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T. R. Singh



THE MADIGA : A STUDY IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CHANGE



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A STUDY IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE & CHANGE

by

T. R. SINGH

M. A., Ph. D.

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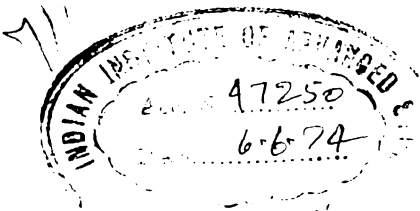
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, U. P. was established in 1945 with the object of studying and publishing material relating to the peoples and cultures of the state and or the country. In pursuance of this objective, Society has been publishing a series of monograph dealing with the cultures of the peoples of India, to demonstrate the variety of the culture of each community and at the same time to show the influence on it of Indian culture. Each monograph is written by a trained social anthropologist who is closely familiar with the ways of the people he writes about. With this exception, each Monograph has its own way, its own theoretical orientation and particular interest.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is the second book in our current Monograph series. It is about a scheduled caste of Andhra Pradesh. The Madiga were studied by the author about eight years ago. This study cast in the structural frame constituted his Ph. D. thesis and has gone into this book. The author is a trained and competent social anthropologist and his statements about the Madiga are authoritative and also full of sympathy for this downtrodden caste.

**K. S. Mathur**





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## PREFACE

This book is a modified version of my Ph.D. thesis entitled "The Madigas of Telangana : A study in Social Structure and Change", which was accepted by the University of Saugar, M.P. in the Department of Anthropology in 1961.

The present book forms part of a larger and more comprehensive study of the Madiga on which I have been engaged for the last ten years. Three years of actual field work have gone into the study. Field research in Western Uttar Pradesh and North Mahakoshal, which interrupted earlier completion of this work, has provided me with certain insights into the problems of social structure and change in castes of comparable social, economic and ritual status.

My aim in this book is strictly limited. It is to present a clear outline of the social structure of the Madiga, a scheduled caste of Andhra Pradesh, and to analyze in a newly developing frame of reference the trends of change in the community. In the interest of clarity I have avoided over-documentation. Against the background of recently published studies on Telangana, I hope the present book will contribute to our understanding of a single caste in the multi-caste setting of village India.

The field-work for this study was done in fifteen Telangana villages. Largely the methods of participant observation were used, but a great deal of supporting data were gathered by the genealogical method. A sociological census of all the fifteen villages was conducted, and schedules were employed for collecting economic data. The language of communication in the field was Telugu throughout.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to :

Professor S. C. Dube for my field-training and guidance ;

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Sarvashree B. Ramalingeshwar Rao of Toopran, S. Chandeshwar Rao and Chaudhri Baboyya of Osmanganj, V. Rama Rao of Secundrabad, Girdhar Singh of Medak Town, and many Harijan and non-Harijan friends for their help in the field, and to A. M. Reddy, Km.G. Subbaratnam and K.P. Dhurandhar for their assistance in organizing the data ;

PREFACE

Dr. K. S. Mathur, Head, Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University, without whose encouragement this work would not have been published ; and

My father who financed a major part of my field work.

T. R. SINGH

Lucknow.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

In the Hindu social system a large number of castes are outside the four-fold hierarchical *varna* division of the society. These 'exterior' castes comprise a number of untouchable castes whose physical contact is regarded as ritually polluting by the clean 'interior' castes and who are, by and large, economically the poorest section of the country's population. The untouchables themselves are divided into many distinct castes, have a complex hierarchical organization, and some of them even practise untouchability in relation to the other untouchable castes. The Madiga of Telangana, the Telugu-speaking districts of the former Hyderabad State now incorporated in the state of Andhra Pradesh, occupy the lowest status among the untouchables of this region.

The Madiga are a caste of leather workers, village menials, drum-beaters and agricultural labourers. Death and everything directly or indirectly associated with death is defiling in the scheme of things governed by the Hindu concepts of ritual purity and pollution. *Madigamen*, handling dead cattle and working in leather, have a low ritual status. Like the other castes working in leather in the other parts of Hindu India, the Madiga are also untouchables, and are placed at the lower end of the caste scale. They correspond in status to the Chamar and Mochi distributed all over India; to Chamarang, Chamarva, Chanvar and Jatia of the Punjab; to Chandor, Durkariya, Meghwal, Raigar, Banubhi, Bola, and Mowanpuriya of Rajputana; to Satrangar, Dabli, Woji, Chaur, Mang, Masalkalpa, Rangari, Dher, Katai, Dhapgar of Bombay; to Dher and Mochi of Gujerat; and to Chakkiliyan of Tamil country (Census of India 1931, XXIII, I, 154).

In Telangana a number of terms are generically used for the untouchables. They are variously known as Panchama, Achhut, Asprushyulu, Dalit-jati, Adi-Hindu, Pedda-Intiwaru, Muttaraniwaru, Harijan and Past-Akhvam. In South India the term Panchama is used generally for untouchable castes. Achhut, Asprushyulu and Muttaraniwaru imply persons whose touch causes pollution, and directly refer to the 'untouchable' status of the castes. The terms with the prefix *adi* have come into vogue

more recently and mean original inhabitants. Pedda-Intiwaru means 'those who dwell in big-houses'. The word Harijan, meaning the children of God, was popularised by Mahatma Gandhi as a new appellation for the untouchables. The Urdu term Past-Akhwan, which means 'the oppressed', was coined by the Muslim rulers of the former State of Hyderabad to distinguish between the untouchables and clean caste Hindus.

The Madiga are known by several other names, such as Gosangi, Gosangi-bantu, Jambuvan, Jambava, Adi-Jambava, Matanga, Arundhatia, Ettiwaru and Tegawaru. Some of these names suggest their mythological connexion with Jambavan—a figure in the epic of Ramayan. Terms like Ettiwaru and Tegawaru refer only to their occupational status. The former is derived from *etti*, or free forced labour, which the Madiga had to perform under orders of government officials; while the latter refers to *tega*, a form of patron-client relationship, which they frequently entered into with land-owning agriculturists in the village.

In the Census Report of 1887 the Madiga were grouped under Dher—a term used for all the leather-working castes, and these formed one of the two major groups of the untouchables. The term 'Untouchables' was in use for many years though it was regarded as a degrading appellation by the untouchables themselves. This was replaced by the name 'Depressed Classes'. However, this name also was found objectionable by the people. In 1931, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar submitted a memorandum to the Second Round Table Conference which said, "We would like to point out that the existing nomenclature of Depressed Classes is objected to by members of the Depressed Classes who have given thought to it and also by outsiders who take interest in them. It is degrading and contemptuous". (Santhanam : 1949, 5). "In response to this representation, the name was changed to Scheduled Castes by the British Government while Mahatma Gandhi has preferred to call them Harijans, meaning 'The Children of God'..." (Santhanam : 1949, 5).

Referring to the classification of castes of this level, the 1931 Census Report said, "In the last Census the castes under the category of untouchables were under the category of 'Depressed Classes' in the Caste Classification and 'Civilized Animists' under Religion. Their present designation is 'Adi-Hindu'. Adi-Hindus are grouped into three main classes :

1. Dher
2. Madiga,
3. Minor Classes :
  - (1) Dher, (2) Mala, (3) Mahar, (4) Chambar, (5) Dhor, (6) Mochi, (7) Mang, (8) Madiga, (9) Dasari, (10) Dom-mara, (11) Garodi, (12) Budbudk, (13) Mehtar, (14) Anamuk, (15) Begara, (16) Dokkalwar. (17) Ellammawar, (18) Katipamula, (19) Malahannai, (20) Mala Jangam, (21) Manne, (22) Mashti, (23) Mala Mashti, (24) Mala Sanyasi, (25) Mathura, (26) Mondiwari, (27) Naikapu, (28) Pachchbotla, (29) Padampari, (30) Pamula, (31) Samgari, (32) Sore, (33) Sindhi, (34) Sare, (35) Sunna, (36) Atar, (37) Bagalu, (38) Balasantanam, (39) Bantu, (40) Bathini, (41) Bindli, (42), Chintla, (43) Gangani.”

(Census of India, 1931, Vol. XIII, Part I, p. 248)

For the Telangana region this classification could not be regarded as satisfactory. It is not clear as to how the castes in these groups were lumped together. The first group curiously includes Dher, Mala and Mahar. In Telangana the term Dher is used for untouchables in general. It is also used particularly for the Madiga who are traditionally expected to offer forced labour to the government officials. The Mala and Mahar are agricultural labourers and village menials. They are untouchables, but they are ranked higher than the Madiga. To them the Madiga are untouchables.

The second group consists of castes working in leather. The Madiga skin dead cattle, cure the hide, and also make shoes. The Mochi and Chambar are cobblers who only make or repair shoes. The Dhor are a caste of Marathi-speaking tanners. They buy raw hide, generally from Muslim butchers and also occasionally from Madiga and cure it. The Mang are a caste of musicians and drummers.

The lumping together of castes in group three appears still more confusing. Some of the small satellite castes of the Madiga such as the Baidla (musicians and priests), Sindu (minstrels and prostitutes), Dakkali (beggars), Mashtu (acrobats and beggars), who should have been grouped with the Madiga have been placed with other unrelated castes. Some of the castes, such as Dasari, Dom-mara, Pachchbotla, in this group are definitely not regarded as untouchable in Telangana.

To the above list of forty-three castes were gradually added

many more castes so that the total number now adds up to ninety-seven. Defects in the above classification were soon realised and these castes were reclassified into two groups: Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. The Madiga are one of the Scheduled Castes.

The name Madiga has been interpreted in a number of ways. Some earlier writers like Thurston and Sirajul Hasan believe that the name Madiga is derived from *mahadige* (the great man who has come down) or to *maha digi ra* (great man, come down). The legend of Jambavant, which connects the origin of Madiga to these words, is very common in Telangana. Once the gods were in difficulty. Only Jambavant, the mythological ancestor of the Madiga, could help them. They summoned him with the following words: *Tata, maha digi ra*—Great Grandfather, come down. Jambavant acceded to their request. From then on he was also known as *Mahadige*—the great man who came down. His descendants were called *maha digewaru*; which later corrupted into *Madiga*.

Another explanation connects the caste name to the group's practice of accepting carrion as an item of food. When cattle died, the ancestors of the Madiga claimed them with the assertion *madi goddu*, this is mine. Thus they came to be called *madi goddu*. This name was corrupted into *madigodu* and eventually into *Madiga*.

According to a well established custom the dead cattle in Telangana villages can be claimed by the Madiga subject to certain rights of the owner.

Still another popular legend of Telangana related by many Madiga, also incidently explains the origin of their name. According to this legend, Siva had a Divine Cow called Kamadhenu. His wife Parvati milked this cow, and feasted the gods with the milk and milk-products. This milk had the quality of nectar, and was meant only for the gods. To look after this cow and to take her out to graze in the forest, Parvati appointed a boy named Chennayya. One day Chennayya had an irresistible temptation to taste the milk, which had so far been denied to all mortals. At first Parvati refused. Repeated requests of the boy, however moved her. She asked him to go to the cow and request her for some milk. The moment the boy did this the cow fell down on the ground and died. When Parvati and Siva heard of the death of the Sacred



Cow, they summoned all the gods to help them to cut it and feast on its flesh. According to the custom prevailing in those days they could not cut it on the very spot it had died ; they had to move it at least a few paces. The gods tried but failed to move the carcass. Then they advised Siva to seek the assistance of Jambavant, who was seniormost among the gods and was born six months before the creation of the Earth. Reaching the spot where Jambavant was performing penance, Siva ordered the Mala boy to call the Old Man. Obeying Siva, the boy said to Jambavant, "*Tata maha digi ra*—Grandfather, come down". The old man came down. He lifted the carcass with his left hand, and carried it to a convenient spot where the gods could cut and skin it. When they had done this the gods requested Jambavant to put the flesh into two heaps so that after they had cooked and eaten one heap, they could bring the cow back to life with the help of their powerful chants. However, Jambavant put all the pieces in one pot and lighted a fire under it. While stirring, a piece of flesh fell down on the ground. Chennayya—the boy, picked it up cleaned it to remove sand and dust, and put it again in the pot. Siva and the other gods were very angry with Jambavant as he had not divided the meat into two parts and kept apart one half for bringing the cow back to life. They were also annoyed with Chennayya for having picked up a piece from the dust and put it back in the pot. They cursed both Jambavant and Chennayya ; in *Kaliyogam* (The fourth and final Age in the cyclic order of time) they were to have a degraded life and were to earn their livelihood by handling dead cattle and by sweeping village lanes. Jambavant and Chennayya ate the flesh and drank liquor. Jambavant took the cow-hide and gave it to his sons ; they became leather workers. Chennayya's descendants took to cleaning village lanes. Jambavant's descendants are the Madiga, and Chennayya's descendants are the Mala. These castes still follow the occupations which their ancestors got as a curse from the gods.

A different version of this legend was given by Madigamen of Toopran, a village thirty miles from Hyderabad city. According to them Jambavant was the king of Jambudweepam. He was the owner of a Divine Cow, the like of which no other king of the day was privileged to own. This divine cow had the unique powers of granting any wish of the owner if he prayed to her. A neighbouring king was visiting Jambavant. To extend to his royal

guest hospitality worthy of one great king to another, Jambavant prayed to the Divine Cow to anticipate and fulfil the wishes of the visitor. To the astonishment of the guest, the very instant there came forth almost everything he could desire. The king was very much impressed by the powers of the Divine Cow. He requested Jambavant to give away the cow to him, but the latter, after consulting his sons, declined. The king felt insulted, and ordered his men to capture the cow. The king's men attacked Jambavant's palace, and in the battle that ensued the king was defeated. After some time the defeated king once again attacked Jambavant's palace, but this time the Divine Cow cursed him, and he was burnt to ashes. The king's son was enraged and was determined to take revenge on Jambavant. Dressed as a poor man, he entered the palace in Jambavant's absence and induced the latter's son to kill the cow so that he could feast on her flesh. On knowing this, Jambavant took the offenders to the court of Siva for judgement. Fearing the wrath of Siva the two offenders did not enter the court; they stood outside by the two sides of the doorway. Siva cursed them to become *Chandal* or untouchable. The one who stood on the right hand side of the doorway became the ancestor of the Mala caste, while the one who was on the left became the ancestor of the Madiga.

A slightly different version of the legend of the Divine Cow is given in Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Thurston: 1909, IV, 315). In this version also the central theme is that of killing the Divine Cow. Thurston writes: "At a remote period, Jambava Rishi, a sage, was questioned by Isvara (Siva) why the former was habitually late at the Divine Court. The rishi replied that he had personally to attend to the wants of children every day, which consequently made his attendance late; where upon Isvara, pitying the children, gave the rishi a cow (Kamadhenu), which instantaneously supplied their every want. Once upon a time, while Jambava was at Isvara's Court, another rishi named Sankya, visited Jambava's hermitage, where he was hospitably entertained by his son Yugamuni." (Thurston: 1909, IV, 316).

To summarize Thurston's version, the extremely delicious cream which formed a part of the meal tempted Sankya to taste the cow's flesh. He tried to induce Yugamuni to kill the divine animal, but the latter refused. Sankya killed the cow himself and prevailed upon Yugamuni to partake of the flesh. On his return from

Isvara's court Jambava found the inmates of his hermitage eating the flesh of the sacred cow. He took both Sankya and Yugamuni to Isvara for judgement. Instead of entering the court, the two offenders remained outside, Sankya Rishi standing on the right side and Yugamuni on the left of the doorway. Isvara cursed them to become Chandals or outcastes. Sankya's descendants came to be known as Holeyā and Yugamuni's as Madiga. Since Sankya stood on the right side of the doorway at Isvara's court, Holeyā are the right hand caste whereas Madiga are known as the left hand caste by virtue of their ancestor standing on the left side of Isvara's court. (Thurston: 1909, IV, 316).

