CHAPTER 2

Historical Background and Profile of the Village
The village, Palaparru is situated in the south eastern part of Guntur district in Andhra pradesh. The region is predominantly a dry zone and agriculture depends mainly on the monsoons. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an essential background to the main theme of the study i.e., understanding the nature of changes in the agrarian structure and relations in Palaparru during post independence period. It is divided into two sections.

Section one (2.1) discusses the nature of agrarian structure and relations during the colonial period. Due to the lack of sufficient historical data on the village, the data on dry region of the Guntur district has been used as a proxy to understand changes in Palaparru during the colonial period. Section two (2.2) provides a brief description of the broad features of life and economy of the village in 1991.

2.1 AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND RELATIONS DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

A brief discussion of the process of agrarian change during the colonial period provides a background and an immediate context for the present study which actually covers the post-independence period. An attempt is made here to locate the observations on dry region of Guntur in the context of the theoretical debates on the question of process of agrarian change in dry regions of South India during the colonial period.

Studies focusing on dry zone regions of South India in the late 19th and early 20th century have brought quite different and
contradictory set of interpretations about the nature of agrarian structure and relations during this period. David Washbrook and Christopher Baker advanced the thesis of 'rural magnate or elite' and characterized the dry land agrarian structure as being a predominant nature for a small section of rural magnates or elites over a large mass of agrarian dependents of small and poor peasants.

They argued that in the dry zone regions of the Madras Presidency because of unfavourable ecological conditions (low rainfall, infertile land, lack of irrigation and widespread prevalence of small landholdings, etc) the vast majority of peasantry had to depend upon credit supplied by rural elite to carry on agrarian production. Thus according to Washbrook:

> in the large central zone of dry cultivation the most distinctive feature of agrarian society was the economic dependence of mass of rural population on tiny elite of rich peasants (Washbrook, 1976, p.68).

Likewise Baker has argued:

> The dominant men of the village formed a very distinct elite in the rural area ... The members of the village elite loomed large in the rural economy. To begin with, most of the other members of the village in some fashion

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depend upon then for their livelihood. The village leaders were the chief patrons of many different artisans and other service castes... Many of the other land owners of the village did not own enough to support their families and thus supplemented their holdings by renting land from the village elite... many of the villagers had at some time to come to village bosses for a loan (Baker, 1976, p.88).

According to Washbrook, the rural magnates who had substantial land property at their disposal could accumulate wealth through cultivation. They diversified their surplus money from land into money lending and trading activities. These rural magnates through their dominant position in land and control over credit and market nexus dictated the production and marketing decisions of a large mass of agrarian dependents. Washbrook believed that control over land was a base and not the real source of economic power for these rural magnates. Their real source of power was derived from their ability to control local credit and commodity markets. According to him the process of commercialisation in agriculture during late 19th and early 20th century in a crucial sense had further strengthened the domination of these people and increased the control of rural magnates over land, credit and commodity markets and over the agrarian dependents.

Bruce Robert (1983) questioned the underlying assumptions of rural magnate hypothesis and offered an alternative explanation to the Washbrook-Baker model². Studying the same region (Bellary

District) as Washbrook did, Robert argued:

the historic process of agrarian change in South India is more clearly understood if the region is described as one of independent, market oriented small farmers rather than one of agrarian dependents under the tutelage of monopolistic rural magnates (Robert, 1983, p.59).

He argued that (a) the inequality in the ownership of land in the dry region of Bellary district was not as high as Washbrook reported, and during the period 1890-1950 inequality in land ownership had declined, (b) credit and commodity markets were not under absolute control of rural elite, (c) with the growth of 'well organised' open and competitive markets in the countryside the 'small and middle level farmers' were favorably placed in marketing their produce and retained their freedom in decision making process; (d) he accepts that there were some rich farmers who exercised considerable economic and political control over their dependents. But he says the number of these individuals were few and their impact was marginal on the economic lives of the vast number of small and middle level farmers of the region.

The implications of Robert's model of existence of independent market oriented small and middle level farmers are as follows: First it does not recognize the domination of the peasantry either by moneylenders or traders in the commodity and credit markets. Secondly, the existence of a section within the village whether it be the traditional landlord or any elite stratum of peasantry with capability of dominating land, credit and commodity markets is denied. Thirdly, the peasantry is seen largely as an undifferentiated mass in a sense, each peasant
irrespective of his (or, her) access to resources, is capable of utilizing the potentialities of profit to his best advantage.

Accordingly, Robert has argued:

the modest economic growth the region experienced after the turn of the century was not detrimental to small and middle level farmers .... but on the contrary, provided increased economic opportunities from which many have benefited (Robert, 1983, p.77).

For him the process of commercialisation during this period provided the context for a liberation of small peasantry and an increase in their prosperity.

