

THE SOLIGA OF BILIGIRI RANGANA HILLS

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S.G. MORAB

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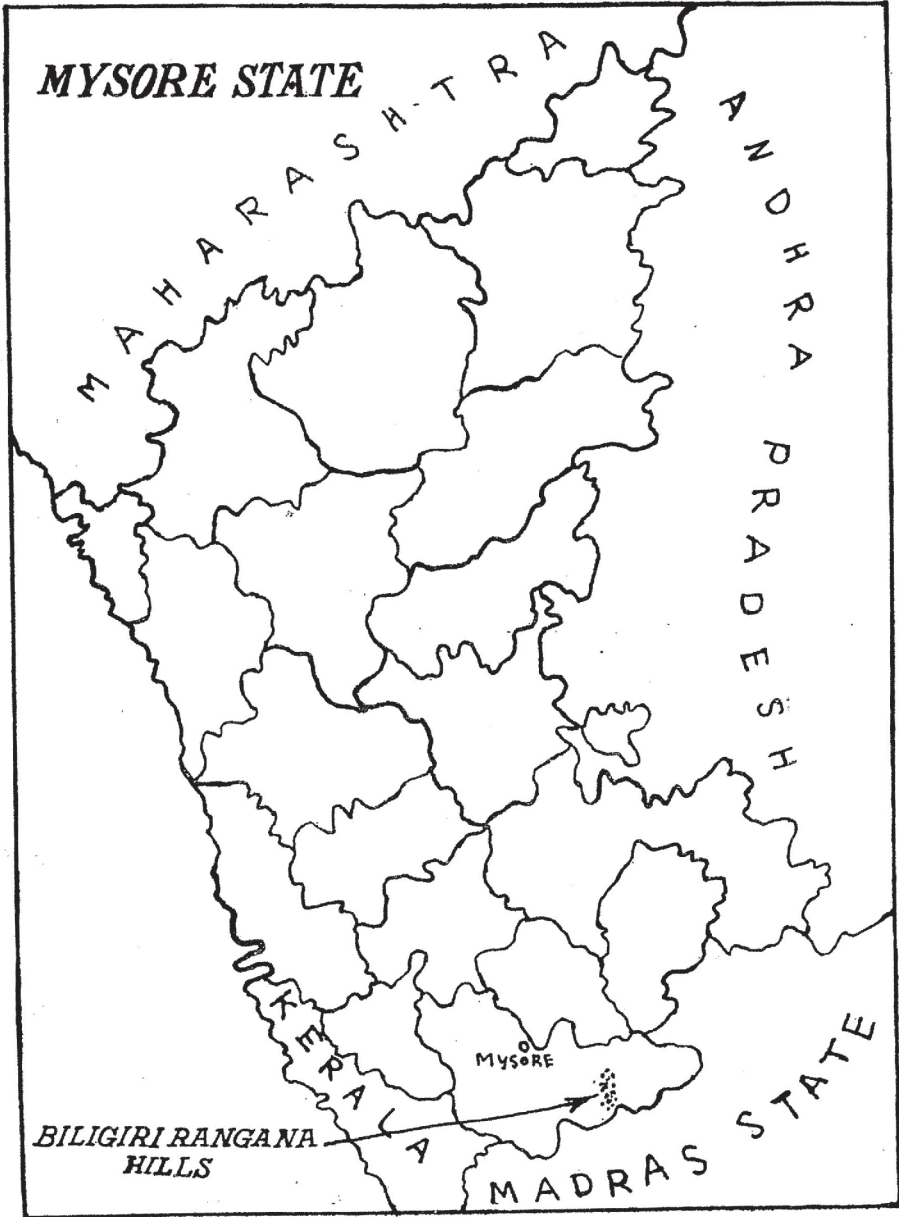
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PREFACE

The present study on the Soliga of the Biligiri Rangana Hills, Mysore, was sponsored by the Anthropological Survey of India as part of the programme of conducting ethnographic studies on various tribes in South India. The fieldwork for the present study was undertaken between February and July, 1965. The report is presented in the form of a detailed monographic study comprising ten chapters broadly covering the various aspects of the life of the Soliga.

In preparing the report, I am indebted to the Director, Anthropological Survey of India for providing facilities to undertake a work of this nature and to complete the report. I am grateful to Dr. P. K. Misra, Regional Officer, Anthropological Survey of India, South India Station, Mysore, for his constant encouragement and guidance. His valuable comments and useful suggestions were of immense help in improving the report. I am thankful to my colleagues Smt. Rajalakshmi and Shri I. Verghese for going through the report and making useful suggestions. I thank my other colleagues, Sarvashree D. B. Sastry, S. C. Shankaran and G. M. Trivedi for going through the report. Many thanks are due to Sarvashree S. K. Sanyal of Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, S. C. Shankaran of the Anthropological Survey of India, South India Station, Mysore, for the photographs used in the report. I thank my nephew Shri V. A. Morab of Bhir' for the two sketches prepared by him. For the pains and care taken by Shri K. S. Venkatanarasimhan of the Anthropological Survey of India, Mysore, in typing the report neatly my thanks are due.

I wish to acknowledge the help done and cooperation given to me by a number of persons while I was in the B. R. Hills for the fieldwork. Sarvashree K. Seeta Rama Iyengar, Headmaster, Tribal school, Sudersan Iyengar, Chairman, Village Panchayat, Sundera Raj Iyengar, Post Master and Guru Raja Char for their help. I thank the Soliga elders, *viz.*, Sarvashree Chaluvade Madegouda, Kolkar Nanjegouda and Tammadi Nanjegouda for the cooperation given to me during my fieldwork. Several Soligas of other settlements also helped me. I owe heavy debt to them all.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

According to a recent study, there are 427 communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes in India (Roy Burman 1969). While there are short descriptive accounts on the various tribal communities, detailed monographic studies on tribes are few and far between. There is, in fact, a great need for studies on the India's little known tribal societies. Haimendorf, (Dube 1951 : i) emphasizes the intensification of anthropological field-research in studying India's preliterate civilizations. He pinpoints the primary task of studying the tribal societies : "lines of approach developed in the classical field of anthropological research in North America and Oceania cannot be applied in every respect to the comparatively virgin ground of India where for some time to come anthropologists will have to concentrate on the primary task of giving as complete an account as possible of whatever aboriginal society they study" (*ibid*).

While, admittedly, we recognize the great necessity for providing information on the cultures and ways of life of the tribal communities, we shall have to take into account the processes of transformation which the tribal societies are undergoing owing to the impact of contact with their neighbouring socio-cultural systems. It has been ably demonstrated by Sinha that there is ".....the possibility of orthogenetic development of civilization in India from a primitive cultural level, roughly comparable to cultures of the less acculturated tribes of Peninsular India" (1957 : 116). He has also shown that there are "..... vital elements of continuity between tribal cultures and Hindu Peasant traditions" (*ibid*). In his later work, Sinha (1965) has distinctively examined two ideal sets of continue, viz. tribe-caste and tribe-peasant.

The tribal communities are largely characterized by the following demographic and social structural features according to Sinha (*ibid*). The tribals are ".....isolated—in ecology, demography, economy, politics and other relations—from other ethnic groups. This isolation generates, and in its turn, is bolstered by a strong in-group sentiment, Inter-

nally, the group is characterized by homogeneity on account of lack of social stratification and role specialization other than by age, sex and kinship" (*ibid* : 61-62). The tribal communities have been coming into closer contact with peasant Hindu communities in their ideological pattern. The case of the tribals in Peninsular and Southern India, has been pointed out by Sinha thus : "All over Central and Southern India we find the tribal communities in a process of transformation, which brings them closer to peasant Hindu communities. There is not a single tribe in this belt completely unaffected by Hinduism" (1957 : 95).

While taking up any study on the tribal communities, it would therefore be useful not only to describe the mere structural features of a community, but also to draw attention to the various aspects of the processes of interaction with the 'greater culture-community of India' (Sinha 1957 : 94).

Presently, we have considered here one of the Scheduled Tribes of the Mysore State, namely, the Soliga, living in the Biligiri Rangana Hills in Mysore district. The study of the tribe was undertaken mainly to present a detailed ethnographic account of the tribe. And while doing so, interaction with other peasant communities is also given. But this has been done in a very generalized way in view of the fact that at the time of conducting the fieldwork, the primary task was to describe the culture and way of life of the tribe.

II

THE SOLIGA

The Soliga are referred to in various works by different spellings. For example, such spellings as *Sholaga* (Thurston, 1909 ; Aiyappan, 1948 ; Luiz, 1963 ; Roy Burman, 1969) *Sholiga* (Nanjundayya and Iyer, 1931), *Sholigars* (Subbayya, 1965), *Soliga* (C. I. 1893 ; Gopal, 1965) are commonly used. In the lists of the State (Government of Mysore : 1967) and the Central (C. I. 1936 ; Roy Burman 1969) Governments the terms used are *Sholaga* and *Sholigaru*. It may be noted that the latter term is the plural form of the Kannada term *Soliga*. The terminological interpretation of 'Soliga' is not known. Two authors, however, have given their explanation regarding the origin of the word 'Soliga'. Luiz states, "The name (Sholaga) is the corruption of the Tamil word Colai or Solai (thicket), and has reference to the dense thickets amidst which they live" (1963 : 180). But if this explanation is held tenable as the people of this name live mainly in the southern Mysore bordering the Tamil country, yet there are other tribes which too live amidst the thickets in almost

the same geographical areas where the Soliga live, and are called by different names such as Urali, Iruliga, Kuruba, etc. Balakrishna (1953) gives his version on the origin of the word 'Soliga' thus :

'It is not possible to find out the derivation of the word 'Soliga' so easily. Among the Soliga, the syllable 'la' is not pronounced clearly. For instance, 'Elu' is pronounced as 'Evu'. Dr. Kittel (an eminent German Scholar of Kannada literature) opines that the word 'Soyi' is the corrupted (*tadbhava*) form of the word 'swami'. Therefore, 'Soyiga' might mean 'Swamiga', that is those people who are related to the 'Swami' (referring to the Mahadeswar Swami) and thus the people might have come to be known as 'Soyiga', which word later on has been transformed into 'Soliga' in the usage. These explanations, though based on some facts, have been wrapped in by speculations and therefore they are not of much use here. In this text, the name of the tribe is spelt as 'Soliga'. This spellings comes nearer to the speech of the people concerned.

Throughout this study, the 'Soliga' is used to refer to the Soliga in the plural form and in its singular form, the term 'a soliga' is used.

III

EARLIER WORKS

Buchanan's (Thurston 1909 : 379) travel account was the earliest reference on the Soliga wherein a description of the poor state of living conditions of the people as he found in 1807 is given. Thurston (*ibid* : 379-86) describes the customs and origin of the Soliga mainly found in the Dimbhum and Kollegal areas near the Mysore province. He has also quoted the Mysore Census of 1891 which gives a brief account of the life of the Soliga of the Biligiri Rangana Hills in Mysore. Nanjundayya and Iyer (1931 : 592-99) describe the origin and customs of the Soliga. In their account, it appears there are some factual errors. For instance, Thurston (*ibid* : 381) mentions that the Soliga have five exogamous septs, while Nanjundayya and Iyer : 594) record only four exogamous divisions of the tribe in the Biligiri Rangana Hills, whereas the Soliga of the area themselves claim to have five clans. The author has found six clans, though one of them is a later absorption in their social structure. Nanjundayya and Iyer (*ibid*) state that out of the four clans, three are of brother clans. But all the clans of the Soliga are exogamous divisions.

There are other references on the Soliga (Aiyappan 1948 ; Luiz 1963 ; Subbayya 1965 ; Gopal 1965 ; Seshadri 1968 ; Roy Burman 1969).

Except Gopal's account which deals mainly with the problems of the Soliga of the Biligiri Rangana Hills, other works describe the life and customs of the Soliga in a brief and generalized way. However, these accounts serve as useful ethnographic notes for the laity. So far as the study on the Soliga language is concerned, Guru Basavegouda's (1969) work deserves mention.

In Kannada language, Iyengar (1944) and Balakrishna (1953) have given a fairly good account of the Soliga living in the Biligiri Rangana Hills. Balakrishna who lived with the tribals for some years has dealt the subject in considerable details as regards the life and customs of the people in the vernacular.

IV

HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE

On the history of and migration of the Soliga, Nanjundayya and Iyer state, "In the hilly tract of Ramagiri, these people are called by other natives Cad Eraligaru; but they call themselves Cad Chensu. The language of the Chensu is a dialect of Tamil occasionally with a few Canarese or Telugu words intermixed, but their accent is different from that of Madras. Their original country is said to be the Anamalay forests below the ghats which is confirmed by their dialect (*ibid* : 592-593)". Luiz (*ibid* : 180) states that in early years the Soliga were known as Kad Eraligarus and as Cad Chenchus in certain tracts. Writing on the 'Iruligaru', Luiz mentions that "About three decades ago they (Iru-ligas, Irulas, Kadu Pujaris, etc.) were known as Cad Iriligarus and Cad Chenchus, the prefix Cad means forest" (*ibid* : 69). From the description of the Iruliga tribe given by Luiz, it may be said that the Soliga are a different tribal group than the Iruligas. Aiyappan (*ibid* : 129) has tried to link the seven-clans Urali with those of the Iruligas. In the Biligiri Rangana Hills, the author did not come across the tribe by name Iruliga. The Soliga of the Biligiri Rangana Hills are not aware of their being associated with Eraligaru (Iruliga) or Chenchu, even remotely. In their folklore traditions, they adore the deity Mahadeswar of the Mahadeswar Hills in Kollegal taluk. They trace their origin to the mythical hero, Karayya Swamy, as is given in the following legendary accounts.

LEGENDARY ACCOUNTS

Thurston (*ibid*), and Nanjundayya and Iyer (*ibid*) have given legendary accounts on the origin and traditions of the Soliga. Luiz, drawing upon material mainly on the authors mentioned above, has given a brief

account on the origin of the Soliga. To quote him, "Sholagas have interesting legends regarding their origin. They claim to be the progeny of Karaiya Swamy, son of God Mahadeswara Swamy, whose effigy is displayed in the Mahadeswara Temple on the mountains of the Yelandur (Kollegal) taluk. God Mahadeswara visited Nibi Sholiga and, when told that he was out, requested his wife Sonk Amma for food, who, being naked declined to come before him. But on being provided with clothes made of the local perennials, she attended on the God visitor, who blessed her, and predicted that she would have children and assured her that her first born would be his child. Karaiya Swamy was her first son and, though many are of the opinion that he lived and died a bachelor, the Sholagas claim him as the progenitor. A second legend traces them to Sri Biligiri Ranga Swamy (alias Swetadri Ranganatha Swamy). Another legend describes them as the progeny of Karayan, brother of Billayya (alias Mahadeswara), who lived in the Geddesa Hills. Shivacharis claim Billaya as the progenitor. These brothers fell into the custody of Rakshasa Savanan, who made Karayan a shepherd and mal-treated his brother for insubordination. With the aid of the gods, Billaya killed Savanan, and for that Karayan decided to kill him. After a chase, Billaya submitted and agreed that Karayan shall have the first claim to all votive offerings (ibid: 181)". Bala-krishna (ibid) gives another version of the origin of the Soliga thus, The Lord Mahadeswar swamy in Kollegal taluk is the god of hunting. One day, the Lord was walking in the forest along with his two sons, Karayya and Billayya, when they saw an iguana (*lacerta monitor*) peeping from an anthill. Thereupon, Karayya caught the animal losing no time, and brought it to his father. On seeing the behaviour, the Lord came to know of the differences in temperament of both the sons. Billayya, who was gentle in temperament, stood simply watching the animal, whereas Karayya sensed it as a delicacy of food and hence caught it. Therefore, the Lord made Billayya to settle in the plains, and to live upon vegetarian diet, while Karayya was made to live in the jungles searching animals for food. The descendants of Billayya are vegetarians and call themselves as Lingayats; and those of Karayya are the Soliga, who live in the jungles and are non-vegetarians'.

V

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The data on the physical characteristics of the Soliga, as far as the author knows, are scarce. The earliest record on the subject is the

Census of India, 1891. According to it, "they (the Soliga) are dark and plain featured, have generally a thick nose, narrow forehead and small head with curly hair....." (Cil, 1893 : 228). Sarkar (sinha 1957 : 101) includes the Soliga in the 'Veddid' type who are true autochthones of India. The Gazetter of India (1965 : 293) describes the Soliga as 'short statured, dolico-cephalic', and 'noses among the Soliga tend to be chamerrhine'.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In the state of Mysore the Soliga are mainly found in the hilly and forest areas of the Yalandur, Chamarajanagar, Kollegal and Heggada Devana Kote taluks of the Mysore district. They are also found in some parts of the South Canara district. According to the Census of 1961 (C.I. 1966) the population of the Soliga for the Mysore district is 10,625.

The Soliga are known in different parts by the number of clans they have. For example, there are the Soliga of five-clans as in the Biligiri Rangana Hills, and seven-clans (Aiyappan 1948; Luiz 1963; Subbayya 1965). Thurston (1909) says that the Uralis and Soliga are the descendants of Karayya, and the Sivacharis (Lingayats) of Mahadeswar. But Aiyappan makes the distinction between the Urali and the Soliga thus: "Uralis claim to be children of Billayya and to have seven *Kulams* (while the Sholagas, the children of Karayya, are of five *Kulams*). They call themselves Uralis or Irulas" (ibid, : 129).

Irula tribe is included in the name of Iruliga by Luiz (ibid). Irulas or Iruliga appear to be different from Uralis or Soliga. As regards the seven-clan Soliga, Luiz (ibid) includes them under 'Urali Sholagars' as one of the principal endogamous groups among the Soliga. Harit (Roy Burma 1969 : 323) states that the 7-Kula Soliga are actually Uralis and speak Tamil and 5-Kula Soliga are *true* (emphasis mine) Soliga who speak Kannada.

The Soliga of the Biligiri Rangana Hills themselves say that they are the Soliga of five-clans, and that they are the descendants of the ancestor known as Karayya (*Karamakka*—children of Karayya). The present study refers to the Soliga of the five-clans mainly found in the Biligiri Rangana Hills area.

VI

FIELD WORK

For a detailed and intensive study of the Soliga one of the nine Soliga settlements in the Biligiri Rangana Hills, namely, the Yarakana-gadde, was selected. While describing the Soliga of the area, in gen-

eral, the author has drawn the material from the Yarakana-gadde settlement extensively, where the field work was done. At the time of the field work some of the other Soliga settlements were also visited, and relevant data were collected. The reasons for selecting Yarakana-gadde which was a suitable unit for the ethnographic study are stated separately later.

The fieldwork was done between February and July 1965 in Yarakana-gadde. At the time of the fieldwork, the difficulties which the author faced were many. The area of the study is a hilly terrain comprising forest tracts. Particularly, it was difficult to move freely in the interior which was infested with wild beasts like elephant, bison and bear. The author had faced rogue elephants twice, but had providential escape. In view of the difficulty, therefore, data on the interior settlements is not comprehensive. Much data is collected from the Yarakana-gadde settlement alone, as stated above, during the short span of the field work. Whenever references to the data on the other settlements are made, they are properly mentioned in the body of the monograph.

The greatest handicap was the individualistic and suspicious nature of the Soliga. It was not easy to establish rapport with them in the beginning. At the initial period of the fieldwork, on several days, when attempts were made, to meet the people in the Yarakana-gadde settlement, the Soliga would disappear from the scene. In the interior settlements too, the case was the same. Thanks to the timely help of Shri K. S. Iyengar, the Head Master of the Tribal School whose introduction to many a Soliga helped the author to carry on the fieldwork smoothly. Two elders of the tribal council of the Soliga later became friends and provided useful information on the various aspects of the Soliga way of life.

Many a time individual Soliga would not give information on any matter, but would show ignorance by a simple 'don't know' whenever a person was repeatedly questioned. Sometimes, a Soliga would direct the author to approach other Soliga for eliciting information. Experience showed that attempts to seek information from others too were in vain as the response was almost similar. Therefore cross checking of information became difficult.

Another difficulty encountered was the temperament of the people. The Soliga appeared to be very shy before strangers. Whenever opportunities permitted, attempts were made to participate in their gossip either round a smouldering fire during nights or when they used to gather in groups at leisure during day time. But such ventures were

always fruitless, as on seeing the author going to their place, members would disperse quietly and quickly after expressing their formal greetings. The Soliga women were found to be extremely shy. They also shunned strangers.

The only advantage to the author was the language of the people. The Soliga speak a dialect very near to the Kannada language which is the mother tongue of the author.

METHOD OF FIELD WORK

At the time of the field work a brief schedule was used to collect data on such events which were not observed. Genealogies of all the households in the settlement selected for the study were taken. Case studies, wherever necessary, were made. The household survey schedules for the households in the nine Soliga settlements were filled in, which give information on age, sex, kinship relation, clan, literacy, occupation, etc. of individual members. Some settlements were visited at the time of observance of festivals and rituals, and relevant information on them was collected. Participation by the Soliga in the annual festival held in the Biligiri Rangana Hills in honour of god Rangaswamy, and also in the market held at that time, were noted. A few of their folk songs were recorded. Relevant published material are consulted and references to them are made in the appropriate places.

CHAPTER TWO

LAND AND PEOPLE

I

THE LAND

The Biligiri Rangana Hills¹ forest range is situated in Yelandur taluk of the Mysore district in Karnataka State. It lies between 11°—53'.00"—12°—3'.15" and 77°—13'.30"—77°—8'.30" North latitude and East longitude in the south-eastern direction of the Mysore district. The entire Hill range is scattered over approximately an area of about ten miles in the north-west and nearly six miles in the east-west bordering the adjoining forest territories of Kollegal and Chamarajanagar taluks in Mysore district.

The area is known as the 'Biligiri Rangana Hills' owing to the existence of a temple² of great antiquity dedicated to god Rangaswamy. This temple is built on a huge rock which appears as 'Bili,' i.e. 'white' viewed from the plains and the height of the rock is nearly 400 feet, and hence the name 'Biligiri' (white mountain) is given.

The temperature in the Hills is moderate. The average maximum and minimum temperatures recorded at the Government Silk Farm situated in the Hills during the year 1964 were 72°F and 70°F, respectively. The rainfall records at the Government Silk Farm for the three consecutive years, viz. 1962, 1963 and 1964 showed that rainfall was 72.27, 35.17, and 56.07 inches respectively, and the average rainfall thus works out to be 54.50 inches per year.

The Hills are rich in flora. The forests are thickly wooded with many gigantic trees and bamboo thickets. Among the most important trees yielding timber are *Honne*, *Nerile*, *Matti*, *Tegu*, *Arale*, *Bandeku*, local varieties of *Bejjalu*. The forests are plentiful with wild plants, bushes and tall jungle grass. During summer, the forests of the Hills look barren with the devastation of the jungle growth by wild fire, and huge timber trees get devoid of green leaves. Monsoon brings beauty

1 Henceforth, referred to as 'the Hills'.

2 The temple is of historical importance as is borne out from earlier references. Hayavadana Rao (1932 : 647-48) says that the temple was said to have been repaired by Vishnuvardhana Raja. According to him, some copper-plates available at the temple mention a grant given for the god called Bilikal Tiruvengialanath by Muddu Raja of Hadinadu (*ibid*).

and life to the Hills, when sprouting leaves, blossoming flowers in trees and bushes, and the voice of shrilling birds make the wild-life enchanting.

Among the fauna, elephant, bison, bear, and wild boar are found in large numbers. Though tigers and leopards are found to be living in the forests, their number is said to be meagre. There are many gentle animals like deer, antelope, junglesheep, and jungle-fowl. Several kinds of small birds are found in the forests of the Hills.

COMMUNICATION

In former days, the hilly areas of the Hills were not easily accessible as there were no road connections from the plains. The only means of transport then was to go either by horse or by foot. Recently, a *pucca* motorable road connecting Chamarajanagar was built by the Public Works Department for transporting timber and bamboo from the remote parts of the Hills. Once in a week, on every Saturday,³ a private bus plies from Chamarajanagar to the premises of the Rangaswamy temple in the Hills and back on the same road now. A State Government Bus plies between Bangalore and the premises of the Rangaswamy temple every day. A private bus also is said to be plying between Mysore and the premises of the Rangaswamy temple every day. A road work was undertaken under the Pilot Project of Utilization of Rural Man Power by the Yelandur Taluk Development Board at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.18 lakhs. This road running about fifteen miles in length, when completed, would connect the premises of the Rangaswamy temple to the Yelandur town, the taluk headquarters in the western direction.

A branch Post Office was started in 1964, and is housed in the house of one of the priests of the Rangaswamy temple. On the 16th April 1965, the Electricity Board of the Mysore State supplied electricity to the temple.

A small village has developed around the Rangaswamy temple. It is known as the B. R. Hills village. Hereafter, the B. R. Hills village will be referred to as the 'Temple village.'

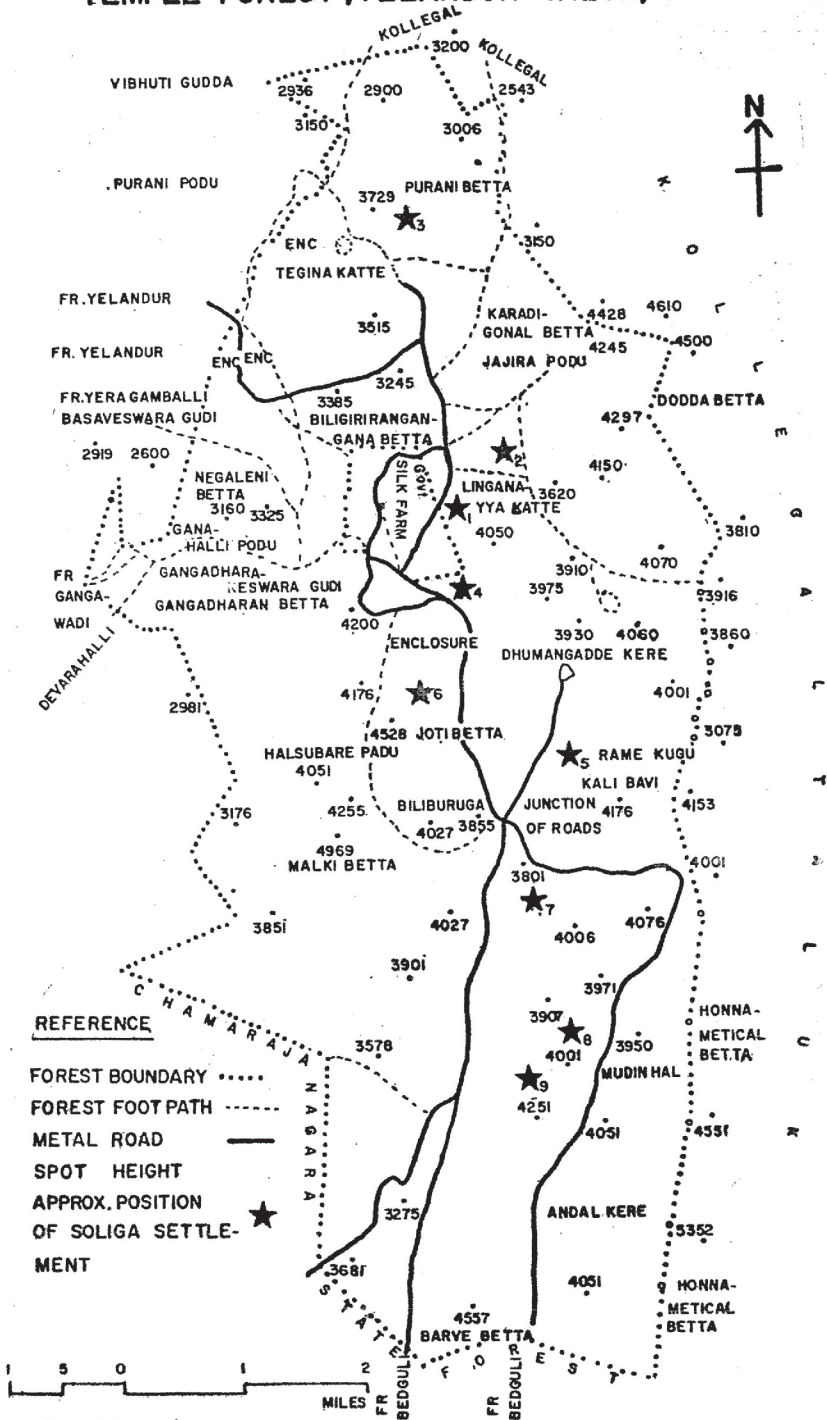
II

THE PEOPLE

The Soliga are the only Scheduled Tribe living in the Hills (*cf.* Hayavadana Rao 1930 : 868). They live in nine isolated settlements in

³ Saturday is sacred to Vaishnavite devotees and hence they throng on that day.