Some writers like Thurston, Sirajul Hassan and others have tried to trace the origin of the term Madiga from Mahang of Maharashtra who correspond to the Madiga of Hyderabad in many respects. According to these writers the Madiga take their name from their tribal goddess Matangi. In some places they are called Matangi Makkalu, meaning the offspring of Matangi. Thurston says: "The origin of the supremacy of the Matangi is obscure, and shrouded in legends. According to one of them, the head of Renuka, the wife of sage Bhrigu, who was beheaded by her lord's orders, fell in a Madiga house, and grew into a Madiga woman. According to another legend, a certain king prayed to be blessed with a daughter, and in answer the gods sent him a golden parrot, which soon after perched on an ant-hill, and disappeared into it. The disappointed father got the ant-hill excavated, and was rewarded for his pains by finding his daughter rise, a maid of divine beauty, and she come to be worshipped as the Matangi. It is interesting to note that the Matangas were an ancient line of kings 'some-where in the south', and the Madigas call themselves Matangi Makkalu or children of Matangi or Durga, who is their goddess." (Thurston : 1909, IV, 297).

These legends have been considerably modified by educated Madiga leaders to enhance the respectability of their mythical ancestors. As early as 1928, Guruswamy, one time president of the Godavari Adi-Andhra Matanga Conference said ; "We of the leather working caste are a numerous and important community all over the country. It is a common tradition among us that we are descended from Jambavan, a well-known general in the army of Sugriva, specially noted for his wisdom, hence we are called Jambuvans ... Our country, India, . . . , is known as 'Jambudweepam',

or the 'Island of Jambu' and as its early inhabitants, we are known as Jambuvans . . . we were the masters of the country. You will be interested to know that inscriptions found in the Kanarese country speak of a Matanga dynasty as having been rulers there, and there is no doubt that the rulers of that dynasty and we, the Matangas of today, are from the same stock. It is of further interest to note that the capital of Sugriva, where Jambuvan lived, is reputed to have been near Hospet in Bellary district, the very Kanarese country where according to the inscriptions the Matangas held sway." (Guruswamy : 1928, 1-2).

The above quotation illustrates the trend towards cultural re-interpretation in the changing themes of Madiga mythology. What the speaker wanted to emphasize, probably, was that the Madiga were the oldest inhabitants of the land and that they were at one time the rulers of the country. Invaded and defeated by some powerful neighbours, they were forced to accept the position in which they find themselves today. The Matanga dynasty of the Kanarese country from which he claimed his community's descent, has been mentioned as an "aboriginal family of but little power, and not of sufficient importance to have left any record of themselves." (Thurston : 1909, IV, 317). Mangalisa (610-11 A.D.), a Chalukiya king, invaded the Matangas of the Kanarese country. He defeated the Matangas and annexed the country to his kingdom." (Thurston : 1909, IV, 317).

The Madiga of Telangana sometimes like to be called Matanga, but they do not appear to claim any connexion with the Matanga dynasty of the Kanarese country. It is agreed that the name Matanga has been derived from Matangi, but they are not altogether clear or consistent about the latter's identity. Some regard Matangi as Jambavant's daughter; while others think of her as his son Yugamuni's wife.

In the epic of Ramayan there are several references to Jambavant and his valour and wisdom. He is described as having a bear-like form, and has been consistently portrayed as a wise, courageous and experienced general in the army of Rama's ally Sugriva. In some villages of Telangana there is a tradition which indicates some probable connexion of the Madiga with Jambavant. In the Holi festival, especially on the second day, a group of Madiga dress like bears and go round the village in a procession. They dance and beg from higher caste people. It is said that Jamba-

vant had engaged bears and monkeys to display acrobatic feats for Rama's entertainment.

The Madiga do not have any written history. Their legends and traditions too do not take us very far. History throws very little light on their origin or on the development of their society. According to the 1931 Census, the total population of the Adi-Hindus, later called Scheduled Castes, was 2,473,280. These Adi-Hindus were classified into three major groups: Dher, Madiga and Minor classes. Under the Madiga group figures for all castes working in leather were given. Of them the Madiga, i.e., the caste bearing this particular name, alone numbered 693, 675 forming 28.01% of the total population of the Adi-Hindus. The above figure, however, did not include some of the satellite castes which are dependent on and attached to the Madiga. The following are their figures according to 1931 Census :

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Sangari (Madiga <i>guru</i> )       | 61    |
| 2. Sindhu (Madiga minstrel)            | 340   |
| 3. Mashti (Madiga acrobat)             | 9,214 |
| 4. Dakkalwar (Mndiga beggar)           | 6,124 |
| 5. Bindla (Madiga priest and musician) | 6,337 |
| (Census 1931, 260)                     |       |

Thus on the basis of 1931 Census figures the total number of the Madiga including the dependent and attached satellite castes would roughly work out to be 726,751.

The Madiga have a wide geographical distribution. They are distributed all over Andhra Pradesh. A considerable number of them are found in some districts of Mysore State. The states of Maharashtra, Madras and Orissa also have small Madiga populations. In Telangana the Madiga are concentrated mainly in the districts of Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal and Karimnagar; although they are found in small numbers in other districts also.

Though Madiga are distributed over a wide area there are no marked variations in their dress, ornaments, occupations, and the type of menial services they have to render traditionally to the village community and to administrative officials. Some degree of variation may, however, be observed in such aspects as dialects, forms of marriage, patron-client relationship between Madiga and agriculturists, and worship details of certain rituals. In Hyderabad District the Madiga have to some extent been influenced by Muslims. Many Urdu words have become a part of their

vocabulary. In the bilingual villages of the adjoining states of Madras, Bombay and Mysore they speak the languages spoken in these areas along with Telugu which is their mother tongue. The Madiga of Hyderabad, Nizamabad and Madak districts have a system of patron-client relationship different from the one obtainable in other districts. Unlike the Madiga of other districts they do not have to work in the fields of their masters on several socio-religious occasions. Local and regional variations in the forms of worship are many. In villages of the southern part of the former Hyderabad State the Madiga follow the regional practice of marrying one's sister's daughter. This practice is looked down upon in other parts of Telangana. The Madiga of Mahabubnagar district are greatly influenced by Saivites. Like the latter they mark their foreheads with ashes, whereas their brethren in other parts of Telangana mark their foreheads with vermilion powder.

In Telangana, composite multi-caste villages are common. The main settlement site consists of dwellings of clean caste Hindus. Although there is a tendency towards specific caste concentrations in certain areas of the settlement, this is by no means the general rule and one does often see families of different castes building houses close to one another. However, the Mala and Madiga untouchables live in separate colonies of their own. These are separated from the main settlement by a small uninhabited patch of land and can be individually identified.

The Madiga colonies are generally situated on rentfree lands which are either uncultivable or unproductive. Sites for setting up new colonies are selected in consultation with the clean caste elders and with the approval of the village officials. Distance to be maintained from the main settlement and the direction in which the colony is to be located are all decided by the village officials.

The Madiga colonies often give an impression of extreme poverty. Thatched huts huddled together, narrow and muddy lanes, children moving about in rags, and tanning pots emanating revolting smell are a common experience there. The dwellings are unplanned; the lanes are narrow, zigzag and dirty. Children relieve themselves in the lanes, Pigs wallow and spread mud all over the place. Manure pits in which the Madiga throw their rubbish are rarely at a distance from the houses and in rains they stink. Hides, cured and uncured, are hung by walls or by the trunks of nearby trees.

The above description, while generally correct, does not hold true of all the Madiga colonies. There are some colonies which are as clean as those of the upper castes. Many Madiga are determinedly trying to improve their way of life by taking to the ways of the higher castes. The government too has undertaken some constructive measures to improve their living conditions. In some villages planned houses with better ventilation have been constructed for them.

In Telangana villages, as mentioned earlier, the Madiga have their colonies at some distance from the main settlement inhabited by clean castes. The fact that they cure hide and work in leather makes it necessary for them to build their huts at a place where they do not cause inconvenience to the clean castes. The fact that leather, spacially uncured hides, pollutes the upper castes is also of significance. Leather is ritually polluting, and so are persons working in leather and the place where the work is done. The clean caste people who fear pollution from physical touch of the Madiga and their place of work make it compulsory for them to choose a site which no clean caste person may have to frequent.

Seeing a Madiga first thing in the morning or at the time of commencing a journey is considered an ill-omen by the upper castes, especially the Brahman. This is believed to bring bad luck. The Brahman, so placed, feels that he may have to go without food for the day or may have to encounter difficulties and hardships on the way. As it is inauspicious for a Brahman to see a Madiga in the morning, it is equally inauspicious for a Madiga to see a Brahman in the early hours of the morning. This mutual avoidance makes it necessary for them to have their houses at a considerable distance from each other to avoid accidental encounters in the morning.

There are two types of houses in the Madiga colony : *penkatillu* and *gudise*. The former has mud or stone walls with a roof more commonly tiled than thatched. Generally it is a three-room house with a verandah attached to the front room. Of these three rooms, one is used for cooking, another for sitting and sleeping, and the third one for storing grain, fuel and other provisions. *Gudise* is a one-room dwelling, generally built of mud walls and with a roof thatched with grass and leaves.

A Madiga dwelling invariably has some open space in front of it. It may be fenced or walled. In one corner of this enclosure

they may erect a hut and house their cattle; in another corner a big earthen pot of water is placed near a flat stone. The spot is known as *jalata* or 'the place where hands and feet are washed'. Generally women have their bath here.

The worldly possessions of the Madiga are few and their household equipment is very meagre indeed. They cook and eat in earthenware pots; very few own costlier metal utensils. While cheap aluminium jugs and tumblers are becoming increasingly popular, not many Madiga own large metal containers for storing water or pitchers and glasses for drinking water.

They have little by way of furniture. Few households possess even the cheap string beds for all members of the family. Some members of the family almost always sleep on the floor. Mattresses are considered a luxury, and even the supply of quilts and blankets is inadequate. Pillows are used by some. Use of clean sheets is considered to be an un-thought of luxury for most Madiga.

In their dress and ornaments, the Madiga are not very different from the people of the lower castes in the region. Most of them are poor and have only the bare necessities of life. A *dhoti*, a *romal* and a shirt are all that some Madiga men possess by way of personal clothing. *Dhoti* is worn in a style different from that of some clean caste people. It is tied to the waist in such a way that it does not go below the knees. The *romal* is a useful possession and serves many purposes. It is a piece of cloth, usually coloured and varying in length from six to twelve feet. Most of the Madiga can afford only one *romal*. They tie it round their head in the day time and spread it on a mattress at night. It is used for carrying grains, vegetables and similar things. Since they do not possess more than one *dhoti* they use the *romal* as loin cloth while bathing in a stream or a tank. Shirts bought from local markets have become common in recent years. Well-to-do Madiga wear western style jackets (locally called *coats*), and open sandles also. In recent years loose tunic shirts (*Kurta*) and caps of hand-spun cloth have also become popular.

A rough blanket is a desirable possession. Farm servants receive it as a part of their wages for the year. It is used as a protection from rains and cold. Some Madigamen fold it and carry it on their shoulders, while some cover their heads also with it. Some Madigamen cover the blanket with a cloth so that rain water would drip down easily and would not wet the blanket. On chilly



mornings when Madigamen have to work in wet fields the blanket protects them from cold and mud. A man folds the blanket, takes it round his body and head and ties a rope round his waist in such a way that he can easily work with his hands. In winter it is common to see men moving about wrapped in blankets. A good blanket can carry one maund or sixtyfour seers of grain. An honoured guest may be seated on a blanket. It is never used by women.

Women wear saris of different colours. A *sari* is tied round the waist in such a way that the lower fringe does not come upto the ankles. *Raike* or bodice is commonly worn. Madiga women who are poor have two *saris* (one new and another old), and two bodices which last them for about a year. When *saris* get too torn for use by adult women, they are divided into small pieces and given to small girls for use. Children upto the age of seven go with a piece of cloth tied round their waist. In some villeges frocks are becoming popular for girls, while boys wear shorts and shirts.

A wide variety of cheap ornaments are worn by Madiga women. They include necklaces, bracelets, arm bands, nose pins, ear rings, waist belts, anklets and toe-rings. Above the waist gold and silver ornaments can be worn, but only the well-to-do can afford these costly metals. On the waist and below only ornaments of silver or any still cheaper metal can be worn. The number, weight and design of the ornaments depend largely on individual tastes of women and the economic condition of the family. However, married women must wear two ornaments. The *puste*, a thin and round gold ornament, is attached to a thread which is tied round the neck. *Mettelu* (toe rings) are also considered necessary. They are generally of a cheap metal, although silver can now be used for this ornament. Traditionally it was not considered proper for an impure people like the Madiga to wear a relatively pure metal (silver) on a relatively impure part of the body, i.e., the toes. Glass bangles of different colours, and necklaces of multicoloured beads, often black and red, are also commonly used.

The Madiga can be viewed as an individual and identifiable group, having a separate community life of their own. However, a number of tiny satellite castes complement their socio-cultural life, and in any well-rounded picture of Madiga life they have also to be considered alongside of the Madiga. Finally, the Madiga are a part of the multi-caste wider village community of

the region, with a traditionally defined position and clearly drawn sets of rights and obligations. The Madiga community will thus have to be conceptualized at three different levels—the caste itself, the constellation of castes with the Madiga at the centre and the satellite castes at the periphery, and the multi-caste village community in its regional setting. Forces of change provide yet another dimension to their socio-cultural life, which is of great significance for their understanding.

## CHAPTER II

### MADIGA IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

The social system of the Madiga functions within the framework of the larger social system of village and regional Hinduism of Telangana. An attempt is made in this chapter to present a generalized picture of the position of the Madiga in the village community. Dube's *Indian Village* offers a well-rounded account of a village in Telangana ; here the focus is on the patterns of relationship between the Madiga and the other constituent castes of the village community.

#### THE VILLAGE IN TELANGANA

According to the Statistical Abstract (1955), the number of villages in the nine districts constituting the Telangana part of the former state of Hyderabad was 11,105. Villages with a population of less than 500 people numbered 3,403 ; those with a population between 500 and 1,000 numbered 2,438, and the number of villages having 1,000 to 2,000 people each was 2,106.

The creation of linguistic states in 1957 has involved transfer of some Telangana villages to the neighbouring states of Bombay (its Maharashtra part now) and Mysore. Some Telugu-speaking villages of Bombay and Mysore states have been added to this region. Roughly the number of villages in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh today is about 10,000. The villages in Telangana, like villages in other parts of India, differ from one another in regard to their 'size, population, and area ; caste composition ; degree of isolation ; local tradition'. (Dube : 1954, 3).

Three main types of village settlement are found in the region. First, there are small hamlets having a population generally of one hundred to three hundred people. These hamlets are only partially self-sufficient units, and function as satellites of a larger village in the neighbourhood in several aspects of their socio-cultural life. They are often inhabited by one or two land-owning castes, and do not have a full complement of service-rendering castes. In land records and for administrative purposes they are often regarded as a part of the larger neighbouring village.

The medium-size villages, with a population ranging between 500 and 1,000, are relatively more self-sufficient in their socio-cultural life. Besides the agriculturists they have a reasonable number of service-rendering castes. However, for certain types of services they may have to depend upon castes and persons in the other neighbouring villages. Many such villages have a bi-weekly market. Most of them have village-gods and organized ritual. They also have a number of village officials.

Larger villages, with a population of more than 1,000 peoples have broadly all the characteristics of the villages of the second type. They have a full complement of service-rendering castes, have some resident minor state officials, and also enjoy certain civic amenities such as a school or a branch post office.

#### CASTES IN TELANGANA

Each culture-linguistic region of India has a large number of castes. Ghurye puts it in the neighbourhood of 2,000 (Ghurye : 1932, 27). Sirajul Hasan, whose information is based on the Census Reports, gives a useful account of about 94 castes of Telangana region. The castes commonly met with in this region are : Vaidiki Brahman, Niyogi Brahman (priest), Komati (trader), Velama, Kamma, Reddi, (agriculturist), Munnor, Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta, Boya, Pancha-Brahma (a composite endogamous caste comprising five occupational groups of Wadla, Kammari, Avasula, Kase and Kanchari), Kummari, Golla, Gaundla, Sale, Sakali, Mangali, Chippa, Kurma, Mala, Begari, Madiga. Besides these there are a number of caste-like semi-tribal groups who have not yet been wholly assimilated into the Hindu social system. They are the Erkala, Vadde, Pichkuntla, Dasari, Poosala, Pachcha-botla, etc.

