

**Some Changing Aspects of Agrarian Relations Pertaining  
To Scheduled Castes of Modern India : A Sociological  
Study with Special Reference To Karnataka  
State (Post-Independence Period)**

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DECLARATION

Certified that the material in this  
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## **CHAPTER - ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- (I) THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF AGRARIAN RELATIONS  
IN INDIA.**
- (II) STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY.**

(I) THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF AGRARIAN RELATIONS  
IN INDIA:

India is predominantly an agrarian society and her people depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. A systematic study of agrarian social structure is of great importance because of inequalities in rural India in terms of ownership, control and use of land. Hence, we need to understand agrarian relations in terms of groups which have been engaged in agriculture, the structure of values and norms of society.

Beteille<sup>1</sup> says that "the sociologist is not concerned primarily with inter-personal differences as such. His main concern is with the systematic differences which exist between aggregates of individuals." He draws our attention to the conclusion reached by UNESCO<sup>2</sup> studies that "there is no difference between two groups in their pattern of native intelligence. And that the division of the world into the white and dark races

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1. Beteille, A. (1975): Inequality and Social Change. Oxford University Press, Delhi-2. p.2.
  2. UNESCO (1956): The Race Question in Modern Science Paris; According to Dahrendorf, one of the sociological approaches is that the inequalities are inherent in the conditions of human existence. Dahrendorf, R. (1969): "On the Origin of Inequality Among Men", In: Social Inequality: Selected Readings. Beteille A.(ed.) Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, pp. 16-44.

corresponded roughly with the division into economically advanced and backward countries."

Therefore, it seems from the sociological point of view that the study of agrarian relations is mainly concerned with certain basic structural phenomena such as class, caste, status and power which are social facts found to exist in all societies.<sup>3</sup> And these facts vary from society to society in their nature. For example, hereditary untouchability and permanent segregation of groups are the products of caste system.

The above mentioned features of Hindu society are unique, because in no other country these features (caste, untouchability, segregation of one section of village population) are found to exist to this extent. Even in those societies where population is segregated on the basis of race (Southern states of U.S.A., South Africa, Rhodesia) the notion of purity-pollution is of more limited application. For instance, a black man may be a cook in a white man's household. In these societies the purity-pollution notion is more specific and limited. Whereas

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3. Durkheim writes: "They are social facts to the extent that they exist independently of what individuals think or feel about them and in the sense that they cannot be changed according to the will and pleasure of individuals". Durkheim, E. (1950): The Rules of Sociological Method, Trans. S.A. Solovay and J.H. Mueller and E.G. Callin (ed.), Chicago University Press, Chicago. pp. 1-46.



in India, hereditary characteristics are so maintained because of the caste system which has born of Hindu religion. A person's social position is given according to his or her caste. There is no place for change of such ascribed status. Therefore, even if an untouchable, improves his economic position, his ritual status remains low as long as the caste rules are observed. There is no escape from these characteristics, since the whole group operates within a ritual framework.

So the inequalities of Indian society may be studied at two levels, namely, material and ideological (caste) aspects of it. Dumont writes "Caste is not merely an arrangement of groups which are ranked high and low, but it is also a system of values in which the idea of hierarchy occupies a pivotal position."<sup>4</sup> Thus, we may have to view the caste not only in terms of quantitative approach, but also in terms of qualitative approach. And their relations could be viewed subjectively and objectively as the manifestations which arise from different contexts or situations.

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4. Dumont, Louis: (1970): Homo Hierarchicus: the Caste System and its implications. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, p. 37.

Besides intensive studies on caste lines, there are also studies based on various factors such as class, power and styles of life. According to some studies, caste is not the only basis of social stratification in India. For instance, in the writings of Ghurye,<sup>5</sup> Hutton<sup>6</sup> and others socio-religious and ritualistic considerations are held as main foci of social stratification (caste hierarchy).

In the analysis of caste stratification Kroeber<sup>7</sup> and Weber<sup>8</sup> have observed that caste is an extreme form of class and of stratification. Myrdal<sup>9</sup> says that caste as an extreme form of absolutely rigid class in which freedom of movement between group is not permissible.

Srinivas<sup>10</sup> and Dube<sup>11</sup> have observed that pollution-purity is the basis of caste hierarchy and this governs

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5. Ghurye G.S.(1948): Caste, Class and Race, Bombay, Ghurye G.S.(1961): Caste, Class and Occupation, Popular Book Depot, Bombay.
  6. Hutton, J.M.(1963): Caste in India: Its Nature, Function and Origin. Oxford Univ. Press, Bombay.
  7. Kroeber, A.L.(1930): "Caste", Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Macmillan Co., New York.pp.254-58.
  8. Weber, M.(1968): The Religion of India: Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism, Free Press, New York.
  9. Myrdal, G.(1944): An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy. Harper and Row, New York. pp. 667-688.
  10. Srinivas, M.N.(1956): "Some Hierarchical Aspects of Caste". In: South Western Journal of Anthropology. 12, pp.117-148; Srinivas, M.N.(1952): Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India, Oxford.
  11. Dube, C.S.(1955): India's Changing Villages: Human Factors in Community Development, London.

their inter-caste relations. Thus, stratification is equated with the caste ranking and criteria for ranking of caste are ritual and not economic. Bailey<sup>12</sup> and Dumont<sup>13</sup> have also considered caste and its religious concepts as the central sources of social stratification system of India.

Mayer<sup>14</sup> and Lewis<sup>15</sup> have observed that caste and kinship cover all relations even political and economic relationships.

Orienstein<sup>16</sup> says that the key factor of "pollution leads to alienation and dehumanization" in caste rank. Harriot<sup>17</sup> has analysed the caste ranking and brought out its importance in studying Indian Society.

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12. Bailey, F.G.(1957): Caste and the Economic Frontier A village in Highland Orissa, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
  13. Dumont, Louis.: Op.cit.
  14. Mayer, A.C.(1956): "Some Hierarchical Aspects of Caste". In: South Eastern Journal of Anthropology. Vol. XII, pp. 114-144.
  15. Lewis, Oscar.(1958): Village Life in Northern India, University of Illinois,
  16. Orienstein, H.(1965): Goan - Conflict and Cohesion in an Indian Village, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
  17. Harriot McKim. (1959): "Interactional and Attributional Theories of Caste Ranking. In: Man In India. Vol. 39, No.2, pp. 92-107. Harriot McKim.(1965): Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions of India and Pakistan, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Poona.

Thus, these scholars have observed that caste is the fundamental basis of social hierarchy. Besides, they have also taken into account <sup>of</sup> agrarian relations. The agrarian relationships involve caste relations also.

There are some multi-dimensional studies on stratification. These studies have taken the factors such as economic position, educational achievements, occupational status, culture style of life, personality attributes and caste values. Beteille<sup>18</sup> has analysed changes in social structure of Indian village. He has shown that differential institutional structures of various kind have emerged. They are mainly: (1) the growth of money economy as opposed to inherited status, (2) a new caste-free occupational structure; (3) a new kind of educational system and (4) the development of differentiated political structures. He has observed that no doubt - caste still remains a vital determinant

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18. Beteille, A. (1966): "Closed and Open Social Stratification in India". In: European Journal of Sociology, Vol. VII, No. 2, pp. 224-246.  
 Beteille, A. (1974): "Ideas and Interests: Some Conceptual Problems in the Study of Rural Stratification" and "Agrarian Relations in Tanjore District, South India". In: Studies in Agrarian Social-Structure. Oxford University Press, Delhi. pp. 35-55; 219-233.

even today but the emergence of differential institutional structures has necessitated attention on determinants of stratification other than caste.

Mukherjee<sup>19</sup> has conducted a study of villages in Bengal. He also explains the association of class groupings with caste hierarchy. He has categorised nine occupational groups into three classes. They are:

- (1) (i) Landholders and (ii) Supervisory farmers;
- (2) (iii) Cultivators; (iv) Artisans and (v) Traders (self sufficient peasantry);
- (3) (vi) The share-croppers; (vii) Agricultural Labourers; (viii) Service holders and (ix) Others.

He explains that the upper-caste Hindus belong to class first; the lower caste Hindus and sayyed-Muslims to class second; and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled tribes to class third of the economic structure. He says that the people of class first maintained their economic and social status and this did not allow upward mobility for the people of other

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19. Mukherjee, Ramakrishna (1957): The Dynamics of Rural Society. Berlin. This study was conducted (1933) before independence and now the villages are in Bangladesh.

two classes, and thus caste and class rank went together. This study also explains that the ritualistic (pollution-purity) considerations alone do not determine the hierarchical character of the caste system. Therefore, the other factors<sup>other</sup> than the ritualistic ones are also equally significant for an analysis of stratification.

Singh's<sup>20</sup> study shows that the upper caste and class status coincide and upper castes continue to hold power in villages.

Gough<sup>21</sup> in her study has observed that the landless people in that region stand at the bottom of social hierarchy. The poor castes think of political revolt against traditional caste system. Their economic depression is not because of the caste system but the recent economic and political legislation has made them so. She also states that the conflict between different groups (particularly the landed groups and the landless) may be known through the forms of agitation and struggle for life chances.

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20. Singh, Yogendra (1966): "The Changing Power Structure of Village Community - A case Study of Six Villages in Eastern U.P." In: Rural Sociology in India. Desai, A.R.(Ed.) Popular Publication, Bombay pp. 688-699.
21. Gough, E.K.(1971): "Caste in a Tanjavur Village". In: Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North East Pakistan. Leach, E.R.(ed.), Cambridge University Press, London, pp. 11-60.

**(II) STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The present study aims to examine some aspects of changing agrarian relations pertaining to <sup>the</sup> untouchables of Karnataka state. Before and after the independence period various agrarian legislations were enacted. Besides, other factors operating in agriculture have also affected the social structure of Indian villages. I have tried in this Dissertation to know how far the untouchables who were at the bottom of socio-agrarian hierarchy are affected by these factors.

**METHODOLOGY:**

While taking this exercise, the methodological problem arises because of the vast area of study in question. Therefore, I have confined myself to agrarian relations related to the untouchables with special reference to Karnataka State. I may also mention that for reason space and time I confined my attention mainly to Karnataka.

**SOURCES OF DATA:**

- (i) Historical records and documents (Gazetteers)
- (ii) Theoretical and empirical micro-level studies
- (iii) Census data and
- (iv) Government reports.

**ANALYSIS:**

The macro and micro-level studies do not match one another. This is a shortcoming which proves to be an obstacle to research work. Therefore, the attempt made here is purely exploratory. Much work remains to be done in matching macro and micro-level studies. Especially, in regard to agrarian relations pertaining to Scheduled Castes, direct references are few both in macro and micro-level studies. Thus, we can only make some broad generalizations on the basis of available data. It may be mentioned that this dissertation was delayed by several months because of the difficulty in finding precise and relevant information. Throughout the dissertation, I have used the term "Untouchables" or "Scheduled Castes" instead of the term "ex-Untouchables" or "Harijans". It is because, inspite of all the legislation, the position of Scheduled Caste people remains more or less same as in the past. Nevertheless, changes are occurring among them through education, limited land distribution etc. Still the upward (Vertical) mobility of the group is limited because of adverse social conditions.

The former name "Mysore" has also been used in this dissertation at places where the events took place prior to the renaming of the state as "Karnataka" on 1st November, 1973.



### CHAPTERISATION

In the first Chapter we have dealt with the theoretical perspective of agrarian relations in India and other related studies.

In the second Chapter we have tried to analyse change and continuity. We have discussed Jajmani relations, the position of Untouchables in hierarchy of Ayasars and the changing dimensions of these relationships.

In the third Chapter, we have analysed the old land system to know the patterns of landownership among different castes and occupational caste groups. The main emphasis is to know the extent of service land given to Untouchables.

In the institution of servitude, it is seen how the Untouchable labourers were known by different names according to different nature of sale and contract. Thus, the second and third Chapters focus upon the analysis of traditional relations. They view the traditional relations in terms of social change.

The fourth Chapter deals with changing land system and relations with reference to Untouchables. In the background of third Chapter, we have analysed the changing occupational patterns of Untouchables. It is

also shown that the landholding patterns (and in view of allotted lands by government) of Untouchables proves, tentatively, their economic position being changed. Their share of new inputs in agriculture is seen to be very minimum. The proportion of agricultural labourers is greater and the problem of bonded labour is acute. Various legislations (Forced Labour Abolition Act, Bonded Labour Abolition Act, Minimum Wages Act, and Abolition of Untouchability Act, etc.) passed by the government have not been effectively implemented is shown.

The fifth Chapter deals with changing agrarian relations. A brief account of various studies on untouchables is also referred. It is seen as to how the Untouchables are entering into a relatively open social system.

**CHAPTER - TWO**

**TRADITIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS**

- (I) SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE UNTOUCHABLES.**
- (II) JAJMANI RELATIONS AND UNTOUCHABLES.**
- (III) RIGHTS IN LAND AND THE UNTOUCHABLES.**

TRADITIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS

A brief account of the traditional socio-economic system would help to know the changes meaningfully, especially the rights in land and the social organization of Hindu society on one hand and the socio-economic position of Untouchables on the other. The insight into this Hindu social organization, namely the caste system shows much complexity but it has greater importance since even today it governs the lives of 300 million Hindu in several important respects.<sup>1</sup>

(I) SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE UNTOUCHABLES:

Traditionally, the social organizations of India was characterized as Chaturvarna. It consisted of major four groups, namely the Brahmin, the Kshatria, the Vaishya and the Sudra. Varnas operatively consisted of castes or subcastes. Srinivas states that the "caste system as an institution has a divine basis and it is essentially devised as a socio-economic framework with religious and political sanction behind it."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Srinivas, M.N. (1952): Op.cit. pp. 24-31.
  2. Ibid.

In the beginning, there were only three classes or groups namely, the Warriors (Kshatriya), the Priests (the Brahmins), and the Trader-cultivators (Vaishyas) who performed all kinds of activities to serve the two in that order. But by the end of the Rigvedic period, the four fold division of society was regarded as fundamental, primeval and divinely ordained.<sup>3</sup>

It was the Warrior group which stood first in the order of priority. Its prime task was waging wars. However, gradually the priestly group attained equal or still greater importance since no war could be waged without rituals. Thus, these two groups - Kshatrias and Brahmins had played important role in socio-economic field. In the pre-Buddhist period, there was often a fierce strife between Kshatria and Brahmin. Both strived for more and more privileges.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Basham, A.L. (1954): The Wonder that was India: A survey of the culture of the Indian Subcontinent before the coming of the Muslims. Sidguick and Jackson, London. pp. 138-147.
4. Sharma, Ram Saran, (1964): Indian Feudalism - C 300 - 1200. Calcutta University, Calcutta.

The contending Varnas (Kshatrias and Brahmins) endeavoured to protect their status which resulted in subordinating relationships. The duty assigned to Brahmin was to study and teach, to sacrifice and receive gifts; the Kshatria must protect the people, sacrifice and study; the Vaishya also had the right to sacrifice and study but his chief function was to breed cattle, to till the earth, to pursue trade and money and the Sudra's duty was 'only' to serve these higher class.<sup>5</sup>

Though the Brahmins had led religious life under the patronage of King or Chief, they could not always lead priestly lives. They knew about the disadvantages of their priest-hood. Therefore, to deal with this situation they had taken to diverse occupations under the notion of "Apad Dharma" or "duty when in distress".<sup>6</sup> It defined what a man may legitimately do when he can not earn a living by the calling normally followed by his group. The Apad Dharma allowed the Brahmins to pursue all manner of trade and professions.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Basham, A.L., Op.cit.

6. Ibid.

7. Basham states that the Brahmins were employed in important government posts and several royal families were of Brahmin origin. Generally the law books disapproved of Brahmins engaging in agriculture because it inflicts injury on animals and insects. But this rule was also often ignored. Ibid.

Like the Brahmins, the Kshatrias also did not always live by fulfilling their ideal function. The rules of Apad Dharma were applied to them and some of them had acquired or taken other professions. The trading group (Vaishya) in Vedic times was the poor, third to Brahmins and Kshatrias. However, it was entitled to receive priest-hood and undergo initiation into the twice-born status.<sup>8</sup>

The Vaishya were described as paying tribute to another to be lived by another to <sup>be</sup> <sup>another</sup> appressed by <sup>at</sup> will. They were regarded as wretched and down-throdden cultivators or petty merchants. However, a special duty was accorded to Vaishya by Manu <sup>it</sup> was keeping cattle.<sup>9</sup> Though they had few rights and humble status, they were wealthy merchants living in great luxury and <sup>in</sup> powerfully organized ~~in~~ guilds. The rich Vaishyas were respected by the Kings and enjoyed their favour and confidence. They also made great donations to religious cause. This shows that they were prosperous and influential.<sup>10</sup>

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8. It is a religious ceremony wherein Sacred thread is worn. After this performance the second birth takes place. Hence, those who underwent this are known as dwijas. Only the Brahmins, Kshatrias and Vaishyas were entitled to wear sacred thread.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

Thus, the Vaishyas also like Brahmins and Kshatrias, did not follow their only ancestral calling. Hence they had also sought shelter under Apad Dharma.