SOLIGA SETTLEMENTS IN SRI BILIGIRIRANGASWAMI TEMPLE FOREST, YELANDUR TALUK, MYSORE DI.



the interiors of the forests. The Soliga settlements are known by the term 'Podu'. Besides the Soliga, the other non-tribal people living in the Hills are Brahmin, Parivara, Banajiga, Lingayat, etc. These people mainly inhabit the temple village. The following Table shows the population composition of the temple village.

TABLE 1*
POPULATION OF DIFFERENT CASTES/SECTS IN THE
TEMPLE VILLAGE

S. No.	Castes/Sects	Population
1	Parivara	146
2	Brahmin	47
3	Banajiga	7
4	Nayar	5
5	Badaga	3
6	Lingayat	3
	<i>Scheduled castes</i>	
7	Adi Jambava	7
8	Adi Karnataka	3
	Total	221

The population figure of the Soliga in the Hills, according to the Census of 1961, is 632 (C. I. (M. D) 1963). The total number, as recorded in the household survey forms by the author in the nine Soliga settlements of the Hills is 574. The following Table shows the population composition of the Soliga of the Hills.

TABLE 2
POPULATION COMPOSITION OF THE SOLIGA OF THE HILLS

Sl. No.	Name of the settlement in the Hills (Podu)	Male	Population Female	Total
1	Yarakanagadde	68	56	124
2	Guruvinagadde	34	39	73
3	Purani	57	45	102
4	Beedikallu	10	11	21
5	Kallara Betta	33	33	66
6	Kanchugara	19	19	38
7	Doddare	23	19	42
8	Bhavihane	49	37	86
9	Kolla	12	10	22
	Total	305	269	574

The Soliga settlements are scattered around the Temple village in the Hills. Yarakanagadde, Beedi kallu, Guruvinagadde, and Kanchu-

* Figures are obtained from the records of the Government Primary School at the B. R. Hills village.

gara settlements are closer to the Temple village, whereas the other Soliga settlements such as Purani, Kallara betta, Doddare, Bhavihane, and Kolla are situated at considerably longer distances from the Temple village.

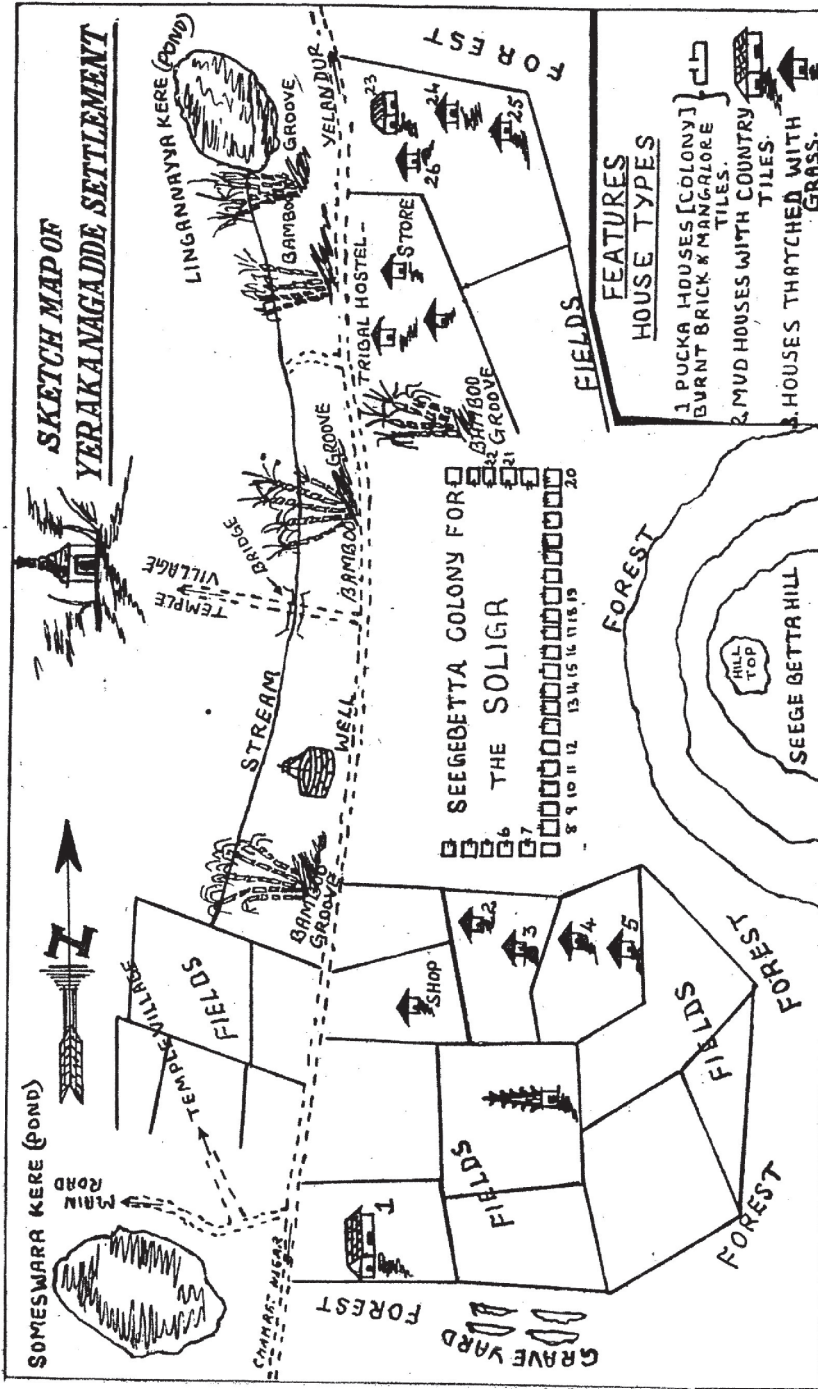
III

Out of the nine Soliga settlements in the Hills, the Yarakaganagadde settlement was selected to conduct the field work. Its selection was prompted by the following considerations. The settlement is situated adjoining the Temple village. The Soliga of the Hills come in contact with the people visiting the temple of Rangaswamy as well as those living in the Temple village. The Soliga of the Yarakaganagadde settlement have their close kin living in the nearby settlements, with whom the former constantly come in contact on many socio-religious occasions. The most significant point is that it is here that all the office-bearers of the tribal council, and a priest-cum-diviner, live. By means of *cutch*a roads at two points, the settlement is connected to the Temple village unlike the other interior Soliga settlements in the forest which involve difficulty in approach. The people of this settlement have been benefited by the various welfare measures sponsored by the State Department of Social Welfare. In this settlement, the Soliga have taken to plough cultivation alongside their traditional form of agriculture, viz. shifting cultivation. The Purani settlement, too, has taken up the plough cultivation, but for different reasons given elsewhere. One of the Soliga of the Yarakaganagadde had taken up the scientific way of cocoon rearing organized by the Sericulture Department of the State Government. Under the auspices of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi an Ashram-type Tribal School at the Yarakaganagadde settlement for the Soliga children is functioning and doing a good work of educating the Soliga children.

Though the settlement has the above features, it has simultaneously retained its characteristic features of a Soliga Podu where people live as one local group and follow their traditional occupations for livelihood like the people of other interior settlements.

IV

The Yarakaganagadde settlement is situated at a distance of nearly three kilometres in the eastern direction adjoining the territory of the Temple village. The Soliga houses are located on the slopes of a hill



called 'Seegebetta'. The name 'Yarakanagadde' was given to the area covering the Seegebetta hill, as the place was once the abode of plentiful jungle trees, locally known as 'Yaraka', which were cleared off by the Soliga, when they had come there to establish the settlements. While the Soliga habitation was found on the southern and northern slopes of the Seegebetta hill, the eastern slope had dense growth of forest vegetation, and was not inhabited. The western part of the Seegebetta hill has borders of the Temple village.

On the western borders of the settlement, a small stream flows which is the main source of water supply for the Soliga. A drinking well was built in 1963 under the National Extension Scheme, but the people of Yarakanagadde were utilizing the stream-water for drinking purposes. A colony consisting of thirty *pucca* houses was built in 1963 by the State Government for housing the Soliga. This colony is known as the 'Seegebetta Girijan Colony.'

The Yarakanagadde settlement was in existence before the Seegebetta Tribal Colony was built. The Soliga were living in clusters of houses surrounding the Seegebetta hill. In the beginning, the Soliga were not willing to occupy the Colony houses, as they preferred to live in their traditional houses. But, later, owing to persuasion by the officials of the State Welfare Department, many Soliga families had moved to the Colony houses.

Before the Yarakanagadde settlement was formed around the Seegebetta hill, the Soliga were living in Bangle, Keedebhavi, and Gundlu Podus which were deserted later. After desolution of these settlements most of the families moved on to the Yarakanagadde settlement.

The State Government had not only built thirty houses in the Colony,⁴ but also distributed lands⁵ to some Soliga families for permanent cultivation. The Soliga said that out of the 26 families in Yarakanagadde, 13 families own lands in the area surrounding the settlement.

Nearness to the Temple village where casual labour is available in the fields of the peasants of the Temple village, building of the Colony houses, distribution of lands to the Soliga, have encouraged some of the Soliga to settle down in the Yarakanagadde settlement.

In the interior forests, the Soliga establish their settlements and live

4 In Purani settlement also the Government has built 8 *Pucca* houses for housing the Soliga.

5 As surveying and allotment of lands was not completed at the time of the field work position regarding distribution of lands to the Soliga by the Government was not known.

as local groups for a specified period. These local groups are dissolved after four or five years, and once again new settlements are formed. The nature and composition of the Soliga settlements have much bearing upon ecological conditions and economic pursuits followed by the people. This aspect has been discussed in the following Chapter at some length.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The term 'local community' is used here as synonymous to 'local group' as defined in the 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology' (1960 : 64). The Soliga settlements are largely local communities as they emphasize factors of aggregateness of people inhabiting a particular demarcated area and regard themselves and act as a unit in relation to other settlements. Owing to ecological and economic conditions, local communities are formed and subsequently dissolved. In this section, an attempt is made to describe the composition and nature of the local communities as found among the Soliga.

In the geographical area known as the Biligiri Rangana Temple forest range (the B. R. Hills), the Soliga live in nine separate settlements. Each settlement consists of a few clusters of houses. A Soliga settlement is known by a distinct word *Podu*. Usually, a specific name for a Podu is given, when a settlement is established. A boundary is recognised by demarcating a certain area where a settlement is formed. Natural surroundings, such as, water source, hill-ridge, bamboo grove, trees, rocky surface, etc. generally determine the boundaries of a settlement. Names of settlements like Yarakanagadde, Purani, Doddare, Bhavihane, Kolla are examples of this category. There are such names as Kanchugara, Guruvinagadde, etc. whose meanings are not known to the Soliga. The Soliga settlements are amorphous, and their sizes vary from one another depending upon the number of houses built in a settlement when a local community is formed.

Most of the Soliga settlements are situated in the interior of the forest areas and they are not easily approachable. The houses with thatch roofs and bamboo wattle-walls are so merged with the scenery of the forest flora that it is easily possible to by-pass the existence of Soliga settlement by strangers. The following table shows the location of the Soliga settlements, number of houses, distance from the Temple village together with their direction.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF SOLIGA SETTLEMENTS SHOWING THE LOCATION

Sl. No.	Name of the settlement (Podu)	No. of houses in each Podu	Distance (approx) of the Podu from the Temple village (Km)	Direction of the Podu from the Temple village
1	Yarakanagadde	26	3	East
2	Guruvinagadde	18	6	North-east
3	Purani	22	12	North
4	Beedikallu	3	4	South
5	Kallarabetta	14	13	South
6	Kanchugara	10	10	South
7	Doddare	11	12	South
8	Bhavihane	17	14	South
9	Kolla	5	15	South

The Soliga settlements are established in the forest fields where people practise shifting cultivation. A few years ago the people changed their settlements usually after a lapse of four years. The necessity for changing the places and the consequent desolation of settlements arises when the land which is used for the shifting cultivation is considered unfertile for further cultivation by the people. The Soliga, when taking a fresh land for cultivation, call it as the *Kutare* land which is regarded as most fertile. After the first year of cultivation the land is known by the term *Takkilu* which is also considered fertile. The term *Kale* is used for the field ready for the third year of cultivation. The Kale field does not have the same fertility as that of the Takkilu field. It is believed that at the stage of completion of the third year of cultivation weeds grow in abundance in the field and the land becomes less fertile. Such type of land is termed as *Sodubhoomi*. Once the Sodubhoomi is cultivated, the land is considered as unfertile and unfit for further cultivation by the people. And then there is the necessity for moving on to virgin lands.

The Soliga do not return to a place if there are any signs of the place being cultivated at any time. In the Hills there are several such places showing visible signs of abandoned fields which speak of the existence of earlier camps of the Soliga. Owing to restrictions imposed on shifting cultivation by forest authorities, as the Soliga say, they are finding it difficult to move to new sites in the Hills. The Soliga of the two settlements, viz. Guruvinagadde and Kanchugara said that they wanted to move to new sites in the neighbourhood as they had overstayed in their existing settlements, but they could not do so because

of forest regulations. On the other hand, they were encouraged by the Block Development and the Forest authorities to shift to the tribal Colony in the Yarakaganadde settlement.

When a few houses or clusters of houses are built in a defined area, the people begin to live in the particular settlement as a local community. In a local community people who are close kin come together to live with them, and after marriage the spouses become members. Birth of children and marriage increase the number of a local community. As there are no restrictions for any Soliga becoming a member of a local community when it is formed, or any person leaving it on one's own volition, or on excommunication, the number of families goes on varying, though ordinarily such instances do not occur in large number.

The number of families in the various Soliga settlements differs. For instance, there are 5 families in Kolla and 26 in Yarakaganadde and the number varies in other settlements as shown in Table 3. Usually some unrelated individual families form a local community. Owing to marriage and setting up of small elementary families by blood relatives, the number of families grow up. Though the residential pattern is patrilocal, there are also cases in which persons after their marriage have established their houses near those of their wives' parents. Examples drawn from two different settlements are given in genealogical charts (1 and 2) in order to illustrate that consanguineous and affinal ties are the important factors in establishing local communities.

When movement from one place to another is contemplated, the Soliga elders of a settlement follow certain omens and observe a kind of ritual. While doing so, there is every likelihood that shuffling of individual families once forming a local community occur. All elderly male members of a settlement choose a new site in the forest for their future stay after they decide to leave their settlement for observance of an omen. Those who gather on such occasion select suitable places in the chosen site for building houses and also for cultivation. A new site is chosen taking into consideration the availability of forest produce and edible roots, for these are essential items of their economic activities and diet.

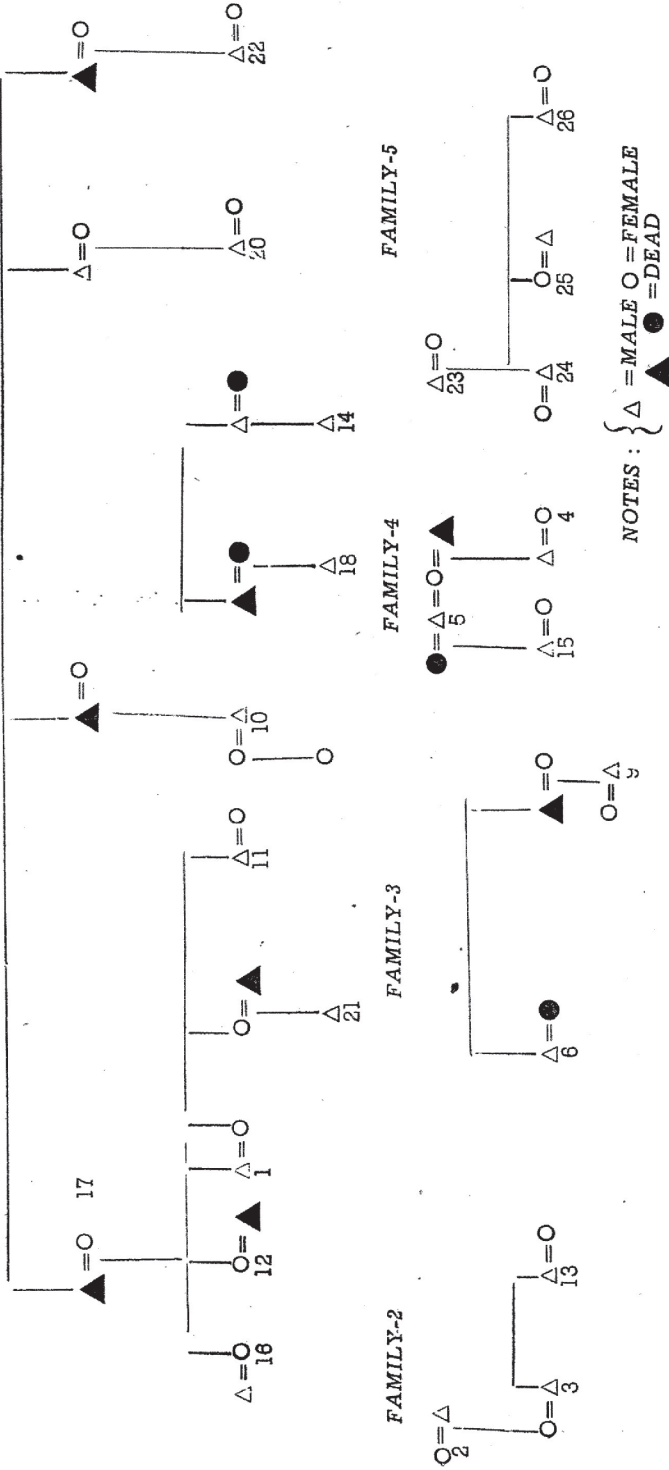
When a new site is chosen, each person selects some place in the site for one's own use. In the selected places, elders sleep for a night in order to find out the results of the dreams which they might dream in all probability. If they do not see any dream, they might have to sleep for some more nights until they saw dreams. It is believed that

GENEALOGICAL CHART 1

HOUSEHOLD NOS.-1 TO 26

SETTLEMENT : YARAKANAGADDA

FAMILY-1

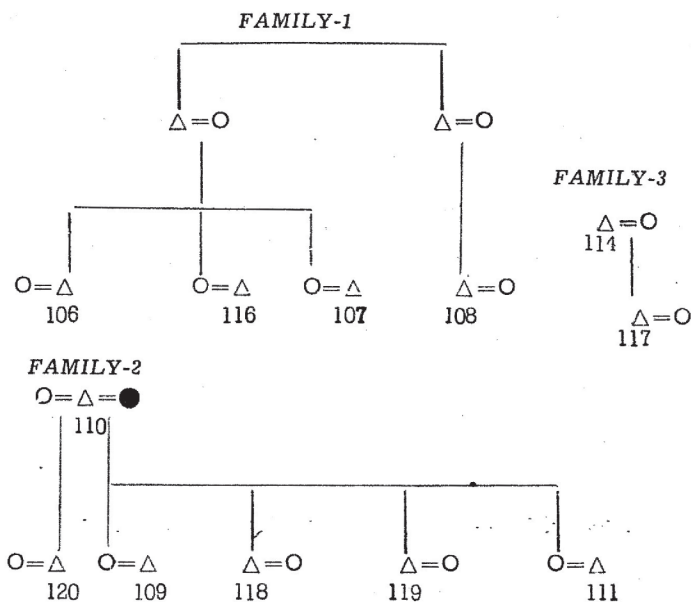


NOTES : { Δ = MALE \circ = FEMALE
 \blacktriangle = DEAD

Families 6, 7 and 8
 Household Nos. 7, 8 and 19 are separate, unrelated, individual families.
 Number of households are shown in the sketch map of the settlement.
 (In the existing local community of Yarakaganagde heads of the families are genealogically related as shown above.)

GENEALOGICAL CHART—2

SETTLEMENT : BHAVIHANE

HOUSEHOLD NOS.—105 TO 121
(17 HOUSEHOLDS)

Families 4, 5, 6 and 7 are separate, unrelated, individual households with numbers 112, 113, 115 and 121 which settled in Bhavihane from other settlement. (In the existing local community of Bhavihane, the heads of the households are genealogically related as shown above).

the dreams are indicative of omen. In case, the dreams presaged good omens, such as, seeing a Lingayat mendicant (symbolising god Mahadeswar), heaps of manure, or hearing roar of elephants, etc., the places are selected as these omens are suggestive of abundance of crops and future well-being. On the other hand, if the dreams are of such category, as for instance, seeing a heap of *Ragi* (*eleusine corocana*) harvest, fire, water, etc., the places are rejected by individual persons as the dreams portend bad omen. Those elders who have good omen finally decide to settle at the site chosen by them and others go to other sites and establish another settlement by following the same procedure if the number of families is big, or else, go to settle at the places where their close kin live. When a person from other area desires to settle down in a newly formed settlement, elders accommodate such an incumbent. But under such circumstances an individual does not go in for observing the omen stated above.

In the selected sites, the Soliga observe a ritual known as *Allus-hastra* (the rite of castor seeds) in order to choose a suitable place in

their sites for erecting a house. A few castor seeds are placed in five circles in the chosen place, and the castor seeds are covered with a basket. One night is allowed to pass and then the basket is removed and the forecast is read. In case the circles of castor seeds remain intact, there is the indication of prosperity, and the place is selected for erecting the house. In the event of slight disturbance in the circles, the portent is not auspicious and the place is unsuited for erecting a house. The rite of Allushastra is observed by the Soliga whenever a new house is erected. But if the forecast is not auspicious for 2 to 3 places, in a selected a site, then, a person decides to desert the site. If the omen¹ and the Allushastra rite are favourable to the Soliga, then the people establish a settlement in the selected site.

The Soliga always build their houses away from water sources. There is a saying among them, 'Be nearer to kin, and live far away from water source'. The main reason for the saying is said to be that in order to avoid menace of wild beasts which is great near water sources, as beasts often would visit water sources for drinking water, the Soliga do not build their settlements near a water source. Secondly, the Soliga's desire to live nearer their kin has bearing upon the type of their small local communities and if they could live nearer their kin they can seek any help from their kin in times of exigencies.

In the Hills, the area is small, and therefore, the movement is very limited. Since the adjoining areas² in the Kollegal and Chamarajanagar taluks too are hilly tracts some Soliga might migrate, but largely, the soliga of the Hills do not leave the forest boundaries as far as possible save under such circumstance as ostracism by the people.

When a local community is established people live as one distinct group in relation to other groups. There is the 'feeling of togetherness' so long as the people live in a particular settlement for the specified period. There is cooperation between members in a local com-

1 Subbayya gives another account of the selection of a Soliga settlement, and observance of omen thus, "In selecting *Podu*, the probable area is located by elders. On a Thursday evening, they keep half *pav* of popped rice in a circle and in the middle they keep five popped rice, pray and cover it with a basket. Five people sleep near it. Next day, if the five popped rice are intact, they consider it a good omen and so settle in that place" (1965 : 45).

2 The B. R. Hills is within the Yalandur taluk *Jahagir* which was given to Sri Purnaiya Dewan and Regent in 1807 (Hayavadana Rao 1930 : 870) by the British as a *Jahagir*. The Soliga also live in the other adjoining territoris. Gopal describes these areas as : "... the Soligas of this area (B. R. Hills) know only their immediate neighbours—those who reside in *Raja Kadu* (i.e. King's forest—Chamarajanagar taluk) and *Kupini Kadu* (i.e. Company's forest—Kollegal Taluk). Their own abode, they call as *Jagir Kadu* (*Jagir-dar's forest*) ..." (1965 : 21).

munity when various ritual functions like worship in a local shrine takes place. During the observance of annual festivals members participate as one group. When ritual impurity accruing out of birth and death occurs, all members of a local community are affected by it. But one important aspect in this regard is that ritual impurity affects not only the members of a local community, but all members of the five-clan Soliga of the Hills. Yet, primarily, the members of a local community take the responsibility of helping the concerned parties to complete the attendant ceremonies connected with birth and death.

In a local community, elderly male members settle the disputes if it concerns their own settlement. But in case disputes are not settled in their settlement, they are referred to the *Kula Panchaiti* (tribal council) whose verdict is final and binding.

In this way, the local communities function as distinct social units. A few years ago, the Soliga changed their settlements at regular intervals. Owing to the rigidity of forest regulations, the Soliga said that it was not easy to shift their settlements frequently. The Soliga Podus, like the Yarakaganadde, Guruvinagadde, Purani, Kanchaugara have been existing for several years and have attained almost a semi-permanent status. In case of the other interior settlements it is said that the Soliga shift their settlements at intervals of four or five years, and the composition and desolution of the settlements takes place according to the traditional practices as has been stated above.

CHAPTER FOUR

MATERIAL CULTURE

The material possessions of the Soliga are few, and these are mostly the bare necessities that a jungle life demands. Since the Soliga come in contact with other people of the Temple village, and also outsiders, some items of their material culture, however, has bearing upon those of their neighbouring non-Soliga population. In the following sections, aspects of the material culture of the people are described.

I

HOUSE TYPES

The Soliga houses, known as *Gudlu*, are the temporary constructions in the forest fields. They are built in order to suit their frequent shifting from one habitat to another. The *Gudlu* that are found in different settlements of the Soliga do not vary in their structural pattern.

A house is built by the consolidated efforts of the members of a family. The time taken for building a house usually is not more than two days if the persons engaged are three. Before constructing a house, the rite of castor seeds (*Allushastra*) as described earlier, is observed on the selected plot. The whole structure of the house rests on six wooden *Kave* (forked posts) symmetrically. The length of the two central posts on which the roof rests is about seven feet and of the remaining four posts which support the roof is nearly four feet. The roof is slanting on both sides, with the bamboo rods radiating and the *Sarabu* (spliced bamboo rafters) supporting the roof structure. They are tied together by means of the *Seve* (a kind of creeper) or other fibres. The roof is thatched with the *Bane* (a kind of wild variety) grass. The wooden posts supporting the roof are fixed in the ground below the ground level to the depth of about one foot. These posts are stripped off the bark and they are not fashioned. The wooden posts used in the construction are such that they are not easily affected by the vermins and moths.

The houses are mainly of a single-room apartment. The four walls are made of spliced bamboo wattle intertwined with several wooden and hard bamboo rods. These walls, in many cases, are not daubed with earth plaster or any other material, but mud pilings at the walls rising from the floor both from inside and outside, are made in order to have the proper setting of the wattlewalls. An *Atta* (attic) is made inside the house at a height of four feet from the ground floor, which is used for keeping baskets, grains, clothes, etc. Doors are made of bamboo wattle alone. The doors have no hinges, but they are fastened to the walls by fibre threads. There is no device for locking the door. Whenever the houses are to be locked, the doors are tied to the wooden or bamboo rods of the wall to secure them tightly.

The space in the apartment in a house is small and serves both for cooking and sleeping purposes. Among the Soliga, it is considered ominous to indulge in sexual intercourse by a couple inside a house. It is in the forests where a couple is said to indulge in sexual intercourse. Generally, the Soliga sleep at night in the open yard outside their houses by the side of fire¹. The Soliga are fond of fire for two reasons. First, it protects them from biting cold in the Hills; and secondly, wild animals including elephants do not come near them for fear of fire.

