

# New Technology and Traditional Rural Institutions

## Case of *Jajmani* Relations in Karnataka

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*This paper attempts to answer the question whether changes in technology and introduction of commercial crops are sufficient causes of bringing about a change in traditional agrarian relations. It is argued that while some changes do occur in agrarian relations as a result of new technology and introduction of commercial crops, traditional agrarian relations continue in some form or another. To demonstrate this thesis, the author has chosen the institutions of jajmani relations as one aspect of agrarian relations in a Karnataka village.*

ARE changes in technology and introduction of commercial crops sufficient causes of bringing about a change in, if not a breakdown of, traditional agrarian relations? Some have argued that they are. In their opinion the introduction of new technology has resulted in erosion of traditional attitudes of mutual dependence and obligations between the landowners and labourers, and increased tension between different agrarian classes (see, Brown 1970; Sen 1970; Frankel 1971; Aggarwal 1975; Singh and Singh 1975; and Alexander 1975). Such arguments fall under two categories of analyses of social change in rural India. Whereas the first considers 'traditional' and 'modern' (or commercial) as mutually exclusive categories, the second offers unilinear explanations, in this case, about the erosion of the traditional, mutually dependent relations and the resultant increasing agrarian unrest. The assumption of a radical contradiction between the characteristics of modern and traditional forms has now been questioned, and they are shown to coexist in India and elsewhere (e.g., Gusfield 1967; Rudolf and Rudolf 1967). Similarly, the inadequacy of unilinear explanations to account for the changes in agrarian social structure has been well demonstrated (see, Oommen 1971 and 1975).

This paper attempts to answer the question posed above in a different way.<sup>1</sup> It argues that while some changes do occur in agrarian relations as a result of new technology and introduction of commercial crop, traditional agrarian relations continue in some form or another. To demonstrate this thesis, I have chosen the institutions of *jajmani* relations<sup>2</sup> as one aspect of agrarian relations in a Karnataka village.

### SOME CLARIFICATIONS

Sociologists and social anthropologists owe a debt to the pioneering work by W H Wiser (1936) which gave a systematic exposition of the concept of *jajmani* relations, and to T O Beidelman (1959) for a comparative analysis. While the term *jajmani* is mainly applicable to the Hindi-speaking parts of India, the network of relations subsumed under the system has been known by different names in different parts of the country: *ayami*, *adade*, *baluti*, etc. Some scholars familiar only with the term

*jajmani* have wrongly concluded that the institution is absent in the non-Hindi regions because they did not come across the term (see, e.g., Hill 1979).

A second clarification needs to be made regarding a view which considers *jajmani* relations as much an aspect of agrarian relations as of inter-caste relations. Some argue that the term *jajmani* is to be applied only to such relations in the realm of ritual (Pocock 1962). But, by narrowing the term's scope only to ritual, we tend to ignore an important aspect of the hereditary inter-caste service-relationships; namely their secular characteristic. Such secular services, significantly, are also included by the people themselves under the *jajmani* system, and they are exchanged for grain and fodder under the same principle as in the religious aspect of *jajmani* relations. Dumont (1972, p 140), for instance, recognises this secular nature of *jajmani* relations. As can be seen from the present study, there are some specialists who render both 'secular' and 'religious' services as part of *jajmani* relations.

A broader view of *jajmani* relations is justified when we take note of another important feature. The exchange of goods and services exists between the specialists on the one hand, and the patrons who own the land, on the other. Such patrons are also members of specific castes with a superior ritual status. In other words, *jajmani* relations do not involve patrons who do not own land, even if they are eligible to receive goods and services by virtue of their superior caste-status. This emphasis on landownership can be readily explained. While exchange of goods and services makes it obligatory for the patron to make annual payments in kind to the specialists, a landless 'patron' can only provide his labour, which is not necessarily skilled, or that required by a given specialist. If the norms of caste purity and pollution permit, a landless patron can obtain the services of a specialist by paying for them in cash. But such a relationship does not amount to a *jajmani* relationship, for in the former instance there is, on the one hand, a right to be served and the duty to serve, and on the other, a periodic grain payment to be made by the patron for goods and services. A broader view of *jajmani* relations as comprising of both secular and ritual aspects may thus be justified in the light of

the three features mentioned earlier: (a) people themselves include the exchange of secular services also under the network of *jajmani* relations; (b) there are specialists who render both secular and ritual services; and (c) such exchanges take place between land-owning patrons and the service specialists.

A third clarification needs to be made with reference to the hereditary character of *jajmani* relationships. What sort of a stable or hereditary relationship can be considered to constitute a *jajmani* relation? That is, do we consider a relationship between a landowner and his indentured servant, lasting over a few generations, as *jajmani*? For example, Harper (1959) considers the permanently indentured servants also as part of the *jajmani* system (which he terms as 'Malnad system'). Similarly, Beidelman (1959) equates the employer or *jajman* with the landlord and the specialist or *kamin* with agricultural labourers. Breman (1974) finds that servitude as a form of unfree labour fits completely with an interpretation of *jajmani* system as compulsory exchange on unequal terms.

