POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE
IN A SOUTH INDIAN VILLAGE

By Dagfinn Sivertsen

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Australian National University

December 1959
STATEMENT

The thesis presented here is the result of a study I personally carried out during the year 1957 in South India in Tanjore District of Madras State under the supervision of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in the Australian National University while holding a Research Scholarship in that University.

Dagfinn Sivertsen
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to the Australian National University by which I was awarded a three years Research Scholarship, from 1956 to 1959; and to the Norwegian Council for Research in the Humanities for a grant which enabled me to complete the writing of the Thesis. My thanks are also due to the Institute for Social Research, Oslo, and to The Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Lillehammer for services and facilities.

D. S.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Introduction of the Topic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>The Village</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Possession of Land and Employment</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>The System of Cultivation and Organization of Labour</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Sources of Livelihood and Problems of Subsistence</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Caste, the Ritual Order and Inter-Caste Services</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Temple Assemblies and Village Councils</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Political Changes</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix

Bibliography
The sociological interest in the study presented here is in processes of organizational change as related to the economic order and to existing political arrangements. The study gives a description of the traditional system of caste and a survey of the economy of a rice producing village. It includes an analysis of conflicts between privileged high castes and underprivileged low castes. This situation is analyzed from point of view of the following general developments:

The dwindling of the power of the traditionally privileged groups in whose hands economic and political control had been vested. The economic and political advancement of subordinate castes and the disruption of the "feudal bond" and traditional loyalties. At the same time as traditional relationships of domination-subordination are gradually being replaced by contractual employer-employee relations with implicit bargaining, castes are being organized as action groups to achieve their objectives in either peaceful or violent fashion.
CHAPTER I

Introduction of the Topic

The study presented in this thesis is of a small multicaste village situated in Tanjore District of Madras State in South India. Tanjore District is well noted for its fertility and vast areas of wet paddy-cultivation, popularly known as the granary of South India. The cultivated area is in the main irrigated from the Methur Dam,\(^1\) about 100 miles north-west of Tanjore, in the adjacent Salem District. The paddy-cultivators regulate their operations according to the dates announced for the opening and closing of this vast irrigation source. But Cauvury, the original and natural irrigation source, which flows through the district in numerous branches and drainages, is still worshipped by the Tamilians as the goddess, Cauvury amma, on whose dried up dunes, in the dry season, one may only tread respectfully with bare feet.

The main crop cultivated is of course paddy. As many as three harvests of paddy may be had in one season. In addition, there are numerous other crops grown such as plantains, sugarcane, groundnut and betelnut.

The district is nearly as densely populated as Bengal. According to Spate (1954:722) "... the deltaic portions of Tanjore Dt; excluding towns of over 20,000 people, have an average density of 705, and in Kumbakonam taluk this rural density is 1104. Nevertheless there is an

\(^1\) "Methur was the first combined power and irrigation project in India (1925-34) and its dam is one of the world's largest." Spate (1954:710)
export of rice to Ceylon, mainly through Negapatam".

Machine industry in this area is practically non-existent, but there is a number of fairly large market towns. Thyagasamuthiram, henceforth referred to as TM, on which this study is based, is about six miles from Kumbakonam, the biggest town in the district with a population of more than 100,000. These towns besides being centres of administration, communication and commerce, are famous in Tamilnad for their temples, especially Kumbakonam and Tanjore towns. As centres of worship these towns provide a fertile field for the study of the more refined manifestations of Tamil culture. In addition to the regular ceremonies and festivals according to the Tamil calendar there are frequent performances by celebrated Tamil artists. The religious festivals known as Mahamagham, are held every 12th year in Kumbakonam attracting thousands of visitors. Side by side with "western" hospitals substantially endowed and supported by local landlords and Rotary clubs we find various sorts of ayurvedic and homoeopathic establishments. There is also an institution for lepers in Kumbakonam. This town is very congested and proper drainage is lacking. A high incidence of filaria, for example, is therefore not surprising. Although the town is regarded as a stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy, it contained a modern educational establishment bearing the name of the Montessori Highschool, run by Indian Christians.

In the market streets, among food shops and tailoring establishments there is a large number of minor smithies and workshops catering for the most part for rural customers. A
fair number of absentee landlords also reside in these centres. About 17 persons, all Brahmins, owning considerable portions of land in TM are among the rentier landlords living here.

The settlement pattern shows the same conspicuous features of residential segregation between castes as in the villages. The Agraharams or Brahmin streets being located at a safe distance from the Paria cheris or the quarters of the untouchables.

The villages number more than 2,600 in this district and are situated close to each other along the rivers, the irrigation channels and the road and rail networks. According to Kathleen Gough (1955) the Brahmins, traditionally the most influential caste in this district, own the land and have administrative rights in about 900 of these villages. A large number of these Brahmins, who constitute about 1/15 of the total population are absentee landlords with occupations outside the village. Before making any further comment on the caste situation in these villages I shall outline briefly certain aspects of social history which may be regarded as characteristic of this part of the South. There has been, especially since the formation of the Madras Justice Party in 1930 a pronounced anti-Brahmin sentiment. A complex and unsatisfactory system of land tenure and conditions of agricultural labour have repeatedly given rise to Government intervention in the form of tenancy legislation and labour regulations. This interference has been closely preceded and followed by the activities and pressures of political parties notably the Congress, the Communists and
lately the landlords' "Welfare Party", which was founded in 1957 in Kumbakonam.

There is no taxfarming system or Zamindari tenure in the district. The so-called Inam system of land tenure whereby a group of persons (in this case Brahmins) held land as a free gift from the Rajah free of tax liability is likely to be abolished by the State. The inam lands are now being assessed for tax and may be divided into individually held plots. The prevailing system of land tenure is ryotwari, or tenure by an "occupancy right holder". The ryot (toiler, Hindi) or occupancy right holder is the individual registered as the owner or pattadar (titleholder, Tamil) of a particular piece of land which he may or may not cultivate, but on which he pays an annual tax.

In the past, these landowners usually sublet their lands for cultivation on a sharecropping basis, supplying equipment and house sites to the sharecropper. This kind of sharecropping, waram, gradually gave way to kuttaghai or contract cultivation, the landowner divesting himself of all responsibility for the cultivation but still receiving a fixed fraction of the crop. Subletting of land on contract was on the increase during the last 30-40 years when the landowners or their sons took to trading or professional employment in increasing numbers. This created a middle class of contract tenants, some with small plots of their own which they could offer to the landowner as security against arrears in payment. Many contract tenants belonged to families who for generations had been the landlord's
trusted servants. Some men without land of their own were able to lease smaller plots, but unable to find their sustenance from contract-cultivation alone these persons had to hire themselves out as labourers on the same terms as landless coolies. Until 1948 the payment for an agricultural labourer was about 37 oz. of paddy a day, scarcely enough for subsistence. In 1948, following agrarian unrest in the district, a slight increase in wages was achieved under the so-called Maya waram agreement of October that year, Malaviya (1954:195).

The beginnings of agrarian unrest in the district are not clear, but are probably quite recent. It is likely that with an increasing market economy the exploitation of small tenants and "semi-serfs" as sharecroppers and labourers are called in Congress Party reports increased. During the last 20 or 30 years great attention had been focussed upon these conditions by Congress study teams, committees and party agitators. Consequently the privacy of the relationship between lord, tenant and servant has been destroyed and new standards introduced.

A second intervention came in the form of the Tanjore Tenants and Pannayals (estate farm labourers) Protection Ordinance of August 23, 1952, which stipulated a one fifth increase in the contract tenant's fraction. This act benefitted the middlemen or the bigger contract-cultivators, but met with disapproval from landlords as well as from landless labourers. A tenancy act (introduced in 1957) granted further concessions to the tenants
by stipulating another increase of his share, so that now
the tenant's share is 60 per cent and the landlord's 40 per
cent. These regulations besides bringing about more uni-
formity in rates also gave the tenant greater security in
his lease. Another provision gave the tenant occupancy
right after continuous cultivation of the land for a certain
number of years. In most cases, it must be borne in mind,
there were no written contracts or acknowledgment of title.
Under these conditions a landowner finds difficulties in
negotiating sales of his land, because a purchaser would
not be entitled to evict a cultivating tenant.

In anticipation of these various enactments,
a large number of landlords forcibly terminated their
leases partly as a political gesture and partly in order
to cultivate the lands themselves. In the distress that
followed the evicted tenants were forced to organize them-
selves in unions with other poorly protected tenants and
farm labourers for the purpose of defending their rights
and securing their livelihood. These unions, as we shall
see, may cut across traditional caste lines - members of
"clean" castes joining with members of "unclean" castes.
A contributing factor to this radical change is undoubtedly
the vigorous "removal of untouchability" campaigns led by
workers of all political parties and backed by the administra-
tion and Harijan Welfare Programmes. Furthermore, given an
anti-Brahmin tinge, these movements may also stand the chance
of winning the tacit approval of wealthier non-Brahmin
cultivators.
In this way, the impact of the larger society in the form of state intervention, agrarian and social reforms and activities of political agents represents one of the most significant factors in the sociological study of villages in this region. In the relations between privileged and underprivileged groups in TM it will be seen to what extent this factor influences social action. The social situation in the village I studied can be described in terms of the following developments:

The power of the traditionally privileged groups in whose hands economic and political control had previously been vested, has dwindled. Subordinate castes have advanced politically and economically. The feudal bond and traditional loyalties have been weakened. Traditional relationships are gradually being replaced by contractual employer-employee relations with implicit bargaining. At the same time groups are being organized to achieve economic objectives in either peaceful or violent fashion.

These developments compare closely with what Gough (1955:51) has described as taking place in the nearby villages she studied during 1953-4. The changes probably are more pronounced in TM since both "clean" and "unclean" castes are involved whereas in the parts where Gough studied, according to her own statement, only the Adi Dravidas. She reports, for example: "... Pallans and Parayans (both considered unclean castes) of twelve villages had in the last five years completely abandoned their age-long dispute for precedence, ate freely together, assembled together at large areal commu-
n ist meetings, supported each other in strikes to gain higher wages from landlords, and, within each village, together settled their disputes concerning debt and adultery. In this district, in fact, so weak is the propagation of Congress policy regarding caste, and so strong the communist, that any person who attempts to defy caste laws is promptly hailed as a communist."

These developments in the villages may of course not be precisely similar in every instance. However, by extension from TM one may expect these new organizational efforts among lower castes not to be limited only to issues like higher wages and protection from eviction. The challenge against the privileged groups may spread to a series of issues, ranging from simple caste distinctions to the administration of the village as a whole.

In this way the little community is becoming more and more directly influenced by forces of change operating in the greater society. One of the effects of external political impact is seen here in the incorporation of the village society into the wider policy by the formation of new associations and unions which constitute parts of statewide political organizations. From the point of view of the traditional village society these new organizational efforts appear as clearly defined political activities based on manifest aims and policies.

In this phase criteria such as similarities in economic status and ideological outlook may override traditional ties and loyalties. The formation of associations on this level can be distinguished from the type of
alignments that result from traditional forms of conflict between kinship groups, for example, and from the exercise of power by individual potentates. I shall briefly describe what I mean by these traditional forms of factionalism by examples from studies made by Lewis (1954) in a Yat village and Pocock (1957) in a Gujarat village.

Lewis, in describing group relations in the Yat village he studied, gives an account of a series of disputes and quarrels occurring sporadically over longer periods of years between various groups of families. These disputes are seen to take place most frequently between groups that are already set off against each other as structural units and whose members share between themselves a number of economic, kinship and ceremonial relations. These different units may sometimes combine to support each other in court cases and quarrels, and from then onwards closer and more persisting relations may develop extending co-operation to a variety of fields. The various alignments may not necessarily always be recurring but exhibit a pattern of shifting allegiances. Such alliances as result are never formally and separately established on the basis of agreements about principal aims and policies, but are brought about through a multiplicity of pre-existing ties.

In Pocock's study, as the other example, political action is analysed in terms of relations of power between the wealthier men of the village. Factionalism here results primarily from the exercise of individual influence by wealthy leaders. What matters for the factions here is:
"... wealth and power for the purpose of standing in a particular system where, in a sense, it is status that makes life worth living." In this situation rivalry between individuals does not represent a challenge to a larger unit. Such relationships may combine for years in a variety of forms without necessarily causing major cleavages of conflicts. Differences are still being contained within the traditional order.

It is difficult to see the wider political significance of such factional activities as operate under these conditions described here. A demonstrably wider spread of these factions is lacking and there is no incidence of external political impact in any organized form. Beyond the immediate issues of dispute and opposition there are no clearly defined goals to which the various factional alignments might be more systematically related. The development of factions in these conditions may variously relate to disputes over landrights, access to water, sexual offences, etc. - but the conflicts are contained within the system. The realignments of political and economic that occur do not constitute a change of the system, but represents organizational phases within it. Social support is mobilized in traditional ways and the factional development is not influenced by the greater body politic. This type of process is characteristic of what happens in a "repetitive social system", a distinction made by Gluckman (1958:54) where: " - conflicts can be wholly resolved and cooperation wholly achieved within the pattern of the system. The individuals
who are members of the groups and the parties to the relationships which constitute the parts of the system, change, but there is no change in the character of those parts or the pattern of their interdependence with its conflicts and cohesion."

Cohen (1955:65), for example, has in particular emphasized the negative aspect of these factions in stating that they constitute the bane and disintegration of village life. Others, like Lewis in his study, have pointed to the potential role of factions in facilitating the formation of more representative bodies in the villages, e.g., Panchayats and elected committees. But the latter may again reflect factional patterns in the village without necessarily altering the pattern of action, and decision-making may be impeded due to previous opposition between faction.

In this study of TM one is also concerned with determining to what extent traditional groupings may function as bases for political support. Castes, for example, may form the basis of recruitment to political associations and, vice versa, parties and trade unions may develop factions within castes. However, the situation in TM is different from those described in the studies referred to, in that conflicting interests have been articulated on a higher level. The community studied here seems to have reached a comparatively high degree of political activity. Besides castes and traditional assemblies of castes the social order includes associations of the party or trade union type which have been established on a broader basis, and which have already formulated action programmes.
Throughout this study I shall specifically examine the social and economic problems which constitute the background of their development, the basis of recruitment, the tactics employed and their role in undermining the traditional economic regime. Important factors to consider for the further development are also the strength of resistance offered by traditionally privileged groups, the attitude of governmental agencies and the spread of alliances over a larger area.

Preceding this organizational development is, as I have already mentioned, the attempts made by the State to establish new rights for the benefit of underprivileged groups and to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth. This has to some extent weakened the position of the high castes and also created a situation of conflict in which disadvantaged elements encouraged by these changes and stimulated by agents from outside unite to challenge the privileged sections.

Under these new forms of social and political pressure traditional arrangements and controls cease to be adequate to cope with problems in a community which is now increasingly becoming subject to the intrusion of external political ideas. In response to the organizational efforts required by these changes new associations are created which are brought into opposition with the traditional system. The bases of recruitment to these new associations are multiple and overlapping, coinciding in part with some pre-existing social groups and cutting across others. Caste is one aspect
of recruitment and class affiliation another. Moreover, the new organizations produce cleavages within castes.

In order, for instance, to strengthen solidarity in the new associations and to mobilise wider support for the new leadership, traditional loyalties and relations are being undermined, resulting in opposition from the traditional leaders of the respective castes. On the other hand support for the new association, is also sought by exploiting traditional identifications with caste. A given programme is alleged to be in the collective interest of the respective caste.

Cleavages within caste may, however, be kept in check by traditional forms of group discipline and justice which, in a small, closed society like this village, still continue to play an important role. In this way members of a caste who stand in opposition to the new association may, when they are in a minority, be "neutralised" as it were and prevented from siding with other parties.

The changes studied here may also signify the development of new moral and ideological evaluations. One of the problems to be dealt with is what then happens to caste.

Caste, as we know, is very much like a synopsis of a person's life, determining not only the person's behaviour with regard to food and sex, but also to some extent his occupation, where in a particular place he has to live, how to dress, and various other features of his life. The
various idiosyncratic modes of this behaviour is moreover reflected in and supported by an hierarchical arrangement of caste groups. This hierarchy again is based on a system of ritual/ranking. Many authors have pointed out that mobility within this system depends not so much on the choice of an individual as on the movements of the groups of which he is a member. Bailey (1957:270) for example, observes in his study of the impact of a new economy on the traditional village society: "In seeking to improve his position in the ritual system of rank in his own community, the rich man cannot throw off his poorer caste fellows: he must carry them along with him." Pocock (1957) in his Gujarat studies refers to the practice of hypergamy among the Patidars whereby fathers on payment of "enormous dowries" may secure an increment in status and also political support by a marriage alliance with a higher group. Though, in this case, the question of a hierarchy is not discussed one may assume for purposes of discussion that in this way, by secession, a higher position was at least obtained for some members of the groups. In other cases, where simple hypergamy is impossible or too costly, an ambitious man will have to depend on his own group for enhancement of his prestige and status. Srinivas (1952,1955) in particular has emphasized that changes involving the rise of a particular group in the traditional hierarchy of caste can be affected only through some renunciation and ritual efforts on part of the group in question, and, on the other hand, through some compromise
on part of the other groups. Some "interpreters of caste", I feel, have pressed these generalizations about the "ritual escalator" a bit far. In apprehending social movements within Indian village societies one has to take into account a group of 80 million "untouchables" and a formidable number of other low castes whose value orientations may differ, or may be brought to differ, significantly from those of members of higher caste. Sanscritization is no panacea for Harijans, and some clean castes have already exhausted their possibilities.

There are areas of action where the traditional controls of caste apply less strictly or less obviously or less effectively. I am here thinking particularly of economic and political affairs where action depends less on the protocol of ritual. Increasing economic and political pressures towards action that cuts across caste lines affects caste in at least two ways. Pressures may operate in activities where no caste injunctions apply. Caste lines are thus blurred without formal contravention of caste rules. In other activities pressures may induce people directly to contravene caste injunctions. Usually, these situations are interdependent with carry over effects from the one into the other. When, for example, the traditional authority of caste (or of one caste) is taken over by, or superseded by that of a political organization this may enable low castes to emancipate themselves without recognition of a higher caste order and force higher castes into symbolic concessions of equality. This depends,
of course, on the degree to which those who strive for power sponsor an anti-caste ideology, are able to provide an alternative unifying frame of reference, and are effective in encouraging association between clean and unclean castes. In appraising the strength of these radical forces in the villages it is useful to bear in mind that in the official Independent India caste itself has been officially outcasted and the observance of untouchability now constitutes a penal offence.\textsuperscript{1)} But caste covers so many aspects of a person's or a group's life, and the taboos are so numerous, that a frontal attack on caste and caste-thinking itself is unlikely to succeed quickly. The orientation and tactics of anti-caste forces are therefore, in the first instance, not so much directed against the caste system as a whole as against the particular privileges enjoyed by higher castes. Gough (1952) remarks pertinently:

"There is no doubt, moreover, that the traditional forms of 'caste distinction' against which official

\textsuperscript{1}A Bill to make the observance of untouchability a penal offence was introduced in the Union Parliament on March 15, 1954. The Bill guarantees to the so-called "untouchables" the right of free entry into public temples and worship therein; the right to bath in or use water of any tank, well, spring, public tap or water course; the right of free access to any road passage, burial ground, ships, public conveyance, public restaurant, hotel or any place of public entertainment; the right of practising any profession or carrying on any occupation, trade or business and the right of free access to any place used for a charitable or public purpose maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the generality of persons." See Indian Year-book, 1955, p.445.
propaganda is so much directed will disappear from the village only when the old economic arrangements which allow of high caste authoritarianism have been more thoroughly undermined." The privileged higher castes, in particular the Brahmins in this district, may very well accommodate an insulting touch or remark by the taking of a bath and reciting a few curses in privacy. The higher castes may concede equality in theory, but when their privileges "on the ground", their social influence and authority, are being systematically threatened they are forced to take up organized resistance. The undermining of the old economic regime on which high caste power is based is therefore not an easily accomplished task.

It may be argued that an investigation of this phenomenon of change limited to one village is of restricted value since the effects of external political impact may vary considerably from village to village, depending on the composition of groups, relation of statuses, and particular stresses and economic problems in each. However, what is lost in extent is gained in depth. The following case study enables one, it is hoped, to see clearly in detail what happens in an immediate sociological context that has been precisely defined. It is not the village as a social unit which is the object of study here, but the interrelations of various sets of social and economic relationships within it. For the purposes of this study the problem of inter-village generalization is a secondary one. Colson (1954:58) remarks, for example, in a similar context: "This is a problem which may be of some concern to the administrators
and to the technical assistants who are trying to deal with the Tonga (or here: Tanjorians) as though they were a single unit. I do not think that it is a problem which needs to concern the anthropologist who is trying to make a study of the interrelation of social factors in a single social system. After all, each area studied does represent a unit in which the people are in close social relations with each other."

How members of different castes respond to alien social and political ideas cannot be shown merely by broad references to the various manifestations of response over a wider area. The analysis must first be focussed on processes within the local community. Although the incorporation of the little community into the wider polity is caused in the first instance by external factors, the process is determined by pressures resulting from the close interaction within the local community of groups diversely placed with respect to particular privileges, disadvantages and stresses.

The new associations, though linked with wider political movements, still continue to operate on the basis of the inter-dependence of their organization with co-existing traditional local groups.
CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE

TM like most other Brahmin villages in this area is situated on the banks of the river Cauvery. Except a few families of village servants who according to their caste do carpentry, barbering and washing (laundry) there is no specialized group of industry like pottery, for example, or weaving. The main occupation is agriculture. In land resources, irrigation facilities and system of cultivation it is typical of villages in this area. In composition of castes and their settlement it is also similar to other villages, though in size it is somewhat below the average.

The lands to the south of the habitation area between the bus road and the river Arasalaru are high level lands where unirrigated crops like plantains, groundnut and millets are cultivated. To the north, forming a vast expanse on the other side of the village lie the low level wet or irrigated paddy fields. In the cultivation season this expanse looks like a sea of paddy. It is broken only by smaller hamlets and groves of coconut palms that lie scattered around like islets in this ocean. The irrigation channels branch out from various intakes of the river and lead into the interior of the paddy area.

The village is easily reached either by bus or rail. The railway station is only one mile from the village.
The dwellings of the village are all in streets that are laid out almost in a rectangular form. The hamlet of the Paria untouchables is separated from the main village and is situated at some distance from it.

I have not been able to discover any written sources of the history of this village, but tradition relates that it was originally an INAM village donated to a group of Ashta Sahasra Brahmins by a Tanjore king. The legend of the origin of the Brahmin settlement is contained in the following story told to me by the Ashta Sahasra Brahmins still living here:

Once upon a time there was a poor unmarried Brahmin (Brahmachari) living in a hut on the banks of Cauvery. For his daily meals he used to seek alms with which he also fed his parents. One day the Tanjore king who was out hunting lost his way and the Brahmachari found him exhausted and hungry near the river. Without knowing who he was, the Brahmachari took him to his hut, fed him with his own share of the alms he had begged during the day and gave him rest. The king then in return for this charity, since the Brahmachari wanted nothing for himself, built houses near the Cauvery and let Brahmins settle here from whence this Brahmachari could beg for his daily needs. To every house was allotted a Pangu (share), a plot of land about four acres of extent. The village bears the name: that which is given with the seal of the king.

