RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEM OF MAHARASHTRA

Conditions of Social Action

Territoriality: Loomis says, "The setting of the social system in space is called its territoriality ......... Territoriality determines within limits, how much space each person or group may have, the frequency and intensity of interaction with the group and the probabilities of systemic linkages between groups". 1

The peasant community studied here is spread over a distinct cultural region, called Maharashtra. The chief characteristics of the cultural region described by Karve and Dandekar are (1) commonness of language: it is a stretch of contiguous territory where one language with its various dialects is spoken, (2) common usages as regards marriage, kinship system and family organization, (3) recognizable similarity in dress, utensils and food preparations of the people, (4) people pay homage to same saints, tell the same stories, sing the same songs and even show the same attitude towards certain situation of life. 2

Physical Setting: The State of Maharashtra was formed as the separate administrative unit on the linguistic basis in 1960. It is situated on the west coast of India between 22.1°

2. I.Karve and V.M.Dandekar Anthropometric Measurements of Maharashtra (Poona : Deccan College Post-graduate- and Research Institute, 1951 ) p.1.
and 16.4° north latitude and 72.6° and 80.9° east longitude. It is bounded by the Arabian sea in the west, Gujarat in the north-west, Madhya Pradesh in the north, Andhra Pradesh in the south-east and Mysore in the south. The region is formed by the trap rock system, and is drained by a number of rivers, big and small most of them forming tributaries of Tapi, Godavari, Bhima, Krishna, Wardha, Painganga and Vainganga.

Area and Population: The total area of Maharashtra is 3.06 lakh square kilometres, which is about one tenth of the area of the Indian Union. As per census of 1961, the population of the State is 3.96 crores and forms 9 per cent of that of the Indian Union. Of the total population, 2.84 crores reside in the rural areas and form 71.8 per cent of the total population as against the corresponding percentage of 82.0 for the Indian Union. The density of population is 129 per square kilometre as against the corresponding figure of 143 for all-India. Looking to the sex ratio there are 801 females per 1000 males in urban area whereas in rural area there are 995 females per 1000 males. The classification of the population according to livelihood status indicates that cultivators form about 22 per cent and agricultural labourers 11.4 per cent as against 23 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, for the country as a whole. The over-all literacy percentage is 30 corresponding to 24 per cent for India. Maharashtra State ranked fourth in 1961 in literacy among all States of India. Marathwada sub-region is lagging behind with literacy
percentage of only 16; while Greater Bombay has 59. The literacy percentage among the females continues to be low (17 per cent) as against 42 per cent among the males. The rural and urban literacy percentages are about 22 and 51 respectively. The 30 per cent of villages in the State did not have a school in 1961. These villages accounted for about 8 per cent of the rural population of the State. Most of these villages have a population less than 5000 persons.

Administratively the state is divided into four divisions and 26 districts. But culturally it is divided in five sub-regions viz. (1) Vidarbha - comprising north-eastern eight districts- Bhandara, Nagpur, Chand, Wardha, Yeotmal, Amravati, Akola and Buldana, (2) Marathwada - comprising five south-eastern districts- Nanded, Parbhani, Bid, Osmanabad and Aurangabad. (3) Khandesh - comprising two northern districts- Jalgaon and Dhulia. (4) Desh - comprising 7 central districts- Nasik, Ahmednagar, Poona, Satara, Sangli, Sholapur and Kolhapur. (5) Konkan - comprising three western districts on the coast- Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri.

Climate and cropping pattern. On the basis of average annual rainfall and the nature of rainy season, the regional features of the State are broadly as follows -

(a) In the coastal sub-region, Konkan, the rainfall varies from 80" to 140"; the high rainfall occurs in the hilly area of western ghats (Sahyadri). Paddy and nagli are principal
grain crops. Coconut, arecanut, mangoes, jack-fruit and spices are main horticultural crops.

(b) The entire area on the eastern side of ghat is practically plateau, known as Desh and is in rainshadow. The rainfall in this area gradually decreases from 20" to 25", while over major part it is around 25" to 30" and in quite a few places it is less than 20". The crops commonly grown are jowar, bajri (millet), groundnut, pulses, sugar-cane and cotton.

(c) In Marathwada sub-region, the rainfall varies from 30" to 40". Bajri, jowar, wheat, cotton, groundnut and pulses are the important crops.

(d) In the Vidarbha, the rainfall varies from 30" to 60". It gradually increases towards the east, particularly in the forest areas of Chanda district. Paddy, Kharif jowar, cotton and pulses are the main crops. This sub-region is famous for oranges (Santra).

The climate is hot, particularly during summer. At most of the places throughout Maharashtra the maximum temperature remains above 30° centigrade and minimum temperature remains above 18° centigrade. The cool climate is at Mahabaleshwar in Satara district (maximum temperature 24.6° centigrade and minimum 16.7° C.). Summer is very hot in Khandesh and Vidarbha. At Jalgaon (Khandesh) the maximum temperature
is 34.8° C. and minimum 19.8° C., whereas at Akola the maximum temperature is 34.1° C. and minimum 20.1° C.

People: Maharashtra is the transitional socio-cultural region between the north and south and thus a combination of Sanskritic northern traits and Dravidian southern traits are found in this region. Due to ancient connections with the north, the northern traits are dominant. Marathi is the spoken language derived from Sanskrit. It has several dialects viz. Nagpuri and Varhadi in Vidarbha, Ahirani in Khandesh and Konkani in Konkan.

Vindhyan Hills served as the barrier between North and South India. The Aryans travelled to the South through the plains of Gujarat and then to Vidarbha. The population of Vidarbha exhibits a considerable mixture with Aryan or other Northern races which affected both physical appearance and language. From here the Aryans moved towards the west. Baden-Powell says, "It is highly probable that a number of the best races - e.g. those collectively called "Maratha" were the result of a fusion of Aryan and Dravidian blood. And the same may be true of the Kunbi caste and the Ahir".¹ He further says that superior Maratha families may be more Aryan than the rest. There are still many remnants of the non-Aryan races in the hills, bordering the State. On the north-east there is Gond, a Dravidian race, which ruled that part known as Gondwana till

TRIBAL PEOPLE

Thakur (Poona district)

Banjara (Aurangabad district)

Madia Gond (Chanda district)

Katkari (Ratnagiri district)
the Marathas seized power. Korku is another tribe in Satpura Hills to the north of Vidarbha. In the same hills Bhil is another tribe towards the western part and north of Khandesh. In the Western Ghat and Konkan several tribes are found viz. Warli, Thakur, Mahadeo Koli, Katkari. In south Maharashtra, the dialect varies somewhat, showing a distinct trace of the non-Aryan or original element.¹

Other caste people also migrated to Maharashtra from the surrounding states. In Vidarbha Kohali and Powar immigrated from the north and Komati from Andhra Pradesh. Rajput, Lewa, Gujar and Vanjari immigrated from the north to Khandesh and western Vidarbha. Marwadi, Gujarati and Sindhi, immigrated from the north, are traders settled all over Maharashtra even in rural area. Vadar and Lingayat immigrated from Mysore and are found predominantly south of Poona.

There is some controversy about the origin of the name of this State. Maha means "great" and Rashtra means 'country' and thus Maharashtra is 'magna ratio'. Some persons say that the name is derived from the scattered major castes, Mahar and Marathas.² Others say that the name is derived from Rashtrakuta dynasty which ruled this area for some centuries after A.D.750. Maharashtra is recorded in a chalukya inscription of A.D.580 as including three provinces and 99,000 villages.

1. Ibid p.112.
2. Ibid p.114.
Kunbl-Maratha is a dominant caste of this region forming 40 per cent of the population. The Nasik Gazetteer states that in 246 B.C. "Maharatta" is mentioned as one of the places to which Asoka sent an embassy; but the Marathas as people do not seem to be mentioned before the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Marathas spring mainly from the Kunbis. Even Baden-Powell states, "The originators of the modern Marathas completely disappear from history; and the race only reappears towards the close of the seventeenth century under Shivaji. This chief himself belonged to the caste or race also widely distributed, called Kunbl. Kumbis are noted agriculturists and spread over other regions, where they are called Kumbi or Kumbhi. Marathas are noted warriors. The name Maratha is often used for all people residing in this region or the people speaking Marathi language and the region is called Maratha country by the outsiders. About the people of this State Patterson says "Maharashtra is a large and populous region, noted for its characteristically vigorous and often violent approach to social and political problem solving".

Village: In the legal terminology the village is a territorial Unit. Brunner described the concept of a village which has the character of a "small, intimate, face-to-face group bound together by a sharing of common values and deep loyalties". Village is an ancien settlement in India. The

Jatak stories give us a faithful picture of the village life in India about fourth and fifth centuries B.C. We gather from these stories that the village was an important unit of administration even in those days. Manu distinguishes among three kinds of settlements - Gram (village), Pur (town) and Nagar (city). In 'Shukra- Matisara' (about 1000 A.D.) there is a mention of three types of rural habitations-Kumbha, Palli and Gram. Kumbha used to be half the size of a Palli and Palli was half the size of a Grama. At present the settlement having the population less than 5000 is called a village or rural for the census; but there exceptions. The settlements which had more than 5000 inhabitants were treated as rural because they did not possess urban characteristics.

The village communities in Maharashtra were based on the Aryan and not on the Dravidian model. Rules laid down in Smritis were generally observed in the village communities. The Pusa court of the Northern Smritikaras was actually functioning in Maharashtra down to the British period. The main features of the village and the rayatwari system is not changed through the Muslim, Maratha and British rules in Maharashtra.

2. Govt. of India "Census of India Vol. IV Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch" 1951.
The village life in the thirteenth century is evidenced in metaphorical verses of Dhyâneswâr, who called himself as Pandewar (Mahar). At this period Moâghals had established their influence in the North India, but Yadav kings were ruling in Maharashtra. The poem runs as follows: "An Officer (named) Squire Desire appressed the tenants by robbing them. Mr. Anger became a revenue Collector, and the kings' business was entrusted to him. Thus Passion was troubled. Squire Mind fomented treachery, and anarchy began. The whole town fell into a state of ruin.... Master Will was headman of Bodytown under Mistress Kindness, Mr. Self had there a pleasant time .... The thought of these two dominated the place; therefore I became angry, and I besought Master Will to keep in check his youngsters."

The village life is also described in another poem composed by Sknath, a Brahmin saint, who flourished in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. At that time Moâghals established their power in Maharashtra. Sknath said, "I am the Mahar of Vîthu Patil (Vithoba deity of Pandharpur). As his subordinate I render an account of the expended cash .... Returning from the transplanting of rice I beg half a bannock and eat it. All the night I keep awake beside a cow-dung fire.... The farmer's plough, the merchant's weight, the women's bangles - all my faculties are employed in this business. Here. Put the village clerk into my custody; we need a true account."
Bedekar states, "The Indian village was, for centuries, a complex stable group with internal differentiation of occupations, statuses, rewards and prosperity - all of these were rigidly stratified according to the traditional rules of Hindu caste system.\(^1\) Atra has used the analogy of the Hindu Joint Household to emphasize the gemeinschaft character of the village. He says "The village exists as a household of the whole village population. The peasant is the head of this household, the crafts-men are its members and the itinerant castes are like relatives and guests".\(^2\)

According to 1961 census, there are at present a total of 5,64,718 villages in India whereas there are 35,851 inhabited villages and 3,016 uninhabited villages in Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra there appear to be three types of villages which are differently constituted as regards their gestalt.\(^3\) These are (1) Compact or Nucleated village, (2) Scattered village and (3) Tribal village. Nucleated villages are found all over Maharashtra (in plains) except Konkan and hilly tracts. In a compact nucleated village; part of the land is set apart for habitation and most of the remaining portion is brought under cultivation by the colonizers. Some portion of this land is reserved for paths and roads, pasture and forest. The habitation area known as Gaonthan is clearly

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defined from the cultivated fields. Gaonthan is also called Pandhari and the cultivated fields as Shivar or Kali, the habitation land is white (Pandhari) and the cultivated land is black (Kali). In the village court (village council or Maya-panchayat) the defendant can swear or take an oath by Pandhari. He must also beg forgiveness of the Pandhari, if he is excommunicated and wishes to be taken back into the fold. The fields adjoining the habitation area are called Akhar and are most fertile as they are used by the villagers for the nature’s call. The line dividing two village lands is clearly marked on the road linking two villages. There are often five stones smeared with orange colour (shendur) denoting five Pandwas. This place is known as Shiv or Hiva. It has importance in rituals. When the bridegroom comes from another village, he is received ceremonially at the Shiv (village boundary) by the bride’s people. This village boundary is ceremonially crossed on the Dasara day, which is called Simollanghan (crossing the boundary). It is the memory of the fact that the Maratha marauding expeditions started on Dasara (after the rainy season ceased). On coming back villagers distribute to each other leaves of Shami (Prosopis spicigera) and Apta (Bauhinia racemosa) as a substitute for gold and silver. On Pola day or in case of a break of cholera epidemic, the disease is driven out of the boundary.

The inhabitants reside together in one central group of houses or cottages on an elevation at some convenient
point within the village area. Such an old dwelling site was surrounded by mud walls, having gateways which lead into narrow and treacherous lanes. At the corners were Buruz. The walls were constructed of stones in mud or unbaked mud bricks having the height of 15 to 20 feet and a thickness of 4 to 6 feet at the top. The gates (Vas) of thick wooden planks used to be closed from the sunset to sunrise. The gate was guarded by a Mahar, (Veskar) with the assistance of a guardsman (Jaglya). They had a small room by the inner side of the gate. Grant Duff mentions that Shivaji destroyed all village walls and allowed to fortification in his territory that was not occupied by his own troops. In the center of the village there was a gadhi (petty fort) of the village chief. This arrangement was made for the defence of the villagers against the enemy attack. The village walls are not essential at present and are not cared for. Remnants of these walls and gadhi are now found in many villages as the earth and stones have been taken out by the villagers for building and repairs of their own houses. Gates are still in existence but the doors are not closed now. Such village walls are not found in new settlements. Dandekar and Jagtap found such village walls in 12 villages out of 72 villages surveyed by them. In some cases a moat encircled the village wall, e.g. village Wyala in Akola district.

If the village is not settled on the bank of the river there is often a common tank or pond or a public well. In Nagpur, Bhandara and Chanda districts almost every village has a tank which is used for washing clothes and irrigating paddy fields. In a big village there are separate wells for each caste; untouchables are not allowed to draw water from the public well and thus have separate wells. In the author's village in Vidarbha, there is a well in each household of each big Maratha family. The women are secluded and they do not go outside the house to draw water. In some villages, well water is brackish. The villagers have to depend on the river water. Most of the small rivers become dry during summer.

Usually there is a public temple or the temple of a village deity (Madhi) and besides which there are many small temples; some are owned by castes or families. Usually there is a spreading tree (baniyan, pimpal or nimb) with a surrounding raised platform. This forms the common meeting place (par). Usually there is a place for funerals on the river bank with a small temple.

There is a community hall (Chavadi) in many villages which is used by village officials as their office, by the village council and also as a guest house. Dandekar and Jagtap found Chavadi in 35 villages out of 72 villages.¹ When there is no Chavadi, the temple hall is used for these purposes. A school building and the office of the Gram Panchayat are

¹. Ibid. p. 11.
VARIOUS FACETS of VILLAGE-KAMTHADI

- Old temple & Modern grain-store
- Grocery shop
- Village street
- Western view of the Village
- Maharwada
  (Habitation of the poor)
- Wadi
recently constructed in many villages. A radio set for the villagers to listen to rural programmes is supplied by the Government to some villages and is kept in the office of the Grampanchayat.

The houses and internal roads are not well planned in almost all villages, except the most recent settlements. The roads, paths and alleys are not straight and of equal width. There are some blind paths (Bol or Galli). Each major caste has a separate habitation area (neighbourhood) in the village, known as Ali or Mohalla or Vetal. The caste name is affixed with Ali e.g. Brahmin ali. Brahmins, Traders and big farmers (Marathas) live in the centre. The occupational pattern is related to the form of settlement; families following traditional crafts, (e.g. carpenter, goldsmith, trader) usually live in the village core, since they can thereby serve their clients better. Some traditional occupations need a large space therefore Kumbhar (potter), Koshti (weaver) and Dhangar (shepherd) live on the outskirt of the common habitation area. Mohamadans and Christians also live in a separate ward on the outskirt. The untouchable castes - Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Dhed, - have separate habitation areas isolated from the main habitation area. They used to live outside the village wall in old villages. The untouchable neighbourhoods are called Maharwada, Mangwada or Chambharwada according to the caste habitants. Maharwada is invariably found in every village. Thus there is
a saying in Marathi wherever there is a village, there is a Maharwada. The Maharwada is generally on eastern side of the village so that western winds do not blow from the untouchable area towards the main village. This side is generally lower side in elevation in the Deccan. If the Maharwada is found in another direction (like to the south in Indapur in Poona district), it is due to the direction of natural drainage.

In some village areas, there are small settlements called wadi. The term wadi is derived from the Sankrit word Watika meaning a garden plot. A wadi in modern Marathi means a garden plot of fruit trees and vegetables. The word in this sense is commonly used in Vidarbha, where wadi as a small group of huts is not seen. As a common rule the peasant families in Vidarbha do not live on their farms. A man may stay in his garden at night for watching, but he has a household in the Gaon, Wadi or Vasti as a small settlement is a common feature in western Maharashtra. For instance, there are 2046 such settlements in Ratnagiri district. There may be more than one wadi as satellites of a village. Wadis are named after villages, other kinds of settlements, castes, family names, personal names, trees, crops, animals, topographical positions, gods, spirits, temples etc.  

A wadi is generally a cluster of agnatically connected

1. The separate habitation area in the village for the people of Mahar caste is called the Maharwada.
households. It may sometimes have just one big family with its farm servants and livestock. Sometimes peasants live in temporary hutsments in wadis and have more permanent houses in the gaonthan, in which they live in the rainy season. Sometimes a wadi is a settlement of a particular caste which by the nature of its occupation may need a larger space than is available in a gaonthan e.g. Dhangarwadi. The Dhangars (shepherds) need large compounds near their houses for their sheep and goats. Sometimes the wadis become as populous as the old village to which they belong and craftsmen and merchants live there. In the canal irrigated area of Maharashtra, small wadis have become prosperous gaons.¹

The interrelation of wadis and villages reveals that wadis are incomplete units and are closely interrelated to villages from a civic and administration point of view. When they become independent of their villages, there is a great rivalry between gaon and wadi. There are some twin-villages, especially in Vidarbha. Both villages are known by the same name; but are distinguished by suffixing Kasaba to the name of main village and Path or Buzzruk to the name of a satellite village. The two villages are separated by a nala or road or by a few fields. The village officers are common for both villages and live in the main village. Craftsmen (Kasabl) also live in the main village (Kasaba).

¹ I. Karve op.cit.
The villages are named after the kind of settlement, family names, peasant names, trees, crops, animals, topographical positions, gods, spirits, temples, etc. These names are suffixed with gaon or khed (village) e.g. Wadgaon or Chinchkhed. Gaon is derived from sanskrit word grama. In Konkan village names are suffixed with ghar from sanskrit grha means a house, e.g. Guhaghar. Some examples of village names are - (1) Mahargaon in Buldana district (Mahar is a caste name; but besides Mahar other castes also live in this village. The village headman is Maratha). (2) Wadegaon in Akola district (The village said to be composed of several wadis kind of settlement). (3) Golegaon in Buldana district and Garegaon in Akola district (Rasul is a personal name of the Muslim chief and abad is a persian word for habitation). (4) Pimpalgaon - Chinchkhed, Vadgaon, Babulgaon, Takli, Mimbargaon, Umhargaon - denote kind of trees. (5) Turkhed in Amravati district (Tur is a pulse crop). (6) Gaigaon in Akola district (Gai stands for cow). (7) Dongargaon (Dongar meaning hill - topographical position). (8) Narayangaon (Narayan is the name god). (9) Deulgaon (Deul means temple).

If there are more than two villages of the same name in the same taluka, the clan name of the dominant family is suffixed with the name of the village. For instance, there are two villages in Poona district viz. Alandi (Devachi) and Alandi (Chorachi).
The caste population varies from village to village. For instance, there may be a single family of Sutar caste in a village, or there may be several families of a particular caste with only one clan-name. In such cases village exogamy is practiced.

The second type of villages called scattered or line villages, are in the Konkan. In these villages the houses are scattered along two sides of a road. No two houses have a common wall. The houses stand in their own compounds with fruit trees like mango, jackfruit, banana, coconut and spices. Rice fields are also nearby. In such villages there is not a sharp distinction between the habitation area and the cultivation area. This pattern has social advantages of residential propinquity and the same time the economic advantages of living on one's own land. The reasons for adopting this pattern of settlement are (1) lack of communication, particularly in rainy season, (2) rugged topography and heavy rainfall and (3) being a poor country there is no fear of robbers. Except the scattered houses the pattern of habitation is similar to a nucleated village. The caste groups live in isolated neighbourhoods. Kolis live near the seacoast and their neighbourhood is called koliwada. In a recent study Karve found that the Kolis were successfully defying the authority of the main village.¹ There is a Maharwada and there are few houses of tribal families in such villages. A few craftsmen and traders also live in these villages.

1. I.Karve op.cit.
The third type is of tribal villages, in which a few hutments are clustered in a forest or in fields isolated from the main village. The village boundaries are not defined. The heads of households are often members of the single close kinship group. There are no artisan and service caste families. In a Gond village two paths often cross in the center of the village, where there is a gotul, a meeting hall for unmarried girls and boys. There is also a hut for women in menstruation on the border of the village and men are not permitted to go near the hut. The group of hutments of Vanjari is called tanda. The Bhils are in the habit of changing the location of habitation on the one or other pretext ranging from a mishap to just a wish for change. In a village Ahupe in Poona district there were only two castes - semitribal. Mahadeo Koli and Mahar. Surprisingly, the greatest cluster of Mahar houses is almost in the center of the habitation area with their own well and temple situated nearby.¹

The small villages are now dependent on or systemically linked with a bigger village or a town where there is a weekly market, a cooperative society, a primary health centre, a veterinary dispensary, a middle school, or a high school, a milk collection federation, an agricultural association supplying various needs of peasants like cloth, medicines, stationery etc. Adam Smith has said "Compare the cultivation of lands in the neighbourhood of any considerable town with that of those which

lie at some distance from it, and you will easily satisfy yourself how much the country is benefited by commerce of the town.¹

2. Size: The size of the social system and subsystems is the necessary condition of social action. The size of the rural social system varies from village to village not controlled by the actors. In general, the term rural (village) connotes the population living in places with less than 5000 inhabitants; but there are few exceptions. A few non-municipal areas with less than 5000 inhabitants were treated as urban because they possessed urban characteristics and some places which had more than 5000 inhabitants were treated as rural, because they did not possess urban characteristics.²

Thus there are three types of villages (1) small having population less than 999 persons (2) medium - having population 1000 to 1999 (3) large - having population more than 2000 -

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>Percentage of Number of Villages with population</td>
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2. Govt. of India *Census of India 1951 vol.IV* Bombay, Saarashtra and Kutch (New Delhi: Govt. of India).
Nearly one-half of the villages in Maharashtra have a population which does not exceed 500 or 100 households if the family of average size is assumed to be five members.1

The small villages are often found in hilly areas and plains, where there are no industries or irrigation facilities. In Purna and Morna valley in Vidarbha, the soil is very deep and fertile. There are a number of villages having a population of less than 500 intermittently located at a distance of one to two miles around a big village. If one stands on the flat roof of the house, one can see 8 to 10 villages surrounding him. The old villages which were the administrative headquarters during Muslim and Maratha rule are generally large. The villages occupied by large number of traditional craftsmen such as Koshti (weavers) are also large. The size of villages which are located near the sugar factories and canal irrigated areas is recently increased. The Government desires that there should be a Grampanchayat in every village having more than 1000 population. Normally a grampanchayat should cover a single revenue village in view of local initiative can be developed only on the basis of one village. In case there are very small villages adjacently situated with a population of less than 300 to 400 they are combined together. According to the census of India 1961, ninety-nine per cent villages were covered by grampanchayats in Maharashtra and the average population per Grampanchayat worked out to 1253, whereas in Poona district 100

per cent villages were covered and the average population per Grampanchayat was 1940.

According to 1961 census there were 87 lakhs cultivators and 45 lakhs agricultural labourers in Maharashtra. Maratha-Kumbis whose main occupation is now agriculture, is the overwhelmingly major caste in most of the nucleated villages of Maharashtra; even in scattered villages of Konkan, Marathas and Kumbis combined together form a major caste.

3. Time: Loomis says, "Time like space may be facility but as a factor in action it generally is inexorable and cannot be made to stand still or be completely controlled by man. It is, therefore, a condition of action".¹

Some anthropologists have characterised Mexicans as manana people or "tomorrow people". The Mexican or Spanish American does to-day what can be done only to-day; he does not put that off till tomorrow. But he frequently does put off the things which will bring him future benefits, which can be put off for manana, for tomorrow, or any date in the future.² This is also the case with Indian peasant. He is not particular about time except the time of sowing, which is strictly adhered to. The popular saint of Maharashtra, Tukaram, described a Kumbi (peasant) as a man who will cover the dead body in his home in order to finish the sowing first. However, other agricultural operations are not planned and

1. C.P. Loomis and Z.G. Loomis op.cit.p.7
are not finished strictly according to any schedule. The work can be postponed by a day or two, if a guest visits or any other pretext. But with the introduction of irrigation there is a change in attitude toward time and the organization of work. The limit is fixed by the Government on the number of cash crops grown and rationed the irrigation water from the canal to the specific area of the land. As a result, the farmer has to decide well in advance what crops and how much of each have to be grown, and where each crop is to be planted. On the basis of his written application to the Irrigation Department, he is assigned specific dates and particular times of the day on which he will be given water. Thus he has to be time-conscious. The precise assessment of time involved in work tends to spread to other matters; a farmer now wants that his artisans should also finish the work by a particular day, often by a particular hour. The farmer growing cash crops can afford to keep a wrist watch and many possess them as an item of socio-economic status as well as a necessity.

The farmers in non-irrigated area are not so time-conscious. Many of them keep the almanac in Marathi in which detailed astronomical data with auspicious times are given. The people are particular about the day; but not about the hour and minutes. Even the illiterate women can count future full-moon days and moonless days. They can correctly tell us on what day a specific festival or fair will be held and for

how many days we shall have to wait for that specific day. The marriages are to be performed at the specific time of the day according to the almanac. But in practice, the specific time is often missed. They have various ways of computing time without the use of timepieces. The villager can tell time, of course roughly, by the position and length of the shadows, by the sun, or the rising of the bright red star (Shukra) before daybreak, or the position of seven stars (Saptarshi) circulating the stationary star (Dhruva) or the position of the phases of the moon at night. The woman at home know the time by the time by ringing of school bells.

The villagers do not feel the pressure of time. They "pass" the time and are not interested in "saving time". The farmers still get up at sunrise or dawn to go to fields, and return at sundown. The day is made for work and the night for the rest. At the festival or the meeting the villagers come and the place is filled only gradually. There is no hurry or a particular time for the function. The proceedings begin when most of the people assemble. A villager may invite somebody, "Come and see us" without telling a specific time, but only a particular day. The house-wife does not cook by the clock. She tells by the smell or the consistency, or the colour, or the resistance against the stirring spoon, or the passing of time is gauged by the intervening activities. The meals are served, when ready, without watching the timepiece. The guests are told, "Don't hurry" while taking meals; and their scheduled bus or
train is often missed. Visitors, asking how far it is to the
next village, find that "five minutes" may mean half an hour
or two hours, or a distance of one mile does not provide an
accurate measure.

The rural social system or agricultural system in
Maharashtra is as old as the Indian civilization. Before the
Aryans immigrated into this area Dravidians were cultivating
the lands. When immigrated communities settled in villages,
the main village occupation was agriculture and allied pursuits.
Even now the main occupation of the village communities is agri-
culture, although other village crafts are declining.

Since the beginning of the Christian era, as the history
tells, Kumbi-Marathas profess agriculture as their traditional
occupation. The Marathas formed a major part of the military
during the Maratha period, still basically they were peasants
and were engaged in agriculture during peace time. During the
British period most of them reverted to their traditional occu-
pation, agriculture.

The rural social system was not disturbed or changed
much till the establishment of the British rule in Maharashtra.
Likewise the agricultural system was not a target of instigated
social change till the beginning of the twentieth century. Due
to the intermittent famines since 1840 to 1908, it was necessary
to change the method of cultivation in order to increase the
yields of crops. Moreover, development of industries in England
and subsequently in India necessitated the increased production of raw materials like cotton, sugarcane, tobacco and groundnut. The peasants were attracted to grow these commercial crops and they were compelled to change their traditional crop-pattern. This compelling pressure has, at present, considerably increased to provide for feeding increasing population and industries and for exports and to check import of food grains from the foreign countries.

In the beginning, the change agents were the employees of the Agriculture Department which took proper shape by 1906 with the establishment of agriculture colleges, one at Poona and another at Nagpur. There was only one Agricultural Assistant for a taluka and one Agricultural Officer for the district in the beginning. The tempo of instigated social change was much increased with the launching of the community Development Programme in 1952 and the National Extension Service in 1953. Under this programme, there is one Block Development Officer and six or more Extension Officers (including one or two for agriculture) for an average of 100 villages (66,000 population) and a Gramsevak (village Level Worker), Assistant Gramsevak and Agricultural Assistant for each village or a group of villages according to the size of the village. The number of change agents still increased with establishment of the Panchayat Raj in May 1962 in Maharashtra in order to decentralize certain powers of the State Government. The Zilla Parishad has been established for rural area of every district and the Panchayat
Samiti in every Block to assign to it local government functions and to entrust the execution of certain works and development schemes of the State Five Year Plans.
BELIEF (KNOWLEDGE) AS AN ELEMENT

For Loomis, "a belief is any proposition about the universe which is thought to be true." Beliefs like other elements of culture, are internalized as part of the personality of the actor, who holds them. Parsons presented a most exhaustive treatment to belief and cognition. He has classed beliefs in two axes. The first differentiates empirical and non-empirical beliefs; on this axis they are respectively amenable or not amenable to scientific validation. The second axis differentiates existential belief from evaluative belief. Existential non-empirical beliefs are referred as "philosophical" belief systems of the culture. These philosophical belief systems differ from religious belief systems in that the cognitive element of the former has much greater primacy than it has for the latter. Implementation to action is a concomitant of religious belief systems but not for philosophical systems. One may say that when a philosophical belief is made the basis of a commitment of action it becomes religious. Religious beliefs are also characterized as non-empirical; but differ from 'philosophical'

2. T. Parsons, "The Social System" (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1951) p. 328.
3. Ibid. Chapt-VIII.
beliefs.

Philosophical Beliefs: - Before determining the philosophical concepts of the rural people we may consider here the philosophy of Hinduism in general so that it will be easy to understand the rural conceptual system.

Philosophical speculation began in India from the time of Vedas. According to orthodox Hindu belief, mentioned for the first time in Rigvedic hymn Purushasukta, the four Varnas or orders formed from primoral man (Purusha), who was the victim in the divine sacrifice which produced the cosmos. When Gods divided Purusha, the Brahmins emerged from his mouth, the Rajanya or Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet.

The untouchable caste find no mention in the hymn. The whole cosmos is believed to be dominated by one Supreme Being, which is identifiable with Self. But a distinction is drawn between the Cosmic Self and the Psychic Self. The Cosmic Self is the Supreme Reality, the Unity which lies behind all multiplicity, known as Brahma. But the Psychic Self, the manifestation on one's own self, is Atma. It is the subject which persists throughout the changes. Death does not touch it nor vice dissolve it. Permanance, continuity, unity, eternal activity are its characteristics.


The world moves on as a huge cyclical process without beginning or end. Death is followed by birth and birth by death as its constant companion. The life desires to get out of this infinite cyclical process.\(^1\)

According to a theory of action (Karma), almost every action of a man has a positive or a negative value.\(^2\) The idea of Karma teaches a Hindu that he is born into a particular caste because of certain actions he performed in a previous life (Janma). The Dharmasutras mention that if a man does good deeds (Punya) he will be born in a high caste and be well-endowed, while if he commits sinful acts (Pap), he will be born in a low caste, or even as an animal. The progress and retrogression of a soul goes on until it attains salvation, the nature of which is differently conceived in the different sects, but all have this in common that the perfected soul is released from the necessity of continual birth and death, and that it either lives in intimate and perpetual contact with God or is absorbed in Him. Birth in a particular caste becomes, therefore, an index of a soul's progress toward God.\(^3\)

The human life must be lived for the realization of four ideals of life, namely, dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Traditional values are centered around these concepts. The law of

2. Ibid, p. 84.
Dharma imposes upon the individual a set of rules to be followed in his relationships, filial, economic, religious and social. It implies the values of tolerance, ahimsa and freedom. The second ideal of artha may be interpreted as action or conduct leading to the economic or temporal good of the individual as living in a social group of which he forms an organic but unique part. It implies the values of acquisition of wealth, non-appropriation and nonstealing. Kama has a special feature and it means the enjoyment of life and thus proves to have a strong connective with the streak of pessimism and renunciation. It regulates the relationships between the senses on the assumption that the life of the flesh, far from being something sinful or harmful in itself, has necessary and moral function to perform. It implies the values of creativity (activity), achievement, innovation and self-restraint (Brahmacharya). Last, there is the ideal of moksha or salvation, which demands that all the actions must be performed by the individual with this ultimate end in view. It implies the values of renunciation or non-involvement, desire and effort for perfection and non-appropriation. The whole cosmos is conceived to be made up of many heavens (Swarga) one above the other and many hells (Narka), places of torture. One's actions (karma), good or bad, lead to him to heaven or hell. Buddhism also accepts the doctrine of rebirth and karma.

To facilitate the fulfilment of four ideals of life an individual's life is divided into 4 stages viz. Brahmacharya.
(studentship), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (contemplation) and Sanyasa (renunciation).

The dead ancestors are apotheosized, and offerings of food and drink have to be made to them periodically by their male descendants. Absence of these offerings will continue manes to a hell called put. The Dharmashastras say, "A man conquers the world by the birth of a son; he enjoys eternity by that of a grandson and the greatgrandfathers enjoy eternal happiness by the birth of a grandson's sons".

The influence of the Ghandhian philosophy led the villagers to participate actively in the National Movement against the British rule. The villagers were the major force in all National movements. Gandhi believed in the dignity of man. He renounced the status of untouchability maintaining that man is a being above to whom nothing is higher. The ultimate ideal of men is to realise God. Since the world is a creation of God, one must enjoy the world with a sense of sacrifice.

Philosophical Concepts of the Rural People: Most of the recent village studies make no mention of Hindu philosophical concepts. While reviewing the Indian village studies Kolenda reported that the achievement of Moksha (release from rebirth) is not a serious goal for most villagers. Instead, they are said to be preoccupied either with attaining better

2. R.N.Saksena op.cit. p.12.
next life or with attaining heaven and avoiding hell. In cognitive background study of six Hindu caste groups in Orissa regarding the low caste untouchables, Rath and Sircar found that the great majority of both high and low caste Hindus did not believe that untouchability was either due to birth from Harijan parents or due to their nasty habits or particular behavior or due to God's will or due to the deeds of past life or by sheer bad luck.

In her survey of people's idea of rebirth in Maharaashtra, Kunte found that the percentage of those who believed in the idea of rebirth for four caste groups were 65, 64.6, 73.7 and 49.1 respectively for (1) Brahmins, (2) Cultivator castes, (3) Artisan castes and (4) Harijans. One would have expected the greatest number of believers from the Brahmin groups; but it was not so. The group represented by the artisans showed the greatest orthodoxy in this respect. This group comprised of higher artisan castes which had attempted to come nearest to the Brahmanical rank e.g. Dalvadnya Brahmin (Goldsmith), Panchal Brahmin (Ironsmith). Harijans showed a relatively lower number of disbelievers both in case of the idea of rebirth and the theory of Karma. The attitude of Harijans reflects their revolt against all Brahmanical ideas.

In Varkute, a village in Satara district, questions on this matter were asked to a few selected individuals from each caste. A Maratha farmer believed in rebirth and law of Karma, while a second Maratha villager (the Patil), a Mahar and a Muslim did not believe in rebirth and the law of Karma. A Koshti and a Holar believed that the good or bad in this life definitely depended on what one had done in the past birth. A Koshti thought God had created castes. A Ramoshi believed in rebirth and Karma. He as well as a Holar and a Mang felt that God created the castes and the caste system was for the good of the society. It was also observed that nobody except a Maratha farmer believed the caste system to be connected with the theory of Karma. In the same study it was found that 25 per cent of the total population of Ahupe, a tribal village of Poona district, believed in the theory of rebirth and Karma. Similarly, 30 per cent of the people of Karul, a Coastal village in Ratnagiri district, believed this theory.

The villagers in Dongargaon (Akola District) believed that death is not the end of every being. They believed that each individual has the soul (Atma), which has existence beyond the death. This soul is eternal and infinite and in bondage which results its assuming different forms. All villagers believed in rebirth. They also believed that ultimately every being, in the process of evolution, by one's good

2. Ibid. p.62 and 64.
or righteous actions and deeds, by devotion and love to God and by His grace will secure emancipation of the soul or will be liberated from rebirth. Villagers’ concept of Moksha assumed that there is Vaikuntha or Vishnuloka where the liberated soul can rest peacefully and happily. Navbuddhas believed that the soul secures Nirvana, a stage similar to Moksha. The people of this village also believed in the theory of Karma. The villagers also believed that the god is both with form (Sagunakar) and without form (Nirguna nirakar).

Religion :- Religion is the centre round which the whole Indian social life rotates. Hinduism predominates in rural India. Peasants of Maharashtra mostly belong to Hindu religion. There are a few Muslim farmers in a few villages but most of the Muslim villagers work as agricultural labourers and petty traders. The way of living of Muslims in Konkan is similar to that of Hindus. Their women do not observe Parda (veil). They wear similar dress. Most of them do not speak in Urdu, but in Marathi. Thus it is often difficult to identify a Muslim peasant from Hindu peasant.

Jain farmers are often met in South Maharashtra and they are considered to be the progressive farmers. Since the conversion of Mahar caste villagers to Buddhism, the people professing Buddhism also found in most of the villages. Christian peasants are not evenly distributed in rural Maharashtra, but may be seen in a few pockets near the Christian Missions. In view of this the study has been concentrated on
Hindu peasants.

During B.C.300 to 500 A.D. Buddhism had spread all over Maharashtra. Buddhist caves are found in several places in Maharashtra even to-day. But later on Brahmanic Hinduism gave a set back to Buddhism. Jainism was restricted to South Maharashtra. There had been no conflict among sects in Maharashtra as in the case of Shaivites and Vaishnavites in South India.

The religious upheaval against the dominance of Brahmanic Hinduism began in Maharashtra about the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Manabhava:— The Manabhava sect appears to have originated in Maharashtra, and spread in other parts of India and Afghanistan. The Manabhava sect proclaimed a wholesale revolt against caste. But it proved unsuccessful giving rise to another sectarian caste. The followers of this sect were contemptuously treated and even bitterly hated by all classes of the population. At present, some villagers including farmers belonging to this sect are seen in Vidarbha region. At Sangvi Haveli, a village 7 miles to the west of Poona City, 13 families of Manabhava sectarians and about 25 Manabhava ascetics (including Panjabis) have been settled. They have a monastery affiliated with the main centre of the sect on this side at Phaltan. The monastery at Sangvi Haveli is known for its efficacy as a spirit-exorcising centre. Manabhava ascetics

Manabhavas have produced a literature known for its high quality and they have developed a secret script to record their work. Krishna and Datta are their patron deities.

Nathpantha: - Nathpanth is a Shaiva sect, which owed its organization, spread and power to the activities of one Gorakhnath. The Natha sect perfected the system of Yogic technique known as 'hata yoga', the mystic school of religious pursuasion and has depended for its spread on the attainment of miracle-working powers (Siddhis) by its great promulgators and later pontiffs.

In Maharashtra the Natha sect originated about the beginning of the 12th century. Mukundraj, the first Marathi Saint-poet-philosopher, who completed his work in A.D. 1188, mentioned the fact that his immediate preceptor was the third Natha in spiritual succession. A century later, Dnyaneshwara too mentioned his Natha affiliation.

The sacred book of the Natha sect called Gurucharitra, in which various miracles are described, is still devotedly read by the villagers, although they may not be affiliated to this sect. This sacred book was written by a Brahmin named Gangadara Saraswati about 1450 A.D.

