DYNAMICS OF GENDER AND LABOUR: A STUDY IN RURAL BENGALURU, KARNATAKA

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by

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DECLARATION

I, **R ARCHANA**, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, "**Dynamics of Gender and Labour: A Study in Rural Bengaluru, Karnataka"** is an original research work carried out by me under the supervision of **Prof. P Venkata Rao** and Co-supervision of **Dr T Appa Rao**, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad, and is original. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree at this university or any other university. I hereby agree that my dissertation can be deposited in SHODHGANGA/ INFLIBNET.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

In the ethnographic discourse, women have consistently featured within the purview of traditional anthropology. However, male and female ethnographers have delineated their representations in distinctive manners. In numerous societies, women are often perceived as subordinate to men; nevertheless, this asymmetry is occasionally misconstrued as indicative of inherent inequality and hierarchy. Eleanor Leacock (1978) contested the assumption of the universal subordination of women. She posited that in pre-class societies, both women and men held equivalent value, prestige, rights, duties, and responsibilities. Consequently, there was no conceptualisation of women as inferior or subordinate to men. Despite this, women's analysis or a gynocentric perspective remains obscured in many traditional ethnographic works.

Ardener (1975) is credited as the first scholar to discern the significance of 'male-bias' in shaping the trajectories of explanatory models within the realm of social anthropology. He introduced the concept of 'muted groups,' positing that the dominant factions within a society not only generate but also control the prevailing modes of expression. Ardener identified groups that are silenced or rendered inarticulate, such as women, children, criminals, and gypsies, as constituting muted groups. The suppression of these groups predominantly occurs within the framework of societal dominance, compelling them to communicate through the dominant modes of expression and adhere to prevailing ideologies. Ardener contends that meekness emanates from the hierarchical relations between dominant and sub-dominant groups within a society. This study highlights the meekness of women, the Dalit communities, and the lower class within the structure of rural society.

The subordinate status of women within society represents a ubiquitous and pan-cultural phenomenon. Most of the time, women's inferior standing is linked to the notion of pollution. Social norms, exemplified by behavioural taboos and restrictions imposed during

menstruation and before childbirth, offer insights into the categorization of individuals and the resultant structuring of the social milieu. A cadre of scholars posits that women, due to the complications arising from their reproductive functions, are perceived as being 'closer to nature.' Elucidating this perspective, Ortner (1974) contends that societies universally establish distinctions between human society and the natural world. Culture, in its endeavour to control and transcend nature for its purposes, is deemed superior to the natural realm, aspiring to delineate or socialize nature to regulate and sustain relations between society and environmental forces and conditions. Ortner suggests a symbolic association between women and nature, juxtaposed with men's identification with culture. The dichotomy between men and women is conceived as opposite pairs, with men linked to synonyms such as 'up,' 'right,' 'high,' 'culture,' and 'strength,' while women are associated with 'down,' 'left,' 'low,' 'nature,' and 'weakness,' respectively. Ortner posits that women are symbolically aligned with nature owing to their association with the 'domestic' rather than the 'public' sphere of social life, with these categories hierarchically related.

Marilyn Strathern (1981) posits that constructs of gender are intricately entwined with notions of self, personhood, and autonomy. Consequently, an examination of gender construction necessitates an exploration of choice, strategy, moral worth, and social value in relation to individuals acting as social agents. Building upon this perspective, Weiner (1976) contends that irrespective of whether women are accorded public recognition or relegated to private spheres, they wield influence in political spheres or various economic domains, functioning within society not as passive objects but as individuals exercising a degree of control. In every society, certain cultural activities are delineated within the purview of women, and within these domains, women wield significant influence. This dynamic establishes a distinct arena of social action for women, thereby manifesting the inherent value attributed to women within societal frameworks.

Within the context of the contemporary rural economy, older women exhibit a heightened alignment with patriarchal norms and their pivotal role in the community's socialisation process, particularly in shaping the upbringing of the younger female generation. The societal adherence to patriarchal norms directs women towards engaging in occupations marked by subordination, often diverging from mainstream roles or those oriented towards

decision-making. Societal restrictions represent a significant factor contributing to the limited participation of women in the labour force. In summation, this study underscores the enduring presence of structural hierarchies and elucidates the intricate dynamics interwoven within gender, labour, and broader patterns of social mobility.

I. Literature Review

1. Intersection of Domestic Labour, Economic Value, and Societal Perceptions

Feminist anthropologists emphasise the intertwined nature of production and reproduction systems, acknowledging their mutual influence. Consequently, women's roles in productive and reproductive spheres are regarded as interconnected and cannot be isolated for independent analysis. An exemplary exploration of this interrelationship is presented in Claude Meillasoux's anthropological work, 'Maidens, Meal, and Money' (1981). Meillasoux delves into the dynamics of social relations of reproduction within the context of a 'domestic agricultural community,' characterised by patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence patterns. These structural aspects lead to two noteworthy outcomes: firstly, women's marital migration between communities and men's acquisition of social affiliations and resource access through marriage. Secondly, women become reliant on their husbands due to their detachment from their natal community, while young men depend on their fathers or elders for resource access. Both sets of dependencies play a pivotal role in understanding societal processes of reproduction. Meillasoux contends that the control of food, seeds, and women constitutes the triad of key factors determining social reproduction. The regulation of women, grain, and food represents the 'means of production,' while the organisational structures governing these means are identified as the 'relations of reproduction' within the society (Meillasoux 1981 p. 38). He contends that the dominance over the means of reproduction, i.e. women, outweighs the significance of control over the means of production (p. 49).

Feminist anthropologists criticised Meillassoux’s model for assuming subordination as an established and unproblematic state of affairs, instead of analysing the actual forms of women’s subordination. Though women are central to an understanding of social

continuity and development in his study, there is a lack of historical and ethnographic detail about what women say, do and think are invisible in his analysis (Mackintosh 1977, Harris & Young 1981). His argument is noteworthy as it seemingly positions women and the social relations of reproduction as pivotal elements in comprehending social continuity and development.

Within kinship systems, women do possess rights; however, the organisation of marriage, residence, descent, and inheritance systems seldom ensures women's guaranteed access to resources or facilitates their capacity to secure access for other women (Moore 1988). The economic standing of women is intricately tied to the unequal access, control, and ownership of productive resources such as land, credit, technology, education, and skills. Notably, the disparate distribution of work responsibilities and consumption resources within the household serves as a significant factor contributing to the differentiation between women and men (Sinha & Baliyan 2014).

Moreover, the nexus between work and property is of critical importance, with both aspects being intricately intertwined and regulated by kinship relations that delineate the productive and reproductive domains of women's lives. While the Hindu Succession Act of 2005 ostensibly allows daughters, widows, and mothers to inherit property on an equal basis with sons, a study focusing on Customary Hindu and Sikh practices in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab has revealed instances of obstructing women from inheriting their fathers' property, particularly in the presence of sons (Sharma 1980 p. 47). Women remain largely excluded from asserting control over property rights and participating in public decision-making, which is further reflected in the ratio of land ownership and diverse occupations occupied by men and women in our country.

In the traditional anthropological perspective, dowry has been perceived as a form of pre-mortem inheritance for women (Goody & Tambiah 1973, Goody 1976). However, Ursula Sharma presents alternative evidence regarding the dowry system, contending that it does not confer power or autonomy to women within their husbands' households. As such, she critiques anthropologists who characterise dowry as a form of pre-mortem inheritance (Sharma 1980, p.48).

The concept of social reproduction finds its origins in Karl Marx's (1867) seminal work, the 'Das Kapital.' French scholar Pierre Bourdieu (1990) further associates this term with his concept of 'habitus,' explicated in 'The Logic of Practice'. Within a societal context, social reproduction ensures the active perpetuation of past experiences. These experiences are embedded in each structure in the form of perceptual, cognitive, and behavioural schemas, ensuring the fidelity of practices over time. Various forms of capital contribute to social reproduction, encompassing financial, cultural, human, and social capital. Financial capital encompasses an individual's income and wealth, influencing the subsequent acquisition of cultural capital. Cultural capital encompasses shared perspectives, beliefs, knowledge, and skills transmitted across generations, subsequently shaping human capital, which pertains to one's educational and vocational training. Human capital, in turn, facilitates the attainment of social capital, denoting the social networks an individual is part of, significantly influencing opportunities and employment prospects. These four types of capital play a pivotal role in the process of social reproduction as they are transmitted between generations, contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities within the system of social stratification ("Social reproduction," n.d.). The researcher has tried to understand rural societal transformation and its hierarchical structure through the combination of capital people own, which makes a better understanding of social mobility.

The intricacies of labour dynamics can be comprehended through the lens of caste, which is concealed within the relationships of labour and other interconnected aspects of social hierarchies (Gopal 2013, p. 91). Continuing the tradition of feminist theorizing on work compels us to surpass the categorization of work based on gender, specifically distinguishing between formal, informal, and domestic spheres. This approach is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of the world of work in India (Banerjee 1997, Krishnaraj 1990, Sen 2010). This delineation often renders imperceptible and undervalues the manifold subsistence and socially indispensable activities predominantly undertaken by women, occurring within the domestic and under-waged realms. These activities, often degrated, are primarily executed by women or workers in the informal sector (Gopal 2013, p. 91).

The majority of tasks and activities within the informal and domestic sectors face devaluation and lack of recognition due to their detachment from the formal economic exchange, categorically falling under the umbrella of 'social reproduction.' The subsistence and socially indispensable activities, along with various degraded tasks performed by women and workers in the informal sector, are intricately intertwined with caste-based labour. In this context, both caste and gender hierarchies contribute to the devaluation of informal sector labour. The experiences of marginalized communities, particularly concerning their relationship with land, labour, and dispossession, are explicated through phenomena such as displacement, migration, and pauperization. These experiences underscore the continuous entry of dispossessed individuals into the informal sector. It is imperative, within this context, to adopt an approach that integrates both historical and contemporary perspectives, thereby avoiding artificial boundaries, such as the formal and informal divide, which tends to separate and devalue gendered labourers (Gopal 2013, p. 91).

Domestic labour, often regarded as abject, exploited, and relegated, disproportionately affects marginalised women in society. The tasks associated with domestic labour are viewed as natural repositories of ideologies cantered on selfless devotion, sacrifice, and altruism. Furthermore, domestic labour serves to underscore the pivotal role of institutions like marriage, family, and the household in the production, organisation, and regulation of social reproduction. There exists a notable connection between domestic labour and other caste-based labour and bonded labour systems, characterised by coercion through ideological or non-economic imperatives. In examining labour with caste status, the concept of untouchability emerges as a crucial factor influencing the enforcement of compulsory labour and perpetuating the enduring servility of Dalit castes in menial, unsanitary, and demeaning occupations in both rural and urban settings (Gopal 2013, p. 92). With this background of women and marginal communities' continuous engagement in menial tasks, this study tries to uncover the concealment of social aspects like caste, class, gender, and capital accumulation (cultural, social, and human capital) in the social reproduction of work in rural society.

The occupational roles undertaken by women from lower castes have been subjected to societal categorisation as inferior and stigmatised. Mainstream society, in its efforts to maintain control over Dalit women's sexuality, Dalit women are characterised as transgressive and deemed promiscuous. These societal constructions, in turn, have framed Dalit women's engagement in social reproductive labour for the community is ensured. The stratification among castes has permeated into the delineation of domestic labour, where tasks are assigned based on ritual markers of purity and impurity. In feudal societies, the role of domestic workers is often an extension of the attached farm labourers (Gopal 2013, p. 92). Especially in rural southern regions, women from the untouchable castes were exclusively assigned tasks related to cleaning and washing, facing restrictions on entering or handling kitchen items. Consequently, contemporary rural society has endeavoured to perpetuate the same stratified caste-based work in rural institutions. However, there have been notable changes, to some extent, influenced by constitutional laws and the acquisition of human capital. Given the limited scholarship available on the labour of so-called menial castes, there is a crucial need to connect inquiries about work with social status, integrating political and cultural influences into the analysis.

2. Women's Contributions in Agricultural and Domestic Spheres

The concealment of women's labour constitutes a characteristic manifestation of the sexual division of labour across numerous societies, further perpetuated by the ethnocentric presumptions inherent in the perspectives of researchers, policymakers and decision-makers. If work is conventionally understood as 'paid work outside the home', then the value of women's subsistence and domestic labour goes unrecognised and undervalued. There is literature that abounds with cautionary examples of women who defined themselves as 'housewives', even if they are involved in agricultural labour, small-scale market production, petty commodity production, and domestic activities (Swaminathan 2004).

In the domain of ethnographic discourse, Esther Boserup (1970) stands as the pioneering scholar to present a comprehensive comparative analysis of women's labour across a diverse array of societies. Her emphasis rested on the systemic underestimation of women's

work, particularly within the realms of subsistence agriculture and domestic labour. Despite the prevalence of sex-role stereotypes and consistent patterns in the sexual division of labour across cultures, Boserup identified significant variations in women's roles from one society to another. Drawing from the agricultural practices in African societies, she challenged the assumption that men invariably served as the primary food producers. By illustrating instances where men primarily cleared the land while women undertook cultivation, Boserup highlighted the fundamental role played by women in subsistence agricultural production in African contexts. However, she discerned notable distinctions in women's agricultural roles in Asia and Latin America when compared to African societies. Boserup (1970) expounded on these distinctions by linking the sexual division of labour to factors such as population density, technology, and landholding systems.

Jack Goody (1976) discussed the relationship between his work and Boserup to demonstrate similarities between their findings. Goody establishes a correlation between forms of marriage, patterns of property transmission, and the agricultural production systems in African and Eurasian inheritance structures. Divergent inheritance, wherein the property is bequeathed to children of both sexes and the practice of dowry, where the parental property is endowed to a daughter upon marriage, characterises Eurasian societies. In contrast, these features are notably absent among African societies. Goody associates the prevalence of divergent inheritance with economically advanced societies engaged in intensive plough agriculture. African hoe-agricultural societies, conversely, exhibit homogenous inheritance, where a man's property is transmitted solely to members of his own clan or lineage of the same gender. Women in these societies do not inherit property but receive bridewealth as compensation for the labour lost to their natal family. However, this transfer of goods does not accord women the same status as dowry does (Goody 1976 p. 6&7).

Boserup arrives at a similar conclusion regarding the interconnections among the sexual division of labour, marriage systems, and agricultural production types. In African hoe-based agricultural practices, predominantly carried out by women, a high incidence of polygyny and bridewealth is observed. Women in this system experience limited support from their husbands yet possess some economic independence by selling their own crops.

Conversely, in Asian regions where plough agriculture prevails, and women are less engaged in agricultural work, polygamous marriages are infrequent, and dowry payments are customary. In this context, women rely entirely on their husbands for economic support, as husbands are obligated to provide for spouses and children due to dowry arrangements (Boserup 1970 p. 50).

Gendered studies posit that given equal access to essential resources and services, women could achieve agricultural productivity comparable to that of male farmers. Investigations into the activities of women in landless and small cultivator households reveal that women consistently contribute more hours than men to both farming tasks and domestic responsibilities. Assessing the economic value of "housewives' work" remains a contentious and unresolved topic. For instance, a wage-earning servant engaged as a cook is unequivocally regarded as economically active. Conversely, the work of a housewife, even if she expends more effort than a paid servant in culinary or other domestic activities, does not receive equivalent recognition as economically active (Government of India 1972 cited in Agarwal 2016).

Within the current socio-cultural paradigm, societal expectations dictate that women primarily engage in domestic activities and are not anticipated to participate in external employment. Deviation from this norm is met with diminished esteem, with traditional domestic work accorded a higher level of respect. Consequently, numerous women tend to underreport their economic activities due to their menial tasks and the prevailing social stigma associated with women working outside the home. The influence of societal values contributes to a perception among women that their work lacks significance meriting formal acknowledgement. Additionally, androcentric biases within reporting mechanisms further exacerbate the tendency to underestimate and undervalue women's contributions in labour-related records.

Domestic labour is commonly perceived as the responsibility of women, while the engagement of men in tasks such as childcare, dishwashing, and toilet cleaning is often viewed as undignified. Working women frequently encounter challenges in reconciling their responsibilities in both household and professional domains. Paradoxically, the

societal valuation of domestic tasks could be elevated if individuals were remunerated at market rates for such work (Olsen & Mehta 2006). An examination encompassing thirty-one countries reveals that women consistently devote more hours to work than men (Jain 2012). However, the economic worth of women's labour remains significantly underestimated, unrecognised, and unrewarded.

The overexploitation of female labour is rooted in the asymmetric sexual division of labour and the societal categorisation of women primarily as housewives. Pervasive definitions, such as the categorical association of women with housekeeping roles and men with breadwinning responsibilities, contribute to the concealment of women's productive labour. A specific instance illustrating this phenomenon is observed in Narsapur, where lacemakers were not aware of the splitting up of the production process, which may be construed as a strategic manoeuvre by exporters aimed at impeding the autonomous marketing initiatives of women lace makers (Mies 1982 p. 59). Women remain obscured within the realm of labour due to the prevalent and dominant ideology asserting their primary identity as 'housewives,' implying that their engagement in economic activities is merely the utilization of their leisure time for profitability (Mies 1982 p. 54).

The exploitation and subjugation of women are not incidental occurrences but integral components of a systemic framework. Maria Mies (1986) introduces the term 'Housewifisation' to characterise the classification of women as housewives, signifying a societal construction. The imperceptibility of women's unpaid domestic labour, absent from official economic measures such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), contributes to its designation as 'free labour.' Additionally, remunerated work undertaken by women is often regarded as supplementary to that of men. Mies extends this analysis globally through the concept of 'Housewifization international,' elucidating the devaluation and characterisation of women's work as a source of inexpensive international labour. In her examination, Mies uncovers the interrelation between the prevailing sexual division of labour and the international division of labour within the broader framework of the global economy (Mies 1986).

Each colonial nation might have anticipated that the overthrow of colonialism would lead to a transformation in its economic standards. Regrettably, this was not the case, as global capitalism seamlessly supplanted the legacy of colonial history. A noteworthy example of this transition occurred in the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s. Corporations from Europe, Japan, and the United States strategically relocated labour-intensive industries, such as textiles, electronics, and toys, to regions recognised for inexpensive labour, such as Southeast Asia or the Mexican borders. This restructuring aimed to mitigate production costs. These manufacturing facilities, where the overwhelming majority of the workforce comprised young, unmarried women, operated under conditions of forced labour, devoid of union representation and the safeguards provided by labour laws, and were frequently subject to direct threats of violence. Notably, women were terminated from employment upon marriage to circumvent the provision of maternity benefits. Through this exposition, Mies compellingly posits that the accumulation of capital historically and persistently relies on the exploitation of labour (Mies 1986).

Gender disparities and inherent male bias are extensively documented in the context of women farmers' access to critical resources, such as technical information, credit, extension services, fertilisers, and marketing. In numerous societies, women encounter societal restrictions that impede their public participation and mobility, thereby adversely impacting their capacity to exploit opportunities for higher-value production (World Bank 2009, FAO 2011, Agarwal 1994, 2016).

3. Feminisation in Agricultural Activities and its Implications for Rural Communities

Over the past few decades, India has witnessed a notable shift in its agricultural landscape, marked by a discernible trend often referred to as the 'feminisation' of agriculture. This phenomenon encapsulates the increasing involvement of women in various facets of agricultural production, management, and decision-making within rural households. Concurrently, it underscores the intricate interplay of socio-economic factors, including male out-migration, changing land tenure systems, and shifts in agricultural practices, all of which have reshaped the roles and responsibilities of women in rural India. The expanding market in land and labour, coupled with alterations in land tenure systems and the

emergence of migrant labour, has further worked against the interests of women (Brain 1976, Jones 1982, Mueller 1977, Okeyo 1980, Remy 1975). The collective findings of this body of literature regarding the disadvantaged position of women in the context of capitalist transformation processes have given rise to a developing theory known as the 'feminisation' of subsistence agriculture (Moore 1988 p. 75).

The 'feminisation' of subsistence agriculture is believed to result from two interrelated mechanisms or processes, often occurring in tandem. The first process involves commercialising smallholder agriculture, wherein men focus on cultivating cash crops, leaving women responsible for meeting 'family' consumption needs by contributing increasing labour to subsistence agriculture. The substantial demands of subsistence production frequently hinder women from participating in cash crop cultivation (Lewis 1984, Staudt 1982). The second mechanism involves male migration, wherein men leave an area to pursue employment, leaving women behind to sustain the subsistence sector (Bukh 1979, Bush et al. 1986, Hay 1976, Murray 1981). In the process of this feminisation, women are increasingly becoming the custodians of family land (Sinha and Baliyan 2014). The 'feminisation of agriculture' in India is attributed to the heightened casualisation of work, unprofitable crop production, and distressed migration of men to higher casual work in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors (Sharmistha and Baliyan 2014). A study on rural male out-migration from Tajikistan to Russia revealed an absence of agricultural labour, prompting women to assume traditionally male tasks and challenging patriarchal values in rural Tajikistan (Mukhamedova & Wegerich 2018).

The phenomenon of the feminisation of agriculture (FoA) has been widely documented as a global trend, with a noticeable surge in scholarly interest over the past decade (Oloo et al., 2023). This trend is particularly conspicuous in various regions of North and South India (Corta & Venkateshwarlu 1999, Neog & Sahoo 2020, Pattnaik 2018, Vepa 2005), where significant male migration takes place. As agricultural men move in search of better employment outside their native then women of their household become custodians of the land, a process commonly referred to as the feminisation of agriculture. However, the key question revolves around whether the process of feminisation of agriculture is inherently linked to male migration. If so, what are the dynamic factors at play? Additionally, if there

is a heightened visibility of women's involvement as agricultural labourers, what is this process termed? These are some of the research questions addressed in this study.

4. Gender Differences in the Labour Market

Gender relations are characterised by considerable diversity across societies and are not static over time. At their core, gender relations reflect power dynamics between men and women, evident in practices, ideologies, and representations, encompassing divisions of labour, ownership, attribution of abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits, and behavioural patterns. These relations involve both cooperative and conflicting elements. The hierarchical nature of gender is either sustained or transformed through implicit or explicit contestation and bargaining among actors with disparate access to economic, political, and social power (Agarwal 1994).

Feminist anthropology, focusing on the conflicts and contradictions inherent in gender relations, has explored the varied ways in which processes of social change, economic opportunities, and the emergence of capitalist relations in production and reproduction impact women and men. However, the mechanisms through which women engage in wage labour in developing economies remain insufficiently investigated, necessitating further substantive research in this area (Moore 1988 p. 93).

Factors influencing female participation rates in non-agricultural employment are intricate and exhibit diverse effects. A comprehensive exploration of these determinants reveals a multifaceted interplay of various elements. These encompass the economic structure, degree of industrialisation, educational opportunities, legal status of women, cultural norms regarding women's conduct, the demographic composition of the population, and the age at which women marry. No singular factor, in isolation, can offer a comprehensive explanation for women's engagement in formal employment (Moore 1988 p. 98). Instead, a holistic consideration of all these factors is essential for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics shaping women's entry into non-agricultural employment. The global landscape demonstrates substantial variation in women's participation rates in non-agricultural employment. Unravelling the reasons behind this considerable variation and elucidating the

determinants involved contribute to a more insightful analysis of the complexities surrounding female labour force participation.

The most recent findings from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), disseminated by the Labour Bureau, reveal a notable increase in female labour force participation rate from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23. Further, the National Sample Survey (NSS 68th round) sheds light on several factors pertinent to women's participation in the labour market. These factors assume significance in comprehending the challenges associated with elevated female labour force participation and offer potential policy solutions. Notably, this report states that a substantial proportion of women who are currently inactive in the labour force but express a willingness to work predominantly reside in rural areas. Furthermore, these women tend to possess higher educational qualifications, yet they are engaged in household activities. The difficulties faced by women in securing jobs suited to their preferences are noteworthy. Additionally, women with vocational training exhibit a higher likelihood of workforce engagement, irrespective of their educational levels. Wage disparities are more pronounced in fields characterized by a greater female representation. Sectors such as education and domestic or home services, spanning rural and urban areas, demonstrate a relatively high representation of women (Fletcher et al. 2017).

Another study between the years 2004-05 and 2011-12 witnessed a widening gender gap in labour force participation. The states of Karnataka, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jharkhand, and Odisha experienced particularly pronounced increases in the gender gap, with Karnataka recording the highest rate. The elevated gender gap in labour force participation can be attributed to the challenge faced by women who transitioned out of the agriculture sector to secure positions in the non-agricultural sector. The generated employment primarily concentrated in construction and the service sector, particularly transportation and storage, with limited opportunities for women. The dearth of non-farm job prospects in rural areas acted as a deterrent, compelling women to remain disengaged from the labour market. During this period, female workers observed a notable improvement in their wage levels, indicative of a diminishing gender gap in terms of remuneration. However, this positive trend in wages coexists with a decline in opportunities available for women in rural areas (Sanghi et al. 2015).

4.1. *Factors Influencing Female Labour Force Participation in India*

The scholarly examination affirms the limited access women have to the labour market, with a decrease in female labour force participation attributed to constraints such as a lack of access to part-time employment, opportunities beyond the agricultural sector, job mismatches, limited information regarding returns to work, and the proximity (geographical location) of available jobs. Conversely, positive influences on women's participation arise from factors such as social contacts, role models, and peer effects (Fletcher, Pande, & Moore 2017).

As of the year 2021-22, a mere 29.4% of women were engaged in paid employment in India (PLFS 2022). This percentage remains considerably low when juxtaposed with the female labour force participation rates with other developing economies such as China, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (World Bank Data 2017). The 68th round of National Sample Survey (NSS) data provides nuanced insights into female labour force participation. It highlights that an increase in education is correlated with a rise in labour force participation (LFP). The female labour force participation (FLFP) graph exhibits a U-shaped pattern, indicating that women with lower levels of education are more likely to participate in the labour force. However, women with secondary education demonstrate the lowest levels of work participation, while highly educated women exhibit increased FLFP. This U-shaped representation is influenced by a corresponding increase in household income, as rising income prompts some women to opt out of the workforce (Fletcher et al. 2017, Olsen & Mehta 2006).

The escalation in household income is associated with a decrease in female employment. However, the deficiency of viable, remunerative, and productive employment opportunities, especially within non-agricultural sectors, has contributed to the decline in female employment. The most pronounced decline in women's labour force participation is observed in the age cohort of 30-34 years, followed by the 35-39 years age group, primarily driven by domestic work and other unaccounted-for work outside the formal labour market. This trend holds true for both rural and urban employment in India. In contrast, for men, the decline in labour force participation rates is more noticeable in the

educational age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 years, with male work participation increasing after the age of 35 (Sinha & Baliyan 2014).

In East Asian nations such as Korea and Japan, a distinct M-shaped correlation is observed between age and Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP). Women were seen to withdraw from the workforce during childbearing years and re-enter as their children mature (Kawata & Naganuma 2010). Conversely, in the Indian context, a decline in female labour force participation is noticeable among women in their mid-twenties, particularly in urban areas. This decline is attributed to factors such as marriage migration, household responsibilities, and childbearing (Sinha & Baliyan 2014).

Wage Participation Rate (WPR) exhibits variations among different demographic groups in India. Notably, scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) women demonstrate the highest WPR due to extreme poverty, leaving them with little choice but to engage in work. Additionally, these groups do not face the same social taboos associated with women working outside the home as observed in 'other castes' (Klasen & Pieters 2015, Sinha & Baliyan 2014, Srivastava & Srivastava 2010). Conversely, Muslim women in rural India experience significantly lower WPR, primarily due to religious norms restricting their mobility and participation in the workforce (Sinha & Baliyan 2014, Srivastava & Srivastava 2010).

For male workers, higher levels of education are positively correlated with higher WPR. This is attributed to factors such as the societal compulsion for men to earn, greater job availability for men. However, for women, the WPR is higher for illiterate women compared to those with higher educational qualifications. Notably, this trend is not consistent among women with technical or vocational education (Srivastava & Srivastava 2010).

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping women's roles, socio-economic status, and societal positions. Quantitative studies on Women’s Work Participation Rates (WPR) reveal a positive correlation with the level of education, particularly for women with vocational and technical education (Mujahid 1985 p. 117). However, caution is urged in

interpreting data on women's labour force participation, as increases in women's wage participation rates may conceal a concentration of women workers in specific economic sectors (Nath 1978 p. 175). The intricate relationship between education, employment, demographic structures, and age at marriage further complicates the understanding of women's roles in the labour market (Moore 1988 p. 106).

Several studies suggest that young, unmarried women with some level of education often have fewer household responsibilities, allowing them to secure factory employment. In contrast, married women with children are constrained to jobs accommodating their substantial domestic workload. A study in Ambattur detailing women's employment in Chennai reveals that female workers enter the labour market at an early age (less than 18) and tend to withdraw before reaching thirty. This withdrawal is often influenced by familial disapproval, particularly from husbands or in-laws, limiting married women's ability to work outside the home. This situation is exacerbated by lower education levels compared to their male counterparts and relatively fewer years of work experience, reflecting the impact of patriarchal relations and structures (Jeyaranjan & Swaminathan 2012).

Data from samples collected in countries such as Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru reveal that the work participation rate for divorced or separated women is five times higher than that for married women. Similarly, the work participation rate for single women is four times higher than for their married counterparts (Youssef 1976 p. 63). This data suggests that women tend to exit the labour force upon marriage but may re-enter it if divorced or separated due to economic necessity (Azzam et al. 1985 p. 7). These impoverished women, who may be the sole wage earners for their families, are unable to withdraw from work, particularly given the additional financial pressure brought about by the birth of children (Moore 1988 p. 108). This trend is also evident in the Indian context, where the relationship between women's employment and marital status is significantly influenced by socio-economic class.

4.2. *Female Labour Force Participation Trends in Rural and Urban India*

Wage participation rates (WPR) in India are high in rural Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. However, female WPR has experienced a decline since 2004-05. In urban areas, women's work participation is greater in Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Unfortunately, the current employment situation for women in these states has worsened over the past five years. The decline in women's labour force participation is a cause for concern, posing implications for their overall economic empowerment. Urgent measures are required to increase decent work and productive employment opportunities for women in various sectors, enhancing their employability to harness the benefits of economic growth for social and economic stability and socially sustainable development (Sinha & Baliyan 2014).

Despite overall growth, fertility decline, and increased female education in India, female labour force participation has either declined or stagnated since the 1980s. This phenomenon is explained by a combination of demand and supply effects. Supply-side factors include an increase in household incomes and husbands' education, while a decline in the selection of highly educated women further contributes to this decline. On the demand side, sectors attracting female workers have expanded minimally, leading to a reduction in female participation rates. Social stigma against women working outside the home, particularly for married women, has further reduced women's participation. In India, social restrictions on women's lifestyles tend to form a rigid hierarchy (Chen & Dreze 1992). An increase in education and restrictions on women's mobility and work, both correlated with family social status, result in a negative correlation between education and female labour force participation. The stigma associated with low-skilled jobs intensifies as women attain low and intermediate levels of education. With secondary or post-secondary education, this stigma diminishes, and women gain access to white-collar jobs not subject to social stigma (Klasen& Pieters 2015).

Given that more than two-thirds of the Indian population resides in rural areas, underreporting of women's work in agricultural activities is likely. This may stem from

survey respondents being reluctant to report women's contributions or not considering women's work as distinct from their general domestic duties. Such underreporting could affect the overall participation rate of rural India, where women spend more time on farm activities that may not be considered as work. This has a direct impact on subsidiary status activities compared to the principal status of female employment (Klasen & Pieters 2015).

In rural India, women's labour force participation is declining as economic status rises. However, higher work participation rates do not necessarily equate to greater welfare unless accompanied by higher educational capabilities, assets, and income. Only when work participation is coupled with these factors can it be deemed meaningful from both a welfare and income perspective (Sinha & Baliyan 2014).

5. Impact of Employment on Women's Socioeconomic Status and Household Dynamics

The correlation between employment and the enhanced social and economic autonomy of women is a nuanced subject. Numerous global studies indicate that married women often perceive employment outside the home as a strategic avenue for attaining greater economic and social independence from men (Moore 1988 p. 111). An examination of a Cairo factory's female workforce suggests that employment strengthens women's standing, elevating their influence within the household and enhancing their involvement in decision-making processes. Additionally, employment empowers women to alleviate their financial needs without being reliant on their husbands (Ibrahim 1985 p. 296).

The study of working daughters of Hong Kong highlights distinct roles and statuses within families that exist for daughters in comparison to sons. Sons typically hold a privileged position in patriarchal families due to religious and cultural emphases on patrilineage continuity and ancestral traditions. Daughters, however, are socialised to contribute selflessly to their natal families before marriage and subsequently to their husbands' families after marriage. Sibling order emerges as a critical determinant affecting educational and employment opportunities, particularly for eldest daughters, who, maturing when family income is minimal, often engage in wage employment to support their

younger siblings' education, thereby improving their employment prospects. Overall, wage employment has notably enhanced women's socio-economic status. Importantly, they chose their potential spouses through peer-group activities, which are not arranged (Salaff 1981 p. 259-268).

Merely examining employment is insufficient; understanding how employment correlates with women's positions within households requires analysis. The reciprocal influence between household position and employment poses a challenge. Women's household responsibilities can limit the types of employment they can access, while employment and income may alter their positions within the household, impacting decision-making, domestic labour division, and resource distribution (Band 1992). In rural India, women are predominantly engaged in the agricultural sector. Despite their involvement, they face challenges in accessing, controlling, and owning land and productive resources. Their limited participation in decision-making, lack of access to markets, and ownership constraints result in increased vulnerability to economic fluctuations. Women in the construction sector often undertake supportive roles, such as scaffolding and carrying bricks, while being discouraged from pursuing specialized trades dominated by men. In the service sector, women, particularly concentrated within health and education domains. Although women constitute a significant proportion of primary school teachers, their representation decreases in higher education positions (UN 2010, as cited in Sinha and Baliyan 2014).

Rural women are deeply ingrained to societal expectations as caregivers and household caretakers influence their internalised views and may deter them from working outside the home. These norms have exhibited limited change over the past two decades, with evidence suggesting greater adherence among wealthier and upper-caste households. Institutionalism plays a role in shaping social norms, interacting with individuals and rules, and either reproducing or adapting to prevailing conditions. Norms in the Indian labour market, such as those defining expectations from various types of work, contribute to the understanding of institutionalised practices (Olsen & Mehta 2006).

5.1. *Silent Strategies, Loud Impact: Tacit Bargaining Power and Women's Agency in Household Dynamics*

Women and men forming labour gangs to enhance bargaining power are evident in rural labouring, as demonstrated by Kapadia's research (Kapadia 1996, 1997, 1999). Bargaining power, derived from productive work and income, is a pivotal factor influencing women's access to the cash economy and the marketplace. Women's dependence on male households for economic resources constrains their access to financial independence (Agarwal 1997). Studies on American households suggest that working women possess higher bargaining power than housewives (England & Kilbourne 1990, as cited in Agarwal 1997). Women's entry into the labour market serves as a means to enhance their bargaining power, legitimising their claims within the household (Sen 1990, as cited in Agarwal 1997). Despite engaging in similar tasks as men, women are often remunerated less, perpetuating the fallacious notion that women's work is less productive. This fallacy not only results in the underestimation and undervaluation of women but also impacts their bargaining power within the household and their perceived worth in the labour market (Agarwal 1997).

The distributive principle assumes a significant role in delineating women's requirements, asset allocation, and bargaining power within the household. Notably, societal perspectives often diminish the perceived value of women's needs, portraying them as subordinate to family needs, in contrast to the widely acknowledged personal needs of men (Agarwal, 1997). Social norms inherently define the boundaries of negotiable aspects, falling within the realm of the incontestable or 'doxa,' a term coined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977 p.167-170). 'Doxa' represents an unquestioned and natural facet of the social order, immune to contestation, often justified under the umbrella of tradition. Examples of 'doxa' encompass widely accepted norms such as the gender-based division of labour within the household, the adherence to endogamy in marriage, and the elevated decision-making authority of elder daughters-in-law. Evidence suggests that when social norms curtail explicit bargaining or vocal expression, women employ implicit forms of bargaining power. These tacit strategies include persistent complaints, feigning ill-health,

manipulating relationships with male affines and consanguineous relatives, threatening to return to the natal house, adopting a stance of silence, and withholding conjugal relations as observed in various instances (Agarwal 1997 p. 15-19).

5.2. *Family Honour and Gendered Responsibilities in Rural Societies*

In rural societal contexts, family honour stands out as a pivotal value, where the status is intricately tied to the modest, chaste, and discreet sexual conduct of female family members. The significance of honour as a fundamental social principle elucidates why males within the family willingly assume complete responsibility for the moral and economic well-being of their female relatives. Control over women within the kin group is exclusively entrusted to male members, who, in enforcing this control, receive religious, judicial, and social backing from the broader society. This guardianship principle extends to all women but holds particular significance for young, unmarried women who are perceived as having the potential to compromise the purity of family honour (Youssef 1978 p. 76-78; Azzam et al. 1985 p. 6-7).

An investigation in Punjab revealed disparities in nutritional care between boys and girls across all castes, with more pronounced differences observed in lower castes (Safilios-Rothschild 1980). Conversely, a study in rural Kerala demonstrated that the increase in women's income was associated with enhanced nutritional status for children, highlighting the diminished predictive value of aggregate household income (Kumar 1977: cited in Safilios-Rothschild 1980). Naturally, family dynamics significantly influence women's choices regarding education, employment, and marriage patterns (Band 1992).

Feminist scholars across various disciplines have consistently and emphatically asserted that the family serves as the "central site of women's oppression" within society. The intricate interplay between the sexual division of labour in the home and its complex relationship with the broader sexual division of labour in the workplace and society contributes to women's subordinate positions. This subordination results from both their economic dependence on men within the family and the ideological constraints imposed by notions of mothering, caregiving, and nurturing (Moore 1988 p. 126-127). A field study

conducted in Narsapur exemplifies how women are obligated to serve the first meal to their husbands, considering their prolonged absences. Despite the perception of men as god-like figures, husbands in Narsapur refrain from serving their own food, even when their wives are menstruating, necessitating assistance from neighbours in serving meals to the male members of the household. When Narsapur women were questioned about why their boys were not taught lace-making, Narsapur women responded, "It doesn't look good when boys make lace" (Mies 2012). This perspective is not limited solely to the women of Narsapur but is reflective of a broader pattern observed among numerous rural women in India. In these contexts, women actively assume roles as agents responsible for upholding and perpetuating patriarchal structures, all while concurrently engaging in the nurturing and socialisation of their children. The alignment of rural women with patriarchal ideologies is evident not only in their thoughts but also in their tangible actions, thereby substantiating the multifaceted nature of their participation in patriarchal systems.

5.3. *Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Women's Marginalization: Unraveling the Nexus*

Women's marginalisation is an outcome of the capitalist organisation of production and labour utilisation. Fundamental aspects of this process encompass the separation of production and reproduction, the hierarchical structure within capitalist enterprises, the emergence of surplus labour, the concept of an industrial reserve army, and the mutually accommodating relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. This arrangement results in the relegation of women to the reserve army of labour (Beechey 1978 p. 185-191).

Across various industry groups, women consistently receive lower wages than men, attributable to the undervaluation of their work and skills. This hierarchical structure is observable in both manufacturing and service sectors, where women predominantly occupy low-skilled positions, even if possessing exceptional talents and extensive informal training. Despite a significant number of women engaging in self-employment, they are often categorised as 'helpers or auxiliary workers' (Sinha and Baliyan 2014).

Married women, children, and older individuals are categorised as secondary workers, entering the labour market when the primary earners' income is insufficient to cover the

family's subsistence needs. Secondary workers from higher-income households may re-enter the labour market when presented with enhanced employment opportunities due to higher levels of education. In this manner, households with higher incomes may delegate some of their domestic responsibilities to the labour market, easing the burden of their double-duty responsibilities (Mathew 2012).

The characterisation of women as a 'reserve army of labour' is closely tied to the prevailing practice of remunerating women at lower rates than their male counterparts. A contested viewpoint posits that unemployed married women depend on their wages. Simultaneously, this perspective allows capitalist employers to exploit the assumption that the waged labour of married women is secondary, justifying lower wages compared to those paid to men. However, this theory of a reserve army of labour and secondary workers has faced extensive criticism. The validity of this assertion is contingent upon specific historical junctures and within the confines of distinct social and economic contexts. The comparative analysis of women's waged employment on a global scale reveals a nuanced and intricate scenario devoid of a singular explanation that uniformly characterises the correlation between women's labour force participation and the sexual division of labour within households. A notable illustration of this complexity is observed in the case of working daughters in Hong Kong, where the dynamics of capitalism involve the utilisation of labour from young, unmarried women. These women often experience a significant alleviation of domestic responsibilities due to their substantial contributions to household income. The circumstances surrounding these young women defy a simplistic explanation based solely on the notion of a cheap labour force reliant on men's wages for support during periods of unemployment. In contrast, a substantial portion of these young women, particularly those engaged in the industrial and service sectors, operate as primary wage earners within their households. Consequently, the livelihoods of other household members hinge upon the earnings generated by these women (Beechy 1978 p. 186).

6. Caste, Class, and Power Dynamics: Intersections in Contemporary Rural India

The analysis of Indian society necessitates the integrated consideration of caste and class as they intricately intertwine. Recent decades have witnessed a diminishing association of

dominant castes with land, suggesting a dissipation rather than a reduction of the power wielded by these dominant castes. This dissipation has profound implications for the reproduction of class relations among the dominant and labouring classes, manifesting both economically and politically in contemporary rural India (Harris 2012, 2013).

The differentiation in the 'class situations' of the propertied and labourers, as posited by Weber (1978), is contingent upon asset ownership and skill levels. Unequal distributions of property and productive assets engender disparate relations in market exchanges. The 'mode of distribution' perpetuates the inaccessibility of highly valued goods to the 'non-wealthy,' illustrating a stratified-oriented approach that delineates the pattern of class positions. Capitalists, owning the means of production, stand in stark contrast to the working class, consistently excluded from higher educational credentials and capital (Wright 2009).

Studies on rural labour in India, often neglecting the boundaries between rural and urban, obscure the focus on rural-based labour. A comprehensive approach must encompass various types of labourers residing and working within a village, commuting to nearby towns or cities, or migrating periodically while maintaining a residence in their home village (Pattenden 2016). In India, a significant proportion of employment is concentrated in the informal sector, characterised by a lack of written contracts and social security. These informal workers face substantial impediments in the labour market, as they remain unorganised, with minimal representation through unionisation. Labour laws offer limited protection to informal workers, and even where applicable, they are consistently undermined through subcontracting, outsourcing, and the evasion of worker registration.

In investigating domination dynamics in rural south India, various 'gatekeepers' were identified, individuals or groups controlling access to goods and services, particularly information. The five categories of gatekeepers included village councillors, political workers, fixers (social workers), officials of Gram Panchayat (GP), and contractors. These gatekeepers leverage their influence over MLAs and MPs from the panchayat to district levels through involvement in various public and contract works. Level-I gatekeepers are village councillors and political workers who predominantly belong to the dominant

caste/class. Their power is perpetuated through their role as gatekeepers of public resources. Politicians further enhance their accumulations by investing in private sectors like mining, resorts, real estate, tourism, and education. However, this dynamic is not without its challenges, as evident in the fluctuating fortunes of the political leaders in relation to mining (Pattenden 2016).

In the context of Karnataka, gatekeepers were reluctant to implement the 'National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA),' recognising its potential to diminish their control over the labouring class. The case studies from the Dharwad and Raichur districts of Karnataka exemplify distinct outcomes. While Dharwad witnessed a gradual disappearance of NREGA due to dominant caste/class influence while Raichur, led by the Jagruthi Mahela Sanghathan (JMS), successfully implemented NREGA, challenging caste inequality and violence against women. The differing situations in Dharwad and Raichur underscore the intricate relationship between social policy interpretation and class relations (Pattenden 2016). The National Sample Survey (NSS) indicates the poor performance of NREGA in Karnataka, particularly in the northern part, as corroborated by Pattenden's study. Further investigation into the works, issues, and implementation processes of NREGA in the southern part of Karnataka is warranted to ascertain the alignment of micro-level evidence with macro data.

7. Beyond the Numbers: Understanding Gender Bias in National Data on Women's Work

National data systems, both in conceptual and technical dimensions, exhibit a propensity to inadequately represent and undervalue various activities undertaken by women that are crucial for the sustenance of households. This undervaluation is primarily attributed to the classification of these activities as 'unproductive,' stemming from their non-conformity with the predetermined standard categories established by the national data system. The biases inherent in the system manifest through multiple factors, encompassing the gender of both respondents and enumerators, cultural perceptions concerning women's roles, and the formulation of questions, including the linguistic nuances employed. Typically, information is sought from the male head of the household or other male members, thereby

reflecting a male-centric perspective when querying matters related to women's work status and their availability for non-domestic labour. In cultural contexts where women's engagement in activities beyond domestic spheres is viewed unfavourably, this predisposition leads to an underestimation of women's participation in non-domestic work and their availability for employment outside the home. The cultural norms surrounding the prestige associated with women primarily identifying as 'housewives' further contribute to this tendency, even if they are actively involved in economic pursuits, as such responses are perceived as socially acceptable and appropriate (Swaminathan 2012).