It is, therefore, necessary to lay down certain criteria to distinguish *jajmani* relations from other, apparently similar relations. In order to distinguish *jajmani* relations from other forms of agricultural labour relations we need to ask: what is the caste of the indentured or the agricultural labourers? It is necessary to view indentured and agricultural labourers from the perspective of caste, since caste membership is a vital element for participation in the *jajmani* relationship either as a patron or as a specialist. Members of almost any caste could be indentured or agricultural labourers (with the exception of ritually high castes, in the past). Elsewhere I have shown that agricultural labourers and bonded or indentured servants, in the past as well as at present, came from the dominant and upper castes as well as from the lower castes (Karanth, 1984). Mere continuity of indentured relations or landowner-labourer relations over a long period does not necessarily amount to *jajmani* relations. It would be more appropriate to consider them as 'patron-client relations' (Srinivas, 1976), which may include *jajmani* and other relations of mutual interdependence.

Fourth, description of the *jajmani* system by most scholars seem to assume that it has

remained unchanged from time immemorial, and that the changes which have occurred in it are modern phenomena. However, it is more likely that the system has undergone changes over time as well as space. A careful examination of the *jajmani* relations in the past would reveal instances of new members inducted into the system while some others are excluded, or a specialist replacing another or even competing with another in the same craft or service and also of changes in the mode and quantity of grain to be paid, etc. (e.g. Harper, 1959; Epstein, 1962).

Finally, almost all studies of *jajmani* relations have been silent about one important aspect, namely, the quantity of grain paid to the specialists and the manner in which this is determined.<sup>3</sup> An examination of the determinants of the quantity of grain to be paid may throw new light on the issue of distributive justice to the specialists. This study reveals that in most *jajmani* relationships the patrons have a formula that determines the quantity of grains to be paid to the specialists, although the actual quantity paid may not be sufficient for the specialist's survival.

#### THE VILLAGE SETTING

Rajapura<sup>4</sup> is about sixty kilometres from Bangalore city, the capital of Karnataka.<sup>5</sup> During 1978-79, the population of the village was 995 distributed among 183 households of twelve different castes. Okkaligas are the politically, economically and socially dominant caste. They own the bulk of agricultural land, while the incidence of landlessness is relatively high among the other castes (see the table). All the castes engage in agriculture, although some of them have other occupations. The main crops grown are ragi, mulberry, pulses, groundnuts, and paddy. Except among the big farmers, production of food crops is mainly for subsistence. However, some products like mustard, sesame, castor seeds, field-beans (*avarekai*), and lentils, in addition to ragi, often serve as sources of cash income. From the point of view of cash income, mulberry-growing and silkworm-rearing are of primary importance.<sup>6</sup> Farmers buy the silkworm eggs (layings) from the sericulture department of the

government of Karnataka. When the eggs are hatched, the silkworms are fed with mulberry leaves, which are grown on either dry or garden land. This being a 'seed area', the cocoons are sold to the grainage of the marketing centre of the sericulture department, in the neighbouring village of Doddi, or to private buyers with the permission of the officials.<sup>7</sup>

Sericulture in Rajapura prior to 1967 was only an agriculturally slack season activity that too on a negligible scale. Farmers had to go to far away places to sell the small harvest of cocoons. The opening of a grainage and silk cocoon market in 1967 in Doddi village facilitated mulberry-growing and silkworm-rearing in Rajapura on a comparatively large scale. The number of households engaged in sericulture rose from about 45 during 1970 to 199 by the end of 1980. The coming of sericulture was a boon to the dry-land farmers in the region. Whereas earlier the farmers sold their crop annually or biannually, they now could harvest and sell silk-cocoons every two months,<sup>8</sup> and thus have a more and frequent cash income.

By the very nature of its technology, sericulture<sup>9</sup> is a labour intensive activity, with extensive use of female labour in particular. Picking leaves to feed the worms through different stages of their growth, carrying headloads of mulberry leaves from the fields, cleaning and chopping them into flakes, cleaning the trays in which the worms are reared, and picking the harvest of cocoons are some of the tasks performed by women. Once a year mulberry plants are pruned at the bottom, the soil is dug and mulberry garden is fenced. These tasks are performed by male workers. As a result of such intensive use of family and hired labour, there is now a shortage of agricultural labour in the village as a whole. Tenancy and sharecropping, which were on the decline following the implementation of land reforms, began to reappear not only in sericulture but also in grain farming. This was mainly to ensure a continued labour supply from the households of sharecroppers. During 1978-79 there were as many as 77 cases of tenancy/sharecropping in the

village. The new and increased demand for agricultural labour also paved the way for continuity or revival of many of the traditional features of agrarian relations such as bonded labour system, tied labour for the agricultural season, indebtedness,<sup>10</sup> etc. At the same time there were changes in certain other areas also. Agricultural wages rose from about fifty paise to one rupee and later to four rupees during 1967-1980. There was always work available for the labourers, besides a new opportunity for cash income through sharecropping in sericulture.