In the forest fields, *Kavalu Kottige* (guarding houses) are built. Garret sheds are built on the branches of trees as watching house. From these places the Soliga can easily guard the standing crops. Men use the garret sheds and guarding houses as sleeping apartments, specially during the ripening of crops and harvesting season when the menace of marauding beasts is great. Women live in the houses during day time, but sleep outside on the open yard by the side of fire during nights. Guarding houses sometimes act as resting places by visitors who happen to stay overnight in the far off settlements of the Soliga.

The usual height of a Soliga house is about four feet at the entrance and nearly six feet in the centre where the roofs incline. There is only one entrance to the house, that is, from the front side. The smoke has to escape through one way, that is, from the clefts of the wattle-walls. Owing to inadequate ventilation, the area around the fire place is covered with a thick coating of black soot. Most of the household equipments are hung from the wooden pegs or bamboo rods of the walls. The attic is used for keeping big baskets, pottery, etc. The Soliga

1 Buchanan (Nanjundayya and Iyer 1931 : 592) has noted the habit of their sleeping 'round a fire'.

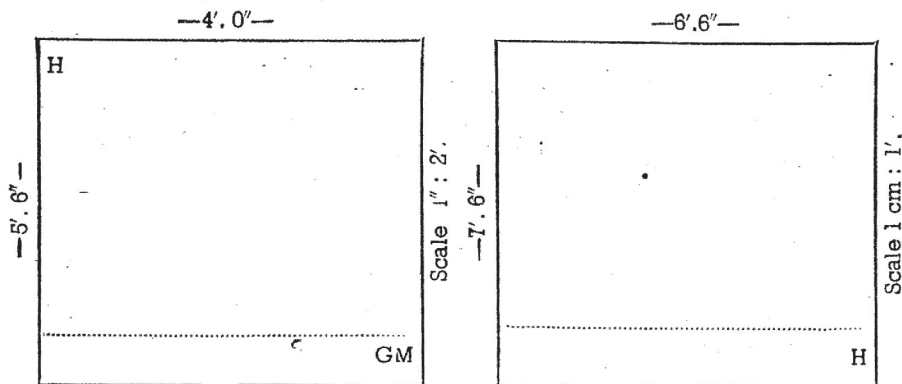
have no furniture. Such articles like the axe, bill hook, hatchet, etc. are propped up in a corner of the house.

In a Soliga house construction of an attic is necessary for storing articles. Usually, at a height of three and a half feet from the ground-level, a few bamboo rods are fixed on all the three sides of the walls, which act as the base for the attic floor. Several hollow bamboo are flattened and fastened together with creeper fibre and made into the attic floor. Sometimes, wattle-screens are used for the attic floor. Besides using the attic as a general store-room, sheaths of ripe maize are placed over the attic floor for drying when maize is harvested.

The *Ragi* is stored in *Guli* (sub-terranean pits) which are dug in the fields of respective families in case there is ample harvest.

The ground plan of house is rectangular and vary in sizes. The materials used for building houses are locally available. Wood, bamboo,

PLAN OF SOLIGA HOUSES



A. Plan of the house of Madegouda of Guruvinagadde.

B. Plan of the house of Chari Madegouda of Bhavihane.

Index : H Hearth, GM Grinding Mill,Place where attic floor ends.

and *Bane* grass grow in abundance in the forests and are easily procurable. Men bring materials like wood and bamboo, and women bring grass for thatching the roof. Men build the houses, while women cooperate with them in plastering the floor with mud, making wattle-walls, etc.

A well-built house lasts for about four to five years. Because of pestilence of vermin and white ants, the houses do not last longer. As the Soliga have to abandon their habitat after a lapse of four years, they do not build firm and durable houses.

II

The Soliga have few household equipments, and tools used in agriculture and other activities. They are described here briefly.

HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

Madake (earthen pots) are in common use for baking and boiling. Water is brought in *Arave* (earthen pitchers). The earthen pots and pitchers are bought from the potters of the Komaranapura village in the plains. Mostly, aluminium vessels like tumblers, plates, cooking utensils of varying sizes are used in addition to the earthen-ware. A few families in the Yakanagadde settlement possess brass vessels like *Bindige* (water pitcher), *Handi* (water containers of large size), tumblers, pots, etc. These brass articles are purchased at the neighbouring towns of Kollegal and Yalandur.

Many a Soliga family have *Ragi Kallu* (grinding mills) used mostly for grinding ragi and maize. They are made of stone, cut into two circular discs. The stone-cutter (*Vaddar*) caste of the plains-villages manufacture them and sell them in the markets during the fairs held in the Temple village.

No pestle and mortar of any kind was found to be in use among the Soliga. As pounding of grain of any type is not done by them.

Milk is stored in small bamboo containers known as *Bidiru Hande*. Large size bamboo containers are used mainly to keep salt, chillies, pulses and other articles of food used in cooking. For collecting and storing honey, large stems of green bamboo are cut with small apertures in the compartment of the stems. Large size wood pieces are cut hollow in different sizes and made as receptacles of water for the use of goats.

BASKETRY

The various articles of basketry which are in use among the Soliga are made locally by a few families whose members have learnt the art of basket-making. The articles of basketry are used mainly for the domestic use of the Soliga. Therefore, those who know the art do not practice it as a profession, and do not indulge in its trade. In some cases, it was noted that articles of basketry were supplied to well to do families of other castes and the Temple village, but this was done in order to fulfil their obligation of some kind, or repayment of loans taken by them when they were in need.

The articles of basketry commonly used are *Putte* and *Hedage*—baskets used for keeping grains and articles of food, and *Mora*—the

winnowing fan. *Tombe* is the large cylindrical type of basket used for storing millet and maize.

The patterns of the basket-work are mostly of the simple, plaited and twilled type. The method of preparing the basketry is that green bamboo are procured from the forests locally, and they are spliced into several strips. They are then soaked in water for about ten to fifteen minutes. These bamboo strips are peeled off into shivers. The shivers are woven into wefts which pass through the bamboo wasps. The only instrument used for the basketry is the bill hook. No colouring material is used. Usually, men take up the work of the basket, but women do not seem to learn the art.

AGRICULTURAL TOOLS

For the Soliga, the *Kodali* (axe) is an indispensable tool for cutting trees and felling bamboos in order to prepare the forest field into a cultivable land. The axe has an iron blade, fitted with a wooden shaft in the circular groove near the blade. The blades of the *Kodali* vary in size. In times of need the axe serves as a defensive weapon, particularly when one is confronted by wild bore, etc. It was observed that the Soliga men rarely go into forests without the axe on their shoulders.

The *Katti* (bill-hook) is used for cutting thorny branches of bamboo, bushes, etc. in the forests. This tool has a carved convex blade made of iron and fitted with a handle by means of a tang.

The sickle which is known as *Kudagolu* is another tool used mostly for cutting stalks of maize, millet, etc. and also wild grass for thatching. A thin sharp iron blade with a convex surface is fixed by means of a wooden handle with an iron ring at the fixture.

The *Kalakotlu* (hoe) is an important tool used in the shifting type of cultivation. It is used for scarifying the surface of the earth after broadcasting millet. The hoe has an iron blade, bent in the middle at right angle and fitted to a wooden or bamboo shaft. On account of its importance, the method of shifting cultivation sometimes take its name as *Kalakotlu* cultivation.

The *Dasi* (digging stick) is a wooden stick of about five feet in length, with one end of it sharpened. It is used for dibbling seeds of maize and pulses. They are also used for digging edible roots. Now-a-days, they have been replaced by the *Hare* (iron crow bars) in several settlements of the Hills.

The agricultural tools described above are bought from the markets at Kollegal and Yelandur towns, and also at the fairs held in the

Temple village. Almost all the tools, except the Dasi, are similar to those used by the peasants of the neighbouring plains villages.

III

DRESS, DECORATION AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Dress : Men wear *Pancha* of four yards in length which is wrapped round the waists, covering the knees. A *Kavacha* (tailor—stitched shirt) is worn by men. Elderly men, instead of wearing shirt, cover their upper portion with another cloth of the same length. In the Yarakana-gadde settlement, young men wear nicker and shirt. In the interior settlements, it was observed that men tuck a piece of cloth to their waist thread covering the loins. Shirts are also in use.

The dress of women consists of *Sele (sari)* and *Ravike* (bodice). The *sari* which is of five yards in length is worn round the waist hanging up to the feet. While wearing the *sari*, one end of the fold is tucked to one of the sides of the waist, and the other fold drawn frontside so as to cover the breasts and is hung over the back on the left shoulder. Elderly women usually do not wear bodice. Young women in the Yarakana-gadde settlement are found to wear undergarments inside the *sari*, besides wearing bodice.

Hair style : Men arrange their hair in three different ways. The hair is braided into a knot at the back of the head by means of a few hair or a thread of fibre. Another way is to leave tuft of hair on the crown of the head after tonsuring the remaining hair on the head. There is also a third way of hair-keeping in which the hair is allowed to grow on the head without cropping them at all. A barber of the Komaranapura village visits the Temple Village regularly once a week on Saturday when those following the second type of hair style seek the services of the barber. Many young men in the Yarakana-gadde settlement follow the method of western style of cropping hair for which they visit the barber shops at the towns of Kollegal and Yelandur occasionally. But largely, in the interior settlements the first style of hair keeping is commonly noticed.

Women adopt the hair style of either keeping a braid in the back of the head, or leaving the hair unplaited.

It was observed that the Soliga do not give much attention to their hair. As no oil is used for the hair, usually hair get into locks and they are full of lice. Considerable time is wasted by the women-

folk in removing the lice from the hair of their menfolk, and also among themselves.

Ornaments : Women wear a few ornaments which are largely of the same type that are used by the women of the neighbouring plains villages.

Kadaga : (heavy silver bracelet) of a plain circular type are worn by women on their wrists. Silver girdle ornamented with spherical jingling bells, known as *Geje Dabu*, is worn by women in the waists during festive occasions. It is said that only two women in the Yarakaganagadde settlement possess this ornament. These ornaments are purchased at the jewellery shops in Kollegal town.

Ole : (ear rings) and ornament for the nose, viz. *Battu* are worn by almost every women. These ornaments are fixed with shining stones and are mostly of the cheap variety made of metal. The ear-rings are tightly secured by inserting in the ear-borings of the ear lobes, whereas the nose-rings are plugged in the studs of both the nostrils. Some elderly women wear a crescent shaped ornament made of silver, in the upper helix of the ears.

It was noticed that among men, a few elderly persons were found to wear silver bracelets, known as *Muri*. It is a thin wringled ornament worn in the wrists. Though among men it was found that youngsters did not wear ear-rings, there were a few cases of elderly men wearing ear-rings made of cheap metals.

Personal hygiene : The Soliga men do not take bath regularly. Once in a week or fortnight, youngsters take bath while elderly persons take bath casually. Women do not take bath regularly. But on festive occasions, the Soliga take bath without any exception.

Owing to the nature of their work, such as climbing trees, digging edible roots etc., clothes often become dirty. Yet they do not wash them frequently. Some Soliga were justifying the habit of not taking bath regularly and not washing their clothes by saying that because of their muddy smell elephants which are in plenty where the Soliga live, scent their aroma² and therefore it was advantageous for them as they could freely move in the elephant infested area, without any fear for the wild animals.

Men do not use soap or any other substitute. Women use the

² Thurston says that '.... even wild beasts will scent a Sholaga, and flee before the aroma' (1909 : 384).

mucilage of barks of the *Bende* tree for washing the hair.

In the vast open space and near the water sources in the forests, they attend to personal ablutions. In case of young babies up to the age of one year, women use torn pieces of clothes for ablutions, and such used up clothes are thrown away along with other refuse. They use leaves of jungle trees in the forests for personal ablutions if no water is available in the near vicinity. Children are not taught any hygienic practice by elders, but are left to learn by themselves.

IV

FOOD PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION

Diet : The staple diet of Soliga is *Ragi* (millet). *Musukinjola* (maize) is also grown in the forest fields and consumed in large quantities. Seasonal variations are observed in the arrangement of food stuff. Maize is reaped during the months of June and July and is consumed for about two months till the millet ripens. *Ragi* is harvested in October and November, and is consumed for the next two to three months. Rice is not grown but procured from the local shops and is eaten during ceremonial occasions. Roots and tubers are used by the Soliga as almost staple diet.

The *Ragi* is consumed mainly in the form of porridge out of which *Mudde* (balls) are made. The *Ragi* flour is added to boiling water until it is well cooked and is then made into balls. Sometimes *Rotti* (flat bread) out of *Ragi* flour are prepared by baking. The food items prepared out of the maize are gruel and *Rotti*. Rice is cooked by adding a little salt and boiling it.

Pulses and vegetables and fruits : Among the pulses *Hurali* (horse gram), *Alasande* (*vigna catjang*) and *Avare* (*phaseolus radiatus*) are commonly consumed. The vegetables used are leaves of *Sasuve* (mustard), *Hedda* (*amarantus oleraceus*), *Keera* (*amarantus mango stanus*), *Kumbal* (pumpkin) which are cultivated plants. Among wild varieties, *Halasu* (Jack), *Seebe* (guava), wild plantain *Bidiru Kalale* (young bamboo shoots) are used for preparing vegetable food. Cherries and fruits (raw ones), such as, *Tebura*, *Geru*, *Kadu Sebu*, *Nerilu*, *Mavu*, etc. which are grown in the forests are extensively consumed. Different types of curry and soups are prepared out of the pulses and leafy vegetables, by mixing chillies, salt, tamarind and spices.

There are certain restrictions and taboos which are observed by

the Soliga in the consumption of food, for example, they cannot eat maize before a few cobs of the maize are offered to the 'Earth Goddess' (*Bhoomi Tayi*). The Ragi can be eaten only after the observance of the *Hosa Ragi* festival. It is believed that violations to the above practices might result in great harm to the individual's well-being, and hence a Soliga scorns to be involved in such violations as far as possible.

Roots and tubers : During most parts of the year, varieties of edible roots and tubers like the *Noore*, *Neve* and *Bellare* are consumed in large quantities. These yams grow in the jungle in abundance and it is easier to extract them from the underground. As has been said earlier, the yams are consumed as staple diet.

Milk consumption : Milk obtained from goats is consumed. Owing to the distribution of milch cows to some families of the Soliga by the government, cow is another source for procuring milk. Mainly, milk is used for tea and coffee. No dairy product like the curds and butter is made.

Honey : During the months of May-June and October-November, the Soliga collect honey in large quantities when they supplement their usual diet with ample quantity of honey. Honey is collected with great effort.

Non-vegetarian food : The principal animals which provide meat for consumption are *sambar* (spotted deer), *Kadabe* (antelope), *Kada Handi* (wild pig), *Mullu Handi* (porcupine) and *Kondaguri* (wild sheep). However, deer and antelope are protected games and hence they rarely get them. Among small games are *Kotti* (cat), *Kadu Koli* (wild fowl), *Uda* (iguana), crab, rat, etc. Many varieties of birds like *Aruga*, *Unni giraka*, *Haralakki*, *Kirichitte*, *Kottarale*, etc. are trapped and relished. For the Soliga, *Alima* (large squirrel), and *Musuva* (black monkey) are the favourite vertebrates. The avidity for the flesh of these two animals is found in their hard search for them in the jungle. Rearing of fowls appears to be a recent phenomenon and its flesh is consumed. The Soliga consider the flesh of goat as an infallible remedy for ordinary fever of any type. Among the animals tabooed for consumption are Bison, Buffalo, cow domesticated pigs, kite, dog and reptiles. Bear is not eaten, but it was found that dried meat-pieces of the bear are consumed as medicinal doses during cholera. It is a taboo to mix meat in any preparation of the milk. The Soliga could not give any reasons for the taboo.

Meat dish is prepared by cooking the meat along with spices in the form of curry and soups, and consumed. Small games like squirrel and monkey are roasted on fire and eaten.

Drink and drugs : It is observed that the Soliga do not indulge in taking fermented drinks like beer, wine and *toddy*. Except an instance of a Soliga in the Yakanagadde settlement addicted to *toddy*, no case of alcoholic drinking was reported. The tribal council of the Soliga consider it a breach of tribal law to take to alcoholic drinking and hence the culprit is punished by imposing fine on the offender. It was learnt that many petty traders from some villages of the plains carried on their trade secretly (as then the Prohibition Law in Mysore State was in force) with their customers in the Temple Village. But the Soliga consider drinking as a crime and abhor it.

In the interior settlements, the Soliga are reported to grow the *Bangi* (Indian hemp) secretly and they are addicts of this narcotic. They deny any knowledge of its growing and consumption. The Soliga are aware that growing of this hemp is unlawful and hence the fact of its growth or consumption is not divulged. It is said that the flowers of hemp plants are dried and smoked in earthen pipes.

Tobacco is chewed by both men and women. It is sold to the people by petty traders who visit the settlements and exchange their articles for cash or for articles of food. *Beedi* (leaf cigarette used in country side) is sold at the local shops. Men including young boys of about fifteen years of age are habituated to smoking *Beedi*. Elderly women also smoke *Beedi*, but only casually, during cold weather.

V

Recreation (Music and dance) : The Soliga find few avenues for recreation, as for instance, reciting songs and participating in dances on festive occasions, and delousing hair. The nature of their local community and also their personality forbid them from establishing more than informal social gathering. As denizens of forests most of the time in a day they feel happy to wander in silent woods lonely, or with one or two companions. The festive occasions, however, provide them a kind of break from sheer monotony of routine life.

To the Soliga, it may be said that recreation as such may not have any meaning. For those who work as farm or forest labourer, absenting from a day's work so as to visit the forests in search of yams and honey, may perhaps be considered as recreation.

The activity of delousing hair often gives the Soliga a kind of relaxation. In the light, sunny mornings or evenings, the Soliga men lie on the lap of their obliging wives who delouse the hair of their spouses. In case of women, other women help mutually in delousing hair. It was also noticed that while doing the activity of delousing which continues for hours, people are engaged in gossip.

Music and dance: The most important recreational activities of the Soliga are singing and dancing during festive occasions. The Soliga songs have profound poetic feeling. They are sung during the two great festivals of the tribe, namely, the *Hosa Ragi* and the *Rotti Habba*. The native songs are compositions in praise of the deity Siva, particularly, Mahadeswar deity. Men sing 'Goru, Goru, Gorukana', a kind of rhythmic couplets, recite *Kagga*, a lengthy literary prose composition and *Olaga* prayer invoking deities by songs in Kannada. Women resort to chorus when men go on singing in attractive phonal tones like 'la, la, le, le, loo.....' etc.

On festive occasions the Soliga make merriment by engaging themselves in their traditional dance to the tune of ordinary drum and a pair of cymbals. In the Hills, it is only the men who participate in dancing. Women do not dance but they assemble to sing chorus songs and witness dances performed by men. The presence of young girls enchants young men and make them join the dancing party voluntarily. Dancers assemble on the ceremonial occasion, near the pole which would face the pandal built for the shrine of the settlement, or a family deity. Usually, when worship is done to a deity and the ceremonial meal is over, dance performances begin. Gradually, with the beating of the country drum and cymbals, and with utterance of prosodic couplets, the individual dancers begin to hop, jump and skip, and later rhythmically circumambulate the sacred pole clockwise. Men who know the couplets sing them in succession and others in the dancing group repeat the first sentence of the vocabulary tenaciously tripping with rapid steps and end with the usual 'Goru, Goru, Gorukana.....' rhyme. As and when dancers drop away from the group for a brief interval others fill the gap, but the heightening of ecstasy will not make Soliga dancers to encounter any feeling of fatigue, despite several hours of quickening steps and swaying movements. Dance usually begins by about nine in the night and continues till the sunrise.

Musical instruments: The most important musical instrument is the *Tala* (cymbal) which are made of brass and always used in a pair. The

rhythmic clapping of cymbals provides resolute music to the dancers. The simple drum known as *Halage* which is strained across an iron rim by means of goat-hide, is played by striking the membrane by stick-beaters. The *Kombu* (brass trumpet) is also in vogue. The cymbals and the trumpet are bought in the shops in the markets at Kollegal and Yalandur towns. For making the drum the Soliga purchase the iron frame from the shops, and prepare themselves the remaining part.

Koralu (flute): *Koralu* is also in use. It is prepared locally out of small bamboo stems. In the interior settlements like Doddare, Bhavihane, the *Peenasi* (a kind of pan pipe) prepared out of wood is commonly used. Usually, young boys prepare the *Peenasi* and blow them as they please. It may be noted that this is not used at the time of singing and dancing.

VI

Arts and Crafts: If art is understood as a mere attempt to reveal aesthetic activity, it may be observed that among the Soliga, such art is expressed through the drawings made on the articles of wood and bamboo, namely, the wooden pillow, the wooden handle and bamboo containers. The presence of superior quality of wood particularly is an important factor which makes the Soliga hew a few carvings on wood. The Soliga carvings are not followed by any interpretation. Only one or two persons are said to be knowing the art of drawing on wood and bamboo.

CHAPTER FIVE

ECONOMIC LIFE

The Soliga of the Hills are largely dependent upon their traditional economic pursuits. Since the Soliga are coming in contact with the people of other cultures, some of them have been taking up modern economic pursuits also. In this Chapter, salient features of the various economic activities pursued by the people are described.

I

TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

The traditional economy of the Soliga is mostly based on shifting cultivation and collection of minor forest produce. There are also other minor economic activities, like hunting, trapping, fishing and honey collecting.

Agriculture: The form of cultivation practised in the Hills is shifting cultivation. This method is generally known as *Podu*¹ cultivation, or *Kalakotlu* (hoe) form.

The *Podu* cultivation is done mainly on hill slopes and mountain ridges in the forests after the local communities are formed. It is considered beneficial to cultivate on such places for reasons of safety from the menace of wild beasts, specially elephants. Small patches of land on the hill slopes are cleared off the forest growth, and cultivation is done on such lands for a period of four years.

Method of Podu cultivation: The Soliga begin the work of cultivation in their forest fields by the end of January. The felling of the jungle growth, cutting of stumps and weeds mark the commencement of the agricultural operation for the new year. The branches and leaves of jungle trees in the fields are chopped off leaving a few of them sparingly for building garrets on the tops of trees. By March and April,

¹ The type of shifting cultivation practised by tribes like Maria Gonds of Bastar, Reddis of Bison Hills, is also referred to as *Podu* (Haimendorf 1945 : 77). A Soligo settlement is called by the same term, perhaps signifying the type of the cultivation.

the clearings in the fields get dried. Then they are burnt. The ash of the burnt wood and leaves is left in the fields until the fall of rains during monsoons. By May, the monsoon showers moisten the fields with the absorption of the ash, and the field becomes ready for sowing maize and pulses. Among other crops, beans and castor are important ones, which are also sown along with maize and pulses.

At the time of sowing the maize, three seeds of maize are held at a time in the right hand by the sower. These seeds are dropped into the holes made by the digging stick held in the left hand, and those holes are then covered with the earth by treading over it by a foot. At the time of sowing the maize no particular system like sowing in any orderly row is practised. The seeds are dibbled at random in all directions leaving gaps intermittently. Usually, each of the holes dibbled is set apart at a uniform distance of one foot each. The sowing of maize is followed simultaneously by sowing of the pulses in the same way. In the sowing operation, men keep the maize seeds in a cloth bag hung over their shoulders while women carry the seeds in the folds of their *sari*.

When maize plants grow to a height of about nine inches, broadcasting of Ragi is done in the same field. Broadcasting of the millet generally takes place during April and middle of May. Usually, it is the work of women to broadcast the millet. When the ritual in honour of *Bhumi Tayi* (goddess of earth) is conducted, broadcasting is begun. When the millet is broadcast, the field is sacrafied by turning the sod with the hoe (*Kalakotlu*). That is why this form of cultivation is referred to as *Kalakotlu* form.

During the period beginning from sprouting of the maize and millet till the ripening of the crop, the Soliga have to remove weeds, at least twice or thrice. The young crops are to be guarded from the ravages of wild animals and birds. The birds are scared away by means of a *Kavane* (sling) made of fibre thread.

No major rituals connected with the agricultural practices are done after the sowing is over, till the harvesting begins. By July, when maize ripens, a few cobs of them are cut, and placed on the earth by the Soliga cultivators as a kind of offering to the earth goddess. From thence forward eating of maize begins. The stalk of the maize cobs are cut with the sickle and the cut-ends are stacked in a *Tenekottige* (storehouse) built in the fields. The Soliga are found to be generous in giving gifts of the maize cobs to the Soliga of other settlements and also to the non-Soliga inhabitants of the Temple village. The maize

cobs are brought home after distribution to the kin and other persons. They are stored in the attic of the house. Some fire is kept underneath the attic and owing to the absorption of warmth, the cobs get dried. When they are completely dried, they are threshed by wooden sticks in order to separate the grain from the sheath.

Ragi is harvested in the months of October and November. By means of a small sickle, stalks of the millet are cut and stacked in bundles in the storehouse. Later the stalks are transferred to the *Kala* (threshing floor). The ears of the stalk are cut and gathered on the *Kala*, and they are threshed with wooden cudgels. The millet is cleared off the chaff by dropping the threshed grain from some height. In this process, the operator stands on a raised platform fixed in the centre of the *Kala*. The grain is dropped from the height by a winnowing fan or a basket. The chaff is blown off by the wind and the millet is separated.

The first eating of the harvested millet begins after the observance of the festival known as the *Hosa Ragi* festival.

Pulses and beans sown along with the millet are harvested in the months of November and December. The castor is harvested in January. The castor pods are cut from the castor trees and dried in the sun. Dried castor pods are threshed with sticks so as to separate the seeds from the pods.

On the hill slopes of the interior settlements, viz. Doddare, Bhavihane and Kanchugara, the local variety of plantain is grown. The plantain seedlings are planted in the forest fields in the area where it is damp. The Soliga say that menace of elephants, particularly to the plantation crop, is very great. Because of this danger, many Soligas do not like to grow plantain, though monetary benefit in growing the crop is considerable. The plantain crop is reaped generally during April and May.

Various agricultural activities are done by both the sexes. Men do the hard task of cutting trees, building fences, harvesting crops, while women do the less arduous work like broadcasting, sowing, plucking weeds, etc. The Soliga do not employ outside labour for their work in the fields. The patch of land cut for cultivation by each family is usually in accordance with their capacity and need.

The agricultural yield derived from the *Podu* cultivation is said to be just sufficient for a period of four to five months in case the harvest is plentiful. In the matter of cultivation, it is the effort of the individuals that counts in respect of maintenance of their family and depen-

dants. There is no collective efforts by the local community in regard to the practise of agriculture.

Collection of minor forest produce : There are three *Gadanga* (agencies) operating in the various settlements of the Soliga which are authorised by the Forest Department to collect the minor forest produce according to forest regulations. The agents advance petty sums to the Soliga and collect large quantities of minor forest produce. Owing to the monopoly of the trade, the Soliga are compelled to depend upon these agents. The earnings on these items are meagre. The Soliga cannot violate the trade norms of the agents, such as, selling any of their goods to others, particularly, honey, etc. In the event of any slight deviation from the usual norm, it is said that the agents deal with the Soliga seriously, sometimes inflicting physical violence. Therefore, they are afraid of the agents and sell them the minor forest produce, without bargaining, to the prices fixed by the agents themselves either for cash or in exchange of articles of food and other necessary goods. The agents are at greater advantage, as they earn not only profits by selling their goods to their main forest contractors at Chamarajanagar, but also earn quite a good sum by selling articles of foods, etc, to the Soliga at comparatively higher prices, in exchange, and thus the Soliga are losers from both the sides ; they get lower prices for the labour done in collecting forest produce, and comparatively pay higher price for the articles they buy from the agents. The agents do not divulge how much net profit they get from their main contractor in these transactions with the Soliga.

