CHAPTER-III

CUSTOMARY LAW
Before entering into the specific sphere of administration of Sugali customary justice dispensed by the Gor Panchayat, it would be profitable and pertinent to examine various customary laws prescribed by the Sugali society.

Customs and customary laws are not synonymous. There may be various customs without any legal authority but whereas the customary laws have the sanction of the bulk of the society and if not obeyed, such violator is to be punished. The early history of mankind gives us proof that the human being was individualistic and nomadic and there was nothing known as group living forging into a society. In individualistic style of living no human being was dependent on any other and there was no norm to regulate any style of living but the laws of nature.

But soon when the human race first learnt to live in groups, the social living compelled them to conform to certain pattern of human behaviour inconsonance with their day-to-day affairs of life to accommodate their interests, hopes, desires and wants – both individual and collective. These behaviours needed to be harmonious, common and accepted by a definite majority, if not each and everyone of the group, as a whole. By experiences and experiments the human beings gradually learnt that a particular mode of behaviour and conduct was conducive and beneficial to collective living by and by, some particular pattern of human behaviour emerged and by consistent adherence to it led to the status of some obligatory norms spontaneously and consciously followed by the members of the
group. This is the stage when the customs first turned into usage.

If the custom is to be elevated to the status of law, it will have to pass through some special social or political mechanism, though jurisprudence recognizes it as one of the sources of law. But some jurists like Austin did not recognize custom as “Law” until and unless it is recognized by a court of law. According to Austin, the term “law” means a set of rules laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent being having power over him. This definition includes the following objects:

1. Natural Law given by God

2. Laws Set by men to men.

As per Austinian views, law is the express enactment by a sovereign or state and certain judicial decisions and it excludes a large body of rules and customs i.e., unwritten laws, which regulate the life and conduct of human society long before any regular political government come into existence. As per this theory a custom cannot become a positive law until it is recognized by a judicial court.

The moment a custom receives judicial recognition, it becomes part and parcel of the positive law. Austin would allow only persuasive value to custom.

In anthropology “custom” refers to the totality of socially acquired behaviour patterns which are supported by tradition and generally exhibited by members of society. For indicating this sense, the recent expressions are “culture” and “traditions”.

162
Custom is supported only by psychological constraints which operate when the individual violates the custom and by the social disapproval which deviation from custom may precipitate. In contrast, laws have the additional coercive support of specific individual or groups who have an institutionally vested change to enforce conformity.

The Hindu jurisprudence also accepted custom as a just foundation of many laws. Custom is not homogeneous, not perfectly unified body of rules of a particular society. In fact, customs and rules of a particular society consist of a number of more or less independent systems, which are adjusted to one another.

Depending upon the nature and observations, the customs are classified. In Hindu Law, the smritikaras mentioned four types of customs:

(i) local custom
(ii) family custom
(iii) community or caste custom, and
(iv) guild custom.

A local custom is a custom which prevails in a locality, in a geographical area not confined to an administrative division or district. On the other hand, family custom is binding only on the members of the family. The Guild custom is not a part of personal law of the Hindus. This class of custom is connected with the traders and merchants. Personal law of the Hindus is mainly covered by caste or community custom which is binding.
on all the members of the caste or community. Most of the customary laws of Punjab are of this nature.

Customs of the Sugali tribe are also community customs, as they bind the community as a whole because the concepts of customs and tribe seem to go together. "Tribe" as a group of families which have a feeling of community through occupying a territory and following similar customs. Customary laws are part of the social customs and are as such without a specified social group it may vary from one region to another. Unlike formal laws, customary laws are not made by any law-making authority but are handed over by one generation to the succeeding generation through the social mechanism of cultural transmission. The customary law is composed of a large body of rules observed by communities, evidenced by long usages and founded on pre-existing rules sanctioned by the will of the community. These rules of conduct may have been based on utility, or may have arisen from social or communal necessity, but these have always the express or tacit sanction of the common consent of the people among whom the customary laws prevail.

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE SUGALIS

If there has been much change in the material culture of the Sugalis, and a good deal in the economic sphere as well, in matters of social organization, there has been little challenge to orthodoxy except that represented by the breakaway or intermarriages with the Hindu castes. In much of the literature on the Sugalis, their social institutions have been regarded as
quite specific to the community and thus portrayed as essentially “tribal” in character. But here we can say that Sugali social organization is better seen as a variant of the more general Hindu model of social relations, and their traditions indicate that the variant is an ancient one, long predating the modern influences which have so greatly affected other spheres of Sugali life.

The person who, to an insider is simply a Sugali, is among his own people a member of several different social groups and categories. First of all he belongs to one of the endogamous sub-castes into which the community is divided. These endogamous sub-castes are usually called “Phratry”, in the ethnographic record.

This resembles the internal organization of caste groups all over India. Besides the restriction on formal inter-marriage, the relations between the Sugali sub-castes are characterized by other, typically Hindus, features of social organization: ritual specialization, hierarchy determined on the basis of relative purity, a prescribed degree of separation and a prescribed degree of co-operation. It is a well known fact that they maintain caste endogamy and clan exogamy. The Sugali society is better termed as a caste-society, as we can see different groups who have taken up different occupations. They are:

1. Sanār or Sōnār : Gold Smith
2. Nāvi : Barber
3. Daliya: Drum Beater
4. Singādiya: One who blows the horn like instrument
5. Bādi or Osaria: who plays the musical instrument
6. Dhadi: who narrates the histories of the great men in the Sugali society.
7. Jogi or Bharava: who makes the ornaments of mica.
8. Rohidas: one who makes the Sugali garments and cloth tents. They are also called as Sikaris.
9. Charamas: cobblers
10. Bamanica: Brahmin or ‘Bhagat’

Myth of their Origin

In the census report, 1901, Thanda and Vali Sugriva are given as synonyms for the tribal name. Vali and Sugriva were two monkey chiefs mentioned in the Ramayana, from whom the Sugalis claim to be descended. The legend, as given by Mr.F.S.Mullay, is that “there were two brothers, Mota and Mola, descendants of Sugriva. Mola had no issue, so being an expert in gymnastics, he went with his wife Radha, and exhibited his skills at ‘Rathanatch’ before three rajahs. They were so taken with Mola’s skill, and the grace and beauty of Radha, and of her playing of the nagara or drum, that they asked what they could do for them. Mola asked each of the rajahs for a boy, that he might adopt him as his son. This request was accorded and Mola adopted three boys. Their names were Chavia, Lohia, Panchar and Ratade.

These three boys, in course of time, grew up and married. From the ‘Bheekya,’ the elder son of Ratade, started the clan, known as the Bhukya, and from this clan three minor subdivisions namely Maigavuth, Kurumothees, and Kholas have found. The Bhukyas form the principal clan among the Sugalis.
These three boys were well trained in acrobatics and soon they attained marriageable age. Then Radha Bai started thinking of how to get them married.

There was a Brahmin in a village and he had three daughters and a son. It was customary for them to get their daughters married at a prepuberty age. As he was in abject poverty, he failed to get his daughters married. Then his family was ex-communicated from the village. One night out of sheer frustration, he leaves his daughters and son at a village alone and escapes from that place. The next morning, his children starts crying. Radha Bai comes to know about them and takes them to her house. The three Brahmin girls were got married to her three sons. Eldest son Rathod was married to Khokrochi, her second son Chouhan was married to Nagarachi and Pamhar to Asavali.

Rathod and his wife Khokrochi gave birth to two sons. The eldest son again had 14 children and younger son had 13 children. Hence Rathod clan consists of 27 sub clans and these are better known as Sattais Pada Bhukya.

The origin and history of Sugali community is very vague and ambiguous. There are several legends that explain their origin and history. Mythological affinity is one of the unique features of Sugali society which distinguishes them from other tribals. They trace their origin to Mota and Mola who were in the court of Lord Krishna. Mota and Mola are the brothers and they were the cowherders. When Lord Krishna was ending his avatara in Dvapara Yuga, they requested him to provide
livelihood. Then Lord Krishna donated Radha to them. Radha was treated as a mother of Mola and Mota. They earned their livelihood by performing the acrobatics at various places. When they reached old age, they started thinking about their livelihood. On one day they performed acrobatics in Rathodghad fort and won the applause of the King. There they expressed their desire to have a son as to look after them in their old age. The Rathod dynasty gave a boy to them. After some days they reached Chouhanghad and acquired a son from Chouhan dynasty. There they got a boy from Pamhars in Pamhanghad. Chouhan had got six sons and Chouhan clan has gotras which are known as Chogot Chouhan. Pamhar had twelve sons and Pamhar clan had Bargot Pamhar.

The brother of the three Brahmin sisters was Parasuram. He marries the daughter of Jharapala of Pamhar clan. His clan is known as Jadhav Vadatiya which consists of fifty two sub-gotras better known as Bavan Pada Vadatiya.

Another story relating to the origin of the Vadatiya clan was that long ago there were some Sugali families living in a thanda. The Naik of the thanda was having three daughters. A Brahmin living in a neighbouring thanda had developed illicit connection with the daughters of the Naik. No one in the thanda was aware of this, but it became public when the girl became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. The Gor Panchayat consisting of all the Naiks of neighbouring thandas was summoned to discuss and decide this case. Since the Naik was very influential and also good at heart, the Panchayat took a lenient view of the affair and decided to admit the Brahmin boy into their
community. They also decided to establish a new clan to accommodate the newly born boy. They named the new clan as ‘Vadatiya’ meaning ‘banyan’ since the panchayat deliberated the case under the ‘Vadatiga’ tree.

