# CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

## VOLUME II, PART V-B, (11)

## ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

### ANDHRA PRADESH


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ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

on

Scheduled Castes

**1. Mehtar**
**2. Mahar**
**3. Mang**
**4. Mang Garodi**
**5. Dhor**
**6. Dakkal (Dakkalwar)**


*Office of the Director of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad*

## 1961 CENSUS PUBLICATIONS, ANDHRA PRADESH

(All the Census Publications of this State bear Vol. No. II).

| | |
|---|---|
| PART I-A | General Report |
| PART I-B | Report on Vital Statistics |
| PART I-C | Subsidiary Tables |
| PART II-A | General Population Tables |
| PART II-B (i) | Economic Tables (B-I to B-IV) |
| PART II-B (ii) | Economic Tables (B-V to B-IX) |
| PART II-C | Cultural and Migration Tables |
| PART III | Household Economic Tables |
| PART IV-A | Report on Housing and Establishments (with Subsidiary Tables). |
| PART IV-B | Housing and Establishment Tables |
| PART V-A | Special Tables for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes |
| PART V-B | *Ethnographic Notes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes |
| PART VI | Village Survey Monographs (31) |
| PART VII-A (1)<br>PART VII-A (2) | Handicrafts Survey Reports (Selected crafts) |
| PART VII-B (1 to 20) | Fairs and Festivals (Separate Book for each District) |
| PART VIII-A | Administration Report — Enumeration (not for sale) |
| PART VIII-B | Administration Report—Tabulation (not for sale) |
| PART IX | State Atlas |

District Census Handbooks (*Separate Volume for each District*)

*List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh is given in Annexure II at the end of this Volume.

# *FOREWORD*

The Constitution lays down that "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

To assist States in fulfilling their responsibility in this regard, the 1961 Census provided a series of special tabulations of the Social and Economic data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are notified by the President under the Constitution and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the lists, any caste or tribe. During the Census Operations, the enumerators frequently face the problem of identifying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the President's Notification, though in some cases, the names of the sub-castes and sub-tribes and synonyms are given, there are many cases where such names have not been provided in the list. The Census enumerators, therefore, require guidance about the acceptance or rejection of claims that they come across during the operations of some communities to be treated as sub-castes or sub-tribes of the notified Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose, the Census Organisation has thought it wise to undertake detailed ethnographic studies in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India. This is also in conformity with the past Census tradition of presenting authentic ethnographic account of In an communities.

For conducting the ethnographic studies, a number of ancillary operations are undertaken by the Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India as well as the staff of the Directors of Census Operations in the various States. These ancillary operations include; (i) compilation of available information on each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and preparation of bibliography in respect of them; (ii) preparation and interpretation of maps showing distribution of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes over time and space; and (iii) special studies on cultural, technological and economic changes taking place among the various tribal communities.

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri N. G. Nag, Officer on Special Duty, and Shri A. M. Kurup, Research Officer, is co-ordinating all these studies at the Central level. At the State level, the Director of Census Operations and his staff are collaborating in conducting the field investigations and preparing the report. Shri P. S. R. Avadhany, Deputy Director, supervised the study at the State level and Shri B. Satyanarayana carried out the field investigation and prepared the draft on these communities. Smt. P. Lalitha revised the drafts.

I avail of this oppor tunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR,
*Registrar General, India*

# *PREFACE*

As an adjunct of 1961 Census, preparation of ethnographic monographs on a number of selected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status and ethnographic glossaries on all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been taken up by the Census Organisation.

In India the Census Organisation has a long tradition of undertaking ethnographic studies. Besides, there are certain reasons why, for its own operational purposes, it is necessary for the Census Organisation to take up such studies. During Census Operation, the Census Organisation is required to make a complete enumeration of all the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their segments. The social boundaries of various communities are not always rigid, they are in a state of flux. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes as well, otherwise comparison of consecutive census figures would give altogether wrong picture in respect of them. There is another aspect of study in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which the Census Organisation, as well as the welfare and planning agencies are interested—it is ethno-demography. In 1961 Census separate tables were prepared in respect of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the following items :—

(i) industrial classification of persons at work and non-workers by sex,
(ii) age and marital status,
(iii) education,
(iv) religion,
(v) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Castes,
(vi) persons not at work classified by sex and type of activity for Scheduled Tribes,
(vii) mother tongue and bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes.

The data available in these tables are to be analysed in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, so that the historical and cultural factors responsible for the demographic pattern can be identified and the impact of the emergent demographic pattern on the social structure can be determined.

The insight gained by the Census Orgnisation, through ethnographic studies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be useful for interpretation of the demographic pattern for the country as a whole. Recent studies show that in India, even now, it is difficult to correctly appreciate the various social and economic processes without reference to caste. On the other hand, in the interest of ultimate national goal, caste is not being recorded in census, except in case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The insight gained through ethno-demographic studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is, therefore, of invaluable help for Census.

At the same time, such study is very much useful for planning of development activities among the castes or tribes concerned. For instance, if the census shows that great deal of diversification of occupation has taken place among the Parayans of Kerala, it is important for the planners to know whether the community consists of a number of disconnected segments or whether it means that a great deal of individual mobility is taking place where the main focus of community is other than traditional occupation. Again when among the Bauris of Orissa, it is found that a very high proportion of the population is engaged in agricultural labour and next to them a high proportion is found in cultivation and also that there is considerable diversification of occupation, the following questions of sociological and practical importance arise :—

(a) What is the historical relation between the agricultural labourers and the cultivators; among the Bauris of Orissa? The Census data suggests one of the two possible developments, namely (1) bulk of the Bauris were cultivators and by a process of degeneration of their economy have become agricultural labourers, (2) on the other hand, it is also possible that the bulk of them were agricultural labourers and through a process of improvement of their economic condition, many of them have become cultivators.

(b) The fact that a considerable diversification of occupation has taken place, suggests that the economy has not remained in stagnant condition. Here, it is to be examined whether the diversification is the result of upward mobility, or downward mobility, or even horizontal mobility, and what is the actual process by which the diversification has taken place.

(c) That social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether inspite of diversification of occupation, the ethos of the particular occupation, for instance; agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of adjustment in values and attitudes.

Instances can be multiplied, but it is not necessary. What have been stated above are enough to bring out the significance of ethno-demographic studies for planners.

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960, at the instance of Shri Mitra, the then Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Directors. In October 1961, the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the office of the Registrar General of India, to coordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys etc. In December, 1961 a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies, handicrafts studies and other social investigations in the offices of the Census Directors, participated. In the Study Camp, it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the state of development of the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total

culture pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different castes and tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned, to adjust to the modern conditons of life. In the light of the above decisions at the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Directors of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the country. These, rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two Ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the Office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Directors participated. In the Study Camp at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal and Director, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal also participated. In these Study Camps, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. A copy of the same may be seen at *Annexure I.* In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts, and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows :—

1. Shifting cultivation in Santal Parganas of Bihar and Garo Hills of Assam.
2. Pattern of Rehabilitation of displaced tribals of Rourkela.
3. Socio-economic survey of the Scheduled areas of Rajasthan.
4. Socio-economic developments among the hillmen of North-East India.
5. Social structure and cultural orientation of Christians converted from Scheduled Castes.
6. Traditional rights of scavenging as claimed by scavengers in urban areas.
7. Grouping of castes and tribes with reference to occupation and inter-group and intra-group comparative study on the basis of the data avilable in earlier censuses.
8. Social mobility movements among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the basis of each of the subsidiary studies indicated above, a separate monograph is under preparation. It is also proposed to prepare separate monographs on a few Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and ethnic groups with special status in each State. Besides, ethnographic glossaries are proposed to be prepared in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For this purpose about one lakh references have been indexed.

The present Ethnographic Notes on some Scheduled Castes *viz.*, Mehtar, Mahar, Mang, Mang Garodi, Dhor and Dakkal are the monographs brought out by the Census Organisation in this Volume. Field investigation on these communities was undertaken by Shri B. Satyanarayana of the Office of the Director of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh. The preliminary reports prepared by Shri B. Satyanarayana have been revised by

Smt. P. Lalitha of the Office of the Director of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh. It was finally edited by the Editorial Board consisting of Shri P. S. R. Avadhany, Deputy Director of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh, Shri A. M. Kurup, Research Officer and myself.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the colleagues who collaborated in this project.

Shri H. L. Harit, Investigator, who is looking after the compilation of information from published sources in respect of all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other special ethnic groups of India deserves mention.

Shri A. Mitra, the Registrar General of India for 1961 Census, whose farsighted initiative is responsible for social investigation in a large number of fields including ethnography, deserves thanks of all students of Indology. I have been benefited not only by his inspiration, but also by his valuable suggestions in connection with the ethnographic studies as well as the other studies, conducted by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit.

The tradition built by Shri Mitra, has been continued by Shri A. Chandra Sekhar, the present Registrar General of India. Under his guidance, the scope of the Social Studies by the Census Organisation has been further expanded. In spite of his other preoccupations, he has gone through the final drafts of the ethnographic notes and given a number of valuable suggestions. I avail of this opportunity to express my gratefulness to him.

B. K. ROY BURMAN

# CONTENTS


| | Pages |
|---|---|
| 1. MEHTAR | 1-19 |
| 2. MAHAR | 21-56 |
| 3. MANG | 57-70 |
| 4. MANG GARODI | 71-84 |
| 5. DHOR | 85-98 |
| 6. DAKKAL | 99-100 |

ANNEXURES :

I. Frame work for Ethnographic study 111-114

II. List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh 115-116




2—1 Cen. And/71

# MEHTAR

**( SCHEDULED CASTE)**

# MEHTAR

## Name, Identity, Origin and History

Mehtar is a caste of scavengers and sweepers largely spread over India. It has been variously called at different places. It is called as Mehtar Bhangi in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. It is also called Mehtar Bhangi or Dhanuk in Madhya Pradesh. The same community is known as Hari, Mehtar or Bhangi in Bihar and West Bengal. It is called Mehtar in Andhra Pradesh and Mysore. It is not known whether the Mehtar of Tripura and Mehtar of other places are one and the same. It is known in the present study that Mehtars are called among themselves as 'Valmiki' and 'Mehtar' is the name given to them by others because of their occupation. R. V. Russel appropriately states.

"But though called by different names, the sweeper community in most provinces appears to have the same stock of traditions and legends. The name of Mehtar is now generally employed and has therefore been taken as the designation of the caste". (Vol. IV, pp. 215-233).

In Andhra Pradesh Mehtar categorically consists of two sections of people—(1) those who are Valmiki by caste but are called as Mehtars because of their occupation; (2) those who are termed as Mehtars because of their occupation of scavenging and sweeping but belong to different castes like Dhed, Dher and Dalwal. If a man from the later section is questioned 'who are you?', he immediately answers 'I am Mehtar'. When he says it, he means only that he is Mehtar by occupation and not by caste. Of the total 533 persons who are engaged as sweepers and Thotis in Hyderabad City, 440 persons belong to Mehtar caste and the rest are Muslims. Here other castes who do the work of scavenging are Dher, Dhed and Dalwal. In the Andhra region of Andhra Pradesh, though the occupation of scavenging is attended to by Relli, Chachati, Thoti, Paky or Moti castes they are not called 'Mehtars'. Mehtars of Hyderabad who constitute 72.3% of the total Mehtars in the State are the migrants from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. They came to Hyderabad 25 years back in search of employment. Though they have settled in Hyderabad long back, they retain their contact with their original place. One Rohat Dhar Singh, belonging to this caste employed as a cleaner in the Central Railways, states that after their migration from Marathwada they were engaged in scavenging and hence the name 'Mehtar' has been applied to them. The original name of the caste is said to be 'Bhangi Balmiki', derived from the author of Ramayana, 'Valmiki, whose descendants were named after him. In Adilabad district, these people are known Halal Khare meaning carriers of night soil. The following quotation from Thurston's work may be noted (Vol. V-pp. 58-59).

"A few Mehtars are returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a Central Provinces caste of scavengers. "This name" Yule and Burnel write is usual in Bengal, especially for the domestic servant of this class. The word is Pers., comp. Mehtar (Lat. major), a great personage, a prince and has been applied to the class in question in irony, or rather in consolation. But the name has so completely adhered in this application, that all sense of either irony or consolation has perished. Mehtar is a sweeper and naught elses His wife is the Matranee. It is not unusual to hear two Mehtars hailing each other as Maharaj."

The status of the Mehtars in different censuses is as follows : In the 1921 Census of Hyderabad State 34 castes were grouped together under Depressed Classes and Mehtar is one of them. During the 1931 Census, 43 communities were represented under the category of Adi-Hindus of whom Mehtar was one. In the 1941 Census it was given under Harijan. In 1951 Census it was given under Scheduled Castes as it was declared as a Scheduled Caste according to the Constitution Order of 1950. It retained the same status in the President's Modification Order of 1956. It is observed from the field study that the Mehtars do not consider themselves as 'Adi Hindus' or 'Harijans'.

## Family, Clan, Kinship and other Analogous Divisions

Mehtars have no sub-castes among them. They have, however, surnames which are exogamous. Marriages between members of the same exogamous group are prohibited. The surnames are also called as *gotra* among them. They prefer joint families and the descent is patrilineal. Their joint family system needs a special mention. They live under one roof but each family cooks separately for its unit. The following exogamous groups are found to be existing among Mehtars, as revealed during the case studies—

1. Chundaliye; 2. Guldah; 3. Lohat; 4. Dholach; 5. Bohut; 6. Dalond; 7. Zigjottede; 8. Mangwada; 9. Chajalam; 10. Chuven; 11. Muval; 12. Bidlan; 13. Koyada; 14. Tak and 15. Kagada. All these exogamous groups are equal in their social status and no section can claim superiority over the other. Figures 1A, 1B and 2 show a Mehtar male and female respectively.

### Distribution and Population Trend

In addition to Andhra Pradesh, 'Mehtar' is also Scheduled in Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mysore, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The population figures of Mehtars are available only for the 1921 [Part I, Page 235] and 1931 [Part I, P. 260]. Censuses of Hyderabad State. During the 1921 Census all castes had been classified according to their traditional occupations; so also the Mehtars (1,739 persons) were returned under sweepers along with another caste Dhers. During 1931 it was considered as one of the minor classes under Adi-Hindus. The total number of Mehtars in this Census was 2,931 persons. Sex-wise details are not available for these two decades. For the decades 1941 and 1951, the castewise population figures are not available. The districtwise distribution of Mehtars in Andhra Pradesh according to the 1961 Census and the corresponding percentages can be seen in the following Statements I and II respectively.

## STATEMENT I

DISTRICTWISE DISTRIBUTION OF MEHTARS IN ANDHRA PRADESH—1961 CENSUS

| Sl. No. | District | Distribution of Mehtars | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | | | Rural | | | Urban | | |
| | | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| 1 | Mahbubnagar | 97 | 29 | 68 | 44 | 5 | 39 | 53 | 24 | 29 |
| 2 | Hyderabad | 2,261 | 1,245 | 1,016 | 43 | 24 | 19 | 2,218 | 1,221 | 997 |
| 3 | Medak | 85 | 47 | 38 | 36 | 17 | 19 | 49 | 30 | 19 |
| 4 | Nizamabad | 86 | 45 | 41 | 65 | 36 | 29 | 21 | 9 | 12 |
| 5 | Adilabad | 155 | 49 | 106 | 88 | 16 | 72 | 67 | 33 | 34 |
| 6 | Karimnagar | 79 | 51 | 28 | 4 | 4 | .. | 75 | 47 | 28 |
| 7 | Warangal | 34 | 13 | 21 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 31 | 12 | 19 |
| 8 | Khammam | 159 | 72 | 87 | .. | .. | .. | 159 | 72 | 87 |
| 9 | Nalgonda | 170 | 122 | 48 | 132 | 102 | 30 | 38 | 20 | 18 |
| | **Total** | **3,126** | **1,673** | **1,453** | **415** | **205** | **210** | **2,711** | **1,467** | **1,243** |

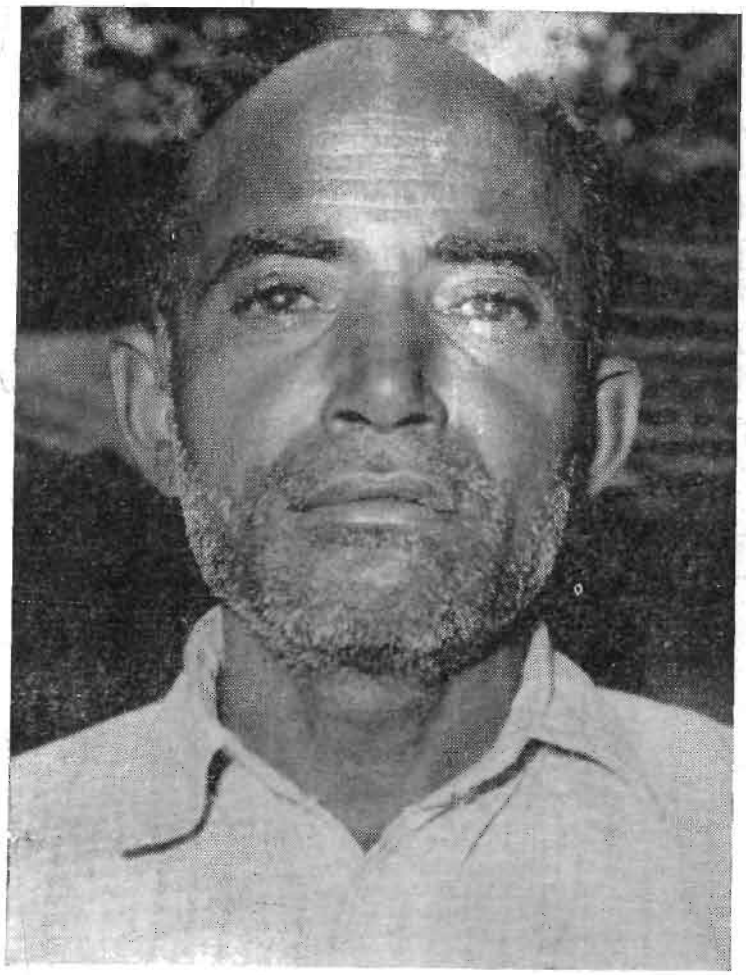


Fig. 1 A. A Mehtar male - Front

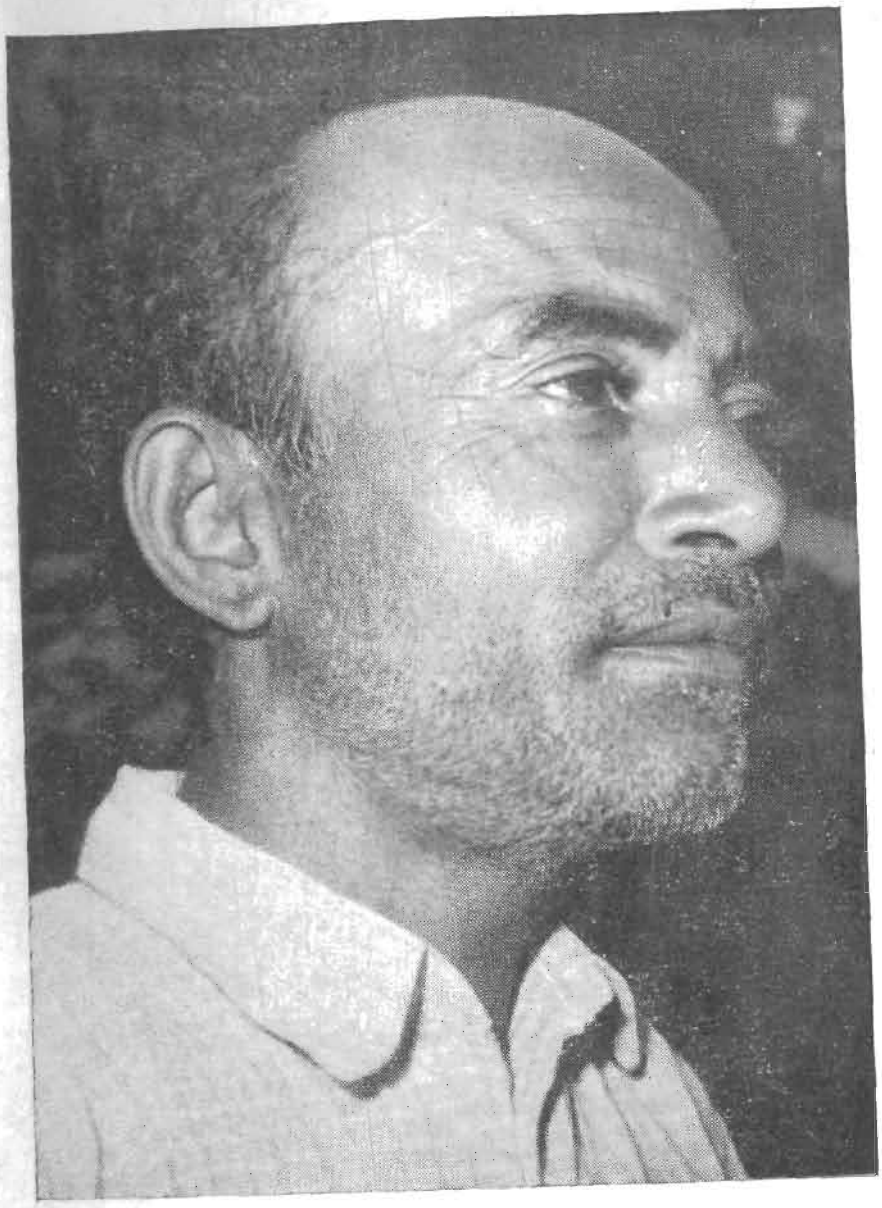


Fig. 1 B. A Mehtar male - Profile



Fig. 2. A Mehtar female

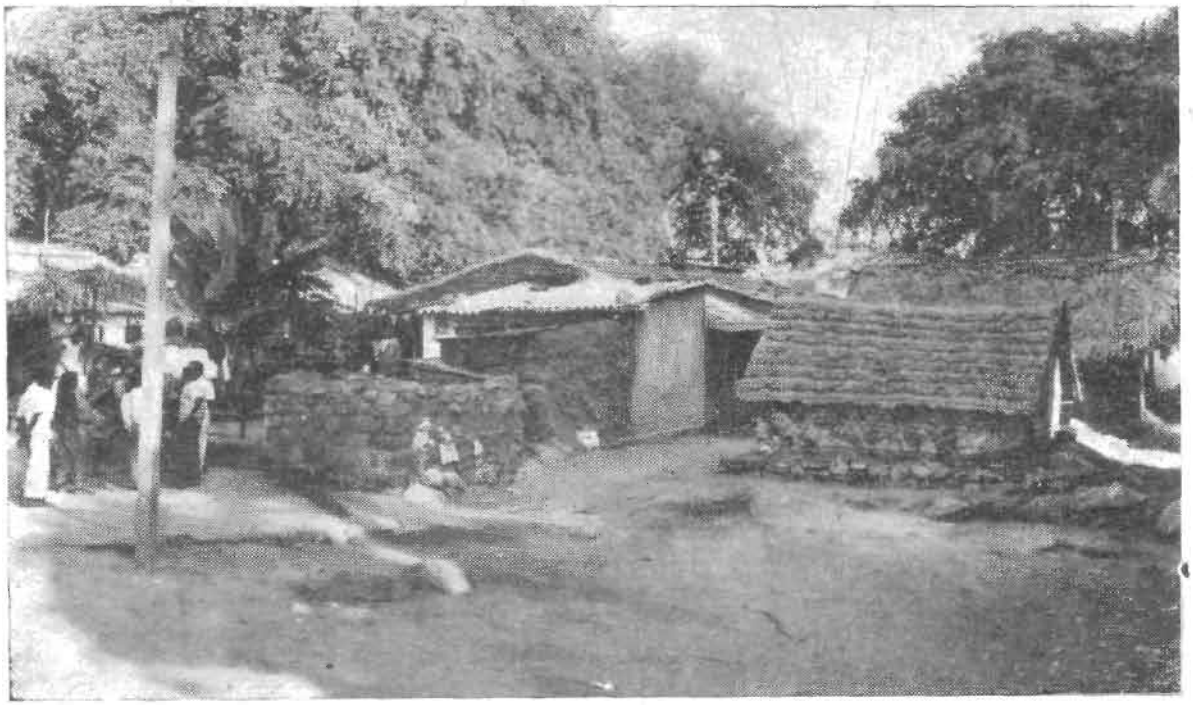


Fig. 3. Housing pattern among Mehtars

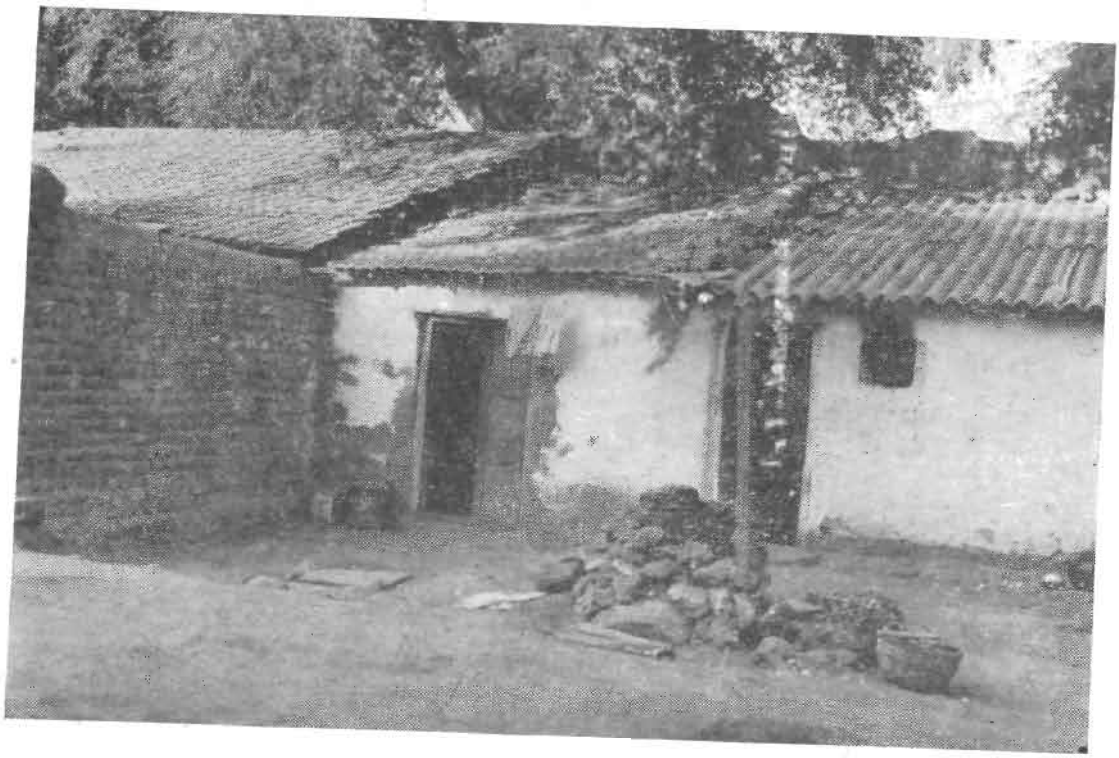


Fig. 4. Housing pattern among Mehtars

## STATEMENT II

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION OF MEHTARS BY DISTRICTS AND RURAL-URBAN

| Sl. No. | Distict | PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MEHTARS | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | | | Rural | | | Urban | | |
| | | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| 1. | Mahbubnagar . . . | .3·1 | 1·7 | 4·7 | 10·6 | 2·4 | 18·6 | 1·9 | 1·6 | 2·3 |
| 2 | Hyderabad . . . . | 72·3 | 74·4 | 69·9 | 10·3 | 11·7 | 9·0 | 81·8 | 83·2 | 80·2 |
| 3 | Medak . . . . | 2·7 | 2·8 | 2·6 | 8·7 | 8·2 | 9·0 | 1·8 | 2·0 | 1·5 |
| 4 | Nizamabad . . . | 2·8 | 2·7 | 2·8 | 15·7 | 17·6 | 13·8 | 0·8 | 0·6 | 1·0 |
| 5 | Adilabad . . . . | 5·0 | 2·9 | 7·3 | 21·2 | 7·8 | 34·3 | 2·5 | 2·3 | 2·7 |
| 6 | Karimnagar . . . . | 2·5 | 3·1 | 1·9 | 1·0 | 2·0 | .. | 2·8 | 3·2 | 2·3 |
| 7 | Warangal . . . . | 1·1 | 0·8 | 1·5 | 0·7 | 0·5 | 1·0 | 1·1 | 0·8 | 1·5 |
| 8 | Khammam . . . . | 5·1 | 4·3 | 6·0 | .. | .. | .. | 5·9 | 4·9 | 7·0 |
| 9 | Nalgonda . . . . | 5·4 | 7·3 | 3·3 | 31·8 | 49·8 | 14·3 | 1·4 | 1·4 | 1·5 |
| | **Total** | **100·0** | **100·9** | **100·0** | **100·0** | **100·0** | **100·0** | **100·0** | **100·0** | **100·0** |

As seen from the above statements, the population of Mehtars, in Andhra Pradesh during 1961 is 3,126 persons of whom 53·52% are males and 46·48% are females. One special feature of the Mehtar community is that it is mostly found in urban areas (86·72%). The sex ratio is 868 females for every 1000 males in the total caste and 1,024 females and 847 females for 1000 males in the rural and urban areas respectively. It constitutes 0·06% of the total population of Scheduled Castes of Andhra Pradesh and 0·008% in the total State population. The age distribution of Mehtars is as follows :

DISTRIBUTION OF MEHTARS BY AGE GROUPS

| Age-Group | Percentage of | |
|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female |
| (1) | (2) | (3) |
| 0–14 | 44·44 | 47.8 |
| 15–44 | 41.9 | 42.3 |
| 45+ | 13.7 | 9·9 |

### Dwellings, Food, Dress and Habits

#### Dwellings

In the past when their touch was considered to desecrate the higher castes, they were forced to live on the outskirts of the village. Though even now it is a practice in the rural areas, they live along with the other caste people in the urban areas. For example, it has been found in the Hyderabad city where case studies have been conducted that these Mehtars are found living in different localities, considered by them to be convenient for their work. It is also observed during the case studies that most of them do not own houses and as such live in rented quarters, whilst some of them live in huts. Their houses are clustered [Figs. 3&4]. Most of the Mehtars in Hyderabad city live either in Chikkadpalle or in Gowliguda. Their dwellings are not confined only to these two localities. Some well-to-do families live amidst the higher caste Hindus. A few of their quarters are also found to have been electrified. Out of the 12 surveyed households, 8 households do not own houses and are living in rented tiled houses whilst two own tiled houses and the remaining two are owning only huts. While brick and lime are generally used in the construction of the tiled houses, brick and mud are used in the construction of the walls of the huts; the height of the length-wise and breadth-wise walls of the huts would normally be 4½′ to 5½′ and 7′ to 8′ respectively. One rafter is so fixed as to rest on the highest points of the two breadth-wise walls. One rafter is placed in length-wise direction on each of the length-wise walls. Small bamboos, parallel to each other, are so placed as to rest on the rafter on each of the length-wise walls in an inclined position from the rafter fixed on the highest points of the two breadth-wise walls. To these small bamboos are fixed two or three long bamboos

parallel to the length-wise walls. On the framework thus laid out, palmyra leaves are spread. These houses or huts have usually one room split into two apartments, one used for cooking and storing and the other for sleeping. The cost of construction of a hut iranges from Rs. 200 to 300. A typical Mehtar hut is llustrated in Fig. 5. Once in a year preferably on the occasion of Ugadi festival, the houses are whitewashed. Every household has a small pandal in the westward direction and a *jyoti* (a lamp) is kept under the pandal. This pandal is a place of worship for them and jyoti is the symbol of God. Neither an auspicious day is fixed for, nor *puja* is performed at the time of commencing the construction of the house. Except skilled labour like mason who is engaged, the rest of the labour is provided by the members of the household themselves. House warming ceremony is, however, celebrated by performing *puja* to Lord Krishna and offering coconuts, followed by a feast at which are entertained friends and relatives.

**Food**

Wheat and jowar constitute the staple food of Mehtars. Rice is rarely taken. They consume freely all kinds of cereals, pulses and vegetables. They are not accustomed to use leafy vegetables. Mutton and fish are considered edible by Mehtars. Among birds they eat only fowls. They take pork. The consumption of beef as well as the flesh of animals that have died a natural death is tabooed. They do not take meat and fish on Saturday as they worship Lord Venkateswara on that day. Now-a-days some of them are accustomed to take tea. As they cannot afford to buy milk and prepare tea at home, they take it from small hotels. Drinking liquor is very common among them. They return from their work by 11 A.M. and immediately they consume some liquor. Some people who are well off spend more and drink heavily. A large part of their earnings is spent on drinking. Women rarely drink. They take their first meal after 12 O'clock in the noon and the second meal in the night. Their meal includes *roti* prepared either with wheat flour or *jowar* flour. While taking meal they mix ghee and sugar with *roti* and eat first. Then they take *roti* along with *Khara* (any preparation with chillies). Their festival meal consists of sweets like *halwa*, *kheer* and savouries like *puri*, etc.

**Material Culture**

Utensils made of different metals are in use. They cook rice in an aluminium vessel known as *Bhagavana* and prepare curry in *handi* which is also an aluminium vessel. Invariably each household possesses an iron pan for roasting *roti* or *chapati*. They eat either in aluminium plate or bronze plates called *thali*. Some well-to-do families possess radios and transistors also. A characteristic feature of the Mehtar community is that every household irrespective of its economic position maintains a *hukka* (Smoking pipe with long flexible tube, smoke being drawn through water in vase to which the tube and bowl are attached) (Figure 6). It has almost become a regular custom among them that all males, sit together in the evenings at one place near their huts and enjoy the *hukka*. Generally, they welcome the guest by offering *hukka*.

**Dress**

The men's dress consists of dhotis of 4½ yards in length, shirts locally known in as *'kamij'* and head gear locally known as *'rumal'* of 3 to 4 yards in length whereas a woman's dress consists of *kurta* (upper garment—a long shirt) and *pyajama* (lower garment) They wear *salwar* (a piece of cloth) over the *kurta* and a portion of it covers head also (Figs. 7&8). They observe *'purdah'* system to some extent in their houses. They *hide* their face behind the *salwar* in the presence of any male person other than the husband, brother and father. But when they go out for work many among them do not observe *'purdah'*. Even on occasions of wedding neither the bride nor the bridegroom put on any special dress. Now-a-days a few females are wearing sarees and blouses. Males of younger generation are wearing pants and shirts. Men and women wear footwear. The hair style of Mehtar woman is shown in the figure 9.

**Ornaments**

The males do not wear any ornaments except finger rings. The women wear neck ornaments like *teep* (necklace made of beads), *hasli* (made of gold or silver), *Jhalri* (a chain with rupees) and *har* (gold or silver chain). Their nose ornament is known as *purli* *Jhumki* and *Bhujini* are ear ornaments. Generally they wear a silver anklet which they call as chain. Married women wear *kante* (neck ornament), *chalkhade* and *ekade*—silver anklets. They buy the above ornaments, at jewellry shops. All the above ornaments are made up of either gold or silver.

**Tattooing**

All the females and some of the males have got tattoo marks. A nomadic people called 'Patchabotollu' attend to the tatooing. Tattoo marks are merely for decoration and no other special significance is attached to these marks.

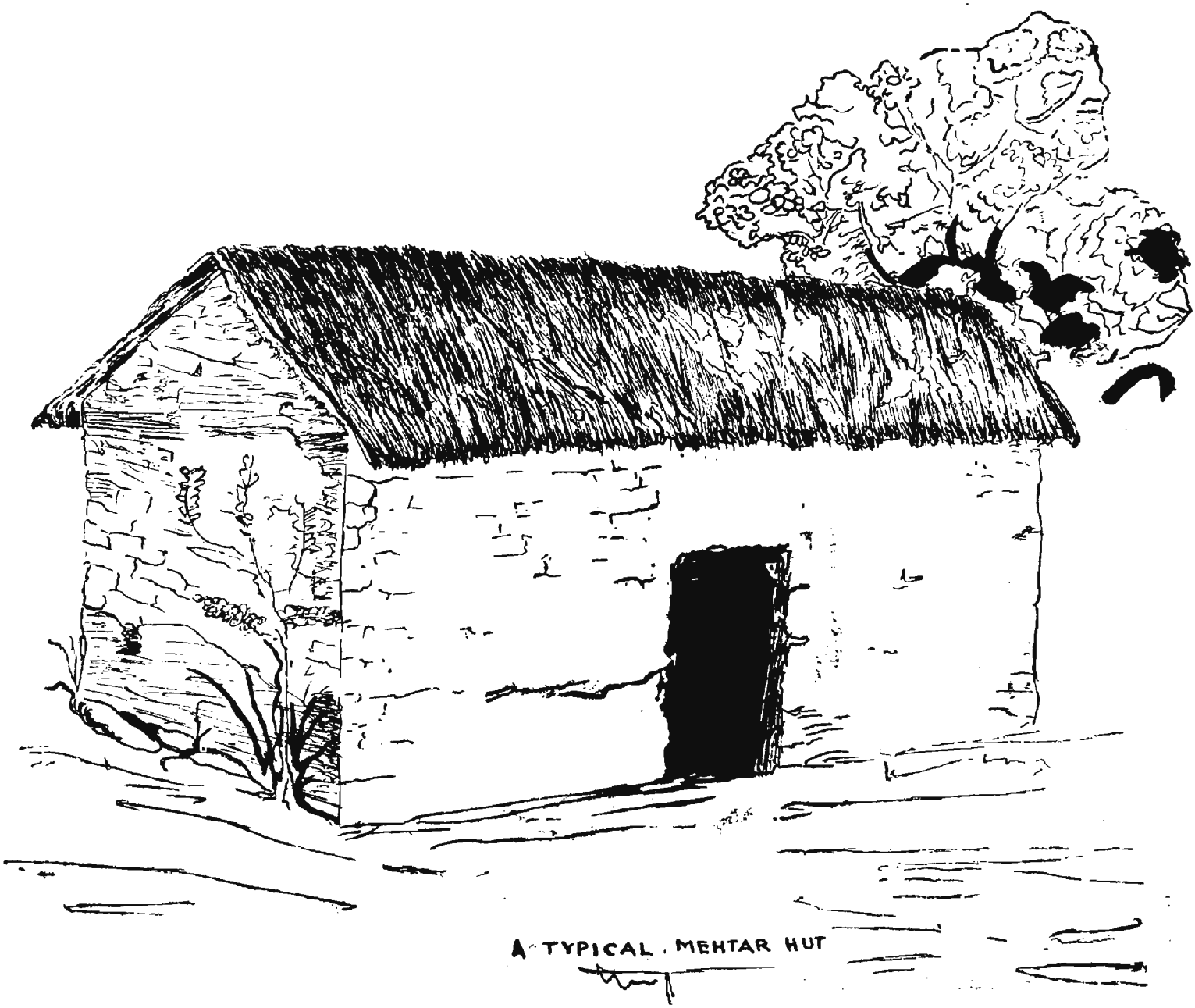
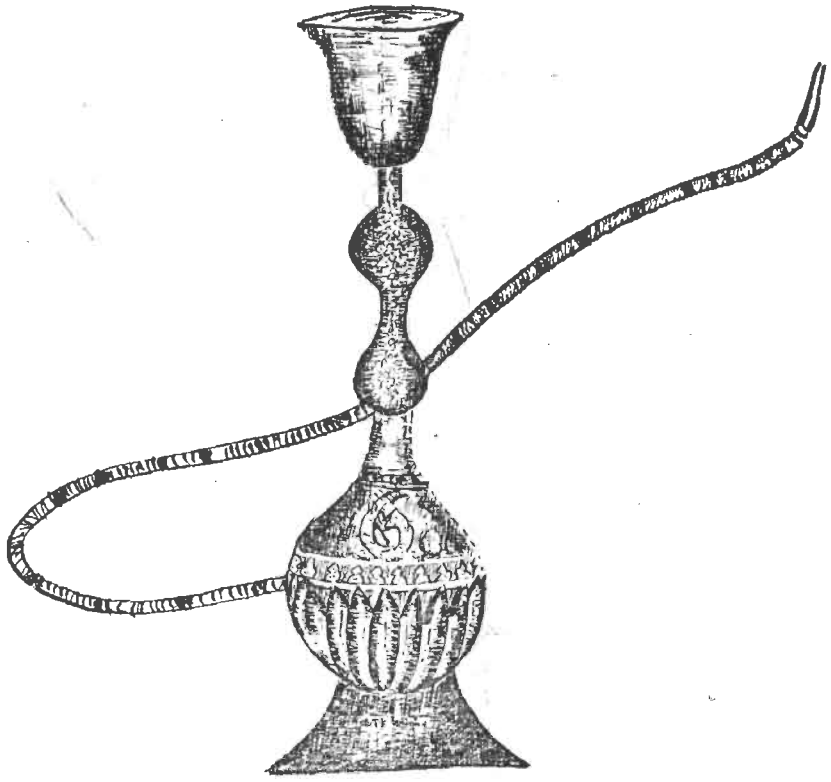



Fig. 5. A typical Mehtars hut



HUKKA

Fig. 6. Hukka



Fig. 7. Dressing pattern among Mehtars

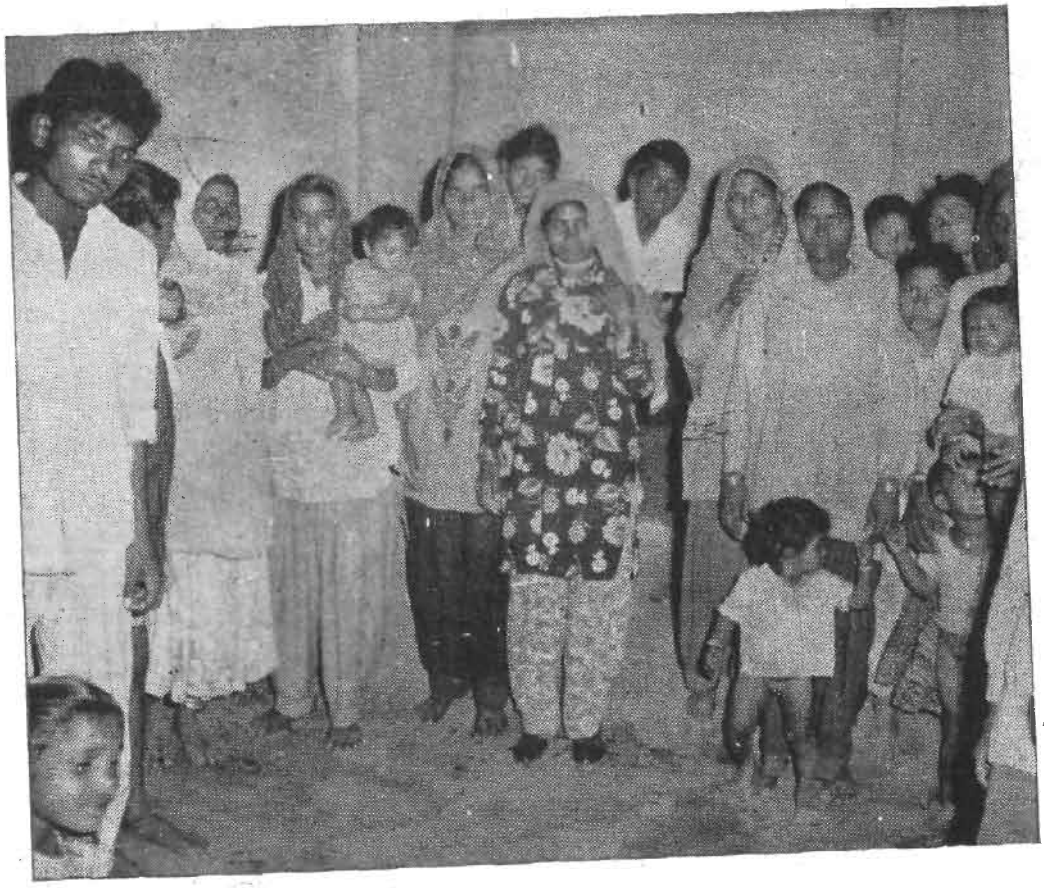


Fig. 8. Dressing pattern among Mehtars

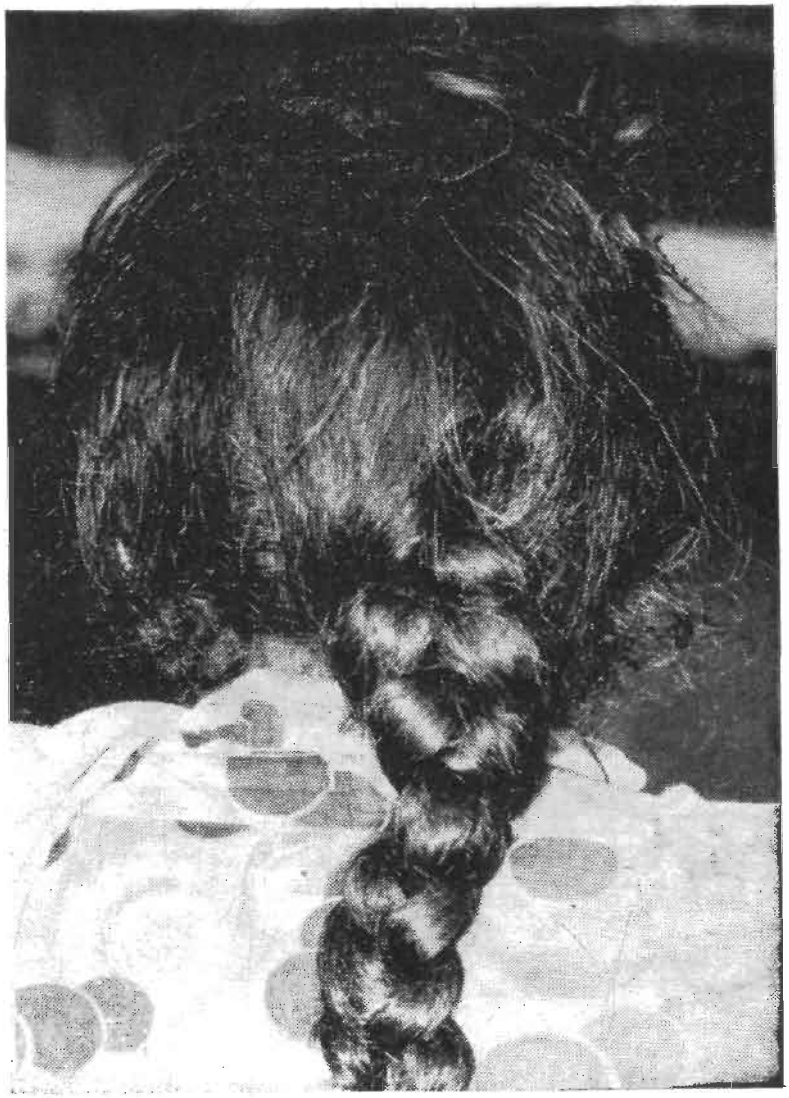


Fig. 9. Hair style of Mehtar woman

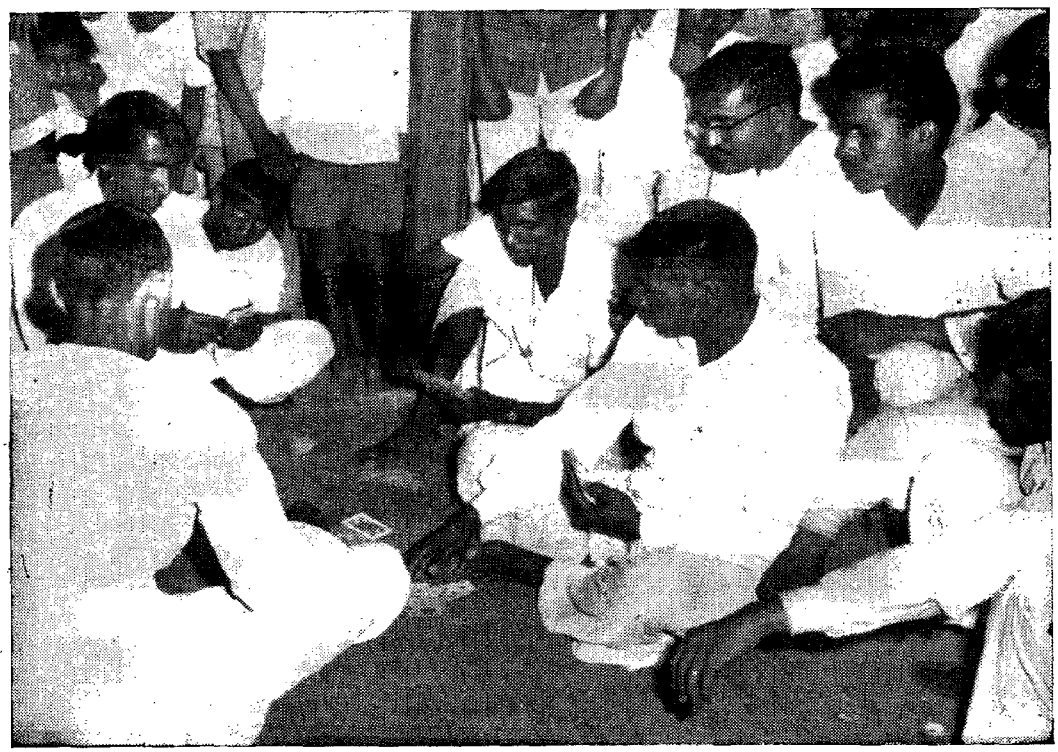


Fig. 10. Playing cards in the afternoon is a sort of relief to them

**Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Diseases and Treatment**

They keep their surroundings neat. They usually bath once in three days. As most of them live in the urban areas, the use of soaps is very common among them. If they suffer from any ailments, they immediately go to an Allopathic doctor. Some of them have belief in Ayurvedic medicine also and consult Ayurvedic physicians.

**Language**

'Bangdi Hindi' a slightly corrupt form of Hindi is the mother tongue of Mehtars who speak Urdu and Telugu also. Those living in Adilabad district speak Marathi in addition to their mother tongue. The conversation among Mehtars themselves is always in 'Bangdi Hindi'.

**Literacy and Education**

According to the 1961 Census, the percentage of literacy among Mehtras is 19·7 (30·3% among males and 7·4% among females). This is quite encouraging and compares favourably with the extent of literacy (21·2%) amongst the general population in the State. The average percentage of literacy among males of Mehtar community does even exceed the State average of 30·2% though the literacy among females of Mehtar community is far below the State average of 12%. The statement given below shows the distribution of Mehtars according to literacy and educational standards of 1961 Census.

STATEMENT III

LITERACY AMONG MEHTARS

| Educational Standard | Population | |
|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Illiterate . . . . . | 1,165 | 1,345 |
| Literate (without educational standard) | 343 | 93 |
| Primary or Junior Basic . . . | 154 | 15 |
| Matriculation or Higher Secondary . | 8 | ... |
| Technical Diploma not equal to degree | 1 | .. |
| University degree or Post Graduates degree other than technical degree | 2 | .. |
| **Total** . | 1,673 | 1,453 |

The presence of 2 graduates, 8 matriculates and one holder of a technical diploma among the 616 literates indicates that obviously the Mehtars are attaching due importance to education. The case studies conducted at Gowliguda and Chikkadpalle in Hyderabad city area revealed that out of 92 persons (53 males and 39 females), 17 males and 1 female are educated upto Primary or Junior Basic while one male has studied upto Matriculation. The high percentage of literacy among Mehtars is probably due to the fact that 72% of their population is concentrated in Hyderabad city and in the surrounding areas, where there are good facilities for education. Another reason is that they are despising their traditional occupation of scavenging and are eager to take more respectable occupations. Some of them are working as scavengers and peons in the Government offices. The older generation feels that the younger generation should not follow their occupation but should seek other employment. An aversion both towards their occupation and the society is apparent especially among the educated younger generation of Mehtar community. They believe that there is no change in the outlook of other communities towards them. They feel that even if they study upto the 8th or 11th standard and apply for the posts of peons in offices they will be given only the posts of scavengers instead of peons becuase of their caste in spite of their eligibility to hold the post of peons.

**Economic Life**

Thurston has observed "Mehtar is a sweeper and taught else. His wife is Matranee" (Volume V, P. 59). Hunting in which Mehtars were said to indulge prior to their migration from Marathwada is no longer practised by them. In the past, Mehtar community was regarded as an indispensable factor in the rural and urban life and the people of that community were entitled to certain allowances either in cash or in kind. At present, Mehtars, a hard-working class of people, are mostly scavengers. The husband and wife of each household are engaged in cleaning drains and latrines, though usually men work for more hours than women. Every day at 8 A.M. they start on their work which is completed by noon. After completing their work they rest a while and then attend to their household duties. Some people play cards in the afternoon as a sort of relief (Fig. 10). Some of the Mehtars even work as labourers during their leisure time and thus supplement their income. Mostly they are engaged as scavengers but a few of them are employed as cleaners in the Railways. There are two categories among scavengers of Hyderabad city—(1) employed by the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad City and (2) employed as house scavengers. The first category is permanently employed by the Municipality. At present (1966-67) there are 533 sweepers and scavengers in Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Out of them

440 persons belong to the Mehtar caste and the rest of them belong to the Muslim community. They work in the scale of Rs. 50-1-59-2-65. They enjoyed the benefits of gratuity and pension. Their working hours are from 6-30 a.m. to 10-30 a.m. and 2-30 p.m to 6-00 p.m. On Thursdays and Sundays they work only half-a-day and enjoy leisure in the afternoon. They sweep the roads in the Municipal limits and clean the drains and latrines built and maintained by the Municipality. Among the second category *i.e.*, house scavengers, each one traditionally attends to the cleaning of certain households in a particular area and no one can encroach on his traditional right of cleaning the latrines in these households. If any one serving in a particular area is not able to carry out his work or if he does not want to do the work any more he can sell away his right of scavenging to any Mehtar who offers the highest amount. For example a Mehtar now serving 75 households in Narayanaguda of Hyderabad city bought the right over the 75 house holds 8 years back for Rs. 6,000. He gets not less than Rs. 200 monthly on these 75 households. The house scavengers start for their work in the morning and finish it by noon. They have complete leisure for the rest of the day. Some of the women folk also go out for work along with men. In the case of house scavengers women very often go and carryout their men's work. The statement given below shows the distribution of workers in Mehtar community by sexwise and by different categories of work according to the 1961 Census.

## STATEMENT IV

### Occupation of Mehtars

| Sl. No. | Occupation | Number of persons | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 1 | Cultivation | 31 | 13 | 18 |
| 2 | Agricultural labour | 93 | 45 | 48 |
| 3 | Mining and Quarrying | 29 | 14 | 15 |
| 4 | Household industry | 51 | 51 | .. |
| 5 | Manufacturing other than Household Industry. | 39 | 33 | 6 |
| 6 | Construction | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 7 | Trade and Commerce | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 8 | Transport and Communications | 56 | 51 | 5 |
| 9 | Scavenging | 1,098 | 661 | 437 |
| | **Total** | 1,406 | 875 | 531 |

An overwhelmingly large number among Mehtars (75·5% among males : 82·3% among females) are engaged in scavenging whereas a negligibly low percentage of them are found engaged in any other occupation. Out of the 12 households of Mehtars surveyed in Gowliguda and Chikkadpalle areas of Hyderabad city, 11 households are found dependent upon scavenging while only one household is found unemployed at the time of the survey. The following statement gives the particulars of income, expenditure and debt of the households for the period from November, 1961 to October 1962.

## STATEMENT V

### Statement showing the Income, Expenditure and Debt of the Households Surveyed for the period from November 1961 to October 1962

| Sl. No. | Name of the Head of the Household | Budget of Mehtars | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Annual income (Rs.) | Annual expenditure (Rs.) | Debt (Rs.) | When the debt was taken (Rs.) |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| 1. | Ch. Pullaram | 1,332 | 1,375 | 1,000 | Four years back. |
| 2. | L. Dhan Singh | 1,860 | 1,868 | 4,500 | Two years back. |
| 3. | R. Rathiya | 600 | 758 | 200 | During current year. |
| 4. | T. Ramja | 1,900 | 1,987 | 3,700 | Rs. 3,000 two years back and Rs ·700 during the current year. |

STATEMENT V—Concld.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Head of the Household | Budget of Mehtars | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Annual income (Rs.) | Annual expenditure (Rs.) | Debt (Rs.) | When the debt was taken (Rs.) |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| 5. | D. Ram Sarup | -- | -- | 1,500 | 10 years back. |
| 6. | M. Talkram | 720 | 820 | 8,100 | Rs. 2,000 10 years back and Rs. 1,100 during the last year. |
| 7. | Ch. Lala Sab | 2,880 | 2,486 | .. | |
| 8. | Ch. Banwari | 1,452 | 1,445 | .. | |
| 9. | K. Papalal | 5,016 | 4,399 | .. | |
| 10. | L. Bharath | 3,372 | 3,334 | .. | |
| 11. | Rambhoj | 720 | 940 | .. | |
| 12. | K. Dhara Singh | 720 | 928 | .. | |

Out of the above 12 households surveyed, 6 households are in debt ranging from Rs. 200 to Rs. 4,500 per household. Out of these 6 households 3 households are having a debt of more than Rs. 3,000 per household and three other households have each a debt of less than Rs. 2,000. The debts contracted during the current year are included under the income of the households. Debts are usually incurred for meeting expenses for marriages etc. The earnings per household though they appear to be large, are not in fact so, if we take the large number of members of each of the households. For instance, in the household of Sri K. Papalal, there are 12 members out of whom only 7 are earning members. Their economic position cannot be said to be sound due to the large number of dependants in each household. The following statement shows the distribution of 11 Mehtar households covered by case studies in Gowliguda and Chikkadpalle area of Hyderabad City, by ranges of expenditure on different items.

## STATEMENT VI

### Ranges of Income and Expenditure among Mehtar Households

| Range of annual income | Number of households in | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Range of annual expenditure on food per household | | | | | | Range of annual expenditure on fuel and lighting per household | | | | | Range of annual expenditure on clothing per household | | | | | |
| | 200 & below | 201-300 | 301-500 | 501-1000 | 1001 & above | Total | 25 & below | 26-50 | 51-100 | 100 & above | Total | 50 & below | 51-100 | 101-150 | 151-200 | 201-250 | Total |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) |
| 300 and less | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 301—600 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| 601-900 | .. | .. | 2 | 1 | .. | 3 | .. | .. | 2 | .. | 2 | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | .. | 2 |
| 901-1200 | .. | .. | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 1,200 and above | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 3 | 6 | .. | .. | 4 | 4 | 8 | .. | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| **Total** | .. | .. | 3 | 5 | 3 | 11 | .. | .. | 7 | 4 | 11 | .. | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 11 |

Though 12 households have been surveyed, the above statement is constructed for 11 households only, one household having been left out as it has no income of its own, being wholly dependent upon others. Food actually constitutes the major item of expenditure in all the households.

Though they are earning considerably, their income and expenditure do not balance and hence many of them are involved in debts. The main reason for this is that most of their earnings are spent on drinking. They can manage without meal but not without drink. In times of need they take loan from a wealthy person (*Seth*) of their own caste by executing on Promissory Note at an interest rate of 2% per month.

## Life Cycle

### Birth

During the seventh month of pregnancy the expectant mother is normally taken to her father's house for the first delivery. No special food is prescribed for her in the prenatal period. During the postnatal period she is served with an indigenous preparation called *gond* which is supposed to generate heat and produce milk in the mother. No particular function is observed to celebrate the occasion of the expectant motherhood. Delivery is attended to by the local midwife called 'Dai' who is usually paid Rs. 5. The expenditure in connection with the delivery is roughly about Rs. 20. They observe no pollulion during the child birth. The delivered woman is given bath on the 6th day. No special ceremony is observed for naming the child. The child is named on the 6th day after the bath. Usually, the child is named after the grandparents. Sometimes, new born children are given the names of God also. However, the typical names among Mehtars are Rathiya, Munne, Jaipaul, Hukmi, etc. The tonsure ceremony is in vogue and is performed only for the first male child, in the second month or in the fifth year or 10th year of the child. The Mother's own brother (maternal uncle of the child) initiates the tonsure ceremony by cutting the hair of the child for four times; the barber thereafter completes the shaving of the head. The removed locks of hair are carefully kept in a cloth or tin and are sent to Gurgaon-a holy place of Mehtars in Gurgaon District of the Punjab State through some one who may visit the holy place. Mehtars are not agreeable to family planning. They say that they invite as many children as God blesses them with. They consider that it is a great sin to prevent the coming of children.

### Puberty

The attainment of puberty by the girls is not an occasion for celebration among the Mehtars. It is taken in a normal routine way. The mother, when informed about the attainment of the puberty by her daughter pays some special attention to her. When convenient the girl is given bath, as no belief exists among Mehtars that bath should be given on a particular day. Neither the relatives nor the neighbours are informed about the attainment of puberty by the girl. No period of pollution is observed on the attainment of puberty.

### Marriage

The law of exogamy is so strictly observed that no male can marry a woman belonging to his mother's or grandmother's section. Marriage with either mother's brother or father's sister is prohibited, *i.e.*, they cannot have marital relations with any *gotra* that falls under 1) the father's *gotra*, 2) mother's father's *gotra* and 3) grandmother's (mother's mother) father's *gotra*. Two brothers can marry two sisters. The marriageable age for a girl is 12 and that of a boy is 18-22. The practice of child marriage is in existence. The only kind of marriage in practice among Mehtars is marriage by negotiation. The Pandit, who is an educated man belonging to the same caste officiates at the marriage ceremony. Musical instruments are engaged by those who can afford. At the bride's house where the marriage is celebrated, a pandal locally known as *Lagna mantap* is erected on the first day. Vermillion and turmeric are applied and thread is tied around the new earthen pots that are brought from the potter for the purpose. After 9 P.M. in the night, *puja* is performed by the Pandit. At the time of the marriage, the bride applies *mehandi* to her palms which is considered very important. *Kante* made of gold which is the symbol of married status, is shown by the bridegroom to all those assembled who express their approval by touching the same, before being adorned around the bride's neck. Other ornaments that are essential for a marriage are silver anklets known as *Chalkhade* weighing ¼ Kg. and *Ekade* weighing ½ Kg. are presented to the bride by the groom's father along with *Kante*. The above three ornaments are offered invariably by the groom's father to the bride. Besides these ornaments, there is neither bride price nor dowry among Mehtars. Sacred rice (rice smeared with turmeric is then showered upon the newly wedded couple by those present on the occasion. Thereafter the ceremony of giving presents to the

wedded couple takes place. All friends and relatives are entertained to dinner on the following day. The marriage celebration ends with the newly wedded couple being taken in procession to the temple in the evening. An amount of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 is usually spent towards marriage expenses. The married couple are not expected to talk to each other until the consummation ceremony is over which is usually held a year after marriage. During this intervening period of one year the bride stays at her hunband's house for some time and at her father's house for the rest of the period. Neither polygamy nor polyandry is prevalent among Mehtars. If a woman does not beget children her husband can remarry. No widow is allowed to marry again. A widow can be kept as a concubine provided with the approval of their caste men.

**Divorce**

Divorce is permitted on the ground of the wife's infidelity with the permission of the Court of Law as they are not having a Caste Panchayat. Divorced women may be kept as concubines by other Mehtars. The following statement shows the distribution of Mehtars in Andhra Pradesh by marital status according to the 1961 Census.

STATEMENT VII

MARITAL STATUS AMONG MEHTARS

| Age group | Marital Status | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never married | | | Married | | | Widowed | | | Divorced | | |
| | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) |
| 0-14 . . . . . | 1,396 | 736 | 660 | 42 | 7 | 35 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 15-44 . . . . . | 167 | 140 | 27 | 1,086 | 541 | 546 | 53 | 16 | 37 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| 45 and above . . . | .. | .. | .. | 268 | 198 | 70 | 104 | 30 | 74 | 1 | 1 | .. |

In the age group of 0—14, about 5% of the females are married, thus indicating the prevalence of child marriages to some extent in this caste. The proportion of divorced both among males and females is negligible.

**Death**

When a person dies, the dead is given bath, tied on a bier and borne by four persons to the burial ground; in the past the corpse was used to be carried on a cot to the burial ground. No musical instruments are engaged on this occasion. The eldest son is the chief mourner in case of man's death and in the case of a woman, the husband is the chief mourner. On reaching the cremation ground, the bier is lowered. Ornaments, if any, on the dead body are removed and after applying ghee the body is cremated. The ashes are then collected and are mixed in the river. The period of mourning is 12 days and on the 13th day, obsequies, are performed in the presence of the Pandit of their caste who recites mantras for which he is paid Rs. 3. The relatives are given a feast on that day. Neither alcoholic drinks nor meat is used on such occasions. The widow's bangles are broken and *Kante* is removed. The average expenditure on the obsequies comes to about Rs. 50.

**Religious Beliefs and Practices**

Their religion is Hinduism. The principal deity they worship is Mahakali. As Mehtars consider themselves as the descendants of the great Balmiki (Valmiki), they worship Balmiki as their priest. There is an association called Valmiki Mandir which is purely religious in its functions. There is a working committee for the association consisting of a President, Vice-President and Secretary. All the Mehtars are members of the association. The association collects Re. 1 to Rs. 2 from each Mehtar household in the month of October to celebrate Valmiki Jayanthi. All Mehtars of Hyderabad city gather at Gowliguda and do *bhajanalu*. A procession is taken on that day from Gowliguda to Sultan Shahi. The Punditji guides the working committee in conducting the ceremony.

They also worship the goddesses like Mata Dhutri and Basanthi. They visit and worship the shrines of these goddesses situated in Punjab State. Their pilgrimage centres are Gurgaon and Nagal of Gurgaon District, Patri of Karnal District and Beri of Rohtak District of Punjab State. After Holi a festival celebrated in the month of March, they go on pilgrimage in groups. They also venerate Lord Krishna. Rama, Lakshmana and Lakshmi Devi.

They observe fasting on Gokula Ashtami (August). The Mehtars are still considered as untouchables and they are not permitted to enter the temples in rural areas. L. Dhan Singh betrayed his ignorance when he was asked whether he was aware of the Anti-untouchability Act. Even though he was informed of the existence of the Act, he stated that they were still treated as untouchables, even in urban areas to a considerable extent.

**Important Festivals**

Of the various important Hindu festivals like Dassera, Deepavali, Gokula Asthami, Vinayakachavithi, Sankranti, etc., that are observed by Mehtars, the greatest importance is attached by them to Gokula Asthami (the birth day of Lord Krishna) which is celebrated with great enthusiasm. No particular dress or ornaments are worn by Mehtars on any one of these festival days. Once in a year according to their convenience, all Mehtar families perform and celebrate Maha Kali *puja* when a goat is sacrificed. The goat that is to be sacrificed is washed, decorated with vermilion and turmeric and fed with some sweets. The husband and wife of the household who offer the goat in sacrifice perform *puja*, apply *bottu* (a vermilion mark) on its forehead and take it in a procession to the temple of Maha Kali. While the goat is immolated, the *pandit* who is the priest of their caste recites *Mantramulu*.

**Social Control and Leadership**

Though confined to the outskirts of the village and assigned to a derogatorily low position in society, Mehtars still form a part and parcel of the village community and come within the perview of the village institutions. In the urban areas, Mehtars do not participate in any such organisations as observed during the case studies in Gowliguda and Chikkadpalle areas of the Hyderabad city. Such disputes as divorce partitions of property, etc., among Mehtars are decided by their own caste elders. In the Gowliguda area of Hyderabad city the Mehtars are found to be aware of the existence of the Zilla Parishads though they have stated that no benefit has accrued by them by any such instituion. Out of the 92 persons covered by case studies, there are 19 literates and some of them are reading newspapers in Hindi. One Sri T. Krishna Chand, son of Ramja, purchases 'Nav Bharat Times' regularly. Another Sri Ch. Lala Sahib, owns a radio. Daily news in Hindi and some of the daily programmes of 'Vividh Bharathi' are enjoyed by them. Some of them are aware of the family planning scheme but they are against its implementation.

**Inter-community Relationship**

It has been ascertained during the case studies conducted in Gowliguda and Chikkadpalle areas of Hyderabad City that forty years ago Mehtars stood at the bottom of the Hindu caste system. Even the other Scheduled Caste people in the locality do not take the food cooked by the Mehtars even now. Washermen and barbers were not serving Mehtars in the olden days. This position has now slightly improved in the sense that they serve Mehtars, provided the Mehtars approach the washermen and barbers at the latter's places of work. However Mehtars are treated better in society when they appear without the equipment of scavenging. This tendency probably indicates that others do not hate them as such, but have an occasion for their traditional occupation. To sum up, it may be said that their social position has improved though to a very small extent, and the stigma of untouchability associated with them has not disappeared though it appear to be on the wane. As stated in the earlier paragraphs, more and more of Mehtars are getting educated. Not only entertainment but also enlightenment is being provided to them by such modern amenities as radios, cinemas, etc. However, it may take a few more decades to bring their social and economic condition on a par with that of the more fortunate and more advanced classes of Hindu society.

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# MEHTAR

AN EXTRACT FROM THE TRIBES AND CASTES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA VOL. IV.
BY R. V. RUSSEL AND HIRALAL PP. 215-233.

**Mehtar** — The caste of sweepers and scavengers. In 1911, persons returning themselves as Mehtar, Bhangi and Dom were separately classified, and the total of all three was only 30,000. They generally confined themselves to their hereditary occupation of scavenging, and are rarely met with outside the towns and large villages. In most localities the supply of sweepers does not meet the demand. The case is quite different in Northern-India, where sweeper castes—the Chuhra in the Punjab, the Bhangi in the United Provinces and the Dom in Bengal—are all of them of great numerical strength.

The present sweeper caste is made up of diversed elements, and the name Mehtar, generally applied to it, is a little meaning a prince or leader. Its application to the caste, the most object and despised in the Hindu community, is perhaps partly ironical; but all the low castes have honorific titles, which are used as a method of address either from ordinary politeness or by those requiring some service, on the principle, as the Hindus say, that you may call an ass your uncle if you want him to do something for you.

In Bombay the sweepers are known as olganas scrap-eaters. The Bengal name Hari is supposed to come from *haddi*, a bone. The Hari is the bone-gatherer, and was familiar to early settlers of Calcutta under the quaint designation of the 'harry-wench' (Greeven, p. 66 quoting from Echoes of old Calcutta). In the Central Provinces sections of the Ghasia, Mehtar and Dom castes will do sweeper's work, and are therefore amalgamated with the Mehtars. The caste is thus a mixed constitution, and also forms a refuge for persons expelled from their own societies for social offences. But though called by different names, the sweeper community in most provinces appears to have the same stock of traditions and legends. The name of Mehtar is now generally employed, and has therefore been taken as the designation of the caste.

