Chapter - IV

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF KINSHIP, SOCIAL CONTROL AND RELIGION, AND THEIR CHANGES

"The hardest challenges to economic anthropology lie in this middle range, studying interconnections between sub-systems" - R.M. Keesing (1971:264).

In this chapter I attempt to delineate the social framework of the economic organization and how this framework has changed on account of the changes brought about in economic organization. The basic changes in technology and in the means of subsistence, the incipient economic diversification and the importance of individual labour for cash wages, all of these have widened the general range of social relations and spatial mobility, and thus, have produced far-reaching secondary changes in the socio-cultural organization of the Lamani. Here I shall specifically discuss changes in the social organization, in the organization of social control and changes in the religious and belief systems of the community.

1. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND CHANGES

The rural Lamani settlements are basically K organized on two principles, viz., kinship and residence. My attempt to understand the larger Lamani society through
the detailed study of two settlements is like looking through the other end of the telescope. On account of considerable overlapping of the groups formed on the bases of the two principles of kinship and locality, it is often difficult to sort out the functions and characteristics of each. On the whole, it appears that the Lamani place greater emphasis on residence or locality as measured in terms of their daily interactions. First I discuss groups based on residence/locality and then those that stress kinship ties.

Social Groups Based on Residence

Three social groups which are based on the principle of residence merit attention.

The Household

The fundamental unit in the sphere of relationships based on residence is the domestic household (whether nuclear or extended). Purely in economic terms the Lamani consider a household as a group of people whose food is cooked in common and who share a common shelter. The reunion of a household which had been divided after a quarrel is symbolized in the minds of the Lamani by their resumption of cooking and eating together. This common cooking also implies a pooling and then sharing of resources produced by the members; and, this draws attention to the basic function of the household as a productive unit.
Since the Lamani now have a mixed economy of agriculture and wage labour, households which have a large labour force operate most efficiently, and hence are frequently composed of two or more nuclear families. There are 34.3% and 35.4% such extended families in Savana and Havana respectively (see Table 19, p. 225). The extended family households, each producing and consuming in common, are known as "joint families", because of the joint ownership of ancestral property of the family. The Lamani also have "coparcenary" rights in the joint families as in the case of other castes. Each joint family is organized under the direction of a head (yajaman), usually the eldest male, and is characterized by a well-developed division of labour. Women's activities are supervised by the eldest woman in the house, usually the wife of the male head. But in some cases this patrilocal authority may have given way to fratrifocal authority under certain circumstances, even when the father is alive, such as illness or an old man becoming ineffective and so delegating the responsibility of the family affairs to the eldest son. In other cases, though the father is still agile, the ambitious son may usurp the charge of the household when the father is a weakling or bad manager of family funds. The usurpation of headship of the family by the young men was unimaginable, according to the informants, only two generations ago. This is believed to be the result of literacy, town-contact, and better acumen of the younger
generation. The old lament that this trend is due to a decline of social values such as filial piety. However, this indicates a trend towards changing authority in the family.

A joint family may also comprise consanguineal and affinal relatives; and, servants or dependents may also live in the same household. For example, in Savana, the richest Lamani joint family consists of three nuclear families of sons, a married daughter along with her husband and children, three Lamani annual servants and two old Maratha dependents who are maintained in return for their help in cultivation of lands. Postmarital residence is generally patrilocal, though a few cases of matrilocal or uxorilocal residence are also noticed because of the custom of the bride service. Thus the ideal household contains a man, his wife, his married sons with their wives and children, and his unmarried sons and daughters. The extended families shown in Table 19 with bigger size, usually beyond 10 members, are of this type. Married sons may seek separation any time, but do so usually after the death of the father. The organization of the household is in accordance with the ideal of the joint family. The ideal has been realised in case of more than one-third of the total number, in both the settlements. Some families cannot realise this ideal because of biological or socio-economic handicaps, such as, bachelorhood, widowhood, desertion, or divorce, barrenness and inadequacy of economic
resources. Some families are on way to becoming extended after the marriage of sons or the birth of grandchildren. Only in a few cases division of the joint family is purposively sought after. Therefore, every nuclear family household does not necessarily represent a case of deviation from the ideal of the joint household; it might have simply failed so far to achieve it. According to the ideal, each household should grow into a joint family by the birth of children, then by marriage of its sons, and finally, by the birth of grandchildren. Even the death of the founder of the joint family household does not ordinarily lead to immediate break up into its nuclear components. Usually the eldest brother replaces the deceased head of the joint family. However, after some length of time together, the brothers usually divide the common holdings into shares by setting their own nuclear family and the process begins anew. When the Lamani find that it is no longer possible to live together in joint family, they divide the property in equal number of shares, with an usufruct set aside for the parents (or one of the parents, if one of them is dead) and, for the expenses of the ritual performances for the family deity and ancestors. The youngest brother is required by custom to take care of the parents and the deities after the division and, in consideration of this fact, he is entitled to the use of the usufruct set aside for the purpose. If there is only one house and if it could not be partitioned to accommodate more than one family, it is given to the
youngest, others establishing their own households by building new houses. Rarely does the youngest brother get separated from the parents as he is emotionally and materially dependent upon them, but if he does, it is usually after he marries or a few years after the marriage. After the death of the parents, their usufruct is equally divided among the brothers.

The reasons given by the Lamani for the parents to live with the youngest brother is that he is considered inexperienced in the management of a household and thus needs to be guided by the parents. In some instances, at the time of division of the joint household, he may still be unmarried and so needs the help of the parents. However, usually in poorer families, this traditional custom tends to be ignored, and the parents are not given proper care. In a few cases the sons separate and establish their own family after marriage. The parents were neglected and left to their own fate, with the result that I heard cynical comments from such parents: "So far as deprivation and misery in old age is concerned, it is immaterial whether one has or does not have sons".

After the promulgation of the Hindu Succession Act of 1955, the sisters also are entitled for an equal share in the coparcenary, but since the Lamani landed-property is not much, they usually give some presents to the married sisters and get a written declaration from them that they have sold their share in the lands to the brothers.
The Lamani acknowledge the economic and socio-psychological advantages inherent in extended-family households. Virtually most of the joint households which decide in favour of partition, do so regretfully for the same reasons - inadequate resources which forces them to search the means of livelihood elsewhere and the incompatibility among the brothers' wives. This is recognised implicitly by them. The Lamani say that since the brothers are of one blood and upbringing, they can put up with the stresses and strains of joint-living; but, as the wives come from other families and in a minority of cases (Savana: 46 out of 149; Eavanas: 57 out of 149) from other settlements, they feel no obligation to solidarity of the male sibling group. Each wife is anxious to be free from the control of the head woman and tends to take more interest in her own nuclear family, and dreams to be a headmistress of her own household. Where the widowed mother remains, the joint household usually remains intact, although it will also divide soon after her death. Thus we find that, in the developmental cycle of the joint family, fraternally extended type is more unstable and fragile than the paternal type. Patrifocally extended (Savana: 22; Havana: 30) families are more in number than fratrilocally extended ones (Savana: 3; Havana: 5) indicating thereby that the chances of successful continuity of such joint families are more. This is because of the fact of parent-children filial bond being stronger than male sibling solidarity
(see Table 9, p.95). An added reason for the latter is the alleged selfishness of the eldest brother to the detriment of other brothers' interests in managing the coparcenary property.

But there are exceptions to this, and the largest households from Savana and Havana are cases in point. They are the joint families of the classic type, now found only in a few well-to-do rural Lamani. Savana's largest joint household has 16 members consisting of widowed mother, two married brothers with their wives and children, and a divorced sister who has come back to her natal home. That of Havana's, again with 16 members comprising both parents along with unmarried children, two married brothers with their wives and children. From both the settlements, one household out of every three, has remained unbroken one generation longer than is usual these days, because household peace has been maintained through the years, partly due to the good behaviour and obedience of the younger generation. An added incentive is the combined resources which make these families well-off and, therefore, the influential households in the settlements.

The family among the Lamani is characterized by patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence and patriarchal authority. Since the family households are basic units, the
type and size of the family have an important bearing on the social and economic organization. The distribution of the households (see Table 19) by size ranges from the single-member, incomplete families to the largest 16-member extended families, in both Savana and Havana. In Savana, 12 families have the average size (6 persons); 53 are smaller than the average, while 47 exceed that size. The same is true of Havana where 49 households have smaller than the average size (5.71 persons), while fifty households are larger than average size. The point to note is that, in both the settlements, nuclear family households (in some cases, with additional relatives) are numerically preponderant (see tables 9 and 13). The economic reason for this pattern seems that the meager resources of most of the Lamani make it difficult to maintain large-size family, though they still desire to attain the ideal of a joint household. Thus, there is a sharp gap between the ideal and the reality. Of the total 102 Savana Lamani families, 67 are nuclear of which two have (in addition) other consanguineal and affinal relatives. The remaining 35 are joint families of which only one has an affinal relative. Turning to Havana Lamani, we find that out of 99 families, 64 are nuclear of which 5 have other relatives, and 35 joint, of which 2 have other relatives. Thus in terms of family types, both the settlements are similar. From the point of

1. In the statutes on land reforms, a family is presumed to comprise 5 members unless otherwise specified.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>Savana Total</th>
<th>Savana Nuclear</th>
<th>Havana Total</th>
<th>Havana Nuclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-104</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105-109</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110-114</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115-119</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120-124</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125-129</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130-134</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135-139</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-144</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145-149</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-154</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155-159</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160-164</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165-169</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170-174</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175-179</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180-184</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185-189</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-194</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195-199</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-204</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205-209</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-214</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215-219</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220-224</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225-229</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230-234</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235-239</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240-244</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245-249</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-254</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255-259</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260-264</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265-269</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270-274</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275-279</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280-284</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285-289</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290-294</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295-299</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-304</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-309</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-314</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315-319</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-324</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325-329</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330-334</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335-339</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340-344</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345-349</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350-354</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>355-359</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-364</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365-369</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370-374</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375-379</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-384</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>385-389</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390-394</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>395-399</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-404</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405-409</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410-414</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>415-419</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-424</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425-429</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430-434</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435-439</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440-444</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445-449</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table above represents the distribution of family types according to size in Savana (1966-67) and Havana (1970-71). The numbers indicate the frequency of each type of family, with 'Total' referring to the total number of households and 'Nuclear' or 'Extended' referring to the respective family type.
economic potential in the form of economically productive membership, the extended or joint type is in a better position, since it has more adults than a nuclear family.

I believe that the nomadic life of the Lamani of earlier days could not permit the possibility of maintaining large joint families because family-size is determined by the level of technology and the economic resources (Montague 1960: 125-26). Nomadism discourages unwieldy burden, both material or non-material. This fact is corroborated from the data on Lamani who still carry on their nomadic way of life. In a simple survey of 100 out of 600 semi-nomadic Banjara families in western Rajasthan, 94 were found to be nuclear (Malhotra and Bose 1965: 70). The old informants say that the emergence of joint family is a consequence of their sedentarization and peasantization. In the first half of the present century, they witnessed a phenomenal increase of large-size, joint families when many Lamani took up agriculture. Now, again, with increasing poverty because of acute inflation in the country and wages generally lagging behind the prices, and with increasing individualization, the number of joint families is declining.

However, the very fact that more than one-third of the total number of families in both the settlements are joint is the consequence of the improving economic conditions of the large-size land holding Lamani and the rising agricultural
prices, as well as the acceptance by the Lamani of the greater value attached to the joint family organization. This is a change from their early emphasis on nuclear family during their nomadic days to prefer now joint families. This is due to changes in their economy as well as to borrowing the ideal from the non-Lamani Communities. Though, these days, the joint families are also on the decline among the non-Lamani, the joint family ideal still persists. My data on the Lamani show a correlation between the joint families and agriculture. The economic pursuit has a strong tendency to influence the organization of the social groups like the family.

**Neighbours and Neighbourhoods:**

The social groups larger than the individual households consist of small groups of neighbouring households. The interaction pattern of these neighbourhood groupings changes (not necessarily leading to physical shifting of the houses) according to changing animosities, and such groups are unnamed and undefined by the Lamani themselves. The members of a neighbourhood are called merely as neighbours if they are not kin. Though residence pattern is not strictly based on lineage connections, usually the Lamani tend to reside close by their relatives. However, those who have settled later, live away from their kin for want of habitation space by the side of the close kin. Thus the settlement is not based on the principle of lineage residence pattern. The affiliation of total households of the settlements to such 10 to 15
neighbourhood groups becomes apparent when one examines cooperative work patterns, visiting patterns, who helps whom when in a crisis, who makes trips with whom to the market together, who lends to and borrows from whom, and similar patterns of day-to-day interactions.

Although no boundaries are apparent to the outsiders within the settlements, the inhabitants divide the cluster of houses into a few distinct sectors or lanes which are named after important or leading elders of the locality. In some respects, these lanes or clusters would seem to comprise neighbourhood groupings. While the Lamani obligation in such larger groups is weaker than among closer neighbours and not always discharged to the fullest expectation, a bond, nevertheless, is felt.

Because of patrilineal inheritance and patrilocal residence and the division of joint families, close neighbours are usually also close patrilineal kin. The strong sibling unity found among the Lamani is partly reinforced by the settlement pattern, discernible in the close neighbourhoods.

However, exceptions to the above pattern of neighbourhood proves the fact that the organizing principle of both larger and smaller neighbourhood groups is residence, not kinship because of the fact that after a generation or so following the inception of the settlement, it is not possible
in all cases to establish new houses closeby one's patrilineal
kin for want of space to build new houses. However, even the
recent immigrants into the settlements fully participate in
the activities of the groups of close neighbours without any
handicaps or reservations.

The Settlements as Communities:

Much more important as a social unit than these
neighbourhood groupings is the settlement itself — the tamâ. The Lamani settlements, in most cases, are ethnically
homogeneous, except in cases where a few Lamani families
migrate and attach themselves with multi-caste villages. I
have not come across a fairly large and viable Lamani settle­
ment which also comprises non-Lamani. Their belief in
segregated and exclusive settlement has been already referred
to. Settlement solidarity is closely related to the frequent
labour exchanges between fellow settlers which in turn is
affected by both generalized and balanced reciprocity. The
social unity of the settlement is demonstrated in other way
as well. The settlements are neither exogamous nor endogamous
in an exclusive sense. Marriages contracted with other
settlements are occasions of greater ceremony and jubilation,
to project a better image of themselves to the outsiders.
Although the Lamani share religious (use of Brahmin priest)
and political (use of non-Lamani leaders) personnel with the
others in the region, some officials like the village
accountant, school teacher and village level worker are posted exclusively for the villages of which Lamani settlements form administrative parts.

The Lamani settlers own in common certain properties: The Sevayabhaya temple, the shrines of Sitalabhavani and Sirsi Marikamba, settlement site and the village commons. They also undertake certain projects like requesting the Government for drinking water wells, school building, street drains, etc., building of new houses with government aid, and the conduct of communal festivities and celebrations. Such projects are operated through the Lamani panchayat and are undertaken after a consensus is attained. The idea is first presented to the household heads assembled in a meeting of the panchayat, and it is thoroughly discussed sometimes in two or more meetings. The sponsors of the subject under discussion seek especially to win over the well-to-do and influential heads of households. Once this is accomplished, dissenters usually fall into grudging agreement. Sometimes they even ignore small protest. Even the naik (headman) is powerless without the backing of his fellow settlers. Similar effects of social pressure within the settlement are felt in various other contexts like adjudicating a dispute, ex-communication of a culprit or imposing fines on the deviant.

The settlement presents a common front to outsiders. When passing police officials and other officials ask if there
are any problems, the answer is usually negative and though there may be many intrasettlement frictions and bickerings. The settlers treat all the affinal kin of fellow settlers in a manner they do for their own affinal kin. In disputes involving Lamani and non-Lamani, as well as among themselves hailing from different settlements, the compositions of alignments cut across sector or lane and kin-group lines, thus expressing the importance of territorial loyalty to the settlement community.

Settlement unity is ritually reiterated in many common ceremonies: Hindu New Year's Day, Sitlabhavanı festival, Dasara, Dipavali, Holi and Gouri celebration, when the whole settlement acts as one group (see pp. 134-135). The unity of the settlement is also demonstrated to the outside world on certain days dedicated to the deities of epidemics, for ushering in rain (all the residents abstaining from doing any work) thereby hoping to propitiate the deities that have afflicted, or about to afflict the life of the people, crop, or animals.

Of all the ceremonies, the Gouri celebration is the most important, since on this occasion the local community plays host to the Lamani world outside the settlement. Primarily, the occasion is one on which the settlers entertain guests from other Lamani settlements especially the kith and kin of the families in the host settlement. People from nearer settlements, especially youngmen in search of brides, are also
welcomed. The really important activities - the ones looked forward to with great anticipation - occur before and after the ritual part of the celebration, when older folk visit from house to house and younger folk gossip and loiter around, as women dance and sing in praise of their benefactor saints and culture heroes.

Each house feeds a number of guests including not only its own invited kins-folk but also a few other guests from the settlement on the days when there is no common feasting. Although many poor Lamani find it economically difficult to entertain guests and give feasts, they still have to do it for the sake of custom and social responsibilities towards the settlement. Every time the Gouri celebration is proposed, it encounters opposition by the poor residents because of its cost, but the opposition is always overcome owing to the necessity of maintaining the "prestige" and the good image of the settlement vis-a-vis other settlements. The emotional attachment to a settlement of even those Lamani who migrate seasonally or temporarily to other places for work, becomes explicit from their attendance at the Gouri celebration without fail. The occasion is clearly one on which all residents of a settlement feel it necessary to present a common front and social solidarity to the outside.

1. Evans-Pritchard talks of a similar tendency of 'return of the native' to his natal village, and the corporate character and a feeling solidarity in Nuer villages (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 361).
world and, thus, publicly declare themselves as a "community". The settlement that does not observe this celebration at an interval of at least 4 to 5 years is looked down upon by other settlement Lamani, and the lapse generates shame in the settlers.

The Gouri celebration is the counterpart of the non-Lamani annual fairs in honour of village deity. Since the two settlements under discussion are each an administrative part of a composite village, and since Lamani also celebrate some of the feasts and festivities celebrated by the multicastr- sectors, one would have expected a common celebration. But this is not the case; the division between Lamani and non-Lamani in these villages is based on both ethnic and community factors. In case of common celebrations, the villages are divided. The Lamani festivities are held within the settlement and the other Hindus do so in their respective localities. The participation on the part of Lamani and non-Lamani in each others' celebrations is only marginal, assuming the nature of onlookers rather than active participants. However, the Lamani-non-Lamani dichotomy within the villages is not all-inclusive. In many respects, both the groups have common stakes. They share many institutions and facilities introduced from the outside and put up a common front vis-a-vis outside administration (see Chapter II: 49).
However strong the ties that bind the settlement together as a community, it does not lack the misunderstandings, disagreements, gossip, and fissiparous tendencies that are inevitable when groups live in close contact over a period of time. Alignments, especially expressed in neighbourhood groupings, are shifted incessantly as a result.\textsuperscript{1} An attempt is usually made to keep such disagreements at the covert level, as if in fear of their disruptive influence on local community.

From the foregoing, I posit that the nature of the social groups based on residence among the earlier nomadic Lamani could not have transcended, at best, the mobile household and the close neighbours' grouping, in the context of bands on the move. The basis of these must have been kinship and affinity and not territorial bond. The emergence of territorial bond peculiar to the localized communities and their enlargement out of small-size band communities into settlement-level communities are the results of sedentarization of the Lamani into larger communities, as a result of the breakdown of their traditional calling and nomadism. Even the semi-permanent settlements of the later seminomadic days also must have presented a weak sense of territorial bond evolving as an outcome of the settling down process, because

\textsuperscript{1} Also see Evans Pritchard 1950: 361 for communities within larger village community.
day-to-day interactions within such seminomadic settlements were fewer in comparison to those that obtain within the present, permanent settlements.

Although most of the day-to-day interactions take place in the context of these residence groupings - the household, close neighbourhoods, the cluster of households or lanes, and the settlement - a parallel system of social relationships is provided by kinship. Similar interaction also proceeds along kinship lines, e.g., one invites other settlement kin to participate in a co-operative work partly in addition to one's neighbours. The Lamani kinsmen scattered in the region also exchange goods that they do not produce with the ones they do. The primary difference between organization by the principles of residence and kinship is that the latter not only consolidates alignments within the settlement but also provides outside effective links to the households.

Social Groups Based on Kinship

Here I discuss the place of family (nuclear and extended), lineages and clans among the Lamani.

The Nuclear Family:

The basic unit of kinship is the nuclear family, which has some degree of integrity, even when it constitutes
A unit of a joint family household. Its integrity is defined mainly in terms of sentiment based on affinity and descent. A Lamani naturally feels closer to his own children than to his brother's children, even though the latter are structural equivalents within the joint household and even if he is obliged to treat them equally. The integrity of the nuclear family is further demonstrated by the fact that each couple and its children form easily identifiable eating and sleeping clusters. However, there is no concept of personal property so long as the nuclear units remain within the joint household.

