CHAPTER VI

CASTE, RELIGION AND LIFE-CYCLE RITUALS
The various castes in Indian Society are held to have sprung from the original Varna system. While this assumption is correct with respect to some castes, it is not valid with respect to many other castes. Subcaste, is a sub-division of a caste. The term sub-caste represents the sub-division of a caste, only if the former retains its link with the later division. It is not correct to call any group, a sub-caste when, it does not maintain any link with the larger group, namely, the original caste. Thus it is wrong to use the term sub-caste for those sub-divisions of a caste which are exogamous in character. (Yogesh Atal, 1968).

Every caste is designated by a name. For the identification of caste, its name is the most important clue. The caste name in some cases also suggests the occupational association of a caste. Association of caste with occupation is generally taken for granted. For some castes, their very name indicates this association. In others, the local phrases and stereotypes may provide the clue. For some other castes, textual references may offer a clue to occupational association. Association between caste and occupation is emphasised by many. Caste name signifies the occupation which is commonly and traditionally pursued by its members. But there are other castes where the caste name does not specify the occupation
or where the same occupation is pursued by different caste groups. Where different endogamous are associated with the same occupation, they may be designated as a "caste cluster" rather than single castes (Yogesh Atal, 1968).

Irawati Karve also refers to these groups of castes following the same occupation as "caste Cluster" (Irawati Karve, 1961). David Mandlebaum refers to these castes as "Jati cluster". Dumont and Ghurye use the term subcastes for these groups (Ghurye, 1950).

In the Karnataka State there are sixteen weaver castes, members of which profess weaving as their caste occupation. Each weaving caste is distinctively endogamous in nature. "Sale" or 'Nekar' is a general term referred to these group of castes. The name 'Sale' is of sanskrit origin - 'Salika' meaning weaver. 'Nekar' is a Kannada term and, 'Vinkar' is a marathi term for weaver.

The present study population of weaver castes of Hubli is represented by eight weaver castes namely, Devanga, Kuruvinshetty, Swakulsali, Padmasali, Pattasali, Pattegar, Togataveeraru and Momin. Every weaver individual when asked about his or her caste identity, name it as 'Nekar' or 'Sali'
referring to the generic term weaver. But, if probed further about the particular caste, to which he/she belongs, then they identify themselves with a specific caste. All these eight weaver castes have not sprung from a common source. Each caste has its own ethnic origin, traditional pattern, customs, beliefs and social behaviour.

6.1 MYTHOLOGICAL LEGENDS:

To account for their origin, these weaver castes tell various legends. Some of the mystical legends connected with the mythological personages who are considered as the founders or progenitors of these castes are discussed here.

DEVANGA: Devanga are also known by other names such as Jadaru, Dedra, Devara, Dera, Semyon, Sedan and Settukkaran in different parts of our country.

The following legend is narrated concerning the origin of the Devanga caste. Devanga means the body of God and is the name of the original ancestor of Devanga Caste. It is stated that Devanga was created by Shiva to cover the nudity of mankind. Brahma having created Manu, told him to weave clothes for Devas (Gods), and men. Accordingly Manu
continued to weave for some years and reached heaven. No one being left to weave for Devas there, and for men they had to wear garments of leaves. So they prayed Brahma, who took them to God Shiva, who created a lustrous spirit and called him 'Devalan'. Devalan was created to weave clothes for Devas and men, whose descendants are called Devangas. God Shiva sent Devalan to God Vishnu, who gave him some of the fibres of the lotus flower that grew from his navel, and taught him how to make it into cloth. Devalan wove a piece of cloth, and presented it to Vishnu, who accepted it, and ordered him to make the fibres of trees and make it into cloth for Devas and human race.

Devalan and his descendants went to a forest in the Bhuloka (earth) in order to collect fibre of trees for weaving. While in the forest he was attacked by the Rakshasas. At that moment, Shakti, a female goddess sprung from the earth, attacked the Rakshasas, and defeated them. Devalan named her as 'Choudeshwari' and made her his tutelary devinity who is worshipped annually by the Devanga caste people (Thurston, E. 1975).

In Hubli Devangas call their family goddess as Banashankari. Choudeshwari is the family goddess of Togataveeraru
caste. It is also said that the Togatas and Devangas originally constituted one caste, and had the same God Choudeshwari. Subsequently the Devangas separated from the main group by wearing the sacred thread and claiming a higher status. (Ananthakrishna Iyar, L. K. 1936).

There are two groups differentiated among the Devangas, based on linguistic difference, namely, Kannada Devangas and Telagu Devangas.

1. Kannada Devangas are also called as Lingayat Devanga or Hatkar Devanga and they speak Kannada. They are vegetarians. They wear sacred thread. But their priests are Jangamas. (Iyyanavaru).

2. Telagu Devangas are also called as Andhra Devangas or Arya Devangas who are migrants from Andhrapradesh and speak Telagu. They are non-vegetarians. Their priests are Brahmas.

There is no intermarriage between these two groups.

PADMASALI. Padmasalis are immigrants of Andhrapradesh and Hyderabad Karnataka area. They are Vaishnavites.
The following legend is narrated concerning the origin of the Radmasali caste. At the creation of the world, men were naked. In order to clothe the nakedness of the people in the world, God Shiva asked his son Markandey Muni to weave cloth. To enable him to weave the cloth, he performed a sacrifice. A great saint by name Bhavana Rishi the celestial weaver came out of the sacred fire, bearing a bundle of threads, obtained from the Lotus flower, which sprung from Vishnu's navel. Bhavana Rishi wove cloth out of the fibre of the lotus flower and presented it to the Devatas. Bhavana Rishi then married the two daughters of Surya, Prasannavati and Bhadravati. The two women bore him hundred and one sons, all of whom took to weaving the cloth. These hundred and one sons of Bhavana Rishi became the anonymous founders or progenitors of the one hundred and one gotras of the Padmasali caste. The Padmasalis consider their gotras analogous to the gotras of Brahmans. Each gotra has a particular family name or surname.

