CHAPTER – III
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Social organization is the way that people put together the elements of action in such a way as to get done something they want. It deals mainly with the significant grouping of individuals and grading people for an effective carrying out of the various types of activities demanded by the common existence. Man does not live alone and at the same time he has to meet his basic needs like food, and shelter and social needs like companionship, recreation, religious activities, play etc. He thus forms a group of association with the help of other men and builds up certain institutions. With the help of that group he satisfies his basic needs.\(^1\) Thus to meet the various types of needs, man forms different types of associations and institutions in the society which help in maintaining social organization.

Social organization has usually been taken as a synonym for social structure. But generally the idea of organization is that of people getting things done by planned action. It is described where we account for the choices and resolutions of difficulties and conflicts that actually went on whereas social structure is a persisting general character, a pattern of typical relationship. So it can be said that social organization pertains to dynamic aspect whereas social structure is static and concrete amalgamation of different elements of society.

According to Majundar & Madan (1991)\(^2\) social reorganization would consist of the inter relations between a particular type of
groups, viz. those groups which make social life possible. The family, school (if any), dormitory, clan, and men's club comprise the economic organization of a tribe; and groups life the Panchayat comprise its political organization. The former sustains, and the later controls and regulates the social reorganization. The inter-relation between the three would present the total pattern of tribal organization. They further differentiate the social organization with Hindu Social Organizations. The Hindu Social Organization consists of the pattern of inter and intra-caste relations. But the tribal social organization is different in so far as there is not much inter-tribal contact and communication in India except where geographical contiguity has forced it upon some tribes, e.g., Munda, Oraon, etc. When we refer to tribal social organization we imply those generalizations, which we may make about social structure after a comparative study of the intra-tribal group-relationship pattern. The present chapter deals with family system of the Sugalis, their marriage systems (nomadic and present), status 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 recognize their unity into a tribe different and distinct from the neighbouring castes and other tribes. The original dialect of Sugali known as Gor-Boli or Gerero-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 practicing 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 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 distinct group. The recent changes in their social economic life have not shattered their feeling of oneness.

The Sugali emphasis on setting 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 contact 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

The Sugali society is a single homogeneous community. Cumberlege (1882) says 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 organize 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. After careful screening of all the ethnographic accounts it reveals that the entire Sugali tribe can be divided into 17 sub-tribes which are: 1. Mathura, 2. Labhani, 3. Charan, 4. Dhari, 5. Dhalia, 6. Baid, 7. Turkia, 8. Mukheri, 9. Dhankute, 10. Kangi, 11. Sirkiband, 12. Sanar, 13. Nayi or Navi, 14. Singadya, 15. Badi, 16. Jogi and 17. Rohidas.

The Mathura Sugali or Muttooriahs are divided 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
The Mathura Sgualis 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 Labhana is traditionally descended from one Mota, one of the two cowherds employed of Krishnaji Rajah. The name Labhana 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 Labhans also came to Deccan as Commissariat carriers with Moghal army.

The third sub-tribe, Rajput charan 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 Jadh. The names of this division are derived from 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 Thawugurh, probably one of the Rajput names for Delhi in formers days, and the Burthia (Vadtya) or Jadh 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, in the year 1630 A.D., as the commissariat carriers of Asip Jai'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 Maharastra district and adjoining Berar and Telangana, Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh. The Sugalis 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 is 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 Nanak 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 curtains 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 settlements, 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 Baid Sugali, a sub-tribe, is 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. The 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 Sunni sect, follow many Hindu traditions such as worshipping of Kali Bhavani. 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 specialized 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 an 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 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 ORGANIZATION

The family as the standard social unit has been found in one form or another at almost all levels of cultural development. The form and basis of familial groupings have varied from time to time and from place to place. Different types of families have been observed in different societies and at different points of time and space. But as a basic social group, family existed in all societies and at all times.

According to Lowie (1950)\textsuperscript{13}, the family may be considered as an association that corresponds to the institution of marriage. Radcliffe Brown (1941)\textsuperscript{14} includes in the family husband and wife and their child or children. In a tribal family relationship between members is to be understood in a sociological as much as a psychological sense. Thus, the family will include not only the husband and wife and their minor children but also parents, in-laws and wife/husband of sons/daughters. The ideal household in most tribes would include two or more married couples and their children.

The family among the Sugali is characterized by patrilineal descent patrilocal residence and patriarchal authority\textsuperscript{15}. Since the families are basic units, their type and size have an important bearing on their social and economic organization. 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 constitutes 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 families of the Sugal\textis\textis in Rayalaseema region, 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 enters into a wage earner or to be involved in productive activities as 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. This is observed that a few pastoral Sugali with huge number of cattle and sufficient cultivable land at pastoral Gonipenta thanda and a few Sugali with comparatively more landed property at Adavibapanapalli thanda have large sized families as such people preferred patrilocal type of residence with in turn makes the management of cultivation and cattle rearing.

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 out number other types at both rural and semi-urban 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 in rural thandas are still in the grip of tradition and most of the families in semi-urban thandas are in transition.

The family organization 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 tied 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 resources16. Nomadism discourages unwieldy burdens, both material and non-material. This is corroborated nomadic way of life. Malhotra and Bose17 in their sample survey of 100 out of 600 semi-nomadic 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 under study are nuclear, 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 organization 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 individualization 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 organization.

According to Pithavath Laxma Naik, a 78-year old man of Gonipenta thanda in Penukonda Mandal, Anantapur district, in this settlement nuclear families are predominantly found due to two reasons. First reason is the general practice for a son to separate from his parents soon after marriage and form a separate household, because many of the Sugalis possess small pieces of lands, or remain as landless labourers working as casual or agricultural labourers. The second reason for separation is domestic quarrels between the wives of brothers or misunderstandings between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law.
STATUS OF WOMEN

Status is customarily defined by social scientists as a recognized social position or socially defined position of an individual or a community within a society. In recent times many attempts have been made to understand the status of women in the tribal society.

The women in the Sugali community constitute more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them in most of the settlements in Rayalaseema region. It is said that in olden days, a daughter is a guest in her parent’s home. Going to the husband’s house is like going to jail. There is status variation of women in their parental versus their marital homes. Women marry out of their natal communities into the communities of their husbands. Women’s status as wives is lower than their status as daughters. This dual aspect of women’s status is crucial for understanding the lives of the women in the study. The marriage rules prohibit daughters from marrying men from their own thanda or marrying into the same thanda from which wives are taken. Marrying within one’s parental thanda is impossible. Usually the Sugali women live their lives in two thanda, their parental thanda, where they grow up, and their husband’s thanda, into which they marry. Until she has grown sons and her own parents are dead, a women’s primary emotional affiliation is to her natal relatives. The strongest emotional bonds between men and women are those between brother and sister and mother and son, rather than between husband and wife. The customs of purdah, restrict the interaction of wives with their husbands and other members of their husband’s household. These restrictions are designed to ensure that the alliance between husband and wife is subordinated to the alliance of men with their consanguineous kinsmen. The Sugali women do not keep purdah restrictions in their natal village and therefore prefer to visit their parents whenever possible. Changes in status as a function of age, are the second most important determinants of women’s status.
Each new wife enters her husband's house at the lowest status and advances as she has children, particularly sons, and as younger wives come into the courtyard. The increase in women's status with increasing age occurs in most societies.