The above castes may be arranged into four groups. At the apex can be placed the castes of land-owners and agriculturists. Their ritual status is not the highest, but in respect of their socio-economic status they certainly hold a dominant position in the village communities. Under 'service-rendering castes' are classified all castes functioning on the basis of fixed patron-client relationships, known elsewhere in India as the *jajmani system*. Under 'occupational castes' are placed the castes who have a well-defined traditional occupation but who do not function on the basis of patron-client relationships. All other castes have been classified

separately. Major castes in these four groups are :

1. *Castes of Agriculturists :*

- A. Substantial land-owners and agriculturists ; mostly being Niyogi Brahman, Velama, (agriculturist) Kamma (agriculturist) and Reddi (agriculturist).
- B. Partly land-owners and agriculturists and partly agricultural labourers. Munnor (agricultural labourer), Muttarasi (agricultural labourer) Tenaga, Besta (fisherman) and Boya (fisherman) may be regarded as the most representative castes of this sub-group.

2. *Service-rendering castes :*

- A. High service-rendering castes, such as Vaidiki Brahman and Jangam priests.
- B. Middle range service-rendering castes, such as Wadla (carpenter) and Kammari (ironsmith) occupational groups of the Panch Brahma, and Kummari (potter).
- C. Lower service-rendering castes, such as Sakali (washerman), Mangali (barber).
- D. Lowest service-rendering castes. such as Mala (agricultural labourer), Madiga (leather-worker), Begari (gravedigger).

3. *Occupational castes :* Consisting of castes with a well-defined traditional occupation, which does not involve rendering or exchange of service on a fixed patron-client basis. This group includes ;

Gaundla (toddy-seller), Sale (weaver), Chippra (tailor), Golla (shepherd), Kurma (blanket-maker), Komati and Baliye (traders), Vanjari (dealer in cattle), and groups of the Panch Brahma Avasula (goldsmith), Kase (carver in stone) and Kanchari (bronzesmith).

4. *Miscellaneous castes :*

- A. The castes of semi-tribal origin :  
Erkala (pig-herds), Vadde (workers in stone).
- B. The castes of beggars :  
Gudise (singers), Dasari (dramatists), Pichakuntla (musicians), Balasantanam (magicians), Pamula (snake-charmers), Garodi (magicians), Dommara (acrobats and prostitutes).

The pattern of inter-caste relations in Telangana, as found in the whole of the former Hyderabad State, was partly determined

and maintained by the feudal system of land-holding and the associated administrative structure. It is necessary to recall that Hyderabad integrated with the Indian Union in 1948. Legislative measures for land reform, such as the Jagirdari Abolition Act, were passed in the next three to five years; their implementation naturally took some more time. The imprint of the old system of land-ownership and administrative organization is evident on many aspects of the social and political structure of the village communities in this region.

The Velama, Kamma and Reddi were the three important land-owning castes of Telangana villages. By and large they retain the same position even now, although land reforms have cut down the size of their holdings. Many of the substantial land-owning families generally lived in towns and cities. Their estates were managed by Munnor and Muttarasi agricultural labourers. The latter employed Tenaga, Besta or Boya men for the domestic service of the estate owners and secured the services of the Mala and Madiga for their agricultural work. The estate-owning Velama, Kamma and Reddi gave pieces of land to the Munnor, Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta and Boya households for their services. When the land reforms came into effect the estate owners began looking after their own estates. Some of them only supervised the work on their fields and employed farm servants to work for them. Others cultivated the land themselves. The position of the Mala and Madiga did not alter materially. As far as they were concerned only the middle-men between them and the land-owners were removed.

The Munnor, Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta and Boya, as has been stated earlier, had no land of their own. They worked for their employers and in return for their services were given pieces of land which they cultivated for their livelihood. The land reforms gave them proprietary rights over most of the fields which were in their possession for a specified time under this arrangement. Some of them acquired more land and became independent agriculturists. In some villages they have started claiming a status equal to that of the Reddi agriculturists. The majority of the Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta and Boya men however, only hold pieces of land and also work for wages. The Besta and Boya earn a part of their livelihood by pursuing their traditional occupation of fishing. Some of them are farm servants and work only for Reddi agriculturists.

The Vaidiki Brahman are found only in some villages. Most of them still follow their traditional calling and are family and temple priests. In addition, some of them own land also, but rather than cultivate it themselves, they employ Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta or Boya men to work on their fields. Because of employment opportunity in urban areas, many of them have migrated to take up government jobs. The Brahman priests offered their services as family priests only to the Komati (trader) and to the other castes of agriculturists, but recently they have started offering their services to all castes except the untouchables and the semi-tribals. The Jangam are found only in a few villages. Like Brahman priests, they are both temple and family priests of Saivaite Hindus. As temple priests they are attached to the temples of Siva. As family priests they offer their services only to Saivaite Hindus.

The Wadla (carpenter) and Kammari (ironsmith) groups of the Pancha Brahma and the Kummari (potter) are the important service-rendering castes in Telangana villages. In addition to working as carpenter the Wadla also works as mason. He makes wooden marriage posts and seats, and carves images in wood. All clean castes use wooden posts and seats at the time of marriage. The wooden posts are fixed under the marriage booth and the married couple have to go round them as a necessary part of the ritual of marriage. The seats are used for the bride and the bridegroom. Wooden images made by the Wadla are used at the time of puberty rites. He supplies these images to all castes. In recent years the carpenters have increasingly turned their attention to land, and some of them are now partly agriculturists also. Some educated carpenters have opened furniture shops in larger villages and towns.

The Kammari works in iron and makes articles of agricultural and domestic use. His services on socio-religious occasions are not many. To all castes other than those belonging to untouchable and semi-tribal groups he provides toe-rings for the bride. It is not uncommon for a blacksmith to derive his income partly from his traditional occupation and partly from agriculture. Some of them have also migrated to urban areas for more lucrative employment.

The Kummari (potter) makes earthenware pots and supplies them to agriculturists and other castes for domestic use as well as for use on ceremonial occasions. Only a few potters sell earthen-

ware vessels in weekly markets. Some of them also follow agriculture as their main occupation.

The two important lower service-rendering castes of rural Telangana are the Sakali and the Mangali. The Sakali are washermen. In some villages, they wash the clothes of all castes but in others they are not permitted to offer their services to the untouchable castes. Most of them follow their traditional caste occupation and render their customary services on different socio-religious occasions. Some have opened laundry shops in towns and cities. The Mangali are barbers. In some villages they render their services to all castes, but in some others they do not have anything to do with the untouchables. A barber's services are required on different occasions by the village community and his presence is essential at the rituals of marriage and death. Some barbers who have kept pace with the changing times use modern instruments and attract customers making cash payment. Some have acquired land and function also as agriculturists. Some barbers have opened hair-dressing saloons in towns.

The Mala and the Madiga are agricultural labourers, farm servants, village watchmen and menials. A sub-caste of the Mala known as Begari digs graves for all castes except for the Brahman, Komati and Madiga. Of these the first two, i.e., the Brahman and the Komati cremate their dead, and as such do not normally need the services of the Begari. The Mala on the whole are better off than the Madiga. They own more land and are in government service in greater numbers. The traditional occupation of the Madiga is to work in leather. They skin animals, tan the hides, and also make leather articles for both agricultural and non-agricultural use.

The major items of work done by some of the important service-rendering castes are presented in Table I. For convenience the castes are arranged into seven groups. The castes included in each of these groups are :

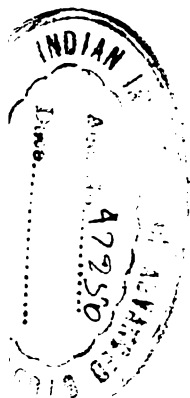
- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Group I   | The Brahman, Komati and castes of similar status.  |
| Group II  | The castes of agriculturists: Velama, Kamma, Reddi, Munnor, Muttarasi, Tenaga, Besta, and Boya.                          |
| Group III | Occupational castes: Gaundla, Sale, Chippa, Golla, Kurma, Vanjari, Avasula, Kase, Kanchari groups of the Pancha Brahman. |



- Group IV Middle range service rendering castes : the Wadla, Kammari and Kummari.  
 Group V Lower service-rendering castes : the Sakali and Mangali.  
 Group VI Lowest service-rendering castes : the Mala, Begari and Madiga.  
 Group VII Semi-tribals :the Vadde, Erkala, etc.

TABLE I

| Service-rendering caste | Major items of services rendered  | Groups receiving services |    |     |    |   |    |     | Remarks                          |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|----|-----|----|---|----|-----|----------------------------------|
|                         |   | I                         | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII |                                  |
| 1. Brahman (priest)     | 1. Fixing of auspicious days for sowing, harvesting, recitation of <i>katha</i> , marriage, house warming, taking water from a well, etc., on the basis of horoscopic calculations. | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | ×   |                                  |
|                         | 2. Calculation of the position of stars at the time of birth and death.   | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |                                  |
|                         | 3. Officiating as marriage priest.  | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | ×   |                                  |
|                         | 4. Recitation of Satyanarayan <i>katha</i> , purana, etc.   | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | ×  | ×   |                                  |
|                         | 5. Accepting alms on the <i>pitru amavasya</i> .  | —                         | —  | —   | ×  | × | ×  | ×   | Except carpenters & iron-smiths. |
| 2. Wadla (Carpenter).   | 1. Making wooden seats, posts and ladles used at the time of marriage.  | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | ×  | ×   |                                  |





| Service-rendering caste     | Major items of services rendered                                 | Groups receiving services |    |     |    |   |    |     | Remarks                                     |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|----|-----|----|---|----|-----|---|
|                             |  | I                         | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII |   |
| 5. Sakali (washer-man).     | 1. Washing clothes (regularly)                                   | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | ×  | —   |   |
|                             | 2. Washing clothes at the time of death, puberty and childbirth. | —                         | —  | —   | —  | × | ×  | —   |   |
| 6. Mangali (barber)         | 1. Shaving head and beard  | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | ×  | —   |   |
|                             | 2. Helping at the time of marriage, birth and puberty rites.     | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | ×  | —   |   |
| 7. Begari (grave-digger).   | 1. Digging a grave   | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   | Except the Madiga & their Satellite castes. |
|                             | 2. Removing dead animals like dog, cat, horse, donkey.           | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |   |
| 8. Madiga (leather worker). | 1. Removing dead cattle (cow, bull, buffalo).                    | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |   |
|                             | 2. Supplying leather articles of agricultural use.               | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |   |
|                             | 3. Supplying leather articles of non-agricultural use.           | —                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |   |
|                             | 4. Drum-beating on all occasion                                  | ×                         | —  | —   | —  | — | —  | —   |   |

Index : Yes. —  
 No. ×

The occupational castes are not affiliated either to the village or to any families on the basis of regular payment. They follow their occupations independently and sell their goods or services.

The Gaundla are tappers and sellers of toddy. They have increasingly taken to agriculture in recent years. They are a low caste, but because of their wealth they have been able to open tea-stalls at several bus-stops. Some educated Gaundla are in government service.

The Sale are weavers. Because of the introduction of textile mills and supply of mill-made cloth in rural areas many of them have had to abandon their traditional caste occupation. They have taken to other occupations such as government service, agriculture and domestic employment. Some work in cloth mills also. Only a few retain their traditional occupation and weave coarse cloth for sale in the local markets.

The Avasula or (goldsmiths) are found in many villages though usually in small numbers.

The Golla are shepherds and tend sheep and goat. Most of them have partly adopted agriculture and agricultural labour as their occupation.

The Kurma buy wool from the Golla and make blankets.

The Vanjari are dealers in cattle; they buy animals from village people and sell them in cattle fairs and markets.

The Chippa, who are tailors, are few in number.

Though in smaller numbers the Komati (traders) are found in many villages of Telangana. They buy grain from village people and sell it in towns and cities. Through their shops, permanent and roving, they supply the daily requirements of village people. Some Komati are money lenders and some cultivate land. A few of them have started rice mills in the villages.

Reference may also be made to the castes of semi-tribal origin. The Erkala herd pigs and also make baskets, bins, fans and mats from palmyra leaves. The Vadde supply stone for the construction of houses and wells and tanks. The Pichkuntla were beggars, but now they are mostly farm-servants. The Poosala are a caste of bead sellers, but some of them have taken to cultivation and agricultural labour. The Dasari and Pachabotla are dramatists and tattooers, respectively. Like the Poosala they have started working as agricultural labourers in some villages.

Besides the castes mentioned above there are several others who

are nomadic in nature and keep on moving from one place to another.

Non-Telugu castes, such as the Kanyakubj Brahman, Rajput and Jat are also met with, but their number is very small. They are confined only to some areas, and there also to some villages only. Muslims and Christians, especially the former, are found in larger numbers.

#### SERVICES RENDERED BY THE MADIGA

The Madiga are integrated into the village economy of Telangana because of their traditional occupation of menial service, leather-work, drum-beating and horn-blowing. For this work they hold rentfree lands allotted to them by the government. All the Madiga are not village menials, nor are all of them drum-beaters or horn-blowers. The families which hold rentfree land allotted for *etti* or menial service are known as Etti-Madiga. By virtue of their possession of this rentfree land they claim the right of affiliation to the cultivators. They also claim the right to the dead animals of the village, and traditionally they alone are entitled to supplying leather articles of agricultural use in the village. Similarly the families who hold rentfree lands allotted for drum-beating have the first right to play drums in the village. No other Madiga can do this without their consent.

#### THE ETTI-MADIGA

The biggest claim of the Madiga to be in the village is on the basis of *etti* or menial service on nominal payment. The position of the Etti-Madiga is recognized by the government and for their services they are allotted rentfree land called *Inam*. Only those Madiga households who benefit from these rentfree lands enjoy the privileges of being affiliated to agriculturists and other castes for claiming their dead cattle, and for working in leather and supplying leather articles in the village. The right to play drums on different occasions is also based on their being Etti-Madiga. The Etti-Madiga are hereditary, and it is common for a son to take over the affiliation with the family of an agriculturist. Those who are not allotted any rentfree land are not expected to perform *etti*, also they do not enjoy any of the privileges of the Etti-Madiga.

The Etti-Madiga are village menials who are required to perform jobs such as cleaning the village lanes, carrying the luggage of government officials on their tours, removing grain from one godown to another, assisting in the collection of land-revenue and generally in maintaining peace and order in the village, and making minor repairs to village tanks and government buildings.

Generally three to eight Madiga families work as Etti-Madiga in a village. From each of these families a responsible adult does most of the government work, though the whole family comes forward to lend a helping hand if necessity arises. The Etti-Madiga clean the village lanes when a government official is on a short visit to the village. They supply fuel for his cooking. They assist him in inspecting crops and produce the agriculturists whom the visiting official may wish to see. The Etti-Madiga assist in the collection of land revenue from the agriculturists of the village. They guard the place where the collected land revenue is kept until it is deposited in government treasury. It is the duty of the Etti-Madiga to carry it in a sealed bag from the village to the treasury.

The Etti-Madiga also assist the police in administrative matters concerning the village. They patrol the village lanes with the village watchmen. They report the activities of suspected bad characters to the officials. They carry police reports and records to the police station. If a stranger dies within the village boundaries they have to report the death and dispose off the dead body. When an epidemic spreads in the village, the Etti-Madiga assist the village people in burying the dead bodies. If dacoits threaten the village they are expected to defend the village. Stray cattle causing damage to the fields are handed over to the Etti-Madiga who take them to the cattle-pound.

#### LEATHER-WORK

The concepts of ritual purity and pollution play an important part in determining the place and position of the Madiga in the village community. All dead objects are polluting and they pollute clean caste people when they come in physical contact with them in varying degrees. A dead cat, dog, horse, pony or donkey is not so polluting as is a dead cow, buffalo or bullock. The dead animals of the first category are removed by the Begari (grave-digger) a section of the Mala. Dead animals of the second cate-

gory are handled by the Madiga who are the lowest of untouchables in the region. No other caste will undertake to do this work.

