CHAPTER III

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

What is social structure and what are the aspects to be included in the study of social structure, is a question for debate. Evans-Pritchard (1940: 262), while observing the social structure of Nuer, restricted his study of social structure to the interrelations of groups, explicitly excluding inter-personal relations. According to the definition given in the Notes and Queries on Anthropology, (1960: 63) social structure is the "whole network of social relations in which are involved the members of a given community at a particular time". Taking these two definitions as our basis, the social structure of the Harijans is discussed in this chapter. The various aspects taken for discussion are caste, occupation, kinship, family, marriage, education, division of labour, leadership, etc., and the possible changes that have taken place in these fields.

CASTE AND CASTE HIERARCHY

One of the characteristics of the caste system is that castes are graded according to their ritual status in relation to each other. In the original scheme of
Varnāshrama Dharma, the Varnas were graded as follows: Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. They are linked to the various parts of the human body, i.e., Brahmans to the head, Kshatriyas to the shoulder, Vaishyas to the stomach, and Sudras to the feet. Though every Varna is equally important, as the limbs of the body are, the notion of superiority and inferiority is also inherent in this system. But, on the contrary, on the basis of importance of the duty, a dutiful Sudra was considered to be superior to a Brahman who neglected his duties.

The caste hierarchy, being rooted in the notion of superiority, itself a consequence of the notions of purity and holiness, stands aloof from the castes which are ritually impure. This notion of superiority and inferiority is not a rigid or a clear-cut one.

Harijans have both a vegetarian and a non-vegetarian diet. Madigas eat dead cattle meat, whereas the Chalwādis have given it up. Other castes among the Harijans eat mutton and chicken. A few Madigas, Chalwādis, Dhōrs, Samagars and Machigars do not eat any kind of meat and this is due to the influence of Veerashaivism, at least as a religious taboo. Beef and pork are not eaten by any Harijan caste except the Madigas. These are the
strict religious taboos. Ten to fifteen years ago, during
festivals, ritual ceremonies and on important socio-ritual
occasions, alcoholic beverages were a special feature of
Harijans. When alcoholic beverages were prohibited by law,
the Harijans gave up this habit slowly. But a few of them
continued to drink illicit liquor.

As a rule, Harijans are very poor and do not own
valuable property of any kind. The relationship within
the family and kinship is marked by petty and continuous
quarrels. It is a Kannada idiom for an analogy of street
quarrels: "Do not quarrel like Harijans" (holeyarante
badidāda bedirī).

The list of castes for the study of hierarchy
among the Harijans of Dharwar is as follows:

1. Machigār
2. Samagār
3. Dhōr
4. Chalwādi
5. Hulsevār
6. Mādar
7. Telugu Mādar
8. Ramōshi
9. Lēlabāgi
10. Malkhāni

This arrangement of castes is based not only on
the basis of rules of commensality but also on the opinion
of our informants. For example, Machigars never smoke tobacco with the Samagars, on the ground that the latter are inferior. On the contrary, the Samagars are given food in brass-plates when they take meals in the houses of Machigars. Samagars do not take food from Dhors, who tan leather. However, Dhors take food from Samagars, while Chalwadis do not take food from Dhors; but accept food from Machigars and Samagars. Hulsavars and Chalwadis accept food from each other, but they do not accept food from Madigas. Local Madigas do not take food from Telugu Madigas, the scavengers. As Lalabegis and Malkhanis are also scavengers, food from them is not acceptable to any of the castes in the list except those who are scavengers, viz., Telugu Madigas, Lalabegis and Malkhanis. Ramoshis accept food from local Madigas, but not from scavengers, whereas scavengers take food from all other castes.

The following sociograms illustrate the acceptance of food among the different castes.
Numbers assigned in Sociograms are as shown in the beginning of this chapter.
From the above sociograms it is clear that the Harijan castes fall into four groups on the basis of acceptance of food.