All the purdah restrictions are ostensibly observed to honor all the older members of the family. The respect-avoidance customs within the family are ways in which the wives honour their husbands, other family men, and the older women of the household. Purdah and caste rules are complex, interactive and inclusive. Deferential customs for both caste and purdah distinctions revolve around food, clothing, seating arrangements and work roles. Both sets of customs maintain authority and status, and ensure obedience of subordinates to superiors by instituting ritual separation between persons of different status ranks and elaborate expressions of deference by subordinates to superiors.

In olden days, in the Sugali society, purdah restrictions guard against disruptive intrusions of brides into the extended family by limiting social interaction of wives with their husbands and with senior men and women of the family. These communication restrictions between husband and wife serve as marriage dilution customs. They subordinate the bonds between husbands and wives to the bonds of sons to their blood relatives. The Sugali men have the power to veto any suggestions made by women. Women are discouraged from getting more than a rudimentary education. The men control even the physical movements of their wives. The subordinate status of women is further emphasized by the custom that women must crouch on the floor and pull their saris over their faces when in the presence of their husbands or any man older than their husbands. This custom is so pervasive that young women usually cover their faces even in front of older low caste serving men. This is a sign of respect for the man's status. Covering the face in the presence of one's husband is also a sign of respect for his mother,
another of the customs designed to protect the mother-son relationship from being threatened by the son’s attachment to his wife. When a man has entered the house for his meal, he will quickly retire into a room or behind the wall of his hearth. The women are then free to move about their business quietly. Because of this custom, the men always announce their presence with a warning cough before entering the household and when possible, send a boy or the youngest male present on errands to the courtyard, since the younger the man, the fewer are the women who must keep purdah from him. In nuclear families, the wife usually does not cover her face before her husband, but only because the man usually requests her not to continue this custom.

The symbols of women's status inferiority are easy to perceive. The ameliorating factor in the status inequality of such a social organization, however is the strength of the bonds which exist between mothers and sons and between sisters and brothers. Adult males are taught that they should be respectful and considerate to their mothers and because of their early, prolonged intimate contact with her are influenced by her wishes. The mother feeds her son even after he is married and even has strong influence on his marital life. She runs the family as long as she wishes to assume the responsibility.

Ideally a man and his wife are not allowed to talk to each other in front of the older members of the family. Since the mother-in-law is virtually always present in the courtyard and the young wife cannot leave the courtyard, this means in effect that the young couple may converse only surreptitiously at night. A husband is not supposed to show any open concern for his wife's welfare; this is the responsibility of his parents. If the wife is sick, the in-laws see that she goes to a doctor; if they do not, neither she nor her husband should complain. The villagers report one or two cases where a woman has remained childless of years and despite the great importance of having children,
has not seen a doctor because the husband was too shy to ask his negligent parents to take her. The restrictions, imposed on husband and wife in the presence of others, particularly the mother-in-law, are to avoid jealousy and conflict and to ensure that the extended family takes precedence in importance to the nuclear.

**WOMEN'S ROLE IN FAMILY LIFE:** As the Sugali community is patriarchal and patrilineal, property is shared equally among the sons. It is an accepted tradition for Sugali women to divide clothes and ornaments among the daughters. Sons are favoured in the community to daughters. Even in the traditional set up, property was not shared equally among all the children. In this scenario boys were preferred over girls but over the years this preference is becoming more promoted. Parents prefer sons to daughters, as they feel that the daughters belong to some other’s family after getting married. And even after giving dowry in large amounts, it is difficult to get a suitable husband. Sons are preferred as they perform the death rituals after their parent’s death. In urban areas it is seen less compared to the thandas. The Sugalis in the towns are educated mostly and they can easily realize the importance of treating equally both girls and boys, and are offered education, in technical and professional fields.

Economic conditions also play a major role as traditional marriages require a lot of money and time and most of the Sugalis feel that this type of marriage is outdated and they have a feeling that the caste Hindus may separate them.

Once the marriage takes place the bride does not belong to her parents’ family. Then onwards she is included in the husband’s family. The feast that is arranged for the wedding is now similar to that of other agricultural communities. But, earlier they used to serve both meat and sweets on these days. If we observe the Sugali older women, especially the married women never wear thali, kumkum on the fore head or toe rings. But at present in almost all the settlements,
the Sugali married women have started wearing all these things thali, kumkum on their fore heads and toe rings which are Hindu customs. 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 lifetime of the husband. Widow remarriage is common. The widow is recognized by the absence of the symbolically significant ornaments worn by the married women.

According to Bukya Ramaswamy Naik, a 67-year old man of Adavibapanapalli thanda in Mudigubba Mandal of Anantapur district, says that earlier, women were not given any position regarding the matters of decision making but slowly the advices given by the wives is being accepted as they found it useful. In the past husbands used to dominate women in all fields. During the past 20-30 years tremendous change has been taken place in the status of women. Approaching financial institutions like banks due to participating in Self-Help-Groups, watching television, rapid spread of mobile communication and road transport, availability of free education and introducing various government programmes for women enabled the Sugali women to participate in all important matters such as admitting children in schools of their choice and other property disputes.

MARRIAGE

The dawn of human civilization has been intimately associated with the social institution of marriage. The institution of marriage brings about a great change in human behaviour. By this medium; a person acquires a spouse and begins an interesting chapter in his life. As a social being man cannot live alone and his existence will have no meaning. Originally envisioned to cater to the needs of sex, marriage has in recent times undergone a metamorphosis. This is true in case of the larger social world and the tribes as well. Yet, the main purpose
of sexual gratification has remained undisturbed. Lucy Mair (1972)\textsuperscript{18} stated simply, a marriage creates relationships of affinity between people who may have been strangers or enemies earlier. Such is the cementing functions of marriage. According to Krige and Krige (1943)\textsuperscript{19} the main function of marriage is to create and perpetuate alliances between groups of people. Sexual or temperamental compatibility between the prospective spouses is not regarded as ideal. In respect of marriage among tribals, Chottopadhyya (1978)\textsuperscript{20} says that the tribal marriage is symbolic – the union of the members of two families, an exchange or sharing in common act, drinking from the same pot shared by all, rice – cake eaten jointly by women of both families. There is no doubt that matrimonial relationships among tribals have a wide and generous perspective. The youth enjoy the freedom of acquiring a mate of their own choice. The couples have a rendezvous at the pre-marital stage and it is also accepted by the liberal tribal society.