## Caste Sub-divisions

Mr. Greeven gives seven main sub-divisions, of which the Lalbegis or the followers of Lalbeg, the patron saint of sweepes, are the most important. The Rawats appear to be an aristocratic sub-division of the Lalbegis, their name being a corruption of the Sanskrit Rajputra, a prince. The Shaikh Mehtars are the only real Muhammadans branch, for though the Lalbegis worship a Musalman saint, they remain Hindus. The Haris or bone gatherers, are the sweepers of Bengal. The Helas may either be those who carry baskets of sweepings, or may derive their name from *hela*, a cry; and in that case they are so called as performing the office of town-criers, a function which the *Bhangi* usually still discharges in Northern India. The other subcastes are the Dhanuks or bowmen & the Bansphors or cleavers or bamboos.

In Central Provinces the Shaikh Mehtars belong principally to Nagpur, and another sub-caste the Makhia, is also found in the Maratha Districts and in Berar; those branches of the Ghasia and Dom castes who consent to do scavenger's work now form separate sub-caste of Mehtars in the same locality, and another group are called Narnolia, being said to take their name from a place called Narnol in the Punjab. The Lalbegis are often considered here as Muhammadans rather than Hindus, and bury their dead. In Saugor the sweepers are said to be divided into Lalbegis or Muhammadans and Doms or Hindus. The Lalbegi, Dom or Dumar and the Hela are the principle sub-castes of the north of the province, and Chuhra Mehtar are found in Chhatisgarh. Each sub-caste is devided into a number of exogamous sections named after plants and animals.

## Social Organisation

In Benaras each sub-division, Mr. Greeven states, has an elaborate and quasi-military organisation. Thus the Lalbegi sweepers have eight companies of *berhas*, consisting of the sweepers working in different localities; these are the Sadar, or those employed by private residents in cantonments; the Kali paltan, who serve the Bengal infantry; the Lal Kurti, who are employed by the British infantry; the Teshan (station), or those engaged at the three railway stations of the town; the Shahar, or those of the city; the Ramnagar, taking their name from the residence of the Maharaja of Benaras, whom they serve; the Kothiwal, or Bunglow men, who belong to residents in the civil

lines; and lastly the Genereli, who are the descendants of sweepers employed at the military headquarters when Benaras was commanded by a General of Division All the eight companies are commanded by a Brigadier the local head of the caste, whose office is now almost hereditary; his principle duty is to give two dinners to the whole caste on election. Each company has four officers—a Jamadar or president, a Munsif or spokesman, a Chaudhary or treasurer & a Naib or summoner. These offices are also practically hereditary; if the candidate can afford to give a dinner to the whole sub-caste and a turban to each president of a company. All the other members of the company are designated as Sipahis or soldiers. A caste dispute is first considered by the inferior officers of each company, who report their view to the president; he confers with the other presidents, and when an agreement has been reached the sentence is formally confirmed by the Brigadier. When any dispute arises, the aggrieved party, depositing a process fee of a ruppee and a quarter, addresses the officers of his company.

**Caste Punishments**

Only worthy members of the caste, Mr. Greeven continues, are allowed to sit on the tribal matting and smoke the tribal pipe (huqqaa), The proceedings begin with the outspreading (usually symbolic) of a carpet and the smoking of a water-pipe handed in turn to each clansman. For this purpose the members sit on the carpet in three lines, the officers in front and the private soldiers behind. The parties and their witnesses are heard and examined and a decision is pronounced. The punishments imposed consist of fines, compulsory dinners and expulsion from the caste; expulsion being inflicted for failure to comply with an order of fine or entertainment. The formal method of outcasting consists in seating the culprit on the ground and drawing a tribal mat over his head, from which the turban is removed; after this the messengers of the eight companies inflict a few taps with slippers and birch brooms. It is alleged that unfaithful women were formerly tied naked to trees and flogged with birch brooms, but that owing to the fatal results that occasionally followed such punishment as in the case of the five kicks among Chamar (tanners) and the scourging with the clothes line which used to prevail among Dhobis, the caste has now found it expedient to abandon these practices. When an outcaste is readmitted on submission, whether by paying a fine or giving a dinner, he is seated apart from the tribal mat and does penance by holding his ears with his hands and confessing his offence. A new huqqa, which he supplies is carried round by the messenger, and a few whips are taken by all the officers and sipahis in turn. The messenger repeats to the culprit the council's order, and informs him that should he again offend his punishment will be doubled. With his warning he hands him the water-pipe and after smoking this the offender is admitted to the carpet and all is forgotten in a banquet at his expense.

**Admission of Outsiders**

The sweepers will freely admit outsiders into their community, and the caste forms a refuge for persons expelled from their own societies for sexual or moral offences. Various methods are employed for the initiation of a neophyte; in some places he, or more frequently she, is beaten with a broom made of wood taken from a bier, and has to give a feast to the caste in others a slight wound is made in his body and the blood of the another sweeper is allowed to flow on to it so that they mix; and a glass of sherbet and sugar known as the cup of nectar, is prepared by the priest and all the members of the committee put their fingers into it, after which it is given to the candidate to drink, or he has to drink water mixed with cowdung into which the caste-people have dipped their little fingers, and a lock of his hair is cut off. Or he fasts all day at the shrine of Lalbeg and in the evening drinks sherbet after burning incense at the shrine; and gives three feasts, the first on the bank of the tank, the second in his courtyard and the third in his house, representing his gradual purification for membership; at this last he puts a little water into every man's cup and receives from him a piece of bread, and so becomes a fully qualified casteman. Owing to this reinforcement from higher castes, and perhaps also to their flesh diet, the sweepers are not infrequently taller and stronger as well as lighter in colour than the average Hindu.

**Marriage Customs**

The marriage ceremony in Central Provinces follows the ordinary Hindu ritual. The *lagan* or paper fixing the date of wedding is written by a Brahman, who seats himself at some distance from the sweeper's house and composes the letter. This paper must not be seen by the bride or bridegroom, nor may its contents be read to them, as it is believed that to do so would cause them to fall ill during the ceremony. Before the bridegroom starts for the wedding his mother

waves a wooden pestle five times over his head, passing it between his legs and shoulders. After this the bridegroom breaks two lampsaucers with his right foot, steps over the rice-powder and departs for the bride's house without looking behind him. The *sawasas* or relatives of the parties usually officiate at the ceremony, but the well-to-do sometimes engage a Brahman, who sits at a distance from the house and calls out his instructions. When a man wishes to marry a widow he must pay six rupees to the caste committee and give a feast to the community. Divorce is permitted for incompatibility of temper, or immorality on the part of the wife or if the husband suffers from leprosy or impotence. Among the Lalbegis, when a man wishes to get rid of his wife he assembles the brethern and in their presence says to her, 'you are as my sister,' and she answers 'you are as my father and brother'.

**Disposal of the Dead**

The dead are usually buried but the well-to-do sometimes cremate them. In Benaras the face or hand of the corpse is scorched with fire to symbolise cremation and it is then buried. In Punjab the ghosts of sweepers are considered to be malevolent and are much dreaded; and their bodies are therefore, always buried or burnt face down-wards to prevent the spirit escaping; and riots have taken place and the magistrates have been appealed to prevent a chuhra from being buried face upwards. In Benares as the body is lowered into the grave the sheet is withdrawn for a moment from the features of the departed to afford him one last glimpse of the heavens, while with Muhammadans the face is turned towards Mecca. Each clansman flings a handful of dust over the corpse, and after the earth is filled in crumbles a little bread and sugar-cake and sprinkles water upon the grave. A provision of bread, sweetmeats and water is also left upon it for the soul of the departed. In the Central Provinces the body of a man is covered with a white winding sheet and that of a woman with a red-one. If the death occurs during the lunar conjunction known as Panchak, four human images of flour are made and buried with the dead man, as they think that if this is not done four more deaths will occur in the family.

**Devices for procuring children**

If a woman greatly desires a child she will go to a shrine and lay a stone on it which she calls the *Dharna* or deposit or pledge. Then she thinks that she has put the god under an obligation to give her a child. She vows that if she becomes pregnant within a certain period, six or nine months, she will make an offering of a certain value. If the pregnancy comes she goes to the temple, makes the offering and removes the stone. If the desired result does not happen, however, she considers that the god has broken his obligation and ceases to worship him. If a barren woman desires a child she should steal on a Sunday or a Wednesday a strip from the body-cloth of a fertile woman when it is hung out to dry; or she may steal a piece of rope from the bed in which a woman has been delivered of a child, or a piece of the baby's soiled swaddling clothes or a piece of cloth stained with the blood of a fertile woman. This last she will take and bury in a cemetery and the others wear round her waist; then she will become fertile and the fertile woman will become barren. Another device is to obtain from the mid-wife a piece of the navel-string of a new born child and swallow it. For this reason the navel string is always carefully guarded and its disposal seen to.

**Divination of Sex**

If a pregnant woman is thin and ailling they think a boy will be born; but if fat and well that it will be a girl. In order to divine the sex of a coming child they pour a little oil on the stomach of the woman; if the oil flows straight down it is thought that a boy will be born and if crooked a girl. Similarly if the hair on the point of her body grows straight they think the child will be a boy, but if crooked a girl; and if the swelling of pregnancy is more apparent on the right side a boy is portended, but if on the left side a girl. If the delivery is retarded they go to a gun-maker and obtain from him a gun which has been discharged and the soiling of the barrel left uncleaned; some water is put into the barrel and shaken up and then poured into a vessel and given to the woman to drink and it is thought that the quality of swift movement appertaining to the bullet which soiled the barrel will be communicated to the woman and cause the swift expulsion of the child from her womb.

**Child Birth**

When a woman is in labour she squats down with her legs apart holding to the bed in front of her, while the mid-wife rubs her back. If delivery is retarded the midwife gets a broom and sitting behind the woman presses it on her stomach, at the same time drawing back the upper part of her body. By this means they think that the child will be forced from womb. Or the mother of the woman in labour will take a grinding-stone and stand holding it or her head so long as the child is not born. She says to her daughter

Take my name', and the daughter repeats her mother's name aloud. Here the idea is apparently that the mother takes on herself some of the pain which has been endured by the daughter and the repetition of her name by the daughter will cause the goddess of child birth to hasten the perild of delivery in order to terminate the unjust sufferings of the mother for which the goddess has become responsible. The mother's name exerts pressure or influence on the goddess who is at the time occupied with the daughter or perhaps so journing in her body.

**Treatment of the Mother**

If the child is born in the morning they wil give the mother a little sugar and coconut to eat in the evening, but if it is born in the evening they wil give her nothing till next morning. Milk is given only sparingly as it is supposed to produce coughing. The main idea of treatment in child birth is to prevent either the mother or child from taking cold or chill, this being the principle danger to which they are thought to be exposed. The door of the birth chambe is therefore swept shut and a fire is continually burning in it night and day. The woman is not bathed fo several days, and atmosphere and general insanitary conditions can better be imagined than described With the same end of preventing cold they feed the mother on a hot liquid produced by cooking thirtysix ingredients together. Gradients are peppers, ginger, azgan (a condiment), turmeric, nutmeg, ajwain (aniseed), dates, almonds, raisins; cocoanut, wild singara etc. The mixture can not be prepared for less than two rupees and the woman is fed on it for five days beginning from the second day after birth, if the family can afford the expense.

**Protecting the Lives of Children**

If the mother's milk runs dry, they use the dried bodies of the little fish caught in the shallow water of fields and tanks, and sometimes supposed to have fallen down with the rain. They are boiled in a little water and the fish & the water are given to the woman to consume. Here the idea is apparently that as the fish has the quality of liquidness because it lives in water, so by eating this will be communicated to the breast and the milk will flow again. If a woman's children die, then the next time she is in labour they bring a goat all of one colour. When the birth of the child takes place and it falls from the womb on to the ground no one must touch it; but the goat, which should if possible be of the same sex as the child, is taken and passed over the child twenty-one times. Then they take the goat and the after-birth to a cemetery and, here cut the goat's throat by the *halal* rite and bury it with the after birth. The idea is thus goat's life is a substitute for that of the child. By being passed over the child it takes the child's evil destiny upon itself, and the burial in a cemetery causes the goat to resemble a human being, while the after-birth communicates to it some part of the life of the child. If a mother is afraid her child will die, she sells it for a few cowries to another woman. Of course the sale is only nominal, but the woman who has purchased the child takes a special interest in it, and at the naming or other ceremony she will give it a jewel or such other present as she can afford. Thus she considers that the fictitious sale has had some effect and that she has acquired a certain interest in the child.

**Infantile Diseases**

If a baby, especially a girl, has much hair on its body, they make cake of gram-flour and rub it with sesamum oil all over the body, and this is supposed to remove the hair. If a child's skin dries up and it pines away, they think that an owl has taken away a cloth stained by the child when it was hung out to dry. The remedy is to obtain the liver of an owl and hang it round the child's neck.

For jaundice they get the flesh of a yellow snake which appears in the rains, and of the *rohu* fish which has yellowish seales, and hang them to its neck; or they get a verse of the Koran written out by a Moulvi or Mohammadan priest and use this as an amulet; or they catch a small frog alive, tie it up in a yellow cloth and hang it to the child's neck by a blue thread untill it dies. For tetanus the jaws are branded outside and a little musk is placed on the mother's breast so that the child may drink it with the milk. When the child begins to cut its teeth they put honey on the gums and think that this will make the teeth slip out early as the honey is smooth and slippery. If they want the child to have pretty teeth; its maternal uncle threads a number of grains of rice on a piece of string and hang them round its neck so that the teeth may grow like the rice. If the child's navel is swollen, the maternal uncle will go out for a walk and on his return place his turban over the navel. For averting the evil-eye the liver of the Indian badger is worn in amulet, this badger being supposed to haunt cemeteries and feed on corpses; some hairs of a bear also form a very favourite amulet, or a tiger's claws set in silver, or the tail of a lizard enclosed in lac and made into ring.

**Religion: Valmiki**

The religion of the sweepers has been described at length by Mr. Greeven and Mr. Crooke. It centres round the worship of two saints, Lalbeg or Bale Shah and Balnek or Balmik, who is really the huntsman *Valmiki*, the reputed author of Ramayana. Balmik was originally a low caste hunter called Ratnakar, and when he could not get game he was accustomed to rob and kill travellers. But one day he met Brahma and wished to kill him; but he could not raise his club against Brahma, and the god spoke and convinced him of his sins, directing him to repeat the name of Ram until he should be purified of them. But the hunter's heart was so evil that he could not pronounce the divine name, and instead he repeated Mara Mara (struck struck), but in the end by repetition this came to the same thing. Mr. Greeven's account continues: "As a small spark of fire burneth up a heap of cotton, so the word Rama cleaneth a man of all his sins. So the words 'Ram' 'Ram' were taught unto Ratnakar who ever repeated them for sixty thousand years at the selfsame spot with a heart, sincere. All his skin was eaten up by the white ants. Only the skeleton remained. Mud had been heaped over the body and grass had grown up, yet within the mound of mud the saint was still repeating the name of Rama. After sixty thousand years Brahma returned. No man could he see, yet he heard the voice of Ram Ram, rising from the mound of mud. Then Brahma be-thought him that the saint was beneath. He be-sought Indra to pour down rain and to wash away the mud. Indra complied with his request and the rain washed away the mud. The saint came forth. Nought save bones remained. Brahma called aloud to the saint When the saint beheld him he prostrated himself and spake : 'thou has taught me the words' 'Ram, Ram,' which have cleansed away all my sins'. Then spake Brahma; 'Hitherto thou wast Ratnakar: From today thy name will be Valmiki (from Valmik, an ant-hill) Now do thou compose a Ramayana in seven parts containing the deeds and exploits of Rama". Valmiki had been or afterwords became a sweeper and was known as 'cooker of dog's food' (Swapach), a name applied to sweepers, who have adopted him as their eponymous ancestor and patron saint (some writer consider that Balmik, the sweeper saint, and Valmiki the author of Ramayana, are not identical.

**Lalbeg**

Lalbeg, who is still more widely venerated, is considered to have been Ghazi Miyan, the nephew of Sultan Muhammad of Gazni, and a saint much worshipped in the Punjab. Many legends are told of Lalbeg, and his worship is described by Mr. Greeven as follows. "The ritual of Lalbeg is conducted in the presence of the whole brotherhood, as a rule at the festival of the Diwali and on other occasions when special business arises. The time for worship is after sun-set and if possible at mid-night. His shrine consists of a mud platform surrounded by steps (with four little turnets at the corners and a spire in the centre, in which is placed a lamp filled with clarified butter and containing a wick of twisted tow. Incense is thrown into the flame and offerings of cakes and sweetmeats are made. A lighted huqqa is placed before the altar and as soon as the smoke rises it is understood that a whiff has been drawn by the hero". A cock is offered to Lalbeg at the Dasahra festival. When a man is believed to have been affected by the evil eye, they wave a broom in front of the sufferer muttering the name of the saint. In the Damoh district the *guru* or priest who is the successor of Lalbeg comes from the Punjab every year or two. He is richly clad and is followed by a sweeper carrying an umbrella. Other Hindus say that his teaching is that no one who is not a Lalbegi can go to heaven, but those on whom the dust raised by a Lalbegi sweeping settles acquire some modicum of virtue. Similarly Mr. Greeven remarks "sweepers by no means endorse the humble opinion entertained with respect to them; for they allude to castes such as Kunbis and Chamars as petty (*chhota*), while a common anecdote is related to the effect that a Lalbegi when asked whether Muhammadans could obtain salvation, replied : 'I never heard of it, but perhaps they might slip in behind Lalbeg."

**Adoption of Foreign Religions**

On the whole the religion of the Lalbegis appears to be monotheistic and of a sufficiently elevated character, resembling that of the Kabirpanthis and other reforming sects. Its claim to the exclusive possession of the way of salvation is a method of revolt against the menial and debased position of the caste. Similarly many sweepers have become Muhammadans and Sikhs with the same end in view. As may be readily imagined, the scavengers are merely in name the disciples or Nanak Shah, profession in fact to be his followers just as they are prepared at a moment's notice to become christians or Muhammadans. Their object is, of course, merely to acquire a status which may elevate them above the utter degradation of their caste. The acquintance of most of them with the doctrines of Nanak Shah is at Zero. They know little

and care less about his rules of life, habitually disregarding, for instance, the prohibitions against smoking and hair-cutting. In fact, a scavenger at Benaras no more becomes a Sikh by taking Nanak Shah's motto than he becomes a christian by wearing a rourd hat and a pair of trousers". It was probably with a similar leaning towards the more liberal religion that the Lalbegis, though themselves Hindus adopted a Muhammadan for their tutelary saint. In the Punjab Muhammadan sweepers who have given up eating carrion and refuse to remove night soil rank higher than the others, and are known as Musalli. And in Saugor the Muhammadans allow the sweepers to come into a mosque and to stand at the back, whereas, of course, they can not approach a Hindu temple.

Anotner Muhammadan saint revered by the sweepers of Saugor is one Zahir Pir. At the fasts in Chait and Kunwar (March & Sept.), they tie coconuts wrapped in cloth to the top of a long bamboo, and marching to the tomb of Zahir Pir making offerings of cakes and sweet-meats. Before starting for his day's work the sweeper does obeisance to his basket and broom.

**Social Status.**

The sweeper stands at the very bottom of the social ladder of Hinduism. He is considered to be the representative of the chandala of Manu who was said to be descended of a Sudra father and a Brahman woman. "It was ordained that the chandala should live without the town; his sole wealth should be dogs and asses; his clothes should consist of the cerecloths of the dead; his dishes should be broken pots and his ornaments rusty iron. No one who regarded his duties should hold intercourse with the chandalas and they should marry only among themselves. By day they might roam about for the purposes of work, but should be distinguished by the badges of the Raja, and should carry out the corpse of any one who died without kindred. They should always be employed to slay those who by the law were sentenced to be put to death, and they might take the clothes of the slain, their beds and their ornaments. Elsewhere the chandala is said to rank in impurity with the town boar, the dog, a woman during her monthly illness and a eunch, none of whom must a Brahman allow to see him when eating. Like the Chandala, the sweeper cannot be touched, and he himself acquiesces in this and walks apart. In large towns he sometimes carries a Kite's wing in his turban to show his caste, or goes aloof saying *pois*, which is equivalent to a warning. When the sweeper is in company he will efface himself as far as possible behind other people. He is known by his basket and broom, and men of other castes will not carry these articles lest they should be mistaken for a sweeper. The sweeper's broom is made of bamboo, whereas the ordinary house broom is made of date palm leaves. The house broom is considered sacred as the implement of Lakshmi used in cleaning the house. No one should treat upon or touch it with his feet. The sweeper's broom is a powerful agent for curing the evil eye, and mothers get him to come and wave it up and down in front of a sick child for this purpose. Nevertheless it is lucky to see a sweeper in the morning, especially if he has his basket with him. In Gujarat Mr. Bhimbhai Kirparam writes of him; "Though he is held to be lower and more unclean, the Bhangia is viewed with kindlier feelings than the Dhed (Mahar). To meet the basket bearing Bhangia is lucky, and the Bhangia's blessings is valued. Even now if a government officer goes into a Bhangia hamlet the men with hands raised in blessing say: 'May your rule last for ever". A sweeper will eat the leavings of other people, but he will not eat in their houses; he will take the food away to his own house. It is related that on one occasion a sweeper accompanied a marriage party of Lodhis (cultivators), & the Lodhi who was the host was anxious, that all should share his hospitality & asked the sweeper to eat in his house, but he repeatedly refused, until finally the Lodhi gave him a she-buffalow to induce him to eat, so that it might not be said that any one had declined to share in his feast. No other caste, of course will accept food or water from a sweeper, and only a chamar (tanner) will take a *chilam* or clay pipe-bowl from his hand. The sweeper will eat carrion and the flesh of almost all animals, including snakes, lizards, crocodiles and tigers, and also the leavings of food of almost any caste.(.....)

**Occupation**

Sweeping and scavenging in the streets and in private houses are the traditional occupations of the caste, but they have others. In Bombay they serve as night-watchmen, town criers, drummers, trumpeters and hangmen. Formerly the office of hangman was confined to sweepers, but now many low caste prisoners are willing to undertake it for the sake of the privilege of smoking tobacco in jail which it confers. (.....) In the Central Provinces the hangman was accompanied by four or five other sweepers of caste Panchayat, the idea being perhaps that his act should be condoned by their presence and approval and he should escape

guilt. (.....) The hangman received ten rupees as his fee, and of this five rupees were given to the caste for a feast and an offering to Lalbeg to expiate his sin. In Bundelkhand sweepers are employed as grooms by the Lodhis, and may put everything on to the horse except as saddle cloth. They are also the village musicians, and some of them play on the rustic flute called *Shahnai* at weddings, and receive their food all the time that the ceremony lasts. Sweepers are, as a rule, to be found only in large villages, as in small ones, there is no work for them. The caste is none too numerous in the Central Provinces, and in villages the sweeper is often not available when wanted for cleaning the streets. The Chamars of Bundelkhand will not remove the corpses of a cat or a dog or a squirrel, and a sweeper must be obtained for the purpose. These three animals are in a manner holy and it is considered a sin to kill any one of them. But their corpses are unclean. A Chamar also refuses to touch the corpse of a donkey, but a Kumhar (potter) will sometimes do this; if he declines a sweeper must be fetched. When a sweeper has to enter a house in order to take out the body of an animal, it is cleaned and white-washed after he has been in. In Hoshangabad an objection appears to the entry of a sweeper by the door, as it is stated that a ladder is placed for him so that he presumably climbs through the window. Or where there are no windows it is possible that the ladder may protect the sacred threshold from contact with his feet. The sweeper also attends at funerals and assists to prepare the pyre; he receives the winding-sheet when this is not burnt or buried with the corpse, and the copper coins which are left on the ground as purchase-money for the site of the grave. In Bombay in rich families the winding sheet is often a worked shawl costing from fifty to a hundred rupees. When a Hindu widow breaks her bangles after her husband's death, she gives them, including one or two whole ones, to a Bhangia woman. A letter announcing a death is always carried by a sweeper (Punjab Census Report 1881).

During an eclipse the sweepers reap a good harvest; for it is believed that Rahu, the demon who devours the sun and moon and thus causes an eclipse, was either a sweeper or the deity of the sweepers, and alms given to them at this time will appear him and cause him to let the luminaries go. According to another account, the sun and moon are in Rahu's debt, and he comes and duns them and this is the eclipse; and the alms given to sweepers are a means of paying the debt. In Gujarat as soon as the darkening sets in, the Bhangis go about shouting, '*Garnandan, Vastradan, Rupadan* or 'Gifts for the eclipse, gift for clothes, gifts for silver, (Bombay gazetter L.C.). The sweepers are no doubt derived from the primitive or Dravidian tribes, and as has been seen, they also practise the art of making bamboo mats and baskets, being known as Bansphor in Bombay on this account. In the Punjab the Chuhras are a very numerous caste, being exceeded only by the Jats, Rajputs and Brahmans. Only a small proportion of them naturally find employment as scavengers, and the remainder are agricultural labourers, and together with the vagrants and gipsies are the hereditary workers in grass and reeds. They are closely connected with the Dhanuks, a caste hunters, fowlers and village watchmen being of nearly the same status. And Dhanuk, again is in some localities a complimentary term for a Basor or bamboo worker. It has been seen that Valmiki the patron saint of the sweepers, was a low caste hunter and this gives some reason for the supposition that the primary occupations of the Chuhras and Bhangis were hunting and working in grass and bamboo. In one of the legends of the sweepers saint Balmik or Valmiki given by Mr. Greeven, Balmik was the youngest of the five Pandava brothers, and was persuaded by the others to remove the body of a calf which died in their court yard. But after he had done so they refused to touch him, so he went into the wilderness with the body; and when he did not know how to feed himself the carcase started into life and gave him milk until he was full grown, when it died again of its own accord. Balmik burst into tears, not knowing how he was to live henceforth, but a voice cried from heaven saying, "Of the sinews (of the calf's body) do thou tie winnows (sup) and of the caul do thou plait sieves(Chalni)". Balmik obeyed, and by his handy work gained the name of Supaj or the maker of winnowing-fans. These are natural occupations of the non-Aryan forest tribes, and are now practised by the Gonds.

# MAHAR

**(SCHEDULED CASTE)**

# MAHAR

## Name, Identity, Origin and History

The Caste, Mahar, is declared as a Scheduled Caste in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh by the President's Order of 1956. The caste Mahar is also Scheduled in the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Since it is a caste mostly inhabiting the Maratha frontiers, the influence of Maratha style is found in general and particularly in their language and mode of dress. As they are numerically dominant in Adilabad district, case studies were conducted in the villages of Mudhol, Kubeer and Thimmapur of Mudhol taluk of Adilabad district during April and May, 1962. Though presently it is referred as a caste, Enthoven records it as a tribe while Hassan assumes that the name of the caste might have been the tribal name which originally belonged to the name of aboriginal races. The present investigation, for want of time could not cover this aspect, perhaps the most important aspect whether Mahar is a caste, or a tribe in a transitory state passing from tribal set up to caste organisation. This question is left to the scholars of deep interest with ample time to investigate. Though the informants of the field study turned an innocent face regarding the origin of their name and identity, Mahars seem to be a popular labouring caste in Maharashtra area since a very long time. Both Hassan, [Hassan, Vol. 1, p. 420] and Enthoven, [Enthoven, Vol. II, p. 401] voiced the same. Enthoven records that Antyaja, Ati Shudra, Bhumiputra or Dharnicheput, Bhuyal, Chokhamela, Dhed, Domb, Hulsava, Kathivale, Mhetre, Mirasi, Parvari, Taral, Thorlegharche and Veskar are synonyms to Mahars. But during the investigation it is observed that all these names are new to them.

Mahars of the villages where the case studies were conducted could not say anything about their origin. Hassan records some interesting legends but he himself doubts the certainty of these legends. The first legend declares that Mahar was one of the four cow-born castes.

He writes :

"When the cow asked her sons how they would treat he when she died, the first three answered that they would worship her, but the fourth said he would bear her inside of him. The horror struck brothers called him 'Mahahar' (great eater) which was abbreviated into Mahar". (Hassan Vol. I, p. 422).

According to another legend some drops of blood on *bel* leaf (*Egle marmelos*) caused by the touch of goddess Parvathi during her bath turned into a beautiful child who was named Mahamuni by Mahadev. One day this little child had crawled out and began to eat a dead cow. Mahadev was shocked at his action and condemned him to live on the outskirts of the village eating carcasses and abused him as Mahahara which means a great eater, (Hassan Vol. I, P. 422). When these legends are told to the informants, they expressed their ignorance of them.

## Distribution and Population Trend

Both according to the 1961 Census and old records, Mahars are the inhabitants of Telangana area in Andhra Pradesh. They are mostly found in Adilabad district which shows that their concentration is more on the border of Maharashtra. Three villages of Mudhol taluk in Adilabad district were selected for the case studies for the reason mentioned in the introduction. Mahars are distributed in the western half of the Telangana area of Andhra Pradesh which is a connecting link between Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Statement I shows the population figures of Mahars for the decades from 1881 to 1931 and 1961.

STATEMENT I

POPULATION OF MAHARS

| Decade/District | Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| *Hyderabad State* | | | |
| 1. 1881 | 438,302 | .. | .. |
| 2. 1891 | 501,241 | .. | .. |
| 3. 1901 | 583,031 | .. | .. |

STATEMENT I—*Concld.*

POPULATION OF MAHARS

| Decade/District | | Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Persons | Males | Females |
| 1 | | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. 1911 | | 689,543 | .. | .. |
| 5. 1921 | | 494,316 | 245,026 | 249,290 |
| 6. 1931 | | 529,364 | .. | .. |
| 1961 *Census—Andhra Pradesh* | | | | |
| Grand Total | Total | 11,741 | 5,782 | 5,959 |
| | Rural | 10,951 | 5,362 | 5,589 |
| | Urban | 790 | 420 | 370 |
| Hyderabad distric | Total | 326 | 169 | 157 |
| | Rural | 11 | 6 | 5 |
| | Urban | 315 | 163 | 152 |
| Medak district | Total | 2,410 | 1,172 | 1,238 |
| | Rural | 2,410 | 1,172 | 1,238 |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |
| Nizamabad district | Total | 3,204 | 1,712 | 1,492 |
| | Rural | 3,155 | 1,678 | 1,477 |
| | Urban | 49 | 34 | 15 |
| Adilabad district | Total | 5,800 | 2,728 | 3,072 |
| | Rural | 5,375 | 2,506 | 2,869 |
| | Urban | 425 | 222 | 203 |
| Karimnagar district | Total | 1 | 1 | .. |
| | Rural | .. | .. | .. |
| | Urban | 1 | 1 | .. |

(*Source* : 1,2,3,4 and 6:—1931 Hyderabad State Census Report Part I-Report, page 253. 5-1921 Hyderabad State Census Report Part II, Imperial Tables, page 102).

In the five Censuses of 1881 to 1911 and 1931, the sex-wise details of the caste are not readily available. In 1921, the total population of the Mahars was 494,316 of which 49·57% are males and 50·43% are females. During the 1961 Census they have been returned in five districts, namely Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad and Karimnagar. The sex ratios in the two Census decades 1921 and 1961 are 1,017 and 1,031 females respectively for every 1,000 males. During 1961, in Adilabad and Medak districts, the number of females exceeded males while in Nizamabad and Hyderabad districts males exceeded females. They form a very insignificant percentage of 0·03% in the total population of Andhra Pradesh and they constitute 0·24% of the total Scheduled Castes population in the State. 93·27% of the total persons are inhabiting the rural areas while 6·73% are living in the urban areas. Regarding the distribution of the population, Adilabad contains nearly half of the population, *i.e.* 48·40% of the total caste. The percentages of population found in Nizamabad, Medak and Hyderabad are 27·29%, 20·53% and 2·7% respectively. In Karimnagar, only one person is reported to be present. Statement II shows the variation in population of Mahars since 1881 to 1931 in Hyderabad State.

STATEMENT II

VARIATION IN THE POPULATION OF MAHARS SINCE 1881 IN HYDERABAD STATE

| Years | | | | | | Percentage in Variation Increase (+) Decrease (—) | | | | | Percentage of Net Variation from 1881 to 1931 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1931 | 1921 | 1911 | 1901 | 1891 | 1881 | 1921 to 1931 | 1911 to 1921 | 1901 to 1911 | 1891 to 1901 | 1881 to 1891 | |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| 529,364 | 494,316 | 689,543 | 583,031 | 501,241 | 438,302 | +7·1 | —71·7 | +18·3 | +16·3 | +14·4 | +20·7 |

*Sousre* : Census of India, 1931, Vol.XXIII, H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions (Hyderabad State); Part I—Report (Hyderabad : 1933), p. 253.

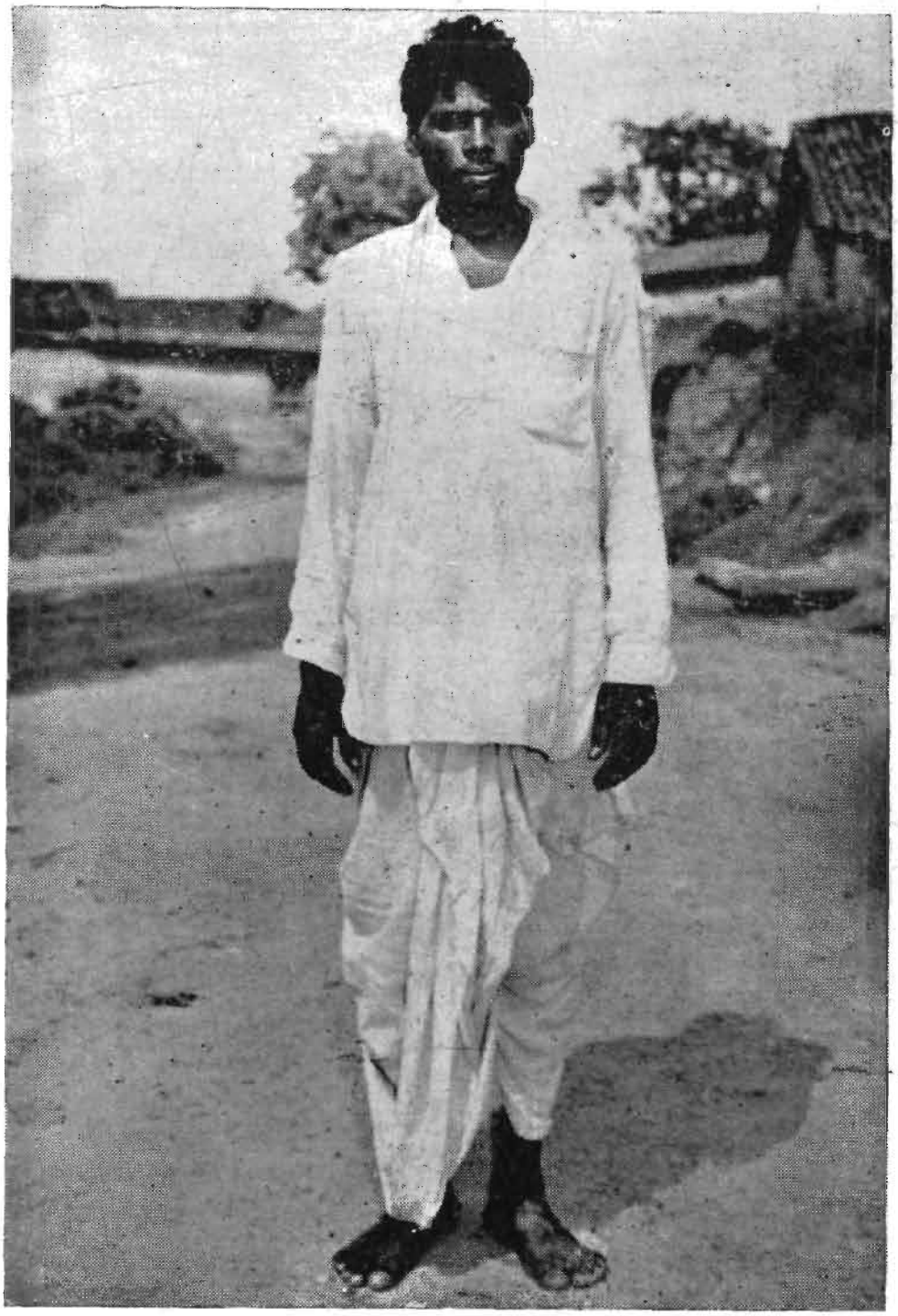


Fig. 1 A male Mahar

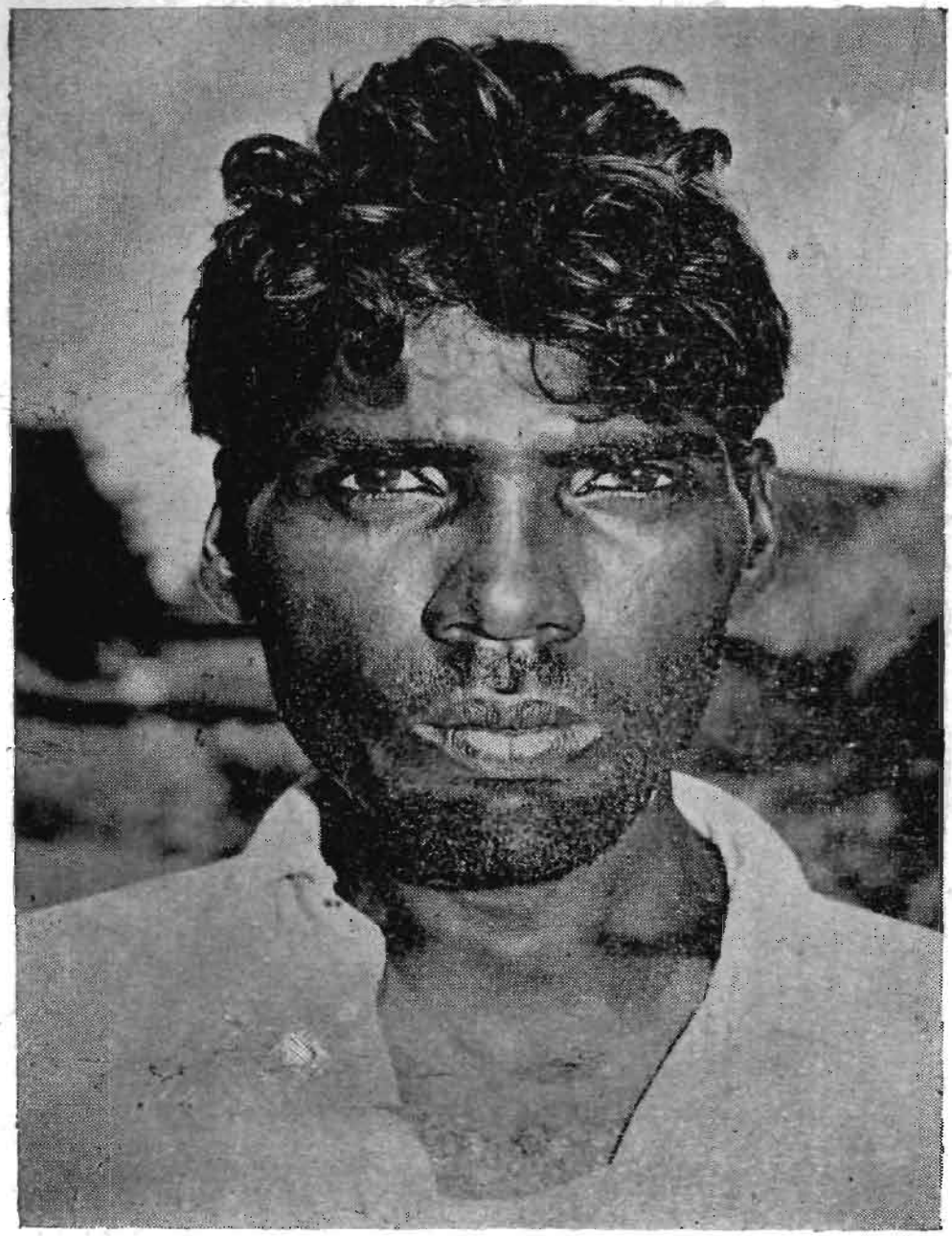


Fig. 2 A male Mahar - Front



Fig. 3 A male Mahar - Profile

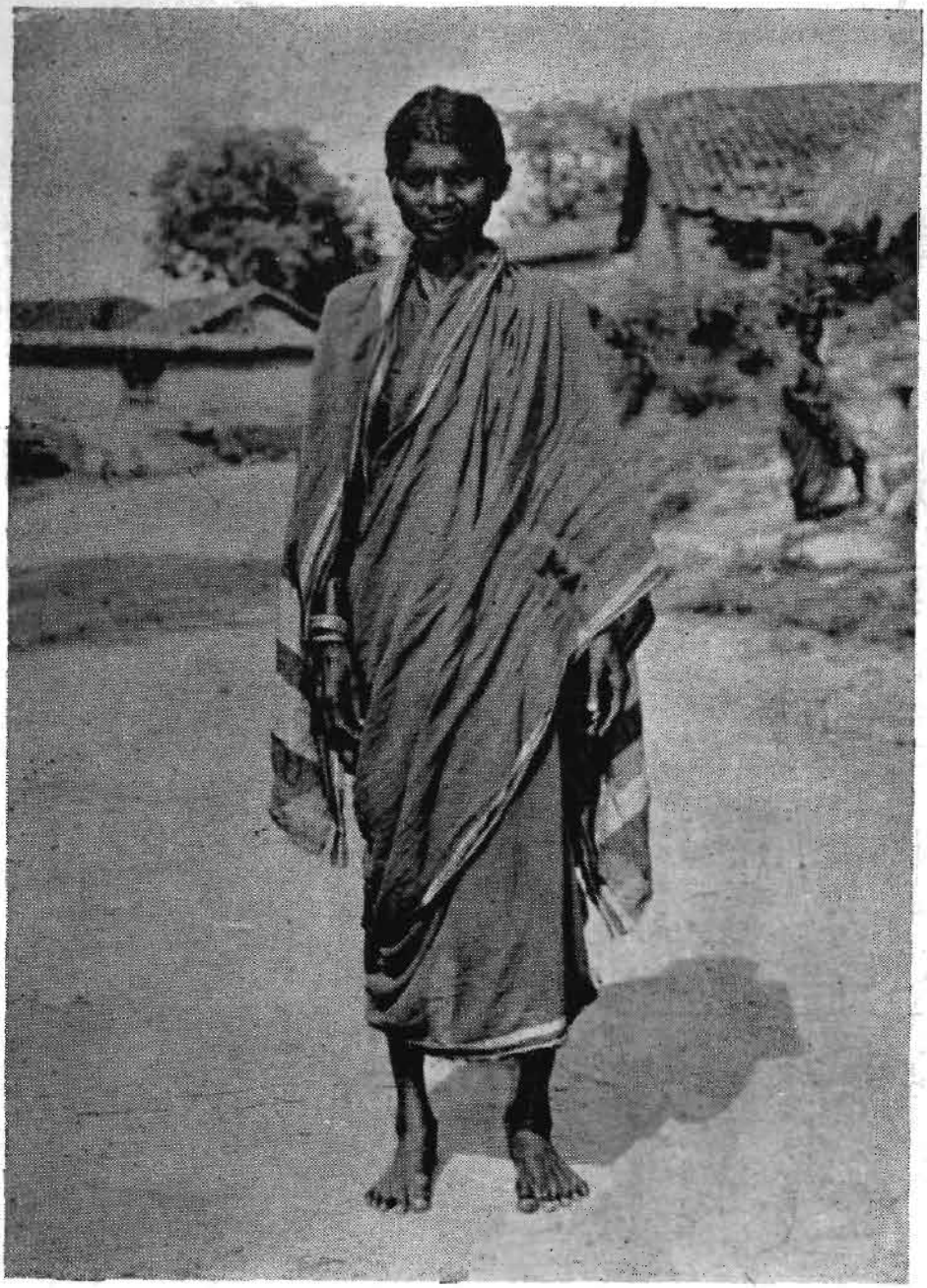


Fig. 4 A female Mahar

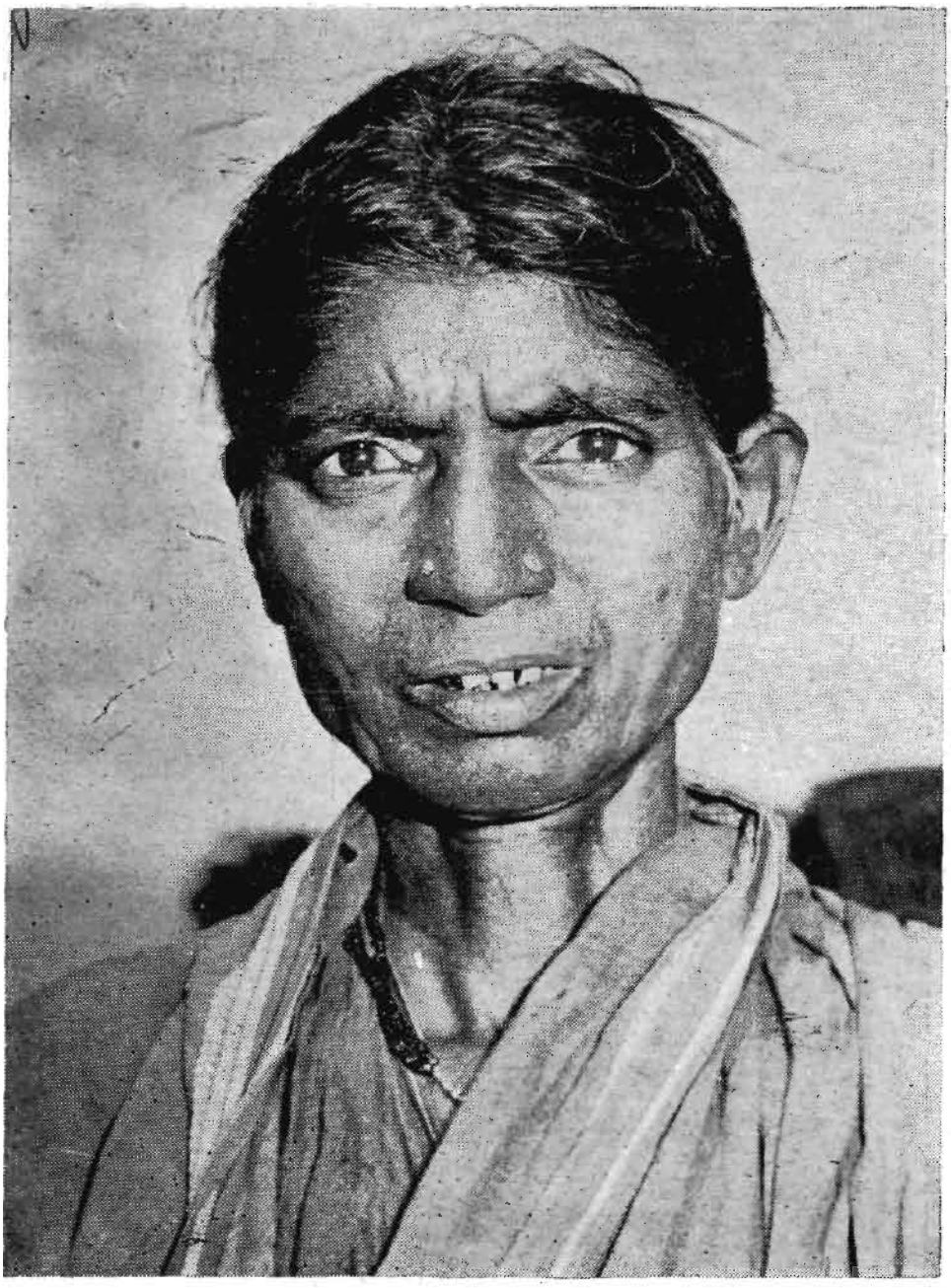


Fig. 5 A female Mahar -Front

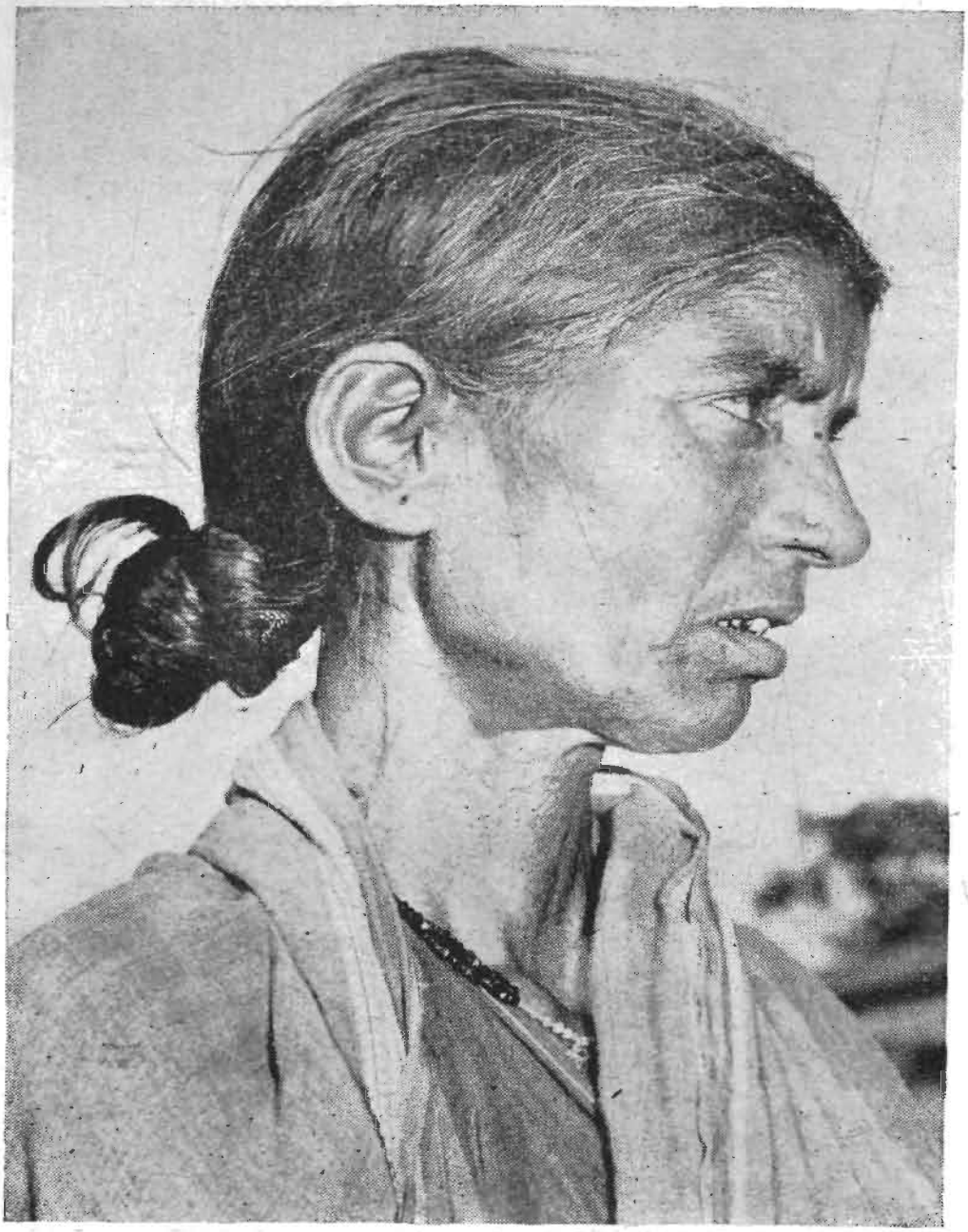


**Fig. 6** A female Mahar - Profile

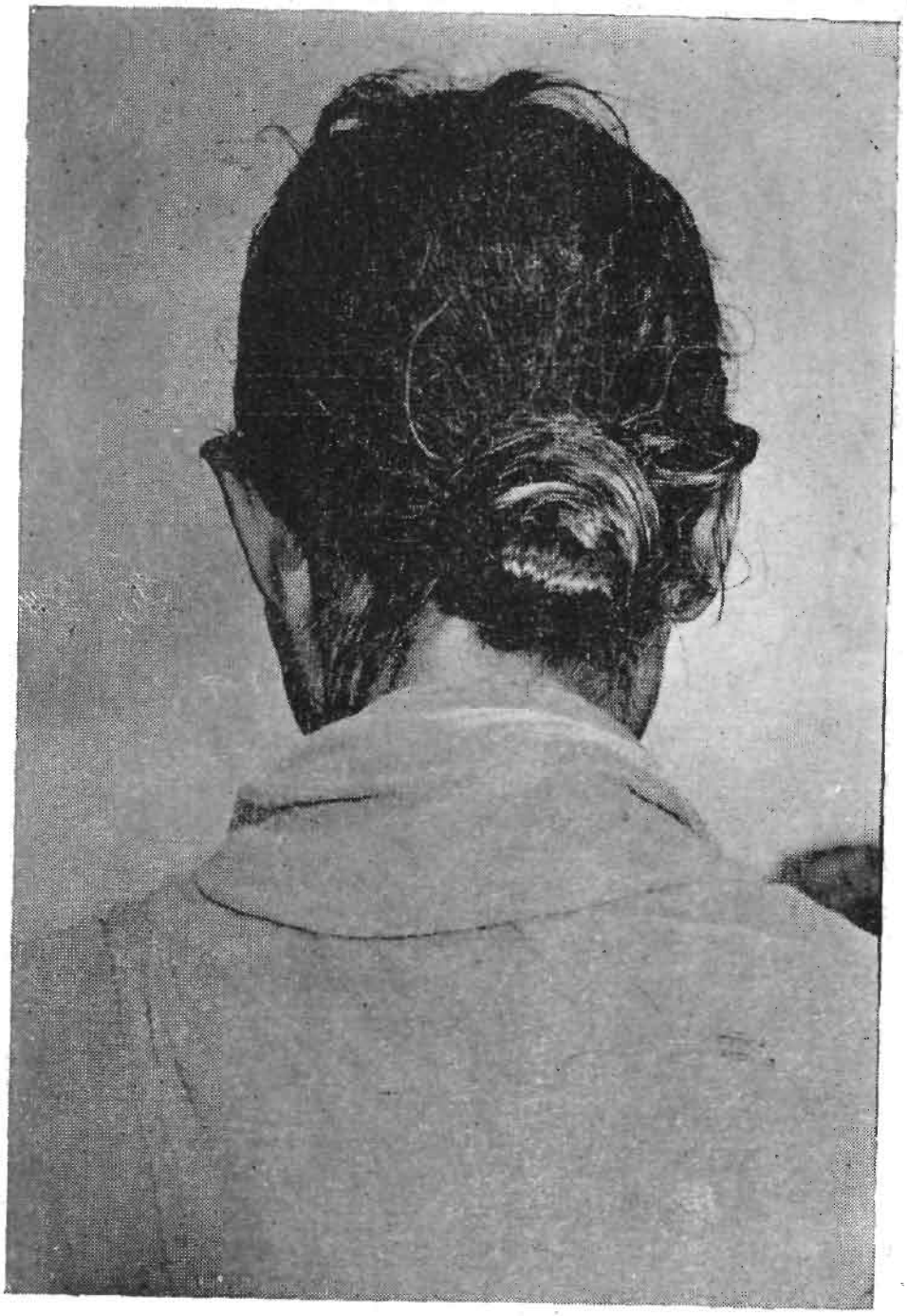


Fig. 7 A female Mahar - Back

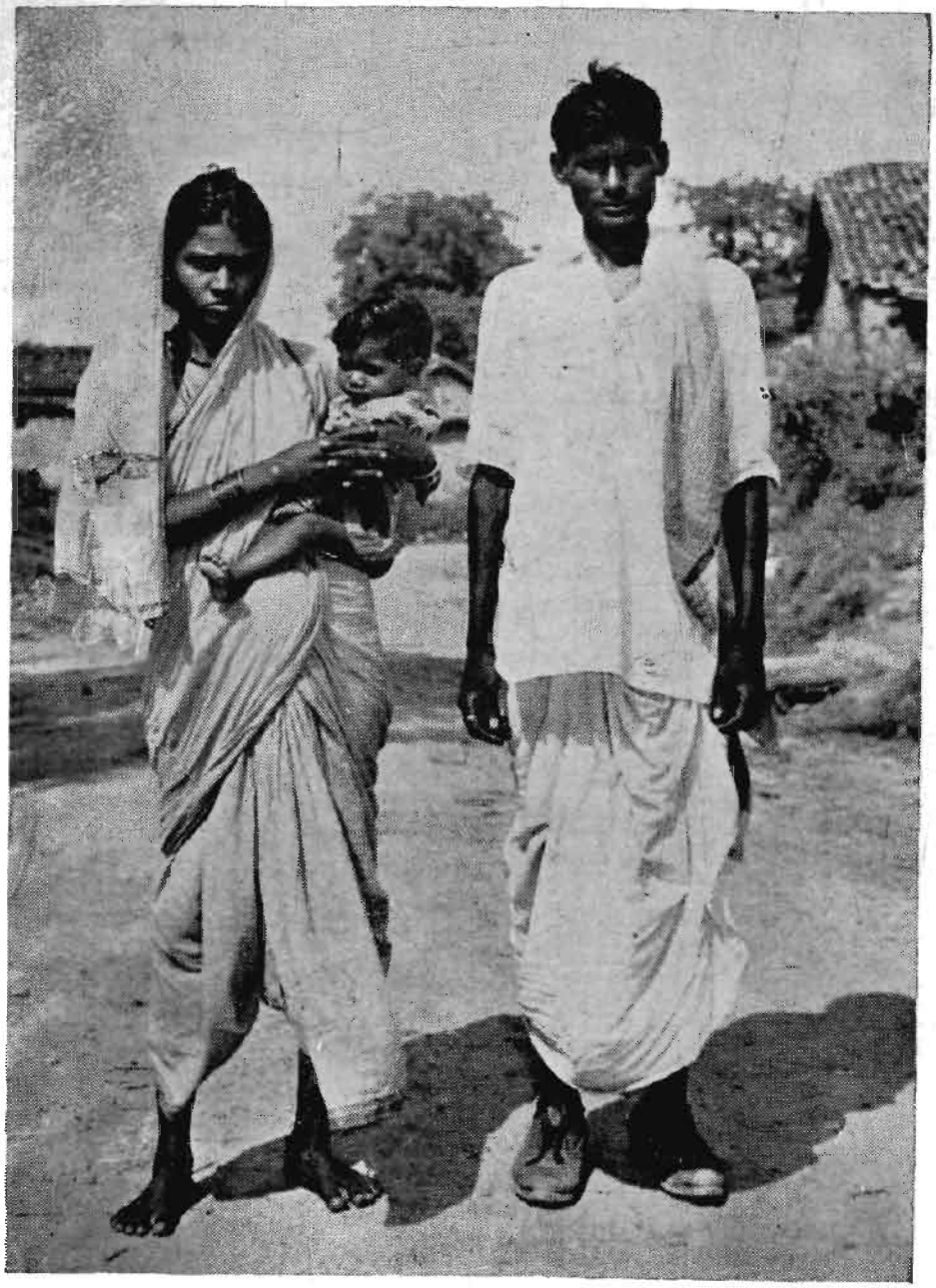


Fig. 8 An young couple



Fig. 9 Housing pattern of Mahar

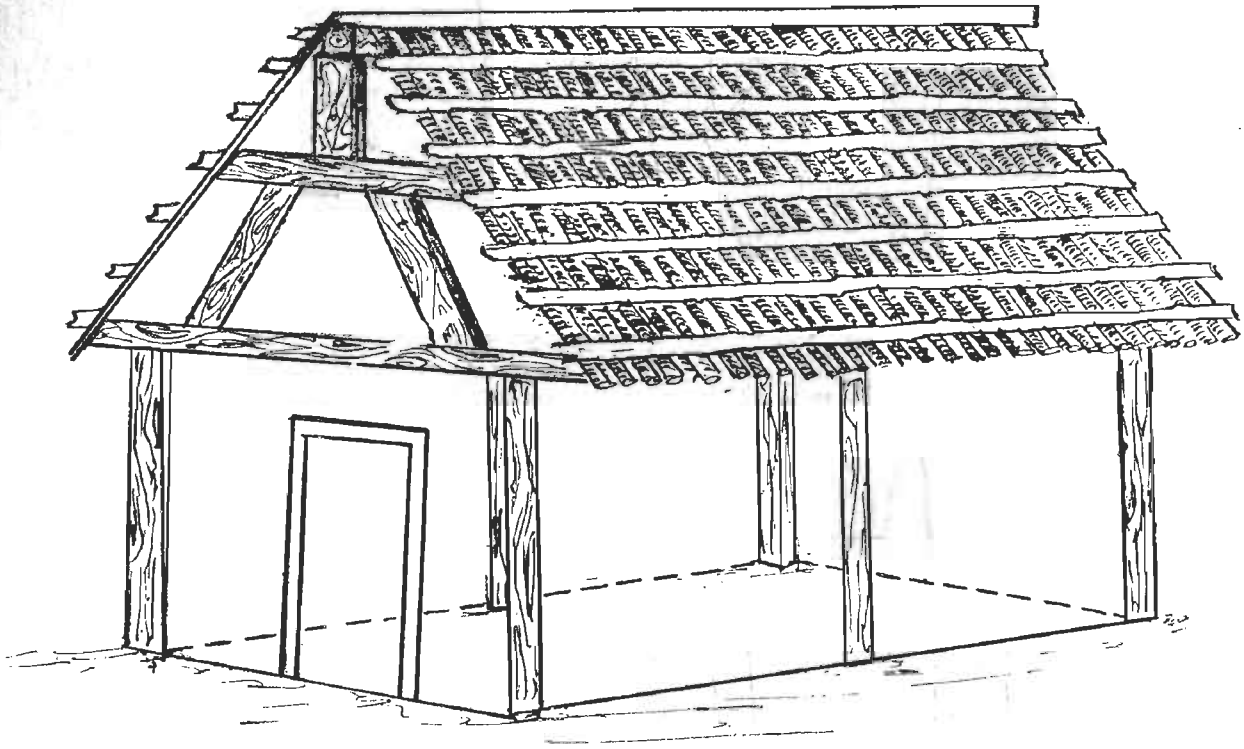


Fig. 10 Wooden frame work of a typical tiled house

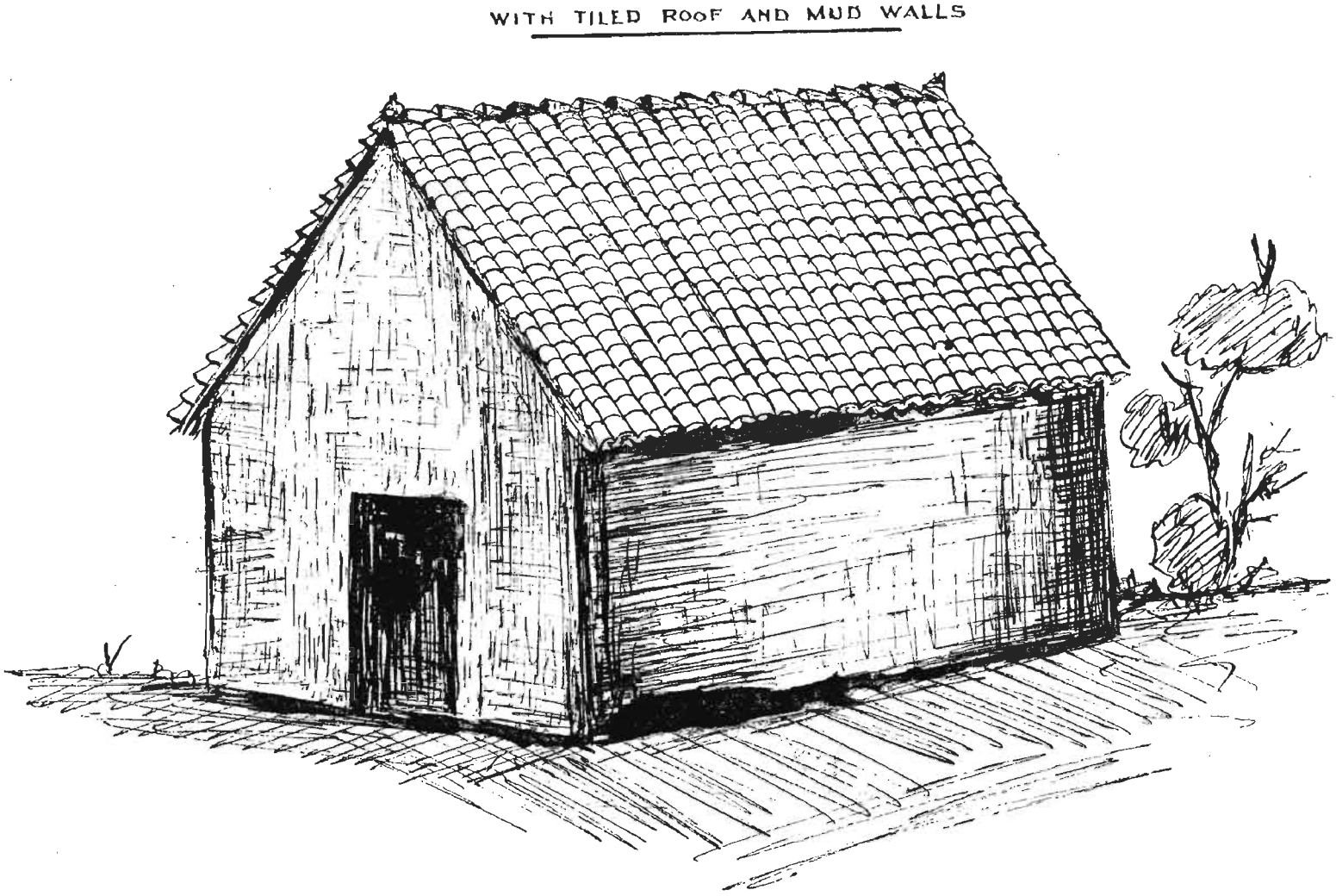



Fig. 11 House sketch

From Statement II, it can be presumed, that there is a gradual rate of increase in the population from 1881 to 1911 followed by a sudden fall in 1921. Again a trend of increase can be seen in 1931. The percentage of net variation from 1881 to 1931 is +20·7. In 1931 the total population of Mahars in Hyderabad State is 529,364 and their population in Andhra Pradesh during 1961 is 11,741 *i. e.*, there is a net variation of —97·78% from 1931 to 1961. This is due to the reshuffling of certain border Marathwada districts of Hyderabad.

### Physical Characteristics

Hassan describes Mahars in the following words :

".....a distinctly aboriginal race with dark skins and rough features. They are generally tall, strong and muscular." (Hassan, Vol. 1, P. 421).

Enthoven records :

"The Mahars of the Deccan are generally tall, strong, muscular and dark, with regular features and low unintelligent foreheads." (Enthoven, Vol. II, P. 403)

In 1961 Census, due to the lack of scientific equipment with the Census Organisation, the Anthropometric measurements are not taken and one has to be satisfied with the description given by Hassan and Enthoven. Figures 1 to 8 show a male Mahar, a female Mahar and an young couple respectively.

### Clan, Analogous Divisions of the Community and Family composition

Enthoven (Enthoven, Vol. II, p. 405) records that there are 53 divisions among Mahars which are of endogamous nature whereas Hassan records the existence of four main divisions of the caste namely, Somas, Andhawans, Ladwans, and Winkers—each is exogamous in its character divided into numerous sub-divisions, (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 422) (the divisions given by Enthovan and Hassan are given in the Appendix). The present case studies show the prevalence of exogamous sections like Somas, Mahar Winkers, also called Bamaniya Mahar, with their offshoot Mahar Jangam and Ladwan Mahars. The names of these exogamous sections are not of totemistic nature as told by the informants. Its significance cannot be explained by the Mahars but as Hassan says, they must be the names of the territory which they occupied or the indication of a particular act performed by their founder. Family is the basic unit of their caste organisation and all the households surveyed are patriarchal in their constitution with patrilineal descent. Of the 32 households surveyed, 13 families are of simple[1] type, and 19 are of joint[2] type. Their trend is more towards the establishment of simple families.

### Dwelling

They live on the outskirts of the village as they are still treated as untouchables. The houses locally known as *illu* are constructed on both sides of the road facing one another. Out of the 32 households studied, 17 face East, 5 West, 8 North and only 2 face South. This shows that they have no tradition that the main gate should face a particular direction. The walls are built with black mud. The walls are generally 4 to 6 ft. in height. There are wooden frames inserted as a support to the roof into the front and rear walls of the house and also in the middle in case the walls are long. About the front and rear walls would be placed wooden frames in the shape of inverted 'Y'. Big wooden rafters are arranged, in parallel, lengthwise on the frames in an inclined plane and small rafters are arranged closely in parallel, breadthwise with no space in between. Above these rafters, black mud is plastered on which the country tiles are arranged. Some of the houses have grass roofs also. The rafters and raffers will be rough and not polished. Figures 9 to 11 show general housing pattern and a typical house with its wooden framework and its final structure. This type of construction of houses appears strong enough as it is reported during the survey that some of the houses constructed 50 years ago are still in good condition. Usually the houses have only one room and there are two partitions inside—one for cooking and the other for storing and sleeping. A hearth, a water pot kept on an elevated platform and a *rolu* (mortar) are seen in the kitchen of every Mahar household. There are many big and small pots for storing food grains *etc.*, in the other half of the house. Well-to-do people have houses of decent accommodation. In the south-west corner of the room, there is an elevated place for worship. Once in a year they apply black mud to the walls. The floor is kept clean by periodical plastering with cow-dung. It is found from the case studies that the construction charges of the houses range from

1. Simple type of family contains husband, wife and their unmarried children.

2. Joint family comprises of parent married sons and married brothers.

Rs. 400 to Rs. 2,000. Out of the 32 households, two households do not own houses. Out of the remaining 30 households, five households are not aware of the cost of construction. The commencement of constructing a house takes place on any auspicious day in a week, Thursdays and Saturdays being avoided. Mahars who previously used to consult Brahmins on such occasions, now-a-days rerely do so and on the other hand are depending on their own knowledge. Usually members of the family themselves, with occasional hired labour, construct the house. The occasion of completion of a new house is celebrated by performing *pooja*, breaking coconuts and entertaining friends and relatives to a feast. They believe in animal sacrifices. Either a sheep or goat is sacrificed, by those who can afford, on these occasions.

**Dress**

Men wear dhoties of 4½ yards length and shirts locally known as *angi* and keep a head-gear known as *rumal* which is 5 yards in length, while a woman's dress consists of a saree, 8 yards in length and a blouse. Women adopt the Maratha style in wearing saree. A peculier feature among the Mahars is that many a time, even the tiny girls of above five years of age are seen wearing saree and blouse just like the elderly women of their caste [Fig. 12]. Though thete is no special dress for the bride or the bridegroom, the dress worn on the occasion of marriage will be of a superior quality. Only men use foot-wear purchased at very cheap rates.

**Food**

The staple food of Mahars consists of rice and *ragi* (finger millet). They take *jowar* (sorghum) and *samai* (little millet). All kinds of cereals and pulses, vegetables and greens are freely used. Though reported to be beef-eaters 40 years ago by Hassan, they have now given it up, and are even considering it a sin to kill and eat the flesh of the animals which serve them. (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 426). But they generally eat the flesh of sheep and goat. Among birds, they take only fowls. Having realised, the evil effects of taking intoxicants, most of them are not indulging in deep potations but a few, however, drink on festive occasions.

