CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
India is one among the major fish producing countries in the world. Fishing, as a source of livelihood, has acquired importance since the pre-historic times almost all over the world. In India, certain segments of communities are associated with fishing as a traditional/major occupation, exploring the vast fishing resources marine as well as inland. Further, the vast coast-line over a length of 5,650 kms., the continental shelf with an area of 4,14,868 sq. kms. (National Commission on Agriculture, 1976), the river systems together with the canals of irrigation over a length of 1,40,000 kms., and the inland water bodies of natural (lakes) as well as man-made (reservoirs) covering an area or 29,000 sq. kms have largely been responsible for the growing prominence of fishing in India (Centre for Science and Environment, 1985). Out of the total fish production of 31.3 lakh tonnes, marine fish production constitutes 17.5 lakh tonnes, whereas the inland fish production is 13.8 lakh tonnes during 1988-89 (The Hindu, September 21, 1989). The total population who thrive solely on fishing are estimated to be 5.38 million of which 3.28 million live along coast line and the remainder on river banks, lake sides or near back waters (Centre for Science and Environment, 1985).
India has considerable marine and inland resources. But the extent of these resources has not been properly assessed so far. It could be judged by the fact that there is a coast-line of which numerous large and perennial rivers discharge their silt-laden waters; two wide arms of Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea; a number of smaller gulfs and bays all along the coast; the large number of small oceanic islands with innumerable creeks, bays, mangrove swamps and extensive coral reefs, the marine fishery resources must be fairly extensive.

In 1976, the Parliament adopted a resolution declaring exclusive jurisdiction over and right of exploitation in a 200 mile area around the Indian coast. This will facilitate the expansion of Indian deep sea-fishing.

The extensive backwaters, tidal estuaries, lagoons and swamps scattered along the entire coast line, a large number of rivers, streams and channels and an enormous number of perennial and semi-perennial lakes, reservoirs, tanks, ponds and other stretches of water, most of which are culturable at present and are a rich potential sources of inland fisheries. Both these
resources, apart from being unestimated, are at present far from fully exploited for developed.

**MARINE FISHERIES**

The marine fish resources of India are vast with the Arabian Sea to the west and the Bay of Bengal to the east both merging into the Indian Ocean at Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari). Of the two coasts the west coast on the Arabian Sea is richer in fish wealth. It has been estimated that the west coast could bring a catch of 60,10,000 tonnes. The east coast on the Bay of Bengal could only bring 32,21,000 tonnes of fish in a year (Manorama, Year Book, 1981). The continental shelf lying along the Indian coast has a total area of about 2,59,000 sq. kms. Beyond the continental shelf of the Oceanic waters lie the home of large sharkes and rays and bany fishes like tuna, the shell fish and sword fish.

**INLAND FISHERIES**

In India inland fishing resources are also extensive. Inland fisheries have achieved a great significance in India because of the spread of water resources through out the country which brings the
source of production very close to the well structured marketing centres. Such close proximity of the production and consumption centres brings down the problems of preservation and transportation and thus simplifies the method of distribution. Moreover, the inland fish have high market value in the hinterland of the country, particularly in the regions of a preferential demand for such fish.

Besides innumerable riverine sources the inland water resources in India comprise of 1.6 million hectares of tanks and ponds, 3 million hectares of lakes and reservoirs, about 1 million hectares of derelict water swamps and 1.4 million hectares of brackish water lakes, lagoons, estuaries, etc. Such huge potentialities, if properly tapped, by adopting suitable techniques in fish catching, and appropriate management practices in fisheries culture can result in a significant improvement in the fish production of the country. While the production potential at current technological status from all the inland fisheries resources has been estimated to be 30 lakh tonnes in 1981-82. However, the actual fish production in the inland sector was 9.5 lakh tonnes during same year which is hardly 30 per cent of
the capability. During 1988-89 the actual inland fish production has increased to 13.8 lakh tonnes. Even this production could be achieved only due to the technological breakthrough in the field of fisheries culture.

