The educational system is an organization of the socio-cultural behaviour of its role-incumbents. It is an organization and a system with the same degree of sophistication and determinism as we may find in any of the natural or sociological systems found elsewhere. Of course the degree of sophistication of a system depend on the nature and quality of its elements and the way in which they are grouped and co-ordinated for the fulfilment of their purposes. To understand the working of a system we should know their basic elements and their organization. This is true whether we are studying an educational system, an economic system or even a biological system. A system not only has certain number of basic elements but they are also differentiated and integrated in a particular manner in order to serve the purpose of the system or any of its constituent parts. Differentiation necessarily means segmentation of the whole system into different units or elements and their combinations. The educational system is segmented and differentiated into personalities, roles, role-sets and collectivities. Education can be studied as a system of roles, role-sets or alignments and collectivities based on a principle of differentiation to fulfil its objectives. But it will be a grave mistake if we consider that education can be understood only by treating it as a closed system which will function in the same way under all circumstances. As a matter of fact education is not a closed system. It is a sub-system of the society and therefore it changes along with the changes in the society. It is therefore imperative to treat education
as both a system as well as a sub-system. Education is intimately connected with the larger society not only because the society influences education but also because education influences society. The different elements of the larger society and that of the educational system influence each other in number of ways. This mutual influence between education and society can take place in an expected or intended manner as well as in an unintended or unexpected manner as well. The society influences the students, teachers and other elements of the educational system. The stratification of the society may influence the role of the students and teachers in the educational system. Similarly any of the structural elements of the society can influence the roles the role-sets and collectivities of the educational system. This does not mean that education has no norms and objectives of its own. Education as a system operates not as a closed system but as an open system in which along with the norms and values of the educational system the norms and values of the larger society also influences the roles of the educational system. Therefore we have to study education with reference to member of variables some of which belong to the educational system itself. They can be called as internal variables such as the students, teachers the administrative body etc. The other set of variables are external to the education system. They may be called as external variables such as the different structural elements of the larger society. When we consider the internal variables we are tackling the education as a system and when we are tackling the influence of the external variables on education we are considering education as a sub-system. Both the internal
as well as external variables can act independent or dependent variables. Education may change and develop because of the change and development of its constituent parts acting independently of other external factors or it may change and develop because of the influence of the external factors in which case they are only dependent variables.

The basic elements of the college social system are firstly the students secondly the teachers and thirdly the set of administrative and managerial body of the college. The character of each one of these matters vary much in deciding the character of the whole educational system and its outcome. Students and also other elements of the college social system can act as both independent as well as dependent variables of the system. The present study is concerned with the culture and role of the student in the college as a dependent variable of the larger society to which they belong. It makes an attempt to record and explain the culture and role of the new generation of college students belonging to a town in Karnataka. It is the hypothesis of the present study that the culture and role of the students are influenced by their social background and that education is a sub-system of the wider society.

The Method of Study:

To test this hypothesis a systematic empirical investigation has been undertaken in two of the colleges of Udupi Town through the employment of an elaborate questionnaire. Students have been selected on the basis of random sample by using the chart of random numbers given by Fisher and Yates in their book statistical
tables. The sample size comes to 65.6% of the total number of third year students of both the colleges. The third or the final year students have been contacted because the role of the student emerges in its bold relief only at the third year. The first and the second year of stay in the college serves as a period of socialization of the youth within the college social system.

Our informants are educated and being students they are still continuing this education. Therefore there is no other tool so admirably suited as the questionnaire to collect the required information about their culture and role in the college. It should be admitted that the students in both the colleges as informants of this study extended their whole hearted co-operation. Since they have been in the habit of answering questions in the tests and examinations conducted by the college writing the answer for the questions in the questionnaire was neither difficult nor inconvenient to them. The formulation of the questionnaire took much time as it had to be designed so as to reach the required areas of the student's life in the college. The questionnaire was formed and finalized in two steps. First a tentative questionnaire was formed and given to some students for their response. On the basis of their responses the questionnaire was further improved and finalized. The students were approached for their responses in the month of January 1980. Questionnaire have been distributed to them in their classes and they have been given the guide lines and instructions to answer the questions of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was anonymous and thus their identity has been protected in order to make them feel free to answer all the questions in the questionnaire in a proper manner.
The Tabulation of the Data:

The data was tabulated with a view to prepare two kinds of statistical tables. Firstly a whole set of summary tables have been prepared in order to ascertain a complete picture of the culture and role of the students in the social system of the college. Secondly a set of cross table pertaining to the role of the students belonging to different levels of academic achievement, different caste groups, and different class groups have been formulated in order to find out whether they are related with the role of the students in the college social system. The relation of the role of the students to the whole set of caste, class and academic divisions have been ascertained with the help of the chisquare test.