The caste members do not remember their gotras but know only their family names. For regulation of their marriages Padmasalis refer to a book entitled 'Padmasali Vanshiyaru', written in Telugu dialect. In this book, all
the one hundred and one gotras are given by reference to the family names or surnames. Depending upon their family name and surname they worked out their family gotras.

Padmasalis profess to have been following all the religious rites prescribed for Brahmans. God Surya, being pleased with what their hundred and one progenitors did, gave them a fifth Veda called Padmaveda. And so they claim that they belong to Padma Sakha and Markandeya Sutra, analogous to Sakhas and Sutras of Brahmans. They followed all the rites prescribed for Brahmans till the beginning of Kaliyug (yug=age). Their fall from this status is described as due to their caste man named Padmasakha, who declined to reveal to God Ganapati the virtues of a miraculous gem which Brahma had given to their caste, who sought to learn the secret, which they had been enjoined to keep, and who on his wish not being gratified cursed them to fall from the high status.

Markandeya is believed to be the Moola Purusha (Progenitor) of the Padmasalis. There are two groups among Padmasalis based on linguistic difference.

1. Kannada Padmasali who are also called as
Bilepattaladavaru. They speak Kannada and are vegetarians.

2. Telagu Padmasalis who are called as Arishin Pattaladavaru. They speak Telagu and are non-vegetarians.

There is no interdining and intermarriage among these two divisions of the Padmasalis.

SWAKULSALI Swakulsalis are immigrants of Maharashtra. Predominantly they were the residents of Bombay Karnataka. They are also called as Maratha Salis because they speak 'Sali' language which resembles Marathi language.

To account for their origin, the Swakulsalis narrate the following legend. In order to clothe the naked-ness of people in the world, Lord Shiva created a man through his 'Jivha' (tongue), who was named Jivhaji and asked him to weave cloth for devas (Gods) and men. He wove a piece of cloth and presented it to goddess Parvati. Since Jivhaji was created by Shiva to help his own descendants by weaving cloth, he called him "Swakul" (swa=own, kula=clan) and 'sali'
meaning weaving, hence the name Swakulsali. Since 'Jivhaji'
was born on Monday his descendants are called as Suryavanshiyaru.
'Jivhaji' is the 'Mool Purush', the founder of the caste.

As per the Souvenir (1913) Akhil Bharat Swakulsali
Sangh, the six other Sali castes namely Sanatan Sali or Bhagadsali,
Sutsali or Shudda Sali, Tikalesali, Archansali Gujarsali and
Padsali are also merged in Swakul Sali, thus forming a single
caste. So these sub-groups are not found in the population
under study.

Swakulsalis Samaj Guru is Muppinarya Swami of
Irani. Swakul Sali's priests are Brahmans. Swakulsalis wear
sacred thread and are non-vegetarians.

PATTEGAR : Pattegars are also called as Somavamsh Sahasrarjun
Kshatriyaru. They speak Pattegar language in which we find
Marathi and Gujarati wordings. Formerly, Pattegars were
silk weavers, now they have taken to business. They worship
all Hindu deities. They worship specially 'Shakti' goddess
to whom they offer goat as a sacrifice in Dasara Festival.

The following legend is narrated concerning the
origin of the Pattegar caste. During the massacre of the
Kshatriyas by Parasu Rama, five women with their children, escaped and took refuge in a temple dedicated to Kali. When children came of age, their marriage were celebrated, their mothers prayed to Kali to give them some means of livelihood. In answer to their prayer, the goddess gave them looms, and taught them weaving.

Shri Rajarajeshwar Sahasrarjuna is the 'Mool Purush', the founder of the caste. Annually they celebrate the fair on Sahasrarjun Jayanthi. Their tribal deity is Renukamba, the mother of Parasu Rama. They wear sacred thread. They call a Brahman priest to officiate at all the rituals, marriage and death ceremonies. They are non-vegetarians.

KURUVINSHETTY : The Kuruvinshetty caste traces its origin from sixty-six Rudras of the eighty four lakh Jivas (Lives) created by Brahma. As per the mythological legend one Rakshasa named 'Tarakasur' along with his sixty six Rakshasas attacked the whole world. To kill these sixty six Rakshasas, God Siva created sixty six Rudras. These Rudras smashed Rakshasas and were named after the Rakshasas, who became progenitors of sixty six gotras of the Kuruvinshetty caste.
Kuruvinshetty have two groups, Hire and Chikka Kuruvinshetty.

1. Hire Kuruvinshetty are also called Lingayat Kuruvinshetty. They wear linga and do not eat meat. For birth, marriage and death rituals, they invite Jangam as officiating priest.

2. Chikka Kuruvinshetty are also called Bilijad and Bilimaggadavaru. They worship Basavanna. For performing marriage rituals they call Brahman priest. They do not wear linga or sacred thread. They are non-vegetarians.

Both the groups are followers of Nilkanth Swami. There is no intermarriage between these two groups.

TOGATAVIRARU: Togataviraru are also called Togatas. Togata is a corrupt form of Togaja. They are named thus for being the progeny of Togaja Pushpandaja Rishi. They are Telagu weavers and speak Telagu language. It is also said that the Togatas and Devangas originally formed one caste and worshipped the same Goddess Choudeshwari as their family deity. Subsequently
they seeded from the main group by wearing sacred thread and claimed higher status (Ananthakrishna Iyer, L.K. 1936).

The origin of the caste is attributed to Iswara. Once his consort, Parvati, who attended the sacrifice performed by her father Daksha was disgraced. This provoked Iswara who threw out in rage, two drops of sweat from his forehead and from them sprung Virabhadra and Choudeshwari. Choudeshwari created three hundred and sixty warriors called Togataviraru, and sent them with Virabhadra to kill Daksha. After they killed Daksha, Choudeshwari sent these three hundred sixty warriors to Pushpandaja Muni and asked them to live by weaving clothe. Thus Togataviraru have three hundred and sixty gotras named after their progenitor. Togatas have Choudeshwari as their Goddess and they also worship Shiva (Ananthakrishna Iyer, L.K. 1936).