Till recently the inland fisheries in India meant for traditional fish trapping and harvesting by fishermen without adopting any scientific management practices. Traditional fish farming practices usually involve very little investment with automatic stocking of tanks and ponds by flood water without any post-stocking management like supplemental feeding or periodic checking of fish growth, etc., and whatever fish are grown during a certain period of time are harvested and sold, which provides a supplemental source of income to the fishermen. No care, whatsoever, was taken for the rehabilitation and scientific maintenance of the derelict tanks or water bodies. Thus, among the huge resources of water bodies, hardly one-tenth were in culturable condition, till recently. The inland fisheries front has been rapidly changing since the introduction of composite fish culture technique and initiation of a number of pilot programmes from the beginning of the
Fifth Five Year Plan. The modern fish production technology involves a considerable capital investment, through scientific practices along with the initiative management techniques. Then it is possible to get a return of five to six times more than the investment. Under such circumstances, fisheries culture in the inland water bodies hold greater promise and are gradually becoming more and more popular among the fishermen communities.

Capture fisheries are confined to riverine, reservoir and esturine waters and account for 90 per cent of India's inland fish catch. This is the source that has been so intensively exploited for many years, that it has practically been depleted. In future, India has to depend upon culture fishing to improve its inland fishing resources.

Culture fisheries or fish farming has been practiced in north-eastern and central India for centuries, particularly in the states of West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Fish farming is also practised in Andhra Pradesh.
Andhra Pradesh has approximately 974 kms. of coastline. It is one among the major coastlines existing in India. The main river water sources are Godavari, Krishna, Penna, Nagavali, Vanashadara, these engulf many tributaries within them. Tributaries such as Sharada, Shabari, Tungabhadra, Premavathi, Kinnersani, Moosi, Upputeru, Paleru flow into the major rivers of Andhra Pradesh. In Telangana and Rayalaseema regions there is a dearth of tributaries. However, the tributaries to some extent eased by the presence of innumerable lakes and tanks.

Bay of Bengal, which is in east to India, is a major source for fish catch. Apart from this, it is estimated that inland fishing is also carried out in about three lakhs and twenty thousand hectares in the existing water resources. In Andhra Pradesh rivers and tributaries together are estimated to 3,32,800 kms., in length. In addition to this Andhra Pradesh has a treasure of many reservoirs, lakes and tanks which offer a great scope for the development of inland fisheries.
In view of the developments made in Andhra Pradesh in inland as well as in marine fishing, the achievement made are far less when compared to the available resources which still need to be tapped.

In Andhra Pradesh there are 72,862 fishing families with a population of 3,26,304 of which 83,903 are full time fisher-folk. The fishermen villages are scattered along the coastline, rivers, backwaters and lakes.

**FISHING COMMUNITIES IN INDIA**

Fishing profession in India is mainly confined to the fishing communities living in villages scattered along the Indian Coasts, rivers and backwaters. Being fish capture is almost entirely in their hands, any attempt to improve the fishing industry has to take into consideration the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen. At present the fishing population has a low rate of literacy and occupy a very low position on the social scale. Consequently, they are highly conservative and reluctant to adopt new ways and methods in their profession.
Over eight million of the population of India are considered as fishing communities, though large sections of these no longer follow this calling. While their hereditary profession was fishing, boating, sea-faring and allied occupations such as salt-making or selling burnt lime, they have gradually merged with other castes and professions. Being injured to hardships of the sea and of the coastal and riverine regions, they are naturally strong and sturdy in physique and easily take to other callings, most of them in Northern India and the Deccan have taken to the profession of water-carriers, porters and palanquin bearers. Though fishermen in India have a very low status in the caste hierarchy they have succeeded in raising their status by following other avocations, such as water carrying and domestic service. Thus the Kandu, Machi, Bhadbhunja, and Bhatiara castes of cooks and domestic servants were originally of the fishing communities. Even the fishermen communities like Kahar, Jhinvar and Dhimar of Northern India have elevated themselves to a higher position as domestic servants and water carriers.
In South India large number of fishing communities have embraced Islam on the West Coast and Christianity on the east coast, on account of their "inferior" caste status, while those who are Hindus still occupy a low rank.

In many places where fishing could not support their daily needs these communities have taken to other pursuits such as hunting, fowling and the collection of forest produce as in the case of the Bedar, Boyi of the Deccan, agriculture, weaving and commerce among the Kevat, Kahan, Haliva and Talabda of the North, the Canarese Kabberas and Tamil and Telugu Pallis of the South.