Varakari Sampraday or Bhagwat Dharma: - The religious movement commencing with Dyaneshwara, who lived in the fifteenth century, gave rise to the 'Varakari Sampraday' or Varakari
Varkari means one who performs a pilgrimage. After Dnyaneshwara, Maharashtra had a galaxy of saints from all castes including Harijans and Muslims, whose names have become household words with the people of Maharashtra. Further, a large majority of these saints, who contributed to the new religious forces, were non-Brahmin. Many of the Brahmin reformers had some stain in their inherited purity which led or forced them to rebel against all artificial restraints. Dnyaneshwara, his brothers and sister Muktabai were born to their father after he had retired from the world and became a Sanyasi (monk). His spiritual guide, Ramanand, came to know that this Sanyasi had not obtained his wife's willing consent to change of ashram and he ordered him to go back to his native village and live with his wife. The children so born to the Sanyasi became marked objects of caste aversion and the Brahmins refused to perform the upanayana (initiation ceremony) when the brothers reached the proper age. The children remained in this unrecognised condition all their life but were revered notwithstanding this defect in their caste respectability.

Eknath, another Brahmin Saint attached little importance to caste distinctions. He fed an hungry Mahar at his house before the invited Brahmins had had their meals. When he was outcasted he allowed himself to be taken to the river for purposes of purification. There a miracle took place by which the merit of feeding an hungry Mahar was proved to be far
greater than that of feeding many hundred Brahmins. This intrepid Brahmin even dared to dine at a Mahar's house. Another saint Moropant was married to a low-caste (Mahar) girl. Krishnadas was similarly married to a barber girl. The inferiority of caste of these girls was discovered after marriage.

The story of Hahiram Bhat is also interesting. Being a Shastri, he did not find rest in Brahmanism and therefore, became a Mohomedan under the impression that its monotheism would satisfy the cravings of his heart, but failing to find the satisfaction he desired, he returned back to Brahmanism. Both Brahmins and Mohomedans found fault with him for these changes of faith, but he disclaimed being either Hindu or Mohomedan. He challenged the Brahmins to make him a true Brahmin as long as his circumcision mark was not removed and he challenged the Mohomedans to fill up the holes in his ears, which showed that he was still a Hindu. The Mohomedan converts to Hinduism, represented by Shaikh Mohomed's followers, even to this day observe the Ramjan fasts and Ekadashi fast and make pilgrimages to Macca as also to Pandharpur.¹

Shaikh Mohomed was previously a butcher; but left this occupation. He composed religious verses in Marathi. Other Saints include persons representing all castes, untouchables, repentant prostitutes and slave girls. Among these are Tukaram who was a Maratha-Wani. Namdev was a Shimp (Tailor). Sawata

was a Mali (Gardener), Marhari was a Sonar (Goldsmith), Gora was a Kumbhar (Potter) and Chokhamela was a Mahar. Among the women saints Muktabai, Janabai, Akabai, and Venubai are famous.

All these saints composed verses which are very popular among the rural people. Many illiterate villagers can recite these verses. Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram even composed verses in Urdu.

As the Shudras were exhorted to mutter the descriptive names of God for their salvation, these saints explored and perfected an easy method of salvation for the Shudras. The special method of preaching by means of peripatetic sermons delivered in temples, with the accompaniment of some simple music was carried to perfection by two saints Namdev and Tukaram.¹ By their poetic ability, their capacity for religious experience, and by their pure life, these saints impressed their contemporaries and won over their Brahmin opponents. Thus they were adored by all. These saints produced a revolution without the uproar of rebellion. Although they exploited the easy method of salvation and thus freed the Shudras from the Brahmanic domination in their spiritual life, they upheld the old order of the four varnas including their own status of inferiority in the scheme.² Their revolt was more or less of conceptual character, severely confined to the field of religious thinking, rather than one which would bring about a

¹ O.S. Ghurye, op.cit. p.106.
² Ibid. p. 108.
general revolution in the structure of the society itself.

According to the Varkari sect Bhakti (love of god) and Bhava (faith) are far superior in virtue to all other forms of worship such as the performance of rites and ceremonies of external worship, pilgrimages and ablutions, self-mortifications and facts, learning and contemplation.1 Followers of the Varkari sect have to temper their daily conduct of life with morality and humanism. This sect is often called "Bhagwat Dharma" and has a connection with Sknatha's sacred book "Sknathi Bhagwat".

One of the greatest exponent of the doctrines and practices of this school, Tukaram proclaimed modification of standard Hinduism which may well be considered an attempt to transcend it. In his famous verse he declared that he desired neither wealth nor even salvation but wanted to have the company of the saints and that for that end he would gladly agree to be reborn. To ask for rebirth is a sentiment that goes against the tenet of transmigration and the ideal of cessation of the inexhorable process.2 The prominence of this is given to the fellowship of the saints in this sect.

Varkaris objure the use of flesh as food. Buddhism exercised a great influence in this part as already mentioned. Some important doctrines are common in Varkari sect and Christianity. Robertson says, "Christianity holds as an essential

1. M.G.Banado, op.cit.
doctrine that God is manifest as the word. Of course the doctrine of the Eternal Word is also a tenet of the best Brahmanism. The word became incarnate and dwelt among men emptying himself of his glory and becoming a slave. Through faith in his Name, a faith which is engendered by God's free grace, the most sinful men and women are saved. The joy of the Holy Ghost is experienced in the fellowship of the saints.1

Rajwade, the famous Historian of Maharashtra was rather critical about the role of Varkari sect. He remarked that Maharashtra remained under the thraldom of slavery on account of the spirit of do-nothingness prevalent in the society due to the influence of Varkaris. In reply to Rajwade, an expert on the Varkari sect, Dandekar, pointed out the elevating and ennobling atmosphere which the saints in Maharashtra were instrumental in creating and which could be traced to the spirit of curbing the narrow self for a higher cause. No great achievement has ever been made by people unprepared to sacrifice their lives for a nobler cause and it is to the Varkari movement that one could trace the self-sacrificing, humanitarian and egalitarian spirit.2

Ranade has also assessed their contribution to the rise of Maratha power and in doing so he has remarked that there is a curious parallel between the history of the Reformation movement in Europe and the struggle represented by the

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lives and teachings of these saints who flourished about the same time in Maharashtra.

Maharashtra Dharma: - Ramadas, a contemporary of Tukaram, stands in a class by himself. He was a Brahmin. He took a more positive and this worldly view and his appeal was limited to the specific class of people viz. the Marathas. He exhorted to Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji (founder of Maratha Power in Maharashtra), "unite all who are Marathas together" and "propagate the Dharma of Maharashtra". Dharma means the duty, the path to be followed. (Although this could be discussed under Norming it is here treated because of its religious importance.) The principal features of this Maharashtra Dharma have been given by Ranade as follows - "It modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness. It raised the Shudra classes to a position of spiritual power and social importance, almost equal to that of the Brahmins. It gave sanction to the family relations and raised the status of women. It made the nation more humane, at the same time making integration possible by mutual tolerance. It suggested and partly carried out a plan of reconciliation with the Mahomedan. It subordinated the importance of rites and ceremonies and of pilgrimages and fasts, and of learning and contemplation to the higher excellence of worship by means of love and faith. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It tended in all these ways to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity both of thought and action and prepared it, in a way no other
nation in India was prepared, to take the lead in re-establishing a united native power in the place of foreign domination".

The overall influence of Varkari sect and Ramdasa's Maharashtra Dharma on the rural people of Maharashtra can be summarised here. Men ceased to believe that the priest was a necessary medium between God and the man for purposes of salvation. The domination of the Brahmin caste as God's creation, whom other castes should serve and worship, lost much of its potancy. The people came to feel that they were free to attain salvation by faith and love in spite of their low origin. The sanctity of married and family life was nobly vindicated by the saints and this was a moral triumph over the past traditions of asceticism.2

The dominance of Brahmins was again brought back in the Eighteenth century A.D. under the rule of Peshwas. The ideals propagated by the saints diminished into orthodox theory of Brahmins, who had secured many pecuniary privileges for themselves denied to others. They occupied the posts of importance below that of the village post of the Accountant (Kulkarni). For instance, Brahmin land holders had their lands assessed at distinctly lower rates than those levied for other classes. They obtained the privilege of having their goods exempted from certain duties and their imported grain carried to them without any ferry-charges. Brahmins were not required to pay house-taxes.3 They were exempted from capital punishment and

1. M.G. Ranade _op. cit._
2. M.G. Ranade _op. cit._
when confined in forts, they were more liberally treated than the other classes. The untouchables were meted such ill-treatment that a Mahar might not spit on the road lest a pure-caste Hindu might be polluted by touching it with his foot. He had to carry an earthen pot, hung from his neck, into which to spit. Further he had to drag a thorny branch with him to wipe out his foot-prints and to lie at a distance prostrate on the ground, if a Brahmin passed by, so that his shadow might not defile the holy Brahmin. During the career of Sawai Madhavrao, the Peshwa's government had decreed that the Mahars, being stishudras 'beyond Shudras', could not have their marriage rites conducted by the regular Brahmin priests. They were asked to employ the services of their casteman-priests, the Medhe-Mahars.

To check the aggressive dominance of Brahmin priests, Jyotirao Phule of Poona, a Mali by caste, started an association of members called the Satyashodhak Samaj, in 1873. He exhorted the non-Brahmin castes not to engage any Brahmin priest to conduct their ritual, which he tried to reduce to a very simple procedure. He perceived the necessity of educating the non-Brahmin castes and untouchables. He started primary schools both for boys and girls of the non-Brahmin castes as early as 1848 and a primary school for the untouchables in 1851. He demanded adequate representation for members of all castes.

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in the services and local bodies. Phule’s movement received the active support of the Maharaja of Kolhapur.

British rulers had to grant the demand of representation to all castes in administration. These reforms divided the people of Bombay State into three political tiers: the first tier consisted of Brahmins and allied castes; the second consisted of the Intermediate castes, the Marathas and others; and finally the Backward Classes, including untouchables. This principle was also made use of in appointments to government posts. Ghurye reported that the Mallis of Lonikand do not employ Brahmin priests for any of their religious or social rites. A School teacher, Mali by caste, officiates as a priest. This is the present situation in many villages.

Navabuddha :- Nav-Buddhas of Maharashtra mostly represent those who had been previously composed the major untouchable caste, Mahar. Some people of casta Hindus and other untouchable castes also embraced Buddhism. This conversion movement was sponsored by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, the leader of Scheduled castes.

It is an offence to observe untouchability according to the Indian Constitution. The public restaurants, temples, conveyances, roads and hotels are open to the untouchables. But this law is not rigidly enforced in rural area, and the observance of untouchability is still seen in villages. The untouchables are not allowed to carry water from the same well as
touchables. The educated untouchable, e.g. a teacher, still does not get a room in caste-Hindu residential areas.

In order to raise their social status and economic plight, Nav-Buddhas have given up performing traditional functions. Some of the Nav-Buddhas have removed their traditional Gods from the temples, whereas some have retained them and idols of Buddha are added.

Religious Beliefs: Religious beliefs are characterized by Parsons as the non-empirical homologue of ideological beliefs. By contrast with science or philosophy the cognitive interest is no longer primary, but gives way to the evaluative interest as these beliefs come to have religious characteristics. Acceptance of a religious belief is then a commitment to its implementation in action in a sense in which acceptance of a philosophical belief is not.

It is believed that every Hindu is born with three debts (Swarn). The debt to the gods, to the preceptors and to the ancestors. The debt to the preceptors is paid in the first part of one's life by learning the lore and the traditions of the caste, the debt to the gods is paid by worship, by feeding the hungry and sheltering the needy. The debt to the ancestors is paid by continuing the line, having sons and giving food to the dead ancestors.

Gods: The pantheon among the rural people belonging

1. T. Parsons op. cit. p.332.
2. I. Karve op. cit. p.100.
to Hindu religion is elaborate. It contains some of the
gods of the great Indian tradition, as well as local spirits
and deities. Reverence for mountains, rivers, ancestral
spirits and village tutelary spirits is an important element
in present Hinduism. The rural people are accustomed to cla-
sifying gods with special reference to casta, village,
lineage, family and individual, each unit having its special
presiding deity.  

Sanskritic Gods: In Hindu cosmogony every major
deity has several manifestations. There are three gods, namely
(1) Brahma the Creator, (2) Vishnu the Protector and (3) Shiva,
the Destroyer. They are worshipped by various names. For
example, Shiva is called Mahadev, Shankar, Nilkantha, Mahesha,
etc., Similarly Vishnu has many names like Madhav, Vithoba or
Vithala Keshava, Narayana, Balaji etc. Vishnu had to take
birth as a human being (avatara) ten times. The idea behind
avatara is that God allows himself to be reborn on earth
periodically to overcome evil and restore righteousness. Thus
Vishnu was incarnated as Bama, as Parashuram, as Krishna, as
Buddha, etc. Besides, each deity has a wife who is also
worshipped along with her husband or separately as Devi
(Goddess). The wife of Shiva is called Parvatl and of Vishnu
is called as Laxmi; but there are identical couple names, for
instance, Laxmi-Narayana, Vithoba-Rukhmini, Radha-Krishna,

2. Bhagvadgita IV, 5-8.
Sita-Rama, Shiva-Parvati, Uma-Mahesha, and so on. Again, Shiva has two sons, Ganpati and Skanda, who are also worshipped. Each god has his wahana (vehicle), for instance, Shiva's wahana is Nandi (bull), Vishnu's wahana is Garud (eagle), Ganapati's wahana is a mouse and Skanda's wahana is a peacock. These are all sacred and therefore, worshipped. Orthodox Hindus object to killing these animals.

In Maharashtra Kartikaswami (a form of Skanda) is believed to be such a confirmed bachelor that women are forbidden to enter his temple or see his image.

Vithoba is the regional deity of Maharashtra. He is a form of Vishnu and is also called Vithal or Panduranga. This deity was installed at Pandharpur before the 13th century A.D. The devotees of Vithoba are known as "Varkari"- one who performs a pilgrimage. Among His devotees Namdev, Tukaram, Chokhamela, Janabai and Savata Mali, are very famous. The fairs are held twice a year at Pandharpur in the months of Ashadh (July) and Kartik (November). Every villager in Maharashtra, particularly the peasant, believes that it is his sacred duty to attend the fair at Pandharpur every year. The nature of the appeal to the people can be gaged from the fact that about two lakhs, pilgrims visit Pandharpur every year. Every peasant in Maharashtra visits Pandharpur at least once in his life. Many villagers walk in procession from far away corners of Maharashtra to Pandharpur. Once the villager visits Pandharpur, he becomes vegetarian afterwards.
BELIEF SYSTEM

Typical Temple

Goddess Bhavani

Clay Horses offered to God

Protection against evil eye

Folk Art

Wall Painting
Datta is another regional deity of Maharashtra. Mythology makes Datta a composite deity combining the three Supreme idols of Datta bears three human heads. Datta is the patron deity of the Manabhava sect.

Besides, Vithoba and Datta there are many gods worshipped in rural Maharashtra. Karve has rightly stated that "Man creates gods in the necessity of his own desires. As new gods are added the old gods may wax or wane in importance but none are discarded for ever". She has called this historical process as one of continuous accretion.

Magico-religious Gods:

Village Gods: The first business of colonizers in Maharashtra must have been to build a temple to the God most revered by the settlers. This god is the protecting guardian of the village.

Thus in most of the villages in Maharashtra, there is the Gramdeva (village god) or Gramdevata (Village goddess). This village god is worshipped by all people of the village. An annual fair may be held in the honour of this god or he may be worshipped on an auspicious day in the year by gathering of village people and there may be a feast for all people. In most of the villages in western Maharashtra Bhairav or Bhairoba is the village God and Maria or Laxmial is the village Goddess.

2. Ibid p.7.
Some of these gods are ancestors, who died accidently. It is believed that the ghosts of these ancestors must be worshipped to keep them satisfied; otherwise they may cause trouble.

Sanskritic gods are placed in temples, while ancestral spirits and village tutelary spirits are placed under the mango, banayan, tamarind, pimplal, nim or umbar tree. Any pimplal tree in one's field becomes a centre of magico-religious worship with the installation of stones to represent Munjoba or Munja.

Every villager pays respect to all gods, all kinds of godlings and spirits, whose little shrines are spread all over the country by the roadside or under the tree or besides running water, or by the side of the village tank.

The worship of godlings, ghosts, and demons, usually local and non-sanskritic has been labeled as animism and often considered to be Dravidian or tribal in origin rather than Hindu or Sanskritie. \(^1\)

Chapakar reported that Pimploba is the village deity of Badlapur in Konkan. Since he belongs to the Brahmin caste, animal sacrifices are not offered to Him. There are other 18 deities in the village, namely, Whasesar, Khais, Kafari, Cheda, Vaghoba, Vanjara, Devi, Mukir, Chavata, Mandhakya, Ajoba,

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1. P.M. Kolenda op.cit.
Saryachi Devi, Vetal, Jarimari, Vaghya, Sati, Narya, Zandyacha Dev. ¹

A grandfather of Agri was drowned in the river and he became the god of the Agris in Badlapur. Mukir was a shepherd. He now occupied a place of worship and vow in the village. It is believed that if the little quantity of milk is poured on this god, the milk yield of cows and buffaloes is increased. Chavata is the god of the Kulkarni family in particular. When one of the Kulkarni was in power, he murdered one Mahar villager, who later on became the ghost. To satisfy him his image was placed under one tree.²

In Dongargaon, a village in Akola district Renukadevi is the village goddess. She is regarded as presiding over the destiny and welfare of the villagers. The temple was constructed 60 years ago after the collection of funds from local people. A fair is held every year on a full moon day in Chaitra. Thursday is considered as the auspicious day of worship of this goddess. Besides this, there are two temples of Hanuman, Marimai, and Whasoba are worshipped by Harijans. It is reported that there are two ghosts in Dongargaon. One ghost is on a tree near the well on the approach road and supposed to mislead children late in the evening. The other ghost located in another road was supposed to attack the villagers passing by that road late at night. There are

2. Ibid.
several roads and paths outside the villages, some leading to fields. In a dark night the traveller unintentionally chooses the wrong way and reaches the wrong destination. It is believed that he is misguided by the spirit, Chakwa.

Ghurye has reported on all deities in the Village Lonikand in Poona district. According to him there are 15 deities in this village, namely, Bapdev, Mhasoba, Munjoba, Bhairav, Vetal, Devlai, Satiasra, Marial, KanhoBa, Kalubai, Yamai, Tukai and Khandoba. Pimpri Bua, Bapdev, Kannoba and Savata Mali are an ancestral representations. When there is an epidemic of plague or cholera in Lonikand, every family representative pours water from a copper jar over Devlai. Vows are made to Satias or Satiasra; and one of the ways in which the vow is fulfilled is by preparing a curry of mixture of seven kinds of pulses and grains. The woman goes with her infant on her fifth day of its birth and after offering something to the Satias or Satwai pours water over these stones. Vowing for a child or a son or for a marriage or to clear a calamity or a disease is generally done to goddess Kalubai, Yamai or Tukai. Khandoba and Mhasoba are the two gods to whom similar vows are made. Over and above the usual vow of offering something, ranging from a coconut to a sheep, there is one which promises measuring one's length from one's house to the places of worship of the deity or the one which enjoins rolling oneself on the ground. But the old vow to swing oneself by a hook stick through the skin of one's back, or to be carried
suspended in that state on a cart to the places of worship of the deity, is not known to be in practice to-day.  

Ghurye has reported some of the superstitious beliefs of the people of Lonikand. There is a belief that till about 20 years ago, on the night of the New-Moon day torches used to be seen moving from the north-east of the village towards the hill top to the north of another village where they used to disappear. Coats, who made a survey of this village in 1819 noted his experience in respect of Pimpri Bua (ghost), which has his abode on pimpl tree. When he was in the village, a ghost in the shape of a dog, at first of the ordinary size, suddenly grew to an enormous bulk and then vanished into air. The villagers even now feel that Pimpri Bua appears on the New Moon and the Full Moon days at night. People living near about, worship that tree and make offerings of food on holidays.  

On certain occasions in special deity is worshipped. For instance, on the fifth day after the birth of a child Satwai gets the first preference, but on other occasions nobody cares for this goddess.

Caste Gods: Some castes have gods of their own and if they can afford it, members of a caste may build a temple to their gods or goddesses. Such a temple is owned by the caste. Though this god may not be exclusive possession of a

2. Ibid p.46-47.
caste, still a certain preference for certain gods and shrines has been noted among castes.

Marial is a goddess of the Mahars and her temple is found in most villages in Maharashtra in Maharwada, the habitation area of the Mahars. However, since recent conversion of Mahars to Buddhism, idols of Marial have been removed in some villages. For instance, it was found that idols of goddess had been removed from temples in Maharwada in Kalyan and Vadaki village in Poona district, whereas in Dehu they are retained and idols of Buddha are added.¹

Khandoba is the tutelary deity of the Marathas and Dhangars. He is also known as Malhari Martand or Mhalsakant or Bhairva or Khanderai and is identified with Skanda of the Puranas.² There is a famous temple of Khandoba at Jejuri in Poona district. The fair at that place draws people from all over Maharashtra.

He is supposed to have been born in a millet field near Poona and to have led the people against Mohomedans in early times. He had a watch dog who warned him of the approach of his enemies. Therefore, Marathas are generally kind to dogs and do not injure them.

The special devotees dedicated to him for their whole lives are called Vaghya (male) and Murali (female). Their

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² G.S. Ghurye, "Gods and Man" p.88.
relations are like brother and sister. A female child is offered to Khandoba in fulfillment of a vow. She is called Murali. She remains unmarried for the whole life. She is supposed to have been married to Khandoba and remained unmarried. But this tradition of offering a girl to a god has been prohibited by recent laws. His symbol is a bag of turmeric powder known as Bhandar. Khandoba is also worshipped by Deshastha Rigvadi Brahmins and some other castes.

Khandoba had two wives. One of them is the special goddess of the Dhangars (Shepherds) as she belonged to Dhangar caste. He is represented on horse back with his two wives. He is named after the Khand (sword) which he always carried.

Bhavani was looked upon as a consort of Shiva before the 4th century B.C.1 Bhavani of Tuljapur was the patron Goddess of Shivaji, who worshipped her for inspiration and success. Shivaji installed an image of Bhavani at Pratapgad. Bhavani is worshipped by Marathas as well as other castes.

The worship of Ganesha or Ganpati is mostly confined to Brahmins and some Brahmin-influenced castes.2 Chitpavan Brahmins worship mostly the god Shiva belonging to one of the coastal shrines in Ratnagiri district.3 Goddess Jogeshwari or Jogai of Ambe in Marathwada is the tutelary deity of the chitpavana Brahmins.4

2. Ibid p.139.
Mhasoba is the commonest and most widely feared of the local evil spirits. He is represented by an unhewn stone covered with red lead. He is the deity of Mallis in Lonikand, but is also worshipped by Kumbis and other caste people. Mhasoba is also worshipped in the practice of black magic. People go to Mhasoba, name their enemy and promise, if he ruins their enemy with sickness that they will give him a goat or a fowl. So much is he feared that when a man knows that someone whom he has ill-used has arranged to set Mhasoba on him, he makes such amends that the god is not forced to exert his powers.¹

Recently caste associations have been formed in some villages and they have built the temples by way of collecting subscription from the caste members. For instance the temple of Savata Mali, a Varkari Saint belonging to Mali caste, have been built by Mali caste association in Lonikand, Poona and Warud (Amravati district).

**Family Gods** :- A special god (Ishtadevta) is chosen by a family and is worshipped. It then becomes what is known as 'Kuladaivata' or 'Kulawami' (family deity or tutelary deity). For example, only 12 families out of 626 families reporting from Nagaon, a village in Kolaba district, have Ganpati as the family deity. Of these 12 cases of Ganpati being the tutelary deity, 9 were from among the Brahmins. In the same village Vithoba was fairly well represented among the deities of house-

¹. District Gazetteer of Poona, 1885.
hold worship, but mostly in a non-brahmin caste.¹

The author's grandfather, although a staunch devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur built a small temple of Mahadev near his own house in order to facilitate the daily worship of the family deity.

Thus the family deity may be placed in a Temple in the same village or may be far away e.g. Vithoba of Pandharpur, Bhawani of Tuljapur or Khandoba of Jejuri and its image is placed in the household. Generally an image of a family deity is surrounded by images of other gods and spirits in the special corner (Devghara or Deoghar) of the household. Ghurye found that less than 51 per cent of the households in Nagaon village had household deities for worship, the rest had none.²

**Village Temples** :- No village can exist without at least one temple. People even now build a temple in new settlements. The proverb is "no god no village". In most of the old villages in Maharashtra, the village temple is still endowed with rent-free land to defray the expenses connected with its worship, upkeep and repair. This temple inam was left untouched even by British Government. The temple inams were common in the Maratha period. In most of the cases, however, the temple inams are as old as the communities themselves.³

It is still believed that to build a temple and to donate land to the temple, manifest the highest of virtues.

¹. Ibid. p.134 and 222.
The temples of Hanuman or Maruti and Mahadev are found in almost all villages in Maharashtra. Ramdas sponsored the cause of Maruti-Hanuman, raising temples to his worship from one end of Maharashtra to the other. Ramdas further exhorted that the image of Hanumant should be set up in one's house for daily worship. Hanuman is the incarnation of Shiva and is associated with Rama as his faithful servant. Hanuman is believed to be the protector in Deccan villages. He is also the god of wrestlers. In every akhada (gymnasium) in Maharashtra a picture or idol of Hanuman is found. On every Saturday Hanuman's temple is a scene of crowding visitors. The bridegroom has to visit the temple of Hanuman before going to bride's house for marriage ceremony.

In a survey conducted by Ghurye and his associates in 120 villages in Havali taluka of Poona district during 1954-57, shrines of Ganpati were reported in only 16 villages with 18 temples, Maruti in only 112 villages with 139 shrines, Bhairav in only 94 with 103 shrines; Mahadev in only 80 with 103 shrines, Vithoba in only 55 with 60 shrines, Vatala (spirit) in only 36 without shrines, Rama in only 13 with 14 shrines and Datta in only nine with one shrine each. Vaishnavite temples dedicated to other forms of Vishnu either as Vishnu, Laxmi-Narayan, Murlidhara or Krishna were reported in 10 villages.¹

In an other survey conducted by Dandekar and Jagtap in representative districts of Maharashtra, 218 temples in 46

1. G.S.Ghurye op.cit. p.127.
villages were found. Of these 48 temples were of Maruti and 34 temples were of Shankara. There were 13 shrines of Vithoba. There were 57 shrines of goddesses of which 12 were of Mari and 7 were of Laxmî. These were the shrines of Mahar and Mang castes. There were 16 shrines of village gods and ancestral spirits and 7 were Mohomedan shrines. The rest of the temples were devoted to Rama, Krishna, Ganpati, Narsing, Datta, Vishnu, Brahmadev, Rhandoba, Bahroba, Vetal, Mhasoba, Balaji, Jotiba, Ravalnath. These were Sanskritic and Prakrût gods. Ambabai, Bhavani, Kalika, Ashtabhuja, Satwai, Mavalai, Matangai, Yamai, Margai, Bhave, Vithalai, Pavanadevi, Thalpandhar, Matadevi, were goddesses and Bhanuba, Bajubuwa, Changoba, Gangoba, Saidubaba, Meghoba, Gosavibuwa, Kanhoba, Shribasti, Swayambhu, Chavata, Awaji and Shankarswami were the local gods and spirits.¹

The temples of Sanskritic gods were comparatively larger and have a dome and peak just above the idol of god. This is called the gābhara (core). There is often a big hall attached in front of the temple, which is called the Mandap. In Konkan village temples are often without peaks. Though there is no objection to orienting a temple on the west or south or north, generally the east is preferred. Temples of Shiva, Vishnu and Surya never faced South.² Such a village temple is the centre of many village activities. A gathering of villages is often

¹ V. N. Dandekar and M. B. Jagtpa, Maharashtrachi Gramin Samajrachana (Marathi) (Poona: Gokhale Institute of Politics & Economics, 1957) p. 74-75.
seen in the village temple. Children and male adults play indoor games in the temple. If there is no school building in the village, the village children assemble in the temple to learn three "R" s. It was in the temple that the village litigants used to settle their quarrels through the caste Panchayat. This was an appropriate place since the offender had to swear in the presence of god. The village temple is still used as the guest-house by the way-worn travellers, Sadhus and Sanyasis. The village temple is still used as a place for entertaining guests and for sleeping at night if there is no room in one's house. The religious sermons-Katha and Kirtan - are delivered to the villagers in the hall of the temple.

Sacred Symbols: Certain symbols are considered auspicious by the villagers.

The swastika is believed to have been used by the Aryans for religious purposes from hoary antiquity. It represented the movement of the Sun and was connected with the worship of the sun.1 The swastika is often drawn on the front wall near the door of the village houses. It is drawn with the Kunkum (red powder), mixed with water on the flypage of the Account Register of shopkeepers and the farmers on the Diwali day.

Another mystic syllable 'Om' is drawn near the place of household gods. A six-pointed star-like figure is drawn with

white powder by women in the morning in front of their houses. This figure represents the Sun. The words Labh (gain) and Shubh (propitious) are written on two sides of the front door after the cleaning of walls with whitewash or cowdung mixed with water, particularly before Diwali. Mohomedans put palm marks with lime on the front wall of the house.

In South Maharashtra, when a new house is constructed a black doll made of cloth is hung head down, on the front door to ward off the effects of evil spirits. Similarly, a small branch of Mimb tree (Azardicta India) is also tied to the front door at the time of delivery of a child in the house.

Beliefs about Diseases: The epidemics of plague, cholera and small-pox are believed due to the wrath of goddess Devlai or Matadevi or Shiltadevi. It is considered to be the punishment for the evil deeds of the people. She is worshipped at the time of an epidemic by pouring water from a copper jar over the image. If somebody is ill in the house, the sacrifice of fowl or goat is offered to the god Mhasoba and the villagers are invited for the feast. If somebody is suffering from small-pox in Vidarbha, a gathering of women in procession walk through the streets singing songs to please Matamai, the goddess of smallpox. On moonless night of Shravan (August) the spirits causing diseases are driven out of a village in a procession.

It is believed that some diseases of men and cattle are
caused to the fury of ghosts and spirits. The village magician is summoned and he spells mantras to ward off evil spirits that cause danger to the ill person. For instance, while a boy was playing, he was injured by some rusted piece of iron. As usual the wound was filled with mashed dust from the street to stop bleeding. One day, the boy had high temperature and he became unconscious due to tinitus. The village people believed that the boy was suffering due to fury of the ghost. The village magician was called.

At the time of the Cholera epidemic four pigs are killed in the four directions out from the village. To prevent plague epidemic a mouse, the mount of Ganpati, is worshipped. The magician is called when a cobra bites someone. If a dog suffering from rabies bites, the cereal flour is mixed with water and the mixture is thrown seven times out of the mouth. Such a bullock is taken to the temple of a special god and there he is allowed to drink sacred water after utterances of mantras.

In case of a snakebite, the juice of Nimb leaves is extracted and given to the person to drink it. He is then asked to run around the temple of Hanuman. At the same time people sing Bhajan in the temple for the whole night. The person thus cured goes home in the morning.1

1. V. Madgulakar "Ghardar" (Marathi) (Bombay: Vora & Co. 1958)
Myths about Animals: Man is not a separate entity in God's creation. Man is believed to derive influence, either good or bad, through association with animals' lives.

The development of the prohibition against killing animals has been attributed to Jainism. Buddha stressed that man should meet all living creatures with a feeling of kindness and compassion and preached strongly against the wanton slaughter of useful animals and against animal sacrifice. The wide adoption of Buddhism in India curtailed the sacrifice and slaughter of cows, but the cow was never regarded as inviolable in Buddhist India (circa 300 B.C. - A.D. 1000). But in order to restore its control more completely, Hinduism adopted certain rigid dogmas and the sacredness and the inviolability of the cow, was one of them.¹

In adopting the 48th article of the Indian constitution, the Administrations felt that it was in the best interests of the people to protect the 'sacred cow'. Along with cow, the bull as the mount of Shiva, is also sacred to the villagers. The gift of the cow or the bull is offered by the villager to the village god on the fulfillment of vows. This sacred cow or bull feeds on crops in the field or grain spread for drying, causing much trouble to villagers. The animal is not used for any purpose and nobody can sell or purchase the same. Thus much damage to the villagers is caused due to such animals.

Killing of animals by farmers is often forbidden. Non-vegetarian farmers may not kill the goats, sheep or fowls, but they invite a Wulani (Mohomedan) for this purpose. One can find several stray dogs roaming in every village. The dogs are not killed, as the dog is supposed to be the representative of Khandoba god. Dogs are very faithful animals for guarding houses, cattle and fields. The centipede is also not killed for it is the only child of its mother.

The particular type of mouse locally known as Chichundri is also not killed, because it is believed that it brings prosperity to the house.

The peacock is also sacred for it is the vehicle of Saraswati, goddess of learning.

The crow is believed by the villagers as an eternal bird and it is very respectable after the death of a Hindu person at the time of Pind-dan to offer a cooked rice to the soul of this dead person. It is believed that if the crow touches this small quantity of cooked rice, the dead man had no unfulfilled desires on this earth. If the caw of the crow, perched near the houses is heard, it is believed that some guests are expected in the house sooner or perhaps a letter or a message.

The villager believes that the sudden chirping of house lizards, locally known as Pal, portend evil or good, according to circumstances. It is believed that this lizard speaks
"Krishna, Krishna". If someone is making some comments a lizard chirps, it is believed that his conclusion is valid and confirmed. Not only is the chirping of the lizard considered important, but the direction from which the sound comes is also recognised as significant. For example, if the chirp is from the east, it causes fear on Sunday, gain on Monday, wealth on Tuesday, happiness on Wednesday, bad effects on Thursday, good news on Friday and very good news on Saturday. Thus for every day of the week and for every one of the eight directions, and the two directions of heaven and earth, the chirping of the lizard brings some form of effect.

Further, the fall of the lizard on the human body is supposed to have beneficial or baneful effects on the man on whom it falls. A fall on one's head implies strife and animosity; on the face meeting of kin; on the neck the destruction of enemies, and so on. To ward off evil effects consequent on the lizard's fall, the person at once washes that portion of the body with water.

The lizard according to myth also has water in its back. To get this water to its mouth, it suddenly leaves its hold on the roof and falls down with a *chap* sound. It will lie there senseless, for a few seconds, and will then run away. In this way the lizard quenches its thirst.

It is believed that unless the scorpion, which gives
one a sting is killed, the venom in human victim will not easily be soothed. There is a legend behind this belief. The scorpion, when it was created by God, was endowed with immortality. It was besides vested with the power of giving a poisonous sting with its tail, so that all persons receiving the sting would suffer pain. One day the scorpion appeared before Lord Shiva in Kailas and pleaded, "O Lord, grant me a boon." Lord Shiva said, "Have your wish". "O Gracious Lord, as soon as I sting death should occur". "My devoted soul, your wish is granted", said the Lord. The scorpion with its mighty acquisition returned to earth and tried the first sting. The person who received the sting began to roar in pain, while his friends searched for the scorpion and killed it. It was not the man who died; it was the foolish scorpion that was killed. A similar mythical story is also prevalent about the ant.

Killing of a serpent or a cobra is not prohibited except when it is worshipped by all Hindus on a particular day of the year called Nagpanchami. It is believed that if while killing the cobra it is injured or made to disappear after injury, it will return sometime to bite the person who has injured it. The cobra is also believed to be the guardian of buried wealth.

If an owl hoots at night or a titavi bird passes over the house chirping, when a person is lying ill in the house,
It is believed that the person may die soon.

It is also believed that if someone goes out for important work and if he sees the Blue bird (Nilkanth) and circles around him, his work will be successful.

Seeing a fox or a deer or a mungoos is considered as auspicious.

Social Beliefs and Superstitions :- The following beliefs and superstitions are held by the villagers as well as some orthodox urban people.

1. If someone has a definite idea in mind and starts work accordingly and someone behind sneezes at that time, it is believed to be an indication that work will never be successful.

2. While embarking on a journey, if a village sees an empty jar or a cat crossing his way, he will break his journey, come back and start again. But if a married woman with a jar filled with water comes across, it is supposed to be the indication of the success of endeavour.

3. The first sight in the morning of a barren woman or a barber is considered inauspicious for the day.

4. If one's palm itches, it is believed to be an indication that he will get money unexpectedly from some unknown sources. If one's sole itches, it is believed to be an indication that he will undertake a long journey.
5. One should not comb his hair at night or look in the mirror, because it is believed to shorten one's life.

6. After delivery of the child, if the woman dies within 10 days, it is believed by Bhils that she will become a ghost. Therefore, her dead body is not burnt as usual, but is buried.

7. The boys are often named after artefacts as Dagdu or Dhondu (stone), Ukarda or Punjaji (heap of house cleanings), Bhika (alms). It is believed that by doing this the boy gains long life.

8. It is considered inauspicious to see the moon on the fourth day of Bhadrapada, (Ganesh Chaturthi). If anybody sees the moon on this day by mistake, he throws stones on neighbour's house and abuses him.

9. It is believed that the snake venom will not be harmful to a person, who eats the flesh of tiger.

10. Starting a journey on a moonless night (Amavasya) is considered inauspicious.

11. Three men going together for some important work, will always come back, with failures.

12. If the left eyelid of a man and the right eyelid of a woman flickers, it is considered to be a bad omen.

13. A lamp going off while eating food at night is believed to foreshadow evil.
Agricultural Beliefs: A new farm practice is usually not adopted until the farmer has knowledge about it. But here is an instance of the persistence of the old. The farmers who grow paddy in Konkan area often follow the practice known as 

rabbing. Dung cakes, tree loppings, leaves, grass and other dry waste material is spread on the ground and is burnt. It is believed that this practice increases the fertility of soil and therefore, is good for raising seedlings on the burnt over piece of land. The Agricultural Department disparages this practice as it causes loss of valuable organic matter to the soil. It also leads to deforestation. In spite of the efforts since 1906 of the Agriculture Department to get these farmers to desist from this practice, the farmers of Konkan are still employing it. The practice has its origin in the tribal people. It is not followed in other parts of the country.

The farmer loves his animals very much. It is believed that cows and buffaloes may be haunted by spirits during location and their milk yield is reduced. In order to prevent this, the black woolen thread passed through number of shells, is tied round the neck of the cow or buffalo. In some villages of South Maharashtra, the cattle are set free to graze in hilly terrain. But before that a fair is held to worship Vandevata, the goddess of the jungle and a sacrificial goat is offered to her.

If a snake bites a bullock, he is tied by a Gurav in front of BhairoBa temple and milk, curds and ghee are poured
on the idol in order to worship Him.

The earth is goddess and wife of Vishnu. The farmer offers Coconut or fowl to Kalimata (the earth) before starting to plough the land or sowing or harvesting. It is believed that Apsara (goddess of water) lives in the well. If the divinities are not satisfied by man's worship, somebody may be drowned in the well. The spirit called Girha also lives near the well.

The Hindu farmers will never cut the Baniyan tree or Pimpal, tree. If anybody cuts it, it is believed that the procreation of his clan ceases.

There also are some superstitions regarding rainfall. For instance, Hasta Nakshatra (star) has four legs. The first leg is of iron. If rain occurs within the four days, after the commencement of this Nakshatra, it is believed that the soil becomes as hard as iron. Therefore, the farmers desire that there should not be any rainfall during these days. The other three legs are of copper, silver and gold. If the rain occurs on the last days of Hasta Nakshatra, it is believed that it will enhance the yield. The yield of Bajri is excellent, if there is rainfall in Magha Nakshatra. If a ring is observed around the moon it is believed that there will not be any rainfall in the near future.

The birds also help the farmers by way of carrying the
message for starting various farm operations. One type of bird says, "Kulay, Kulay" which means "start harrowing", because the rains may occur soon. There is another bird seen in Vidarbha area which speaks "Perte Va" in the month of June which means "start sowing".

In the Konkan area the woman is not allowed to walk on the threshing floor until the grain is measured. It is believed that the paddy yield is decreased, if a woman walks on the threshing floor. Therefore, she stays away from the threshing floor, when she carried meal to her husband in the field.

In South Maharashtra a farmer will never ask another farmer whether he has completed sowing of his field. Instead of this, he will say "Have you increased the work of sowing?" This is due to the fear of an evil eye believed to cause a harm to the growing crop.

In Akola district, the seed-drill used for sowing wheat is carried from the house to the field in procession at night with petromax and fireworks. The villagers sing the special song of the seed-drill. Before starting the sowing operation farmers throw some seeds saying "Victory to god Gajanan". Similarly before harvest of the crop, some farmers offer plants of wheat and jowar to their household or family deities. Many cultivators offer a few seeds of each harvested crop to family or village deities. Unless this ceremony is performed
eating of any grain from the new crop is forbidden by custom. Farmers usually offer some grains of parched jowar to Agni-narayan (fire) before eating. For selecting the spot in the field for sinking a well, Sadhus are consulted.

