Welcome to this inaugural issue of The Dawn Journal. We are delighted to offer this interesting range of papers dealing with tribal communities.

It makes us proud for being a research platform encouraging people around the world to engineer variety of articles on the contemporary conditions of such tribal communities.

We highly hope that the themes presented here would be welcomed and relished by readers around the world and would contribute for the success of the journal. We extend our special appreciations to the authors of this issue.

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Editor-in-Chief
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Announcement
It seems that hardly a week passes without the news media reporting another harrowing account of the movement of refugees somewhere: Afghan boat people heading for Australia, Africans trying to get to a better life in Italy, Ethiopians living in Moscow Airport. Their stories are often horrifying, their health and sheer numbers mind-boggling, and their futures inconceivable. Yet most of these people do survive, long beyond the day’s news headlines. Some finally get the chance to return home, while others settle down in another land.

Sociologists have developed three categories to help explain the motivations which may lead people unwillingly into refugee status. Some "majority-identified" refugees, people who continue to identify with their homeland but not with its current government or social conditions: they fondly expect to return home at a later date. Secondly, there are "events-alienated" refugees who have been driven from their homeland by force or intolerable conditions, and who doubt they will ever set eyes on it again. Third, there are "self-alienated" refugees who move away for ideological or other personal reasons, including work or educational opportunities.

Taking a long view of their histories, one can see that refugees may in time be better viewed as emigrants, even if not usually willing ones. They settle down in a new host country, working there, perhaps raising families, and integrating themselves into the new place. Yet this integration may be less than whole-hearted among those who started off as "majority-identified" refugees, because they continue to feel themselves as part of their homeland. Clearly the motivation for the original refugee flight has something to do with eventual success as immigrants elsewhere. What are the characteristics of successful immigrants?

Among many highly visible examples of immigrant success are the East European Jews who came to America about a century -ere "events-alienated," others "self-alienated," but in either case they and their descendants became hard-working, loyal U.S. citizens who valued
education, freedom, and other liberal principles. They flourished in a society of non-Jews, and would not dream of going back to the ancestral homeland.¹

Have there been similar success stories in the non-Western world, where today so much refugee movement is reported? The Badaga people of South India are one such story, and it is a particularly interesting one because it was not in modern times that the Badagas were refugees: they were in fact refugees four centuries ago, yet sufficient is known about their subsequent history to show how they adapted, first to life in a new highland environment, and later to life under a modernizing but alien British administration. It is this process of adaptation, to geographical environment as well as to foreigners, that we shall now examine.

Identifying the Badagas

The word "Badaga" as used in this article has three distinct meanings: (1) the largest indigenous community in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu state, in the interior of Southern India. They number around 160,000 today. Their name, meaning "northerners", was given because they migrated, as we shall see, from the Plains of Mysore District, just to the north of the Nilgiri Hills, in the decades following the Muslim invasion that destroyed the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in 1565 AD. (2) Badaga is also a Dravidian language spoken only by these Badagas. It is now a distinct language, but was derived from 16th century Kannada and perhaps Kurumba as well. Today it contains many words of English and Tamil origin, as well as many ultimately derived from Sanskrit.² Although the language has an extensive oral literature of plays and ballads, as well as hundreds of proverbs, prayers, omens and curses, it was never a written language.³ (3) Badaga is also the common name for the Gaudas, who are by far the largest phratry within the community.

Settling Down on the Nilgiri Hills

The Badagas were initially "events-alienated" refugees who had been driven from their ancient homeland by the threat of force in the 16th century. They had been settled farmers there, living in villages which are still identifiable today. Although Badaga legend does refer specifically
to the "wandering in the wilderness", even to an apocryphal pursuit by Muslim soldiers whose advance (like that of the pharaonic forces against the Children of Israel) was cut off when the Moyar River closed in on them; yet it does not appear from these same sources that it took the Badaga settlers more than a few weeks to find forest clearings where they could build their huts and live in peace.

The picture of their initial settlement on the Nilgiri Hills is a hazy one, for they had no chroniclers then; indeed, it is safe to assume that everyone living on the Hills in those distant times, including the various local tribes, was non-literate. Occasional medieval inscriptions have been found in the foothills, carved on rocks, but these inscriptions (in the Tamil or Kannada languages) were evidently the handiwork of lowland warlords and chieftains, not of early Badagas. The first place to be settled by Badagas was a site called Anekatti, at the foot of the northern edge of the plateau. The grandson of their leader at that time, a man called Hucci Gauda, later established a settlement up above on that northern edge of the plateau, which they called Tuneri, and which somewhat later became the home village of the Badagas' paramount chief. Even today this official still exists, and his family records indicate that he is the eighteenth to succeed to that position, popularly called "Tuneri headman" or, more formally, "four-mountains headman".

One might ask how it is possible to know anything about the history of a people who were all non-literate until early in the 19th century, and who thus lack written documents from early times? Fortunately, much of their legends are a fairly factual (or at least not supernatural) kind of oral history. Beyond this, it is possible to argue from internal cultural evidence about, for example, the date of their arrival on the plateau. Because the birth of the latest incumbent of the paramount chieftaincy occurred in the mid-20th century, and because the average generation among Badagas we have a tool for calculating the date of Tuneri's founding. However, it may safely be assumed that prior to the 20th century, when schooling did not delay the age at marriage and first pregnancy, people started reproducing at a younger age and so we might guess at a generation prior to 1900 as spanning only 20 years. This assumption does allow us to count back from the birth of the present headman to conclude that the very first Tuneri headman was born about the year 1600 AD. He was the grandson of a man who fled with his family from the Muslims invading Mysore District, and this fact accords very closely with my presumption that it
was the breakup of the Vijayanagar Empire (covering roughly the modern Karnataka State), which followed the historic battle of Talikota in 1565, that prompted a flight into the nearby hills by some of the rural Hindu peasantry living near Mysore City. It would have been altogether appropriate for them to recognize as their leader a male elder, and once they had settled at Tuneri it would also be natural to their way of thinking for the eldest son to succeed his father in the office each generation. This was, after all, the most normal way in which offices had been passed on in medieval India.

Having a headman and a spokesman was essential for the newcomers. They carried a remembered peasant culture in their heads, but now needed to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with the surrounding tribes, specifically the Todas, Kotas, and Kurumbas. A Kota legend records this:

...in the night, at midnight, secretly... they came and arrived at our...district. Having held a big meeting, (the Badagas) begged and asked, saying: Because of the trouble that the Mohammedan made for us...we have come, making ourselves to escape. This country is yours... We are helpless. You must help us. (The Kotas) decided, saying to all the Badagas who had come to the Todas, the Kotas, the Kurumbas, these three people: If you are to go on making cultivation on the land of our...district and eating and prospering, to us Kotas you must give a tax of grain (said to be one quarter of the yield). To the Todas you must give a winnowing basket (of grain to each house). To the Kurumbas you must give the village tax (four annas and a meal paid by each house).... They made a decision, saying: The Kotas must give to the Badagas iron things and wooden things and must make help to then. The Todas must give them winnowing Baskets and cane and churning sticks, all these. The Kurumbas must keep watch so that no one at all must come making the Badagas fear. Eating food in the houses of the Badagas, they must keep watch....

6

In this short extract from the translation of a much longer tale recorded in the 1930s, we also find the charter for the peaceful intertribal relations that have been so extensively discussed in previous ethnographic accounts of the area.
To a modern student a frontier is a line on a map or perhaps a string of cement markers that separate Belgium from France. To new or immigrant settlers in a region of pre-modern India, on the other hand the frontier was a state of mind. And thus for the earliest Badagas the frontier was that place beyond the Mysore territory, their previous home, where they might be free from the threat of invading Muslim soldiers. In terms of practical geography this meant the gorge of the Moyar River, which still forms the boundary between Mysore District and Nilgiri District. Its frontier status was made memorable to all later Badagas by the sight of the gorge itself, but even more by the story, no doubt adapted from the Old Testament, of how the waters of the Moyar River opened up to allow the Badaga refugees to pass, but then closed on pursuing Muslim soldiers and washed them away. The southern rim of this gorge is marked by several "frontier shrines" dedicated to local deities, each the scene of an annual boundary-marking festivity.

"The frontier concept ... brings to mind the idea of a temporary, highly fluid social environment that ends when conditions of increased population bring the opportunity for movement to a close." Yet the subsequent social history of the Badagas after crossing the Moyar River meshes more closely with a new African model of a permanent "inter-frontier" which existed in zones of weak political control between established polities. This was the sort of "no man's land" in which the early Badagas found themselves eking out a living on the Nilgiri Hills—albeit surrounded by other men. They were in fact to become a tribe among tribes, as they slowly lost their former Mysore caste identity (no longer interacting with any other castes), and they represent perhaps the only well-documented case in Southern Asia of a caste group adopting a tribal social model for emulation, because usually cultural change has been in an opposite direction: tribes there emulate caste society.

