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## FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit, assisted by Shri A. M. Kurup and Shri N. G. Nag, Research Officers is coordinating all these studies at the Central level. I avail of this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have undertaken various studies on different aspects of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India.

Soligaru, more popularly known as Soliga, is a Scheduled Tribe of Mysore State. In Tamil Nadu, on the other hand the Community is scheduled as Sholaga. The Soliga is divided into three endogamous groups, *viz.* Dev, Urali and Podu Soliga. The first section is more sophisticated in their way of life when compared to the other two divisions. Essentially the Soliga is a forest tribe and mainly subsisted on forest produce during bygone days. Presently, however, the community mainly eke their livelihood as agricultural labourers. In the present monograph an attempt has been made to bring out the social and economic changes taking place among them. Even with the change of time Soliga economy is not satisfactory and their educational level shockingly poor which works out to 1.90 per cent. The Soligas have no social institutions of their own to work for their socio-economic and educational development.

Shri K. B. Koppad conducted the field investigations and prepared the draft. Shri A. M. Kurup and Dr. B. K. Roy Burman edited the report.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR  
*Registrar General, India*

## P R E F A C E

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) The social dimensions corresponding to the diversification in economic life have to be examined. It is also to be examined whether inspite of diversification of occupation, the ethos of a particular occupation, for instance

agriculture, continues to be dominant. In that case, diversification might have created problems of adjustment in values and attitudes.

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

The above dimensions of ethno-demographic studies have evolved through stages. In 1960 at the instance of Shri Mitra, Registrar General of India, a questionnaire for collection of ethnographic data was circulated among the Census Superintendents. In October, 1961, the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit was set up in the office of the Registrar General of India to coordinate the ethnographic studies and a few other ancillary studies, like village surveys, handicraft surveys, etc. In December, 1961, a Study Camp was organised in Delhi, where the personnel engaged in ethnographic studies and other social and handicrafts studies and other social investigations in the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp, it was considered that the ethnographic notes would mainly aim at making an objective assessment of the state of development of the different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the context of the changes taking place in technology, economic organisation and total cultural pattern of the country. It was further suggested that the primary focus of the study should not be on the exotic elements of the cultures of the different castes and tribes. It should be on the efforts of the communities concerned to adjust to the modern conditions of life. In the light of the above decisions of the Study Camp, rapid ethnographic studies have been carried on by the staff of the Superintendents of Census Operations as well as by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, in different parts of the country. These rapid surveys have brought out a number of methodological and operational problems. In May and June, 1966, two Ethnographic Study Camps were held at Kurseong and Hyderabad, where personnel from the office of the Registrar General of India as well as from the offices of the Census Superintendents participated. In the Study Camp held at Kurseong, the Secretary, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, and Director, Tribal Welfare, West Bengal, also participated. In these Study Camps, an integrated frame for preparation of ethnographic notes was discussed and adopted. A copy of the same may be seen at 'Annexure'. In addition to the studies in respect of each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe separately, a number of subsidiary studies were undertaken by the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General of India, for gaining insight into a number of problems of general nature, which have bearing on the different aspects of the lives of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. These subsidiary studies are as follows:---

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

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

The present Report on the Soligaru (Soliga) is one of the monographs proposed to be brought out by the Census Organisation. The investigation on the community was undertaken by Shri K. B. Koppad of the Office of the Registrar General, India under the guidance of Shri A. M. Kurup, of the same office. The draft report prepared by Shri K. B. Koppad, was edited by Shri A. M. Kurup and myself.

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

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

(vii)

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

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

B.K. ROY BURMAN

## SOLIGARU

### I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

The Soligar, more popularly known as Soliga, one of the Scheduled Tribes of Mysore State, inhabits the hilly and forest tracts of the Western Ghats of Mysore district. They are found concentrated in and around the forest tracts of Madheshwara Hills and Biligirirangana Hills in Kollegal and Yelandur taluks respectively, and also in Gundlupet and Heggadadevanakote taluks of Mysore District. They are also found in good numbers in the Kanakapura, Ramanagar and Channapatna taluks of Bangalore District. Elsewhere in the State, they are sparsely distributed. Outside the state, they go by the name Sholaga, and are found in the contiguous area of Tamil Nadu.

Soligar have been referred to by different names. Thurston has styled them as Sholaga, Sholagas or Solagas (1909, VI, 379). Further he quotes "Madras Mail, 1907" in which the community has been termed as Soligar (Thurston, 1909, VI, 385). Iyer has mentioned them by the name Sholiga (1931; IV, 592). The Mysore Census Report of 1891 has described them as Soligas (p. 228). In the 1931 Census they were categorised as Sholagar and were treated as a primitive tribe in the districts of Bellary, Mysore and South Kanara (C.I. 1961, India, Vol. I, Part V-B(ii), p. 469). In the hilly tracts of Ramagiri, these people are called by other natives as *Cad Eraligar*, but they call themselves *Cad Chensu*. (Iyer, 1931, IV, 592). The field enquiries in the Biligirirangana Hills, Madheshwara Hills and other areas of Mysore district, however, reveal that they are known only by the name 'Soliga', (singular of Soligar) in Mysore State.

According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Lists Modification Order, 1956, Soligar have been notified as a Scheduled Tribe throughout the State of Mysore except Coorg, Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwar, North Kanara, South Kanara, Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur districts and Kollegal taluk of Mysore district. In the constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, this community was notified only in the districts of Bangalore, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Kolar, Mysore, Hassan, Shimoga, Chikmagalur and Mandya. In the 1931 Census it was treated as a Primitive Tribe and a Depressed Class under the name 'Soliga' in the above mentioned districts (C.I.

1961, India, Vol. I, Part V-B (ii), p. 473). In the above said order of 1956, Sholaga has also been shown as a Scheduled Tribe in the South Kanara district and Kollegal taluk of Mysore district. Sholaga is a Scheduled Tribe in Tamil Nadu\* as per the same order. In the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 Sholaga was notified as Scheduled Tribe in the districts of Bellary, Mysore and South Kanara. Except in the difference in pronunciation the terms Sholaga and Soligar are reported to refer to one and the same community. Even in Kollegal taluk, where the community is scheduled as Sholaga, the more popular name is Soliga. Thus, one and the same community has been scheduled in the Mysore State by two different names. This is because of the fact that South Kanara and Kollegal taluk of Mysore district were part of Madras State before the States reorganisation in 1956, where the community is more commonly known as Sholaga. During 1961 only two females have been returned from South Kanara district. They have not been taken into account for the analysis of the present report.

Soligar being the plural form of Soliga in Kannada language and as the latter name is more popular, the community has been henceforth referred to as 'Soliga' in this report.

Despite their contacts with other socially advanced castes of the area, Soliga have not undergone much change in their traditions and customs. But they have also not remained static as found by Buchanan who had described them in the following words: "They speak a bad or old dialect of the Karnataka language, have scarcely any clothing, and sleep around a fire, lying on a few plantain leaves and covering themselves with others. They live chiefly on the summits of mountains, where tigers do not frequent but where their naked bodies are exposed to a disagreeable cold. Their huts are most wretched and consist of bamboo with both ends struck into the ground as to form an arch, which is covered with plantain leaves" (1807. Vol. I; 415). Most of the Soliga are now found living inside or close to inhabited villages and majority of them are agricultural labourers. Those staying inside the forests and near the game sanctuaries have been engaged by the Forest Department as forest guards, labourers and watchmen.

\*Sholaga is notified as Scheduled Tribe in Chingleput, Coimbatore, Madras, Madurai, Nilgiris, North Arcot, Ramanathapuram, Salem, South Arcot, Tanjore, Tiruchirappalli and Tirunelveli (except Shencottah taluk) of Madras State.

The Soliga have several interesting legends regarding their origin. During field investigations one of the elderly Soliga of Anuvale village in the Madheshwara Hills narrated the following one:—

“Neela Soliga was residing in Sonkana Malai hillock with his wife, Nijagempe (Iyer mentions the names of the couple as Niri Sholigayya and Sonkamma 1931; IV; 593). One day, Neela Soliga went to Halu Malai and Jenu Malai (two hillocks) to collect sweet potatoes, honey and other forest produce. Before starting for the hills he tied his wife’s hands and legs with a rope, stitched her eye-lids, closed the opening of the cave, where they were staying, with a big rock and finally drew seven line-marks in front of the cave. Nijagempe could not bear the torture and started wailing.

Nijagempe’s tears fell on God Madheshwara who was penancing near Antaranganga (a streamlet near Madheshwara temple) at that time. He perceived the whole situation through his inner-eye. He went to the spot and on hearing her woes removed all the hurdles, turned a plantain leaf into a piece of cloth for naked Nijagempe to wear, and finally hit the seven line-marks with his stick (it is claimed that the stick is still found in Soluru Matha near the temple) converting them into seven snakes. Nijagempe being a barren woman Madheshwara could not accept offerings and food, as the belief goes, from her. She requested Madheshwara to bless her with a child which he did, on condition that the first born son should be given to him. Nijagempe agreed to the proposal and Madheshwara disappeared.

On his return Neela Soliga had suspected his wife’s fidelity. He would not believe her statement that Madheshwara had visited her and asked her to call Him again in his presence. In response to her invocation Madheshwara appeared in the form of a ‘Jangama’, the priest of the Lingayats. Neela Soliga would not believe him to be Madheshwara and tried to beat him. At this Madheshwara disappeared. Nijagempe sent Neela Soliga to meet Madheshwara at Aleru Halla (a streamlet). He went accordingly and saw Madheshwara sitting amidst 100 tigers. Neela Soliga hastened back home and the couple prayed for Madheshwara. The Lord appeared again as a Jangama and assured that they would be blessed with a child.

After a year Nijagempe gave birth to a male child. Another son was born to her, the next year. Madheshwara, as per condition laid down earlier, came to collect the first born son. Neela Soliga hid the child

in the cave but the boy himself came out before Madheshwara. Now the parents requested him to name the children. Madheshwara suggested that the first born may be named Karayya, the second one Billayya while all others born subsequently may be called Karayya’s children.

So, according to the legend, Soligas are the children of Neela Soliga and Nijagempe but their origin was possible because of Karayya through whom, as per the boon of Lord Madheshwara, the subsequent children were born. The same legend has been recorded by Iyer (1931; IV; 593) and Thurston (1909; VI; 379-381) with slight variations. Thurston also informs that Karayya and Billaya or Madheshwara were brothers. The Uralis and Sholagas are descended from Karayya, and Sivacharis (Lingayats) from Madheshwara. (1909; VI; 379-380).

According to another legend, there was a demon by name Savana, who had captured all the deities and had kept them as his servants. Madheshwara came with his mother, Puttarajamma, from Kattura Rajya to the Kingdom of Savana. After a few days Madheshwara went to see Savana when he was called upon to prepare a pair of shoes for the latter. Madheshwara, though angry, told Savana that he would supply the shoes within three months. He prepared a pair of beautiful shoes with wax. After three months as promised, Madheshwara went to Savana who was very happy to see the beautiful pair of shoes. Savana wore the shoes. After a few steps the wax melted and he slipped and fell on the ground. Madheshwara, taking this opportunity tried to hit Savana. Savana was the strongest among the demons and he pulled Madheshwara down and was about to beat him when Karayya, who had accompanied Madheshwara, hit the demon at the joints of his legs and hands and killed him. Then on Madheshwara considered Karayya as one of his faithful devotees and defied him.

A third legend, which is only popular in the Biligirirangana Hills, goes to say that God Biligiriranga Swamy took away a Soligagitti, a beautiful Soliga girl, named Pushumali and all the Soliga, therefore, consider God Biligiriranga as their brother-in-law. Another belief is that the Soliga are the progeny of Karayya and the Tammadis who stay in Madheshwara Hills and function as priests to Soliga, are the progeny of Billayya. It is also believed that originally Tammadis were Bedas when Lord Madheshwara converted them to Lingayats and thenceforth they were called as “Tammadis”.

The place of origin of Soliga is said to be in the Anamalai hills in the Coimbatore District and this inference appears to be justified from the fact that their Kannada dialect has a Tamil accent and also contains several Tamil words. Even their folk songs have several Tamil words in them. This inference is also supported by Iyer (1931: IV; 592).

## II. Distribution and Population Trend

The major concentration of Soliga, as mentioned earlier, is in and around the Biligirirangana Hills and Madheshwara Hills of Mysore district. They are also found in some number in Bangalore and Mandya districts. Though reference of Soliga is made in the Census Reports of 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1931 etc., the population figures are available only for the 1911 Census according to which there were 1897 Soligas, of whom 1796 were enumerated as **Animists** while 101 were returned as Hindus. During 1961 Census, 10,653 Soliga (5,402 males and 5,251 females) have been returned in the State. During the same Census 6,136 souls have been returned from Madras State.

Soliga is essentially a rural community with 99.74% of its population living in rural areas. Only 0.26% with 28 persons (9 males and 19 females) are urban dwellers. This favourably compares with the national rural tribal population of 97.44% and 2.56% urban dwellers. In the State of Mysore, on the other hand, 94.83% of Scheduled Tribes are in rural areas while 5.17% are urban dwellers.