The chief among the minor forest produce collected by the Soliga of the Hill are : *Kakke Chakke* (*cassia festiula*), *Pachi*, *Alalekai* (*terminalia chebula*) and *Jenu* (honey). The *cassia fistula* is used in tanning industry. It is available in plenty from January to May. The *terminalia chebula* and *Pachi* are useful in the dyeing industry. During the summer months, specially from February to April, the *terminalia chebula* nuts are collected. *Pachi* is a kind of whitish growth of moss obtained on the trunks and branches of trees. *Pachi* is available in the rainy season. From July to September, when there is heavy rainfall in the Hills, collection of the *Pachi* keeps most of the Soliga men busy. The average daily earning of an individual varies from rupee one and fifty paise to two rupees, if one is engaged in the work from morning till evening, in the case of collection of *cassia fistula* and *terminalia chebula*, while in the case of the collection of *Pachi* the average daily earnings range from Rupees two and fifty paise to Rupees three. The difference in the

two types of work is due to the risk involved in the operation, and the greater economic value of the latter. It is said that the Pachi is sent to Madras by the main contractor of forest produce for being exported to outside countries, and therefore it has greater demand. It is hazardous to climb branches of giant trees covered with slippery moss and scrape the Pachi (whitish moss) with wooden scrapper, held in one hand and filling the moss scraped thereof by the other hand in the cloth bag suspended from the shoulders. It is a great act of balancing also. Sometimes, there are casualties from a fall from trees, but the Soliga take the risk involved in the collection of the Pachi in view of the higher rates of remuneration they get. Only the Soliga men are engaged in the two economic activities mentioned above.

The other minor produce collected by the Soliga in the forests are: Wax, Stag hoofs, *Seege* (*acacia concinna*), *Antavala* (soap nuts), *Nellikayi* (*phyllanthus imbllica*), but the income derived out of these items is very meagre. Both men and women engage themselves in collecting these items.

The Soliga perform worship of the deities of the local shrines before commencement of collection of minor forest produce for every season. The agents of the forest contractor usually finance such worship. On a chosen Friday or Monday, a ceremonial meal consisting of rice, *Ragi* porridge and curry is cooked and offered to the deities. Hens or cocks are also sacrificed on the occasion. The ceremony is conducted near the water source of a settlement. The priest and others of the local community pray to the deities for safety of the operation of collection of forest produce without any injury to the persons engaged in the work.

Honey collection: As an item of minor forest produce, honey fetches considerable remuneration for the Soliga. It is relished much by the Soliga. They consume the raw honey, and sometimes when available in plenty, it forms the Soliga's diet. They seldom sell honey to the agents; and that also when their desire for consuming it is satiated. There are two seasons for collecting honey, namely, May—June and October—November. Honey is collected during these seasons from the cliffs, rocky crevices and the branches of giant trees. The Soliga of the Hills are expert climbers of rocks and trees. Sometimes by using bamboo scaffoldings they extract honeycombs from remote and inaccessible places.

There are three varieties of money, viz. *Kirijenu*, *Hejjenu* and *Tudu-*

vejenu. The *Kirijenu* is extracted from the combs of small types (*Kiri*) of bees. These combs are mostly found in bushes and branches of trees. But it is not found in large quantities. Because of the medicinal contents in this variety, there is a great demand for it. It costs more. The *hejjenu* combs are found to be sticking to cliffs and rocks at heights. The *tuduvejenu* is generally found in the hollows of trees and rocky crevices.

With the sprouting of wild flowers, such as, *Beede*, *Tare*, *Neri*, *Seve*, *Bende*, *Harnelli*, *Matti*, etc., in the forests, bees begin to suck the juice from the flowers of these trees, and transform it into honey. The Soliga start searching for the places of honeycombs, when they see the wild flowers sprouting.

One side of the huge rock where the temple of Rangaswamy is situated is inaccessible, as it is vertically situated and has slight inclination. This side is filled with honeycombs during the two seasons mentioned above. The honeycombs are found sticking to the huge rock at different heights. It is strenuous and hazardous to collect honey from this rock. The Soliga prepare bamboo scaffoldings with twigged bamboo stairs in order to reach the honeycombs. Before commencing the operation of honey collection, the Soliga perform worship to the deities like Rangaswamy, Mahadeswar and others by offering parched rice, parched gram, jaggery, cocoanut, etc. This ritual is observed with a view to praying to the deities to protect them from the danger of falling from the heights or being bitten by the bees.

The equipments used for the operation are a long rope, a few buckets or tins and bamboo poles. After the bamboo scaffoldings are built in order to reach the honeycombs at different heights, several bundles of green leaves are placed on the ground floor of the rock and are burnt. The leaves being green do not burn, instead, smoke is let out from them. This thick smoke clouds the rock thereby making the bees fly away. One full night is allowed to pass so that the bees either fly away, or being 'smoke drunk' become harmless. Only on the succeeding day, the actual operation begins. Usually, two or three persons climb the scaffoldings carrying torches of green leaves in order to escape from the ravages of bees. The other members of the party wait on the ground floor for receiving the buckets or tins suspended from the above. Those who operate from the rock pick up the honeycombs and fill them into the buckets or tins and suspend them below by means of ropes. The operation is repeated until the combs are exhausted.

TABLE 4
VARIOUS ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLIGA AND THE RITUAL
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM IN A CALENDAR YEAR

Sl. No.	Calendar month	Month according to the Soliga	Major traditional economic activities	Honey collection	Specific ritual activities associated with them
1.	February-March	Ugadi	Agricultural, i.e., Podu cultivation Clearing off of the forest growth, weeds, stumps etc. in the Podu fields.	—	Specific ritual activities associated with them
2.	March-April	Jatre	Burning the dried weeds, forest growth etc., in the Podu fields.	—	—
3.	April-May	Teppa	Sowing maize, pulses, and castor seeds. Broadcasting the Ragi millet.	—	The <i>Bhumi Tayi</i> (earth goddess) festival is observed.
4.	May-June	Adre	Removing weeds grown in maize and millet plants.	Collection of honey	—
5.	June-July	Kakkat	Reaping the maize	—	Offering maize cobs to the earth goddess before eating.
6.	July-August	Sarawana	Threshing the maize	Collection of <i>Pachi</i> .	Worship to the several deities is done.
7.	August-September	Gowri	Removing weeds grown in millet for the second time	—	—
8.	September-October	Marlame	Same as above	—	—
9.	October-November	Divalige	Harvesting of the millet	—	—
10.	November-December	Kiri Divalige	Harvesting pulses	Collection of <i>cassia festucla</i> and <i>terminalia chebulu</i> .	The <i>Hosa Ragi</i> festival is observed.
11.	December-January	Sankranti	Harvesting castor	—	—
12.	January-February	Sivaratri	—	—	—

While removing the combs at great heights, the Soliga keep up tempo in the work by singing songs in praise of their deities.

The honey is squeezed off the raw honeycombs. Then the combs are boiled in tins and the solution filled in the moulds dug in earth, and wax is extracted out of them.

It is said that previously, the agents of the forest contractors used to take away the honey available from the rock, but in 1965 the Forest Labourers' Co-operative Society of the Hills took up the contract and the honey was collected by engaging the Soliga.

In the Hills, there are several big rocks and huge trees where honeycombs are available in plenty. The Soliga collect them more or less in the same way as described above and sell the honey and wax to the agents of the forest contractors.

The Podu cultivation, collection of minor forest produce and honey are the major economic activities of the Soliga. The various aspects of their traditional economy along with the rituals observed thereon in a calendar year are shown in the Table 4.

Trapping : The Soliga are not expert trappers. However, they trap a few small animals. Mostly, they use a kind of crude trap to kill birds and wild cat. The only principle involved in their crude trap is by dropping a heavy weight on the catch as soon as the catch touches a bait, like the rat, in case of trapping a cat, and a few grains in order to trap birds. A heavy stone is so arranged that it is supported by means of a stick which is held by another stick. The latter also touches the bait. With this trapping arrangement, no sooner the bait is touched by the catch than one of the sticks moves abruptly dislodging the supporting stick, with the result that the stone falls on the catch and the victim is crushed.

A *bale* (net trap) is used for catching the large forest squirrel (*Alima*). The net is made out of the fibre of pendant root of banyan tree. It is operated thus : the net trap is tied with one end to the branch of a big tree and its mouth supported by a stick. The animal is chased by a Soliga towards the open mouth of the trap. When the animal falls into the mouth of a trap the nose of the trap gets tightened and the trap remains hanging to the branch with its victim trapped in the *bale*. The victim is then beaten to death ; otherwise

the animal bites the trap and makes way for its escape.

For catching the wild sheep and wild pigs, *kuli* (game pits) are dug in the vital areas of their intrusion. Usually, two or three sharpened wooden spikes are fixed in vertical positions in such pits at a depth of about six feet. The mouth of the pits are covered by layers of leaves, so as to disguise the identity of the spot where the pits exist, and deceive the catch. When an animal falls into the pit with great force, it is either stuck or hurt by the spikes. The animals then is beaten to death by sticks. But such pits are not dug now-a-days owing to the dangerous possibility of human beings becoming victims. Such pits are dug in some very interior settlements as a protective measure in guarding crops from the wild pigs.

Another method of lessening the ravages of the wild pig is by means of *sidimaddu* (fire crackers). This method appears to be very recent. The readymade balls of fire crackers are placed in different places near the fences of forest fields. Wild pigs while trying to dig the fences in order to enter the fields take the fire crackers in their mouth and bite them. When the fire crackers are bitten, they usually explode and instantaneously kill the animals. In the Yakanagadde settlement, two cases of death of wild pigs by the use of fire crackers were noted. Traders in fire crackers from the towns of Yalandur and Kollegal visit the various Soliga settlements in order to sell them. Generally, trading in fire cracker is kept secret. The Soliga too do not divulge the information about the traders, or the animals killed for fear of forest and other authorities. It is said that the prices of each ball of fire cracker varies from Rupees five to eight depending upon the size. The meat of the animal killed in such an operation is sold to others including the non-Soliga people of the Temple village for the prices fixed by the owner of the kill. As the havoc created by the wild pigs is too great in the Hills, the Soliga take to this device only for guarding their crops.

Hunting : Though the Hills are full of games, the Soliga are not traditionally hunters of any game. They do not have any hunting weapon. There are no myths and legends indicating any trace of hunting except the *musuva* (black monkey) which were said to be hunted with muzzle loaders according to a folksong. Though they are fond of black monkeys, they cannot kill them without muzzle loaders

or any such weapon. The forest laws forbid hunting by any means. The Soliga may occasionally find animals like antelope, deer, etc. discarded by other animals after they had caught or killed them. When such victims are found, they are able to get the meat of these animals.

Fishing : Fish is not available in abundance in the Hills. In a few springs of shallow waters scattered here and there, fish is found. The method of getting the fish is by poisoning the water. The Soliga have no fish traps or any other device of catching the fish. The barks of local trees, viz., *sokko seege* and *budugariana karekai* are pounded into a juicy form and the liquid is mixed in the shallow waters where the fish are found. The fish die of the poison of the herbal mixture and begin to float on the surface of the water when they are collected. As there are very few springs containing fish, fishing is resorted to occasionally.

Vara system : There is a kind of economic dealing in the area in which maintenance of animals like goat and fowl is involved. In this transaction, the Soliga and people of the Temple village are the parties. It is known as *vara* (sharing) system which is recognized from the tradition. Now-a-days the system also covers the cattle. Under the arrangement of *vara* system, reproductive animals like the goat, hen and cow are taken and transacted with an oral agreement to return back only the half of the animals produced thereof along with the reproductive animals after completion of the specified period. In turn, the recipient has the obligation of proper maintenance of the animals contracted under the *vara* condition. If the animal gave birth to only one, the product is valued in terms of money, and both the owner and the client share the actual sale price fixed by the parties equally. In case of misuse of the animals, the owner may penalise the client but the owner may, however, relax penalty if the animals are lost due to tiger-lifting, death or theft. Under such circumstances, the client has to produce sufficient proofs or convince the owner; otherwise, the owner has the right of asking for compensation. The conditions being very rigid, the Soliga hesitate to enter into the *vara* agreement with the people of the Temple village, who usually want to have their animals maintained by the Soliga. It was observed that there were only two cases in Yarakaganadde settlement. In one case, the Soliga client had agreed for the *vara* of a goat with a man of the parivara caste in the Temple village, and in the case of the other, the animal

was a hen, which was contracted with the muslim agent living in the Yarakaganadde settlement. The Soliga are not interested in taking up the vara system, despite the advantage of the system as it requires no capital, and also there is not much risk involved in it. The important reason for their indifference is that they cannot maintain them properly and fear destruction of young plants like the sandal, teak, etc., by the animals which is treated as an offence by the authorities of the Forest Department.

Forest labour: The forest contractors employ the Soliga men for cutting trees and felling bamboo on casual labour. Since the Soliga are experts in these jobs and the labour charges comparatively cheaper, the contractors who are authorised by the Forest Department always engage them. Sometimes, the officials of the Forest Department employ them on daily wages for petty works like preparing game roads, forest survey work, etc. Mostly, people of the interior settlements like Doddare, Kanchugara, Bhavihane, Kallarabetta and Kolla are the beneficiaries of such works. But the forest works are mostly available during summer months, when contractors and officials of the Forest Department undertake work in the forests.

II

CHANGING ECONOMY

Besides their traditional subsistence economy, the Soliga are also engaged in various other economic activities such as plough cultivation, agricultural labour, animal husbandry and rearing of silk cocoon. It was observed that the people of the Yarakaganadde and Purani settlements have taken advantage of the governmental measures sponsored for the welfare of the tribals. The reasons for the two settlements taking advantage of the new economic activities are, first, the people of these settlements come in closer contact with the people of the other Hindu castes of the Temple village and the plains-villages, and the second reason is that the settlements are connected by road and could be easily approached. The people in other settlements are largely dependent upon their traditional economic activities as their settlements are situated in remote and not easily accessible areas.

The following are the various economic pursuits followed by the Soliga of the Hills,

Plough cultivation: When a census was taken as regards the number of families who were using the plough, it was found that in the Purani settlement, 19 Soliga families had taken up the plough cultivation, whereas in the Yarakaganadde and Guruvinaganadde settlements, the number was two and one respectively. The wooden plough used here is similar to the one used by the people of the Temple village. The Social Welfare Department is said to have given to some Soliga families sophisticated ploughs made of iron. The Soliga of the Purani settlement which is in proximity to the plains-villages as they have only to come down from the Hills in order to reach the villages in the plains, get their wooden ploughs made by the carpenters in the plains-villages, particularly Komaranapura village or any nearby village. Along with the plough cultivation, the traditional *Podu* cultivation is also practised.

Agricultural labour: During the agricultural seasons, labour force is needed to work in the fields of the peasants of the Temple village. The Soliga are employed in the fields for various agricultural activities, such as, preparing fences, weeding, guarding the crops, harvesting, etc., as casual labourer. Mostly, women and youngsters are employed for this work; men are engaged only to do hard tasks like cutting trees, etc. People of the Yarakaganadde and Beedikullu settlements mostly are engaged for such work. Sometimes, petty loans are given to the Soliga by the land holders in times of their need but the return is always in terms of labour. Many Soligas of the Yarakaganadde settlement complain that they do not get remuneration commensurate with the service rendered by them. The daily wages for a man was fixed as Rupee one and fifty paise, whereas one rupee was paid to a woman labourer and youngsters were paid only seventy five paise. Though wages in the plains-villages were much higher, the Soliga were not desirous of going down to the plains from the Hills in search of agricultural labour.

Animal husbandry: Among the domesticated animals goat and cow are the chief. Fowls are also raised. The goat and fowl are the sacrificial animals during ritual occasions. The cow and bullock are employed in agricultural operations wherever plough cultivation is introduced. The milch cows give milk to their owners, but the quantity of milk obtained is sufficient for domestic use only.

The following table gives the stock of the cattle and other domesti-

cated animals in the various settlements of the hills, when the census of them was taken.

TABLE 5

CATTLE AND OTHER DOMESTICATED ANIMALS IN THE SETTLEMENTS

Sl. No.	Name of the settlement	C a t t l e			Goat	Sheep	Fowl
		Cow	Bullock	Calf			
1	Yarakanagadde	16	6	9	10	—	14
2	Guruvinagadde	5	2	1	9	—	6
3	Beedikallu	1	—	—	—	—	—
4	Purani	22	5	10	12	—	12
5	Bhavihane	8	—	—	—	2	4
6	Kolla	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	Doddare	—	—	—	1	—	6
8	Kallarabetta	—	—	—	2	—	6
9	Kanchugara	—	—	—	—	—	2

The Soliga did not domesticate cattle in the past. Some of the cattle shown in the above table are the gifts from Government. In the case of the Bhavihane settlement, the number of in the column of cow occurs as one Soliga had bought milch cows for his own use. The Soliga do not have any knowledge of rearing cattle. Bullocks are yoked to the plough. But sometimes, heifers are also yoked to the plough. The above table shows that the Soliga of six settlements, mostly of the interior areas, do not possess any bullock. The people of other three interior settlements who often come in close contact with the peasants of the Temple village and other villages of the plains, have come to know of the utility of the cattle as well as plough cultivation and hence they have started maintaining cattle.

The Soliga are fond of goat. It is believed that the meat of goat is an antidote for fever. But for many years they are not domesticating them in large number. Particularly, the Soliga of interior settlements are not rearing goats for fear of violation of forest laws as has already been stated.

Cocoon rearing and mulberry cultivation : The Government of Karnataka has established a silk farm in the Temple village for the purpose of encouraging the people to participate in cocoon rearing and mulberry cultivation. The silk farm has also encouraged the Soliga to take up to the cocoon rearing and mulberry cultivation by providing subsidy. It would be a lucrative economic pursuit if mulberry is grown properly and silk cocoons reared cautiously. But there is risk of en-

countering heavy loss, if the silk cocoons die out in the first and second phase of their operation when not cared properly. Many people in the Temple village, especially of the Brahmin and Pariwara castes are engaged in the silk industry. In the Yarakaganagadde settlement, at the time of the field work, only one Soliga had taken up the profession and had earned about rupees two hundred and fifty, within a short span of four months or so. Yet, it was observed that other Soligas were not forthcoming to take up to the profession unlike other people in the Temple village. The Soligas could not take up because of the constant hardwork required, initial investment of a few rupees which they cannot afford, and the risk involved in its operation.

The data on the various occupations followed by the Soliga of the nine settlements is tabulated below from the information given by each head of the family as regards the main and the subsidiary occupations in which he or she was engaged.

It may be observed from the above table that nearly 90% of the Soliga were dependent mainly upon agriculture and about 5% on forest labour, while almost 97% of the Soliga were engaged in the collection of minor forest produce as their subsidiary occupation.

It was considered useful to take up household survey showing therein the various economic pursuits followed by each head of the family and also to ascertain from them the approximate annual incomes in terms of money. The data were collected from the heads of 125 families. The average annual income thus works out to Rs. 157 per Soliga household. This average income of the Soliga is not satisfactory as they do not think of their income in terms of money value. Many of them unhesitatingly tried to guess their annual income. The approximation and the guess work on the incomes do not provide useful results, because of the fact that there are no prices, assumptions on output, measurement of labour, etc.

In the Hills, there is scope for taking up to such varied and gainful economic pursuits like the cocoon rearing, plough cultivation, agricultural and forest labour, animal husbandry, poultry farming, etc., but most of the Soliga, especially those of the interior settlements, do not seem to be interested in all these activities. It may be said that by and large they are contented with their traditional economic pursuits, despite the forest laws, and exploitation by both the agents of the forest contractors and the non-Soliga people. They say that they do not aspire for any

TABLE 6
MAIN AND SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATIONS FOLLOWED BY THE SOLIGA

Sl. No. of the settlement	Agriculture		Cacoon rearing in silk		Government service		Collection of minor forest produce		Forest labour		Others like Animal husbandry, household dependents etc.	
	Main	Sub	Main	Sub	Main	Sub	Main	Sub	Main	Sub	Main	Sub
1 Yarakaganadde	22	—	—	1	1	—	—	24	—	—	3	1
2 Guruvinagadde	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	—
3 Purani	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	1	—	2	—
4 Beedikalu	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
5 Kallarabetta	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	—	—	—	—
6 Kanchugara	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	—
7 Doddare	9	1	—	—	—	—	—	10	1	—	1	—
8 Bhavihane	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	4	—	—	—
9 Kolla	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	—
Total	113	1	—	1	1	—	—	123	6	—	6	1
Percentage	89.6	0.8	—	0.8	0.8	—	—	97.6	4.8	—	4.8	0.8

thing more than subsistence. The main reason is said to be that they have no acquisitive instinct and they never think for the morrow. Many a time, visitors of the plains-villages and the Temple village have felt that it was not possible to make the Soliga work, specially when these people get some food at hand. On account of lack of interest in taking up gainful economic pursuits and their attitude to life, the Soliga are suffering economic backwardness.

III

MARKETS AND EXCHANGE OF COMMODITIES

The Soliga cannot afford to sell their agricultural produce in any great measure as they do not grow in surplus. But they sell, at least, some quantity of their gross produce to others in exchange of other food articles or for cash. Among the articles maize, millet, mustard, castor, plantain are the chief agricultural produce which are sold to the local merchants of the Temple village and also to the agents of the forest contractors.

There are no markets in the vicinity of the Soliga settlements. The nearest market towns, namely, Yelandur and Kollegal, are situated at distances of more than ten miles even by the short cut, but the people seldom visit these towns for marketing. The Soliga buy their essential articles from the local shops at the Temple village and also in the shops of the agents of the forest contractors. A small cooperative store was opened in 1965 by the Forest Labourers' Cooperative Society at the Hills where the Soliga often bought the food articles.

Many petty merchants dealing in earthenware, agricultural tools, clothes, tobacco, eatables, etc. often pay visit to the Soliga settlements and trade their goods in exchange of articles of food and for cash.

In the Temple village, two annual fairs take place in honour of the deity Rangaswamy, one in the month of January and the other in April. On these occasions, markets are held in the premises of the Rangaswamy Temple when merchants from such places like Yelandur, Kollegal, Gumballi, Yeragamballi, Komaranapura, situated in the plains; establish their shops. The goods sold in the various shops are mainly cloth, cheap jewellery, agricultural tools, earthenware, aluminium and brass utensils, glass bangles, sweetmeats and various preparations of eatables. Quite a number of Soliga from different settlements including those of the neighbouring forest areas attend the fair and buy the articles needed by

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CHILD BIRTH

The Soliga regard birth of a child as a happy occasion. Male children are more welcome than the female children. This preference is due to the fact that after marriage a female has to go to her husband's house leaving her natal home.

The women when they become pregnant do not seem to take any particular care until the birth of the child. It is interesting to note the remarks made by the trained midwife who was posted by the Government to attend to the midwifery work of the Soliga tribe in the Hills. The midwife was staying in one of the colony houses in the Yarakaganagadde settlement. With regard to her work, and attendance on delivery cases, she explained, 'The Soliga women do not take seriously the delivery cases. They are particularly afraid of the midwife. As far as the treatment during the pregnancy is concerned, they do not take any precaution before delivery takes place. As soon as the delivery takes place, however, the woman is fed by a kind of recipe prepared locally by the attendant Soliga women for three days continuously. This recipe is prepared by baking the leaves of *seegekai* (*acacia concinna*) tree, mixed with large quantity of pepper and salt. This is considered to be the most efficacious native medicine by the tribals which would make the women recover speedily and attain normalcy. With great difficulty, I was able to attend one case of delivery in the Yarakaganagadde settlement and I was surprised to see that the woman was seen attending to such hard tasks as carrying water on the second day after the delivery had taken place. This woman stated that the strength she got was only due to her taking the herbal medicine. I must say that many a Soliga woman never wanted the services of a trained midwife though such service was available to them free of cost'. The above statement of the midwife, therefore, reveals the attitude of the Soliga who believe in the efficacy of their native medicines, and are not attracted by the modern devices and medicines so far as child birth is concerned.

When a Soliga woman completes the ninth month, usually, she worships at the local shrine situated in their settlement, and prays for the safe delivery and well-being of the child. The deities prayed on such occasion are the Doddasampigedevaru, Huliyeerappa, Basaveswar, Haluketappa and Jadeswamy. Sometimes, the delivery may be delayed due to certain difficulties. In case there is any such delay, the Soliga women are given a juice of the barks of the *bende* and *selle* (local varieties) trees which is believed to help the speedy delivery.

As soon as the child is born, its naval string is severed by means of a kudugolu. The naval string is taken to a distant place and is buried in a bamboo thicket. Care should be taken that it is not eaten by any creature. It is believed that in case wild animals eat it, the mother of the child is bound to suffer some serious calamity. The service of taking away the naval string is done by the mother, sister, or mother-in-law of the woman, for which she is paid twenty five paise.

Weaning : Children are breast-fed for nearly two to two and a half years. In case a woman does not get enough milk after the delivery a local root known as *halu-sora* (milk giving plant) is ground and its paste is given to the woman, so that there would be a good flow of milk.

Naming ceremony : Name giving ceremony of a child is known as *Namkarana*. In the case of the male child, the ceremony is observed on the fourth day, whereas it is held on the fifth day, if the child is female. The Soliga could not explain why the difference exists. A ritual is observed before a name is given to a child. A male member who is either a brother or addressed as 'brother' terminologically of the mother of the child, usually, performs the ritual. On such occasions, close relatives are invited. The person who would be performing the said ritual takes a bath on that day before he commences the ritual. He takes a *muttuga* (*butea frondosa*) leaf and carves a symbol† shaped on it by sandal paste. This leaf is enshrined in a slanting position in one of the corners of the house where the worship is done. It is not known to them whether the symbol is the mark of the Srivaishnava God Rangaswamy, or that of the Saivite trident. The worshipper, that is, the person who performs the ritual, keeps some water in a leaf-cup along with leaves of the *tolasi* (*ocynum sanctum*) plant, and also a little quantity of jaggery. The water of the leaf-cup with its contents is considered as the *teertha* (consecrated water) on the occasion. Sandal paste and vermilion are placed on a *muttuga* leaf. The father

of the child also takes bath and wears new garment. The worshipper smears vermilion and sandal paste on the forehead of the child, the mother, and also of the father. On a big leaf, either of plantain, or Muttaga the *ede* (ritual meal) consisting of balls of ragi flour, curry, is usually prepared out of chicken, and rice, is served. A cocoanut is broken and incense is burnt and waved in front of the deity. Then the Ede is shown to the deity. This is the ritual form of offering the food to the deity. Payers are uttered in praise of the deities mentioned above. After this, the teertha is given to the relatives and others who assemble at the function. When the teertha is taken, it is believed that the *sutak* (ritual impurity) due to the birth of a child is cleared off. The worshipper then asks the mother to tell the name which they propose to give, and when the name is mentioned, the worshipper announces the name loudly thrice, so that the assembled people could hear it. When the name giving ceremony is over, the ritual meal is partaken by all the people gathered at the time of the observance of the ceremony.

Ear and nose piercing : On the twelfth day, usually, ears of a child (both male and female) are pierced by a needle, by an elderly Soliga woman. No ceremonies are associated with its observance. A girl's nasal septum are pierced by the mother, or an elderly woman at an early age of seven or eight years. Usually this is done before a girl attains her puberty.

Adolscence : Boys, as they grow, keep away from their houses during the day and like to wander in small groups in interior forests in search of edible roots, honey, and small animals. But as they become adults, they abandon going in groups, but prefer to go individually. A tribal school is functioning in the Yarakaganagadde settlement but very few children join the school. Their folksongs usually sung at the time of the annual festivals depict their wanderings in different areas of the Hills. Boys over fifteen years of age, start participating in the various economic pursuits of the family.

Girls stay at homes most of the time attending to the several domestic activities. As they grow up they help the womenfolk in the various agricultural activities, bringing fuel for domestic use, fetching water, and also collecting edible roots for daily consumption etc. Some women also work in the fields of the Temple village as casual labourer.

