Man is a social animal. Social process governs his life. He feels drawn to another human being because of his basic needs and desires whose fulfilment rests on contact with others. These result in social relationship, responses, interaction and communication. Social life is an essential part of human life. It grows out of constant patterning of social interactions and relationships among human beings as such. The social organisation deals primarily with the significant grouping of individuals. Man has to meet his basic needs like food and shelter and social needs like companionship, recreation, religious activities, play etc. The present chapter deals with the internal structure of the Sugali, their family system, their marriage systems (nomadic and present) characteristics of Sugali women, their kinship relations and how they are interacting with the non-Sugali agricultural castes.
The Sugali tribe identify themselves as belonging to a single homogeneous group and speaks themselves as belonging to one single community. Although they are individualistic by temperament, they do recognise their unity into a tribe different and distinct from the neighbouring castes and other tribes. The original dialect of Sugali known as Gwar-Boli or Gorero-Wath is mixed with several North Indian Languages such as Gujarati, Rajasthani, Punjabi and Hindustani. In spite of the borrowings from various languages as they moved towards the South from their original Marwar region of Rajasthan, the retention of Sugali dialect, a variant of the regional standard Marwari, is the most significant way of preserving identity. This dialect is used among themselves only, mostly in homes and settlements. The Sugali can be easily identified by their conversation, and the Sugali women are easily identified by their gorgeous, well decorated traditional dress. But it is somewhat difficult to identify the Sugali men, because they look like any other peasant. The Sugali who followed different occupations such as transportation of food-grains, trading, cattle rearing, firewood selling and practising agrarian methods of production, has been existing for the last many generations. This contact has naturally brought about many changes in the life styles of the Sugali. Consequently, the language of neighbouring castes and certain regional words crept in to their original dialect.

It is highly significant to note that the kind of social structure, which the Sugali had built up in the past, was swiftly
altered by the demands of the changed economic circumstances. However, the Sugalis are very much conscious of their separate ethnic identity and the need to preserve and protect it from being assimilated, though they have borrowed a few items from the regional dominant castes (viz., Reddy, Kamma, Balija etc). In addition, the continuance of the customs of their nomadic days also helped to be marked as a distinct group. The recent changes in their social economic life have not shattered their feeling of oneness.

The Sugali emphasis on settling down in an exclusive and separate settlements (thandas) in order to keep themselves at a safe distance from others, naturally gives them an opportunity to minimize contacts with others, which they consider detrimental to their identity. In spite of a sedentary life for nearly a century or so, the Sugalis still distinguish themselves as denizens of the Thandas (Carovans or hordes of moving camps) as opposed to the settled village folk. Another interesting feature of the Sugali is that they still speak of themselves as a body of people bearing original generic name 'Banjara' and forming a single homogeneous community which spread all over the Indian Sub-Continent. The Sugali address each other throughout the country as 'Gwar' and call the non-Sugali as 'Kwar' indicating their sense of separate entity. The cultural and social segregation of the Sugali from the non-Sugali is also evident from their frequent use of the term 'Gwaria' for themselves and as Kwaria for the permanently settled
agricultural caste communities of the villages. Thus, from the point of view of the Sugali the social categories and social identities are mainly two; the Sugali and the non-Sugali.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE SUGALI

The Sugali society is a single homogeneous community. The accounts of Cumberlege gives that the Banjara (Sugali), the Gypsy tribe has mainly three distinct divisions, representing the Brahmin, Chuttri and Rajput castes and as fourth division the Bard's also added many years ago to the Sugali society. The main occupation of these classes is grain carrying and the two last mentioned classes have for years been notorious as those of clever and bold dacoits. Besides, the four classes above noted there are the Jangurs or slaves, Mochees, Mangs, Bungrikars and other denominations who live in Banjara Thandas and whose names denote the trade they organise and were called. The name by which the Brahmin class is called is Muttooriah, the Chuttri is called Labhana, and from the Rajput class the Charan Sugali and the Bards are called Dharis.¹

The Mathura Sugali or Muttooriahs are divided into four divisions viz., Pandey, Dubey, Chobey and Tewari. This group claims to be considered as Brahmins. They claim to be of the highest rank and purest blood. They wear the sacred thread and they recite Gayatri Manter chantings and to the present day they abstain from meat and liquor, subsisting entirely on grain and green vegetables. Carrying, and trading grain, which was and still is their legitimate occupation.

The Mathura Sugali do not accept cooked food from any other Sugali tribe. While eating their meals they keep a fire burning, if the fire goes out by chance, they stop eating. The bride and bridegroom must be of tender (15-20) years. The boy's father sends a Brahmin or Hajjam (Navi) to the girl's Thanda and asking his daughter in marriage, which the Naik of the Kooree or Thanda is informed. Their important festival is Gokulastami (The day of the birth of Lord Krishna). Their dialect is the mixture of Hindi and Gujarati.

The second sub-tribe, the Chattri or Lubhana is traditionally descended from one Mota, one of the two cowherds employed of Krishnaji Rajah. The name Lubhana has been derived its name from Sanskrit Lavana or Salt. Perhaps the Labhanas devoted themselves more to the carriage of this staple. They claim that they are Rajputs. They carried on extensive trade by means of large bands of bullocks. Later they are said to have taken to
agriculture as an additional means of livelihood. The Lubhans also came to Deccan as Commissariat carriers with Moghal army.

The third sub-tribe, Rajputcharan is the most numerous, and by far the most interesting class. This charan Sugali are divided into five exogamous clans: 1. Rathore, 2. Ponwar, 3. Chohan or Chowhan, 4. Tooree, 5. Burthia or Jadho. The names of this division are derived from the names of their founders and the names of their founders and the names of Rajput clans. This division again divided into so many sub-divisions, Gotes, and Paras. The Rathores seems to have originally come from Jodhpore in Rajasthan. Ponwars from Daranagri near Indore, and close to Ujjain, Chohans from a place they call Meet (probably Meerat). Toorees from Thawurgurh, probably one of the Rajput names for Delhi in former days, and the Burthia (Vadtya) or Jadho class was picked up as presently noted, through a criminal intercourse, which they are reluctant to admit, between a Gorhama (Ponwar) girl and a Marathi Brahmin. The charan Sugali evidently came to the Deccan with Asiph Jan, commonly called Asaf Khan, the Wazeer of Shahjahan, the Moghul emperor, and in the year 1630 A.D., as the commissariat carriers of Asiph Jan's force, with whom they did not return to Upper India.