**Ornaments**

Regarding ornaments, men do not wear any, *Puste* (marriage locket), *teege* (ordinary necklace) *pogulu* (ear rings) made of gold, and toe rings made of silver are some of the ornaments worn by women.

**Material objects**

The food grains are stored in big earthen pots or *gadelu* made of bamboos. Utensils of all metals are used and the following are some of them in daily use :

| *Purpose of use* | *Local name and nature of its materiai* |
|---|---|
| Cooking | *Buvva kunda* (earthen pot for cooking food). |
| | *Rotte penku* (frying pan) made of iron. |
| Eating | *Thale* made of aluminium. |
| Drinking | Tumblers of aluminium or glass are used |
| Fetching and storing water | *Nella kunda* or *bogine* made of earth or brass |

Their kitchen can be seem in figures 13 and 14. It is customary among Mahars to own a cot. Out of the 32 households surveyed, 30 households own cots but only a few of them are having bed sheets and blankets.

**Hygienic Habits**

The environmental sanitation and hygiene are not the matters much cared for. Taking bath once in a day is found but not at a particular time. Bath is taken, not with any sense of health or hygiene but it is an act which can relieve them of their days' burden. So bath is enjoyed in the evenings after finishing all their work. Due to their poverty most of the Mahars cannot afford to have toilet soap for washing purposes. Only 6 out of the 32 households studied use washing soap. All the females and some of the males have got tattoo-marks. A few persons called *bichhagallu* or *pacchabottollu* (*Pachhabottu* in Telugu means tattoo) visit the villages occasionally and attend to tattooing [Fig. 15]. The Mahars do not attach any special significance to this but take it purely as decorative and designs adopted are scorpion, names, flowers, and the names of Gods like Hanuman.

**Language and Education**

The mother tongue of Mahar is Marathi and after reorganisation of States, the Mahars of the border districts of Andhra Pradesh adjoining Maharashtra, like Adilabad, have slowly picked up Telugu. A great majority of the males speak Urdu fluently and understand and speak a little of Telugu too.

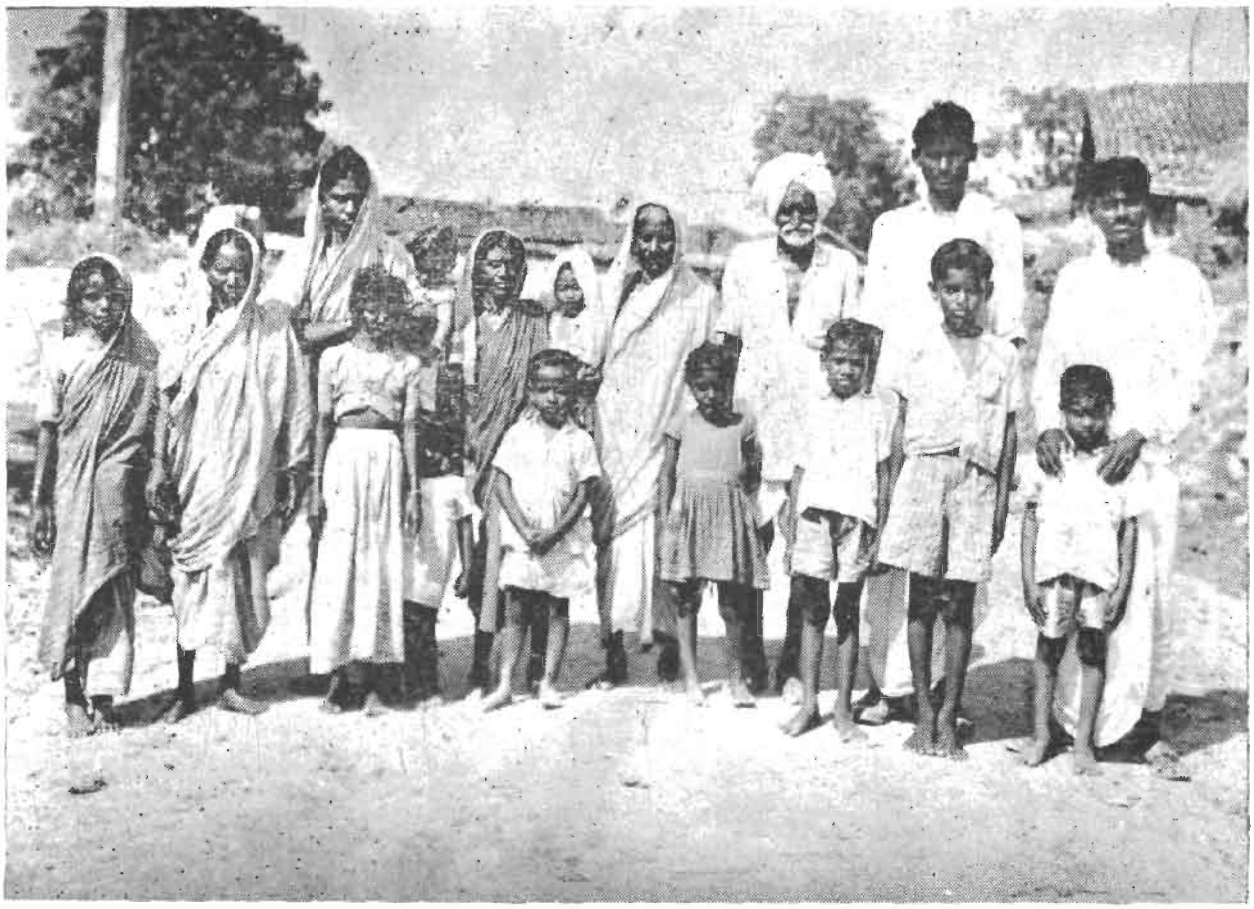


Fig. 12 A group of Mahars in their usual pattern of dress

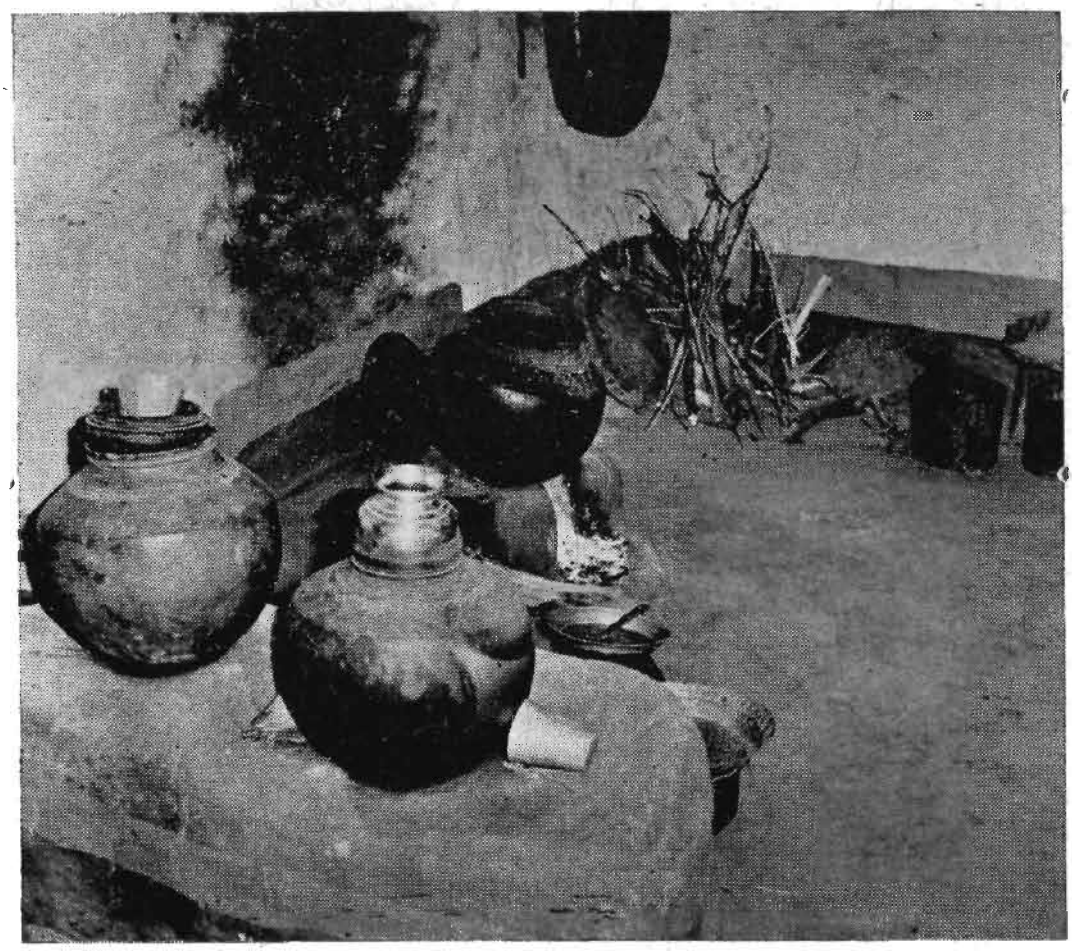


Fig. 13 Kitchen

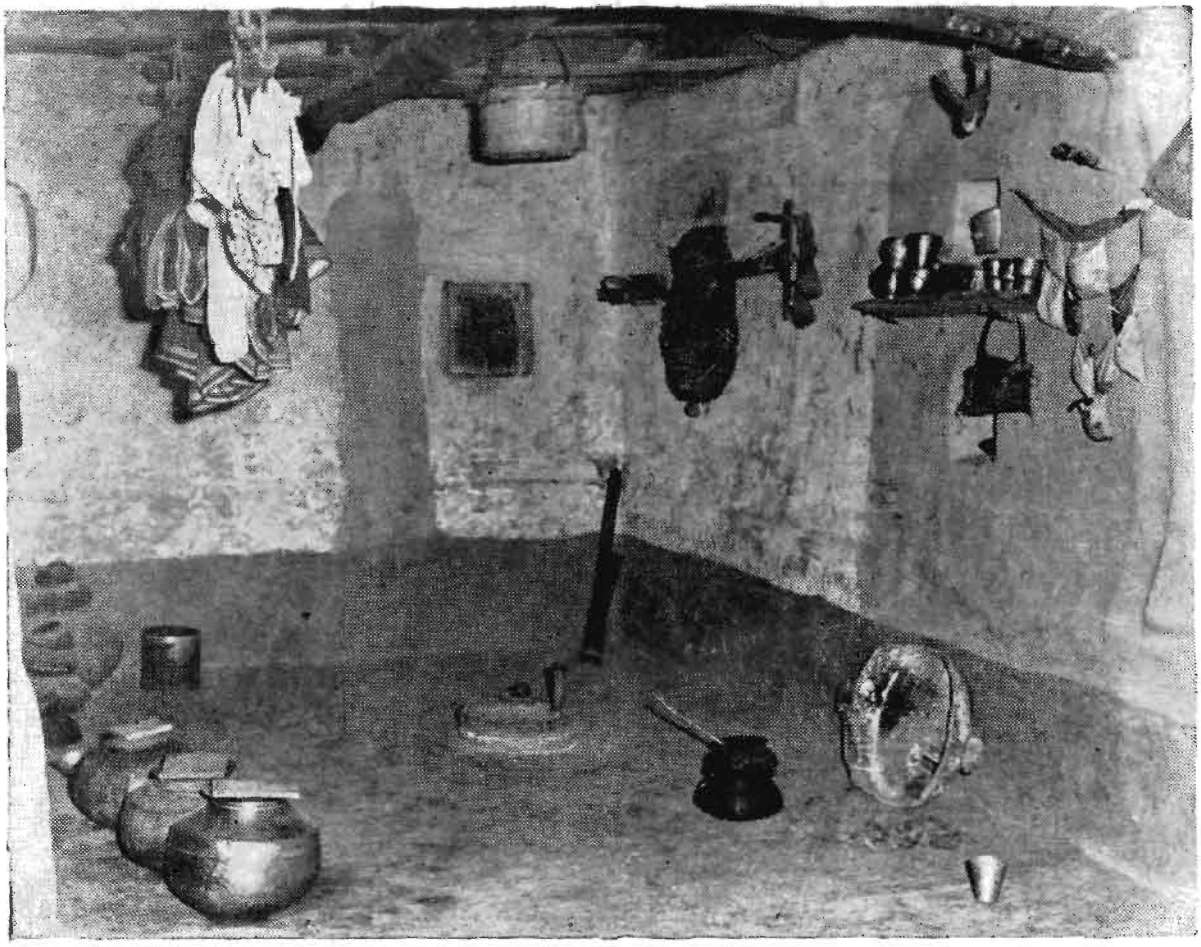


Fig. 14 Kitchen

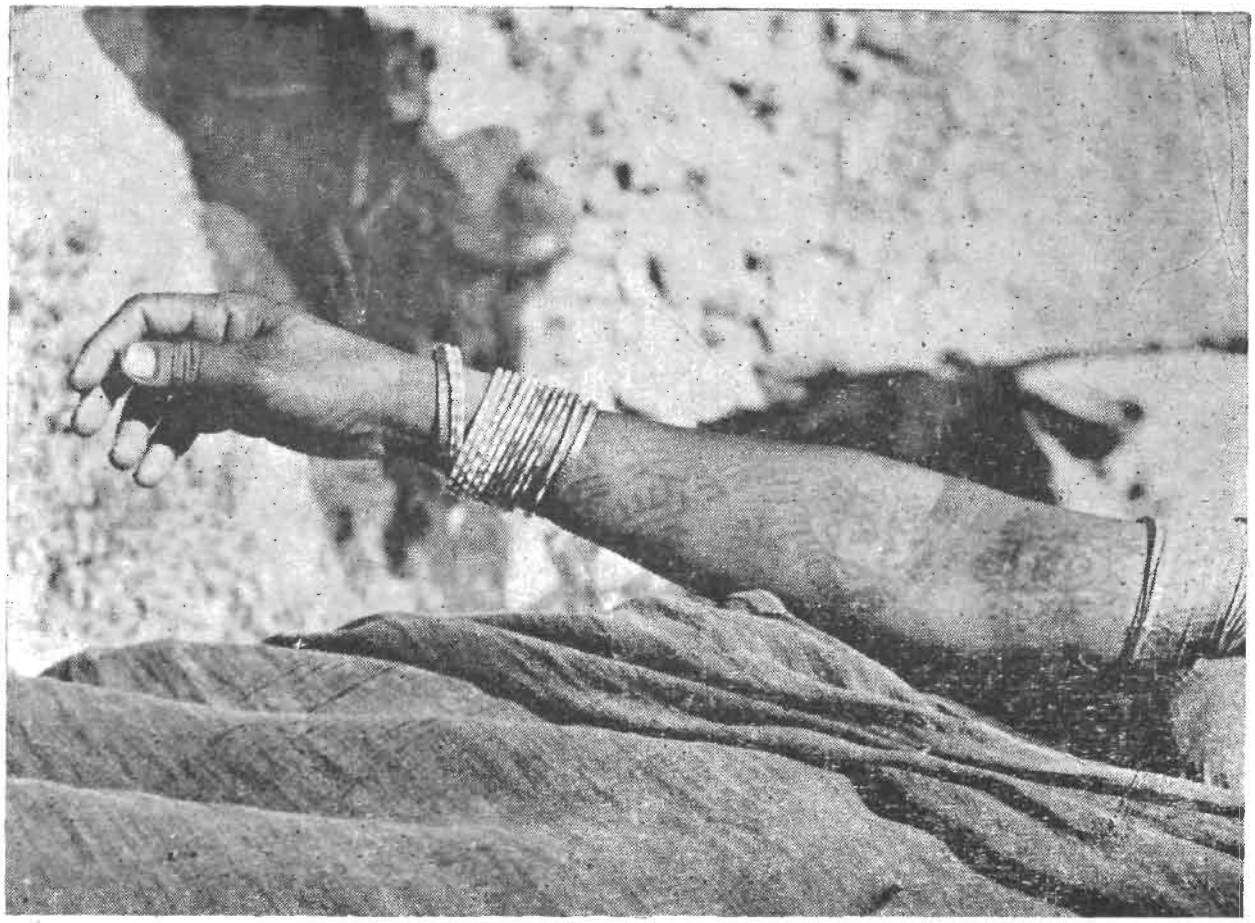


Fig. 15 Tattooing designs

Statement III shows the literacy standards of Mahars as recorded in 1961 Census and field investigation.

STATEMENT III

LITERACY OF MAHARS

| Educational levels | Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| *According to* 1961 *Census—Andhra Pradesh* | | | |
| Illiterate . . . . . | 11,187 | 5,285 | 5,902 |
| Literate (without educational level) | 296 | 259 | 37 |
| Primary or Junior Basic . . . | 234 | 215 | 19 |
| Matriculation or Higher Secondary . | 22 | 21 | 1 |
| University degree or Post-Graduate degree other than Technical degree. | 2 | 2 | .. |
| Total . | 11,741 | 5,782 | 5,959 |
| *According to case studies* | | | |
| Illiterates . . . . . | 185 | 86 | 99 |
| Literate (without educational level) . | 5 | 5 | .. |
| Primary or Junior Basic . . | 4 | 4 | .. |
| Matriculation or Higher Secondary. | 1 | 1 | — |
| Total . | 195 | 96 | 99 |

As seen from the above statement 95·28% of the total (91·4% males and 99·04% females) are illiterates. At the level of literates without education 2·52% are found comprising 4·48% of total males and 0.62% of total females. 1.99% of the total consisting 3.72% of males, 0.32% of females are found in the standards of Primary or Junior Basic; 0.19% of the total caste comprising 0.36% of males and only one female studied upto Matriculation. Only 2 males are seen possessing University Degree or Post-Graduate Degree other than Technical Degree. The case studies conducted in Mudhol, Thimmapur, and Kubeer villages of Adilabad district covering 32 households show that out of 195 persons, only 10 are literates and all 10 members are males. Of the total literates, 5 males, are without educational standards, 4 with Primary or Junior Basic standard and one has reached the standard of Higher Secondary. In these three villages only two persons are enjoying scholarships. Nobody is reported to have been benefited by the adult education scheme. They are ignorant of even the existence of adult education centre. It can be seen from the statistics of 1961 Census that the Mahars are slowly realising the importance of education in these days as is evident by the two Graduates and 22 Matriculates among the 258 literates. The general percentage of literacy is of course appallingly low.

**Economic Life**

One's economic life, its scope and limitations are completely the results of one's occupation and its yieldings. Hassan stated that they served the village as watchmen, messengers, sweepers and had the monopoly over dead animals in the village (Hassan Vol. I, p. 427). Hassan also says that Mahar women were very co-operative and helped their men in every field. The latter part of the Hassan's statement seems to be unchanged even today. But according to case studies no one is found serving the village and all are engaged either in cultivation or agricultural labour. A few are engaged in carpentry which is their subsidiary occupation.

The following statement gives the statistics relating to males and females engaged in different occupations according to 1961 Census :

STATEMENT IV

OCCUPATION OF MAHARS

| Occupation | No. of Persons | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| 1. Cultivation . . . | 2,306 | 1,246 | 1,060 |
| 2. Agricultural labour . . | 4,178 | 1,990 | 2,188 |
| 3. Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities. . . . . | 248 | 244 | 4 |
| 4. Household Industry . . . | 118 | 112 | 6 |
| 5. Manufacturing other than household industry . | 91 | 62 | 29 |
| 6. Construction . . . . | 15 | 12 | 3 |
| 7. Trade and commerce . . | 17 | 14 | 3 |
| 8. Transport, storage & communication. . . . . | 44 | 44 | .. |
| 9. Other services . . . . | 378 | 241 | 137 |
| Total Workers . . . | 7,395 | 3,965 | 3,430 |
| 10. Non-Workers . . . . | 4,346 | 1,817 | 2,529 |
| GRAND Total . | 11,741 | 5,782 | 5,959 |
| Special Occupations :— | | | |
| Tanning and currying of hides and skins. | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Scavenging . . . . . | 13 | 4 | 9 |

It is evident from the above statement that a majority of Mahars are either cultivators or agricultural labourers and a few of them are engaged in scavenging. Out of the 32 households selected for case study in Mudhol taluk, nine have agriculture as their main occupation. There are only 10 households owning land [Fig. 16]. Nine out of them own less than 10 acres each and the remaining household owns more than 20 acres. There are 96 males and 99 females in the 32 households surveyed and out of them only 44 males and 33 females are workers, that is to say, more than 60% are either non-workers or dependents. Again among the 77 workers as many as 46 are employed as agricultural labourers and out of the remaining 31, 18 are cultivators and very few are engaged either in household industry or business. All the lands are dry and dependent upon rains, and the crops raised are *jowar* (sorghum), chillies, and cotton *etc.* Draught animals and indigenous implements are used for cultivation. They help each other and some also work on a co-operative basis in all agricultural operations. The agricultural implements used by them are shown in Figs. 17 to 23. They have not taken to improved agricultural implements, seeds and manures, as they do not have either sufficient amount to go in for them or have the knowledge about them. Most of them are not aware of the recent land legislation, except two persons who know the advantages of consolidation of holdings. They are absolutely ignorant of the co-operative societies. A few Mahars are now-a-days doing carpentry and earning a little money [Fig. 24].

The economy of Mahars with their income, debt and expenditure pattern is presented in Statement V as noted in the 32 households of sample study.

## STATEMENT V

INCOME, DEBT AND EXPENDITURE OF MAHARS FROM APRIL 1961 TO MARCH, 1962.

| S. No. | Name of head of household | Budget Provision: Income | Debt when taken | Expenditure: Total | On Food | On clothing | On fuel & lighting | On miscellaneous Items |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| | *Kubeer village in Mudhol taluk* | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Madhava Rao | 460 | .. | 624 | 300 | 150 | 19 | 155 |
| | *Thimapur village in Mudhol taluk* | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Muthenna | 1,100 | 3,000 (7 Years back) | 1,358 | 500 | 200 | 58 | 600 |
| | *Mudhal village and taluk* | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Bhoja Ram | 610 | 400 (10 years back) 800 (5 years back) | 967 | 402 | 100 | 15 | 450 |
| 4 | Narasaiah | 873 | 300 (current year) | 1,179 | 700 | 100 | 68 | 311 |
| 5 | Makkaji | 850 | 500 (10 years back) | 865 | 450 | 100 | 15 | 300 |
| 6 | Pochani | 200 | 250 (current year) | 354 | 240 | 50 | 25 | 39 |
| 7 | Haniba | 1,020 | 1,000 (10 years back) 500 (1 year back) | 1,245 | 600 | 300 | 25 | 320 |
| 8 | Sakkubai | 375 | 250 (current year) | 645 | 360 | 100 | 25 | 160 |



Fig. 16 Men working in the Agricultural fields

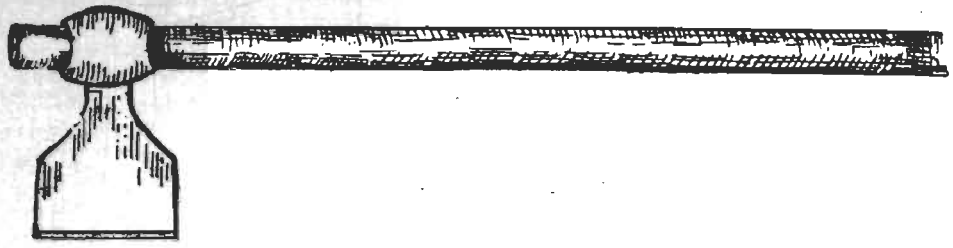


Fig. 17 Agricultural implements

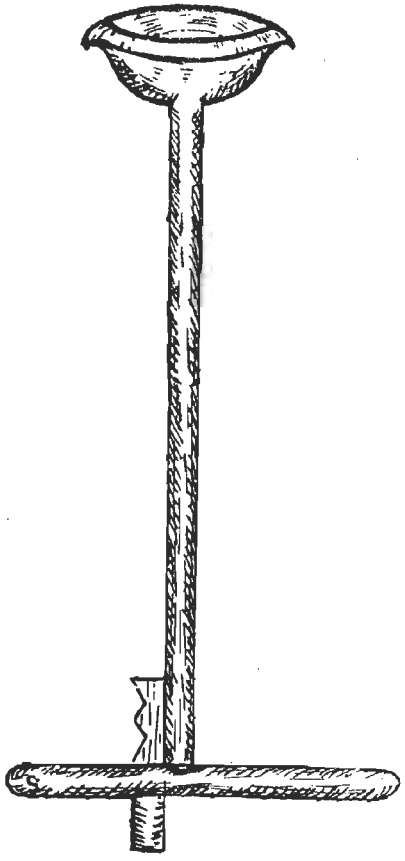


Fig. 18 Agricultural implements

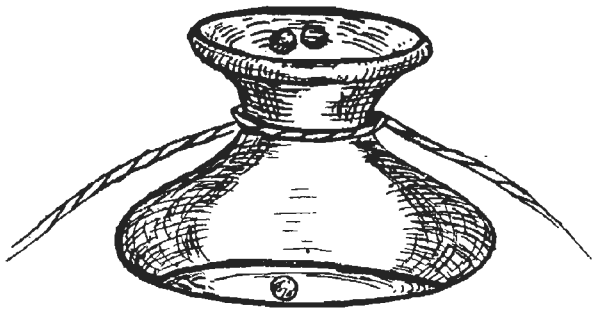


Fig. 19 Agricultural implements

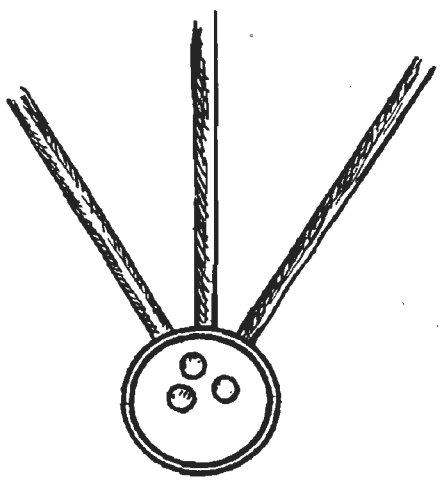


Fig. 20 Agricultural implements

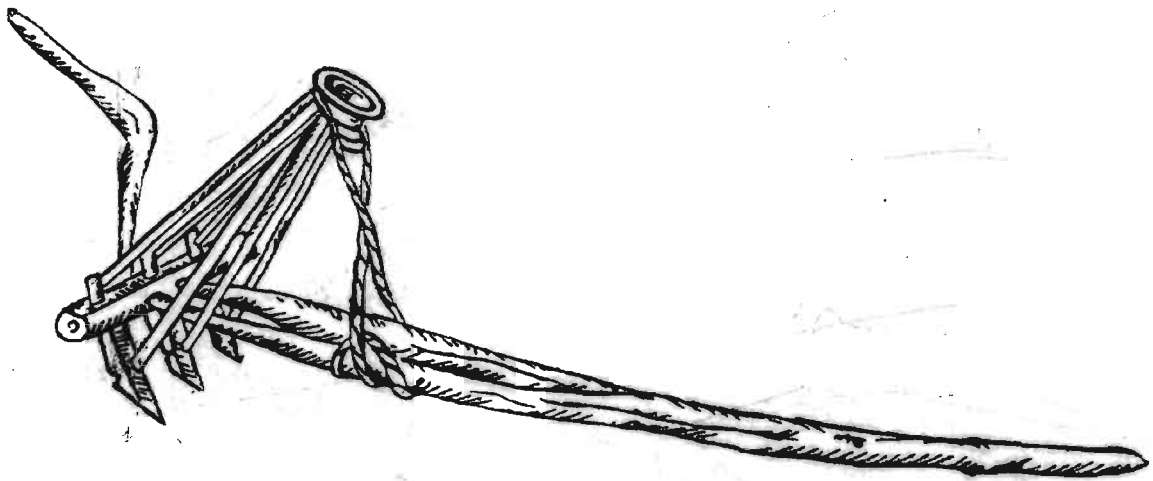
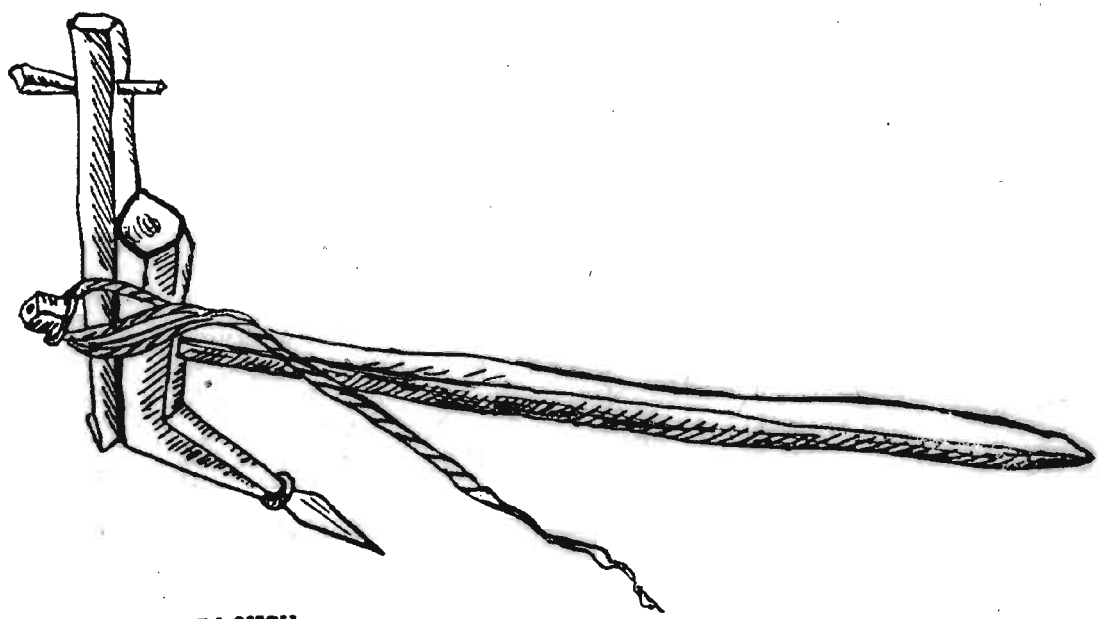
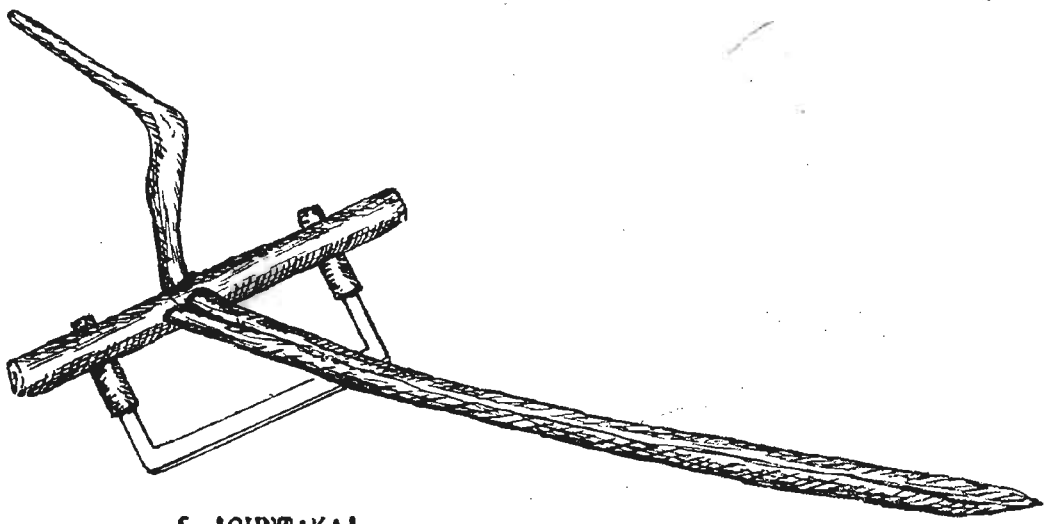


Fig. 21 Agricultural implements



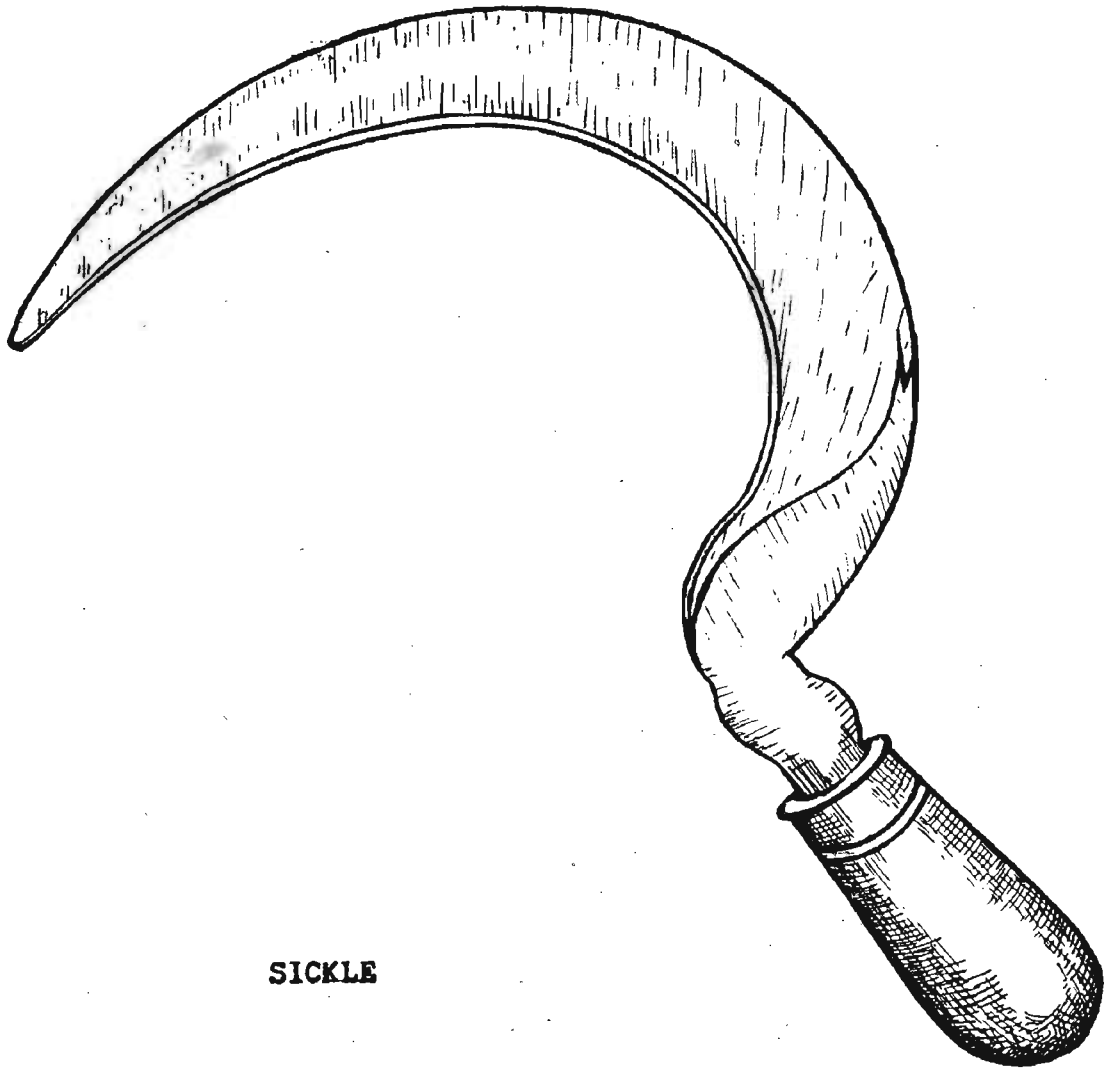
PLOUGH

Fig. 22 Agricultural implements



ε 'GUNTAKA'

Fig. 23 Agricultural implements



SICKLE

Fig. 23A Agricultural implements

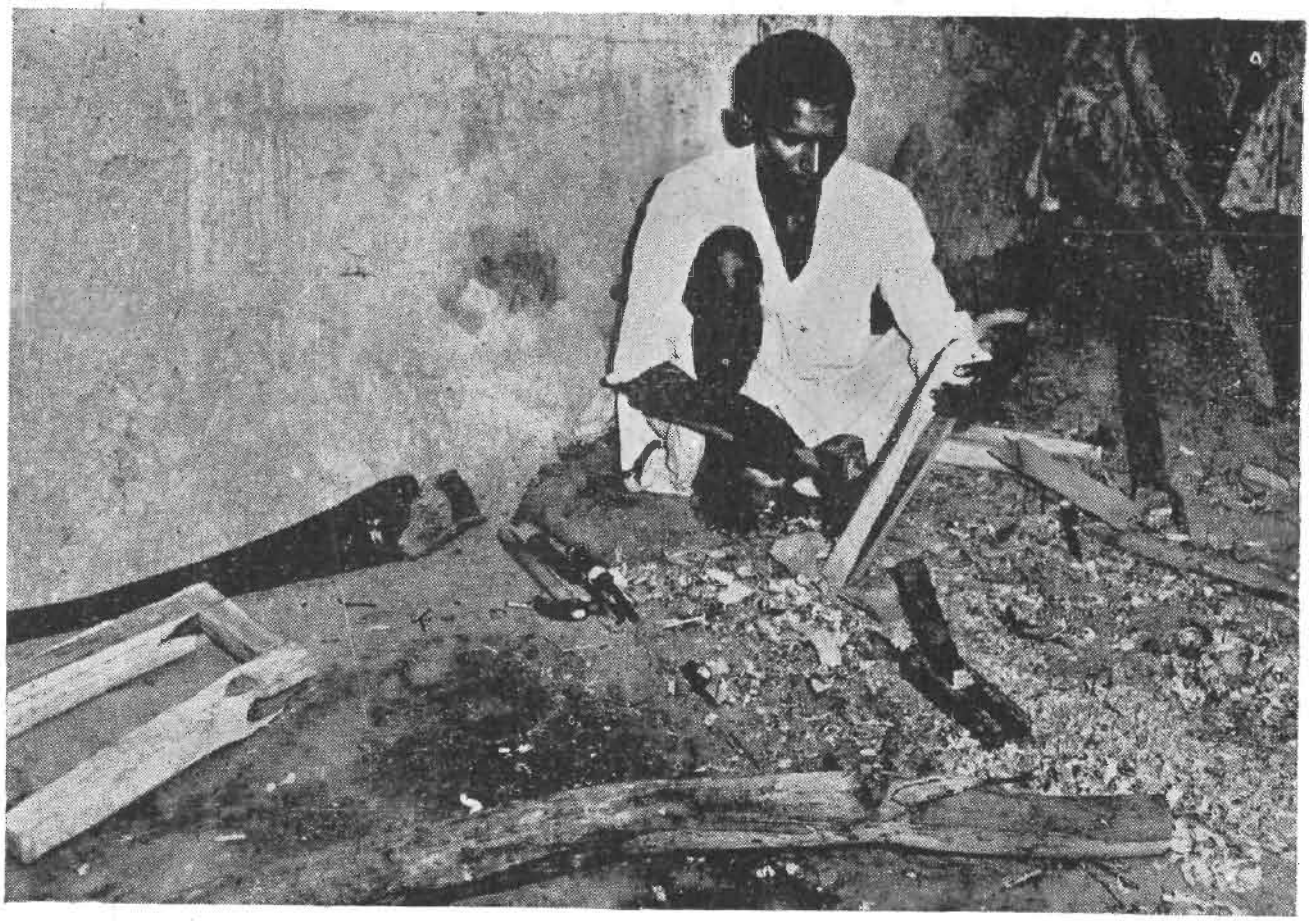


Fig. 24 A male doing carpentry work

STATEMENT V—*Concld.*

INCOME, DEBT AND EXPENDITURE OF MAHARS FROM APRIL 1961 TO MARCH, 1962

| S. No. | Name of head of household | Budget Provision | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Income | Debt when taken | Expenditure | | | | |
| | | | | Total | On Food | On clothing | On fuel & lighting | On miscellaneous Items |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| 9 | Madhava Rao | 710 | 250 (2 years back) | 841 | 300 | 200 | 6 | 335 |
| 10 | Rama | 685 | 500 (2 years back) | 790 | 600 | 100 | 15 | 75 |
| 11 | Mahda bai | 225 | 100 (1 year back) | 245 | 150 | 50 | 15 | 30 |
| 12 | Dav bai | 200 | 50 (1 year back) | 226 | 150 | 50 | 6 | 20 |
| 13 | Jalbah | 1,650 | 250 (2 years back) 1,500 (2 years back) | 905 | 500 | 150 | 57 | 198 |
| 14 | Jalbah | 1,650 | 450 (current year) | 2,137 | 1,500 | 200 | 127 | 310 |
| 15 | Ukhandiah | 1,070 | .. | 1,095 | 600 | 300 | 15 | 180 |
| 16 | Laksha | 920 | 200 (2 years back) | 923 | 500 | 200 | 38 | 185 |
| 17 | Lalaji. | 770 | 200 (2 years back) | 795 | 600 | 100 | 25 | 70 |
| 18 | Gangaram | 750 | 200 (5 years back) | 755 | 350 | 150 | 15 | 240 |
| 19 | Namdev | 686 | 300 (3 years back) | 760 | 360 | 150 | 15 | 235 |
| 20 | Madhav | 1,000 | 200 (current year) 300 (3 years back) | 1,225 | 700 | 200 | 40 | 285 |
| 21 | Mahisha Ram | 800 | 300 (1 year back) | 930 | 400 | 100 | 30 | 400 |
| 22 | Maha Devan | 360 | 600 (2 years back) | 340 | 300 | 15 | 15 | 10 |
| 23 | Erranna | 310 | 300 (10 years back) | 325 | 280 | 15 | 10 | 20 |
| 24 | Vittobha | 265 | 500 (10 years back) | 315 | 200 | 40 | 10 | 65 |
| 25 | Durgaji | 285 | 200 (10 years back) | 299 | 250 | 20 | 10 | 19 |
| 26 | Ganganna | 440 | 1,500 (10 years back) | 412 | 340 | 5 | 15 | 52 |
| 27 | Manwar | 400 | .. | 350 | 300 | 40 | 10 | .. |
| 28 | Jalaba | 470 | 150 (10 years back) | 465 | 360 | 50 | 30 | 25 |
| 29 | Gangaram | 675 | 500 (10 years back) | 645 | 500 | 25 | 10 | 110 |
| 30 | Narayana | 770 | .. | 762 | 720 | 25 | 12 | 5 |
| 31 | Chandrayya | 2,020 | 2,000 (1 year back) 200 (current year) | 2,313 | 1,800 | 360 | 60 | 93 |
| 32 | Lingayya | 1,100 | 400 (1 year back) | 1,139 | 900 | 60 | 15 | 164 |

As seen from the above, the income of 32 households ranges between Rs. 200 and Rs. 2,020. The statement shows that 28 households have taken debt. Of 28 households, 10 households have borrowed between 7 and 10 years back, 2 households have borrowed between 3 and 5 years back. There are 10 households which have borrowed between 1 and 2 years back. 5 households have two kinds of debts—taken during the current year and previous years. Only one household is seen with the current year debt. The debt of 28 households ranges from Rs. 50 to Rs. 3,000. There are 3 households whose debt ranges from Rs. 50 to 150. In the range of Rs. 151—300, 10 households are seen. Seven households have the debt in the range of 301—500, and 3 households have debt in the range of Rs. 501—1,000. In the range of 1,001—3,000, 5 households are seen. In many cases the expenditure of the households does not coincide with the amount seen under total income (income+debt). The reason for this is due to their inability to give the exact figures of income and expenditure. In majority of the households as observed during the field study the income is underestimated and the expenditure is over estimated.

**Life cycle**

**Birth**

The expectant mother is usually taken to her father's house for the first delivery in the 5th month of pregnancy and a ceremony locally known as *Seemantham* is celebrated on the occasion, to which friends and relatives are invited and her father presents clothes to her as well as to her husband. The delivery is attended to by an elderly woman of the caste in whose absence the local midwife irrespective of caste is called.

Hassan records the following practices with reference to delivery :

"A Mahar woman, after child birth, is unclean for eleven days. On the fifth day after birth, a silver image representing the Goddess Satwai is set up on a stone slab and worshipped with offerings of flowers and sweet food, and a feast is provided in her honour for five married women whose husbands are living.

On the 12th day the mother and the child are bathed and the mother places, in the name of Satwai, five stones under a tree daubs them with red lead and burns frankincense before them. She smears the child's forehead with frankincense and ashes invoking the Goddess to protect the child, walks three times round the stones and returns home. For the first three days after birth the mother is given a mixture of 'Katbol' (gum myrrh) and leaves of neem (Melia indica) and is fed on a diet of strained millet mixed with oil and molassess; from the fifth day she takes her ordinary food. On the fourth day the mother begins to suckle the child". (Hassan, Vol. I. p. 426).

During the field investigation, it is ascertained that they observe the period of pollution for 11 days and give bath on the 12th day. The other details of the above procedure are not followed now-a-days. The total expenditure on delivery is roughly Rs. 25. There is a ceremony attached to the naming of the child, which is observed on an auspicious day within a month of the child birth. The child is usually named after grand-fathers and grand-mothers. The usual names are Ramji, Bhoja Ram, Sambaji, Narayana, Ukhandiah, *etc.* The other names like Vittoba and Namdev show their Maratha origin. Tonsure ceremony is in practice and is celebrated in any local temple, before the child completes one year. No ceremony is attached to the first feeding and initiating the child to learning.

**Puberty**

The attainment of puberty is an occasion for celebration. The girl on attaining puberty is kept in a separate room for 5 days (some observe 7 days) and is provided with a mat spread on paddy hay. She is prohibited from moving freely in and around the house and delicious food is served separately on all these five days by nearest relatives at the rate of one on each day. On the sixth day, after anointing her with turmeric, she is given bath and clad in new clothes. A feast is arranged for all relatives and friends and in the evening all the womenfolk of the community are invited for a party wherein vermilion is put on the forehead and turmeric is applied to feet; betel leaves and arecanuts are distributed a the end.

**Marriage**

The law of exogamy is strictly followed among the different divisions of Mahars. The same is recorded by Hassan also (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 423). There is only one kind of marriage in practice *i.e.*, marriage by negotiation. Child marriages are still in vogue. Payment of bride price is in practice, which ranges between Rs. 10 and Rs. 15. A Mahar *gosavi* (Priest) officiates at the marriage celebration. During the ceremony the bridegroom is wrapped in a black blanket. People who can afford, engage local musicians. In certain places the practice of tying *puste* (Marriage locket) has been recently adopted from the local Hindu customs. The bridegroom shows the *Puste* before tying it round the bride's neck, to all the assembled and they all express their consent by touching the same. Then they

shower *akshintalu* (rice smeared with turmeric) on the newly wedded couple as a mark of blessings. Marriage expenses generally range between Rs. 300 and Rs. 500. Regarding polygamy, Hassan writes that among the Mahars a man is allowed to take as many wives as he can afford to maintain (Hassan Vol. I. p. 424). But the practice now seems to be that a Mahar marries again only if the first wife does not bear any children. A widow is allowed to marry again except among the Ladwan Mahars and the Mahar Winkers. She is not required to marry her late husband's younger or elder brother. A widow after remarriage forfeits all claims to the custody of her children through her late husband. The widow remarriage locally called *udiki* is a simple ceremony consisting of the smearing of the couple with turmeric and the tying of their garments into a knot. The bridegroom then puts a string of glass beads round the bride's neck and the ceremony is concluded.

Hassan wrote:—

"It is customary to dedicate girls to Khandoba and such are subsequently called Murlis."

(Hassan Vol. I. p. 423).

But this practice seems to be extinct now.

The following statement shows the number of persons married, widowed and divorced among Mahar in Andhra Pradesh according to 1961 Census.

STATEMENT VI

MARITAL STATUS AMONG MAHARS

| Age group | Never married | | | Married | | | Widowed | | | Divorced or Separated | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) |
| 0-14 | 4,154 | 1,990 | 2,164 | 352 | 50 | 302 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .. | 1 |
| 15-44 | 601 | 555 | 46 | 4,329 | 2,072 | 2,257 | 242 | 65 | 177 | 101 | 56 | 45 |
| 45 and above | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1,143 | 799 | 344 | 773 | 174 | 599 | 39 | 18 | 21 |
| Age not stated | .. | .. | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | |
| TOTAL | 4,758 | 2,547 | 2,211 | 5,825 | 2,921 | 2,904 | 1,017 | 240 | 777 | 141 | 74 | 67 |

It is evident from the above statement that out of the total population of 11,741 Mahars as many as 5,825 are married that is to say nearly 50% of both males and females are married. The fact that child marriages are in practice is evident from the 50 and 302 married boys and girls respectively who are below 14 years of age. The consummation ceremony is celebrated unostentatiously after the girl attains puberty.

**Divorce**

Hassan states :

"Divorce is permitted on the ground of the wife's unchastity, or if the couple cannot get on together. A divorced women may marry again, but not before her first husband has recovered the amount he spent on her as a virgin" (Hassan. Vol. I. p. 425).

This procedure holds good even now.

**Death**

The dead are usually buried, but occasionally cremated. Persons dying of cholera and small pox and those dying unmarried are buried. The corpse is tied on a bier and borne by four persons to the burial ground in a procession accompanied by musical instruments. A lamp is kept on the burial place and milk is poured over it for 5 days in memory of the departed. In case of cremation the ashes and bones are collected on the third day after death and are mixed in river waters. Mourning is observed for 10 days in the case of adults and for 3 days in the case of children or distant relatives. The chief mourner is usually the eldest son of the deceased. The performance of obsequies is not compulsory but in some places it is being done in accordance with the prevailing local custom. The widow, after

completion of obsequies is deprived of the privilege of wearing *puste* and bangles until she remarries. Expenses on ceremonies connected with death will normally be around Rs. 50. If the death anniversary falls on a festival occasion, the festival will not be celebrated until the birth of either a child or an animal takes place in that house.

**Religious beliefs and practices**

At the time of study of Mahars by Hassan, he had described their religion to be in a transitory state passing from primitive animism into popular Hinduism, (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 425—426). Field study reveals that they have already passed the transitory period, and now by all their beliefs and practices, they are purely Hindus. They worship the deities like Krishana, Satyanarayana, Hanuman, Surya Bhagavan (Sun-God) and Siva. In addition to these deities they also worship the indigenous deities like Mari Ai (the Goddess of cholera), Pochamma, and Ellamma; and celebrate fairs in the name of these deities once in 2 or 3 years.

Mahars have spiritual advisers locally known as *guru.* The important among the spiritual advisers is one by name Gunnaji Baba or Nivarthi Baba (both the names are prevalent). His caste is not known to the informants. He comes from a place by name Nisturi Nilangi near Pandarapuram once in three years. He narrates the stories connected to God and he is presented with a little amount of money by every household. His teachings gradually made them to give up the habit of taking beef. Brahmins do not officiate at the religious and ceremonial observances of this caste. But a learned man of the caste known as *Gosavi* officiates on all the ceremonial occasions. According to Hassan, (Hassan, Vol. I. p. 426) Deshastha Brahmins are employed at the marriage ceremonies, while this practice is not found at present.

*Brahmananda Bhajan :*

जिसको नहीं है बोध तो गुरुजन दया करें ।
निज रूप को जाना नहीं तो पुराण क्या करें ।।

घट घट में ब्रह्म ज्योत का प्रकाश हो रहा ।
मिट न द्वैत भाव तू फिर ध्यान क्या करें ।।

रचना प्रभू की देख के ज्ञानी बड़े बड़े ।
पावे न कोई पार तो नादान क्या करें ।।

कर के दया दया तूने मनुष्य जन्म दिया ।
बन्धा न करें भजन तो भगवान क्या करें ।।

सब जीव जन्तुओं में जिसे है नहीं दया ।
ब्रह्मानन्द बरतने पुण्यधन कथा करें ।।

A brief summary of the above verse is as follows :

The preachings of *Gurus* and the literature in epics will not help us if we have no interest to know the existence of God. The Supreme light is being reflected at every moment, and we are not able to realise the oneness of God. Therefore, there is no use of worshipping God, without realising that God is one and the only one. Also when the so called *Gnani*, the man with analytical power are not able to understand the creation of God, what about the ordinary man. The kind hearted God has blessed us with human life and it is our duty to worship Him whole heartedly. If we dont' worship Him, what can He do for us? One should be kind to all the beings in the world, then only one can aspire for the *punya dhan* the riches of good deeds.

As they are still considered as untouchables it would appear that they are not permitted to enter the temples of Hanuman or Venkateswara and therefore they offer their prayers from outside only. When some of the elder members of this caste were questioned about the existence of the Untouchability Offences Act they expressed their ignorance. After being informed of the existence of the Act, they said that it would be impossible to implement this especially in view of the resistance of the higher classes.

**Important festivals**

All Hindu festivals like Sankranti, Dasara and Deepavali are observed by Mahars. Only one festival known as *Yedla Polal* is celebrated with great pomp and enthusiasm. There is no prescribed dress for any festival, but those who can afford, purchase new dress for children. Satyanarayana Vratham is performed by a few families once in a year. *Poori* and *vada* are the two special dishes prepared on all festivals. Yedla Polal is a festival of local importance celebrated with great enthusiasm in honour of the cattle which reflect the prosperity of the agriculturists. On the festival day the oxen, cows, buffaloes *etc.*, are washed cleanly and decorated with coloured clothes and fed with sweet dishes, *etc.* The housewives perform *pooja* and apply *bottu* (a vermilion dot) on the forehead and turmeric to the legs of the

animals and after the feast they are taken in a procession round the village and are not employed to work on that day.

Saraswati *jatara* is a famous fair conducted for 3 days during Sivaratri at Basar, 8 miles from Mudhol. The fair is connected with the deity Saraswati the Goddess of learning. The Mahars do not have any religious concept about the Solar and Lunar eclipse.

**Social control and leadership**

Mahars, inspite of their very low position in the society and living on the outskirts of the village, form a part and parcel of the village community and come within the jurisdiction of the village institutions such as the village Panchayat. All the same, they have their own Caste Panchayat headed by an elderly man agreeable to all, who, in consultation with a few caste elders, decides the disputes concerning divorce, partition *etc.*, and awards decisions. From the case studies conducted in Mudhol taluk it is found that they are aware of the existence and even of the functions of the Zilla Parishad which did not appeal to them much; but on the contrary they are much satisfied with the functions of Panchayat Raj, at the village level, since a few wells were dug in their locality by the Panchayat Samithi. They know the headquarters of the district and taluk in which they are living. The names of the rivers flowing nearby are familiar to them. Out of the 195 persons, three are in the habit of reading news-papers of Marathi language and one actually purchases a copy of *Loka Shayi* a Marathi daily regularly. Though none of them owns a radio, three persons hear the programmes with interest. None of them is aware of family planning but after being informed of the inherent advantages, many expressed their willingness to implement the same.

**Inter-community relationship**

Hassan writes :

"The Mahar stands at the bottom of Hindu caste system. He lives on the outskirts of the village and his touch is deemed unclean by all the respectable classes. The regular village servants decline to serve him, as they consider themselves defiled by his touch; the caste is required to provide itself with barbers and washermen from among its own members. Although the Mahar occupies the lowest position in the Hindu community, he claims to be superior to Bhangis and Mangs and does not eat from the hands of Buruds, Mangs, Mochis and Bhangis." (Hassan, Vol. I, 425).

The present day position of Mahars in society has remained the same as it was 40 years ago as observed by Hassan. Higher caste people *viz.*, Brahmins, Vaisyas, Kapus, Telegas, do not take food and water from these people while Mahars accept food and water from all the above castes. Barbers and washermen do not take food or water from Mahars while Mahars also do not accept from these peoples. Even now they cling to their own norms of living keeping alive their antiquated notions. It may take a few more decades for their social and economic position to show any marked improvement.

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# MAHAR

An Extract from *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions*, Vol. I by Syed Siraj-ul-Hassan, (Bombay 1920)

(Title : Naik)

Mahar, Mhar, Dher, Bhumia (guide), Yesker (gate keeper), Taral (watchman), 'Dharni che put', (sons of the soil)—form, like the Malas of Telingana the great labouring caste of the Marathwada country and are found in every village of the province.

**History.**—They are without doubt the oldest inhabitants of the country and are a distinctly aboriginal race with dark skins and rough features. They are generally tall, strong and muscular. They have probably given their name to Maharashtra, which is derived by some as 'Maha Rashtra' or the country of the Mahars.

The Mahar is, as he claims to be, an indispensible factor of village life. "He is the very first man appealed to, whether it be about a murder or a robbery, a burglary or a boundary dispute. He is the incarnation of the traditions and history of his village and, though he is despised and condemnedto live outside the village, fearful of letting his defiling shadow fall on the Brahman, the latter well knows he can do nothing without him. He holds lands—the worst in the village—on hereditary tenure and is entitled by prescription to certain grain allowances. A stranger or a traveller comes—'*Maharala bolawa*' (call the Mahar). A robbery occurs—'*Maharas vichara*' (ask the Mahara). Who owns this field? What are the boundaries? '*Maharas mahit ahe*' (the Mahar knows)—and so on."

"In all Maharashtra there is no class on the whole so reliable, so trusty, so honest, so hard-working as the Mahar. Ask any British officer of any service, who makes the best ghorawalla, or horsekeeper, or who was his most reliable servant. The answer will be, "the Mahar".

The derivation of the name 'Mahar' is uncertain, but it may have been the tribal name of one of the aboriginal races. Several egends are current regarding their origin. According to one, they are one of the four cow-born castes, and when the cow asked her sons how they would treat her when she died, the first three answered that they would worship her, but the fourth said he would bear her inside of him. The horror struck brothers called him 'Mahahar' (great eater) which was abbreviated into Mahar. Another story states that while Parvati was bathing, her touch turned some drops of blood on a bel leaf (*A egle Marmelos*) into a handsome babe. The child was named Mahamuni by Mahadeva. One day, it crawled out of the house and seeing a dead cow began to eat it. Mahadeva was horrified cursed him and condemned him to live on the outskirts of villages and to eat carcasses, and called him Mahahar, or great eater.

**Internal Structure.**—The Mahars are divided into several sub-castes, the members of which neither interdine nor intermarry. In the Aurangabad Subah the chief sub-castes are : Somas, Andhwans and Tilwans. The Somas, or Somawanshas, claim to be of the highest dignity, professing to derive their name from 'Soma' or the moon. The members of the sub-caste regard the pig with traditional reverence, neither killing the animal nor eating its flesh. The oath of the pig is also deemed very sacred by them. The Andhwans say they came from Berar and their name suggests a connection with Andhs the Hinduised brand of Gonds. They are said to have been descended from a widow. The members of the sub-caste hold the tiger in extreme reverence, regarding an oath on it as binding. The affinities of the Tilwans cannot be traced. In the Adilabad district two sub-castes appear to exist 'Mahar Winker', also called 'Bamaniya Mahars' who are weavers by profession, and 'Ladwan Mahars', who are supposed to be immigrants from 'Lat', a name by which the tract of country round Broach (Gujerat) was known in ancient times. The Mahar Jangams, al o found in Adilabad, are an offshoot from the Mahar Winkers. The members of this sub-caste profess to be Lingayits in creed and act as money lenders and bankers to the Raj Gond and Kolam tribes of the hilly tracts. Besides these sub-castes, there are others, such as Anant Kule (descended from a Mahar Murli), Bavne, Bavise, Dharmik and Pans, all of whom are found in very small numbers in these dominions.

The section names of the caste are not totemistic, but are either territorial or refer to some act on the

part of their founders. Specimens of these names are shown below:—

*Exogamous sections*

| *Somas* | *Andhawans* | *Ladwans* | *Winkers* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jondhale | Khillor | Dethya | Mohaker |
| Bhadarge | Wadhawe | Waghmarya | Dingarya |
| Jogadande | Hatker | Nadya | Durgya |
| Hanumate | Ghonde | Malkhadya | Ramtakya |
| Gaikwad | Kambale | Ondaker | Zadya |
| Sonatakke | Ingole | Karmanker | Piryadya |
| Awasrunle | Dhuldhawane | Pareka | Kondagulla |
| Chaudante | Padd | Umrya | Piprya |
| Sarode | | Paddharya | Borkutya |
| Taliwar | | Jiwanya | |
| Mule | | Lokhandya | |
| Lambane | | Bhaktya | |
| Chondhe | | Teltumdya | |
| Khandare | | Tumberya | |

Among all the sub-castes the law of exogamy is strictly observed and a man cannot marry a woman belonging to his own section. A man may marry the daughter of his mother's brother or father's sister but he cannot marry the daughter of his mother's sister. Two brothers may marry two sisters.

**Marriage.**—Generally, Mahar girls are married as infants and adult marriage is resorted to only in cases where the girl's parents are too poor to get her married before she has reached the age of puberty. It is customary to dedicate girls to Khandoba and such are subsequently called Murlis. Among the Aurangabad Mahars, the marriage ceremony is of the orthodox type and conforms to the rites common among the Maratha Kunbis. A Mahar Gosavi officiates as priest. During the ceremony, the bridegroom is wrapped in a black blanket. The Mahar winkers follow the usage current among the Khaira Kunbis of Adilabad. The Ladwan Mahars tacitly tolerate sexual intercourse between unmarried people, but if the girl becomes pregnant her lover is compelled to marry her. Their marriage ceremony comprises several usages of special interest. After the preliminary negotiations have been completed and a bride-price of Rs. 11 has been paid to the parents of the girl, an auspicious day for the marriage is fixed by consulting a Brahman. Previous to the wedding and before the marriage booth is erected, a small shed of mango twigs is constructed in the inner courtyard of the house. Beneath this shed a square of *Jawari* flour is drawn and sprinkled over with kumkum and *gulal* powders. Before this square are placed five dough lamps, five dry dates, a like number of arecanuts and betel leaves. A sheep smeared over with turmeric and decked with flower wreaths, is sacrificed over the shed, so that its blood trickles down through the mango twigs over the square of jawari flour beneath. The whole is subsequently removed and thrown outside the house and the spot is smeared clean with cowdung. This singular ceremony is known as Anganadevi. On the wedding day, five married couples are made to observe a fast and to take their meals at evening, out of the same plate. This is called Ohorpitar. The wedding takes place at night, at the bridegroom's house, and, as the auspicious hour for the ceremony arrives, some sesamum oil is poured into the noses of the bride and of the bridegroom and they are made to stand facing each other, the bride on a low wooden stool and the bridegroom on a yoke, and a Mahar Joshi unites them in wedlock by sprinkling jawari grains over their heads.

**Widow-Marriage.**—In point of polygamy, the Mahars profess that a man is allowed to take as many wives as he can afford to maintain. A widow is allowed to marry again and, except among the Ladwan Mahars and the Mahar Winkers, she is not required to marry her late husband's younger or elder brother. But, in such cases, she forfeits all claims to the custody of her children by her late husband. The ceremony in use at the marriage of a widow is simple, consisting of the smearing of the couple with turmeric powder and the tying of their garments into a knot. The bridegroom then puts a string of glass beads round the bride's neck and the ceremony is concluded.

**Divorce.**—Divorce is permitted on the ground of the wife's unchastity, or if the couple cannot get on together. A divorced woman may marry again, but not before her first husband has recovered the amount he spent on her as a virgin.

**Inheritance.**—In matters of inheritance, the Mahars follow the Hindu law.

**Religion.**—The religion of the Mahars is in a transitory state, passing from primitive animism into popular Hinduism. Their principal deity is Mari Ai (the goddess of cholera) to whom fowls, sheep and buffaloes are offered in the month of Ashadha and on festive occasions. On full and new moon days, the spirits of deceased ancestors are propitiated in the form of taks, or embossed images on silver or copper plates. Among their other gods may be mentioned Masoba, Khandoba, Bhairoba, Chokhoba, Chedoba, Bhavani and Mesai. Votaries of all sects are found among them and, as Saivaits they worship Mahadeva, under the presidency of Mahar Jangams, and, as Wackaris, they worship Vithoba of Pandharpur (the incarnation of Vishnu) and his consort Rakhamai. Some of them belong to the Manbhao sect and a few are the followers of Kabir. The disciples of Chokhamela wear round their necks garlands of the tulsi plant (Ocimum sanctum) and beads and dance and sing songs in honour of the saint. These make pilgrimages to Alandi in the Poona and Pandharpur in the Sholapur Districts. The saivait Mahars, visit the temple of Mahadeva at Shinganapur in the Satara District. The Mahars have spiritual advisors, or gurus, belonging to their own caste, whose advice they are required to take Both boys and girls, before they are a year old, are taken to the guru with a cocoanut, some grains of rice, flowers and frankincense. The child's father marks the teacher's brow with sandal paste, worships him and presents him with the articles. The guru then takes the child on his knee and whispers into his right ear some mantras or mystic words. At this time, the priest either covers himself and the child with a cloth, or a curtain is held between them and the rest of the people. The Mahars have a strong belief in witch-craft and sorcery and ascribe all diseases and calamities to the working of ghosts and evil spirits. When a person is believed to be possessed by a spirit, exorcists are engaged to lay the possessing spirit. Usually, Brahmans take no part in the religious and ceremonial observances of the caste and either the head of the household officiates as priest or a professional Mahar mendicant, a Jangam, or a Joshi, is called in. Occasionally, however, Deshastha Brahmans are employed at the marriage ceremony.

**Child birth.**—A Mahar woman, after child-birth, is unclean for eleven days. On the fifth day after birth, a silver image representing the goddess Satwai is set up on a stone slab and worshipped with offerings of flowers and sweet food, and a feast is provided in her honour for five married women whose husbands are living. On the 12th day the mother and the child are bathed and the mother places, in the name of Satwai, five stones under a tree, daubs them with red lead and burns frankincense before them. She smears the child's forehead with frankincense and ashes invoking the goddess to protect the child, walks three times round the stones and returns home. For the first three days after birth the mother is given a mixture of *'katbol'* (gum myrrh) and leaves of *nim* (*Melia indica*) and is fed on a diet of strained millet mixed with oil and molasses; from the fifth day she takes her ordinary food. On the fourth day the mother begins to suckle the child.

**Disposal of the dead.**—The dead are usually buried, but occasionally burnt. Persons dying of cholera and small pox and those dying unmarried are buried. In the case of cremation, the ashes and bones are collected on the 3rd day after death and thown into a river. Mourning is observed for ten days for adults and three days for children or distant relatives. No Sradha is performed in honour of the deceased person.

**Social Status.**—The Mahar stands at the bottom of the Hindu caste system. He lives on the outskirts of the village and his touch is deemed unclean by all the respectable classes. The regular village servants decline to serve him, as they consider themselves defiled by his touch; the caste is required to provide

itself with barbers and washermen from among its own members. Although the Mahar occupies the lowest position in the Hindu community, he claims to be superior to Bhangis and Mangs and does not eat from the hands of Burud, Mangs, Mochis and Bhangis. His ideas on food are in keeping with his degraded position. He eats beef, mutton, fowl, fish and the flesh of the buffalo, horse, deer, field rat, crocodile and of animals which have died a natural death; but he abstains from pork and the flesh of the dog, the ass and the crow; he also eats the leavings of all respectable classes and indulges freely in strong drinks.

**Occupations.**—Mahars are the predial slaves of villages and either hold grants of rent free lands or receive grain allowances, or Baluta, for the services they render. Their public duties as Yeskers, or Veskers, are to watch the boundaries and the village office, to carry Government letters, to repair the village office and village gate (*gaon kosa*), to sweep the village roads, and to serve as guides to Government officers passing through the village. The Mahars of a village either divide these duties among them or serve at the village office in turn for one year, distributing the produce of the land amongst themselves Their private services consist of cutting fire wood, carrying letters and sweeping and cleaning court-yards in front of houses, and for these duties they are paid in cash or in cooked food. They have a monopoly of the village dead animals, of the shrouds used in covering the village dead and of the copper coins cast as largess in the name of the dead. Many Mahars have entered the native army and have risen to the rank of Jamadars and Subedars. Others are engaged by Europeans as domestic servants and grooms. They are also labourers, carriers of dead animals, cultivators, scavengers, sellers of firewood, messengers and beggars. Mahar women, besides attending to their home duties, help the men in the field, but not in carrying or skinning dead animals. Many are engaged as day labourers.

# MAHAR

EXTRACT FROM THE TRIBES AND CASTES OF BOMBAY By R. E. Enthoven (Vol. II—1922, pp. 401—418)

**Name and origin**

MAHAR or Mhar, a tribe or more properly speaking an assembly of tribal units, numbering 953,212 (1901), including 471,803 males and 481,409 females, found throughout the Marathi speaking area of the Presidency, including the coast portion of the North Kanara district. The term includes over fifty tribal fragment that do not intermarry, and in reality connotes more a status than a tribe, being the broken residue of many former aboriginal tribes owing the country, of which they were dispossessed by successive waves of Aryan and *POST*-Aryan invaders. Thus they became "hewers of wood" if not "drawers of water" for the new overlords and perform mental services, such as crop guarding, scavenging and the carrying of messages for the village community to this day. Kolis, Bhois, Katkaris, Ramoshis and Bedars have much in common with the Mahars, who differ from them in having settled on the land at a period when these tribes were still in the nomad stage, as, in some instances, they are to this day. The Mahar lives on the village lands he once owned but in a separate hamlet to the present owners of the soil. He differs only from the similar tribe of Mangs in that he will eat cow and not pig, while the Mang will eat pig and not cow. By all castes of standing he is considered untouchable.

**Synonyms**

The synonyms by which they are known are: (1) Antyaja, (2) Atishudra, (3) Bhumiputra or Dharnicheput, (4) Bhuyal, (5) Chokhamela, (6) Dhed, (7) Domb, (8) Hulsava, (9) Kathivale, (10) Mhetre, (11) Mirasi, (12) Parvari, (13) Taral, (14) Thorlegharche and (15) Veskar. The origin of the term Mahar s lost in antiquity. It is popularly said to be derived trom MAHAHARI or great eater, in support of which few traditions are quoted below. According to others t is derived through Prakrit from the Sanskrit word MRITAHARI, which is given as the name of the lowest caste, in the MARKANDEYAPURAN (Chapter 35, verse 36). In verse 28 of the same PURAN they are also called Mritaharins. This name they are said to have earned by their occupation of removing carcasses of dead animals. The synonym Antyaja means lastborn, that is, the lowest in the social scale. Atishudra means those below the hudras; the last of the fourfold divisions of Manu, and is indicative of the primitive origin of the tribe. Thorlegharche is an ironical expression meaning noble born. These three names are applied to the Mahars contemptuously by the members of the higher castes.Bhumiputra or Dharnicheput means sons of the soil, and indicates the original position of the Mahars. Dheds and Dombs are respectively the Gujarat and Northern India representatives of the Mahars. Kathivale or men with a stick is a word indicative of the profession of the caste in olden times and to some extent even at the present lime. To such an extent is the KATHI or stick recognised as indicative of a Mahar that, in many places it is used by him as his sign-manual, and is accepted in courts of law and in the registration department.The term Mirasi means a landholder. Parvari, though often applied to all Mahars by the Europeans, is said strictly to belong to the musical Mahar. The term Veskar means a gatekeeper and describes the Mahar's occupation of the night watchman. In Poona, the Mahars, who are followers of the Varkari sect, are known as Chokhamela after the famous Mahar saint of that name. The term Hulsava is peculiar to Kanara.