MOMIN : Momin are found in large number in Sholapur district of Maharashtra State. They are converts of the Sali caste. They are said to have been converted in the fourteenth century by an Arabic preacher, Pir Syed Husein Gaisudarz or Khav Bunda Nawaz who died in 1408 at Gulbarga (Gazetteer Maharashtra State, Sholapur district).
Most of the 'lower caste' artisans who were converted to Islam were given Arab Clan names like Quraishi, in adherence to the words of the prophet: "Whoever becomes a Muslim, belongs to my clan Al Quraishu". After their conversion, North Indian Weavers came to be called Ansaris and Momins. These groups have tended to follow their ancestral occupations and have married within their own clan although there has never been any restriction on their interdining and intermarrying with other Muslims. In the mosques all the Muslims irrespective of their origin stand side by side to offer their prayers (Chopra, P.N., 1982).

Momins of Hubli speak Urdu, they obey the Khazi and perform all the Musalman ceremonies and they pay great respect to the Gulbarga saint by whom their forefathers were converted to Islam.

This foregoing account of the mythological legends, their religious affiliations, beliefs, practices, food habits clearly point out that though these weaver castes follow the same occupation of weaving, they have not sprung from a common source. Each caste has its own origin, traditional pattern and social behaviour. Swakul Salis are migrants from Maháráshtra
State and speak Sali which resembles Marathi language. Togaviraru and Padmasali are migrants of Hyderabad State and speak Telagu, some of the Padmasali speak Kannada. Pattegar are migrants of Gujarat State. Kuruvinsetty and Pattasali are of Karnataka State and Momins are local converts of weaver castes.

6.2 INTER AND INTRA CASTE INTERACTIONS:

The nature, features and functions of different weaver castes are different due to different geographical conditions in which they lived in the past.

Except the Momins though the different weaver caste groups function as separate entities, they come together frequently. Their social life presents a picture of their structural unity. They all co-operate with each other and live side by side with each other, have liberty to move about and freely mingle.

The religious life of the weaver castes also contributes to this unity. Families of different weaver castes have their residence in one locality, they celebrate the festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Holi and Mohurram as one community. Members
of each locality jointly decide the festival days and contribution to be collected from each family to meet the expenses. Responsibilities of festival functions are shared by all the family members of the locality.

Other social institutions like participation in important life cycle ceremonies of other families also create the feeling of structural unity. People attend functions like birth, marriage and death in the families of one another as equals.

Families of different weaver castes have their residence in common in a locality. They not only share their residential areas but enjoy the principal amenities and other facilities provided by Municipal Corporation in the locality. Each locality has its locality council. One person from each family participates in this council. All these members together elect representatives of their locality. These representatives undertake the responsibility of providing essential services to the people of the locality. They discuss the needs of the locality, and decide upon the action to be taken.

Weaving is the major source of income for the people. Dependency on the same occupation by different castes brings
them together into one socially knit unit to discuss their problems regarding their weaving occupation. The weavers have formed their own associations, like 'Bada Hagu durbal Hitavar Nekar Sangh, Nekarnagar, and Siddharudha Nekar Sangh, Channapet. These associations have chosen their office bearers. Every month a meeting is held to discuss the problems and needs of the weavers with regard to the wages, supply of raw materials sanctioning of loan, ownership of the corporation loom, loan repayment and to decide upon the action to be taken.

Apart from the council of the locality and associations, each of the weaver caste has its own caste organisation. Caste organisation is a committee of five chosen members of a particular caste. The President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretaries of every caste organisation are elected from amongst the members of the particular caste for a period of one year. The organisation works generally to meet social and religious needs of the caste community. If a marriage has to be arranged in any family of a particular caste, the head of the family has to place the matter in the meeting of his caste committee and take their consent. This convention ensures the smooth performance of the marriage ceremony. Moreover, if any problem creeps as regards to the marital relationship in any family, the problem
is placed before the caste committee and possible efforts are made by the committee members to solve the problems. The caste organisations also undertake the activities, such as, helping the poor students and awarding scholarships to intelligent students. They also perform annually mass marriages and thread girding ceremony for their caste members.

Those weaver castes also have state level caste associations. For example, in 1923 the Devangas founded its State level caste association at Bangalore. Swakulsalis Sangha was founded in the year 1913 at Hubli. Togataviraru Sangha was founded in 1947 at Bangalore. Kuruvinshetty founded a caste association in the year 1928 at Bangalore. Padmasalis formed their caste association in the year 1927 at Bangalore. Pattegars caste association was founded in the year 1935 at Bangalore (Gayatridevi K.G., 1985).

A curious feature of castes in Southern India is their division into castes of the righthand and castes of the left hand. Dube, in his book 'Indian Village' (1955) has grouped the different castes of Shamirpet in a hierarchical order wherein the Brahman are at the top and Mala and Madiga at the bottom
of the caste hierarchy whereas Sale (weaver) caste considered themselves superior to the Barber, Washerman and Vaddars.

A caste is generally rated as higher or lower on the basis of the patterns of interaction between the members of different castes. It is however very difficult to formulate a hierarchy among these weaver castes. The ideas of the people (study population) on this point do not lead to a common hierarchical pattern.

The hierarchy is often expressed in terms of the values in matters of diet and the type of the fabrics that they weave. They say that silk weavers are of higher rank than the cotton weavers and some mentioned that the vegetarians are of higher rank in hierarchical order than the non-vegetarian. However, despite the higher status normally accorded to vegetarians it is observed that some non-vegetarian castes like, the Swakulsalas and the Pattegars in fact out rank the other vegetarian weaver castes. They are numerically, economically and politically dominant communities.

The rigidity of caste hierarchy is not seen in present days, as before, that too, in city places. Political thought of
upliftment of depressed classes, and the measures that have been adopted to fight against orthodoxy, has shown that the people of all castes eat together in Hotels. It is only when they go home they come under the influence of caste system.