Among all the Charan Sugali clans the Rathod and Baditya are chiefly found in Maharashtra district and adjoining Berar and Telangaana, Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh. The Sugali of the present study belong to the four clans of the Rajput charan sub-tribe 1. Rathor, 2. Pomhar, 3. Chohan and 4. Burthia.
The fourth sub-tribe, the Dharee Sugali are considered as an out-caste or inferior to other sub-tribes of Sugali. They are said to be a hybrid offspring of Muhammedan and Hindu. They belong to Ratwan-Bhats of the Gung Bhat family. The Dharee ancestor's Hindu name is not remembered, but he was a servant of Guru Nanack who one day went with him to feast given by the great Moghal Emperor Humayun and ate beef. The Dharees are not certain whether thereafter they were circumcised and became Mussalman, but they acquired the name as Murdananoor. Murdana now became a musician in service of the great Moghul Court, and had two sons, Gaji and Gandha, who each had six sons, left the Moghul Court, joined the camps of Charan Sugali and became their bards. The Dharees are both musicians and mendicants, who sing in praise of the Charan Sugali ancestors, and of the old kings of Delhi. Dharees were, and still are musicians and bards. During certain seasons of the year they visit Charan Sugali hamlets and collect from each family some amount of money or a young bullock.

The fifth sub-tribe Dhalia or Sugali Mangs are attached as Musicians to each Sugali settlement, even though their touch is regarded as impure by those of other Sugali sub-tribes. Both the Dhalia and the Dharee Sugali are said to have come to the Deccan with the armies of Asaf-Jan in 1630 A.D. The Bald Sugali, a sub-tribe, are reported to have followed the occupations as doctors and weavers and carriers. They are chiefly found in Pilibhit, Kant and the adjoining places of North Western provinces of India.
Turkia and the Mukheri Sugali seem to be a mixed group of Hindus and Musalman who may have embraced Islam, the religion of their employer. The Turkia assert they are originally from Multan. They carried transportation only in Northern India. The Mukheri Sugali is spread in the states of Maharastra, U.P. and West Bengal. They claim that they derive their name from their ancestor Makka Sugali who helped the Father Abraham to Build Mecca, the sacred place for Mussalman. Though they profess Muhammadans of Sunnisect, follow many Hindu traditions such as worshipping of Kali Bhavani. 10

The Dhankute Sugali, is a sub-tribe of Sugali whose main occupation is husking of rice. The terms of other sub-tribes of Sugali are Kangi or Phanda and Shirkiband or Shirkiwala are artisan sub-tribes who are engaged in comb-making and mat-weaving. They are mainly found in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and some other parts of Central India.

Further, the names of the last six sub-tribes refer to those Sugali who have taken up independent professions as per settlement. These people moved with Koorees or Thandas and fulfilled their needs. They are: the Sanar-goldsmith who makes Sugali gold ornaments. Navi - is a traditional barbar, also called as Hajjam. They were used by the Charun Sugali Naik as messengers for marriage selection. The Shingadya are musicians specialised in blowing horns, when a Thanda was moving on its assignment from one place to another place. This sub-tribe will stand in front of the troop and also other special occasions will blow the horns.
The Badi or Bajigar group of singers accompanied by an orchestra they entertain the Kooree or Thanda with their orchestra. The Jogi or Bharara are the makers of Sugali Silver ornaments and the Cobbler. However, in course of time the latter groups have stopped performing their traditional services to the Sugali, since the changed circumstances have also compelled them to settle down and seek other pursuits of economy such as pastoralism and agriculture.

FAMILY ORGANISATION

The family as the basic social institution has been found at almost all levels of cultural development. The family as a social group which had existed in all societies and at all times. The family as a functional unit, comprising of members by marriage and descent, is an agency through which the impressionable rising generation, is made familiar with the traditions developed as a response to the peculiar circumstances of the environment. The pattern which the family exhibits inculcates among its members certain kinds of behaviour responses and thinking and feeling patterns typical of their culture. Thus, without the family there could be no preservation of the species and culture and without marriage, the family.

The family among the Sugali is characterised by patrilineal descent patrilocal residence and patriarchal authority. Since the families are basic units, their type and size have an important
bearing on their social and economic organisation. Sugali family is usually composed of a husband, wife and their unmarried children who live together in a single house and do their cooking together and for all practical purposes constitute one single economic unit. Generally, the members in a joint family household include the head of the family, his wife and children, his parents and unmarried brothers and sisters. The aged parents take common care of the grand-children and great-grand children even if they hold separate households within the settlements.

In all the families of the Sugali, very small children and the aged and economically-inactive members in a family, are left to the care of generally a young girl called Naniki Chori. Children in the age group of 8 to 10 years who do not go for wage labour, occupy themselves in grazing sheep and cattle. The dire economic need of the families makes them either enter into a wage earner or to be involved in productive activities as a non-wage earner.

The families in traditional pastoral Sugali settlements are predominantly smaller in size than in the peasantised settlements. But the large families are more in peasant settlements than in the pastoral settlement. From this it is observed that a few pastoral Sugali with huge number of cattle and sufficient cultivable land at pastoral Narasampalli thanda and a few Sugali with comparatively more landed property at Pedapalli have large sized families as such people preferred patrilocal type of residence which in turn makes the management of cultivation and cattle rearing.
The inter-relationships of the Sugali families can be divided into nuclear, joint and polygynous. All these types are observed in the sample settlements. Nuclear families outnumber other types at both the thandas. The difference in the proportions of nuclear families between the two groups is not so significant. The joint family with its sub-types also exhibits great numerical disparities due to the prevailing differential practices of economy. After careful observation it is found that most of the families at either Thandas are still in the grip of tradition and some of the educated families are in transition.