The organization of a joint household tends to supercede that of its units. When a woman of such a household wishes to visit her natal kin or attend fairs and festivities in a neighbouring village, she has to take the permission, not of her husband, but of the head of the family. Children of any nuclear unit are instructed and disciplined by any adult of the household. The head, having the last word in this, as in other household matters, may prohibit a mother from disciplining her own children, if he so desires. Children are considered part of the household into which they are born regardless of their mothers' reaffiliation elsewhere consequent upon divorce, or widowhood. Because of the division of labour by age and sex, interaction tends to be more and frequent among men, women or children than between spouses or parents and children, in the joint household. In large households, at least two separate
and successive settings provide the meal time: first men and later women, children having no specific setting. Though most Lamani houses are not spacious and so lack privacy, there is no separate youth dormitory among the Lamani. It is evident that the nuclear family is subordinate to the larger household, and it seems that this was even more true in the recent past than at present. The father-son relationship among the Lamani seems to be the "dominant kinship relationship" (Hsu 1965: 640) in the sense that not only this relationships but also that it colours and dominates even other relationships like husband-wife, brother-brother etc. But this does not mean that the dominance of the father is always tacitly accepted. Day-to-day life creates many situations of harmony as well as tension. Not only presentday sons but also sons in the past, had quarrelled and fallen out from their fathers as revealed in some of the legends of the Lamani (cf. Grierson 1968: 267, 273). Nor was male sibling solidarity always intact. Brothers used to quarrel and divide the joint family property (cf. ibid: 292).

Lineages and Clans:

The Lamani of North Karnataka are divided into four, patrilineal clans; Rathod, Pamhar, Chauhan and Vadatya, with many maximal and minimal lineages within each. The lineages are named after the names of the children of the original ancestors of the clans. A folk saying denotes the number of
lineages in the four clans: Sattavisgot Rathod, baragot Pamhar, chhogot Chauhan and bavanpada Vadatya" (Rathods have twenty-seven lineages, Pamhar 12, Chauhan 6 and Vadatya 14).

Rathod clan is divided into two halves: Chinna Rathod and Pedda Rathod (also known as Bhukya). Again the first three clans: Rathod, Pamhar and Chauhan together constitute what are called "Jatbhaïs" or allied clans, as they are the earlier ones. The fourth is supposed to be of later origin, with a lower kinship status vis-à-vis the higher three clans. Thus the processes of division of clans and alliance into lineages of clans into a phratry-like "Jatbhai" indicate that the tendencies of both fission and fusion have occurred among the kin-groups. Among the Lamani, although the clans can be viewed as unilineal descent groups, they lack corporate character and "evidences of organisation, collective activities or group functions" which characterize corporate clans (Murdock: 1965: 69). This, again, is a change in their clan and lineage organisation from the exclusively corporate character of their kin groups during the days of transport work and nomadism (see Briggs 1819:724). With settling down, the exclusive and corporate clans broke-down and scattered in the region, only to join other clans to establish multi-clan multi-lineage settlements.
The legends that survive through folklore are quite suggestive of the various factors responsible for the origin of these clans and lineages—poverty of some groups, nomadism leading to contact with other communities, miscegenation and laterality in reckoning descent of the originators of the clans.

In the social organization based on kinship, the groupings larger than an extended family are lineages and clans, and clan-alliances. In size, the lineages range from a single household to 55 households in the two settlements (see Table 20). The table shows that all the four clans are present in both the settlements, but not all the lineages of these clans; nor are clans and lineages equally present in any settlement. As between Savana and Havana, the knowledge of kinship, e.g., belonging to a lineage, is becoming less important in Havana (there are more cases of inability to remember the name of the lineages to which the informants belong). The inability to know one's lineage name may also be due to the recent immigration of such households into these settlements, leaving behind the elders who know these names.

Although the clan and lineage unity is expressed in several ways like delimiting marriage choices, organizing ancestor worship, etc., these kin groups have relatively little importance in the organization of day-to-day activities.
### Table 90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lineage</th>
<th>Savana</th>
<th>Havana</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khedavat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathod</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedawat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanraower</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amagot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gohgot</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mewar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- **H**: Havana settlement, it has 15 known lineages
- **S**: Savana settlement, it has 15 known lineages

Households according to Clans & Lineages in Savana & Havana
of the Lamani. All members of the respective groups share a common name, usually derived from the personal or nickname of the common ancestors. Altogether there are 15 named lineages in Savana and 13 in Havana, with a maximum depth up to the fourth ascending generation beyond which the Lamani do not know the definite ascending generation of even the lineage ancestors. There is no question of tracing the exact generation of the clan initiators. The names are remembered by oral tradition in the form of songs. In the past, the Lamani remembered their ancestors, up to the fourth ascending generation, as kinship was the foundation of their social life (and not territorial bond) because of nomadic life. But today with sedentarization most Lamani confess that they cannot easily remember ancestors beyond the second ascending generation. Only a few older people who had something to do with rituals connected with ancestors, and fixing of marriages, etc., knew the names of ancestors to the maximum extent of four generations. Most of the younger Lamani do not know even the names of their great-grand-fathers, indicating thereby that the occasions of remembering the dead are becoming rare these days. On the occasion of annual ancestor worship, only parents and grandparents are remembered (with the help of terms of reference), thereby believing that they have remembered all the ancestors. The knowledge that particular lineages are the offshoots of a certain clan (or gotra), is the basis of the close bonds that sometimes prevail among the households that belong to a
particular lineage or clan. Thus, the adoption of clan names like Rathod, Pambar, etc. as family surnames by the literate and modernizing Lamani is an indication of their effort partly to preserve the knowledge of their ancestry and partly to hide their Lamani identity which signifies low social position. The ordinary Lamani are satisfied with the common label of the community - "Lamani".

The crucial occasion for lineage and clan identification is the betrothal ceremony. Clans including their constituent lineages are exogamous; and, failing to remember the lineage identity, it would be enough if one knew the broader category of clan. The closer the relationship, the greater are the obligations of reciprocal cooperation, sentimental attachment, and the likelihood of material resources like landed estate (these days) and the herds of bullocks (in the past) being held in common. This close kinship bond is usually reinforced by the fact that close kin are normally also the close neighbours and, thus, tend to interact more commonly than with families more distantly related and farther away in the settlement. Even in such cases, it is usually the neighbour rather than the kinship bond, which is generally emphasized by the Lamani; because neighbourhood is a certainty while, in a few cases at least, neighbours need not be close kin.
Inheritance and Succession:

As the Lamani recognise patrilineal descent, inheritance and succession are through the male line, giving equal importance to all the male siblings. In no case is ancestral property allowed to pass in the female line. However, gifts, but not property, may be given to female descendents on the occasion of their marriage.

When a couple does not get any male issue, it can adopt a "son", usually a son of the brother, parallel cousin, or a boy from the same lineage or other lineages of the same clan in that order of preference. Similarly, a widow or a widower is also allowed to adopt a son. In rare cases, any orphan Lamani boy who had been fostered by such childless Lamani has been adopted later, when the boy grew to adulthood. The adoption ritual is simple. The elders of the neighbouring settlements are invited for a feast on the occasion, and the antecedents of the boy and the names of the adopting persons are announced before the assembled public so that any objection to the adoption in terms of violation of kinship rules may be brought to the notice of the assembly. After this, the waist-band of the boy is removed and a new one is tied to symbolise the change of social paternity because of adoption. The following two case studies of adoption bring

1. Of course, the 1956 Hindu Succession Act legally modified this, giving equal rights to females as well.
out the cardinal values involved and the processes and problems of adopting a son.

1. M who was 65 years old in 1967, had adopted 15 years ago his cousin brother K's son according to traditional, informal adoption rites, without any written document in proof of the act. The boy joined his household and assisted M in cultivating land and adapted to the new family. Somehow K suspected that M may ultimately bequeath his property to his daughter or daughter's son someday, to the detriment of the interests of the "son". The suspicion arose partly because of instigation by K's relative from Havana who knew legal method of adoption, and partly because M had not transferred his rights of property to his adopted son, in the government land-records. M argued that, since the boy is adopted by him, after his death the property will anyway pass on to the adopted son and the panchayat will certify the fact of adoption, in case of any difficulties. In case the immediate transfer of the property to the name of the son were to be effected, he asked for a firm promise from the Panchayat for his maintenance in old age (by the adopted son). The Panchayat upheld the stand taken by M and bycotted K, since he showed lack of confidence in the decision of the Panchayat.

After sometime, K had to come round and requested the Panchayat to settle the issue. The Panchayat held cut two alternatives: (i) to continue the adoption as per status quo, or (ii) to dissolve adoption and take back his son, after paying to M maintenance cost on the boy. K accepted the second alternative, by removing the waist-band tied by M. In 1967, M was fostering two young boys: one K's another son and the other, his daughter's son. He confided in me that he has made up his mind to adopt his brother's son.

2. Kalu (aged 52) could not beget any issue and with a hope to get a male issue he contracted in 1960 a secondary marriage with a widow aged 40, who had two grown up sons from the first husband. He did not get any issue from the second marriage either, but was cared for
by the step-sons. He died without formally bequeathing his property. In view of the services of his surviving wife and step-children, the Panchayat approved the succession of one of the step-sons, L, as the "son" of the deceased and transferred the rights of property to his name. The agnatic relatives of Kalu also had attended the adoption ratification and had partaken the feast arranged on the occasion.

But subsequently, the agnatic relatives objected to the use of lands by L, saying that they do not recognise his heirship, since he is not the lineal, direct heir. The Panchayat supported L, adhering to their earlier decision. When pressed, on the ground that the Panchayat had erred in ignoring the lineality while adopting, the Panchayat conceded that an exception on humanitarian grounds was made in this case by adopting L who is a descendant of another clan, in view of the services the step-children and their mother had rendered to the deceased, Kalu.

The Panchayat also ruled that in case the contending agnatic family is interested in Kalu's property, they should pay compensation to the step-sons, and only then the adoption of L can be dissolved. A prominent member of the Panchayat confided in me after one of the meetings that if the contending family goes to the court, the Panchayat will boycott it. He said that the family did not want to challenge the decision of the Panchayat as it also had participated in the adoption rite, but later, it has been instigated by a Havana relative who knows the adoption laws and courts.

These two cases illustrate the challenge the community's traditional norms relating to inheritance and succession are facing from the modern legal system and the courts. The relatively isolated Savana still follows the traditional norms while many Havana Lamani are acquainted with the modern laws and court system.
Cognatic Kinship Trends:

The range of the presence of lineages and clans in any sizeable settlement is more than that of a small nomadic band which presumably comprised fewer lineages belonging to a single clan. Settling down of nomadic bands and sizeable migration of families belonging to various clans and lineages from one settlement to another in pursuit of a better life have increased the possibility of multi-clan and multi-lineage settlements. Many people now live in a different settlement from that of their birth. Thus, in a representative settlement like Savana, the population now comprises a large number of small segments of lineages of discrete origins, whereas it previously comprised only four to six lineages of each clan. In Savana and Havana, there are now present 15 and 13 lineage segments respectively of which only 2 or 3 were responsible for founding the settlements in the present sites, at the turn of the present century. As many as 10 households in Savana and 12 in Havana have immigrated into them in the last 10 years, from nearby as well as distant settlements for a variety of reasons: death of husbands/fathers, disrepair of the house, bride-service, in search of finding work, and government service (the primary school teacher who settled permanently in Havana).

The Lamani kinship system is cognatic in reckoning the kin and in observing the rights and obligations of the
kin-relationships. With the presence of "wife-giving" clans within the settlements, the borrowing of kin/marriage practices from the local non-Lamani castes, and marriage alliances within the settlement being permissible, the range and intensity of cognation has increased, diluting the earlier strong tenor of agnatic ties. In fact, the Lamani recognized from the early times cognatic kinship relations though being patrilineal in terms of descent and inheritance. This is evident from the inclusion of ancestors on both sides of the genealogy on the occasion of annual ancestor worship ("Bapu-Yadi, Dada-Dadi, Nana-Nani and so on ... accept our offering ..."). This earlier bilateral streak is strengthened because of permanent settling and culture contact, with the result that a person's kindred category is larger today, including a person's bilateral kin to the extent of two ascending and descending generations.

A similar process of a transition from exclusively unilineal to bilateral kinship, but a narrowing down of the range of kinship relationships to a small number of close bilateral kin, is found elsewhere following the breakdown of the traditional social organization, because of economic diversification and social and occupational mobility among the Seminole and the Nayars of Malabar (see Spoehr 1947 quoted in Gough 1952: 85; Gough 1952: 82).

With reference to the extension of kinship terms
to non-kin, Lamani fictive kinship terms of address as well as terms of reference are determined by the age and sex of the persons. There are no rituals to create enduring, alliance-forming, fictive kinship relationships among them.

As the preceding description of settlement social organization indicates, bonds of remote kinship such as the tertiary variety are weakly developed among the Lamani. Such kinship roles do not usually carry specific and distinct rights and obligations, but rather connote a general obligation of help and affection. The segmentary system and agnatic-based groups larger than the household are becoming weaker now. The Lamani do not display much interest in recounting long genealogies; very few can name a forbear beyond their grand-father's generation. All this is a reflection of the declining importance of agnatic kinship in organizing relationships these days; although it was more important in their past nomadic life, since agnatic kinship was the sole basis of band organization.

**Marriage and Affinity**

The Lamani practised both clan and lineage exogamy, as well as allied-clans exogamy, any marriage within such a group being considered incestuous. But these days allied-clans (Jatbhai) exogamy is on the decline, permitting marriages between clans which constituted the Jatbhai, because of the
scarcity of the brides for the allied clans as there was only one "wife-giving" clan (viz. Vadatya). A few intra-clan marriages also have taken place, arising out of love affairs followed by marriage, but these are rare. Moreover, a few educated and modernizing Lamani from the southern part of the district question the very rationale of the clan or lineage exogamy. They argue that since they cannot trace definite relationship of the remote kin in a clan or lineage, there is nothing wrong in contracting marriage. They, however, agree that marriage alliance should not be sought between close agnates. A recent social reform measure introduced by the government becomes handy for these modernistic Lamani.¹ A Lamani class-I Officer, who is now retired, is held responsible for starting intra-clan and intra-lineage marriages.

Since the Lamani originally belong to North India, in line with North Indian marriage usages, they did not allow cross-cousin marriage and uncle-niece marriage for quite some time (Enthoven 1922: 338; Mead and MacGregor 1912: 282). But these rules of prohibiting kin marriage have gradually lost their force over the years and such marriages are coming into vogue these days, due to sedentarization and the resultant contact with non-Lamani castes among whom such marriages are

1. The Hindu Marriages Disabilities Removal Act of 1946 validates marriages between parties belonging to the same gotra (clan) or pravara (lineage).
common. The Lamani now permit patrilateral and matrilateral cross-cousin, and uncle-niece marriages. This is one example of the cultural influence of the region where the Lamani have settled; and, consequently of change in cultural values and customs by adopting some of the customs of the dominant castes of this South Indian region.

Out of 115 cases of close-kin and non-kin marriage alliances, the majority (99) is of the latter kind, indicating thereby that, marriages among the close-kin of specified relationships are allowed, though they are not of preferred kind. Of the 16 such kin marriages, 8 are matrilateral cross-cousin, four patrilateral cross-cousin, 1 marriage of sister's daughter, 1 sister-exchange marriage, and 2 levirate marriages.

In regard to the type of kinship terminology, the Lamani terminology resembles "Sudanese type" (Murdock 1965:236) in the sense that the cousin terms are "usually but not always associated with descriptive terminology" in case of patrilateral and matrilateral parallel and cross cousins, parallel and cross nephews and nieces, as well as affinal relatives of the younger generation, while among the other Hindus of the region a few classificatory terms cover the entire range of cousins, uncles and nephews and nieces. (see Appendix for Lamani and other kin terms). For example, the term "mama" covers as many as nine different
kin relationships among the Hindu castes of this region, whereas Lamani use 9 distinct but descriptive terms for these relationships. There is no change in the Lamani kinship terminology inspite of their contact with other Hindus. If the Lamani were to lose their dialect and adopt the local, regional language, probably the kinship terminology would have also changed. Thus, conscious efforts made by a community to maintain its social identity through retention of their own dialect inspite of contact with a dominant regional language, indirectly also help it to preserve kinship usages like kinship terminologies.

As in case of other Hindus, parallel cousin and parallel uncle-niece marriages are a taboo among the Lamani also, such marriages are considered incestuous.

Marriage with wife's sister is allowed and brothers can marry sisters. Similarly sister-exchange marriage between two persons of different clans is permitted, and such marriage is usually adopted to avoid paying bride-wealth. Polygyny is allowed and was practised in the past, but the practice is now declining mainly because of the heavy cost of maintaining polygynous family because of more children, and the fear of household peace being a casualty as a result of quarrels among the co-wives. The discouragement of polygyny was also one of the reformatory measures of 1940
Lamani Conference held at Gadag. However, I came across 5 polygynous (with two wives each) marriages in Savana but none from Havana (see Table 21, p. 262).

Divorce is allowed on the ground of wife's misconduct. Sexual intercourse before marriage is connived at in some cases, but in others (especially if it becomes known), the involved parties are fined by the panchayat and are made to marry.

Widow remarriage is permitted, if she so desires and if she is of the child-bearing age. The ceremony is extremely simple; and the marriage itself is called secondary marriage (Nanakya viya). A widow who has been married in this fashion does not have the same status as accorded to a normally married woman. However, the implications of the secondary marriage for the children from such a marriage are not very detrimental. Such children are considered as normal for inheritance of ancestral property and are not considered socially as of lower status in the Lamani Society. The custom of inheriting one's brother's widow (levirate) was allowed in the past, was quite common and was practised up to second and third collateral cousins. However, levirate is deliberately discouraged these days, for Lamani have changed their views regarding this custom, and under the influence of the reform.
measures adopted by the Lamani Conference of Gadag held in 1940 they consider it as improper or socially undesirable. It is a case of the process of sanskritization - or adopting the special customs of the local high caste Hindus with a view to raise their ritual status in the high caste hierarchy. Only two such cases of levirate were found in Savana and none from Havana.

The reasons for the past custom were: protection of the honour of the widow and thereby the honour of the family; avoidance of the division of the family resources (bullocks or lands); protection of the children from the previous marriage; and (because of patrilineal descent and inheritance) interest of the lineage in retaining the children and the women. The last point assumed significance only when the widow decided to marry some one else outside the lineage; otherwise she had a right to maintenance in the deceased husband's family. The main merit of levirate lay in the brideprice. The lineage paid for the woman in the form of the brideprice (varying between Rs. 61/- to Rs. 81/-), given by the family of the bridegroom and thus it had a right over the woman, for the procreation of more children by other members of the lineage, e.g., brothers and parallel cousins of the deceased member. As though to prevent widow's remarriage with men of other lineage, payment for widow
remarriage had been fixed at a higher amount than the usual brideprice. A man marrying a widow had to pay Rs. 150/- to the agnates of the deceased husband as a compensation and Rs. 25/- towards the panchayat's customary fees.

To substantiate the discouragement of levirate now, the key-informants pointed out five recent cases of potential levirate which did not materialize because of changing values of "propriety" and "morality" of the Lamanis. These changing values provide an important case of how changing social values affect the economy of the Lamanis. In the preceding paragraph the amount of brideprice in earlier times, and its close relationship to levirate, has been indicated. With settling down and adoption of agriculture and peasant way of life, there is a decline in the brideprice amount (it has fallen from the earlier range of Rs. 61/- to Rs. 61/-, to Rs. 41/- to Rs. 61/-) in recent times — almost becoming symbolic now. Probably, that is why the Lamanis could afford to drop the custom of levirate. This seems to be the economic dimension of the disuse of the custom, while changing ideas of morality and propriety provide another dimension of the same issue.

On the contrary, taking up the custom of the other Hindu castes, some of the well-to-do Lamanis are forgoing even the symbolic brideprice amount payable to them and are
thus moving towards the dowry custom of the high caste Hindus. They even pay dowry up to Rs. 2,000/- if the groom is employed in Government service or in modern professions, like medical practice, pleading, etc. In a sense, this kind of payment can be considered as an economic drag on the economy of the Lamani, and is unproductive and wasteful. But they are doing this economic sacrifice to gain ritual caste status. That is how economic considerations are sometimes, sacrificed by Lamani to gain social responsibility, and a higher status among themselves.