6.3 LIFE CYCLE RITUALS:

A human being does not become a member of his society merely by being born in it. To become a full fledged member of the community, he has to go through significant milestones, from conception to cremation. The life of an individual in any society, thus, is a succession of passage from one age to another that marks the transition from one social stage to the next with similar ends and beginning i.e. birth, initiation, betrothal, marriage and death. Every one of these life-cycle events is an object of rituals, whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined for every community. Since the goal is the same, it follows of necessity that the ways of attaining it should be at least analogous, if not identical in detail, for a group of persons who belong to a particular cultural community. The cultural celebration of these rites of
passage or life-cycle rituals differ in detail and manner from one community to another.

We can distinguish mainly three groups among the weaver castes according to the officiating priest they invite at the life cycle rituals and the traditions they follow. These three groups are those who follow Brahmanic, Veer Shaivitic and Muslim traditions. The Padmasali, Swakulsali, Telagu Devanga and Pattegars call the Brahman priest for their ceremonies and follow Brahmanical tradition, therefore their ceremonies have been treated under Brahmanic group. The Kannada Devanga, Kuruvinshetty and Pattasali call the Lingayat priest, the Ainaru for their ceremonies and follow Veershaiva tradition hence their ceremonies are treated under Veershaivatic and finally Momins have Mulla or Khazi as the officiating priest and follow Muslim traditions.

However, since many of the Lingayat life cycle ceremonies follow the general pattern of the Brahmanic form and since a marked difference is noticed among the Hindu weavers and the Muslim weavers, the discussion that ensures here is made under these two types bringing out other distinctive features wherever necessary.
6.3.1 Life cycle rituals of Hindu Weavers

6.3.1.1 SEEMANTHA KARYA (The ceremony of Kubasa Maduvadu)

This ceremony is celebrated during the first pregnancy of a woman in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy in her natal home. On the day of celebration, the pregnant woman is given ritual bath and is dressed up in a new saree. Her head is decorated with lots of flowers. She is seated on a decorated wooden plank. Neighbours, friends, and relatives are invited to the ceremony. The married women invited to this ceremony wave arati around the face of the woman, apply turmeric powder and Kumkum on her forehead, present flowers, sprinkle rice on her head and present gifts to her. Mother and mother-in-law present silk sarees. They fill her lap with betal leaves, arecanuts, flower, sweets and saree which is called Uditumbuvadu.

A feast is arranged to satisfy her desires and special food is cooked on the day. Caste people, neighbours and friends are also invited for the feast.

6.3.1.2 BIRTH CEREMONY:

The first delivery always takes place in the expectant
mother's natal house. Now-a-days all births take place in hospital. A woman stays in the hospital for ten days. On the sixth day after birth, the baby is bathed. At night a blank sheet of paper and a pen are kept along with coconut and Jaggery on a betal leaf near the cradle. A lamp is kept burning. It is believed that Satavi (a deity) visits and writes the destiny of the baby on its forehead on that day. The family observes ceremonial impurity for ten days.

Among the weaver castes who follow the Lingayat tradition, (Kannada Devangas, Hire Kuruvinshetty and Pattasali) on the fifth day after birth, the baby is given Ling diksha. A Jangama (Lingayat priest) is invited, who prays for the welfare of the baby and the mother. He takes a new linga, blesses it and wraps it in a piece of silk cloth and ties it round the baby's right arm or around the neck. Then he sprinkles Padodaka (water which has been sanctified through the washing of his feet), on the baby and the mother. The linga is immediately taken off, and is tied to the baby's cradle. Every Lingayat is ordained to wear the linga life-long on his body.

6.3.1.3 Naming Ceremony:

After child birth, both mother and the new born baby
are considered as impure for ten days among the weaver castes who follow brahmanic tradition and for three days among the weaver caste who follow Lingayat tradition. After completion of this period, purificatory bath is given to the child and the mother. The naming and cradling ceremonies are performed on the same day. Different weaver castes perform the naming ceremony after consulting the priests on different days according to the convenience. Usually weaver castes perform the ceremony on the twelfth day. On the day of the naming ceremony both the child and mother are given a ritual bath. New cradle is brought which is decorated with new cloths and flowers. The child is dressed in the new cloths. All the friends, relatives and neighbours are invited for this ceremony. When the people gather, the child's fathers' married sister takes the child in her hands and passes it from below the cradle to another woman on the other side and repeats this five times and whispers the child's name five times in the child's ear. The married women wave arati to the child and present gifts. On that day a feast is arranged for all the invitees.

6.3.1.4 CEREMONY OF JAVAL

Javal ceremony is the haircutting ceremony. It is known as chudakarma or tonsure ceremony the first tonsure of
the hair for the sake of dharma and is performed in the first or third year of a child, hairs are given in the name of God either to the family God or to their favourite God. Whoever they vow to give their child's hair there they go offer the hair and perform the Puja of the deity.

6.3.1.5 THREAD CEREMONY OR MUNJIVE.

The ceremony of Upanayan is performed only among the Devangas, Padmasalis, Pattegars and Swakulsalis, weaver castes who follow Brahmanical tradition. A boy usually undergoes the Upanayana ceremony at the age of eight or after the completion of eight years. It is a purificatory rite, initiating a boy to Brahmacharyashram. Early on the appointed day, the boy is taken to the barber who shaves the head of the boy, leaving a few locks of hair towards the middle of the head. He is anointed with oil and turmeric and then bathed. He is seated on a stool, his mother and father sit on eitherside. At the decided Muhurta (auspicious time), the Brahman priest recites mangalaslokas and the assembled guests sprinkle akshata (coloured rice) on the boy. Sacred fire is lit on the altar and offerings of ghee, sesame and several kinds of sacred wood is made to the God of fire. The Brahman priest ties a
sacred thread prepared by himself (a hand spun cotton thread) round the initiate's waist. He teaches the boy the sacred mantras (spells) to be recited while offering prayers and the rites to be performed before partaking food. All the friends, relatives and the neighbours are invited for this function who present gifts to the boy. A feast is arranged.