**Group I**
1. Telugu Madar
2. Lālabegi
3. Makhāni

**Group II**
1. Chālwadi
2. Hulsavār

**Group III**
1. Local Madar
2. Ramōshī
3. Dhōr

Local Madigās will not establish matrimonial relationships with Telugu Madigās, who work as scavengers. But matrimonial relations are possible if they are not scavengers. Marriages between Chalwadis and Hulsavārs are possible, and a Hulsavār can give a bride to a Chalwadi, but cannot get a bride from the Chalwadis, who consider themselves superior to Hulsavārs. Ramōshīs have matrimonial relationships with Madigās (Local and Telugu), for which they are called Mini-Madigāru. All the other five castes are endogamous, and in no case inter-caste marriage possible. Inter-caste marriages can be shown with the help of diagrams as follows:
Local Madigas consider themselves superior to Telugu Madigas, as the latter are scavengers. Machigars are superior to Samagars, as the former do not repair shoes but only prepare new shoes. Dhōrs are inferior to Samagars and Machigars as the two latter castes work with refined leather, whereas Dhōrs tan leather. Chalwādis think themselves superior to people who work in leather, viz., Dhōrs, Machigars, Samagars, and Madārs. The status of Madigas and Ramoshis is lower than that of Samagars and Madārs, as the two former castes work in rough leather and the latter two castes work in refined leather. Telugu Madigas, Lalabegis
and Malkhanis are scavengers; so they come below all the other seven castes. On the basis of occupation, they can be brought under these groups:

(a) **Leather Workers:**
   - Dhor,
   - Samagar
   - Machigär
   - Local Madiga
   - Ramoshi

(b) **Scavengers:**
   - Telugu Madiga
   - Lalabegi
   - Malkhani

(c) **Sweeping and brooming:**
   - Chalwadi
   - HulsaWar

A Lalabegi is considered superior to a Malkhani, because the former observes Brahminic customs and the latter more of Muslim customs. The former is already Brahmanised and the latter is adopting Muslim culture. The Malkhanis have Muslim names and observe most of the
Muslim festivals, and many of them have been already converted to Islam; whereas Lalabegis follow Hindu customs. Machigārs observe purity and pollution more than Samagārs. In the past, the rules were so strict that the caste council would fine a Machigār who touched untanned leather.

There are disputes between Chalwādis and Madigās with regard to the roles performed by them during fairs and festivals. These disputes arise because each considers himself superior to the other and demands higher and better social rights in the village. The fact that they belong to different sects and religions gives them this superior and inferior feeling among themselves. A few castes, like Samagār, Machigār, Chalwādi, Madār (Local) and Dhor, follow the Veerashaiva customs and religious doctrines. Chalwādis and local Madigās are Shaivas, and Hulsavārs, Ramoeshis and Telugu Madigās are Vaishnavas. This difference in faith, gods, priests, customs and rituals brings gradation into their status. On the basis of ritual purity, we can reduce the different Harijan castes into three groups.
Hierarchies within the caste:

The Harijan castes may be again divided into different endogamous groups known as sub-castes. The graphic (see graph No.1) presentation of the hierarchy of these castes and sub-castes is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Veerashaivas</th>
<th>(b) Vaishnavas</th>
<th>(c) Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samagar</td>
<td>Madar (Telugu)</td>
<td>Lalabegi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalwadi</td>
<td>Hulsavari</td>
<td>Malkhani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madar (Local)</td>
<td>Rososhi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph No.1
III: The sub-castes among Dhors are shown in the graph.

A is the line of superiority. AK is the line of number of castes and sub-castes. Line AO is the highest caste No. I. The perpendicular line No. I is the highest sub-caste of caste No. II. Thus the highest sub-caste of a lower caste comes below the lowest sub-caste of a higher caste. The line OL shows the slope of castes and sub-castes in order of superiority. (The numbers assigned to castes are according to the list given earlier in this chapter).

Not all these Barijan sub-castes are found in Dharwar. Hence it was not possible to find out their exact hierarchical position in their own castes. All these sub-castes may be ranked in terms of acceptance of food, marriage, occupation and ritual purity.

Sub-castes are formed sometimes on the basis of religion, and function as endogamous groups. It becomes difficult to rank them on the basis of the factors we have discussed above. For example, Hindustani, Rajput, Maratha, Gwe and Kakasya-Dhor are sub-castes of the Dhör caste. These sub-castes are formed on the basis of religion, language and the sect they belong, and the hierarchy among them is mainly based on their religious sects.
Sub-castes do not show much rigidity in accepting food, brides and intermingling, locally known as Balake, within the same caste. But castes show too much rigidity in accepting food and brides from other castes. So, we can say that sub-castes function as exogamous groups, while castes function as endogamous groups. Castes belong to the group of Harijans and the sub-castes are integral parts of the castes, as shown in the following sociogram.

The numbers assigned to the castes are as shown in the beginning of this chapter and the sub-castes of caste No. III Dhor are shown in this Sociogram.
Now let us take up the demographic aspect of the Harijans of Dharwar. Here we shall study their occupations, family types, education, etc.

