CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
An attempt is made in this Chapter to evaluate the changes that have taken place in the Patnul community and their connection with the existing social system. The Researcher has already examined some of these changes in detail in the previous Chapters. The family structure of the community, their occupations and occupational mobility that have taken place, and their position in the society have been examined in detail. Conspicuously a consistent pattern has emerged. The Patnul community seems to have lost its prominence and is not any more in the forefront.

Patnul Salis are one of the castes listed as Backward Castes in the State of Andhra Pradesh. These people originally hail from Gujarat and Sourashtra. After a series of migrations from there due to invasions they ultimately migrated to South India. Some of the families settled in the Southern region of Andhra Pradesh, and some of them migrated further South and settled in and around Madurai, now in Tamil Nadu. The actual reasons for this migration
are not known to the present generation. But, whatever the little known is hearsay and conjecture. Patnuls are Hindus by religion and observe a number of festivals and ceremonies that are part of Hindu religion. However, they have a few festivals and ceremonies of their own, different from those of the other castes. Though the people are in an urban setting, not much change is discernable in their religious behavioural pattern. The changing times and the general behavioural change that is taking place in the present society seem to have left not much impression on these people.

The purpose of the study as already specified is to examine the socio-economic conditions of patnuls and evaluate the changes that have taken place in their life. Besides, an attempt was also made to study their religiosity and rituals as practised and observed by them. The study is mainly confined to Tirupati Town in Chittoor district in the State of Andhra Pradesh for obvious reasons like the town has the large population of patnuls and the proximity of urban centre endowed with many facilities. There are altogether 250 families in the town. And all the families were taken for the study. No particular technique was
employed in selecting the sample since the population of Patnuls in the study area is very limited. Necessary data was collected through the employment of two important tools like Interview Schedule and participant Observation. In addition, the elders of the caste, the ward councillors, ritual heads, the educated young and the middle aged were consulted and interviewed for authenticity of the data. The data were later processed, tabulated and studied in detail. The final analysis of the data has revealed the following interesting changes in the life of Patnuls in the study area.

The Patnuls consider themselves as belonging to a single homogeneous group. As regards their social life, the following points of changes were noticed. The most acceptable form of family is nuclear. Out of 250 respondent families, 86 per cent are nuclear and 12 per cent joint families. The data indicates, the joint family however is retained by some patnuls for various personal and social reasons.

The family among the patnuls is patri-lineal descent with patri-local residents and patri-protestate authority.
The property inheritance is also traced through the male descent only. In other words, the father is the key figure to his son, the husband to his wife. Very little deviation or change is seen in this aspect. Interestingly, it may be noted that patnuls are nuclear on the structural level, but at the functional level they are united and one single community. The functional unity and the community identity are maintained. The social bond is very strong here. However, neolocal residence represents a structural change in their social evolution.

In general, Patnuls remain family centric for various reasons of which the expressive, moral and instrumental remain important. Conformity to one's family expectations is accomplished by general consensus. Personal gratification is the real motivation that induces individuals.

Socialization is the principal means by which an individual's motivation for an enduring commitment to family culture is achieved. Socialization involves not just the meeting of the basic needs of children but it essentially involves an inculcation of the structure of one's social environment including caste ethos. Patnuls maintain caste-
conscious, self-interest and self-respect. The relationships between the children and the parents are maintained in cordiality and filial affection and love. Rituals, feasts, fasts, festivals, notions of purity and impurity and dietary practices are distinctly maintained tending to establish their caste identity. The interaction not only with their own kith and kin but with other caste people is mutually gratifying. They have enduring solidarity ties. Patnuls are homogeneous in terms of caste. As a result, they are well integrated into homogenized social group. They closely adhere to their caste and family values.

With regard to their marriage, Patnuls are endogamous. No exogamous marriage is permitted bride and bridegroom are selected strictly from within the community. Marriages with other communities are strictly forbidden. Norms related to endogamy and kin marriages are carefully observed by the respondents. The aims of marriage such as maintaining religious duty, progeny and conjugal love are retained and observed. The most prevalent type of marriage among patnuls is marriage by arrangement. An overwhelming majority of 96 per cent of the respondents married as arranged by their
parents. Inter-caste marriages are not encouraged. However, love marriages do take place within their own caste.

Marriage still remains a parental duty. Parents continue to play important roles in mate selection. Both boys and girls generally abide by their parents' decision. On the whole, marriage is seen by patnuls as a means of continuing the family line. This is best accomplished if one marries one's own relative with whom there is greater familiarity and understandings before marriage.

Other points of interesting that may be noted are that pre-puberty marriage for girls is strictly prohibited. Only those girls who have attained puberty are married. No special emphasis is made on their education and employment at the time of marriage. Child marriage is strictly prohibited. No widow remarriage is encouraged, although widows are noticed during the study.

