CHAPTER 1

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"India is on the move; contemporary Indian Society is changing. No society is ever totally static. This change is taking place both in structure and functioning. The amount and scope of change is stupendous, unprecedented" said Mathur (1973: vii). The study of social change, of course, needs no more justification than the study of society itself. Human societies are located in space and time; space signifies continuity and time, movement. Phrases such as "time flows" "time flies", "time passes" all refer to this fact. The passage of time does not have the same significance, however, for all societies or for all periods in the history of a particular society (Madan 1973:1). A concern with the structural features of Indian society - with such examples as village community, caste, family - itself will lead us to the study of social change, for these institutions are now showing unmistakable signs of new kind of change. Social change in India is that of the relation between tradition and modernity. As Guesfield put it, "tradition an modernity are frequently mutually reinforcing, rather than systems in conflict" (1967: 356). The evidence to that effect continues to accumulate.

The subject matter of this study is to examine the patter and processes of change which is taking place among the Idiga, one of the backward communities of Andhra Pradesh. It is recorded in the 'North Arcot Manual' (1881) that "Idiga is one of the toddy drawing castes of the Telugu country the name being derived from Telugu "Idchu", to draw. They speak the Telugu language. The Idiga are mainly distributed in Andhra Pradesh; in Ganjam
District of Orissa and in Selam, North Arcot and Chengalput districts of Tamlilnadu and all over Kurnata. They are known by different names in different parts of Andhra Pradesh. In the northern Circars, Telengana and the Nellore district, they are known as Gammila or Gamandla and in the Cuddapah district as Asili. In the East and West Godavari Districts they are known as Setti Balija and Goundla; in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts they are called as Yata and Segidilu. For example in Selam, North Arcot and Chengalput Districts of Tamilnadu they are called as Idiga or Indra.

Earlier to the independence of India, the Idiga were said to have been employed as soldiers by the local rulers, the palagars. Now the caste has the monopoly over the occupation of tapping palm trees and also of selling the fermented juice and has admirably succeeded in continuing the occupation. In the Madras Census Report, long back (1901), it is stated that the Idiga are descendants of Balija community of Rajahmundry in Godavari District and their occupation separated them into a distinct caste. The same fact is further confirmed by Anantha Krishna Iyyer and Nanjundalal in their monumental work "The Mysore Tribes and Castes" (1930). They also claim that the Idiga are the descendants of the sage Vyasa, the compiler of the Hindu epic Mahabharatha. With regard to the origin of the caste there are a few versions both in oral and written traditions and these are discussed at length in the fifth chapter, the religious and ritual life of Idiga. They are polygamous. Their widows are permitted to marry. They are mostly Hindu Vaishnavas.

The chief deity of their worship is Yellamma, who presides over toddy and liquors. She is decorated with flowers and saffron colour and offered cooked food and betal leaves and nuts. Further they make daily offering of a
few drops of toddy from the first pot taken from the tree, to the deity. They are under the control of a headman called Gauza, who presides over the caste council and settles disputes.

The Idigas have rehabilitated themselves as agricultural labourers after the introduction of prohibition by the Government on the sale and consumption of intoxicating liquors. The recent relaxation in the prohibition laws and the permission granted by the Government to sell sweet toddy (nira), has made a few of them to go back to their traditional occupation of toddy-tapping. However, many of them who had acquired land, formal education, white-collar jobs and petty business establishments, have stayed away from their traditional occupation. The modern forces of change have affected their socio-economic, politico-religious life. They have sanskritized their ways of life too. They have also changed in their values, outlook on life and so on. In a rapidly changing society, the study of the present problem is more meaningful and enobling.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of the present study are:

I. To study the traditional culture of the Idigas;

II. To study the impact of various factors and forces of changes such as Anthropological, technological, and economical on the traditional culture of Idigas and

III. To study and analyze the various patterns and processes of transition among the Idigas.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Indian Anthropology a number of prominent ethnographic studies have come out on tribals, scheduled castes and backward castes. The emphasis is even now continued. Although there are several detailed monographs on various tribes and castes in Andhra Pradesh, there is no full length ethnographic study on the Idigas until now. The available literature on Idiga community is also scanty. However, Thurston in his book ‘Castes and Tribes of Southern India’ (V o1. II, 1909, 366 - 69) has given a brief ethnographic account on the community.