In the light of the above debate an attempt is made in this section to examine the changes in agrarian structure and relations in the dry region of tobacco growing areas in Guntur district during the colonial period. The observations drawn in this section are primarily based on secondary source material particularly on the studies of Frykenburg (1965), Nata Duvuury (1985 & 1986), Satyanarayana (1991), G.N Rao and D.Rajasekhar (1991).

Significant economic inequalities and stratification existed in the villages of Guntur even before the colonial period. The colonial Government's attempt to bring about changes in village land revenue system through the introduction of Permanent Land Settlement in 1802 and Ryotwari Settlement System in 1869 did not address itself to the existing inequalities in land ownership. Instead it further strengthened these inequalities within the village. Frykenburg (1965) in his monumental work *Guntur District 1768-1848: A history of local influence and central authority in South India* explained the 'failure of colonial government in bringing about changes in land administration. The introduction of the Permanent Land Revenue System in 1802 according to him did not bring about any significant change in the land revenue system or reduce the inequality in the land ownership patterns due to the growing influence of local revenue officials (village carnams) and rich ryots who owned lot of land property and yielded considerable control at the village level. Nata Duvvury in her detailed study in tobacco growing region in Guntur also reports:

the ryotwari settlement while injecting, some dynamism into the system by removing an oppressive and parasitic class of Zamindars, created conditions for the accentuation of inequality within the village. Though the tenure system considered all the landholders equal in a legal sense, it did not alter significantly the

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inequality between them. The new revenue system only institutionalized the results of the process of acquisition of land that had been taking place over the previous sixty, even two hundred years (Duvvury, 1985, P.24.).

2. Agriculture in the Guntur district in general and tobacco-growing areas in particular had been exposed to a higher degree of commercialisation during the colonial period. Particularly after the introduction of F.C.V. tobacco in the early decades of the 20th century. Guntur district has been reported by several economic historians as a unique case of the rapid growth of commercialisation and deepening of commodity relations in South India during the colonial period. Comparing the changes in the cropping pattern and growth of commodity production in the coastal Andhra Districts. G.N. Rao and D. Rajasekhar reports:

Among all the districts of Coastal Andhra Pradesh (CAP), Guntur presents a unique case of commodity production. Although its share in the total rice area of C.A.P. was small, varying from about 8 to 10 per cent during the period 1910-46, its share in the area under crops such as groundnut, tobacco, condiments and spices was quite high. In the late 1910 the share of Guntur in the total groundnut area of C.A.P. was a mere 7 per cent. But by the early 1930s, this had gone up to more than 52 per cent. Such dramatic rise during the short period of one and half decades indicates the progress of commercial agriculture in the district. As for tobacco, even by the early 1910s, Guntur claimed as high as 43 per cent of the total tobacco area in C.A.P. By the late 1940s this share went up to well over 60 per cent. As per condiments, except during the depression, more than half of the total area of these crops was in Guntur. Till 1913, Guntur claimed about one fifth of the total area under cotton in C.A.P. However, during the subsequent period, this share declined rather drastically (Rao, G.N and Rajasekhar, D, 1991, pp.10-11).

Like wise Adapa Satyanarayana observes:

a process of commercial agriculture was firmly set in the district during the early decades of the present century (Satyanarayana, 1991, p.56).
The process of commercialisation has had a long history in the District of Guntur. In Guntur, agriculture had been exposed to commercial influences even before the British established their control in this region. However, it was not a significant phenomena till the second half of 19th century.⁵ A variety of developments during the second half of 19th century (growing demand for cash crops in internal and foreign markets, expansion of transport facilities, incentives and compulsions from colonial administration etc.) and importantly the introduction of F.C.V. tobacco in the early 20th century, greatly strengthened these commercial influences and paved the way for the rapid growth of commodity production in this region (Duvvury, 1985, p.90).

Analysing the data on the changes in cropping pattern during 1865-1930, Duvvury (1985) made the following observations. (a) Even at the time of the Ryotwary settlement in 1865 Guntur was a predominantly subsistence production region. Nearly 80 per cent of the cultivated area was under food-grains which were mostly inferior cereals. The production of oil seeds and cotton was mostly to cater to the local needs. Remarkable changes took place over the next seven decades. (b) There was an increase of 85% in the area cultivated between 1865 and 1900. The most significant

⁵ see Duvvury (1982). Not only Guntur most parts of South India too exposed to commercial influences in Medieval period. With regard to commercial influence on agriculture in India in Medieval period David Washbrook concludes:

Although it would now seem established beyond question that agriculture in most parts of India had been exposed to commercial influences from medieval times, there can be little doubt that a variety of developments from second half of the 19th century greatly strengthened these influences' (Washbrook, 1994, p.129).
trend was the steady increase in the area under industrial crops. The area under food grains declined from 80% in 1965-66 to 64.4% in 1930-31 and area under cash crops on the other hand had risen from 20% in 1985-86 to 35.6% in 1930-31. (c) The expansion of the area under cash crops does not fully reveal the extent of the commercialisation in the region. It may be noted that part of the grain produced was also meant for the market. By 1920s more than 42% of the rice production was marketed.

