CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
The title of the dissertation is "Caste and kinship in a multi-caste village of Eastern Orissa - a caste-wise differential study of intra-family interaction in daily routine". The dissertation is based on field investigation in Bantalla, a village in the Cuttack district, Orissa State, India.

This is essentially a study of caste differences. Study of intra-family kin behaviour in the daily routine is the method employed here for eliciting inter-caste and intra-caste differences and similarities. The analysis offered in the study is oriented towards arriving at inductive conclusions on the nature of caste differences and similarities within this specific framework.

It has been the aim of this study to narrow down progressively the scope of the field of investigation so as to focus the analysis on a specific point. This has been done with the intention of offering a depth analysis within a narrow compass. During the course of prolonged field investigation a mass of interesting data were collected, some of which would have thrown a new light on aspects of caste, other than that chosen for the dissertation and much of these would have been relevant for the study of kinship proper. I have resisted the temptation of taking into consideration these discursive material which were not directly relevant for the chosen topic. Those which were considered to be appropriate as referent material have been briefly presented in the relevant section. They are meant only to provide a background to the data presented in the text of the dissertation.
It is a subject of current discussion that Indian sociology is as yet immature, which is brought to focus by comparing it with African sociology. In such a comparison sociology is not referred to as a science of universal application but as a technique developed in response to the methodological requirements of understanding society in a specific region. The immaturity of Indian sociology is held to be due to the preoccupation of Indian Social Anthropologists with "tribal" studies. The representative opinion in this respect may be quoted in the following words of Dumont and Pockok:

Reviewing "Village Studies" in India they observe "Social Anthropology has grown up in Africa and this to such an extent, that its African Orientation has become almost implicit, an unconscious figure of its existence. Despite the much longer period of Anglo-Indian contact, the sociology of India has only properly begun in the last ten years. It might be assumed a priori that such a new branch of sociology would run the risk of being overshadowed by the conclusions of more advanced branches and fail to define its distinctive approaches, a stage necessarily prior to a discussion of general similarities.

* * * Above all the Indian sociologist has to become conscious of the suppositions which he takes over from more advanced studies and progress by adapting them to his particular field". (Dumont & Pockok ed, 1957, 24-25)

In such a state of affairs the basic aim of any sociological study should be, what Nadell calls, "to map out
This aim can be achieved by locating sociologically relevant data in an accepted scheme of classification. Speaking in other words, as far as India is concerned, a sociological inquiry should specify the region where it belongs and the specific characteristics of which determine the empirical validity of the conclusions drawn. This problem was discussed at length in the Summer School of Anthropology, organised by the Anthropological Survey of India at Kodaikanal (Madras State), in 1962, which I had the privilege to attend. These discussions were held with reference to the study of caste in India and the barrenness of some of the findings, which had no reference to regional uniqueness, were put under severe fire. These discussions prompted me to undertake a study which would be representative of a distinct region.

For the delimitation of a region the criteria will have to be mainly cultural. Language is a fairly reliable cultural factor for such delimitation. This coupled with history and geographical characteristics would further qualify the selected area to attain the status of a region. It should be noted that these criteria are far from being sociological—rather considered from the angle of sociological mapping out of Indian society they should be treated as having a priori value and the possibility of a sociological classification rendering the cultural frontiers as obsolete, may not be ruled out. A proper idea of a region for sociological study may be given in the words of Srinivas, who observes, "It is popularly imagined that a region is a fixed and definite area which has been there for a long-time. This idea is reinforced by the analysis of culture areas made on the basis of
single criterion or of a group of allied criteria. Such efforts conceal, however, the truth that the idea of a region is contextual and dynamic" (Srinivas, 1962, 92)

As hinted above, the ultimate objective of region-oriented studies is to synthesise the findings for the delineation of Indian social structure. This objective, as far as final results are concerned, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is however, within its scope to strengthen the analytical foundation of this synthesis by throwing the region in to as sharp a relief as possible. To achieve this objective the required historical and geographical data have been given as background material in this dissertation. Other data drawn from sources like census reports and district gazettes have also been given where they are considered relevant. The status of Crissa as a distinct region is based on these data. In order to be more specific the intra-regional characteristics have also been taken into consideration. Hence the emphasis on "Eastern Crissa" and on Cuttack district within Eastern Crissa.

