CHAPTER - III

THE KINSHIP AND THE POSITION OF WOMAN

Family as a basic unit of social order is organised around statuses and roles. It is a basic kinship unit that provides opportunities for its members to interact. Men, women and children are related to each other through kinship bonds and their behaviour needs to be analysed in terms of their statuses and roles. In this chapter, the position of women is analysed in the kinship network of the rural community. The kinship network as part of the rural social system is understood in terms of family, marriage and kinship organisation of the community.

A kinship system represents an organization of social relationships (Farber 1971:5) and has been studied as an aspect of social structure (Fox 1967:16). Siddapur is a village with patriarchal authority, patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence system. At present the village has two hundred and three families, of which one hundred and twenty three are nuclear and eighty are extended. In earlier period the extended families were more common in the village, according to the villagers.

Before Independence nearly 90% of people lived in the
villages with agriculture as the main occupation for their livelihood. Siddapur was no exception to it. Earlier, families were extended, where eldest male member was the head of the family and all his lineal and collateral kinsmen with their wives and children lived together in the same house. Property was held in common and all the members of the family worked together without any discrimination. All the members pooled whatever they earned collectively or individually. They obeyed whatever the head of the family thought proper and necessary. All of them assisted and cooperated in running the household and upbringing of the children. In such families, inter-dependence and affection characterised the relations between the family members; a stranger could not know who were the primary relatives and who were the secondary ones. The members would not feel intensely the loss of any relatives, even of the parents. The socialization of children was the responsibility of the extended family. The family customs and traditions were taught to the young by elders and the young respected the elders. Family prestige was most important and it was to be maintained even by sacrificing individual interest.

Role of Women in the Family

In Siddapur it was the woman who held the members of
an extended family together, though she did not have any jural right of her own. The functioning of the family depended on the subordination of its members - both men and women - to the head of the family. In this type of family it was necessary for a woman to be self-restrained, reserved, modest, accept male authority and have respect for elderly women. It was the duty of the woman to see that family rituals, feasts, fasts and festivals were observed properly at appropriate time. She was also expected to assist the members of the family in their work and on the occasions of crises of life. It was her responsibility to undertake the activities like child-care, tending the sick, cooking food and looking after the household chores. Thus the activities were centred around the home. Hammond and Jablow (1976:9) state in respect of other societies, that "in societies throughout the world and throughout recorded history, women's primary roles have been family oriented."

In the extended family women were generally in a subordinate position to men but the degree of subordination varied. As Rama Mehta (1970:16) points out "the position of women has varied in different periods of Indian history. There is recorded evidence to show that Hindu women were not always without rights nor constantly in subjection. There is however greater evidence to show that the contrary was
true. For many centuries her position continued to be one in which she did not have either legal or social rights to make her independent of the family into which she was born or married." In Siddapur also the position of woman is in no way different from this. Though women are generally subordinate to men, those women who are intelligent, hard working, bold, knowledgeable and have some property of their own, directly or indirectly tend to dominate and assert higher position than the male in their family. Even so, women are still excluded from assuming certain roles and powers, which are public in nature. This is in line with other societies, for Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974:3) argue that "everywhere women are excluded from certain crucial economic and political activities. Their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and authority." Similarly Elliot and Merril (1961:226) consider that "the role of women in society is however still defined largely in their functions as wife and mother."

In the extended families of Siddapur women were conditioned to be self-controlled and accommodative. Hence the parents of the girls brought them up right from their childhood days according to this expected pattern of behaviour. As a consequence, the girls in their childhood imbibed the idea that if they are to be loved and respected they should
work hard, be submissive and adjust with various in-laws in their husbands' houses. After marriage, a woman used to go to the extended family of her husband where she had the problem of adjustment, because she would be under the authority of the mother-in-law and other kin. She was a stranger there. She had no power or authority over anyone or anything in their family.

In case she could not adjust and be accommodative in her parents-in-law's house, she was ill-treated or sent back to her natal home. The parents of the girls did not like their daughters return and stay with them rejected. In case they came, they would be sent back saying that it brings bad name to their family. Parents were not ready to lose the affinal relationship which was established after investing money and energy with great difficulty at the time of marriage. Women had no support legal or otherwise. Hence, women had no choice but to adjust and remain in their husband's family even if they faced some problems.

In the life of a wife, the birth of a son changes her position in an extended family. As the sons mature, she tends to become assertive and more respected as she continues the family line. At the marriage of her sons she becomes in turn the mother-in-law with authority over others. As a
daughter-in-law in an extended family a woman has to take much responsibility of the household work and has to follow many restrictions. She cannot move freely in the village or talk to all and sundry, has to show respect to all the elders in the family. Managing the house and household purchases are mother-in-law's responsibility. As she grows old she does less domestic chores and looks after the grand children, makes purchases for the household which her mother-in-law was doing earlier. In brief, she succeeds her aging mother-in-law.

After Independence India is aiming at internalising democratic ideals and bringing about cultural modernization. All aspects of life are undergoing change - some aspects faster than the others. One of the effects of modernization in the country is the changing pattern of the family, which in turn has brought about changes in marriage and kinship system. Because of the new opportunities of education and employment the members of the family - both men and women - have more freedom of movement, employment and spending their income. The new legal provisions have lessened the authority of the extended family, giving more freedom, authority and rights to the younger members of the family, including women.

The impact of modernization on rural communities is
uneven throughout the country. Siddapur being a fringe village is influenced to some extent by the new ideas and values that are being disseminated from the nearby urban centre. One can notice such influence in its organization of family life (See table No.3). In Siddapur 61% of the families are of nuclear type, where a man with his wife and unmarried children lives together, some times with one or two other relatives. For the last fifteen years nuclear families are becoming more common in the village, as the conditions in the village are undergoing a change, especially in their economic life. The men above the age of forty say that they were living in the extended families in their childhood days which were like one independent, self-sufficient unit, but at present their children like to live separately from their family of orientation. The result is, at present only 39% of the families are of extended type. This type of family includes lateral, generational, lateral-cum-generational kin and sometimes with dependents. Among them, generationally extended families alone form 50% of the total extended families. This tendency shows that the attitudes of the people are changing towards kinship. The kinship relationship other than generational is losing importance now-a-days. Still family and kinship are very important in the life of Siddapur people, as their life primarily depends on them from birth to death.
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61%
The breaking up of extended families in the village is an indication that the members in the family want to have relatively more freedom which is available in the nuclear family. The data show that it is the younger and the educated people who are establishing independent families. More than 50% of the nuclear families in the village have come into existence after 1970. The major reason for this change was the job opportunities available for them near the village as well as in the nearby city. Due to the drought situation in 1970, in the area, government gave opportunities for them to earn wages. Further the establishment of the post-graduate centre near the village and the development of transport facilities at the same time encouraged the people to leave the village and the extended families in search of new jobs for their livelihood. In earlier days, as already stated, agriculture was the main occupation which encouraged all the members of the extended family to work together and live together. But at present the job opportunities to earn cash income other than from agriculture made the members to lead an independent life and enjoy more freedom to spend their earnings. With the diversification of occupations they neglected their kinsmen and became more self-centred. Now men and women with new earning capacity are not ready to take the responsibilities for various kins who were earlier living together, under the
same roof and shared their earnings. However, the break is not total. Even after separation, the members of several nuclear families belonging to the same stem family, occasionally come together and help each other.