The family organisation among the Sugali is mostly tradition-oriented. The husband commands superior position and has always the primary say in the family matters and the wife enjoys a subordinate position in relation to her husband. However, the relationship between husband and wife is of partners in all social, economic, domestic and emotional activities and it does not mean that her position is low in the family. The relationship between the children and parents is fairly informal. All of them may share the same cot for sitting. In many ways, the parents do not show any differential treatment between sons and daughters. The younger brother when married will not normally sit or stay close with his wife in the presence of elders of the family due to the respect.

During their nomadic past, tradition vested the parents with the power of selecting the partners for their sons and
daughters. But now-a-days the parents give complete freedom to their children in selecting their partners. Generally after marriage the son establishes his own family away from his parents. Even after the establishment of residence, the son never completely ignores his parents. On important occasions like the conduct of life-crisis rituals and festivals like ancestors worship they visit their parents. The parents also visit the families of their sons and daughters. If the spouses of young sons and daughters die, the latter have the right to seek shelter in their natal homes once again but remain only dependents. Because the Sugali family members have very strong kinship tie among their parents.

Further, it is also obvious that the family is essentially nuclear or individual especially at pastoral settlements. The moment the son is married, he sets up his own house in the same thanda and lives with his wife and children. If the parents are alive, the youngest son when married usually lives with his surviving parents. It is the social obligation for the youngest son to look after his age-old parents. Thus, the Sugali family has, indeed moved a long way from the days of nomadism to settled semi-nomads to become stronger and typical patrilineal group to serve as the back bone of the changing social and cultural life.

The nomadic life of the Sugali during their trading days, could not permit the maintenance of large joint families, because family size is determined by the level of technology and economic resources. Nomadism discourages unwieldy burdens, both material
and non-material. This is corroborated nomadic way of life. Malhotra and Bose (1963)\textsuperscript{13} in their sample survey of 100 out of 600 seminomadic Banjara families in Western Rajasthan, observe that 94 per cent were found to be nuclear families. It is stated by the Sugali that the emergence of the joint family is a consequence of setback to their nomadic trading and transport in result of sedentarisation and peasantisation. They have witnessed an increase of large size joint families, when they adopted the occupation of agriculture only from the first half of the 20th century.

However, it is observed that majority of the families in both the settlements are joint, thanks to the improving economic condition of the large-size landholding Sugali which fetched better agricultural prices, and to Sugali acceptance of the greater value attached to the joint family organisation by the local agricultural Hindu communities. This is a radical change from their early emphasis on the nuclear family during their nomadic days. The preference for joint family is due to changes in their economy as well as borrowing the joint family ideal from the peasant communities. But, now, again with increasing individualisation and the increasing poverty among the poor and wage earning Sugali the number of joint families are disappearing. The borrowed agricultural economic pursuit among the Sugali has a strong tendency to influence the family, which is a basic unit of the social organisation.
MARRIAGE SYSTEM

Marriage and family are two aspects of the bio-physical-cum social needs of man, which are coeval with each other and with culture. On the individual plane, marriage ensures a biological and psychological satisfaction and on the collective plane it ensures the survival of both the group and its culture. The marital bond is found to bring together not just two individuals but families of the two settlements. Marriage is not exclusively meant to secure for the individuals a highly personalised satisfaction but it used as a social mechanism to create and foster social solidarity.

Marriage among the Sugali is based on the principles of community endogamy and clan exogamy. There is a patrilineal system permitting cross-cousin marriage. The Sugali community is divided into too many clans (Rathore, Pomhar, Chohan and Burthias or Vadtya form main clans of the Sugali community), and each clan has many Gotras (Gots). Gotra has a social significance in so far as the members of the same gotra or Para, even if they have never known or heard of each other nor are related by blood, cannot intermarry.

Inter marriages are forbidden within the Rathore or Chowhan or Pamhar. However, inter-marriage is permitted between all the three clans. All the three clans are eligible to marry from the Burthia (Vadtiya) clan and vice-versa. A consanguinous marriage is also a taboo in this tribe although other tribes, like the Koyas,
MARRIAGE SYSTEM

SUCALI

RATHOD OR BHUKYA

CHOWDHAN OR MOOD

PAMHAR

BURTHYA OR VADYA
the Chenchus, the Bhagators etc., practice or rather prefer exogamous and endogamous marriages.

The Dhalia, Dhadi, Bhat, Sanar, and Jangad are treated as low and out-castes by the Charun Sugali. The Dhadis and Bhats are beggars and it is they who provide music for life-cycle ceremonies. The sonars are those who make the distinctive ornaments that are worn by the Sugali. The Dhalia or the messenger caste have an instrumental role in arranging marriage alliances. The Jangad, literally meaning once who are outcastes, are those without gotras, and who are kidnapped children of the caste Hindus while the Sugali are on their march of trading. Both girls and boys kidnapped by the Sugali were called after the gotras of their masters. The Jangad serving in the house of Rathore, was called as Rathore Jangad. Similarly, Chowhan Jangad, Pomhar Jangad and Burthia (Vadtya) Jangad. The marriages among them also was based on their master's clan exogamy. This was included into the mainstream of Sugali community after seven generations.

**MARRIAGE SYSTEM (NOMADIC) :** The marriage pattern of the Sugali during their nomadic trading days was very peculiar. Since the Sugali were nomads, had no permanent settlement, their Koorees or moving Thanas were based on clan exogamy. The nomadic Sugali had no permanent housing to celebrate the marriages of their children. Their movements were seasonal. During the rainy season they settle in huts on the
hillocks, and they try to reach those places by that particular
season. That is why the marriages of this mercantile nomadic
community was frequently held in rainy season, a season forbidden
to other Hindus, naturally the most convenient to the Sugali, because
in the dry season they are usually travelling from one place to
another places as traders and transporters of provisions to all
corners of the sub-continent.