It is known, furthermore, that a second group of Brahmins - VADDAMAS - who are supposed to have come from the North to Southern India in a later period bought land in the village and settled on their own account.
The Brahmins again it is supposed set aside certain portions of the village for other castes who became their servants.

The size of the village is somewhat below the average of multicaste villages in this area. When this enquiry was made in 1957 the population including the Parias totalled 786 persons. The population comprises 10 caste-groups. The size of the respective caste groups and the number of households in each is enumerated in Table I below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashta Sahasra</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(BRAHMIN) Vaddama</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herdsmen</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SUDRA) Palli Infantry</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddytapper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paria</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
<td><strong>786</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of significance to note here is that Infantry and Paria, numerically the most important groups are also, as will be seen, the strongest groups politically. The Brahmin group has been reduced by migration over the last 56-60 years.
by as much as 30-40 households. The greater part of the Brahmin street is now in ruins.

All streets, except the Brahmin street and the Paria Hamlet, have residents from more than one caste. But these groups nevertheless, live in strict social segregation. Irrigation channels and paddy fields bar any further residential expansion in the bigger streets. INFANTRYMEN who, for example live in the HERDSMEN street have moved there on account of congestion in their original quarters. INFANTRY men and TODDYTAPPERS do not live interspersed with the HERDSMEN in this street, but in a row contiguous with the HERDSMEN houses towards the end of the street.

The following table shows, however, that residential segregation among the castes is still a salient characteristic of the village.

**TABLE II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Brahmin</th>
<th>HERDSMEN</th>
<th>INFANTRY</th>
<th>Palli INFANTRY</th>
<th>Paria Hamlet</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli INFANTRY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARPENTER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARBER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODDYTAPPER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each street is known as the street of a special caste, but not all castes have streets of their own castes.
Other notable characteristics of the settlement include three cremation grounds on the outskirts of the village. These three separate grounds again reflect the classical division of caste. One is for the Brahmins, one for the Paria, and one for other non-Brahmins. The temples are located for the ends of each street. The grounds in front of the temples in the non-Brahmin streets serve as the sacred places for caste meetings of the traditional type, but political meetings are not held here.

**Signs of prosperity and poverty**

The Brahmin street is the most spacious of all settlements, and the Paria hamlet the most congested. This hamlet is on all sides surrounded by irrigated paddy fields barring any extension of dwelling sites. Being prohibited from settling anywhere else in the village or in its vicinity the Paria families are now huddled together two and three in huts the average size of which is about 450 sqft. The average size of a Brahmin house is 3500 sqft, and in the Sudra street the average is 400 sqft. Though among Sudras the variations are much greater.

All the Brahmin houses are built of brick and the roofs are laid with hand-made tiles. The walls usually have a coating of mud plaster, but no houses are built of mud as they are to a large extent in the other streets. The ratio of brick and tile houses to mud and thatch in the INFANTRY streets, for example, is 1 to 10. The owners of the most expensive brick houses in these streets are the leaders of
this caste and command considerable respect in the village.

Brahmin houses are built according to definite rules of the old Shastras, part of the Vedic scriptures, and there is very little variation in design. Orthodox Brahmins also attribute personal misfortune to faulty house construction for which experts on the Shastras of house building are called upon to rectify. The doors and passages must all be placed in relation to a given axis and must be of different heights: the front door highest and the back-door lowest. As it is being said: "Lakshmi the goddess who brings riches shall have an easy entry but a difficult exit."

There are also for example certain rules for the levels of the floors, the placing of windows, etc.

It will be helpful for the comparisons which follow later to give an indication of how living conditions differ for the various groups. I have chosen to describe three houses typical of the accommodation occupied by a Brahmin, a wealthy non-Brahmin, and a poor Sudra.

Like the other Brahmin houses the one described here has massive walls of brick, roof with several layers of tiles and cemented floors. Along the entire front runs a portico which is divided by the entrance into a smaller portion east and a larger portion west.

The courtyard inside is open to the weather and serves as a sort of sunken reservoir. On two sides of it - is a covered sidewalk with a roof supported by wooden pillars. This area is used by the inhabitants as their main living and sleeping quarters. Off the sidewalk are two small rooms.
One serves as a study and as a store for valuables, the other is lived in by women during confinement when they have to be secluded from the rest of the household.

The back of the house contains partitions for the sacrae of the family, and for kitchen, laundry, woodshed, byres, etc.

The furniture consists of several tables, chairs and bedsteads, lockers and cupboards. Other household goods are books, pictures, a variety of cooking utensils, receptacles, brass vessels, oil-lamps, candles, etc.

The house is inhabited by the owner, a retired clerk who owns land, with his Brahmin wife, and a Sudra concubine.

The house exhibited next belongs to one of the more prosperous non-Brahmins who is also one of the traditional leaders or Nathanmaikarar of his caste, the INFANTRY. This house is one of the few in the INFANTRY street which has a tiled roof and is built of brick. It was built during World War II at the cost of about 4000 Rupees. For comparison, the Brahmin house if built during the same period would have cost about 10 - 15,000 Rupees; the ordinary mud and thatch dwelling common among the poorer majority costs about 250 Rupees or about the same as a good bullock.

This house is built in nearly the same style as the Brahmin's but is not so massive as the latter which was constructed several hundred years ago. The inner divisions are nearly the same but the uses vary.
A BRAHMIN HOUSE

LEGEND:
A - Front portico
B - Porches
C - Study & store-room
D - Covered sidewalk
E - Sunken courtyard
F - Kitchen
G - Vegetable garden
H - Woodshed and laundry
J - Seclusion room

- Fireplace
- Paddy-store
- Sacred bush (Tulasi)
- Pillar
- Well
- Brick wall
- Door
- Tiled roof
- 3000 sq ft
THE HOUSE OF ONE OF THE WEALTHIER PERSONS OF THE INFANTRY CASTE

LEGEND:
A - Front portico
B - Storeroom with sacrae
C - Sunken watertank
D - Inside gallery
E - Storeroom
F - Kitchen
X - Paddy stores
○ - Fireplace
○ - Pillar
□ - Brick wall
▌ - Door
Tiled roof
No well
1610 sq ft
THE HOUSE OF ONE OF THE POORER PERSONS
OF THE INFANTRY CASTE

LEGEND:
A - Front portico
B - Front room
C - Back room
Box - Fireplace
× - Paddybin
     - Curtain
     - Mud wall

Thatched roof
No well
336 sqft
The furniture is more sparse: two chairs, two benches and a locker, no bedsteads. There are no books or pictures. Besides the sacrae, there are four brass pots, a number of clay pots and various other receptacles and utensils.

The house is inhabited by the owner, his mother, his wife and two unmarried daughters and his deceased younger brother's wife with two unmarried sons and two unmarried daughters. The owner, besides cultivating land of his own, holds considerable portions of land on lease from Brahmins. He owns cattle, a bullock cart and does extensive trading.

The third and last house to be described is typical of the majority of agricultural labourers of the Infanty and other castes who own no cultivable land themselves or hold only small leases.

The walls are mud. The floor stamped earth and the roof which is very low is made of thatch and bamboo. These mud walls sometimes collapse during the rainy season. Part of one of the walls of this dwelling is in ruins and has been replaced by mats. The household goods consist of one small paddy bin of mud and plaster, one brass vessel, a few clay pots and some utensils. There is no furniture. The house is inhabited by the owner, his wife and widowed sister, a married son and two younger unmarried sons.

The housesite was bought by the present owner for about 250 Rupees. Besides the house site the owner has no landed property but rents a small plot of wet land.
The Brahmin houses are built on rather more favourable sites than the other castes; the water level is higher and each house has its private well. In the other streets there are practically no wells. An attempt by the Public Works Department to bore a well in the INFANTRY street failed to produce any water even below 80 feet. People living in these quarters therefore have to carry water from the river or from the irrigation channels. In the dry season water is dug for in the river beds. In that season the Brahmins usually allow their tenants and servants to take water from the wells in their houses. The Parias have a separate well of their own constructed for them by the Government ten years ago.

No house in TM has a latrine. Defecation and urination takes place in unbuilt portions of house sites. The Government has recently provided funds for the development of latrines in the village. Latrines will now be installed in every house.

This preliminary survey of the village has provided a rough view from the outside of the pattern of residence and living conditions for the different categories of the population. The housing problem in the Paria hamlet and the lack of certain facilities such as electricity, wells, public reading rooms in the village at large has recently been taken up by the rural development authorities. The congestion in the Paria quarters has in particular been recognized as a pressing need, and funds have now been made available by the development authorities for the expropriation of a portion of
the surrounding paddy land for housesites. It goes without saying that the villagers now feel these needs more acutely when officials of the administration and political agitators tell them how badly off they are. This subject will be brought up again later in connection with local political action.

The treatise following will above all be centered on the problem of economic, and by implications, political interests of the various groups. It is from the varying limitations and opportunities in this field that the conflicts primarily arise in which the village (and for that matter the whole area) has become so deeply involved. In the village, wealth and the manner of obtaining livelihood is still linked with caste. But caste today is no longer the sole basis on which the economic organization rests though it was very much so in the past. Mention has been made of the original settlement of this type of village. In the beginning the Brahmins owned all land and ruled the village. Serving under these Brahmins were cowherds, agricultural labourers, share croppers, and other servant castes and menials. Today the greater part of the village lands is still owned by Brahmins. But they are now mostly rentier owners and the share croppers, who formerly lived on housesites owned by the Brahmins and were at their beck and call, are now sharecroppers on contract. To a large extent they have been able to buy their housesites from the Brahmins and acquire cultivable land themselves. Many others have had service rent commuted into cash rent. A few Brahmins have
terminated their contract leases and now cultivate under their own management, employing wage labour.

There is as much variation with regard to income and property within as between castes. Few members of the respective castes follow exclusively the traditional callings of their particular castes or in the manner traditionally prescribed. The traditional village servants like barbers, carpenters and washermen still "belong" to the village and are paid from village common lands. They belong to castes appropriate to their occupations and have inherited their position from their fathers. But their trade is not monopolistic to the same degree as in the past, for some villagers get their clothes washed outside the village and likewise with barbering and carpentry. However, all the resident members of these village servant castes carry on their traditional occupation as well as cultivating their land.

A significant trend on the whole is the economic advancement of non-Brahmin groups. Some of these non-Brahmin have also received education and are qualified to compete with Brahmin for salaried jobs.

These changes have been gradual and slow and have not altered drastically the caste structure itself. When lower castes improved their status they succeeded in their efforts by the ability to take advantage of the opportunities offered by an expanding economy with better marketing facilities and a wider demand for cash crops. The position of the lower castes in general has been strengthened but this has not in itself led to any radical moves on their part.
The new opportunities favoured a few in particular who thereby also became the leaders of their own caste. The influence and wealth of these leaders, it may be said, symbolize the new strength of a formerly degraded caste. Under these leaders the low caste infantry has been able to establish a position of greater independence, but this has not changed their status in the traditional system of caste. They still remain at the same level within the ritual order.

The high caste privileges have to a larger extent been left untouched. On the other hand, State intervention and the growing economic and political aspirations of the lower castes have made Brahmins less secure of their own position. Their prestige is now being taken less for granted. Hegemony in economic and political affairs is no longer correlated with the high caste position. It is opposed to an increasing extent by the extra-caste considerations, the courts, and the attitude of the community at large. The fact that Brahmins, for example, have been defeated in courts by their low caste tenants and are unable to enforce their own will as before has been interpreted as a sign of their growing weakness. This has raised new expectations among the low castes and encouraged attempts to obtain further concessions.

Since most Brahmin landowners have become absenteeees there is no longer any face-to-face contact between landlord and tenant. The relationship has become purely impersonal. Even the annual rent is paid by a remittance
through the post. There are no ties to reinforce dwindling loyalties. Among the lower castes there are persons who because of their interests as employers and caste leaders insist more strongly than others on maintaining the traditional economic and social order and see no advantage in radical changes. Others, the less fortunate who have lagged behind in the development, have become resentful and criticize not only the higher caste order but also the more fortunate among their own group. As we shall see later Brahmins with lands to lease tend to prefer as tenants those non-Brahmins who have some land of their own. These wealthier tenants become the target for criticism and resent from their poorer caste mates.

In the course of this gradual process of dissociation the lord-servant relationship which was formerly based on high caste hegemony and low caste obedience is becoming more formal and specific. At the same time the new economic differentiation has created classes of employers and employees - a stratification which is no longer based on the original caste hierarchy. This differentiation tends to separate members of the same caste and according to their respective interests to join some of each caste with members of other castes. In this partial relationship between caste and economic interests we see the beginning of a cleavage which under new and more penetrating forms of pressure from the outside results in open conflict and the formation of new associations.
Seen in the perspective of these events caste itself, it seems, while loosing much of its importance also as a system, tends to become isolated from the rest of the whole, becoming less a synoptic thing as it were. But it may not be left high and dry. Forces are being mobilized in support of an ideology which conflicts with and challenges the view that caste can be accepted as a legitimate reason for social and economic iniquities.

CHAPTER III

Possession of land and employment

In the previous chapter it was stated that there is as much variation in economic position and interests within as between castes. Nearly all, however, derive in the main their income from land and activities in agriculture. People employed in other ways are few. These again also tend to retain some interest in land. It is in the agricultural sector that the economic interests of the various groups differ. It is here that group interests begin to clash on questions such as payment of rent, wages and conditions of employment.

The class differentiation which has developed on this economic basis overlaps with the traditional hierarchy. In addition to caste one also has to deal with a hierarchy of employers and employees.

Nearly every person makes his living from the land either by his own work directly or by the system which entitles him to shares of the product of other people's
labour. Caste membership is still operative but it is the partial relationship between this and the more material interest which determines the way a man becomes involved in factional alignments.

The survey presented in this chapter shows the extent of these differences.

Land tenure

In law the state is the owner of all land. Under the Ryotwari system, which is the system applicable in TM the right to permanent occupation of a particular piece of land is granted to individuals on condition of annual payment of tax. This right is registered with the courts by a title deed. The title holder or primary holder is called Pattadar. The owner is free to transfer his title or sublet his land for cultivation. On the death of the title holder, the land passes to his son or sons, who become responsible for the tax on it. Land thus acquired by inheritance cannot be alienated by the new owner without the consent of his heirs. Certain restrictions also obtain with regard to subletting of land and sale of land under lease which will be discussed later. When a title holder dies leaving no heirs the land reverts to the state.

Under a second type of tenure, Inam, the state grants holdings free of tax or on a nominal rent to temples for their upkeep and for rewarding village priests. In TM, land owned by temples is registered as primary holdings with
full tax liability. The property is administered by a state appointed trustee.

The third category of land, **Gram Samudayam**, consists of rent-free, inalienable lands granted to hereditary village servants. These lands may be cultivated in perpetuity by the servant families on condition of obligatory service, but they are not registered as the titleholders, nor are they responsible for the tax on this land. For statistical purposes I have treated the village servants as primary holders. State tax in respect of **Gram Samudayam** is paid by the major landowners of the village. The land is registered in their name as joint pattas (titles) and they contribute to the tax each in proportion to the tax paid on his private land. This category include housesites as well as cultivable land. Under **Gram Samudayam** land has also been granted to temples for the remuneration of priests. A grant of that kind is called maniam. Land held under both systems may be leased. Some tenants of house pay their rent in cash, some in labour. These leases are in practice hereditary.

Many landowners usually sublet their lands to one or several tenants on contract, a system called Kuttaghai. Under Kuttaghai a lessee is specifically required among other conditions to acknowledge the title of the lessor and the latter's right to enjoy his lands fully on expiry of the lease. A specimen contract is given as appendix. Under Kuttaghai the rent is a fixed amount. Under non-contract sharecropping, Waram, the rent is fixed in proportion to the actual yield. Some of the biggest landowners cultivate their lands them-
selves by means of hired labour and servants permanently attached to their farms. This system is known as Pannai, and the servants as Pannayals. The distribution of land under the various categories of tenure is given in Table III below.

**TABLE III**

**ACREAGE OF CULTIVATED LAND BY TYPE OF TENURE AND SYSTEM OF LEASEHOLD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tenure</th>
<th>Retained by Primary holder Or Grantee</th>
<th>Leased out by Primary holder Or Grantee</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temple Individuors</td>
<td>190,14</td>
<td>10,27</td>
<td>1,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waram Kuttaghai Individual</td>
<td>1,30</td>
<td>5,54</td>
<td>2,62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>191,44</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,81</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of landholdings

Members of all castes in TM, except Paria and some servant castes own land, the Brahmins more than the others.

A large number of primary holders do not live in the village. Table IV shows the distribution of cultivable land between members of various castes and between resident and absentee owners.
### TABLE IV

**OWNERSHIP OF CULTIVABLE AREA BY CASTE AND BY RESIDENT AND ABSENTEE OWNERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>In TM No.</th>
<th>In neighbouring village No.</th>
<th>Elsewhere No.</th>
<th>Total owners</th>
<th>Total area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35,00</td>
<td>11 76,21</td>
<td>42 95,89</td>
<td>63 207,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14,54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8 8,46</td>
<td>15 23,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53,33</td>
<td>22 16,57</td>
<td>5 2,29</td>
<td>53 72,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli INFANTRY</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19,49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 19,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Brahmin high castes not represented in TM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>122,36</td>
<td>33 92,78</td>
<td>75 142,42</td>
<td>158 357,56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Temples**

- **Gram Samudayam**
  - 3,92

**GRAND TOTAL**

- 377,29

I shall first comment briefly on absentee ownership. About 27 Brahmin absentee owners live as far away as Madras, Calcutta and Bombay and 15 are found in towns and centres within the district, 11 live in nearby villages. The non-Brahmin absentee owners, 33 in all, belong most of them to trading and money lending castes and most of them live in this district, but none have ever lived in TM.

Their lands in the village have all been bought from the Brahmins and let again to the sharecroppers here.
The land belonging to absentee Brahmin landowners is for the most part their ancestral property. Having received education in high schools and colleges in the district they left the village for good to find employment elsewhere. Others have returned as pensioners. It has not been possible to obtain detailed information on their occupations but one may assume that most of them occupy salaried posts. Sons and brothers of Brahmins now living in the village are, I know, either studying in college or are employed in Government Service. That many in the past went to cities so far away is no doubt due to the anti-Brahminism in the South and to Government orders restricting their employment in Government service in favour of non-Brahmins. Non-Brahmin castes resident in TM all acquired their lands during the last 40-50 years. Their proportion of ownership is not very great but indicates the trend of events. Previously they were sharecroppers only.

Size of estates

Most estates or holdings have been acquired in a piecemeal fashion by transfers of parts of original estates and by partitions among heirs. A great number of holdings are below the size of half an acre and the majority are below one acre. There are a few larger estates which again may consist of up to 30 separate plots situated in different parts of the village. Each plot is separately registered under the owner's name and assessed separately for tax. A few owners,
brothers, have not partitioned the estate officially in order to avoid the registration fee, but in all cases they operate their lots individually.

In this first case for statistical purposes I have listed parts of the common estate that would accrue to the owners individually, and which are managed separately, as individual holdings. Others, especially the bigger landowners, have divided up their estates and registered parts of them in the names of their sons and wives on account of the limits proposed by the State to be imposed on the size of individual holdings retained for personal cultivation. In this case where parts of a holding have been formally partitioned but are still operated as integral parts of the original estate I have listed the various titles as one.

The range of sizes of estates and the extent of fragmentation is shown in Table V.

TABLE V
OWNERS, BY SIZE OF ESTATE AND NUMBER OF PLOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of plots per owner</th>
<th>Size of Estates</th>
<th>Total Estates:Plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: (-2.49)</td>
<td>II: (2.5-4.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III: (5.0-9.99)</td>
<td>IV: (10.0-14.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V: (15 acres and above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Plots</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estates</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cultivable area of the village comprises three kinds of land, one producing two crops of paddy annually, one producing a single crop only and the third, dry lands on which plantains and other cash crops are grown. The respective proportions of the total area are approximately: 32% double crop land, 50% single crop land and 18% dry land.

First class double crop land is priced at about 3600 rupees per acre and dry land at 1200 rupees. The price of single crop paddy land lies somewhere between.

The medium and big estates are composed mostly of dry land plots and double crop plots. The profitableness of the various kinds of land is discussed in chapter IV.

The Brahmins own not only the greater part of the village lands on the whole but their individual estates are also larger than those owned by members of other castes. A comparison between castes of the sizes of individual estates is given in Table VI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE VI</th>
<th>OWNERS OF CULTIVABLE LAND, BY CASTE AND BY SIZE OF ESTATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caste of Landholder</td>
<td>Sizes of Estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Brahmin High castes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not represented in TM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The estates have been grouped into 5 categories of sizes: I - below 2,49 acres, very small; II - between 2,5 and 5 acres, small; III - between 5 and 10 acres, medium; IV - between 10 and 15 acres large; V - above 15 acres, very large.
The two biggest estates are owned by two Brahmins both living in adjacent villages and one of whom is the village Headman of TM. These are the only Brahmin landlords who do not let their lands to others but farm their lands themselves by means of labour hired in this village. They personally supervise the work on their estates and are the only farmers here who have made use of improved methods of cultivation and installed motor pumps for irrigation. As big employers of agricultural labour they have been particularly tenacious in disputes over wages and labour contracts and were the first persons to form a local branch here of the so-called Welfare Party, an organization of landlords. They also own considerable tracts of land in other parts of the district.

Their influence among the other landowners of TM is great. Some time past they were, for example, able to deprive some of the village servants of their maniam and appropriate it for their own benefit without meeting any opposition from the other landowners, the Sudras included.

Distribution of leaseholds

With a few exceptions all absentee landowners and all resident Brahmin landowners have let the lands owned by them in TM to resident contract tenants. Many Brahmins who still live in TM did formerly farm their lands themselves by means of the system of permanent labour referred to as Pannai. However, the increasing reduction of their estates made this system unprofitable. Since moreover the younger and more
active members of their families migrated from the village they found it difficult to maintain an effective supervision of the farms.

Only to a very little extent have share-croppers living in TM obtained leaseholds in other villages and no persons not living in TM have obtained leaseholds here.

Transfer of land to persons living outside the village has of course led to an increase of leaseholds mostly in favour of contract tenants who already possessed some land of their own which might be offered as guarantee for the lease contract arrears in payment of rent. The average extent of leaseholds acquired by contract tenants with primary holdings of their own is 3.15 acres as against the average of 1.65 acres for tenants without freeholds.

The distribution of cultivable land between castes by the various modes of tenure is summarized in Table VII following. (Tenure of temple lands and Gram Samudayam will be treated separately). This table also gives a comparison between size of leaseholds for tenants with and without primary holdings.