The mothers of these clans are treated as the clan Goddesses. Rathod clan has their Goddess Khokrochi or Parvati and Jilledu (*Callotrophis giganta*) plant is treated as their totemic plant. Chouhan clan is Goddess Nagarachi or Lakshmi is worshipped in the form of Tulasi Plant (*Ocimum Sanctum*). Pamhar clan deity is Ásavali or chandimata and their totemic plant is Jammi tree (*Prosopis Spicgera*). Jadhav clan has Pasvali as their clan deity and she is represented by Banyan tree (*Ficus Bengalensis*).

The above legendary story reveals that the Sugalis are the descendents of Kshatriya father and Brahmin mothers. They are the admixture of Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Hence they possess the courage of Kshatriyas and intellectual capacities of Brahmins.

**Rathod Clan**: Sattaispada Bhukya – 27 sub-gotras

|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|

169
**Chouhan Clan:** Chogot Chouhan has 6 sub-gotras
1. Mood 4. Korra
2. Paltya 5. Dumavath

**Pamhar Clan:** It is otherwise called as Bargot Pamhar. It consists of 12 sub-gotras.

The Jadhav clan consists of fifty two sub-gotras. They are known as Bavan Pada Vadatiya. Some of these sub-gotras are given below.

As stated earlier, the Sugali society is divided into two moietyes namely Jat and Bhukya. At first the Jat moiety consisted of Chogot Chouhan and Bārgot Pawar. There is only one main clan in Bhukya moiety, i.e., Rathod clan. The Chogot Chouhan (6 sub-clans) and Bargot Pamhar (12 sub-clans) together formed 18 sub-clans and it was not equaled to 27 sub-
clans of Rathod clan. So the Rathod clan found it more difficult to get their children married. To overcome this difficulty, the Vadatiya clan of 52 sub-clans is also included in the Jat moiety.

The Vadatiya clan can marry in both the moieties. There is another sub-clan known as Bānoth which belongs to Rathod clan. A person named Bānoth of Rathod clan unknowingly married the girl of the same clan. As clan exogamy is strictly maintained in the Sugali society, his marriage was not recognized by the Sugali community. Hence Banoth was asked to remain in Jat moiety. While entering into the matrimonial alliances with the Rathod clan, the Banōth clansmen maintain exogamy with Jatroth, the brother of Banoth.

The lineages called Pandhi or Got are named after the names of the children of the original ancestors of the clans. A folk saying denotes the number of lineages in the four clans. “Sattavisgot Rathod, Baragot Pamhar, Chhogot Chouhan and Bavanpada Vadatiya” (Rathods have twenty-seven lineages, Pamhar 12, Chouhan 6 and Vadatiya 52).

At present in many parts of Anantapur district, the Rathod clan is divided into two groups: Chinna Rathod (Jat) and Pedda
Rathod (also known as Bhukya). Chinna Rathod, Pamhar and Chouhan together constitute what are called “Jat Bhais” or allied clans, as they are supposed to be the earlier ones. The Vadatiya clan is supposed to be of a later origin, with a lower kinship status vis-à-vis the three higher clans. Thus the processes of division of clans into lineages and alliances of clans into a phratry like “Jat bhai” indicate that the tendencies of both fission and fusion have occurred in the kin groups. Although the clans can be viewed as unilineal descent groups, they lack corporate character and evidences of organization, collective activities or group functions” which characterize corporate clans. This again is a change in their clan and lineage organization from the exclusively corporate character of their kin groups during the days of transport work and nomadism.6 With settling down, the exclusive and corporate clans broke out and scattered in the region, to live with other clans, thus in the process establishing multi-clan, multi-lineage settlements.

The legends that survive through folklore are suggestive of the various factors responsible for the origin of these clans and lineages – the poverty of some groups, nomadism leading to contact with other communities, miscegenation, compromise in the laterality in reckoning descent and so on. In the social organization based on kinship, the groupings larger than extended family are lineages, clans and clan alliances. Although the clan and lineage unity is expressed in several ways, like marriage exogamy, organizing ancestor worship, etc., these kin groups have relatively little importance in the organization of the day-to-day activities outside the realm of kinship. All
members of the respective groups share a common name usually derived from the personal name or nick name of the common ancestors. Altogether there are 18 named lineages in Pampanuru thanda and 12 in Singampalli thanda, with a maximum depth of upto the fourth ascending generation, beyond which the Sugali do not know the definite ascending generation of even their lineage ancestors. There is no question of tracing the exact generation of the clan initiators. The names are remembered by oral tradition in the form of songs. In the past, the Sugalis remembered their ancestors upto the fourth ascending generation, as kinship was the foundation of their social life because of their nomadic life. But today, with Sedentarisation, most Sugalis confess that they do not remember their ancestors beyond the second ascending generation. Only a few older people who have something to do with rituals connected with ancestors, with fixing of marriage, etc., knew the names of their ancestors, upto four generations. Most of the younger Sugalis do not know even the names of their great-grand fathers, which shows that the occasions of remembering the dead are becoming rare these days.

During the annual ancestor worship, only parents and grand parents are remembered, and yet it is assumed that they have remembered all the ancestors. Lineage link to certain clan is the basis of the close bonds that sometimes prevail among the households belonging to a different lineage of a clan. Thus the adoption of the clan names like Rathod, Pamhar, etc., as family surnames by the literate and modernizing Sugalis is an indication of their desire partly to preserve the knowledge of
their ancestry and partly to conceal their Sugali identity which signifies low social rank while the ordinary Sugalis are satisfied with the common label of the community – “Sugali”.

The crucial occasion for lineage and clan identification of persons is the “Sagai”. Clans, including their constituent lineages, are exogamous; and, failing to remember the lineage identity, it would be enough if one knew the name of broader category of clan. The closer the kinship relationship, the greater are the obligations of co-operation, sentimental attachment, and the likelihood of holding in common material resources like herds of bullocks.

According to S. Deogaonkar, Russel & Hiralal and Nanjundayya, Sugalis social organization is called as a ‘caste structure.’ It is divided into 4 exogamous groups called Rathod, Pawar, Chouhan and Jadhav. The Sugalis trace the origin of these gotras from Mola and Radhika. The Rathods, Pawars and Chouhans are supposed to be the descendents of Mola and Radhika. These five are grouped together and called as ‘Panchachula’. The Rathod, Pawar and Chouhan clans are formed into a group called as Pachchisanaata. In the anthropological studies, the grouping of a few clans is called as Gotra Samuha (Phratry).

WEB OF FAMILY TIES

In the social structure of the Sugalis, the family occupies the most important place. It derives its significance not merely from its economic functions and its dominant role as an agency of socialization and social control, but its ritual importance is also very great to the average Sugali. Marriage is usually
regarded as natural and social necessity. Only morons and cripples remain single. It is rare for people to renounce their home and property in old age. They are excessively attached to material goods and a good deal of criticism is made acquire them. People often remark about them, 'will they carry their wealth with them to the other world when they die?' It is at this time that their thoughts turn more to religion and to the destiny of their souls in the future life.*

The necessity of both marriage and family is self evident to the Sugalis. It is necessary that the family life should be continued. A male heir must be left. An unmarried person past the marriage age is an object of pity. A couple without a son is unhappy. Childlessness and inability to produce a male child on the part of a woman often leads to a polygamous household. A male child must make a ceremonial offering of water to the spirits of his deceased parents and ancestors, without which their souls may not have peace.

The head of the family is the most senior man alive. His position affords little or no authority. He is the titular head, and in that capacity should perform both social and ritual duties and always be present to ratify any ritual performance or major social transaction by a member in the house. Married sons do not become entirely independent of their father until his death. It is not possible to make a clear distinction between a main home stead and the cattle camp as amongst many pastoralists.

* The information relating to customary law of the Sugali society in this chapter is based on the primary data collected by administering an interview schedule among the selected elderly people of Pampanuru and Singampalli thandas. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data the researcher also referred the literary sources.
The chief home stead at any time is the centre of the family’s life and organization, and in the olden days the Sugalis who were leading a pastoral life used to perform nearly all important social and ritual activities connected with the whole family, under the direction of the family head. From their pastoral and economic point of view, a secondary homestead often moves and lives in a completely different geographical region from that of the chief homestead.

As stated earlier the father is considered to be the head of the family and remains so till death. Although during his old age he may consider himself to be influential in decision-making process, nevertheless, the younger member of the family shows due deference to his opinions if sought in crucial issues pertaining to marriage, death and birth crisis within the family. The Sugali family is composed of parents, their unmarried sons and daughters and the eldest married son with his wife and children. This family turns into extended family as when the eldest son marries and remains with his parents while the other sons after marriage establish their own households. The daughters after marriage live in their husband’s houses. Though the father is the head of the family, in his old age the eldest son takes over the responsibility of family’s maintenance. The eldest son is responsible for maintenance of his aged parents, unmarried brothers, unmarried sisters, widowed sisters, their minor children besides his own wife and children.

The Sugalis do not at once, when getting married set-up separate households; they stay with parents. If a man moves away to live in the house of his father-in-law, they blame him
very much, and such a man will not afterwards get any share of the inheritance. Some people will, because they are annoyed sufferance, perform the final funeral ceremonies for such a son. Now-a-days a few Sugali men will give them a share of the original property; but this is only favour; formerly they had no right to this.

Until the father makes his sons set up separate households, they work together and eat together. The parents of the young men look upon their daughters-in-law as their own and the mother will love her youngest child most. The young men with their wives honour their uncles and aunts like their own parents, and these look upon them as their own children.

