CHAPTER - II

PLACE AND PEOPLE

2.1. LOCATION

Dharwad is an administrative district of Karnataka state in Southern India. Dharwad town is the administrative headquarters of the District. Dharwad town is joined to another town Hubli and forms a Municipal Corporation. The administrative area covers around 191 sq. km. Dharwad is located 425 km North-West of Bangalore, on the main highway between Bangalore and Pune. The city of Dharwad is surrounded by hills and lakes. The word ‘Dharwad’ means a place of rest after a long journey. For centuries, Dharwad acted as a gateway between ‘Malenaadu’ (western mountains) and ‘Bayalseeme’ (plains). According to another version, during ‘Vijaya Nagara’ rule, there was a ruler by name ‘Dharav’ (1403 AD). The place was named after him. There are some inscriptions that refer to Dharwad as ‘Kampana Sthana’.
2.2. GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Dharwad District is situated in the Western sector of the Northern half of Karnataka State. The District encompasses an area of 4263 sq. Kilo meters lying between the latitudinal parallels of 15° 02’ and 15° 51’ North and longitudes of 73° 43’ and 75° 35’ East. The District is bounded on the North by Belgaum District, on the East by Gadag District, on the South Haveri District and on the West by Uttara Kannada District. The District lies approximately about 800 meters above the sea level and has a healthy climate. The District is broadly divided into three natural regions namely the Malnad, Semi-Malnad and Maidan. These regions, on an average, receive moderate to heavy rainfall and have dense vegetation. Kalghatagi and Alnavar area in Dharwad taluka receive more rainfall than other talukas of District. The presence of rich black soil helps in raising crops like Cotton, Wheat, Ragi, Jowar and Oil seeds. Some place is covered with red soil and is more suitable for paddy.

In the District, dry farming is the backbone of the agricultural economy. Agriculture is even now labor-intensive enterprise. Hence, the District has an above average proportion of workers in its population and offers opportunities to seasonal workers. The major religions in the District are Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Christianity. The majority of Hindus are
found in both urban and rural areas. Around 26.00 per cent are engaged in agriculture activities.

2.3. FLORA

The Dharwad District is very rich with evergreen trees namely Sandal wood (*Santalum album*), Teak wood (*Tectona grandis*), Matti (*Terminalia arjuna*), Bamboo (*Bambusa bambos*) and Sesame (*Sesamum indicum*). The District also has many other plants namely Mango (*Mangifera indica*), Banana (*Musapara disiaca*), Jack fruit (*Artocarpus hirsus*), Gooseberry (*Physalis peruviana*), Jambul (*Eugenia jambulan*), Papaya (*Carica papaya*), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), Cashew nut (*Anacardium occidentale*), Arac nut (*Areca catechu*), Champak (*Mesua nagassarium*) and many other wild varieties of trees are grown in this District.

2.4. FAUNA

The most common domesticated animals in Dharwad District are Dog, Sheep, Goat, Ox, Buffalo, Cattle, Donkey, Chicken, Pig, Rabbit, and Fish. The rich vegetation gives shelter to many varieties of animals, birds and insects. Animals like Mongoose Bear (*Ursus labiatus*), Hare (*Lepus nigricollois*), Chameleon (*Chameleon calcaratus*), Black faced Langur (*Presbytis entellus*) and Stripped squirrel (*Funambulus tristriatus*) are
common in the District. Birds like Sparrow (*Hirunda rustica*), Crow (*Corvus splendens*), Pigeon (*Terephoenicopters chlorigaster*), Cuckoo (*Eudynamys acolopaces*), Wood peckers (*Picoides mahhattensis*) and King fisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) are commonly seen. Snakes like Cobra (*Naja tripudiens*), Viper (*Echis carinata*), Russel Viper (*Vipera russelli*) and Pythons (*Python reticulatus*) are abundantly seen. Hot and humid climate of this area is an ideal breeding place for varieties of insects.