The three higher castes (Varnas) have undermined the rigid rules of hereditary professions and entered other activities, whereas the lot of the Sudras was more unfortunate than that of the Vaishyas. According to Manu, "Sudra was the servant of another to be expelled at will, to be slain at will or to be beaten at will"<sup>11</sup>. Sudra were deprived<sup>of</sup> the initiation of sacred thread, which was one of the criteria to acquire Aryan Status. It (Sudra) was one of the Aryan classes who refused rigid Brahmanic observances, orthodox customs or old practices.<sup>12</sup> Sudra's refusal to observe Brahmanical customs gave birth to hatredness among them. Therefore, to govern the conduct or behaviour of these people, rules and laws were formulated. Ambedkar<sup>13</sup> has listed the laws against Sudra class (including the Untouchables, i.e., Panchamas) from different books which have dealt

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11. Kane, P.V. (1941): History of Dharmasastras. Vol. II, Part-I, Bhandarker Oriental Research Institute, Poona, p. 120.
  12. Basham, A.L., Op.cit.
  13. Ambedkar, B.R., (1970): Who were the Sudras? Thackers, Bombay, p. 46.



with every aspect of life. They are:

- (1) That the Sudra was to take the last place in the social order;
- (2) That the Sudra was impure and therefore no sacred act should be done within his rights and within his hearings;
- (3) That the Sudra is not to be respected in the same way as the other classes;
- (4) That the life of the Sudra is of no value and anybody may kill him without having compensation, if at all a small value as compared with that of Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya;
- (5) That the Sudra must not acquire knowledge and it is sin and crime to give him education;
- (6) That the Sudra must not acquire property and that Brahmin can take his property at his pleasure;
- (7) That the Sudra can not hold office under the state;
- (8) That the duty and salvation of Sudra lies in his serving the higher classes;
- (9) That the higher classes must not intermarry with Sudra. They can, however, keep a Sudra woman as a concubine. But, if the Sudra touches a woman of higher class, he will be liable to dire punishment;

(10) That the Sudra is born in servility for ever.

Ambedkar and Basham have observed that the Brahminical textbooks assigned duties for Sudras <sup>which</sup> were of such nature that they had to remain in the low position from social and economic point of view. The Sudra must not acquire property etc. Even he had an opportunity to becoming wealthy, he must not do so. For a Sudra who makes money is distressing to the Brahmins. And Brahman killing a Sudra performed the same penance as far killing a cat or dog.<sup>14</sup>

From the above analysis, it seems that the Sudra had no hope of becoming like others on the earth, because salvation for him lay in serving the others. Though some of them had engaged in other activities,<sup>15</sup> the Varna system imposed social disabilities on them which contributed to their lowly status.<sup>16</sup>

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14. Basham, A.L. Op.cit.

15. Basham states " there is mention of Sudras engaged in manufacture and commerce and by the Mauryan times many Sudras were peasants. As we have seen, Sudra Kings were not unknown and many Sudras, despite the injunction of the law books must have been prosperous". Ibid.

16. Ghurye, G.S., (1969): Caste and Race in India. Popular, Bombay. p. 331.

**THE UNTOUCHABLES:**

To this four-fold division of society one more category was added namely, Ati-Sudras or Panchamas. This category comprises many untouchable sub-groups. They stand at the bottom of fivefold hierarchical Hindu society.<sup>17</sup> These Untouchables were known as Avarnas, Antyajas, Namasudras, thus these concepts show that they were out of the Varna System. They were also known as 'out-caste'<sup>18</sup>. But like the Sudras of the Vedic period, the Untouchables were also governed by the Brahmanical laws.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Srinivas, M.N., Op.cit.

18. The Untouchables are known by different names in different languages in all the states of India. For example, in Northern India, they are known as Chamar, Bhangi etc. In South India, in Kannada, as Holey, Madiga, Adi-Karnataka; in Tamil as Pariahs; in Telugu as Malas; in Malayalam as Poliyar and in Marathi as Mahar, Dhed etc. There are many untouchable-castes which are reported in various Census of India. Chitra Tiwari has listed about 429 untouchable-communities in India numbering 50 to 60 million people. Chitra Tiwari, (1963): Sudras in Manu. Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, p.75.

19. In his search for the origin of untouchability, Prof. Ghurye has come to the conclusion that it was between the time of Panini and Manu, i.e., 500 B.C., the social position of Chandals, Swapanchas and Mritaps, the then untouchables deteriorated and they were excluded from the village and assigned extremely low duties. Ghurye, G.S.(1957): Caste and Class In India. Popular Book Depot, Bombay, p. 241. Basham states that by the Gupta times (400 A.D.), the Chandals had become so strictly untouchable that they were forced to strike a wooden clapper on entering a town to warn the Aryans of their polluting approach. Basham, A.L. Op.cit. p. 146.



Therefore, the Untouchables' sole duty was to serve the three Varnas like that of Sudras. For them, the traditionally assigned jobs were: cleaning or sweeping of streets, drains; removal of human and animal excreta, carrying dead animals out of the village, digging of burial ground, supplying pyre woods, leather work and guarding the village etc. Besides it, they were employed as field-hands and in all kinds of manual labour.<sup>20</sup>

The Untouchables had to obey the rules of traditional customs and sanctions, since, they were lowest among the low, their contact of any kind (even seeing) warranted the savarnas to undergo purificatory rites in order to recover normal ritual status.<sup>21</sup> Because of certain Hindu theological notions like Karma and Dharma

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20. Rice Lewis, B. (1897): Mysore - A Gazetteer compiled for Government, Mysore in General, Vol.I, London, pp. 208-286.

21. According to Ghurye, the ideas of untouchability and unapproachability arose out of ideas of ceremonial purity first applied to the original Sudras in connection with the sacrificial ritual and extended to the other groups because of the theoretical impurity of certain occupations. Ghurye, G.S., Op.cit. p.182. Srinivas, M.N. Op.cit., Ayyappan has mentioned distance to be maintained between castes while approaching or crossing each other. A Nayar must keep 7 feet from Nambudari Brahmin. An Iravan (Ilavan, Izhuvan Tiyar) must keep 32, a Cheruman 64 and Nayadi 74 to 124. The respective distances between these lower castes were calculated by a simple process of subtraction. The Iravan must keep 25 feet from the Nayar and Cheruman 32 from the Iravan. Aiyappan, A.(1937): Anthropology of the Nayadis. Vol.II, No.4, Madras Government Museum Bullitans, N.S., Madras, p.18.



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made the Untouchables believe that dying in the service of Savarnas (especially the Brahmins) would secure for them a place in heaven or in the next birth they would be born in a higher caste. Thus, they must remain as faithful servants and should not strive to become any one else in this mundane life.<sup>22</sup> If the Untouchables took other occupations, they were subjected to punishment by the upper castes.

The residences of the Untouchables were and are always situated out of the Hindu village. This is one of the conspicuous features of village India. Their spatial segregation or isolation from the rest of the country should be viewed as the physical-expression of more subtle social barriers based on the avoidance of ritual pollution and other beliefs rooted in Hindu tradition.<sup>23</sup>

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22. As Basham observed that the orthodox texts contain frequent warnings on the evils which arise when Sudras and out-castes grow too powerful and this would seem to show that even a Chandala might occasionally become influential. Basham, A.L., Op.cit.
23. Mahar, J. Michel. (1969): "Agents of Dharma in the Untouchables" In: The Untouchables in Contemporary India. Mahar, J. Michel (ed.) The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, p. 74; Spate has shown about spatial settlement and quarters for various castes of village Aminbhavi in Dharwar district. Spate, O.H.K.(1954): India and Pakistan - General and Regional Geography, Chapter-VII: Village and Town in India, Methuen & Co. Ltd., Great Britain, pp. 198-208.

Thus, the study of traditional social structure shows a number of lines that are clear and distinct and others that are blurred. But amongst them the first and strongest line is the "Pollution barrier" that divides the Untouchables from the rest of society.<sup>24</sup> The principle of purity-pollution governs every individual of Hindu society, and wherever the Untouchables exist, they share certain characteristics. According to Aggarwal<sup>25</sup> prominent among them are:

- (i) Stigma of Untouchability;
- (ii) Segregated locality;
- (iii) Hereditary defining occupations;
- (iv) Economically dispossessed condition;
- (v) Denial of Education, and
- (vi) Denial of political participation.

The Untouchables are considered to be ritually polluted. It is believed that they involuntarily defile whatever or whoever they touch. Therefore, upper caste Hindus avoid touching them. They also do not allow <sup>them</sup> to enter houses, temples etc., except certain restricted

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24. Bailey, F.G. Op.cit. (1957).

25. Aggarwal, P.C. and Ashraf, M.S. (1976): Equality Through Privileges. A study of special privileges of Scheduled castes in Haryana. Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, New Delhi. pp. 3-14.

places, such as latrines and the animal sheds. The Untouchables who violate this rule are punished and the defiled object or persons are to be purified.

The stigma of untouchability or pollution is also associated with low evaluation of qualities. It is believed that the highly prized qualities in society, for example, honour, moral goodness, intelligence, courage and uprightness are held by upper caste Hindus, and that low intelligence, lack of courage, immorality, dirtiness are held by the Untouchables on the other. These assumptions are manifested through many ways. For instance, in fact the Untouchable caste names such as "Holeyá", "Chamar" or "Chandala" are often used as abuses. These abusive names conceal the above undesirable traits.

Because of their hereditary polluted status and their filthy occupations they are isolated from the main population of village. This spatial segregation of Untouchables is clearly known by boundary lines or a stream, or street or wall. Thus, in every village their settlement is outside the village - which is the special feature of Indian village.

According to sub-castes of Untouchables, their settlements are patterned. This would be because of the assimilation of the pattern of caste Hindu settlement. Separations of sub-sections of Untouchables are not visible like that of their isolation from the rest of the village. Though they are hierarchically arranged and caste rules are observed, the interaction between subcastes is not as much constrained as between them and caste Hindus.

Even today in some Indian villages the segregation is observed to such an extent that the Untouchables are not allowed to pass or enter the high caste settlements. The Untouchables would not enter the Agraharam or Wadi (Brahmans' settlement). If an Untouchable tenant or labourer had to deliver grains etc. to his Brahman landlords, the former could have to call out a person standing on the edge of Agraharam or main gate of Wadi. However, in such situations the restrictions are strictly put on the Untouchables. But the fact of segregation is almost universal with varied degrees of strictness. According to Srinivas, even when a new settlement of the village takes place due to the construction of a dam or tank, the place of habitation for the Untouchables is separated from the main village.<sup>26</sup>

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26. Srinivas, M.N.(1976): The Remembered Village. Oxford University Press, Delhi. p. 186.



Consequently, the pollution barrier keeps the Untouchables away from public life and public avenues which are dominated by the caste Hindus.

Their defiling occupations yield mere subsistence income. They had access mainly to manual work. Broadly speaking, there are mainly three categories of occupations of Untouchables, which are cleaning, leather processing and manual work. The first category of work consists of sweeping streets, cleaning drains, removing human night soil and animal excreta, removing of dead animals and raising pigs, etc. The second category of work comprises removal of skins, curing them and making goods such as shoes and agricultural equipments, accessories used in ploughing, etc. The manual work involves all sorts of activities comprising working in the field - ploughing, transplanting, sowing, thrashing, digging etc., tending cattles and so on.

All occupations except agriculture were considered as defiling occupations by caste Hindus. The occupations are also graded in hierarchial order. Thus, the ranking of respective caste communities seem to be associated with the traditional occupations. The Untouchables, who are engaged in low graded activities, are also ranked as

lowest among the low. Their position is revealed in the map<sup>27</sup> given below:

HIERARCHICAL LIST OF CASTES IN RAMPUR

Rank Group	C a s t e
I	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>Brahman</span> <span>Lingayat</span> <span>Smith</span> </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;">           (a) Hoyasala Karnataka             (b) Madhva         </div>
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II	A- Peasants-Shepards Trader-Oilman-Potter Fisherman-Washerman Barbar-Basketmaker Toddy man.  B- Swineherd
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III	Untouchable.

One important point noted by Srinivas is that, even the Untouchables do not take food from Smiths. One reason for the Smith's strange position is that they are said to belong to the left hand (edagai) division, while the bulk of non-Brahminical castes including Holeya

27. The map is extracted from: Srinivas, M.N. (1955): "The social structure of Mysore Village". In: Village India, Marriot McKim (ed.), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 23.

(Untouchables) belong to the right hand (balagai) division.<sup>28</sup>

As all Untouchable castes are hierarchially arranged, among them the Madigas occupy <sup>the</sup> bottom and that the top Cheluwadis. This is shown in the social structure of Ksetra village. The Cheluwadi comes first followed by Kanchaveer (special Madiga section) and at <sup>the</sup> bottom stands Madiga.<sup>29</sup>

The untouchables are the most backward and poverty stricken among the weaker sections of Indian society. The filthy condition of their location, their mud houses and tattered cloths are easily identified. The force of social customs and myths compelled the Untouchables to remain as faithful and humble servants of Caste Hindus. Thus, spatial segregation, stigma of Untouchability and poverty have minimised their participation in the sphere of politics and education.

Since the Untouchables were not only debarred from the seats of learning but also subject to punishment, they were made to remain in a state of ignorance. As a result, they became the victims of fear complex in

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28. Srinivas says, Smiths also carry certain disabilities like Madigas for example, Wedding procession of Smith is not allowed to pass through those areas where high caste lived. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

29. Parvathamma (1971): Politics and Religion: A study of historical interaction between socio-political relationships in a Mysore Village. Sterling Publishers, New Delhi. pp. 61-66.

their minds and held superstitious beliefs. Thus, the social disabilities which were imposed on them and the lack of knowledge determined the type of earning their living. Hence they had to remain as servants and agricultural labourers.

Though several reformist movements and government policies have attempted to eradicate traditional blind practices and to bring about the uplift<sup>ment</sup> of the Untouchables, there is no much improvement in the field of education of Untouchables. Still in remote villages, the children belonging to Untouchables sit separate in the schools and have a separate water supply for them. It is mainly because of prevailing belief in Untouchability in those areas.

The traditional village Panchayat power was held by caste Hindus. As a rule the Untouchables were never allowed to be members of the village panchayat. An exception was made in regard to the Holeyas (agricultural workers), whose verdict in settling the village boundary disputes was final. But the Holeyas were the henchman of the headman of the village. He always helped Panchayat members in such matters. The Untouchables were not expected to take part in politics. As they were economically poor, that they could not get any political weight.

They were considered to be unintelligent and irresponsible by the caste Hindus. Moreover, the fact that the high caste Hindus did not tolerate any activities undertaken by the Untouchables in the political field.

The Untouchables could not raise their voice against injustices since they solely depended for their livelihood on caste Hindus. Numerically so small and isolated from the village political life, they were politically alienated in rural politics.

Thus, in the traditional social structure, the Untouchables had to depend on the caste Hindus for their major part of income for livelihood. Each hereditary occupation of caste has also links with economic relations in tradition economy. We shall examine it in the next section.

**(II) JAJMANI RELATIONS AND THE UNTOUCHABLES:**

The Jajmani system which is similar to Aya System has been put forward and studied by various scholars. According to Ishwaran, "Aya system involves a series of economic transaction between a farmer and farmer, farmer and non-farmer and between other groups".<sup>30</sup> Harper states that the "Jajmani system is a network of alliances between different groups of individuals who follow different occupations and who exchange their products and services directly with one another."<sup>31</sup>

Wiser and Wiser have referred to Jajmani system as "an established service relationship which was somewhat like the old feudal system, yet unlike it. It contained a mutuality that was lacking in the feudal system. This system of inter-relatedness in services within the Hindu community is called the Hindu Jajmani system".<sup>32</sup>

Beidelman refers to it as "a feudalistic system of prescribed hereditary obligations of payment and of

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30. Ishwaran, K. (1966): Tradition and Economy in Village India, Allied Publications, Bombay, pp.36-46.
31. Harper, E.B. (1959): "Two Systems of Economic in Village India". In: American Anthropologists, Vol. LXI, pp. 760 - 778.
32. Wiser, W.H. and Wiser (1958): The Hindu Jajmani System : Socio-economic systems interrelating members of a Hindu village community in Service. Lucknow Publications House, Lucknow, pp. I - XXI.

occupational and ceremonial duties between two or more specific families of different castes in the same locality".<sup>33</sup> Kolenda defines Jajmani system as "a system of distribution of Indian villages whereby high caste landowning families called 'jajmans' are provided services and products by various lower castes known as 'Kamins': carpenter, potter, blacksmith, water-carrier, sweeper and laundrymen."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the studies show that the Aya system or Jajmani system involves economic relationships generally in accordance to caste relations. The strength of the system depends on the concessions granted to different occupational groups. Therefore, Wiser says that these concessions are not equally applied but vary according to customs. And these exchangeable goods and services do not correspond to their services rendered.

Ishwaran has also said that the Aya system is centered around the values of honour, pride and prestige. These values are further crystallised around the land in village. He states that the essence of the system is that it obliterates the conflict between master and

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33. Beidelman, T.O. (1959): A comparative analysis of the Jajmani System. J.J. Ausustin, p. 6.
34. Kolenda, P.M. (1963): "Towards a Model of the Hindu Jajmani System", In: Human Organization, Vol. 22, pp. 11-28.

servants. The master feels as much dependent on servant as the later does on the former. Thus, the goods and services are not measured and equated. They are granted as an immediate counter-part.

It seems that ideologically the Aya system has religious sanction because all castes have ritualistic roles along with economic and political roles. However, the political participation depends upon a number of factors such as principle of universal adult suffrage and education etc. The caste which renders ritual services tends to be subordinate to <sup>the</sup> caste which receives them. By and large, <sup>the</sup> receivers are economically and politically dominant.