Puberty and Menstruation : When a Soliga girl attains puberty

she is segregated for five days. A separate hut is built usually by her prospective husband, or any other male person, whose clan is different from that of the girl. The newly built hut is called as *Gummi*. Generally the *gummi* is built at some distance from the house. Women members escort her to the *gummi* during the period. She is also given a *kudugolu* (bill hook) for protection against ghosts and evil spirits. The *gummi* is built with the sticks of *dadasu* and *bende* trees. On the fifth day, the girl takes a ritual bath in a nearby pond. She goes to the pond covering her face with one end of her *sari*. As the girl goes to the pond, young boys and girls go on spreading ash in front of the girl, on which she walks. After the ritual bath the girl returns home, her face once again covered. Before she marches home, near a crossing where more than one path meet, fire is made usually by the prospective husband, and the girl undergoing the ritual, has to leap over it. This is done in order to ward off the influence of evil spirits. Now, the girl uncovers her face and returns to her house. The *Gummi* is destroyed by burning it on the last day when the menstruating girl leaves the hut for the ceremonial bath. The girl's prospective husband, if there is one, has to present her with a new *sari*, a blouse, bangles etc. Otherwise, the girl's parents provide her the presents. On that day, a ritual, known as *hosage hittu* is observed. A ceremonial meal consisting of *ragi* balls, rice and chicken curry, are prepared. If a girl has a prospective husband, the latter has to meet the expenditure of this feast. In the case of two or three persons desirous of marrying the girl whosoever among them meets the expenditure of this feast, the marriage is finalised with him. In the case of no such contenders, then, the parents of the girl meet the expenditure. The girl is seated in the main hall of the house, and young kids are made to be seated on her lap and prayers are made to the deities. The girl is fed first with the ceremonial meal. After the girl takes her meal, other women partake in the meal. This particular ceremony is observed in order to pray the various deities to bless the girl with fertility of bearing children (*makkala phala*).

A menstruating woman is segregated in a separate hut, or a house (due to the availability of the empty houses in the colony in the Yarakaganagadde settlement) for a period of two days. Such a woman does not visit fields. In the event of violation of this norm it is believed that elephants would visit the fields and settlements, and create troubles. Festivals are not observed if there is a menstruating woman

in a house. On the third day, the woman takes bath. Each time, a menstruating woman goes for the bath, the ceremonies of spreading the ash by youngsters, and leaping over the fire as done at the time of the puberty, is repeated. The Soliga believe that menstruating women are prone to the evil effects of ghosts and spirits and hence such precautions are necessary in order to ward off the malevolence of supernatural beings.

II

Marriage : The usual form of marriage among the Soliga is described as one of elopement (Thurston, 1909; Nanjundayya and Iyer, 1931; Luiz, 1963; Gopal, 1963). Srinivas (1942) has described it as 'ratified elopement'. The Soliga of the Hills have the following types of connubial relationships. They are, namely, (1) Marriage by force; (2) Elopement; (3) Marriage by service; and (4) Negotiated marriage. Broad features of these four types of marriages are given below.

(1) *Marriage by force* : About 30 years ago or so, marriage by force is said to be in existence. When a boy desired to marry a particular girl, and if the girl refused to give her consent, the boy took the girl by force when the latter was found alone in a forest or in her podu. Generally a man stealthily resorted to the abduction. The marriage used to be promptly regularised as soon as elders came to know of the abduction, in which case the boy had to give a feast to the elders of the tribe. It is said that such instances occurred in large number in the past. Three persons of the Hills had resorted to this type of marriage about 30 years ago, among whom one belongs to the Gurusvinagadde and two to Kallarabetta settlements. It is said that in the interior settlements such cases occasionally occur. But such instances are stated to be few.

(2) *Elopement* : Most of the authors have described that among the Soliga when a boy elopes with a girl, and the young couple decide to live together, and if it is accompanied by a formal feast to the community, it is construed that the young couple are married. Thurston says, "...and the couple, without any formality, live together as husband and wife, on the understanding that, at some time, a feast must be given to a few of the community" (1909 : 382). Nanjundayya and Iyer describe the marriage ceremonies of the Soliga as, "...when a young man has to be married, he elopes with an adult girl to a jun-

gle and remains there for a day or more as he thinks proper. After their return to the village, a fowl or a goat is killed in honour of the event, and the tribesmen are invited to a feast. On the same day, the husband ties a *tali*¹ (marriage badge) round the neck" (1931 : 594). Srinivas (1942 : 66) aptly describes the practice of a man eloping with his fiancée and subsequently giving a marriage feast as 'ratified elopement', since the event of elopement is ratified by the community, ordinarily when a feast is given.

In the Yarakaganagadde settlement, though the practice of elopement exists, mild rebuke is given to the eloping couple. Now-a-days the couple elope to a nearby settlement and stay with their relatives. The boy returns to his podu with his spouse after lapse of several days. Whenever a case of elopement takes place, the parents of the either spouse express their indignation at the affair in the absence of the couple. The father of the girl threatens that he would take his daughter to task for agreeing to elope. The boy's father, too, declares with threatening gesture that he won't see the face of his son as he had eloped with a girl without his consent. Parents-in-law, thus, may show their anger, but their anger evaporates when the couple returns home of any one of the spouse. It is expected that the boy is required to give a feast to his kith and kin, and to the elders of the tribe, but even if the feast is not given the couple are considered as married. The same thing is described by Luiz in other words. He says, "elopement, which lasts for two days, has the silent approval of the parents, though the young couple have had connubial pleasure in the forest, they are, on return, rebuked at first, later greeted, and then feasted" (1963 : 184-85).

(3) *Marriage by Service*² : Sometimes, a boy goes to stay with his prospective parents-in-law, if the latter agree to marry their daughter to the boy. In that case, the boy shares the responsibilities of maintaining the members of his spouse's family for the fixed period, by meeting at least, partly their maintenance expenses. If the boy is found to be suitable and the girl approves the boy, then the marriage is solemnised by the parents by giving a marriage feast to the community. An instance of a Soliga boy in Yarakaganagadde is cited here to des-

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1. The practice of tying a *Tali* (marriage badge) is not in vogue among the Soliga of the Hills.
 2. This form of marriage is contracted in the villages of the plains by the peasant communities and is known by the term *Manevaltana* (Service for acquiring a wife). But there is no word among the Soliga to describe this institution.

cribe the actual nature of the form of marriage, that is existing in the Soliga society.

An young boy of 22 years of age of the Beedikallu settlement approached the parents of a girl living in the Yarakanaagadde settlement to marry the girl. The mother of the girl accepted the offer of the boy, but the father was reluctant to give his daughter to him. The girl was acting according to her father's advice. The father had put a condition that if the boy wants to marry his daughter, he should stay in his house for a period of one year, and help the family economically. At the time of the fieldwork, the boy was staying in the house of the girl since nine months. He was giving part of his earnings to the girl's parents daily and also ate in their house. He helped his parents-in-law in the various agricultural activities, carried fuel, and brought edible roots etc. The boy and the girl were living as husband and wife. Some Soliga were insisting that the boy should give a marriage feast to the community. The boy continued to live in his parents-in-law's house. The boy was brushing aside the demands for the feast, by saying that he was not able to do so for want of money, and that he would be giving the feast later. He was sure that the Soliga would never take seriously the demand for feast, as the society had already recognised them as married since the day of his stay in the girl's house. In this case, the girl had no objection to marry the boy. Therefore, there was no difficulty for the boy to have connubial relationship with the girl.

It is stated that since few years this type of marriage is contracted in the various settlements.

(4) *Negotiated marriage* : Sometimes parents negotiate and settle marriages of their sons and daughters. Usually it is the elderly males of a boy who approach the parents of a girl whom they are going to marry her to their boy. In case the parents of the girl accept the offer the marriage takes place. A specific day is chosen when relatives and elders of all the clans are invited to the house of the bride. The bridegroom brings new clothes and ornaments to the bride as marriage gift. He also brings a small cloth bag containing betel, betel leaves and tobacco. These articles are presented to the bride by the groom through elders. The bride wears the new garments and the ornaments presented by the groom. A marriage feast is given to the people assembled there on that occasion. Now-a-days, such type of marriages are taking place. Perhaps, this is a partial adoption of the

practice common among the various peasant communities of the neighbouring villages in the plains.

Though the above four types of marriages are prevalent among the Soliga, the more common type is still the marriage by elopement. The Soliga of the Hills believe that this form has the sanction of God Rangaswamy, who had, in olden days eloped with a girl of their community. Balakrishna (1953) has described the interesting legend and the form of the marriage in vogue among the Soliga, thus : 'In olden times, that is, as the Soliga say, in Satyayuga, god Rangaswamy was visible to the human beings. At that time, one Bommegouda of the Soliga tribe belonging to the Teneru clan was living in the hilly place called Guruvina Hajar situated opposite the present place of the temple, in the east. He had seven daughters. Among them, the youngest daughter known by the name Kusumale was beautiful and unmarried. The God fell in love with Kusumale. One day, at night, when Ranganayakamma (God's consort) was asleep, He, by His supernatural power transformed the night into a day so that Kusumale could feel that it was a day when she could go to fetch water. When she was going to the water source carrying a pot, the God, dressed as a Soliga carrying an axe on a shoulder, appeared before her and chastised her to love Him. Finally He made her to marry him. But the marriage took place in the *gandharva*³ form. Since then God Rangaswamy became the *bhava* (sister's husband) of the Soliga wherever they might be, either staying near or far off from the Hills. The God, in due course, is stated to have hid Kusumale in His own self.'

Generally, the Soliga have the system of the *gandharva* form of marriage without having any rituals. Even to-day, the Soliga say, in their own way that, 'when the God had married without any rituals, why should we (have any rituals)?'

Among the Soliga, sorrorate is practised. There are no instances of levirate being in vogue at any time. Polyandry is not found to be practised in any form, and is unknown. Polygyny is possible. But, generally, a Soliga may marry several times, only when his wife is either dead, or he has divorced her. The Soliga ordinarily do not venture to take another wife, when one wife is living with him.

3. The author obviously means that the *Gandharva* form in this context is a secret marriage without any rituals, and where only the parties concerned know that they are married.

Bride price : The *tera* (bride price) as such is not taken at the time of marriage, or after the elopement is ratified. Though tradition has it that god Rangaswamy had given the Soliga a winnowing fan full of money, out of which, the father of Kusumale (though this observation is not made by Balakrishna, (1953)⁴ could only get the amount equivalent to Rs. 12.50, the bridegroom is customarily entitled to pay the above sum as a bride price. However, this amount is made good, compulsorily when a person seeks divorce from his wife. The tribal council insists for payment of this money before granting the divorce.

Divorce : Divorce is sought when there is no adjustment between husband and wife. But the authority to grant divorce rests with the tribal council. In the case of a man seeking a divorce, he has to pay the bride price as described above and when a woman seeks a divorce, she is not entitled to any concessions from her husband. Commonly cases of divorce are not many in the Hills. Usually, children of a woman divorcee live with her only, and when a man remarries her, children also stay in her newly married husband's house. A formal ceremony is held when the remarriage of a divorcee takes place. It is a similar ceremony as is observed in the case of a widow remarriage which is described below.

Widow remarriage : Widow remarriage is commonly practised. In case, a widower wants to remarry a person, if he has minor children, they too would live with their remarried spouse.

In the case of a remarriage a simple ritual is observed. The man, who wants to remarry a woman, seeks the approval of the woman and also of the parents of the woman, through elders. When approval is given by the woman and her parents, then a formal ceremony is held. One day is chosen for observance of the ceremony when close relatives and elders of the tribal council are invited. The man presents a sari, a blouse-piece, and bangles, to the woman whom he is remarrying, and also gives a feast to the assembly. The expenses of the feast is borne by the man himself. The ceremony is held in the house of the woman.

4. Iyengar brings this point in his account. He states, 'Rangaswamy married Kusumale and employed the Soliga as his servants. One day Bommegouda prayed the God (Rangaswamy) to send his daughter to his house. The God instead of sending his daughter, sent a bagful of *Pana* (money). When the money was being brought, there was cyclone. The money contained in the bag was blown off by the wind, and there remained only twelve and half *Pana*. This was considered by him as a bride price. Later on, it became twelve and half rupees' (*ibid.* 42).

III

Old age, death and funeral rites : When a person becomes old, it is the living sons and daughters who take care of the old. The Soliga treat old persons when they are sick with the native herbal medicines that they know of. In some cases, when the old persons become seriously ill the Soliga take the help of the priests of the local shrines who treat the patient with sacred ash and consecrated water. Old people are treated with respect and tenderness. When a person dies, the whole community is affected by the ritual impurity arising due to the death.

The Soliga believe that death occurs when a person becomes old. But they also believe that a person may die due to the effects of malevolent spirits, or sometimes by magical devices. There is a kind of sorcerous device which is believed to cause instant death. It is known as *dhoopa hakuwadu* (burning incense). Incense is burnt in an earthen burner before the family deities by taking the name of the person who is the target of the sorcery, and the victim does not survive. Usually, recourse to such action is taken by a person if another person happens to steal the ragi grain from the Guli of the affected person. It is the fear of this action that occurrences of thefts of Ragi from one's Guli are very few.

When the souls⁵ namely, the big and the small soul, present in a person leave the body of the person it is believed that the person is dead. When a person dies, it is desired that at least one member from each of the clans has to assemble at the place of death. Messages to close relatives of the deceased are sent, and until they come, the dead body is kept. The death ceremony begins by giving a hot water bath to the dead body. It is decorated with washed clothes, its forehead smeared with sacred ash, and the body is garlanded with flowers grown in the forest. Younger people touch the feet of the dead. Cocoanuts are broken, and camphor is burnt in front of the dead. Youngsters pray the dead for giving them long life. With this preliminary ritual, the body is carried to a nearby place in the open, about half a furlong from the house of the dead, the observing the ritual known as the *kalu karaga*.

In the *kalu karaga* ritual, the hand, the leg, and the cheek of the right side of the body is smeared with turmeric, powder of *sikekai*, and castor oil. An earthen pot (*karaga*) is broken at the feet of the dead.

5. For further information on the belief of the souls, see the chapter on 'Religious Beliefs and Practices'.

body. A married woman removes her ornaments, bangles, chain of black beads etc. if her husband had died. The chief mourner has to give cash gifts to all the Soliga who assemble at the place where the ritual is held. On such occasions it is necessary that at least one person from each of the clans is present.

The dead body, then, is tied to a long bamboo, by means of a strong fibre thread in three places so as to secure the body tight, and carried by two persons on their shoulders. It is taken to the graveyard situated near the settlement. A grave is dug, and the body is placed there with its right side up and its head southwards. Usually the body is placed on a cloth kept in the grave and some quantity of Ragi is placed on it before the body is lowered. On one side of the body the articles used by the deceased like the axe, billhook, sickle, clothes etc., are kept. A leaf-cup with ragi balls and a tumbler containing water are also kept alongside the body. Mourners, and members of all the clans place a little mud in the grave, and then it is filled with mud. The bamboo used for carrying the dead body is broken into three pieces and placed on the grave, in horizontal position. Ragi are thrown on the grave. When the mourners return home they take bath and then take a recipe made of tamarind. It is believed that this would lessen the sour of the grief (*Dukkada Huli*).

A ritual is done after the second and third days of the death of a person. A big lump of ragi ball and a tumbler full of water are kept near the place where the death occurs and they are covered with a basket. The basket is smeared with a thick coating of cowdung so as to prevent any intrusions by creatures and insects. On the succeeding morning the basket is opened to see if there are any scratches like those made by mice etc., in the Ragi ball placed there, and also any diminution in the quantity of water in the tumbler. In the event of any such indications, stated above, the conclusion arrived at by the Soliga mourners is that the deceased has become ghost. It is then presumed that the deceased had no happy death. It is, therefore, necessary, under such circumstances, to consult diviners and seek their advice. The diviners may suggest some remedies like offering sacrifices etc. In case there are no indications of any scratch and the quantity of water remaining the same, then it is believed that the deceased had not become ghost.

If a person has died on account of treading of an elephant, a ritual known as *ravu kattuvadu* is observed. A mud image of the

elephant is made and is smashed on the spot where the person is tread by the animal. Food articles are kept near the place. A chicken is often sacrificed. If a person is eaten by a tiger, similar observance is done by making an image of a tiger instead of an elephant. This propitiation is called *Shanti* and is believed to appease the spirit of the dead. Dead bodies of persons who die on account of such accidents are buried under heap of stones and leaves at the spot itself, and no subsequent funeral rituals are observed. The same method is adopted in the case of a person who falls from a tree and dies.

For those who die under normal circumstances, funeral rituals called as *hindekulu* or *tithi* are observed before completion of twelve days after the death of a person. The rituals are done in order to appease the spirit of the dead and consequent removal of the ritual impurity arising out of the death. The rituals can be done on the 5th, 9th or 12th day. If no rituals are observed on or before the 12th day, the tribal council might take action against the mourners as then the ritual impurity continues to be existing for all the five-clan Soliga as a whole, and no one in the Hills can work in the field, or observe any festival etc., during the period of the ritual impurity.

On the day of the observance of the *hindekulu* atleast one representative from each of the five clans (now there are six clans) are invited. Near a water source, the ritual takes place. The chief mourner arranges a meal consisting of chicken curry, rice and ragi balls. Five teak, or muttuga leaves and leaf-cups are spread on the ground, round a basket containing the food cooked on the occasion. The chief mourner sits by the side of the basket. The food in the basket is reserved for the spirit of the deceased. On the five leaves, food articles are served. One elder from the each of the traditional five clans sits in front of each of the leaf. In the basket containing the food of the deceased, usually other articles like *Bidi*, earthen smoking pipe containing Bangi (hemp) if the deceased was using them, are also kept so as to appease the spirit of the deceased. A stone is also kept in the basket which symbolically represents the image of the dead spirit. This stone image is called as the *kallugombe*. In absolute silence the rituals beign and as part of the ritual, the chief mourner lifts the Kallugombe in his cupped hands, twitching, and begins to take it upto his head thrice repeating the action and then the spirit of the deceased is said to enter his person, and consequently he falls into a state of trance.

Two elderly persons hold the entranced chief mourner at this stage by the shoulders, so that the latter, may not fall on the ground in that state. The five elders sitting in front of the leaf-plates, loudly raise a cry two to three times, saying that the deceased is pleased. By then, the chief mourner slowly regains his consciousness, and asks the persons whether the deceased was pleased. To this, many reply that the deceased was so much pleased with his food, and observance of the rituals, and that as soon as he lifted the stone image, he was entranced. Then the chief mourner requests the assembled persons to partake the ritual meal. The chief mourner keeps the stone-image in one of the hollows of a nearby tree. It cannot be placed on the ground as it is believed to have the spirit of the deceased. Cooking and serving the food is done by male members and women do not have any ritual function.

When the food is taken, there will be the ritual of washing the shoulders. All the elders of the five clans of both the sexes have to wash their shoulders. Pots of water are poured on the right shoulders of elders. This specific ritual signifies the removal of the ritual impurity accruing out of death.

One more ritual remains to be done, and that is, the ritual of setting at rest the spirit of the deceased symbolised in the stone-image in the place known as the *kallugudi* (the temple of the dead). There are several kallugudis, in the Hills. A typical kallugudi which is a stone structure, is as shown in the photograph given. For each lineage of a clan usually the Soliga have such kallugudis in the various places in the interior and their existence is known to the Soliga of respective clans and lineages. Here alone, the kallugombe of the deceased are placed. Thurston (1909 : 383), Nanjundayya and Iyer (1931 : 598) mention *Gopamane* (burial ground) where the Soliga are supposed to set up the stone image, but as far as the Soliga of the Hills are concerned, they do not know of any gopamanes being in existence in the jurisdiction of the Hills.

There is no fixed time for observing the ritual of placing the kallugombe in the kallugudi. It is mostly dependent upon the availability of funds with the chief mourner. The Soliga won't be happy unless they complete the ritual early, otherwise, the spirit of the deceased may cause them harm. As the ritual does not require much money, it is done as early as possible. A day is chosen, when the chief mourner, accompanied by representatives of all the clans, goes to

the spot where the kallugombe is placed. The Kallugombe is carried by him to the kallugudi of his lineage. Food articles, like Ragi balls, rice and chicken curry prepared in the house itself, are also carried. The kallugombe is kept in the kallugudi where the kallugombes of the ancestors of the deceased are kept. Along with it the food articles taken by the chief mourner are placed in a teak, or muttuga leaf, and leaf-cup. An earthen pot, or an aluminium tumbler used by the deceased, filled with water is also kept. The ritual meal is partaken by the assembly which may consist generally, the chief mourner, other male mourners, and a few members of the five clans. No female members attend the ritual. The beliefs in respect of the spirit of the dead are described in the Chapter on 'Religious Beliefs and Practices'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FAMILY AND KINSHIP

I

FAMILY

Family among the Soliga is patrilineal in descent, and patrilocal in residence. The type of the family is that of the 'elementary form' consisting of a man, his wife and his unmarried children. The authority in the family rests with the man who is the head of the household. Though the family form is mostly that of the elementary type, a few cases of extended families were also observed. The Soliga have no attachment to any land; they own no land and they do not possess any valuable property worth the name. The following table gives the types of families, together with their percentages in the different Soliga settlements of the Hills.

The residence pattern among the Soliga is patrilocal. It is the factor of marriage which brings change in the family. A man after his marriage usually establishes a separate household and lives with his wife. From the table given below, it may be noted that the percentage of the Type I, is 87.4. This Type I, may be considered as the elementary type. In the Type II husband and wife live with married sons and other kin and this type may be considered as extended families, the percentage of which is 11.0. The Type III is a kind of mixed type wherein different kin were found to be living. But the percentage of this type is only 1.6.

When individuals establish separate households after marriage, they do not like to live away from their parents and relatives. It has already been shown in Chapter Three, that composition of families in a local community is based on kin ties and that the people seek cooperation from one another during the important rituals and ceremonies.

Father is the head of a family and he does the duty of maintaining his wife and children. He has the responsibility of transmitting tribal traditions to his children. The division of labour among the different members in a family is based on age and sex.

TABLE 7
TYPE OF SOLIGA FAMILIES AND THE DISTRIBUTION IN DIFFERENT SETTLEMENTS WITH PERCENTAGES

Types of families	Yaraka- nagadde	Guru- Purani	Kanchu- gara	Beedi- kallu	Doddare rabetta	Bhavi- hane	Kolla number of fami- lies	Total Percen- tages
TYPE I								
1. Husband and wife	—	3	—	—	—	1	1	9
2. Husband, wife and unmarried children	18	12	9	2	10	6	2	85
3. Husband, wife and children of different spouse	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
4. Other Categories	2	2	—	—	2	1	—	10
(i) A widower/widow with unmarried children	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(ii) A widow	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	3
(iii) An unmarried man	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	22	18	9	2	12	10	—	110
TYPE II								
1. Husband, wife and married sons and unmarried children	—	—	—	—	1	1	4	4
2. Husband, wife and unmarried children and a married daughter with her husband	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
3. Husband, wife and unmarried children, and widowed and deserted daughters with their children	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. A widower/widow and married sons	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Total	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
TYPE III								
1. A widower and his daughter-in-law, widowed daughter of his spouse by her former husband with her child	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
2. A widow and her deceased brother's daughter	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
GRAND TOTAL	26	18	10	3	14	11	5	126

Women enjoy considerable freedom and respect in a family. A woman's role in a family is significant as she cooperates with male members of her family in their various economic activities like working in fields, collecting edible roots, building houses etc., and also actively participates in domestic work. Attitudes and behaviour between different kin are described in a later section.

II

KINSHIP

Patrilineage is the structural base of the Soliga society. Kinship bonds exist not only with one's patrilineal kin but also with maternal kin. There are close kinship ties between kin of one's own married sister and father's sister. The mother's brother's role is significant in that he acts as a guardian of his sister's younger children and his sister, in case of widowhood or desertion. The mother's brother usually performs the name giving ceremony of the children of his sister. Mother's brother is held in high esteem and his advice is sought by the children of his sister. The affinal kinship bonds are continuously maintained by frequent visits, and by also giving gifts to affinal kin.

There is no specific term used for the elementary or extended family. A broad term *dayadi* is used to refer to all agnatic kin only, and is understood in the sense of a lineage. But cognatic kin like children of one's mother's sister, are not included in this category, though the same kinship terms are used for parallel kin.

Clan : The Soliga tribe in the Hills is segmented into six *kula* (exogamous clans). There are no further segments in the clans forming into sub-clans. The clans are guided by the principle of patrilineal descent. The Soliga call themselves as belonging to five-clans (*eidu kulada soligaru*) but in course of time, a sixth clan came into being. The names of the traditional five clans are; *Teneru*, *Haleru*, *Shalikiri*, *Belloru*, and *Suraru*. For ritual and ceremonial occasions, members of the above five clans are invited. When death and birth take place, ritual impurity accrues to all members of the five clans. But members of the sixth clan, viz. *Baleru* are not affected by the ritual impurity on such occasions.

Ranking : It is said that there is some kind of hierarchical order in the clans exists though proper reasons were not forthcoming as regards the existence of such hierarchy. While it was noted that there

was no hierarchical order in regard to contracting marriages among members of all the six clans existing at present, but different statuses were given to the office-bearers of the tribal council, where the members hold the offices by virtue of their belonging to particular clans. For example, the people of the two clans only, viz., Shalikiri and Haleru are eligible for contesting the election of the headmanship (*yejaman*) of the tribal council. The other offices of the *Pattegar*, *Kolkar* and *Chaluvade* are assigned to the hereditary incumbents of the Teneru, Belloru and Suraru clans respectively. These officients are considered as lower in rank to the *yejaman*, as they mainly assist the *yejaman*. These three offices, however, have the same status.

Baleru clan is considered as of an inferior status, as the people of this clan were meant to remove the leaf-plates of the people of the five-clans after the latter have taken the meals during ceremonial occasions. But now such distinction between the five clans and the Baleru clan is not made as the people of this clan freely inter-marry and inter-dine with other Soliga and they do not remove the leafplates of others.

The Soliga of the nine settlements are distributed in six clans as shown in the following table :

TABLE 8
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SOLIGA IN DIFFERENT
SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ACCORDING TO CLANS

Sl. No.	Name of the settlement	Clan						Total
		Shalikiri	Teneru	Belluru	Haleru	Suraru	Baleru	
1.	Yerakanagadde	25	18	36	14	20	11	124
2.	Guruvnagadde	25	15	19	6	—	8	73
3.	Beedikallu	7	—	1	7	—	6	21
4.	Kallarabetta	28	22	9	7	—	—	66
5.	Purani	22	28	23	5	23	1	102
6.	Kanchugara	8	1	6	20	—	3	38
7.	Doddare	9	21	7	5	—	—	42
8.	Bhavihane	24	33	2	27	—	—	86
9.	Kolla	3	7	10	2	—	—	22
	Total	151	145	113	93	43	29	574

From the above Table, it may be noted that the Suraru-clan people are found in the Yerakanagadde and Purani settlements only. Baleru clan people are mostly found in the Yerakanagadde, Guruvnagadde, Beedikallu, and Kanchugara settlements, and they are not represented in the relatively interior parts of the Hills. The Soliga could not ex-

plain the distribution of the people of certain clans in certain areas as stated above.

Origin of the clans : The Soliga do not know exactly how the different clans originated. Some attempt, however, was made by them to explain the origin of the clans. The clans-people of Belloru, Haleru and Shalikiri claim that their ancestors belonged to the occupational groups of silversmith, shepherd, and weaver respectively, and hence their clans take these names. One account states that god Siva, who created them, classified the Soliga into five clans at the time of creation. The origin of Teneru clan was ascribed to the finding of an ear (*tene*) of ragi for first time by their original ancestor when he was breaking up a hollow bamboo stem. His group therefore began to be called teneru (*teneyavaru=of the tene*), as the tene was found out by a person of this group. The name Baleru suggests that the ancestor of this clan belonged to a person of the *baleyavaru* (bangle seller) caste. It is believed that a few decades ago, the ancestor of this caste migrated to the Hills and married a woman of the Soliga. In course of time he was accepted by the tribals and he was assigned a lower rank.

The explanation given by the Soliga as regards the origin of Belloru,, Haleru, Shalikiri clans associating themselves with the various occupations appears to be vague. It is said that no one remembers to have been engaged in the occupations like silversmithy, shepherding and weaving, nor any mention of their existence is made in the folk-songs. There are also clans by these names including Tene, among the peasant castes in the villages of the neighbouring plains.