**Status**

Mahars are held to be impure. Except at Pandharpur in the Sholapur district, their touch, even the touch of their shadow, is thought to defile. The Bombay GAZETTEER relates that in some outlying villages in the early morning, the Mahar, as he passes the village well, may be seen crouching that his shadow may not fall on the water-drawers.The village barber will not shave the Mahars, nor are they allowed to draw water fr om the village well. Formerly an earthern pot was hung from their neeks to hold their spittle, they were made to drag thorns to wipe out their footsteps, and when a Brahman came near were forced to lie far off on their faces lest their shadow might fall on him. Modern means of locomotion, however, by bringing all classes together, have led to the proximity of unclean classes being tolerated' to an extent formerly unheard of. The Mahars live outside villages in special Marvadas or Mahars' quarters. Their houses are generally untidy and ill-cared for, made mud and stone with thatched roofs, and the ground nearby is dirty and strewn with bones and refuse.

**Traditions of origin**

According to a Hindu tradition, Mahars were originally night rovers (NISHACHARS), whom the

god *Brahma turned to men lest they should eat his whole creation. † In Nasik, it is related that the founder of the caste was Svarup Somaji Mahar, sprung from the sole of Brahma's foot‡. The Ahmednagar Mahars claim to belong to one of the four cowborn castes. Their story is that the cow asked her sons how they would treat her after she died. The first three sons answered they would worship her as a goddess; the fourth said he would bear her inside of him as she had borne him. The horror-struck brothers called him MAHAHAR or the great eater, which, according to the story, use has shortened to Mahar.£ Another tradition regarding the origin of the Mahars relates that, once, when Parvati was bathing, her touch turned some drops of blood on a BEL leaf into a handsome babe. She took the child home and showed him to Mahadev, who named him Mahamuni. One day, while still young, the child crawled out of the house and, seeing a dead cow, began to eat it. Mahadev was horrified and cursed the child, saying that he would live out-side villages, that his food would be carcasses, that nobody would have anything to do with him, would look at him, or would allow his shadow to fall on anything pure. Parvati, who took great interest in her child, begged her lord to have pity on him and Shiva agreed that the people would employ him to supply mourners with wood and dried cow-dung cakes to burn the dead. As the child's appetite was so great, he, turned his name into Mahahari or the great eater.@ These stories are mere puns on the word Mahar. Some state that the Mahars were born of the left eye of the moon (Soma) and therefore one of their divisions has come to be called Somavanshi. The name of the original ancestor of the Somavanshis was Domba, whose son was Soma and grandson Satyasoma. The traditions regarding the origin of the Pan and Bel tribes of Mahars are too indecent for publication.

### Appearance, Dress and Ornaments

The Mahars of the Deccan are generally tall, strong, muscular and dark, with regular features and low unintelligent foreheads; those in the Southern Maratha Country are darker than Kunbis, with gaunt cheeks, irregular features, a dreamy expression and flat noses, still, except in colour, they differ little from Kunbis. The Kanara Mahars, both men and women, are tall, fair and regular-featured. The men dress in a lion cloth or waist cloth, a blanket, coat or smock and a dirty Maratha turban. The women wear the full Maratha robe and bodice. The men carry in their hands a thick staff about four feet long with one end adorned with bells. The poor among them use Kunbi-shaped ornaments of brass while the well-to-do use gold or silver ornaments.

### Language

The Mahars of the Deccan speak an incorrect and oddly pronounced Marathi. Among themselves they have a few peculiarities. They say *NHAI* for *NAHI* (no), *TOHA* for *TUJHA* (thine), *MAHA* for *MAJHA* (mine), *NAGU* or *NAI PAYAJE* for *NAKO* (do not want), *SAMINDAR* for *SAMUDRA* (the sea), *SAMANG* for *SANGAM* (the source), MANG for MAG (afterwards), etc. When he meets a man of his own caste a Mahar says *NAMASTU* or a bow to you, and when he meets anyone other than a Mahar he says *JOHAR*, said to be from the Sanskrit *YODDHAR* or warrior, the usual Shravak or Jain greeting. In Khandesh, like the local Kunbis, they speak a Khandeshi dialect, a kind of shortened Marathi e.g. *KATHETHUM UNA* for *KOTHUN ALAS* (whence have you come), *KATHIJAS* for *KOTHEJATOS* (whither are you going), etc. The home tongue of the Kanara Mahars is Konkani. The names in common use among men are: Balya, Bhagya, Gondappa, Khima, Kondu, Limba, Mahadji, Masa Munjya, Narya, Rama, Sadya, Laka and Tukappa; and among women Aheli, Bhagi, Bhimi, Chimi, Gagi, Iji, Jaya, Kushi, Mani, Nagi, Radha, Tuki and Yelli. The men add the word NAK—probably NAIK or leader—to their names.

In the Khandesh district, in each group of villages there is a chief Mahar headman, who in Jamner is called PANDWAR and in the south MEHETAR. The office is, as a rule, hereditary. The most sensible and worthy of the sons is chosen in the room of his father. Failing sons, some other member of the family and failing the family, an outsider is chosen. Caste disputes are settled by the men of the village with or without, the help of the headman. The offences punished by expulsion are :—the failure to give caste dinners, dining and smoking with one of lower castes such as a Mang, and adultery or concubinage. In other places, they have caste councils, the head of which is known in some places as PATIL and in other

*The Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XVIII, Part I, P. 441.
†The Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XVII, P. 172.
‡The Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XVII, P. 172.
£The Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XVI, P. 67.
@The Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XVIII, P. 439.

as MEHETAR. The headman of the Kanara Mahars is called BUDVANT. In Sholapur and Thanea caste decisions are enforced by forbidding the caste people to smoke or drink water with the offender, or by enacting of a fine, which is spent on drink. In Satara, if a Mahar dines or commits adultery with a Mang or a Bhangi he is put out of caste and is not allowed back unless he shows that he was ignorant of the caste of the person with whom he associated. In Kolhapur, a NIMB twig is thrown on the offender's house and all are enjoined to keep aloof from the offender's family on pain of losing caste. When an offender is readmitted, he has to spend from Rs. 2 to 10 on a caste dinner. The high priest gives him *TIRTH* or holy water to sip and he is allowed to eat in the same row with his castemen. The Mahars in the Savantwadi State have no recognised headman, but the Mahars of certain villages have for generations been regarded as arbitrators in settling caste and other disputes. Taking food in the house of a Jingar or a Musalman and adultery are said to be punished by expulsion from the caste.

**Endogamous Divisions**

The Mahars have the following endogamous divisions:

1. *Abne*
2. *Andvan or Andhon*
3. *Ananthakulya*
4. *Autakamble*
5. *Balbi*
6. *Balkamble*
7. *Barke*
8. *Bavan or Bavane*
9. *Bavcha*
10. *Bavise*
11. *Bel, Bele or Belia*
12. *Ben*
13. *Bole*
14. *Bunkar*
15. *Chelkar*
16. *Daule*
17. *Dhed*
18. *Dharmik*
19. *Dom or Domb*
20. *Gardi*
21. *Gavasai or Gavase*
22. *Ghadshi*
23. *Ghatkamble*
24. *Godvan or Gondvan*
25. *Gopal*
26. *Hedshi*
27. *Holar or Huvale*
28. *Jhade*
29. *Jogti*
30. *Junnare*
31. *Kabule*
32. *Kadvan, Kudvan or Kadu*
33. *Kamble*
34. *Kasare*
35. *Kharse*
36. *Kochare, Khosare or Kosare*
37. *Ladvan or Ladhan*
38. *Mathkamble*
39. *Murh*
40. *Nirale*
41. *Pan or Panye*
42. *Pradhan*
43. *Pular*
44. *Rain*
45. *Saladi or Salade*
46. *Silvan*
47. *Sirsalkar*
48. *Soma or Somavanshi*
49. *Somkamble*
50. *Sonkamble*
51. *Sonaibalkamble*
52. *Sutad*
53. *Tilvan*

Of the e divisions the Somavanshis, who claim descent from Soma or the moon, are most numerous and are the social superiors of the rest. In the Savantvadi State, Bele and Somavanshis are considered to be identical, and the Pans are said to include Mangs, Berads, Bhorpis and Ramoshis. The name Pan is said to be derived from the profession of working with leaves (Pan leaf), of which umbrellas are made and the name Bele from the profession of making mats and baskets from BEL chips of bamboo.

The Gopals, who are Mahar ascetics, and Ratis are considered in some places to be half castes. Gopals Ghadshis and Holars have been described separately under those heads. The Murli Mahars are the off spring of Mahar girls dedicated to the service of the god Khandoba; Gavasi Mahars are said to be the children of Mahar parents born in adultery; and Jogti

Mahars are said to be descendants of bastard Mahars who were devoted to the service of the Karnatak goddess Yellamma. The Kadvans or Kadus are bastardss, and Andvahs are those born of virgin.

In the Ahmednagar district; the sub-divisions Anan kulya, Andvan, Bavane and Bel eat together and intermarry. The Khandesh Mahars consist of 12½ divisions, viz; Andhon, Bavane, Balhi, Bunkar, Gondvan, Holar, Kharse, Kochare, Ladhan, Pradhan, Soma, Tilvan and the half caste Gopal. Of these the first four eat together, but do not intermarry. The Nasik Mahars aslo have 12½ divisions, the names of which are:—Andvan, Bavacha, Chelkar, Dhed, Dom, Ghadshi, Gopal, Ladvan, Pan, Pular, Rati Somavanshi and Sutad, Rati being considered half caste. The Mahars of Poona are split up into Andvans, Daules, Junnares, Pans, Silvans and Somavanshis, who neither eat together nor intermarry. In the Sholapur district are found Abnes, Andvans, Bauane, Bels, Bens, Bavises, Boles, Dheds, Godvans, Kadvans, Kambles, Khochares, Ladvans, Nirales, Pans, Salades, Soms and Tilvans. Most of these divisions except the Kadyans eat together and intermarry. The Satara Mahars have four divisions—Proper, Gavasi, Jogti and Murli—who eat together but do not intermarry. In Kolaba the divisions are;— Belias, Doms Gardis and Somavanshis. The divisions found in Thana are Daules, Pans and Somavanshis. The Ratnagiri Mahars are mostly Kambles. The Mahars of the Southern Maratha country have fourteen divisiona *viz*, Andvan, Bele, Gavase, Ghadshi, Hedshi, Jhade, Jotgi, Kadvan, Ladvan, Murli, Pan and Saladi, who neither eat together nor intermarry. The Savantwadi Mahars have two divisions—Beles and Pans, who do not eat together or intermarry.

**Exogamous Divisions**

The Mahars have numerous surnames which are exogamous. Some of the commonest surnames are as follows:—

Abhang
Adhav
Adijadhav
Adsule
Aherrao
Ahire
Auchat
Autakamble
Babre
Bachav
Bagad
Bagul
Bahelime
Baikar
Baikamble
Bansure
Basede
Bayakar
Bayat
Bhagat
Bhalerao
Bhambhal
Bhede
Bhilang
Bhingar
Bhoi
Bhoir
Bholke
Bhosale
Chandanshive
Chavan
Chhettise
Chikane
Chitale
Dahane
Darule
Detge
Dharpavar
Dhede
Dive
Doble
Dukare
Gade
Gadre
Gaikvad
Gamre
Garud
Ghanvat
Ghatkamble
Ghode
Godivale
Gote
Hatavate
Jadhav

Joshi
Kadam
Kakate
Kakude
Kale
Kamble
Kanoje
Katre
Khandagale
Khandizad
Kharat
Kharode
Khupate
Kohale
Kolge
Ladav
Lakde
Lokare
Lokhande
Makasure
Malve
Matkamble
Mehede
Mhasge
Mhaskate
Mohite
More
Nikumbh
Nirmal
Pachaer
Pagar
Pakhare
Pardhe
Patekar
Pavar
Pokade
Puravne
Sadvarte
Sapkal or Sakpal
Salve
Samidar
Sarvzgod
Satpal
Shelar
Shelk
Shevale
Shinde
Shirke
Sisate
Sodjadhav
Somaibalkamble
Somkamble
Sonavale
Sonkamble
Sonavane
Sonkavale
Surya
Suryavanshi
Suryakadam
Tadke
Talvatke
Tambe
Tapaichere
Tizoad
Thorvade
Umbale
Vadkar
Vagh
Vaghchavre
Vaghmare
Vaghpanje
Vartak
Yadav
Yetum
Zankar

The evidence obtained in the course of enquirie ends to establish the fact that each of these exogamous sub-divisions originally owned and worshipped a DEVAK or TOTEM, closely corresponding to the BALI of the Kanarese tribes (*see* MARATHA). The object represented by the DEVAK is worshipped, protected from injury by the section owning the DEVAK, and brought into prominence at the time of the marriage ceremony. Members of families with a common DEVAK cannot intermarry.

A list of the some of these DEVAKS with the name of the KUL or exogamous section owning the DEVAK is given below:—

| *KUL* | *DEVAK* |
|---|---|
| *Bagad* | *UMBAR* (*Ficus glomerata*) |
| *Bhagat* | *Cobra* |
| *Gaikvad* | *Crab, sunflower, KOHALA* (*Cucurbita pivi*) |
| *Jadhav* | *Palm* (*Borassus flabelliferi, PANKANIS* (*Typha angustata*), *tortoise* (*KASAV*). |
| *Kadam* | *KADAMBA* (*Anthocephalus cadumba*). |
| *Mhasge* | *Buffalo* |
| *Mohite* | *UMBAR* (*Ficus glomerata*). |
| *More* | *Peacock.* |
| *Satpal* | *Cobra* |
| *Shevale* | *NAGVEL* (*Pieper betle*). |
| *Sonkamble* | *CHAMPA* (*Mesua ferrea*). |
| *Suryavanshi* | *Sunflower* |
| *Talvatke* | *Copper* |
| *Tambe* | *UMBAR* (*Ficus glomerata*). |
| *Zankar* | *Mango, UMBAR, ZAMBUL.* |

Other common DEVAKS, in addition to the above, are the HARINA (mousedeer), NAG or cobra, NANDRUK (Ficus retusa), the doll PITHICHE BAVLE and the banyan tree.

In many cases the DEVAK has become obsolete and has been replaced by a composite TOTEM or PANCHPALVI composed of the leaves of five trees, which are similarly worshipped and play a prominent part in the marriage ceremony. The number five has special value among the Mahars, as will be seen in the full account of the birth and marriage ceremonies given below. It may be equivalent to the early numerical conception of many. The VANSH or group of five ancestors if largely worshipped in outlying villages in the form of a stone carving of five caste or tribal elders, kept in the village temple, to this day.

The following PANCHPALVIS are worshipped by Mahars in the districts shown:—

| Poona | Nasik |
|---|---|
| 1. Mango | 1. Mango |
| 2. Pipal | 2. *PIPAL* |
| 3. *RUI* | 3. *RUI* |
| 4. *SHAMI* | 4. *SHAMI* |
| 5. *UMBAR* | 5. *UMBAR* |
| **Khandesh** | **Satara** |
| 1. *ARKATHI* | 1. *BABUL* |
| 2. *BORKATHI* | 2. Banyan or *VAD* |
| 3. *JAMBUL* | 3. *JAMBUL* |
| 4. Mango | 4. Mango |
| 5. *RUCHKIN* | 5. *RUI* |

**Marriage Rules**

The Mahars of the different districts, though belonging to the same division, do not intermarry, unless some former connection can be traced between them. In the Savantvadi State, each village group forms an exogamous unit, and consequently marriages between Mahars of the same village are prohibited. Marriages are generally prohibited within three degrees of relationship. A Mahar cannot marry his father's sister's or monther's sister's daughter. He may marry his mother's brother's daughter. In some places, marriage with a sister's daughter is allowed. Marriage with a wife's sister is allowed, both during the wife's lifetime and after her death. Two brothers are allowed to marry two sisters. Polygamy is allowed and practised, but polyandry is unknown. Marriage is infant as well as adult, girls being sometimes married even when only a month old and sometimes after the age of sixteen. The cause of late marriages is in most cases want of money. Sexual intercourse before marriage is tolerated among the more helpless portions of the caste. But generally, if a virgin commits sexual indiscretions, she is allowed to remain in the caste on her parents paying a fine and giving a dinner to the castemen, if the seducer is a casteman or a member of a higher caste. If the seducer be a member of a lower caste the girl is excommunicated.

After the birth of a child the mother is held impure, generally for twelve days. In Poona, she is held impure for forty-one days, in Ahmednagar for eleven days, and in Kolhapur for eight days.

**Birth Ceremonies**

In Sholapur and Satara, on the third day, a ceremony called TIRVI or TIKONDI is performed, when FIVE little unmarried girls are feasted on millet of KARRI made into lumps and eaten with a mixture of milk and molasses, or sugar, or with curds and buttermilk. On the FIFTH or PANCHVI day FIVE stone pebbles are laid in a line in the house and worshipped by the midwife and millet is offered. On this day, among the Kolhapur Mahars a few spots of sandal and turmeric paste are daubed on the wall near the mother's cot. The spots are marked with sandal paste and rice and lamp is waved round them. On the sixth or *SATVI* day the hole made for the bathing water in the mother's room is filled, levelled, cowdunged and sprinkled with turmeric and red powder and flowers, and wheat cakes are laid before it. The goddess Satvai is also worshipped on this day, or, in some places, on the evening of the FIFTH day. A silver image of the goddess is set on a stone slab or PATA, and flowers, a coil of thread and food are laid before the goddess, and a wheat flour lamp is set at the bathing pit. FIVE married women are asked to dine at the house, and the child is not allowed to look at the wheat flour lamp at the bathing pit, as the sight at the lamp is said to make it squint. In Kanara, the child is named on the sixth day, in Kolhapur on the ninth. In the Deccan, it is named between the twelfth and any time within about two months in consultation with the village astrologer. When the child is a year old, if it is a boy, the hair-cutting or JAVAL is performed

**Marriage Ceremonies**

The offer of marriage comes from the boy's father, who, in some cases, has to pay a sum of money to the girl's father. A few days before the marriage, the village Brahman is asked whether there is anything in the names of the boy and girl to prevent their marring. He consults his almanac and says there is no objection. He is then asked to fix a lucky moment for the marriage and for the turmeric rubbing. He again consults his almanac, tells them the days and gives them a few grains of rice to be thrown on the bridal pair. The marriage service is conducted either by a Brahman priest standing at a distance, or by a Mahar GOSAVI. In Khandesh, it is sometimes conducted by a Dhangar. Marriage booths are erected at the houses of both the boy and girl, the *MUHURTA MEDHA* or auspicious post of which is generally of *UMBAR* (Indian fig tree) wood. The booth is covered with leaves of mango, *UMBAR* and *PIPRI* (Ficus tsiela). The DEVAK of the family stock is worshipped. Silver masks or *TAKS* are occasionally brought by a newly married couple from a goldsmith's shop and placed among the household gods and worshipped. The *DEVAK* is tied to the *MUHURTA MEDHA* along with wheat bread and an axe. In some places, the *PANDHARI* (Randa uliginosa) is worshipped by the bridegroom before the installation of the *DEVAK*. The few particulars in which the marriage ceremonies of Mahars differ from those of Kumbis are that the boy and girl are made to sit in bamboo basket at the time of marriage and that a yellow thread is passed seven times round their necks. In Khandesh, while the marriage verses are being recited, the baskets are twisted round five times, and, when the priest clapes his hands to show that the moment for marriage has come, the baskets are turned a sixth time, the cloth is snatched aside and the bride and bridegroom throw garlands round each other's necks. In most places from the beginning of the marriage ceremony to the end, the bride has to hold a knife in her hand and the bridegroom a dagger. Among the Mahars of the Thana district, the marriage ceremony is performed without the help of a Brahman, unless the boy's father is a follower of Chokhamela, when the services of a Brahman are necessary. Some Mahars also call in a Bhat. On the day before the marriage, a medium, *BHAGAT*, is called to the bride and bridegroom's houses and consulted whether the next day will be lucky. If the medium say the days is favourable, the marriage is celebrated on that day. The binding portion of the marriage service seems to be in all places, the throwing of sacred grains of rice over the bride and bridegroom.

Among the Mahars of the Savantvadi State, a com posite DEVAK, consisting of one or two *SERS* of rice grains, one cocoanut, five pice, a betelnut and leaves, plantains, and leaves of the *KADAMBA* (Antho-cephalus cadumba) is put into a basket and worshipped with flowers and sandal paste by the bridegroom and his parents. The *MUHURTA MEDAH* or auspicious post of the marriage booth, with mango leaves tide to its end, is then planted at the entrance to the house along with a post of the *SAVAR* tree (*Bombax malabarricum*) and it is worshipped. Next

the ceremony of *SHESA BHARNE* is performed, in which rice grains are applied to the foreheads of the bridegroom and his parents by FIVE married pairs, and the DEVAK is brought and placed into the house with a lighted lamp by its side. The bridegroom is then taken back into the marriage pandal and rubbed with turmeric paste by FIVE married pairs. Next a triangular frame of the branches of the SAVAR or KIVAN tree is raised, outside the pandal, cotton thread is passed round the frame and to its top is hung a cloth bag containing *FIVE VADALU* (cakes fried in oil). The bag is filled with water by FIVE married unwidowed women and the bridegroom is seated under it so that the water trickles over his head. The bridegroom is then taken out of the frame and bathed, and carried by his maternal uncle or some other near relation to the door of the booth, whence he throws Bel leaves over the booth. In many districts, water is poured over the joined hands of the bride and bridegroom (the DHARE ceremony). The marriage is completed after the fashion of the Kunbi caste marriages.

**Widow remarriage**

The remarriage of widows is permitted. A widow cannot marry her father's sister's, mother's sister's or mother's brother's son, or a member of her late hunsband's KUL. In some places, marriage with a mother's brother's son is allowed, in others, it is prohibited with a member of the widow's father's KUL. In Khandesh, a widow is said to be allowed to marry a younger brother of her deceased husband. The intended husband has, in some places, to pay a sum of money called DEJ to the father of the widow and to the relatives of her deceased husband. A widow remarriage is always celebrated at night except on a new moon day. It cannot take place on those days on which first marriages are celebrated. In some districts it is not allowed to be celebrated in the months of ASHADHA, PAUSH and BHADRAPADA. The ceremony takes place in a lonely locality and is generally attended by remarried widows, a caste GOSAVI or PANDIT, and sometimes a Brahman priest. The widow is dressed in the clothes and ornaments presented by her intended husband, the pair are then seated on a carpet or a bullock's packsaddle, the ends of their garments are tide into a knot, the widow's brow is marked with redpowder, her lap is filled, and the ceremony is over. In some places, molasses are put into the mouth of both. Sometimes the god Varuna or Ganpati is also worshipped. In the Savantvadi State, a widow remarriage is celebrated only on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. It is attended by the relations of both parties, neighbours and friends. The ceremony consists only in applying rice grains to the foreheads of the pair by the party assembled, which is followed by a feast. Next, the married pair, with the party start for the widow's new husband's house. Before they reach the place, a cock is killed and a piece of the widow's robe is cut off and Rs. 2 with a SER of rice grains and a coconut or five NAGCHAMPA leaves tied into a piece of cloth are sent to the house of the window's deceased husband and placed in the basin of the TULASI plant in the courtyard. This offering is made to appease the spirit of the widow's deceased husband, the cock offered cannot be eaten by the remarried pair. It is cooked and eaten by the members of the party attending the pair before they reach their destination. On arriving there, the couple bow to their family god, and rice grains are applied to their foreheads by FIVE married unwidowed women, which ends the ceremony. A bachelor is not allowed to marry a widow unless he is first married to a RUI plant or a ring. The marriage with the RUI plant is performed with full marriage rites. The plant is then chopped up and buried in a burial ground, thus indicating that the first wife, i.e. the tree, is dead, and putting the bachelor, as a widower, on a footing with the widow. Divorce is allowed on the grounds of the wife's unchastity, the husband's illtreatment of the wife, or the contraction of an incurrable disease by either. Divorced women are allowed to remarry by the widow remarriage form, unless the cause of the divorce be adultery with a member of a lower caste, in which case, they are excommunicated. The caste follow the Hindu law of inheritance.

**Religion**

The Mahars profess Hinduism. They are both Shaives and Vaishnavs. Some of them, in the Ahmadnagar district, belong to the Matan gapatta sect, and many are followers of Kabir, Giri and Nath. Those who are followers of Chokhamela (Varkaris) wear sweet basil or TULSI bead necklaces and make periodical pigrlmages to Alandi and Pandharpur, passing their nights in praying or singing sacred songs or ABHANGS. In the Deccan, the pious among them have singing clubs where they sing in priase of some Hindu god, especially of Ram or of Vithoba of Pandharpur. Both men and women are good singers and go in bands of two or more, singing and begging.

The favourite deities of the Deccan Mahars are Bhavani, Mahadeva, Chokhoba, Jnyanoba, Khandoba, Vithoba and Mhaskoba. The objects of their special worship are the cobra or NAGOBA, the smallpox goddess Satvai and the cholera-goddess Mariai, whose shrines are found in all Mahars quarters. The family deities of the Kanara Mahars are Shantariamma, Maridevi, Bhumidevi and Mahadeva. The Mahars of the Savantvadi State worship gods in the form of coconuts or betelnuts called Brahmans and Purvas. In every village, close to the chief temples there is a Mahar shrine where they worship a stone idol of Talkhba. The family deities of the Mahars of Thana are Mhaskoba, Janai, Gauri, Bahiroba, Khandoba, Chokhoba, Bhavani, Yellamma, Giroba, Babdev, Chedoba, Jakhai, Somnai, Kalkai, and Jokhai. Besides the above deities all the Mahars worship the usual Hindu gods and goddesses and Musalman saints, an some have TAKS (embossed images) of deceased ancestors. They observe all the Hindu holidays and make pilgrimages to the holi places of the Hindus, specially to Pandharpur Alandi, Jejuri, and Tuljapur.

When cholera rages in a village, the people raise a subscription and hand the money to the headman. The headman brings a robe and bodice, some rice and flour, a he-buffalo or a sheep, and flowers, camphor, frankincense, red powder and betelnut and leaves. He takes three carts, fills one with cooked rice, a second with cakes and in the third places the other articles of worship, and, leading the he-buffalo, takes the carts through the village accompanied by music and a band of the villagers. The carts then go to the Mahars' quarters outside of the village, where is the shrine of Mariai, the cholera goddess. The headman and the other villagers stand at a distance, while a Mahar bathes the goddess, dresses her in the robe and bodice, fills her lap with rice, betelnuts, dry dates and a coconut waves burning frankincense and camphor before her, and with joined hands begs her to be kind. All the villagers lift their joined hands to their heads and ask the goddess to be kind and retired, leaving the Mahars and Mangs in peace. The buffalo is led in front of the goddess and a Mahar chops off its head with a sword or a hatchet, and touches the goddess' lap with a finger dipped in its blood. The cart-load of food and meat are shown to the goddess and are distributed among such of the villagers as do not object to eat them. This concludes the sacrifice. They say that the goddess truly partakes of the sacrifice, as the food and meat become insipid and tasteless.

The religious teachers and priests of Mahars are members of their own caste, who are called GURUS, VACHAKS, PANDITS, GOSAVIS, or MENDHE JOSHIS. In Khandesh, there is a class of beggars known as Mahar THAKURS, who also act as their priests. The GURUS are those who have been initiated by other GOSAVIS, and who, have devoted themselves to a religious life, chiefly to the worship of Vithoba. The Mahar THAKURS are probably Bhats who have been degraded by mixing among Mahars. Their form of greeting is different from the Mahar saying RAM RAM to each other and BRAHMA to strangers. Besides officiating as their priest the THAKUR acts as the Mahar's banker. He eats from a Mahar but no Mahar will eat from him. Besid GURUS and THAKURS, Brahmans are sometimes employed to conduct marriages in the Southern Maratha Country. The JANGAMS also officiate at times.

In the time of Namdev and Tukaram, the Mahars were admitted to the Varkari cult of the Bhakti MARG. Their great saint Chokhamela has a shrine at Pandharpur close to Namdev's preaching place.

The *SADHUS* read and explain their sacred books, the *BHAKTIVIJAYA*, *DASBODH*, *JNYANESHVARI*, *HARIVIJAYA*, *RAMVIJAYA*, *SANTLILA*, and the poems of Jnyanoba, Tukoba, and other. Some of them are very fluent preachers and expounders of the PURANS. Every Mahar, both a male and female, has a GURU. A child is first brought to be taught by its GURU when it is about a year old the rite is called KANSHRAVNI or ear-whispering and more commonly KANPHUKNE or ear-blowing. About seven or eight at night, the parents take the child in their arms and go to the teachers' house, carrying frankincense, comphor, red and scented powders, flowers, betelnuts and leaves, a coconut, dry dates and sugar. In the teacher's house a room is cowdunged and a square is traced with white quartz powder. At each corner of the square a lighted lamp is set, and in the middle on a wooden plank or on a low wooden stool is a metal pot or GHAT filled with cold water. Another board or stool is set facing the square and the teacher sits on it cross-legged. He sets flowers, sandal paste and rice on the waterpot and takes the child in his lap, resting its head on his right knee. He shrouds himself and the child in a blanket or a waist cloth, mutters the sacred verse into the child's right ear, pulls off the blanket and hands the child to its parents. The priest is presented with money, gifts and, if they

are well-to-do, the parents give him a waistcloth, one or two metal water vessels and a plate. A feast is given to the teacher and a few near relations, or, if the parents cannot afford a feast sugar is handed round. After the dinner the parents retire with the child.

The Mahars believe in sorcery, witchcraft and soothsaying and attribute all diseases to the working of evil spirits. They have many spirit scarers or exorcists among them, some of whom are GOSAVIS, and the rest POTRAS or devotees of Lakshmi, who cover their brows with red powder and carry a whip with which they lash their bodies while they beg, singing and dancing.

**Death ceremonies.**—The dead are generally buried. A few, who have the means, burn. At burial the corpse is either seated or laid with head to the north or south. The body is carried to the burning ground either on a bamboo bier or in a sling. In Khandesh, the thumbs are tied with a piece of silver wire over the breast, the body is shrouded in a new cloth, and grains of rice are tied to one of the hems of the cloth. The chief mourner walks in front with fire in a new earthen jar and music if he has the means. The mourners follow. On the way to the grave the party halts and the rice from the hem of the deceased's robe is laid on the ground. A pit five feet deep is dug, and the body is stripped of all its clothing, even the loincloth, according to the saying "Naked hast thou come and naked shalt thou go". In some places, the clothing is not removed. The body is then lowered into the grave, the chief mourner scatters a handful of earth on the body, the rest also scatter earth, and the grave is filled. In Poona, a few BEL leaves are scattered on the head before the grave is filled. The chief mourner fills the fire pot with water, sets it on his shoulder and goes thrice round the grave, carrying aloud and striking his open mouth with the palm of his right hand. At the end of the third turn he pours water from the jar on the grave and dashes the jar to pieces on the ground. All bathe in running water, and go to the mourners's house each carrying a NIM branch. At the house an earthen pot of cow's urine is set on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. The mourners dip the NIM branches into the urine, sprinkle it over their heads and bodies, and go to their homes. On the third day a few of the deceased's kinsmen go to the burial ground, the chief mourner carrying in his hand a winnowing fan with two pieces of cocoa-kernel and some molasses in each piece. At the resting place, where the bearers halted, they lay a piece of cocoa-kernel with molasses on it under five stones. The other piece is laid on the heaped grave. They beat the grave down to the level of the rest of the ground, bathe, and go to the chief mourner's house. The four bearers are seated in a line on the bare ground in the front room of the house. Each holds a NIM branch under his arm, the chief mourner drops a little molasses into his mouth, and they go to their homes. On the third, seventh or eleventh day a bread and vegetable Caste feast is given. In the Savantwadi State, on the eleventh day after death, an earthen jar is worshipped with an offering of a cock, the people assembled put coins into the jar, sing praises of gods all the night, worship a flour image of a cow and at daybreak the chief mourner gets his face and moustaches clean shaved, and the flour image is taken and thrown into a pool.

For the propitiation of the deceased ancestor MAHALAYA is performed in the dark half of BHADRAPADA, when crows are fed and castemen are feasted. The ceremony of SHRADDHA is not performed.

**Occupation**

The Mahars are hereditary village servants and are considered authorities in all boundary matters. They escort Government treasure, act as guides and messengers to public officers, call landholders to pay the land assessment at the village office, watch boundries and the village office, repair the village office and village gate or GAONKUSU and sweep the village roads. Most of them enjoy a small Government payment, partly in cash and partly in land. The chief source of their income is the yearly grain allowance or BALUTA. They say that they used to have fifty-two dues, but now the number is greatly reduced. Some of these dues, which were allowed by the Muhammadan and Maratha Governments are as follows:—

1. *SITA-DEVI* or apart of a standing sugarcane crop.
2. Village or town gate offerings.
3. *HOLI* food offerings on the full-moon day of PHALGUN.
4. *BENDUR* grain gifts on the full-moon of ASHADHA.
5. Hides of dead cattle.

6. *HATSHEKNE* or hand-warming, a money gift for watching the fire made for boiling sugarcane juice.
7. *GHAR-TAKKA* or home money.
8. Money paid for digging graves.
9. Grain lying on and about the threshing floor when the floor is used for the first time.
10. Grain at the bottom of PEV or grain-pit.
11. The rice thrown on the two low stools which are set for the bride and bridegroom.
12. A yearly pair of sandals for watching the village or town gate.
13. *RUKKA* or marriage gift including two coppers in cash a piece of cocoa-kernel and a handful of rice.
14. *OTI-PATI* or lap-tax that is handfulls of grain put into the laps of Mahar women at the first treading of the grain.
15. Money thrown into her platter when a Mahar woman comes to wave a lamp round the head of the bride's or bridegroom's mother.
16. *MADHE-PADE* or carcass tax.
17. *MANGULI* or gifts for winding a string round the village on the new-moon of Ashadha and of KARTIK.
18. *RANSODVAN* or forest-leaving, that is, grain ears given to Mahars on the first cutting and stacking.
19. *PENDHA* or straw.
20. *LAGIN-TAKKA* or marriage rupee, that is, four annas given to the village Mahar when the booth is raised.

The duties of the Mahars to the villagers are to cut firewood, carry letters, sweep and clean the yards in front of their houses, carry cowdung cakes to the burning ground and to dig graves. For their private services they are paid in cash, or, what they like better, in cooked food. They have a monopoly of the dead village animals, of the shrouds used in carrying the village dead, and of the copper coins which in the name of the dead are thrown to one side at the resting place or VISAVIACHI JAGA. Mahara are largely employed by Europeans as domestic servants, and as grooms, or syces, they perform service in all parts of India. Recently they have taken readily to attending motor-cars and earn high wages in that capacity. As unskilled labourers they are employed in very large numbers. Of recent years complaints have arisen in villages near large centres of industry that the Mahars have been so depleted in numbers by emigration to the cities as to leave an inadequate staff for village requirements. Some are husbandmen. Many are contractors and money lenders, and manage their business without the help of any high caste clerk. Mahars make excellent railway gang labourers and have gained almost a monopoly of the unskilled railway labour market in some districts. The Mahars of Kanara and Savantwadi plain bamboo mats, baskets and fans, and play kettle-drums at some of the religious festivals and at the marriages of some of the lower castes. The Parvari or musical Mahar plays on a double drum called sambal, small flute or trumpet called *sanai*, a long trumpet or flute called sur or surani with a palm-leaf mouthpiece, a thin drum-stick called buk, and a horned or crooked stick called chap. These, with a wooden flute (*alguzar*), are the chief instruments used by the musical Mahar. Occasionally be blows the horn (singa), but never beats the tambourine or blows the big trumpet (karna) these being exclusively Mang instruments.

**Food**

The staple food of the Mahar of the Deccan is millet bread, split, pulse, pounded chillies, cheap vegetables and occasionally fish; that of the Konkan Mahars—kodra and coarse rice. They eat the leaving of the higher castes, and when cattle, sheep or fowls die they feast on their carcasses, eating strips of the strips of the flesh roasted over a fire, often with nothing else, but sometimes washed down by liquor. They do not eat pork, crocodiles, monkeys, jackals, horses, serpents, rats, squirrels and lizards. They hate the Mangs for eating the pig and the Mangs hate them for eating the cow. They are very fond of liquor and palm juice. They do not eat cooked food at the hands of buruds, Jingars, Kaikadis, Vaddas, Parits, Mochis. Bhangis, Mangs and Ghadshis. The Holars and Mangs eat food cooked by them. Socially, Mahars are slowly making progress owing to the increasing earnings which the industrial development of the country sffords them an opportunity of securing.

# MAHAR

EXTRACT FROM CASTES AND TRIBES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA, VOLUME IV, 1916 PP. 129—146.
BY R. V. RUSSEL

**Mahar, Mehra, Dhed**

1. *General notice.*—The impure caste of menials, labourers and village watchmen of the Maratha country, corresponding to the Chamars and Koris of Northern India. They numbered nearly 1,200,000 persons in the combined Province in 1911, and are most numerous in the Nagpur, Bhandara, Chanda and Wardha districts of the Central Provinces, while considerable colonies are also found in Balaghat, Chhindwara and Betul. Their distribution thus follows largely that of the Marathi language and the castes speaking it. Berar contained 400,000, distributed over the four districts. In the whole Province this caste is third in point of numerical strength. In India the Mahars number about three million persons, of whom a half belong to Bombay. I am not aware of any accepted derivation for the word Mahar, but the balance of opinion seems to be that the native name of Bombay, Maharashtra, is derived from that of the caste, as suggested by Wilson. Another derivation which holds it to be a corruption of Maha Rastrakuta, and to be so called after the Rashtrakuta Rajput dynasty of the eighth and ninth centuries, seems less probable because countries are very seldom named after ruling dynasties. Whereas in support of Maharashtra as "The country of the Mahars", we have Gujarashtra or Gujarat, the country of the Gujars, and Saurashtra or Surat, the country of the Sauras. According to Platts' Dictionary, however, Maharashtra means 'the great country', and this is what the Maratha Brahmans themselves say. Mehra appears to be a variant of the name current in the Hindustani districts, while Dheda, or Dhada, is said to be a corruption of Dharadas or Hillmen. In the Punjab it is said to be a general term of contempt meaning 'Any low fellow'.

Wilson considers the Mahars to be an aboriginal or pre-Aryan tribe, and all that is known of the caste seems to point to the correctness of this hypothesis. In the *Bombay Gazetteer* the writer of the interesting Gujarat volume suggests that the Mahars are fallen Rajputs; but there seems little to support this opinion except their appearance and countenance which is of the Hindu rather than the Dravidian type. In Gujarat they have also some Rajput surnames, as Chauhan, Panwar, Rathor, Solanki and so on, but these may have been adopted by imitation or may indicate a mixture of Rajput blood. Again, the Mahars of Gujarat are the farmservant and serfs of the Kunbis. "Each family is closely connected with the house of some landholder or *pattidar* (sharer). For his master he brings in loads from the fields and cleans out the stable, receiving in return daily allowances of buttermilk and the carcasses of any cattle that die. This connection seems to show traces of a form of slavery. Rich *pattidars* have always a certain number of Dheda families whom they speak of as ours (*hamara*), and when a man dies he distributes along with his lands a certain number of Dheda families to each of his sons. An old tradition among Dhedas points to some relation between the Kunbis and Dhedas. Two brothers, Leva and Deva were the ancestors, the former of the Kunbis the latter of the Dhedas." Such a relation as this in Hindu society would imply that many Mahar women held the position of concubines to their Kunbi master and would therefore account for the resemblance of the Mahar to Hindus rather than the forest tribes. But if this is to be regarded as evidence of Rajput descent, a similar claim would have to be allowed to many of the Chamars and sweepers. Others of the lowest castes also have Rajput sept names, as the Pardhis and Bhils; but the fact can at most be taken, I venture to think, to indicate a connection of the 'Droit- de Seigneur' type. On the other hand, the Mahars occupy the debased and impure position which was the lot of those non-Aryan tribes who became subject to the Hindus and lived in their villages; they eat the flesh of dead cattle and this and other customs appear to point decisively to a non-Aryan origin.

2. *Length of residence in the Central Provinces.*—Several circumstances indicate that the Mahar is recognised as the oldest resident of the plain country of Berar and Nagpur. In Berar he is a village servant and is the reference on village boundaries and customs, a position implying that his knowledge of them is the most ancient. At the Holi festival the fire of the Mahars is kindled first and that of the Kunbis is set alight from it. The Kamdar Mahar, who acts as village watchmen, also has the right of bringing the *toran* or rope of leaves which is placed on the marriage-shed of the Kunbis; and for this he receives a present of three annas. In Bhandara the Telis, Lohars, Dhimars and several other castes employ a Mahar *Mohturia* or wise man to fix the date of their weddings. And most curious of all, when the Panwar Rajputs of

this tract celebrate the festival of Narayan Deo, they call a Mahar to their house and make him the first partaker of the feast before beginning to eat themselves. Again in Berar the Mahar officiates at the killing of the buffalo on Dasahra. On the day before the festival the chief Mahar of the village and his wife with their garments knotted together bring some earth from the jungle and fashioning two images set one on a clay elephant and the other on a clay bullock. The images are placed on a small platform outside the village site and worshipped; a young he-buffalo is bathed and brought before the images as though for the same object. The Patel wounds the buffalo in the nose with a sword and it is then marched through the village. In the evening it is killed by the head Mahar, buried in the customary spot, and any evil that might happen during the coming year is thus deprecated and, it is hoped, averted. The claim to take the leading part in this ceremony is the occasion of many a quarrel and an occasional affray or riot. Such customs tend to show that the Mahars were the earliest immigrants from Bombay into the Berar and Nagpur plain, excluding of course the Gonds and other tribes, who have practically been ousted from this tract. And if it is supposed that the Panwars came here in the tenth century, as seems not improbable, the Mahars, whom the Panwars recognise as older residents than themselves, must have been earlier still, and were probably numbered among the subjects of the old Hindu kingdoms of Bhandak and Nagardhan.

3. *Legend of origin.*—The Mahars say they are descended from Mahamuni, who was a foundling picked up by the goddess Parvati on the banks of the Ganges. At this time beef had not become a forbidden food; and when the divine cow, Tripad Gayatri, died the gods determined to cook and eat her body and Mahamuni was set to watch the pot boiling. He was as inattentive as King Alfred, and a piece of flesh fell out of the pot. Not wishing to return the dirty piece to the pot Mahamuni ate it; but the gods discovered the delinquency, and doomed him and his descendants to live on the flesh of dead cows.

4. *Sub-castes.*—The caste have a number of subdivisions, generally of a local or territorial type, as Daharia, the residents of Dahar or the Jubbulpore country, Baonia (52) of Berar, Nemadya or from Nimar, Khandeshi from Khandesh, and so on; the Katia group are probably derived from that caste, Katia meaning a spinner; the Barkias are another group whose name is supposed to mean spinners of fine thread; while the Lonarias are salt-makers. The highest division are the Somvansis or children of the moon; these claim to have taken part with the Pandavas against the Kauravas in the war of the Mahabharata, and subsequently to have settled in Maharashtra. But the Somvansi Mahars consent to groom horses, which the Baone and Kosaria subcastes will not do. Baone and Somvansi Mahars will take food together, but will not intermarry. The Ladwan subcaste are supposed to be the offspring of kept women of the Somvansi Mahars; and in Wardha the Dharmik group are also the descendants of illicit unions and their name is satirical, meaning 'virtuous'. As has been seen, the caste have a subdivision named Katia, which is the name of a separate Hindustani caste; and other subcastes have names belonging to Northern India, as the Mahobia, from Mahoba in the United Provinces, the Kosaria or those from Chhattisgarh, and the Kanaujia from Kanauj. This may perhaps be taken to indicate that bodies of the Kori and Katia weaving castes of Northern India have been amalgamated with the Mahars in districts where they have come together along the Satpura Hills and Nerbudda Valley.

5. *Exogamous groups and marriage customs.*—The caste have also a large number of exogamous groups, the names of which are usually derived from plants, animals, and natural objects. A few may be given as examples out of fifty-seven recorded in the Central Provinces, though this is far from representing the real total; all the common animals have septs named after them, as the tiger, cobra, tortoise, peacock, jackal, lizard, elephant, lark, scorpion, calf, and so on; while more curious names are—Darpan, a mirror; Khanda Phari, sword and shield; Undrimaria, a rat-killer, Aglavi, an incendiary; Andhare, a blind man; Kutramaria, a dog-killer; Kodu Dudh, sour milk; Khobra-gade, coconut-kernel; Bhajikhai, a vegetable eater, and so on.

A man must not marry in his own sept, but may take a wife from his mother's or grandmother's. A sister's son may marry a brother's daughter, but not *vice versa*. A girl who is seduced before marriage by a man of her own caste or any higher one can be married as if he were a widow, but if she has a child she must first get some other family to take it off her hands. The custom of *Lamjhana* or serving for a wife is recognised, and the expectant bridegroom will live with his father-in-law and work for him for a period varying from one to five years. The marriage ceremony follows the

customary Hindustani or Maratha ritual as the case may be. In Wardha the right foot of the bridegroom and the left one of the bride are placed together in a new basket, while they stand one on each side of the threshold. They throw five handfuls of coloured rice over each other, and each time, as he throws, the bridegroom presses his toe on the bride's foot; at the end he catches the girl by the finger and the marriage is complete. In the Central Provinces the Mothuria or caste priest officiates at weddings, but in *Berar*, Mr. Kitts states, the caste employ the Brahman Joshi or village priest. But as he will not come to their house they hold the wedding on the day that one takes place among the higher castes, and when the priest gives the signal the dividing cloth(Antarpat) between the couple is withdrawn, and the garments of the bride and bridegroom are knotted, while the bystanders clap their hands and pelt the couple with coloured grain. As the priest frequently takes up his position on the roof of the house for a wedding it is easy for the Mahars to see him. In Mandla some of the lower class of Brahmans will officiate at the weddings of Mahars. In Chhindwara the Mahars seat the bride and bridegroom in the frame of a loom for the ceremony; and they worship the hide of a cow or bullock filled with water. They drink together ceremoniously, a pot of liquor being placed on a folded cloth and all the guests sitting round it in a circle. An elder man then lays a new piece of cloth on the pot and worships it. He takes a cup of the liquor himself and hands round a cupful to every person present.

In Mandla at a wedding the barber comes and cuts the bride's nails, and the cuttings are rolled up in dough and placed in a little earthen pot beside the marriage-post. The bridegroom's nails and hair are similarly cut in his own house and placed in another vessel. A month or two after the wedding the two little pots are taken out and thrown into the *Nerbudda*. A wedding costs the bridegroom's party about Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 and the bride's about Rs. 25. They have no going-away ceremony, but the occasion of a girl's coming to maturity is known as Bolaan. She is kept apart for six days and given new clothes, and the caste people are invited to a meal.When a woman's husband dies the barber breaks her bangles, and her anklets are taken off and given to him as his perquisite. Her brother-in-law or other relative gives her a new white cloth, and she wears this at first, and afterwards white or coloured clothes at her pleasure. Her hair is not cut, and she may wear *patelas* or flat metal bangles on the forearm and armlets above the elbow, but other ornaments. A widow is under no obligation marry her first husband's younger brother; when marries a stranger he usually pays a sum of about 30 to her parents. When the price has been paid couple exchange a ring and a bangle respectively token of the agreement. When the woman is proce ing to her second husband's house, her old clot necklace and bangles are thrown into a river or stre and she is given new ones to wear. This is done to the first husband's spirit, which may be supposed hang about the clothes she wore as his wife, and wh they are thrown away or buried the exorcist mutt pell over them in order to lay the spirit. No music allowed at the marriage of a widow except the croc ed trumpet called *singara*. A bachelor who marries widow must first go through a mock ceremony with cottonplant, a sword or a ring. Divorce must be effe ted before the caste *panchayat* or committee, and i divorced woman marries again, her first husband p forms funeral and mourning ceremonies as if she we dead. In Gujarat the practice is much more lax a "divorce can be obtained almost to an indefinite exte Before they finally settle down to wedded life m couples have more than once changed their partners But here also before the change takes place, the must be a formal divorce recognised by the caste.

6. *Funeral rites.*—The caste either burn or bu the dead and observe mourning for three days, havi their houses whitewashed and their faces shaved. C the tenth day they give a feast to the caste-fellow On the Akshay Tritia and the 30th day of Kunw (September) they offer rice and cakes to the crov in the names of their ancestors. In Berar Mr. Kit writes : "If a Mahar's child has died, he will on t third day place bread on the grave; if an infant, mil if an adult, on the tenth day, with five pice in one han and five betel-leaves in the other, he goes into th river, dips himself five times and throws these thing away; he then places five lighted lamps on the tom and after these simple ceremonies gets himself shave as though he were an orthodox Hindu ".

7. *Child birth.*—In Mandla the mother is seclude at childbirth in a separate house if one is availabl and if not they fence in part of the veranda for her us with bamboo screens. After the birth the mother mu remain impure until the barber comes and colours he toe-nails and draws a line round her feet with re *mahur* powder. This is indispensable, and if the barbe

is not immediately available she mus wait until his services can be obtained. When the naval-string drops it is buried in the place on which the mother sat while giving birth, and when this has been done the purification may be effected. The Dhobi is then called to wash the clothes of the houseol, and their earthen pots are thrown away. The head of the new-born child is shaved clean, as the birth-hair is considered to be impure, and the hair is wrapped up in dough and thrown into a river.

8. *Names.*—A child is named on the seventh or twelfth day after its birth, the name being chosen by the Mohturia or caste headman. The ordinary Hindu names of deities for men and sacred rivers or pious and faithful wives for women are employed; instances of the latter being Ganga, Godavari, Jamuna, Sita, Laxmi and Radha. Opprobrious names are sometimes given to avert ill-luck, as Damdya (purchased for eight cowries), Kauria (a cowrie), Bhikaria (a begger), Ghusia (from *ghus*, a mallet for stamping earth), Harchatt (refuse), Akali (born in famine-time), Langra (lame), Lula (having an arm useless); or the name of another low caste is given, as Bhangi (sweeper), Domari (Dom sweeper), Chamra (tanner), Basori (basket-maker). Not infrequently children are named after the month or day when they were born, as Pusau, born in Pus (December), Chaitu, born in Chait (March) Manglu (born on Tuesday), Buddhi (born on Wednesday), Sukka (born on Friday), Sanichra (born on Saturday). One boy was called Mulua or 'Sold' (*mol-dena*). His mother had no other children, so sold him for one pice (farthing) to a Gond woman. After five or six months, as he did not get fat, his name was changed to Jhuma or 'lean', probably as an additional means of averting ill-luck. Another boy was named Ghurka, from the noise he made when being suckled. A child born in the absence of its father is called Sonwa, or one born in an empty house.

9. *Religion.*—The great body of the caste worship the ordinary deities Devi, Hanuman, Dulha Deo, and others, though of course they are not allowed to enter Hindu temples. They principally observe the Holi and Dasahra festivals and the days of the new and full moon. On the festival of Nag-Panchmi they make an image of a snake with flour and sugar and eat it. At the sacred Ambala tank at Ramtek the Mahars have a special bathing-ghat set apart for them, and they may enter the citadel and go as far as the lowest step leading up to the temples; here they worship the god and think that he accepts their offerings. They are thus permitted to traverse the outer enclosures of the citadel, which are also sacred. In Wardha the Mahars may not touch the shrines of Mahadeo, but must stand before them with their hands joined. They may sometimes deposit offerings with their own hands on those of Bhimsen, originally a Gond god, and Mata Devi, the goddess of small-pox.

10. *Adoption of foreign religion.*—In Berar and Bombay the Mahars have some curious forms of belief "Of the confusion which obtains in the Mahar theogony the names of six of their gods will afford a striking example. While some Mahars worship Vithoba, the god of Pandharpur, others revere Varuna's twin sons, Meghoni and Deghoni, and his four messengers, Gabriel, Azrael, Michael, and Anadin, all of whom they say hail from Pandharpur". The names of archangels thus mixed up with Hindu deities may most probably have been obtained from the Muhammadans, as they include Azrael," but in Gujarat their religion appears to have been borrowed from Christiaity. "The Karia Dhedas have some rather remarkable beliefs. In the Satya Yug the Dhedas say they were called Satyas; in the Dvapar Yug they were called Meghas, in the Treta Yug, Elias; and in the Kali Yug Dhedas. The name Elias came, they say, from a prophet Elia and of him their religious men have vague stories; some of them especially about a famine that lasted for three years and a half, easily fitting into the accounts of Elijah in the Jewish Scripts res. They have also prophecies of a high future in store for their tribe. The king or leader of the new era, kuyam Rai by name, will marry a Dheda woman and will raise the caste to the position of Brahmans. They hold on religious meetings or *Ochhavas*, and at these with great excitement sing songs full of hope of the good things in store for them. When a man wishes to hold an *Ochhava* he invites the whole caste, and beginning about eight in the evening they often spend the night in singing. Except perhaps for a few sweetmeats there is no eating or drinking, and the excitement is altogether religious and musical. The singers are chiefly religious Dhedas or Bhagats, and the people join in a refrain '*Avore Kuyam Rai Raja*, Oh' come Kuyam Rai, our king". It seems that the attraction which outside faiths exercise on the Mahar is the hope held out of ameliorating the social degradation under which they labour, itself an

outcome of the Hindu theory of caste. Hence they turn to Islam or to what is possibly a degraded version of the Christian story, because these religions do not recognise caste, and hold out a promise to the Mahar of equality with his co-religionists, and in the case of Christianity of a recompense in the world to come for the sufferings which he has to endure in this one. Similarly, the Mahars are the warmest adherents of the Muhammadan saint Sheikh Farid, and flock to the fairs held in his honour at Girar in Wardha and Partapgarh in Bhandara, where he is supposed to have slain a couple of gaints. In Berar also they revere Muhanmmadan tombs. The remains of the Muhammadan fort and tank on Pimpardol hill in Jalgaon taluk are now one of the sacred places of the Mahars, though to the Muhammadans they have no religious associations. Even at present Mahars are inclined to adopt Islam, and a case was recently reported when a body of twenty of them set out to do so, but turned back on being told that they would not be admitted to the mosque. A large proportion of the Mahars are also adherents of the Kabirpanthi sect, one of the main tenets of whose founder was the abolition of caste. And it is from the same point of view that Christianity appeals to them, enabling European missionaries to draw a large number of converts from this caste. But even the Hindu attitude towards the Mahars is not one of unmixed intolerance. Once in three or four years in the southern Districts, the Panwars, Mahars, Pankas and other castes celebrate the worship of Narayan Deo or Vishnu, the officiating priest being a Mahar. Members of all castes come to the Panwar's house at night for the ceremony, and a vessel of water is placed at the door in which they wash their feet and hands as they enter; and when inside they are all considered to be equal, and they sit in a line and eat the same food, and bind wreaths of flowers round their heads. After the cock crows the equality of status is ended, and no one who goes out of the house can enter again. At present also many educated Brahmans recognise fully the social evils resulting from the degraded position of the Mahars, and are doing their best to remove the caste prejudices against them.

11. *Superstitions.*—They have various spells to cure a man possessed of an evil spirit, or stung by a snake or scorpion, or likely to be in danger from tigers or wild bears; and in the Morsi taluk of Berar it is stated that they so greatly fear the effect of an enemy writing their name on a piece of paper and tying it to a sweeper's broom that the threat to do his can be used with great effect by their creditors. To drive out the evil eye they make a small human mage of powdered turmeric and throw it into boiled water, mentioning as they do so the names of any persons whom they suspect of having cast the evil upon them. Then the pot of water is taken out at midnight of a Wednesday or a Sunday and placed upside down on some cross-roads with a shoe over it, and the sufferer should be cured. Their belief about the sun and moon is that an old woman had two sons who were invited by the gods to dinner. Before they left she said to them that as they were going out there would be no one to cook, so they must remember to bring back something for her. The elder brother forgot what his mother had said and took nothing away with him; but the younger remembered her and brought back something from the feast. So when they came back the old woman cursed the elder brother and said that as he had forgotten her he should be the sun and scorch and dry up all vegetation with his beams; but the younger brother should be the moon and make the world cool and pleasant at night. The story is so puerile that it is only worth reproduction as a specimen of the level of a Mahar's intelligence. The belief in evil spirits appears to be on the decline as a result of education and accumulated experience. Mr. C. Brown states that in Malkapur of Berar the Mahars say that there are no wandering spirits in the hills by night of such a nature that people need fear them. There are only tiny *pari* or fairies, small creatures in human form, but with the power of changing their appearance, who do no harm to any one.

12. *Social rules.*—When an outsider is to be received into the community all the hair on his face is shaved, being wetted with the urine of a boy belonging to the group to which he seeks admission. Mahars will eat all kinds of food including the flesh of crocodiles and rats, but some of them abstain from beef. There is nothing peculiar in their dress except that the men wear a black woollen thread round their necks. The women may be recognised by their bold carriage, the absence of noserings and the large irregular dabs of vermilion on the forehead. Mahar women do not, as a rule, wear the *choli* or breast-cloth. An unmarried girl does not put on vermillion nor draw her cloth over her head. Women must be tattooed with dots on the face, representations of scorpions, flowers and snakes on the arms and legs and some dots to represent flies on the hands. It is the custom for a girl's father

or mother or father-in-law to have her tattooed in one place on the hand or arm immediately on her marriage. Then when girls are sitting together they will show this mark and say 'My mother or father-in-law had this done', as the case may be. Afterwards if a woman so desires she gets herself tattooed on her other limbs. If an unmarried girl or widow becomes with child by a man of the Mahar caste or any higher one she is subjected after delivery to a semblance of the purification by fire known as Agnikasht. She is taken to the bank of a river and there five stalks of juari are placed round her and burnt. Having fasted all day, at night she gives a feast to the castemen and eats with them. If she offends with a man of lower caste she is finally expelled. Temporary exclusion from caste is imposed for taking food or drink from the hands of a Mang or Chamar or for being imprisoned in jail, or on a Mahar man if he lives with a woman of any higher caste; the penalty being the shaving of a man's face or cutting off a lock of a woman's hair, together with a feast to the caste. In the last case it is said that the man is not readmitted until he has put the woman away. If a man touches a dead dog, cat, pony or donkey, he has to be shaved and give a feast to the caste. And if a dog or cat dies in his house, or a litter of puppies or kittens is born, the house is considered to be defiled; all the earthen pots must be thrown away, the whole house washed and cleaned and a caste feast given. The most solemn oath of a Mahar is by a cat or dog and in Yeotmal by a black dog. In Berar, the same paper states, the pig is the only animal regarded as unclean, and they must on no account touch it. This is probably owing to Muhammadan influence. The worst social sin which a Mahar can commit is to get vermin in a wound, which is known as Deogan or being smitten by God. While the affliction continues he is quite ostracised, no one going to his house or giving him food or water; and when it is cured the Mahars of ten or twelve surrounding villages assemble and he must give a feast to the whole community. The reason for this calamity being looked upon with such peculiar abhorrence is obscure, but the feeling about it is general among Hindus.

13. *Social subjection.*—The social position of the Mahars is one of distressing degradation. Their touch is considered to defile and they live in a quarter by themselves outside the village. They usually have a separate well assigned to them from which to draw water, and if the village has only one well the Mahars and Hindus take water from differest sides of it. Mahar boys were not until recently allowed to attend school with Hindu boys, and when they could not be refused admission to Government schools, they were allotted a small corner of the veranda and separately taught. When Dher boys were first received into the Chanda High School a mutiny took place and the school was boycotted for some time. The people say, 'Mahar sarva jaticha bahar', or 'The Mahar is outside all castes'. Having a bad name, they are also given unwarrantably a bad character; and '*Mahar jaticha*' is a phrase used for a man with no moral or kindly feelings. But in theory at least, as confirming to Hinduism, they were supposed to be better than Muhammadans and other unbelievers, as shown by the following story from the Rasmala; A Muhmmadan sovereign asked his Hindu minister which was the lowest caste. The minister begged for leisure to consider his reply and, having obtained it, went to where the Dhedas lived and said to them ; "You have given offence to the Padishah. It is his intention to deprive you of caste and make you Muhammadans. The Dhedas, in the greatest terror, pushed off in a body to the sovereign's place, and standing at a respectful distance shouted at the top of their lungs; "If we've offended your majesty, punish us in some other way than that. Beat us, fine us, hang us if you like, but don't make us Muhammadans." The Padishah smiled, and turning to his minister who sat by him affecting to hear nothing, said, 'So the lowest caste is that to which I belong.' But of course this cannot be said to represent the general view of the position of Muhammadans in Hindu eyes; they, like the English, are regarded as distinguished foreigners, who if they consented to be proselytised would probably in time become Brahmans or at least Rajputs. A repartee of a Mahar to a Brahman abusing him is; The Brahman, '*Jare Maharya*' or '*Avaunt, ye Mahar*'; the Mahar, '*Kona diushi nein tumchi goburya*' or 'Some day I shall carry cow dung cakes for you (at his funeral);' as in the Maratha Districts the Mahar is commonly engaged for carrying fuel to the funeral pyre. Under native rule the Mahar was subjected to painful degradations. He might not spit on the ground lest a Hindu should be polluted by touching it with his foot, but had to hang an earthen pot round his neck to hold his spittle. He was made to drag a thorny branch with him to brush out his footsteps, and when a Brahman came by had to lie at a distance on his face lest his shadow might fall on the Brahman.

In Gujarat they were not allowed to tuck up the loin-cloth but had to trail it along the ground. Even quite recently in Bombay a Mahar was not allowed to talk loudly in the street while a well-to-do Brahman or his wife was dining in one of the houses. In the reigin of Sidhraj, the great Solanki Raja of Gujarat, the Dhers were for a time at any rate freed from such disabilities by the sacrifice of one of their number. The great tank at Anhilvada Patan in Gujarat had been built by the Ods (navvies), but Sidhraj desired Jusma Odni, one of their wives, and sought to possess her. But the Ods fled with her and when he pursued her she plunged a dagger into her stomach, cursing Sidhraj and saying that his tank should never hold water. The Raja, returning to Anhilvada, found the tank dry, and asked his minister what should be done so that water might remain in the tank. The Pardhan, after consulting the astrologers, said that if a man's life were sacrificed the curse might be removed. At that time the Dhers or out castes were compelled to live at a distance from the towns; they wore untwisted cotton round their heads and a stag's horn as a mark hanging from their waists so that people might be able to avoid touching them. The Raja commanded that a Dher named Mayo should be beheaded in the tank that water might remain. Mayo died, singing the praises of Vishnu, and the water after that began to remain in the tank. At the time of his death Mayo had begged as a reward for his sacrifice that the Dhers should not in future be compelled to live at a distance from the towns nor wear a distinctive dress. The Raja assented and these privileges were afterwards permitted to the Dhers for the sake of Mayo.

14. *Their position improving.*—From the painful state of degradation described above the Mahars are gradually being rescued by the levelling and liberalising tendency of British rule, which must be to these depressed classes an untold blessing. With the right of acquiring property they have begun to assert themselves, and the extension of railways more especially has a great effect in abolishing caste distinctions. The Brahman who cannot afford a second-class fare must either not travel or take the risk of rubbing shoulders with a Mahar in a third-class carriage, and if he chooses to consider himself defiled will have to go hungry and thirsty until he gets the opportunity of bathing at his journey's end. The observances of the rules of impurity thus become so irksome that they are gradually falling into abeyance.

15. *Occupation.*—The principal occupations of the Mahars are the weaving of coarse country cloth and general labour. They formerly spun their own yarn, and their fabrics were preferred by the cultivators for their durability. But practically all thread is now bought from the mills; and the weaving industry is also in a depressed condition. Many Mahars have now taken to working in the mills, and earn better wages than they could at home. In Bombay a number of them are employed as police constables. They are usually the village watchmen of the Maratha Districts, and in this capacity were remunerated by contributions of grain from the tenants, the hides and flesh of animals dying in the village, and plots of rent-free land. For these have now been submitted in the Central Provinces a cash payment has been fixed by the Government. In Berar the corresponding official is known as the Kamdar Mahar. Mr. Kitts writes of him; As fourth *balutedar* on the village establishment the Mahar holds a post of great importance to himself and convenience to the village. To the patel (headman), patwari and big men of the village he acts often as a personal servant and errand-runner; for a smaller cultivator he will also at times carry a torch or act as escort. He had formerly to clean the horses of travellers, and was also obliged, if required, to carry their baggage. For the services which he thus renders as *pandhewar* the Mahar receives from the cultivators certain grain-dues. When the cut juari is lying in the field, the Mahars go round and beg for a measure of the ears (*bhik payali*). But the regular payment is made when the grain has been threshed. Another duty performed by the Mahar is the removal of the carcasses of dead animals. The flesh is eaten and the skin retained as wage for the work. The patel and his relatives, however, usually claim to have the skins of their own animals returned; and in some places where half the agriculturists of the village claim kinship with the patel the Mahars feel and resent the loss. A third duty is the opening of grain-pits, the noxious gas from which sometimes produces asphyxia. For this the Mahars receive the tainted grain. They also get the cloths from a corpse which is laid on the pyre, and the pieces of the burnt wood which remain when the body has been consumed. Recent observations in the Nagpur country show that the position of the Mahars is improving. In Nagpur it is stated; "Looked down upon as outcaste by the Hindus they are hampered by no sense of dignity or family prejudice. They are fond of drink

but are also hard workers. They turn their hands to anything and everything, but the great majority are agricultural labourers. At present the rural Mahar is in the background. If there is only one well in the village he may not use it, but has to get his water where he can. His sons are consigned to a corner in the village school, and the schoolmaster, if not superior to caste prejudices, discourages their attendance. Nevertheless, Mahars will not remain for years downtrodden in this fashion, and are already pushing themselves up from this state of degradation. In some places they have combined to dig wells, and in Nagpur have opened a school for members of their own community. Occasionally a Mahar is the most prosperous man in the village. Several of them are money lenders in a small way and a few are malguzars." Similarly in Bhandara Mr. Napier writes that a new class of small creditors has arisen from the Mahar caste. These people have given up drinking, and lead an abstemious life, wishing to raise themselves in social estimation. Twenty or more village kotwars were found to be carrying on money-lending transactions on a small scale, and in addition many of the Mahars in towns were exceedingly well off.

# MANG

**(SCHEDULED CASTE)**

# MANG

## Name, Identity, Origin and History

Mang, a Scheduled Caste in Andhra Pradesh, is a class of Maharashtra leather workers traditionally resembling in several respects the Madigas of Andhra districts. At present their traditional occupation has been given up almost completely and they earn their livelihood by Agricultural labour generally. 'Mang' is supposed to be a Marathi or Urdu term for Madiga. According to case studies the Mangs trace their origin to Marathwada and reported to have migrated to neighbouring Telangana districts of Andhra Pradesh State, long back. They are found only in the Telangana districts of Andhra Pradesh. Even among the Telangana districts, they are predominantly settled in the Nizamabad district which is adjacent to Nanded district of Maharashtra State. Making of leather goods like water-drawing leather-buckets locally called '*Kapila Bana*', chappals etc., which was once their main occupation has been replaced gradually by agricultural labour. Besides Andhra Pradesh, where the population of this caste is 11,456 persons as per the 1961 Census it is declared as Scheduled Caste in Gujarat (941 persons), Maharashtra (27,706 persons), Madhya Pradesh (9,753 persons), Mysore (28,901 persons), Orissa (156 persons), and Rajasthan (1 person). The status of Mang is different in different Census. It was grouped under 'Depressed Classes' in 1921 Census (Hyderabad State, Part 1, p. 231). In 1931 Census it was shown under Adi-Hindus (Hyderabad State, Part 1, p. 260). The same was included under Harijan in 1941 Census (Hyderabad State, Part 1, p. 220). In 1951 it was declared as Scheduled Caste according to the President's Order of 1950. It retained the same status according to the President's Modification Order of 1956.

According to R. E. Enthoven

"Mang known as Madigas in the Kanarese districts and as Mangelas in Gujarat are found in large numbers in the Deccan and Karnatak, a small number being recorded in Kanara and Gujarat. The tribe is described in Sanskrit literature by the name Matang, of which Mang is a corrupted form. In the Kanarese districts, the Madigas are often addressed as Mangs and *vice versa*" (R. E. Enthoven, Vol. II, p. 434).

It is quite so even in Telengana area as is found in Bichkunda of Madnur taluk of Nizamabad district, from case studies conducted there during February, 1963 that Mangs are popularly known as Madigas only. Even the Mangs themselves say that they are equivalent to Madigas of Andhra area and that they are known as Mangs in these parts. R. E. Enthoven records regarding their origin,

"it is held by them that they are descended from Jambarishi, who had seven sons, one of whom named Karkamuni was offered by him to the earth. Karkamuni had two sons, Madarchanaya and Niluchandaya. The former was sentenced to be a Mahar by Shankar for having eaten his cow and the letter to be a Mang for having gone before Shankar with his body sprinkled with the blood of the cow." (Vol. II, p. 434)

The above account of their origin given by R. E. Enthoven was confirmed by the elders of this community who were contacted during the field survey.

The report from the District Statistical Officer, Adilabad, furnished the following account of their origin. Mangs do not know definitely the meaning of their caste. However, it is believed that there was a Jam Rushi. He had a son named Nulkuchandia. From Nulkuchandia was born Matang Rushi and Mangs are the children of Matang Rushi and from Matang the word Mang has come. The Mangs at Bichkunda village do not know anything about Matang Rushi. Syed Siraj-Ul-Hassan has reported.

"Mang Raut a servile caste of Marathwada regarding whose origin very little is known. ...Ancient authorities call them 'Shwapach' (dog-eaters) and make them the descendents of Chandala father and Meda mother. They correspond to the Madigas of Telangana and both are probably the branches of the same parent stock, separated from each other by reason of their occupying different localities. Like the Mahars they are predial slaves and claim par of the village 'baluta'." (Hassan, Vol. 1, p. 458).

This is not known to the Mangs of surveyed households. They neither eat the meat of dogs, nor do they claim the part of village *baluta* at present.

## Clan, Kinship and other Analogous Divisions

According to R. E. Enthoven, the Mangs have three main territorial divisions *viz.* Maratha Mangs, known as Mangs, Kanarese Mangs or Madigas and Gujarat Mangs or Mangelas who neither eat together nor inter-marry. These three territorial divisions are however not known to the informants at Bichkunda village. According to Hassan the caste is divided into the following endogamous divisions, (1) Khakare, (2) Telangi Mangs, (3) Pendhari or

Mang Garodi, (4) Dhale, (5) Dasori, (6) Bavise, (7) Bedar, (8) Holder, (Vol. 1, p. 458). The above sub-divisions are however not known to the Mangs of the twelve households surveyed at Bichkunda. They say that they do not have any sub-divisions at all. According to R. E. Enthoven, Mangs have the following endogamous divisions (1)Assal Mangs, Gastis, Marathas or Mangs proper, (2) Bale, (3) Burud, (4) Chapalsande, (5) Dabkar, (6) Desur, (7) Dhakalvar, Dakalvar, Dakkalgar or Vajantri Mangs, (8) Dhor, (9) Ghadshi, (10) Holge or Holar, (11) Jingar, (12) Jiraits, (13) Kakar, (14) Kokalvar, (15) Manbhav, (16) Mang Garudi or Mahaisbhadre, (17) Mochi, (18) Nade, Nudar or Khotra, (19) Parit, (20) Pend or Ped, (21) Shivate, Shevte, Valar or Pathantanas, (22) Telangi, (23) Tokarphode, (24) Zare, (25) Musalman. None of these endogamous divisions are found in the place where case studies have been conducted nor are the Mangs of Bichkunda village aware of the existence of such divisions among them. Out of the above 25 sub-divisions 'Mang Garudis' are found to be separate caste and they have no relations with the Mang. Hassan has also stated that the exogamous sections of the caste are numerous and that some of them are :

| | |
|---|---|
| Bhalerao, | Gaikawad, |
| Londhe, | Balawante, |
| Ubale, | Sonatakke, |
| Bujone, | Paradhe, |
| Ingale, | Shikare, |
| Bule, | Are, |
| Bujawane, | Gawar, and |
| Sede, | Jadhava |

According to field study, the caste is divided into numerous exogamous sections are noted by Hassan. Marriage within the same section of the caste is prohibited. The twelve surveyed households belong to 'Goni' surname. Another exogamous section mentioned by them is Nurlka. Figures 1 to 9 show a few Mangs.

