Chapter I
INTRODUCTION
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Concentrated settlements of the Sidis are found mainly in the Western Ghats of the North Kanara district and also in some parts of Belgaum and Dharwad district of Karnataka State. The Sidis can be identified as a distinct group totally different in features from the rest of the people living in the area. They are people of African negro stock who settled in India from ancient times. Most of them live in the forests of the Ghats, their occupations are either agricultural labour or farming. Very few do private business or are employed in service.

The Sidis have come from different countries of East Africa at different periods from the 14th century to the 16th century. Most of them were brought as slaves and a few came as traders. The slave trade between India and Africa throws some light on the origin of Sidis and their cultural life.
Thus there are several terms to represent these Negroes. Commonly they are called Sidis. The other names are as follows: Siddie, Siddee, Siddy, Seydee, Suddee, Habsis, Moors, Bilas, Maltos, Kaphris and Negroes etc. These different terminologies are found in various documents of the British, Portuguese and Indian gazetteers.

Apart from their common ethnic stock and their economic conditions, we found that there are three religious groups viz. Hindu, Muslim, and Christian Sidis. Apart from different religious-cultural practices, all the Sidis show some similarity in observing of life-cycle rituals. In their political and social organisation, there are special features distinct from those of other people in the same region. The settlement of disputes among the Sidis and other family affairs are found. This pattern is very close to the segmentary type of organisation of a typical tribal people.

They are hardworking and are sought after for strenuous labour. They have no worry about
their future. Sidis in Karnataka are mostly found in Ankola, Haliyal, Kalaghatagi, Khanapur, Mundagod, Sirsi, Joida and Yellapur talukas. (Vide Map No.1).

The Hindu Sidis work mainly in the fields of Havik Brahmins who act as their priests during marriage ceremonies and some other life-cycle rituals. They are mostly agriculturists, agricultural labourers and porters or wood-cutters in the forest. The Sidis of Karnataka take both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. The pray animals give them nourishing non-vegetarian food. Jawar, rice and dhal all form the staple food of the Sidis. Mutton is generally taken by Muslim and Christian Sidis. Chicken, fish, deer and many other pray animals are eaten by all. However non-vegetarian dishes are reserved for festival celebrations and special occasions as festival food. For the daily diet of all Sidis is vegetarian.

The Hindu Sidis have the names common to the Hindu castes. The Muslim Sidis have the usual Islamic names. The Christian Sidis names are
of the biblical origin, like the names of the Portuguese. Sometimes the mixed type of names have been also found among them for eg. Fakira, Santan among the Christians. Bhimabi among Muslim Sidis and Fakira Sidi among Hindu Sidis may be mentioned as mixed names. There are numerous examples where the Sidis have married the local women of North Kanara district, including excommunicated Brahmin women.

It is said that king Mayura Varma of the Kadamba dynasty brought the Havic Brahmins to North Kanara from the town Ahichchatra in Andhra Desha during the 5th century A.D. for Hindu Sidis. The Havic Brahmins of North Kanara district officiate as their priests for the marriage ceremony and for some other life-cycle rituals. For Muslim Sidis the Mulas are the ritual priests during marriage and for some other rites. The Christian Sidis observe their rituals at home for certain feasts. Thus they depend upon the church administration for marriage. Sometimes they go to church to solemnize the marriage after the birth of a child.
Like the low castes of Hindus like kare-vokkaliga, Kudumbis, Halakki Vokkaligas, Areas, Kharvis and Mahar in the region, the Sidis have organised themselves into Tribal Panchayats called "Sidis Sabha" in their communities. They have got their own Patel or a headman of the locality and the Budivanta, the wise-man to advise people in the matters of quarrels, marriages and such other socio-religious areas.

One outstanding social phenomenon is their adherence to the norm of the nuclear family. The extended family and the joint family are rare among them. Whenever the brothers marry and there is a division of the family, they arrange the living quarters in the same house so that there is a kitchen for each new family. Because of the shortage of houses they may go for such composite houses.

As far as the structure of the house is concerned the factory-tiled houses are very few among them. Most of them live in country-tiled
houses and even thatched huts may still be found among them. This introduction reveals very interesting details about this Scheduled Tribe, the Sidis. We must study further their general background.

a) KARNATAKA STATE

The Karnataka State, a region inhabited predominantly by Kannada-speaking people, is situated in the west central area of peninsular India. The western districts of the State lie in the narrow elongated strip between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats with a strikingly exquisite and enchanting coastline about 400 km. long and hilly mountainous tracts of the Western Ghats and their magnificent ranges of great scenic beauty and evergreen forests. With its amazing variety of topographic features, unique drainage pattern, colourful wealth of wildlife, eventful history, rich cultural traditions and an unending vista of scenic excellence, Karnataka has definitely made unique contributions to the wealth of Indian culture and heritage. Its achievements in literature,
MAP OF KARNATAKA
Showing North Kanara District
the fine arts and in religious and spiritual realms are equally significant, Karnataka was the arena where mighty political changes were enacted with the rise and fall of strong empires which left behind striking movements. Karnataka had been the melting pot of achievement of various culture. Thus it helped towards the synthesis of the teachings of many religious reformers. The State has vast untapped resources in its soils, forests, minerals, water sources and man-power. Even from hoary antiquity it has been the homeland of the world famous sandalwood tree.