Only the Etti-Madiga affiliated to agriculturists and to service-rendering and occupational castes have the right of handling dead cattle of the village. When an animal dies, the owner of the animal informs his Madiga. The latter collects five or six Madiga men from his colony, and together they carry the animal outside the village. They cut and skin it and distribute the carrion among all the Etti-Madiga families. The Madiga affiliated to the family of the owner of the dead animal carries the hide and cures it. He keeps half of it for himself for making various leather articles, while from the other half he makes articles of leather for the owner of the dead animal. If the owner does not need any leather articles he gets the approximate price of his portion of the hide.

The leather articles commonly made by the Madiga are : belts, ropes, slings, straps, whips, buckets, chappals, pouches, bags of different shapes and designs, toddy-containers, and sharpeners. Pouches are used by many people, both agriculturists and non-agriculturists. A flint, a piece of steel, tobacco and cotton are kept in these pouches. These pouches are supplied free of charge to agriculturists and service-rendering castes and on payment to other castes. An agriculturist needs neck-belts, ropes, straps, whips and slings of leather. These are supplied by his affiliated Madiga once a year. Besides these, a pair of *chappals* may also be supplied once in two years. To a few substantial agriculturists he supplies leather-buckets for drawing water from wells. Leather bags for common and special use are also made by them.

Special articles of leather supplied to the Gaundla toddy-tapper are belts, sharpeners and toddy-containers. The belts are used for climbing a date or palmyra tree safely. After toddy juice has been collected from the trees it is stored in large earthen pots and from these pots it is transferred to huge leather-containers called *pakalu* which are carried on the backs of buffaloes to the toddy-shops. These leather toddy-containers are made by the Madiga.

Besides the articles of leather mentioned above, the affiliated Madiga supplies leather straps to the Wadla (carpenter), Kammari (ironsmith), Kummari (potter), Sakali (washerman), Chippa (tailor) and Sale (weaver) who use them for different purposes.

Generally the affiliated Madiga makes repairs to the *chappals* of his patrons free of charge, while he expects to be paid in cash for

this service from all others.

As a part of their duty towards the government officials the Etti-Madiga collectively supplies certain leather articles to them. A large leather-bag for carrying government records to the tahsil office is supplied free of charge once in three or four years. Slings, pouches and straps for workers of the village who have their duties fixed by government are also supplied free of charge, once in two or three years. In some villages the Etti-Madiga gives one pair of *chappals* to the Mali Patel, Police Patel and other important village officials on every Dasher festival. As mentioned above these articles are supplied collectively by the Etti-Madiga.

#### FARM SERVICE

The agriculturists engage three kinds of people to work on their fields: (1) Agricultural labourers who work for daily wages; (2) Farm servants who work on monthly salary, and (3) Madigamen who are affiliated to one or more families of agriculturists on the basis of patron-client relationship and assist them in different agricultural operations. Their affiliation to the families of agriculturists is hereditary. Only the Etti-Madiga have the right of this kind of affiliation.

A Madiga is affiliated to one or more families of cultivators. The number of families to whom a Madiga is affiliated depends upon the number of families of cultivators and those of Etti-Madiga residing in the village.

Ideally an Etti-Madiga is expected to perform and to assist the families of agriculturists to whom he is affiliated in all agricultural activities, and to supply fuel to the families for everyday use, and also for use on special occasions such as a marriage or a funeral. The wife of the affiliated Madiga cleans the cattle-shed and deposits dung and refuse in the manure-pit. She supplies red earth for plastering the floor. In practice, considerable variation is seen in respect of the work actually done by the affiliated Madiga households. The variations are accounted for partly by regional differences in customs and partly by the nature of inter-personal relations between the patron and the client.

#### DRUM BEATING

An important musical instrument in Telangana is *dappo* or a



drum which the Madiga plays on different socio-religious occasions. The Madiga plays his drum at private functions like marriage, death and Satyanarayan Katha, and at public functions like the worship of deities of smallpox and epidemics. He plays his drum at the weddings and funerals of all castes except the Brahman and some castes of semi-tribal origin such as the Erkala, Vadde, Pichakuntla and Dasari. The well-to-do also employ, alongside the Madiga drum-beaters, a clean caste musician called the Tammali. The Tammali plays his drum to the accompaniment of pipes generally played by Muslims. The Brahman employs only Tammali drummers and Muslim pipers.

The main governmental duty of the drum-beating Madiga is to make public announcements on behalf of the administration in the village. These announcements are generally in connexion with the dates for the collection of land revenue, visit of some important official or dignitary, auction of government properties such as forest produce, fish, fodder, etc., and announcement of warnings against epidemics and dacoits.

On festive and national days such as Dashera, 15th August (Independence Day), 26th January (Republic Day), Ugadi and Holi, he goes round the village playing his drum to collect the people at a central place. On the Dashera day he leads the procession to the place where village people worship a plant called *Jammi* (*Prosopis Spicigera*). On Holi day he plays his drums also for the stick dance. When people proceed to the tank for bathing, the Dappo-Madiga leads the procession. For ten days during the Moharram festival the Dappo-Madiga are much in demand among the Muslims. The Madiga drum-beaters not only play their drums, but they also dance and sing songs in praise of the Muslim heroes. On the tenth day drummers play their drums till the *pirs*, or *tazias* are ceremonially immersed in a tank or well. The drummers also play at the time of the worship of the deities of smallpox, epidemics and Gauri.

#### THE VILLAGE WATCHMEN

Generally there are three village watchmen in a village: one each from the Tenaga or Muttarasi, Mala and Madiga castes. The duties of these three are not clearly defined. Generally the Muttarasi or Tenaga is the head of the three watchmen. The

village watchmen assist the village officials in different activities of the village.

The village watchman patrols the village in the night. He keeps an eye on suspects and bad characters, and reports their activities to the police. They supervise work at the government rest house and see that it is properly cleaned by the Etti-Madiga men.

It is also the duty of the village watchmen to keep an eye on government properties such as fish (in the tanks, streams and wells) and forest produce, and to see that no damage is done to them. In the summers they are very alert and see that village people do not steal mangoes and tamarind fruits from government owned orchards. Being the lowest in caste status, the Madiga watchman often gets only low but strenuous duties.

The Madiga as a caste occupy a well-defined and significant place in the scheme of village life in Telangana. They make a distinct contribution to the economic life, material culture, and socio-religious life and rituals of the community. Even in the administrative set-up of the village community they have a place. Their acceptance of a low social and ritual status has offered to them a basic minimum of security, and that is perhaps why their revolt against the established social order has neither been strong nor persistent. Even today only verbal protests are made by the educated and urban-oriented Madiga ; no serious movement has been launched to alter the situation materially.

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE : THE SATELLITE CASTES

The organization of inter-caste relationships within the framework of the Hindu social system is extremely complex. The picture that we get of this system from classical texts is different in many ways from the picture that emerges out of empirical studies. However, both classical texts and empirical studies have so far not adequately analyzed the system of caste constellations that constitute an identifiable socio-cultural system within the local and regional Hinduism. In this constellation there is a large central supporting caste and several small satellite castes, each having all the traditional characteristics of individual castes, but all together constituting an individual and identifiable cultural whole in their unique organization. Here the main supporting caste has been called the *central caste*; the others—economically dependent upon, but complementing the socio-cultural life of the former, have been called *satellite castes*.

According to the Oxford Universal Dictionary the word *satellite* means “an attendant upon a person of importance, forming a part of his retinue”. There is often an “implication of subservience or unscrupulous service”. Conceptually, a satellite caste may be described as a caste traditionally dependent upon another caste for its subsistence, with well-defined roles and functions that complement the socio-cultural life of the main caste supporting it. While inter-dependence is a feature of caste organization all over village India, the instances of almost total economic dependence of one or more castes on one particular caste, to whose socio-religious and cultural life they contribute more in cultural and less in economic terms, are not many. The Pradhan may be said to be satellites of the Gond; the Bhat and Charan—hereditary bards and genealogists may also be similarly described. The complementary caste constellation with the Madiga in the centre and several satellite castes in the periphery is different and in some ways unique. Scattered references suggest the presence of such a system elsewhere also, but it has so far not been described in the ethnographic literature of the country.

The Madiga have six satellite castes. They are : Sangari,

Baindla, Erpula, Sindu, Mashtu and Dakkali. The Sangari are spiritual guides to the Madiga in particular and to all other satellite castes of the Madiga in general. The Baindla are musicians and function as domestic and temple priests to the Madiga. They propitiate the goddess of epidemics. The Erpula, like Baindla, are also musicians. They specialize in the worship of Maisamma (the goddess of the prosperity of crops), and Ellamma (the goddess of epidemics). The Sindu are bards and minstrels who sing songs in praise of Jambavant, the mythical originator of the caste. Sindu men stage mythological plays and their women help them by playing musical instruments. Some women get into trance and act as spirit mediums. They help the Madiga with their magical powers in curing diseases and warding off evil spirits. Some Sindu women work as prostitutes. The Mashtu are acrobats and entertain the Madiga by displaying their acrobatic feats. The Dakkali are beggars. They also keep the genealogical records of the Madiga.

The capacity of an economically poor caste to maintain six satellite castes can at first appear somewhat puzzling. However, we have to bear in mind that although poor the Madiga are a fairly numerous caste and have a wide distribution. The satellite castes, on the other hand, are very very small. They are constantly on the move visiting their patrons all over the wide region. The customary payments made to them are small, but they can nevertheless make a living out of them. The Sangari, Sindu, Mushtu and Dakkali visit the colonies of their patrons once in three years and render their services only to the Madiga. The Baindla and Erpula, however have a dual position. In addition to being a satellite caste of the Madiga, they also earn a part of their livelihood by providing drum and pipe music to the general village community. As a satellite caste they function as domestic and temple priests to the Madiga, and as musicians they help clean caste priests in the worship of the goddess of epidemics and the goddess of prosperity of crops. But for the Baindla and Erpula, all the other satellite castes are entirely dependent upon the Madiga. They live on the customary payments made to them by the Madiga.

#### THE SANGARI

The Sangari are few in number, but their position is the highest in the constellation of the Madiga and their satellite castes.

The functions of the Sangari are manifold. As spiritual guides of the Madiga they preach the appropriate ethical standards of conduct. The Madiga seek their blessings for prosperity. If they happen to be present in a Madiga colony on the occasion of a wedding, their participation in the ceremony is considered essential. They help the Madiga in settling important caste disputes. They also ensure that the Madiga do not supply *chappals* to certain castes such as the Medari (workers in bamboo) and the Mundi (pigherd), who are regarded as lower than the Madiga. Near Medak town, a Sangari saw a Medari wear a pair of *chappals*. He asked the Medari from whom he bought them. The Medari, not knowing the authority of the Sangari, told him that he bought them from a Madiga of Gangaram village, five miles from Medak town. The Sangari went to this village, gathered the headmen of all the neighbouring Madiga colonies and declared that the offending Madiga had been ex-communicated from the caste. For three years the culprit had to stay outside the caste.

The Sangari travel in a special bullock-cart doing their rounds of visits to their widely dispersed clients. Their stay in a Madiga colony may extend from two or three days to a week or even more, depending upon the number of Madiga households and the warmth of welcome extended to them. He stays in the house of a prominent Madiga. The house is specially cleaned for his stay and the children of the household are prohibited from entering it during the Sangari's stay. Supplies are brought to him by his Madiga clients, but he cooks for himself. If his family members accompany him, they look after the kitchen. The Sangari will not accept cooked food from the Madiga. When he leaves the settlement the clients make offerings of grain and money to him.

#### THE BAINDLA AND ERPULA

As mentioned earlier the Baidla and Erpula derive their subsistence partly from the general village community and partly from the Madiga.

Before Independence the Baidla and Erpula were given pieces of rent-free land for their services to the village community. Their main service was playing the *Jammidike* drum on the occasion of the worship of village deities.

The Erpula got their rent-free land for a different purpose.

Their services were also required at the worship of village deities. Their main duty was to find out the pleasure or wrath of the deities and to determine the sacrifices to be made to them. This they do with their special divination techniques.

In some villages the Madiga also give the Baidla a piece of land for their services as marriage priest. In other villages the Madiga gave them  $\frac{3}{4}$  seers to 2 seers of paddy at each harvest.

As a marriage priest the Baidla gets Re. 1/- to Rs. 2/- from the Madiga. He also earns a few rupees every year by officiating as priest at the shrines of Poshamma (the goddess of small pox) and Ellamma (the goddess of epidemics).

A Baidla is free to accept charity from any caste. He goes from door to door signing songs in praise of Ellamma (the goddess of epidemics), and accepting alms when they are offered to him.

#### THE SINDU

“Like Rambha in the court of Indra in the heaven and Urvasi in the court of Rama on the Earth, there was Menaka in the court of Jambavanta”, says Sindu mythology. The Sindu claim their descent from Menaka, the court dancer of Jambavant. They are the bards of the Madiga. The total number of the Sindu according to the Census of 1931 was 340.

Each Sindu family has to dedicate a woman for the attainment of special spiritual powers. A woman having such powers generally trains one of her daughters. The woman having these powers can cure diseases. They get into trance and ward off evil spirits. Should a Sindu family fail to dedicate a woman for this purpose it loses its claim to charity in the village.

At the age of nine or ten the girl to be dedicated is nominally married to a sword or a plant. A man, either from among the Sindu or from the Madigamen, is asked to ‘hold the sword’ during this mock marriage. When she is fourteen or fifteen the parents of the girl approach a well-to-do Madiga and request him to take the woman as his ‘wife’. If the man is ready to pay a sum varying from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 300/- along with necessary clothes and ornaments, the woman is sent to him. She stays there until a child is born. After that she is normally required to go back to her parents’ home. If the man wishes to keep her for some more time he has to pay more money to the parents. The children born to

the woman are Sindu and are not permitted to work in leather. She eventually returns to perform her special functions.

The Sindu do not have any permanent residence; they keep on moving from one Madiga colony to another within their jurisdiction. They move in groups staging mythological plays.

The Sindu women are of great help to men at the time of staging a play. They assist them by playing musical instruments, and singing in chorus. At the end of every drama the dedicated woman comes out on the stage. She is dressed in a white sari; her forehead is marked with vermilion, turmeric powder is smeared on her face, and she holds *neem* twigs in one hand and a whip in another. This is called Ellamma-vesham. The Sindu men beat their drums vigorously to make her go into a trance. She is then taken in a procession round the village. Shouting at the top of her voice she scares evil spirits. She beats men and women with her whip so that ghosts and evil spirits residing in them may leave.

The Sindumen in some villages have started training Madiga boys in singing and staging plays. Some Sindu women have started working as agricultural labourers. This was prohibited to them before.

Sometime back it was necessary for a Sindu family to supply ropes and pot hangers made of ropes for the Madiga families. Today they have started selling ropes in the open market also. The customary payment to a Sindu family in an average Madiga colony varies from Rs. 20/- to Rs. 50/- every third year.

#### THE MASHTUS

The Mashtu are also very few in number. They visit the Madiga colonies, display their acrobatic feats, and leave for another Madiga colony after receiving their customary payment from the Madiga. The payment made to the Mashtu, besides food during their stay in the village, varies from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 10/-.

#### THE DAKKALI

The Dakkali is considered to be the lowest among the low in Telangana. The Dakkali sets up his temporary camp on the outskirts of the Madiga colony. After fixing his little hut outside the Madiga colony, he informs the headman about his arrival so that

arrangements for food to be supplied to him and payment to be made to him are taken in hand. In the evening he goes to the Madiga colony and standing at a distance from Madiga houses, announces loudly, "I am Dakkali. Bring food for me". Food is thrown into his garment and water is poured into his vessel from a distance. It is obligatory for the Madiga households to feed the Dakkali. They feed him either collectively or family by family each day during his entire stay.