**Distribution and Population Trend**

The population figures of Mangs are available for previous decades from 1881 to 1931. But those figures are not furnished here except for 1911 and 1921 since the then Hyderabad State included districts which form part of Maharashtra and Mysore State now. The district-wise population figures of this caste are not available for the censues of 1881, 1891 1901 and 1931. During the 1891 census, Mang was grouped under 'D' (which indicates she Artisan and village menial), (Census of India 1891, Vol. XXIII, His Highness the Nizams Dominion, Part II, P. 163). During 1901 it was shown under Mala (Census of India, 1901, Vol. XXII, Hyderabad, P. 293). Of the total 259,232 Mangs in 1901 only 264 (172 Males and 92 females) Mangs were found in the Railways of Telangana districts. In the 1911 Census there were 340,959 Mangs. Of them, 22,454 Mangs were found in Telangana districts and the remaining 318,505 Mangs are found in the districts of Aurangabad, Bhir, Nander, Parbhani and Osmanabad (of present Maharashtra) and Gulbarga, Raichur and Bidar (of present Mysore). During 1921 Census the total number of Mangs was 330,841 and in Telangana districts, there were only 4,155 Mangs. The distribution of Mangs in Telangana districts for 1911 and 1921 Censuses is as follows :

STATEMENT I

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF MANG IN TELANGANA DISTRICTS OF HYDERABAD STATE DURING 1911 AND 1921 CENSUSES

| S. No. | Particulars | 1911 | | 1921 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| 1 | Hyderabad | 1,007 | 1,109 | 402 | 1,870 |
| 2 | Atraf-i-Balda | 38 | 25 | 893 | 990 |
| 3 | Warangal | 47 | 14 | ... | ... |
| 4 | Karimnagar | .. | .. | ... | ... |
| 5 | Adilabad | 10,014 | 9,126 | ... | .. |
| 6 | Medak | 521 | 433 | ... | ... |
| 7 | Nizamabad | 43 | 29 | ... | ... |
| 8 | Mahbubnagar | .. | ... | ... | ... |
| 9 | Nalgonda | 30 | 18 | ... | ... |
| | Total | 11,700 | 10,754 | 1,295 | 2,860 |

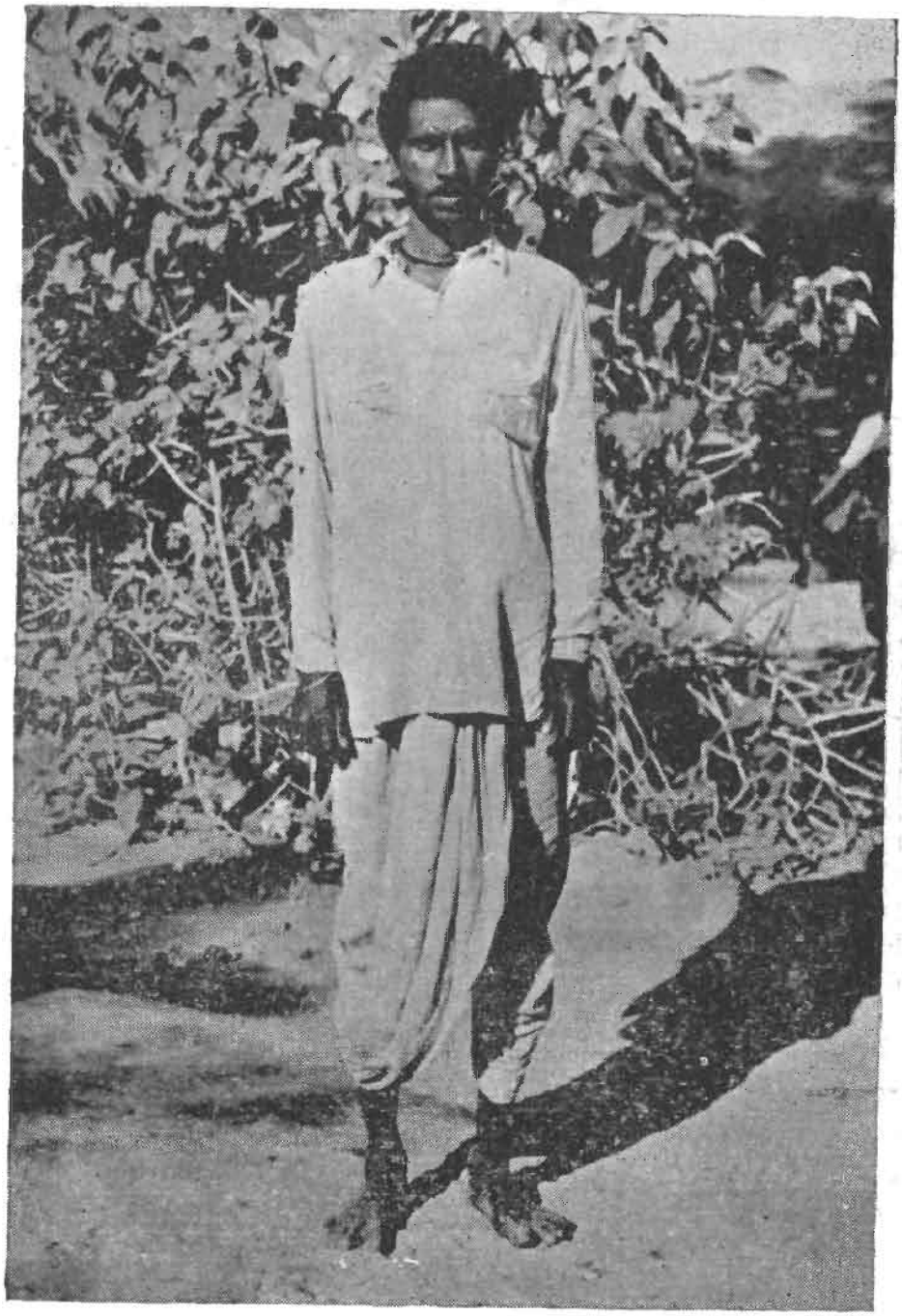


Fig. 1 A Mang male



Fig. 2 A Mang male - Front



Fig. 3 A Mang male - Profile

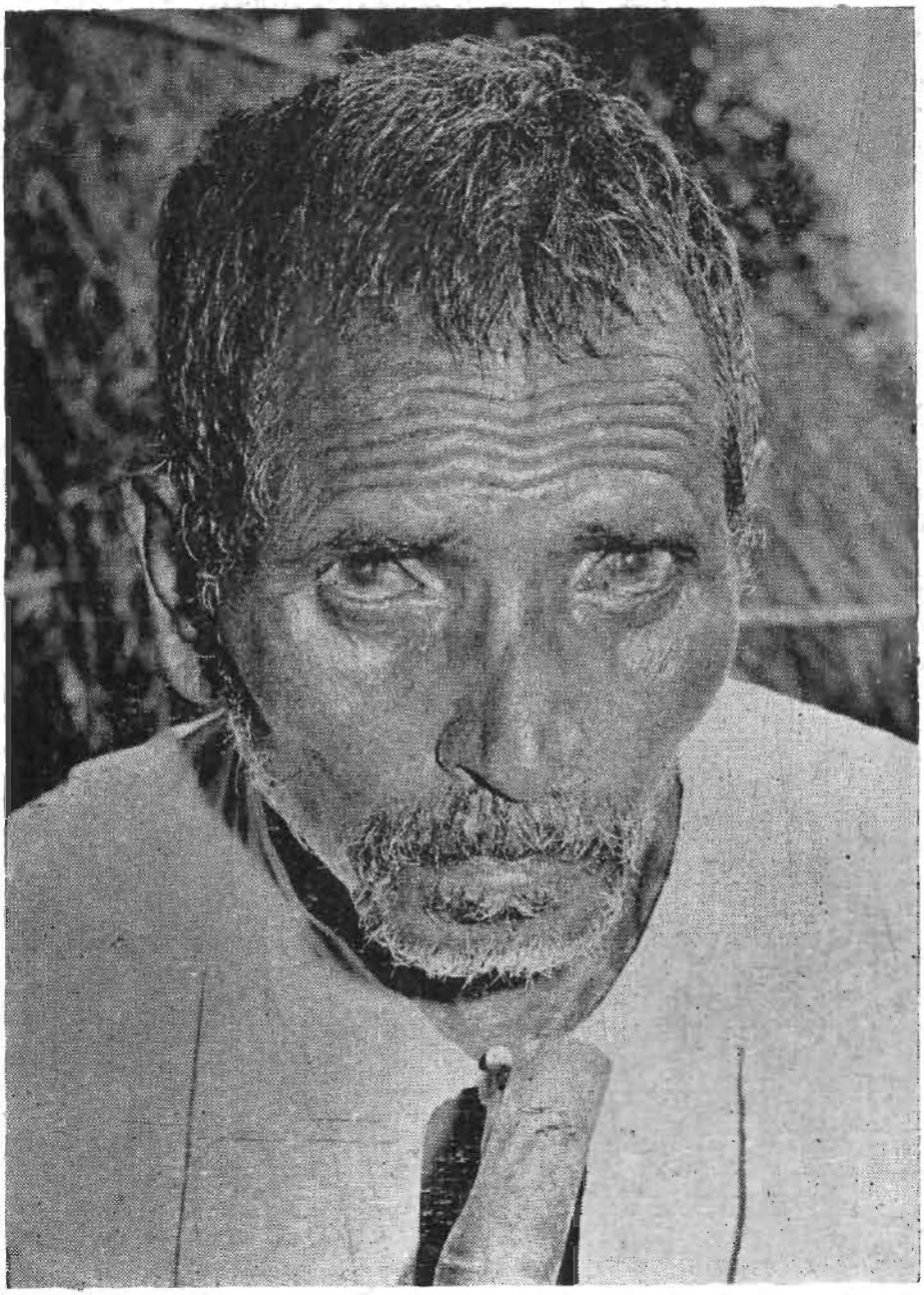


Fig. 4 An old man aged 60 years

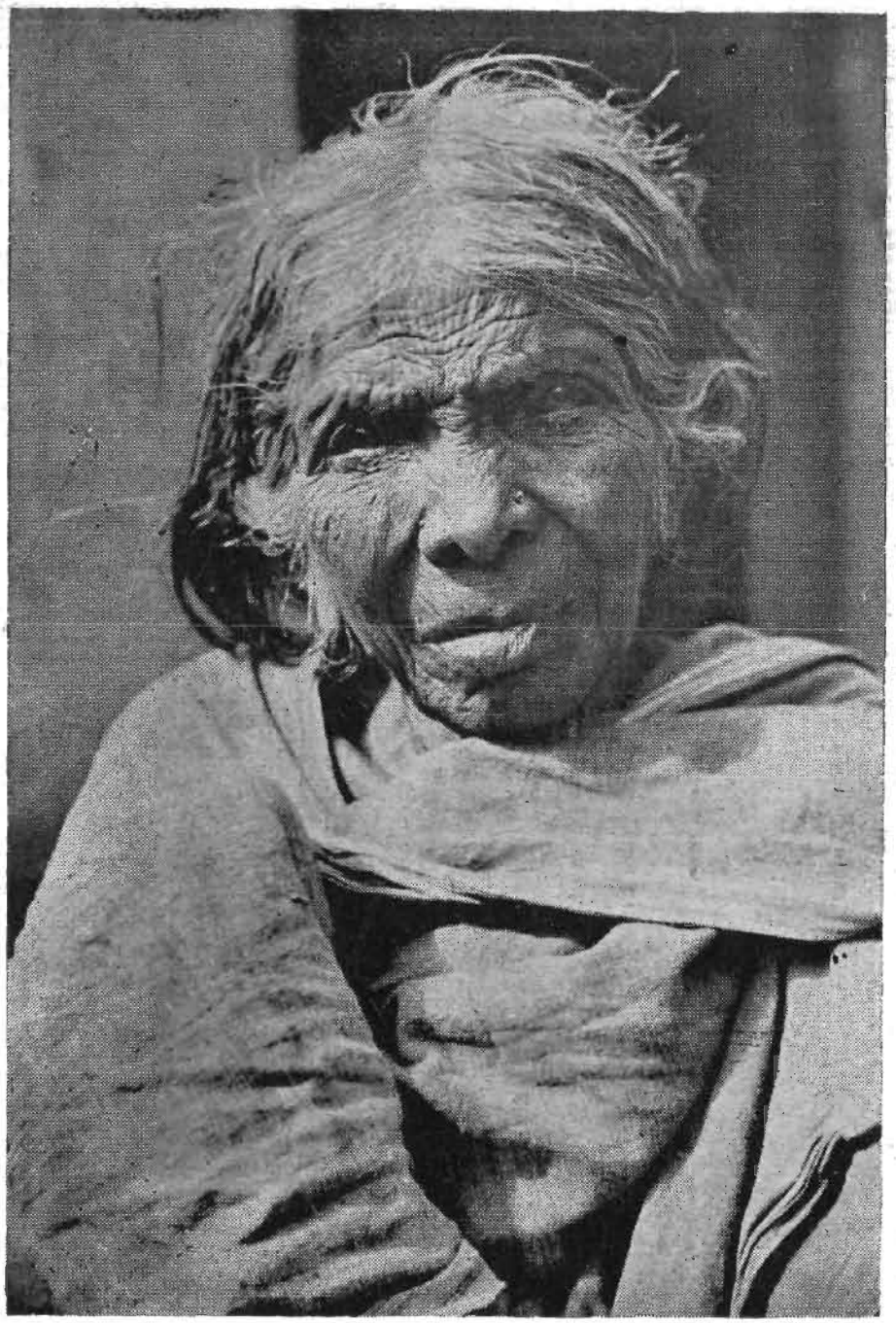


Fig. 5 An old woman aged 90 years

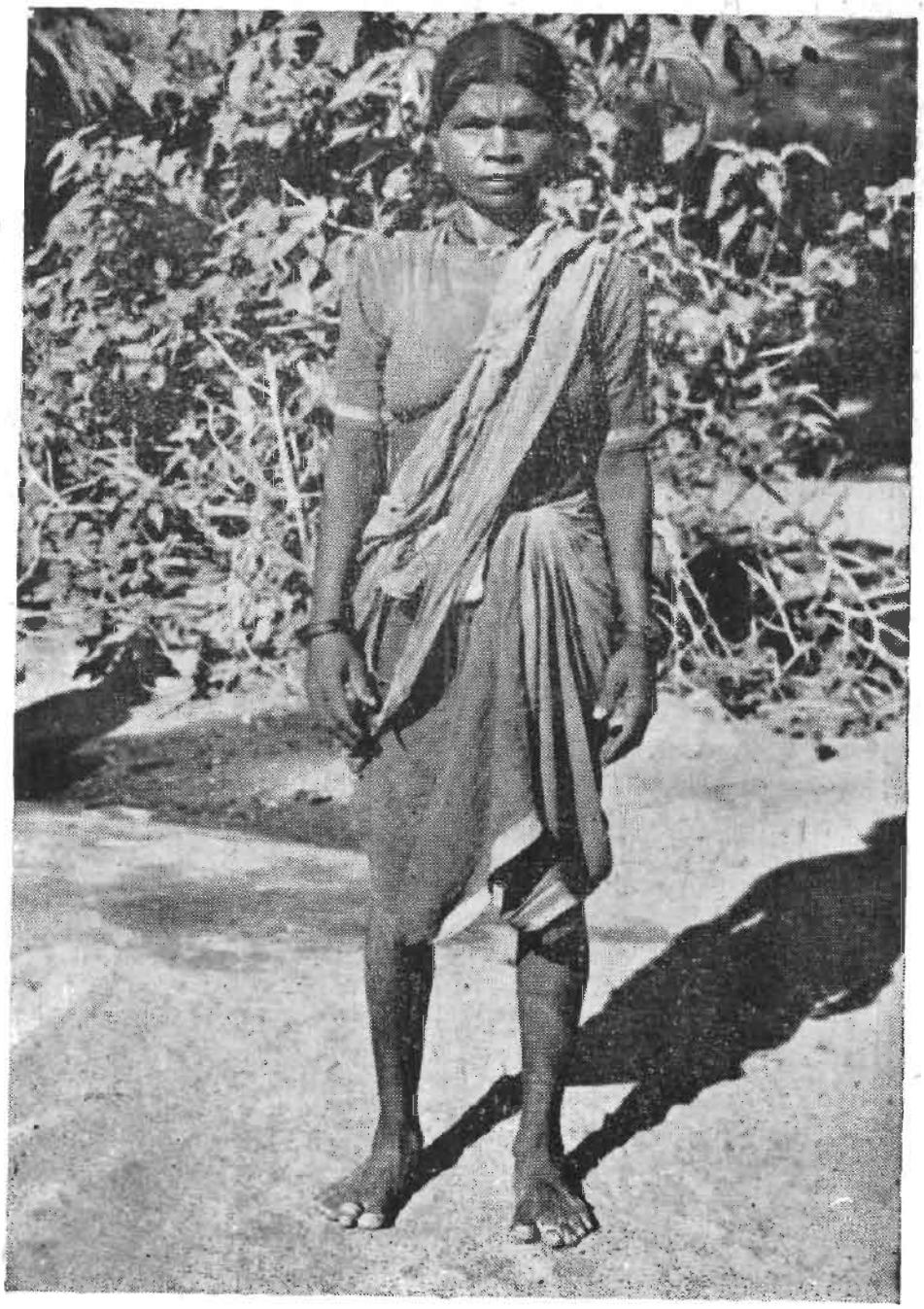


Fig. 6 A middle aged female from Mang community

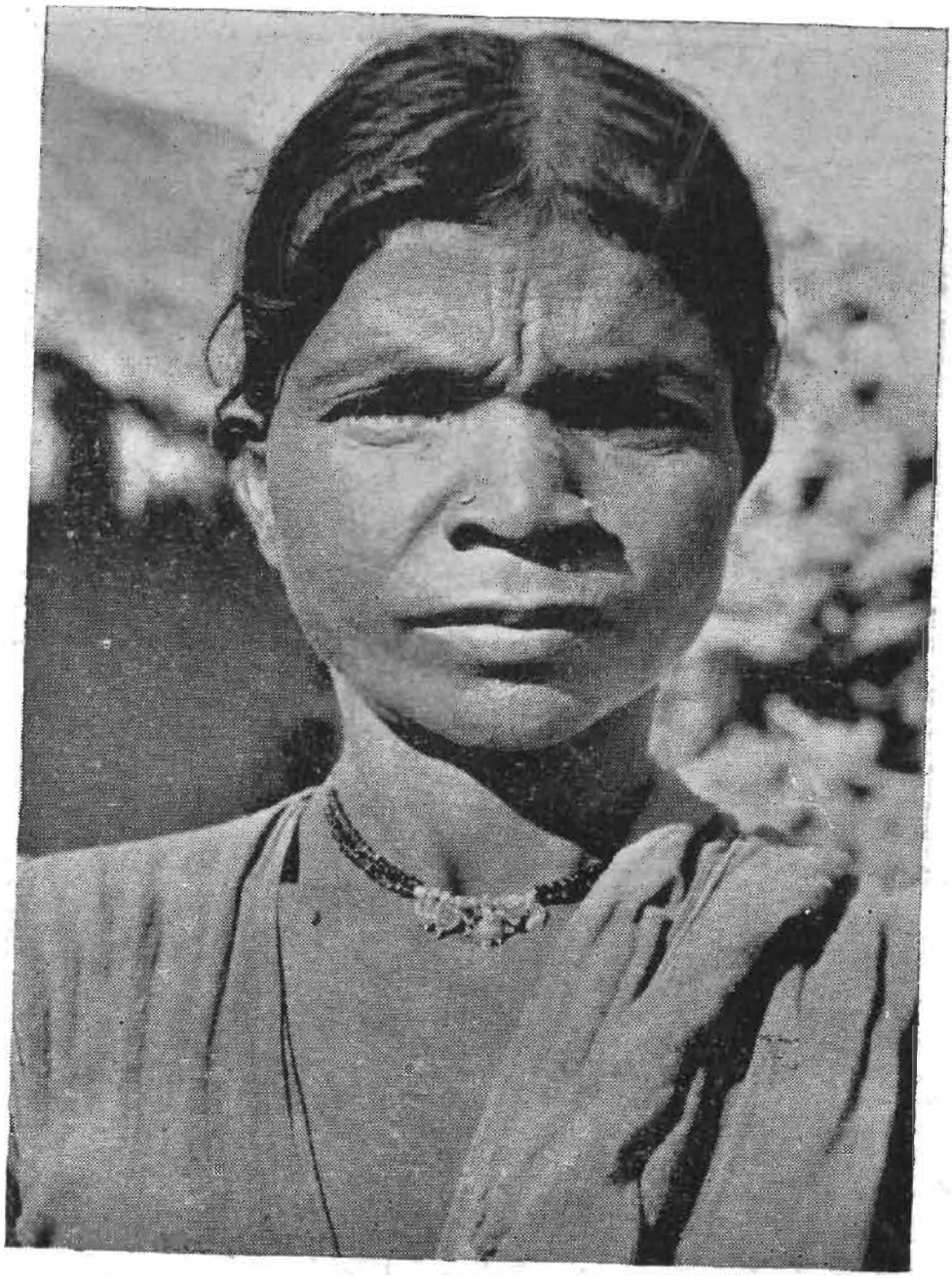


Fig. 7 A Mang female - Front

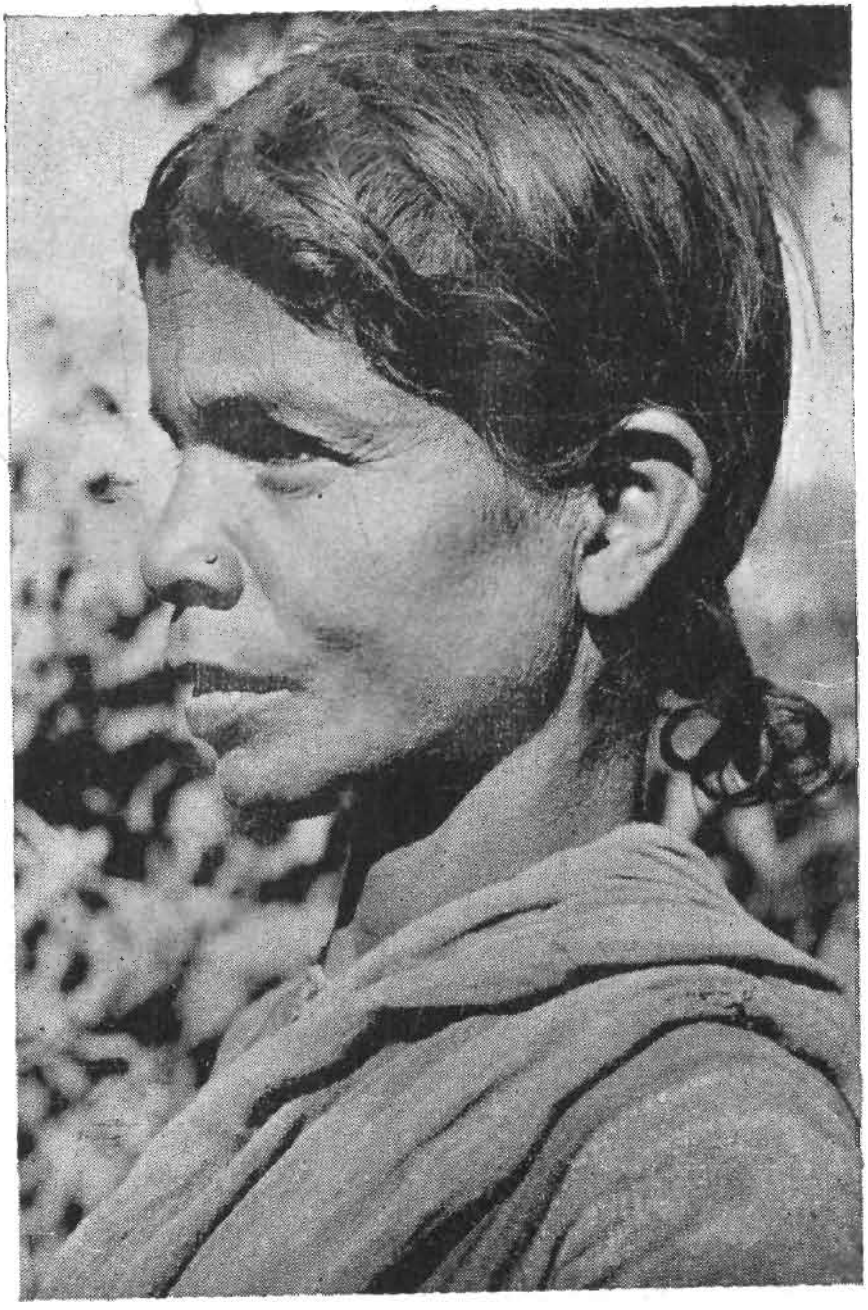


Fig. 8 A Mang female - Profile

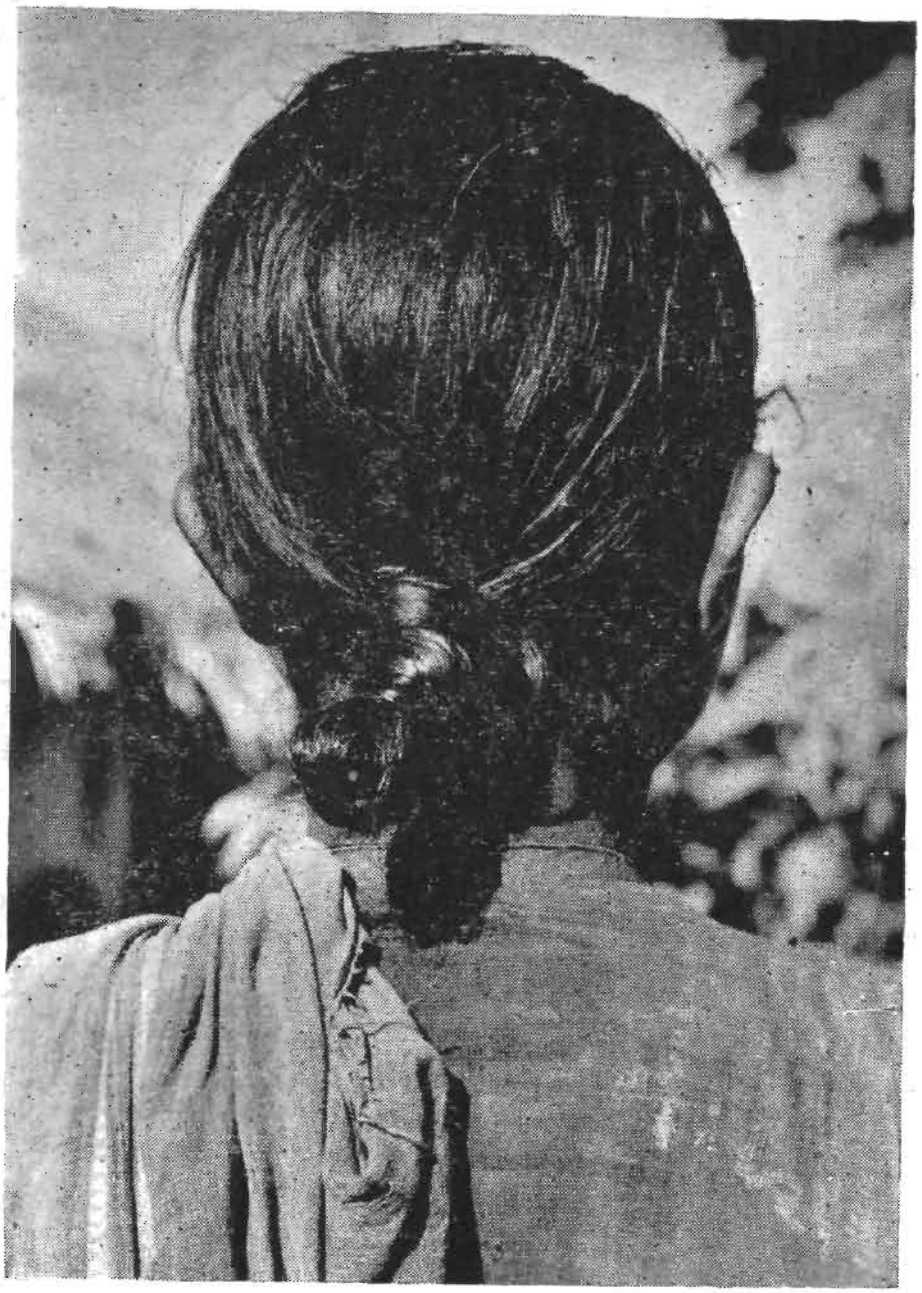


Fig. 9 A Mang female - Back

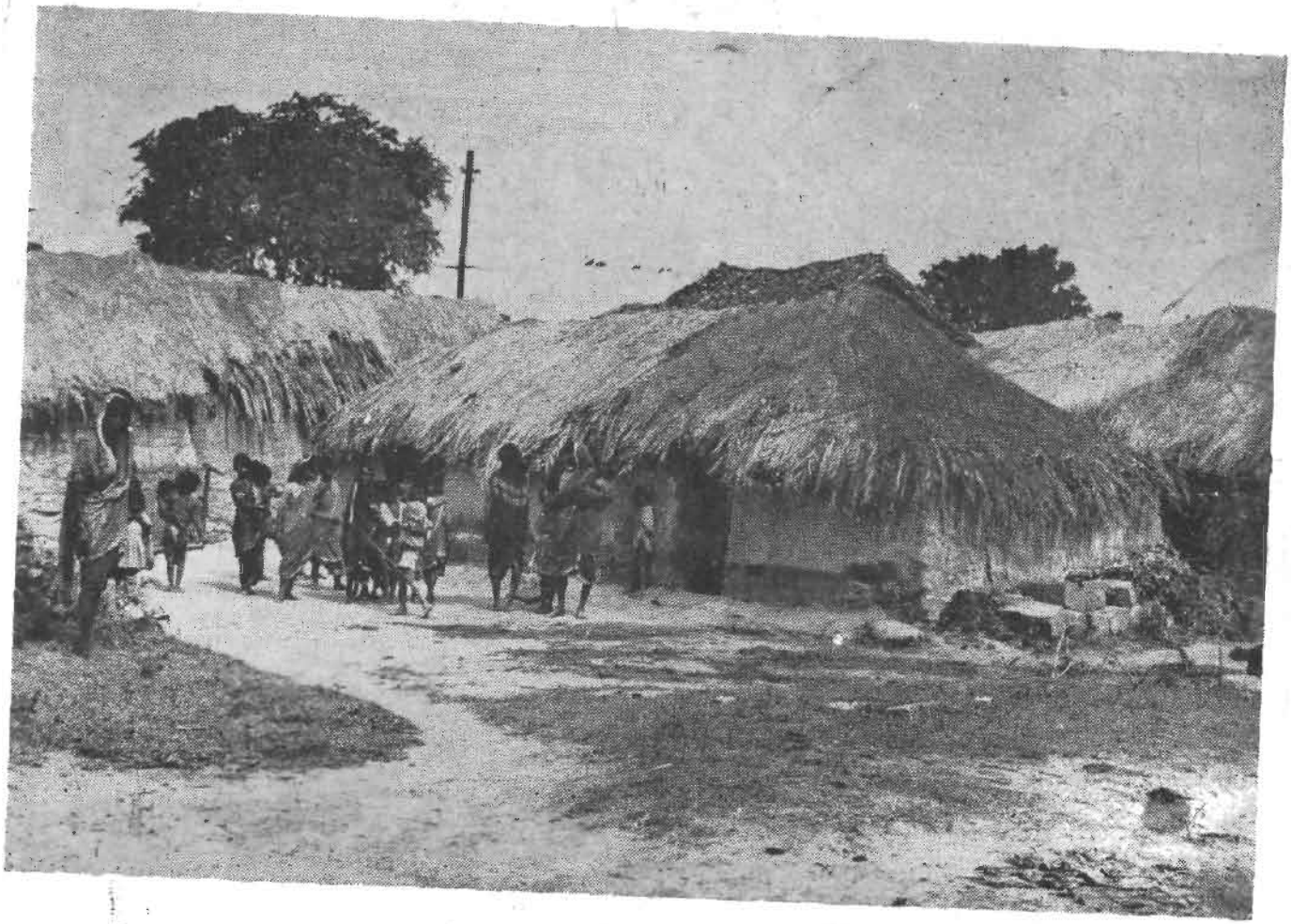


Fig. 10 Housing pattern of Mangs

The districtwise distribution of Mangs according to the 1961 Census is given below :

STATEMENT II

POPULATION OF MANGS ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS

| | Population | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| 1. Hyderabad . . . . | 1,046 | 461 | 585 |
| 2. Medak . . . . . | 2,483 | 1,235 | 1,248 |
| 3. Nizamabad . . . . | 4,130 | 2,007 | 2,123 |
| 4. Adilabad . . . . . | 3,756 | 1,860 | 1,896 |
| 5. Karimnagar . . . . | 35 | 15 | 20 |
| 6. Warangal . . . . | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Nalgonda . . . . | 3 | .. | 3 |
| Total . | 11,456 | 5 580 | 5,876 |

The sex ratio among them is 1,053 females for every 1,000 males as seen from the above statement. Excepting the two districts *viz.*, Khammam and Mahbubnagar, they are found in all the Telangana districts. Even among these seven districts of Telangana their strength in Karimnagar, Warangal and Nalgonda districts is negligible. They are found in large numbers in Nizamabad and Adilabad districts, which are adjoining Maharashtra State, where this caste is predominant. 89.42% of the Mangs live in rural areas whereas only 10.58% of Mangs live in urban areas. They form 0.23% of the total population of Scheduled Castes and 0.03% of the total population of the State.

**Dwellings, Food and Dress**

Mangs live on the outskirts of the village, in a locality known as Mangwada, which would usually be towards the northern direction of the village. No special significance is attached to the direction of the village where their hutments are built. One probable reason is that the burial ground of the village is generally to the north of the village and higher castes avoid, residing near the burial place. It is likely, therefore that the Scheduled Castes occupy the northern corner of the village. They are still treated as untouchables. They live along with other Scheduled Castes like Malas and Madigas. They have got their own well. The dwellings of Mangs are locally known as *Gaddigudiselu* or huts (Fig. 10). These houses are generally built on the ground with no erected platforms. The foundation of the walls is laid with country stone whereas the walls are built with mud. The roof is covered with paddy hay. The houses do not consist of either ventilators or windows. Even the door would be either a *tadaka* (made of bamboo wattle) or made of cheap wood. The ground floor would be generally of a rectangular shape. The floor is swept daily and is kept clean. Occasionally the floor is plastered with cowdung neatly. Walls are white-washed once in a year preferably on a festival occasion. *Erramannu* (red earth) is applied to the *Gadapa* (threshold) and line drawings on the floor with lime-powder locally called '*Muggu*' are drawn for decorative purposes. Generally the houses consist of not more than one or two rooms which are maintained neatly. The front yard of the house also is kept neatly. In a corner of the house a permanent hearth is arranged with mud (locally called *Bankamatti*) which is plastered with cowdung. Cattle possessed by any one are kept outside the house and no separate sheds are built for them. Re-roofing of the hut is done once in a year so as to arrest any leakages during the rainy season. The normal expenditure for the construction of a house ranges from Rs. 300 to 500. Mostly their dwellings are those put up by previous generations. There are one or two '*Midde*' type of houses, the walls of which are built with stone and the roofing with tiles. Ceremony connected with the laying of the foundation stone for the construction of a new house would be marked by breaking a coconut, by the head of the household on an auspicious day fixed either by a Brahmin or some local learned man. On this occasion, a goat is sacrificed by those who can afford. House warming ceremony is also celebrated by performing *Pooja* to their favourite deity like Hanuman, Pochamma or Maisamma. *Paluponginchuta i.e.* boiling the milk is done in the new house, which is followed by a feast at which friends and relatives are entertained. The inmates of the house use the room or rooms for all purposes. The kitchen portion is used for cooking, dining and storing of grain. Generally they sleep in the open yard outside the houses excepting in winter and rainy seasons. Grown-up sons and daughters who are unmarried too sleep in the same place and no segregation is observed. As each house does not have a well of its own, they draw water from the common well provided for this caste.

Their staple food consists of *Jowar* bread and *dal*. Wheat and rice too are consumed occasionally. All kinds of cereals, pulses, vegetables and greens without exception are consumed. They take food twice a day. They take their first meal in the after-

noon and second meal in the night. *Jowar* being cheap, and within their reach they go in for it (Figs. 11 and 12). Starvation is not uncommon in their lives. On certain days they satisfy themselves with mere *ambali*. They eat the meat of sheep, goats, chicken and of such wild animals as deer, rabbits, squirrels and fish. The eating of pork and the flesh of frogs is prohibited. Beef eating is resorted to but rarely. They desist from the consumption of flesh of dead animals or birds. It is said of them by Hassan that formerly they were dog-eaters too. But, now they do not take dog's flesh. Fruits are considered a luxury, their economic condition being very poor. Even now they are exceedingly fond of drinking liquor as stated by Enthoven.

The chief sweet item of food on any festive occasion is *polelu* (sweet cakes prepared with jaggery and rice or wheat flour). On Dassera, Kamanna Punnema and Sankranthi festival days, meat and intoxicants are consumed whereas for Ugadi, Divali, Shivarathri and Edla Polal the use of the same is prohibited. Only a few people take tea in the morning. Their common cooking utensils are *Buvva kunda* (rice pot), *Kura kunda* (curry pot), *Ginne*, a plate for eating, *Munta*, a small vessel for drinking and a *Kudava*, a big pot for fetching and storing water. The grain is stored in *Kagu or Kunda*. *Pidakalu* (cakes made of cowdung) supplemented with *Kattepullalu* (fire wood) collected from open fields provide fuel for cooking purposes and kerosene is used for lighting purposes.

**Dress and Ornaments**

Men wear dhotis, shirts with full or half sleeves, knickers and banians. They use turban as head gear. Elderly men use *Kambali* as upper cloth. Women wear sarees and *cholies*. On festive occasions they go in for new clothes. They prefer dark colours like red, green and blue with big borders for sarees (Figs. 13 and 14). Men use chappals as foot-wear. Men do not wear any ornaments except finger rings which are possessed only by a few. Married women wear *Pustha* (golden marriage locket amidst black beads) and toe rings (*Mattelu* of either bronze or silver), *Kante* (for neck), *Kadelu* (for legs), nose and ear-rings. Bangles are worn by both married and unmarried women. Some women wear *Pusalasaram* (a chain of beads) and nose rings made of brass or aluminium.

**Tattooing**

Both men and women get tattooed on their forearms. A class of *bichagallu* (a sect of beggars who come from forest areas) attend to tattooing. The tattoo marks would be of figures of goddess like Saraswathi or Paravathi or the names of individuals or some zigzag designs. Tattoo marks are more for decorative purposes with no other special significance attached to them (Fig. 15). They believe that it is a valuable and unreasonable mark of identification in cases of people being lost. It is also held by them that these tattoo marks remove bodily pains and give relief to sufferers.

**Hygienic Habits**

Bath is taken daily in the evenings during summer and during other seasons once in two or three days. Only a few are found using toilet soaps. It may be said that poverty precludes them from using toilet soaps and etc., in most of the cases. Water is drawn from the community well in the locality and bath is taken out-side the house by males, and women do it in a corner unseen by others.

**Language and Education**

The mother tongue of Mangs is Marathi. But the Mangs of Telangana area speak Telugu at home and Urdu with outsiders. The Mangs of Bichkunda, though reported to be of Maratha origin do not know Marathi. The Adilabad District Statistical Officer reports that Mangs speak Marathi at home and Hindi with outsiders. Case studies at Bichkunda, however, reveal that the Mangs there do not know any other language except Telugu and Urdu. It is natural to find regional differences in respect of language.

The level of literacy standards of this caste is very poor. The fact that not even a single member among those surveyed is a literate and not even a child is attending school speaks of their extreme backwardness as far as education is concerned.

The following statement shows the literacy standards of the community according to 1961 Census.

STATEMENT II

LITERACY OF MANGS ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS

| Educational Standards | POPULATION | |
|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females |
| Illiterate | 5,334 | 5,843 |
| Literates without educational standards | 158 | 20 |
| Primary or Junior Basic | 86 | 11 |
| Matriculation | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 5,580 | 5,876 |



Fig. 11 Kitchen of Mangs—A Mang woman is preparing *jowar roti*

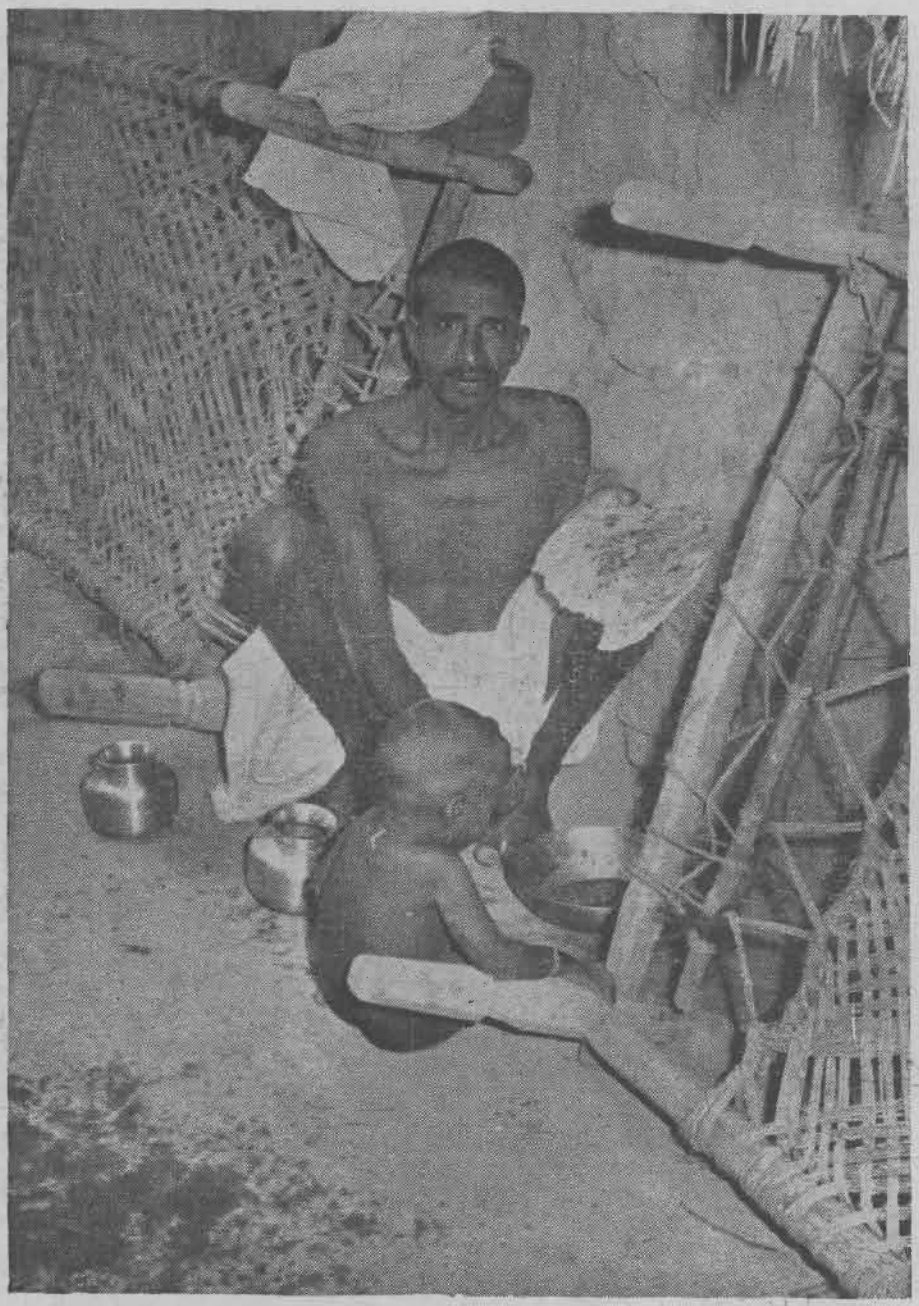


Fig. 12 A father sharing his jowar bread with his children



Fig. 13 A Mang family—Their dressing pattern can be seen

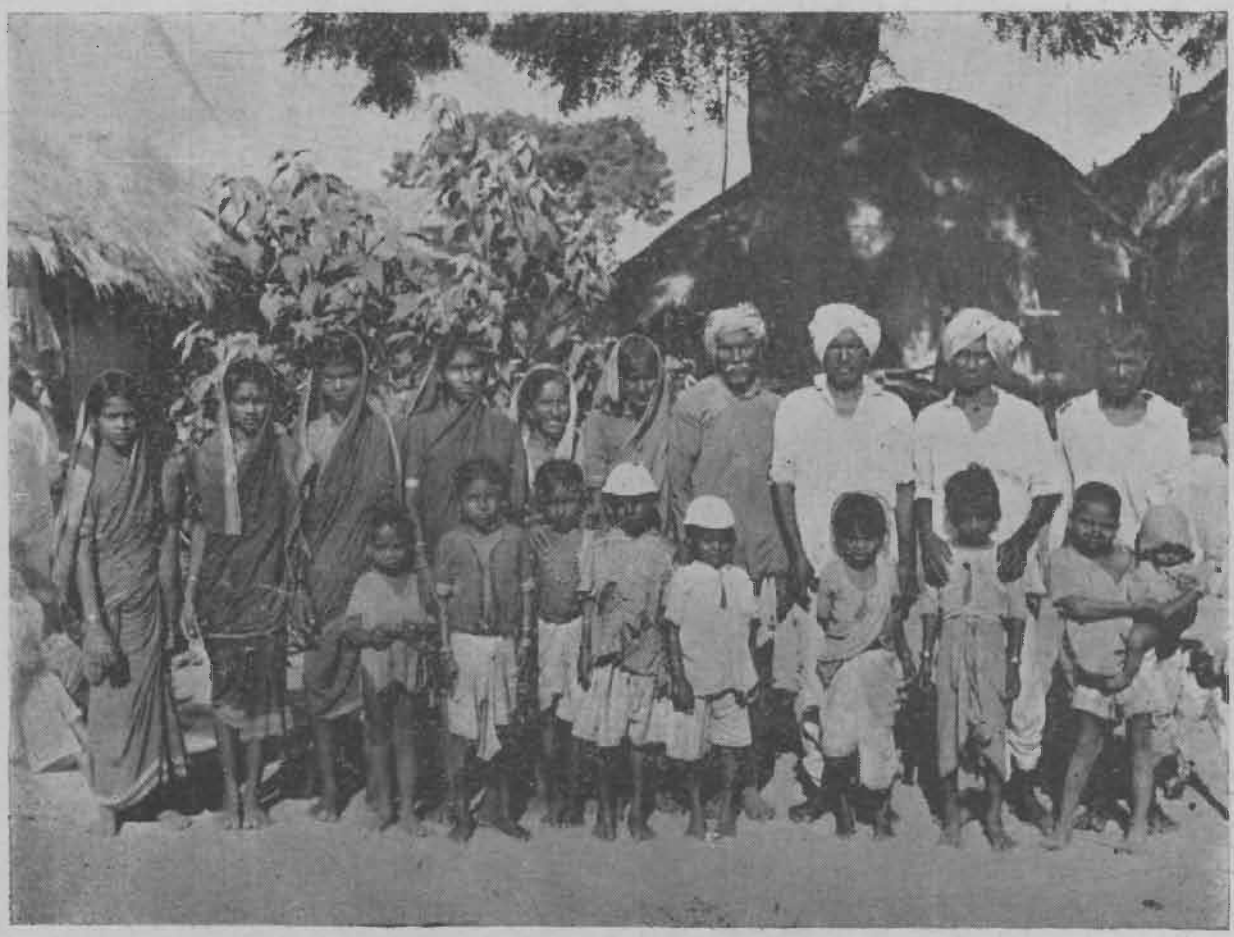


Fig. 14 A group of Mangs of all ages—Women wear sarees in the Maharashtrian fashion

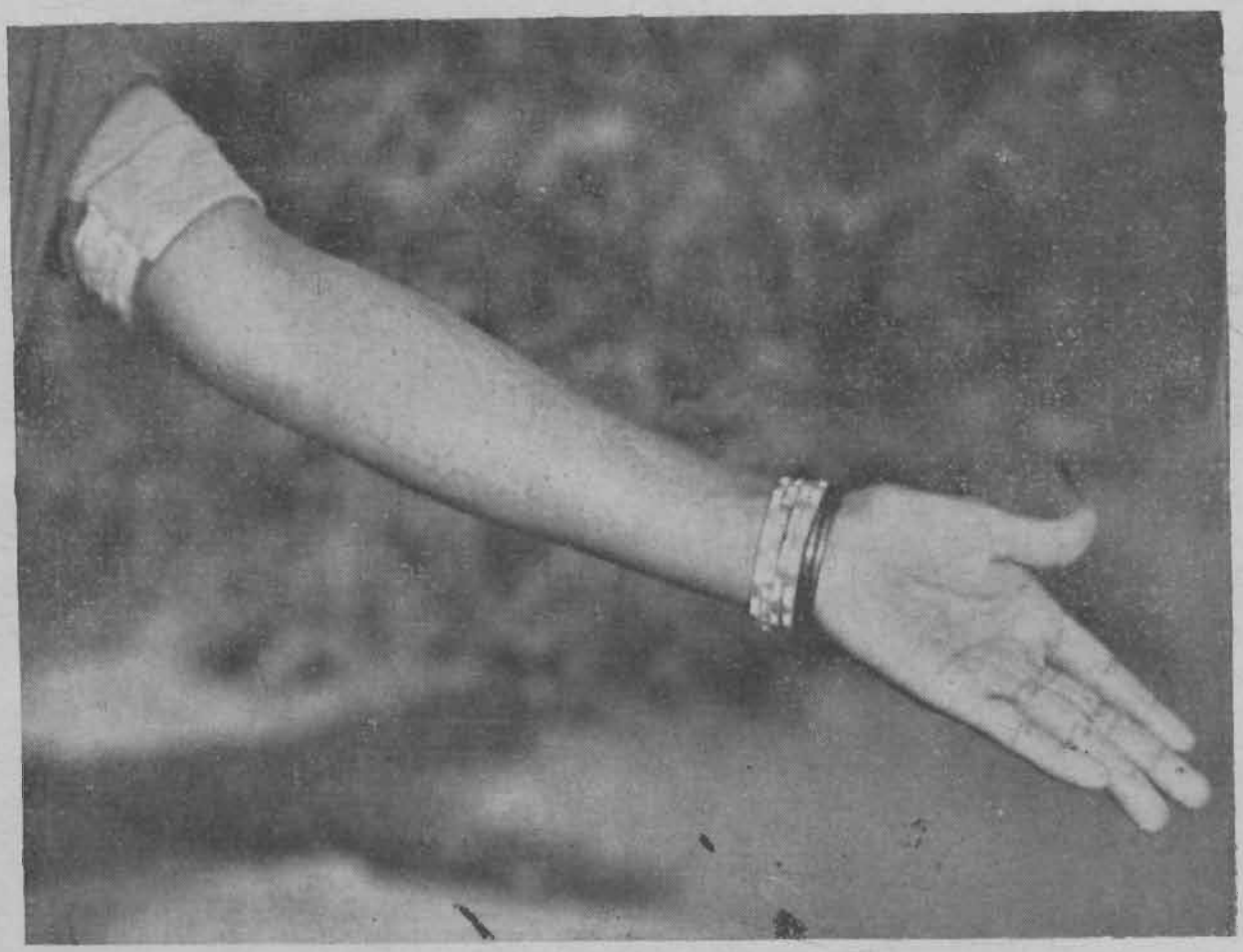


Fig. 15 Women generally tattoo their hands - It does not carry any special significance except decorative purpose



Fig. 16 An young woman at work



Fig. 17 A good number of women actively working in the fields

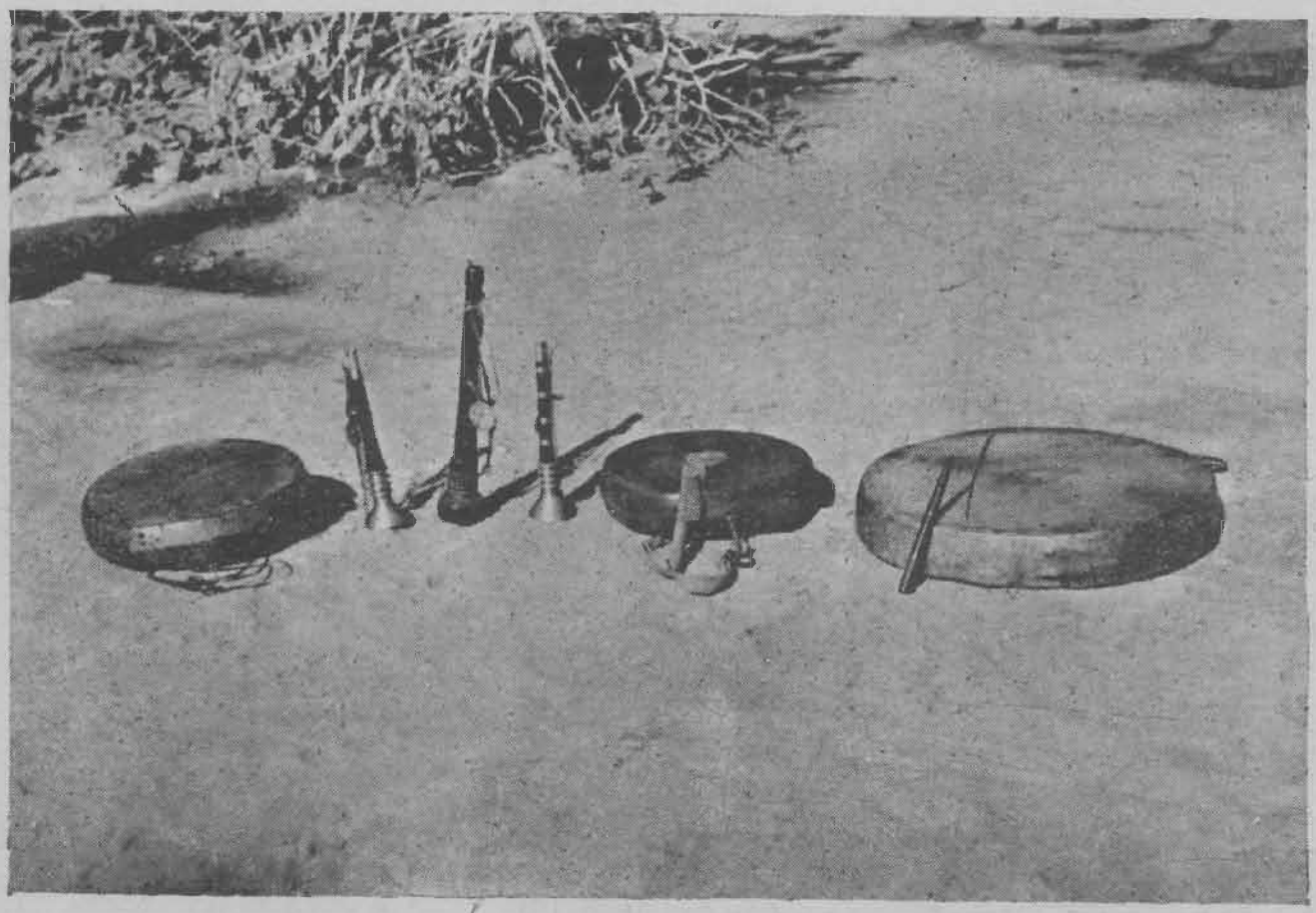


Fig. 18 Musical Instruments of Mangs - 1. *Dappu*, 2. *Sannai*, 3. *Suti*, 4. *Sannai*, 5. *Dappu* and 6. *Aliga*



Fig. 19. Mangs while playing their musical instruments

95.59% of males and 99.43% of females are illiterates. This confirms the statement made above that educationally this caste is very backward. The percentage of literates among Mangs is very low when compared with the rate of literacy of total Scheduled Castes which is 8.47%. All these go to show that this caste is not evincing any interest to get their children educated in spite of several facilities provided by the Government for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes.

**Economic Life**

Their traditional occupation is tanning, shoe-making and preparation of leather buckets and drum beating. The implements they use during their traditional work are *Kompe*, *Kuripa*, *reli* etc. But now, most of them live on casual agricultural labour. Very few who possess lands are cultivators.

According to R. E. Enthoven

"they make and sell leather ropes called *nadalu*, thin cords or charats of ambada (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) or hemp and of kekti sweet pandanus, ropes, date brooms, shinkes or slings for hanging pots in, gophans or slings for throwing stones with, bamboo baskets, tent screens and ropes. They are musicians, songsters, scavengers, husbandmen, messengers, beggars, labourers, sellers of cow dung cakes, grass and firewood, bricklayers, carpenters and hang men. Several of them are village watchmen and guides. In some places they have one-fourth share in every head of cattle that dies." (R.E. Enthoven, Vol. II, P. 452).

According to Hassan

"their occupation is to weave flaxen tape for cots, to make ropes and to act as village criers and musicians to the higher castes; they make brooms and mats from the date palms; they are tanners, workers in raw hides and leather, shoes and harness makers, messengers, scavengers and public executioners; they are engaged as village watchmen; as daily labourers they live from hand to mouth, but will never groom a horse. They show a tendency to crime and are closely watched by the police" (Hassan Vol. I, p. 441).

But it is found during case studies that their profession of making and selling of leather ropes, *nadalu* etc., as stated by R. E. Enthoven, is now a thing of the past and they have taken to agricultural labour and other miscellaneous rural labour, as they are unable to complete with the machine-made leather goods produced at cheaper rates. (Figs. 16 and 17).

Their principal source of subsistence at present is rural labour; however, whenever they have nothing else to do they engage themselves in the traditional occupations stated above except in the making of mates and brooms from the date palm. The usual occupations in which they engage themselves generally are ploughing, manuring, sowing, transplantation watering the fields, gardening, crop-cutting, harvesting, winnowing, taking care of cattle etc. Women also engage themselves in one occupation or the other such as sale of cowdung cakes and grass and serving in the households of caste Hindus. Generally they work as daily labourers and are paid either in kind or cash. Men are paid at the rate of 75 P. or Re. 1 while women 50 P. or 62 P. per day. Some men are engaged as servants in certain agriculturists' households and are paid Rs. 100 or Rs. 150 per annum with meals twice a day depending on the nature of work they are entrusted with. It was reported during the case studies that they are making efforts to establish a tanning society of their own and revive their traditional occupation. Agriculturists who own lands (these are not many ; even those who possess have it only to a very limited extent) grow paddy and use it for domestic consumption.

In the twelve households surveyed (28 males and 30 females) 13 males and 15 females are agricultural labourers. One male member is having sooth saying locally known as *Gadde* as his occupation. Three males are engaged in looking after the cattle belonging to certain agriculturists' households. Two males are engaged as servants. In addition, there are a few heads of households who own land and live on cultivation. Among the households surveyed there is one musician who renders music with his band on occasion of marriage, death and other occasions. The musicians are rewarded for their services either in cash and kind (Figs. 18 and 19). Usually the youth are engaged in the households of caste Hindus to look after and graze the cattle etc. and are paid Rs. 50 or 60 per annum for their services. The soothsayer referred to above is a boy by name Sayanna aged about 14 years and he goes about the nearby villages and earns something by foretelling. Generally, he will be paid in kind *i.e.* grain and also given old clothes.

STATEMENT III

OCCUPATION OF MANGS ACCORDING TO THE 1961 CENSUS

| Name of the occupation | MANGS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Cultivation . . . . | 703 | 553 | 1,256 |
| Agricultural labour . . | 2,389 | 2,623 | 5,012 |
| Mining, Quarrying etc. . . | 227 | 8 | 235 |
| Household Industry . . | 244 | 92 | 336 |

Out of the 12 households surveyed, 10 households are having deficit budgets. Eight households out of the 12 are in debt ranging from Rs. 80 to 200 per household. Among these 8 households two households are having an old debt of Rs. 200 each. The normal income of Mangs ranges between Rs. 400 and Rs. 600 per annum. Only one household is getting an annual income of Rs. 900, and even in this case the budget is not balanced and there is a deficit, to make up which, a sum of Rs. 200 has been borrowed during the current year. Debts are normally contracted to meet the expenses of marriages and other unforeseen expenditure. The main item of their expenditure is food. The miscellaneous items occupy the second place, which include mainly the expenditure on drinks, travels, smoking of beedis or Cigarettes.

**Life Cycle (Birth, Marriage and Death Customs)**
**Birth**

Many of the ceremonies which used to be observed in the past are no longer observed owing to their poverty. The expectant mother is taken during the 5th or 7th month of her pregnancy by her parents to their house for the celebration of *Cheera Kattimpu* otherwise known as *Seemantham* on which occasion they present the expectant mother with a new saree and a blouse piece and arrange a feast. 'Lap-filling' or *vodi biyyam* was also being observed earlier. Women of the neighbourhood were invited for this function and *tambulam* (Betel leaves and nuts) distributed to those present on the occasion. Now, most of them cannot afford to celebrate this ceremony. A few households, however, still observe it. No special food is prescribed for the pregnant women nor any taboos regarding diet are observed. But she would be advised to give up items containing too much of chillies (*Karam*) : Generally items which are easily digestible are specially preferred for a pregnant woman.

The first delivery normally takes place at the house of the parents of the expectant mother. Unless the case is of a serious and complicated nature, it is not taken to hospital. The first confinement is attended to with utmost care and caution and with anxiety and enthusiasm. Great significance is attached to the first delivery and the joy is all the more if a male child is born. Though no segregation is made, the delivery takes place in some corner of the house which is separated by a small screen from the rest of the house. The local *Mantrasani* (dai) of the same caste attends to the delivery and she cuts the umbilical cord. It is buried in the back yard of the house. She is given food and Rs. 1·25 as her fee. Normal expenses for delivery ranges between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40.

According to R. E. Enthoven

"A woman is held impure for five weeks after child birth, but after 12th day she is touched though nothing is eaten from her hands. On the 5th day after a child is born they worship a dough image of 'Satvai' or simply 5 pebbles arranged in a line in the mother's room and offer them cooked rice and split pulse or *dal bhat*. Two dough lamps are kept burning the whole night and a feast is held. On the 12th day the mother and child are bathed, her clothes are washed and the lying-in room is cow-dunged. Seven pebbles are then placed outside the house in a line and worshipped by the mother in the name of the goddess Satvai. The child is named on the same day, the name being given by the Brahmin astrologer. Female guests are called and boiled gram or wheat is distributed among them. A month later new bangles are put round the mother's wrists." (R. E. Enthoven, Vol. II. p. 438.)

Case studies reveal that on the very first day after the delivery, the mother and the new born child are given bath and not on the 12th day as stated by Enthoven. The pollution is observed for 20 days and not five weeks as observed by Enthoven. The pollution ceases immediately after taking bath on the 21st day. The observation regarding the worship of Satvai or 5 pebbles does not hold good today. During the postnatal period, for about one month, the mother lives on rice, garlic and peppar powder *rasam*. She is given ghee, if possible but not buttermilk. She resumes her normal duties immediately after the pollution is over, if she is physically fit. On the fifth day itself the naming ceremony takes place and not on the 12th day and no Brahmin astrologer officiates as a priest on that occasion as stated by Enthoven. The elderly member of the caste or the father of the child presides over the ceremony. No special feast is arranged on this day. Names are selected in consultation with family elders. Names of Gods and those of grandfathers are preferred. Common names are Sayanna, Ramaiah, Maisanna, Lakshmaiah etc. A Brahmin is consulted to cast the horoscope of the child. The community is patrilineal in descent.

**Tonsure**

The tonsure ceremony locally called *Puttina Ventrukalu Theeyuta* for the child is observed before the child attains one year, either during the 5th, 7th or 11th month. This ceremony is observed for all children for whom the parents take a vow (*Mokkubadi*). The ceremony takes place either at a temple or at their own house. Maternal uncle and close relatives attend the function. The Barber who attends to the shaving

of the head is paid Rs. 5. The mother and the child are given new clothes. A feast is arranged to all the relatives who attend the function. The expenditure for this ceremony roughly comes to Rs. 60.

First feeding of the child with solid food locally called *Annaparasana* and initiating the child to learning locally known as *Akshrabhyasam* are not in vogue in this community.

**Puberty**

First attain puberty at the age of 13 or 14 years. Pollution is observed for 9 or 11 days during which period her touch is considered polluting and participation in the domestic duties is forbidden. She is made to sit aloof in a corner of the house on a mat. She is given sweets prepared out of jaggery and coconut. On the 10th or 12th day, as the case may be, bath is given to her and she is dressed in new clothes. A feast is arranged consisting of sweets, preferably *polelu* (Sweet cakes) and *Chalimidi* (prepared out of rice flour mixed with jaggery and ghee). In the evening a function locally known as *Perantam* is held to which women both the near and the dear are invited and they apply *Nalugu* to the girl. Women, who attend the function sing songs, and *Chalimidi* along with *tambulam* is distributed to them. For subsequent monthly courses, also pollution and segregation are observed in the community for 3 or 5 days.

**Marriage**

Marriage by negotiation is the only type prevalent among Mangs. Alliances are fixed by the parents of both the boy and the girl by mutual consultations and agreement. Normally marriage negotiations are not contracted outside their relatives in the village. Paternal aunt's daughter and maternal uncle's daughter are the most favoured alliances. A widower is eligible to marry his deceased wife's sister. Marriage with sister's daughter is looked down upon and is not in practice. In case of non-availability of a suitable bridge among their own kith and kin, they go in for alliances outside the village. The normal age of marriage for boys is between 15 and 20 while for girls between 10 and 15 *i.e.*, either before attaining puberty or after. Betrothal is fixed at any time convenient to the parents. Initiative for marriage is always from the bridegroom's side. As stated by Hassan and Enthoven both infant and adult marriages are in practice. Child betrothal also exists but is rather rare. Marriage within the same surname is prohibited. They do not marry outside their caste. Premarital sex-relationship is tolerated, though not encouraged. If a woman is found to be having illicit relationship with a male member of the same caste arrangements are made for getting her married to the same person, and if she develops illegal contact with a man from outside the caste she is expelled from the community and in order to readmit her a fine is levied, as fixed by the caste panchayat, which is spent on the community feast. Polygynes is prevalent and a man can marry as many wives as he can afford to maintain. But practically it is limited to three as stated by Hassan. Polyandry is not in vogue.

Alliances are fixed by mutual consultations. The auspicious day is fixed by a Brahmin purohit or some learned man in the village, as observed by Hassan. The marriage takes place at the bride-grooms house. Enthoven writes that the bride price was only Rs. 5 to 10. But at present it is Rs. 60 which is given to the father of the bride soon after the fixation of marriage. Ornaments for the bride are given by the bridegroom's parents. The expenditure for the celebration of marriage are equally borne by both the parties. The marriage is celebrated for five days. The proceedings of the five days are as follows :

1st day : Marriage pandal is erected in the front yard of the bridegroom's house. The groom's party goes to the bride's house to bring the marriage party.

2nd day : The groom's party brings the marriage party to their village and accommodate them in a separate house arranged for the bride's party. A feast is arranged to the bride's party.

3rd day : The actual marriage ceremony starts on this day. The bride and groom are given oil bath and dressed in new clothes. Turmeric is applied to them. The groom ties *puste* around the neck of the bride, and the invities shower sacred rice on them. It is followed by *talambralu* ceremony when the couple pour rice on each other's head. Ornaments are given to the bride by the father of the groom depending on his economic status.

4th day : *Nagavalli* ceremony takes place in the morning. Two pots, one filled with water and the other empty one are customarily kept to represent the couple under the

pandal. The couple are taken in procession to the local tempie of the village. In the evening the bride's party starts for their house followed by the groom. The relatives also leave for their respective places.

Enthoven has stated that the marriage proceedings would be conducted by a holy man or *Sadhu* from their own caste. But now such a practice does not seem to exist. An elderly man from their own caste, officiates as the priest and he is known as *Bada Mehetar.* Musical instruments (*Tappetta* and *melam*) are engaged for the occasion. A person belonging to their caste attends to the playing of musical instruments for which he is paid Rs. 10 to 15. The ceremonies of Kanderi working of Mari Ai, Birpali and Devaka mentioned by Hassan are not known to the Mangs, surveyed, (Hassan, Vol., P. 460). The average expenditure on marriage would be about Rs. 600. If the girl has already attained puberty the consummation ceremony takes place on the same day. No special ceremony is observed for this. The groom and bride receive new clothes from their respective father-in-law on the day of consummation.

There are no cases of inter-caste marriages in the community. Divorce is granted on grounds of wife's unchastity or husband's impotency or incapacity to maintain her subject to caste panchayat's approval and the parties can remarry according to widow remarriage rites, the bride price and expenses being half of that of first marriage which is given to the father of the widow. Widow marriage is known as *Udiki.* A widower can marry his deceased wife's sister. A widow can marry any person who accepts to marry her. A widow who wants to remarry goes and stays with her father. If she does not want to remarry she stays with her father-in-law.

Statement below shows the Marital Status of Mangs in Andhra Pradesh according to 1961 Census

STATEMENT V

MARITAL STATUS OF MANGS ACCORDING TO THE 1961 CENSUS

| Age group | MARITAL STATUS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | | Never married | | Married | | Widowed | | Divorced | |
| | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
| 0–14 . . . | 2,014 | 2,317 | 1,961 | 2,007 | 53 | 305 | .. | 2 | .. | 3 |
| 15–44 . . . | 2,283 | 2,637 | 358 | 47 | 1,828 | 2,352 | 75 | 185 | 22 | 53 |
| 45 and over . . | 1,283 | 922 | 50 | 7 | 570 | 348 | 631 | 555 | 32 | 12 |
| TOTAL . | 5,580 | 5,876 | 2,369 | 2,061 | 2,451 | 3,005 | 706 | 742 | 54 | 68 |

The presence of 53 males and 305 females under 'Married' against the age group of 0—14 confirm that child marriages are still prevalent to some extent in this community. It may also be noted that two women are widowed and 3 women divorced in this tender age group of 0—14 years.