Soda Munjive ceremony follows immediately after the Upanayan ceremony. The boy discards his clothes and Munj (sacred thread) and puts on a waist cloth, a shoulder cloth, a cap and a pair of sheets, takes an umbrella, and sets out as if on a journey to Kashi (the holy city in North India). The initiate's maternl uncle, as a custom, meets him on the way and requests him to return promising to give him his daughter in marriage. Thus the boy returns back and becomes a grahasta. As per the sacraments of Hindu religion every male person has to pass through four stages of life (ashramas) and for entering into a married life he has necessarily to complete the first one the Brahmacharyashram and munjive marks the entry into it.

The Kuruvinshetty and Pattasalis who follow the Lingayat tradition perform aitan (Diksha) ceremony, corresponding to the ceremony of Upanayana.
Among the Kuruvinshetty and Pattasalis on the appointed day of the ceremony, a Jangam priest performs Linga puja and teaches the boy how to perform the linga puja. The linga is placed into a specially made silver case, called Gudadal, which is tied in the neck with a thread specially prepared with 108 fibres and the boy is asked to perform its Puja daily.

6.3.1.6 PUBERTY CEREMONY

Puberty ceremony observed among the weaver castes announces a girl's "coming of age" and her marriageability. The ceremony is observed on the fifth day after a girl's first menstruation begins. On that day turmeric paste is rubbed on her body and she is given ritual bath. In the evening the married women who are invited for the ceremony wave arati to the girl. The girl is presented with new clothes and jewellery. Relatives, friends and neighbours are invited for the ceremony, who present gifts to the girl and a feast is arranged for all the invitees.

6.3.1.7 MARRIAGE CEREMONY:

Weavers who follow Brahmanic tradition perform
marriage according to the vedic ritual. In the past marriage was celebrated for five days but now-a-days the whole festivity is completed in a day. In the past they would celebrate the marriage in front of the bride-groom's house by erecting a pendal, but now-a-days all marriages take place in Kalyan Mantap.

Marriage negotiations are usually initiated by the girl's party. Boy's father along with some elders goes to the girl's house to see the girl.

An astrologer is consulted who screens the horoscopes of the boy and the girl and gives his opinion about the compatibility of the stars. If the astrologer gives good opinion about the horoscope and if the boys and his party agree, the betrothal ceremony takes place at the bride's residence which is called Nischaya Karana.

NISCHAYA KARANA.

On the appointed day the boy's father, mother, and kins with their friends go to the girl's house. Married
women mark the girl’s forehead with 'Kumkum' and present a saree to her along with betel leaves, arecanuts and flowers. The marriage negotiations are finalised and are noted on a paper, which the girl's father and boy's father both sign. The community elders too sign the paper. Betel leaves along with betel nuts and sugar are distributed among the assembled people as a token of marriage settlement. The aim is to make the claim on the girl public, so that somebody else may not seek her hand in marriage.

MARRIAGE RITES :

The marriage day is fixed by a Brahman priest. The wedding preparations begin with a month in advance. Invitations are sent to all the near and distant relatives, friends, co-workers and neighbours. Close relatives come much earlier to the wedding day who play an important role in the matters of purchasing ornaments and clothes. Two days before the marriage, marriage pendals are raised infront of the bride's and bridgegroom's house respectively. A day earlier to the marriage the family deity and God Ganapati are worshipped to invoke their blessings for the marriage.
On the marriage day early in the morning married women from the groom’s party apply turmeric paste to the bride and she is bathed. She is presented with a yellow saree and bodice which she wears. The bridegroom too is rubbed with turmeric paste by the women and given bath. A dress is presented to him by the bride’s father.

Marriage is celebrated in the presence of the God of fire (Agni) who recognised as a witness to the unalterable bond of union between the bride and the bridegroom. The bride and the bridegroom undergo many rituals like Nandi whereby the ancestors of the bridal couple are invoked, kankana dharana - symbolising the couples entry into the marriage state, Akshata - Sprinkling of rice by the couple on each other’s head and also by the invitees over the couple, and tying of the mangalasutra followed by lajahoma and Saptapati which marks the end of the marriage.

Nandi (Anustan) Prayers are offered to the God Ganapati, the family deity and Mrutyunjaya before the commencement of the marriage, in order that the marriage ceremony should complete without any inauspicious occurrence.

Akshata: On the marriage day, shortly before the auspicious
moment arrives, two small heaps of rice grain are placed near the marriage alter by the priest, and a cloth with a central cross mark is held between the heaps. The bridegroom stands on one heap facing west and bride is brought and made to stand on other heap facing east. Akshata (a mixture of rice grains coloured with vermillion) is distributed among all the invitees. Priests standing at the two ends of the curtain tell the pair to look at the lucky cross and pray to their family God. The priests recite auspicious verses and sprinkle akshata on the bride and the grooms. The invitees also sprinkle akshata over the bride and the bridegroom. Musicians play music. The priest removes the curtain and the bride is asked to sprinkle akshata on the bridegroom's head five times, the same is done by the bridegroom who sprinkles akshata on the bride's head five times.

Kankandharana: Kankanas or marriage wristlets are then tied to the wrists of the bride and the bridegroom. Then the bridegroom ties the mangalasutra around the neck of the bride. The hems of the garment of the bride and the bridegroom is tied into a knot which signifies that the two are bound by the ties of marriage once for all.

Lajhoma and Saptapadi: The Vivahahom (Lajhoma) is then performed on the marriage alter. The bride and the bridegroom
are made to sit on two planks with the bride on the left side of the groom. The sacrificial fire is lit. Grains of rice, clarified butter, sesame seeds, cotton sticks of palas and other samidhas (sacred wood) are offered to it. Then the bride and the bridegroom go around the sacred fire, from right to the left for seven times which is called Saptapadi with this the marriage is considered to be final and irrevocable.

Friends, relatives and neighbours who are invited for marriage are given dinner, kinsfolk help in welcoming the guests, serving of food and looking after the comforts of guests. The concluding ceremony is Varat, the return of the bridegroom with the bride to his home.

After completion of marriage rites the bride goes to the bridegroom's house. On reaching the house God Laxmi is worshipped, milk is offered to the Goddess, and the bride is given a new name. Giving a new name signifies the acceptance of the bride into her husband's family.