From the point of view of the present paper, the most important impact of sericulture was the increased demand for the services of craftsmen: basket-maker, potter, ironsmith and carpenter. Sericulture requires many appliances that are to be made and repaired by these craftsmen. Bamboo baskets, trays and mounts which are used for carrying mulberry leaves and keeping the silkworms; wooden stands to store the worm-rearing trays; watering the garden with earthen pots; and making and repairing tools, etc. were some of the goods and services now required of these specialists. Instead of buying these goods from urban markets, farmers patronised local craftsmen. Thus, while prior to 1970 some members from artisan households had migrated to other places in search of work, during the post-sericulture period there was not only a halt on migration, but a reverse flow also.

#### JAJMANI RELATIONS IN RAJAPURA: THE ADADE SYSTEM

The local term for *jajmani* is *adade*, while the service of craft specialists are known as *Kasabudararu* and landowners as *adade kula*,<sup>11</sup> or as *okkalu*. *Adade* also means grain payment, while some specialists (musicians, and the village servants) refer to it as *acre-ragi*. *Adade* relationships exist between patrons who are landowning members of high castes on the one hand, and the priests, village servants, blacksmiths, washermen, barbers and musicians on the other. About fifteen years ago the network of *adade* relations included an astrologer and a potter also. When the old astrologer, a Brahmin from the nearby town of Magadi, died none

TABLE: HOUSEHOLDS, POPULATION, AND LAND OWNERSHIP OF DIFFERENT CASTES IN 1979

Sl No	Castes	Population			House-holds	Average Size of House-holds	Total Land Owned (Acres)	Average Land Owned (per HH)	Average Land Per Capita	Land-less House-holds	Per cent Land-less HH	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Per Cent in the Populn
		Male	Female	Total											
(1)	Lingayats	10	4	14	3	4.7	16.00	5.33	1.143	2	66.7	7	3	10	71.4
(2)	Okkaligas	336	339	675	108	6.3	659.02	6.10	0.976	14	13.0	198	217	415	61.5
(3)	Kumbara	4	5	9	2	4.5	2.00	1.00	0.220	—	—	2	3	5	55.6
(4)	Madivala	5	5	10	3	3.3	—	—	—	3	100.0	3	5	8	80.0
(5)	Bestha	1	1	2	1	2.0	—	—	—	1	100.0	1	1	2	100.0
(6)	Achari	13	6	19	3	6.3	10.10	3.37	0.532	2	66.7	3	4	7	36.8
(7)	Marathe	9	10	19	3	6.3	18.38	6.12	0.967	—	—	6	8	14	73.7
(8)	Lambani	21	21	42	14	3.0	24.28	1.73	0.578	4	28.6	14	17	31	73.9
(9)	Korama	9	9	18	3	5.3	8.25	2.73	0.458	—	—	5	6	11	61.1
(10)	Odda	17	13	30	7	4.3	10.00	1.43	0.333	2	28.6	11	8	19	63.3
(11)	Holeya	28	37	65	14	4.6	49.32	3.52	0.759	2	14.3	22	26	48	73.8
(12)	Madiga	51	41	92	22	4.2	29.75	1.35	0.323	13	59.1	37	30	67	72.8
	Total	504	491	995	183	5.4	827.10	4.52	0.831	43	23.5	309	328	637	64.0

of his children showed any interest in succeeding to his father's role. Similarly when the old potter died, his two sons were not old enough for *adade* relationship. Subsequently one of the sons learnt the traditional craft, and is now active selling pots for grain, but not as part of *adade* relation.

Traditionally villages in general were said to have had twelve different offices, the incumbents of which were members of specific community who "assembled each other's wants" (Wilks, 1930). Such an account is much in common with the description of Indian villages as self sufficient republics.<sup>12</sup> It must, however, be pointed out that not all villages have all the village offices, and have depended on other villages for certain services (see, Srinivas, 1978). This was the case in Rajapura also: the barber came from a neighbouring village while the village musicians served a few other villages.

In order to understand the various services and crafts involved in this relationship, I attempt a classification of *jajmani* relations in Rajapura (see the chart). This classification takes into account a feature which has by and large received little attention from students of *jajmani* relations: the nature of patrons. Do the patrons of a given craft/service specialist constitute the village as a corporate whole, or only individual families, or both? The scheme of classification presented here also allows for a description of two other aspects, namely, secular or religious nature of service; and the mode of payment for it (grain payment, allotment of land, etc).

While there are certain specialists who serve only families in the village, others serve both particular families and the village, as a whole, and yet others serve only the village as a corporate body. Accordingly, the specialists' status vary as do the mode of payment. The position of various castes in the local hierarchy is also found to be influencing, and influenced by, the variations listed above.

The chart may be described as a 'traditional' or 'ideal' one, and a few of the offices listed in it have ceased functioning. I shall now proceed to describe the duties traditionally attached to each office and to note the changes that have occurred.

#### (I) VILLAGE-ORIENTED SERVICES

The distinguishing feature of this category of services is that the specialists render their services to the village as a corporate whole. In return they are generally given a plot of land for cultivation. Payment by gift of land stands higher than periodical grain payment. In addition to the land given, particular landowning households pay the functionaries a quantity of grain and a bundle of straw.