Bullocks are not yoked on a Monday, a day of the god Shiva, as the bullocks are the mount of Shiva.

In Konkan, a black earthen pot painted with white strips and mounted on the top of a stick fixed in the standing crop is believed to prevent crop damage by evil forces.

Cognitive mapping and validation as process:

Cognitive mapping and validation as process may be defined as the activity by which knowledge, or what is considered true and what false, is developed.¹

Our beliefs concerning what is right, true and beautiful are largely results of the inter-relationships in which we participated as we were growing up. The great preserver of these beliefs is, of course, the family, but it is the local community that must ultimately support and sanction them.²

What is true and what is false is to be determined with reference to the vast body of Sanskrit literature including Vedas, upanishadas, Puranas, Spics like Ramayan and Mahabharat,

and the law books like Dharma sutras and Dharma shastras. This literature is often called collectively by villagers as Dharma shastras. There is a deep-seated feeling among the people that what is written is true and the older the manuscript, the more true, its contents. For instance, the Dharma sutras mention that if a man performs good deeds he will be born in a high caste and be well endowed; while if he performs sinful acts he will be born to a low caste, or even as an animal - a pig or a donkey.¹ This is accepted by one and all.

Maharashtrian saints have translated this Sanskrit literature in Marathi in a form the literate villagers can read it and illiterate villagers can understand and memorize some part. The large number of Maharashtrian saints have produced a vast literature in Marathi.

Communication is a major function of many Indian religious institutions. In every village the temple is the hub of religious activities. Villagers including woman assemble in the hall of the temple to listen to the discourse by a priest, a Shastri, a Kirtan kar. A group of villagers also assemble and sing Bhajans at night and other villagers and children listen to them. Traditional texts are read in the temple at night particularly during rainy season, when villagers are less burdened with the field work. Theatrical performers, such as, Haridas, Gondhal, Chitrakathi, as well as Kirtan kar, Sanyasi

¹ M.N. Srinivas, op. cit. p.151.
Guru and Sadhus often wander from region to region penetrating on foot into remote areas far from public transportation. They are free from many restrictions of caste system and they interact freely with many individuals. They preach the villagers using various methods and have a greater impact on the minds of the villagers in respect of cognitive mapping.

Men and women return from the fields in the evening. The women start preparing the evening meal and after tying cattle men proceed to the temple to offer prayers to the God. It is customary to sit for a moment in the temple or on the raised platform under the tree (par) and there gossip (exchange of information, knowledge and beliefs) starts among the villagers.

Besides this, daily worship of house-hold gods is performed by any member of the orthodox family after taking a bath. A small quantity of cooked food (Naivedya) is offered to God before eating the same, even by children. Pictures of Gods are also hung in the houses. For instance in village Dongargaon the following Gods - Vitthal-Rakhmaia, Rama, Krishna, Tukaram Maharaj, Tukdoji Maharaj, Gajanan Maharaj etc. have pictures which may be observed in houses. Religious books are also read at the time of worship of household gods. For instance, in village Dongargaon the following books are read- Ramvijaya, Pandav Pratap, Haripatha, Dnyaneshwari, Tukaramachi Gatha, Pothi of Gajanan Maharaj, Shani Mahatmya, Warkari Bhajan
Sampradya, Shivalamrut etc.

These are various channels of communication utilized by the villagers for cognitive mapping and validation of knowledge (beliefs).

While stressing the importance of poverty and undernourishment on man and society Kruyer stated that the villagers, especially the small farmer, works hard to earn his livelihood. When all his efforts fail to achieve his goal; the adjustment to the frustrating situation requires some solution. He may resort to aggression (the magical practices), withdrawal (participation in a mystical cult or migration to the city) or sublimation (membership in ascetic sects). There also appear such sociological manifestation as isolation or the magical struggle against the successful, unsatisfactory functioning of utilitarian social systems.1 Parsons also stated that the prevalence of magic in non-literate societies seems to be associated with the element of uncertainty in the success of practical endeavors. Because magic provides a non-empirical cognitive orientation to the unknown and uncontrollable factors in the situation, which is in certain respects motivationally gratifying and functionally positive for the social system, the existence of magical beliefs, as Firth, clearly points out inhibits the development of rational empirical knowledge, because the two are in direct competition and

are incompatible with each other.¹

According to Davis the pursuit of transcendental goals by its nature excludes the employment of demonstrably effective means or facilities. The actor who employs a means to salvation undoubtedly believes there is a connection between the means used and the end to be gained, but that connection cannot be tasted. His validation is by "arbitrary tradition". He simply accepts the connection on faith rather than on evidence.²

The Indian villagers have a great belief in the tradition of the village. In all customs they see a way of life and associate anything that happens in the village with some superior power. They have faith in the supernatural powers and hence offer sacrifices. At the same time they do not deny the value of the hard work in attaining a prosperous life. Fate (karma) is blamed only after all efforts to avert misfortune have failed. As a result of these beliefs respect for life, elders, marriage family ties and property is enhanced.³

Karve observed that there is far greater knowledge about the literary tradition of the last seven centuries of this land among the illiterate people of Maharashtra than among the people who have received their education in schools and colleges.⁴ This indicates that there was an effective communication of beliefs

1. T. Parsons op. cit. p. 333.
4. I. Karve op. cit. p. 118.
and knowledge among the rural people.

Thus the agricultural practices of the Indian peasant can only be understood in the context of his level of knowledge, legal and social institutions, religion and way of life. His agriculture constitutes a body of skilled knowledge, beliefs, rites and rituals which are transmitted from one generation to another. It has enabled him to survive for several centuries in an environment full of vagaries of nature - heavy rains, drought and famine. He has, therefore, full faith on his traditional way of agriculture, which has become his way of life and not a commercial enterprise. His technical system is interwoven with his social and religious system, and they together form a closely-meshed entity. The introduction of any new farm practice or institution will have repercussions not only in the field of techniques but also in the social and religious fields.¹ Religious custom (e.g. veneration of certain beasts and birds) is one of the severest inhibitions upon agricultural improvement.²

2. Feeling:

Sentiment as an Element: - According to Loomis, beliefs embody thoughts, whereas sentiments embody feelings about the world.³ Although belief is for Williams an analytically distinct component of culture, he recognizes that empirically,

¹. Shrinivas op.cit.p.ll.
². H.Tinker, "Authority and Community in Village India" Pacific Affairs 32 (1969) : 354-375,
³. C.P.Loomis and Z.K.Loomis, op.cit.p.ll.
knowledge is never distinctly separable from sentiment. The term 'sentiment' is used by Parsons to denote culturally organised cathetic and/or evaluative modes or patterns of orientation toward particular objects or classes of objects. A sentiment thus involves the internalization of cultural patterns. Conformity with the relevant expectations is treated as a 'good thing'. Furthermore, this attachments to common values, while it may fit the immediate gratificational needs of the actor, always has also a moral aspect in that to some degree. This conformity defines the 'responsibilities' of the actor in the wider, that is, social action system in which he participates. Sentiments are learned or acquired and thus culturally structured. Homans stated that sentiments are overt behaviour and so are directly observable. They are accordingly activities.2

In every society there is a sharp distinction between the holy, the ordinary and the unholy.3 The follower of the orthodox and traditional way is known as a Sanatani (Puritan). In villages the puritan person is admired by all. The man who does not smoke or drink and who works hard and saves money is respected by one and all. If over the years he acquires wealth, this is attributed as much to his hard work as to the fact that God has favoured a 'virtuous' man, when a rich man

1. Ibid. p.506
3. K.Davis op.cit. p.520.
is a 'bad' man, villagers attribute his wealth to the good actions which he had performed in a previous incarnation and point out some misfortune to him or to one of the members of his family as evidence of divine anger with his present 'badness'.

Feeling of Togetherness: The feeling of togetherness is very much stronger among the villagers of Maharashtra than is general for urban people. This feeling of togetherness is based on interaction in the same clan, caste and village. In former time villagers as a whole were consolidated against invaders and robbers. The village population sets off the Gavacha (of the village) against the upara (a stranger). The person whose kin had lived in the same village for at least two generations is called 'Gavacha' and the person who immigrated to the village is called upara. This strong feeling of togetherness among the village people is well illustrated by an instance reported by Karve.\(^1\) The Eighteenth century Brahmin poet Moropant went on a pilgrimage to Banaras. In a poem addressed to the holy river Ganga he has pleaded the cause of his fellow-villagers and begged the river to wash their sins away. In this poem he mentioned by name persons of all castes including untouchables and even the Muslims.\(^2\)

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2. I.Karve, op.cit. p.122.
All families in a village are bound in a certain pattern of services and duties and are known to each other. In times of emergency the villagers help each other. If anybody's house catches on fire, all villagers gather, carry water from a well or a river and extinguish the fire. They help the distressed family with grain, clothes and building material. In days of famine all villagers have together migrated.

Strong emotional responses attach to the familiar domestic environment and to the place of birth. The behaviour of rural people is greatly influenced by belonging to one village. People of the same village will go to the market together, transport agricultural produce together and return home together. As noted in critical situations they help each other. The sentiments of the native village are so strong that a migrated family uses the clan name after the native village. For instance, the clan name Rahukar signifies that the person originally belongs to the village Rahud.

About the strong sentiments attached to the native village by the rural people Russell and Hiralal say, "The noticeable trait of these Maratha houses is the fondness with which they clung to the small estates or villagers in the Deccan in which they had originally held the office of a Patil or village headman as a watan or hereditary right, even after they had carved out for themselves principalities and
states in other parts of India. A few examples can be cited here. Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur took his title from the village Deur in Poona district. Bhonsla Raja of Satara had a strong feeling and fought for the Deshmukh watan of Masur. Sindhia Raja of Gwalior is always termed as Patil. Holkar Raja of Indore and Pawar Raja of Dhar fought desperately after the British conquest to recover the Patil rights of Deccan villages which had belonged to their ancestors.

The people who migrated to Bombay will never forget or fail to visit their native village at least once a year. They keep a house there and if possible a piece of land in their possession to show that they belong to the specific village. Thus, although new group ties are established and old group ties may be weakened, the old are not severed altogether.

Sentiments about Land and Cattle:- The villager of Maharashtra like others has a strong attachment to the land. He feels that his agricultural occupation is the best among all other occupations. There is a saying that "Best is Agriculture, next is commerce and lowest is service". The possession of land not only indicates wealth, but it carries with it social prestige as well. The farmer has such an intimate bond with his land that even murders are not uncommon in South Maharashtra over land disputes. Disruption of village property arrangements may cause psychological difficulties. For instance, a farmer of village Valadgaon in Ahmednagar.

district had for a period rented his 1405 acres of land to a Sugar Factory. When the contract was up in 1959, the landowner (the farmer) took possession of his land. He took pains and spent much money on the development of his land. He constructed two wells and a house on the arable part. Sugarcane was the main crop grown on this land and the same was sold to the Sugar Factory. Recently, the State Farming Corporation decided to acquire this farm. On hearing this news the farmer was shocked. He became psychotic and had to be admitted in the Mental Hospital at Poona.

Emotional attachment between the peasant and his cattle has also been observed. The peasant will never sell his cattle to the butcher. Once the author's grandfather sold a pair of bullocks to a farmer of another village, who subsequently sold them to a Mohomadan, from whom the animals were passed on to a butcher. The old man dreamt that his pair of bullocks asked him why he has sold them to a butcher when they had performed such hard work for him. Then next day the old man became so uneasy that his son had to bring home the same pair of bullocks having to pay more money to the butcher. These bullocks were used for light farm work for one or two years and later on were left idle till their death.

Sentiments become attached also to the established way of doing things; they are often sufficiently strong to withstand and oppose the introduction of new and perhaps more
appropriate methods. For instance, the peasants of Konkan still follow the traditional method of *rabbing* and oppose the introduction of the Japanese method of rice cultivation, which has been established to give higher yields. Devotion to the traditional methods is matched by the fear of new. For instance, the farmers who use fertilizers prefer to use Ammonium Sulphate, with which they are better acquainted than the such new fertilizers as urea.

The highly variable rainfall, which is, of course, completely beyond the villager's control, induces the feeling that luck or fate is more responsible for success or failure than the individual's own efforts, regardless of how painstaking he may be.¹

**Sentiments about Family:** Family and religious systems are particularly sentiment-laden. The feeling of respect toward old people is comparatively stronger among rural people, than urban people. The efforts of all family members are directed to give as much comfort to old persons as possible. They are thus prevented from hard physical work. To get away from the family tension and anxiety, the old person often prefers to go on pilgrimage.

Disturbance and anxiety usually are associated with the lack of structured and predictable relations. While support and security come from having an established

institutional relationship. Traditional relationships exist in villages between the peasant's family and the families having non-agricultural occupations, but dependant on the peasant family. Due to the process of urbanization the cleavages in inter-family relations especially those between peasants and non-peasants are on the increase.

The socially structured reaction of those people who share the same rank as the transgressor requires considerable adjustment in the light of indignation. Each person must because of the transgression, redefine his relationship and repattern his own behaviour with the deviant.\(^1\) This is applicable to Nav-Buddhists as well as others. Mahars who embraced Buddhism were working as village servants. They used to carry the dead cattle from the village and did other sundry work for the touchable Hindus. Since they have become Buddhists in order to raise their status and economic plight, they have ceased their traditional occupations. Recently Mahar Vatans are also abolished. This break in the traditionally patterned relationship between the Mahar and other caste villagers created tension in many villages. In backward areas the intensity of this tension is much more than among others. Intense feeling has resulted in communal fights. For instance, the relations between caste Hindus and the Mahars were tolerably good before the Holi festival of 1957 in village Vadaki in Poona district. In that year, the Nav-Buddhas refused to celebrate

\(^1\) C.P.Loomis and Z.K.Loomis op.cit.p.257.
the Holi function, this enraged the villagers, who started beating the Nav-Buddhas. This tension between these two groups persisted for a long time. There was a complete estrangement and lack of confidence between the caste Hindus and Nav-Buddhas. The atmosphere of the village was surcharged with litigation, the Nav-Buddhas filing criminal suits against the caste-Hindus, who, in their turn, had duly filed similar cases against Nav-Buddhas. The level of social anxiety in the village was very high as evidenced by the frequency of such remarks as "admit the Mahar in your house and he will start demanding the hand of your daughter in marriage". This is similar to expressions of Whites against Negroes in U.S.A. Many poor peasants gave expression to their feelings of insecurity and jealousy at some Nav-Buddhas having secured more dependable jobs. However, the Mangs and Chambhars, also untouchables, did not complain about the behaviour of the caste-Hindus. Perhaps they were acquiescing in the untouchability patterns of relations and behaviors.

In another village in Poona district, Kalyan, the caste-Hindus had no such quarrel with Nav-Buddhas, still there appeared to be feeling of discomfort at the rising tide of Nav-Buddha assertion. In a third village, Dehu there were amicable relations between caste-Hindus and untouchables. The people of Dehu had the influence of Tukaram's religious tradition who was a resident of Dehu. Moreover, the caste Hindus and Nav-Buddhas
worked side by side in the nearby Military Depot and this had its good effect on intergroup relations. Also the village was served by a younger, more active and educated leadership and enjoyed better economic status and pursued more varied occupation pattern.¹

**Religious Sentiments**: One of the functions of religion is to justify, rationalize and support the sentiments that give cohesion to the society.² Becker's continuum manifest the component of sentiment in varying degrees. The pole representing the extracted sacred is heavily saturated with evaluations charged with sentiment. The pole representing the extracted secular is not without its charge of sentiments of a nature compatible with the highly evaluated items anchored there. The intermediate gradient points on the scale exhibit lesser or no sentiment. In this respect the Becker types differ from the PAS Model on which sentiment clusters only at the Gemeinschaft pole, effective neutrality being characteristic of the Gesellschaft. An application of the typology to religious groups distinguishes the cult-sect-denomination-ecclesias stages and types which display religious sentiment decreasingly from cult to ecclesias.³

The villagers show an unparalleled tolerance of other religious and philosophic doctrines. Such tolerance is

³ C.P.Loomis and Z.K.Loomis, *op.cit.*, p.35.
generally associated with rationality and exchange. Therefore, the religious conflicts in villages are rare. Hindus and Muslims work together in fields. There are Muslim servants even in houses of Brahmins. Many ceremonies and festivals are performed by the mixed gathering of Hindus and Muslims in villages. The conflict between Buddhists and Hindus is of recent origin and restricted to a few villages. It involves economic values rather than social values.

a) Tension Management: Demonstrations of societal provisions for the reduction of tension are found as Davis examines some of what he calls the major institutions. Religion (or magic), for example "furnishes the individual with a cushion whereby the frustration, fear, anger, and insecurity growing out of failures in this world can be compensated for. Family similarly provides societal provisions for management of tensions".1

In rural social systems there are several occasions when the tensions are aroused between high caste or low caste people. But contentment with one's lot is maintained by a number of mutually reinforcing beliefs such as reincarnation. The individual is constrained from envy and discontent by the belief that anything short of complete acquiescence would result in demotion in the next rebirth. It is also believed that an individual's sin may cause the anger of god or a

1. K. Davis op. cit. p. 544.
spirit and result in the out break of epidemics of cholera or smallpox.

Rituals are another societal device which reduces emotional tension. There is a custom in South Maharashtra which illustrate this. On new year's day, the priest of the village temple prepares the Prasad, a mixture of bitter leaves of Nimb tree, tamarind, jaggary and copra. All village people gather in the temple. The village Brahmin (Joshi) reads to them astrological fortunes and misfortunes for the next year. Later on the account of the village fund is settled. The fund is collected for the organization of a fair or the village festival by way of contributions from every house in the village. The unspent money is given on loan to some needy person in the village with the consent of all. The debtor has to pay his debt with interest, otherwise nobody will eat the Prasad. Sometimes the settling of accounts leads to hot discussions and ill feelings are created. But this tension settles down gradually till another gathering is held on the birth-day of Hanuman at which time people gather to eat the tablets made of dry ginger and jaggary.

A group of women who live in the same residential area form a conversation group. These women are immediate neighbours in adjacent and opposite houses. They help one another with their household work within such neighborhood groupings.
These activities also serve to relax the tension which exists between a woman and her mother-in-law or sister-in-law. Since their houses are so close together such cooperation contributes to the solution especially of quarrels between women and their mother-in-laws. This is because the women of the neighbourhood can be called upon to give their opinions as third persons, and they have many opportunities of action in the role of mediators. In this sense they are engaged in systemic linkage (see below).

Fairs and festivals organised in the village also play an important role in relieving villagers' tension. The unity of the village is dramatised in ritual at the annual temple festival. All villagers of Varkute mentioned the fact that village solidarity and fellow feeling was enhanced by the annual temple festival followed by the feast. Formal invitations were extended to neighbouring village people to attend the function. Such invitations are always given on behalf of "all the people of the village" (Samasta Gaonkari).

Another peculiar and interesting way of relieving tension between two villagers is illustrated in Maharashtra. There are two old neighbouring villages on the bank of the river Godavari viz. Sanvatsar and Konkanthan. The village deity of Sanvatsar is Whasoba and the village goddess of Konkanthan is Laxmial. An annual religious fight between two

1. T. Fukutake et al op. cit. p.45.
2. I. Karve and V.W. Dandekar op. cit. p.61.
villages is organised. It lasts for five days during the month of May. Knives, sticks, slings and stones are used as weapons for fighting. The fight goes on with beating of indigenous drums like Sambal, Daffade, Dholak and Tasha. The fighting ceases at sunset every day. About four thousand adult males from both villages participate in this fight. The wounded persons are treated with the mixture of ash from the temple, common salt and termeric powder. About 30 to 40 persons are captured and kept in a special prison erected in front of village deities. They are later on ceremonially released. Nobody registers a complaint against anybody with the Government during this fight. The judgement given by the Sarpanch is accepted by all. It is believed that if such a fight is not organised, the villagers may suffer from famine and epidemics of contagious diseases.

Besides the village festivals and fairs there are common festivals observed in all villages in Maharashtra.

**Table 2: Important Festivals of Maharashtra.**

   2. Ramnavami (Birth day of Rama).
   3. Hanuman Jayanti (Birth day of Hanuman).
2. Vaishakh (April-May) 4. Aksha Trutiya (Rite of propitiation to ancestors).
4. Ashadha (June-July) 6. Ekadashi (Fast day symbolizing a fair at Pandharpur).
7. Bendur (Festival of bullocks).

9. Raksha Bandhan (Tieing affection band by the sister on the wrist of a brother).

11. Shravani Somwar (Fast day).
12. Pola (Festival of bullocks).
13. Hartalika (Women's festival).
14. Ganesh Chaturthi (Birth day of Ganesh).
15. Anant Chaturdashi (End of Ganesh festival).

17. Dasara (Autumn festival; see Glossary).

8. Kartika (October-November) 18. Diwali (Festival of lights).
19. Bhaubija (Ceremony showing affection of a brother towards his sister).
20. Tulsi marriage (Celebration the marriage of Tulsi plant indicating the beginning of marriage season).
21. Ekadashi (Fast day symbolizing a fair at Pandharpur).
22. Champa shashti.
23. Makar-sankrant (Celebration of the winter solstice, when the sun enters the sign of Makara or Capricorn).
25. Holi (Festival of colour).

b) Communication of Sentiment :- The village people gather in the afternoon on hot summer days and in the evening on other days at the village temple, Chavadi, a tea-shop, a motor-stop or on the platform under the sacred tree. They form several small gossipping groups. Several village problems are discussed in the informal conversation. These conversation groups serve the purpose of communication of sentiments and relaxing the tension. Sometimes, the people gather in the temple to sing Bhajans. This activity indirectly helps to relax the tension. Visiting with each other at
home is also common and such visits are very informal.

In castes that did not hold formal meetings the occasion for the communication of sentiments is primarily the marriage ceremony, for this is the largest single gathering of people in the caste. If not at a wedding, communication occurs during visits to kinsmen, usually when fairs are held in their villages. In any event, news travel quickly over a considerable portion of a caste by these means.

Village women have to carry water in earthen or brass pots from the river or a well to their homes. Water-carrying is a considerable labour, for the women must go back and forth four or five times with at least two water-jars on their heads and the third on their waist. However, it is also a form of recreation, since at other times they never leave the residential area in which they live, but remain shut up in their houses. As women of the low-caste work in the field, they have also to carry water to their houses and this may not be only a chore but also a recreation for them. Besides collecting water they also wash clothes at the well or river. This provides an opportunity for the women to engaged in conversation. The members of conversation groups are often the women of the same residential area. Sometimes the woman's mother lives in the same village or she has relatives in the same village. She can meet these women at these places. Thus besides their usual chores, the women also communicate their
sentiments to each other. They also hear various local news, as each woman communicates whatever she knows to other woman and later to her family.

The religious system provides an institutionalized channel for the communication of sentiments. Ritual enables the individual to give expression to his religious sentiments and thereby to achieve an emotional catharsis. For instance, the peasant performs the Satyanarayan to express his gratification to God for the favours bestowed on him. He invites his colleagues and other villagers to share his feelings by way of accepting the Prasad. The festivals of local deities are also helpful in the communication of sentiment.

The power of reproduction of verses orally is developed from childhood. The adults as well as children recite several verses (slokas) during feasts. A fair is annually held in a village Wadegaon in Akola District (Author's village) solely for the Mahar caste. At night a procession of Mahar pilgrims passes through the main streets of the village. In answer to questions asked by somebody amongst them while sitting at the cross-roads for sometime and many illiterate Mahars recite several verses regarding their ideas about gods, nature and the universe. It becomes a sort of debate and all kinds of sentiments are communicated.

The village people also come in contact with various
communicants like Haridas (Kirtankar), Puranik, Gondhali, Chitra-Kathi, astrologers, snake-charmers, magicians, indigenous medical practitioners, all types of entertainers, merchants vendors, and various nomadic tribes. Though the village people are comparatively immobile, these communicants are all very mobile and cover great distances reaching even to remote forest-villages. The two popular epics, Mahabharat and Ramayana, are full of stories with sentiments, tension and tension management instances. People seem never to tire of hearing these.

Communication leads to imitation. Imitation brings about certain uniformities of behaviour which help the feeling of togetherness. One such uniformity is language a system of symbols used for communication. Like language the Gandhi Cap, Nehru shirt and a dhoti made of white Khadi (handmade cloth) have become the accepted dress of several village leaders, particularly the members of Grampanchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad throughout Maharashtra and symbolize much communication of common sentiment.

3. Achieving

End, Goal or Objective: Loomis and Baegle have defined ends or objectives as those changes which members of the social system expect to accomplish through the operation of the system. In some instances systems have as ends or objectives of retaining the status quo.2

1. I.Karve op.cit. p.118.
2. C.P.Loomis and J.A.Baegle op.cit.p.3.
Goals for the self: Like all good Hindus, the average Hindu farmer pursues four Purusharthas (goals of existence). They are, dharma (right conduct), artha (wealth), karma (satisfaction of desire) and moksha (salvation). Austerity and renunciation are directed towards the last goal.

The ultimate aim in this life is to obtain Mukti (salvation), as believed by the villagers. However, only a few people like Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram are considered to be capable of attaining Mukti. Devotional exercises, and the observance of ritually correct behaviour are the steps to attain this objective. The villagers are also concerned with the paramount need to restrain their instinctual impulses, if they could not be suppressed altogether. This is applied with special force to the sexual impulses, whose gratification is believed to lead to physical and spiritual degeneration. The accomplishment of this rigorous suppression of sensuality is believed to impart supernatural powers, leading eventually to release from human existence.

The rural people on the whole think that man’s innate nature is neither good nor evil per se. They are future-minded and believe their actions and efforts will bring rewards to them and their children. Yet they have not become individualistic in their outlook and are still guided by group goals and collateral considerations.

Ends and objectives of the family: The prevailing objectives of the family are broad and diffuse. Farm families direct their activities toward attainment of goals, and their activities may be indicators of these goals.1

The prime goal of every peasant is to get married at proper age and to raise a family, preferably a joint family. One who is very poor and cannot meet the expenditure for marriage and dowry remains unmarried. A poor labourer enters a contract to work for one or two years for a rich farmer. He may through such an arrangement marry often he becomes indebted to his employer.

Goals change as the family's position in the family life cycle changes2 and age is a significant factor in the type of goals that are accomplished.3 It is a point of prestige to raise as many children as possible and to feed them. Proper education of the children is the goal confined to the families of better socio-economic status. Lower castes and some of the backward families of higher castes do not care to send their children to school. Nothing can be said about the villagers, if there is no school in the village. In such cases the children have to walk 3 to 4 miles daily to attend school in another village. In such cases attendance is very irregular.

2. Ibid.
Table 3: School attendance of children.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of villages</th>
<th>Families having children of school going-age, who go to school</th>
<th>Do not go to school</th>
<th>Proportion of families of school senders to non-senders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Varkute</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1 : 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karul</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 : 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subhashwadi</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belekarwadi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.5 : 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Every village woman desires to have at least one son. She will try all means including medicines and magic to attain this objective. She may in desperation go to the extent even of worshipping God by the side of a river alone and naked on a moonless night because somebody tells her that this action will bestow her with a child. Village fires are also often due to these childless women. Her life becomes miserable without a child, especially the son. A childless man (or woman) takes a brother's son or nearest kin ceremoniously for adoption or a succession of wives is taken until one yields a child.

Every village family desires to live in its own house. Every family will build a house in the village, if it has no hereditary joint family house. Everybody desires to get his share in the hereditary house. If the hereditary house is too small, the incoming family will construct a new house or buy a house in the neighbourhood which have been left vacant, provided this family has the necessary money.

¹ I. Karve and Y.B. Damle, op. cit. p. 11.
In villages maintenance of the joint family may be an objective. It is also more economical to run the joint family with an agricultural holding may have economic advantage. Hence the farmer will desire that his sons continue to live under the same roof after they have married. For the continuance of the joint family, teamwork and amicable relations among the members of the family are required, and for this, patience and tolerance are demanded of all. However, in practice, such tolerance and patience are hard to come by. The greatest difficulty arises with the wives, who have come into the family from outside. Relations between the wives and their mother-in-law are often strained and more so among the wives of the brothers. There is a saying that two women cannot live amicably in the same house. Quarrels between the wives is the reason which is always given for the residential separation, although there may not be a division of property.\(^1\) Having an amicable joint family is not an easy end to attain.

Every villager is very careful about the maintenance of the prestige of his family which may be an end in itself. If any incidence occurs in the family, news about it speedily spreads in the village. Deviation from the traditional norms by any family member is frowned upon. For instance, begging alms brings discredit to the family of the farmer, but does not lower the status of Gosai family as it is the latter's accepted norm.

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The lower caste families try to imitate the behaviour and practices of the Brahmin or Maratha family of the village, this being thought of as a means of raising status. To achieve this objective the villager often extends his expenditure beyond his economic resources, incurring debt. The rituals such as twelveth day ceremony after the birth of a son, marriage and funeral also provide a means of expressing status or rank by way of the large feast given to the kinsmen and often to the neighbouring villagers as well.\(^1\)

**Economic Goals** - Land is a pressing problem in most of the villages in Maharashtra. It is highly valued both for its economic worth, as a prestige objective and as the means of establishing durable bonds among people.\(^2\) While setting a marriage a question is often asked, "how much land does the bridegroom own?" For one who owns land, it is easier to get a loan from the moneylender or a bank. Therefore, there is a craving to acquire more land, even though there is now a check on acquiring land due to land ceilings by law. The farmer will work hard, save money by contracting his expenditure and then invest his money to buy the land. The preference is given to buying the land rather than purchasing or improvements in the house. This is because the land is a continuous source of income, while the house is not a source of income in small villages. An outsider can get a room in a small village without paying any rent. Farm ownership is a goal of tenant.

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families, but it is difficult to achieve.

Hard cash is prized by the progressive farmer to the same extent it is by a man in the city. Boss rightly says, "the farmer will listen to the sound of money quicker than to anything else, and it is for that reason that we usually approach him from the business standpoint. Ask him if he wants to make" (money) and he will be immediately interested; but ask him if he wants to buy a better cow, and he will say, "No, I guess the old one will do". Illiterate farmers do not know the ways or profitable investment of his money, which is often spent on gold ornaments or buried under the floor of his house, instead of being kept in the bank. Some hard-working farmers utilize their savings in purchasing land, construction of wells and a hut on the farm.

In the scarcity area of West Maharashtra where the lands are poor and rainfall is deceptive, the prime goal of the villager is merely that of supplying food, clothing and shelter to the family. Kruyer states that undernourishment and poverty make food and money overriding goals for large groups of the population. Shortage of good land, the traditionality of the farming system and social factors (the marketing system) block the way to these goals. As a result small farmers make strenuous efforts toward achievement but are apt to try for too quick results (premature crops) or to seek government help.2

a) Goal attaining activity and b) concomitant "latent" activity as a process:

The activities of the farmers are directed to achieve four goals, viz. right conduct, wealth, satisfaction of desire and salvation. Of these the pursuit of wealth and satisfaction of desire have to be governed by the rules of dharma. While the first three goals are all accessible through man's efforts and therefore, attainable (sadhya), the last is thought to be according to belief immanent in him. It is to be given a chance to unfold itself, (siddha). In Hindu theory, therefore, the instinctive, moral and spiritual aspects of man are all considered legitimate and worthy of expression.\(^1\)

The processes comprised of all this unified activity are called "latent" by Merton because their consequences are unintended and unrecognized.\(^2\)

The farmer tries to acquire and accumulate spiritual merits and direct his action towards this goal resulting right conduct with reference to the traditions. The orthodox farmer worships household gods, in the morning, offers prayer to the village God in the evening, performs all rituals, observes fasts on auspicious days, donates part of his earning in charity and goes on pilgrimage regularly.

All farmers know that thrift, industry, careful farm

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2. C.P.Loomis and Z.K.Loomis *op.cit.* p.266.
management and marketing are essential to accumulate wealth. Their efforts are directed towards this goal. Some farmers are successful in achieving these goals. For example, Leva farmers of Khandesh, Jain farmers of South Maharashtra and Mali farmers of Ahmednagar, Sholapur and Amravati districts have improved their lot considerably. Tensions are often created when a specific caste makes headway, but their ways are followed by other farmers also.

4. Norming, Standardizing and Patterning:

Norm as an Element: There is no agreement among the sociologists regarding the definition of norms. Loomis and Beegle defined norms as "rules or guiding standards which prescribe what is socially acceptable or unacceptable. Hence norms govern the application of means in the attainment of ends or objectives."\(^1\) Parsons defined norm as "a verbal description of the concrete course of action ..., regarded as desirable (and) held to manifest or otherwise involve a sentiment attributable to one or more actors that something is an end in itself".\(^2\) Homans makes clear that "a norm is a statement made by some members of a group that a particular kind or quantity of behaviour is one they find valuable for the actual behaviour of themselves, and others who they specify, to conform to".\(^3\) For Williams "a norm is a standard (not necessarily explicit) of the course that action should follow, not a description of action that actually occurs". Norms may

1. C.P.Loomis and J.A.Beegle *Rural Sociology* p.4.
2. T.Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* p.75.
vary by universality of acceptance as valid guides to action, universality of application in a given population, the mode of enforcement, explicitness the specificity of the injunction, and the rigidity or flexibility of exact conformity. Norms are for Sorokin the determinant of (a) the rights and duties of the members, (b) the circumstances governing what "to do or not to do", (c) the roles and/or functions of each individual (d) one's status, (e) official law and government, (f) the forms of interaction whether they are obligatory, prohibited or recommended, (g) a system of differentiation and stratification of members, (h) an economic complex of vehicles to carry out the functions of the group and to some degree, as a result of the above factors, the symbols of identity of the group.

Defining norm as a 'rule' which implies a sense of obligation and effort, Davis subscribes to a classification of norms as folkways, mores, customary and enacted laws and institutions. Folkways regarded as obligatory but not absolutely obligatory are enforced by informal social control. Mores, more fundamental than folkways, represent the hardest core of the normative system, (they are) morally right, their violation is morally wrong. Taboos are mores stated on negative form. Mores become laws when they have some special organization for their enforcement. An institution such as marriage is a set of inter-woven folkways, mores and laws built around one or more functions.

The latest survey of the conceptual treatment of norms, that conducted by Dohrenwend, implicitly recognizes various types in setting forth a generic definition: "A social norm is a rule which, over a period of time proves binding on the overt behaviour of each individual or an aggregate of two or more individuals. It is marked by the following characteristics: (1) Being a rule, it has content known to at least one member of the social aggregate. (2) Being a binding rule it regulates the behaviour of any given individual in the social aggregate by virtue of (a) his having internalized the rule (b) external sanction in support of the rule applied to him by one or more of the other individuals in the social aggregate (c) external sanctions in support of the rule applied to him by an authority outside the social aggregate or any combination of these circumstances."

Studies of India, China, Persia, Islam and Judaism led Weber to conclude that the lack of distinction between temporal and sacred law in the East was a basic cause in the lack of development of the modern state in these parts of the world. The caste system in India and the supporting structure such as the family operate to restrain the sense of identification to a group not longer than a family and/or a caste, and thus to mitigate against a genuine civil development.

Family norms: Many of the norms inculcated by the

rural family are ends in and of themselves.¹ Husband-father is dominant in the rural family and hence the head of the family. The husband is treated by wife almost as a deity. He is referred by her as Patidev, or Malak or Dhanl (Master). After marriage a woman’s status is determined by that of her husband. She takes her meal after the husband has his, not before or with him. All adult women in the family usually take meals after the men and children have their meals. The wife usually uses the same plate of her husband for taking her food. The women perform a number of yratas (religious vows) to assist in securing a long life for her husband. A woman expects to predecease her husband and thus avoid becoming a widow. Women who predecease their husbands are considered lucky as well as good, while widowhood is attributed to sins committed in a previous incarnation. A wife who shows utter devotion to her husband is held up as an ideal, as a pativrata i.e. one who regards the devoted service of her husband as her greatest duty.² The formality and sacred character of the relationship is symbolized by a taboo on uttering the name of one’s spouse.³ The wife does not call her husband by his name and also the husband does not call his wife by her name. Certain terms are prescribed to refer one’s husband or wife. They use indirect means or a kinship term. One is not supposed even to refer to one’s spouse by name in normal discourse. When men do this, disrespect is

1. C.P. Loomis and J.A. Beegle op. cit. p. 84.
sometimes intended. However, husband or wife can mention the name of one's spouse only with the request of others in a ceremony, usually a marriage of somebody. This process of "name taking" especially among women is always stylized, the woman announce her husband's name in a short extemporaneous poem, called *Ukhana*. It is thought shameful for husband and wife to engage in conversation in the presence of older persons of acquaintance. When the children are grown up, this rule is, however, relaxed. Similarly, husband and wife are forbidden to walk shoulder to shoulder. If necessity demands that they walk together the husband will walk in front of his wife, keeping some distance between them. When a wife is in the presence of her husband and a third person, she behaves with great restraint. Husband and wife remain at some distance from one another. Husband and wife will avoid come in contact with the husband's father, his elder brothers and all male persons senior to him with particular strictness. The reason for this is that a man, so long as he remains under his own father's roof, must keep up the fiction of denying that he leads an active sexual life of his own. Not to do so is to be disrespectful. Although *parde* is not observed in Hindu peasant families of Maharashtra, the wife always keeps her head covered with *padar*, end of her *sari*, particularly in the presence of elder persons and strangers.

In the eastern part of Maharashtra the man avoids going nearer to his wife's mother and the wife's mother herself also
avoids approaching her son-in-law as far as possible. Both of them may engage in a short conversation without seeing each other.

The relation of married woman to the younger brothers and nephews of her husband is of a degree of intimacy which is in inverse proportion to the strictness of the code of behaviour which regulates their relations with the senior male members of the family. The relations between the married woman and her husband's brothers as well as between a man and his wife's younger brothers and sisters are of the type called joking relations. These relations help in relaxing the tension, especially for the married woman.

In a joint family, it is not considered proper to fondle one's own child in the presence of older members of the family or when strangers are present.\(^2\) A child is generally fondled by grandfather or grandmother or its uncles. The mother must look on impassively while the grandmother makes much of her child—unless the child begins to cry. Only then is she entitled to assert her first claim to "mother" her baby, by clasping it in her arms and giving it the breast. The child remains with its mother till the period of breast suckling. The boy is thus not dependent on his own parents physically and psychologically in the joint family. He generally spends his time in the company of men and boys avoiding


\(^2\) This is also true in villages in Rajasthan State. See 6. Morris Carstairs, *op.cit.*, p.66.
a company of girls. After marriage he may see his wife moving in the house and working among other family women, but it is a taboo to speak with her. He is fed and cared for by other women in the family. When she reaches puberty, a sexual life between them commences after a ceremony called "vatbharan" or 'Shantik'. Husband-wife relationship in a joint family does not take up a primary position.

In general, men and women have their own clearly defined spheres of living corresponding to their particular functions of social life. The male members of the family engage in their various productive occupations and spend the greater part of each day out-of-doors, while the women and children remain in the house, the women attending the housework, the care of the children and the feeding of the domestic animals. Women are expected to assume full responsibility for running the household, including discipline of the young children.

The women of the higher caste (Brahmin and Maratha) never engage in any kind of agricultural labour. However, the women of Mali caste may work in their irrigated fields. The women of the lower caste comprise the main force of female agricultural labour. A Maratha woman seldom goes to her farm even after the death of her husband for supervision. She engages a male servant for this purpose. Men and women generally do not work in the field in a mixed group. The agricultural operations are divided strictly. For instance, the
weeding is considered the job of women labourers and men will
never do this job except when they are very old men. On the
other hand, one never sees a woman handling a plough, a harrow,
a hoe or driving a bullock-cart. While returning home after
the field work, the women will walk forming a group exclusively
of women. In villages also men in the neighbourhood will
form a conversation group. Generally women form their separate
group avoiding a man in sight. Men and women do not take
their meals together at home or in field. As indicated women
generally eat after the men have eaten.

Property may be held by a family or the property may
be held jointly by two or more families. A set of persons,
who constitute the property group, is composed of males of a
patrilineaged fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, nephews,
cousins, etc. These patrilineal family members have equal
rights to the property which they own jointly. According to
the Mitakshara law, these male members of the family have
equal rights from the moment of birth. In consequence of this
right, each person also has the right to demand the division
of property, but such a division requires the consent of other
members. It is thought that the members have a moral obliga-
tion to try to continue the unit of joint ownership, provided
this does not result in serious disagreement among the persons
concerned. It is also thought that the continued existence of
such a unit of joint ownership is a potential source of social
prestige.
However, in practice it becomes difficult to maintain the joint ownership of the property. It is obligatory on the part of the man to keep the property intact for future generation. Therefore, frugality is practiced. He provides for the division of property among his sons to avoid the quarrels among them during his life time. The joint property generally remains intact till the marriage of the second son. For instance, in the family of farmer X, who had three sons, there were good relations among the members, although the relations between eldest son's wife and her mother-in-law were some times strained. Two years after marriage of the second son, his first son was born. It was then known that the two wives of the brothers could not maintain amicable relations between themselves. Hence, the eldest brother with his wife and children moved to another house. There were thus two families till the marriage of the third son. Finally, there were three families and farmer X and his wife became the household members of the family of the youngest son.