Origin of name:

The origin of the name "Karnataka" given to the area or region inhabited predominantly by Kannada speaking people is subject to many controversies. The word 'Karnataka', 'Karnada' and 'Kannada' seem to refer to a region as well as language.

Area and population:

Karnataka State covers an area of 1,92,204 sq.km. or occupies 5.35 percent of the total
geographical area of the country. The population of the state according to the 1981 census of India was 37,043,451. The state holds the most populated state in the nation. North Kanara District has the lowest population with barely 29 percent of the state's population in it. Most of Karnataka State lies between 450 and 900 metres above the mean sea level. The broad divisions based on the physical features of the State are the coastal region (which is normally subdivided into the coastal plain and the Western Ghats) and the Karnataka plateau area which is subdivided into two regions called traditionally Malnad the South-West plateau which has more rainfall and is thickly forested, and maidan the Eastern area of the plateau which is drier with less rainfall and vegetation. The Maidan is further subdivided into Northern and Southern maidan. The coastline has a length of about 400 km. and there it gradually extends to Konkan coast in the North and the Kerala coast in the South.

Through the ages men have added their
artistic creations to the wealth of natural beauty. There are Hindu temples thousands of years old decorated with carvings of amazing vitality; grandiose Muslim monuments; remains of lost civilizations. The grand places and formal gardens befitting a princely State, the splendour of such festivals as Dasara, and the relics of centuries of royal living Hindu or Muslim. Some of the best religious monuments in the whole of India are to be found here.

Parts of Karnataka are geologically the oldest formation in the world and people have been living there for a proven 10,000 years and undoubtedly, much longer. The state's history is intimately interwoven with that great epics of India. India's first great emperor, Chandragupta Maurya after embracing Jainism, retired to Sravanabelagola near Mysore renounced all worldly possessions including his empire. Many of the great names of Indian history like the Cholas and the Gangas ruled parts of Karnataka during the early centuries of this millenium. Saints and philosophers followed
one after the other in setting up their abode on this auspicious soil. The Hoysala dynasty was the first to control all of what is now modern Karnataka from 11th to 14th century. They were great builders and it is to them that we owe the magnificent temples of Somanathapura, Belur and Halebid. The Muslim horders came sweeping into Karnataka as elsewhere and the Hoysala capital of Halebid was sacked by Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq in 1327. Karnataka history goes back to the days of Ashoka III and of his minor rock edicts are to be found in the state. Later it was the cradle of three great dynasties, the Kadamba, the Hoysala and kings of Vijayanagar under the impetus provided by the Hoysala king in the 11th, 12th and 13th century. Architecture and sculpture developed greatly and achieved a high degree of excellence. The delicacy of carving and mastery of design are best exhibited in the temple.

Not only did British rule create a new middle class (always a prime conditions for revolution, be it peaceful or violent) but they gave
it a political movement. It is a fact that the Indian National Congress ultimately led the country to independence. Gandhi's programme was one of open non-co-operation with the Government in all spheres and of political action based on nonviolence. This was backed by a boycott of British goods.

Since Independence agricultural production in India has doubled. Per capita income has risen to Rs.636 per year. Community development programmes were designed to help the villagers. The Government offers financial aid and technical assistance. The essential elements in any rural programme are the panchayat, the co-operative, and school. The panchayat is the elected village council which supervises all the development programmes in the area.

After independence, the national Government announced its industrial policy. It proclaimed the right of the state to acquire any industry in the public interest. India started exporting cloth, jute, spices, silk and sandalwood. Thus
India soon ranked among the first six industrial nations of the world.

b) ORIGIN AND GENERAL BACKGROUND OF SIDIS:

Sidis are found in India along with the Western Coast in Goa, Diu, Maharastra and Gujarat. They are also found in Hyderabad and Bengal. But their main settlements are in North Kanara District of Karnataka and the Saurastra region of Gujarat. In Rajkot Division of Gujarat the Sidis were considered as a scheduled caste. In Hyderabad, they were employed in the army of the Nizam and other provinces of the region. They were found in very few numbers in Goa and Diu. In Maharastra, they are found in Ratnagiri and Savantwadi, Coastal Districts of South Maharastra. They are also found in the Janjira Island in the Kolaba District of Maharastra.