Marriage among the Sugali is based on the principles of community endogamy and clan exogamy\textsuperscript{21}. 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\textsuperscript{22}. However, inter-marriage is permitted between all the three clans. All the three clans are eligible to marry from the Vadtya clan and vice-versa. A consanguineous marriage is also a taboo in this tribe although other tribes, like the Koyas, the Chenchus, the Bhagators etc.
The Dhalia, Dhadi, Bhat, Sanar, and Jangad are treated as low and out-castes by the Sugali.\textsuperscript{23} The Dhadis and Bhats are beggers 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 has 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 and similarly, Chowhan Jangad, Pomhar Jangad and Burthia (Vadtya) Jangad. The marriages among them also were based on their master' clan exogamy. This included into the mainstream of Sugali community after seven generations.\textsuperscript{24}

**MARRIAGE SYSTEM:** 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 Thandas were based on clan exogamy. The nomadic Sugali had no permanent housing to celebrate to the marriages of their children\textsuperscript{25}. 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\textsuperscript{26}. 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 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 areca nuts, seven pieces of turmeric, a few grains of rice, some Kookoo (dye) and one rupee coin (Sakerorupia). With this the first ceremony commences.

SAGAI (BETROTHAL): Then the bride’s party invites bridegroom’s party to their Thanda for the ‘Sagai’ ceremony (betrothal). One auspicious day27 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 Thands. While going the boy’s father carries a hookah (a traditional smoking pipe) a large pouch (Kothali) filled with betel nuts for the betrothal ceremony, is styled themselves as Gole Khayane Jayero, (that is, going to eat jiggery at bride’s residence). The bride and bridegroom never see each other until the day of the official ceremony. The boy’s father serves hookah and betel nuts to all those present at the assembly. And the bridegroom’s father gives a feed of ‘Gheewar’28 (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.

VYAH (MARRIAGE): 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 most must be chosen. After the Sagai or Betrothal ceremony, the next ceremony, Vyah or marriage is the final ceremony. Messenge 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 muzzar (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. 29 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 form four annas to few rupees by the entire thanda. 30 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 similar a 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 makes 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 bridegroom's clothes together, placing one rupee, a piece of turmeric and a few grains of rice in this knot. He strains another corner 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 boy's 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 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. 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 along to recite Dhavolo on her 'Dheju' (bullock presented to her by 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 Navelri 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 crystallized 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. They says 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.

Nenavath Lakshmi Bai a 76-year old woman of Lakshmaiahkunta thanda in Kurnool district, expressed that 60 years ago, I got married at the age of sixteen. While I was going to the home of bridegroom, parents and other relatives wept and sang the songs as well as embraced me. On the occasion of 'Dhavalo', I was made to
stand on the back of a bullock in the possession moving in the street of the thanda. Now-a-days the custom of standing on the back of bullock for bride has disappeared and only parents and other relatives weep and sing the songs as well as embrace the bride.

**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 of the same sect, 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) veil called ‘*odhani*’ and ornaments are brought for the bribe. Ornaments consist of number of bangles, armlets, anklets, nose-toe and finger rings, number of bead necklace and while and yellow metal necklace and ear-rings. The marriageable woman has to wear all these, as none can identify the bride without ornaments. The bridegroom wears a dhoti, shirt and marriage coronets. Both are 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 other’s knot at the end of the marriage rite. Then sweets are placed in front of them. They share the dish, feeding with water in which rice has been washed, is placed infront of the couple. The Head of the
Thanda (Naik) puts two Kavadis or sea-shells, two beta nuts and one rupee in this water. The bridal couple is 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 is 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 newlywed couple is made to sleep under one big cloth in the booth itself. And in the morning bathe those with cold water already kept in the pots.

It is noticed in almost all the settlements of Rayalaseema region 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 compel 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 patrilineal or matrilineal 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 is 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 demanding dowry. In fact, 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 which was traditionally fixed, used to be paid by the father of bridegroom to the father of bride, but this custom has been replaced, because the Sugalis have travelled a long way from their nomadic transportation to semi-pastoral and semi-agrarian. 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.

Describing the present marriage system by 78 years old Pithavath Laxma Naik, who is 78-year old, residing in Gonipenta thanda in Penugonda mandal in Anantapur district says, since a decade there is an increasing tendency among thanda people to perform their marriage in manner more or less similar to that of agricultural caste communities living in Gonipenta village, followed by Sanskrit rituals like tying of ‘tali’ and presence of a Brahmin priest. All most all thandas not only in selected mandals of study area but also in Rayalaseema region, 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 this region. 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 practice both clan and lineage exogamy, and even practiced allied clan
exogamy in the past, any marriage within such a group being considered incestuous in olden days. 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 regularized by marriage; but this type of marriages are very rare in this community. Moreover, a few educated and modernized Sugalis questions about the very rational 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 setting down in the south. 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.

At present the Sugali invite a Brahmin priest in all most all marriages. Though the Sugalis have been coming from North India to South India for 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, 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.

WIDOW REMARRIAGE: - Widow re-marriages are in practice in pastoral settlements, and no social stigma is attached to the widow after marriage. Practicing the widow re-marriage is common among the Sugali community and it is called as 'Bhang Karer' or 'Suko Auto Chata Aero.' As the Sugalis claim themselves as Kshatriyas, they used to engage in continuous warfare. When the husband dies in the battle field, wife used to perform 'Sati.' The ladies who lost their husbands were reluctant to commit suicide, as their children might become orphans. Hence the widows are permitted to remarry. If a woman becomes widow the first preference is given to her husband’s younger brother to marry her. If the younger brother is not interested then only she can marry any other person according to her wish. In such cases a widow is expected to marry a widower; but there is no objection to her, marrying any other person. It is customary to marry the widow of elder brother. But an elder brother is not allowed to remarry his younger brother’s wife. She is considered as a ‘daughter’.

During their nomadism and sometime after setting down, the widow after lived with the younger brother of the deceased husband as his wife (Levirate), but there is no ceremony to solemnize the union. Widow re-marriages are very simple. It is not considered as the most delightful and auspicious occasion. The practice of widow re-marriage operates often in another way; a widow who does not want to marry her deceased husband’s brother is often not forced to, but if she chooses to marry another man, she is permitted to do so. The widow remarriage is permitted only with the permission of the Naik of the thandas. The children born to their deceased husband will inherit the
property of their father. However they enjoy equal rights along with children born to proxy father.

The children born of previous marriage reside with their mother and proxy father. The children born of re-marriage inherit the property of their father. The property of proxy father is not shared to the children of previous marriage. A Sugali woman who is willing to re-marry has to pay a nominal fee called ‘Taru’ (sulka) to the Gor Panchayat. To compensate the loss of an economic asset, the person who marries a widow, has to give bride-price to the widow’s in-laws. If a divorced woman wants to re-marry, she has to pay an amount of Rs.135, (Vaya Valira Savvasu) to the Gor Panchayat. A widow has to pay Rs.160 (Randa Berara Dudasu) to the panchayat. She has to bear the expenses of the Gor Panchayat.