(1) *Priests (A)*: It is necessary to identify

the groups of priests with a suffix (A) to distinguish them from the others also referred to as priests. Of the three temples in the village, one is of the presiding deity of the village, *Hatti Maramma*. The eldest male member of the households belonging to the lineage of the former *patel* is the hereditary priest of this temple. During my fieldwork period there were three such priestly households, each serving for a year in rotation. The temple has been endowed with 18 acres of land by the earliest settlers of the village. The three households enjoy this land among themselves. The deity has to be offered special prayers every Tuesday, while on other days merely the temple lamp is lit. The major event is the annual festival in April-May, the expenses of which are met by the priest.<sup>13</sup> But, a devotee may undertake a vow to have the image of the goddess taken out and on such occasions the cost is borne by the devotee himself.

By definition, the services of the priests are oriented towards the entire village. The priests officiate for everyone by accepting their offering, and distributing flowers (*prasada*) sanctified by being offered to the goddess. There is, however, a discrimination against the members of the former untouchable castes of Holey and Madiga. Their offerings of fruits and flowers are accepted only after the higher castes make their offerings and *prasada* is given to them. The deity's procession is taken only till the outskirts of the Holey and Madiga quarters.

(2) No astrologer exists now in Rajapura, but when one did he lived in the town of Magadi. He used to visit the village with his almanac during the Hindu New Year (*Ugadi*) festival (March-April). The astrologer traditionally read out to the villagers the forecast for the year contained in the almanac (*panchanga*) about the adequacy of rains and which crop would fare better. He also indicated times auspicious for commencement of certain important tasks such as ploughing, sowing and bringing the harvest home. The farmers also used to consult the astrologer in the town to find out auspicious time for the digging of a well or construction of houses, going out looking for a bride, where to look for a missing cow, etc.<sup>14</sup> On each of these occasions a payment in cash and kind was made to him.

In some villages of the region, the astrologer was given a plot of land for his services. But in Rajapura each landowning household gave him a measure of ragi, pulses, jaggery, fruits and vegetables. The washerman provided donkeys to carry the grains to Magadi town.

Although the role of the village astrologer does not form a part of the present day network of *adade* relations in the village, the

villagers have not lost faith in astrology. For astrological consultations they now go to a smith in a neighbouring village. Payment for him is exclusively in cash. Some peripatetic groups also give predictions about future for the villagers in addition to medicine to the sick. Most of the villagers, who are able to read now buy a pocket-calendar or a popular almanac which gives them the information formerly given by astrologers.<sup>15</sup> Lack of interest on the part of the village astrologers themselves has contributed to the decline in their role in *adade* relations.

(3) *Village servant (Thoti)*: This office is held by members of the Madiga caste, which was formerly an untouchable caste. The *thoti* serves the entire village. Traditionally his duties were to accompany and assist the *patel* and *shanubhog* (that is, headman and accountant) in performing their duties. For instance, the *thoti* accompanied the *shanubhog* during the time of assessment and recovery of land revenue from the farmers. He also accompanied the *patel* during his official visits in the village or outside. The *thoti* also had to be present during the meeting of the village council, for it was his duty to inform each member to attend the meeting, and summon the members of various families whose presence was necessary. He continues to function as the village broadcaster: All important announcements are made by him to the accompaniment of the drum-beat. He might be asked to announce the date of the accountant's visit to the village to collect revenue, the need for volunteers to repair a part of the temple, or contributions to be made by each household to a village festival.

Ideally, the *thoti* was expected to know the details of every dispute settled by the council and to provide the facts to the members on future occasion, if necessary. He was also expected to know the extent of land owned by each villager, and point out to the stones marking each boundary when a need arose. He was also the watchman of the village and crops and as such he had to take possession of stray animals that entered the village or its fields, and hand them over to their owners after collecting fines. Finally he removed the carcasses of cattle, the skins of which he was free to sell or make drums with.

The *thoti* had also duties on ceremonial occasions such as the festival of the village deity when, for instance, he had to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed goat in the eight directions to propitiate the spirits inhabiting each.<sup>16</sup> He was also one of the party of musicians to accompany a corpse to the burial ground.

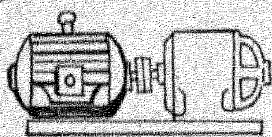
In return for his services, the *thoti* got a reward of land, referred to as *thoti-inamti*. In addition to this, from each landowning household he received a measure of grain (*acre-ragi*) as payment and a bundle of straw. Grain payment was made to the scale of two seers per acre owned by patrons.

There are two *thotis* now in Rajapura. They have married sisters, and between themselves have divided the land that goes with the office. They serve the village by

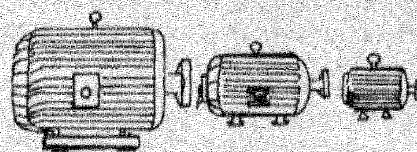
CHART: TYPES OF JAJMANI RELATIONS IN RAJAPURA (SERVICES)

I Village-Oriented	II Family-Oriented	III Village-and-Family-Oriented
(1) Priests (A)	(1) Priests (B)	(1) Priests (C)
(2) Astrologer	(2) Smiths	(2) Washermen
(3) Village servants	(3) Barber	(3) Musicians

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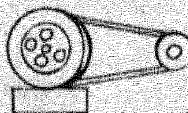
- Your motor should be placed as close to the load as possible.