Patnuls are strictly monogamous. Possessing a second wife is not permitted unless is sanctioned by the community on the reasonable and justifiable grounds such as wife becoming sterile and mentally retarded. Dowry is widely
accepted. However, a negligible percentage of respondents, that is 8 per cent, expressed negative attitude towards taking or paying dowry when interviewed. As far as the marriage process is concerned, all the rituals associated are followed and observed. There is no deviation from observing various rituals, although three days, conducting marriage is simplified from the point of view of ones economic status.

Education plays the leading part in social development and mobility. The literacy level of patnuls shows that they have poor educational standards when compared to other communities in the area. It is very distressing to note that as many as 36 per cent of the respondents (that is, heads of the respective families) are illiterates. 61.20 per cent of them have school education. Among the members of the respondents' families, 46.7 per cent are found illiterates. 46.4 per cent have studied from first to tenth standards. Similarly, the education level among patnul children is found to be not very high. Not may have received college education. There are many dropouts for economic reasons. Among a total number of 386 children, 84.70 per cent have received school education, from first to
tenth standards. The literacy level among females is equally distressing to note. Among the total respondents' wives, 82 per cent are illiterates and only 18 per cent literates. Similarly if we take the literacy standards of all the female members present in the families, of the total 680 female members, 68 per cent are illiterates and the remaining 32 per cent literates. On the whole, it presents a sad picture. As compared to the standards of other communities in the area, patnuls have poor educational qualifications. This has prevented them from moving upward.

Previously patnuls did not pay any attention to education. Almost all the children are helping their parents in one way or other. Mainly economic conditions are responsible for this. Many children are engaged in some occupation or other. Others who are too young, or where necessary look after household chores while elders are engaged in work. So they never found it necessary or otherwise to send their children to schools. But, now-a-days, in consistent with the changing times, they are sending their children to schools, colleges. Even girls, who were previously forbidden, are now allowed to join schools. As a result, there is a marked change, at least in
the present generation, in their outlook on many aspects of life. Formerly they kept aloof from others. Now they are slowly but steadily joining others in the mainstream of social life. They are seeking other avenues of livelihood. Their traditional occupation of silk weaving is no more lucrative, or does not offer much scope. By and large, excepting a few families, the patnul community is poor. Struggle for existence forced them to shed some of their inhibitions and dogmas.

The family forms the nucleus of the patnul community. The patnuls in Tirupati do not hold any land property. 70 (28 per cent) of them have own houses of some type or other. They depend on silk thread preparation and other occupations for their livelihood. Silk thread weaving is their traditional occupation. But it is no longer their main vocation and only a minority of the community is engaged in this, the rest have chosen various occupations by necessity. This indicates occupational mobility. But, the mobility seems to have been not very high. It is very limited in the sense that patnuls do not hold any higher positions in the society. This is mainly attributed to their lack of having higher education. As it is known truth
that both education and occupation are inter-linked. Where there is more education, there is more upward mobility. But, it is not the case with the patnuls who lack higher education though they are placed in the urban centre. Their low educational standards are ascribed to their poor economic conditions. So, it is seen and understood from the study that patnuls though have deviated from their main traditional occupation weaving, they have not climbed up the social ladder in order to be well with the other communities in the town.

As regards their economic life, however, we find considerable amount of occupational mobility. They have virtually given up their traditional occupation of silk weaving. Only a few well-to-do families continue this occupation. These few families are the privileged in the community, they are honoured and respected by the community, since they provide employment to majority of women and children of the community. The Tirupati Tirumala religious complex has an important bearing on the occupational mobility. Some members of the community are engaged in the preparation of kasi threads. These kasi threads have a good market with the pilgrims. Some people act as tourist guides
to the pilgrims visiting these places. Some others who are academically qualified are employed in the government and quasi-government services. Some run small business like vegetable vendors, tea stalls, etc. Some who are not well educated work as clerks in shops and various other establishments.

One noteworthy and interesting point to be noted is that not many patnuls are indebted. The data shows that only 61 families (24.4 per cent) are indebted. The rest are free from debts. They try to adjust their family budget within the resources available. This shows that they are very economical.

As regards savings, majority of patnuls, that is 78 per cent of the respondents do not have at all as their income resources are meagre and insufficient. Only 22 per cent save money. And of the 55 families, 72.73 per cent save money in commercial banks and 9.05 per cent in post offices. Only 18.18 per cent keep money with their relatives. The role of money lenders is very insignificant, although a few families borrow money from them. Further, it may be worth noting that the average annual savings of these 55 families
range from Rs.1,000 to Rs.10,000. The study shows that 32 families (58.18 per cent) save money between Rs.1,000 and Rs.4,000. Only 10 families (18.18 per cent) have savings between Rs.6,000 and Rs.10,000. This points out that their savings are meagre and not very high.