8. Trends of Gender and Labour Dynamics Emerging from the Literature

The aforementioned literature review substantiates the pervasive undervaluation and marginalisation of women's labour despite their extensive work contributions, attributing this phenomenon to deeply ingrained societal constructs and the processes of socialisation. The prevailing societal perceptions embedded in the unconscious minds of individuals within a patriarchal framework further contribute to the relegation of women's work to a secondary status. During the process of data collection of rural women's employment, women engaged in non-domestic labour are surrounded by cultural stigmas, especially those who engage in menial tasks that compel them to identify themselves as 'housemakers' rather than acknowledging their role as workers. Notably, the national data system has inadequately addressed factors related to employment in unorganised sector and unpaid labour like domestic work during data collection, introducing ambiguity into national data.Despite constituting half of the total population in India, women's overall participation in the workforce has been considerably lower compared to men. However, the participation of rural women in agriculture is increasing at a significant rate compared to their male counterparts. The proportion of women engaged in agricultural work remained elevated in 2021-22 compared to pre-pandemic levels, whereas the proportion for men declined. When Covid-19 disrupted the economy and led to large-scale migration and job losses for millions of Indians, agriculture became a fallback option for many. Specifically, 57.3% of women aged 15-59 were involved in agriculture during 2021-22, in contrast to only 34.4% of the male workforce being employed in the agricultural sector (Dhamija & Chawla 2023). It has been observed that male workers in rural areas are transitioning from agricultural to

non-agricultural activities whereas the number of women work participation in agriculture is increasing on a large scale. This phenomenon will be examined through fieldwork in the study village of Maralukunte. Explorations into female labour force participation in India reveal that 29.4% of women aged 15-59 were part of the labour force in 2021-22. Women's participation in agricultural activities is higher compared to non-agricultural activities, although they predominantly work as unpaid labourers on family farms. In rural areas, non-agricultural establishments employed an average of 2.10 persons. Among non-agricultural activities, the highest number of workers was engaged in manufacturing, followed by retail trade and education (PLFS 2021-22). Scholars argue that individuals from socially disadvantaged groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and single women, are more likely to engage in wage work due to their socio-economic circumstances. Religious affiliations also influence work participation, with Muslim women exhibiting lower participation compared to Hindus. Educational attainment presents a nuanced relationship, depicted by a U-shaped curve indicating women with lower levels of education are more likely to participate in the labour force, those with secondary education demonstrate the lowest levels of work participation, and highly educated women exhibit increased participation (Fletcher et al. 2017, Olsen & Mehta 2006). Considering these factors, this study will explore the correlation between female labour force participation and various social groups and classes, recognizing the need for regional socio-economic studies to complement existing macro data. The impact of the Green Revolution has catalyzed a significant shift in rural economies from food crops to cash crops, adversely affecting farmers and subjecting them to debilitating debts. The mechanization of agriculture has compelled male farmers to seek employment in non-farm and allied activities. Consequently, the resultant male out-migration from rural areas has led to a concentration of women in agriculture, a phenomenon known as the 'feminization of agriculture.' This situation has forced women to assume roles traditionally dominated by men in the agricultural sector. The present village study aims to determine whether the phenomenon of FoA is universal or region-specific and to identify the dynamics of the FoA processes.

II. Research problem

The principal aim is to locate labour and gender relations in the context of change in agricultural production, migration of rural populations, preference for non-agricultural employment, occupational mobility, industrialization, interventions of the state, and aspirations of women, low income groups, and landless castes in rural areas of Karnataka. Furthermore, the study aspires to gain a comprehensive understanding of gender-based disparities inherent in the rural labour market, concurrently capturing the nuanced trajectory of rural transformation vis-à-vis occupational diversity.

III. Conceptual Framework

In the course of this study, the researcher has applied an intersectionality approach, drawing upon the conceptual framework devised by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) that incorporates key concepts contributing to his overarching understanding of social structures and practices. Specifically, Bourdieu's theoretical constructs, including 'doxa,' 'capital,' 'agency,' and 'field,' have been utilized to elucidate the intricacies of the gender division of labour, expound upon the stratification of occupational roles, delineate the uneven dispersion of power and wealth, and comprehend women's engagement within the broader social sphere.

Doxa encompasses the set of unexamined and unquestioned beliefs, opinions, and values existing within a society. It represents the prevailing orthodoxy or "common sense" that individuals accept without critical reflection. Doxa plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and judgments, defining the normative or legitimate aspects of a given social context. Understanding Bourdieu's concept of doxa is crucial for comprehending how social norms and ideologies become embedded in individuals and institutions.

Bourdieu introduces the notion of capital to encompass various forms of resources possessed by individuals and groups, which can be strategically employed to gain advantages in social life. He identifies three primary types of capital: firstly, Economic Capital, encompassing material resources such as money and property; secondly, Cultural Capital, comprising non-material resources such as education, knowledge, and cultural

tastes; and lastly, Social Capital, involving social networks, relationships, and connections. Bourdieu contends that individuals convert one form of capital into another, and this possession of capital contributes to social stratification and power dynamics. The concept of capital is central to comprehending social inequalities and the mechanisms through which individuals navigate and perpetuate social structures.

In Bourdieu's framework, agency is not understood in the conventional sense of individuals as autonomous, free agents making choices independently of external influences. Instead, the agency is seen as a product of the interplay between individuals and their social context. Bourdieu contends that individuals do possess a degree of agency, but this agency is constrained and structured by the broader social forces at play. The concept of habitus is crucial to understanding agency in Bourdieu's theory. Habitus refers to the ingrained dispositions, preferences, and embodied knowledge acquired through socialisation within a specific social context. It shapes individuals' perceptions, actions, and choices in a way that aligns with the norms and expectations of their social environment. Habitus operates largely at the subconscious level, guiding individuals in their everyday practices.

Bourdieu argues that individuals exercise agency within the bounds of their habitus and the broader social structures, or fields, in which they operate. Fields are specific social arenas characterised by their own rules, hierarchies, and forms of capital. These fields include domains like education, politics, and culture. Within each field, individuals navigate and strategise, employing their habitus and accumulating various forms of capital to position themselves advantageously. Fields are dynamic and subject to change, with individuals' positions within them contingent on their ability to mobilise various forms of capital.

Intersectionality, originating from feminist scholarship and widely adopted across various disciplines, serves as an analytical framework acknowledging that individuals embody multiple, intersecting identities concurrently, shaping unique experiences. Within the realm of gender and labour, researchers employing intersectionality consider how factors such as race, class, and ethnicity intersect with gender, influencing individuals' workforce experiences. This approach unravels complex power dynamics influencing access to opportunities, resources, and rights in the labour market. Intersectionality directs attention

to the intersecting forms of inequality individuals may encounter, facilitating an understanding of simultaneous systems of oppression, discrimination, and privilege. This proves especially pertinent in scrutinising wage gaps, occupational segregation, and barriers to career advancement.

Numerous scholars have embraced the intersectionality approach in their investigations of gender and labour, probing the intricate interplay of various social categories shaping individuals' workforce experiences. Patricia Hill Collins's (1993) book "Black Feminist Thought" explores the intersectional experiences of African-American women, underscoring the importance of comprehending the interconnections between race, class, and gender in shaping social reality. Nivedita Menon (2013) consistently incorporates an intersectional perspective in her exploration of gender and sexuality, considering the intersections of caste, class, and gender in understanding power relations and labour dynamics. Kumud Sharma (2011) has researched women's labour in India, focusing on the intersectionality of gender and caste. Her work highlights how caste structures intersect with gender to shape women's access to and experiences in the labour market.

IV. Objectives

1. To understand the socio-economic profile of the Maralukunte village and Bengaluru Rural district.
2. To examine agricultural employment and transformation of the agricultural production to reveal changing work and gender relations.
3. To explore causes and consequences of occupational mobility and analyse the gender dynamics of work.
4. To assess the impact of non-agricultural employment on caste, gender and participation in work.

V. Methodology

1. Selection of Field Area

The purpose of this study is to comprehend the process of rural transformation with a specific focus on gender and labour dynamics. The researcher sought multi-caste villages where residents actively engage in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities, aiming to investigate the interplay of gender and labour across various social classes and communities. The literature review highlighted a notable aspect in the context of Karnataka's work participation rate, indicating two dynamic factors. Firstly, the state grapples with a significant gender gap in labour participation within India (Sanghi, Srija, and Vijay 2015). Conversely, Karnataka demonstrates a notably higher wage participation rate in rural areas compared to the national average (Sinha & Baliyan 2014). Consequently, the researcher opted to select a village in the Karnataka region as the focal point for the empirical study.

After conducting thorough research on mobility and developments in Karnataka, the researcher opted to select a village in Bengaluru Rural district, which is 60km away from the city centre Majestic to align with the focus on rural livelihoods. The establishment of an industrial area in Dabaspet/Sompura started working in the year 2010, caught the researcher's attention. A preliminary survey in the surrounding areas of Sompura facilitated the identification of Maralukunte village for the study. Several factors contributed to the selection of Maralukunte as the field area, including the active participation of males and females in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, a high rate of work participation among both men and women compared to neighbouring villages, and a diverse population comprising different caste groups. The village's size, neither too small nor too large, was also conducive to achieving the study objectives. Maralukunte fulfilled all these criteria, making it the chosen field area for this empirical study.

2. *Rapport Building and Profiles of Key Informants*

The researcher's integration into the research setting was facilitated through her existing social network, which served as a conduit for a smooth entry into the village community. A

direct introduction to Nagabhushan, a prominent taluk Panchayat elected member in the village in 2019, was arranged through the researcher's social connections. Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher resided in Nagabhushan's household, a crucial arrangement that not only facilitated accommodation but also played a pivotal role in establishing rapport with the villagers. The support extended by Nagabhushan's family, including his wife Renuka, who held the position of a village Panchayat elected member, and their children Pruthvi and Gowda, played a significant role in introducing the researcher to every household in the village.

The introduction through a politically active family proved beneficial in establishing trust with the villagers but occasionally sought clarification on the study's relevance to them and its potential political implications. These inquiries were addressed transparently at the outset to mitigate conflicts of interest, ensuring a smooth journey with the villagers. The researcher's understanding of the social dynamics and background contributed to her warm reception in the Dalit colony, where she was consistently welcomed with respect. Her amiable disposition and unassuming behaviour facilitated close interactions with Dalit women, who demonstrated hospitality by insisting she sit on a chair rather than the floor during visits. Dalit families initially exhibited hesitancy in offering food and drinks, possibly influenced by prevailing social dynamics and historical caste-related apprehensions. However, the researcher's open and accepting demeanor, devoid of any caste discrimination, played a pivotal role in cultivating trust and fostering a closer connection with the villagers over time. The researcher's non-discriminatory attitude contributed to breaking down barriers and bridging social gaps, ultimately enhancing the depth of her rapport with the Dalit families in the community.

The researcher's familiarity with Maralukunte's agricultural resources, such as areca nut and horticulture plantations, led to guided tours by women, fostering a connection with various families. Invitations to participate in local celebrations, including the village fair (*jatre)* and *Muniyappa pooje* (a traditional ritual or worship conducted in the name of Muniyappa deity in agricultural fields to seek prosperity and protection from pests or threats) provided additional opportunities to build rapport with a broader segment of the

population. The participation in these festivities, which occurred post-harvest in the summer, further ingratiated the researcher with the community.

During these engagements, the researcher encountered Prem Kumar, a twenty-five-year-old individual actively involved in his family's areca nut plantation business and occasional work in factory employment, especially in lean agricultural periods. Developing a connection with Prem Kumar, who became a key informant, occurred through repeated encounters in different agricultural fields, where he often operated a tractor due to his family's ownership. Additionally, interactions with the traditional village headman and Basavaraju, a commercial agriculturist, contributed valuable insights into the traditional political system and prospering commercial agriculture, respectively. The researcher's initial rapport-building efforts allowed her to approach key informants for an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the village.

3. *Methods of Data Collection*

This study utilised a mixed-method approach to comprehensively investigate the research objectives. In examining the profile of the study area, the researcher consulted various gazettes, books, census data, and district profile booklets. Additionally, interviews were conducted with elderly residents of Maralukunte village to acquire insights into its social history. Demographic profiles and occupational details were obtained through the administration of household schedules and semi-structured interviews. A total of 243 household schedules and 881 population details of the entire village encompassing aspects such as caste, age, marital status, educational background, landholding, migration, economic status, women’s autonomy, and primary and secondary occupations were documented.

The structure of the household schedule and interview questions are appended at the conclusion of this thesis. The researcher diligently documented three generations of occupations for men and women in each household to analyse inter-generational shifts in occupational mobility. Qualitative methods, including the case study approach, focus group interviews, and semi-structured interviews, were employed to elucidate facets of rural

transformation and the roles of men and women in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. The case study method facilitated the documentation of narratives pertaining to the impact of non-agricultural employment on rural households, with a particular focus on shift from traditional caste occupation. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were instrumental in gathering insights into various state provisions and their impact on enhancing the livelihood options for villagers. Data analysis involved using Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to examine associations between caste, class, gender, and workforce participation. The researcher meticulously coded information for 243 households and 881 individuals in Excel, utilising pivotal functions and graphical representations to discern the relationship between the dynamics of gender and labour within various social groups.

VI. Significance and Limitations of the Study

This study constitutes a noteworthy contribution to village studies, agrarian anthropology, and feminist research in anthropology. It systematically chronicles the process of rural transformation within the framework of agricultural production in an arid region, emphasising the emergence of pluriactivity as a discernible trend and exploring factors influencing occupational mobility. The study is significant for its noteworthy findings on the sustenance of the structures of dominance in the village society. The agricultural production reveals traditional social and religious organisation while the significant dynamics are revealed in the shifts of rural population to non-agricultural employment. Thus, it is remarkable to note that the traditional structures are waning with the mobility of people to non-agricultural employment. Nevertheless, the study's findings are primarily drawn from women's perspective. Hence, it may be noted as a limitation of the current research.

VII. Organisation of the Thesis

The introductory chapter commences by elucidating the factors contributing to the subordinate status of women globally. It subsequently directs attention to the body of anthropological literature addressing gender and labour, encompassing perspectives from Ester Boserup, Jack Goody, Maria Mies, Moore, and Meillassoux. This section

incorporates studies delineating the transformative impact of women's engagement in wage labour, emphasising the heightened bargaining power of working women compared to homemakers. The chapter reviews macro-level studies on the female labour force in India, examining correlations among identity, location, income. The second segment of the chapter encompasses conceptual frameworks, study objectives, methodology, and the significance and limitations of the research.

The second chapter furnishes a socio-economic profile of Maralukunte village, delving into its history, demography, social composition, political organisation, essential amenities, socio-economic landscape, traditional caste occupations, agriculture and irrigation, principal crops, animal husbandry, settlement patterns, family and marriage, transport and communication, festivals, tourist attractions, and prevalent yantras in Maralukunte village and Bengaluru rural district in general.

Chapter three explores the connections between agrarian class, caste, and the types of crops grown, highlighting how these factors have shaped agricultural practices. The chapter also discusses the improvement of irrigation facilities, emphasizing the significant impact of deep borewells on the sustainability of future agricultural productivity. Additionally, it addresses issues related to land ownership, the gendered division of labour in agriculture, the effects of mechanization, and the resulting feminization of the agricultural labouring class. Through this comprehensive analysis, the chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic transformations in rural agricultural communities.

Chapter four provides a detailed exploration of occupational mobility and its impact on the rural workforce, with a particular focus on Maralukunte. By analysing the migration and occupational diversification, the chapter sheds light on how socio-economic factors shape and diversify the work of men and women in rural areas. These findings offer valuable insights into the broader processes of rural transformation, revealing how rural populations adapt to and navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by shifting economic landscapes.

Chapter five delves into the transformative role of non-agricultural employment in Maralukunte, exploring how it has served as a catalyst for socio-economic mobility and improved living standards. It then examines the intricate dynamics of caste-based

disparities, highlighting the differentiated participation of males and females in the labour force. Through this exploration, the chapter seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how non-agricultural employment shapes socio-economic outcomes within the village, with particular attention to the intersections of caste and gender.

The concluding chapter synthesises the research findings, elucidates the study's significant contributions and concludes by providing recommendations for future research.

Chapter-2

Socio-Cultural Profile of the Bengaluru Rural District and Maralukunte Village

1. Introduction

The socio-cultural landscape of Bengaluru rural district and Maralukunte village presents a microcosm of the broader transitions occurring in rural Karnataka. Historically rooted in agriculture, the district and its villages are witnessing significant shifts driven by urbanisation, industrialisation, and evolving socio-economic practices. This chapter delves into the intricate tapestry of traditional and modern influences shaping the lives of the inhabitants.

Bengaluru Rural District, with its rich historical legacy and cultural diversity, reflects the complexities of rural life in southern Karnataka. The village of Maralukunte, characterized by a multi-caste society, offers a unique lens through which to examine the intersections of caste dynamics, agricultural practices, and emerging industrial employment. As urban influences from nearby Bengaluru seep into rural areas, traditional occupations and lifestyles are adapting, leading to both opportunities and challenges for the local population.

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive profile of the district and village, highlighting the socio-economic structures, cultural practices, and the impact of industrial development. By exploring the demographic composition, agriculture and allied activities, and the role of government initiatives, the chapter sets the stage for understanding the broader socio-economic transformations in rural Karnataka. The insights gained from this analysis will inform subsequent discussions on the interplay between tradition and modernity in shaping the future of rural communities in the region.

The region commonly referred to as South Karnataka encompasses the southernmost portion of the state, excluding its coastal areas. This region largely corresponds to the

historical territory of the former Mysore State. The Kannada dialect spoken in South Karnataka exhibits significant linguistic differences from the dialect prevalent in North Karnataka. South Karnataka comprises fifteen districts, namely: Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Chikkaballapur, Chikmagalur, Chitradurga, Chamarajanagar, Davanagere, Hassan, Kodagu, Kolar, Mandya, Mysuru, Ramanagara, Shivamogga, and Tumakuru. According to the 2011 census, the population of Bengaluru Rural District was 990,923, comprising 509,172 males and 481,751 females. The district's population density stands at 441 people per square kilometre (1,140 inhabitants per square mile). The female-to-male ratio is 945, and the literacy rate is 78.29 percent (District Census Handbook 2014).

Bengaluru Rural District is one of the thirty-one districts of Karnataka. It was established following the bifurcation of the erstwhile Bengaluru District into Bengaluru Rural and Bengaluru Urban on 15 August 1986 (Government of Karnataka 1989). Initially, the taluks of Kanakapura, Ramanagara, Magadi, and Channapatna were included within Bengaluru Rural District. However, in September 2007, these taluks were reorganised to form the new Ramanagara District. Currently, Bengaluru Rural District encompasses four taluks: Doddaballapur, Devanahalli, Hosakote, and Nelamangala. The district also comprises 35 hoblies, 177 densely populated villages, 101 gram panchayats (Bengaluru Rural Zilla Panchayat 2023). The proximity to Bangalore city has its own influence on the district. Notably, Devanahalli is the site of the Kempegowda International Airport.

Bengaluru Rural District, in close proximity to the metropolitan city of Bengaluru, experiences a significant daily influx of people, which influences the socio-cultural and economic landscape of the region. Traditionally an agrarian society, the district has seen considerable occupational diversification. Kannada is the predominant language spoken in Bengaluru Rural District, with notable variations in its prevalence across different taluks. Nelamangala taluk has the highest percentage of Kannada speakers, reflecting the linguistic homogeneity in this region. In contrast, Hoskote taluk has the lowest percentage of Kannada speakers, indicating a more linguistically diverse population. Telugu is the second most spoken language in the district, with significant Telugu-speaking populations in Hoskote, Devanahalli, and Dodballapur taluks. According to the 2011 Census, 71.67% of

the district's population speaks Kannada as their first language, 12.84% speaks Telugu, 9.22% speaks Urdu, and 3.29% speaks Tamil (District Census Handbook 2014). This linguistic diversity underscores the multicultural fabric of the district, shaped by historical migrations and contemporary socio-economic interactions.

The religious composition of Bengaluru Rural District is predominantly Hindu, with significant communities of Muslims and Christians. As per the 2011 Census, Hindus constitute 89.86% of the population, making it the majority religion in the district. Islam is practised by 9.31% of the population, while Christianity accounts for 0.54%. The religious diversity of the district reflects the broader patterns of religious pluralism in the region. The distribution of religious communities varies across taluks, contributing to the unique cultural and social dynamics within each area.

Historically, the population of Bengaluru Rural District primarily engaged in agriculture. However, proximity to Bengaluru has facilitated a shift towards occupational diversification. The daily commuting population and the expanding economic opportunities in the metropolitan area have led to increased employment in non-agricultural sectors. This shift indicates the broader socio-economic transformations occurring in the district, driven by urbanisation and the integration of rural areas into the urban economy.

2. Historical and Geographical Context of Bengaluru Rural District

Bengaluru Rural District is situated in the southeastern corner of Karnataka state, encompassing a geographical area of 5,814 square kilometres. The district is geographically positioned between latitudes 12°15' N and 13°35' N, and longitudes 77°05' E and 78° E. This district lies on a plateau with an average elevation ranging from 600 to 900 meters above mean sea level. The topography features a range of hills that are extensions of the Eastern Ghats, including notable peaks such as Banantimari Betta, Mudawadi Betta, Bilikal Betta, and Siddadevara Betta. Additionally, the Savandurga and Shivaganga peaks form another row of hill ranges, extending up to the Nandi Hills and traversing the Bengaluru Urban District (Government of India 2014).

Bengaluru Rural District derives its name from its headquarters, the town of Bengaluru. The earliest known reference to this name appears in a ninth-century Ganga inscription from Begur, where it is mentioned as "Bengaluru." A popular anecdote suggests the name originated from "*Benda kaluru*," which translates to "boiled beans town." According to this story, the Hoysala prince Ballala, during a long journey, was served boiled beans by an elderly woman, prompting him to name the place "*Benda Kaluru*." However, this narrative is likely apocryphal, as the name "Bengaluru" predates the Hoysala period. It is more plausible that the name has a botanical origin, derived from the Kannada term for the Banga or Rakta Honne tree (Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb., commonly known as the Indian Kino) (District Census Handbook 1971).

Figure 2.1: The Location of Bengaluru Rural District in Karnataka Map

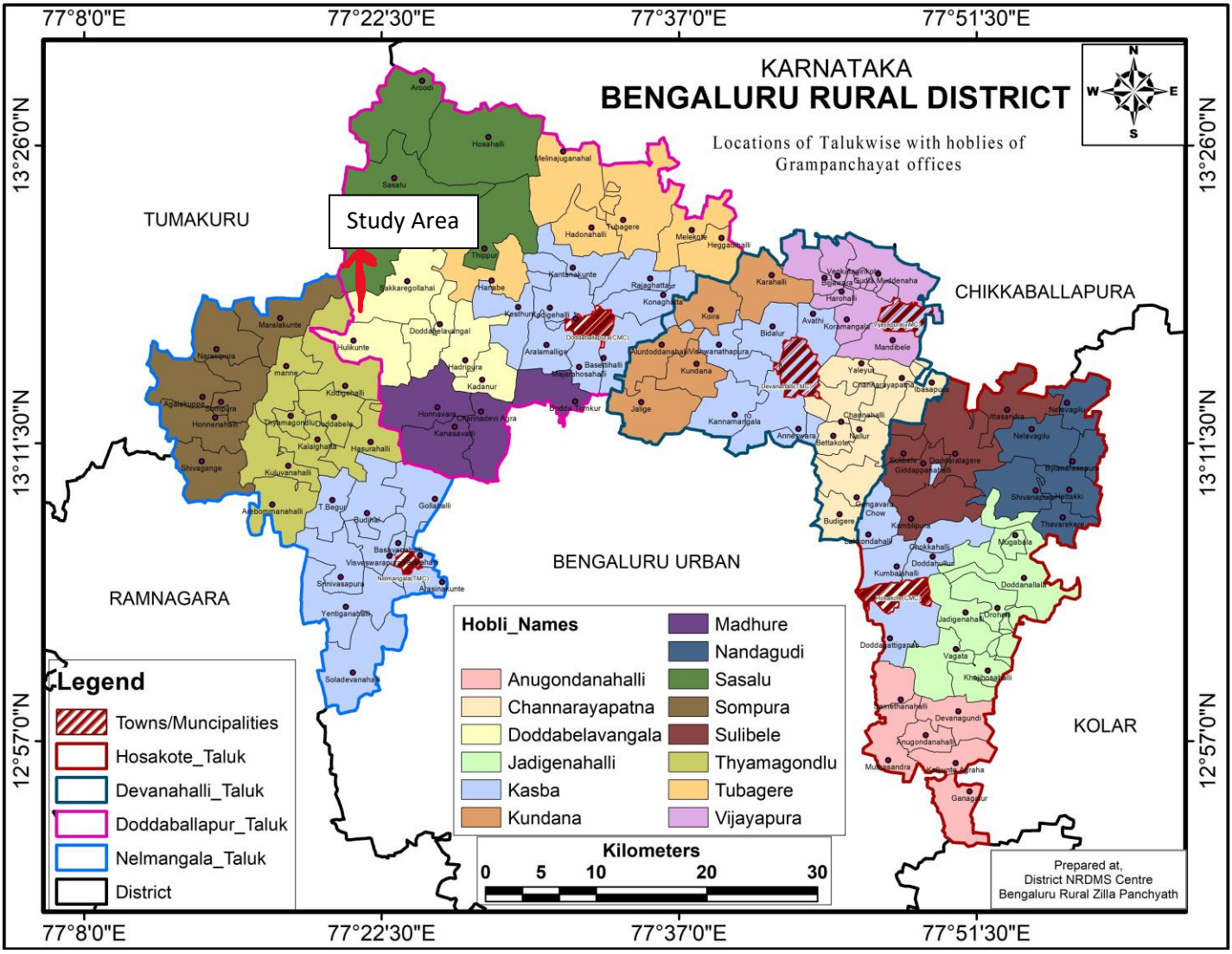


Figure 2.2. The Location of Study Area in Bengaluru Rural District

Geographically, the district is situated in the southern maidan region of Karnataka and is largely an open country with minimal natural barriers. Bengaluru Rural District is bordered by Tumkur and Kolar districts to the north, and Mandya and Mysore districts to the south. This strategic positioning contributes to its unique historical and geographical identity within the state. The historical records of Bengaluru Rural District date back to the period of the Ganga dynasty, as evidenced by various inscriptions. These inscriptions facilitate a detailed understanding of the district's historical trajectory. Numerous megalithic sites have been identified within the district, although significant work remains to be done in the

realm of prehistoric studies. The district's rich cultural heritage is further exemplified through legends and myths recounted in local sthalapuranas and oral traditions.

The area now known as Bengaluru Rural District is traditionally described as part of the Dandakaranya forest, which features prominently in the Ramayana. Ramagiri, near Ramanagaram, is associated with Sugreeva and is believed to have been visited by Lord Rama. Additionally, the site at Heggunda, approximately five kilometres from the study village Maralakunte in Nelamangala Taluk, is linked to the Ashwamedha horse of Lord Rama, followed by his army. Aigandapura is another significant site, reputedly visited by the Pandavas during their exile, with the Dharmeshwara Temple commemorating their stay. The Bhimeshwara Temple at Makali in Magadi Taluk is said to have been established by Bhima on the banks of the Arkavathi River. Kondrahalli in Hoskote Taluk is identified as the location of the Yaksha Prashna episode from the Mahabharata (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989).

Bengaluru Rural District was predominantly under the rule of the Ganga dynasty from the fourth to the tenth century, with Talakadu serving as the capital for a considerable period. Initially, their capital was Kuvalala, identified as present-day Kolar, though some sources suggest it was near Manne in Koratagere Taluk. The Ganga dynasty, symbolised by their elephant emblem, also governed from Mankunda near Channapatna and Manne (Manyapura) in Nelamangala Taluk, which is eight to ten kilometres from the study village. Durvinita, one of the most notable rulers of the Ganga dynasty, achieved several military victories, including those recorded at Mallohally in Dodballapur Taluk, likely in battles against the Pallavas. The Gangas were pioneers in establishing a systematic administrative framework in the region, organising village and town assemblies, creating administrative divisions (such as Kukanare Nadu, Paru Vishaya, and Perati Bhoga), appointing officials, and systematising tax levies. They also undertook numerous irrigation projects and constructed temples, agraharas, and basadis. Notable constructions include the Arkeshwara Temple at Malurpatna, the Srirama Temple at Kudlur, and the Kapileshwara, Someshwara, and Basti temples at Manne, located approximately six kilometres from Maralukunte (Kamath 1989).

Palaeolithic remains have been discovered in the district, notably at Kibbanahalli in the neighbouring Tumkur District, the only site of its kind in the region. Tools from the megalithic stage, including quartz microliths, have been found at Kibbanahalli as well as Jalahalli near Bengaluru, Chudasandra in Anekal Taluk, and Siddapur in Channapatna Taluk, dating back to a period earlier than 10,000 to 8,000 BCE. Neolithic sites within the district include Rajaghatta near Dodballapur and Virupapura in Magadi Taluk, where extensive ashmounds, hand axes, and pottery have been discovered. Similar findings have been reported at Hoskote, Doddahullur, and Attur, including iron pieces and black and red ware. Megalithic sites are also present at Jadigenahalli, Magondanahalli, Savandurga (Magadi Taluk), and Bellandur (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989).

Iron implements have been unearthed in megalithic tombs, predominantly stone chambers. The site at Chikkajala, discovered in 1881 by Captain Branfil, is notable for its extensive megalithic tombs. These stone chambers, some with slabs measuring over four meters, often feature an eastern passage. The tombs contain skeletal remains, pottery, and iron implements, some of which are preserved at the Madras Museum. Jadigenahalli in Hoskote Taluk is characterised by megalithic tombs surrounded by circular enclosures of tall stones, with diameters ranging from two to six meters. Excavations conducted by Dr M. Sheshadri in 1957 yielded artefacts now housed in the Bengaluru Museum (Kamath 1989).

3. **Agriculture and Irrigation**

Agriculture constituted the cornerstone of the economy in ancient times, with substantial emphasis placed on irrigation, as evidenced by records from the era of the Ganga dynasty. These records highlight the construction of tanks and the allocation of grants for their maintenance, underscoring the importance of sustainable water management. Village descriptions from this period typically include references to drylands (*beddalu*), wetlands (*gadde*), fruit and flower gardens (*tota tudike*), and irrigation structures (*ane achchukattu*), indicating an integrated approach to land and water resource management.

A notable village grant illustrates a record that details the allocation of dryland, wetland, and garden plots to a temple. The crops cultivated during this period were similar to those

grown today, including paddy, ragi, oilseeds, and cotton. The introduction of mulberry in the 18th century by Tipu Sultan in taluks like Ramanagaram and Channapatna marked a significant development in agricultural practices, predating the formation of the Ramanagara district. The influence of Portuguese traders also facilitated the gradual introduction of new crops such as groundnut, potato, tomato, chillies, and papaya (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989).

Irrigation received considerable attention from the Ganga dynasty onward. An inscription from Tippur in Dodballapur Taluk references a tank constructed during the Ganga period. Nagattara, a Ganga feudatory chief, is noted for installing a sluice in a tank at Agara. Another record from 870 CE mentions the installation of sluices in two tanks and the construction of a third, with bittuvatta land allocated for their maintenance in Agara, Bengaluru Taluk. A tank built in Bevur during the 9th century was similarly provided with bittuvatta in the 10th century (Kamath 1989).

The term nittuvatta refers to grants given to individuals responsible for maintaining irrigation facilities, a practice later termed *kattukoduge* in Bengaluru District records. For example, in Korati village around 1640, land valued at 100 varahas was granted as kattukodige manya to Subbayya for repairing the damaged Doddakere. During Haider Ali's reign in 1766, a grant was made to Hajisaheb for constructing a tank in Tirumalapura, Nelamangala Taluk (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989). These examples underscore the sustained commitment to developing and maintaining irrigation infrastructure by various ruling dynasties throughout the region's history.

3.1. Agro-climatic Classification and Agricultural Practices in Bengaluru Rural District

Bengaluru Rural District is classified under the Eastern Dry Zone, along with Kolar and parts of Tumkur districts. The region experiences an annual rainfall ranging from 679.1 mm to 888.9 mm, with two distinct peaks in precipitation: one occurring in May and the other during September-October. This bimodal rainfall pattern significantly influences the agricultural practices in the district (District Census Handbook 2014).

The primary agricultural activity in Bengaluru Rural District is Kharif cropping. The major crop cultivated in the dryland areas is Ragi, which occupies a substantial portion of the agricultural landscape. Groundnut cultivation also plays a significant role, covering approximately 10 to 12 percent of the area (District Census Handbook 2014). Kharif pulses, such as horsegram, are typically sown later in the season, taking advantage of the residual moisture.

A more diverse range of crops is cultivated in areas with access to irrigation. Paddy, mulberry, and sugarcane are the predominant crops grown under irrigated conditions. These crops benefit from the controlled water supply, allowing for more intensive and productive farming practices than rain-fed regions.

The agricultural practices in Bengaluru Rural District reflect a balance between traditional dryland farming and more modern irrigated agriculture, each adapted to the specific climatic and hydrological conditions of the region.

3.2. Agricultural Practices and Crop Cultivation in Bengaluru Rural District

Primary food crops grown in the study area are Ragi, Mekke Jola, and Groundnut (*Shenga / Nelagodole)*; among pulses, *Avarekayi, Togari and Alasande* are significantly grown. In horticulture and plantation – Areca nut, coconut. flowers and vegetables like beans (*huralikayi)*, radish (*mulangi*), peas (*avarekayi*), cabbage (*elekosu*), black-eyed peas (*alasonde*), cauliflower (*hookosu*), bitter gourd (*hagalakayi*), tomato (tamoto). And prominent flowers like roses (*gulabi*), marigolds (*chenduva*), chrysanthemums or mums varieties (*batans* and *savanthige*).

The researcher has given details about the major crops grown in Bengaluru rural district, Southern Karnataka:

3.2.1. *Ragi Cultivation*

Ragi (finger millet) is a significant grain crop in Bengaluru Rural District, occupying more than half of the net sown area. In the 1987-88 agricultural year, the crop was cultivated on

approximately 147,956 hectares. Kanakapura Taluk leads in the area dedicated to ragi cultivation, followed by Magadi, Nelamangala, and Dodballapur Taluks. Predominantly a rain-fed crop, ragi is also grown under irrigation on about 9,500 hectares, where higher yields are typically achieved (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989).

The practice of double cropping with cowpea *(alasande*) and ragi is common when early rains are received in April and May. This crop rotation is believed to enhance soil fertility. Mixed cropping is also prevalent, with pulse crops such as field bean, cowpea, and fodder jowar commonly intercropped with ragi. Redgram (tur or *togarikayi)* is another essential pulse crop often grown in conjunction with groundnut and ragi.

3.2.2. *Pulse Crops*

Field bean (*avare*) is another important pulse crop in the district, primarily grown as a mixed crop with ragi but also cultivated as a vegetable. The Hebbel avare variety is grown as a pure crop and is ready for harvest in 90 days, yielding 10 to 12 quintals per hectare. Horsegram (*huralikayi*) is extensively cultivated as a late-season dry crop, typically sown in September. It is often grown as a single crop of the year in rotation with cereals, although yields tend to be low due to minimal attention and late sowing.

Bengalgram (*kadale*) is a minor pulse crop occupying about 560 hectares in 1987-88. Other pulse crops include blackgram (*uddinabele*), greengram (*hesarukalu*), and cowpea (*alasande*).

3.2.3. *Oilseed Crops*

Groundnut (*kadalekayi, shenga, nelagadale*) is a major oilseed crop cultivated under both rain-fed and irrigated conditions. Niger (*uchellu*), though now rare, was once a prominent minor oilseed crop grown on approximately 2,137 hectares, mainly in Magadi and Kanakapura Taluks (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989). Traditionally, niger was grown as a mixed crop with ragi or horsegram, sown in early September. The decline in niger cultivation is attributed to modern agricultural practices, including the use of chemical fertilisers, which adversely affect its growth.

Castor (*haralu*) is another significant oilseed crop in the district, cultivated almost entirely as a dry crop. Castor occupies the land for the entire crop season, often grown as a sole crop, despite various pulses such as field bean, redgram, cowpea, horsegram, and short-season groundnuts being intercropped. Other oilseed crops in the district include sunflower and mustard.

The diverse cropping patterns in Bengaluru Rural District reflect a rich agricultural heritage adapted to the region's climatic conditions, with a mix of traditional and modern practices aimed at optimising land use and ensuring sustainability.

3.3. High-Yielding Varieties Program

The introduction of high-yielding varieties (HYVs) and hybrids has significantly transformed agricultural practices in Bengaluru Rural District. Since the inception of these varieties in 1966-67, there has been a continuous increase in the distribution of quality seeds, particularly targeting rain-fed areas to enhance production and productivity (Kamath 1989). This shift towards HYVs has been met with consistent year-on-year growth in yield. However, there is a perception among the older generation of farmers that while yields have increased, the quality and taste of the produce have diminished. Additionally, the intensive use of chemical fertilizers associated with HYVs has raised concerns about soil health and environmental sustainability.

In response to these challenges, the Karnataka government has initiated several projects aimed at preventing soil erosion and conserving rainwater. Notable among these initiatives is the watershed management program and the current Krushi Honda program, which focuses on rainwater harvesting and sustainable agricultural practices.

3.4. Dry Farming Practices

Dry farming in Bengaluru Rural District is characterized by specific cropping systems and management techniques tailored to optimize resource use in a given environmental context. The district, classified under the Dry Zone, predominantly practices Kharif cropping,

making it suitable for mixed cropping systems. In dry farming, three types of cropping are generally employed: sequential cropping, intercropping, and mixed cropping.

3.4.1. *Sequential Cropping* involves planting two or more crops in quick succession on the same land within a single farming year. For example, wheat might be followed by rice, which is then succeeded by ragi. This method ensures continuous land use and maximizes productivity.

3.4.2. *Intercropping* refers to the simultaneous cultivation of two or more crops on the same piece of land with a definite row arrangement or fixed ratio. This method optimizes the use of available resources and can enhance soil fertility through diverse plant interactions.

3.4.3. *Mixed Cropping* is the cultivation of multiple crops simultaneously on the same field without a specific row arrangement or ratio. This practice is particularly beneficial in managing risks associated with crop failures due to erratic rainfall, as different crops respond differently to varying climatic conditions.

Given the district's dry climatic conditions, the dependability of monsoon rains is a critical factor in determining cropping strategies. While the monsoon typically sets in early, rainfall reliability often diminishes by the second and third weeks of June. Therefore, careful management of crops and cropping programs is essential to mitigate the effects of low rainfall dependability and to ensure sustainable agricultural productivity.

The integration of high-yielding varieties and innovative dry farming practices in Bengaluru Rural District highlights the region's adaptive strategies to enhance agricultural output while addressing environmental concerns. Through continued government support and farmer engagement, these practices aim to achieve a balance between increased productivity and sustainable land management.

3.5. Horticultural Crops in Bengaluru Rural District

Coconut *(Cocos nucifera)* is a significant commercial crop in Bengaluru Rural district, typically beginning to yield six to seven years post-planting. Dwarf varieties and hybrids start bearing fruits earlier, around four to five years. Coconuts can be harvested throughout the year, with a primary harvesting season in the summer. The average yield ranges from

80 to 100 nuts per plant annually. During the initial years, cereal and leguminous crops, along with pineapple and banana, are commonly grown as intercrops. Later, mulberry, banana, or pineapple become suitable intercrops. Additionally, fodder grasses such as hybrid Napier or Guinea grass, alongside leguminous fodder crops, are cultivated in coconut gardens to alleviate fodder scarcity. One hectare of coconut garden can sustain four dairy animals, and the use of cattle manure enhances soil fertility and palm yield.

Arecanut *(Areca catechu)* is typically harvested from November to March. The tender nuts are processed by cutting the kernel, boiling, and drying. The normal yield of tender cured kernels is approximately 1000 kg per hectare. Common intercrops include banana, betel vine, pineapple, guinea grass, vegetables, and flowers. Betel vine is a perennial creeper whose leaves are traditionally chewed with areca nut and lime after food for good digestion. Leaf picking commences from the third year and is done four times annually per vine on a rotational basis.

Chillies *(Capsicum annum)* are a significant spice crop in the district, grown under both rain-fed and irrigated conditions. Other minor plantation and spice crops in the district include cashew nut, coriander, ginger, turmeric, and garlic. Tomato *(Lycopersicum esculentum)* is a widely cultivated vegetable in the district, harvested between 10 to 12 weeks, depending on the variety and season. A yield of approximately 20,000 kg of fruit per hectare is common. The optimal planting period for tomatoes is October and November.

French bean *(Phaseolus vulgaris)* is a crucial legume pod vegetable, has a short duration and is harvested within 60 days. It is successfully cultivated from June to October and January to March. The bush variety allows for three to four pickings, yielding about 6000 kg of green pods per hectare. Potato *(Solanum tuberosum)* is another popular vegetable in the district, primarily grown under irrigated conditions as a winter crop. It thrives in cool conditions, with planting starting in November-December and harvesting from February onwards, depending on the variety. Carrot *(Daucus carota)* is an essential root vegetable in the district, with a harvest period of about three months. An average carrot crop yields around 20,000 kg per hectare.

Ladyfinger *(Hibiscus esculentus)* (*bendekayi* in Kannada), also known as okra, is harvested approximately six weeks after sowing, with the harvesting period extending another six to eight weeks. The yield ranges from 7500 to 10,000 kg of pods per hectare. Cabbage *(Brassica oleracea var. capitata)* is a significant vegetable crop in Nelamangala and Dodballapura taluks, yielding up to 25,000 kg per hectare (District Census Handbook 2014). Other vegetables cultivated in the district include cucumber, knol khol, radish, cauliflower, and peas, contributing to the district's diverse horticultural landscape.

3.6. Plantations and Orchards

Mango *(Mangifera indica)* is a significant fruit crop in Bengaluru's Rural district. The yield of mango fruits varies with the age of the tree, with trees aged between 11 to 20 years producing approximately 500 to 1500 fruits per plant. Grapes *(Vitis vinifera)* are among the most delicious and nutritious fruits cultivated in the district. The Bengaluru Blue variety is characterised by round berries with thick skin that slips easily from the pulp. This variety produces thick, purple juice suitable for bottling. The bunches are medium-sized and compact. The Anab-e-Shahi variety is known for its oval, thick-skinned, sweet grapes, which are white in colour and excellent for consumption. These grapes do not ripen post-harvest but develop a golden colour when fully ripe, while the Bengaluru Blue variety turns dark and uniform in colour. The Bengaluru Blue variety yields about 20,000 to 25,000 kg per hectare, whereas the Anab-e-Shahi variety yields approximately 30,000 to 35,000 kg per hectare. Devanahalli, Hoskote, and Nelamangala taluks are the principal grape-cultivating regions in the district.

Various banana *(Musa paradisiaca)* varieties, including *Acchabale*, *Yelakkibale*, *Boodbale*, and *Rasabale*, are cultivated in the district. Guava *(Psidium guajava)* is particularly popular in the Nelamangala and Devanahalli taluks. Jackfruit *(Artocarpus heterophyllus)* trees begin yielding fruit 8 to 12 years after planting, with each tree producing between 50 to 250 fruits annually. Sapota *(Achras sapota)* is becoming increasingly popular in Nelamangala and Devanahalli taluks. Economic yields from sapota can be obtained from the seventh year onward, with a 10-year-old plant producing around 1000 to 1500 fruits annually. Papaya *(Carica papaya)* fruits are ready for harvest approximately 9 to 10

months after planting and are produced throughout the year. The yield varies from 75 to 100 tonnes per hectare, with the economic life of the papaya plant being only three years. Other fruit crops cultivated in the district include watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), pineapple (*Ananas comosus*), limes, and lemons. These crops contribute to the diverse agricultural landscape of Bengaluru Rural district.

3.7. Floriculture

Jasmine (Jasminum spp.) represents a significant commercial crop cultivated for its aesthetically pleasing flowers, predominantly in the taluks of Nelamangala, Kanakapura, and Dodballapura. The jasmine varieties include *Kakada* (Jasminum pubescens), *Gundumallige* (Jasminum sambac), *Vasantha Mallige* (Jasminum auriculatum), and *Jaji Mallige* (Jasminum grandiflorum). Each variety has distinct flowering periods: *Kakada* blooms throughout the year except from March to May; *Gundumallige* flowers from March to October; *Vasantha Mallige* from April to October; and *Jaji Mallige* from June to September. Under typical management practices, jasmine plants generally produce economically viable yields for about 10 to 15 years.