The boy's father, with the permission of the Naik of the
Thanda (moving camp) sends a Hajjam (Navi) to the girl's Thanda,
asking his daughter in marriage. A Panchayat forms in which all
the four denominations are represented, and the bride's father name
the sum he intended to claim before marriage. The Panchayat taking
the status of the contracting parties into consideration, eventually
fixes this amount. The messenger then returns with the decisions.
And the boy's father assembling a Panchayat agrees to the demand
and sends back his messenger to the bride's Thanda. Having
delivered this message, the messenger now returns accompanied by
two males of bride's Kooree or (Thanda) carrying a present of seven
arecanuts, seven pieces of turmeric, a few grains of rice, some
Kookoo (dye) and one rupee coin (Sakerorupia). With this the first
ceremony commences.

BETROTHAL (SAGAI): Then the brides party invites bridegroom's party
to their Thanda for the 'Sagai' ceremony (betrothal). One auspicious day
is fixed and the boy's father with the Naik of the Thanda and few elders will move to the house of the girl's Thanda. While going the boy's father carries a hookah (a traditional smoking pipe) a large pouch (Kothali) filled with betelnuts for the betrothal ceremony, is styled themselves as Gole Khayane jayero, (that is, going to eat jaggery at bride's residence). The bride and bridegroom never see each other until the day of the official ceremony. They boy's father serves hookah and betelnuts to all those present at the assembly. And the bridegroom's father gives a feed of 'Gheewar' (flour mixed with water thrown into fried ghee) to the whole Thanda. The boy's father pays the Rs. 13.8 annas half the amount from the assured bride price and Rs. 2 a piece to the bride's father with this the betrothal ceremony of Sugali ends.

MARRIAGE (VYAH) : The marriage celebrations begin from the bride's house. In order to propitiate the clan deity, a goat sacrifice is generally offered. Marriage among the Sugali means a lot of fun and merriment. Marriage being a Thanda affair, only such a date which convenient to most must be chosen. After the Sagai or Betrothal ceremony, the next ceremony, Vyah or marriage is the final ceremony. Messenger of the Thanda still act as the liaison between the two parties of the two Thandas. The day previous to the formation of the procession to the bride's place the bridegroom put on new clothing and sits down on a chabootra (raised platform) inside his mundwa. And the sister or a sister-in-law or other female of his family,
brings a plate containing some bruised turmeric and a little rice and places it before the boy and some member of each family of the thanda puts a little of the rice on the boy's forehead and turmeric on his feet and leaves a rupee as a nuzzar (present) by this act the boy called as 'vetudu' (bridegroom). The next day, the vetudu (bridegroom) being placed on horseback, is accompanied by every adult who could find leisure, to the bride's thanda. The groom arrives at bride's place many days before marriage (in some cases couple of years before marriage). This long stay reflects their old custom of probation to marry.\textsuperscript{22} The dress of the Vetudu (bridegroom) appears similar to the dress of a warrior, in his hand a sword and a dagger, while his friend has a tobacco pipe (hukka). When sets out on his journey to bride's place he is presented with some money ranging from four annas to few rupees by the entire thanda.\textsuperscript{23} The bride's father would make obeisance to the bridegroom, ensured that he was comfortably housed. He goes home and sends a puggree and dooputta for the boy, which must at once be put on. In response the boy now sends a silk sari, a Doolurri (an ornament) and a bracelet composed of beads and rupees strung on silk for the bride, which were put on her, with exception of the Doolurri retained to be added to her attire by the Brahmin at the marriage ceremony. Next morning the bride groom sends a string of beads (called Thimni), a comb, five small wooden boxes containing turmeric power, red lead with a sari and enter the mundwa and sits on wooden stool placed near a hallow in the ground called 'Homa', on the other side of which is a similar seat in readiness for the
bride—the father bringing her in join bride's and bridegroom's hands saying 'Kannia Dan'. After the pair is seated the priest make offerings of grains in the fire (Homa). If a brahmin was not available for performing the ceremony a member of the Thanda wears a sacred thread and acts as a priest. The Brahmin knot the bride's and bridegrooms clothes together, placing one rupee, a piece of turmeric and a few grains of rice in this knot. He strain another corner of their 'dooputta' (Upper Veil) with turmeric and knots, the second knot implying they are married for life. The back of the dooputtas are marked with a 'swastic' symbol with turmeric paste. After the completion of this ceremony, the next day, the bride's father has to make her a present of a young bullock (Deju) with pack saddle, a complete set of ornaments and a sufficient set of Langas (Skirt) to last her, for her life time. Next day the bride is taken to the 'Janosa' as the boys encampment is called. With this the marriage ends.

The distinguishing feature of the marriage is that the women sing songs which are instructive to the bride, briefing her of her duties and role in her husband's house and the necessity for her to bring a good name to her parental home. Each song is accompanied by the members embracing the bride and crying. The reasons offered is that the Sugali, being a wandering tribe, the bride's parents or kith often thought of marriage as a culmination of their relationship and the probability of never again seeing the bride in their life time. This customary practice of this tribe is called as 'Dhavalo'.
DHAVALO SYSTEM: In the history of any society, marriage and death gave occasion to people to give vent to their emotions by weeping. A systematic weeping. A systematic weeping is followed by the Sugali from time immemorial but it is unknown among other people. The custom of 'Dhavalo' is one of the most interesting practices among the Sugali life.

Dhavalo, means a kind of weeping, followed on different occasions during a girl's married life. It is a training given to the Naveleri, a new bride by some expert elderly Sugali ladies. Soon after Vetudu (bridegroom) reaches the house of Naveleri (bride) along with Leria (an assistant) a follower of Vetudu, a Nakota (a programme) called Bhang and Ghota is performed. From the night of this ceremony the Naveleri is initiated into the Dhavalo training in the presence of the Nayakani (wife of Nayak, who is the President of Settlement) Karbharni (wife of Karbare, secretary to Nayak) and Daisani (wife of Davo, Vice-president of Settlement) and amongst other thanda ladies. This Dhavalo training continues from the day of Ghota till the day the Navelevi and goes to the new house of her husband. The expert tandri (ladies) keeps teaching the Dhavalo to the bride required for different occasions. They are (1) expression of sorrow (2) expression of prayer (3) expression of bride's view.