It would seem that from the very outset these newcomers distributed themselves through the Nilgiri Hills according to a principle of marrying outside the settlement (settlement exogamy). In modern times this principle has expressed itself as hamlet exogamy, but in the beginning there were probably no true Badaga hamlets, only individual houses. A man and his family, perhaps with his brothers' families alongside, settled in a particular forest clearing in the 16th or 17th century. Incest prohibitions brought with them from times long past meant that this residential
unit was an exogamous unit too. As their population expanded into a regular hamlet, they grew in numbers and social organization from one extended family to one lineage, which might split later into several minor lineages. Yet all knew that (if not wives from elsewhere) they were descended from the founding male of that place. When young people wanted spouses, they had to look for them in other Badaga hamlets. Elopement or marriage by capture were sometimes resorted to, it would seem. Yet always certain rules applied, for those other affinal hamlets could not be descended from the founder of one’s own hamlet (i.e., belong to the same clan), and they certainly could not be hamlets of the neighbouring Kota, Toda, Kurumba or Irula tribes either. These patterns of lineage, clan, and settlement exogamy still operate among the 160,000 Badagas of today, but they were already being formulated four hundred years ago when there were only a few hundred Badagas on the hills altogether.

The isolated style of life followed by early Badagas was related to their method of economic exploitation. In medieval Mysore their ancestors had lived in ancient villages that were within walking distance of Mysore City and the pilgrimage centre of Nanjangud. Settled agriculture on permanent fields was normal there. On the Nilgiri Hills, in contrast, Badagas had no fields available until they had cleared them; and indeed cultivation in small swiddens, following a process of slash-and-burn, was one usual form of agriculture on the Nilgiris (and elsewhere in the hilly parts of India) until the mid-19th century. A swidden is a patch of ground cleared of its forest cover for cultivation during the next few years: such a practice is commonly called shifting or slash-and-burn agriculture, Not only the Badagas but the neighbouring Kotas too practised some swidden cultivation; indeed. We may presume that much of the highland culture of the Badagas was less an adaptation of lowland traditions they had brought with them than a borrowing of useful and appropriate traits from the material culture of the Kotas and Todas.

One explanatory tale makes this point quite explicitly: the earliest refugees were fearful that their daughters would be taken by Muslim pursuers, usually said to have been soldiers. So, to make the girls look unattractive to urbane Muslims, the refugees adopted the practice, once on the hills, of tattooing the brows and arms of their girls with patterns that would make them look similar to the tribal Kota or Toda women. It was thought, probably with some justice, that this ruse would make Badaga woman sexually unpalatable to the Muslims. Young girls were still being
tattooed in the traditional way as late as the mid-20th century, using a barberry thorn and a solution of soot.10

**Subsistence**

We have seen that, as a community of refugees, the early Badagas had to cut their homesteads out of the Nilgiri forests. They continued with some slash-and-burn activity there until the 1870s. In general they use fields around each village, practice mixed farming of millets, barley, wheat, and a variety of European vegetables, two of which — the potato and the cabbage — have now assumed major commercial importance. Badaga farmers have virtually no irrigation but rely instead on the rainfall of two regular monsoon seasons. During the last century the farmers gradually shifted from subsistence cultivation of traditional grains to cash-crop farming of potatoes and cabbages, with irrigation in some places. After several seasons of disease potato fields were recently replaced by numerous small plantations of tea (which was first introduced here by the British in 1835, and had come from China).

Badagas also have herds of buffalo and cows for dairy purposes, less numerous now than in the past, and never kept for meat even though most people are not vegetarians. Poultry are commonly kept, and ponies occasionally, but not sheep, goats, donkeys, or elephants.

**Economic Exchange**

The community is well-known in anthropological literature for its complex symbiosis with the Toda, Kota, and Kurumba tribes of the Nilgiris. It is also true that some Badaga villages maintain exchange relations with the Irulas, Uralis, Panyas, and Chettis of the surrounding slopes.11

The closest ties are with the seven nearby villages of the Kotas. Until 1930 every Badaga family had a Kota associate who provided a band of musicians whenever there was a wedding or funeral in that family, and who regularly furnished the Badagas with pottery, carpentry, thatching, and most leather and metal items. In return for being jack-of-all-trades to the Badagas (who had no specialized craftsmen in their own community), the Kotas were provided with cloth and a portion of the annual harvest by their Badaga associates, of whom, each Kota would have many.
The Todas, a vegetarian people numbering several hundred only, were the only group in the hills whom the Badagas were willing to accept as near-equals. The two communities used to exchange buffaloes and attend each other’s ceremonies. Some Todas still supply their associates with baskets and other jungle-grown produce, I believe, as well as clarified butter (ghee). In return the Badagas gave a portion of their harvest. Since 1930 the relationship has become much attenuated, as with the Kotas, largely because the Badaga population has increased out of all proportion to the Todas and Kotas — but also because it is distinctly more modernized than theirs.

The Kurumbas are a cluster of seven tribes of jungle gatherers, gardeners, and sorcerers on the Nilgiri slopes. Each Badaga commune has (or had) a watchman, a Kurumba employed to protect those Badagas from the sorcery of other Kurumbas. He also takes part in some Badaga ceremonies as an assistant priest, and supplies his Badaga friends with Baskets, nets, honey and other jungle products. The Badaga headman traditionally levied for him a fixed quantity of grain from each household in the commune.

Irulas and Uralis are thought to be sorcerers like the Kurumbas, if less effective ones, and are treated similarly. Some Chettis are itinerant traders who would sell knickknacks on a fixed circuit of Badaga villages once a month. They also have a minor ceremonial connection with the Badagas. Panyas are (or were) agricultural serfs on the land of certain Badagas and Chettis who inhabit the Wainad Plateau directly to the west of the Nilgiri Plateau proper. (The above relationships are today pretty much a thing of the past.)

**Villages**

The settlements, usually of no more than several hundred people, consist of parallel rows of stone or brick houses with tiled roofs. They lie along the slope of a hill on its leeward side, for protection from the westerly monsoon. Each row of houses is fronted by a set of level workspaces that look something like a street, but are not. The fields spread out all around. Up to a half-dozen temples and shrines for different Hindu gods are to be found in each village. Modern villages have piped water to communal taps, but not long ago the water supply was a nearby stream or at best a channel running into the village from a stream. One other universal feature is a village green, important as a council place, playground, dance ground, funeral place, and general grazing area for the calves.
Political Organization

Characteristic of any “inter-frontier” like the Nilgiri Plateau is that it is something of a power vacuum. This was certainly the case for the earl they had walked out of the realm of Mysore but were apparently not entering any other realm. It was only around 1820 that British people began settling in small numbers on these hills, developing towns, roads and markets; and the Badagas were then effectively brought under the administrative hand of the Madras Presidency, a huge territory covering much of Southern and Eastern India and governed at the time by the East India Company. Before that date the early Badagas had been slowly filing this political vacuum on the Nilgiris, for each hamlet founder not only became the head of a micro-economic system, but with the passage of the years he would become a respected elder with a political influence that could easily reach well beyond the confines of his relatives' customary swiddens.

Traditionally, therefore, Badagas lived in what anthropologists call chiefdom, as they are under a paramount chief. The filling of the power vacuum just referred to had its small beginning when the first settler, Hucci Gauda, founded the first settlement at Tuneri, and thus became the ancestor of that village's seventeen successive headmen and also of the paramount chiefs for the entire hamlet headmen only controlled the loyalty and labour of the younger men and women in their family; but, with the growth of their status and that of their entire family and lineage, they came to control the patterns of marriage and even the fates of wrongdoers on a much wider scale, through their headship of a council. Each hamlet (hatti) had a headman and a council of elders, in neighboring hamlets, constituted a higher-level council at what can be called the commune (uru) level. A commune was and is a cluster of neighbouring hamlets (any number from one to forty-one) that recognize one of their headmen as head also of the entire commune. The Nilgiri Hills were further divided into four segments, with recognized boundaries radiating out from the central peak of Doddabetta. Each of these segments contained a dozen or so communes, and had a divisional; council made up of the headmen of these communes, under a divisional headman. In turn, at the highest level, there was an all-Nilgiri council, ("four-mountains council") made up of all the headmen of all levels, and of course under the supervision of the Tuneri headman who, as we have already seen, was also paramount chief by tradition.
The Badaga council system still has some influence, although its judicial authority has been greatly undermined by modern law-courts and the Indian legal system. Each headman still has his council; but the paramount chief's council is rarely called together nowadays.

The traditional legal procedure of long ago required that a dispute or crime be considered first by a hamlet council — the headman's judgement being final — but that an unacceptable decision could be appealed up the hierarchy of councils. Major land disputes and cases of murder would formerly have been brought to the paramount chief after consideration by councils at lower levels. In early times the headmen could dictate severe punishments, including ostracism and hanging. Today the headmen are mainly involved in small disputes and in ceremonial duties.