The father guides, instructs and tutors his sons, and the mother does the same with her daughters-in-law and daughters. The younger daughters-in-law address the elder daughters-in-law as elder sisters (Bai) and obey their word like that of their mother-in-law. The elder daughters-in-law address the younger ones as "girl" and look upon them as younger sisters. When the parents have lost their strength, the eldest son and the eldest daughter-in-law manage the household, and they have to standup when the young ones misbehave and commit any fault. If the elders ones while living let the younger ones manage, awful quarrel arise. The old man mostly scolds his wife if the work and business don’t go well, and now and then he will also upbraid his sons, but never his daughters-in-law. Those who really start quarrels are the mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, and the wives of the brothers, and through their quarrels
brothers also become enemies. The Sugalis say, "Another's child, a forest fowl, they will not become one's own."

An elder brother's wife and younger brothers and sisters of her husband are great friends; they do not quarrel. Girls tell the wife of their elder brother everything, both good and bad, and the young men speak and laugh much with the wife of their elder brother; no one takes any notice of this.

Old men and their wives love their grand children very much; they carry them on their hips, fondle them, and the wives of brothers also, if they live in peace with each other, carry the children of them all on their hips and fondle them, and when they have fever or are ill, they also nurse each other. During the festive gatherings, one can find the 'big men' (elderly men) remained seated, smoking the hookah and exchanging gossip.

RECRUITMENT TO THE HOUSEHOLD: BIRTH AND ADOPTION

The customary and usual modes of incorporation and recruitment to the household among the Sugalis are birth, adoption and marriage. The basic significant principle of membership into the household is based on the incorporation into the family. Birth is the principle by which an individual is incorporated into a family, while adoption is considered as substitute to birth.

On the other hand, marriage is a principle where by a woman is recruited into her husband's household. Thus the principle of incorporation and membership into the family by birth is by adoption and marriage.
Birth – Conception

In their society, custom, law and morals, sometimes even religion take cognizance of the bond between mother and offspring, usually at as early a stage as the beginning of gestation. The mother, sometimes the father also, has to keep various taboos and observances, or perform rites which have to do with the welfare of the new life within the womb. Birth is always an important social event, round which cluster many traditional usages, often associated with religion. Thus even the most natural and most directly biological tie, that between mother and child, has its social as well as its physiological determination cannot be described without reference to the influence exercised by tradition and usage of the community. They consider the maternity as a moral, religious and even artistic ideal of civilization. A pregnant woman is protected by law and custom, and should be regarded as a sacred object, while she herself ought to feel proud and happy in her condition.

From the first moments of pregnancy, the expectant mother is made to watch over the welfare of her future offspring by keeping a number of food taboos and other observances. The pregnant woman is regarded by custom as an object of reverence, an ideal which is fully realized by the actual behaviour and feelings of these natives. There exists an elaborate ceremony performed at the first pregnancy, with an intricate and somewhat obscure aim, but emphasizing the importance of the event and conferring on the pregnant woman distinction and honour.
Adoption: A Process of Incorporation into the Family

Birth provides a natural process of incorporation into the family. Earlier, failure to beget children, particularly a male child, created certain problems for the Sugali couple. As a matter of fact when a Sugali does not beget a male child through his wife, he is allowed to marry a second woman to fulfill such a desire. But now-a-days, the Sugali man is not ready to marry a second woman and this shows the strong bond of love between the wife and husband. Those without children are left with no alternative but to adopt a child and the choice of a particular child for adoption generally reflects their anxiety to minimize uncertainty.

Among the Sugalis, however, adoption is not common. But where there is no male issue to look after the parents during old age and there is no one to inherit the property after death, some one from the nearest in the family or clan is adopted as heir and successor with the prior consent of the parents of the adoptee and with the concurrence of lineage or clan members.

Among the Sugalis, persons, who is desirous of adopting a son is not given full rights to adopt a son from some one according to his own choice.

At first:

(i) he should approach his brother for a son; failing this
(ii) he may choose from the nearest relations or from near lineage men; then
(iii) he may ask the remote kindred or clansmen for a son to be given in adoption.
If the relatives fail to provide a son, they have no right to oppose the further proposal to adopt a son from somewhere else. In such cases he has the right to adopt an abandoned child in the Sugali society. The adopted son has rights to assume the title, status and property right of the adopter only after it has been approved by kinsmen of the adopter. But if a Sugali man adopts a non-Sugali child, then the customary law rejects the claim of such adoptee. A person can adopt a son from different clan also. From the time of adoption, the adoptee’s rights and responsibilities are transferred to the adopted clan as if he was born in it. But the customary law obstructs the adoptee to marry the girl of the same clan to which he originally belongs. Hence the adoptee is strictly adhered to clan exogamy.

When the adoptee dies, however, all the members of the adopted clan attend the funeral along with his native clan and after burial, both the clansmen take bath.

When a male child is born to the couple after adopting a son from other, then

(i) the adoptive son and their own son get equal share / right over the parental properties and adopted son is treated as eldest son and the other one as younger one.

(ii) Any of them can maintain the parents and can give a decent burial to the deceased.

(iii) In case of discord between the two, the putative son has the right to settle the matter and then he may get the large share of the father’s properties sand the adoptive son may get only a compensation.
An adopted son, as long as he lives in the adopter’s compound also fully enjoys similar familial and economic rights. An adopted son is easily deprived of his final claims on adopter’s property as soon as he leaves the compound of his adoptive parents. Residence in the ancestral house of the adoptive father determines and authorizes one to claim complete final rights on such father’s movable and immovable property. Adopted son may also be allowed to use a property owned by the patrilineage of his adoptive father when the lineage elders feel that in view of poor economic status of the adopted son such help was justified.

Now-a-days, we find that a daughter’s male child also, in absence of a son, provides the appropriate substitute. A person who has only daughters, and no son, may request one married daughter at his old age to take up residence in his house. This arrangement is made in order to manage the family property as well as to get a permanent male heir for such property. The daughter’s son’s incorporation in this way is generally regarded as a normal and natural process.

In fact, the choice of daughter’s son reflects the need of minimizing the uncertainties involved in an adoption from a socially unrelated group. To avoid any dispute which might arise due to final claims over property to be made by such daughter’s son in mother’s patrilineage ‘verbal will’ is made. Now-a-days ‘Written will’ is also made.

By giving away a child in adoption, the real father and his lineage cease to have any rights over that child. However,
adoption among Sugalis does not strictly mean severance of all social, ritual and economic ties inherited by birth. The adopted child does not inherit his personal share of father’s property (which one is supposed to get from his father after one’s marriage). But he always retains the right of use of property of his patrilineage. This right is generally claimed only when one has left the house of his adoptive father.

Where there is a separation of adopter and adoptee after their living together for many years and there after maintaining the adopting parents for a number of years, then adoptee may or may not get the share of his adopted father’s properties. This mainly depends upon the cause of separation. If the adopted father is responsible for separation, then adoptee has right to get half of adopter’s properties or he can claim a heavy charge of maintenance. On the other hand, if the adopted son is found guilty, then he cannot claim anything from adopter. But in some cases when the adopted one maintains the adopter till death staying in separate household, has a right to succeed and inherit the properties of the adopter.

When an adopted son dies in the adopter’s house after maintaining his adopter for a number of years as per custom either natural father or nearest blood relatives or adopted father has the right to bury the dead body of an adopted son. To maintain the childless couple, a male person from the same family of an adoptee may be substituted the surviving adopter.

In case of such substitution, the half or larger portion of adoptee’s properties would pass over to the relatives of this
second adoptive son even if the second one too dies in the same adoptive house. If the adopter decides not to substitute the adoptee from the same family of the dead adoptive son, the relatives of the dead adopted son would claim compensation from this adopter.

If the adoptive father dies, leaving his wife and adoptive son then, the adoptive son had the right to bury the dead body of adopter and to inherit the adopter's property, if the adopted son taken from the nearest or near blood relatives.

If the adopted son is from a remote kindred or from an unrelated family or from among the parentless children he is not allowed to bury his adopter's dead body as the performance of burial rite is intimately connected with the inheritance of the properties of the deceased. The adoptive son of such relation is entitled to get only a share of maintenance charge from the properties of the adopter. Again, an adopted son from such distant relation or from unrelated family has also been given rights to bury the body of his dead adoptive parent to inherit deceased's property rights if that process of adoption was obtained with proper consent of the adopter's relatives.

Through the formal adoption, the adopted son acquires membership of the family, lineage and clan of his adoptive father. This strengthens the natural process of incorporation and the adoption proves to be a prefect substitute to birth. Not only the adoptive father's family but also his lineage and clan thus share responsibilities over that child; and in turn, the adopted child also owes rights, responsibilities and obligations towards
his adopted parents and their kin groups. The adopted child now participates in the social, religious and economic activities of the family of his adoptive father.

Though the customary laws are specific regarding the adoption of a child, among the Sugalis sporadic cases of adoption are found. Barrenness and infertility are the familiar grounds which inspired such couple to adopt a child. But generally such adoption does not go beyond the limit of the family or lineage.