The Kahar, Machis and Bhois are the principal fishing castes of northern and western India. Most of them speak Marathi or Gujarathi. Besides fishing, they follow other professions such as agriculture, trade, domestic services and cooking. The Kahar have no endogamous divisions or exogamous septs. They allow polygyny. They usually cremate their dead. The Machis are both river and sea-fishers, boat-men, cultivators and labourers. They prohibit cross-cousin marriages.
The Mallah, Malo, Tiyar and Patni are the principal fishing communities of Bengal, Bihar and other eastern parts of the country. The Mallah include various fishing and boating castes. The Malo appear to be tribal people with totemistic survivals. They are largely Hinduized, worship Vishnu, practise clan exogamy and cremate their dead. The Tiyar include both fishers and cultivators. They have three hypergamous divisions, also have a tribal organisation. The Patni are a low caste of fishers and boatmen. They include traders and cultivators. They are Hindu Saivites and have exogamous septs.

The Besta, Boya, Palli, Jalari, Gangaputra, Mutrai, Vodabaliya are the principal Telugu fishing castes. The Besta are also porters and cooks, the Telugu Boya is probably identical in origin with the Canarese Bedar, though the formers are fishers, porters and labourers while the latter are hunters, fowlers and nomads. The Telugu Pallis are a division of the Great Tamil Palli caste. Both these divisions, however, claim to be superior and call themselves Vanni Kula Kshatrivas, wear sacred threads, imitate Brahmins, prohibit meat-eating and widow re-marriage to raise themselves in the social scale.
The Kabbera or Ambiga and the Moger or Mogayar are the fishing castes of Canara. They are both fishermen and cultivators, the former speak Kanarese and the latter Tulu. The Kabbera have two endogamous divisions, the children of Gowri (Gowri Makkala) and the children of Ganga (Gangi Makkala) and each has exogamous septs. They are Vaishnavites. The 'tali' is tied by the Brahmin purohit during marriages. They have the Basavi system among them. The Moger or Mogayar are Tulu fishermen who have taken to other professions. Their settlements are called Pattana, like those of the Tamil fishermen. They are superior to the Malabar fishermen or Mukkuvans. The Moger have exogamous septs with animal names. They are also matrilineal.

The Mukkuvans are the fishermen of Kerala. They are boatmen, palanquin bearers, cultivators and burnt-lime sellers. They have hereditary chiefs called Aryans. They are matrilineal in the north and patrilineal in the southern part of Kerala. Bhadrakali is their chief goddess. They work along with the Mappillas and are largely Islamised. The women wear ornaments on the helix of the ear like Muslims. Some children were brought up as Muslims and married to Muslims for
fulfilling vows. The Maharajah of Cochin on his coronation receives a bag of salt as a present from a Mukkuva chief.

The Sembadavans and Pattanavans are the chief Tamil fishing castes. The later are sea fishers, and live in maritime villages. They are considered to be inferior to the former who are river fishers. Another caste of seafaring people in the South are called the Savalaikarans are superior to Sembadavans. The Pattanavans are mainly Hindus though there are some sections, who are Christians. They have a right to carry the idol during temple processions. The Sembadavans are in many places pujaris (priests) of temples of mother goddesses in the villages.

During the early epochs when the Andhras, Pallavans, Cholas and Cheras were important maritime powers, the ancestors of the present fishing communities of the Indian coast provided the navigators who manned the large sea-going vessels, big enough, in some cases, to take a number of elephants. Later, when seafaring became a lost art, the fishermen lost their importance as navigators. During late medieval times, the Zamorin
employed Arabs in his navy, even in other regions of Southern India, navigation and coastal trade passed into the hands of Muslims. But in the fishing communities of India today, we have the best recruiting ground for our navy and merchantmen (Hand Book of Indian Fisheries, 1951).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fishing, as an occupation, can be traced back to prehistoric times almost all over the world. But very few sociologists and anthropologists have shown interest in carrying out a systematic study of this most ancient occupation and the people involved therein.

Anthropologists, like Malinowski (1918), Hocart (1937), Radcliff Brown (1948) and others, have studied primitive fishing in a few islands, like Trobriand Islands, Edystone and Andaman Islands. But their studies were not primarily focussed on fishing. Only incidentally they described the technology of fishing of the primitive islanders. Their main interest was to provide a picture of the total social and cultural system of people of those islands. Cokar (1908), Osgood (1940),
Edward (1960), Foster (1960), Lebar (1964) and others have focussed, more specifically, on fishing as industry and technology. But very few have studied the sociology of fishing in relation to the peasant hinterland.