In the past, if an elder brother marries and dies without offspring, the younger brother must marry the widow and the children of the deceased elder brother are regarded as his own children, if however, the elder brother dies leaving offspring, and the younger brother wishes to marry the widow, he must give fifteen rupees and three oxen to his brother’s children. Then he may marry the widow. As stated earlier, the custom here referred to is said to be practiced because their ancestor Sugriva married his elder brother Vali’s widow.

But at present they have discarded this custom and even marrying husband’s younger brother is not considered an obligation on the part of the widow. The Sugalis seem to have struck a golden mean between the two extremes. At present if the widow is not willing to marry her husband’s younger brother she can marry any other person from their caste provided the person pays some compensation to her deceased husband’s younger brother. If any person wants to marry a widow, there are two ways; one is to approach the widow directly and the second is to approach the Naik of the thanda. The Naik ascertains the widow and informs the concerned person. The
levirate practiced in Sugali society today has two main features which distinguish it from the levirate in other societies. First it is 'full marriage levirate', also known as 'widow inheritance' as the brother cohabits with the widow of his deceased brother. Second, it is 'junior levirate' as only the younger brother of the deceased brother is supposed to marry his widow. Reflecting this second feature, the local term for levirate contains the local term for 'younger brother-in-law'. If the younger brother is not interested then only she can marry any other person according to her wish. In such cases a widow is expected to marry a widower. It has been claimed by some Sugalis in the region, that in the past, the rule of junior levirate was strictly enforced. If the younger was not of age, the widow could stay with another person and bear him children, until her deceased husband's younger brother came of age when she was expected to join him with her children. When the husband dies, his place as spouse of the widow is taken by his brother or his son. The new consort may simply take the place of his dead brother in a marriage. Thus any children who are subsequently born to the woman are socially regarded as the sons not of the new husband but of the dead man. Of course, everybody knows that the late husband is not the physiological father of the children whom his children begets, but for social purposes the dead man is their father and they trace their descent from and inherit from him, and not from their physical father.

Owing to the scarcity of women in their society a widow is seldom allowed to go out of the family, and when her husband dies she is taken either by his elder or younger brother; this is in opposition to the usual Hindu practice, which forbids the marriage of a woman to her deceased husband's elder brother, on the ground that as successor to the headship of the joint family he stands to her, at least potentially in the light of a father. If the widow prefers another man and runs away to him, the first husband's relatives claim compensation, and threaten, in the event of its being refused, to
abduct a girl from this man's family in exchange for the widow. But no case of abduction has occurred in recent years.

**DIVORCE:** Provision of divorce of a man or woman is widely reported in human societies. There are definite norms governing the same. These vary from simple to complicated procedure. In the sphere of seeking divorce, the woman is neither segregated nor deprived. She has equal right to man in the matter of seeking divorce. The divorce either a man or woman, is allowed to marry again. The grounds of divorce for a husband are adultery, desertion, neglect of duties, contagious diseases, barrenness, and in compatibility of temperament, whereas sexual infidelity, quarrels and harsh treatment are main reasons for which a woman seeks the divorce.

Divorce is very common among the Sugalis and it is very easy to obtain divorce and no social stigma is attached to a divorced Sugali. It is stated by the elderly women of the Sugali that a woman does not break up the marital bond unless the husband completely stops discharging his responsibilities towards her and his family. Since the family organization has patriarchal in character, the behavioural pattern that followed it accepts absolute submission and dependence from the members of family.

Either of the couple of the Sugalis may divorce on the following grounds:

(i) When both husband and the wife mutually agree, they may separate from each other with the approval of the Gor Panchayat. In such cases, neither of the two parties may prefer any claim for compensation.

(ii) A wife may sever her matrimonial relations with her husband, if the husband does not agree to such separation.

(iii) A wife may secure a divorce if she has any affairs with third party and if the third party agrees to pay the bride price in the form of compensation to the husband and marry thereafter.
(iv) A husband may divorce a wife, if he so desires, before there is any issue born out of their union, but he may forfeit thereby his claim to the personal ornaments belonging to the wife.

(v) On the ground of cruelty, the wife may divorce her husband.

Though a Sugali woman is free to divorce her husband, she rarely attends the Gwor Panchayat and complains about the misbehaviour of her husband. It has become customary for a Sugali woman not to attend the Gwor Panchayat. If her presence is essential, then she attends the Gwor Panchayat by covering her face with veil.

Though the divorcees are allowed to marry again, there could be dispute on the grounds for divorce. Marriage implies a stable relationship between the husband and his kinsmen on the one hand, and the wife and kinsmen on the other. This relationship is maintained by a complex system of reciprocal obligations, duties and conventional pattern of behaviour. Between the married couple there are errors, breaches of good behaviour or recognized rights which the Sugali will quote as the usual causes of divorce. A Sugali husband may demand divorce from his wife for the following reasons:

- If his wife fails to produce children at all, a divorce will usually be demanded by the husband. Barrenness amounts to failure of the woman to fulfill the procreative obligations to which her husband has a legal right.
- A Sugali has a right to extract domestic and any other work from his wife, and he may call for divorce if she is lazy and does not listen to his commands.
- A man may ask for divorce if he discovers that his wife has committed adultery.
- If a wife runs away to live with another man her husband is more likely to seek a divorce.
- A Sugali may claim a divorce if his wife gets an incurable disease.
The bride wealth (Karar) may serve as security for his good behaviour as well as for hers. If the wife behaves badly her husband may divorce her and demand the return of his bride wealth. If the husband ill-treats his wife or fails to support her she may leave him, and if he is found to be at fault, his affines may refuse to return the bride wealth (Karar), so that he loses both property and wife.

As far as interpersonal relations are concerned, a man claims superior status to his wife. He usually expects her to be submissive, humble and obedient, and in the Sugali society he claims the right to beat her if she is not. She is permitted to claim the divorce on the grounds of cruelty, impotence, neglect of maintenance and adultery. However impotence doesn’t lead to divorce and in some cases, a woman cannot express it in the Gwor Panchayat. If the husband is suffering from an incurable disease like cancer or AIDS, his wife rarely claims the divorce.

A person who wants divorce has to get consent of the Naik and Gwor Panchayat of the concerned settlement. The client has to pay a nominal fee of Rs.1 to the Gwor Panchayat and should meet the expenditure of the panchayat members. According to Vislavath Ramaswamy Naik aged about 79 years old a resident of Gonipenta thanda, says that even today the cases of divorce are settled by the Gwor Panchayat. Both the husband and the wife can move to the caste panchayat. The decision is taken only after giving a hearing to both the parties. Generally, the Naik advises the couple not to separate. But if the persuasion fails then only the case is taken up for hearing. If the wrong lies with the husband, he is fined some amount and with this amount the Naik and the elders of the panchayat enjoy a sumptuous non-vegetarian feast. In such case the wife need not return her bride price to the husband. If the panchayat decides that the wrong is with the woman, either she has to return the bride price herself or the person who marries her. After the divorce has been affected the woman has to return to her former husband all the
ornaments and clothes given her by him, she can, however, take along with her those articles which are strictly considered personal. If she has any suckling baby, she can take the same with her. If her former husband agrees, she can also take with her other children aged below 6 years, but are required to be sent to him after they grow up. The responsibility of bringing them up, settle them in life and putting them married rests with the father.