Out of the total population of 76,300 during 1881 (Cfr. Bombay Gazt. 1883 : 401) in the Janjira State, it was found that 13,912 were Muslims and of them 288 were Sidis.
The Sidis of the Janjira were related to the Nawab of Janjira State and thus they had inherited land grants and allowances. Most of them were landowners or State servants with few being poor (Cfr. Bombay Gazt. 1883 : Vol. XI : 401).

The Sidis were either brought to the Island of Janjira as slaves or they had come on their own as traders by sly and devious means during the 15th century. They gradually became politically powerful even after the British left India, the Sidis claimed some powers and clung to the coastal area like tortoises.

There is a legendary account of the migration of Sidis to India from Africa. The story of their coming to India is this:

In the year 1489 an African disguised as a merchant, obtained the permission of the chiefs of the island of Janjira on the West Coast of India to land 300 boxes supposed to contain
the valuable goods. But in reality every one of these boxes contained soldiers and by this ingenious trick the Africans took possession of Janjira island and its port which was earlier known as Dand Rajapuri (Cfr. Banaji: 1932: 418-433). Sidi mythology has developed from the mythology of the local people of the region. For the local people, the curly hair of the negroid Sidi is interpreted as having some episodal connection with Hindu myths. It is said that Rama, the hero of Ramayan, burnt the kingdom of the villain, Ravana, and at that time, these Sidis took part in the war in the side of Ravana and so their hair was burnt in the battle. So the progeny of those primeval began subsequently to have short and curly hair. This story has no historical or biological basis whatever but the mythological connection aims to bring the Sidi with the Hindus presence in India in line with Weltanschaung from ancient time. Sidis are also identified with Rakshas. The facial or characteristics of physique of the Sidis are not caucasian but dark and solid.
So, this might have given rise to this identification with Rakshasas of Hindu mythology who had also mighty in physical process and an ugly appearance.

The ruler of Bengal, Ruda-Ud-Din-Barbak (1459-1474), possessed thousands of slaves who were subsequently expelled by King Ala-Ud-Hussain (1493-1519) and they migrated to Gujarat and the Deccan. Then the Portugese in the 17th century used to import African slaves as domestic servants (Cfr. Cambridge History of India:Vol.III:1928:271).

NOMENCLATURE:

The African negroes in India go by several names. Commonly they are called Sidis. Different variations of this term are found in various documents and gazetteers of the British and the Portuguese Government. The name used in Siddie with these variants: Siddee, Siddy, Seydee, Suddee, Suddie, Moors, Habsis, Khapres, Maltoos and Negroes. The word 'Siddhi' is the corrupt form of Syed or Sayyad or Saiyad or Saidi or Sayyid. 'Saiyad'
is considered to be the designation of a descendant
of the Prophet. According to some authorities
it means 'priest' (Cfr. Russel and Hiralal : 409).
But this postulate is contested because a term
designating 'priest' would not have been used
for Abyssinians who were notorious for their lack

According to the Oxford Dictionary 'Siddi'
means lord or prince. Enthoven notes that 'Siddi'
means lord literally means a form of genteel address
commonly used in North Africa like 'Sahib' in
India. Specifically it is said to be an honorific
title given to the descendents of African natives
in the west of India. Some of them were distinguished
administrative and military officers of Mohammadan
to the Bombay Gazetteer the Sidis or African negroes
are also known as "Habsis" especially in Maharastra.
According to Banaji the Habsis are Abyssinians.
The term Habsis is derived from the Arabic El-
Habish, the people of west Africa (Cfr. Vol.XI:
1883:433). The island Janjira was also called
Habsharn i.e. Habshans or African's land (Cfr. Bombay Gazetteer: 1883: 19). Another name used for the Sidis mostly in Goa and Diu is Kaphris (Cfr. Vol. XI. 1883: 433 & Vol. XV.: 382). This may be a Portuguese term denoting the colour black and it rhymes with the word 'Africa'.

The Sidis are also known as Mulattoos. 'Mulatto' is a Portuguese term denoting the mixed racial progeny of a negro and non-negro.

In the Rajkot division of Gujarat they are called "Sidi Badshah" which indicates their carefree disposition. The Sidis were also known as "Bilas" which is the name of a disciple of prophet Mohammad Hazrat Bilal (Cfr. 'Sidis of Gujarat' 1881: 1). The term "Moor" is also used to refer them as the vague geography of ancient times and the term "Morocco" is used to designate the African Continent.

c) History of the Sidis in general:

The Sidis of India have come from different
countries of East Africa at different periods from the 14th century to the 19th century. The majority of them were brought as slaves, but a few came as traders.

The important factors of the slave trade between India and Africa throw some light on the origin of Sidis and their present conditions. The Mohammadan and the Hindu Law organised the institution of slavery from ancient times (Cfr. 1883: 1). The majority of slaves in India were natives of the African country. They were imported from the East Coast of Africa, the Persian Gulf and Madagascar. The number of imported slaves were greater than the Indian-born slaves in the Western Coastal areas (Cfr. 1883: 36). This trade of slaves from the East Coast of Africa is said to have started even before the Christian era.