When the joint family divides in two or more nuclear families the household assets are divided among them, while the joint ownership of landed property may persist for some time. If this is not possible, the landed property is also divided. This division may occur during the life time of the father in which case he also keeps his share as a sort of insurance. If he cannot maintain good relations with any of his sons, he can have his own establishment. He also meets
the expenditure for marriage of his youngest daughters and/or expenditure on married daughters when they come as guests in their father's house. After his wife's death his share is again divided equally among his sons.

The death of the father always provides pressure in the direction of the division of the joint property, if it remains undivided till then. In such a case the youngest son gets his preference as parts of the property are chosen. If things go wrong, the near relatives of the members of the family (often the maternal uncle of the brothers) are called in to help settle the dispute. So difficult is it to divide the property to the satisfaction of all brothers, that a high social prestige attaches to brothers, who are able to carry out such a division of property in an efficient and amicable manner. Sometimes, it may give rise to quarrels among the brothers and the matter may even be taken to court; in an extreme case the murder of one brother by his other brothers is not a rarity. The constant splitting of land has resulted in fragmentation of uneconomic holdings.

Although jointness is economically beneficial to almost everyone, it is not so important for the destitute or near destitute; their capital wealth cannot support even one nuclear family, so partition makes little difference. Hence where the norm is broken and brothers are separated while their father is still living, we should expect to find a high incidence of
partition among such people if wealth is a crucial factor. However, partitioning may also be expected to be fairly frequent among the well off, for the survival of such people is not threatened by it. If wealth is the main determinant of family type, one would expect to find jointness strongest in the middle groups, weakest at the extremes.¹

When there is partition the family gods remain in the ancestral home, who-so-ever inherits it.

Norms About Bhauki: In most castes a number of patrilineally related households form a distinct, largely localized exogamic group. Villagers sometimes use the term "Kutumb"² for it, usually, however, they call it a "bhauki" or "bhauband", although these terms are also used to refer to a more widespread group which subsumed a number of localized groups sharing one surname. In a few cases villagers use the term "khari bhauki" - "real bhauki"- to distinguish the localized group from the broader one. In the Anthropological literature on rural India, groups similar to this are frequently called lineages, but in point of fact, those in this region, and possibly elsewhere, differ from a lineage as ordinarily defined.³ Fellow villagers not in the main bhauki are sometimes said to be "outsiders" despite the fact that their families had been living in the village for many generations.

¹ H. Orenstein, op.cit.p.41-42.
² Kutumb means a family and bhaub means a brother.
³ H. Orenstein, op.cit.p.64.
Villagers view the term matlag, similar to the English "relative", to refer to bhauki members and soyare. The term "soyare" is defined in terms of membership in groups of people with histories of marital connections. It is not the same, however, as the English concept of "in-law". The term is used to designate individuals, but it does not connote marriageable as against interdicted individuals. For example, ego's father's brother's unmarried daughter is not his "soyare"; she is unambiguously in his bhauki, and marriage within this group is prohibited. But once she marries into an appropriate group, that group, including herself, is considered to be soyare, by virtue, at least, of her marriage into it.¹

The boundaries of a khari bhauki are partly defined by exclusive participation in traditional village work. This work included the jobs of village headmen, as well as those duties associated with the balata system. It is only the main bhauki that serves the village; "outsiders", no matter how long resident in the village and no matter what their relationship to the main bhauki, have no right to work at traditional tasks unless they are given permission by members of the main bhauki or have been specifically brought into do so. The right to work and its remunerations can be temporarily alienated, as by mortgage, but it is not allowed to be permanently sold or given away to people not in the main bhauki.

¹. Ibid. p.91.
The boundaries of the group are also defined, in some cases, by traditional caste offices. In those castes that have traditional officers, each post is inherited by one whole bhauki, actually one khari bhauki, allegedly the original one. For example, all members of the main bhauki of Marathas in a village are "patils". Those in the khari bhauki select one of their members to carry out the actual duties of the office, but all members of the main bhauki are called by the appropriate title during caste meetings.

The nature of the khari bhauki is seen in birth and death taboos and, in part also, in some sraddha (ancestor propitiation) ceremonies. The death, generally only that of a married person, defiles his kinsmen for a stipulated period of time during which taboos and austerities are required. This condition is called "sotak".

In inviting one's bhauki members to wedding, it is customary to give them colored rice and to give other guests invitation cards. There is a tendency toward marriage outside of the village, because a considerable number of people in each caste are of the same bhauki. A few intravillage marriages do occur, e.g. among Marathas, where there are many bhaukis in the village, several such marriages are performed. If an individual moved to a distant place, he often keeps some ties to his original khari bhauki, and his children also do so too, to some extent, but the third or fourth generation is
likely to keep few if any affiliations. This helps in the selection of a bride. In the kharí bhāukī as a whole, two most important area of obligation and cooperation are in marriage and death. It is highly desirable to have some mature members of the bhāukī participate in the selection of one's spouse. It is also considered absolutely necessary at the time of death to have kharī bhāukī members assist in removing the dead body from the house. They are required to be among the "pall bearers" who carry the deceased to the place of cremation.¹

Norms about Marriage: In Maharashtra the family is patrilineal and patrilocal. A combination of marriage customs from the north and south of India are found in Maharashtra, where the Sanskritic northern trials and the Dravidian southern trials almost hold a balance. For instance, village exogamy is found in all castes in the North India, even in Gujarat, but there is no taboo against the marriage of a boy and girl of the same village in Maharashtra. In a demographic survey of six rural communities, it was found that 21 per cent of marriages took place between partners living in the same village.² The marriage of a man to his sister's daughter is a common custom in South India. This custom is also prevalent in Southern Maharashtra, even among the Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmins.³ Levirate (marriage of a widow to the younger

¹. H. Orenstein, op. cit. p. 70.
brother of her husband) is a northern custom and is followed by some castes in eastern Maharashtra.

The Maratha and the Kumbis form the most numerous part of the population of Maharashtra. Many other castes including Brahmins follow the same marriage pattern as followed by Marathas. For instance, cross-cousin marriage, a man marrying his mother's brother's daughter, has been accepted by all castes except Madhyandin Brahmins. The Gujars who migrated in north-west Maharashtra do not allow cross-cousin marriage and follow northern customs. Recently, however, after much debating in the caste council permission was granted for one such marriage.\(^1\) This is an example of cultural exchange and cultural adjustment. In a demographic survey of six rural communities Dandekar found that nearly 20 per cent marriages were between first or second cross-cousins and nearly 70 per cent were between families totally unacquainted before arrangement for marriage were made. The proportion of cross-cousin marriages was, however, small among Brahmins and other advanced castes; while it was large among artisan castes and also the scheduled castes. Among these castes, nearly one-third of all marriages were between cousins.\(^2\)

There is a general preference to only one type of cross-cousin marriage i.e. man's marriage to his maternal cross-cousin (his mother's brother's daughter). But the man's marriage with father's sister's daughter is not preferred. There is

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1. I. Karve, "Kinship Organization in India". (Poona Deccan College Monograph Series No.11, 1963) p.162.
a belief that such marriage may bring ill-luck to the family. The reason against such a marriage is given in the popular expression "The climbing creeper must not return". Like a creeper whose shoots grow to one direction, once the girl given in marriage from family 'X' to family 'Y', her daughter born in family 'Y' must not return to the family 'X' in the marriage bond. Therefore, exchange of girls as brides between two families is disapproved. However, such marriage occur among extremely poor families in order to save expenditure on marriage.

Sisters can and did marry the same man. Although there is not a taboo, there is a definite prejudice against two brothers marrying two sisters.

The clan organization\(^1\) plays an important role in marriage among Marathas. The Maratha clans are arranged in a hypergamous system "Panchakuli" (five clans) and "Satkuli" (seven clans).

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**Figure 2 : Bilateral Kindred Endogamy.**

1. Orenstein called this clan organization as a bilateral kindred. See H. Orenstein *op.cit.* p.125.
elans) consisting of families which claim noble ancestry and also claiming the origin of Rajputs. Including these clans, there were 96 original clans of Marathas. Later on, they had been split up assuming various clan-names.

The rule of marriage is that the clans shown in the same circle can marry among themselves or they can marry with daughters of clans shown in outer circles. For example, the man, who belongs to seven clans can marry a girl from all clans except five clans shown by innermost circle; but his daughter may be accepted in marriage among five clans. This forms the pattern of hypergamous clan arrangement like that of Rajputs and Khatis of northern India. Devaka is the symbol connected with the clan. Devaka may be any living thing or an artefact, e.g. a species of grass, a jarelin, etc. The rule of Devaka-exogamy is also practiced in Maharashtra. Those clans who have same Devaka do not marry.

Generally, marriages are settled with the consent of parents or guardians only. The consent of the boy and girl may not be obligatory. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that in nearly 40 per cent of the marriages of the above and 15 per cent of the marriages of girls, they were explicitly consulted and had consented. In the same survey, it was reported that only 15 out of the total of 459 marriages were settled by mutual approval and consent of the bride and the bridegroom, who were members of Bhil community in a village in Dhulia.
District. Among Bhils, the pre-marriage relations between boys and girls appeared more liberal and even the forms of marriage seemed less rigid. There were instances where a man and a woman had stayed together as husband and wife without any formal marriage ceremony as in the case of the tribal communities. The formal ceremony would take place sometime later according to mutual convenience. Another form of marriage, called Zagda (quarrel) was also reported among Bhils. According to this form, the boy and the girl after mutual approval and consent would elope and stay in hiding. Knowing about this, the girl's father would demand payment of damages from the boy's father. The amount of damages was settled by arbitration and the boy and the girl were deemed married when the amount was paid. The amount was paid either in cash or by the bridegroom agreeing to stay with the father-in-law and work for him for a certain period.¹

Among Brahmins and other advanced castes, the marriage proposal usually comes from the bride's side; while among scheduled, Backward and Primitive castes as also among Non-Hindus, the proposal comes primarily from the bridegroom's side. Sometimes a "go-between" is required for arranging the marriage.

While settling the marriage following major points are taken into consideration: (1) One prefers a bride as far as possible from among the relatives i.e. from a family connected

¹ K. Dandekar, op. cit. p. 56-57.
by former ties of marriage. This is called "Padar Lagne". If it is not possible to find a suitable bride among the relatives, one selects a bride from a family of sufficient acquaintance. Therefore, brides are selected from the same village or from nearest villages. Marathas are concerned about the 'purity' of potential spouses. Where a prior affinal link exists, little investigation is involved. Of the 459 marriages, Dandekar found that 21 per cent were contracted between partners living in the same village, in 36 per cent cases the distance between the home villages of the partners was less than 10 miles and in only 12 per cent cases the distance was more than 50 miles.\(^1\) (2) People endeavour to give their daughters in families having better socio-economic status, while they may select a bride from a family of low economic status. But a bride from a family of higher economic status is preferred as she is expected to bring some fortune with her. For this reason, the bride from a low social status but high income family is accepted in some cases. (3) The marriage negotiations may be disrupted on account of the dowry. Generally speaking, it is in the advanced castes that the payment is made by the bride's family to the bridegroom while the reverse is the case in lower castes.\(^2\) However, the custom of dowry payment is not prevalent in all castes. (4) The marriage expenses to be incurred by both parties are also settled as soon as the marriage is fixed. Generally, the expenditure on

\(^1\) *Ibid* p.54.
\(^2\) *Ibid* p.57.
marriage incurred by the bride's party is half of the expenditure incurred by the bridegroom. Generally marriage ceremony takes place at the bride's village. Therefore, the bride's family has to make arrangements for food and lodging of the bridegroom's party and other relatives. Bridegroom's clothes are prepared at the expenses of the bride's family, while his family purchases clothes and ornaments for the bride. In marriage rites the bridegroom's party has a dominant status-role.

The total average expenditure on marriage in different villages, as reported by Dandekar, varied from Rs. 400 to Rs. 700 in the case of marriages of boys and from Rs. 200 to Rs. 450 in the case of marriages of girls. In most cases, the expenditure on marriage is found to be more than half the annual income of the family and in many cases it is very nearly equal to its whole annual income. Such high expenditure can only be met by borrowing and marriage becomes almost a universal occasion for borrowing. Pressure of custom and public opinion and of false family pride is such that there seems no escape from this heavy expenditure.¹

Until recently, Brahmins used to marry their girls before puberty, and parents who had not succeeded in finding husbands for daughters past the age of puberty were regarded as guilty of a great sin.² The marriage of a girl of age below 14 years has been prohibited by legislation known as

1. Ibid p.57-58.
2. M.N.Srinivas op.cit.p.46.
the Sarda Act of 1929. This legislation, however, is not very effective in practice. Dandekar reported that nearly 80 per cent of all marriages contracted since 1929 were child marriages in four rural communities.\(^1\) Child marriages are more prevalent in lower castes than the higher castes. In rural society late marriages of girls are disparaged, as these marriages meant deviation from traditional pattern. Rural people opine that early marriage of a girl helps her to learn and adopt the cultural traditions of her husband's family. It also helps rural families to secure more home labour for their domestic and farm chores. The majority of girls get married in villages before they attain the age of 15 years. This is evident from the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natambli</td>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>85.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamathadi</td>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>83.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koka</td>
<td>Parbhani</td>
<td>55.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongargaon</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>59.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambadi</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>51.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhilgaon</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>63.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navari</td>
<td>Dhulla</td>
<td>81.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Ibid p.35.
The incidence of divorce or otherwise separation is on the whole small. Remarriage of widows is in general less common among the so called advanced and the artisan castes than among other intermediate and backward castes. Widow remarriage lowers the prestige of the family among Brahmins and Marathas. A Brahmin widow had to shave her head, shed all her jewellary and ostentation in clothes. She was regarded as inauspicious and had to observe continence. Among other castes widows do not have to shave their heads. Divorce and widow marriage were both permitted and practiced. Their sex code is not as harsh towards women as that of the high castes.

The remarriage is called Pāt or Gandharva-vivah, which is different than the first marriage. The Pāt ceremony is performed late at night in the courtyard, verandah, temple, or at the river bank. Married women and unmarried boys and girls do not attend this ceremony, which is attended by old persons, widows and remarried women. Two wooden planks (pāt) are kept in line. The bride sits on right-hand plank and a dagger and headwear is kept on the left-hand plank. The bride worships Ganpati as told by the Brahmin priest. She then wears a new sari and presents the dagger and headwear to the bridegroom. She bows her head to his feet. Bride and bridegroom holding hand-in-hand proceed to the planks to sit down. The bride applies gandh on the forehead of the bridegroom. Both of them then worship Ganpati. The bride enters in the house of the

bridegroom same night with him.

While polygyny is permitted in all castes, monogamy is held up as an ideal in Maharashtra. The bigamous marriages are common among Marathas, Lingayats, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and Muslims. The motive generally given is childlessness or lack of a son, though there is some prestige attached in being able to maintain two or more wives. Dandekar reported that among the married men of age above 37 in village Dhanore in Dhulia district nearly 10 per cent had two living wives, while the percentage of bigamous males in Bori (District Parbhani), Mirajgaon (District Ahmednagar) and Wistabaon (District Ratnagiri) were 3.0, 1.7 and 0.8 respectively. In a large number of cases, the men concerned could not give any reason for bigamy. A majority of the bigamous men at Mirajgaon said that they had a second wife, because they had no issue or no son from their first wife. In Dhanore, many said that having two wives was useful for farm work. At Bori, 12 men had first married a child bride and finding her to be too young, had married a second wife. The first wife stayed with her parents until she came of age and later joined the husband along with the second wife.¹

The former Government of Bombay enacted legislation preventing Hindu bigamous marriages in 1946. If the law is effective, the bigamous marriages should have been less frequent in recent years.

¹ K. Dandekar, op.cit. p.47.
Norms about Caste: According to Weber the doctrine of Dharma introduced a particularism into Indian society of which there is no counterpart in the West. It encompasses the norms of each caste which not only differ from one another, but often stand in strict conflict.

The inter-familial behaviour is regulated by the caste council and tradition. The rules regarding inter-marrying are very rigid, so much so that even the sub-castes settle marriages within their own circle. The inter-caste marriages in villages are extremely rare.

Many families in the various castes still follow their traditional occupations. There are certain norms regarding occupations to be followed by castes. Farming, business, tailoring, teachership and carpentry are the occupations which can be undertaken by any caste; while smithy, shoemaking, weaving, tending sheep and goats, tanning skins, fishing, washing clothes and hair cutting are the occupations rigidly followed by specific castes.

The caste and class distinction are clear in villages. The etiquette demands respect for the high caste person from the lower castes and to village officials and for members of the village council from all villagers irrespective of caste.

As previously noted the untouchables are not allowed to draw water from a well used by other castes. If the village is
situated on the bank of a river or a stream, the untouchables
have to use water from the lower side of the water current,
while the upper side of the water current is used for bathing,
washing clothes and fetching water (called Panotha) by the
touchable castes.

Pollution by contact with Harijans or people in sutak
is removed by various methods. The most frequent method is
bathing - really pouring water on oneself with the clothes on
or plunging into a river. Sprinkling with cow urine or touch­
ing a cow are also considered satisfactory purification for
mild pollution, especially for children. Deities are very
sensitive to pollution; they cannot be approached too closely
by Harijans or by temporarily polluted persons. Harijans,
cannot enter temples, except for the Martial temple. Education
gives prestige, but educated Harijans are still untouchable.
Casual sexual relations of high caste men with Harijan women
are tolerated, however, unwillingly, so long as they are purely
sexual and they do not live in the same house as de facto
husband and wife.

If an untouchable man touches a metal vessel, it is
polluted. A burning piece of charcoal is kept in such a
vessel and then it is accepted by touchable person. If it is
an earthen pot, it is given to the untouchable man. Even the
cloth in which jowar bread is tied for carrying to the field is

polluted with the touch of untouchables and it is discarded. The touchable boys will never go to the untouchable locality to play there with untouchable boys.

On very few occasions the different castes come together. The intercourse between castes is peripheral or tangential. Karve observed that the activities of inviting people to meal, going to others for meal and visiting for a few days, were confined in nearly 90 per cent of cases to the kinship group. The remaining 10 per cent were within the caste group. The same was the case with friendships.¹

It is considered obligatory that hospitality must be given to those of one's caste who appear in the village. Food and water are given and if necessary, a place to sleep, although the caste temple or chavadi is usually used for sleeping purposes.

The Brahmins and other high caste villagers do not use earthen wares for cooking.

Castes which offer blood sacrifices to deities are lower than castes making only offerings of fruit, grain and flower.

Norms about dresses: The dress of the villager differs according to caste and occupation. The dress of the supervisory land owner is different than the farm labourer.

¹ I. Karve, *op.cit.* p.34.
The dress of the Brahmin priest is different than the persons of the other caste. The pagdi (head-wear) of Brahmin is different than that of Marathas, which is called pagota. The style of this pagota and feta also differs from region to region. The pagota of the farmer in Vidarbha is of red colour; sometimes of cream colour, while the white pagota is seen on the heads of farmers near Sinner in Poona district. The style of tying feta in Kolhapur district is different than that of a farmer in Sholapur district. As it was compulsory to wear a half-pant during agronomy practicals in Agricultural College, the author had purchased the half-pant for him. When he was at home during vacation he had put on the half-pant for going to the field. He was, however, prevented from doing this by his grandfather, who ordered him to wear Dhoti instead of half-pant saying only Mahars wear half-pants.

The style of a Brahmin woman of wearing 9 yards sari is different than that of the Maratha woman in South Maharashtra. The Brahmin woman does not cover her head with the end of her sari, while the Maratha woman does. Women in Ahmednagar district (Ghati) wear the same sari with a different style than the above mentioned women. The dress pattern of tribal castes is again different having no parallel with the general village and among different tribes. The sari of 5 yards is only preferred by young girls in villages. For instance, the author's wife wears a sari of five yards in the city, where she resides; but when she goes to the native village she has to
wear a 9 yards sari and has to cover her head with one end of it. The colour of sari is also of special significance. The woman working on a farm generally prefer blue coloured sari, second preference is for green and third to red. The colour of the sari at the time of ritual is yellow, which is sacred. When the girl reaches puberty, the first sari presented to her is green. During her wedding, except at time of the ritual, she wears green. When she is pregnant, she wears green; when her son marries, she receives a green sari as a gift from the bride's mother. Black is rejected in marriage. Finally, if she dies while her husband is alive, she is cremated with a green sari on. With the green sari go green bangles.¹

The woman of Mali caste in villages wear a choli (bodice), the sleeves of which cover the elbows and come down an inch; the women of the Maratha caste wear a choli which stops short of the elbow; while to the women of vaddar caste a choli or any sewn garment to cover the part of the body above the waist is a taboo;

The unmarried woman wears a kumkum on her forehead. The married woman also wears kumkum on her forehead plus a black-beaded necklace (Mangalsutra literary means sacred thread), a nose ring or ornament (Nath), eartops (kudya) and silver rings (Jodavi) on a finger nearest the long toe of each foot. The married woman will never move among people without wearing a black-beaded necklace and silver rings. These are obligatory

¹. Ibid. p.47.
sings of married women. The widow never wears Kumkum, Mangalsutra, Nath, Jodavi, green sari and green bangles. The Brahmin
didow, whose head is shaved, always wears a red coarse sari.

The typical old peasant wears a pagadi (headwear),
barabandi (kind of shirt without buttons), Dhoti or Dhotar
(2½ yards piece of long cloth 45 to 50 inches in width) and
joda or chappal (footwear). The typical middle-aged farmer
wears a white cap or feta, Nehru shirt, Dhotar and Chappal.
Change in the dress of the younger generation is conspicuous
due to the urban influence. The young farmer now wears a cap,
a shirt, a pyjama and chappal. He also when he can afford,
wears a wristwatch and if possible gold ring on his hand. Male
villagers prefer white clothes.

Norms about diet:—Eating pork or beef is more defiling
than eating fish and mutton. Brahmins, immigrated merchant
and artisan castes are strictly vegetarian. Among the Brahmins,
Sarswat Brahmins eat fish. The trader caste, Wani is strictly
vegetarian; but Wanis of Konkan eat fish. Among the Maratha,
Kumbi and Mali castes some families have put the restrictions
on non-vegetarian diet on their own accord, since a vegetarian
family is ranked higher in status than the non-vegetarian family.

Generally the villagers eat what is grown in their
villages. The items of diet are well illustrated in one of the
village folk-songs, which is translated here.
What is the main dish of Kunbis?
The main dish of Kunbis
Is the maize gruel and butter milk
What is the main dish of Bhil?
The main dish of Bhil
Is the nagli chapati and kurudu vegetable.
What is the main dish of Marathas?
The main dish of Marathas
Is the bajri gruel and curry of pulse.
What is the main dish of Brahmin?
The main dish of Brahmin
Is the wheat chapati and pure ghee
What is the main dish of Bania?
The main dish of Bania
Is jowar chapati and matha vegetable.
What is the main dish of Muslims?
The main dish of Muslims
Is bajri chapati and a fowl.

The items of diet are also dependent on one's economic ability. In a demographic survey of six rural communities, Dandekar reported that 73 per cent of the families were non-vegetarian. However, non-vegetarian food was rarely consumed in the surveyed areas. It being costly villagers could not afford to consume it except on rare occasions or when some cheap river fish was available. In Konkan the main item of

diet of many families is fish. Dandekar found that 70 per cent families had consumed fish of low quality since better quality was sold out.\(^1\)

The refusal to accept food often implies that the host is inferior, "unclean". The traditional pattern prescribes the giving of food by higher castes to lower castes and not vice versa. There is an absolute taboo against receiving food from untouchables, who however, receive food from touchables. The touchable man is forbidden to take food sitting near the untouchable man. Meals on specific occasions like marriage, funeral etc. are given and received among the kin and caste people. A rich man may invite all villagers for a feast on account of marriage. If he is a Maratha, the Brahmins and higher caste artisans do not accept food. Some artisan castes claim to be Brahmins, e.g. some carpenter castes call themselves as Vishwa-Brahmins and goldsmiths call themselves as Naivadna-Brahmins. They are given uncooked food or a Brahmin cook is employed for them. Other castes ranked lower than Marathas, however, take meals from Marathas having separate caste lines. The line of untouchables is accommodated on the street or open courtyard. It has been reported that Navabuddhas and Harijans of village Dongargaon can now take meals with touchables. But at the end of the meal they have to remove their patravalis (leaf-plates) or wash their own metal plates.

\(^1\) K. Dandekar op.cit.p.131.
Among the untouchables the feast is confined to caste people only. Thus Mahars give a feast to Mahars and Chambhar to Chambhars only. The touchables are forbidden to participate in their feasts and this norm is strictly observed by all. A few persons of higher castes might have occasionally taken meals with untouchables and Muslims. Karve and Damle reported that 6 persons out of had received food from untouchables. Of these 6 persons five were Marathas and one was Dhangar. They were not socially boycotted. This may be due to law of untouchability. In the same survey Karve and Damle found that a Maratha both received and gave meals from and to a Muslim.

Before the legislation prohibiting untouchability, the Harijans were not allowed to enter the village tea-shop. A cup and saucer were hung in a wirebasket at the entrance of the tea-shop specially for the untouchables.

Drinking tea and offering tea have become established customs in the village. This practice was unknown about 30 years ago. Some families drink tea without milk. Jaggary is usually used instead of sugar. Farmers and agricultural labourers go to the fields after drinking tea. There are no restrictions on the time one may drink tea. The village visitors and guests of families of acquaintance in the village are offered tea and pansupari. In a village survey of Koka in Parbhani district, it was found that the average family consumed 695 cups of tea per annum. There is a prohibition on drinking

spirits by law, but there are no restrictions by religious prohibition. Still drinking is considered disreputable. If any one is addicted to drinking he takes it in private and as if by stealth.

As previously stated cows and bullocks are sacred to Hindu peasants and no one kills them for meat. Eating beef is taboo to all Hindus. Mahars did eat the flesh of cattle, which died a natural death as the flesh of live cattle was expensive. He-buffaloes are ceremonially killed by Mahar and Mang castes on Dasara day and the flesh is eaten by them. But many Mahars who embraced Buddhism have given up flesh eating. Flesh of domestic pigs is consumed by scavenger caste people, but wild pigs are preferred by Marathas. However, eating flesh is a mark of the lower caste, because the taking of life in any form is a sin for Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. Therefore, clean castes employ the Mulani (Mohomedan) for killing sheep, goat or fowl. But killing wild beasts is not regarded a sin. On the contrary, it enhances one's prestige.

The villagers observe a number of fast days prescribed by the Hindu calendar. Certain items of food are avoided on fast days. For instance, onion and garlic are not eaten on fast days and these items are not consumed by orthodox families during four months of rainy season in Maharashtra. Elderly ladies and widows of all ages are not supposed to eat onion and garlic. Jains do not eat tubers and fresh vegetables nor do
they eat non-vegetarian food such as meat, eggs and flesh. A non-vegetarian villager on return from pilgrimage to Pandharpur becomes strictly vegetarian. A villager after the death of his father may avoid eating a specific item for a year, e.g. rice or panvida.

Norms about behaviour: - Du Wors observed that "values affect and effect social change by acting as rejection-selection standards for choosing among possible modes of behaviour. They act as the final causes of behaviour--by supplying the ends toward which behaviour is directed. They also act as formal causes, by ruling on the forms of behaviour acceptable for achieving those ends."  

(1) Ordinarily, a man does not have an open friendship with unrelated woman of about his own age, for such relationship may be conceived as sexual in nature. People of opposite sex who are acquainted do not even greet one another in public. There may be some open friendship relations between a man and a woman in a village, but they are brought about by a special technique. In a such case they first visit the Gosavi or Sadhu (priest) at the temple, who gives them perfunctory religious advice - the Kanmantra, secret words. Then the fictitious relations of brother and sister are established between them. These relations often cross caste lines e.g. a Maratha man and a Chambhar woman.

(2) People undertake any new work, including farm operations, pilgrimage, sinking a well, building a house, shifting from one house to another house, rituals and rites, going on a long journey on a **muhurt** (an auspicious day) according to the Hindu calendar. People avoid moonless nights for such work. It is considered unauspicious to send the newly wed bride to the bride-groom's house on Wednesdays and Fridays and therefore, these days are avoided.

(3) One has to bathe before worshipping god sitting to a meal. One does not take meals in his house or on the farm with his footwear on or his head covered with a cap or **pagadi**. While taking meals one has to sit crosslegged. It is believed that a person taking meals seated with his legs spread out will marry in a far away place.

(4) The kitchen is sacred as the food is cooked there. The place, where the household gods are kept, is also sacred. Nobody walks there in footwear. Footwear is also not allowed in a temple. Generally footwear is not allowed inside the living rooms of the house. One has to place his footwear near the door upon entering the room. The idea of pollution lies behind this norm. But the bridegroom is not forbidden to enter in the house with his shoes on his feet; because his shoes are always new and he fears that his shoes will be stolen by the brother of the bride in order to extract customary payment of money. Footwear is also not allowed in a **chavadi**
(community hall). People are also forbidden to climb on the
par (platform) near the sacred tree. One who speaks stand-
ing on this platform has to speak only the truth. Walking
with the footwear on the threshing floor, in banana orchard
and chilli field, is also considered inauspicious by the
farmers.

(5) During menstruation a woman is temporarily pollut-
ed. She does not cook food or bring water into the home for
four days. She is also not allowed in the temples, marriage
ceremony and religious functions. She, however, does light
work at home or on the farm as for example cleaning grain. If
anyone touches her by mistake, the feeling of revulsion is
great and he has to take off his clothes and bathe. But at
times he is permitted to move among people, if the urine of
cow is sprinkled on his clothes. Cow's urine is sacred and a
potful of this urine is often kept in the cowshed.

(6) Moving in a village without head covered with a
cap or other headwear is considered ungracious. This taboo
may be due to the practice of villagers joining a funeral
procession without covering their heads. The taboo seems to
be relaxed at present. Some young school teachers, village
officials and young educated villagers move in a village with-
out covering their heads.

(7) Growing long hair by males was also a taboo. There-
fore, old villagers shave their heads clean keeping a bunch of
long hair in the centre which is called Shendi. Keeping Shendi is customary among Hindus and not among Muslims. At present middle-aged and young villagers keep comparatively long hair on their heads, which is combed.

(8) The earlobes of Hindu males are pierced while Muslim males do not pierce the earlobes. The earlobes and nose of Hindu woman are also pierced. There may be more than one hole on the ears of Muslim woman whose nose is also pierced.

(9) Young people avoid smoking tobacco and eating pan in the presence of elders in the family and other respectable persons. Smoking by children and women is a taboo. However, the fisher and tribal women in Konkan smoke. Village women in some other areas eat pan and tobacco. Cigarettes are considered fashionable and are costly also. The Bidi is more convenient than the 'chilim' (small earthern pipe). Therefore, old persons smoke with the chilim and younger persons use bidi.

(10) Education is now regarded as desirable for male children. People now realize that it is essential for getting desired official position and status in a decentralised pattern of Government. Education of girls, though not disfavoured by high caste Hindus, is discouraged as there is no provision of a separate school for girls, particularly beyond primary education. Coeducation is not considered desirable.
Peasants' Idea about Spiritual Merit:— The peasants in their everyday life try to acquire and accumulate Punya (spiritual merit) and avoid Pap (sin) in order to achieve Moksha. The following actions are considered necessary for the acquisition of Punya—

1. Helping any poor man confers merit, but more merit would accrue when the poor man is also a Brahmin and a priest.
2. Feeding the Brahmins and hungry.
3. Not coveting other man’s wife.
4. Showing due respect to elders.
5. Doing one’s job including caste duties without murmur.
7. Giving charity to Brahmins and others.
8. Going on pilgrimages.
9. Construction of temples and guest houses (Dharmashala).
10. Offering water to people for quenching their thirst during the summer.
11. Behaving nicely with neighbours and desisting from unseemly quarrels.

The following actions are considered to be pap (sin) and it is believed that they lead one to hell.

1. Stealing.
2. Adultery.
3. Treason.
5. Insubordination to elders and towards those of higher castes.

Norms about Agriculture: Farmers have intensive attachment to their land and most farmers like farming as the way of life.

In a study of characteristics of youth choosing farming as an occupation in 5 selected counties in Wisconsin, Apps found that boys who choose farming, as an occupation are low achievers in education. This is also true in Maharashtra. Among the farmer's sons, one who scores good marks will prefer a white-collar occupation as a merchant, a teacher or a tailor in city or in the same village. A college educated boy, who prefers farming as an occupation seldom works with his own hands but he supervises the work of agricultural labourers on his farm. Poorly educated or illiterate persons actually carry on all the manual operations of farming. This agriculture in the area of study is confined to the lower stratum of the peasantry and the agricultural labourers. Some big peasants hire the services of labourers for a year at a time. In these cases the labourer is paid partly in cash and partly in grain and one or two changes of clothing are provided per year.

Fukutake pointed out that the peasants of the upper stratum use an astonishing amount of labour on a holding of only four or five hectares.¹

Several peasants have neither work-animals (i.e. bullocks) nor implements. They have to hire these on payment of cash or in exchange of labour. There is also a cooperative practice of agricultural operations in Maharashtra known as Irijik. In this practice a poor small landholder invites other peasants with their bullocks and implements to his landholding and harrowing and sowing operations are done simultaneously by them on the same day. After finishing the work they eat a feast given by the land-holder. Organization of the Irijik is considered of low status, therefore, this practice is generally followed by sick and old farmers, who cannot put in hard toil and have no able-bodied relatives. This practice is followed for harvesting of crops also and is reported by Dandekar and Jagtap. A farmer by the name of Tukaram Shripati Pawar engaged agricultural labourers on contract for Rs.50 for harvesting his jowar crop on seven acres. Two farmers by the name of Dyaneshwar Patil and Gulabrao Patil organized the Irijik for harvesting jowar crop, on four and three acres respectively. They invited 20 villagers, but actually 50 villagers came and harvested the crop. The two landholders spent about Rs.45 on tea and non-vegetarian meals. Thus the expenditure was almost the same.² But the quality of work is always much lower it is

¹. T.Fukutake et al. op.cit.28.
². V.M.Dandekar and M.B.Jagtap Gavarahati (Marathi) p.115.
done through the Irâlik than is otherwise the case.

Two generations ago, selling milk was considered sin by high status farmers and Brahmins. Therefore, dairying was not organised from the business point of view. This taboo is no more now, but orthodox old farmers of high status still do not drink buffalo's milk.

Studies have been conducted in India and Maharashtra in particular to investigate into the peasant values related to the adoption of new farm practices. For instance, Bose found that the adopters of new agricultural practices were characterized by the urban traits of business attitudes, rationality, and scientific attitude, and the non-adopters were characterized by traditionalism, religious inclination and familism. Wealthy and able farmers in the present study area neither purchase nor use improved seed. It has long been thought a disgrace and a sign of failure or poor management to be forced to borrow or buy seed. However, these old norms are now changing.

While reviewing investigations of advisory methods designed to make farmers adopt new farm practices in the Netherlands, van den Ban observed that human behaviour is strongly influenced by group norms and thus it is easier to change a group as a whole than to make a person deviate from the norms.

of his group. This does not mean that it is always easy or even possible to change group norms. It is only possible when the new norms can meet the needs of the group members better than did the old ones.¹ For instance, with the introduction of milk collection federations in villages surrounding Poona city and other urban centres, the peasants have adopted new methods including new cattle breeds, artificial insemination and vaccination in order to increase the milk yield and gain more money.

**Evaluation as a process** - Evaluation is a process through which positive and negative priorities or values are assigned to concepts, objects, actors or collectivities or to events and activities, either past, present or future.²

According to Gibb's a norm in the generic sense (i.e. encompassing all the various types of norms) involves (1) a collective evaluation of behaviour in terms of what it ought to be (2) a collective expectation as to what behaviour will be and/or (3) particular reactions to behaviour, including attempts to apply sanctions or otherwise induce a particular kind of conduct.³

The individual member evaluates when he calculates the results of his action in terms of his ends and norms. Merton has presented a typology of modes of individual adoption.

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² C.P. Loomis and Z.K. Loomis op. cit. p.12.
Figure 3: A Typology of Modes of Individual Adaptation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Adaptation</th>
<th>Culture Goals</th>
<th>Institutionalized Ends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Conformity</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Innovation</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Ritualism</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Retreatism</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Rebellion</td>
<td>Rejection of prevailing ends and substitution of new ones.</td>
<td>Rejection of prevailing norms and substitution of new ones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure p.140).

Merton’s typology can be made use in our peasant society.

**Conformity:** This is the mode of adaptation for most people in which both the ends and norms are positively evaluated and relatively balanced. Most of the villagers conform the norms of their own caste, when they stay in a village. However, their behaviour may not conform to the village norms when they migrate and live in cities, as there is change of reference group. For instance, the villager may abstain from taking non-vegetarian food in his village but he may accept the same during his stay in a city. His family may or may not have the knowledge of his action.

In general caste leaders are consulted before taking any action or decision involving change. For example, they
are invited to participate at the time of fixing and arranging of marriages. The caste leaders are the trustees who observe that every one does confirm to the norms in his actions and decisions.

Jowar (millet) is a staple food of majority of villagers in Maharashtra. But it is considered as the staple food of the poor and therefore, rich villagers and city people prefer wheat and rice in their diet.

Innovation:- In this mode of adaptation institutionalized norms are rejected at the same time that a high evaluation is placed upon the culturally prescribed goals.

There are councils, caste associations and village councils (Gramsabha) to evaluate the individual's action. Caste associations are more democratic than caste councils. Villagers are constantly under strain resulting from the appeal of social innovations brought into a village from cities by the villagers who have visited cities and those who have stayed in cities for some years and returned to the village. The villager who migrates to the city and has an occupation there periodically visits his native village. In Konkan the villager, who has an occupation in Bombay gains prestige in his village on account of this city linkage. People prefer bridegrooms with such linkages for their daughters.

The leader or the person of a lower caste who has
migrated to the city often feels some traditional behaviour of his caste should be changed in order to elevate the status of the caste. The proposed change is talked over with some respectable persons and if they are favourable to change, a meeting of the caste association is called. The decision is arrived at to accept or reject the new norm often after much deliberation. For instance, a caste in Vidarbha decided to limit the expenditure on marriage to the maximum limit of Rs. 500 per marriage. According to this decision rich villagers were forbidden to spend more than Rs. 500 on a given marriage, because small villagers tend to follow the steps of their rich brothers even at the cost of incurring debt.

The individual's action is also evaluated in such meetings. The caste may sanction the innovation as in the case of a cross-cousin marriage among Gujars already noted above or it may reject the new idea. In the latter case the individual or even the whole family may be excommunicated. Karve has noted an instance of excommunication. Among the Vaddar caste there is a taboo against women wearing a bodice. They may wear costly saris and gold ornaments, but never wear a bodice (choli) or a blouse. A few years ago, a rich man of Vaddar caste in the city of Sholapur, tried to defy this norm of his caste. He asked his women-folk to wear bodices as the women of all other castes do. As will be noted above under the discussion of sanctions he and his family were promptly excommunicated and
after a few weeks of resistance they had to give up the innovation, make an object apology and pay a heavy fine before they were admitted back into the fold.  

The actions which pertain to the village as a whole are taken up to the village council instead of the caste council. In villages there may be only one or two families of a particular caste. Their cases cannot be dealt with on the village level by the caste council which does not exist in the village and therefore, they are taken before the village council. The village council is a larger body than the caste council and thus has more power. For instance as noted above in the discussion of sanctions the village council can excommunicate a whole caste. In some of the villages in Marathwada, the people of Mahar caste were boycotted, when they embraced Buddhism and refused to perform their traditional duties. This case is not unimportant in Indian society and history and it illustrates the difficulties of introducing innovations.

The village council assembles in a village temple on new year's day in South Maharashtra. In case of emergency it can be called on other occasions. If the respectable man of the village residing temporarily in a city visits his native village, a meeting of the villagers is called to decide the pending cases in his presence.

**Ritualism:** This is a mode of adaptation by which the cultural goals are rejected and the institutional norms

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1. I.Karve *op.cit.*p.15.
accepted.\(^1\)

The villagers occupy the position closer to the sacred pole of the Becker's continuum. Thus the various sects in Maharashtra, they can be fitted as follows on this model.

![Figure 3: Various Religious Sects on Becker's Continuum.](image)

The village people believe in fate. If God is to be worshipped and if his blessings are to be obtained one has to worship Him with great faith. Simply going through the rituals without having faith is considered not to bring the desired results.

