Chapter 3

PROFILE OF STUDY AREA AND TRIBES

The present study is conducted in north-west area of Maharashtra state in the geographical region of Satpuda range covering Tapi and Narmada river valley of Dhule and Nandurbar districts.

Figure No. 4: Maharashtra Showing Dhule District (Dark Portion)

Figure No. 5: Dhule District Showing Four Talukas
DHULE DISTRICT:

Dhule District is a part of Maharashtra state in central India. The city of Dhule is the administrative headquarter of the district. The Dhule district previously comprised of tracts of land predominantly inhabited by tribal population. The Dhule district was then bifurcated on 1st of July 1998 into two separate districts now known as Dhule and Nandurbar, the later comprising the tribal region. Agriculture remains the basic profession of the population in this district. Most parts of the district are not under irrigation and thus cultivation heavily depends on regular monsoon or rain water. Apart from wheat, bajra, jowar or jwari, onion the most favoured commercial crop is cotton. Majority of the population in the rural area speaks Ahirani language (a dialect of Marathi). However, Marathi is more widely spoken in the urban areas. Around 26.11% population of Dhule district resides in urban area. The Dhule district is a part of Maharashtra’s historical region of Khandesh. Although for administrative purpose it is now clubbed to Nasik Division.

It is spread on area of 8,063 square kilometer with population of 17,07,947 (2001). Major highways passes through district are NH-3, NH-6, NH-211.
History:

This district of Dhulia was previously known as West Khandesh district. The ancient name of this region was Rasika. It is bounded on the east by Berar (Ancient Vidarbha), on the north by the Nemad district (Ancient Anupa) and on the south by the Aurangabad (Ancient Mulaka) and Bhir (Ancient Asmaka) districts. Later the country came to be called as Seunadesa after king, Seunchandra of the Early Yadav dynasty, who ruled over it. Subsequently its name was changed to Khandesh to suit the title Khan given to the Faruqi kings by King Ahmad I of Gujarat.

In 1345, Devagiri was passed into the hands of Hasan Gangu, the founder of Bahamani dynasty. However, Khandesh formed Southern boundaries of the Tughluq Empire.

In 1370, Firoz Taghluq assigned the district of Thalner and Karavanda to Malik Raja Faruqui, the founder of ‘Faruqui’ dynasty. His family claimed the descent from Khaliph Umer Faruq. He established himself at Thalner. The Governor of Gujarat honoured Mali Raja with the title ‘Sipahasalr of Khandesh’. From the title of ‘Khan’ the region came to be known as ‘Khandesh’ the country of Khan.

On 6 January 1601 Khandesh came under Akbar regime. Khandesh was fancifully named by Akbar a Dandes after his son Daniyal. In 1634 Khandesh was made into a Suba.

On 3 June 1818 the Peshva surrendered himself before British and Khandesh came under British rule.

Geography:

Climate: The climate of this district is on the whole dry except during the south-west monsoon season. The year may be divided into four seasons. The cold season from December to February is followed by the
hot season from March to May. The south-west monsoon season which follows thereafter lasts till September, October and November constitute the post-monsoon season. The average annual rainfall in the district is 674.0 mm (26.53”). The rainfall is heavier in the hilly regions of the Western Ghats and the Satpuda ranges. The rainfall during the south-west monsoon constitutes about 88 percent of the annual rainfall, July being the rainiest month. Some rainfall is received mostly as thundershowers in the post-monsoon season.

From about the latter half of February, temperatures increase steadily till May which is the hottest part of the year with the mean daily maximum temperature at 40.7°C (105.3°F). Hot, dry winds blow during April and May and the heat is intense with the maximum temperatures going above 45°C (113.0°F) on some days. With the onset of the southwest monsoon by about the second week of June, there is an appreciable drop in day temperatures and the weather is pleasant in the south-west monsoon season. By about the beginning of October when the south-west monsoon withdraws, day temperatures begin to rise and a secondary maximum in day temperature is reached in October. From November, both day and night temperatures drop rapidly till January which is the coldest month with the mean daily maximum temperature at 30.3°C (86.50°F).