Crossandra (Crossandra undulaefolia), also known as *Kanakambara*, is cultivated for its cut flowers, which have a robust market demand. This crop is mainly grown in Nelamangala, Devanahalli, and Hoskote taluks, with a yield of approximately five tonnes of flowers per hectare. Marigold (Tagetes erecta), referred to locally as *Chandu hu*, is another popular floricultural crop, especially in the taluks of Nelamangala, Ramanagaram, and Devanahalli, with a yield of up to 10,000 kg per hectare.

Other notable flower crops in the district include Aster (Aster amellus), Chrysanthemum (Chrysanthemum indicum) or *Sevantige*, Champaka (Michelia champaca), *Spatika* (Barleria cristata), *Dasavala* (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis), *Bettadavare* (Hibiscus mutabilis), Croton, Bougainvillea, and *Kanigalu* (Nerium odorum).

3.8. Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry has traditionally been an integral component of agricultural practices in Bengaluru Rural district, with recent decades witnessing transformative changes in livestock development. The significance of dairying and poultry farming has markedly increased due to their economic benefits. Despite the advent of mechanisation, small agricultural holdings still necessitate traditional ploughing methods for certain crops. Farmyard manure, predominantly consisting of animal refuse, continues to be highly valued by farmers, notwithstanding their familiarity with chemical fertilisers. This underscores the enduring link between land possession and livestock management.

The adoption of advanced breeding, feeding, management, and disease control techniques has substantially enhanced livestock productivity. The approach to cattle development emphasises intensive cross-breeding of indigenous cattle with superior germplasm from exotic sires to improve genetic potential, thereby increasing milk production and utility for draft purposes. This strategy reflects a comprehensive effort to integrate traditional agricultural practices with modern technological advancements in animal husbandry, ensuring sustainable development and economic viability in the district.

4. Religion

Karnataka is a diverse state with a rich tapestry of religious communities, reflecting the cultural pluralism of India. The majority of the population in Karnataka follows Hinduism, which is deeply rooted in the state's history and culture. Islam is the second-largest religion, with significant communities in urban areas like Bengaluru and Mysuru. Christianity, though smaller in numbers, has a strong presence, especially in coastal regions and parts of the Western Ghats. Other religions, including Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, also have followers in the state, contributing to its religious diversity. In the Bengaluru Rural district, the religious composition mirrors the broader trends of Karnataka, with Hinduism being predominant. The 2011 Census data on religious composition in Bengaluru Rural district reveals a significant majority of the population adhering to Hinduism, accounting for 89.86% of the district's residents. Islam is the second most practised religion, with 9.31%

of the population identifying as Muslim. Christianity is a minority religion, with only 0.54% of the population following it. A small fraction, 0.29%, either belong to other religions or did not state their religious affiliation. This data underscores the dominance of Hinduism in the region while also highlighting the presence of religious minorities that contribute to the district's cultural diversity. The religious distribution in this region highlights the blending of urban and rural influences, with traditional practices coexisting alongside modern, cosmopolitan values.

4.1. Sacred Sites and Historical Fortifications in Bengaluru's Rural Hinterlands

4.1.1. *Kundana Betta*

Kundana Betta, located approximately ten kilometers west of Bengaluru Devanahalli, is a monolithic hill notable for its distinctive squirrel-shaped appearance when viewed from a distance. Standing at 61 meters in height, Kundana served as the capital of the Hoysala king Ramanathanaraja in the late 13th century. During the construction of Bengaluru by Kempegowda I in 1537 AD, under the orders of the Vijayanagara Empire, Kundana was a strategic military base. Today, it hosts the Channarayaswamy and Anjaneyaswamy Temples, attracting thousands of visitors during annual festivities. The rocky hill offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

The fort at Kundana was initially constructed in 1501 by Mallabairegowda and remained under the control of his descendants until the mid-18th century. In 1749, the Dalwai of Mysore, Nanjarajaiah, seized the fort. It later fell into the hands of Hyder Ali and, subsequently, Tipu Sultan. In 1791, during the Anglo-Mysore War, Lord Cornwallis captured the fort. Near the fort lies the birthplace of Tipu Sultan, marked by a modest pillared enclosure with a stone tablet, now a protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

4.1.2. *Devanahalli Fort and Surroundings*

Devanahalli Fort, the birthplace of Tipu Sultan, is a historic site situated close to the Bengaluru International Airport on National Highway 7. Tipu Sultan, also known as the Tiger of Mysore, was born here in 1751. His birthplace is a simple structure with a

commemorative stone tablet, surrounded by an area known as Khas Bagh. The fort and birthplace are protected monuments by the ASI.

Within the fort, the Venugopalaswamy Temple, dedicated to Vishnu, is constructed in the Dravidian style of the post-Vijayanagara period. The temple features a Garuda Stamba in its courtyard, walls adorned with scenes from the Ramayana and the childhood of Krishna, and intricately carved pillars. The temple's Garbhagriha houses a standing Venugopala image typical of the Vijayanagara style, with the Navaranga containing finely carved black-stone pillars. This temple is also a protected monument under the ASI.

4.1.3. *Makalidurga*

Makalidurga is a hill fort near Makali village, 60 kilometres north of Bengaluru and 10 kilometres beyond the Doddaballapura enroute to Gauribidanur. At the summit of the hill, which stands at an altitude of 1,117 meters, there is an ancient Shiva temple with Nandi. The hill, known for its historical and religious significance, was the site where the sage Markandeya performed penance. The Makalidurga hill fort, nestled among a series of hills forming a valley near the pilgrimage centre of Ghati Subramanya, has become a popular trekking destination. The foothill features a temple dedicated to Lord Krishna, and the hill itself is covered with date plants, lemongrass, and small boulders, offering scenic views of the surrounding lakes, roads, and railway tracks.

4.1.4. *Vishwa Shanti Ashram*

Established in 1982 by Sant Keshavadas in Arasinakunte village on the Bengaluru-Tumkur highway, the Vishwa Shanti Ashram promotes international peace and understanding. The ashram, spanning 15 acres, includes several intricately designed temples such as the Lord Lakshmi Narayana Temple, Ashta Lakshmi Temple, Gayathri Temple, Navagraha Temple, and the Temple of Santoshi Mata. Additionally, it features sculptures of seven women representing the seven rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswathy, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri) and an exhibit of the entire Bhagavad Gita inscribed in Hindi, English, and Kannada on 800 granite slabs.

4.1.5. *Shivagange*

Shivagange is a sacred hill near Dobbaspet, standing at 4,559 feet above sea level. The hill, appearing different from various sides (bull, Ganesha, serpent, and linga), is often referred to as Dakshina Kasi due to its pilgrimage significance. The hill was fortified in the 16th century by Shivappa Nayaka and later enhanced by Magadi Kempegowda. It contains several temples and spots of religious significance, such as Gangadhareshwara Temple, Sri Honnammadevi Temple, and Nandi Statue. During Sankranti, a month-long cattle fair is held, and a notable ritual involves the transformation of ghee into butter when poured over the Shivalinga, which is believed to have medicinal properties.

4.1.6. *Shree Shani Mahathma Temple*

Located on the banks of Madhure Kere Lake in Chikka Madhure, the Shree Shani Mahathma Temple is a significant pilgrimage centre dedicated to Saturn (Shani Deva). Situated around 14 kilometres from Nelamangala on the Nelamangala-Doddaballapur Road, the temple features typical South Indian architectural elements and intricate sculptures on the gopuram. The temple, built by a farmer named Ganga Hanumaiah, is particularly crowded on Saturdays. Devotees offer *ElluBatti* (sesame wick) and light them in front of the idol to alleviate life's difficulties. The annual chariot procession during the major festival attracts thousands of devotees.

4.1.7. *Ghati Subramanya*

Ghati Subramanya, an ancient Hindu temple near Tubagere in Doddaballapura Taluk, uniquely enshrines Lord Karthikeya alongside Lord Narasimha. Believed to have a history of over 600 years, the temple was developed by the Ghorpade rulers of Sandur. It is an important centre for worshipping Kethu, with special rituals conducted during Brahmarathotsava and Narasimha Jayanti. The temple is known for its practice of childless couples installing snake idols (Nagara havu) to receive blessings. The annual cattle fair held in December attracts agriculturists and traders from neighbouring states, making it a significant event in the region.

5. Hindu Festivals and Cultural Practices

The Hindu calendar is replete with numerous festivals, some observed annually and others celebrated as per individual or community desires. These festivals primarily honour various gods and goddesses, holding significant societal importance. Ugadi, marking the beginning of the new lunar year, is celebrated on the first day of Chaitra masa, typically falling in March or April. This festival is prominent among Hindus in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. On Ugadi, households adorn their door frames with green festoons, don new clothes, and partake in rituals, including the consumption of *bevu-bella* (neem leaves and jaggery), symbolising the balance of joy and sorrow in life.

Sri Ramanavami, commemorating the birth of Lord Rama, is celebrated on the ninth day of the first half of Chaitra, around April. This festival is widespread in rural districts, where devotees worship Lord Rama and distribute *panaka* (jaggery juice), *neeru majjige* (spiced buttermilk), and *kosambari* (dal salad) among villagers.

The Gowri-Ganesha festival, occurring in Bhadrapada (August-September), is another significant event. During this festival, newly married daughters are invited to their natal families, where they are treated to feasts and gifts. Mahalaya Amavasya in Bhadrapada is dedicated to honouring departed ancestors, with families gathering to worship and offer feasts in their memory.

Dasara, celebrated in September-October, spans ten days and venerates goddesses Saraswati and Durga. During this period, a perpetual lamp (*Nanda Deepa*) is maintained in households. The festival culminates on Vijayadashami, which commemorates Goddess Chamundi's victory over the demon Mahishasura. On this day, village deities are paraded to the shami tree, where both the tree and deities are worshipped, and shami leaves are exchanged as a symbol of wealth and good fortune among community members.

Deepavali is less significant for villagers compared to Gowri-Ganesha or Mahanavami but involves the preparation of sweets like *kajjaya* and the lighting of diyas. Shivaratri, a holy day for fasting and a sacred day for Shaivas, involves night-long worship of Lord Shiva.

Makara Sankranti, celebrated in January, marks the Sun's transition into the Capricorn zodiac sign. This festival involves the decoration and procession of cows and oxen, a ritual known as *kenda hayuvudu*. Women and children exchange plates containing traditional sweets, symbolising the sharing of joy and goodwill. This festival is celebrated across India under various names, such as Pongal in Tamil Nadu and Bihu in Assam.

6. Dietary Shifts and Cultural Practices in Bengaluru Rural, Karnataka

In recent decades, the staple diet of rural populations in Karnataka has transitioned from ragi (finger millet) to rice. Historically, villagers primarily consumed ragi, preparing traditional dishes such as *mudde* (a type of millet dumpling) and *rotti* (flatbread). However, the introduction of government-issued ration cards, which provide rice to households at subsidised rates, has significantly altered dietary habits. Consequently, rice has supplanted ragi as the predominant staple food.

Elderly villagers frequently express concerns regarding this shift, attributing the contemporary generation's perceived physical weaknesses to the consumption of hybrid food grains rather than traditional ragi. Among the Brahmin and Lingayat communities, vegetarianism is prevalent. Even those who consume meat often abstain from non-vegetarian food during the sacred months of Shravana and Karthika, as well as on specific days dedicated to family deities, such as Mondays and Saturdays.

Rural dietary routines typically include three meals a day. Breakfast, often referred to as tiffin, is consumed before 9 or 10 AM and commonly consists of dishes like idly, dosa, *pulihora* (tamarind rice), and various rice preparations such as *pulav*. Lunch is taken around 1 to 2 PM, and dinner is eaten before 10 PM. Both lunch and dinner usually include rice, sambar, and occasionally mudde with curry, time permitting. Special dishes like *payasa* (sweet pudding), *tambittu* (a sweet made from roasted gram and jaggery), and *obbattu or holige* (sweet flatbread stuffed with lentils or coconut) were traditionally prepared only on festival days. However, socio-economic changes have led to more frequent preparation of these dishes, as many households now have at least one member who earns a regular income by commuting for work.

Despite these changes, older generations reminisce about their earlier diet that heavily featured millets such as jowar (sorghum) and ragi, which were staple foods. The routine consumption of rice, now a daily practice, marks a significant shift from the traditional millet-based diet, reflecting broader changes in rural food practices and economic conditions.

7. Demographic and Socio-Economic Analysis of Maralakunte Village

This study examines Maralakunte, a village located in the Sompura/Dabaspet Hobli of Nelamangala Taluk within the Bengaluru Rural District. Despite its official affiliation with Bengaluru Rural District, Maralakunte is geographically closer to Tumkur, resulting in a preference among residents for Tumkur city for educational and market-related activities due to its relative proximity. According to the 2011 census, Maralakunte spans 429.2 hectares and has a population of 1,281, encompassing approximately 335 households. The village includes populations from three hamlets: Rudranapalya, Chikkamudrayanapalya, and Chikkannahalli. However, fieldwork reveals that some households have settled in their agricultural fields, and some residents have migrated to urban areas in search of better livelihoods. Consequently, this study focuses on households residing within the revenue village, excluding those in hamlets and scattered agricultural settlements.

The 2011 census data collection for Maralakunte occurred in 2008-09. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned census for 2021 was not conducted. As a result, Panchayat staff estimate the population by increasing it by two percent annually for official records. The population count includes individuals from the hamlets of Rudranapalya, Chikkamudrayanapalya, and part of Chikkannahalli. The Maralakunte village panchayat council administers ten villages and two hamlets: Benachinahalli, Kuntabommanahalli, Chikkannanahalli, Dasenahalli, Baraguru, Hullarave, Elekyathanahalli, Giriyanapalya, Madaga, Shivaji Palya, Chikkanapalya, and Bommalingainapalya. Due to these complexities and discrepancies in official records, there are slight differences between the demographic information from official sources and fieldwork data.

The revenue village of Maralakunte comprises 243 households, with a population of 881, excluding those living in scattered agricultural settlements. On average, each household consists of three to four members. The family structure in Maralakunte is predominantly nuclear and extended. Nuclear families, also referred to as elementary or conjugal families, consist of parents and their biological children. Extended families, an extension of nuclear families, include parents, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins living in the same household. Of the 880 inhabitants, 428 are male, and 452 are female. Approximately seven percent of the population is under the age of six, and 70% are under the age of 45. Based on field data collected in 2019, the total literacy rate in Maralakunte is 66.9 percent, with a significant gender disparity: 75.8 percent of males are literate compared to 59.2 percent of females. This disparity highlights the need for targeted educational initiatives to improve female literacy rates in the village.

Overall, the female population slightly exceeds the male population, with 452 females compared to 428 males. The distribution suggests that the village has a relatively young population, with a significant number of individuals in the under-45 age group, which comprises the majority of the population (619 out of 880). The gender distribution varies across different age groups, with notable female predominance in certain younger and middle-aged groups, while the older age groups show a more balanced or slightly male-dominated demographic.

Table 2.1 Age and Gender-wise Demographic Details			
Age Group	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Under 15	96	69	165
15-25	67	89	156
25-35	74	73	147
35-45	64	87	151
45-55	57	42	99
55-65	34	49	83
65-75	24	28	52
75-85	10	13	23
85-95	1	1	2
95-105	1	1	2
Grand Total	**428**	**452**	**880**

Table 2.2 reflects a higher number of females compared to males across all educational levels. However, despite the higher female population, males dominate in higher education levels from SSLC, Under-Graduation, and Post-Graduation. The high rate of female illiteracy is a significant concern, and although females show higher participation in PUC, this does not translate to higher numbers in undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

Table 2.2 Gender-wise Educational Composition of Maralukunte			
Educational Level	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Illiterates	76	150	226
Pre-School	33	22	55
Primary School	80	73	153
Secondary School	33	38	71
SSLC	94	73	167
PUC	52	59	111
Under-Graduation	23	19	42
Post-Graduation	9	3	12
Diploma and Vocational Course	28	15	43
Grand Total	**428**	**452**	**880**

Table 2.3 shows the overall population of 880 individuals in Maralukunte is most densely represented in the younger and middle-aged groups (under 45), with a noticeable decline in the older age groups (above 55). The data highlights an educational shift over generations, with younger age groups attaining higher levels of formal education compared to their elders. This trend is indicative of the broader educational advancements in the region.

Table 2.3 Age-wise Educational Level Composition of Maralukunte

Age Group	Illiterates	Pre-School	Primary School	Secondary School	SSLC	PUC	Under-Graduation	Post-Graduation	Diploma and Vocational Course	Total
Under 15	3	53	69	21	16	3				165
15-25	2			8	37	51	22	4	32	156
25-35	5		20	21	46	34	8	6	7	147
35-45	47		28	12	36	17	8	1	2	151
45-55	54	1	12	4	20	3	3	1	1	99
55-65	59	1	15	1	5	1	1			83
65-75	34		8	3	4	2			1	52
75-85	18		1	1	3					23
85-95	2									2
95-105	2									2
Grand Total	**226**	**55**	**153**	**71**	**167**	**111**	**42**	**12**	**43**	**880**

Table 2.4 Caste-wise School Going Children of Maralukunte

Caste	Government School	Private School	Residential School	Anganwadi	Total
Lingayat	21	4	1	8	34
Vokkaliga	9	2			11
Tigala	23	5		3	31
Marati	3	8			11
Adi Karnataka	20	2	1	6	29
Adi Dravida	12			2	14
Golla/Yadav	1	2			3
Ajama/Barber	2				2
Madivala/Agasa	1				1
Brahman		1			1
Ediga	1				1
Grand Total	**93**	**24**	**2**	**19**	**138**

Table 2.4 highlights that Lingayats have the highest number of school-going children among all castes, with a significant presence in all educational settings. The vast majority of children across all castes attend government schools (93 out of 138), reflecting a strong reliance on public education in Maralukunte. A smaller number (24 children) are enrolled in private schools, with Maratis, Tigalas, and Lingayat having the highest numbers in this category. Very few children (2) attend residential schools, indicating limited participation

in this type of schooling. A total of 19 children attend Anganwadi, primarily from the Lingayat and Adi Karnataka castes. This points out how socio-economic factors influence educational choices and access to different types of schooling in the village.

Table 2.5 Caste-wise Education Level Composition of Maralukunte

Caste	Illiterates	Pre-School	Primary School	Secondary School	SSLC	PUC	Under-Graduation	Post-Graduation	Diploma and Vocational Course	Total
Lingayat	51	18	41	21	55	27	17	5	12	247
Vokkaliga	4		13	5	11	3	1			37
Tigala	48	11	31	12	23	25	5		11	166
Marati	18	4	14	4	13	7	4	1	2	67
Adi Karnataka	64	14	30	14	37	24	7		9	199
Adi Dravida	27	6	16	8	15	17	2		7	98
Bhovi/Vodda	3		1	1	1	1		1		8
Golla/Yadav	7		4	1	4	3	1	1	1	22
Ajama/Barber	1		1	1	3		1	1		8
Madivala/Agasa	2			1	1	3			1	8
Brahman	1	1	1	2	2		3	1		11
Weaver/Devanga		1		1		1	1	2		6
Ediga			1		2					3
Grand Total	**226**	**55**	**153**	**71**	**167**	**111**	**42**	**12**	**43**	**880**

Table 2.5 highlights the disparities in educational attainment across different castes in Maralukunte, with certain castes like Lingayats showing higher levels of education, while others like Adi Karnataka and Tigalas struggle with high illiteracy rates and low participation in higher education. The village's educational composition is marked by a strong presence in primary and secondary education, but significant gaps remain in achieving higher education and vocational training across various caste groups.

Maralukunte's geographical layout is divided into five distinct areas based on habitation patterns:

1. **Basappa Cross:** Predominantly inhabited by Lingayats, with a few Tigala households on the periphery.
2. **Village Bus Stop:** Primarily occupied by Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities.
3. **Chowka (Square):** A mixed population of Lingayat, Maratha, and Tigala households, with a few Adi Dravida (AD) houses on the outskirts connecting to the colony.

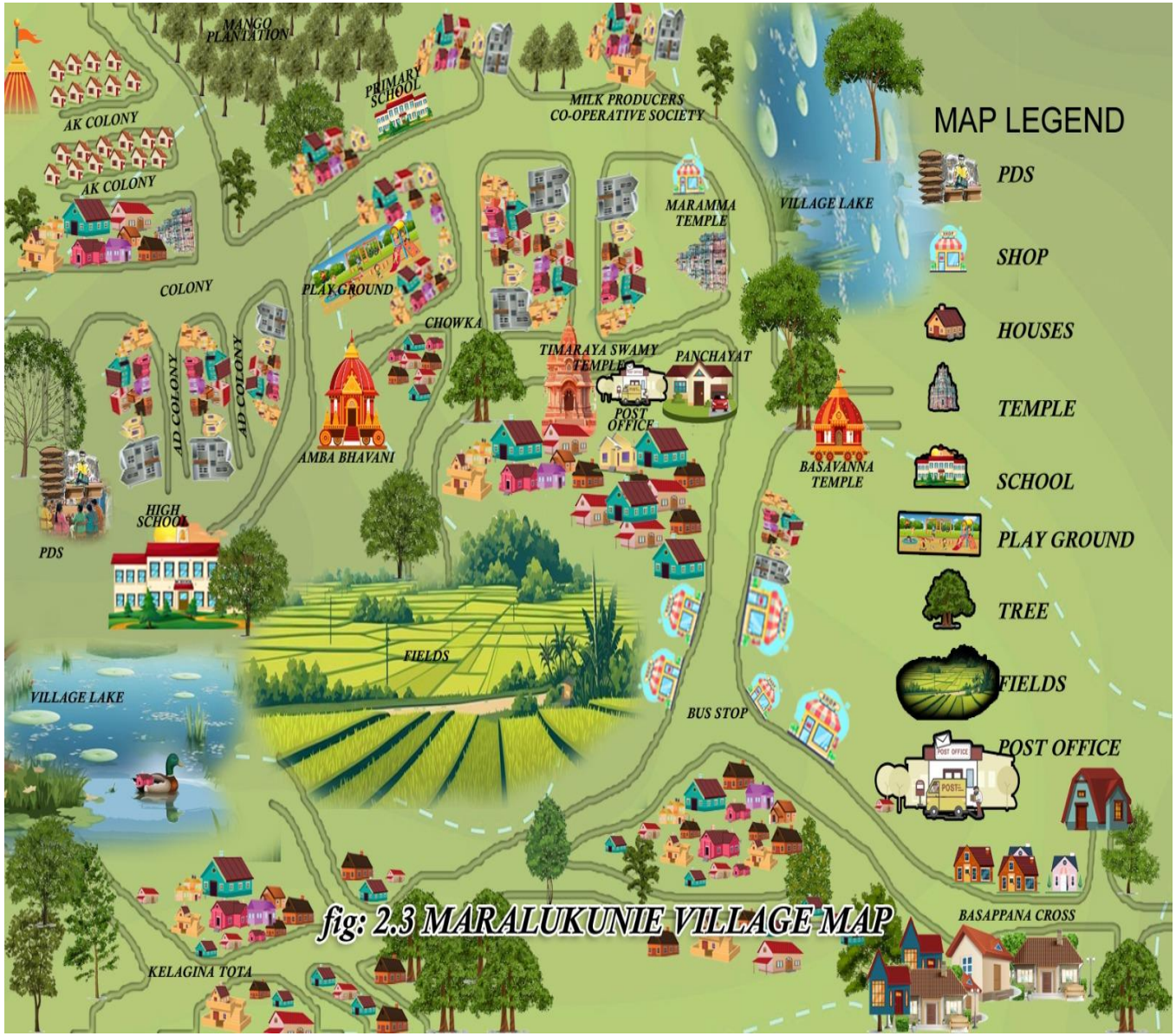


fig: 2.3 MARALUKUNIE VILLAGE MAP

4. **Kelagina Tota (Lower Plantation):** Mainly Tigala residents.
5. **Colony (*Atti*):** Primarily inhabited by the Dalit community.

The socio-economic and demographic profile of Maralakunte reveals a community in transition, influenced by both traditional practices and modern pressures. The proximity to Tumkur has shaped residents' preferences for education and market activities, while the diverse family structures reflect the village's socio-cultural fabric. Addressing the educational and economic needs of this village requires a nuanced understanding of its unique demographic dynamics and administrative complexities.

8. Caste Composition in Maralakunte Village

Maralakunte, a multi-caste village, showcases a diverse social fabric that includes various caste groups such as Lingayat, Brahmin, Ajama, Thigala, Vokkaliga, Marati, Golla, Madivala, Bovi, Ediga, Adi Karnataka, and Adi Dravida. This section provides a detailed account of the village's caste composition and highlights the significant socio-economic and political influence of certain castes.

Table 2.6 Caste Composition of the Maralakunte Village

S. NO	Caste	No of Households	% of Households
1	Lingayat	69	28.4
2	Vokkaliga	8	3.29
3	Tigala	46	18.93
4	Marati	19	7.82
5	Adi Karnataka	54	22.22
6	Adi Dravida	30	12.35
7	Bhovi/Vodda	2	0.82
8	Golla/Yadav	7	2.88
9	Ajama/Barber	1	0.41
10	Madivala/Agasa	1	0.41
11	Brahman	4	1.65
12	Weaver/Devanga	1	0.41
13	Ediga	1	0.41
	Total	**243**	**100**

8.1. The Lingayat Community

Lingayats hold a dominant position in Maralakunte, both numerically and in terms of their socio-economic and political clout (Srinivas, 1955). Rather than a specific caste, the term "Lingayat" refers to followers of a religious tradition encompassing various subgroups, such as Aradhyas, Jangams, Nonabas, Gowda Lingayats, Sadaru, and Banajigaru, historically practising endogamy and vegetarian, Lingayats have traditionally been engaged in agriculture and trade.

The religious framework of Lingayats revolves around concepts such as Ashtavarana, Panchacharya, and Shatsthala. Their faith traces its origins to the Shiva agamas, with Basaveshwara recognised as a revivalist who revitalised ancient forms of worship. The Panchacharyas (Renukacharya, Panditaradhya, Marularadhya, Korama, and Vishwaradhya) were instrumental in the establishment of Lingayatism, which evolved into Veerashaivism, a distinct Shaiva tradition.

In Lingayat belief, the wearing of the linga signifies perpetual purity, theoretically rendering events like birth and death free from ritual pollution. However, in practice, Lingayats in Maralakunte observe rituals of impurity akin to other Hindu communities. While they acknowledge the Vedas, they reject Vedic sacrifices and question the efficacy of shraddha rituals. Their initiation ritual, Diksha, involves affixing an ishta linga to the neck, housed in a silver box (*Karadige*), which is venerated. Customarily, deceased Lingayats are interred in a seated posture.

The Lingayat community owns a Basava temple in the village. During the Maralukunte *Maramma jatre* (fair), they perform aarti to Basavanna, highlighting their religious devotion. They marry within their own caste, which remains the norm. Ganganna is a notable figure within the Lingayat community, stemming from an elite family and holding significant political influence as a member of the local BJP organisation. Despite his socio-economic capital, his relocation to Bengaluru has diminished his political efficacy in Maralakunte, resulting in electoral losses against the Vokkaligas and Gollas. Basavaraju, another influential Lingayat, comes from a wealthy family with substantial agricultural and

commercial assets. However, despite their financial strength, they lack the social and cultural heritage that elevates the social status of the Golla community, which will be discussed further in this section.

8.2. The Vokkaliga Community

The Vokkaligas, or Gowdas, are a significant caste group in Karnataka, known for their socio-political influence despite their smaller numbers in Maralakunte. The Vokkaliga community, although consisting of only eight households in the village, wields substantial power within the larger Maralukunte panchayat. The traditional role of the village headman is hereditary within the Vokkaliga caste, a trend observed throughout Southern Karnataka.

The current headman, Timmegowdru, faces a potential succession issue due to his sons' disinterest in village affairs. He is considering transferring his position to Nagabhushan, a kin member who is also an elected member of the taluk-panchayat.

The Vokkaliga community is divided into several endogamous subgroups, such as Gangatkar, Morasu, Nambhudhari, Kunchitiga, and Reddy. Although intermarriage between sub-castes is increasing in urban areas, it remains rare in Maralakunte and surrounding villages. Inter and sub-caste marriages are considered as deviance such couples are often excluded from religious rituals. The Vokkaligas are primarily agriculturalists, with many branching into other professions. They practice burial for their deceased. The Kunchitiga Vokkaligas, predominant in Nelamangala taluk and Maralakunte, have specific marriage restrictions based on gotra (kulas), with Voddagere being a significant religious site for the Havinavaru kula.

8.3. The Tigala Community

The Tigala community, categorized under Other Backward Classes (OBC), traditionally engages in horticulture and gardening. The term "Tigala" originates from the Kannada language, referring to the Tamil-speaking Vanneru or Vannikuladavaru. Their religious practices centre on the worship of Dharmaraya and Draupadi, with familial deities being

the Pancha Pandavas. The Tigalas celebrate the Karaga festival in honour of Draupadi, a significant cultural event for the community.

Tigalas adhere to Hindu rituals, including the burial of the dead with the head positioned towards the south and observing a ten-day pollution period. Their dietary habits are predominantly non-vegetarian. Distinct from other castes, Tigala women retain their toe rings and Thali even after their husband's death, indicative of the community's relatively lenient social norms concerning women. Notably, Tigalas allocate a portion of family property to women, highlighting the community's recognition of women's importance.

Economically, Tigalas in Maralukunte primarily engages in plantation and horticultural activities, including the processing of betel nuts. Tigala women are easily identifiable by the absence of nose piercings, stemming from a community myth associating nose piercing with bad omens. A notable incident in the village involved a Tigala girl who committed suicide following a failed love affair with a boy from a Dalit caste. The boy was subsequently beaten by village elders, leading to a legal case that implicated several traditional panchayat members and wealthy village leaders. This incident highlighted the need for immediate police involvement in such cases, prompting a shift in community practices regarding suicide reporting.

8.4. The Maratha Community

The Maratha community in Karnataka traces its origins to Maharashtra, initially arriving as part of Shahaji's military contingent and later serving under rulers such as Haider and Tipu. The community is divided into four main lineages: Suryavamsha, Somavamsha, Yaduvamsha, and Sheshavamsha, each comprising 96 subgroups known as devaks. Marathi is the primary language spoken within their households.

Religiously, Marathas predominantly worship Lord Shiva in forms such as Khandoba and Bairoba, alongside the goddess Ambabavani. Their funerary practices involve cremation, with ancestral appeasement rituals observed during Mahalaya Amavasya, where each family follows a specific day for these rites. In 2017, the Marathas in Maralukunte constructed a temple dedicated to the goddess Ambabavani. The community engages

primarily in agriculture, with some owning irrigated lands for plantation and horticultural crops. Socially, Maratha men are referred to as Rao (e.g., Sidduji Rao) and women as Bai (e.g., Charu Bai).

Migration patterns within the Maratha community are notable, with a unique incidence of women-initiated migration. Often city-born and married to village residents, women have migrated to urban areas like Bengaluru due to employment opportunities and lifestyle preferences. This phenomenon, driven by marital discord and economic aspirations, reflects broader socio-economic challenges and is further examined in the subsequent chapter.

8.5. The Yadava Community

The Yadava community, also known as Gollas, Yadava Kula, or Krishna Kula, traditionally engaged in cattle rearing and selling dairy products. Their religious practices include the worship of deities such as Krishna, Yellamma, and Gangamma. Among the Yadavas, there exists a tradition of dedicating men as *Dasayyas* for the service of their gods. Funerary practices involve burial rather than cremation.

In Maralukunte, the Yadavas are considered one of the elite classes. This status can be traced back to Dasappa, a Yadava who migrated from a village near Kolala in Tumkur district. Dasappa acquired land near the village pond (kere) through an auction, successfully cultivated sugarcane, and subsequently accumulated wealth. The current Golla residents of Maralukunte are descendants of Dasappa. His involvement in the panchayat elections and the family's continued political influence underscores their significant social and economic capital.

Notably, many of Dasappa's descendants have migrated abroad or to various cities for career opportunities. Gopalappa, who is considered Dasappa’s adopted son (from the same family), pursued a career in astrology. The family has made substantial contributions to the village, including donating land to construct a public school and playground. Despite the widespread migration of his family members, their land remains an important asset, managed by one of the few remaining family members in the village.

8.6. The Brahmin Community

The Brahmin community in Maralukunte is small, comprising only four households. Traditionally, the role of the shanubhoga, or village accountant, was occupied by Brahmins due to their access to education in earlier times. This position, responsible for maintaining village land records, has evolved in the modern panchayat system to be filled through government recruitment exams. However, Maralukunte still retains a traditional shanubhoga who plays a significant role in religious activities and village fairs.

8.7. The Agasa Community

The Agasa, also known as Madivalas or washermen, have a traditional occupation of washing clothes. They also serve as torchbearers during festivals and processions and provide special services during marriages. The Agasas have several exogamous clans or kulas, such as Bellikula, Nagarkula, and Halekula. They worship local deities alongside Hiriyanna and Hunasamma and perform special rituals for Bhumidevaru during the Gouri festival. The Agasas bury their dead and observe rituals for deceased ancestors during Mahalaya Amavasya. They also have a caste headman who resolves disputes within the community.

8.8. The Ajama/Barber Community

Ajama or Barber community traditionally plays a significant role in the social and cultural life of the village. They are known for providing essential grooming services such as hair cutting, shaving, and other related tasks. Beyond their primary occupation, barbers often hold a respected position in the village hierarchy, participating in various social and religious rituals. For instance, they are commonly involved in wedding ceremonies, where they perform specific rituals tied to the groom's preparation. While their traditional role is well-defined, many members of the Ajama community have diversified into other occupations due to socio-economic changes, yet they continue to maintain their cultural significance within rural society.

8.9. The Devanga/Weaver Community

The Devanga community, also known as Weavers, is traditionally associated with the weaving profession and is a significant artisan caste in the Bengaluru rural villages. Historically, they have been engaged in producing handloom textiles, which is a skill passed down through generations. In the rural areas of Bengaluru, the Devangas often live in close-knit communities where their craft is both a livelihood and a cultural identity. Despite the challenges posed by industrialisation and the decline of traditional handloom industries, the Devangas continue to preserve their weaving heritage, although many are now seeking alternative occupations due to economic pressures. Their presence in rural Bengaluru reflects the intersection of tradition and modernity, where age-old crafts coexist with the demands of contemporary economic changes. There was only one weaving family living in Maralukunte. They are migraters. The head of the family works as a PDO (Panchayat Development Officer). Most of their family members work in non-agricultural employment, and only the spouse of the head engages in tailoring.

8.10. The Vodda Community

The Vodda community, also known as Bovis, is numerically significant in the district but has only a few families in Maralukunte. Traditionally, they engage in tank digging, well sinking, road construction, and masonry. The Vodda community does not practice bride price or the tying of the basinga during marriages. They worship deities such as Siddadevaru and Kariamma of Sira. They consume non-vegetarian food, and bury their dead.

8.11. The Holeya/Adi-Dravida Community

The Holeya community, preferring the term Adi-Dravida, is found throughout the district, typically residing in hattis (colonies) adjacent to villages. Historically, they are known as agricultural labourers. Even now, Holeyas work in construction, tree felling, and manufacturing. They bury their dead and propitiate ancestors during Mahalaya Amavasya. Despite numerical strength, internal social differences and poor socio-economic conditions

hinder their political influence in electoral representation. The community actively participates in village festivals, offering various services.

8.12. The Madiga/Adi-Karnataka Community

Madigas, also known as Adi Karnataka, are part of the *edagai* (left-hand) section of castes (Karnataka State Gazetteer 1989). Their traditional occupation involves leatherwork, and they historically served as village watchmen. The community worships the tutelary goddess Maramma and no longer practices bride price. Marriages are conducted by family headmen. Madigas are significant in number and, along with the Holeyas, form a considerable part of the village population, although internal social divisions limit their political efficacy.

8.13. The Ediga Community

The Ediga community, traditionally toddy tappers, has diversified into various trades. Sub-sects such as Maddi Idiga, Bellada Idiga, and Eni Idiga were historically endogamous. Edigas consume non-vegetarian food, bury their dead, and observe a ten-day pollution period in post-funerals. They predominantly speak Kannada, with some also speaking Telugu.

Maralakunte's social composition is a microcosm of the broader socio-cultural dynamics of rural Karnataka. The village's caste structure, religious practices, and political affiliations reflect the complex interplay of tradition and modernity. Understanding these dynamics provides valuable insights into the socio-economic transformations and challenges faced by rural communities in contemporary India.

9. Soco-Economic and Cultural Transformations in Rural Maralakunte

9.1. Family and Marriage

The traditional joint family system in rural Maralukunte is witnessing a notable decline, with such arrangements now rare even in village settings in general. Contemporary trends indicate a preference among the younger generation for nuclear family structures, reflecting

broader sociocultural shifts. This transition is accompanied by a gradual erosion of the practice of untouchability in public spheres, fostering new optimism among historically marginalised communities. This change is largely attributed to progressive social legislation and educational and economic upliftment programs initiated by both state and central governments. The associated social stigma and regressive customs that have historically hindered progress are increasingly being dismantled. Organisations such as the Dalit Sangharsha Samiti, active at district, taluk, and village levels, play a crucial role in combating injustices faced by oppressed groups.

9.2. Evolution of Marital Customs

Historically, the selection of brides and grooms adhered strictly to caste and sub-caste endogamy and clan exogamy, including specific clan (*kula*), lineage (*begadu*), and gotra restrictions. However, contemporary practices exhibit increasing flexibility in caste and sub-caste endogamy, influenced by factors such as migration and the resultant difficulties in securing suitable matches.

The role of the maternal uncle remains significant in puberty customs and marriage rituals. He is traditionally responsible for tying and untying the basings in marriage ceremonies, escorting the bride to the marriage pendal, and inserting toe rings for both the bride and groom. Cross-cousin marriages continue to be practised in some communities.

9.3. Marriage Practices

Marriage remains a central social institution in Maralukunte, with approximately 52% of villagers married and 35% single, including children under the age of six. The widow population, constituting 12%, is significantly higher than the number of widowers, reflecting the typical age disparity between male and female partners. Arranged marriages continue to dominate, accounting for 93% of all unions, with love marriages constituting a minority at 7%. Deviations from traditional marital norms are rare among dominant and elite castes, with acceptance of non-traditional matches, particularly those perceived as socially or economically inferior, remaining low.

Early marriage is prevalent, with a substantial number of girls marrying before the age of twenty. This trend is rooted in patriarchal norms, where daughters are seen as transient members of their natal families and are often perceived as economic burdens. This societal expectation pressures parents to marry off their daughters at a relatively young age.

9.4. Widow Remarriage and Divorce

While widow remarriage is now accepted, particularly for younger women, divorce remains relatively uncommon in rural areas. According to Section 13B of the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, mutual consent divorces are permitted. Traditional village councils continue to play a significant role in resolving marital disputes, though dissatisfied parties increasingly seek judicial intervention. Despite these legal provisions, divorce rates remain low in Maralukunte, reflecting enduring social conservatism.

Significant transitions in family structures, marital customs, and social practices characterise the sociocultural landscape of Maralukunte. These changes reflect broader patterns of modernisation and urban influence, while traditional values and practices continue to strongly influence rural life.

9.5. Settlement Pattern

In early times, rural housing construction in Maralakunte was largely dictated by functional needs and the availability of local materials. Traditional houses commonly featured a deep pit (*kanaja*) for grain storage, a feature now absent in modern structures. Additionally, earlier homes often included jagali, or raised platforms on either side of the entrance, which have become increasingly rare. Roofs were traditionally constructed from country tiles or *Kadapa kallu* (black limestone). Contemporary rural housing, however, predominantly utilises concrete or asbestos sheets for roofing. Houses constructed with concrete are classified as pucca houses, whereas those with roofs of country tiles or *Kadapa kallu* are considered kutcha houses. Approximately 75% of the houses in Maralakunte are pucca, while 25% are kutcha. Notably, most Lingayats and Thigalas reside in traditional kutcha houses, which remain structurally sound and span various income levels.

9.6. Shifts in Rural Lifestyle and Occupational Patterns

The lifestyle in rural Maralakunte has undergone significant changes, particularly influenced by urbanisation and proximity to the Bengaluru urban agglomeration. While traditionally agro-oriented, rural life now encompasses a diverse array of occupations. Enhanced connectivity to urban centres via well-maintained roads, along with improved educational, medical, drinking water, and power supply facilities, has transformed the rural landscape. The presence of bicycles and radios has dwindled, replaced by motorcycles, televisions, electric pumps, tractors, and cars, which have become ubiquitous in village life. The market for perishable products such as milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables has expanded, driven by urban demand, especially from Bengaluru. This demand has catalysed the rapid development of dairying as a principal activity. The cultivation of vegetables and flowers has also increased significantly, bolstered by the shift towards cash transactions and the decline of the barter system.

9.7. Daily Routines and Occupational Decline

Traditionally, villagers began their day early, attending to cattle, cleaning sheds, and delivering milk to dairies. These activities continue for farmers engaged in livestock rearing. Observations around eight to nine o'clock in the morning reveal villagers carrying lunch boxes as they head to non-agricultural work. Farmers remain particularly busy during sowing and harvesting seasons. However, some traditional occupations, such as pottery and oil-pressing, are in decline, having become subsidiary and losing their former significance. For instance, the folk singing by women while grinding ragi has diminished due to the advent of mechanised grinders, though singing persists during the harvest season.

9.8. Cultural Activities and Leisure

Despite the occupational shifts, traditional cultural activities remain integral to village life. During lean periods, farmers engage in festivals, jatras (fairs), and cultural performances such as Yakshagana, Bayalata, Kurukshetra, and Somana kunita. Tea shops are prevalent in nearly every village, serve as social hubs for gossip and discussion. The proliferation of newspapers, television, and other mass media has significantly educated the rural populace.

Cinema theatres have become commonplace in small towns, and contemporary village conversations often revolve around political issues and film personalities rather than solely focusing on agricultural topics.

9.9. Entertainment and Socioeconomic Status

In Maralukunte village, the ownership of a color television, particularly those equipped with liquid crystal display (LCD) or light-emitting diodes (LED) technology, accompanied by a cable or dish connection, is a prominent status symbol. This trend underscores the socioeconomic stratification within the village. Notably, families from the Thigala, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida castes are less likely to possess such luxury items, reflecting their lower income levels and social standing within the community.

9.10. Transportation and Economic Mobility

Transportation plays a critical role in the daily lives of Maralukunte residents, serving both personal and commercial needs. Historically, bullock carts (*yettina Gadi*) were prevalent for transporting goods and people. However, the advent of mechanization in agriculture and the increasing price of petrol have rendered these traditional modes of transport nearly obsolete. Despite rising fuel costs, vehicle ownership has surged, with 57% of households owning some form of modern land transportation.

Among these, two-wheelers constitute approximately 52% of all vehicles, predominantly owned by Lingayat, Thigala, Adi-Karnataka, and Golla communities. The village also has six three-wheelers (autorickshaws) and eight goods-carrying vehicles, such as TATA Ace and Tempo. Vehicle ownership extends to nine cars within the village, with Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida households often purchasing these on loans for private use and as taxis for companies like Uber and OLA to repay their loans. Conversely, Lingayat, Vokkaliga, and Golla households typically own cars outright, indicating a higher economic status. Additionally, Maralukunte households own eight tractors, primarily for agricultural purposes, with six owned by Lingayat families and two by the Thigala community.

A specific case study of a Lingayat family highlights the economic disparity within Maralukunte. This family owns four tractors, a milk-carrying lorry, and a TATA Ace for commercial purposes. They manage 18 acres of land where they cultivate various flowers, vegetables, and maintain mango and betel nut plantations. Additionally, they operate a cattle ranch. The family head has two married sons and a daughter, all residing in a multi-tiered building where portions are rented out. One son serves as a secretary in the local milk cooperative society. This family's ownership of heavy commercial vehicles, including a JCB (Joseph Cyril Bamford) by a Vokkaliga Taluk panchayat member, significantly contributes to the village's economic growth and development.

The presence of luxury furniture, such as sofa sets, washing machines, and refrigerators, is another indicator of socioeconomic status in Maralukunte. Households possessing these items are categorized as middle to high-income families. Approximately seven Lingayat families meet this criterion.

9.11. Access to Cooking Gas and Government Schemes

Historically, rural households in Maralukunte relied on earthen stoves fueled by readily available firewood from nearby forests. However, the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana scheme in 2016 has transformed cooking practices. This initiative aimed to provide liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections to women from below the poverty line (BPL) households, addressing health hazards associated with traditional cooking methods and empowering women by reducing their cooking time and effort. As a result, 93% of households in Maralukunte now use LPG for cooking. The remaining 7%, primarily elderly individuals, continue to use traditional stoves or rely on their children's households due to financial constraints.