A few of the bigger sharecroppers do occasionally sublet parts of their leaseholds to others but this happens only rarely. In general leaseholds are rented from the landlord directly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Holders</th>
<th>Primary Holders</th>
<th>Primary Holders</th>
<th>Primary Holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaseholders</td>
<td>Without Pratt</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Without Pratt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tube</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Without Pratt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Without Pratt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Land on Pratt</td>
<td>Without Pratt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Area Mean</td>
<td>Area Mean</td>
<td>Area Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.35</td>
<td>10.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table III**

RESIDENT HOUSEHOLD HEADS, BY CASTE AND BY PRIMARY OR LEASED HOLDINGS OF LAND.
Tenure of housesites

In former times, prior to the migration of Brahmins from the village about two generations ago all Sudras rented their homesteads from the Brahmin landlords in consideration for which they were obliged to do work on their farms, do duty as nightwatchmen and perform other tasks. The HERDSMEN, for example, herded and milked the Brahmins' cows. Many of these homesteaders were also employed as the Brahmins' sharecroppers on a non-contract basis - the so-called Waram system of lease. These tenants are still referred by the Brahmins as their al, their men.

By buying out the Brahmins most Sudras have today acquired ownership of their housesites. Some have had labour rent commuted into cash rent. Others still pay rent by labour service to the landlord. Very few persons in the two last mentioned categories possess cultivable land either by freehold or by leasehold. The others have bought their housesites at the average rate of about 300 Rupees which is roughly equivalent to an agricultural labourer's yearly income if he is steadily employed. These persons have of course been enabled to buy their housesites mainly by their earnings from sharecropping. Mode of tenure of housesites may then be treated here as a further index of economic differentiation within and between castes. This is summarized in Table VIII below.
### TABLE VIII

**HOUSEHOLDS, BY CASTE AND MODE OF TENURE OF HOUSESITE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Freehold</th>
<th>Leasehold Money Rent</th>
<th>Leasehold Service Rent</th>
<th>Gram Samudayam Service Rent</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli INFANTRY</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARPENTER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARBER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODDYTAPPER</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rent stipulated for housesites is not very high, 1 to 2 rupees per month in money or one day’s labour a month in service. The service attached to a housesite is not a heavy burden but it is seen as a mark of subordination reminiscent of the days when tenants were at the landlord's beck and call on all occasions. Tenants in this category are called **ammunchal** or **sonda-al** literally meaning serf. Today this is felt as an indignity, and for a Sudra in this category it means he is not classed as equal with the rest of his caste who are freeholders of housesites: "Whom nobody can call".
The designation applied to Parias who are attached to either Brahmin or Sudra landlords as permanent servants is also ammunchal or sonda-al.

The first step a low caste person takes in the direction of his emancipation is therefore to acquire ownership of his own housesite. Those who have lagged behind in the general economic advancement of their caste resent the fact that they are unable to do likewise.

The village servants and Parias who occupy Gram Samudayam do not render any service specifically to the subscribing landlords but are obliged to serve the village as a whole. Nevertheless the subscribing landlords can exert pressure on those under Gram Samudayam. The village barber and carpenter have been alienated from the cultivable portions of their maniam. It was alleged that they no longer did service according to the traditional village standard. But they have not been evicted from their housesites. These servants no longer receive fixed grain payments either but work on a cash basis. Their position will be discussed more fully later as example of market influences. The village washerman is the only servant who to some extent has been able to retain the privileges of his maniam.

There has been no alterations in the tenure of Gram Samudayam reserved for the Paria. Their maniam include besides housesites a small portion of cultivable land of about one acre. These lands are held by the Paria in common. The contingent duties they divide between themselves by rotation. This caste is divided into two groups of menials.
equal in size and intermarrying. One group, the vettian, keeps the threshing floors of the village in order, looks after ditches and irrigation channels and undertakes cremations. Members of the other group, the tallayari work as field watchmen. The village employs two servants of each group for these duties every year. The servants change every year by rotation within each group. First between Pangalis, groups of agnates tracing common agnatic descent from the forefathers of living adults, who are responsible in succession for providing service. If more than one nuclear family in a Pangali the families take it in turn to provide the service when it becomes a responsibility of the Pangali. These menials, during their term of duty receive remuneration in paddy for the agricultural part of their work. Each cultivator pays at a rate fixed per unit of wet land under his cultivation. The payment is collected by the assistant to the village accountant and divided among the menials. For cremations and for drumming at Sudra functions they are paid in cash.

The occupations Paria householders are given in the following table.

**TABLE IX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION OF MALE PARIA HOUSEHOLDHEADS IN 1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village menials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour on monthly contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowherd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Labourers on monthly contract are employed by the farmers of the village singly: 11 by Brahmin landlords and 7 by Sudra cultivators. Apart from one HERDSMAN no other men in TM are employed as labourers on monthly contract. The methods of remuneration applicable to this class, extent of debt bondage, etc. is specified in ch. V.

Paria agricultural labourers hired by the day work on the same terms as casual labourers of other castes.

The priests of the village are all remunerated in kind from the temple lands. Some Brahmin priests possess in addition small holdings of their own partly obtained as gifts from Brahmin families and partly by purchase. For specific services the priests are now paid in cash.

Besides agriculture and occupations specifically ordained by caste and tradition there are few alternative means of making a living. Some specialize in petty trading and some have salaried jobs. But there is virtually no modern industry in the district and salaried employment for educationally qualified people is extremely limited.

The table below shows that nearly all male Brahmins above the age of five have received primary education and a great proportion have gone through secondary or higher schools. The corresponding proportions in other castes are much lower and there are some castes with none of their members having been to school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>15-20</th>
<th>Above 20</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle or higher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total persons</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle or higher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total persons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle or higher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total persons</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli INFANTRY</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle or higher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total persons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

x) M & F = Male & Female

xx) For five persons education was not stated.

NOTE: Among the following, Paria, TODDYTAPPER, BARBER and CARPENTER none have received primary school education except the village carpenter.
Of HERDSMEN two are employed as teachers in nearby schools and one as sanitary inspector. One INFANTRY-MAN is employed as clerk in the town and one is a police constable. Though they are employed outside they all reside permanently in the village.

Among the Brahmins still remaining in the village two are employed as clerks in nearby rice mills and one in the Administration. Another one is estate manager in a nearby village. As mentioned earlier all village officials including the postmaster are Brahmins. Land reforms and agrarian troubles are likely to increase Brahmin migration from the village and more will sell their lands. All of the younger sons of resident Brahmins who are either in school or are unemployed intend to leave the village - most of them for good. In the next generation there may hardly be any Brahmins left in the village.

CHAPTER IV

The System of Cultivation and Organization of Labour

The working part of the population is predominantly engaged in some way or other in agriculture and the largest section depends directly on its own labour for its living. The range of employment is determined by the scope of activities in agriculture and the wage rates and contracts are fixed according to the system of cultivation. Although work on the village land does not occupy the working population the whole year - in the off season some go away to work in other parts of the district - it is a very intensive and
varied system which leaves little time for leisure. It is, moreover, a very regular system. The dates for the operations are fixed according to the opening and closing of the irrigation channels. The requirements of the particular crops are well known and the work is regulated by firmly established standards as regards time or tempo, number of people employed on specific tasks and what compensations are allowed for differing working conditions as light or heavy, dry or wet soil, etc.

There are two types of cultivation in TM: wet and dry. In the dry or unirrigated lands plantains are now grown for the most part; in the wet or irrigated lands courser varieties of paddy are cultivated in fields producing one single crop in a year, and finer varieties are cultivated in the more fertile and better irrigated fields producing two consecutive crops. In describing this system I shall deal with paddy cultivation first and plantain cultivation second.

In this area paddy and the activities associated with its cultivation is more important on the whole than the cultivation of cash crops; it is the staple crop; it is associated with a ritual complex - lacking for other crops; it requires more systematic cultivation and more labour and periods of irrigation are fixed so within these limits well timed and well organized efforts are necessary. Paddy leaves little freedom in the disposition of time and labour. However, it is a relatively stable source of subsistence. Crop failure is less likely with paddy than with plantains. The latter is more susceptible to physical hazards such as heavy
rains and stormy winds and there is also greater dependence on transport and a ready market. Surplus paddy can always be stored and marketed when convenient. This system of cultivation requires a relatively large and reliable labour force. Even small holdings need comparatively large working groups which to a great extent have to be hired from outside the cultivator's or the manager's own family. The labour force is recruited in the main from the large numbers of landless families who are engaged as casual labourers or on long term contracts.

Among the chief and most immediate conditions on which the new organizational efforts in this community are based is the association of various groups in agricultural activities. Interaction in this field is determined to a large extent by flexibilities in the demand and supply of labour: the time and effort needed to cultivate a given area, cost of labour and equipment required; and participation in the production according to age, sex and caste.

In this chapter attempts are furthermore made to arrive at estimates of the incomes of the various groups, subsistence needs, incidence of tax, rent and other contingencies which will indicate how people in this village are likely to be affected by the new political developments.

**Crops and Techniques of Cultivation**

The first paddy crop - called *Kuruvai* - requires about 30 days from the time of sowing till transplantation and is harvested 60 days after transplantation. The second
crop - **Talhedi** - is sown and planted in the same fields as the first crop. A few days after the transplantation of **Kuruvai** the same nursery field is again prepared for sowing **Talhedi**. The second crop is of longer duration, requires much more manure, and gives lesser yield than the first crop. It is transplanted about 45 days or more after sowing and harvested about 90 days afterwards.

The single crop - generally called **Samba** - is cultivated in nursery and planting fields separate from the double crop fields and takes six months before it is harvested.

The cropping seasons and the duration of the various activities are shown in the synoptic chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNE</th>
<th>Preparation of nursery beds, ploughing, sowing Kuruvai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>Preparation for sowing nursery beds for single crop Samba. Ploughing double crop planting fields, transplanting Kuruvai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
<td>Making nursery beds ready and sowing Talhedi. Ploughing single crop lands and transplanting single crop Samba. ... weeding ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPT</td>
<td>Harvest of Kuruvai, ploughing and manuring for Talhedi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td>Transplanting Talhedi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>... weeding ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Dry land work and sowing grams in wet lands (broadcasting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>Harvest of single crop Samba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>Harvest of Talhedi. Threshing paddy remaining on stalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>Reaping grams and dry land work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRIL</td>
<td>Levelling fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>Manuring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

August and October are months of heavy rain. All the months from December to July are dry. The irrigation lasts from
June to around January.

The yields vary greatly according to the amount of work, manure, etc. spent by each cultivator. On account of the state of conflict prevailing between landlords, tenants and labourers, it was in many instances impossible to obtain information on yield and cultivation expenses. However, my local servants and assistants who were all villagers of TM (employed by me for a year) gave me opportunity to assess closely the input and output of the fields cultivated by their families. This evidence was compared with testimonies obtained from others. I shall express these estimates in terms of local measures for volume and land. One unit of paddy (in Tamil Kalam), contains 24 measures, one measure is roughly equivalent to two pints and two pints of paddy gives after husking about one pint of rice. One local Kalam is approximately half a bag and weighs about 64 lbs. One unit of land (in Tamil Ma) is equivalent to about one third of an acre.

The first crop harvest of one of these cultivators which I witnessed gave 11 units of paddy for one unit of land or 2112 lbs. per acre. Besides dung or compost manure and green foliage, the cultivator of this plot applied no other manures. The harvest of his second crop gave about 2 - 3 units less. By what I gathered from the testimonies of others, this yield is somewhat below the average which is about 12 units for the first crop and about 10 for the second. The big estate farmers who can afford and apply expensive manures reach up to 18 and 15 units. The average yield of single crop
lands is about 15 units of paddy per unit of land.

The grain of double crop paddy is smaller and more slender than the shorter, courser single crop variety. The cultivator usually markets the double crop paddy and retains the Samba for his own consumption. The labourer's first meal in the day consists of cold rice mixed in gourd, and the ordinary Samba is, they say, better suited for this purpose than the finer and more slender varieties which are favoured mostly by Brahmins and people in towns. For each crop there are numerous varieties of seed, some of which is obtained from a government farm in the area. The local practice is to change the variety sown nearly every year.

Irrigation and Use of Water

The source of irrigation is the Cauvery River. From the intake, a sluice constructed by the Government, the water is conducted through big channels branching into numerous smaller ones in the paddy fields. The water is first diverted into the nursery fields near the temples of the village, then to the double crop lands, and finally to the less fertile single crop lands further out.

The Government is only responsible for the flow up to and through the sluices. The maintenance and repair of the village channels is the cultivators' own responsibility, and the Brahmin landlords hold it to be the duty of their tenants. Lately, however, the tenants have refused to carry out any repair as they maintain that the landlords also should contribute to the costs of repair and cleaning.
Formerly, when the Brahmin landlords had more power, these works were executed on the command of the village headman. The flow of water in the fields is supervised by Paria village servants who regulate the amount of water in the fields according to the height of the crops.

During the first days after manuring, the landlord or the cultivator himself keeps watch to prevent loss of manure in solution. In many instances it was feared that the cultivator of an adjacent plot might attempt to divert the water from his neighbour's field which had newly been manured into his own. There is a steady supply of water all through the months of July to January, and the cultivators sow before the monsoon rains. During cultivation water is used in the following way. In the nursery fields, after digging and manuring, water is let into the field for one night, and the field is then ploughed in this wet condition. The field is soaked again for puddling for about three days. It is ploughed for a second time on the day of sowing and water remains in the field during the night and is drained again the next day. On or about the third day, the field is watered for a short period and then drained. It is afterwards irrigated till transplantation. In the planting fields water is changed usually every eight day. According to local opinion, the water level of a standing crop should not exceed about 5 - 6 " . However, owing to growth in channels and the slight incline of the plain, proper drainage is becoming increasingly difficult.
Many cultivators have been concerned about the future fertility of the soil. According to the opinion of many in this area, the river water no longer carries silt as it did prior to the construction of the Dam and the soil has thus been deprived of one of the sources of its natural fertility: "what we get is only decanted water". The problem is discussed in Spate's "India and Pakistan" (1954:722) where it is mentioned that a scheme proposed to add to the height of the Mettur Dam - to allow for an estimated accumulation of 10 feet of silt in 50 years --- suggests that the complaints of cultivators have some substance. One might also take into account the effect of an increase of tenant cultivation and the inability or lack of interest among tenant cultivators to procure sufficient manure which also has contributed to reduced soil fertility. Other sources of irrigation are few. Recently two of the biggest estate farmers have installed motor pumps for irrigating their nursery fields with well water before the channel irrigation starts, thus achieving a much earlier transplanting of paddy, and an earlier harvest.

Nearly all cultivators possess one or several small nursery plots separate from the main fields which are used only for raising seedlings. Those possessing no nurseries either hire from others or buy seedlings. The nursery beds are sown at the average rate of 75 measures of seed per unit of land - sufficient for a quantity of seedlings to plant an area of 4 acres or 12 units of land. For each measure of seed a harvest of 20 measures or more of paddy may be expected,
the yield is 20 fold.

Most cultivators prepare their nursery plots by ploughing them when they have been soaked which is easier and cheaper than doing the first preparation by spadework. A few turn the soil by digging it in a dry condition. This is thought to be helpful in promoting a quicker and sturdier growth of seedlings and making seedlings easier to pluck, but for those who hire labourers it is more laborious and more expensive than ploughing in a wet condition. The only spadework usually done is levelling the bottom of the field, banking and turning ridges left over from the ploughing.

Transplantation

Seedlings are planted out in an irregularly spaced manner - the first crop close, and the second crop wider apart, about half a foot between each planting which usually contains four seedlings. A few of the wealthier farmers were recently persuaded by the agricultural demonstrators to use the so-called Japanese method of paddy cultivation. At the border of a few of the most fertile fields near the main road signboards have been erected with the inscription: "Japanese cultivation". However, the only new practice adopted as a result of these demonstrations is that the few farmers who think they can afford it plant seedlings in straight rows. This method is believed to make the operation of the field easier, facilitating manuring and weeding; and under heavy rains and winds the plants are less likely to intertwine when there is more free room around each. Line transplant-
ation is, however, more labour-consuming than the ordinary method, requiring about one third extra labourers.

For the protection of the crops against stray animals thorn fences are put up around the fields adjacent to the habitation area. On the banks Salpenia and other plants are sown against insects. Rat traps and poison are also laid out by some.

Manure

The main bulk of manure consists of dung and compost and foliage gathered from bushes and trees around the village. Human dung is not used. Green manure crops are cultivated in the paddy fields after harvest. The pulses sown with the paddy are also thought to be beneficial to the soil, restoring the nitrogeneous content. The more expensive manures, groundnut, margosa and husk of millets, etc., are used by a few cultivators who partly grow them themselves or buy them in the market. Artificial fertilizers are applied by some. Few cultivators are in a position to apply manure liberally as most of the fresh cow dung is used for fuel. It is mixed with water, straw and paddy husk, patted into cakes and stuck into walls for drying. Sold in the market these cakes fetch a price of about 1/4 annas a pair. Rubbish compost consists mostly of ashes and straw and is noticeable as a thin layer of dust when spread over the fields. On the average an amount of about 30 cart loads is applied per acre. Besides the usual foliage and green manure plants, some cultivators contract herdsmen to keep their herds overnight in the fallow paddy fields for the customary payment of one unit of paddy
per 100 cattle.

Ploughing

Bullocks are mostly used as draught animals but some also use buffaloes. The plough is of wood with an iron point. A plough team, called a kalapai consists of one man, a pair of animals and a wooden plough. A kalapai ploughs one unit of land (1/3 acre) in a six hour day. An important part of this operation is the ploughman's footwork in kneading the soil. By adjusting the tiller of the plough, furrows of varying depths may be ploughed. For wet ploughing light animals are mostly used, making shallow furrows only. Left over ridges are treated by spadework. A field is ploughed three times over before planting.

Harvest

After draining the water, the paddy is cut by hand with a small, short sickle. The paddy is bundled in headloads, carried to the threshing floor where the bundles are dashed against the floor, the loose grain shaken out and the remainder stacked to be trodden out later by bullocks. At the end of a day's harvest the grain is gathered in heaps, measured, and wages paid out. The owner then writes his signature and marks on the heaps with a spray of liquid dung, and the heap is covered with straw. Paddy is usually sold from the threshing floor.

The labour required for harvest is calculated at the rate of one man per third of a unit of land or one ninth
of an acre a day: cutting, bundling, shaking out loose grain and stacking.

The most important prerequisite for this type of cultivation is bullocks. Compared to bullocks, seeds and the ordinary type of manures are low cost items. Bullocks are also difficult to hire in the cultivating season. For this reason, rentier landlords are also reluctant to lease out their lands to men without plough animals. However, as I have observed at the muster of bullocks at the ceremonial ploughing held by the Sudra temple assemblies at the commencement of the season, there are few cultivators who do not possess bullocks. The bigger farmers possess on the average two or more pairs of bullocks. Among bigger farmers with neighbouring paddy fields, it is customary to exchange plough labour and bullock teams for treading out paddy. Bullocks used for ploughing in the wet fields are usually of a much lighter breed than cart bullocks and are valued at about an average price of 200 Rs. per pair - cart bullocks nearly twice as much. The plough itself is made by carpenters at the cost of 5 Rs. and the tiller 6 Rs. Other implements include a hoe-like spade costing 7 Rs. and a wooden club priced at \( \frac{1}{2} \) R.

Carts for transport of manure and paddy are possessed by relatively few. The smaller farmers usually carry manure to the fields in baskets. (Surplus paddy is sold off the threshing floor to dealers who themselves arrange for the transport). Fifteen of the biggest farmers and contract cultivators, who also do the most extensive trading in the
village, have their own carts. A cart costs about 300 - 400 Rs. The cost of hire within the village area is 2¹⁄₂ Rs. a day.

The average amount of labour required for the main tasks of the cultivation of one paddy crop and the respective wage rates are given here for an area of one unit of land, approximately 1/3 acre.

(a) Nursery field

Ploughing: Twice, about 6 hours each time, with one Kalapai (cost of hire of Kalapai - one man with one pair of bullocks) - 2 1/4 Rupees).

Spadework: Banking, levelling of ridges and furrows - 4 men, one day. Wages per man - 1 to 1 1/4 Rupees.

Manuring: Spreading dry manure and puddling - one man, one day - 1 R. (Cart hire 2 Rs.).

Sowing and work with the levelling board:

Making the surface of the field smooth prior to sowing broadcast - one man, about one day - 1 R. (Sowing included).

Plucking Seedlings: About 4 men, one day - 1 R. each.

(b) Planting field

Ploughing: 3 times (same rates as above).

Spadework: 4 men, one day (same rates as above).

Manuring: Spreading dry manure and puddling, one man, one day (same rates as above).
Transplanting: 4 women, one day - about \( \frac{1}{2} \) R. or 2 measures of paddy each, plus one man for handing out bunches of seedlings - 1 R.

Weeding: 2 to 3 women, once or twice - same wages.

Harvesting: 3 men, one day - 6 measures of paddy each in wages: cutting, carrying sheaves to the threshing floor, beating and loosening grain by hand, stacking sheaves.

Men doing heavier work such as digging and ploughing are usually given one meal in addition to pay in cash. Without meal, the daily wage for spade-work is 1 1/4 Rs. These wages are uniform for TM and neighbouring villages. Labourers engaged by public works contractors are also paid according to these rates for jobs on the roads, digging latrine pits, etc. According to Government Labour Ordinances casual labourers must be paid when discharged after the day's work. This Ordinance is also observed in TM by private employers here.

Labourers employed on long term contracts such as the Paria pannayals are given one meal and 6 as. cash a day and receive in addition an annual payment of 2 bags of paddy and one pair of garments. Besides cultivation work these labourers are set to all kinds of tasks around the master's house. The cultivators also pay at the harvest of each crop two measures of paddy for each unit of land under his cultivation to the Vettian or Paria digger who levels and prepares the threshing floors and regulates the water flow, and two
measures to the Tallayari or Paria watchman. The grain payments from the cultivator are pooled and distributed to these servants by the assistant to the village accountant. The wives of these servants sweep the threshing floors and receive the grain swept up as their payment. The village threshing floors belong to the temples in the vicinity of which they are located. At the harvest of each crop the cultivator pays the priests for the hire of these sites with one to two measures of paddy for each unit of land cultivated.

The close sequence of cultivation and the necessity to utilize water efficiently necessitates the completion of transplanting, harvesting, and other major tasks within the shortest time possible. Cultivators always plan to complete the work on any given field, whatever its size, in one day and work will start only when the maximum number of workers required have been mustered. The women's working day is normally six hours. The men's - during harvest is ten hours from five o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening with three hours rest at noon. During ploughing the day is six hours.