Firth (1946) started a new area of study on the sociology of fishing and fisherfolk. In recent years as a part of the regional peasant economy, a systematic sociological-social anthropological studies on coastal fishermen were made.


Indian Sociological and anthropological research on fishermen were also tuned in accordance with new trends. A series of studies were made by Hora in 1935, 1948, 1952, 1953 and he gave a detailed account about the fishing knowledge of ancient Hindus. The fish culture and fisheries development in India and the references about fish in Ramayana were also depicted in his studies.
The recent sociological and anthropological studies on fishermen in India traces the socio-economic and cultural life of fisherfolk. Hornell (1920) has studied the Indian boat designs and contributed two other interesting monographs on the coastal fisherfolk of southern and western parts of India. Moses (1929), Punekar (1959) studies have highlighted the socio-economic and cultural life of fishermen. Ahmed (1966) and Trivedi (1967) also published two monographs on fisherfolk villages of Orissa and Kerala States respectively.

Mukherjee (1967) made a comparative study of fisherfolk of coastal West Bengal and Orissa. Marine fisherfolk of Andhra was studied by Rezeq (1967), study of the marine fisherfolk of north-east coastal Andhra Pradesh was contributed by Suryanarayana (1977), fishing communities of West Bengal, fishing communities of Chilka; a study on their ecosystem were made by Raychowduri (1977, 1980) in a detailed way.

Some of the studies on marine fishermen and their life styles and other related aspects have been made by Hajra (1967) and Lal (1967). Some of the technological changes among the coastal marine fishermen of Madras State was studied by Blacke (1970). Kodanda Rao (1975) has made a detailed study of the family and

Evans Pritchard (1940) in his monograph 'The Nuer' has given an excellent ethnographic account of fisherfolk and their primitive fishing technique in relation to the ecological set up at Nuer land of Sudan in South Africa.

Thurston's "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" (1909) provides some information on the fisherfolk of Andhra Pradesh. This has a brief note on the "Pattapu's", the marine fisherfolk, their cultural life and fishing technology. The Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute of Andhra Pradesh has produced a report on "The Fishermen of Pudimadaka", giving an outline on the culture of the fisherfolk. A village survey Monograph on Mofusbandar (Census of India, 1961), a fishermen village in Andhra Pradesh, is a detailed study on all aspects of the culture of the fisherfolk. Another village survey Monograph on Sannambukulan in Tamilnadu (Census of India, 1961) provides some information about the Pattapus too and yet another Monograph on
Rattamala (Census of India, 1961), a fishing village in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, gives some information on Pattapus and their fishing technology. However, it lacks depth and has not much to say on the social structure and religious life of the people.

Mohan Reddy (1978) studied the variability in marriage distance and its demographic implications on the Vodabalija. Association between inbreeding and marriage distance, the impact of marriage distance on demographic variables and temporal changes in mean marriage distance have also been examined.

Mathur (1981) gives an interesting account of the ritual complex of Mappila fisherfolk, the Hindu Mukkuvans converted into Islam. It has been observed that although these converts have abandoned many of their old beliefs and practices, the primitive rituals connected with their economic pursuits and curing techniques have been combined with the universals of Islam.
Goswami and Budhi Singh (1970) studied certain aspects of economy of a lake-fishing community of Manipur in perspective of the tenure and allocation of a "Phoompham" fishing ground in a traditional method of fishing, locally called "Phoom namba".

Rama Rao (1962) studied about the socio-economic status of the fishermen of Kotha Jalaripeta in Visakhapatnam. The socio-economic conditions included living conditions, number of fishing members, income, education, occupational pattern, expenditure pattern, status of women, etc.

Goswami and Budhi Singh (1972) studied the organisation of certain co-operative credit and saving societies of the fishermen of Tanga of Manipur. Some aspects of social structural relationship of the participants have been shown in brief through an analysis of their pattern of behaviour. The status of the Pattapu fishermen of Andhra Pradesh, their religion and tradition was studied by Vidyasagar and Suryanarayana (1977). According to them limited popularity of dieties, absence of brahminic participation and presence of animal sacrifices in the periodic and non-periodic rituals
appeared to be the characteristic features of the Hindu tradition practiced by the fishermen.

A comparative study of the marine fisherfolk of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh was done by Suryanarayana (1969). The castes selected were Vodabali, Jalari and Pallaes. The groups were observed for their economic, social organisations such as marriage, family, kinship and religious festivals and the food patterns.