The socioeconomic landscape of Maralukunte village is characterized by significant disparities in access to entertainment, transportation, and domestic amenities. These differences are particularly pronounced among various caste groups, reflecting broader patterns of economic stratification. The village's transition from traditional to modern practices, facilitated by government initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana,

highlights both progress and ongoing challenges in improving the livelihoods of rural communities. Future chapters will delve deeper into the role of state interventions in shaping these livelihood options.

10. Traditional Practices and Agricultural Dynamics in Maralukunte

Maralukunte encompasses a net sown area of 304.7 hectares, of which 25.7 hectares are irrigated, and 279 hectares remain unirrigated (District Census Handbook 2014). The irrigated area has expanded recently due to investments in new borewells and the increasing cultivation of plantation and horticultural crops. The agricultural landscape of Bengaluru Rural District, including Maralukunte, is primarily dry and heavily reliant on rainfall. Farmers in this region predominantly cultivate crops such as ragi, maize, groundnut, and various pulses. However, escalating production costs, particularly wage labour, have placed significant economic pressure on farmers. Consequently, many households rely on family labour for farming, while others diversify their livelihoods (pluriactivity) to sustain themselves, as sole dependence on agriculture proves challenging.

Agriculture in Bengaluru Rural District is predominantly rain-fed, with dry farming being a characteristic feature. The district's agricultural landscape is primarily focused on ragi as the main food crop, while mulberry cultivation is also significant. The climate of the district is salubrious, characterized by moderate temperatures and minimal extremes. However, rainfall is sparse, and the district lacks significant river systems, resulting in limited irrigation facilities. The region frequently experiences erratic and insufficient rainfall, leading to recurrent crop failures. Despite these challenges, horticulture substantially contributes to the district's economy, with significant areas under mango, grape, and betel vine cultivation.

The village of Maralukunte is home to three significant agricultural lakes: Maralukunte Dodda kere (south-west), Maralukunte Chikka kere (south-east), and Ooru kere (north-east). The Yettinahole Project aims to redirect water from the Yettinahole River in the Western Ghats to water-scarce districts including Tumkur, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar, and Chikkaballapura. This project involves the selection of reservoirs such as Madaga kere at

Baraguru and Maralukunte Dodda kere for water provision. Local farmers anticipate an increase in groundwater levels, which would enable them to engage in commercial crop cultivation, thus enhancing agricultural productivity and economic stability in the region.

In Maralukunte, the allocation of *maanya* (land grants) to families or individuals in recognition of their services to the village and its temples is a well-documented practice. Historically, priests serving in village temples were granted parcels of land, a tradition that has become hereditary, passing the priestly duties along familial lines. Similarly, functionary castes such as village barbers and washermen received land allocations in exchange for their services. The Dalit castes, specifically the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities, were provided with dry land to compensate for their roles in handling deceased animals, digging graves, and performing drumming duties during festivals, fairs, and ceremonies. Despite improvements in education and political awareness, which might otherwise lead individuals to refuse traditional caste occupations, but the bond to community service persists due to the *maanya* land usage and the compensation these communities received in cash, kind, or grain for their services. Consequently, these traditional roles continue to be observed during village events.

One notable observation is the active participation of the washermen community in village rituals, particularly during the Maramma Jatre (fair). A woman from this community visits each household, excluding Dalit homes, to collect grains such as ragi, rice, and daal, as well as cash, without a fixed amount, for the divine services provided during the festival. The washermen are also responsible for decapitating animals sacrificed to the goddess Maramma, spreading white cloth for those carrying idols, and participating in processions with the sacrificial buffalo head and lamp.

Dalit castes play crucial roles in the Maramma Jatre and other village ceremonies. Their responsibilities include marching around (*meravanige)* the main sacrificial animals, cleaning the temple surroundings, and beating drums during processions. The Adi-Karnataka community traditionally beats the *tamate*, while the Adi-Dravida community plays the *hare badiyodu* and *nadaswaram*.

Figure 2.4 Adi-Dravida's musical instrument drum (*hare badiyodu*)

Figure 2.5 Adi-Dravida woman showing her late husband's Nadaswaram instrument.

Maralukunte comprises a total of 304.7 hectares of net sown area and 25.7 hectares of irrigated agricultural land (District Handbook, 2011). The predominant agricultural practice is rain-fed dry farming, with ragi being the primary food crop cultivated in Maralukunte and its surrounding areas. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in horticulture and plantation fields, particularly of areca nut and coconuts, spurred by government subsidies for agricultural development.

The district's climate is generally moderate, with minimal rainfall and no significant rivers, resulting in limited irrigation facilities. Consequently, residents largely depend on groundwater for both drinking and cultivation, except during the rainy season. The district frequently experiences irregular and insufficient rainfall, leading to crop failures.

10.1. Land Ownership of Women

Land ownership among women in Maralukunte is significantly influenced by the custom of *Manavaltana*, a matrilocal tradition where a married daughter remains in her natal home, and her husband joins her community. Out of 243 households, 20% have granted land ownership to women, reflecting the adherence to Manavaltana customs. This practice is particularly prevalent among Lingayat and Thigala castes, which bestow part of the family property to women.

The Thigala caste is distinguished by its liberal attitude towards women, exemplified by the absence of a tradition requiring widows to remove their toe rings and thali, symbols of marriage. This contrasts with the practices of other Hindu castes. The Thigalas' tradition of bestowing family property to women further underscores their progressive stance on gender roles.

10.2. Agricultural Practices and Kitchen Gardens

Maralukunte's soil primarily consists of red loams and sandy loam varieties, which are suitable for diverse agricultural activities. Rural households traditionally maintained kitchen gardens or backyards, though this practice is declining. In Maralukunte, only 30% of households continue to cultivate backyards, growing various flowers, vegetables, and fruits. This practice is notably prevalent among Lingayat, Thigala, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida castes with spaces surrounding their houses.

10.3. Livestock Rearing

Mixed farming, which combines crop cultivation and livestock rearing, is a prevalent agricultural practice in rural India. This integrated system enhances resource efficiency by using the outputs of one activity as inputs for another. In Maralukunte village, approximately 45% of households engage in livestock rearing, a traditional practice deeply rooted in rural life. This study also highlights the types of livestock reared, the socio-economic benefits, and the cultural significance of livestock in Maralukunte.

In Maralukunte, livestock rearing includes cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, poultry, and oxen, with a predominance of cow rearing. Notably, the Lingayat, Thigala, Adi-Karnataka, Vokkaliga, Marati and Adi-Dravida communities exhibit significant interest in this enterprise. Livestock serves as a subsidiary income source, particularly for resource-poor farmers. Milking cows provide a steady income stream by selling milk to cooperative dairy units, with bi-weekly payments. This dairy income is crucial for many households, supplementing the annual revenue from subsistence dry cropping.

Livestock plays a vital role in providing financial security and emergency income. Animals like goats, sheep, and poultry can be sold during financial crises to cover expenses such as medical treatments, festivals, marriages, education, and household repairs. These animals act as liquid assets, offering economic resilience to their owners. Additionally, livestock products such as milk, meat, and eggs are essential sources of animal protein for household consumption. The dung from these animals is used as manure to enhance soil fertility, especially for betel nut plantations, further illustrating the interdependence within the mixed farming system.

Rearing animals is an integral part of Indian culture, with livestock playing a role in various socio-religious functions. Cows are often included in housewarming ceremonies, while sheep, goats, and chickens are sacrificed during festivals. Bulls and cows are worshipped during Hindu festivals such as Sankranti and Basava Jayanti, reflecting the deep cultural and spiritual connections between rural communities and their livestock. Despite the advent of mechanisation reducing the number of oxen, their cultural significance remains, albeit in a diminished capacity.

Mechanisation has largely replaced the use of oxen for ploughing and transporting agricultural inputs and outputs, leading to a decline in their numbers. Field observations reveal that only four to five households in Maralukunte still keep oxen, highlighting the gradual disappearance of traditional practices that are no longer economically viable. This trend underscores the dynamic nature of agricultural practices and the impact of technological advancements on traditional livelihoods.

In Maralukunte, a detailed survey of 243 households reveals that 105 households, accounting for 43.2%, own livestock, which includes cattle, goats, sheep, buffaloes, and poultry. Notably, the village maintains a total of 202 dairy cattle, exclusive of the livestock owned by Basavaraju and his brother, who manage a separate cattle farming operation with approximately 50 dairy cattle in their shed. The acquisition of livestock by villagers has been significantly facilitated by government subsidies and loans from Self-Help Groups (SHGs). However, it is observed that in some instances, funds borrowed for livestock purchases are diverted towards other expenditures, such as ritualistic celebrations, ceremonies, or the acquisition of jewellery.

Each dairy cattle in Maralukunte was insured, underscoring their economic importance to the villagers. The insurance policies provide compensation of up to Rs. 40,000 in the event of the cattle's death, thereby offering financial security to the livestock owners. The distribution of livestock ownership in Maralukunte is closely aligned with the village's caste hierarchy. The data indicates that the Lingayats, a dominant caste in the village, predominantly own dairy cattle. In contrast, goats are primarily owned by the Tigala and Dalit castes. Poultry farming, which is generally for household consumption, is also prevalent among the Tigala and Dalit communities.

This pattern of livestock ownership underscores the strong economic capital of the dominant caste and reflects broader socio-economic structures within the village. The hierarchy of caste not only influences the distribution of assets but also shapes the occupational engagements of the villagers. These aspects will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between caste dynamics and economic practices in Maralukunte.

11. Industrial Establishments in Bengaluru Rural District

The district's industrial development, particularly in areas like Dodballapur and Devanahalli, is noteworthy for its prosperous weaving industry. The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) industrial area in Sompura/Dobaspet hosts a variety of industries, including mechanical, automobile, garment, and electrical engineering

sectors. Hence, a predominant number of agricultural labourers have started working in manufacturing industries. These industrial activities will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

The socio-cultural profile of Bengaluru Rural District and Maralukunte Village reveals a dynamic interplay between traditional practices and modern influences. The diverse caste composition of Maralukunte significantly impacts the socio-economic structures and occupational engagements within the village. Dominant castes such as the Lingayats hold substantial economic capital, reflected in their extensive ownership of land and livestock.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the local economy, with dry farming and horticulture being predominant. However, the expansion of industrial areas, particularly in Dabaspet, has led to a shift in employment patterns, with many agricultural labourers now working in manufacturing industries. This transition illustrates the broader economic transformations occurring in the district.

Traditional practices, including caste-based occupations and rituals, continue to play a vital role in village life. However, modern influences such as improved connectivity, urbanisation, and government initiatives are reshaping the socio-economic landscape. The chapter highlights the need to understand these evolving dynamics to address rural communities' challenges and opportunities in the contemporary Bengaluru rural district. Overall, the profile of Maralukunte village underscores the complex interrelation between caste, agriculture, and industrialisation, offering valuable insights into the socio-economic transformations in rural Karnataka.

Chapter- 3

Agricultural Employment and Transformation of Agricultural Production

1. Varna, Caste and Occupations

The Indian caste system is widely recognised as a closed stratification system, wherein an individual's social standing is intrinsically tied to the caste of their birth (Sekinon 2000). This system is intimately associated with the Hindu varna system, derived from the Manusmriti and implemented at the grassroots level. The varna system is characterised by the enforcement of occupational roles and the allocation of wealth, power, and privilege. The varnas consist of four principal categories: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Brahmins, believed to have originated from the head of the primordial man, Purush, hold the top position in the occupational hierarchy, serving as priests and scholars due to their perceived wisdom and education.

Kshatriyas, born from the arms of Purush, represent the warrior caste, symbolising strength. Vaishyas, originating from the thighs, engage in trade and commerce. Shudras, the fourth varna, emerge from the feet of Purush and are typically associated with occupations such as farming, labour, craftsmanship, and domestic service. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes occupy an ambiguous position in the Varna system, neither considered a subset of the Shudras nor a separate category, but classified below the four varnas in the social order. They are commonly referred to as untouchables, outcasts, or avarnas and engage in occupations deemed unclean and polluting, such as scavenging and skinning dead animals (Bayly 1999, Daniel 2010, Deshpande 2010, Gupta 2005, Iversen 2011, Smith 1994).

The varnas, constituting the social divisions in the Indian caste system, are further subdivided into specialised sub-castes known as Jatis. Each Jati comprises individuals whose primary means of livelihood is associated with a specific occupation. Individuals are born into a particular caste and subsequently become members, acquiring the appropriate occupation according to their Jati. The perpetuation of this hereditary occupational specialisation and hierarchical ranking of occupations is believed to be maintained through

an elaborate ritual system regulating social interactions between the Jatis. The hierarchical classification and the rituals governing social behaviour find justification in Vedic texts from the Hindu religion, compiled, validated, and interpreted by the Brahmins. These texts also prescribe rules governing appropriate occupational pursuits, behaviours within and between castes, and regulations related to marriage.

2. Changes in Occupational Inheritance

Since India's attainment of independence in 1947, substantial relaxation of the norms associated with the caste system has occurred. Several policies, including the abolition of Bonded labour, Dowry, Untouchability, and Child labour, have had a profound impact on the socioeconomic facets of rural life. Gender and manual labour issues have gained increased attention, evident in legislations such as the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act 1993, Building and Other Construction Workers Act 1996, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, enacted post the liberalisation of India.

The traditional hierarchical relationships and rigidly assigned occupations within Indian villages, rooted in the Jajmani relations and Zamindari system, facilitated a patron-client dynamic. This dynamic involved the Jajman (patron/*Yajamana*) and the Kamins (labourer/*Jitadara*), typically comprising landed proprietors from upper and middle castes and agricultural labourers from lower castes, respectively. Post-independence legislation has mitigated severe forms of bonded labour and sought to dismantle the hereditary link between castes and occupations, particularly in the lower echelons of the caste system.

Ethnographic research extensively documents transformations in the occupational structure across different castes in Indian villages over time, revealing evidence of occupational mobility among lower castes. For example, a longitudinal study in the village of Behror in Western Rajasthan (Mendelsohn 1993) highlighted the Chamars' shift from traditional occupations to leather trading and agriculture, expressing resistance to their historically associated roles. Similar trends were observed in Dalit communities in rural Punjab (Jodhka 2004), deliberately distancing themselves from polluting activities and reshaping social structures. Studies provide nuanced insights into the diminishing intensity of the Jajmani system, weakened caste and occupational relationship, and increased work

participation across castes (Epstein et al. 1998, Mayer 1997). Surveys in Uttar Pradesh in 2007 indicated Scheduled Castes' reduced engagement in traditional agricultural occupations, opting for non-agricultural activities and circular migration to towns and cities (Kapur et al. 2010). And in another study, Srinivas (1996) illuminates the persisting inequalities and caste-based divisions of labour in post-independence rural India. Historically, caste and agriculture were inseparable, manifested in practices like the Jajmani system. Indian legislation after independence tried to reduce poverty and caste discrimination. Despite legislation weakening the traditional patron-client relationship of the Jajmani system, some Scheduled Caste families still recall ancestral experiences, maintaining subtle 'client' relationships with their *yajman* families even today, influenced by the historical practices of the Jajmani system.

The prevailing circumstance persists even within the confines of the study area, Maralukunte, in a nuanced manner, wherein a minority of Dalit families i.e. Adi Karnataka and Adi Dravida, whose forebears served as *jeetadalu* (kaminis) for the *yajamanas* (jamindars), continue to be employed for the same *yajmana* families, receiving remuneration in both monetary and non-monetary forms. This is mainly due to their low education and low status in the hierarchical layers of society, which has indelibly imprinted emotional traces of historical oppression upon the economically disadvantaged. This enduring manifestation is noteworthy. Despite legislative measures favoring the lower strata of society after independence, such as the abolition of the jajmani system and untouchability, certain Dalits find themselves unable to extricate from the residual effects of prolonged subjugation. However, those who have acquired education have started working in non-agricultural employment, particularly in manufacturing industries established in Dabaspet, which is near Maralukunte. These individuals are earning a regular income and have improved their standard of living as observed through the clothes they wear, their use of normalised home appliances like dominant castes, and sending their children to schools.

This situation in Maralukunte highlights the enduring impact of historical oppression on Dalit families, particularly those with limited education and low social status. Despite legislative efforts to uplift these communities, many remain entrenched in traditional roles

bound by their past legacy. However, the positive shift among educated Dalits, who are now engaging in non-agricultural employment and improving their living standards, offers a beacon of hope. This narrative underscores the critical importance of education and economic opportunities in breaking the cycle of subjugation and fostering social mobility.

Below case study narrates the historical dependency and changing relations of Dalits in Maralukunte:

> **Case 1** Murthy, a 45-year-old individual hailing from the Adi-Dravida community, where his siblings presently reside in distinct nuclear households. Murthy reminisced about his parents, Kempanna and Hanumakka, who were formerly employed as *jeetadalu* within the household of Dasappa (a member of the Golla community acknowledged for affluence in the village). Murthy recounted observing his father participating in diverse agricultural activities, including ploughing, transplantation, harvesting, and overseeing the plantation. His father was also involved in horticultural field operations. Simultaneously, his mother undertook responsibilities such as livestock grazing and household chores, encompassing laundry and the cleaning of the household premises and cattle shed. However, she was prohibited from handling utensils utilised by the landowner's family. Meals were presented to Murthy's parents on separate plates or leaves and plastic glasses. Remuneration for their labour was not fixed, but given grains, gifts, old clothes, and some *paisa* (money) during festival days (*habbada dinagalu*), celebratory occasions, and periods of crisis (*kasta kaaladalli*). Murthy noted that the symbolic *thali* (representing marriage/mangalsutra) was provided by their *yajmana* (patron) during his and his siblings' weddings. Notably, Murthy recollected donning old clothes of Dasappa's son's in his childhood.
>
> Even after a span of seventy-six years since attaining independence, Murthy from Maralukunte persists in addressing Dasappa and his son Gopalappa as *Dhanigalu* and *Yajmanre*, denoting landlord or possessor/seigneur. Murthy's family continues to engage in agricultural labouring activities for Dasappa's family, albeit not exclusively as a traditional client relationship. But prefer to work in yajamana's field over others agricultural tasks. Especially in cases where work opportunities

abound during harvesting seasons and are extended by multiple farmers, Murthy's family consciously opts to work for Dasappa's family, maintaining a connection with the landowner's lineage. In return, they receive various benefits from the *yajamana's* family, such as assistance in their children's education, college admissions, and financial support for social celebrations. This observation accentuates the contemporary advantages derived from the enduring traditional footprint of the jajmani system in the lives of Dalits.

Murthy's family's experience is not an isolated case, as several other families from the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities within Maralukunte similarly recall their ancestors' service to dominant families in the village. Some of these families still maintain subtle social and economic ties to their *yajamana* families by offering various services like working overtime during rituals, festivals, marriage, and death ceremonies. However, the younger generation of Adi Karnataka and Adi Dravida who have attained education exhibits a diminished emphasis on traditional oppressive practices. Many of these youth have pursued education and aspire to work in the industrial and corporate sectors. Even if they are engaging in agricultural labouring activities within the village, they assertively demand immediate payment in cash; otherwise, they communicate a refusal to continue their services. The same attitude is seen in other contexts where Dalit youngsters enter all temples within the village, whereas the older generation of Dalits still stand outside of temples, underscoring the lingering emotional traces of the historical oppression of Dalits in rural society.

Srinivas (1996) documented instances where exceptionally loyal servants (*jitadalu*) were interred next to their master's (*yajamana's*) grave, highlighting the deep-seated loyalty and subjugation prevailing in pre-independence times. The historical scarcity of labour relative to abundant available land reinforced strong patron-client relationships during that period. However, there are shifts in the dynamics of land and labour relationships in rural areas and Maralukunte with mechanization of agriculture, industrialization, and migration of workforce.

3. Agricultural Production in Maralukunte

In Maralukunte, Lingayats, and Gollas hold a significant part of the land. When it comes to land ownership in general, nearly 90% of households own land. Table 3.1 represents the classification of farmers based on their household land holdings. Marginal farmers are defined as those who own two acres or less. Small farmers possess more than two (excluding two) up to five acres (inclusive of five). In contrast, middle farmers own more than five (excluding five) up to ten acres (inclusive of ten) of land. Finally, large farmers possess more than ten acres (excluding ten) of land.

Table 3.1 Land Holdings of Households

S. No	Categorisation of Farmers	Count of Households	Percentage of Households
1	Marginal Farmers (0-2)	134	61.47
2	Small Farmers (2-5)	70	32.11
3	Medium Farmers (5-10)	6	2.75
4	Large Farmers (More than 10)	8	3.67
Total		218	
Source: Based on a field survey conducted in 2019			

The table above indicates a substantial proportion of marginal farmers, with over 90 percent of Maralukunte's farmers classified as either marginal or small farmers. Additionally, approximately ten per cent of village households, totalling 25 households, do not possess any land; most of these households are migrants to the village. The growing prevalence of marginal and small farmers is corroborated by numerous macro-level studies on the agrarian structure of the Indian economy (Deshpande & Arora, 2011; Roy et al., 2020). In an attempt to seek the association between caste and landholding, the researcher has found a clear caste and class differentiation within agricultural production. Though the area of Bangalore's rural district, especially the Nelamangala taluk, is categorised under rain-fed location, the large farmers own some irrigated land by investing in borewells. In which they either cultivate horticulture or grow plantation crops like areca nut (*adake*), coconut (*tenginakayi)*, mango (*maavu*) and betel leaves (*veelyadele*). Large farmers hire

labour, whereas marginal and small farmers make their own family members engage in agricultural production and use the practice of traditional labour exchange (*muyyalu*) in the busy season. *Muyyalu* is a labour exchange system in which two or more agricultural producers come to an informal agreement to exchange their family labour in terms of hours or days without much intervention of money.

In Maralukunte village, the larger farmers are generally from the Lingayat, Golla and Brahman castes. Vokkaligas of Maralukunte are mostly middle farmers. But there are large Vokkaligas farmers located in the neighbouring hamlet named Chikkanayakanahalli, which is not considered for the present study. The utility is considered one of the salient features of determining the value of the land. Further factors like fertility of the land, irrigation facility, crops grown, and proximity of connectivity to roads increase the value of agricultural land. Considering these factors, the quality of the land owned by the Dalits of Maralukunte, particularly Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida, is less fertile land. The government gave these lands to the landless on various land distribution Schemes. The provisioned lands were usually the community grazing land or Kharab land (land which is unfit for cultivation), which were converted into plain agricultural land and distributed among the landless. Presently, they have got a *patta/ khathe* (land record) on their names. A significant percentage of Dalits are Small and marginal farmers engaged in subsistence agriculture and cultivating dry crops like *ragi* and *jola*. They are also traditionally best known for their agricultural labour class.

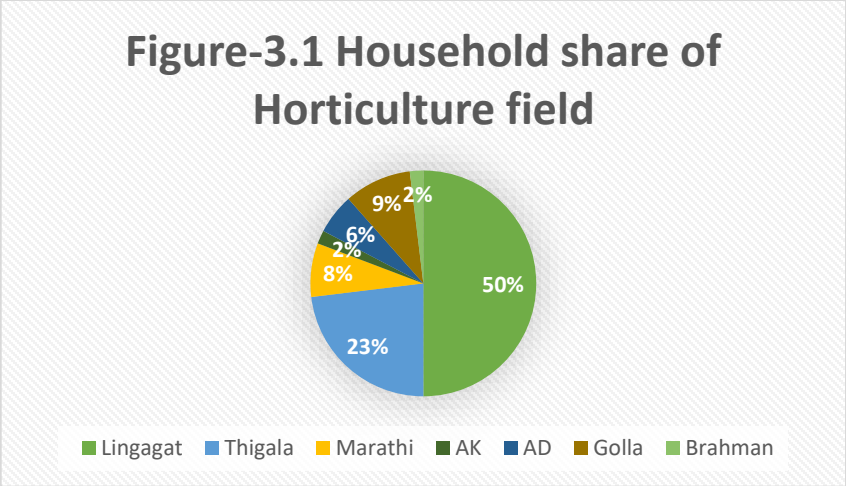
In the arid lands of Maralukunte, farmers grow ragi, ground nut (*nelagadale*), corn (*jola*), and other seeds for household use like pigeon peas (*togaribele*), peas (*avarekayi*), black-eyed pea (*alasandkalu*), and castor bean (*aralu)*. Ragi is the major crop grown in Maralukunte. Nevertheless, they use to cultivate millets in olden days. As an older woman mentioned, "when I was young, my parents used to grow millets like foxtail millet (*navane*), little millet (*saame*), koda millet (*harka*), barnyard millet (*oodalu*), and browntop (*korale*)." And she recalled the delicious diet of *ragi rotti* and *uchellu chatni* (ragi roti and niger seed chutney). Further, she said, present generation of farmers do not know how to cultivate the millet. These days farmers entirely depend on chemical fertilisers to increase their yield per acre; in such situations, crops like niger seeds do not grow in mixed farming.

Even if it is attempted separately, the yield and the taste would surely be minimal due to the use of fertilisers and types of equipment (electronic grinder) used to prepare the *Chatni*! She recalls the taste of sambars and chutneys prepared using mortar and pestle stone (*valakallu*).

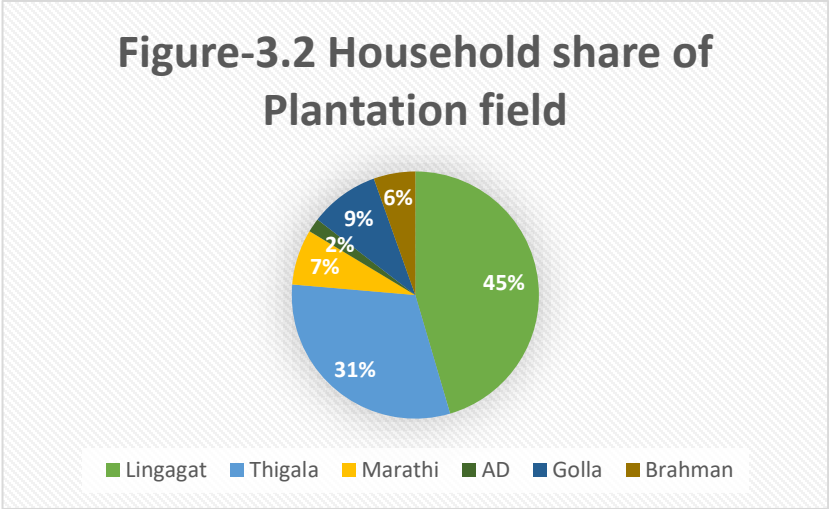
3.1. Agrarian Class, Caste and Crops Grown

There is an association between agrarian class (categorisation of farmers, refer to Table 3.1), caste and crops grown. In Maralukunte, nearly 71% of the farmers cultivate dry crops like ragi, ground nuts, and maize. Villagers own arid land from half an acre to almost nineteen acres. However, a significant number of them own one and two acres of arid land. Adi-Karnatakas are the ones who possess the most arid cropland, along with Lingayat, Tighala and Adi-Dravida communities. In arid land, farmers grow ragi, ground nut (*nelagadale*), corn (*jola*), and other seeds for household use like pigeon peas (*togaribele*), peas (*avarekayi*), black-eyed pea (*alasandkalu*), and castor bean (*aralu)*.

Notably, in an arid region, nearly 21% of households engage in horticulture. In that villagers grow various vegetables and flowers like beans (*huralikayi*), radish (*mulangi*), hyacinth bean (*avarekayi*), cabbage (*elekosu*), cauliflower *(hookosu*), bitter gourd (*hagalakayi*), tomato (*tamoto*). And prominent flowers like roses (*gulabi*), marigolds (*chenduva)*, chrysanthemums or mums varieties (*batans and savanthige*). Households own 0.05 to four acres of horticulture land in the village. Out of which, the ones who own half, one and two acres are more in number—the Lingayats community possesses a significant part of the horticultural field along with Thigala and Gollas. Additionally, 23% of the households have plantation trees. Farmers of Maralukunte own plantations of areca nuts (*adike*), betel leaves (*veelyadele)*, mango (*maavu)*, coconut *(tengu*) and banana (*baale*). Farmers hold nearly half and one acre of plantation fields. Villagers use both manure and chemical fertilisers for growing various crops. But they exceptionally choose manure for areca nuts, and betel leaves plantation.



Source: Based on Field Data



Source: Based on Field Data

Figures 3.1 & 3.2 show that Lingayats own a significant portion of horticulture and plantation fields along with the Thigala community. The interesting factor to notice here is that though the percentage share of Gollas is just 2.88 % in total village household composition, they own a considerable share in horticulture and plantation fields. In the same way, even Brahmans are minimal in the number of households but share a substantial percentage in holding plantation fields in the village. The households owning more than a half-acre of horticulture and plantation fields are considered actively engaged in farming and making some monetary benefits out of agricultural production. Commercial agriculture is one of the ways to make money in agricultural production. Lingayats and Gollas hold

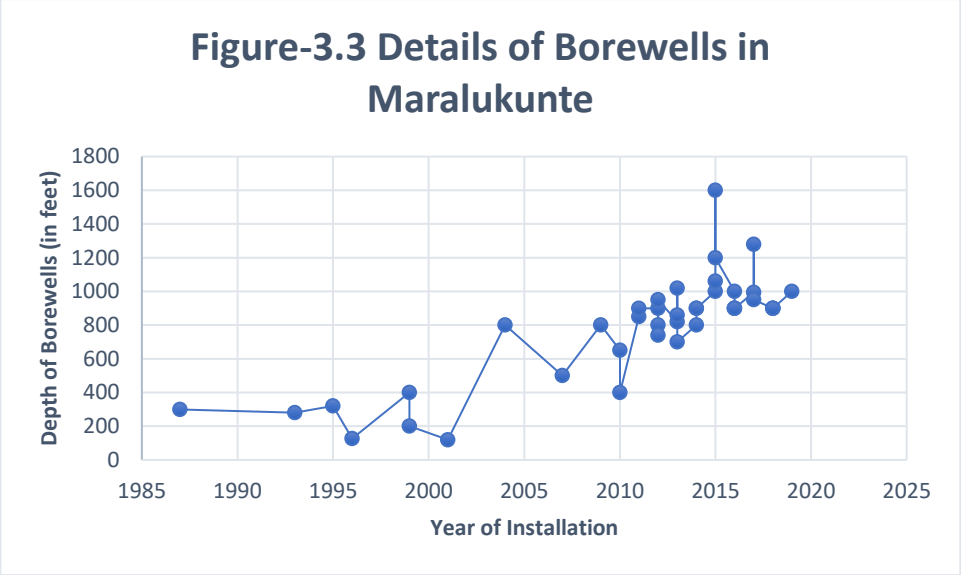
major irrigated lands in the village, and they continue to hold a dominant position in the village through their fertile land ownership, social status, and economic wealth. The situation may not be the same after two generations due to huge migration and shifting in occupational preferences. Converting arid areas to irrigation through investing in borewells, government subsidies, and active engagement in the cultivation of horticulture and plantation farming shows these farmers' present financial capital and the village's social capital.

3.2. Improvement in Irrigation Facility in Maralukunte

Irrigation is one of the vital sources of agricultural production. In the arid region of Maralukunte, farmers significantly depend on monsoon rains for their dry crop cultivation. The ones who engage in horticulture and plantation primarily own a borewell or traditional well or borrow water from neighbours. The village has almost forty borewells, and Lingayats own majority of them. There is a strong association between the households who own borewells and engage in horticulture cultivation and the plantation of areca nuts and betel leaves. Around twelve traditional wells are still used for agricultural production and are mainly owned by Lingayat, Thigala and Golla communities. There are three agricultural lakes (*Keregalu*) in the village. Maralukunte *Dodda kere (*big lake) is located at the southwest end, and Maralukunte *chikka kere* (small lake) is located at the southeast before entering the village. *Ooru kere* (village lake) comes across the northeast of the village and is located near the habitat. Farmers use these lakes' water for agricultural production, cleaning livestock and as a source of drinking water for livestock. They extract lake water through canals or motors to their personal agricultural fields.

There are many dry wells in the village, which were used for irrigation and drinking purposes earlier. Owning a borewell in agricultural land increases the value of the land for sale and further in tenancy. Villagers started extracting groundwater through borewells from the year 1900 (see fig 3.3) in a few numbers and haven't stopped yet. As time goes on, it is evident that the water table level goes down, and farmers dig deep in search of water. Figure 3 shows that there has been a proliferation in the number of borewells since 2010. And especially after the year 2015, the depth of the borewell increased almost from 900 to 1600 feet. Further, nineteen borewells have failed in the past few years, and these farmers

could not find water in their fields. The irrigated landholding households are from the communities of Lingayat, Thigala, Marathi, Golla, and Brahman. They didn't stop there but dug deeper or other borewells in their agricultural field till they found water. Some families own more than two borewells, which shows their financial capital status in the village.



Source: Based on Field Data

The continuous extraction of groundwater through borewells has led to a significant decline in the water table. As farmers dig deeper to find water, the increasing depth required to access groundwater reflects the depletion of this vital resource. This trend is unsustainable and poses a severe threat to future agricultural productivity, as water scarcity may become a limiting factor for crop cultivation. As borewells need to be dug deeper to reach water, the costs associated with drilling and maintaining these borewells increase. This raises the overall cost of irrigation, making agriculture more expensive and potentially less profitable, especially for small and marginal farmers who may not have the financial resources to dig deeper borewells.

The ability of certain communities (Lingayat, Thigala, Marathi, Golla, and Brahman) to invest in multiple borewells indicates significant socio-economic disparities within the village. Wealthier farmers can afford the high costs of drilling deeper borewells and securing water for their crops, while poorer farmers struggle to compete, potentially leading to increased inequality in agricultural productivity and income. The aggressive

extraction of groundwater could lead to land degradation, including issues like soil salinity and reduced soil fertility. This can further compromise agricultural yields and the long-term viability of farming in the area.

The declining water table due to the proliferation of borewells has far-reaching implications for agricultural production, including increased costs, socio-economic disparities, land degradation, changes in agricultural practices, and concerns about long-term sustainability. These challenges highlight the need for more sustainable water management practices and possibly diversifying livelihoods to reduce the community's dependence on groundwater for agriculture.

3.3. Tenancy

The land tenancy is informal from the traditional times. The value of tenancy is more in the irrigated areas. Factors like migration, full-time employment in the non-agricultural sector and the absence of male members in the family are a few reasons why the Maralukunte folks lease out the land. Tenancy emerges prominently in regions characterised by favourable land improvement factors such as soil fertility, adequate rainfall, and irrigation infrastructure. Additionally, under conditions marked by widespread unemployment, landlessness, and the cultivation of labour-intensive crops (Bardhan 1979). But, Maralakunte offers a different scenario. Since Maralukunte is an arid region that receives rainfall only in monsoon, and farmers generally cultivate ragi here, which is their staple food and involves lower production risk. Hence, most households would like to cultivate their land by themselves or by using machines for ploughing and harvesting rather than leasing it out. Thus, the percentage of tenancy practised in the village is paltry. The households with no male members and those who migrated to cities for better income jobs but owned ancestral land have given land to tenants. Generally, for the cultivation of one acre of non-irrigated land, barring all production costs by tenants, offer one quintal of ragi, but the rates are different for the irrigated lands. Further, the tenancy is mostly an informal or oral agreement between a tenant and a landowner. Most of these non-irrigated lands were leased to kin relatives and neighbours. There was only one incident of lending out irrigated land to a tenant. The land-owning family has migrated to Bangalore but owns a plantation of betel nut and a small piece of land next to it which has an irrigation facility.

This small piece of ten *kuntas* (0.25 acre) was given to lease to a Lingayat family, and they provided Rs20,000 a year for cultivating vegetables and flowers in it. This emphasises the high value of irrigated land for sale and also for tenancy.

3.4. Land Ownership of Women

Gender disparity in land ownership constitutes a crucial focal point for comprehending the nuances of women's economic empowerment. This investigation scrutinises the ramifications of progressive legal frameworks, exemplified by the Hindu Succession Act (2005), which ostensibly accorded daughters equal entitlements to paternal property analogous to their male counterparts. However, an imperative question emerges concerning the practical instantiation of these legal provisions. The pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG) on gender equality underscores the commitment to eradicating gender-based discrimination and establishing a framework that ensures equal rights and opportunities, thereby fostering empowerment. The analysis seeks to bridge the gap between legal intent and operational realities to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between gender, land ownership, and the economic agency of women.

In Maralukunte, 20% of women-led households possessing land. However, the intricacies inherent in women's land ownership reveal a nuanced and divergent aspects. Notably, a substantial majority (65%) of women owning land in Maralukunte are widows, a trend corroborated by Bina Agarwal's macro analysis of women's land ownership. Another noteworthy aspect of women's land ownership is the transfer of residential land to women's names by a considerable proportion (38%) of households, a strategic move aimed at availing benefits earmarked for women in government-sponsored house construction schemes. In light of the reservations designated for women by the panchayat in the approval of subsidized loans for housing construction, a subset of households in Maralukunte village strategically converted the ownership of residential lands to the names of female members to avail themselves of that subsidy. This phenomenon is discernible in Maralukunte, where few women acquired residential lands through government reservations.

Contrary to this trend, a mere four women-led households possess agricultural land ownership, excluding widows. These households predominantly belong to the Lingayat and

Thigala castes, where the practice of "*manvaltana*" is notably prevalent. *Manvaltana* exhibits elements akin to matrilocal residence, wherein husbands reside with their wives' families to oversee their ancestral property. This practice typically unfolds out of necessity when a family has a sole daughter or in the absence of male offspring. Presently, 12% of households in Maralukunte adhere to this tradition, predominantly observed within the Lingayat, Thigala, Marathi, and Golla communities. Upon inquiring with women in various households, seeking insights into their awareness of the Hindu Succession Act of 2005, which grants equal rights to both sons and daughters over ancestral property. A substantial number of women exhibited awareness of this legal provision, albeit with a reticent demeanour. An in-depth exploration of this phenomenon unveiled a complex interplay between societal norms and the socialization of women, fostering a disposition towards disavowing claims on ancestral property.

One respondent, Leelavathi, belonging to the Lingayat community, acknowledged her awareness of the legal equality between sons and daughters in terms of ancestral property rights. However, she attributed her share of the property to her parents' provision during her marriage, emphasizing on marriage expenses and gifts.

In contrast, Hanumakka, hailing from the Adi-Dravida community, presented a distinct perspective shared by many women in Maralukunte. She articulated a sentiment prevalent among local women, asserting that women, as a gender, do not necessarily seek land from their natal family. Instead, the paramount importance lies in maintaining kin relationships, marked by invitations to familial rituals and festivals, and sustaining these connections until death is more important for women rather than economic property.

Remarkably, Hanumakka's husband aligned with her perspective, expressing a willingness to recognise his sisters' rights to ancestral property if they were to request it. He underscored his efforts in fostering familial bonds by inviting his sisters to significant events and providing gifts during festivals, acknowledging the associated costs.

> “I invite them to major festivals like the village fair and the Gowri Ganesh festival. Non-veg feasts and gifts to sisters at the time of the village fair and festivals cost me high. In every Gowri-Ganesha festival, we (Hanumakka and husband) send off

my sisters with *arishina* (turmeric), *kumkuma* (vermilion powder) and a saree. Who pays me for that?".

This narrative highlighted the prevalent inclination among women to prioritize relationships over property, an inclination fostered by socialization processes. Consequently, many rural women, adhering to cultural norms transmitted through generations, tend to eschew claims to ancestral property, viewing it as belonging inherently to male heirs. Because in rural society, social norms have a high value compared to the state legislation.

Interestingly, few women who migrated post-marriage registered complaints in local panchayat against their brothers for property share. In a few cases, male siblings give some part of the property to females, which was never equal to what male siblings receive. In most cases, women are silent and chose kinship over economic property. Hence, despite an awareness of legal provisions, the observed dynamics suggest that mere knowledge of the Hindu Succession Act does not necessarily translate into empowerment or a heightened status for women. This narrative underscores the complex interplay of gender roles and familial obligations, and societal norms.

3.5. Gender Division of Labour in Agriculture

Agricultural activities within the studied context were intricately entwined with gendered divisions of labour. Specifically, tasks such as ploughing (*hola hulodu* or *negilu kelasa*), land preparation for plantation (*saalu hodiyodu*), sowing (*bittane*), irrigation (*niravari*), application of manure and fertilizers (*gobbara hakodu*), as well as various transportation duties were notably allocated to men. The transportation and storage processes encompassed weight lifting, loading, unloading, and the movement of agricultural inputs and outputs. In contrast, women's participation in agricultural activities are seen as subsidiary roles. Their involvement extended to tasks like plantation (*pairu hakodu*), weeding (*kale keelodu*), harvesting (*koylu*), along with ancillary responsibilities such as loading and unloading of manure (*sagani gobbara*).

Certain scholars contend that women's engagement in agricultural labour is characterized by a prolonged duration compared to that of men, notwithstanding which they receive

remuneration at rates lower than their male counterparts (Hirway & Roy 1999, Nayyar 1987, Omvedt 1977, Srivastava &Srivastava 2010). This inequity is perpetuated by a prevailing characterization, wherein tasks undertaken by men are consistently designated as primary, while those executed by women are relegated to subsidiary roles, irrespective of the substantive volume of their contributions. The assessment of work based on gender without due consideration for the actual magnitude of individual contributions perpetuates a systemic bias in the valuation of labour within the agricultural context.

During the researcher's investigation into the disparity in wages between gendered agricultural tasks, an elderly individual named Gopalappa asserted, "Women cannot undertake all agricultural tasks performed by men." According to Gopalappa, activities such as ploughing and hoeing, which are traditionally associated with men's work, demand greater strength and exertion, thereby justifying higher remuneration for men compared to women. However, in the current scenario of Maralukunte, women receive equal pay to men while engaging in the same activity, at least in agricultural and factory work.

This assertion holds true to a certain extent in the context of Maralukunte and its adjacent villages. Women in rural southern Karnataka have been successful in advocating for equal remuneration for equivalent work, irrespective of gender. This achievement can be attributed to the support of their spouses, household members, labour group networks, and awareness regarding national and state policies. Notably, the trend is further reinforced by women's participation in the non-farm sector, where equal pay for similar tasks is the norm regardless of gender.

A noteworthy observation is that despite these strides towards wage parity, the division of labour in agriculture persists along gender lines in Maralukunte. Significantly, no woman in the village has contested or challenged this established gender-based division of agricultural tasks thus far. While a few women have acquired the skills of use of axe, digging, and irrigating plants, their engagement in these tasks remains confined to their own fields, which are mostly unpaid. Consequently, the prevailing gender-based division of agricultural labour in the village has not been subject to scrutiny or challenge.

> **Case 2** Renukamma, a widow from the Lingayat community, originally hailing from Bangalore, relocated to Maralukunte subsequent to the demise of her husband.

Possessing a substantial agricultural holding comprising two acres dedicated to betel nut and coconut cultivation, she additionally cultivates vegetables and flowers within the same plantation field. Her son, professionally engaged as an engineer, resides in Bangalore. Renukamma initiated her transition to Maralukunte at approximately 40 years of age, and her plantation is strategically situated in close proximity to her residence. Consequently, she dedicates a significant portion of her time to personally engaging in various agricultural activities within her field. Given the escalating costs of labour, she opts to undertake several tasks independently rather than hiring external labour. She replaces desiccated plants through the excavation of pits and subsequent transplantation of new plants. Furthermore, Renukamma undertakes responsibilities such as the collection of fallen coconuts and the arrangement of coconut tree branches within her field at one corner. Her involvement also extends to the supervision and maintenance of the drip irrigation system implemented within her agricultural enterprise.

Case 3 Manjamma, aged approximately fifty-four and belonging to the Thigala community, is notable for the agricultural labour leadership in the village. Farmers approach her for labour procurement, and she facilitates agricultural labourers through her extensive social networks. Her life narrative stands as a compelling example of steadfast support for her daughter during a period of adversity.

Manjamma is deprived of formal education due to prevailing beliefs about the dispensability of education for girls during her formative years, Manjamma is now the mother of two married children. Her husband, Mallanna, is a farmer who owns about three acres of land, two of which benefit from irrigation. The cultivated areas include a one-acre plantation featuring betel nuts and coconut trees, alongside another acre devoted to the horticulture and flower cultivation like beans (*huralikayi*), cabbage (*elekosu*), cauliflower (*hookosu*), marigolds (*chenduva*), and chrysanthemums or mums varieties (*savanthige*).

Mallanna faced a severe leg injury in an accident seven years ago; despite this setback, he continues to contribute to the family's sustenance through minor tasks such as tending to cattle and overseeing crops. Mallanna believes that farmers with

fertile land and efficient irrigation need not work under external employment; he articulates a cyclical model of agricultural work where six months of dedicated effort yield a period of relaxation for the remaining six months in farming.

Manjamma's son, formerly employed in the manufacturing industry, recently transitioned to full-time agriculture to support the family. Although he contemplates returning to the factory during lean seasons, the day-to-day household responsibilities are managed by Manjamma's daughter-in-law. Despite the circumstances allowing for a more relaxed role at her age, Manjamma actively engages in both unpaid household and agricultural work, earning her recognition as one of the industrious women during peak agricultural seasons.