Social Organization

The community is divided into a number of phratries. It is not correct to call these units subcastes (although they sometimes have been), for they are not altogether endogamous and they have no distinctive forms of occupational specialization. They are, however, like subcastes in forming a hierarchy, with the conservative Lingayat group, the Odeyas, at the top, and the headman's official servants, the Toreyas, at the bottom. Between these two extremes there are one phratry of vegetarians and three others of meat-eaters. The Christian Badagas, started by the first conversion in 1858, now constitute a separate meat-eating phratry ranked below the Toreyas but respected for their progressive habits.

Each phratry is made up of several exogamous clans — two each in the case of the Tareya, Beda, and Kumbara phratries, three in the case of Odeyas, and rather more in other cases.

Marriage: The Cement of Life

A successful family head, even a hamlet head, was effective only if he were fertile. The more sons a man had, the more daughters-in-law he would acquire, and, because both sexes worked on the land according to a set division of labor, the more agricultural productivity would result. But through one of the prime biological laws, it was typically the case that the more sons a man sired, the more daughters he was likely to have as well. By the time these girls had attained
puberty they would have to be married off to other hamlets and their labor would thenceforth be lost to their father. Nonetheless his daughters were useful to him in the frontier environment, for he could use the very fact of offering their hands in marriage, as well as the resultant kin ties, as a basis for extending his own influence. At the same time this affinal net could become a safety net when a man fell on hard times, for his in-laws might be relied upon to lend him grain or money when really necessary. The strength of affinal ties among the Badagas has always been expressed in the marital preference for a spouse who is a cross-cousin: a boy should marry his mother’s brother’s daughter (MBD) or else his father’s sister’s daughter (FZD). At the same time his sister might well find a spouse who was her mother’s brother’s son (MBS) or father’s sister’s son (FZS), and at the same time the brother of her own brother’s wife. This latter situation is called brother-sister exchange. Repeated marriage arrangements between two families linked in this way led to strong ties between affines living in separate hamlets usually some miles apart. Clearly the head of a family is not only the manager of a production system but of reproductive possibilities too, because nearly all marriages are arranged by the parents.

As has also been observed for frontier societies in Africa,

... the direct expression of and means to wealth is the control of persons, their reproduction, and labor. ... [Production is geared toward the maintenance of current social relationships, that is, toward strengthening and supporting the family in its existing social matrix...] Hence the importance of being first as a salient cultural feature... Through their relation to founder ancestors, those lineages that are first in an area have a strong claim to political importance and resource control. Those that are latecomers often have more limited power and rights.12

In short, there is an ecological as well as political dimension to establishing one’s family in a new place. Every Badaga village belongs to one particular clan or another, and hence is exogamous. At marriage a bride has to leave her natal village and move to her husband’s. Beyond this the Badagas have what are, for Hindus, some unusual regulations. Most remarkable perhaps is that hypogamy (women marrying down) is as acceptable as hypergamy (women marrying up): marriages may occur between couples coming from clans of differential status, yet in these cases it does not matter whether the groom is from the higher or the lower clan.
Although a dowry has become a requirement during the past few decades, it is not a traditional part of the Badaga marriage arrangements. Instead a bride wealth of up to two hundred rupees was, and perhaps still is, paid by the groom's family to the bride's. This small sum does not purchase the girl but is viewed as payment for the ornaments she will bring with her to the wedding, and hence has increased over the years with the price of gold.

The favoured marriage partner is a cross-cousin, preferably father's sister's daughter (FZD) or MBD. But other more distant relations are acceptable, provided that they belong to an appropriate clan. Generation level is recognized as a distinguishing feature of men alone, and women may actually change their generation levels as they perhaps marry successive husbands belonging to different generations. It is even theoretically possible for a man to marry a woman and her daughter and grand-daughter simultaneously, provided he does not thereby marry his own offspring. All three wives would thus attain the generation-level of their co-husband. Gerontogamy — old men taking young wives — is not at all uncommon.\(^{13}\)

Polygyny is acceptable, though not nearly as common as monogamy. In an extreme case a man had five wives at once. Divorce and remarriage are easy for men, even for women, and are acceptable practices, Widows can remarry without adverse comment in this society.

**Religion**

Except for perhaps three thousand Christians (Protestants and Roman Catholics in similar proportions), all Badagas are Hindus of the Shaivite persuasion: they honor numerous gods, but see Siva as the preeminent one, and most other gods as aspects of Siva. A sizeable minority, however, are of the Lingayat sect, which is almost confined to Karnataka State (formerly Mysore). This was a medieval sect founded in the 13th century which took Siva as the only deity for them, and which still worships him through a phallic emblem, the *linga*. Among Badagas the sect is represented in the entire membership of several clans, namely Adikiri, Kanakka, Kongaru, and three more which make up the Wodeya phratry.

The Hindu Badagas, including these Lingayat clans, worship quite a number of gods, all of which are sometimes explained as "aspects" of Siva, or members of his family. These include Mahalinga and Mariamma (the smallpox goddess), together with many lesser deities unknown outside the Nilgiri communities, among them the ancestral Hiriodea and his consort Hette. Each
village celebrates about a dozen festivals during the year. The most important are *Dodda Habba* ("Great Festival") which celebrates the harvest in July. *Mari Habba* is intended to keep smallpox away for the year, and is celebrated in a few villages by a fire-walking ceremony in which devotees walk unscathed across glowing charcoal with no protection for their feet.

As in all societies, certain transitions in life are marked by ceremonies. For Badagas these events are the naming, the first tonsure or head-shaving, the first milking of a cow (for boys only), the wedding, and the funeral. On rare occasions each Badaga commune used to hold a huge memorial ceremony (*manevale*) in honor of a whole generation of the dead, once the last member of that generation had passed away. This was last performed in 1936, however, and has since been viewed as too costly to repeat.

**Ritual: serving the gods**

In a peasant society, work is organized by two principles: the technical procedures are organized according to a certain division of labor, primarily by sex; but there is also a mystical organization of production that is handled by priests and their accessories, which rationalizes the division of labour and links it semantically to an ancient tradition.

The Badaga people, like peasants everywhere, do not think of the fruits of their labour as dependent entirely on their own efforts, on their knowledge and skills. Nor is the outcome of an agricultural season wholly attributable to what Westerners might label chance, fate, or luck. There are deities who symbolically can work on behalf of the farmer, but this is a reciprocal relationship: the farming community must also work for the deity, by feeding and honouring him or her.

The complex of deities that the Badagas worship is fairly typical of the polytheism to be found throughout India and Nepal. One deity — in the Badaga view, Siva — is pre-eminent, and is not only worshipped by all Badagas (except those few who are Christian), but is worshipped in a number of "forms" or aspects; in other words, is recognized under different names. Some of these aspects of the god are considered to be his family members: of these, Parvati is the most widely worshipped one. The kinship principle is the most usual way of organizing and relating to Hindu deities. But the Badaga complex includes other sorts of deity that do not fit into this universal pattern. Hence the occurrence of numerous purely local deities, including what might loosely be
called nature spirits, demons, and ancestral spirits. One early missionary observer ¹⁴ claimed that there were "no less than 338 idols on the Hills," which may not be much of an exaggeration. He was of course mainly counting such localized entities, many of which were only worshipped at one place, if indeed they had a cult at all.

Badagas are commonly aware that a deity known by a special name at a particular place may well be a variant of the supreme god Siva. Thus a god with the extraordinary name of Kakkayya (literally "vomit Lord"), who is worshipped at three places, is actually an aspect of Siva, who according to some legends swallowed poison which he later threw up. But with other deities there may be nothing more than a vague assertion to link a particular god or goddess somehow with the family of Siva. This is a likely scenario in the case of minor figures that are the ancestral spirits of particular clans. Anganadesvara (the -esvara is a name of Siva) is a god worshipped by one Odeya clan and some Adikiris. Angamasti is a goddess worshipped only by certain Odeyas. Some gods have a particular and fairly restricted function to perform in the scheme of things. Thus Maleya Madappa (or Halevirasomi) is a minor deity who protects cattle. Mallesvara is an aspect of Siva to whom Badagas pray that their cattle will be protected from disease; every cattleshed is a shrine to this deity. And Mallima is another aspect of Siva who protects people from attack by wild elephants.