During the cold season, cold waves which sometimes affect the district in association with western disturbances which pass across north India the minimum temperature may drop down to about 8° to 9°C (46.4° to 48.2°F). Winds are generally light to moderate with some strengthening in force during the summer and monsoon seasons. During the southwest monsoon season, winds are mainly south-westerly to westerly. In the post-monsoon winds are light and variable in
directions in the mornings and north-easterly to easterly in the afternoon. In the winter and summer season’s winds are mostly from directions between south-west and north-west, with northerly or north-easterly winds blowing on some afternoons.

The district is further divided into two sub-divisions and four talukas for administrative purposes. Dhule and Sakari talukas are part of Dhule sub-division, While Shindkheda and Shirpur talukas are part of Shirpur sub-division.

There were earlier has five Vidhan Sabha constituencies in this district. These were Sakri (ST), Shirpur, Sindkheda, Kusumba and Dhule. Dhule was the only Lok Sabha constituency in this district. Shirpur Vidhan Sabha constituency was part of Nandurbar (ST) Lok Sabha constituency.

After 2002 delimitation, there is one Lok Sabha constituency in the district which is Dhule Lok Sabha comprising of six Maharashtra Assembly constituencies of Dhule Rural, Dhule City, Sindkheda from Dhule district, and Malegaon Outer, Malegaon City and Baglan (ST) from Nashik district.

There are five Maharashtra State Assembly seats namely Dhule Rural, Dhule City, Sindkheda, Sakri (ST) and Shirpur (ST); Sakri (ST) and Shirpur (ST) assembly seats from Dhule district are the part of Nandurbar Lok Sabha seat.
Figure No. 6: Maharashtra Showing Nandurbar District

(Dark Portion)

Figure No. 7: Nandurbar District Showing 6 Talukas
NANDURBAR DISTRICT:

Nandurbar is an administrative district in the northwest corner (Khandesh Region) of Maharashtra state in India. On 1st of July 1998 Dhule was bifurcated as two separate districts now known as Dhule and Nandurbar. The district headquarters are located at Nandurbar city. The district occupies an area of 5035 square kilometer and has a population of 1,311,709 of which 15.45% were urban (as of 2001). The sex ratio of the district is as high as 975 (u/s), but the literacy is lowest 46.63%.

Nandurbar district is bounded to the south and south-east by Dhule district, to the west and north is the state of Gujarat, to the north and north-east is the state of Madhya Pradesh. The northern boundary of the district is defined by the great Narmada River.

Current site for the construction and operation of the world’s largest wind farm having an output of 1000 MW is just 30 km away from Nandurbar city. This project is being undertaken by Suzlon Energy. Suzlon also has local manufacturing units at this site for making WTG tower and blades.

Divisions:

The district comprises 6 talukas. These talukas are Akkalkuwa, Akrani Mahal (Also called Dhadgaon), Taloda, Shahada, Nandurbar and Navapur.

There is one Lok Sabha constituency in the district which is Nandurbar (ST) reserved for ST. There are four Maharashtra Assembly seats namely Akkalkuwa (ST), Shahada (ST), Nandurbar (ST), Nawapur (ST).
Sakri (ST) and Shirpur (ST) assembly seats from Dhule district are also part of Nandurbar Lok Sabha seat. Nandurbar is primarily a tribal (Adiwasi) district.

**History:**

Before 1st of July 1998 Nandurbar was part of the larger Dhule district. Nandurbar, Dhule and Jalgaon districts formed what was known as the Khandesh district. Dhule was known as the west Khandesh whereas Jalgaon was known as the east Khandesh. So, much of history applicable to Khandesh and Dhule, is applicable to Nandurbar.

The ancient name of this region was Rasika. During Aryan’s penetration of the Deccan, Agastyā was the first Aryan who crossed Vindhya and resided on the bank of river Godavari. This territory became part of the Mauryan Empire during Chandragupta’s southern conquest of India. Pusyamitra, the founder of Sunga dynasty overthrew Maurya dynasty and thus ruled this region. Later on the Satavahanas ruled over this region.

By 1382, he became a completely independent ruler of Khandesh. At the time of his accession, Khandesh was a backward region populated by a few thousand Bhils and Kolis. The sole prosperous area in Khandesh was Asirgarh, populated by the rich cowherds, Ahirs. One of the first acts of Malik Raja was taking steps to develop the agriculture in his kingdom.