The familial narrative of Manjamma, notably encapsulated through the tribulations faced by her daughter, Savita, reflects an extraordinary resilience and fortitude. Savita, having entered matrimony in her twenties within the confines of the village, encountered the grievous demise of her spouse amidst his employment in the automotive sector. The factory, in acknowledgement of the tragic incident, provided monetary compensation to Savita. Subsequently, discord ensued between Savita, her kindred relations, and her in-laws, with the latter asserting a claim to the indemnification. Numerous deliberations unfolded within the caste and village panchayat, deliberating the rightful recipient of the compensatory funds. Remarkably, during this tumultuous period, Savita found unwavering support from her parents. Her natal family, in an assertion of solidarity, directed the compensation towards the construction of a distinct dwelling in Savita's name on a parcel of land bequeathed to her during her nuptials. The residual funds were judiciously deposited into a bank account.

In the aftermath of this ordeal, Savita embarked on a subsequent marriage and was subsequently blessed with a son. However, it became discernible that her second husband harboured intentions to exploit her assets, thereby subjecting Savita to instances of both physical and verbal abuse. Despite the adversities encountered in her formative years, Savita manifested a resilient and courageous disposition, attributing her tenacity to the robust support system she was fortunate to possess. At

present, Savita has forged a new path for herself as a preschool teacher within the precincts of an international school where her son is also enrolled. This narrative not only underscores the profound resilience of an individual in the face of adversity but also accentuates the pivotal role played by familial support structures in facilitating such resilience.

The case study of Manjamma and her family provides a profound insight into the dynamics of gender, labour, and resilience within rural communities. Manjamma's leadership in agricultural labour, despite her lack of formal education, highlights the critical yet often unrecognised role that women play in rural economies. Her family's ability to adapt and thrive amidst significant challenges underscores the importance of social networks and familial support systems.

Savita's journey, marked by adversity and triumph, further illustrates the resilience that can emerge when individuals are supported by a strong familial foundation. Her transition from a widow facing severe socio-economic pressures to a preschool teacher exemplifies the transformative power of education and family solidarity. This finding will be further elaborated in the next chapter, particularly in the section on the impact of non-farm employment on women.

Overall, this narrative emphasises the need to acknowledge and support the multifaceted roles women play in both household and economic spheres. It also highlights the importance of creating social and economic policies that bolster family support systems, thereby enhancing the resilience and socio-economic mobility of women in rural areas.

The forthcoming sections of this chapter will scrutinise the escalating trend of women entering the agricultural labour force, accompanied by the broader movement of labourers from the agricultural sector to non-agricultural employment domains facilitated by processes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, and enhanced educational attainment. This comprehensive analysis aims to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of gender roles, labour dynamics, and economic transitions within the evolving rural landscape of Maralukunte.

3.6. Mechanisation in Agriculture

The advent of agricultural mechanisation has brought about a substantial transformation in agricultural production in the Bangalore rural region. Mechanised implements such as tractors, tillers, harvesting machines, and JCBs (Joseph Cyril Bamford) have become integral components of agricultural practices. Tractors, for instance, play a pivotal role in soil preparation, transportation of inputs and outputs, and tilling, with specialised tooth configurations in tilling machines catering to diverse soil preparation for various crops. Harvesting machines, specifically designed for crops like ragi and maize, autonomously separate seeds from plants, reducing reliance on manual labour. However, the use of machines results in the wastage of grass, rendering it unsuitable for fodder. JCBs find application in tasks such as digging canal lines, levelling agricultural land, and loading and digging pits.

Traditionally, men were predominantly engaged in these agricultural activities; however, the mechanisation of agriculture has led to a displacement of male labourers by machines. Consequently, men who were formerly reliant on these tasks have transitioned to non-agricultural employment, while some have adapted to the remaining agricultural opportunities available within the village. Some have learned to operate these machines. Households equipped with irrigation facilities engage in the cultivation of cash crops such as areca nuts, betel leaves, coconuts, horticulture and floriculture. Remarkably, there is a heightened demand for the labour for harvesting of vegetables and flowers compared to the conventional processes of transplantation, weeding, and harvesting of dry crops.

Traditionally, the activities of transplantation, weeding, threshing, and harvesting were designated as women's work; these activities now witness male participation, too. The agricultural tasks which were designated to women like harvesting flowers and vegetables, weeding, transplantation have become gender-neutral work in agricultural production with the process of mechanisation seizing men’s agricultural works.

Historically, agricultural practices have ascribed tasks such as transplantation, weeding, threshing, and harvesting exclusively to women. However, contemporary developments in agricultural mechanization have resulted in a notable shift, whereby these once exclusively designated female activities now witness male participation too. The processes of

harvesting flowers and vegetables, weeding, and transplantation, hitherto considered the domain of women's agricultural responsibilities, have undergone a transformation into gender-neutral tasks within the agricultural production milieu. This evolution is intricately tied to the advent of mechanization, which has not only streamlined and expedited these agricultural processes but has also facilitated a reconfiguration of gender roles by transcending traditional gender-specific divisions of labour.

Consequently, the involvement of men in tasks historically attributed predominantly to women within the agricultural domain stands as a contributing factor to the emergence of gender parity in wages associated with agricultural production. This shift reflects a noteworthy transformation in gender dynamics, as men engage in activities traditionally perceived as women's work, thereby influencing the remuneration structures within the agricultural sector. The alteration in the historical gender association with specific agricultural tasks has played a role in equalizing compensation practices, marking a nuanced intersection of evolving gender roles and wage parity within the agricultural labour framework.

The mechanization of agriculture carries both advantages and disadvantages. Tractors, viewed as efficient tools, significantly reduce the time required for ploughing compared to traditional methods. Similarly, machine-assisted harvesting expedites the process, allowing for quicker cultivation. However, this transition has implications for traditional practices, such as borrowing ploughs and animals for labour exchange, which were prevalent in conventional farming. The region's primary crop, ragi, is a staple food source, and in addition to ragi, farmers sow various seeds like hyacinth peas (*avarekaalu*), pigeon peas (t*ogarikaalu*), black-eyed peas (*alasonde*), and castor seeds (*haralu beeja*) for household consumption.

Noteworthy changes have also been observed in the post-harvest processes. In traditional methods, crops were manually cut, left to dry, and then stacked separately. Threshing and winnowing were conducted on a designated clean surface known as "*kana*." However, the introduction of tractors and machines has rendered obsolete certain tools like the rock roller (*gundu*, see fig. 4) used for separating ragi from the husk. Machine harvesting, while efficient for ragi production, tends to disregard other crops in mixed farming. Households

with ample unskilled members continue with traditional harvesting practices to obtain a variety of crops with mixed farming, using the harvested plants as fodder for cattle. Conversely, those lacking sufficient labour opt for machine harvesting, emphasising a nuanced adaptation to mechanisation within the local agricultural landscape.

Figure 3.4 A rock roller (*gundu*) lying on the edge of the field

3.6.1. Feminisation in Agricultural Production

The feminisation of agriculture (FoA) has garnered substantial global attention, manifesting as a notable focal point in scholarly discourse over the preceding decade (Oloo et al. 2023). This phenomenon of FoA is particularly salient in diverse regions of North and South India (Corta & Venkateshwarlu 1999, Neog & Sahoo 2020, Pattnaik 2018, Vepa 2005), where pronounced instances of male migration are prevalent. This migratory pattern is consequential, leading to a distinctive restructuring of gender roles within agricultural settings, as women in the households of migrating men assume the responsibilities of land management. This transformative process is commonly denoted as the feminisation of

agriculture. A central inquiry arises as to whether the feminisation of agriculture is inherently correlated with male migration and whether this is a global trend. However, a critical inquiry arises regarding the global applicability of the feminisation of agriculture. Specifically, there is a need to explore whether this process is uniformly experienced on a global scale or if regional disparities and patterns exist in trends. Furthermore, it is imperative to investigate whether women engaged in agriculture encounter similar challenges due to the movement of male labour.

Nevertheless, the case of Maralukunte introduces a distinctive phenomenon attributable to its geographical proximity to the urban centre and the recently established industrial enclave. Maralukunte is situated approximately 60 kilometres from Bangalore and within a 30-kilometre radius of the towns of Nelamangala and Tumkur; residents of Maralakunte exhibit a prevailing inclination toward commuting rather than adopting a permanent migration strategy. This tendency is notably observed among those engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, as it serves as a pragmatic measure to mitigate the high cost of living associated with urban areas. Even in instances of migration, individuals manifest a distinct preference for relocating with their entire family or, at the very least, with the nuclear family unit. This preference is rooted in a desire to preserve familial cohesion and, importantly, women are not left solely to managing household affairs and agricultural duties. Consequently, this familial migration pattern curtails the likelihood of women assuming the role of custodians of the land and contributes to shaping a distinct trajectory of the feminization of agriculture within the confines of Maralukunte. The ensuing section will expound upon causes and consequences of migration within Maralukunte, providing a detailed examination of the factors influencing the engagement of women in agricultural responsibilities amid the prevailing migratory dynamics.

> **Case 4** Sharadhamma and Sanjeevamma, subsequent to their marriages, migrated to Bangalore with their respective spouses. Sharadhamma's husband was employed in the manufacturing sector, and having been brought up in the city, she accompanied him to Bangalore. In contrast, Sanjeevamma's husband, who was engaged in the government sector (as an engineer), acquired two acres of irrigated land in Maralakunte with support from his father-in-law. Following the demise of their

spouses and the matrimony of their children, both Sharadhamma and Sanjeevamma returned to Maralukunte, motivated by concerns about potential land encroachment by kins and neighbours. Presently, both individuals possess a minimum of two acres of irrigated land and actively engage in the cultivation of vegetables while managing plantations of areca nuts and coconut trees. Their sons have established themselves in Bangalore, and familial visits occur periodically, particularly during festivals. Significantly, both Sharadhamma and Sanjeevamma independently oversee all agricultural operations, resettling in the village to safeguard their existing plantations, recognising the potential risk of wealth loss.

The instances of return migration and widows assuming land ownership and cultivating their land cannot be construed as constituting the process of feminisation in agriculture.

The broader context in Maralakunte elucidates a discernible trend indicative of an amplified presence of women in the agricultural labour force. As previously elucidated, the introduction of mechanization in agriculture precipitated the displacement of men from traditional agricultural roles, leading them to transition towards non-agricultural vocations, establish modest enterprises, or engage in gender-neutral occupations within the village. Owing to the seasonal nature of agricultural work, which does not demand year-round commitment, women have seized the opportunity to engage in agricultural activities, particularly those disinclined to work full-time or averse to commuting. A meticulous examination of household individual data unveils a notable escalation in women recognising agricultural labouring as their primary occupation, exemplified by Table 3.2, where 16% of working-age women identified agricultural labour as their primary occupation, in contrast to 5% of men in Maralukunte.

An intriguing facet is the observed gender ratio within agricultural labour, delineating fourteen men to fifty-one women (14:51). This ratio has been calculated by dividing the total number of men and women engaged in agricultural work by its greatest common divisor (GCD). The visuals (Fig. 4(a-e) portray women's active participation in diverse agricultural activities, such as harvesting flowers, peeling areca nuts, stringing flowers, and participating in the threshing of ragi production. The pivotal question that emerges pertains to whether the notable increase in women's involvement in agricultural labour justifies its

characterisation as the feminisation of agricultural labour. However, in this context, the terminology appears inappropriate as it implies a transformative shift solely in the quantitative aspect of women's engagement in agricultural labour without concomitant alterations in traditional gender roles confined to agricultural production.

Maralukunte male agricultural labourers are moving away from their roles, primarily stemming from the mechanisation of agricultural practices. Skilled men transitioned toward non-farm employment opportunities, while affluent individuals established small-scale businesses within the village. A subset of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida men found employment in cutting eucalyptus trees (*nilgiri maragalu*). However, the introduction of machinery did not impact the agricultural responsibilities of women, such as weeding, sowing, and peeling areca nuts for kernel extraction and harvesting. The persistence of a substantial demand for female agricultural labour in the village is discerned, particularly as affluent families invest in irrigation and convert arid cropland into horticulture, floriculture or plantation fields, a transformation incentivised by government subsidies and personal loans. The upsurge in horticultural cultivation, accompanied by the mechanisation of men's agricultural tasks, has markedly reduced male labourers in agriculture, concurrently elevating the participation of women as labourers in agriculture. This transformative shift is characterised by an increased reliance on women for various agricultural activities, including transplantation, weeding, harvesting of vegetables and flowers, stringing flowers for market sales, and processing areca nuts.

This transformative shift can be comprehended from dual perspectives. Firstly, it involves farmers consciously embracing commercial cultivation, such as horticulture and floriculture, with a deliberate consideration of the availability of women labourers. Secondly, the mechanisation of agricultural production exhibits limited integration of women's agricultural tasks. Even when certain technologies or machinery designed for women's agricultural work, such as transplanting, exist, the farmers in Maralukunte refrain from their adoption, thereby underscoring the marginalisation of women in the realm of agricultural production.

In Maralukunte, a pervasive lack of literacy persists among middle-aged and elderly women. Additionally, unskilled employment opportunities in the non-farm sector often

necessitate educational qualifications. The insular nature of the village, coupled with limited exposure to the external world, contributes to a prevalent sense of insecurity among middle-aged and elderly women when considering non-agricultural employment. Consequently, the expectation for grooming, interpersonal interactions with co-workers, and the prospect of working overtime become discomforting factors. Consequently, many middle-aged and elderly women lacking formal education choose to engage in seasonal agricultural work, finding solace within the familiar confines of their comfort zones.

The transformation of agricultural production in Maralukunte exemplifies the intricate interplay between historical socio-economic structures and contemporary shifts in occupational patterns. The rigid caste-based occupation system, deeply rooted in the Hindu varna framework, has historically dictated the socio-economic dynamics within rural Indian communities. Despite India's post-independence legislative efforts to dismantle these hierarchical structures, the legacy of caste-based occupation continues to exert a significant influence on the lives of many individuals, particularly within the Dalit communities of Maralukunte.

Our ethnographic research has illuminated the persistence of historical patron-client relationships, manifesting in the ongoing economic and social interactions between Dalit families and their traditional yajmanas. This continuity underscores the deeply entrenched nature of caste-based occupational roles and the challenges associated with fully eradicating these practices, even decades after legal abolition.

However, there are notable signs of progress. The emergence of educated Dalits engaging in non-agricultural employment and improving their living standards highlights the transformative potential of education and economic opportunities. These individuals are breaking away from traditional roles, contributing to a gradual but discernible shift in the socio-economic landscape of Maralukunte.

The village's agricultural production is characterized by a significant predominance of marginal and small farmers, with a marked disparity in land ownership and quality between upper and lower castes. The adoption of modern agricultural practices, such as the use of chemical fertilizers and mechanization, alongside traditional methods, reflects a complex adaptation to contemporary economic pressures and opportunities.

Figure 4(a) Women involved in sowing ragi seeds and man in ploughing.

Figure 4(b) Women harvesting flowers.

Figure 4(c) Women stringing flowers.

Figure 4(d) Women peeling betel nuts.

Figure 4(e) Men and women engaging in the process of threshing ragi.

In summary, this chapter examines the intricate relationships between varna, caste, and occupation, with a particular emphasis on the evolving patterns of occupational inheritance. It explores the interconnections between agrarian class, caste, and the types of crops cultivated while also addressing the significant improvements in irrigation facilities. The chapter highlights the implications of the increasing reliance on deep borewells for future agricultural productivity. Additionally, it delves into the dynamics of land ownership, the gender division of labour in agriculture, the effects of mechanisation, and the feminisation of the agricultural labour force.

Chapter-4

Occupational Mobility: Emerging Trends and Significance

The phenomenon of occupational mobility, particularly in the context of rural-to-urban migration, plays a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of rural areas. This chapter delves into the intricate dynamics of transition in occupation and its consequent impact on gender dynamics in work participation, with a specific focus on the village of Maralukunte. Occupational mobility is spearheaded by aspirations of people or diminishing opportunities in existing occupations. The research identified migration as a significant factor. Migration is often driven by a blend of push and pull factors. Push factors include the lack of stable employment opportunities and agrarian crises, while pull factors encompass the allure of better employment prospects, higher standards of living, and improved educational opportunities and aspirations. Approximately 40% of rural households migrate to urban areas in search of enhanced income and employment opportunities, leading to various forms of migration, such as permanent, temporary, return, and in-migration.

This chapter examines prevalent types of migration in Maralukunte, highlighting how factors such as caste and socio-economic status influence migratory behaviours. For instance, the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities, historically marginalised and engaged in menial labour, show a high incidence of permanent migration. This is largely driven by the persistent social stigma in rural areas and the pursuit of better livelihood opportunities in urban settings. In contrast, the Golla community's migration is often motivated by the pursuit of higher education and professional training, leading to a lower likelihood of return migration due to the accumulation of urban assets.

Additionally, the chapter explores the emerging trend of commuting, facilitated by improved transportation infrastructure, which allows rural inhabitants to engage in non-farm employment in nearby urban centres. This shift underscores the diversification of occupational roles within rural communities, moving away from traditional agricultural practices to a broader spectrum of employment opportunities in both organised and unorganised sectors.

The analysis extends to the diversification of occupations within Maralukunte, reflecting a significant transformation from an agriculture-dependent village to one characterized by varied economic activities. This shift, described as depeasantization, is driven by factors such as the agrarian crisis, high input costs, and the introduction of agricultural machinery, prompting a migration towards industrial and service sector employment.

Through a detailed examination of field data, the chapter illustrates the occupational diversity and evolving gender dynamics in Maralukunte, providing insights into how industrialisation, urbanisation, government policies, and educational initiatives have collectively influenced rural work participation and socio-economic structures. This chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the impact of occupational mobility on rural work participation, highlighting the nuanced interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors that drive migration and shape the livelihoods of rural communities.

1. Aspirational Migration

Migration from rural to urban areas is often perceived as a trajectory toward an enhanced livelihood (Sundari 2005). Individuals embark on this migratory journey influenced by a confluence of push and pull factors. Push factors encompass the dearth of consistent employment opportunities and agrarian crises, while pull factors involve access to available employment, aspirations for an elevated standard of living, and improved educational prospects. A substantial proportion (40%) of households undertake migration from rural to urban locales in pursuit of augmented income and employment opportunities. The discernible patterns observed in migration are categorised into four types based on the underlying factors of purpose and duration. These classifications include permanent migration, temporary migration, return migration, and in-migration. Temporary migrants, by definition, migrate for a brief period with the intention to return, although, at times, temporary migration may evolve into a permanent relocation. On the other hand, individuals opting to reside permanently in the relocated area without any intention of returning are categorised under permanent migration.

Individuals who choose to relocate back to their original village are categorized as return migrants, whereas those who migrate into a village from external locations such as other villages or towns and have resided for a brief duration are classified under in-migration.

Permanent migration emerges as the predominant form of migration, as substantiated by the data in Table 4.1. Notably, permanent migration is notably high among castes such as Adi-Karnataka, Adi-Dravida, Marathi, and Golla. The migration patterns within each caste exhibit distinct characteristics.

Table 4.1 Classification of Migration

S. No	Types of Migration	% of Households
1	Permanent	46.74
2	Temporary	27.17
3	Return migration	20.65
4	In migration	5.43

Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities, both belonging to Dalit castes traditionally engaged in menial activities and historically subjected to social marginalization, witness a high incidence of permanent migration. The enduring stigma associated with these communities persists in rural areas, influencing educated Dalit youths to migrate in search of improved livelihood opportunities. Their decision to migrate is often marked by a reluctance to return, particularly if satisfaction is derived from the employment opportunities secured in urban areas.

Conversely, the Golla community presents a different narrative. The majority of Gollas migrate to cities primarily for higher education, acquiring new skills, or for professional training. Subsequently, they establish settlements in urban areas to meet the demands of their professional roles, given the realisation that their desired jobs are not readily available in rural settings. The migrated population of Gollas engaged in skilled professions such as engineering, lecturing, medicine, teaching, contracting, business, and administration. The likelihood of their return to the village is diminished due to the accumulation of assets in urban areas. Although there are instances where individuals may contemplate returning

post-retirement, particularly if they own irrigated land in the village or lack substantial assets in their migrated place, such decisions are markedly influenced by individual circumstances. Those who migrate intermittently often visit their villages for annual rituals, participation in village fairs, and engagement with sacred spaces, aligning with their beliefs and practices that are often geographically distant in urban settings.

In this migratory context, it is typically men who initiate or decide to move, with women and children serving as co-passengers accompanying them. It is observed that unmarried men may migrate to a city independently, but post-marriage, they often relocate with their spouses. This trend is pervasive across various castes and socioeconomic classes. Over time, individuals from diverse communities are drawn to pull factors in urban areas and continue to reside in migrated places. In contrast to the prevailing trend of men primarily initiating migration from the village, there are isolated instances where women independently decide to relocate, separating themselves from the village and their male counterparts, driven by aspirations for improved livelihoods. Such departures are considered deviant or unique cases in early studies but they are narrated as normal. Notably, two Marathi women migrated to Bangalore in pursuit of enhanced opportunities due to challenges posed by their husbands with alcohol addiction, neglecting household responsibilities. The motivations for women's migration initiation include ambitious individuals raised in urban environments, unable to acclimate to rural settings, and seeking a more favourable way of life.

Historically, societal norms dictated that women should adapt to the joys and sorrows of their husbands' lives. Consequently, leaving one's husband was perceived as challenging, susceptible to rumours, and socially frowned upon within the community. Living without a husband in patriarchal societies, where men are traditionally regarded as supreme, remains challenging for women even in contemporary times. However, the interpretation of the incidents involving separated women reflects a nuanced perspective that suggests a degree of positivity in the way such cases are viewed.

Temporary migration is predominantly observed within the Lingayat, Marathi, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida communities, driven by the pursuit of better income, employment, and an improved standard of living. Conversely, a significant prevalence of

return migration is noted among the Lingayat, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida communities. Lingayats typically return to the village upon accomplishing specific objectives, including facilitating higher education for their children, arranging marriages for their daughters, constructing permanent residences, investing in agricultural land, and while establishing small businesses. Contrastingly, the return of Dalits to the village is often attributed to challenges related to the high cost of living in urban areas to pursue their children's education during the duration of their spouse's pregnancy and post-natal time. This trend underscores the contrasting financial capital and family support between Lingayats and Dalits.

A few families, predominantly from the Lingayat community, have come from other villages and towns and settled in Maralukunte, with the exception of one Ediga community couple who returned from Bangalore. The Ediga couple, residing in a rented house in Maralukunte.

> Tara (migrated Ediga) said, "my father has a cycle shop in the village, and my native is Chikkanayakanahalli".

Chikkanayakanahalli is a hamlet of Maralukunte, which does not have proper transport and housing infrastructure. Hence, the couple settled in Maralukunte for a viable environment and with an affinity established by Tara's father in the village.

The migration trend among Lingayats underscores the availability of employment opportunities within the village and the influence of the dominant caste. Notably, two migrated Lingayat households are employed at Jana Small Finance Bank, which is situated in the village. The majority of in-migrants reside in rented houses, although one family constructed a house after purchasing a plot with local support.

2. Commuting

Commuting has emerged as a notable pattern in Maralakunte and surrounding villages. Commuters engage in daily travel from their residences to their workplaces, a phenomenon that lacks comprehensive academic exploration and survey data. The viability of commuting for Maralakunte villagers is facilitated by robust road and railway connectivity, with a nearby railway station situated merely five kilometres away. Additionally, the

village benefits from adequate bus and private vehicle services, facilitating travel to workplaces and nearby towns including Tumkur, Dobaspet, Nelamangala, and Bangalore City.

Dobaspet, also known as Sompura, is located just eight to ten kilometres from Maralakunte. A decade ago, approximately three thousand acres of agricultural land in and around of Dabaspet and its environs were transformed into an industrial area under the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB). Established as a statutory body under section 5 of the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Act (KIAD Act) of 1966, the KIADB aims to foster industrial development and provide amenities in industrial areas across the State of Karnataka. The predominant industries in this region are associated with mechanical, automobile, and electrical engineering. The industrialisation of this area significantly alleviated the lives of the rural populace, particularly those grappling with unemployment and irregular work availability in agriculture.

In Maralakunte, forty percentage (40%) of households engage in daily commuting. While individuals from various communities partake in commuting, a notable proportion hails from the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities, indicating a shift from agricultural labour to non-farm employment. Notably, commuting is predominantly undertaken by men, with approximately thirty-six percent (36%) of women engaging in daily commutes. This aligns with Mohanan's (2008) assertion that commuting is reinforced by a floating population of individuals travelling from peri-urban to urban areas, as evidenced by the crowded trains and buses during morning and evening hours.

The researcher explicitly highlights commuting as an outcome of industrialisation, signifying a transition for rural inhabitants from permanent residency to daily travel to fixed workplaces. This shift has instigated noteworthy alterations in the gender and labour dynamics within the context of Maralukunte. The advent of industrialisation has unfolded employment prospects for numerous residents of Maralukunte and its environs, extending to women who, although ambitious to engage in work, were traditionally confined to household responsibilities and agricultural labour.

The subsequent sections of this study will delve into a comprehensive examination of how industrialisation, urbanization, government legislation, and educational initiatives have

collectively facilitated occupational diversity within the socio-economic landscape of Maralukunte.

3. Diversification of Occupation

The above elucidation manifests that Maralakunte village is not the same as scholars portrayed earlier about the Indian village, that Indian villagers were primarily depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Socio-economic and political dynamics have changed been changing due to legislations after independence. People are no longer restricted to follow their traditional caste occupations. People are involved in multiple occupations. The diverse occupations includes (see Table 4.2) a farmer, factory workers, agricultural labour, self-employed (petty business), housemaker, priests, teachers, animal husbandry, cook, workers in village Public Distribution Systems (PDS) or ration shop, tailors, attenders, lecturers, bank employ, engineer, family labour, driver, dairy worker, computer operator, security, housekeeper, contractor, hawker/street vendor, flower decoration, politician, carpenter, barber (*hazama*), panchayat worker, electrician, nurse, civil worker (*gaare kelasa*), tutor, astrologer, Anganwadi helper, village accountant(*shanubhoga*), veeragase (vigorous dance based on Hindu mythology), borewell mechanic, and waterman. The researcher identified 48 primary occupations villagers involved in Maralukunte. This spectrum illustrates the diversification of occupations within Maralakunte village.

Table 4.2 Primary Occupation of Maralakunte Population

S. No	Primary Occupation	No of Male Population	% of Male Population	No of Female Population	% of Female Population	Count of Primary Occupation	Total Percentage of Primary Occupation	Ratios of Male and Female
1	Farmer	86	29.66	8	2.55	94	15.77	43:4
2	Factory worker	60	20.69	45	14.33	105	17.62	4:3
3	Agricultural labourer	14	4.83	51	16.24	65	10.91	14:51
4	Self-employed (petty business)	50	17.24	12	3.82	54	9.06	25:6
5	Housemaker	0	0.00	60	19.11	60	10.07	0:1

6	Priest	6	2.07	0	0.00	6	1.01	1:0
7	Teacher	1	0.34	4	1.27	5	0.84	1:4
9	Animal husbandry	5	1.72	36	11.46	41	6.88	5:36
10	Horticulture	13	4.48	6	1.91	19	3.19	13:6
11	Cook (*batta*)	3	1.03	1	0.32	4	0.67	3:1
13	PDS	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
14	Tailoring	1	0.34	15	4.78	16	2.68	1:15
15	Attender	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
16	Lecturer	2	0.69	0	0.00	2	0.34	1:0
17	Bank employ	5	1.72	0	0.00	5	0.84	1:0
18	Engineer	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
20	Family labour	0	0.00	65	20.70	65	10.91	0:1
21	Driver	7	2.41	0	0.00	7	1.17	1:0
22	Dairy worker	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
23	Computer Operator	0	0.00	3	0.96	3	0.50	0:1
24	Bank security	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
25	Contractor	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
27	Hawker/Street vendor	0	0.00	2	0.64	2	0.34	0:1
28	Flower decoration	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
30	Carpenter	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
31	Barber	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
32	Panchayat	3	1.03	0	0.00	3	0.50	1:0
34	Electrician	7	2.41	0	0.00	7	1.17	1:0
35	Nurse	0	0.00	1	0.32	1	0.17	0:1

37	Civil work (*gaare kelasa)*	2	0.69	0	0.00	2	0.34	1:0
39	Tuition	0	0.00	1	0.32	1	0.17	0:1
40	Astrologer	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
41	Housekeeping	0	0.00	2	0.64	2	0.34	0:1
42	Anganwadi helper	0	0.00	1	0.32	1	0.17	0:1
43	Office	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
44	Village accountant(*shan ubhoga*)	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
45	Veeradasi	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
46	Borewell mechanic	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
47	D-mandla worker	0	0.00	1	0.32	1	0.17	0:1
48	Waterman	1	0.34	0	0.00	1	0.17	1:0
	Grand Total	290	100.00	314	100.00	596	100.00	
Source: Based on field data.								

Table 4.2 substantiates that a mere 20% of the populace primarily relies on agriculture, encompassing horticulture and plantation cultivation. This statistic denotes a conspicuous shift in Maralakunte's populace from agriculture to the non-farm sector, characterising a process commonly referred to as depeasantization. Scholars like Sukhpal Singh, Shruti Bhogal (2014), and Farshad Araghi (1995) have elucidated the global and regional facets of depeasantization. This study contributes to the regional-specific understanding of depeasantization, unveiling distinct dimensions through inductive reasoning. In Maralukunte, 37% of the active working population is engaged in agriculture and related activities, encompassing farming, agricultural labour, and animal husbandry. Conversely, 42% of the villagers participate in non-agricultural pursuits, such as small-scale enterprises,

industrial labour, and roles in organised sectors (Public Distribution System, panchayat, banking, and education), as well as unorganised sectors (street vending, driving, barbering, flower decoration, and civil service). An additional 21% of women, primarily involved in unpaid work, identify themselves as housemakers and family labourers. This distribution reflects a structural shift in the economy from agriculture to industry, a phenomenon recognised as the Lewis turning point (Mehta 2018, Reddy 2013). The transition of individuals from agricultural to non-agricultural employment hints at subtle alterations in the structural dynamics of the Maralukunte economy.

This movement is mainly because of the circumstances of the agrarian crisis due to the high cost of inputs, increase in wage labour, less yield, scanty rainfall, and fall in market price are forcing the small and marginal farmers to find employment outside agriculture. Simultaneously, the introduction of agricultural machinery nudges landless labourers towards non-agricultural employment. On the other side of the spectrum, established industries in Sompura actively welcome labourers seeking consistent work opportunities.

An intriguing observation in the process of depeasantisation is the notable participation of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities in industrial work, particularly in unskilled and semi-skilled roles encompassing housekeeping, security, gardening, piece work and manual labour within diverse sectors such as garment, pharmaceutical, automotive, and other manufacturing enterprises. Conversely, Lingayats predominantly venture into establishing small-scale businesses, including provision stores, eateries, hardware shops, shamiana tent rental services, and flour mills. This disparity highlights the financial capital and social network status of the Lingayat community within the village.

An additional noteworthy aspect is the perpetuation of traditional caste occupations by at least one household from the functionary castes, exemplified by the present-day barber and washerman in the village. These individuals, belonging to functionary castes, are still obligated to fulfil their designated roles in specific rituals and village fairs, underscoring the enduring significance of their contributions. The village has allocated specific land for these castes to carry out their duties, and they continue to receive remuneration, both in kind and cash. The services of washerwomen and washermen remain integral to rituals related to puberty and marriage, while barbers play crucial roles in marriage ceremonies

and funerals. The current generation of adults within the families of washermen and barbers has undergone educational attainment and actively engages in non-agricultural employment. This prompts an inquiry into whether these younger individuals will succeed their parents in the traditional occupation or opt to persist in non-agricultural employment pursuits.

Examining Table 4.2 reveals that women are predominantly concentrated in specific domains such as agricultural labour, industrial work, homemaking, animal husbandry, family labour, computer operator, and tailoring. While these patterns underscore a degree of continuity with historical trends, with certain noteworthy changes are evident. Nearly 21% of women engaged in unpaid roles such as homemaking, animal husbandry, and family labour, for which they won't receive any monetary compensation. These sections of women are particularly from the Lingayat community and higher-income households, where women are primarily associated with unpaid work, involving various domestic activities and providing assistance in agricultural fields and petty businesses when necessary, along with tending to livestock.

Women's participation as agricultural labourers has also increased in the context of Maralukunte. Furthermore, there has been a notable surge in women's participation in non-agricultural employment, including roles in tailoring, teaching, computer operation, and various positions within garment and medicine factories. This transformation extends to socially constructed roles for women, such as cooking and caregiving, which are now recognised as forms of labour, as evidenced by women working as cooks and Anganwadi helpers. Agricultural labourers in Maralakunte predominantly hail from the Adi-Karnataka, Thigala, and Marathi communities. However, an increase in household income potentially limits women's inclination to seek employment outside their homes, which is observed across all communities and classes. Notably, the relatively higher literacy rate among the Adi-Dravida, compared to other Dalit castes, may signify their preference to work in factory employment over agricultural work. This observation is substantiated by the case of Kamala.

Kamala, a forty-year-old woman from the Adi-Dravida community, holds a PUC education. In the early days of her marriage, she migrated to Bangalore with her spouse in

pursuit of better employment opportunities. Kamala was employed in a garment factory in the city. However, during her post-natal period, they returned to the village due to the high cost of living in the urban setting. It was difficult to manage two household expenditures with a single income, like supporting his parents and wife, along with his own spending. Presently, with the establishment of industries nearby, life has become more manageable. Kamala's husband is employed in the automobile industry, while she previously worked in a medical factory. Her decision to leave the job a few months ago was influenced by her father-in-law's illness. Kamala articulates the sentiment that working within the confines of a roof, particularly in a factory setting, is preferable to toiling in open agricultural fields for meagre wages with irregular work availability and a lack of respect.

The majority of individuals employed in factories within Maralakunte are typically engaged through contractual agreements or outsourcing. A notable observation made by the researcher is the absence of instances where female factory workers have availed themselves of maternity leave benefits. Occupations within the non-agricultural sector are ascribed a higher social status when contrasted with agricultural labour, primarily due to the latter's inherent uncertainty in providing consistent work opportunities and income. This perception is particularly salient among the youth, who often face societal disapproval if they remain unemployed after completing their studies. Additionally, it is pertinent to note that men relying solely on agriculture for their livelihood encounter increased difficulty in securing a suitable marital match compared to those employed in the factory sector. The subsequent chapter will provide an in-depth exploration of hierarchical structures within non-farm occupations and delve into the intricacies of occupational diversity across various castes and classes.

3.1. Pluriactivity

In ancient times, agriculture was intricately linked to rural economies and subsistence, but this paradigm has undergone significant transformations. Villagers are undergoing a transition from agriculture and related activities towards non-agricultural occupations, driven by the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation. Traditional concepts employed in the study of rural economies, such as peasants and subsistence agriculture, are evolving to become inappropriate in the present context of rural studies. The shift is evident in

villagers' move from producing staple food crops to cultivating commercial crops. Contemporary villagers no longer rely solely on agriculture for their livelihood; instead, they engage in multiple income-earning activities to sustain their lives. This diversification of economic activities, where individuals participate in more than one income-earning pursuit, is termed as pluriactivity or multi-activity.

Table 4.3 elucidates that over 20% of individuals engage in agriculture and related activities as their secondary occupation, including horticulture, floriculture, animal husbandry, and agricultural labour. Men exhibit a predominant concentration on agriculture and allied activities as their secondary pursuits. Men with favourable financial backgrounds and robust social networks often engage in roles of higher economic and social standing within Maralukunte. They commonly assume positions as contractors, local politicians, and proprietors of small-scale enterprises such as grocery shops, restaurants, and cattle feed establishments. This group tends to benefit from established connections and economic stability, allowing them to take up more lucrative ventures. Conversely, individuals with specific skills often find employment as tractor drivers and specialise in flower decoration services. These roles are indicative of a level of expertise that is valued within the community, and those with these skills contribute to various aspects of village life.

In contrast, women within the community tend to be more inclined toward domestic responsibilities and family labour in their secondary roles. However, it is worth noting that there are exceptions, as a few women participate in income-generating activities such as stitching clothes or engaging in the sale of vegetables and flowers as secondary occupations. These exceptions highlight a degree of diversification in women's roles within the community, with some venturing into economic activities beyond traditional domestic responsibilities.

Table 4.3 Secondary Occupation of Maralakunte Village

Secondary Occupations	Number of Male in Secondary Occupation	Number of Female in Secondary occupation	Total Number of persons in Secondary Occupation	Total Percentage of persons in Secondary Occupation	Ratios of Male and Female
Farmer	77	1	78	16.85	77:1
Factory worker	1	2	3	0.22	1:2
Agricultural labourer	23	16	39	5.03	23:16
Self-employed (petty shop)	6	2	8	1.31	3:1
Housemaker	0	90	90	0.00	0:1
Priest	2	0	2	0.44	1:0
Animal husbandry	41	9	50	8.97	41:9
Horticulture	33	4	37	7.22	33:4
Tailoring	0	4	4	0.00	0:1
Family labour	4	130	134	0.88	2:65
Driver	9	0	9	1.97	1:0
Hawker/Street vendor	0	1	1	0.00	0:1
Flower decoration	1	0	1	0.22	1:0
Politician	1	0	1	0.22	1:0
Grand Total	198	259	457	43.33	

Source: Based on field data

Industrial workers in Maralukunte primarily consist of agricultural labourers and small-scale dry crop producers lacking irrigation facilities. The shift of farmers from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector is commonly referred to as depeasantisation. However, the pertinent question arises as to whether this depeasantisation is translating into deagrarianisation in Maralukunte. While it is true that small and marginal ragi producers in Maralukunte have ventured into factory work, they have not entirely abandoned agriculture. These farmers continue to cultivate ragi, now employing modern machinery

such as tractors for tilling and harvesting machines for crop harvesting. The introduction of machinery has significantly expedited traditional activities like ploughing, sowing, and harvesting, reducing the time required from months to just a few hours or a day.

The phenomenon of diversifying livelihoods and engaging in pluriactivity is primarily driven by the escalating cost of living and agrarian challenges. Susheela, belonging to the Adi-Dravida community, emphasises the difficulty of sustaining oneself solely through small-scale commodity production in a world of rising prices of daily commodities. Prices of essential commodities, such as cooking oil, gas, cereals, clothing, school fees, and agricultural inputs, are escalating, which prompts individuals to seek alternative employment opportunities beyond agriculture. This push factor, coupled with increased educational qualifications and industrialisation, motivates people to explore diverse employment avenues.

An analysis of women's primary and secondary occupations within Maralukunte reveals a substantial concentration of women in unpaid work. Despite a modest increase in women's participation in non-farm employment (constituting approximately 28%), a noteworthy 32% of women in Maralukunte are actively engaged in agriculture and its associated activities as their primary occupation. Given the male-dominated nature of agriculture in the region, where the male head of the family predominantly oversees investment and profits, the participation of women in agriculture often translates into roles as agricultural labourers rather than decision-makers or beneficiaries of the agricultural proceeds.

This gendered pattern underscores the prevalence of women in unpaid employment within the agricultural sector. Recognising this reality is pivotal in devising policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the economic and social empowerment of women in Maralukunte. Such endeavours become imperative to foster gender equality within the rural fabric, acknowledging and addressing the disparities in the distribution of economic benefits and decision-making authority.

The households in Maralukunte are systematically categorized into four distinct types to assess the extent of diversification concerning the occupations individuals pursue within a family or their primary sources of income:

1. **Agricultural households** are members of households involved only in agriculture and allied activities like farming, farm labour and animal husbandry.
2. **Non-agricultural households** are the ones whose members are entirely dependent on non-farm activities for their livelihood, like working in factories, administration work, and self-employment (petty business).
3. **Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Employment Households** are involved in both agriculture and non-agricultural employment.
4. **Households of the Aged** are the ones who crossed sixty years and are not engaged in any productive work but mostly live on the benefits of the pension scheme.

Table 4.4 Classification of Households based on the Source of Income

Type of Households	**Number of Households**	**% of Households**
Agricultural Households	103	42.39
Non-Agricultural Households	31	12.76
Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Employment Households	91	37.45
Households of the Aged	18	7.41
Total	**243**	

Table 4.4 illustrates that over 40% of households in Maralukunte are exclusively involved in agricultural activities. Concurrently, the prevalence of Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Employment Households are on the rise, nearly equating to the percentage of those solely engaged in agriculture, while non-agricultural households remain relatively limited. The nuanced dynamics of households headed by elderly individuals will be expounded upon in

the subsequent chapter, specifically addressing the state's role in facilitating diverse livelihood options for rural residents. A noteworthy observation is the substantial representation of Lingayat households in all three identified categories, signifying the existence of diverse socio-economic classes within this dominant caste. This highlights the fluidity of occupations, emphasising the departure from the traditional practice of passing down occupations through generations. The presence of non-agricultural households is observed across all caste groups, and the increasing prevalence of Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Employment Households suggests strategic management of farming alongside engagement in non-farm sectors. Small and marginal farmers, despite facing challenges in agriculture, are not entirely abandoning agriculture, as they continue to derive some benefits from government support. They are managing farming by cultivating crops intensively using machines with the income they are earning from the non-farm sector. The details of the state's benefits and subsidies for agriculture will be elucidated in the forthcoming chapter on state provisions.

Both the Lingayat and Thigala communities in Maralukunte continue to actively engage in agricultural endeavours, particularly focusing on the cultivation of vegetables, flowers, and the plantation of areaca nuts. Many households within these communities are involved in the processing of areaca nuts due to the substantial demand in the market. Notably, some farmers extend their involvement by procuring green betel nuts from farmers outside the village for subsequent processing. The majority of these households rely on both family labour and hired labour, especially during seasons such as harvesting and processing. Importantly, the engagement of a significant number of women in peeling areca nuts underscores the labour-intensive nature of this agricultural activity. The time sensitivity of peeling, which needs to be done within a few days post-harvest, reflects the meticulous planning required in this agricultural practice. Farmers store these processed nuts and sell them whenever the market rate is high. This indicates a continued interest of villagers in agricultural production that yields a profitable return.

Dominant, elites, and upper caste farmers either move from dry crop cultivation to commercial crops or invest in heavy commercial vehicles to maintain their wealthy and socio-economic position in the village. This strategic economic move allows them to

maintain their affluent and influential status within the village. In contrast, households belonging to the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida households are prominently categorised under Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Employment Households. These communities typically possess arid and less fertile land, limiting their options and compelling them to focus on the production of dry crops with minimal reliance on hired labour to mitigate production costs. The socio-economic constraints faced by Dalits, particularly the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida households, push them toward non-farm sectors to manage household expenses to live up to the standards of others and invest in agriculture. This nuanced agricultural landscape in Maralukunte reflects the absence of a deagrarianisation process, with the emergence of a proletarianisation class taking root in rural Maralukunte.

4. Intergenerational Occupational Mobility

Household occupational data is analysed to understand the intergenerational shift in occupation in terms of gender. In order to examine this parameter, occupational details of the past three generations of each household have been collected for men and women separately. Almost 64% of men and 28% of women households' intergenerational occupations have shifted. It suggests that men are not rigid towards their traditional occupation. Men's intergenerational shift of work identifies distinct trends from different communities. The reasons for this shift among lingayats and high-income households from other castes indicate access to higher education, migration, opportunity, awareness and an increase in household income. The motives in occupational shift reveal the solid financial and human capital among the dominant caste and other high-income households.

In contrast, an anecdote of Dalits conveys an improvement in education, an agrarian crisis and an urge to improve the standard of living. The percentage of shift is high among Dalits compared to other castes, indicating their inferior or lower rank occupations in the primordial times. Industrialisation is an opportunity for people who were conventionally engaged in lower-ranked activities within the village to improve their standard of living.

The analysis of household occupational data serves as a crucial lens through which to comprehend the intergenerational shift in occupations, particularly in the context of gender dynamics. The examination focuses on the occupational transitions across three successive generations within each household, with a specific breakdown for men and women. The

findings indicate that approximately 64% of male and 28% of female households have experienced intergenerational shifts in occupations. This underscores the adaptability of men toward altering their traditional occupational trajectories.

The discernible patterns in intergenerational shifts in men's occupations reveal notable variations across different communities within the village. Particularly, Lingayats and Adi Karnataka male-headed households demonstrate the most pronounced changes when compared to other community groups. The primary catalysts for these intergenerational occupational shifts are consistently rooted in the pursuit of education and migration as responsive measures to agrarian crises, aiming to enhance the standard of living. Additionally, individual family circumstances, such as the presence of an irresponsible alcoholic father, early paternal death, or family conflicts regarding property division, have acted as triggers for occupational changes or migrations among men.