Details of distribution of Soliga population in the State are given in the following table:

District-wise population of Soliga in the State according to 1961 Census:

Name of District	Persons	Percentage	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
1 Mysore . . . . .	9500	89.18	4746	4754
2 Bangalore . . . . .	726	6.81	424	302
3 Mandya . . . . .	340	3.19	189	151
4 Tumkur . . . . .	42	0.39	18	24
5 Shimoga . . . . .	19	0.18	6	13
6 Chikmagalur . . . . .	11	0.10	8	3
7 Hassan . . . . .	7	0.07	5	2
8 Kolar . . . . .	7	0.07	5	2
9 Chitradurga . . . . .	1	0.01	1	..
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>10653</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>5402</b>	<b>5251</b>

Thus, Mysore, Bangalore and Mandya districts account for more than 99% of the Soliga population. Among them, Mysore district alone returned 89.18% comprising 9,500 souls. Even in Mysore district, Kollegal taluk with 4,622, is the area of concentration. Among the other taluks of the district, Chamarajanagar accounts for 1,629, Heggadadevanakote 1,472 and Gundlupet 665. Next in order is Bangalore district with 6.81% of the Soliga population while Mandya district accounts for 3.19%. All the other districts put together returned less than 1% of the total population of the tribe.

The following table throws light on the distribution of Soliga population according to age and sex:—

*Soliga population in the State according to age and sex and their percentages*

Age groups	Males	Percentage	Females	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Sex ratio
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0—14 . . . . .	2351 (43.53)	22.07	2249 (42.83)	21.01	4600 (43.18)	43.18	957
15—44 . . . . .	2182 (40.32)	20.48	2299 (43.78)	21.58	4481 (42.06)	42.06	1054
45 and above . . . . .	867 (16.05)	8.14	700 (13.33)	6.57	1567 (14.71)	14.71	807
Age not stated . . . . .	2 (0.09)	0.02	3 (0.06)	0.03	5 (0.05)	0.05	1500
<b>Total</b>	<b>5402</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>50.71</b>	<b>5251</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>49.29</b>	<b>10653</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>972</b>

Sex-ratio among Soliga is comparatively higher than those prevailing among their neighbouring tribes like Jenu Kuruba and Kadu Kuruba. Among Soliga it is 972 females per 1,000 males while among Jenu Kuruba and Kadu Kuruba there are 949 and 903 females per 1,000 males respectively. The national sex-ratio is 941 females per 1,000 males while in the State of Mysore it is 959 females (973 rural and 913 urban) per 1,000 males. The Soliga, therefore, account for 11 females per 1,000 males more than the general sex-ratio in the State of Mysore or is almost equal to the general rural sex-ratio of the State. However, there is striking fluctuation in the sex-ratio in the successive age-groups of the community.

### III. Physical Characteristics

Thurston has made anthropometric investigations among 20 Sholaga males in 1,894 in the jungles of Coimbatore. According to his findings their average height vertex is 1,593 mm. Cephalic index 74.90 and the Nasal index 85.10 (1909, I; pp. Ixi-Ixiii). Karve, has recorded anthropometric measurements of 40 male Sholagas of Mysore State in the year 1949-50, according to which the mean value of stature of Sholaga is 1,609.7 mm, Cephalic index 73.87; Nasal index 85.85; and facial index 84.98 (1954-45-75).

Somatoscopic observations of 20 Soliga belonging to Vaddaragudi, Punajurli and Bandipura villages of Mysore district were made during the present field investigations. According to these the average height vertex of Soligas is 1,590 mm, the minimum and maximum being 1,478, and 1,665 mm, respectively. The colour of skin varies from medium brown to brown and the formation of hair is of low waves. All the twenty men studied have medium forehead, medium depression at the root of the nose with normal wings. The eye-slit is straight and epicanthic fold absent. They have oval faces with medium chins, lips, prognathism and cheeks.

The overall physical features of Soligas are in no way strikingly different from other communities inhabiting the region. Their resemblance with Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba and Yerava, who are their immediate neighbours, is quite conspicuous.

### IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and other analogous divisions

Observations in the field reveal that nuclear family is the most preferred type among Soligas. With limited

supply of food, clothing and shelter in an unsettled and insecure forest life a Soliga thinks mainly of his wife and children. His day begins with the search for food and ends with it. In such an environment a Soliga cannot think of any one other than his wife and children. Out of the 16 households studied at Vaddaragudi village in Heggadadevanakote taluk, 14 are simple or nuclear families while 2 families are of the intermediate type. The average size of a family in the village is 4.06, the range of membership being 2 to 6.

Ideally, the Soliga family is patrilocal, patripotestal and patrilineal. The woman, after marriage goes to stay with her husband. Immediately after marriage the couple shifts to a separate hut set up by the husband. Even in some of the 'tribal colonies' built by the government it is found that a newly married couple start on a separate hearth in the same quarter after their marriage. However, joint or extended families are not prohibited by tradition. Descent and inheritance of property are always in the male line but generally, except for the inheritance of the father's '**Kul**' or clan there is hardly anything to inherit.

Since the Soliga family is ideally patripotestal the head of the household is always an elderly male member of the family. His decisions in social, religious and economic matters of the family are final. Some amount of sex-wise division of labour is practised among the Soligas. Men go in search of food into the forest while females look after the domestic duties and take care of children. Men go for hunting, fishing, gathering honey or wax etc. At times female members of the family may also frequent to the forest, not far from their dwelling unit, in search of edible roots, fruits and bamboo shoots.

A group of agnatic families of the same lineage living in the same area and having a common headman form a '**Budakattu**'. There is no restriction for the number of families in a '**Budakattu**' and it goes on extending as and when the male members belonging to the **Budakattu** get married and establish their own households. The '**Budakattu**' is exogamous.

Enquiries in the field have revealed that there are three endogamous divisions among the Soligas in the State, namely:

- (a) **Urali-Soliga**. Living in the low lying areas of Biligirirangana Hills and Madheshwara Hills, bordering the forest area.

(b) **Podu Soliga.** Living in the high mountains and in the interior forests of Biligirirangana Hills and Madheshwara Hills.

(c) **Deva Soliga.** Living in the Heggadadevanakote taluk.

The third one has not been recorded in any of the published literature. This section of the Soliga is more sophisticated as compared to the other two divisions. Most of them in the Heggadadevanakote taluk stay either inside the villages or in their vicinity, in separate settlements in clusters. The Deva Soliga of Bandipura game-sanctuary area are economically better-off as many of them are employed by the Forest Department. Iyer mentions four endogamous groups among the Soligas, namely (i) Urali Soligas, (ii) Male Soliga, or those residing on the hills, (iii) Kadu Soliga, or those residing in the forest and serving under the people of the plains; (iv) Urubetti Soliga or Dasayas of the Soliga (of the Kankankote forests) and Burude Soliga\* (1931 IV; p. 594). These divisions have also been mentioned by Rao according to whom the 'Burude Soliga' are the priestly class among them (1961: 166).

An elderly informant in Madheshwara Hills confirms that Podu Soliga and Male (or Malai) Soliga are one and the same. The word 'male' (or malai in Tamil) means hill and since the Podu Soliga reside in dense forests, they are also known as 'Malai Soliga'. The name Podu Soliga has come after the name of their settlements which are known as 'Podu'. 'Podu' is a clearing on the slope of a hill with a water source nearby. It may consist of one house or many. Usually, it is a cluster of 5 to 6 huts. (Rao, 1951, II, 165).

Soliga are also divided into a number of exogamous septs locally known as **Kula**. At different areas the number of **Kulas** followed by each division vary so that, some follow five **Kula**, others seven **Kula** and still some others follow twelve **Kula**. Those who follow five **Kula** are locally known as **eidu Kuladavaru** (the followers of five **Kulas**); those following seven **Kula** are "**Yelu Kuladavaru**" (the followers of seven **Kula**) and those follow twelve **Kula** are **hanneradu Kuladavaru** (the followers of twelve **Kula**). However, the seven **Kula** Soliga and twelve **Kula** Soliga are very few in number and during the field study the

twelve **Kula** Soliga could not be contacted. It is reported that Urali Soliga follow the seven **Kula** system but some of them living in the foothills of the Madheshwara Hills mentioned only five **Kula**. Thus, among Soliga five **Kula** are more common and are found in good number, Podu Soliga of Madheshwara Hills and Deva Soliga of Heggadadevanakote taluk follow five **Kulas**. Observance of five **Kula** by Deva Soliga in Bandipura area of Heggadadevanakote taluk has also been reported. Information regarding the twelve **Kula** Soliga is not available except the hearsay that they adhere to the number 12 in many of their ritual observances such as their birth, puberty and death pollutions last for 12 days, Rs. 12 is paid as bride-price (**Tera**), 12 members bless the child etc. However, it has been observed that many of the five **Kula** Soliga too have such practices.

Even the clear-cut segregation of five **Kula** and seven **Kula** are not to be found due to limited migratory habits of the Soliga and their admixture with different sections of the community since long. Regional variations are also found in the names of five **Kula** in different places. The following is the list of the names of five **Kula** with their variations found in different regions:—

*Variation in the names of clans in different regions of Mysore district*

Sl. No.	Names of clans found in		
	Heggadadevanakote Taluk	Madheshwara Hills	Biligirirangana Hills
1	2	3	4
1	Belli Kula	Belluru Kula	Belleru Kula
2	Bangara Kula	Hongaluru Kula	Chalikiri Kula
3	Chinna Kula	Surya Kula	Suri or Turi Kula
4	Ari Kula	Aluru Kula	Aleru Kula
5	Teneru Kula	Teneru Kula	Teneru Kula

From the above it may be noted that **Teneru (Tene** is *Setaria italica*) **Kula** and **Belli** (Silver) **Belluru** or **Belleru Kula** are found in all the above three mentioned regions in the district. **Aluru** or **Aleru Kula** and **Surya Kula** and **Suri** or **Turi Kula** are found in both the hill regions but not in Heggadadevanakote taluk. **Bangara Kula** and **Chinna Kula** in Heggadadevanakote taluk refer to gold (**Bangara** and **chinna** in Kannada means "gold"). **Ari Kula** found among the Soliga of Heggadadevanakote has not been reported from the other two regions. Instead **Aluru Kula** and **Aleru Kula** have been reported. It was learnt

\*Though Iyer speaks of four groups he mentions five groups including this.

during the field investigations that **Aluru** or **Aleru** refers to milk (**Alu** equivalent to **Halu** meaning 'milk' in Kannada). Iyer, (1931; IV; 594) however, mentions that **Aluru** refers to the banian tree (**Ala** means banian tree in Kannada). Iyer has mentioned about **Jangaluru Kula** among the Soliga except those living in Biligirirangana Hills. Instead of **Jangaluru Kula**, **Hongaluru Kula** is reported from Madheshwara Hills during the field investigations. Iyer has also mentioned that **Belluru Kula**, **Jangaluru Kula** and **Aluru Kula** are 'brother Kulas' who trace their ancestors from males.

Information on the mythical origin of the different **Kula** of the five **Kula** Soliga shows that each has a presiding deity of its own. Some of the clans are also totemistic. The following are the mythical origin of the different **Kula**.

(i) **Hongaluru Kula**: Siddeshwara is the presiding deity of this sept. This deity is believed to have emerged out of a stone located in Palamalai Hills. The belief runs that some Soliga were cutting the **Honge** tree near a stone when the deity emerged. Since then they became members of this **Kula**. **Honge** tree is the totem of the members of this **Kula** and they neither cut or burn it.

(ii) **Aluru Kula**: The presiding deity of this **Kula** is Madheshwara. God Madheshwara was enquiring from a Soliga about something while he was milching the cow. (**Alu** or **Halu** in Kannada means milk). Thus, this Soliga and his descendents became members of **Aluru Kula**. The presiding deity of this **Kula** in Biligirirangana Hills is said to be **Kyathedevaru**.

(iii) **Belluru Kula**: Pandeshwara is the presiding deity of this sept. This deity is said to reside in Devarabetta (the name of a mountain) in Bhanali taluk of Coimbatore District in Madras State, while Lord Pandeshwara was enquiring about Soliga's **Kula**. When the Asaris or Acharis, an artisan community of gold and silversmiths in the state, were working on silver. (**Belli** in Kannada means silver). So the name of this **Kula** came to be known as **Belli kula**. The members belonging to this **Kula** do not use silver for anklets.

(iv) **Suri or Turi and Surya Kula**: The Presiding deity for this **Kula** is Brahmeshwara or Barameshwara. The abode of this deity is in the village Matalli in Kollegal taluk. **Suri** or **Turi**, the same as **Churi** or a knife (**Churi** means knife in Kannada) was in the hands of some Soliga when Brahmeshwara was enquiring about their **Kula**. Since then they adopted this

name for their **Kula**. In Biligirirangana Hills the presiding deity of this **Kula** is **Surya**, Sun, and the members belonging to this **Kula** worship the Sun.

(v) **Teneru Kula**: Madheshwara is the presiding deity of this **Kula**. While Lord Madheshwara was enquiring about the **Kula** of some Soliga, they were carrying bundles of ragi or **Ten** (**Tene** is *Setaria italica*) on their heads and so they come to be called as **Teneru Kula**. In Biligirirangana Hills, the presiding deity of this **Kula** is **ragi** (*Elesusine Coracane*). The members belonging to this **Kula** salute **ragi** corn before harvesting them.

