

GASTRONOMIC TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE KUTA MAHA JAGAT*

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Abstract

This paper seeks to understand the nature of development through an examination of the gastronomic tradition. The Kuta Maha Jagat (KMJ) or the Great Universe of Kota, a cluster of 14 villages in the Udupi District of Karnataka State, is the geographical context of the study. It is a multi-jati community with Brahmins enjoying dominance in such domains as economy, education and ritual. After introducing food as an important aspect of socio-cultural reality, the description of the research universe is provided. Then the paper elucidates the centrality of gastronomy for the people of KMJ. The next part accounts the socio-economic transformation of the area and the nature of development. The argument of the paper is that in the context of development-induced stress the gastronomic tradition is reinvented.

"In the human sciences, the moment one approaches any problem at a sufficiently general level, one finds oneself in a circle where the researcher himself is part of the society that he intends to study and that plays a pre-eminent role in the elaboration of his mental categories."

(Goldmann, Lucien 1981: 55)

"In the earlier days there were only two classes amongst us, namely Brahmins and non-Brahmins. All were poverty stricken. The situation was so worse that even the Brahmins, who were of higher class, could eat once in two days. Only they could consume milk and curd"

(Karanth, Shivaram 1995)

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Prelude

Food occupies a transconceptual and transdisciplinary space in our discussion on society and culture, for food is life and life can be studied and understood through food. In fact, the study of food can be used to question the limitations of academic disciplinary boundaries (Counihan and Esterik 1997: 1). In this paper I make an attempt to know the nature of development in my own native community through the gastronomic tradition and contemporary practices. I attempt to interpret the gastronomic me and the gastronomic we in a first person narrative. This is an attempt to understand the scenes of development surrounding me as narrated by the gastronomic experiences of my community and myself.

The centrality of gastronomy to human affairs has been recognised by anthropologists. Study of social structural and symbolic nuances of food and culinary practices constituted a substantial focus of anthropological literature. In India, the anthropological works have shown that food has always been and continues to be at the ritual practice, social behaviour, common etiquette, and theological speculation (Khare 1976, 1992; Khare and Rao 1986; Madan 1975; Olivelle 1995). This is because of the polyvalent significance of food.

Food is the foundation of every economy. It has strategic roles to play in state and home politics. It marks social boundaries. "It is an endlessly evolving enactment of gender, family, and community relations" (Counihan and Esterik 1997: 1). Food is also a significant means of cultural expression and through it we can understand the nature of culture. Also it is a matter of psychological and emotional significance - as indicated by such phenomena as preference for 'homely' food. Thus, gastronomy, including food preparation, distribution, and consumption, is intricately connected to several other central processes of life (Warde 1997: 22).

Food is a symbolic medium. All human societies have manifold cultural meanings and discourses surrounding food and eating (Lupton 1996: 1). A close look into the gastronomic tradition - both oral and written - and the culinary practices of a given people shows this. Furthermore, because everyone eats and many people cook, the meanings attached to food speak to many more people than do the meanings attached to more arcane aspects of life (Counihan and Esterik 1997: 2).

The polyvalent significance of food, and especially its role as social commentator on transformation can be elucidated through a sort of autobiographical reflection. The popular memory of my community, for example, is rich in terms of anecdotes and narratives having food as a central theme, that contain in capsule form the experiences of past generations. Through this popular memory we can attempt to make sense of the contemporary culinary practices that express predicaments of the present. The past was characterised by scarcity, inequality, subjection, and stress; the present by mobility, abundance, competition and stress. Through an analysis of changing popular conceptualisations and practices surrounding food, the cardinal processes of life that emerged in the wake of development I seek to know.

My Community: Geography and People

I am born and brought up in the community by name the *kuta maha jagat* (KMJ), roughly translated into English as 'The Great Universe of Kota'. A cluster of fourteen villages, the KMJ had been an agrarian corporation of Brahmin landowners. The fourteen villages are - Chitrapadi, Gundmi, Parampalli, Handattu, Karthattu, Kodi Kanyan, Padukere, Yedabettu, Airodi, Moodhadu, Pandeswara, Manoor, Giliyar, and Karkada. Saligrama, the capital of the guild popularly called as *pete*, is situated at the heart of the cluster. The temple of Narasimha (Lion Avatar of Lord Vishnu) is located in Saligrama, that occupies a central place in the society and culture of KMJ.¹

The KMJ belongs to the district Udupi, which lies on the West Coast of India, half way between Bombay and Kanyakumari, occupying a narrow strip of land between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. The Bombay-Kanyakumari highway (NH 17) passes through KMJ. Kundapur, a Konkan Railway Station is 20 kms. from it.