The Abyssinian slaves were held in high esteem in Turkey, Arabia and India at the end of the 15th century. This was due to their intelligence, courage and docile nature. Hence, some
of them were employed as soldiers and sailors (Cfr. Vol.II : 1883 : 157).

The Arabs were masters of the Indian ocean from the 6th century. During this period, they were the chief promoters of the African slave trade in India. But the Arab ships continued to bring African slaves in the succeeding periods to India, both to the West Coast and Bengal, the seat of administration (Cfr. 1883 : 19). During the period from 1772 to 1843, according to Banaji to official documents of the Presidency of Bombay show that slaves were imported in Arab vessels into the native states of Kutch, Kattiawar, Porbandar, Sind and even to Bombay, Goa, Diu and Daman. From there, they were distributed all over the Bombay presidency (Cfr.1823 : 3). An article in Calcutta Journal stated that "150 eunuchs have been landed from the Arab ships this season to be sold as slaves in the capital of British India. The female natives were exchanged in barter for African slaves for the Calcutta market. Out of the 200 boys emusculated in India only ten survived in the cruel
The slaves sold in India were usually from Abyssinia as their country was not far from India (Cfr. 74).

The Asiatic journal of June 1831 records that a Mogal merchant supplied the king of Oudh three Abyssinian women, seven Abyssinian men and two native girls (Cfr. 1823 : 63). A certain Mohammed Been Sooleman brought to Karachi Abyssinian slaves and negroes shortly after this, another small boat entered the port with both negroes and Abyssinian slaves who were brought by Sidhians (Cfr. 1823 : 77).

The import of African slaves increases during the rise of Portuguese power (1530-1738) in the Konkan (Cfr. Vol. XI : 1883 : 433). The source of the slaves was East Coast of Africa, from Abyssinia in the North, down to Sofala in the South. The Portuguese brought to India a number of slaves
of both sexes. Another main source of slaves for the Portuguese was Mozambique. They converted them into Christians and made them their priests (Cfr.1916 : 433). Palakshappa quotes from the Lins Hosten "Travels" that from Mozambique they carry into India gold, ambergris, ebony, ivories and many slaves both men and women. They are the strongest Moors: in all the East countries.

The British also had tolerated slave trade in India till about the middle of the 18th century.

The Customs House Book at the port of Porabandar furnished further information through the entries of regular duties being levied on the import of slaves. They were imported chiefly from several other ports in Arabia. The chief of them being Mozambique, Malacca, Muscat, Bucca, Judda, Maculla, Sohal and others. A certain amount of money was paid to the captain of the ship who brought the slaves at his own risk. Thus slaves were improved for whom they found a ready market

The slave trade carried on by European natives in coastal India was only a fraction of that of the trade in West Indies and America, because in the west, they were required as labourers in plantations where as in India, they were necessary for domestic work.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, it was noted that during 1791 there were on the coast of Africa forty agencies devoted exclusively to African slave trade. The number of slaves exported from Africa around that time was about 74,000. The breakdown is: 38,000, by the British; 20,000, by the French; 4000, by the Dutch; 2000, by the Danes; and 10,000, by the Portuguese.

The Portuguese obtained the slaves through many ways viz-by war, by tribute or by trade. Usually Pombeinos (the slaving agents) went into the interior of the regions and purchased slaves.
from chieftains and brought them to the sea-port to hand them over to the Portuguese sea-captains who took them on their ship and sold them. The agents were either pure negroes or mulattos who went into the regions, laden with different merchandise-like clothes, couries and wine to purchase the slaves. These Pombeiros used to go to the interior for a year or two and then return to the port with thousands of slaves chained together (Boxer : 1952 : 228). Sometimes the Jaga Cannibals sold to the Portuguese those African captives whom they did not kill and eat or whom they could not preserve for future use (Cfr. Boxer : 1952 : 228). The slaves were made to walk hundreds of miles to the coast. If there were no ships to carry them to different countries then they were made to stay in a large shelter and work during the day. They were looked after with care by the Portuguese or by the agent during the waiting period or during the voyage. Before embarking on the ships the slaves were taken to a nearby church and baptized by the parish-priest in a batch of hundreds at a time. The various names
given to them were Peter, John, Francis and so on. The slaves' names were written on a piece of paper were handed over to each.

Salt was sprinkled with hyssop (Cfr. Boxer : 1952 : 232 to 321). After this, they were taken to the ships. Many of the slaves preferred to commit suicide by drowning rather than be taken to foreign countries. To prevent this they were kept below the deck even when the ship was in port. The slaves were classified into groups according to their age and physique as described in Peca De India (Cfr. Boxer : 1952). The ships carrying the slaves were usually small with a capacity of 600 slaves. On reaching the destination the Negroes who are alive were marketed like other merchandise (Cfr. Boxer : 1952 : 231-233).