As mentioned earlier this is essentially a study of caste, and kinship has been employed as a tool for such study. The specific mode of employment of kinship as a tool for the study of caste as adopted here and its effectiveness for the problem studies needs some explanation in view of the fact that kinship is an area as vast as it is varied and it is not possible to tackle it in all its aspects where the primary emphasis is on caste and not on kinship.
Usually the study of kinship lays emphasis on the normative pattern wherein the rules and norms are of utmost importance than their actual observance. The kinship system is considered to exist independently of the individual kinsman and the aggregate of such individuals constituting the group; much in the similar manner as a language as such, is studied quite apart from the individual speakers of that language or groups of such speakers. This position has been aptly described by Murdock in the following words:

"A kinship system differs in one important respect from the type of social organization previously considered. In the various form of the family, sib, clan and community, interpersonal relationships are structured in such a manner as to aggregate individuals into social groups. A kinship system, however, is not a social group, nor does it ever correspond to an organized aggregation of individuals. It is merely, as the name implies, a structured system of relationships, in which individuals are bound one to another by complex inter-locking and ramifying ties. Particular kinship bonds, isolated from others, may and often do serve to unite individuals into social groups, such as a nuclear family or lineage, but kinship systems as wholes are not and donot produce social aggregates" (Murdock, 1949, 91-92).

When emphasis is shifted from kinship system to the kin-group, the group characteristics and individual variation within the group becomes the focal point.
For eliciting differentiated characteristics of castes in reciprocal intra-family kin behaviour, which is the subject matter of the present dissertation, kinship has been adopted as an organisational component of the groups studied, in contradistinction to its rendering as a normative pattern. The choice can be justified on pragmatic grounds, conceding to the field-worker the right to choose one among a many methods, provided the method so chosen is appropriate for studying the problem he investigates. But the choice of the method here is not a random one, made only for procedural convenience. Its aim is to tackle one of the neglected areas of caste. The supreme importance of kinship for the understanding of caste, has been put forth in some recent studies. Karve aptly says "Ordinarily one has no relative out of one's caste group, and one's relatives are all within the caste. A part of the caste is a person's actual extended kin and the rest is his possible kin. In such circumstances, caste stands for many values realized in a family and caste loyalties are comparable to family loyalties" (1956, p. 55). Offering a very technical analysis of kinship Dumont also holds a similar view, somewhat more emphatically when he says "South Indian kinship cannot be served from the caste-system" (1957a, p 7) and this holds true for the whole of India."

The choice of "daily routine" as a further limiting factor may be explained next. A review of the recent caste studies, shows that their main concern is with the ritual, ceremonial and ideational aspects of caste. A few of them may be referred to here. Works of general nature which deliberate on the
caste system as a whole, such as Hutton's "Caste in India" (1951) do not concern us here as our immediate reference here is to the rendering of specific material.

Beldelman, in his "A comparative analysis of the Jajmani system" compares the Jajmani systems in different areas, and analyses the jajmani system as it is inter-related with caste (1959). Damle in his "Caste in India" advocates that caste system must be analysed in the light of the theories of rebirth and Karma as found in Hindu Philosophy (Damle, 1956). Gough in "Criteria of caste ranking in South India" describes that castes in Kerala and Tanjore, derive their ritual status, from the services they perform to others and from the degree of onerousness to the servitor (1959). Stevenson in his, "Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System" discusses the bases of status evaluation in Hindu society with reference to caste. He maintains that the secular and ritual basis of caste should be differentiated and that ritual status is very deeply concerned with the idea of pollution. He also emphasises the role of belief and behaviours in determination of status (Stevenson, 54) In "The Dominant caste in Central India" Mayer discusses the dominance of single castes as against the interdependence of the castes (Mayer, 58). Pockok in his "Inclusion and exclusion" (1957) describes how castes in Central Gujarat try to arrogate to themselves a higher status by imitating the caste above it. Oscar lewis holds that the Jajmani system is based on the inequities of the caste system involving both ritual and secular status, in his "Caste and Jajmani system in a North Indian Village". (Levis & Barnown, 1959). Majumdar in his "Caste and communication in an Indian Village" (1958)
describes the interaction of various castes with the Thakur caste on the occasion of functions like marriage, mundan, birth and death among the latter. Meyer, in his "Caste and Kinship in Central India" (1960) describes the role of caste and sub-caste in the field of kinship and evaluates the social changes consequent upon political changes.

All these are valuable studies and they also provide a guideline for the present dissertation. It may however be observed here that they lay emphasis, as indicated earlier on the ceremonial, on ritual and ideational aspects of caste. Behaviour of the incumbents has been considered under highly formalised situations such as marriage, initiation ceremonies, birth, and mortuary rites, ceremonial exchange of gifts and the like. Here individual and group characteristics are not only relegated to the background, they are also subsumed in the observance of the form. My intention in the present dissertation, is to analyse the behaviour of incumbents in situations which are comparatively least formalised and thus provide wide scope for individual variation. This would facilitate the study of the juxtaposition of caste-ascribed and caste-free behaviour.

