SIN AMONG THE WADDARS
CHAPTER - III

SIN AMONG THE WADDAR

One of the prime objectives of this study is to know the perception of 'Sin and Crime' among the Waddars of Hubli-Dharwad. Researcher by the virtue of his detailed and extensive field work among these people could able to extract information as much as possible on the concepts of Sin and Crime.

According to Summner and Keller (1909:1136) "vice is individual and is the original and real thing, religion makes it a sin, law a crime. Among primitive people law is so largely a mater of religious taboo, sin and crime are pretty much the same thing". It is clear from the above statement that, man violates laws and breaking of these rules of moral conduct prescribed by religion makes him a sinner. On the other hand, breaking the rules of the society or of a particular body of a society becomes a
crime. The breach of social codes and religious custom amounts to both Sin and Crime. The waddars of Hubli-Dharwad opines that any kind of activity or action that can be done against the dictates of the society amounts to both a Sin and a Crime. Those who break the religious customs and moral laws is going to be affected badly by the wrath of gods and goddesses. Only through expiatory acts such as worship or propitiations, one can overcome the consequences of sin. In some societies sacrifices and offerings are also made for this purpose. In this study of the sin and crime among the Waddars, their moral laws, religious taboos and the social codes of their own and the laws of the society in which they are living are examined. In this connection Harcourt Butler writes that Indians are essentially religious and religions is still the alpha and omega of
the Indian life (O'Malley, 1935:45). This statement is applicable in case of Waddars in India because they are the people who are highly religious minded. However, religion and the moral law has a binding on the Waddar. Therefore, the religious element and the moral law plays an important role in the life of the Waddars as an agent of social control and has to be taken into account. In discussing the law and ethics, Sethna (1964:8) says, "If the positive law has declared an act as unlawful, it cannot be done without an infringement of law, through that act may not be sinful. On the other hand, if an act may not be sinful, then if there be on legal prohibition to the doing of that act it may done lawfully". For example, telling a lie is not commission of crime unless if amounts to fraud or perjury. But in the law of ethic telling a lie is a sinful thing, the exception being innocent
and harmless lie, as it benefits a sick or a nervous person. From this it is clear that ethics looks not to what is said but to the purpose and the motive behind it. Therefore there is a difference between sin and crime. The positive law should try and confirm as much as practical with the laws of ethics. It means that the positive law should sub serve ethics.

As Sethna puts it (ibid: 64), "what may be a sin a wrongful act morally-is not a crime if not so regarded by the law... And on the other hand what may be regarded by the law as a crime may not be morally a wrong". From this statement it is clear that an act which is morally wrong, is a sin. Further, he distinguishes between crime and sin by saying (ibid: 129) that "A crime may be defined as an act or omission or sinful or non-sinful, which a society or a state has
thought fit to punish under its laws for the time being in force”.

The origin of sin is as old as man himself. Since the primitive man was an wanderer and went on moving till he got the favourable settlement to settle in a particular place. He not only developed his faith in nature but also considered light, dark, sun, moon, lightening etc are the man supernatural powers. He thought that unless worshiped he will not be protected by them. Any violation of worship was considered as a sinful activity.

**CONCEPT OF SIN**

According to the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (1934:560, Vol.IX) the concept of sin in Hindu religions has been explained as follows: Varuna is the God of righteousness to whom the sinner addresses, as he has spies who know the thoughts of man. The sin which has been committed or
inherited from his father by doing such bad acts. The more primitive conception of sin as a pollution which can be Hindus. Expiatory acts can be observed in order to remove the guilt. Hindus thought that by gradual process of moral development, by punishment inflicted for an act or a word displeasing to Gods could be removed or overcome. They also held that the negligence in observing ceremonial duties, and the real that the negligence in observing ceremonial duties, and the real offence against moral laws could bring sins to individuals. For them even the crimes were scaled as exhibited in Vedic hymns. In this way the concept of sin developed among the Hindus and the priest could remove the sin by expiatory and magical rituals. Therefore, in the name of removing sins and in making the individuals reach Heaven, the priest went on exploiting the people. Because the people
were afraid of punishments in Hell and even in Rebirth. The people were told that the sinner would get the lower Rebirth. Therefore, people were afraid of committing sins and their consequence on this earth and in the other world.