In this transitional period of changes from extended family to nuclear family in Siddapur village neither the old traditions are rejected completely by the people, nor the new trends, attitudes and ideals are fully accepted and adopted. Hence, there is a confusion in the minds of the younger people. It is reflected in the nuclear families which still cherish the old sentiments and values. For, the villagers approve of those who perform their obligations towards parents and siblings, and frown on those who do not share the responsibilities. The psychological attachment and security of the extended family binds its members even after establishing their independent nuclear families.

Religious devotion is another bond which brings the members of nuclear families together and strengthens their old relations. Ancestor worship, (rati kudisuvadu or gangasthala maduvadu) which is practised by all the castes in the village develops the feeling of oneness among the members of all nuclear families which are separated from extended families. Though they are living separately,
they come together on the occasion of life cycle rituals like marriage or first-pregnancy rite in the family on which occasions worship of ancestors is essential. On this occasion the image of the ancestor has to be installed with the help of all the elders - carrying the image is done by male and worshipping is performed by females. Similarly, among Pujaries - a section of Kuruba - initiation ceremony (pattakke haku vadu) is performed jointly by all the nuclear families of a lineage.

The following incident also explains the importance of family and kinship in the changed situation of the village. While I was conducting the preliminary survey of the village, in the beginning, some individuals tried to conceal that they are staying in nuclear families. This attitude reveals the fact that even when they are living separately in nuclear families, they think that living in extended family is socially approved and hence try to identify themselves with their family of orientation. They have not yet rejected completely the traditional ideals and values of extended family living, though they are dabbling with ideas of modern times and enjoy the fruits of freedom and independence. They do care and respect elders and help the near kins in times of need and crisis. As Kapadia (1958:232) states, "the whole history of Hindu family unfolds
one significant fact, namely, that even when the trends towards individualism are recognised and attempts are being made to harmonise them with the interest of the joint-family, the family constitution was unequivocally declared to be and maintained as joint and agnatic. Hindu sentiments, it seems, are in favour of the joint family."

According to the expected authority pattern in the family at present in Siddapur, the households are based on two hierarchical principles - namely age and sex. There is a principle of seniority by which elders have inherent authority over youngsters. The principle of male authority is expressed in the relationships between husband and wife, and father and child. Male is the head of family except in rare cases like incomplete family or a family headed by a dominant woman. These principles are important in the organization of family and inheritance of property. The relationship between adult men and women is generally conceptualised as unequal. In particular social context, the principle of age is modified. "While in general men are superior to women, an older woman may expect deference from a younger kinsman as well as younger kinswomen and from male inferiors or servants" (La Fantaine 1978:4). In the family matters in Siddapur, it is the man who makes major decisions regarding arranging marriage, selling or buying of property,
but usually in consultation with women in the family.

The wife and children have to obey, respect and serve the husband/father. The wife is expected to be faithful, submissive and devoted to her husband. She should be hard-working and should look after the home and children, apart from helping the husband in his work in the field. She is also expected to earn and assist him to overcome financial difficulties. In many other societies providing livelihood to the family is men's duty and looking after the home and children woman's. But in Siddapur, no woman thinks that providing livelihood to the members of the family is man's exclusive duty. Because they are aware of the fact that their lands are not fertile enough to provide them with sufficient produce. They can make both ends meet only when women supplements the family income. Therefore, woman must assist man in maintaining the family. Except a few (22%), most women of the village work both in their own fields and that of others on wages.

A significant change appears to be on the way regarding the position of women of scheduled castes, namely Holeya and Madaru. On account of the gainful employment of their menfolk, the people of these two groups feel it below their dignity to allow their women to undertake outside work because
they themselves are capable of maintaining their families. "Upward mobility in certain kinds led to the restrictions rather than more freedom for women" (Beteille 1975:66).
The women who stay at home consider themselves superior to working women, though their movement is restricted to home only. Of late women of four Holeya and two Madaru families are not working for wages.

In any social order the ideal roles and the actual roles differ. People in Siddapur accept the fact that man is the head of the family. He is taken to be knowledgeable and knowing about everything better than woman, as woman is always busy in her routine household chores. In the casual discussion which I had revealed that women have accepted this idea and agree that man is superior to woman. Woman is ignorant about the happenings outside the home and sometimes she does not even know some details about happenings in their own household. But when I was conducting field work in the village, in a majority of the households, it is the women who gave information I needed, though men were present there. Whenever I tried to gather information from men, they directed me towards their wives, probably because I was a woman.

The kinship organization plays an important role in family. The basic unit of kinship is the nuclear family,
though it is a part of extended family, as it has some degree of integration. Affinity and descent are very important for family integration and position of woman. For, a man feels more intimate with his children than his brother's children even though they are structural equivalents in an extended family. The integrity of the nuclear family has its influence on the position of woman in the family. This is evident by the fact that in an extended family, the couple with their children sleep together, look after them very closely, go out together and so on. Even then the authority of extended family is superior to that of nuclear family unit in it. For instance, whenever a woman of such a unit wishes to undertake some activity or to go to her natal home, for fairs or festivals, she has to take the permission of the head of the extended family in addition to that of her husband. Children are considered to be belonging to the extended household into which they are born regardless of their mother's reaffiliation elsewhere consequent upon divorce or widowhood. It is evident that nuclear family and the position of woman are subordinate to the extended family. But in recent years when the nuclear families are becoming more numerous, woman has some authority over her children. In case of widowhood, she can be a guardian. In case of divorce, male children are retained in the family and the female ones are given to the deserted/divorced woman as daughters are considered a liability in recent years.
At present, the married women with one or two children are a little free to talk to the strangers. A few women who are dominant in the family because of their hard work, are free to talk with men. It was not in vogue in earlier times. The women above the age of 50, now say that they never used to come out to talk to any one unless they were called for. At the same time, they were not expected to interfere with any matter which was the domain of their husbands or other men in the family. In case they interfered too much, they were scolded or sometimes even beaten. For instance, a Badiga woman is free to talk to any one who comes to their house or go to market for purchase or watch the movies. She is given some amount for personal expenses by her husband. Still she is not happy over her husband who gambles. She tried to stop him but her husband did not care. One day she came to the mosque - the place where he was playing the game to call him. It was not liked by him. He beat her saying that he is free to spend his money in any way he likes and the wife has to keep quiet.