At the time of marriage, the Naveleri is made to recite Dhavalo for a long period while at the time of her departure she is left alone to recite Dhavalo on her 'Dheju' (bullock presented
to her by her parents. )  This is a stage of test to know
that whether she has learnt Dhavalo well or not. This final act
is called 'Haveli'. Haveli is a system of weeping by Naveleri alone,
who recites prayers conveying good wishes for the well being of
her parents, relatives, the thanda people and the thanda at the time
of her departure to the house of the bridegroom. When the 'Haveli'
is recited the Dheju bullock is fully decorated with colourful clothes.
The Tangdi of Naveleri is placed on the back of the Dheju bullock.
The Naveleri is made to stand on the back of the Dheju bullock.

Deep sorrow expressed while sending off a newly married
woman to her husband's place is quite common in India. But in the
case of Sugali, it is heightened and expressed without any inhibition,
because, in the past such a woman was not likely to return to her
natal home because of the nomadic life. Unlike the women of other
castes, she did not visit her parental home often enough to
participate in important rituals and celebrations, because of
nomadism. Thus, a tradition of married women not visiting their
natal homes crystalised during their nomadic days and continues to
this day, even though conditions have changed. The Sugali, now,
permit their daughter-in-law to visit their natal homes. The wailing
habits could be viewed as vestiges of old ways of life. When
transport and communications were scanty and the Sugali caravans
of pack-bullocks were always on the move there was no certainty
of meeting again the person who parted on marriage.
The Sugali old informants say that they wept in the past over to the shoulders of the bridegroom when he set out for the bride's place for marriage because there was no knowing whether he would return to his people because of his possible death in the encounter while capturing the bride. Now-a-days the custom of bride-capture is not in vogue and yet the custom of weeping persists. Even now when Sugali women meet by chance after a long separation they weep aloud even on the road or in the market place. Such occasions of rare meeting are replete with joy and sorrow and the customary weeping of the Sugali women on such occasions may be called rite of re-union.

MARRIAGE SYSTEM (PRESENT): Now-a-days some of the Sugalis celebrate the marriages in the traditional manner and they strictly adhere to the clan exogamy and tribe endogamy in selecting their mates to their children. The groom now-a-days is accompanied by one chunga (hukkah) three or five friends, the total number in the party to be add-including hukkah should be three, five or seven. When they arrive, they are treated with feast music and dancing. They are entertained all along till marriage ceremony takes place. In the mean while enough number of laingas (colourful embroidered petticoats) vie l called 'odhani' and ornaments are brought for the bride. Ornaments consist of number of bangles, armlets, anklets, nose-toe and finger rings, number of bead necklace and white and yellow metal necklace and ear-rings. The marriageble woman has to wear all these, as none can identify the
bride without these ornaments. The bridegroom wears a dhoti, shirt and marriage ceronets. A booth is erected at the bride's place. The posts are made of the trunks of 'jilledi (calotropis) tree.

On the wedding night, a square area is smeared with cow dung and is decorated with wheat drawing. Two pestles are erected on this place and to these pestles iron ring and mendhal are tied. Seven new earthen pots are filled with cold water and kept on the place already prepared. Two of these pots are big while others are small. Then the bride and the groom are seated near the pestles. A thread is wound round neck of the pots, then around the right hand of the bridal pair seven times. This is called 'Kankana'. Separate Kankana is used for the bride and groom. They unite each others knot at the end of the marriage rite. Then sweets are placed in front of them. They share the dish, feeding each other. Then a large wooden plate called 'Khagoti', filled with water in which rice has been washed, is placed in front of the couple. The Head of the Thanda (Naik) puts two Kavadis or sea-shells, two betal nuts and one rupee in this water. The bridal couple are supposed to find these things from that non-transparent water. Further, they are asked to play a game of throwing a small plate on this water. The couple are required to go around the pestles seven times by the officiating priest. This priest is not a brahmin but he is a member of the tribe (Vadtya). He puts on a sacred thread like the brahmin priest. When the couple is going around the pestles, the Sugali women sing
songs by closing their eyes. After these rites are over, the newly wed couple is made to sleep under one big cloth in the booth itself. And in the morning bathe them with cold water already kept in the pots.

It is noticed that even today the Sugali are aware of the traditional system of selection of their marriage partners. The guidelines suggest on whom to marry and whom not to marry. The Sugali strictly adhere even today to tribal endogamy, sub-tribe endogamy, surname exogamy incest taboos and preferential marriages. The rules of endogamy compell the Sugali to select a spouse within tribe and within a sub-tribe but the rules of exogamy prescribe that an individual must find a spouse outside the surname group. Now-a-days the Sugali encourage cross-cousin marriages, because the marriageable persons are known to each other and when they marry better understanding is supposed to develop among them. However, a boy is free to marry a patrileneal or matrileneal cross-cousins.

Now-a-days the General tendency of the Sugali is that they do not favour their children marrying unknown relatives. The marriages are contracted within their settlements. The economic position of the two families are taken into consideration for the selection of marriage partners. The custom of giving bride-price has produced a tendency for families of equal financial status to enter into matrimonial alliances. The payment of bride-price to the parents of bride is an inevitable custom among the Sugali.
It is stated that the persons who are not able to pay the bride-price are considered to be incapable of looking after their wives. But, now, the practice of giving bride-price is gradually disappearing but in its place, the Sugali of both the groups are demanding dowry. Infact, the Sugali have borrowed the custom of taking dowry from the settled agricultural caste Hindu villages. The amount of dowry naturally depends on economic status of the bride groom's family. If the bridegroom is educated and employed the dowry will be more. Few decades ago, the bride-price used to be paid by the father of bridegroom to the father of bride, which was traditionally fixed, but this custom has been replaced, because the Sugali have travelled a lonway from their nomadic transportation to semi-pastoral and semi-grarian. Thus, it can be assumed that within a span of two to three decades the traditional payment of bride price has been replaced by the payment of dowry among the Sugali.