The social organisation of KMJ can be understood in relation to religions and *jatis*. Apart from small pockets of *Byari* Muslims and Catholic Christians, the Hindus constitutes majority. They are subdivided into several *jatis* that can be grouped under three categories: Brahmins, touchable non-Brahmins, and untouchable non-Brahmins (see table one).

The *jati* differentiation and hierarchisation had been correlated with class

differentiation reinforced by overwhelming dependence on primary and traditional occupations for livelihood. Brahmins owned most of the land and among them a few households owned 3/4 of the land and the remaining 1/4 was shared by the small cultivators.

Now let me elaborate the social organisation of my people through a look into my own lived past. The first concept I learnt during my childhood was the distinction between 'we', the pure vegetarian Brahmins and 'they', the impure non-vegetarian non-Brahmins. The notions of purity and impurity associated with food reflected the purity and impurity of *jatis* along with the nature of their occupations.

The etymology of *jati* names indicates that these were occupational groupings and the degree of pollution attached to their calling decided their place in the regional *jati* hierarchy. Along with the traditional calling (some of them disappeared now) all caste groups except Gauda Saraswat Brahmins were and are attached to agriculture - the Brahmins and Bunts as landowners and others as agricultural labourers. Up till 1970s many lower *jati* households were tenant cultivators attached to Brahmin landowners. Some type of 'feudal' relations existed between the tenants and their masters. This was evident in the language being used by the two classes and the salutations. The tenant addressed his master as *vodia/vodti* (Lord) and the master addressed the tenant as *gade/hena* (boy/girl) irrespective of age. Another manifestation of feudalism was the free services known as *bitti* that the tenant and his/her family members had to render to the household of the master. During my childhood, I experienced this crude version of feudal relations in my own and my maternal grand father's household. However, the degree of subjection and exploitation varied from household to household depending upon the temperament of the *vodia* and *vodti*. In fact this was a special case of feudalism because in majority of the cases the economic gap between the master and the tenant was not unfathomable. And also tenants were neither bonded labourers nor were they slaves. Late Dr. K. Shivaram Karanth, a noted literary figure of KMJ, for example, described: "In the earlier days there were only two classes amongst us, namely Brahmins and non-Brahmins. All were poverty stricken. The situation was so worse that even the Brahmins who were of higher class could eat once in two days. Only they could consume milk and curd. The members of the remaining class had to depend upon manual labouring."²

Social differentiation of *jati* categories is manifest in the language use too. The Brahmins use the sanskritised version of Kundapura Kannada. For example, Brahmins refer to cooked rice as *anna* and the non-Brahmins, *kulu*. The exposures of the Brahmins to the world of letter and the fact that they were the first to experience out-migration to cities have been evident in their language use. The amount of prestige attached to Brahmin language is reflective of the prevalence of hierarchy.

The social organisation of my community was characterised by the occupation-determined *jati* names, agrarian economy, and a few owning most of the land, and less money in transaction.

Centrality of Gastronomy and Oral Tradition

Gastronomy was and is central to the lives of my people. In spite of its triteness, eating was a fundamental preoccupation of my people. I try to elucidate this by analytically dividing gastronomical domain into two: daily eating and ceremonial eating.

Unlike the western societies, daily eating was a problematical issue in my community.³ For members of all *jati* categories, each day was an uncertain day as far as food was concerned. In the case of Brahmins, boiled rice as an item in the staple food was guaranteed. For them uncertainty was in getting vegetables for side dishes. Every morning the Brahmin women virtually hunted for the vegetables in the kitchen gardens. Many a time, the dishes were prepared by grinding some green leaves, butter milk and coconut, which they call *tambli*. Hence, a popular saying - *modaligond tambli, umbukond umbli* (a *tambli* to eat rice and a donation of field to grow rice).⁴

When Brahmins were searching vegetables in the morning, I used to see non-Brahmin boys and girls fishing in the village ponds and backwaters. A social ecologist may be pleased at this juncture to notice a symbiotic relation between people's food and environment. However, for the people of my community this conscious daily struggle of primary nature was highly bothersome. Adding to the uncertainty of side dishes, many non-Brahmins' daily quota of boiled rice would be available as wage only after the day's work. When I was young I used to hear a phrase from many of my known

people - *hotte ninninda na kette* (O! Belly! I am damned because of you). Arranging food for three times a day for all - usually the families were large - was quite tiresome. The situation was worst for tenants and *okkalu* or attached labourers, who are allowed to build house in one of the masters' sites. Especially during the monsoon, due to the virtual absence of manual work, the non-Brahmins faced tough time in arranging for ration. During times of extreme hunger, I had seen attached labourers waiting outside the masters' houses requesting for some rice and side dishes.