Compared to the women in earlier extended families, women in nuclear families have more freedom of movement and expression of their ideas. Still they cannot exercise control on the behaviour of men who are heads of the family. All men like their wives who are hard working, who manage their house
and children well. However, they are not ready to treat them equally in every respect but are ready to give them some freedom to visit the market in the nearby city, to make some purchases, talk with some people, etc., which do not come in their way of life.

In a majority of the families, husband's actual participation in the routine management of the household is minimum. He spends much of the time outside the house as he is not expected to spend all his time in the family. He is not very intimate with his children and does not interfere much unless he is approached. Running the home and rearing the children are wife's tasks. Only when the children are sick and need the help of a doctor he attends; otherwise, it is her duty to look after the children. Men's non-interference in the routine management of the home and permission to their wives to undertake certain tasks outside the home should not be understood as women being free. They are still expected to work under men's over all control. A minor mistake would invite the displeasure of men.

Recently we notice some change in the behaviour of those women who have some role to play outside the family, such as selling milk and curds, working as construction labourers, or the women whose husbands are working outside the village or
in government or private services. These women enjoy some freedom of movement and talk to other men whenever occasions demand. Usually women of large agriculturists' family follow most of the traditional pattern of behaviour. Even among them we observe a slow change among young people, that is, women in the age-group of 20-30 years. In one of the rich families a daughter-in-law who had come from a rich natal home is more change-prone and enjoys more freedom. Therefore, she is indirectly criticised by village people but no one dare talk about it in her presence. However, the young girls have a liking for her and appreciate her behaviour. As Apoko (1967) writes for Acholi mothers of grown up and marriageable daughters as enjoying considerable leisure and opportunity to visit friends, in Siddapur also women in the age group of 40-45 are more free. When the daughter is learning the house-keeping and looking after the siblings, the mother enjoys some leisure.

Formal education is denied to girls because of the social prejudices against the educated women. Villagers are of the opinion that the training that they require for their future life is not provided by formal education. 'After all, the girls' work is at home; then what is the use of schooling?' is their question.
In all kinds of decision-making, in matters such as economic, marriage, educational, religious, etc. people of Siddapur think that consultation with wife is a routine affair. In an extended family usually decision-making does not involve younger women. It is the privilege of the men. In some families the elderly woman, that is, the mother, is consulted but never the wife. The old woman in the village, recollecting their early days, are surprised to see their sons and grand-sons now consulting their wives in all domestic matters. On inquiry they said that their husbands never consulted them and they themselves also never felt like asking for anything or asserting in any issue. "Whatever is right, the husbands do," was the belief of a wife in those days. An old woman of 70 years said, "my husband used to bring good sarees but cheap blouse-pieces. I never murmured but accepted them without any complaint. I also justified my husband's act by saying that women have to cover their body fully and after all the blouse is not seen." Now her son takes his wife along with him to Gulbarga for purchases - to choose clothes of her own liking. But even at present some women in extended family do not go to the market for personal purchases or selection of clothes.

These days a newly-wed daughter may not go to her
husband's extended family but sooner or later stays in nuclear family which is the trend of the day. She has less problem of adjustment, more freedom of movement and decision-making. Here husband-wife relationship is more important and much co-operation is there. Therefore, in nuclear families it is usual to consult their wives and to take joint decisions in most of the matters relating to their family.

Irrespective of class and caste affiliation, in a majority of the families in the village, it is the woman who makes the marketing for day-to-day needs. In extended families it is the mother-in-law and in nuclear families if the woman is elderly, that is, above 30 or 35 years, she does the marketing, otherwise men do the purchases. Even in earlier times, it was the women who used to go to the market as men were busy with farm work. Men are of the opinion that women are critical of the purchases they make; therefore they ask women to make the purchases. In any case, in Siddapur it is the women who go to the market for household purchases right from earlier period. However, men sell the surplus agriculture produce, if any. On Saturdays, since it is a market day at Gulbarga, we can see not less than 70 to 80 women going to the city. The marketing done by women is not considered by men as giving
a chance to express their liking, interest or intelligence or giving her freedom or equal opportunities for purchase. But this is attributed to save themselves from women's criticism or to avoid botheration. Any how, by this opportunity, some women have a chance to go out of the village and meet their acquaintances and friends.

Getting/serving food first is one of the indicators of the higher position of a person. In Indian society, it is the men who take food first as their position is considered higher. They are the heads or masters; so should be fed first and well. The remaining food is consumed by women later. In Siddapur among all the castes, in those families where women go out for wage labour, they do not wait for their men to take food first. They take food and go for work without waiting for men. But on festive days, it is the men who take food first. Women taking food before men is not an indicator of their higher position but is a consequence of pressure of work.

For the last 10 years a family planning educator is working in this village. She stays in Gulbarga and comes to the village once or twice a week, for popularising family planning. In the beginning both men and women were hostile to her. They were not ready to talk to her. She said that
in the first five years she was just visiting the village
without much success. Then with the help of college students
in the village, they conducted some programmes and screened
films depicting family planning-themes. After sometime,
slowly some women of the rich family took interest and
started talking to her. A Lingayat woman was the first
to undergo tubectomy operation. Then a Kuruba woman who
was working in the post-graduate centre in a temporary post
got herself operated. After a few days her appointment
was confirmed. Though it was a coincidence, people of the
village thought that jobs will be confirmed in case of those
who undergo tubectomy operation. Then a few more women
took interest in family planning. At present two men—one scheduled caste and other Kabbaliga—have undergone
vasectomy and fourteen women—9 Lingayat, 1 Muslim,
3 Kuruba, and 1 Badiga—have undergone tubectomy operation.

Generally men have no interest in family planning.
They are not much concerned with child-care, as child
rearing is the responsibility of the women. However, out
of 16 cases of family planning, in four cases men have taken
the initiative. In two cases women have undergone tubectomy
operation despite their husband's opposition. Other couples
are not interested in understanding or using any methods of
family planning. Still they believe in the proverb 'the
lord who provides the saplings will also water them.* However, for the last five years, family planning is slowly becoming popular. The reasons are the recent contacts with the University campus and the extension of the facilities of the urban living. Because of their poverty and difficult living conditions, slowly they are compelled to undergo family planning operations. Another important reason is because a few rich and higher caste women are making use of family planning, others also imitate them.

Women in Marriage and Kinship

In the family, positions and roles of each individual are a complex of detailed duties and rights, attitudes and expectations which have to be carried out carefully. To know the marital and kinship position and roles of the woman one can study her life cycle. From birth a little girl is a daughter and later sister, wife, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. As a daughter and sister she is reared and trained for future roles of wife and mother. It is only after puberty and marriage she assumes the adult role in the family.