It is noted that since a decade there is an increasing tendency among the Sugali to perform their marriage in a manner more or less similar to that of agricultural Hindu communities followed by Sanskritic rituals like tying of 'tali' and presence of a Brahmin priest. The ideal form of marriage for the Sugali is monogamy even though they are not against polygamy. The practice of polygamy is very limited among the Sugalis. In fact, the polygamous unions are resorted to in exceptional cases when the first wife bears no children or suffers from a chronic disease or
upon the traditional obligation of marrying one's elder brother's widow (levirate). The practice of monogamy has very strong bonds among the Sugali. Both men and women try to adhere to their conjugal rights with a view to leading a happy marital life. If both the wife and husband do not like each other they may part with each other and seek their new partners freely.

The Sugali are by and large an endogamous community. Though a few cases of marrying outsiders are known, they practise both clan and lineage exogamy, and even practised allied clan exogamy in the past, any marriage within such a group being considered incestuous. At present the allied clan exogamy is on the decline, permitting marriages between clans which constituted the Jatbhai, because of the scarcity of the brides of the allied clans as there was only one wife clan (Vadtya clan) for them. A few intra-clan marriages also have taken place, arising out of love affairs which were later regularised by marriage; but this type of marriages are very rare in this community.

Moreover, a few educated and modernised Sugalis question the very rationale of the clan or lineage exogamy. They argue that, since they cannot trace the definite relationship of remote kin in a clan or lineage, there is nothing wrong in contracting marriage with them. They, however, agree that a marriage alliance should not be sought between close agnates. Since the Sugali originally belonged to North India, they did not, in line with North Indian
marriage usages, allow cross-cousin marriage and uncle niece marriage for quite some time even after settling down in the south.\textsuperscript{26}

In view of long years of stay in this region, and on account of their increased contact with South Indian customs, the Sugali have borrowed the Tali rite, a custom which did not form part of their marriage ceremonies when they were in North India. Until recently, a bride's marriage dress approximated to the marriage dress of a Rajasthani bride, viz., bodice, upper veil and skirt, but now she wears a sari, blouse and veil at the marriage ceremony, the customary bridal dress in South India.

Now-a-days, the Sugali invite a brahmin priest in almost all marriages. Though the Sugalis have been coming from North India to South India for the past few centuries, they have started to model their marriage ceremonies along with the Hindu castes because their economic conditions culture contact had improved. In the past, on account of their nomadic way of life, the Sugali could not employ a brahmin priest to officiate at the marriage rituals, for they invariably camped away from villages and towns. So, one of their own elders from Vadtya, clan well versed in the rituals officiated,\textsuperscript{27} but when they came into increased contact with the Hindu peasants who make use of the brahmin priest at marriages, the Sugali in the process of becoming a settler, began to seek the services of a brahmin priest whenever available.
THE SUGALI WOMEN

The Sugali women stand out clearly from other women, due to the distinctive dress ornamentation. They are comely and strong in physique. Married women are distinguished from the unmarried women in that they wear their bangles between the elbow and shoulder, while the unmarried have them between the elbow and wrist. Unmarried girls may wear black bead necklace which are taken off at marriage. Married women also use an ear-ring called 'guriki' or 'gugri' to distinguish them from widows and unmarried girls. The men are agile and muscular capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. Their ordinary dress is the dhoti with short trousers, and frequently gaudy turbans and caps in which they indulge on festive occasions.

The Sugali women are comely and tall. Their costume is the langa (skirt) or gown of Karwar cloth, with a quantity of embroidery. The chola called 'Kali' or bodice with embroidery on the front and on the shoulders, covers the bosom and is tied by variegated cards at back, the ends being ornamented with cowries and beads. A covering cloth made of Karwar cloth, with embroidery, is fastened in at the waist and hangs at the sides with a quantity of tassels and strings of cowries. Their jewels are very numerous and include strings of 10 or 20 rows with a cowry as a pendant called the cheed threaded on horse hair and a silver hasali (necklace), a sign of marriage equivalent to the tali. Brass or horn bracelets, 10 to 20 in number extending to the elbow on either
arm, with a 'gazera' or piece of embroidered silk, one inch wide tied to the right wrist. Anklets of ivory of bone are only worn by married women, they are removed on the death of the husband. Pachala or silk embroidery adorned with tassels and cowries are also worn as anklets. Their other jewels mukuram or nose ornament, a silver kania or pendant from the upper part of the ear attached to a silver chain which hangs to the shoulders, and a profusion of silver, brass and lead rings. The hair in the case of unmarried women unadorned, brought up and tied in a knot at the top of the head, with married women, it is fastened with a cowry or a brass button and heavy pendant or ghugri fastened on the temples. This later is an essential sign of marriage and its absence is a sign of widowhood. Sugali women when carrying water are fastidious in the adornment of the pad called 'gala' which is placed on their heads. They cover it with cowries and attach to it an embroidered cloth called 'phietis' ornamented with tassels and cowries.

The sari which is called 'Odani' (upper veil) is thrown over the head as a hood, with a frontlet of coins dangling over the forehead. This frontlet is removed in the case of widows. At the end of the tufts of hair at the ears, heavy ornaments are braided. Married women have gold and silver coin at the ends of these tufts, while the widows remove them. Their dearest possessions are large broad bracelets, some made of wood and others of bone and ivory. Almost the whole arm is covered with these ornaments. In the case of widowhood the bracelets on the upper
arm are removed. They are kept in place by a cotton bracelet, gorgeously made, the strings of which are ornamented with the inevitable cowries. On the wrist broad, heavy brass bracelets with bells are worn, these being presents from the mother to the daughter.

The traditional dress made of coarse cloth is very thick and heavily embroidered. It has ornate fixtures such as small mirrors, cowries etc. It was designed to suit their nomadic ways and the occupational needs of passing through jungle tracts in order to collect wood and other forest produce. Even today, there has been no change in the dress as the women still continue to collect wood for fuel from the forest. However, some young women have adopted the local saris but the pattern of wearing the saree is that of the Marwari women, there by retaining their distinct style.