The title of the letter from the Honorable Court of Directors gives a clear description of the manner in which the trade in slaves was conducted in the open market at Zanzibar where merchants from Cutch, Sind, Seine and other parts of India
flocked in great numbers to buy them. Early in the morning the slaves were brought to the market, but the actual exhibition of the slaves used to take place in the afternoon about 3 or 4 o'clock. The slaves were arranged in ascending order according to age and height. To exhibit them in the most advantageous way their skins were cleaned and burnished with oil; their faces were painted with white and red stripes, their wooly hair was plastered and filled with yellow powder; their hands and feet were ornamented with rings and plasters and round their waist a loin-cloth was wrapped, or just a plain coloured cloth. A minute physical examination of the slaves was indeed done thoroughly which was indeed in far greater detail than the inspection in any cattle market in Europe. There was testing of speech ability, hearing, snoring, grinding of teeth, the mouth, the teeth and all most all the parts of the body except the private parts. A slave was made to run to see if he has any defects in his limbs. Then the bargain was struck. At the close of
the day these wretched beings are stripped of their decorations and sent to the house of their respective purchasers. Women with infants at the breast and the old slaves are marshalled and driven about in the streets. The young slaves were sold at a higher price than their older ones. Women unencumbered by small children fetched a better price than those with children".

The slaves who were bought by Portuguese and British officials and the princely families of India were usually made to do domestic work and work as page boys. The native chiefs also had slaves to do odd jobs and to attend on them. They made the slaves do the filthiest and most strenuous work. In Goa, the slaves mainly worked as manual labourers. The slave carried or held aloft umbrella over his master whenever he went out. A team of slaves carried the palanquins of the Portuguese ladies. According to Shirodkar the female slaves played on instruments to entertain their masters or they wove cloth, stitched garments,

The condition of the slaves was miserable. They were captured in their native countries, emasculated, baptized and sent to foreign countries to work like beasts of burden. They had no freedom and no family and community life. Hence they clutched at freedom wildly at the earliest opportunity. They preferred to be drowned in the sea rather than being sold to foreign agents as slaves. Hence a number of rebell incidents occurred. The treaty were struck between the Government of Goa and the kings of the neighbouring states for the return of fugitive slaves or the master of a runaway slave had to be compensated with the price of the slave.

The slaves who escaped to the territory of the neighbouring king and got themselves converted into Muslims or Christians were released by that king because of the Portuguese. Later the British abolished the slave trade in their territories.
During the 18th century there were no strong sentiments against the slavery of African negroes. But on 25th Feb. 1869 slavery was abolished throughout the Portuguese Empire (Cfr. Banaji: 1933: 404). The British also made an agreement about the abolition of slavery in India. The Act of April 1843 completely put a stop to the slave trade in British territories. By the Penal Code of 1860 the trade and the possession of slaves in India was considered a criminal offence (Cfr. Banaji: 1933: 403 to 404).

There is no record of what has happened to the slaves who were freed. They must have sought shelter in the forest regions in the interior of the coastal strip to live their lives as best as they could, in freedom.

d) THE SIDIS IN INDIAN HISTORY:

The people from the Egypt and other parts of North Africa were already powerful in India and they left their progeny among the Indian popu-
lation. So, negroid blood had entered India from ancient times. According to Prof. L.R. Hegade the giraffe, an African animal, was carved in the sculpture of the Hoyasala rulers of Karnataka and in the sculpture of Vijayanagar Kingdom during 10th and 17th century respectively.

Sidi men like Malik Ambar (1101), Malik Yakub and Malik Kafur (1304) are well known in Indian history (Cfr. Banaji: 1932). It was Thujar Khan, a Gujarati Sidi, who slew Chenghiz Khan in 1568 A.D. It is noteworthy that Sultana Razia (1239 A.D.) lost her throne because of a Sidi with whom she fell in love.

The Sidis were the rulers in Janjira till 1820 A.D. Sidi Ismail a native of Cambug - was powerful in North Gujarat as minister of Salis of Radhampur. The Sidi were eunuch nobles of Delhi and Lucknow up to the 1857 Mutiny are well known in Indian history. At the time of Shah Jahan in the 17th century, there was an African in his army called as Yakut Khan. The Portuguese, the
British, the Dutch, the Italians, the French etc. were connected with North Kanara District. Later the British became the rulers of this district.