PATRILOCAL AND NEO LOCAL RESIDENCE

The patrilineal and patrilocal elementary or joint family is the normal type of family unit met within the thanda. When a son-in-law settles with his wife’s parents, one can occasionally get examples of matrilocal residence. But this is rare and is largely confined to the cases of a few orphans and children of very poor parents who take recourse to the method of service for securing a wife and then continue to live with their parents-in-law. The Sugali joint family is approved by social tradition. But it is indeed difficult to locate family units in a thanda of Anantapur District, in which five generations live together under the same roof. In the thandas of Andhra Pradesh, particularly Rayalaseema, it is impossible to find a family in which all nuclear families of three generations share a common house while joint families are regarded as ideal. It is common for sons to separate from their parents within a few years of their marriage. As a result of this separation they start as an elementary family which comprises at first only the husband
and the wife. Owing to the severe famine conditions in Anantapur district, these people migrate to other parts of the country to seek their livelihood. Hence joint family system is not seen practically. In this connection case histories of 120 families from the Pampanuru Thanda of Anantapur district are examined. In 34% of the cases sons had separated from their parents within two years of marriage. 36 per cent separated between two and three years after marriage. Separation took place after three, but within five years of marriage in 28% cases. Only 22% of the sons were still found to be living with their parents five years after their marriage. As most marriages are between adults, effective married life begins almost immediately after the marriage ceremony, or at the most within six months.

Further analysis of the caste histories reveals an almost uniform pattern of development in a majority of cases. For a year or so after his marriage a son continues to live with his parents. His wife also lives with him. Domestic quarrels and dissensions develop within this period and compel him to start thinking about separation. In some cases this takes place in the course of the next year; those who can hold together for five years generally continue to live under the same roof peacefully for a much longer period. Nevertheless, separation is known to have taken place in some cases even after ten to fifteen years of living together.

A young married man separating from his parents or brothers generally maintains close connections with their family or families. However, as the immediate cause for separation is
often a quarrel or an acute difference of opinion, for sometime the separating families continue to have strained relations. They may not even be on speaking terms. With the passage of time much of the bitterness of the dispute wears off and cordiality gradually returns to the different branches of the same main family. When the relations between the main family and the seceding family are once again cordial, they start taking interest in each other's affairs and problems. Ceremonies, feasts and festivals bring them all together. Rites connected with the major crises of life are great occasions for family reunions. Particularly in the event of death old quarrels and misunderstandings are generally forgotten and all near relations assemble for the last sites. In the rituals that follow the presence of all the branches of the family is regarded as obligatory, and the absence of anyone at such an occasion is bound to be viewed very seriously. This would almost always lead to a permanent breach of relations between the absenting unit and the other units of the same family.

A Sugali elementary family can be regarded as an independent unit of the extended family or the allied families. In everyday life it is practically free from the control of the other units of the allied families. Ordinarily these branches meet only on ceremonial and ritual occasions. Importance of the solidarity within the allied families is emphasized, and it is expected that any major decision will not be taken by any branch without consultation with the senior members of these allied families. Selling or buying land, starting litigation, obtaining large loans from a money lender, leaving the thanda
permanently for settling down in a different locality, and fixing the date and time for socio-religious ceremonies are among the subjects on which prior consultation with the senior members of the allied families is regarded as necessary.

The spread of affinal relations and the resulting kin ties can be gauged from an analysis of the pattern of marriage. There are three bases for match-making within the endogamous groups. The first two are restrictive — the degrees of prohibited relationships, and the quality and reputation of the person’s ancestry. The third is of a different order, being the pattern of marriages possible within these rules, given the restrictions imposed by the factor of distance.

THE PLACE OF THE UNILINEAL DESCENT GROUP

Clan affiliations are more stronger in the Sugali society. It is very common that social activities take place at clan gatherings, whereas the lineage, being of local extension, tends to have co-operation amongst members and even to be itself defined through this co-operation.

Worship of the clan Goddess is a test of common clan membership even more than the clan name. A stranger, who enters the thandas, can easily say he is a member of a particular clan; but it was said to be a much more serious matter for him to claim that he worships the same clan Goddess, and actually to do so. In practice he will not be allowed to worship with clan mates in the thandas to which he has come until they are satisfied that his credentials are in order, through the existence of mutual kin or the guarantee of someone they trust.
The clan Goddess is worshipped on one of the nine days before the festival of Dasara, in September-October. The image of the clan-Goddess, if this exists, is placed on a wooden stand and all who are qualified worship her with food and fire. Afterwards sweet offerings (Prasad) are eaten in honour of the occasion. The significance of the site in Singampalli thanda consists for us in the people who participate, and in the degree to which it is exclusive to them.

To start with, all male agnates (married or widowed or bachelors) are expected to worship their clan Goddess. A Jangad from any but a collateral branch will not usually worship. The main occasion of a woman’s connection with her conjugal clan’s Goddess is the worship by a wife in her husband’s village at the first festival after their marriage. People in general are not clear as to the precise difference between the clan Goddess and the Mother Goddess, saying that both are ‘goddesses of the house.’ Men who have settled permanently in their conjugal thandas continue to worship their own clan Goddess.

The wood from which the platform is made is sacred for each clan, and must never be burnt by its members. The totemic tree of the clan is regarded sacred and the wood of the totemic tree is not used as furniture in their houses. This is in addition to the wood of the Pipal and neem trees which no one should burn. The Sugalis worship the clan goddess on a platform of their totemic tree’s wood.

Some fathers promise the clan goddess that they will not shave their son’s hair until after his fifth year, when they
worship her in return for his protection of the boy. Such a rite includes the sacrifice of a goat, and a greater expense of other materials too.

GUARDIANSHIP

According to the Sugali notion, a boy is considered to be a minor up to the age of 12 or 13 years. During this period of minority:

(i) the father is the natural guardian of the child
(ii) if the father dies, the mother becomes the guardian of all the children who are either minor or major who has not by then got married.
(iii) In case of death of both the parents, the eldest brother of the father or next one in sequence in the absence of any preceding one.
(iv) In case the father has no full brother, then the nearest and the eldest brother or other suitable male adult from the clan becomes the guardian.
(v) If the children have an eldest brother who is major, whether married or unmarried, then he becomes the guardian.
(vi) In case no one from the clan is prepared to look after the minor children then they are taken away by the maternal uncle too be looked after till they grow up as major.
(vii) In case of a child born out of premarital 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.
(viii) If a couple gets divorced, the children will remain with the father. But in case of minor children, then remain with the mother till they grow up and after attaining majority the male return to the father and daughters remain with the mother. But on marriage of the daughter, the father receives the share in the bride price (Karae).

MARRIAGE SYSTEM

At various places and at various stages of human development, the institution of marriage came into existence in different forms. Anthropologists view the marriage as almost always more than simply a legalized sexual union between a man and a woman and children born to the woman out of that union are the recognized legitimate off-spring of both partners.

Diamond defined marriage as: "Mere sexual intercourse, among some primitive peoples, is licensed upon defined occasions or as between certain classes of persons. Throughout primitive law it is essentially a secular institution requiring no preliminary formality, though among some peoples religious ceremony may be superadded. It is the fact of cohabitation that constitutes the marriage."^2

The marriages of the Sugali tribe are performed at the approval of the respective families or at the will of the parties thereto. Based on the customary laws like clan exogamy, caste endogamy preferential lineages (Kutumb) and Bride-price, they fix the marriage. Adult marriage is the normal practice, but in
some thandas of Anantapur district, child marriages are also prevalent.

The age of marriage is normally 21 for a boy and 18 years for a girl. The Sugali families who possess only one son, prefers the marriage of their son at an early age. They feel that they may not enjoy their son's marriage, if sudden death happens to them. So also the girl's parents also want their daughter's marriage at an early age i.e., 16 or 17 years. They believe that once they send their married daughter to her in-laws home, they feel secure.

The Sugali women are under privileged with regard to their right to marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship etc. In the olden days, the girl is an economic necessity as she brings bride-price to her parental home. Now-a-days the situation is quite contrast, as there is a growing demand for a boy as dowry has replaced bride-price.

Because of the poor economic conditions, the Sugalis prefer their daughter to get married at childhood stage itself. The girl attains puberty at her husband's home. She is an economic necessity as she is helping hand in hearth and homestead rather than in the heart. She is considered as an economic asset in the family avocation as agriculture is mostly dependent on her.

In the Sugali society, marriage is the basis of social organization and the exclusive domain for sexual relations, marriage rules offer the mechanism for societal control over female sexuality. Socio-economic expediency, together with
ecological compulsions, had been a contributory factor in social sanctions of man-woman sex relationships. Payment of fixed or mutually agreed amount of bride price is a must which is followed by a community feast. Though a good number of rituals and ceremonies are observed in marriage, they are strictly from customary legal viewpoint, not indispensable nor do they carry weight unless the conditions of bride-price payment and community feast have been fulfilled.

The Sugalis usually prefer a girl from a good family background. The girl should be very beautiful and should possess a sweet voice. The customary law obstructs a girl of harsh voice from attending the major festive gatherings and marriages. A Sugali girl has to be well acquainted with the customs, rituals, songs and dance.

A mentally retorted and physically handicapped person either a boy or girl, cannot get married. He or she is looked after by the kith and kin. If the person is elder son, then the younger son will get married. If the elder daughter is physically handicapped, then in such cases, the younger daughter will get married.