Some of the deities are essentially nature spirits. Of these Gange (or Iramasti), the water goddess, is of crucial importance in an agricultural society; but she is also equated with Siva's consort, Parvati. Some nature spirits are now scarcely remembered unless a reference to them is preserved in some place-name or prayer. There is for example a hill called Ammadittu Bettu ("goddess-boundary mountain"), which certainly contains such a reference, but we know nothing further of that particular goddess today. Another similarly named hill, Ammanmudi Betta ("headland-of-the-goddess mountain") has an ancient shrine on its summit devoted to a lineage ancestress. Evidently the worship of mountain peaks was in general an ancient form of worship in this part of South India. Even today the foraging tribe of Hill Pandarams, living some 175 miles south-southeast of the Badagas, worship mountain peaks as deities—but without any shrines or iconography—and there is plenty of archaeological evidence in the Nilgiris showing that before the Badagas had come there the hilltops were the favored sites for the burial of prominent tribal people.
If nature spirits embody the powers of the land, there are also "demons" which may have to be propitiated at specific places simply because of the dangers they are thought to pose. A good example is the shrine of a deity called Muniyappa ("teacher, father, Lord") next to the Ketti railway station. Although it is a fairly substantial building today, when I first saw it in 1963 the shrine was merely a few rough stones set against a rock face. An annual offering of liquor and chicken flesh is made to Muniyappa to avert his anger and malice. This worship must date back, in his particular case, only to the beginning of the century, when the first steaming carriages chugged their way up the newly laid track, their noise and steam clouds and power posing a seeming threat to all the thousands of villagers who had to cross the railroad at this very point in order to walk up to the main road. Badagas were in such awe of these early self-propelled trains that they used to pay off their debts and settle all their worldly affairs before risking a train journey down to the plains below. Needless to say, they soon became as familiar with the twice-daily trains as all other railway passengers; and yet the cult of Muniyappa has remained at this crossing-point and his shrine has recently been growing in impressiveness.

Another kind of entity that has the status of a minor deity, but is of human origin, is the ancestor or ancestress who is venerated. Among the Badagas by far the best-known of these spirits is Hette, and a close examination of the legends about her is instructive.

There are at least eleven Badaga villages which worship an ancestress called Hette celebrating an annual festival in her honour.16 In each of these exogamous villages she is regarded as the mythical founder, with her husband Hiriodea, of at least some of the village's lineages. Both of them have become minor deities, associated particularly with the fertility of women and crops. As we shall see, there are numerous local variations in the tale of Hette, and these all lead to three broad conclusions: she was the ideal Badaga woman; she exemplifies contradictions in the lives of all Badaga woman which cannot be resolved except through a ritual; and her behaviour represented a popular flight from enforced Vaishnavite orthodoxy in the early 17th century.

It has been argued by Claude Lévi-Strauss and others that "The essential themes in a myth, impossible to identify from a simple reading of one version, emerge upon consideration of a number of other versions of that myth in which, despite various changes and reversals, certain elements persist. What is important is what is repeated, reworked to fit different circumstances,
transformed even to the point of apparent meaninglessness, but always retained.” What is outlined in these words is a research method called structural analysis.

In the present instance we find that Hette was the ideal woman for a number of reasons that are stated in parts of her legend, namely: she was so given to the idea of chastity that she did not want to go to the bed of an elderly husband and so drowned herself instead; she selflessly did not want to become pregnant until a senior but childless co-wife had already conceived; her husband was once out guarding a heap of grain when someone started a brushfire—Hette went to look for him, thought he had perished in it, and so immolated herself in the flames; her husband was at home with a Chetti woman whom he loved when the house caught fire, and his ever-faithful wife returned to throw herself into the flames in the belief that he had already died; because her husband died, she committed ritual suicide (sati or suttee) by strangulation, drowning, or self-immolation; her son Batrabala kept a girl he was not married to, and also ate meat, which so upset his mother Hette, a vegetarian Haruva herself, that she committed suicide; old and devoid of any relations, she killed herself so as not to be a burden on the village; this was done by jumping down a well where, people claim, she "saw" her husband and dead relatives; and after her death she possessed another woman, during which time her ghost explained that she had really been an incarnation of Parvati, the wife of Siva, and hence a goddess who was universally the model of Hindu womanly virtue; Hette undertook to protect the Badagas, and asked for a temple to be built for her. An annual ceremony has subsequently been celebrated in her honor.

In addition to all these versions of her story, two others have been reported recently by a Badaga writer. In one case, a man had three sons by his first wife, and after her death he married again, the second wife giving him three daughters. Once the man had died too his eldest son began pestering the surviving wife for money; and his servant was once so obstreperous in his demands that the woman threw herself down a well. She is said to have cursed the eldest son and blessed her other children; and later on somebody dreamt she was the incarnation of Maha Sakti, who is equated by Badagas with Hette. Another such incarnation arose under different circumstances. A man had promised his elder daughter to a man working for him, but she was enticed into another marriage and the jilted man was heartbroken. Her younger sister Masi (i.e., Maha Sakti abbreviated) consoled the man and promised to marry him, but he became ill with
grief and soon died. At his funeral Masi had a vision that he was calling her, and so immolated herself on the pyre. Such then are most of the variant legends, and we shall return to them shortly. The reader should not be concerned at the apparent inconsistencies between different parts of this legend.

Perhaps the most common version of the tale is that Hette was a very young girl whom her father had promised in marriage to his own sister’s husband. That sister was an old and barren woman. The idea that Hette should be offered as a young co-wife accords well with the Badaga idea of marriage: her father’s lineage still owed a fertile wife to her father’s sister’s husband. On the day when Hette reached physical maturity she knew that her ageing husband would soon sleep with her, and the idea did not appeal to her. She went out with some other girls to gather firewood, and, once in the woods, left them and built a pyre. She then asked God to grant a child to the older co-wife, her father’s sister, and to accept Hette’s self-immolation if He judged her to have been pure. Oblivious of all this, the other girls meanwhile returned home. When the villagers saw the column of smoke they went to investigate, and found Hette’s cremation. Belatedly they performed the funeral ceremonies; and before the final ritual which releases the soul from the village, some few days after death, it was found that the old co-wife was pregnant.

In all these legends about Hette and all the villages where she is venerated, she is seen as the epitome of womanly perfection; yet underlying that image are some contradictions that no Badaga seeks to explain, contradictions which beset the life of every Badaga woman to this day, but which are resolved in due course. Let us now look more closely at the virginity-and-marriage theme, and the contradictions will be apparent. On the one hand Hette committed suicide while a virgin, rather than up-stage a senior co-wife and have possibly fruitful relations with the old father’s sister’s husband; alternatively, she gave birth only to three daughters, no sons. But on the other hand she was the ancestress of Badaga patrilineages. Furthermore, though she was a virgin she was nonetheless held to be the model of a wife devoted to her husband. Yet another contradiction lies in one story that she committed suicide after all her relations were dead, lest she become a burden on the villagers. This variant, and a message from her ghost that she would protect the village, are somewhat at odds with her desire to join her dead husband through ritual suicide (sati) and go with his soul to the Saivite paradise.
In summary, we have found four contradictions inherent in the story of Hette:

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 1**

It is a situation that seemingly has no resolution: this is really the predicament of women in Badaga society.

Yet one solution to the conundrum does present itself as an obvious possibility. It is that the four elements diagrammed above represent major stresses during four stages in the life and death of any woman, viz.: young virgin; devoted wife; old lady without close living relatives; deceased ancestress of a lineage. Each status is at once typical and ideal, even if not followed through in the life history of each particular woman. The transition from one to another status is marked by a radical shift in personal standards, and also by an appropriate ritual which mitigates the anomalous situation, viz.: the first two stages are bridged by a wedding; the second and third stages are bridged by the husband’s funeral; the third and fourth stages by ritual suicide. All these transitions have been summarized and truncated in the brief myth of Hette, with whom all women can identify.

In the sequence of statuses just referred to, the contradictions between being a virgin and being a lineage ancestress remain unexplained. Yet here too a cyclical view of time yields some insights.

In Badaga and similar patrilineal, patrilocal societies of India (structured around male kin), a young girl is far removed, both mentally and physically, from a lineage ancestress. Devotion to her own lineage ancestress, that is, her father’s, will be abandoned once the girl marries and thereupon joins another clan and lineage. In that lineage, that is, her husband’s, the girl will forge a new, subservient relationship with its ancestress, for her duty henceforth will be to produce a new generation of descendants and devotees for that ancestress. In a sense this ancestress is
really a mythical mother-in-law, a personage with whom any young Badaga bride is likely to have strained, subservient relations. That the legend presents Hette as both virgin and ancestress is not then an inexplicable conundrum, but rather a reference to the common reversal that with time the fearful bride becomes a mother-in-law herself, and then after death moves towards the status of a lineage ancestress. The very word *Hette* after all means "old woman, grandmother".

A more sinister understanding of Hette’s marital situation emerges when we look at two segments of the myth in combination. Reflection on her chagrin at her stepson Batrabala’s behaviour in keeping a mistress and eating meat, and on another version of the legend which makes her stepmother to three sons and mother to three daughters, leads us to the following kinship diagram.

![Fig. 2 The Family of Hette](image)

It will now be noticed that Batrabala is not only Hette’s stepson: the two are potential spouses, for Batrabala could marry his widowed MBD and this union would be a permissible cross-cousin marriage for the Badagas. Thus when he came pestering her for money was he asking her *in loco parentis* for the bride wealth so that he could marry her, his not-so-old cross-cousin, or was he possibly seeking a dowry, which was not a Badaga practice? Or does money here symbolize sexual favors? At any rate we can see that for Hette this man represented a
dilemma: he was at the same time her own husband's son and an ideal cross-cousin mate; she was Jocasta to his Ædipus. No wonder she cursed him!