In a family the birth of the first child is an occasion for rejoicing. It is one of the expectations of a woman that she should be a mother, especially the mother of a son.
Sociological literature defines "happiness to the woman as fulfilling the biological destiny of being good wives and mothers" (Chafe 1977:16). As Alfred De'Souza (1975:x) describes, in Siddapur also "woman's sense of personal worth is related to her fertility performance and the social standing she receives as a mother of sons." Mandelbaum (1974:2) also points out that woman in the village knows no other acceptable alternative role than of being good wife and mother and her success depends on carrying out these roles. Therefore the news of the first pregnancy brings happiness to all kins. The pregnant woman is cared for most with love and affection. For her psychological satisfaction and the well-being of the foetus certain rituals are performed by relatives. Her relatives and friends serve her with delicious food. The first pregnancy rite is observed among all the castes but the elaboration of the ritual performance varies from caste to caste. Lingayats perform it more elaborately than others in Siddapur.

When a woman is about to complete the third month of her pregnancy, some relatives (usually mother's sister) other than her parents come to her in-laws house with floral deidem (dandi), green bangles, blouse-pieces and cooked food of various varieties (buthrotti). The quantity, quality and the variety of items of food brought enhances her position
in the eyes of her in-laws. Usually, this rite is performed on Monday, Tuesday or Friday. On that day the expectant mother is given a head bath in the morning. She is offered bangles, flowers and blouse pieces by her natal relatives in the place of worship, in front of platform where the idols of gods are placed (janali). Then they serve her the food brought by them. A few near relatives, friends and neighbours are also invited on the occasion for food. This rite is not celebrated on a large scale. This is known as a ceremony of presenting of a blouse pieces (sanna kubusa).

In the fifth month of her pregnancy, her parents come to perform the pregnancy rite (kubusa maduvadu) proper, which is usually celebrated on a large scale. To make their daughter as well as her in-laws happy, all the expenses of the ceremony are borne by them including presentation of a sari and blouse with necessary auspicious articles like flowers, bangles, vermilion and saffron. This ritual has to be performed for the wellbeing of mother and child as their daughter is fulfilling the basic objective of marriage.

For the performance of the rite, an auspicious day is selected in consultation with the priest. On that day, after the ritual bath in the morning, a new earthen pot (embala gadagi) is worshipped. The earthen pot is filled
with pounded jowar and a little curds. On its lid all the new clothes meant for the couple are placed. A string made of soaked wheat is placed on them. In front of the pot, a winnowing pan is put filled with 2 coconuts, 5 betel leaves and areca nuts, 5 date nuts and 5 sweet cakes (kara:kai). Then sweet cake made of jaggery and chana dal (holice) is offered to the pot and then served to all the invitees.

In the evening the pregnant woman and her husband are made to sit together and are presented new clothes. The things put in the winnowing pan in the morning are placed in the hem of her sari. In rich families a gold ring is presented to her husband. Then the traditional aarati is waved followed by songs by elderly women.

Usually, after eight months of her pregnancy, the expectant mother is taken to her natal home for the first delivery. In case she has no mother, other natal kin take her. It is an important occasion in a woman's life. Child delivery is surrounded in mystery and is beset with much risk. But once a woman gives birth to a child, her position in the husband's family changes. Her position is elevated from girl and wife to that of a mother. Hence, all care is taken for the safe delivery. To achieve this, the things presented on the ceremonial occasion and the string of wheat are carefully preserved till the delivery
of the woman. She carries them with her when she goes to her natal home for delivery. After delivery the placenta is buried in an earthen pot along with these articles. In case of male child the placenta is buried inside the courtyard and for the female child it is buried outside the home. Thus from the birth the differential treatment towards male and female children is noticed.

Since Siddapur is a male dominated community the people expect that the first child should be a male one, because it is he who continues the family line and stays with parents to look after them in their old age. Having a son is considered very essential especially by rich families. In one of the families of a Lingayat when the first wife could not give birth to a son, her younger sister was given in marriage to him, with the intention of getting a son, so that the family line will be continued and the family property will be retained with them. Therefore, among the rich families the birth of the first male child is celebrated and announced by distributing sweets. This indicates the preference for male over female child. It is also expressed in the following ways. The mid-wife is paid more for assisting in the delivery of a male child than that of a female child. When a couple has only a daughter they go on begetting unwittingly, more daughters in the hope of begetting at least one son some day. In general the first child is often desired to be a male. But in subsequent
births the preference for a son or daughter varies from family to family depending upon whether sons or daughters are in majority. A daughter after a son or sons is welcome and more so in case the family is economically well off. Though sons are preferred to daughters, at least one daughter is desired, for daughters are considered in villagers' thinking as goddess of wealth (Laxmi). People also have a feeling that daughters are more affectionate and helpful to parents. At present in the village a few girls in the age-group of 10-15 who earn, are in a position to understand the conditions of their family, feel sympathy and try to make at least partial provision for their marriage and expenses of the household and in this way mitigate a part of the financial burden on the parents. Hence, a few families expressed that having a son who does not look after his parents is of no use. Because of this, some parents love their daughters more than their sons. Sons are of the opinion that a woman becomes more selfish and loses confidence in sons as she grows old. Thinking that the sons do not look after them, they give away whatever they have to their daughters and do not care for the sons.

And yet, female children are not treated in the same manner as the male ones. All castes have a feeling that if one or two daughters are there it is all right. If
there are more daughters it is a problem to get them married. Because at present arranging daughter's marriage has turned out to be very difficult and costly. Chapman (1891:30) considers that "the dowry system makes every daughter represent a debt that sooner or later must be paid." The girls as they grow, learn that they are less valued. This is more true where dowry is very high. In Siddapur dowry has come into vogue only recently. Irrespective of caste all people now feel that if there are more daughters it is difficult to get them married at the proper age by payment of dowry. In the village except 10 families, others have not given or received any dowry so far. Only the few rich families have given some gifts in the form of gold. Others are worried that in nearby villages and town, dowry system is in vogue and for their daughters they may have to pay. Hence, kin-marriages are preferred now-a-days to avoid payment of heavy dowry.