The Sugali women are perhaps the most heavily ornamented in the world. Their gorgeous costumes studded with mirrors and striking ornaments are an external manifestation of their great zest for life. The women put on many thick ivory or plastic rings on their arms. For married women, the symbolically significant ornaments and ivory bangles on the upper arms called 'chuderbalya' in addition to those on the fore arms, chains in the pinnae which connect the plaits and pendants (ghugris) attached to the plaits hanging from the temples. It is noticed that the Sugali women have a dot on the left side of the nose below the nasal root. Because of their elaborate dress and ornamentation,
they sparingly take a bath as it is tedious and time consuming to remove and put on their dress.

Among the Sugali women widow remarriage and polygamy are said to prevail freely and it is customary for even divorced women to remarry during the life time of the husband. Widow remarriage is common, the widow is recognised by the absence of the symbolically significant ornaments worn by the married women. Divorce is easy and the only condition necessary is the assent of the Naik or chief of the thanda.

The status of Sugali married women is connected with their child bearing and child rearing functions and therefore, as mothers they always receive respect and consideration for this same reason. Barreness is regarded as a stigma and can be the cause for divorce or even re-marriage of the husband. The position of a mother is further elevated with the birth of a son. The mother of male child is presented with a silver disc or tali having a single flower engraved on it for the first son and two flowers thereafter for the birth of second or more sons. The father usually celebrates a son's birth by distributing molasses and dry coconut to his castemen. No such disc is added nor is there distribution of molasses and dry coconut on the birth of a daughter.

DIVORCE

Divorce is very common among the Sugali and it is very easy to obtain divorce and no social stigma is attached to a divorced
Sugali. The main reason for the dissolution of marriage seems to be extramarital relation. Excessive drunkenness, illtreatment, impotency, prolonged ill health, sterility also cause divorce among the Sugali. Adultery on the part of the wife is not considered a serious offence if the husband is willing to pardon it.

It is stated by the elderly women of the Sugali that a woman does not breakup the marital bond unless the husband completely stops discharging his responsibilities towards her and his family. Since the family organisation has patriarchal in character, the behavioural patterns that followed it accepted absolute submission and dependance from the members of family.

The cases of divorce are settled by the Gwar Panchayat. Both the couple can move to the Panchayat. Generally the Naik of the settlement advises the couple not to separate. But if his persuasion fails then only the case is taken up for hearing. The Panchayat consists of the chief (Naik) of the Thanda and a few elderly people. The decision is taken only after giving a hearing to both the parties. If the wrong lies with the husband he is fined. In case the wife is at fault and has been guilty of conjugal disloyality and if she insists on separation she is allowed to take divorce with her husband. After taking divorce the children at breast invariably remain with the mother and the bigger sons are some times brought up by the father. After divorce he/she is allowed to marry any one of his or her choice.
WIDOW RE-MARRIAGE

During their nomadism and some time after settling down, the widow after lived with the younger brother of the deceased husband as his wife (Levirate), but there is no ceremony to solemnise the union. The younger brother, has a claim his deceased elder brother's wife, and may marry her by simply assembling Gwar Panchayat, giving a feast, and saying he will do so, taking her to his hut. Some times the younger brother may not care to do so, or the widow may refuse. In the first event, should she have a son by the elder brother the effects are equally divided and the brother must support her till re-marriage. In the second event, if the brother is willing, the widow simply received food and clothing at the brother's hands, and in either event she can only re-marry with the Devar's consent, when he receives Rs. 75/- from her husband and the Rs. 5/- is given to the Naik of her thanda. Should the widow elope, her Devar chooses few associates to go and sit or squat down in front of any hut she may be in, to be fed and liquored up till the above mentioned sum is paid, then she may marry her paramour.

But this custom today is not favoured much by this tribe. Still it is a dire economic necessity for the widow. The children if any, do not live with her. The daughters will be married out and the sons live separately with their wives. The widow if she remains with a married son becomes a drudge in the latter's family and her relations with her daughter-in-law are seldom cordial. When
a widow marries the younger brother of her husband, she can maintain her control over her minor children, until the latter setup separate establishment on marriage.

The custom of inheriting one's brother's widow was allowed in the past, and was quite commonly practised even after sedentarisation. But the Sugali have changed their view regarding this custom. The 'Banjarah Conference' held at Gadag in 1940, considered it as improper or socially undesirable. It is because of the Sanskritization or adoption of the social customs of the local agricultural high caste Hindu (Reddy, Kamma, Balija) with a view to raising their ritual status in the caste hierarchy. The rationale behind the old custom is the protection of the honour of the widow and the family and avoidance of the division of the family resources or property, protection of the children of the deceased member of the family and interest of the lineage in retaining the children and the women. As though to prevent widow's re-marriage with men of other lineage, payment for widow re-marriage had been fixed higher than the usual bride-price. A man marrying a widow had to pay a fixed amount by the Gwar Panchayat to the agnates of the deceased husband as a compensation. But this customary practice has slowly disappeared. This seems to be the economic dimension of the disuse of the custom. This is how economic considerations are sometimes sacrificed to gain social prestige.
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN TRIBE AND OUTSIDE

The KINSHIP system is the whole process of designating the relationship of the various kins by a particular set of kinship-terminology as well as the patterns of behaviour and the modes of reckoning descent. Kinship can be based on bilineal as well as unileneal decent. The Sugali have patrileneal descent and patrileneal extension of incest-taboos.\(^{34}\) Hence, the individual in the Sugali community is assigned membership of a particular consanguineous Kingroup through the males or agnatic line right from his birth, and property and surname are transmitted from father to son. However, they also recognise kinship through both the parents but such recognition is not equally weighed.

THE SURNAME GROUP: Among the Sugali of the study area and the region, no difference exists between sub-clan or lineage and surname groups. Each surname group is named, agnatic and exogamous Kingroups whose descent is traceable. The members of the surname group presume to be related to one another by the patrilineal succession under a common name that may indicate the name of their progenitor. The surname group among the Sugali is a corporate group and it forms one of the important functional units of the social life of Sugali settlements. When there is any celebration in the family the members of the surname group living in the settlement and around the settlement gets first priority for invitation. When a hut or a house is to be constructed for any family members, the
members of the surname group are normally the first persons to extend their co-operation. Likewise at the time of birth, marriage and death rituals the members of the surname group are the first to be invited.

