaste marriage should take place. But practically or in real life situation it takes place. This phenomena of the undesirable inter-caste relations, marital or extramarital their consequences, and the role or the response of the society will be discussed basing the issues on case studies in the following subsection.

3.5.2 Inter-caste marriage

The nature of inter-caste marriage is often ambiguous to define. In terms of kinship, a true inter-caste 'marriage' which is accepted and approved by **both** kinsmen does not exist in the village. Moreover, in some cases it is difficult to make clear

distinction between a marriage and a regularized liaison relationship. For an example of the connections between high caste man and low caste woman, while the woman's side insists this relationship as '**marriage**', the man's side never accepts it as marriage instead it is claimed as simple relationship of sexual liaisons or concubinage.

Concerning this distinction, **Yalman** (1960:95) has suggested three separate forms of regular connections, such as:

- (i) regularised sexual liaisons,
- (ii) the establishment of domestic, conjugal and commensal **unions**, and
- (iii) the alliance between kinsmen, with the implication that it be perpetuated in the next "generation".

In the village, however, the last form of union, that is, the alliance approved by both kinsmen, does not exist. Any form of **inter-caste** marriage, whether it is a type of **hypergamy** or hypogamy, had not been accepted and approved formerly by the kinsmen. Naturally, there is no marriage alliance between kinsmen of different castes. Moreover, the offspring of inter-caste union were unwilling to be admitted by either paternal or maternal side regardless of their caste hierarchy.

It is not easy to distinguish between mere sexual intercourse and concubinage. And if a man is having an affair with a woman of his own caste, it may well be difficult to decide exactly what the relationship is. In the village mere sexual intercourse relationships or liaison is treated as if no such relationship between them exists, though such relations are recognized by the public.

There are a lot of rumours connected to sexual intercourse between the members of different castes, real or imaginary. And it is very difficult, if not impossible, to confirm those rumours whether real or not. Usually, those affairs take place very secretly, so nobody can prove, though he has suspicion, without witness of the scene. But sometimes, by accident, such relationships become publicly proved when the woman is pregnant or both run away together. For example, when an unmarried Madiga girl became pregnant, the matter was hushed up and the girl married immediately after artificial abortion. At that time, there was a rumour that a Reddy boy had sexual relationship with her, but without confirming, it was over as a rumour. However, such relationships with the married women keep up for a long time with a safety of pregnancy, and with the mechanism of ascription for the status of illegitimacy. Some of such cases will be related below:

Case - 1) . A married Muslim man (40, butcher) has developed sexual relationship with a married Waddera woman whose husband left her sometimes before they developed relationships. Both are habitual toddy-drinkers, they met frequently on the toddy shop in the village. Gradually, they attracted each other, and became regularized liaisons to each other. Since last fifteen years this relationship is going on. The woman had one daughter from her husband. In the meantime she produced three children from the Muslim. Those illegitimate offsprings took her husband's family name and were ascribed to the mother's caste, Waddera.

Even though her husband left her **longtimes** ago, that is before she produced three illegitimate offsprings, all of her children were ascribed and got the status of family and caste through the name of her husband. That is, her estranged husband is the father of her children. It was made possible with the help of two facts: firstly, the woman was spiteful and her husband was tied to her through **illerikam** marriage, that is he had no relative in the village. Secondly, like other castes the Waddera **Sangam** had already lost its power or authority to control the misbehaviour of its individual members. In this matter the genitor, the Muslim, is regarded as if he does not exist.

In this case, the caste affiliation of the illegitimate offspring is not a serious problem. Those offsprings remain with their mother and take her caste. In the village, in the matter of liaison, whether it is between the members of different castes or religions, the genitor is treated as if he does not exist at all.

Case - 2) One married **Komati** man (53) has kept relationship with a Muduraju widow, since the last two decades. He has a wife and two adult children, the widow also has two sons. He publicly keeps the relationship, he treats her as his wife. In the daytime, he manages the widow's a petty vegetable shop which is located in her house, but he takes food at his own house and takes rest there. Moreover, he sponsors the widow's sons as a patron-like and as the rumour goes, he is also the genitor of a son of the widow. Both families and others recognize this liaison relation, though they are not legally, and ritually bound husband and wife.