**OCCUPATIONS AND FAMILY TYPES**

Today, owing to the shift from traditional occupations, Harijans follow various occupations, including employment with Government and the Municipal Corporation. A few work for private and semi-Government agencies as peons, clerks, etc. So, in our discussion on family-types, we shall not keep only the traditional occupations followed by Harijans in the past or present.

From the figures in table No.7, it is clear that peons and labourers mostly stay in elementary families. Agriculturists and leather-tanners are heading towards extended families. The spread of modernization and industrialization has influenced the family types among the Harijans. In the past, in order to get socio-economic security, people used to prefer extended families. But now, elementary families are becoming universal since that offers better family life.
### Table 7

**Occupations and Types of Families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Extended</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shoe-making</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sweepers</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leather-Tanning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scavengers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Peons</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Factory Labourers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Labourers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. White-collar jobs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Agriculturists</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Other occupations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>368</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>561</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>65.60</td>
<td>34.40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table No. 8 we can also see what type of families are opted by different castes among the Harijans.
Table - 8
Family Types according to castes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Extended</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lelabegi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ramoshi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Malkhani</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kulavār</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Machigar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chalwadi</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Telugu Madar</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dhör</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Local Madar</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Samagar</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 369 192 561

From the above table, it is clear that in some of the castes elementary families are more in number owing to the impact of modernisation and change in occupation. Samagārs are mostly engaged in shoe-making and prefer to live in elementary families; Machigārs, who have taken up agriculture, prefer extended families, since they are more
convenient for agriculturists, where male labour may be supplemented by women and children.

Castes and Occupations:

The various Harijan castes follow a fixed pattern of labour. A particular caste has to do a particular job in society, and these form different traditional occupations of these castes.

**Table - 9**

Traditional and Present Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chalwadi</td>
<td>Sweeping</td>
<td></td>
<td>Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madar (Local)</td>
<td>Leather-work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madar (Telugu)</td>
<td>Leather-work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Scavengery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulsavar</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samagär</td>
<td>Leather-work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machigär</td>
<td>Leather-work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhor</td>
<td>Leather-tanning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malkhāni</td>
<td>Scavengery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lālabegi</td>
<td>Scavengery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāmoshi</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table, we can see that Harijans are changing their occupation. Table No.10 below shows the trend in change of traditional occupations.

We learn from Table No.10 that Harijans are taking up white-collar jobs. With the impact of modernisation, they are also working as peons, domestic servants, labourers and agricultural labourers. Today, there are many opportunities for them to change their occupations. It is also found that their traditional occupation assigned to them by their caste is the main hindrance to changing their occupation.

Division of Labour:

We find a clear-cut division of labour among the sexes of each caste as follows:
Table - 11

Caste, Occupation and Division of Labour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Division of</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Samagär</td>
<td>Shoe-making</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Differ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Machigär</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chalwādi</td>
<td>Galman</td>
<td>Zadamali</td>
<td>Differ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Madār (Local)</td>
<td>Galman</td>
<td>Zadamali</td>
<td>Differ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mādar (Telugu)</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rāmoshi</td>
<td>Peon</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Differ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dālabegi</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Malkhānī</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Scavenger</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dhūr</td>
<td>Tanning</td>
<td>Tanning</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hulsevār</td>
<td>Peon</td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Differ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table we can say that in occupations like shoe-making, sweeping and serving, the sexes differ in their type of occupation; whereas in scavengery, the sexes do not differ, and in agriculture, the sexes complement each other. Division of labour between the sexes depends upon the nature of occupation they undertake.
Harijans of Dharwar have four different languages as their mother-tongue. Since language is an important carrier of culture, we have to see these languages as an integral part of their social structure. Marathi, Hindi, Telugu and Kannada are the four languages spoken by them. As a regional language, Kannada is spoken by all the groups. A few Malkhānis have learnt Urdu, owing to the influence of Muslim culture. Lālabegis have picked up the regional language of the area where they stay; those who stay in Gujarat speak Gujarati, and those who stay in Maharashtra speak Marathi. However, most of them can speak Hindi. Marriages take place between persons who speak quite different language not known to each other on the ground that they belong to the same caste. In such cases, they learn the local language gradually.

Telugu Mādigas are influenced by Āndhra culture. They speak Telugu and so can be distinguished from the Kannada-speaking Mādigas. So are those who speak Marathi and are influenced by the culture of Maharashtra.
Education:

Education among the Harijans may be observed from two angles. One, their attitude towards education; and the other, how far the education imparted to them is utilised.