A grander dimension to the whole Hette myth appears if we refer back to its prototype in a Hindu scriptural tale, the Bhavishyottara Purana. There it is related that Parvati had, since a child, vowed to marry none but Siva. When she came of age and was told that her father Himachala had been advised to marry her off to another god, Vishnu, she became very indignant. Taking one companion she ran off into the forest, and there on a bank she made three lingas (phallic icons of Siva) which she worshipped all night, while singing the praises of Siva. The god was gratified by this and appeared to her, promising to grant any request she made. So she asked to become his wife, and he agreed; then (as men will) he disappeared. After their vigil Parvati and her maid lay down to sleep, and were later found by her father who was so relieved that he consented to her marriage wish.

Now there was in medieval Badaga history a sort of parallel to this situation; for, when the earliest Shaivite Badagas were fleeing into the Nilgiri Hills from Mysore at the turn of the seventeenth century (when "Sri-Vaishnavism reached its highwater-mark") the Wodeya lineage on the throne of Mysore was converted, in 1617, to Vaishnavism, and made the worship of Vishnu thenceforth a state cult. There followed some widespread disturbances between the Vaishnavites and the Shaivites. Given that Badagas did recognize Hette as an incarnation of Parvati, her myth becomes a political statement about a people, the Badaga refugees, symbolized by a pure virgin, Hette, fleeing to the forest to avoid the fatherly command of the Mysore Odeya rulers to institute the cult of Vishnu. They wished to remain faithful to Siva, their caste deity. The imperious royal gurus, Tatacharya and others, in the early 17th century actually had the power "to punish people who swerved from the right path" of Sri Vaishnavism. In marital terms this change could have led to Shaivite daughters being married off to Vaishnavites. Like Parvati ("the Mountaineer"), these girls sought instead to be constant in their devotion to Siva, joining their families as refugees to the Nilgiri Hills in order to achieve this aim.

The variant legend recorded by Noble in which Hette's husband is described as having a Chetti mistress, is parallel to this political situation. Because the Chettis of neighbouring Coimbatore District came from Mysore and settled there long ago, and were Vaishnavites, this illicit relationship between the Badaga man and the Chetti woman exemplified turning away from
the Shaivite faith of the Badagas. In the face of it, Hette’s reaction was to commit ritual suicide (sati), always viewed as an expression of devotion and purity. It is not surprising therefore that of over a thousand Badaga temples and shrines that exist now, only one or two are devoted to a Vaishnavite deity, Rangasvami. Nor is it surprising to find some of the Hette legends contrasting her purity and selflessness with the meat-eating, mistress-keeping, and monetary greed of her relatives. Indeed, an underlying theme in those legend is that Hette is an outstanding individual because she over-values certain ideals that those around her under-value: she over-values chastity, whereas her elder sister under-values it to the point of marrying (or eloping with?) a man other than the one her father had already designated as her husband. Hette over-values marital fidelity, in direct contrast to the behaviour of her own husband. She over-values the purity of vegetarianism, in contrast with the meat-eating stepson, Batrabala. She over-values the equivalence of sisters in marriage arrangements, in contrast with Batrabala again, who seems to view Hette and his own mother in quite different lights. Finally, Hette, when alive, under-values the obligation of the community to support her in widowhood, which is at odds with the way she, when dead, over-values her own ability to protect and support the community in response to their building a temple for her and worshipping her like a goddess.

As a goddess, her association with the fertility of women and crops is appropriate for one who had promised to protect future generations of Badagas. Yet open might justifiably question why in a patrilineal society a minor goddess should be given such importance, especially when her husband Hiriodea plays what is undeniably a secondary role in the entire story. The answer to this question lies in the interconnected facts that Hette was an ancestress of Badagas only, while her husband kept a Chetti—and hence a non-Badaga—mistress. Only a properly married Badaga woman can confer legitimacy on the children she and her husband raise: children of the husband by a Chetti mistress would not really be Badagas, and would be excluded from certain key roles in their Badaga father’s funeral. It is in this light that we can now understand the capital importance of premarital virginity, and of wifely chastity, purity, and devotion, in a patrilineal society where the husbands have been known to stray. Hette’s legend accounts for the legitimacy of people who consider themselves to be Badagas.
Cultural values

The analysis of the various myths surrounding the ancestral figure of Hette shows that they are something more than a handful of brief just-so stories. Badaga myth is like a language which permits talking about some very basic facts of life: what it means to be a Badaga, and how this way of life can be maintained. Ritual is similarly concerned with the lives of real people, and not merely with the presumed requirements of the gods. It too can be subjected to structural analysis.

It is evident that Hette was more than an old lady who begat generations of Badagas: she has a personality, and is concerned with such ethical considerations as the unacceptable behavior of her stepson Batrabala, or her obligations toward the older co-wife, or her duty to present her husband with an heir.

Very few of the "classic" ethnographies have anything to say about ethics as such, and one will certainly search in vain for that word in their otherwise thorough indexes. It is not that non-literate peoples are or were lacking in ethical principles, but rather that Western anthropologists had no agreed-upon tools for revealing what those principles were, or were not sufficiently fluent in the language of their subjects to grasp the ethical subtleties of their thinking, comments, and behaviour. Nonetheless there are some good approaches to the question that have the advantage of not relying too heavily on the value judgments of anthropologists themselves.

A value is a selective orientation toward experience, some ideal which prompts the actor to behave in one socially acceptable way rather than another. But such a guide to conduct has to be embodied somehow, if people are to learn and to remember each value of their culture. Embodied values are, perhaps surprisingly, readily apparent though often overlooked in any traditional culture, such as the Badaga one, for they are spelled out in proverbs, prayers, omens, blessings, curses, and various longer forms of oral literature such as poems, songs, dramas, and folktales.

This is not the place to offer even a slight sampling of all the different kinds of oral literature produced by the Badagas: much has already been published elsewhere. We may, however, note that the ethical values of these people can be discriminated into several hundred categories. Some of the categories are very broad, in that they differentiate right from wrong, good from evil. But most of the categories are quite narrow and specific, dealing with such
matters as using the hearth, choice of a bride, how to plough, and indeed hundreds of other points of day-to-day guidance that any Badaga might find useful from time to time.

**Cultural change**

For many years now the Badagas have been adapting to their own use certain alien customs and techniques. Nowhere is this more evident than in agriculture, where crops of European origin are now grown on machine-made terraces with the help of chemical fertilizers, truck transport, scientifically improved seed, and even crop insurance; and in the tea plantations, which must maintain standards necessary to ensure that the leaf can find its way into national markets.

Such progressive attitudes mark the Badagas as an unusually successful farming community. Population figures from the official censuses bear out this success: in 1812 there were only 2,207 Badagas; by 1901 there were 34,178; today there are close to 160,000. By developing intensive cash-crop cultivation they have managed to accommodate this greatly increased labour force and still improves their standard of living and of public hygiene. The traditional relationships with neighbouring tribes have been all but abandoned. There is now a sizeable middle class living in the four main British-built towns on the plateau, and the community can boast many thousands of college graduates. Badaga doctors, lawyers, teachers, information technologists, and government officials are very numerous, in India and abroad, and there are also a few professors, agronomists, and politicians. A remarkable fact is that fathers have so often been willing to invest the profits from cultivation or labour contracting in college education for their sons and daughters. Badagas though still largely a rural population, today have as high a literacy rate (in Tamil and English) as one might find in Chennai (Madras City).

**Modernization**

Modernization is a very broad term for what is really a variety of processes of cultural change. One form of modernization is industrialization, but in the Badaga case this has hardly occurred at all. Another aspect is urbanization, which has occurred to some slight extent: the few hundred highly educated professional people and their nuclear families tend to live in the few towns, if
indeed they are able to find work in the Nilgiris at all. Finally, another quite pervasive form of modernization is what we call Westernization. This is the adoption of selected cultural traits, of certain behavioral patterns, from what modern Western society and business have offered the world at large. Modern transportation, radio, newspapers, television, are just a few of the most obvious items in the Badaga repertoire of cultural borrowings.

For 20th century Badagas, as for many other Indian groups, these Westernizing patterns have included the following three important factors:

1. **English literacy.** Being able to read, write, and argue in English is today the mark of an educated Badaga. For over a century and-a-half the English language has been taught in high schools in the Nilgiris District, and so one finds tens of thousands of local people, including children, fluent in that language. It is in fact as much a lingua franca and a window on the outside world as is Tamil, the "official" language of Tamil Nadu State.