But, an important fact is that the caste groups that are economically dominant, are most powerful ones, provided they are above the 'pollution-barrier'. According to Parvathamma, only in the case of Untouchables is the ritual status not commensurate with economic and political authority. Thus, the caste Hindus naturally enjoy ritual superiority.<sup>35</sup>

The Aya system as an organised institution has its institutional functions and relationships. It forms a part of village social structure. So the Aya system

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35. Parvathamma, C. Op.cit. p. 257.



and caste system are so much associated that the later is a pillar on which the community life turns.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the occupations are graded into a hierarchy of their own with purity and pollution rules which have caste base.

Broadly speaking, the Aya system consists of two parties,<sup>37</sup> namely, "Ayadakula" and "Ayagar". Ayadakula is a family which gives Aya and the Ayagar is the recipient of Aya. Aya is regarded as 'Kanike' which means simply a 'gift'. This gift is not considered in quantum. The customary Aya is always paid in kind. For other services outside the Aya system, the payment is made in cash.

#### THE UNTOUCHABLE AYAGARS:

The untouchables are Ayagars whose duties are to serve the Ayadakula as well as Ayagars. Since the Untouchables occupy the lowest position in the caste-hierarchy their position in the Aya system is filled with more duties than rights. They also receive remuneration or concessions for their rendered service but the fact is that the Aya which they receive is not sufficient to

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36. Ishwaran, K. Op.cit. p.36.

37. Ibid, pp. 36-45.

their livelihood. Therefore, they also do other work along with traditional job. Thus, their services are linked with the moral notion of Dharma or Duty. This is a central principle that every Aya is looked from religious point of view.<sup>38</sup>

#### PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS:

Ishwaran states that the Aya system is based on the principle of reversibility of the master-servant paradigm. According to him the essence of Aya system is that it obliterates the dichotomy between master and servant. Therefore, it is characterised by the qualities of reciprocity and redistribution, harmony and cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

However, the fact that economically the Ayagars contribute to the working of agricultural economy. These Ayagars supply the technological apparatus required by the local economy. The Ayagars who occupy their offices are twelve.<sup>40</sup> They are known as "Hannerdu Ayagaru". They are also known as "Bara Balute" in Marathi language.

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38. For example, "Palige Bandaddu Panchamrita" (One's share should be accepted as god-given).

39. Ishwaran, K. Ibid. p. 38.

40. Parvathamma, C. Op.cit. p. 57.

The twelve offices are mentioned below:

- |     |           |   |                              |
|-----|-----------|---|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Gāuda     | - | Village Headman              |
| 2.  | Banakara  | - | Ritual leader of the Village |
| 3.  | Badiga    | - | Carpenter                    |
| 4.  | Kammara   | - | Blacksmith                   |
| 5.  | Akkasale  | - | Goldsmith                    |
| 6.  | Kumbara   | - | Potter                       |
| 7.  | Navinda   | - | Barber                       |
| 8.  | Barike    | - | Palanguin bearer             |
| 9.  | Talwari   | - | Village watchman/servant     |
| 10. | Agasa     | - | Washerman                    |
| 11. | Cheluwadi | - | Priest of Untouchables       |
| 12. | Madiga    | - | Shoemaker.                   |

Amongst the twelve Ayagars, the Cheluwadi and Madigas are Untouchables. They serve the castes above them when their ritual services are required such as during a wedding and funeral ceremony. They also work as agricultural labour. The Holeya ~~was~~ acted as a village watchman. The ritual services undertaken by the Untouchables indicate their economic and political dependence on the higher castes.

In accordance with custom, the Cheluwadis (or Holeyas) take the dead animals (of higher castes) and

pass on the skins to the Madigas. The Holeyas render their services, mainly such as sweeping, acting as messengers of dead person belonging to higher castes; They do not serve the Madigas who are scaled lower in the caste heirarchy.

The Madigas play the drums during village festivals and ceremonies. Their participation in village festivals such as 'Karahunnime' shows that an important feature of village inter-caste relations. And that the practice of unapproachability is not there. However, the practice of untouchability is still found in villages.<sup>41</sup>

One form of patron-seller relationship - locally called "Kattaya"<sup>42</sup> - involves the Madigas. The Madigas supply sandals and other leather goods used in agriculture by their patrons. This service is paid in kind.

During the harvest time, the Holeyas are employed. Generally, the woman belonging to Untouchables help to prepare threshing-floor of their landlord. The patron

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41. Buggi, Chandrashekar, (1971): "Changing Peasants of Mysore - An Enquiry into their Attitudes toward Governmental Programmes and Fatalism". In: Economic Development and Social Change in Mysore State, Meti, T.K. (ed.), Karnataka University, Dharwar, pp. 1-26.

42. Parvathamma, C. Op.cit. p. 64.

gives the best and top layers of the grain heap to the priest and the rejected material at the bottom to the untouchable-Ayagars. This is done according to customs.

The remuneration paid to untouchable-Ayagars reveals the fact that the hierarchical theme runs in almost every context of life. The rejected material is locally known as "Mannukalu" and "Gondekalu"\* is given to the untouchable-Ayagars as their concession for labour. This is obtained by sweeping the threshing floor (Kana) after the landowners have collected most of the grain. The untouchable-Ayagars accept the rejected material and generally they do not demand good grain. They also do not regret. It seems that the religious ethos reinforces their traditional assignments and remunerations. There is a belief among the untouchables that if they refuse to accept the remnants of the threshing floor, they will incur sin. This makes the Untouchables to remain satisfied with that remnants.

The variety of the patron-seller relationship involves the payment in kind made by the patron to the

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\* Mannukalu is a mixture of grain and little dry mud. Gondekalu is corn which remains after threshing.

Madiga artisan. The Madiga artisan's work is considered and payment is made in kind during harvest season. Most of the families of Holeyas and Madigas work on the basis of contract during harvest time and receive remuneration in kind. Moreover, the Untouchables hire out their labour to serve the master. Sometime the master (Ayadakula) gets such servant who comes from Ayagar family. The relations of Ayadakula and Ayagar which are harmonious help to keep the other relations in the same manner.

As Kolenda<sup>43</sup> has observed almost all serving castes have ceremonial and ritual duties at the Jajman's (patron) birth, marriage, funeral and at some of the religious festivals. For example, in case of the Untouchables their duties are playing drum at the time of death, collecting the wood and digging the graveyard and sending the message to relatives of deceased etc. The ceremonies and festivals reinforce the ties between the castes. And, these relations cut-across the castes and hence lead to village unity.

Thus, relations among the Jajman or Ayadakula and the Kamin or Ayagar exist even today. Lewis notes that these Jajmani relations are not strong as they were

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43. Kolenda, P.M. Op.cit.

in the olden days. Though the Jajmani system is losing its importance<sup>44</sup> it still exists in Indian villages, because the secularization of professions has not spread in this field.<sup>45</sup> It is also found that in a weakened form the patron-client relationship still exists. The factors such as belief about ritual pollution, the myth of next world, priest's (Brahmin) role at the time of marriage and life cycle, rites and festivals contribute to maintain the Jajmani system.

As far as the Untouchables are concerned in the Aya system, they also occupy the lowest ritual post and they stand at the bottom of the hierarchy of Ayagars.

### (III) RIGHTS IN LAND AND THE UNTOUCHABLES:

Before analysing some important variables such as land-holding patterns, land-lord-tenant relations, landlord-agricultural labour relations, Agricultural labour-agricultural labour and the division of work, income and wage etc. it is very important to discuss the traditional socio-agrarian relations which throw

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44. Lewis, Oschar and Barnow<sup>u</sup> (1956): "Caste and Jajmani system in a North Indian Village", In: Scientific Monthly (Journal), Vol. 83, No. 2, pp. 66-81.

45. Smita, Charu (1977): "The Jajmani System in an Urban Metropolis", In: Social Change - Journal of the Council for Social Development, Vol. 7, No. 1. pp. 20-23.

light on the problems of Untouchables. Here we shall concentrate on land-ownership, land-holding pattern and the Untouchables, in the traditional economy.

(a). Land-ownership:

Ownership of land and property are the bases on which one's economic position depends. Land plays an important role in the socio-economic position of any individual in society. Therefore, property and ownership ~~of it~~ have a great significance. The subject of ownership of property, succession and inheritance are dealt with in the Indian law-books like Smritis and in the commentaries.<sup>46</sup> The Kings' function was not only conceived in terms of legislation but of protection and this involved the protection not only of his subject from invasion but also of the order of society - the right way of life for all classes and ages (Varnashrama Dharma) as laid down in the Sacred texts.<sup>47</sup> The Kings or Chieftans were protectors of Dharma. It was believed that

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46. Karve writes: "always commentators referred to the principles - according to Smritis, Dharma, Vyavahar Charitra and Raja Shasana while dealing with succession and inheritance of their relation to kinship organization of dwijas (twice born people) viz. Brahmin, Kshatria and Vaishya". Karve, Iravati, (1968): Kinship Organization in India, Asia Publications, Bombay. p.27.

47. Basham, A.L. Op.cit. p. 138; Radhakrishnan, S. (1961): The Hindu View of Life. Unwin Books, London. He has discussed the stages of life (pp. 59-66) and Caste System (Chapter-IV).



the King was Dharma incarnate and that he maintained the 'sacred law' by punishing evil doers and <sup>rewarding</sup> ~~rendering~~ the righteous. The kings were the custodians of law and order in society.

There are two ideas of Royal ownership of land. One view holds that King was the owner of all land and water in his Kingdom. The other view holds that the King was the owner only in a socio-political sense, but that in reality he did not own the land. This latter view is held by Ghoshal.<sup>48</sup> As it could be seen in the case of Sudras and the Untouchables, the lands of Indian villages were not truly communal because, the different castes did not have equal rights to their use.<sup>49</sup> In India communal ownership only meant that a particular caste had rights on certain portions of village land. However, the pasture grounds and groves of fruit trees (such as mangoes) were generally held to be open for all villagers' use. The rights were accorded according to their ritual status. And in case of Untouchables, or Sudras even if they had opportunity, they must not do so.

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48. Ghoshal, U.N. (1973): The Agrarian System in Ancient India, Sarawat Library, Calcutta.
49. Basham was ~~was~~ of the opinion that majority of thinkers on this subject favoured the doctrine of royal ownership. Basham, A.L., Op.cit. p.iii.

It was considered by the dwijas that it was against the sacred law if the Sudras or Untouchables accumulated any wealth, hence their doing was wrong. As far as possible, they must remain humble servants of the country.

In fact, the religious values, principles and customs were imparted through the process of socialization of Hindus; and the manifestation of them would be seen at the events like that of eight prohibitions<sup>50</sup> which were imposed on the Untouchables by the caste Hindus in the year 1930. When the Untouchables disregarded them, it led to the use of violence by the caste Hindus against Untouchables. The caste Hindus destroyed their huts, granaries and properties. They also looted the Untouchables' live-stock.

As Mangalore District Gazetter<sup>51</sup> has written that "when the Ande-Koraga (the Untouchables) had to carry a spittoon round their necks as being so highly polluting that they could not be allowed to expectorate on the public road."

Thus, even after the independence, the Untouchables in rural India, generally are not allowed to enjoy

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50. Please see Appendix No. 1, PP.133-135.

51. Hutton, J.H. Op.cit. p. 200.

civic life. It may be seen from various Reports that in some villages, if any Untouchable person dares to approach the public well and tank etc., he is man-handled and economically bycotted, in certain cases, the Untouchable women are made naked and then the procession of naked women taken, their women are raped, their men are hanged and burnt alive, ritualistically sacrificed, their houses are burnt and their property is also looted.<sup>52</sup>

The treatment of Untouchables as a whole by the Caste Hindus of one side reveals that any activity of Untouchables, if goes against the existing interests, usages, customs and tradition of caste Hindus, they (the Untouchables) are punished even beyond imagination. Thus, the hope of owning land was suppressed and their efforts to become economically well-being were invoked by socio-religious sanctions. Hence, the net result was that they had to become landless.

The three groups - Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya traditionally employed others to till the land. However, the ritual prohibition was restricted to Brahmin and

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52. Report of the Committee on Untouchability, Economic and Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and connected documents. Govt. of India, Deptt. of Social Welfare, New Delhi, 1969. pp. 15-33; Report: 1974. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1971-72 and 1972-73. Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, pp. 152-172; Report-1975: Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 1973-74, Gove.of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, pp. 181-195.

Kshatria. For instance, the Brahmin was not supposed to till the land because by doing so he might injure insects and animals.<sup>53</sup> They could own land and get it ploughed by others. Nevertheless, the Vaishyas also generally avoided tilling the land. Traditionally the Untouchables and the Sudras were mere servants of the three upper castes. They tilled lands belonging to these castes. Thus, the rights, namely, owning, selling, purchasing, supervising, leasing, from legal point of view were exclusively enjoyed by the Caste Hindus. The Sudras and Untouchables were denied these rights.

However, exception to the denial of right in land, the Untouchables had a piece of land.<sup>54</sup> This piece of land was allowed to <sup>be</sup> cultivated (in lieu of village servant or Ayagar). This land was so small that their survival depended on other menial jobs.

The second right in land of Untouchables in traditional society was that of burial ground. The Untouchables had to dig graves for deceased belonging

53. Srinivas, M.N. (1955): In Marriots, Op.cit.

54. Parvathamma states that the temple records do not say anything about the balance of land (56 acres and 22 cents) but according to oral information, this land was distributed between Maratha mirade players and Cheluwadi pipers. Parvathamma, C. Op.cit. p. 161.

to higher castes. Besides, some coins, cloth, the deceased wore, they also received fee for that ground.<sup>55</sup> The income of burial ground and of village servants' land were partly supplementary to their livelihood. Therefore, under such condition their other vocation was becoming agriculture or manual labour.

(b) Late entry into the field of Agriculture:

The origin of the Untouchable's real entry in the field of agriculture may be traced in the changing phase of rural economy under the impact of British rule.<sup>56</sup> The British Government issued an order for the grants of "Chakari lands" (or servant lands or Inam lands for their services to Government) of the villages as their remuneration. The British Government secured an access for them to the servant land in terms of legal

55. Op.cit.

56. Davis Kingley, (1951): The Population of India and Pakistan. Princeton N.J. Chapter-18, p.170; In Belgum district, Karnataka state, the service lands are called "Talwarike hola" and "Holeyana Hola". The former refers to land given for their service to Government and the latter refers to land given in lieu of the service in Aya system. Thus, "Sarkari", "Chakari" are the local names of non-ryotwari tenures. Various Inams are listed in Census of India, 1961: Land Tenures in India, Vol.I, Part-XI(1), Delhi, 1968, pp. 104-115.

rights which was prohibited in Hindu polity. Thus, it was through government's initiative to improve their conditions. Its aid helped them to carry on their limited agricultural activities on the plots of land allotted to them. Thus, their late entry in the agriculture was accompanied by the rights in land in terms of legal ownership. This is the very basis of security and hence tenure.

**CHAPTER - THREE**

**EARLY LAND SYSTEM IN KARNATAKA STATE**

- (I) LAND-OWNING PATTERN IN MYSORE STATE**
- (II) AGRARIAN SERVITUDE AND AGRARIAN STATUS  
OF THE UNTOUCHABLES**

From the preceding sections, the generalization would emerge that the dvijas (caste-Hindus) were exclusively given rights in land and property. Broadly speaking, in the traditional economy, the land system consisted of Poligars and Ayagars.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we shall briefly discuss the land-owning pattern with reference to untouchables.

(I) LAND-OWNING PATTERN IN MYSORE STATE:

Poligars:

The early land system in the old Mysore<sup>2</sup> State consisted of Poligars and Ayagars. The Poligars were the defeated chieftains who remained vassals and paid tributes<sup>to the victorious Kings</sup>. They were also appointed as trusted servants to manage the uncultivated waste land and jungle to bring them under cultivation. They were powerful representatives of the sovereign and in the later days they emerged as the landed aristocracy of the country<sup>3</sup> (Mysore province).

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1. George, P.T. (1970): "Land System and Laws in Mysore State". In: Arthavijnana - Journal of The Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona. Vol. XII, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 117-192.
  2. The old Mysore State consisted of nine districts, viz., Bangalore, Chikmangalore, Chitradurge, Hassan, Kolar, Mandya, Mysore, Simoga and Tumkur.
  3. Ibid.



**Ayagars:**

The second category called 'Ayagars' consisted of twelve hereditary occupational representatives. They rendered their services according to regulations issued by the Kings for their administration. These different hereditary offices (Ayagars) were recognised and provision was made for their maintenance in the Vijayanagar reign. They were:

- (1) Shanbhog - Accountant
- (2) Gauda - Headman
- (3) Kammara - Blacksmith
- (4) Badagi - Carpenter
- (5) Agasa - Washerman
- (6) Panchangi - Village Astrologer
- (7) Nainda - Barber
- (8) Madiga - Shoe-maker
- (9) Akkasale - Goldsmith
- (10) Talwari - Watchman of the village
- (11) Nirganti - Watchman of the tanks and
- (12) Kumbara - Pot-maker.

George has categorised these two Ayagars into three groups which are:

- (I) The first group consisted of the Shanbhog and Gauda,
- (II) The second group consisted of village artisans, and
- (III) The third group comprised of village servants.

The first group was held responsible for keeping an account for each village and for maintaining law and order. They were the links between the villagers and the high officials of the state. The Shanbhogs were responsible for the collection of land revenue. So they were required to keep detailed account of all the cultivators in their jurisdiction. They also held privileged lands or Manyams as remuneration for their services. These privileged lands were later on called as service inams. For such land, they paid Jodi\* to Government. The Gauda's functions were to see that the farmers cultivated the land for the Kandaya (land revenue or land tax) or rent to be paid per annum. Like Shanbhogs they were also authorised to collect revenue from various duties and remitted it to the authorities. In addition to these assignments, they also settled the rents for the ensuing year according to estimates made by the Government officials (Amildars).