In this case, such **hypergamous** inter-caste liaisons are never recognized as alliance between kin groups or castes. However, individual men often establish concubinage relationship across

caste boundaries. Thus the ideology of caste endogamy is **pre-** served because the concubinage relationship is not regarded as a true '**marriage**'. Moreover, in the case that the men had a legally and ritually married wife and her child (a son) this liaison relationship was treated as an extramarital affair, not as a marriage .

Case - 3) A married Yadav man once worked for the Gram Panchayat office as a bill-collector in the village. He was a native of the village. A village sweeper belonging to the Madiga had a good looking daughter. One day the girl came to the office looking for her mother. The **bill-collector** was attracted by her charm, and he allured her, had intercourse with her. Thereafter he continued illicit connection with her, until they were **forced** to get married by the Madiga **caste**. Now they are living together at other village where the Yadav man works still as **bill-collector**. He has one son and two daughters from his first wife, and two sons and one daughter from the sweeper's daughter. His first wife and her children are living with his parents in the village.

This case suggests that a **hypergamous** inter-caste liaison can be transformed into a legal marriage relationship, though it is not ritually accepted by the man's family and caste because, already, he had a married wife approved by the kinsmen of both sides, and a legal inheritor, a son, The man's family and caste did not consider that relationship seriously, moreover they regarded it as an extra-marital union.

But the relationship between **high-caste** woman and **low-caste** man, that is, **hypogamous** relationship, whether marital or extra-marital, is severely controlled and punished by the community, especially of the woman's caste. Such prohibition of **hypogamous** sexual relations is explained in terms of the ideology of caste purity (see, **Yalman** 1960) or the concept of caste hierarchy (see, Das 1977). Das (1977:78) explains that hypogamous marriages are forbidden because the circulation of women and the prohibition of asymmetrical exchange of women are expressive of extreme separation of caste.

Therefore, whenever there is an asymmetrical exchange of women, the receiver of women are not placed in a lower position than that of the givers of women. However, Yalman suggests that the prohibition of **hypogamy** is mainly due to the status of the woman's offsprings. In the case of a liaison between a high-caste woman and a low-caste man, the offsprings of the woman would be

polluted in their blood. The ritual status of the offspring is transmitted through both father and mother, but maternal filiation is given greater significance than the paternal connexion. Therefore, because of the position of potential offspring, **hypogamous** relations are absolutely repudiated (cf. **Yalman 1960:97, 1971**).

Case-4) About 5-6 years ago, a Reddy girl fell in love with a **Harijan** boy. By the time others acknowledged it, they ran away to Hyderabad city, and got '**married**' there. After some time, they returned together to the village by the same bus. The Reddy caste raged against this shameful affair. They beat the boy severely. After this, the father of boy forced his son to marry a girl of same caste, for fear of the **Reddy's** wrath. **Meanwhile**, the family of girl regarded her as already died, and offered a *karma pooja* (rites for dead person).

Though the circumstance is **transformably** changed, with the help of spread of education and ideology of egalitarianism, the **inter-caste** sexual relationship, especially hypogamous, is intolerable for the high caste, particularly for the Reddy who is dominant in the village. Moreover, if the low-caste man is a Harijan, the **high-caste** woman must not have intercourse with him on pain of death.

However, the situation is different in the case of liaison or marriage between a woman and a man of similar status or of slightly lower caste. For them the relationship is reluctantly allowed by the both families, but not by the castes, after some-time by a tacit **consent**.

Case - 5) A Bestha boy had developed love affair with a **Padmasalle** girl, about ten years ago. By the time many villagers acknowledged it, the caste elders of both the boy and girl considered the matter seriously, and warned them to cut off the relationship. **In** spite of the opposition of both families and the warning of the castes, they continued liaison relationship. Thereafter, the caste of woman, the Padmasalle, beat the boy severely with a warning to break off the relationship. But, instead of letting it break off, the lovers ran away from the village and married at a temple of Yadagiri **Gutta**, near Hyderabad city. Now they are living in Patancheru, a town near the village, with the children.