During his rule he was able to increase his area of control to such an extent that even the Gond Raja of Mandla was forced to pay tribute to him. Soon after his accession as an independent ruler, he attacked Gujarat and annexed Sultanpur and Nandurbar. Almost immediately, the governor of Gujarat Zafar Khan (Mzaffar Shah) retaliated and laid siege
to Thalner, Malik Raja and to return back all the territories annexed by him. He died on April 19 (April 28, according to Ferishta), 1399 and was buried in Thalner.

Thus, from the period 1382 A.D. to 1601 A.D. Khandesh was successfully ruled by the Faruqi dynasty. The last ruler of the Faruqi dynasty was Bahadur Shah. On December 10, 1600 Bahadur Shah surrendered to Akbar but the fort was still held by his general Yakut Khan. Aisrgarh fell to the Mughals only on January 17, 1601. Khandesh was annexed to the Mughal Empire. Prince Daniyal was appointed viceroy of the Subah. Bahadur Shah was taken prisoner and he died later in Agra in 1624 CE. Khandesh was fancifully named by Akbar as *Dandes* after his son Daniyal.

After the Mughal Empire’s decline, the Marathas took control of Khandesh and subsequently on 3rd June 1818 the Maratha Peshwa surrendered Khandesh to the British rule.

Nandurbar had its own share in the Indian struggle for independence. It was here that during the Quit India Movement of 1942 Shris Kumar, a mere boy of 15 years, lost his life by a gun shot. A small memorial has been erected in memory of Shirish Kumar in the square where he shed his blood.

**Demographics**

As of 2001 India census, Nandurbar District had a population of 1,309,135 being 50.62% male and 49.38% female. Nandurbar District has an average literacy rate of 46.63%, male literacy is 55.11%, and female literacy is 37.93%

**Languages/ Dialects:** Aahirani, Marathi, Hindi, Bhilori, Pawri, Gujjar.
Transport and Communication

- Total railway lines length – 90 km
- No. of villages connected by road
  - 12 Months : 671
  - Temporary : 262
- Total length of the roads : 4338 km
- Total length of National Highway : 44 km
- Total length of State Highway : 611 km
- Total length of Major District Roads : 948 km
- Total length of Other District Roads : 672 km
- Total length of Village Roads : 2063 km

Education

- Nandurbar District has 1354 primary schools with 4497 teachers teaching 1,59,502 students that comes to 36 students per teacher.
- Around 257 Secondary schools with 2765 teachers teaching 1,31,554 students and number of students per teacher comes to 48.
- Total colleges for higher studies including Medical and Engineering is 30 and more than 8580 students enroll each year.
- Nandurbar District also has 6 Government ITI (Industrial Training Institutes) and 2 private ITI having 1444 students total.
- 3 VJNT Pri. School (Mhasawad, Akrale & Nandrakhe) 2 High schools, 1 Jr. College.
- 1 SC Residential School Shahada

Industries

- Total registered factories : 346
- Total registered and running factories : 346
- Cooperative sugar factories : 3
- Total spinning mills : 2
• Total cooperative societies 1400
• Primary Agricultural Credit societies total : 159
• Members : 47448
• Cooperative Milk Societies: 392
• 1 JOSHABA Central co.op societies for SCP

Agriculture

• Main crops: Jawar, Wheat, Rice, Toor, Groundnuts, Chilly
• Annual Crops Sugar cane, Cotton
• Area under cultivation : 2,53,413 Ha
• Crop pattern Kharif (approx 800 villages), Rabi (approx 130 villages)
• Fruits: Mango, Sitaphal, Banana

Climate

The climate of Nandurbar District is generally hot and dry. As the rest of India Nandurbar district has three distinct seasons; summer, Monsoon / Rainy and the winter season.