The proposal for marriage comes from the boy's father who visits the girl's settlement along with a few elderly persons. Different amounts of brideprice are paid, depending upon the status of the clan, i.e., Jatbhaig pay Rs. 41/- to the Vadatya and the latter pay Rs. 61/- to the former, as brideprice. In the past, marriages were celebrated for three days, but now due to increasing expenses and rising prices, all rituals are compressed in one day. The rituals that comprise marriage ceremony are betrothal, (average cost Rs. 100/-) halad (turmeric application ceremony) dhare or vyaha (handing over of the bride). The latter two ceremonies cost about Rs. 500/-. The three ceremonies take place in the girl's residence. During the dhare ceremony, the bride and the groom together go round two posts, three times around each. It is this ritual which
is considered binding and essential to the marriage ceremony. The critical identification marks of a married woman are the following ornaments, among others: pendants (ghoggry) hanging from the plaits of the hair on both sides of the temple of the head and ivory (and now plastic) bangles on the fore and upper arms (chuder balya). The dress and ornaments for the bride and the groom cost about Rs. 1,000/-. Thus, on the whole, a marriage costs about Rs. 1,500/- for the girl's party and Rs. 1,000/- for the boy's party. Of course, in case of well-to-do Lamani marriage, the expenditure can go up to Rs. 5,000/-.

During the process of their settling down in this region and on account of their increased contact with the South Indian customs, the Lamani have borrowed the custom of the tali rite, a custom which formed no part of their marriage ceremonies when they were a North Indian group. Until recently, a bride's marriage dress approximated the marriage dress of a Rajasthani bride, viz., bodice, veil and skirt, but now she wears a silk sari, blouse and veil at the marriage ceremony, a customary bridal dress in South India. This change in bridal dress also has increased the expenditure related to marriage, as the silk sari is costlier than the traditional bridal dress that the Lamani used earlier.
On account of their nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life, the Lamani could not employ a Brahmin priest to officiate at the marriage rituals, for they invariably camped away from the villages and towns. Thus, one of their own elders who was well-versed in the rituals officiated at the marriage ceremonies. But when they came in increased contact with the other Hindu peasants who make use of the Brahmin priest at marriages in the process of permanent settling down, the Lamani began to request for the services of the Brahmin priest whenever available. (cf. Campbell 1883: 339; 1884A: 122). Now in almost all marriages, they invite a Brahmin priest. It shows that the borrowed traits take time to be integrated into the culture. Though they came to South India in the 17th century, they started modelling their marriage ceremonies after the high caste Hindus only at the turn of the present century. (cf. Thurston 1907: 47), when their economic conditions had improved and the contact with other castes had increased.

Lamani give full vent to their feelings which underlie their loud conversation, peels of laughter or wailing — perhaps a hangover from their past wandering life. Their women weep and wail on different occasions: the death of a relative, departure of the bride-groom to
the bride's home for marriage, during the marriage ceremony itself, departure of the bride to her husband's place, and chance meetings of mothers and their married daughters, or of married sisters.

The wailing customs were the products of old ways of life when transport and communications were scanty and the Lamani caravans of pack-bullocks were always on the move and hence no certainty of meeting again the person who parted on marriage from the bands. But now the Lamani have settled down and, thus, have permanent postal addresses; and, a fairly good system of transport and communication has been built. However, inspite of changed conditions facilitating frequent contacts now, the Lamani custom of wailing persists.

The Lamani say that they weep over the shoulders of the bridegroom when he sets out to the bride's home for the marriage ceremony, because there was no knowing whether he would return to his people (he went to the bride's home for the bride service) or also because of possible death in view of the custom of bride-capture. These days, the customs of bride service and bride capture are not in vogue. While the bridegroom departs for the marriage, he is presented money ranging from Re.1/- to Rs.5/- by every household in
the settlement, as though to help him to tide over the financial contingency. The custom of wailing on the occasion of marriage by the close women relatives of the bride is a relic of marriage by capture (Thurston 1907: 49).

Again, the occasion of parting as when the bride leaves her people behind to join her husband's family is vested with the expression of deep sorrow when women weep aloud. Before saying goodbye, the bride is presented money ranging from Re.1/- to Rs.5/- from each family. She is also given presents by her parents and other close relatives (see Chapter III:121).

Thus the highly emotional situations like marriage and consequent separation bring forth the expression of deep feelings of joy and sorrow, followed by material gift-giving as a concrete expression of the psychological dimension of life. Kin, marriage and friendship alliances a particular family has with others become explicit through gift-giving which have economic and social implications.

The deep sorrow expressed while sending away a married women to her husband's place is quite common in India. But in case of Lamani it is heightened and expressed without any inhibition, probably because, in the past such a woman was not likely to return to her natal home due to
nomadic life. Unlike the women of other castes, she would not visit her natal home frequently to participate in important rituals and celebrations, again because of nomadism. Thus, a tradition of married women not visiting their natal homes crystallized during their nomadic days, which continues to the present, even when conditions have changed. The Lamani rarely permit their daughters-in-law to visit their natal homes. By custom, the delivery of the first child takes place in the natal home of the woman among the non-Lamani castes, while it is not so among the Lamani. But, after the first delivery, in the husband's place, a Lamani woman visits her natal home 'to show the child', when she and new-born baby are presented new dress and ornaments.

Now when the women meet by chance after a long separation, they weep aloud even on the roads or in the market place. Such occasions of rare meeting are replete with joy and sorrow and the customary weeping of the Lamani women on such occasions may be called "rites of reunion" (Marcel Mauss).
Thus, during the few weeks before, and a year or so after, the marriage a series of ritual visits, gift-exchanges and ceremonies are used to establish the important bond of affinity. Affinal bonds thus formed tend to be regarded more highly than any other bond between households with the singular exception of close agnatic ones. Small gifts in the form of food are exchanged not only with members of the households that have formed the new alliance but with closer kin and neighbours as well. Often more than one marriages between two households, either in the same or succeeding generations, are contracted thereby reinforcing the relationships once established and, thereby minimizing the need to pay bride price or dowry. When one marriage proves successful, another match follows, often leading to mutual exchange of women in marriage between the two households, thus leading to the possibility of finding wives in a household whose members are not only affines but also kin. Duplication and reduplication of affinal bonds are the means of reinforcing affinity which has assumed equal importance to that of consanguineal bonds in the kinship system of the Lamani, which was strongly agnatic in the past. This has led to the widening of cognatic kinship web. The affinal bonds provide facilities of board and lodge when a Lamani goes places without spending any thing because of kin and affinal hospitality.

Table 21 gives details on marital status of Savana and Havana Lamani. There is some indication that child marriages were discouraged by the Lamani even when they led
### Table 21

Population according to age-groups and marital status in Savana (1966-67) and Havana (1970-71)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Married</th>
<th>Total Divorced</th>
<th>Total Widowed</th>
<th>Total Single</th>
<th>Total Married Single</th>
<th>Total Divorced Single</th>
<th>Total Widowed Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- M = Male
- F = Female
- S = Savana settlement
- H = Havana settlement
- D = Divorced
- M = Married
- W = Widowed
- U = Unmarried

Savanna Settlement: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
Havana Settlement: 3 = Male, 4 = Female

*(Data extracted from: Population according to age-groups and marital status in Savana (1966-67) and Havana (1970-71).*

---

*Table 21*

---

---
a nomadic life, and they are discouraged today. For example, in both the settlements, no girl below the age of 14 and no boy below the age of 18 years is married. This is a significant fact in view of the prevalence of child marriages among the other Hindu peasants of this region despite statutory prohibition of child marriages. 1

The table shows that most of the girls who have grown to the marriable age are married and only twelve girls (4 from Savana and 8 from Havana) remained to be married; and they are sure to be married in the light of what has happened to the girls in the next higher age group viz., no girl beyond the age of 24 has remained unmarried. In case of boys most of them are married before they attain the age of 30-34 years. Only 6 boys (4 from Savana and 2 from Havana) have remained unmarried in the age group of 25-34 and they are anxious to marry but could not, because of lack of funds for marriage expenses and not because there is a dearth of girls, or because of social reasons like being considered low. A single exception to the Lamani norm that a man must marry and beget children in order to be considered as a normal person, is that of a man from Havana who is lame and poor.

1. According to the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 (including subsequent amendment in 1938) boys under the age of 18 years and girls under 14 should not be married as they are considered "minors".
Desertion and divorce are related stages in the dissolution of marriage.¹ Not all cases of desertion lead to final divorce, as the separated couple may resume conjugal life. Relatively Havana has more cases of desertion and/or divorce (12) as compared to that of Savana (5), because of town contact and the resultant prostitution, and the weakening social control of the Lamani panchayat. There are eight cases of desertion (3 men and 5 women) from Havana and none from Savana. According to the informants the social and economic reason that lead to desertion are: laziness, inability to earn livelihood for the family,² unfaithfulness to the wife, long absence from home and wife beating on the part of the husband; ill-treatment in the house, especially the botheration of the mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law; infidelity, elopement with someone else on the part of the wife; and dissatisfied sex life.

In most cases, desertion has led to divorce, either by formal approval of the panchayat or as a fait accompli leading to a second or secondary marriage of one of the spouses. Since divorce usually is the second phase of desertion,

¹ The daughter (aged 22 years in 1971) of the brother of the second rich Havana Lamani, who was married locally, had been deserted since 1968. A government court decree had ordered an annual maintenance allowance of Rs. 360 for her, though the decree had not been obeyed by the defendant as of 1971. It means the marriage bond has not been dissolved.

² A Savana Lamani was deserted by three wives, whom he had married one after the other because of his inability to support the wives economically.
the same reasons which explain it are also valid for divorce as well, though in a few cases divorce can ensue without any desertion, erupting suddenly. Nine cases of divorce came to my notice during the census (5 from Savana and 4 from Havana). In fact, many more cases of desertion and divorce have occurred than are counted in the census, as some individuals who are counted as "married", had married for the second or third time consequent upon death, desertion or divorce of the first wife.

There is an interplay of social, economic and psychological factors in the breakdown of marriages. Though not realised fully in actual behaviour, stability of marriage is an ideal in conjugal life among the Lamani. As though purporting to uphold this ideal, the Lamani panchayat has laid down heavier amounts of money for various types of cohabitation and remarriage, as compared to the normal, symbolic bride price of Rs. 41 and 61, as the case may be. In case of elopement with an unmarried girl leading to a marriage, a person has to pay the usual bride price and Rs. 150 fine which accrues to the panchayat (even the collaborator is made to pay Rs. 60 by way of fine). In case of remarriage of deserter or a divorcee, a man has to pay Rs. 300 as compensation to the previous husband and a fine (of Rs. 25 in Havana, Rs. 60 in Havana) to the panchayat. To indicate that a widower or divorcee has a lower social
position in the Lamani society, such a man who would like to marry an unmarried girl pays a higher amount of bride-wealth viz., Rs. 75.

Thus, though discouraged by the society by prescribing heavier economic burden, such remarriages had to be contracted because of the exigencies of life. The social consequences of such re-marriages are that a woman who enters into a secondary marriage has a lower social status which becomes obvious on the auspicious occasions, when she is not welcome as is a usually married woman. But, children born of the secondary wedlock have the full social status without any impairment. However, the children born out of premarital as well as extra-marital sex-relations especially in case of deserted, divorcee and widowed women are considered illegitimate by the Lamani and, there is no place for the illegitimate children in the society. To illustrate some of the factors involved in the breakdown of marriage bonds and the formation of new bonds, I give a case study from Havana settlement.

S, a woman aged about 28 years in 1971, had been married in 1965 to a local Lamani. She deserted him, and became a paramour of a Kalghatgi non-Lamani man. Hence, she was divorced. But, when she conceived because of contact with the townsman, the conception had to be regularized by making a Lamani accept her, as wife, because the Lamani believe that they cannot admit a child born of a non-Lamani man into their community. Therefore S's elder sister's husband, L, hailing from Savana who had come to live with his wife in Havana was asked to accept S as his
second wife, so that the progeny got the Lamani paternity. And, a secondary marriage was performed by levying the usual fine. However, S continued her relation with the townman and even started bringing him to the settlement. I felt ashamed of this and discarded both the wives and returned to Savana. S has given birth to two boys aged 5 and 2 years respectively who are considered illegitimate by the community. But they are not the only unfortunate ones. There are a few more. The Lamani panchayat has been powerless in the face of such flagrant violations of marital norms. The economic allurement has proved stronger than the considerations of morality and propriety, in the case of this poor community.

When we turn to the natural cause of the breakdown of marital bond viz., widowhood, we notice that in both Savana and Havana settlements, widows are overwhelmingly numerous as compared to widowers (see Table 21). This is because of the differential death rates as between men and women. Men seem to wear out faster and die soon, as they shoulder the responsibility of earning livelihood for the family in the hard way. Though Lamani women do contribute towards the family income, it is not a major one and the norm fixes the responsibility of maintenance of the family on the man.

A widow is permitted to remarry, provided she is of child-bearing age and has no children. If she has reached menopause she does not usually remarry and stays in the patrilocal family. If she is treated harshly in her deceased husband's house, she is welcome in her natal home. According
to the Lamani custom and the laws governing joint-family, she has a right of maintenance in the husband's family, until her death.

In all cases of the breakdown of marriage, the children belong to the patrilineage and therefore to the husband's family. In special circumstances like the child being too young, they permit the child to be carried by its mother for nurturing, which will ultimately return to the father's house.

Whichever is the family to which the widow and her children are attached, it has the additional burden in view of the absence of its breadwinner. However, widows (as well as divorced and deserted ones) supplement the family income by working along with the other members of such families.

Widowhood, desertion and divorce are considered as unfortunate occurrences. The latter two, especially, lead to erosion of the status of the woman's natal home and marriage alliances between families are affected by divorce and desertion, some times leading to reprisals in which even happy couples become a casualty. However, like the other Hindu castes, the Lamani do not face serious problems for marriage of boys and girls only because of earlier instances of divorce or desertion in their families.
During their nomadic days, the Damani may have been contracting marriages from distant places in their chance meetings at camps. As they have now settled down, they do not go to distant places in search of brides. The non-Lamani villagers make fun of the Damani saying that the latter search their brides around their huts, suggesting that most of the marriages are contracted from within the settlements or from the neighbouring settlements, with the result that marriage circle tends to be rather narrow in terms of space. They prefer marriage-alliance with nearer places (see tables 22 and 23).

The tables show that 69.12% of the marriages (both extant and extinct) were contracted within the settlements of Savana, while the percentage for Havana is 60.19. This is a change from village exogamy which they practised when they were in north India to village endogamy, which the Damani have adopted since their settling down, mainly due to cultural influence of the south Indian Hindu customs. Similarly, most of the remaining marriage alliances with other settlements were contracted within the taluka i.e. within a distance varying from 5 to 15 miles (Savana: 22.82%; Havana: 27.97%), leaving out only a small number (Savana: 8.46%; Havana: 11.84%) of marriages which were made outside the taluka. More or less the same pattern prevails for marrying the daughters of their settlements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kanara District</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur District</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the District</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements within the district other than 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other settlements within the taluka</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savana Settlements</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Ds.: Daughters of Savana married out as well as within the settlement
- Ds.-in-laws: Daughters-in-law married in Savana

**Places of Origin of Wives of Savana Settlement as of 1967**

**Table - 22**
Daughters of Havana married out as well as within the settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Deserted</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore city</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kanara</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the district</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the taluka</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other settlements</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havana</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past, even after settling down, contacts with the married daughters were maintained through personal visits and not through correspondence because of the high rate of illiteracy among the Lamani. But today, with quite a few Lamani learning to read and write, personal visits are sometimes substituted by correspondence or letter writing. They do not prefer marriage alliances with settlements far away, as that would entail heavy cost on travelling which is necessitated because of affinal, mutual obligations such as compulsory attendance on the occasions like birth of a child, naming ceremony, tonsure ceremony, weddings, Gouri celebration, and deaths. The cost of obligations of presents or gift-giving is the same whether affinals live nearby or far-off. The only variable element in the economic cost of maintaining affinal ties is transport cost which can become so heavy as to force them not to attend these occasions, thereby straining the affinal ties. Therefore, only the well-to-do Lamani venture to contract marriages with distant places. Table 15 - item 4 (p.153) shows that the average expenditure on transport per family in both the settlements is very little (Savans Rs. 32; Havana Rs. 66 per annum).

The Lamani tendency to prefer marriage contacts with nearer places within a narrow circle of 5 to 15 miles radius- the "nearness" of affinal ties in categories 1 and 2 of Tables 22 and 23 - has other considerations than mere
transport cost. Nearness of affinals helps them in many ways. Economic help such as a loan is sought and sometimes given by affinal relatives. Similarly cooperation in joint ventures like cultivation of fields, or forming a team of woodcutters on wages are easy to carry out if the affines are available locally or in nearby settlements. In addition, exchange of gifts between affinal kin at important social (lifecycle rituals) and religious occasions etc., have already been discussed under "Distribution and Exchange" in Chapter III.

Table 15 (item 12 and 14) gives the average expenditure on social and religious heads per family per annum: (Savana: Rs. 44 and 103, for Havana: Rs. 33). These claim in all 5.98% and 2.26% respectively of total income of the settlements.

On the contrary, there can be occasional strains and tensions in the affinal relationships, leading to quarrels and disputes between them. I have already referred to the reprisals consequent upon a desertion or divorce which may generate a chain reaction. Since property is inherited patrilineally, there are no disputes over property division between affines. Yet there are many other reasons for heart-burn among the affines: ill-treatment of married daughters, lapses of, as well as inadequate, gift-giving, lack of proper hospitality to the affinal relatives, and so on. Lapses of
propriety in maintaining affinal ties are discussed at the family level, usually the lineage elder acting as a moderator. The serious lapses like maltreatment of a woman, extra-marital sex-relations, elopement, desertion and remarriage without obtaining divorce are considered serious infringements and invoke adjudication by the panchayat. The plaintiff has to spend at least Rs. 50/- to get the Lamani panchayat/ meet; the lapses or infringements invoke various fines (see Chapter III p.156 for details).

**CONCLUSION**

To summarize, the Lamani are organized in household economic units strongly bound together in settlements by bonds of neighbourhood, and agnatic and affinal kinship, all manifested in social interaction, and economic cooperation and competition. Affinity is utilized to affiliate the households in Savana and Havana with certain households in other settlements. The economic importance of these relationships is significant, especially when they exist between settlements with microclimatic and ecological differences like the hilly area, transitional zone and plains. The entire settlements are confined to a single ethnic group — the Lamani. Of course, a few bonds also exist between settlements and multicaaste villages. And, the social organizations of the Lamani and the non-Lamani of the region have certain differences, but these differences
constitute but different variant of a single pattern for both viz., patrilineal descent and inheritance, and patrilocal residence, with a preference for the ideal of the joint family. The same is true for other aspects of culture of the Lamani and non-Lamani such as social control, wealth possession, religious beliefs etc. For any given trait, the two tend to practise a different variant. These differences tend to be minor, yet can be extremely significant as ethnic boundary markers for the people of this region.

For example narrow marriage circle, levirate, the custom of wailing, bride price, bride service and a distinct kinship terminology which remains intact unaffected by Lingayat kinship terminology, help the people to view Lamani as standing out distinctly from other Hindu castes in the region. Whatever minor differences there are, are largely those of emphasis in regard to the function and significance of intermediate social groupings, because the basic units like households and caste-groups are the same. The Lamani emphasize and have elaborate lineages and clans, whereas other Hindus are only vaguely aware of lineage and clan boundaries and some groups among the Lingayats do not bother about gotra-exogamy.

These changes have taken place over a long period among the Lamani as a result of acculturation necessitated by the breakdown of their traditional economy and a new mode of residence. I get the impression that no major change has
occurred in the Lamani kinship system because of direct economic change. Whatever minor changes we notice are mainly due to sedentarization and the consequent culture contact the Lamani had with other castes. Similar changes may come about in a society quickly, accompanying modernization. But, in case of Lamani very little of modernization has entered, and even now they are primarily tradition-oriented. In attempting to explain differential developments in case of Lamani vis-a-vis other castes, syncretism — an amalgamation of practices from North Indian origins and later South Indian influences — seems quite a plausible explanation of changes. This process can be seen easily with regard to kinship, women's dress, folklore, moral codes and religious beliefs as mainly indigenous while most Lamani variants of south Indian culture, linguistic borrowing into their dialect from the regional languages, economic pursuits, modification in the dress, etc., can easily be traced to the local South Indian influences. But, the acculturative influence of the South seems less clearly in the case of the differences in social organization, especially in kinship terms (See Appendix). In the cross-cultural survey of 250 societies, Murdock has confirmed this peculiar character of kinship organization which has been admirably demonstrated by Spoehr that "rules of descent, forms of familial and kin groupings, and kinship systems, under conditions of contact with other cultures, do not ordinarily change by direct diffusion but rather by a process of internal
readjustment to altered conditions of life" (Murdock 1965: 199).