For the two most critical operations of paddy cultivation, transplantation and harvesting, a full labour force is particularly needed. The family itself is not normally a productive unit in relation to those operations which cannot be spread over longer periods. In practically all cases there is too much land to occupy its members. From the table below it can furthermore be seen that the labour capacity of non-Brahmin families with the largest holdings of
wet land is not much larger than that of families with smaller holdings. Moreover the labour capacity of the more well-to-do non-Brahmin families is reduced by the fact that they like the Brahmins tend to consider it undignified for its members to engage in physical labour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE XI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOUSEHOLDS, BY LABOUR FORCE AND SIZE OF HOLDING OF WET LAND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holding in acres</th>
<th>Male Labour Force</th>
<th>Per H. Hold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0, -0, -0, -0, -0, -0, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -4, -6, 99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22 33 44 55 66 99 49 99 49 99 99 99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 6 6 2 2 2 5 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- - - - 1 4 2 - - - 2 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- - - - - - - - - - - 1 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- - - - - - - - - - - - -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Labour Force</th>
<th>Per H. Hold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>- - - - - - - - - - - - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 2 2 3 8 6 3 1 1 2 6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 2 1 - - - 3 2 2 - 3 1 4 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- - - - - 1 2 1 - 1 - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- - - - - - - - - - - - -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: As labour force of a household are included all males between 12 and 60 years of age and all females between 15 and 60 years. According to the usual rates one man harvests in a day 1/9th of an acre and a woman 1/12ht.
The amount of work a gang is hired to do is fixed - neither more nor less is done. What each worker receives depends on the total output of the gang and all receive the same amount. The work is organized by the gang itself whose members hold themselves mutually responsible for reaching the day's target. For example, there was one man who worked in the morning but failed to turn up after midday. He claimed wages for half the day, but his work mates refused to give him anything at all since, by his absence, he had forced the others to work harder in order to get full wages. Usually a man will send his son or his brother in his place if he himself cannot come.

All working members of landless and of small cultivators' families are fully employed in TM and in one of the neighbouring villages during the cultivation seasons. During off seasons in this area the men migrate temporarily to other parts of the district which are labour deficit areas and where the cultivation seasons coincide with the off seasons in TM. Cultivators in TM also hire workers from neighbouring Paria hamlets. The biggest farmers scarcely keep more than one labourer on long term contract, the rest is hired from the stock of casual labourers.

Members of all castes, both men and women, except Brahmins and richer Sudra families, hire themselves out as agricultural labourers.

There are few differences as regards employment and conditions of work as between labourers belonging to different castes. Apart from water regulation, maintenance
of threshing floors, etc., which are the hereditary jobs of the Parias. Parias are engaged by Brahmin estate farmers and Sudra cultivators for the same tasks as members of other castes. However, a Sudra cultivator, for example, always tends to employ persons of his own caste first and Paria second. (The exception is made here that only Paria are contracted for longer terms). For large scale operations Paria workers are always employed together with Sudras and paid by the day as the others. Sudra women, I have noticed, are more reluctant to do agricultural work than Paria women. This is particularly the case with female members of richer Sudra families. Paria women, for example, sing while they plant the fields whereas Sudra women do not.

Women are employed only for transplanting, weeding and reaping of millet - all other jobs are done by men. Although Paria and Sudra men work together, one group by the side of the other, I have never observed women of these two different caste groups working together in the same field.

Age and agricultural Labour

In the INFANTRY caste, males are trained in ploughing at about 12 years of age when, according to custom, they have gone through the earboring ceremony. Before that age they usually look after cattle, cut grass for the animals and various other odd jobs. From about 17 - 20 years of age they are regarded as full labourers and given adult wages. Tending cattle after reaching that age is definitely looked down upon as inferior work, but considered appropriate again for dis-
abled and older people. Herding cattle is traditionally the occupation of all able-bodied HERDSMEN (Konars), but the wealthier members of this caste in TM have now given up the work.

Older men past working capacity, if not employers themselves, are given jobs as watchmen and are often hired to measure paddy.

Girls below 15 - 16 years of age are rarely seen doing work in the fields. Young girls look after cattle, in the same way as boys, and are otherwise occupied in the household.

Cultivation accounts

The only person in the village who to my knowledge maintained accounts of cultivation regularly was one of the village petty shopkeepers. This man was pointed out to me by his fellow villagers as one of the most interested farmers in the village. He cultivates a freehold of about one and a half acre of double crop land. Being for the most part busy with his little shop he seldom does any work himself on his land and relies almost exclusively on hired labourers. He has no bullocks of his own so he also hires Kalapais. His family includes his wife, a 12 year old daughter and a son seven years old. I have presented below an extract from his cultivation accounts.
Cost of cultivating first crop paddy

Spadework: cleaning channel, levelling and
digging of nursery, banking and
levelling planting field ............... 9 - 10
Ploughing nursery and sowing ................. 4 - 0
Ploughing planting field (12 ploughs) .......... 25 - 14
Puddling .................................. 8 - 8
Putting up thorn fences ...................... 9
Transplanting ............................. 14 - 6
Weeding .................................. 2 - 4
Seeds .................................... 30 - 0
Seedlings bought extra ...................... 4 - 0
Gathering foliage and growth ................. 0 - 12
Cattle manure, including hire of carts ........ 28 - 4
Sulphate manure ........................... 12 - 9

Total cost: Rs.140 - 12 as.

Cost of Cultivating II Crop Paddy

Preparing of nursery, ploughing and sowing .... 6 - 8
Banking and levelling planting field ............. 4 - 0
Ploughing planting field (12 ploughs) .......... 25 - 8
Plucking buds and weeding ..................... 9 - 8
Transplanting ............................. 18 - 0
Rat traps and poison ........................ 2 - 8
Seeds .................................... 22 - 0
Manure (husk of black and green grain, margosa
nut, sulphate) incl. transport, etc. ........... 64 - 0

Total cost: Rs.152
As the soil has been somewhat exhausted by the first crop, greater input is needed for the second crop: more intensive manuring and more weeding and thinning of buds. The second crop is furthermore transplanted in October during heavy rains and somewhat higher wages have to be paid. Harvest expenditure for each of the two harvest is as follows:—

Village servants (Vettian and Tallavari) 20 measures of paddy, and to priests of one of the Sudra temples 5 measures; for harvest labour 3 1/2 units of paddy. If converted into money at the average market rate total harvest expenditure amounts to about 75 1/2 Rs. The first crop gave a yield of about 70 units and the second crop 50 units. In the season the market price for double crop paddy was about 8½ Rs. per unit, which gives a total value of about 1020 Rs. Deducting cultivation expenses, 368 Rs. 4 as. and tax 33 Rs. the net receipt is 618 Rs. 12 as. or 412 ½ Rs. for an acre. The value of straw has, however, not been calculated. The ordinary tenant cultivator uses much less manure and gets accordingly less yield from the same type of land.

For single crop cultivation approximately the same rates apply as regards input of labour, seeds and manure as for the cultivation of the first of the double crops. The gross output per unit of single crop land can tentatively be estimated at about 381 Rs. per acre. The tax paid on this type of land is 9 Rs. per acre.
Marketing Facilities for Paddy

There are two rice mills in a nearby centre, and most of the paddy is sold to the agents of the mill owners. The shopkeepers in the village only deal in small quantities. The grain is bought from the threshing floor direct - measured and filled in bags containing two units of paddy. (On delivery to the mill owner the grain is weighed and accounted for in terms of a standard weight of 164 lbs. for the bag).

Bigger farmers are, of course, in a better bargaining position than smaller cultivators and tenants whose storing facilities are poor or, as is usually the case, are in instant need of cash for payment of rent at the stipulated time after harvest and for meeting various other obligations. (When the latter have to sell depends also on the difference calculated between interest on loans and the price of paddy in the market at any given time). In a particularly advantageous position are those who, by means of pump irrigation, are able to raise crops earlier and sell in a favourable market.

Dry Land Cultivation

During the year of my stay in TM plantains were cultivated in practically all the high level dry lands between the two rivers which flow past the village. Plantain cultivation is purely mens work, the main labour consisting of digging. When seedlings are raised some fields are watered by bucket lift irrigation with water from the river, and others, farther away from the river, are watered from
wells. To avoid water-logging during heavy rains, plantains are grown in beds about two feet high with a 2 ft. wide ditch between each. The beds are about 12 ft. wide with two rows of plants. Seedlings are planted at the rate of 900 per acre. The plant takes about five to six months to bear fruit. Each plant gives an off-shoot, and hence seedlings have to be bought only for the first cultivation. Every tenth year the plantain fields are left fallow. During the period in between, groundnuts and millets are cultivated.

From one of the cultivators I obtained the following accounts which illustrate the costs involved in this type of cultivation.

**Plantain Cultivation of One Unit of Land (1/3 of an acre).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of 300 seedlings over 10 years</td>
<td>Rs. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging 1st time, 10 coolies one day</td>
<td>&quot; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; 2nd &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; 3rd &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploughing once (2 ploughs)</td>
<td>&quot; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging pits, planting and watering</td>
<td>&quot; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loosening soil around plants, 5 coolies one day</td>
<td>&quot; 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Costs: Rs. 50

Manure of cattle dung and rubbish only is used, but the quantity applied was not specified.

The cultivator whose account is given here belongs to the INFANTRY caste and owns in addition to his dry land several units of wet land. He personally supervises the work
on his land which is done by hired labour. He does not himself engage in actual physical labour nor does any member of his family.

Tax on these dry lands is about 6 Rs. per acre. The produce, plantains and leaves, is sold on contract to agents in town for about 600 Rs. yearly per acre which gives a net output of 444 Rs. Most cultivators sell their plantains on contract. Some with smaller holdings sell quantities in headloads to part-time traders in the village. A bunch of plantains sold in the market for about 2 Rs. gives one Rupee to the cultivator and one to the trader. A petty trader rarely obtains more profit than the equivalent of one day's coolie wages on the head load of plantains he takes to market.

By comparison with the costs of wet land cultivation, the cost of raising plantains in dry land are higher but, under present market conditions, the profit is equal to if not higher than that of the wet lands. The hazards of heavy winds and rains are greater, however.

Cultivation Contracts and Rent

The particular problems arising out of the more recent changes in the relationship between rentier landlords and tenants are discussed in the following. Here I shall describe first the incidence of rent and the customary rates.

Leases of wet land run for a period of five years, dry land leases for longer. In most cases leases are renewed at the expiry of the term and the same cultivator may thus be attached to the same landlord's lands during a whole generation.
The rent is fixed in advance. Usually it is determined on basis of the capacity of the lands as it was known to be in previous times when, for certain periods, the landlords themselves personally supervised the cultivation. Alternatively, the capacity of a given type of land may have been ascertained from previous owners (father, for example) and from the present estate farmers. For paddy lands, the rent is stated in terms of measures of volume of grain per year - the tenant may pay in two installments as he wishes. Absentee landlords usually receive this rent commuted into cash at the prevailing market rates. Resident and nearby landlords still receive theirs in kind.

Since 1953 and until about the middle of 1957 the maximum legal rent was 60% of the assessed capacity - leaving 40% to the contract tenant. All cultivation costs are borne by the tenant. The tax is paid by the landlord or, if paid by the tenant on the landlord's behalf, deducted from the rent. As compared with the rent the tax, however, represents only a minor sum.

In 1957 the proportions of the respective gross shares of the landlord and the contract tenant were revised by state legislation, giving 40% to the landlord and 60% to the tenant. In TM, however, the new rent was not immediately made effective. In discussing the economic position of these classes, I shall therefore use the old rent as a basis for comparing incomes.

In former times, prior to increases in landlord absenteeism, a sharecropping arrangement prevailed under which
the owner of the land supplied seeds and manure to the tenant who did the actual cultivation work. In those days the produce was divided between landlord and tenant at the customary rate of 4/5ths to the former and 1/5th to the latter. The tenant's share, I was told, was considered the equivalent to the value of his labour. (It is, however, probable that the tenant in those days also enjoyed in addition some customary perquisites).

According to a survey I made at the beginning of 1957 the rent for double crop lands averages 45 units of paddy or the equivalent in money of about 382 Rs. at a market rate of 8 1/2 Rs. per unit. Deducted from the gross yield assessed at 66 units or 561 Rs. the tenant who alone must bear the cultivation costs is left with 179 Rs. Similar proportions obtain with regard to single crop lands. Examples of the subsistence of tenants under these conditions will be given later.

The rent of dry land leaseholds is fixed in money. An advance deposit is paid to the rentier at the commencement of the lease period for security against arrears. The average rent is about 90 Rs. per acre. This rent is clearly much more favourable to the tenant who, if he cultivates plantains successfully may obtain a gross yield worth about 600 Rs.

Plantain land leases are much sought after by contract tenants, and by former leaseholders who have now bought their paddy land. A minor portion of these dry lands has also been sold (in some cases as a result of foreclosures) by Brahmin landlords to wealthier non-Brahmin farmers.
in a neighbouring village who personally cultivate their lands. Two thirds of the TM plantain land is owned by Brahmins and let to Sudra cultivators who now own themselves about one third of these lands.

I do not know why the rent in respect of these lands is less than for paddy lands and why the rent has not been enhanced in view of the apparent profitableness of plantain cultivation. On questioning rentier landlords, they told me that they have never been interested in other crops than paddy. One might also guess that the rent is lower because the value of the produce was less during periods of food rationing and because the same crop cannot be cultivated continuously.

Arrears are allowed to accumulate until the lease expires when they have to be repaid together with a certain amount of interest. Many landlords, however, do not extort full rent from their tenants, particularly if the latter have cultivated the same landlord's lands for many years, enjoy a solid reputation in the village, and have behaved towards their landlords with appropriate deference. Brahmins lay great emphasis on being treated with the utmost respect and deference, and tenants who show respect are not pressed for arrears of rent.

Since most rentier landlords live so far away from the village it has not been possible to collect information on the extent to which arrears are being remitted. Remissions are probably granted more often by absentee than by resident landlords. In 1957, for example, five suits were filed
against tenants for recovery of arrears, all by resident landlords. In estimating income from land in the form of rent, I have, unfortunately, only been able to work on the basis of the average of rates publicly stated. I suspect that, in many cases, full rent has not been paid and that minor defaults in payment are not openly admitted by some landlords.

In former times, I was told by rentier landlords, when the Brahmins in the village were able to exercise their authority much more effectively, they could force tenants to compensate for arrears by extra labour.

Changes in the relationship between landlord and tenant

As I have indicated earlier, the relationship between landlord and tenant had in former times a more inclusive character than it has now. The tenant was more dependent upon his landlord. All tenants then rented their house sites from their Brahmin landlords. Besides tilling the lands for his landlord, the tenant had to perform many services for him for which he received no specific remuneration. Yet in distress the tenant could always rely upon his landlord's support. The landlord's authority over his tenant was much stronger then. He dealt with his tenant patriarchially and there were no restrictions imposed upon the landlord from outside. The relationship was probably more intimate and stable than it is now. In TM they say: "In those days we were like father and son". The relationship continued over a series of generations. Descendants of landlords engaged as their tenants
members of tenant households which had been under their fathers. When landlord co-parceners partitioned their estate, parts which formerly had been let as a single holding to one tenant household were leased as separate plots to sons of the household. Each landlord preferred a tenant of his own who was responsible to himself only. The Paria were excluded as tenants since they could not be admitted to the Brahmin quarters.

Now, the customary and more intimate relationship between lord and tenant has been replaced by a contractual relation and has become impersonal. Many landlords now do not know the names of and have never met their tenants. This change is perhaps best characterized by a passage taken from an article on "Medieval Society in Transition" in the Cambridge Economic History (1942:499): " - instead of the personal relationship between lords and their tenants, purely material connections were being set up. The bond became a business bond, a cash nexus".

The present system of lease contracts developed because of greater opportunities for outside employment, the desire of Brahmin landlords to live in towns and the transfer of land from them to business people and moneylenders in towns and other villages.

Under the former sharecropping arrangement, Waram, the customary shares were proportionate to the yield of each harvest as distinguished from Kuttaghai where rent is fixed in advance. One may assume therefore that in those days arrears and disputes over rent payments were less likely to arise. The Waram system is now retained by only one landlord in the village.
For the landlord the new arrangement had some immediate advantages. He was now divested of any responsibility for the cultivation and he received in rent nearly as much as before. His only obligation was to pay tax. Freed from the concern with the cultivation of his estate he could devote his time to other pursuits and travel wherever there was opportunity for employment and business. However, in the purely formal and specific relationship which developed, the attitude of the tenant also changed. He ceased to feel any attachment or personal allegiance to his landlord. Stimulated by outside political support and the protective attitude of the authorities he became ambitious and felt he was as much entitled to possession of the land as the landlord.

The subservience of tenants to their landlords is particularly symbolised by the custom of gift giving at harvest festivals. When the tenant offers his gift to the landlords, he prostrates before him and receives his blessing. This I saw done by only one tenant. All others have abandoned the practice. People say: "We have no affection for each other any more and the servant no longer respects his master". I shall now give some examples of how the rentier landlord is affected by the changes in the relationship to his tenant as regards his rights of disposing over his land, problems in collecting rent and changing tenants.

The landlord's title to his land is safeguarded in the lease contract and he still has the right to transfer the title to others. But in transferring the land to others the new owner cannot evict the old tenant either for the purpose
of letting the land to a new tenant or for cultivating the land himself. This naturally makes the rentier's assets less liquid. If he has to sell his land, he may in many cases find no one willing to buy it except his own tenant. Many persons now prefer to invest their money in houses and shops in towns rather than in agricultural land for lease on account of the difficulties encountered in many parts of this area in collecting rent. If the rentier has to sell his land to his tenant the latter may force the price down arguing, for example, that the price ought to be reduced in proportion to the amount of rent he has already paid.

One of the rentiers in TM offered a portion of his land to his tenant at a price of 4 Rs. per Kuzhi (144 sq ft). The tenant bargained for a price of 2.80 Rs. per Kuzhi arguing that he had already, while leasing this plot, paid a considerable amount in rent. The rentier then asked him, if he still did not want to accept his offer, to sign a document prepared by himself wherein was stated that he, as tenant, had no longer any interest in the land and that he would give up his leasehold. The tenant refused to agree to either of these alternatives. Finally, the rentier gave in and the tenant bought the plot at the price he had himself suggested.

It is difficult in many cases for the rentier landlord to enforce the contract and to secure payment or compensation for arrears. Many tenants have no property of their own which can be attached; litigation is expensive and the attitude of the courts is, for the time being, unfavourable to the rentier. During my stay, two of the three tenants who
were sued by their landlords for arrears were upheld by the court. The landlords then tried to obtain an eviction order from the court, but the court refused to issue one. The third tenant, however, was evicted; but he had refused to pay any rent at all. Besides action through courts, the landlord may, if he wishes to transfer the lease to another tenant, try to play one tenant against another. For instance, a landlord had a tenant and wanted to transfer the lease to one of the richer tenants. The richer man was eager to get the lease and tried by various means to instigate members of the caste to which both tenants belonged, to force the poorer tenant to give up his lease. But he failed to find enough support and the rentier was forced to renew the contract with the old tenant. This happened at a time when the association in the village of poor cultivators and landless people was developing and the richer cultivators were losing their influence.

CHAPTER V
Sources of Livelihood and Problems of Subsistence

The main differences in sources of livelihood between resident Brahmins and non-Brahmins may briefly be recapitulated as follows. The Brahmins' share of income from land consists mainly of rent. Among Sudras and Parias there are no landlord rentiers, though with expanding employment opportunities in towns a non-Brahmin rentier class may develop. Of non-Brahmins, the majority are landless agricultural labourers. Among Brahmins nobody is an agricultural labourer.
By comparison with the Brahmins, very few Sudras and no Parias earn salaries, and no one receives a pension. *Inams*, i.e. grants of land or of produce of village lands to persons in hereditary professions as compensation for their services, have been allotted in greater proportion to the Brahmins than to others. In the Sudra group there are still comparatively few owner-cultivators and their holdings again are considerably smaller than the biggest Brahmin estates. A great portion of the Sudra earnings comes from market gardening where Brahmins have shown no activity. No Brahmins rent land from others whereas among Sudras contract tenants represent one of the biggest classes. While there thus exists significant differences between and within the Sudra and Paria groups, these are less exclusive than the differences between Brahmins and non-Brahmins on the whole. Between Sudra and Paria, for example, there are important economic similarities.

**Income of Brahmin families**

Most of the 11 Brahmin rentier families in TM, receives besides rent smaller amounts in salaried income and pensions from previous employers. One of the retired men owns practically no land but receives a pension of about 1800 Rs. yearly. Of the three Brahmin priests, one, the *Gurukhall* or temple priest, possesses no land, but from the produce of the temple lands he is given an *Inam* of 90 units of paddy yearly worth about 756 Rs. The other two priests own lands. The *Purohit*, who officiates in ceremonies of the Sudra castes in TM and in some of the neighbouring
villages is paid for his services on a particular occasion partly in kind and partly in cash. It is not possible here to specify all his receipts on the various occasions. The practice now varies considerably. Some Sudra families perform the earboring ceremony in the big temple in one of the nearby centres. To mark the consummation of a marriage a ceremony is held in the seventh month of the woman's pregnancy; here again, some poorer Sudra families may not call the Purohit to officiate. He is invariably called upon to officiate in marriage ceremonies, and this is one of the main sources of his earnings. During the two yearly marriage seasons he may earn between 150 and 200 Rs. The rates for a marriage are as follows: deciding the auspicious dates and writing the marriage agreement - 2 Rs.; on erection of the ceremonial pole of the pandal - 1 R.; on the tying of the marriage thread - 5 Rs. For death anniversaries, funerals, etc. he is paid minor fees. In addition to income in rent from his private lands, he is also entitled to an Inam of about 27 units of paddy worth about 230 Rs. The Brahmin Pandit is entitled to an Inam of the same amount. In addition he receives rent from his own tenants. His income in the form of payments and gifts for specific religious services which he is supposed to perform for members of his caste, is now very much reduced since few Brahmins are left in this village. Occasionally he receives a few rupees from absentee Brahmins whom he has provided with sacred threads.

A few Brahmins also receive money from their sons employed in towns. This is customary practice. How-
ever, it has not been possible to ascertain the amounts received in this way. Indebtedness I shall discuss in the final evaluation of the economic positions of the respective groups; I should only like to state here that the TM Brahmins at present to a very small extent lend money to others. Income in the form of interest on loans is therefore negligible. The estimated total income of 12 of the 13 resident Brahmin households is summarized below. For one household the source of income is not stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Income in units of paddy</th>
<th>Income in Rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent from paddy lands</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent from plantain lands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment for specific religious services</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inams</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1012</strong></td>
<td><strong>6546</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The figures presented here should be regarded as only being tentative since it has not been possible to specify the amount of arrears and the extent to which they are being remitted).