The rivers are sacred. They are called Mata (Mother). Bathing in rivers is considered meritorious and involves sentiment. Of all the rivers Ganga is most sacred. The water of Ganga river filled in small brass jar is often kept near the household Gods. A dying man is given few drops of this water to drink.

Some of the trees and plants are also regarded as sacred e.g. Banyan, Pimpal, Bel, Avala, Tulshi, Shami, Vaijayanti etc.

People eagerly avail of the opportunities of attending

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religious fairs. They also go to nearby places of pilgrimage. For instance, the people of village Dongargaon in Akola district go to Shegaon (32 miles), Shindkhed (10 miles) and Sangaluda (4 miles). Some farmers habitually go to Pandharpur every year. Rich farmers go on pilgrimage to four Dhamas i.e. Dwarka (west), Badrikeshwar (north), Puri (east) and Ramshwaram (south) as well as Haridwar, Banaras, and Gaya at least once in their lifetime.

Brahmins are forbidden to accept a dowry from the bride by Brahmin shashtyas, but this taboo is most prevalent among the Brahmins than other castes. Similarly, Brahmins were supposed to cut the hair of a female child (Javal Kadhane) a custom which is rationalised by the fact that the hair grew on child's head when she was in her mother's womb. This custom is now followed by other castes; but not by Brahmins.

Gold has a higher ritual purity than silver, brass or iron; while earthen wares are polluted with the touch of low caste people and therefore, are not used by the high - caste people for cooking. Silk has a higher ritual purity than cotton. Changes in dress have marked a gradual weakening of ideas regarding ritual purity. Formerly, eating was a ritual act. Marathi verse says "eating is not a filling of belly, but performance of ritual act (udarbharan nohe janiye yadnakarma)". In former times a Brahminton had to wear ritually pure

1. N.G.Chapekar Badlapur (Marathi)
2. N.G.Chapekar op.cit.
robes (sovale) while eating or serving a meal. This meant wearing either a freshly-washed cotton dhoti or a silk dhoti and a pure upper cloth. Wearing a shirt was taboo. This traditional custom was also followed by the orthodox farmers who used to wear a freshly-washed dhoti and the gandh on their foreheads and chests; but not a shirt. Although this tradition is followed by the older generation, it is not accepted any more by the younger generation, who wear pyjama or pants. The dhoti is washed daily, but not a shirt, pyjamas and pants, (westernised dress) which are either washed by a Dhobi or at the interval of 3-4 days at home.

Retreatism:- This is a privatized rather than a collective mode of adaptation of the socially disinherited. In this type of adaptive behaviour Merton has included a typical response by many of those who had suffered an abrupt break in the familiar normative framework and established social relations of their lives.

A man can retire and sever all connections with his family and village becoming a Sanyasi or Sadhu. A Sanyasi has no caste restrictions. Some persons desert their families and run away from the village due to immoral action or deviation from normal behaviour. Such persons may or may not return to the family after some years depending on the nature of crime.

A woman may remain unmarried devoted to a religious cause e.g. Devadasi or Murali. A widow looses many rights

which she had enjoyed before the death of her husband. Even remarriage does not bestow the same rights on her.

Rebellion: Rebellion involves a genuine transvaluation where the direct or vicarious experience of frustration leads to full denunciation of previously prized values, both ends and norms.

The best example of this mode of adaptation is that of untouchables who embraced Buddhism in Maharashtra.

Institutions are the agencies for the fulfilment of the essential and universal biological values such as food, marriage, family and protection; economic values such as wealth, property, standard of living and security; social values such as status, honour and prestige and spiritual values such as aesthetic appreciation, knowledge and security amidst the uncertain and inexplicable. It is because man can fulfill and foster values mainly through instrumentality of institutions that these latter possess authority and sanctity. Values are defined by institutions in a broad and general manner, leaving ample scope for the variety and flexibility of individual strivings and behaviour.

5. Dividing the functions:

Status-role as a unit incorporating both element and process: Loomis stated that the two-term entity, status-role, contains the concept of status, a structural element

1. R.K. Merton *op.cit.* p. 156.
implying position and the concept of role, a functional process. Both are important determinants of what is to be expected from an incumbent and how it is performed by him as he occupies any social position. Loomis and Beegle used the double term "status-role in preference to "role" in order to eliminate from consideration psychological concepts of role, which do not require membership or participation in a specific group.\textsuperscript{1}

According to Parsons the social system is a system of differentiated roles.\textsuperscript{2} The position that a particular actor occupies in that structure is his status.\textsuperscript{3} When he acts in this status he is said to be acting out a role.\textsuperscript{4} There are no roles without corresponding statuses and vice versa.\textsuperscript{5}

In human society the division of labour (dividing the functions) is resorted for the maximization of effort and facilities. Davis noted that a socially determined division of labour allows different persons to acquire different parts of the cultural heritage. Putting to work the part they do learn they perform useful functions for the entire group.\textsuperscript{6} For instance, the Indian peasant does not know how to manufacture implements, but he knows how to use them in crop production. Making implements is the function of the carpenter.

There are three main social institutions in rural

\begin{enumerate}
\item C.P.Loomis and Z.K.Loomis \textit{op.cit.} p.12.
\item T.Parsons \textit{op.cit.} p.114.
\item Ibid.
\item T.Parsons \textit{op.cit.} p.39.
\item K.Davis, \textit{op.cit.}
\end{enumerate}
India; namely, the extended family, the caste and the village. In Indian rural social system, the status-roles of members of these pluralities are well-defined.

**Status-Roles in a Rural Family:** The productive, protective educational and religious functions are mainly entrusted to the family. The status-roles of a member of a family vary with his age which is related to the family life cycle.

**Family cycle:** The stages of the nuclear family's life cycle are much less clearly defined in rural India than in United States especially in the final stages. Early marriage, prolonged child bearing and early death combine to fuse the stages or to obscure entirely the final stage in which a couple go on living after the marriage of their last child. In the survey made in 60 villages near Banaras, Collver found that the median age of boys at Shadi (Marriage) was 13.6 and of girls (10.9). Shadi generally occurs about two years later than this among the Muslims, and an even greater postponement is found among the upper class Hindus. The median age of the husband at gauna (consummation of marriage) was 17.3 and of the wife 14.6 years. Individuals married before 1916 reported generally younger ages at gauna than those married since 1950. This illustrates the changes which are gripping Indian society. The typical couple with an interval of 3.6 years before the first birth and average intervals of three years between all other births, takes a total of 21.6 years to complete and
results in an average family of seven children.\(^1\) Death may take either one of the parents, thus preventing any further increase in the number of children born. The median ages of husband and wife at each stage of the family cycle in Uttar Pradesh and U.S.A. are shown in Table 5. From available knowledge it appears that conditions in Maharashtra are similar to those found in Uttar Pradesh.

Table 5: Median Ages of Husband and Wife at Each Stage of the Family Cycle, Uttar Pradesh and U.S.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Median Age of Husband</th>
<th>Median Age of Wife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadi</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guna</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth of first child</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth of last child</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage of first child</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage of last child</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of one spouse(^a)</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of one spouse(^a)</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at own death(^b)</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\): The couple survives jointly to the age shown.
\(^b\): Spouse survives separately from marriage.

Status-Roles of the Father: Traditionally the father is a protector and provider and has undisputed authority in the

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household. He is regarded as the head of family. His authority, guidance and instructions are accepted by all members of the family. The organization of agricultural pursuit or the craft of family rests mainly with him. The decisions affecting the family are mainly made by him with or without consultation of other family members, especially his wife. As noted below in the discussion of Controlling his authority is partly divided if the wife has a dominant personality and may be completely transferred to his wife or the eldest son when he reaches old age or after his death.

The peasant family possessing a small land holding, say less than 15 acres, manages the cultivation with the help of family labour. In such cases there is always a division of labour. Heavy field operations like ploughing, harrowing, hoeing, carting manure to fields, and digging are entirely conducted by males, and the light work like picking stubble, spreading farm yard manure, thinning, weeding, carrying soil for embankments is done by females. The making of dairy products like curds, buttermilk, butter, and ghee is also the job of females. The children either attend school or they are engaged in herding cattle, driving cattle to the river for drinking water, tying cattle in cattle sheds, weeding, carrying the father's meal to the field and baby-sitting of younger brothers and sisters.

**Status-roles of the Mother**: Besides assisting her husband in the agricultural pursuits the mother is entirely
responsible for cooking, cleaning her house and courtyard, cleaning utensils, washing clothes; bathing, dressing and feeding of babies; nursing of sick and old persons in the family; fetching water from the well or river; storing, cleaning, drying and grinding grains; stitching and mending clothes; covering mud floors and walls with thin cowdung paste; preparation of pickles, papad, shevaya etc; drying and preserving vegetables; worship of god, and rituals. She never receives help from male members of the family for these sundry jobs. If she belongs to the lower stratum or agricultural family, she has to work in the fields besides participating in home-making. In rich high status family, particularly the 96 clan Maratha family, women do not work outside of their houses. Their workload out of house like washing clothes, fetching water etc. is shared by servants.

In some of the village artisan families, the women help their husbands in their occupations. For example, the wife of a blacksmith blows the air; the wife of a potter helps in making pots, bricks and tiles; the wife of a weaver helps in processing yarn; the wife of a tailor helps in making button-holes; and hand-stitching; the wife of a washerman helps in washing and ironing clothes; the wife of a gardener helps in harvesting and selling vegetables etc. But the wives of a carpenter, a mason, a goldsmith, a barber do not help their husbands in their traditional occupations.

It will be interesting to see how the functions are
divided in a typical peasant's joint family and then how the functions are shared between males and females in general in selected villages. There are 25 members in the family of Shri Baburao Mukundrao Ingulkar of the village Kamthadi in Poona district. His father is deceased, but his mother and his father's sister, who is a widow, live with him. He has two wives and three sons. Moreover, he has three brothers. His eldest brother has two wives, three sons and a daughter; his middle brother has a wife, 3 sons and a daughter and his youngest brother has a wife, a son and a daughter. Since the children are much younger, it can be safely said that this family is still at a growing stage.

**Figure 4:** Joint family of a Peasant.

- △ - Male
- ○ - Female
- ▲ - Deceased male
- ▲ - Head of Family
- Ages are shown in brackets
- = - Marriage bond

Shri Baburao Mukund Ingulkar is a village leader, a social-political worker and a progressive farmer, a Maratha by caste. The total land holding of the family is only 4.1 acres, which has been put to intensive cultivation and an
area of 3.25 acres is cropped more than once per year. The land is irrigated from wells. As the landholding is too small the family has to seek sources of income other than agriculture. Besides working on his farm, which is fragmented in 7 pieces ranging from 0.4 acre to 1.50 acres, Shri Baburao also works as a petty contractor and earns about Rs.1000 per year. His net income from farming is Rs.1180 and from his mango orchard he gets an additional Rs.496. His eldest wife manages a grocery shop in the village and earns about Rs.700 per year. Of the four women at home, two are old and cannot work strenuously in the field and therefore, they baby-sit and keep watch over house and farm. The other two women at home are real homemakers. Besides the house work, they work on farm and look after the cattle and this brings in Rs.8 from milk production. The actual family labour used on the farm comes to 66\frac{1}{2} male days and 159 female days. The three brothers are engaged in non-agricultural occupations. The youngest brother with his wife, son and daughter live in the ancestral village home, although he works as the Secretary of Sales and Purchase Cooperative Society at a nearby village, Nasrapur, earning Rs.840 per year. Thus the total income of the joint family, consisting at present of 12 members, comes to Rs.4224 per year. The annual expenditure of the family is Rs.3340. All sons and daughters of school age attend schools and thus they do not earn any income. Two brothers who migrated from the village do not contribute to the income of the joint family operating in the native village. Of the two brothers
who are away, the elder is working in a textile mill in Bombay for the last 25 years and lives there with his two wives, three sons and a daughter. The younger of these two brothers has worked in a textile mill in Poona for the last 15 years and lives there with his wife, three sons and a daughter. His wife works as a retail dealer in vegetables in Poona. These two brothers with their nuclear families occasionally come to the native village and stay one or two months in a year.

A study of working hours of peasant families has been made during 1963-64 in five Indian villages, distributed in different agro-climatic zones.

It was observed that women put in less work in agriculture than the men. September is the busiest month for farm work for both men and women, while the farm work is slack from February to April. It is further observed that males work less up to the age of 26 years but work much harder and for longer periods from 27 years to 35 years. Thereafter they work for shorter periods and less as their age advances. As regards females, the younger and middle aged women work equally long hours while as would be expected old women work less.

On working days, the male agricultural labourer works on an average 7.9 hours per day and the female worker for 5.7 hours. A male worker employed for the whole year by the farm family works on an average for 9.4 hours per day. He has to attend to any sundry assignments of his employer ranging all
the way from attending to guests to fetching water. These are duties besides regular agricultural operations on the farm. If he belongs to the same caste as the employer, he is treated as the member of the family. If he is unmarried, he gets his three meals a day from the employer's household besides some cash, new clothes, footwear and a blanket. He may sleep in the village temple, if he has no house. He marries after some years spending his savings and perhaps an additional amount from a loan from the employer. He thus establishes his own family.

Status-Roles of Castes in a Village Community: The typical village in Maharashtra is essentially agricultural settlement. Hence main the occupations are agriculture and allied pursuits. Such has been the case ever since the foundations of our communities. A peasant can hardly carry out his occupation without the assistance of the Carpenter, the Blacksmith, the Leatherworker. The services of the Barber, the Potter and the Washerman are also necessary for a civilized community. Thus all these and several other similar artisans have existed in villages from time immemorial. These artisans not only serve the agricultural families but also the non-agricultural families i.e. the whole village community (except the untouchables). Hence they were called 'servants of community' by Chanakya. Their maintenance was guaranteed by the community. Hence they did not accustomedly migrate.

2. Ibid p. 89.
from village to village in search of better employment. A peculiarity of Indian village occupations was that they were just what were required to make the village community self-contained and self-sufficient and no more than what were required to serve the needs of the peasants and other villagers. This is evident from Appendix I showing various castes settled in selected villages. A remarkable balance of status-roles linked in a common enterprise; namely, the maintenance of the village developed through the ages.

Table 6: Average working hours per Adult from Farm Families on Agricultural and Livestock Activities. 1963-64.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Average working hours per day per person</th>
<th>Average Number of Eight days in a month per person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Natambi</td>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>16.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nhavri*</td>
<td>Dhulia</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>22.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jalalpur</td>
<td>Parbhani</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>17.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dongargaon</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>18.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vihar-</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>11.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Majority farmers are the Maratha by caste in village Nhavri and their women do not work on farms.
The percentage of families in a village community which are primarily agricultural ranges from 50 to 86. From 45 to 55 per cent are so employed in Vidarbha and Marathwada and much more in western Maharashtra viz. Poona district 66.3 per cent; Dhulia district 60.6 per cent; Kolhapur district 85.9 per cent; and Ratnagiri district 75.9 per cent.¹

There are landless or agricultural labour families in villages. They get a share of the agricultural income in kind and cash. Their share ranges from 30 to 40 per cent in Vidarbha, 25 per cent in Dhulia and Kolhapur districts and 18 to 20 per cent in other selected districts.²

Each caste in a village has a traditional occupation. Of course, the caste-wise division of labour facilitate the inter-dependence of castes. Every caste performs more than one function. For instance, Mahar works as the hereditary village worker, as a watchman and also a messenger. Mahar also works as a carpenter in some villages. A caste may also follow more than one occupation in the absence of a specific caste in the village. For instance, Reddy reported "the Carpenters are scarce and the Blacksmiths work both on wood and iron in a north Indian village".³

Balute system or Jajmani system:

In the villages of Maharashtra the specialist castes are called Balutadar, Balutya or Karu derived from the word

2. Ibid. p. 42.
Kar (worker) and other castes are called Alutedar, or Alutya or Narn. In a village community which is well balanced occupationally, there are 12 Balutedar and 18 Alutedar. Alutedars do not have the right to insist upon baluta payment, similar to the balutedars, but they can be included if the farmer desires. In practice, however, there are only the important specialist castes (Balute) in many villages. If the villages are small and are not far removed from one another, one specialist caste may serve more than one village.

In many so-called developed societies even to-day the farmer does not depend completely on others in the rural area for many non-agricultural activities needed for farming. He may purchase machinery from the market, but can repair himself. Other articles required by him are readily available in the market. He is more or less independent in his farming operations. Extreme specialisation within rural society appears to be a distinctive characteristics of India. Occupational specialization of this type requires independence among the castes.

This specialised system of village occupations is called the Jajmani system in North India. The patron or recipient of services is called a jajman and the traditional workers are called kamins or parijans in North India. The Jajmani system is defined by Beidelman as "a feudalistic system of prescribed, hereditary obligations of payment and of occupational and ceremonial duties, between two or more specific families of
different castes in the same locality”. Beidelman challenges the impression conveyed by Wiser and several other writers, which describe the traditional Jajmani system as a system in which the several castes of a given locality cooperate with balanced powers, in a harmoniously interdependent manner for their mutual benefit. Beidelman, taking an opposing position, points up the gross inequalities of wealth, prestige and power which characterise the roles of Jajman and Kamal. He notes that the main jajman tend to be ritually high castes. Gould hypothesised that the jajmam are not a 'class', sociologically speaking, but a religio-economic category representing a rank or status which any orthodox rural Hindu, regardless of caste, seeks to achieve according to his means. Gould's hypothesis has been confirmed by occurrence of persons of this rank of status in every caste in his sample of study. Gough observed that each kamin sub-caste has traditionally practiced "trade unionism" in relation to its masters and to others of the same occupation. Ostracised members of some such strata who have tried to encroach in the service-rights of others have thus directly discouraged eviction of kamins by their landlords. The services to the number of jajmam are hereditarily divided among the kamin sub-castes. For instance, if a blacksmith, who served 30 jajmans, has two sons, each of his two sons will

serve 18 jajmans on his retirement. Orenstein reported that "caste and class were significant factors in village life. The baluta system was superimposed upon them; it incorporated them and helped to make of the community a unified whole .... Inter-caste arrangements of this kind minimized competition for work, and this gave balutedars more unity. Furthermore, it was the balutedars who allocated work in the system, not the landowners. As contrasted with a market economy, baluta gave the monopoly of a task to a particular group in the village .... Balutedars' monopolies were conceived by them and by landowners as legitimate rights".¹

The Kamins use traditional tools. The balutedars (kamins) avoid change over to modern techniques because the return on the baluta basis are not sufficient to motivate the change over. However, barber balutedars opened hair-cutting saloons and washermen opened laundry shops in urbanised villages. This changeover is based on demand, as village youth have now adopted a western style of hair-cutting and dress.

In Maharashtra, there are 3 categories of balutedars traditionally called Oli (lines). In the first category, balute castes like the Sutar (carpenter), the Lohar or the Khati (blacksmith) and the Chambhar (leatherworker) are included. They are most essential for agriculture. In the second category the Khavi (barber), the Dhobi or the Parit

¹. H. Orenstein op.cit.p.211-217.
(washerman), the Kumbar (potter), the Koli (fisherman) and the Mang (broom and rope maker) are included. Their services are required to meet the necessities of village families. In the third category the Gurav (priest of a village temple), the Joshi (Brahmin priest), the Sonar (goldsmith), the Mulani (Mohomedan butcher) and the Mahar (petty servant) are included. They are necessary for religio-social activities. Besides these specialists, there are some others which receive baluta payment from the farmers. For instance in irrigated villages there are the Patkar balutedars, who are responsible for the maintenance of private canals and distribution of water from these canals. Also there is a ferryman at the river across the road leading to the village in some villages, wherever necessary.

Under this system, a measured grain-share (baluta) was paid by each farmer to all balutedars at the time of annual harvest, as their service charges for the whole year. The payment is not made on every occasion on which the service is rendered by the balutedar. It must be noted that each farmer has to give a certain grain-share to each balutedar, whether he requires his services or not. The reason for adopting this system as given by Altekar is primitive exchange existing earlier coins of precious metals were rarely used. Villagers have a peculiar attachment to their cattle and are reluctant to part with them even in times of stress and difficulty; so the use of cattle as a medium of payment was out of question.
Payment in corn then was the chief alternative left.

The quantity of baluta payment varies from village to village. The payment is made on the basis of the number of bullock-pairs or acreage possessed by the farmer. Sapre has given the method of payment of various balataadars in a village, Kasabe Sukene, in Nasik district as follows.

The quality of baluta payment was fixed for some important types of balataadars, whereas in the case of others a share was more or less arbitrarily decided upon depending upon the extent of services performed and the harvest yield. In the cases of Carpenters and Cobblers the rate was on the basis of the bullock holdings of the client, whereas in the case of barbers it was on the basis of number of male adult and non-adult persons in the client's family. The rate of payment to the Carpenter, the Cobbler (Leatherworker) and the Barber was as follows:

Carpenter: for 1 pair of bullocks - 35 seers of corn.

2 pairs of bullocks - 66 seers of corn.
3 pairs of bullocks - 94 seers of corn.
4 pairs of bullocks - 122 seers of corn.

Cobbler: 30 seers of corn per pair of bullocks.

Barber: 14 seers per male adult.
7 seers per male non-adult.

1. A.S. Altekar op. cit.
Besides corn these balutadars also received sheaves of fodder, onions, jaggary, groundnuts, etc.

Sapre has studied the changes in the baluta payment during 1939-1960 in respect of 27 selected farmers in village Kasbe Sukane. The data are tabulated in Table 7.

Table 7: Total Baluta payment (Average per Farmer) Made to Different Balutadars During 1939-60.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balutadar</th>
<th>Value of total payment in Rs.</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.46</td>
<td>35.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobbler</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.82</td>
<td>29.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ropemaker</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>6.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potter</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>7.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washerman</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.08</td>
<td>7.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulani</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patkari</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.36</td>
<td>14.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Valued in terms of 1960-61 harvest prices and included cash values for wheat, bajri, rice, groundnut, onion and jaggary excluding value of fodder).

Sapre found that there was a decline in proportionate share of baluta in the total produce. Out of 27 farmers under study only 7 reported payment of baluta to the Barber. Only bigger farmers (holding above 30 acres) had reported payment of cereals to the Barber, the Washerman and the Mulani. The
farmers whose holding was below 30 acres had almost ceased to pay baluta to these specialists. This indicates a preference for obtaining these services on the cash basis. This may be due to the fact that the farm production in case of small farmers was just sufficient to meet the requirement of the family. It may also be due to the rising prices of cereals. In spite of these conditions all farmers continue to pay baluta dues to those artisans whose services are indispensable for carrying on the agricultural profession i.e. the Carpenter and the Cobbler.

A comparative study is also available in respect to the village Pimple Saudagar in Poona district. Mann reported annual baluta payment given to various recipients in 1917 shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 : Annual Baluta Payment Given to Specialists.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balutedar</th>
<th>Grain in lbs.</th>
<th>Number of bundles of jowar fodder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramoshi</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutar</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mhavi</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambhar</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferryman</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahar</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meng</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulani</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd.
Table 8 (Contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balutedar</th>
<th>Grain in lbs.</th>
<th>Number of bundles of jowar fodder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parit</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurav</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koli</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonar</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8580</strong></td>
<td><strong>4460</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total value of these payments according to rates prevailing in 1917 was Rs. 536 which was shared by 93 the Maratha families. In the resurvey of the same village in 1951, Daskalkar found that there was apparently a complete breakdown of the baluta system. There were only five balutedars in 1951 viz. the Ramoshi, the Sutar, the Parit, the Nhavi and the Kumbhar. The former three used to stay in the same village, while the latter two used to stay in other villages.¹

The Jajman or Baluta system is declining in importance primarily because of the increased opportunities for employment in factories, rise in prices of grain and other agricultural commodities and the prevailing cash economy. Small farmers desire to pay Balutedars for their services in cash.

Jajman:

The Kumbi-Maratha: The Kunbis and the Marathas

TYPICAL PEOPLE of MAHARASHTRA

Maratha Farmer (Poona district)

Maratha Farmer (Akola district)

Maratha Married Woman

Potraj (Priest)

Maratha Farmers (Sholapur district) greeting each other
together constitute about 40 per cent of the population of Maharashtra. By profession they are noted Agriculturist and Military men. The Marathas have comparatively higher rank or status than the Kunbis. In Central Maharashtra persons who were listed as the Kunbis in Censuses some fifty years ago now call themselves the Marathas, who are Kshatriyas. Baden-Powell assumed that they are of mixed Dravidian and Aryan origin, and their superior families may be more Aryan than the rest.\(^1\) Karve observed that the Maratha-Kunbi complex has assimilated various ethnic strains and that it has various endogamous sub-castes within it. Anthropometric measurements have failed to show any physical differences between the Maratha and the Kunbi. Karve further says, the Kunbi-Marathas of the plateau of western Maharashtra seem to belong to a great wave of immigration of a meso- to sub-branchy-cephalic people possessing cattle and practising agriculture.\(^2\) Although neither advanced so much in education or wealth as some other cases of Maharashtra, they have dominated political fields since the 17th century. The traditional administrator (Patil) in most of the villages is Maratha. Marathas represent the cultural traits of Maharashtra and their practices and their family names are taken up by most of the lower castes.\(^3\)

In the Kunbi caste-cluster there are several sub-castes.

In Dhuilis, Jalgaon and Buldhana district the Leva Kunbis are

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2. I.Karve op.cit.p.20.
3. I.Karve Kinship Organization in India ( Poona : Deccan College Monograph Series No.11) p.156.
well-known agriculturists. It is said that they migrated to this part of the state from Gujrat. They are different in their dress, speech and appearance from both the above groups. They tend buffaloes and sell milk and milk products. This activity links them with the north. Neither the Marathas nor the Kumbis of the plateau or Konkan are good pastorals, though they take good care of their draft bullocks.\textsuperscript{1} In Vidarbha there are several sub-castes of the Kumbi viz. Tirole, Mana, Khaire, Dhanoje, Zade, etc. Of these Tirole are in the majority and many of them now call themselves the Marathas. The Kumbis living in Konkan are classified among the backward classes by the Government.

Among the Kumbi-Maratha caste there are absentee landlords, land-owners cultivating their own lands, tenants and landless agricultural labourers. Other castes are dependent on the Kunbi-Marathas, who are agriculturists, for their livelihood. There is extreme specialization of occupations in the traditional Indian agricultural villages. Such specialization of occupation is not observed in tribal villages. Thus the Bhil with his wife and children unlike Kumbi-Marathas can build his own house without the assistance of specialists.

**Balutedars:**

**Sutar (Carpenter):** In Vidarbha the Sutar is called a Vadhi. The main function of the Sutar is to make and to repair

\textsuperscript{1} I. Karve \textit{op. cit.} p. 21.
OCCUPATIONAL CASTES

Vadar
(Stone Shaper)

Kumbhar
(Potter)

Lohar
(Blacksmith)

Sutar
(Carpenter)

Chambhar
(Leather Worker)

Nhavi
(Barber)
wooden parts of agricultural implements, bullock-carts, wooden frames of houses and other sundry wood work. The required wood is supplied by the farmers. He gets baluta payment for his work. He also makes cots, cradles, small wooden bulls for Pola festival etc., and wooden tools of other specialists for which he receives separate payment. In order to elevate their status some Sutars call themselves as the Panchal Sutar or the Vishwa-Brahmin. They do not accept cooked food from other than a Brahmin. The Sutar generally lives in the centre of the village. Of the 72 surveyed villages Dandekar and Jagtap found the Sutar Balutedar in 60 villages. In some villages the Marathas and the Mahars work as the carpenters.

Lohar (Blacksmith) :- In Vidarbha, the Lohar is called a Khati. His main function is to make and repair iron parts of agricultural implements and bullock-carts for which he receives baluta payment from the farmers. Pig iron and fuel is supplied to him by the farmers. He also makes iron tools required by other village artisans and receives payment in cash from them. He likewise furnishes hot plates for baking bread and other kitchen accessories made of iron. The Lohar caste has no special ceremonial obligations. The Lohar's house is generally located by the side of a main road or near the market-place. One Lohar sub-caste has migrated from Rajputana in northern Maharashtra. Like Sutars, some Lohars also call themselves Panchal and do not accept cooked food
from others. There is a nomadic sub-caste of Lohar called Ghisadi, who move from one village to another in search of work. They can get sufficient work where the Lohar balutedar is absent. Of the 72 villages surveyed Dandekar and Jagtap found the Lohar balutedars in only 25. They found none in 16 villages of Dhulia and Ratnagiri districts.

**Chambhar (Leather worker)**: The Chambhar makes leather bucket (mot) used for lifting water from the well for irrigation, leather straps for bullocks, leather ropes (warati and wadi), whips and shoes. He also repairs these articles. Tanning hides is a job preferred by some Chambhars. One who makes shoes gains higher status than the tanner. There is a sub-caste of the Chambhar called the Dhed migrated from Gujrat and their main occupation is tanning of hides. Chambhars are untouchables and thus live separately from other castes including other untouchables like the Mahar and the Mang. They assume highest status among the untouchable castes. The Chambhar does not repair shoes of the Mang and the Mahar. The Chambhars are fairly well off, considering their caste rank, and have been upwardly mobile in the recent past. Their rank relative to others, however, remains unchanged.¹ In a survey of 72 villages Dandekar and Jagtap found, the Chambhar balutedar in 32 villages.

**Mang** : This caste member manufactures ropes required for tying agricultural implements, cattle and other purposes. He obtains fibre for rope-making from agave plants. He also

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¹ H. Orenstein *op. cit.* p. 117.
shaves the body of buffaloes; makes brooms, baskets and matting from palm-leaves; calls villagers for a meeting by beating a large leather drum (Dafade) or by blowing a horn; communicates Government message to the villagers calling their attention at cross-roads by beating a large leather drum with a stick. Besides these services, his presence is necessary in marriages and other rituals. Mangs are untouchables and live in separate area called Mangwada. As they do not eat the flesh of dead cattle, they assume a higher rank than Mahars. Mangs are relatively permanent residents of villages. There is one sub-caste called Mang Garodis, who are nomadic magicians. In a survey of 72 villages, Dandekar and Jagtap found the Mang balutedar in 18 villages.

_Nhavi_ (barber): In Vidarbha this caste member is called a _Nhali_ or a _Hajam_ and in Marathwada a _Warik_. His traditional services involved hair-cutting and shaving the head, face and armpits as well as paring nails and opening boils for which he gets a baluta payment. His presence is very essential in marriages and for certain rituals. Ceremonial duties included performing at the tonsure ritual which was held for male children less than one year old. He communicates the invitations personally for feasts; serves meals to invitees and holds torches in marriage processions. He used to perform minor surgery in villages and armies. Generally Nhavi moves from house to house for his work. He is a very good communicator and spreads the local news. As he comes
in contact with all males both rich and poor and being talkative, he spreads many secrets about villagers. He can also communicate with womenfolk about rituals. Thus he is supposed to be a very clever man of the village and sometimes can create or intensify conflicts between two rival groups. Recently, some Nhavis have established hair-cutting saloons in urbanised villages. Among all balutedars in the village, Nhavis are economically the best off and they have purchased land. Thus agriculture is their secondary occupation. In a survey of 72 villages, Dandekar and Jagtap found Nhavi Balutedars in 50 villages.

Parit (Washerman) :- This caste member is also called Dhobi or Warathi. His job is to wash clothes daily for rich village families. For this job he gets Bhakari (bread) and Bhaji (cooked vegetable) daily and annual baluta payment from each client family. His wife helps him in washing clothes. His wife's presence is necessary in marriage rituals, and she gets a sari and cloth for a bodice from a rich family. On a death, all household clothing is to be washed by a Dhobi. In a survey of 72 villages, Dandekar and Jagtap found the Parit Balutedars in 21 villages.

Kumbhar (Potter) :- Manufacture of earthen wares of various types and size is the main job of the Kumbhar. He uses a wheel for this purpose; but ranjan (big vessels) and chulõ

1. A chulõ is a small three sided square without top or bottom a fire is made inside and the pot is placed on top.
(hearth) are made by hand. Some make bricks and tiles. After these earthen wares are dried they are baked in a kiln. To prevent fires due to burning kilns, Kumbhars stay at the outskirts of the village. Their habitation is called the Kumbharwada. The Kumbhar use asses for carrying earth and fuel to their habitation and from there to carry baked earthen wares to the market.

The Kumbhar supplies small earthen pots for water storage and for rituals in marriage and other festivals for which he receives corn. His wife helps him in all his occupational activities. Unlike the Marathas and the Kunbls the Kumbhars do not have clans or clan names. They practice both types of cousin marriage but not uncle-niece marriage. All Kumbhars of a village are called after the village and do not inter-marry within the village. From west to east in Maharashtra there are a dozen castes making pottery and they are called Pardeshi Kumbhar, Lingayat Kumbhar, Lad Kumbhar, Ahir Kumbhar, Bhonkar Kumbhar, Kurer Kumbhar and Sungaria Kumbhar, etc. Sungaria Kumbhars eat and keep pigs.

There is a peculiar custom among Kumbhars. The conflicts are settled through caste Panchayat when all of them sit eating at a marriage feast. The arguments in this continue for a long time. If the decision given by the caste Panchayat is not acceptable, all people go away without eating.¹ In a survey of 72 villages, Dandekar and Jagtap found the Kumbhar

Koli (Fisherman): The member of this caste is also called a Dhivar or a Bhok in Vidarbha. Fishing is his main occupation for which his wife helps a little. He also works as a ferryman. He carries water to rich Maratha households. Many households do not use this service, because it is expensive. However, the Kolis are employed for important ceremonies, such as weddings, when large quantities of water are needed. He often uses a buffalo for carrying water in two big leather bags (Pakhal). Cleaning the village chavadi is also his job. He receives baluta payment for this job from villagers. Some Kolis sell lime. The members of a sub-caste Sonkoli live on the sea coast and catch fish from the sea. Fish are caught by males and sold by females in the market.

There is a peculiar custom among Dhillars, who live in eastern Maharashtra. There husband and wife can live together without official marriage ceremony. Community marriages are performed once in a while. In a survey of 72 villages, Dandekar and Jagtap found the Koli balutedar in 14 villages, most of them were in western Maharashtra.

Sonar (Goldsmith): During the Maratha rule the land revenue was received in coins which were examined by the Sonar, who was called a Potdar. For this work he used to get baluta payment. But during British rule his post was abolished. At present the Sonar makes metal ornaments and small images of

1. Ibid p.63.
gods. He works in gold, silver, and copper. He also repairs the jewelry. Earlobes of male and female Hindu children and noses of female children are pierced by the Sonar. In some villages, he gets a small baluta payment for polishing images of deities (taks) for ceremonial occasions. The Sonar used to be traders in gold and silver as well as money-lenders and were economically well off. Due to Gold Control Act they lost their once considerable business. In order to elevate their status some Sonars call themselves a Daivadnya Brahmin.

**Brahmin:** The Brahmin, who is a priest, is called a Gramjoshi, Bhat, Bhatji or Baman in villages. Village Brahmins wear horizontal forehead markings during rituals. They use black powder (bhasma or bukka). Gramjoshi moves from house to house of the farmers who give him corn reading the almanac and for telling auspicious days. The Brahmin priest was necessary for various rituals, household rites including marriages, shraddhas and satyanarayana puja but at present a few people call the Brahmin priest for this purpose, others carry out their rituals in the presence of respective caste priests. The Gramjoshi is also an astrologer and predicts the future. He reads the horoscope for village prospects on Makar Sankrant day. In a survey conducted by Dandekar and Jagtap, of 72 villages it was found that only 11 had the Gramjoshi balutedar. Of these eight were in Osmanabad and Parbhani districts.\(^1\) Brahmins who do not work as priests, either work as agriculturists, government servants, contractors or shopkeepers.

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1. **Ibid.** p.79.
Gurav (priest of the village temple): The Gurav is a non-Brahmin priest of village temple. He lives near the temple. He performs daily pujas, cleans the temple and keeps light in the temple. For this job, he gets baluta from villagers. His wife supplies flowers and bel leaves to the households for which she gets about 1/8th kilogram of corn from each household. The Gurav makes leaf-plates and leaf-saucers which are purchased by the villagers for feasts. He also blows the horn at marriage ceremonies and in some villages he manages the land given to the temple as a gift (Inam). The income is utilised for the maintenance of temple and organisation of a village fair. He carries the palanquin on the day of the village fair. Dandekar and Jagtap found the Gurav Balutedar in 18 out of 72 villages.

Mulani (Mohomedan): A solitary Mohomedan (Muslim) family is often found in the Maratha villages in Deccan as a butcher. However, the Mulani Balutedar is not found in Vidarbha. The Marathas are meat eaters at least occasionally. They object, however, to the killing of goats. In high Maratha families there is a feeling that the flesh before being eaten must have been blessed by the Mujawar or priest of the local Mohomedan saint or pir. The Mulani is also called when a goat or a hen is offered to magico-religious gods. The sacrifice is made at a specified distance from the deity, about 15 feet, but apart from this, it is done in the same manner as secular.

1. Ibid. p.76.
butchering, by cutting the animal's throat. Generally the Mulani works as a butcher and sells meat, particularly in the weekly market. Mulanis are not a proper caste, because they are not Hindus. However, everyone treats them as such.

**Mahar (Scavenger):** The untouchables constitute about 10 per cent of the population of Maharashtra. Among the untouchables the Mahars, make up over 70 per cent. In any village there may be from one to about to 20 houses of this caste, as usual set apart from the main village habitation. A certain number of male Mahars in rotation used to serve as watchmen and attendants, messengers and other general servants of the village. They used to perform services for the official visitors of the village; carry money to the treasury; act as guides to strangers; clean village streets; carry dead cattle out of the village; guard the village and fields at night; assist Police Patil in investigating crimes in the village and so on. They also keep the Marai temple clean and worships the deities in it. As the Marathi saying goes the Mahars are found in almost all villages of Maharashtra. Being untouchables they live outside the village settlement and are therefore called a *Veskar* (living near the village gate). Their habitation is called the Maharwada. For doing village service the Mahars had their own land which they held under an *inam* tenure. The income of this land was divided among the working Mahars. Besides this, they used to get *baluta* from the farmers. There

1. It should be mentioned that before paper money was introduced, carrying coins was a heavy work.
were three categories of village servants, viz. the Mahar (serviceman), the Jaglya (watchman) and the Taral (messenger). The state Government has abolished these hereditary offices and the Watan lands attached to these offices in 1959. Under the Bombay Inferior Village Watan Abolition Act 1958 the duties of these servants are now discharged by salaried employees. However, these Mahars who embraced Buddhism, have now stopped working as village servants and therefore, the Mang, the Koli, the Ramoshl or the Mohamedan are employed as village servants. Many Mahars migrated to cities and the majority of them are employed as textile workers and as bidi-makers. The Mahars who embraced Buddhism have stopped eating flesh of dead cattle. The clan-names of Mahars are like those of Marathas.

Ramoshi (watchman):- The members of the Ramoshi caste are found in Southern Maharashtra only. Their traditional services involve helping the headman to apprehend thieves; helping the Mahar caste to guard the tax money collected in the village and accompany the latter who carry the money to the government treasury. When conditions were unstable, the Ramoshi was expected to patrol the village at night, once at midnight and once at three in the morning. Whenever, a government worker comes to the village, he acts as escort. At weddings he guards the possessions of the incoming party. He is responsible to the temple of the god Vetala, who is believed to protect the village from ghosts and evil spirits. The
temple comprises a circle of white painted stones at the rear of the village. The Ramoshis held and farmed inam land. They receive baluta for their traditional work.

Besides these Balutedars there are other castes found in villages having various occupations. The Khatri, the Marwadi, the Vani, the Gujarati immigrated to villages in Maharashtra and settled there as shop-keepers. The Telis used to press oilseeds and sell oil. But this village industry could not compete with oil-mills. At present the Telis work as shop-keepers or grain dealers or agriculturists. The Kasar caste makes the metal-wares. Some Kasars sell glass bangles. The Dhangars are shepherds and they sell wool and weave blankets. There are several sub-castes among the Dangars of which two main sub-castes are the Khutekar Dhangar and the Hatkar Dhangar.

The Malis are excellent gardeners. Economically they do well. They grow various types of vegetables, fruits and sugarcane. The whole Mali family often works in the fields. There are various sub-castes among the Malis viz. Phul-Mali, or Sawanta Mali, Halad-Mali, Jire-Mali, Kshatriya Mali etc. The Baris are cultivators of betelvines. They sell betel-leaves. The Buruds make various articles of bamboo viz. baskets, matting, screens etc.