For the Sugalis, marriage is not just a single legal act of making a girl the wife of a man, but it is a long ceremonial process which begins with the proportions for the wedding and whose explicit object is the ritual, spiritual, and social creation and establishment of the marital union, and to ensure the fertility of the woman and the welfare of her children. The process is completed between two and three years after the
actual wedding where the first child of the union has been reared to the walking stage. However, the process is completed not less than five years after the wedding, for at least two children have to be similarly reared. The total process culminates in the ritual incorporation of the woman into her husband’s house, family and clan, at which time she finally abandons her natal affiliations. The marriage process consists of a number and variety of events which take place in a strict order such that the completion of one allows preparations to go forward for the next. Each event is consciously related to a further stage in the process. Some of them are of vital ritual significance, some are of importance in establishing and cementing affinal relationships and some appear almost trivial, scarcely to be raised to the level of a stage of this process. The naming of the child and the Dhund ceremony are performed with due ceremony at the relevant time and by conventionally determined people from either side of the union. It is regarded as a new stage in the development; that is, the birth of the child is a further step in the Sugali woman becoming a ‘full-wife’ and in uniting her with her husband and his house. It also marks a further step in the linking together of the new affines. In fact, there are two interwoven processes; one is the development from unmarried girl, to bride, to ‘bride-wife’ (Navalerin), to mother (Yā), to full wife (Gonni); the other is the gradual binding together of the husband with his wife’s father and full-brothers, and to a lesser degree the houses and even the families of each. Amongst the Sugalis, there are some fifteen successive stages, beginning with the formal request of the girl in marriage and ending with her ritual incorporation. The ceremonies like
Got require the slaughter of animals for ceremonial feasts and many of them necessitate the co-operation of clan elders on both sides.

It is customary for a Sugali girl to possess a sweet voice. A girl who has harsh voice is not permitted to participate in all the ceremonial occasions and it will be difficult for her to get married.

The Sugalis believe that the prime, extrinsic features of legal marriage are the man's sexual monopoly over his wife and authority over her children. On the reverse side, the wife gains the opportunity to bear legitimate children and the rights of support and protection from her husband. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the transfer of bride wealth and its formal, public acceptance is but one stage of the total marriage process, though a critical stage in the eyes of all people. The marriage can only be completely established by the due performance of the ritual and the ceremonial acts already mentioned.

The public declaration of the transfer and acceptance of the bride wealth is clearly marked. The bride's father permits the bride to show all the ornaments by standing on an ox and this is already mentioned in the previous chapter. This is followed by the groom and his supporters, who perform ceremonial dancing and elders drink sarai.

**Forms of Marriage:** (modes of acquiring a mate) Polygamy is an accepted form of marriage in the Sugali society. In the medieval period the Sugali women outnumbered men, a tendency perhaps accentuated by the fact that men often
engaged in more dangerous activities than women, such as warfare and trading activities. It has often been remarked that an effect of polygamy is to provide that all the women in a community can be married and so materially provided for. A spinster is a social anomaly; there is no accepted role for her or at best only a restricted one. Also where a man's status and property pass to his own children, and where, as is often the case his own reputation and his being remembered after he dies depend almost entirely on his having a large number of descendents, he has evidently a strong incentive to polygamy. Now-a-days owing to the growing poverty, the Sugali men are not interested to practice polygamy.

Several forms of marriage are prevalent among the Sugalis. Those forms of marriages are almost similar to those of old marriage that could be seen in the shastric Hindu law. The following are the known forms of marriages prevalent among the Sugalis. Marriage by

(i) exchange,
(ii) service,
(iii) capture,
(iv) purchase or barter marriages,
(v) elopement, etc.

Marriage by exchanging of girls from the family of the bridegroom to the family of the bride is a prominent mode of marriage in the Sugali society. This is a kind of barter, which reflects various economic and social factors practiced by them. First, it may be the economic conditions of the family of the bridegroom, if it is not so sound to give a bride-price. Secondly,
it is difficult to get a marriageable girl having similar and suitable family status. In order to avoid such type of economic and social adjustments, marriage is performed by exchanging the bride between two families. In these transactions it is almost always man who do the exchange; women are like a commodity simpliciter transferred, for a consideration, from one group to another.

**Marriage by Service:** The competency to marriage of an adult boy is judged by the compatibility and capability of his services to be rendered to the bride’s family. The service prior to marriage is conducive to good pre-marital understanding. It vastly depends upon the valour capacity of the bridegroom to convince the bride and her family by these virtues. Usually a Sugali bridegroom stays in the bride’s residence and serves her family members for one month before the marriage.

**Marriage by Capture:** Capture is the taking possession by force of something which offers resistance.

According to Gisbert capture may be of three types: genuine, connubial and ceremonial or symbolic.³

The exogamous clans of the Sugali community have plant totems, the consumption of which is forbidden. They have a great reverence for these totemic plants which are worshipped by them on all occasions. It may be noted that heterogeneous lists of clan names is most apparent in India where a proportion of totemic names are names of natural objects that is, symbols of functional activities which because they are clearly differentiated in a caste system – can serve to express
distinction between social groups within the tribe or the caste itself. Women are biological individuals, and they are alike so far as nature is concerned and can be regarded as different only from the cultural angle. The Sugalis believe that women certainly have to be exchanged since they have been decreed to be different. But this exchange presupposes that basically they are held to be alike. Women are only recognized as alike within the limits of their respective social groups and consequently cannot be exchanged between one caste and another or between one tribe and another. The totemic groups decree women to be culturally heterogeneous.

In connubial capture the girl is taken by physically breaking down the opposition as a condition for the validity of the marriage, thus until the bid succeeds the couple is not considered as married.

In a genuine capture, the girl is abducted against her wishes or the consent of her relatives and subsequently she becomes the wife of her captor and legitimacy is tacitly agreed upon by the society gradually.

Ceremonial capture is neither real or necessary, but a part of the ceremony and a symbol of love.

Marriage by capture is not a common practice of the Sugalis. However, pre-arranged capture is prevalent among them; when the boy and the girl meet with parental objection and where the bride-price demanded for the bride is in excess to pay, the girl arranges that she shall be abducted and after that marriage takes place immediately. According to Hamilton where
the bride-price demanded for the bride is in excess to pay, the girl arranges that she shall be abducted and after that marriage takes place immediately.

**Marriage by Purchase:** The sociological meaning of marriage by purchase has given rise to many different interpretations, the most extreme being that which regards it as essentially an economic transaction whereby the wife is reduced to the category of a slave. The Sugalis are of the view that the bride price called ‘karar’ is given sometimes as a remuneration for the expenses incurred by her parent for her maintenance until the time of marriage, or as an indemnity for the economic loss they suffer with her departure, for their trading and agricultural economy, women are an economic asset. Study reveals that marriage by purchase is nothing but the payment of bride price to the parents of the bride which is very much prevalent among the Sugalis. To the question, whether marriage by purchase enhances or depresses the condition of women, no general answer may be given. The most desperate degrees regarding the status of women maybe found among the people whose marriage is performed without so-called bride-price or consideration. The marriage by purchase is considered to be dignified in comparison to the marriage by dowry; which is more common among the non-Sugalis.
**Marriage by Elopement:** Marriage by elopement though is in practice, is less honoured by the Sugalis to avoid bride-price and parental objections. However, the younger generations prefer such type of marriages and are found to be in practice among the Sugalis.

![Marriage System Diagram]

**Rules and Restrictions of Marriage**

**Caste Endogamy:** The Sugalis are endogamous within the jati (tribe). Because of the strict caste endogamy, they have a good 'genetic pool,' a limited number of genes from which all its members have drawn their physical characteristics. In the Sugali society, it is generally held to be very important that their community should keep itself to itself, and avoid mixing with other castes, especially with lower ones. The rule of endogamy often associated with strongly institutionalized notions of purity and impurity, helps to ensure tribe separateness; it also expresses the high value socially attached to such exclusiveness.

**Clan Exogamy:** The Sugalis are strictly exogamous between the gotras. These gotras are better termed as social groups which are distinguished from one another but they retain their
solidarity as parts of the same whole and the rule of clan exogamy furnishes the means of resolving this opposition balanced between diversity and unity. Each social group will tend to form a system no longer with other social groups but with particular differentiating properties regarded as hereditary, and these characteristics exclusive to each group will weaken the framework of their solidarity within the society. Each clan tries to define itself by the image which it draws from a natural model or totem, the more difficult will it become for it to maintain its links with other clans, and in particular to exchange its sisters and daughters with them since it will tend to think of them as being of a particular ‘species’. Two images, one social and the other natural, and each articulated separately will be replaced by a socio-natural image, single but fragmented:

SUGALI SOCIETY

NATURE : Jilledu Tulasi Jammi Marri
CULTURE: Rathod Chouhan Pamhar Jadhav

Prescriptive and Preferential Marriage

Rules prohibiting certain persons as spouses may be accompanied by rules designating others as particularly appropriate, or even as the only appropriate partners. If it is the rule that a man ought to marry a person in a particular category, this is called as prescribed marriage. If it is just thought desirable that a man should find his wife in a particular category of persons, this is called as preferred or preferential marriage. Cross cousin marriages are permitted among the Sugalis. As

201
stated earlier, clan exogamy is the basic rule in the Sugali society. Earlier, a man was forbidden to marry
(i) a woman belonging to his mother’s side
(ii) Paternal or maternal grand mother’s section (Dâdi or Nâni’s relatives)
(iii) Paternal or maternal great grand mother’s section (Pad dâdi or Pad Nâni’s relatives).

But this rule of exclusion is gradually losing its vigour, and such marriages are becoming fairly common. In the olden days a girl was prohibited to marry her maternal uncle. But now-a-days it has become common to marry their maternal uncle. If he is older than her mother, then he is called as ‘Moto’ and mother’s younger brother is called as ‘Füpi.’ Usually a girl is married to younger brother of the mother.