L.K. Ananthakrishna lyyer (1930) too has given a brief account of Idiga, their social customs and traditions. Dube (1958) in his pioneering study of Indian village communities has given an account on the Idiga. But this is a very small account, on the caste known as Gaundla, the toddy tappers in the Shamirpet, near Hyderabad. M.N. Srinivas (1960), who has referred to the Idiga has however equated the caste on par with the Golla (shepherd) in the Social hierarchy, after agricultural castes. The 1961 census of, Andhra Pradesh (p. 13) provides scanty information on the socio-economic condition of the Idiga. K.V. Reddy in his published Doctoral thesis ‘An Anthropological Study of Folklore of Chittoor District,’ Andhra Pradesh’ (1969: 37, 119, 120) has given a small account of this caste. Sherrings, in his work, The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency too has made a mention of the Idiga caste as palm cultivators of the Telugu districts in the north. Neither of these studies throw much light on the change and continuity aspect of the Idiga caste. The present study is, therefore, made to fill in these gaps to some possible extent.
METHODOLOGY

In this thesis the traditional culture of Idiga is studied to serve as a basis for a better understanding of the continuity of Idiga culture. Further the impact of various factors and forces of change as science and technology on the different aspects of the Idigas, culture are also studied. Lastly the patterns and process of continuity and change in the Idiga culture in the present environment.

The primary data collected from the field centers together with secondary data from the available literature on Idiga community were analysed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The analysis of the data is carried out in three phases: (i) In the first phase data available on Idiga in the existing literature are examined. This provides a base for further analysis. (ii) At the second phase the data collected from the field on Idiga are analysed and compared. And (iii) in the third phase the process and direction of change and continuity have been analysed and identified by using certain anthropological concepts.

In accordance with the pattern of analysis as suggested above, a starting point or base was selected for further analysis after screening all the existing literature. This is because a base line has to be taken since it is approximately from this point of time that the changes are studied. The changes that have been brought in the organisation, it is presumed will have taken roots some fifty five years ago and over a span of time have been incorporated into the structure, as it is seen today. It is on this presumption that the researcher has taken into account a period of about fifty five years.
After India became a republic in 1950 many welfare and development programmes were taken up by the new government. This is also the time when prohibition was introduced, which in turn drastically affected the Idiga society and culture. 1950 it is approximately from this point of time that the changes which occurred with Idiga society are studied. This has been done since as Cohn (1968: 25) states "anthropologist's model of change is based on the assumption of a baseline of zero point of change."

At any rate the researcher is well aware that this is not without its limitation. But, due to the absence of other alternatives this is perhaps the most suitable conceptual approach available. One is also conscious of the fact that the society was not at static equilibrium at the point of time from whence changes are studied (Subramanyam, 1975:4). On the contrary, the author is well aware of the fact that this was done only for the sake of convenience and as a useful tool of researcher. The data about the Idiga society and culture approximately corresponding to 19th and 20th centuries provide a basis not only for the understanding of the starting point or beginning and subsequent phenomena of social and cultural change among the Idiga, but also for knowing what still exists or continues. In other words, such data throw light not only on the tradition but also on the transition which implies change that occurred in the traditional social and cultural setting subsequently. The base line in this study is the point of time from which certain changes in the social structure are studied. The baseline as a useful tool of research has been chosen for certain methodological considerations.
In this study of changes in the Idiga community after India became a Republic have been taken into account. This landmark is a convenient gap of time in more ways than one. Fifty-five years is not too large a period of time to stretch one’s memory and events and can be easily recalled with a fair degree of accuracy. Informants who were then twenty and twenty-five in age would be seventy-five and eighty now. This span enables them to be fairly competent to give the investigator an idea of the then society. Further the author can as well depend on the still older members of the Idiga society to get information. However, the researcher has to use his discretion at times so that the account might not be coloured or exaggerated.