As already mentioned Sidi men in North Kanara District in Karnataka were also known for their bravery and leadership. In the kingdom of Kittur Channamma, there was a Habsi man called Ram Habsi (1924*) who was the bodyguard of the king and the queen. He fought bravely against the English on October 23rd 1824. He cut off the head of Thackeray, the collector of Dharwad, and danced in the battlefield. When the English soldiers defeated Kittur Channamma and captured her along with Ram Habsi, they put him to death. The Sidi men were soldiers

* Ram Habasis name is found in the folk songs of that place along with Channamma.
with Sangolli Rayanna. All were hanged to death in 1830. He was known for his enimity for the British. There was another Sidi man called Huen (1900 A.D.) who was killed by Hindus because of atrocities committed on Hindu women in Bailhongal of Belgaum District. His brother Rajan was also rebelled and so the Hindus of that place shot him dead. There was numerous instances of Sidis who were notorious but now they are not found in Belgaum District except Khanapur Taluka. Many Sidi women from North Kanara District were brought as wives or concubines by the merchants. Others who migrated for the purposes of trade or business in North Kanara District were absorbed in Indian population. Some Sidi men were notorious in North Kanara District. Stories about these rebels or sex-manics are told among the people.
e) ORIGIN OF THE NEGRO ELEMENT IN INDIA:

In the Bombay and Karnataka Gazetteer, 1893 and 1894, it is mentioned that there are castes known as Habbu Brahmins and Habbu Okkaligas, who worship god Mahadev and speak Kannada and Hindi mixed with the Konkani language. These Habbu Brahmins may have originally been Habsis, and in course of time, they came to be identified as Habbus. The Gouka Sabaru caste who are Muslims are said to be descendants of Habsis who had been employed in the Kingdom of Hyder Ali. They came to this area about 1803 A.D. They were butchers of cows and buffaloes. The untouchables purchase the flesh of these animals from them. There was another caste called Kakars who are black people from Afghanistan. Somehow the negro element had
entered with migrants from Afghanistan, Arabia, and Iran, they were called Moghls, Pathans, Kabuli Pathans, Navyats and Behuri Muslims (Cfr. Kadetotad: 1984).

According to the Bombay gazetteer the Sidis escaped from Goa from their masters and settled in India and Yellapur Talukas. They are described as having a black skin, curly hair, sloping forehead, and thick lips. The people known as Kaphres are Goan Catholic Christians. They speak Konkani and are described as Sidis in physical appearance.

The black Jews in India and on the Malabar coast may be of Hindu origin. The Falasha Jews in Abyssinia are also like the Jews of Cochin. There is an infusion of Negroid blood (Cfr. Ayer: 1981:429). There is a belief that the Jews of Abyssinia might have brought the Negroid element into India.

The ritual of circumcision has its origin
among the people who dwelt in the land of the Nile river in Africa which might have been taken by the Arabs and later it became the custom of the Muslims all over the world. It may be noted here that Muslim Sidis practice circumcision while others have discontinued the practice.

The Moors of India came here to trade from earliest times. The arrival of European nations, one after another, gave a death-blow to the Egyptian trade carried on by the Moors.

The Sidamo tribe in Africa practiced circumcision and grew a tuft of hair on the head. These practices in India continued among the Sidis.

f) PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE SIDIS:

The Sidis belong to the Negroid stock of East Africa. We can discern typical Negroid features in the majority of the Sidis.

The Sidis are well-built, tall and robust.
They are accustomed for hard and strenuous work in the clearing operations of the forests. They belong to the Negroid stock of East Africa. The Muslim Sidis generally are not so black and a few of them have thick wavy, and not wooly, hair on the head. The Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency had mentioned already in 1883, this difference between Hindu and Christian Sidis as due to the inter-racial marriages with local low-caste Hindus. The present study reveals on the same with the research of Roy Choudhary among the Sidis in North Kanara, and by personal observation.

They are generally on the taller side with a mean height of 165 cm. The Gujarat Sidis are also said to be above medium stature, the mean height recorded being 166 cm. 91% were black and brown in colour. In Gujarat also 95% of the Sidis in the sample had black and dark brown skins. But we also find various shades from black to light brown among the Sidis of Karnataka State.

After Roy Chaudhary's 1957 observation,
No.1. Christian Sidi husband and wife with their child waiting for a bus.
of physical characteristics. Regarding their hair he records that 56% had wooly hair, 39% frizzy, 3% pepper-corn, 1% wavy. The lips had a tendency towards thickness, with 50% having broad thick lips and only 5% had thin lips. Hindu, Muslim and Christian Sidis follow the semilateral descent. Therefore, the Sidi women inter-marry with Indians (Hindu, Muslim or Christian). They may produce children with the Sidi features these children with Sidi features will not be counted as Sidis despite their appearance. In the same way when women of Indian origin are taken into marriage in Sidi families, they may not get children with the features of the original Sidis. Therefore, the identification of Sidi families and population becomes a difficult task for enumerators. At the same time, the marriage bond is not very strong among the Siddis. Therefore, there are many difficulties for census workers in the Sidi settlements.