The village artisans and servants were required to see that their respective services were rendered. They were paid for their duties in the form of grant of privileged lands for which they regularly paid Jodi.

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\* Jodi means grant of land or village on lighter assessment than the proper land revenue; quit-rent.

But the Panchangi (village astrologer) was exempted from paying Jodi.

George points out that the land system under Vijayanagar reign was one of the direct payment of land taxes to the state through the village officials (Shanbhog and Gauda). This, according to him, amounted to some sort of Ryotwari system.<sup>4</sup> He says that the land system has undergone some changes. He has surveyed the land system under different administration of Kings.

In brief, under the Mysore Rajas (Chik Deva Raja, 1672 - 1704 A.D.) land taxes were also imposed on ryots according to directions laid down in the sastras. During his reign the Poligars were compelled to leave the village to live at <sup>the</sup> capital. Because as Chik Deva Raja went on conquering, the capital Srirangapatna had to be looked after. And the lands held by the soldiers were exempted from taxation to gain their goodwill.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he utilized them in the event of rebellion etc. However, the Raja retained control over the lands by his right as the overlord. Thus the cultivators became the tenants of the State.

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4. Ibid.

5. Venkata Ramappa, M.N. (1975): Outlines of South Indian History, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt.Ltd., Bombay. pp. 202-204.

In the later period, Hyderali introduced a machinery for collecting rent and to redress the grievances of ryots by appointing two Brahmin officials. These officials were called Harakars. In each district he established such a system but it was abolished by his son Tippu Sultan. During Tippu Sultan's period an important step was to take out various types of inams held by the Hindus - particularly the Brahmins. The Poligars who were <sup>subdued</sup> reduced under <sup>the</sup> Sarkar Management and the abolition of <sup>the post of</sup> Harakars (Brahmin officials) created discontent.

During the reign of Dewan Purnaiya (1799-1810) two important settlements were emerged viz., hereditary property and hereditary services. Under Maharaja Krishna Raja Wadeyar (1811-1831) an important development was the settlement of villages on Kayangutta - permanent village settlement at low assessment. In his period, Fauzdars (Chief military administrator of district) were authorised to make grants of Kayangutta villages for which money rent was fixed. Another important development was of Batayi system where hired labour or tenant-at-will of the Government cultivated lands on the basis of share of the produce. The lands were held by the Jodidars (who held grant of land on quit-rent). Brahmins and others

held inam lands. These inam lands were ~~of~~ rent free lands. During this time, the Gauda alone collected the revenue from the ryots.

However, the history of the land system under British rule (1831-1881) is of great significance. Lewis writes about their administration was "to reform flagrant abuses in the old <sup>system,</sup> to liberate <sup>the</sup> trade and agricultural classes in their just rights, against the gross tyranny and shameful exortion of a host of unscrupulous officials in every department, to purify and to regulate the administration of justice to develop the resources of the country".<sup>6</sup> This shows that their efforts were directed to put in order the chaotic inam tenancies in the state. Thus, the British Government established the Survey and Settlement Departments to settle the government lands. In view of the above administrative purpose, the ryotwari system introduced by William Bentinck in <sup>the</sup> Bombay Presidency, was also implemented in Mysore Province.

Firstly, the British identified the landholder who was responsible for the payment of land revenue. They classified tenures according to the method of settling the revenue.

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6. Rice, Lewis. Op cit. (1897) p. 639.

### ZAMINDARI SYSTEM:

Under Zamindari system the land revenue was fixed in perpetuity and the zamindar had all the residuary rights to waste-land and the like. These rights were not held by the cultivator. In the Zamindari system, the landowner was granted relatively favourable rates of land revenue. The lands controlled by the state were subject to full payment of revenue. The various rates of revenue were adjusted periodically taking into consideration ryots or the actual cultivators. At the end of the British period Mysore province consisted, broadly speaking, of two systems, namely, Ryotwari system and Inamadari System.

### Inamadari System:

In ryotwari areas, ~~in~~ large holding lands were cultivated by undertenants or Payakaris (temporary cultivators). Such cultivation was undertaken on various terms. Batali lands were also held directly from the Government on the basis of an agreement to pay assessment in kind (usually grain).

In Inamadari system, an Inam was granted. It was a grant or gift by the government for personal benefit. Such grants were made to individual or individuals or for religious, charitable and other purposes or for the

services rendered to the state or the village community. Inam lands were held free of assessment and in some cases subject to Jodi or quit rent.

There <sup>are</sup> different types of inams that existed in the state. They are classified into five categories<sup>7</sup> as:  
 (1) Personal Inams; (2) Religious Inams; (3) Kodagi Inams;  
 (4) Service Inams and (5) Miscellaneous Inams.

The Table-1 given below shows the pattern of land holding in Inam areas.

TABLE - 1 INAMS AFTER THE SETTLEMENT

Class	Results of the settlement of land inams of all kinds			Result of the Settlement of cash alienations	
	No. of cases	Extent in acres	Assessment Rs.	No. of cases confirmed	Amount Rs.
<u>Devadaya</u>	19702	184024	254813	1544	209090
<u>Dharmadaya</u>	431	240079	184463	76	47656
<u>Inams of Personal benefit</u>	30475	337943	791696	313	7010
<u>Kodagar and Gavadi dasavandam</u>	1719	8124	27733	-	-
<u>Inams of miscellaneous police and revenue services</u>	2317	9197	27034	-	-
<u>Inam artisans</u>	4291	23618	17404	-	-
<u>Village service to government</u>	557	11939	3402	-	-

Source: George P.T. (1970) "Land System and Laws in Mysore State"  
 In: Artha Vijnana, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 135.

7. George P.T. Op.cit.

The Table reveals that the lands were held by the Brahmins and Gaudas were larger in areas. But the village artisans held small areas of land. The village servants held even less land than the artisans.

Besides large areas of land held by the Brahmins and Gaudas, the religious Inams were also held by their respective community's priests. For instance, Brahmin and Lingayat mathas held land (Sringeri matha had 4452 miles of land). Although the Dharmadaya Inams and charitable institutions were fewer in number, they had larger estates including waste land. The distribution system consisted of various types of service. Inams were inequitable in terms of the actual service rendered.

Thus, the landholding pattern shows that the Brahmins and Lingayat priests owned a larger area of village land than their ryots. These priests cultivated them by the help of either hired labourers or sharecroppers. The lower castes, especially the Untouchables tilled their lands.<sup>8</sup> The Inams assigned to Chatras<sup>\*</sup> were for upper castes only. The temples of Untouchables were not endowed with agricultural or even waste land.

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8. Srinivas M.N. Op.cit. (1955) p.5.

\* Chatras are the places where the Brahmin priests are given refreshment.



Thus, the distribution of land reveals, besides unequal rights in land, unequal pattern of landholding of different sections (castes) of society in rural India. On the one hand, the upper castes owned larger proportion of land of the village and they invoked the authority of social sanctions and customs and caste rules to sustain their sound economic position. On the other hand, the lower castes occupied weak material positions and served as tenants or agricultural labour.

(II) AGRARIAN SERVITUDE:

There was a close association or connection between caste and occupation as far as lower castes are concerned. Broadly speaking, most of the workers in agricultural labour - castes followed their traditional occupation<sup>9</sup> and secondly, though the subsequent measures (for example, legal emancipation of slaves in 1843) were enforced to improve their lot, still they remained as agricultural labourers. Dharma Kumar<sup>10</sup> says that where these forms of

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9. For instance, the percentage of actual workers - following traditional occupations in castes from selected districts - according to Census 1911 is as follows: Cheruman - 93.5; Holeyá - 65.7 and Paraiyan 64.2. Cited from Dharma Kumar, (1965): Land and Caste in India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency During Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, p. 61.

10. Ibid. p. 62.

servitude flourished, the bulk of labourers were unfree and hired. According to her, this was almost true of Malbar and South Canara. She refers to the Collector of South Canara who reported in 1801 that nearly all the cultivation was carried on by Holeyas or Slaves of other sorts and that the condition of working class in Canara was servile. She reports that in South Canara, at least 10 to 12 per cent of the total population consisted of agricultural slaves.

However, the Indian institution of servitude or serfdom differed from European conception.<sup>11</sup> In other words, these institutions in India had the support of "Varnashrama Dharma"<sup>12</sup> wherein each occupation in that system was tied with traditional relations such as ritual relations and ascribed status relationships. The serfdom was deeply rooted in the Indian society and its sanctions, local customs and even official blessings.<sup>13</sup>

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11. In other countries, groups of people who were designated as "slaves" or "serfs" were mostly deprived of their rights by their masters. By contrast in India, some limited rights were given to the agricultural serfs.
12. Gail Omvedt (1976): Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society : The Non-Brahmin Movement in Western India 1873-1930, Scientific Socialist Education Trust, Bombay. p. 27.
13. For example, 'The Holeyas should be stopped from enlisting in the army as they were in habit of quarrel with their masters' - a order by Collector of Canara. Dharma Kumar, Op.cit. p. 67.

Thus, the use of Holeyas has continued to help stabilise the system. Because the most important factor was the belief in super natural punishment for acts of deviance,<sup>14</sup> this fear made them to remain faithful to the rules which functioned as agents of social control. The caste Hindus were empowered by the Hindu Law to execute their rights. Therefore, Dharma Kumar observes: "Purely economic justification (indebtedness) can not alone account for the survival of the system of servitude and this inescapable bondage was reinforced by the tenacious traditions of serfdom". She states further: "Whatever the origin of the system, its durability must be explained in social rather than economic terms, in terms of caste system rather than market needs. And these institutions were deeply rooted in the South Indian Society".<sup>15</sup>

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14. Harper B.B. (1968): "Social Consequences of Unsuccessful Low Caste Movement", In: Social Mobility in the Caste System in India. Silverberg, James (ed.) Mouton The Hague, Paris. pp. 36-65.
15. Dharma Kumar. Op.cit. pp. 75-76. In this context, Nilakanta Sastri's conclusion is that although there is no clear evidence of the preodial slavery (in the Chola period), it is possible that most of the labourers of the "last class" did not differ much from slaves in their status; Sastri, K.A. Nilakanta (1955). The Cholas, Madras. p.87.

There are, mainly three terms usually used for the classification of agricultural labourers. These are called in Kannada "Huttalu", "Mannalu" and "Saladalu".\* These terms are used for understanding the forms of Indian agrarian servitude. These terms are locally used. On the whole agricultural labourers were not free. Among them the untouchables were very far from being free. The servants brought and sold had to abide by their caste rules. Their master-slave or master-serf relations were in harmony since the religious system of belief helped to do so. On both the parties the religious values contributed to the harmony of their relations. The serfs or slaves were divided into three categories. They are: <sup>16</sup>

- (i) The hereditary serfs or the serfs permanently attached to the land, i.e., Huttalu;
  - (ii) Conditional slave - Mannalu and
  - (iii) Debt slave - Saladalu.
- (1) Hereditary Serf = Huttalu:

Huttalu was a servant of the landlord. He was a permanent servant of the master right from the time of his birth. In the hereditary serfdom, the servant had

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\* The Kannada terms: Huttu = Birth, Mannu = Land or soil; Alu = servant and Sala = loan.

16. Dharma Kumar. Op.cit. pp. 34-48.

to work for generations of masters. There was no escape from that bondage.

The master was obliged to look after his servants. Their service was conditional one - that the master gave them customary allowance of rice, cloth and so on for their livelihood. The servants had their right to recover their balance.

However, the servants were subject to sale.<sup>17</sup> The servants were also sold and purchased. Servants were transferred within the range of 20 or 30 miles of their birth place.

The cost of the slave varied from one place to another.<sup>18</sup> Here the caste of the slave was considered and on the basis of it the prices varied. The best male slaves were sold at £ 6 5s and hired out at 3s 9d per annum. For Cheruman £1 6s and the annual rent (hiring charges) was 2s 6d. The price of male child was Rs. 3/ 8 annas. In terms of barter system, one pair of slaves was

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17. Thurston reports that <sup>in</sup> most of the hilly taluka (South Canara) each Wargadar or proprietor of landed estate owned a set of servants called Huttalu and Mannalu. These were of Holeya class but in some other places they were men of the Hasalar tribe. Thurston, E. (1909): Castes and Tribes of South India Vol. II, Madras. p.335.

18. Dharma Kumar, Op.cit. pp. 35-43; Dr. Srinivas has referred to slavery in Coorg. He has mentioned more or less the same prices of slave. £ = about Rs.13, Srinivas, M.N. Op.cit. (1952). p.22.

said to be equivalent to four pairs of buffaloes. In the market of slaves (labourers) the rate of the male slave varied between Rs.12/- to Rs.26/-. The wife could not generally be sold separately from her husband.

(ii) Servant Attached to Land - Mannalu:

The Mannalu was also the slave of the landlord. These servants were tied to land. Hence whenever the land was sold or purchased, automatically the slaves went along with it. Thus, along with land the slaves were sold and purchased. The purchase price of estates included the value of slaves which varied <sup>from</sup> one place to another. These servants were born into servitude and they died in it. Even if they tried to escape from these chains, they had to face risks.

(iii) Debt Slave - Salada Alu:

The Debt slaves or the Saladalu were the individuals who entered into a contract of working for their master to pay off a debt. Their agreement of contract consisted of payment in kind and cash. The debt slaves had to work off a debt for a specific period. Until the debt is paid, they had to work in their Master's land. The debt slave system thus differed from that of Mannalu and Huttalu, in the sense that <sup>in</sup> former <sup>case</sup> was free if he pays off debt. Thus, <sup>debt slaves</sup> they were not tied on the

basis of hereditary obligation.

There are some evidences which indicate that generally the Holeyas were debt slaves and the references to them are found in the folk-songs also. For example, the Coorgi wedding song says: "With this wealth he brought a band of Holeyas to till his land."<sup>19</sup> The owning of slaves enhanced the status of master. Thus, he was proud in owning slaves.

Here the relation seemed to be cordial if that servant remained faithful. He was treated as manomaga (own son). He had to be fed daily. The debtorship was also known as Jeeta system which was prevalent in Dharwar district. As the contract was established on an agreement the Jeeta servant could pay off the debt and again he could renew it. However, the debt slave system or contractual servanthip is said to be the remnant of serfdom. Usually the poor persons entered into such systems.

The agreements were sometimes written and at times orally done. his contractual pledge also involved certain religious rites such as the drinking<sup>of</sup> milk by the debt slave offered by his master in front of temple.<sup>20</sup> This milk-drinking

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19. Ibid.

20. Harper, E.B. Op.cit. (1968).

ceremony ensured the bond. However, this system is looked down upon by the Untouchables<sup>and they</sup> often refused to go through such ceremony.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, these master-slave or contractual relationships were highly institutionalized and vertical. So these relationships, might be viewed as relationship between patrons and clients. These relations were unequal since they consisted of vertical links between different castes.

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21. Ibid.



## **CHAPTER - FOUR**

### **CHANGING LAND SYSTEM AND THE UNTOUCHABLES**

- (I) CHANGING LAND SYSTEM AND THE UNTOUCHABLES DURING THE 'POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD WITH REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA.**
- (II) THE UNTOUCHABLES AND THEIR CHANGING OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN.**
- (III) LANDHOLDING PATTERN AMONG THE UNTOUCHABLES.**
- (IV) CULTIVATORS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AMONG THE UNTOUCHABLE WORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT MEASURES.**
- (V) BONDED LABOUR AND THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT. Etc.**

(I) CHANGING LAND SYSTEM AND THE UNTOUCHABLES  
DURING POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD WITH REFERENCE  
TO KARNATAKA:

As India became independent, the development in the field of agriculture received more importance. There were two major developments, namely, abolition of feudal intermediaries and the enactment of laws regulating landlord-tenant relationships. A Committee<sup>1</sup> was appointed to suggest measures for suitable legislation in the state for the abolition of Zamindars, Jahgirdars, Kayangutta grants and Sarvamanyams. And it<sup>was</sup> also required to suggest simplified tenures by abolishing Jodi and Inams etc. The Committee pointed out that the inam villages were among the most backward areas in the state though it has fertile and greater natural resources. Hence, it recommended that the elimination of the intermediaries ~~was~~, therefore, necessary in the interest of an improved agricultural economy.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee examined the tenancy laws and recommended suitable legislation in the Mysore<sup>3</sup> state.

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1. The Chairman of the Committee was H.B. Gundappa Gauda and its report is The Report of The Committee for Revision of Land Revenue System in Mysore, Bangalore, 1950.
  2. Ibid, Part-2, p.26.
  3. Mysore Act. No.I of 1955: The Mysore (Personal and Miscellaneous) Inam Abolition Act, 1954.

It also laid down the principles for the payment of fair compensation in respect of each class, in view of the interest of improvement in agricultural economy.

Besides, the various Inams were abolished on compensatory basis and a Kadin was treated as registered occupant of the lands. The Committees' recommendations were acted upon by passing Mysore (Personal and Miscellaneous) Inams Abolition Act, 1954. The Act was directed towards abolition of major Inams and the village service inams held by the Shanbhogs, and Mirasdars. The Act repealed the Act of 1950<sup>4</sup> and it was the major step in bringing alienated villages under the government control. It also gave the provision for personal cultivation which was one of the loopholes of that Act. In 1955, a further enactment was made to cover the inams by religious and charitable institutions.<sup>5</sup> However, it exempted the inams held by Pujari, Archak etc. who rendered their services in those institutions.