Harijans, as a rule, do not like to give education to their children beyond the primary level. Higher education has not attracted them so far. Poverty, the age-old customs and indifference are some of the main causes for their lack of education.

The rate of illiteracy is higher among the Harijans. Even among the literates, very few use their literacy skill adequately. Among the literates, the majority (62.92%) have had only primary education. Only 14.07% have had secondary education, and 3.38% college education. College-level education among the Harijans is increasing, but very slowly. Those who have had adult education can hardly read and write. Most of them learnt to write only their names in the regional language; so that they can put their signature to a document. Nowadays, Balwadi, or pre-school education, for children below the primary level and above three years, is increasing very fast and it is becoming more popular. One Balwadi school was opened near
### Table - 12

Castes and Education of the Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Literate</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rāmośhi</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hulswār</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mālkhānī</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lālabēgi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dhūr</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Samaĝār</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chalwādi</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Machgār</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Telugu Mādīga</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Local Mādīga</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Others are Balwadi and Adult educated)
Madaramaddi, in 1962. Table No. 12 shows the educational level among the Harijans of Dharwar.

The general literacy statistics of Dharwar town shows that the illiterates exceed. Here, the ratio of literacy between males and females is 2:1 for entire Dharwar town, and includes all castes. Among Harijans, literate females are hardly found. If at all they are, it is only among the younger generation. However, the ratio of literacy among Harijan's women is also increasing. Among educated Harijans, two were studying for M.B., B.S. and two were attending postgraduate classes in Karnataka University, while a few were studying in different colleges.

Though the majority of the people belong to the non-literate group, they have latterly given some attention to their children's education. As a result, education has become very popular among the younger generation. This can be seen from the following statistics. The school goers among the children are 327 (61.27%) and the non-school goers are 235 (38.73%), the ratio being 1.38 to 1. (The ages 5 and 10 are taken both as inclusive in these statistics. The numbers include both girls and boys). Here we find that the ratio of school-goers is greater than the ratio of non-school goers.
Family, Marriage and Kinship:

As with caste Hindus, the Harijan family is patrilineal. In the case of Basavis (temple girls), the matrilineal pattern, where the property is divided among the children of brothers and sisters equally, is followed. In the patriarchal families, the father or the grandfather is the head of the family. In the absence of the father, or grandfather, the eldest son becomes the head of the family. If the children are young, the mother acts as head of the family.

Preparation for a marriage starts when the groom-to-be goes to the home of the bride-to-be, with his parents and elders, to see her. Since marriages are settled only after the consent of both parties, the girl's party also visits the boy's home. Nowadays, also the consent of the girl and the boy to be married is taken. Mostly, a marriage is celebrated at the groom's place; but if the parties so desire, it may be arranged at the bride's place. Nowadays, marriages may take place in a temple, to avoid expenditure and conflicts between the parties. Though the custom of bride-price is decreasing, it is still prevalent among the Harijans. Dowry is given only if the groom is educated and well-placed in society.
If an unmarried man or a widower marries a widow, he is not allowed to have all the marriage customs observed, but made to marry her according to a special type of marriage called Udiki. Here, no rituals and no publicity are essential, and the man gives a new sari to the woman, with a feast to the community. The status of the persons marrying this way and the children born of the union will be lower than of those who marry in the customary manner. Either a Brahmin or a Lingayat priest officiates over the marriage rite. Those who follow the Veerashaiva religion invite a Jangama priest, and the others, a Brahmin priest. It is also possible to have a marriage performed without the presence of a priest; under such circumstances, an elderly person who is well versed in marriage rituals, officiates at the marriage.

A striking difference one can notice among the Harijans is that they have to invite all their caste men in the locality, or village, to the wedding feast. (Daivada Uta). On the day of wedding no family in a locality cooks food at home. This mass-feeding is compulsory, and the womenfolk who are relieved of their culinary chores naturally partake in different activities including singing-songs, and help the family in conducting the wedding.
Harijans are still in the grip of traditional Hindu beliefs and customs. Among these, to marry their sons and daughters at an early age, is one. The reasons seem to be the same as in the Hindu society at large, such as poverty, chastity and tradition. During my field-work, I came across 98 cases of child marriage, where the couples were below the age of 10. That is, according to our census, 41% of the families have performed child marriages. Re-marriage of widowed and divorced men and women is allowed. Such marriages are also called Udiki; in it, the status of the persons involved and the children born to them is inferior.