3. The growth of commercial crop production did not benefit all the sections of the peasantry equally. Though there was evidence to suggest that the commercial crop production was spread among all the sections of peasantry, it was the upper stratum of the peasantry which responded more favourably. This was more evident in the case of the F.C.V. tobacco cultivation. As the F.C.V. tobacco cultivation was more capital intensive the poor peasantry in tobacco growing areas did not favorably respond to produce the tobacco crop (Duvvury, 1986, p.51). In the case of marketing of cash crops also the rich peasants who had certain degree of independence and autonomy in credit relations and command over resources benefited more than the other sections. In the marketing of cash crops the rich peasant could afford to wait, stock the produce in their houses for some time and sell them only when the price was high. The president of the local co-operative bank in Guntur district told the Banking Enquiry Committee:

the rich agriculturists who became village traders enormously benefited by the cultivation cash crops.\(^6\)

4. There was expansion in the commercial crop production accompanied by the development of agro-processing industries. The processed and semi-processed agricultural products were not only traded within the district but also were increasingly exported. By 1920s, Guntur, Tenali, Narsaraopet and Chilakaluripet became the leading trading centers for exporting various agricultural commodities. Export of commodities from the district increased nearly eight fold between the 1880s and the end of 1920s (Duvvury, 1985, pp.40-44).

5. The rapidly growing trading in agricultural products was controlled by a long chain of intermediaries at the apex of which were the English firms such as the Volkart Brothers and Bally Brothers, B.A.T. (British American Tobacco Company) I.L.T.D. (Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Corporation) which controlled much of the export trade in cotton, tobacco and indigo. The wealthy Indian Marwari and Komati or chetty fins, controlled significant production of the internal trade in rice, chillies, turmeric etc. The lower level of intermediaries, village dealers to the established wholesale dealers in market towns had relative autonomy vis-a-vis the Komatis and other Marwari firms depending upon the trade conditions and the type of crop (Duvvury, 1986, P.47).

6. The expansion of commodity production provided immense possibilities for the penetration of Merchant moneylending capital into the village economy. It increased the monetary requirements of a large section of the peasantry and led to their increasing
dependence on the credit market for production capital. The most interesting aspect of commercialisation process in the district was the emergence of the rich peasant moneylender/trader in the villages. The benefits derived from the cultivation of commercial crops and increasing access to the market enabled the rich peasants to diversify their surplus profit into money lending and trading activities. In Guntur district the rich peasants of the Kamma caste had to compete with the professional Komati moneylenders and traders in credit and trading activities. By 1940s the rich peasants had become an important force in rural credit market (Satyanarayana, 1985, p.65). A survey in 1935 reports that 87 per cent of the moneylenders in Guntur were agriculturists themselves. 7

The significant role played by the rich peasantry in rural credit market also enabled them to venture into trading in agricultural commodities. The village surveys conducted by N.6. Ranga in the late 1920s in Guntur district reveal that the rich Kamma peasants, who accumulated profit through commercial agriculture, chillies and money lending were able to diversify their activities in the agrarian trade. He wrote:

In Guntur there are as many village dealers as there are merchants and the former have come to play as important a part as the latter. Most of these village dealers are themselves rich ryots who wish to find employment for their money ... there has arisen the tendency for the bigger ryots of most of the tobacco growing villages to enter the trade directly themselves—The mystery

surrounding the manner and the method of carrying on export business has long ago been dispelled...and even ordinary but rich ryots are entering into this business with plenty of confidence (Ranga, 1926, p.30).

7. There are rich peasants who took to money lending and trade and established a clear control over credit and trade markets. The traditional moneylenders and traders though on the retreat had still an important presence in the countryside and more so in urban centers. The continuing existence of traditional moneylender/trader class has to be considered in analysing the economics and politics of this region as suggested by Duvvry (1985, p.62).

6. The dynamics of wealth accumulation in other spheres i.e., credit and trade did not reflect in the same way in land ownership though the land was unevenly distributed among the different strata of the peasantry. There was no clear indication that the inequality in land ownership increased over a period of time. Analysing data on changes in the pattern of land ownership Duvvury concludes that, during 1905-1909

the dynamics accumulation did not get reflected in any market increase and concentration. While there were increasing land sales, there was no adequate data to indicate that land was passing primarily into the hands of the rich peasants (Duvvury, 1986, p.48).