Though there is a clear preference for sons, both sons and daughters are loved much. The children enjoy carefree happy life up to the age of five or six years. Then the girls are segregated from boys and are trained for future life. The girls are educated to be submissive and gentle right from the beginning.
Puberty of the girl is the mark of maturity both physical and social. After puberty a girl's marriage is arranged. Marriage is a complex of religious, moral, social and economic obligations. For villagers, marriage is not just a union of two individuals but it is a relationship between two families. As Irawati Karve (1953:215) states, "the first marriage creates obligations about giving or receiving daughters which restricts the choice in all subsequent marriage transactions." As Veena Das (1975:81) considers, in Siddapur also due to suspicion about new relations and preference for kin marriages, the marriage network does not spread very far. Twenty percent of marriages are within the village. Forty-two percent of marriages are within the taluka. People prefer marriage with relatives in the nearby places. The reasons for selecting spouses from nearer places in earlier times were the lack of the transportation and communication facilities and absence of payment of dowry. Two percent of the marriages outside the district are contracted by the immigrants into the village (See Table No.4).

The spread of marriage relationship has its effect on the attitude of women. The women in the village and those who come from nearby villages are very orthodox and hesitate to talk and mix freely with strangers, while those who have come from taluka and district places and had contact with
### TABLE - 4

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>CASTES</th>
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<th>OUTSIDE TALUKA</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>141</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
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<td><strong>178</strong></td>
<td><strong>55%</strong></td>
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Note: The percentages are calculated based on the total number of cases.
urban places are somewhat free with strangers and do not hesitate to talk to them.

In olden days kin marriages were preferred in order to renew and reinforce the existing kinship bonds. Usually women preferred kin marriages for their children to strengthen their natal relations. At present 45% of the marriages are of kin type. Recently the people of Siddapur have started preferring kin marriages to minimise the payment of dowry which is increasing now-a-days. People think that the kin marriages do not involve high expectations and expenditure on the part of the bride's parents. In such cases, the groom's parents do not insist on heavy dowry, especially in case of poor families, as they are already related to each other and know their economic conditions. Another advantage in such kin marriages is that a young bride does not go into a stranger's house after marriage. She can move freely and adjust very well without much difficulty in her in-law's house, which she must have visited before marriage. Her mother-in-law would be either her grand-mother or her paternal aunt, or maternal uncle's wife. In Siddapur out of 394 marriages recorded, 178 are kin marriages. These kin marriages include marriage of a boy with his mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, and his own sister's daughter. There are two cases of a man marrying
his brother's wife's sister. The cross-cousin marriage also includes marriage with classificatory cross-cousins.

Arranged marriage is the rule in Siddapur. This encourages the practice of dowry which has in turn led to the lower position of woman. There is only one case of love marriage between persons of different sub-castes of the same caste. In arranging a marriage kinship plays an important role. Usually, women have considerable influence in marriage negotiations as they know better the prospective brides and grooms. Women have time to stay and discuss among themselves about the marriage relations. Hence, men consult women in their house while arranging the marriage of their children about the suitability and the choice of prospective brides and grooms. Generally, men know about their economic and social status in the village while the women know in detail about the nature and character of the girl and her family in their routine talk. Hence, while arranging the marriage of their children, parents discuss the matter among themselves and consider the opinion of their women. Though men initiate the negotiation, women's influence is considerable in the process of arranging the marriage. In the selection of the daughter-in-law usually the daughter is consulted. Daughter of the house also goes to see the bride for her brother.
Arranging marriage at one's place was a matter of pride and prestige. In earlier times parents of the groom used to feel obliged towards their sisters for taking their daughters in marriage. Hence brothers had the satisfaction of arranging their sons' marriages in their own place. Even in non-kin marriages people used to prefer marriage at groom's place in an elaborate manner. Since sons are considered an asset in old age parents preferred to arrange their marriage at their own place. In those days marriage used to take place for as many as 5 days. Various rituals like worshipping of mortar and grind-stone to start the activities relating to marriage (vallu kallu pooja) and noting down the auspicious moment for the celebration of marriage (jaqna patrike tegayuvadu) were done on the first day. Worshipping the pandal specially erected for marriage ceremony (hander pooja) and making condiments and vermicelli as part of marriage ritual (sandige kadivuvadu and shyavige maduvadu) on the second day, bringing pots (airani taruvadu) and presenting of five types of dishes to the groom's party (bhuma taruvadu) on the third day, distribution of sweets (sakkare bhashtaoi) and engagement (kumkum hachchuvadu) on the fourth day, and on the fifth day applying oil and turmeric (arishina enne hachchuvadu), giving bath (meeyuvadu) and sprinkling of coloured rice (akshata) used to take place.
Now-a-days according to convenience, marriage can take place either in the groom's house or in the bride's house. But for the last 8 to 10 years usually marriages among all the castes including scheduled castes take place in the temples the rituals extending for a day only. Only the rituals of the last two days referred to above are performed in a condensed form and others are omitted. Villagers say it is not necessary to perform all of them, as marriages are performed now in the presence of god in the temple. The simplification of marriage rituals is however, the result of economic pressure. Financially, marriage is considered as a contingency and this has to be overcome by incurring huge debts. One will be saved from spending huge amounts by arranging marriages in temples which are away from home.

Kinship plays an important role in the procedure of conducting marriage rituals. The father and mother of the bride and groom have very little role in a large number of rituals. Villagers are of the opinion that in marriage ceremony one should shoulder all responsibility and the kins should be given importance. In the performance of different rituals different relatives are given importance. For example, in engagement ceremony (kumkum hachchuvadu) and distribution of sweets (sakkare bhasthaqi) which are
performed a day or two earlier to the marriage or on the same day, if not celebrated earlier, cousins of the bride are given importance. For this ceremony, the groom's family has to get five sarees. Of them, one is placed on platform (jaagali), two are given to the bride and the other two to a cousin who sits by her side (vadakke kuntake). For this occasion usually a parallel-cousin is preferred. In the absence of a parallel-cousin, cross-cousin is asked, though the bride may have her own sister. In the next ritual of putting oil and giving purificatory bath, the bride's father's brother's wife is preferred. To carry the pot for washing the feet (dari kod), bride's father's sister is preferred. Washing the feet (dari) of the newly wedded, is done by bride's elder brother and his wife. Thus, nowhere in the actual performance of the marriage ceremony, parents of the bride and/or the groom are given direct ritual roles. Only at the end of the marriage ceremony when gift giving (alveri) takes place, parents of the bride and the groom are made to sit together and offered gifts consisting of a pair of clothes. All relatives who have played important roles in different rituals get their gift of clothes (chasa). People of Siddapur strongly believe that the chasa should be given to various relatives. One should not be miserly on such occasions, magnanimity lies in sharing with the kin.
After the marriage, when the bride leaves for her husband's house, her feet are washed, her brothers and sisters-in-law bow down at her feet. This may be an indication that in earlier period sisters were respected because of the desire to continue affinal relations with her in future. People in the village say that daughters of the house should be kept happy because they are considered divine; otherwise it is not good for her natal home. She names her brother's children on the occasion of their cradle ceremony. Since daughters also show much concern to natal relatives, they are treated affectionately by members of the family. It is only recently, because of the practice of dowry and difficulties in finding suitable match at proper time, that parents consider daughters as a liability and wish not to have many daughters.