**MARRIAGE WITH NON-SUGALIS:** The Sugalis are a nomadic tribe and it is not closed to outsiders first. The general rule in the Sugali community is that they admit women who have married to Sugali men. Women of the lowest and impure castes are excluded. Once the marriage of a Sugali male and a non-Sugali female is approved or sanctioned by Gwor Panchayat they become members of the community after due observance of all formalities and after obtaining the approval of the elders of the Sugali community.

According to the Sugali custom the rule of endogamy is not absolute, for instance, in the case of Sugali female married or unmarried found to have gone astray with a non-Sugali, it is said that the latter is summoned before a panchayat and a heavy fine is imposed on the lover and the fine, if realized is paid as compensation to the parents of the seduced maiden or the husband of the married female and the seducer is compelled to take the girl or woman as a wife or a mistress and in the case of refusal (which is rare) to submit to the orders of the panchayat. The family of the seduced female remains outcaste until a purificatory ceremony is performed and thus restored to caste. The members of the family they cook rice and pulse and themselves distribute the food to the assembled relatives.

If a Sugali male married a non-Sugali girl and such marriage was accepted by the society it would be a valid and proper marriage. The wife would, therefore, be accepted as a member of the Sugali community.
After observing certain rituals if the Gwor Panchayat approves a particular marriage with a non-Sugali then the question of excommunication never arises. Sometimes, the Gwor Panchayat disapproves of such marriage and that where a Sugali male and his family are out casted for marrying a non-Sugali girl. These people are admitted to the tribe after certain special ceremonies are performed.

It may be concluded that this custom among the Sugalis is not static but is dynamic and is changing.

**PRE-MARITAL RELATIONS:** Pre-marital relations between boys and girls are strictly prohibited among the Sugalis and if any one violates this rule, a serious view is taken of it. Unmarried girls rather than unmarried boys are always reminded by their parents to be careful about such affairs. After puberty, a girl is considered mature physically as well as mentally and her movements in the thanda as well as outside are restricted. Her parents particularly mother, keep a watch on her lest she should take a wrong step and harm her chances of marriage. In spite of the restrictions pre-marital sex relations do take place now and then and the girl have become pregnant before marriage, the Naik of the thanda reprimanding her parents and asks the girl to reveal the name of the partner. If girl reveals the name of the person concerned, she is summoned and asked to marry the girl and at the same time he is required to pay a fine as decided by the Gwor Panchayat. If the person refuses to marry the girl he is forced to pay her a compensation of Rs.500 to Rs.700 out of which she pays a fine of Rs.200 to the Naik. The boy born outside the wedlock is not however considered illegal; if any person belonging to the caste marries the woman, he takes over the responsibility of the child as well.

**STATUS OF CHILDREN OF UNMARRIED WOMEN:** The child born out of pre-marital relations is treated as illegitimate. The mother is asked to identify the father of the child. If she fails, then the Gwor Panchayat
serves the unfiltered tamarind juice to all the members and seeds of tamarind in the juice are spitted out and the plant grows out of it. In such manner, the boy also grows up. In case of a child born out of pre-marital relations with no person to claim paternity and the mother marries another one who is in the knowledge of such a child accompanying her, the child is to be treated as his own.

A child born of extra-marital relations will belong to the legal husband, if the mother on account of this lapse is not divorced. If she is divorced, then the child will belong to the person whom she remarried, whether he is the one responsible for the birth of the child or not and if she remain unmarried, she shall be the guardian of the minor. Thus, custom lays down an order as to who shall be the guardian of minor children. If the mother is married to another person, then the children born out of pre-marital relations will be looked after by the mother's parents and her brothers. A part of the property will be kept aside by them, for the well being of such children. If the new husband is willing to accept those children as his own, then those children are considered as legitimate. There is no mechanism and process of legitimization of illegitimacy of such children, except the voluntary acceptance by the new husband.

Though these children are accepted as the own children of the new husband, a Sugali woman and her children are occasionally humiliated by the community. When the children grow up, after overcoming all the hurdles and hardships, then the question of legitimacy arises at the time of their marriage. The customary law envisages that clan exogamy and caste endogamy are to be followed strictly. But it is very difficult to identify their original father and the clan. Hence such children usually prefer their marriage with non-Sugalis.
TABOOS

The Sugalis are regarded as a distinct race showing either physical or linguistic relationship with their nearest neighbors in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The customary law prohibits them to build a permanent shelter; their communal affairs are decided by a council of elders. They have to struggle against the hardest conditions of existence as a result of mechanized transport, appear to be stronger both by body and by mind. Their sexual instincts are subjected to a great degree of restriction. We find that they set before themselves with the most scrupulous care and the most painful severity the aim of avoiding incestuous sexual relations. Indeed, their whole social organization seems to serve that purpose or to have been brought into relation with its attainment. The Sugali tribe falls into smaller divisions, or clans, each of which is named after their ancestor. Each clan is represented by a totem. The meaning of a totem is, as a rule an animal and a plant or natural phenomenon, which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan. The totem is the common ancestor of the clan; at the same time it is the guardian spirit and helper, which sends them oracles, and if dangerous to others, recognizes and spares its own children. Conversely, the clansmen in the Sugali society are under a sacred obligation not to destroy their totemic plant. They believe that the totemic character is inherent, not in some individual or entity, but in all the individuals of a given class. From time to time, festivals are celebrated at which the clansmen represent the emotions and attributes of their totem in ceremonial dances and other occasions.

The totem is inherited through the male line. A Sugali’s relation to his totem is the basis of his social obligations. Their totem is not attached to one particular place. The clansmen are distributed in different localities and live peacefully side by side with members of other totem clans.
The characteristic of totemic system is that we find a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying. This, then, is ‘Clan exogamy’, an institution related to totemism. Hence a strong bond exists between totemism and exogamy and is clearly a very firm one. Some further considerations will make the significance of this prohibition clearer. The violation of the prohibition is not left to what might be called the ‘automatic’ punishment of the guilty parties, as in the case of other totem prohibitions, such as that of destroying the totemic plant. It is avenged in the most energetic fashion by the whole clan, as though it were a question of averting some danger that threatened the whole community or some guilt that was pressing upon it. In the Sugali society, the regular penalty for sexual intercourse with a person of a forbidden clan is death. In the rare cases, which occur, the man is killed but the women is only beaten or speared, or both, till she is nearly dead; the reason for not actually killing her being that she was probably coerced.