In Hindu Mythology the Hell is referred to as Yamaloka. It is said that the attendant of Yama, known as Chitragnuta, follows men like their shadow, records all sins and merits and produces it before the God's court. Man goes to Hell only if the balance shows that the said of sin is greater than the side of merit in this world. The record of sin and merit is examined by the God of death, Yama.

Waddars, concept of sin is different. They opine that man should not commit mistakes and harms others. If he does so it becomes a Sin and the gods and goddess of their community will not leave him without
giving punishment which he will undergo daily in his activities. Waddars who are highly superstitious, religious minds and take things lightly. But with regard to religious code of conduct that even if they fail to punish a guilty, god will take care of him later that to after his death. This is because of the fact that the Waddars have the faith in rebirth. Waddars recognizes certain things such as infidelity to god, murder, theft, adultery, unnatural crimes, neglect of their ancestral worship and irregular pooja dead ancestral telling lies, magic gambling, drunkenness, forgery, usury, disobedience to parents, false witness, defrauding orphans, are mere sinful acts. Punishments for these misdeeds are given in Hell punishments are also mentioned. The greater the sin, the heavier varies according to the degree of sinful acts.
The Waddars, the subject of this study, are influenced by the different concept of sin, Hell and Heaven. The Hindu mythology, the sacred scriptures such as Ramayana and Mahabharatha, Bhagavadgita and the teachings of Lord Siddrameshwara had great impact on them with regard to sinful activities. Since the Waddars from a part of Hindu tradition are also impressed and influenced by other religious ideologies. For example they opined Islam and Christianity have also laid sufficient impact on its people about their code of conduct and to lead a meaningful life. For example Christianity propagates that only 'Jesus Christ' protects the world. Any disobedience to him is a sinful activity. Since the Waddars have maintained their contact with the people of different religions naturally they too make out the significant differences of what is a Sin and how one should be free from a sinful life.
Waddars are basically illiterate and as a result they have faith in the existence of supernatural powers. They opine that every society irrespective of its nature size and composition have certain code of conduct for its people. By the virtue of this people will be able distinguish what is good and bad, what to do and what not do. They also expressed the feeling that people should discharge such things which should be liked by their Divine beings. In the beginning even the Waddars tried to convert themselves into Christianity but owing to the persuasion by their leader and well-wishers they ignored it. The study of these concepts is taken up as the Waddars came from Orissa.

Therefore, it is quite possible that the Waddars in Karnataka are influenced by the concept of sin morality of two religions such as Hindu and Christianity. Since the Waddars are living in India, naturally
impressed by the cultural heritage and according they have moulded their life and living conditions. Therefore, the Waddars who have their ethical code which supervises their day to day activities without hearting their sentiments about religious customs and codes.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1970:69, Vol.9) sin means an act which is regarded as transgression of the divine law and an offence against God; a deliberate violation (especially willful and deliberate) of some religious or moral principle. This depicts the relation between social and religious actions of man in society. Because anthropologically there is a relationship between man and man; on the other hand, man always keeps relationship with supernatural powers like god and goddesses. This is quite clearly depicted
even in Christianity in the form of "Ten commandments".

Where the first four principles say something about the relationship which exists between man and man and the other six principles say something of morality that is the relationship which exists between man and God. From the above discussion it is found that the breach of social norms becomes crime and breach of morality becomes sin. But the Waddars who are under study are not in a position to make out this sharp difference.