Cross-Cousin Marriage

Similar marriage rules existed among historically unrelated people in South India and Sugalis. These societies are characterized by rules which specified that an individual should marry his or her cousin. Cross-cousins are children of siblings of the opposite sex (i.e., children of a brother and a sister). The sequence by which a Sugali alliance is established and maintained can be exemplified by taking two model lineages, each of which contain one man and one woman in each generation. In the first generation, the two unrelated men exchange their sisters in marriage. When their sons repeat the exchange, each is now marrying a woman to whom he is already related. The Sugali marriage rule requires marriage with a
cross-cousin who resides in another thanda. The relationship can be traced both through the father and the mother. The woman whom the man marries is both his father's sister's daughter and his mother's brother's daughter. The woman is marrying a man who is both her mother's brother's son and her father's sister's son. Radcliffe-Brown, who studied such marriage rules in Australia, termed this as bilateral cross-cousin marriage.7

In practice there are, of course, several men and several women in each generation of the lineage. All the men, however, address each other as 'brother' (or 'fellow-male-member-of-the-lineage'). They call each other as 'Bhai' or 'Bhiya'. All the women address each other as 'sister'. Men address women of the lineage to which they are allied as 'wife', or 'marriageable-woman', while women address the men as 'husband' or 'marriageable man'. Members of the same sex in the other lineage will be addressed as 'brother-in-law' or 'sister-in-law'. Parallel cousins (children of one's father's brothers and mother's sisters) are addressed as brother and sister and cannot normally be married. They are, in fact, members of one's own lineage, because the father's brother has married the mother's sister.

Levi-Strauss pointed out that cross-cousin marriage is a phenomenon which occurs in many parts of the world. He accepted that this could not have occurred through diffusion of the custom from a common point of origin, and saw it as an expression of universal patterns of human thought. It was the structure of human cognition which generated structure in social
relationships. The exchange of marriage partners is the form of human communication in the Sugali society. There are three types of cross-cousins in their society. They are: patrilateral (the father’s sister’s child), matrilateral (the mother’s brother’s child) and bilateral (where the father’s sister’s child and mother’s brother’s child are one and the same or, at least, occupy the same positioning the structure of the kinship system.

Levirate

The custom of inheriting one’s brother’s widow is allowed in the past, and was quite commonly practiced even up to second and third collateral cousins. However, levirate is deliberately discouraged these days, for Sugalis have changed their views regarding this custom. The reasons for the old customs are:

Protection of the honour of the widow and thereby the honour of the family; avoidance of the division of the family resources like bullocks or lands; protection of the children; and (because of patrilineal descent and inheritance) interest of the lineage in retaining the children and the woman. The last point assumed significance only when the widow decided to marry some one else outside the lineage; otherwise, she had a right to maintenance in the deceased husband’s family. The main merit of the levirate lay in the full use of bride price. The bridegroom’s family paid for the woman in the form of bride wealth thereby the lineage claimed a right over the procreative potential of the woman by acquiring a member of the lineage, e.g., a brother or a parallel cousin of the deceased person to
inherit the widow. As though to prevent widow remarriage with men of other lineage, payment for widow remarriage had been fixed higher than the usual bride price. A man marrying a widow had to pay Rs.1500 to the agnates of the deceased husband as a compensation and Rs.250 towards the Panchayats’ customary dues.

**Sororate**

In the absence of a heir, to inherit their property, a Sugali is permitted to marry his wife’s younger sister (Sali). Sororal polygamy is rarely practiced by them.

**Mode of Acquiring a Mate**

Usually it is the boy’s family which seeks a wife for their son. Formal marriage arrangements are made by senior male relatives. Usually, the girl’s father tries to make an alliance with a family of high economic position. For the girl’s father, the selection of a suitable groom requires a delicate balancing of many factors. The reputation of the groom, his age, health, looks and now-a-days, schooling are important. It is desirable, if possible, for the girl’s family to make an alliance with a family having a somewhat higher status than hers, since this enhances their prestige in their own thanda and ensures that the bride will not be discontent with her husband’s social standing position.

The marriage customs result in families of each thanda seeking husbands for their daughters from a limited number of other thandas. As a result of this localization, most wives are known to other women from their parental thandas who also
married into the thanda. Because the selection of a groom involves balancing many factors, the bride's family seeks as much information as possible about prospective grooms and their families. Women already married into families under consideration are the main source of such information. Therefore, the first, informal contacts are frequently made by a Dhadi and also by a female relative who is already married into the village of the prospective groom.

As stated in the previous chapter, the girl's family goes in search of the bride-groom. Owing to the fact that the Sugalis are migratory community, the Dhadis or the professional singers carry the work of arranging the matrimonial alliances among the Sugali families (Katamēlo). When a boy or girl attains the marriageable age, the parents attend all the social gathering and festive occasions, to find a life partner to their son or daughter.

**Bride Price**

There is an interplay of social, economic, and psychological factors in the break down of marriage. Though not fully realized in actual behavior, stability of marriage is only an ideal in the conjugal life among the Sugalis. As though purporting to uphold this ideal, the Sugali Panchayat has laid down heavier sums of money for various types of cohabitation and remarriage, as compared with the normal symbolic bride-price.* In case of elopement with an unmarried girl which eventually leads to marriage, a person has to pay the usual

---

* The researcher used the word 'bride price' to describe Sugali marriage transactions, because firstly, only cash is transacted between the wife exchanging groups and secondly, the payment is not made to the bride but to her father; or in some cases to her brothers.
bride-price and Rs.150 fine which accrues to the Panchayat. In the case of remarriage of a deserter or a divorce, a man has to pay Rs.300 as compensation of the previous husband and a fine to the Panchayat.

As stated earlier, the Sugalis believe that they are the descendents of Vali and Sugriva in the Ramayana period. The legend is that Vali, the elder brother of Sugriva was killed by Lord Sri Rama and finally Sugriva marries his elder brother's wife 'Tara.'

Hence junior Levirate is the characteristic feature of the Sugali society in which unilineal descent in the male line forms the central principle of social organization. In the Levirate, if a married man dies, his widow (Bojayi) may be taken over by his younger brother (Bhay). In Anantapur District, the person presents the widow with a new saree and a blouse piece in the presence of the Naik and relatives and he offers liquor at his own expense to those who are present. This ceremony is called 'Bhannu.'

In the Sugali society, a man's heir is his next brother, who succeeds to his responsibilities and his status generally as well as inheriting his possessions. He thus becomes the guardian of his widows as well as of his children, and is expected, particularly if a widow (elder brother's wife called as Bhojay or Mot) is young and has not yet borne many children, to 'raise upseed,' to his dead brother by cohabiting with her. But the elder brother is not permitted to marry a widow of his younger brother.

207
Residence after Marriage

In a patrilineal society like that of the Sugalis, in which the basic social units are exogamous agnatic clans or lineages, that is where the kinship bonds that hold the group together are through men, it is usual for husbands to remain in their own groups after they marry, and for wives to leave theirs and join their husbands. Thus after a woman is married, she tends to be more or less cut off from her natal group. She becomes instead a permanent member of her husband's group, and as we have seen she may continue to be so even after her husband’s death. The stability of the marriage depends upon the rule of residence. Though the patrilineal rule of residence is prescribed, the Sugali couple soon, after their marriage, prefer the neo-local rule of residence. Sons live in the family till their marriage. After marriage they cannot live in the joint family. The male offspring take his share of property and follow their wives and live independently. Hence they are more self conscious and common sense.”

Divorce (Choddi Natur)

Another arena where a Sugali woman and her status is well reflected concerns the situation of divorce. Provision of divorce of a man or woman is widely reported in human societies. There are definite rules / 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.

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 Gor Panchayat and complains about the mis-behaviour of her husband. It has become customary for a Sugali woman not to attend the Gor Panchayat.
If her presence is essential, then she attends the Gor 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:

**Barrenness:** 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.

**Laziness:** 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.

**Adultery:** A man may ask for divorce if he discovers that his wife has committed adultery.

**Desertion:** If a wife runs away to live with another man her husband is more likely to seek a divorce.

**Incurable disease:** 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 leads to divorce and in some cases, a woman cannot express it in the Gor Panchayat.

If the husband is suffering from an incurable disease like cancer or AIDS, his wife rarely claim the divorce.

The person who wants the divorce has to get the consent of the Naik. The case is settled by the Gor Panchayat. The client has to pay a nominal fee of Rs.1 to the Gor Panchayat.

As the Sugali society is patrilineal, the children are considered as the members of the father’s lineage and they will get a share in the father’s property and also the surname of their father’s lineage. When the parents claim divorce children are given choice either to stay with their father or mother. The
responsibility of bringing them up, settling them in life and 
getting them. After the divorce has been effected, married rests 
with father. The woman has to return to her former husband all 
the ornaments and clothes given to her by him.

Remarriage

Remarriage is common among them. 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, his 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.

As stated earlier, 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’. If a 
person maintains sexual relations with his younger brother’s 
wife, then he is called as ‘Ye bodinchoddu’. Here the word 
‘Bodi’ means younger brother’s wife.

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.125, *(Vaya Valira Savvasu)* to the Gor Panchayat. A widow has to pay Rs.150 *(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. But there is no
objection to her marrying any other person. It has been claimed by some Sugalis, 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.
In Pampanuru thanda, the compensation claimed in the case of a woman marrying out of the family amounts to Rs.750, with Rs.500 for the Naik or head man of the family. Should the widow elope without her brother-in-law's consent, he chooses ten or twelve of his friends to go and sit dharna before the hub of the man who has taken her. He is then bound to supply these men with food and liquor until he has paid the customary sum, when he may marry the widow. In the event of the second husband being too poor to pay monetary compensation, he gives a goat, which is cut into eighteen pieces and distributed to the community.