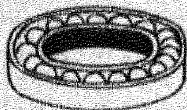
- Always match your motor to your load requirement.



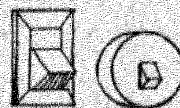
- Use shunt capacitors to keep voltage conditions stable.



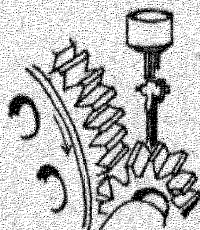
- Tighten belts at regular intervals to avoid slips.



- Replace worn out ball bearings immediately.



- Switch off all appliances when not required.



- Lubricate motors and motor-drives regularly to reduce friction.

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turns. *Thotis* continue to serve even though the office has been formally abolished by the government along with the offices of hereditary headman and accountant.<sup>17</sup>

In recent years there have been some strains and changes in the *adade* relations involving the *thoti*. The number of farmers paying *acre-ragi* has been declining. The payment is no longer related to the extent of land owned. During 1978-79, the *thoti* and other musicians refused to perform at the annual festival on the grounds that annual payments were not being made regularly by many landowners. The *thotis* complained that they could not pay Rs 5 to the other drummers who were part of the band of musicians. But the village elders were able to persuade the musicians to perform, and some farmers to pay up their dues.

One important sociological point not to be missed here is that some traditional institutions are so strong that government's abolition is an inadequate cause for its decline and disappearance. The *thotis* themselves explained that they were willing to serve the village as long as their services were needed. This does not suggest that they are happy to serve the village under the prevailing conditions of declining number of people paying *acre-ragi*.

Some farmers, however, point out to the irrelevance of *thotis'* services as causes for their not making grain payment. It was also felt that the *thotis* were suitably rewarded with land for whatever services they now rendered.

In spite of the declining payment, the *thotis* continue to serve the village as in the past. They now accompany the newly appointed village accountant, and officials of the police and revenue departments during their visits to the village. Their role in the present day village council is insignificant, but they do render their services if asked for. The important reasons for their continuing to serve the village seem to be the grant of land and the power of village elders in persuading them to work. The villagers also, by and large, continue to consider the role of the *thoti* in the same way as before. "A village without a *thoti* is like a jungle" is a saying which the people recall whenever the *thotis* neglect their duties.

#### (II) FAMILY-ORIENTED SERVICES

As already mentioned, the specialists in this category perform certain specified tasks for patron-households. The specialists are paid fixed quantities of grain and straw. They are not given a gift of land as in the first category.

(1) *Priests (B)*: Most households in Rajapura have a house-deity located generally in the village from which they or their ancestors migrated. The household refers to itself as the *okkalu* of such and such a deity. The priests officiating in these temples serve the client households of the deity. The client households periodically visit the patron deities and the priests of the temple serve as chaplains.

The priests of these temples also used to

visit Rajapura annually to collect grain (*adade*) and other gifts from devotees. Where the temples were far away or the local devotees too few, the latter themselves carried a measure of ragi and other gifts during their annual visit to such temples. Frequently they gave money in lieu of the kind payment.

In recent times there has been a decline in the frequency of the visits by the priests to village. The devotees, however, visit the temples at least once in three-four years. But the relationship between the priests of this category and *okkalu* devotees is not as in the past. Not only do the priests know accurately the geographical distribution of *okkalu* devotees, the former have frequently accepted new temples as their family-deities. However, a few priests and devotees do maintain a *adade* relationship, particularly the older families in the village.

(2) *Blacksmith*: There are three households of blacksmiths in Rajapura. About 35 years ago the village had only one smith who served all the households in the village for *adade*. After his death three of his sons left the village to work as labourers elsewhere, entrusting one brother with the caste-occupation. After a few years, the latter invited his sister's husband to assist him. Soon the sister's husband established himself independently as a smith and the villagers seemed to find the latter's workmanship better than that of the former.

In 1952 another smith migrated into the village as a tenant. Following a dispute with the old smiths of the village, a few patrons engaged the new smith. Neither the caste nor the village *panchayats* were able to enforce the norm of exclusive right of the old smiths to serve the households in the village. The precedence of the old Smith's brother-in-law entering into *adade* relation was one of the factors which helped the new smith. He was successful in gaining acceptance also by virtue of his skill and, later, by professing his loyalty to the dominant faction of the village council. The entry of new specialists into *adade* relations is to be viewed here with reference to the argument made earlier; namely, that the system is flexible and hereditary rights to the office are not always strictly followed.

The smith's duties consist of making, repairing, and sharpening such tools as sickles, chisels, crowbars, ploughs, etc. There are rules and conventions governing when a new tool is to be provided and when an old one is to be repaired. In making a new tool, for example, the farmer has to provide the required material. Making and repairing the tools are generally prior to the commencement of the agricultural season, and again, during harvest operations.