As already seen, a few Patnul families are in debts. Hence, they are compelled to borrow money from various sources. The data indicates that 53.2 per cent borrow money form business people and only 8.4 per cent from commercial banks. Borrowings from relatives and friends are not very high. The role of money lenders in lending money is negligible. Patnuls do not solely depend on these people, since the town has all financial lending facilities.

Similarly, notable changes have taken place in matters of religious functions also. Once a Brahmin priest was considered a must for any ceremony or ritual. But, now-a-days, excepting a few ceremonies like marriage, namakaranam, etc., the rest of the rituals and ceremonies of the community are being conducted by the members of the community themselves.
The ceremonies marking the life cycle among the patnul community mark the important events in the life of an individual, phases of separation, transition and reintegration are clearly discernable in all the rituals of the patnuls. Pregnant women are separated by sexual taboos, restrictions of work and idea of pollution. Reintegration takes place after the birth of the child, and purification ceremonies. The ceremonies of Namakaranam and tonsuring have functional importance to indicate that the sacred forces are responsible for the well being of the individual. The rites marking puberty and adolescence of girls also indicate the significance of elements. A girl on maturity (first menstruation) is separated literally, by restricting her to an enclosure. Transition consists of a period of seclusion during which she is instructed in various activities. The girl is taught how to speak, walk or eat. The reintegration is marked by a purificatory bath. Similarly the rites of marriage include the aspect of separation of the bridal pair by means of decoration, dress and various other items. Betrothal and tying the sacred pusti indicate transition. Reintegration is accompanied by nuptials. As regards rites concerning death, the close relatives of the dead are separated by specific habits in
mouring and pollution and at the end of which they are once again reintegrated in the society.

All rites of passage among the patnuls are symbolic of three elements. They announce an imminent change of individuals, prepare the individuals for their new identities, roles and status. Further, they express the individual's identity before the members of the community.

The Patnuls observe several religious festivals. Some of them like Srimananavami, Dasara, Deepavali and Vinayakachaviti have an all India Character. These are symbolic of great tradition of India. However, some other festivals like Ugadi, Nagulachaviti, Varalakshmi Vratam and Sankranti have regional Character. They also worship a few local deities like Gangamma, etc. They also observe local festival like Anantha Padmanabha Vratam. They have a special communal festival, Renukarameswari festival which is associated with their community only. By and large and at practical level, we find it very difficult to demarcate the great and the little traditions, because there is a lot of overlapping between them. If we choose to follow the two-fold concept of little and great traditions, we can
include all the intermediary festivals. But, by observing the Patnuls, we may say a three-fold division of traditions, into classical, corresponding to the great traditional, seems to be more logical. In addition to all these festivals, we find that Patnuls worship a number of Gods like Siva, Vishnu, Saraswathi, Lakshmi, Venkateswara, etc. Most of them are conversant with important sacred texts and Hindu Epics like Ramayana etc. Thus we may conclude that the religion of Patnuls is more articulated with that of the great tradition of India.

Finally, before coming to a conclusion we have to take into consideration the following, which bear some significance on the life style and other aspects of Patnul Salis.

Comparative study of Patnuls with other weaving communities in the area is not reasonable for the following reasons. They are not natives of this area. They originally hail from Gujarat and Sourashtra. They have migrated from there to these parts. Of course, this happened long time ago, but still they stick to their original customs and traditions which are vastly different. Further, they consider the art of silk weaving, which is a specialised
art, is far more superior to the ordinary cloth weaving. For a long time they considered themselves as Brahmins of Sourashtra. Though they are no longer in Sourashtra, this concept of superiority still lingers in their minds and deeds.

Those that settled at Madurai continued their traditional occupation of silk weaving and prospered. They became rich and occupy a leading position in society whereas the local weaving community is neither so prosperous nor so innovative.

The families that settled in Andhra Pradesh are not so lucky. They lead a mediocre life, yet the pride is still there. Even today they look down upon other local weaving communities and do not much socialise with them. They consider themselves a separate and superior sect.

The social, economic and religious life of the Patnuls can be summarised as follows.

In spite of their living in an urban setting, there are no major changes worth mentioning in their religious life.
We find some interesting and noticeable occupational mobility in their economic sphere.

Though times have changed, we can say no notable changes have taken place in their social conditions, such as family structure, participation in social events and other similar activities. They still remain a closely-knit community.

As far as political front is concerned, though the community is in a minority, they do have their representatives in local bodies. There seems to be no change in their communal set up, which remains as it was, but a certain amount of relaxation is seen, in the rules and regulations governing the community, they are less stringent now.

One thing stands out, the Patnul community is a closely-knit unit, with lots of grit and determination, fighting for survival against adverse conditions, but still retaining their identity. Though, still recent times they can be said to be almost obstinate in certain things, ultimately realising their folly they fall in line with
others. This is an indication of their adaptability conditions and environment.

After all is said and done, the study makes it clean—
that this is a clean illustration to show once again that religion is the hard core of culture and economic conditions presently prevailing caused occupational mobility.