Five **Kula** Soliga claim themselves to be superior to the Seven **Kula** Soliga and their claim is valid only to this extent of their contact with other Hindu castes and is also reinforced by their better economic conditions. The five **Kula** Soliga: particularly Deva Soliga and some of the Podu Soliga stay near villages and work as agricultural labourers to the villagers. They therefore, lead a more settled life and are better fed and clad as compared to their brethren living in the forests and hill-tops. Those living along with other castes in villages have acquired many of the cultural traits of high caste Hindu of the region in respect of observance of pollution, marriage, birth, festivals and worship of Hindu deities. Within the different **Kulas** no hierarchy or status was observed during the present study. In the Madras Census Report of 1931, however, it was mentioned that the socio-political leaders of Soliga, known as **Yejamanas**, were selected from a particular **Kula** and their assistants known as **Chik Yejmanas** were from an inferior **Kula**. It was also reported in the same source that from Biligirirangana Hills the **Yejmanas** was selected from the **Chalikiri Kula**. For marriage, no preference is given to any particular **Kula**. After marriage a woman acquires her husband's **Kula**.

As mentioned earlier, being a patrilineal society, the Soliga give more importance to the agnates. All the rituals and ceremonies are conducted in consultation with the latter. **Podu** or **Budakattu** is based on patrilineage or agnatic principle. This, however, does not mean that relatives from mother's side are left out during social functions. In fact, the maternal uncle has some important roles to perform during puberty rite, marriage and death.

#### V. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornaments and other material objects distinctive of the community

Soliga settlements do not present much uniformity in different areas. In Haggadadevanakote taluk and

Gundulpet taluk they are known as **hadi**, where a number of families belonging to different **budakattus** reside. The term **hadi** is not exclusively used for the settlements of the Soliga only; but is also used while referring to the settlements of Jenu Kurubas, Betta Kurubas, Yeravas and other forest tribes. There is no restriction to the number of families or **budakattus** in one **hadi**. There is an **Yejamana** in each **hadi** who deals with the socio-religious problems of that **hadi** with the assistance of other officials. The **hadi** of the Soliga is more or less a permanent settlement unlike the **podu**, the settlement of the **podu** Soliga residing in the forest and hill-tops. Generally, one **Podu** consists of limited number of families of agnates and it shifts its location on and off. A **hadi** is always located near a settled village of the caste Hindus and the members of it depend mostly on the village for their food and employment. Since forest is their traditional source of livelihood, the Soliga **hadis** are mainly found attached to the villages bordering forests. Some **hadis** near Kakanakote forest areas are found to be almost isolated on the hill slopes. A **hadi** may be 2-3 miles away from a particular village, but will be known after the village to which it is supposed to be attached. It is because of the fact that most of the Soliga of this **hadi** eke out their living from that village. The settlements in a **hadi** consist of irregular cluster of hutments with an open ground in the centre.

On some of the hillocks of Madheshwara Hills are found some sprinkled hutments which look more like farm houses. These belong to the families who own land on the hill slopes where they practice terrace cultivation.

Another type of settlement is the one introduced by the Government in which the residential quarters are built in a linear pattern. It seems that in such settlements, the Soliga are not so much attracted by the new type of houses, they are more attracted by the other facilities like the availability of agricultural lands, subsidies for agricultural implements, and seeds, etc. In addition to these, the educational facilities provided by the Government also seem to be a source of attraction for some Soliga.

Except for the sprinkled hutments attached to agricultural lands as mentioned above, generally the Soliga houses, both in the **hadis** and the **podus**, are huddled together.

The Soliga do not appear to suffer from the stigma of untouchability and always stay along with clean Hindu castes like Lingayats, Aradhyas, Shetti,

Tammadi etc., and are rarely found living by the side of the settlements of Scheduled Castes. They may also stay alongwith other forest tribes like Jenu Kurubas, Betta Kuruba, Yarava, and so on.

Cattle-sheds are put up attached to the front or by the side of the dwelling units. The shape and the material used for building a cattle-shed is almost the same as that of the residential huts. The only difference is that the former may or may not have side walls.

No elaborate ritual is observed by the Soliga at the time of selecting the site for a hut, making the ground plan, putting the plinth or at the time of first inhabiting it. However, flowers and fruits including a coconut are offered to their clan deity at the time of commencement of the construction of the hut and again after they begin to live in the house after the completion of its construction.

The common shape of a dwelling unit, locally known as '**gullu**', is rectangular with a narrow and low entrance and the roof slopes down projecting over the entrance. There is no specific direction for the entrance. At the four corners strong bamboo poles of uniform length are planted and the side walls are made of woven split bamboo mats of check pattern. The tops of the four poles are joined by four bamboo poles placed horizontally. Bamboo poles of required size used for the roof are conically joined from either sides starting from the tops of the ground-posts. The roof is thatched with leaves and grass.

The thatching is repaired or replaced every 3-4 years, when it gets decayed by rain. The side walls of bamboo mats are never plastered. Generally, two compartments are made in a hut with bamboo mat partition, one of them, which is the smaller, serves the purpose of the kitchen, the other one serves as the living room. The various household goods are also stored in living room. The floor is cleaned often and is daubed with cow-dung. There is hardly any provision for ventilation. Three stones of the same size planted in a triangle at one corner of the kitchen serve as the hearth. The front portion of the hut is used for sleeping where fire is normally kept burning during the night.

Sometimes, the **Podu** Soliga make their hut in between two big blocks of rocks or stones which serve as two side-walls and the rear and the front are covered with split-bamboo mats while the roof is, as usual, covered with leaves, grass, etc. A narrow entrance

is left in the front. There will not be more than 3-4 such huts at one place, each one occupied by a family belonging to the same **Budakattu**.

No structure, to serve the purpose of a latrine is made in the settlement. Nearby jungle serves the purpose. Small children, however, are allowed to defecate inside the hut which is removed by the female members. Source of drinking water is a nearby river, streamlet or a tank.

The Soliga rear cats and dogs as pets.

### Dress

Soliga dress is very simple. Conventional dress of men include a loin cloth extending up to the knees, known as **mundu**. The younger ones may, however, use a shirt and in place of **mundu**, a tailored half pant like under garment of cheap cloth. According to them, the latter is cheaper than **mundu**. The Soliga males living in **podus** wear scanty dress, normally a short loin cloth extending up to the knee.

The traditional dress of females is a cotton coloured sari wrapped around their body. The upper border on the back and the front may be pulled up, to cover the bosom and is secured by a knot on the right shoulder. Sometimes they use a short string which helps in securing the border on both the sides. In this pattern of wearing the garment no folds are formed in the front. This method is still followed among the backward sections of Soliga living in the outlying forests. The usual dress of Soliga women living in the **hadis**, attached to villages is a woven coloured cheap sari worth less than Rs. 10 and a ready-made cheap blouse worth Re. 1 or Rs. 1.25. Mostly the same pair of clothes are used continuously till these become completely worn out. Usually a full length Sari of 6 or 8 yards is cut into two equal pieces and worn in the traditional way.

The children of both sexes upto the age of 5-6 years, usually do not wear any dress, or at best they are seen in the old rags left out by the elderly members of the family. However, this phenomenon has been considerably reduced in the areas where the Tribal Welfare Department has opened Residential (or Ashrama) Schools where along with free primary education the children are provided free garment and mid-day meal.

No special ceremonial dress is used by the members of the community. None wears foot-wear of any sort or any type of headgear.

### Ornaments

It is believed that in the past both males and females used to wear a number of ornaments, but now few do so. In case of the males particularly, this is mainly due to change in their outlook. The ornaments commonly used by females are rings, ear-rings, nose-screws, anklets, bracelets and neck ornaments. A few of them are described below.

1. **Besari**: It is a nose-screw of brass, studded with three or five stones of cheap variety. It has two parts. The upper part has a thin hollow brass cylinder, 1/4 inch long, at one end of which the stones are studded. The inner side of this cylinder has anticlockwise screws. The lower part is a thin brass rod with clockwise screws over its body and having a knob at the lower end. When the upper part of the **Besari** is inserted in the nosehole from above, the portion studded with stones fits over the nose. Then the metal rod of the lower part is inserted from inside the nostril into the cylinder of the upper part of the ornament with screw mechanism. It costs about a rupee or two.

2. **Muga Battu**: This is also a nose-screw, the mechanism of which almost resembles the **Besari**. The only difference is that it has only one stone studded to it. The woman gets this ornament from her husband's family at the time of marriage. This is expected to be of gold, but being poor, many Soliga women wear **Muga battus** of brass.

3. **Wale**: This (ear-stud) is an ornament worn in the ear-lobe. The mechanism is the same as that of **Besari**. Five, seven or nine stones or pearls of cheap variety are studded on it. It is made of brass and costs less than a couple of rupees.

4. **Karimani**: **Karimani** means a black bead. Tiny black beads strung on cotton threads usually in two rows, and worn around the neck by married women go by the name **Karimani**. **Tali** or marriage-badge, is strung along with **Karimani**. **Tali** is either flat, round or concave in shape. A **Karimani** may also be worn sometimes without the **Tali**.

5. **Sara (Bead necklace)**: **Sara** is a necklace with beads of different hues. This ornament appears to have lost its popularity and none is seen using it now-a-days. It was reported to be a very common ornament till last decade.

6. **Kadaga**: **Kadaga** are silver bangles, which formed one of the essential ornaments received by a woman from her husband during marriage. The frequency of their use has been considerably reduced now and hardly any woman is seen with **Kadagas** in her hands.

7. **Kalu Chain**: Chains of aluminium used by young girls around their ankles are known as **Kalu chains**. Very few have been observed using them. A pair of them cost Rs. 2 to 3.

8. **Kala muri**: It is a solid round anklet of aluminium or silver. It is also not commonly used now-a-days.

9. **Kalungura**: These are toe-rings of silver but not in vogue now. The women belonging to **Belli Kula** never wear silver ornaments on their legs.

10. **Dabu**: It is a silver ornament worn around the waist over sari. This is also not in vogue now-a-days.

11. **Bale**: These are cheap glass-bangles worn by all Soliga women.

Some of the above mentioned ornaments are not peculiar to the Soliga community only, but are worn by the members of other castes and communities in the region, including the socially advanced castes.

### Tattooing

Tattooing (**Hasaru Hoisikolluvadu**) is still found among Soliga men and women, though its importance is considerably reduced. The Soliga believe that tattooing cures diseases like **Vayuroga** (Dyspepsia). Males get tattooed on their forearms motifs of snake, scorpion, star, **rath** (chariot) etc. Sometimes the names of their beloved friends are tattooed. Females get their foreheads, chins, cheeks, forearms, backside of the palms and the arms tattooed with geometrical designs, flower motifs, stars, **rath** (chariot) figures of birds, pet animals and so on.

Women belonging to **Burude Besta** community do tattooing for the Soliga and other communities. First, the designs are drawn on the part of the body to be tattooed with some green liquid extracted from certain plant and then the actual tattooing is done with needles. Seven needles are used in the process. It is the usual practice that the remuneration for tattooing is paid by another person at whose instance the tattooing is done.

The **Burude Besta** woman gets her remuneration in cash or kind which may be valued at fifty paise. The practice is being continued unabated.

In olden days there was a practice among the women to blacken their teeth by using a green powder known as **Halla Kappu** or **Hallittu** (which means black teeth in Kannada).

### Hair do

Some men crop their hair while some shave the frontal portion of the head and tie the remaining tress of hair into a knot behind the head.

Women grow their hair long and keep them knotted at the back. Not much care is taken and hence their hair get matted giving a frizzly appearance. However, a few, once in a while, apply coconut oil and do their hair with the help of long wooden combs called **Sirunagi**. Some change in hair dress, however, is discernible among the younger generation. Particularly the young girls, living in residential schools, regularly apply oil and plait their hair. The boys too keep their hair oiled, neat and clean.

### Food and Drink

The Soliga, particularly those residing in forests, do not follow any fixed timings for their meals. Their day starts with the quest for food and ends with it.

The staple food of the Soliga is **ragi** (Eleusine Coracana), a kind of millet. Ragi flour is mixed with water, boiled and when it turns out into a paste is consumed after adding some salt and chillies to taste. **Mudde** may be taken alone or with some vegetable dishes. Leaf preparations, called **Sppu**, form an important item of their dietary. The leaves are boiled and salt and chillies added to taste. Some of the common leaves used by them are, **Anne Soppu**, **Kadumallige Soppu**, **Kare Soppu** etc. Other forest produce which form part of their food are tender bamboo shoots, fruits, honey, edible roots like yams, etc. Yams (dioscorea) are called **genasu** in Kannada and there are several varieties among them. Some of them are very big in size and are consumed after either baking or boiling with a little milk and jaggery. Some common wild varieties of Yams are:

(a) **Benne (Butter) Genasu**: This variety grows upto about 8 inches in diameter and about a foot in length. One has to dig about four to five feet to uproot a yam of this type. **Benne Genasu** may be baked and eaten after adding a little salt or jaggery.

(b) **Nore Genasu**: Like **Benne Genasu**, this is also big in size. It has small prickly thorns on its body. It is cut into big pieces after removing the thorns and baked. The baked stuff may be mixed with milk and jaggery and eaten.

(c) **Nave Genasu**, and **Belare Genasu** are two other varieties met with in plenty.

Soliga are non-vegetarians and eat all varieties of flesh. In Madheshwara Hills they eat the flesh of goat, sheep, deer, porcupine, stag, black monkey, pork (preferably of wild boar called, **Kadu Handi**), rabbit and crab. In Heggadadevanakote taluk, Soliga do not eat the flesh of monkeys. They eat the dead animals killed by tigers and leopards in the jungles. They refrain from eating beef jackals and kites. Among birds, they eat chicken, cuckoo, parrot, peacock, duck and wild pigeon. Fish is a delicacy for them and they catch fish from the rivulets and streamlets with the help of **Makri**, a kind of small net. **Makri** is a basket shaped contrivance with a wide mouth having a cylindrical projection sprouting from the centre of the convex surface to which end a net made of twined cotton thread is tied. At the tip of the cylindrical projection there is a small opening. The wide mouth of the **makri** is held dipped into water against the current in the river or the streamlet. The fish that come into the mouth of the **makri** are pushed in through the cylindrical projection and then into the net through the small opening by the strong current of water. The fish, thus, collected in the net are removed and cooked.

