PREFACE

There are vague ideas and misconceptions among the laymen about the Harijans, since their institutions are not studied or understood properly. On the contrary, the politicians have been propagating very much about the institution of untouchability for their own ends; to get votes. There is much talk and propaganda going on about the upliftment of Harijans in India, though scientific studies on them are made only recently. For example, Isaac Herold, and O.M. Lynch etc. have studied the problems of Harijans very recently. Though, for the students of Anthropology, the study of a neglected people is of a special interest, the Indian anthropologists have not yet begun this type of serious studies.

Keeping this in mind, the Harijans of Dharwar were chosen for this study of "Religion and Society Among the Harijans". Dharwar is a representative town in this part of the country, since we find here Harijans speaking different languages and belonging to different castes and cultures of both South and North India. These varied systems have been mingled with the local culture and they show a typical culture of this part of the country. Here we also find the urban as well as rural qualities among the castes of Harijans. In Dharwar, we find the Harijans settled for generations; and there are also Harijan castes who have immigrated from the villages which are

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both far away and near. Many welfare activities for women and children, for their upliftment, are also found here. In this manner many past traditions and modern ways of life were present here which were of much importance for our study.

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