The surname groups do not enter into matrimonial alliance but use kinship terms among them as brother's and sisters. The rule of surname exogamy necessitates the dependance of one surname group upon another and it helps to integrate the Sugali tribe as a whole. In the case of women the membership of the surname group is offered after marriage. Once they are married, they are considered as members of their husband's surname group. In the case of death or divorce of her husband she has to forgo the membership in the surname group of her husband. Each surname group comprises several agnatic descent groups. The agnatic descent group includes all those who are descendants in the male line commonly known male ancestor. It is a unilineal, residential or non-residential and exogamous kin unit with a range of more than two or three generations in which descent is computable. Members of the agnatic descent group generally dwell in the same settlement. When they reside in one settlement, they usually build their houses close to each other.

These agnatic descent groups are not given any separate names but are known after their surname groups. The memberships of this descent group is acquired by birth only. In the case of women upon the death or divorce of her husband, her membership
of her husband's surname group ceases but her membership of the agnatic descent group of her father remains permanent.

When a person dies all the members of this agnatic descent group observe pollution for a fixed number of days. Generally, the members of the agnatic descent group come together during ritual's and ceremonies (like tonsure ceremonies, marriages, deaths and religious functions). A woman is looked after by a member of her agnatic descent group when her husband dies before her. In case she remarried any person beyond her husband's agnatic descent group, she is not entitled to claim the property or the things left by her departed husband. The property is taken away by the agnatic descent group of her deceased husband. Thus, the agnatic descent group is a co-operative kin group, where as the surname group is the kin group of recognition. Unlike the surname group, the agnatic descent group is a corporate group with obligations of reciprocal co-operation and hospitality.

Over the years, the Sugali tribe have developed increasing dependence on local non-Sugali agricultural communities by working as share-croppers, tenants, wage-labourers and attached agricultural labours. Therefore, the Sugali cannot be viewed in isolation, if we have to define their Sugaliness or to identify them as a detribalizing community and to understand how they survive as a group in modern India.
It is observed that a few people belonging to the agricultural castes living in the respective neighbouring hamlets not only attend the marriage of the Sugali but also partake cooked food along with the Sugali. The constant interaction of the Sugali of both the groups with the communities of the neighbouring villages has ensured the Sugali and the non-Sugali to come closer. The social intercourse between the Sugali and the agricultural Hindu communities of the neighbouring villages helps peasant Sugali to maintain good relationship with the agricultural castes and seek advice on agricultural operations, borrowing of agricultural implements and tools and seeds during lean season. In social relations the Sugali of Pedapalli Thanda move freely mix with village communities and they invite them on the occasions like marriage and tonsure ceremonies. But this kind of social interaction is somewhat limited between the Sugali of Narasampalli settlement due to the location of the settlement in the midst of forest.

The social interaction of the Sugali with artisan caste of neighbouring villages have improved after breakdown of their traditional occupation. They say when they were as a nomadic transporters and traders and, when their thanadas were on the move from one place to another place they had their own artisan groups within their community. They attended to all works like sanar (make of gold and silver ornaments) Lohar (iron workers) Navi (barber) Dhobi (washerman). At present these artisan communities of Sugali have disappeared because of the break down of the traditional mode
of nomadic life. They have taken to agriculture labour as means of livelihood. Now these tribal people are forced to depend on the artisan communities of the neighbouring villages.

Those Sugali who have taken to agriculture either as primary or secondary occupation have contacts with blacksmiths or carpenters who reside in the neighbouring villages of their respective settlements. For making and repairing of various agricultural implements the 'vadrangi' (carpenter) receives remuneration in kind per annum at the time of harvest. The 'Kummari' (potterer) supply earthenware to the Sugali for which the former paid in cash or in kind immediately. During the time of marriage of the Sugali tribe it is the bounden duty of the Kummari to supply earthen pots for this, they receive rice, arecanuts, betel leaves and some amount of cash. The 'Chakali' (washerman) renders services to both the Sugali groups. They wash clothes and collect remuneration in cash from pastoral Sugali and grain at the time of harvest from the peasant Sugali. The barbers or Mangalis are attached to most of the families and receives remuneration annually in cash or in kind as far as their regular and ritual services are concerned. During the ceremonial occasions he receives not only cash but also some rice, betel leaves and betel nuts.

A careful analysis of the social life of the Sugali reveals that they maintain sufficient socio-cultural isolation but for certain services they have constant interaction with the caste people. In the process, they have been losing some of their age old customs
and traditions such as traditional marriage pattern, traditional dress, and are borrowing many new traits such as adoption of cross cousin marriages and a few South Indian kinship usages because of the necessitated contact by economic interdependence. The Sugali Society is also influenced by the process of Hinduization. The process of incorporation of some features of local Hinduism by the Sugali helped them to blend into the caste structure and they are now being integrated into the civilized society. Even then the Sugali influenced some internal changes in their society, but even today, they are able to maintain their separate ethnic identity, living in separate settlements exclusively meant for them by retaining some of their traditions and customs. The Sugali have preserved their myths, ceremonies, kinship system, their distinct dialect, dress and ornaments of their women, endogamy and exogamous principles and their exclusive settlements. The Sugalis have acclimatised to the increased contact with the caste people and have yet preserved their original culture.

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2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 8-14.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., pp. 28-29.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.


17. Mohan, S., Ibid.


19. Ibid.

20. Tuesdays and Fridays are treated as auspicious days by the nomadic Sugali still these days regarded by them as auspicious for all important occasions.

22. Ibid., p. 45.
23. Thurston, E., Ibid.

24. Dhavolo - is a customary passion of weeping by the Sugali women is wholly reproduced from the Report of All India Banjarah Study Team (Ed. by Naik, Ranjit).