Soliga are teetotallers and refrain from any intoxicating drinks even at ceremonial occasions. They say that it is forbidden by their custom and are afraid of their deities being provoked if they do so. Tea and coffee find favour with them but may consume only when offered by somebody. They are found to visit often the local tea-stalls and beg for tea or coffee. Men smoke bidies whenever offered by others.

#### Other Material Objects

The Soliga cook their food mostly in earthen pots. A few households however, possess aluminium utensils which they use only for serving food.

Their household possessions are meagre. Besides a few utensils and some tattered clothes kept in an old wooden box, they have very few material possessions worth mentioning. Axes (**Kudlu**), sickles, iron scrapers and digging sticks possessed by a few are

carried whenever they go out into the jungle to collect food or to cut firewood.

Soliga tribal head, called **Yejamana**, keeps some **mudras** (symbols of deities), a **burude**, a dried up gourd for being used as a rattle when invoking the spirits, they also keep some other articles required for socio-religious purposes. Almost every Soliga household possesses a **ragi-kallu** for grinding cereals.

#### VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic habits, Disease and Treatment

The Soliga attach very little importance to the cleanliness of their settlements (**hadis**) and hutments (**gullus**). As regards personal hygiene they are almost wholly unconcerned. Except the central portion of the **hadi**, which is kept better swept due to constant use, the area all around the huts and nearabout the **hadi** is covered with garbage, dirt and other waste material. Young children answer the call of nature just around the **hadi** which makes the physical environment filthy and stinking. The position is aggravated during rainy season when the small ditches filled with dirt around the hut start emitting foul smell due to stagnant water. As far as the environmental sanitation is concerned, those living in the Government agricultural colonies stand almost on par with their brethren living elsewhere.

It has been reported that the Soliga take bath only occasionally. They do not clean their teeth or wash clothes and other household utensils regularly.

Diseases and ailments are often attributed to the wrath of some deities like Maramma, Yellamma, etc. Soliga believe in soothsaying and often they invoke the spirits and sacrifice fowls to find out the causes of ailments, diseases, difficulties, etc. They have much faith in black magic and believe that it can cause disease. An elderly person in the **hadi** who happens to be conversant with medicinal herbs treats the patient. Being nature's children, they are not easily susceptible to diseases. Recently a good number of them, particularly those staying near bigger villages, have started taking to modern medical help provided by the Government.

#### VII. Language and Literacy

The mother-tongue of majority of Soliga is Kannada which also happens to be the regional language. They converse fluently in Kannada among

themselves as well as with outsiders. However, chastity of the language depends upon the locale. Those living near the caste villages speak comparatively better Kannada when compared to their counterparts living in the interior. The language spoken by Podu Soliga is not easily intelligible to a Kannada speaking person as it contains more of Tamil words and is spoken with a Tamil slant.

The 1961 Census data provide much insight into the linguistic affiliation of the Soliga. According to

these, it has been found that barring a few, almost all (89.89) speak Kannada as their mother-tongue. An insignificant number returned Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Tulu, Konkani, Gujarati and Malayalam as their mother-tongue, obviously influenced by the neighbouring communities. In all these cases, however, it has been reported that most of them also speak Kannada as a subsidiary language. The following table gives the distribution of Soliga population according to their mother-tongue and subsidiary languages spoken as reported in the 1961 Census.

*Mother-tongue and Bi-lingualism of Soliga  
(figures in brackets are percentages)*

Sl. No.	Mother-tongue	Total	Male	Female	Subsidiary Language		
1	2	3	4	5	6		
					Male	Female	
1	Kannada . . . . .	9576 (89.89)	4911	4665	Telugu . . . . .	83	99
					Tamil . . . . .	48	11
					Malayalam . . . . .	14	10
					Total . . . . .	145	120
2	Tamil . . . . .	536 (5.04)	304	232	Kannada . . . . .	67	5
					Telugu . . . . .	..	1
					Total . . . . .	67	6
3	Telugu . . . . .	509 (4.78)	171	338	Kannada . . . . .	96	281
					Tamil . . . . .	1	..
					Total . . . . .	97	281
4	Malayalam . . . . .	16 (0.15)	11	5	Kannada . . . . .	5	3
5	Gujarati . . . . .	5 (0.05)	5	..	Kannada . . . . .	5	..
6	Konkani . . . . .	7 (0.07)	..	7	Kannada . . . . .	..	4
7	Tulu . . . . .	3 (0.03)	..	3	..	..	3
8	Marathi . . . . .	1 (0.01)	..	1	Kannada . . . . .	..	1
	<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>10653</b>	<b>5402</b>	<b>5251</b>	<b>733</b> <b>(6.80%)</b>	<b>319</b> <b>(2.99)</b>	<b>414</b> <b>(3.89)</b>

The table reveals that the total percentage of Soliga who speak and understand Kannada, either as mother-tongue or as a subsidiary language comes to 94.26 per cent while there are only 5.74 per cent who do not speak Kannada either as mother-tongue or as subsidiary language.

Literacy rate and levels of education attained by the Soliga is shockingly poor. Since centuries they lived in the forests and were, thus, deprived of the

facilities to acquaint themselves with the three Rs. Since independence efforts to spread literacy among the Soliga by the Government agencies do not seem to have made much headway. This is revealed from the information collected in the last Census.

During 1961 Census, 202 out of a total 10,653 Soliga or 1.90% were returned as literate. When compared to the mean literacy of the Scheduled Tribes of the State which works out to 8.4% the Soliga were

found to trail very much behind. Jenu Kuruba and Kadu Kuruba, the immediate neighbours of Soliga, fared better in literacy with 4.89% and 4.99% respectively during the same Census. In terms of their sex-wise break-up, it was found that while 3.32% of the males were returned as literate only 0.33% of the females claimed to belong to this category. If effective literacy is considered separately, the position is much more dismal. Out of the 202 persons, returned as literate, except for 3 males and 2 females who were returned as literates with primary or junior basic standard, the rest were as literate without any educational standard. In the urban areas lived 28 Soliga of which 5 (4 males and 1 female) persons were returned as literate.

During the last decade the State Government in its effort to spread education among the Scheduled Tribes has opened many Residential Schools with provisions for boarding and lodging. The boarders are also provided with free books and clothing. It appears that this has gone well with the tribes and more and more Soliga children have taken to education.

### VIII. Economic Life

The overwhelming majority of the Soliga of Mysore State are engaged in cultivation. A number of them also follow other occupations like collection of forest produce, labour in the Forest Department (in connection with felling, planting and maintenance of trees) etc. Though there is no clear cut division of labour based on sex the males do comparatively heavy jobs like hunting, trapping, fishing, felling of trees, shifting (**kumri**) or terrace cultivation, collection of honey and so on while the women-folk, besides attending to domestic chores and looking after children, move about in search of edible roots, green vegetables, tender bamboo shoots etc. when they find time.

Since long, forest has been an eternal source of food for the Soliga and other forest tribes. In the past, they used to enjoy much freedom and liberty in exploiting the forest produce. Recently, the Forest Department has placed several restrictions on hunting and utilising of the forest produce by the forest tribes. These restrictions have placed considerable strain on the freedom of the tribal folk and has resulted, it is reported, in the unauthorised exploitation of minor forest produce by them. On the other hand, it is the Forest Department of the State Government that has provided some employment opportunity for the tribes. The department engages them as forest labourers and

also permits them to do some cultivation for short periods in the newly laid teak plantations of the Department which, in local parlance, is known as **coup**. According to an understanding reached between the Department and the forest tribes, the latter are also permitted to raise **ragi** or other short-term crops in between the planted teak saplings for a period of two years, thus, providing constant protection to the saplings. Thus, this arrangement mutually benefits the Forest Department as well as the tribal folk, the former getting constant protection to their teak saplings and the latter besides wages for planting and weeding also raise minor crops.

It is reported that some **Podu Soliga** stealthily grow hemp out of which **bhang**, an intoxicant is prepared. When ripe it is supplied to the merchants who frequent these areas.

It is reported that in former days some Soliga who lived in the outlying forests practised shifting cultivation locally known as **Kumri**. In this type of cultivation the forest vegetation is cleared and allowed to be dried up. Just before rains they are burnt and the ash is spread. With the onset of monsoon the earth is loosened with the help of digging sticks and hoes. **Ragi** seeds are broadcast and allowed to grow unattended. After harvest the stumps are again burnt to provide manure for the next crop. After a couple of years the site is abandoned and another patch of land is cleared and used for **kumri**. This type of cultivation is held as injurious to forest wealth and is, therefore, prohibited by the Forest Department. The other tribes who practise **Kumri**, were the **Jenu Kurubas** and **Betta Kurubas**. Some of the Soliga of Madheshwara and Biligirirangana Hills own some terrace land on the hill slopes. These lands being rugged, cultivation can only be done in small patches, where vegetables and some **ragi** are raised using digging sticks or iron hoes.

For the last one or two decades, the Social and Tribal Welfare Department is trying to 'rehabilitate' the forest tribes including the Soliga. Agricultural Colonies are organised by distributing **Darkhast** land to the members along with some financial assistance to procure bullocks, carts, agricultural implements, seeds, etc. A few of them in such colonies, besides cultivating land, keep goats, poultry and cattle. Plantain groves are maintained by some, where inferior varieties of plantains are raised.

Occasionally, the Soliga resort to fishing in the near about streams with the help of a small net **Makri**

which is manipulated by a single person. Though, hunting is prohibited by the Forest Department, several Soliga are found moving in the forest with their dogs presumably for hunting. They carry with them implements like axe, sharp wooden sticks, sharp stones, etc. In the month of **Ashadh** (June-July) honey is collected. They also collect some minor forest produce like **Arlekai**, **Antalkai**, **Nellikai**, **Hunasekai**, (tamarind) **Sigekai** (Shekoy; Acacia Concinna) **Hasisunthi** etc. Some of them collect a kind of grass which is used in making brooms. They supply this grass to contractors and obtain provisions in exchange.

Many of the Soliga of Bandipura and Kakanakote forest areas are employed as Forest Guards and Watchmen in the Forest Department. A number of them are also employed as labourers by the same Department. Since they get regular income in the form of either monthly salaries or daily wages, their economic condition is comparatively better than that of the Soliga living in other areas of the State. They are better fed, clothed and settled. The daily wages for the forest labourers is Rs. 1.50 per male and Re. 1 per female. A child is paid 75 nP. per day.

Besides the above avocations, majority of the Soliga in the State work as agricultural coolies with the local farmers on daily wages or on contract basis for a year or more. The contract system is called '**Jeetha**' and is common among the Soliga of Madheshwara Hills and Biligirirangana Hills. According to this system, a person works under his employer for a pre-determined period which may range between one and five years or even more. A **Jeetha** labourer is provided with shelter, food, clothes and some money as per the provisions of the contract. On the expiry of the contract, the **Jeetha** labourer may renew the

terms of his service or may seek employment elsewhere. There are also some cases where a person who has obtained a loan is expected to work for the latter till he pays back the debt. But there are instances wherein a borrower having failed to redeem the loan with interest in time has to serve his master for generations. This system, however, is not peculiar to the Soliga only; it is prevalent among many of the economically backward communities of the region.

Information on the occupational pattern of the Soliga is available in the 1961 Census returns. According to the same, out of the total Soliga population of the State 50.49 per cent are workers and 49.51 percent are non-workers. If examined sex-wise, 29.93 per cent of the workers are males and 20.56 per cent are females.

As reported earlier, there are only 28 (9 males and 19 females) urban dwellers among the Soliga in the State; out of those 8 males and 2 females are workers and 1 male and 17 females are non-workers. The industrial classification of urban dwelling Soliga, indicates that 5 males are engaged in household industry while one male is working in manufacturing other than household industry. One male is found employed in Trade and Commerce while another is reported to be under other services. In case of urban dwelling working females, one is employed in household industry while another is reported to be in other services.

The details of the rural workers under different industrial categories are furnished in the following tables:

*Rural workers belonging to Soliga in each industrial category and special occupation stated as per cent of total workers*

Category of Workers	Workers					
	Total workers			Stated as per cent of total workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Percentage	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultivator	2492	1598	894	46.41	29.76	16.65
Agricultural labourers	1627	1035	892	35.89	19.28	16.61
Forestry, hunting and plantation	123	99	24	2.29	1.84	0.45
Household industry	109	89	20	2.03	1.66	0.37
Manufacturing	13	15	8	0.24	0.09	0.15
Construction	2	2	..	0.04	0.04	..
Trade and Commerce	45	21	24	0.84	0.39	0.45
Transport, Storage and Communication	3	3	..	0.96	0.06	..
Other Services	655	329	326	12.20	6.13	6.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>5369</b>	<b>3181</b>	<b>2188</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>59.25</b>	<b>40.75</b>

The table reveals that overwhelming majority, (82.30%), of the Soliga are engaged in the agricultural sector. A good number of them, 46.41% have been returned under the category of owner cultivators which appear to include those living in the Government sponsored agricultural farms having been provided with **Darkhasth** land for cultivation.