Thus, today the social organization of the Lamani is not typical of North Indian nor of South Indian variants. Elements from both sources have been integrated, in line with the chequered history of the Lamani. The final form that prevails now differs considerably from either, even in respects where origins were similar. From this it follows that a simple replacement model of acculturation does not tell us really the spirit and process of acculturation; it is reintegration at a new level which is the real thing, as revealed in the changes in the Lamani kinship system.
2. THE ORGANIZATION OF LAMANI
SOCIAL CONTROL AND CHANGES

Here I wish to describe the Lamani political organization and techniques of social control in terms of decision making process and mechanisms of settlement of disputes, the role of different types of leaders and relationship of these mechanisms and processes to the economic factors within the community; and finally to establish the relationships between the Lamani and non-Lamani political processes.

I have taken a historical perspective as far as possible in order to determine to what extent the changing economy has influenced the organization of social control among the Lamani, and, to what extent the nature of the political institutions has affected the functioning of the economy itself.

Although the polity of India as a nation-state is divided into many hierarchically organized administrative units, (viz., the state, the district, the sub-division of a district, and the taluka down to the village polity), the Lamani settlements have a parallel, albeit lesser and informal, organization of social control of their own. The Lamani settlements can be viewed as units in the culturally heterogenous administrative divisions. But, from an intrasettlement point of view, they can be considered as
homogeneous political communities in a limited sense, unlike the multi-caste villages that are heterogeneous.

There is an informal headman for every settlement with limited political power. The traditional panchayat which assists the headman in the adjudication process makes use of both types of legal sanctions: restitutive and penal. Though these characteristics of the organization of social control appear conceptually neat, they also overlap, so that the presentation of the functioning of this organization becomes somewhat complicated and interconnected account.

The Traditional Political Organization

The earliest definite reference to the relatively autonomous character of the Lamani bands with regard to social control is by Craufurd, "They live in tents, and travel in separate bodies, each of which is governed by its own particular regulations" (1742:89: emphasis added). From the 14th century when the Lamani first accompanied the Mohomedan armies which invaded the Deccan from the North until the present century, there is a series of, though scanty, records written by Persian and British travellers, missionaries and administrators. Between the late fifteenth and the middle of the 19th century, there was considerable political upheaval in India in the form of wars between indigenous empires and kingdoms in the pre-European period and between the native kings and the British, the French,
and the Portugese after the 17th century. The Lamani (or Banjara) played an important role on payment as carriers and suppliers of provisions to the armies. The patrilineal clan system by which the caravans or tandas were organized, were very strong until the last quarter of the 19th century. The strong patrilineages and the well-defined authority of the caravan headmen were the direct results of the peculiar economic pursuit of the Lamani in the early period. Therefore, in order to understand the traditional political organization, a reference to their economy of nomadic bands of carriers becomes necessary.

The importance of their services to the armies becomes evident from the fact of their having received from Moghul Emperors even the right to plunder the enemy's country, thereby making the Lamani, robbers and thieves. Wherever they went even in times of peace, they were the most cruel robbers on the highways. "Theft by them ... is not considered as a crime" (Briggs 1819:191).

From the days of Afghan and Moghul Emperors of Delhi, the later rulers of Poona and Satara and the Nizam of Hyderabad to the days of British East India Company rule, they have served the armies, sometimes with as many as 40,000 bullocks (ibid: 187). In peace time they were also useful as petty traders of grain and salt with the inhabitants
of the Deccan, and their importance increased especially during the periods of famine, whenever movement of grains from one part of the country to another became necessary. This remunerative pursuit led to a general increase in the Lamani population. Past accounts in travelogues and gazetteers make frequent mention of the two clans (Rathod and Vadatya) having played a prominent role in transport and trade.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, a chief of the Rathods (Sarang Bhangi) had to formulate a code of laws which existed intact till the end of 19th century and formed the basis of the Lamani community governance. He found that the personal character of the chief alone could secure the obedience of his clan and that, as all the family-heads were proprietors of a general stock of bullocks, any member, if he so chose, could emigrate, thus dividing the formidable power which the leader had brought together. He thought that, amongst a body of proprietors, there must be a certain number amenable to one called a naik (leader or headman), who was to be elected by the proprietors of the horde or tanda. All naiks had to pay obedience to the chief of all of them, who used to sit on a gaddi (woolsack).

Thus each of the several hordes which had joined him, had a naik. It was subsequently agreed that the
naikhood should devolve patrilineally on the nearest relative and that he should only be set aside by the majority opinion of the proprietors composing the tanda. At the beginning of the 19th century, these proprietors possessed anything between 4 to 200 bullocks each, and a band consisted, in times of great demand, 30,000 to 40,000 bullocks. The only privilege of a naik was the right to appropriate for his own use an amount out of the total, paid by the employers. Thus, the naiks must have been men of considerable wealth. Each hoarde comprised a single corporate clan and not several clans, as the present-day settlements do. Long before the time of Sarang, it was usual for the Banjara to select their wives out of a clan other than their own, to prevent promiscuous intercourse between the sexes within single clan-based bands which used to camp in the open, in the tents. To ensure clan solidarity, clan-exogamy was instituted by Sarang, lapses of such a norm being considered incest punishable by expulsion from the clan. The custom was adopted by each hoarde and the well known chastity of Lamani women had its origin in this code.

To avoid the possibility of personal jealousy against the chief and the naiks, likely to result from an undue exercise of authority, Sarang resolved that all punishment should be limited to pecuniary fines or expulsion, that no Lamani should be liable to suffer death by the community magistrate (chief or naik) since it meant vesting
too much power in them, and making them analogous to a "master" rather than a "father". Further he laid down the rule that no man could be punished in any way without being first tried by a jury of five of the proprietors in the horde (a harbinger of later caste-council or panchayat). An accused had a right to object any or all of the proprietors being nominated as jury. The freedom allowed to the culprit extended even to deny the power of the jury; but he rarely dared to do that for fear of excommunication. To prevent an expelled person from entering again into the community, it was ordered that no individual or a small body of Lamani shall be received as members of an established horde. If circumstances necessitated the dispersal of a horde, the individuals must reunite under their former naik, or remain independent and form a new tanda.

If a serious dispute took place between the two Lamani individuals, to prevent its proliferation to their kin and often to the drawing of swords, each Lamani was duty-bound to throw himself between the disputants, so that it may be settled by law. If swords were drawn and if it appeared imprudent, the mediator was supposed to take off his turban, and holding one end in his hand, throw it at full length between the disputants. This seldom failed to remind both the parties the nature of their customary rules and the necessity of abiding by them. To continue the
quarrel after the intercession of a mediator was a crime punishable by the jury.

The unanimity or consensus that prevailed in the tandas and the punctuality with which they adhered to these codes or customs (considered by them as "sacred" or inviolable) probably prevented the recurrence of minor crimes such as stealing among themselves. But whatever the nature of the crime, it was punishable only by a jury, the maximum and extreme fine being Rs. 30/-, before 1800 A.D.

The money thus collected as fines was spent on opium and liquor, the only exception being a rupee which went to the chief for keeping a register of records for such fines.

The plaintiff and the defendant were asked to sit side by side. Some opium leaf pulverized was placed in the right hand of each person, and they blew it off to symbolize that their quarrel was blown over too. The rest of the horde sat round and drank; and, it was at this time that their Bhats or bards sang the sagas of their illustrious ancestors.

Although Sarang thought that the power of life and death should not be vested in the hands of his successors,
he decreed that, in case of murder, the friends and relatives of the murdered could put the murderer to death within 3 days after the murder. Any revenge after that period would invoke the same retaliation. By this simple code, a murderer seldom escaped death, although it frequently led to the excommunication of one of the parties, on account of the protracted feuds.

The power which Sarang Rathod had organized, the favour with which he had been treated by Aurangzeb and the insignificance into which his rival Bhagwan Burteehah (Vadepya) had sunk, made the latter jealous of Sarang's power, and as a result, Sarang was murdered. Since then, there were internecine wars between Rathods and Vadatyas.

Later, the Lamani-British relations were primarily political and economic, but characterized by expediency and ambivalence. The Lamani role in the two British wars with Tippu of Mysore (1891 and 1899) and the British war with the Maratha (1803) has been highly praised (ibid: 183-188). But, because of the breach of trust as well as the cruel practice of the Lamani as robbers, they also became targets of censure in derogatory terms, leading in some cases to hanging of some Lamani culprits of law to death by the British (ibid: 186–87, 190-91). It was advantageous to employ the Lamani in preference to other types of transport as the caravans could
move through the country-side away from the main roads which were not safe because of unsatisfactory law and order prevailing in those days. Their services were most sought after, in times of war. Without a well-developed system of commissariat in those days, without the need to employ many troops or permanent public servants for the supply work, and without the risk of speculation in prices of grain, or fraud and defalcation of supplies, the allied armies in the Deccan comprising the British and the Nizam of Hyderabad which had already been plundered by the Maratha - at such a place and time - were supplied grain at a fairly reasonable rate by the Lamani.

However, with the establishment of direct British rule in India in 1858, substantial improvements in the transport system were introduced, and, as a consequence in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Lamani lost their main occupation as transporters of grain and army supplies. Thus, they became more dependent on predatory methods as a way of life which they had acquired while they were serving the Moghul armies. To restore peace within the realm, the British government had to curb this lawlessness, which it did by bringing the Lamani under the purview of Criminal Tribes Act of 1871; and, thus forced them to settle down and adopt other peaceful economic pursuits. In addition to occupational and economic changes, the traditional Lamani
society has also been greatly affected by the administrative measures introduced by both the British government and the national government of India.

Lamani Political Organization after settling down

With the breakdown of the great organization of nomadic transporters, the chieftainship among the Lamani lost its significance. Inspite of sedentary life, the continuance of the term tanda (horde, caravana or band) for denoting even the settled groups highlights the importance of the past mode of life for the Lamani. The following are the leaders and institutions which have survived from their nomadic past.

The Naik:

The headman of a tanda is also called naik. Naikship was an important institution and the post was hereditary (Campbell 1884b: 210; Enthoven 1922: 334; Mead and MacGregor 1912: 283). If the family from which naiks are drawn has no representative, a fresh selection is made, usually within the same clan. But the selection of the naik within the same clan is not obligatory; other clans within the settlement may also be considered for this position. After election or selection, a new headman is presented with a turban and clothes in the presence of the naiks of
neighbouring settlements, which is a token of recognition. In Dharwar district, a naik selects two assistants: a dhavo (vice-headman) and a karbhari (manager or adviser). The headman is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the tanda and has the general duties of looking after its general welfare. He knows all the people in the tanda and possesses substantial information about all the households in the settlement. Everyone in a tanda is expected to consult him before undertaking any important work. He is the main liaison between the settlement and government officials and the non-Lamani. He is expected to be truthful, honest, intelligent and to possess a judicious and understanding temperament. Generally, he is a man of substance and so he is able to sustain the settlement during natural calamities, disasters and famines by organising relief measures.

On the occasion of marriage negotiations he accompanies the party of his settlement and speaks on its behalf. He often has a decisive voice in determining the expenditures to be incurred by the two parties. He is entitled to his sank (customary dues) from both the parties.

At every council (or panchayat) meeting, he presides over and conducts the proceedings. In the temporary absence of the naik, dhavo officiates as naik; otherwise he is generally naik's assistant.
The Karbhari:

The naik is assisted in discharging his duties by Karbhari. He acts as a messenger in summoning council meetings. He must be able to help and advise the naik in complicated matters such as disputes involving a Lamani and non-Lamani peasant, murders, dealings with outsiders and the government. Between the death of a naik and the selection of a new one all the affairs of the tanda are generally managed by both the dhavo who acts as naik, and the karbhari. The succession to the vacant positions of dhavo or karbhari follows a similar procedure as in the case of the naik's succession.

The privileges of these three officials may be noted. At the conclusion of a betrothal ceremony, betel leaves, betel nut and jaggery are distributed among the invitees comprising the people who bring the marriage proposal, the local kin, friends and neighbours. In recognition of their importance, the three officials are given these presents first, in the order of their status, beginning with the headman. Similar is the case on the occasion of marriage ceremony. While sharing cooked or raw meat of a goat/goats or sheep, the bones of the upper hindlegs are given, one each, to the naik and karbhari and the upper frontleg bones are given to the dhavo and the head of the Vadatya clan. These privileged claims to the
prized parts of the meat reflect the Lamani recognition of the status and roles of leadership and also to the fact that the Vadatya clan is outside the fold of the three clans who together constitute a unit jatbhaia.

The greater importance given to political statuses in preference to kinship statuses of the relatives is to be seen in the practice of distributing meat when goats or sheep are killed. Customary distribution of meat to kin is taken up only after the political claims and the meat is distributed in the following order of preference: agnates, uterine kin, affines and distant relatives. Even the visiting adult guests receive a few pieces of bones as a mark of honour. (For details regarding the expenditure on various occasions of rites of passage as well as festivals and celebrations, see Chapter III: 117-36).

The Panchayat:

The panchayat of a settlement consists of the naik, who acts as the head punch, his two assistants and 4-5 elders of the settlement. It takes decisions on all matters affecting the life of the community on behalf of the settlement; and, settles the disputes arising in the tanda. If one of the disputants is a non-Lamani, the presence of non-Lamani elders is regarded essential. In almost all cases of Lamani-non-Lamani disputes, the Lamani go to the informal village panchayat.
of the non-Lamani Hindu castes. Each Lamani present at the time of Lamani panchayat meeting may argue on behalf of the party as he sees fit, but the final verdict, which reflects consensus, is given by the headman. All members of the Lamani panchayat need not be present for the settlement of the dispute but the presence of the headman is considered essential.

Though all the four clans are present in both the settlements of Havana and Savana, the panchayats do not comprise the representatives of all the four clans, (see Table 20). In Savana, out of seven members including the headman, 5 belong to Ramavat lineage of Rathod clan, 2 to Pamhar clan (one each of Jarbla and Amgot lineages). Chauhan and Vadatya clans have no representative on the panchayat. In Savana, Rathod and Pamhar clans are dominant both numerically (Rathod 50 households and Pamhar 23 households) and economically. In the Havana upper settlement, 3 belong to Rathod (Bhukya) clan, two to Chauhan clan, and one to Vadatya clan. In the Havana lower tanda, the membership on the panchayat is: Rathod (Bhukya) 4, Pamhar 1, and two vacant positions because of the temporary emigration of the occupants. The headmanship is invariably from the Rathod clan families. The composition of the membership of the two Lamani panchayats in Havana again reflects the numerical (see Table 20) and economic dominance of the Rathod and Pamhar
clans respectively. Once selected for the panchayat membership by the elders of the settlement, a person continues to hold the post until death or incapacitation, unless removed from the post because of unbecoming behaviour. The members of the panchayat are permanent in the sense that they have no specified tenure. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the most suitable and acceptable member is selected and, therefore, there is no fixed number for any clan in the settlement to be represented on the panchayat.

**Procedure of adjudication:**

In case of a quarrel or dispute, first a report is given by the aggrieved party to the naik, who in turn asks karbhari to call for a meeting of the panchayat at an appointed time, usually in the Sevaya-bhaya temple. They sit around the parties to the dispute so that every one is seen. The complainant/plaintiff speaks first, followed by a reply by the respondent. Then the supporters of each party also speak in order to clarify issues and to provide evidence. Then the pcmchas discuss among themselves and express their opinions on the merit of the case and thus assist the headman to come to a decision.

In the past, the statements were made after an oath, but now discontinued as people take oaths lightly. Moreover, if the issue comes to a critical phase, it becomes difficult
to say who is at fault, since each party swears profusely; so, the Havana Lamani have stopped swearing these days. In very serious and ticklish cases the parties swear in the name of Sevayabhaya; and, they believe that the divine retribution will be known within a month's time by some kind of suffering on the part of the person who had lied. Such a person is fined as the person at fault.

In most cases, they are able to reach a decision based on consensus or overwhelming majority opinion. But in some cases because of kinship, affinity, neighbourhood and friendship, there can be division of opinion among the panchayat members. If there is strong division either side not budging from its stand, there will be adjournment to buy time. Sometimes, a naik or other informal leader from other settlement is invited to adjudicate. There is no superior panchayat either in terms of jurisdiction or status among the Lamani of this region. If a disputant is not satisfied with the local panchayat decision, he can suggest a leader of other tanda and, if this is acceptable to the panchayat, the appellant will have to bear the costs towards the invitees which may amount to Rs.10-15. Generally, non-Lamani people are not invited for the panchayat meetings. But if such a person happens to come to the settlement incidently, they sometimes take his help and advice to settle the issue. He may be a more knowledgeable person
so that the Lamani elders are benefitted by his experience. He may be more influential economically or politically and so the parties to a dispute abide by his decision. The already existing relations between such a person and the Lamani are decisive in making the role of non-Lamani peasants effective here. In cases of disputes between a Lamani and a non-Lamani person, non-Lamani elders would be invited to attend; and, such situations are frequent these days because of increasing economic contacts.

The Lamani approach the community leaders and the panchayat to settle or decide cases of: (1) inheritance and division of ancestral property; (2) betrothal and celebration of marriages; (3) marriage disputes; (4) desertion and divorce; (5) violation of Lamani sexual code; (6) various types of disputes relating to social status, such as, marriage with a non-Lamani person breaking the rules of commensality, etc.; (7) disputes relating to economic relations such as breaches in annual contract labour arrangement, non-payment of loans, tenancy disputes, etc.; and (8) criminal assault. About fifty years ago, none of these cases were ever taken to the government courts, only the naik working through the Lamani panchayat exercised social control in every aspect of the community life of his tarda. If a Lamani filed a suit in a government court, he was again tried by the head and the usual penalties were imposed (Mead and MacGregor 1912: 282). In the past, harsh
and brutal punishments were meted out to the arrogant offender who challenged the authority of the panchayat. The incorrigible offenders who did not pay the fine were excommunicated and were readmitted only after the payment of twice the amount of the original fine. His kith and kin were apprised of the fact of expulsion and were asked to obey the decision, or to bear the same consequences as the culprit.

It is the duty of the naik and the panchayat to see that the norms of approved behaviour are observed. Even today the lapses that are considered harmful to the interest of the settlement are considered serious and thus are dealt with strongly. Petty offences are punished by levying fines ranging from ₹.5 to 1,000 (see Chapter III:36). The fine must be paid by the accused or by his relatives or descendents.

The Declining Authority of the Lamani Traditional Political Organization

In simple societies, though political power is not dependent on economic power in the same way as in a highly developed society since there is not much scope for control of resources, to be effective the leader should have a reasonable standard of living in the community in order to
command obedience. The present-day naiks of Savana, upper Havana, lower Havana and Mapur tandas are very poor, and this has resulted in the considerable loss of their political power, though they still continue to be recognised as naiks. The Savana headman (died in 1971) was old, did not have any lands of his own, and subsisted on his wife's wages, the wages of his grandson who was working as an annual contract labourer, and the fixed, customary payment of grain by every household in the tanda in return for his ministrant work in the Sevaya Bhaya (patron saint) temple. Similarly, the naik of the upper Havana tanda (19 years old in 1971) has no lands and lives in a rundown hut. He maintains his family of five members by working as a wage-labourer along with his widowed mother. His mother is believed to be a prostitute (on the sly). He complains that his naikship is only in name and nobody cares about him. Even his customary dues of Rs.3 on the occasion of every marriage are taken away by the members of the panchayat and spent on tea. He is made to act as a messenger to call the people for panchayat meetings, which normally is the work of the karbhari. The economic position of the naiks of the lower Havana and Mapur tandas is similarly miserable.

This establishes the correlation between the economic and political factors. There is a breakdown of the headmanship in the present-day individualistic economy
of the Lamani. As we have seen in the preceding account, during their nomadic days, the naiks used to be men of economic substance and, therefore, could sustain their political power; their word was law, since the caravans moved and lived according to their will. The change in the mode of economic life, without adequate economic base like land grants made to the Naiks by the rulers, and the changed conditions, have brought about a breakdown in the political institution of the chieftainship or the naikship. As these four cases (given below) go to show, a punch or other informal leader rather than the traditional naiks are more effective in the regulation of social control within the tandas and they are able to do so because they are economically more well-off than the naiks, and also have better qualities of leadership. The nouveau riche seek political expression for their new economic status and the poorer naiks and panchayat members have no power to oppose this quest. Although the political status of the hereditary naiks is still recognized by the community a status that cannot be given to anyone else no matter how much wealth or qualities of leadership he may possess, but the important functions of the naikship have been taken over by the newly rich and the newly powerful Lamani in these tandas. The informants gave the analogy of an idol in a temple, "you cannot have a temple without an idol", suggesting thereby the need to have de jure naiks, though they may be ineffective in de facto sense.
In Savana, I saw the naik operating very feebly. During meetings, he would occupy a corner which was unusual for a naik. The central place was occupied by some one else (not the same person always, but one of the core members of the panchayat). The naik did not speak effectively nor was he heard with attention. He was less effective than even an ordinary council member. The informants attributed the ineffectiveness of Savana naik to poverty, old age, and lack of fluency in speech, which is a cardinal prerequisite for a naik to possess since the Lamani discuss issues in very loud tone. It is said that his father and grandfather were well-to-do and also very effective naiks.