Traditionally the quantity of grain paid to the smith was related to the number of the ploughs owned by a landowner. For two ploughs owned a farmer paid 16 seers of ragi and two bundles of straw, and for every additional plough, eight seers of ragi. The number of ploughs used by a man was related to the extent of land owned by him. Thus different classes of landowners (big,

or small) paid the smith in accordance to their wealth.

For two reasons, mainly, this formula is not strictly followed in recent times. First, the smith does not verify the number of ploughs used or owned by his patrons. Formerly he knew it as he himself would have fashioned the ploughs. Nowadays many farmers themselves have acquired the skills of fashioning the ploughs, and they also lend their services to their fellow-farmers. In the absence of an exclusive right to their duties, the smiths now fail to keep track of the number of ploughs in possession of patrons. Secondly, the practice of plough sharing and mutual exchange of labour involved in ploughing renders the calculation difficult.

With the introduction of sericulture, the range of tools the smiths have to make has greatly increased. For such additional services they collect a cash fee. In either form of payment, i.e., *adade* or cash, the farmer is required to provide charcoal to be used as fuel for the kiln, and assist the smith in bellowing. Some other changes have occurred in the *adade* relations between the smiths and their patrons. For example, with the inclusion of new smiths in the network of *jajmani* relations, the patrons now change their smiths frequently. Not all the farmers have been prompt in settling their *adade* dues with the smith, which situation has been largely responsible for frequent shifts in patron-client relations.

(3) *Barber*: Rajapura does not have a resident barber. A barber comes everyday from a neighbouring village. In his shop he serves all except Harijans. There is pressure on him from the higher castes not to extend his services to Harijans while serving in Rajapura. But at the annual cattle-fair at Magadi and elsewhere, where he puts up a temporary shop, he serves all the castes.

The barber receives an annual payment of eight seers of ragi and a bundle of straw for serving every adult and married male member of a household. For serving other male members he gets only eight seers of ragi per head. If a household has more than four adult male members, payment for serving one member is waived. He does not collect grain for cutting the hair of young children of his patrons. The number of adult male members includes bonded labourers of a given household, if they are not Harijans. *Adade* patrons are entitled to one haircut and one shave a month. For additional services the barber collects 50 paise and 25 paise respectively. Non-*adade* patrons also have to pay these rates for the barber's services.

The *adade*-barber has also ritual duties to perform. He has the right to bring *basinga*, a forehead-ornament worn by a bridegroom and bride during marriage. In return he is given a gift of Rs 5, one cube of jaggery, betel leaves, arecanuts, and a measure of grain.

The barber serves almost all the *okkaliga* households on *adade* basis. Other castes like the lingayat, maratha and odda are also served either for *adade* or cash. The *holeya* and

madiga, who are not served either for cash or kind payment, get their haircut by one of their own caste-folk on an exchange basis or by going to a haircutting shop in Magadi town.

Rajapura's barber complains, indeed as most other specialists do, of increasing irregularity in grain payment by *adade* patrons. He is also unhappy that many young men do not take his services unlike the older men in their families. In the absence of a powerful and effective caste-panchayat, he has no way of ensuring an exclusive right to serve the patrons. Nevertheless, his service relation with most land-owning okkaliga patrons is found to be continuing. The farmers who are not regular in making the annual grain payment continue to take his services by promising to settle the dues. Farmers find it inconvenient to get their hair cut in Magadi town as they have to wait for an auspicious day and time and make a visit for that specific purpose. As a hair cut is to be followed by a purificatory bath many patrons find it convenient to take the services of the *adade* barber. A few also observed that the barbers in Magadi town do not pay enough attention to the personal requirements of the rural folk. Moreover, the barbers in the town serve the former untouchables also while the local barber does not.

### (III) VILLAGE AND FAMILY-ORIENTED SERVICES

The third category of specialists includes priests (C), washerman and the village musicians. Their duties are not only towards the village as a whole but also to individual households living in it.

(1) *Priests (C)*: This category of priests serve in a village temple as well as the individual households for grain-payment. For example, the priests of Basava, and cave temples respectively, have duties to officiate in the temples, the deities of which are worshipped by all in the village. As priests of the village-temples they are compensated by a gift of land. They also serve the farmers by performing the rituals associated with annual crop-worship, purification following a birth or death in the family, and in such other occasions. In return for these services the priest is paid annually a measure of grain and straw, in addition to cash gift.

One important factor needs to be mentioned here. Over the past three decades these two temples have had many new priests replacing the old ones. Yet the villagers have entered into *adade* relations with each successive priest.

(2) *Washerman*: Rajapura has three washerman households. Two of them are brothers, one of whom is not engaged in his caste occupation. The washerman of the village, as in the case of smiths, have had to face competition from their own caste-members. A faction of the village leaders, (the same people who had shown preference to the immigrant smith, discussed above) was unhappy with the old washerman and invited a man from a nearby village. Initially

there was a protest by the old washerman. But his attempts to censure the new washerman through his caste *panchayat*, with its headquarters at Magadi town, did not succeed. With the support of a powerful faction of the village leadership, the new washerman was able to establish himself as an *adade* specialist. The hereditary washerman was, however, given the exclusive right to perform the duties towards the village as a whole. The new washerman had on an average ten to fifteen patrons at a given time. But in course of time some of the members who were responsible for bringing the new washerman returned to the old washerman or to one of his sons who had now taken over the duties from the father.