The courses of breakfast, lunch, and supper were very simple for all categories (see table two). The food lacked variety and nutrition. The result of less nutrition in the food had been the increase in the quantity of food being consumed. Another result had been a perpetual desire for good and tasty food.

The experiences of scarcity had been crystallised in some phrases in the non-Brahmin language use: *nammani oliyangivat haisara manikandit* (In our hearth today sleeps a snake. Snake symbolises the cold not heat that in turn tells the absence of food grains at home and also the firewood). Related to such expression is non-Brahmins' comparison of their state with those of Brahmin land-owners. Especially with regard to the possession of food stock, many a time I heard non-Brahmins murmuring: *birambrigen, bekad hang horduske ithale akkimudi kwaniyage* (These land owning Brahmins need not worry at all, they have enough stock of rice packed and stored as *mudis*, locally prepared round shaped package in which rice can be stored for years). The conditions of scarcity in my community could be attributed to such factors as unequal distribution of land, low agricultural production due to archaic methods of cultivation and less money in circulation. All these aspects of existential reality can be conceptualised in one term - underdevelopment/low rate of development.

The above-mentioned conditions of scarcity, however, should not allow us to conclude that there were no occasions for the people of my community to fulfil their gustatory pleasures. There were certain occasions for feasting during which time there were deviations from monotonous food items of mundane consumption. The people of KMJ have developed an elaborate and sophisticated culinary culture. Over the centuries they have developed cultural complexes surrounding food preparation and distribution for specific occasions. Such occasions could be classified into two: calendarical festivals and life-

cycle celebrations and *pujas*. The items being prepared, the ways of cooking, the social relations of cooking, caste-wise class-wise break up of items, and overall semiotics of food - all these constitute questions for a separate ethnographic study. In this context, I need to take note of lavish spending amidst scarcity as a socially and culturally induced compulsion.⁵ If Brahmins spent from their reserve pool of grains, the non-Brahmins borrowed from their masters or any other well-to-do Brahmins. None in KMJ was ready to be called as *varatara sanna*, a metaphoric reference to a penurious person.

Varatara Sanna, according to a local narration, was a rich Brahmin landowner. He lived a very miserly life throughout. Always wearing a loincloth, Sanna lived a poor life. He was not even allowing his wife to cook proper meals. Many days they were starving along with children. He was locking the *ugrana* - the place where the kitchen requirements are stored - and used to release insufficient ration daily.⁶ He did not celebrate life cycle ceremonies of his children in grand scale; did not feed the people of the community in connection of *pujas*. Having lived such a miserable life for more than seventy years, towards the end of his life, Sanna developed stomach-related ailment, and he could not eat anything solid. Exactly during that time there was World War II and the consequent ban on hoarding of food grains. The patel of the village along with higher officials raided Sannas' *ugrana* and confiscated huge stock of paddy. Broken Sanna, died on the spot.

We cannot conclude that overall ideological makeup of the community was not for careful and spendthrift life. Existentially, saving schemes and procedures of contemporary type were virtually non-existent. Earning and spending were uncalculated and spontaneous activities. And also it so happened that egregious spending on feeding others in a large scale became a drain on future earnings. The result of such an imbalance coupled with such aspects of social organisation as big families and troubles (like frequent illness of one or the other family member and uncertainty of future income) had been mental stress.⁷ These aspects of mundane existence people conceived as due to the wrath of superhuman forces (the situation of stress was the manifestation of *upadra*), and sought the redress of this situation through divine and magical interventions. Some such practices were - getting the horoscope read, contacting a *mantravadi*⁸ for identifying the magical way out of present troubles and confusions, deciding to give divine presentations and so on. Many of these practices ultimately ended up with giving grand lunch or supper to the community people. The outcome of such practices was dietary imbalance:

nutrition deficiency in daily food intake and excess nutrition and resource waste on account of special and ceremonial feedings.

At the time of calendarical festivals the land owning Brahmin households used to serve the family members of attached labourers and tenants with special dishes. Similarly, during the occasions of community feeding, after serving all Brahmin invitees, both invited and uninvited non-Brahmins were served. On all such occasions the manner in which the people consumed food depicted crave for good food as the local idiom puts it: *baragettu banda haage tinnu* (Eating as if not seen food for many days). Even I, as a child and teenager, experienced such craving for good food. I used to long for the arrival of such festivals and ceremonies.