This trend seems to confirm the Dharma Kumar's observation on land ownership pattern in South India during 1853-54 to 1945-46. She states:

the growth of inequality may have Manifested itself not in large land owners buying up smaller ones, but in the larger landlords diversifying their assets, and going into trade banking and industry; particularly agricultural processing industries such as sugar and rice milling (Kumar, 1975, p.258).

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While this has been the trend in the late 19th and the first two decades of the 20th century, after 1920s the concentration of land seems to be growing. This is more so if one takes the actual operated land instead of own land into consideration. The concentration of operated land in the hands of upper stratum of peasantry had reflected itself in the growth of 'reverse leasing after 1920s in the tobacco growing villages.

In reverse leasing, the upper stratum of peasantry lease land from lower sections. The reverse leasing was mainly confined to tobacco cultivation. The main reason for reverse leasing in tobacco cultivation was that it required rotation of crop because continuous cultivation of this crop in the same field led to erosion of the soil. Moreover the processing of tobacco required a 'barn' which needed around 10 acres of tobacco crop for its optimum functioning. These features of tobacco cultivation encouraged the reverse tenancy in the study area (Duvuury, 1986, P.47).

The commercialisation process in the region also affected the landless agricultural labourers; the lowest strata of agrarian society. The attached labour relations and the practice of payment of wages in kind which prevailed, showed a declining trend over a period of time. There was a significant increase in the proportion of this class. It had increased from nearly 25% to 32%

Barn is a small tobacco processing unit where curing and grading of tobacco green leaves is done.
during 1911-31 (Duvvury, 1985, p.56). After the introduction of F.C.V. tobacco, a new form of labour arrangement i.e., mootah or contract labour system came into existence especially in tobacco harvesting and grading operations in this region. A group of 25-30 labourers formed a mootah (called gang) and did the work collectively and shared the wages equally. The amount of wage was fixed for the 'total work' done by all the labourers and not for an individual labourer. The emergence of mootha or contract labour marks a new qualitative stage in the evolution of the agrarian class in this region. Studying the impact of F.C.V tobacco cultivation on labour relations Duvvury observes:

The introduction of F.C.V. tobacco cultivation and consequent reorganization of labour process in the agrarian and agro-processing sector marks a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of the agrarian class. The elements of attachedness rapidly disappeared and casual labour employment became the norm. Given the higher demand for labour, the mootoh labourers, especially the curing workers were able to assert themselves. By the end of the Forties there were numerous strikes by agricultural labourers in Guntur for better wages at times against the arbitrariness of the mootah leaders. Tobacco villages of Guntur came to be known as 'belt of red pallis (Duvvury, 1985 ,p.51).

To sum up, the observations on the growth of commercialisation of agriculture and its impact on the nature of the agrarian structure and relations during the colonial period clearly reveals that (a) the agrarian structure in Guntur was highly stratified even before the commodity production was widespread and wealth was disproportionately distributed among different sections of the peasantry. The growth of commercialisation further strengthened these inequalities. The
upper stratum of the peasantry responded more favorably to the cash crop production. In marketing of the crops also, this section which had a certain degree of autonomy and independence in credit relations and control over resources benefited more than the other sections. The most significant development of commercialisation was the diversification of resources by the rich peasants into money lending and agrarian trading activities*. The combined control of rich peasants over land, credit and trading markets further strengthened their position in village economy and politics. Though the rich peasants established a clear control over village credit and trade market, the traditional moneylenders/traders (though on the retreat) were still an important force. On the other hand the commercialisation process led to increasing dependence of small and poor peasants on the credit market for their production capital.

The presence of the highly stratified agrarian structure and the subsequent commercialisation of agriculture resulting in the increasing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small section of rich peasantry and increase in the dependence of small and poor peasants on the credit market are apparently more close to the 'rural magnate' thesis of Washbrook-Baker than Bruce's thesis of 'Independent small and middle farmers'. But Washbrook-Baker model too has some limitations. First, it overemphasises the role of the upper stratum of the peasantry in their control over credit and trade markets and in turn, in controlling the large mass of small and poor peasantry. The observations suggest that the dominance of the rich peasantry over
village credit and trade market was not absolute and the traditional moneylenders and traders within the village and from outside still played an important role. Secondly, to imagine that the small farmers were so dependent that they were dictated by the 'rural magnates' even in matters of crop choice can not be validated from the study observations. Thirdly, the 'rural magnate' thesis does not provide any scope for the important role played by colonial capital and State in the process of commercialisation. In Guntur the process of commercialisation was clearly influenced by the 'politics of colonial government and foreign capital. The introduction of F.C.V. tobacco and its growth was a very clear example in this regard.