It makes sexual intercourse impossible for a man with all the women of his own clan by treating them all as though they were his blood relatives. Here the part played by the totem as common ancestor is taken very seriously. So, also all those who are descended from the common ancestors are the cultural elements which shape the innate tendencies. There appears a traditional training of the innate tendencies into cultural habit responses. They are the taboos which forbid incest and adultery; they are the cultural releases of the mating instinct; they are the moral and ideal norms as well as the practical inducements which keep husband and wife together – the legal sanction of the marriage tie; the dictates which shape and express parental tendencies. The organization of Sugali society has economic, social and religious ideals to impress upon the sexual inclination of men and women. These exclude mates by rules of exogamy, of caste division, or of mental training. In the relation between parents and
children also tradition dictates certain attitudes which even anticipate the appearance of the objects to which they pertain.

Kinship dominates the regulation of sexual attitudes. The extension of kinship beyond the family implies in many societies the formation of exogamy side by side with the formation of clans. The incest is associated with the problem of exogamy or of primitive forms of marriage, with hypotheses of former promiscuity and so on. Exogamy is correlated with the prohibition of incest that it is merely an extension of this taboo, exactly as the institution of the clan with its classificatory terms of relationship is simply an extension of the family and it is made of kinship nomenclature. Exogamy is completely forbidden in the Sugali society. They believe that in any type of civilization in which custom, morals and law would allow incest, the family could not continue to exist. It may witness the breaking up of the family, hence complete chaos and an impossibility of continuing cultural tradition. For them, incest would mean the upsetting of age distinctions, the mixing up of generations, the disorganization of sentiments and a violent exchange of rules at a time when the family is the most important educational medium.

No restrictions or taboos are placed regarding marrying inside or outside their thandas or villages. In the past the customary law prohibited the consanguineous marriages. But during the last 3 to 4 generations, they have adopted the customs of their neighbours among whom they have permanently settled down.

In the Sugali society, the sexual relation between an unmarried boy and a girl or widow in the same thanda is considered as a grave sin. This is because in a thanda, everyone is a member of an unilineal descent group. In such an unilaterally organized society, all relatives on one's own side, however distant they are genealogically may be are prohibited as mates, while marriage with quite close relatives on the other side may be socially acceptable and even preferred.
Hence sexual relations between the members of unilineal descent groups are regarded as incestuous. The person who commits this mistake, is ex-communicated. If he begs pardon, then there is a custom through which he is inducted into the Sugali society. The custom is called as 'Dharam Ka Hukka' according to which the sinner has to prostrate before the elders of the Gor Panchayat and has to offer the Hukka to them.

The accused is humiliated with penalty of a nominal fine of two paisas. This punishment is called as 'Taki Ka Daand.' His value is reduced to two paisas and hereafter, he is called as "Taki Ka Admi or Dopisar Admi."

Matrilateral cross-cousin marriages have become preferential in the Sugali society. But patrilateral cross cousin marriage is the prescribed form of marriage in their community.

There has recently been some sharp controversy in the Gor Panchayat of Bakkannagaripalli thanda on the question whether in this Sugali society cross-cousin marriage is prescribed or merely preferred. The heat has gone out of the debate as they begin to realize that most people in the Sugali society which approves of cross-cousin marriage will say it is the rule, but the same people will not necessarily obey the rule in practice.

It is interesting to note that the exogamous clan unit is a closely knit corporate group of kinsmen, and the rule that its members must always 'marry out' helps to maintain the group's internal unity. This is also an arrangement which ensures that conflicts with 'in laws' (Sasuro and Sano) will be minimized.

As the French social anthropologist Levi Strauss states, "the rules of exogamy and cross cousin marriages, are the blue print of a mechanism which "pumps" women out of their consanguineous
families to redistribute them in affinal groups, the result of this process being to create new consanguineous groups."

Thus in the Sugali society groups are constantly cross-fertilizing one another. In this way the society itself is being continuously renewed, and at the same time, through an expanding network of affinal and kinship links, its members are brought into relationship with one another in a variety of ways. Cross-cousin marriage is a means to the social integration of the whole Sugali community.

Marriage with one's wife's sister is allowed and brothers can marry sisters. Similarly, sister exchange marriage between two men of different clans is permitted, and such marriage is usually preferred to avoid paying bride-wealth.

**ADULTERY:** According to Aiyer and Nanjundayya, (1928) "adultery on the part of the wife is not a serious fault, if the husband is willing to pardon it. It is said that if a man is convicted and is undergoing imprisonment, his wife may live with another man of the same caste, bearing him children and after the release of her husband, she may return to him along with the children of her paramour. At present in no part of Rayalaseema region this custom is prevalent. It appears that this custom arose in response to the precarious conditions of their life. Since they were declared as criminals even for small faults, the police used to arrest and put them in jail. Left in this helpless condition their wives had frequently to attach themselves to other males who looked after them and their children till the husbands came out of the jail. If the husband is ailing, having no children, then she is permitted to have the sexual relations with other male members of the thandas and have a child by him. It seems that though extra-marital sex relations are forwarded upon, it is not completely absent. But such sex relations with persons belonging to the other thanda, their own community are taken very seriously. In case the offender is a woman, she is driven out of the caste. In case the offender is a male,
he can marry the woman, if she belongs to a higher caste or of the same status. But the descendents, born out of such marriage p to three generations are not considered full fledged members of the caste.

**COURTSHIP:** Every human culture consists of well-defined taboos which rigidly separate a number of people of opposite sexes and exclude whole categories of potential partners. The most important of these taboos completely excludes from mating those people who are normally and naturally in contact, who is the member of the same family, parents from children, and brothers from sisters. As an extension of this, one can find in Sugali society, a wider prohibition of sex intercourse which debars whole groups of people from any sex relations. This is the law of exogamy. Next in importance to the taboo of incest is the prohibition of adultery. While the first serves to guard the family the second serves for the protection of marriage.

But culture does not exercise a merely negative influence upon the sexual impulse. In each community we find also inducements to courtship and to amorous interest besides the prohibitions and exclusions. The various festive seasons, times of dancing and personal display, periods when food is lavishly consumed and stimulants used, are as a rule also the signal for erotic pursuits. In the Telangana region, on the next day of the Holi festival, large numbers of men and women congregate and young men are brought in contact with girls from beyond the circle of the family and of the local group. Very often some of the usual restraints are lifted and boys and girls are allowed to meet unhampered and uncontrolled. Such festivals naturally encourage courtship by means of the stimulants, the artistic pursuits, and the festive mood. However, this type of congregation is not found in the thandas of Rayalaseema region.

Thus the signal for courtship, the release of the process of mating is given not by a mere bodily change but by a combination of
cultural influences. However, it is the system of cultural taboos which limit considerably the working of the sexual impulse in any society. From the next day of the Holi festival, for 3 days, both men and women are allowed to meet unhampered. After 3 days, strict restrictions are imposed on them, thus obstructing them from looking each other.