The table also shows that considerable number of Soliga have taken occupations other than agriculture. For instance, 12.20% of the workers are in other services. During the field investigation it was found that there were a number of persons engaged in government services, at various levels, including white collar jobs, who were included in this category. There were also a few persons who were returned under the industrial category of trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication and manufacture.

A comparison of the participation rates of males and females in different industrial categories provides interesting insight about the economic development of the Soliga. In the agricultural sector the participation rate is almost the same for both the sexes, 81.28% in case of the males and 81.62% in case of the females. But, if this is broken into the categories of cultivation and agricultural labour, in the former case the males predominate to the extent of over 10% while in the latter case the females dominate to the extent of 8.22%.

In forestry, hunting and plantation, household industry, construction, transport and storage the males predominate. In other services, trade and commerce and manufacturing, the females are more in number.

The non-working population of the Soliga comprises 49.51% (20.77% males and 28.74% females) in the State. Sex-wise, out of the total Soliga males 40.97% are non-workers while among the females 58.29% are not gainfully employed. This non-working population includes full-time students, unemployed and others seeking employment, physically handicapped and diseased, disabled persons due to old age and infants, and also those engaged in household activities. The statistics collected during 1961 Census show that out of the 49.51% population consisting the non-workers, full-time students account for only 3.79%. None has been returned as seeking employment for the first time, though .74% have returned as seeking employment and who were employed earlier.

## IX. Life Cycle

**Birth:**—It is popularly believed by the Soliga that a child is a gift of God. Barren women are considered

unfortunate and inauspicious. Miscarriage and still-birth are attributed to the wrath of God and every effort is made to avert such misfortunes. These may, sometimes, happen, it is believed, as a result of black magic, in which case the sorcerer responsible for the misfortune is brought to book. Barren women are sometimes treated with indigenous medicines. It is reported that there are a few elderly men in Biligirirangana Hills who are reputed in this art. But even after much persuasion the informants refused to mention the names of such medicinemen, possibly, because of fear.

An enquiry about deliberate prevention of birth evoked and response that it was never resorted to.

Infant death is considered as the revenge of some angry spirit and hence all the members of the **hadi** leave the settlement for a few days in case of such death. Formerly, they used to desert the **hadi** for three months believing that the place would be hunted by a malevolent spirit during this period. This practice is now dying out.

Though male child is preferred, the female child is not disliked.

Stoppage of menstruation is taken as an indication of pregnancy. First delivery takes place at the women's natal home. Some member from her natal home comes and invites her in the 7th month of her pregnancy. Before leaving her husband's house, a ceremony called **Basira Hosage** is performed; the expenses of which are met by her natal folk. The ceremony comes to a close with the waving of a consecrated flame (**aarti**) and a feast to the members of the community. Offering of **aarti** appears to be a custom borrowed from other Hindu castes of the region. All the succeeding deliveries of the women take place at her husband's place.

During the period of pregnancy, the woman is subjected to certain taboos with respect to food. Light food like par-boiled rice and **ragi mudde** are preferred while food which is hard to digest, like bamboo-shoots, are avoided. During this period she consumes less of non-vegetarian food. She may also be exempted from doing hard physical labour.

During delivery, the woman is attended to by an elderly woman belonging to the same community, or in her absence, one from the neighbourhood. Delivery normally takes place in the living room over a mat or some clothes spread on the floor. Assistance

by the Maternity Health Assistants provided by the Tribal or Social Welfare Department is also sometimes availed of in case of necessity.

After delivery, the umbilical cord is severed with a **kudlu** (sickle) by the woman who assists the enceinte. The placenta is now mixed with grass, leaves etc., rolled into a bundle and tied up with some string. This is carried by the husband and deposited amidst thorny plants in the jungle.

Warm water bath is given to the mother after delivery. The child is also bathed in tepid water after a few days. During the first three days the child is given a little castor-oil and after that it is fed with mother's milk. The mother eats boiled rice known as **Kusalakkianaa** which is believed to be easily digestible. Even salt is not mixed with food for 7 days. For a few days she is given only boiled and cooled water. Then onwards normal food stuff are given.

Thurston has recorded an interesting account of the treatment of the expectant mother in former days. "I am told that Sholagas of Burghur Hills have a very extraordinary way of treating expectant mothers. A few days before the event is expected to take place, the husband takes his wife right away into the jungle, and leaves her there alongwith three day's supply of food. There she has to stay, and do the best she can for herself. If she does not come back at the end of the three days, the husband goes out and takes her more food. But she may not return to her village till the baby is born. When one of these unfortunate creatures comes back safely, there is a great celebration in her honour, with beating of tom-tom etc." (1909, VI, pp. 382-383). However, the field enquiries have revealed that such customs have become as a thing of the past.

**Pollution (Sutaka)** lasts for 12 days among the Soliga of Heggadadevanakote while the Soliga of Madheshwara Hills observed it only for three days. Pollution is observed not only by the members of the household where the delivery has taken place, but also by the members of the husband's family. After the pollution period old earthen pots are replaced by new ones. There is no specific ceremony observed in this respect. They collect sacred water from Jangam or Tammadis or from the priests of the Biligirangana Temple or Madheshwara temple and consecrate the house. Some water is also sprinkled over the mother and the new born child, and then onwards they can move anywhere in the house.

**Naming Ceremony.**—Among the Soliga of Heggadadevanakote taluk naming ceremony is done on the 12th day after the birth of the child at the mother's natal home. The husband and other relatives join the occasion. The ceremony is done at night. The **Yejamana** of the mother's natal **hadi** selects the name and calls the child by that name for the first time. The names of grand-fathers, grand-mothers or other ancestors and those of gods are preferred. Before that, on the 5th or 9th day, the child is put on a bamboo cradle. The naming ceremony in Madheshwara Hills is observed in a different way. The child is named on the 5th day when 5 members belonging to 5 different kula are invited to name the child. Ancestral spirits are invoked at night and one of the members belonging to the 5 kulas is possessed by the spirit who spells out the name to be given to the child. Yet another method is that the mother and the child go to the temple of Madheshwara after bath where the Tammadi offers **Tirtha**, the holy water, to them and also pronounces the name of the child. The second method has become more common in Madheshwara Hills now-a-days. The common names given for males are Dasa, Mara, Kitta, Betta, Basara, Deva, Beera, Ronna, Jogi, Hari, Dutta etc. and for females Dyavi, Kali, Basvi, Madi, Puttamma, Kempa, Mari, Bhoori, etc.

Suckling period generally lasts for one year after which the child is weaned away by applying something of repulsive taste on the nipples of the mother which the child rejects. The mother and the child return to the husband's place after three months of her delivery. Co-habitation is tabooed for three months after delivery.

**Tonsure:**—Tonsure ceremony, known as **Huttukudala Tegeyuvadu** is performed for the children of both sexes in their 3rd or 6th year at a temple, preferably **Bira Devaru** Temple. The village barber formally shaves the hair of the child and is paid 50 paise for his services in case of a boy and 25 paise in case of a girl. A feast is given to the relatives on the occasion.

**Ear-Boring Ceremony:**—In the 3rd or 5th month of the child an experienced person pierces the ear lobes of the child with an iron needle or a thorn of lemon plant (**Nimbimullu**). The latter practice is more common and the thorn is left in the earlobe till the wound is healed. Later a silver or brass ring replaces the thorn. In the case of girls nose wings are pierced in the same manner.

**Puberty:**—When a girl comes of age, she is lodged in a temporary hut (**gullu**) constructed by the side of the dwelling unit. The roof of the temporary hut is covered with leaves (**soppu**) of **Arali**, **Atti** or **Basari**. These plants exude a milky juice and, therefore, their use symbolises fertility. The girl is made to sit in the hut for 9 to 16 days during which period some female members give her company. Iyer (1931, IV, 595) mentions that when the girl attains her age, she occupies a separate hut, at a distance of a stone's throw from the family house, and is under seclusion from seven to thirty days. Thurston (1909, VI, 382) informs that the girl after reaching puberty, occupies a separate hut for five days and returns home after a bath. The maternal uncle should present her with a new cloth, betel leaves and areca nuts and plantain fruits.

During the pollution period none touches her nor can she attend to any work. She takes warm water bath every day. A special dish, prepared out of copra (**Khobbari**), black gram (**Uddu**) (*phascolus minimus*), sweet oil (**olle enne**), purified butter (**tuppa**) mixed together and pounded, is given before food.

**Kadikaliyuvadu** (worship of sacred water) is performed on the 9th or 16th day, as the case may be, to remove ritual pollution. On this day, the girl in pollution along with a few companions, goes to worship a water source, a tank or a river after a purificatory bath at home. After returning home she is made to sit on a sacred plank of wood called **hase**. A married woman waves **aarti** around and blesses her. In case the girl is married the husband is invited on the 10th day who also sits along with his wife at the time of **aarti**. The consummation of marriage also takes place on the same day. On the 16th day the temporary hut is thrown away or burnt.

This ceremony is observed with slight variations among the Soliga of Madheshwara Hills where the pollution lasts for seven days. Here the maternal uncle puts up the hut (**gullu**) which is burnt by him after seven days. For all the seven days the girl takes bath outside the hut with warm water and on the 7th day, she takes bath at the tank or streamlet where she goes to worship the goddess of water (**Ganga**). On this day the girl's father gives a feast to the assembled relatives while her maternal uncle presents her with new clothes and other presents.

### Marriage

Run-away marriage or marriage by elopement was the most popular form among the Soliga during

the by-gone days, under which an young man elopes with an adult girl to the nearby jungle or to the house of a relative away from their own house for 2-3 days. Such marriages are still common among the Soliga living in the forest areas and no social stigma is attached to them. Sometimes such marriages have silent approval of the parents of the girl and the boy. After the boy and the girl return from the forest, latter starts living in the former's house as his wife. If possible the boy's father arranges a feast for the members of the **hadi**. Here the girl dressed in a new sari and blouse may receive the **tali** (marriage badge). However, these rituals are not compulsory. Often the young couple have their connubial pleasure in the jungle and the conception during the period of elopement is considered legitimate. Marriage by elopement is often resorted to avoid the prohibitive expenditure.

In marriage by elopement, the partners usually are adults since such a marriage could be normally possible only with the consent of the boy and the girl. However, the 1961 Census returns indicate that there are 85 girls and one boy married in the age-group of 0-14 which, obviously, indicates the prevalence of child marriages among them. Rarely any boy marries before the age of 15, but it so happens that an adult boy sometimes selects a girl of 14 or 15 years old.

The Soliga have been influenced considerably by the neighbouring Hindu castes like Okkaligas, Aradhya, Lingayats, etc. and as such they have borrowed many of the latter's customs including the observance of marriage ceremonies. Regional variation too are discernible among the Soliga of Heggadadevanakote taluk and Madheshwara Hills which will be dealt with in the following pages.

Monogamy is the rule among the Soliga. Rare instances of polygyny are reported, but polyandry is forbidden. A person can marry his maternal uncle's daughter or elder sister's daughter in order of preference. Marriage with parallel cousins is a taboo.

**Betrothal:**—In the case of regular marriage, when the parents of a boy intending to marry come to know about a suitable girl, four or five members, (among whom one or two are ladies), go for negotiation. In Heggadadevanakote, it is reported that even a widow can participate. The arrival of the party is intimated to the girl's family in advance, usually an auspicious day fixed by a Brahmin, Jangama or Avadhya after consulting **panchanga** (Hindu Almanac). The health of the girl and her disposition are the major factors which contribute to the decision. If the negotiations

are settled. **Arishinabalehannu shastra** (the turmeric-plantain) ritual is performed. In this ritual a new sari and a blouse, 5 betal leaves, 5 betal nuts, one coconut, a bit of jaggery, plantains and turmeric etc., are kept in a metal plate and are offered to the girl. This act is known **Tatu tumbuvadu** or filling the plate. Afterwards the girl wears the new sari and blouse given to her. A little turmeric paste is applied to her cheeks by the female members of the party, who also wave **aarti** (except the widow, if there is any). The boy is not allowed to see the girl before marriage. This ceremony mentioned above is performed a week after the marriage is settled in Madheshwara Hills when 5 betal leaves, 5 betal nuts, a coconut, 5 rupees and a blouse and a sari are sent to the girl. After consulting a Jangama or Brahmin an auspicious date for marriage is fixed.

**Marriage ceremony:**— Generally marriage takes place in the groom's house. Previous day to the marriage ceremony a marriage-pole, called **Muhurta Kamba** and another pole, called **Eesanya Kamba**, are erected. Both these poles are normally from the **Kaddi Kalli** or **Kootagalli** or **Devaragalli** plants. Twelve posts are essential for the pandal.

The girl's party comes to the boy's village the previous day of marriage where separate arrangements are made for its stay. The same night two rituals known as **Kaluguru Shastra** and **Bale Shastra** are performed. In the former one, the village barber clips the nails of the bride and the groom while in the latter the bride is made to wear a few glass bangles (**Karipatti bale**), in each forearm.

Next morning **Kankara Shastra** ceremony is performed in which a turmeric *rhizome* having five knots (**Eidu Suli**) is tied with a twined string applied with turmeric paste. The *Kankana*, thus, prepared is tied to the right wrist of the bride and the groom by a maternal uncle of the latter or in his absence by some other near relative.

