The Moorasavira Math at Hubli has become an integral part of the urban social structure. People from all walks of life turn to it for comfort whenever they are in distress. Hubli being a big commercial city, the stresses and strains of city life are found there. The Math provides the necessary solace to people who are overwhelmed by such conditions.

The Math is in the Virakta tradition, i.e., it follows the ascetic tradition. Under Virakta tradition, the social affiliations are still maintained, and this tradition is not necessarily nurtured in the seclusion of the forests or the mountain-tops. It is practised in human communities, and in this context, the Viraktas have developed the tradition of social welfare.

The Virakta tradition is not a new development in Virasaivism. It was already contemplated at the time when the Virasaiva movement was gathering momentum in the 12th century.
The Yiraktas who fled from Kalyan due to religious persecution, spread to other parts of the northern districts of Karnataka, and provided a nucleus for the spread of Virakta tradition in this region. The maths of both the Virakta and the Pattada tradition dot the countryside and has been integrated into the social life of the people concerned. Hubli itself has a number of such maths.

A resume of the various welfare activities of the Math is given in the following, before, examining the validity or otherwise of the hypothesis. The Math has been able to promote higher education in the area. Several educational institutions in Hubli and elsewhere have received monetary and material assistance from it.

One distinct contribution of the Math in the cause of higher education is the starting of a women's college at Hubli. A women's college was unknown in these parts until the starting of this college and it is fulfilling the need of female education. A new building for the Women's College is under construction and it is almost in the finishing stage.
Besides upholding the cause of female education, the Math has been helping the poor students with all facilities so that their continuing in schools and colleges will not be hampered. A large percentage of students come from the villages, and such students find it extremely difficult to pay for their maintenance and tuition in an urban setting. Such students get the protection of the Math, and in the case of very poor students, the Math bears the educational expenses.

The Math has also achieved a distinction in starting a training institution, Sri Kumareshvara Shivayogi Sangha, which trains student-priests. There are at present twelve such trainees who undergo training in Sanskrit and classical studies and also Yoga. Besides these, the student-priests are enabled to qualify themselves for any academic degree like B.A., M.A., and so on. There are instances where these student-priests, or what they are locally known as Sadhakas, have taken up post-graduate studies, and also doctoral work.

The achievements of the Math in the field of medical services is symbolised in the founding of well-staffed and well-equipped hospital, at Ghataprabha.
It serves a vast countryside, and the people who would have gone almost without any medical care, are given the most competent and necessary medical assistance. Practically, all the major areas of modern medicine and surgery are represented in this hospital. These facilities of the hospital are not meant exclusively for the affluent sections of society, but are available even to the poorest. It is not run on commercial lines, but on a no-loss and no-profit basis. Depending upon the circumstances, medical help at concessional rates, or even free of cost, is provided. In other words, no person is denied medical treatment at the hospital just because he cannot pay for it.

Another direction in which this hospital has taken a stride is towards the toning up of the public health awareness and the providing of facilities in the surrounding villages. Thus health centre is meeting the health problems of the rural masses, and wherever necessary, protective services are rendered by it. Thus the spirit of service has gained a prominent place in the hospital.

Our focus of attention may now be shifted to famine relief work. The government took up the famine
The government took up the famine relief work to provide ready employment to the distressed population under the scheme of 'food for work'. This scheme attracted mainly the starving able-bodied men and women who could take advantage of the employment provided. They moved to the work centres, leaving behind the very old and the very young, the chronically diseased and the disabled. This miserable section of the population was to be saved from actual starvation. The Math, therefore, started fifty-four gruel centres and maintained them in the drought-affected areas of north Karnataka for a period of four months principally to help these people who were left helpless in the villages. The supporting role of the Math was appreciated and supported by the Government and the public alike. The citizens of Hubli and the peasants in the nearby villages supported the Swamiji when he took the historic Padayatra by contributing money and material to the humanitarian cause undertaken by the Math. The Jagadguru visited the suffering masses, instilled hope and confidence in them by saying that nothing can separate them from the love of God, and that 'Dharma protects the protectors'. In times of community crises and natural disasters, the role of the Math in providing
solace and tangible help to the suffering people is quite in tune with the spirit of true religious life.

The Math is, thus, a centre of diverse social activities. It keeps itself in readiness to meet the various exigencies of the times, rises to the occasion without restricting itself to the narrow dictates of religion. The religious leadership is put to use with great effect in the social welfare field. This provides us with a good example of the inter-relationship between religion and society. The Jagadguru's spontaneous readiness to come to the rescue of those affected by a natural disaster and the tremendous response of the common people to his call for help is an unparalleled event in the history of the Math.

Another instance of the Math helping a community to mobilize its own resources towards the end of community welfare is provided by the collective response of the inhabitants of the Settlement Area in Hubli.

The temple that was built in the Settlement Area, renamed as Gangadhar Nagar, was a vivid act of
collective decision, and it stands as a symbol of an effective corporate life. This framework of corporate life was seen in action when the residents of Gangadhar Nagar unequivocally responded to the call of the Jagadguru to help the distressed population of the drought-affected communities.

The study also reveals that the religious organization has a positive role to play in fulfilling the welfare needs of the family organization. Apart from providing counselling services where family life is threatened with disruption, and resolving of problems connected with marital maladjustment and family disputes, the religious organization provides the necessary refuge to individual members when they are victims of the vicissitudes of family life.

The main hypothesis held in the beginning of this study was that the provision of social welfare services by a religious organization is not dysfunctional, in the sense that they are likely to weaken the religious base of the organization under purview. Such services may, in fact, be thought of as assisting the religious organization to consolidate and strengthen its position in the community.
Let us now examine the validity of the hypothesis. The nature of functions and dysfunctions is understood by the noted sociologist, Robert Merton, thus: "Functions are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system; and dysfunctions, those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system."¹ Functions contribute to the integration of society, while dysfunctions have disintegrative and destructive results. This theoretical perspective will help us to examine the validity or otherwise of the hypothesis.