2. **Christianity.** Although only a few thousand Badagas were ever converted to one or another sect of Christianity, the impact of European missionaries since the late 1840s has been an important one. In the past many thousands of Badaga children who were to remain Hindus nonetheless attended mission-run schools where they learned to read and write English, Tamil, or Kannada; acquired some mathematical and geographical knowledge; and learned how to locate themselves in a modernizing world. Even Christian values were not altogether alien to their way of thinking, as many of their own proverbs indicate; and it is probably true to say that in many respects the small Christian community which arose from the first conversion (in 1858) has recently served as a positive role model for many non-Christian Badagas, especially in matters of education.

3. **European agriculture.** Early in the 19th century British settlers or local officials introduced the garden fork, and numerous European vegetables, including the commercially important potato, cabbages, carrots and turnips, among numerous other types. To these items may be added tea, which was introduced to India from China in 1835. Its cultivation, together with that of Australian eucalyptus and the main introduced vegetable crops, has transformed Nilgiri agriculture and the landscape so much that the indigenous millets that were the Badaga staple up till the beginning of the 20th century are scarcely, if at all, grown today. Those Badagas who
are still farmers—but the majority of all workers—are now growing tea or vegetables for a regional and national market, with the help of such key paraphernalia as irrigation pumps, chemical fertilizers, and crop insurance.

These three factors should not be viewed as simply external influences, for with the passage of time they have become a part of Badaga culture, through a process of public discussion and internalization that has shown the Badagas to be the masters of their own destiny and never mere pawns in some colonial scenario. It was they who decided to send their children to school in the mid-19th century, and it was they who decided to plant tea (initially stealing the cuttings from large commercial plantations run by British companies). This changing of traditional values and adaptation to the modern world have been going for over a third of the entire time the Badagas have been on the Nilgiri Hills, and it has if anything been quickening its pace since the British administration of the country came to an end in 1947. The popularity of computers, cellphones and national television of the past several decades is bringing irreversible changes in the Badaga world view.

NOTES

4. A phratry, as used in this article, refers to a large social group made up of two or more clans, joined by some common bond, and culturally distinct from, or differently ranked from, other phratries in the society.
5. The term "non-literate" is distinct from "illiterate," which refers to those who cannot read or write in a partially literate society. "Non-literate" can be taken as a more accurate but less judgmental term than the formerly used adjective "primitive," and simply means that the society lacked literacy.


26. A patrilineage is a lineage in which descent is reckoned in the male line.


29. Sri-Vaishnavism is the cult of the god Vishnu, one of the three universal gods (Trimurti) in Hinduism.


34. This section on Hette was originally published in Paul Hockings, "The Badagas," in Paul Hockings, ed., *Blue Mountains: The Ethnography and Biogeography of a South Indian Region* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 223-228, and is reproduced here by
permission.

35. For a lengthier discussion of what values are and how they may be studied, see Hockings, *Counsel from the Ancients*, pp. 14-17, 39-46.


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Hockings is a British anthropologist who studied the subject at the Universities of Sydney, Toronto, Chicago, Stanford and California. He has been doing research on Badaga society for the past fifty years, and, with Christiane Pilot – Raichoor, is the author of the only dictionary of the Badaga language (1992). He has also written or edited several other books on the Nilgiri people, as well as writing dozens of scholarly articles on the region. His forthcoming Encyclopedia of the Nilgiri Hills (Manohar) will be the most exhaustive 2-volume coverage of the district ever to have been printed. He is currently professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Illinois, and also Editor-in-Chief of the journal, Visual Anthropology.
FOOD AND HEALTH STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Dr. D. PULLA RAO

ABSTRACT

Ecologically, the tribal households are far from homogenous; they display a diversity of high order. The areas of tribal concentration have been generally described as the forest and hilly areas of the country. Their ignorance and the long-sightedness of the money lenders play with the tribal lives. With less income they take less nutrient food and it leads to health problems among scheduled tribals. This paper addresses the food and health status of scheduled tribes in the study area. Expenditure on food takes the major share of expenditure followed by paying interest on loans and medical care. The average intake of food items in the sample population of Visakhapatnam District is not up to the suggested level. This malnutrition may be one of the causes for their high disease prevalence in the study area. The disease prevalence rate for females in the total sample is around 28 per cent. Malaria and general fevers are widely prevalent in the study areas. Most of the scheduled tribes do not agree to take modern medicine (Allopathy), and they are reluctant to accept it. Most of the women did not consult doctors when they need. In this regard, the government should initiate the tribals the importance of the medical care.

Introduction

In the traditional caste system (Varna vyavastha), the Indian society has been divided into four groups, known as castes, on the basis of occupations. But, in the modern Indian social system there are two more marginalized caste groups namely, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Even today, widely pervasive reality in respect of
tribal communities in India is that most of them are geographically isolated, economically weak, socially ignorant, politically indifferent, culturally rich, behaviorally simple, trustworthy and leading their life in the lap of nature.

Low agricultural production and lack of an appropriate food distribution system are the reasons for low levels of the nutritional status. In addition to the low agricultural production, the nutritional status of the population is to be viewed as the problem of poor quality of food intake due to low literacy and lack of awareness. Food consumption expressed in kilocalories (kcal) per capita per day is a key variable used for measuring and evaluating the global and regional food situation. Shortage of food and nutrient inadequacies leads to ill-health of the tribal people.

In India there are 573 scheduled tribe communities. In Andhra Pradesh dwell 33 of them. In India, the president is empowered by the constitution to declare a community as a scheduled tribe community.

The growth rates of scheduled tribe population in Andhra Pradesh are 5.47, 2.24, 6.50, 2.79 and 3.01 for the years 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. Except 1961 and 1991, the decadal growth rate of tribal population is more than the growth rate of general population. From 1951 to 2001 the tribal population has increased by five times but for the general population it is only 1.5 times.

In Visakhapatnam, the growth rate of tribal population from 1981 to 2001 is 57 percent. For Andhra Pradesh and India this is 58 and 63 percent respectively. This indicates that growth rate of tribal population in Visakhapatnam is less than that of state and national average respectively.

The share of tribal population in the total population of Visakhapatnam increased marginally from 13.74 to 14.55 from 1981 to 2001, the same for Andhra Pradesh and India stands at 5.93 to 6.59 and 7.6 to 8.20 respectively.

The Data and Methodology

The primary data comprise of collecting information from the selected sample tribal households in the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh by way of
canvassing a structured schedule among them. In addition, the secondary data are also taken from the Chief Planning Officer of Visakhapatnam District. The primary data has been collected during the month of June and July of 2007.

A sample of 138 households is selected for the study. A Multi-stage random sampling technique is employed to select the sample households. In the first stage, Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh has purposively been selected for the study. Then, Anantagiri Mandal was selected from the district. In the third stage, four villages from the mandal were selected. They are Damuku, Ananthagiri, Chilakalagedda and Khambhavalasa. In the fourth stage, all the tribal households in the sample villages were interviewed with a pre-prepared schedule.

This paper deals with the food and health status of Scheduled Tribes in the sample households in the study area.

Table-1 explains the size and the average size of the family. Majority of the sample households at the aggregate and random levels are in the region of three to six members per household. The overall sample population lies at 583 persons for 138 families making the average size of the family to be 4.22 members for a family.

**Table-1: Distribution of the sample households on the size of their family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of the family</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19.56</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp;Above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample Population</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Size of the family</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table-2 denotes the gender wise classification of the total sample population and sex ratio. In the study area, out of the sample population of 583, 293 persons are males and the remaining 290 are females, pegging the sex ratio of 990 females per 1000 males. Although it is less, it is better when compared to the national and state average of the sex ratio. In the child sex ratio it is recorded at 1080 and it is a positive sign.

**Table-2: Gender Wise Classification of the Total Sample Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total Sample Population</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>50.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>49.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Sex Ratio</td>
<td>989.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex Ratio</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-3 gives the specific age and gender classification of the total sample population. Out of the total sample population (583 persons), majority of the population (69%) is under the category of productive age group i.e., 15 to 59 years, while the unproductive categories i.e., below 14 years and above 60 years comprises 27 and 4 per cent of the total sample population respectively. The analysis indicates that the population under the productive age group and under the below 14 years age group is very high and in the category of above 59 years is 4 per cent.

**Table-3: Age Specific and Gender Specific Classification of the Total Sample Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25.60</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>26.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-59</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>69.28</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>68.28</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>68.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Estimates of Caloric Levels of Food

A calorie is the unit of heat necessary to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water by one degree centigrade. For calculating the families with per head calories, different food items are taken into consideration. In this regard not every family may take each item daily but the average intake is calculated by taking the average figure of the items used by the particular group of population. The items taken into consideration are cereals, pulses and nuts, green leafy vegetables, roots, tubers and other vegetables, milk, sugar and jaggery, and the edible oils. For this, their average daily consumption levels in grams and average daily expenditure on food items is collected from the sample households. Then the data per hundred grams of each and every food item consumed by the tribal people are averaged by the above given items taken from the Indian Council for Medical Research bulletin on “The Nutritive Value of Indian Foods and The Planning of Satisfactory Diets’-Sixth Edition.