**Devaru Taruvadu** is another ritual performed on this day in which five married women go to nearby well, tank or river with 5 new earthen pitchers (**Devara Gaddige**), fill water in them and keep them in the pandal on a wet white cloth (**Madi vastra**). In Bandipura area of Heggadadevanakote taluk, it is reported that 12 such pitches are brought by 12 married women. While bringing water, the pitchers are worshipped at the spot where they are filled with water. At the time of bringing the water filled-pitchers the washerman (**Madiwala**) spreads a long wet cloth and

the five ladies (or 12 ladies in case of Bandipura) walk over it. **Madiwala** carries two wet clothes, one of which he spreads in front of the women walking on the other one. Immediately when they step on to the cloth in front of them he goes behind and collects the first cloth and spreads it again ahead in front of them. This continues till they reach the pandal. The earthen pitchers are supplied by the potter (**Kumbara**) while the **Madiwala** supplies the clothes. They are rewarded for their respective services.

The Aradhya or the Brahmin presides over the functions in Heggadadevanakote taluk. In Madheshwara Hills, Tammadi supplies sandal paste and receives 25 paise for his services. It is reported that in Bandipura area Jangamas serve as priests at the marriage ceremony. The groom comes inside the pandal at a sacred place (**Hase**) where a white or red cloth is held. Now the bride comes escorted by five married women and sits behind the cloth in front of the groom. The priest utters sacred hymns (mantras) and the groom ties **tali** (marriage badge), but he cannot see the face of the bride. The cloth held in between the groom and the bride is removed at a later stage.

**Dhare** is the next ceremony. During this ceremony the groom holds a coconut and the bride holds a plantain. Both sit side by side and one puts his or her palm on that of the other while the parents of the bride pour milk and water on the hands, of the bridal pair. Then the rice coloured with turmeric is thrown over the couple.

The bride-price (**Tera**) is given after the **tali** tying ceremony. The relatives may also offer presents (**Muyya**) to the couple. In Madheshwara Hills the boy continues to sit outside the pandal after **tali** tying while the girl goes inside the house. This is followed by a simple ceremony in which a small metal plate filled with jaggery, tobacco, betal leaves, betal nuts, etc. is worshipped and handed over to the 5 members belonging to the **5-kulas** along with Rs. 1.25 which is later distributed among them equally. The groom dines only after this function.

The amount of bride price (**Tera**) also varies. In Heggadadevanakote it is Rs. 12 while in Bandipura area of the same taluk it is Rs. 12.50. The additional amount of 50 paise is said to be for **Nadavali** (contract money); 25 paise each from the groom's side and the bride's side to be used as contract money contributed towards the expenses of writing a marriage bond. In Madheshwara Hills **tera** amount is Rs. 33 or Rs. 112.

After the marriage ceremony, the couple go to a temple and offer prayers. **Kankana** is removed after 3 days. The bride stays in the groom's house for 3 days. Then both go to the former's place and stay there for another 3 days and later return to the groom's house. Before dismantling the pandal the new earthen pitchers filled with water are carried by the married women and are emptied at the foot of a tree and the pitchers brought back. This is followed by the removal of the pandal.

Another important ceremony at marriage is bringing of the insignias or **mudras** (bell metal idols of horse, ox, elephant etc.) from **Desa Settaru** (a headman belonging to a businessman community). The **Panthagara**, who belongs to a **Balagai** (a Scheduled Caste) community, goes and collects the **mudras**, from the **Desa Settaru**. These insignias are kept in the pandal and worshipped. Normally, the **Desa Settaru** is also present at the time of marriage to avoid any quarrel. The **Panthagara** gets some money for his services and the insignias are taken back to the **Desa Settaru** after marriage. There are a number of **mudras** with no hierarchy among them but are meant to supply to different places in case marriages and other ceremonies take place simultaneously. In Bandipura area the **mudras** are kept with the **Yejamana** and are not brought from **Desa Settaru**. In Madheshwara Hills no insignias are brought, but it is important to have five members belonging to 5 **kulas** present during the marriage.

**Widow Marriage:**—Widow marriage is permissible among the Soliga and they call it **Kudike** or **Kuduvali**. The widow has to choose her spouse not belonging to her deceased husband's agnatic kins. The ceremony connected with this type of marriage is very simple, and is usually conducted at night. A sari and a blouse are given to the bride by the groom in the presence of the tribal panchayat. The groom also ties

a **tali** (marriage badge). The **Yejamana** heads the ceremony. Married women do not attend to widow marriage. **Veelya** (Betel leaves and nuts) is distributed and a feast partaken of by the attending members. A woman or man can go for any number of **Kuduvalis** when any one among them dies, divorced or separated.

**Divorce:**—Divorce is allowed among the Soliga but desertions are more common. Adultery, illtreatment, incurable and contagious diseases etc., are some of the reasons for divorce. When divorce is sought by any party, it is intimated to the **Yejamana** who calls the tribal panchayat and tries to deal with the problem. In case it is not solved by **Uru Yejamana**, the **Gadi Yejamana** is consulted whose decisions are final.

In case a married woman commits adultery with a Soliga, the seducer has to pay Rs. 110 to her husband and then marry the woman. The woman returns all the ornaments given by her first husband. In case the husband asks for divorce, he has to pay the amount of money as decided by the panchayat. **Veelya** (betel leaves) are exchanged by the husband and wife which implies the severance of their relations. After that they can marry again if they desire. In recent times, the control of the **Yejamana** has been considerably reduced. Often it so happens that the woman runs away from home in the absence of her husband and starts living with her beloved or even gets married to him without formally divorcing the previous husband. Even if the tribal panchayat is called through the **Yejamana**, sometimes the culprit may not respond. In such cases the only recourse left to the deserted husband is not to think of his deceitful wife anymore and search for another spouse.

Below is presented the statistical information collected during the 1961 Census on the marital conditions of the Soliga of Mysore State:

*Persons belonging to Soliga in different marital status category as per cent to the total population*

Category	Population in the State according to their marital status			As per cent of the total population		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Never married	5326	3011	2315	50.00	28.27	21.73
Married	4677	2233	2444	43.90	20.96	22.94
Widowed	555	123	432	5.21	1.15	4.06
Divorced, Separated	86	31	55	0.81	0.29	0.52
Unspecified	9	4	5	0.08	0.04	0.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>10653</b>	<b>5402</b>	<b>5251</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>50.71</b>	<b>49.29</b>

The above information reveals much disparity between the never married (50.00%) and the married (43.90%). Among the married woman are more (22.94%) than the men (20.96%) suggesting polygyny practised by a few men. A total of 5.21% are returned widowed out of which 4.06% are females indicating that though widow re-marriage is allowed among the Soliga the widowers get married frequently than the widows.

Information collected during the 1961 Census on the marital status of the Soliga population in the age group of 0—14 shows that the incidence of child marriage is fairly conspicuous. One male and 85 females are returned as married in this age group.

**Funeral customs:**—Though the funeral customs vary in different regions, burial is the common method of disposal of the dead, though in rare cases cremation is also resorted to.

On arrival of the kiths and kins of the deceased the corpse is washed in tepid water by near relatives and then is covered with a new piece of cloth. A bier (**Chatta**) is prepared and the corpse is carried on it by four members. Females may also accompany the funeral procession. A grave is prepared by those related. Soliga have their own burial ground.

In former days, Iyer (1931, IV, 597) reports they (Soliga) place heap of stones over the grave and call it **Kalluseve**. Further he mentions that some corpses are thrown to be devoured by vultures and wild beasts. The above customs, however, has not been reported from the place where the present study was made.

An earthen pot (**Yedagula moge**) in which rice is cooked, is carried by the nearest male relative of the deceased along with the procession. At the village boundary the corpse is placed on the ground along with the bier for a short while. Iyer mentions that here each member of the funeral party places a stone called **hinda-gundla gudda** in commemoration (1931, Vol. IV, p. 597). The person carrying the earthen pot containing cooked rice on the shoulders takes three rounds of the bier and allows the pot to fall from his shoulder behind him near the head of the dead. Then the bier is lifted by 4 members and carried to the grave.

The grave is worshipped before the corpse is laid in it. The members who dig the grave exchange their implements among themselves three times. By doing so, it is believed that the spirit of the dead cannot

recognise the persons who dug the grave. The corpse is then laid with face upwards and head pointing towards south.

**Ambadumbala** (pounded betel nut and betel leaves) is put in the mouth of the corpse. A pice or a four-anna coin is inserted in the nostril of the corpse. The wife, eldest son or any other agnatic relative of the deceased may be the chief mourner. The wife removes all her ornaments except her glass bangles at the grave. Then the grave is covered with earth, the chief mourner putting the first handful of earth.

At home, the place where the person breathed his last is daubed with cow dung. Iyer also mentions that on this place a little ragi (Eleusine Cracana) paste and water are placed and here, on the fourth and the twelfth day, for the elders, a goat is sacrificed, and offered to the soul of the departed (1931, Vol. IV, p. 592). During the field enquiry this custom, was, however, found to have disappeared. Instead, it has been observed that **Rangoli** is made here and some rice is kept along with an earthen lamp. All the members of the funeral procession come and see the light, take some rice and throw it on the roof of the house and leave for their homes.

After 3 days **halu-tuppa** (milk and ghee) ceremony is performed in which milk, ghee and other favourite eatables of the deceased are taken to the grave by near relatives, and are poured over the grave. Other articles are also kept on the grave. On this, spot the wife breaks her glass bangles. She is, however, not required to remove the **tali**. If she, remarries, she returns it to one of her husband's relatives (Iyer 1931, IV, p. 398). Now-a-days they observe pollution for eleven days. They also give a funeral feast to the tribesmen at the end of the year.

The **Sutaka** (pollution) lasts for 11 days and on the 12th day all the old earthen pots are thrown out and new pots are brought. Formal removal of pollution is effected by sprinkling **tirth** (holy water) brought from the **Aradhya's** or **Jengams'** house. This ceremony performed on the 12th day is called **Dina Maduvadu**.

#### **Dina Maduvadu.**

In Bandipura area, some interesting magico-religious ceremonies are performed on the 12th day. On the night of the 12th day the spirit of the dead is called back by a Soliga who is good at the art and also specialised in operating **burude** (a dried up gourd that makes sound like a rattles). One's shadow, it is believed, may itself become the **bhuta** or spirit of

the deceased. In case it is not satisfied, it harms the people. The person who operates the **burude** goes on calling the name of the deceased in a frenzy and finally gets possessed. The spirit tells its demands through him. A fowl is sacrificed and offered to the spirit along with other varieties of dishes. The person possessed by the spirit goes into the house and sits at a particular place made for him and eats all the food prepared for the consumption of the spirit.

Somewhat different account is recorded by Iyer on **Dina Maduvadu** which reads as follows: "After this, the son proceeds to the burial ground, carrying a stone followed by men from each of the exogamous clans arrives near a water spot (the grave) where they sit down, while the son places the stone on the ground. They then lift in succession and the last man while doing so is said to fall in a trance. On recovery, leaves (Plantain, teak, etc.) corresponding to the number of exogamous septs are arranged round the stone, and on each leaf different kinds of food are placed. The men partake of the food, each from the leaf allotted to their sept., after which the son holds the stone in his hands while his companions pour *ragi* over it and then carries it away to the **gopamane** (burial ground) of his clan and sets it up there. (1931, Vol. IV, pp. 597-598). Thurston has also recorded more or less similar information on the above ceremony.

As a part of the **Dina Maduvadu** ceremony, some people collect food and an earthen pot in which they fill water and place it over the grave along with food. Now they collect a piece of a particular grass known as **Karike** which is cut in such a way that it should have three blades (**Muru Tisalu**). This grass is dipped in castor oil and is held on the earthen pot containing water and three drops of castor oil are made to fall on the water from three different blades of the grass. The belief is that one drop of oil represents the spirit of the person who has just died, one of the other spirits of the fore-fathers and the last one represents the family deity. The members sit and wait till two drops of oil meet each other. It is firmly believed that only two drops will meet each other and then become one. When the two drops meet, they believe that under the control of the family deity the spirit of the presently dead had joined the spirits of the ancestors and no harm will be done by it. The food brought is left on the grave to be eaten by crows, and then all of them go back. A common meal served to the members concludes the ceremony.

In Madheshwara Hills, the observance of funeral rites is simple. The pollution lasts only for three

days, at the end of which old pots are replaced by new ones. The ceremony is concluded with a feast to five members belonging to five different **Kulas**.

An annual ceremony is performed after a year which is often held on the banks of a stream in which all the invitees partake of a non-vegetarian feast. A small cylindrical stone, about 6 inches long and three inches in diameter, symbolises the spirit of the dead by decorating it with cloth and cotton thread smeared with turmeric paste. Then it is worshipped by an agnatic kin of the deceased. Five members belonging to 5 different **kulas** stand in a row with folded hands, when the agnatic kin touches the sacred stone to the folded palms three times uttering the name of the deceased. The last person now gets possessed by the spirit. Some water is poured over his chest and the symbolic stone is taken away from him. The spirit now "speaks" of the reason for the death and make demands which will be carried out without delay. A feast concludes the ceremony. The symbolic stone is taken away by one or more male members to a place known as **Kattari Betta**, about 20 miles away from Madheshwara Hills and placed in the appropriate heap representing the **Kula** of the deceased. There are five such heaps representing the five **kulas** of the Soliga, known as **Eerara Gudi**. A non-vegetarian feast partaken by the members visiting the **Eerara Gudi** concludes the ceremony.