Marriages used to take place normally before a girl attained puberty. Parents of the pubescent girls were criticised for their failure to get them married at proper age. At present in Siddapur, marriage after puberty is tolerated. Virginity for girl and fidelity for wife are still considered as essential but a few deviations are tolerated on the sly, though quietly criticised. Sixteen women at present in the village who are above the age of 60 do not remember anything about their marriage celebration.
or the age at their marriage. Fifteen men of the same age-
group vaguely remember their age at marriage, as they were
between the age of 10 to 15 years at the time of their
marriage. A few women in the age-group of 40 to 60 remember
their marriage, while a majority of women below the age of
40 remember their marriage but cannot give exact age at
their marriage. Those women below 25 remember the details
of their marriage arrangements and the age at their marriage.
Most of them were married after puberty while women above
40 had early marriage. Except Lingayats and Badigas, at
present, others do not consider it necessary to get the
consent of the girl, for marriage, though that of the boy
is necessary. Usually girls acquiesce to the selection
of their parents as they realise their parents' position.
It is another indication of differential treatment towards
male and female children. In the village, at present there
are two cases of child-marriage: one among Madaru and the
other among Kabbaliga. In the case of Madaru, at the time
of the elder brother's marriage, the younger brother's
marriage was performed as a suitable bride was available.
This also avoided the expenses of marriage once again for
the younger son. In the case of Kabbaliga, it is a kin
marriage. The groom's parents were in a hurry to arrange
their son's marriage. Hence, were busy finding out a
suitable bride. The parents of this girl thought that
though the girls is too young to be married now, she will come of age in one or two years, and at that time they may not get a good match like the present one. Thus, the parents got their daughter married at the age of 9 years. In such cases of marriage, the groom or the bride is not in a position to think about his/her marriage and to give their consent. Parents also are not bothered about their consent, as arranging the marriage of their children is the parents' duty.

During my field work I could not come across any unmarried girl of the age of 20 years. Immediately after the puberty of the girl, parents try to get their daughters married as early as possible. Normally the marriageable age for girls in Siddapur is between 13 to 18 years, for boys 18 to 24 years. However, a girl, the daughter of a school teacher, is not married even though she has attained her 18th year. But her cousin who is younger to her by two years got married in May 1983. Hence the parents of the girl as well as the girl herself are worried very much. During my field work I came to know that the teacher is trying for a proposal with a boy who is employed in a temporary post. The girl is good looking, educated upto 7th standard and is hard working. Even then she is ready to marry any boy whom her parents select, whether he is
in a temporary or permanent job. The mother of this girl owing to her superior family status, belonging to high caste, husband's job and good economic position, was very much reserved with others. But now since her daughter is not married yet, she is taking interest in talking to other women, with the hope of getting good proposals for her daughter. This is inevitable to save themselves from the criticism of the other members of the community. The leisure time gossips are normally carried out on themes such as evils of late marriage, illicit sex relations between boys and girls, etc. Such a gossip would lead to the lowering of the prestige of the family. Hence, the parents and the daughters worry much until the latter's marriage is settled.

In earlier times it was always the groom's party which took initiative in exploring the marriage relationships. The old women in the village very proudly now say that when they were young, the parents of the grooms used to come to bride's parents requesting them to give their daughters in marriage and thus do a favour. In kin relations, brothers used to insist on their sisters to give their daughters to their sons. In those days the position of the parents of the girls was high. They used to get bride price (tera) for their daughters which usually ranged from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.
For the last fifteen years or so, due to socio-economic changes in the village, the practice of dowry (hunda) has come into vogue. The conditions prevailing in the region have also contributed to it. Except Holeys and Madaru, other castes have given up the practice of tera. One of the informants from Holeys caste who is in service, is of the opinion that if one accepts tera for his sister or daughter, it is as good as selling them. Hence, he is not in favour of this practice. At the same time he is also aware that since his people are poor, they are not in a position to give dowry. Therefore without much expenditure marriages take place among them. Among other castes the change from the practice of bride-price to dowry may be an indication of less value accorded to female roles leading towards the lower status of women in the society, because they are the last to be fed, clothed and educated. Secondly, now people give more importance to job and so men in job demand dowry.

After marriage a girl has to leave her natal homo and go to live in her husband's family, as Siddapur has parti-local residence system. In four cases men have come to live in their wife's natal homo (uxorilocally) in the absence of a male child there. In the village, six families are without male issues and five families are without any issues.
In such cases one can adopt a child, but except one Lingayat family, others have adopted sons informally.

In case a woman is found to be barren, her husband may adopt a child or can marry another woman. Though a barren woman is looked upon sympathetically she is not treated as equal to other married women. In Siddapur, the co-wife (savati), if any, and the people are very sympathetic towards her and feel pity for her barrenness. They treat her as a woman who is denied of the grace of God. Hence the co-wife and sister-in-law (neqanni, a woman's Hu By Wi) often express that their own children are equally her children. On ritual occasions she is asked to play the role of the mother. The issueless women also love the co-wife's children very much, as they are the source of help for their future, especially in old age. This may be one of the reasons for the rarity of legal adoption in Siddapur.

Though there are constitutional and statutory provisions in favour of women to raise their status, the knowledge of their existence has not reached the people of Siddapur. According to the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 equal right of inheritance for male and female heirs is granted. The people of the village still strongly hold the traditional values and attitudes regarding inheritance; how can they
give a share in the ancestral property to the daughters when
sons are there? In cases of those who do not have male issues
some parents want to keep their married daughters at home
and give all the property to their husbands. But the agnates
(bhacadoru) do not like it. They say that since they belong
to that family, they have their claim on its property and
are ready to compensate for the daughter's share. According
to them, the daughter's right is the occasional visit to
natal home for feasts and festivals, and on such occasions
she is entitled to get bangles, blouse-pieces and clothes
for her children as long as she is alive, but not a share
in the property. This might be one of the reasons for the
preference of kin-marriages. Four daughters-in-law in the
village have received some landed property from their parents
not as equal share with their brothers but as a token of
affection. But no woman so far has asserted her right for
her share in the ancestral property of her natal home.
When a senior judge of the district court was interviewed
to find out the awareness of women regarding their legal
rights with regard to sharing parental property in the region,
he revealed that there are very few cases of this kind and
even those are the results of instigation of the male members
in the family to do so. The women themselves very rarely
approach the courts for the redressal of their grievances.
Similar are the opinions of other officials and other members
concerned with the issue.
Monogamy is the common practice. Still there are 10 cases of polygyny. A man may take a second wife if the first wife dies or she turns out to be barren. One Lingayat has married for the second time after having four children from the first wife. Though the first marriage was a kin marriage, once her relatives had insulted him. In his anger he married another woman and deserted the first. The first wife stayed with her natal kinsmen along with her children. Now her sons are grown up and have come to stay in Siddapur with their father. They are working on their fields and the latter did not object. This shows that an aged woman with her grown up sons can assert her rights, though as a young wife she was harassed by her husband. As Judith K. Brown (1982:143) states, in Siddapur also, "middle age brings fewer restrictions, the right to exert authority over certain kinsmen and opportunity for achievement and recognition beyond the household."