**Death**

Mangs bury the dead. The corpse is bathed with hot water and covered with new clothes. The forehead is decorated with vermilion mark. Later it is carried by the caste people on a bier in a sitting posture in a procession along with playing of musical instruments. The chief mourner *i.e.* the eldest son of the deceased, walks in front, with an earthen fire pot. Just before reaching the burial ground, the corpse is customarily kept down at a place called *Dimpudu, kallam* enroute the burial ground. While doing so care is taken to see that the fire pot in the hands of the chief mourner will not touch the ground lest it should become impure. Throughout the way coins of small denomination are thrown around. A Mala digs the pit and the corpse is kept in a sitting posture

in the pit and salt is spread around it before covering it with earth. Tombs are not generally constructed But some well to do people do it. No obsequies are observed for unmarried people. Mourning is observed for 12 days for all and not 9 days or 13 days as stated by Hassan and Enthoven respectively. (Hassan, Vol. I, P. 461, Ethoven, Vol. II, P. 441). On the 5th day known as *Chinnadivasamu* non-vegetarian food is served to all the relatives. Previously they were heavily indulging in drinks on this day. Now-a-days this practice is on the decline. On the thirteenth day also (known as *Peddadivasamu*) a similar function is held. All the relatives take bath on the 13th day. Cow's urine is sprinkled on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. Hassan has stated that a Jangam officiates as a priest during this occasion. (Hassan, Vol. I, P. 461). But according to the present case studies it is observed that no one officiates as a priest on this occasion. Roughly they spend Rs. 200 on the obsequies function.

A woman soon after the death of her husband becomes a widow and on the fifth day she is taken to a nearby pond or well where her bangles, toe rings and marriage locket are removed and vermilion mark called '*bottu*' on the fore-head erased. She takes bath and wears a new saree. No annual ceremonies are held in memory of the departed souls and it is believed that one would go to heaven or hell, depending upon one's deeds and acts in this world during one's life time.

**Inheritance**

Mangs follow the Hindu law of inheritance. All the sons of the deceased bequeath equal share of property, irrespective of marital status. They do not know anything about Hindu Adoption Act and Hindu Succession Act. Inheritance of property equally by daughters is no doubt favoured by them, but none has put it into practice so far.

**Religious Beliefs and Practices**

Mangs profess Hinduism and worship all Hindu Gods. Their caste deity is Bhavanijanakamma [Fig. 20]. They worship spirits and village deities like Pochamma and Maisamma, who according to them are responsible for all the good and bad that befalls the village community. In order to avert the evil occurrences and for the safety and well being of the village community they propitiate these village goddesses. They firmly believe in idol worship. They are theists. They have a temple for Maisamma, in their locality. On every auspicious occasion the caste members gather and worship the deity. They celebrate *Jatara* for deity Maisamma in this locality once in a year at their convenience. A goat or sheep is sacrificed to the deity by the caste members during the *Jatara*, and they enjoy a feast with its meat. They indulge in the consumption of liquors on that occasion.

No idols or photos of deities or gods are kept in their houses. Besides village deities, they also worship Sri Rama, Krishna Bhagavan and also Hanuman their most-liked God. In case of any trouble they pray Hanuman and firmly believe that. He relieves them of all troubles. The tiger is held in special reverence and no member will injure or kill it. During epidemics like cholera etc., buffaloes are sacrificed to the village deities. At the time of propitiating any god or goddess, they use vermilion and turmeric and break coconut before the deity and offer plantains betel leaves and nuts. There are no sub-sects among them and there are no priests or spiritual advisers for this community. But there is one Nurlka Sandayya of their community who stays at Bhadrachalam and occasionally visits them on invitation. They consider him as their *guru* and pay him some *Gurudakshina* (in cash) along with a coconut, betel leaves and nuts Owing to their poverty they do not visit any pilgrim centres.

**Superstitious beliefs and practices**

They have certain superstitious beliefs. A cat coming from the opposite direction or crossing the way sight of a widow or fuel, empty pots, sneezing, cry of an owl are bad omens and the sight of a marriage party, corpse, bangle-seller etc., are considered as good omens. If one falls sick, besides taking medical treatment, they pray to God and make vows which are fulfilled later. Some wear talismans and mascots which are given by Koyas who bring medical roots from forests. *Drishta* (to ward of evil) is removed with dry chillies or salt for a man ailing from disorders.

**Important Festivals**

Mangs observe all Hindu festivals, important among them being Dassera, Sankranthi, Ugadi, Divali, Sivarathri, Kamunipurnima and Edlapolal. The main distingushing feature of a festival would be a feast which consists of some sweet items like polelu or non-vegetarian dishes. The scale on which these festivals are celebrated depends on one's capacity. They

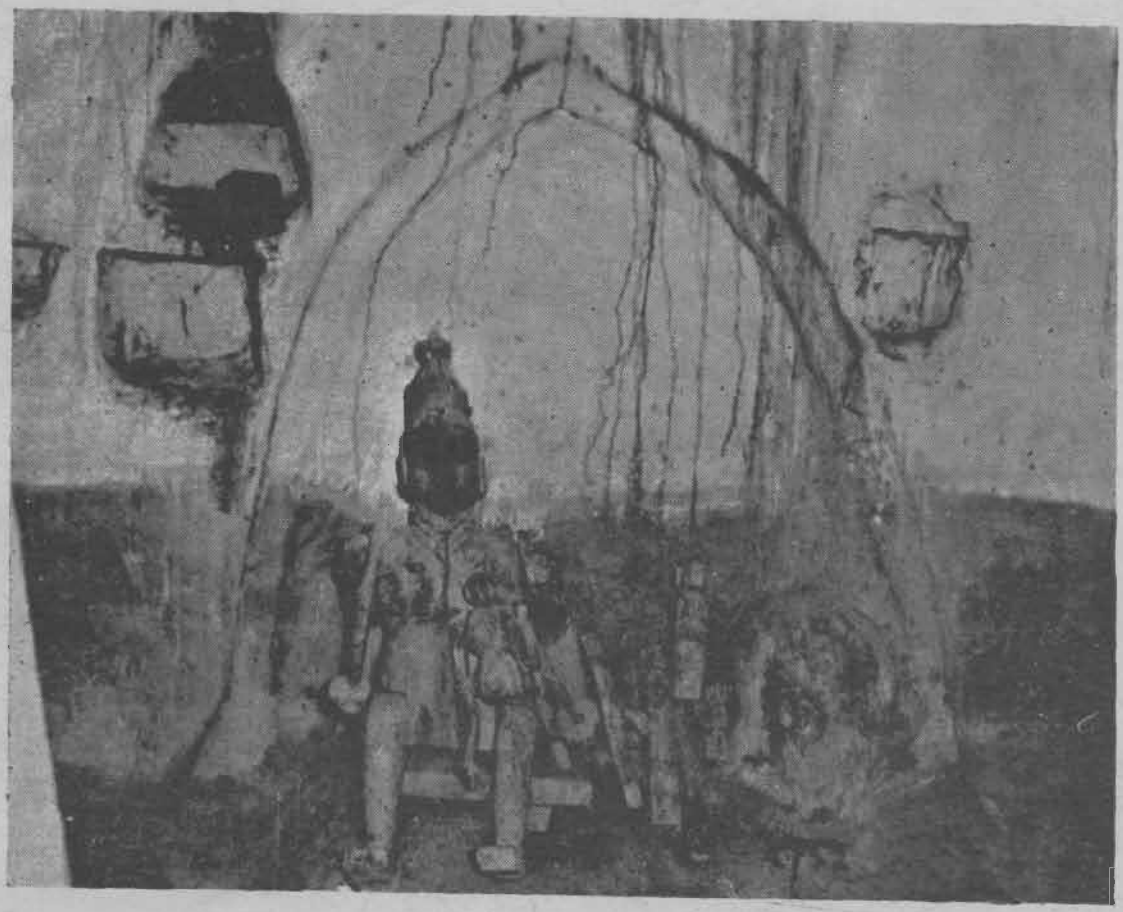


Fig. 20 *Bhavani Janakamma* - A caste deity of Mangs

take non-vegetarian food and liquor on Dassera festival, Kamunipurnima and Sankranti. On other festivals *viz.*, Ugadi, Sivarathri, Edlapolal and Deepavali they neither take non-vegetarian food nor indulge in drinking. People who possess money go in for new clothes for Ugadi festival. Fasting is observed on Sivarathri day by the adults in some families and Lord Siva is worshipped. On Kamuni purnima day the youths in the community along with other members in the village collect fuel from the households and also from outside and burn the effigy of Kamanna or Manmatha (cupid) in the night. The ashes are considered sacred and they apply it to their foreheads. Edlapolal is another festival for merriment and gaiety for the members of this community. This festival is purely meant for the worship of animals. Those who possess cattle like oxen and bullocks and such other animals, bathe them in the ponds and decorate them with coloured clothes. Vermilion and turmeric are applied to the foreheads and the horns of animals and they are fed with *polelu* (the sweet cakes) specially prepared for the occasion. Later, in the evening the animals are taken round the village in a procession. Some women folk observe 'Nagulachavithi' also on which day they go to a snake pit, worship Lord Subrahmanya and pour milk into the pit. No special games are connected with any of the festival. On Sankranthi day a cock or hen is killed and its meat is enjoyed. Though Hindus by religion, Mangs participate in the Mohammaden festival 'Moharram' along with certain other Hindu communities which is celebrated by Muslims for ten days. No fair is held in the village.

**Leisure, Recreation and child plays**

Smoking cigars (leaf pipe) or beedis is a common habit with most of the males and some old females during their leisure hours. *Chilumu* (smoke-pipe of earth) is used for this purpose. The habit of chewing *pan* and *zarda* is seen mostly among women. Intoxicants are enjoyed by everyone except children, invariably once in every two or three days. No specific games are played by Mangs. Their children join other children of the village and play the common games *goli*, *Gillidanda* and *chendu* etc. Girls play *Gilla* (Achchana Kayalu). Cinema houses are occasionally visited. They take medical aid from the local civil dispensary. They do not read newspapers, but listen to radio, whenever they have leisure, at the Panchayat office. During leisure hours, they either attend to domestic duties or take rest or chit-chat with neighbours. They do not have any household craft to make good use of their spare time.

The village Bichkunda is administered by a Village Panchayat. All communities including Mangs abide by its rules and regulations. No Mang is a member in the Panchayat.

There is no caste Panchayat as such for the community. However, internal disputes are settled by mutual discussion among the elderly members who form a group represented by members from each household. There will not be any elected caste head. But generally the word of an aged and experienced man who is respected in the caste is taken as final and abiding. Usually cases of disputes among individuals of the community, divorce and trespass, adultery etc., are brought to the notice of this informal *Kulapanchayat* wherein they are settled in a peaceful manner. The accused if found guilty is asked to pay a fine, as deemed fit by the members and the aged elder and the amount so collected is spent for a community drinking and feast. Divorce is granted. For widow remarriage the permission of the Caste Panchayat is sought. For all other inter-caste disputes they refer to the Village Panchayat.

**Inter-community relationship and social status**

Mangs render traditional service to all communities in the village. But barbers and washermen do not serve them. They do not have access to the village well. Water is drawn from the wells in the locality specially dug for this community. Their children do not attend schools because of poverty. However, they are availing themselves of the medical aid from the local hospitals along with other caste people. Brahmin priests do not officiate either at their religious or social functions. But when approached, they advise about auspicious days for any occasion or ceremony. They are forbidden to enter the temple premises and hence they satisfy themselves by worshiping the god from outside the temple. Free movement in the village is however, not restricted. But the Mangs are not allowed to enter the houses of other caste people. Hassan observes that the Mangs occupy the lowest grade in the Hindu caste system. (Hassan, Vol. I, P. 462). They eat from all castes except Malas, Dakkalas, Mahar, Mehtar etc., and no other caste

takes cooked food or water from them. Mang is still treated as an untouchable caste and they are at the lowest rung of the social ladder. Their touch is deemed to be polluting by others. But of late gradual change seems to be coming in their lives and people of other castes have begun to move more freely with them.

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# MANG GARODI

**(SCHEDULED CASTE)**



11—1 Cen. And/71

# MANG GARODI

## Name, Identity, Origin and History

Mang Garodi is notified as a Scheduled Caste in Telangana area of Andhra Pradesh by the President's Modification Order of 1956. Their population in Andhra Pradesh is only 123 persons according to the 1961 Census. Mang Garodis, investigated during the field studies near about Hyderabad City claim that they belong to a Maharashtra caste. But they are not able to indicate the name of that Maharashtrian sect. Russel (R. V. Russel, Vol. IV, p. 189) considers them as a criminal sub-division of the Mang caste and he calls the caste as Mang Garodi. Enthovan (R. E. Enthovan, Vol. II, p. 435) professes that Mang Garodi is one of the 25 endogamous divisions of Mangs. Hassan (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 459) records that it is one of the eight endogamous divisions of Mang. Hassan gives the following statement while writing about Mang Garodi.

"They profess to be a branch of the Mang caste of Maharashtra, but are disowned by the latter and, except in name, appear to have no connection with them". (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 469)

The opinions of the above learned authors, the style of their dress after Maratha fashion and the mother-tongue Marathi suggest that they might be a sect of Maratha caste. As the population of this caste in Andhra Pradesh is very small and almost all of them are found in the urban areas of Hyderabad district, near about Hyderabad City it may not be very reasonable to compare in all respects the field data with those in the existing literature on the caste. However, the results of the field study would be useful in knowing the present socio-economic conditions of the caste in Andhra Pradesh and may indicate the trends of change in different aspects during the last few decades.

The informants could not say anything about their origin except that they originally belonged to a Maharashtra caste. Russel gives interesting information associating the origin of their name with occupation :

"The name Garori appears to be a corruption of Garudi, and signifies a snake-charmer. Garuda, the Brahminy kite, the bird on which Vishnu rides, was the great subduer of snakes and hence probably snake-charmers are called Garudi. Some of the Mang Garoris are snake-charmers, and this may have been the original occupation of the caste, though the bulk of them now appear to live by dealing in catttle and thieving." (R. V. Russul, Vol. IV, p. 189)

Enthovan also says that they were originally snake-charmers. He continues:

"They are called Mhaisbhadrus in Khandesh after their occupation of shaving buffaloes (Mhais, a she-buffalo and bhadraya, one who shaves roughly)." Enthovan, Vol. II, p. 435.

Hassan (Hassan, Vol. I, p. 469) notes them as a wandering tribe of acrobats and mat makers. But the Mang Garodis investigated during the field study are neither snake-charmers nor acrobats nor mat makers. But all of them have agreed that their traditional occupation is shaving of buffaloes. From the field study it cannot be said conclusively that they are separate from those living in Maharashtra. Some of the Mang Garodis who were previously rural dwellers might have migrated to the urban areas where they acquired to some extent a different culture necessitating them to give up their own occupation, *i.e.*- as acrobats and mat makers or as Hassan (p. 472) says the stringent measures which were taken on them in the rural areas might have produced a desire in them to give up their traditional occupation and pursue other avocations.

## Clan and Analogous Divisions

The caste has no endogamous divisions. According to Hassan there are sixteen exogamous divisions* among Mang Garodis. Of the sixteen exogamous divisions only Kamble, Uphade, Kasab, Londe, Sakat have been reported during the case studies. The composition of the family shows that it is of the simple type consisting of parents and their children. The nature of the family structure is patriarchal in all its ways and rule of inheritance runs from father to son. The man who marries the nearest kin relative having his own *intiperu* (surname) is considered a sinner. Thus the rule of exogamy is based upon family names and it is strictly observed. A man is allowed to marry his mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter.

## Distribution and Population Trend

They are originally the inhabitants of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnatak. Mang Garodis are found according to 1961 Census only in two disricts. *viz.*, Hyderabad and Khammam in Andhra Pradesh.

*1. Sakat, 2. Kasab, 3. Hatakale, 4. Jade, 5. Uphade, 6. Kamble, 7. Dehade, 8. Made, 9. Gade, 10. Londe, 11. Omap, 12. Fasge, 13. Bodke, 14. Ukarde, 15. Gaikwad and 16. Hatagle.

Case studies were conducted during December, 1962 in a suburb of Hyderabad (urban area) where 85.37% of the total population is concentrated. For case study of the caste twelve households were selected. Figures 1 and 2 show a Mang Garodi man and woman. The district-wise distribution of Mang Garodi population is as follows according to the 1961 Census.

STATEMENT I

POPULATION OF MANG GARODIS

| Name of District | | MANG GORODIS | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Grand Total | Total | 123 | 52 | 71 |
| | Rural | 18 | 4 | 14 |
| | Urban | 105 | 48 | 57 |
| Hyderabad | Total | 105 | 48 | 57 |
| | Rural | .. | .. | .. |
| | Urban | 105 | 48 | 57 |
| Khammam | Total | 18 | 4 | 14 |
| | Rural | 18 | 4 | 14 |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |

The sex ratio among Mang Garodis is 1,365 females per 1,000 males. Mang Garodis form a negligible proportion of the total population of the Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh. 14.63% of the Mang Garodis in the State are inhabiting the rural area whereas 85.37% of them are found in the urban area.

**Dwellings**

Mang Garodis live in small huts which declare their low standard of economy (Fig. 3). The walls are of mud and are built on plain grounds sometimes in low lying areas, with no erected platforms, in remote parts of the town. The walls do not exceed a height of 4 or 4½ feet. The door ways are low and while entering the hut they have to bend their heads. The roofing is done with grass or paddy hay covered over bamboos, wooden sticks and rafters. In the centre, there would be a strong round wooden rag and towards both ends the grass is covered in a slant manner. A typical hut of Mang Garodis is illustrated in Figure 3-A. In case of constructions of a new house they approach a Brahmin purohit who works also for the above castes or a learned man to fix up an auspicious day. No importance is attached to the selection of house site nor regarding the facing of the main gate. The house warming or *grihapravesam* ceremony is marked by a small feast for the invited guests on an auspicious day suggested by a *purohit*. The house consists of only a single room; a corner is set apart for cooking. They do not have covered open yards in the front or at the back of their huts. The cattle are kept in sheds in front of their houses, but in the case of poor who cannot afford to construct a separate shed the cattle share a part of the house. The houses are well maintained. Occasionally reroofing is done so as to safeguard against leaking, etc. Mud is applied to walls once in a year to keep them in good condition. Walls are also whitewashed for festivals and the floor is plastered with cowdung. The lower part of the walls are daubed with red mud water and *rangoli* (*muggu*) on the floor are drawn to give colour and beauty to the house. The rubbish from the house is thrown into the dust bin in the bazar. Bathing by males is done in the open space outside the houses. Women of course bathe either in closed sheds outside the house, or inside the house near the kitchen. Water is brought from the common water tap in the locality for drinking and other purposes. Although the houses are kept clean, due to lack of drainage facilities the water flowing out of the kitchen and bath shed forms a stream of dirty water and stagnates in a ditch in the centre of the street or road. The Mang Garodis in Hyderabad have built their dwellings on Government land and are constantly threatened with eviction by the authorities. They do not have a permanent abode and whenever they are asked to remove their sheds they readily oblige and go to some other corner till they are detected again and driven out.

**Food**

The staple food of Mang Garodis is *jonna rots* (Jowar bread) with onion or tamarind *chatney*. Rice is consumed occasionally along with some vegetable curry or *pappu* (dal). They relish all kinds of meat such as chicken, mutton, beef, pork, eggs and fish. They even consume the meat of animals like wild cats, lizards and jackals. They have no objection to consume the meat of animals that have died a natural death. They eat the leavings of almost all castes except Dakkalwars. They indulge excessively in alcoholic drinks. Their festival meal consists of a sweet dish and rice. Meat is consumed on the next day.

**Dress**

Men wear either a loin cloth (*iungi*) or a dhoti (*gochi pancha*) and a shirt. Elderly people wear turban as headgear. Underwears or knickers and banians are also used (Fig. 4). The elderly women wear their

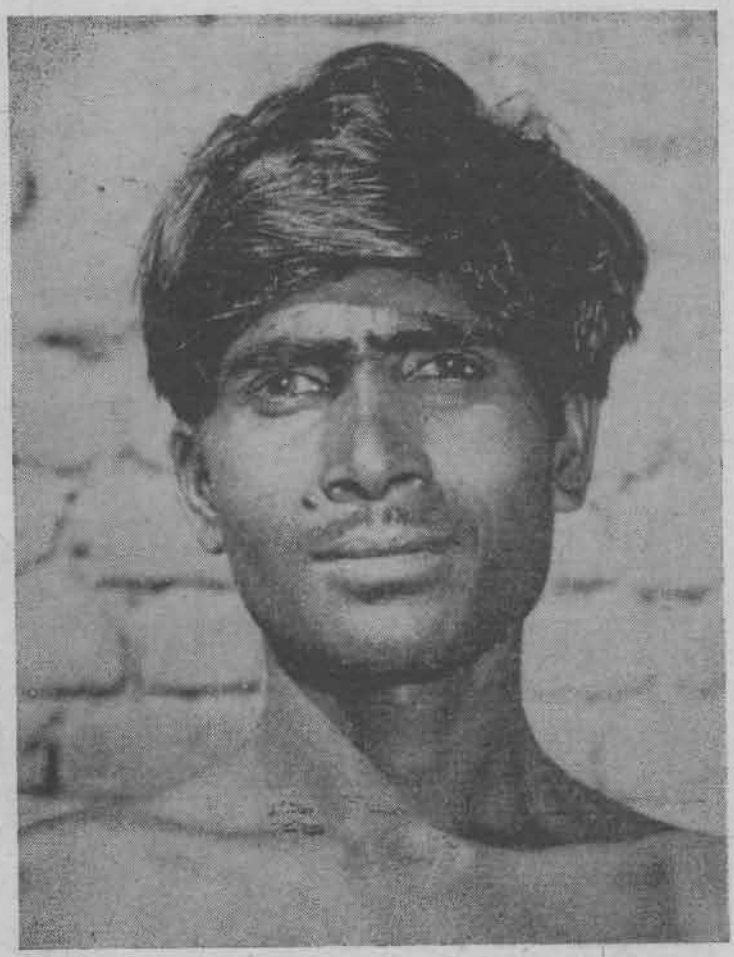


Fig. 1 Mang Garodi male

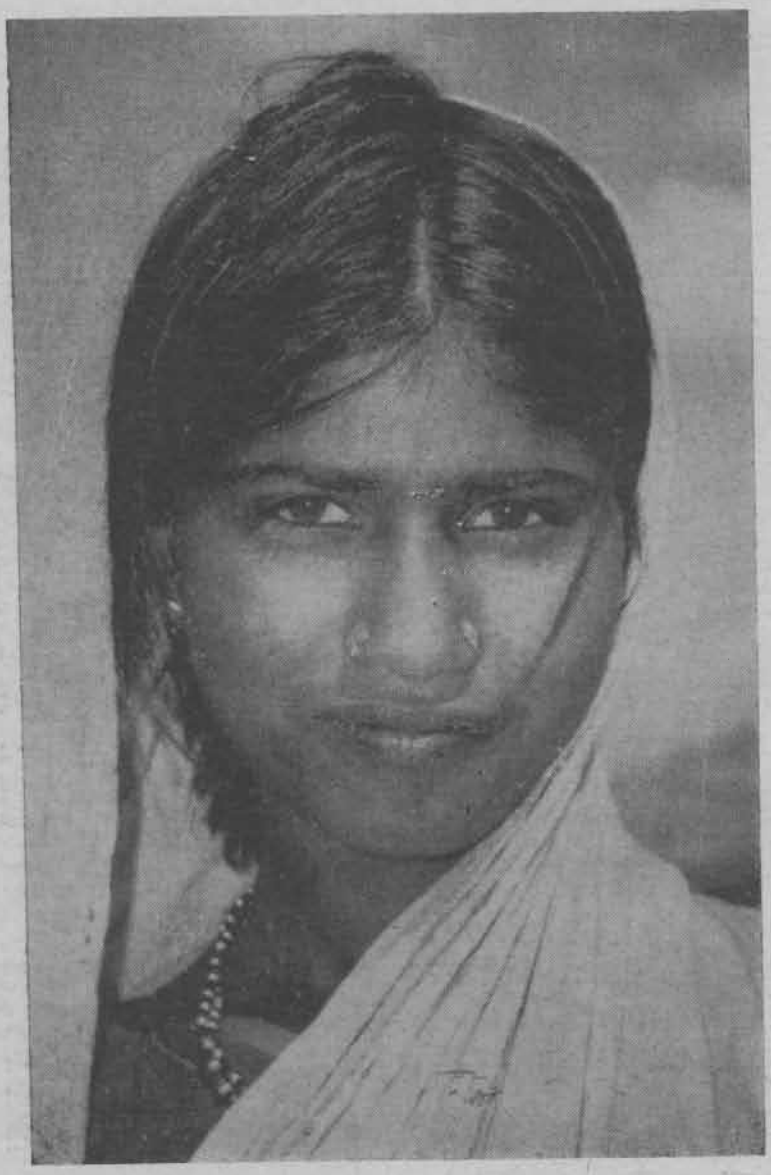


Fig. 2 Mang Garodi female



Fig. 3 Housing pattern among Mang Garodi

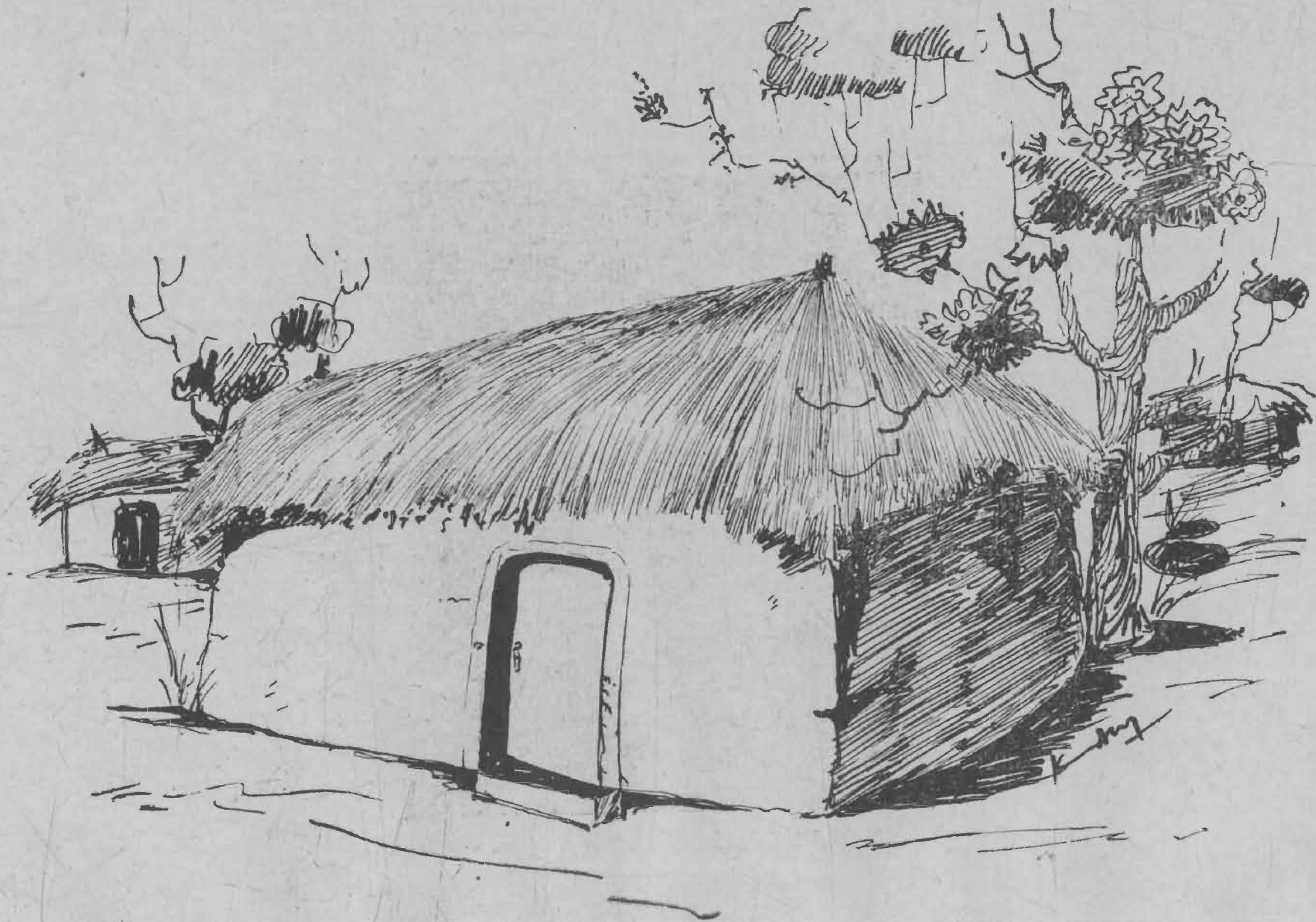


Fig. 3 A. Typical Hut of Mang Garodis

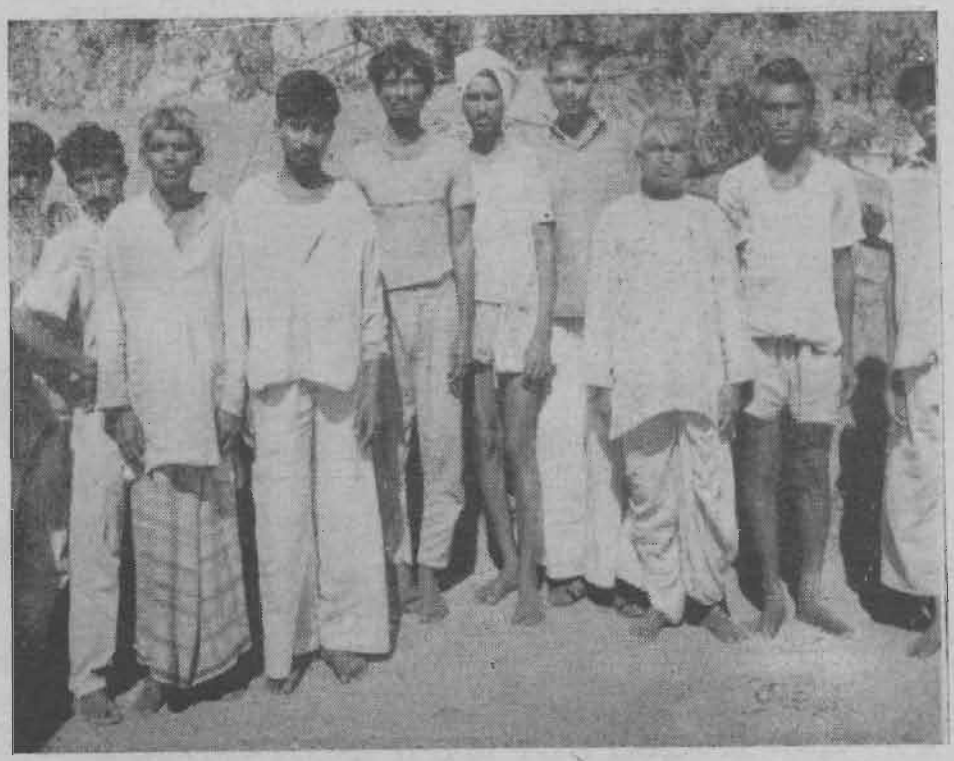


Fig. 4 Dress of males



Fig. 5 Dress of females



Fig. 6 Women's hair style

costumes after the Maratha fashion. (Fig. 5). The younger women wear saris and blouses in the Telugu fashion. Clothes are purchased normally once in an year for the entire family. Figure 6 shows the hair style of Mang Garodi woman.

**Ornaments**

Among Mang Garodis gold ornaments are not widely used because of their low economic condition. Only well to do women can afford to have gold ornaments. Generally the married women wear *puste* ( marriage locket) and *mattelu* (rings for toes). They wear chains and necklaces of black beads threaded to a strong fitting tight round their neck or hanging over their breast, and *sandalu* (big silver bangle) are worn around the wrist. The ordinary women wear brass bangles along with coloured glass bangles. They also wear rings of silver and brass on the fingers. They have the custom of tattooing the body which is done profusely on their arms, chest and forehead for both men and women. It is purely decorative in purpose and does not carry any religious significance. The figures generally selected for tattooing are scorpion, snake and figures of Rana Pratap and Ranjit Singh and important heroes of Maharashtra. This act of tattooing the figures of heroes indicates their reverence towards them and the prevalence of hero worship.

**Hygienic Habits**

During the field work it is observed that environmental sanitation and hygiene are very unsatisfactory among Mang Garodis. By looking at the surroundings and the houses in which they are living it is observed that they are an unclean type of people and do not bathe for days together. Neither do they apply oil to their hair regularly nor dress it properly. The men are in the habit of smoking *beedis* and cigarettes. Some of them chew *pan* and tobacco also. Most of the women chew *pan*. Drinking is a regular habit with many old men and a few women. They do not play any games. Children play *goli* and *baddikaya* and during winter fly kites. Mang Garodis do not know *bhajanalu* and *harikathalu*. They occasionally play cards. They visit cinema houses now and then and it can be said that it is the only entertainment they enjoy.

**Languages and Education**

The mother tongue of Mang Garodis is Marathi. Being residents of Hyderabad, they freely converse in Urdu and Hindi also. They have a little knowledge of Telugu. In Hassan's work it is stated that Mang Garodis also, just as any criminal tribe, have their own 'flash-slang'. But no such thing was observed during case studies.

It is seen from the 1961 Census figures that all the Mang Garodis in Andhra Pradesh were returned as illiterates. Even though most of them are living in urban areas where ample opportunities for education are available, it may be only to their indifference that they remained illiterate. However, according to the case studies conducted in December, 1962, out of the total 68 persons interviewed (35 males and 33 females) 10 persons (8 males and 2 females) are literates without educational level and 3 males have acquired the Primary or Junior Basic standard of education. It is observed during the field study that some of them are eager to send their children to schools and have begun to do so recently.

**Economic Life**

Though Mang Garodis were depicted as the followers of their traditional occupations like snake-charming, mat making, buffalo-shaving and some of them were acrobats in the past, at present they know buffalo-shaving only which is still considered to be their traditional occupation. But this cannot obviously give whole time work and therefore in addition to this they also undertake labour of all types during slack season. Case studies also reveal that the sole possession of a few Mang Garodis is one or two buffaloes. The following statement shows the occupational distribution of Mang Garodis according to the 1961 Census and the case studies.

STATEMENT II

OCCUPATION OF MANG GARODIS

| Occupation | MANG GORODIS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS | | | |
| I. Cultivation . . . . | .. | .. | .. |
| II. Agricultural labour . . | 1 | 1 | .. |
| III. Mining, Quarrying, etc. . | .. | .. | .. |
| IV. Household Industry . . | 3 | 3 | .. |
| V. Manufacturing other than Household Industry. | 2 | 2 | .. |
| VI. Construction . . . . | 5 | .. | 5 |

STATEMENT II—(*concld.*)

OCCUPATIONS OF MANG GARODIS

| Occupation | MANG GARODIS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| VII. Trade and Commerce . . | 1 | 1 | .. |
| VIII. Transport, Storage and Communications. | .. | .. | .. |
| IX. Other Services . . . | 25 | 14 | 11 |
| Total Workers . . . | 37 | 21 | 16 |
| X. Non-workers . . . . | 86 | 31 | 55 |
| **Grand Total** . | 123 | 52 | 71 |
| *Special Occupations (included in workers)* | | | |
| 1. Tanning . . . . | | 1 | .. |
| 2. Scavenging . . . . | | 4 | .. |
| ACCORDING TO CASE STUDIES | | | |
| 1. Labourers . . . . | 23 | 7 | 16 |
| 2. Playing musical instruments . | 11 | 11 | .. |
| 3. Boot polishing . . . | 2 | 2 | .. |
| 4. Trade in buffaloes. . . | 1 | 1 | .. |
| 5. Beggars . . . . . | 4 | 4 | .. |
| Non-workers . . . . | 27 | 10 | 17 |
| **Grand Total** | 68 | 35 | 33 |

According to the 1961 Census 30.1% of Mang Garodis are workers, 40.39% among males and 22.53% among females. Most of the workers are engaged in other services, probably as general labourers. There is only one man who is engaged in agricultural labour and three males are occupied in household industry. There are no cultivators, as most of them are residing in urban areas. One male is engaged in tanning and four males are found in the occupation of scavenging. Though it is not their traditional occupation, these four males might have taken up scavenging due to their inability to do any other work. During the case studies no one is found engaged in scavenging and it is said that the Mang Garodis engaged in scavenging are looked down by others of the community because of the type of work they do. The proportion of non-workers is 69.9%. There are more non-workers among females than among males. Among Mang Garodis covered by the case studies in Hyderabad city (total 68, out of which 35 are males, 33 females) 23 persons are *labourers (7 Males + 16 females). Eleven males* earn by playing musical instruments during marriage ceremonies. Two males are engaged in boot polishing and one person is a dealer in buffaloes and his business is to buy and sell buffaloes. Four males are beggars and the rest 27 (10 males+17 females) are non-workers. Those who are engaged in a particular type of work may be doing other types of work also on a part time basis or as subsidiary occupations. The main occupation of this caste is shaving of buffaloes. They keep sharp knives by which they shave the hair on the skin of the buffaloes. They are paid for this act 37 to 50 paise for each buffalo. This activity is strictly confined only to Mang Garodis and no other caste normally undertakes this job. Those who work as labourers get Rs. 1.50 or Rs. 2 per day. The boot polisher earns nearly a rupee per day. Some aged people resort to begging too. It is clear from the above that their income is too meagre to meet the expenditure that city living involves. The following statement shows the family budgets of the twelve Mang Garodi families investigated during the field study.

STATEMENT III

FAMILY BUDGETS OF MANG GARODI HOUSEHOLDS IN THE CITY AREA OF HYDERABAD FROM JANUARY, 1961 to DECEMBER, 1962

| Sl. No. | Name of head of household | BUDGET PROVISION | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Income (Rs.) | Debt when taken (Rs.) | Expenditure in Rupees | | | | |
| | | | | Total | Food | Fuel or lighting | Clothing | Miscellaneous |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| 1. | Kamle Sarja . . . . . | 540 | 250 (2 years back) | 542 | 400 | 27 | 35 | 80 |
| 2. | Kamle Master . . . . . | 480 | 250 (current year) | 730 | 300 | 40 | 30 | 360 |
| 3. | Kamle Narayan . . . . . | 480 | 300 | 461 | 300 | 40 | 50 | 71 |
| 4. | Kamle Gangaram . . . . . | 900 | .. | 934 | 420 | 84 | 60 | 370 |

STATEMENT III—(*concld.*)

| Sl. No. | Name of head of household | BUDGET PROVISION | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Income (Rs.) | Debt when taken (Rs.) | Expenditure in Rupees | | | | |
| | | | | Total | Food | Fuel or lighting | Clothing | Miscellaneous |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 5. | Upade Seetha | 900 | .. | 905 | 600 | 35 | 160 | 110 |
| 6. | Kasab Irkana Bhai | 1,250 | 100 (1 year back) | 1,210 | 900 | 35 | 50 | 225 |
| 7. | Kamle Ganapathi | 900 | 150 (current year) | 1,057 | 700 | 52 | 45 | 260 |
| 8. | Hathagadi Marothi | 640 | 100 (current year) | 767 | 550 | 52 | 50 | 115 |
| 9. | Kamle Gulchand | 750 | .. | 832 | 600 | 62 | 50 | 120 |
| 10. | Upade Hiralal | 700 | .. | 782 | 550 | 62 | 50 | 120 |
| 11. | Kamle Sugram | 430 | .. | 462 | 350 | 32 | 40 | 40 |
| 12. | Kamle Babu Rao | 980 | .. | 1,160 | 900 | 40 | 70 | 50 |

The statement shows that six households have incurred debt. Three of these households have annual incomes of about Rs. 500 each; one household has an annual income of Rs. 640 and the income of the remaining two households is Rs. 900 or more. The households with lower income have incurred larger debts. The amount of debt ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 300 in the six households. In many cases the debts were incurred for celebrating marriages and in a few cases for meeting the daily expenditure of the families. It may be noted in this context that most of them are unable to report correct figures of income and expenditure and hence they should be treated as very approximate.

## LIFE CYCLE

### Birth

The pregnant woman either goes to her parents' house for confinement or stays at her husband's house. In case where the parents of the woman live at a different place from that of the husband, the confinement usually takes place at her husband's house in view of the expenditure involved if she is to be taken to her parents' home. It is further observed that alliances of marriage also are not, normally, negotiated with the people outside their locality. A ceremony for the expectant mother is celebrated during the 7th month and it is usually observed for the first delivery. Some do not celebrate it even for the first one due to their poverty. The parents give the expectant mother a new saree and a blouse piece on this occasion. They do not go to hospitals for delivery. Usually some experienced old lady of their own caste assists in all cases of delivery and no payment is made to her. Bath is given to the mother and the child on the 4th day after delivery. The *purutlu* ceremony is performed on 9th or 11th day after which pollution ceases. They do not perform any elaborate functions to mark this ceremony. Giving bath to the delivered women and sprinkling of water in the house will ward off pollution. Naming ceremony is usually performed on the 21st day after the delivery. It is not performed for a motherless child. Some of their common names of males are Sarja, Saini, Marothi, Gulchand, etc. and those of females are Lakhmi Bhai, Seeta and Irkana Bhai. For an outsider it is difficult to know the sex by their names.

### Puberty

A girl is treated as grown up when she is found in her first menstruation and this matter is intimated to all their nearest relatives. This function is limited to the womenfolk only. The girl is segregated for nine days in a separate room or in a part of the house separated by a *thatti* or a screen. During this period she is neither allowed to work nor touch anybody. On the 10th day she is given bath which marks the end of pollution. In the evening women are invited for *nalugu* when gingelly oil or coconut oil is applied to the arms and face of the girl and then the flour of blackgram or greengram and rice mixed with water is applied. The girl is given head-bath and clad in new clothes. On this occasion the girl's parents present a new saree or a *patta* (half saree) to her. From the day of her first menstruation she is not allowed to mingle with the other men of her caste. No special feast is arranged on the day of her purificatory bath

**Marriage**

Although caste endogamy is there, clan exogamy necessitates that the bride and bridegroom should come from different families. Among Mang Garodi there are two types of marriages on the basis of the initiative taken by the persons to celebrate the ceremony. In the first case the parents take the initiative and in the other the younger generation or the partners take the initiative. According to the informants the first one is preferred and it is called marriage by negotiation. But in the case of widows and divorced women who are allowed to remarry the first type of marriage is not applicable.

**Marriage by negotiation**

If a man wants to get married he has to observe some formalities. The main thing is that he has to pay the bride price locally known as *voli*. The *voli* is usually fixed at Rs. 200. But it may vary from family to family and from time to time. Among Mang Garodis the actual performance of the ceremony is very simple. If both parties agree to the normal condition of the stipulated amount, a go-between is sent to the bridge's party with some presents on an auspicious day by the groom's party to inform them about the matter. If the bride's party accepts the present then it is an indication of their willingness to the alliance. The presents offered by the groom's party are simple things like sweets or liquor. The marriage generally takes place at the bride's house. They erect a pandal and engage musical instruments for the occasion.

They do not chant any *mantramutu*. An elderly man of the caste directs the function. The bridegroom ties the marriage locket and the necklace of black beads round the neck of the bride. Toe rings of silver or brass are also presented to the bride. No presents are made to the couple. Immediately after the solemnisation of the marriage, the bride and bridegroom pour rice on each other's head and this ceremony is known as *talambralu*. That evening the newly wedded couple are taken around in the streets in procession. The procession goes upto the temple of Gooddess Maremma. The marriage takes place for four days. But there is no restriction with regard to this period. Some poor families complete it within one or two days. A feast is given to all the relatives on the marriage day. The important item would be mutton of goat or sheep besides liquor. The normal expenditure for a marriage varies from Rs. 400 to Rs. 600.

If the girl has attained puberty the consummation ceremony takes place on the same night or the following night. Otherwise it is postponed till she attains puberty. Usually girls are married only after the attainment of puberty. The normal age of marriage for girls is between 13 and 18 and for boys between 20 and 25 years. Polygamy is allowed but not prevalent. Polyandry is not in vogue.

**Widow remarriage**

Widow remarriage is in practice, subject to the approval of the Caste Panchayat. Widow marriage is celebrated in a very simple manner. The bride price (*voli*) will be only half of the original bride price. A divorced woman may marry again as a widow; but she forfeits the custody of all children born to her from first husband. If a woman illtreated by her husband, wants to remarry a man of her choice, the man is not allowed to claim her unless he pays to her first husband half the original amount of bride price paid by him at the time of the first marriage. The following statement gives the distribution of Mang Garodi according to marital status by sex and age groups.

STATEMENT IV

MARITAL STATUS OF MANG GARODI ACCORDING TO THE 1961 CENSUS

| Age group | MARITAL STATUS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | | | Never married | | Married | | Widowed | | Divorced | |
| | P | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 0-14 | 70 | 30 | 40 | 28 | 39 | 2 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 15-44 | 41 | 19 | 22 | 3 | .. | 15 | 17 | 1 | 5 | .. | .. |
| 45 and over | 12 | 3 | 9 | .. | .. | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | .. | .. |
| GRAND TOTAL | 123 | 52 | 71 | 31 | 39 | 18 | 22 | 3 | 10 | .. | .. |



Fig. 7 Goddess Chandra Bagh

It may be observed that child marriages are rare and no divorce case was reported among Mang Garodis during the 1961 Census.

**Death**

The dead are buried. The corpse is given bath with warm water and is decorated with new clothes and *tilak* (vermilion mark) on the forehead. It is carried by four people on a bier to the burial ground. It is kept on the ground just before they reach the burial ground, to remove the clothes on the body. The persons carrying it exchange sides and again carry it to the burial ground. A pit is dug by their own caste members and the corpse is kept in a lying posture with head pointing to the south and earth is covered. Tombs are constructed with earth after two or three months. Mourning is observed for 7 or 9 days. The obsequies are observed for seven days and they are generally performed by the eldest son of the family. The final ceremony takes place on the 7th day. They invite relatives and a non-vegetarian feast is arranged and then they indulge in drinking also. No annual ceremonies are performed. They have no ideas of hell or heaven. No priest attends to officiate over these ceremonies.

**Widowhood**

A woman after the death of her husband is not allowed to wear *tilak* and *puste*, necklace of black beads and bangles which are considered to be the symbols of married status. When she gets remarried, of course, she is allowed to wear them again.

**Religion**

Being Hindus they worship all Hindu Gods. They have particular reverence for Narasimhaswamy and Venkateswara. Some of them go to the temple of Narasimhaswamy at Yadagirigutta in Nalgonda district once in a year. They also worship spirits and village deities like Chandra Bagh, Maremma and Pochamma. The temple of Goddess Chandra Bagh is shown in the figure 7. No idol or photo of God is kept in their homes. They have a temple of Maremma in their locality and once in a week they go and worship the deity, especially during epidemics. They celebrate the Maremma *jatara* at the temple of Maremma in their locality once in a year or once in two years by collecting money from each household. They purchase a goat or sheep, sacrifice it to the deity and enjoy a feast with the meat. They pay much reverence to leaders like Chatrapathi Shivaji and Rana Pratap, Ranjit Sigh, etc., and they get these figures of great men tattooed on their chests. The Mang Garodis seem to be somewhat animistic in their notions. The tiger is held in special reverence by them and no member will either injure or kill it. An oath by the dog is deemed sacred and binding. But no informant is able to tell why they show reverence towards these animals. Mang Garodis celebrate all Hindu festivals, imporant among them being Dasara, Divali and Ugadi. They celebrate these festivals according to their capacity and cannot give due importance to each occasion wing to their poverty. On every festival day they enjoy a feast. Though they do not take rice and prepare vegetable curry and a sweet dish like *paramannam* or *purnam*. Meat is consumed the next day. They purchase mutton from a shop as per the family's requirements. Well-to-do people purchase new clothes during Dasara festival.

Mang Garodis celebrate the Muslim festival '*Moharram*' also due to their long association with and living amidst Muslims in and near about Hyderabad city. They indulge in heavy drinking and enjoy the festival along with Muslims. In fact they show great reverence to the *pirs* (martyrs) and hold them as great heroes of Mohammadan mythology.

**Social Control and Leadership**

Being residents of city area the Mang Garodis of Hyderabad do not come under any village Panchayat. However, they have got their own *Kula* Panchayat which consists of each family head and is presided over by a head known as *Chowdary*. His advice and guidance, decisions and judgment are respected and he is the head of the caste for all purposes. He decides over individual quarrels and disputes, divorce and such other rifts among the caste members. The intra-household relationship is quite harmonious. Each family, for the purpose of domestic requirements often depends upon other families of the caste. The inter-communal relationship is also harmonious. The higher Hindu castes like Brahmins, Vaisyas and Reddis do not take water or food from the hands of Mang Garodis. Other castes like, Mehtar, Mochi or Muchi and Mutracha accept food and water from Mang Garodis and *vice versa*. The neighbouring community *viz.*, Muslims, freely mingle with them and they all live in a cordial atmosphere. No restrictions of any sort are imposed upon them. They get water from the street tap. Since it is a city area they enter saloons, laundries and hotels and have the services of all caste people.

**Inter-community Relationship**

Regarding their social status Syed Siraj-ul-Hassan observes:

"Mang Garodis occupy the lowest position in the Hindu social system, being only higher, in social rank, to Dakalwars who are their genealogists and eat from their hand. Their touch is regarded as impure and neither the village barber nor the village washerman will work for them..... They freely indulge in strong drinks". (Hassan, Vol. I. P. 472)

This may be true regarding those who live in villages. As already stated so far as Hyderabad city is concerned where case studies are conducted, these practices do not exist. The people under the influence of city life are found in a milieu in which social distinction is noticed very little. Most of them are anxious to educate their children. No criminal propensities are observed among them and they are trying to live on peaceful pursuits. But many ameliorative and other measures have to be taken to bring this lowest class of Hindu society to stand on a par with the advanced classes.

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# MANG GARODI

AN EXTRACT FROM "THE CASTES AND TRIBES OF H.E.H. THE NIZAMS DOMINIONS" BY SYED SIRAJ-UL-HASSAN, VOL. I, (BOMBAY, 1920,) PP. 469-472

Mang Garodi, Rangidas Garodi, Firaste Mang, Pendhari Mang, Philwan—a wandering tribe of acrobats and mat-makers found in the districts of Aurangabad, Bir, Parbhani, Usmanabad and Bidar. They profess to be a branch of the Mang caste of Maharashtra, but are disowned by the latter and except in name, appear to have no connection with them. They move in gangs, from village to village, carrying their tents, goods and chatels on the backs of bullocks and barren cow-buffaloes. They generally encamp on the outskirts of villages, pitching their 'pals' (huts) of bamboo mats with openings on all sides and with roofs covered with grass.

*Physical Characteristics and Habits.*—The men are strong and well set up and wear, like gymnasts, tight short drawers, a waist band and a carelessly folded rag as head gear. The women are very violent and quarrelsome. Their costume resembles that worn by Maratha females. They wear bangles on their wrists, brass ear-rings in their ears and bead necklaces round their necks. Their hair is never combed nor oiled and lies in dishevelled locks. Both men and women are dark in complexion and extremely dirty, not bathing for days together. They are considered to be habitual criminals and cattle lifters and are, consequently, under the strict surveillance of the police. Their home tongue is Marathi but, like other criminal tribes, they have a flash-slang of their own. It is customary among the males never to shave their heads after marriage but to allow the hair to grow on to the end of their lives.

*Internal structure.*—Mang Garodis have several denominations. They are called Rangidas Garodis, as they colour their bodies before exhibiting acrobatic feats. Their name 'Firaste' indicates their roving habits and the name Pendhari refers to their criminal prospensities; being athletes, they are known as Pahilwans.

The caste has no endogamous divisions. The exogamous divisions are based upon family names, some of which appear to resemble those of the Maratha Kunbis. Their exogamous sections are:—

(1) *Sakat*
(2) *Kasab*
(3) *Hatakale*
(4) *Jade*
(5) *Uphade*
(6) *Kamble*
(7) *Dehade*
(8) *Made*
(9) *Gade*
(10) *Londe*
(11) *Omap*
(12) *Fasge*
(13) *Bodke*
(14) *Ukarde*
(15) *Gaikawad*
(16) *Hatagle*

Excepting the Bodkes, all other families interdine and intermarry. The rule of exogamy is strictly observed and a man is forbidden to marry a girl bearing his own surnames. Two sisters may be married to the same man. In matters of prohibited degrees they follow the same laws as the other Maratha castes.

Mang Garodis admit into their community members of other castes higher than themselves in social rank. No ceremony is observed on this occasion.

Mang Garodis marry their daughters either as infants or as adults, between the ages of 2 and 20. Sexual intercourse before marriage is tolerated and if a girl becomes pregnant, her seducer is compelled to marry her. Pollygamy is recognised and a man is allowed to have as many wives as he can afford to maintain.

*Marriage.*—The marriage ceremony is very simple. A sheep or a fowl is killed as a sacrifice to their patron deity and the bride, dressed in green, and wearing green bangles and a black bead necklace, is taken to the wedding 'pal'. There the couple are made to stand face to face in bamboo baskets, a cloth is held between them and they are wedded with the sprinkling of grains over their heads. No Brahman attends the ceremony, but the functions of the priest are discharged by the caste elders. A bride-price amounting to Rs. 10 is paid to the parents of the girl.

*Widow-marriage and Divorce.*—Widows are allowed to marry again and divorce is recognised. A divorced wife may marry again by the same rite as widows; but she forfeits the custody of all children she may have had by her first husband.

*Inheritance.*—In point of inheritance, Mang Garodis follow their own tribal usage. The price received for a girl becomes the property of her father and, failing him, it is divided equally among her brothers.

*Religion.*—Like other nomad tribes, Mang Garodis are still animistic in their beliefs and worship ghosts, evil spirits and the gods of diseases, the chief of whom is Mari Ai, or the goddess that presides over cholera.

When an epidemic breaks out in the camp, the goddess is worshipped with great pomp by the members of the caste. Bull, buffaloes are sacrificed at her altar. The heads are buried before the shrine of the goddess and the trunks and limbs are cooked and eaten by her votaries. Under the influence of Brahmanism their primitive beliefs are undergoing a change and they now pay devotion to the gods of the Hindu pantheon. Khandoba is regarded by the caste as their patron deity and the dog, the emblem of the god, is worshipped by each householder on the light 6 th of Margashirsha, when onions, brinjals and molasses are offered to the god and the caste people are feasted in his name. They pay reverence also to deified Mohammadan saints and martyrs (*Pirs*). The tiger is held in special reverence and no member will either injure or kill this wildbeast. An oath by the dog is deemed sacred and binding.

*Disposal of the dead.*—The dead are buried in a lying posture with the head pointing to the west. The grave is circular and at the bottom a niche is cut for the reception of the head and the chest. The body, after being smeared with oil and washed with water, is carried to the grave by two men in a cloth bag called a '*zoli*'. The body being lowered into the grave and the head and the chest of the corpse placed in the niche, the grave is filled in; the mourners bathe, hold grass in their mouths and return home. On the 3rd day after death three wheaten cakes are deposited on the top of the grave, one just over the head of the corpse, a second over the middle part and the third over its feet. On the 9th day, jaggery is distributed and a funeral feast is provided for caste breathren. Ancestors in general are propitiated once a year, when a new earthen pot is set up to represent them and is worshipped with the sacrifice of a fowl. Mourning is observed seven days by some and nine days by others, no definite rule being prescribed on this point.

*Social status.*—Mang Garodis occupy the lowest position in the Hindu social system, being only higher, in social rank, than Dakalwars, who are their genealogists and eat from their hands. Their touch is regarded as very impure and neither the village barber nor the village washerman will work for theme. In matters of diet they have few scruples and eat beef, pork, mutton, fowl, wild cats, jackals, lizards and animals that have died a natural death. They eat the leavings of all castes, except the Dakalwars. They freely indulge in strong drinks.

*Occupation.*—As acrobats, Mang Garodis perform in the streets and entertain their audience by vaulting, tumbling throwing summersaults and exhibiting other physical feats. They also make bamboo mats, brooms and ropes and are occasionally engaged as farm labourers and in sinking wells. As already mentioned, they are looked upon by the police as cattle lifters and highway robbers and are not allowed to move from one place to another without a surveillance pass. This stringent measure seems to be producing the desired effect, as great numbers of them have repressed their criminal habits and are settling down to peaceful pursuits.

# MANG GARODI

AN EXTRACT FROM R. V. RUSSEL, THE TRIBES AND CASTES OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA (VOL. IV 1916, PP. 189-193.)

*Mang-Garori*—This is a criminal sub-division of the Mang caste, residing principally in Berar. They were not separately recorded at the census. The name Garori appears to be a corruption of Garudi, and signifies a snake-charmer. Garuda, the Brahminy kite, the bird on which Vishnu rides, as the great subduer of snakes, and hence probably snake-charmers are called Garudi. Some of the Mang-Garoris are snake-charmers, and this may have been the original occupation of the caste, though the bulk of them now appear to live by dealing in cattle and thieving. The following notice of them is abstracted from Major Gunthorpe's *Notes on Criminal Tribes.* They usually travel about with small *pals* or tents, taking their wives, children, buffaloes and dogs with them. The men are well set up and tall. Their costume is something like that worn by professional gymnasts, consisting of light and short reddish-brown drawers (*chaddi*), a waistband with fringe at either end (*Katchhe*), and a sheet thrown over the shoulders. The Naik or headman of the camp may be recognised by his wearing some red woollen cloth about his person or a red shawl over his shoulders. The women have short *saris* (body-cloths), usually of blue, and tied in the Telugu fashion. They are generally very violent when any attempt is made to search an encampment, especially if there is stolen property concealed in it. Instances have been known of their seizing their infants by the ankles and swinging them round their heads, declaring they would continue doing so till the children died, if the police did not leave the camp. Sometimes also the women of a gang have been known to throw off all their clothing and appear in a perfect state of nudity, declaring they would charge the police with violating their modesty. Men of this tribe are expert cattle-lifters, but confine themselves chiefly to buffaloes, which they steal while out grazing and very dexterously disguise by trimming the horns and fring, so as to avoid recognition by their rightful owners. To steal goats and sheep is also one of their favourite occupations, and they will either carry the animals off from their pens at night or kill them while out grazing, in the following manner; having marked a sheep or goat which is feeding farthest away from the flock, the thief awaits his opportunity till the shepherd's back is turned, when the animal is quickly captured. Placing his foot on the back of the neck near the head, and seizing it under the chin with his right hand, the thief breaks the animal's neck by a sudden jerk; he then throws the body into a bush or in some dip in the ground to hide it, and walks away, watching from a distance. The shepherd, ignorant of the loss of one of his animals, goes on leisurely driving his flock before him, and when he is well out of sight the Mang-Garori removes the captured carcase to his encampment. Great care is taken that the skin, horns and hoofs should be immediately burnt so as to aviod detection. Their ostensible occupation is to trade in barren half-starved buffaloes and buffalo calves, or in country ponies. They also purchase from Gaoli herdsmen barren buffaloes, which they proves to be able to make fertile; if successful they return them for double the purchase-money, but if not, having obtained if possible some earnest-money, they abscond and self the animals at a distance. Like the Bhamtas, the Mang-Garoris, Major Gunthorpee states, make it a rule not to give a girl in marriage until the intended husband has proved himself an efficient thief. Mr. Gayer writes as follows of the caste; "I do not think Major Gunthrope lays sufficient emphasis on the part taken by the women in crimes, for they apparently do by far the major part of the thieving. Sherring says the men never commit house-breaking and very seldom rob on the highway; he calls them 'wanderers, showmen, jugglers and conjurors', and describes them as robbers who get their information by performing before the houses of rich bankers and others. Mang-Garori women steal in markets and other places of public resort. They wait to see somebody put down his clothes or bag of rupees and watch till his attention is attracted elsewhere, when walking up quietly between the article and its owner, they drop their petticoat either over or by it, and manage to transfer the stolen property into their basket while picking up the petticoat. If an unfavourable omen occurs on the way when the women set out to pilfer they place a stone on the ground and dash another on to it saying, "If the obstacle is removed, break"; if the stone struck is broken, they consider that the obstacle protended by the unfavourable omen is re-

moved from their path, and proceed on their way; but if not, they return. Stolen articles are often barterred at liquor-shops for drink, and the Kalars act as receivers of stolen property for the Mang-garoris."

The following are some particulars taken from an old account of the Criminal Mangs: Their leader or headman was called the *naik* and was elected by a majority of votes, though considerable regard was paid to heredity. The *naik's* person and property were alike inviolable; after a successful foray each of the gang contributed a quarter of his share to the *naik*, and from the fund thus made up were defrayed the expenses of preparation, religious offerings and the triumphal feast. A pair of shoes were usually given to a Brahman and alms to the poor. To each band was attached an informer, who was also receiver of the stolen goods. These persons were usually bangle or perfume-sellers or jewellers. In this capacity they were admitted into the women's apartments and so enabled to form a correct notion of the topography of a house and a shrewd guess as to the wealth of its inmates. Like all barbarous tribes and all persons addicted to criminal practices the Mangs were extremely superstitious. They never set out on an expedition on a Friday. After the birth of a child the mother and another women stood on opposite sides of the cradle, and the former tossed her child to the other, commending it to the mercy of Jai Gopal, and waited to receive it back in like manner in the name of Jai Govind. Both Gopal and Govind are names of Krishna. The Mangs usually married young in life. If a girl happened to hang heavy on hand she was married at the age of puberty to the deity. In other words, she was attached as a prostitute to the temple of the god Khandoba or the goddess Yellamma. Those belonging to the service of the latter were wont in the month of February to parade the streets in a state of utter nudity. When a bachelor wished to marry a widow he was first united to a swallow-wort plant, and this was immediately dug up and transplanted, and withering away left him at liberty to marry the widow. If a lady survived the sorrow caused by the death of two or three husbands she could not again enter the holy state unless she consented to be married with a fowl under her armpit; the unfortunate bird being afterwards killed to appease the manes of her former consorts.

# DHOR

**(SCHEDULED CASTE)**

# DHOR

**Name, Identity, Origin and History**

Dhor is a Maratha Caste which is found to a large extent in Telangana ditricts of Andhra Pradesh which are adjacent to the Maharashtra State. The Status of Dhor is different in different censuses. It was grouped under Depressed classes in 1921 (Hyderabad State Part I, p. 231). In 1931 it was shown under Adi-Hindus (Hyderabad State, Part I, p. 260). The same was included under Harijan in 1941 (Hyderabad State, Part I, p. 220). In 1951 Census, it was declared as Scheduled Caste according to the President's Order of 1950. It retained the same status according to President's Modification Order of 1956. Dhors are declared as Scheduled Caste in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Mysore besides Andhra Pradesh. The present field study is conducted in the village of Pastapur, Ranzol, Hoti-B and Gunjotti in Zahirabad taluk of Medak district during 1962. Dhors are tanners and leather workers. E. Thurston reports Dhor as: "a low caste af Marathi leather workers" (E. Thurston, Vol. II. p. 170).

Hassan writes about Dhor as:

"The tanner caste of the Maratha districts, numero s also in all parts of the Carnatic, in a smaller number, in some parts of Telangana". (Hassan, Vol I. P. 171).

The name of the caste is implicit in its occupation itself. The meaning of the Dhor is 'thorned cattle'. Hassan also expresses the same view that the name Dhor :

"is doubtless bestowed upon this caste with reference to their occupation of tanning and dressing cattle skins."

Very little is known about their origin. Hassan writes :

"they appear to be degraded branch of the great Chambar caste of the Marathwada country" (Hassan, Vol.I, P. 171).

At present the Dhors do not agree with this view and in fact the social status of Dhors is superior to that of Chambar. According to Hassan, the Dhors are divided into five endogamous groups *viz.* (1) Range Dhor, (2) Budhale Dhor, (3) Kakayya Dhor, (4) Chambar Dhor and (5) Shadu Dhor. He gives the origin of each of these divisions in the following words :

"The Range Dhors claim the highest rank and appear to be the original stock from which the other sub-castes have branched. They derive their name from the Marathi 'Rangvine' meaning 'to dye', which refers to their occupation of staining hides. The Budhale Dhors, probably an offshoot from the Range Dhors, are so called because they make *budhales*, or leather jars, for clarified butter and oil. The mode of making a *budhale* is as follows: a piece of leather is closely set over an earthen mould of the size and shape of the jar required and the joints are cemented with a paste made from tamarind seeds. After the leather has taken the form of the mould and solidified, the earth is removed from inside. These leather jars were extensively used as convenient receptacles for carrying clarified butter and oil on bullocks, but since the opening of the railways, they have been replaced by tins and the *budhale* industry has almost died out. The *budhale* Dhors have now taken to tanning and currying skins, making Dholaks (drums), water bags, water buckets and other leather articles. The Kakayya Dhors trace their descent from one Kakayya, a disciple of Besave the founder of the Lingayit sect. Kakayya was originally a Range Dhor, but having embraced Lingaitism he was cut off from his community and became the founder of a new sub-caste. In addition to their own work of staining hides, the Kakayyas cobble old shoes and sometimes make new ones. The Chambar Dhor, as the name indicates, is a mixed sub-caste. It occupies a degraded position to both of them. The Chambar Dhors tan and stain hides, make shoes and water buckets and water bags. The Shadu Dhors are the illegitimate off spring of the Dhors, by Dhor women who have been degraded for some social offence". (Hassan, Vol. I, P. 171).

At present Dhor community in this State is known as Kakayya Dhor and all its members profess that they belong to 'Arya Dhors'. The above legend about their origin mentioned by Hassan is unknown to them. A popular story current among them, regarding the origin of Kakayya Dhors, goes thus. Once there was a divine cow, known as *Kamadhenu* which used to distribute its milk, curds etc., to the 70 crores of Devatallu. Once the caretaker of the cow while conducting her to the forest, got a fascinating idea of relishing her flesh. The thought itself, pious as the cow was, made her to sacrifice her fleshy body to fulfil his evil desire. Lord Siva visualised the fate of his sacred cow through his divine eye, within a few moments. All the 70 crores of Devatalu assembled there and began to eat her flesh. By the time Kakayya's (one of the Devatalu) turn came, there remained only the skin of the cow which he gladly accepted and cleared it. As all his followers prepared foot wear out of the leather flayed by Kakayya, they were and are still known as Kakayya. At one of the places in the surveyed area, it is found that there are Turaka (Muslim) Dhors also. These 'Turaka Dhors' who are Muslims by religion and tanners by occupation seem to have accepted the term Dhor to represent their profession.

**Clan, Analogous Divisions and Family**

According to Hassan there are 360 exogamous sections among Dhors which are either territorial or totemistic. He gives the names of 24 sections (Hassan, Vol. I, P. 172). The Dhors covered in the field study are ignorant of the sections given by Hassan. In the 1891 Census Caste Index apparently the same community is referred to as 'Dher' and its sub-castes are noted as Eipal and Lingadhari. Joint family system among Dhors exists but it is not compulsory for a married member to stay in the joint family. However, case studies in respect of eleven households revealed that there are joint* families and simple† families. Out of the eleven families surveyed eight families fall under the category of joint, and three are of the simple type. The average size of these families is eight. Figures 1 to 8 show male and female Dhors respectively.

**Distribution and Population Trends**

The population of Dhors for earlier decades is available for Hyderabad State from 1881 to 1931. But the figures are not furnished here because the figures for former Hyderabad State include the figures for many districts which now form a part of Maharashtra and the district-wise break up of the figures is not available for all the decades. During the ‡1891 Census, out of 9,155 Dhors in Hyderabad State only 9 Dhors were found in the Telangana districts of Hyderabad State. During the ‡‡1911 Census, out of 13,241 Dhors, in Hyderabad State only 1,078 Dhors were found in Telangana area.

There are 1, 926 Dhors according to the 1961 Census; they are exclusively found in Telangana Districts. Numerically Dhors form a very small proportion (0.04%) of the Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh State. In the total population of the State, the per centage of Dhor is 0.005. Of the total population of Dhors, 40.86% belong to rural areas and 59.14% are found in urban areas. The sex ratio among them works out to 969 females for every 1000 males. The following statement shows district-wise distribution of Dhors in the rural and urban areas according to the 1961 Census.

STATEMENT I

POPULATION OF DHORS

| State/District | DHORS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| *Andhra Pradesh* | | | |
| Total | 978 | 948 | 1,926 |
| Rural | 393 | 394 | 787 |
| Urban | 585 | 554 | 1,139 |
| *Mahbubnagar* | | | |
| Total | .. | 10 | 10 |
| Rural | .. | 10 | 10 |
| Urban | .. | .. | .. |
| *Hyderabad* | | | |
| Total | 335 | 371 | 756 |
| Rural | 96 | 75 | 171 |
| Urban | 289 | 296 | 585 |
| *Medak* | | | |
| Total | 253 | 250 | 503 |
| Rural | 171 | 163 | 334 |
| Urban | 82 | 87 | 169 |
| *Nizamabad* | | | |
| Total | 114 | 133 | 247 |
| Rural | 58 | 72 | 130 |
| Urban | 56 | 61 | 117 |
| *Adilabad* | | | |
| Total | 170 | 123 | 293 |
| Rural | 64 | 71 | 135 |
| Urban | 106 | 52 | 158 |
| *Karimnagar* | | | |
| Total | 54 | 61 | 115 |
| Rural | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Urban | 50 | 58 | 108 |
| *Khammam* | | | |
| Total | 2 | .. | 2 |
| Rural | .. | .. | .. |
| Urban | 2 | .. | 2 |

The Majority of Dhors live in urban areas. Their traditional occupation is tanning and leather working. The other important occupation is agricultural labour.

*Married couple with married sons/daughters or with married brothers/sisters.

†Consists of those individuals who are found together by a procreative urge and grouped their children into a protective-cum-productive association.

‡Census of India, 1891, Vol XXIII, His Highness the Nizam's Dominions, part II, Tables VII to XII, PP. 163, 174 and 175.

‡‡Census of India, 1911, Vol. XIX, Hyderabad State, part II, Imperial and Provincial Tables, PP. 131 and 133.