Income in paddy converted into money at the average market rate of about $8 \frac{1}{2}$ Rs. per unit gives, when tax has been deducted together with the rest of the money income, an estimated total income of approximately 15110 Rs. Per household this income is distributed as follows: -
Annual income in rupees per household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>300</th>
<th>500</th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>3000</th>
<th>Total households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the minimum wage an agricultural labourer receives in a year—which is about 300 Rs. most Brahmin families in TM are not badly off. But they are now faced with a reduction of income in rent by one third, the political implications of which I shall presently discuss.

The Brahmin estate owners of the neighbouring village and the TM rentiers have both recently been active in organizing the landlords' association in opposition to the organization of the poor cultivators and landless labourers. Both of these two groups of landlords are adversely affected by the new land reforms. But the wealthy estate farmers and the petty rentiers, none of whom has retained any part of his lands for personal cultivation, are affected in diverse ways. The difference in their economic positions is also of significance for their mutual relations within the landlords' association.

The estate farmers whose lands constitute the biggest private estates in TM are for their part firstly confronted with the proposed legislation on ceilings on estates that may be retained for their own cultivation. They are secondly challenged by the local workers' demand for higher wages. The first difficulty they have already been able to overcome by registering parts of their estates in the names of their dependants. The second challenge, the workers'
claim for higher wages, they have not been able to dodge, which is mainly the reason for their organizing the landlords' association.

The rentier Brahmins on the other hand are faced with depreciation of their lands as an investment only in the form of rent reduction. As rentiers they are strictly not concerned by the local workers' action for increased wages. Yet at the instigation of the estate owners they formally consented to join the landlords' association, taking, however, much less active part in its activities.

In committing themselves by this step, some rentiers probably hoped to be able to exert pressure on their tenants to pay rent at the old rate. But many of them thought this an unlikely prospect and consequently took a somewhat diffident attitude towards the association which they perceived to be serving mainly the interests of the estate owners.

The relationship between landlords and tenants, though established on a contractual basis, also contains some informal arrangements. Between some there has always existed a certain amount of "private understanding". Instead of insisting on full payment of rent, the rentier in many cases allowed the tenant to compensate for outstanding payments by his own labour in doing odd jobs around the landlord's house and gardens and other services when required. Such arrangements continue to exist even today. In a local conflict, or pending settlement of the rent according to the new provisions, the petty rentier may be put to additional hardship if the
tenant decides to suspend payment of rent and to refuse to pay off debts by his own labour. In view of the precariousness of the situation and in the light of the experiences of landlords in other parts of the district where tenants have taken more drastic actions, some of the petty rentiers here are, therefore, in favour of a more cautious attitude which will not jeopardise the relationship with their tenants. Their richer associates, the Brahmin estate owners, who have better resources at their command to sustain a conflict, pursue a much more activist policy.

The only real misfortune which at this stage can befall the estate farmers is a rise in wages and this will not substantially detract from their profit. When the rentiers nevertheless have been persuaded to join the association of landlords the reason is partly prestige: the extraordinary great importance which Brahmins attach to relations of prestige based on wealth; the superiority of the richer estate owners over their poorer caste mates, and the obsequity of the latter.

Income of non-Brahmins

The majority of persons in this group are landless workers and cultivators with small leaseholds. I shall describe their position in terms of subsistence on the minimum wage for agricultural labour.

An adult worker's daily consumption of rice is roughly about one padi (one half measure) or 1½ pints. One full measure is equivalent to 3 pints. One unit of paddy
when milled gives 12 measures of rice. An adult's annual requirement of rice is about 7.5 units or 15 units of paddy, the cost of which is about 127 Rs. Two hot meals are usually taken a day. The remnants of the evening meal is kept overnight and eaten cold in the morning. Brahmins and richer Sudras take in the morning instead of this left-over meal a kind of rice pudding together with coffee or tea.

The curry normally consists of vegetables (nearly every man grows vegetables on his own in the little garden at the back of his house). Fish or meat curry is prepared among non-Brahmins about once or twice a week and then in small quantities only.

The Brahmins reckon their own consumption of rice to be about half that of an agricultural labourer's - Brahmins use raw rice only. Non-Brahmins use par-boiled paddy. During the dry season in 1957 the price for ½ measure of rice ranged from 0.40 to 0.50 Rs. In other words, about half of the daily pay of a worker goes to feed himself and the rest to feed his family. In the transplanting and harvest season the workers are better off than at other times. During transplanting a man's wife and grown up daughter will also be able to earn wages and for harvest work the men are paid six measures of paddy a day which is six times the amount of rice needed for one man's daily consumption. For many families, sale of milk is an important addition to the daily earnings. Most cultivators and landless labourers possess at least one milking cow. The average yield is about two pints of milk a day worth 0.50 Rs. Very little is kept for own consumption.
Most of the milk is sold to milk vendors and cafes in the nearby centres. The cow is mostly fed on grass, cut and collected from the irrigation channel banks by women and children. The rice water from the day's cooking is also fed to the cow. Women try to make money in various sorts of ways: by selling vegetables, roasted groundnuts and cakes of cowdung, rati. The earnings derived from this petty trading are variously used to buy oil, salt and other minor necessities. Eggs were previously sold to Muslim customers. At present, however, HERDSMEN only and INFANTRYMEN living in the HERDSMEN street keep poultry. By necessity the wants of these people are few and the demands on the whole are very modest. Clothing, for example, is generally bought once a year only. A man's garments consist of loin cloth and uppercloth, and cost about 2 - 3 Rs. A sari of the coarser variety costs about 5 Rs. and a blouse 3 Rs. but few women wear blouses under their saris.

The pay of pannayals, workers on long-term contracts, includes an annual presentation of one pair of loin and uppercloths. Women servants are given one sari.
To illustrate what income from land may represent in terms of subsistence under the prevailing tenancy conditions I give here the examples of a household which leases 0.42 acres of double crop land, one which leases 1.20 acres of double crop land, and one which besides a freehold of 4 acres of single crop land and 1.50 acres of plantain land has a leasehold of 4.60 acres of plantain land. The first household pays 19 units of paddy in annual rent. The yield this year was 23 units. Seed and wages amounted to about 3/4th of a unit. The household possesses no bullocks of its own and had to hire a plough team for one day. For transplantation two women were hired for one day. The household consists of three adult men, two adult women and two younger boys. Its annual requirement of paddy is about 90 units equivalent to 765 Rs. One of the boys were employed by me for 20 Rs. a month, another was employed by a Public Works contractor for 25 Rs. a month, and a third worked as cowherd for one of the estate Brahmins getting 17 Rs. a month. Together with the casual earnings made by the women and the old man they were able to make in all nearly 800 Rs. The leasehold of the second household yielded 73 units of paddy. 47 units was paid in rent. Wages for transplantation and harvesting, including customary payments to Paria watchmen and diggers came to 3 units and seed 2 units which leaves besides straw 21 units of paddy against the household's annual requirement for consumption of about 90 units. The household consists of seven members, three adult men, three adult women, and one young boy.
Families in this category which have to depend on casual employment to supplement their income, are as contract-tenants not only interested in rent reduction but have interests also in common with the landless labourers. An increase in the daily wage means higher cultivation costs for themselves. This, however, is compensated for by an increase in their earnings as casual labourers which for them is the major source of livelihood.

The third household consists of four members, two adult men and two adult women. Its annual requirement of paddy for consumption is about 60 units. The single crop paddy lands yielded 140 units equivalent to 1190 Rs. Sale of plantains brought 3300 Rs. Total income: 4490 Rs. Own consumption of paddy is equivalent to 510 Rs. Seeds and manures - 214 Rs. Wages to servants and labourers 1800 Rs. Rent on plantain land - 500 Rs. Tax - 40 Rs. Interest on loans - 360 Rs. Total expenditure: 3424 Rs. Net income when own consumption has been deducted: 1066 Rs.

In this category are the "magnates", who live in houses of brick with tiled roofs, and who are the leaders of the traditional caste assemblies, most of them both owning and leasing land.

Among HERDSMEN, only one person has salaried income only. Other HERDSMEN in salaried employment: a teacher, a sanitary inspector, and an assistant to the village headman have all of them either leaseholds or freeholds which they cultivate themselves. Of INFANTRYMEN, only three persons have salaried appointments: a clerk, an assistant to the
village headman, and an assistant to the village accountant, who all have landed income in addition to their salaries. Teachers and clerks get from 50 to 70 Rs. a month, and minor village assistants get 20 to 25 Rs. Among Paria, none has salaried income. The Sudra priest, the pujari, owns no land, but holds a minor inam besides the annual gift of paddy received at harvest. I have dealt with shopkeepers and village servants separately.

Marriage payments and other contingencies

Among Brahmins and some of the richer Sudras the marriage of daughters is expensive, demanding comparatively heavy outlays in cash, jewellery and on feasts. Marriage payments among less wealthy and poorer non-Brahmins are by no means extravagant. Even so, families with small incomes will normally have to find means by borrowing money and food. However, a non-Brahmin family - much more than a Brahmin one - can always depend on recovering its expenses in whole or in part by contributions from relatives and caste mates. Most families keep a notebook in which the name and village of the donors and the contribution received from each is entered. In most cases the gifts represent prestations which will be returned when there is an event in the donor's family. Since a man who gives a feast can always count on being able to reimburse himself on such occasions he is willingly granted credit by shopkeepers, gold merchants and dealers in paddy, often without interest and security. Such loans are usually
repaid as soon as the celebration is over. For the poorer non-Brahmin family ceremonial expenditure is thus a much less severe burden than, for example, buying a bullock or buying a house site.

The main interest here is to show how people on the margin of subsistence cope with expenditures that are far in excess of their normal income. These expenditures represent moreover unavoidable obligations - commitments to sons, daughters and siblings which have to be fulfilled.

I shall first give an illustration with examples from weddings of two INFANTRY contract-tenants which I was given the opportunity to watch very closely. To explain the various expenditures involved a brief sketch of local marriage customs is required. In both families the earnings of the members go into a common pool, and the new couples do not establish separate households but live with the others with whom they have to share their earnings again. The girl takes up residence in the house of her husband's family. The exogamous unit is the group of agnates, the Pangali, tracing common agnatic descent from the FF of living adults. Marriage of a man with his MBD is preferred. The frequencies of the relationship of bride to groom is shown in Table XII below.
## TABLE XII

RELATIONSHIP OF BRIDE TO GROOM, BY INTER- AND INTRA-VILLAGE MARRIAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of bride to groom</th>
<th>Intervillage</th>
<th>Intravillage</th>
<th>Total marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZD</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBD</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZD</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MZD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBDD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZDD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBSD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZSD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMBD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZSDD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMBSDD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZHBD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMZDD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB+WBD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZHFBBD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified distant relatives</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation: B - brother, D - daughter, F - father, H - husband, M - mother, S - son, W - wife, Z - sister, + - elder.
Among Sudras and Parias the wedding takes place in the boy's house. The Valaikapu, the event of a girl's first pregnancy, is also celebrated here - six or seven months after the wedding. For her first confinement the girl returns to the house of her own parents. For the outlays occasioned by both these events a minimum standard exists (in Tamil, Tewai Alavu), with which both the girl's and the boy's party have to reckon, and below which they cannot go. The Tamil word for marriage payments is Zir. Among non-Brahmins it covers both the dowry given to the girl by her family and the presents given to the girl by the boy's family. Zir also includes gifts from the mother's brother, called Mama Zir. For obligatory gifts from other affines other terms apply such as Natinal Kas, gold coins presented to the girl by the boy's sister, or sisters; and Mami Kas, gold coins presented by the boy's and the girl's mothers and mother's sister. The obligation to reciprocate these gifts falls on the boy's family, his father and brothers who have to present these relatives with dhotis and saris.

All the jewellery received in this way is displayed by the bride and bridegroom on the day of the wedding. Afterwards, most of it is usually pawned or sold in order to meet other contingencies. Each guest has to present to the host a small sum of money, usually from one to five rupees, called Moi Pannam. Moi Pannam must be reciprocated when the occasion arises with an equal or slightly larger amount, depending on the status of the donor.

The exchanges which take place during these events
are supervised by the Nathanmaikarars of the boy's village who are chiefs of the temple assembly to which the respective families belong.

The exchange of gifts and cost of the weddings performed by A and B are summarized below.

**A's Wedding**

**Expenses met by groom's relatives**

On betrothal, presented to the girl: saris (57 Rs.), jewellery (165 Rs.); to the girl's mother: saris (10 Rs.)

Clothes to the bridegroom (20 Rs.) and saris to his sisters (20 Rs.), and gold coins presented by the groom's mother (12 Rs.)

At the wedding, dhotis presented to the following relatives of the groom: his mother's elder brother, brother's wife's brothers, sisters' husbands and father's sister's husband (72 Rs.); dhotis to the following relatives of the bride: her brother, father, mother's brother, and sari to the bride's mother (76 Rs.).

Other outlays: cost of invitation cards (5 Rs.); to Brahmin purohit, Sudra pujari, barber, Dhobi and musicians (18 Rs.); food, 10 units (in 5 bags at 120 lbs. each) of rice plus goods from the shop (150 Rs.).

**Total expenses - 605 Rs.**
Expenses met by bride's relatives

Jewellery, brass candles, brass vessels (115 Rs.); gold ring to the bridegroom from the bride's brother (35 Rs.), Mami Kas, gold coins presented by the bride's mother (12 Rs.).

Total expenses - 162 Rs.

In addition, the girl's family has to give a minor feast in their village. On that occasion, however, they will receive Moi Pannam from the wedding guests. Furthermore, the bride's Valaikapu, to celebrate her first pregnancy, will cost them another 50 Rs.

The bride's other relatives, her mother's brothers, sisters and mother's sisters (in Tamil Kulendi) presented gold coins worth 60 Rs. to the couple. From the groom's other relatives the bride received the following gifts: From his mother's brother - gold ring, gold coin and Tali, the marriage thread, (50 Rs.); from the groom's sister's husband - and sister's husband's brother - gold ring and coin (82 Rs.); from the groom's brother's wife's brothers - gold coins (24 Rs.). In cash from the bride's affines (her MBW, MZH, ZH) was furthermore received 26 Rs. which went to the groom, and from the groom's affines 10 Rs. which went to the bride. Moi Pannam from 109 guests amounted to 200 Rs. In total the groom received from the girl's family, her affines and from his own relatives and other guests 614 Rs. which, against a direct outlay of 605 Rs., gives a balance of 9 Rs. To this balance may also be added the value of the jewellery (165 Rs.) which the groom's relatives bought and presented to the girl. The jewellery was subsequently
realised to pay off debts contracted for purchase of land. Family A has an annual income from land of about 255 Rs.

**B's Wedding**

For B's wedding I obtained a similar account which I have here presented in a summarised version. Family B has an annual income from land of about 18 Rs.

**Expenses of the groom's family:**

Jewellery to the bride and to the groom (120 Rs.); dhotis and saris in exchange for gold rings and gold coins (120 Rs.); to priests, village servants and for food, etc. 95 Rs.

**Total outlay 335 Rs.**

The value of the bride's dowry is 115 Rs. From relatives was received gold worth 145 Rs. and Moi Pannam from 50 guests totalled 116 Rs. In total, 376 Rs. was received, which gives a balance over direct outlays of 41 Rs. As regards contributions from relatives, when the proper person in the specific relationship is missing, the obligation devolves upon a more distant relative. In A's case, for example, the bride's mother's only brother was dead. The only living relative known by the same kinship term as "mother's brother" was the girl's mother's father's elder brother's son, who had to take upon himself the obligations of the MBR.

It can be seen from the examples given here that among non-Brahmins as among Brahmins, the cost of marrying daughters is higher than marrying sons. However, the bride's elder brother and parents are to some extent compensated, not only by gifts received at the betrothal and the wedding itself,
but also by Moi Pannam at the feast given in their own house after the wedding.

At Valaikapu, gifts are again received from relatives and friends. On this occasion, the minimum which is required of the wife's party is a pair of gold and silver bracelets which is presented to the wife by her brother. Other relatives, closer agnates and affines on both sides have to give silver bracelets - worth about 4 Rs. a pair.

For the feast this time most of the food is provided by the wife's party. It is prepared in the house of the wife's parents and brought from there to her husband's house. I left the village before the Valaikapus expected to follow the marriages described above were performed. But an illustration of the scale of exchange on this occasion may be given by information I obtained from three couples of the INFANTRY caste who had married earlier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family I</th>
<th>Family II</th>
<th>Family III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presented by the wife's party:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery worth rupees:</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented by the husband's party:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery worth rupees:</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boy's family spent on the feast rupees:</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moi Pannam, rupees:</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of guests:</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the amount of food contributed by the wife's parties no specification was available.
The annual income from land of these three households of which the couples are part were respectively 319 Rs. (family I), 77 Rs. (family II), and 1355 Rs. (family III). In each incidence the head of the household was the husband's father of the woman whose pregnancy was being celebrated.

With regard to wealthier and less wealthy families, the contributions made by the groom's and the bride's parties are approximately equal. But in functions celebrated by a wealthier household the scale of exchange seems to be greater. In the wedding which preceded the Valaikapu of household III, there were about 245 guests and 655 Rs. was received in Moi Pannam. The corresponding sums for A's and B's weddings were respectively 200 and 116 Rs. In both these weddings only members of the INFANTRY caste had been invited. Family III are comparatively prosperous cultivators and traders with connections in towns and other villages. To their functions many persons of other castes were also invited.

To what extent richer non-Brahmins give cash dowries I do not know, but I know one instance at least of a relatively prosperous Sudra cultivator in this village who gave 1200 Rs. in dowry to his daughter whom he married to a college graduate in Government employment. This sum he obtained by mortgaging a portion of his lands.

Class differences may also to some extent be reflected in the tendency on the part of richer persons to refuse to marry their daughters to poorer relations who by right of kinship are entitled to claim them in marriage.
Other family events, such as funerals and earboring ceremonies, represent relatively minor contingencies. On both these occasions the contribution of the woman's agnates and close cognates is substantial.

By comparison with the Sudras, the Brahmins make very high payments to sons-in-law. The prosperity of a Brahmin family is actually said to depend inversely on the number of his daughters. In common parlance the bridegroom is referred to in jocular terms as the "bribegroom". The greater part of the feast expenses is also borne by the bride's parents. Moreover, it is said that contributions from relatives are less than among non-Brahmins since most of the relatives of a Brahmin are spread over greater distances and their employment makes it difficult for them to attend the celebration.

Among relatives, the bride's sisters' husbands, if she has any, are expected to make substantial contributions, but these are not large as compared with the payment made by the father. The size of marriage payments as stated to me by Brahmins in TM averages about 3000 Rs. The amount is said to vary with the education of the groom.

In describing economic differences in this community I have tried to indicate in this chapter that these are also accentuated by differential display of wealth; on the part of the wealthier people in the form of larger marriage payments, more expensive houses, costlier bullocks and carts, better clothing, and a higher style of living and consumption in general. Moreover, there is a tendency on the part of the wealthier persons, or at least some of them, to dissociate
themselves from their poorer castemates in certain social and political activities.

The richest man in Palli INFANTRY street does not attend any of the ceremonies and affairs conducted by the temple assembly. Another wealthier person, an INFANTRY man who belongs to the same assembly also abstains from the meetings. Both persons have educated sons, and it was one of them who married his daughter to a college graduate. Two other prosperous INFANTRYMEN moved out from the INFANTRY street some years ago and settled near the HERDSMEN'S street where they have bought house-sites and put up expensive buildings. Neither of them takes part in any of the traditional temple assemblies.

Again, those among the wealthier class who take an active part in the traditional, social and religious affairs of their caste tend to dominate the others. But they do not contribute any more than others to collections and temple funds.

Their economic success must first of all be seen in relation to their ability to acquire their own land and to accumulate leaseholds, which accordingly has reduced the opportunities for others to get land. They were furthermore favoured by the recent tenancy reforms stipulating a reduction of the rent by one third while wages remained the same. That the rise of this class is a comparatively recent phenomenon is indicated, for example, by the fact that most of the Sudra free holders and leaseholders built their expensive houses in brick and with tiled roofs only about 12 - 15 years ago,
during and after the Second World War. These men are now referred to somewhat deprecatingly by the oldest Sudra land-owning family as the Pudu Vittu Karanghall, the New House Men.

Two circumstances in particular favoured their economic advancement, along with the increase of markets; these were (a) increased frequency of absentee landlordism, giving tenants an opportunity to commute the payment of paddy rent into cash at the nominal or average market rate, while storing the surplus for marketing when convenient; and (b) food rationing, with the consequent rise in the market value of paddy.

Some of these men also find it relatively easy to obtain extensive credit from paddy merchants and plantain agents for investing in more land. As I have mentioned earlier, Brahmin rentiers are now eager to sell away their lands. In a survey of indebtedness I made the biggest sums were found to have been borrowed by wealthier cultivators for the purpose of buying land. One of them recently borrowed nearly 4,000 rupees, with which he bought three acres of plantain land. With a profit from the sale of plantains of 1,300 Rs. per year and at a rate of interest of 12% he may expect to be able to repay the loan within a few years. Wealth got from subsidiary or miscellaneous sources also accrues in greater proportions to persons in this class. More paddy land means more fodder, larger herds, more manure, and greater milk sales. About thirteen of the bigger cultivators own carts and cart bullocks, an investment of 700 Rs. On occasions they hire carts out for 2 - 4 Rs. a day. In the dry season they trade in coconuts
which they buy in small quantities from people in TM and other villages; most homesteaders grow a few palms in their backyards. One cart-load of coconuts, split and dried, brings a profit of about 30 Rs.

Finally, with bigger earnings, sons may be educated and gain as well as salaried appointments, higher payments when they marry.

Shopkeeping

There are two shopkeepers in the village. Neither of them are rich. A shopkeeper's annual earnings can at the most be estimated at about 400 - 500 Rs. The likelihood of earning more by shopkeeping alone does not seem great. These shops trade in small goods only, such as matches, oil, betel, chewing tobacco, chillies, etc. for which the customers pay partly in paddy and partly in cash. The villagers of TM also patronize the shops in a centre one mile from the village. These are bigger and offer a greater variety of goods. One of the shopkeepers, formerly landless, has nevertheless been able to acquire land; seven years ago he bought one and a half acres of paddy land for 2,000 Rs. from which, it seems, he now gets as much income as from his shopkeeping.

Crafts and Services

I have no means of estimating the income derived from the services of the village barber, carpenter and washerman. The barber works at fifty houses in the Sudra streets, each twice a month, for which he receives a total annual pay-
ment in paddy of 25 units (212 Rs.). In addition, he serves
the Brahmins in TM and in one of the neighbouring villages,
for which he gets paid 0,12 Rs. in cash for each service.
The father of the present carpenter, who is no longer living,
was remunerated in kind by the village on a fixed basis. Now,
the carpenter is paid in cash per piece only, the fixed grain
payment having been terminated. The washerman who lives out-
side the village gets from 55 Sudra houses in TM a total of
14 units of paddy (119 Rs.) yearly. Their main earnings
derive from cash labour on which I have no information. Most
customers ended their customary arrangements with the village
servants during the war, when they found it cheaper to pay in
cash instead of in paddy. The only servants still being main-
tained solely on a traditional basis are the Paria diggers
and watchmen, employed in rotation, four every year, who each
receive about 50 units of paddy (400 Rs.) a year.