This marriage has not been approved by both the castes, however, the parents of both husband and wife drop in at the

couple's house of Patancheru once in a while. The husband visited the village two or three times for his younger brother's marriage, while his wife never did. This case suggests that the case of **inter-caste** marriage, especially hypogamous, would not be accepted by any caste, but after sometime the marriage is approved by a tacit consent of both families, but not castes. Hence, from a standpoint of caste, a true **inter-caste** marriage does not exist. Such inter-caste liaisons or marriages can never be recognized as alliances between two kin groups of different **castes**.

However, in the case of inter-caste marriage of '**outsider**' or divorcee (or widow), it is somewhat easily to be acknowledged by the family, than in the case of villager and/or unmarried.

Case - 6). A Reddy man who came through in the village seeking for a job, married a **Padmasalle** woman of the village. Before the marriage, the reputations of her and her widow mother were not good among the villagers. They had run a tea shop in the village. There are rumours about her and her mother, concerning sexual intercourses, the daughter had deep relationship with a **Malariman** who worked for the Machine Tool Company near the village. Once they lived together as husband and wife somewhere, but that person left her. In the meantime, in the view of her family a poor Reddy man appeared as an appropriate husband for her. They then got married, and dwelt in the woman's mother's house of the village.

In the above case, the man himself was very poor, his position in the village **anomalous**. Though he and his wife's family claim he comes from the Reddy caste, he is usually identified with the Muduraju as the husband of a Muduraju woman. Because he has settled uxorilocally in the Muduraju wife's house and he is an outsider; the village is unconcerned as to what happens to him.

Case-7). A beautiful Reddy girl once worked at a rustic bakery shop. Her family was very poor, at that time, temporarily immigrated from a hamlet of the village. The status of her mother was not clear; whether she was a married wife or a concubine of the girl's father. When she was working at the bakery shop, several youths were attracted by her charm. Among them, she induced a Yadav boy to marry her. The family of Yadav boy was immigrant, rich, and both the boy and his father were high salaried job holders. They got married

with the acceptance of both families, except her father. Now the couple is living with the boy's family in the village.

Though it is a **hypogamous** union, this marriage was recognized by both families, but it does not mean, such hypogamous inter-caste marriage was accepted as alliance between different castes. It is not an alliance marriage between kinsmen, but a '**marriage**' of a man and a woman, with or without acceptance of both (or one) families, whether reluctantly or tacitly. Custom recognizes the union of different castes, but does not accept the union as alliance between castes. Thus the principle of caste endogamy is preserved.

Moreover, above mentioned girl does not belong to the Reddys of Kandi, and the boy is '**outsider**' but possessed wealth and influence, therefore the village and the concerned castes did not consider it seriously. The outsiders are always regarded as complete **strangers**.

But in practice an outsider who has wealth and/or influence often finds it possible to make a union with high caste woman. However, if the **high-caste** woman is widow or divorcee, the local low-caste man is also allowed to have marital union with her, without much antagonism against being union, from the high caste.

Case-8). A Chakalli widower remarried (or lived together with) a Reddy divorcee from a neighbouring village. After marriage she works as a Chakalli, that is, washing and ironing clothes for the clientele of husband family. She produced four children from him, living in the village.

Due to her inferior position, as a divorcee within her caste, she could be exempted from the principle of strict endogamy and the penalty of offending the rule of endogamy. To divorce itself is to violate one of the caste principles, especially, among high castes.

3.5.3 Affiliation of the offsprings of inter-caste union.

To decide the affiliation of offsprings is a more delicate problem than to approve the inter-caste union. In practice as well as in principle, such an inter-caste marital or extra-marital union has never been recognized as alliance between castes. Therefore, the position of offsprings is ambiguous or marginal in the caste system, in that they would not to be accepted as a true member, both from the father's caste and the mother's caste.

In the case of a high-caste man having an affair with a low-caste woman, the question of the caste affiliation of the possible offspring does not seriously arise. The children remain with mother and her family, under normal condition and will in her caste (see, **Yalman** 1960:97).

Case - 9) . A Waddera boy had developed a love affair with a **Budigajangam** girl of the village. After the girl's parents acknowledged this relationship, they forced the boy to marry the girl. But the boy's family directly rejected this demand, instead they forced the boy to marry a girl of the same caste. However, the boy kept sexual relationship with the Budigajangam girl even after marriage. Moreover, he took the girl to Hyderabad and got married. After the ceremonial (or legally registered) marriage, he kept the girl at her house. They have two children. The children are staying with the mother and her family.