The Bhandaris are found in Konkan. Their main occupation was to prepare country wine, but due to the prohibition
of wine drinking they had to change traditional occupation. The Koshtis and the Salis weave saris, bedsheets and other cloth on handlooms. Dyeing and printing of cloth is done by the Bhavsar. Tailoring is the traditional occupations of the Shimi caste. At present other caste people even the Brahmins are in this occupation. The Agris are agriculturists of Konkan. The Tambats mend metal pots and pans. The Vanjari, the Laman, the Bhil, the Katkari, the Warli, the Thakar, the Mahadeo Koli and the Gond are tribal people. They mostly live in separate villages. A few of them live in peasant villages and work as agricultural labourers.

Besides these permanent resident castes of villages, there are nomadic castes. Some castes move from village to village in search of employment and others entertain the villagers. Generally these caste people live in their native villages during the rainy season and change residence frequently during other months. They camp near the village habitation in their tents.

Nomadic workers :- The Wadar (migrated from Mysore State, generally work on construction like bunding, wells and houses), the Beldar (Mason), the Vanjari, the Laman, the Ghisadi or the Panchal, the Paradhi, the Vaidu, the Kanjari, the Tambat etc. are nomadic castes.

Nomadic Entertainers :- The Kolhati, the Darveshi, the Mang garodi, the Gopal, the Bandarwale (Mohamedan), the Madari
or Garodi, the Makadwale or Kunchewale, the Nandiwal or Tirmel, the Chitrakathi, the Rainand, the Bahurupi, the Thokejoshi or Medhinge, the Kudmude Joshi, the Vaghe, the Murali, the Gondiali, the Jogati, the Hijade, the Bharadi, the Vasudeo, the Pangul, the Raul, the Potraj, the Kanphate, the Udasi, the Aghori, the Gosavi, the Kaikadi, the Bairagi, etc. entertain the villagers and receive corn, cash and clothes from them.

Generally all nomadic people bring with them cattle, horses, sheep, goats, poultry, asses, dogs or monkeys. These animals are let loose at night and feed on field crops. Nomadic people also steal agricultural produce from fields and cattle. Some of them even steal from houses. There is a saying in Marathi "There is no donor like Kunbi (agriculturist), but he would not part with his wealth unless beaten".

Relationship Between Caste and Occupation:

Driver noted that the literature in India provides two contrary views on the effect of the caste system on occupational choice and mobility. According to one school of thought caste not only prescribes for each person a hereditary occupation but also discourages his attempts to surmount the occupational barriers existing for his group. Subscribers to this view do recognise that maintaining absolute immobility in occupational status, horizontally or vertically is a practical
impossibility in any society, but contend that in India fixity of status reached a point that is harmful to economic development. In the opposite view, the affinity between caste and occupation, which was probably strong during the early development of the caste system, has in recent history been weak. Evidence adduced by Ghurye from documents dating back to the sixteenth century shows that certain castes have participated in a variety of occupations. He emphatically stated that caste is not of occupational origin. This view is further supported by the partial surveys conducted by the Census Commission of 1931 which revealed that only half of the male workers were engaged in occupations traditionally associated with their castes.

The differential views based on empirical data expressed by various workers is due to their study of a single village in a particular cultural region. For instance, Cohn's study of the Camars is confined to a village Madhopur in Ganges-Gomati plain of Uttar Pradesh, where there is a rigid association between caste and occupation, particularly depressed castes. The association between caste and occupation is not so significant in another cultural region, Maharashtra. This may be due to the influence of the Varkari sect and recruitment to military service during the Maratha rule. The Brahmans, the Marathas and even the Mahars were recruited in the Maratha army. Military service during the Maratha rule. The Brahmans, the Marathas and even the Mahars were recruited in the Maratha army. Military

3. B.S. Cohn, in Village India, op. cit., p. 53-77.
service and agriculture were respectable occupations for members of all castes. After retirement from military service one could follow agriculture as one's occupation. Even during the British rule several castes accepted the occupation of agriculture as their traditional occupations were not profitable due to lack of mechanisation. Certain types of occupations e.g. leatherwork were considered so degrading that a person of higher caste would never practice them. Therefore, occupational choices were restricted to agriculture, shopkeeping, trading in agricultural produce, tailoring, carpentry, teaching, government service, industrial work, etc. Even some village artisans besides following their traditional occupation are engaged in agricultural occupation as a secondary source of income. Excess persons in non-agricultural castes are being absorbed in agriculture as land owners, tenants and farm workers. This social change is constantly bringing population pressure on those dependent on agriculture. The peasants say they prefer their profession because it permits being their own boss, getting good food from their farms and enjoying outdoor living. The peasants generally are resigned, accept and take for granted their economic plight and this constitutes a severe handicap in inducing changes which might improve their lot.

Karve concluded that a relationship between caste and occupation exists, but that it affects a limited number of castes and a limited number of occupations. Occupational mobility does not ordinarily bring about a change in the designation
or composition of a caste. Nor does a person ordinarily lose his connection with the caste, merely because he takes up other occupation than that traditionally followed by his caste.¹

Srinivas says that under the caste system the non-agricultural castes are assured not only a monopoly over their traditional callings but also have the freedom to choose among certain alternatives especially agriculture and trade— which give flexibility to the traditional social system, yet help to preserve its form.²

But change from the traditional occupation to service has also extended from urban areas to rural areas. The villagers who are in the vicinity of an industrial area prefer factory work employment. Chapekar observed that 17 persons out of a population of 2000 in a Badlapur village were employed in Government and private service in 1930, while 111 persons out of a population of 3000 were employed in service in 1954. Chapekar summarised the occupational situation in rural Maharashtra today as follows: "It seems every community is preferring service to its traditional work".³

The influence of the Hindu caste system is so strong that it has been adopted by Muslims and Christians even though their religion supposedly denies the caste principle. An explanation for this may possibly be found in the fact that the

² M.N.Srinivas, in Village India op.cit.p.15.
persons, who embraced these religions were previously Hindus associated with a certain caste. Upon conversion they continued their occupation even after embracing new religion. This is supported by the fact that the castes among Muslims are based on occupation. Following are illustrations of this principle. The Atar (essence seller), the Manyar (Stationery-seller), the Teli (Oil-presser), the Dhobi (Washerman), the Momin (Weaver), the Kasai (Butcher), the Kasabi (Concubines), the Madar Darvesh and the Bandarwale (Entertainers), the Tamboli (Betel leaves seller), the Kanjar (Cutlery seller), etc. Among the Christians there are the Brahmin Christi, the Sali Christi, the Mahar Christi, the Mang Christi etc. Endogamy is practiced by these castes.

**Status-Roles in village Administration:**

The Chavadi was the centre of village administration and Patil, Patwari and Mahar were village administrators. Patil (Headman) and Patwari (Accountant) were the village officers responsible to Government.

**Patil:** The village headman was a normal feature of the Aryan village in the sixth century B.C. He existed also in the new villages founded in western India by the Aryans. He was designated as gramani, leader of the village. The headman was a hereditary officer during the Muslim, the Maratha and the British rule. His main duties were (1) defence of the village community, (2) collection of village revenue and (3) settlement of village disputes. Besides these, he also
had to look after every aspect of the welfare of the village community.

The headman enjoyed inalienable rent free lands for remuneration for his service since the Hindu Kings up to the British rule. This land was called Patilki watan. During the Maratha rule he used to get baluta from the villagers. One such example is given by Altekar. The headman of Balnegaon in Poona district was entitled to receive two shoes from the shoemaker, two dhoties from the weaver, five sheafs of cotton and 25 sheafs of fodder from every farmer, a certain amount of gur from the sugarcane growing farmers, 13 betel leaves and some vegetables every day from those who dealt in them and a certain amount of fees, partly in cash, partly in kind, from the village shopkeepers etc.¹

There were two Patils in big villages. One was called a Mulki or a Mahali Patil (Revenue Headman) and another was called Police or Kotwali Patil (Police Headman). The former was responsible for the collection of the revenue and the latter was responsible for law and order in the village. In a survey of 72 villages in 1951-52, Dandekar and Jagtap found two Patils in 14 villages. Two factions were observed in some villages, where there were two Patils. In small villages, a single Patil acted as revenue and police headman.

The Patil was a man of high socio-economic status and had influence in his village. Therefore, any investigator or

visitor had to first contact the Patil of the village.

In most of the villages Marathas were village headman. In a few villages Brahmin and Mohomadan Patils were found, and in a few other villages, other caste Patils existed, if their caste people were in majority.

In the laws of Manu the king was directed to let the headman of the village as well as the officer of larger revenue divisions (Deshmukh), have a certain portion of his land free of revenue charges. Thus the watan was not a state grant of land, but an old customary hereditary holding existing by virtue of office with the privilege of remission of the revenue dues.

Considering the duties of the Patil, his remuneration was relatively low. Patil had watan lands in Western Mahara-ashtra. He used to get the honorarium ranging from Rs.20 to Rs.125 per annum depending on the amount of collected revenue. In the village, Nagaon in 1840-41 the Patil used to get an honorarium of Rs.10 per annum plus 66 Mds. paddy, the Kulkarni used to get Rs.60 per annum plus 44 Mds. of paddy, the Mahajan used to get Rs.30, the Vartak (village servant) Rs.35 and the Chaugula Rs.10/- per annum. About 75 years ago, the Patils of Marathwada division had inam (watan) lands. Later on these inam lands were abolished and the Patils were paid annual remuneration. In the four districts of Vidarbha division (Berar), the Patils had no inam lands and they were paid
annual honoraria depending on the amount of revenue collected, but the minimum was Rs.36 per annum.

Although the post of village headman was not economically advantageous, it was a prestigious post. There used to be quarrels over who would hold this post among the Patil-clan. There was a strong attachment and loyal adhesion to this post. Many persons in Maharashtra use Patil as a clan-name, even though they may not be working as village headmen; because the clan name 'Patil' carries some status. Great Maratha chiefs (like Mahadagi Shinde) valued the title of Patil and, of course, gave it status.

In Vidarbha one who was patriarchally related to Maratha family from which there was a hereditary headman, had a higher status in marriage. He was called Watandar. If a Watandar migrated to another village and settled there permanently, he used to lose his connections with his original clan family and was called a Asami. Asami had a lower status than a Watandar and this point was much discussed while fixing marriages. There is another group among Marathas called Deshmukh, who assume still higher status than a Watandar Patil and a Asami. Deshmukhs offered their daughters to the Deshmukhs only, though they took daughters from Patil families for their sons. Another reason for acquiring higher status was that Deshmukhs had forbidden remarriages of their widows.

Khot : In Ratnagiri and Kolaba districts, hereditary Patil did not exist, because of the Khoti system. Khots when
introduced by the Maratha rule, soon became masters of their villages and replaced the ancient Patils as headmen.\footnote{1} The Khot held the land of the village directly from the Government subject to payment of assessment. He also enjoyed in practice all the rights enjoyed by an occupant under the \textit{rayatwari} tenure and perhaps a few more, such as the right to trees and the right to reverse the possession of land. The Khoti tenure differed from \textit{rayatwari} tenure in one significant respect. In case of land held by those of inferior rank, the rights of the Khot were limited by those of the inferior holders. In respect of such lands the position of the Khot was that of a revenue farmer collecting revenue from his inferior holders. As a remuneration for collecting revenue the Khot was allowed to collect a small fixed amount from some of his inferior holders.\footnote{2}

The Patil and Khot watans are now abolished by the Government. The work of collection of revenue has been transferred to the Grampanchayat and the Government has appointed a Police Patil, with a salary. The post is no longer hereditary.

\textit{Patwari} (The Accountant): - Although every village had the Patil, every village did not possess the accountant. Big villages had one or two accountants each, but small villages were grouped under the jurisdiction of one accountant.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{1}{A.S.Altekar \textit{op.cit.} p.11.}
\end{footnotes}
The Patwari is also called Kulkarni or Talathi or Pandebuva.

The office of the village accountant existed in the first century A.D. He was called Lekhaka or Gramlekhaka or Gopa. This indicates that written records of land titles etc. in the villages were kept in Western India since the foundation of village communities.

Most of the hereditary village accountants were Brahmin, in few cases they were C.K.P., Marathas or Mohomdans. Such an official got more honorarium than the village headman. Like Patil watans Patwari watans have been abolished by the present Government. Salaried employees are now appointed by the Government.

Patwari maintains all village records pertaining to titles of land, land revenue collected from each land holder, arrears of land revenue, annual cropping patterns, yield of crops, births and deaths in the village, government loans etc.

Mahar :- Mahars were hereditary village servants. Their number varies from village to village ranging from one to eight. All Mahar adults of the village did not work as serviceman simultaneously, but used to work at specific intervals. In Vidarbha, the Mahar serviceman was called Jaglya which means village police. Among the Mahars, there used to be one or two Veskars or Tarals, whose duty was to sit at the Chavadl (community house) as peons. They were not allowed to do any other work such as Mahars had the privilege of doing.
The Mahars frequently had to carry village revenue to
the taluka treasury and official papers to the taluka office.
He used to help the Patil and the Patwari in the collection of
revenue and detection of crimes in the village. He used to
help the official visitors to the village.

In Western Maharashtra the Mahars had *inam* lands like
the Patil. This was a joint property of all officiating
Mahars. In some villages each officiating Mahar used to get
an honorarium of Rs. 5 per annum. Besides these Mahars used
to collect *Baluta* from the villagers.

The hereditary system of village servicemen and Mahar
*watans* have in present times been abolished by the Government.
The Government has now appointed salaried village servicemen.
In Vidarbha each village serviceman gets a salary of Rs. 16
per month besides a blue uniform.

6. **Ranking**:

Rank as an element: - For Loomis rank or standing
includes the value an actor has for the system in which the
rank is accorded. In all societies, there is stratification
based on social rank, standing or honour assigned to various
groups and individuals. The social rank or honour accorded
depends upon the standards for evaluation of activities of
actors which are rooted in the values of the social system.
These standards form the basis of an evaluating process
whereby each system and each member attains a certain social
standing. In a given community there are usually many reference and membership groups that provide their members social rank and honour. The members of some systems devote much time and effort to this evaluation process and its maintenance.

Stratification in a social system is inevitable, according to Sorokin, because of needs of the social system itself, because of physical and mental characteristics of human beings, and because of environmental factors.

Social rank in family and kinship system: - Ranking in the Indian rural family is based on age and sex. Older persons are respected, but more so the head of the family. He may be younger than some of the older persons in the family. The head of the family always represents the family in rituals and contracts on behalf of the family. Married persons are placed at the top on the ranking scale. The elder brother remains a colleague to his younger brothers and sisters, but once married, he becomes especially respectable person to younger brothers and sisters, whose manner of addressing him also change.

The wife has the inferior rank in the family. She calls her husband as Malak or Ghardhani (master). When the wife assists her husband in his traditional occupation or the earning member as the farm labourer, her rank is relatively high.

Between the two sexes, the male members in family are accorded higher status than the females. The females born in

a given family generally move out of the family after marriage while females born in other families move in at marriage. The male child is required to perpetuate the family line. He only can perform the shraddha for the successive reincarnations of the deceased in its heavenward journey.

Among the women of the joint family those married and with children (particularly one male) are ranked at the top. Then in the descending order are childless married women, unmarried females, widows with children and widows without children. Even if a widow remarries, she cannot attain status equal to that gained by her first marriage. In a joint family, however, the wife of the head of the family assumes the highest status role.

The wealth of the family is closely related to its social rank in the kinship group. The high caste family may lower its status on transgressing certain norms such as widow marriage, inter-caste marriage, marriage with a concubine, eating non-vegetarian food, drinking liquor etc.

Social Rank in a caste system:

Caste system:- The Indian caste system as the hierarchical social system has attracted the attention of the sociologists the world over. Davis writes, "When the term caste is mentioned one thinks of India, not because India has the only caste system in existence, nor even a complete one, but because she has the most extreme one".1 Davis writes as

follows about this system, "It is the most thorough-going attempt known in human history to introduce inherited inequality as the guiding principle in social relationships".1

Weber saw caste as the central fact of the social structure of India. He saw it as an extraordinarily heterogeneous phenomenon, possessing sufficient order to be called a system and made up of non-rigidly endogamous, usually local, hereditary groups which are arranged in order of superiority and inferiority.

Wint has defined caste as "a group of whose members can marry with each other and can eat in each other's company without believing themselves polluted".2 According to Berreman "the caste system in India has several unique features, among which are its religious aspects, its complexity, and the degree to which the caste is a cohesive group that regulates the behaviour of its members" and he defined it as a "hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent". While comparing the caste in India with that in the United States Berreman points out, "In both the United States and India, high castes maintain their superior position by exercising powerful sanctions, and they rationalize their status with elaborate philosophical religious, psychological, or genetic explanations".3

Various theories are put forth about the caste system

1. Ibid.
in India by the Western and Indian sociologists.

Toynbee says, (a) caste establishes itself when one community makes itself master of another community without being able or willing to exterminate or assimilate it; (b) caste involves segregation; (c) caste in India has been given the support of religion and (d) caste in India has begotten the unparalleled social abuse of untouchability.¹

Ghurye summed up the origin of Indian caste system in the following words, "I may conclude that caste in India is a Brahmanic child of the Indo-Aryan culture, cradled in the land of the Ganga and the Yamuna and thence transferred to other parts of the country. This racial origin of the principal feature of caste system is further supported by the early term varna meaning colour used to specify the orders in society. Later on the word jati is specialized to denote caste, which is a group the membership of which is acquired by birth. The word Jati etymologically means something into which one is born".²

Further, while describing the circumstances, which encouraged the formation of small groups (castes) Ghurye says "adherence to details of social and customary etiquette became the distinguishing mark of membership of group. Distinction in any detail tended to be translated into separateness of membership and hence of a group. Secondly, the lack of

rigid unitary control of the State, the unwillingness of the ruler to enforce a uniform standard of law and custom, their readiness to recognize the varying customs of different groups as valid, and their usual practice of allowing things some how to adjust themselves helped the fissuring tendency of groups and fostered the spirit of solidarity and community feeling in every group.¹

Identifying the Indian caste system as closed social stratification pluralities or semi-pluralities, Bailey distinguished four separate referents of caste in India as follows:

1. Caste as Varna: The four varnas or caste designations do not represent groups but categories of interaction and identity. They are not exhaustive. The varna system is sociologically utilisable as a framework of reference for actual systems of stratification. They can serve as a prestige indicator in making claims to higher status or as a metaphor of actual relations.

2. Caste categories: These are aggregates of persons, usually in the same linguistic region, usually with the same traditional occupation and sometimes with the same caste name. These are not specific social strata and since, while they are exhaustive and exclusive, they are not unambiguous groups. They are categories made up of groups with similar attributes which may be designated as follows: Firstly, there is some

¹ Ibid. p.159.
vague sense of common heritage. Secondly, there is a form of negative interaction in that, for example, Herdsman Type X will not marry Herdsman Type Y.

3. Caste associations: These are groups, exclusive but not exhaustive in the sense that not all actors with the above or other attributes actually belong to them.

4. Caste as Jat i: Each village is horizontally stratified into castes and each caste is dispersed through the villages.

Karve has shown that what older writers have described as castes are really occupational caste-clusters composed by smaller endogamous units or Jatis. According to her even such seemingly obvious caste names like Sonar, Sutar, Nhavi, Lohar are not caste names but names of caste-clusters. Karve's caste cluster theory can be articulated to Bailey's caste categories, referred above. For her the caste or Jati is the endogamous group or extended kinship group in which every member of the group is either an actual or a potential kin of another.

What others have called sub-castes, Karve calls castes or Jatis. She says the concept of sub-castes is a modern creation belonging to the British period. She has described the features of caste as follows: (a) an endogamous kinship group which (b) is spread over a contiguous area which (c) has a caste-council as an agency to regulate behaviour with the caste and social

3. Ibid. p.123.
relationship with other castes, and (d) owns or creates facilities such as temples, wells, guest houses, assembly-halls etc., which belong to the caste in question.

Karve's theory of caste as extended kinship group is only applicable to a limited extent for more general use especially for a caste having limited members. For instance, there are usually one or two Wani families, in a village. The Wani seeks a suitable bride from another village nearby or from a far-off village even crossing the regional boundary in the place from where his ancestors migrated. In this case the Wani seeks a marriage relation in his extended kinship group called his caste. But there are many exceptions to this rule in a large caste. For instance, a Mali is a caste of which the Phulmali is a sub-caste (according to the old terminology). Phulmalis are found in Maharashtra as well as in Bengal.¹ But their kinship group is quite separate and this proves the limited applicability of Karve's theory. Let us take another instance from the Marathas. Till the last century the means of travel were limited. Every villager used to seek a bride within a radius of about 16 miles, a day's journey by bullock-cart from his village. Thus the kinship group was restricted to a limited area. But the Maratha Jati (in Karve's terminology) is spread over the whole of Maharashtra and beyond Maharashtra where they established chiefdoms in earlier times. Their dress, manner of speaking, character

and customs are not the same over this entire area. There are kinship relations among them, but this is not the general rule. A Mane (a Maratha) of the Satara district and a Mane of the Wardha district may not be able to identify themselves as kin or relatives by blood ties. Their kinship groups may be quite different. Three hierarchical groups are indentified in Marathas in Vidarbha division viz. Deshmukh, Patil and Asami. These status differences often crop up in elections, as seen by Bhatt, who observed that caste restrictions between Deshmukhs and Patils were being rapidly relaxed, but caste identification in politics was still mentioned. There is another caste, the Mahar spread over entire Maharashtra with representatives in almost every village. But a Mahar of a village in Kolhapur district considers himself in no way related to a Mahar in Nagpur district. Their kinship group is restricted to a small area. Instead of using a bullock cart a Mahar had to walk to another village when he or his relatives go to a bride. One may say, of course, that there is potential kinship in either of the two-distant groups. But such distant relationships are usually not considered as kinship ties and are not preferred by the villagers for various reasons for intermarriage.

Another case will likewise demonstrate the limited application of Karve’s theory.

Among the Marathas the two sons, one born to a wife and

another to a concubine despite similar kinship are not of equal status or ranking. Their kinship group is not the same. A son born to a concubine will not be able to get a bride from a Maratha family in the same way that a son born to a wife can easily get. Though the clan-name is the same, there is a difference in rank of a son of a concubine and a son of a legitimate wife. The former son has to seek a bride from a caste formed by the offspring of concubines and Marathas. This caste is known as Akarmase or Khaltate. Thus the theory of caste as an extended kinship plurality is not imperically based but the concept caste as an endogamous group can be accepted. The latter has been endorsed by many sociologists. ¹

Grouping castes on the basis of occupation and calling such groups a "caste-cluster" is also not correct. For instance, the priest-ship is the occupation of many castes in Maharashtra. The Brahmin, the Gurav, the Gosavi, the Bhagat, the Bhope, the Bhute, the Potraj, the Vasudev are all priests, but there is little similarity among them and they certainly are not sub-castes. The Brahmin, the Gosavi and the Gurav are distinct castes. The Bhagat, the Bhute and the Vasudev are Marathas or belong to other so-called clean castes. The Potraj is the Mahar or the Mang. The deities, they worship, are different. No purpose is served by grouping all these priests as caste-clusters or sub-castes.

Srinivas has defined caste as a hereditary, endogamous, ¹

1. K.Davis op.cit.p.3.
usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by the concepts of pollution and purity and generally a maximum of commensality occurs with a caste.¹ Srinivas has cautioned the sociologists studying Indian caste system, "The caste system of even a small region is extraordinarily complex and it does not fit the varna-frame except at one or two points". Mayer defined subcaste as "the largest division within the caste .... it has enough properties common to the caste to be a caste-like unit".² For a given society to exhibit a caste system, Bailey says, it must be divided into groups and he lays down the following requirements for these: (a) They are exclusive (no one belongs simultaneously to more than one group) (b) they are exhaustive (every one belongs to some group) (c) they are ranked (d) they are closed (recruitment by birth only) (e) relations between the pluralities are organised on the basis of summation of roles making a totality and (f) they cooperate and do not compete. For the structural criteria which Bailey mentions those of exclusiveness, exhaustiveness and closed recruitment still hold unambiguously in the village. But the remaining criteria do not.³

Hierarchy in Caste System:— Hierarchical ranking of groups is one of the main features of the caste system with the Brahmans at the top and untouchables at the bottom. The varna

1. M.N.Srinivas op.cit.p.3.
3. F.G.Bailey, op.cit.
or four-rank system has been described by Manu, who says, "Jatis are many, while varnas are four". The Brahmins were the priests, the Kshatriyas were the warriors, nobles and kings; the Vaisyas were farmers, merchants and clerical workers; the Sudras were artisans and the manual labourers. To this scheme some anthropologists have added the fifth varna, the untouchables or outcastes, who performed the low-status tasks. Others have included the untouchables in the fourth varna, Sudra.

Manu’s system of four Varnas was modified in practice in Maharashtra and there were only two varnas viz. Brahmin and Shudra and a third was later added - the untouchables who however, were a sub-rank of the shudra - varna. They were called Ati-shudras. The Shudras were exhorted to mutter the descriptive names of God for his salvation. Ambedkar put forth the following theory about the origin of Shudras.

1. The shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the Solar race.
2. There was a time when the Aryan society recognised only three Varnas, viz. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
3. The Shudras did not form a separate varna. They ranked as part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society.
4. There was a continuous feud between the Shudras Kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.

1. I.Karve, op.cit.
5. As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the upanayana for the Shudras.

6. Owing to the denial of upanayana, the Shudras, who were Kshatriyas, became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth varna.

Prior to the seventeenth century i.e. before Maratha rule in Maharashtra, there were only two varnas in effect viz. Brahmin and Sudras. Almost all the castes with the exception of the Brahmin were denied the right of being Dwija (twice-born) and thus made into Sudras. The third varna, Kshatriya was added in the beginning of Maratha rule and Marathas, who were previously treated as Sudras, were elevated as Kshatriyas. But there was no Vaishya Varna. Kunbis (agriculturists) were treated as Sudras.

During the British rule, the castes of people were recorded in the census reports and people became more conscious than ever of caste. Complaints were raised by caste councils and leaders that they were wrongly categorised. Often the complaint carried the idea that the caste being considered was different. Many castes put forth their claims either to the Brahmin or Kshatriya varnas, while in south India the Lingayat and the Smiths claimed not to be the Brahmin but of equal rank to Brahmins. In Maharashtra artisan castes were included in the Sudra varna but members of this caste claimed the right to

1. I.Karve, op.cit.p.43.
2. Ibid.p.44.
a higher rank than that accorded. Sonar claimed to be a
Maivadnya-Brahmin and Sutar claimed to be a Vishwa-Brahmin;
the Jingar, the Vadval, the Mali, the Prabhu, the Patwagar,
and the Kunbi castes called themselves Kshatriyas. The Wani
claimed to be Vaishya. Some low caste people e.g. the
Sweepers call themselves Valmiki and their habitation is
called Valmikinagar in Nagpur city. Valmiki was the composer
of epic Ramanaya and he was supposed to belong to a low caste.
Gandhi called untouchables Harijans (God’s people) a designa-
tion now used throughout India. Certain low caste people are
called the Sudras by the people other than those included in
the Sudra varna; but the castes which are so designated never
use it for themselves.

In Maharashtra there may be as many as 200 castes. Caste
rank is not a completely clear-cut matter. The members of each
caste among the caste-cluster and each sub-caste within the
caste think or profess to think that their caste is superior to
that of their neighbours. This attitude results in caste con-
flict. Such conflicts may come to the fore particularly when
there is a village feast.

A village feast is a cooperative activity in which all
villagers participate. Tasks are allotted to each person.
Cooking is done by persons from whom all villagers accept food
without pollution. Others perform such jobs as marketing,
transporting required facilities, cleaning, bringing fuelwood,
making leaf-plates and saucers, cleaning utensils and precincts
after the feast etc. What one does is dependent upon the one's caste rank or occupation. Under such conditions conflict and lack of cooperation may put the whole community in a state of tension.

It is difficult to obtain the consensus opinion of all villagers regarding caste ranking. Each individual practices caste taboos according to the traditional belief, e.g. one may avoid interdining with some castes from whom he would accept water, while both of these practices are interdicted in respect of other castes. One important reason why individuals differ in their formulations of caste rank is that different criteria for caste rank exists. Some of these are religious or "ritual" others primarily secular. The religious criteria are more important and people think of caste rank largely in religious terms. The aspect of religion involved in caste is the idea of pollution. Despite the lack of precise, overtly stated agreement among villagers, it is possible to construct a general view of caste rank. Table 9 illustrates rank and castes in the villages studied and in Maharashtra.

Since ancient times the Brahminical supremacy has often been challenged by non-Brahmins. The non-Brahmin movement was led in Maharashtra by Jyotirao Phule of Poona, who founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873. Maintaining that there was no need for the Brahmin priests in marriage and other religious rituals and festivals he advocated their disparagement. When a Maharashtrian Brahmin in 1948 assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, the
houses of Brahmins were put on fire in a few villages in our study area. In spite of this and other movements, Brahmins are still ranked at the top in the social scale in the rural areas. This is true even though the Brahmin priest (Bhatji) may not be invited by some persons for religious rituals. The Brahmin almost ruled the villagers and the supremacy was evident till the abolition of Kulkarni watans. This event was important for Maharashtra. The Kulkarni (the village accountant), usually the Brahmin had up to the time in question an unchallenged position in the villages. Every villager had some work to be done by the Kulkarni. For getting concessions, scholarship, loans etc., the Kulkarni's certificate was required by one and all. The Kulkarni certified the birth dates of all villagers except the village headman to whom Kulkarni was allegedly but not actually subordinate. Now the Government appointed an official called Talathi for the Brahmin Kulkarni in the post of village accountant. When legislation made the office of the village accountant competitive the Brahmins lost much of their in the villages.

After Brahmins next in rank are Marathas and the Kumbis and Malis (agriculturists), because almost all villagers are dependent on agriculture. The lowest in rank are naturally the untouchables. Among the untouchables, the Chambhar assumes the highest rank as he does not eat beef or flesh of the dead cattle. The Mahar is ranked next to the Chambhar, but higher than the Mang.
Once Gandhi said in his address to the people, "All the various grades of untouchables are untouchable among themselves, each superior grade considering the inferior grade as polluting as the highest class of the castes Hindus regard the worst grade of untouchables. Further, among the same grade of untouchables there are sections, each considering itself different and distinct from any other, prohibiting interdining and intermarriage."

Table 9: The Hierarchical List of Caste in Maharashtra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual Purity</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Approximate Varna Status</th>
<th>Caste Groups</th>
<th>Sectarian Caste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Chitpawan, Deshastha, Karhade, Saraswat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pseudo-Brahmin)</td>
<td>Daivadnya, Panchal, Manbhava Gurav.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclean</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Kshatriya</td>
<td>Maratha, Rajput, C.K.Prabhu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pseudo-Kshatriya)</td>
<td>Vaghya, Bhagat, Vasudeo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Vaishya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sonar, Sutar, Lohan, Gosavi Teli, Koli, Marwadi, Parit, Kumbhar, Khavi, Dhanger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Shudra</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Tribal Castes)</td>
<td>Koli, Katkari, Warli, Bhil, Thakar, Laman, Mulani (Mohomedan), Ramoshi.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untouchables</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Harijan</td>
<td>Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Potraj Dhed, Bhangi (Mehtar).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Scheduled Castes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. As quoted by B.Shira Rao The Industrial Worker in India (London: Allen & Unwin, 1939) p.81-82.
Other castes are regarded intermediate i.e. higher than untouchables, but lower than Marathas. All artisan castes and trading castes are ranked as intermediate even the Muslims and tribal castes. As mentioned above some of the artisan castes claim to be Brahmans, but their claims are hardly ever accepted by others. Among the artisan castes it is difficult to rank a particular caste in the social order partly because of these claims and counter claims.

Ghurye noted that the Peshwa rulers upheld the claim of Potters (Kumbhar) (who were then opposed by the Carpenters) that they could lead their bridal processions on horse-back.¹ To further complicate the matter we may mention the fact that Karve observed that Carpenters and Weavers in Maharashtra have higher status than the Kumbhar. Some castes of the Iron-smiths have a higher status, others have a very low status. Herders of cattle (the Gaoli) who are also milkmen are higher in rank than Shepherds (the Dhangar). Ghurye stated that the Dhangars call their bastard brethren 'Kada' (bitter).² Boatmen have a higher status than the Fishermen. The Barbers are relatively high in rank in some regions and extremely low in others.³ The Barber acts as the Brahmin’s assistant in marriage ceremonies and for the lower castes he may even himself serve as the matrimonial priest. The Washerman has generally a low status and rank throughout Maharashtra and India generally.

1. G.S.Ghurye op.cit.p.12.
2. Ibid. p.42.
When a tribal group adopts Hinduism, it remains a separate named group for no *jati* is open to admit it. The absorption of a tribe only enlarges the coverage of the system and is in no way a demonstration of its structural looseness. However, the continuous absorption of tribals into the Indian caste structure illustrates the key processes in the stratification of India.

The hierarchical caste system in the rural areas of Maharashtra can be illustrated in a generalised and simplified form by the diagram as in Figure 5. Here an effort has been made to indicate both rank and number of representative in the rank. Thus the most common caste representative are the Maratha-Kumbis. The untouchable constitute about ten percent of the total.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5** : A Generalised and Simplified Diagram of Caste System in Rural Area of Maharashtra.

1. A.Alyappan *op.cit.* p.139.
There is a relationship between caste rank and wealth, but it is rough. About a village in Poona district Orenstein reported that Brahmins along with high castes averaged 13,958 rupees per household, 2108 per person, while low caste along with Harijans averaged 2291 rupees per household, 457 per person. Exception to the relationship were numerous. The well off Romoshi household was one such. His total wealth was 24,500 rupees. The average of Chambhar caste was as good or better than most other castes of the village. Despite their high rank the Koli, the Whavi and the Sonar castes were clearly classed as poor. Similarly many individuals in the Rajput, the Maratha and the Kumbhar castes were poor.

The distribution of wealth in the village gave a potential basis for class. Eighteen households, less than ten per cent of the total, owned 48 per cent of the productive wealth of the village (Rs.1,800,575). However, these 18 were of Brahmin, Maratha, and Rajput castes.1

Karve emphasised the fact that rank or hierarchical status perpetuates privileges and injustices. It increases social isolation, at the same time that it creates conflicts. Also once equalitarian belief are introduced as in India the stratification system may intensify desire to rise in the social scale.2

Agrarian Stratification: In the rural societies

1. H.Orenstein op.cit.p.165.
mainly dependent on agricultural enterprise, there are at least four distinct classes viz. Landlords, Land owners, tenants and agricultural labourers. Their percentage distribution to the total population in Maharashtra as based on the 1951 Census is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Non-cultivating owners of land and agricultural rent receivers.</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned.</td>
<td>39.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned.</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultivating labourers.</td>
<td>14.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>63.97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Landlords: Landlords are defined as the land-owners who do not cultivate the land themselves but receive the rent from the tenants. The landlords may live in cities and have salaried jobs or they may be merchants and money lenders. During the depression years around 1930 many petty land-owners lost their lands to the money lenders and became latter's tenants.

In a Khoti tenure system the Khot was a landlord or a superior holder of land responsible to the Government for the payment of revenue. The Khot used to furnish land on rent to permanent tenants who had to pay to the Khot a customary rent. The Khot had certain rights in lands occupied by the tenants so which required that the land would revert to him in case of
laps for failure of heirs, forfeiture for failure to pay rent and resignation by the permanent tenants. Besides this land, the Khot had full proprietary right in some other lands, which were also leased out to ordinary tenants i.e. tenants other than the permanent tenants. The Bombay Khoti Abolition Act of 1949 was put into effect following the 15th of May, 1950. Then Khoti tenure was abolished. Full proprietary occupancy rights were accorded to permanent tenants or in the absence of tenants for a Khot tax payments were made by the Khot. In the study of the results of the Bombay Tenancy Act of 1948, Dandekar and Khudanpur concluded that "the tenancy reform effected by the abolition of the Khoti tenure in Ratnagiri district was a major operation and was more radical than that attempted by the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act of 1948 in other districts of the State. The benefits accruing to the tenants from the abolition of the Khoti tenure are too obvious to need any statistical demonstration."  

In other districts immigrant traders such as the Marwadi, the Gujarati and the Banlya, who settled in villages often grabbed the land of villagers taking advantage of their indebtedness. Thus a black cloud formed in the land tenure of India many big traders thus own substantial land in the villages. Economic, political and social power in the rural areas is exercised chiefly by two classes viz. trader moneylender and

The term "feudalism" is linked with urban traders and can exploit the peasants as he purchases their produce and sells peasants the things they need and charges high interest rates on the credits they extend.

The term "feudalism" used in the sense in western Europe and Japan is not very applicable to India. Thorner stated that "a feudalism without manors, serfs of the manor, feudal contract, vassals and fiefs based on feudal contract, is simply not feudalism; and the term had best be dropped, at least for rural India". Nevertheless, paternalistic exploitation by the groups just mentioned has been important.

Land-owner cultivators: The cultivators constitute the key unit comprising peasants as well as big farmers, who live in the villages and are wholly dependent on agriculture. Small peasants cannot get enough from their lands to maintain their families. Some of them till the land of absentee landlords in addition to their own land. A few of them migrate to the cities keeping their families in villages to supervise or work on the land. These migrated farmers seasonally return to their villages for agricultural operations.

Due to the decline of village industries the craftsmen either became land owners, tenants or landless labourers,

depending on their economic position. They are likely to be forced on to poorer quality land. The number of farm families is further increased due to norms for the inheritance of property which was divided in equal shares among the heirs.

Of course, all who profess to be farmers, are not efficient farmers. In her countrywide study of the human element in Indian development, Nair concluded that "the best farmers are to be found not necessarily in communities most favourably endowed with material resources, but in those that are traditionally agriculturist by caste.... It is so mainly because these castes have an inherited respect for agricultural work and they are not precluded by religion or tradition from working on the land. The result is that even if members of these professionally agricultural communities have been reduced to the status of tenants or landless labourers, they will be found superior in husbandry to the non-working castes of landowners such as Brahmans, Rajputs, Banias (traders) etc. though the latter may have more capital, land, education, and thus superior means to acquire modern techniques and tools of cultivation".1 Similar conclusions have been drawn by Bose in his study of Badpur village in Bengal. "The Ugra-Kshatriya caste which has agriculture as its caste occupation took to scientific agriculture while other villagers did not. The former have special skills in agriculture and carry on farming with more seriousness than other castes whose traditional occupations are

not agriculture such as Brahmins and the Bagdi.¹ The same
is true for the cultivating caste viz. the Kunbi and the Mali
in Maharashtra. The Mals in Maharashtra are particularly
enterprising farmers and take advantage of irrigation projects.
They have even migrated from villages with no irrigation to
irrigated villages. They obtain good yields from small hold-
ings and readily adopt innovations in farming.

There is an age-old feeling among the members of some
castes that manual labour (physical work) is degrading. Thus
the Brahmin will not hold the plough himself and will never
work as the labourer. Likewise the so-called white collar
group of the villagers, viz. trader, moneylender and absentee
landlord will not soil their hands and clothes. The balutedar
each of whom owns a few acres of land, are not able to devote
full attention to the cultivation of their lands as agriculture
is only their subsidiary occupation. They cannot maintain a
bullock pair and agricultural implements because their holdings
are too small.

In some cases a progressive owner farmer, who modernizes
his farm and obtains good returns, sends his sons to college.
After that, they may want to live in the city and not return to
the farm. This is true even in the case of sons who receive an
agricultural education. For them to work on the land is wholly
incompatible with their educational achievement.

¹. S.P. Bose, "Baddpur" (Calcutta, Department of Agriculture,
Big landowner cultivators often carry on their production in genuine capitalistic style. They hire a group of permanent labourers, who reside in the tenements constructed by the owners on their farms. They concentrate on growing commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, fruits, etc. They also obtain part of their income from renting out land, lending money or grain and trading in agricultural commodities.

The great mass of petty peasants carry on their production primarily with their own family labour. They utilize the crops they grow chiefly to feed their own families and to hand over what is due to the money-lenders, merchants or landowners upon whom they are dependent.¹

Due to land reform legislation many tenants have become owner cultivators. The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Amendment Act of 1955 provided that a large operating landlord may continue to hold half the area leased by him and the tenant would be deemed to have become an owner in the other half of the area by the 1st of April, 1957.

The Government applied the ceiling to the area of land a man may hold. The Committee of the Panel on Land Reforms had suggested that the land up to the ceiling limit should ensure a minimum net income of Rs.3600 per annum. The level of the ceiling in Maharashtra ranges from 13 to 126 acres according to class of soil, types of crops grown or whether or not irrigation is available and its effectiveness or on the

¹ Daniel and Alice Thorner op. cit. p.11.
basis of the combination of these factors. The ceiling for seasonally irrigated land is 27 to 48 acres.