Marriage with Non-Sugalis

The Sugalis are a nomadic tribe and it is not closed to outsiders first. The general rule 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 Gor Panchayat they become members of the community. Even if a female is not a member of Sugali community by virtue of birth she having been married to a Sugali after due observance of all formalities and after obtaining the approval of the elders of the community she will be taken into the hold of the tribe.

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 Gor Panchayat approves a particular marriage with a non-Sugali then the question of ex-communication never arises. Sometimes, the Gor Panchayat disapproves of such marriage and that where a Sugali male and his family are outcasted 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 Sex Relations

Any pre-marital sex relations between boys and girls are strictly prohibited 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. If a girl is known to have become pregnant before marriage, the Naik of the thandas sends for her and her parents, and after reprimanding them asks the girl to reveal the name of the partner. If she reveals the name, the person concerned is summoned and asked to marry the girl and at the same time he is required to pay fine as decided by the Naik. If the person refuses to marry the girl he is forced to pay her a compensation of Rs.300 to Rs.500 out of which she pays a fine of Rs.100 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.

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 Gor Panchayat serves the unfiltered tamarind juice to all the members and seeds of tamarind in the juice are spitten 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.

Social Stigma

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**

**Incest**

The Sugalis are regarded as a distinct race showing neither 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 more 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 fall 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: (a) 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 thought 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 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. Incest 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 unilineally 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 is 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 2 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 Pampanuru 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 Sāno) 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

Aiyer and Nanjundayya mention that "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 Anantapur district 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 theirs 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, that 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 Anantapur district.

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.

FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY CATEGORIES

Concept of Property

According to Maine, the most primitive form of society known among the Indo-European races of mankind is the
patriarchal society, and its prominent characteristic is the Patria Potestas or power of the paterfamilias. The people in the ancient societies knew nothing of the individual, they were concerned only with the family, their clan and the tribe as a whole. The family as the social unit, not the individual. The property devoted not in distinct and separate shares to the individual members of a family, but to the eldest male descendant, who stepped into the position of the paterfamilias, who managed the family property for the good of the family.

Ideas about ownership and property differ widely depending upon the basic culture adopted by the social order. The occidental virtue of laying stress on individual possession or private use is rare in the Sugali society. The exclusive and unconditional use over certain specific chattels like the person’s weapons considered essential for safety and security, or the tribal customary costumes or clothes depending on the ferocity of climatic conditions, are the only private property. Like land or livestock, anything is scarcely possessed by individuals. The common properties are always for the clan, sub-group, extended family or lineage. Although the stock may be controlled by the senior members of the clan, it is usually in the capacity of custodian for the use of the entire society. The Sugali society signifies certain peculiar characteristics of a patriarchal society. The properties as it is understood by the Sugalis, include both immovable and movable properties. Immovable property includes land both residential and arable and lime mortar kilns etc. The common pattern of land ownership which appears to be ethnic in origin is the communal ownership. Such communal
lands are further divided into thandas land, clan land and privately owned land etc. Members of the community at large practice certain courses of conduct over the general land of the community, for example, passage way, drawing of water in a well, forest etc. Movable property means livestock utensils, bowls, ornaments and agricultural implements.

The problems of property in general, and those of individuals in Sugali society have been thoroughly investigated in their sociological, historical and economic aspects. It is a known fact that private ownership of livestock arises at a very early stage; its emergence marks the advent of cattle breeding as an economic system and a switch over to the monogamous family. As Lenin wrote, both private property and inherited property represent categories of a social order which features well defined, small, monogamous families with barter and exchange already extant. Until recently, the problems related to the private ownership of livestock in Sugali community have been considered primarily in a general form. And yet ethnographic sources allow a more specific approach to the concept of private-family ownership of livestock among the Sugalis. Here the researcher tried to trace certain stages in the development of this form of ownership and to determine the existence of such a category of ownership of livestock and of other property of Sugalis which in its original form may be regarded as characterizing patriarchal, large-family communities. Before characterizing this category of community ownership, which will be referred to as family-group ownership, it should be noted that it is never encountered in a "pure" form.
but rather co-exists, and sometimes intertwines, with other kinds of ownership, particularly with the private ownership by individual families that crystallized somewhat later.

Family-clan groups, which are in fact small communities in their own right, constituted a real form of social organization among Sugalis, conducive to the preservation of vestiges of collective ownership. The study of Sugali community made up of kindred families indicate that it resulted from the disintegration of the patriarchal family, at the same time, remaining the smallest sub unit of a clan in which relations of consanguinity were still viable.

Bride price and the dowry should be included in the category of family-group property which has simultaneously a private-family form of property. In the Sugali community, the bride-price was paid primarily or exclusively by the groom’s family and is administered solely by the bride’s father.

Hence the widely accepted definition of the type of marriage based on bride price payment as “marriage by purchase”. The researcher attended a betrothal ceremony (sagai) of Bhimla Naik in Singampalli thanda and found that the persons who took part in the collection of wealth to pay for the bride and in the “appropriation” of that wealth were far from confined to the groom’s and bride’s parents. In this thandas, the groom is helped to pay the bride price by his relatives, particularly his next of kin on the father’s side; in some cases the groom’s father’s relatives pooled to pay the bride money. According to an oral report by Ranjit Naik, the president of All
India Banjara Sangh, among the Sugalis the relatives likewise took part in the collection of bride money. The custom dictates that the bride groom’s relatives are bound to help him in the payment of the bride money.

If a young woman is widowed and childless, she is taken as wife by one of the deceased husband’s younger brothers or other relatives with all her possessions and livestock is divided among the relatives, for all the relatives had taken part in the payment of the bride money for the widow.

Characteristically, all close relatives by blood or marriage got together to discuss their contributions to the bride price.

It is to be noted that the groom’s father is not solely responsible for the payment of the bride price, for the groom’s relatives especially his brothers make contributions which are the greater, more valuable the gift made by the bridegroom’s father. He is also helped by his distant relatives, particularly on his mother’s side. Hence the bride-money payment among all people who practiced this custom, concerned not only the narrow circle of the groom’s next of kin and close relatives, but involved a great number of persons who assisted in its payment.

As stated earlier, the bride price is termed as Karar or Sak. It is precisely the members of the family clan group to which the groom’s family belonged who were bound to pay, in varying amounts the bride money. Thus, the very method of collecting bride money reflected the collective nature of this category of ownership. No less indicative is the subsequent loss of the bride money. A considerable body of evidence indicates that a large,
not small, portion of it was spent to prepare the bride’s dowry, on the one hand, and that, on the other it became the property of those kindred families which had taken part in the collection of the dowry and in other wedding expenses.

In this respect, of special interest are the customs practiced by the Sugalis in giving the karar. The bride price in the form of livestock is termed as ‘Ramasade karar’ and it is presented by the groom’s family to the bride’s parents which is considered as common property by all the bride’s relatives, and the bride’s parents were required to share the gift livestock with their closest relatives, giving them up to two-thirds of the total number. Hence, anyone receiving livestock was in turn obliged to participate in supplying the bride’s trousseau, which, upon her marriage, became her personal property for life in her husband’s home.

Now-a-days, the dowry, just like the bride money, secures a private or private family form of property only to a very casual observer. Actually, the dowry had also evolved all the way from family-group to family to individual property. But to tackle this problem in depth, it is necessary first to analyse the concept of “dowry”. It is called “Teru” by the Sugalis. It includes trousseau, ornaments, utensils and livestock. The ‘Mal’ is the word to denote property which the bride received from her parents as her personal possession and which included various species of livestock, various clothes, utensils etc. It is obvious that the dowry should be distinguished from that property given to the bride by her parents which represented her share of the common-family possessions. This share consisted
primarily of livestock, whereas the dowry brought to the husband’s home included everything needed to form a separate economic unit.

At present, a Sugali divides his property among his sons and a part of his property is apportioned as a share to his unmarried daughter. She receives the share at the time of her marriage. The researcher could find that they apportioned the bride’s share in cattle and not in things. Certain relatives of the bride were bound by custom to make quite substantial gifts: the bride’s elder sister’s husband, present the bride with the gold ornaments or cash. Thus the assembly of a dowry or ‘Teru’ was a collective process among the Sugalis.

Practically all sources assert that now-a-days the dowry became the husband’s full and inalienable property, if it been apportioned to him, or the property of the bride’s father-in-law, if it had not been apportioned to the married son. If the woman tried to leave her husband, she could not reclaim her dowry. Only on rare occasions would a Sugali husband after a divorce provide his ex-wife with a part of the dowry. Yet sometimes she would be given their entire dowry.

A Sugali girl at the age of fifteen or sixteen started “to embroider her trousseau. Exactly these items of the dowry constituted the woman’s personal possessions. In a divorce, provided the guilt was the husband’s, from the part of the bride money returned to him a sun was withheld required to provide his ex-wife with a livelihood.
But the Sugalis did not extend the rubs of the dowry to the ‘mal’. It is regarded as the wife’s property, and she has the right to it if she is left a childless widow and desired to return to her parents’ family.

The woman’s right to this kind of property was recognized by custom in various divisions and redivisions of property. The livestock forming part of ‘Mal’ was added to the husband’s herd, and the whole herd was common and indivisible, though for a long time after the marriage each spouse knew his or her livestock. Practically, this “differentiation” of livestock was important only in cases of controversy over the property rights of one of the spouses. It should be noted that the property brought by the woman to her husband’s household was used by the whole family, but in case of divorce all this property was returned to the woman, and in case of her death it was claimed by her next of kin-brothers, father etc.