A collaborative project work was made by a combined Research team of Belgium and Indian Scholars in 1980. They studied the factors influencing the life cycle of Kerala marine fishermen. The Kerala fishermen are hindered by the traditional equipment, type of technology used, ownership position, family formation and rates of partitioning, labour and market relations, the economic freedom, financial ties between employers and crew labourers, the share system of labour, basic consumption expenditure (food, clothing, housing) poverty of the fishermen, rural interest rates, relationship between the ownership position and the level of indebtedness.
Shubhendu Sanyal (1983) studied, the majority of the fishermen communities in Orissa who are economically backward and belong to the lower rung of the society. They need economic upliftment. Despite the economic advancement of the country as a whole, however, they are striving hard to achieve better position in the society. This is reflected in their lower literacy, social bondages and an urge to adopt economic pursuits other than the traditional one, which have hardly been enough to support their families.

Pitchaiah, Rama Mohan Rao and Prasada Rao (1987) studied the socio-economic conditions of fishermen in Prakasham District and examined their fishing and marketing activities which are found to be inadequate. In their study they suggested a suitable measures on fish culture and fish marketing wherever necessary. Sen and Das (1986) studied the problems of transfer of inland fisheries technology among the small scale fish farmers in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.
Chowduri (1968) made some observations on marine fishermen and fish traders in Southern district of West Bengal. Subba Rao (1980) studied about the socio-economic and cultural profiles of a coastal village in Andhra Pradesh, Kodanda Rao (1981) highlighted the fishing economy of Jalari community which depends on exploitation and utilization of the open sea to which they have adopted themselves by specialising in off-shore fishing operations. Panda (1971) described about the economy and society among the fishermen of the coastal Orissa. It shows that their socio-economic system has been inextricably interwoven with regional history. Muniratnam Reddy (1987) has made an indepth study of the Vadde fishermen of Kolleru lake.

Thurston (1975) notes that the sea fishermen in the North Coastal area are either Vodas or Jalaries, both of which are Telugu castes. The socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of these fishermen communities have been studied fairly extensively.

Ramamurthy (1959) studied about the socio-economic status of fishermen communities of Visakhapatnam. The fishermen belong to Vodas and Jalari castes. The
aspects studied were structure of the family, their age, educational and occupational pattern, income, expenditure and so on. The socio-economic conditions of the fishermen in three selected villages of Konaseema, East Godavari District were studied by Simhadri (1964). The life and labour of fifty fishermen families in Gognanattam village, East Godavari district were studied by Satyanarayana Raju (1964). He added that the income and housing conditions were found to be very poor.

The belief on pregnancy and child birth among the Pallaes and Voda Balijas of Visakhapatnam was studied by Narasa Reddy (1977). The study confined itself to three hamlets spotlighting fairly on their beliefs and customs of daily living. Sanjeeva Rao (1964) highlights the socio-economic conditions of fishermen community in five selected villages of Konaseema area in East Godavari district.

Carolyn Ellis (1984), compares two isolated Chesapeake Bay shell-fishing communities in fishneck, an isolated peninsula and seafood, a small island at South Florida, to examine how specific aspects of community organisations relate to family organisation and patterns of family life. It seeks to contribute to a growing
literature on family processes in 20th century in small isolated communities, focusing on their interplay with economic structure. The study of Singh and Chand (1988) in Uttar Pradesh revealed that a total area of 1.5 lakh hectares has so far been brought under scientific and intensive fish culture as a part of the development of inland fisheries. Inland fish catch was 2.18 lakh tonnes in 1950-51. This rose to 11.6 lakh tonnes by 1985-86.

Phal (1977) in his study revealed that, even though the Konkakan Karve and the Pagi castes are in rivalry about their linguistic attitude they are slightly differing in traditional customs and manners. But the fishermen are similar in their occupation, trade and living conditions. Regarding the modernisation of techniques, the fishermen are taking the help of fishermen's co-operative credit societies and the fisheries department. His study about the cultural activities focusses attention on the traditional cultural activities, fairs and festivals, decoration of their houses which are similar to each other.
Malleswara Rao (1977) studied about the fishermen problem of Srikakulam district. According to him the habits, customs and tradition of the old generation of fishermen of Srikakulam district cannot be changed, unless until the younger generation of this community are given proper education and enlightenment. Kamat (1977) stated that, the potentiality of inland fishing is deteriorating steadily because of the inappropriate adoption of fishing techniques and lack of co-operation of the co-operative agencies.