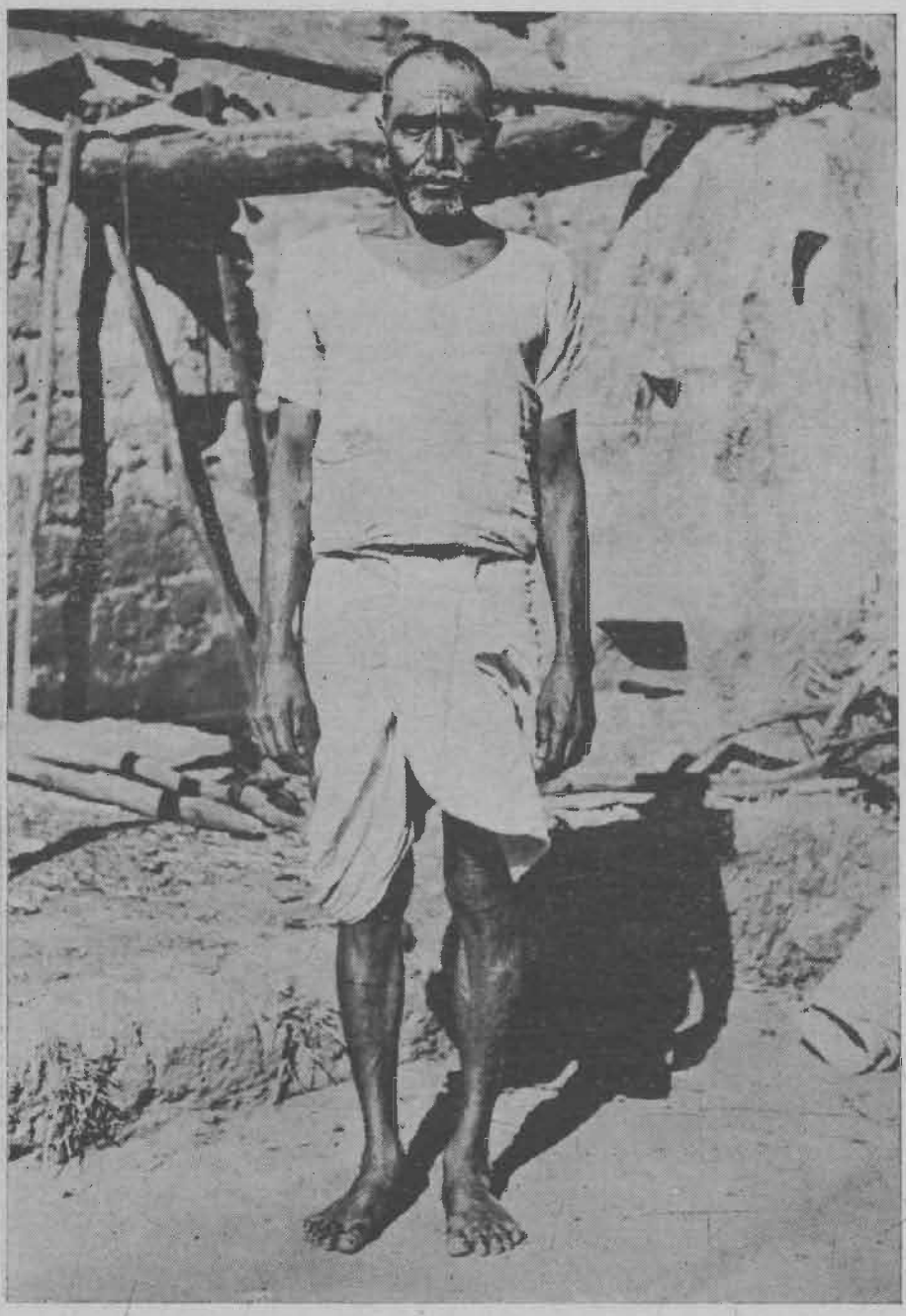


Fig. 1 A male Dhor aged about 60 years

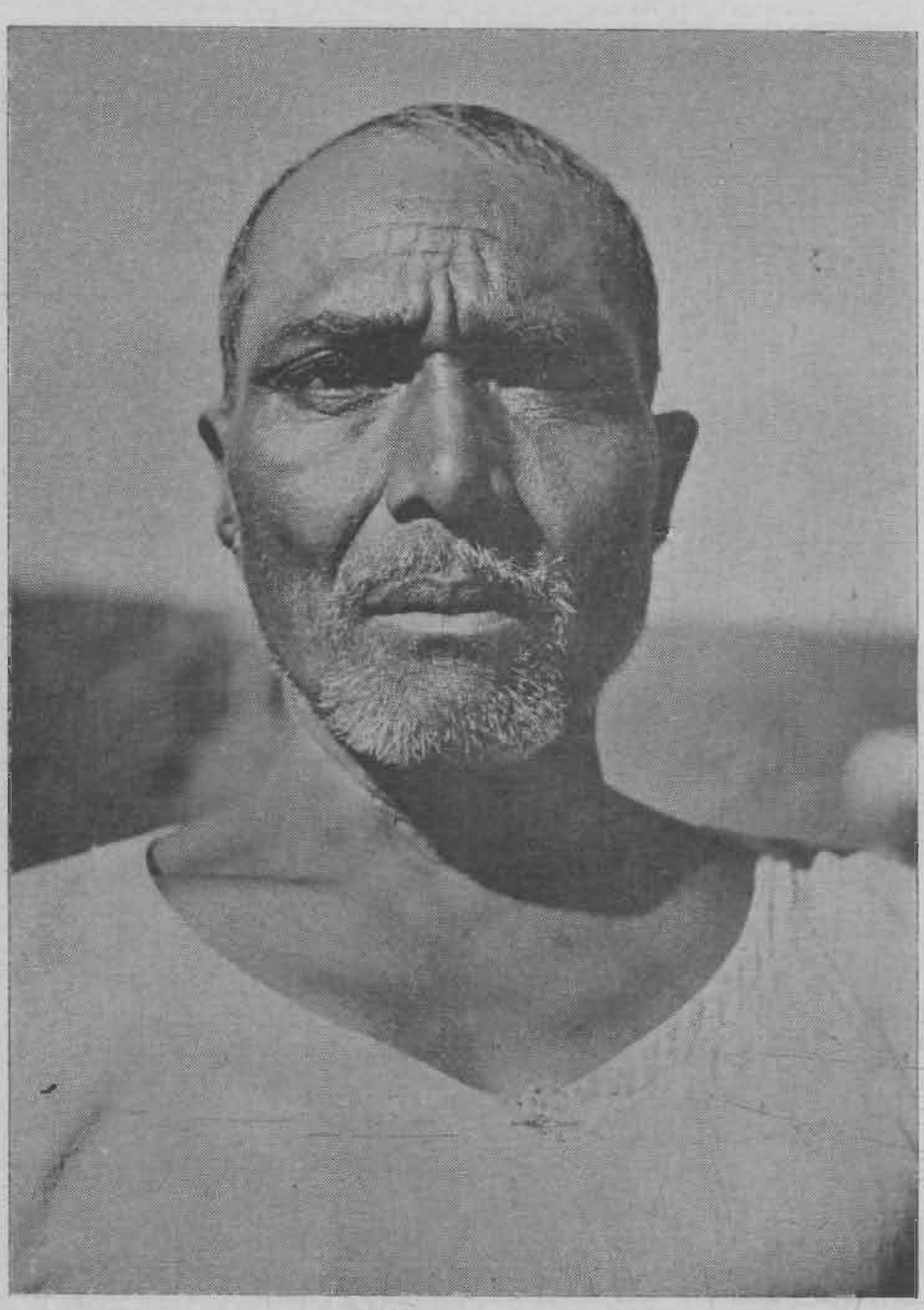


Fig. 2 A male Dhor—Front view

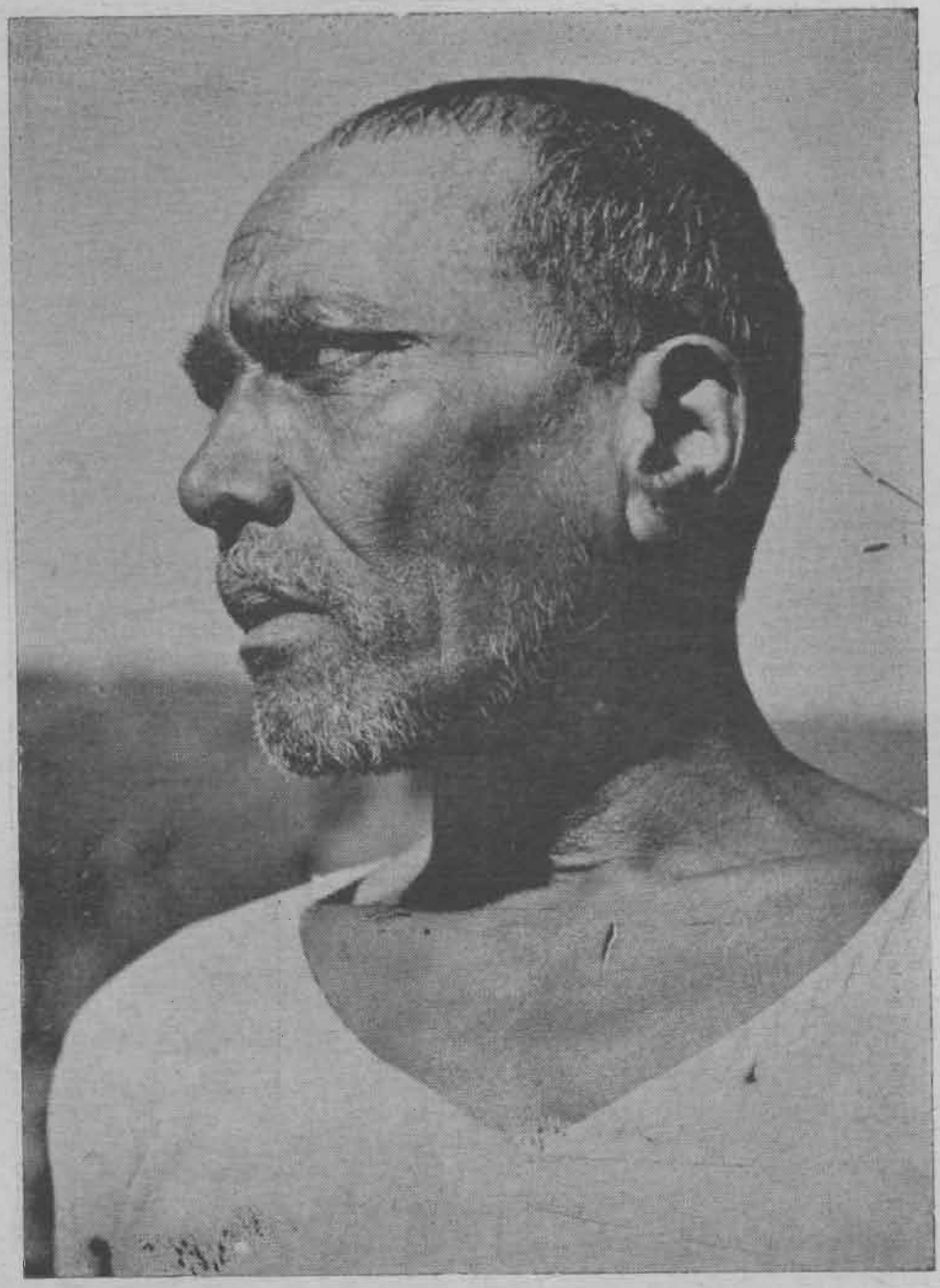


Fig. 3 A male Dhor—Profile



Fig. 4 A Dhor female aged about 50 years



Fig. 5 A female Dhor—Front view



Fig. 6 A female Dhor—Profile



Fig. 7 A female Dhor—Back view
Their general hair style can be seen



Fig. 8 A couple from Dhor community with their tiny child



Fig. 9 Kitchen in a Dhor household



Fig. 10 A group of Dhors in their day-to-day life

**Dwellings, Food, Dress and Ornaments**

Dhors usually live in plains. Their dwellings are clustered on the outskirts of the village along with other Scheduled Castes. The reasons behind this is that they soak the skins for cleaning and this creates a lot of bad smell. Secondly, being migrants from Marathwada, they found the present habitation convenient to promote their occupation without causing any inconvenience to the other sections of population. They are not treated as untouchables in the places where case studies were conducted. Their houses are of two types *viz.*, *Purigudise* (hut) and *Midde*. (House with *pucca* roof). *Gudise* is circular in shape without any ventilators but with a kitchen and verandah, where as *midde* which is owned only by the fairly rich, consists of 4 to 5 rooms used for different purposes. There is no speciality from place to place about the manner of use of the different parts of the house nor is there any innovation in the construction of dwellings. Most of these houses are built facing East. The sample survey conducted in the four villages of Zahirabad taluk in Medak district shows the out of all households covered saven are facing east while among the rest two are facing North and the remaining two West. The caste elders are consulted for the selection of a house site and the actual construction of a house is commenced on any auspicious day such as Sunday, Monday, Wednesday or Friday of any month except *Ashadha* (June-July) and *Shravana* (July-August). They break a few coconuts and worship god and celebrate the occasion by distributing sweets etc. to friends and relatives. A mason locally known as *Upparayana* is employed for building the house. The walls are constructed with bricks and mud. Small rafters are fixed and paddy hay is used for roofing. A few well-to-do people arrange a feast on the occasions of house warming when relatives and friend, are invited. The houses are kept clean by periodica plastering of the floor and walls with cow-dungl Among the 11 houses surveyed 9 have got separate cattle sheds for sheltering cows and buffaloes. All the rubbish and animal waste is collected and heaped in a corner and sold as mannure once in a year.

**Food**

The staple food of Dhors is *jawar* but all other cereals also are consumed freely. All kinds of vegetables and meat are commonly taken. The Kakayya Dhors do not take beef. The food is cooked in earthen pots. Groundnut oil is used both for preparing the ordinary and special dishes for feasts an festivals. None of the eleven families takes the flesh of animals that die a natural death.

**Domestic utensils**

To mention a few, *gunne* (for storing the grain) *bogoni* (for cooking food), *ragi tavandi* (for preserving the cooked food) and *tale* (a plate for taking meals) are some of the important domestic utensils (Fig. 9).

**Dress**

The men wear *dhotis* and women dress themselves in sarees like other caste Hindus. *Namastia* ( a half shirt) or *Kameez* (a full shirt) and jackets form the upper garments of men and women respectively (Fig. 10). There is no special dress for festive or other ceremonial occasions. A few rich males are now-a-days going in for modern apparel like pants and bush shirts. As they themselves are engaged in cobblery, most of them do not purchase shoes or chappals from the market, the exceptions being the few well-to-do.

**Ornaments**

The common ornaments are toe-rings and *puste* (marriage locket) for married women and glass bangles and ear-rings for both women and girls. Females get tattooed on fore arms with figures of scorpion, dieties, flowers and names etc. Except for decoration purpose, the habit of tatooing does not carry any significance.

**Drinking and Other Habits**

They freely indulge in drinking liquors. Chewing *pan* along with tobacco and smoking beedis and cigars is a common habit with men. Now-a-days they are habituated to take tea as a stimulant during working period. The nature of their occupation which is time consuming and requiring patience and concentration, does not leave much time for amusements. Generally bath is taken once in 2 or 3 days during the evenings.

**Language and Education**

The Dhors of this State have generally returned their mother tongue as Telugu. But the mother-tongue of all the 11 femalies studies, is Marathi. They speak Urdu also. In Medak district the Turaka Dhors, *i.e.* the Muslim Dhors speak Hindi also freely. With outsiders they converse in Telugu or Urdu as the case may be.

The percentage of literacy is very low both among males and females. The proportion of these even with the primary education is negligible. Of the total population of 1,926 persons recorded in the 1961 Census, only 195 males and 63 females are more literates without any educational standards forming 19.94% males and 6.65% among females respectively. However there are 71 males with Junior Basic qualification and 4 males are matriculates. A more or less similar picture is observed in the case studies conducted in the four villages. Out of 116 persons surveyed, only 15 males are literates, their educational standard ranging from 1st to 7th Standard. All the females are illiterates. Not only are there few schools in villages inhabited by Dhors but most of the people cannot afford to, or do not wish, to send their children to urban or rural schools, situated away from their villages. However, with the declining importance of their occupation on account of mechanisation of the industry, a section of people have come to realise the importance of education and they are now sending their children to schools.

## Occupation

The traditional occupation of Dhors is tanning and leather working (Figs. 11 and 12). Hassan writes that their traditional occupation :

"is tanning, currying hides, and making leather bottles, leather buckets, water sacks, *budhales*, *Pakhals* and other leather articles. They buy raw hides of goats, sheep, bullocks, buffaloes and deer from butchers and Dhors, and soak them for fifteen days in a strong solution of lime. The hide is then deprived of its hair and steeped in a solution of pounded *babul* (*Acacia arabica*) bark, *Amla* or *Aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*) and *Tarved* (*Cassia uriculata*) leaves. The hide, thus dressed is bought by Maratha Chambars, or Mochis for making shoes and other articles. The Dhors are not known to skin the carcasses of dead animals. Some of them make new shoes and cobble old ones." (Hassan, Vol. I, page 176). Their occupational pattern has not changed significantly as indicated by Statement III below.

All the tools and implements used in currying the hides and manufacturing shoes are indigenous (Fig. 13). The chief article manufactured by them is the leather bucket, (Figs. 14 to 16) a must for lifting water for all agricultural purposes. But with the recent rural electrification the leather bucket has been replaced by water engine run by cheap electric power, thus adversely affecting the industry.

## STATEMENT III

OCCUPATION OF DHORS ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS

| Name of Occupation | DHORS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| 1. Cultivation | 51 | 35 | 16 |
| 2. Agricultural labour | 156 | 68 | 88 |
| 3. Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and allied activities. | 18 | 15 | 3 |
| 4. Household industry | 336 | 224 | 112 |
| 5. Manufacturing other than Household industry. | 99 | 67 | 32 |
| 6. Construction | 1 | 1 | .. |
| 7. Trade and Commerce | 89 | 70 | 19 |
| 8. Transport, Storage and Communications. | 1 | 1 | ... |
| 9. Other Services | 105 | 61 | 44 |
| Total workers | 856 | 542 | 314 |
| 10. Non-workers | 1,070 | 436 | 634 |
| Total population | **1,926** | **978** | **948** |
| *Special occupations* (already included above) | | | |
| Tanning and Currying of hides and skins | 214 | 156 | 58 |
| Scavenging | 7 | 3 | 4 |

The above statement shows that there are 542 male workers out of 978 total males and 314 female workers out of 948 females. 224 males and 112 females are engaged in household industry which may be no other than tanning carried on as a household industry. It is also likely that out of 67 male workers and 32 female workers shown under manufacturing other than household industry, are also engaged in organised tanning and allied industries. 68 male workers and 88 female workers are working as agricultural labourers. Available evidence indicates that the traditional industry of tanning and manufacture of leather goods has declined because it could not compete with the machanisation which produces goods at cheaper rates. The machine-made goods are replacing the products of this cottage industry and all the 11 families studied, revealed that they are slowly changing over either to rural labour or agriculture.



Fig. 11 Tanning of hides

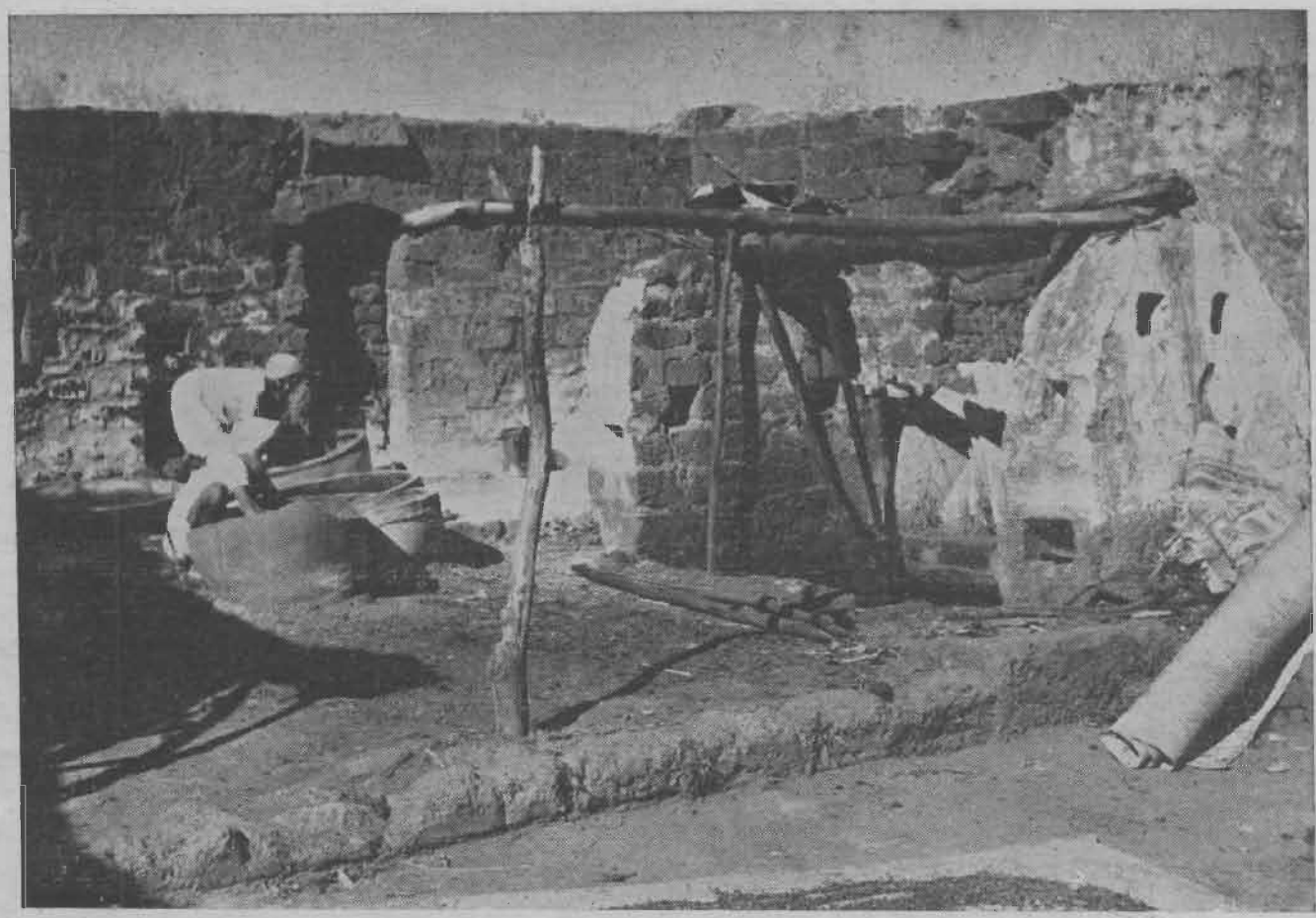


Fig. 12 Tanning of hides

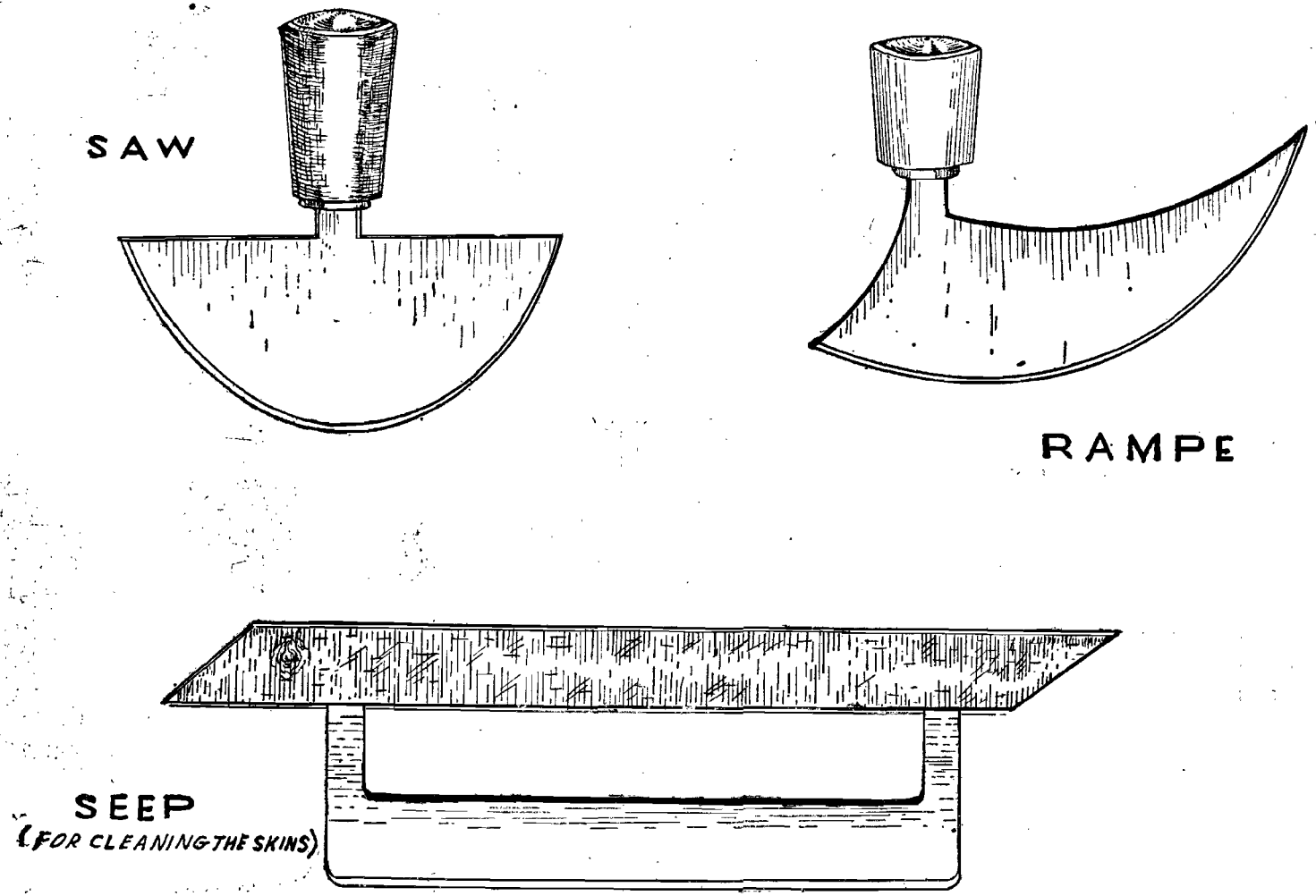



Fig. 13 Implements used in currying the hides

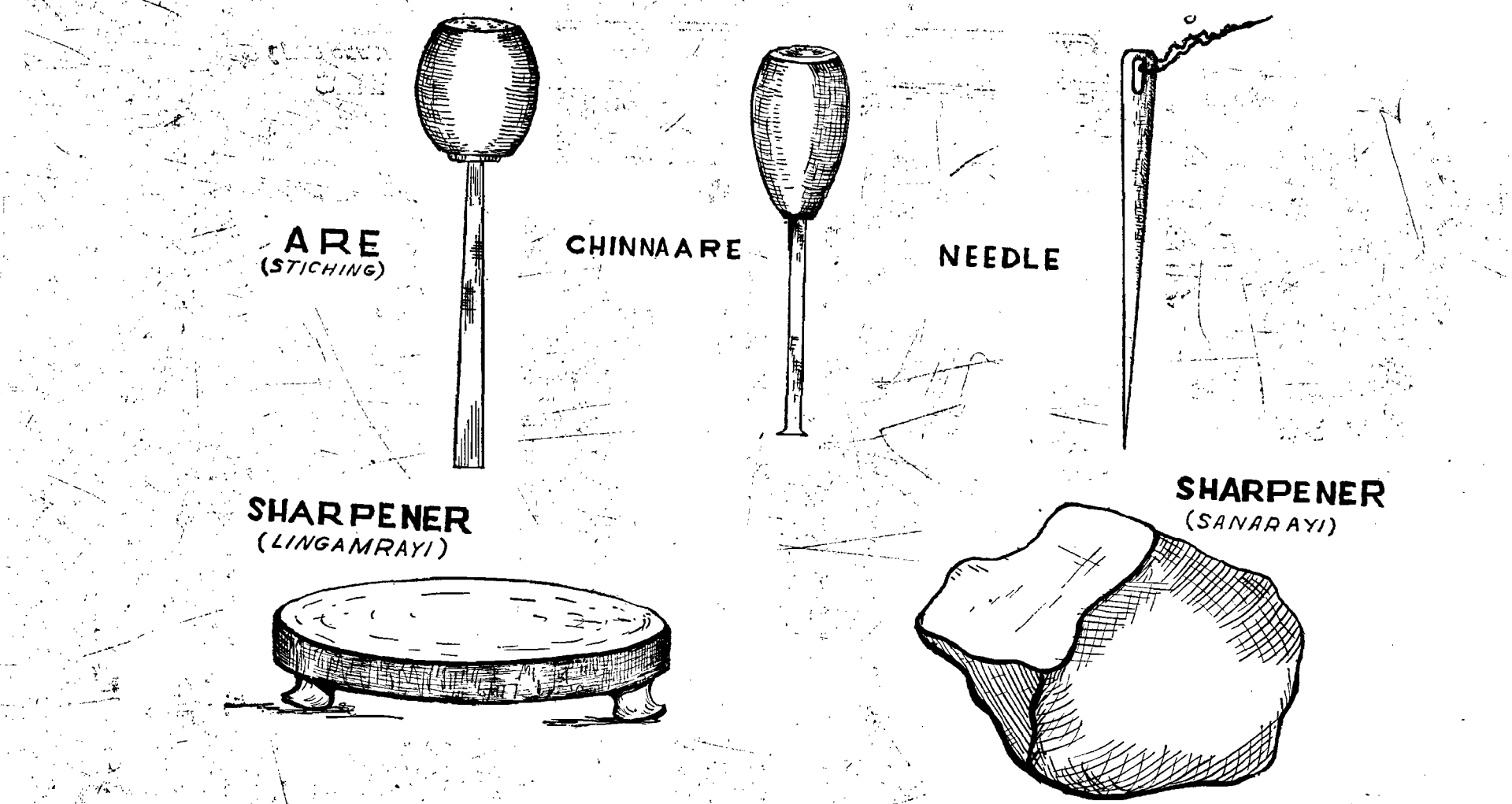



**Fig. 13 A** Implements used in currying the hides

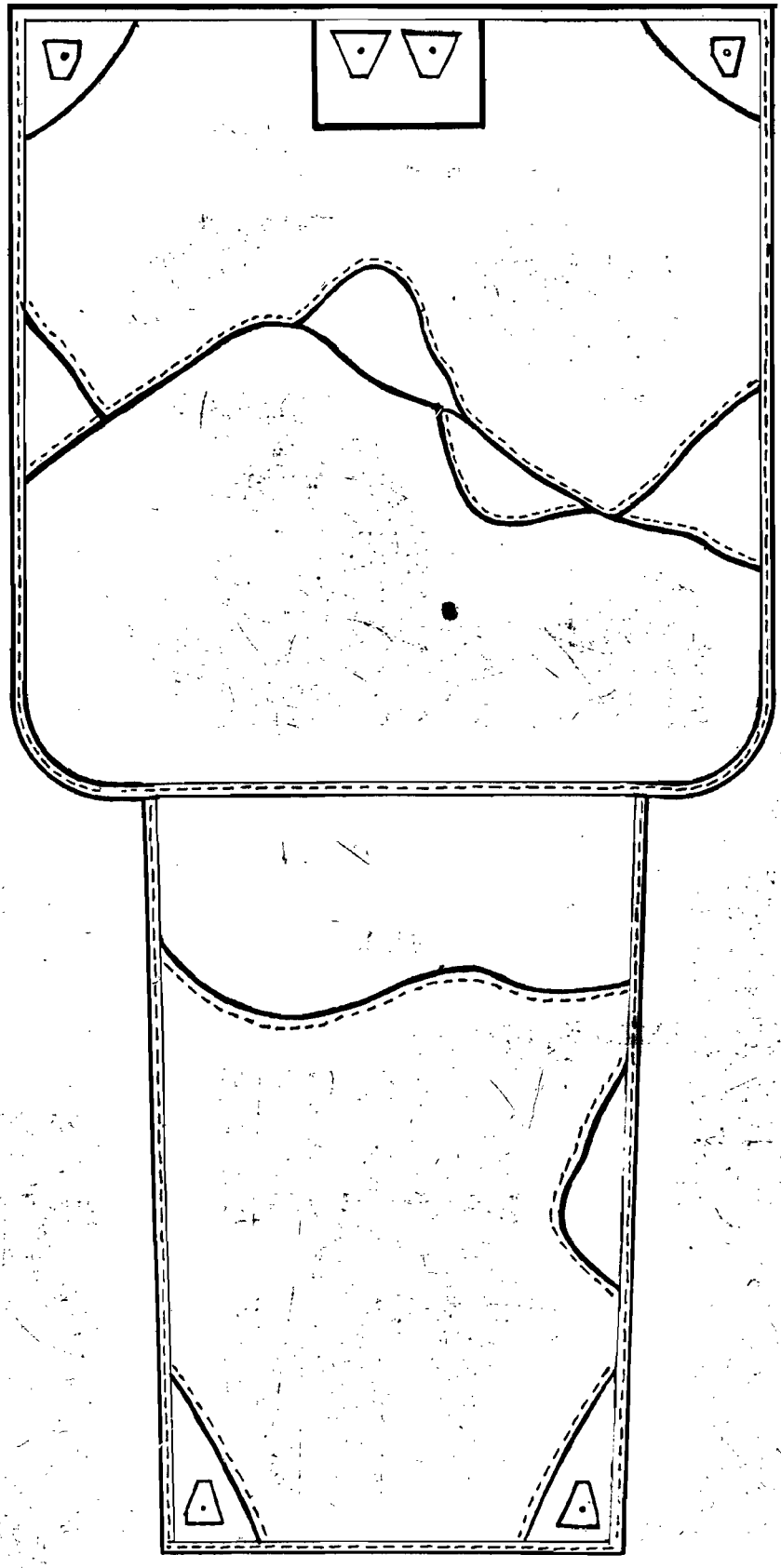


Fig. 14 Leather bucket prepared by Dhors for lifting water



Fig. 15 Leather bucket prepared by Dhors for lifting water



Fig. 16 A male and female Dhors giving final touches to a leather bucket

The rapid opening up of the means of communications in the recent decades and the increasing importance of exporting hides and skins to foreign countries like U. K. for earning foreign exchange have brought nearer the mercantile cities like Bombay and resulted in enriching a few intelligent middlemen. The same factor has, however brought peril to the majority of Dhors. Even then, a few of them follow tanning only because it is their traditional occupation. A few are cultivators, agriculturists and a good number are agricultural labourers. However, ameliorative steps are being taken up by the Government to raise their standard of living by advancing loans for introducing modern methods of tanning, through the co-operative societies, started by them. (There is a co-operative society for tanners at Ganjotti, a village in Zahirabad taluk of Medak district.).

**Economic life**

They are economically unstable because of their inability to meet the challenge of the cheap goods manufactured by mechines. Secondly due to the paucity of funds for purchase of the modern implements to augment their production, they are indebted heavily to make both ends meet. Thirdly the most important factor responsible for their present unsound economic position is their high illiteracy. Out of the eleven households surveyed, one household is having a surplus budget and nine households are having deficit budgets. The remaining household was not in a position to report clearly about its financial position. However, the head of this particular household has reported that he is not in debt. Out of the nine households who are having deficit budgets, seven are in debt, while the other two households without debt are having a deficit of Rs. 30 and Rs. 56 respectively. Among the seven households reported to be in debt, one household with 13 members and an annual income of Rs. 2,390 raised a loan of Rs. 1,000 for improving its tanning industry. Another household with four members whose annual income is Rs. 1,740/- also raised a loan of Rs. 600/- for the same purpose. The rest of the five households who are in debt have raised loans ranging from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400 for the improvement of their business. The average debt per household is Rs. 428/-. An attempt was made to study the income, debt, and expenditure pattern of the surveyed households of Dhors. Of the total eleven households one household refused to give any information on their annual budget. The annual income and expenditure of ten households is given in the Statement IV.

STATEMENT IV

STATEMENT SHOWING THE INCOME, DEBT AND EXPENDITURE OF DHORS FROM FEBRUARY, 1961 TO JANUARY, 1962

| Sl. No. | Name | Total No. of persons | BUDGET POSITION | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Income | Debt | Total Expenditure | Expenditure on | | |
| | | | | | | Food | Clothing | Miscellaneous items |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| 1. | Madappa | 40 | 3,200 | 6,000 | 3,152 | 2,200 | 500 | 452 |
| 2. | Ramachander | 5 | 1,200 | 200 | 1,498 | 600 | 200 | 698 |
| 3. | Tukaram | 4 | 1,070 | 600 | 1,772 | 1,200 | 100 | 472 |
| 4. | Bhimji | 3 | 1,200 | 200 | 1,407 | 450 | 75 | 782 |
| 5. | Hanumanthu | 4 | 1,950 | 400 | 2,505 | 750 | 400 | 1,355 |
| 6. | Ramji | 8 | 1,450 | .. | 1,506 | 800 | 300 | 406 |
| 7. | Ambaji | 4 | 995 | 300 | 1,301 | 600 | 200 | 501 |
| 8. | Ranoji | 7 | 1,325 | 300 | 1,683 | 800 | 200 | 683 |
| 9. | Manlalji | 5 | 640 | .. | 670 | 450 | 150 | 70 |
| 10. | Vitholji | 13 | 1,390 | 1,000 | 2,460 | 1,200 | 540 | 720 |

The income of the ten surveyed households ranges from Rs. 640 to Rs. 3,200 whereas the expenditure ranges from Rs. 670 to Rs.3,152. The principal items of their expenditure are food and clothing. The miscellaneous items of expenditure include the expenditure on fuel and lighting, interest on debt, purchase of assets like tools for their occupation and livestock like buffaloes and recreation. In no household the income and expenditure are balanced. Execpt two households, all houlseholds have taken debts ranging from Rs.200 to 6,000. The debt position of the household at Sl. No. 1 is overwhelming. The family of Madappa is a joint family with 40 members. The income of Rs. 3,200 is very low when compared to the total members of 40 persons of the family. The average annual income and expenditure of each member of the eleven households ranges between Rs. 155 and Rs. 193 respectively. It can be said that the economic position of the Dhors is very low.

## LIFE CYCLE

### Birth

There is no hard and fast rule for ascertaining the pregnancy period. The celebration of expectant mother-hood is not customary. The first delivery usually takes place in her father's house. There will not be any special arrangement for segregation of the expectant mother. Only in serious cases the pregnant women are taken to the hospital. The local midwife called *Dai* is engaged for the purpose and she is paid either in cash (ranging between Rs. 2 and Rs. 5) or in kind with a meal and a saree. The approximate expenditure on delivery is about Rs. 40. Pollution is observed for 10 days after delivery. Bath is given to the mother on the 11th day and afterwards she resumes her normal activities. No special food is prescribed for the mother during prenatal or postnatal period. She is, however, advised to take food which generates heat in the body till three months after delivery. There is a ceremony connected with the naming of the child on which day friends and relatives are invited for a feast. The typical names adopted *viz.*, Ramji, Hanumanji, Ambaji, Shankarji etc., drawn from Hindu epics show their belief in Hindu mythology. The Marathi title of 'ji' is also affixed to their names. That the community is patrilineal in descent can be inferred from the fact that the bride soon after her marriage changes over to the clan of her husband.

The tonsuring ceremony takes place after the completion of fifth month. No function is celebrated in connection with the first feeding or initiating the child for learning. When a Dhor girl attains puberty, she is kept in a separate room for 20 days and during that period she is forbidden to go out. She is given bath regularly but food is served from a distance. After 20 days a Priest called *Jangam* is invited to conduct the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony she is given bath and the *Jangam* worships God and sprinkles sacred water on her head. The girl is then neatly dressed with new clothes. The ceremony then comes to an end, with a feast to their relatives and friends.

### Marriage

Rule of exogamy is strictly followed in the sense that the people belonging to the same section under Dhor do not marry. Marriage by negotiation is the only customary practice in vogue. The normal age of marriage for males would be 20 to 25 years and for females 12 to 15 years. The custom of child betrothal does not exist. Permissible partners are one's father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter. Marrying one's own sister's daughter is also allowed. Both infant and adult marriages are allowed for girls. Premarital sex-life is not allowed. Polygamy is permitted. Regarding the customs of marriage the following quotations from Hassan is worth noting.

> "The father of the boy seeks out a bride for his son and arranges the match with her parents in the presence of the Caste Panchayat and of a Brahmin or a *Jangam* officiating as priest. This having been agreed to, the girl is seated on a low stool, her forehead is smeared with vermilion and clothes and ornaments are presented to her by the parents of the boy. Patron saints and tutelary deities are invoked to bless the couple. The ceremony takes place on an auspicious day fixed by Brahmin in a wedding booth made of branches of *guler* (*ficus glomerate*). After the bridegroom has arrived in procession at the bride's house, the young couple are made to sit side by side, surrounded by five pots encircled with cotton thread; their bodies are smeared with turmeric and oil, and they are bathed with warm water *Kankanamulu* (thread bracelets) are tied on their wrists, their clothes are knotted together and they walk, the bride following the bridegroom, to the earthen platform, where they are wedded by the officiating Brahman, who holds a curtain between them, recites mantramulu and throws rice over their heads. The curtain being withdrawn, the wedded pair exchange garlands and rice, and make obeisance to the family deities and elderly relatives. A grand feast is given to the assembled guests and relatives and the ceremony is completed". (Hassan, Vol. I, PP.173-174).

But time has brought changes in the marriage ceremonies also. Now-a-days marriage is celebrated in the same fashion as the case of the other Hindu Castes. Adding to all the above formalities, tying of '*Puste*'

or Marriage locket, has become an important item in the celebration of marriage. The payment of bride price, once in practice, is not popular now. But there are certain exceptions where the rich parents offered handsome dowries to the educated or well settled bridegrooms. Some jewellery like *'genteelu'*, *Chandraharam* (gold necklace), *Kadivalu* (anklets), *mattelu* (toe rings) are, however, presented to the bride by the bridegroom's father. The newly wedded couple are seated either on two bullocks or horses and taken in a procession round the village. Previously the practice used to be carrying both of them on one bullock or horse back only. Of late, even rikshaws are used for this purpose. Consumation takes place on the day of marriage itself, if the bride had attained puberty. Otherwise, after attaining puberty it will be celebrated on any later auspicious day fixed by a Brahmin or Jangam. The average total expenditure on marriage ranges from Rs. 1,000 to 1,500.

**Widow re-marriage**

Widow remarriage is not prohibited and as a matter of fact is customary in this caste. The person marrying a widow has to pay an amount of Rs. 200 to Rs. 330 towards bride price to her parents. No formal function is attached to the celebration of this kind of marriage. There is no social boycott for the couple to attend any function and this practice is called *Mothar* or *Udiki*. A widow is not allowed to marry her late husband's brother.

**Divorce**

"Divorce is granted on the grounds of the wife's unchastity or barrenness or the husband's inability to support her", (Hassan. Vol. I, p. 174). It may be initiated from either side. A committee, consisting of five respectable persons, known as *Panchas* tries these cases and awards decisions. The divorced woman is entitled to a share of 50% of her husband's property as long as she does not marry again. Divorced women may marry again, by the retual in the practice at re-marriage of widows.

The following statement gives the details of marital status among Dhors.

STATEMENT V

MARITAL STATUS OF DHORS ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS.

| Age group | MARITAL STATUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | | | Never married | | | Married | | | Widowed | | | Divorced or separated | | |
| | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F | P | M | F |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) |
| 0—14 | 865 | 417 | 448 | 819 | 410 | 409 | 42 | 4 | 38 | 3 | 3 | .. | 1 | .. | 1 |
| 15—44 | 775 | 396 | 379 | 93 | 79 | 14 | 646 | 308 | 338 | 29 | 6 | 23 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 45 + over | 286 | 165 | 121 | 1 | 1 | .. | 192 | 146 | 46 | 91 | 16 | 75 | 2 | 2 | .. |
| TOTAL | 1,926 | 978 | 948 | 913 | 490 | 423 | 880 | 458 | 422 | 123 | 25 | 98 | 10 | 5 | 5 |

**Death**

When any person is about to breath his last, a few drops of water are put in his mouth and a picture or an idol of Ambabhavani is shown to him. The dead body is given a bath, vermilion is put on the forehead and is dressed in new clothes. It is carried by four persons on a bier made of bamboo in a procession to the burial ground with the belief that the dead may come back to life again. Both burial and ceremation are in vogue. Persons considered to be holy and those dying of small-pox or cholera and women dying in pregancy are burnt. The dead are buried in a sitting posture, (this practice varies from district to district) with the face turned towards the east. Mourning is observed for ten days when an adult dies and in the case of a child's death, no specific period of mourning is observed, though customarily it is for four days. The obsequies take place on the eleventh day for elders and 5th day for youngsters. There is no practice of changing the residence if the

death occurs on an inauspicious day. But if a death occurs on any auspicious day *i.e.*, on any festival day, that festival will not be celebrated until the birth of a human being or an animal takes place in the house. A *Jangam* or priest is invited to conduct the obsequies. An earthen figure of the deceased is prepared and worshipped and a near relative presents new lothestothe widow or widower. All the friends and relatives are entertained at a feast after completion of the obsequies. The total expenditure on the day of death may come to Rs. 50 and it may be a little more on the day of obsequies. The funds are generally raised by borrowing. The woman on becoming a widow, is deprived of the privilege of keeping bangles and necklace of black beads and marriage locket, until she marries again.

**Religion**

Dhors are Hindus. They are *Saivaits* who worship God Mahadeva. They also worship Basva and his disciple Kakayya from whom they claim their origin (Figs. 17 and 18). Recently a *guru* (Teacher) by name '*Kakeri guru*' belonging to a village called *Kakeri* near Hubli has been visiting all the villages where there are Dhors, at regular intervals. He is a descendant of Kakayya Dhors. He delivers few lectures at each village preaching the gospel of truthfulness, honesty etc. He advises them to worship Siva every day in the morning. The occasion is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy. No pilgrimage centres are visited by the Dhors excepting the local temples. All Hindu calendar months except '*Shravana*' (July-August) and *Sunyamasa* or *Ashada* (June-July) are considered auspicious for performing marriages and construction of houses. Among the seven days of the week, Sunday is considered to be auspicious for cutting ones hair or nails and Tuesday and Friday for starting on a journey. Seeing a 'fox' or *Palapitta* (a kind of grey bird) at the time of commencing a new work is considered lucky while the sight of a cat is an ill omen on all occasions. Sitting or standing on the threshold is considered to be unlucky and bad.

**Important Festivals**

Dhors celebrate all the Hindu festivals like Sankranti, Ugadi, Dasara, Divali and Sivarathri. The Turaka Dhors not only celebrate the above but also celebrate their own Muslim festivals like 'Moharram' and the other sub-sects also take part in it.

Sankranti festival is celebrated for three days in January of every year. They keep awake on the night of Sankranti and perform Bhajans. Dassara is the most important festival celebrated with great pomp by Dhors. It is celebrated for 10 days just as all other Hindus do. On the first day, they get up early in the morning, take oil bath and worship the idol of Ambabhavani, their ardent Goddess installed for the purpose at the place of worship in each house. All the special dishes are offered to the Goddess and a lighting wick known as *Akhandalam* is kept burning throughout the day and night for five days. They observe regular fast in the nights for nine days. On the 10th day they sacrifice a goat or sheep to the Goddess and make a feast of the mutton. Some of them also indulge in drinking liquors and play throughout the night. On Divali festival they worship the implements of their traditional occupation. A traditional fair lasting for five days is held at Ismailkhadri, a villlage four miles away from Zahirabad, Medak District, in which all the Dhors, Reddis and Muslims take part. Dhors play a kind of drama known as *Khol* and perform dance called *Chaitkelu* (Kolatam played with sticks).

**Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership**

The traditional caste council either at the village level or regional level is not in existence now. But petty disputes concerning theft, adultery etc., are, however, decided among themselves. Once there used to be a caste panchayat consisting of elders of the caste. With the change of social conditions from time to time the *Caste Panchayat* became a single man show who was empowered to award decisions in case like theft, etc. He was traditionally named as Kulapedda and advised all the members of the community on all organisational matters including religion. His word was taken for order, but as time passed there were more cases of disobedience to his order and hence even this institution was scrapped. There is now a Surpanch (President) of the Statutory Panchayat in each village who deals with above cases occasionally.

**Inter-community relationship**

There is no prohibition against their entering the temple premises. The same barbers and washermen who serve other caste Hindus also serve them but only well-to-do people employ a washerman. They employ servants also. They do not take water or food

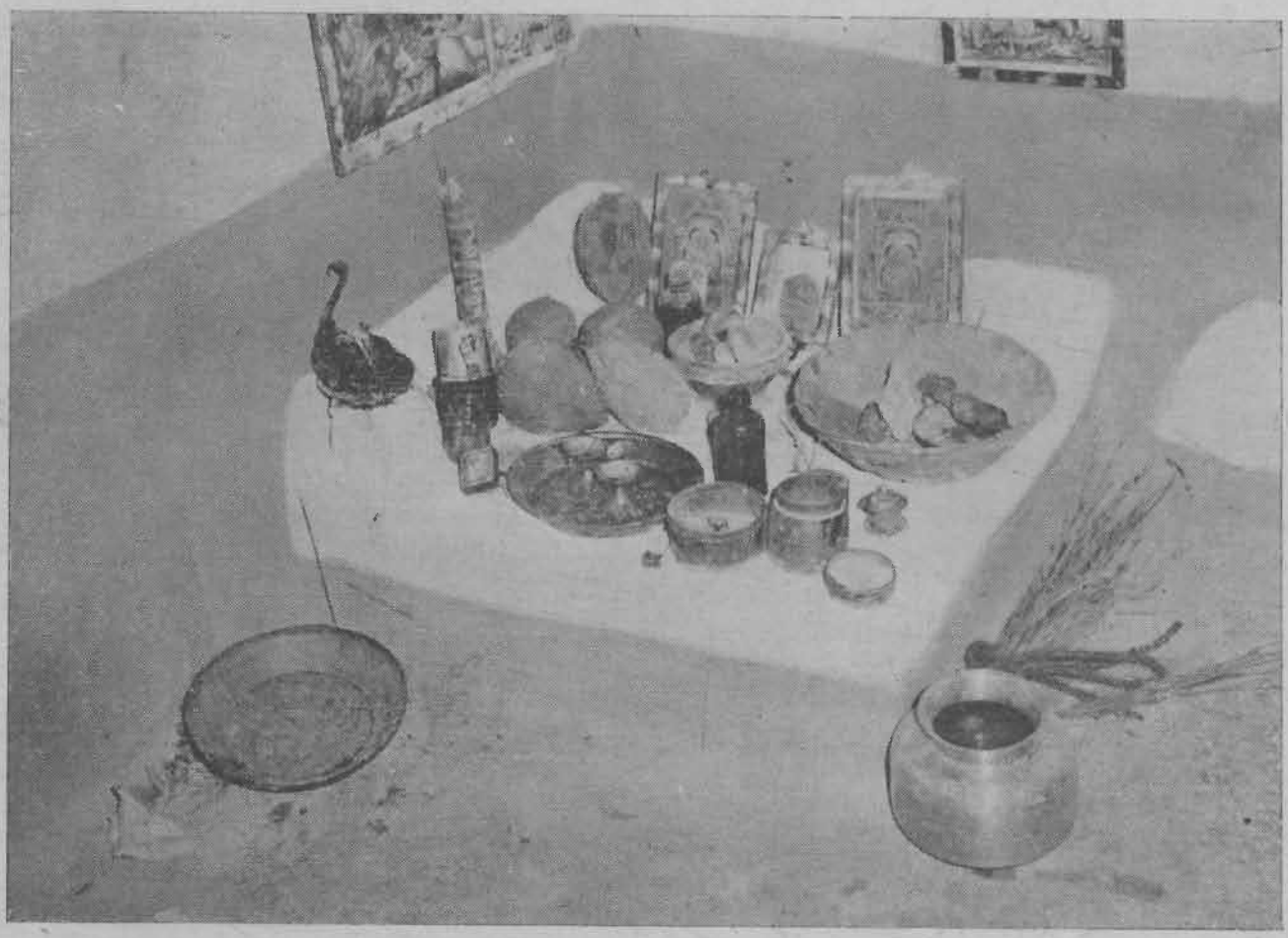


Fig. 17 Place of worship in a Dhor household



Fig. 18 Place of worship in a Dhor household

# DHOR

AN EXTRACT FROM THE "CASTES AND TRIBES OF H.E.H. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS" BY SYED SIRAJ-UL-HASSAN, VOL I, (BOMBAY. 1920) pp. 171-176.

Dhor—the tanner caste of the Maratha Districts, numerous also in all parts of the Carnatic and, in a smaller number, in some parts of Telaingana. The name 'Dhor' means 'horned cattle' and is doubtless bestowed upon this caste with reference to their occupation of tanning and dressing cattle skins. Very little is known regarding their origin. They appear to be a degraded branch of the great Chambhar caste of the Marathwada country. This view derives support from the fact that, in whatever country they are found settled they speak Marathi as their home ongue. They are robust and fair with well-developed chests and wide faces, and in all their features they gave evidence of a Maratha origin. The Marathah title of *'jhi'* is also affixed to their names.

*Internal structure*—The dhors are divided into five endogamous groups: (1) Range Dhor, (2) Budhale Dhor, (3) Kakayya Dhor, (4) Chambhar Dhor and (5) Shadu Dhor. The Range Dhors claim the highest rank and appear to be the original stock from which the other sub-castes have branched. They derive their name from the Marathi 'rangvine' meaning 'to dye', which refers to their occupation of staining hides. The Budhale Dhors, probably an offshoot from the Range Dhors, are so called because they make *budhales*, or leather jars, for clarified butter and oil. The mode of making a *budhale* is as follows :— A piece of leather is closely set over an earthen mould of the size and shape of the jar required and the joints are cemented with a paste made from tamarind seeds. After the leather has taken the form of the mould and solidified, the earth is removed from inside. These leather jars were extensively used as covenient receptacles for carrying clarified butter and oil on bullocks; but since the opening of railways, they have been replaced by tins and the *budhale* industry has almost died out. The Budhale Dhors have now taken to tanning and curing skins, making *dholaks* (drums), water bags, water buckets and other leather articles. The Kakayya Dhors trace their descent from one Kakayya, a disciple of Basava the founder of the Lingayit sect. Kakayya was originally a Range Dhor, but having embraced Lingaitism he was cut off from his community and became the founder of a new sub-caste. In addition to their own work of staining hides, the Kakayyas cobble old shoes and sometimes make new ones. The Chambhar Dhor, as the name indicates, is a mixed sub-caste, probably evolved by marriages between the Chambhar and the Dhor castes. It occupies a degraded position to both of them. The Chambhar Dhors tan and stain hides, make shoes and water buckets and water-bags. The Shadu Dhor are the illegitimate offspring of the Dhors, by Dhor women who have been degraded for some social offence.

Within these sub-castes, there are again 360 exogamous sections, which appear to be entirely of Maratha origin. The section names are mostly of a territorial or titular type; but a few of them are totemistic, the totem being revered by the members of the section bearing its name. For instance, the members of Kavale section may not kill or injure a crow; so also a Kavade is enjoined to pay devotion to *Cowrie* shells. Some of the sections of the Dhors are given below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sonkavade *(cowries)* | Kavale (crow) |
| Landge (wolf) | Bhokare |
| Jadhav | Hivre |
| Kadam | Pulpagar |
| Gaikwad | Bhalerao |
| Sinde | Kalyanker |
| Savre | Kharad |
| Kharatmal | Jogdanker |
| Sabne | Soneker |
| Ingale | Chougale |
| Sherkani | Darweshe |
| Vathar & c. | Gajankushe & c. |

The rule of exogamy observed by the caste is that a man cannot marry outside the sub-caste nor inside the section to which he belongs. Two sisters may be married to the same husband and two brothers to two sisters. Marriage with a sister's or maternal uncle's daughter is permitted. Adoption is practised provided the boy be of the same section as the adopter. Both infant and adult marriages are recognised for girls. Sexual license before puberty is tolerated. If an unmarried girl goes wrong with a man of her caste and becomes pregnant, her seducer is compelled to marry her and the pair, as well as the parents of the bride, are admitted to pangat, or communion of

food, on payment of a small fine to the caste *Panchayat*. The Dhors do not devote their young women to gods. A girl taken in adultery with man of an inferior caste is expelled from her own caste. Polygamy is permitted and no limit is set to the number of wives a man may have.

*Marriage*—The father or the boy seeks out a bride for his son and arranges the match with her parents in the presence of the caste Panchayat and of a Brahman or a Jangam officiating as priest. This having been agreed to, the girl is seated on a low stool, her forehead is smared with vermilion and clothes and ornaments are presented to her by the parents of the boy. Patron saints and tutelary dieties are invoked to bless the couple. The ceremony takes place, on an auspicious day fixed by a Brahman, in a wedding booth made of branches of *guler* (*ficus glomerata*) and other varieties of trees in the courtyard of the bride's house, in the Marathwada, and of the bridegrooms's house in the Carnatic. After the bridegroom has arrived in procession at the bride's house, the young couple are made to sit side by side, surrounded by five pots encircled with cotton thread, their bodies are smeared with turmeric and oil, and they are bathed with warm water. *Kankanas* (thread bracelets) are tied on their wrists, their clothes are knotted together and they walk, the bride following the bridegroom, to the earthen platform, where they are wedded by the officiating Brahman, who holds a curtain between them, recites mantras and throws rice over their heads. The curtain being withdrawn, the wedded pair exchange garlands and rice, and make obeisance to the family deities and elderly relatives. A grand feast is given to the assembled guests and relatives and the ceremony is completed.

*Widow-Marriage*—A Dhor widow is allowed to marry again by a very simple rite, at which no Brahman officiates. A price varying in amount from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 is paid for the widow to her parents. On a dark night, the bridegroom proceeds to the bride's house, makes her a present of a complete dress and ties *mangalsutra*, or a string of beads, around her neck. Early the next morning, the couple repair to Hanuman's temple and after worshipping the god, they go to the bridegroom's house. The proceedings, are concluded by a feast to the caste brethren of the village. A widow is not allowed to marry her late husband's brother.

*Divorce*.—Divorce is granted on the ground of the wife's unchastity or barrenness, or the husband's inability to support her. Divorced women may marry again, by the ritual in use at the re-marriage of widows.

*Inheritance*.—The Dhors follow the Hindu law of inheritance. In making a division of property, the eldest son gets an extra share (*jethang*) to enable him to support his unmarried sisters.

*Religion*.—The Dhors profess to be Saivaits, or the devotees of the god Mahadeva, whom they worship every week. No image is set up to represent the God; but a small piece of ground is smeared with cow-dung on which the devotees burn incense and offer flowers and wheaten cakes covered with rice. They then bow down and are at liberty to partake of the offerings. Basava and his disciple Kakayya are held in the highest reverence and invoked every Monday. Tulja Bhavani is worshipped on the Dassera holiday with offerings of goats, sheep and liquor. Khandoba and the other gods of the Hindu pantheon are also worshipped. The animistic deities, Pochamma, Ellamma, Mari Amma, and a host of others, are appeased with animal sacrifices, a Bhoi or a Dhobi officiating as sacrificial priest at the worship of the deities and claiming the heads of the slaughtered animals for his services. The Dhors believe strongly in ghosts and departed spirits and in cases of sickness or disease an Erkala woman is consulted to divine the cause. Should a *ghost* or malevolent spirit be suspected, it is immediately propitiated with the offerings the Erkala has enjoined. Ancestral worship prevails and images of departed ancestors, embossed or impressed on silver plates, are hung round their necks. At the *Divali* festival, the Dhors worship the chief implements of their trade, which are the tan-knife and the tan-pit in which the hides are steeped. In the Marathwada, Brahmans, and in the Carnatic Jangams, serve the caste as priests.

*Disposal of the dead*.—The dead are buried in a sitting posture, with the face turned towards the east. After death, the corpse is washed and carried in a sitting posture to the burial ground. The corpse is seated in a niche carved out on one side of the grave, the forehead is smeared with *vibhuti*, a *lingam* is placed in the left hand, *bilwa* leaves (*Semecarpus Anacardium*) and *vibhuti* are placed at the side, and the grave is then filled in. A Jangam stands on the grave, shouts out the name of the deceased and announces that he has gone to *kailas* or heaven. The Marathwada Dhors observe mourning for 10 days, and perform *Sradha* for the

benefit of the departed; but in the Carnatic, where Lingayitism prevails, no mourning is observed, nor is any memorial ceremony performed after death. Persons dying of small-pox or cholera and women dying in pregnancy are buried.

*Social Status*—Owing to their filthy occupation and habits, the Dhors have been condemned to the lowest grade in the Hindu social system, and hold, at the present day, a rank superior only to the Mahar, Mang and other degraded classes. They are not allowed to approach the temple premises, nor will the village servants defile themselves by working for them. They have, therefore, to procure barbers and washermen from among their own community. Their rules on diet are in keeping with their degraded position. They eat mutton, pork, fowl, venison and the flesh of animals that have died a natural death. They, however, profess to abstain from eating beef and the leavings of other people. They also freely indulge in spirituous and fermented liquors. No other caste, not even the Mahars or Dhers, will eat food cooked by a Dhor.

*Occupation*—The hereditary calling of the Dhor is tanning, curring hides, and making leather bottles, leather buckets, water sacks, *budhales*, *pakhals* and other leather articles. They buy raw hides of goats, sheep, bullocks, buffaloes and deer from butchers and Dhers, and soak them for fifteen days in a strong solution of lime. The hide is then deprived of its hair and steeped in a solution of pounded *babul* (*Acacia arabia*) bark, *amla* or *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*) and *tarvad* (*Cassia auriculata*) leaves. The hide, thus dressed is brought by Maratha Chambhars or Mochis, for making shoes and other articles. The Dhors are not known to skin the carcasses of dead animals. Some of them make new shoes and cobble old ones. A few of them work as day-labourers. In social standing the Dhors are inferior to the Maratha Chambhars or Telugu Mochies.

# DAKKAL (DAKKALWAR)

**(SCHEDULED CASTE)**

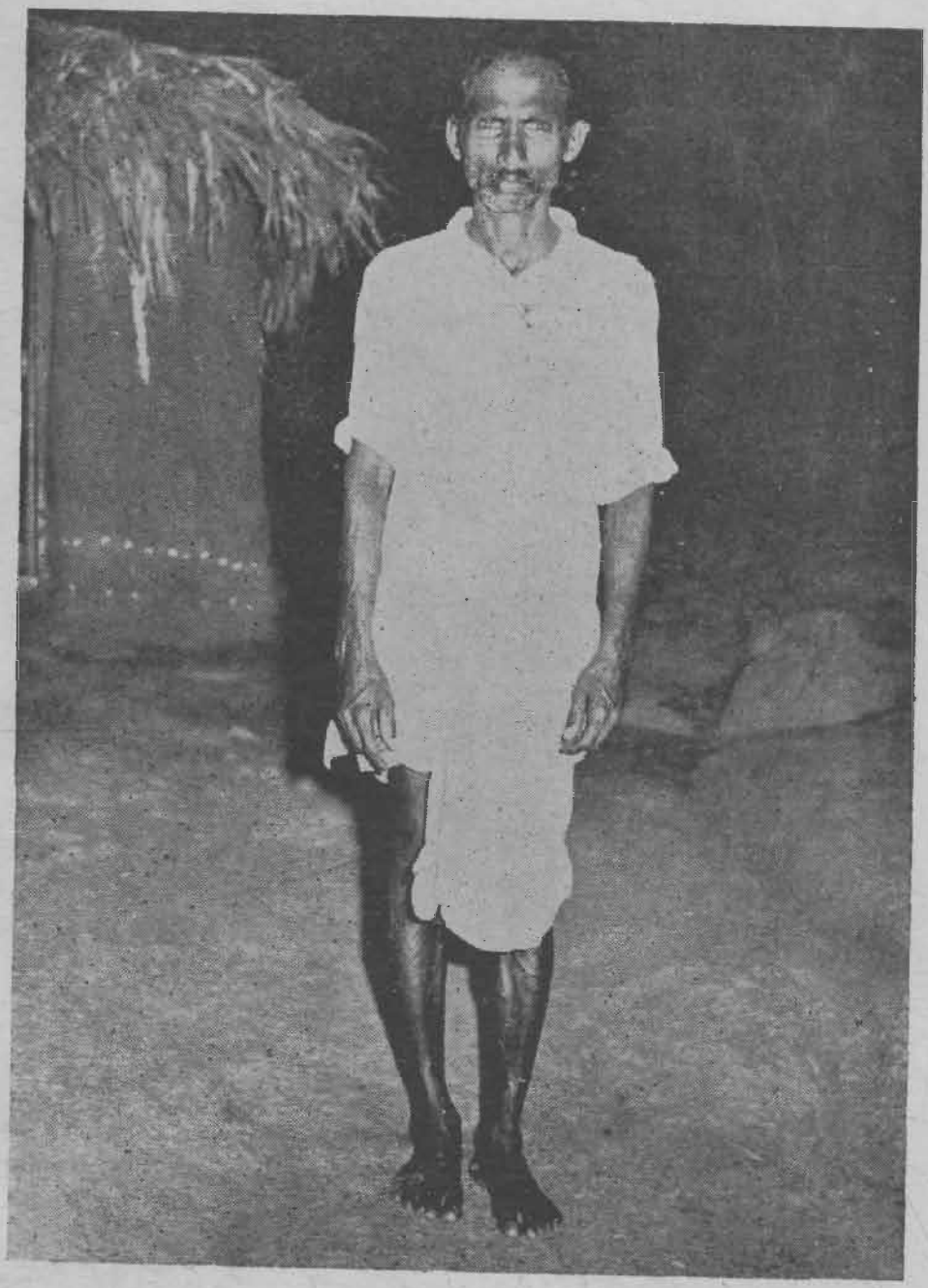


Fig. 1 A Dakkal male

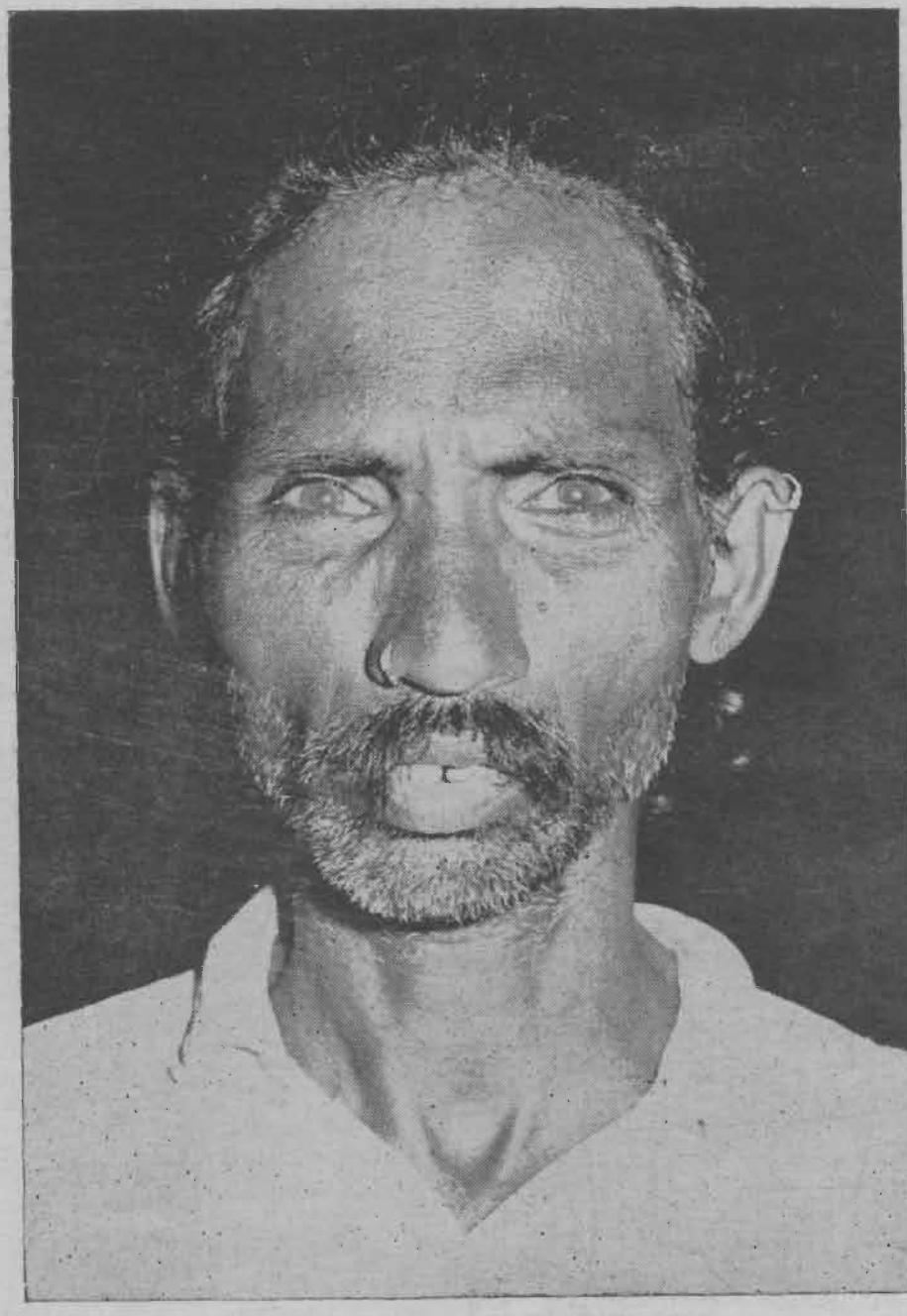


Fig. 2 A Dakkal male—Front

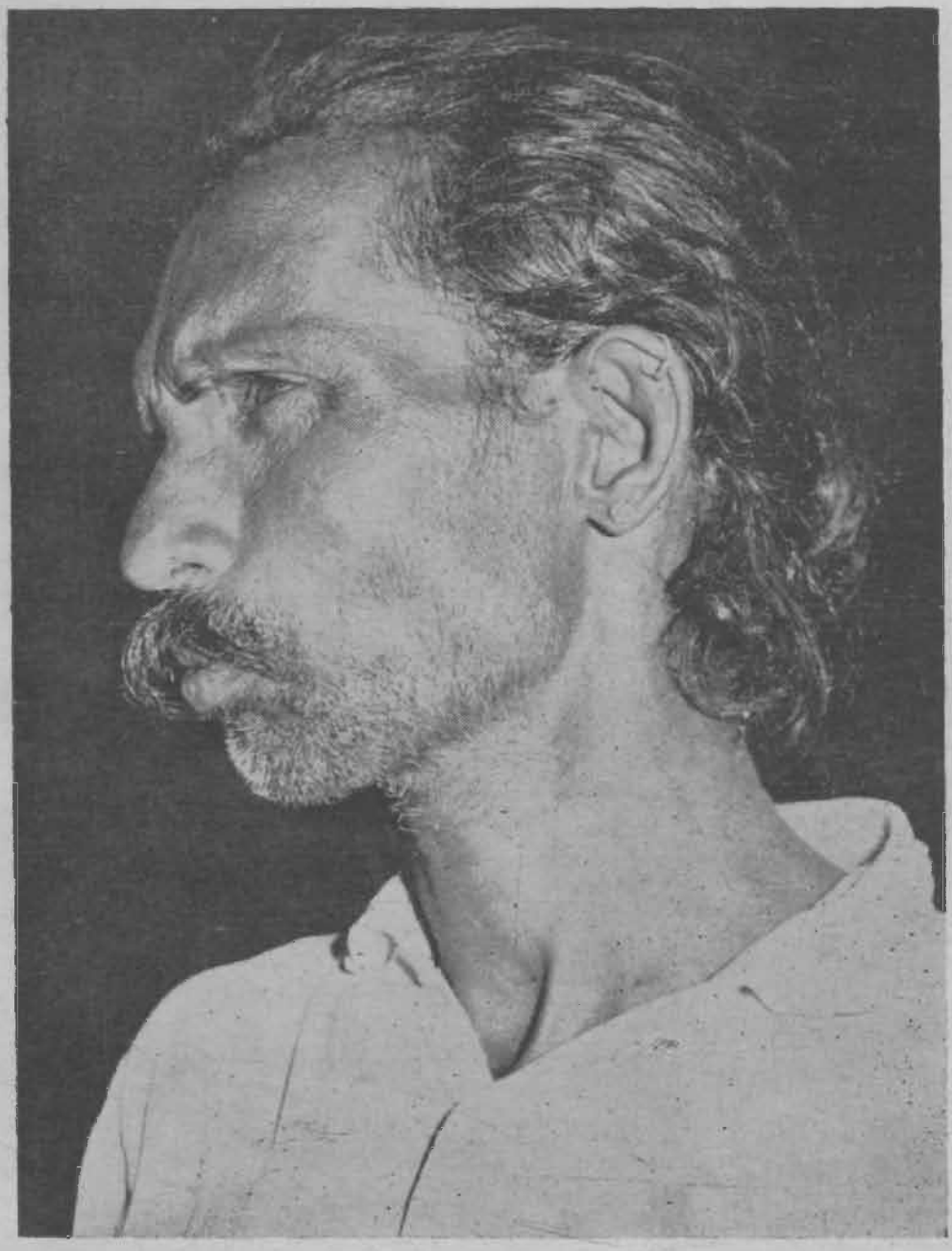


Fig. 3 A Dakkal male—Profile



Fig. 4 A Dakkal male—Back
The elderly males do not cut their hair. They knot it in the back.