THE SYSTEM OF JANGAD

In their nomadic life, the Sugalis were much addicted to kidnapping children from other communities. These were whipped up or enticed away whenever an opportunity presented itself during their expeditions. The children were first put into the Gonis or grain bags of the bullocks and so carried for a few days, being made over at each halt to the care of a woman, who would pop the child back into its bag if any stranger passed by the encampment. The tongues of the boys were sometimes slit or branded with hot gold, this last being the ceremony of initiation into the community. Girls, if they were as old as seven, were sometimes disfigured for fear of recognition, and for this purpose the juice of the marking nut tree (*Senacarpus anacardium*) would be smeared on one side of the face, which burns into the skin and entirely alter the appearance. Such children were known as jangads. Another name for the jangad is 'Polo Passo'. If they behave well, do not cry much or attempt to escape, jangads are generally fairly treated – the girls being frequently raised to the dignity of a concubine even to a Muttooriah and should she bare a son to her lord before he has sold or otherwise disposed of her, she is permitted so long as she may live to rest under his shadow, as slave to the married wife. A jangad can only marry a jangad and his descendants are all jangads to the Seventh generation (Sath peedi). If any jangad male marries any Sugali female or any Sugali male marries any jangad female, the clan and sub-gotra of their children will be changed.
automatically. A jangad woman even after her marriage with Sugali never wears a Wankri, and is distinguishable at a glance from a Sugali.

When the Sugalis were on their march, some of the members of other castes used to follow along with the Sugalis for service or for want of security. After the lapse of some period these members of other castes will be admitted into the fold of Sugali community.

In the absence of the children, to inherit the property, the Sugalis are permitted to adopt a child. If the adopted child is a non-Sugali he or she is called as 'jangad'. A jangad is not permitted to marry a girl in the Sugali community. He or she has to choose a life partner from the jangad community. It is only after seven generations, a jangad is considered as a jangad carries a burden as he is an untouchable for the non-Sugalis as well as for the Sugalis among whom he has lived and worked for generations. To overcome this social ostracism, the jangad will save all his earnings for a single purpose – to become a Sugali. The number of jangad families living in Sugali thandas varies from one thanda to another. It is only through further research that we can discover exact number of jangad families.

Tradition dictated that jangads seeking acceptance by the Sugalis offer gifts in cash and kind and feed the gathering, consisting of Sugalis of their own and neighbouring thandas.

If the Sugali married female fail to conceive any child, she adopts a male or female child from other than Sugali tribe. The adopted child will be admitted into the fold of Sugali community after performing certain customary rituals of the tribe. The adopted or purchased child will get the gotra and clan of the adopted parents.

The above referred three kinds of jangads are permanently treated as jangad by the Sugali until they were not allowed to use the
hukka along with the Sugali, their cooking utensils and other articles have to be kept separately.

In Karnataka, the Sugalis call Jangad as 'Koris'. The jangad or Koris of the Karnataka state comes under the third category of jangad. The Koris are neither kidnapped children nor illegitimate children of Sugalis. The Sugali are said to purchase children from other castes and bring them up as their own. Such children are not allowed to marry into superior Sugali section called 'Thanda'. The adopted children are classified as 'Koris' and Kori only marry a thanda boy or girl after seven generations.

It should be noted that the jangads of North India cannot be compared with the Sugali jangads. Here the jangad forms into an independent community. The description given by the Elliot with regard to the North Indian jangad is that they identify themselves with the Turi Clan of Kshatriyas. It was stated that some time back the Turi tribe used to meet Sugali tribe and majority of the Turi families accepted Islamic faith and those Turi families who have not accepted Islamic faith are called as jangad in North India. The meaning behind this perhaps was the Sugalis are very flexible in changing their faith at any time.

In Rajasthan there is a tribe called jangad. They earn their livelihood by means of singing songs.

After careful study of the institution of Jangad it can be rightly stated that unlike other tribal groups, the Sugalis are not so particular in maintaining the purity of their race. The other caste members and the ex-communicated members of their own community, who violate customary laws, are admitted into the fold of Sugali community. The other caste people who accompany the groups of Sugalis and ex-communicated Sugali, after some stipulated period of time, will be admitted into the community and got the status of clan. If the Sugali feel the necessity of admission of any member into
their community, they will be admitted into the community after 5 to 10 years of their assimilation and gets the status of clan and sub-gotra of the Sugali community and if the Sugalis do not feel the necessity of admission of any members into their community they remain as jangad for generations together.

As stated earlier, the childless Sugali parents who adopt the kidnapped or purchased boys and girls of other castes are admitted into their tribe. For this kind of admission they follow certain customary rituals. For example, the elder of the panchayat while reading some mantras put, a Gold needle into the fire and when it is hot, remove it and place it on the tip of the tongue of the boy (Jangad) of other caste and these members arrange a feast to the whole gathering. After the feast the elders of the panchayat declare that the jangads are admitted into the Sugali community and they are called after Rathod, Chouhan or Pamhar and they acquire the clan of the family in which they are adopted.

**RELATIONSHIP WITHIN TRIBE AND OUTSIDE**

The kinship system is the whole process of designation the relationship of the various kins by a particular set of kinship-terminology as well as the patterns of behavior and the modes of reckoning descent Kinship can be based on bilineal as well as unilineal decent. The Sugali have partileneal descent and patrilineal extension of incest-taboo\(^40\). Hence, the individual in the Sugali community is assigned membership of a particular consanguineous. Kin group through the males or agnatic line right from his birth, and property and surname are transmitted from father to son. However, they also recognize 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 kin groups 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 cooperation. 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 brothers and sisters. The rule of surname exogamy necessitates the dependence 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 or 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 membership 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 cases 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 rituals 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 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 was observed that not only in study area but also in Rayalaseema region a few people belonging to the agricultural castes living in the respective neighbouring hamlets not only attend the marriage of the Sugalis but also partake cooked food along with Sugalis. The constant interaction of the Sugalis of both the groups with the communities of the neighbouring villages has ensured the
Sugalis and the non-Sugalis to come closer. The Social intercourse between the Sugalis and the agricultural Hindu communities of the neighbouring villages helps peasant Sugalis 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 Sugalis of semi-urban settlements move freely mix with village communities and they invite them on the occasions like marriage and tonsure ceremonies. Pithavath Krishna Naik, 60-year old man of the Gonipenta thanda expressed that now-a-days, inviting each other to ceremonies between Sugalis and other Hindu communities became a common. Borrowing money to each other is also a common. In 2008, I borrowed Rs. 50,000 from whose community was Reddy and Rs. 60,000 from whose community was Boya for my daughter marriage.