The kinship system has also clear-cut notions about marriageable and non-marriageable groups. The totemic symbol (Bedagu) is taken into account while selecting a bride. The Bedagu group is a clan group. For example, the Bhandare clan among the Telugu Madigas cannot marry within their own group since they have a common Bedagu. Since there is no restriction of territory, persons belonging to Dharwar but to a different Bedagu group can marry.

Supposing A, B, C are three different groups. If A and C have matrimonial relationships with B, this normally
makes them non-marriageable groups. This is because any possible marital relationship will create problems regarding kin behaviour and terms of address though there is no bar in terms of clan status. Under such circumstances, Harijans avoid taking or giving brides to such group or groups.

Among Harijans of Dharwar one cannot marry one's brother's widow. This is because, after her marriage into a family or clan, she becomes a member of her husband's totemic group. However, since they allow widow remarriage, she is given in marriage to a person of another Bedagu. It is only among the Dalabegis, sororate and levirate marriages are in practice.

The marriages permissible within near kins are maternal uncle's daughter, paternal aunt's daughter, sister's daughters and brother's wife's sisters. The prohibited kins are classificatory mothers and their daughters, and one cannot also marry any of the other wives of one's sister's husband. The latter prohibition is important as the Harijan kinship system is based on equality of marital relationships. For example, the co-wives of a sister, are considered to be one's sisters and one's mother's sister's husband is considered, and respected, as one's own father.
Joking Relationships:

Two clans which exchange women in marriage become affinal (Biga) groups. As members of affinal clans, they have joking relationships, and this is expressed whenever they meet and talk. One can have a joking relationship with one's sister's sons and daughters, one's mother's brother, and with the daughters and sons of one's paternal aunt. In return, one's father's sister can have a joking relationship with her brother's wife and her brothers and sisters. One can also have this type of relationship with one's sister's husband, or one's brother's wife and their children.

Kin groups:

Use of appropriate kin terms is a must whenever kinsmen interact. The kin terms are suffixed to the name of the persons and they indicate the status of a person in society. In terms of kinship, caste is an endogamous group of a large number of kinsmen in which marriageable and non-marriageable groups are distinguished.

There is another kind of social groups on the basis of kinship in the localities of the same caste, and is called Bana. There are three Banas in the Chalwadi street: (1) Karemmanavar (2) Mushennavar and (3) Chalwadi-
yavar. The people belonging to the Bana work together and co-operate with one another in socio-religious functions. It is possible for a locality to have more than one Bana and also different Bīga groups.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS

As a group, Harijans who live in different localities and belong to different castes have a few other groups to make community life comfortable and meaningful. These groups are both corporate and civic in nature. They also take care of the socio-economic and religious and political functions. Their composition and functioning is tradition-bound and governed by the rules of morality and obligation. In the past, these groups were well organised and very effective. Now, owing to changes in the socio-economic and other fields, these groups have not only lost their functions but also their powers. Now, let us take, one by one, and see how these customs are peculiar to Harijans and how they function today.

Caste Councils:

The caste council as an institution is fading away, as the Government has taken away most of its powers
and functions. However, caste councils function to this day, and attend to such functions as cannot be undertaken by the Government. In the past, caste councils served as socio-political and religious bodies. Members were elected from among the heads of families in that caste and were traditionally empowered with many rights and duties. Since they were also the elders of the caste, their opinion and decisions were valid in all matters concerning the caste. They had also jural powers and, in this capacity, punished individual members by penalty or excommunication. Marriages, community festivals and other socio-religious ceremonies were organised by them. To this day, caste councils function among the Harijans of Dharwar, though not in the old way.

**Bhajana Mela (Prayer Group):**

Another group commonly found in most Harijan castes is the Bhajana Mela. The members of the Bhajana assemble in the local temple to sing devotional songs. The group meets usually during night. On religious and social occasions, such as marriage, death etc., they assemble to sing devotional songs in individual homes. Whenever they are invited by individual families, they are paid for their services.
Halige Mela (Drummers):

Drum-beating groups are found mostly among the Madigas and Chalwadis. Though found in other castes, they are not common in all the Harijan castes. Members of this group are also invited during socio-religious ceremonies conducted by others, including higher caste Hindus. To be a good drummer is a prestigious thing, and one has to practise for several months to acquire this mastery. Once established as a good drummer, one can earn one's livelihood by this alone. Halige Mela is a special feature of Madigas and there are popular groups in the Malapur and Kamalapur Harijan localities in Dharwar.