The three levels or academic division have been worked out on the basis of the marks obtained by the students in the previous examinations. Those who have secured an average of 35% to 49% of marks have been considered as belonging to the mediocre level. Between 50% and 59% as middle level and 60% and above as higher level or as bright students. Thus on the basis of the marks obtained by the students in five of the previous examinations it was possible to determine the academic standing of every student of this study.

The caste background of the students have been ascertained by the help of the questionnaire. Students were asked to name the caste group to which they belong. While tabulating the data it became clear that there are too many caste groups and from the lower castes very few students are attending the college. Therefore lower caste groups with very few students have been merged into one group. Thus Mogaveera, Billawa, Scheduled
Caste and Scheduled Tribes became a single category for the purpose of analysis. Similarly there were also some castes having a status higher than of the Mogaveera, Billawa, Scheduled Caste and Tribal group with a very low percentage of students. These castes have also been merged into one category and called as the minor castes of the middle range. Christians mostly Roman Catholics though not a caste group in the Hindu society are also kept as a separate group along with one Muslim student for the purpose of analysis. Thus our division of the castes in the student population consists of five groups namely 1) Brahmins 2) Bunts 3) Minor castes of the middle range; 4) Mogaveera, Billawa Scheduled castes and tribes; 5) Christians.

To ascertain the class background of the students a class division with six categories of class namely 1) Upper Upper 2) Lower Upper 3) Upper Middle 4) Lower Middle 5) Upper lower 6) Lower Lower have been provided in the questionnaire, and the students were asked to round off the class group to which they belong. They were asked to select their class group only after taking into consideration the economic worth of their parental family as well as their own psychological identity in the given class division. While tabulating the data of the six fold class division it was found that a big majority of the students belonged to either the Upper middle class or to the lower middle class and there were only very few students in the Upper and the lower classes. Therefore the sub division of the Upper and the lower classes have been merged into one group; merged into a single class division. Thus our class division of the students
consists of only four categories. These are 1) Upper class
2) Upper middle class 3) Lower middle class 4) Lower class.

The Social Background of the Students:

Our sample consists of 365 students drawn from the two
colleges of Udupi Town. Of this 196 or 53.70% are boys and the
remaining 169 or 46.30% are girls. The students belong to an
age group between 19 and 26 years. However majority of students
are in the age group of 19 to 22 years. 318 or 87.13% of the
students are Hindus, 46 or 12.60% are Christians. Only one
student is a Muslim. Students from almost all the castes of
the Hindus are round in the college. But majority of them are
from the Upper Castes, especially the Brahmins, 216 or 59.18%
are Brahmins, 45 or 12.33% are Bunts. Mogaveera, Billawa,
Scheduled Caste and Tribes all put together are only 26 or 7.12%
32 or 8.77% are from the different minor castes of the middle
hierarchy. Christians are 46 or 12.60% (only one student is a
Muslim) of the total sample. Thus it becomes clear that it is
mostly from the higher castes the students are attached for
college education.

The social class composition of the students of this study
are - 36 or 9.86% are from the Upper class, 199 or 54.53% belong
to the Upper middle class, 119 or 32.60% are from the lower middle
class, 11 or 3.01% belong to the lower class. The social class
composition of the sample shows that the majority of the college
students come from the middle class.

Udupi is a small town in the District of Dakshina Kannada
of Karnataka. There are two first grade colleges in this town with commerce Science and Arts faculties. Agriculture, white collar professions and business are three important occupations of the parents of the students. 10% or 29.32% of the students reported that they come from agricultural families. 109 or 29.46% belong to families where the father is a white collar professional, 69 or 18.90% of the students come from business families. 10 or 2.74% of the students said that their father is a priest by profession. 17 or 4.66% belonged to miscellaneous jobs and 53 or 14.52% of the students did not disclose the profession of their parents. Thus agriculture, white collar profession and business are the three important occupations of the parents of the students. This clearly shows the urban characteristic of the community.

The educational standard of the parents also point out the same thing. Out of the total 365 families only 15 or 4.81% of the student mentioned that their fathers do not know reading and writing. 63 or 20.19% has education upto primary school level and 160 or 51.26% upto the High School level and 23 or 7.31% upto Pre-University level, 38 or 12.18% are graduates, 12 or 3.85% are post-graduates and one person has the doctorate. Both the occupational and educational background of the parental families of the students show that college students even in a small urban community like that of the town of Udupi come from families with urban occupational and educational characteristics.