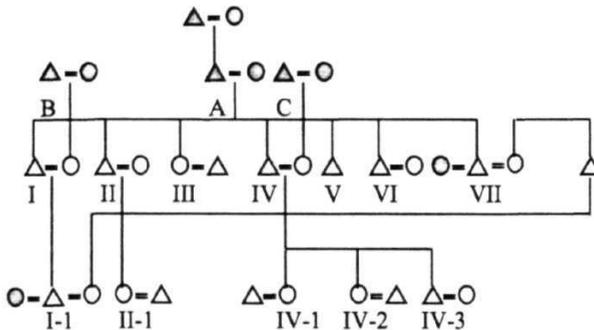
In this case, the positions of children is not yet clear, though they remain with the mother and in her caste, the mother's family insists that the children's caste affiliation belongs to the caste of father, not the mother. However. The father's family never approves not only the existence of the children but also even the marriage itself. They pretend not to know anything about all these.

In the case of **inter-caste** union, whether hypergamous or **hypogamous**, the question of the offspring's caste affiliation will exist as ambiguous or uncertain, until the time of their marriage. Though they remain in the mother's caste, their caste affiliation is not fixed, it is tentative, moreover it is not accepted by the whole community. At the time of their marriage, it will be decided, if they can marry a same caste mate, it means, they would be accepted as a member of the caste, or not. But, in practice, the offsprings of inter-caste union remains in the low-caste parent's caste, either the low caste mother's or the low-caste father's caste.

Case - 10) . One Brahman temple priest had 'married' (lived together with) a Muduraju woman without ritual ceremony. They had seven children, six sons and one daughter. None of them was married to a Brahman, moreover, the Muduraju of the village unwillingly accepted them as a '**true**' Muduraju.

A Brahman priest (A) married a **Muduraju** woman, the children of (A) are called '**mixed-caste**' or hybrid-production (**shankara jati**). Of them, two sons married the women of same category, that is, *shankara jati*. (I)'s wife was a daughter of the Lingayat father and Muduraju mother (Fig 3-B), and (IV)'s wife was a daughter of the Goud father and Muduraju mother (Fig. 3-C). The rest of them, that is three sons and one daughter, married the **Mudurajus**, one son still remains a bachelor. All of the next generation, that is, the grand children of (A), married the Mudurajus. Among them, a daughter (fig. 3-IV-2) married a Muduraju of the village. Nevertheless, they maintain their Brahman Gotra to identify themselves to **differentiate** from the rest.

Figure - 3
THE CASE OF INTERCASTE MARRIAGES



This case suggests that the offsprings of inter-caste union, even though that is **hypergamous**, would not be accepted as a true member of both the father's as well as the mother's caste. They should marry the person of same category that is *shankara jati*. Though they were the offsprings of high caste Brahman father, they would not be classed as belonging solely to the low caste of the mother. However, the next generation is to be accepted as a real Muduraju by the Muduraju of the village. Therefore, the caste affiliation of offsprings, in the case of inter-caste unions, will be decided by the time of their marriage.

Case- 11). A Brahman boy married a Reddy girl, but the villagers expressed their doubt about her caste status. The couples are accepted by both families. Now, they stay at a town where both are working for the Govern-

ment Bank. They, now with a daughter, visit the man's family now and then at the village.

Consequently, an inter-caste union can be legally valid in the eyes of law (registered legal marriage) and/or approved by the families. But in terms of kinship alliance between castes, there is no valid inter-caste marriage. The law asserts that the children of any registered marriage are legally the children of both parents. Nowadays, a legal provision is that the caste can not inflict punishment or excommunicate the person who violates the norms of caste endogamy. Whether the approval or punishment of such a **inter-caste** marriage is not the matter of the caste, but it is the family which decides whether to accept or expel the person who commits extra-marital affair or goes for an inter-caste marriage. In this regard, the caste has lost power, though not totally, to punish its member. The caste is no more a corporate unit which has the indispensable power to punish and to excommunicate its member who violates the rules of caste.