A variety of socio-economic developments which have a significant impact on the process of agrarian change have taken place since independence in the study area. The introduction of green revolution in late 1960's and changes in cropping pattern (shift from tobacco to cotton) have further strengthened the process of commercialisation which had its underpinnings during the colonial period. The increasing intervention of government in agriculture through extending institutional credit, procurement policies, land reform measures and various other welfare interventions had a significant impact on the socio-economic life in the rural areas in general, and agrarian relations in particular.
2.2 PALAPARRU VILLAGE: SOME OF ITS BASIC FEATURES

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief description of some of the basic features of the village life and economy. It covers only those socio-economic features which will provide a necessary background to the latter analysis of the dynamics of changing agrarian relations and structure. Most of the data presented in this section is based on the census type of survey conducted on all the resident households in Palaparru as part of the field work.

Before going into the description of the village per se, it is important to understand the features of the region, as much of the information related to climatic and other geographical features are available at a regional level, rather than on the particular village under study.

2.2.1 South eastern part of Guntur

Guntur district is one among the nine coastal districts in Andhra Pradesh. The south eastern part of the Guntur district (presently comprising the Pedanandipadu and a few villages of Chilakaluripet, and Kakumanu Mandals) with which the present study

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9 Andhra Pradesh is one among the four southern states of India. It is broadly divided into three separate regions – (a) Coastal Andhra, a relatively developed region consists of nine districts i.e. Sri Kakulam, Vizianagaram, Vishakapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Ongole and Nellore, (b) Rayala seema region considered as the most backward region of the state consists of four districts. Both Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema were under the direct control of British rule and were part of the Madras Presidency during the Colonial period, (c) Telangana region consists of ten districts. This part of the region under the control of the Nizam government during the colonial rule.

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is concerned is known for producing the world famous 'Virginia' tobacco since 1920s up to late 1960s, and for its long staple cotton since from 1970's. The area attained historical significance due to its active participation in the non-co-operation movement against Imperial rule popularly known as the 'Pedanandipadu no-tax movement'.

The area is located between the north latitudes of 15°18', and 16°50' and the east longitudes of 70°10' and 80°55'. The area suffers from hot climate. During the summer which starts from the middle of February and continues till the first week of June, the temperature rises to between 30°c-40°c. The north east monsoon breaks the hot spell and brings early rains. The south west monsoon season follows thereafter and extends up to the end of September, October and November, constituting the post-monsoon season. The period from December to the middle of February is generally marked by moderate weather. The temperature during this period is between 15 c to 18 c.

The average rainfall in the area during 1983-90 varied between 760mm to 1026mm per annum. While the rainfall in monsoon season accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the annual rainfall,

10 Pedanandipadu Non-cooperation movement in 1921 had attained a national significance. As part of the protest, the people in this area stopped paying taxes to the colonial government. All the village officers resigned from their posts. The administration came to standstill. The British government took serious note of this movement and used oppressive measures to stop the movement. (source. M.Venkatarangaiah, Freedom Struggle in Andhra. pradesh Vol.Ill, 1965).
rains in the post monsoon season record for about one third of the annual total. Heavy rainfall occurs in the month of October.

The agrarian geography of south eastern part of Guntur is characterised as a dry zone. Agriculture which is the backbone of the region's economy is almost dependent upon monsoons. Most of the ground water available is saline and hence not suitable for either cultivation or for drinking. A small stream called vogeru vagu or nallamada vagu which finally drains into the Bay of Bengal passes through this area. After the construction of Nagarjuna Sagar Dam in 1967, this stream is used as a channel to pump the drainage water. The stream has a constant water flow throughout the year except in summer season when it gets dried up. Pumping water from this stream to the lands is an expensive affair. The farmers who have lands adjacent to this stream make use of the water from this stream for irrigational purposes during periods of drought.\textsuperscript{12}

The area is covered by black soil which is suited for tobacco and cotton cultivation. Cotton is the principal crop grown in this area. In the year 1990-91, cotton accounted for

Data on climate and rainfall is taken from \textit{Census hand book. Guntur district}, 1991, published by \textit{Bureau of Economics and Statistics}, Government of Andhra Pradesh.\textsuperscript{12} In 1995 some of the farmers in Palaparru and Annavaram (a neighbouring village) formed into a Cooperative society and started a lift irrigation scheme. They have installed a permanent motor and started lifting water from the vogeru vagu. Under this scheme nearly 250 acres were converted into wet land. In Palaparru revenue village nearly 50 acres came under this scheme.
nearly 80% of cropped area in the region. Since 1975 the percentage of the area under cotton never dropped below 70%. The predominant varieties of cotton grown in this area are i.e M.C.U.5, M.C.U.9, Varalakshimi, N.H.Y which produces long staple cotton, all being hybrid varieties.