Custom enjoins a number of restrictions on a Dakkali. He must not use a cot. He must not use a blanket or *chappals*. He should not sit down in the presence of a Madiga. He should also not go out in public places in the early hours of the morning or in the evening. He must not draw water from any well or at least from the well from which the Madiga draw water for their domestic use. He must not accept charity from any caste other than Madiga, not even from Sindu and Mashtu.

#### INTRA-GROUP RELATIONS

The Madiga, Sangari, Baidla, Erpula, Sindu and Mashtu do not pollute one another by their physical touch. The satellite castes, except the Dakkali, stay in the Madiga colony (generally in the headman's house) when they are on a visit to the colony. Except the Sangari all other satellite castes drink water from earthenware vessels of the Madiga. When they are on a visit to a Madiga colony, the Sangari stay in a Madiga house, specially cleaned with cow dung. Madiga are not permitted to enter this house during his stay. The Sangari do not drink water of a well from which the Madiga draw water for their domestic use. A Dakkali must not touch any of the six castes, for his physical contact is very polluting. If a Madiga touches a Dakkali, the former is excommunicated at least for three years, and the Dakkali loses the right of begging from the Madiga households. The Dakkali must not enter the courtyard of a Madiga house.

The Sangari strictly refrain from eating food touched or cooked by the Madiga or other satellite castes. All the satellite castes as well as the Madiga eat from their hands. The Madiga can eat food cooked or touched only by the Sangari and Sindu. The castes which eat food handled by the Madiga are the Sindu, Mashtu and Dakkali. In some villages the Baidla and Erpula



eat from the Madiga; in others they do not. The Sindu eat food cooked or handled by the Madiga and Sangari. No satellite castes eat from the Sindu. No satellite caste will partake of food cooked by the Baindla and Erpula. The Mashtu eat from the Madiga and Sangari, but their food is acceptable to no one other than the members of their own caste. The Dakkali must not cook his food; he should only beg for food from the Madiga. He eats at the hands of no one else. The Sangari enjoy a higher position among the Madiga than any other satellite caste. They hold the same position as Brahmans do among the clean castes. Their right to claim and accept customary payments from the Madiga and their satellite castes has been firmly established in the Madiga mythology and tradition. All the six castes are supposed to make the customary payment to them, but strictly speaking only the Madiga and the Baindla do this as their duty.

Chart 1 shows the acceptance of food and water or otherwise in the constellation of the Madiga and their satellite castes.

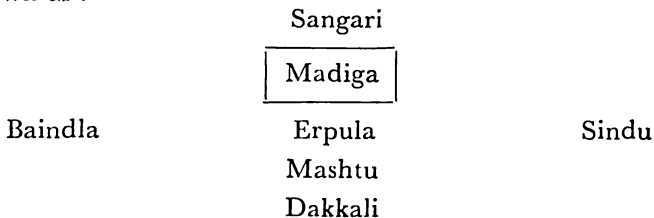
CHART 1  
SHOWING ACCEPTANCE OR NON-ACCEPTANCE OF  
FOOD COOKED OR HANDLED BY ONE ANOTHER.

| Caste      | Food cooked by them<br>accepted by                                      | Food cooked by them not<br>acceptable to   |
|------------|---|--|
| 1. Sangari | all castes  | none   |
| 2. Madiga  | 1. Sindu<br>2. Mashtu<br>3. Dakkali<br>4. Baindla (in some<br>villages) | 1. Sangari<br>2. Baindla (only in some<br>villages)                                  |
| 3. Sindu   | 1. Madiga   | 1. Baindla<br>2. Mashtu<br>3. Dakkali<br>4. Sangari                                  |
| 4. Baindla | 1. Madiga (in some<br>villages)   | 1. Madiga (in some<br>villages)<br>2. Sindu<br>3. Mashtu<br>4. Dakkali<br>5. Sangari |
| 5. Mashtu  | none  | all  |
| 6. Dakkali | none  | all  |

CHART 2  
SHOWING THE ACCEPTANCE OR NON-ACCEPTANCE  
OF WATER FROM ONE ANOTHER.

| Caste      | Water touched by them<br>accepted by              | Water touched by them<br>not accepted by            |
|------------|---|---|
| 1. Sangari | all castes  | none  |
| 2. Madiga  | 1. Sindu<br>2. Baindla<br>3. Mashtu<br>4. Dakkali | Sangari   |
| 3. Sindu   | 1. Madiga   | 1. Baindla<br>2. Mashtu<br>3. Dakkali<br>4. Sangari |
| 4. Baindla | Madiga  | 1. Baindla<br>2. Mashtu<br>3. Dakkali<br>4. Sangari |
| 5. Mashtu  | none  | all castes  |
| 5. Dakkali | none  | all castes  |

The hierarchy of satellite castes in relation to the Madiga may be shown as :



The Sangari have the highest social status. Next to them are the Madiga. All the satellite castes except the Sangari are inferior to the Madiga. In some villages, however, the Baindla and Erpula not only claim but maintain superiority over the Madiga by refu-

ing to eat food cooked or touched by the latter. Whatever food is offered to them by the Madiga in marriages they give it away to other Madiga. The Madiga claim that the Baidla are to them what the barbers are to the clean castes. The Baidla argue that they do not eat beef and carrion and, therefore, they are superior to the Madiga. The Sindu claim status equal to that of the Baidla and regard Mashtu and Dakkali as inferior. The Dakkali is the lowest of these castes.

It will be observed that the Madiga along with their satellite castes constitute a socio-cultural system within the larger socio-cultural system of village Hinduism in Telangana. The relationship between the Madiga and the satellite castes is in many ways unique. It is impossible to think of Madiga society and culture without at the same time thinking also of the satellite castes.



#### CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL STRUCTURE : ENDOGAMOUS AND EXOGAMOUS DIVISIONS

An attempt will be made in this and the three chapters that follow to outline the social structure of the Madiga caste as an individual and identifiable unit of social organization.

Considerable confusion exists in regard to the use of the terms *caste* and *sub-caste* in the anthropological and sociological literature concerning India. No clear indices have so far been developed to classify a group definitely into one or the other of these two categories. For the purposes of the present work the twin criteria of identification and acceptance as the main determinants governing the recognition of caste have been used. When a group identifies itself as a caste and is so accepted by the wider village community, it has been called a caste. It is in this sense that this term has been used throughout.

#### ENDOGAMOUS DIVISIONS

In Medak district, where fieldwork for this work was largely done, the Madiga are divided into two endogamous groups: Tangedi or Tega Madiga, and Gosangi or Gosika Madiga.

The Tangedi Madiga take their name from a plant called *tangedi*, the bark of which is used in tanning hides. The Madiga use this plant in their traditional occupation, and a section of the caste is known by it. The clean caste people have a different version. According to them a *tangedi* plant is always crooked, and one needs considerable effort to make it straight; a Tangedi Madiga too is never straightforward and needs great pressure to mend his habits. The plant has to be beaten hard with a stick for removing its bark, and only after a good deal of beating it becomes useful for burning; in the same way a Tangedi Madiga will not work properly unless he is punished every now and then. The Tangedi Madiga are found in almost all the villages of Medak District. In some villages they are also called *Tega* Madiga because they work as village menials.

The Gosangi or Gosika Madiga, a small group, are found only

in some villages of Medak District. They claim superiority over the Tangedi Madiga. They do not eat beef or pork, nor do they work in leather. In some villages they do not even work as village menials. Most of them work as agricultural labourers. It is said that the Gosangi at first ate beef but refused buffalo meat, and as such received this name. Because the Tangedi Madiga ate buffalo they were placed lower than the Gosangi.

These two groups are endogamous, and even interdining is not permitted between them.

The endogamous groups of the Madiga in other districts of Telangana are :

1. Sambari Madiga
2. Jingari or Zingar Madiga
3. Pinchini Madiga
4. Dhore Madiga
5. Dokkali Madiga
6. Manne Madiga
7. Areti Madiga

Tangedi or Tega Madiga are found in large numbers in these districts also.

The Sambari Madiga work in leather, but unlike the Tangedi they do not claim the dead animals of the village. They do not work for the village officials, nor can they be called upon to perform *etti* (forced labour). They buy hides from the Tangedi Madiga or local dealers and make leather articles from them. The Tangedi Madiga also make *chappals* and articles of agricultural use, but they supply them only to the cultivators as a part of their customary obligations to the latter to whom they are affiliated in terms of fixed patron-client relationship. The Sambari Madiga on the other hand make *chappals* only for general sale. The Tangedi Madiga make *chappals* and also mend them when necessary; the Sambari only make new ones and never mend them. The Jingari Madiga are saddlemakers. The Pinchini Madiga specialize in making broomsticks. They make most of their living from this work. The Dhore Madiga buy raw hides either from the Tangedi Madiga or from Muslim contractors, and sell them again after they have been tanned. The Tangedi Madiga also tan hides, but they tan only the hides of the dead animals belonging to their patrons. In some villages the Sambari Madiga buy hides only from Dhore Madiga, and not from the Tangedi

Madiga. The Dokkali Madiga collect bones of animals. They also buy bones from the Tangedi Madiga and sell them to the contractors dealing in bones. The Areti Madiga work in horns. In the hilly tracts of Warangal and Adilabad is found a group of Madiga called Manne Madiga who are said to live by thieving and robbery. However, the Madiga who work as labourers for the Raj Gonds of Adilabad are also called the Manne Madiga. They only work as labourers and do not remove dead cattle or work in leather.

The Tangedi or Tega Madiga are divided into two sects: Tirmandar and Ibotidar. The latter are also called Vibhotidar. The Tirmandar Madiga are Vaishnavite and the latter Saivaite. The Tirmandar Madiga marks his forehead with vermilion powder, while the Ibotidar smears ashes across his forehead, wears *lingam*—a phallic symbol, and imitates the ways of the Lingayats. Cases of intermarriage between the Tirmandar and Ibotidar are not lacking. The Ibotidar regard themselves superior to the Tirmandar. When a Tirmandar girl goes to live with her Ibotidar husband she has to undergo a purificatory rite after which she starts wearing the phallic symbol round her neck. She is instructed not to take it out even when she goes to her father's house. She also smears ashes across her forehead every morning. Custom permits an Ibotidar Madiga to eat his food even before the dead body of a close relative is buried. But a Tirmandar will not do this. He will not cook food as long as a dead body is in the house or in the colony. After the cremation and a purificatory bath alone can any cooking be done. There is also a difference in the offering of food to the dead on the third day after death. The Tirmandar cooks food to be offered to the dead in his house. The chief mourner proceeds to the grave with this food and offers it to the grave. The Ibotidar does the opposite. He cooks food at the burial ground, offers some to the grave and partakes of the rest himself. Both Tirmandar and Ibotidar claim their descent from Jambavant, the originator of the caste. Belonging to different sects, they have adopted different customs and rituals, and today they are practically two separate endogamous divisions.

The Madiga do not have any exogamous *gotra* or clans. The only exogamous divisions they have are agnatic lineages called *vamsham* and *inti-peru*. There is considerable confusion in regard to the use of these terms. Some people use them synonymously.

and interchangeably; while others make a sharp distinction between the two. According to the latter, each *vansham* has a common ancestor five, six or even more generations above in the genealogical scale, while the common ancestor of an *inti-peru* rarely goes above three generations in this scale. Their existence is not explained by mythology or oral tradition.

| Village | Vamsham      | Inti-peru       | No. of households |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Toopran | 1. Erraballi | 1. Gajjelli     | 15                |
|         |              | 2. Kalakanti    | 10                |
|         | 2. Sargala   | 1. Sargala      | 7                 |
|         |              | 2. Kichchugari  | 5                 |
|         |              | 1. Vadyaram     | .. 12             |
|         |              | 2. Enrelli      | 6                 |
|         |              | 3. Bangarugalla | 4                 |
|         |              | 4. Bijlipuram   | 1                 |
|         |              | 5. Kondapuram   | .. 1              |

While some lineages have only one name, i.e., *inti-peru*; others are grouped together also into *vamshams*. The former may roughly be called a minimal lineage; the latter a maximal lineage. However, a dividing line between the two cannot always be neatly drawn. Exogamy is based essentially on considerations of nearness or remoteness in the kinship scale. The names of *vamshams* and *inti-perus* are incidental and associational, following places, peculiarities or professions of an ancestor from whom the name is derived.

In the absence of accurate genealogical records extending to several generations it is difficult to reconstruct the history of the formation of *vamshams* and *inti-perus* with any degree of reliability and certainty. Poor memories of the informants in regard to their own family tree is also not conducive to any fruitful search in this direction. From fragmentary accounts that I was able to gather from the families covered in the preceding Table, it appears



that *vamshams* and *inti-perus* follow a developmental cycle. Large *inti-perus* tend to become a *vamsham* ; the latter being subdivided into two or more *inti-perus*. To illustrate the process the division of the Madiga into *vamsham* and *inti-perus* in Toopran may be examined.

In Toopran, a village in Hyderabad District, there are two *vamshams* and nine *inti-perus* among the Madiga. Erraballi and Sargala are the two *vamshams* which are sub-divided into two *inti-perus* each, that is, Gajjilli and Kalakanti, and Sargala and Kichchugari respectively. The other *inti-perus* in the village are Vadyaram, Bangarugalla, Enrelli, Bijliporam and Kondaporam. They are not grouped into *vamshams*. The history of these *vamshams* and *inti-perus* is as follows.

Some generations ago there were two brothers of Erraballi *vamsham*. One of them was married in a village called Sargala. Having quarrelled with his brother he went to his wife's father's village and lived there for some time. When he came back to Toopran with his wife and children to take charge of his ancestral property, he was called Sargala. This name remained associated with his children also. Beginning as an *inti-peru* the Sargala developed into a *vamsham*. In this way the Erraballi *vamsham* broke up into two : Erraballi and Sargala. A few generations later an Erraballi man went to his father-in-law's village called Gajjelli to live temporarily with his wife. The name of this village got associated with his name and with the names of his descendents as well. However, Gajjelli *inti-peru* has not yet developed into a *vamsham*. The Kalakanti *inti-peru* was also formed in a like manner. The Sargala *vamsham* also expanded as time went on. A member of this *vamsham* was a stammerer and produced a peculiar nasal sound. His descendents were called Kichchugari. This name was derived from a Telugu word describing the peculiarity of the ancestor. These again only constitute an *inti-peru* so far.

The Vandyaram *vamsham* has 12 families. A Gajjelli daughter was married in Vadyaram. For some reason the woman and her husband came to Toopran and settled down there. Their descendents are called after that village. Similar is the case with the Enrelli *inti-peru* which consists of six families. Enrelli is a village from where the ancestor of these families migrated to Toopran. Bangarugalla *inti-peru* brought this name when it came to Toopran three generations ago. It has retained it so far. Bijliporam and Kondaporam are two villages from where the heads of these

families have come to Toopran. Their stay here in Toopran is temporary. They and their descendents are identified with these names.

Almost no work has so far been done on the subject of family names in South India. In conclusion, it remains to be emphasized that sociologically only the lineage identification is important; the names of lineage are not. One may not marry into either type of the identified lineage; there is nothing to prevent one from marrying into a lineage bearing the same name as one's own but to which one is not agnatically related.

CHAPTER V  
SOCIAL STRUCTURE : FAMILY

The Madiga have a system of monogamous/polygynous marriage, patrilineal descent and inheritance, and patrilocal residence, although examples of matrilineal residence are not lacking.