\textbf{g) THE SIDIS IN AFRICA:}

The Abyssinians of Africa were converted
to Christianity during the 2nd century A.D. (Cfr. Linton: 1955:396). The interaction between Abyssinia and Arabia was very close throughout the whole period. Abyssinia has played an important role in the politics of Arabia. In ancient times Abyssinia conquered almost the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. This close contact of Abyssinians with Arabians resulted in the migration of Abyssinians to India along with Arabians from the 8th century A.D. G.P. Murdock divides the Sidamo tribes of Ephiopia into seven major groups (1) Bake (2) Cibe (3) Cimire (4) Janjero (5) Kaja (6) Jaji and (7) Ometo. He mentions that Sidi were a tribe of a major group called Ometo. The tribe Janjero may be mentioned here as the origin of the name given to the island near Bombay (Cfr. Kadetotad: 1984: 55).

The Ethiopians speak the Swahili language and Sadama is a form of language in Ethiopia. Kafe and Habhura are the groups. The Kafa language may be classed with the Conga group of Sidamo languages. Among the Sidamos and particularly the Kafe and Manjo, the word for cotton is "Hutto"
it is the variety grown in this part of the country of India. Hutto is the Dravidian word for cotton and it may be noticed how this word entered the Sidamo region at the trading-centre of Bonga in South Ethiopia. There is a settlement of Muslim Sidis called Gudrundur near Iravatti of North Kanara District. The Dravidian word Gudru, (mountain), must have entered Ethiopia at the same trading centre in Bonga. Many of their English names are pronounced like Portuguese in India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Portuguese</th>
<th>In English</th>
<th>In Sidi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paulu</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Paulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrel</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Gyabrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>Rosary</td>
<td>Rose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly Muslims in Sidamo and in India have names of Arabic origin like Ahmad, Jafar etc. The Hindu Sidis have Hindu names like Rama, Ganesh, Laxmi and Sita etc.

The Sidis of India have come from different countries of East Africa at different periods.
from the 14th to the 19th country. These negroes go by several names. Commonly they are called as Sidis. There are variations of this term found in various documents of the British and the Portuguese Governments and in Gazetteers: viz. Siddie, Siddee, Siddy, Seydee, Suddee, and Suddie.

The Sidis in Africa not only came to India but also moved to the Western and Northern parts of Africa. The Sidamos are found in the African regions like Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, Numba hills, Tunisia, Congo basin (Cfr. Murdock: 1954). This westword movement of Sidis in Africa happened due to the spread of Islamic invaders who carried the converted Muslim Sidis towards the West and North of Africa. It may be said here that this was also the reason that Islamic invaders of India brought the Muslim Sidis to India along with them as their slaves workmen, warriors and officials. This is the correct explanation to account for the reason why Sidis came to India. This shows that they were in the habit of moving from one place to another.
It is very essential to know the details about some historically important places in Karnataka in order to understand the Sidis and their movements.

h) IMPORTANT AREAS OF SIDIS SETTLEMENT:

1) ANJADIVA:

This island near Karwar is variously interpreted as derived from Adya dweepa: Ajja Dweep; Anche Dweepa: Anjani Dweepa; etc. This island has been noted by the Egyptian historian Talme in his book in 150 A.D. Periplus of the Erythrean sea also mentions the name of the island in 242 A.D. Therefore, it is concluded that the people from the west visited India through this island even before the Christian era. In 1342 A.D. Ibn Batuta of Africa visited this island. It is said that he met a yogi there who performed many miracles.

2) ANKOLA:

It is recorded that the king of Swadi used to live here. He built a temple of 'Rudrashwara'
here where his concubine could worship. In 1675 Shivaji raided this town. Later Hyder Ali captured it in 1763. It is said that at that time, there were 7000 Christians in this place. Tipu Sultan captured these people and carried them off.

3) BHATKAL :

The Navayat Muslims live in this place even today. In 1321 A.D. an Arabian king was ruling this place. Later this was taken by the Vijayanagar Kingdom. The rulers of Ikkeri also ruled this place. Later, it was captured by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.

4) HONAVAR :

The place has been mentioned in Periplus of the Erythrean Sea (242 A.D.) as Navar. In 1342 Ibn Batuta writes that there was a settlement of Muslims here. In 1503 the soldiers of Vasco Da Gama burnt Honavar. Then the Portuguese built a factory here. It was in the realm of the Bijapur kings.
First queen was ruling Bhatkal then a king of Bhatkal ruled Honavar. Later the king of Ikkeri captured Honavar. Finally it was taken by Hyder Ali.

5) KARWAR:

The Karwar district came into British hands in the year 1799. When the district was joined to Bombay Presidency, Karwar was made the headquarters of the district by combining seven villages around the seaside place. It is said that this is a very good natural sea-port. In 1752 it was captured by the Portuguese.

6) KUMTA:

This place is ten miles north of Honavar. Arabian sea-faring vessels used to call here. There was a Jain ruler in Kumta. In 1530 the Portuguese ruled over this town. In 1738 there was a church administered by Portuguese here. Later the area was taken over by the kings of Bidnur. Then Tipu Sultan raided this town.
7) SADASHIVGAD:

This village was in the Kingdom of Swadi. Later it was taken over by the Portuguese. Later cavalry of Hyder Ali captured it.