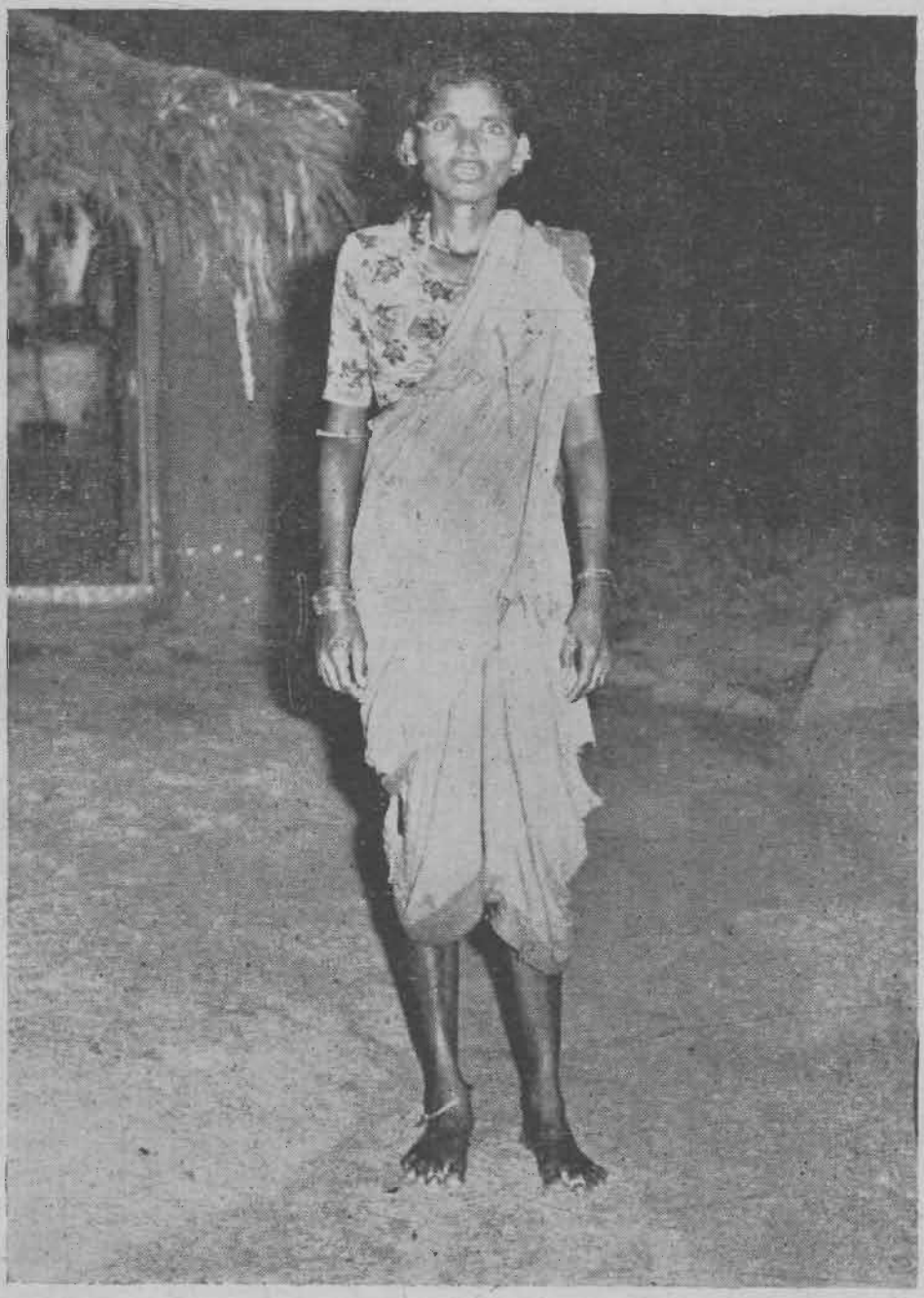


Fig. 5 A Dakkal female



Fig. 6 A Dakkal female—Front



Fig. 7 A Dakkal female—Profile



Fig. 8 A Dakkal female—Back
Hair style of Dakkal woman can be observed.

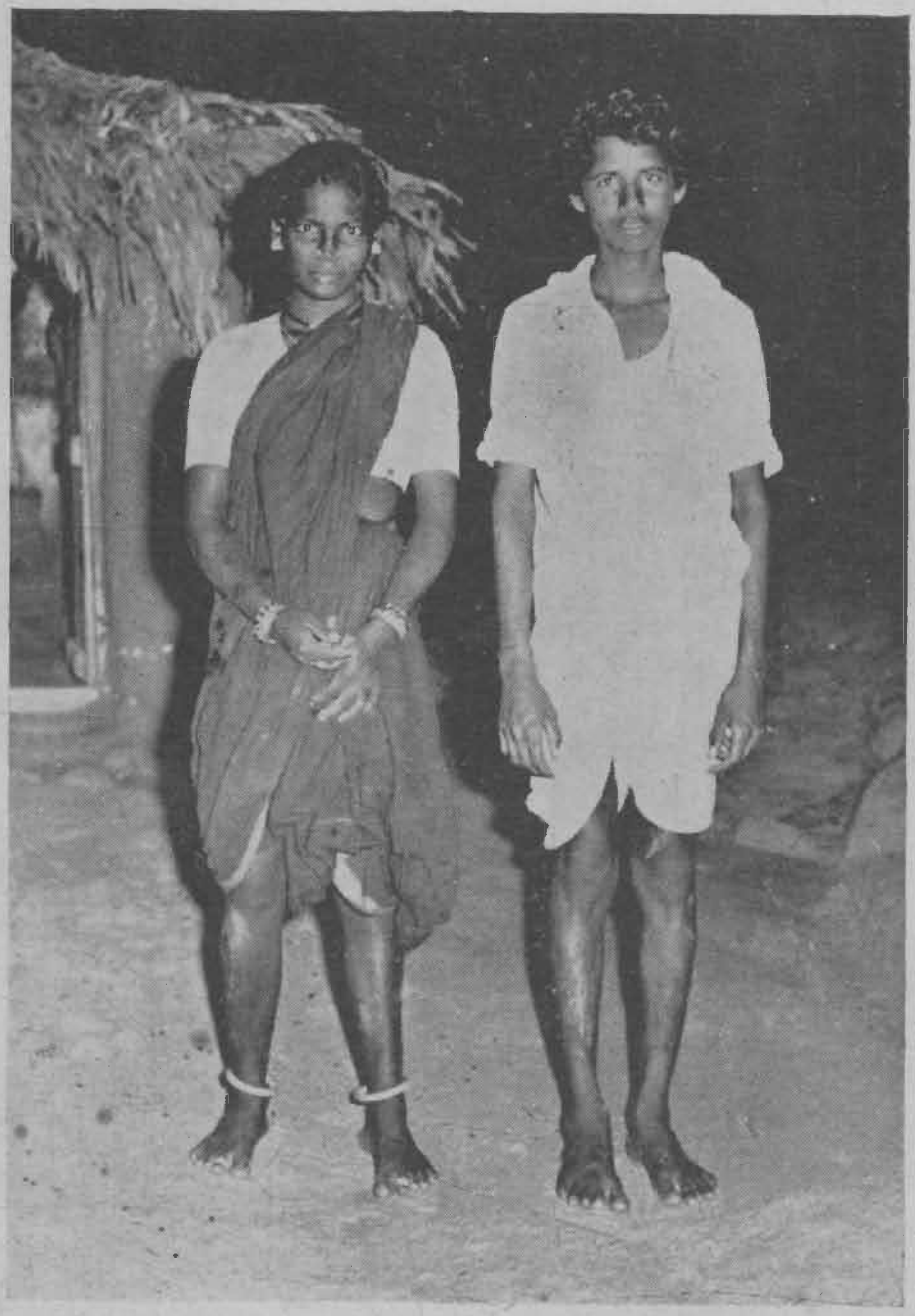


Fig. 9 An young couple from Dakkal community

# DAKKAL (DAKKALWAR)

## Name, Identity, Origin and History

Dakkal or Dakkali is the name of a class of mendicants who beg from Madigas alone. In addition to Andhra Pradesh*, the caste is Scheduled in some parts of Mysore† and Maharashtra‡ States. In Telangana they are mostly found in Mahbubabad taluk of Warangal district. Case studies of Dakkalas for the purpose of ethnographic study were carried out at Mahbubabad, Pusapalli and Anantharam villages of Mahbubabad taluk of Warangal district.

The following story was narrated by Karanikanti Venkaiah, a Dakkala who is a resident of Pusapalli village, Mahbubabad taluk of Warangal district. In connection with the wedding of Lord Shiva and Parvati, preparations were being made elaborately at Kasi (Varanasi). When every thing was ready, Viswabrahma who was asked to prepare the *puste* (marriage locket) failed to deliver it in time due to non-availability of tools and accessories. This created a sort of desperation among the gods. Jambuvamuni rose to the occasion and supplied the tools and accessaries to Viswabrahma, who prepared the *puste* and delivered it at the ceremony. Parvathi was anxious to know how the *puste* was made ready in the absence of tools as reported by Viswabrahma. Viswabrahma narrated how Jambuvamuni came to his rescue and sacrificed his younger son, Jagamuni, and made the accessories, by using some parts of his body. Parvathi postponed her marriage till Jagamuni was brought back to life. The only left over bones of Jagamuni were of the thorax. They were brought and sacred water was sprinkled on them to bring him back to life. Because Jagamuni was brought back to life from the thoracic bones (*lakka*) the progeny of Jagamuni came to be known as Dakkalas or Dakkals (descendants of Dakka). Viswabrahma claimed this recreated Jagamuni. His father Jambuvamuni rejected the claim of Viswabrahma and wished Jagamuni to be looked after and served by Madigas, the descendants of his eldest son Egamuni. From that time onwards, the Dakkalas have become dependent on the Madigas as mendicants and medicinemen. In course of time since the Dakkalas are dependent on Madiga, they came to be considered as inferior to Madigas. The following story about the origin of Dakkala is recorded by E. Thurston which is more or less the same as that narrated by Venkaiah.

"A smith was asked to make a *bottu* (marriage badge) for Siva's wedding and for this purpose required bellows, firepot, hammer, etc. Jambuvudu called his eldest son and prepared the various implements from sundry parts of the body, except the backbone. Being highly pleased at this, the gods endowed the backbone with life and the son went to his father Jambuvudu, who failed to recognise him and refused to admit him. He wast old that he must live as a baggar attached to the Madigas and was called Dakkala because he was brought to life from a vertebral column (dakka)"(E. Thurstone, Volume II, P. 104) .

## Family Clan and Other Analogous Divisions

Rules of descent and residence run in the father's line. Almost all the studied families are of the simple type. The other type of family that is prevalent is the joint family. The rule of inheritance runs from father to son. There are two *gotramulu* among Dakkala namely, *Gonga* and *Neelaveni*. The *gotramulu* are divided into the following exogamous sections, known as *intiperlu* according to the informants.

1. *Allam*
2. *Anthanodu*
3. *Banala*
4. *Chasagonda*
5. *Dakur*
6. *Gowravaran*
7. *Jada*
8. *Karni*
9. *Kasturi*
10. *Mekala*
11. *Pedda Karni*
12. *Poteti*
13. *Ravikanti*

*Gotra* is of no significance for marriage. *Intiperu* governs the choice of partners for marriage. Marriage among persons belonging to the same *intiperu* are prohibited. There is no objection to marrying persons belonging to any other *intiperu* other than one's own, in the caste. There are no legends or stories connected with the origin of *intiperu*. Figures 1 to 9 show Dakkal male and female respectively in different poses.

## Distribution and Population Trend

The Statement I gives the distribution of Dakkal population in Andhra Pradesh according to 1961 Census. A mention is made about Dakkal in the Census Report of 1901 (Vol. XXII, Hyderabad

*Andhra Pradesh : Adilabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Mahbubnagar, Khammam, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad and Warangal Districts.

†Maharashtra : Aurangabad, Bhir, Nanded, Osmanabad and Parbhani.

‡Mysore : Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur

State, Part I, P. (292) under the head of Mala caste. The total population of Dakkal in 1901 is 669 persons. The distribution of the caste by districts is as follows:

| *Districts* | DAKKAL | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Males* | *Females* |
| Mahbubnagar . . | 3 | 83 |
| Atraf-i-Balda . . | 152 | 46 |
| Medak . . . . | 157 | 16 |
| Nalgonda . . . | 20 | 68 |
| Warangal . . . | 53 | 71 |
| TOTAL . | 385 | 284 |

No reference is made about Dakkal in the 1911 Census. During the 1921 Census, Dakkalwar is shown under Depressed Classes but population figure is not given (Vol. XXI, Hyderabad State, Part I, P. 231). In the absence of earlier figures it is not possible to show the population trend of the community. It appears that this community was considered as a part of either Mala or Madiga in the previous censuses and this may be one of the reasons why separate figures for Dakkalwar are not available in the previous Censuses.

## STATEMENT I

POPULATION OF DAKKAL ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS

| Name of the District | Total Rural Urban | DAKKAL (1961) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| TOTAL POPULATION | Total | 1,109 | 584 | 525 |
| | Rural | 1,070 | 554 | 516 |
| | Urban | 39 | 30 | 9 |
| Mahbubnagar | Total | 115 | 56 | 59 |
| | Rural | 114 | 55 | 59 |
| | Urban | 1 | 1 | .. |
| Hyderabad | Total | 33 | 23 | 10 |
| | Rural | 21 | 12 | 9 |
| | Urban | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| Medak | Total | 124 | 60 | 64 |
| | Rural | 124 | 60 | 64 |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |
| Nizamabad | Total | 146 | 113 | 33 |
| | Rural | 146 | 113 | 33 |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |
| Adilabad | Total | 61 | 27 | 34 |
| | Rural | 55 | 22 | 33 |
| | Urban | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| Karimnagar | Total | 175 | 82 | 93 |
| | Rural | 168 | 77 | 91 |
| | Urban | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| Warangal | Total | 189 | 95 | 94 |
| | Rural | 176 | 87 | 89 |
| | Urban | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| Khammam | Total | 118 | 62 | 56 |
| | Rural | 118 | 62 | 56 |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |
| Nalgonda | Total | 148 | 66 | 82 |
| | Rural | 148 | 66 | |
| | Urban | .. | .. | .. |



Fig. 10 A group of Dakkalas in their usual pattern of dress

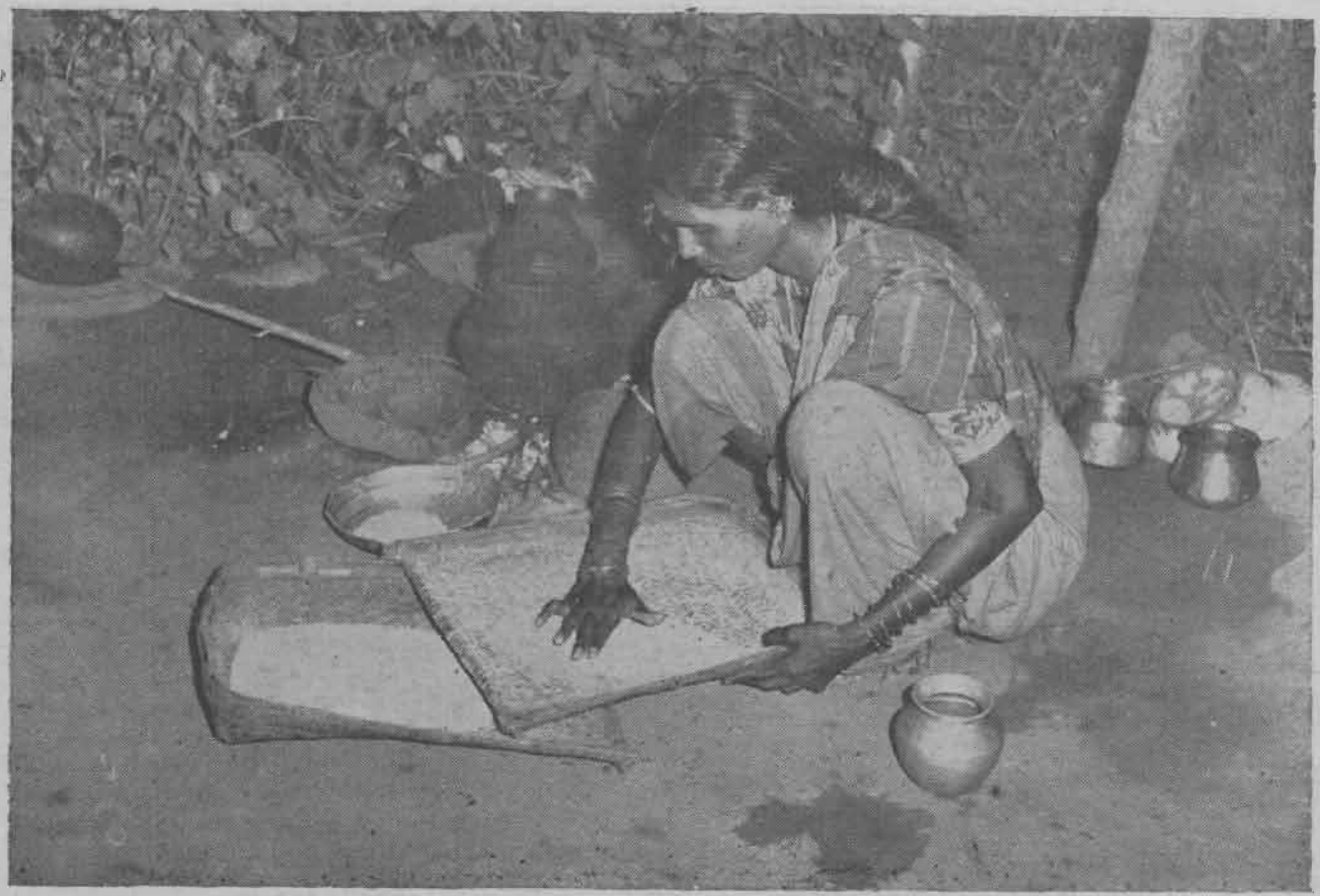


Fig. 11 A Dakkal female in her kitchen.
She is making the rice ready for the day's preparation.

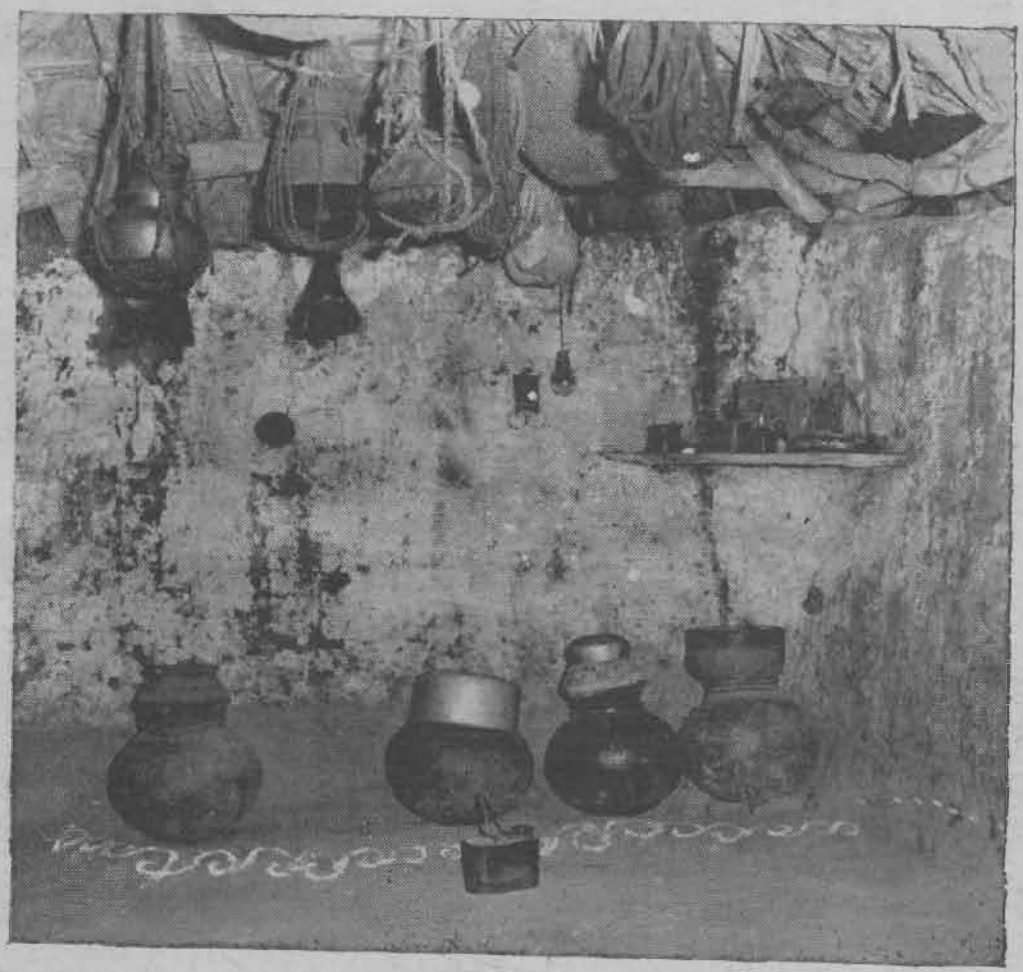


Fig. 12 A section of kitchen in a Dakkal household

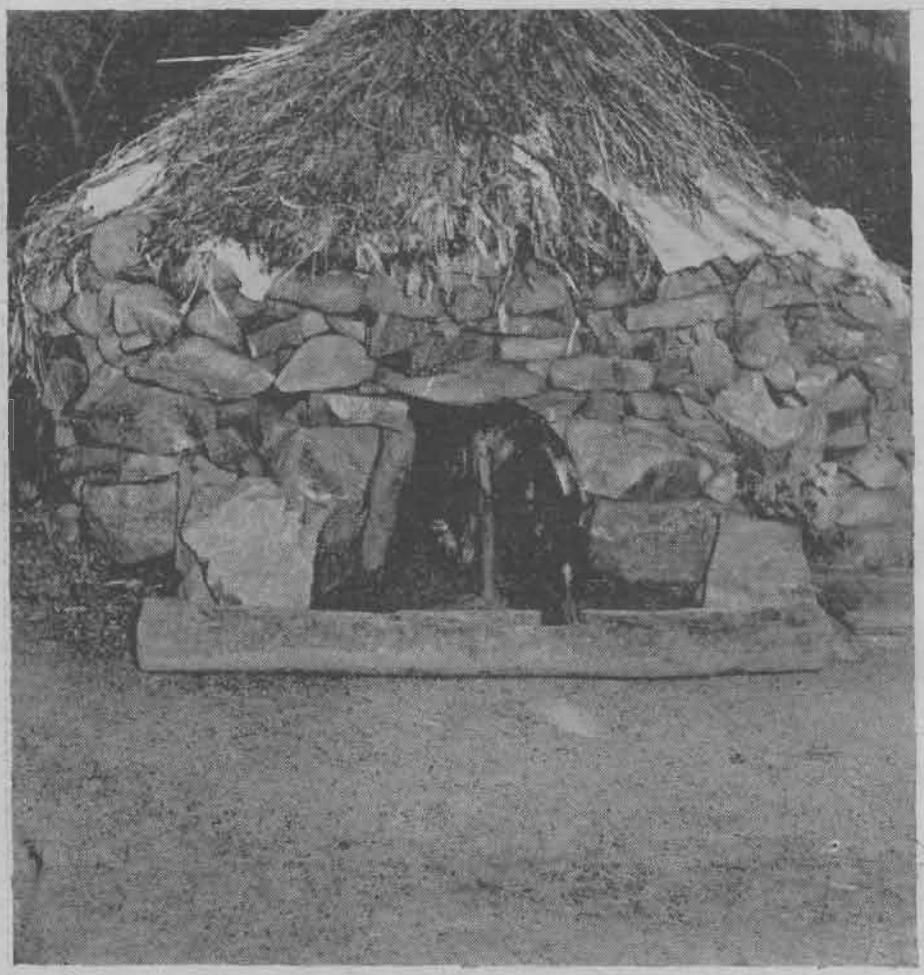


Fig. 13 Feeding the pigs at their sty
This sty is erected with locally available stones and roofed with hay.

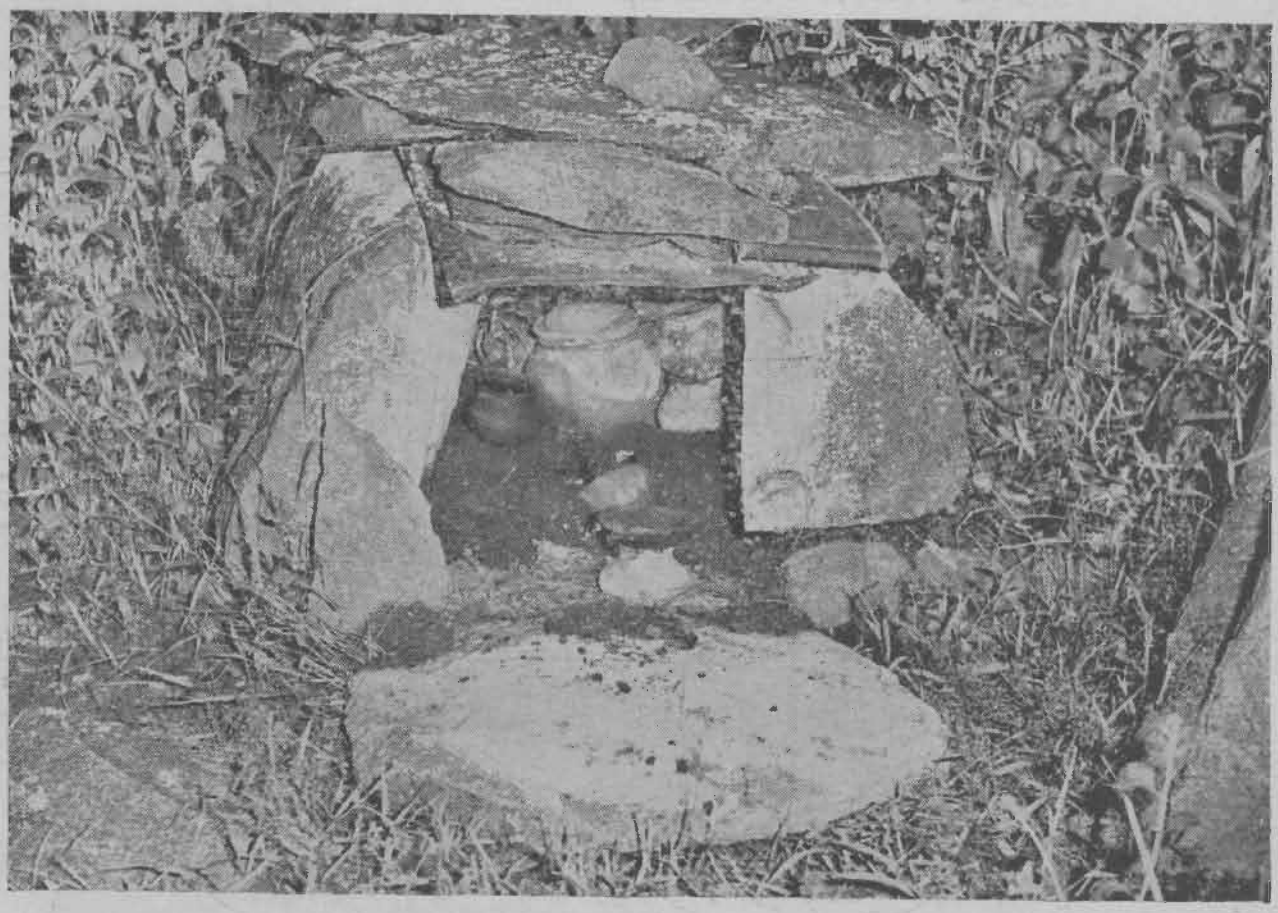


Fig 14 This is the place where Dakkalas worship their caste deity Uppalamma



W—1 Cen. And/71

The total population of Dakkalas in the State is only 1,109 persons. They form 0.02% of the total Scheduled Caste population of this State. 52.66% among the Dakkalas are males and 47.34% are females. The sex ratio is 899 females for every 1,000 males. Also 96.48% of the population live in the rural areas while 3.52% live in the urban areas. The percentage distribution of Dakkal population (by districts) corresponding to Statement I, is given in the following statement.

STATEMENT II

| Sl. No. | Name of the district | Percentage of concentration to the total population of the caste |
|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | (3) |
| 1 | Mahbubnagar . . . . | 10.37 |
| 2 | Hyderabad . . . . . | 2.98 |
| 3 | Medak . . . . . | 11.18 |
| 4 | Nizamabad . . . . . | 13.16 |
| 5 | Adilabad . . . . . | 5.50 |
| 6 | Karimnagar . . . . | 15.78 |
| 7 | Warangal . . . . . | 17.04 |
| 8 | Khammam . . . . . | 10.64 |
| 9 | Nalgonda . . . . . | 13.35 |

It is evident from the above statement that Warangal, Karimnagar and Nalgonda occupy the first three places in regard to concentration of Dakkal populaion. The concentration is the least in Hyderabad district.

**Dwellings, Dress, Food, Ornaments and other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community etc.**

**Dwellings**

The settlements are generally crowded and they live along with other castes *viz.*, Mala and Madiga. Only two types of houses are prevalent among Dakkalas, *viz.*, *Chapillu* or *Chapagudise* and *chuttillu*. Out of the five households studied, four live in *chapillu* type of houses, while one has built a *chuttillu* with mud walls.

15—1 Cen. And/71

(i) *Chapillu or Chapagudise type*

*Chapillu* is an improvised hut temporarily erected while they wander from one village to the other Whenever they go to a village they temporarily occupy an area in the outskirts of the village with the permission of the site owner. Even in their native villages when they return to collect alms from the Madigas, they erect the same type of temporary huts. There are no regular walls as such for these huts. The ground plan is circular with about five feet radius; at the centre of it, a pole of five feet is fixed in the ground. As they wander from place to place they do not raise any platform. Around the top point of this pole, five to six bamboos are placed and secured in inclined manner so that the other ends of these bamboos almost touch the ground. Over these bamboos, bamboo mats are spread. These bamboo *thatties* erve both as roof and wall. There will be a small pening into this hut and one has to bend very low while entering the house. Because the hut is so low roofed and unplastered, cooking is not done inside except in the rainy season for fear of fire accidents. This is exclusively used for sleeping and living purpose.

(ii) *Chuttillu Type*

The ground plan for this type of house also is circular. The house is built on a platform raised to a height of one foot on the ground. The walls are built with mud and stones. The floor is plastered with cowdung and the roof which is conical in shape is covered with palmyra leaves. A pole is fixed at the centre of the circular floor and sufficient number of countrywood rafters depending on the size of the house are arranged in such a way that one end of each after rests on the central pole and the other end on the circular wall. On this structure are spread palmyra leaves. There is provision for a single door and the shutter provided for this is made up of bamboo pieces or palmyra leaves. Importance is not attached to the direction of the main gate. Both family and hired labour are engaged for house construction. This type of house costs about Rs. 200 at present; earlier it used to cost roughly Rs. 100. The following ceremonies are observed in connection with the house construction. The plot, that is selected for the house construction, is first cleaned. The household head prays god and plays thrice with nine *cowrie* shells. If the total of the *cowries* which base upwards comes to odd numbers like 5, 9, 11 or 13 the site is considered to be lucky. Otherwise the plot is discarded for house construction and another one is selected. The site selected for house construction is swept and a

portion at the centre of the plot is plastered with cow-dung. The head of the household worships his favourite god and at the auspicious moment, fixed by the experienced man of their caste, a pole is fixed at the central portion of the site and this pole is locally called *nitrayi*. A coconut is broken after the erection of the pole and the coconut (kernel) pieces are distributed among the invitees, comprising mostly of children. The house warming ceremony is observed only in the case of *chuttillu*. After the completion of the house, they fix up a day for this occasion, depending on the star at the time of birth of the concerned head of the household. On that day god is worshipped and milk is boiled in the new house. As sheep or goat is also sacrificed and a feast is given to all the nearest and dearest.

**Dress and Ornaments**

A Dakkala wears a *dhoti*, shirt and a head gear. He can be identified by a nose ornament called *mukku pogu* worn on the nostril, mustaches, and long hair on the head and a bag hanging down the shoulders containing some medicines and a bundle of palmyra-leaf books. He also wears a woolen blanket called *gongali* on the shoulders and keeps a staff in his hand. The dress of a female is comprised of a saree and a blouse only. The pattern of wearing saree is local. The girls wear a frock or a skirt and blouse. The dress of boys consists of knicker and a shrit [Fig. 10]. There are no special ornaments for females except the usual ones like *puste* (marriage locket), bangles, ear ornaments and *mattelu* (toe rings). Both male and female folk have tattoo marks for decorative purpose.

**Food**

The staple food of Dakkalas consists of rice, *jowar*, maize and *sajjalu* (bulrush millet). They also eat tubers like *alligaddalu, govinda gaddalu* and *seema pendalam* (yam) which are available in the forest and are obtained by digging to a depth of 3 to 4 feet in the surrounding places. The following is their routine food habit which consists of two meals—one in the afternoon and the other in the night. The first meal consists of *jonna gataka* or *jonna sankati* (solid food prepared out of *jowar* flour) and *karam* (chutney prepared out of chillis). The night meal includes cooked rice and *pappu* (curry prepared out of *dhad* and some vegetable) and *chintapulusu* (a liquid prepared out of tamarind leaves or tamarind). They eat the flesh of fowls, squirrels, *Goranka* (a kind of bird) *kamjulu* (patridges), sheep, goat, etc. Beef is also consumed by them. The following are the favourite fishes consumed by them : *Valuga, ingilikalu, paperlu* and *buddaparakalu*. They do not hesitate to take the flesh of the abovementioned dead animals or dead birds. Earthen pots are used for cooking, preservation of edibles, fetching and storing water and storing grains, condiments, oil etc. However for eating and drinking they use aluminium plates and tumblers respectively [Figs. 11 and 12].

**Language and Education**

The mother tongue of Dakkalas is Telugu. They know a little of Urdu. They speak in Telugu and Urdu with the neighbours. The Statement III brings out the literacy standards of Dakkal according to 1961 Census and as per the case studies.

STATEMENT III

LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AMONG DAKKALAS

| Educational levels | | DAKKALAS Persons | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| *According to* 1961 *Census—Andhra Pradesh* : | | | | |
| Total Population | Total | 1,109 | 584 | 525 |
| | Rural | 1,070 | 554 | 516 |
| | Urban | 39 | 30 | 9 |
| Illiterate | Total | 1,005 | 482 | 523 |
| | Rural | 971 | 457 | 514 |
| | Urban | 34 | 25 | 9 |
| Literate | Total | 96 | 94 | 2 |
| | Rural | 93 | 91 | 2 |
| | Urban | 3 | 3 | .. |
| Primary or Junior Basic | Total | 8 | 8 | .. |
| | Rural | 6 | 6 | .. |
| | Urban | 2 | 2 | .. |

According to the above statistics, 90.62% of the total population, (82.53% of males and 99.62% of females) are illiterates. Of the 9.38% literates, 8.66% are mere literates without educational standards while only 0.72% have the Primary or Junior Basic qualification. Of the total female population of 525 only 2 females are literates without educational standards. There is not even one female who has obtained even the Primary or Junior basic standard. As stated earlier, the Dakkals are bards of Madigas. Also for medicinal purposes, they have to refer to the book *Navagraha Chintamani*. Hence education is required for such of the males who have to eke out their livelihood by these means. In spite of this requirement their percentage of literacy is comparatively poor. When it is compared with the literacy percentage of all the Scheduled Castes (8.47%), the position of Dakkal is slightly better. With the literacy standards of the general population of the state which is 21.2%, Dakkals are at a very low level. According to case studies, 85.72% (72.73% males and all the females) are illiterates. Only 4.76% of the population are mere literates without educational levels and 9.52% are educated upto the Primary or Junior Basic level. However, as the surveyed population is only 21 persons and is confined to a limited area, the Census figures may be taken to represent better the literacy position of the Dakkals.

**Economic Life**

The main occupation of Dakkalas is to give particulars relating to the genealogy of different families of Madigas *i.e.*, they are bards of Madigas. They tell some stories relating to their origin and charge Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 from every Madiga household once in a year. Every Dakkala has a jurisdiction over 10 to 20 villages where he has a right to collect the amount in the households earmarked for him. The practice of begging and telling the genealogy of Madigas is still continuing with Dakkalas. Though the traditional practices are observed even today, strict adherence and importance attached to the traditions in the past are not found at present. No doubt Madigas listen to the legends narrated by Dakkalas but in return do not pay as lavishly as they used to do earlier. In addition to this, Dakkalas also go about as medicine men and some of them are engaged in agricultural labour. They keep forest products such as the dried fruits, nuts, bark, etc. and use them as medicines. They move for about eight months in a year by carrying out their traditional occupation. Generally the entire family moves from one place to the other. The Dakkala always keeps with him a bag containing two books written on palmyra leaf plates. They are *Jamapuranam*; which tells about the origin of Madigas and other castes and also of the *gotramulu* of Madigas and *Navagraha Chintamani*, which gives detailed account of medicinal treatments. They now feel that their traditional occupations do not enable them to earn sufficiently and hence they want to settle at one place and take up agriculture provided land is allotted to them either by the Government or by any private body. They are developing a strong feeling to settle at one place as shown by a good number of persons returned under cultivation and number of literates in the 1961 Census. Some of the families have already started to settle at one place. A few households are rearing pigs (Fig. 13). The occupational distributions of Dakkal according to the 1961 Census is given below in the Statement IV.

STATEMENT IV

OCCUPATION OF DAKKALAS

| Name of the Occupation | DAKKALAS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| *According to* 1961 *Census—Andhra Pradesh* | | | |
| Cultivation | 35 | 19 | 16 |
| Agricultural Labour | 30 | 8 | 22 |
| Mining, Quarrying, etc. | 27 | 14 | 13 |
| Household Industry | 54 | 16 | 38 |
| Manufacturing other than Household Industry. | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| Construction | 5 | 5 | .. |
| Trade and Commerce | 4 | 4 | .. |
| Other Services | 11 | 10 | 1 |
| Total Workers | 173 | 77 | 96 |
| *Non-workers | 936 | 507 | 429 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 1,109 | 584 | 525 |

*Because most of the persons are engaged in begging the proportion of non-workers is very high in this community.

It is somewhat peculiar to find that according to the 1961 Census figures only 15.60% of the total population of Dakkal are workers (13.18% among males and 18.29% among females). However, this phenomenon is due to the fact that most of the Dakkals retained themselves as beggars and hence were treated as non-workers. Of the working population, 20.23%

are cultivators, 17.34% are agricultural labourers, 15.61% are engaged in mining, quarrying, etc., 31.21% in household industry, 4.05% in manufacturing other than household industry, 2.89% in construction, 2.31% in trade and commerce and 6.36% in other services. Only one male is engaged in scavenging. Of course this solitary male is included under 'Other Services'. Statement V gives the income and expenditure particulars of five Dakkal households according to case studies.

STATEMENT V

INCOME, DEBT AND EXPENDITURE OF DAKKAL OF PUSAPALLI, ANANTHARAM AND MAHBUBABAD VILLAGES OF MAHBUBABAD TALUK OF WARANGAL DISTRICT DURING DECEMBER, 1964 TO NOVEMBER, 1965

| Sl. No. | Name of the head of the household | Income (Rs.) | Debt when taken | BUDGET PROVISION | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Expenditure (Rs.) | | | | |
| | | | | Total | On food | On clothing | On fuel & lighting | On miscellaneous items |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | | Rs. P. | | Rs. P. | Rs. P. | Rs. P. | Rs. P. | Rs. P. |
| 1 | *Anantharam village* | | | | | | | |
| | 1. Bonala Tirupati | 350.00 | Nil | 353.75 | 273.75 | 40.00 | 12.00 | 28.00 |
| | 2. Bonala Venkadu | 350.00 | Nil | 367.75 | 273.75 | 40.00 | 10.00 | 44.00 |
| 2 | *Mahbubabad village* | | | | | | | |
| | 3. Karnikanti Yenki | 250.00 | Nil | 259.50 | 182.50 | 35.00 | 10.00 | 32.00 |
| | 4. Karnikanti Muthigadu | 420.00 | Nil | 427.00 | 365.00 | 40.00 | 10.00 | 12.00 |
| 3 | *Pusapalli village* | | | | | | | |
| | 5. Karnikanti Venkaiah | 350.00 | Nil | 353.50 | 182.50 | 45.00 | 12.00 | 114.00 |

In almost all the cases, the income and expenditure are balancing and no household has incurred any debt. It is observed that they cannot raise debts as no one is prepared to give loans to them because of their wandering nature.

## LIFE CYCLE

### Birth

The attainment of pregnancy is made known to the husband by the other female members of the family after two months of pregnancy. If the pregnant woman has her parents alive, then she is taken to her parents' house during the ninth month. She stays there till the completion of second month for the child. The subsequent births usually take place at her husband's place only. They do not go to hospital for delivery. A portion of the house is separated for the purpose of confinement which is enclosed by cloths or a cot. The delivery is attended to by a *dai* who is usually an experienced woman of the caste. If the delivery is difficult, a woman from the barber community is invited to attend. Normally a barber woman does not serve Dakkala community. Only in exceptional cases she offers her services. She is paid Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for her services and is provided with liquor. Soon after the child birth, the umbilical cord cut by the *dai* is buried in a pit near about the residence. No importance is attached to this. The child is given bath regularly right from the day of birth. But the mother is given bath on alternate days starting from third day. The period of pollution after delivery is for ten days and the final bath on the 11th day removes the pollution. The mother attends to her normal activities from the 16th day onwards. During the prenatal period, meat, fishes, white gourd and jaggery are prohibited. While in the postnatal period, only meat is not allowed to be eaten. However, there is no special food prescribed during the prenatal period. But during the postnatal period she has to take a paste locally known as *balintha karam* a mixture of *sonti* (dried ginger), *elakulu* (cardamom), *miriyalu* (pepper), *pippallu* (long pepper), jaggery and ghee regularly for a period of thirty days. Also she has to take rice with any one of the following preparations, like

*Kandipachchadi* (a chutney prepared out of redgram dal), *ulavapachchadi* ( a chutney prepared out of horsegram) and *ulavacharu* (a dilute liquid prepared out of boiled horsegram). On the eleventh day, after cessation of pollution, they kill a sheep or fowl and give a dinner for a few people in their community as a mark of cessation of pollution. The total expenditure on delivery comes to Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.

**Naming Ceremony**

The naming ceremony takes place on the third day. Usually the names of ancestors are given. Names are also selected basing on the star at the time of child birth. Both the mother and the child are given bath on the 3rd day and the child is dressed in new clothes. All the relatives are invited on this occasion. In the presence of all the invitees, the child is kept in a winnow and rice is poured on the four corners of the same. The maternal uncle calls the child by the name selected while the mother keeps the winnow in her lap and some one of the caste rings a bell in acceptance of the name. The invitees shower *akshintalu* (turmeric smeared rice) on the child. All the invitees are treated to a simple party. The expenditure on this occasion would be about Rs. 25.

**Tonsure Ceremony**

This is observed for every child of the family either in the third year or in the fifth year. If the name of the child is given after any God, they have to go to the concerned temple for this purpose. Otherwise the celebration takes place at the residence itself. If the ceremony is observed at temples, the barber cuts the hair otherwise the maternal uncle or grandfather attends the tonsure in whose absence the father himself attends to this. The person who cuts the hair is paid a rupee for his services. The child is given oil bath after tonsure. On that day all the nearest relatives are treated to a feast.

**First feeding (of solid food) of the child**

This is not observed by all people in this caste. Only people who can afford the expenditure celebrate the occasion. They invite the nearest relatives and give them food on that day after giving solid food to the child.

**Initiating the child to learning**

There is no practice of observing the ceremony connected with the initiation of the child to learning.

**Puberty**

The normal age of puberty in this caste is between 12 and 14 years. During the first menstruation, pollution is observed for 10 days and final bath is given on the 11th day. The girl is segregated on all these 10 days. A separate hut is erected by the maternal uncle and in his absence the parents themselves attend to this. The food served to her is very simple consisting of rice and curry (prepared out of dal). Sweets are also given to her. She takes bath every day during the period of pollution also and changes the clothes. On the 11th day, she is given oil bath and is presented with a new saree and blouse. Relatives are treated with a feast on that day. They do not observe pollution for subsequent menses and there is no segregation also.

**Marriage**

Marriage by negotiation is the common type in this community. Child betrothal does not exist at all. The normal age of marriage for males is between 20 and 25 years while for females it is between 12 and 18 years. The permissible partners for marriage are mother's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter and own sister's daughter. Marriage is endogamous with reference to caste and exogamous with reference to *intiperlu* or *gotramulu*. The range of bride price is between Rs. 20 to Rs. 30. There is no practice of dowry payment as found during the field study. Marriage is celebrated at the residence of the groom. An elderly man of the caste officiate during the marriage. No remuneration is paid for his services. Musical instruments are played during this occasion. The marriage is celebrated for one day. After usual negotiations, the date of marriage is fixed. The bride's party arrives at the village of the groom and rests under a tree. The groom's party come there accompanied by musical instruments and with the following, *viz.*, *Garigabuddi*, containing turmeric, Vermilion, mango leaves, five *Kharjaurmulu* (date fruits), 5 paise, and rice and a small earthen pot around which is tied a mango leaf with white thread. These are given to the bride's party. The bride's party in turn presents the groom with a pair of *dhotis*, a head gear, a shirt and a ring. A pandal is erected in the front yard of the house with twelve poles and mango leaves are spread on the pandal. The marriage is celebrated in the evening. The bride and bridegroom are given bath and dressed in new clothes and are seated on a mat spread in the pandal. At the auspicious moment, the officiator shows the *puste* to the audience present and they touch it giving their blessings. Then it is given to the groom for tying it round the bride's neck. Just at the time

of tying the *puste* the musical instruments are played. All the invitees shower *akshintalu* on the bridal couple. After this the couple is seated facing each other and *talambralu* ceremony (pouring rice on each other's head) takes place. Then the couple is seated side by side. The relatives or friends present some money or gifts on the occasion. In the night the couple is taken round the village in procession and finally to the temple. If the girl is matured, the consummation ceremony is celebrated on the succeeding night, otherwise it is done after attainment of puberty. A grand feast is given to all the people in the night. The feast includes non-vegetarian items of food and also liquor. The bridegroom's party gives a feast and gives send off to the relatives and other invitees on the next day. Usually all the people leave on the evening of the second day of marriage. Thus ends the ceremony.

**Widow remarriage**

Widow remarriages are permissible in this community. There is no ceremony attached to this. The man who marries the widow, goes to her home with a saree and blouse and presents the same to her. As soon as she wears the saree and blouse, she becomes the wife of the man. Of course, the formal acceptance of the Caste Panchayat is required, before fixing up the marriage.

**Divorce**

Divorce is accepted in this community. Approval of the Caste Panchayat is very much essential for this. A divorced woman can marry once again. Mostly the divorce is on the grounds of adultery and ill-treatment by husband. If the divorce is initiated by the male on the ground of adultery, he need not pay anything to his wife. But if it is on the ground of his unwillingness to live with her, he has to pay for her subsistence. If the divorce is initiated by the female, then she has to pay the expenses incurred on the marriage. The particulars of the marital status of Dakkal according to the 1961 Census is given in the Statement VI.

STATEMENT VI

MARITAL STATUS OF DAKKAL ACCORDING TO THE 1961 CENSUS

| Age-Groups | MARITAL STATUTS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | | | Never Married | | Married | | Widowed | | Divorced | |
| | Persons | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| 0 — 14 Years | 485 | 283 | 202 | 280 | 193 | 3 | 9 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 15 — 44 Years | 436 | 210 | 226 | 55 | 10 | 142 | 194 | 7 | 12 | 6 | 10 |
| 45 Years and over | 188 | 91 | 97 | 1 | 18 | 76 | 40 | 13 | 37 | 1 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 1,109 | 584 | 525 | 336 | 221 | 221 | 243 | 20 | 49 | 7 | 12 |

The statement given below gives the percentage distribution of Dakkalas according to broad age groups and marital status as per the 1961 Census.

STATEMENT VII

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DAKKALS ACCORDING TO BROAD AGE GROUPS

| Age-groups years | DISTRIBUTION OF DAKKALAS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | | | Never married | | Married | | Widowed | | Divorced | |
| | P | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| 0 — 14 | 43.32 | 48.46 | 38.48 | 98.94 | 95.54 | 1.06 | 4.46 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 15 — 44 | 39.32 | 35.96 | 43.05 | 26.19 | 4.42 | 67.62 | 85.84 | 3.33 | 5.31 | 2.86 | 4.43 |
| 45 Years & over | 16·95 | 15·58 | 18·47 | 1.10 | 18.56 | 83.52 | 41.28 | 14.28 | 38.14 | 1.10 | 2.06 |
| TOTAL | | | | 57.54 | 42.10 | 37.84 | 46.29 | 3.42 | 9.33 | 1.20 | 2.28 |

*Age group of* 0-14 *years* : In this age group, 98.94% of the males and 95.54% of the females are never married. 1.06% of the males and 4.46% of the females are married thus showing the prevalence of child marriage. There are no divorced and widowed persons in this age group.

*Age group of* 15—44 *years* : 26.19% of the males and 4.42% of the females are never married. 67.62% of the males and 85.84% of the females are married. 3.33% of the males and 5.31% of the females are widowed while 2.86% among the males and 4.43% among the females are divorced.

*Age group of* 45 *and over* : 1.10% of the males and 18.56% of the females are never married while 83.52% of the males and 41.28% of the females are married 14.28% of the males and 38.14% of the females are widowed while 1.10% of the males and 2.06% of the females are divorced.

**Death**

The dead are usually buriedhead facing south and upwards. Soon after the death, the corpse is given cold water bath and wrapped in a new cloth. Turmeric is applied to the face and head. The corpse is placed on the bier; and is carried by four peoples to the burial ground. Only the nearest relatives follow the corpse. The eldest son holds the fire pot and leads the corpse. On the way, the corpse is brought down and some *sambrani* powder is sprinkled in the fire pot and the smoke is made to pass over the corpse. The carriers of the bier change their places at this spot. The pit is dug by a Dakkal man and the corpse is placed in it. It is covered with mud and a stone is placed over it. All the people who go to the burial ground, take bath and male members go in for liquors to a nearby shop. No feast is arranged on that day. On the third day they celebrate the *ehinnadi-vasam* when they sacrifice a fowl and give a simple feast to the relatives. Before the feast a portion of the cooked food is taken to the burial ground and placed on the stone, where the corpse is buried. The final obsequies are celebrated on the 10th day. A sheep or goat is sacrificed on this occasion. All the relatives are invited to attend on this occasion and a feast is given to all of them. The caste man only officiates on this occasion. On that day just before taking food the wife of the deceased is taken to the well by another widow and she breaks the bangles, removes the vermilion mark on the forehead and also the *mattelu.* She also removes the *puste* from her neck. After coming home, she is presented a new saree by the nearest relatives. They have faith in rebirth and in the existence of heaven and hell. According to them, a person who commits sins is taken to hell while a person who has done good deeds is elevated to heaven.

**Inheritance**

They are not aware of the laws of inheritance. However, according to them, the property of the deceased is shared equally among the sons. If there are daughters, some amount or jewels are given at the discretion of the sons. The eldest son has to bear the responsibility of his family in case of his father's death.

**Religion**

The religion of Dakkalas is Hinduism. They observe all the Hindu festivals and worship all Hindu Gods. The important Goddess for them is *Uppari Mahishamma* or *Uppalamma* [Fig. 14]. There is a sacred plant in their house where they keep the lithographs of Rama, Krishna, Venkateswara and Narasimhaswamy. They do not have any spiritual advisers. Just like all other Hindu castes, Dakkalas use vermilion, turmeric, paddy, grains, flowers etc. during the rituals. The important pilgrimage centres visited by them are Korivi, near Mahbubabad where Korivi *jathara* is celebrated and Bhadrachalam. During the Korivi *Jathara* animals like sheep or goat and birds like fowls are sacrificed.

These people believe in omens. The bad omens are the sight of a cat, the sound of sneezing, the sight of firewood bundle, the sight of a new pot, empty pot, crowbar and the sound produced by a jackal and also that of the gun. The good omens are the sight of *saddi annam* (the left overs of previous night), grain and cow. Whenever they suffer from continuous pain in the leg, they wear a silver anklet to the paining leg after offering prayer to god. They have great belief in this practice.

**Festivals**

The following festivals are observed in this caste; Ugadi, Sankranti. Deepavali, Dassera, Sri Rama Navami, Pithrula Amavasya (Bhadrapada month), Korla Punnam (*Karthika* month) and Shivarathri. On all the festive occasions except on occasions like Sivarathri during which they have to observe fasting. They eat the flesh of pigs and folws. Taking oil bath on all the festive occcasions is a must for them. It is not very much essential that new clothes should be worn on the festive occasions. On these occasions, the males sing songs and dance. They are not aware

of the legends connected with the festivals. Every household head erects a small shed near about the locality of Dakkal for keeping an idol of Mutyalamma or Maisamma. For Mutyalamma, they sacrifice fowls and also offer her *Kudumulu* (sweet prepared out of wheat flour and jaggery), *guggillu* (Boiled green-gram) and milk.

**Inter community Relationship**

Dakkalas are treated as one of the lowest castes in the society. They are treated inferior to Madigas. All the castes including Madigas treat them as untouchables. They do not have access to temples and the common well. These people take food from all castes except from Viswabrahmins. They are not allowed to enter the houses of Madigas. Alms are collected by standing outside only. Males alone used to give the alms previously but now-a-days, even females are allowed to serve food to them. Dakkalas are not expected to wear shoes in the presence of Madigas. They cannot directly take water from the hands of Madigas as it signifies equality. Madigas have to pour down the water from a height and Dakkals have to receive it standing below. A Dakkal must stand up when a Madiga passes by. A Dakkal should not lie or sit on a cot in the presence of Madigas. Dakkalas are not allowed to live along with Madigas in the same street.

**Structure of Social Control and Leadership**

They do not know the existence of Panchayat Samithi and Zilla Parishad, etc. But they know the names of taluk and district headquarters. This community has a Caste Panchayat of its own. The Caste Panchayat exists at the regional level only. The caste head is known as *kulapedda*; his office is hereditary. For *Dakkalas* of Warangal district, Karni Kanch Gopal of Chinna Pendya village in Jangaon taluk is the caste head. He is aged about 35 years. All kinds of disputes dealing with social aspects such as divorce, marriage etc. are discussed with him and settled. His decision is taken to be the final one. However, his decision is mainly based on the opinion of the members of the Caste Panchayat. The Caste Panchayat is found to be very effective. At the village level the experienced members of the caste advise their young folk in matters of trivial differences. Their traditional occupation of giving medicines has received a set back-because of the modern medicines and the establishment of several hospitals. They are very much in favour of cultivating lands giving up their-traditional occupation provided land is made available to them for cultivation purposes.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. II, P. 104.
2. Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXI, Hyderabad State, Part I, Report, P. 231.
3. Census of India, 1901, Vol. XXII, Hyderabad State, Par I, Report, P. 292.

## ANNEXURE I

### FRAME WORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

**I. Name, Identity, Origin, and History :**

1. Name; Synonym; sub-caste/sub-tribe as in President's Order and as in other published sources such as Census Reports, Monographs etc., grouping with other castes and tribes during various Censuses. Affinity with other Castes and tribes according to recognised authorities.
2. Etymological significance of the name; names by which the community is referred to by (a) others and (b) itself.
3. Identification of the community by occupation or any other way of life.
4. Myths and legends connected with the origin and history of the community and its segments; historical references and popular beliefs about history and migration of the community.

**II. Distribution and Population Trend :**

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside; physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variations during 1901-1961; sex ratio; age-groups and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

**III. Physical Characteristics :**

1. Racial Stock; appearance and affinity with other known communities.

**IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and other Analogous Divisions :**

1. Family, size (observed and published), Types, residence after marriage, descent, lineage and its economic and religious function and inheritance.
2. Clan/gotra and sub-clans; names, etymological meaning, clustering of clans, belief and mythology about origin, status among clans, clan and regulation of marriage (preference and prohibition), occupation and clan, clan and rituals, clan and (restrictions, prescriptions etc.,)
3. Others; Phratry, Duel organisation, like moieties etc., as in 2 above.

**V. Dwelling Dress Food Ornaments and other Material objects Distinctive of the Community :**

1. Settlement; Village site, location, settlement, pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped horse-shoe-shaped, linear, rectangular, circular or ring-shaped etc.,) and variations; regional pattern vis-a-vis pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion caste (Caste Hindus, untouchables) and tribes etc., with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit; Compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house (latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts etc.,); shape (square, round, irregular etc.); storeys; nature of floor, plinth; wall; roofing, thatching; ventilations and doors; materials used; decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.
4. Dress including head gear and foot wear used ordinarliy on ceremonial occassions and special occasions, sex-wise and according to majority or minority; dress of priest and office bearers; variations.
5. Ornaments; use; material used; from where obtained; variations according to sex and age
6. Personal decoration; tattooing; mutilation (Chipping of teeth, etc.); hair cutting; how done, purpose, attitude and variation according to sex and age.
7. Food and drink; Materials (Staple and other) prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensil and mode of preparation; practices connected with serving and taking of food; preservation of food rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual; how procured, material used, construction and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording of time space and weight and their methods of use; As above.

**VI. Environmental Sanitation Hygienic Habits Disease and Treatment :**

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, diposal of night soil, garbage etc.,
2. Hygienic habits; cleanliness of body, teeth dress, houses, untensils etc.,
3. Diseases; Incidence; local names; interpretation of the causes; symptoms; diagnosis; and cure–persons and methods involved.
4. Modern system of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

**VII. Language and Education :**

1. Ancestral Language; Classification according to Grierson, Persistance of ancestral language and literature
2. Mother tongue; Classification according to Grierson; bilingualism and multilingualism, regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 Census on language and literature.
4. Education and literacy; Traditional and modern attitude, information collected during 1961 Census literacy and levels of education.

**VIII. Economic Life :**

1. Economic resources; Land, community land, individual ownership and types of land possessed and land utilized.
2. Forest wealth; Flora and fauna; nature and extent of right in the forest; forest utilization.
3. Fishery, Livestock and others.
4. Working force; Sexwise, urban and rural variations and comparison of the same with the region.
5. Non–Workers.
6. Industrial classifications; Details as collected in the field and comparison with that of the 1961 Census figures, traditional occupation and changes in the pattern, main and subsidiary occcupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, pattron–clien relationship (jajmani), mode of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement; Cycle and occupation pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation; Method, implements and equipments, produce, partcipation, cycle of rotation, measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation; As above.
12. Income and expenditure; Sources of income extent, expenditure on food, clothing, house education, social functions and others.
13. Other aspects of economic life.

**IX. Life Cycle :**

**A. Birth**

1. Beliefs and practices connected with conception, barrenness, still birth, miscarriage, abortion, child death, regulation of sex, etc.
2. Prenatal and natal practices; Residencei, diet, work, taboos, etc., delivery place, assistance equipments used in delivery, position during delivery severance of umbilical cord (who does and how done), disposal of placenta.
3. Postnatal practices; Confinement and segregation, ceremonial pollution, diet for mother and child, rituals.
4. Protection and care of child and training. Attitude towards birth of child, preference above sex preference about number, segregation of sex. etc.

**B. Initiation**

1. Initiation ceremony, descriptions.
2. Premarital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

**C. Marriage**

1. Age at marriage for both sex; prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow remarriage (preferences and taboos).
2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage; Monogamy, Polygamy (Polyandry and Polygyny).
4. Selection of spouse; Qualities valued (for bride and groom) mode of selection procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate; By negotiation force, intrusion, elopement etc.
6. Terms of settlement; Payment of bride price dowry, service, exchange, adoption, etc.

7. Ceremonies connected with marriage; Details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce; Reasons and procedure.

**D. Death**

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirits.
2. Methods of disposal ; Burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water, etc.,
3. Preparation for disposal of dead, informing friends and relatives, treatment of the dead body, digging of pit etc. for disposal; how carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.
4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Death rites; Details.
6. Monuments; Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution; duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, saving, hair cropping, sex life etc.; removal of pollution.
8. Mourning; Mourners and duration.

**X. Religion :**

1. Deities; supreme deity, benevolent deities malevolent spirits, presiding dieties of village and other aspects of life including occupation clans, gotras etc.,
2. Place of the deities in the regional pattern and Brahmanical and other traditions.
3. Rituals and concepts associated with the pantheon.
4. Spots associated with the deties, pilgrim centres and methods of worhsip.
5. Religious functionaries.
6. Calendar of festivals and their observance.
7. Concept of soul, hell, heaven, rebirth, transmigration of soil, etc.,
8. Sects and denominations; Name, distribution, beliefs and practices etc.,
9. Statistical information.

**XI. Leisure, Recreation and Child Play :**

1. Use of leisure time ; For male, female, children and adult; seasonal variation in leisure time.
2. Recreations, their mode and extent for males females and children.
3. Leisure and recreation with reference to work

**XII. Relation among Different Segments of the Community :**

Recognised segments—name, basis (territorial, ceremonial, Social, prestige, religion, sect, education , age, etc.); Interrelationship among various segments; status of the segment; status of women.

**XIII. Inter-community Relationship :**

1. Ceremonial relationship; Service by Brahmins traditional service by castes like barbers and washerman etc.,
2. Pollution by touch or proximity to high Caste Hindus, use of well, admission to temple.
3. Secular relationship; Model for other communities; dominance due to economic resources, political status, social status, etc.
4. Bridge role, buffer role, alliance and antagonism of the community.

**XIV. Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership :**

1. Social control; Levels of social control, community level, regional level, ereditary special functionaries etc., social control by other agencies.
2. Mode of acquiring offices.
3. Control exercised by traditionally recognised leaders, functionaries of statutory bodies of the region. Powerful individuals belonging to the community etc. at the regional level and local level.
4. Relationship between spheres of social control and agencies of social control.
5. Leadership : For social change, for technological change, for political action and for other organised activities at the community level, regional level and local level.

6. Social Prestige; Method of gaining social prestige (by performing ritual, merit of feast, associating with historical association etc.) symbols of social prestige.

**XV. Social Reform and Welfare :**

1. Social reform movements; Intensity; reasons (for raising social status, establishing traditional norms, for westernisation, etc.) history and import of the movements.
2. Social Welfare; Agency, religious organisation community as a whole Government Official and non-official, role of the social welfare measures and impact.

**XVI. References cited and other Bibliographs.**

## ANNEXURE II

LIST OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

List of Scheduled Castes and Schedulec Tribes in Andhra Pradesh State as notified by the President of India in the "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes List Modification Order, 1956" is given below.

### SCHEDULED CASTES

*I. Throughout the State.*

*1. Chalvadi

*2. Chamar. Mochi or Muchi

*3. Madiga

*4. Mala

II. In the districts of Srikakulam, Vishakha patnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Kurnool.

*1. Adi Andhra
*2. Adi Dravida
*3. Arundhatiya
4. Bariki
5. Bavuri
*6. Chachati
7. Chandala
*8. Dandasi
*9. Dom, Dombara, Paidi or Pano.
*10. Ghasi;Haddi or Relli Relli Chachandi.
*11. Godagali
*12. Goadari
13. Gosangi
*14. Jaggali
*15. Jambavulu
16. Madasi Kuruva or Madari Kurva.
17. Mala Dasu
18. Madiga Dasu and Mashteen.
*19. Matangi
20. Mundala
*21. Paky or Moti.
*22. Pambada or Pamband
23. Pamidi.
*24. Panchama or Pariah
*25. Relli
26. Samban
*27. Sapru
*28. Thoti

III. In the districts of Mahabubnagar, Hyderabad Medak, Nizambad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal Khammam and Nalgonda.

1. Anamuh.
*2. Aray (Mala)
*3. Arwa Mala
4. Beda (Budga) Jangam
+5. Bindla
6. Byagara
*7. Chambhar
*8. Dakkal (Dokkalwar)
*9. Dhor
10. Ellamalwar (Yellam malawandlu).
11. Holeya
12. Holeya Dasari
+13. Kolupulwandla
*14. Mahar
+15. Mala Dasari
16. Mala Hannai
*17. Malajangam
18. Mala Masti
19. Mala Sale (Netkani)
20. Mala Sanyasi
*21. Mang
*22. Mang Garodi
*23. Manne
24. Mashti
*25. Mehtar
*26. Mitha Ayyalvar
*27. Samagara
+28. Sindhollu (Chindollu).

### SCHEDULED TRIBES

I. Throughout the State.

*1. Cenchu or Chenchuwar

*2. Koya or Goud with its sub-sects–Rajah or Rasha Koyas, Linghdhari Koyas (ordinary) Kottu Koyas, Bhine Koya and Rajkoya.

II. In the districts of Srikakulam, Visakhaptnam East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur Nellore, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Kurnool.

1. Bagata
2. Gadabas
*3. Jatapus
4. Kammara
11. Kuliya
12. Malis
13. Manna Dhora
14. Mukha Dhora or Nooka Dhora.

* Surveyed by the Census Office, Andhra Pradesh.

+ Present Monograph

5. Kattunayakan
*6. Konda Dhoras
7. Konda Kapus
8. Kondareddis
9. Kondhs; (Kodi and Kodhu) Dasaya Kondhs, Dongria Kondhs, Kuttiya Kondhs Tikriya Kondhs, and Yenity Kondhs.
10. Kotia-Bentho Oriyz, Bartika, Dhulia or Dulia, Holva, Paiko, Putiya, Sanrona and Sidhopaiko.
15. Porja. (Parangiperja)
16. Reddi Dhoras
17. Rona, Rena
18. Savara; Kapu Savaras Maliya Savaras or Kluttio Savaras.
*19. Sugalis (Lambadis)
*20. Yenadis
*21. Yerukulas.

III. In the districts of Mahbubnagar, Hyderabad, Medak, Nizambad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal Khammam and Nalgonda.

1. Andh
2. Bhil
*3. Gond (including Naik-Pod and Rajgond).
4. Hill Reddis
5. Kolam (including Mannervarlu).
6. Pardhan.
7. Thoti

IV In the Agency tracts.

1. Goudu (Goud)
2. Nayaks
3. Valmiki

GIPN—S3— 1 Census Andhra/71—13-2-73—1000.

# ERRATA

*Part V-B* (11)

| *Page No.* (1) | *Col. No.* (2) | *Para No.* (3) | *Line No.* (4) | *For* (5) | *Read* (6) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 7 | llustrated | illustrated |
| 10 | 1 | 3 | 12 | pollulion | pollution |
| 14 | 1 | 1 | 20 | ruppee | rupee |
| 16 | 1 | 2 | 1&3 | wil | will |
| 16 | 1 | 2 | 9 | chambe | chamber |
| 16 | 1 | 2 | 11 | fo | for |
| 18 | 1 | 3 | 21 | eunch | lunch |
| 30 | 1 | 4 | 3 | Stonc | stone |
| 30 | 2 | 2 | 14 | a | at |
| 34 | 2 | 2 | 23 | al o | also |
| 38 | 1 | 2 | 7 | s | is |
| 38 | 1 | 2 | 9 | few | a few |
| 38 | 1 | 2 | 10 | to | it |
| 38 | 2 | 1 | 11 | lime | time |
| 41 | 2 | 1 | 13 | divisiona | divisions |
| 42 | 1 | 1 | 1 | enquirie | enquiries |
| 45 | 2 | 2 | 7 | pigrlmages | pilgrimages |
| 46 | 1 | 1 | 21 | holi | holy |
| 46 | 2 | 1 | 15 | Besid | Besides |
| 47 | 2 | 3 | 5&6 | boundries | boundaries |
| 48 | 2 | 1 | 26 | be | he |
| 52 | 1 | 1 | 1 | mus | must |
| 52 | 1 | 1 | 6 | houseol | household |
| 67 | 1 | 1 | 2 | tempie | temple |
| 74 | 2 | 2 | 1 | rots | roti |
| 78 | Page Heading | | | Mang Gorodi | Mang Garodi |
| 78 | 1 | 3 | 1 | mantramutu | mantramulu |
| 8 | 2 | 1 | 6 | Gooddess | Goddess |
| 82 | 2 | 2 | 6 | theme | them |
| 83 | 2 | 1 | 21 | Gunthorpee | Gunthorpe |
| 89 | 1 | 1 | 22 | Saven | seven |
| 89 | 1 | 1 | 37 | periodica | periodical |
| 89 | 1 | 1 | 38 | cow-dungal | cow-dung |
| 90 | 1 | 1 | 5 | more | mere |
| 94 | 1 | 1 | 8 | lothestothe | clothes to the |
| 96 | 1 | 1 | 3 | Telaingana | Telangana |
| 103 | 1 | 2 | 4 | populaion | population |
| 103 | 2 | 1 | 17 | erve | serve |
| 103 | 2 | 1 | 18 | pening | opening |
| 104 | 2 | 1 | 12 | dhad | dhall |
| | | | *ANNEXURE—I* | | |
| 111 | 1 | III (1) | 2 | cmmunities | Communities |
| 112 | 2 | IX (2) | 1 | Residencei, | Residence, |
| | | | *ANNEXURE—II* | | |
| 115 | 1 | II | | 17 Mala Dasu | *17 Mala Dasu |
| 115 | 2 | III | Scheduled caste | +5, +13, +15, +18 | * 5, * 13, * 15, * 18 |
| 115 | 2 | III | Scheduled caste | * 8, * 9, * 14, * 21, * 22, * 25 | +8, +9, +14 +21, +22, +25 |