George has observed that the rights and privileges enforced on the tenants were to meet the needs of

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4. Mysore Act No.19 of 1950: The Mysore Alienated Villages (Protection of Tenants and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1950.

5. For example, Sringeri Jahgir and all other Devadaya or Dharmadaya inams; Please see: Mysore Act No.18 of 1955: The Mysore (Religious and Charitable) Inams Abolition Act, 1955.

justice. But, the rights of the tenant to purchase, for instance, were hollow so long as the tenants could not take any initiative to effect a transfer of the land to him.<sup>6</sup>

After the reorganization of Mysore state in 1956, the areas which were included - the Mysore State from Bombay, Hyderabad, Madras and the Coorg - had their respective tenancy laws (except Coorg at the time of reorganization). Because of the reorganization of the Mysore state, different tenancy laws in different areas led to complex divergencies. Therefore, a Committee headed by Jatti, was formed to provide a comprehensive tenancy laws.<sup>7</sup> The Committee suggested many measures. Thus, though the interim measures brought uniformity they which still differed in major aspects.

Though some measures were of temporary nature, and for their effective implementation had also been prolonged. For example, Mysore Land Reform Act, 1961 was delayed upto 1965 for its implementation.<sup>8</sup>

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6. George, P.T. Op.cit.
  7. The Government has appointed a Committee - The Mysore Tenancy Agricultural Land Laws Committee - headed by B.D. Jatti, in 1957.
  8. Srikanthayya, B.S. (1966): "Review of Implementation of Land Reforms in Mysore", In: Seminar on Land Reforms, Proceedings and Papers, Seminar Series, No. 1, (Socio-Economic Research Division (Planning Commission) New Delhi, pp. 177-179.

However, the Land Reform Act of 1961 made general provisions regarding tenancies. It defined tenants' payment, compensation to landlords, etc., the grounds of eviction and other rights of tenants. It also made an important provision in respect of tenant (section 43) that the rights and privileges of any tenant under any circumstances should not be limited or abrogated. This gave greater security and advantages to tenants.

The above Act (Section, 44) has provided for the conferment of ownership on tenants. The tenants who were tilling government lands came to be recognised as occupants. The Act also established principles and the mode of fixation and payment<sup>of</sup> compensation. It also put certain restrictions on alienation of lands such as land transfers to non-agriculturists.

Again, the Mysore Land Reform Act, 1961 which became law in 1962, <sup>was</sup> ~~did~~ not enforce till October, 1965. Moreover, because of Section 14, the landlords had filed their statements for resumption of lands upto 2-10-1966. Thus, the timely action on the part of government was lacking and the process of land reform to achieve physical targets was slow.

However, in view of the planned agricultural development, there emerged two major emphases during

post-independence period. They were to promote economic growth and improve agrarian relations. Thus, the government undertook land-reform measures to maximise agricultural production and to reduce economic inequalities. Therefore, to attain the former object the legislative measures consisted of abolition of intermediaries, conferment of ownership on the tiller of the soil and the imposition of ceiling on the landholdings. For the second object, the government undertook administrative measures such as maintenance of up-to-date records of rights, distribution of government waste and forest land to the landless persons, etc. All measures have affected traditional economy - the association between caste hierarchy and agrarian hierarchy. In Karnataka all villages come under Rayatwari, where the land is divided into several individual survey numbers. Those numbers may also have subdivisions. In the Rayatwari system the land revenue is fixed on individual survey numbers.

In the Inam<sup>9</sup> tenure system the land is held on a reduced assessment which is not liable to revision. However, the Inams or watan (Desai, Despande or Kulkarni,

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9. Bombay State Gazetteer (1959), Dharwar District,  
Government of Bombay, Govt. Publications, Bombay.  
pp. 340-351.

Patil and village servants) have been abolished. <sup>But</sup> Thus, the land is unequally owned by the people.

Beteille points out that there is still a very high concentration of land within a single caste (for example, the Okkaligas who are cultivating owners) in three villages in Mysore.<sup>10</sup> The micro-level studies conducted by Dharm Narian, P.C. Joshi, S.K. Sanyal and others also reveal that there is no evidence of reduced concentration of land in rural India.<sup>11</sup> For instance, there is an increase in the concentration ratio pertaining to the distribution of ownership holding from 0.67 in 1953-54 to 0.68 in 1961-62.

Nonetheless, in the case of Untouchables who were almost landless agricultural labourers, some of them have become tenants and petty agriculturists. According to Dahl, this is a change from a system of "cumulative inequalities" to one of "dispersed inequalities".<sup>12</sup> In other words, it is a change from a relatively "closed system" to a relatively "open system" of stratification.<sup>13</sup>

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10. Beteille, A. Op.cit. (1966).

11. Dharm Narian and Joshi, P.C. (1969): "Magnitude of Agricultural Tenancy", In: Economic and Political Weekly, Sept. 27, Vol. IV, No. 39, pp. 139-142.  
Sanyal, S.K. (1972): "Has There Been Decline In Agricultural Tenancy?" In: Economic and Political Weekly May, 6, Vol. VII, No. 19, pp. 943-947.

12. Dahl, A. Robert, (1961): Who Governs?: Democracy and power in an American City, New Haven.

13. Beteille, A. Op.cit. (1966).

(II) THE UNTOUCHABLES AND THEIR CHANGING  
OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN:

According to Census<sup>14</sup> 1971, the population of Scheduled Castes in Karnataka state is 3850034. Out of this, 3202756 are in rural areas and 647278 in urban areas. Their proportion to the total population of the state of Karnataka is 13.14 per cent. The same Census has listed 100 Scheduled Castes. There are nine major castes with larger strength amongst Scheduled Castes population. They are Adi Karnataka, Adi Dravida, Ebovi, Bhambi group, Holeya or Holer, Madiga, Banjara, Chaluvadi or Channaya and Korama. They share more than 80 per cent population of <sup>the</sup> Scheduled caste population. The Scheduled Caste Communities are not distributed uniformly among the districts of the state.

Occupational Pattern:

We shall examine the occupational pattern of the Untouchables in the state with the help of data given in the Census 1961. Again, their comparison with that of general population will throw more light on the economic position of Untouchables in the state.

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14. Census of India, 1971, Mysore, Series-14, Part-I-A, Volume.II, General Report, Padmanabhan (ed), Director of Census Operations Mysore, Bangalore. 1975, pp. 733-40.



**TABLE : 1**

**PERCENTAGE OF RURAL WORKERS IN DIFFERENT INDUSTRIAL  
CATEGORIES FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND  
GENERAL POPULATION IN KARNATAKA\***

S.No.	Category	Year	
		S.C.	1961 G.P.
I	Cultivator	49.16	62.78
II	Agricultural Labourer	31.46	18.52
III	In mining, quarrying and other services	3.59	3.23
		<u>84.21</u>	<u>84.53</u>
IV	In Household Industry	5.56	5.09
V	In Manufacturing other than household industry	0.96	1.21
VI	In construction	1.36	0.97
		<u>7.88</u>	<u>7.27</u>
VII	In trade and commerce	0.36	2.30
VIII	In transport, storage and communication	0.14	0.26
IX	In other services	7.41	5.64
		<u>7.91</u>	<u>8.20</u>

\*Source: The original tables adapted for our purposes of work are from: Census of India 1961, Mysore, Vol.XI, Part - V-A, Delhi, p.3; (for S.C.) and Census of India 1961, Mysore, Vol.XI, Part II-B (1) Delhi, p. 4. (for G.P. in rural areas).

The above Table-1 reveals that the population of Scheduled castes and the general population is not uniformly distributed. And the general comparison between the Scheduled castes and the general population shows the disparity in their pattern of distributed occupations. The followings are the important findings:

(1) It is interesting to note that the proportion of rural workers engaged in primary sector for Scheduled castes population and general population is same. 84 per cent of workers are engaged in the primary sector and the remaining are engaged in non-primary sectors in case of both scheduled castes and general population.

But further examination reveals that the similarity between the scheduled castes and the general population hides the real disparity in the distribution of workers in terms of specific occupations.

(a) An important point to be observed in the primary sector is that the percentage of scheduled caste workers as agricultural labourers is quite high. In other words, 31.46 per cent of agricultural labourers are among the scheduled castes against 18.52 per cent for general population.

(b) The scheduled castes' share in the category of cultivators is quite low as compared to general population. The general populations' share is 62.78 per cent as cultivators against 49.16 per cent of scheduled castes.

(2) As far as non-primary sector is concerned, the table shows that more or less the same proportion of workers are engaged in those categories. But again their proportion in industrial occupational categories is not uniform when closely examined.

(a) The proportion of the Scheduled caste workers in the construction and other services is high in comparison to the general population.

(b) While their (SC) proportion in manufacturing industry, trade and commerce is low as against general population.

(c) The proportion of workers for both Scheduled castes and general population is more or less same in the categories of household industry, transport services, communication and mining.

Broadly speaking, the comparative picture of occupational pattern of both the Scheduled castes and the general populations shows that:

(I) While comparing the occupations which involve unskilled and manual labour, the proportion of scheduled caste workers is significantly higher than the general population. Thus, the main occupations in which the Scheduled castes workers are engaged are agricultural labourer, construction and other services.

(II) Where the occupations involving the question of ownership and where the skill is required, the proportion of scheduled caste workers is low. For instance, in manufacturing industry, trade and commerce, the proportion of scheduled castes is very low. It shows that they are engaged in such activities where unskilled labour is required which follow low rate of wages.

(III) Finally, it is observed that in mining and household industry the proportion of both scheduled castes and the general population is same.

(III) LANDHOLDING PATTERNS AMONG THE UNTOUCHABLES:

In the preceding section, we have noticed that the proportion of scheduled caste workers as cultivators is quite low, when compared with the caste Hindus. The data on family landholding pattern among the scheduled castes and the general population show their share in land and the comparison of them also throw light on the

unequal rights in land.

**TABLE:2 LANDHOLDING PATTERNS AMONG THE UNTOUCHABLES\***

Category	S.C.	G.P.
Small 0 to 5 acres of land	62.90	43.58
Medium 5 to 15 acres of land	29.25	36.60
Large 15 acres and above	7.80	19.78

\*Source: The original tables are adapted for purposes of our work from: Census of India 1961, Mysore, Vol. V-A, Special Tables on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Sample Scheduled Castes Households engaged in cultivation based on 20% sample of all households in rural areas, Mysore State), Delhi, pp. 304-306; Census of India 1961, Mysore, Vol. XI, Part-III, Household Economic Tables (Sample households - general population - engaged in cultivation based on 20% sample of all households in rural areas, Mysore State), Delhi, pp. 8-36. S.C.: Scheduled Castes; G.P.: General Population.

The above Table-2 gives the distribution of cultivating households among the nine size categories, which have been conveniently grouped into broad three groups. The above table reveals the following points:

- (1) That the proportion of scheduled caste cultivating households in the small size holding (0 to 5 acres of land) is as much as 62 per cent, while the proportion of non-S.C. cultivators is 43 per cent.
- (2) As against this the proportion of the Scheduled caste cultivators in the large size holding (15 and above acres of land) is 7.90 per cent only, while the proportion of general population is 19.78 per cent. In other words, the share of large size holding among the general population is almost double that of Scheduled castes.
- (3) So far as the medium size holding is concerned, the proportion of cultivators belonging to general population is more than that of the Scheduled caste cultivators.
- (4) The table also reveals that not only the proportion of Scheduled caste cultivators is small, but within this, their share as a small cultivator is quite high. And a small proportion (7.90 per cent) of cultivators is of big landholders.

The micro-level village studies <sup>15</sup> by Srinivas, Epstein, and others also show that most of the village

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15. Srinivas, M.N. Op.cit.(1955), Epstein, T.S.(1962): Economic Development and Social Change in South India, Oxford University Press, Bombay; Gurumurthy, K.G. (1976): Kallapur - A South Indian Village, Karnataka University, Dharwar.

land is owned by the Lingayats or Okkaligas, while other castes have nominal landholdings. Moreover, the finest land as well as the land near the settlement is owned by the upper castes.

For instance, Gurumurthy's study reveals that the Untouchable - Madigas own 32.4 acres of land.<sup>16</sup> And that too is shared by 35 families. In other words, per Madiga family, the holding is of one acre, whereas the Cheluwadis do not own land at all. The land owned by lower castes is less fertile.<sup>17</sup>

#### Tenancy:

The second factor, besides the land owning pattern is tenancy. It consists of different types of tenants, such as owner tenants and landless tenants. The owner tenants are those who own lesser amount of land. As the owned land is insufficient, they also become tenants of some others.

The tenants till the land on the basis of share-cropping and leasing. These are the two major types practiced in villages. Again the share cropping is subdivided into equal (Sari Pain or Sama Issa) and unequal

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16. Ibid. pp. 75-105 (Please see Appendix No. 2. ).

17. Ibid.

(Nalkane Palu) shares. These are traditional types of tenancy. The equal share (Sama Issa or Sari Palu) is preferred by the poor tenants. In this system, both the landlord and the tenant share the yield equally. Sometimes, the landlord pays the whole revenue tax. Moreover, whatever is spent and produced is shared equally by the tenant and the landlord. But the tenure is not permanent, and whenever, the landlord wants, he can ask the tenant to vacate his land during the summer. In this system, the tenant has no special rights to hold the land.

The landlords who possess plenty of land and engaged in the profession or business usually give the land to tenants. Whatever expenditure incurred by the tenants is taken into account at the time of sharing the produce. Generally the tenants are not changed often. However, there is no binding to keep one tenant permanently or give him any tenancy papers.

The second type of tenancy is that of leasing. It is more of a contractual type. In this system a better off tenant will hire a piece of land. The tenure depends on the agreement of both parties with fixed amount of money or grains. The tenant (leasee) incurs all the expenditure. Thus, except the lease amount, the



rest of the produce goes to the lessee. In this system, the tenure is fixed, this security encourages a tenant to invest more and to produce more.

Thus, the share-cropping and leasing are also practised by the Untouchables. These tenancies which were of traditional type had no tenancy documents. However, the terms and conditions of the tenancy system have changed. And according to the Mysore Tenancy Act, 1957, a tenant gets a preemptive right to the land which he has tilled for more than twelve years. But usually the written document of actual tenancy contract with fixed amount is not made. It is because the landlords fear disclosing the actual amount of land owned and tend to escape from land legislations such as ceiling on landholding and tenancy laws. Moreover, tenants who demand written tenancy document could not secure the land on lease. Generally, the landlords leased out lands to one's needy kin or persons who obeyed them.

These tenancy systems are also practised by some Untouchables. But it depends on their cardinal relations. Because of Tenancy Act, landlords give their lands to those who may not indulge in legal actions. However, the tenancy troubles (refusal to vacate the land) have

made the landlords to lease out their lands to near kin persons. Today, as in the past, also the leasing system is practised as a means of paying off the debt by the poorer peoples. The poor borrower leases out his land to pay back debt. Some times he sells out his land. If the lease amount is not paid, the leasee has to loose his land right in land. There are cases where the evictions have taken place. Many Untouchables have lost their land ~~for~~ <sup>due to</sup> failure to pay off debt.<sup>18</sup>

The last category of the agrarian system is agricultural labourers. In the agrarian hierarchy, agricultural labourers stand at <sup>the</sup> bottom. This difference arises because of different amounts of land owned.

In case of Untouchables, most of them are landless agricultural labourers. Certainly the landlords employ agricultural labour. Even the peasants also require agricultural labourers during the sowing or harvest seasons. Thus, the Untouchables provide the labour to landlords as well as <sup>to</sup> the peasants and tenants.

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18. Report of the Commissioner, Op.cit. (1975), p.223.

(IV) CULTIVATORS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AMONG  
THE UNTOUCHABLE WORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT MEASURES:

As there are some changes in the proportion of cultivators and agricultural labourers in agriculture<sup>19</sup> the proportion of Scheduled castes <sup>as agricultural labourers</sup> in ~~it~~ is increasing. We shall deal with their share in agriculture as cultivators, agricultural labourers and their concentration of them in different districts.

TABLE : 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED CASTES ACCORDING  
TO INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES OF WORKERS AND NON-WORKERS  
IN RURAL AREAS\*

S.C./ State	T o t a l	% of workers to total population	Categories of Workers			
			Culti- vators I	Agricul- tural Labourers II	Other categories of workers III to IX	Non- Workers X
Scheduled Castes	100	41.34	12.99	21.29	7.06	58.66
State (General Population)	100	36.40	17.60	11.40	7.40	63.60

\*Source: The original table adapted for purpose of our work is from: Census of India 1971, Mysore, Series - 14 Vol.II, Part-I-A, General Report, Bangalore, p.769.

19. Please see also Thorner, D. and Thorner, A. (1965): Land and Labour in India, Chapter: Agrarian Revolution by Census Redefinition, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp. 131-150.

From the above Table-3, it is noticeable that the proportion of cultivators belonging to scheduled castes is less than the average proportion for the state, while that of agricultural labour is greater than the state average. In other words, the proportion of Untouchables cultivators is 12.99 per cent against 17.60 per cent for total cultivators of rural area. And the proportion of Untouchable agricultural labourers is 21.29 per cent against 11.40 per cent for total agricultural labourers of rural area as a whole. In rural areas the agricultural labour force among the Untouchables is very high.

The Table-4 below shows the pattern of concentration of agricultural labourers and cultivators. The percentage distribution of agricultural force (agricultural labourers and cultivators) constitutes 74.98.