Summer is from March to mid of June. Summer is usually hot and dry. During the month of May the summer is at its peak. Temperatures can be as high as 40° Celsius during the peak of summer. The monsoon set in during the mid or end of June. During this season the weather is usually humid and hot. The northern and western regions receive more rainfall than the rest of the region. The average rainfall is 767 mm through the district. Winter is from the month of November to February. Winters are mildly cold but dry.
### Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Mid June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monsoon</td>
<td>Mid June</td>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>February</td>
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### Religious Places:

- Dev Mogra (Dab) and Ashwashthama (Asli) were most devoted religious places among Tribal.
- Prakasha, one of the famous religious places also known as Dakshin Kashi, is in Shahada Tehsil. The temple of Prakasha is very old.
- One of the famous temples of God Shree Ganesha (Heramb) is at Jaynagar, 24 km away from Shahada. Hundreds of thousands of people visit this temple on the occasion of Mangli Chathurthi.
- Shri Datta temple is at Sarangkheda. Every year a big fair is organized on the eve of Datta Jayanti.
- Hingai is a small village between Shahada and Shirpur. People there conduct the “Mahavakya” & “Mahakavya” of the Mahavubhav panth.

### Other Notable Places in Nandurbar District:

- Toranmal is the second coolest hill station in Maharashtra State and is near Shahada (approx 40 km). It is the second highest place in Maharashtra. It has a natural lake called Yashwani Lake which is natural and full of flowering lotus. It is a good place for sight-seeing and picnic.
- Unapdev (25 km from Shahada) is a pleasant picnic point in Shahada tehsil. It has a permanent natural hot water source, and it flows throughout the year from a structure in the shape of a cow’s mouth.
**Rehabilitation and Resettlement:**

Rehabilitation and resettlement of Project Affected Families of Sardar Sarovar Project is done according to Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award guidelines and various government resolutions of Maharashtra government passed from time to time.

There are totally 33 villages getting affected by the project in Maharashtra all of which belongs to Nandurbar district. Nine villages are in Akkalkua taluka and 24 villages are in Akkarani taluka.

About 1519 hectares of private land, 6228 hectares of forest land and 1592 hectares of government land is going under water. Total number of affected families is 3221 out of which 1472 are landowners, 748 are landless and 1001 are major sons/daughters. As per the award, not only the landless and landholders are to be resettled; but also their major sons and daughters, counting them as separate families.

NWDT award allows PAFs (Project Affected Families) to opt either for Gujarat or Maharashtra for settlement. About 1000 PAFs out of 3221 have opted for Gujarat. Award also stipulates alternate agriculture land, residential plots, irrigation schemes and gaotihan facilities. For the 2221 PAFs who have opted for government Maharashtra for resettlement, of Maharashtra has made available 4200 hectares of forest land in Taloda and Akkalkua taluka of Nandurbar district. This area has been made into 5 new villages namely, Rozva Punarvasan, Narmada Nagar, Sardar Nagar, Reva Nagar and Devmogra Nagar. These villages have been declared as revenue villages and separate grampanchayats.
PROFILE OF TRIBE

BHIL:

The Tribe has derived its name (Bhil) from a Dravidian word for a bow, “Vill” or “Bhilee.” A weapon which until recently used to be constant companion of the Bhil and in the use of which they were particularly adept.

References to the Tribe constantly occur in the ancient Sanskrit literature. They are referred as ‘Nishads’ in the latter samhitas and Brahmanas. The word ‘Bhil’ was mentioned, for the first time in Gunedya’s ‘Katha sarit sagara’ in which an episode involving a Bhil chief who opposes the march of a king through the Vindhya mountain has been mentioned. About the origin of the Tribe, it has been stated in the Puranas, that Vena, son of Anga and a descendant of Manu rubbed his thigh and produced a dwarfish with a flat face, which looked like a charred piece of wood. There are several other stories narrating their origin mentioned in various monographs written by anthropologists.