In addition to these, we also find other groups, such as play-groups, entertainment-groups, including folk and modern drama groups, and recreational groups, such as card-playing groups. The activities of Harijans conducted through these groups point to their social life, but is mostly confined to their communities and centered in their caste localities. Moreover, they are of recent origin and are not controlled, either by the elders of the caste nor by the tradition.
TRADITIONAL LEADERS

According to Weber (1947: 180), leadership goes with authority and power. A leader means one who has some rights and duties, and also certain qualities and following. So, a study of leadership involves the study of typology, traits and authority. In this study of Harijans of Dharwar, they may be classified into two types: traditional and modern. The former category may in turn be divided into social and religious, and the latter into official and elected. The former category of leaders draw their authority to lead, control and demand certain things from their following, as well as from the traditional sources such as caste and religion. In most cases, this is inherited. On the other hand, modern leaders are elected or selected because of their abilities, such as their good nature, helpfulness, popularity etc. Weber (Ibid) has classified them as ascribed and achieved leaders.

The Harijan population as a whole is useful and serves the larger community. Any disturbance in their functioning will disturb the society as a whole. So, a study of leadership and their authority, power and roles among them becomes essential since they play an important role in maintaining discipline in their community. The
roles and status of these leaders are traditionally fixed and described. A study of these should make our task of getting to know Harijan society easier and better. The traditional leaders among Harijans are the Chalwādi, the Raniga, the Kahale Holeyas, Potaraj, the Goud, the Pujāri, the Drummer, the Jogappa and the Jogāti. Now, let us take them one by one and examine their status and roles as Harijan leaders.

**Chalwādi:**

He belongs to the Holeya caste and, because of his role, the entire caste acquires the name Chalwādi. The Chalwādi serves in the socio-religious activities of the castes that follow the Veerashaiva religion. In return, he gets the social payment known as Babu. This institution is hereditary. Sometimes, the Chalwādi also officiates at rituals performed by the Holeyas, another Harijan caste.

**Raniga:**

The Raniga plays a very important role in the ritual life of Harijans; specially, in performing religious ceremonies of female deities. It is he who kills or sacrifices the he-buffalo during the community fairs of Demawva and Durgawva. His position may be
compared to that of Yajamāna, a well-known figure in conducting sacrifices prescribed in the Hindu scriptures. Since he has this typical religious status, he is invited to officiate at all sacrificial rituals. For his services he gets the social payment from Harijans and caste Hindus. During the fair of Dejawa, the village goddess, when the deity is taken around the settlement in a procession, the Raniga follows the procession abusing her. It is believed that the goddess, who has created so many problems for the villagers, should be provoked, by abuse, to solve them. It is believed that the Raniga will make her act immediately. The Harijans consider that he is her husband and that only he can abuse his wife and put her to work.

*Kahale Holeyā (Piper)*:

The duties of the Kahale Holeyā are utilised during the socio-religious functions of Harijans as well as caste Hindus, where he plays the pipe (Kahale). The sound of this pipe is supposed to be a symbol of triumph and inspiration. Because of his religious role, he is considered a leader and respected as such. For his duties he gets the social payments known as Aya and Babu. This position is also hereditary.
\textbf{Pōtarāj:}

The Pōtarāj is another important religious leader among Harijans. He belongs to the Mādiga caste and his position is hereditary. His participation is inevitable at the time of community fairs of female deities, where he kills a goat by cutting its throat with his own teeth. Pōtaraj in the vernacular means tiger. This rite is performed as a recognition of the strength of wild animals and to appease them. He catches the goat and plays with it the way a wild beast does with its prey. Finally, he tears at it and then performs the rites. On the festival day, he wears the customary dress to symbolise his profession. In addition to \textit{Āya}, he also gets \textit{Rābu}. Henry Whitehead (1921: 18) describes the Poturaja found in the Telugu country" as a being who figures sometimes as the brother, sometimes as the husband and sometimes as merely an attendant of the deity."

\textbf{Gouda, Ghattekar and Buddhivanta:}

These are important socio-religious functionaries among Samagar. At all socio-religious ceremonies, it is the Gouda who goes round to every Harijan house to invite people for the occasion. He also supervises different activities at a marriage, death etc. If the Gouda works as a manager, the Ghattekar works as a director, and the
Buddhivanta as a judge, in various socio-religious ceremonies. As a team, they also settle disputes in the community. For their service to the community, they are given Babu and a few coins called Chapi Kushi. These positions among the Samagars are hereditary. Among other Harijan castes, these persons are known by different names, such as Pancha, Patil, Munsif, Chawdari, Jamadar etc.