But, however, the caste still controls such an inter-caste union through the caste affiliation of the possible offspring. The castes usually isolate the offsprings of inter-caste union as far as marriage is concerned. For instance, concerning the caste affiliation of the daughter (**Case-11** above), a Brahman of the village explained that the daughter's status is not yet decided. By the time she becomes of a marriageable age, it will be decided whether she will be accepted as a true Brahman or not.

In the society, **the** individual's place is determined by the kin-group of the caste or sub-caste in whose collective status he participates, not by the individual family into which he is born. In the caste system, it is the principle of '**social descent**', rather than '**genetic transmission**', which determines the system. Hence by the rule of endogamy the individual's position would be recognized and qualified, not by a role of **hypergamy** or **hypogamy** (see, Pitt-Rivers 1971:241).

In marriage, caste endogamy is an important principle and is still practised almost universally, but it is justified by claiming that the **way** of life of each caste is distinctive, and expressive of cultural differences, rather than by insisting that a purity-based hierarchy of caste should be kept (see, Fuller 1996:12). Regarding the rule of endogamy, one Brahman informant who knows English says: "every caste has a different form, boundary, and its own rule, as each sport-game has. Every player in the game should follow its rule and respect, otherwise he will be expelled from the play-ground. Like this, the rule of endogamy is a kind of social regulation of the castes."

During the conversation he used such terms as 'cultural group' or 'community', instead of the term 'caste'. However, he insisted that the difference between castes is, solely, based on the circumstance, the essence of world is same. But, for the fear of different custom or rule, or for the fear of loss of its own tradition, it is prohibited to match a member of others.

In the matter of caste endogamy, the concept of 'blood purity' gives meaning to marriage rule and **inter-caste** transaction. The blood purity is transmitted from both parents to children. Blood is the locus of purity, therefore, one must marry a relation, a person of 'same' blood to keep the purity of its caste (see, Barnett 1975:150-151). Regarding this, one old villager who is a Padmasalle explains that: "what is the meaning of caste (**kulam**)? It is nothing but saving the woman of its own, to save the woman from outsider is to save the caste (**kulam lakshana**). The man needs the girl of his own group, therefore, the caste comes out." Therefore, the practice of caste endogamy is an implicit repudiation of blood-mixture and is ascribed to the child the caste affiliation of its parents.

3.6 The features of castes

The social science literature on India is dominated by the caste approach. One group of scholars claim that Indian society is unique and therefore eludes analysis in terms of traditionally employed sociological concepts (see, Dumont 1970a; Hutton 1946; Leach 1960a; Srinivas 1966a, 1987a etc). On the contrary, series of studies have attempted to apply and enlarge the concept of caste. That is, the caste system is a kind of social stratification which is found not only in India but in other parts of the world (see, Berreman 1968, 1981; Harper 1968) as well as non-Hindu communities (see, Ahmad 1978a; Ahmad 1977; Barth 1960; Bhatta 1996; Caplan 1980; Kaufman 1981; Tharamangalam 1996, etc). Which of these positions is tenable and preferable depends upon one's own interests and purposes. The caste system in India is unique in terms of religion and ritual context which explain it, and its complexity and the degree to which it constitutes cohesive and **self-regulating** mechanisms. However, caste also can be defined in terms of social **stratification** which allows the cross-cultural comparison and generalization.

The features most commonly used to characterize caste are: endogamy, **commensality**, and hereditary occupation (see, Basham 1967:147; Das 1992; David 1981; Ghurye 1969; Hutton 1946; Leach 1960b; Neelsen 1983; Srinivas 1966a, 1989; etc). These outstanding features are connected with the idea of the purity or

pollution, separation and hierarchy or rank. Caste can only be understood in term of interaction with other caste groups, and such an interfactional structure is characteristic of the structure of an entire system. The prescriptions concerning food, women, and service transactions all aim at preserving the identity of individual caste. This identity is directly linked to the specific **ritual-purity** of the group, whose maintenance is only guaranteed by strict observance of separation or **differentiation**. The rules concerning **commensality**, and endogamy are nothing else but the means whereby each caste attempts to continually reaffirm and stabilize its identity and internal integration. Apart from being an integral component of group identity, each particular caste is integrated into the economic system as a hereditarily specialized group. The exchange of goods and services between individuals or families of different castes has been, traditionally, stable and continuing from generation to generation.