Social change can be the product of a number of factors like innovations, external and internal influences and contact with a different way of life culminating in economic growth. Hence, multiple factors can be responsible for producing change. This is more plausible than designating a single factor as a change agent. Also change in one sphere leads to concomitant change in other areas i.e. if a society has been subjected to economic change it is found that to a certain extent it affects the political and social fields as well. This is because all these aspects of social structure are so interlinked that a shift in any of these is reflected on the other inter-related spheres. The values of a society play a considerable role in the acceptance or rejection of change. A society which is tradition-bound generally has more difficulties in accepting new ideas and innovations.

Defining traditional societies Hagen (1964:5) says, “A society is traditional if ways of behavior in it continue with little change from generation to generation where traditionalism is present, certain other characteristics are
also found. Behaviour is governed by custom, not law. The social structure is hierarchical. The individual's position in the society is normally inherited rather than achieved. A traditional society, in short, tends to be custom-bound hierarchical ascriptive and unproductive." This would fit in well with the Idiga society in Rayalaseema villages, which is a caste society, with more or less ascriptive roles and hierarchical in nature.

Talking in terms of change it would be interesting to mention that drastic changes in the social structure of a society have always been considered harmful. This is because the social system is unable to adjust itself and its cultural roots are torn apart. Tradition forms an important part in maintaining a social system and its values, and a total destruction of these can cause normlessness and anomie. Social change among Idiga has been gradual and not a sudden and shattering type. Changes have taken place in certain spheres, and these have in turn caused change in other spheres since all these are highly interrelated. In the following chapters these changes will be discussed with reference to the traditional structure of Idiga.

While talking of change one should be constantly aware that continuity and change are well integrated in the social sense and the student of society can study the changes only in comparison with the traditional. What continues today in concurrence with the image of the past is part of the traditional and the rest, in tune with the changed pattern.

Another important reason for taking India becoming a Republic as landmark for analysing socio-cultural changes among the Idiga is the effect that it has had on the national life. After independence India became a Republic in 1950 and as a consequence came the Community Development Projects, the
Panchayat Raj, adult franchise and provision of special reservation rights for Scheduled castes and Tribes under the new Constitution. At the state level, backward communities were given reservations in the matters of education and employment. These have influenced the life of Idiga community all over the state. The idea of Parliamentary Democracy emphasizing the notion of equal rights and opportunities irrespective of caste, colour, creed, community or sex had its own consequences on the social system. In addition, there has been a general awakening among the hitherto neglected masses.

The baseline data thus obtained were compared with the data of Idiga villages, and then the data collected to have an understanding of the social-cultural continuity and changes.

The conceptualisation of socio-cultural dynamics in the case of the Idiga requires a thorough understanding of not only change in social and cultural phenomena but also change in the operation of the changing process itself. Hence, a number of culture-oriented as well as structure-oriented concepts of change are employed to explain the total process of social cultural change among the Idiga. The proposed culture oriented concepts of change are Srinivasa's Sanskritization and westernization, Redfield's, Great Tradition and Little Tradition and hierarchy of Indian traditions, Suraljit Sinha's tribe-caste and tribe-peasant continuum, and Harold A. Gould's concepts of centripetal and centrifugal.

Srinivas (1966:6) defines Sanskritisation as a process by which a lower Hindu caste, tribal or other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently, twice-born. The word is associated with the Brahmin community in India. After the biological birth, an
individual undergoes some ritual performances like wearing of sacred thread etc., usually at the age of 14 or after. This rite refers to second birth, according to the tradition. Henceforth he is called twice-born (Dwija). Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the dominant caste by local community. The other term Westernization used by Srinivas is, however, a broader one and cannot be understood as easily as the former term. This is because of its all embracing nature and the whole gamut of issue it covers. Westernization (Srinivas, 1968:55) has been referred to as "a complex, many layered concept. It covers a wide range from Western technology at one end to the experimental method of modern science and modern historiography at the other". There is, however, a degree of vagueness in the delineation of this concept which Srinivas himself admits. He later explains why he prefers the term Westernization to Hamer’s term modernization. He says the former is more ethically neutral.