Patel, Haribai (1986) has made an analysis about the social organisation of the fishermen community located in the Varavil Mangrol coastal region in Western India. In his study, he highlighted the process of change resulting from technological adoptions. In his study he has compared both the rural and urban fishermen livelihood and their social organisation. Finally, it is concluded that the level of uncertainty forces a marine resource based community to permit only limited modernisation.
Harder, Utpal Bhowmik, Pandit and Chatterjee (1988) revealed in their study in the villages of West Bengal that the modern inland fisheries depend heavily on sophisticated technology and modern equipment. In order that it makes an impact on the lives of the fishermen and fisherwomen. The sophisticated technology has to be transferred to the target group of fishermen without any loss of time and should be implemented in an efficient manner and also to find out the extent of adoption and implication of new technology by fisherfolk of West Bengal and their contribution through it to the economic well being of the family.

Sharma, Nirmal and Thakur (1988) has made an indepth study on Orissa's fisherwomen, more than 88 per cent of Orissa's population live in villages. There are 982 women for a every thousand men but their contribution to crop and non-farm activities is estimated at 73.3 per cent. In their study the level of income, the technology in usage and the training imparted to them is thoroughly analysed.
Dehadri (1988) studied about the traditional fish processing women. Inspite of their fish processing as a major activity, occasionally they are also participating in fishery related activities, such as net weaving to supplement their income. It is found that there are more avenues for income generation which are open to rural fisherwomen.

Datta (1958) has revealed in his study about some traditional practices and modern usages and implications among the fishermen of Panihati Sukhchar of Thana Khardaha district in 24-paraganas of North Calcutta.

Veeranna (1989) stated that the inland fishermen are extensively exploited by the middlemen in Andhra Pradesh. The lack of marketing, financial and transportation facilities are adding to the grievances of fisherfolk and they are found to be hampering the socio-economic upliftment of these fisherfolk.

Jean-Philippe Platteau, Jose Murickan and Etienne Delbar (1985) have studied in detail about fishing technology, credit system and indebtedness in marine fishing of three fishing villages of South Kerala.
Mahindra Reddy (1988) has made a study on the ecology and economy of Pattapu fishermen of Pulicat lake. He concentrated his study mainly on the ecology and economic conditions like fishing technology, fish production, marketing income, expenditure and indebtedness.

Nair (1989) reported that the traditional fishermen are threatened by the operators of trawlers and motorised boats in the Sakthikulangara - Needakara Coastal area in Kerala State. One of the major consequences of mechanisation was the entry of middlemen, most of whom were not fishermen.

With the above background in terms of the number of studies that have been conducted, an attempt has been made in the present study to highlight the socio-economic and the other related aspects of the Ganga-putras which is an inland fishing community in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. This study also aims at filling the lacuna in the studies of the inland fishermen in India.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. to study the occupational pattern, fishing equipment and activities, fish marketing and economic status of the Gangaputras;
2. to analyse the patterns of marriage, family and kinship among the Gangaputras;
3. to highlight the aspects of political organisation among the Gangaputras; and
4. to analyse the cultural practices, ritual belief systems, fairs and festivals of the Gangaputras.

ORIGIN OF THE COMMUNITY UNDER STUDY

The system of Chaturvarna (four colours) - a traditional Hindu social structure - generated the society into four broad social strata, which is comprised of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras. But gradually these varnas were classified according to their mode of occupation. The Shudras are placed at the bottom of the gradation and are known as the lowest class in the social strata. Brahmins rejected to do 'Upanayana' to the Shudras and pushed them into the
lowest ebb by colouring cultural constraints. Later on the privileged policy formulation made Shudras to accept themselves as non-Dwijas. The Shudras again are divided into sub-caste groups depending on their social status. Even these groups do not come under the same category. Among these Shudras, who have been following different occupations, Gangaputras are one who have been following fishing as their traditional occupation.

We could attribute the importance of a mythological story to enumerate the origin of Gangaputras. Once there lived a king called Bestaraju. He had a delightful, enchanting young daughter by name Ganga. Lord Siva got fascinated by seeing Ganga. Besta Raju opposed the love of Lord Siva, who was considered to be a beggar by him. The begging of Lord Siva became a constraint for their marriage. But this constraint was surpassed by their divine love. They enjoyed a brief delightful experience. Their experience gave a new dawn to Ganga as mother. Their children were called Gangaputras.
The Gangaputra community in the present study consider Lord Siva and Holy Ganga as their ancestors. Fishing became a major source of their livelihood and it has been their traditional occupation.