Lingayat weavers' marriage customs very from those who follow Brahmanic tradition. Among the Lingayat weavers generally the boy's father takes the initiative of looking
for a suitable bride for his son. The marriage day is fixed by a Jangam. They do not consult the horoscope. If the boy's and the girl's party agree, marriage is settled and engagement ceremony is held in the girl's home by serving betel leaves along with betel nuts and sugar in the presence of Jangama.

On the previous day of marriage, they worship their family God, and God Ganapati.

On the marriage day in the morning, married women apply paste of turmeric powder to the bodies of both the bride and the bridegroom, this ceremony is called 'Arishin Hachchuvadu'. Since Kannada Devagas, Hirekuruvinshettys and Pattasalis are followers of God Virabhadra, they perform Guggal Ceremony in honour of Virabhadra. In Guggal ceremony two new earthen pots are brought and cut into two equal halves each. The upper half is turned upside down into which the lower half is kept so that the open side is upward. A Sandlewood Stick dipped in oil is kept in it and lighted. The earthen vessel is held by a Jangama (generally by a pujari of Virabhadra temple). Two Jangamas carry these two earthen vessels, with the bridegroom and the bride, with the image of Virabhadra in their hands, leading the procession with the accompaniment of music played by the Bhandaris. The procession is followed by
friends and relatives, to the Basavanna temple. At the temple both the bride and the bridegroom worship Basavanna and break a coconut. Then the earthen vessels are placed on the ground, the Jangama’s feet are washed, and a coconut and some cash is presented to him. Then guggala’s are put and vessels are broken.

Among the weavers who follow Veerashaiva tradition there is total absence of sacred fire as is the case among those who follow the Brahmanical tradition. The place of fire is taken by the Panchakalasa.

At the time of marriage Muhurtha, the bride and the bridegroom are made to stand facing each other, the Jangama recites verses and sprinkles akshata (rice mixed with kumkum and turmeric powder) on the bride and the bridegroom. The bridal couple exchange the garlands and the guests also sprinkle the akshata. Then the bride and the bridegroom are seated side by side and the hems of the garment of the bride and bridegroom are tied together and mangalsutra is tied round the bride’s neck by the bridegroom. The bridal couple is taken to the family God to pray for the blessings, and then the knot of the garment is loosened.
Thus the main feature of the Lingayat marriage is the tying of the mangalasutra by the bridegroom around the neck of the bride.

6.3.1.8 FUNERAL CEREMONY

Funeral ceremonies of various Hindu castes vary according to their religious beliefs and faiths. Differences in detail are noticed in the matter of burial or cremation. The weavers who follow Brahmanical customs cremate their dead and weavers who follow Veerashaivism bury the dead.

After the death the ornaments, if there are any, are removed from the dead body. The body is washed with water and is attired in new dress or saree. The weaver caste such as Karnataka Devanga, Kuruvinshetty and Pattasali who follow the Lingayat tradition keep the dead body in a sitting posture, that is, the body is laid cross-legged slightly leaning against a wall. The dead body is kept until all relatives arrive, Bhajans are sung and music is played for it is believed on death the soul leaves the earthly world and joins the divine in heaven. Specially prepared chair for this purpose is brought, plantain stems are tied to the upright poles of the chair
and it is decorated with flowers. The dead body is seated cross-legged in the chair and the chair is borne by four men, either relatives or friends. Men and women go along with the procession to the burial ground. On reaching the burial ground the dead body is buried in sitting posture with the head turned towards the south. A grave is dug three and a half feet deep. The burial pit is either smeared with cowdung or white-washed and dust of the Jangama's feet is sprinkled into it. The body is seated in the burial pit. The Jangama removes the Linga worn by the deceased, lays it on the dead man's left hand. He then lays before the body, rice, flowers, sandal and Vibhuti, and burns the camphor. The Linga is handed over to the family members. Full of earth are placed in, and, when the earth is filled as high as the face, a piece of gold is laid in the mouth, and the chief mourner, touches the closed mouth with water. All the mourners place a handful of mud on the grave. Then the burial pit is fully filled and a small mound of earth and stone is raised over it. Mourners when they reach home wash their legs and hand. The spot where the dead breathed his last is smeared with cowdung and pot of water and ashes are set on it. On third day, the chief mourners go to the burial ground, worship the grave and pour milk on it. After that, things which the deceased liked in her/his lifetime are deposited there. Then they
observe 11th day ceremony, Vaikuntha Samaradhane, when the house is purified and food is offered in the name of deceased person to all the relatives and friends. It is believed on this day the wandering soul of the dead person joins the ancestors and the God.

In case of weavers who follow Brahmanical tradition, the dead body is kept on a bier and the body is covered with a white cloth. The chief mourner (Eldest son) carries an earthen pot containing fire and other kinsmen and neighbours and friends follow. Their women do not attend the funeral ceremony at the cremation ground. When they reach the cremation ground, the body is laid on the funeral pyre and is covered with other layer of wood. When the mouth is being covered the son pours a little water in it. The son sets fire to the pyre, brings water in the large earthen pot, and stands at the head of the pyre. With a stone, a hole is made to the earthen pot, as water spouts from the pot, the son goes five times round the pyre and at the end throws the pot on the ground at the head. The funeral party returns home. In the evening an oil lamp is lighted on the spot where the deceased breathed his/her last breath.

On the third day, the son goes to the cremation ground, takes ashes from the spot where the body is burnt and
later the ashes are immersed in a holy river on the tenth day the son shaves his head and bathes. On the eleventh day purification rites are conducted and on the twelfth day *shradha* is performed, in the name of the dead. Friends and kinsfolk are treated to dinner. The Shradha and Mahalaya are performed annually in the name of the ancestors.

Attending funerals is obligatory for all the kinsmen. An event of sorrow such as death in a family needs sympathy, consolation and help from the relatives and friends. Large gathering of kinsfolk, neighbours and friends is seen to console the mourners on such occasions.