Recently, during my field work, another Lingayat who is having three children, has taken a second wife. He did not spell out the reason for doing so to his people at home or to the neighbourhood. Nobody in the family or in the village knew about the marriage. His first wife and his parents opposed his bringing a second wife in the family. Yet he has brought her home. On protest, the first wife
was beaten. After two months, however, he started beating his second wife also. Thus he dominated over both the wives. Though the villagers are surprised about his behaviour, they are not in a position to question him about the second marriage. When all people in the family did not co-operate with him and his second wife, she herself left him.

In the case of two Kabbaliga families when husbands brought the second wife, the first wives just kept quiet as they were young and were afraid of their husbands. Some of the women in the middle age-group (41-to 50) say that if a man is capable he can have any number of wives as a local proverb goes: "aslonice aeru mandi." They do not mind the husband being polygynous. A man from Holeya caste has taken a second wife for want of a male child. However, there are eleven men without a male child or any child, who have not thought of the second marriage.

The practice of polygyny and adoption are not very common in Siddapur. For, if the people are rich and have landed property, to retain the property in the family, the issueless couple may think either of adoption or of a second marriage. Since most people are not rich nor have sufficient land, the practice of polygyny and adoption are not much in vogue.
Widow marriage is allowed among all the castes except Jangams, Badigas and Kuduvakkaligas. Usually a widow in any caste with children will not marry. After remarriage a woman has to face certain social disabilities. In Siddapur, two Kuruba and two Kabbaliga women have remarried. A widow is allowed to remarry only a widower, while a widower can marry a virgin. For a man's second marriage all the due rituals are performed in accordance with the traditions, but for the marriage of a widow the usual rituals are not performed. In the evening, by presenting a saree and floral deidem (dandi) she is sent to her husband's house. This kind of marriage is known as udaki. On this occasion, other married women are not supposed to be present. Therefore it is performed by a widow who has undergone second marriage. After the second marriage the couple are not allowed to participate in regular marriage rituals of others, as the former are considered inauspicious.

Divorce is allowed but usually it is not resorted to. Old people say that 'they do not remember any one having given divorce (parikat) to his wife in those days, though some said that they used to hear that a man might desert his wife if she was quarrelsome or too selfish. There are six women in the village who have been deserted by their husbands but no one has been legally divorced. One Badiga woman is
deserted due to her ill-health, one Kuruba woman, due to family conflict among kinsmen, two among scheduled caste and two among Kabbaliga are deserted because they could not adjust in their husband's house. Five men of the village have deserted their wives. A Gouli deserted his wife due to her ill-health. A Muslim deserted his wife because she refused to stay with his parents. A Lingayat went away leaving his wife in the village for the last 20 to 22 years. Nobody knows the reason that prompted his action and also his whereabouts. People say that he has become an ascetic (sadhu). Two Kabbaligas have deserted their wives who could not adjust in their family. There is one case of a Kuruba woman who has deserted her husband who was lazy. For a few years she took the responsibility of feeding him. Afterwards, she was fed up with him and went back to her natal home leaving her lazy husband.

No one in the village has resorted to legal divorce or has claimed maintenance allowance. None of the deserted wives or her parents are aware that they are entitled for alimony or claim for their maintenance. During my field work when I asked the village elders whether their deserted daughters get any support from their husbands, they were surprised and said, "when they desert why would they support?" The men who have deserted their wives do not give any
maintenance to their deserted wives. Going to the court or taking legal help in such matters is considered scandalous by the villagers. They do not consider it necessary to take divorce legally and ask for alimony, as they are permitted to contract a second marriage. Two deserted women and four deserted men have remarried. Another point to note is that 90% of the women work for their support right from their childhood and continue to work even after marriage. When they were living with their husbands they were working for him and after separation they are working for their own self and for their children. Women of the village know the economic conditions of their husbands. Therefore they feel that there is no sense in asking for alimony from a poor husband who depends on his daily earnings for his own maintenance.

The idea of total chastity and fidelity to the husband alive or dead—the concept of pativrata—is not quite obvious in Siddapur, as defined in Brahmanical tradition. Except a few castes already mentioned, others have allowed the practice of widow remarriage and divorce.

The practice of purdah is considered as an indication of low status of woman. Though Gulbarga district was in Nizam's State earlier, and had Muslim influence, the practice
of purdah is not present in the village. The Muslims in the city and nearby villages are also giving it up. In Siddapur, though nobody including Muslims practises purdah, they do segregate women from men. As young girls, their social life is confined to home and to the company of other women.

Women's social relations are restricted to their kinsmen and immediate neighbourhood. Even among the neighbours, their own caste people are preferred. The young women and the girls of marriageable age are not allowed to go to the market or to any other places where they are likely to meet strangers. Women are expected to be quiet in the presence of other men. Among rich Kuruba family, younger sisters do not talk freely even with their elder brothers who are educated. The scheduled caste women were working in the fields with men in earlier times. At present they are not allowed to talk to men who are strangers. Even they are not supposed to come out when there are strangers. The change in the occupations of the men among scheduled castes has brought more restrictions on the behaviour of women.

In the social organization based on kinship, the groupings larger than an extended family are known as lineage and clan. Knowledge about kinship, that is, belonging to a particular lineage or clan, is not very clear among Siddapur
villagers. Their inability to know their lineage may be due to their lack of interest and the insignificant role it plays in the day to day life of the people of the village.

The lineage and clan unity is expressed in several ways like delimiting marriage choices, organising ancestor worship, transmission of property, etc. The people of the village know the names of the third ascending generation beyond which they know nothing. Due to their poor socio-economic conditions in the village, people have not felt the significance of genealogical relations. They have to depend on their own efforts for their living without much help from kith and kin. A post-graduate person in the village does not know the name of his great grand-father. He said that he never felt the necessity of knowing the name of his great grand father or other elderly people of ascending generation. During my field work, when I asked about information about elders, he tried to know from his elders about his lineage. Almost all people in the village follow Lingayat pattern of marriage and death rituals. Hence, they do not feel the necessity of knowing about the lineage and clan relations in greater detail.