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TABLE 1 4

**DISTRICTWISE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF S.C. BY WORKERS**  
**(Cultivators and Agricultural Labourers)**

State/ District.	Total workers	CATEGORIES OF WORKERS			Total Agricul- tural force (I & II)
		Culti- vators	Agricul- tural Labourers	Other categories of workers	
		I	II	III	
Mysore State	100	27.91	47.08	25.01	74.99
Bangalore	100	28.34	29.96	41.70	58.30
Belgun	100	19.21	57.44	23.71	76.65
Bellary	100	22.34	56.51	21.35	78.85
Bidar	100	9.30	66.90	23.71	76.29
Bijapur	100	13.59	66.14	20.27	79.73
Chikamangalore	100	23.81	35.69	40.50	59.50
Chitradurga	100	28.48	52.51	19.01	80.99
Coorg	100	6.93	33.49	59.58	40.42
Dharwar	100	14.12	62.74	23.14	76.86
Gulbarga	100	22.16	55.84	22.00	78.00
Hassan	100	28.72	25.05	21.23	73.77
Kolar	100	41.78	39.68	18.54	81.46
Mandya	100	42.42	43.28	14.30	85.70
Mysore	100	40.66	36.62	22.72	77.28
N.Kanara	100	14.52	36.29	49.19	50.81
Raichur	100	20.93	57.26	21.81	78.19
Shimoga	100	25.66	56.63	17.71	82.29
S.Kanara	100.	4.35	60.73	34.93	65.08
Tumkur	100	44.11	39.38	16.51	83.49

Source: The original Table adapted for purpose of our work is from: Census of India 1971, Mysore, Series-14, Part-I-A Vol.II, General Report, Bangalore, pp. 772-773.

In the districts of Hassan, Tumkur, Mandya and Kolar the proportion of <sup>the</sup> Scheduled caste cultivators is 40 to 48 per cent among <sup>the</sup> Scheduled castes total workers, whereas the proportion of agricultural labour in the districts of Bidar, Bijapur, Dharwar and South Kanara is very high - 60 to 68 per cent - among the Scheduled caste total workers. In other words, high concentration of agricultural labourers <sup>given</sup> in the Table shows the economically weak position of Scheduled Castes. It is interesting to note that where the paddy cultivation (irrigated areas) is there, we find a high concentration of agricultural labourers among Scheduled castes <sup>is clearly discernible.</sup> <sup>20</sup> In case of Karnataka where the proportion of agricultural labour is high, it does not necessarily correspond to the above finding since these areas are not paddy growing areas.

The lowest proportion of cultivators is below 10 per cent in the districts of Bidar, Coorg and South Kanara. In the districts of Bidar and South Kanara, again the percentage of agricultural workers is high on the <sup>one</sup> hand and the <sup>of</sup> cultivators<sup>\*</sup> is very low on the other.

More than 50 and below 60 per cent <sup>the</sup> agricultural labour among Scheduled castes is concentrated in the

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20. Beteille, A. Op.cit. p. 165. (1974).

districts of Belgum, Bellary, Chitradurga, Gulbarga, Mandya, Raichur and Shimoga. Against this medium concentration follows the low concentration of agricultural labourer in the districts of Bangalore, Bijapur, Chikamangalore, Coorg, Hassan, Kolar, Mysore and Tumkur.

Generally the cultivation by Untouchables is carried out without hired labour. As they are petty peasants, the produce is for self-consumption. Share-cropping is the usual form of tenure undertaken in rural Karnataka. They are mostly tenants-at-will.

There are two schemes to benefit weaker sections of the society.<sup>21</sup> They are intended to create employment and additional incomes. They are <sup>the</sup> Small Farmers' Development Agencies and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Development Agencies.

The government defines the farmers with landholdings between 1 to 3 hectares as small farmers. Marginal farmers were considered to be those whose landholding were lower than the small farmers and generally a ceiling of one hectre of irrigated land was adopted for this purpose.<sup>22</sup>

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21. Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST. Op.cit. (1975) p. 141.

22. Ibid.

In case of Untouchables, farmers who have three hectares of land-holdings are very few. The <sup>previously</sup> above mentioned agencies were created to introduce land development, soil conservation, minor irrigation, horticultural demonstration and <sup>to</sup> implement new strategies in agriculture. Since statistics in relation to weaker sections are not available, we have to depend on the studies conducted to examine the distributional effects of new farm technology, etc. to know the benefits which have gone to Untouchables. Because during 1960's the period is marked by a great change in terms of agricultural production in some regions of India. It was because of the introduction of new agricultural strategy, namely, High Yielding, new farm technology, package of modern inputs and practices etc. in the field of food production. Thus, this is also known as Green Revolution.

The studies<sup>23</sup> done by Sau, Ojha, Bardhan, Madalgi

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23. Sau, R.K.(1971): "Resource Allocation in Indian Agriculture" in: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.VI, No.39, pp.A-106-116; Ojha, G.(1970): "Small Farmers and HYV Programmes", in: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.V, No.14, pp.603-608; Bardhan P.K.(1970): "Green Revolution and Agricultural Labourers" in: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.V, Nos. 29 to 31, pp. 1239-1246, and his article, 1973: "On the Incident of Poverty in Rural India", in: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.VIII, Nos.4 to 6, pp. 245-254; Madalgi, S.S.(1970): "Estimates of Farm Income in India-1951-52 and 1967-68", in: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.V, No.13, pp.23-32.



and others have shown that the new agricultural strategy with its emphasis on the use of package of modern inputs such as HYV seeds, modern fertilizers, etc. and practices has a built-in bias towards the promotion of inequalities and poverty. The new farm technology is more easily adopted by large size landowners than by the small or marginal farmers. This naturally results in the benefits flowing to the richer sections; these benefits are increased income, higher level of savings, capacity to reinvest in the farm, etc. Thus, poverty and inequality are aggravated by the adoption of new agricultural techniques. As these studies have pointed out, ~~that~~ the large-size landowners have greater control over the supply of scarce agricultural resources; they have greater access to credit with their greater credit-worthiness and possess greater technological dynamism.

On the other side, the small and marginal farmers have an insignificant degree of control over the supply of agricultural resources and credit-worthiness; hence they find difficulty in competing with large farmers.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the benefits of new strategy go to large farmers

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24. Oommen, T.K. (1975): "Impact of Green Revolution on Weaker Sections", In: Changing Agrarian Relations in India. NICD Hyderabad, pp. 151-167.

more than marginal or small farmers because by raising their (large turnover) capacity to produce and market surplus.

According to Singh and Mishra, the large farmers have also <sup>been</sup> benefited from agricultural price rises.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, the small and marginal farmers have become worse off on the one hand and they have little capacity to produce marketable surplus having greater dependence on market for their subsistence on the other. Moreover, the Report<sup>26</sup> on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has also observed that the persons belonging to Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes are not able to derive adequate financial benefits from the schemes - SFDA and MFALDA.\*

The majority of the Untouchables are poor agricultural labourers. The wage is the main source of <sup>their</sup> livelihood. The daily wage rates in rural Karnataka varies from place to place. The average daily wage rate of agricultural labour ranges from Rs. 1-50 to 3.00. The major items of expenditure, as pointed out

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25. Singh, M.L. and Mishra, G.P. (1972): "Agricultural Price Policy", The Economic Times, January 21 and 22.
26. Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST. Op.cit. (1975) p. 242.
- \* SFDA - Small Farmers Development Agencies, and MFALDA-Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Development Agencies.

by Survey<sup>27</sup> are food and clothing. For instance, the expenditure pattern of the Chaluvadi (Untouchable) agricultural labour is that 80 per cent of the income is spent on food and 10 per cent for clothing. For other expenditures they have to borrow from others. Thus, the money is borrowed on items such as marriage, festival and funeral etc. from village money lender or land-lord. To pay off the debt, the Untouchables agree to work voluntarily for money-lender. We shall examine this below.

(V) BONDED LABOUR AND THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT. etc.

When money is advanced on the basis of oral agreement for specific period of one year, it is known as the Jeeta-system. In the Jeeta-system, the Jeetalu or Saladalu enters into contract voluntarily and the maximum tenure is fixed (for example one year). The Jeetalu is expected to perform all kinds of work such as livestock rearing, house-construction etc. in addition to agricultural operation.<sup>28</sup> Their annual wages range between Rs. 150/- to 300/- besides food and clothing.

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27. Census of India 1961, Mysore; Ethnographical Notes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Vol.XI, Part V-B, Delhi, pp. 31-39.

28. Ibid.

In the pre-independence period, a-meal-a-day and a blanket to wear - were regarded as sufficient fringe benefits to an Untouchable, who received an annual payment of Rs.25 to 50.<sup>29</sup>

Even after independence such contracts are in practice. In the contracts the families or persons and the landlords are involved. Thus, the contract is a bond between labourer and the landlord by oral agreement. In some cases, the contract is carried on generations together. Thus, the bonded servants had to work in their master's land. As earlier mentioned, the wages were in kind and cash. The quantum of grains was determined by master. The clothing supplied was made of pieces of cheap cloth. This was considered as gift once a year. For dwelling a piece of plot was also provided. All these are provided without records of occupancy in the property of the landlord. There are many instances which are reported. For example, in the Bijapur district<sup>30</sup> one Mr. Janavaru had not been paid wages for work done in the field of Dastgirab Teli in

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29. Mysore Gazeteer, (1929); C. Hayanavadan Rao (ed.) Bangalore, p.57.

30. The Times of India, Dated: 3-12-1975, Bijapur. December 2, "Case under Bonded Labour Act Registered".

near by Minchinal village for over 20 years. The victim contended that Rs. 100/- paid at the time of Ugadi festival was treated as a loan by Dastgirab Teli. Even there are some cases where huts were burnt for refusal to perform the begar (forced labour).<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, there are important findings<sup>32</sup> of the study on bonded labour in Karnataka. Some of them are: The Jeetha system continues to exist in both Mysore and Hasan districts. The persons of all age groups from 8 years of age to more than 60 years serve under Jeetha. The annual wages vary from Rs. 25 to 175 with food and clothing. The rate of interest being unusually high and the wages paid meagre. An employee succeeds in freeing himself from Jeetha by repaying the loan. There are large number of Jeethagars among the Scheduled castes than Scheduled Tribes. The main reason for entering into Jeetha was poverty and most of the Jeethagars had more than 5 members and were not having sufficient land

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31. The Times of India, Dated 10/8/1975, Gorakpur - August, 9 (PTI).

32. Please see, Findings of the Study on Bonded Labour conducted in Karnataka by the Organization of the Director General, Backward Class Welfare in 1974. The report is based on 102 case studies of Jeethagars in the Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST, 1973-74, p. 326.

to maintain their living. 42.2 per cent of the families under Jeetha were landless and those who had land, their landholdings were not adequate for their requirements. The amount of loan taken by the Jeethas varied from Rs.100 to 1,000. The relations between Jeethas and their employers were not cordial and they were being ill-treated by their employers. However, the system provided social and economic security to the Jeethagars. The Jeethagars had no other alternative to get money from other sources and they had no other option but to work as Jeetha.

Though forced labour is abolished by the Constitution of India, still in disguised form it exists in Karnataka. To curb this practice, Bonded Labour Abolition Ordinance Act. 1975 was passed.<sup>33</sup> The Education Minister<sup>34</sup> has found bonded labour and extraction of over 100 per cent interest per month in kind from debtor in South Kanara. He was also told by the village leaders that over 400 families of Harijans in 81 villages in Taluka were bond to their landlords by a Moola System. It is also known as the Guttige Paddati.<sup>35</sup>

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33. Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance Act. 1975. Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
34. The Times of India, dated 18/11/1975, Bonded Labour in South Kanara, Mangalore-17.
35. Bhat, K.H.(1972): Agrarian Economy of Hebasuru, Dissertation of M.A., Department of Anthropology, Karnataka University, Dharwar, pp. 100-105.

After the promulgation of Bonded Labour Act, 22921 bonded labourers have been found freed in Karnataka.<sup>36</sup> Their districtwise number is given in the Table below.

TABLE: 5. DISTRICTWISE BREAKDOWN OF BONDED LABOURERS FREED.

Name of the District.	Number of Bonded Labour
1. a. Bangalore district	48
b. Bangalore city	1009
2. a. Kolar	1727
b. Kolar Gold Factory	28
3. Tumkur	1404
4. Chitradurga	70
5. Bellary	20
6. Mysore	12937
7. Mandya	1670
8. Hassan	459
9. Coorg	75
10. Chikamangalore	934
11. Shimoga	2907
12. Belgaum	5
13. Bijapur	4
14. South Kanara	78
15. Dharwar	Nil
16. North Kanara	20
17. Gulbarga	19
18. Raichur	6
19. Bidar	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22921</b>

36. This information is taken from the Office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, New Delhi, 1976. This information is unpublished.

These figures reveal important points that there is highly acute bonded labour problem in the districts of Mysore (12973), Shimoga (2807), Kolar (1729), Mandya (1620), Tumkur (1404), Chikamangalore (934) and Hassan (459). It <sup>has</sup> also been revealed that in these districts, the condition of Untouchables is worst and among these bonded labourers there is a lack of awareness, and ignorance. It would be proved that there is a failure to implement the Minimum Wages Act.

Since independence, (upto 1968) the Government of Karnataka has allotted 7.226 lakhs of acres of land to Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes.<sup>37</sup> The land was procured from three sources, namely reclamation of waste lands, surplus land released through imposition of ceiling on landholding and Bhoodan and Gramdan lands. Another Commissioners' Report<sup>38</sup> observed that "though the surplus lands have been distributed, it is not known how much of 21,000 acres of land has gone to the persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of different states".

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37. Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1969-70; Government of India, Ministry of Social Welfare, New Delhi, p. 71;  
(Please see Appendix No.3.p)<sup>37</sup>.

38. Report of the Commissioners for SC/ST, Op.cit.(1975), p. 226.



Therefore, it is difficult to deal with the distribution of land among the Untouchables of Karnataka, due to non-availability of information. However, there are some other schemes such as housing, provision of loans, etc. for the welfare of Untouchables. But very few among the Untouchables are benefited.

Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, wages for agricultural workers have been fixed in all the states. And the National Commission on Labour has made a review of the Minimum Wages Act as applied to agricultural labour in 1969, and pointed out that though there are a number of deficiencies with regard to both fixation and enforcement of minimum wages, at present the Act would help the agricultural labour.<sup>39</sup>

There are not adequate details of wages occupation-wise for different years and different districts. With the help of available data, we shall examine the wage pattern. The wage pattern slightly differs from place to place and district to district in rural Karnataka. There are changes in daily wage rates during pre-independence and post-independence period. The following Tables would

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39. Mysore State Gazetteer, Mandya district, 1967,  
Bangalore, p. 258.

make clear<sup>a</sup>/view; clear.

TABLE: 6.1. RATES OF DAILY WAGES FOR UNSKILLED WORKER  
(Mandya District, During 1916-17):\*

Taluka	Rates for Unskilled worker		
	Rs.	As <sup>†</sup>	Ps.
Srirangapattana	0	6	0
Pandavapura	0	5	0
Mandya	0	4	0
Nagamangala	0	3	0
Krishnarajpet	0	6	0
Malavalli	0	5	0

\*Source: Quoted from Mysore State Gazetteer, Mandya District, 1967, Bangalore, p. 258.

†Eight annas were equal to 50 Naya Paise.

TABLE: 6.2. RATES OF DAILY WAGES IN MANDYA DISTRICT  
During the Year 1951-52\*

Month/Year	Agricultural Labour	
	Rs.	As.
July, 1951	1	8
January, 1952	1	8

\*Source: Quoted from Mysore State Gazetteer, Mandya District, 1967, Bangalore, p.

**TABLE: 6.3. RATES OF DAILY WAGES PAID TO WORKERS IN  
BELLARY IN THE YEARS 1957 and 1959\***

Employment	Bellary		Harappanahalli Taluka		
	1957	1959	1957	1959	
	B. As. Ps.	Rs.Ps. As.	B. As. Ps.	B. As. Ps.	B. As. Ps.
Field Labour (Men)	1 - 4 - 0	1 - 8 - 0	1 - 0 - 0	1 - 8 - 0	
Women	1 - 0 - 0	1 - 0 - 0	0 - 8 - 0	1 - 0 - 0	
Children	0 - 8 -	0 -12 - 0	0 - 8 - 0	0 -12 - 0	

\* Source: This table is adapted for our purpose of work from: Mysore State Gazetteer, Bellary District, Bangalore, 1972, pp. 348-358.

Though the wages continued to rise, the agricultural labour found it difficult to maintain the minimum standard of living because of inflation. Hence, under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (Centre Act, of 1948) these rates were revised in 1968. This time, according to different types of work and areas, the employments are classified. They are given in Table-7 on the next page.

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TABLE : 7. REVISED RATES OF DAILY WAGES\*

Class of Employment	Dry areas (all inclusive minimum daily rates)		Irrigated areas (all inclusive minimum daily rates)		Perennial garden areas (all inclusive minimum daily rates)	
	1959 Rs.Ps	1968 Rs.Ps.	1959 Rs.Ps.	1968 Rs.Ps.	1959 Rs.Ps.	1968 Rs.Ps.
<b><u>Class A.</u></b>						
1. Ploughing						
2. Digging						
3. Harrowing						
4. Sowing	1.25	1.85	1.50	2.20	1.75	2.55
5. Intercutting						
6. Irrigating or watering						
7. Uprooting						
<b><u>Class B.</u></b>						
1. Manuring						
2. Transplanting						
3. Weeding						
4. Reaping	1.00	1.45	1.12	1.65	1.37	2.20
a. Hammering						
b. Thrashing						
Winnowing						
5. Picking the cost of cotton						
<b><u>Class C.</u></b>						
1. Cattle, Sheep and goat grazing	0.50	0.75	0.50	0.75	0.50	0.75

\*Source: Quoted from Mysore State Gazetteer, Bellary District 1972, Bangalore, p. 350.