**BELIEF AND PRACTICES OF SIN**

The different types of sins recognized by Waddars in Dharwad district are dealt with in the light of the above concept and discussion. Though Waddars are deceitful, they consider deceit as a sinful act. It is quite clear that the circumstance have forced them to do the deceitful acts.
They opined that in the present day scenario unless they cheat deceive others it is highly impossible for them to lead a normal life cheating and deceiving have become the rule of the day. But they also accept that deceiving others is as same as committing a Sin, that are helpless and they are forced to do this inorder to live comfortably specially in construction works. Since they are the specialists in construction work without mixing in proportionate the cement and sand. Where as their women folk whenever they are free they go to nearby forest area to collect firewood. After collecting them they prepare the bundles. While preparing them also they cheat the customer by keeping some good looking and solid firewood but in between they keep most useless fire wood. They also prepare the bundle in such a way that it should be looked good and big one. So that they can
cheat the people easily and make sufficient money out of it. At present Waddars have developed the art of deceiving public easily. For example when they buy some thing or sell some thing or even rendering some services to other they do it with a cheating motto. While selling or purchasing and hiring any services from other, in all such interactions, they deceive others. Another example, if a Waddar hires an autorikshaw for rupees ten to go to his residential area, after reaching there, he will pay only rupees two, thereby creating a scene. If the matter is not settled his fellow men and women come to his rescue and see that autorikshwala should leave the place without demanding money.

Deceiving within the group by an individual waddar is not tolerated. If anyone tries to deceive any member of their own community, they will take the person to
task. And it is seen that no deceit will be made among any member of the community. If anybody tries to deceive any one among them, it is held to be a sin and the person concerned is punished and he is told that he will punished by God also. For example, if anybody has taken loan from a member of the community and is deceiving the lender, then the matter is taken to their community leaders and the behaviour is condemned on the part of the borrower. They will see to it that the borrower repays the loan.

It was held by Waddars that killing of a cow is a sin. As per the Hindu mythology cow has been considered as a sacred animal. Hence killing of this animal is not only a Sin but also badly heated by all in the society. It is believed that every creature on this earth is created by God and it has its own right to live in this world. Therefore killing any creature whatsoever it
may be is harmful and sinful act. Above all killing any animal or a human being is a sinful act. According to them the act of killing takes away the right of living. Killing of any creature in this world is considered as the Sin of the greater order. When they bring a sheep, a goat, a chicken for the purpose of eating, they are cut in the name of God. It is not always possible for these Waddars to invite a 'Mulla' or a Waddar priest to cut the animals for eating. Therefore, in order to avoid sins, they cut the animal themselves in the name of the God. The Waddars believe that killing of some particular animals for the purpose of eating in the name of God is not sinful. Anyway it does not amount to demerit. Though the Waddars have the practice of offering blood to deities by way of killing animals, they have selected only a few animals for eating purposes. Like any other Waddar,
eating of beef is tabooed, whereas wild pig is not a tabooed one. It seems Waddars have been influenced by the concept of non-violence (Ahimsa) towards animals while they abstain from killing them.

Deliberate abortions are considered as sin. If there is any natural abortion then it is considered as the act of God. If any woman becomes pregnant before marriage, they will see to it that the person who is response for this should marry her, and do not go for abortion. If the person is a Non-Waddar she will be given a total excommunication. At the same time, it should be remembered that no Waddar woman should indulge in premarital sexual relations.

Teasing and blaming others is also considered as a Sin. The status of woman is not only very high among the Waddars but placed them in a superior position. Though the Waddars have the custom of polygny yet
they see to it that it will go in the way of their respect and fame. It is also true that polygyny among Waddars was a recognized institution. Hence Waddars need more and more helping hands in their business. But owing to the problems that has cropped up among the women folk now the Waddars are containing themselves to a single wife only. But here and there some Waddars do have two, three wives, but they are kept in separate house in order to avoid tensions in the family. Waddar women rarely mixes with their men folk but at the same time pre-marital chastity and extra-marital chastity are valued. Prostitution and adultery among Waddars is not only forbidden but a sinful act. Extra-marital relations is also not entertained by the Waddar's code of ethics. Though they are illiterate, superstitious and religious minded they give too much scantity to premarital sexual, extra marital
and adulterous relations. This is how they have maintained the purity of relations. Any violation of their, definitely leads committing of Sin as well as an offence. Therefore, it is seen that no woman is teased for any of these purpose. Ill-treating women and children or abusing the women and children is with a filthy language strongly condemned. If their men folk suffer, they do not worry much but if their women folk are suffering, they come to their rescue at any cost. This is the prime tradition of respecting the women folk. That is way Hindu tradition recognizes women as mere angles (Prabhu: 1954)