Abul Fazal in his “Ain-i-Akbari” has praised the law abiding qualities of the Bhil of Khandesh. In the words of Mr. R.E. Enthoven, “The Bhil is frank, thriftless, timid, fond of spirits, and loathes steady work. At the same time, he is simple, faithful and honest, kindly and intelligent”. It is now admitted by everybody that the Bhil are the oldest inhabitants of Rajputana and Gujarat. Some of the Rajputs and Chiefs of Gujarat perform their ‘Raj Tilak’ with the blood drawn from the thumb of Bhil. Goha who was the ancestor of the Sisodia Rajput took the kingdom of Idar in Gujarat from a Bhil Chief by murdering him even though the latter had endeared him and accepted his sovereignty. The relations of the Bhil with non-tribal groups in the country were not always normal. With Rajputs they were fairly cordial. With the
Marathas they were not nearly so. The Bhil retaliated with force. The treatment of each other was marked by cruelty and brutality. The independent and courageous Bhil came in conflict with the rising Marathas, withdrew themselves in the hills and became outlaws and robbers. As and when Maratha domination weakened, the Bhil of the hills became self imposed Rajas and petty princes. Attempts at reclamation and pacification of the Bhil were made by the formation of, and their recruitment in the Khandesh Bhil Corps in the year 1825. In the year 1919, they were brought under the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act in six districts of East Khandesh, West Khandesh, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Poona and Sholapur. Gradually as the situation improved, the operation of the Act was relaxed, until in the year 1950, they were declared as Scheduled Tribes.

The Bhil are spread over a large area covered by the mountain ranges of the Vindhyas, the Sahyadris and the Satpuda. However, they do not form a single linguistic, cultural or racial group. This is probably due to the classification of all aboriginal people of Western India belonging to different Tribes, under the generic term ‘Bhil’ by the immigrant populations.

Location:

The Bhil of Maharashtra is broadly divided into – (i) Those living in the hills, (ii) those living in the plains, (iii) Pawara Bhil and (iv) Tadvi Bhils.

The Exogamous divisions of the Bhil of the plains in the districts of Ahmednagar, Nasik, Dhule and Jalgaon are: More, Suryawanshi, Khirsav, Barde, Jadhav, Pawar, Rathod, etc. of those living in the hills, the most common kul is Pawar. Other Kuls are Ahire, Barde, Chaudhari, etc. The exogamous clans of Pawaras who are so called because they
have migrated from Pavagad in Gujarat and who are concentrated in Akkarani Mahal, northern part of Shahada Taluka, Shirpur Taluka, and north-east part of Taloda Taluka are: Noyre, Janore, Thakre, etc. The Tadvi Bhils who are concentrated in Raver, Yawal, Jamner, Pachora and Chopda Talukas of Jalgaon district have two sub-divisions – Tadvi and Nirdhe. Tadvi Bhils are the descendents of the alliance formed between Muslim men and Bhil women.

**Dress:**

Bhils living in the hills have scarcely any clothing except a piece of loincloth and their women wear coarse tattered saris. The peasant Bhil wears a turban, a waistcloth and a coat and their women have ‘sadi’ with or without a bodice.

**Festivals and Ceremonies:**

The more civilized Bhils of the plains have complete birth, marriage and death ceremonies not differing much in detail from those practices by higher class Hindus.

**Marriage:**

A marriage proposal has to be made by the bridegroom’s side through some intermediary. If the father of the girl agrees, the girl is brought out and seated among the guests from the bridegroom’s side and a packet of sweet-meats is given to her. This done, they dine together and with the help of an astrologer a betrothal day is fixed. On the betrothal day, an astrologer, the boy, his father and other relations take a ‘side’, a bodice piece and a go to the girl’s house. A final announcement is made in the presence of ‘Panchas’. The presents are given to the girl. The girl’s father entertains the guests. There is no fixed interval between betrothal and marriage. It may be a month or years. When in a position
to meet marriage expenses, the boy’s father sends word to the girl’s father that he would shortly bring dowry or ‘dahej’ called ‘dejo’ in Bhil language. The dowry is settled in a meeting of all and placed in a plate. An unmarried girl of the bride’s family puts red powder on it and on the brows of the bride and the groom. The bride is asked to sit on the boy’s father’s lap and he gives the ‘dejo’ to her. After a feast, the evening is spent in dance and music. Next day, the boy’s father fixes the marriage day in consultation with a family priest. What follows is very much akin to what obtains among other Hindu castes.

Death:

When a Bhil is about to die, his relative distributes money among the poor in his name. After death his body is laid on a blanket or on a piece of cloth spread over a blanket. An earthen pot full of cold water is placed near the door of the house and the body is brought out, held in a sitting position outside the door and water is poured on it. Old clothes are taken off and a new piece of cloth is tied round loins. The body on bier and covered with a new sheet of white cloth. The face is left bare and the head is covered with a turban. ‘Gulal’ is sprinkled over some bread and cooked rice are tied together in a piece of cloth and laid on the bier.