The important occasions of clan or lineage identification are marriage and death. The family, lineage and clan are
exogamous. A man has to avoid three ascending and descending generations in a male line for marriage relations. Caste and sub-caste are endogamous. Failing to remember the lineage and clan identity in the village, it is necessary and sufficient to trace the marriage relations that have already taken place in the family. As people of Siddapur prefer kin-marriages and marriages in the nearby places, it is easy to establish affinal relations in the absence of lineage identity. Among Lingayats, each family has a Guru. If the bride and the groom belong to families which have different gurus, they are eligible for marriage. Among Kurubas in earlier times, there were only 4 families which were intermarrying. After partition and re-partition from generations these 4 families, at present there are 70 families. Hence, marriage cannot be contracted between members of the same original family. Kabbaligas do not remember their lineage. Hence, at the time of arranging a new marriage, they get information about the proposal by known people in the area. Then they tally their gods and bhuma (a ritual at the time of marriage). If the gods and the bhuma of the bride and the groom are the same, they proceed in the negotiation. Among all the castes including the scheduled caste, once the above mentioned procedures are over, they consult either the pujari or priest for the match (salavali). Among Kuduvakkaliga of Siddapur, they do not prefer new relation for marriage.
At the time of death the villagers are not very particular to observe the death pollution rite. The unconcern for genealogical relations among the villagers is also evidenced in the observance of same kind of death rituals for genealogical and other kin.

Since Siddapur recognises patrilinear descent, inheritance and succession take place in male-line giving equal importance to all the male siblings. In no case, the ancestral property is inherited by the female; however, a gift but not a share may be given to daughters. Since a majority of village people are poor, kinship does not play an important role in this regard, as they do not have much to share any way.

**Summary**

Siddapur has in all 203 families. It is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal in its organization. Earlier, this village appears to have had a large number of extended families with agriculture as its main occupation. But in recent times the situation has changed. Today the number of nuclear families surpasses the number of extended families. Sixty one percent families of the village are of nuclear type. The status of woman in extended family is one of subordination and adjustment. She has no individual freedom.
Her personality is totally submerged in the family image and status.

After independence, like any other fringe village, Siddapur also is influenced by the urban centres and the forces of modernization. The number of nuclear families increased as a result of division of extended families. The process of change accelerated only after 1970 in Siddapur owing to new job opportunities available in the nearby city and drought relief programmes. Another important factor was the establishment of the post-graduate centre close by the village. Diversification of occupation, decreasing dependence on agriculture and economic betterment have resulted in the change of attitudes and traditional family sentiments. The women assumed a greater responsibility and role in the family. They began to participate in the decision-making process in the family. However, one notices the prevalence of traditional values of the extended family in the minds of men and woman though in a modified form. Age and sex are still important in organising the life of the people of the village. The present situation warrants us to conclude that traditional values and new emerging values exist side by side and people try to strike an adjustment between them. Woman's status appears to be improved in the sense, that she is involved in the process.
of decision-making and has more freedom to move out of her house. Submissiveness and fidelity are still considered as values in Siddapur.

The women of Siddapur are gradually taking up wage-earning, selling milk, fodder, etc. rather than sticking to agriculture. It is interesting to note that a change is on the way in the case of the scheduled caste women of this village, as they are not permitted by their men to go in for a job or labour. They say that they are superior to working women. It is found that the women in nuclear families enjoy greater freedom of movement and expression compared to the women living in extended families.

Pregnancy and birth of a child are very important for their associated rituals wherein the position of man and woman can be identified. The birth of a male child is preferred to a female one. This preference considerably affects the entire process of earlier socialization of male and female children. However, it is not correct to presume that female children are not loved. Both may enjoy the same care up to 5 or 6 years and after that their training differs. The females are trained in household duties.
Marriage is another life-cycle ritual which reveals the position the woman enjoys. Marriage is a complex of obligations - religious, moral, social and economic. The spread of marriage relationships plays a very significant role in determining the attitude of women. The women who come from nearby villages are orthodox and are very much hesitant in establishing relations with others. But those who have come from far-off places appear to be more assertive, free and do not hesitate to talk to strangers.

Kin-marriage appears to be still persisting in Siddapur. About 45% of marriages are of kin type. This type appears to be more convenient, since it does not insist on dowry and huge expenses on marriage apart from renewing the old relations. Cross-cousin marriage is preferred, the matrilateral type being more common. Except a lone case of love-marriage, arranged marriage is in vogue. The size of the rituals prior to and during marriage is reduced. There is an increasing tendency to arrange the marriage at temples instead of at residence, as the former is more convenient, less time-consuming and less expensive. Now marriage is becoming a function of less than a day due to economic burden and problem of management.

The practice of child-marriage is not common in the
village. Only two cases are recorded. The marriageable age for girls is 13 to 18 and for boys 18 to 24 years. After puberty if a girl is not married soon, people view it seriously. In olden days, the position of the girl's parents was high as groom's parents used to approach them with a proposal for marriage. But the situation has changed today. Dowry is gradually being accepted by the people of Siddapur.

The nearness to urban area, diversification of occupation, and economic improvements no doubt have helped in elevating to some extent the status of women of Siddapur. These women do not always think in terms of their status as they keep the interests and the prestige of the family uppermost in their mind. This is substantiated by the fact that they do not show any awareness of the legal measures intended to secure equal status for them in society. For instance, the provision of Hindu Succession Act of 1956, Divorce and Maintenance Act, and Dowry Prohibition Act, are not known to the women of the village. Traditional values dominate all considerations on the status of women. Legal divorce is very rarely resorted to. Instead, desertion of wife or husband is noticed in the village but no legal divorce is sought. The women do not consider it proper to demand alimony when they are deserted by their men. Widow remarriage is permitted.
The women in nuclear family are more mobile than women in extended family and exert a considerable influence in decision-making. In the fringe village Siddapur, it is the responsibility of women to go to market and purchase the provisions. Family planning is gradually becoming acceptable to women of Siddapur. Men do not show any interest in family planning as they are not much concerned with the upbringing of their children. In a few cases the women have undergone tubectomy operation despite opposition from their husbands. This reveals the fact that some women can exercise their right in those matters which exclusively concern them. This change is gradually taking shape in this fringe village.

In general, though it is true that the position of woman is lower than that of men, it is not as low as one might think. Men in the village do not consciously organise to dominate over women in all matters. Both men and women function together in a complex socio-cultural and ecological system with considerable adjustment. Men do dominate the activities outside the home - they are the leaders, make important decisions pertaining to village and home and etc. Nevertheless, women affect men's actions and have their own spheres of influence. There is no competition between men and women. They have different but complementary roles.
to run the home. Irrespective of caste and class, people of
the village explain that "nobody is superior or inferior.
Both of us have to work together to run the home. Otherwise
how can one survive without the other. We do our work."
Sometimes man undertakes women's work if there is a need
and vice versa.