Pujiari (Priest):

Priests are of two types: those who worship the deities in the temples, and those who officiate at individual and community rituals. Sometimes, both these functions are performed by one and the same person. However, the priesthood is mostly restricted to temple duties. This institution is both hereditary and achieved, i.e., appointed by the caste elders. In return for their duties, they get Babu and also the offerings made to the deity.

Drummer:

Beating drums on all ceremonial occasions is a ritual duty. This is a hereditary position, and the drummer gets Babu payments. In the past, Harijans used only drums on all important occasions, such as a marriage or death. He has also secular duties towards the community.
He is the official announcer, or conveyer, of all public news from the castemen, community, village panchayat or municipal corporation to the people. As he goes around the community to announce the news, he beats a drum known as Halige to draw the attention of the people. For this he gets separate payments.

**Jōgati** and **Jōgappa**

These are, again, religious leaders. These persons are devotees of the goddess Yallamma. A temple devotee is known as Jogati and wears pearls round her neck as a sign of her dedication to Yallamma. These may be married or unmarried persons. Many a time, eunuchs also profess as Jogatis or Jogappas. This position is also inherited by a close relative; for example, after the death of an old Jogati, the pearls and the position are inherited by the wife of her youngest son, or by her youngest daughter. If the youngest daughter has already become a Jogati by now, she gets a right to her mother's pearls, along with the position, which is prestigious.

The institution of Jōgati should be distinguished from the institution of Basavi (temple girls) and understood clearly, for Basavis sometimes may become Jogātis in the
course of their life. However, not all Jogatis are Basavis. Jogatis are of three kinds: those who possess (1) a metal pot (Koda), (2) a small basket with the goddess known as Padalagi, and (3) a big basket with the goddess known as Jaga.

It is customary that, sometimes, Jogatis wear the garb of a man and Jogappas the garb of a woman. Owing to this, it is said that the goddess can change men into women and women into men. Jogatis sing and dance when they beg. Possession and oracle-telling are the two main features of the Jogatis. The reasons for becoming Jogatis are as follows: when a person begins to grow a knot in his or her tuft of hair, called Jadi, it is interpreted that this person is liked (blessed) by the deity, Yallamma. On the other hand, those who suffer from incurable diseases take a vow to dedicate themselves to the service of the goddess. Lastly, those who could not marry and become Basavis will also become Jogatis to give a legitimate status to their children.

To become a Jogati, one has to go through an initiation ceremony. During this ceremony one who is already a Jogati ties the pearls round the candidate's neck. The candidate is also made to walk to the temple
or offer prayer wearing a sheet of neem leaves, locally known as Bevina Udige.

This ceremony is not observed in the case of those who inherit Jogatihood from their mother or mother-in-law. Jogatis have to observe certain social, ritual, ceremonial and spiritual taboos in their daily life, such as: (1) not to enter a temple without taking a bath; (2) to fast on a day when there is a death in the community; (3) to worship the goddess Yallamma daily at home before eating their food; (4) to avoid eating certain foods, etc. Jogatis can be easily identified by their ornamentation, such as bells, a fan made of bear fur, shells round their necks and anklets on their feet, stringe of bells put on their legs, turmeric on their forehead and a basket or pot on their head.

Basavis:

The institution of Basavi (temple girl; Devadasi) prevails among the local Madigas, Telugu Madiga, Chalwadis and Hulsaevs. Since Basavis now practise prostitution, the institution is banned. To this effect, laws have been enacted to bring social pressure on them. In the past, the Basavis served only in the temples. Later, when their number increased and the temples could not maintain
them, they went out and turned to prostitution for a living.

Formerly, Basavis had many functions to perform, e.g. (1) during the fairs of deities belonging to both touchables and untouchables, they carried sacred lamps and went with the group either in front or behind the procession; (2) they served as priestesses to the caste deities, kept the temples clean, and sang songs in the temples at the time of worship; (3) even today they are invited to all rituals and given the status of a married woman, Muttaiiddi, (4) during the Holi festival, as a rule, the fire to burn the idol of Holikama should be brought from the Harijan locality and it is the Basavi's privilege to give it. Again, on such an occasion, the Basavi sings regular songs at public meetings arranged by caste people. It is they who tie the kari during the Kara Hunnive festival.