THE STUDY AREA

Warangal district is chosen for the present study. It lies between latitudes 17° 19' and 18° 36' North and longitudes 78° 49' and 80° 43' East. It is bounded on the North by Karimnagar, on West by Medak, on the South-east by Khammam districts.

RAINFALL AND CLIMATE

The rainy season commences with the onset of the South-West monsoon in later part of June and ends with the South-East monsoon in October. About 81 percent of the annual rainfall is received during this season. Rainfall in the form of thunder showers is generally received in the later half of the summer season and in the post-monsoon season. The normal annual rainfall of the district is 987.3 mm.
The district being situated at a considerable distance from the sea coast, its climate, generally, tends to be dry, and there are no considerable fluctuations in its temperature. The year may be divided into four seasons. The period from December to February is winter in which the temperature drops slightly. The summer season is from March to May and the hottest month in this season is May. The period from June to September is considered to be the onset of the South-West monsoon season. October and November constitute the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon season.

RIVERS AND LAKES

The principal river in the district is the Godavari. The river Godavari passes through the district on the north of Gangaram village of the Mulug Taluk, flowing in a south-easterly direction along the eastern boundary of the district, the river leaves the taluk at the South-East of Bhogampadu in the Khamnam district and thereby enters the East Godavari district. The other rivers in the district are the Muneru, the Paler and the Akeru, besides a few minor streams. The river Muneru takes its birth at Yellibulicutta near
Kistapuram village of the Narsampet taluk. The Akeru, a tributary of Muneru takes its origin in the North-eastern region of the Janagoan taluk near Bouthghat Nagaram village and flows in the South-Eastern direction through Warangal and Mahaboobabad taluk. In addition to these rivers the important irrigational and fishery resources in the district are the lakes of Pakhal, Laknavaram, Ramappa and Ganapur. These lakes stand a testimony for the old irrigation works constructed by the Kakatiya kings who ruled over this area during 1000-1328 A.D.

**PAKHAL LAKE**

The investigation and construction of this lake was done during the period of Sri Ganapathi Dev of the Kakatiya Dynasty, Grandfather of the famous Prataparudra Dev-II. The history of the lake thus dates back to SAKA 1134 corresponding to 1213 A.D. An invasion was led by Moghuls during the reign of Prataparudra Dev-II and it is said that during their invasion the tank was breached by one of the guards of Moghul army by name Seethab Khan and this breached portion was known as "Sethabkhan Gandi". However, during the year
1902 A.D., the Nizam's Public Works Department has restored the lake to its present standards at a cost of Rs.4,50,000.

Pakhal lake is situated in the revenue village of Pakhal in the Narsampet taluk and it is 11.27 Kms., away from Narsampet and 45 Kms., away from Warangal towards east. Pakhal lake is an artificial sheet of water and is formed by a 2,000 yards dam built across the Pakhal river. It has a catchment area of 268.80 sq. kms and has the capacity of irrigating roughly 6,879.64 hectares. It gives vent to five irrigation channels known as the Sangam channel, Jalabandam channel, Thungabandam channel, Pushoor channel and Mottrelvaram channel.

LAKNAVARAM LAKE

The Laknavaram lake lies in the limits of Laknavaram village of the Mulug taluk. This lake is at a distance of 69.23 kms from Warangal. The surplus water of this lake ultimately joins the Godavari. This lake was formed by closing three narrow valleys, each with a short bund. Its catchment area extends to about 195 sq. kms., and it irrigates about 5,260.90 hectares.
RAMAPPA LAKE

The Ramappa lake is situated to the North-East of Warangal, at Palampet in the Mulug taluk. It was formed by laying bunds across the streams of Medivagu and Rallavagu. Its catchment area is 183.89 sq. kms., and it has four main distributeries which are known as the Voger channel, Veeralal channel, Burugu channel and Somi channel. The lake has an ayacut of 1,863 hectares.

GANAPUR LAKE

The Ganapur lake lies in the Mulug taluk of the Ganapuram village. It has a catchment area of 100.36 sq. kms. The lake serves an ayacut of nearly 16,200 hectares.