Here the question as to how the personal property of both the girl and the boy was formed is of particular interest. According to Bhimla Naik of Singampalli thanda, the Sugalis had a custom whereby his parents allotted a certain quantity of livestock to a boy during the ceremony of circumcision; this constituted his personal property. This gift not withstanding during the division of a deceased father’s property, the son was entitled to claim his part of the inheritance, on par with the other heirs.
Laws of Inheritance and Succession

The Sugalis being predominantly a patrilineal group, the general rule is that property is inherited by males. The rule of primogeniture prevails. However, the youngest son is given the choice to select the piece of land or other immovable property as his share. The reason behind this is, the eldest son after getting married tries to establish a separate homestead. The younger son is supposed to look after his parents until he gets married. Even after his marriage, parents prefer to live with their younger son. Though all sons inherit equally, preference is given to the youngest so far as landed property is concerned. The parents are also given a part of the share in the property. But there need be no mathematical precision about the equality of shares. If one son takes a plot of banjar land in one field, the other may get good land in different field with very much lesser area.

However, the law of primogeniture is prevalent among the Sugalis. As per this custom, the eldest son gets any share. Primogeniture is an ancient rule to ensure that the ancestral property remains in the lines of the original family. The Sugalis make a distinction between ancestral property and self-acquired property and only in respect of ancestral property the rule of primogeniture rigidly applied. Daughters do not inherit any landed property. As per custom of succession, during the lifetime of his father, a son may establish a separate household only of his own, but he cannot claim the property share. On the death of the father, the property is equally divided among the sons.
In case a man dies without any issue, the property may remain in the possession of the widow until she marries again. If she marries, it goes to the brothers of the deceased husband or nearest kinsmen and in absence of any such blood relation, to the members of the sub-clan of the deceased husband. Women are not considered to hold property as their own. They are usually adequately supported by their husbands, fathers or brothers (partly, because of the bride price which has been paid or will be received) and on marriage they go out of the family, leaving the family property behind them. Yet commonly the ornaments, domesticated animals, cloth and household utensils which they hold still descend on death to their daughters, or in default to their sisters, and they are considered to hold these as their own. Apart from such property, daughters usually do not inherit.

If a man leaves a minor son or sons behind wife predeceased, his brother shall look after the property as a guardian of the minor son or sons during his or their minority, and hand over to each of his / their share when he or they attains/attain majority.

If a man has adopted a male child on his having no son or before the subsequent birth of a son, the adoptee inherits the property, especially when the adoptee carries the dead body to the grave.

If the person has only one daughter then the son-in-law staying in his in-laws' house with wife and after the death of the
father-in-law carries his dead body to the grave, he does earn the sole right to inherit the property.

A widow is not entitled to inherit the property of her husband but with minor sons she remains custodian till it is inherited by the sons on attainment of majority. If a son marries a non-Sugali girl (Kor), then the father may debar him from inheriting his property. As a general principle and accepted social custom, a son starts living separately before his father's death, the son or sons living with the father at the time of his death gets a larger share or shares in the form of residential house but landed property is equally divided. The son or heirs to a person's properties are liable to compensate for the liabilities of the father or the person. Generally the eldest son inherits the debts and he clears the same.

As the Sugalis recognize patrilineal descent, inheritance and succession are through the male line, giving equal importance to all the male siblings. In no case is ancestral property allowed to pass into the female line. However, in practice gifts, but not a share in the property are given to female descendants on the occasion of their marriage.

When a couple does not have male issue, it can adopt a "son". Usually a son of a brother, parallel cousin, or a boy from the same lineage or other lineages of the same clan, in that order of preference. Similarly, a widow or a widower is also allowed to adopt a son. The adoption ritual is simple. The elders of the neighbouring settlements are invited to a feast, and the antecedents of the boy and the names of the adopting persons
are announced, so that any objection to the adoption in terms of violation of kinship rules may be brought to the notice of the assembly. After this, the waist band of the boy is removed and a new one is tied to symbolise the change of social paternity.

If there are any articles numerical division of which may not be possible, the share is determined by fixing a value for such items.

After the death of the father, a part of the property is kept aside for the marriage of a girl. The eldest son takes the responsibility of his unmarried sisters, arranges marriage and receives the bride prices and gives the gifts or ornaments to the sisters at the time of performance of marriage. The ornaments of the mother are divided between the daughters, where the eldest one gets the lion's share. But such ornaments are given at the time of marriage and having settled in their husband's house. This provision of succession is similar to the succession of stridhan of Hindu Law. If the son does not take the responsibility of looking after the unmarried sisters, anyone who looks after them will be entitled to receive the bride price. Study reveals that the womenfolk of the Sugalis enjoy a very limited right to property. The woman can inherit only her ornaments which are passed on as heirloom from her mother. They have virtually no right over the immovable property, whatever right they have, is nothing but a limited and temporary right only during her life time.

Traditionally sons inherited land, while daughters' inheritance was given in jewellery. Land holdings passed from
father to son, and gold jewellery passed from mother to daughter. Although traditional law gave sons the right to claim their share of the family land when they reached adulthood, this right was seldom exercised. Eldermen controlled the land, and elder women controlled the distribution of household goods. Elders of either sex might control some or all of the household money.

While a man’s most valuable asset is his land and livestock, a woman’s most valuable possession is her gold and silver jewellery, which she guards most carefully and gives away with the greatest reluctance. Although traditional law permits land division, sons seldom divide landholdings until after the death of both parents, and then only if they are quarrelling. Fathers usually retire from fieldwork when their sons are old enough to take over the work but retain ownership of the land. Joint ownership allows families to share farm equipment and co-operate in cultivation. Even when farm equipment and labour are not shared, the land may be held in joint ownership. In many families, seniormen and their sons farm portions of their ancestral land and use or market their crops separately without changing the land records to legally separate their holdings.

By traditional law, if a man had no sons, his estate passed to his brothers and their children, that is, to his parental nephews. These inheritance rules ensured that land ownership remained with men of the same lineage. The patrilineal inheritance rule is still adhered to with deep emotion, despite the changes in inheritance laws.
Kinship and Property

A significant effect of descent group formation is the establishment of a mechanism for the transmission of property from one generation to the next.

Bride price which is often found in Sugali society, is a payment by the family of the bride groom to the bride's family. It is conceived of as payment in lieu of inheritance, in recognition of the fact that a woman has, upon marriage, left her natal kin group, whereas a man remains a member of his bride wealth, found commonly in patrilineal society, and especially in pastoral ones, is a payment by a man or his kin to the kinsmen of the bride. Its usual function is the legitimation of children. If it is not paid, children may belong to their mother's rather than their father's patrilineal group.

In the light of these data one can see how the nomads switched from a collective form of ownership by patriarchal family communities, referred to later as family-clan groups, to the principle of private ownership by individual families. Such a form of private property evolved in several ways: allotment of livestock to new born and children, and later to adolescent boys and girls; apportioning to sons from the common-family estate; and, finally division of inherited property.*

One social institution particularly specific to the nomadic community like Sugalis is apportioning to sons by their fathers;

* The problems of property in general, and those of nomads in particular have been thoroughly investigated in their sociological, historical and economic aspects. Soviet economists, historians and ethnographers widely discussed the problem of property among nomads in mid-fifties. These categories are similar to that of the Sugalis in India.
the emergence of this institution marked a change over from the principle of family-community ownership to ownership by the separate small family. Characteristically, the process of formation of private-family property involved not only males but also girls and women, which argues in favour of this being the earliest stage in the development of private property. In recent years, the Sugali private-family property had its specific features. Among poor and middle-status Sugalis, the common family property would often include the share of a brother who lived far away and visited his native settlement only occasionally.

THE INSTITUTION OF JANGAD

In the former days, 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 The 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.

WOMAN: FROM DAUGHTER TO WIFE

It is said that 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 thandas from which wives are taken. Marrying within one’s parental thanda is impossible. Usually the Sugali women live their lives in two
thandas, 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. As sāsu, a woman is traditionally in charge of the household finances and directs the work of her bahus. This control lessens as daughters-in-law opt for more autonomy over their own affairs. The increase in women's status with increasing age occurs in most societies. The Sugali women show several of the general characteristics listed by Guttman: (a) after menopause, women are not a sexual threat and have increased mobility, (b) mothers may gain increased power through their grown sons, and (c) mothers-in-law gain servants in their daughters-in-law.
All the purdah restrictions are ostensibly observed to honor wives or other family members. 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.

The elaborate respect avoidance customs between husbands and wives and between 'bahu's' and 'sasu's' clearly indicate that prevention of adultery is not the exclusive or even the primary function of purdah. However, these customs are most frequently justified as a means of keeping women safe from rape or seduction. They believe that purdah is necessary to prevent adultery.

Purdah Customs

My father-in-law never heard my voice.

My husband never saw my face.

This quotation is typical of the descriptions of restrictions imposed by the complex customs of purdah of the Sugali women of that time.

Caste is the key custom complex that regulates social interactions among persons of different lineages, occupations and social positions, purdah is the key custom complex that regulates social interaction between men and women and among female relatives. 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.

Caste restrictions guard against the disruptive intrusions of outsiders into the caste group by curtailing social interaction with and marriage to persons outside of one's own caste. 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 sasu 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.

It may be concluded that the aim of Sugali customary laws is to maintain internal peace, and to check the breach of their customs and practices and ensure adherence to their religious beliefs and ritual practices.
References


6. General Briggs quoted by Mr.Faridi in Bombay Gazetteer, Muhammadans of Gujarat, p.86.


8. Ibid., p.74.