However, as people can not openly speak of castes as unequal nowadays, they only describe castes as different. That is, caste hierarchy can no longer be legitimately confirmed in public. The hierarchical values which are based on the concept of purity or pollution remain only in the private and domestic domain, but in public domain this traditional code of conduct has displaced the norm of '**difference**' as marker of separation (see, Fuller 1996:12). Singer (1968:438-439) explains the phenomenon to separate public domain and private domain as 'compartmentalization'. But Fuller (1996b) and Barnett (1975) insist that it is not a simple adaptive process but a change at the ideological **level**. They explain that this alteration in the normative base of caste-**from** the purity as an index of hierarchical rank to the difference as a marker of separation - is the change of code for conduct, from castewide to individual level. **Dumont** has mentioned this phenomenon as '**substantialization**' of caste. He insists "**the** caste appears as a collective individual, as a substance" (Dumont 1970a:222).

With the increasing economic **differentiation** within castes, and the relaxation of commensal restriction among higher and middle castes, each caste is becoming as a collective individual and each individual is confronting other individuals in terms of economic and political ground. And the castes seem to accept '**equality**', at least in public place, as the ideological discourse. That is, each caste becomes like a '**collective individual**' with its own distinctive culture and way of life, and the norm of '**competition**' substitutes for the '**interdependence**' between hierarchically ranked castes (see, Fuller 1996b). But it is a matter of degree rather than kind. "**Castes** exist but the caste system is no more" says Dumont (1970a:226). Caste member-

ship is no more seen as any moral obligation to follow an ancestral occupation, or it is unconnected with the means of livelihood. It means the primary identity situates within an individual or family rather than the whole caste itself. Now the whole is secondary system, built up from these primary persons. However, every caste, still, has its own positive identity, whether it has been ranked high or low.

Though certain castes have maintained their **socio-ritual** identity through ritual ceremony (e.g. the Thakur, the Yadav, the Goud, the Mala, and the Madiga), language (e.g. the Thakur, and the Dore), or organizations of economic and/or political association (e.g. the Yadav, and the Goud), the boundary of castes, either geographical separation or socio-ritual distinction, has been visibly diluted in the village circumstance. However, some castes or subcastes still monopolize their traditional occupation, especially the crafts or the service castes, such as the Blacksmith, the Carpenter, the Barber, the Washermen, the Scavenger, the Gravedigger and etc. While a lot of castes abandoned their traditional occupations, due to several reasons, mainly by the economic changes (e.g. the **Padmasalle**, the Sara, the **Gandla**, and **etc.**).

In other words, caste as a unit almost lost if not totally the mechanism to maintain its social identity and boundary, and to sanction its individual members who violate the castewide code of conducts. The hereditary occupation is no more practical than that of the past, nowadays, it becomes nothing but the nomenclature of the castes. The occupational relationships or continuity in a large measure depends on the concerned family or individual, according to the socio-economic interests, not by caste obligation.

Moreover, the rule of **commensality** is no longer the caste-wise code of conducts, it solely relies on the individual's decision or choice, especially in public area. But, in domestic area, food **is** still an important part of domestic ritual - daily, life-cycle and calendrical - as the mechanism of maintaining **purity-impurity**, by the womenfolk. That is, still, food constitutes a critical element in ritual idiom of purity and pollution in domestic area. Therefore, it is not the caste but the family who are the custodian of the rule of **commensality**.

And regarding to the **inter-caste** marriage, the caste can not section or excommunicate the person who violate the caste endogamy. Only the caste controls the caste affiliation of the possible offspring by boycotting to accept as proper marital partner. As far as marriage is concerned, the caste still maintains, to some

extent, its social mechanism. While the caste as a cooperative unity lost its power regarding to the approval or punishment of inter-caste marriage, it is the family to decide whether accept or expel such union, by direct control and/or participation. Though the caste as a whole does not lost totally the traditional mechanism of boundary maintenance, the center of authority to maintain the social identity shifts to the family as a unity. In tradition, the norms or values were institutionalized in the terms of caste hierarchy which based on the purity/pollution, however nowadays they are individualized, i.e. the individual or the family is decision-making actor regarding to their behavior.