Though a bill banning the Devadasi custom was enacted by the Government of India in 1956, it continues illegally to this day. This is because the Devadasis have certain socio-religious functions to do among Harijans. During a few socio-religious celebrations, Basavis perform certain duties, specially during the festival of Holi (Kāmadevā). In every locality of the above castes, there
are at least 3-4 Basavis aged over 40 years. There is no one below 20 years, which shows that nowadays this institution is diminishing fast, and very few Basavis are found among the younger generation. In the past, many customs and factors drove parents to initiate a daughter into Basavihood; e.g., the only child, a girl, born in the family was not given in marriage but retained in the family as a religious prostitute to look after her parents and to continue her father's lineage.

MODERN LEADERS

So far, we have discussed the status and roles of traditional leaders among the Harijans of Dharwar. With the advent of the many changes that have taken place in their social, political and religious life of our country, significant changes have occurred in the field of leadership among the Harijans as well. As in other fields, the Harijans have imitated the upper castes also in the field of leadership. Along with these factors, modern ways of living and the changed social environment have made them accept modern patterns of leadership. Formerly, the caste council was dominant and functioned among all the Harijan castes. In addition, they had also accepted village-level leaders belonging to higher castes.
Today, all this has changed, and they, like all of us, live in a democracy.

**FORMAL LEADERS**

Today, with the popular and democratic set-up, Harijans have their own leaders in all administrative bodies. Since Dharwar is part of the Hubli-Dharwar Municipal Corporation, the Harijans of Dharwar have had their reserved seats in this local self-governing body since its inception in 1963. Even before the formation of the Hubli-Dharwar Municipal Corporation, Dharwar had a separate Municipal Borough, on which there were also reserved seats for the Harijans. One Mr. Savadatti, who belonged to the Samagār caste, has served as President of the Municipal Borough of Dharwar. When I interviewed him at his residence, he told me that he was an active member of the Municipal Borough and never felt that he was segregated as a Harijan. In addition to him, there have been others who have worked as members of several local administrative bodies. It was noticed that all of them came from a well-to-do and educated family background. In a way, those Harijans who were already educated and modernised in their occupations and way of life, could become leaders.
Here we must make a clear distinction between the traditional and modern leaders. Traditional leaders were always some type of social or religious leaders, holding a hereditary post; whereas modern leaders are elected on the basis of their leadership abilities by universal franchise. The sphere of activities of the traditional leadership was restricted to their localities or castes; whereas the modern leadership is part of the larger social community. So, their election to local bodies and the legislatures have made the Harijans as well as their leaders feel that they are part of the larger society. Their segregation from the society was removed to a certain extent by their election to various administrative bodies.

The new leadership has not only linked the Harijans with other caste leaders; it has also made them aware of their privileges and roles. This situation has also brought different Harijan political leaders near each other. As a matter of fact, this opened channels for establishing ties with, and taking help from, Harijan leaders from different States. For example, a Primary School teacher belonging to a Harijan caste wrote a letter to a Central Minister who was also a Harijan, suggesting that he should change the name of their caste from 'Harijan' to 'Adi Jan', on the assumption that he, being
himself a Harijan, would take interest in the matter.

Owing to political changes, the Harijans have a greater voice in politics, but socially they are still backward. One thing that is noticed is that, the population of Harijans being quite large, they can very well influence or social leadership. But their social isolation and lower economic and occupational status have become great barriers for them to acquire social leadership in the larger society. As of now, their social leadership is still restricted to their own localities and castes. No Harijan is considered a dignified or recognised person (dodda manushya) by high caste people whereas the Harijans readily accept the importance of a high-caste man, however young and poor he may be. In social matters, therefore, Harijans are still traditional.

Though, in religious life certain rights and duties were traditionally assigned to Harijans, in social and religious matters of caste Hindus they were always treated as outsiders and inferior. On the other hand, the Harijans invite Lingayat and Brahmin priests to officiate at their socio-religious ceremonies. At the same time, they have developed their own priestly class, who could officiate at the absence of a high-caste priest. They
have a separate ritual set-up, temples and religious groups of their own. At the same time, they accept the Lingayat ritual set-up and go to the monasteries and accept the membership of a monastery. They are also devoted to Brahmin gods and goddesses and make offerings to them.

It is said that, in the past, the Harijans struggled to establish their own monasteries in Dharwar on the lines on which their community had established them elsewhere. They have their Harijan saints and monks. These saints were accepted by the Harijans since they had attained sainthood by imitating Lingayat and Brahmin saints here. Thus, leadership among the Harijans could be seen in the traditional as well as the modern form. There is no doubt that Harijans are keeping pace with the changing times in the political, social and religious aspects of leadership. The high castes imitate the great tradition of Hinduism, whereas the Harijans, who have little tradition, follow others by observing their ways.