Therefore the morality of the Waddars is built up on this background and they do not tolerate any kind of teasing, blaming and abusing the women. At the same time their women are also ready to help their men folk in any quarrel coming from other
communities. For this purpose if anybody is hurting the feeling of others, it is considered as a sin. Naidu (1907:67) says that "The women are fond of throwing their children on the ground and threatening to stamp the life out of them, if they are molested". This shows their love for chastity and morality. According to my key informants among the waddars staring looking at women with eye of lust is also a sin. From this statement it becomes clear that even thinking in bad way is considered as sinful act. According to Hindu Mythology the God of Death has spies who keeps a watch over the person who think bad about others. Therefore, it is obvious that the Waddars have been influenced in this concept of sin from Hindu ideology.

Whenever any woman or girl is brought by a Waddar from other community, the persons concerned were searched out, they were
forced to marry and then the couples were taken into their fold. However, such cases are very few among them.

Fighting and quarrelling within the community and also fighting with a person outside the community are a sin. Waddars condemn the blood feuds. Quite contrary to this there are occasions when blood feuds have occurred among them. They try to normalize the situation whenever such occasion arises.

Thieving others' property is considered as sin. They are sometimes, subject to thieving because they live in tents. They hold that thieving others' property is bad and immoral, but at the same time they themselves are notorious for their petty thefts. In olden days they were always engaged in thieving, looting, cheating and deceiving others. So they were known as criminal tribe until the tribe was
considered a Scheduled Castes (Kennedy: 1985:167). In the history of this tribe, they were also known for their criminality since ancient times. Due to their interaction with other groups, they have come to know that thieving is bad and sinful.

They know that one should do good deeds whenever it is possible and earn merit because bad deeds are considered as sinful. A few, who derive happiness by troubling, insulting, blaming and teasing others, are considered as sinners. Violating the established norms of the established society means disturbing the established social structure. This is learnt by the adults through experience, because formal education is very low and less among the Waddars. Youngsters are taught how to behave with elders, parents and relatives. Only through informal education, the children
are uncultured. However, the mischievous behaviour and rudeness among the children of Waddars is noticed. This is because they do not mingle with others, other than their own community. The children in the past were taught not only cheating, pick pocketing and thieving. In this regard the ethical behaviour of the Waddars in the past was very low. Though they are told about Hell, Heaven, sin and punishment, very few are cautious about these concepts because Waddars are not that much intelligent. Morality outside the community is one of hostility. They deliberately neglect that. For the smooth functioning of the society certain moral behaviour, regulations, ethical considerations and manners are essential. Whatever social organization finds among them is not rationally understood but it is followed only as a law of custom. They are much worried about their
daily earnings and they fill their stomachs with rich food. They try to imitate the high standard of living in their daily life. They purchase expensive costumes, luxurious goods like transistors, tape-recorders, etc. The food grains purchased by them are of high standard, but they do not know whether they are able to maintain such a high standard of living by containing themselves to the profession of construction and earth work. This kind of conflict among Waddars makes them frustrated and drives them to commit immoral and sinful acts like thieving, pickpocketing and deceiving others. They have no idea of meritorious actions.

The Karma theory of Hindus has influenced and impressed them. Therefore, they do believe in the rebirth. However, they strongly believe that after death the soul goes either to Hell or Heaven because soul has no death. Therefore the senior
waddar informants told me that a person during his life time should do good deeds. By doing so he can straightaway go to Heaven or else he goes to hell and faces lot of punishment there by the king of the death 'YAMA'. That is way they opined that one should a Dharmic life. Because Dharma alone follows him even after death. That is why an sacred scriptures say that Dharmo Rakshati Rakshataha. He who protects Dharma, Dharma inturn protects him. Leaving the dead body like a log of wood, people departs, but only Dharma follows him. This is their strongest belief in the other world.