In the case of Lingayats, the prevalent trend underscores a substantial shift driven by their affluence and robust financial backgrounds, prompting migration to urban centres for higher education, skill acquisition, and improved employment prospects. Conversely, instances among Adi Karnataka households emphasise factors like education, migration, and the reluctance to engage in traditional menial tasks or face irregular employment opportunities in agricultural production as key drivers behind the occupational shifts observed among Adi Karnataka male members.

There has been a discernible yet limited degree of change in the realm of women's intergenerational shifts in occupation within the village. The primary drivers of this shift are improvements in education, the acquisition of specialised training courses, the lack of regular work opportunities within the village, and the compelling necessity stemming from challenging family circumstances. Interestingly, Adi Karnataka and Adi Dravida women exhibit a high frequency of intergenerational occupational shifts across all community groups within the village. Lingayat and Thigala women also experience shifts in occupation to some extent.

The reasons underlying the occupational shifts among Dalit women include their disadvantaged socio-economic background, an increase in literacy levels, the desire to provide better education to their children, and a yearning for an improved quality of life

comparable to other communities in terms of better living space, clothing, and household amenities. Conversely, among Lingayat and Thigala women, the acquisition of special training or skills emerges as a significant factor contributing to intergenerational occupational shifts. Even within the Lingayat and Thigala castes, instances of a poor socio-economic background leading to occupational shifts are observed, particularly in cases involving disrupted or separated marriages and instances of losing a husband at an early age.

A recurring theme among working women is their association with spouses or fathers' alcohol addiction, leading to their failure to fulfil socio-economic responsibilities or cover household expenses. Consequently, women are compelled to seek employment outside the home.

> **Case 1** Chintamani, a forty-three-year-old individual hailing from the Adi-Karnata community, is situated within a family dynamic where her husband engages in both farming and agricultural labour. Unfortunately, her husband grapples with alcohol addiction, allocating the majority of his earnings towards the purchase of alcohol. The couple shares the responsibility of raising two children, a son and a daughter. Initially, Chintamani was employed as an agricultural labourer within the village. However, due to the irregular availability of work in the village, she opted to seek employment in the non-farm sector.
>
> Chintamani found employment in the housekeeping department of a tarpaulin industry. Her lack of formal education constrained her from securing more lucrative positions in nearby manufacturing industries. Over the past decade, she dedicated herself to supporting her children's education and contributing to household expenses. Remarkably, both her son and daughter have completed their PUC (Pre-University Course) and are now gainfully employed in factories. Her son works in the automobile industry, while her daughter is engaged in garment factories. Notably, the children now earn a higher income ranging from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per month, surpassing Chintamani's monthly income of Rs 8,000. This economic progression within the family underscores the transformative impact of education and non-agricultural employment on subsequent generations.

Case 2 Gayatri, a thirty-six-year-old individual belonging to the Adi-Dravida community, possesses a distinct life trajectory. Prior to her marriage, she was gainfully employed. Presently, her husband contributes significantly to the family's financial well-being through his employment in the automobile industry, yielding a monthly income of approximately Rs 20,000. Additionally, her husband engages in the cultivation of ragi and other subsistence seeds for household consumption, with collaborative support from his brother and other family members.

The family comprises two boys, both now attending school. In the earlier phase of her marital life, Gayatri dedicated her time to childcare responsibilities and various household chores. However, with the commencement of her children's schooling, the domestic burden has lessened. Subsequently, she seized the opportunity to utilise her leisure time effectively by joining a medical factory. This decision not only serves as a productive means to engage her free time but also contributes to augmenting her family's economic status.

Gayatri's narrative reflects the intricate interplay between familial responsibilities, economic considerations, and the evolving roles of women within the context of rural Maralakunte. The pursuit of employment outside the home, particularly in a medical factory, signifies a deliberate effort to enhance both personal fulfilment and economic stability for the household. The majority of women's narratives in the village corroborate the experiences of individuals such as Chintamani rather than Gayatri in the context of women working in unskilled and semi-skilled work. Women residing in households engaged in non-farm employment commonly encounter challenges, including the presence of alcoholic breadwinners, insufficient household income, and a dearth of regular work within the village. These factors collectively compel them to seek employment outside the confines of their homes. This prevailing pattern highlights a nuanced shift in women's household intergenerational occupation, with a scarcity of positive stories akin to Gayatri's, who willingly entered the workforce to support familial expenditures and enhance the standard of living.

It is noteworthy that many women from upper, elite, and dominant caste backgrounds often choose to remain within the domestic sphere, despite possessing adequate education. This

choice is predominantly attributed to societal norms that discourage women from seeking wage employment outside the village, deeming it low in status for both genders within rural contexts. In instances where the male head of the household earns sufficiently and manages all household expenses, women from such households are discouraged from seeking employment outside. Instead, they may engage in small-scale enterprises that allow them to work from home, such as chit funds, tailoring, embroidery, and falls work.

A notable observation revolves around women who return to the village after migrating to urban areas. Despite their prior engagement in employment within cities, these women often encounter impediments upon their return, restricting them from pursuing work outside their homes. In urban settings, women were compelled to undertake semi-skilled and unskilled employment to alleviate the burden of high living costs and rental expenses. In contrast, the village milieu, characterised by a moderate cost of living, with house ownership, and cultivation of essential consumable goods, dissuades them from participating in unskilled tasks.

Beyond economic considerations, social norms exert a potent influence in rural areas, imposing constraints on the mobility of women. These constraints are driven by the imperative to safeguard the perceived status of both the family and the broader community. The interplay of economic, social, and cultural factors collectively shapes the choices and opportunities available to women upon their return from urban employment to rural settings.

The preceding discourse elucidates a discernible departure from traditional caste-based occupational structures towards a diversified array of economic activities within the village. Furthermore, it underscores the prevalence of pluriactivity, wherein individuals engage in multiple income-generating pursuits concurrently. This transformation is intrinsically linked to the interplay of various castes and classes and the cultivation of diverse crops within the village.

The impact of agricultural mechanisation and the heightened involvement of women in agricultural labour are notable facets of this transformation. The enumeration reveals the engagement of villagers in a spectrum of 48 distinct occupations, are systematically categorised based on diverse sectors and sources of income.

A pivotal catalyst for these occupational changes is traced to the strategic initiatives of the state government. Specifically, the conversion of an extensive arid agricultural tract in the vicinity of Dabaspet into an industrial zone, facilitated under the aegis of the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB), assumes paramount significance. This transformation has emerged as a crucial driver for the creation of industrial employment opportunities, particularly benefiting individuals previously unemployed or experiencing irregular employment due to the prevailing agrarian crisis.

The transformation of Maralukunte's socio-economic landscape reflects a significant departure from traditional caste-based occupational structures towards a diversified array of economic activities. The interplay of various factors, including agricultural mechanisation, industrialisation, and evolving gender roles, has reshaped the village's occupational framework. This chapter highlights the growing prevalence of pluriactivity, where individuals engage in multiple income-generating pursuits, indicating a shift towards more diverse and resilient livelihoods.

The strategic initiatives of the state government, particularly the conversion of arid agricultural land into industrial zones, have been pivotal in creating employment opportunities and alleviating rural unemployment. The narratives of individuals like Gayatri underscore the complex interplay between familial responsibilities, economic considerations, and the evolving roles of women in rural Maralukunte. These changes signify a broader trend of socio-economic mobility and diversification, with education and economic opportunities emerging as crucial factors in breaking the cycle of traditional occupational constraints.

The chapter underscores the critical importance of education, economic opportunities, and supportive policies in fostering social mobility and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas. The enduring impact of historical oppression on Dalit families, despite legislative efforts, highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving true socio-economic equality. However, the positive shift among educated Dalits engaging in non-agricultural employment offers a beacon of hope, demonstrating the transformative potential of education and economic empowerment.

5. Welfare Schemes, Occupational Shifts, and Gender Dynamics of Labour Participation

5.1. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a social welfare scheme launched by the Government of India in 2005, has facilitated livelihood options for rural people by providing employment opportunities, creating rural infrastructure, encouraging sustainable agriculture, empowering women, and promoting skill development. One of the primary goals of MGNREGA is to reduce out-migration in search of work. In Maralukunte, MGNREGA has benefited the rural population by creating infrastructure, encouraging sustainable agriculture, and providing income.

However, the scheme's assurance of providing 100 days of work to vulnerable sections of rural society and linking wage payments through the Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS) has not been fully realised. Local-level implementation reveals various rural development works under MGNREGA, such as renovating village roads, cleaning village drainage systems, installing drip and sprinkler irrigation systems, constructing Krishi Honda, cattle sheds, animal water tanks, and troughs, desilting village lakes and ponds, and practising social forestry on fallow lands.

Despite MGNREGA's clear mandate to assure 100 days of employment for rural households in exchange for manual unskilled work, there are discrepancies in the allocation of funds. According to the scheme, 70% of the grant should be used for wages and the remaining 30% for material purchases. However, contractors and panchayat elected members often produce fraudulent evidence indicating adherence to this distribution. The collusion between bill-passing officers, local contractors, and panchayat members facilitates the approval of these claims.

For tasks such as road renovation, lake desilting, and land development activities under MGNREGA, machinery like graders, excavators, tractors, lorries, and road rollers are frequently employed, reducing the demand for unskilled manual labour. Consequently, labourers are relegated to supporting machine operations or operating the machines themselves, which is classified as skilled labour. Women in Maralukunte were not involved

in operating heavy vehicle machines as they lacked this skill, and driving heavy vehicles like buses, lorries, trains, and JCP is still attributed to the work of men and masculinity. Women are not trained in such work due to persistent gender stereotypes and gender restrictions in rural work. Thus, women were not active in operating heavy vehicle machines in Maralukunte, which are paid higher than those of supporting and maintenance workers.

In MGNREGA projects such as rural road construction, land development, and desilting lakes, contractors hire machines and complete the work within a few days or weeks. However, the paper and photography they produce seem to depict a huge labour force to complete the aforementioned work (e.g., 60 workers for 90 days). The labour class of Maralukunte and surrounding villages preferred to work in factories rather than in the government-sponsored MGNREGA works because it offers timely payments and social security benefits, enhancing workers' societal status. Factory workers have a better societal status compared to agricultural labour as they dress up every morning like other professionals, go to work, commute back in the evening, and work under shelter. That's why many labouring-class populations in Maralukunte prefer to work in factories. Moreover, once a person is registered for a job card in the MGNREGA scheme, they get some amount of money through DBT mode if their card numbers are used in billing for the completion of certain works under MGNREGA works. Further, the collusion among village residents, elected officials, and contractors among Maralukunte involved in the collection of villagers' Aadhaar cards and bank passbooks under the pretence of monetary compensation. Villagers provide their documents, believing they will receive some financial benefit for sharing their personal documents and posing for photographs. However, these evidents are subsequently used to fabricate records of labour involvement in MGNREGA projects.

It was observed that there was a clear correlation between the surnames of elected members and contractors working on government projects, suggesting a preference for same-community contractors by project owners. In other words, panchayat-elected members choose their own community members as their contractors. This nexus helps them make money from government projects. This finding aligns with the article "Elections and

Corruption: Politics and Public Procurement in India" (Lehne, Jonathan, Shapiro, Jacob, and Vanden Eynde, Oliver 2017) in the series Corruption. This hypothesis was tested in 4058 elections in 24 Indian states, inferring that contractors and political candidates have the same surnames in projects related to PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana), which highlighted similar patterns in public procurement projects was observed in Maralukunte and surrounding villages.

The official MGNREGA Gram Panchayat website lists 549 active job cards in Maralukunte, but villagers, especially women, were often unaware that they hold a job card since they don't participate in any work in respective to the scheme. In many cases, funds are sanctioned for irrigation and land development works of Maralukunte. In those circumstances, the head of the household typically receives the payments, claiming that all family members participated in the work. However, actual work was done by hiring machines or external labour, contradicting the reported data on the website.

The shift towards horticulture and plantation crops, such as areca nut, does not significantly alter the gendered division of labour in agriculture. Men continue to handle heavier tasks like digging and loading, while women are assigned roles in weeding and harvesting. In a similar way, there is a division of labour in the works of road construction and sanitation. The introduction of machines in the above works has slightly reduced these differences, but men and women are still paid differently in construction and sanitation works. One of the other reasons why the Maralukunte labour class prefer to work in the industry compared to agriculture and construction is because their wages are better compared with fixed MGNREGA wages. Also, there is an absence of traditional patron-client relationships in a modern work environment. Interestingly, in Kerala, the actual wage rate is higher than the fixed MGNREGA wage, and the migration rate is also higher, suggesting a potential area for future research on how MGNREGA operates in such areas.

In the system of panchayat raj and its decentralisation planning, if the sanctioned funds are not utilised on time, they must be returned to the government. Hence, authorities have allocated subsidies for the development of agricultural land and improve irrigation facilities under the umbrella of rural development. The dominant caste and affluent classes of Maralukunte benefit from these provisions by improving the irrigation facilities of their

fertile land. Many have received funds to convert their dry cropland into plantation fields of coconut, areca nut, mango, banana, and black plum. Though Dalits have a special reservation of 50-80% subsidy in this scheme, many did not avail of these provisions since their land is less fertile. Also, they lack such kind of money to invest before getting reimbursement since the government fund process takes its own sweet time to deliver and reach the beneficiary.

Pattenden (2016) talks about the MGNREGA programme in two villages of Karnataka and highlights how this scheme was succeeded in one village where the Dalit sangha was strong and able to raise their voice in implementing the programme. However, it failed in another village because of the strength of the dominant caste, and gatekeepers were not interested in implementing the programme for fear of losing control over the labouring classes. Whereas the situation in Maralukunte is slightly different. MGNREGA looks successful in terms of reducing migration and creating work in the village, but it failed in creating job opportunities for unskilled labourers in the village. The work participation rate in Maralukunte and surrounding villages is high mainly because of the industrial establishments, education and aspirations to work at a better place.

5.2. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are community-based collectives formed by women in rural areas to enhance their socioeconomic status. Supported by NGOs, government agencies, or financial institutions, SHGs promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among women. These groups enable women to pool resources and engage in income-generating activities such as handicrafts, small-scale agriculture, and animal husbandry.

Access to Credit: SHGs provide members with access to credit without relying on formal banking systems. Members can borrow from the group's savings, which are collected regularly, and repay loans with interest over time. The interest rates are typically lower than those of banks, and repayment terms are more flexible.

Training and Capacity Building: SHGs offer training and capacity-building programs focused on business development, including market research, product development, financial management, and marketing.

In Maralukunte, there are eighteen SHGs, locally known as *Swa-Sahaya Gumpu* or *Sanghas,* consisting of 12 to 25 women aged 18 to 50. These groups meet weekly or monthly to collect savings, record transactions, and enforce attendance rules. Separate sanghas exist for Dalit women to address specific benefits and mitigate caste-based tensions.

The Rudset institution in Karnataka organises various training programs in tailoring, livestock farming, vermiculture, agarbatti making, embroidery, soap making, and eucalyptus oil production in collaboration with different departments of government to empower women. Women from Maralukunte and surrounding villages participated in these training programmes and significantly benefitted from them. A good number of women from Maralukunte have learned to stitch clothes through these kinds of government-sponsored programmes, and they are economically independent by earning income through this skill acquisition.

SHGs also facilitate loans and subsidies for purchasing livestock. Researcher's observations indicate that dominant caste women often purchase dairy cattle, while Dalit women opt for native cattle, goats, and chickens. Some members use SHG loans to lend money at higher interest rates or to purchase jewellery and celebrate festivals. A woman named Lavanya from the Lingayat community has started a small business making plates from areca sheaths. She has purchased an areca leaf-making plate machine through a loan from her SHG. Since areca sheaths are abundantly available in her own village for a cheap price, her business is doing well. She gets orders for different sizes of plates from temples for distributing prasada and also from non-veg restaurants and different functions.

Despite challenges, such as an incident where a member absconded with group funds, the women of Maralukunte remain committed to the benefits of SHGs. Each group now has three organising members—president (*adhyakshe*), vice president (*upadhyakshe*), and secretary (*karyadarshi*)—who manage financial activities and ensure accountability. In summary, SHGs in rural Karnataka, particularly in Maralukunte, play a crucial role in empowering women by providing access to credit, fostering entrepreneurship, offering training, and promoting social cohesion.

Figure 4.1: Women attending the Rudset awareness programme in the village.

The examination of occupational mobility and its impact on rural work participation, as delineated in this chapter, underscores the complex interplay of socioeconomic factors influencing migratory patterns and occupational diversification in Maralukunte. Migration, driven by a combination of push factors such as agrarian distress and pull factors like urban employment opportunities, emerges as a critical mechanism through which rural inhabitants seek to improve their livelihoods.

The distinct migratory behaviours observed among various castes highlight the influence of historical, social, and economic contexts on migration decisions. For instance, the high incidence of permanent migration among the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities reflects their pursuit of better opportunities in urban areas, propelled by enduring social stigmas and limited rural prospects. Conversely, the Golla community's emphasis on higher education and professional training signifies a strategic migration aimed at securing skilled employment, which further reduces the likelihood of return migration.

The rise of commuting as a viable option for many rural residents, facilitated by improved transportation infrastructure, signifies a transitional phase where individuals can partake in non-farm employment while maintaining their rural domicile. This trend not only broadens the employment spectrum for rural workers but also underscores the evolving nature of rural-urban interactions.

Occupational diversification led to a shift from a predominantly agriculture-based economy to a diversified occupational structure, is indicative of broader structural shifts. The concept of depeasantization, as evidenced by the transition of labour from agricultural to industrial and service sectors, underscores the adaptive responses of rural communities to economic pressures and opportunities. This shift is particularly pronounced among marginalised communities such as the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida, who find new avenues of employment in industrial settings.

The chapter further illuminates the gendered dimensions of this occupational transformation, with women increasingly participating in both agricultural and non-agricultural labour. The persistence of traditional caste occupations alongside the emergence of new employment roles reflects a nuanced landscape where historical continuities coexist with contemporary changes.

In conclusion, the findings of this chapter reveal that occupational mobility, influenced by a myriad of socio-economic factors, plays a pivotal role in shaping and diversifying the work of men and women in rural areas. The intricate patterns of migration and occupational diversification observed in Maralukunte provide valuable insights into the broader processes of rural transformation. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of how rural populations navigate and negotiate the challenges and

opportunities presented by changing economic landscapes, ultimately fostering a more nuanced comprehension of rural development in the context of occupational mobility.

Chapter-5

Non-Agricultural Employment: Dynamics of Caste, Gender and Labour

The preceding chapter expounded upon the occupational mobility observed among rural inhabitants transitioning from agrarian to non-agricultural employment (NAE), alongside at the emerging pluriactivity. The trend of individuals gravitating towards non-farm employment is intricately linked to the contemporary challenges afflicting the traditional agricultural sector alongside aspirations for better living. The diminishing viability of agriculture in recent times is ascribed to multifarious factors, including a reduction in land holdings, climatic uncertainties impacting rainfall patterns, escalating wage levels, and the pervasive mechanization of agricultural practices. These cumulative influences have constricted opportunities for agricultural labourers within rural domains. The economic returns derived from agricultural pursuits have proven insufficient to sustain households amidst the escalating cost of living. Consequently, rural households find themselves compelled to seek supplementary sources of income or engage in diverse activities to offset the burgeoning financial demands, encompassing the escalating costs associated with maintaining a household and financing children's education. This chapter scrutinizes the ramifications of non-agricultural employment on rural households, with a specific focus on its repercussions for women.

1. Non-Agricultural Employment: Caste and Gender-wise Distribution

This section discusses the caste and gender-wise distribution of non-agricultural employment in Maralukunte, distinguishing between factory workers and those employed in other non-agricultural occupations. Table 5.1. highlights that Lingayats account for 20.71% of the total non-agricultural employment workers (NAEW), with a relatively balanced gender distribution in non-agricultural roles outside of factories (27 males and 11 females). Adi Karnataka caste has the highest percentage (25.76%) of NAEWs, with a significant portion (34.29%) employed as factory workers.

Males are predominantly represented in non-agricultural employment across most communities. For example, among the Lingayats and Thigalas, males constitute the

majority of NAEWs. Female participation in non-agricultural employment is significant in certain communities, notably among Adi Dravidas (19 females, 18.18% of total NAEWs) and

Table 5.1 Caste and Gender-Wise Count of Non-Agricultural Employment of Maralukunte

	Male			Female			Total					
Community Name	Apart from Factory Workers	Only Factory Workers	NAEW	Apart from Factory Workers	Only Factory Workers	NAEW	Apart from Factory Workers	% of Other than Factory Workers	Total Factory Workers	% of total Factory workers	Total NAEW	Percentage of NAEW
Lingayat	18	12	30	9	2	11	27	29.03	14	13.33	41	20.71
Vokkaliga	2	1	3	1	5	6	3	3.23	6	5.71	9	4.55
Thigala	8	8	16	7	5	12	15	16.13	13	12.38	28	14.14
Marati	6	4	10	3	4	7	9	9.68	8	7.62	17	8.59
Adi Karnataka	13	22	35	2	14	16	15	16.13	36	34.29	51	25.76
Adi Dravida	4	13	17	6	13	19	10	10.75	26	24.76	36	18.18
Bhovi	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.00	1	0.95	1	0.51
Golla	2	0	2	1	0	1	3	3.23	0	0.00	3	1.52
Barber	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	2.15	1	0.95	3	1.52
Washerman	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.08	0	0.00	1	0.51
Brahman	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3.23	0	0.00	3	1.52
Weaver	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3.23	0	0.00	3	1.52
Toddy Tapper	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	2.15	0	0.00	2	1.01
Total	**62**	**61**	**123**	**31**	**44**	**75**	**93**	100.00	**105**	100.00	**198**	**100.00**

*NAEW- Non-agricultural employment workers

Source: Based on field data

Adi Karnataka (16 females, 25.76% of total NAEWs). Factory employment is notably concentrated among Adi Karnataka and Adi Dravida communities, which together make up a large portion of factory workers (34.29% and 24.76%, respectively). Most female factory workers are from these two communities, indicating a gendered employment pattern within factory settings. Smaller or marginalised communities such as Bhovi, Golla, Barber, Washerman, Brahman, Weaver, and Toddy Tapper have minimal representation in non-agricultural employment, with percentages ranging from 0.51% to 3.23%.

The total non-agricultural employment is split between 93 individuals in non-factory roles (47.0%) and 105 factory workers (53.0%), indicating a nearly even distribution between factory and non-factory employment across the village. The communities with the most substantial factory employment (Adi Karnataka and Adi Dravida) also show high total NAEW numbers, underscoring their significant involvement in the non-agricultural sector.

This analysis highlights the socio-economic diversity within Maralukunte, reflecting varying degrees of access to non-agricultural employment opportunities across different castes and genders. The data underscores the intersection of caste and gender in determining employment patterns in rural settings.

2. Stratification of Employment and Unequal Distribution of Power and Wealth

In the framework of the Indian hierarchical caste system, caste delineates individuals' occupations or vocations. Non-agricultural employment, which is highly esteemed, is intricately linked with the socioeconomic status of households. As noted previously, demographics hailing from the Lingayat, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida communities are predominantly involved in non-agricultural employment. A discernible disparity in the nature of non-agricultural employment is evident between other castes and Dalits, prompting researchers to subdivide non-agricultural employment into distinct categories, namely factory workers and non-factory workers. Notably, Table 5.1 underscores the substantial involvement of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida individuals in factory employment. Factory workers primarily contribute to manufacturing sectors such as garments, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and automotive products. They mostly work in the Dabaspet industrial area surroundings. The impoverished socioeconomic circumstances of Dalits, coupled with limited skills, the absence of vocational training, and their

unproductive agricultural lands, propel them toward employment opportunities available in nearby factories. The fact that nearly 60% of factory workers hail from the Dalit caste underscores their economic deprivation and dearth of social and cultural capital.

Conversely, non-Dalits predominantly engage in semi-skilled or skilled employment. A significant portion of this demographic, excluding factory workers, is notably involved in self-employment endeavours such as operating small businesses, including grocery stores, shamiana rentals, restaurants, tea and cigarette stalls, hardware stores, evening snack stalls (offering items like bajji, bonda, and gobi Manchuria), bakeries, and fancy goods stores. Individuals from elite backgrounds often serve as contractors for government projects such as road construction, water management, and afforestation. Furthermore, non-Dalits are observed in various skilled and semi-skilled occupations, including engineering, teaching, banking, electrical work, borewell maintenance, driving, computer operation, administrative management, and water supply management. The occupational distribution among non-Dalits underscores their possession of superior cultural capital (including embodied, objectified, and institutionalised) relative to Dalits.

The association of occupation and social group is intricately tied to the accumulation of diverse forms of capital. Before delineating the specific capital endowments of different communities, a comprehensive understanding of Bourdieu's theory of capital and its manifestations is imperative. Bourdieu posits that the possession of varying forms of capital by individuals or collectives plays a pivotal role in determining their positioning within the social stratification framework and contributes to the construction of social class, thereby exerting influence on patterns of social behaviour (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114).

Bourdieu delineates four primary forms of capital: economic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Economic capital encompasses financial and material assets that hold tangible exchange value, including property and assets. Within the context of the studied village, a predominant ownership of economic capital is observed among certain communities, notably the Gollas, some Lingayats, and Vokkaliga households, relative to others.

Social capital pertains to an individual's or group's social networks, encompassing relationships with acquaintances, family members, and business associates. These networks serve as conduits for accessing resources vital for advancement, whether through the

dissemination of pertinent information (e.g., regarding job opportunities or real estate ventures), preferential treatment (e.g., securing employment or obtaining financial loans), or other forms of assistance that facilitate access to resources and opportunities. Everyone in the village owns some form of social capital, but its effects depend on how well their network is equipped with other forms of capital.

Symbolic capital denotes the intangible forms of capital, encompassing cultural knowledge, social networks, and prestige, which afford individuals access to economic or political opportunities. This form of capital manifests through various channels, including educational attainment, linguistic proficiency, clan affiliations, and adherence to traditional customs. Possession of symbolic capital confers advantages in resource accessibility and opportunity attainment, thereby fostering enhanced social mobility and upward social advancement. Conversely, symbolic capital can serve as a mechanism for perpetuating social and economic disparities, as individuals lacking in symbolic capital may find themselves marginalized from opportunities and resources. Within the context of Maralukunte, households associated with prominent political figures, such as the Dasappa's family (from the Golla caste, who also own a local school), Nagabhushan (from the Vokkaliga caste), and Ganganna (from the Lingayat caste), alongside traditional village leaders like the panchayat headman (from the Vokkaliga caste), *Shanubhoga* (the traditional village accountant from the Brahman caste), and a priest (the *poojari* of the Basava Temple from the Lingayat caste), emerge as recipients of symbolic capital within the village.

Whereas cultural capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, behaviours, tastes, and cultural predispositions possessed and employed by individuals and groups to garner and sustain social, economic, and cultural influence. Bourdieu delineates three forms of cultural capital: embodied, objective, and institutionalized. Embodied cultural capital pertains to the acquisition of knowledge and education, encompassing a broad array of capabilities and skills cultivated through familial, educational, and societal socialization processes. Objective cultural capital pertains to tangible cultural assets, which, due to their material nature, can be transmitted as inheritable property. Institutionalized cultural capital involves the attainment of titles, such as certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees, which serve as

attestations of an individual's possession of specific cultural competencies and aptitudes. These titles hold institutional recognition, facilitating their conversion into economic capital, as evidenced by instances where the successful completion of educational programs serves as a credential for entry into the professional sphere (Scheffer 2023).

The majority of households belonging to the Golla, Vokkaliga, and Lingayat communities possess substantial cultural capital, alongside other forms of capital. Conversely, a minority of Thigala, Adi-Karnataka, and Adi-Dravida households, who secured government employment through educational attainment and reservation policies, exhibit discernible differences in tastes, lifestyle preferences, way of dressing, and non-essential expenditures. A deeper comprehension of the stratification of employment concerning social groups and the varying degrees of capital accumulation will be facilitated through the following case studies below.

The aforementioned factors contribute to an elucidation of how occupational hierarchies are perpetuated through diverse forms of past and present capital accumulation. Cultural capital encompasses an individual's social assets, including property, education, intellect, and social networks, which serve as facilitators of social mobility within a stratified society. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the micro-level analysis of Maralukunte. In Maralukunte, individuals employed in intellectual and service sectors predominantly hail from families endowed with affluent cultural capital. These families typically occupy the upper echelons of the caste hierarchy within the Karnataka community, comprising Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Brahmans, and Gollas. While many of these individuals have migrated to urban centers, working in professions such as engineering, contracting, lecturing, banking, and entrepreneurship, as well as traditional roles in village like village headmanship, *shanubhoga*, and priesthood, command high esteem within rural society.

However, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of young and middle-aged educators from upper and dominant castes occupying middle to higher strata of the occupational hierarchy have migrated from the village due to the exigencies of their professions. Initially, such migration may have been temporary; however, over time, many have established permanent residence in their new locales, acquiring property and constructing

homes. They typically return to their native villages during occasions such as village fairs or annual festivals like Ugadi, Sankranti, and Mahalaya Amavasya (ancestral worship).

Migrants who retain ownership of land in their native village typically lease it to tenants, often relatives or neighbours, through informal oral agreements for a nominal fee, such as one quintal of ragi per acre (referred to as one *chila).* This practice stems largely from the heightened costs of agricultural inputs and a dearth of available labor. Notably, the value of irrigated land for tenant diverges from that of dry land. In Maralukunte, small and marginal farmers who own dry lands have significantly reduced encouraging their future generation to take up farming. It is due to multiple factors which are interconnected. Since the industrial area was established in the Sompura area, agricultural labourers started working in manufacturing factories because of regular employment, on-time payment, and social security benefits, which are lacking in the rural agriculture system. Neoliberal policies have enhanced the cost of inputs and production, which is again the burden for small and marginal dry landholders. On the contrary, chemical fertilisers and pesticides bring down the fertility and innate qualities of the soil in the long run. In this long process, the yield turns down with the loss of soil fertility is a huge loss for farmers. An increase in the number of small and marginal farmers is a nascent phenomenon in the Indian agricultural system. The cutdown of state funds on agriculture as further demotivated farmers to pass on their occupation to the coming generation. Considering all the dynamics in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations in Maralukunte, the researcher presents two case studies to elucidate the intricacies of pivotal role of capital accumulation in shaping occupational hierarchies.

> **Case Study 5.1:** Basavaraju was 45 years old man from the Lingayat caste. His father owns nearly 20 acres of land from inheritance. Basavaraju has two siblings, one male and another female. His sister got married and his brother-in-law died due to some ill-health. So, Basavaraju's father bought his sister and nephew back home. Sister's family is economically and socially supported by Basavaraju's family. His sister engaged in tailoring, and his nephew recently got a software engineer job at an IT company. He stays in Bangalore and visits family at weekends. Basavaraju holds a post-graduate degree in Kannada. He had prepared for government exams

and could not crack the desired job. He and his brother decided to take up farming instead of working under someone in the private sector for fewer wages. In an arid area like Maralukunte, Basavaraju's family cultivate both staple crops and commercial ones. Their family is engaged in cultivating ragi, paddy, flowers, vegetables and plantation of mangoes, areca nut and coconut. They also engage in commercial cattle farming, caring for 50 dairy cattle to sell the milk. The family own three borewells to supply irrigation for the cultivation of plantation trees and horticulture. They are in the position to hire a huge labour force and hold a better social network. With this privilege and cooperation in the village, Basavaraju was elected as an accountant for the dairy cooperative society in Maralaukunte. Additionally, they own three heavy commercial vehicles, including One lorry for milk supply and two tractors for ploughing, tilling and transferring goods. They also own an asset of a three-floored commercial building in the village in which his family occupied three portions, and the remaining portions are given for rent and commercial purposes. The above-mentioned are some of the objectified capital and positions they hold with the help of their economic capital. This family successfully transitioned from subsistence agriculture to agri-business, which motivated them to expand their business.

Case Study 5.2 Nagaraju was a 40-year-old man from the Adi-Karnataka caste, which comes under the category of the Dalit caste. He has completed graduation and works as a secretary in a local FPS (fair price shop) or ration shop. He was known as a rebel at a young age as he was the one among to raise his voice against discrimination of not giving service to Dalits in local barber shops. But his participation in Dalit's rights and struggles has reduced in the past few decades. He barely owns two acres from an inheritance which is not so fertile land. In that, he cultivates ragi. He married an educated lady. He has two grown-up girls studying secondary education in a private school. He owns a decent house in the colony. He owns non-essential items, including a fridge, sofa, washing machine and other home appliances. At the time of fieldwork, Nagaraju's spouse received an appointment letter for a teaching position in an autonomous school in Kyasandra, near Tumkur. The family was planning to shift to Kyasandra very soon. He and his

spouse gained white-collar jobs because of their education qualification and caste reservation. He is known for having a good social network since he works in a higher position at a village ration shop, which is responsible for procuring, storing and allocating food grains to villagers and, along with sanctioning crop loans for farmers who own land.

The above provided case studies delineate narratives of capital accumulation within both dominant and Dalit caste households. Case 5.1 illustrates the prosperous trajectory of the Basavaraju family, characterized by their successful transition from subsistence agriculture to agribusiness, facilitated by their preexisting cultural and social capital. Basavaraju's family history reflects a strategic investment approach, wherein profits derived from staple crops such as paddy and ragi were reinvested into high-yielding commercial ventures, including the cultivation of areca nuts, coconut, and mangoes. Furthermore, Basavaraju and his brother augmented their agricultural endeavors by acquiring heavy commercial vehicles tailored to agricultural and allied activities, thereby bolstering their economic stature within the village community.

In contrast, Dasappa's family, hailing from the Golla caste and traditionally recognized as *Dodda manetanadavaru* (denoting both substantial material wealth and rich cultural and social capital), presents a contrasting narrative. Originating from Kolala, Dasappa migrated to Maralukunte four generations ago. His success in the local Panchayat elections enabled him to acquire land near Maralukunte Lake, where he initially cultivated sugarcane, amassing considerable profits that were subsequently reinvested into land acquisition. Over time, Dasappa's family emerged as prominent landholders in the village, contributing significantly to community development through philanthropic gestures such as land donations for school construction and gold offerings to temples. However, the present generation of Dasappa's lineage has largely relocated abroad or to metropolitan areas, displaying diminished interest in agricultural pursuits. Notably, Gopalappa, Dasappa's adopted son and a trained astrologer, assumes a pivotal role within the village hierarchy, commanding respect and influence. His endorsement played a pivotal role in securing victory for his son-in-law in the 2020 Gram Panchayat Election. Additionally, the family's

historical legacy and accomplishments are commemorated in a published book documenting their heritage and achievements.

In contemporary times, while Basavaraju's family has achieved a superior level of economic prosperity compared to Dasappa's family, but they have not attained commensurate societal esteem. This discrepancy can be attributed to several factors, notably the dissolution of the joint family structure as Basavaraju's family augmented their economic capital. Recent events, such as the attempted suicide of Basavaraju's son, stemming from parental disapproval of his choice to marry a Dalit woman, have further compromised their social standing despite their considerable economic affluence.

An additional noteworthy aspect of Basavaraju's case is his engagement in a diverse range of activities for livelihood sustenance and wealth accumulation. Apart from agricultural pursuits, Basavaraju is actively involved in various other endeavors, including employment at a dairy during early morning and evening hours, management of commercial vehicles, and cultivation of both subsistence and commercial crops. This multifaceted engagement, often termed pluriactivity, underscores a prevalent trend in Maralukunte and rural Karnataka, wherein individuals rely on multiple income-generating activities for sustenance. This phenomenon aligns with the broader discussion on livelihood diversification in rural Karnataka, as expounded upon in previous chapters.

The case of Nagaraju elucidates his arduous journey towards achieving his current social standing within the village, overcoming formidable challenges associated with his Dalit identity. Nagaraju's trajectory to success was fraught with obstacles, including societal barriers and systemic discrimination, underscoring the inherent challenges faced by individuals from marginalized communities. Nonetheless, through a combination of educational attainment, leveraging caste reservation policies, and his inherent competitive and rebellious disposition, Nagaraju succeeded in ascending to a better social echelon compared to his counterparts within the village.

The case of Nagaraju shows his struggle to reach his current social position in the village through education, caste reservation, and his rebellious and competitive nature. His journey to success wasn’t easy being a Dalit. He has gained better cultural and social capital compared to his father. Nagaraju and his spouse’s white collar employment, his taste and

preferences to non-essential things like sending his daughters to private English Medium School, consciously avoiding his children and spouse to mingle much with his caste members, dressing with decent and light colour clothes, maintaining a decent attitude in the language he speaks, and accumulating household appliances like washing machine, fridge, sofa set, drinking water purifier and converting his arid land into irrigated by investing a borewell in his land have changed his family's economic and social position in the village. Nagaraju's education, occupation, way of living, and lifestyle preferences have changed his status in society.

Nagaraju's ascent to prominence is characterized by a marked improvement in his cultural and social capital relative to his father's generation. This transformation is evidenced by various markers of social distinction, including his and his spouse's employment in white-collar occupations, preferences for non-essential luxuries such as private English-medium education for their daughters, deliberate efforts to limit interaction with caste members, adoption of refined and modest attire, cultivation of a dignified manner of speech, and acquisition of modern household amenities such as washing machines, refrigerators, sofas, and water purifiers. Additionally, Nagaraju's strategic investment in converting arid land into irrigated fields through the installation of borewells further underscores his commitment to enhancing his family's economic and social status in the village.

Nagaraju's educational attainment, occupation, lifestyle preferences, and cultivation of social capital collectively contributed to his upward mobility within village society, representing a departure from traditional social constraints. His case exemplifies the transformative potential of individual agency and the accumulation of various forms of capital in fostering social and economic mobility within marginalized communities.

In summary, the presented case studies illustrate the diverse journeys of capital accumulation and social positioning within the village context. While Basavaraju and Dasappa's cases underscore the reproduction and conversion of cultural capital into enhanced economic capital, Nagaraju's narrative represents a departure from traditional social constraints, wherein his pursuit of education, occupation, lifestyle choices, and cultivation of social capital facilitated his upward mobility within village society.

3. Caste Dynamics in Non-Agricultural Employment

The Upper and Dalit castes males working together in the same place with same rank are minimal in NAE. First, let me explain the situation within the village, where Dalits and Dominant caste Lingayats work at the same place, like a ration shop, cooperative dairy society, and panchayat office. In cooperative dairy, the ones who do manual work and unskilled work like moving milk drums, cleaning and housekeeping have done by the Dalit caste. Tigala person measures milk, which is considered semi-skilled and accounts have been computerised by the lingayat caste person which is a skilled work. Again, in the ration shop, the one who unloads ration bags and serves the customer's bag is the Dalit caste person. The one who looks after the measurement is from the Tigala caste. The one who keeps the account is Lingayat. These are the positions which are elected by the committee members. Hence, the positions are allocated based on the caste hierarchial system. The case of Nagaraju is different since he was recruited from the state government. In panchayat, the peon and attender are again from the Dalit caste. This highlights the perpetual lower position of Dalits in the village institutions, Thigalas in the intermediate and Lingayats holding upper position in the hierarchy of occupations available within Maralukunte.

This phenomenon is slightly different when different caste people work outside the village. As non-agricultural employment is diverse in scope, the data has been analysed based on the profession. As previously mentioned, the ones who work in the academics, banking and IT sectors in Maralukunte are significantly from the Lingayat caste. The professions like driver, carpenter and electrician are observed across all communities. They are paid according to their expertise and skills. Sometimes their socio-cultural background matters in obtaining orders for the work of carpent, electricity, transportation and ploughing. For instance, if a lingayat person wants house furniture, he mostly contacts the carpenter from his caste. The same logic applies to other communities and professions, too, to bring cohesion and cooperation among the community. People consult someone outside of their community for services in situations where nobody is engaged in that particular service or if they are not satisfied with the service of their community person or if the outsider provides service for a lower price, or if the outsider is better-expertise in that field. Earlier,

people used to prefer their community person for most things, but things have changed now. People look for skilled people and good products.

Male workers from distinct strata of society engaging in a similar task in the same factory are rarely found. Dominant castes folks working parallel with Dalits in the same factory are looked at with low esteem in their community. It's a status issue for Lingayats to work for equivalent pay to the Dalit caste, especially in unskilled or semi-skilled tasks in non-agricultural employment. For this reason, there are incidences where the dominant caste people commute a distance for the same kind of job with negligible pay difference to maintain their social status in the village. For instance:

> **Case Study 5.3** Manjunath, Basappa and a few others from the Lingayat caste work in APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) yard, which is also known as *mandi* or Yeshwanthapur market. They engage in unskilled or semi-skilled work like supplying goods to customers, looking after measuring goods, and loading and unloading goods from trucks. They work in the APMC yard for negligible pay differences in comparison with the factory work availability in proximity to Maralukunte. Working in the APMC yard is an accumulation of economic and social capital because the one who works in the *mandi* gets a reasonable price in purchasing daily household ingredients. Further, they get commission money for referring it to people for purchasing and selling goods to their shop.

> **Case Study 5.4** Prem Kumar, from the Lingayat caste, works in a garment factory in Bangalore. He prefers to work in the Bangalore factory rather than to shift to the Dabaspet garment factory for two reasons. Firstly, for his long years of service in the same company, he expects better monetary benefits. Secondly, he doesn't want to lose the social network and comfort he has had in the place of work for almost a decade. He does not want to lose the company's extra social security; thus, he continues to commute to the Bangalore factory. In fact, he has mentioned reasonable travel expenses to Bangalore incurred with the local train facility and its availability during working hours. It almost costs more or less the same to travel from Maralukunte to Dabaspet by Bus and Muddalinganahalli to Bangalore by train.

Cases 5.3 and 5.4 highlight the phenomenon of dominant caste workers travelling long distances to engage in unskilled or semi-skilled work, which is available in proximity (Sompura industrial area), in fear of their community assigning lower status to them for working along with Dalits. Hence, the dominant caste's unskilled and semi-skilled workers choose to commute to Bangalore rather working in Sompura factories.

Another important factor to note in the rural area is that it is difficult to get a bride for males working in agriculture compared with men working in non-agricultural employment. In Maralukunte, the bride's families mostly prefer males who own some property as social security and work in non-agricultural employment. Second preference is given to males who own irrigated land and cultivate plantation and horticultural crops like areca nut, coconut, mango, flowers, and vegetables or commercial crop cultivation. The reason behind this trend is the belief that commercial crops bring in good monetary benefits. The least preferred grooms are the ones who own and work in an arid land. Therefore, it is evident that young adults who are single and not interested in higher education but own some piece of inherited irrigated land choose to work in factories or other non-agricultural employment in agricultural leisure months so that they can make some money and live on their own highlight the trend of pluriactivity in the village.

4. Impact of Non-Agricultural Employment:

Non-agricultural employment has significantly reshaped the socioeconomic landscape of rural households in Maralukunte. With the diversification of livelihood options beyond traditional farming, rural communities have experienced notable transformations in their economic well-being and social dynamics. Non-agricultural employment avenues, such as manufacturing industries and services, have provided alternative sources of income, reducing dependency solely on agriculture. This diversification has led to improved standards of living, increased access to education and healthcare, and enhanced infrastructure development in rural areas. Furthermore, it has played a pivotal role in reducing seasonal unemployment and mitigating the vulnerability associated with fluctuating agricultural yields for small and marginal farmers. The following six factors elucidate the primary consequences arising from the shift of Maralukunte households from agricultural to non-agricultural employment:

4.1. Improvement in Infrastructure

In traditional rural Karnataka, people used to live in huts and kutcha houses constructed with mud, stones, and unburnt bricks. Even the roofs of the opulent farmers' houses were made of country tiles or *kadapa kallu* (black limestone). Primordial house structures were based on earlier utility and functions where every farmer had a *kanaja* (deep pit) or *vaadegalu* (mud bins) in the house to store seeds and grains. *Hole* (earthen stove) and *valakallu* (pestle and mortar stone) were inbuilt in traditional kitchens (*aduge mane*). A house used to have a big living room (*padasale*), a place where family members come and interact. Outside the house, there are jagali (raised platforms) on both sides of the entrance for kids to sit and relax and to play and interact with neighbours. Only elites had toilets earlier, which were located outside or in the backyards of the houses. The development which has taken place now in villages definitely has the role of non-agricultural employment. NAE is an alternative employment opportunity for farmers and agricultural labourers which guarantees regular employment and on-time payment. It provided an alternative source of income, allowing for an increase in the household level of income and maintaining the standard of living. These are conspicuous in the houses villagers live in, the vehicles they drive, and the electronics and furniture they utilise.

In Maralukunte, nearly 75% of households live in pucca houses constructed either with burnt bricks or concrete bricks and roofs are made with asbestos sheets or concrete. In the dwindling nature of the agriculture sector, where do people get all the money to purchase the above items? One such source is the government scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana', which was previously known as Indira Awas Yojana. It is a social welfare programme to provide financial assistance to construct houses for the rural poor. Only a fixed number of houses are sanctioned to rural poor based on the reservation quota through panchayat raj institution. Thus, it is not available for all rural households; on top of that, government aid is insufficient to complete a house's construction. In that situations, the income from NAE helps as an addition to government aid for the construction of a house. There are instances of many rural households who have built new houses or renovated their old houses with the income from their non-agricultural employment and in support of government subsidies with non-agricultural income.