Neelakanta Rath and V.M Dandekar are the first to start calculation of the poverty ratio based on the per capita intake of the calories, based on the average intake chart provided by the Council. In the same way the study has taken, some of the items consumed in grams by the tribal people into consideration and then calories were been calculated by the intake of every family. Then as per the norms of the Council, 2400 calories are taken as minimum calorie intake for a healthy rural individual male. Based on that, the families are divided into two categories on their per capita intake of calories taking into consideration of the given minimum intake.

Table-4 brings out the classification of the sample households in the sample area based on their per capita intake of calories. This can define the households under the poverty line. With regard to the study area, out of the sample households of 138, around 41 percent of the households are above the poverty line; as such, their per capita intake of calories is above 2400 calories. In addition to this, the households below poverty line are of 59 percent. This indicates the aggravated situations in these areas.

This denotes that starving situations prevailing in these areas. As per the latest NSSO surveys and estimations the nearly 26 percent of the total population of India stands below the poverty line. However, in these areas the persons below the poverty line stands
at three times the figure of the national estimate. This indicates the situation prevailing in these areas. These areas are filled with poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. Therefore, the government and the respective authorities should take some measures in this regard. The politicians’ policy of distributing money to the households during the elections is not of any use to the intended persons. The government should concentrate on income generating schemes to implement in these areas.

**Table-4: Families with Per Head Calories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2400</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>59.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2401</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Households</strong></td>
<td><strong>138</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-5 brings out the average per capita gram wise intake of different food items and the suggested composition of a balanced diet. The data are provided in grams. The composition of balanced diet is taken from the Bulletin of Indian Council for Medical Research- ‘The Nutritive Value of Indian Foods and the Planning of Satisfactory Diets’. In our study, the average intake of food items is given above. In no way they are comparable to the balanced diet. They are comparable only in roots and other vegetables like tubers. In all the items, they are lagging behind. Owing to lack of nutritional food, they have less immunization power. Therefore, they are falling prey to the epidemics prevailing in these areas. The cause for this debacle is only one, lack of sufficient income for their maintenance. The government should concentrate on income generating alternative schemes in this regard.

**Table-5: Average Intake of Food Items by an Adult in the Sample Population**

*(in Grams)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Quantity in Grams</th>
<th>Suggested composition of Quantity in Grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green leafy Vegetables</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots and Tubers</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar and Jaggery</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible oils</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table-6 brings out the classification based on average annual expenditure per capita in the sample population. This shows their standard of living. Many a number of variables denote the tribal people’s backwardness in their endeavour. The items taken into consideration are food, education, medical care, paying interest for loans and the other items of expenditure. The reference year is 2007 with regard to the Visakhapatnam district, per capita expenditure on food is 1522 rupees and then comes interest and the medical care issue, and the next follows. It is understandable that, even though they are spending less, due to improper utilization of the available facilities, they have to spend a lot on medical provision.

This table is to indicate their average pattern of expenditure on their provisions. In this regard, the government should motivate them on the facilities provided to them on several aspects and to provide alternative income generation activities to get supplementary income which will go a long way in solving their food and other problems as well.

**Table-6: Average Annual Expenditure per capita in 2007 On Several Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items of Expenditure</th>
<th>Average annual expenditure (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Care</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for Loans</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-7 brings the classification of the households based on their annual expenditure on food. In this, the expenditure is fixed in three ranges. The information is provided for the year 2006. In this regard in the Visakhapatnam District, majority of the families are in between the ranges below Rs10,000/- per annum. This indirectly states that this much expenditure is the total of their earnings. Majority of the sample households is under the hand to mouth earning. This may be the main cause for the high rate of disease prevalence in these areas. Therefore, the measures of the government intended for the welfare of the scheduled tribes should concentrate on income generation schemes.
Table-7: Distribution of the sample households on their Annual Expenditure on food for the year 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range (in Rs.)</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 4000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001 to 10000</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>58.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 10001</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-8 brings out the classification of the sample households based on the age, sex and morbidity data. The disease prevalence rate for the age groups is also presented in the table. The disease prevalence rate is high among the vulnerable groups like children, women and elder people. At the aggregate and individual levels, we can observe that women are the main victims of diseases in these regions.

Table-8: Distribution of the infected population on the basis of their Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of age (in years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease Prevalence Rate</td>
<td>25.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-58</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>66.18</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>71.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease Prevalence Rate</td>
<td>22.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59&amp;above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease Prevalence Rate</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-9 brings out the classification of the sick persons based on their gender and the type of disease from which they suffered from. In this area majority of people, there is a wide
spread of malaria attack and the others followed with lack of sufficient nutritional food and timely medical provisions, leading them to starve and wait for the outside help.

That is the main reason for taking only some diseases in this regard. With regard to the study area, out of the disease affected persons in the reference period, 46 persons suffered from general fevers and 102 persons suffered from malaria, viral fevers and some of its perpetuities, only two persons suffered from other diseases, such as gastric problems and others. Out of the 102, malaria affected persons; nearly 60 percent are women, the vulnerable section in the society. So, the government should take some pro-active measures in this regard, such as, enlightening them on hygienic surroundings and drinking boiled water and using the modern medicine. In the process of data collection, it is observed that majority of the tablets given are simply set-aside in the house, and are not used for the intended purpose.

Table-9: Distribution of the afflicted population based on Sex and Type of Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>General fever</th>
<th>Malaria</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-10 brings out the gender differential classification of the disease-affected persons in the sample households based on whether they consulted the doctor or not. In the tribal areas due to the inaccessible terrain and the non-supporting atmosphere, many of the government doctors do not wish to serve in these areas. Owing to ignorance many a number of tribals believe in the traditional medicine, that too the private and unqualified doctors who take up that activity for their employment, take huge amounts of money and make the tribals believe that super natural elements are the cause for the disease. Meanwhile, the disease becomes severe and leads to death of the person.

With regard to the sample area, out of the affected 150 persons, 34 percent of them did not consult the doctor. In that, 43 per cent are males and the remaining 57 percent are females. In this regard, it is observed that there exist the gender-differences in consulting
the doctor. At this outset, it is imperative to understand that due to lack of sufficient money or due to ignorance they are unable to obtain proper medical attention to get rid of the disease. Therefore, the government should initiate proper measures in this regard. Proper motivational programmes are the need of the hour. If the tribal people approach the doctor, he or she may obtain proper medical attention for the disease. On the other hand, if the affected tribal people, by lack of money cannot reach or approach the doctor, in some particular seasons, the government should allow them to reach the hospital free of cost.

**Table-10: Distribution of the patients on the basis of Sex and consulting a doctor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Consultation of Doctor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22 (43)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29 (57)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>51 (34)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentage with their totals.

Table-11 brings out the gender differential classification of the disease-affected persons based on the question of what type of doctor they consulted. The doctors are taken into two categories, government doctor and private doctor. As already explained, the tribal people approach the traditional superstitious healers and the unqualified doctors, who play with their lives. In this context, it is imperative to study the type of doctor they consult, when they are sick. In our study, it is understood with a glance that majority are approaching the traditional and unqualified natural healers. In our study, out of the 150 affected persons, 99 consulted the doctor. In this way, they themselves are allowing others to take them to the deathbed. The government should encourage the tribal people to go for modern medicine through all the available media. The private doctors should be discouraged in the sense they have to be replaced by experts from outside or train the local educated youth in this regard in providing timely help and also to motivate the tribal to take modern medicine. This can go a long way in solving most of their problems. Instead of serving the scheduled tribes in the interior regions, the majority of the government doctors
prefer to quit the job. Therefore, the government should take stringent action against the
doctors who are reluctant to work in remote areas. It should also provide the scheduled
tribes with anti-biotic; safe drinking water and free ration in the lean seasons so that they
may not be afflicted with diseases.

Table-11: Distribution of the patients on the basis of Sex and Type of Doctor
Consulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Government Doctor</th>
<th>Private Doctor</th>
<th>Not consulted Doctor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-12 brings out the gender differential classification of the disease-affected
persons based on the amount of expenditure incurred in the process of getting rid of that
disease. In our study, out of the 150 affected persons, 99 consulted the doctor, majority of
them incurred expenditure more or less Rs.1, 000/-. Moreover, it is strange to see the
persons who incurred more than Rs.1, 000/-. As a whole, it has been understood that the
female's medical expenditure is too high.