In addition to the above lakes, there are some important tanks at which the village inhabitants practice fish culture and capture. The major tanks are - Nagaram, Wardannapet, Arjunapatta, Katakshapuram, Madannapeta tanks in the district. The Gangapurtrags practice fish culture and capture at Madannapeta tank. A brief description about the tank is given below.
The Madannapeta tank was constructed during the period of Kakatiya Dynasty between 1000-1328 A.D., subsequently in the period of latter rulers the tank was put to disuse and it was only in 1902, the tank was restored, at a cost of Rs.2,12,420/-. This tank lies in the revenue limits of Madannapeta village of the Narsampet Mandal at a distance of 51 kms. from Warangal. The tank bund measures a length of 1.64 kms. Its catchment area extends to about 115.50 sq. kms., and it irrigates about 2,428.24 hectares. The capacity of the tank F.T.L. is 255.11 M.C.F.T. and annual storage is 384.35 M.C.F.T. and the yield of the tank is 353 M.C.F.T.

Warangal district with 3,624 tanks of short seasonal, long seasonal and perennial water lakes is self-sufficient in its fishery requirements. Gangaputras, Mutrasi and Kohli are the fishing communities who are traditionally engaged in fishing. They catch fish by using various nets, traps and so on. In regard to deep waters, wild duck boats and nylon nets are also used. Practically, there is neither import nor export of fish from this district. In this district, there are about 700 tanks that are being maintained by the Fisheries Department. The rest of the tanks are under the control of the respective Gramapanchayats.
METHODOLOGY AND FIELD WORK

The present work is an extensive study on the fishing community around Pakhal lake and Madannapeta tank, whose occupation mainly constitutes of fishing in the lake and tank. Pakhal lake and Madannapeta tank are inland fresh water bodies. Field work was conducted in four villages viz., Madannapeta, Maheswaram, Kammapally and Itucalapally of Narsampet Mandal during March 1988 to May 1990. Madannapeta village is situated 5 Kms away from Narsampet. The total area of the village is 1,150.11 hectares with a total population of 2,414. Maheswaram village is situated at 8 kms., away from Narsampet, the total area of the village is 900.02 hectares with a total population of 4,015. Kammapally village is situated at 6 kms., away from Narsampet, the total area of the village is 331.03 hectares with a total population of 2,756 and Itucalapally village is situated at 4 kms., away from Narsampet, the total area of the village is 862.38 hectares with a total population of 2,820.

The above four villages were selected for intensive study with due consideration to their locational aspects. These villages have 2,362 households and
out of them 315 (13.5%) households belongs to the fishermen community. The remaining 2,047 (86.66%) households constitute different caste groups. The 2,362 households account for a total population of 12,005 and the 315 households of the fishermen have a total population of 1,351 people which accounts for 11.25 per cent of the total population.

The inhabitants of these four villages engage in fishing at Madannapeta tank and Pakhal lake. The fishing activity in this tank and lake is covered by these four villages. The researcher covered all these 315 households. Thus, the sample consisted of the heads of these 315 households. The village wise breakdown of households is as follows. Madannapeta 145 households, Maheswaram 59 households, Kammapally 48 households and Itucalapally 63 households.

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by using unstructured interview schedules and sociological census schedules. The methodological choices assume a critical importance since our capability to elicit the right answers to the right questions will hinge very much on the methodological support of the study. The study unit is the household.
Field work in these villages was carried out covering different seasons and different periods of the years. The secondary data, was collected from various books, journals and other sources of information such as historical documents, pamphlets and various unpublished dissertations. Besides these, the District Fisheries Department was approached for information on fishing activity in Warangal district.

CHAPTERISATION

The first chapter deals with a brief introduction about the marine and inland fisheries in India. A historical view of the fishermen communities in India is also presented. A brief review of literature, objectives of the study and methodology followed is presented in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the economic organisation of the Gangaputras which includes occupational pattern, capital investment, fish production, income and expenditure, marketing and their indebtedness. The type of technology under adoption is also described.
The third chapter 'social organisation' deals with the patterns of marriage, types of family and family development, kinship of the Gangaputras, along with the life cycle ceremonies.

The fourth chapter highlights the 'political organisation'. The traditional political structure, its functions, organisational set up and the impact of modern political institutions on the traditional one is presented.

The fifth chapter deals with the religious beliefs and practices and associated fairs and festivals of Gangaputras.

In the final chapter, summary of the present empirical study along with conclusions drawn from it are presented.