The social interactions 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 thandas 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 (washer man). At present artisan communities of Sugali have disappeared because of the breakdown 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 ‘vadranji’ (carpenter) receives remuneration in kind per annum at the time of harvest. The ‘Kummari’ (potter) 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, areca nuts, betel leaves and some amount of cash. The ‘Chakali’ (washer man) renders services to both the Sugali groups. They wash clothes and collect remuneration in cast 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 cast but also some rice, betel leaves and betel nuts.

CASTE DIFFERENCES: By taking up non-Sugali pursuits of economy and by improving their standard of living considerably, the Sugalis of either Thanda consciously sought a prominent place in the caste hierarchy in the respective revenue villages basing on the concepts of purity and pollution. Hence the new claim of the Sugalis helped them maintain Jajmani relationship with the service rendered artisan castes. The change from tribal status to caste (Kulam or Jathi) status, thus is an important structural change which integrate them into the civilization of wider society.41

The Sugalis are divided into Jatis and Gotras. They are endogamous within the Jati and exogamous between Gotras. Theirs is a patrilineal system permitting cross cousin marriage. Traditionally the largest debts are incurred due to “bride Price” payable in live stock, land ornaments, etc. However this tradition is fast changing under the influence of the wider society that they from the past of now in these Thandas girls pay dowry in order to get married.

As stated earlier, these are four main gotras, which include rathores, the pawars, chouhans and Badavath gotras. Among these any one choosing to be, say, tradesmen or artisans may do so, that will remain within his gotra irrespective of their occupation. All gotras
have their own origin myths, rituals and legends which are still strongly believed in. The customs of today are built on the traditions of yester years.

The Brahmins, represented by a few sub-divisions of the Badavath, are the customers of local legends. They perform all life cycle rituals among the Sugalis. The remaining gotras of the Badavath and other gotras are free to follow any occupation. But the common occupation is agriculture.

Concerning relations between gotras, it should be noted that the four main gotras interact quite freely. They marry across gotras, and all except the few sub-gotras of the Badavaths (Brahmins) interline. These Brahmins accept cooked food only from a limited number of gotras who considered themselves and are considered by the community as Brahmins. They give cooked food to all served on leaves and not from the vessels from which they themselves eat. The Rathods, Pawars, Chouhans, Badavaths and Vadatiyas will not accept cooked food from the lower caste Sugalis. The lower caste Sugalis marry exogamously among the lower castes only.

**FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR**

Social changes can be connected to land, where it has given rise to class differences among the Sugalis, which divided them into landowners and the landless class. A small portion of landowners are considered rich peasants, a slighter larger proportions belongs to the class of middle peasants. The Naik and Karbari look after all the land transactions and disputes. Sometimes even Naik exploit the Sugalis by taking away their lands.

The Sugalis are divided into jatis and gotras even today, where they are exogamous between gotras and endogamous within the jati. Earlier, Sugalis used to give bride price. But of late this tradition of
giving bride price has been replaced by giving dowry in large amounts. This change is seen in Sugalis mainly as they interacted and adopted the local customs of non-tribals which were new to them. Four earlier gotras can be seen even today with strict endogamous rules. These four important gotras are rathods, pawars, chouhans and the vadatiyas. Badavaths who are considered equal to Brahmins and perform all the life cycle ceremonies among the Sugalis. The other sub-castes such as Dapadiya, Jangad, Dhadi and Bhat are considered as lower castes and therefore treated as out castes. Though Dapadias do not eat beef they are still considered as dalits. The word Jangad means an “outsider”. Their origin is shrouded in mystery. These gotras have their own myths, rituals and legends regarding their origin. The Dhadis and Bhats are considered as beggars and messengers. They provide music for ceremonies in the thandas. All except Badavaths interact and inter-dine freely and accept food from a limited number of gotras. But Sugalis never accept food from dalits as they eat beef, whereas Sugalis worship the cow. Sugalis can marry outside the gotra and these rules are followed even today. They never allow dalits into their houses and will not touch them and do not allow them stay with them. But in towns this practice is slowly reducing due to the change in economic status where they obey harijan officers, inter-dine though rarely, in functions like marriage, parties, etc. Basing on personal observations as well as experiences one can say that Sugalis are treated better when compared to harijans, and they are allowed into the other caste houses freely though not into the puja room which they consider as a holy place. But in the case of illiterate Sugalis the close relationship is not seen. Thus basing on these experiences one can say that caste feelings are whipped up among the general categories in a fairly lesser degree is the case of Sugalis when compared to the Scheduled Castes. Still one cannot say totally that there is no tribal exploitation or oppression and they do exist in terms of economic and physical exploitation. This form of exploitation is mainly due to their lack of education and their innocence where they
can be easily cheated by the counterparts as well as by their own tribal heads, etc. Another important feature of Sugalis is that they never do free service as in the case of non-tribals. They are conscious of the rights. If a Naik overreacts, he will be forced to give up the Naikship and dragged to the panchayat. According to Shyamala Devi, even outsiders can attain the status of Sugalis. The jangads to become Sugalis, have to pay money in large sums for the conversion ceremony held by the traditional panchayat. This ceremony is called jangad dawat, where jangad are accepted as Sugalis and given the Sugali status after they have offered in cash and kind to the gathering consisting of Sugalis and also two tulas of gold and clothings to the Naik, etc. The jangads serving in the house of Rathod, was called a Rathore jangad and similarly, Chouhan jangad, Pamhar jangad, etc. The marriages among them are also based on their waster clan exogamy. There were included into the main stream of Sugali community after 7 segments.

The social discrimination in the thandas and as they look down on the sections of their own community and sometimes even verbally abuse them. Once the jangad is accepted as a Sugali no one can refer to him or his family as jangad can become respected members of Sugali community is, as is evident closely. Besides, the same opportunity is not available to the lower castes such as Dapadya, Dhadi and Bhat. In spite of these observations we can say that Sugali social set up is fairly flexible and the potential for change exists. One should explain that among the Sugali community, the castes and classes are men made and the customs and traditions according to their own convenience. We should educate them that all men are equal. Then only these stringent social evils can be ousted from the Sugali society. It may be noted that the whole profile of Sugali set up has undergone a change, such as their system of marriage, their thinking pattern, living pattern, their food habits, drinking habit
dress, ornament patterns and many other connected systems. At present the Sugalis are mostly interested in earning money.

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. 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 acclimatized to the increased contact with the caste people and have yet preserved their original culture.

REFERENCES

4. Ibid., p. 2.
5. Ibid., p. 8-14.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. 28-29.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
25. Thurston, Edgar, Tribes and Castes of Southern India, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1909, pp. 220-226
26. Ibid.
27. Tuesdays and Friday are treated as auspicious days by the nomadic Sugali still these days regarded by them as auspicious for all important occasions.)
29. Ibid. p. 45
30. Thurston, Edgar, ibid.
31. 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 (brigroom) 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 occasion. They are 1. Expression of sorrow, 2. Expression of prayer, 3. Expression of bride’s view.

35. Cumberlege, N.R., ibid, p. 18
40. Reddy, K.B., ibid, p. 23.