Dube (1967:35) prefers the term modernization to depict the changing social and cultural phenomena in India. He holds that it is "essentially a process - a movement from traditional, quasi-traditional order to certain desired types of technology and associated forms of social structure, value orientation and motivations and norms". He has listed some of the attributes of modernization such as (i) empathy, (ii) mobility, (iii) high participation, (iv) interest articulation, (v) interest aggregation, (vi) institutionalised political competition, (vii) achievement orientation, (viii) rational end-means calculations, (ix) new attitudes to wealth, work saving and risk taking, (x) faith in the desirability and possibility of change, (xi) social economic and political
discipline, and (xii) capacity to put off immediate and short-run satisfaction for higher satisfaction in the long run from the works of different behavioral social scientists. The term modernization seems to conceptualize change more clearly than Srinivas's term Westernization. However, both the terms discuss changes caused generally by external influences on the system. It also means a tending away from traditional ways of thinking and behavior. Sanskritization, however, envisages change with in the traditional framework.

Redfield (1956:72) proposed the concepts of Great Tradition and Little Tradition to explain culture change. He conceived of civilization as consisting of a fabric of interdependent Great Tradition and Little Tradition. The Great Tradition is represented by the Pan-Indian Sanskritic Hinduism while the Little Tradition is represented by the unofficial folk-accepted cult institutions. The relationship between the Great Traditions and Little Traditions is, however, not at variance and contradictory. Following Redfield two other anthropologists, viz., Mckim Marriot (1955, 1961) and Milton Singer (1955,1959) analysed the interaction between the Great Tradition associated with higher castes and Little Tradition with lower castes. Mckim Marriot discerned the two processes of change, namely Universalization and Parochialization. By Parochialization he means the downward devolution of the elements of the Great Tradition and their integration with the elements of Little Tradition. On the other hand, Parochialization is a process of localization, of limitation upon the scope of intelligibility, of deprivation of literacy form, of reduction to less systematic and less reflective dimensions. According to him the Universalization stands for the upward movement of elements belong to Little Tradition and also the process of culture change in Indian communities (Marriot, 1955: 197-218).
Dube has spoken of hierarchy of Indian traditions: (i) the classical tradition, (ii) the emergent national tradition, (iii) the regional tradition, (iv) the local tradition, (v) the Western tradition, and (vi) the local sub-culture traditions of social groups. He holds that it is only a complete understanding of this hierarchy of traditions can give a sober picture of the total change in India (1985, 421-423).

The above given culture-oriented concepts of change have been criticised on the ground of inadequacy to explain the totality of change in every culture because they identify change with the spread of norms and values in regional and national spheres and focus on acculturation and diffusion. Hence, scientists have framed a few structure-oriented concepts. The structure-oriented concepts mainly come under two categories: the dialectical and the cognitive. The dialectical concepts describe and analyse the socio-cultural changes in India in terms of Marxist theory (Mukherjee, 1958:76, Dessai, 1959-146). The cognitive concept analyses social change in India from the viewpoint of ideational or value patterns of cognitive structures (Dumont, 1957, 1964). In this context, the focus of the study of change should be on "the reaction of Indian minds to the revelation of Western culture", and on how under the impact of the cognitive elements of Western culture such as individualism, freedom, democracy, etc., the cognitive system of Indian tradition is reacting with the rejection or acceptance. The contrast in the Indian and Western cognitive system lies in the holistic character of the former and individualistic attribute of the latter, this contrast also possesses the nature of tension between tradition versus modernity in India (Singh, 1973: 21).

Surajit Sinha explains the relative position of a few isolated tribes in central India in terms of two ideal sets of continua; tribe-caste and tribe-
peasant. The tribal end may be characterised as isolated in ecology, demography, economy, politics and other social relations from other ethnic groups. This isolation generates in the group a strong in-group sentiment or homogeneity on account of lack of social stratification and role specialization other than by age, sex and kinship.