The other important crops are jowar, maize, tobacco, chilli, red gram etc. Tobacco, once a principal crop in the area has almost declined and now grown in less than two per cent of the total cropped area.

The south eastern part of Guntur district which predominantly is a cotton growing region is considered as one of the leading commercial zones in coastal Andhra in regard to commercialisation of agriculture as far as high agricultural productivity is concerned. The average yield of per hectare cotton is high in this area when compared to the state and national averages. During 1978-81 for instance, the average yield per hectare cotton (lint) raised to a record level of 450 Kgs which was higher than the average yield of 160 Kgs of the state and national level (V.N.Reddy, 1985, p.A137). In terms of intensive application of H.Y.V seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides this region stood high among the leading areas in the country (Ramesh et al, 1987, P.4).
2.2.2 Palaparru village

Palaparru, the village on which the present study is focused, lies on the plains of south-eastern part of Guntur district, six Kms. south-west of market town of Pedanandipadu which is the mandal administrative headquarters and Chilakaluripet, yet another market town, situated at about 12 Kms from the village. It lies on the main 'pacca' road which connects these two marketing towns and has good transport facilities. The National highway which connects Calcutta and Madras passes through the Chilakaluripet town.

Palaparru is a revenue village with its own Panchayat administration. It is one among 12 villages which is under the jurisdiction of the Pedanandipadu mandal. The concept of 'social village' clearly applies to this village. All the important social groups which are found in this area are represented in the village.

2.2.3 Physical structure

Physically Palaparru constitutes a compact unit. The houses are clustered together within a small area, giving the village a

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13 Mandal is a local revenue and developmental administrative unit. In Andhra pradesh the local administration has a three tier system, i.e. District, Mandal and Village. Mandal is a middle level unit which links between District and Village. The jurisdiction of a mandal extends to a group of villages.

14 In Palaparru, the revenue village (basic unit of revenue administration) and the panchayat village (the basic unit of development administration and of local administration) coincide.

15 A village is called social village if it represents all the important social groups (castes) of that area (Rahman. 1986, p5 270).
fairly distinct physical entity. Though it looks like a single physical unit, it has important territorial divisions when examined from within. These territorial divisions are of great importance because social norms and values are attached to them. The internal divisions among different castes in the village to a great extent reflect in these territorial divisions. The people who are close to each other in the caste positions tend to live together and where the caste positions differ, they live apart.\footnote{The importance of village physical structure in understanding the social relations among different castes in the village is clearly brought out by many village studies of social anthropologists. For example see Andre Bettelie's (1969) study of a village in Tamilnadu and M.N Srinivas (1988) study of a village in Karnataka.}

The \textit{palla} or \textit{waada}. is a place where the so-called former ex-untouchable castes i.e., Mala and Madiga (officially classified as scheduled castes) live and is on the eastern corner of the village. Though this area looks like a part of the village, there is a clear demarcation that separates it from the rest of the village. Within the palle, Malas and Madigas live separately. A small area in the north-east end of the palle is occupied by the Madigas and rest of the area by Malas. A new colony was constructed by the government in 1984 for these people in the southern side of the palle. A Government primary school is located in the palle which caters exclusively to the needs of these castes. Although there is no caste restriction to admit other caste children into the government school, since its inception no upper caste children have sought admission here.
Host of Mala and Madiga caste people converted themselves into Christianity during the colonial period. A church which is located in the palle is their center of meeting place for both religious and other social activities. The Yerukala caste officially classified as Scheduled Tribe, has a separate settlement called yerukala peta.

The Vuru which is the main part of the village is occupied by other castes (non-S.C and S Ts) and a small section of Muslims. While the place where Muslims live is situated in the southern corner of the village, the rest of the area is occupied by other castes. The settlement pattern in the main village has undergone important changes since the beginning of this century.

In the original plan each caste had clearly a separate place of settlement. The streets were named after the caste groups ie., Brahmin bazar, Komati bazar, Mangali bazar, Kummari bazar, etc. The Brahmans and Vysyas occupied the center of the main village where all the important public places i.e., Venugopal Swamy temple, village library, school and administrative office, hotel are situated. Much of the village social activity used to take place here. Next to them, a large area was occupied by the Kammas the dominant peasant caste who also constitute the single largest population group in the village.

Kummari (potters), Kamari (goldsmith), Kamsali (blacksmith), Sale (weavers) Chakali (waherman), Mangali (barber), the
traditional services castes used to live next to Kamaas in separate streets named after their castes in south-east corner of the main village.