Table 10: Percentage Distribution of All cultivating Households According to Size of operational Holding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Holding</th>
<th>Less than 1 acre</th>
<th>1 to 4.9 acres</th>
<th>5 to 14.9 acres</th>
<th>15 to 49.9 acres</th>
<th>Above 50 acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>32.37</td>
<td>37.23</td>
<td>34.48</td>
<td>24.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>43.29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31.59</td>
<td>13.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Tenants: In the census "tenant-cultivators" are defined as the persons who hold the land they cultivate for a strictly limited period. Tenants pay rent to landlords in cash or kind. Cash rent varies according to the type of land. In Dhulla district the rent is less than 10 times the revenue charged in the majority of cases, while in Poona district nearly 70 per cent of the cash rented area was rented for between 40 to 45 times the land revenue. The rent in kind is either paid as fixed rent (kind) or the share in annual produce varying from half to one-sixth. Nearly 50 per cent of the area was share-rented for half the crop share and nearly 30 per cent has rented for cash rent in old Bombay State.

Poona, Ahmednagar and Sholapur districts share renting was the common practice and between 80 to 90 per cent of the area was share rented. In Poona 1/2 and 1/3 shares were common. In Ahmednagar district the 1/2 share was a more common practice. In Sholapur, the 1/2 to 2/5 share were common.

In order to protect the interests of tenants the Bombay Tenancy Act of 1948 was made effective in December, 1948. The principal provisions of the act related to the protection given to the tenants from eviction from the land; certain restrictions on the transfer of agricultural lands and special provisions promoting its transfer into the hands of the cultivators; and finally regulation of rent. The maximum rent is now defined to be five times the assessment or Rs. 20 per acre whichever is less. The new amendment seeks to abolish share rents. It prescribes that the aggregate of the rent, revenue and local tax will not exceed one-sixth of the value of the crop. When the land is transferred to the tenant the price of the land is fixed between 50 to 200 times the tax assessment plus the value of improvements made by the landlord. In any case it is obvious that it is impossible to pay off the landlords in a single instalment and therefore, payment is spread over several instalments.

Zinkin and Ward say, "Land reform of itself, neither increases nor reduces productivity". When the land is

1. Ibid p. 113.
transferred from the absentee landlord to the able tenant the production normally goes up. But in case a poor tenant who was wholly dependent on the landlord for seed, credit, bullock power and implements gets the land the production may be reduced unless the Government helps him.

Zinkin and Ward evaluated the land reform measures in Maharashtra, writing that "They have got rid of absentee landlords almost entirely, and they have had some success in reducing the rents of those tenants who remain. When a man lives in the same village as his tenant, and is himself a farmer, however, he has quite often succeeded in resuming his land. The net effect ... has probably, therefore, been some increase in production".1

Agricultural Labourer: A household deriving 50 per cent or more of its income (after inputting the value of home-grown and self-consumed products) from agricultural labour was defined as an agricultural labour household.2 Half of the agricultural labourers in India are without land, and the rest possess a little land. As many as 86 per cent of them had only casual work, mostly in harvesting, weeding, preparation of soil and ploughing. The average annual income per family of these was Rs.447.3

The landowners employ agricultural labourers either on a daily wage or annual basis or on monthly contract. Rates of

payment vary with age, ability and experience of the person employed and also partly with the financial position of the employer. Generally the labourer for tending cattle is employed on monthly contract, while the agricultural worker is employed on an annual contract. The payment is made in kind (in the form of grain) and cash. For example, the agricultural worker on annual contract gets (1) Rs.210 in cash, which is received in part as and when required by the employee, (2) monthly payment of grain (jowar) and (3) annually a pair of shoes, a pair of Dhoti and two shirts. An employee without family takes his three meals a day at the employer's house in which case his grain payment is reduced and cash payment is increased. A man may get himself employed on annual contract to earn enough to get married or to repay the loan taken on the occasion of marriage.

The employee on annual contract may belong to the same caste or may be the distant relative of the employer in which case the former is treated more liberally. He is invited for feasts and gets tea occasionally at the employer's house. When he accompanies his employer, he is also treated as a guest by the employer's relatives.

Being landless and sometimes without his own house, if he has immigrated, the status of landless labourers is at the bottom of hierarchy. Owning to this lack of status or rank it has been impossible for persons from this group to assume leadership roles in the community, despite the fact they take
most active part in village festivals and community construction works. Farmers often complain that agricultural labourers now-a-days have become lazy. They are reported to have no ambition to work hard and earn more. The importance of these evaluations will be evident when one notes the tremendous labour power required for various agricultural operations. In the production of India's food and fiber the labourers' wages paid is the major item in the cost of cultivation of many crops. Besides there is the additional cost of the supervision of the labourers.

Evaluation of actors and allocation of status-roles as a process:

The evaluation of actors and allocation of status-roles is based on certain criteria. Marriot has tried to give a scheme of ranking by asking people which castes they held to be higher and lower. Studying the evaluation of actors would be worthwhile to get an idea of ranking by asking who dined with whom who sat with whom and who lives near whom in the village. When the whole village is invited by a rich man for a feast, the place where a guest is fed and with whom he eats gives data on ranking. For instance, untouchables form a line (pangat) in a village street or courtyard for eating. In this line the Chambhar will not sit near the Mahar, who also will not sit near the Mang. Untouchables sit in pangat after clean castes have taken their meals. But the intermediate castes like the Kumbi, the Mali, the Parit, the Whavi, the Vani, the Kumbhar etc. will not mind sitting in one line for eating in the

same verandah or inside the temple hall, but the Brahmin, the Sutar and the Sonar may not join this feast. The village feast is not the only criteria by which to evaluate the rank of a villager, because the norms of eating are, at present, much relaxed as the villagers including the villagers under study do not fear excommunication for this act as they once did. Karve and Damle reported a case of the Brahmin who had taken meals with an untouchable in the village, Karul. They also came across five Marathas and a Dhangar who were not handicapped in any way by restraint on this behaviour in their intercourse with the clean castes.¹

Among criteria of ranking actors the following are of general importance in Maharashtra.

1. Occupation
2. Diet
3. Commensality
4. Pollution Potential
5. Ritual
6. Other Behaviour.

1. Occupation :- Evaluation of social action basic to earning a living is important in all societies. In our study area and in India generally killing animals for a living is given a low evaluation. The Khatik (Butcher), the Paradhi (Hunter), and the Koli or Dhivar (Fisherman) thus have low rank. The non-vegetarian Marathas and other high castes

¹ I.Karve and Y.B.Damle, op.cit. p.30-31.
engage the Mulani (Mohomadan) for killing goats, sheep and poultry instead of killing these animals by themselves.

Working with leather is a low occupation, because handling hide is defiling. Shoes are not allowed inside a kitchen and temple. The Chambhar (Shoemaker), the Holar (Shoemaker and musician) and the Dhed (Tanner) are low in status in the descending order.

Scavenging or cleaning streets and latrines and carrying dead animals were lowest occupations of all. Those who performed these jobs were untouchable. The Mahar and the Mehetar (Scavenger) were at the bottom of the ranking scale.

Ranking of herdsmen was dependent on the type of animal herded. Tending cows was a sacred occupation. God Krishna tended the cows. The Brahmins also keep cows and this activity is highly evaluated. However, selling milk was forbidden for the Brahmins. Cow dung and urine of the cow were sacred and those who use these items are more highly evaluated by virtue of this use. Herdsmen of cows (Gaoli) were ranked high and herdsmen of swine (Mehtars) had the lowest rank and were untouchable. Herdsmen of sheep and goats (Dhangar) were intermediate. The Kumbhars (potters) used to tend asses, who feed on dirty garbage. They were ranked lower than the Dhangar, but higher than herdsmen of the swine which feed on human excreta.

Thus the behaviour of animal being herded determines in part the evaluation of herding and other activities of animal tenders.
The tapping and selling *toddy* (country wine) were low occupations because only low castes drink *toddy*. However, serving western alcoholic drinks which were only consumed by the wealthy was not evaluated adversely. The Bhandari caste in Konkan practiced tapping of *toddy*, before prohibition. Its rank was low. The Barber (Nhavi) and the Washerman (Parit) were considered lower in rank because the Barber had to handle and cut hair and nails. This activity defiles the person doing it. Washerman handled soiled clothes including clothes of persons who participated in funerals and menstruating women and of course, was given low or negative evaluation. Even so, Barbers and Washerman refuse to serve untouchables. Actually the barber used to act as a matrimonial priest for untouchables thus indicating his higher rank.

Among the smiths, the Sonar (Goldsmith) believes himself superior to the Lohar (Ironsmith); because the Sonar handled the precious metals (gold and silver), while the Lohar handled the cheaper metal, iron. The Kasar (makers of brass utensils) was intermediate in rank between the two because he handled semi-precious metals such as copper and brass.

Agriculture was a noble occupation in Maharashtra. There is a saying in Marathi that "best is the agriculture, the trading is intermediate and service is the lowest". Many castes preferred agriculture as a secondary occupation, while it was the main occupation for Kumbis, Malis and Marathas.
Even the nobles and Brahmins preferred agriculture as their main livelihood. Manu had forbidden it for Brahmins and the reason given for this is that the plow injures the earth and destroys living things. As stated above Brahmins and rich Marathas usually did not engage in manual work, the actual work was done by tenants and agricultural labourers.

In rural India the rank of agriculturist differs from that of the peasant or farm families in many so-called developed countries as well as some developing countries such as Russia. Nelson has remarked that the farmer's or peasant's status in the western world is often characterized in derogatory terms carrying connotations of slavery and serfdom.¹ Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels in the Manifesto of the communist party disparaged the rank of the agriculturist in speaking of the idiocy of peasantry.

Srinivas observed that villagers considered agriculture to be tough work, but manly and worthwhile. At the same time they envy the man who earns his livelihood sitting in an office chair writing something and issuing orders. The young villagers who had been to a school in urban area show an aversion to agricultural work. Their aim is to get a white-collared job or to engage themselves in trade.² This is a recent trend.

The approximate position of each caste in the ranking scale has been mentioned above, but it is difficult to

² M.N. Srinivas op.cit.p.93.
determine the exact place of each caste in the hierarchical system. Mandelbaum also noted that individuals and even groups may be given one rank order in a particular context and a different ranking in another context. Marriott says the intricacies of the Hindu system of caste ranking cannot be imagined as existing in any but small packages. Russell reported 40 castes of central provinces (8 districts are now in Maharashtra) professing to be agriculturists.

Bailey observed that although changes have taken place social stratification is still present in the village. There is still a system of closed recruitment; but there is a tendency now toward a more segmentary and less holistic or organic system. Castes still exist; but they are used as building blocks in a different kind of system than was originally the case.

2. Diet: - The dietary habits of actors are effective indicators of the basic caste hierarchy. Purely vegetarian castes are ranked high. One may be predicted from the other. Thus the non-vegetarian castes are ranked low. However, there are exceptions to this rule. The Marathas and the Sarswat Brahmans eating flesh occupy a higher rank, but the eaters of flesh of deceased cattle are ranked at the bottom. Eaters of swine are also very low. At present, some young men of Brahmin

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5. F.G.Bailey op. cit.
and other castes eat meat (not beef). It is the open secret. But they are still considered of high rank.

In order to elevate their status, the low castes often abstain from eating meat and try to adopt the purely vegetarian diet of Brahmins.

3. Commensality: Srinivas used the term commensality as a basis for differentiating castes. He says, "complete commensality may be said to exist only when all persons, men as well as women, accept cooked food and drinking water from each other. Each person accepts drinking water and cooked food only from castes which he regards as equal or superior to his own." Brahmins do not accept cooked food and drinking water from Non-Brahmin castes. Some orthodox Brahmins do not accept these things even from a Brahmin if he was not ritually pure. Women are more particular than men about commensal restrictions.

In a village there are separate wells for untouchables; but many clean caste people cannot drink water from the same well. If there is no separate well for the untouchables in a village, they have to beg water from others. If the river water is used for drinking by the villagers, the untouchables fetch water from down the stream, while the caste people draw water from the upstream.

Grain can change hands, but once it is ground into

flour, the Brahmins do not accept it from untouchables. Inter-dining is taken to be the ultimate measure of rank by the villagers. Commensal restrictions are, however, being relaxed rapidly. Social importance is attached to inviting persons above one's caste for meals. Karve and Damle reported that in 4 villages viz. Varkuta, Karul, Wadi and Vasti there were 6, 17 9 and 1 such case respectively of people inviting people in higher castes to meals. In one case a Chambar gave hospitality to clean castes. This Chambar had lived in Bombay for a long time and considered himself, to be superior and was also rich. In Karul the Maratha and the Kunbi who gave food to persons above their caste had not really given cooked food in their own houses, but gave flour, rice and condiments.¹

4. Pollution: The term used by villagers for pollution is vital. People are sensitive about loss of rank or status through pollution. High status, even if achieved largely by secular means, is always asserted through exclusiveness in the matter of pollution. The touch of a member of any caste lower than one's own defiled the person of the higher caste. In practice this norm is only observed by the orthodox Brahmin, who specifically avoids physical contact with members of lower castes. This is especially important in bathing, worship and eating food. During the Peshwa rule in Maharashtra, the shadow of the untouchable (Harijan) was sufficient to pollute a Brahmin if it fell on the latter. Harijans are conceived as in a

¹. I. Karve and Y.B. Damle, op.cit.p.31.
permanent severe state of pollution and contact with them defiling. The higher caste people avoid sitting on the same bench, bullock-cart or a wooden plank with the untouchables. While giving food to untouchables, the clean caste people carefully pour it in the vessel of the untouchables without touching it. Some Harijans do not practice their traditional occupations and are vegetarians. They are given more respect for this when others knew of it but are still defiling on contact.

When a person was polluted, he was degraded from his normal ritual state for the period of this pollution. During this period he was avoided by his own castemen of the village, till he was accepted in their social orbit after penance and ritual decontamination.

5. Ritual:- There are two types of rituals viz. the Vedic and the Puranic. The Vedic ritual is based on the Vedic and the Puranic. The Vedic ritual is based on the Vedic mantras (lore) and is regarded as of great sanctity, while the Puranic is based on formulae of less sanctity. The Sudras contented themselves with the latter ritual. During the Peshwa period the Prabhus had to establish their right of carrying out their rituals according to the Vedic procedure and the Sonar caste established its right by employing a fellow caste member as a priest. At present many castes in Maharashtra are not employing the Brahmin priests. In some villages there are no Brahmin priests. Non-Brahmin castes try to adopt Brahmanical
rituals, as a means of elevating themselves. A man, who is conservative regarding caste strictures is respected as "religious".

The wedding rituals of untouchables are very simple and different than the higher castes. Brahmins do not perform the wedding rituals of the untouchables.

Certain sacraments can not be performed by any other caste except the Brahmins. The Sudras were forbidden from studying the most sacred literature and there were rules for them and others regarding their entry into big temples. The Brahmins were so conscious of their superiority that they did not condescend to bow even to the idols of gods in a Sudras house. The Brahmins could only enter the intermost recesses of temple and could touch the deity. The clean castes had to keep themselves outside the sacred precincts. The untouchables were forbidden to enter even the outer portion of the temple. They could come no closer to the idol but could stay in the court yard surrounding the temple. The great untouchable saint Chokhamela once entered the most sacred temple of Vithoba at Pandharpur. He was forcibly driven out and had to undergo a rigorous punishment during the Muslim rule in Maharashtra. At present right of the untouchables to enter temples is specified by law and sanctions could be applied if they were left out of temples.

In ritual the link between husband and wife is very close

1. G.S. Ghurye op. cit. p. 15.
and the two stand as one at some crucial ritual junctures. In a marriage ceremony on the occasion of bathing the bride and the bridegroom, five couples are chosen to take baths at the same time. The clothes' ends of husband and wife are tied together to make them one. In the Maratha caste the wife is often called "Ardhanga (half body). In the offerings to the deity the wife touches the hands of her husband to symbolize that the offering is made by one body. A unmarried person has lower religious status than a married person, either male and female. A bachelor is not allowed to perform certain important rites such as offering pinda (balls of cooked rice) to the ancestors.

In the marriage ceremony of a rich high caste villager, all villagers are generally invited to witness the ceremony. The untouchables stand outside the marriage pandal. All of receive the pansupari (betel-leaf and areca-nut). In a few cases, if the villager is poor, this activity is restricted to kin and caste. The performance of the Satyanarayan ceremony is a household affair in which prasad (a bit of sweet as God's gift) is given to the invitees. The participants on this occasion are confined to kin and caste. Karve and Damle reported that no untouchable reported having received such prasad in the village Varkute, whereas in Karul only 4 Mahars, said that they had received a prasad from clean castes.¹

There is a difference in ritual sacrifices offered by

¹. I. Karve and Y.B. Damle op.cit.p.31.
various castes. The untouchables and low caste villagers offer living animals such as a goat, a sheep or a hen as the ritual sacrifice to their deities. The Brahmins and the Varkari villagers who had gone on pilgrimages to Pandharpur do not offer such sacrifices to their deities.

In Maharashtra all saints including Ramdas (Brahmin) tried to inculcate in the minds of people the idea of unity. Many pilgrims (Varkaris) from all over Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka walk hundreds of miles as groups in procession to Pandharpur twice in a year. This pilgrim procession of mixed gatherings of all castes have been made for hundreds of years. Each pilgrim carries a red flag on his shoulder, a small bed and other requirements in a bag on another shoulder and a musical instrument (tambora) or tal in his hand. Some pilgrims carry a palquion in which the images of saints like Tukaram and Dynaneshwar are kept. During the day they walk making halts at mid-day for meals and at night for rest. During the halts they sing religious songs or hear religious discourses. During this social intercourse no distinction is made among the pilgrims on the basis of caste. All castes are equal in rank to them. These Varkaris do not practice strict commensal restrictions.

The Varkari sect or Bhagwat Dharm has great influence on the villagers in Maharashtra. Most of the agriculturists in villages assert Bhagwat Dharm by their behaviour, dress and diet. They are more devout than fellow villagers.
The person may renounce his worldly ties including caste and become a *Sanyasi* (ascetic) and thus acquire some ritual merit. But this method of moving toward salvation is rarely adopted by the villager because he has to sever ties with his family, kinship and caste. Often the farm operations would suffer were the villager to renounce life as some people do.

6. Other Behaviour: The ranking or the status system is also guided by behaviour which is not involved in eating or ritual. Age, sex, wealth, education, intelligence coupled with character, spirit of social service and self-sacrifice are recognised criteria by which one may raise one's status or rank. Possession of skill such as hunting, magic and medicines are accorded special respect. Dishonest practices are condemned. For instance, a person in a position of influence is condemned for mis-appropriation in village funds.¹

The lower castes and untouchables address the higher castes, even a small boy, in a fashion which reflects their lowliness. For instance, the 40 year old lower caste person will address the rich Maratha boy of ten as 'uncle', keeping a distance of a generation. The untouchable would say 'Johar Mai Bap' in reply the higher caste man would bless him saying, "Sukhi raha" (Be happy). Nav-Buddhas no longer practice this traditional way of behaving.

For the women, virginity in brides, chastity in wives and continence in widows are highly valued and give high status to women. The castes which practiced widow remarriage were so

¹ Ibid p.63.
evaluated as to produce low in status. Some noble Marathas still do not allow their widows to remarry. Divorce also lowers the status of the family. Low caste villagers are more liberal in the spheres of marriage and sex. Caste members who are westernised are also liberal about marriage e.g. Brahmins.

The concept of "Sanskritization" has been developed and used by Srinivas. Sanskritization is defined as the gradual adoption of Brahmin ritual practices and other traits of ancient Hindu culture by inferior castes with consequential rise in their status. This process usually goes along with improvement in economic condition, or sometimes, political position. It illustrates the systematic linkage of the Brahmins to their "lessors".

It is doubtful whether the Brahmanic model is imitated by all low caste villagers in Maharashtra and the linkage is more important. In villages of Maharashtra the Maratha is a dominant caste, while often the few families of Brahmins, are economically poor and have no influence or power to initiate linkage with those below. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to say that the Brahminic model from urban areas is being adopted by the Marathas to which they are in some respects, linked but that the Maratha model is being imitated by the other castes in villages, even by Brahmins. This latter linkage is powerful. For instance, farm practices have been taken over from

1. I.Karve, op.cit. (KOLL) p.156.
2. N.G.Chapekar, op.cit.
Marathas by Brahmins. The accent in speaking used by the village Brahmins is different than that of the educated city Brahmins but similar to that of the Marathas. In his study of a Malwa village, Mathur observed that the villagers follow the customs and practices of the leading caste, the Rajputs.¹ The reason for this as given by Mathur is that the Rajput have been more liberal and democratic in their relations with castes lower than themselves than have the Brahmins. The Rajputs freely accepted food, water etc. from a large number of castes who were also treated as equals in everyday social relations by the Rajput. They appear to have been more actively linked to the people.

7. Controlling :

    Power as an element :- For Loomis power is the capacity to control others. He says, "there are two major forms of control, authority and influence. Authority is right, as determined by the social system (and built into the status-role) to control others, whereas influence is non-authoritative.²

    Controlling by influence :- Brahmins retained their supremacy through the ages, although they were not wealthy or had no authority of type that has ruler (save some rulers like the Peshwas). They had influence over all other castes through their learning and moral behaviour. Brahmins served as advisors to kings and household chaplains directing the rituals, religious

Karve observed that the man in power, whether king, minister or dictator may pay homage publicly and bow his head before an acknowledged saintly man, but otherwise he may completely disregard the latter’s admonitions. ¹

The villagers are considerably influenced by ascetics viz. Sadhus, Babas, Buvas, Avaliyas. Several such ascetics are found wandering from village to village or stationery in a village and village gatherings paying their respects. People believe in magical powers of the ascetic holy man. Many of them are selfish and extract wealth from villagers and later on change their base of operation.

Some of these Babas and Avaliyas had such powerful influence over the people that temples were built to them after their death. These temples became the holy places for pilgrims from distant places. The photographs of these holy men are hung near the household deities and are worshipped by the villagers. Some people even wear the images of Baba in rings and in lockets tied in a black thread hung on the neck. Sai Baba of Shirdi in Ahmadnagar district and Avaliya Gajanan Maharaj of Shergon in Vidarbha are examples of such saints.

The author observed the rise of such a saint in his village during his childhood. This Avaliya, Mali by caste, was originally in service in the garden of author’s grandfather.

¹ I. Karve op.cit. (HSAI) p.41.
This man was actually not able to speak clearly in any language. He always behaved more like a two-year-old child than a saint. He never cared about the appearance of his clothes, food and bathing. Saliva oozed out his mouth and children used to jeer at him. Villagers used to catch hold of him, bring him home, clean him and offer him food. A few years ago this Avaliya died. The people of the village built a temple near a field along the main road and appointed a regular Brahmin priest to provide daily pooja. An annual fair is now held near the temple to celebrate the anniversary of his death. This example is here offered to illustrate the need which such people seem to meet the lives of villagers. Against this background the rise of the Brahmins, who in addition to being holy, were educated and intelligent.

A pious man in a village is often called a Sadhu. About 100 years ago, there lived a Sadhu by the name of Manubuva in a room attached to the Hanuman temple at Dongargaon in Akola district. After his death, two of his disciples lived in the same room he had lived in. These two Sadhus used to advise villagers in difficult times and treat the patients using indigenous medicines. Villagers have built Samadhis after their death, which honours Sadhu. Five local farmers of this village reported that they had consulted one Sadhu at Paras who guided them in selection of suitable sites for sinking wells. The diggers of these wells struck ample potable water. Villagers believe in such magic.

Besides Sadhus and Magicians, there are always some
influential persons in every village, who guide the village activities. They may not hold any official post. They do not stand for panchayat elections, probably not wishing to enter into party politics in which they might lose their influence over the whole village. The advice of such persons is sought by villagers on several occasions in respect of family affairs, adoption of new farm practices, purchase of land or house, marriage, education of children etc. Sociologists have called these influential persons by the variety of terms viz. key communicators, local leaders, informal leaders, information leaders, adoption leaders, local influentials, opinion leaders, etc.

There is also at least one influential person in a clan. Such a person may be old or middle aged and have experience and intelligence. He is required to direct several important activities of households belonging to his clan. His presence is absolutely necessary in the fixing marriages and for important rituals. A middle aged man (cousin) almost ruled all households of the author’s clan in his village. The author had to seek this leader’s approval for the bride selected by him. As it happened he had a tough time because the relations with bride’s kin could not be traced out easily.

The influence of such opinion leaders dwindles if his behaviour is faulty and he gets involved in corruptional, alcoholism, pollution, etc.

The history of a family or a clan has considerable
influence on the behaviour of a member. For instance, descendants of a patriotic family or clan will always try to be patriots.

The influence of the dominant castes in a village cannot be ignored. Maratha is a dominant caste in the majority of villages in Maharashtra. A particular tribe is usually dominant among tribal villages. Srinivas observed that with strength of numbers, wealth and following, the dominant caste occupies a strategic position to exploit new opportunities to the own advantage of its members.¹

Opinion leaders:— Merton defined opinion leaders as "men who exert personal influence upon a certain number of other people in certain situations."² Personal influence has been defined by Rogers as a communication involving a direct face-to-face exchange between the communicator and the receiver which results in changed behaviour or attitudes on the part of the receiver.³ Bahudkar found that neighbour-to-neighbour communication was of greater importance in the diffusion of farm innovations than any other communication channel in his study.⁴

Characteristics of opinion leaders: A study of 232 opinion leaders spread over the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra was made by Rahudkar. The personal and social characteristics of these opinion leaders were compared with their followers. The majority of the opinion leaders were between the age range of 40 to 49 years. They were usually better educated farmers having a secondary occupation, Kunbi-Marathas, owners of more than 30 acres farm, members of village organizations, and had lived in the same villages since their birth and their houses tended to be located at the centre of the village or along the main road. They had more informal and formal contacts outside the village than their followers.

The finding of Marsh and Coleman, Rogers and Burdge indicate that the opinion leaders conform more closely to social norms than the average member is not supported by the above cited study, which however, confirms the findings of Lionberger.

The opinion leaders were above average in innovativeness. This is confirmed by many investigators including Mash

and Coleman, in the U.S.A., Rahim in Pakistan and Barnabas in India.

Rahudkar obtained evidence which differed from that obtained by Marsh and Coleman on leader-following differences. In a more developed area, Rahudkar found that opinion leaders' innovativeness scores were closer to those of all farmers (a difference of only 13.5) than in a traditional area, where the leader follower differences in innovativeness scores were 27.0. Lionberger similarly found a greater difference in innovativeness between opinion leaders and followers in a traditional Missouri community (a difference of 31 in innovativeness scores) than in a modern community, where the leader group difference in innovativeness scores was 24.

It is interesting to note the qualities of a good leader conceived by traditional villagers, as compared with villagers who are rational in behaviour and thought. The traditional villagers of Varkute in Satara district opined that the local leader should be mature in age, possess good moral qualities, be educated and show readiness to help others even at a cost to him and possess initiative and drive. In another Adivasi village,

1. W.B. Rahudkar, op. cit.
4. W.B. Rahudkar, op. cit.
5. H.F. Lionberger, op. cit.
Ahupe in Poona district the people opined that the leader should have ability to get along with everybody, have gentle behaviour, desire to do good to others and have the ability to get things done through government agencies. In another village Karul, where leadership was vested in previous landlords, the people opined that the leader should have competence and ability to conduct public affairs, ability to make public speeches, the spirit of social service and self sacrifice, education and learning, character and intelligence, possession of some skill and honesty. In contrast to these villagers the more rational villagers of two recently established villages, Wadi and Wasti placed greater emphasis on technical competence and assimilation of new values.¹

Katz found that leadership in one sphere does not necessarily imply leadership in another; the same persons are often advisors in one field and advises in another. People are most frequently influenced by persons of their own socio-economic level, except in the case of public affairs, where there is concentration of leadership in the highest status.² These findings also hold for the village leadership in Maharashtra. With increasing contacts with the cities and persons migrated from villages to the city, two distinct types of leadership are visible at present. One type of leadership serves as a liaison or systemic link between the village and

outside world. These are new leaders represented on the organizations outside the village e.g. Cooperatives, Panchayat Samiti (Block organization) and Zilla Parishad (District organization). The other type of leaders are traditional who are consulted by villagers on various matters such as agriculture, ceremonies and rituals.¹

The economic power in the rural area under study is today exercised by two classes: the trader-money lender and the big landlords, say top 10 per cent in terms of income.² The former is connected with the urban trading and financial communities e.g. Jain or Marwadi and acts as their representative in a village. The latter usually wield considerable political and social power. In some villages these two classes may act together and control all activities in villages including panchayat elections. Activities of the poor and the weak as constituted at present can make no advance against or wrest independence from these two powerful classes.

**Caste Council:** The caste council as an institution was supported by Maratha rule; but it did not receive the support of the British rule and the present government. As the caste panchayat is not a statutory body, it holds power by influence and not by authority.

The meeting of the caste council is held in the temple,

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² D.R. Gadgil, op.cit.
under a large tree, in the community hall, or in the household. Generally it is held when caste people gather on certain occasion e.g. marriage, death, festivals, etc. Otherwise an emergency meeting is called in order that the decision of the caste council may be made. Among the Agris the caste council (*Jamat*) meets every month to settle disputes.

In a survey of 72 villages of Maharashtra, Dandekar and Jagtap found 107 caste councils in 37 villages. In another five villages the decisions were made by the village council instead of a caste council. There were no caste councils in 30 villages. Of these 107 caste councils, 36 were in Chandrapur district, 27 in Kolhapur district, 14 were in Akola district and 3 to 8 in other districts. The Mahar caste councils (26 in number) were the majority. They were found all over Maharashtra except in Marathwada, and Dhinla district. Other caste councils were of the Marathas, the Mang, the Chambhar, the Sutar, the Dhanger, the Kumbi, the Kumbhar, the Parit, the Bhil, the Mali, the Jain, the Lingayat, the Gosavi, the Gurav, the Laman, the Vadar, the Kalkadi, the Kalal, the Telli, the Gond, the Halbi, etc. The caste councils of the Muslims and the Christians were also found.1

The jurisdiction of the caste council is limited to a single village, if the caste group is big enough. In case of the smaller caste groups, the jurisdiction of the caste council

covers the cluster of villages. For instance, the caste council of the Phulmali had control over five villages in Dhulia district. Generally five members are nominated in the caste council and they are present in each meeting of the council. However, the members of the caste council vary according to the caste. The members are hereditary in some castes, while they are elected after every 2-3 years in other castes. Sometimes a dominating person becomes a member. The members are the opinion leaders of the caste and they are known by various names. For instance, a Mahar leader is called as 'Padewar' in Chanda district, as 'Shende' in Nagpur district and a 'Mahalkari' in Ratnagiri district. A Kumbi leader is called as 'Gaokar' or 'Patil' in Ratnagiri district and as 'Mahajan' in Chanda district. The primary leader of the Lamans is called as 'Naik' and the secondary leader is called as 'Karbhari'. A Mang leader is called 'Mehetare' - Deshmukh' in Marathwada. A Sutar leader is called 'Des-Mehetare' in Poona. In many other castes the caste leader is called as 'Shetya'. The caste leader gets the part of fines paid by the culprit. He acts as the representative of the caste in negotiating with other castes or government. If the writing of a document becomes necessary Gramjoshi or a Kulkarni is requested to do this job.

The influence of the caste council and village council diminished during the British rule. This was particularly

1. Ibid. p.97.
2. Ibid. p.97-98.
true of the high caste councils. In order to administer uniform criminal law many matters were removed from the purview of caste council. But most of the castes have formed their own associations which cross village boundaries and cover a wide area, e.g. All India Maratha Education Society. The functions of new caste associations are (1) to promote the general interests of the caste and particularly to guard its social status in the hierarchy from actual or potential attacks of other castes, (2) to collect funds by which scholarships may be provided for the needy and deserving students of the caste. Such scholarships are to enable the student to complete his college education in India or abroad and (3) to regulate certain customs of the caste by resolutions passed at the annual meeting of the members of the caste.¹

Controlling by authority:

Power in a family: The authority and rights of the members of the family are prescribed by law and custom. Landis found that the large family does tend to be authoritarian, and the small family democratic.² The joint family of India tends to be authoritarian and is, of course, larger than the nuclear family which is more common in the West. The authority of a joint family is vested in the elder male member who is called as Karta or Kartasavarta (one who does the work and is responsible). It would not be correct to say that the Karta is always

¹ G.S. Ghurye op. cit. (CACII) p. 191.
the eldest male member of the family. When the eldest male, the father, becomes old the family responsibility is shoulder ed by his eldest son or by a dominating son, who may be the next to eldest son. In the absence of a male adult member of the family, the authority is temporarily exercised by the elder female member of the family until her son comes to the age and can shoulder the responsibility.

In a nuclear family the authority is held by husband and father. In a most traditional family the relations between husband and wife take the form of master-servant. The wife calls her husband 'Dhani' (master). In rural areas the husband is referred as a wife’s master e.g. saying "Jani’s malak" (master of Jani). However, in some families the wife may possess a dominating personality and may acquire power or even authority in home affairs.

In a family of agricultural labourers both husband and wife are earning members. In the family of Sonkoli, the husband is often mediocre and indulgent and his main job is fishing in the sea, while the wife usually dominating and she needs to be clever. Her main job is that of selling the fish which are caught. Thus she becomes the cashier of the family.

The father-son and the grandparent-grandchildren relationships are authoritarian although grand parents may if the parents still live indulge the children more than the parent does.
Power in a village: In a rural community the authority before Independence was vested in the statutory Headman of the village and had unofficial influence over the villagers. He used to act as the arbitrator in village disputes. The ideal of village unity supports the role of hereditary leaders in initiating action and settling disputes.\(^1\) The Kulkarni (Accountant) also yielded considerable power in the village. His power came from his knowledge of transfer of property, government loans, mortgage or property, revenue records and so on. People frequently consult him in disputes for his knowledge of such matters usually surpass others.

With the abolition of the hereditary post of the village headman in Post Independence time his statutory powers are transferred to the village panchayat. Thus in many villages the headmen do not exercise any authority or influence over the villagers. Rahudkar found in a study of 339 farmers in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra that the village headman was seldom influential in farmers' decisions to adopt new farm ideas. Compared with other sources of farm information, the contact with the village headmen resulted in the highest percentage of low adopter and the lowest percentage of high adopters. This possibly indicated the dissatisfaction of the headmen towards the changes in administrative set-up; these changes he might have perceived as a threat to his leadership. During the study period, a partial transfer of power from the hereditary position

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of the village headman to the village council occurred.

In a village, when the traditional leadership is dwindling, the traditional unit is at stake and the village is caught up in the struggles of factions which produce cleavages characteristic of the modern democratic society.

In a village, when the traditional headman retained the authority not because of his previous position in the Government hierarchy but from the standing of his own family, the traditional ties and values persist more strongly than elsewhere and they tend to be weakened as and if the local leaders through excessive partition of family property, lose their economic ascendancy and corresponding control.¹

Wealth is not the only determinant of power in villages. Unified action of large groups is another important determinant for power and is often also related to the number of able-bodied men that can be mustered in the event of conflict. The groups most likely to display unity in this context are castes. The potentially most powerful castes will be those large and wealthy. In this regard, Marathas are dominant in this region. However, they lack unity of action. Kinship ties, although they often produce conflict, are still the main means whereby common action is achieved, especially in a large group.²

¹ Eric Miller "Village structure in North Kerala" Economic Weekly 4: 159-164; 1952.
² H. Orenstein op. cit. p. 167.
Active leaders are distinguished by wealth, assertiveness and pride. To be an active leader one has to conform to village norms and further, one has to use one's wealth to exceed expectations in some respects. They are usually generous and participate actively in most of the village activities ensuring privileges for themselves. Passive leaders do not participate overtly in competition for power. They are ordinarily religious and strictly adhere to ideal norms of the village. They are important as style-setters in behaviour. They are approached by people for advice and resolution of quarrels. Because they remain aloof from conflicts, the disputants feel that they can turn to such leaders without fear that factional or caste partiality will be shown. Passive leaders act through the active leaders in such matters.

Grampanchayat (Village Council): The grampanchayat (literally the group of five) is a traditional council of elders. The village councils were in existence since Vedic times. Formerly it was an informal body of aristocratic elders who exercised their powers only when things were mismanaged by the village headman. This council of elders neither met regularly nor did it have a regular elected constitution. They were natural leaders. In the village council of Maharashtra were included non-Brahmins and untouchables. The functions of the village elders during the Maurya period were the arrangement

1. There is a saying in Marathi, "the verdicts of five elders are words of God".
of public fairs, festivals and shows, the management of temple
property and property of minors, occasional undertakings of
public works and other matters which were left to the villagers.

The formal village council disappeared in the Mohammedan
and Maratha period. In the Maratha period the headman managed
village affairs with frequent consultations with village elders
on occasions of importance. A formal meeting of village elders
was convened only when a dispute arose and it could not be
settled by the headman. The elder members of all castes were
invited to attend this meeting. A quarrel between Brahmin cou­
sins in respect of a some hereditary rights was referred for
settlement to the whole village. The assembly that was to
tender the decision included the Maratha, the Dhangar, the Gurav,
the Sutar, the Lohar, the Kumbhar, the Koli, the Nhari, the
Chambahr, the Mahar and the Wang.¹ Although informal councils
were not declared to be unlawful assemblies under the British
rule, an inevitable effect of British policy and system of admi­
nistration was their liquidation. The British Government discon­
tinued the granting of village fund² for these assemblies thus
preventing their continuation.

The formal village councils known as Grampanchayats were
established in Western India in 1920. The formal village coun­
cils did not take roots in many villages due to limitation of
funds. They could only collect the house-tax, which the

villagers were reluctant to pay. However, the Grampanchayat took proper shape after independence of India.

Grampanchayat is the statutory committee established recently and is different from the comprehensive council of villagers (Gramsabha) which existed before. The members of the former are elected by whole village. They include representatives of the major castes, scheduled castes and tribes and women. Membership is not restricted to five members as the word 'panchayat' indicates; but varies from 7 to 15 depending on the population of the village. The functions of the Grampanchayat are covered a wide area of activity. The important functions are related to public works, public health, lighting, controlling bazar, fairs and shops, education, improvement of agriculture and animal husbandry, village industries, cooperative societies and collection of revenue. In these fields the Grampanchayat exercise supreme control at the village level.

The village headman had limited jobs, while a chairman of the grampanchayat who is elected by the Grampanchayat members must have wide knowledge. Besides being educated he must know improved methods of agriculture, sanitation of the village, working of cooperative societies, accounting, revenue records, rules and regulations and various other activities. Poorly educated or illiterate village elders are not fit to occupy the post of the chairman. Thus the village leadership
in India has shifted to the younger generation and brought in its fold the representation of women and low castes.¹

The establishment of Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishads have brought the opportunity to the villager to become a leader crossing the village boundary.² He tries to gain support of his kin from other villages to become the member of the Panchayat Samiti. The villager’s ambition for leadership has now no limitation provided he can get elected. A villager can even become a Minister of the State something that earlier was scarcely possible. The majority of the Ministers in Maharashtra are from the rural areas where most of the voters live.

Intermediary landholders, large peasants and non-agricultural middle classes are sources of local leadership. Poorer tenants and farm labourers are yet to gain a position of authority among them.³ Rural leaders are using the influence

¹ According to the legislation of Bombay Grampanchayat Act of 1958, each Grampanchayat should comprise of 7 to 15 members as decided by the District Collector based on the population of the village. Of these members, two seats are reserved for women and some seats are reserved for Harijans and scheduled tribes depending upon the population of these people in the village.

² In order to decentralise the power of the State Government, activities of State Government have been transferred to Zilla Parishad in Maharashtra in 1961. At present there is one Zilla Parishad for each of the 26 districts of Maharashtra and a Panchayat Samiti for each Block. The work of all Panchayat Samitis in a district is supervised by the Zilla Parishad. The members of the Governing Body of the Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti are elected from the people of that area.

which they gain as brokers and systemic links outside the rural system to compete for power with incumbents, mainly urban-oriented, politicians of the national parties.\(^1\) In this power competition, the upper castes in the village have started working as less cohesive units than was formerly the case. However, lower castes still act as units. The latter align with one group or the other as a whole and this is important in elections. Groups within the upper castes do not mind aligning in fact may desire to join with the leaders of lower castes for political purposes.\(^2\)

**Decision-making and its initiation into action as a process:**

Decision-making is the process by which one choice is selected from among those that are available. The selection or choice of candidate is dependent on many factors viz. resources, alternatives, risk involved, family cycle, influence of family members and others, norms and values, economic gain, goals and objectives, keen sense of the decision-maker to project the results of his decision in the future and his own experience, etc.