In contrast with the isolated, homogeneous and unstratified tribe, caste is typically connected, heterogeneous and stratified and is characterised by several social structural features like multi-ethnic residence in the local community; inter-ethnic participation in an economy involving occupational specialization and interaction with other ethnic groups. Further, at the cultural level, caste is different from tribe in matters of interaction with the sub-cultures of other ethnic groups in the region; interaction with the Great Traditions; polarization of lay and elite cultures with elaboration and systematization of cultural ideals; hierarchic view of social relations bolstered by the concept of ritual pollution, emergence of ethical religion and a puritanical view of life. Further, Sinha holds that a peasant village shares not only most of the characteristics of the caste but also maintains extensive territorial affiliations with multiple centres of civilization. At the cultural level also it is heterogeneous in terms of caste and class and maintaining complex external relations with a heterogeneous region (1985: 57-83).

Harold A. Gould interprets Indian peasant villages in terms of "Centripetal and Centrifugal" in the sense that "Peasantries are self-contained" and autonomous i.e. centripetal, to the degree that they are concerned with the task of providing themselves with subsistence; they are centrifugal to the degree that they must make their surpluses available to the urban centers and in this process, involve themselves with a numerous facets of the 'national culture' (1974: 296-306).
Despite the lacuna in some of the concepts, each one is useful to some extent, in analysing socio-cultural change among the Idiga. But no single concept is all comprehensive and can be put to use in the analysis of socio-cultural change without the help of other concepts with regard to the Idiga. Further, as no single theory serves as an adequate basis for comprehending the traditional and transitional aspects of Idiga way of life, the structural-functional and ecological-historical approaches are knit together. Though these are two different approaches, yet they are complementary ways of understanding social and cultural phenomena.

The structural-functional approach regards a culture or a society, that is, one single tribe or community as a unit, as a kind of a whole. The structure emphasises "the durable, normative features of the observed behavior of the members of the society, but the function refers to the inner dynamics of the parts of the structure" (Clifton 1968: 41). The structural-functional approach takes a thin slice from the total career of a society, and with its help it presents an essentially static portrait of a way of life lacking time depth and comprehension of the dynamics of socio-cultural change; on the other hand, the historical approach focuses on the sequence of development of a single trait, institution, society or culture with the passage of time. The strategy seeks understanding of that cultural trait or intact society in terms of origins, growth and development, events and processes flowing along a temporal continuum which constitutes the unique career-area of that society or bit of patterned behavior. The ecological approach emphasises "the ties of interdependence within and between populations and in the relations between populations and their environments" (Lenski, 1970: 24).
The structural-functional approach helps one to have an understanding of the cross sections of the Idiga society at different periods of time. The ecological-historical approach facilitates the understanding of how different cross-sections of the Idiga society have come to the present stage. In a nutshell, it provides an understanding of the causes of the processes and patterns of change in the Idiga society. While the structural-functional approach identifies and describes the structure and function of the Idiga society, the ecological-historical approach traces out the relations of interdependence within and between the Idiga populations and between the Idiga populations and their environments across the dimension of time. In other words, the structural and functional relations are studied with reference to the larger and more inclusive frame-work provided by the ecological and historical perspectives. A combination of these two approaches lays stress upon the diachronic study, a comparing and contrasting of different cross-sections of the Idiga society at different periods of time for assessing socio-cultural change. The resultant approach may be labelled as the chronic approach, as the latter combines the required elements of both. Hence, the synthetic approach aims at explaining the total processes of socio-cultural change and the overall patterns of development.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the Idiga community of Rayalaseema Region, the Southern most region of Andhra Pradesh is chosen for the present study. The study is based on empirical data collected through an intensive field-work for a considerable length of time, at various field centers which are inhabited by the Idiga community. Major conventional anthropological tools and techniques were employed for the collection of data.
A structured schedule was employed to collect relevant statistical information. The historical data were also obtained from the available published sources.