In this region, one gets the impression that the subordinate role of the panchayat vis-a-vis the naik has changed and the political process is somewhat more democratic as compared to its autocratic nature during the haydays of the naiks. Today, it is not the naik, but the core or inner group within the panchayat which in fact controls the political process. If during the British rule the institution of the Lamani chieftainship lost its luster and power, the recent economic individualism has done away with the political power and functions of the naikship.

At the same time, on account of the cases of fraud
on community funds, partiality on the part of council members, lack of forthrightness, fair play or good judgement on the part of the panchayat members and other informal Lamani leaders, one gets the impression that this community is leaderless. No Lamani wholeheartedly mentioned a name to which their loyalty is unqualified. Nevertheless, in critical periods, the community is able to evolve a solution with the help of a cumulative, discursive methods of decision making and the adjudicative machinery of the caste-council, however imperfect it is. Though much of the Lamani council's authority has been taken over by the government courts and informal non-Lamani leaders of the region, at least on the occasion of critical situations, such as a fight leading to division in the whole settlement or police harrassment in the settlement because of a few individuals practising illicit distillation, and for the settlement community as a whole, the Lamani council is still a viable institution. I illustrate the prolonged and complicated nature of the issues that come up for settlement before the Lamani council by referring to two case studies:

1. A case study from Savana:

Being much bothered by the police harrassment for the illicit distillation and sale of liquor, the Savana Lamani council banned this activity in 1960. But three families could not adhere to the ban inspire of a warning by the council to expel them from the settlement. As they persisted in this pursuit, the council expelled
them in 1961 and they had to settle in the jungle near a village 4 miles away. In a way, the secluded residence helped these families to carry on their business, without much let or hindrance.

However, the forced social isolation from their community must have been hard to bear to these three families, especially on the rare occasions such as Gouri celebration of 1967. The expelled wanted to negotiate readmission when some worthwhile opportunity arose and the 1967 Gouri celebration came very handy for the purpose. Therefore, one of the non-conformists, Mr. K, approached the Savana Council for readmission. Before that, his wife had already visited the tanda and paid the contribution towards the celebration, so that they can at least participate in the celebration. Social segregation from one’s own people is a very hard penalty for the clannish Lamani.

The council met to consider the request of K who feigned submissiveness and helplessness (he was drunk at the time) and volunteered to accept unconditionally the decision of the council regarding his request. The main concern of the council was how to control a deviant person who had defied its ban earlier and, at the same time keeping in mind the probable relapse of distillation, because of K’s admission into the settlement. After deliberation, the council put forth two conditions for readmission: (1) The expelled group should shift its residence and reside permanently in the settlement. The motive in putting this condition was the fear that they may live in the settlement and yet use the jungle home-steads for distillation and may even start selling liquor in the settlement itself. (2) The deviant families should pay a fine of ₹500/- for readmission, with a promise that the community will help him in shifting his residence and erecting a new dwelling.

K’s objections before accepting the conditions laid down were: (1) The council has not been fair to these families in the past, by handing him over to the police while shielding the favoured non-conformists of the ban and imposing on them only a nominal fine of ₹30/-, though his wife had implored not to drag him to the police station. Subsequently, K had been tried by the police in the magistrate’s court, and fined and imprisoned. K had resumed his
business on return from jail and so the council was constrained to warn him to either observe the ban or leave the settlement. He had chosen the second alternative. (ii) K thought it impossible to shift immediately in view of the difficulty of erecting a new building in the settlement; he even visualised the prospect of staying in the open until a new house was built. K's argument was counteracted by the panchayat saying that the community will come to his help in building a shelter. When K was really cornered in this way, he came out with his real difficulty in decamping from the jungle. He imagined that since he will have to stop distillation, his family will have to starve and beg in the settlement. Since he was drunk and since the way out of the dilemma was harmful to his interests, he seemed to be undecided and inconsistent in his arguments. Once he said he would abide by the council's decision, but the very next moment he accused the council of partisanship.

In order to close the fruitless discussion with a drunken man, the council told K that since he is not the head of the family, he may come the next day along with his father for discussion. He was also told that, in case he chose to continue to stay in the jungle camp, he was still free to participate in the celebration after paying the usual contribution of 1 seer rice and Re.1/- per head. Since this is not a case of the ex-communication from the community, the punishment meted to K may be called as territorial expulsion from the settlement.

All through the discussion, a political fact was quite apparent to me, viz., though the previous discussions of the council and the stand adopted during the present discussion implied a consensus, there were some Lamani who supported the recalcitrant indirectly. These are the ones who are dissatisfied with the ways of the council; but the only difference between K and these disgruntled Lamani is that they cannot come out in the open as did K who was still
residing in the jungle when I left the field in 1967. The case also reveals the use of both traditional and modern government-agencies to control persons who are considered anti-social by the community.

2. A case study from Havana:

In May 1971, a betrothal ceremony for a boy from the upper tanda and a girl from the lower tanda took place. Prior to the ceremony, the panchayat of the lower tanda received the customary fees from the groom's people which is utilised for refreshment for the elders. When they went to Kalghatgi for the purpose in the evening, some members asked for their share of Re.1/- each, so that they can drink liquor and the others can take refreshment and tea. Some of them became fully drunk by spending from their own pocket, one of them being R, the school teacher. At night, the elders of lower tanda and upper tanda as well as from neighbouring tandas assembled for betrothal in front of lower tanda Sevayabhaya temple which is situated behind R's house.

In a drunken state, R complained that the groom's party has not paid the customary fees of the girl's tanda panchayat. When told that it has been already given in the hands of K, R started shouting in an abusive language, "who is K to receive mamul; I am the leader and panch (arbiter)". Where upon K lost temper and entered into angry arguments with R which culminated into a brawl. As R had lost control on himself because of drinking, the elders separated the disputants and pushed R into his house and closed the door. It is said that as R was shouting at everybody in a filthy language, some youths were enraged and hammered him. Then the betrothal ceremony was performed. If they wanted, they would have handed over R to the Kalghatgi police station in the drunken state and he would have lost his government job.

H, the rich man of Havana who also resides in lower tanda, was not present when the brawl took place. When he arrived the next day, the elders of both the tandas (lower and upper)
deliberated and thought it fit to warn the teacher to behave properly and even approached the non-Lamani leaders of Begur where the teacher worked. After the school hours the teacher, instead of coming to Havana, went to Hubli to meet his mother's brother who is a police head-constable. He advised R to register a case with the Kalghatgi police station against the elders. The elders came to know of it and requested R not to do so. Even the ex-headman of Kalghatgi, a recognised leader asked R to desist from such an act. But R said he would not retrace his steps and registered a case of assault implicating 12 people, of course using the good offices of his relative.

On the face of it, this case looks simple but its underlying motives reveal the jealousy, competition, and factionalism in the life of Havana. Thus a brawl has led to a rift in the community, pitting the teacher against the whole community which had to decide to throw him out, if he did not withdraw the case which had already reached the Magistrate's court in Dharwar. Since H was not present when the brawl occurred, and as an important leader and a rich person, why did he not try for a compromise when he arrived the next day from outstation, if he desired peace in the community? Instead, R alleged, H had encouraged the elders to call R and teach him a lesson which made R apprehensive that he may be beaten up by his people, which in turn forced him to register a police case. The twelve accused were arrested and later got released on bail, H being one of the sureties for the bail. It is alleged that H would have prevented the case to go to the police and the court as he was not present at the time of the brawl and hence could have acted as a neutral mediator. People said that he pretended to be interested in the settlement of the dispute but in his heart of heart he wanted the rift in the community, so that he can thrive and nobody would excel him. He had also certain old scores to settle with R and G, the rich and influential person from the upper tanda and a competitor to H for leadership. What were the old scores of H against R and G? When H married his cousin sister as a consequence of love affair after her husband's death (violation of clan exogamy), he had been excommunicated and later readmitted by levying a heavy fine, at the instance of R's father. He could not do anything then, as R's
father was very popular and so he was settling
the score against his son.

Moreover, in the previous election for the
"reserved" seat of the Town Panchayat Council
for the backward classes, R had worked for G
against H's wife who ultimately won the election.
H used the present dispute to result in a court
case so that his rival G (one of the implicated)
would be penalised and thereby will be disqualified
for future elections. He does not like G emerging
as a real leader of the Lamani (G is more forth
right and upright person). By allowing the case
to run its course, he would also break the R and
G alignment.

A third reason for H to take revenge on R
was the unnatural death of a Lamani a few years
ago, who died because of burn injuries caused
by his wife. When the elders of the settlement
tried to penalise her for her misdeed, as a
retaliation she filed a complaint with the police
alleging that the people who were troubling her
(one of them was G) had killed her husband. The
complaint could be made because she lodged it
after the body had been cremated). They were
arrested but were later released and the case
was dropped by the intervention of the ex-headman
of Kalghatgi who told the police what really was
the cause of death. G and other accused in that
case suspected that R had instigated the woman to
lodge a police case. Though R had turned down
proposals for a compromise in May, by the end of
June, because of ex-communication, he was in a
mood to consider such a proposal. I made a move
towards this end by sounding R, H and dhavo of
upper tanda separately; and, the three parties
were willing for a compromise. Why did H agree
to initiate a compromise move? His son's
marriage had been subsequently fixed up for
July 2, and it would be awkward to present a
divided front before his new affines, if the
excommunication of the only other important
family in the lower tanda were to continue.
When I broached the idea of compromise, he
willingly agreed saying that he is a well-wisher
of R's family as the families had good relations
from the time of R's father, which was not true.
(He wanted to present himself before me as a good
person). He was only apprehensive whether the
elders who were unnecessarily dragged to the
court would be ready for a compromise. He
assured that he would bring round the teacher.
On the night of 29-6-1971 a joint session of upper and lower tanda panchayats was held. The priest of a neighbouring village church, two elders from the multi-caste sector of Havana and myself were invited to arbitrate under my chairmanship. Both the parties to the dispute as well as many people of the settlement were present. The discussion started at 10.30 p.m. I called upon G to speak on behalf of the twelve accused, who narrated the case for one hour clearly and in a clever manner. Then spoke R, the plaintiff. As a third party, H also spoke. The facts of the case became clear, though each party narrated its case in a slightly distorted fashion, as if the right was on its side and the other was in the wrong. As the discussion dragged on and seemed endless, impatient youngsters and those who were drunk started showing signs of restlessness, expressing disagreements to what was said by the main speakers; and a few murmurs were also heard. By 1.00 a.m. to next day, the arbiters had enough facts and the disputants were asked whether they would accept the decision. Each party agreed, but requested not to let it down. The decision was: no costs to the accused and the plaintiff should withdraw the complaint and bear the costs thereof, since he has registered the case. Though both the parties were quiet for some time, the assembled acclaimed the decision and were happy because the rift in the community was breached.

At an earlier stage after the hearing and before the decision I suggested that they agree for a compromise and finalize the details with the help of elders like ex-headman of Kalghatgi and the police officer. H shotforth saying that the arbiters were evading responsibility, "The panchayat should not rise without giving the verdict". He was in a hurry to effect a compromise so that the ex-communication against R was lifted, so that he can take him the next day to the marriage of his son. Technically, the case had to be formally tried before the magistrate and the accused were declared "not-guilty" in August 1971 as the plaintiff did not press his allegation in the court.

The declining vitality even of the panchayat is to be discerned from the statements expressing frustration
made by the panchayat members and from their frequent inability to control increasing lapses in observance of the norms and codes of conduct on the part of individual Lamani, and to command respect and obedience to their decisions from the members of the tanda as was the vogue in the past. This is manifest not only in the panchayat's inability to apply traditional sanctions that were at its disposal against anti-social conduct and violation of 'rights in personam' and 'rights in rem' but also in areas of the positive sanctions such as getting cooperation of the people for community-works, or communal celebrations, etc. This is a sign of emerging individualism. The economic change from the corporate, nomadic band, which owned the stock of cattle and which was headed by a naik, to the settlement of emancipated individuals with growing individual property rights, has freed many people from the domination of the naik and his council. This is reinforced by the recent beginnings of economic diversification and the resultant mobility, though the Lamani are still at the stage of "embryonic peasantry" (Geertz 1971: 327). The collective responsibility of the tanda in social, economic and political spheres is strong and more viable among the Lamani of western Rajasthan (see Malhotra and Bose 1963:70) in comparison to the Lamani of this region.

1. In a way, factions can be viewed as a mechanism whereby economic status is translated into political influence (Epstein 1962: 318) cf. case No. 2 in the preceding account.
the Lamani of both settlements and many Lamani distrust the capacity of the panchayat to dispense justice, with the result that some even take their disputes to the government courts. Prior to the study, 5 cases had gone to the courts from Savana, and Havana is ahead of Savana in this respect because of town contact. This is the result of failure on the part of panchayats in discharging their duties by adopting just standards since they are now faction-ridden, of growing awareness of laws and urban contact on the part of increasing number of Lamani (many modern laws are based on concepts which go directly against the traditional concepts of justice, e.g., excommunication on any account is banned by statute), and of the increasing economic betterment of some Lamani which enables them to spend on litigation, by making use of government courts rather than the local Lamani council to settle their disputes and by using the services of city lawyers for arguing their cases in the courts.

Savana and Havana have spent Rs. 1,207 and Rs. 1,070 respectively on litigation (see Table 15 - item 13). Thus, as a result of increasing contact of the Lamani with the outside world including the modern state apparatus, communal customs as a means of social controls enforced so far through the Lamani panchayats are replaced gradually by the bureaucratic legal and political systems of the national
and state governments. It then means that the political and social independence of the settlements is lessening as the government machinery extends its power down to the local level to more areas of life than was the case hitherto, thereby incorporating the peasant Lamani as an organic part of the new (national) social order trying to modernize within a democratic framework.

The lessening hold of the panchayat on the people is also due to the general slackening control of the old on the socialization of the young - the usual generational gap which is so much in the air these days. Since the young are now exposed increasingly to the influences external to the settlement, the earlier automatic replication process of the young acquiring intact the typical Lamani lifeways, values and attitudes, is no more possible, because of literacy among some of the young Lamani, government service, incipient economic diversification and spatial mobility, and increasing contact with non-Lamani communities, all these providing different and contending ways of life. As a result, there is lessening identification on the part of the young with the customary Lamani values and practices, and, the young know many new things of which the older Lamani are ignorant. In such a situation, how can the council members who are usually old impress upon the young?
The declining authority of the panchayat or its inability to cope up with these changing circumstances which have brought forth more complex issues, such as: modern laws, democratic decentralization of power giving more opportunities of participation in the local political processes, activist and interventionist government policy (e.g. banning of distillation, stringent forest protection rules, etc.), the new political policy of the backward classes and so on, some of which are exogenous but still affecting the Lamani, is reflected in the fact that for the last forty years, prominent non-Lamani leaders in the region are approached for settling the disputes which the Lamani are unable to settle. One of them, the ex-headman of Kalghatgi who is a recognised leader for the whole taluka, had been approached by the Lamani during the last fifteen years for the settlement of different issues which had defied solution at the Lamani panchayat level. He even intervened in cases which had reached the local courts and police station and used his good offices so that some sort of compromise could be arrived at, at the community level. The Lamani accepted him as their informal and yet important leader because of his interest in their affairs, reform and welfare. He has also been the leader for the peasants of other communities in the region. His leadership rested on the fact that he was the government recognised headman of Kalghatgi and belongs to a rich, Jain, landed gentry family. (See p 311)
cannot better their economic life; but unless they are capable of spending some amount before receiving the aid etc., they cannot get the government aid. Hence, it is only the literate, well-to-do Lamani who know somewhat the complexities of the functioning of the modern government and who can afford to spend for getting government aid. The aid does not reach people for whom it is meant.

The poor sections are at the mercy of these leaders and even the bold ones who question the leaders will be suppressed, by refusing help and by involving them in some cases and by influencing the panchayats which have the final say. The non-Lamani peasants often complain about the thefts by the Lamani and allege connivance of their elders in this matter; the gain the panchayat has in theft cases is the fines that accrue to it imposed on the culprits.

In view of the preceding discussion of the state of affairs, the Lamani settlements are like a house divided within itself on account of enlightened and selfless leadership as well as the growth of individualism and the ignorance of the Lamani due to poverty.

The weakening of the panchayat's authority ensues also from contradiction between its own professions and actions (or ambivalence). For example even as Savana
He evinced interest in the affairs of the people and spent considerable time and energy in solving their problems and in getting government aid for the provision of public facilities in the region in order to keep the people obligated to him so that he can use the votes of the region in the general elections in favour of the candidates who approached him for electoral support. Of course, this support is in return for a gain.

The Lamani distrust in their leaders is partly because of their exploitation by their own leaders. Therefore, in a sense the main obstacle for Lamani advancement has been a social fact: a poor people who are divided. The worst exploiters of the poor Lamani are their own leaders, who get government grants for the development programmes within the community, but these funds are used up by the leaders and their close relatives for their own personal and economic betterment. The well-to-do Lamani can afford to spend on travel to approach political leaders and officials, and, if necessary, to pay bribes. Usually, the personnel of the various development agencies do not visit the tandas and thus the people have to approach them in the offices to get things done (see Chapter III: 36-37 ). The problem of Lamani betterment involves a vicious circle difficult to break: unless these poor people get substantial aid from the government, they
settlement was under the enforcement of the ban (introduced in 1960) on distillation and drinking liquor, by 1967 the members of the panchayat had started drinking liquor in the settlement itself by procuring it from the neighbouring village distillers.

The sense of injustice and dissatisfaction with the working of the panchayats experienced by some Lamani is to be seen in their severance of their territorial bonds with the settlements, by emigrating and attaching themselves to multi-caste villages. Such instances of isolated living of the Lamani may also be due to excommunication and difficulties in finding work nearby the settlements. Such cases of isolated living also have consequences for the maintenance of identity and self-image.

Since social control rests on the political fact of territorial bond and territorial loyalty, it is necessary to assess territorial solidarity vis-a-vis communal solidarity in the changed circumstances. In intra-settlement context, both combine in case of Lamani, which is not the case with multi-caste villages where caste solidarity is counter-poised against the village solidarity. Both centripetal and centrifugal forces coexist in a settlement. Despite rifts so far referred to, there is some show of unity which is expressed when they undertake settlement-wide celebrations...
or when they are poised against other villages or other communities. For example, disputes arising out of Lamani thefts of belongings of other people, tenancy disputes, poaching in the forest etc. In the inter-settlement context, except for obligations to the kin and affines in other settlements, the sentiment of settlement as a community (see pp.22-33) prevails over the diffused identification with larger Lamani society.

A clear instance of the ties of local contiguity taking precedence over the communal solidarity is the division of Havana settlement into two parts—upper and lower. Though the two parts are contiguous and, administratively both are incorporated into Kalghatgi township having a total of 99 households (upper: 61, lower: 38), the residents clearly think and feel the separateness of the two. The separateness is expressed concretely in the form of separate naiks, panchayats, Sevayabhaya temples and different histories of migration and settlement—the important institutions of settlement identity. It is also expressed in daily conversation which is full of reference to "upper" and "lower" tandas and in the competition to have the local school. Prior to the summer of 1974, Havana school was conducted in the Sevayabhaya temple of the lower tanda, and the upper tanda people complained why should the school be run in a settlement which is small in size. When a new
building for the school was proposed to be built in between the two settlements to satisfy both, the upper settlement people succeeded in having it in "our settlement" in June 1974.

The solidary nature of the settlements has also been affected adversely by the introduction of modern political institutions as part of economic development and cultural modernization in the country as a whole, creating new transactional and institutional links between hinterland communities and the new central state and local governments, and the cities. Today, the Lamani also participate, though not to the same extent as the advanced communities, in the institutions of democratic decentralization such as the statutory village-, and town- panchayats, taluka development boards, the state assemblies and the national parliament. The participation of the Lamani of this region in these government sponsored institutions has already been mentioned (see Chapter III:145-216). Though this participation of the Lamani is primarily because of statutory reservation of seats for the backward section of the population, it often leads to contests for these positions among them. This novel process of open contest and competition for elective posts is something new to the Lamani who had been working with the principle of hereditary succession and nomination based on consensus, thereby leading to new psycho-social
stresses and strains which survive long after the elections. On the one hand, the elections have brought the Lamani into wider political participation and increasing extra-settlement bonds, while on the other, they have narrowed down the settlement sentiment to factions neighbourhoods within the settlement, as is made evident in the preceding case study from Havana. Thus, the incorporation of the Lamani economy into the larger economy of the region and the consequent political contacts have affected the solidarity of the settlements.