The washerman's duties toward the village as a whole consist of carrying a torch while the procession of any of the three deities is taken out. He has to provide clean white clothes to be spread on the ground so that the carriers of the image of the deity do not walk on bare ground. He has to wash the ornamental clothes with which the images of the deities are dressed. He is also the custodian of these dresses when they are not being used.

The washerman gets paid in cash as well as in kind for his services to the village as a whole. When a procession is taken out the priest gives him money towards oil and gifts of coconut and fruits. A farmer who vows to take out a procession pays a fee in cash and kind to the washerman. During the annual festival almost every household in the village, with the exception of Lingayats, offers a sheep to the deity, the heads of which are collected by the washerman.

As regards serving the patron-households, the washerman's wife cleans menstrual clothes and post-natal clothes of women. Women in their periods and at birth are regarded as impure as also the blood-stained clothes. Every morning the washerman's wife goes round the village picking up menstrual clothes of women which are put away in a corner of the front yard.

The washerman, further, has a ritual to perform at the time of weddings in his patron's household. He provides a white cloth used for covering the vessel into which 'milk' sanctifying a wedding is poured. Guests and relatives put money into this vessel which the washerman collects (see, for a description of this ritual, Srinivas, 1942).

In return for these services he is paid eight seers of ragi and two bundles of straw. The payment vary according to the number of married couples in a house: for each couple he is paid an extra eight seers of ragi. If the number of couples exceeds four, the oldest couple receives free service. The exemption suggests that the physiological factor of menopause is being taken into account. Further, when a member in his patron's family dies, the washerman is given the clothes in which the corpse is dressed.

In Rajapura only one of the two brothers has the office of village washerman. This is the younger brother, while the older was a bonded labourer who later became a tenant

of a Lingayat landowner. The new washerman also holds the office of village washerman in a nearby village.

Like the other specialists in the village, the washerman do not serve harijans (*holeyas* and *madigas*). The oddas are above the untouchability line but are too poor to pay the washerman either in cash or kind.

(3) *Musicians*: The team of musicians has duties to the village as a whole and to patron-households. Towards the former the musicians play at the annual festivals of the deities and on other occasions when a procession is taken out. As to the patron households, their duties consist of playing instruments for funeral procession. Formerly they played during weddings also, but increasingly professional musicians of Magadi town are being hired for this purpose. Apart from a preference for modern music, the other reason for hiring musicians from outside is that, very often, there is more than one wedding in the village on the same day.

The team of musicians consists of four *holeyas* and two *madigas*. It has duties not only in Rajapura but in a few neighbouring villages also. Each musician is paid eight seers of ragi and two bundles of straw by all the landowning households in the village. The Priests (A) and (C), referred to earlier have an obligation to give coconuts and fruits in the addition to money to the musicians at the end of every procession. Like all the other specialists, the musicians also complain of *adade* dues not being settled in time.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the account given till now it is evident that the institution of *jajmani* relations has adapted itself to suit the changing needs of the people both in the past and in recent years. Although sericulture brought an increased monetisation to the agrarian economy of Rajapura, it may be seen that it did not result in the erosion of the 'traditional' attitudes of mutual dependence and obligation between different agrarian categories as argued by some. An examination of *jajmani* relations in the context of a new technology, namely sericulture, shows that the latter has not significantly affected one of the traditional forms of rural institutions. On the contrary it has kept some of the service-specialists relatively busy throughout the year. The description of *adade* relations in Rajapura can now be related to some of the other issues raised in the beginning of the paper.

First, succession to various specialist roles is not always hereditary. Over time new specialists have replaced old ones or competed with each other. Accordingly there have also been frequent shifts in patron-client composition in the network of *adade* relations. The principle of hereditary rights is found to be operative more often in services that are oriented towards the village as a whole (I category) than in the family-oriented services (II category). The former are usually rewarded with land which may

be said to encourage inheritance of the office along with land. Division in the family is accommodated by sharing rights to serve by turns.

Second, payment of grain to the specialists ideally was not arbitrary, but was in relation to the extent of land owned, the number of tools (ploughs) used by the patrons, or the number of married couples in the patron's households. However, in recent times and increasingly the farmers are defaulting in making payments to the specialists. This is particularly so in such services where an alternative specialist serves, and is willing to have new patrons. Further, grain payment is increasingly being delinked from the extent of land or tools owned. Instead, a standard eight or sixteen seers of ragi and a bundle of straw are given. Cash payment is made for all extra services. Thus although cash and kind payment coexist, *adade* relations have not been replaced by monetary transactions.