Man has always thought about the next world after his death. Going to Hell or Heaven depends on the deeds committed and meritorious acts done by him in this world. A religion of one kind or the other is always observed by man whether it is primitive or advanced. The super-natural
element, which plays as an unseen force behind the actions of all human beings, is taken into account. The ideas about other world, Hell and Heaven have been in existence in all cultures. No doubt, these ideas varies from culture to culture.

As it has been already stated the Waddars have accepted Hinduism and leading their life accordingly. Similarly they are also influenced by other religion such as Christianity with regard to the code of conduct. Every religion prescribes certain do's and dont’s to its followers. It is upto the followers to select what is to be done and what not. Waddars also impressed by Muslims to a certain extent because a 'True Muslim' is not supposed to tell lie. This has impressed them very much.

According to Hindus, there are 21 worlds. Among these seven are upper worlds, seven are netherworlds. The upper worlds are
supposed to be the heavens, the nether worlds are supposed to be the abodes of demons and serpents. Beneath these seven worlds, there are seven hells. These hells are created for different types of sinners. The heavens are supposed to be the places of beautiful gardens with moonlight and nectar to drink where a person who has acquired merit in this world is sent to enjoy them.

Waddars think about the other world, i.e. Hell and Heaven. They also believe that those who do not attain either hell or heaven after their death will wander on this earth as mere (Ghost). Some of them believe in the performances of magical rituals to ward off the evil spirits. However, Waddars are not very much worried about the other worlds like Hell and Heaven. On the other hand, they are worried about the luxurious life on this earth. However, they opine that one who does bad deeds enters Hell and one
who does good deeds goes to Heaven. The Hells and Heavens, according to them, are situated one above the other in the upper world.

Waddars believe that the sins can be overcome by expiatory acts. For this purpose they believe that by offering food for sadhus and saints can wash off their sins. But in practice they do this very occasionally. They also think that by giving gifts to others the sins can be overcome. This idea is due to the influence cultural heritage of Hinduism. Giving gifts (Dana) is a meritorious act. No doubt in Hinduism also giving alms is mentioned as a religious and meritorious or expiatory act. Therefore, it is quite possible that they have taken this idea after being impressed by Hindu way of life. Another way of expiation of sin is that the sinner has to give compensation and this is observed by them. They say that "If
you do any harm to others naturally you will be harmed." So one is advised not to harm others.

To the Waddars sin is an act which is regarded as transgression of the divine law and an offence against God. Violation of this divine law deliberately brings sin, because it is a breach of some religious or moral principle.

In civil and social ethics, sin is usually categorized as violation of human rights protected by law and is more specifically termed as crime or misdemeanor. Moralists and religionists unite in contending that psychological sin is no less heinous than sin which is more overt in nature. During and since the 19th century numerous religious ideologies have come into prominence accordingly discountenancing sin and all its manifestations do not adhere to the doctrinal concept of sin. By many, sin
is the name given to moral evil when considered from the religious point of view. In ancient Greece, sin was looked upon as a failure on the part of man to achieve his true self-expression and to preserve his due relation with the rest of the universe. Therefore, the sin was attributed mainly to ignorance. Christianity, while not denying this aspect, sees the sin as a deliberate violation of the will of God. It attributes sin to man’s pride, self-centeredness and disobedience.

The Waddars believe in their supreme God "Siddarameshwara" and respect the other Gods and adhere to the teachings of other godly persons. In their opinion, the sinner is punished by God if not in this world surely in the next world. For sins, one has to suffer in the Hell and for merits one has to enjoy in the Heaven. Therefore, each and every Waddar is afraid of the consequences
of his/her bad deeds in this world. They opined that human beings can rise to any height if they do good deeds which is totally free from Sin and Sinful acts.