As a religious organization, the Math is recognised to fulfil purely the spiritual functions. It is to provide necessary solace and comfort to the distressed and the disadvantaged. It is meant to provide mental and spiritual health to individuals. In the course of this study it is tried to understand 'religion as an inspirer of social activity.'² Most of the contemporary religious organizations combine

The social goal with the spiritual. The combining of the two functions may appear as incompatible in the actual working of a religious organization. According to Etzioni, "There may be conflicts over the amount of means, time, and energy to be allocated to each goal." He further remarks, "There is also the danger that one goal may completely subordinate the other and sometimes more primary one, such that the latter is no longer served effectively."

The specific goals or objectives of the Math as stated are, principally, the propagation of Virasaiva religion and the promotion of education. In addition, the Vidyavardhaka Sangh and the Hospitals' Cooperative Society are formed to run the Women's college and the hospital respectively. The Math, under the leadership of the Jagadguru, has been endeavouring to fulfil the stated objectives. In spite of the fact that there are six trusts, besides the Vidyavardhaka Sangh and the Hospitals' Cooperative Society each having its own specific objectives and providing the respective services, in reality, there

4. Ibid., p. 16.
is no inherent contradiction between the stated objectives of the Math and the objectives of the various trusts and bodies established by the Math. As bodies created by the Math, their functioning is not antithetical to the very purposes for which the religious organisation exists. Equal attention is bestowed, with necessary resources and personnel, to meet the varied objectives of the trusts and other bodies.

The starting of educational institutions is well within the purview of the professed objectives of the Math. It is also in consonance with the provisions of the Bombay Public Trust Act which apply to Dharwad district also. Hence the establishment and the running of educational institutions is not dysfunctional. On many occasions the Math approached the general public to donate funds for educational purposes. The people have responded to the appeals of the Math in an appreciable measure. The relationship between the Math and the community is thus strengthened.

The undertaking of health services is not something alien to this Math. The old cottage system
of catering to the needs of tuberculosis patients at Ghataprabha was renewed and developed on a larger scale by the formation of a cooperative society. The new hospital attends to the health needs of the people in the surrounding countryside. The 'divine healing touch' gives solace to the sick. The relationship between the Math and the public is again well-established through the health and medical care programmes.

Ideally, social welfare is considered as a matter of such importance in a welfare state that it should receive its full attention. But, in actual practice, the state is not in a position to involve itself actively in the sphere of social welfare to the extent expected, not only because it involves enormous amounts of public money, but also because the state is not quite certain about the long-term benefits that might accrue to society through specific welfare activities.

But, even under ideal conditions, state welfare provisions lack the spontaneity and the humanitarian approach, and are confined to definite
categories of persons who, as per the rules laid down, become eligible. Thus, a lag between the actual welfare needs of a particular category of people, and the extent to which state welfare provisions could meet such needs is observed. The separation of the eligible from the ineligible under state welfare provisions becomes a necessity since such provisions will have to be limited to the annual budget provisions that are made on the basis of certain scale of priorities established well in advance. Under rather inflexible conditions, it becomes really difficult for a modern state to fully and effectively meet the entire welfare needs in any recognised field of social welfare.

Further, before the state contemplates making certain welfare provisions, it must have a full knowledge of the welfare needs of a population in any given welfare field. Under normal conditions, it becomes an extremely difficult task to assess and take into account the entire welfare needs of a people in a particular field of welfare. In other words, the welfare needs of a population are often never openly expressed, and for the state bureaucracy,
it becomes difficult to gain access to the intimacy of family and community life.

Added to these, the problem of bureaucratic organization of welfare services is a severe problem which the state faces. An elaborate bureaucratic machinery is required in the actual execution of welfare tasks, and this enhances further the rigidity contributed already by well-laid rules.

In view of the above facts, it becomes imperative for a modern welfare state to cease being the sole custodian of social welfare and to rely heavily on the more spontaneous and humanitarian efforts of voluntary organizations in undertaking welfare tasks. The strength of the whole argument lies in underlining the useful task that could be fulfilled by a religious organization in the realm of social welfare. It becomes an effective participant in the welfare venture.

The provision of certain necessary welfare services is a task undertaken by the Math. With a firm ideological base, the Math is actively involved
in these services. The importance of the Math lies, perhaps, not so much in maintaining purely its religious character, as in embarking on various social welfare activities, particularly in a society like ours where numerous social problems are fairly widespread. The Math has been able to adapt itself to the changing conditions, accept the challenges of modern life and to endeavour the promotion of the well-being of the people at large.

A special feature of the Math is the institutionalization of the 'Puja' into a 'Puja Seva Samiti'. This has brought about far-reaching changes in religious and community life. The manifest function of the Puja Seva Samiti is to stress the religious element in social life. In the context of the Puja Seva Samiti, it may be stated that the welfare activities undertaken by the Math do not come into conflict with the religious aspirations and goals of the votaries of the Math. The Puja Seva Samiti, whose stated goals are essentially religious, also serves to integrate community life. This is a 'latent' function. Another 'latent' function of the Samiti is that it has served to establish a link between the Math and the community.
Thus, the relationship between religion and social welfare is, by no means, precarious. On the other hand, it is a well-matched relationship, in the sense that the relationship does not tend to become an inverse relationship. In other words, religion and social welfare are not at cross-purposes, one trying to become predominant at the cost of the other. In fact, they tend to be mutually reinforcing. And that is what we found in our investigation of the role of Moorusavira Math in promoting social welfare in the region where it is located.