### 2.5. SEASONS AND RAINFALL

The year has three seasons namely summer, monsoon and winter. The summer starts from March and ends in May followed by monsoon with heavy rainfall till September. The District experiences winter from October onwards and overlaps with summer. The average rainfall of this District is estimated to be 772.00 mm. Heavy rainfall occurs between June and August.

### 2.6. HISTORY OF PATEGARH COMMUNITY

‘*Somavamshiya Sahasrarjun Kshatriya*’ belongs to the ‘*Kshatriya*’ community. Basically, they are Hindu. They claim their linage to legendary king ‘*Sri Sahasrārjuna*’ who is also called ‘*Kartavirya Arjuna*’ or ‘*Sahastrabahu*’ of the ‘*Haihayavansha*’. The Pategarh community is also
referred with other names like, Savji, Pattegar, Patkar, Patvegar, Patvekar and Khatris in different regions of India. They follow the patrilineal and patrilocal system. According to ancient history, ‘Somvanshi Sahasrārjuna Kshatriyas’ were once the rulers of the North central India. They belong to the Lunar dynasty of the ‘Arya’ race. There is a temple of ‘Sri Somavamsha Sahasrārjuna’ in the place Maheshwar of Madhya Pradesh, dates back to the early 2nd century. This temple is a major tourist attraction.

Later, medieval history (8th century to 13th century) is attributed to the ‘Savji’ kings and dynasties. They are the direct descendants of ‘Sri Sahastrarjun’ and ruled North-central India. They bravely withstood the constant threats from the Muslim invasions. However, with the fall of the ‘Kalchuri’ rulers and the threat of rising conversions by the Islamic rulers, the community started migrating slowly from their original homeland to other parts of India during the 12th and 13th century AD (Beteille and Gopa Sabharwal, 2005).

2.7. CULTURE AND FESTIVALS

‘Dasara’ is the focal festival in Pategarh community during which, the Goddess of power ‘Sri Durga mata’ or ‘Shakti’ is worshiped. Special cooking dishes like ‘edimi’ (food prepared by wheat flour and Bengal gram
flour), ‘arithi’ (food prepared by wheat flour in the shape of Diyas) and offer ‘lalpani’ (intoxicants - alcohol) to the Goddess ‘Sri Durga mata’. On each Kartika month, Sapthami tithi in Shravana Nakshatra, Savjis celebrate the birthday of ‘Sri Sahastrarjun’ called ‘Sahastrarjuna Jayanti’ with much solemnity and jollity (Ernst. 2007). Idol of Sahastrarjun is taken out in procession to many places on the ‘Sahastrarjuna Jayanti’. They also celebrated Diwali, Holi and other traditional Hindu festivals. Every year, people gather in groups and chant divinity prayer called ‘Bhandara’. The function is preceded with prayer, ‘bhajan’ and ‘aarti’ of the divinity, followed by meals in the form of ‘Prasad’. The meal served during the function is usually vegetarian.

Most places Pategarh have a committee called the ‘Puncha’ constituted by the elderly people of the community. The ‘Puncha’ committee takes care of forming social events, congregations, functions and finances for the welfare of the community. Most marriages are recorded with the ‘Puncha’. The ‘Puncha’ also helps to resolve community concerns and family issues when required. Afore going to court or legal system, the members of the community deliberate the problem with the ‘Puncha’ and take their guidance and try to resolve the issues within themselves. Hence, the ‘Puncha’
committee is extremely respected in the community. Most of the community functions are celebrated in community center or in temple halls.

2.8. PHYSICAL FEATURES

Men and women of Pategarh exhibit brown to dark skin colour. They have medium stature. Women are comparatively shorter than men and possess lean body. They show features like broad heads, slanting foreheads, round cheeks, medium projecting jaws, narrow - straight noses and well-cut lips.