The funeral party then goes to the nearest water place, bathes and accompanies the chief mourner to his house. In front of his house a fire is lit and into it some women’s hair is burnt and each of the mourners take some neem leaves, throws them on the fire and passing his open palms through the smoke rubs them over his face. The mourners are now pure and return to their homes. The burial rites for a woman are the same as those of a man. In the case of a child, its father carries the body
in his arms and buries it. A feast celebrates the seventh day. In rare case Bhil’s are also known to burn their dead bodies.

**Religion:**

Bhil’s from place to place, differ in their religious beliefs and practices. Some of the wildest tribes worship only the tiger god or ‘Vaghdev’. Most are devotees of the ‘Mata’ and ‘Mahadev’. Others worship local deities like Khandoba, Kanhoba, Bahiroba and Sitalamata, the small-pox goddess. Almost all worship the spirits of their ancestors and believe in sorcery, witchcraft and omens.

**The Family system and Family Life:**

The Adivasi family is ‘self-contained’ and ‘self satisfied’ women sons and daughters in the family are free to live their own lives. Old persons in the family are given proper respect and also treated most respectfully. Though the old people cannot do hard work their orders are obeyed. All the brothers in the family have fantastic love for each other and the parents have an artificial or natural love for their kids.

**KONKANI:**

Kokani though often confounded with them, hold them separate from, and superior to Bhil. Living in the same part of the country as the Gavits, they rank below them, and unlike them, have no special dialect. They say that their ancestors originally came from the Konkan, and this, their name and their appearance, which very closely resembles that of the Konkan Thakurs, bear out. They are more settled than the Thakurs, and unlike them commonly use the plough. They do not often take service or leave their villages, and many of them, like the Gavits, are village headmen, patil. They bury their dead, and in their memory raise square single-stone pillars, sometimes as much as eight feet high. They have similar cultural patterns and practice like Bhil.
MAVCHI:

According to R. E. Enthoven (1920) the Gamits have synonyms like Gamta, Gavit, Mavchi and Padvi. Gamit means a villager. In Gujarat Mavchis are known as Gamits, Gamta and Gavits. In Gujarat, they are chiefly distributed in the hilly terrains and on the plains of Surat, Valsad, Dang and Bharuch district.

R. E. Enthoven (1920) is of the opinion that the Gamits / Mavchis migrated to Maharashtra and Gujarat from their original home in Goa. According to K. S. Singh (1998) the Gavits believe that their ancestors were warriors in Rana Pratap’s army and that they migrated to the present habitat in the course of war.

Clans

Some of the popular clans of Mavchi tribe are Mavchi, Gavit, Thingle, Mavali, Choudhari, Kuwar, Barish, Raut, Desai, Bhavre, Bilkude etc. Marriage within the clan is prohibited.

Physical Features

According to Karve & Dandekar (1951) the Mavchis are mostly short or below medium in stature and have broad faces with a flat nose and show mesocephalic features. According to Vyas (1958), they indicate a high incidence of gene A and presence of A2 allele in a very low value (1 percent). They also show a relatively higher proportion of gene N (46 percent) in the M. N. blood group system, than to other proto-Australoid groups of Central India.

Dress Pattern

The Mavchi men wear dhoti (Favya) and Shirt. Some men wear turban called pagdi, while others prefer white Nehru cap. The women wear sari called lugde and blouse. Half a piece of the sari cloth is used to cover their head and the body. Women folk are known to wear bright and colourful saris. The spinsters of Mavchi community wear blouse (dhovi)
and sari (lugdi). A girl who attains puberty starts wearing sari and blouse, which is a signal for eligible bachelors, that she is due for marriage.

**Ornaments**

Mavchi women like the Bhil and Pawra women are very fond of ornaments. Elderly women and widows wear white bead necklaces.

**Family Type**

Nuclear families are very common among the Mavchi, however few cases of joint families too are observed. Patriarchy, patrilineal and patrilocal residency by cultural rules are the family forms.

**Kinship Terminology**

The kinship terminology as observed among the Mavchis from an epic perspective as found in their Mavchi dialect is given below.