Madiga families may be classified into four types: (1) simple family; (2) compound family; (3) patrilineal patrilocal extended family; and (4) patrilineal matrilineal extended family. The households which are not covered by any of these four types may be put under 'miscellaneous' category. A complete simple family consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children. However, there are many incomplete simple families where one of the three elements of a simple family, viz., husband, wife and children is lacking. It is seen that many simple families have some other relatives—consanguinal or affinal—living with them. They are simple families with adhesions and/or adjuncts. An adhesion refers to some member or members from the disintegrated patrilineal extended family, like husband's widowed mother, unmarried brother or sister, brother's widow or children living with a simple family. An adjunct refers to those relatives who cannot be regarded as belonging to typical patrilineal extended family. For example, husband's widowed sister, a widowed daughter of the couple, or wife's mother or brother living with a simple family have been called adjuncts. A family consisting of husband, more than one wives and their unmarried children is called a compound family. Like incomplete simple families, there are some incomplete compound families also. Some compound families have adhesions and/or adjuncts living with them. The patrilineal extended family may be formed because of either of the four types of extensions. In vertical extension parents live with a married son and members of his simple family. In lateral extension, brothers live together with members of their simple families. In vertical-lateral extension, both these extensions are combined. Among the Madiga there are many examples of matrilineal families in which married daughters with their husbands and children live with their parents,

On the basis of a sociological census of the Madiga of fifteen

villages comprising 404 households of this caste, figures for different types of family are given below :

|   |     |            |
|---|-----|------------|
| 1. Simple Family                          | ... | 283        |
| 2. Compound Family                        | ... | 8          |
| 3. Patrilineal Patrilocal Extended Family | ... | 15         |
| 4. Matrilocal Extended Family             | ... | 33         |
| 5. Miscellaneous Family                   |     | 65         |
| Total Number of Families                  |     | <u>404</u> |

It can be seen that simple families far exceed other types of families taken together. Among the Madiga, it is a general practice for a son to separate from his parents soon after marriage and form a separate household. With this event new responsibilities emerge. It is the responsibility of the head of the newly formed family to look after his wife and children, if any, and to provide them with food and clothing. Poor as the Madiga are, at the time of separation, a man may not be able to construct a separate house of his own. He and his wife will then have to be contented with a room or a corner in the parental house. They may carry on like this for a couple of years or so until a separate hut is built. As the head of the family, the son's responsibilities centre on his own family, but he cannot sever his relations with his parental family. Newly separated sons and brothers generally share a number of responsibilities with their parents and brothers. If there is an unmarried brother or sister in the family, they contribute a part of the expenses for his or her marriage. They are also expected to contribute towards the clearing of loans which have been incurred before the separation. If before separation a definite understanding is reached between father and son or between brothers regarding the responsibility, each would take for bearing the expenses to be incurred in marriages and for repaying the loans, it is expected that each would try to do his share.

For some time after separation, the status of a young man as the independent head of a family is not recognized by the caste or village people, especially if his father is alive. On occasions like a marriage or birth ceremony, invitation is sent to the father or elder brother only. On many occasions, land is divided among brothers and father if he is alive and it is cultivated separately, while in government records it continues to remain in the name of the father or eldest brother.

Besides the conjugal unit which has the potentiality of turning into a complete simple family after the birth of children, there are two more kinds of conjugal units, viz. those who have passed the child-bearing age, and those who have been left alone after the separation of sons and marriage of daughters. Some simple families are left incomplete because of the disintegration due to the death of one of the partners. Figures and details for different types of simple families are given in Table :

TABLE I  
SHOWING TYPES OF SIMPLE FAMILIES

| Family type   | Constituent members of the family  | No. of families |
|---|--|-----------------|
| A. (1) Complete simple family                             | Husband, wife and their unmarried children   | 148             |
|   |  | <hr/> 148       |
| (2) Complete simple family with adhesions and/or adjuncts | 1. Husband, wife, their unmarried children and his mother or father                | 20              |
|   | 2. Husband, wife and their unmarried children, and a widowed daughter              | 3               |
|   | 3. Husband, wife and their unmarried children, and his sister's unmarried daughter | 2               |
|   | 4. Husband, wife, and their unmarried children and wife's mother                   | 7               |
|   |  | <hr/> 32        |
| B. Incomplete simple family                               |  |                 |
| (1) Conjugal unit   | 1. Husband and wife  | 67              |
|   |  | <hr/> 67        |
| (2) Conjugal unit with adhesions/ adjuncts                | 1. Husband, wife and his sister  | 6               |
|   | 2. Husband, wife and his widowed brother   | 2               |
|   | 3. Husband, wife and her sister  | 3               |
|   | 4. Husband, wife, his unmarried brother and widowed mother                         | 1               |
|   | 5. Husband, wife and his step-mother   | 1               |
|   |  | <hr/> 13        |

| Family type   | Constituent members of the family                           | No. of families |
|---|---|-----------------|
| (3) Disintegrated simple family                         | 1. Widower and his unmarried children                       | 11              |
|   | 2. Widow and her unmarried children                         | 7               |
|   |   | 18              |
| (4) Disintegrated simple family with adhesions/adjuncts | 1. Widower, his unmarried children and his mother or father | 4               |
|   | 2. Widower, his mother and his unmarried sisters            | 1               |
|   |   | 5               |
|   |   | 283             |

Among the Madiga, a widow is free to remarry, though some widows whose children are grown up prefer to stay with their children, and to look after them and their property. Young widowers also usually remarry even if they have children from their previous spouses. In some villages it is regarded as the duty of the parents-in-law to provide a widower with another wife. This is necessary specially if the widower's children are very young. Remarriage of a middle-aged widower with children, however, often evoked criticism from people. Medi Sailu of Amirpet became a widower at the age of thirty-five. He had an unmarried daughter of 12 years and a son who was 10 years old. The widower's lineal relatives were not interested in his remarriage; they were more interested in marrying off the girl. But contrary to their wishes, Sailu decided to remarry a widow who had children from her previous husband. People were heard criticising him: 'Look at him. He has grown up children. Still he is thinking of marrying that widow. He should instead have made arrangements for the marriage of the daughter. He is indeed selfish.' The supporters of Sailu put it like this, 'What should he do? He is *mogabhai* (simple man or a man without a wife), without any experience of domestic work. How will he work in the field and also cook and feed the children. He should have someone to look after him and his children. It is true that a step-mother is a step-mother, but she is also a human being. If she feeds her own children three

times in a day she will at least feed the husband's children once a day.' Sailu married the widow and has children from her also.

An ageing widower may marry a widow who has children from her previous husband, and treat the woman's children as his own. Guddi Gaura of Madhawaram was about forty-five when his wife died leaving only an unmarried daughter behind. The girl was grown-up and was married in another village. Gaura married a widow who had two children, a daughter of 12 years and a son of 10 years. The girl was married off in the same village, and the mother and son lived with Gaura. Gaura made some interesting remarks about his wife and children. He said, "I have brought a cow from the market and with the cow were two calves. People say that the cow is mine but the calves do not belong to me. They cannot inherit my property. How is it possible, to take the cow and drive away the calves? They are as much mine as is the cow. The girl is married off. Her mother will cook food for me. The boy will light a lamp in my house after my death."

There are very few polygynous compound families among the Madiga. Even if they are formed, they do not last long. If a man takes as his second wife a woman other than his first wife's sister or cousin there are greater possibilities of quarrels in the house. Interesting descriptions of quarrels between co-wives are related by the Madiga. 'Madiga women are quarrelsome. Two women cannot live in peace. A man who marries two women leads a miserable life and sometimes he is placed in very awkward situations. One of his wives would insist on his sleeping with her but another would not let him go. One would hold his legs and another his arms and there would be a regular tug of war. The poor man is helpless because he cannot satisfy either of the two.'

Sometimes polygynous compound families are formed in the following way. If a woman does not have children, she does not get proper treatment from her husband and his people. Most women in such situations divorce their husbands. But if they are cross-cousins of their husbands, they may advise them to remarry and have children to continue the line. In Amirpet, Kommu Narsimma and his wife were cross-cousins. They did not have a child for a long time. The wife did not like to run away or divorce her husband because she was fond of him and she did not want to bring a bad name to her husband's and parents' families. Her mother-in-law wanted to see them have a child and specially a

son. In the mean-while, one of the wife's cousins divorced her husband and went back to her parent's village. She had a small child, a boy, from her previous husband. Narsimma's wife advised him to take this woman as his second wife, and he did so.

Ellayya of Kanjerla, a village six miles from Madhawaram, lived with his wife and children. Durgi of Madhawaram was married to Balayya of Kanjerla. Durgi used to approach him for help whenever her husband beat her and treated her badly. The Madiga of that village suspected them when Ellayya started frequenting Durgi's house very often. They called a meeting and decided that Ellayya should leave his wife and children and take Durgi as his wife and pay the marriage expenses to Durgi's husband. Ellayya's wife was his mother's brother's daughter. She did not want to leave him. She advised him to keep Durgi in his house. Ellayya, his wife and children, Durgi and her son ran away from Kanjerla and settled down in Madhawaram. Since then, this polygynous compound family has lived in Madhawaram.

The types of compound families are given in the Table.

TABLE 2  
SHOWING TYPES OF COMPOUND FAMILIES

| Family type  | Constituent members of the family   | No. of families |
|--|---|-----------------|
| A. (1) Polygynous compound family                      | 1. Husband, wives and their unmarried children  | 3               |
|  | 2. Husband, wives and his second wife's unmarried children                              | 2               |
|  |   | 5               |
| (2) Polygynous compound family with adhesions/adjuncts | 1. Husband, wives and their unmarried children and his second wife's unmarried children | 2               |
|  | 2. Husband, wives and their unmarried children and his brother's unmarried children     | 1               |
|  |   | 3               |
|  | Grand Total   | 8               |

The patrilineal patrilocal extended families are not very stable among the Madiga. Most of them break up within a period of



four or five years after their formation. There is not a single example in these fifteen villages where brothers and their simple families are found to live together after the death of parents. The following Table gives the figures and details for these extended families :

TABLE 3  
SHOWING EXTENDED FAMILIES

| Family type   | Constituent members of the family   | No. of families |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Vertically extended patrilineal patrilocal family           | 1. Parents, their unmarried children and son with his wife and children               | 4               |
|   | 2. Parents and son with his wife and children   | 5               |
|   |   | 9               |
| Vertically-laterally extended patrilineal patrilocal family | 1. Parents, their unmarried children and sons with their wives and unmarried children | 1               |
|   | 2. Parents, and sons with their wives and children                                    | 5               |
|   |   | 6               |
|   | Total No. of families   | 15              |

It is often seen that if there are no grown-up sons in the family, parents like to keep their daughter and son-in-law in their house. Such families are comparatively more stable than the patrilineal patrilocal families. The sociological census of fifteen villages shows that they number more than the latter. The following Table gives figures and details for such matrilocal families.

TABLE 4  
SHOWING MATRILocal FAMILIES

| Family type                | Constituent members of the family                    | No. of families |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Matrilocal extended family | 1. Parents and their daughter with her husband       | 28              |
|                            | 2. Parents with married daughters and their husbands | 1               |

| Family type                | Constituent members of the family   | No. of families |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Martilocal extended family | 3. Parents their unmarried children and married daughters' husbands, and children | 2               |
|                            | 4. Parents, and their married daughters, husbands and children                    | 2               |
|                            |   | 33              |

The total number of 'miscellaneous' households is 65. Table given below indicates different combinations included in this category.

TABLE 5  
SHOWING MISCELLANEOUS FAMILIES

| Family type              | Constituent members of the family   | No. of families |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Miscellaneous Households | 1. Widower alone  | 28              |
|                          | 2. Widow alone  | 8               |
|                          | 3. Widow, her sister's unmarried daughter   | 1               |
|                          | 4. Divorced woman alone   | 7               |
|                          | 5. Brothers only  | 14              |
|                          | 6. Sisters only   | 5               |
|                          | 7. Man and his unmarried male cousin  | 1               |
|                          | 8. Husband and wives, children of the second wife from her previous spouse, Husbands' widowed mother and widowed sister, sister's married daughter and her husband and their children and sister's unmarried daughter | 1               |
|                          | 65  |                 |

Family ideals for different levels in the village community in Telangana have been discussed in some detail by Dube

(1955 : 138). The Madiga, like the other castes of this region, regard solidarity, cooperation and understanding as the essential attributes of the family.

Four basic principles on which the structure of the family is founded are : (i) Respect for old age, (ii) Respect for position in the scale of kinship, (iii) Superiority of the male, and (iv) Necessity of keeping family matters confined to the responsible members of the family.

These are the respectable ideals of upper caste Hindus. It may be observed that the higher we go in the caste hierarchy, the greater is the observance of these ideals in everyday life; and the lower down we travel on the caste hierarchy, the lesser is their observance. The common Madiga in the village may verbalise them, but is by no means strict in observing them. However, with education and economic betterment, they tend to emphasize and observe them more and more.

Respect for age and special kinship positions is shown only on ceremonial and formal occasions. In everyday life one fails to observe any special respect being shown to people of different kinship statuses. Separation of sons from their parents three or four years after they are married makes the very conception of solidarity of the family different from what it is in the upper castes with larger families. Solidarity is expressed only in crises and difficulties and on ceremonial occasions. Ideally brothers should continue to live under one roof even after their parents' death. But most of them separate soon after their marriage. Theoretically a woman is inferior to man, but in practice she is not so. If the husband does not treat her properly, she takes another man as her husband. If he beats her, she can also beat him. If he teases and taunts her, she also retaliates in like manner.

An ideal husband is one who works hard and looks after the comfort of his wife and children. He treats her kindly. He buys her good clothes and some ornaments. He spends money on drinks for her. He is polite to his wife's people and offers them a drink of toddy when they happen to visit his place. An ideal wife is submissive. She regards her husband as her master. She does not complain to anyone even if her husband and his people do not take proper care of her. She respects him; washes his clothes and eats food after everybody else in the house has eaten. She does all the household work.

In actual practice, only a few Madiga families strive to conform to these ideals, and that too for a short while. Husband and wife get to know each other only after they are united in marriage. For several days their relations are formal, and they hardly discuss any family matters. After they become intimate with one another, they begin discussing matters concerning the family. The wife complains about her mother-in-law and criticizes other members of the family. The husband in the beginning does not pay any heed to her complaints. He does not side with his wife even if he finds his mother at fault. Later, he has to take sides. The quarrels between the wife and the mother are discussed openly in the colony. Ultimately, separation of the family takes place. This is done in a matter of fact and realistic manner. No particular shame is felt regarding the quarrels. There is intervention of the elders only when they threaten to take a violent turn.

Inter-personal relations between the siblings are closest in their early childhood. When they grow to be six to eight years old, girls confine their activities to household work and their own play groups. They do not play with their brothers. They help their mothers in domestic work. Brothers, however, continue to be companions for a longer time. An elder brother claims authority over the younger ones. He also supports and defends them.

Marriage separates girls from their natal houses. They go to live with their husbands, sometimes in far off villages. It is the duty of brothers to invite them on ceremonial occasions; especially at the time of the marriage of their children. In the years immediately following their marriage, they retain close contacts with their parental homes, but time creates an increasing distance between them and their parental homes.

Brothers, even after they have set up their independent homes, consult one another on several important matters. Solidarity is expected between them, and is actually maintained also up to a certain extent.

Older people, specially the elder brother of one's father or father's father, are to be respected. A paternal uncle is treated almost as a father and his wife as a mother. Old grandparents are also to be treated with consideration. The actual treatment of the old people, however, depends upon the economic condition of the family and the individual temperament of the husband and wife on the one hand and the old relatives on the other. In an

average or well-to-do home, older people will rarely be treated harshly if they are non-interfering and do not make any unusual demands on the earning members of the family.

Other important relatives outside the family are father's sister and mother's brother. Their visits to the family are frequent and their presence on certain special occasions is considered essential. When brothers fail to help a person, he can turn to his mother's brother for help.

The simple family is the basic type of family unit in the Madiga society. Other types represent mostly the phases in its developmental cycle. Urbanization, industrialization and modernization are not likely to affect its structure in any significant way. Increasing economic prosperity coupled to the adoption of some of the upper-caste family standards, may, however, set a trend for somewhat larger sized households in the rural setting, but even here culturally established forms of family organization are likely to prove a hindrance. The changes most in evidence today point to the possibility of an increasing adoption of some of the upper-caste norms of intra-family relationships, rather than to any major structural change.



CHAPTER VI  
SOCIAL STRUCTURE : KINSHIP

The kinship terminology of the Madiga is mainly classificatory. It provides thirty-nine basic terms of reference to cover the entire range of kinship ties.