However, despite considerable loss of control and prestige, the panchayat still constitutes an important agency of social control. Therefore, the changes undergone by the panchayats need not be construed as a total breakdown of the mechanisms communal control. Even now, many problems are solved in the panchayat. Forde and Douglas refer to the same tendency in the simple societies in general: "Every contact which a primitive economy comes to have with a complex economy modifies its primitive characteristics. The feelings of village solidarity, the obligations of mutual aid and hospitality will be present, but diluted (1956: 343)."
The Social Status of the Lamani and their Place in the Caste-hierarchy

So far we were concerned primarily with the settlement as a polity. But the Lamani live as a minority community in a region where the majority population is hierarchical in terms of the caste system and its ritual ranking. Following Bailey (1960: 263), we can characterize the Lamani political system based on agnatic kinship system as "segmentary" one as opposed to the multi-caste Hindus' political system as characterized by the principle of "ordination". Though the Lamani may not have been completely out of the pale of high-caste Hindu ideology of ritual purity and pollution in the early days of nomadism, the chances of interaction within the framework of caste system were few and far between.

"There is a class of people, called Banjaries, that do not belong to any cast(sic), or any part of Hindustan" (Crawfaurd 1942: 89; emphasis added).

Caste Hierarchy:

As the Lamani settled down and contacts increased, certain customs and values of the great tradition must have been shared by even the relatively isolated Lamani. For instance, they were aware of commensal rules even though they had few opportunities to observe them. They used to refuse to take food from some communities like Muslims, Christians, and untouchables and accept it from those considered as equal
or superior. The former accepted food from the Lamani and the latter did not. But the interesting point in this case is not so much that the rules were understood, but that Lamani did not usually come into contact with the groups in relation to whom they conceived hierarchy. The rules, therefore, lacked functional significance and represented rather an idea-system relevant in the area. After settling down, they ranked below Brahmin, Kshatriya, Lingayat, Jain, Gavali, Kuruba and other cultivating and crafts castes, but above the Muslims, Christians, Washermen, Walmikis, Koravas, Waddas, Shikligars, Helawas and Untouchables (Campbell 1883: 339, 1884a: 122, 1884b: 207; Enthoven 1922: 343).

The Lamani still retain clannish and egalitarian tendencies to some extent. There are no socially or ritually ranked high and low groups among them. But, because of increased contacts with other peasant castes in the region, they are now involved in the caste-hierarchy more than was possible in the past, although they live in separate, exclusive settlements.

Thus, it would not be wrong to say that commensal rules that underlie caste-system have not emerged out of the internal processes of social interactions among the Lamani themselves, but have been acquired by them in a general and imperfect manner from the Hindu castes of this region. That
is, commensal rules are an aspect of their social system, external or peripheral to it. They have a few occasions for commensal interaction with others viz., while eating with other cultivators or labourers in the fields, attending a marriage- or community-feast in the multi-caste villages, and while the annual servants eat in the house of their masters. In such contexts, Lamani understand quite well their place in the caste hierarchy, and to this extent they share a part of the traditional Indian culture. In this sense, they are no more a tribe but a Hindu caste. This is an instance of an erstwhile marginal group becoming a part of the caste system. This process of becoming a part of Indian civilization is also reported in case of other tribes elsewhere, e.g., the Hill Maria of Bastar (see Jay 1959: 82). The influence of the Hindu great tradition on the Lamani is to be found not only in caste-hierarchy but also in other aspects of life such as pantheon, religious beliefs and world view (see section 3). This impingement of values and concepts of the indigenous civilization on the tribal life, which was gradual in the past and is now rapid, Jay calls "traditional process", and distinguishes it from another viz., "modern" which is essentially a deliberate and sponsored one - the community development programme, modern medical facilities, the schools, the cooperatives, and the statutory village panchayats (see Chapter III: 214-215). Undoubtedly, both processes interact
and influence each other, giving an altogether new tenor to the quality of change these days, in contrast to the gradual change arising out of the few contacts of the tribes with the advanced population for millennia.

**Intercaste Relations:**

The Lamani contacts with others are not simply of caste-hierarchy. They include other types of relations as well, viz., economic, political, ethnic, attitudinal etc.

The economic relations of the Lamani with the Hindu high-castes (see Chapter III:124-59), is similar to that between a high-caste and a low-caste, i.e., primarily as suppliers of paid labour and secondarily as tenant cultivators. Hence the Lamani are treated on par with the low-castes, though the Lamani claim their origin from the Rajputs. Although the Lamani economic life is more dependent on others and, consequently have come to occupy a low social status, they maintain a sense of ethnic pride, which is partly expressed in terms of myths of origin and partly in their egalitarianism and communal solidarity as expressed in residential and cultural isolation.

The economic relations of the Lamani with others have already been noted in chapter III. Their economic dependence is expressed in terms of their tenancy status and wage-labour,
their need for specialist services from others, as well as some contributions of the non-Lamani peasants for Lamani community celebrations. During the 1967 Gouri celebration, the Lamani of Savana collected paddy worth about Rs. 500 from others to supplement their own contribution. The peasants of the neighbouring villages feel uncomfortable to have Lamani as neighbours in the fields because of the stereotype that the Lamani are thieves. The Lamani are said to steal sheep at night from the camps of the itinerant shepherds. The stereotype about the Lamani that they are unreliable allies and mercenaries in voting is baseless since others also behave in the same way these days.

A few non-Lamani elderly peasants said that the relations between Lamani and other Hindu castes are far from being happy. They are aware of the complementary nature of the relationship and recount how, 30 years before, Lamani were loyal and faithful workers and, therefore, many Lamani were hired as annual servants. But, now, especially after independence of the country, the Lamani behaviour has changed. They do not work hard, though they are capable of it. It is complained that they do not show the usual respect and obedience, and tell lies and indulge in theft, especially during harvest season. After their increased contact with the outside world, especially the cities and awareness of recent laws, they have not been vacating the lands held on
lease, not been returning loans taken, and have been cutting short the period of annual contract labour. The interesting point is that, they do not steal among themselves but do so with others, because the former will lead to detection and punishment by the panchayat, and it violates the codes of their communal solidarity. Therefore, even the thefts committed outside their own community are shielded, and hence it is difficult to detect them.

Irrespective of their veracity, such views and attitudes of others with reference to the Lamani are quite revealing. They are the expression of their ambivalent attitude toward the Lamani. The Lamani are indispensable for them, but at the same time this erstwhile dependent community is becoming itself a peasant community, some acquiring land which is so scarce. Some non-Lamani peasants ask: "why help the ungrateful Lamani?". This built-in conflict on the one hand, and indispensability of the Lamani services on the other, lead to belittling characterization of the Lamani, while talking to a third party. The following stereotypes of the Lamani and non-Lamani about each other are quite revealing:

Non-Lamani peasants: "Tanda people are dirty, of loose morals, drunkards, thieves, spendthrifts lacking any foresight ..."
The Lamani: "The villagers are stingy and niggardly; they have no guts and so their women rule over them. They will die one day without eating what all they accumulate"

Conclusion

In medieval India, though the Lamani accepted the overall suzerainty of native kings, most of their day-to-day life was ordered by themselves under the control and guidance of their headman called Naik, assisted by their panchayat. Rarely did they take their disputes to the non-Lamani leaders. When they were nomadic transporters, or when they had lost their traditional occupation and were thus dependent on forest work and hunting, their communal solidarity was strong. Their Naik was all-powerful politically and directed the economic activities of the tanda. He decided when to shift camps, and undertook contracts of transport work for the armies; he ordered when to set-out on banditry, hunting and so on. It was a communally controlled economy. With the economic emancipation into settled, independent, individual family-enterprises, the hold of the Naik and his council of elders over the community has slackened. The development of increasing economic and political contacts with other advanced castes has given room for non-Lamani leaders to influence the functioning of the Lamani panchayat, in some cases even thwarting its vitality. The new links with the wider economy have brought about an awareness of wider political issues.
With the declining authority of the naik, the authority of the panchayat has suffered a set-back. In fact a process opposite to the one described by Lloyd Fallers for the Western society is to be seen in India as Fallers himself is aware (1963: 214-16), where traditional background is different from the West in major respects. He says traditional societies in the West (archaic and feudal) were characterized by hierarchical political authority where power was primarily wielded by elite, ruling classes or castes, and the process of political modernization now in such societies is to be seen in the emergence of increasing equalitarianism in the structure of political power (Fallers 1963: 207-212).

But this hypothesis does not fit in with the explanation of political change in the precivilized or tribal societies. Here, a process in the opposite direction is to be discerned. For instance, in case of Lamani, in the olden days, the position of the Naik was hereditary and was based on tribal egalitarian considerations in the sense that he was like any other Lamani and he did not belong to a separate, higher, ruling class. Then, to wield authority over his people, he had to be an upright man. His birth in the Naik family was the jurally critical condition. But, today the position of the Naik is tied also to the economic position as in case of informal leaders in other peasant castes. Hence,
wherever a naik is poor, he does not wield real power, though he is recognised as Naik, de jure. The present ineffective position of the headman of Savana, Havana and Mapur tandas is evidence of this view. The people who wield real power now are the educated, and economically well-off, informal leaders. The structure of power among them is now becoming hierarchical and dependent on economic standing.

From an intracommunity point of view, they continue to be egalitarian in the sense of contributing equally for communal celebrations, having no social strata among themselves, and conducting the proceedings of the panchayat in a democratic way. But as a social group in the total social milieu of the region, they have become one of the low castes.

Thus, the changing economy and the resultant sedentarization and peasantization have modified their traditional mechanisms and processes of social control, and in the process, they have been increasingly brought within the caste system, whereas they were a marginal group to the caste system earlier.
3. THE LAMANI RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF SYSTEMS AND CHANGES:

In the study of religion, anthropologists focus not only upon the typical life cycle of both men and women in the culture, but also upon that part of culture which is called the people's 'world view' (Redfield 1968: 85-86). Some of the important aspects of a people's world view are supernatural beings, religious specialists, magic and sorcery and self-image or cultural identity. These are the aspects which directly influence the maturing individual so that he becomes a normal member of a particular culture. My concern in this section is to show how the changing economy of the Lamani has influenced, directly and indirectly, the religious beliefs and the world view of the Lamani, and to what extent religious factors have influenced the economy and other aspects of Lamani culture.

THE EARLY LAMANI RELIGION AND BELIEFS

In the recent centuries, the traditional world view of the Lamani has been conditioned by the limitations of the physical environment (to some extent), technology and economy, their turbulent history, their subjugation to almost two hundred years of colonial rule, the nature of social change introduced by national and state governments and urban contacts.
During their nomadic days, the Lamani were animists (Dubois 1936: 70; Thurston 1909: 213-14). Moreover, since they were strongly organized in patrilineal clans, they had a strong belief in ancestral spirits of the male line, which were worshipped frequently, any lapses leading to serious consequences for the living. In a cross-cultural study of the basis of religious beliefs, Swanson found that the belief in ancestral spirits is widespread: thirty-three out of forty-nine cultures have beliefs in active ancestral spirits (1960: 216). Moreover, he has discovered that ancestral spirits were associated with organized kinship groups. When descent groups (by definition ancestor-oriented) such as lineages, clans and phratries are present in a culture, there exists an important bond between the living and the dead, the latter playing an active part in affairs of the former, thereby establishing relationships between living members and the deceased ancestral members of the descent group (ibid: 97-108).

The traditional naik combined the roles of both the headman and the priest, though in some cases, these two roles were separated and were held by two persons. The relative isolation of Lamani religion and belief systems from that of other Hindus is discernible from the writings of missionaries and travellers of the period. Writing about Lamani of South India for the period 1792-1823, Dubois said that the nomadic Lamani have different manners and customs, "a different
A strong fear of natural forces like lightning, torrential rain, tornado, and a deep anxiety about the imminence of misfortune, disaster, disease and death characterised the Lamani attitude towards the world and the nature. Their world was full of hostile forces such as family, and epidemics and malevolent spirits which must be propitiated if their goodwill and protection were to be secured. Therefore, they had tremendous faith in magic and ritual, and resorted to them frequently.

It was a custom among the nomadic Lamani before starting out on a journey to procure a child or a grown up person belonging to other castes and bury the victim up to his shoulders in a lonely place, and then, to drive their loaded bullocks over the victim. They believed that, in proportion to their thoroughly trampling the person to death, the chances of a successful journey increased (Dubois 1936: 71; Thurston 1909: 214). They also believed in the cure of the diseases by the magical spells of their magicians (Thurston 1909: 214). They used to sacrifice a goat or a chicken in case of a shift of residence from one part of the jungle to the other consequent upon an epidemic attack on the tandas, to propitiate the epidemic deities. They hoped
to escape death by leaving one camping ground for another. Half way between the old and the new sites, a chicken or a goat was buried alive, up to its head. Then all the bullocks were driven over the buried creature and the whole camp walked over it (ibid: 228).

Another belief obliged them not to drink water which was not drawn from springs or wells. Thus, the water from rivers and tanks being forbidden, they were sometimes forced to dig a hole by the side of a tank or river and take the water that filtered through, which thereby became spring water (Dubois 1936: 72). The reason for this practice is not known but may be guessed to be the result of the Lamani fear of spirits dwelling in the large water sources like a river or tank. During their nomadic days, a shady grove and a protected, drinking-water well had a high value. Those who provided them for the nomadic Lamani earned their esteem. They have a folk song in praise of one, Dharmito Baba, who planted a grove and built a masonry well as an act of charity (Grierson 1968: 271).

Moore says (Narrative of Little's Detachment against Tippusultan, 1794) that he passed by a tree on which several bells were hung. This was a superstitious offering by the Banjara who, while passing that tree, used to hang a bell/bells upon it, taking off the bells from the necks of
their sick cattle, believing to leave behind them the sickness of the cattle also. This practice may be considered as a case of contagious magic. It was believed that those who touched these bells could be exposed to the wrath of the deity, to whom the offerings were made and, who was supposed to inflict the same disease on the bullock who subsequently carried a bell from that tree (quoted in Thurston 1907: 344).

During their nomadic days and even after settling down, the Lamani believed in sorcery and many a witch (Dhakun) was tried in the jungle and killed. Wilks has noted that at the time of the British wars with Mysore (between 1791 and 1799) the Lamani objected to two British conditions to discipline them viz., that no capital execution should take place without the sanction of the regular judicial authority (government courts) and that they should be punishable for murder. The "execution" and "murder" had their origin in witchcraft, the power to communicate with evil spirits. For any misfortune or trouble like a child falling sick or a wife becoming inconstant, a sorcerer was discovered and punished (quoted in Thurston 1909: 213). As I have already referred, they had a taboo for a substantial, permanent house quite in keeping with their nomadic way of life. Previously, they had also a custom of moving a hut after a death and nobody entered the hut through the door, through which the spirit had entered and killed the deceased (Enthoven 1922: 334). A peacock screaming on one's right and a jackal howling on the left were
considered unlucky omens, when one set out on journey (Grierson 1968: 268).

These beliefs, customs and practices are instances of both contagious and homeopathic or sympathetic magic and, keeping in mind their general illiteracy, we can imagine the role of magic in order to sustain and give meaning to a life which was hard, precarious and full of risks and dangers. These beliefs and practices were the attempts of the Lamani to overcome, or to feel a sense of mastery over, the forces of nature within which they had to eke out a living. Such magical activities and the beliefs underlying them relieved the tensions created by the anxieties and feelings of inadequacy, thereby making the Lamani once more to be in harmony with the life to which they were fated. As animists, they did not have any organized, higher religion resembling that of the long-settled multicaste Hindus. Hence, the predominance of magic in the early Lamani relations with the supernatural, and by their very nature, magical practices involve either personal or small local community issues in contrast to religion which involves both personal and social integration of a higher order (Nadel 1970: 199). The wandering life and the jungle habitation shaped the conception of their supernatural world.
RELIGION AND BELIEFS OF THE LAMANI AFTER SETTLING DOWN

With settling down to permanent residence after the breakdown of the traditional occupation of transporters (around 1870) which necessitated an increasing range of contact with the advanced communities, the Lamani religious and belief systems were increasingly modelled after the dominant Hindu caste groups.

Lamani pantheon:

The Banjaras are believed to have descended from the Rajputs, and have a myth to the effect that they became nomadic after Chittor was conquered by the Mughals. They are Vaishnavaites and profess Hinduism. Their chief deity is Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, the maintenance aspect of the Hindu Trinity. They call Krishna also as Balaji, the divine child and cowherd and this conception of their high god as a cowherd is significant in view of their great tradition of a cattle people. Therefore, the Lamani after settling down in South India show great reverence for Tirupati Venkatarama, an incarnation of Vishnu. They also worship many gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon: Tuljabhavani, Ambabai, Mariamma, Martal and Hinglaj. The lesser dieties are Seetal, Lakdya, Vaghya, Mhasoba, Bahioba etc. The image of Balaji is a four headed-figure of a man and that of Bhavani and other goddesses, of a woman. Lakdya and Seetal are rough
stones smeared with vermilion powder. On both sides of Balaji image, they plant two white flags. In times of distress or in consequence of a vow, these flags are replaced by new ones on the full-moon day of Jeshtha (June-July) and during Divali (October-November).

They also worship bullocks on the two occasions of Kar-humnime and Divali, on grounds dissimilar to those professed by the Lingayats of the region. Cows and bullocks are revered by the Lamani because Krishna himself had tended cattle and the cattle were the means of livelihood for them (earlier as pack-animals and now as agricultural draught animals) (Thurston 1909: 226; Enthoven 1922: 341).

The change from earlier animism to sharing of the pantheon and ideology of the higher Hindu religion must have been a gradual process after settling down, by Sanskritizing their behaviour after the fashion of the reference group behaviour in the region of their settlement.

They also have a great reverence for their patron saints who are seen as intermediaries between God and man and, the Lamani do everything in order to gain their favour. Every settlement has a shrine built for Sevayabhaya who was a pure vegetarian and tee-totaller and who passed away as a saint. His samadhis (main shrines) are at Papur and Lonand

1. The Lingayat worship bullocks as they are supposed to be the earthly incarnation of Nandi, the vehicle of Shiva, their chief god.
in Maharashtra. Some of them visit his samadhi every year after Dasara, as an auspicious beginning of the year’s work. Similarly, Mitthu Bhukya (a meat-eater and drinker of liquor) and Nanu Sadu (a vegetarian) are other culture heroes for whom the Lamani have great reverence. A hunting expedition begins with an offering of fruit or cocoanut to Mitthu Bhukya, believing that the offering ensures success of the expedition.

Soon after settling down and the consequent increased contact with the advanced Hindus, the Lamani found that they did not have supreme gods as in case of other Hindus who are divided into various sects depending upon the supreme deity they accept as their supreme god or goddess: Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and Shakti; while they had only patron saints. Since they are supposed to be descendents of Rajputs, they accepted Vishnu as their supreme god and further raised to godliness, Sevayabhaya as a reincarnation of Vishnu, since Sevayabhaya was supposed to be a cowherd.

The earlier ancestor worship continued despite the borrowings from the high caste Hindus. Once a year, after smearing the houses with cow dung for ritual purity, the emblems of the ancestors are worshipped during Dasara. A goat or sheep is sacrificed in the name of the ancestors. This ceremony is repeated when some one is sick in the family in order to propitiate the ancestors who are supposed to cause sickness.
Musalman pirs (saints) are also venerated by some of the Lamani, like some of the other Hindus. Some Lamani also keep panjas (palms) of Hassan and Hussain on the occasion of Mohurrum (three such families from Savana and one from Havana). However, this observance of the Muslim festival is at the family level and, in terms of Titiev's distinction, is a contextual observance in fulfilment of vows taken, and not, a calendrical one in a sense of it being an integral part of the total community's religion. Thus, without being bothered about the doctrinal subtleties of Hindu-Muslim dictotomy, the Lamani observe religious rites which appear efficacious to them.

Some of them also worship the so called "three-and-a-half goddess" (Sadeteen devi) but never divulge the name of the half-goddess. When an epidemic such as cholera or small-pox breaks out, Sevaya bhaya, Durga and Mari are propitiated with offerings of water, rice and goat or sheep flesh.

By and large, the primarily utilitarian view of Lamani religion precludes fantasy, mysticism, or any preoccupation with metaphysics. They seek from religion concrete solutions to the problems of daily life. They understand supernatural punishment for lapses on their part, as well as the need for supernatural protection by doing what is expected of them: lighting a wick-lamp, burning incense,
reciting prayer or performing a certain dance.

Religious Specialists:

The lamani had recognised mendicant groups such as Gosai and Bhats as their priests and gurus; and, Suri or Dhadi (Lamani converted into Islam) acted as their genealogists, as the Helavas are for the Shivachar people of the region (Briggs 1887: 173; Thurston 1909: 227). But, by the turn of the 19th century, the Gosai and Dhadi could not earn enough livelihood from their specialist pursuit and therefore, had to discontinue their traditional occupations. They have now settled down to agriculture. Nor were the Lamani employing Brahmins for priestly work as in the case of other Vaishnavaites of the region (Campbell 1883: 339; 1884a: 122, 1884b: 207).