This would explain why "daily routine" has been focussed upon. It should not give the wrong impression that the individual is an absolutely free agent of the society going thorough the daily routine in an arbitrary manner. It would be seen from the relevant chapters that the institutionalisation of certain items of daily routine is quite rigid for certain groups of people. Here also there is no escape from formalisation, the
difference being only of degree. The specific items of daily routine, chosen for study and the reasons for choosing them have been given in the text.

As already indicated, the area of kinship is vast and justice cannot be done to all aspects of it within a single study. In view of this the study has been confined within the fold of the family - which in the chosen village means nuclear family. Family is the unit of most intensive kin interaction. In the words of Murdock "The point of departure for the analysis of kinship is the nuclear family. * * * Intra-family relationships are not only the first to be learned in infancy and childhood, they continue to be an individual's most intimate relationships in adulthood. The child now grown up and married, tends to recreate with his own children and spouse the behaviour which his parents exhibited towards him, his siblings, and one another. Family relationships are of necessity highly functional, since they are universally in many of life's most important activities - economic co-operation, household routines, sex, reproduction, child care, and education. It is scarcely surprising therefore that they set the standard for all other kin relationships - standards to which the latter must conform or from which they must be differentiated (Murdock, 1949, 92-93)

The artificial division between family relationship and kin relationship, as maintained by Evans Pritchard, has not been accepted in this dissertation. Evans Pritchard based his proposition on the fact that certain people, for example, make differentiation between family members and kinsmen(1951). This cannot form the basis of a theoretical differentiation between family
members, resulting in the total exclusion of the latter from kin organisation. The nuer not only differentiate between family members and other kinds, they also make a distinction between different categories of kin, outside the family, which would justify the exclusion of some of these categories from the fold of kinship if Evanspritchard's argument is carried through. There is no doubt family needs to be treated on a different footing than other associations by virtue of the intensity of interaction between its members - all the more reason why it should be included within the fold of kinship.

In dealing with the primary problem of caste and the secondary problem of kinship and in the effort towards regional specification, the over-all method adopted for the study, is partly that of descriptive ethnography and partly that of structural analysis.

"The difference is usually said to be that ethnography is purely descriptive while social anthropology is analytic and concerned with problems. But this is not quite so; ethnography cannot be purely descriptive since, as has been often observed, there can be no statement which is not the answer to some question, and no "plain facts" which donot presuppose some body of theory. xx xx The ethnographer's concern are no more than a means of conveying to his reader a picture of the society in which he is interested and its culture. For the social anthropologist the priorities are reversed; he is interested in that particular society only in so far as it helps him to understand a problem of general reference. xx xx. The social anthropologist wants to understand
how a society or a segment within a society" (Baily in Madan & Saran ed 1962).

The above quotation would suffice to explain the employment of descriptive ethnography to achieve the objective of regional specification as stated earlier in this chapter but the employment of the method of structural analysis has some specific implications for this study which require further clarification. The points to be examined in this respect are firstly the status of village as a sociological unit, secondly caste as an area of sociological study and thirdly the nature of sociological analysis of kinship as it applies to non-tribal societies.

A study of caste can achieve regional precision only by the employment of the ethnographic method at the first level. In the words of Dumont: "One would think that, for a general picture to be attempted, a number of intensive studies should firstly be written and apart from tribal monographs, we have very few of them indeed. * * * The only short-cut is sound method. The monographic study remains the only source of valuable data as well as of valuable abstractions. Certainly comparison is also necessary but any attempt at comparison which is not combined with through monographic work is doomed to failure" (Dumont & Pockok 1957, 43-64).

The ethnographic method has been adopted to give a description of castes in a larger frame work and a more detailed description of their intra-family behaviour within the village. The ethnographic data for the first purpose are based on literary sources like census reports and district gazetteers whereas the intra-family behaviour among the different castes is based on
field observation.

In considering the status of "Village" as a sociological unit we are confronted with two sets of seemingly contradictory opinions. One group would assert that village in India is a distinctive sociological unit whose structural characteristics are clearly defined. The other group denies the existence of Indian village as a sociological phenomenon and considers it almost as a non-entity in a net work of caste and kin relationships over an wider area. Some of the representative opinions reflecting these viewpoints may be discussed here.