**Forms of Marriage**

Monogamy is common among the Mavchi, however one gets to rarely see few cases of polygamy. The Mavchi do not permit polyandry. Marriage by capture was prevalent among the Mavchi once, is slowly dying off as quite a few of them taken up Christianity. The elderly people in the tribe manage marriages.

A Mavchi boy chooses and decides the girl to whom he has to marry. He informs about his fiancé to his parents. The parents along with 10 to 15 elders from the boy’s village go to visit the girl’s family. They discuss in detail about the relationship. The bride’s consent is taken. The girl’s parents along with few elders offer “Mauha”, the traditional wine prepared from the flowers of Madhuca indica. The bride’s parents sometimes offer food to the groom’s party. After 8 to 10 days, the groom’s people revisit the bride’s village to pay the Bride price. Traditionally bride price (dej) was given in this kind.

This ritual is performed one day prior to the wedding. Both the party’s has exchange of turmeric and liquor. Pendols (Mandaps) are
erected separately in front of the houses of the bride and the groom. The exchange of liquor and turmeric symbolizes the bond between both the families.

Divorce is permitted and widow re-marriage is allowed. A decrease in the frequency of marriage by service, polygamy an increase in the amount of bride price, wearing of a necklace and applying vermilion mark as symbols of marriage for women are the social changes that have taken place recently. Residence after marriage is patriarchal though a few cases of matrilocal residence also exist.

**Delivery Ritual**

The first delivery takes place at the bride’s parent’s home. During the eight month of pregnancy, the bride is sent to her parent’s house for first delivery. The delivery takes place at home. The traditional Birth Attendant called, “Huvarki” or “Dai” performs the delivery. The parents give her some money, food grains, clothes and/or liquor for her services.

**Religion**

Animism is a typical feature of the Mavchi religion. Every Mavchi village has a “gram dev” village god situated on the northern side of the village. Some of the principal deities of the Mavchis are Monger (crocodile), Waghdev, Kakadeha and Mandar dev. According to K. S. Singh (1998), the main village deity is Daman Devi, which is worshipped during Dussehra. Some of them worship Hanuman as well. The Mandar (goval dev) and the village deity are worshipped on week before holi festival. The Christian Mavchis go to church and believe in Christ, at the same time continue with their traditional cultural rituals. These gods are offered liquor, eggs, rice, goat, chicken and coconut and worshipped. The blood of the goat/chicken is sprinkled on the idol of the village god.
Kamb – The Acenstral Memorial

The Mavchis bury their dead. An ancestral memorial of wood is erected on the tomb. This wooden pillar is called Khamb. Lately they have started making images of a man and or woman depending on the sex of the deceased.

According to K. S. Singh (1998) the Mavchi bury the dead along with the personal belonging of the deceased.

A dead pregnant woman’s foetus is removed and buried separately. Memorial stones, known as “Khatra” are erected in the memory of the brave and old persons.

Burial Practice

Whenever there is death in Mavchis, every home donates Rs. 5 to support the greaved family. This money is used for the expenses of the burial service. The dead person is laid on a wooden cot. There is a person in the Mavchi village called shravaniya who is responsible for conducting the burial service. The dead body is carried on shoulders, till the village boundary. At the village boundary the body is lowered down for a while and the women return home. Women are not allowed to visit the burial ground. Shravanya walks in front of the body holding an axe, upside down. While walking him drops rice grain on the ground. After reaching the burial ground, the body is lowered in the burial pit.

Traditional Political System

A council of village elders manages village / hamlet level affairs. This organization works on certain laws. Disputes over land, divorce, separation quarrels etc. are solved by the council of village elders. Key personal such as Punjari (Priest), medical practitioners, village head etc. play significant role in maintaining the integrity of the traditional political system.
**Festivals**

The main festival of Mavchi is Wadhdev (Tiger god). It is observed in the month of the August every year. This festival is observed to please Tigers who used to destroy human being as well as animals. The branch of the Teakwood is placed in the middle of the land considering it as Tiger God. Buffalo or goat is offered to this god and the community takes part in community food cooked near the river. Along with this other Hindu festivals are also celebrated.