## X. Religion

The Soliga have hitherto been described as animists and totemists who revere "tigers and worship their foot-prints; worship snakes and hills" (Iyer, 1931, IV, p. 596; Rao, 1951, p. 168). During 1961 Census, however, all of them have been returned as Hindus. They worship the prominent deities of the region. As for example, the Soliga living in Biligirirangana Hills mention Biligiri Rangaswamy as their family deity (**Kula Daiva**) while those living in Madheshwara Hills are the devotees of Madheshwara. Due to constant contacts with the temple of Biligiriranga, and the proximity of the Madheshwara Hills, the tribesmen have imbibed the religion and the customs of the neighbours (Rao; 1951; p. 168). Some Soliga in Vaddaragudi village of Heggadadevanakote taluk have **Veerabhadra** as their family deity and also are the devotees of Madheshwara at **Bheemanakolli** (appears to be the same deity of Madheshwara Hills installed in a temple there) in the name of which a fair is held in the month of January. Many of the deities they worship belong to the Hindu pantheon and they observe Hindu festivals and follow the Hindu calendar. Some

of the names of their popular gods are Basavanna or Nandi, Madheshwara Rangaswamy, Jadeswamy, Kyathe Devaru, Beera Devaru, etc. Among the goddesses, Maramma and Yellamma are very popular. Among these deities, Jadeswamy is worshipped more often by the Soliga. Rao mentions that Jadeswamy is an aspect of **Bhootha** (Devil) of which all these tribesmen are afraid (1961; p. 168). Yellamma is the presiding deity over diseases and, therefore, she is appeased by sacrificing a sheep or fowl at the time of epidemics. Iyer describes an interesting rite observed by the Soliga whenever any epidemic or other kinds of danger beset them. They set up seven stones of quartz on a bed of sand in the jungle and smear them with red and white stripes, burn incense and offer fruits. When they can afford, they sacrifice a goat to obtain their satisfaction and blessings. One of them, generally, a **pujari** who is an intermediary between god and man, works himself to an ecstasy, and passes orders which are supposed to be emanated from God, (1931; Vol. IV; pp. 596-597). All the Soliga living in different regions worship **Karayya** who is their tribal tutelary deity. They are the firm believers in the spirits of the dead and offer prayers to them every year at their graves.

Their ritual functionaries also vary according to the nature of the deity to be worshipped and the regions they belong to. In Heggadadevanakote taluk their ritual functionaries either belong to the Brahmin or Aradhya communities; in Biligirirangana Hills they get the ritual services from Jangamas, a priestly community among the Lingayats while in Madheshwara Hills they are served either by Tammadis or by the Jangamas.

Some interesting information is available about the spots associated with the deities and pilgrim centres in Madheshwara Hills. It is believed that Karayya and Billayya (refer to the mythological origin of the community reported at p. 2), finally joined the devotional services of Madheshwara whose **Lingas** (Phallic images of Lord Siva in stone worshipped by Saivites) are still to be found in the Madheshwara temple and are worshipped in the month of December (**Dhanur-masa**). There is a tomb (**Gaddige**) believed to be of Karayya at a place called **Marada Are** to the south of Madheshwara Hills where a stone is installed on a raised platform under a tree. It is believed that the tomb of Billayya is also nearby. These tombs are often worshipped.

Other important places associated with the Soliga tribe are on the peaks of different hillocks around

Madheshwara Hills. The peaks of hillocks are referred to as Boli and a few important ones are described below:

1. **Kambada boli:** There is a pillar of **Jali mara** (a kind of tree) installed on the hillock. This hillock is three miles away from Madheshwara Hills. After every 12 years this pillar is replaced by a new one and offered Pujas to it by the Tammadis. No sacrifice is made on this occasion. A big vegetarian feast is arranged for which ingredients like plantain leaves, fire-wood and bamboo baskets are conventionally supplied by the Soliga, while the required amount of rice comes from Madheshwara temple. It is believed that god Madheshwara did physical exercises at this place before he killed the demon Savana.

2. **Majjana boli:** This place is about three miles away from Madheshwara Hills. It is believed that Lord Madheshwara had his bath here.

3. **Karayyana boli:** This place is 5 miles away from Madheshwara Hills.

4. **Padada Are:** Here, it is believed, god Madheshwara had walked on the rocks and his foot prints on the bear testimony to this belief. These foot-prints are worshipped by all communities including the Soliga. It is about twenty miles away from Madheshwara Hills.

5. **Tavasare boli:** Here the Lord Madheshwara did penance (**Tapassu**). There is a stone temple where the **linga** of Madheshwara is installed.

6. **Nagamale of Nagappana boli:** This place is about 8 miles away from Madheshwara Hills. There is a big overhanging rock which looks like the hood of a cobra. There is another small rock under it which has the shape of a **linga**: so it is believed to be the linga of Lord Madheshwara and the over hanging rock is believed to be the hood of the cobra that protects him. The overhanging rock is said to be about three feet high. There are about 10 households of **Tammadis** living near here who function as priests to the devotees going to that place. There are a host of comparatively insignificant places which are attributed to the history of the tribe.

The Soliga, though eager to observe all the festivities, rarely do so owing to their economic limitations. Gauri puja is one of the few festivals they observe. This festival is observed in the month of

August-Sept., and only vegetarian dishes are prepared during the occasion.

In the observance of this festival regional differences are met with. In Bandipura area, a new earthen pitcher is purchased from the potter which is taken to a tank or a river where it is washed, **vibhuti** (purified ash) applied and five betel leaves and nuts and a coconut etc., are kept on the water filled in the pitcher. Then it is brought to the **hadi**, and is placed before the house of the **Yejamana**, which is already consecrated by anointing cowdung paste.

In the evening the Soliga gather around the pitcher and the spirits invoked. A Soliga who is specialised in operating **burude**, starts uttering the names of spirits till he is possessed. Sometimes it takes more than one night and in such cases the ritual is stopped in the morning and again resumed the next evening since the ritual of invoking the spirits is only conducted at night. Finally, the person gets possessed by some spirits and he forecasts the events to come. After sometime, the possessed person returns to senses and is fed along with others. Water filled in the earthen pitcher is poured at the root of a tree and the 25 np. coin which was already deposited in it is taken out. Fresh water is again filled in the pitcher which is finally kept at the sanctum-sanctorum of the **Yejamana's** house where the **mudras** are kept. The speciality of this festival is that an elderly person of every household observes fast and does not eat any cereal of the fresh harvest till the evening.

In Madheshwara Hills it is considered as a new corn eating ceremony and the person who observes fast goes to Madheshwara temple after a bath, takes **tirtha** (holy water) and returns home. Samples of all the vegetarian food prepared out of the corns of fresh harvest are placed on a plaintain leaf which is kept at the sacred place and the person who observes fast eats it. This is known as **Ele Bidara**.

Yet another festival observed by the Soliga is the **Sankranti** in the month of January. Like other Hindus, on this day a paste is made out of neem leaves (Margo leaves), mango leaves etc. and the same mixed with jaggery (known as **bevu-bella**) and eaten in little quantities by the members of the family. The mixture of neem leaves and jaggery is believed to symbolise sorrow (bitter) and happiness (sweet) in life. Soliga call it **Kapu Kattuvadu**.

Iyer (1931) mentions about a fire-walking ceremony done by the Soliga (Vol. IV: p. 598). The account

given by a **Gadi Yejamana** in Motta village of Hegga-dadevanakote about fire-walking gives the impression that though the Soliga associate themselves in the ceremony, the actual act of fire-walking is done by the Jangamas.

### XI. Inter-community Relationship

Soliga do not possess social disabilities like untouchability and can even go near to the kitchens of high caste Hindus. Most of them work as agricultural labourers in the households of Hindus and have limited access into their houses. They fetch water from the same tank or river from where other clean castes collect water. Iyer mentions that they do not come under any caste gradation. They live outside the villages. They profess their superiority over the Madigas and similar low castes (1931: Vol. IV; p. 599). Rao shares the opinion of Iyer and states that Soliga claim superiority over the Harijans and do not eat food prepared by them while Harijans eat food prepared by Soliga (1951: p. 169). There is no taboo for them in sharing food with other forest tribes living along with them like Jenu Kurubas, Kadu Kurubas, Yeravas, and so on.

As has already been mentioned earlier, Soliga are served by Brahmins, Aradhyaas, Jangams and other Lingayats and Tammadis during ceremonial occasions. They are also served by the barbers (**Kshauri**) and washermen (**Madiwala**) both during ceremonial occasions as well as at other times for which payment is made in kind, mostly in the shape of **ragi**. This system of payment is known as **Hadade**. For every married man the barber gets 5 **kolagas** of **ragi** (one kolaga--approximately 4 kg.) a year and all the minors are served free.

Being agricultural labourers of the higher castes Soliga remain in very cordial relationship with them. They also work as menial and household servants to some of the villagers. During marriage and other social ceremonies Soliga are assisted by Jenu Kurubas, Kadu Kurubas or Yeravas in addition to their own brethren if they happen to live in the same **hadi** or agricultural colony. Similarly, Soliga also assist and attend to the social functions of other tribals. Many a times, Soliga work as menial labourers during social or religious functions of other caste Hindus on payment. Though there is no taboo for high caste Hindus against attending marriages and other social ceremonies of Soliga, they do not normally attend such ceremonies.

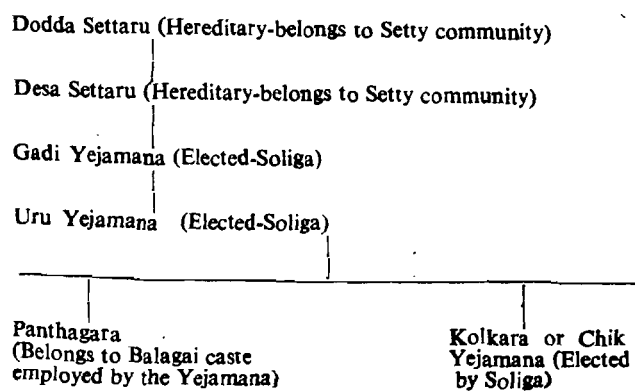
## XII. Structure of Social Control, Prestige and Leadership

As in the case of neighbouring tribes like the Jenu Karubas, Betta Karubas etc. the Soliga have an institution of **Yejamana**, (Headman). Each **hadi** has a headman called **Uru Yejamana** who is assisted by a **Kolkar**. The **Uru Yejamana** is often called as **Yejamana** while the **Kolkar** is referred to as **Chik (Small) Yejamana**. **Chik Yejamana** or the **Kolkar** works with the **Yejamana** and helps him in communicating messages to other **Yejamanas** and such other tasks entrusted by the **Yejamana**.

Above the **Yejamana** is the **Gadi Yejamana** (**gadi** means area) who heads a region consisting of many **hadis**. These are all elective posts. The **Uru Yejamana** is elected by the members of a **hadi** in the presence of the **Gadi Yejamana** while the latter is elected unanimously by the **Uru Yejamanas**, constituting the **Gadi**. All these leaders belong to the Soliga community. There is yet another authority above the **Gadi Yejamana** who belongs to Setty caste and is called the **Desa Settaru**. His authority extends, besides the Soliga, over many other tribes such as Jenu Kuruba, **Betta** Kuruba etc. among whom this institution prevails. It is further reported that there is a supreme authority above the **Desa Settaru** in the Heggadavankote taluk covering 33 **Gadis**. He is known as **Dodda Settaru** and he also comes from the Setty community. Both the above mentioned positions are hereditary.

The **Desa Settaru**, besides being the appellate authority over the **Gadi Yejamana**, is also the custodian of the **Mudra** (the bell metal insignia). The insignias are sent to social functions through a functionary called **Panthagara**, a member of the **Balagai** (an untouchable) caste, who is employed by a **Yejamana**.

The traditional functionaries operating among the Soliga may be shown in the following hierarchial order.



5-3 RGI/ND,70

The **Yejamana** is the key figure to effect social control in a **hadi**. He, with the help of the other elders in the village, sits over judgement of cases arising out of petty quarrels within the community, problems related to sex crimes like adultery, divorce etc. Those cases which cannot be settled by the caste council are referred to higher authorities. They observe a strict moral code and hence adultery or sex relationship with other lower castes is severely dealt with, often resulting in excommunication.

The touch of leather is abhorred by the Soliga and hence a person beaten with leather shoes, has to undergo a severe punishment before he is accepted by the society. Such a person is made to drink some water with which the **Mudras** have been washed in the presence of the **Gadi Yejamana**. Further the tip of his tongue is slightly burnt with a heated gold-wire. This purificatory ceremony is known as **Vibhuti Dharane** or **Bandhu Shudhi Manduvadu**. In some places the guilty person has also to undergo another ritual in which his head is clean shaven and he is made to crawl through seven small huts prepared for the purpose followed by swallowing some **Tirth** (holy water) brought from the **Desa Settaru**.

The guilty person may also be fined. The amount of fine varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 30 which is shared by the **Yejamana** and the **Gadi Yejamana**. Some amount is given to the **Desa Settaru** at the time of returning the **mudra**. He has also to give a feast to the member of the **hadi** along with **Gadi Yejamana** before declaring him to be pure.

A similar ceremony of **Vibhuti Dharane** is undergone in case a person befonging to any other community (except the Scheduled Castes), is inducted into the fold of the Soliga community, or a Soliga takes food with a Scheduled Caste person or had sex-relations with a Schedule Caste woman.

A Soliga woman having sex-relation with a Scheduled Caste or another tribal man, is also ex-communicated and is never taken back into the community fold.

With the wind of change the Soliga tribal leadership too has ceased to be an effective institution of social control. However, the **Yejamanas** continue to enjoy considerable prestige and power among the members of the community.