6.3.1.9 ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Weavers who follow brahmanic tradition offer worship to their ancestor annually on the particular day of their death. Lingayat weavers worship the ancestors on the day of *Mahalaya amavase*. This annual celebration of ancestor worship is known as *Hiriyar Habba* by the weavers who follow Lingayata tradition, *Shradha* by the weavers who follow brahmanic tradition. Eldest male member of the family performs the ancestor worship. Observation of ancestor worship is one of
The main functions of the family. The rites of ancestor worship are based on the belief that those who participate in it receive blessings and help for prosperity and happiness of all living descendants from ancestors who are presumed to be endowed with supernatural power. A special feast in honour of the dead is prepared on the study.

6.3.2 Life cycle rituals of Momin Weavers

As momins are Muslim weavers their religion rites differ from the Hindu weavers.

BIRTH: When a child is born, the Islamic prayer is intoned in the child's ear. On the seventh day both the mother and child are given bath. The khaji (priest) is invited who takes the name of Mohammed and whispers the Islamic prayers in the child's ears. This signifies the child's membership in the Muslim community.

6.3.2.1 NAMING CEREMONY

Naming ceremony is celebrated on the fortieth day. Barber is invited to shave the infant's head. Money is distributed to the poor on this occasion. A he goat is sacrificed, feast is arranged for friends and relatives.
6.3.2.2 CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

During infancy or in early childhood, circumcision ceremony is observed which is obligatory for every Muslim male.

6.3.2.3 MARRIAGE

The offer of marriage comes from the bridegroom's party. Among Momins since 'pardha' is observed, the boy cannot see the girl until the time of his marriage. It is the boy's mother, sister and other relatives who go to see the girl. If the girl is approved, on the appointed day, some men and women from the bridegroom's party go to the bride's house to settle the marriage. They take with them a saree, a blouse piece and some ornaments and present it to the bride along with sugar, coconut, betel leaves, betel nuts, and flower. They distribute the sugar to all the persons and declare that the marriage is settled. Subsequently, the day for the wedding is fixed.

On the day of the wedding ceremony the bridegroom's party sends wedding clothes to the bride. The bride's father too presents dress to the bridegroom along with sugar, sugarcandy, almonds, dry dates, coconut, turmeric, betel leaves and betel nuts.
Marriage takes place in the bride's place. The bridegroom comes in procession (Barat) to the bride's house accompanied by men and women. The procession comes with local musical band playing music and singing.

The bride is dressed up in a saree and covered with Odhnī and is decked with ornaments and flowers.

When the bridegroom reaches the bride's place, the bride is brought near him, a curtain is held between the bridal pair and rice smeared with turmeric is sprinkled on them by everyone attending the marriage. Then the bride is taken inside and the bridegroom is seated on a platform specially erected for the occasion.

The bride's maternal-uncle and two witnesses called 'gavah' go to the bride, and tell her that, it has been decided to give her in marriage to so and so, the son of so and so, and ask her consent. This is repeated thrice and she answers in the affirmative thrice. After obtaining her consent, the khazī, recites some verses from the Koran and tells the bridegroom that so and so, the daughter of so and so, has agreed to marry him and asks his consent for the marriage. He repeats
this thrice and the bridegroom answers thrice in the affirmative. Then some prayers are offered and sweets are distributed and guests are treated to a feast.

At the bridegroom's house, his sister stops the bride and bridegroom at the door and demands the gift of money. Then the bride is taken inside. Subsequently a day or two days later, the bridegroom's party gives the valima feast, which is mainly intended for the bride's party. Guests of either party are also invited. The feast is celebrated on a grand scale. The bride is seated outside, garlanded and presented with gifts.

6.3.2.4 FUNERAL CEREMONY AMONG THE MOMINS

The Momins bury the dead body and only men go in the procession to the burial ground. The corpse is washed with warm water. Once the dead body is kept in a 'Janaza' (carriage of dead body) the 'Janaza' is considered sacred. Near the burial ground brief prayer is said and then the son lowers the dead body into the grave. After the burial the mourners place a handful of mud on the grave. While returning the prayer is said again. On the third day, the
Koran is read, clothes are given to the poor. On the forteenth day simple rite is performed, Koran is read and feast is arranged. The departed are always referred to as the blessed.

6.4 FESTIVALS

6.4.1 FESTIVALS OF HINDU

The Hindu weavers celebrate many festivals spread throughout the year. These festivals are religious in nature and are celebrated with great enthusiasm. All the festivals are joyous occasions. The following are the festivals celebrated by all the Hindu weaver castes of Hubli.

UGADI • Ugadi festival is celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April), the first month of the Hindu calendar. Ugadi is the new year celebration. On the festival day all the family members take bath and put on new clothes and worship their family deity. A mixture of neem flowers or neem leaves and jaggery called Bewu-bella (bewu - neem leaves bella - jaggery) is partaken by all the family members as prasada. The partaking of Bewu-bella signifies that the life is a combination of both bitter and sweet experiences, like the neem leaves and jaggery which are bitter and sweet respectively and the life is to be
accepted with happiness and shared with relatives and friends.

NAGAPANCHAMI: This festival is celebrated in the month of Shravana (July-August). Naga (cobra snake) the snake God is worshipped on this festival day. This festival is celebrated for two days. On the first day they bring the idol of a snake made out of clay and worship it by offering milk, flowers and fruits. On the second day they offer milk, flowers and fruits to the stone images of Naga. Special sweet called ladu (sweet balls) is prepared on this festival.

The belief behind the worship of Naga (snake God) is that by performing Naga Puja (worshipping snake) harm by Naga (snake) can be averted throughout the life. The second belief is that, the snake is a poisonous creature, when it bites people die, inspite of the fact that the snake is a poisonous creature, we give milk to it in the same way in real life too we should do good to all the people even if they harm us.