Of these thirty-nine basic kinship terms, seven are *particularizing* or *descriptive*. They are : *ayya* (father), *amma* (mother), *pendlam* or *bharya* (wife), *magadu* (husband), *savali* (co-wife), *pinatandri* (step-father) and *pinatalli* (step-mother).

Terms which denote more than one person are thirty-two in number. It will be seen that the distribution of classificatory terms at different generation levels is not equal. There are fourteen terms to cover all relatives on Ego's own generation level. Thirteen terms cover all relatives on the level of his father's generation. On the level of his son's generation all relatives are covered by four classificatory terms. The number of these terms is greatly reduced if we go up or down the generation scale from the level of Ego's father or son respectively. The generationwise distribution of classificatory kinship terms is shown in Chart 4.

It can be seen from the Chart that sex and generation are the two important determinants in the classification of relatives. There is not a single kinship term which refers to both a male and a female relative. Similarly, the same term is never used to refer to relatives of different generations. The principle of age is important only for the classification of relatives in one's own generation and in the generation of one's parents. There are separate terms for elder brother, younger brother, elder sister and younger sister, but not for their children. Similarly, there are separate terms for father's elder and younger brothers and also not for their children. Age differences are not taken into account while referring to father's sister, father's sister's husband, mother's brother, or mother's brother's wife. The kinship status of a wife depends upon the age-status of her husband, irrespective of her own age. A person will refer to his/her elder brother's wife by the term *vadine*, even though the latter may be younger than the person referring to her. There is a separate term to refer to younger brother's wife. Younger sister's husband or husband's younger brother is referred



CHART 4  
SHOWING KINSHIP TERMS AT DIFFERENT GENERATION LEVELS

| Generation Level        | Terms used   | Number of terms used on the level |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Father's father' father | Muttata<br><i>(father's father's father)</i> Muttavva<br><i>(father's father's mother)</i>   | 2                                 |
| Father' father          | Tata<br><i>(father's father)</i> Avva<br><i>(father's mother)</i>  | 2                                 |
|                         | Peddayya<br><i>(father's elder brother)</i> Peddamma<br><i>(father's elder brother's wife)</i>   |                                   |
| Father                  | Ayya    Amma    Pin-tandri    Pin-talli    Mena-mama    Mama    Atta<br><i>(father)</i> <i>(mother)</i> <i>(step-father)</i> <i>(step-mother)</i> <i>(mother's brother)</i> <i>(mother's brother)</i> <i>(wife's mother)</i><br>Mena-Atta      Chinnayya      Chinnamma<br><i>(father's sister)</i> <i>(father's younger brother)</i> <i>(father's younger brother's wife)</i><br>Anna      Vadine      Akka      Bava<br><i>(elder brother)</i> <i>(elder brother's wife)</i> <i>(elder sister)</i> <i>(elder sister's husband)</i> | 12                                |
| Ego                     | Magadu    Pendlam    Savati      Saddakudu      Yaranulu      Viyyankudu<br><i>(husband)</i> <i>(wife)</i> <i>(co-wife)</i> <i>(wife's sister's husband)</i> <i>(husband's brothers's wife)</i> <i>(son's wife's father)</i><br>Viyyankuralu    Tammudu      Maradalu      Chelle      Bava-mardi<br><i>(son's wife's mother)</i> <i>(younger brother)</i> <i>(younger brother's wife)</i> <i>(younger sister)</i> <i>(younger sister's husband)</i>   | 15                                |
| Son                     | Koduku      Kodaldu      Alludu      Bidda<br><i>(son)</i> <i>(son's wife)</i> <i>(daughter's husband)</i> <i>(daughter)</i>   | 4                                 |
| Son's son               | Manamadu      Manamaralu<br><i>(son's son)</i> <i>(son's daughter)</i>   | 2                                 |
| Son's son' son          | Munimanamadu      Munimamaralu<br><i>(son's son's son)</i> <i>(son's son's daughter)</i>   | 2                                 |



to as *bavamarabi* or *maradi* taking into account the age of the husband/sister irrespective of the age of the person referring to them. Age differences are ignored while referring to son's wife's father, son's wife's mother and wife's sister's husband. Age differences are not taken into account in regard to relatives in the generations above those of Ego's father and below that of Ego's own.

Brothers and sisters use common terms of reference for all those who are related through father and mother and for relatives above one's own and one's father's sister and father's father's sister's generations. However, when we come to the generation below that of one's own we find that brother and sister use reciprocal terms of reference. For a brother, sister's son will be his *alludu* and sister's daughter his *kodalu*, while for a sister, brother's son will be her *alludu* and brother's daughter her *kodalu*.

At son's son's generation the terms of reference used by brother and sister again become common.

In contrast to this, the terms of reference used by husband and wife in common are at the generation level of their son and son's son. The reciprocal terms of reference for husband and wife are at their own generation level and at the generation level of their parents. For relatives in generations above the parents the terms of reference to be used by husband and wife become common.

The basic structure of kinship as revealed by terms of address is also essentially the same. There are only fifteen basic terms of address. As most relatives younger than Ego on his own generation level and those on the generation level of Ego's son or daughter are addressed by their personal names, the number of kinship terms of address is considerably reduced. These basic terms of address are shown in Chart 5.

CHART 5  
SHOWING TERMS OF ADDRESS

|   |                                  |  |                                  |                            |
|---|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Tata<br>(father's father)               | Avva<br>(father's mother)        |  |                                  |                            |
| Peddaiya<br>(father's elder brother)    |                                  | Peddamma<br>(father's elder brother's wife)    |                                  |                            |
| Ayya<br>(father)                        | Amma<br>(mother)                 | Mama<br>(mother's brother)                     | Atta<br>(father's sister)        |                            |
| Chinnaiya<br>(father's younger brother) |                                  | Chinnamma<br>(father's younger brother's wife) |                                  |                            |
| Anna<br>(elder brother)                 | Vadine<br>(elder brother's wife) | Akka<br>(elder sister)                         | Bava<br>(elder sister's husband) | Chelle<br>(younger sister) |

The Madiga kinship system recognizes and identifies by name eight clusters of relatives. These are :

1. *Intiwandlu* or members of the minimal lineage (excluding married daughters).
2. *Vamshamwandlu* or members of the maximal lineage (excluding married daughters).
3. *Menawandlu* or father's sister and mother's brother and their children.
4. *Ammagariwandlu* or a woman's parents and their children.
5. *Attagariwandlu* or wife's parents and their children.
6. *Avvagariwandlu* or mother's mother and her children.
7. *Vivvankulu* or son's wife and daughter's husband and their parents.
8. *Shaddakulu* or wife's sister's husband and his brothers.

In the above, clusters 1 and 2 in that order, are the most important in respect of ritual, social and economic obligations. For other groups specific relationships between particular individuals count more for the purposes of these obligations; the entire group as such is much less involved.

Degrees of nearness and distance in the kinship scale may be measured by *sutakam* or death pollution observances and the modes of purification within the kin-group. *Sutakam* is observed for nine days by all the members of the minimal and maximal lineage following the death of one of their members should the death take place in their village. Those living in a different village are only required to take a purificatory bath to wash off their *sutakam*, unless the deceased is a very close kin. A married woman will observe *sutakam* for three days on the death of her father and mother, and for only one day on the death of her married daughter, sister, or brother. For attaining purification a man has to shave off his hair and moustaches on the death of his father or mother, besides having a purificatory bath. All men belonging to the maximal and minimal lineage, residing in a village, have to have an ordinary hair-cut and bath on the death of a member from the same local group; if the deceased lives in a different village a bath alone is considered enough. For a man a purificatory bath only is required on the death of his father's sister, mother's brother, mother's brother's son and father's sister's son.

Joking relationships exist between the following categories of relatives :

a man and his father's father; father's sister's son, mother's brother's son, daughter's husband's father, son's wife's father, son's son, daughter's son, elder brother's wife, wife's younger sister, wife's elder sister, father's mother, mother's mother, son's daughter, daughter's daughter ;

a woman and her father's father, father's sister's son, mother's brother's son, daughter's husband's mother, son's wife's mother, son's son, daughter's son, elder brother's wife, younger brother's wife, husband's elder sister, husband's younger sister, father's mother, mother's mother, son's daughter, daughter's daughter.

Of these only mother's brother's daughter and wife's younger sister are regarded as the potential mates of a man. For a woman only her father's sister's son is regarded as a potential mate.

Avoidance relations exist between the following :

a man and his wife's mother and younger brother's wife ; and  
a woman and her husband's father and husband's elder brother.

Effective ties exist between members of an extended family and minimal lineage sharing the same settlement ; those of the maximal lineage living in the same settlement come next. Physical distance and time work together as factors creating distance between kin ; the more apart they are in space and time the lesser is the frequency of their inter-action. Consequently their relationship becomes more and more formal and symbolic.



## SOCIAL STRUCTURE : AUTHORITY

Authority in a multi-caste Telangana village has to be viewed at two different levels : the intra-caste level and the inter-caste level. On the one hand the Madiga in each village have a separate authority organization consisting of a caste council and a headman ; on the other they are also represented in the general village council through their headman.

Caste authority operates at three different levels. Each family has a recognized head who is responsible for the acts of omission and commission on the part of the family members, and is answerable to the head of the minimal lineage in the first instance. The head of the family as well as the head of the minimal lineage are answerable to the caste council and to the headman of the caste in the settlement.

Minor offences are expected to be dealt with by the head of the family. Admonitions and light punishment by him are considered adequate. If he is lax or ineffective he may be directed to be more watchful or strong, and may even be admonished by the head of the lineage, the caste headman or the caste council.

A head of lineage is similarly supposed to watch the activities of all the families belonging to the lineage. Negligence and ineffectiveness on his part may provoke the headman of the caste or the caste council to rebuke him.

The caste council of the settlement consists of all the heads of lineages and the headman of the caste. The latter is known as *myatari*. If the Madiga colony consists of two recognizable units, as in many larger villages, there are two *myatari* for them. The head of the older colony is the senior headman and is known as *pedda myatari*. The head of the relatively more recent colony functions as the junior headman and is known as *chinna myatari*. Both the headmen are represented in the caste council ; the senior one enjoying precedence and conducting its proceedings.

The more serious infringements of caste norms by the members in the settlement come up for decision before the caste council. An analysis of over one hundred concrete cases that came up before the caste councils in the fifteen villages reveals that cases

coming before them mostly relate to : (i) sex offences, especially adultery and incest ; (ii) inheritance and division of ancestral property ; (iii) ill-treatment of dependents and members of the family, especially the aged ; (iv) personal quarrels involving violence or serious threat of violence ; (v) stealing and damage to property of other members of the caste ; (vi) failure in discharge of contractual obligations to patrons and service-rendering castes having traditional arrangements for exchange of services ; (vii) failure in timely repayment of debts ; (viii) lack of proper courtesy to or improper behaviour towards the upper castes involving risk of possible violent retaliation by them ; (ix) defiance of caste authority or refusal to accept the decisions of caste functionaries ; and (x) undue familiarity with or latitude towards the satellite castes involving breaches of traditional propriety governing their interaction.

Decisions are taken generally by the democratic consensus of the members of the council. However, the outcome of a case depends largely upon the personality and attitude of the headman. The pulls and pressures of the parties involved in the dispute are also a powerful factor in governing the decisions of the council. In any case, the council is expected to hear both sides and consider concrete and circumstantial evidence as well as the testimony of the witnesses. Punishments range from admonition to ex-communication, fines occupying a middle position.

The office of the *myatari* is hereditary, and goes from the father to the eldest son. He enjoys a special status within the caste settlement. In the sphere of authority, his position largely depends upon his personality, tact and the quality of his inter-personal relations. An aggressive *myatari* can dominate caste affairs ; a weak one becomes a mere symbolic head.

The privileges enjoyed by the *myatari* can now be enumerated.

- (i) He can dispose of many of the less serious cases himself. He decides what cases should go up before the caste council. He presides over the deliberations of the council and can play, if he so wishes, a significant role in determining the outcome of the case.
- (ii) The upper castes bring complaints against the Madiga men affiliated to them to the *myatari* in the first instance. If he fails to give satisfaction to the patrons, the cases are generally taken to the larger council of the entire village.
- (iii) His presence is essential on many socio-religious occasions, such as marriage negotiations,

receiving the marriage party, feasts and sacrifices. (iv) He is the first to be served in a feast, and often gets the choicest share. (v) He sacrifices the goat or sheep under the marriage shed. (vi) In the festival in honour of goddess Poshamma (goddess of smallpox) his offerings are given precedence over the offerings of others. (vii) If there is no Baidla priest in the settlement he officiates as a priest both at marriages and at Poshamma worship. (viii) He sacrifices the buffaloes at the ceremony held every three years in honour of Durgamma (the goddess of epidemics).

His authority has weakened considerably in recent years. The same is true, to a lesser degree, of the authority of the caste council. More cases are now taken to the statutory village councils or to higher law courts in defiance of the caste council. When this happens, the caste council feels helpless and generally lets the matter take its own course.

Each multi-caste village also has a traditional village council. Its deliberations are conducted by the headman of the village and members representing all the major caste groups in the village. The Madiga caste is represented in it through the headman of the caste. But because of his low status the Madiga headman is rarely an influential or even a vocal member of this council. Disputes involving members of two different castes or more are generally referred to this council.

The creation of statutory village *panchayats* or councils has affected the position of the traditional *panchayats*. These new councils have both administrative and limited judicial powers. While the upper castes are tending to cling to the traditional councils in so far as judicial matters are concerned, the lower castes—including the Madiga—are more enthusiastic about the statutory *panchayats*. Because of their voting strength they can occupy a better position in it and can even effectively influence its decisions. At the time of this research both types of panchayat were co-existing, but the struggle for survival between them was on.

The Madiga do not have any large inter-village caste councils. In cases involving Madiga of two different settlements, the two parties to the dispute nominate two responsible elders to discuss the issue. Each has a right to nominate one elder. These two, if they think fit, ask a few other responsible caste members to join them in hearing the dispute. Their agreed verdict is supposed to be binding on both the parties.

Madiga caste councils have always had to face some competition from the general village council, for the spheres of the two have never been quite clearly demarcated. While the caste council could not hear any dispute involving members of other castes (these cases being decided either in a joint meeting of the councils of the two castes or in the village council), the village council could always hear serious cases even if both parties to a dispute belonged to the same caste. With the creation of statutory village *pan-chayats* and easy accessibility to higher courts of law, their position has been weakened still further. They still function, but the possibility of defiance of their decisions has loosened their hold on the community,



CHAPTER VIII  
TRENDS OF CHANGE

In this book an attempt has been made to present a structural picture of the total net-work of the social relations of one segment of Hindu Society. We have first analyzed the position of the Madiga in the setting of the general multi-caste village community of Telangana. Then the position of the Madiga *vis-a-vis* their satellite castes has been examined. Finally, the social structure of the Madiga community has been outlined as an isolable whole. The integration of the analyses at these three levels, it is hoped, will offer us the structure of *part society* within a *whole society*.

The Madiga, like people all over India, have been exposed to a series of powerful currents of change. While a certain number of changes have been inspired *from within*, a great many have been induced—directly or indirectly—*from without*. National, regional and local developments have significantly modified the life-ways of the Madiga, and have also materially contributed towards setting the pace and direction of self-inspired moves for change.

Forces and factors of change in Telangana villages have been discussed by Dube. (1955 : 292-236). In a general way they operate in all villages inhabited by the Madiga. Special mention deserves to be made of certain factors which have particular relevance for the changes that are occurring in the structure of Madiga society.

Following the integration of Hyderabad State with the Indian Union, there was a series of important land reforms. The abolition of Jagirs and associated land reforms affected the Madiga caste in three ways. The rent-free lands allotted to some of them for their traditional services were taken away, causing among them considerable heart-burning and frustration. However, it also opened up the possibility for them, or for the more well-to-do at any rate, of acquiring proprietary rights over the land under their possession. The end of the feudal order brought in its wake a series of administrative reforms. This reduced the authority of the petty officials, land-lords and their agents who often reserved their harshest behaviour for the low Madiga.