An increase in non-agricultural employment rates and the establishment of proximate industrial zones have exhibited a symbiotic relationship, yielding consequential enhancements in various infrastructural facets within the vicinity. Such advancements have notably included developing tar roads and increasing private and government-operated bus services, thereby ameliorating transportation networks and communication infrastructure pertinent to rural households. Formerly villagers were reliant on communal street taps administered by the local panchayat for water provisioning, with the increase in household income, residents of Maralukunte have elected to procure individual water tap connections sanctioned by the village Panchayat, albeit necessitating the remittance of nominal monthly fees. This transition is underscored by the fact that nearly 69% of Maralukunte households presently benefit from individual water tap connections facilitated by the village Panchayat.

4.2. Improvement in Household Income

Income from NAE has enhanced the flow of money and the standard of living among rural households. As agriculture is seasonal, farmers get paid for their crops only after the harvest. A farmer has to manage the whole year's expenses with that money. In the case of agricultural labourers, they get paid predominantly in plantation, weeding and harvesting seasons. In contrast, non-agricultural employees like factory workers get paid every month. It helps them to manage their finances better by saving some amount for economic vulnerability. It gives them the confidence to borrow money for emergencies like health care, relying on their regular salary. This way, rural households working in NAE have become financially independent and indulge in the flow of money in rural society. An increase in household income captivates them to buy trending products like mobile phones, two-wheelers, furniture, and electronic items. Using LPG gas, grinder, pressure cooker, electricity, and built-up toilets, which were luxury items in the traditional village, have become the necessary items of the present modern village.

4.3. Trends in the Purchase of Household Appliances

In contemporary domiciliary constructions, traditional implements such as earthen stoves, pestles, and mortar stones typically associated with culinary activities have been supplanted by modern counterparts such as Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) stoves and electric grinders. This transition owes its realisation in large part to the implementation of the

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana initiative under the auspices of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, which facilitates the provision of LPG connections to economically disadvantaged women hailing from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. A consequential outcome of this initiative is the pervasive adoption of LPG cooking gas among the households of Maralukunte, where upwards of 90% of such domiciliary entities have embraced this modern energy source. Despite the financial considerations associated with its utilisation, which entails an expenditure of approximately one thousand monetary units per cylinder refill, a considerable proportion of marginalised households have been able to afford this expense through gainful employment opportunities found in non-agricultural employment, typically in the manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, the socioeconomic landscape of the village has undergone a palpable transformation, exemplified by the increasing ownership of electronic paraphernalia among its denizens. Noteworthy possessions now include ubiquitous electronic gadgets such as televisions, grinders, and mobile communication devices. Moreover, there has been a discernible uptick in the acquisition of luxurious domestic amenities such as sofas, refrigeration units, and laundry appliances, with approximately twenty-eight households within the village boasting ownership of such accoutrements. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in households wherein at least one individual is gainfully employed in non-agricultural pursuits, denoting a diversification of occupational engagement and a concomitant rise in disposable income.

Additionally, a salient manifestation of improved economic standing is evidenced by the widespread ownership of vehicular assets within the village populace, with nearly half of the village households possessing means of personal transportation, predominantly comprising two-wheeled conveyances such as motorcycles, scooters and bicycles bearing the marque of Tvs. This automotive proliferation underscores a notable augmentation in the material wealth and mobility of the villagers, thereby reflecting an overall enhancement in their economic prosperity.

4.4. Effects on Kinship Relations

This section examines the repercussions of diminished familial interaction resulting from the imposition of fixed schedules necessitated by extrinsic occupational commitments.

Historically, in the realm of traditional agriculture, familial cohesion was integrally linked to collective engagement in agrarian pursuits. Men typically undertook tasks such as ploughing and sowing, while women were predominantly involved in activities such as transplanting, weed removal, and crop harvesting. Notably, pivotal agricultural festivals such as Makara Sankranti, the Kannada New Year (Ugadi), village fairs, and marriage ceremonies were customarily celebrated subsequent to the harvest season spanning from January to June (Magha to Jyeshta masa in the Hindu calendar). That means people used to take a break after the harvest with merry-making. If the yield is good, then the celebrations used to be massive. The preparation and celebration of village fairs and marriages used to take months. All the family members and kin used to get together for marriages and have fun in preparing from sambar powder to turmeric required for celebrations. Kin used to exchange labour not just in celebrations but also in agricultural works. They used to listen to each other's stories and spend quality time with one another in happy and sad events.

But the NAE has a negative effect on the quality of time people spend with families and kin due to the occupational compulsions. As most of the non-agricultural employees work for a minimum of eight hours a day, and the firms, in general, follow holidays of the English calendar, employees do not get many holidays to attend all the traditional festivals and rituals as earlier. This is one of the reasons why kinship ties have loosened. Regular employment and an increase in household income have made preparation work for the celebration easy and smooth. For instance, people book conventional halls for celebrations like marriage and purchase every minute things from the market, like flowers to *thaali* (marriage pendant). Whereas the middle classes hire a cook, and elites go for catering services to serve food for a large number of people in the ceremonies. Relatives, friends and well-wishers mostly come to a conventional hall to wish for the couple in the marriage due to the occupational compulsion. The practice of visiting houses for functions is disappearing.

Forty years old Prem Kumar works as a lecturer in a private college. He is from Lingayat caste. He said, “These days, marriages take place in the conventional hall for two days. The marriage ritual takes place on the morning of the second day. The one who cannot attend a marriage comes to a reception on the night before marriage”. This is more convenient for

working people. Most of the working people attend a reception at night and go to work in the morning. Due to this reason, hosts prefer Saturday and Sunday muhurtham dates so that all the kin members, near and dear can make it to the ceremonies. This is one of the examples of change in the cultural celebration along with a change in occupational structure.

4.5. Investment of Non-agricultural Income in Agriculture, Education and Self-employment

Agriculture was considered the main source of income a decade ago, but things have changed after the establishment of industries in the Dabaspet area. On the contrary, real estate is booming. Hence, holding agricultural land in the village is considered prestigious. Land with an irrigated facility is valued higher than dry land. So, the savings which is made from non-agricultural employment were either invested in agricultural land development and improving irrigation facilities or in establishing a petty business in the long run. Establishing an industrial area at Dobaspet was an opportunity for Sompura and Thyamagondlu Hobli villagers, including Maralukunte. The primary functioning industries are manufacturing automobiles, textiles, and electronic goods. On the other side, this factor encouraged investors to establish international schools surrounding the Dabaspet area. Development and maintenance of infrastructure in villages through the institution of the local availability of good schools, industries, and panchayat are some of the pull factors that slightly diminished the percentage of outmigration and encouraged reverse migration in Maralukunte Village. For instance, Basappa and Timmaiah's return migration examples highlight their non-agricultural income investment into agricultural land, kids' education and petty business.

> **Case Study (5.5)** Timmaiah was thirty-five years old male from the Adi-Karnataka caste. He migrated back to Maralukunte when his spouse came for a post-natal period for her second child. Timmaiah and his spouse were relatives and were born in the same village. After marriage, Timmaiah and his family moved to Bangalore for better employment opportunities. They both used to work in a garment factory in Bangalore. The main reasons for Timmaiah's return migration were the high cost of living, needless rent for a single person in the city, and the absence of a wife's

services or work. After returning, he works in an automobile factory at Dabaspet. He commutes every day from the village. His first son goes to LKG (Lower Kinder Garten). Timmaiah's spouse left working and started taking care of the kids. She said, "I am not allowed to work as I am breastfeeding my second kid. And there is no necessity as my husband takes care of household expenditures. Now we live in our own house, so we do not need to pay for rent." Timmaiah's second brother was engaged in full-time cultivation. He usually gives a part of the yield to Timmaiah as the property is jointly owned. In return, Timmaiah contributes a small amount in purchasing seeds and fertilisers and contributes to work in the busy season.

Case Study (5.6) Basappa, 40 years old man from the Lingayat caste, migrated to Bangalore with his family when he was too young. In Bangalore, his father used to work as a security guard in a firm. Basappa has one school-going son and a daughter. After his father's retirement, his father and mother shifted to the village to spend the rest of their life with close kin relatives. But Basappa and his spouse continued to stay in the city. Basappa used to work in APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) yard, and his spouse in a garment factory. Basappa's nuclear family shifted to a village two years back, as his age-old father was suffering from *gasey* (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and it was difficult to manage all the household chores by himself after losing his sweetheart.

After shifting to the village, Basappa managed to work in APMC Yeshwanthapur, as he got access to good roads and railway facilities at a reasonable cost. Maralukunte and nearby villagers have got access to railway transport either from Muddalinganahalli or Nidavanda, which are five to six kilometres away from Maralukunte and cost five rupees by bus and ten by autorickshaw to travel there. Further, it costs ten rupees to travel to Yesvantapur or Majestic by train. Basappa has a two-wheeler vehicle, so he managed to commute daily with an expenditure of twenty rupees to travel. His spouse Girija worked in a garment factory when she lived in Bengaluru. After returning to the village, she spends most of her time in household chores, grooming and taking care of her two kids along with her old-ill father-in-law who is critical. Girija spoke of her willingness to go to work after the

demise of her father-in-law. However, among the upper caste, dominant caste, and middle-class, when their males are earning well and able to bear the household expenditure, their household women are not sent to work in any unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in industries.

Basappa sends his son to an English medium private school and a daughter to a Kannada medium government school. Basappa cleared the plantation of eucalyptus and started cultivating ragi after he shifted to the village. He has a plan to go for horticulture and plantation cultivation. He has invested his non-agricultural income in developing his agricultural land.

The cases of Basappa and Timmaiah underscore the allocation of primary income towards acquiring agricultural inputs, land development, and financing children's private education through non-agricultural employment. This underscores the comparatively lower cost of living in rural areas compared to urban locales. Both individuals reside in their self-owned dwellings in the village, circumvents their rental expenditures, which is typically associated with urban habitation. Moreover, within nuclear family structures, a single household member engaged in non-agricultural work can adequately manage living expenses, ensuring a modest yet sustainable rural lifestyle. Timmaiah’s case elucidates how the proximity of employment opportunities facilitated his support to his spouse during her post-natal period, exemplifying the advantages of local employment accessibility. These cases underscore how non-agricultural employment enables access to educational resources, healthcare services, and enhanced infrastructure. Furthermore, they shed light on the phenomenon of women discontinuing employment post-migration to rural areas and the prevalence of gender-based discrimination concerning the education of female children within private schooling systems. These factors will be discussed in detail in the coming sections.

In assessing the impact of non-agricultural employment on rural livelihoods, the researcher examined the correlation between non-agricultural employment and migration patterns. Rural households typically migrate in pursuit of enhanced employment opportunities, access to education, and the augmentation of their standard of living. However, when these amenities become accessible within rural areas, some households opt to return to their

villages to avail themselves of these provisions at minimal expense. A substantial portion of the migrated population engages in non-agricultural employment, which, in turn, fosters investments in land development, housing construction, commercial crop cultivation, and the initiation of self-employment ventures. Within Maralukunte, fifty-four individuals are actively engaged in self-employment endeavours, ranging from operating small shops and local eateries to owning commercial vehicles such as autorickshaws, Tata Ace vehicles, tractors, lorries, and JCB machines. Notably, nearly 70% of these individuals have a history of prior migration for non-agricultural employment opportunities outside the village, underscoring the significant role played by non-agricultural employment and self-employment in the community's economic landscape.

4.6. Exposure to Diverse Cultures and Imitation

Non-agricultural employment (NAE) has served as a catalyst for fostering social interactions and cultural exchange among rural households, leading to the emulation of various material and celebratory customs from diverse sources. Individuals within these communities endeavour to replicate each other's material attributes and festive practices, including adopting contemporary clothing styles, hairstyles, and social behaviours. Notably, the tradition of cutting cakes to commemorate birthdays, weddings, engagements, and New Year celebrations has emerged as a novel phenomenon within rural settings, diverging from the conventional practice of temple visits on birthdays and the distribution of chocolates among friends and family members has been supplanted by the custom of cake cutting, reflecting the influence of urbanised cultural practices and the availability of such items in proximity. Additionally, mass media channels and interpersonal interactions in working spaces facilitate the rapid dissemination of fashion trends in attire and hairstyles, further accentuating the cultural diffusion driven by non-agricultural employment.

The spectrum of non-agricultural employment encompasses various occupations, ranging from factory workers to professionals in sectors such as health, education and manufacturing sectors. The prevalence of industrial zones, exemplified by the Dabaspet industrial area, significantly impacts the employment landscape of surrounding villages such as Maralukunte and Sompura. In light of this, the researcher has systematically

delineated NAE data into categories, including factory workers and those engaged in non-factory employment. Approximately 22% of rural residents are employed in NAE within the organised sector, either on a permanent or contractual basis. Such employment offers a greater degree of job security compared to agricultural labour, as evidenced by the provision of social security benefits, provident funds, and eligibility for sick leave. Moreover, non-agricultural employment exhibits a modern ethos by embracing cultural and gender diversity, as evidenced by equitable wage allocation practices devoid of caste or gender-based discrimination.

4.7. Improvement in Dalits' Standard of Living

Historically, the Dalit caste was predominantly associated with agricultural labour. The establishment of an industrial sector in Sompura presented a significant opportunity for this labouring class, offering regular employment and consistent remuneration. In order to delineate the demographic engaged in manufacturing industries, I have categorized non-agricultural employment (NAE) into factory workers and those employed outside of factory settings, distinguishing between genders and castes. Table 5.1 provides a comprehensive representation indicating substantial Dalit participation in non-agricultural employment. This inclination can be attributed to their historical involvement in agricultural labour due to limited access to fertile lands. The unpredictability of work in the agricultural sector, coupled with a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, has compelled Dalits to seize the opportunities arising from the establishment of an industrial area in Sompura. The positive impact of non-agricultural employment on Dalit's standard of living is huge, which is evident in their changes in lifestyle, including attire, dietary habits, and possession of assets such as furniture, electronic appliances, and vehicles.

A poignant illustration of this transformation is articulated by Adi-Dravida woman Hanumakka during an interview. She recounts the stark contrast in their previous living conditions and present circumstances, elucidating,

"Earlier, we used to take a shower weekly once and eat rice only during festivals. On a daily basis, we consumed only *ragi mudde* (finger millet ball) and *ragi ganji* (ragi porridge). New clothes were bought only during festivals like Ugadi and Sankranti. We used to cook on the *hole* (traditional earthen stove) with *madike* (pot). The food used to be

delicious, but the toil in the agricultural field left us fatigued. We slept on the floor or *kambali* (blanket made with traditional handloom sheep wool). Though my generation experienced contentment, managing household expenditures remained a challenge, given the constraints of a joint family structure with a minimum size of five members. The lower cost of living did not translate into financial means. Presently, with men and women gainfully employed in factories, there is financial autonomy, enabling the purchase of desired items. my son and daughter-in-law work in a garment factory, utilising modern kitchen equipment like a mixer, pressure cooker, and gas stove for the preparation of food. However, the food will not be tasty. Sometimes the same food is preserved in the fridge for later use. *Nanna maga* (my son) paid Rs.1000 for my granddaughter's (*mommagalu*) dance dress. We have not seen all this at my time! My parents did not have money to purchase slate and *balapa* (slate pencil) and stitch our freely given uniform cloth. Due to this reason, many of my generation folks have dropped out of school and started working with our mothers or taking care of our siblings. My *sose* (daughter-in-law) keeps buying sarees now and then, saying it is a new model in the market. I don't know why she spends so much on clothes…"

The analysis of the discourse with Hanumakka delineates a discernible amelioration in the standard of living among Dalits attributable to their engagement in non-agricultural employment. Concurrently, Dalits have begun to assert their self-esteem and personal dignity in social interactions with other communities, manifesting through discernible shifts in clothing, attitudes, and lifestyles. Notably, a propensity among Dalits to correct members of other communities, including the researcher, has been observed, urging the use of designations such as Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida instead of the pejorative terms *Madiga* and *Oleya* historically ascribed to them.

Historically entrenched social stratifications, marked by the exclusive sartorial privilege of elites, village headmen, or landlords donning silk *panche* (dhoti), have undergone a transformation. Presently, individuals across all communities, including Dalits, adorn silk *panche* and shirts, particularly during ceremonial events such as marriages and village fairs. The pervasiveness of untouchability in educational institutions and places of worship, exemplified by segregated seating arrangements and restricted temple access, has

witnessed a significant reduction. Modern-day schools witness students from Dalit and other communities coexisting harmoniously, sharing the same vehicles, occupying shared benches, and engaging in collaborative learning activities.

A noteworthy aspect pertains to the educational landscape, with 32 village children pursuing education in private schools. While three students hail from the Adi-Karnataka caste, the remainder come from affluent Lingayat, Vokkaliga, Golla, Brahman, Marati, and Tigala families, exemplifying an inclusive educational environment. In the context of Hinduism, Dalits historically faced social and religious marginalization. However, the constitutional provisions delineated in Article 15 emphasize the fundamental rights of Indian citizens, aiming to prevent discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Moreover, Article 17 explicitly prohibits the practice of untouchability in any form. Although these constitutional tenets were codified in the 1950s, their implementation at grassroots levels encountered temporal challenges.

The transformative shifts witnessed among the Malakunte Dalits are attributable to a confluence of factors, including educational attainment, heightened awareness, and a realization of fundamental rights. The pivotal role played by non-agricultural employment in augmenting income and enabling Dalits to interact with diverse people has been instrumental in facilitating these transformative changes, underscoring the multifaceted nature of progress in socio-economic dimensions.

The transformative alterations observed within the Malakunte Dalit caste can be ascribed to a convergence of elements, encompassing educational achievements, elevated consciousness, and an acknowledgement of fundamental rights. The pivotal function assumed by non-agricultural employment in amplifying income and fostering interactions with a diverse range of individuals has proven to be instrumental in facilitating these transformative changes. This underscores the nuanced and multifaceted character of advancements in the socio-economic dimensions specifically pertaining to Dalits engaged in non-agricultural employment.

4.8. Access to Public Places and Commensality

The disjuncture between legal prescriptions and societal practices manifests in the nonuniform adherence to established laws within the broader social framework. Instances arise wherein individuals must actively assert their fundamental rights, particularly in cases where literacy and awareness of legal statutes are lacking, leading to the perpetuation of traditional biases. The entitlement of citizens to access religious institutions, exemplified by the right to enter a temple, remains a point of contention, particularly at the grassroots level. Noteworthy is the observation that members of the Dalit caste, predominantly the middle and young age demographics, visit local goddess temples such as Maramma, yet a noticeable absence is discernible in their attendance at temples associated with upper castes, such as Basavanna and Muniyappa Swamy within the village.

Despite the augmentation of non-agricultural employment, which has concomitantly contributed to an increase in household income, elevated economic standing, and improved living standards, a palpable social schism endures. Notably, the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida castes maintain discrete temples within the village, thereby accentuating the perpetuation of societal compartmentalization. This phenomenon is further manifested in the observed hesitancy or outright exclusion of Dalits from entering upper caste temples and residences affiliated with upper and dominant castes, relegating social interactions to the confines of verandas. Even in situations where Dalits are recipients of sustenance due to their engagement in agricultural labour or participation in communal events, the conspicuous use of plastic disposable plates and glasses, replacing traditional utensils crafted from leaves, serves as a poignant symbol of enduring discrimination in commensality.

Moreover, the spatial organization of the village delineates distinct residential areas for different communities. The numerically dominant *Lingayat* caste predominantly inhabits areas proximate to the Maralukunte bus stop and *Chowka* (the village square or centre). *Vokkaligas* primarily reside near the bus stop, while *Thigalas* are predominantly situated in *Kelagina tota* (the lower garden area). Given their involvement in plantation agriculture, *Thigalas* tend to reside near their agricultural plots, often adjacent to the village pond's lower reaches, thereby earning the area the designation of *Kelagina tota*, notable for its

picturesque areca nut plantations and horticultural fields. Conversely, the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida castes are situated at the southern periphery of the village, referred to as the colony/*Madiratti* and *Voleratti* (Colony of *Madigas* and *Voleyas*). Even the colonies of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida are divided based on their castes. Their residential presence is conspicuously absent in other parts of Maralukunte, underscoring the social compartmentalization within the village's physical space.

Within the community of Maralukunte, the gastronomic milieu during rituals and ceremonies, principally orchestrated by members of the Lingayat, dominant caste and affluent families, is distinguished by a conspicuous exhibition of religious customs. The principal culinary figure, often a head chef, is adorned with *vibhuti* (sacred ash) on the forehead and actively engages in ritualistic practices, including the performance of a ceremonial pooja for the stove, thereby symbolising a dedicated adherence to religious norms. Notably, the researcher observed that most of these head chefs belong to the Lingayat caste, and they are frequently extended invitations to cater for diverse religious and social events originating from locales beyond the village. In stark contrast, Dalit workers, who experience social discrimination, find themselves relegated to subsequent culinary activities, notably the cleaning of utensils. This stark contrast underscores the persistent socio-economic disparities embedded within the societal fabric.

5. Women in Non-Agricultural Employment

Exploring non-agricultural employment opportunities for women in Maralukunte offers a window into the evolving socio-economic dynamics, characterised by a blend of traditional paradigms and contemporary aspirations. Maralukunte, being situated within the southern reaches of Karnataka, Bengaluru Rural District, serves as a confluence of urban developmental tendencies and rural agrarian traditions. While agriculture has historically been a primary occupation, the influx of urbanisation and industrialisation has catalysed a shift towards non-agricultural employment opportunities for both men and women. This transition symbolises broader societal transformations, encompassing enhanced educational accessibility, shifting gender role perceptions, and the burgeoning of service-oriented industries. However, despite these advancements, challenges persist, ranging from gender-based discrimination in the workforce to limited access to skill development initiatives and

entrepreneurship opportunities. A comprehensive comprehension of the dynamics surrounding women's engagement in non-agricultural employments within Maralukunte, Bengaluru Rural District, assumes paramount importance in evaluating the region's economic fabric and devising policies conducive to fostering gender parity and holistic economic progress.

This segment delineates distinct empirical findings pertinent to the involvement of women in non-agricultural employment, recognising nuanced differentiations in the social and economic milieu vis-à-vis their male counterparts. The focalisation on women is warranted due to discernible divergences in occupational mobility trends when juxtaposed with men. For instance, while men are progressively transitioning away from agricultural labor, women exhibit an augmented concentration therein within Maralukunte. Moreover, Dalit women conspicuously gravitate towards employment within Dabaspet's manufacturing industries. Hence, to unravel the intricate nuances underpinning women's labor dynamics across caste affiliations, educational backgrounds, and age cohorts within the non-agricultural domain, this segment exclusively directs attention towards the multifaceted determinants shaping women's participation in non-agricultural employment pursuits.

Macroscopic inquiries into women's labor force engagement in developing nations furnish two prevailing hypotheses. One posits that female labor force participation escalates during economic downturns, attributed to heightened familial financial exigencies ensuing from dwindling household incomes or job losses suffered by household members. Termed the "added-worker effect," this phenomenon denotes the augmented labor supply rendered by married women when their spouses encounter unemployment (Abraham 2009, Attanasio et al. 2005, Bhalotra & Umana-Aponte 2010). However, it is imperative to acknowledge that such employment opportunities often entail low remuneration and contribute marginally to the overall productivity of the economy (ILO 2011). Thus, while heightened female labor force participation might initially seem favourable, but experts caution against presuming it as indicative of positive economic trajectories for developing nations.

Comprehending the intricate dynamics of female labour force participation necessitates considering various socio-economic determinants across various levels, encompassing macroeconomic, local, and household dimensions, including factors such as prevailing

economic conditions and the availability of local employment, as well as the associated costs of job search. Within the household context, critical determinants comprise educational attainment, socioeconomic status, income levels, the presence of dependents—especially children—and the labor market status of spouses (Chaudhary & Verick 2014). These factors will be instrumental in comprehending the intrinsic dynamics of female labor force participation in Maralukunte.

Female labour force participation rates undergo fluctuations over time in response to short- and long-term shifts in economic growth and other influencing factors. In East Asian nations like Korea and Japan, women's labour force participation displays a distinct M-shaped relationship with age, where women tend to exit the workforce during childbearing years and re-enter as their children mature (Kawata & Naganuma, 2010). Conversely, in the Indian context, female labour force participation diminishes notably among women in their mid-twenties, particularly in urban areas, owing to factors such as marriage migration, household responsibilities, and childbearing (Sinha & Baliyan, 2014). However, in Maralukunte, the participation of married women remains significant, with approximately 63% of the total female non-agricultural labourers being married. Data concerning female non-agricultural employment (FNAE) rates in Maralukunte reveals that the working-age female population ranges from 17 to 56 years, with a notable concentration of working women falling within the age bracket of 30 to 45 years. These trends suggest that women in Maralukunte continue to engage in labour force activities even after marriage and childbearing, exhibiting a phenomenon akin to the added-worker effect.

From Table 5.2 below, it becomes evident that women in Maralukunte are significantly involved in factory work, tailoring, self-employment, and providing support to family businesses, such as petty shops, including kirana shops, restaurants, grinding mill stores, and evening snack stalls. Women often assume roles within these businesses after completing household chores, catering to customers' needs and vending products. Notably, males within the households primarily handle the purchasing and accounting aspects of these businesses. Profits generated from these enterprises are reinvested into business enhancement, real estate, children's education, and discretionary expenditures/non-essential things such as home improvements, gold purchases, and lavish celebrations of festivals and

rituals. Additionally, substantial donations to temples are made by purchasing gold or silver jewellery, contributing to infrastructural improvements, and providing assistance to the less fortunate through food, clothing, and monetary means. These economic activities also serve to elevate the social and religious status of households within the community. By involving in these kinds of donations, the dominant class try to elevate their social and religious status with the means of economy.

Table 5.2 Caste-Wise Engagement of Women's Non-Agricultural Employment in Maralukunte

	Factory worker	Self-employed (petty shop)	Teacher	School cooking	Tailoring	Family business	Computer Operator	Bank security/ Housekeeping	Hawker/ Street vendor	Nurse	Tuition	School classrooms sweeping (*Kasa gudisodu*)	Anganwadi helper	D-mandla worker	Grand Total
Lingayats	2	3	1		3	6	2	1				1	1		**20**
vokkaligas	5			1											**6**
Tigalas	5	1	1		3				2					1	**13**
Maratis	4				2		1								**7**
AK	14	1	1		1										**17**
AD	13				4					1	1				**19**
Bhovi	1														**1**
Gollas					1										**1**
Ajamaru			1												**1**
Brahmans	1														**1**
Edigaru					1										**1**
Grand Total	**45**	**5**	**4**	**1**	**15**	**6**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**87**

The prominence of women's involvement in factory work within the spectrum of non-agricultural occupations in Maralukunte is notably pronounced, a trend directly linked to the availability of employment opportunities in the Dabaspet industrial zone. Women in Maralukunte typically engage in unskilled and semi-skilled roles within manufacturing industries, undertaking tasks such as housekeeping, tailoring, patchwork, pressing, folding, segregating defective pieces, and packing. Notably, the participation of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida women in factory work surpasses that of other castes within the village. This phenomenon underscores several factors, including endeavours to ameliorate social and economic circumstances, low household incomes, and women's greater autonomy in seeking external employment to contribute to household finances. In certain instances, the dependence of Dalit households on alcohol-addicted men for financial provisions compels women households to seek employment opportunities to sustain their families. Generally, traditional rural norms dictate that men assume responsibility for daily household expenses, children's education, and daughters' marriages, as well as hold decision-making authority within the family. However, instances of Dalit men succumbing to alcohol addiction, manipulated by dominant and upper-caste individuals to fulfil their tasks, have become prevalent. Historically, Dalit men often demanded alcohol along with wages in rural labour

settings. Their propensity for alcohol consumption, even during sacred religious rituals, was conspicuous. These Dalit men were seen asking for money from esteemed households, especially during various festivals and rituals. However, this trait has relatively diminished after Dalit households have started working in non-agricultural occupations. Yet, Dalit women are economically vulnerable to work because of their social, economic and religious marginalisation in the village.

On the contrary, women from the upper caste, elite, and dominant caste were discouraged from undertaking unskilled wage labour, as it is perceived to diminish their societal status in the village. Because of this reason, many dominant and upper caste women stopped working after returning to the village but used to work in manufacturing factories when they were in temporary migration to urban areas. These women are encouraged to portray the features of ideal women, like involving in household work, taking care of children and the elderly, and supporting family business. In most of these households, women serve food and drink to their spouses and elderly. Their men visit the kitchen only when the female of the household is absent in the house. Even if his spouse is sick then the serving duty will be carried out by their daughters. The researcher would call these groups of women 'Dominant class women'. They are mainly involved in small-scale businesses like selling saris, Ayurvedic products, petty shops, and managing multiple SHGs in the village.

Moreover, high-profile employment opportunities within the local community are typically monopolised by individuals from the upper echelons of Maralukunte society. This pattern is observable in various roles, including positions at the village panchayat, ration shops, dairy cooperatives, and government contractual projects. This is also applicable to women. Locally available jobs for females, like computer operator, typing master, cooking for school children, brooming classrooms, and housekeeping at local bank, were largely acquired by Lingayat women. Moreover, since Lingayats are vegetarians, all children and teachers across the different castes in the school eat mid-day meals without creating any issues.

Notably, female literacy rates are on the rise across all castes in Maralukunte, with nearly 60% of females in the village being literate by 2020. Encouragingly, it is observed that women who have attained Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC)/10th standard

qualifications are more prevalent in non-agricultural occupations, followed by those with Pre-University Course (PUC)/senior secondary school and primary education backgrounds. Although women are educated and interested in working outside, they are significantly seen engaging in household duties and tasks related to family business and labour. These are mostly unpaid. For male workers, higher levels of education are indeed associated with a higher work participation rate. This is true due to multiple factors, such as the compulsion for men to earn and the greater availability of jobs for men and the restrictive social norms for women to engage in unskilled work outside the home explain this pattern.

Macro studies of women's labour participation in India proclaim that women's labour participation is higher for illiterate women compared with women with higher educational qualifications but not applicable for women with technical or vocational course attainment (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2010). This macro trend is inappropriate to the context of Maralukunte women's participation in non-agricultural employment since a significant number of working women are literate. Gratitude to the constitutional amendment Article 21A, which states that the state shall endeavour to provide free education to all the children of age group six to fourteen as a fundamental right. Which helped to increase the rate of literacy in rural India. Further, industrial companies or organised non-agricultural firms ask for formal educational qualifications as a requisite. Due to these factors, significant working women in Maralukunte have secondary education backgrounds and youngsters with pre-university courses (PUC). Women were able to raise their voices in providing education to their kids, which is possible because primary and secondary education is free in India. In a country like India, either the provision must be free or compulsory to make that work against the traditional regimes at the grassroots level. Hence, if the government could provide or announce some extra benefits like subsidies, free health care, free higher education, and offering home appliances to working women might increase the rate of female labour participation in rural areas.

6. Impact of Non-agricultural Employment on Women

The transition from agrarian-based economies to diversified economic landscapes, particularly in Maralukunte, has brought about significant socio-economic shifts, particularly impacting women. In the rural areas of Bengaluru Rural District, this

transformation is marked by the increasing prevalence of non-agricultural employment opportunities, which have implications for women's status, empowerment, and livelihoods within these communities. While traditionally relegated to roles within the agricultural sector, women in rural Bengaluru increasingly engage in various non-agricultural occupations, ranging from manufacturing and service industries to entrepreneurial ventures.

This transition signifies not only a diversification of economic activities but also a departure from traditional gender roles and norms that have historically confined women to domestic spheres. The impact of non-agricultural employment on women in rural areas of Bengaluru Rural District is multifaceted, influencing their economic independence, social mobility, and overall well-being. Moreover, it underscores broader shifts in societal dynamics, including changing perceptions of gender roles, access to education, and the evolving structure of rural economies. This section seeks to explore the nuanced dimensions of the impact of non-agricultural employment on women in rural Bengaluru, Maralukunte, shedding light on the opportunities and challenges they encounter in navigating this evolving economic landscape.

6.1. Improved in Standard of Living

India is renowned for its predominantly agrarian economy, with a considerable portion of its populace residing in rural areas. Over the past few decades, the Indian government has implemented various policies to foster industrialisation in rural regions, particularly through establishing small-scale factories. This transformation has had significant ramifications for women in rural India, with the repercussions of engaging in non-agricultural employment yielding both positive and negative effects on their livelihoods.

Foremost among the positive outcomes of factory employment is the provision of avenues for women to generate their own income, thereby fostering economic empowerment. This newfound financial independence has enabled women to elevate their socioeconomic status, enhance their quality of life, and contribute to the financial stability of their families. Notably, the process of industrialisation has had a particularly beneficial impact on Dalit women residing in Maralukunte and adjacent villages. Moreover, the proliferation of self-employment opportunities, such as tailoring and petty businesses, has further bolstered

women's financial autonomy and agency. These endeavours have facilitated their economic independence and granted them greater control over their financial resources.

The ensuing case study exemplifies the pivotal role played by the income earned by a single daughter in bolstering the overall financial resilience of her family:

> **Case Study 5.7** Sujatha was 25 years old, from the Adi-Dravida caste. She has studied till 2nd PUC (pre-university course). She has a male sibling who got married and moved to his spouse's place. Sujatha's father is an alcohol addict. He does not look after household expenditures. Most of the time, he has been seen hanging out with other drunkards of the village either near tea stalls or local liquor shops. Sujatha's mom used to work in D-mandala (private horticultural farm) as agricultural labour. It's been a year, she stopped going to that work. The family or neighbours believe that a spirit possessed Sujatha's mom. That's the reason she stopped going to work. She keeps talking to herself and to open air. Villagers say *devva* (ghost) comes on Sujatha's mom on *amaavasya* (new moon) and *pournami* (full moon) days. She does not do any work. She has stopped combing her hair for a year, it looks matted or clotted. Locals call it *jade bandide* (clotted hair). There were rumours that Sujatha's mom consumes alcohol, and the researcher noticed Sujatha's mom sitting at the local liquor shop in between many male drinkers. It is not just Sujatha's mom, but a few more Dalit women were known for consuming alcohol in the village. In contemporary times, young men and women who work in corporates consume alcohol in urban spaces. It has become a thing among peers. But in rural areas, consuming alcohol, especially cheap liquor, is looked down upon. Women consuming cheap liquor were seen with low esteem. This behaviour was mainly observed among Dalit women. In some cases, Dalit women's spouses purchase alcohol and give it to them or both husband and wife booze in the evenings after finishing the manual labour. This trend was predominantly seen among manual labourers of Dalit caste men and women.
>
> Sujatha realised her poor economic and social condition and asked her neighbours for help. With the help of her neighbour women, Sujatha got a job in the pharmaceutical industry. At a very young age, she has taken the responsibility of

household along with typical household duties. Sujatha earns around 15000 rupees per month. The opportunity to work in a factory has allowed her to earn a steady income and contribute to the family's financial stability. This additional income has also given her more autonomy and decision-making power in her family.

In the instance of Sujatha, engagement in non-agricultural employment (NAE) has afforded her opportunities to secure personal income, thereby facilitating economic empowerment. This newfound financial autonomy has enabled her to attain a state of self-sufficiency and contribute to her family's financial obligations. Concurrently, her involvement in NAE has expanded her social network, facilitating encounters with novel acquaintances, one of whom she is presently in a relationship with and contemplating matrimonial union. This exemplifies how NAE has not only bolstered Sujatha's economic independence but also endowed her with the agency to exercise discretion in selecting her prospective life partner.

Conversely, the narrative of Sujatha stands in contrast to the experiences of many daughters from upper and dominant caste backgrounds, whose matrimonial decisions are often constrained by familial dictates, relegating them to acquiescence rather than autonomy in partner selection. Meanwhile, numerous narratives of Dalit women underscore their pivotal role in financing their children's education through employment in NAE, notably within unskilled positions in factory settings. Consequently, these children, having attained education, now enjoy lucrative employment opportunities in industries. Additionally, several instances are documented where women utilized their NAE earnings to procure essentials such as motorcycles to facilitate their children's commutes to educational institutions. Furthermore, investments in domestic appliances, including grinders, refrigerators, mobile phones, divan cots, chairs, and tables, have been observed, aimed at enhancing convenience and emulating prevailing consumerist trends prevalent in both media representations and neighborhood dynamics.

Case Study 5.8 Timmakka was 46 years old from the Adi-Karnataka caste. She dropped out of school after studying the fifth standard. Her parents did not give much importance for her formal education. They used to take her to work with them or give her the duty of caring for her siblings. Timmakka’s husband is a heavy alcohol addict. She tried some medicine to stop him from consuming alcohol

(*saaraayi*). She referred to alcohol as a *mane maari* which means spoiler of the house. As Timmakka's husband failed to take responsibility as the male head of the family, Timmakka had to go and work in a factory to bear the household expenditure. She worked in the housekeeping department at a firm. After she started going to work, she took care of her kids' education and other expenses. Her son and daughter completed graduation and started working in different factories. Now, three of them engage in factory works at different skill levels. With the increase in household income, they were able to renovate their house and buy a fridge and a two-wheeler vehicle for easy transportation. They use modern utensils like a pressure cooker and an LPG stove for fast cooking.

Timmakka and her kids were afraid of losing the property because of her husband's addiction to alcohol and gambling. So, Timmakka arranged a meeting with the village headman and other reputed elders of the village to convince her husband to transfer all the property in the name of Timmakka and her kids. And she succeeded in that task.

The case study of Timmakka highlights the increase in household income from non-agricultural employment, which helped support children's education, share family expenses, and increase living standards by purchasing modern apparatus. And transferring her husband's property in her name due to her awareness of losing it due to her husband's addiction to alcohol and gambling. Non-agricultural employment has provided women with access to education and training, which has helped them to develop new skills and advance their careers. This has allowed women access to better-paying jobs and move up the career ladder. In this way, education has played a key role in accessing non-agricultural employment. Non-agricultural employment has helped women to gain a higher social status within their communities. As previously mentioned, the occupation hierarchy is associated with the person's social status within the community and village in general.

6.2. Increase in Dalit household Income

It is observed that Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida predominantly work in factory work within non-agricultural employment. This observation is in tune with other macro studies that underline the highest women wage participation among scheduled caste and scheduled

tribes (Sinha & Baliyan 2014, Srivastava and Srivastava 2010, Klasen & Pieters 2015) who were left with no other choice but to work due to impoverishment. Maralukunte consists of multi-caste populations belonging to the Hindu religion. There were no Scheduled tribes, and the Muslim population in the village. Here an attempt has been made to investigate the intricacies and intersectionality between Dalits and other community-working women.

The occupation hierarchy is intricately associated with social groups of women in relation to various capital accumulations in the family. Table 5.1 shows that Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida women mainly engage in non-agricultural employment. This conveys that Dalits' lack of social and economic capital pushes them to sell their labour power to survive and improve their livelihoods. Working professionals like computer operators and teachers are mostly from the Lingayat caste in female non-agricultural occupations, as this work requires separate training that needs the help of money. So, only the progressive thinkers of the upper ladder of the caste system and elite households were able to provide them to their women. Different eligibility criteria/skills/training are required to teach different levels in the education field. Women teaching higher grades in private schools and holding permanent positions in government schools are mostly from Lingayat and Brahman castes. Tigala women teach at private pre-schools, which require minimal skills. The employment opportunities available for women within the village, like Anganwadi helper, school cook, local bank, and school housekeeping, are mostly monopolised by lingayat women who exhibit their strong social network along with a strong cultural, political, economic and numerical strength in the village. Women who work in unskilled jobs, whether within or outside the village, are looked down on compared to women who stay at the house looking after children and household duties. Dominant caste and affluent class women staying back at home looking after household chores and helping family's petty businesses indicates their high social and economic status within their community and village in general. It is also a matter of pride and prestige that upper-caste women do not work for the well-to-do upper castes. Tigala castes are majorly involved in cultivating vegetables and flowers, and their women are engaged in street vending to earn a small amount for the daily household expenditure and support their families. Below, a case study of a Tigala woman engaged in street vending to support her family is explained in detail:

Case Study 5.9 Kumaramma was approximately 50 years old from the Tigala caste. She has three kids. Out of that, two daughters got married and moved to their husband's places. Kumaramma's son is also married and living with his mother and spouse. Kumaramma's husband died seven years back due to liver failure since he was an alcohol addict. Kumaramma has taken responsibility for the household expenditure since her husband was sick. She started going around the village and neighbouring villages to sell vegetables and flowers grown from her field. Her income from street vending was very useful for supporting her son's pre-university education and graduation and further in household expenditure. She had even saved some money by systematically investing a small amount of money in a self-help financial group. When Kumaramma's son obtained a job as a supervisor in a manufacturing unit, her son asked her to take a leave from her work. Now, she doesn't go around the village to sell vegetables and flowers; instead, she looks after the areca nut plantations, which are still small plants, and for the rest of the day, she collects green leafy vegetable *hanagane soppu* (variety of alternanthera sessilis) to sell in the market. *Hanagane soppu* is a wild plant grown in agricultural fields and the surroundings of the village lake (*kere*). It has many health benefits. Kumaramma collects this leafy every day according to the availability of the plants. Her daughter-in-law helps in removing other wild plants and separating it from stems. The processed leafy is further taken by Kumaramma to the city in the early morning train and sold in the Yeshwanthapur market. These plants are mainly available during summer or early autumn from December to March. In monsoon, she plants *dantu or harive soppu* (Amaranthus) in the field of areca plantations and sells it. This is how she is still financially independent, not dependent on her son.

Further, a reasonable number of women are engaged in tailoring across all castes. This was possible because of the state's provision of a vocational training programme for rural women from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with the aim of developing skills and empowering rural women. Vocational training initiatives are strategically devised interventions aimed at equipping female participants with specialized competencies and expertise across diverse professional domains, thereby facilitating their entry into the workforce or progression within existing career trajectories. These programs

encompass a spectrum of offerings, ranging from fundamental literacy and digital literacy skills. The overarching objective of vocational training initiatives is to foster self-sufficiency among women, enabling them to attain economic autonomy and enhance their overall standard of living. Such initiatives are frequently administered through educational institutions, vocational colleges, and non-governmental entities, often supported by governmental allocations or private sponsors, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Tailoring courses for women are also part of such government programmes. This is the reason women from all castes engage in tailoring; customers prefer to give their clothes to women who are more skilled and stitch them according to the customer's instructions and give back within the time frame of the customer's request are some of the criteria involved in choosing a tailor. But in previous generations, people used to prefer their own caste tailors. If the upper caste has given their clothes to other caste tailors, then the stitched clothes were washed before use. The same trend was followed by the dominant caste, too. In this situation, the women who still believed in purity and pollution of a caste system would like to wear stitched clothes after washing. This was the common practice earlier, but things have changed as commercial tailor shops in nearby towns press the clothes to make them look neat and clean.

Dalit households are earning a decent income through working in non-agricultural employment. They have liquid money in their hands now to purchase commodities in the market. Earlier, Dalits in Maralukunte were known to live near unhygienic places and mostly wore used clothes of the upper caste and their landlords. Currently, Dalits are also wearing good and neat clothes and eating nutritious food. Women's occupational mobility, especially among Dalit women, implies that the traditional caste hierarchy's tenacity is losing and leads to the formation of classes as an emerging trend in Maralukunte.

It was considered that Dalits women do not face many social taboos to work outside the home due to their impoverishment. It is quite apparent from the participation of Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida in non-agricultural employment. But the interesting factor to observe in cases Timmaiah and Basappa is that both of their spouses left work when returned back to Maralukunte. Their woman stated their interest in working after their kids grow up and after the death of sick in-laws. At the same time, they also mentioned that

their in-laws and husbands might not allow them to work outside or in factories. These women used to work when they stayed in Bangalore with their husbands as the cost of living was high, and need to pay rent in an urban area. But in Maralukunte, they live in their own house. Where Timmaiah and Basappa work in factories. Single income is sufficient to run a family in the village. In this context, Bourdieu's concept of doxa is helpful in understanding the traditional gender division of labour at the household level. Doxa includes some widely accepted norms and practices. And it is not open for questioning or contestation. In other words, what is justified in the name of 'tradition' falls under doxa (Bourdieu 1977b:165-7, Bourdieu 2000a, Grenfell 2008:120). Basappa's spouse left working outside the home because of her father-in-law's illness. According to the norms of society, it is the daughter-in-law's duty to take care of the children and elders of the household. When the researcher asked Basappa's spouse about whether she was interested in working? She stated her wish to work, earn money, be independent, and give better education to her kids. In modern society, if a husband and wife are working in a permanent position and cannot take a long leave to care for their old, then they hire a nurse or caretaker for that situation. This would have been applicable if Basappa's family had stayed in Bangalore. As Basappa was the only son of his father, his situation compelled him to move back to the village to care for the elderly. As Basappa was not rich enough to send both of his kids to an English medium school, he chose to send his son to a Convent and his daughter to a Kannada medium school. This is because the daughter is considered '*parara swattu'* (the property of the other). This belief is still immensely persistent in Maralukunte. That's the reason not many rural women are allowed to acquire higher education; even if they are highly educated, women are not allowed to work outside the home if they are from higher social classes in the village. Even if rural women are working, they are never untangled from their traditional gender roles and duties in the household.