In reviewing village studies in India Dumont & Pockok have raised the question "... is the village indeed the social fact which it has so long been assumed to be?". They point out that there are basic methodological difficulties for accepting the sociological status of Indian village as compared with the African primitive tribes because, "One of the axioms was the insistence that the field worker approach his area united by questions of historical or cultural nature and that he be concerned with social wholes in themselves, to describe and analyse their contemporary functioning. But the Indian sociologist dare not isolate the area of his enquiry from neighbouring areas or from history", and that "... the problems which India poses are pre-eminently those which the subject as a whole will have to face sooner or later". They further say that when village is referred to by the people (villagers), "... the referent is not the whole village but merely the local caste group of the villagers". For example, "He may say that his Daughter is married to such and such
village because the people of that village are "good people". He does not include in his judgement the large number of people from other castes. The social referent is a group of other caste fellows considered more particularly as affines and with regard to their standing within the caste. In this example the village as an architectural and demographic fact is secondary to the social facts of kinship. (Dumont and Pockok, 1957, 23-32)

This is an extreme position taken by Dumont and Pockok which is not borne out by the research of those who have made intensive field studies of Indian villages. It is true that Indian village is not a social or cultural isolate in the sense a primitive was supposed to be. Our isolation of the village is heuristic and its aim is not to tear it away from the complexity of a wider network of relationships. It has of course to be accepted that, while the influence of extraneous factors on village society is obvious, the existence of such a society cannot be denied. As Bailey puts it "I have traced the study of Indian society by social anthropologists through three stages: first the study of isolable wholes, such as the village or the tribe, and these are equilibrium studies, secondly the study of change in these societies, following on the intrusion of factors from the complex society outside; thirdly on the complex society itself. I think that this is the way our discipline would evolve, but this does not mean that these are three stages, each one being completed or outdated when the next comes into existence. All three can go on together". (Bailey in Saran and Madan ed., 1962). The point is further stressed by Srinivas when he asserts "... the importance of the intensive study of
villages which are at present being made in different parts of India. To the anthropologist the villages are invaluable observation centres where he can study in detail social processes and problems to be found occurring in many parts of India, if not in a great part of the world" (Srinivas, 1962, 134). These views are borne out by the majority of recent sociological studies of Indian villages based on intensive research. Mention may be made of some studies which have "Caste" within the frame work of "Village" as their theme. Gough in "Caste in a Tanjore Village" gives an comprehensive account of political, economic, social and religious aspects of caste (1960). Dube in his "Indian Village" (1955) discusses the social, economic and ritual structure in a Telengana village and describes the changes in various spheres. Meyer in his "Caste & kinship in Central India" (1960) shows how castes form distinct groups within the village and that intra-caste boundaries transcend the boundaries of a single village whereas inter-caste boundaries are confined to it. There are a large number of studies which are of equal importance to those mentioned here. It is not necessary to duplicate instances from them to prove the point.

I have accepted the viewpoint that village is a structural unity. Indian village does not have the structural status of an African tribe like the Bantu or Ashanti because like them it is not self-contained. Considered as a sub-stratum of Indian society the Indian village has structural components and the same components are integrated differently to constitute other concurrent structures - such as "Family" which is an Unit within the village or "caste" which has a larger boundary than the village and thus marks it
out as different from the self-contained structure of an isolated primitive tribe. The acceptance of the structural unity of the village for the purpose of this study is however hypothetical, pending the study of sufficiently large number of villages inside and outside the region - for accurate generalisation.

The above viewpoint has also been subjected to field study in Bantalla and it has been observed that caste behaviour is strongly influenced by the structural characteristics of the village and still they are not free from other influences. It has also been observed that this influence acts with different degrees of intensity for different castes.

The structural concept of kinship has been chiefly developed on the basis of social anthropological studies among the primitive tribes, which have been designated as "kinship articulated" societies. As Fortes observes, "Kinship is one of the irreducible principles on which organised social life depends". It "is unique in that it is the master principle of organization both for particular activities and for social structure as a whole". (1949 a, 340). The concept of kinship as the "master principle of organization" is not tenable for non-tribal industrialised societies, where the Indian village belongs.

The difference in the words of Robin Fox are "Ours is not a kinship articulated society. The basic groups in our society are not extended kinship groups. What is more there are no rules of membership which apply universally to every one." (Julius Gould ed; 1965, 140). He further observes that the type of a kinship group "will be determined by ego's position in the life cycle." and
that a man's cognatic lineage, "will not survive his death, as it only functions as a group to celebrate points in his life cycle". (Ibid, 142) Thus the structural method as applied to the Indian village, should envisage kinship partly as an irreducible principle and partly as a dependent variable. The minimum basic characteristies of kinship in Indian village, are not explainable in terms of other aspects of social structure, such as occupation and values. As a dependent variable it is deeply integrated with other aspects and is sensitive to changes in these aspects.

In view of the foregoing discussion the research design of the dissertation may be summed up as follows:

The village of Bantalla has been taken as a structural unit having the characteristies of a part structure. Each caste in the village has been studied as a group. Intra-family interaction in daily routine has been studied with a view to understanding group characteristic of each caste. A further objective of the study is to assess the intra-group and inter-group (intra-caste and inter-caste) differences. The characteristic of the region where the village is located have been given in the background for regional specification.

It will be appropriate to discuss about the methods and procedure after presentation of the background data in the foregoing chapters.