Nanjundayya and Iyer (1931 : 593) mention that the people of the Belloru clan do not wear silver leglet and that (the clan-people of the 'surya' (suraru) adore 'sun-god' (surya). But it was observed that wearing of silver ornaments, by the people of the Belloru clan is not a taboo. It was noted that the Soliga of the Hills do not wear any leglets. The clan-people of suraru are not found to worship sun god, or any semblance of it was noticed. Nanjundayya and Iyer (*ibid*) refer the name of the clan as 'surya', but the word pronounced is 'suraru', which means 'warrior'. Both the meanings do not have any connotation in this context. The meaning of 'Shalikiri' is not known, though it was suggested that the people of this clan were weavers which is not applicable in this case as stated earlier. It may therefore be stated that the clans are fictitious and are not eponymous in their origin.

The purpose of having a clan is two-fold. By the association of clan, people are agnatically related to all those having the name of the same clan, which obviously means that they are descendants of a common ancestor. Another purpose involved is that of injunction of clan exogamy.

While the clanship emphasize such factors as descent and exogamy, there is no significance of any specific geographical area being demarcated for any particular clan. For instance, no clan has any spatial dispersal in a specified area. At no time, activities of a clan are consolidated by any authority. There are no clan-gods. It was observed that no institution of clan-chief or clan-elders is functioning as a corporate body in any geographical area.

Lineages : There are lineages called *gumpu* or *budakattu* in the different clans. The depth of each lineage generally exists for three to four generations. Members of a lineage trace their descent through their genealogies of their ancestor, when new lineages are formed. In the process of formation of new lineages, original or remote ancestors are forgotten but immediate ancestors are remembered. The Chart I shows the formation of such lineages.

It was observed that members of a particular lineage who are related agnatically differentiate between members of another lineage from that of their own in a formal 'brotherhood' (*dayadi*) relationship; and while differentiating between members of one lineage to the other, the factor of the clan is always recognized by remembering the name of the clan to which they belong.

The *mane devaru* (family deities) are inherited through the eldest male descendant. During the festival of the *hosa ragi habba* the family deities are worshipped in different settlements when members of each lineage of the same clan participate in the observance of the festival. Members of a lineage contribute their mite in kind by giving *ragi*, rice etc. to the person who worships the family deities as an obligation on the part of members as co-sharers of the ritual, since their ancestor belonged to the same *Gumpu*. This is the only occasion when recognition of a lineage is taken into consideration.

III

Structure of kinship terminology : The following is the termino-

logical classification of the kinship structure of the Soliga. For this description as far as five generations, namely, two in the ascending order, two in the descending, and one in the contemporary generation are covered. In Appendix I, the kinship terms as used for different kin are given.

Kinship nomenclatures used here for various kin in different generations are as follows :

Ego's first ascending generation :

Consanguineous kin

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. <i>Appa</i> (male) | b. <i>Avve</i> (female) |
| Fa ; | Mo ; |
| Fa Br. | Mosi. |

The terminology is classificatory in character. The relative seniority are denoted by qualifying prefixes, viz., *dodda* (elder) and *chikka* (younger) to the terms *appa* and *avve*, describing ego's parents. The same terms are referred by both the sexes.

For other kin, the terms used are :

A. *Consanguineous kin*

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. <i>Mava</i> (male) | b. <i>Atte</i> (female) |
| Fa si Hu ; | Fa Si ; |
| Mo Br. | Mo Br Wi. |

B. *Affinal kin*

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. <i>Mava</i> (male) | b. <i>Atte</i> (female) |
| Wi Fa ; | Wi Mo ; |
| Hu Fa (woman speaking) | Hu Mo (woman speaking) |

Ego's second ascending generation : The maternal and paternal grand parents are classed together and referred by the same terminology distinction being made between sexes.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. <i>Ayya</i> (male) | b. <i>Amma</i> (female) |
| Fa Fa ; | Fa Mo ; |
| Mo Fa. | Mo Mo. |

The range of grand-parental terms include all male siblings and parallel cousins; they apply to great-grand-parents also, but with certain prefixes. For example, in case of the great-grand-parents on the paternal side, the prefixes 'hettayya' and 'hettamma' (literally, one who gave birth), and 'tatayya' and 'tatamma' in case of the great-grand-parents on the maternal side are used,

Ego's generation : The terms for siblings and parallel cousins are the same but differentiation is made with regard to age. Separate terms are used for different sexes. Similarly, kin falling under the category of cross cousins and affines follow the same terminological classification. This is shown as given below :

<i>Kin categories</i>		<i>Kinship Term</i>
<i>A. Consanguineous kin</i>		
a. <i>Male</i>	<i>Elder</i>	<i>Younger</i>
Br	Anna	Tamma
Fa Br So	"	"
Mo Si So	"	"
Mo Br So	Bhava	Maida
Fa Si So	"	"
b. <i>Female</i>		
Si	Akka	Tange
Fa Br Da	"	"
Mo Si Da	"	"
Mo Br Da	Attige	Nadini
Fa Si Da	"	"
<i>B. Affinal kin</i>		
a. <i>Male</i>		
Si Hu	Bhava	Maida
Wi Br	"	"
Hu Br	"	"
(woman speaking)		
Husittu (,,)	"	"
b. <i>Female</i>		
Br Wi	Attige	Nidini
Wi Si	"	"
Hu Si (woman speaking)	"	"
Hu Br Wi	"	"
Wi Br Wi (man speaking)	"	"

Wife is referred by the term *Hedti* while a woman refers her husband by the term *Ganda*. But usually the term of address is indirect and

*The terms, Akka and Tange, are also used depending upon relationship.

both the spouse avoid addressing each other in any specific manner.

Ego's first descending generation : In the kin categories of this type, the kinship terms referred for the consanguineous and affinal kin are :

Kin categories :

<i>A. Consanguineous kin</i>	<i>Kinship terms</i>
<i>a. Male</i>	
So	Maga
Br So (man speaking)	„
Si So (woman speaking)	„
Fa Br So So (man speaking)	„
<i>b. Female</i>	
Da	Magalu
Br Da (man speaking)	„
Si Da (woman speaking)	„
Fa Br Da Da (woman speaking)	„
Hu Br Da	„
<i>B. Affinal</i>	
<i>a. Male</i>	
Da Hu	Aliya
Wi Br So	„
Hu Si So	„
Si So (man speaking)	„
<i>b. Female</i>	
So Wi	Sose
Wi Br Da	„
Hu Si Da	„
Si Da (man speaking)	„

Ego's Second descending generation : Children of the sons and daughters in the second descending generation are grouped together. They are referred to as *mammakka* denoting the category of grandchildren with a prefix 'mam' to the terms 'maga' and 'magalu', the

grand-children are referred as 'mammaga' (male), 'mammagalu' (female). The kin included within this category are :

a. <i>Mammaga</i> (male)	b. <i>Mammagalu</i> (female)
So So	So Da
Da Da Hu and their male cousins	Dada and their female cousins
Si Da So	Si Da Da
Si So So	Si So Da

All the descendants of grand-children are grouped together under the descriptive term '*mulumakka*'.

The primary relatives like one's own father and mother are referred and addressed by the kinship terms like Appa and Avve while qualifying prefixes like 'dodda' (elders), or 'chikka' (younger) are used for the secondary relatives, namely, Fa Br, Mo Si Hu, Fa Br Wi, and Mo Si. In case of Wi Si Hu, a term *shaddaka* is used. Parents of either spouse are found to be referred by the term *beega* (male) and *beegithi* (female).

The younger kin are addressed by their names, while elders are addressed by respective kinship terms. Strangers are addressed by such kinship terms like Ayya or Amma, Appa or Avve, Anna or Akka Maga or Magalu, according to the relative seniority and sex. The term of address for a Brahmin, a Government official, or any person with some status, is *buddhi* (sire) indicating utmost respect.

The members of a clan refer to each other by the same terms used for consanguineous and affinal kin. In case of members of one's own mother's clan, female children are treated as one's own consanguineous kin. For example, if a man's mother's clan is Belloru, female members of that clan are referred and addressed as 'mother' (elder or younger), according to generation and seniority, and marital relations with them is not possible. This relationship is described as *mori* which means 'channel', and thus denotes the channel of one's own mother, and children of mother's sisters are parallel cousins. But in case of children of one's mother's brother, or any clan brother, marriage is permitted. In fact, the children of the person who is addressed as 'Mava' are eligible for marriage.

The term for Mo Br, Fa Si Hu, and Wi Fa or those in the category of brother to one's mother is *Mava*; and the term *Atte* is used

for Mo Br Wi, Wi Mo, and those who fall in the category of sister to one's father. The daughters of 'Mava' and 'Atte' are cross-cousins, and are potential wife (*sala*) to a male 'ego'. The sons of 'Mava' and 'Atte' are *bhava* and *maida* with whom sisters of an 'ego' can marry. This feature characterises the perscriptive bilateral cross-cousin marriage rule.

Terminologically this type may be described as 'bifurcate merging' (Dumont : 1953, Yalman : 1962). There is separation and unification at the same time. Brothers and sisters are prohibited from marrying or have any sexual relation. But children of a sister and brother can marry. Again the off-springs of these unions cannot inter-marry. The generation and sex are distinguished in the terminological classification.

Though the terminological structure follows the bilateral cross-cousin marriage rule, in actual practice,¹ instances of cross cousin marriage are very rare among the Soliga. It may be noted that in the case of the neighbouring Hindu castes, cross-cousin marriages are said to be prescribed bilaterally and occur frequently. Therefore, it may be surmised that perhaps the Soliga follow the terminological form as are found among the neighbouring Hindu castes. In view of the usual type of marriage practised by the people which is that of elopement, bilateral cross-cousin marriages are permissible as the terminological form clearly explains.

IV

Attitudes and behaviour towards kin : Among the Soliga, people who are senior in age, are respected, and the kinship terms are used by the relative terms of address and reference. Elders usually refer the youngsters by a descriptive term *Maga* (child). There is also another term, viz., *Kusu* which gives almost the same meaning. But many times, youngsters are addressed by their real or nicknames by elders. Usually, an youngster does not challenge or defy the advice given by elders in front of them, but express his resentment to his friends and age-mates in private conversation.

1. Tambiah says, "the kinship terms imply cross-cousin marriage and, what is more, *cross-cousin marriage is imperative if the kinship terms are to be consistent* (Italics Tambiah's). However, in a foot note pertaining to this latter statement, Yelman, faced with its implications, states that 'it must be pointed out immediately that "actual" cross-cousin marriages are not very frequent. The low rate of "actual" cross-cousin marriages does not prejudice the argument that all marriages must take place between "categories" of cross-cousin'..." (1965, 136).

Though a man may live separately after his marriage, he tries to maintain cordial relations with his parents. As close kin live in local communities, mutual help by the relatives is always sought during social and ritual occasions. Parents when grow old and become sick children take proper care of them. It is customary to carry disabled persons from one place to another in a carrier which is prepared out of cloth and hung to bamboo rods. Though efforts to maintain cordial relations among brothers are made, there are occasions for quarrel for petty matters, like contributing expenses for performing annual festivals, or taking care of disabled parents, but such cases are settled mutually. On such occasions views of older brothers are respected. In times of crisis other brothers help. For example, in the event of death of a brother remaining brothers perform the funeral and other attendant rites unless sons of the deceased are grown up. Brothers may take up the burden of rearing minor children and widow of the deceased brother if needed.

Fathers treat their daughters affectionately. Daughters are obedient to their parents and do not violate the advice of elders. At the time of marriage too, parents do not come in the way of their selecting mates unless it violates tribal code. In times of sickness and old age of the parents, daughters attend to them if there are no sons or if sons are not taking care of their parents. Brothers occasionally married sisters with kindness and affection. Brothers occasionally visit the families of their sisters and give gifts. Brothers also invite their sisters to their houses while observing festivals and other ceremonies.

Behaviour of a Soliga woman towards her husband is that of cordiality which helps them to lead a harmonious life. It is said that men do not go against the wishes of their wives, but this does not result in any feeling of subordination among men. Quarrels arise between a couple, when charges are levelled against a husband of infidelity, or of adultery in the case of a wife. But these quarrels generally, result in divorce and desertion.

A man is expected to show greater respect to his parents-in-law. Father-in-law is regarded as an elder standing in relation to a man's mother's brother, or father's sister's husband. A man seeks help and advice from his father-in-law when required, whereas the attitude of a man towards his mother-in-law is that of circumspection. There is observance of complete avoidance between a son-in-law and his mother-in-law. A man cannot speak to his mother-in-law in his lifetime,

and even if he speaks, the speech is indirect. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relations are not always cordial. Even though both the relatives do not live under the same roof, on account of each other's physical presence in a local community occurrence of tensions and quarrels is not uncommon.

A man shows much respect and cordiality to his elder sister's husband and the same behaviour is practised with regard to one's own wife's elder brother. In case of youngsters, falling in the above categories, a man is friendly towards them. These relatives visit each other's homes during festivals and ritual occasions and render mutual help.

A woman shows utmost reverence to her husband's elder brother. Though there is no strict avoidance, usually a woman does not talk to her husband's elder brother. In case of younger brother of her husband, a woman speaks freely and addresses him by name and the proper kinship term. But there is no trace of joking relationships existing between them.

A man speaks to his wife's elder sister with much respect and cordiality. A man does not speak freely with his wife's younger sister if the latter is married. Before marriage, a man speaks freely with his wife's younger sister, but this does not culminate into joking relationship. A woman treats her husband's elder sisters with reverence and in case of her husband's younger sister, she is friendly and affectionate and address her by name.

Behaviour of the Soliga towards the people of their own tribe is that of expression of 'we-feeling'. For instance, a Soliga refers another Soliga, as 'our Soliga' whether the latter is a known person or not. To non-relatives of their own tribe, the Soliga refer affectionately by the kinship terms as used for collateral relatives depending upon generation and sex.

As the people live in smaller settlements and in independent families, their attitudes and behaviour with their close kin, and others is generally cordial, and there are not many cases of disputes—occurring at family level. But, sometimes, disputes of serious nature, viz., breaches of tribal code, do arise, when such matters require to be dealt with not only by the people of a settlement, but by the tribal council also. This aspect has been discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOCIAL CONTROL

I

The tribal jurisprudence of the Soliga differs widely from that of the other people. For example, theft of ordinary nature, telling a lie, and breaking a promise are not serious offences. Usually a Soliga may steal fruit, Ragi, plantain etc. from the field of a non-Soliga and it is not regarded as any great offence. It is the common occurrence among them that many a time, the Soliga take money from other people with a promise to do some work, like bamboo felling, agricultural labour, or supply of honey or other forest produces in lieu of money. But most of them break their promises. This is considered as a serious offence from the stand point of others, but to a Soliga though it is not wanted, it is not regarded as any offence. If a Soliga takes money from others on loan, he never thinks of returning it. There is a saying among them that, 'the person who gave (money) is a monkey, and the person who received (it) is *Irabhadra* (son of Siva)', which means that the lender is a fool and the debtor is a wise person.

There are no cases of homicide among the Soliga. Very few cases of physical violence occur. And in such an event, the concerned parties settle the issues among themselves. In case of physical violence with other people, the matter concerns solely the individuals and no Soliga takes cognizance of it. Quarrels of minor nature are mutually settled but rarely a person seeks the help of police or court. There was only one case in the Yakanagadde settlement, in which the aggrieved party had sought police help. A Soliga of the settlement had stabbed the cow belonging to another Soliga as the cow had trespassed into the former's field. The stab wound was so deep that the owner of the cow had to take it to the Yalandur veterinary hospital. Meanwhile he had also claimed a heavy compensation. The accused did not pay any compensation when the aggrieved person pressed the issue, the accused absconded for sometime and later settled in the Purani settlement. As the cow was given by the Government, the aggrieved person made a police case. But subsequently he withdrew the case as the Soliga of Purani had intervened. Till the author left the field, the issue was hanging without any solution, and the Soliga of

Purani had failed to convince the accused to pay some compensation. The aggrieved person was all along telling other Soliga that he was going to take the case to the tribal council and if it was not settled there, he was filing a case with the police.

It may be noted that no action is called for if a Soliga steals grains or other things in the fields of non-tribal people. But in the case of a Soliga stealing grain from another Soliga's granary, or any other material of the Soliga, it is regarded as a serious offence. Such cases, however, are treated by individuals alone, sometimes seeking the supernatural power of *dhoopa hakuvalu*, said to be resulting in death. This fear keeps the Soliga to refrain from committing thefts in the fields of their own tribesmen. As has already been said, the Soliga houses have no locks. No cases of theft as having occurred in their houses are reported.

Sexual intimacy between a brother and sister results in excommunication. This applies even to the relatives of a single clan, and hence is a punishable offence. It is believed that the whole community may perish, if such an offence is committed.

The Soliga are complete teetotallers. Therefore, it is considered as a serious offence, if a Soliga took to alcoholic drinking. The tribal council imposes severe fine if such cases are brought before it. There was only one case of alcoholic drinking which was not brought to the notice of others. The Soliga take *bangi* (Indian hemp). They believe that taking *Bangi* has to be kept as a secret to outsiders whereas they know that many a Soliga including women, are addicts to the narcotic, and its consumption is not considered as against any tradition, though its use in illicit manner is an offence in the legal sense.

A menstruating woman is housed in a separate hut and she is forbidden to enter a cultivated field. If she violates, then the earth goddess is angry and no good harvest is expected: And also there is the danger of elephants visiting the field and destroying crops. Due to this supernatural fear the Soliga women do not commit any violation against the tradition. The tribal council, however, would view seriously, if such cases are taken to it.

The cases of serious nature like adultery, incest etc. if they are brought to limelight, they are generally referred to the tribal council. The functioning of the tribal council and its operation of the tribal jurisprudence are described in the following section.

II

When a dispute or offence is to be settled, elders of a settlement mediate and dispose off the case. In the event of non-settlement of any case, it is the tribal council which is the recognized authority to deal with tribal law and its branches.

Tribal council : The tribal council is known as the *Kula Panchaiti* or *Jati Koota*. The Kula Panchaiti of the Hills has the jurisdiction over all the nine Soliga settlements of the Hills. It is said that there are also similar kula Panchaitis for the Soliga who live in other forests, namely, *kupini kadu* (kollegal taluk) and *Raja kadu* (*Chamarajanagar taluk*). But at no time, representatives of all these areas meet. The Kula Panchaiti of the Hills functions as an independent body with four office bearers to look after its working.

The tribal council usually sits in two places which are traditionally fixed whenever a case is to be dealt with. These places are known as the *kattemane*. In all cases of 'good acts' like selecting the headman, marriage feast, allotment of work during the annual festivals of the Rangaswamy temple etc., the *Kattemane* is the one situated near the Someswar pond, in the southern direction which is about half a kilometre from the tribal colony. The other *Kattemane* is situated near the Linganayya pond which is also about half a kilometre from the tribal colony in the northern direction where such acts which are considered as 'not good' by the tribals like cases of adultery, observance of funeral rites etc., are tried by the Kula Panchaiti. In case of necessity, the kula Panchaiti may have its sittings in one of the Soliga settlements also.

The tribal council has a *Yejaman* who is the headman of the Soliga of the Hills. The office of the *Yejaman* is not hereditary. But he is selected by the people. Only members of two clans, namely, *Haleru* and *Shalikiri* have the traditional right of acquiring the office of the *Yejaman*. The tenure of the office is usually five years but may continue if no objection for continuance of a *Yejaman* is raised by the people. Clan, seniority in age, and character of an individual are guiding factors for selecting a *Yejaman*. But the clan factor significantly affects the choice of a headman, as the number of potential candidates from among the two clans noted above, is not large.

While selecting a *Yejaman*, or continuing the tenure of his office, the Soliga meet at the *Kattemane* near the Someswar pond. They

decide the issue by raising their hands. But, in the event of two or more contestants for the office, then there exists a real difficulty. This difficulty, however, is overcome by adopting a method of divine intervention, that is, selecting a yejaman by means of drawing a chit. It is not known since when this method came into practice. The procedure followed in the case of the chit-method is given below.

On the concluding day of the *teppotsava*,¹ chits in which the names of the Soliga who contest for the headmanship are written, are covered in some of the plantains which are offered for worship by the Soliga on the occasion. The priest or the assistant priest of the Rangaswamy temple writes the names on the chits, and arranges for the drawal. When the worship is over, the priest hands over the plantain one by one in succession to the yejaman present over there, or to the other office-bearers if the yejaman is not present. Each plantain is examined so as to see if it contains any chit. As soon as a chit is found in a plantain, it is opened and the name mentioned in that chit is declared as the new incumbent selected to succeed the office.

A *Mudre* (seal) is given to the yejaman by the authorities of the temple in recognition of the authority of the headman of the Soliga. The *Mudre* is transferred to the new incumbent when he is selected by the Soliga as the headman. The *Mudre* is made of silver and said to have the engraved figurine of the goddess Alamelu Ranga Nayaki Amma, the consort of Rangaswamy. As the legend has it god Rangaswamy had eloped with a girl of the Soliga who had later become one with the god. The *Mudre* with the image of the goddess symbolizes the Soliga woman, and hence, as a mark of reverence to her, the Soliga say that they receive the seal. Whenever, meetings are held, the Yejaman worships the seal with varmilion, burning sandal sticks, camphor lamp, Tolasi leaves etc., at the first instance, and deliberations of the meetings are held in front of the seal afterwards. The seal is kept in a box, and the Yejaman alone has the right of its possession. Whenever changes in headmanship occur, the seal is transferred to the new incumbent under the authority of the temple officials.

Traditionally, the yejaman is expected to take the seal ceremo-

¹ The idols of deities (*utsavamurtis*) viz., god Rangaswamy, goddesses Sri Devi and Bhu Devi—His consorts—are taken on a bamboo boat, with all the royal insignia like umbrella, torch, music, etc. in the Someswar pond. There is a *Mantap* (stone platform) where the deities are enshrined after the bathing ceremony is completed and worship is made. For several days, depending upon the number of devotees arranging the festival, the celebration continues. The Soliga offer their worship and pray for the blessings of the deities on the last day of the celebration.

nially to the various Soliga settlements accompanied by other office-bearers once a year. Members in a local community felicitate the sacred seal by arranging worship. During the celebration, fowls are sacrificed and ritual food is partaken. One Anna (6 paise) is collected from each household by the Yejaman. Once in a year, out of the fund so collected, rupees four and fifty paise are given to the temple authorities for arranging a ritual service at the temple during the annual *rathotsava* (Car festival) on behalf of the Soliga of the Hills.

The association of the non-tribal temple authorities with the Soliga and also in recognizing the traditional authority of the Soliga by providing them with the seal of the goddess is interesting. Neither the Soliga elders, nor the non-tribal temple authorities could give any reasons for the association of the tribals which the Brahminic god and goddess. The legendary account of the Soliga girl finally integrating into the Sri Vaishnava god Rangaswamy could not be explained. It is also an interesting feature that the tribals are associated with some of the temple functions, such as decorating the huge *Rath* (Car), constructing the *teppa* (Boat), and carrying the *utsavamurtis* during the time of the annual Car festival. These services are done by the Soliga as *bitti* (free) work.

It may be noted that the association of the tribals with the non-tribals in their politico-religious life has some historic background. When the temple of the Sri Vaishnava god Rangaswamy was established in the Hills, Sri Vaishnava devotees from the plains came and settled there. The Soliga living in the Hills thus came in contact with the people of the Temple village. Interaction with the non-tribal people perhaps made the Soliga to accept their deities. Many a Soliga turned Sri Vaishnava devotee. In the beginning, as the number of non-tribals who had settled in the Temple village was not large, they were largely dependent upon the tribals living on the spot for the various activities connected with the temple. Since the tribals were given some important work as described above, the tribals accepted the privilege, and began to offer the required service. The ascription of kinship relationship to god Rangaswamy and receiving the seal of the goddess may be regarded as the later absorptions resulting from the interaction of the tribals with the non-tribals.

The Yejaman presides over the meetings whenever they are convened. The three other office-bearers whose functions are mainly to

assist the Yejaman are the *Pattegar*, *Kolkar*, and *Chaluvade*. The three offices are hereditary and they are held by the members of the three different clans, viz., Teneru, Belloru and Suraru respectively. All the four office-bearers live in the Yarakaganagadde settlement. But these office-bearers may also live in any other settlement of the Hills as there is no rigid convention as regards the residence of the office-bearers.

The *Pattegar* acts as an assistant to the Yejaman whose presence is necessary at the time of a meeting. He, generally, asks questions and counter-questions and helps the headman to arrive at a decision. Besides, he has another important function of socio-religious nature. The *Pattegar* visits different settlements of the Soliga in the Hills, and utters blessings of the deities. He carries a *kondi kolu* (a special kind of stick) and attends the Soliga houses where births and deaths have occurred. It is believed that his visits remove the *Sutak*. He is paid six paise for this service. The *Pattegar* holding the charge attends the meetings of the tribal council. But the present incumbent being a Government servant does not find time to perform the function of visiting the Soliga houses and uttering blessings. He has, therefore, authorised one of his agnatic kin living in the Kallarabetta settlement to carry on the function on his behalf.

The *Kolkar* is another assistant to the Yejaman. His main duty is to convene meetings of the tribal council. He visits the various Soliga settlements and announces date, time, and place of the meeting. In case, the tribal council is required to meet in any of the settlement, the *Kolkar* arranges a meeting there. The *Kolkar* carries the seal box to the place of the meeting. A small *pandal* is usually built in the settlement where the seal box is enshrined and meetings are conducted in front of the seal box.

The *Chaluvade* assists both the headman and the *Kolkar*. He accompanies the *Kolkar* whenever the latter visits the other settlements. During the meetings, he helps the *Kolkar* in the various activities, such as arranging the place for the meeting, controlling the offenders if they turn out violent etc.

Elderly male members of each household in a settlement are invited by the *Kolkar* and *Chaluvade* to a meeting of the tribal council. The four office-bearers of the tribal council take final decision in any issue which is binding on the parties concerned.

The offices of the tribal council are honorary. Usually a small

sum is collected at the time of a meeting. This sum is used for miscellaneous expenses incurred in connection with convening a meeting. The money which used to be collected by the office-bearers at the rate of six paise per household is also spent on such occasion, after arranging a ritual service at the Rangaswamy temple. The headman keeps the money. It is said that as the headman and other office-bearers were not going to various settlements to collect money, they have not been able to collect much money from the people of other interior settlements. This has affected the Soliga of the interiors in participating in the functioning of the tribal council.

III

The tribal council of the Soliga was said to be functioning effectively before the Yejaman who was holding the office at the time of the author's visit, took charge. The Kolkar and the Chaluvade described some of the cases that were dealt with by the tribal council previously, as evidence of the effective functioning of the tribal council. These cases are given below :

(1) *A case relating to violation of clan exogamy* : It is against tribal code to have any sexual intimacy with a sister, including a clan-sister ; and its violation would result in ostracism. The then Yejaman was alleged to have violated the tribal code, as he was found to have committed such an offence by having sexual intimacy with a clan-sister. Though, the accused tried to refute the charge, elders in the meeting of the tribal council which the accused was presiding over as he was the then Yejaman, however, decided to impose heavy fine, and asked him to desert the woman with whom he was living. The accused did not agree. Hence the elders decided to ostracize him. Thereupon, the person handed over the seal box to elders and left the meeting. Later, he migrated to the forest in the Kollegal taluk. This case had happened some time in 1961. The accused was anxious to return to the Yarakaganadde settlement but then he was required to pay a heavy price for his conduct which he was unwilling, and wanted to compromise without spending any money.

(2) *Cases concerning adultery* : When cases of adultery are brought before the tribal council, and if ample proof is produced, the tribal council takes action such as granting divorce. There were two cases in which men had proved the guilt committed by their wives during 1960 and 61. The men were granted divorce, and the men who

had committed the offence were asked to marry the concerned women with whom they had indulged in extra marital relations. Fine was imposed on the accused, and they were also made to give feast to the elders of the tribe. In case of a woman accusing her husband of infidelity, the tribal council forces the man to pay Rs. 12.50 as a tera (bride price) which she is entitled, if the tribal council is convinced about the guilt. The guilty man has to pay a fine if imposed. He is also required to give feast to the community.