This study agrees with the observations of macro studies that women of the household quit their jobs predominantly in situations after marriage, with an increase in household income and time of childbearing. Few examples presented in cases 5.5 and 5.6 where women left their jobs after returning to the village (reverse migration). This is mainly because of the low cost of living in a village and social constraints on women to engage in unskilled jobs, which also indicate the trait of hegemonic masculinity where men try to control women's

mobility by restraining them from working outside. Traditional norms related to gender roles and responsibilities among higher social classes of Maralukunte have not changed much with occupational diversification or women working in the non-agricultural sector. Women working outside the home are still looked at with low esteem depending on the job they do and the position/skill they hold. High respect is still given to traditional domestic work and entrepreneurship. The status and rank of working women differ within the same profession according to expertise, age, and socio-economic background.

6.3. Women's Employment and Bargaining Power

During the fieldwork, a number of rural women expressed their wish to work outside the home. This confirms the macro studies argument that women prefer to work outside as a strategy to gain social and financial independence. Still, a large number (41%) of Maralukunte working-age (17-60) women are housemakers and family labourers, which is unpaid work. Thus, many rural women are dependent on their men for their economic support. Women are restricted from accessing the cash economy and marketplace. They are dependent on male households to access economic resources (Agarwal 1997). From the studies of American households, Paula England and Barbara Kilbourne argue that working women have higher bargaining power than housewives (England & Kilbourne 1990: cited in Agarwal 1997). Women's entry into the labour market is one way of increasing their bargaining power, and it also increases the perceived legitimacy of their claims (Sen 1990: cited in Agarwal, 1997). This is also mainly because the majority of tasks and activities carried out in the informal and domestic sectors are undervalued and unrecognised and paid less/unpaid.

Nothing is free in this world. Women are aware of this factor but do not have the autonomy to choose to work outside as it is influenced by many factors like education, feeling obliged to do household tasks, taking care of elders and children, and constraints of traditional gender norms. Working women have more bargaining power compared to housemakers as they are earning. Upper-caste, Dominant caste, and upper-class women are more restrained from working outside; in this context, Dalit women enjoy relative freedom to go and work outside. However, there are cases where Dalit families have adopted the traits of the dominant patriarchal culture. Once the Dalit household income increased, they restricted

their household women from engaging in unskilled jobs. If women are not working/earning/contributing financially then they will have less say in the family decision.

The case study below manifests how the caste and status of the family restrain women from working outside the home:

> **Case Study 5.10** Padmaja was 50 years old from the Lingayat caste. She was the wife of a village priest. She has a son who is studying post-graduation in Sanskrit and taking sloka classes in Siddaganga matta (at Tumakur), which will help him occupy his father's profession in the future. Siddaganga is a Lingayat matta attached to an educational institute. Padmaja's daughter is a widow and stays in her natal home with her kid. When factories started functioning in the Dabaspet industrial area, a large number of people from Maralukunte started going to work. By observing this, Padmaja and her daughter also wanted to go. She has used all her bargaining skills to convince her husband and join one factory. As Padmaja was illiterate, she was recruited into the housekeeping department. She went to work for a week or two and quit the job.
>
> Padmaja says the main reasons for quitting work were long hours of work, delays in coming home, not being comfortable working and eating with other community members. She had to groom herself by colouring her hair as expected at work and followed by other co-workers, which was against her wishes. In Hindu society, females are considered to be Goddess Lakshmi, and it is customary to light a lamp after six in the evening. As it gets darker after six, women's movement outside the home reduces in the village. These cultural norms protected women from other men or any danger from ancient times. Women are not allowed to roam in the village when there is less movement of people or visit secluded places. As a priest's spouse, she was expected to follow some gender regimes more rigorously, like lighting a lamp in the evening, maintaining purity, and taking care of household chores. When she was not able to follow the traditional gender regimes due to occupational constraints, she was asked by her husband to withdraw from the job, and she did because she was raised to believe in the patriarchal ideology.

Padmaja's case highlights how women's mobility is restricted through various gender regimes, which women follow to protect themselves and to protect their family's honour and status. In general, if men are working and fulfilling the obligation to take care of the financial needs of the family, then women are not sent to work even if they are educated and hold a graduation degree. An increase in household income has a negative effect on women's employment across all castes of the Maralukunte. The ability to control women and other marginals through major masculine features is the trait of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) in the Maralukunte. Hegemonic masculinity is the most accepted and admired way of being a man in a certain society. It's like the gold standard for masculinity, defining how men are supposed to act and be. This ideal masculinity is usually linked with traits like being tough, assertive, aggressive, and emotional stoicism. Men who fit this mould are often valorized and rewarded within society, while deviations from them may be stigmatized or marginalized. Hegemonic masculinity plays a central role in shaping power dynamics, social hierarchies, and gender relations in society. Rural societies still follow rigid patriarchal principles of gender norms. For example, According to the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act of 2005, daughters have equal property rights as their sons irrespective of their marital status. However, very few families in the Maralukunte have given property shares to their household women. And very few women have raised their voices against it. Because in patriarchial society, property was inherited only by sons in tradition, which was also taught to kids in the socialisation process. Hence, not many old women ask for their share of parental property these days, but things might change in the coming generation by observing the present generation's awareness of things.

6.4. Double-Burden

Women participating in the workforce and managing household chores is a double burden and drudgery. Working throughout the day is stressful. Non-agricultural employment has increased women's workload as they have to balance their work and domestic responsibilities. Women often work long hours and are still expected to take care of the household tasks and children. Working women's day starts with household chores like cleaning vessels, brooming and mopping the floor, preparing coffee or tea, then grooming kids if they have any school-going kids, cooking breakfast and lunch for a lunchbox, then

travelling to work, carrying out paid work, ravelling back to the house after work, clean all utensils, cook dinner, serving food. hese are the minimum monotonous works rural working women engage in on an everyday basis. In the middle of all these busy work schedules, married women were not even asked whether they wished to produce children or not. In fact, they are blamed for not producing a male child. They were forced to reproduce until they gave birth to a family heir, i.e. a male member.

During the fieldwork, the researcher observed that women served food for their spouse's plates. After eating, men did not even keep their plates in the sink but left them for women to clean the plates and the eating area. When a researcher questioned this practice, people replied that married women have seen and followed what their mother and mother-in-law were doing for very long and passed it on to the next generation because that is what is expected from a woman, to feed men who worked hard outside the home. Then what about women who also work outside the home and contribute financially? At least they should get some helping hand from their spouses in managing household tasks. In joint and extended families, men helping with household chores are minimal. But in nuclear families, when men and women are working outside the home or in the cases of a spouse's ill-health, there is some relaxation that men are seen participating in household duties.

Men reacted differently when a researcher asked why they were not helping women with household duties. Few men admitted that they know household tasks; however, they do it when their spouses visit natal or relative's house. Few men answered it in a funny way, complaining to spouses that they wish to help their women but their spouses do not allow them to do so! For this answer, few women reacted by twisting their mouths, and few even laughed! in group interviews. Because they know that gender roles and duties are doxas, which are difficult to alter in rural areas, which are known for the strong perpetual of traditional institutional regimes. Interestingly, few men from the Lingayat caste who work as chefs. They are cooks by professionals; they cook for various events and functions. These men cut vegetables, wash vessels, and cook food as a part of their job but do not help their spouses with the household chores. Man is considered strong, assertive, courageous, a leader, and independent while exhibiting all masculine features. If men are seen indulging in household chores, it relegates their status, and people question their wives' behaviour for

letting their husbands do household chores. Along with household duties and childcare, women were also seen helping with their spouse's personal grooming, like oiling hair, ironing clothes, and helping in cleaning the back part of the body (*bennu tikkodu*) during bath. It shows the double burden of working women in Maralukunte. Women who are working outside the home don't get any helping hand in household tasks in large households.

There is a negative association between changes in women's occupations and changes in gender role ideology in relation to the size of the household. Women were expected to be involved in household chores and parenting, dress typically feminine, and be polite and accommodating. If women choose to work outside the home to contribute to the household total income, that is most probably in the cases when the husband fails to take household financial responsibility orin desire to improve the living standards of the family. Even if women are working outside, they were not released from traditional gender roles like household chores and parenting. Women of Maralukunte are able to engage in paid work mainly because of opportunities available in proximity and the availability of technologically advanced pieces of equipment for household chores that reduce the burden of women's tasks and help them to work outside. Modern technological equipment like washing machines, fridges, LPG gas stoves, mixers, and pressure cookers have saved women time engaging in washing, cooking and other household chores. Further, the panchayat has facilitated water taps for each household to promote safe drinking water. In the modern kitchen setup, people prefer the dishwashing area within the kitchen and water taps inside the houses that further save women's time from fetching water from a distance and carrying utensils from inside to out and vice versa. Modern technological equipment and rural development facilities have relaxed the burden of household chores for women and given way to engage in paid work.

6.5. Discrimination at Workplace

Working in factories also impacted negatively on women's livelihood. Though women are literate and capable of doing semi-skilled and skilled work in different manufacturing industries, sometimes they are forcefully recruited in housekeeping jobs assuming that women are well-trained in household chores. This will further discourage women from

going forward in their carrier. Most of the women from Maralukunte and nearby villagers are hired on contractual basis. Contractors often remove people, especially women, if there are no or minimal orders received, lack of work availability, and sometimes even without any valid reason. So, there is a lack of job security in contractual hiring. Further, benefits such as maternity leave, provident fund, health insurance, paid leaves and pension which make it hard for workers to plan for their future. Women who are in need of money are made to leave their job and rejoin the same company so that they can claim their provident fund (PF). The absence of maternity leave and pay benefits discourages newly married and pregnant women away from work. The absence of labour unions makes it further difficult for women workers to raise their issues. Sometimes women are put to overtime (OT) work without their consent. If women raise their voices against it then they are simply asked to quit the job. Overtime keeps women's stress and anxiety level high and leaves them with little time to spend with their families or pursue other interests. Women who work in factories also face discrimination, sexual harassment, abuse and are often asked to work overtime. Their problems are often not addressed by management. As most of the factory supervisors and management crews are men, they are ignorant of these issues. Sometimes they show favouritism based on workers age, looks, and associations. Women who are badly in need of monetary support continue to work in spite of the above-mentioned problems. Whereas some women have complained against supervisors and left the job when management has not taken action against the culprit. Some women left their job and joined other factories. This implicitly indicates that people from management themselves are culprits who ask for sexual favours, pressure them to have a conversation, and go out with them. If women do not listen to such orders, then such women are pressurised to do extra work or asked to work overtime. These problems can limit women's to work outside and their experiences can scare other women too, to step out of the house to work. Hence, the government and factory management need to address these issues and provide better working conditions and benefits for women in rural areas to ensure their livelihoods are sustainable and empowering and for overall improvement in female workforce participation. The establishment of a workers union in each firm can reduce this kind of problem to an extent.

Non-agricultural employment has both positively and negatively impacted women's livelihoods in Maralukunte. While it has allowed women to earn a steady income and contribute to their family's financial stability for the lower social classes of the village. At the same time, it has also increased their workload, exposed them to several health risks and gender discrimination and harassment. However, women are stepping out to work outside the home. Societal norms related to gender roles and duties have not changed much in Maralukunte among the higher social classes. In Maralukunte, almost 59% of woring age women are engaged in paid work, out of that more than half of them (28%) are engage in non-agricultural occupation. Lingayats and Dalit women are largely engaged in Non agricultural occupations. But Dalit women are significantly observed working in factory units. Since they are socially impoverished and enjoy social autonomy in working outside the home. This is in tune with many gender studies stating Dali women enjoy relative autonomy in relation to other caste women in the rural societies. The present study establishes that women are still restricted to household chores and constrained to work in paid work outside the home, especially from affluent households. This implies that not much has changed in gender roles and duties in association with occupation among the higer social classes of the village. But non-agricultural employment has helped in a huge way to both men and women of Maralukunte households.

7. Women's Expected Behaviours in Different Social Spaces

Looking at employment is not enough, although how employment relates to women's position within the household must be analysed. However, one encounters the problem of reciprocal influence between the position held within the household and employment. On the one hand, women's responsibilities within the household constrain some kinds of employment to which she has access. On the other hand, women's employment and income will change their position within the household in decision-making, division of domestic labour and distribution of resources (Band 1992). A study of Cairo factory women reveals that work strengthened women's position. And it increased women's respect at home and raised their voices in decision-making (Ibrahim 1985). But the relationship between employment and women's increased social and economic autonomy is contentious. Though income allows women to raise their voices in household decision-making, their voice pitch

differs according to the social space. The researcher attempted to contemplate Bourdieu's concept of Field in this context to investigate women's behaviours in different social spaces. According to Bourdieu, a field is a social space in which interaction, transactions and events occur (Bourdieu 2005:148 cited in Grenfell 2008:67). Though women take part in the decision-making among the households, women are still not allowed to interfere with their male or elders in public.

In the field study, when researcher visited village houses to fill the household schedule, most of her respondents were women since she is also a woman. She had to specifically request to talk to men of the household, as there were some questions designed for men. Further, a few details like household income, property, crop cultivation, and inter-generational occupational diversification were mostly given by a male member of the family. It was observed that if a male member is talking to some official, and the spouse is a housemaker by her profession, she will not sit with the visitors unless if they are from kin members. She was mostly seen in the kitchen preparing something for the visitors. If she does not like the person who had visited the house or the conversation which is going on, then one can hear unpleasant sounds from the kitchen, like glass falling or keeping glass/plate gratingly! Suppose a woman is working and earns equal or more than her husband. In that case, she has seen sitting along with the guests in the conversation without intermission of her duty to prepare food and serve guests. Initially, the researcher was thought as an official who visited the village to approve various loans as she was roaming around the village with a hanging bag, holding a notepad and a pen. In a moneylending situation, when the borrower delayed giving money but visits the house to give interest then the women of the household were implicitly forced to speak about the financial need or the crisis of the household to make it a point in the conversation. If women intervened in money and property dealings without the consent of men, then their voices are side-lined by saying that women do not know about the outside world (*avalige enu gottilla*). These observations from the field highlight embedding social rules in social spaces. Social rules limit the position of individuals to just actors in social spaces. Individuals are just actors who perform in different social spaces according to what their role and position (as in particular gender, age, father, mother, spouse, daughter, in-law, etc) demands.

8. Gender Stereotypes

Family honour is one of the key values in a patriarchal society. And it depends mainly on the modest, chaste, and discreet sexual conduct of daughters, sisters and wives. The importance of honour as a basic social principle explains why males in the family accept full responsibility for their kinswomen morally and economically. Control of women in the kin group is vested exclusively in the hands of male members of the group. While exerting this control, men receive social, moral, religious, and political support from society. Men are considered the guardians of family honour. Women are most likely to damage the purity of family honour (Moore 1988). This is one of the reasons why girls are married off at a very young age, sometimes even before crossing the legal marriage age of 18. In cases where women are cheated by their husbands or widowed, their natal family will come front to support them. Women are not free from societal norms, customary codes, and sexual mores, ranging from the way women dress up, make eye contact, and speak. This gendered ideology produces inequality and hierarchy by embodying women as repositories and men as a regulator of women's conduct (Gupte 2013). Educated and working women enjoy relative freedom regarding traditional gender constraints by wearing trendy clothes of popular culture and expressing their opinions towards various things. Things have changed so much regarding gender roles globally (like great women entrepreneurs). But people still prefer educated, non-working women as their daughters-in-law (*sose*) in the village. Women are expected to attain education, which can get a better groom in the market because middle-class urban men expect educated and working women.

Studies on women's paid work confirm that women are predominantly engaged in service sectors like health and education. Within the education sector, women acquire a high proportion of primary school teachers positions but a much fewer proportion of higher education posts (UN 2010: cited in Sinha and Baliyan 2014). In Maralukunte, it is observed that women were significantly engaged in semi-skilled work in factories and unskilled housekeeping jobs in non-agricultural employment. They are further seen in professions like teaching, nursing, and computer operations. This signifies women's lack of skill, training, and education. On top of that, occupation is still gender stereotyped in Maralukunte. In urban areas, women sometimes cut men's hair and ride gear bikes, cars,

trains, and flights, but in Maralukunte, these facts are only seen in the popular media. In villages, professions like waterman, electrician, civil contractor, carpenter, and mechanic are meant to be men's work. It is mainly because women were prohibited from receiving training or engaging in the above-mentioned works. Women were restricted from engaging in outside work as they were supposed to take care of household duties, look after the elderly and kids, and reproduce.

This chapter delves into the transformative effects of non-agricultural employment on rural households and women in Maralukunte. The transition from traditional agricultural practices to diverse non-farm employment opportunities has significantly altered the socio-economic fabric of the village. This shift is driven by the diminishing viability of agriculture due to factors such as reduced land holdings, climatic uncertainties, and increased mechanisation.

The engagement of rural inhabitants, particularly Dalits, in non-agricultural employment has led to substantial improvements in their standard of living, which is evident in changes in lifestyle, attire, dietary habits, and the acquisition of assets. Women's participation in the non-agricultural workforce, especially in factory settings, has been pivotal in enhancing their economic independence and social status. The narratives of individuals like Hanumakka and Sujatha illustrate the profound impact of stable income from non-agricultural employment on family dynamics, financial stability, and personal empowerment.

Despite the positive changes, the chapter also highlights the persistent social stratification and the unequal distribution of power and wealth. Dalits, although benefiting from non-agricultural employment, still face challenges in achieving socio-economic parity with upper and dominant castes. The enduring effects of traditional biases and the compartmentalisation of residential areas within the village underscore the complexities of achieving true social integration.

In conclusion, non-agricultural employment has been a catalyst for socio-economic mobility and improved living standards in Maralukunte. However, the nuanced realities of caste-based disparities pertaining to the participation of males and females in the labour force are significant.

Chapter 6
Summary and Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis delves into the socio-economic transformations in Maralukunte Village and Bengaluru Rural District, focusing mainly on the gender dynamics of work in agriculture and non-agricultural employment. The thesis further examined the significance of occupational mobility in transforming gender and inter-caste relations. This concluding chapter synthesises the key findings, emerging trends of gendered participation in work, and the dynamics of caste relations in the rural Indian context.

The advent of agricultural mechanisation has profoundly transformed traditional farming practices and relations of production in rural areas. Although mechanisation has enhanced productivity and efficiency, it simultaneously displaced manual agricultural labour, adversely impacting the small farmers and agricultural labourers. Machines are integral to local farming practices, facilitating ploughing, digging, pest management, efficient water usage, and the transportation of goods. Men traditionally performed these works. Nevertheless, it has not resulted in distress in Maralukunte village. Instead, they are successful in diversifying into multiple occupations. An increased literacy, improved levels of education, industrial development, the village's proximity to the city of Bengaluru and people's aspiration for a better living facilitated such a transition.

As mentioned in chapter three, women's land ownership in Maralukunte is slightly higher than that of Indian women. This regional disparity highlights the local practice of *Manvaltana,* which is preferred when a family has a single daughter or diseased son, then the son-in-law is invited to take care of the family property in this practice. Besides, women's reservations in Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana enhanced women's residential land ownership. The male heads of several families from the village registered residential land in the name of their spouse to construct a new house using the financial assistance and subsidies under the scheme. Besides, widows own a significant portion of women's land in Maralukunte. This regional observation is consistent with broader studies on women's land ownership at the national level (Agarwal et al 2021). In this context, the

property is transferred to a woman after the demise of her husband. Consequently, widows in nuclear families become heads of the family.

The mechanisation of agriculture has led to the displacement of male labourers into the non-agricultural sector, resulting in a decline in the number of male agricultural labourers in Maralukunte. Notably, machines have predominantly introduced in agricultural tasks traditionally performed by men. Nevertheless, mechanisation is not significant in the activities traditionally practised by women in agriculture. Hence, women continue to engage in agricultural activities, which often lead to the feminisation of agriculture or agricultural labour. The feminisation of agriculture is a notable trend in North India, largely driven by the high rate of male migration. When men migrate, women in these households are left to manage agricultural activities. However, in Maralukunte and surrounding villages in rural Bengaluru, male migration patterns differ from the case of North India; men here typically migrate with their nuclear families. If a man is single, he migrates alone to the city to fulfil his aspirations. However, he takes his spouse with him after the marriage since the migration destination is a proximate city such as Bengaluru. Moreover, migrated men will have either their parents or relatives to take care of agricultural land and other properties in the village. The agricultural land is still under the control of male members of the family; on top of that, females are companions to male migrants giving less scope for the feminisation of agriculture in Maralukunte.

In addition, the government's sustained efforts to enhance irrigation and productivity have shifted the focus from subsistence agriculture to commercial cultivation, including horticulture and plantation crops in Maralukunte. This change in agricultural production continues to necessitate seasonal agricultural labour for tasks such as planting, weeding, and harvesting horticultural crops. Women, who have traditionally been involved in these activities, are now experiencing increased demand for their labour due to changes in agricultural production. Consequently, the participation of women in agricultural labour is significantly increased than that of men in Maralukunte. This phenomenon can also be argued as an outcome of a technological bias in the development and use of machinery for tasks typically carried out by women in agriculture. This bias can be attributed to the continued male dominance in the agricultural sector, encompassing roles from landowners

to decision-makers and investors in modern agriculture. Historically, women have been viewed as supporters or secondary workers in agricultural activities, which further led machine developers and their investors to largely overlook the mechanisation of women's tasks in agriculture.

In the past, Maralukunte experienced a high rate of migration, driven by escalating agricultural input costs, inadequate irrigation facilities, and irregular work availability. These challenges compelled villagers to seek alternative means to fulfil their aspirations, provide good education and marry their children. Establishing an industrial area in Dabaspet has subsequently created employment opportunities for residents of Maralukunte and surrounding villages. Moreover, infrastructure facilities, transportation and communication facilities have improved over time. In addition, international schools are established in the vicinity of rural areas. As a result, migration has significantly declined, and several villagers commute daily for work. The increased income from non-agricultural employment facilitated social and economic mobility for many families. However, economic mobility mediated by long-term migrations weakens family and kin relations. Additionally, younger generations prefer to pursue their careers in non-agricultural sectors, as agriculture in arid regions is no longer considered profitable. At the same time, expanding educational and industrial opportunities have created new pathways for social mobility, where the labouring class is no longer tied to traditional patron-client relationships. This shift provides relative social and economic advantages in non-agricultural employment.

Pluriactivity, or engagement in multiple income-generating activities, has emerged as a prevalent trend in Maralukunte. It is a response to the economic uncertainties inherent in agriculture and the emerging opportunities in the industrial area of Dabaspet, located near Maralukunte, which comes under the Bengaluru Rural district. These factories in the vicinity have created job opportunities for many job seekers. As a result, the working population in Maralukunte engages in a diverse range of occupations, encompassing 48 primary and 14 secondary occupations, which have been further categorised based on gendered work divisions. Activities such as driving, electrical work, water supply management, barbering, carpentry, and vehicle mechanics continue to be dominated by

men in Maralukunte and surrounding villages. Notably, no women in the village have ventured into these traditionally male-dominated occupations. While a few women have acquired the skills to drive scooters and cars, but none have adopted driving as an occupation or a source of income. This situation highlights persistent gender differences in opportunities for a set of occupations, and it is an example of doxa was still not challenged by the Maralukunte women. The women in the region are not allowed into such occupations due to social and cultural constraints and gender-stereotyped orientations. Alongside such restrictions, dominant and upper-caste women are not allowed to engage in co-working with Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida women who are actively engaged in factory work. There are restrictions on interaction, inter-dining, and sharing space. Such a scenario reveals the diversity of barriers and opportunities for the women from different castes of rural Karnataka.

Diversifying into alternative occupations impacts various aspects of life in Maralukunte, including education, attire, lifestyle, and dietary habits. Enhanced earnings have consequently elevated the living standards of the villagers. Conversely, this phenomenon can also be viewed as a response to the rising cost of living, which has compelled them to seek alternative sources of income. The shift towards non-agricultural employment has profoundly affected rural communities, prompting horizontal mobility (Sorokin 1927) due to transformation, weakening traditional political institutions, and increasing bargaining power for women.

Non-agricultural employment has become increasingly vital for rural households, with factory work and service sector jobs emerging as preferred occupations and significant sources of income. The diversification of employment has enhanced financial stability and resilience for many households, thereby reducing their reliance on agriculture. Notably, men and women from Dalit communities are significantly engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled factory work since they were the main agricultural labouring classes in rural society. Changes in the agricultural sector and the introduction of machines have a direct impact on these classes. Dalit women's participation in the non-agricultural workforce has markedly increased their economic independence and bargaining power in making household decisions such as investment, children's education, marriage and changes in the attire and

nutrient food intake. Employment in factories and other non-agricultural sectors alongside men has provided women with dignity, and stable incomes, contributing to improved household welfare and greater decision-making power within families. The active participation of women in work outside the domestic sphere has facilitated a shift from entrenched social norms and increased women's agency in negotiating with traditional social regimes.

The rise in income with non-farm employment has led to better housing, improved living conditions, access to public places and commensality, investment in education, and petty businesses. The houses with modern amenities and essential home appliances simplified domestic chores for women. The Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida castes significantly benefitted from new avenues of work, as 60 per cent of the factory workers are from these communities. There is a significant improvement in their access to public spaces, resources, and other communal spaces such as temples, wells, and public gatherings. This was possible due to improved literacy, political awareness, and aspirations. State's interventions, those specifically targeted manual labourers and women, such as the MGNREGA and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), have been instrumental in creating and enhancing opportunities for work and women's empowerment. The SHGs have provided women with access to credit, training, and support networks, enabling them to start small businesses and improve their economic status.

An intriguing aspect of the dominant community of men who work in the non-farm sector in Maralukunte is the tendency to avoid working with the members from Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida on the same skill level. The participation rate of dominant caste women in the labour force is less compared with Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida women. Dominant caste women mostly engage in self-employment, such as petty businesses or supporting family businesses. Dominant caste women who migrate to cities with their spouses work in factories due to the high cost of living in urban areas. In contrast, they withdraw from the workforce after returning to the village. Dominant caste women who are single and whose spouses are sick or not fit to work are seen working in factories to support the family. In the above situation, men from dominant communities are more likely to commute to nearby towns and cities such as Nelamangala, Tumkur, and Bengaluru for better employment. In

contrast, Dalit workers typically seek employment in the nearby industrial area of Dabaspet. A similar practice is evident in the village institutions like the panchayat, Public Distribution System (PDS) shops/ ration shops, and Maralukunte *haalū Utpadakara Sahakara Sangha* (Maralukunte Co-operative Milk Producers Society). The roles within these institutions are distributed according to the hierarchical structure of the traditional caste system. For example, Lingayats primarily handle accounting tasks, Tigalas are involved in measuring products, and Dalits perform unskilled labour such as carrying and cleaning. However, there are deviations from these traditional social arrangements, as illustrated by Nagaraju's case. Despite belonging to the Adi-Karnataka community, Nagaraju serves as a secretary at a local PDS institution, overseeing even Lingayat and Tigala workers. This situation revealed the complexities and tensions surrounding caste-based roles and reservations.

The relationship between caste and occupation has undergone significant transformation following the abolition of untouchability and the decline of Jajmani system. Alongside, the gender division of labour has undergone a significant change. Historically, *Kula dharma* (the unique duty or custom of a family or caste) was prioritised, which closely links occupations with the rigid caste system. Influential factors such as education, better employment opportunities, and migration have gradually decoupled occupations from caste constraints. In Maralukunte, many agricultural labourers and small and marginal farmers have shifted to factory work. Men and women who engage in the same work, whether in industry or agriculture, are paid the same. However, the gender division of labour is prominent in the agricultural sector. Besides agricultural labour, women continue to manage household responsibilities. It is occasionally negotiated when both men and women in the household engage in non-agricultural employment. Recent trends suggest a gradual shift towards income parity, regardless of gender, where traditional doxa of wage disparity in terms of gender was challenged in the agricultural sector with the influence of India's Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 and its implementation in factory works. Nonetheless, employers seldom hire women for roles previously deemed as male domains, such as ploughing in agriculture and machine operations in factories. This indicates that

significant gender-based occupational differences persist while there has been some progress.

The present study reveals a hierarchy within occupational diversification influenced by caste, class, capital, and educational attainment. Sons of priests continue to hold priestly positions predominantly within Brahmin or Lingayat communities, and these priests do not serve the Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida communities, who have their community priests. White-collar job holders, such as engineers, bank employees, and teachers, attain their positions through specific levels of education and skills. They are often from upper-caste, dominant-caste, and wealthy family backgrounds. Individuals engaged in self-employment, petty businesses, contracting, and large-scale landholding possess substantial social, cultural, and economic capital. In contrast, Dalit communities are often employed as agricultural labourers, factory workers, electricians, peons, and attenders. Despite a few exceptions, this situation reveals the extension of the hierarchical caste relationship into occupational shifts in Maralukunte. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of capital are pertinent to understanding differences in occupational achievements in any caste in the context of Maralukunte. Upper-caste, dominant-caste, and wealthy families are likelier to pursue occupations with high revenue and social status. It was possible because of their higher educational qualifications, skill acquirements, social networks, and substantial economic and cultural capital. These groups typically exhibit their dominant nature and strong cultural capital. In this way, the traditional structure of dominance is still regulated by the upper ladder of the traditional caste system. Hence, they are averse to engaging in the tasks performed by Adi-Karnataka and Adi-Dravida, whether in agriculture or in the factory. They are afraid of attributing lower status in the village, as exemplified in Chapter Four. In stark contrast, Dalit communities occupy a range of positions from unskilled to skilled labour, primarily due to their lack of socio-economic capital, less fertile land, lack of economic capital to pursue higher education and historical oppression. This disparity underscores the persistent influence of caste and class on occupational diversification and economic mobility in Maralukunte. Economic mobility often reveals the class differentiation within the caste, where the better-income families within the caste claim a higher status and prefer to establish marital relations within the class. Such a shift indicates

perceived social mobility. However, there is no significant mobility in the social context of the village.

The socio-economic transformations observed in Maralukunte Village and the Bengaluru Rural District provide valuable insights into the broader changes in caste-based occupational specialisation and gender relations in rural India. The interplay between tradition and modernity, mechanisation, depeasantisation, occupational diversification, pluriactivity, and the bargaining power of working women within households are critical themes emerging from this research. Although significant progress has been achieved, continued efforts are required to address persistent challenges related to social stratification, gender inequality, and economic disparities. Expanding economic opportunities can enhance equality and reduce the gender gap and social stratification.

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CHECK LIST

1. **To understand the socio-economic history of rural southern Karnataka in general and Maralakunte village in particular.**
   - History of the region.
   - Climate condition.
   - Topography.
   - Flora and fauna.
   - Soil type.
   - Water resources.
   - Settlement pattern.
   - Demography.
   - Social institution (family, marriage and kinship).
   - Caste composition.
   - Political organization-
     - ✓ Various organisations in the village (political groups, youth organisations, SHGs, cooperative groups, religious groups, caste groups).
     - ✓ Purposes of these groups.
     - ✓ Various activities undertake by these groups to influence public opinion.
     - ✓ Conflicts between and within group.
   - Economy-
     - ✓ Various tasks villagers involved in.
     - ✓ Mode of payment.
     - ✓ What do villagers consume on daily basis and from where do they get these goods.
     - ✓ Labour structure-bonded, hired, etc.
     - ✓ Exchange syatem-barter, exchange through money.
   - Agriculture –
     - ✓ Major crops grown.
     - ✓ Changes in cropping pattern (old and new crop).
     - ✓ Division of labour (different role of male and female).
     - ✓ Source of irrigation.

- ✓ Fertilizers- manure/chemical fertilizers.
- ✓ Varied sources of irrigation.
- ✓ Mechanization in agriculture.
- ✓ Land holding, land ownership and control.

- Animal Husbandry-

✓ Kinds of Animals villagers domesticate.
✓ Why and how did they start this practice.
✓ Fodder-varieties of fodder and what are the sources.
✓ Dairying-where do they sell, cost of milk, how the local cooperative dairy unit is helpful for villagers.

- Material culture-
  - ✓ Different instruments used in agricultural productions, village fair, festivals (Diwali, Ugadi, Dasara, Sankranti, Mahanavami, Ayuda Pooja and etc) and rituals of rites of passage (birth, puberty, marriage and death).
  - ✓ Meanings attached to it.
- Religion-
  - ✓ Village fair and other gods and goddess in the village.
  - ✓ Who are the decision makers for these activities.
  - ✓ What are the purposes of these activities.
  - ✓ How do villagers used to celebrate and how are they celebrating it now.
- Migration-
  - ✓ Push and pull factors
  - ✓ Who takes the decision to migrate.
  - ✓ Information regarding primary and secondary migration.
  - ✓ Type of migration- commute daily/weekly/monthly/ seasonal/yearly/permanent.
  - ✓ Cases of Emigration and immigration.
  - ✓ Problems labourers face in migrated places.
- How many schools, hospitals, temples, wells, reservoir, pond, streams in the village.
- Number of enrolment in the government school, children from within the village and outside the village.

- Their sex ratios, and socio-economic background.
- Children going to private school and their sex ratios and socio-economic background.
- The role Panchayat-employed and elected members.
- Role of community leaders in the village

2. **To analyse the gender differential works in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in rural Karnataka across caste, class and educational dimensions.**
   - Source of livelihood-
     - ✓ Villagers involved in various activities for their livelihood.
     - ✓ Primary and secondary source of income.
     - ✓ Mode of payment.
   - In what kinds of work both men and women are engaging predominantly.
   - Roles of men and women at home and at work place.
   - How do men and women differentiate between domesticate and work place.
   - What is expected from men and women at both home and work place.
   - In agriculture- crops they grow, source of irrigation, season of cultivation, fertilizers used, land holding, land ownership, land control.
   - Various tasks both men and women used to do in agriculture.
   - Is agricultural labourers are hired or family members?
   - If they are hired, then they are from which caste/community?
   - Who are the main members from family involved in agricultural laboring.
   - Are both men and women doing the same in contemporary? If no, why?
   - Who have taken those jobs now?
   - Crops they used to cultivate earlier. Any changes in crops they grow? If yes, then from where do they get those old crops for consumption?
   - What are the adaptation mechanisms in food production, consumption and labour exchange.
   - What factors led agriculturists to shift from cultivation to non-agricultural employment.

- Do farmers completely shifted to non-agricultural employment? If yes, then what are they doing with their agricultural land. If they have any. (simultaneously cultivating, given to tenant, barren).
- If they are cultivating then how are they managing both agriculture and non-agricultural works?
- The role and contribution of women in this process.
- What work do their women households do?
- In which sector they work, proximity of their job location, are they skilled or unskilled laborers, salary per month?
- Workers age, marital status, educational level, socio-economic background.
- What are they doing with their salary (expenses)
- Do they save, what is the mode of saving/investing?
- Any changes within the household due to wage employment? If yes, what are those? If no, why?
- How was their life before joining to non-agricultural employment? Were they happy? then why did they shift to NAE?
- How many days they work within a month?
- Wage per daily/weekly/monthly.

3. **To study the impact of non-agricultural employment on rural households and women in particular.**
   - Inter-generational occupation- what occupation their grand-parents, parents and present generation men and women are doing (geneological).
   - If there is any change in the caste/traditional occupation- then when, how and why did it happen (collect these process in case studies of home makers, wage earners and employed).
   - Particularly the shift of women occupation from domestic to non-domestic with local socio-economic history.
   - Social implication (effect) of the above change.
   - Case studies of women about their problem/tension/stress/risk in NAE and coping mechanisms.

- Marital prospects- earlier and after employment (chronological/historical between working and non-working women).
- How working women differentiate their lives before and after working in non-agricultural sector?
- Mobility-are women allowed to go alone to market/health facility/outside the village.
- If yes, were they allowed before joining to work? If no, why?
- Do women hold any land ownership? If yes, who is operating it? Do they know the value of it? If no, why?
- Does women hold any other valuable things like (gold jewelry, livestock, house and others).
- How women got them (self-purchased/ inherent/ gifted from affinal or consanguine kins).
- Again do women have the control on their other valuable things? If yes, what are those. If no, then who controls it?
- Decision making- are women allowed to participate in decision making. Can they share their opinions? If yes, in which context. Were they allowed participate before joining to wage labour. If no, why?
- Bargaining power- do family accepts and respect women choices, preferences. If no, then what do women do to fight against it?
- Proximity of women's job location (time taken and distance).
- How do they manage both household work and paid work?
- Do their male households help in domestic work? If yes, what all they do? If no, why?
- What are the general and particular norms (dos and don'ts) female (young and unmarried women, married women of domestic and wage labourers; female children) receive from household and society at large?

4. **To examine the role of the state, in facilitating employment and livelihood options for rural people.**
    - Various government provision villagers receive (PDS, NREGA, Pension and others).
    - Are these provisions implemented properly?
    - What are the benefits villagers get from these provisions?
    - Do they face any problem in benefitting this? If yes, what are those?
    - Advantage and disadvantages of above provisions.
    - Is there any provisions for women particularly and how are they implemented?
    - Various training and skills provided by government, cooperatives and NGOs.
    - Role of Govt, SHGs, cooperatives, NGOs in facilitating employment and livelihood options for rural people.
    - Role of women welfare (maternal and childcare).
    - Role of Asha workers and Anganwadi workers.
    - NREGA-
        - ✓ Kinds of work offered for labourers.
        - ✓ How many job card holders are there and their socio-economic profiles.
        - ✓ Who take the decision and on what criteria.

University of Hyderabad

Depart of Anthropology

HOUSEHOLD CENSUS SCHEDULE

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

Name of the Village- **Location-**

Household Number-

1. **Demographic Composition of the Family:**

S.No	Names	Relation with HH	Age	Sex (M/F)	Marital Status	Type of marriage	Age at marriage	Literacy status	Education Level	Primary Occupation	Secondary Occupation	Income	Migration
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
7													
8													

2. Caste:
3. Sub-caste:
4. Specify SC/OBC/GEN:
5. Worship (*manedevru*):
6. Religion:
7. House type: a) Kutcha house b) Pucca house c) other

8. Electrified/not electrified Legal/Illegal.
9. Toilet: yes/no , from how many years:
10. Water tap: a. individual b. public
11. Distance travelled to access water:
12. Drinking water:

13. Do you own land: Yes/No

Land Type	**Source of Irrigation**	**Ownership**	**Value**	**Own patta Yes/No**	**How they acquired**	**Crops Grown**
Crop land						
orchard						
pasture						

Ownership: 1-Govt; 2-joint ownership; 3-privately owned; 4-tenant.

Source of irrigation: 1-borewell; 2-rain; 3-well.

Acquired: 1-through inheritance; 2-bought; 3-given by govt; 4-occupied; 5-other

Crop	Manure				Transport cost		Chemical Fertilizers		Seeds				Labour Cost (plough)	Irrigation Charges	
	Home Produced		Purchased						Home Produces		purchased				
	Qty	value	Qty	price	Mode	cost	Qty	price	Qty	value	Qty	Price	LC	source	price

14. Inputs used for each crop on operational holding

15. Ownership of tube wells

Type of ownership	Year when installed	Depth when installed	Present depth	Source of power	Cost of installation	Maintenance expenses last year	crop	area	Total revenue

16. Type of soil-
17. Land ownership (on whose name)-
18. Does women of your household hold land ownership: Yes/NO
19. If Yes, how many acres and the value of it:
20. If No, Why:

21. Land operated by whom-

22. Does women make decisions: Yes/No

23. What types of decisions are taken by women:

24. Who all are involved in it (participation):

25. Who is the head of the household:

26. Who make choices/decisions to grow particular crop:

27. Do you own kitchen garden: Yes/No If yes, a) size _____

b) Crops grown in kitchen garden:

c. purposes (domestic use/commercial):

28. Livestock:

S.No	Name of the animal	No.	Native/hybrid	Purpose
1	Oxen			
2	Cows			
3	Buffaloes			
4	Goats			
5	Sheep			
6	Pigs			
7	Poultry			
8	Others			

29. Do you have any of the following:

(a) Television…….. Yes…Color/Black & white……Since Years…….Dish/Cable…..

(b) Transistor/Radio ….Since……

(c) Bicycle….Since

(d) Furniture……

(e) Cooking Gas……..Since…….other cooking fuels…

(f) Any other valuable asset (plot, gold)-

30. Migration-

a. Does anyone from your family go to job outside the village: Yes/No
b. If yes, who are those people:
c. does anyone migrated from your family:yes/no
d. if yes, why

S.No	Name	Relation with the HH	Type of Migration (seasonal/commuter)	From	To	Reason for Migration
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						

31. Household expenditure pattern

Monthly expenditure			
Food	Bought at the ration shop	Bought outside	Price if bought outside
a) Rice			
b) Wheat			
c) Sugar			
d) Kerosene			
e) Pulses			
f) Oil			
g) Spices			
h) Milk			
I) Vegetables			
J) Meat			
k) Eggs			
Other commodities			
a) Clother per year			
b)Soaps, tooth pastes and shampoos per month			
c) Electronic goods per year			
Social customs			
a) Marriages			
b) Festivals			
c) Funerals and related			
d)Temple fairs			
f) Child' first year and naming functions			
g) Birth days			
Entertainment			
a) movies			
b) Tours			
c) Liquors last week			
d) Cigarettes			
e) Playing cards			
Other (specify)			

32. Inter-generational occupational shift

S.NO	Generation	Male occupation	Female occupation
	Grandparents 3		
	Grandparents 2		
	Grandparents 1		
	Parents		
	Present		
	Future1		
	Future2		
	Future3		

33. Is there any shift in the occupation: Yes/No

34. If yes, when, how and why did it happen:

35. Various tasks both men and women used to do in agriculture.

36. Are both men and women doing the same tasks in contemporary? If no, why?

37. Who have taken those jobs now?

38. Any changes in crops you grow? If yes, then from where are you getting the old crops?

39. What factors led agriculturists to shift from cultivation to non-agricultural employment.

40. Did you change your employment from agriculture to NAE: yes/no
41. If yes, what you used to do earlier:
42. Then what are you doing with your land now? (cultivating, given to tenants, barren)
43. If you are cultivating, how are you managing both the tasks?

44. What are the govt provisions your households receive(PDS, pension, NREGA/job card, gas)

45. Do you face any kinds of problem? If yes, what are those:

46. Does anyone of your family members have job cards: yes/no
47. If yes, what kinds of work they did? For how many days? What was the payment?

48. Did men and women receive the same remuneration: yes/no
49. If no, why:

50. How many are school/ college going- a. Male- b. Female-

51. Where do they go for school/college (private/govt) and what are they studying-
52. Does your family have any children belong to 0-6yrs age group: yes/no
53. If yes, do you send them to daycare (Anganawadi): yes/no
54. What are the provisions your children get there?
55. If no, why:
56. Do your women households participate in SHGs: yes/no
57. If no, why?

58. If yes, they are in how many groups:
59. Does she ever borrow money from the SHGs: yes/no If no, why?

60. If yes, how much-:
61. How many times:
62. For what purpose:
63. How did they utilize:
64. Were they able to payback: yes/no
65. If no, why? Then what happened:

66. What is the source of income for them to payback-
67. Was it helpful: Yes/No
68. Does anyone of your family members work in NAS?: Yes/NO
69. If yes, do they aware of the medical benefits for themselves and their dependents: yes/no
70. If no, do they know its govt rule to provide such benefits to the employees: yes/no
71. If yes, how did they come to know and what benefits they receive (in detail)

72. Does anyone of your female family members work in NAS?: Yes/NO
73. If yes, do they aware of the 'maternity benefit act' (protects the employment of women during the time of maternity and gets fully paid for 12 weeks to take care of the child): Yes/No
74. Did they benefit out of this scheme: Yes/NO
75. If no, why:

76. If yes, what are the provisions they received:

77. Do men and women receive an equal wage in agriculture: yes/no
78. If no, what is the difference and why?

79. Do men and women receive equal remuneration in NAE: yes/no
80. If no, do you know it is against govt law: Yes/no
81. Do you want to fight against this: Yes/No
82. If no, why?

83. If yes, in what way:

84. Does your women households aware of equal inheritance of parents' property? Yes/No
85. Did anyone benefit out of it: yes/no
86. If no, why:

87. If yes, what property they received? What is the value of it?

88. Do they feel it’s an equal share? If no, how and why (detail).

89. Do they exchange gifts in marriage? If yes, what are those? Who gives gifts to whom? And why?

90. Do they know it's against govt law? If yes, then why do they practice?

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by Archana R

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