The barber and the carpenter formerly were given the
produce of a plot of paddy land nearly one acre in area which
a few years ago two of the richest landlords annexed for their
own benefit. A controversy within the village about this plot
of land will be described later.

Credit is for the most part obtained outside the
village. According to a survey I made, the total sum stated
to have been borrowed by TM villagers was 26,000 Rs. of which
22,000 Rs. had been obtained from outside.

The Brahmins in TM are comparatively poor; and the
richer Sudras who at present are bent upon buying as much
land as possible from the rentier landlords do not have much
capital to spare. Poorer workers tend to avoid borrowing in their own village from bigger landowners who, by advancing money, may extract cheap labour from them. Moreover, within the village most of one's agnates are living, from whom it is not considere proper to borrow money; borrowing from one's uterine kin and affines (in Tamil both of them are called Sammandi) is on the other hand not considered improper. Of 80 daughters of Sudra parents living at present in TM, 65 have married out to other villages and 15 only married inside the village. Most INFANTRY girls marry to a prosperous village 10 miles from TM.

Bailey (1957:87), in his study of an Oriya village, notes the same impropriety and disinclination to solicit help from one's agnatic kinsmen. This, he suggests, may stem from economic rivalry between brothers connected with partitioning of the father's estate. He states (1957:87), "It is as if partition sets the pattern for their (the brothers) future economic relationships. - - On the other hand, there is no land to make rivalry between a man and his mother's brother or a man and his wife's brother". Similarly the Tamil proverb characterizing the relationship between brothers says: "You may trust your worst enemy, but not your co-parceener, (Pangali)."

In the following table I have shown the frequency of borrowing by TM residents by caste of borrower and lender, and by residence of lender in TM or elsewhere. All the loans were still outstanding at the time of my enquiery.
From the table presented here I have excluded Brahmins and Parias as borrowers. Nearly all Parias are in debt to their employers for smaller sums of about 30 - 40 Rs. which they have undertaken to repay by their own labour. None of the Brahmins in TM stated that they were in debt at the present time.

A number of INFANTRYMEN who stated they had borrowed within the village got most of the loans from the funds of

**TABLE XIII**

INSTANCES OF BORROWING BY CASTE AND RESIDENCE OF LENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lender</th>
<th>Borrower</th>
<th>HERDSMEN</th>
<th>INFANTRY</th>
<th>Palli INFANTRY</th>
<th>Total Inside</th>
<th>Total Outside</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HERDSMEN in TM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HERDSMEN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFANTRY in TM</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other INFANTRY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palli INFANTRY in TM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Palli INFANTRY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paria in TM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Paria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin in TM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Brahmin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Castes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None resident in TM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the two temple assemblies in their street which are auctioned once every month. Nearly all INFANTRYMEN who have borrowed within their own caste from members living outside the village borrowed from their affines and uterine kin. Table XIV shows the incidence of borrowing by size of landholding.

### TABLE XIV

**HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT OF DECLARED DEBT AND SIZE OF LANDHOLDING (WET AND DRY)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Holding No</th>
<th>Total and above</th>
<th>Freehold Debt</th>
<th>Leasehold</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freehold</td>
<td>Leasehold</td>
<td>No Debt</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-99</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1,49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2,49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4,99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-7,99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10,99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-13,99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-15,99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Households   | 57 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 118 |

The biggest sums have been borrowed by wealthier Sudras from Brahmins and from non-Brahmin money-lending castes outside the village by mortgage of land. From banks mostly
smaller sums have been borrowed by pledging jewellery. Most of the biggest debts have been contracted for the purpose of buying land, bullocks and building houses. A few have run into debt on account of lease rents and litigation. The smallest sums have been borrowed by small landholders and landless persons for domestic expenses.

---------

In the economic structure which has been described here the castes no longer carry out their eponymous occupations. The TODDYTAPPER, for example, owing to Government prohibition is barred from following his occupation. Among HERDSMEN only a few occasionally deal in cattle or tend cattle and those who are not salaried professionals occupied outside the village are cultivators. The title Padayachi or INFANTRY may probably refer to the origin of the caste but does not denote the occupation of its members which again is not the same for all. Now the only strictly eponymous castes are the village servants. The diversification of the economy has resulted in better conditions for some and the "masters" have changed but the economic arrangements and the marked inequality in the distribution of landed property remain much as before. The main classes - rentiers, renters of land, freeholders who have retained their estates for own cultivation, agricultural employers and employees - are only partly divided along caste lines. Class divisions represent aspects of relationships between castes. At the same time inter-class relationships represent problems that must be viewed against the organization of economic and political activities as a whole. These problems range from settlement of wages, payment of rent and
security of tenure to the question of equity of privileges and claims against privileges in general. In the next chapter I shall briefly discuss the significance of the differences in control of productive resources for the caste order as a whole. The economic differences continue to be associated with ritual or formal rank but do not validate the legitimacy of these distinctions. Instead these differences constitute new sources of provocation and the targets against which the resentment and opposition on part of the poorer sections is directed. In this situation it is class affiliation and not caste membership primarily on which inducement to group action is based.

CHAPTER VI

Caste, the ritual order and inter-caste services

The basic features of caste that still persist in TM will be described subsequently. Our main purpose is to show that although groups are still demarcated on the traditional basis of caste, one can no longer predict from a description of caste relations what will happen in the economic and political field.

Several instances may be cited to indicate that the ritual order is not so strong as it is thought to have been formerly and that modern developments have diminished much of the importance of the traditional caste distinctions. However, during this period of increasing challenge to an order dominated by high castes, the basic characteristics of caste remain nevertheless unchanged: segregation,
endogamy, untouchability, and restricted commensality are still there. It is an order in which the underprivileged sections no longer acquiesce. Various factors, the chief being the intrusion of new political ideas, have made them realise the value of combined efforts for mutual benefit. The less privileged groups, in order to better their position, and the privileged groups, to protect their own interests, associate at different levels, one caste with another, sections of one caste with members of different castes. They are able to do so without being restrained by ritual considerations. Untouchability, for example, is no barrier preventing "clean" castes from joining with Paria in common efforts to improve living conditions. Members of different castes may associate to co-operate for specific purposes without in the first instance having to remove barriers such as commensality and endogamy. Again, high caste power is being undermined by deterioration of their economic position, by diminishing external political support and by the organized challenge from poorer sections in the village, but these changes do not reverse the ritual order. Sudras, for example, who try to boycott Brahmin landlords, still call the Brahmin priest to officiate in their ceremonies.

When groups, in order to further their interests, form alliances, recruitment is primarily along class lines. But, as will be seen from the analysis presented in the last chapter, within an association composed of castes and sections of castes similarly situated with regard to their economic interests, the relatively higher caste maintains
its dominance over the lower caste. By dominance I simply mean influence over procedures by which decisions are made: arrangement of meetings, initiations and planning of actions, leadership and distribution of offices. In this we see caste still operating as an organizing principle though it works now in conjunction with other principles of affiliation. Within a caste traditional leadership may be challenged. It is, therefore, necessary still to take the traditional status system into account when describing the present struggle for power.

By definition a caste is endogamous and has commensal relations with and duties to only specified others. These are general rules pertinent to any sociological description of caste and in reference to which the position of every group within the conventional framework of caste can be stated. In TM there are three major divisions of rank according to the classical varna-system Brahmin, Sudra, and outside the Varna system, Paria. All sections of the population rate the Brahmins highest in this ritual hierarchy because they are traditionally attributed with greater virtue, have more restrictive rules with regard to pollution than the others and are accorded greater respect, and in addition they are officially recognised as the highest caste. The middle rank is constituted by the Sudras comprising the groups of INFANTRY, Palli INFANTRY, HERDSMEN. The other Sudra Jahtis: BARBER, WASHERMAN and CARPENTER, since they are village servants, are regarded as ranking below INFANTRY and HERDSMEN. The Paria, or the untouchables, come at the bottom.
In certain contexts, e.g. commensality, intercaste services, this hierarchical aspect is clearly manifested. Caste members avoid those below them and accept cooked food only from those above them. It is, moreover, reflected in the type of duties an inferior caste performs for a higher caste.

The position of Sudras in this hierarchy is fixed in relation to Brahmins and Parias, but status within the intermediate range of Sudras is indeterminate. The various Sudra groups cannot be ranked in a unilinear order that is universally accepted. This indeterminacy gives room for varying evaluations. Between INFANTRY, Palli INFANTRY and HERDSMEN a certain kind of surreptitious rivalry has been going on. The INFANTRY groups and the HERDSMEN do not accept cooked food from each other and, in formal terms, no one is willing to accede to the other a superior standing. Tendencies to formalism may suggest an underlying scale of status evaluation. Palli INFANTRY use INFANTRY as their only surname but by the other INFANTRY group, which is in the majority, they are referred to, but not openly addressed, as Palli, suggesting a lower social origin of the latter. However, the groups interdine and hold temple assemblies together, but do not intermarry. HERDSMEN, especially wealthier HERDSMEN and HERDSMEN in salaried jobs, no longer write themselves Konar, but use Pillai as their surname, thus simulating the name used by a non-Brahmin high caste, the Vellalas. By Brahmins and by other castes they are, however, still referred to, and addressed, as Konars.
In Pre-Independent India caste names were returned in the censuses which sometimes gave occasions to disputes about caste names. Now caste is no longer officially recognized and in the census religion and occupation only are recorded.

For reasons which will be stated below I shall not attempt to make any formal comparison between the positions of these intermediate groups in terms of a general hierarchical order. In passing it should be mentioned, however, that when such formal attempts have been made by workers in this field, the description of group relations has tended to give somewhat excessive weight to contexts where behaviour and prestige are determined by ritual-formalistic criteria. The method applied, for example, by Mayer (1956) in his study of a Malwa village consists in ranking the positions of the various groups in terms of a unilinear order by correlating criteria such as precedence in certain commensal arrangements, "clean" or "unclean" occupations and levels of wealth and education. The association of these criteria with what is taken to be the statuses of the groups with regard to original varna distinctions is then summarized in the form of a "consolidated hierarchy". The main objection to this approach is the impression it gives of an abstract system of status evaluation determining social interaction whereas it can be shown simply to depend, in the situation Mayer describes, on the dominance of a noble group (the Rajputs) based on economic advantage and inherited influence. Inherent in such an approach is also the general kind of
fallacy implied for instance in a question stated by Davies (1952:144): "How likely is it that ranking studies have forced people into differentiating when they have lacked real incentive?" Another difficulty consists in lack of a general consensus about relative rank. The following examples from the Malwa study may illustrate this:
- "In some cases there are contradictions in the data: one caste may say another caste eats from its hands, the second caste denying this." (P.121, ibid.)
- " - A Mina said he did not know if he could eat from a Gari, the question had never arisen". (P.126, ibid.)
- "Such Government employees as village accountants (patwari) would come on a level below this (below school masters in the ancient tradition), equal to traders perhaps. They tem-s lves may take a more exalted view of their status, but farmers resent this, having a somewhat equivocal attitude in which they maintain that tender hands do not mean a higher position - - ". (P.129, ibid.)

When actual ranking takes place it is only in occasional instances, in feasts, for example, when Rajputs take precedence. As far as internal views about relative rank are concerned, it should be borne in mind that there are informants within the same category who variously diminish and exaggerate the social distances between groups.

It is evident from the discussion above that there are great difficulties involved in representing status relations in this situation in the form of a "consolidated hierarchy". Castes may have different statuses in different
fields of activity. Varna status is fixed, but status of jati within varna is indeterminate.

In TM, for instance, the assumption on the part of a given caste of a high caste name symbolizes their aspirations, but from this cannot be inferred that an hierarchical order exists in the middle range or that all castes do place themselves according to notions of relative rank. Except as regards Brahmin, Paria and the village servants, there is no ritual subordination of any of these groups to another; and there are no intercommensal arrangements that might serve to symbolize relative rank. I shall, therefore, leave the hierarchical aspect undefined and, apart from the general persisting features of caste, I shall treat social relations in this situation in terms of more "on the ground" proximate and general criteria of group properties, and stresses and pressures to which the respective groups are variously exposed.

In TM the low caste struggle for emancipation is not phrased in terms of ritual actions. It is not inferiority of ritual position which alone causes significant numbers to revert the hierarchical order in certain areas of action. Under increasing economic and political pressures the less privileged groups actively oppose the traditional caste order and revolt against high caste authority. The economic and political considerations which the respective groups follow in this struggle may collide with the established principles of caste. These principles, however, still determine the tactics being used. The higher caste depends, for
example, for the support of its ritual position on the services of the subordinate castes. One of the obvious means which the low castes may use to force the higher into granting concessions is to threaten it with boycott of these very essential ritual services. Moreover, as we have already mentioned, high caste membership may serve as bases for authority within the new association. Why differences in wealth and privileges were tolerated in the past or how they were contained in the traditional order can be discussed here only tentatively. The elements of beliefs and obligations which characterised the traditional system of intercaste relations were centered round the divine position of the Brahmin and the privileges enjoyed by him were justified by the moral order itself. The legitimacy of this position was moreover supported by the external political authority.

When the privileged caste is deprived of external official support and attempts are made to alienate their lands, the result is conflict which with the intrusion of alien radical ideas may end in the breakdown of Brahmin ritual domination.

To protect their interests against this challenge Brahmin landlords ally themselves with wealthier members of lower castes. This is clearly a compromise which they are forced to make.

In this case the following reasons may obtain:
a) the new association is strengthened by increasing the number of members;
b) by establishing membership on a broader less exclusive
base the Brahmins whose interests are most vitally at stake may by allying themselves with wealthier low caste persons attempt to influence the rebellious low caste sections through their low caste allies. The supposition being that the latter may still have some influence in their respective castes;

c) by a broader base create the impression, important in this era of anti-Brahminism, that the association represents the interests of various castes, and not sponsored merely for the exclusive interests of the privileged Brahmin caste.

Furthermore, the association of poorer Sudras with the Paria caste in what is named "The union (sangam) for Poor Agriculturists" can also be characterized as a compromise by the Sudra who still to a large extent regard the Paria as ritually inferior. The Parias are still "untouchable". In this association the Sudras are clearly the leaders, but on the level of rank and file the Parias are for the specific purposes of the association treated as more or less equal members. In propaganda and in the arbitration courts the Sudra leaders may represent the association as part of the struggle for Harijan uplift in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhiji.
Characteristics of outward appearance

The Brahmins may generally in outward appearance be distinguished from the other more darker groups of Sudras and Paria by a relatively fair colour of the skin. The forehead is usually shaved leaving a tuft of hair at the back. The men always wear the sacred thread and as they in TM are Shaiwaites they also smear across their brows white ashes, the mark of that religious sect.

The CARPENTERS are also a "thread wearing" caste, but their only member in this village has given up the custom. The very orthodox Brahmins, who are few nowadays, tie and fold their garments in an elaborate manner and wear wooden or rubber sandals only. The less orthodox Brahmins can be identified by cropped haircut, moustache, leather shoes and garments tied in a more casual manner. In speech, the Brahmins frequently use sanscritized words that are generally unknown among other castes. In contradistinction to other castes they also practise the famous Tamil - "rzha" which in textbooks on the language is defined as a postlingual sound: "In pronouncing this sound, the tip of the tongue is raised, and curled far back towards the soft palate, letting the air pass through the mouth". The non-Brahmin uses instead the simpler "thick l". All castes have one mark in common, the earrings worn after the earboring ceremony.
Avoidance and Commensal Relations

It is not necessary for our purposes here to detail the total universe of objects and actions that constitute the recognized sources of pollution. Suffice it to mention that the keeping of a certain diet and avoidance of certain classes of social contact are only a few of the means by which ritual status is safeguarded.

The only vegetarian caste in the village is the Brahmin. Lower castes who normally eat goats meat, poultry, eggs and fish, do observe certain alimentary restrictions as part of the general ritual observances followed during specified periods of the Tamil year, and family ceremonies, when they abstain from meat, fish and liquor, as well as from sexual intercourse and the taking of oilbaths. All such observances apply with more rigour in the Brahmin caste. Only the Paria who dispose of carrion, eat the meat of other animals and even they do not slaughter cattle. The diet of the other non-vegetarian castes consists of meat, usually bought from a nearby Muslim abattoir, birds, eggs and fish. In practice, however, most families cannot afford anything but rice and milk products for the greater part of the week. All castes to the extent they can afford it take coffee, tea and chew betels and tobacco.

Relative to these dietary differences a corresponding exclusiveness is observed in the field of social contacts. All higher castes avoid the Paria hamlet. The Paria themselves are barred from the Brahmin street. On one occasion
only did I see a Paria who happened to be a tenant of a Brahmin enter the Brahmin's backyard to unload some produce. Usually, the Paria deliver their goods at the edge of the street from where it is carried farther by the Sudras. The Sudra streets, on the other hand, may be freely entered by Parias. The Sudras are freely allowed to pass through the Brahmin street but should walk barefoot and without umbrellas. Many Sudras while on visit to the Brahmin street used my hut in the middle of the village as cloakroom for depositing articles that might be offensive to the Brahmins.

The Parias are prohibited from drawing water from wells belonging to other castes and from bathing and washing places used by others. However, since streets have their own wells, the question of ritual contamination never arises. The INFANTRY street has no well, but some members of the INFANTRY caste are allowed to draw water from the wells of their Brahmin landlords. Others mostly take water from the river.

Among castes in the middle rank interdining takes place only between INFANTRY and Palli INFANTRY. But these two groups do not intermarry. These two castes do not dine with any other castes, and they again have no commensal relations with any others. The Vaddama and Ashta Sahasra Brahmins do not intermarry but may take food from each other. A Brahmin will not take food from Sudra but the latter do at times employ Brahmin cooks for their marriage feasts. Brahmin beggars beg rice from the Brahmin houses only. From others they accept money.
As noticed in the previous section there are no formal commensal arrangements between the castes whereby they may be seated in order of precedence during feasts. Consequently, disputes about a commensal ranking order do not take place.

Occasionally relations of intimacy may develop between, for example, a Brahmin and a Sudra. I have seen one pair of friends, a Brahmin and an INFANTRYMAN exchanging betels and gossip together. The Sudra will never be seated on the portico of the Brahmin's house, but usually squat on the ground. The Sudra will formally invite the Brahmin to his family ceremonies but nobody expects the Brahmin to be present and he sends his gifts by a third man.

There are no explicit rules based on the concept of pollution with regard to borrowing and lending of money. But there are certain definite notions of seemliness and dignity. A Brahmin informant told me that Brahmins, for example, could never borrow money from a lower caste since it might lower his status. The lender when of a lower caste might also find it difficult to claim repayment from a high caste debtor and at the same time behave towards him with the appropriate deference. Only once did I come across a Sudra who had borrowed money from a Paria. The relationship was admitted with obvious feelings of shame. In common parlance amongst Sudra borrowing money from the Paria was regarded as a last resource.
Inter-caste services

The hierarchical aspect of a caste's position within the ritual order is probably seen most plainly in the system of duties and services in which one caste performs inferior tasks for the caste above it or superior tasks for the caste below. The rendering of such services are general duties enjoined on a caste in accordance with its ritual status as a whole, but the caste members do not necessarily earn their living that way. This type of service points explicitly to the ritual subordination of one caste to another. Services of this type are paid for, but are never reciprocated. Many duties which represent the obligation of a lower caste to the higher are performed in situations of pollution where the higher caste is subject to stricter rules than the lower.

For example, when a Brahmin dies it is the duty of a Sudra to carry the body to the cremation ground. A Sudra in turn is carried by a Paria. Paria always cremate the bodies and keep watch over the remaining bones during the night. It is the barber's duty to officiate at upper caste funerals by administering a rice and rice-water ceremony. The washerman's duty is to collect and dispose of clothes defiled by menstruation, childbirth, or death. Confinement is regarded as a strictly polluting condition among Brahmins only. The woman is secluded from the rest of the house and is fed and attended to by a Sudra woman. The barber's wife is traditionally the midwife, but many Brahmins and richer Sudras have their births in hospital.
Sudra women are also employed for sweeping and cleaning in Brahmin houses.

There are three priests in the Brahmin caste, one in the Sudra caste and none among the Paria. The first priest of the Brahmins is the Pandit or Brahmin guru who officiates in Brahmin ceremonies only. He is supposed to be the spiritual teacher of the Brahmins and is not concerned with temple services.

Second is the temple priest or gurukhall who performs the daily prayers and offerings in the Shaivaite temples located near the Brahmin street. Third is the priest who officiates in Sudra ceremonies only and also serves as the local astrologer. The Sudra have a priest of their own caste called the aynar pujari who serves the temples of the lesser deities in the Sudra street but never presides at the marriage and funeral ceremonies of his caste. The Paria partly officiate themselves, partly have their ceremonies presided over by a valluva, an endogamous priestly class of the Paria division, a member of which lives in a neighbouring Paria hamlet.

A similar arrangement obtains with regard to the services of the barber, the carpenter and the village washerman. All are prohibited from serving the Paria and the Brahmin comes before Sudra.

These village servants are no longer paid exclusively in kind but as long as they reside in the village and make use of the portion of village common lands set aside
for them they are regarded as village servants and as ranking below the status of other castes above Paria. The Paria in addition to serving as village menials and field watchmen are also the drummers of the village employed by the Sudra in their processions and meetings.

The formal hierarchy is moreover reflected in the way in which castes address each other. The Brahmin is always addressed most deferentially either by the English Sir or the Tamil equivalent aya. "The Brahmin in turn will usually omit such vocatives when addressing a member of other castes and simply say "you there", beckoning him in the commanding mode of ya = come; vada instead of the polite vanggo.

An educated person of low caste will, however, be treated somewhat more respectfully. Within caste and between castes of the same rank the term for mother's brother is used opposite seniors who address younger persons by the term for son-in-law. Village servants are addressed by their personal names or by their respective caste names.

The doctrines which form the basis of this ritual order, i.e. Dharma and Karma are still being verbalized by the villagers - by some with conviction and by others who no longer adhere strictly to these doctrines they are used merely in explaining the origin and persistency of the caste system. I shall briefly relate the popular version here. According to the ideology of caste as it is expressed in terms of Dharma the Brahmin is the pivot of the system. To him all good gifts should go and from him all good blessings
come. The duty of the Brahmin is to practice Karma and thereby be fit to give blessings. The highest duty of the non-Brahmin then is to provide sufficient for the Brahmin to keep him free of all material care and thus become entitled to his blessings. He must also beware not to incur the wrath of God by insulting or injuring the Brahmin for the Brahmin's curse is the deadliest of all curses. These dogmas also "explain" that one is endowed with different talents depending on into which caste one is born and that the allocation by caste of different duties and stations in life is rational and natural.