The festival of Naga-Panchami among the weavers is also called the festival of women. Married daughters are invited for this festival by their parents, and they are presented with a new saree as a festival gift.
GANESH CHATURTHI. Festival of Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). Ganapati, the God of wisdom success, who is believed to remove all the obstacles (vigna) is worshipped. Hindu weavers invoke God Ganapati's name worship him at the commencement of every undertaking. On the festival day, an idol of Ganapati, made of clay is brought home and is installed on specially decorated platform and is worshipped for five days, or seven days, or eleven days, or throughout the year according to one's family tradition. On the last day the idol is immersed in water. Those who install Ganapati for one year immerse the idol after the new idol of Ganapati is brought. Modak, Kadubu and ladu are the special sweets prepared and offered to the deity.

DASARA. Dasara festival is celebrated in the month of Ashwina (September-October). The festival of Dasara (Desh=ten, ahar=days) is celebrated for ten days. The festival is also called as Navaratri festival (nine nights). The first day of the festival is called Ghatastapana. On this day, a sacred oil lamp is lit and kept infront of the Goddess Durga who is worshipped for nine days Devi parayana (the holy script) is recited in this festival for nine days. On the tenth day the Dasara festival is celebrated. On this day Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of Education (vidya) is worshipped. It is also called Vijaya Dasami, the day of
victory gained by Rama over Ravana. It is also the day on which Goddess Kali (Durga) vanished the buffalo demon Mahishasura. The weavers offer Puja to their looms on Dasara and on that day they do not weave. The Pattegars celebrate this festival by sacrificing goat to Goddess Durga on the 9th day to celebrate her success over the Mahishasur Rakshasa (demon). Not all the weaver castes celebrate this festival for ten days. Depending upon their family tradition some celebrate the festival on last two days and some others on last three days.

DEEPAVALI The festival of Deepavali is celebrated in the month of Kartika (October-November). It is the festival of lights. The word Deepavali means clusters of light. On the festival day people worship Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. On the festival day, in the evening, in every house people illuminate oil lamps to welcome Goddess Laxmi. Akash-butti (sky-lamp) is also hung in front of house which is illuminated throughout the Kartik month. The festival symbolises the domination of light over darkness and killing of Narakasur by Lord Krishna.

Two days after Diwali comes Yama Dwitiya, popularly known as Bhaubeej. On this day brothers visit their sisters. In the evening sister performs the ceremony of arati and receive a gift.
HOLI: Holi festival is celebrated for two or five days according to the tradition that they follow. The festival is celebrated in the month of Phalguna (February-March). On the first day of the festival an idol Holika (Kamanna) made out of clay is brought and is placed in the centre of street. This festival is celebrated by all the locality people irrespective of caste. Second day is the Holi day. People gather early in the morning and set Holika on fire and play Holy by spraying coloured water with sprayers on their friends.

They also celebrate other festivals like Mahashivaratri, Makar Sankranti, Janmastami and Basava Jayanti.

6.4.2 Festivals of Momins

The Lunar Hijra Calander is followed by the Muslims (Momins). The Muslim new year starts as a period of mourning with the month of Moharrum.

MOHARRUM: The Moharrum celebration is famous. The festival is celebrated for ten days. On the first day they keep the 'Punjas', the symbol of the deities Bibi Fathima, the mother of seven children commonly called as 'Peerah'. Every day prayers are offered and on the tenth day, that is, on Moharrum day.
they take the procession of the 'Panjas' and immerse them in the water, it is the mourning day for the Muslims. No marriage takes place during this month.

RAMAZAN: Ramazan is the holiest of all ten months for the Momins. Men and Women fast during this month for thirty days. Considering the hours of day light as a means of self purification they keep fast. When the fast is broken, prayers are offered in mosques, and they have their night food. And Morning food they will have early in the morning before sunrise. On the last day of Ramazan when the new moon is sighted in the evening, it heralds the festival of Id-ul-fitir. They take bath, wear new clothes, apply 'Itr' and cook special food. "Sheer Kurma" is prepared specially on this day of "Idul-fitrr". Food is exchanged among Muslim and Non-Muslim brothers. They visit each other's houses and exchange greetings. (They take vows to make Bagh (lion) of their children to fulfil their wishes. The male children or even grown-ups are painted in yellow and black straps thus to disguise themselves as lions. Such persons are taken with band in procession to beg alms from five to seven houses in fulfilment of their wishes. Men go to the Idgah for congregational prayers.

BAKHR IDD: This is yet another important festival for Muslims. It coincides with the Haj pilgrimage, one of the most obligatory
part on any Muslim who could afford to bear the expenditure to undertake pilgrimage. On the day of Haj, sheep or cow, is offered by those who can afford it. Sheep is sacrificed individually, whereas cow is shared by seven members. This marks the day of 'Idu-ul-juha', commonly called as 'Bakhar Idd'. On this day too, people take bath, apply Itr, wear new clothes, prepare special food, usually 'Sheer Kurma' a sweet is prepared along with mutton curry, and Biryani. The mutton of the animal sacrificed is divided into three equal parts before household consumption. One part is kept for household utility, second part goes to relatives (affines and agnates), and neighbours and the third part belongs to the poor, those who come to beg alms. One can observe on this day Muslim brothers exchanging gifts of mutton. They visit each others houses and exchange greetings.

Thus the festivals have both religious and social characteristics. Festivals are the important occasions of inter-caste gathering in the ritual realm. Among all the festivals the Hindu festival of Ganesh Chaturthi and Holi and the Muslim festival of Ramazan and Moharrum are the festivals during which people from all the castes, that is, other than weaver castes also gather and celebrate the festival.
During the Ganesh festival, the idol of God Ganapati is installed in each locality and worshipped for five days. This festival being a community affair, the members of the locality irrespective of being rich or poor, contribute money to make the festival a grand success. All households in the locality work unitedly. They erect the pendal and decorate it by illuminating electric lights. On the fifth day the procession of the God is taken round the locality. Thus all the caste members join and make the festival a grand success.

During the Holi festival too irrespective of caste, people amuse themselves by spraying coloured water on their friends and relatives.

During the Moharrum celebration of Muslims, many Hindus also participate. They go to the mosques and do the prayers by offering sugar.

Weavers believe in the existence of God and almost all participate in the religious activities. Children acquire religious beliefs from parents. Religious attitudes learnt in the childhood at home are carried and passed on to the next generation. Worship of the portraits of deities is a common