Since the beginning of this century, there has been a large scale migration of Brahmins and Vysyas to towns in search of salaried employment and business. Thus today one hardly find any Brahmins and Vysyas living in the area once exclusively occupied by them. Some of the Vysya families shifted their houses to other localities. The Brahmins and Vysyas who immigrated into the village for employment in local government schools, started living in different areas where other castes are dominant. Thus while the original settlement plan of the village clearly reflected the traditional caste hierarchy the recent changes reflect the changing caste relations and softening of the caste prejudices mainly among non-S.C and S.T castes. The relationship between the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other castes have also undergone some changes, although it has not yet been reflected in their settlement pattern.

The village has three water tanks, two in north and one in the south-west end of the main village. The two tanks in the north end are used for drinking water purposes and the one at south-west end is meant for miscellaneous purposes i.e., washing clothes, cleaning cattle etc. The village has a overhead water tank, which
supplier water to the houses through pipes\textsuperscript{17}. In the main village most of the houses have water pipe connections. The village panchayat has provided seven public taps to the palle and one tap at the Erukala street.

Electricity was provided in this village in 1978. Both the palle and Vuru are provided with public street lighting. Almost all the houses in uuru and 80\% houses in palle have electricity connections.

2.2.4 Literacy and education

Palaparru is a center of education for the neighbouring villages. It is also known for its high literacy rate. The first Government Primary School was started as early as in 1891 itself. There were 70 children studying in the school in the year 1918. Among them 57 were boys and 13 girls. The ratio of the upper castes and backward castes (Kammas were also included in the backward castes list) was 18:52. A separate school for girls was started in 1928. In 1944 of the 200 girl children in the school-going-age in the village 56 of then were studying in the school. The girls school continued till 1951 and later it was merged with the boys' school. In 1950-51 a private high school (8th to 10th class) was started. As there is no high school in the surrounding villages, the children from these villages have to

\textsuperscript{17} Palaparru was one of the earliest villages in Guntur district which constructed the overhead tank to supply the water through pipelines to the houses, as early as in 1962.
The data on literacy and education shows that the village has more literacy rate than the district and state average. In 1991 nearly 62% of the population (excluding children below 5 years) in the village were literates whereas the average literacy rate was 46.35% and 44.09% in Guntur and A.P. state respectively. Among 38% illiterates 95% of them were above 15 years old. The illiteracy was more among agricultural labourers who mostly belong to Scheduled castes and Tribes. Nearly 60% of the illiterates belong to these two communities only. In recent years the need for education has been recognized by all the communities. They are sending their children to the school at least for a few years to enable them to acquire the minimum skills of writing and reading.

2.2.5 Population

The total population of the village in 1991 was 3522 divided among 874 household and 15 castes. Kaunas who are the single largest group constitute 48.9% of the population. Next comes the Scheduled Castes who constitute 29.2% of the population. The backward castes together constitute 21.7% population and 0.9% Vysyas and Brahmins account less only 0.2% (see table 2.1).

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18 This information is taken from an unpublished village monograph written by Janaki Rama Rao, D. a village school teacher.
19 According to official census reports 1991 the total population of the village was 3,566 which almost coincides with the census data collected by the author.
The population of the village did not show any marked increase during last three decades. According to official census reports, during 1961-1991 the population has increased only 19X which is very low compared to the population growth rate at the district and state level. During this period the total population of Guntur district and A.P.State have increased by 60% and 84% respectively.

The most important reason for the low rate of population growth is large scale migration of population to urban areas. The migration is greater among upper castes belonging to Brahmins Vsyas and Kammas. Janaki Ramarao the local historian estimates that while during the last four decades nearly 300 families mostly belong to upper castes had left the village totally, the families who migrated into the village were only about 40. Of the 300 families nearly 65% of them belonged to Brahmins, Vsyas and Kammas. While most of the Brahmins and Kammas have moved out of the village in search of employment in Government and private sector salaried jobs, the main reason behind the migration of the vysyas was to expand their business activities (Janaki Ramarao, 1994).

2.2.6 Caste and occupational structure

The economy of the village is mostly dependent upon agriculture and the livelihood of most of the people is derived more or less directly from it. The occupational structure of the households is given in table 2.2. It shows that nearly 62% households derived their income mainly from agriculture.
### TABLES 2.1.

**Caste wise distribution of No. of households and population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Number of house holds</th>
<th>Percentage of house holds</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Percentage of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamma</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vysya</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakali</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumari</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangali</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madiga</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yerukala</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yanadi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golla</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>874</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>3522</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: BCs = Backward Castes.*

### TABLE 2.2.

**Occupational wise distribution of households**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of House holds</th>
<th>Percentage of House holds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture labour</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried employees</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washermen</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>2_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>874</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The households that have a fixed salaried income from government and private sector jobs i.e., teachers in local schools, supervisors in private spinning mills, etc., account for 6.6% of the total households. The families dependent upon business and trade, i.e., shop keeping, hotel, commission business, money lending, pan shops, vegetable shops etc. account for nearly 5.3% of the total households. The employment in traditional occupations like, pottery, carpentry, laundering, weaving etc., seems to be very low. The households mainly dependent upon these occupations constituted only less than one per cent of the total households.