The atrophy of these beliefs is now becoming apparent. A certain amount of "atheism" has so to speak crept into the system. Until the advent of radical political movements the disbelievers, however, were only marginal men. One of them, a Brahmin who has travelled much and met officers and educated persons also of the Paria caste has reached, for example, the conclusion that "the caste system must be wrong" since even Paria may achieve distinctions. Besides the carpenter who, as mentioned earlier, had ceased to wear the thread and to perform the ceremonies of his caste there is also one "apostate" among the HERDS-MEN. This man is employed as Middle School teacher. He is sophisticated and considers himself not bound any longer by the customs of his caste. This year he refused to call the Brahmin priest for the ceremony of the anniversary of his father's death until prevailed upon by his relatives to
call the priest. These are merely isolated instances, however, and need not concern us further. I witnessed anti-Brahmin demonstrations in the village on one occasion only. The demonstrators wearing the black shirt uniform of the Dravida Kazhagham, an anti-Brahmin movement, paraded the village shouting anti-Brahmin slogans. The Brahmins themselves and the other villagers also remained passive and the episode was followed by no further incidents. The demonstrators were persons from outside. This movement has no organized following in the village nor has any attempt yet been made to organize factions here. As will be described later, the communists, however, were very successful in organizing a following among the low castes in the village.

It is evident from the examples given here, and from the accounts given by Gough, that the Brahmins can no longer rely for the support of their position on the allegiance to their religious doctrines by the other castes. That they also have been losing the economic control over the subordinate castes has made their position all the more precarious. The weakening of their influence is further indicated by the fact that other castes no longer refer their disputes to the Brahmins. They manage their own funds and arrange the village festivals independently.

In TM today the Sudra castes occupy a relatively independent position due to their economic advancement and the movement of Brahmins away from the village. One may
assume that they have adopted their customs to the Brahmin model in the past, but now the possibilities of further approximating the Brahmanical code of conduct seem partly to have been exhausted and partly to have lost attraction.

The non-Brahmin castes have, for example, given up animal sacrifice since the last ten years but this is due mainly to government prohibition and not to their own fiat.

During my stay INFANTRYMEN decided to abolish poultry keeping in their streets. This decision was later imitated by the Paria. Normally this is regarded as one of the means by which lower castes seek to attain a ritually higher position. In the present instance, however, what prompted the decision was the desire to improve the state of cleanliness in the street and the fact that birds picking grain laid out for drying in the street often occasioned quarrels between neighbours. The eating of eggs and poultry was not abandoned but food of this kind could now be obtained only from outside.

CHAPTER VII
Temple assemblies and village councils

Among non-Brahmins jural and moral affairs are dealt with by the temple assemblies which have the custody of the temples in the non-Brahmin streets and are the centers of the social and ceremonial life of these castes. I shall give below an account of the organization of these assemblies among the INFANTRYMEN, politically the most important caste in TM. The leaders of the assemblies in this caste also
exert their authority over members of lower caste. They have dealt with disputes among the Parias, and a few years ago they expelled from the village a barber who had been sexually intimate with a woman of the INFANTRY caste. In this section the reasons why the Brahmins have no temple assemblies will also be discussed.

At both ends of the INFANTRY street there is a temple. One end of the INFANTRY street joins the Palli INFANTRY street. Associated with each temple is an assembly. One comprises all married men living in the one half of the INFANTRY street, and the other, the INFANTRYMEN living in the second half of the street including all married men of the Palli INFANTRY caste. The assemblies have separate leadership and hold meetings separately but join in the major festival processions.

The assemblies work according to the same rules and deal with similar matters. So, for practical purposes they may be described as one. Each assembly is headed by a group of wealthier, senior persons about five to six in number. All of them occupy the most expensive looking houses in the streets. The local title is Nathanmaikarar: one who wields power. A leader may also be referred to as Machevithukarar: one who occupies a "fine house". Meetings are held outside the temples every new moon night and during calendar festivals. Attendance is obligatory, but a member may send an elder son or brother as deputy.
The Nathanmaikarar is held in high esteem by all castes including the Brahmins. His chief function may be described as guarding the custom, or as the villagers say, looking after good and evil on behalf of his caste. His authority extends over all the most important activities in the social life of the caste. He presides at marriages and ear-boring functions where he supervises the exchange of gifts between relatives. As a token of honour he is always served first at such functions. He arranges funerals and the distribution of payment to village servants. He also acts as guardian for orphans and widows. Disputes between relatives and neighbours are referred to him for conciliation. The Brahmins also to some extent rely on his authority for disciplining smaller tenants and servants and in negotiating cultivation contracts and the sale of land to tenants in the village. The Nathanmaikarars themselves hold considerable portions of land let to them by Brahmins.

A Nathanmaikarar does not hold his position for any fixed term and there are no periodic elections. These leaders are all nearly equal in wealth, have at least had a few years schooling and may thus regard each other as co-equals. In the village they are the 'big men'. But there are two obvious limitations to their power. One is the need for the assent of the rank and file of the assembly. The other is the degree of unanimity between the Nathanmaikarars themselves. The latter is particularly important.
Some time past village festivals were not held on account of disagreement between these leaders.

The affairs and activities managed by the Nathanmaikarar are as follow:

1. He conducts and presides in meetings and ceremonies;
2. Collects funds for expenditure on village festivals and temple repairs;
3. Organizes auctions of loans from the caste funds;
4. Auctions fishing rights in the village tank;
5. Negotiates, adjudicates disputes, levies fines and acts as a small banker, etc.

Each member or household pays a monthly contribution to the temple fund, the amount being equal to about a quarter of a day's wages. The two shopkeepers in the village pay more. Greater amounts are contributed on special occasions like harvest festivals, etc. Loans are auctioned for a certain interest which is added to the fund. Fishing rights are sold on the condition that the buyer undertakes to join in a collective catch. On the occasion of the catch the Nathanmaikarars are presented with the largest fish.

All the proceeds including the amounts collected from fines will be devoted to the temple funds. For the construction of public amenities there are separate collections. In the meetings which are held outside the temple there is strict observance of order. The leaders sit apart in a group in front of the temple with the others in two rows facing each other. Since the assembly is seated on
sacred ground nobody is allowed to smoke or use indecent language. When an especially important case is being discussed no one is allowed to leave the session, one may do so only by pledging something for one's promise to return. There are also standard procedures for swearing in of witnesses.

The following are examples of subjects discussed in some of these meetings:

Fixing of dates for the ceremonial ploughing and the arrangement of a village festival; construction of a village well and repair of the village tank; planning construction of a Panchayat Hall. Agreement was readily obtained on most issues but not on the question of building a Panchayat Hall where the contributions to be levied on each would be higher than many members thought they could afford.

I have been present at meetings when more controversial questions were brought up and the debate was more heated. When, for example, the proposal to abolish poultry keeping was made the prospect of reaching agreement seemed small. On this occasion the leader would not attempt to impose his will against an expressed majority, but would seek to avoid this particular issue in the beginning and instead open his speech with statements on the value of unity in general. Having exhorted at length the advantages of concord and united action he finally came around to dealing with the poultry question but did not press for an immediate decision.
He encourages discussion in the meetings, and, tackling each in turn, urges everyone to voice his opinion. Discussion of a particular issue may be continued over several sessions. Free and open discussions of the affairs of the caste in which all adult males participate is not thought inconsistent with general discipline and the authority and prestige of the Nathanmaikarar. Contending views as expressed in the traditional assembly are not regarded as opposed to the Nathanmaiship as such, but as expressions of disagreement between members of the group in general which it is the task of the leader to reconcile. In these meetings, then, the leader exercises his influence not so much by enforcing his own will as by attempting to bring about unanimity in the group as a whole and evoke feelings of solidarity. His position is firmly anchored in the realm of custom and the fact that by consensus of his caste he has been entrusted with its welfare gives his opinions and arguments weight. As his function is given in traditional terms e.g. upkeep of custom, the ceremonial life of the caste, etc., his position stands and falls with the traditional order as a whole. During a period of radical changes he may, however, still preside at ceremonies while being opposed by his caste mates in other contexts.

Besides the generally internalized norms of pollution, of common decency, etc., there are specific rules and procedures for gift exchange and for settling alimony, sustenance of widows, for example, that are customs
peculiar to the caste which the Nathanmaikarar is called upon to express and to enforce. In cases where there is a clear application of traditional principles his authority comes into its fullest force and then he may rely on the full support and co-operation of his caste. When a Nathanmaikarar makes exceptions to established precedents, as in the following incident, it is perhaps typical of his behaviour as guardian of custom that he does so by as little compromise as possible. On the occasion of an INFANTRY funeral the Paria undertakers demanded more than the payment which was usual for cremations. Since it was the dry season and food prices were rising the Nathanmaikarar consented to the demand but made two rounds of payment. The first he made according to the customary rate and the second was the part of the payment demanded in excess. When the transaction was concluded, the Nathanmaikarar emphasized that he had not in principle altered the customary rate which was still to apply for the future.

The general punishment for the most serious cases of non-compliance is social boycott. In a small closed community this form of punishment is sufficiently effective to bring a recalcitrant to yield by the mere threat. It is a form of social pressure that also may be used against other castes in the village. The strictest punishment is expulsion from the village, as for example in the case of the barber who had taken an INFANTRY mistress. For minor offences like "indecent" behaviour, disturbance of the
peace, etc., fines are usually imposed. Failure to pay fines or contributions to the collections of the assembly results as I have seen in the movable property of the culprit being seized by the group of the Nathanmaikarars in pledge for the amount due.

In the past no-one has ever appealed to any outside authority against the verdicts of the assemblies. But recently one of the Nathanmaikarars complained to the police about being forced to attend meetings which were then directed by the communists in the village. In disputes, for example, between a Brahmin lord and his tenant the Nathanmaikarar of the INFANTRY caste is often called upon to arbitrate but in many cases he has not been able to restrain the parties from bringing the dispute before the courts.

Other castes excepting the Brahmins have similar organizations and institutions of leadership, but these I was not able to study in detail. The Paria have Nathanmaikarars of their own who manage the affairs of this caste along approximately the same lines as the INFANTRY. Though placed in different positions within the ritual hierarchy, the customs of Paria and Sudra are with some exceptions nearly the same. Most of the Parias are the permanent servants of either Brahmins or Sudras and disputes among them involving severe damages are generally referred to the Nathanmaikarar of the INFANTRY caste who again may report directly to the Village Headman. But festivals, ceremonies and ordinary familial affairs are managed by the Paria Nathan-
maikarar themselves. They have no caste funds or collections like the INFANTRY but receive regular contributions towards their ceremonial expenses by the bigger landowners in the name of the deity of their hamlet.

The washerman of the village, but not the barber or the carpenter, is a member of an organization of his own caste which meets on ceremonial occasions in one of the nearby centres.

The lack of caste assemblies and group justice among the Brahmin living in this area has been commented upon by K. Gough (1956:827) who states: "Brahman men are engaged primarily in a symmetrical relationship of authority and subordination, and tend to place correspondingly little emphasis upon the solidarity of peers", and further:p.840 ib. ".. personal status is of such importance to the Brahmans that in all contexts they find it difficult to act as co-equals in a group. This contrasts with the low caste emphasis on the mutual equality, social equivalence, and organized solidarity first of brothers, and second of all adult married men of the street. Unlike the lower castes, Brahmans do not hold street assemblies to settle disputes and do not elect a headman to represent his peers of the street".

The Brahmins in TM do not hold street assemblies and do not have caste leaders either. It is true also here that they are very circumspect and meticulous about details of importance for personal status and also that their eti-
quette emphasizes the relationship of authority and subordination between senior and junior members of the caste as observed by Gough in her case. But it must be added that each one is also a master in his own right. Most Brahmins have been and many still are wealthier persons both in TM and in the villages Gough studied. Unless it is an Inam village each Brahmin landlord has managed his own private lands, tenants and servants with a minimum of restrictions up to now. When each is of independent means they find it difficult to act as co-equals in a group not merely because personal status is so important, but because occasions for collective undertakings are fewer and group decisions more difficult to enforce. Recent developments in TM and other villages have shown, however, that when confronted with threats from outside and when they no longer can rely upon the loyalty and support of their tenants and servants they do get together - elect their representatives and act in concert. In accounting for the lack of a traditional caste assembly among these Brahmins it should also be pointed out that their affairs are different from the relatively simple matters managed for example by the leaders of the INFANTRY caste. Among the wealthier Brahmins questions of adoption, sustenance of widows, inheritance and guardianship are strictly legal transactions involving rights over property which it is not convenient to settle in the "crude tribal manner" of the Sudras. Such affairs are managed and settled by the parties privately and with the
help of hired lawyers. Being in a better position than others to avail themselves of outside agencies they have not need of any organization of their own to deal with such questions. They are the born elite and have always felt sure of their superiority, their privileges and the respect and obedience of lower castes.

In TM there is no village council or Panchayat to represent the villagers in dealings with the Administration or when matters of concern to the community as a whole are being discussed. The village beadman and the village accountant, both Brahmins, are therefore the important "gate-keepers" in relations with the Administration and its officers. Both positions are permanent government appointments. The village headmanship is hereditary and usually belongs to the largest landowning family of the Brahmins. The present headman owns the largest estate in the village but lives outside it in a nearby centre. The previous headman sold his lands and emigrated to Burma. The duties of the accountant is to deal with the routine matters of land registration and cultivation reports. The headman registers births and deaths, collects revenue, reports crimes to the police. Both have assistants and servants whose wages are paid by the Government. In later years, since the opening of Government departments for rural welfare, it has also become their duty to assist welfare and development officers by advising them on the problems and needs of the villagers, forwarding petitions, recommending applications for cultivation loans, etc. These welfare programmes are well publicized.
When little or nothing has been done for the improvement of this village the villagers blame the headman and the accountant for it. A village development committee was formed a few years ago with the headman and the accountant appointed as leaders, the other members being non-Brahmin farmers. Since taxpayers only were eligible the Paria were automatically excluded. For the Paria, however, there exists a separate welfare programme administered by a specially appointed officer.

The committee is supposed to stimulate and encourage development activities in the village but the headman has never called a meeting nor has the committee any funds of its own.

This development committee, even had it been working, and the traditional caste organizations alike are obviously not suited to deal with problems of equity e.g. fair wages, better amenities, etc., claims that are now being pressed by the less privileged sections at the instigation of agents from outside.

The traditional caste organization as among the INFANTRY, for example, by its very upholding of the customs of the caste, was an important element in sustaining the caste order as a whole, thereby supporting the old economic regime. The traditions maintained by this type of organization under the leadership of the Nathanmaikarar were such as were consistent with the inferior position of the caste and did not conflict with high caste superiority. The Nathan-
maikarar though they are the recognized leaders and representatives of their own caste, their leadership is nevertheless restricted by custom in a domain where the Brahmins are the overlords. Economically the interests of these leaders in part fall together with the interests of the Brahmin landlords in that they are landowners and agricultural employers. The poorer tenants and labourers of the INFANTRY caste in furthering their interests therefore have to form new associations in alliance with poorer members of other castes. The traditional leaders naturally tend to discountenance such developments because it is contrary to their own economic interests and in conflict with the ideas long held about the legitimacy of Brahmins rights and privileges. This radical movement also of course reduces the importance of their own role as representatives of the caste, because new leaders emerge to lead the castes in their economic and political struggle. These new leaders seek to destroy the conventional notions of caste exclusiveness and high caste superiority. Since within castes there are divisive interests that are now being brought into the open, it might seem that the concept of group loyalty and unity would no longer be applicable. But in a caste group like the INFANTRY where the traditions of collective participation in activities and decisions have been particularly strong, pressures towards conformity still persists and in a small closed group like this there is no escape. Thus the wealthier persons of the caste who might tend to side with the Brahmin landlord risk
being boycotted by their own caste - by the same pressures and sanctions which they themselves controlled in the past.

Though the struggle is not fought in the idiom of caste, and results in cleavages within caste, the latter may still form the basis for factional alignments and the traditional sanctions of caste may be utilized for new organizational purposes. The organizers of these new associations mobilize their support in the village by "exploiting" pre-existing solidarities taking over as it were the old system of caste discipline and keeping internal cleavages in check.

In their new organizational efforts the underprivileged low castes have an advantage over the Brahmins in their organizational skill and in their previous experience in acting together for mutual benefit, and the old system of group discipline and sanctions is being made equally if not more effective in the new association.

In a traditional society which is dominated by a high caste, as is this village, opposition to the traditional social order and the formation of factions for the promotion of low caste interests do not develop all of a sudden. It would not have happened as quickly as it did in TM had it not been for the fact that high caste power already was weakening. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, this is in fact due to increasing absenteeism among the Brahmin landlords, government interference, and a certain degree of economic advancement of traditionally underprivileged groups. These changes have created ideological and
economic problems that can no longer be solved in terms of the traditional framework of caste and represent the antecedents of the factional development.
CHAPTER VIII

Political Changes

In this chapter I shall describe the incorporation of this community into the wider polity through the formation of workers' and landlords' associations. These associations are part of political movements with extensions throughout the district and the state.

Here I shall mainly deal with the organization of these associations in the village; for what ends, how recruited, the effect upon intra and intercaste relations, and the problem of changing loyalties.

Earlier in this thesis I have described certain changes in the structure of social and economic relations in TM: the change in customary economic relations between the village and its servants, between landlords and tenants, the increase in landlord absenteeism, the economic advancement of some sections of the less privileged castes, and the changes following the State's attempts to regulate agrarian relations. These changes I judged to be the main sources of tension in the community. I pointed out that as traditional loyalties dwindled and relations of dependency weakened, the poorer elements were becoming more politically ambitious, particularly under the impact of state reforms. The point was also made that the adjustment so far had largely been contained within the traditional system.

In 1957 two parties or associations were formed in TM; one representing the interests of landowners
and rentiers and the Poor Cultivators' Association, or sangam, representing small tenants and labourers. Before the coming of these formally established associations political relations or the pattern of power and influence which existed in this community could hardly be classified as distinct from other social and ritual activities. There is the administrative setup, the revenue authority, which links TM with the State. But this is regular machinery which poses no internal problems of a political nature. Relations of power and influence, as based on wealth and inherited privileges, were structured in terms of caste and were in this way unalterable. Associations with a political function, like the temple assemblies, are again subsumed under caste by which membership is given and the purposes defined. The activities and issues for which these assemblies provided a forum were determined by the traditions of the particular caste, and had no connection with wider political programmes and movements.

Under impact from the outside the new associations are organized as bodies separate from the traditional ones, but in part take over their functions.

Under the guidance of district leaders of the Poor Cultivators' Associations a group of about five of the younger men of the village had been active for some months in propagating among workers, poor peasants and tenants the idea of a sangam or union which would work for higher
wages, for protection of the tenants, and for the welfare of the village in general. Particularly active were two tenants who were fighting a court case with their landlords, two landless workers, and two junior members of some of the wealthiest Sudra families. These latter two took the most active part in this work. Both were sons of the late elder brothers of two of the INFANTRY Nathanmaikarars. They had passed secondary school examinations, were eloquent and had travelled quite a lot in the area. The group did not argue its cause openly in any of the temple assemblies but discussed the purpose of the proposed union privately with people they met.

One month before the first harvest a committee was formed in the name of the Poor Cultivators' Union which subsequently announced a public meeting to be held in the INFANTRY street. To this meeting the Parias and people from neighbouring villages were also invited. A programme for the meeting had been printed and distributed, bearing slogans and appeals such as: "Long live the unity of the cultivators! Stop evictions from land and give the cultivator his lawful share! Fix a fair wage for the agricultural labourer!" Loudspeakers had been put up and talks on land-reforms and purposes of the union were given by three of the district leaders of the Poor Cultivators' Associations who were referred to as "comrade toilers". Their names were announced, but with omission of the caste designation, which according to custom, must
be mentioned with the first name. This policy has been adopted so that the leaders will not be identified with any particular caste in order to appeal to a broader following. Two of the comrades were college graduates. One of them was a Brahmin, but the caste of the others it was not possible to identify.

In their speeches the organizers dealt with the new land-reforms and the Fair Rent Act, urging the tenants not to pay above the now ruling rate of 40%. And the workers on their part, they held, ought to claim higher wages.

The big landlords were blamed for the poor conditions prevailing in the village. Each of them were mentioned by name and their misdeeds related in detail. The chief aim of the cultivators' union was to resist being exploited by these landlords in any form. This meant, besides protecting tenants and seeking an increase of the daily wage to abolish hereditary appointments, and to put an end to the practice of rendering unpaid services that were traditionally unfree. Further it was intended to dispossess landlords of lands which they had wilfully taken possession of, and to establish a governing body that effectively could represent the interests of the villagers to the Government.

The union should strive to better the morale of the people, make effective prohibition of alcohol and organize educational activities. Differences due to
caste were to be banished from this association. All groups should be united on equal basis in the struggle for common interests. The means to be used in furthering these objectives were mass petitions, strikes and social boycott.

Tensions were now mounting rapidly in the village. Shortly before this meeting was held police had raided the village in search of illicit liquor. Nothing was found, but many persons in the INFANTRY streets were beaten as a warning. Many INFANTRYMEN alleged that the incident in fact was a provocation planned by the Brahmin village headman to intimidate communist sympathizers; that he had bribed the police or otherwise used his influence to instigate the raid. When asked by these people why he had not tried to protect them he answered that they deserved the beating. The INFANTRYMEN got angry and with the help of one of the district organizers framed a petition demanding his dismissal and the appointment in his place of a landowner actually residing in the village.

Added to this general excitement were rumours reaching the village of fights between tenants and landlords in other parts of the district. In TM the conflict between the landlords and the poor cultivators did not break out into unorganized fights, partly because the resistance the landlords could mobilize was relatively weak and partly because the workers organized their actions in a very disciplined and controlled manner. A murder in the neighbouring village caused rumours that the communists
were inspiring violence. The rich Brahmin landlords there became scared, fired their watchmen of the INFANTRY caste in TM whom they thought no longer reliable, and instead hired and armed some Gourkha veterans. The only outcome of this incident was to intensify the INFANTRYMEN's resentment.

At this time the landlords of TM and the neighbouring village formed their "association of small landowners". The cultivators on their part were busy consolidating their union in anticipation of the first test of strength, the harvest strike. Since this union takes the leading part in the events which follow, I will deal the problems of this association first.

After the big meeting the district organizers were guiding the development from outside, but the actual work of building up the organization in the village was done by the local committee itself. INFANTRYMEN were first recruited. But the support of the Parias and their enrolment in the union was necessary for a number of reasons. They represented a considerable labour force so a strike could not be made effective without them. Refusal of the ritually important services of which they were undertakers could also be used as a threat both against the Brahmin landlords and against recalcitrant sections of the Sudras. Internal differences or cleavages were negligible among the Parias as compared with, for example, the INFANTRY caste, which had the advantage of possibly being won over as one
group. Thus strengthening the solidarity in an association so diversely composed. For the Paria the idea of associating with the Sudra on equal terms was no doubt an important incentive for their joining the union.