(3) *A case relating to a person who was beaten by boots* : If a person is found to be beaten or even touched by boot or chappal, such a person is ostracized unless he undergoes an expiation ceremony. A few years ago, a Soliga of Yarakanagadde was said to have been taken to the Kollegal Police Station on a charge of smuggling elephant's tusk, some time in 1962 or so. When the man returned after his release he was asked to undergo expiation ceremony, as he was said to have been beaten by the police with their boots. The accused denied the charge and he was not willing to undergo the ceremony. Therefore, he was ostracised. Finally the accused surrendered and arranged the expiatory ritual. The said expiatory ritual was observed in the following manner. A meeting of the tribal council was arranged at the Kattemane near the Linganayya pond. Worship to the seal box was done by the Yejaman and other office-bearers. Some quantity of water mixed with cowdung was sprinkled for seven times by the Yejaman, on the person of the accused. Teertha, in which Tolasi leaves were mixed was given as concluding ceremony of the expiatory ritual. The accused gave a feast to the members who had attended the function. After this, he was absolved of the charge.

(4) *A case relating to violation of the directives of the Yejaman* : The Soliga provide free service during the annual festival of the Rangswamy deity as already described. The Yejaman and other functionaries are in charge of conducting the various works. If any one violates the directive of the elders, then, the Yejaman and others arrange to place the leaves of *kokke* (*fistula cassia*) tree at the house of the guilty person, which means imposition of temporary boycott on the guilty person. If once the Kakke leaves are placed the guilty person has to pay a fine of seventyfive paise to the Yejaman. Non payment of the fine and challenging the authority of the elders, might then lead to imposition of heavy fine, or even permanent boycott. A

person from the former settlement of Bangle Podu had violated the directive of the previous Yejaman. When the accused saw the *kakke* leaves placed at the roof of his house, he rushed to the Yejaman and other office-bearers and paid the fine of seventyfive paise and did the work assigned to him by the Yejaman.

The Kolkar and Chaluvade said that when the previous headman left the place on charge as stated in case 1, they selected the new headman. As the headman was not taking any interest in the affairs of the people, and as he was also very old, an attempt to remove him from the headmanship was made on the last day of the *teppotsava* in the year when the author was there. As many Soliga from other settlements had not turned up on that day, the Kolkar and Chaluvade did not press the matter.

When the headman was contacted by the author to know his views about functioning of the tribal council, the headman said that the tribal council was not functioning at all. He ascribed the following reasons : (1) That the Soliga had scant respect for the Yejaman ; hence he could not function without any respect. (2) That the people were more bothered about their own problems: Instead of bringing cases before the tribal council, they see that cases are either mutually settled, or cases are dropped. Referring cases to the tribal council involves huge expenses which the Soliga rarely afford. (3) That there was the onset of *kalega* (*kali* age) and hence Soliga were not adhering to traditional practices.

It was observed that the three office-bearers of the tribal council wanted their traditional institution to continue and function effectively. During the period of the field work, the author came to know about two cases of disputes. In one case, which was an intra-settlement dispute the author had witnessed the tribal. The case is as follows :

When exchange of abuses between a Soliga woman and her husband of Yarakanagadde were heard on one evening, the Chaluvade and Kolkar met on the spot and decided to call a meeting of the elders of the Yarakanagadde settlement to settle the issue. The Kolkar invited all the male members. The Yejaman was reported to be unwilling to attend the meeting though he was also a member of the same settlement. The complainant in this case was a woman who accused her husband that the latter had developed sexual intimacy with a widow who was living in their neighbourhood. The Pattegar enquired the matter and asked the concerned parties to give their versions of the

case. The accused was the husband of the complainant who flatly denied the charge. The widow who was also charged with the offence, did not say anything. The complainant was vociferous in stating that since she had seen her husband's misconduct with her own eyes she was seeking justice. She also wanted that her husband be punished severely. But the accused did not accept the allegation made by his wife. When both husband and wife began to fight, then the Chaluvade intervened and asked the complainant perform the *satya* ritual to prove her accusation. While observing a Satya ritual a person makes an oral promise by holding a mixture of cowdung and salt. It is believed that if a false statement is uttered when observing the satya, great harm is bound to occur on that person. The complainant performed the satya as required by the elders. The accused also wanted to observe the satya as he too claimed that what he was saying was also the truth. But, he was not allowed by the Chaluvade and others to do so, who said that, 'one part is justice, the other part is offence'. It was decided to impose a fine of Rs. 12 on the accused as the complainant had proved her statement by observing the Satya, but later, the fine was reduced to seventyfive paise only. The widow, the other accused, was also seventyfive paise. Both the accused were asked to put the fine money in the *golak* (fund box) of the Rangaswamy temple. The main accused, however, left the meeting refusing to pay the fine imposed on him as he was not satisfied with the verdict given by the elders of the settlement.

In the second case, a Soliga was charged with the offence of receiving cooked food from a person of an untouchable caste. It was stated that the Chaluvade was informed by a person of the Pariwara caste of the Temple village that a Soliga man of Yaraknagadde had received cooked food from a person of the untouchable caste of the Temple village. Some Pariwara men who were hearing the case had instigated the Chaluvade to take serious action against the culprit. The Soliga take a serious view of such offences, and offenders are ostracized unless the offenders accept the guilt and perform the expiatory ritual immediately. When the Chaluvade took up the case, the Yejaman was reluctant to convene the meeting of the tribal council. The Chaluvade had convinced the Yejaman to take up the case in view of the severity of the offence. As the people of the Temple village had come to know of the case, there was need for taking urgent action. The Yejaman had then agreed and arranged for a meet-

ing of the tribal council at the *kattemane* near the Lingannayya pond. Since the offender had accepted the guilt, necessary expiatory ritual was performed. The offender gave some fried gram and puffed rice to all the persons who had assembled at the place as feast. He was also stated to have given twelve paise to the Yejaman as cash gift. As the author was away from the settlement on that day, the matter was reported by the Chaluvade on the above lines.

From the above two cases, it may be observed that the office-bearers, and the Soliga elders of the Yarakaganagadde settlement were keen that the tribals adhered to the tribal code. The headman was not found to be enthusiastic about enforcing tribal code in the event of its breaches. In the interior settlements, elders do not wish to refer their cases to the tribal council unless it is a serious breach of their custom. In view of the huge expenses of feeding the elders of the tribe and also paying off fines etc., the Soliga from the interior settlements refrain from referring their cases to the tribal council. Instead they try to settle their cases within themselves, or through the mediation of elders of other settlements.

The tribal council said to be very powerful about 20 years ago. But with passage of time, its influence has dwindled to some extent. Though, as the Soliga said, no body had gone to police, or court so far, except in one case, which was done because of other considerations as stated earlier, cases that were taken to the tribal council were not many. The main reason as already noted is the expenses that the parties incur in the event of convening a meeting. And secondly, the attitude of the tribals, in general, has changed in respect of functioning of the tribal council. People violate the directives, and the Soliga elders could not do anything about it, except that repeated attempts at maintenance of tribal law are made, whenever occasions like infringement of tribal code arise. This is done by advising the members to adhere to traditional practices.

CHAPTER NINE

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The characteristic features of the religion of the Soliga are : There is innate belief in the existence of supernatural beings as the protectors and benefactors of human beings. It is believed that spirits abound in the Hills and that they are malevolent in effect. There are certain preventive magico-religious rites which combat influences of evil spirits. The Soliga, to some extent, believe in the spirits of the dead, but their belief is not carried to any great form like prophesying any cult of the dead, or practising any kind of ancestor worship. The Soliga believe that the spirits of the dead are malignant to living beings. They do not perceive any knowledge of metempsychosis. There is belief among the people that there are two souls in a human being and they (souls) sever their connection from the human body, when death occurs, and beyond these ideas, the Soliga are incapable of explaining their eschatology. In the following sections, their religious attitudes and beliefs are examined with references to their practices.

I

Gods and goddesses : The gods and goddesses worshipped by the Soliga can be classified here into five categories, viz., (1) Family deities; (2) Hindu gods and goddesses; (3) Regional deities; (4) Mythical hero, Karayya swamy; and (5) deity known as *Kyatadevaru*.

(1) *Family deities* : Traditionally, some families have inherited the family deities and they are even today maintained by the concerned families. The family deities are known by the terms *Hadagina Devaru* or *Mane Devaru*. The deities are kept in a basket container made of cane which is called as *Hadagu*, literally, the term means a sailing vessel. When the Soliga refer the deities in the *Hadagu*, they also use another term *jala* which means 'water'. The people could not explain what these two terms symbolize in relation to their religious beliefs. Perhaps, the ideas associated with the sailing vessel and water might mean their earlier conception of the supernatural beings.

The deities in the *Hadagu* are called by the name *Hadagina Devaru*, which are represented by means of a spine of boa (*havina*

mullu), conch-shell (*sanku*), gong (*jagate*), wooden and bronze dolls (*gombe*) with human faces. The deities are worshipped at the time of observance of the Hosa Ragi festival. There are no individual names for the deities, except for a female deity. The goddess is represented by a doll and she is known as *Kurijujinamma*. The family deities are inherited by the Soliga through the eldest male descendants. The family deities are worshipped for bestowing good harvests. The family deities have the malefic power of creating harm when a curse is uttered.

(2) *Hindu gods and goddesses* : The Soliga pantheon consists of a number of Hindu gods and goddesses. *Siva*, the god of destruction in the Hindu Trinity is considered as the protector of human beings by the Soliga. He is the protector from all calamities and benefactor of mankind. The Soliga are Saivites as they regard themselves as descendants of Karayyaswamy, who is the son of god Mahadeswar Swamy. God Siva is worshipped in the form of 'Linga', and 'Trident', and in His various manifestations like Madeswar, Basaveswar, Kumbhayya, Siddheswar, Mallappa, and Huliyeerappa. Folksongs of the Soliga mostly contain deification of these deities.

The Soliga also deify Rangaswamy, an incarnation of Vishnu. The god is regarded as their *bhava* (sister's husband) as the legend has it. It has already been shown that the beliefs in Rangaswamy prevails on account of the existence of the temple of the same name in the Hills. The Saivite deities named above and Rangaswamy are considered by the Soliga as *Melu Devaru* that is, superior gods from that of their family deities.

Jadeswamy is conceptualised as a deity taking the form of a Lingayat (a saivite sect of South India) medicant (*jangam*) with 101 *jade* (locks of hair on the head), daubed with *Basavanga* (sacred ash) on the forehead. The description of the deity, as narrated in the folk songs is almost akin to that of *Veerabhadra*, an emanation of Siva, who created *Veerabhadra* in great fury. The emanation, *Jadeswamy*, decapitated *Daksabrahma* after the latter's daughter, viz., *Parvati*—*Siva's* consort had jumped into the sacrificial alter, unable to bear the insult inflicted on her husband by her father.¹

Among the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon the Soliga deify *Parvati*, *Durga*, *Chamundeswari*, and *Tolasamma*. *Tolasamma* is the consort of *Rangaswamy*, and the other three goddesses are considered as various forms of *Siva's* consort-*Parvati*. There are no shrines dedicated in

1. The legend contained in the folksongs of the Soliga is similar to the Hindu mythological account of *Veerabhadra* described by Hae Kin (1963 : 125).

honour of these deities in the Soliga settlements. But their prayer which is in prose contains deification of these deities.

In the interior of the forest, there is gigantic Sampage (*michella champaca*) tree, which is of botanical importance in view of its gigantic size and antiquity. The Purani tradition (Swetachala Mahatmya 1959 : 11) has it that the tree was existing since the time the Sages like Vaikhanasa, Valakhila and others, who had pinanced under the tree. The Soliga believe that the tree is the abode of Siva and His consort-Parvati. Siva and other deities are represented here by means of 101 stone emblems (*Linga*) which are placed in a lineal ordes, under the tree. These deities are referred under a generic term *Dodda Sampage Devaru*.

(3) *Regional deities* : *Mariamamma* and *Masanamma* are the twin goddesses of the deseases small pox and cholera and are worshipped by the people of the villages in many parts of Southern Mysore. Usually, in each village a shrine for Maramma deity is built. The Soliga believe that if no proper propitiation is made to these deities, there is the likelihood of occurrence of small pox and cholera. The disease small pox is known as *gora* and dreaded by the people so much that even a little symptom of its occurrence in their settlement makes them to desert the entire locality leaving the patients, and move on to distant places. In order to escape wrath of the deities, they are to be placated by observing festivals, at least once a year, and also by offering animal sacrifices.

(4) *Mythical hero* : Karayya Swamy an ancestor of the Soliga, as their legends say, is worshipped. In the interior of forests, a shrine for Karayya Swamy is said to be existing. Though there appears to be no ritual celebration observed in honour of the mythical hero, the folk songs contain the eulogies of Karayya Swamy along with other Saivite deities.

(5) *Kyatedevaru* : Kyatedevaru² is described as a described as a deity who guards the Soliga. The deity is also described as having a human face, seated on a white horse but clad in such dress as trousers, longboots, cap on the head and carrying a loaded musket. All these are made of gold and silver. There is a shrine dedicated in honour of

2. There is a big temple of Kyatedevaru in the former Gudihatti settlement about 13 miles away from the Rangaswamy temple on the main rood leading to Chamarajanagar. The idol of the deity is carved in a stone with the deity as sitting on horse, wearing long boots, trousers and carrying a musket. The idol is now mutilated and hence it is not clearly visible.

the Kyatedevaru with a stone representation in the Kanchugara settlement. Festivals are observed once a year, in honour of the deity in the Kanchugare settlement. The significance of the peculiar form and dress of the deity is not explained by the Soliga.

II

Spirits and ghosts : The Soliga believe in the existence of spirits in the nature. There are unnamed spirits, i.e., ghosts, known as *deyya* (male), or *deyti* (female), which are believed to be malevolent and create harm to human beings on malicious whim. There are some spirits, which are less malevolent. They are termed as *peede* and *pichachi* and are in the form of wind (*gali*). *Dayya* or *deyti* are seen in some form, human or animal.

Among the category of spirits, there are *Muneswar*, *Veeru*, *Bhumi-gali*, and *Neerubhut*. *Muneswar* are the ghosts of dead sages, and are living in mountain and trees. *Veeru* are ghosts of muslims who had died in the past in the area, when there was muslim rule. They are believed to appear in the form of humans, wearing pyjama, shirt, cap and boots in the same way as a living muslim dresses. Their above is mountains. These spirits are believed to be malevolent and are dreaded during nights when these spirits are supposed to move about.

The ghost of the earth is known as *Bhoomigali* which is in the form of wind. The spirits of the water, viz., *Neerubhut*, reside in ponds, streams, and rivers. *Bhoomigali* and *Neerubhut* are malignant ones and cause harm to human beings.

When a Soliga is possessed by any kind of evil spirits, he approaches the priest for redressal. The priest offers worship on behalf of the affected person and prays the deities for relief. It is believed that through the benevolence of gods, malefic influence of evil spirits is overcome. In case there is no relief even then, the affected person is taken to the *Kaniyaru*, a caste of people who are wellversed in the occult power of controlling evil spirits and ghosts. In the villages of the neighbouring plains, these people live. The Soliga seek their service for magical cure.

The Soliga do not observe any specific ritual for propitiating any particular spirit, or ghost. But a general festival called *bhoodana habba* (festival of ghosts) is observed when spirits of all kinds are

placated. On that occasion food and water are thrown outside the house in order to placate the spirits and ghosts.

Beliefs regarding the 'spirits of the dead' are obscure and confusing to the Soliga. The people say that they cease to believe in the spirits of the dead once the *kallugombe* personifying the soul of the dead is placed in the *kallugudi*, at the time of observance of funeral ceremonies. After the ceremony the spirit of the dead goes to live with the spirits of the dead ancestors and will never haunt, nor cause any harm to the living ones. The dead are forgotten. The spirits of the dead are referred by a generic term *gurugudde*. Though no ritual supplicating the spirits of the dead is observed, during festival occasions, however, a morsel of food and little water is thrown outside the house, by the Soliga to all 'those who have come', that is, spirits of all kinds including those of ancestors, which are believed to have gone to their houses on such occasions) as mark of feeding spirits, ghosts and evil deities of diseases like *maramma* and *masanamma*.

III

Ideas regarding soul : The soul is believed to be having two forms. One is the *dodda sulu* (big soul) and the other is the *hulu sulu* (little soul). The place of the big soul is the heart in a human body. But the actual spot where the little soul exists is not known to the Soliga. It is believed that when the big and small souls depart from the human body death occurs.

The big soul wanders in different places as it likes when a human being is asleep. Adventures like seeing wild animals and going near them, and various other activities found to be doing in dreams are attributed to the action of the big soul which returns to the human body when a person wakes up from the sleep. The state of unconsciousness during sleep is conceived as the result of the big soul's temporary departure. At the time of sleep the little soul is responsible for breathing. Both the big and small souls are described as sisters.

The Soliga believe that soul exists in animals, plants and trees and also in inanimate objects such as rocks. The Soliga say that falling trees make sounds like 'aa, aa, gri, gri' when they are cut, which is the sound of their cry and an indication of the departure of the soul. When such a sound is made during cutting of trees by the Soliga, they invariably observe a simple ritual of keeping a stone near the

tree. Observance of such a ritual is supposed to lessen the blemish of taking the soul of the concerned tree. The Soliga do not know how many souls exist in animals, plants and other inanimate objects, though many a Soliga say that only one soul exists in them unlike human beings.

When the souls depart and human being dies, the Soliga do not know the aftermath of the souls. They have no belief in the rebirth of the souls.

IV

Priesthood and divination : The Soliga believe that the priests among them have ritual power of contracting and communicating with the supernatural beings. A Soliga priest is known as *Tammadi*. The priesthood is inherited through sons. Usually a priest trains his eldest son in the art of priestcraft from childhood. But any number of sons can be initiated into the priestcraft. The priests do not make priesthood as a profession. They earn their livelihood like other Soliga.

A priest is recognized as a *guru* (teacher). Priests render ritual service when called for by any member of the community. Some of the priests are also diviners. Generally, the priests do not expect any remuneration from their devotees. But they are given a few measures of Ragi, or a few coins for the ritual service they render. Gifts in the form of cloth etc., are made in the name of deities when person takes a vow to do so, and in such cases, the gifts are taken by the priests. The priesthood is considered as an act of god's service (*devara seve*).

Priests are believed to be proficient in achieving a state of trance whenever they desire to communicate with the deities. When a priest is in a state of trance, he is 'possessed' by deities. It is known as *devaru bandane*, (god has come on the priest).

Norbeck (1961) has analysed the importance and use of trance in primitive societies. He says, "American Indians employed them (states of trance) principally to gain power for personal use and in connection with curing. They have been also important in divination..... Trance has also undoubtedly been sought for its own sake, for its quality of transcending the mundane..... Whether for healing, divination, or other use, where personalized concepts of supernatural

power prevails, trance appears generally to be interpreted as possession by gods, deceased ancestors, or spiritual beings" (*Ibid*, 92). The Soliga priests are possessed by the deities, and the trance is employed to cure illness and for blessing human welfare. An instance of how a priest dealt with a case of illness is given here. A man of the Yarkanagadde settlement fell seriously ill and was not cured in spite of the use of herbal medicines known to the Soliga. Ultimately the patient was taken to the priest of the local Basaveswar shrine. After the worship, the priest started twitching and began to move spasmodically. After a brief silence, the priest came out from the sanctum-sanctorum with his eyes half closed with his *Gandugodli* (a kind of axe used during worship) near the patient and started beating his abdomen as if in a paroxysm. Though the priest was standing he was violently shaking and was making gestures towards the patient as if he was asking questions. The patient explained his illness, and the priest waved lemons and threw them off. He also gave some quantity of *vibhuti* (sacred ash) to the patient. There was silence for about ten minutes, and then the priest regained this consciousness. In course of few days the patient recovered from the illness, and the Soliga attributed the cure to the benevolence of the deity and the priest's ritual power of being possessed by the deity.

The priests when intense trance exhibit bodily movements and many times show their intensity by striking with either *Gandugodli* to their abdomen, or by pressing *gandu kattari* (a kind of scissor used specially for the occasion) to their neck. The priests say that before they are entranced, they begin to see the atmosphere blurred with bluish tinge, and they will have theophanistic form of the deities they invoke. At this stage they lose contact with the human world and begin to communicate with the supernatural beings.

Priests during divination, particularly, in the *gunjishastra*, are possessed by deities and go into a state of trance, and through them, the priests cure illness, ward off evil spirits, and predict future well being of human beings. The types and the method of divination are described below.

Divination : Some of the priests the wellversed in divination, The priest of the Basaveswar shrine in the Yarkanagadde settlement is an expert diviner as the Soliga say. Two methods of divination are practised. In one method, the diviner manipulates *kavade* (cowries) and forecasts the results. It is known as *kani helwada*. In the

side. At the time of the operation of the *gunjimora*, the diviner asks questions, as if they are addressed to spirits, as, 'why the evil has come?', 'why not the client is well?' etc. etc.; and if the *gunji* seeds stick to the *gunjimora* abruptly, as it happens on many occasions, the diviner predicts that there is spite of a malignant spirit causing harm to the client. But then, the diviner immediately seeks the aid of the deities. He, begins to pray the deities and tilts the *gunjimora* with such a force and emotion, that the *gunjiseeds* separate, and the diviner falls into a state of trance. While in trance, he blesses the client by saying that he has been promised by the deities for his well-being. When he regains his consciousness, he once again prays the deities and burns incense which is a concluding rite of the *gunjishastra*. Usually this type of divination is done at the house of the client. But the diviner conducts the *gunjishastra* sometimes in his own house also. The remuneration for the divination is one seer of ragi and twenty five paise.

V

Magic and witchcraft : The Soliga believe in the occult power of magical experts. Among them, there are no magicians at the present times, the Soliga elders tell that there were magicians, among them in the past, wielding mystical powers either to prevent or to protect the human beings from misfortunes, and also affecting human welfare. It is believed that the Mullu Kurumba—a tribe living in the Chamarajanagar taluk in Mysore district are supposed to possess magical powers, whom the Soliga dread. The Kaniyaru people who live in the villages of the neighbouring plains, are considered to be experts in magic, whom the Soliga approach for magical cure when affected by the spite of evil spirits.

Power of curse : If a curse is uttered in front of the family deities and followed up by the ritual of 'burning the incense' it is believed that it would cause harm to the person on whom the curse is directed. it is called as *dhoopa hakuvadu*. Recourse to this action is taken by the Soliga on those who are found to steal the Ragi kept in the granaries (guli). The 'burning of incense' is done by those who have these who have their family deities. Any Soliga desirous of taking recourse to the act of cursing, seeks the help of those who have their family deities. The power of the curse uttered is so much that the offender either suffers physical illness, or death, depending upon

the wording of the curse pronounced. Resorting to the device of curse is not considered good, as the persons who do the ritual act also suffer, or in case the curse does not reach the victim, it has such a magical power that it may revert to the person who does the ritual. It is regarded as a kind of magical act. As the ritual act is done secretly, identity of the concerned parties namely, both the persons who do the ritual act and those who seek the services are not revealed. Not all those who have family deities would perform the ritual act. Some of them who do it are known to the Soliga but their names are not disclosed to others. Such persons usually charge heavily when their services are sought for.

The ritual act of 'burning the incense' is simple. Even if the offender is not known, the curse is believed to be efficacious and causes harm. In Kallarabetta settlement, a middle-aged Soliga died after a brief illness. His death was associated with the burning of incense by these who had suffered. Names of those who had arranged the ritual were mentioned to the author by the people of the Yarakanagadde settlement. The reason stated was that the deceased had stolen *ragi* belonging to the sufferers, and hence there was the revenge. Belief in the power of curse is so strong that ordinarily a Soliga refrains from stealing anything for fear of the ritual of 'burning the incense.'

VI

Festivals, other rituals, and fairs :

Festivals : The most important festivals which the Soliga observe are : (1) *Rotti Habba* ; (2) *Hosa Ragi Habba*. They are described here briefly.

Rotti Habba : The *rotti habba* is celebrated once a year by members of a local community. For observing the festival the elders take active interest in collecting contributions from every house in a settlement and bear collective responsibility. A Monday, or a Friday during the months of March and April is selected for its observance.

At the precincts of a shrine, a big *pandal* is erected. The priests of all the shrines of the Soliga settlements are invited by special invitation by sending messengers. The priests attend the festival with the flags, umbrella, as insignia of the deities, cymbals, etc. The important feature of the festival is that flat breads (*rotti*) are made out

of the ragi flour and pressed into the muttuga leaves and are roasted in the ceremonial fire prepared on the occasion. On account of the preparation of this type of bread, the name of the festival is called as the '*rotti habba*' (literally, bread festival). The other noteworthy feature of the festival is the walking on the ceremonial fire.

In the various Soliga settlements, the length, breadth, and height of the ceremonial fire differs. In the Purani settlement where the author had attended the festival, the length of the fire prepared in front of the shrine for the rotti habba was 18 feet, breadth 3 ft. and the height 1 foot. In the afternoon the bread are roasted in large quantities in the fire prepared for the ceremonial occasion, but the fire is kept smouldering till the ritual concludes.

As part of the ceremonial meal, rice and vegetable curry are prepared. Men do the cooking. In the evening, the priests who are invited for the festival come to the place of the observance of the festival where they are welcomed by elders. Traditionally, a priest of the Lingayat sect from the nearby village in the plains officiates on the occasion in the beginning. Near a pond situated close to the settlement, all the people assembled go for the worship. A brass vessel is made as a *kalasa* (sacred pot) by the Lingayat priest who worships it with flowers, burning incense, and waving lights of camphor as a ritual invocation. The Soliga priests, who are, by then, possessed by the deities worship the *kalasa*. The role of the Lingayat priest is over after the invocation ceremony but he stays till the closing of the observance. After the worship, the entranced priests go to the ceremonial fire, which is continuously kept burning and walk slowly on the fire. It is stated that as they are possessed by the deities, nothing happens to them and they are believed to be protected by the deities. Inside the shrines, ceremonial meal is placed on the leaf-plates marked for different deities. When the priests return to the shrine the priest in charge of the shrine conducts worship and blesses the elders of the settlement who arranges the festival by stating that the deities are satisfied with the observance of the festival. Then the leaf-plates containing the meal are given to the respective priests, and the ceremonial meal is partaken by the assembled Soliga. In the night, the assembled men and women participate in dancing and singing in groups. By means of songs the deities are invoked. During the course of the dancing and singing the priests are possessed by the deities. While entranced, they give *helike* (forecast) to devotees. In-

dividual Soliga devotees touch the feet of the priests when the latter are in a state of trance and seek redressal of their personal difficulties. Many a Soliga from different settlements attend the festival with the main object of seeking the divine forecast of the deities from the entranced priests. The festival concludes when the day dawns.

Hosa Ragi Habba : Before the commencement of eating the newly harvested millet viz., ragi, a festival known as 'Hosa Ragi Habba', in the fields of those who possess family deities (*hadagina devaru*) is observed. Ragi is harvested in the months of October and November. Balakrishna (1953) has given a detailed description of the observance of the festival, important features of same are described here.

This festival is observed by individuals in order to propitiate their family deities. Cooperation from kinsfolk who are agnates is sought, and it is readily available. Agnatic relatives help the individuals both by kind and manual labour since the family deities usually belong to descendants of the same lineage.

In the field where the ragi is harvested, a pandal is built and a *kalasa* representing the family deities, together with the images and other sacred objects, is enshrined there. The elder of the household, who observes the festival worships the family deities with the help of the priest of the local shrine, who is usually invited on the occasion. The worshipper observes complete fast on that day till the ritual is over. Vegetarian food is cooked in which the ragi balls are prepared out of the newly harvested Ragi, as an offering to the family deities. By evening the worship of the *kalasa* is completed, and the ceremonial food is partaken. As in the case of the *rotti habba*, the assembled Soliga participate in dancing and singing for the whole night. When the day dawns, the festival concludes with the final worship to the family deities.

The main object of the observance of the festival is to pray the family deities for giving the people ample harvest, and blessing the community with happiness for the coming year.