With the discontinuance of others acting as religious practitioners for the lamani after some days of sedentary life, one among them accepted the priestly work in each settlement on the basis of a fixed, traditional payment by each household. In a strict technical sense the job was not a full time one. Moreover, these ministrants perform the religious rites and worship in the Sevayabhaya temples and are capable of becoming spirit mediums. There were two types of Bhagats (magicians) - good (Nimbukatma) and bad (Janta) and both were approached and consulted (Nanjundayya and Aiyer 1928: 180).
Beliefs:

The earlier beliefs such as beliefs in ancestors, spirit world, good and evil omens, persisted but were modified in line with the changing mode of life. Many of the earlier magical practices like human sacrifice, taboo on drinking stream water, permanent houses etc., and witchcraft have disappeared from their belief system following changes in their occupation and discontinuance of nomadic way of life. At the same time because of contact and borrowing from other Hindu castes, new ideas, beliefs and practices have entered into their life. For example, a person returning from jail or on readmission into the caste following expulsion had to give a goat-meat feast to the community and his tongue was burnt with a red-hot gold-piece indicating his purification. Lamani women are often supposed to be troubled by ghosts, when they burn frankincense before the patient and ask the name of the ghost and what desires. If the ghost refuses to speak, an exorcist is brought who tries to drive the spirit away with the help of the charms. They believe that the spirits of the wealthy who die in the prime of life, of misers, of women who leave behind young children, and of creditors, afflict the living. Like other Hindus, they also believe in astrology and consult a Brahmin astrologer for auspicious moments for performing ceremonies and beginning new ventures. They believe in the transmigration of the soul and say that a good man on death goes to heaven, but at the discretion of God may be born again in this world.
I now present an account of the ceremonial organization and belief system as found in the two settlements studied, as well as the tangible reasons of their change. Changes in Lamani ceremonial life during the last seventy-five years are even more discernible than changes in the kinship organization. However, specific changes were surprisingly difficult to detect because of paucity of knowledge on the part of many Lamani concerning ceremonial activities. Further difficulties in analysis arose in trying to distinguish between their own and borrowed elements. The core of Lamani religion was animistic before settling down. Since then, there has been an accretion of advanced Hindu as well as Muslim elements. Some of the admixtures are recognised by the Lamani themselves; others have lost their origins and have been incorporated as native components.

Rituals and Celebrations:

The Lamani follow Hindu calendar of festivals; and, now they are considered as a caste among the Hindus. The festivals that they have been observing traditionally which formed part of the calendar are: Hindu New Year's day, Dasara, Dipavali and Holi. On these occasions they worship community gods/goddesses, family gods/goddesses and ancestors by offering sweet dishes. But on the final days of each of these, they
also sacrifice goats and sheep and offer cooked meat, in which the panchayat plays an important role (Chapter III: 133-34).

As already noted (Chapter III: 134-35; Chapter IV: 231-33), the most significant Gouri-celebration is observed for ten days, usually from the first to the tenth day of bright half of Chaitra month (March-April), once in 4-5 years. During the Gouri celebration in Savana in 1967, an exception was made for this calendrical adherence by celebrating it from the fourth to thirteenth day. The postponement was necessitated by a death in the settlement and the death-pollution period of thirteen days which ended on the third of Chaitra. The exception demonstrates two important considerations: the requirement of ritual purity in the whole community during Gouri-celebration and the sympathy of the community for the bereaved family, thereby revealing communal solidarity.

This celebration involves much of organizational work in conducting the rituals, collecting materials and money, erecting pendal, and providing food for the participants and guests on the last two days. The temples in the settlements are distempered and white-washed; continence and ritual purity for the period of the celebration had to be observed by everybody, and the seedlings of grain which are the staple food of the people are to be raised in front of the patron-deities and saints, and the flame of wick-lamps must be kept
alive for the duration of the celebration (Namdādeep). Five boys and ten maidens (who have not yet attained puberty) are given charge of the 10 baskets in which the seedlings (called Gouri) are raised. The selection of these boys and girls for these coveted positions of suppliants is considered very lucky and meritorious, and hence, the selection is based on some rough representation of the different clans and lineages in the settlement. Thereby the communal solidarity of the settlement is reinforced by the ritual roles performed and the rewards received by various kin groups. Incidentally, it may be noted that giving representation to all the clans is not considered necessary while selecting a member of the panchayat.

The meticulous care and skill with which the seedlings are raised clearly indicated that the Lamani possess a sound knowledge of traditional agricultural techniques and practices. The immediate reason for the observance of this rare ritual-ceremony may be a vow taken by the community in face of calamities or epidemics likely to afflict them, their cattle or crops. Though they are unaware of them, the dominant values underlying the celebration are those of agricultural prosperity. It is a celebration connected with fertility cult, fertility of both women and the soil. Thus, Gouri celebration must have been a consequence of the Lamani adopting agriculture as their main occupation.
As a finale of the Gouri-celebration in Savana in 1967, the Lamani put up a folk-theatrical performance (locally called Doddat or Bailat) whose theme was taken from the epic of Ramayana titled "Ramanjaneya Yuddha" (battle between Rama and his devotee Hanuman). It was enacted in Kannada and so hundreds of surrounding villagers thronged to witness it. They were tutored by one of themselves, though they first learnt the art from a Lingayat priest some years ago. Thus, such occasions provide an opportunity in establishing a communication between the little tradition of the Lamani and the Hindu great tradition. This fact of theatrical performance in Kannada is also an evidence of proficient acquisition of Kannada language by the Lamani.

Marikamba (locally called Gali-Durgawa) is the presiding deity of epidemics like plague and cholera and is offered fowl on Holi and full-moon day of Jeeesta (June-July), provided a vow had been taken on the occasion of attack of epidemics. Seetlabhavani (locally known as Elumakkala tai), who is supposed to cause eye-sore, cough, cold and fever, is offered by the community a goat or two, and a fowl by every family, on either the first Tuesday or Friday after the full-moon day of Aghadha (July-August), every year. The shrines of these goddesses are found at the outskirt (the ritual boundary) of every settlement.
On the occasion of Ganesh (elephant-headed god) Festival, the Lamani carry out the ritual of tonsure ceremony of their children by offering a sweet dish to the god, Venkataramana or by sacrificing a goat or sheep to Sirsi Marikamba. These two deities belong to the great-tradition of the local Hindus. In Savana, in addition to the traditional stone-symbol of Galidurgavva (Marikamba) outside the settlement, a new temple was built within the settlement in 1966 for Sirsi Marikamba, a goddess worshipped by the advanced Hindus of North Kanara district. This is an instance of borrowing and installing a goddess from the pantheon of the great tradition. It may also be considered as an instance of felt-need of the Lamani in preference to their other basic needs such as safe drinking-water wells, sanitary provisions, and school building etc., which can similarly be secured through community effort, just as they built a new temple for a goddess.

Through the observance of life cycle rituals (see Chapter III:117) the Lamani establish, demonstrate or herald lasting attitudes (feasts of rejoicing on occasions such as a birth or adoption ceremony), stable relationships (marriage sacrament) and an awareness of rights and obligations (initiation ceremony), which constitute a part of the social order (Nadel 1970: 199). They conduct the initiation ceremony (Yadai) at the time of marriage ceremony by giving the novice two burn-marks with a redhot needle, by uttering a chant as
the marks are made. Invariably, an initiation ceremony requires two brothers and the younger brother need not go through this ceremony on the occasion of his marriage. If the bridegroom has no brother, a boy of the same lineage or clan is adopted as a "brother" for the purpose of the ceremony. This practice suggests the sibling solidarity among the brothers who are supposed to stand united in both happiness and misery.

All these traditional, calendrical and lifecycle rituals are obligatory. The point of interest in terms of changes is the fact that the Lamani now observe all the festivals, by following the calendar (in full) - just as the non-Lamani Hindu peasants do whereas they observed only four in the recent past. That is, they now observe additional celebrations which were not in vogue even as of 1930. Some of the Lamani have become the confirmed devotees (Sants) of Pandharpur (in Maharashtra) Vithoba and Yellamma of Soundatti and they make pilgrimages to these shrines on certain fixed days every year. The bhajans they perform in the Sevayabhaya temples in Banjari dialect have traditional songs as their theme, but tunes have been now changed, modelled after the bhajans of the non-Lamani peasants, and the filmsongs.

In addition now they also observe agricultural festivals associated with different phases of agriculture
The new festivals and celebrations are observed not only by those who have taken to agriculture, but by even those who do not practise agriculture but some other pursuit like wage-labour and wood-cutting, though on a smaller scale, since the non-agricultural Lamani are not usually well-off, economically.

Over the years, the Lamani have come to acquire these additions or accretions to their traditional, ritual repertoire. So, in terms of religious changes—on their march from tribalism to peasantry—, it is not a case of substitution of traditional belief and pantheon with that of a new, peasant ones, but a case of addition. Therefore, a good chunk of their meagre income is spent on rituals and ceremonies (see Chapter III:156 and Table 15). An obvious change that has come about in their religious observance especially after 1955 is that, since the prices of articles are going up all along, the observances are becoming less deftailed and less pompous.

In regard to modelling their religious practices and beliefs after the advanced Hindus, the use of the services of the Brahmin priest after 1930 for solemnization of marriage, for knowing the stars under which a child is born, for knowing the auspicious moments to start a new venture or celebrate a marriage, and so on, is a significant adaptation on the part of the Lamani.
Similarly the present-day practice of Lamani priests supporting themselves and their families by supplementing their priestly rewards with earnings from farming or wage labour constitutes a distinct shift from former settled times when the priests were fully supported by the community, and from the still earlier nomadic days when the headmanship and priesthood reinforced each other, making the headman-priest very strong.

Another item of change in their ritual practices because of contact with non-Lamani peasants thereby the Lamani themselves becoming peasant, is the practice of abstention from work on specified, dedicated days (Tuesdays and Fridays) as a mark of reverence to the goddesses of epidemics, which is supposed to serve as a magical cover to the community, as well as to propitiate the gods to give rain when rains fail. Such dedicated abstention from work and the concomitant observance of ritual purity by the whole community, and offerings of prayers and bhajans for such five consecutive dedicated days constitutes the ritual of abstention (Wara-Biduvadu). But in terms of loss of man-hours and delay in carrying out the critical agricultural operations on time, such interruptions because of ritual abstentions are to be considered unproductive from a rational, economic point of view. Similarly, expenditure on social and religious purposes which seems apparently unproductive, is not considered so by the people who believe
in its necessity and efficacy. So they had to incur it.
A few families which had adequate land resources and working population, were in huge debts, the net annual income being absorbed by interest on such loans. The need for such loans was contingent expenditure. With a period of 5 years, these families had celebrated 2-3 marriage ceremonies and thanksgiving offerings to the deities who were supposed to have cured their diseases that had defied allopathic treatment.

In fact, through a study of the observance of rituals and celebrations we see kinship, economy, polity and religion, all meshed up. The animal sacrifices and the feasts (vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian as the occasion demands) in honour of ancestors, family gods, gods and godlings connected with agriculture, and the community gods involve heavy expenditure which is usually shared among the brothers. Even the brothers who live separately, pool their resources to observe a common ceremony and to arrange a common feast. This sharing brings forth not only the sibling solidarity with the Lamani emphasis on agnatic kinship, but also the economic necessity of managing expensive occasions by pooling resources and conducting the ritual/ceremony in a cooperative and concerted manner.

**The beliefs that affect economy:**

Some of the beliefs and practices of the Lamani affect positively or negatively, as the case may be, their economic
activities. For example, the meticulous care and skill with which the seedlings are raised during Gouri celebration, and the practice of asking young ones to look after the baskets in which the seedlings are raised, by making a bed with fine soil and sand and supplying sun-rays and water to the germinating seeds - the whole process may be viewed as a part of informal education of the young in the agricultural knowledge. Similarly, many of the rituals associated with the various phases of agriculture already described in Chapter III act as morale boosters to the agricultural activities, the success of which depends on the vagaries of weather and other natural occurrences. A few more beliefs and practices which affect their economic activities need mention.

Generally, they take bath once a week. Certain days in the week are considered auspicious because they are dedicated to specific deities or saints, and, therefore, they induce the Lamani to wash themselves, their clothes and the cattle thereby promoting their hygiene. These are the days on which they begin a new venture. Fridays and Tuesdays are dedicated to their gods, goddesses and saints and are, therefore, considered auspicious. Mondays and Thursdays are considered auspicious for starting a new tenure of cultivation.

Monday is sacred for the Lingayat peasants which is dedicated to Basava, their patron saint and a reincarna-
tion of Nandi (bull), the vehicle of Shiva. Therefore, they abstain from any agricultural work, especially involving the yoking of bullocks, who are given a bath and rest that day. The day is also very sacred for them because they worship their god on that day. But Monday is not so significant for the Lamani as they are Vaishnavaita. However, since they have accepted agriculture as their mainstay, the Lamani also follow the abstention from work and do not yoke the bullock on that day, and, to that extent, are influenced by Lingayat peasants. But at the domestic-level rituals, Monday has not made any dent in the Lamani religious practices, except that in Savana the Lamani do not eat meat on Monday, as the day is dedicated to Basava (a vegetarian saint). This is not the case in Havana with regard to the taboo on the use of meat on Monday, probably because Havana is not yet peasantized to the same extent as Savana. In addition to Monday being, thus, a weekly holiday, occasionally either Tuesdays or Fridays are declared as abstention days for five consecutive weeks (see pp. 344-45). This practice some times affects agricultural operations adversely, as certain crucial operations like ploughing and sowing will not be carried out on time.

As to why they stay in exclusive settlements outside the multica caste villages, the Lamani offer two reasons: (i) they have their own culture to be protected from undue external
influences and (ii) the religious reason which forms part of the legend relating to Sevayabhaya which runs as follows: Though the Lamani eat fowl by purchasing them from others, it is a taboo for them to raise fowl in the settlement. It is said that Sevayabhaya obtained fourteen blessings from Satibhavani one of them being not to afflict his people with deadly epidemics like plague and cholera. The goddess is said to have granted the request but asked in return how would she identify a Lamani settlement. The saint gave her a cue: "where the cock does not crow, you should presume it is a Lamani settlement and spare it and where it crows, is a permanently settled village of the non-Lamani communities where you are free to enter". Thus a taboo on fowl raising came into vogue and is one of the several marks of Lamani identity, the belief being very much connected with their well-being. Therefore, even if the fowl were to be offered free for raising, as a supplementary source of income, the Lamani will not accept them. Thus, this belief is an instance of how traditional religious ideas inhibit economic improvement.

Sevayabhaya was revered by the Lamani from the early days of their settling down to such an extent that there are folk songs in his honour, almost deifying him (see Grierson 1968: 270). Today, the Sevayabhaya shrine is a central institution of every settlement around which all the activities of the Lamani revolve. It is here that they hold their
council meetings, meet important personalities who come to see them, and gossip in their leisure time. The reverence shown for their patron saint is quite obvious. Every Lamani who sets out for the day's work or on an important errand, makes obeisance to the shrine.

Paradoxically, their funeral customs also reflect the Lamani dread (a hangover from the past) of the epidemic diseases which are almost deified even in these days of effective control of epidemic diseases by public health agencies. A married or initiated Lamani is considered a full person and therefore such a person's body is usually cremated. Those who die before initiation or marriage ceremony are considered incomplete persons and hence the full-status funeral by cremation is not accorded to them; and so, they are buried. Fifty years ago, there was a custom of slitting open the womb of a pregnant, dead woman in order to take out the foetus for burial since it was an incomplete person, and then cremating the woman's body. But those who die of epidemics are buried, as it is believed that they are already burnt in the mouth of the goddess causing the particular epidemic disease, and so are ranked with the concerned deity. To burn such persons' bodies will tantamount to challenging the deity thereby inviting more trouble. Therefore, they are buried. Improper disposal of the dead body is supposed to cause misery for the community by way of
failure of rains, which affects their economy adversely, and of affliction of epidemics which either reduce their man hours or their population.

As in the case of the non-Lamani peasants, hooting of an owl is considered an evil omen, foreboding a coming death, natural calamities or epidemics. The Lamani still believe in the black and white magic and think that a strong, beautiful or talented man can be harmed by magical spells employed by jealous competitors or enemies. Similarly, crops, cattle and milk-yield of the cattle etc., can be adversely affected because of the black magic. Thus, belief in magical practices continues but has changed from the magical practices relating to the risk-ridden, nomadic life, to the ones that relate to the life of the settled peasants. I did not come across any practising magician or sorcerer among them; but they agreed that they make use of the services of non-Lamani specialists. A stray case of human sacrifice (the killing of a young daughter of his brother) performed by a Savana Lamani in the hope of getting a hidden treasure, has occurred a few years ago, indicating the Lamani poverty leading to such anachronistic pursuits of wealth.

The World View of the Lamani:

Their world-view has been changing over the last one hundred years radically from the tribal to the peasant
one, because of changes in their economy, mode of residence (from nomadic to settled), the other aspects of life, and the influence of neighbouring peasants' world-view. Myths and legends current among them relating to their origin, migration and culture-heroes are replete with their religious beliefs, and concepts of morality and good life.

The major value change in them is from a virile, brave, martial tradition of the Rajputs to the one of peaceful, docile life of a peasant, whose dominant value is agricultural prosperity. Therefore, their concept of good life now is that a man must have sufficient number of children, enough to eat, the health of human beings, cattle and crops, and enough lands. Thus, work, industry and thrift for the purpose of accumulating property in land and animals, are the highest and the most enduring values though realised only in a few individuals (Chapter III:60-83,92:143,173-77). The Lamani of this region have acquired a typical peasant way of life, and they do not aspire for higher education, modernization and urbanization. Why do they not want to settle in cities? As they are not educated, they have only one avenue of earning a livelihood in cities viz., unskilled wage-labour, which is considered by them worse than agricultural labour or work in the jungle. A man should be hardworking, should not steal (a great change from the days of robbery), should not drink intoxicating drinks in excess,
should not bother others, and more important, he should bring dishonour to the community — such a person is a 'good fellow'; otherwise 'bad'.

A 'good woman' must be married, be fertile and beget sufficient number of children. Secondary marriage (Nanakya Viya) has a lower status. Barrenness of a woman is considered unfortunate. A woman should not speak ill of parents and in-laws, and she should not be unfaithful to her husband. If a woman violates all or any of these rules, she is considered as "a devil in the house".

They say that nobody should inflict pain on the cattle. Indulging in unnatural and immoral acts like cutting a growing crop, setting fire to heaps of harvested crops and haystacks is 'sin'. All kinds of prohibited sex relations such as pre- and extra-marital relations, violations of lineage and clan exogamy and community endogamy are immoral. The Lamani believe that persons who commit sin by indulging in immoral acts are punished by divine retribution like accidental death, becoming victims of natural calamities and suffering from incurable diseases.

The Lamani view other people as potentially hostile and dangerous, and their typical reaction, therefore, is a defensive one. Their exclusive, segregated settlements are the concrete expression of these basic ethos. Their inability
to make use of the government offered facilities in agricultural modernization and economic development must partly be due to this distrust of officials and viewing them as people who squeeze bribes. Security in the threatening world is sought by the Lamani through the economic independence of the family. To be able to provide for one's family with food, clothing and shelter is the only way of forestalling want and interference by others in one's family affairs. To the extent a Lamani devotes himself to work, he feels secure and blameless, regardless of the income that accrues. Therefore, material success is admitted as a value in itself and is admired. Inspite of hardwork, one is not sure of success in economic pursuits, especially in agriculture which still mainly relies on whimsical weather and rainfall, and so Lamani have to seek the help the supernatural to ensure success, and the help of his fellowmen in periods of want and crisis, which often haunt them. The low level of economic development is reflected in many avenues of collective collaborations economic, ritual or political.

But this high dependence on the community and the supernatural does not completely kill individualism and independence of a Lamani. However, this individualism is not strictly competitive as in the case of universalistic-achievement oriented (Parsons) West. Therefore, in the settlement communities, the individual tries to win security
a recognition through conformity and submission to the needs of the family and the local community. They also seek security through respect and the extension of respect relationship, which is valued as a safe one. Respectable status stems from a superior economic, or political position, from old age, education and from intimate relationships established between two individuals or families.

Because of their suspicion of outsiders, the Lamani are not an easy people to understand, as they are not very communicative, to begin with. But, most interpersonal relationships among themselves are characterized by frankness and free behaviour, though a man who speaks little and minds his own business is considered prudent and wise. Inspite of poverty, the dominant theme of Lamani life seems to be mirth and religion, one reinforcing the other. The Lamani peasants still retain a streak of tribal heritage—unrestrained vocal expression and gesticulation of what one feels and thinks, including frank expression of hostility. However, in some cases, suppressed hostility finds indirect release in malicious gossip, stealing, secret destruction of property, envy, deprecation and even sorcery. Occasionally, a murder is not uncommon. Inspite of many deprivations like malnutrition, children seem quite happy and gay, and especially in the evenings, keep on singing in a monotonous, plaintive tone.
However, creativity and artistic expression are limited. As already noted while discussing economic pursuits, there are practically no handicrafts, pottery, wood-carving, weaving or basket making. Folk music and songs, and dancing are quite expressive and impressive. The gaudy-coloured and embroidered dress of the women is the most impressive aspect of the Lamani creativity.