The name of Gandhi was known to them. They were familiar with his views concerning the place the Parias or the Harijans deserved or were entitled to in society. On several occasions they had witnessed the work undertaken by the Government to improve the conditions of the Parias in the district. Together with Parias from TM I attended one function given to celebrate the opening of a new settlement for Parias, built for them by the Harijan Welfare Authority which also had provided equipment for handicrafts, reading rooms, wells and sanitary conveniences. In their speeches on this occasion the Government officers described the reforms adopted by the Government to abolish the caste system and warned the public that any injustice or insult committed against the Harijans was punishable by imprisonment. And the settlement, they insisted, should not be called the Paria cheri, but the New Street.

In TM the Paria had very small chances of improving their position by their own efforts alone. Being a minority they lacked the power to realize their rights and their aspirations. Government assistance could provide for them better amenities and give them protection to a limited extent, but this would not alter their status
vis a vis the other castes. As they knew that wells, streets, public places and temples officially had been declared open for them, they might have been tempted to use these liberties. Such attempts, however, would merely be acts of self-assertion likely to be met with severe retaliation on part of the high castes, and of little use in bringing about a change in the system. In this situation anything approaching equality of status could only be achieved if it were conceded to them by the other castes. In the Cultivators' Union they were in principle treated by members of the other castes as equals, albeit in a very restricted context of action. In relation to the traditional pattern of activities in the village the union represented a new and wider front of interaction at a level which did not involve questions of ritual relationships. Eradication of differences due to caste was explicitly part of the programme of this movement. The Sudra, in treating the Paria as equals for the purposes of this association do so partly as a symbolic concession and partly out of necessity. The main bases of identification: work in agriculture, where they do the same jobs for the same pay provides a simple and convincing argument for their joining together; in furthering their interests the one group has to depend on the other. "Paria and Sudra are one". In their opposition against the landlords they have common interests, in political action they stand solidary, but in the traditional ritual sphere they remain mutually exclusive. The incentives that were active in promoting their political association do
not apply in the traditional area of actions. They neither interdine nor intermarry. Between Brahmins and HERDSMEN a similar form of a limited association and interaction was established.

As regards ritual status HERDSMEN stood closer to INFANTRYMEN than to any other caste, but in their political orientation they identified themselves with the Brahmin landlord class. This was a natural choice since most of them were relatively well off both as landowners and as salaried employees. Very few of them had to hire themselves out as agricultural labourers. Their siding with the Brahmins was also consistent with their need for social prestige. As I have pointed out earlier, they pretended to be of higher status than the INFANTRYMEN, and had changed their name to imitate a high caste origin. Their joining the Brahmins association one may regard as another expression of their aspirations.

Between INFANTRYMEN and Palli INFANTRYMEN there existed hardly any problem of status differences. They did not intermarry, but in general they mixed freely with each other and held temple assemblies in common. In the Cultivators' Union they had an equal share in the leadership.
The organization of the associations and resulting factions within castes

In the beginning the organizing committee of the Cultivators' Union was able to secure a considerable following by voluntary means. They made house to house visits calling on the male head of the household and his adult sons. The purpose of the union and its programme of action was explained in detail. Having been persuaded of the advantages to be gained in supporting the association they were made to sign a membership roll and to pay a fee of two rupees for the membership card. All the Parias and most of the INFANTRYMEN joined without much hesitation. A minority of INFANTRYMEN comprising the Nathanmaikarars and other relatively well-to-do persons refused to join the union. Some of them also actively worked against it. They maintained that they were well off, that the union was intended for poor people only, and that they themselves saw no advantage in supporting it. The leaders of the union argued that since the majority of the caste had joined the union it was now an obligation for all adult males of the caste to become members of it. It was feared that the minority might side with the landlords; and that the Nathanmaikarars, who still enjoyed considerable respect and prestige, might influence their castemates to turn against the union. Therefore it was important to undermine their position of authority within the caste and to prevent them
from supporting the other party. Many INFANTRYMEN, mostly elderly ones, hesitated to join the Union as long as the Nathanmaikarars were not in it; and Nathanmaikarars who had sublet some land to a few tenants threatened to evict them if they joined the Union. In this way and by other means they tried to work against the Union. As a last resort they appealed to the police court to have the Union declared illegal. The magistrate, however, refused to issue such a decree. The petition had been drawn up with the help of one of the leaders of the landlords association. The Union was accused of disturbing the peace in the village, of being run by communists, and of forcing people to join it. When called by the court to answer the charge, all members of the Union assembled and marched in protest to the court where one of the district secretaries of the Cultivators' Union explained the purpose of the Union; that it was just an ordinary trade union which had no aims other than ensuring the welfare of its members and that membership was voluntary. The secretary was asked the question what he personally (himself) had at all to do with the activities of the Union in TM to which he answered that he had taken it upon himself as his sacred duty to work selflessly for the interests of the poor, and that his work had no particular political or economic motive.

As more and more of the INFANTRYMEN became members of the Union, the position of the Nathanmaikarars became increasingly difficult. The court had refused to
refused to support their charge against the Union for unlawful activities. They were now heavily pressed to sign the membership-roll by their castemates. But joining meant for them not only loss of personal prestige, but possibly also loss of the Brahmins' goodwill. They were without means to organize any effective resistance from within the caste. The majority were against them, and the junior members of their lineages were among the most active leaders of the Union. They could have sided with the Brahmin landlords, but at the risk of being boycotted and ostracized by their castemates and the Parias. Neighbours would turn away from them. Nobody would speak to them or to any member of their households. They would be excluded from any kind of social intercourse, barred access to wells and refused labour and services. Living in close contiguity to others of their caste such an isolation would be very hard to stand, particularly for their womenfolks. Faced with this threat the Nathanmaikarars finally had to give in. On the night of one of the union meetings they were practically driven out of their houses and forced to sign the membership roll and pay the fees. One of them tried to save face by sending in his place one of his younger sons, but was told that the Union was not a boy's club and he was made to appear personally.

A couple of the well-to-do INFANTRYMEN living in the HERDSMEN street joined the landlords party along with the HERDSMEN. As far as I know, they were under no pressure from the latter to do so. Their "Unionist" caste-
mates tried to persuade them from taking this step. But
the kind of "silent terror" which threatened the Nathan­
maikarars could not so easily be used against members of the
caste who lived in a separate street among members of a
different caste with different political attitudes.

The Union had by now won a solid following
among. INFANTRYMEN. and among the Parias. Meetings were
frequently being held. Most of the time the members assembled
in the middle of the INFANTRY street and not in fron of the
temples and not on New Moon nights as the temple assembly.
The Parias were seated as a separate group at some distance
from the others with a spokesman in front of them. The
INFANTRYMEN who had constituted the organizing committee
acted as leaders, directed the proceedings and kept the
accounts of the Union fund. This fund, incidentally, had
risen quite rapidly. After about two months since its
establishment fees and funds collected by the Union amounted
to more than 400 rupees. This was intended to be used for
the construction of a reading room. No formal election of
leaders had been held, and those, who from the beginning
had assumed the leadership, remained undisputed in this
position throughout my stay in the village. With the excep­
tion of a lesser one of the Nathanmaikarars who had recently
become a member of this group none of the union leaders had
played any role in the temple assemblies. Although they were
of a relatively young age, they acted and spoke with, it
seemed to me, a surprising firmness and conviction. Their
open challenge of the caste elders is perhaps the most impressive example of the resolution with which they carried out their purpose. In this connection it is relevant to note that two of the leaders, who appeared to be the most important, were educated and owned considerable holdings of land. This gave them a natural basis for prestige. Moreover, to tenants whom the Nathanmaikarars had threatened with loss of leaseholds in case they joined the Union, these leaders had been able to offer leases of their own lands as compensation. How the outside organizers had selected them, how training for this task had been imparted to them, and whether they purposely had been chosen with these attributes in view, I do not know. As regards their own motives, however, it is likely that apart from having been influenced by the new political ideas, they also saw in a powerful union a chance of one of them attaining the headmanship of the village.

The Parias had no representative of their own seated among the talaivars, the leaders of the Union, which is one of the indications, one may say, of the fact that they still occupied a position subordinate to the INFANTRYMEN.

In the first of these meetings the Parias appeared to begin with to be rather reserved and diffident. The INFANTRY leaders of the Union encouraged them strongly to take part in the discussion and to state their opinion of this movement. They were told that the Union intended to use only peaceful means in its struggle, which they expressed by
the word *ahimsa*. In particular they aimed to promote the welfare of the Harijans and to realize what Gandhi had taught - that all men were equal, irrespective of caste.

**The relationship between the Union and the temple assemblies**

The Union has been introduced from without into a system characterized by an inclusive pattern of inclusive social relations. It seems plausible to assume that the motivation to participate in such a specialized and purpose oriented association would be difficult to sustain unless the new association was attached to some pre-existing form of organization to which the participants were already "socialized". In this system the new association was to begin with established as a body separate from the existing traditional ones. Adaptation to such a segmental organizational order which was now developing in TM would be facilitated if the Union, for example, as one of the new associations, incorporated functions traditionally exerted by the temple assemblies.

Geared to a more inclusive pattern of activities than that determined by its specialized purposes, the Union might achieve a firmer anchoring in the social life of the various castes; and gain thereby control of a wider area of action. When, therefore, the Union began to take over from the temple assemblies some of their traditional
functions it is here the process of adaptation begins. And, whether part of an expressly adopted policy or not this process it seems is what underlies the operation.

Excepting ritual questions all matters moral and jural that hitherto had been dealt with by the temple assemblies were now handled by the Union. When acting as tribunal, adjudicating disputes, censoring (im)moral conduct, etc. the Union adhered to a great extent to traditional conventions, but the leaders of the Union also imposed new moral rules. Drinking, for example, which the Nathanmaikarars had tolerated was now strictly prohibited and offenders heavily fined. Persons were also punished for passing insulting remarks about the Union. Moreover, the Union decided to hear complaints and grievances concerning debts and cultivation contracts.

The tribunal was common to all castes represented in the Union. Cases involving members of one of the castes only were no longer as before dealt with as of exclusive concern to that caste alone, but treated on equal terms with cases involving members of other castes, Sudra and Paria alike being subject to the same rules.

The opposition between landlords and workers was the dominant cleavage in the village. The temple assembly and the Union were not perceived as necessarily in conflict with each other although they represented different views and interests.
To me it seemed confusing at first when union members who belonged to the INFANTRY caste also attended meetings of the temple assembly which were still being held on New Moon nights. I questioned some of the INFANTRYMEN on this point and got the answer that there was nothing in the aims of these two associations which made them interfere with each other. As compared with the temple assembly the Union represented a different idea of association. The latter was a form of government, and the former a product of custom.

Qua organization the temple assembly had ceased to wield any real influence in the affairs of the community and no longer represented any threat to the Union. The authority of the Nathanmaikarars had been thoroughly undermined. Their defeat was complete. They were still being invited as guests of honor to weddings and other social functions when they were asked to officiate. But these vestiges of prestige or esteem had no positive significance for their political and economic relations, that is, their bargaining position. For example, the most senior of the Nathanmaikarars once refused to pay his labourers in accordance with the rates fixed by the Union. When the workers went on strike he demonstratively worked for a short time alone in the fields. But nobody, not even his own sons, came to assist him.

People continued to gather on New Moon nights, but fewer in number attended. Before a meeting was finally
announced many were also in doubt if the assembly was going to be held at all. It was left with practically no important issues to decide. The meetings were held mainly, I think, at the request of those who were still interested in the auctioning of loans from temple funds.

Again, in these days it was no longer taken for granted that a Nathanmaikarar should preside over the meeting. On one occasion, for example, one of the Nathanmaikarars asked the assembly whether they wanted him to continue to be in charge of the fund and direct the proceedings.

The process of secularization was already far gone before the coming of the communist movement. But in opposing the Brahmin landlords and the traditional leaders of the other castes, and in placing Sudra and Paria as equals the communists had provoked a more drastic change of attitudes towards the whole set of ritual practices and beliefs.

What precisely was the effect of this direct influence upon, for example, INFANTRYMEN and Parias at large, I had no means to gauge, but it may in part be inferred from the attitude shown by the leaders of the "comrade toilers".

I observed, for example, one of them being severely criticized by his fellow "comrades" for appearing in public with vipudi, holy ashes, smeared on his forehead: "You are no real communist who can't give up this practice". He acknowledged the fault, but tried to defend himself by saying that he had done it on account of the anniversary of his father's death which he had felt himself compelled to
observe out of regard for his old mother. Another example: A barber had some time ago had a love affair with an INFANTRY woman. The affair was a sin against caste and considered a particularly grave insult against the INFANTRYMEN. The leaders of their temple assembly evicted him from his lands which he held under the Gram Samudayam and banned him from the village. He had later on been allowed to return to the village where he now lived in the house of a relative, but the land he formerly held had not yet been restored to him. The union leaders decided to reopen the case. Caste having been abolished, they argued, the offence committed by the barber could not be judged to be a sin against caste but an ordinary breach of morality only deserving much less punishment - a fine of about twenty rupees or so. The Nathanmaikarars' decision was held to be invalid. The barber should be allowed to resume possession of his lands.

Brahmins with whom I discussed this affair expressed surprise and consternation: "What! Have they now given up caste altogether?"

The landlords' association also constituted an alliance of ritually distant castes, but it had formulated no programme which explicitly suggested a revision of the concept of caste like that adopted by the cultivators' union. The latter represented a revolutionary movement whereas the former had no aims beyond protecting vested interests.
The organization of the landlords' association and the conflict between landlords and labourers

The landlords' association was formed sometime after the workers had organized theirs, as a response to this challenge. The initiative to form this association had been taken by three of the richest Brahmin landlords of a neighbouring village. They owned the biggest landholdings in TM and were likely to be more adversely affected than others by a wage rise. These persons were members of the so-called Welfare Party established in this district a few months ago and which they had supported during the recent elections. This party had been formed mainly in order to oppose the landreform programmes of the Government and in particular the rent reduction act.

The landlords association of TM purported to work for the interests of the small landholder including self-cultivators as well as rentiers. Therefore they called it the Little Landlords' Association. Apart from this general appeal the association had outlined no direct proposals for action. It was in the main dominated by the richest of the Brahmin landlords who in their dealings with the workers union often took decisions without consulting or informing the other members. This organization had the formal appearance of an association and one of the HERDSMEN, a school teacher, had been appointed as secretary. Membership fees were supposed to be paid, but nobody ever did so. Moreover, to
the few meetings that were ever held many members were not even invited.

One of the TM Brahmins and some of the HERDSMEN were already connected with the leading landlords through being employed as their assistants and servants. These persons were therefore nothing but their obedient dependants.

With the exception of the Vaddama Brahmins who recently had sued many of their tenants for arrears of rent, most of the petty rentiers in TM, in particular the Ashta Sahasra Brahmins, tried to avoid getting involved in the conflict between landlords and workers. Nominally, they belonged to the Landlords Association, but they refrained from taking any active part in its activities. On the whole they preferred to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the union than did the other landlords. In a previous chapter I gave some of the reasons for this attitude, the chief being the desire of some of these petty rentiers to maintain a relationship of good-will with their tenants, and besides, they were not like the big landlords affected by higher wage claims.

The lack of cooperation among the Brahmins can also be attributed to the enmity between the Ashta Sahasra and the Vaddama sections of the TM Brahmins. The Ashta Sahasras who had settled in TM long before the Vaddamas regarded the latter as newcomers and had never accepted them as their equals. Furthermore, the Ashta Sahasras had once
been the masters of the village and now resented the influence of the rich neighbouring landlords who had organized the association. On various occasions they declined to support actions which the big landlords had proposed to take against members of the union. They did not, for example, assent to a petition the landlords had put up to the court which aimed at debarring the INFANTRYMEN from catching fish in the village tank, a privilege they had enjoyed for as long anybody could remember. Although it might be questionable whether the INFANTRYMEN had the right to reserve this use for themselves they had enjoyed it for so many years, the Ashta Sahasras maintained, that to object against it now would serve no purpose other than provoking the other party unnecessarily. They also disagreed to a proposal made by the leading landlords to dissolve the Gram Samudayam and distribute the lands among the constituent proprietors for their private use. By this move the big landlords hoped first of all to get the other landowners' sanction for the appropriations of Gram Samudayam land they had already made themselves. Secondly, by evicting the village servants from the Gram Samudayam they hoped that the Parias might become discouraged from participating in the union. The Ashta Sahasras had all the more reason to object to this proposal since the class of persons who held land under Gram Samudayam also included the Brahmins priests who all belonged to the Ashta Sahasra section. The portion of the Gram Samudayam
which the landlords had annexed was later seized by the Union members who drove away the plough servants of the landlords and harvested the land themselves. The crop was sold and the money deposited with the Ashta Sahasras who were requested to mediate in the conflict. The Union leaders had no legal right to the money, but wanted the consent of the landlords that it be dedicated to the building of a reading room in the village. The case was still undecided at the time of my departure.

On most occasions the members of the landlords' association failed to act in concert. It was evident that excepting the richest of the landlords nobody had any stake or faith in this association. As compared with the union the landlords' association was numerically much weaker; the relations between its members were less inclusive, the Brahmins for example, lacked the elements of traditional organization on which a new organization could build and finally the diversity of economic interests was greater. In the conflict between the two organizations the landlords' proved to be the weaker part. The conflict reached a decisive stage by harvest time.

A speedy harvest of the first crop was necessary so that the fields could be cleared well in time for the planting of the second crop. The union now took advantage of this situation and pressed for higher wages. They demanded first a rise in wages for male workers on ordinary day-labour by 0.25 rupees and two extra measures
of paddy in addition to the six measures issued per day to labourers on harvest work. As an alternative to the last demand the landlords were requested to employ a greater number of workers per unit of harvest land.

The leading landlords refused to concede these demands and the strike was launched. While it was on some employers tried to hire people from outside, but the members of the union had picketed the fields and the outsiders were prevented from working.

During the negotiations that followed the landlords made an attempt to drive a wedge between the Parias and the other members of the union. They announced that they were willing to accept the terms put forward by the union in respect of all workers except the Parias whom they considered as a separate class of workers. The Parias, they argued, were attached to the Gram Samudayam. Thus they were common to the whole village and had no right to side with any particular party or to refuse to work for any particular group in the village. Hence, they would now lock out the Parias from their estates and employ others, preferable INFANTRYMEN, in their place. But the union leader insisted on the Parias being treated on the same terms as the other workers. The Parias on their part maintained that the very fact that they belonged under the Gram Samudayam meant that they had a traditional right to work in this village. The landlords lock-out of the Parias was therefore unlawful. The INFANTRY members of the union remained solidary with the Parias and
decided not to end the strike until the latter had been covered by the same agreement.

When the leading landlords finally felt themselves compelled to give in, the strike had only lasted a few days. It had been conducted in an orderly and disciplined fashion. The leaders of the union seemed to be in complete control of the situation. No wanton attempts to use force had been made, and workers who on their own had tried to bargain with individual landlords for higher pay were strongly censured by the "tribunal". During the rest of the harvest season no further conflicts arose. The strike had proved a simple but effective demonstration of the strength of the union. It is worth noting that the village women, who are employed in transplanting paddy, were not registered as members of the Union, and were consequently not involved in this incident.

Through their union the workers have achieved material results. More important than these, however, is the new insight this experience probably has given them - into the working of a solidarity which in the future may form the basis for more decisive actions against landlord interests.
An attempt had earlier been made in TM to make the inhabitants of the caste village reform their attitude towards the Parias. This happened about ten years ago. The reformer came from outside. He was a Congress worker - a follower of Gandhi. He appealed to the caste villagers to treat the Parias or the Harijans as their equals. To foster this attitude of equality he proposed to build a school in the village for the children of all castes. He laid the foundation of the building with the help of workers he himself had hired and paid and then asked the caste villagers to come forward and complete the building. But nobody was willing to cooperate. The reformer left the village. The structure of the foundation can still be seen at the outskirts of the village. The reason why he failed seems obvious. The problem of caste differences he reduced to a moral question failing to take cognizance of the dynamics of class struggle. Efforts to "help" the Parias as "Harijans" are not likely to improve the social status of the members of this caste vis a vis the other villagers unless at the same time a situation is created which provides the Parias with an active participant role in the common struggle of the less privileged sections of all castes for better conditions.

In one of the earlier chapters I mentioned that anti-Brahmin demonstrations led by members of the Dravida Kazhagham had taken place in TM. The Dravida Kazhagham is an anti-Sanscritic movement which puts its accent on
the theory that the Brahmins are Aryans and aliens in a land which rightly belongs to the Dravidians. The party wants to form an independent Dravida state and to drive the Brahmins out. The members are violent in their actions and stage demonstrations where they break idols and burn holy books. During 1957 they damaged shops and other establishments owned by Brahmins and attacked Brahmins while these were taking their holy bath in the Cauvery river, tearing off their holy threads. This movement has, however, its following mostly in towns and although it has held demonstrations in TM and in the nearby villages it has not as yet been successful in winning active support here.
APPENDIX

Form of lease-chit executed by the tenant to the landowner.

I so-and-so son of so-and-so residing in TM, age,...occupation,... execute this lease in respect of the nanchay (wet) land in favour of so-and-so (landowners's name) ditto place.

I agree to take on lease for a period of one - 1 - year the land - survey no...sub-division no...extent etc. belonging to you on which you are enjoying full rights and agree to measure out to you so many...- Kalams of paddy. I further agree to cultivate the field properly and keep the field in good condition and to notify you about the harvest and on getting your specific permission and in the presence of your agent I undertake to harvest and measure so many.... Kalams of Kuruvai in properly prescribed measure - without dampness and without mixture of mud (iram and padari illamal) - shall before such and such date of October and with regard to 2nd crop - Talhedi, March/April also notify you. I shall get a proper voucher from you in respect of the land leased out to me.

I shall further deliver so many bundles of straw (for 1 MA = two kullis - 3 bundles or headloads of straw)- at your backyard. If sown black gram and green gram I shall measure so many measures prior to such and such a date. In the event of there being left arrears by me (paddy, straw, grams) I shall repay the amount with interest at the end
Appendix (ii)

of the lease) with so and so many pais per rupee per month till the day of payment. I shall myself pay subject to your instruction the charges to be paid to the man appointed by you. I will not encroach upon the sideways, puramboku land. I will keep the survey stone in its proper place.

At the end of the stipulated period you can yourself come upon your lands and enjoy them without objection.

To be signed by Tenant.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, F. Caste and the Economic Frontier, 1957


Colson, Elisabeth The Intensive Study of Small Sample Communities. 1954


Gluckman, Max Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand. The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No.28, 1958

Gough, Kathleen The Social Structure of a Tanjore Village. Econ.Weekly 4:531-36, 1952


Lewis, Oscar Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village, 1954

Malaviya, H.D. Land Reforms in India. Publ. of the Indian National Congress, 1954

Mayer, Adrian Some Hierarchical Aspects of Caste. SW Jnl. of Anthropol. Vol. 12, 1956


Spate, O.H.K. India and Pakistan, 1954

Srinivas, M.N. Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, 1952