Men wear trousers and shirts. Both men and women wear leather sandals. Elderly women invariably wear blouse and ‘seere’. Girls prefer to wear ‘Panjabi dresses’. Women and girls wear glass or plastic bangles and gold necklace. Ear piercing is common for both men and women. Nose piercing is common among women. They generally wear ‘muguti’ (Nose ring). Women have long dark hair. They apply coconut oil before combing and tie them in knots. They decorate the hair with metal clips. They also wear ‘wale’ (ear studs) of gold. Women apply a small circle of ‘kum kum’ (red decorative powder) at the center of the forehead. Savjis perform the thread ceremony (Upanayana).
2.9. **LIFE CYCLE RITUALS**

Most of the time delivery takes place at home. In emergency, she is taken to nearby hospital. On the 5\(^{th}\) day of delivery, ‘Tottalu-karyakrama’ (naming ceremony of a newborn baby) will be arranged in the bride’s house. The naming of the child is usually by the paternal aunt. Names like *Rama, Lakshmana, Vishnu, Ranga, Vittal, Govinda, Krishna* or *Murari* are a few names common for male child. *Tulasi, Lakshmi, Somi, Saraswati, Ganga, Pushpa, Rukmini,* or *Radha* are a few names common for female child. Traditionally, after marriage, men in the community affix ‘sa’ and women ‘bai’ to their names like *Lakshmansa* and *Sitabai*.

‘*Javala*’ ceremony (first hair cut ceremony of a newborn baby) and ear piercing ceremony is performed simultaneously when baby completes first year. A few hairs are cut symbolically by the ‘*Poojari*’ (priest). The ear piercing ritual is performed by the goldsmith.

When a girl experiences her first menstrual cycle, she is educated by her mother and kept in isolation for 5 days. She is given a nutritious food and educated to wear ‘*seere*’. Usually, maternal aunty presents a green ‘*seere*’ to the girl. After each menstrual cycle, the woman is considered as polluted for 5 days.
Marriage age among the Pategarh, ranges between 18 to 25 years. People prefer arranged marriages. Marriages between Pategarh and other local caste people are not entertained. Uncle-nice and cross-cousin marriages are common. Offering dowry in any form is strictly forbidden in the community. Moreover, the marriage ceremony is performed by the bride groom’s side. During marriage, the bride and groom side, look for the ‘Lagna’ and ‘Janma Kundli’ to match between the boy and the girl, and also for the matching ‘Gotra’. Marriage date is scheduled after referring the ‘Panchang’.

During the engagement, elderly people, closed relatives and friends sign over the agreements between bride and bridegroom's families. They apply ‘Gandha’ on the forehead of each other, exchange sugar and ‘tambool’ during marriage ceremony. Clothes and ornaments are exchanged between the parents of bride’s and bridegroom's. Bridegroom ties ‘Thali’ around neck of the bride. ‘Thali’ is bought by the bride groom’s parents. Most of the marriage expenditures are borne by bride’s parents. Lunch is arranged for all the visitors those who blessed the newly married couple. The lunch includes liquor and delicious non-vegetarian food.

‘Seere shastra’ is usually celebrated in the 7th month of her pregnancy and is celebrated in the husband’s house. A special dinner is arranged for
invitees. The pregnant woman is given oil bath and decorated with green ‘seere’ and green bangles (green colour is the sign of fertility). The ‘seere shatra’ is celebrated to disclose that woman is pregnant. Friends and relatives present gifts for a pregnant woman. Then, she is sent to her parents’ house for first delivery. After delivery, mother is considered as polluted for 3 months. During this period, a very nutritious food is given to delivered woman.

When the person is dead, he is given an oil bath with turmeric powder. The body is covered with white cloth. Flowers are showered on the dead body. Dead is carried to the cremation ground in a sleeping position. Friends and relatives join the procession. Pategarh cremate the dead. On the fifth day of cremation, the ash is collected by the relatives in earthen pot and disposed it off in the river.