The process initiated by the land-reforms was aided by the

introduction of the apparatus of democracy at different levels. The hold of the dominant castes had been loosened somewhat by the land reforms; democratic elections struck another blow to it. The position of the dominant castes was consequently weakened still further. Recognition of the constitutional equality of the Madiga allowed them to improve their position in the changing group alignments on the village and regional levels. Their number, and not their traditional position, mattered in village politics. Even the most orthodox aspirant to political office could not ignore the strength of Madiga votes in local, state and national elections.

Legal ban on public practice of untouchability, an equal share in public utilities, reservations for scheduled castes in legislative bodies and public services, provision of funds specially ear-marked for welfare activities among the scheduled castes, and promotion of special welfare schemes both within the framework of Community Development Projects and National Extension Services and outside, contributed greatly to changing their position in the village community.

While some of these measures brought to them opportunities of a fuller participation in the community life of the village, special safeguards and reservations also gave rise to certain separatist tendencies. Their separate identity, recognized by the constitution, came in handy for the ambitions of the emergent elite of the caste; solidarity of the caste meant greater bargaining power because of its united voting strength.

Opportunities of urban employment and absorption in "open", i.e., non-traditional occupations were also created. Although they were limited in their range and capacity, they did nevertheless suggest certain alluring possibilities.

In the context of constitutional and political changes, legislative safeguards, reforms and benefits, and increasing economic opportunities, urbanization and modernization, certain broad hypotheses regarding trends of change in the Madiga society can be formulated. The more important among them are given here:

1. Under the impact of the new forces, there is likelihood of a shift in the emphases of life from the sacred to the secular. Consequently, ascriptive aspects of social life and value-orientation are likely to be modified, giving place to achievement aspects.
2. Following from hypothesis 1 above, and from the many changes in different spheres, a rise in the level of aspirations out-

side the traditional premises of life can be anticipated. The system of expectations within the traditional premises is likely to be marked by a shift from a *diffused expectation system* to a *specific expectation system* both in the context of intra-group and inter-group relations of the Madiga.

3. Following from hypotheses 1 and 2, it is to be expected that there will be a shift in the degree of kin—and caste—orientation of the community toward development of interest-orientation.

4. Cumulatively the new forces could lead to the breaking up of group cohesion and gradually to a progressive degree of disintegration of the traditional patterns of intra-and inter-group arrangements.

For a variety of reasons, mostly socio-cultural, the change could take a different turn also, necessitating an alternative set of hypotheses. These may also be stated briefly.

1A. The Madiga being sensitive on the ritual level, better economic, social and educational opportunities may induce them to assert their claims for a better status on this level. This could take one of the following forms.

(i) A total rejection of both the content and forms of traditional Hindu social organization, and an effort to seek the destinies of the group in a different setting; for example the rejection of Hinduism and acceptance of Buddhism (or neo-Buddhism) by the scheduled castes in some parts of India.

(ii) A rejection of the forms of Hindu social organization but not of its content, leading to an effort to defy its ascriptive injunctions and attempting to achieve a high status by adopting the ritual practices of the highest group. This could initiate a process of *sanskritic leap*, as evidenced among the Satnami of Chhattisgarh, who tried almost wholesale adoption of Brahmanical practices while giving up the traditional practices which gave them a low status (Parganiha : 1960).

(iii) Partial and selective acceptance of the content and forms of Hindu social organization, and effort both at ritual and sacred levels for the attainment of a higher status.

2A. The rise in the level of aspiration coupled with the new opportunities of social advancement, especially in the new democratic set up, may contribute further to group cohesion and solidarity, so that the united strength of the group as a whole could carry on its fight better.

While on the surface the two sets of hypotheses appear to be contradictory, they could in practice operate simultaneously also. As the following analysis will show they can in fact be seen to be operating together.

Signs of change are evident in the pattern of inter-group relationship involving the Madiga and the other Hindu castes. But for the fast dwindling core of elderly Madiga who accept tradition without any overt protest, the younger generation does not accept its ascribed status. They have gained equal access to schools, public wells and community temples. While they are still regarded as 'untouchables', overtones of contempt for their ritually low and defiling status find expression only in anger. In the ordinary course derogatory remarks and contemptuous behaviour are avoided. Thus from a slave of all work, who could be forced to undertake all kinds of menial jobs for little or no payment, the Madiga is tending to develop specific contractual obligations in his dealings with the other castes. Their new constitutional status and awareness of the value of their votes has strengthened this trend. While the structural outline of the Madiga in relation to the wider multi-caste community remains the same, there is a definite change in the overt community attitudes towards them. Patron-client relations are tending to be specific contractual obligations; so is exchange of services between the service-rendering castes. Services for cash payment reflect the changing wage structure.

This trend is also explained partly by the rising level of aspiration, which has also promoted migration to urban areas and the quest for urban-industrial employment. Those who are left in the village are not too many to undercut one another in fierce economic competition. Lest they also migrate to towns, the employers have to treat them with consideration.

Economic interests have forced them not to break away completely from the framework of traditional village economy, but they have worked with a certain degree of success to make suitable adjustments in it. Those who can migrate to urban areas and find suitable employment there, break away partly from their family and almost wholly from its traditional obligations in the village. There is no legal or even a practical way to compel a migrant son to return to his village to take up his father's obligations. But the instances of all branches of a family migrating are

not too many, and a reasonable number of Madiga are still left in the village to carry on their traditional roles in a modified form.

The position of the satellite castes is somewhat anomalous. The growing prosperity of the Madiga within the framework of village economy is reflected in their making relatively liberal rewards to the satellite castes, but the increasing migration of Madiga patrons to urban centres at the same time reduces their chances of raising their incomes substantially. In the urban setting they do not feel obligated to maintain their traditional patron-client relationship with the satellite castes. It is curious that while the Madiga claim better status vis-a-vis the upper caste Hindus, they have shown no inclination to grant the same to the still lower satellite castes dependent upon them. Their nomadic character, small numbers, absence of cohesive organization, and lack of educational opportunities, have kept the satellite castes almost in their traditional position, but there are some documented instances of their breaking away from their traditional callings and taking to labour for wages in the villages and towns.

Endogamous and exogamous divisions of the caste have largely been only an intra-caste concern. To the outside world, especially to the upper caste Hindus, irrespective of the division to which they belonged, they were Madiga. In the rural setting the endogamous divisions still perform their main function of defining the outer limits of the group from which a spouse may be chosen. For the urban groups, especially the educated and well-to-do elite section, it could be said that the larger identity of the Madiga caste is tending to eclipse the separate identity of smaller endogamous segments. Exogamous divisions, based mainly on considerations of affinity in the lineage scale, appear to be remaining stable. No signs of change are in evidence in them. With increasing literacy and the developing fashion of adding a family name to the personal name, it is certain that the changes in *inti* and *vamsham* names will in future not be as frequent and casual as they appear to be up to the present.

In the area of intra-family relations and kinship ties two significant trends are in evidence. With better economic status and education, the Madiga tend to give up their 'low caste ways' and adopt the more respectable norms of intra-family relationships current among the upper castes. The landed upper-level agricultural castes, rather than the Brahman, provide them the model

for emulation. In the urban setting their bonds with the extended family and kin-group left in their original villages become loose, and the effectiveness and frequency of contacts gradually diminishes as they acquire deeper roots in their new setting.

The same cannot be said, however, in regard to the strength of their caste feeling. In the urban setting caste loses almost all its salient characteristics except one—endogamy. Some of them would have liked to forget their caste, but its endogamous character, resulting in their non-acceptance by others in this sphere, does not help them in this. Special safeguards and reservations in services confer some advantages to them, and to avail of these they press their claims based on their caste origin. The rise of caste as a political factor in recent years has also worked toward keeping their caste-consciousness alive.

In respect of authority two changes of some significance may be noted. With the growth of a spirit of individualism, the authority of the hereditary headman of the Madiga colonies has weakened considerably. Democratic consensus of the heads of different families in the colony, rather than the orders of the headman, regulates its affairs and punishes offenders. In the inter-caste village panchayat, the interest of the Madiga has shifted from the traditional panchayat, in which they had at best only token and practically ineffective representation, to the statutory panchayat. The latter gives them scope, either individually as a caste or in alignment with other castes, to assert their claims on the authority of their voting strength.

In conclusion, we may now consider changes in the Madiga caste in the developing conceptual frame of reference which has played such an important part during the last decade in all discussions of social structure and change in India.

Srinivas' concept of *sanskritization* marks, as it were, the opening of the flood-gates for a spate of concepts ending with the suffix *ization*, each with an individual emphasis but each in its turn taking in a large assortment of change phenomena to explain a broad and dominant theme of change. The *sanskritization* concept emerged out of the analysis of Coorg data by Srinivas, who identified a tendency among the lower castes increasingly to adopt sanskritic ritual with a view to raising their status, in a ritually determined social scale (Srinivas: 1956). Srinivas himself has admitted that the name he has given to the process is somewhat

awkward. For want of a more suitable name, however, the concept has continued to be used under its original label ; although certain alternative names, such as Hinduization or Brahmanization, have been suggested from time to time (Aiyappan and Balaratnam : 1956, Ishwaran : 1960). The suggested alternatives, it has to be admitted, are no better than the one they seek to correct and are in some ways more confusing. The quarrel over a suitable name for the concept has at best touched its content very superficially, and as such it has been rather unproductive in terms of meaningful conceptual advances. The concept emphasizes the ritual theme greatly. Notwithstanding Srinivas' subsequent efforts to bring in associated secular factors also within the general framework of this concept, one is still left with the impression that adoption of sanskritic ritual is the most significant channel for the attainment of a higher status. The concept also errs in implicitly assuming one specific type of *reference model*, the sanskritic model, for castes lower down in the social scale wishing to raise their status. Simple and attractive as the concept is, its vagueness in two important aspects greatly reduces its value as an analytical tool. First, it has not precisely defined the inter-relationship between ritual and secular avenues of status attainment. Secondly, the sanskritic model has been left largely undefined and unidentified in terms of its location and content. The Madiga society does not in any case provide us with an example of a concentrated and dominant trend toward sanskritization. Stray and sporadic instances of it may be found, but the model for change before them cannot be characterised as a sanskritic model.

Later concepts in the field have contributed toward clearing the hazy picture. Prasad's concept of *Kulinization* has the merit of considering ritual and non-ritual factors simultaneously, and as such it provides a more realistic approach for the analysis and understanding of the phenomena of change (Prasad : 1957). It also points toward a different type of reference model : one determined not by ritual considerations alone but by a multiplicity of factors. Unfortunately, in its presentation the concept lacks articulation and sophistication, and as such it has failed to make the impact that it should have made. Its significance as a definite advance, however, deserves note. Instances of *desanskritization* as a process (Majumdar : 1958) also tend to correct the perspective, and point to the importance of non-ritual avenues of

status attainment. Empirical work has shown that rather than have a single reference group, lower castes may have multiple reference groups from whom they may selectively choose traits for emulation (Srivastava : 1958). The trends of change in the Madiga society suggest that this caste has before it a Kulin model, the upper caste agriculturists providing many points of reference for this construct.

Dube's still tentative conceptual scheme synthesizes, integrates and develops the current approaches to the study of change in India. (Dube : 1958). It assumes multiple avenues of change and multiple reference groups. Five different cultural traditions have been recognized : the classical, the regional, the local, the modern-western and the emergent national. A community derives its sources and sanctions for patterns of life and patterns of change in varying degrees from all the five, and its reference model, although it may be characterized by the dominance of one or more over the rest, is in the final analysis made up of a combination of all the elements in varying proportions.

This multi-faceted approach to the study of change appears most appropriate in the context of changing Madiga society. Increased acquaintance with some of the classical legends and with history have led to some attempt at a reinterpretation of their own past on the part of the Madiga elite. However, no attempt has been made by them to adopt the rituals of the higher caste, with the one exception that there is a definite attempt in a sizable section of the community to stop eating carrion if not to give up dealing with dead cattle. Even in the urban setting they have not tried to bring in the Brahman in a priestly capacity in their socio-religious life. Even to-day they worship local territorial and caste gods, goddesses and deities more than the all-India gods of classical Hinduism. Printed tracts have made caste mythology more readily available to literate Madiga. To promote caste solidarity for political purposes, mythology—both in its oral-tradition version and in its classical version—has been utilized. The regional traditions of Andhra Pradesh have also provided some avenues for change. In food, housing, dress and personal names, upper-caste trends having a region-wise distribution have been adopted. Regional political pressures and currents have tended to define group alignments of the Madiga caste with others. They not only have upper-caste Andhra agriculturists as a reference model, they



are now politically emerging as a part of the larger Andhra Society. Local traditions, in their inherent strength, have prevented certain types of change, and where they could not prevent them altogether, they have at least modified them significantly. Modern-western and the emergent national traditions have opened up new vistas for this group, and if it is trying to reach out for new horizons today, credit for the trend should be given to the impact of these traditions.

The Madiga stand today mid-way between the ideals of tradition and progress. The security of tradition, though painful in some aspects, is still a source of assurance; but the promise of progress, still somewhat uncertain in terms of the present, is no less tempting. The structure of the society has shown itself sensitive to these conflicting ends; without doubt there are some protests against the traditional order, but they are nowhere near being a revolt. Mild protests win small concessions one after the other; open rebellion may result even in the forfeiture of the security of tradition. It hurts to be a Madiga, but it has offered them some advantages in the past and even in the new set-up it continues to offer some definite advantages. To be or not to be a Madiga is literally the question with them, and at the moment both outside pressures and immediate group gains induce them to remain, though grudgingly, in this position.

## APPENDIX I

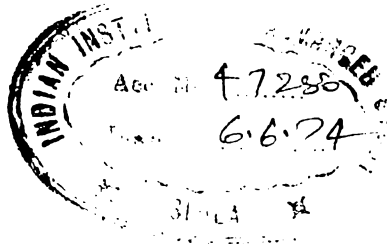
### GLOSSARY

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Achhut :          | untouchable.   |
| Adi :             | original.  |
| Adi-Hindu :       | “original Hindus” or the original inhabitants of the country.  |
| Arundhatias :     | descendents of Arundhati.  |
| Asprashyulu :     | untouchables.  |
| Dappo :           | a type of drum.  |
| Dher :            | a caste of untouchables.   |
| Dhoti :           | an Indian garment worn around and below the waist. It is a long strip of cloth which can be tied in many different ways. |
| Etti :            | forced labour; little or no payment is made for it.  |
| Gudise ;          | a hut.   |
| Illu :            | house.   |
| Inam :            | rent-free land.  |
| Inti-peru :       | minimal lineage.   |
| Jalata :          | the place where hands and feet are washed.   |
| Jambudweepam :    | the island of Jambavas or the descendents of Jambavant.  |
| Jammi :           | a plant ( <i>Prosipus spicigera</i> ) which is worshipped on the Dasher day.   |
| Kaliyogam :       | the fourth and final Age in the cyclic order of time.  |
| Kamadhenu :       | the Sacred cow.  |
| Lingam :          | a phallic symbol.  |
| Madi goddu :      | “this dead animal is mine”.  |
| Maha dige :       | “the great one has come down”.   |
| Maha digi ra :    | “Great one, come down”.  |
| Matangi-makkalu : | the children of Matangi.   |
| Mettelu :         | toe-rings.   |
| Muttaraniwaro :   | those whose physical touch pollutes.   |
| Myatari :         | headman of the caste in a Madiga colony.   |
| Panchama :        | untouchable or one who is outside the four-fold Varna division of the Hindu society.                                     |
| Pedda-Intiwaru :  | those who dwell in big houses.   |
| Peddamanishi :    | “big man” or an elder.   |
| Penkatilli :      | tiled house.   |
| Puste :           | a thin round gold ornament worn round the neck.  |
| Raike :           | bodice.  |
| Romal :           | a piece of cloth which is tied round the head.   |
| Sari :            | a garment worn by women.   |
| Tangedi :         | a plant the bark of which is used in tanning hides.  |
| Vamsham :         | maximal lineage.   |



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