Why do some farmers continue to have *adade* relations with the specialists? Why do *adade* relations continue in spite of the coming of sericulture with its increased monetisation? In answering these questions one should take a look at the nature of each service, the utility value of such goods and services to the patrons, and their indispensability for the secular and religious life of the patrons. In some cases substitute services are available, as with hired musicians from Magadi or barbers in town. From the point of view of the patrons the available alternatives are not always convenient. The personal relationship involved gives confidence in the workmanship of the local specialists and ensures fulfilment of specific requirements. Moreover, *adade* payment also serves as a retaining fee and ensures the services at the back and call of the farmer. Yet another reason is that he need not sell the grain to make cash payment but measure them out to make the payment.

The specialists, on their part, continue to serve on *adade* for many reasons. First, most of them are found to be supplementing their income by working as agricultural labourers (two washerman, one smith, two priests 'B', as well as the *thotis* and musicians), or as tenants and sharecroppers (*thotis*, musicians, one smith, priests 'A', 'B' 'C', and one washerman). Secondly, functioning as 'village' service specialists in the *adade* network gives them the satisfaction of keeping up the family or caste tradition. By virtue of serving as *adade* specialists they enjoy a higher social status within their caste, and are often envied by their fellow caste members. Indeed, specialists of all castes keep requesting the village elders to give them the custom whenever an incumbent specialist threatens to sever *adade* relations.

Third important factor as to why specialists continue to take part in *adade* relations is the role played by the village leadership. No account of rural Indian life seems to be complete without a reference to the role of village leaders, mainly of the dominant caste. In the past the leaders in Rajapura

were responsible for bringing new specialists to compete with the existing ones and accommodating them in the network of *adade* relations. A similar and equally powerful role is being played by the present day leaders. Whenever there is a sign of possible breakdown of *adade* relations the leaders intervene to settle matters. People, particularly the aggrieved ones, point out that the leaders want to maintain *status quo*. The specialists even now complain formally to the village leaders about non-payment of grain. After persistent protests, either the headman, or the former *patel* speaks to the erring farmers. If there is a stalemate, the specialists are advised to write-off the arrears and discontinue serving such farmers. The specialists also take advantage of critical moments of patrons to demand payment of grains.

In most cases both the patrons and the specialists are vulnerable to pressure from the village leaders. They need the help of the leaders, for instance, in securing loans from the co-operative credit society, grants of free building materials, or allotment of free house sites, etc.

Finally an important observation made in the village needs to be emphasised. Not only has the 'traditional' institution of *adade* persisted in the wake of increased monetisation of economy, the notion of *adade* has been applied to certain other repetitive relations in a 'market' situation. The forest guard of the forest near Rajapura, and the visiting merchant receive a measure of grain and bundles of straw from all the farmers dealing with them. The guard receives the grain for 'permitting' the farmers to graze their cattle in the forest, and allowing the forage of firewood, wood for making ploughs, etc. Ideally the relations between the villagers and these two men are expected to be impersonal and commercial. They are not only found to be personal but also contain elements of traditionality.

### Notes

- 1 This paper is a by-product of my doctoral dissertation. I am grateful to T K Oommen, M N Srinivas, A M Shah, B R Chauhan, V S Parthasarathy, C N Ramachandran and R Sivaprasad for their comments.
- 2 For a discussion of other aspects like landowner-labour relations, credit relations, tenancy and sharecropping, etc, see Karanth (1984).
- 3 Exception, however, is in a paper by Anthony Good (1982), although he refuses to refer to the services as part of the *jajmani* system.
- 4 Rajapura is a pseudonym.
- 5 For a detailed description of the village, see Karanth (1981) and (1984).
- 6 I use the word sericulture in a restricted sense to include growing mulberry and rearing of silk worm. As an agro-based industry 'sericulture' includes a third dimension, namely the reeling of silk yarn from the cocoons. For a social anthropological account of sericulture, see Charsley (1982).

7 Under the Mysore Silk worm Seed Control Act, 1951, farmers engaged in sericulture have to register themselves with the Department of Sericulture, government of Karnataka, and be supervised by its technical experts.

8 See above, note 2.

9 For a description of different operations in silk-worm rearing see Krishnaswamy (1978).

10 Bonded labour system was legally abolished in Karnataka in 1976, while under the 20-point programme relief to the rural indebted was provided.

11 See Srinivas (1976: 212) for another village in Karnataka.

12 For example, Sir Charles Metcalfe, quoted in Srinivas (1978: 23).

13 Special worship, either during the annual festival or at other times, involves the cost of flowers, fruits, additional payment to the washerman, musicians, and gifts to the priests, etc. In addition, the deity has to be offered a goat, the cost of which is borne by the devotee if he is fulfilling a vow, or by the priest. There will be at least half a dozen special *pujas* of this kind every year in addition to the annual festival.

14 See Srinivas (1976: 310-12) for a description of the importance of astrology in agriculture.

15 The pocket calendars and almanacs are sold not only in bookshops and petty shops in Magadi town, but also by vendors in bus stations. A pocket calendar costs 50 paise while the price of an almanac varies from Rs 4.00 to Rs 8.00.

16 The custom is known as *Mari bali* and takes place normally during the months of October-November every year. The meat is sold so as make good the cost of the sacrificed animal.

17 The Mysore Village Offices (Abolition) Act, 1961, which came into force in 1963.

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