**Decision-making in the peasant family:**

The majority of Indian farms are family farms with all or the greater part of work being done by the peasant and members of his family on unpaid basis. The lower the socio-

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economic status of the family, the greater the likelihood that the wife of the farmer will do field work in intimate association with her husband. In families of better economic status the wives and children do only chores, such as milking, tending cattle, care for the poultry, feeding the livestock and carrying meals to the farm. They have also to share some responsibility in farm work. Thus the members of the family influence the decision-making which affects the family.

Wilkening found that about two-fifth of the farm owners in Wisconsin (U.S.A.) were encouraged by their wives to make specific changes in enterprises or practices on their farms. Wilkening observed that farm matters were discussed more frequently with the wife and children than with anyone else. Abell's study of Canadian farmers produced similar results. She found that in most families the husband and wife were jointly concerned in decisions relating to 14 activities. In 48 percent of the families the husband alone made farm plans and decisions.

In a joint farm family in Maharashtra only a few adult members participate in decision-making. The decisions regarding farm enterprises are made by adult male members. Sometimes

2. E.A. Wilkening "Changes in farm technology as related to families, family decision-making and family integration" Amer. Sociol. Review 19(1) 29-37; 1954.
the mother participates in the discussion, as the decisions are often made at home at the time of evening meals or immediately after the meals.

For instance, in an actual case at the time of a meal the son (karta) proposed that the family grow potatoes in a specific field. His father cited his experiences with growing potatoes and said that the potatoes can be grown excellently in the same field proposed by his son. The mother said that the family needed cash during summer for the wedding of her grand-daughter and that the crop of potatoes will help to raise the money. It was ultimately decided to grow potatoes. The further decisions regarding which variety of potatoes to be grown, from where the seed is to be purchased and the matter of making money available for the purchase were made by the son in consultation with the Agricultural Officer.

While making decisions regarding family matters the relevant family members in the joint family are always consulted, otherwise the issue develops a conflict and quarrel among the family members. A wise karta at least makes a show of consultation and makes decisions in accordance with his own conscious and judgment.

In a nuclear family as studied in the West the decisions are often jointly made by both husband and wife. This is more true in a labour family as both are earning members. In a sample of Irish Roman-Catholic families with at least one child of elementary school age Heer has shown that both in the working
In the middle class the working wife exerts more influence in family decision-making than the non-working wife. He has also pointed that whether they are employed or not, wives in working class families have more say in family decision-making than wives in middle-class families.¹

The author investigated the role of the members of 262 farm families in decision-making in Nagpur district. The findings revealed some interesting facts. Of the 262 farmers, the great majority of farmers made decisions themselves regarding the choice of the crop to be sown, while for this purpose 8 per cent farmers consulted their sons and less than 4 per cent of the farmers considered the opinions of either their brothers, parents or wives.

Regarding the time of sowing and harvesting of the wheat crop 86 per cent farmers decided themselves, 8 per cent consulted their sons and less than 3 per cent farmers asked for the opinion either of their parents or wives, and 3 per cent consulted their brothers.

For the adoption of new farm practices farmers did not ask for the opinion of the members of their families. They sought the outside sources of information for this purpose. Farm decisions are influenced by friends, neighbours, relatives, gossip groups, opinion leaders, village level workers, agricultural officers, field demonstrations and mass media.²

A hypothetical question was used to ascertain the nature of decision-making among farming villagers. A sample of farmers were asked at the time of interview that if by the grace of God they received two thousand rupees, would they purchase land and if they wished to purchase land with whom they would discuss the matter. In response to this question one-third of all the farmers said that they would not invest money in increasing the size of their farm. The rest of the farmers reported that they would decide after discussing the matter with other members of their families. Among the farmers reporting that they would decide the matter after discussing with members of their families, 17 per cent said that they would consult their wives, 12 per cent their parents, 4 per cent their brothers.

It is interesting to note that the influence of the family members varies in relation to age and education of the farmer. Most of the skills and knowledge of farming is transmitted from father to son, when he is young. On the other hand, old farmers may be encouraged by their sons to gain knowledge from outside contacts, both personal and impersonal.

It was evident from the analysis of the data that the farmers below 25 years of age were influenced by both their parents, while the farmers of 26-35 years age group were influenced by their fathers. The farmers of 36 to 45 years of age asked for the opinions of their sons and farmers of 40 years and over consulted their brothers or wives in matters of

1. Purchase of land is considered the best type of investment by the farmers.
seasonal farm operations. It was further observed that the illiterate and poorly educated farmers sought the advice of their parents, brothers, wives and sons; while the farmers having education beyond middle school made decisions themselves in this matter.

A mean adoption index was computed for the farmers who decided themselves and consulted their family members before adoption of new farm practices. The data are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Decision-making and Adoption of Farm Practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influenced by</th>
<th>Mean Adoption Index*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The farmers who made decisions themselves had adopted more practices than those whose decisions were influenced by their family members. The farmers who consulted the younger family members had adopted more practices than those who consulted older family members.

In adopting a new idea in farming the main consideration

* The adoption index was computed by summation of scores, giving a score of one to each practice.
for many farmers is the possible profit they would make. Once the farmers are convinced that a profit will be forthcoming they will not hesitate to go in debt. The rapid spread of grape cultivation in Maharashtra is a case in point. Growing grapes needs much initial expenditure about Rs. 7000 per acre. For some farmers going in debt means losing one's prestige. Such traditional farmers base their decisions primarily on their past experiences and examples of farmers of equal status. As a rule they have smaller farms, lower income and less contacts with extension agencies. They are strongly attached to many traits of their old cultural inheritance, they show a tendency of accepting the new ideas. Such traditional farmers will make wise decisions if they are adequately informed regarding their various opportunities and if their capabilities are enhanced so as to increase the number of choices available to them.

It has also been observed that farm families with limited resources centre decision making around two or more influential and resourceful farm families, which for years have contested the leading part in the social life of the village. The dependent farm families obtain a pair of bullocks and agricultural implements etc. from the leading family. Such cohesive

groups become apparent at the time of elections.

In the religious matters gurus bring out much of the decision-making in the traditional family. If the guru is also astrologer he will use his power in the settlement of marriage, charity, etc.

The decision-making in the village council:

There are definite norms about behaviour concerning family members, neighbours and caste. The aberrant persons are brought round by various means. A friend or the elder person in the family request him to correct his behaviour. If there is no effect the influence of the neighbour or the opinion leader is sought. If the person still does not correct his behaviour, the gossip about him spreads in the village and the people including children jeer at him. If the aberrant still does not mend his way, the matter is taken finally to the caste council and then to the village council.

In case of some castes, when people assemble for the wedding or funeral feasts, the complainant approaches the elders or the influential persons of the caste and explains his case. If the elders feel that the dispute is worth receiving their judgement, the defendant is called to explain his side. The decision is given after some questioning and argument. The simple cases like breaking caste norms are decided unanimously in one sitting. If the case is complex and there are two major factions or opinions, it is difficult to arrive at a decision based on a consensus. The angry arguments are
sometimes exchanged and one party leaves the place without taking food, which is wasted. This act is felt by the host to be an insult. These splits persist for a long time but a compromise may be reached on another occasion.

In case the conflict involves the village council, the assembly of the villages is called to the community meeting place with a beating of the drum by a Ramoshi or a Mang who passes through the village streets. People gather and the proceedings are started after important village personalities have arrived. The elders take a high position in the assembly. In the beginning the meeting is a debate on the issue by everyone. Both the plaintiff and defendant open their cases before the assembly with force and sometimes anger. Supporters of both sides speak. The elders hear without saying anything. But when things have quieted down they start to question and to guide the council into some compromise or course of action. Here lies the value of oratory and firm temper and character of the arbiter, more than hereditary position or wealth. The leaders size up the feeling of the council and reckon whether they can get a consensus or not. If it is unlikely, they say less and less until the meeting peters out and it is understood that the matter will be taken up again later.\(^1\) Although the dissolution of the assembly is not declared, the people start to leave one by one. The same issue is raised in the next meeting. The composition of the arbiters may be different in the second meeting.

Certain conventions are observed by the village council (1) both sides of a dispute must be present and (2) there must be general consensus on the verdict; if not, the decision is postponed. The principle is to induce a spirit of compromise by repeated adjournments.\(^1\)

When there is consensus over the verdict the accused has to undergo the punishment. If he defies the verdict he is boycotted by all villagers. Mayer says "The village-wide boycott is a two-edged weapon. In so far as it is effective, it is clearly a patent weapon for strengthening the power of the leaders. But there is an obvious tendency for such a wide boycott to be eroded by ties of self-interest, as well as of ritual kinship, propinquity or friendships which existed before the boycott was imposed. When this happens, the boycott turns into a factor of division in the village". Thus if the boycotted one does not pay any contribution towards the village fund, other people refuse to do so, not because they are his supporters, but because they see in this a way to avoid spending money.\(^2\)

Whiteway commented on the working of village council as follows: "with all this apparent intricacy I have hardly met a disputed field, and not one case which was not easily and readily disposed of by the panchayat".\(^3\)

The disputes regarding boundaries of house and field drainage and inheritance are usually among kin or neighbours.

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid, p.125.
Castes were involved in disputes about assault, trespassing, extramarital relations etc. Karve and Damle reported that quarrels and especially factions were not based on caste rivalries; nor were they based on economic groups like landlord-tenant, employer-employee, money-lender-borrower and Balutedar - Non-Balutedars.¹

8. Sanctioning:

**Sanction as an element:** In every society ends, objectives and norms are prescribed. Conformity to norms by actors received rewards in various forms, while non-conformity is dealt with penalties of various types. In other words positive sanctions are rewards available to members from the system, including satisfaction, prestige, rights, privileges or immunity from authority, esteem and other social or economic returns. Negative sanctions are the penalties or the deprivation of facilities. As Durkheim observed punishment among other measures is the community's means of reinforcing its own belief in its values.

Loomis and Beegle noted that the rural family has available perhaps, greater opportunity to apply the sanction system than the urban family.²

**Positive sanctions:** Brahmins who conform to the religious rules have been elevated to high esteem by people throughout the ages. Brahmins received many privileges and the protection from the King, who was styled as the protector of the Brahmins and cows. Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha rule, was called

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¹ I. Karve and Y.B. Damle, *op. cit.* (GRIVC) p.74.
by this designation. A distinction was made in the punishment ordered to a Brahmin and to a Non-Brahmin for a breach of rules during the Maratha rule. For instance, if a Brahmin and a Mahar were prosecuted for the act of theft, a Mahar was severely punished than a Brahmin who would simply be reprimanded by the court.

The other castes follow the lead of the Brahmins in the matter of sanctions. The righteous man is known as Dharmatma (acting according to religious duty) or Sadhu, who is held in high esteem by the people. Such a man receives social and economic privileges. Man becomes Dharmatma by his virtuous acts viz. giving help to the poor and needy, contributing to the public works such as the constructing a temple, a well, a school a pond, a goshala, etc., respecting the women of others, conformity to one's caste norms, etc.

The concept of mukti (escape from the chain of rebirths) is most important in as a factor inducing conformity to the caste norms. These beliefs according to Weber, are among the most powerful sanctions known to man. The fear that nonconformity to caste norms and religious duty will lead one to torture in narka (hell), compels one to behave properly. The author of this thesis still remembers the sermon on tortures in hell given to him by his aunt, who was illiterate for his act of mischief to the animal. The traditional man is also afraid of devils, witchcraft and magic. He believes that the breach of religious rules by him will bring a disease or a great misfortune to the family.
The part sanction played in war, death and life generally in India has always made interesting reading.

The *pativrata* (a wife who shows utter devotion to her husband) is held in high esteem and is respected by all villagers. The extreme devotion to the husband was shown in the act of sati, immolating the husband's death on the funeral pyre. History records how the Rajput women committed suicide (sati) in preference of being made captive into the hands of Muslim rulers. The story is quite different with Maharashtrian women. They instead of committing suicide, fought with the enemies and embraced death in fight; the famous examples are of Laxmibai, the Queen of Jhansi, Ahilyabai Holkar the Queen of Indore and Bankabai Bhosle the Queen of Nagpur. These famous warriors among the feminine sex must be remembered as one compares the place of women in Asiatic countries. They have been rewarded by monuments in public squares in the cities of Maharashtra.

**Negative sanctions:** The phenomenon of divorce and also the remarriage of widows, though permitted by law, are not common among the higher castes. The righteous life of widows of high castes is often a source of comment. Dandekar reported that widow remarriage was practically absent at Mithabaon. The proportions of remarried among the widows of all castes were 23.7 per cent at Bori, and 20.2 per cent at Mirajgaon. The proportion of remarried to ever widowed among those widowed before the age 28 was from 60 to 75 per cent, and varied from 40 to 60 per cent in the age group 28-37 and from about 20 to 40 per cent.
in the age group of 38-47.\(^1\)

In Weber's opinion, both widow celibacy and widow suicide were social phenomena which were related to the sanctions imposed upon families unable to arrange marriages for their daughters.

The status of the married widow is inferior to that of a woman married only once in her lifetime. She is denied certain religious rites, and it may be said that rightly or wrongly she is sanctioned when her husband dies before she dies. We may summarise this section by noting that the verdict rendered by the caste council or the village council is generally obeyed by the offender for the fear of excommunication. The violator of the norms has to apologise publicly. He has to confess his fault in public and has to promise not to repeat the offense in future.

**Application of sanctions a process:**

Group pressure is used to compel the deviator to mend his ways. The person, who does not conform to the social norms, is first mildly reprimanded by family members, friends, neighbours and elder persons. When the person does not yield to these persons, the matter is dealt by the caste council. The castes have an agency of social control and punishment in caste council which is parallel to the agency of the state. Thus the caste has been called "a state within a state and a kingdom within a kingdom".\(^2\)

\(^1\) K.Dandekar *op.cit.* p.37.
\(^2\) I.Karve *op.cit.* (HSAI) p.36.
Some of the offences dealt with by the caste council are: (1) Social intercourse of its caste people with other castes, (2) extramarital relations, particularly with women of lower castes or Muslim, (3) fornication, (4) refusal to fulfill a promise of marriage, (5) keeping the daughter unmarried when she had come to age, (6) refusing to send a married daughter to her husband, (7) breach of trust, (8) defying the customs of castes regarding the feast, marriage etc., (9) killing a cow or a bullock or a cat (by clean castes), (10) changing traditional occupation, (11) inheritance rights and division of property, (12) illegitimate pregnancy, (13) inducing a married woman to elope, (14) breach of caste norms e.g. to wear shoes by Paradhis or to wear bodice by Gond and Vadar women and (15) a witchcraft.

The offender has to undergo the punishment told by the caste council depending on the nature of the offence. Various types of punishment are: bath and supply a feast to the local caste group, carrying footwear of all those present at the meeting, verbal atonement, physical atonement and payment of penalty to the caste. For deliberate killing of a cow or a bullock or a cat, one has to go on a pilgrimage and donate a miniature image of the animal to a Brahmin. In the case of a marriage with a non-caste person, the marriage is dissolved. In Nagpur district a Mahar offender has to shave off his mustach and beard; take a bath in a river and then sacrifice a goat which provides a feast for the caste group. Among the Bhils
in case of breach of trust in respect to the payment of dowry, when death occurs in the family, the dead body, must not be moved from the household until the payment is made to the creditor.¹

Among the Agris the culprit had to pay a minimum fine of Rs. 5 which was spent on liquor enjoyed by the caste-group.² If the person does not obey the orders of the caste council he is excommunicated.

Contrary to the British system, the culprit has to prove his innocence before the caste council. Among the lower caste the culprit has to prove his innocence by physical treatment. For instance, the hunter caste (phaseparadhi) woman has to prove that she had not communicated adultery. She has to pick a ring or coin from boiling oil with her naked hand. The verdict of non-guilty is given by the caste council, if her hand is not injured. Among the higher caste the culprit has to make a statement on oath. Sometimes, he is asked to pick up a flower from the deity to prove his innocence.

Sometimes, the cases of theft, murder, physical assault are also dealt by the caste council. If the decision of the caste council is not accepted by the offender. He is permitted to approach the government court. But nobody stands a witness in his favour.

In a very orthodox family the girl or the woman, who

¹ V.M.Dandekar and M.B.Jagtap op.cit.p.100.
² M.G.Banade, op.cit.
violates the sexual norms, is driven out of the house and all connection with her are severed. She is disowned by her family. She has to take refuge in a public home for such women or the government rescue home. Many such women are waylaid by pimps and brought into prostitution.

The man who violates the norms of marriage is boycotted. The author knows a case of the farmer 'X', who developed intimate relations with his brother's beautiful daughter, who being an orphan, was living in his family. The villagers came to know of this relationship, when the girl became pregnant. The man X had to leave his family and village with the girl to avoid his being shamed. He stayed in the city with the girl severing all his connections with his village kin and family. After six years the ill-feeling of his kin and the villagers had subsided. By this time he had arranged the marriage of the girl with the unknown person. He then returned to his family in his village. But he could not retain his prestige and leadership. Only with great difficulty could he arrange for the marriage of his only son with a daughter of a poor man from a remote village. To consummate this marriage he had to give the latter a sumptuous amount of money. The whole family was in this case ruined morally.

It is not possible for every villager to leave the village like farmer X just referred to. In olden days it was impossible for the boycotted man to leave the village as everyone was dependent on others for one's livelihood. In the modern
rigor of the sanctions have been reduced in this manner.

If a person disobeys the verdict of the caste council or the village council his whole family is boycotted or he has to live alone to save his joint family. Usually in former time he was not allowed to enter into the house of a fellow caste-member. He was not invited for meals, feasts and rituals. Nobody used to take meals with him, or in his household. Nobody smoked with him. The kinship relations were also severed with his family. Nobody dared to marry his family members. If death occurred in his family nobody would help him. If he was in distress, he could not seek the help of his fellow members. His family was denied the use of the public well. No craftsmen (balutedar) or labourer worked for him. The last was so serious that it required that he had to engage labourers from other villages at higher rates, and had to contact with outside craftsmen too, with much inconvenience to himself. If he had committed a serious ritual offence (e.g. killing a cow) he would be denied services by the craftsmen of other villages too, more for the sake of their own purity than from the solidarity with the boycotting village. The 'right' of the balutedar to a client thus lapsed, if he himself was not willing to exercise it.¹

If he wanted to be reinstated or could not withstand this torture, he had to approach the panchas (arbiters) with his apology. Again the assembly of the caste or the village was called. The apology of a boycotted man must be made by him to

¹ A.C. Mayer, op. cit. p. 71.
the whole village, not just to his subcaste group. He had to pay the penalty in cash to the panchas. The money was spent immediately by offering tea to the assembly. If the offence was severe, the man had to give a feast to the villagers, the elaborateness of which, of course, depended on his economic ability. Then the boycotted man was taken in the fold of the caste which vested in him all previous privileges.

A rich man with good outside connections could withstand the boycott though with much inconveniences and gossiping against him. He could enlist the services of old men or single men, who had nothing to lose through helping him. But as the time passed, the bitterness would erode and little by little he would gather people to his side and thus a new action might develop in the village. The boycotted man was able to get help from relatives in other villages and had no need to capitulate to his own village’s subcaste group.

The British Government made it possible for people to withstand the pressure of the caste, because the first reformers were employed by the government.¹ The boycotted villager could live on his farm (wadi) or could find employment in a factory or somewhere in the big city like Bombay. Thus the power of the traditional caste council was weakened during the British rule. However, the role of the caste council or village council is now played by the Nyāya panchayat, which is a statutory body in villages.

¹ I. Karve, op. cit. (KOLI) p.15.
9. Facilitating:

Facility as an element: As defined by Loomis and Beegle, facilities are means used by the system to attain its ends and objectives.¹

Worship: Loomis observed that the facilities of worship and everyday living are not so plentiful among some sects as they are for more ritualistic and more materialistic social systems. What is true about the Amish people in U.S.A. is not true in India, where the facilities of worship are so plentiful that India is often called the country of idols. According to Hindu belief God is everywhere, in man (Janta janardan) in animals (in cow’s body 330,000,000 deities are said to exist), in trees, in stones and in cosmos. In the morning, the farmer washes his mouth on a platform in front of his house. Then he folds his hands in the direction of the rising sun. His daily worship of God, thus begins. While taking a bath in a river or in his house, he pronounces several names of God. He can worship several deities in his household or can worship God in the nearby family temple or in the public temple. There is no dearth of temples, and deities without temples in any old settlement. Indian craftsmen and farmers may worship their tools and on the day of Dasara festival. They are ritually sanctified. Before a shopkeeper starts selling his merchandise he will bow his head with folded hands to the balance for his shop; the balance being sacred to him. With the sight of first sun’s rays in the morning he mutters the name of his favourite

¹ C.P.Loomis and J.A.Beegle, op.cit.p.468.
God with his folded hands. The light or fire is worshipped for it should not cause any loss to the shopkeeper. All these instances give sufficient proof that the God is everywhere for the Hindu. The case of Muslim, who believes in monotheism, is also not different so far as facilities are concerned. He can find a place anywhere for his daily worship (Namaz), if it is not possible for him to go to the mosque. Pirs are scattered all over the countryside.

Agriculture: Coming to the latter part of Loomis's statement above concerning the Amish the facilities for everyday living are not plentiful in India generally or in Maharashtra in particular. In Maharashtra 30 per cent of the land suffers a shortage in annual rainfall. In this area rainfall is often less than 10 inches and due to the uneven topography and trap rock system only 6.7 per cent of the gross sown area is irrigated. More than half of the irrigated area (56 per cent) is under well irrigation and about 20 per cent is under irrigation from Government canals. The maximum amount of land that can be irrigated by harnessing all the potential is 30 per cent and the programmes of future irrigation development will take nearly 20 to 25 years for its full realization after tens of millions of rupees are spent. Generally, the lands are not very fertile. Many of them are in hilly areas and are subjected to constant soil erosion, which gradually reduces the existing fertility. Consequently, the depth of the soil is not enough to raise good crops. Out of 4.5 crore acres under crops nearly 3.5 crore acres require basic developments.
such as bunding, levelling, terracing, drainage and kharif irrigation.

A revolution in agriculture in the form of land reforms after independence was inevitable. The feudal system in which the absentee landlord was the owner had to be changed and the rights of ownership transferred to the actual amount of land one may own tiller of the land. To achieve this in Maharashtra State many laws were enacted, viz. ceilings on the land holdings, transfer of land to the tiller, prevention of fragmentation, consolidation of fragmented holdings and abolition of different Vatans and special rights. The new pattern of ownership of the agricultural land has created a certain amount of confidence on the part of the peasant and given him incentive. An inevitable result of these land reforms has been that the new owner still has a very small holding. Thus 47 per cent of the land-holders' holdings are less than 5 acres of land. The average size of holding is 6 to 7 acres per family. About 70 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture. The economic classification of population in Maharashtra according to 1961 census shows that there were 22 per cent cultivators and 11 per cent agricultural labourers of the total population.

Maharashtra State is deficit in food grains to the extent of 22 lakh tonnes i.e. 16 lakh tonnes of cereals and 6 lakh tonnes of pulses. The deficit of rice is about 6 lakh tonnes and that of wheat is about 10 lakh tonnes. It has, therefore, to depend on the imported food grain.
During the last ten years, the food grain production increased by 24.9 per cent; while the cereals production increased by 32.4 per cent, the production of pulses has gone down by about 8 per cent. This latter decline is mainly due to the decline in area under pulses. During the last decade the population increased by 23.6 per cent. In all such areas the relation of population increase to food production is vital.

The adoption of improved farm practices including facilities as seed, fertilizer, method of cultivation, etc. is a sure way of increasing agricultural production. This activity is still lagging. A sample survey taken by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics to assess the adoption of the improved practices by the farmers showed that only 38 per cent of the farmers adopted one or more practices which would have increased production and could have effected 28 per cent of total sown area in the kharif season of 1962-63. In the rabi season of that year, 29 per cent of the farmers brought about 25 per cent of the cultivated area under these practices. The proportion of farmers using improved seeds was 29 per cent in kharif and 23 per cent in rabi season and that using fertilizers was 17 per cent and 12 per cent in two seasons, respectively. Among the kharif crops, cotton took the largest proportion of the area (75 per cent) under improved practices. Rice ranked second but the proportionate of the rice area under these improved practices was only 29 per cent. For jowar and groundnut, these percentages were estimated as 25 and 14 respectively. In the case of Bajri, the improved practices used were in a very small
proportion (i.e. 7 per cent) of its total area under cultivation. During the rabi season, the adoption of these practices covered nearly 42 per cent and 28 per cent of total sown area under the two major rabi crops, wheat and jowar respectively.

Rice is grown in 22 per cent of the irrigated area, jowar in 23 per cent, wheat in 11 per cent, sugarcane in 11 per cent and cotton in 5 per cent. The increase in area under irrigation has changed the crop pattern slightly in favour of cash crops but the absolute irrigated acreage under food grains has not decreased. With irrigation the yield of rabi jowar increased from 259 to 1092 lbs. per acre in 1964-65.

With the extension of rural electrification, electric power is being increasingly used for agricultural purposes. On an average in every 35 wells, one was equipped with an electric pump in 1963-64 as against one in 54 in 1962-63.

Family Farm: Agriculture is a way of life in India as in most peasant societies. It is not considered as the business by most of the farmers, who are often known as 'family farmers' and their land holdings as the 'family farms'. A family farm is described as one sufficiently large to provide steady employment for family members but not large enough to require a great deal of supplementary labour. In addition, the family provides its own capital and management. According to Motheral the three traditional values - agrarian, democratic and efficiency all enter into almost everyone's concept

of the family farm with different weights and emphases.\(^1\) Hamilton observed that the family farm is not only an economic organization helping to feed and clothe non-agricultural people, but it is also a social institution engaged in producing the kind of people and the kind of social values which make a society strong and secure.\(^2\)

As mentioned above, the farm family in this State has on an average 5 to 6 acres of land and the use of this base is the only means of livelihood and production for many families. The size of land holdings varies from district to district. The average size of holdings in Kolaba district is 4.34 acres and 18.29 acres in Sholapur district.

Every family desires to grow whatever is required for the family i.e. grains, pulses, vegetables, fodder for livestock, and some cash crops like cotton, sugarcane, groundnut, fruits, etc. Thus the family farm in Maharashtra is not a specialised farm. Diversification is still a dominating character of the family farm, except in Konkan where rice is only grown in \textit{kharif} and pulses in \textit{rabi} season. It has been found that larger farms concentrate more on cereal production.\(^3\)

More than half of the family farms are subsistence farms. The family must be provided with some subsidiary source of income. Even in an advanced country like West Germany about 35 per cent of the farms are unprofitable enter-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{1.} J.R. Motheral "The Family Farm and the Tree Traditions" \textit{J. Farm Econ.} 336 514-529, 1951.
  \item \textbf{2.} C.H. Hamilton in "Family Farm Policy" by Ackerman and Harris, (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947) p.110.
\end{itemize}
prises and the farmers are faced with the necessity of finding some additional source of income. The study of a random sample of 151 peasants from Vidarbha area in 1966 revealed that only 14 per cent of the peasants sold jowar and half of them both sold at harvest and purchased it before they could reap their own harvest; twenty per cent neither sold nor purchased i.e. the production of jowar was sufficient only to feed the family. The remaining 66 per cent were only purchasers i.e. their production was not sufficient to feed their families and they had to purchase jowar. Thus almost all peasants possessing less than 10 acres, were only purchasers while with the increase of size of holding the proportion of peasants, not producing enough jowar for their own needs, decreased. In 1966, only 50 per cent of the marketable jowar was sold out during three months following harvest. The rest was held up for 9 months and then sold.

The per capita Income of Maharashtra was Rs. 421 in 1962-63 as against the per capita National Income of Rs. 339 in the same year. The average gross income per rural family in Bombay-Deccan in 1950-51 was Rs.1325 and gross investment per family was Rs.131 (9.7 per cent).

2. Small farmers have to sell their agricultural produce immediately after harvest to pay the revenue dues, instalments of the debt, to meet the marriage expenses, etc.
3. Hoarding of marketable grain is done with a view to benefit by increased prices and to provide for themselves in case of a crop-failure in the next year. The grain is sold when the prospect of the next crop seems to be good.
In spite of low income of farm families, they save some money in normal times to meet the emergencies. From the analysis of family budget studies of three widely dispersed regions of the country, Panikar found that the gross cash savings of gross income per family ranged from 8 per cent upward. The rural savings are put into cash and precious metals held for future use and also for the construction of monumental buildings or such unproductive channels.

Table 12: Gross Investments of Rural Families 1950-51.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment per family</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>New construction</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other real estate improvements</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net purchase of land</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm implements</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other machinery</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullion</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares etc.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub total</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>143.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net purchase of livestock</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>76.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>219.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indebtness: Indebtness was found to be positively associated with irrigated farming and it increased with the size of the farm. The average indebtness per family was Rs.1760.78 for irrigated farms and Rs.451.51 for dry farming. The major sources of loan were the Land Development Bank (29.33%), Cooperative Credit Society (21.27%), Government tagai (1.72%), and private agencies (37.79%).

Standard of living: The standard of living of the population is the final measure of the impact of the social change and use of facilities.

A survey was conducted covering 8516 families in 30 villages (25 in Maharashtra and 5 in Mysore State) with an objective of investigating the possession of durable articles by rural families. These items may indicate the level of living.

Table 13: Percentage of Families Possessing Different Durable Articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Article</th>
<th>% families possessing particular article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramophone</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petromax</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove</td>
<td>5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupboard</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>10.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cot</td>
<td>54.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lantern</td>
<td>66.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>67.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The index of durable articles was highest in case of businessmen. This group was followed by the group of teachers and other salaried services. The indices for the cultivator (who were mainly Marathas) and semiskilled and skilled manual labourers were fairly similar and considerably lower than those noted for the former groups. The indices were still lower for the groups "small business and cultivation-cum-manual labour" while they were very low in the case of unskilled manual labourers, who were predominantly Kolis or belonging to tribal groups.1

Engel's laws tell us that "As the income of a family increased, a smaller percentage was expended for food; and as the income increased in amount, a constantly increasing percentage was expended for education, health, recreation, amusement, etc."

The data on consumer expenditure have been recently collected in the National Sample Survey. The provisional estimates show that the average value of consumption per person per month during 1963 was Rs.21.20 in rural areas and Rs.39.03 in urban areas of Maharashtra State. The distribution of population according to levels of consumption is of equal importance. Nearly 63 per cent of the population in rural areas and about 65 per cent in the urban areas of Maharashtra lived below the average national level of consumption in the respective areas. Half the rural population lived below Rs.17.94 and that in urban areas, below Rs.30.90. In other words, the per capita

value of daily consumption was less than Rs.0.60 in rural areas and Rs.1.03 in urban areas for half the population.1

The estimates of the consumer expenditure over different items show that nearly 82 per cent of the consumer expenditure in rural areas was accounted for by the basic essentials such as food, clothing, fuel and light. This percentage for the urban areas is much less and works out at about 68. The difference in this percentages can be taken to measure the difference in the level of living in two areas.2

Employment: Dandekar and Pethe conducted a survey of 2379 households selected from 34 villages of Ahmednagar, Satara, Sholapur, Poona and Bijapur districts in 1949-50 to determine employment and unemployment of the adult rural population. The data revealed that nearly half of the adult male population was engaged in farm work, about a one fourth in non-farm work and the remaining were either voluntarily or involuntarily unemployed. While employment on the farm was largely self-employment, non-farm employment was predominantly wage-employment.3 It was interesting to find that the variations in the employment pattern, as between the big and small cultivators were quite significant. For example, while

1. Ibid.
3. The Agricultural Labourers and Small Farmers find employment in off-seasons out of the village and are engaged in bridge and road construction, maintenance of rail-roads, stone-quarries and building construction work in cities. Some of them migrate to sugarcane area and find employment either in sugarcane cultivation or in sugar factories which operate for about six months in a year. They also move from village to village for harvesting wheat in Bhandara and Nagpur districts.
self-employment was characteristic of labour force coming from big and medium cultivating households, hired farm labour was prominent in the case of labour force of small cultivators and agricultural labourers. Nearly half of female labour force was engaged in household work. Some differential pattern as of adult males was observed. Weeding, harvesting and threshing were usually women’s jobs which accounted for 70 per cent of the female self-employment on the farm.

Table 14: Percentage Distribution of the Adult Male and Female Days According to Employment Categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment categories</th>
<th>Percentage of Adult Male days</th>
<th>Percentage of Adult Female days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Out of village</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Employed on farm</td>
<td>33.03</td>
<td>10.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hired farm-labour</td>
<td>14.66</td>
<td>7.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-employed in non-farm occupation</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hired non-farm labour</td>
<td>18.99</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Unemployed</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ill-health</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Disabled</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Non-seeking work</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>9.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. School</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Household work and domestic duties.</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>40.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Not given</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of days: 1,33,175 1,36,985

Source: V.M. Dandekar and V.P. Pathe, op.cit.
Another study of the employment pattern on farms in the Vidarbha area was conducted by Parthasarathy.\textsuperscript{1} He found that the hired labour exceeded family labour and female labour dominated among the hired labour. It was observed that 60 per cent of male labour and over 85 per cent of female labour employed was hired. Women are preferred for weeding and for picking cotton. Wage rate for women is lower that is \frac{1}{4} of the wage rate of men. The ratio between family and hired labour was 1:3. The reason given by him for this large proportion of hired labour was smaller proportion of family farms (25 per cent) than those in other regions.

The employment of agricultural labour depends on the cropping pattern of the village, season and the closeness of the industrial area. Since there was a considerable proportion of double cropped in the area (22.5 per cent) and under irrigation (18.50 per cent) in Kamthadi (Poona district), the village provided employment to an appreciable number of workers continuously throughout the year. Of the 166 families, 134 (80.7 per cent) families were engaged in agriculture. Of these 96 families possessed the land holding below 5 acres. These holders generally carry on different agricultural operations with the help of the family labour and to a less extent under mutual exchange. Thus 14 agricultural labour families (8.5 per cent of the total) could find employment in the 60 per cent of the total cultivated area possessed by the landholders.

each having more than five acres. It is estimated that agricultural workers were employed on an average of 230 days in the year either on their own farms, or on others' farms on exchange basis or on wages.

In village Natambi (Poona district) the rice is the main crop and there are no irrigated lands. The agricultural workers could find only seasonal employment there. In a study of employment based on monthly operation, it was found that the maximum daily employment for a man was in the month of September (harvesting season). During this month, he was engaged on an average for 6.24 hours per day. The minimum daily employment was in the month of April and he was engaged on an average for 3.88 hours per day during this month for the preparatory tillage of the land. Women work for longer hours than men in the rice growing region. Thus in this village it was found that the women worked on the farm on an average of 7.98 hours per day during September and October and 5.38 hours per day in May and June.

In order to study the extent of employment and wage rates in a village Koke (Parbhani district) the 262 working members were divided in three categories, viz. seasonal, annual and casual and their wage rates were computed. The data are presented in Table 15.
Table 15: Extent of Employment and Wage Rates in Village ROKE (1964-66).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the</th>
<th>No. of</th>
<th>Employment Passional</th>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>Casual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>members</td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>No. of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>members</td>
<td>wage</td>
<td>members</td>
<td>wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>210.81</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>274.30</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traders</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>290.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>775.11</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a comparative study of irrigated and unirrigated farms in Sholapur district Maral found that the better the irrigation facilities, the lower was the percentage of family members working on the farms and the higher was the tendency for engaging outside labourers for working on the irrigated farms. This is due to the better economic conditions, of families possessing irrigated lands.\(^1\) The labour requirement of irrigated farms is also higher than that of unirrigated farms.

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Occupational Mobility: A few traditional occupations are no longer followed by castes, e.g., oil-pressing is not practiced by Telis because the oil processed in oil mills is cheaper and more refined than that pressed traditionally in a bullock-driven Ghani. Carpentry and tailoring are not now so much as the caste occupation as formerly. Village school teachers are derived from all castes including Harijans. The main castes traditionally occupied are those connected with agriculture.

Kulkarni found that 50.37% of all the family heads in Gokak taluka followed agriculture as their occupation. The family heads that had taken up a 'new' occupation formed 26.37% per cent of the total. The Hindus i.e., Brahmans, Marathas and Vadars evinced greater independence in taking on new occupations. Occupational mobility was still higher among Muslims and Christians than Hindus. The scheduled castes appeared to be the most conservative in retaining the old occupations in this respect.

The reasons for out-migration to Bombay are given as (1) a job in Bombay gives security of employment and an income much higher than would be earned in the village, (2) the out-migrant could send a remittance home and feel useful to the family, (3) the high living standards of Bombay as well as its urban amenities has also a strong attraction for the young village aspirant, and (4) a secure job in Bombay attaches a

Utilization of facilities as a process:

As mentioned earlier, the farm family in Maharashtra has an average of from 5 to 6 acres of land. Various land reform acts have been introduced which have been designed to assist tiller of the soil. Production from the family farm and its income have some limitations. The intensive cultivation and double cropping is limited to the availability of irrigation in an area in which water is scarce. As the farm size decreased the relative area under double cropping goes on increasing. The peasant tries to put his small farm to maximum utilization with his limited resources in order to provide for the maintenance of his family, all the year round. Therefore, he follows diversified and intensive farming.

The position of the farmer in most areas of Maharashtra who has to follow dry farming, is not satisfactory as he has to depend on the vagaries of the nature. The maximum that he can get from such a small and mainly dry crop holding is not sufficient to maintain his family even after he is given maximum incentive price for his produce. Thus he is always hard up and short of money to maintain his family and consequently he is driven to spend a certain amount of his productive capital on providing the urgent necessities of his family. Even a Government loan may be spent on meeting the emergencies and not for agricultural production. For want of capital for the next year, his production will suffer and the self-sufficiency
attained for the time being at harvest will turn into defici-
ency very soon thereafter. As he becomes a defaulter in
repayment of a loan, he is not able to get a loan again. This
forms a vicious circle. To break this vicious circle it is
necessary to improve the overall economic condition of the
farm family. In order to achieve this, the farm family’s agri-
cultural income will have to be supplemented by other means.
The Government desires that the farm family should get 40 per
cent income from crops and the remaining 60 per cent from Agro-
industries, subsidiary occupations like animal husbandry, dair-
ing, poultry, sheep breeding, piggery and inland fishing.

The steps are being taken by the Government to chalk out
a farm production plan for every farm family. The programming
of individual farms is most important. With proper planning
there would be an increase in food production and cash crops as
well. According to Desai more area should be allocated in
Ahmednagar district, to a few profitable crops like jowar, sug-
jowar, bajri, bajri gram and cotton under dry land conditions
and to jowar, lucerne and sugarcane in irrigated lands. In
Nasik, more area would be allocated to peanuts under dry land
conditions and to lucerne under irrigation. Desai further
noted that in the Ahmednagar sample food production could be
increased from 695 mds. to 967 mds. The optimum plans would
produce double the quantity of sugarcane (gur) which is the
main crop in the district. In Nasik district, the optimum plans
would have increased the present peanut production by 2½ times

(Bombay: Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, 1964).
and lucerne by eight times without substantially decreasing food-grain production. He further claims that not only there exists substantial potentiality of increasing farm income but also there exists substantial potentiality of increasing production of food and cash crops even with the existing resource shortage of supplies and technical knowledge of the farmers.

Efforts are being made by the Extension Service to motivate the farmers to adopt new farm practices, which have been proven increased returns. With the constant effort of the Agriculture Department's Extension Service most of the farmers now believe in utility of modern fertilizers. However, several reasons prevent them from using these fertilizers. The lack of credit is the most significant cause. High prices and lack of adequate irrigation facilities is the cause next in importance. Preference for organic manures and inadequate facilities and instructions in use chemical fertilizers, are also mentioned in this connection. In addition, lack of availability of fertilizers in adequate quantities should be added as a cause for not using fertilizers in case of Maharashtra. The results of a survey conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organization showed that the benefits of the Cooperative Credit Societies go mostly to the larger cultivators in the villages, who also play the dominant part in the panchayats.

The differential acceptance of recommended farm practices have been regarded as a function of status role and motivation. In the study of 339 farmers of Vidarbha area of Maharashtra State, Bahudkar found that farmers' education, economic status, farm size, caste hierarchy, social participation, subsidiary occupation, status-roles and positive attitude toward Extension Service were highly associated with the adoption of recommended farm practices; while age was negatively associated and the size of family was not associated. The contacts for information about new farm practices were also studied. It was found that the institutionalised contacts at the village level i.e. the Village Level Worker, and Agricultural Assistant were sought by the majority of the farmers. The institutionalised contacts at the Block Level and mass media were more preferred by the farmers who were younger, upper caste, comparatively rich, had higher formal education, had a favourable attitude toward Extension Service, participated in community activities and operated larger farms. The farmers who were older, lower caste and illiterate depended more on other farmers for information on farm matters than other contacts.\textsuperscript{1} These results have been confirmed by other studies in different areas including those of Rahudkar.\textsuperscript{2}