## XIII. Social Reforms and Welfare

Soliga have no social institution of their own to work for their socio-economic development. In

fact they are so engrossed with the problem of finding their daily bread that they can hardly think of any reform movement. However, the Government agencies, as a part of their move for socio-economic development of the weaker sections of the society, have started a few measures which can briefly be mentioned as follows:

An agricultural colony known as **Budipadaga colony** in Chamarajanagar taluk gives shelter to 50 Soliga households. Fifty residential quarters have been built at the rate of Rs. 1,600 per quarter. All quarters have brick walls and roofs covered with Mangalore tiles. Three hundred acres of forest land was released for cultivation and as per colonisation scheme all households were given bullocks, agricultural implements and other necessary assistance. A Residential School (Ashrama School) is functioning in the colony where free boarding and lodging facilities are provided for fifty students. 25 more residential quarters of the same type have been built in **Kyathedevanagudi** of the same taluk.

Similar arrangements have been made in **Kaniyanpura** village of Gundlupet taluk where a total amount of Rs. 30,000 was spent on residential quarters to rehabilitate 25 families with an allotment of 6 acres of land per family along with a pair of bullocks and other agricultural implements. In **Bandipur** area of the same taluk an Ashrama School is functioning and Rs. 16,000 have been sanctioned for a Tribal Hostel. A Woman Welfare Centre is also functioning since 1962-63. Similar colonies were built in **Bylore** and **Chikkalore** in Kollegal Taluk and also some other colonies in Heggadadevanakote Taluk.

A close review of the development activities undertaken by the Government indicates that desired results have not been achieved. Various factors are responsible for this, including the lack of co-operation and response from the tribals themselves.

#### XIV. Case Studies

The intimate understanding of incidents and happenings in an individual's life are also interesting. The varied problems and experiences of an individual in a given set up of a particular community reflect the social and cultural heritage of the community. The following case studies of three individuals belonging to different age-groups and areas present very interesting material for understanding the community.

#### Case I

The informant is the resident of Madheshwara Hills and is aged 24 years.

"My name is J. and I do not remember much about my activities in the young age. I was living with my parents in **Baragur** (now in Madras State) which is our original settlement and many of our relatives are still residing there. I used to go with my mother to collect yams in the jungle and in the evening used to play with my friends in the **hadi**. My father had taken a loan of Rs. 100 from a village **Patel (Monegar)** for whom he was working in his field and the part of the wage was being adjusted against the loan. He worked throughout his life to repay the loan but he could not repay it. When I was about 12 years, I joined my father to assist him. During that period I got married to the daughter of my maternal uncle living in the same **hadi**. The marriage had taken place in my tender age and about which I do not remember exactly. Within one year after my marriage my wife died due to some disease and now I cannot even remember her face.

I worked under that money-lender for a few years and in due course my father died. All my brothers and sisters were married and I was protecting my mother. After two years she also died. By that time I had repaid the loan of the money-lender. I came to Madheshwara Hills and started working under **Jeeta system** in the **Saluru matha** and still continuing it.

My **Sodara Atte** (Father's sister) is staying in a **hadi** here. She had a daughter who was married to an old man and who later on came away from him and stayed with her mother. I then married her and she even did not care to take formal divorce from her old husband.

An accident happened two years ago when 5 members, including myself, were digging a well. It had rained that day. We were cutting the sides and some portion of the earth was over-hanging us. Immediately it collapsed and we were buried under it. The people who were working above pulled out the earth. All of us were taken out in an unconscious state. Among those five I survived but got the hand fractured. I was taken to the hospital at Mysore where I was treated for 4 months.

My wife got the news through somebody that I died in that accident. During that period a Soliga

from my native place, Baragur, had come to see the Madheshwara fair and was staying in the **hadi** of my wife with his uncle. He developed friendship with my wife and told her that it was no use waiting for the dead man. So she went with him to Baragur. I came to know about it after my return and thought it of no use to contact her now. I am now a deserted husband and I live cursing my fate."

### Case II

The approximate age of the informant is 40 and he belongs to Heggadadevanakote.

"My name is S. D. My father did not belong to the **hadi** where I am residing. This **hadi** is my mother's natal home and my father came and settled here. He was not a much influential person in the **hadi**. We were two brothers and three sisters. I am the eldest. My younger brother is also staying in the same **hadi** along with me. All my sisters are married. One, among them, recently died.

I was working hard in my young age. My father searched for a suitable girl for me from another **hadi** and I had a ceremonial marriage unlike the runaway type. I have two sons and one daughter.

2-3 years ago, night classes were conducted to teach Kannada in my **hadi** and I took interest in it and learnt to sign my name. I wanted to study more but due to some reason the classes were stopped, and my education also came to a close. Government were initiating some developmental schemes among hill tribals and I co-operated with the officials of the community Development Block. People of my **hadi** got the grant of land and other material assistance from the Government. The members of my **hadi** thought that it was only due to my efforts that they got land. So I became very popular and they elected me as the **Uru Yejamana**. Since 8-10 years I am functioning as the **Yejamana** and have attended many traditional panchayats.

Formerly, we were living only in jungles and were leading a hard life. We have got allotment of agricultural land, free quarters to live in, bullocks, carts, agricultural implements and other material assistance. Unlike olden days now we have more contacts with other people. Special attention has been given by the Government to raise us to the standard of other well-advanced communities and so on. But, we have a few problems: There is disparity in the distribution

of Government aid. Concrete houses should be built for us and a primary school is essential for our village because our children have to walk about three miles to attend to the school at Heggadadevanakote. I have applied for the sanction of the primary school and no reply has yet come from the Social Welfare Department. Now, many in the village wish to learn reading and writing for which night classes are to be started again. There is a canal near our village which may be made effective to irrigate agricultural lands."

### Case III

The age of the informant is about 65 years and he belongs to Bandipura area:

"My name is M and my native place was **Angale** which is about 5 miles away from this place. I am the **Yejamana** to this **hadi**. I do not remember the experience of my young age. I can only remember that there were no settlements here some 50 years back and this was a thick forest. Now-a-days it is rapidly developing since it is made as the check post for same sanctuary.

There is nothing worth mentioning about the experiences of my life. During my young age we used to go often for hunting, collecting yams, tender bamboo shoots and also did some **kumri** cultivation. I developed friendship with a girl of my own **hadi** and one day ran away with her into the jungle where we stayed for four days depending on yams, honey and wild fruits. Then we returned to our **hadi**. The parents and brothers of my wife picked up quarrel with my family and after two days we ran from that **hadi** and came to Bandipura and started living. I have two daughters and one son. All are married. Daughters are in their houses and I stay with my son. Three years ago, my wife also died.

I have followed various avocations. I have worked in the **khedda** operations. I was good at hunting and know about animal characters. I have worked as a forest labourer under many contractors. Then I was appointed as the Forest Guard by the Forest Department in which post I worked till last and now getting pension. The same post is again given to my son.

I am quite old to do any hard job, but still do some work in our kitchen garden to grow vegetables. I have heard that Government is giving land and other assistance to the tribals, but we have not received any."

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*The Soliga males and females in front of a hut. The roof is to be thatched with new grass.*



*Side-view of a Soliga settlement pattern.*



*A temporary hut of a poor Soliga.*



*The Soliga couple with a child.*



FIG. 1.—*A Soliga male.*



FIG. 2.—*A Soliga female.*



FIG. 1.—A Soliga female flouting ragi in ragikallu inside the hut.



FIG. 2.—Hearth-portion inside the kitchen of a Soliga hut.  
A pet cat has found a cosy nook by the side of hearth.



FIG. 1.—Group dancing of Soliga females in an Agricultural Colony.



FIG. 2.—Group dancing of Soliga males in an Agricultural Colony.

## ANNEXURE

### FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

#### I. Name, Identity, Origin and History

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

#### II. Distribution and Population Trend

1. Area where found; population and concentration in the State and outside. Physical aspects of the areas of concentration.
2. Numerical strength in 1961 and population variation from 1901-1961. Sex ratio, age-groups, and rural-urban distribution in 1961.

#### III. Physical Characteristics

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

#### IV. Family, Clan, Kinship and other Analogous Divisions

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

#### V. Dwelling, Dress, Food, Ornament and Other Material Objects Distinctive of the Community

1. Settlement : Village site, location, settlement pattern (agglomerated, nucleated, dispersed, sprinkled, isolated, amorphous, star-shaped, horse-shoe-shaped, linear, rectangular, circular or ring-shaped etc.) and variations; regional pattern vis-a-vis pattern of the community.
2. Neighbourhood pattern on the basis of religion, castes (Caste Hindus, untouchables) Tribes etc., with segregations, if any, and the basis thereof.
3. Dwelling unit, compound, entrance, source of water, the use of different parts of the house (latrine, cattle shed, isolation huts etc.). Shape (square, round, irregular etc.) storeys, nature of floor, plinth, wall, roofing, thatching, ventilations, and doors, materials used, decorations and embellishments; temporary structures.
4. Dress including head gear and footwear—used ordinarily, on ceremonial occasions and on special occasions and sex-wise and according to majority or minority. Dress of priests and office bearers—variations.
5. Ornaments : use, material used, from where obtained ; variations according to Sex and age.

6. Personal decoration : tattooing : mutilations (chipping of teeth, etc.), hair cutting, how done, purpose, attitude and variation according to sex and age.
7. Food and drink : materials (staple and others), prescriptions and prohibitions, fuel, utensils and mode of preparation ; practices connected with serving and taking of food ; preservation of food and rituals, if any.
8. Equipments connected with economic pursuits, religion and ritual, how procured, material used, construction, manipulation and purpose.
9. Other household equipments. \ As above.
10. Equipments connected with recording of time, space and weight and their methods of use. As above.

#### VI. Environmental Sanitation, Hygienic Habits, Disease and Treatment

1. Environmental sanitation, settlement, disposal of night soil, garbage etc.
2. Hygienic habit : cleanliness of body, teeth, dress, houses, utensils etc.
3. Diseases : incidence, local names, interpretation of the causes ; symptoms, diagnosis and cure, persons and methods involved.
4. Modern systems of medicine and attitude of the community towards it.

#### VII. Language and Literacy

1. Ancestral language: classification according to Grierson; persistence of ancestral language and literature.
2. Mother tongue : classification according to Grierson : lingualism and multi-lingualism, regional language.
3. Information collected during 1961 on language and literacy.
4. Education and literacy : Traditional and modern attitude, information collected during 1961—literacy and levels of education.

#### VIII. Economic Life

1. Economic resources : Land, community land, individual ownership and types of Land possessed and land utilization.
2. Forest wealth ; right in the forest, forest utilization.
3. Fishery, Livestock and others.
4. Working force : Sex-wise, Urban and Rural variations and comparison of the same with the region.
5. Non-workers.
6. Industrial classifications: details as collected in the field and compared with that of the 1961 figures (traditional occupation and changes in the pattern) ; main and subsidiary occupations.
7. Forced labour, bonded labour, patron-client relationship (*jajmani*), mode of payment.
8. Seasonal migration connected with occupation : recruitment, formation of working groups.
9. Nomadic movement, cycle and occupational pattern.
10. Shifting cultivation : method, implements and equipments, produce, participation, cycle of rotation, measure to regulate shifting cultivation and its impact.
11. Terrace cultivation : as above.
12. Income and expenditure : Sources of income, extent, expenditure on food, clothing, house, education, social functions and others.

## 13. Other aspects of economic life.

**IX. Life Cycle****A. Birth:**

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

**B. Initiation:**

1. Initiation ceremony ; descriptions.
2. Pre-marital sex relations within the community, outside the community, sanctions and taboos.

**C. Marriage:**

1. Age at marriage for both sex, prohibited degrees of relationship, preferences, widow remarriage (preferences and taboos).
2. Civil status and social status.
3. Types of marriage : monogamy, polygamy (Polyandry and polygyny).
4. Selection of spouse : qualities valued (for bride and groom) mode of selection, procedure.
5. Modes of acquiring mate : by negotiation, force, intrusion, elopement, etc.
6. Terms of settlement : payment of bride price, dowry, service, exchange, adoption etc.
7. Ceremonies connected with marriage : details including who presides over the marriage and services of functional castes.
8. Statistical data as per 1961 Census.
9. Divorce : reasons and procedure.

**D. Death :**

1. Concept about death, measures to ensure future well being of the soul, measures to avert harm by the spirit.
2. Methods of disposal, burial, cremation, exposure, floating on water etc.
3. Preparations for disposal of dead, informing friends and relatives, treatment of the dead body, digging of pit etc. for disposal. How carried, who carry, who accompany, place of disposal, methods of disposal, norms and taboos.
4. Ceremonies connected with disposal.
5. Monuments : death rites : details.
6. Tombs, megaliths, etc.
7. Pollution : duration, restrictions in work, food, dress, shaving, hair cropping, sex-life etc., removal of pollution.

8. Mourning : mourners and duration.

#### **X. Religion**

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

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

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

#### **XII. Relation among different Segments of the community**

Recognised Segments—name, basis (territorial, ceremonial, social prestige, religion, sect, education, age etc.); Inter-relationship among various segments, status of the segment, status of women.

#### **XIII. Inter-community Relationship**

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

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

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

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

**XV. Social Reform and Welfare**

1. Social reform movements : intensity ; reasons (for raising social status, establishing traditional norms, for westernisation etc.); history and impact of the movements.
2. Social welfare : agency, religious organisation, community as a whole Govt., officials and non-officials, role of the Social welfare measures and impact.

**XVI. References cited and other bibliography**