The field-work carried out at intervals, facilitated the researcher to record the data in different seasons and of important activities such as fairs and festivals, since the web of the folk in the area under study was subject to seasonal fluctuations. To start with, a house to house anthropological census was taken. Besides, a few key informants and a variety of formal leaders were also interviewed to obtain information on the past and present patterns of their life styles. There was not much difficulty in getting the relevant data from the respondents because the researcher knew their mother tongue, Telugu.

In this study, mostly the non-participant and wherever possible the quasi-participant methods of observation, have been resorted to, in order to obtain first-hand information. Fully-participant observation method could create an element of bias in the minds of the researcher and hence was avoided. To make this study more exact, precise and first-hand, the data was collected by personal visits to the field. It was sought to peep into human relations of the people living in this region through change and continuity. The knowledge and performances of the informants were observed from them in as-it-is' condition. The policy of weeding out was adopted during the analysis and only the relevant material was picked up from the total stock collected, in this study, the problem obviously required a descriptive and analytical treatment. The material collected, therefore, comprises mostly of the 'qualitative data'.
For obvious reasons and practical advantages, it was not possible to base this study on any technique other than 'purposive sampling'. In selecting the respondents, due care was exercised so that almost all the characteristics of age, sex, surname, education, occupation, income, political awareness and status were fairly represented, including males, females and children, as deemed important from change and continuity point of view. Stress was mostly laid upon the social setting of the informants.

Besides the primary data actually collected from field studies, the main source of secondary information has been census reports, monographs and the District Gazetteers of the region. In these records enough information pertaining to the general background of the field area was available. Certain of the available research works on the Idiga community submitted to the Universities by different scholars, were consulted.

Visits to the Idiga villages were planned according to the time and facilities available with the researcher and the convenience of the informants. Repeated visits and frequent night halts were necessary for establishing rapport. The first round enabled the researcher to acquaint himself with the preliminary background of the Idiga people. Mostly in the second and third visits the desired information could be collected. The village markets, the recreation centers, the worship-spots and the common fairs and festivals also served the researcher's purpose to a great extent. The initiative and interest of the scholar could often remove the informant's shyness and hesitation.
In contacting the Idiga, the 'Provocative' as well as 'critical' approach was also adopted at times. They were tactfully handled on delicate matters and prestige-issues. These queries were cleverly answered and suitable pretence were used wherever needed. The same technique could not serve the purpose everywhere. Different approaches, mostly, milder, submissive, and persuasive ones, were used. To deal with the informants successfully, chances for all sorts of their misapprehensions and suspicion were avoided. Tackling the menfolk and the children was practically speaking, not so difficult as the strata of women informants. Help was sought from the influential local men or the elder members in approaching the married women, especially the orthodox and conservative ones. To establish rapport with old widows or other elderly women was relatively easier and helpful too. There were relatively fewer problems in dealing with the menfolk, except their occasional non-availability during busy agricultural and toddy-tapping operations.

However, in the above description, the researcher aims to provide a clear idea about the methods of collection of data used in this study. The materials so collected have been analysed according to the methodology of anthropological study. The data were analysed mainly by examining the factors responsible for changing the traditional patterns of life of the Idiga and at the same time the factors responsible for continuation of the Idigas' traditional culture.
ORGANIZATION OF DATA (CHAPTERIZATION)

The data collected has been analysis and presented in seven chapters of the thesis.

The first chapter, introduction deals with the clear explanation of the problem, objectives of the study and the methodology along with a brief history of the Idiga.

The second chapter is concerned with the topography of the area under study, the early history, distribution, physical characters, social stratification, religion, dwelling, dress decoration etc.

The third chapter on social organisation is pertaining to marriage and family system, besides the inter-personal relations among the Idiga.

The fourth chapter deals with the base line information about Economic Oraganization. The occupational shifts are also discussed.

The fifth chapter deals with the religious life of the Idigas. They generally attribute everything to supernatural powers. The life-cycle ceremonies and their significances are discussed. The inter-mixing of little and great traditions too are discussed.

The sixth chapter is concerned with the political life of the Idigas and describes how the political system of these people has evolved into present complex stage and integrated politically with reginal and national politics.

The concluding chapter provides a critical summary of the conclusions on the subject of the thesis.