The interlinkage between caste and occupation of the households indicates that in Palaparru there had been a remarkable change in the traditional occupational structure. The traditional artisan castes i.e., Mangali, Chakali, Kamsali, Sale, Kummari, Kammari, etc., constitute 9% of the total households. Among them nearly 76% have left their traditional occupations completely. Business and trading has been a traditional occupation of Komatis. In recent years the Kammas and other castes have entered these activities in a significant way. Out of 31 households who are dependent upon trade and business, only 9 belonged to the Komati caste.

2.2.7 Caste and landholding pattern

In Palaparru the Kammas are the dominant land owning community. They owned nearly 70% of the land. The Scheduled Castes who constitute 29.2% village population shared only 3.7 of
the land. The caste-wise distribution of households into categories of different land sizes (see table 2.3) indicate that 94.2% of the households who own land above 10 acres and below 24 acres and 93.7% who own land between 5 and 10 acres belong to Kamma caste. Nearly 60% of the households that belong to Scheduled Castes do not own any land. They constitute 54.4% of landless households.

**TABLE: 2.3.**

**Caste and land category wise distribution of Households**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Caste</th>
<th>Category I=10 and above acres</th>
<th>Category II=5-10 acres</th>
<th>Category III= Between 1-5 acres</th>
<th>Landless</th>
<th>Total (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamma</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vysya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakali</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kummari</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kammari</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangali</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193 (22.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71 (8.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madiga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yerukala</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanadi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golla</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other BCs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
<td><strong>384</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Category 1=10 and above acres Category 11=5-10 acres Category 111=between 1-5 acres Category IV=less than 1 acres

The backward castes together constitute 28.7% of the landless households. 44.9% of the households in the village do not own any land. The significant feature of this village is that there are no big landowners. The biggest landowner who belongs to the Kamma caste owned only 24 acres. There are a huge number of small land
owners who own land ranging between 1 to 5 acres. They constitute 47.9% of the total land holders. A detailed study of changes in the pattern of land ownership is taken up in chapter 3.

2.2.8 Cropping pattern

Cotton is the principal crop grown in this village. Of the total 2585 acres cropped in 1991-92, cotton crop accounted for 2180 acres (84.5%). Cotton crop was first introduced in Palaparru in 1969. In the first year only two rich farmers had experimented on this crop. Within a span of five years it became the dominant crop in the village. In 1974-75 it accounted for nearly 70% of the cropped area and since then it never dropped below 70%. The normal duration of the crop is 150 days to 180 days depending upon the variety of crop sown. Due to lack of irrigation facilities only one crop is grown in a year. The varieties of cotton grown in this village are i.e., M.C.U.5, M.C.U.9, Varalaksimi. All of these are hybrid varieties. The cotton produced in this village is of superior quality which is in demand in the national market, and exported to mills in Coimbatour and Bombay.

The other important crops are jowar, maize, tobacco, chilli, red gram, green gram etc. Jowar is produced mainly for cattle feeding. The tobacco once the principle crop in this village has almost declined and now it accounts for not even one per cent of the cropped area.
2.2.9 Tenancy

Tenancy is an important factor in Palaparru. Nearly 27% of the owned area was under tenancy in 1991-92. All the sections of the farmers are involved in leasing of land, (see chapter 6 for detailed discussion on tenancy relation)

2.2.10 Credit and Banking facilities

Much of the credit required for Palaparru villagers comes from outside the village. Palaparru does not have banking facility. For formal institutional credit the villagers depend on the Union Bank situated at Uppalapadu a neighbouring village and the Bank of Baroda at Pedanaudipadu town both situated within the distance of 6 Kms. The advances in kind in the form of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are from the shop dealers in Pedanandipadu and Chilakaluripet and is an important source of credit for most of the small and poor peasants in Palaparru (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion on credit relations).

2.2.11 Political institutions

Palaparru is a separate revenue village with its own panchayat administration. The village administrative officer (V.A.O) who is a government servant looks after the revenue administration. The panchayat president who is a head of panchayat administration is directly elected by the people. Presently the president of panchayat is a women candidate who was elected to this post under recently introduced reservation policy for women in local bodies. The introduction of adult franchise
and elections to village panchayats have had a significant impact on the socio-economic life of the village.

All the important political parties in the state like Telugu Desam, Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) have their representation in Palaparru. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) which had a large mass base in 1960s has lost its support base and become a mere entity now. The Congress Party draws its main support from agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Castes, Brahmins, Vysyas, and small section of rich Kamma peasants. The Telugu Desam Party on the other hand is popular among small, middle and section of rich peasants and Backward Castes.