They have a healthy attitude towards sex-life and it is an aspect of good life: A song sung during the betrothal feast expressed their attitude: "A brave person is fond of a mare. A sword is dear in war. The wife is dear on the bed and a spear is dear in hunting. Similarly, this bhang (a narcotic drink) may be pleasing to you" (Palande 1959: 195).

There is a clear lack of concern for the future with most Lamani, leading to no "savings for a rainy day". Only a minority which has realized the importance of placing premium on future has been the successful ones among them; they are the ones who have also recognized education as an important change-agent. The rest of them exercise a general thrift, spending when they

---

1. The song in Banjari runs as follows:

Rādhā mithi ghodāli
Rana mithi telvār
Seja mithi Kāmīni
Sura mithi Sanga,
Lo bhai bhanga.
have money and pulling the belts when they have little. This present-oriented gypsy trait has been responsible for the formation of a stereotype in the minds of the other caste peasants, that inspite of hardwork and occasional windfalls, "the Lamani can never attain a state of adequacy". This opinion has covert religious and moral overtones, implying thereby that the Lamani are not honest and righteous people.

The majority of the Lamani seems to lack a strong drive or ambition for self-improvement. They are satisfied with enough food and clothing from harvest to harvest. The young people also accept the way of life without much skepticism or an ideal of remoulding their destiny. The young men wish to be peasants like their fathers and young girls to adopt the roles of their mothers.

Inspite of misery and want, there is an enigmatic absence of mental ill-health (except for a single case in Havana) among them. This is probably due to their tendency to shift personal responsibility for lapses or failures on to others, or on the supernatural forces, thus freeing the individual from likely frustration, anxiety, guilt and self-blame. This also explains why such people exhibit traits like fatalism, equanimity in face of misfortune, passivity, expedience in preference to high principles, and rare incidence of suicide, inspite of grinding poverty in case
of most of them (per capita income per day was less than a rupee, see Chapter III 151).

Most Lamani men and women take interest in preserving and continuing the religious practices and beliefs as well as a good moral behaviour. Through child-rearing patterns, these are taught to the young. However, these days, the older generation complains about the lessening religiosity of the young. The expansion of frontiers of understanding for the younger generation about man, society and nature is dispelling the mystery that surrounded these phenomena for the old in the past, thereby leading to the shrinking of the supernatural world and to the lessening emotional involvement in the associated magico-religious practices.

THE PROBLEM OF LAMANI CULTURAL-IDENTITY

If by 'world view' is meant the way a people characteristically look upon the universe "out there" (Redfield), the "social/cultural identity" of a people is the way they conceive of themselves, as well the way others look upon them, as a social group, distinct from other groups with which they have contacts. Therefore, the cultural/social identity or self-image of a people is another, complementary dimension of the world of ideas, beliefs and emotions with which this section is concerned.
Ethnic, social or cultural identity may be conceived as the total and distinctive clustering of roles, cultural inventory, and social system experienced by a group and derived from the group's own viable historical tradition of changes through time. It gives both a sense of continuity and the background for common analogies to occur to produce innovations permitting change (Lurie 1968: 297).

It is very difficult to talk about Lamani's past cultural identity. However, certain observations about the Lamani made by others with whom they came in contact, viz., colonial officers, missionaries and travellers, are quite useful in constructing the cultural identity of the Lamani during their nomadic days, with reference to which their present cultural identity can be compared.

Early Lamani Identity:

The utility of their services during the periods of wars was clear from the convention that they should not be robbed by either of the warring camps (see Craufurd 1742: 90). Cumberlege (1882) narrates how the Lamani, because of their readiness to kill themselves rather than give up the property entrusted to their care (called the custom of traga), had become the best means of transport of goods (quoted in Nanjundayya and Aiyer 1928: 142).

In an account of the Banjara towards the close of the 18th century, Colonel Moore (1794) says that the Lamani
associated amongst themselves exclusively. In times of war, they marched and camped apart, relying on their own courage for protection. Even their women drove the cattle and were quite robust, capable of hard labour with apparent ease. They were chaste and affable and any indecorum showed to a woman was resented by the men, who had a high sense of honour in this behalf (quoted in Thurston 1909: 210-212).

Writing in 1815, General Briggs was impressed by the ethnic distinctiveness of the Lamani, said that their language, habits and manners differed from those of the Deccan Kingdoms "so materially as at once to stamp them as foreigners" (1877: 172). The women's dress was the most characteristic one, as it differed completely from the Southern dress. They wore a coarse, multicoloured petty coat, an open-backed bodice, and an odni or over-cloth. To this dress, they had added massive rings of ivory round their arms as substitutes for lighter precious metal bracelets used by others. The men wore at the end of the strings with which they fastened their short drawers round their waist, a profusion of heavy, gaudy-coloured tassels and, were thus, easily distinguishable by these peculiarities of dress from other men in the South.

Briggs was impressed by the fact that the Lamani had been able to preserve their specific habits, manners and language of Marwari origin, even in the South. This retention
of their habits and dialect for several centuries "is perhaps one of the most remarkable instances of the kind to be found in any history, when we consider that they have no written records, and, unless among themselves, had no intercourse in the language" with others. With reference to the concept of 'good life', Briggs noticed similarity between the Lamani and the Rajputs from whom the former trace their origin. The Lamani were like the Rajputs, whose occupation was confined to a military life and the Lamani also formed part of that military life. A Rajput might cultivate his own land, but he would not work as a servant for another; he could only serve as a soldier. Custom permitted him to perform many things for himself which it would be disrespectful for him to do as a menial of another person (1877: 172-74). The Lamani had retained the same Rajput streak which prevented Lamani men to accept wage-labour after they had lost their traditional occupation (see Chapter III: 172).

During the days of transport and trade, the Lamani were as calculating and worldly-wise as any other community though they were illiterate. For example, they used to buy and sell quickly if the prices were high and hold up the stock of grain if the prices were low, with a view to maximize gain or minimize loss. Born in the open field and bred up in a camp, the Lamani braved the heat of a tropical sun, and the heavy showers of rain, from the time of their birth, thereby acquiring a robust constitution, a fierceness of manner and
disposition, and a freedom of thought and action, which combined to render them athletic, hardy and brave.

In spite of rational calculation and employment of the Lamani with the different armies thereby earning huge sums of money, poverty seems to have been their lot, even in the hay-days of transport and trade. This paradox can be explained in terms of their wandering habits, their clannish nature which necessitated maintenance of even those who did not work, their spend-thrift habits, and their habitual drunkenness, with the result that often a Lamani was hardly able to purchase cattle to replace those lost in the course of his campaigns.

Although the Lamani had generally performed their contracts with the British with great probity, this is supposed to be the result of pecuniary gain or fear of the British, than of innate principles of honour (Briggs 1877: 188-89). Since the days of the Muslim invasions on the South, the Lamani had practised robbery along with their traditional occupation (Briggs 1877: 190-191; Dubois 1936: 69-70; Buchanan 1807: 144-190 et. seq.). Major Gunthrope (Notes on Criminal Tribes frequenting Bombay, Berar, and the Central Provinces, 1882) says that some of the Lamani, in their palmy days, undertook dacoities on the most extensive scale. Gangs of 50 to 150 well-armed men would go long distances from their tandas to
rob houses in villages, or treasure parties or wealthy travellers on the highways. They also indulged in cattle-lifting. However, he also noted the Lamani virtues as well, viz., the number of those who adopted an honest mode of livelihood was increasing and the predatory practice of some of them was due to the deprivation of their former occupation by the cessation of the continual wars in India under native rule, and by the extension of roads and railways rendering their mode of transport obsolete (quoted in Russel and Harájállal 1916: 190-91).

For Mackenzie, they were basically an intelligent, though illiterate, people, their virtues preponderating over their vices. Generally they were truthful and brave and once gained over, were faithful and devoted followers. Despite his apprehension that a time must come when all their peculiar, distinctive marks and traditions would be lost, even after hundred years, they have been able to retain their peculiarities; and, this capacity must be attributed to the strength of persistence of their cultural organization, inspite of their economic poverty.

The apparent contradictions in these opinions of the officials, missionaries and travellers about the early Lamani resolve if we put together the available material and analyse the accounts objectively. If we consider their stealing and
wandering habits and peculiar magical practices they may be considered as a barbarous community in a civilized country, while if they are considered as members of an alliance with the governments, one has to admit their general utility to the state, either by promoting commerce or maintaining armies in the field.

The Problems of Maintenance of Cultural Identity:

In the context of South Indian cultural milieu, because of their distinctive characteristics, the Lamani are considered as one of the very colourful and interesting people. Some of the writers mentioned in the preceding paragraphs have an apprehension that the Lamani would not be able to retain their cultural identity for long because of their increased contact with others. But their prophesies have not yet materialized. Therefore, why and how the Lamani experienced the radical changes in their economy as well as the increased cultural contact and yet have been able to retain their social/cultural identity is an important issue.

Some of the distinctive identity marks, which act as the community's boundary-maintaining means and mechanisms are: (i) a common name: Banjara, (ii) endogamy, (iii) distinctive dress and ornamentation of their women, (iv) Banjari dialect, and (iv) their exclusive, separate settlements.
Among themselves, they apply the term *Ghor* when addressing mutually: *Ghor Mati* and *Ghor Dasi* as distinguished from *Khor Mati* meaning a non-Lamani person, indicating their sense of separateness and identity. Their awareness that they are one people inspite of spreading over the whole country, and known by different regional names, is evident in their preference for being called by the generic, original name 'Banjara'.

Marriage among them is based on the principle of community-endogamy and clan- and lineage-exogamy. If a woman marries outside the community, she is thrown out. In the past, they used to kidnap others' children and such children were called foster children (*palgoot*). An outsider was considered an alien (*Jāngad*) whose descendents in the third descending generation could be admitted into the caste. All these restrictions and taboos had the sole aim of maintaining the purity of blood. However, inspite of their best efforts, it has not been possible to check stray cases of miscegenation, as in case of the prostitution.

In the past, Lamani men's dress was typical which included short drawers, a shirt, and a turban, with silk tassels hanging from their waist band and ear lobes. But today men's dress has changed as to be indistinguishable from that of other peasants and, the drawers and tassels have been
dropped out. However, surprisingly the dress of the Lamani women (basically Marwari variant of Rajputani dress) has remained as distinctive as it was in the past for almost all women, except for a few educated and modernizing Lamani women who have adopted the local sari in place of ghagra or skirt, but the pattern of wearing the sari is that of Gujarati and Marwari women, thus retaining their distinct style in spite of changes in the materials of dress. The traditional dress of the women, made of coarse cloth with strongly sewn patchwork and gaudy-colour had been designed to suit the occupational needs of passing through jungle tracts flanked by thorny bushes, and collecting wood and other forest produce. The thin sari worn by the non-Lamani peasant women would have been useless for such work. Perhaps, this is the reason why there is no change in the dress of the women as the women still continue to collect forest produce and fire-wood. Moreover, this is an instance of the persistence of a cultural trait in the sense that once a dress pattern got established in response to the ecological and economic milieu, it persists in spite of changes in ecology and economy. But this dress is very thick and unwieldy for frequent washing, because of many ornate fixtures in it such as small mirrors, cowries etc. So, the women wash their clothes very sparingly and occasionally, and, for this reason, are usually dirty. Therefore, as a reform measure, they were asked to discard the traditional dress and adopt the thin, simple sari.
unintended consequence of which has been to make them more
attractive and vulnerable to prostitution. Now, the thick
and ornate dress is reserved for special occasions and a
simple one is used for daily wear, which can be easily washed.

Similarly, in ornamentation and hairdo the Lamani
women stand out clearly from other women of the region. The
Lamani women put on many thick, ivory rings on the forearms
and their dress is heavily embroidered, studded with small
mirror and cowries. A single dress costs Rs. 50-100. In
case of married women, the symbolically significant ornaments
indicating marital status are the ivory bangles on the upper
arms in addition to those on the forearms, chains in the
pinnæ which connect the hair plaits, and pendants (ghugris)
attached to the plaits of hair hanging from the temples, while
the symbolically significant ornament for a non-Lamani woman
in the South signifying marital status is the tali. These
days, the Lamani have started using the tali also in addition
to traditional bridal ornaments. In tattooing, too, the
Lamani women differ from others in that the latter have a
tattoo mark on their forehead in different designs, depending
upon the caste, while the Lamani women put a dot on the left
side of the nose below the nasal root, after the style of the
Rajput women. Though the ornaments do not cost much (on
average Rs. 30), as markers of cultural identity they are
quite helpful.
Inspite of borrowings from the various regional languages as they moved towards the South from their original Marwar region of Rajasthan, the Banjari dialect, a variant of the regional standard Marwari, is the most significant means of preserving identity. It is used only among themselves, mostly in the homes and in the settlements. In large gatherings like fairs, bazars, railway stations and bus stands, it is not difficult to identify Lamani women because of their dress, while it is difficult to identify Lamani men who look similar to any other peasants. The only other way to identify the men is by listening to their conversation. Therefore, in terms of cultural diversity of the country, the Lamani can be called an ethnic-cum-linguistic group.

They are very conscious of separate, cultural identity as well as the need to preserve and protect it from being engulfed by the regional dominant castes, though they are forced to borrow because of the changing circumstances a few items, while some items have been voluntarily borrowed. But the borrowing has not been wholesale so as to disintegrate their life-style, and even the borrowed items have been reintegrated into their own cultural idiom, by using the technique of change by analogy-formation as in case of their pantheon and changing dress of the women.

Their emphasis on settling down in separate, exclusive settlements in order to keep themselves at a safe
distance from others, naturally gives them an opportunity to minimise contacts in areas which are considered detrimental to their identity, and to establish and develop those that are necessary like economic interdependence, secular interaction, and modern political, administrative links, and so on. Inspite of sedentary life for nearly a century or so, the Lamani still distinguish themselves as denizens of the tandas (caravans or hordes) as opposed to the settled village folk (oor-maniyavaru). The cultural and social separation of the Lamani is also evident from their frequent use of the term "we" as opposed to "they", the permanently settled villagers.

In fact, the multi-caste villagers are not really bothered about the Lamani remaining aloof and, to that extent, they are passive or indifferent towards the Lamani cultural semi-autonomy, thereby indirectly making it possible for the Lamani to remain as they are. I did not notice any cultural trait from the Lamani culture having entered the non-Lamani culture.

The majority of the local peasants belongs to the Lingayat sect which is a vegetarian group and, therefore, it feels that it is good if the Lamani, who are non-vegetarians, stay separately. The Lingayats, Jains and Brahmins often complain that, during rainy season, it is difficult for them to enter the settlements because of the dirty sanitary practices of the Lamani and the bad odour of fish which is
spread out in front of the houses for drying. In a way, the Lamani also are happy to live away from the multi-caste villages. They know fully well that they drink a lot and lose tempers, and often indulge in loud, and obscene brawls, and, this would create an unseemly scene for the others.

CONCLUSION

The "different orientations in the means of livelihood are reflected in the religious attitudes and codes of social obligations" in case of Lamani, too, as in the case of other communities such as the African ones (Forde 1960: xvi). From the days of closely-directed economic, political and religious life in the pre-British period, it is a great change for the Lamani to settling down and adopting agriculture and wage labour which in turn have necessitated modifications in their social organization, polity and religion. In this process the Lamani have emerged themselves as relatively emancipated individualists from their earlier submission to tighter hold of the naik and his council. The changes in economy which necessitated increased contact with others which together have modified greatly the Lamani belief and ritual system. As a result, the communal celebrations and rituals are becoming fewer and far between, while family-level observances are increasing in number. Thereby, the nouveau riche Lamani are exhibiting their relative affluence by giving lavish feasts to the settlement, which is not possible in the context of
communal celebrations because of the egalitarian method of managing such celebrations by equal contributions. The number of community-level celebrations is decreasing because of the lessening willingness and spirit of cooperation amongst the Lamani today. Thus, there seems to be a correspondence between the degree of social integration and the degree of ritual and ceremonial unity, as Forde rightly observed in the case of African societies: the "... belief and ritual and ... to mirror the scale and degree of social integration. The greater the economic self-sufficiency and the political freedom of action of localized groups, the greater the segmentation of ritual activity and the particularity of the objects of worship. On the other hand, the closer the integration of economic activity and social control among such groups, the more extensive socially and the more firmly interconnected are the basic concepts and ritual forms" (1960: xvii).

The role of religion in Lamani life is not limited to the religious and belief sphere alone but is related to other aspects as well. This is more so in simpler societies which are characterized by integrated cultures and less true in case of Lamani who have been able to maintain their cultural identity, inspite of contact with advanced, regional cultures for centuries. The role of religion in the life of Lamani as well as of the villagers in India is pervasive providing ties between the living and the dead, holding kinsmen and affines
together in family rituals, necessitating pilgrimages which provide travel, adventures and new experiences and intersettlement bonds. Religion also provides for the Lamani, occasions of rewarding Aya clients, of gift-exchange, of emotional security and group solidarity. It also provides "courage and hope in areas of life where uncertainty and anxiety are most prevalent" (Opler quoted in Singer 1961: 282).

Religion sanctifies and therefore sustains social usage; it sacralizes the assumption of relationships. That is, it lends its sanction to the structure and values of the society, and in this sense is indispensable to the integration and orderly existence of the community (Nadel 1970: 201). Because of this nature of religion we find that when the Lamani economy and its associated social practices and values changed, the supporting religious and value system also has undergone modifications and changes. While many traditional ceremonies emphasizing rain, fertility and protection against the ravages of the epidemics have lost much of their former significance (the community's sacrificial feasts are now arranged on fewer occasions because of increasing cost and weakening spirit of cooperation among the residents of the settlements) due to economic changes, culture contact and widening world-view, nevertheless it is also true that these same ceremonials still retain attraction for the Lamani. The future of these seems assured for many years to come, partly as a survival of beliefs
and sentiments associated with their former vital role, and partly as dramatic pageantry. As managing groups for much of this ceremonialism, the future of the Lamani panchayats appears assured. But, both the panchayats and the ceremonies have lost much of their esoteric and deeply religious significance. However, the outward manifestations of these in actual observance would continue, as do their folklore, the exoteric pageantry, when other bases have been lost. In fact, a close observation of these ceremonials indicates several levels of persistence of some of the past ceremonies and beliefs (such as sacrifices to epidemic deities), as well as of acculturative borrowings (agricultural rites). In this sense, while the Lamani peasantization and the consequent increased impact of Hinduism has been a contributing factor in the transformation of their earlier animistic religion, it is also true that by tolerating the merger of certain rites of the Hindu festival calendar, these very same animistic rites are being perpetuated. Thus, rather than further reducing the traditional rituals and beliefs, it is apparent that the influence from the Hindu high castes on the Lamani has been to Hinduise them more and to widen their ceremonial and belief system. When faced with the need to decide one way or the other in personal observance, a Lamani picks up the traditional and/or the modified version, depending upon his degree of acculturation, occupation, the level of economic status, and education and the social milieu in which he lives (in settlements or in multi-caste villages).
This borrowing of myth, rituals and ceremonies by an erstwhile animistic group seems to have been more rapid only in the last one hundred years, after the Lamani settling down, and is itself a feature of the gradual breakdown of the rigour of Hindu caste-hierarchy, as a result of over-all changes in the expanding economic system of the country. The emulation of high caste behaviour as a mechanism of sanskritization was far more difficult in the past, when the norms of caste-hierarchy were more rigid. A similar process has been noticed among the Nayars of South Malabar by Gough (1952: 15). In an historical perspective the Lamani have moved through a full circle. They were said to be descended from Rajputs (a Hindu high caste) and so they were a caste. When they left their home after the fall of Chittor to become suppliers to the army in the south and thereafter, they slipped down to animism. Now with sedentarization, again, they have acquired but a low caste status in South India.

Hinduism is credited with a wonderful capacity to absorb alien cultures by incorporating the main traits of "alien" cultures and thereby establishing similarity with them, so that the alien loses its angularities of distinctive identity. But we notice that, since the Lamani have been and continue to be a minority in any region of India and since they are culturally less developed, their tribal culture did not pose a challenge to Hinduism in the new context of increa-
sed contact. Hence, no conscious efforts have to be made on the part of Hindus to absorb the Lamani traits. If at all, it has been a process otherway round, viz., the Lamani imitating, in the last 100 years, some of the traits of high Hinduism and, thereby themselves becoming a new caste, while retaining at least some elements of the basic or key structure of their identity, so as to enable them to remain a viable cultural group. Of the many elements of their cultural identity in different contexts in the monograph, the following impressed me as distinctive: the name of the community, their women's dress, dialect, exclusive settlements, endogamy, their strong sense of clannishness, and the still viable systems of kinship, social control, and of religious and value clusters, despite modifications in them.