8) SAMBRANI:

The king of Swadi was staying here for some time. There is a tomb of Sidi Rehman here. He is said to have built a tank here. It is said that Sidi Rehman was related to the Muslim Kings of Bijapur.

9) SWADI:

There are three monasteries here, one belonging to Vaishnava Brahmins, another belonging to Havic Brahmins and a third ruined monastery belonging to Lingayats. The Kingdom of Swadi is older than the Vijayanagar. The descendents of Arasappa Naik of this place (1590 A.D.) were Lingayats. They ruled the district till 1762. In 1763 Hyder Ali captured it. King Sadashiva of Swadi
fled to Goa and settled there in a place called Bandewadi.

10) TADA:

This place is six miles to the north from Kumta. It is a very small port, but it seems to be ancient one, and there are many memorials connected with the Sidis and other pirates who died in the local encounters.

These places mentioned above have played an important role in the cultural history of the Sidis and hence they give us clues to the life of the Sidis in this district. It may be noted here that Sidis are concentrated in the villages on the Ghats of North Kanara District. The talukas like Haliyal, Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur are regarded as the Ghat areas of this district. West of the Ghats is the Coastal strip and to the east are the plateau uplands extending to the Bail-Nadu.
Risley Herbart (1915) in his book 'People of India' mentions that the Sidis were also found in South Kanara District. However, the number of them there may be negligible.

i) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The Sidis of Karnataka State have an interesting history because they were brought to India by the Portuguese and other foreigners as Negro slaves from Africa from the 14th to the 16th century. Today one finds that Sidis are divided into three endogamous groups in India i.e. Hindu, Muslim and Christian Sidis.

The present study aims to bring together as much information as possible from endogamous groups of Sidis with a view to see how far these groups vary from one another in their life, living and languages of Karnataka. The study of Sidis will make us fully aware of the reality of the Sidi population in Karnataka. With this purpose in mind a detailed survey was undertaken to cover
all the Sidi families in Karnataka. A true and comprehensive picture of their way of life: socio-economic conditions, accommodation, religious and family life, kinship, literacy, pattern of migration, household goods, health and languages all this comes within the scope of this research work. The survey has achieved its objective by covering all the Sidi families. The information gained the various surveys supplemented by interviews and by personal observation.

Further an analytical study and a close observation of Sidi settlements would help us to understand how far they differ from other advanced groups in their area. The seasonal and periodical migration of Sidis and non-sidis would help us to understand the action and interaction and the social changes in the settlements. Indeed, this kind of study is quite illuminating or interesting.

This kind of tribal research would enable the Government agencies for community development
and block development who are engaged in work in tribal area to understand and plan for the welfare of this section of the population.

j) METHOD OF STUDY:

For the purpose of the study on the Sidis of Karnataka, I selected eight talukas i.e. Ankola, Haliyal, Kalghatgi, Khanapur, Mundgod, Sirsi, Joida and Yellapur during the year 1990. The total population of the Sidis is about 7943. To get first-hand information and experience I have stayed in different villages to study the life of Sidis. I also consulted various documents in the British, Portuguese, Indian Gazetteers and official records at different taluka headquarters and in University Main Library as the main sources of reference work.

To study the various Sidi communities of Karnataka in situ, the questionnaire-method was used. The questionnaires, containing about 60 questions, were asked, to collect data of those
three groups. Only heads of households were inter-
viewed. The sample was random based on convenience, occupation, location and castes of respondents. Some intensive interviews were also conducted in order to gather more and detailed material for the study. The respondents were interviewed in their homes individually. At the time of the harvest many of them were not available in the house. So they had to be conducted during their leisure hours. While collecting the data, I found no reason for suspicion about the information given to me.

To get extensive information about the Sidis I selected 124 families in Ankola, 555 families in Haliyal, 80 families in Kalghatgi, 14 families in Khanapur, 117 families in Mundgod, 22 families in Sirsi, 16 families in Joida and 478 families in Yellapur. I selected a quarter of the total number of villages for intensive study and I concentrated on them for detailed research. The historical evidence throw some light on the origin of special cultural traits, customs, social behaviour, etc.
No.2. Group of sidis in Yellapur taluka along with the researcher and the guide.
Therefore, this method of study is historical and empirical in many ways. No one has made such a study of the Sidis before as far as we know.

Census work is necessary to collect data with the aid of schedules. We have collected data by village census.

Geneologies were collected to find out the geneological tree of a family's history. Sidis knowledge about the lineage is very poor as their memory goes no further than three generations. However through geneology we could get useful material for our study.

Maps and plans are equally important for the research work. To study the geneological environment of that region, I relied on maps supplied by the village officials.