It is noticeable that the daily wage rate was Rs. 1.50 during 1951-52 in Mandya district, whereas, in Bellary district, it was Rs. 1.25 during 1957 and Rs. 1.85 in 1969, against Rs. 3.96 in Mandya for agricultural labour. The wage rates differed according to areas. In irrigated areas the minimum daily wage rate was Rs. 2.20, as against Rs. 1.85 in dry areas. In the garden areas, wage rates were high, i.e., Rs. 2.55 in Bellary and Rs. 3.00 in South Kanara.

As we have seen, the wage rates differed from district to district. It could be observed that in South Kanara district wages are higher than neighbouring districts.

During 1957, in Mandya a male adult got Rs. 1.50 for agricultural labour and for female Rs. 0.86. In South Kanara, both male and female received higher wages than other districts. The wage rate disparity between male and female is seen in Mandya. The Table-8 below shows that the wage rates are higher in South Kanara.

TABLE : 8. DAILY AVERAGE RATES IN SOUTH KANARA\*

Workers	Daily average rates		
	1968	1969	1970
	Rs.Ps.	Rs.Ps.	Rs.Ps.
<b>Field Labour</b>			
Men	4.07	3.81	2.83
Women	3.15	2.99	2.89
Children	2.31	2.45	2.89
<b>Other Agricultural Labour</b>			
Men	2.61	3.96	4.02
Women	2.67	2.18	2.99
Children	1.95	2.47	2.29

\*Source: The table adopted for our purpose of work is from: Mysore State Gazetteer: South Kanara, 1973, Bangalore, p. 38.

From the above table, it seems that there has been a fluctuation in wage rates in the districts. As far as agricultural labourers are concerned, there is an increasing trend in wages. In this district, children get higher wages than other children in the neighbouring districts. Thus, agricultural labourers get higher wages i.e., Rs. 4.02. The children also get higher wages than the adult in the neighbouring districts.

As the daily wages differed from district to district, the monthly minimum wage rates also differed. The monthly wage rates were also fixed during 1968 for men and children employed. For example, under Class A, employer paid Rs. 22.05 with food and clothing and Rs. 44.05 without food and clothing. According to the employment, the rates are varied. This is seen in the table given below:

TABLE: 9. MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGE RATES\*

Class of Employment	Cash payment with food and clothing	Cash payment without food and clothing
	Rs.Ps.	Rs.Ps.
For Class A	22.05	44.05
For Class B	14.70	22.05
For Class C	7.35	22.05

\*Source: This table adapted for purpose of our work is from: Mysore State Gazetteer, Bellary District, 1972, Bangalore, p. 384.

The agricultural labourers stand at the bottom of agrarian hierarchy, whose lot is hard. These people have neither <sup>any</sup> holding nor any property. They have to toil and earn a meagre wage which is usually not sufficient. Since there is no adequate rise in wage rates commensurate

with the rise in prices of common goods, they have to live in the worst condition.

It is seen that in the districts of Karnataka, there is no uniform wage rate. Moreover, there was no timely revision of minimum wages. There was no organized labour movement to take the advantage of legislation. The agricultural labourers continue to be at the lowest rung and the problem is bound to be more acute in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.<sup>40</sup>

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40. Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST, Op.cit. (1975), pp. 240-242.



**CHAPTER - FIVE**

**CHANGING AGRARIAN RELATIONS AND THE UNTOUCHABLES**

The social organisation of agriculture reflects a particular pattern of work and a particular pattern of property rights. Broadly speaking, there are three patterns of productive organisations. They are:

- (1) The agriculture is carried out on the basis of family labour;
- (2) It is based on hired labour, and
- (3) On tenancy which is considered in broad sense.

In rural Karnataka, as far as Untouchables are concerned, they cultivate land on their family basis. Though the big size landholders are very few in number, they had to hire labour. Generally, these farmers having more than 15 acres of land have joint families. They may employ few labourers besides their family members. All members of family, male and female, work on land.

Most of the Untouchables are agricultural labourers. They seek employment outside their caste fellow landholders. Thus, they are very much dependent on caste Hindus. Most of the labour which is required by caste Hindus, is supplied by Untouchables. The Untouchables labourers provide labour for both high caste farmers and landlords. Thus, the Untouchables and the high castes

are related reciprocally. However, the relationship between them differs from place to place.

The Untouchable labourer is employed to do all kind of manual work. These landowner-labour relations are reshaped by the prevailing customs and caste privileges. The Untouchable labourer has to obey the master who happened to be a high caste person. Thus, the landowner-untouchable labourer relations are structured with caste status. Hence, their relations differ from that of high caste landowner and high caste labourer. In the context of relations between high caste master and Untouchable labourer, there is always a tendency on the part of the master to look down upon Untouchable labourer as he is Untouchable. In case of relations between high caste master and high caste labourer there is no such tendency. Therefore, the non-untouchable labourer receives better treatment than Untouchable. But the Untouchable agricultural labourers are generally addressed by abusive words. At the time of harvest, when the wages are paid in kind, first comes the non-untouchable labourer in order of payment.

Thus, the social role of Untouchable agricultural labourer differs from those of non-untouchable agricultural labourers in accordance with their caste-status.

The polluted status of Untouchable makes him keep some distance to avoid touchability. This is even today prevalent in rural Karnataka.<sup>1</sup> It is practised in a very acute form by the cultivators who generally belong to higher castes in their relations with Harijan labourers. Harijans are not allowed to enter village temples, tea shops or mingle freely with members of higher castes at public places.<sup>2</sup>

Alexander has observed that little change could be noticed in the traditional relation between the cultivator and agricultural labour in Mandya, despite substantial improvement in agricultural economy of the district. The picture of the cultivator-labourer that one notices in Mandya is almost similar to the traditional relation that prevailed between these groups in the past. Agricultural labourers in Mandya have never demanded an increase in wage rates. Whatever increase in wage had occurred it was due to economic laws of demand and supply. Despite the degraded socio-economic status, few endeavours are made by them to organise themselves to change the pattern of their relations with the cultivators.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Buggi, Chandrashekhar. Op.cit.
  2. Alexander K.C. Op.cit. p.21.
  3. Ibid, p. 22.

The relations of high caste master and the agricultural labourer are of mutual relations. This also holds for the relations between landlord and tenant. This mutual and harmonious relations are maintained because of caste. The high caste farmers who get labour willingly and spontaneously ~~are~~ highly regarded by the village community. The prestige of the farmer is lowered if he denied by the labourer the traditional services. This indicates the value attached to the goodwill of labour. This pattern is governed by traditional behaviour and backed up by the customary sanctions, ultimately involving Dharma.<sup>4</sup>

The Untouchables believe that their birth as Untouchables is due to their misdeeds in their previous birth. They also believe that being Untouchables they must not enter temples, shops and public places. There is a wide belief among Untouchables that their misbehaviour will bring calamities and the supernatural power will punish them.<sup>5</sup> Such beliefs are widespread in rural Karnataka. Hence, the Untouchables <sup>do</sup> not dare to go against

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4. Singh Yogendra, (1973): Legal system, Legislation and Social Change in India, working paper for the Seminar on Law and Social Change, organized by I.C.S.S.R., New Delhi, March 21-24, 1973, p. 4.

5. Karnataka State Gazetteer, 1973, South Kanara Dist. Bangalore, pp. 110-111; Srinivas M.N., Op.cit.(1952).

ascribed role expectations. If they try, they will receive punishments from upper castes. Hence, the aspirations of Untouchables are nipped in the bud.

The major factors, listed by Oommen<sup>6</sup> in agrarian conflict are :

- (1) Perception of disparity;
- (2) Agricultural labourers' consciousness of its strength and political bargaining power;
- (3) Support of political party;
- (4) Mass aspiration; and
- (5) Lack of fit between socio-political framework and economic order.

The first four factors are not actively current in rural Karnataka. Hence, harmonious relations prevail between landowner and the Untouchable agricultural labourer.

However, it is noticeable that there is change in reciprocal or mutual economic ties between low caste labourers and high caste masters. For example, Harper's study<sup>7</sup> shows that the quasi-slavery relations (the indentureship - lifelong relations between master and servants) have changed. And the Holaru do not want to

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6. Oommen T.K. (1971): "Green Revolution and Agrarian Conflict", In: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. VI, No.39, pp. 99-105.

7. Harper, E.B. Op.cit. (1968).

to become Kondalu or Lagnalu. They have given up the practice of drinking of milk - as a promise to keep contract.

Harper has shown that the Untouchable "Holeru" castes have tried to gain prestige by assuming behavioural pattern associated with higher castes, such as taboo and refusal to perform such tasks which are ritually degrading. Thus, there is ritual change - a change in traditional religious ritual roles and relations. Bhat<sup>8</sup> states that the Untouchables express their <sup>hostility</sup> hospitality against the prevailing Aya Paddati (Aya system) because they are sometime cheated, do not get extra crop for their extra labour and receive bad grains. According to Epstein<sup>9</sup>, the Untouchables have referred to perform his customary ritual services to Peasant-master who refuses to give rewards.

However, the Untouchables act as drum Beaters at village festivals. This type of relation continues since the Untouchables are scared of upper caste violence. Still, the ritual occupies a dominant role in economic activities. There is always a tendency for men to try

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8. Bhat, K.H. Op.cit. pp. 66-90.

9. Epstein, S.F. (ed.) Dalton Op.cit., pp. 468-469.

and translate their newly gained economic status into ritual through exerting political influence.<sup>10</sup>

The high caste land-owners supervise all activities invested in agriculture. The Untouchables, who perform all sorts of manual work and receive remuneration in cash and sometimes in kind also. As we have already seen, this wage does not become self-sufficient. The condition of agricultural labourer is very miserable; it is characterised by low wage rates, long working hours and unequal working relations.

Since the share-cropping is carried on oral agreements, the high caste landowner takes advantage of being aware of existing tenancy legislations and keep the tenants in control. Being a socially privileged people, the high caste landowners always influence the tenants and do not keep written documents concerning their tenorial relations.

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10. Ibid.



The Economics of Sanskritization:

This phrase is taken from Epstein<sup>11</sup>, which helps to analyse socio-economic change. Firstly, the term Sanskritization coined by Srinivas<sup>12</sup> has become a tool to analyse social change in India. According to Srinivas "Sanskritization is a process by which a low Hindu caste or tribal or other group changes its customs, ritual ideology and the way of life in the direction of a high and frequently twice born Caste".<sup>13</sup>

Those Untouchables who are in the process of secular mobility are prone to change ritual relations. As Bailey has stated, the increased wealth leads to desire for a greater say in management of the community and at the same time the aspirants wish to assume the guise of responsibility and they do this by improving their planning within the ritual ranking of the Hindu caste system.<sup>14</sup>

Though among the Untouchables there is little change, it is handicapped by the fact that they continue in a dependent economic relationships. In the field of

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11. Ibid.

12. Srinivas, M.N. Op.cit. (1969), p.6.

13. Ibid.

14. Bailey, F.G. Op.cit. (1957), p. 197.

agrarian relations between the Untouchables and the high caste people, the economic status influences more and the ritual status contributes to influence effectively. In the village India, land also contributes to enhance social prestige. Thus, economic development and consciousness are pillars of enhancement of social change.

Thus, the studies on Untouchables account the aspect of change in rural Karnataka. Parvathamma<sup>15</sup> has found in her study some amount of frustration prevalent among the Scheduled Castes in the post-independence India. She has observed that constitutionally the practice of untouchability in its all forms is abolished but even today it has remained only as a "legal fiction." She has also stated that there is a big gulf between the Scheduled Caste politicians, the educated and the common man. Most of the educated Scheduled castes who get government jobs are alienated from their own people. Economic betterment has brought about a class-consciousness but has not helped to remove the stigma of untouchability.

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15. Parvathamma, C. (1968): "The Case for Indian Untouchables", in: United Asia, International Magazine of Afro-Asian Affairs, Vol. 20, No. 5, pp. 279-286.

Epstein's study<sup>16</sup> of village in Mysore reveals that the provision of the reserved seats for Untouchables on the village Panchayat does not mean real power for them, as they are still dependent on the peasant-masters. She remarks that unless democratic legislation is accompanied by redistribution of land in favour of the Untouchables, it is ineffective. The Untouchables are competing among themselves and thus their unity is impaired. Unless there is change in the production relationships, the social legislation in favour of the Scheduled Castes would remain a dead letter.

Srinivas<sup>17</sup> in his study of the village in Mysore refers to Untouchables. Among the Untouchables are cultivators (chakars or hereditary village servants) and landless agricultural labourers. In the traditional rural economy, ownership of land is the most important source of wealth. He <sup>has</sup> discovered that when a member of low caste owns some land, there is a tendency on his part to Sanskritize his ways and customs. He observes that since the Untouchables are and were very poor, it is likely that some of the traditional servant-master

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16. Epstein, S. (1975): South India: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Mysore Village Revisited. MacMillan Press Ltd., London. pp. 189-190.

17. Srinivas, M.N. Op.cit. (1955).

relationships were reinforced by tenancy contractual servanthip, debtorship and other ties as well. He says that the Jeeta servanthip (contractual servanthip) differs from traditional servanthip in which a poor man contracts to serve a wealthier man for fixed period of time.

Ishwaran<sup>18</sup> while analysing social structure with its castes and sub-castes refers to Untouchables whose lowest ranking is due to pollution. The Untouchables are excluded from religious system (except on some occasions) but included in economic system. He shows that the village today is scene of change as well as of continuity. Beals<sup>19</sup> also reveals that the Untouchables (Madigas) were excluded from many forms of social participation and most of them were Jeeta-servants. Because of interplay of external change - producing factors in the external environment of village, traditional relationships have ceased to exist (thus, the Jeeta servants to agricultural labour) since it was difficult to collect their traditional dues.

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18. Ishwaran, K. Op.cit. (1966).

19. Beals, Alan, (1955): "Interplay Among Factors of Change in Mysore Village, Namahalli". Village India: Studies in the little community. Marriot McKim (Ed.), The University of Chikago Press, pp. 78-101.

The studies on Untouchables of other states are also conducted, for example, by Leach, Beteille, Sunanda Patwardhan, Sachidanand and others. Here among them the important one is that of Beteille (1966). His study<sup>20</sup> pertains to the relationship among the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins and the Adi-Dravidas - the Untouchable castes (Paraiya and Palla) of village in Tamil Nadu. He shows that how the caste system overlaps the class structure to a large extent although certain aspects of life as landownership, occupation, etc. are not dependent upon caste as before.

Gough<sup>21</sup> has shown that how the social system of Kumbappattal village is undergoing social change due to internal changes and dependence on a wider economy. The events at Kumbapettai have broken the traditional local social structure. She remarks that the events have led to a break down of some of the taboos that keep the castes apart and in hierarchial order. She also points out that they have led to a union of different people from different castes and thus a class consciousness has emerged to improve life chances.

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20. Beteille, A. Op.cit. (1966).

21. Gough, E.K. Op.cit. (1955).

The Adi-Dravidas (Pallans, Chakkaliyans and Parayams) were the agricultural serfs of the landowning castes in the traditional economy. And among them too, revolutionary changes have taken place (free labourers emerged in a body against landlords and hoisted the Communist flag).

Sunanda Patwardhan<sup>22</sup> has analysed the kind and degree of social mobility among the Scheduled castes in Poona city. Her study concerns a few important Untouchables groups of Maharashtra. Among them is the "Holar" caste (Holeya caste) which has migrated from Karnataka state. She says that urban area is a more flexible field of interaction for Scheduled castes. She has observed that caste values and norms continued to be operative in certain areas including political, but at the same time, there is strengthening and crystalization of relations on caste lines. Thus, she has stated that the vertical movement on the class line is still limited if all the scheduled castes are taken together. Economic backwardness and slum like living conditions exist among all the groups. She has also stated that there is some horizontal mobility and urbanization <sup>offers</sup> ~~shows~~ this trend.

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22. Sunanda Patwardhan, (1974): "Aspects of Social Mobility Among Scheduled Castes in Poona" Urban Sociology in India, M.S.A. Rao (Ed.) Orient Longman, pp. 309-347.

Bailey's study<sup>23</sup> reveals that it was not easy for the polluting castes to attain higher ritual status either through acquisition of wealth or through education or by other means. Thus, vertical mobility is difficult in rural context. He observed that there is difficult in crossing the barrier of Untouchability. In spite of their acquiring a better economic status, the Bood outcastes were unable to improve their social status. This is because the upper castes did not approve the Boods' efforts to Sanskritise themselves.

The Census reports and the Gazetteers have also described some aspects of the Untouchables. They point out that besides traditional occupations the Untouchables have taken mainly to cultivation and agricultural labour. The Census<sup>24</sup> contains ethnographic notes on certain Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes of Karnataka. For instance, it has referred to Begar<sup>25</sup> or Byagara castes as synonymous to Holeyas. Begar is a sub-caste Holeyas. Begar means a person who works without remuneration. Thus, Begar is a forced or compulsory Bitti Maduvavara

23. Bailey, F.G. Op.cit. (1957).

24. Census of India, 1961, Mysore. Vol. XI, Part-V-B.

25. Ibid. pp. 1-16.

forced labour without remuneration. Traditionally, they formed a class of village servants. Their duty was to assist state officials and they were also expected to serve Kulkarni and Patil. Other tasks assigned to them were digging the graves for higher castes, disposing dead animals and scavenging (not cleaning night soil). However, this forced labour was abolished in 1950.