There other festivals observed by the Soliga are : (1) *Bhumi Tayi Shanti* (2) *Pairu Pooje* ; and (3) *Boodana Habba*. These festivals are also associated with agricultural activities. The Bhumi Tayi shanti festival is observed before the broadcasting of Ragi is done. The ceremony is done in order to propitiate the Bhumi Tayi (the earth goddess) and pray for ample harvest. Elders of a settlement observe the ceremony

collectively. One of the fields in a settlement is chosen for the observance. The priest of a shrine who is invited on the occasion worships the deity of the shrine in the first instance, and later worships the earth goddess. A basketful of Ragi is placed at the place of worship. The priest goes to the place where Ragi is kept and worships by waving camphor lights and offering food articles. Elders sacrifice a hen on the occasion and blood of the victim is allowed to fall on the Ragi. At this stage, the priest goes into a state of trance, and blesses the devotees assembled on the occasion. The priest regains his consciousness. The ragi from the basket is then broadcast by the priest in the field where worship is done. The ragi is also distributed among other Soliga for mixing them with the Ragi to be broadcast in their fields. Food articles worshipped are given to the Soliga who assemble there as consecrated food. The festival is held during the months of April and May.

The worship to maize plants is done by the members of a settlement when the maize plant grows to a height of about one foot in any of the fields. The priest of a local shrine worships the maize plants and offers food articles. But there is no animal sacrifice. The priest prays for abundance of maize crop. The worship is, therefore, known as *pairu pooje* (worship of the crop). The consecrated food articles are partaken by all those who assemble at the occasion.

The Boodana Habba is observed during the months of October and November, when the Ragi is threshed. Usually the field, where the Bhumi Tayi Shanti is observed, is selected for conducting the above ritual. As it is a festival of placating the spirit, the name of the festival is called as the Bhoodana Habba (Bhooda i.e., spirits). In the morning of the day fixed for the celebration, elders of a settlement assemble near the place where the Ragi is threshed. The priest of the local shrine worships. Food articles are offered to the spirits. On the same day, in the evening, a goat is sacrificed and its blood is made to fall on some quantity of the Ragi threshed afresh. Ceremonial food consisting of rice, Ragi balls, and meat-curry is offered to the spirits in a leaf-plate and leaf-cup. Members assembled on the occasion partake the ritual food. It is a festival done by a local community whose members contribute for its observance. It is celebrated in order to appease the evil spirits and ghosts abound in nature so as to escape from their wrath.

Mari Habba : A festival known as the *Mari Habba* is observed

by the Soliga, in honour of maramma, the deity of small pox. With the cooperation of all the members of a local community, it is held as a community festival, usually in the month of February. Near a water source, a brass vessel is enshrined as a kalasa to represent maramma. Any male person of a settlement can become a priest for the occasion. Food articles such as parched gram, cocoanut, jaggery, and plantain are offered. A goat is also sacrificed. Individual Soliga, if they have vowed to sacrifice fowls, fulfil their vows by sacrificing fowls. The maramma deity is prayed on this occasion with a view to warding off of the disease small pox.

Hindu festivals : The important festivals observed by the Hindu castes in the Temple village are *Ugadi*, *Gowri*, *Divalige*, *Sankranti*, and *Sivaratri*, which are also observed by the Soliga. On these occasions, ceremonial bath is taken, clean clothes are worn and sweet dish like *payasa*, that is, rice gruel mixed with jaggery, is cooked by the Soliga. The Soliga priests on those days conduct worship in the local Soliga shrines. The Soliga devotees not only visit their shrines but also visit the temples of Rangaswamy and Gangadhareswar in the Temple village. Many a Soliga go on pilgrimage to the Mahadeswar Hills in Kollegal taluk on the *sivaratri* and *divalige* (*deepavali*) days to taken the view of the Mahadeswar deity. On those days, large number of devotees from among the peasant castes living in the villages in the neighbouring plains go on pilgrimage to the Mahadeswar Hills.

Rituals of 'Rain-making', and 'Rain-Stopping : There are no ritual experts associated with 'rain-making'. But there is a belief that if propitiation is done to the deity known as *Kadubina Basaveswar*, rains are sure to come. In the absence of rains, the Soliga of a settlement propitiate the deity, who is giver of rains. The shrine of the *Kadubina Basaveswar* is situated about eight miles away from the Temple village. The Soliga priest, or any elderly person performs the ritual.

On an appointed day, the Soliga go to the shrine carrying good quantity of honey with them. Honey is smeared on the stone emblem (Linga) of the deity, and a vow is made to the effect that if the deity blesses them with rains within a period of three to eight days, the deity is worshipped and offered articles of food. The Soliga believe that by the application of honey, ants cloud on the deity and bite which causes great suffering to the deity, and therefore, the deity blesses them with rains. In the event of rainfall, the Soliga fulfil their

vows by giving a waterbath to the deity and worshipping it with flower, and waving camphor lights. Food articles, viz., cocoanut, plantain, jaggery, parched rice and gram, are offered. This is the only shrine in the Hills, where the deity has the power of giving rain.

Ritual of rain-stopping : In case of excessive rains, the Soliga observe a kind of ritual, as a result of which it is believed that rains stop. The Soliga priest, or any elderly person acts as the functionary. The person who conducts the ritual goes to a secluded place on the top of a hill. He carries with him, the barks of a kind of tree known as *bhootala* and an axe. He then keeps the barks on a rock in the hilly place, and strikes the barks with the axe severely. While performing this ritual act, the person remains completely naked, removing the girdle-thread if he has worn, and also stops his breath at that time. The rains stop instantaneously. Later the barks are destroyed by dropping them into water. The Soliga have no explanation as regards the underlying ideas of the observance of the ritual, but say that they observe it as they are actuated by their traditional practice.

Fairs : In the Temple village, two important fairs (*jatre*, namely, *dodda jatre* and *chikka Jatre* are observed in the months of April and January respectively, in honour of the deity Rangaswamy and His consorts. The Soliga of the Hills render free service (*bitti*) to the temple, as the tradition has enjoyed then to do so. In the discussion, the association of the Soliga with the temple of Rangaswamy has been shown.

The Soliga of the Hills attend the fair held at Doddavvana Gudi Mule, near Yalandur town, in large number. Every year, a big festival is held in honour of the goddess of the place, viz., *Doddavva* sometime in March. The Soliga are given free food by the people on the occasion. In fact, the Soliga have fixed houses in the village, where they take their food since generations. A fair is also held here, which provides opportunity for the Soliga to purchase some articles.

CHAPTER TEN

ASPECTS OF CULTURE CONTACT AND TRIBAL PROBLEMS

It has been pointed out earlier that the tribal societies are undergoing transformation owing to the contact with their neighbouring socio-cultural systems. In the case of the Soliga, the impact of culture-contact with other people has brought about certain changes in the social, economic, and religious life of the tribal people. The Soliga of Yarakanagadde come in contact with the Soliga of other settlements. Their immediate neighbour are the non-tribal people of the Temple villages, whose impact is great on the Soliga. The following diagram shows the types of other cultural groups with whom the Soliga come in contact.

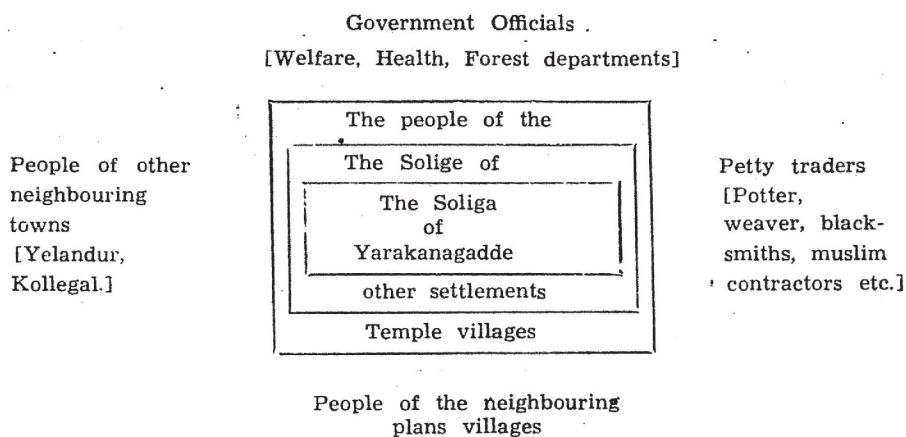


Diagram 1. Showing the types of cultural groups which the Soliga come in contact.

In their social life, changes are largely brought about in material aspects, such as, dress, housetypes, agricultural tools, etc. It may be noted that the Soliga in the past were scantily dressed. The type of dress that is common among the people of the Temple village is almost adopted by the Soliga. Some of the Soliga have begun to wear *chappals* whenever they visit other places. In many cases, youngsters have taken to the hair style of the cropped type instead of tying the hair into a bun, as it is the fashion among the youths of the villages

in the plains: Young women are putting on blouses usually with lengthy sleeves, which type is in vogue among the women of the Temple village and other villages in the plains. Formerly, no woman wore a petticoat beneath the *Sari*, but quite a few young women have now started wearing it like those in the plains villages. Women adorn themselves with various types of ornaments of cheap metals which are sold at the markets held during annual festivals at the Temple village as the Soliga women see the fashionable ornaments worn by women of other cultures.

The houses in which most of the Soliga live are the traditional type, viz., the *gudlu*. In Yarakaganadde, two elders of the tribal council have been living in improved types of houses, that is, houses built with bricks and thatched with tiles, while most of the Soliga have been living in the colony houses. These elders had got some grant from the Government under tribal welfare schemes for building houses.

The many varieties of household equipments that are available in the markets at Yalandur town and other places have entered the houses of the Soliga. Aluminium and brass utensils, unknown previously, have replaced the earthenware in many cases which were the only household articles used in cooking in the past.

In their diet, the Soliga have started making use of rice in increasing proportion along with other items whenever they can afford to do so; various kinds of vegetables and milk have also found their place in their diet.

The type of marriage is still largely marriage by elopement. But the Soliga are also resorting to other forms like marriage by service and negotiated marriage. Though the number of marriages of the latter two types is not large, the trend towards them is very favourable. Elderly Soliga prefer the latter two types as they say that in other villages, connubial relationships exists on the latter two forms.

Formerly, the Soliga never bothered for having honorific titles against their names. In the Temple village and also in other villages in the plains, elderly persons of the peasant and other castes are called by the names with honorific titles, like 'gouda', 'shetti', in case of males and 'goudti' for females. Now-a-days, the Soliga elders insist on for using honorific titles like 'gouda' for males and 'goudi' for females,

People belonging to the castes of peasant, shepherd, uppaliga, and of Lingayat sect from different villages in the neighbouring plains go to Guruvinagadde and Purani settlements in search of fodder when drought conditions prevail in their area. Those who go to these places stay for several weeks. The Soliga co-operate with them. With their acquaintance, the Soliga learn folk songs, stories, food preparations, dress pattern, agricultural practices, etc. and they try to emulate what they learn from others.

The school for the tribal children has been functioning since 1954. When the data on literacy was analysed it may be noted that the literates constitute only 4.5 per cent (i.e., out of 574 people, 26 are literates) for the entire Soliga population of the Hills. In the age groups of, below 5, 16-30, 31-45, and 46-60, the percentages of literates are 7.3, 13, 1.8, and 4, respectively, for the male population, and in the case of the female population, the percentage is only 3.3 for the age-group of below 15. For the individual Soliga settlements, the percentages of literacy are as shown in the brackets against each settlements: Yaraknagadde (16.1), Guruvinagadde (2.7), Purani (0.9), Doddare (2.4), Bhavihane (2.3). There are no literates in the Beedikallu, Kallarabetta, Kanchugara and Kolla settlements. As the tribal school is situated in Yaraknagadde, the percentage of literacy there is high. Though facilities such as free boarding and lodging exists, the Soliga elders in the interiors do not send their children as they do not find its utility. The Soliga of Yaraknagadde have realized the importance of education as they observe the children of the Temple village attending schools. Some Soliga are aware that they get concessions like age and reservation and hence they are keen on sending their children to schools which might help them secure some employment but they do not want to send their children to take up jobs in distant places.

There is no hospital in any of the Soliga settlements nor there is one at the Temple village. The trained mid-wife posted by the Government helps the people for treatment of minor ailments. A health inspector from the Nellore Block in the Chamrajanagar taluk visits the Soliga settlements, usually once in a fortnight and gives medicines for minor ailments besides attending vaccination. The Soliga largely depend on their herbal medicines and in the efficacy of the priests' ritual power of curing diseases. The Soliga claim that they know of a certain herbs by which child-birth is controlled. But they do not like

to divulge information on the herb.¹ Modern medicines, however have not influenced the people very much despite their contact with other cultures.

The subsistence economy of the Soliga was one of the shifting cultivation and collection of forest produce. But there was marked improvement in the form of agricultural practices, as in at least two settlements, viz., Purani and Guruvinagadde, many a Soliga is taking up plough cultivation. The people of Yarakanagadde as a result of great contact with the people of other cultural groups are taking up other economic activities like cocoon rearing, animal husbandry, though in a small measure. Trading in many goods is taking place with the slight improvement of communication. A few years ago, the people did not know the utility of the various goods that now in, like clothes, ornaments, plough, brass and aluminium vessels, tobacco, tea and coffee, and different kinds of estates, but now there is demand for such articles, and as a result, the value of money is increasingly felt. At least in some cases, people from the Yarakanagadde and Purani settlements are seen working hard in order to earn more money.

The traditional authority of social control is the tribal council, and the authorities of the Rangaswamy temple play a useful role in selecting the headman. Contact with other cultures, however, has not affected the structure and functioning of the traditional authority. But many Soliga are now aware of the importance of the village Panchayat and elections to the other bodies. Elders among the Soliga had participated in the previous elections. At that time, however, they were mostly guided by an influential person of the Temple village in this regard.

The religion of the Soliga is described as animism (Nanjundayya and Iyer, 1931 : 596). The legendary accounts show that they regard Karayya Swamy as their tribal tutelary deity. Perhaps the worship of the ancestor Karayya Swamy and the family deities account for their earlier belief in the existence of spirits of the ancestors. But it may be observed that now their pantheon consists of the deities of the Hindu pantheon. Mahadeswar is the popular deity in the southern parts of Mysore States, and the deity is worshipped as a family deity by many families of the various Hindu castes in the area. The folk songs of the Soliga contain eulogies of mainly the Saivite deities like Maha-

1. The Central Food Technological Research Institute, at Mysore, is reported to have procured the herb recently, for conducting experiments.

deswar, Basaveswar, Haliyeerappa and Jadeswamy. The main shrines of the Soliga are dedicated in honour of these Saivite deities. During one of the festivals, a Lingayat is employed as the priest for initiating the ritual. Their festivals have greater similarity in the manner of performances of those festivals observed by the various Hindu castes in the villages of the plains. The worship of the goddess Maramma appears to be an adoption from their neighbouring people in the Temple village as most of the Soliga attend the Maramma worship observed by the people of the Temple village every year. The worship of Rangaswamy, and attending to the various services during the annual festivals reveal that Sri Vaishnavism flourished in that part, and the Soliga of the Hills came into the influence of Sri Vaishnavism since the time when people from the plains migrated to the Hills.

Owing to some of these factors described above, it may wellnigh be said that the Soliga have been Hinduized in their religious beliefs and practiced. In their ideological system, certain changes are noticed. They have the pantheon of gods of the Great Indian Tradition as well as local deities. The supernatural power of the deities as benefactor of mankind is regarded in high esteem. The deities are prayed for bestowing material prosperity and human welfare. Idols are enshrined in temples and they are deified. The Soliga's beliefs in regard to the existence of 'heaven', 'hel' and 'reincarnation' are, however, obscure. Balakrishna (1953) contends that a Soliga are orthodox Hindus, and the Census of India (C. I. 1966 a) has tabulated the Soliga as 'Hindu'.

II

Culture contact has made the Soliga face some problems. Their problems are to be tackled with sympathy and understanding and in consonance with their economic and ecological circumstances. No attempt is made here to examine the whole question in detail. But, some of the immediate problems that the tribal people were facing have been pointed out here.

Tribal problems : The State Government has taken several welfare measures to improve the lot of the Soliga. But these have not made much impact on the people. As part of such schemes, the State Government has built 38 *pucca* houses to colonise the tribals, granted

modernised iron ploughs, distributed bullocks and milch cows, made provisions for medical facilities, drinking water, and trying to give lands etc. But the Soliga have several problems of their own, and the general approach of the tribal upliftment is not feasible at the present juncture unless effective remedial measures are taken to solve their problems.

The State Government has constructed 30 houses for colonising the Soliga in Yarakanaganadde. Out of them, only 17 families moved to those houses after a lot of persuasion. Initially, when the houses were built, the Soliga were not willing to live in them, but later agreed on account of the efforts of the Block Development Officer who persuaded some Soliga to settle down. But the Soliga living in the colony were not willing to stay for longer time. In view of the nature of their local community, and the economic activities, the tribals desire to live in the interior settlements. This is the psychological barrier which does not remedy the problem of their settlements despite building many more colonies.

Restrictions on the podu cultivation practised by the Soliga have made them suffered much. Now that shifting to different areas in the forest is not possible, the people have to stay in the same place for several years. The traditional method of podu cultivation does not yield enough crops. The forest fields being on slopes of the Hills, use of plough, either wooden, or iron becomes hazardous and unrewarding. Unless the problem of settling the Soliga in larger and comparatively plain areas the modern agricultural methods are of very little use.

The great problem that is faced by the tribals in the various settlements in the Hills is the ravage of wild animals. Elephants, bores, and wild buffaloes devastate whatever crop is grow in the forest fields by the traditional podu cultivation. This problem cannot be solved until the Soliga are settled in places which are free from the menace of wild animals.

On account of the shifting nature of their settlements, the tribals do not have any attachment towards the land where they practise cultivation. The people could settle down permanently when they have feeling of land possession. In view of their traditional love for the forest area, lands could be given to the tribals on suitable forest sites. The most important reason for the Soliga's love for the forest is that in the forests produces are available in plenty which are useful for both diet and carrying on their economic pursuits of collection of minor

forest produces. Therefore, any plan for the settlement of the tribals has to be viewed from these ecological and cultural considerations.

Besides agriculture, collection of minor forest produces is other main economic pursuit of the Soliga. But due to the monopolistic rights of the non-tribal agents, the Soliga are exploited to the maximum extent. Forest labourers' Co-operative Society has been functioning in the Hills, but it has not taken up the collection of forest produces. Unless, efforts are made at the government level by the cooperative department in this regard the problem of exploitation continues unabated. Unemployment problem among the tribals is very great. Consequently, therefore, they are underfed and undernourished. There is ample scope for developing the area for the cash crop cultivation, industries etc., which in turn would provide employment to the tribals in greater measure.

The land in the Hills is fertile. Cash crops like Potato,¹ rubber, coffee,² tea, etc., could be raised. Bamboo and honey are plentiful. The Soliga can take to cottage industries like basketry, and honey collection in improvised method, profitably. More incentive be given for taking to silk (cocoon rearing) industry by the tribals so that more and more people can involve in themselves in bettering their living conditions economically. There are greater potentialities for rearing poultry farms, sheep breeding and animal husbandry. The Soliga would prove better in exploiting the resources, provided facilities are given to them with the help of the department of Co-operation, Agriculture, Forest, Animal Husbandry etc. In order to revolutionize the tribals to improve their economic conditions, there is the exigency of drawing up of suitable schemes on the lines suggested above.

The Soliga are still dependent upon their traditional herbal medicines. The medical facilities in the Hills are too meagre. The tribals in the interior settlements are the worst sufferers. A mobile health unit may do useful service if stationed somewhere in the Hills, and provide the necessary medical facilities by moving in the interiors whenever needed.

1 The author has learnt that recently a Potato Research Station has been established in the Hills in order to conduct researches on Potato cultivation.

2 "The State Government has decided to allot certain lands in and the Biligiri Ranga Hills in Mysore district for growing coffee on experimental basis...." says a newspaper report of October, 20, 1969. This shows that the State Government has taken certain steps in this regard.

Despite functioning of an Asrama school for the tribals, the progress of providing primary education to the people is not much. So long as the Soliga decide to live as denizens of forests depending upon shifting cultivation and collection of forest produce, education has no meaning. If other means of livelihood are provided to them, and if the people have to come into greater contact with other cultures, the tribals are bound to progress educationally. At this stage, mobile educational units with audio-visual facilities, may prove advantageous for the spread of education among the tribals. It is education that would bring about greater change among the tribals, and perhaps, the people might appreciate what all is done to their welfare when they are educated.

The above are some of the problems which the Soliga are facing. Therefore, welfare measures for upliftment of the tribals have to be viewed from various economic, social and cultural considerations in order to give them a better deal.

APPENDIX I

KINSHIP TERMS OF THE SOLIGA

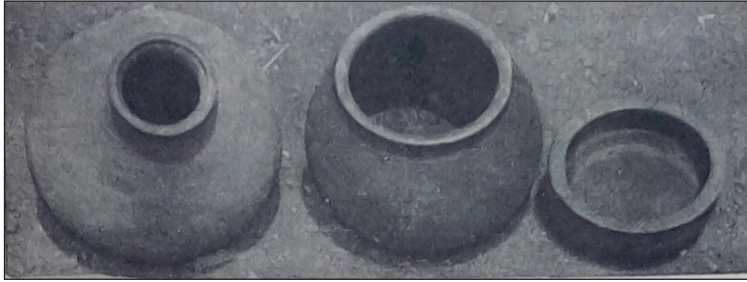
Sl. No.	Description of persons	Terms used
1	Father's Father's Father	<i>Hettayya</i>
2	Father's Father's Mother	<i>Hettamma</i>
3	Mother's Father's Father	<i>Tatayya</i>
4	Mother's Father's Mother	<i>Tatamma</i>
5	Father's Father	<i>Ayya</i>
6	Father's Father's Brother	<i>Ayya</i>
7	Mother's Father	<i>Ayya</i>
8	Spouse's Mother's Father	<i>Ayya</i>
9	Spouse's Father's Father	<i>Ayya</i>
10	Father's mother	<i>Amma</i>
11	Mother's mother	<i>Amma</i>
12	Father	<i>Appa</i>
13	Father's Brother a) elder b) younger	<i>Doddappa</i> <i>Chikkappa</i>
14	Mother's Sister's Husband a) elder b) younger	<i>Doddappa</i> <i>Chikkappa</i> <i>Chikkappa</i>
15	Step Father	<i>Mava</i>
16	Mother's Brother	<i>Mava</i>
17	Spouse's Father	<i>Mava</i>
18	Father's Sister's Husband	<i>Mava</i>
19	Mother	<i>Avve</i>
20	Mother's sister a) elder b) younger	<i>Doddavve</i> <i>Chikkavve</i>
21	Father's Brother's wife a) elder b) younger	<i>Doddavve</i> <i>Chikkavve</i> <i>Chikkavve</i>
22	Step Mother	<i>Atte</i>
23	Father's Sister	<i>Atte</i>
24	Mother's Brother's wife	<i>Atte</i>
25	Spouse's Mother	<i>Anna</i>
26	Brother a) elder b) younger	<i>Tamma</i>
27	Father's Brother's son	} Same as in 26
28	Mother's sister's son	
29	Father's Sister's son a) elder b) younger	<i>Bhava</i> <i>Maida</i>
30	Mother's Brother's son	Same as in 29
31	Father's Sister's Daughter's Husband	} <i>Anna Tamma</i> (According to relationship other terms like <i>Mava</i> , <i>Bhava</i> and <i>Maida</i> are also used.)
32	Mother's Brother's Daughter's Husband	

33	Spouse's Sister's Husband	
	a) elder	<i>Bhava</i>
	b) younger	<i>Maida</i>
34	Spouse's Brother	
	a) elder	<i>Bhava</i>
	b) younger	<i>Maida</i>
35	Sister's Husband	
	a) elder	<i>Bhava</i>
	b) younger	<i>Maida</i>
36	Spouse	
	a) Man speaking	<i>Hedti*</i>
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Ganda*</i>
	(*These are terms of reference. Speech between spouses is always in-direct. Man may address his spouse by her name, while a woman does not).	
37	Parents-in-law of a son or daughter	<i>Beegar</i>
	a) Father-in-law of son or daughter	<i>Beega</i>
	b) Mother-in-law of son or daughter	<i>Beegti</i>
38	Sister	
	a) elder	<i>Akka</i>
	b) younger	<i>Tange</i>
39	Father's Brother's Daughters	} Same as in 38.
40	Mother's Sister's Daughter	
41	Father's Sister's Daughter	
	a) elder	<i>Attige</i>
	b) younger	<i>Nadini</i>
42	Mother's Brother's Daughter	Same as in 41.
43	Spouse's Brother's wife	
	a) elder	<i>Attige</i> (<i>Akka</i> , <i>Tange</i> are also used)
	b) younger	<i>Nadini</i>
44	Spouse's Sister	
	a) elder	<i>Attige</i>
	b) younger	<i>Nadini</i>
45	Brother's wife	
	a) elder	<i>Attige</i>
	b) younger	<i>Nadini</i>
46	Son	<i>Maga</i> (Addressed by name).
47	Brother's Son	
	a) Man speaking	<i>Maga</i> (Addressed by name)
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Aliya</i>
48	Spouse's Sister's son	} same as in 47.
49	Mother's Brother's Daughter's son	
50	Father's Sister's Daughter's son	
51	Sister's Son	
	a) Man speaking	<i>Aliya</i>
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Maga</i> (Addressed by name).
52	Spouse's brother's son	
	a) Man speaking	<i>Aliya</i>
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Maga</i> (Addressed by name)

53	Daughter's Husband	<i>Aliya</i>	
54	Brother's Daughter's Husband		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Aliya</i>	
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Maga</i> (Addressed by name)	
55	Sister's Daughter's Husband		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Maga</i> (do)	
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Aliya</i>	
56	Daughter	<i>Magalu</i> (Addressed by name)	
57	Brother's Daughter		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Magalu</i> (do)	
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Sose</i> (do)	
58	Sister's Daughter		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Sose</i> (do)	
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Magalu</i> (do)	
59	Spouse's Brother's Daughter		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Sose</i>	} (Addressed by name)
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Magalu</i>	
60	Spouse's Sister's Daughter		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Magalu</i>	} (do)
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Sose</i>	
61	Son's wife	<i>Sose</i>	
62	Sister's Son's wife		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Magalu</i>	} (do)
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Sose</i>	
63	Brother's Son's wife		
	a) Man speaking	<i>Sose</i>	} (do)
	b) Woman speaking	<i>Magalu</i>	
64	Son's son, Daughter's son, Brother's son's son, Brother's Daughter's son, sister's son's son, sister's daughter's son	<i>Mammaga</i>	(do)
65	Son's Daughter, Daughter's daughter, Brother's son's daughter, sister's son's daughter, son's son's wife, daughter's son's wife, sister's daughter's daughter	<i>Mammagalu</i>	(do)
66	Children of second descending generation	<i>Mulu Makka</i>	

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Earthen-ware



Articles of basketry



Agricultural tools



Soliga couple



A Soliga elder (dress of male)



Soliga men carrying Utsava dieties of Rangaswamy and His consorts



Kallugudi (the temple of the dead)



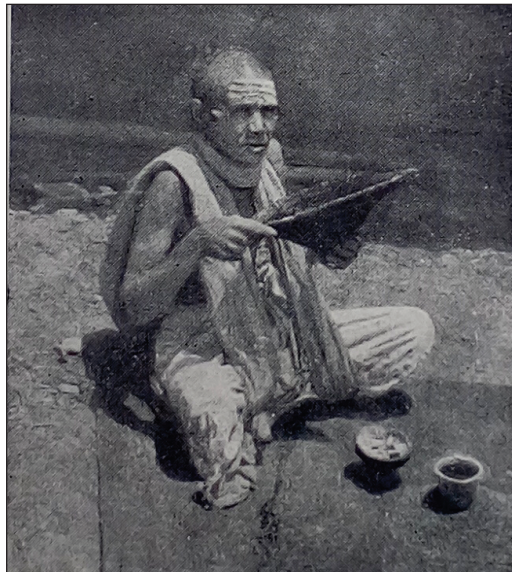
Basaveswar shrine in Yarkanagadde



Guruvinagadde settlement



A priest in operation of Kani Heluvudu



A priest in operation of Gunjishastra