The government is providing medicines at free of cost. The government should
initiate educating the tribal people in this regard. Corruption is prominent in each nook and
corner of society. However, extending it to the tribal areas and using it on the illiterate and
ignorant people is cynical. Their ignorance in this regard is playing perpetual role. From the
above analysis it can be observed that many a number of tribal patients are approaching
the traditional and private healers without any knowledge and qualification. In the mean
time the latter making money on this indigenous people. The measures meant for the
tribals should have the motivational programmes at the core, and then only they can
succeed in their intention.
Table- 12: Distribution of the diseased persons by their Sex and Expenditure Incurred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Medical Expenditure by diseased persons (in Rs.)</th>
<th>100 to 500</th>
<th>500 to1000</th>
<th>1000 &amp; above</th>
<th>NA*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not applicable – Those who does not consult Doctor.

Table-13 brings out the classification of the sample households based on their expenditure on the medical care. Medical care is necessary in these inaccessible areas. People in these areas suffer from many a type of epidemics and are prone to diseases because of the atmospheric conditions and bad hygiene.

In our study, about 75 per cent of the sample is spending much amount for the maintenance of their lives. That too, the remaining persons who do not spend are because of lack of money but not lack of sickness. Over the years, it is interesting to see the number persons spending more money on medical care. Again, it is also disheartening to see more number of households expending more money for the sake of their health.

In this regard, when asked for their immediate needs many voted for the providing of hospitals. This indicates that many are in need of health facilities. When visited the areas, much sophisticated medicines are provided for the tribal people, but due to the inaccessible terrain and lack of financial assistance and that much motivation in using the modern medicine, they are starving, in the sense this is due to the working of vicious circle of poverty. Therefore, it is advised that those measures that are intended for the welfare of the tribes must start with the motivation of their opinions with regard to the development.
Table-13: Distribution of the sample households on their Annual Expenditure on Medical Care in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range (in Rs.)</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 50</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 2500</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500 to 4000 and above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

In the study 58.70 percent of the sample households are spending around Rs. 4,000/- to Rs.10,000/- on food. Most of the families are spending the major portion of their income on food. More than 38 percent of the sample households are spending more than Rs.500/- on medical care. This may be a cause for the tribal indebtedness. As most are spending 100 percent of their incomes on food for the remaining necessities, they are approaching private moneylenders for credit. As most are spending on health care, this may throw light on the disease prevalence in these areas. As explained earlier, most of their incomes are spent on food and for other necessities they have to approach and stay in the clutches of private moneylenders. Expenditure on food takes the lion’s share of expenditure made by the sample households and followed by paying interest on loans and medical care. More than 59 percent of the sample households intake of calories is less than the stipulated level in our study area. The average intake of food items in the sample population is not up to the suggested level. This malnutrition may be one of the causes for the high disease prevalence in the study area.

The disease prevalence rate for females in the total sample is around 28 per cent. That is for every 100 females in the society of scheduled tribes 28 are affected with diseases. But this for males is 23 percent; even this is more when compared with the general population. The disease prevalence rate is high among the children and elders. Malaria and general fevers are widely prevalent in these sample areas. Out of the 150 persons, 102 are affected by malaria. In this aspect females too are worst hit. Most of the
scheduled tribes do not agree for modern medicine, and they are reluctant to accept it. In this regard, it is observed the existence of gender differentials in consulting a doctor. Most of the women did not consult a doctor when necessary. Most of the sample tribal households are approaching the private unqualified doctors when they are sick. In this regard the government should initiate motivational programmes elucidating the importance and usefulness of modern medicine.

References

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DEserted villages and destroyed dreams: an indication of culture extinction

Rajesh Bojan, M.A., M.Phil.

Abstract

What I propose to pen in the following pages is not about the history of my people, but about their contemporary condition of living that I aspire to explore. I come from the badaga community, a distinctive sect of tribes accommodating most regions of the Niligiri district of Tamilnadu. I have no doubt that those who are familiar with the Niligiri district are well aware of the people in it. Especially, nobody would have left their thoughts of Nilgiris without contemplating about the special race of people that the district is blessed with.

It is quite an unfortunate thing that so far a community with such cultural merits has remained unpopular and out of the picture due to lack of script. We have been incapable of expressing ourselves, our culture, customs and rituals in the form of historical records. It is a great disadvantage to live without a language of our own to express. We have indeed lost our finest antiquity and the lifestyle of our forefathers entirely due to lack of education and script. It is at the same time very disappointing to mention the fact that among us not many have attempted to investigate or research our origin. Undeniably, it is true that we have not shown interest into our own community even to the extent it was considered with admiration by scholars from abroad. This paper will attempt to explore the contemporary condition of the badaga people specifically focusing on the impact of dislocation.
Introduction

Displacement has always been a very challenging and unavoidable issue in human history. We have been so far forced to displacements in variety of ways. Turning the leaves of history, we could notice tremendous displacements where men have left their homelands due to battles, due to natural disasters, sometimes because of poverty, for survival, even for education and business. Such unnatural movements have been a gateway for innumerable problems. This has given rise to immigrant literature as well, where authors have expressed their agonies of being away from their homelands, of being uprooted from their family, society and culture, of sufferings they have been facing in the alienated society, of their constant battle with the dual roles they are tied to and many such unpleasant things are well recorded in modern works.

Undeniably, only a handful of gifted people are left with the luxury of living in their native soil. Most of us in one way or the other fall as victims to displacement. Moving from place to place whether we like it or not is an ancient unquestionable strategy and survival need. We may not be able to prevent such migrations because it is something very common in every nation. My purpose here is only to let the readers understand this in an awareness perspective specifically concerning the life of the Badagas. In no way this short piece of writing expresses anything against urbanization.

Badaga Hattis

Badagas like many other communities are scattered around the world. Against the traditional belief of unity and brotherhood, modern generations are left with no possibilities to taste the fruits of togetherness. It has become very common among the Badagas to settle outside their geographical boundaries due to variety of reasons. Hattis¹ which were once the fountain of Badaga establishments, a reservoir of Badaga tradition and culture, are at present mere leftovers.

Ancestral Badaga heritage has come to an end nearly in all Hattis. The continuity in the Badaga tradition has been lost almost to the extent where recovery seems impossible.
Though lifestyle requires change, developments are essential; we ought to try to remain in constant communication with our culture. For the past few years, *hattis* have been losing most of its inhabitants. People are continually abandoning their villages in search of new places in order to fulfill their needs. Day by day, percentage of those who march towards towns and cities have drastically increased and majority of them have left their once valued possessions.

**Shifting Roles**

Their ancestral routine has been totally stripped off leading to forcibly accept new roles for survival in new places. An unstoppable wave has flooded the Badagas and swept them to areas unfamiliar to them. In one way it is an irreparable cultural disaster but, on the other side it is a way of life. All that is left for us is to understand and accept that change is needed but definitely not at the cost of cultural damage. One could argue over this matter in either way but this is not my intention. Nothing has been lost yet, therefore, there is no need to regret. We are only at the climax, a point that would decide whether we would live or perish, I mean our culture.

**Diminishing Harmony**

Badagas around the world are in constant communication in the internet everyday expressing their agony of being detached from their people and culture. The harmony that exists in *hattis* cannot be replaced elsewhere in the society. Unfortunately, to most of the younger generation *hattis* have become a place of utter boredom. It is rare enough to see children pestering their parents to take them to hattis. In spite of the beautiful serene, landscape and peaceful environment, it is very tragic that *hattis* have nothing entertaining to offer these kids. Despite the improvements, entertainments are still out of reach. It has become so rare to notice children playing in the *tharas*. The *tharas* that were once astonishingly cleansed and decorated by cow dungs are places where children keep loitering around and playing their favourite marble and top games. But now cement bases have replaced the *tharas* bringing down the little harmonies of the past.
Remembering who we are

Children of today hardly remember Badaga customs and practices. Leading their lives in towns and metropolitan cities they do not get the necessary opportunities to be exposed to the rich Badaga culture. They look at their own rituals and ceremonies as an outsider, as if they are observing some alien manners. Shockingly, young Badaga brides brought up entirely in the towns and cities face terrible inconvenience in getting adapted in traditional Badaga homes after marriage. These brides hardly know the Badaga manners and find it to be in some way inappropriate and against their lifestyle. Though they may learn it in the course of time, it may not be possible for us to assure whether they would develop love towards such traditional customs. What I would personally suggest to such youngsters is that they should right from their young age take measures to look into our culture, involve in the practices and move around with suitable elders from whom they can learn much about our Badaga life.

Conclusion

Badagas have understood the importance of education. It is primarily for this reason most people vacate their homelands. Badagas have comprehended the fact that there are no ways their children could flourish in the villages. It is quite impossible to improve our economic and social status sticking to hattis. Hence, there is a necessity for every individual of the present generation to depend upon the neighboring towns and cities to grow professionally and safe guard their family. Badagas have understood quite well that agriculture is not a savior anymore. Only education could transform and uplift their life to a better altitude. All we have to remember is this, no matter how far we proceed, how modernized we may be, what matters the most is that how much we stick on to our culture. It is only by spreading awareness our cultural legacy could be spared for our future generation.
NOTES

1. *Hatti* - Badaga term for village

2. *Thara* – Badaga term denoting the area in front of the house

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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