Begars held service inams called Byagariki inam lands. The Census points out that the traditional occupations are confined to few only. Thus, cultivation and agricultural labour have become important occupations for Begar. The Census also pointed out that Begars do not have patron-client relationships with the landed castes groups. But they work on a causal basis or on annual contract.

The Mysore Population Study<sup>26</sup>; Report of Field Survey, carried out by United Nations in selected areas of Mysore state has tried to outline concerted efforts required to improve the level of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribe groups. It has said that these groups by tradition have not had sufficient opportunities

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26. United Nations (1961): The Mysore Population Study: Report of Field Survey carried out in Selected areas of Mysore state, India, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, New York, pp. 56-210.



in education, representation in government processes and other spheres of endeavour. It has discovered that in present-day Hindu society, the Scheduled Caste occupy, on the whole, a relatively low position in the scale of social status and material well-being, and the non-backward classes on the whole, enjoy the highest position.

The Untouchables remained for a long period in a state of poverty as an immobile class. But with their entry into open system, some of its members are acquiring secular positions<sup>27</sup>. Their own and government efforts to improve or to uplift have affected the traditional social position. Though the land is concentrated in a few hands of upper castes, the changes in political system have transferred the composition of traditional status. There is also a new pattern of landownership.

The social distinctions are <sup>un</sup>affected for in the traditional scheme of values the owner was socially superior and the tenant was socially inferior. By contrast many peasants and landlords belonging to upper castes have taken lands belonging to Untouchables on lease etc.

Because of employment opportunities, though limited, the Untouchables are becoming relatively free labourers and are entering into competitive economic activities.

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27. Please see also: Weber Max. Op.cit. pp. 111-117.

**CHAPTER - SIX**

**CONCLUSION**

In the first Chapter we have studied the social stratification in general and particular. Social inequality is seen from two angles. One is in terms of social position in social hierarchy and the other is in terms of economic position - income, property etc.

Untouchability and caste system are unique features of Indian society. Every individual member of caste group has two statuses in rural India: namely, ascribed status and achieved status. Ascribed status in rural India is associated with ritual status. In general, ritual hierarchy and economic hierarchy have gone hand in hand as far as the Untouchables are concerned. Hence, ascribed status has remained forever, whereas the achieved status has been prone to change. In case of Untouchables, their ritual status occupies the bottom of caste hierarchy. Therefore, any change in economic and political position does not necessarily lead to change in ascribed status at theoretical level. But, at the behavioural level, the achieved status undermines the ascribed role in rural India.

In the second Chapter, we have dealt with socio-economic relations in rural India with reference to Untouchables. In the first section of the Chapter, we have examined the social organization of Hindu society

which was characterized as Chaturvarna at all-India level and caste system at village level. Certain occupations were monopolized by certain castes whose were not allowed to change them. However, the "Apad Dharma" provided many provisions to the caste Hindus (Brahmins, Kshatria and Vaishya) to enter into other activities. And the caste Hindus also undermined their ancestral professions, which did not warrant any serious punishment. But, the lower castes (Sudras and Untouchables) were subjected to social disabilities. The offenders were subject to cruel punishment.

The Untouchables were known as 'outcastes' or 'Avarnas'. The Untouchables had become victims of Brahminical customs. Besides defiling occupations, they also performed manual work which was only an alternative for their survival. Their ascribed status which made them remain as servants and manual labourers. The Untouchable communities as a whole live in a state of servitude. The spatial segregation and ritual pollutions have contributed to widen the gap between the caste-Hindus and the Untouchables from economic and political point of view.

Denial of right to property, education and political participation have made the Untouchables handicapped

in leading an honorable life in rural India. Knowledgeless and powerless Untouchables remained in state of ignorance of their own position in society. They were alienated from the real village life.

If the Untouchables became innovative or enterprising, the high caste Hindus did not encourage them, because it was felt to be presumptuous behaviour. Hence the Untouchables continued to abide by traditional occupations.

In the second section, we have analysed the Aya System in which the Untouchables have also played the role of Ayagars. Their services yielded mere subsistence. The patron-client relations were supported by theological ideas. Therefore, there were harmonious and reciprocal relations among the caste Hindu landlords and the Untouchable-servants or labourers.

The Untouchables were at the bottom of hierarchy of Ayagars who occupied ritual positions in the village. Though the Aya relations are not strong still the system exists.

In the third section, we have examined the rights in land and ownership with reference to Untouchables. The right to own land and property were denied to

Untouchables. These rights were given by sacred Hindu texts in traditional society. The Untouchables did not have equal rights to the possession and alienation of land. Efforts on the part of Untouchables to enjoy these rights were suppressed by caste Hindus.

There were two exceptions to the denial of rights in land. Firstly, that the owned piece of Aya land and secondly, the burial land. The yields from both the lands were so small that their survival depended on other manual jobs. And that alternative vocation was agriculture or manual labour. Thus, the Untouchables had unequal rights in land.

Generally, during British rule the Untouchable village servants received Inam land for their services as remuneration. Thus, the Untouchables were enabled to carry on limited agricultural activities on their small plots of land. Their entry in agriculture gradually followed rights in land in terms of legal ownership which is the basis of security. Thus, the real participation in agriculture started very late.

In the third Chapter, we have examined the early land system in general and particularly land ownership pattern and the agrarian status of the Untouchables in

rural Karnataka. The earlier land system consisted of poligars (defeated Chieftains) and Ayagars. Among the twelve hereditary occupational representatives (Ayagars) the Untouchable Ayagars shared the Aya system. The Untouchable Ayagars' land was also subject to alienation at the will of the master.

Under Inamdari system (during British period), all service Inams were held by the servants. But the Untouchable servants held even less land than the other caste-Hindu servants. Thus, the upper castes owned larger proportion of land in the village. They invoked the authority (social sanctions and customs etc.) to sustain their higher economic position. In the agrarian hierarchy, the Untouchables occupied the position of either under-tenant or landless agricultural labour.

As there was a close association between caste hierarchy and agrarian hierarchy, the Untouchables shared servile status with few rights and more disabilities. Majority of Untouchables were either serfs or slaves. The institution of servitude and serfdom had the support of Varnasharma Dharma. Their relations were institutionalized. And the serfs and slaves accepted their position of ascribed status relations. The relationships were maintained by religious ideas which functioned as agents of social control.

In the first section of the fourth Chapter, we have examined the measures taken by the government to enhance agricultural development and to regulate the relations between landlords and tenants. Some committees were appointed by the government to recommend suggestions. ~~Zamindari~~ Zamindari and Inamdari system were abolished. However, the land reform Acts had loopholes and hence the tenants' rights were feeble. The land measures also took more time to implement.

The planned economic development had two important objectives to achieve. They were economic growth and the improvement in agrarian relations. All these measures have affected the traditional economy. In Karnataka, all villages have come under the Raitwari system, and the land is owned unequally. Micro-level studies have shown that there is no reduction in the concentration of land.

In case of Untouchables, who were almost landless agricultural labourers, a number of them have become tenants and petty agriculturists. This has affected the system of cumulative inequalities. And <sup>relatively</sup> the process of open system of stratification has begun.



In the second section we have analysed the changing occupational pattern of Untouchables. The percentage of agriculture labour among Untouchables is higher than that of the caste Hindu agricultural labourers. In case of Untouchable-cultivators, their percentage is also low. Even in the non-agricultural sector, the percentage of Untouchables in manufacturing, industry and trade and commerce is low against the general population. The proportion of workers in construction and other services is higher than that of the general population.

Where the unskilled and manual labour is required, the proportion of Untouchables is significantly higher than the caste Hindus. The Untouchables are engaged in less remunerative jobs. The occupations which include ownership and skill, the proportion of Untouchables in that is low. This also implies their backwardness.

In the third section, we have examined the land-holding patterns which consist of three categories, namely, small, medium and large. The proportion of Untouchables cultivating households in the small size holding is more than 60 per cent (general population 43 per cent only). The proportion of the Untouchable cultivators in the medium size holding is also less than others. In the

third category of large size holding, the proportion of Untouchable cultivators is quite low, i.e., 7.90 per cent against 19.78 per cent of general population.

Most of the village land is owned by the upper castes. Moreover, the land owned by the Untouchables is less fertile. The tenancy has consisted of different types of tenants, namely, owner-tenants and landless-tenants. The tenants till the land on the basis of share-cropping and leasing. The tenure in this system is not permanent, and the tenant has no special right to hold the land. In the system of leasing, a fixed amount of money or quantity of grain is paid to landlord. In it the tenure which is fixed encourages the tenants to invest more and to produce more.

In spite of the tenancy enforcement, the landlords have not disclosed the actual amount of land owned. And due to the fear of not getting land on lease the tenants also have not demanded documents from the landlord. Generally the landlords have favoured near kin persons to be their tenants.

The tenancy system is practised by the poor Untouchables as a means to pay off their debt. Inability to pay back the lease amount has led to the eviction of Untouchables by the landlords.

In the fourth section, we have analysed the distribution of Untouchable-cultivators and agricultural labourers in different districts of Karnataka. We have also examined the benefits of new agricultural strategy. The proportion of cultivators among Untouchables is less than the average population of the state, whereas the proportion of agricultural labourers is greater than the state average. Thus, the agricultural labour force is high among the Untouchables working force in rural Karnataka. Their proportions as cultivators and agricultural labourers have varied from district to district of Karnataka. The high concentration of agricultural labour is in Bidar, Bijapur, Dharwar and South Kanara districts. This shows their economically weak position.

The cultivation by the Untouchables is carried out without hired labour from caste Hindus. The benefits of agricultural development have gone to large farmers who are caste Hindus. The Untouchable small and marginal farmers have not adequately received the benefits. The average daily wage rate (for example, Rs. 2 to 3) of agricultural labourer is not sufficient. Expenditure on non-productive items is made by borrowing money from money lenders or landlords.

In the fifth section we have dealt with the problem of bonded labour and the Minimum Wages Act. The borrowed money is paid off by entering into an agreement (orally or written) to work for the money lender. It is one of the ways to clear off debt. Most of the bonded labourers come from Untouchable families. As in earlier days, wherein the semi-slave system prevailed, in modern India also a similar system - the bonded labour - is prevailing in (the rural economy) Karnataka. There are different forms of bonded labour system. It is mainly because of poverty and ignorance.

The Untouchables could not pay off the debt because it carried exorbitant interest. Hence they were compelled to work as bonded labourers. Moreover, the money-lenders who were also generally landlords favoured this system. In the busy sowing or harvest season, they did not face the scarcity of labour if they had bonded labourers. This system is often maintained in disguised form (to escape bonded labour abolition law). Here, the caste-relations and personal relations helped to sustain it.

Wherever the bonded labour system exists, it shows acute poverty, lack of awareness, and ignorance.

It also reveals the failure of implementation of Minimum Wages Act. The rates of daily wages have changed from region to region. The wages are not revised adequately along with rising prices which have affected the standard of living. They live in the worst possible condition. There is no organized labour movement among the Untouchables to take advantages of legislation etc.

The agricultural labourers who perform all kinds of manual work depend on caste Hindus. Their wages are paid in cash and kind. There are reciprocal relations between the Untouchables and the Caste Hindus. Their landowner-labour relations are reshaped by customs and caste privileges. Therefore, the relations between high caste landowners and high caste labourers differ from that of high caste landowners and low caste labourers. The labourers who are Untouchables are looked down upon by the caste Hindu landlords as well as caste Hindu labourers. Thus, the non-untouchable labourers receive better treatment than Untouchable labourers. The Untouchable labourers are usually addressed with abusive words.

In the fifth Chapter we have dealt with changes in agrarian relations. Though there is agricultural development in rural Karnataka, the traditional social relations of caste Hindu master and the Untouchable

agricultural labourers are still maintained because of their regard to caste. However, the traditional mutual economic ties between them are changing. But this process of change has not yet led to agrarian unrest or conflict in rural Karnataka as it is found elsewhere.

The process of economic sanskritization has revealed that the change in economic status influences other relations at behavioural level. Hence ritual relations are also affected. Broadly speaking, economic development and consciousness of one's own social position have become the main impetus of social change.

Thus, the Untouchables who were in the state of immobile-class in closed system have entered relatively open system. This process is accompanied by horizontal change among Untouchable castes within a vertical setup.

In this dissertation I have relied on secondary documents, reports etc. I intend to select one or two villages for doing fieldwork, in the next phase of my research work leading to Ph.D. This field work would involve observation and interviews. Thus, on the basis of primary data, I intend to further examine the agrarian relations pertaining to the Scheduled Castes of Karnataka. The main emphasis in the next phase would be on the

examination of transition from the closed to open system of agrarian stratification. This would reveal the changing dimensions and the new patterns in the field of agrarian relations in Karnataka.

**A P P E N D I C E S**



APPENDIX NO. 1. With reference to Chapter Two, page-43.

In December, 1930, the Kallar in Ramnad profounded eight prohibitions. They were:

- (i) that the Adi-Dravidas shall not wear ornament of gold or silver;
- (ii) that the males should not wear their clothes below their knees or above the hips;
- (iii) that the males should not wear coats or shirts or banyans;
- (iv) no Adi-Dravida shall be allowed to have his hair cropped;
- (v) that the Adi-Dravida should not use other than earthen-ware vessels in their homes;
- (vi) that their women shall not be allowed to cover the upper portion of their bodies by clothes or ravukvais or thavanies;
- (vii) their women shall not be allowed to use flowers or suffron paste; and
- (viii) the men shall not use umbrellas for protection against sun and rain, nor they should wear sandals.

Again in June, 1931, eleven prohibitions were profounded as original eight were not satisfactorily observed by the Adi-Dravidas. They were:

- (1) The Adi-Dravida and Devendrakula Velalars should not wear cloths below their knees.

- (2) the men and women of the above said depressed classes should not wear gold jewels.
- (3) Their women should carry water only in mud pots and not in copper or brass vessels.
- (4) Their children should not read and get themselves literate or educated.
- (5) The children should be asked only to tend the cattle of the Mirasdars.
- (6) Their men and women should work as slaves of the Mirasdars in their respective Pannais.
- (7) They should not cultivate the land either on waram or lease from the Mirasdars.
- (8) They must sell away their own lands to Mirasdars of the village at very cheap rates, and if they do not do so, no water will be allowed to them to irrigate their lands. Even if something is grown by the help of rain-water the crop
- /(9) should be robbed away, when they are ripe for harvest./ They must work as coolies from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. under the Mirasdars and their wages shall be for men Re. 0-4-0 (25 paise) per day and for women Re. 0-2-0 (12 paise) per day.
- (10) The above said communities should not use Indian Music (Melam, etc.) in their marriage and other celebrations.
- (11) They must stop their habit of going on a horse in procession before tying the Thali thread in Marriage and they

must use their house doors as a palanquin for the marriage processions and no vehicle should be used by them for any purpose.

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Source: Quoted from Hutton, J.H. Caste In India: Its nature, Function and Origins, Oxford University Press, Delhi. pp. 205-206.

## APPENDIX NO. 2 With Reference to Chapter Four, page-78.

## DISTRIBUTION OF LAND ACCORDING TO CASTES AND FAMILIES

S.No.	Name of the caste	No. of families	Per- cent- age	Landowned by each caste (in acres)	Per- cept- age.
1.	Jangama	24	9.06	280	9.71
2.	Sadar	128	42.96	2246.10	76.14
3.	Panchamasala	13	4.37	90	2.80
4.	Kumbara	2	0.67	35	1.09
5.	Hadapad	8	2.68	63	1.96
6.	Brahmin	1	0.34	-	-
7.	Panchala	2	0.67	-	-
8.	Kammara	12	4.04	28	0.87
9.	Komati	1	0.34	2	0.06
10.	Telagu Kumbara	3	1.01	21	0.65
11.	Nayak	37	12.42	82	2.55
12.	Kayara	18	6.04	52	1.62
13.	Agasa	2	0.67	20	0.62
14.	Ura Nayak	3	1.01	-	-
15.	Pinjara	7	2.35	62	1.93
16.	<u>Chaluwadi</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0.62</u>	-	-
17.	<u>Madiga</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>11.75</u>	<u>32.4</u>	<u>1.00</u>
TOTAL		298	100.00	3213.14	100.00

Source: Quoted from: Gurumurthy, K.G.(1976): Kallapur: A South Indian Village, Karnataka University Dharwar p. 79.

APPENDIX NO. 3. With reference to Chapter Four, page-95.

EXTENT OF LANDS ALLOTTED TO SC/ST SINCE INDEPENDENCE  
(upto three plan periods)

S.No.	Name of the State	Extent of the land distributed in lakh acres.
1.	Andhra Pradesh	13.090
2.	Assam	2.020
3.	Bihar	5.064
4.	Gujarath	3.332
5.	Kerala	0.484
6.	Madhya Pradesh	23.457
7.	<del>Maharashtra</del> Maharashtra	6.407
8.	Mysore	7.226
9.	Orissa	1.663
10.	Punjab	1.699
11.	Rajasthan	28.350
12.	Tamil Nadu	3.111
13.	Uttar Pradesh	9.442
14.	West Bengal	1.220
<b>T O T A L</b>		<b>107.545</b>

Source: The Report of the Commissioner for SC/ST, 1969-70; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1970. p. 71.

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