Holi festival lasts for about twenty days. During Holi, Gamit dance in-groups with their traditional musical instrument like Doharu, Dhol, Tur, Kundi etc. In addition, there are other festivals associated with sowing and harvesting of crops, wherein goddess Kansari is worshipped. The Nandario dev festival marks the beginning of rainy season. Some of these festivals are to be dying out. This is especially the case with Holi and Diwali in South Gujarat.

**PAWARA:**

The Pawara are found at Akrani sub-division and parts of Taloda and Shahada. They are said to be Rajputs, who were driven by the Udepur chiefs from their homes near the hill fort of Palagad. They come from the Mathvad state north of the Narbada and are often called Mathvadis. They are called Pawara Bhils, Pawara Naiks, and Pawara Kolis. The Pawaras are usually short and slightly built. Their features, flatter than those of the ordinary Hindu, show intelligence and good nature. They have low round foreheads, wide nostrils, and thick lips, and were their hair long and moustaches though they pluck out the beard. The women are shout and buxom, and when young, very comely, fair, and with expressive features. Their language is irregular, governed by few rules. Full of rolling vowels and diphthongs it is more like Gujarati than Marathi.
Instead of letting his cattle live in his house, the Pawara has usually two thatched huts of interlaced bamboos, one for his family the other for his cattle. Generally scattered about in small groups, each forming a small farming establishment, the houses are enclosed by a courtyard, on one side of which are arranged a number of circular store houses for grain, and a shed for the earthen water vessels which are always set on a raised bamboo frame.

The religion is simple. They neither have priests, temples nor idols. They worship a supreme creator, bhagvan, and strive to please him with sacrifices and offerings. In the forest near each village is a sacred tree, round which, before harvest, the villagers meet and prostrate themselves before the rising sun, offer corn, and sacrifice goats and fowls.

The marriage ceremony is never performed till both the birde and bridegrooms are of age and the young men are generally allowed to choose for themselves.

Widow marriage is allowed, but if the widow has no son, her father-in-law does not, as a rule, give her the clothes provided for her by her deceased husband. Her children, if young, accompany her; but return to their father’s house on coming of age, unless, which generally happens, the second husband keeps them with himself. Polygamy is common, and those who can afford it have three or four wives.

Pawaras have three chief holidays, Indraja, Divali, and shimga or Holi. Indraja, apparently in honour of Indra, is held only when the year is good or when a vow has to be discharged. It is celebrated on any Sunday, Wednesday, or other lucky day between Dasra and Divali. Its chief ceremony consists in planting a Kadamb, Nauclea parvifolia, branch in front of a landlord’s, jamindar’s, house, so as to remain one cubit underground and a man’s height above. The branch is rubbed with vermilion and worship begins at midnight. A goat and hen are killed an offered, and dancing is kept up till daybreak. Next morning at about ten
they pull up the branch and throw it into some neighbouring river or pond. On returning they drink and dance, and eat the goat and hen offered overnight.

*Davali*, sometimes called *Nagdivali*, is a yearly festival celebrated in the month of *Posh* (January) on different dates in different villages, so as to last on the whole for nearly a month. Four or five stones are brought from neighbouring river and placed outside the village, but within the limits of the village lands. They are then painted red, and next day at noon worship begins. Liquor is sprinkled on the gound and freely drunk, and goats and hens are killed. Dancing begins at nightfall. Two men, holding two lighted bamboo sticks, go from house to house followed by the villagers. Every housewife comes out with a lighted lamp in her hand, waves it before them, spots their foreheads with lamp oil, and gives them drink. After dancing for a few minutes, the procession passes to another house and there go through the same routine. Next day they feed their bullocks with Indian millet, rice, *banti*, and *paral*, and give them drink.

*Shimga or Holi* takes place, as elsewhere, on the fifteenth of the bright half of *Phalgun* (March). Immense crowds meet at Dhadgaon, the central village and police head-quarters of the Akrani territory, a pit is dug, and a wooden rod thrust into it and lighted about ten or eleven at night. Every one present brings a piece of bread, some rice, and a cock. Portions of these are thrown into the fire, and the rest is handed round among friends. Then, with the help of an occasional draught, they dance till dawn.

In each village the oldest man is looked up to as the chief of the community and invested with a sort of patriarchal authority. Simple fornication between and unmarried couple is punished by a small fine, and adultery by paying the injured husband his marriage expenses.
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