In next chapter, it will be focused on the relations **between** caste and family structure and between occupational diversification and the family, and the role of family in the reproduction of social inequality through education of the children. On the other part, the marriage relationship, i.e. kinship terminology, the rules of marriage, and the practice of marriage are described, in terms of norms and behavior.

Notes to Chapter - III

- 1) However, some scholars such as Hocart (see, **Quigley** 1991b; **Dumont & Pocock** 1958), Raheja (**1988a,b**, 1989), and Quigley (1991a, 1993), reject the superior position of the Brahman in a hierarchical order. Instead they focus upon a concept of sovereignty of Hindu king of the dominant caste at the level of village (see also, **Berreman** 1992). Moreover, Quigley (1993:20) warns like that "If one begins with this assumption - that '**Brahmins** are the highest caste' - one will never understand how caste systems work".
- 2) Srinivas (1966a) explains this phenomenon as '**Sanskritization**'. According to him, "Sanskritization is the process in which a '**low**' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, '**twice-born**' caste" (1966a:6), to claim higher social status.
- 3) The term '**Harijan**' literally means a man of God - suggested by Gandhi to replace the term '**untouchables**', in 1931. But **this** term, Harijan was not Gandhi's own invention. It had been coined in 19th century by the Gujarati Brahmin saint and poet Nasingh Mehta. However, the term "untouchable" or "untouchability" was constructed in early 20th century with the strategy for '**upliftment**'. The untouchables' do not form a distinct and separate identity among themselves. But the category of '**untouchables**' was to be the criterion for identifying them and thus received official recognition with 'the invention of Scheduled Castes' under the Government of India Act. However '**untouchability**' was legally abolished in the Constitution of 1950. Instead of the term '**untouchable**', therefore, '**Harijan**', '**Scheduled Castes**', and '**Dalit**' are all in use (cf. Charsley 1996).
- 4) The first time nation-wide census was taken during the years 1867-1871. From this occasion, numerous castes claimed or wanted to be recorded as belonging to a higher varna than that popularly conceded to them. But at the 1941 census, the column about caste was eliminated by the British Census Commission (see, Srinivas 1966b)
- 5) The details of traditional occupation of each caste are mainly based on the field survey, as well as Thurston (1975a) and Hassan (1989).

- 6) Regarding to this, **Dube's** (1955) observation would be helpful to understand the role or position of Telangana Brahman priest. The Brahman priest, as Dube (1955:37) describes, "**officiates** at the ceremonies of all castes, except those of the Vaddar, the **Erkala**, the **Pichha-Kuntla**, the Mala and the Madiga. However, he is consulted by these castes also regarding the auspicious timing of agricultural operations or to perform marriage ceremonies". Moreover, Rao & Murty (1972) say that in the Telangana region, the Vaishnavaita **Brahmans** are non-vegetarian and do not abstain from alcoholic drinks, by the effect of dominant Muslims and their culture.
- 7) Before **Wiser's** (1936) study, there was a general description of the **jajmani** system which was written by E.A. Blunt in 1912 in his Report on the census of 1911 for the United Provinces (see, Mayer 1993:377).
- 8) Fuller (1989) insists that the term '**jajmani** system' is a misnomer, it should be abandoned. That is, there is no discrete and isolable *jajmani* system in full sense of that term, neither internally integrated nor isolable from a wider set of exchange. Moreover, he argues that the *jajmani* system itself has been the construction of 'an anthropological **fiction**', or 'anthropological **imagination**'. Similarly, Mayer (1993) also insists that the *jajmani*, in anthropological literature, is a special kind of 'invented **tradition**'.
- 9) There are a lot of studies on the so called *jajmani* system. Among them, Benson (1976), Bronger (1975), Caldwell (1991), Epstein (1971), Fuller (1989), Good (1982), Gough (1960), Harper (1959), Ishwaran (1966), Karanth (1987), Kumar & Rao (1993), and others, are focussed on the South India.
- 10) The dual **classification** of Right Hand {*Valangai*} and Left Hand (*Idangai*) castes is "a 'root' paradigm, whose function has been to provide a cultural tool for the integration of South Indian Society and this structure is essentially contextual and contrastive" (Appadurai 1974:257). The notion of right and left hand castes bifurcates the horizontally segmented social body into two sides. But this distinction has disappeared (see, Mines 1982, 1984; Thurston 1975b:48).