The depth of the craving can be fathomed through an anecdote: the tragic death of *alige sadiya*. My maternal grand mother narrated this to me. I still remember that day. It was the special occasion of *karkataka amavasya*, marking the beginning of *ashada*, one of the monsoon months in Hindu calendar. Early in the morning, all of the family members went for sea bath as we did every year. Afterwards, we sat to consume *kadabu*, a special dish for the festival. We were eating *kadabu* after a long gap. Therefore even after eating our quota, we, the children of the household, were not satisfied and we pestered our grand mother to put more *kadabu*. Getting angry at our uncalled-for obsession with eating *kadabu*, grandmother shouted: "Don't behave like *alige sadiya*, lest you die." Later on, at our request grandmother narrated the circumstances leading to Sadiya's death.

The incident under reference happened some seventy years ago from now. Sadiya was an attached labourer of a rich landlord of the village Handattu. The occasion was *Karkataka Amavasya*. In the landlord's (*Vodia's*) house, after serving all the family members with *kadabu*, the attached labourers and tenants were served. When eating was completed, all of them, except Sadiya, got up. Though full to the neck, Sadiya was asking for more *kadabu*. The angry *Vodia*, notorious for his short temper, served six more *kadabus* and sat near Sadiya with a long stick, shouting: "I want to know today how big your *alige* (meaning a barrel) is?"⁹ Afraid of *Vodia's* short temper, Sadiya ate the *kadabus*. Within him there was no space even to breathe. He collapsed and died on the spot.

Socio-economic Transformation, Development, and Gastronomic Tradition

The people of my community experienced wide spread socio-economic transformation during the last three decades. Mechanisms of directed changes, mobility, and migration are notable factors responsible for this change.

One of the mechanisms of directed changes that brought about sweeping changes in the agrarian relations had been the strict implementation of *Land to the Tiller Policy* by the Congress Government under the leadership of late Shri Devaraj Urs in the 1970s. During these heydays of tenancy reforms, the tenants who were non-Brahmins, became owner cultivators. As a result, big and medium Brahmin landowners were reduced to small landowners. Many even became landless.¹⁰

Another factor of social transformation is migration. Throughout the 20th Century a considerable number of Brahmin boys and men migrated to the cities as hotel keepers or workers in the Udupi Hotels using culinary expertise as cultural capital for mobility. The paddy fields were leased out and the aged parents, wives and children stayed back in the ancestral houses. The hotel keepers remitted money regularly to the native. They also took with them in due course the younger relatives to facilitate them to get job or education (Maiyya 1995: 47-49). For Brahmins, migration meant economic, educational and occupational mobility. In the case of non-Brahmins, changed agrarian relations led to the economic mobility at the first instance.

The Brahmin hotel keepers took with them to the cities small non-Brahmin boys of their neighbourhood for the cleaning jobs and adult non-Brahmins for some other works like store-keeping. Eventually, when the children of Brahmin hotel keepers deviated from their fathers' occupation to take up white collar jobs, the non-Brahmin hotel workers continued the entrepreneurial tradition of hotel keeping. The Brahmins and non-Brahmins of my community experienced upward economic mobility due to migration, occupational change and education.

Judged by the standards of scarcity experienced by the past generations, I can conceive the present as experiencing development.

- Now people have money to spend and also to save. There are, at present in KMJ, ten nationalised Bank branches, an agricultural credit co-operative society with five branches, and scores of private financial institutions.

- Roads connect all fourteen villages, and bridges have been constructed over the streams and backwaters.
- Three market places - Kota, Saligrama, and Sasthan - now have shops where all modern gadgets, building materials, and provisions are available.
- Two decades ago there were only five modern doctors and one small Primary Health Centre for the whole of KMJ. Now there are more than twenty doctors and ten medical stores.
- Two decades ago most of the houses had mud walls and thatched roofs. Now they have been replaced by new houses: tiled or RCC.
- The construction boom has increased job opportunities for skilled, semiskilled and unskilled labour.

I can go on listing many more manifestations of economic development in my community. Rice de-husking is no more a household activity. The oral tradition incorporated in folk songs of traditional method of rice de-husking is fast disappearing. Many rice mills have come up. Along with the overcoming of scarcity, substantial changes have taken place in the gastronomic domain.

Now people have enough to eat and variety of dishes to eat due to the availability of variegated occupational activities leading to the augmentation of the purchasing power. This is evident in the changes in the daily culinary practices. In the place of *ganji* or remainder of last night's meal for breakfast, now people consume such items as idli, dosa, upma, chapati and so on. Now Brahmins and non-Brahmins alike afford to consume milk and milk products. Dairy development has taken place in the community. Compared to the society of yesteryear, everyday is a festival day today. Fish market is full with fishes and vegetable shops beam with vegetables and fruits grown in other parts of the country. Now very rarely people depend on kitchen gardens for vegetables.

In addition to the two spheres of food preparation and consumption - daily eating and special eating - a third sphere has emerged: eating out. Presently, there are more than 30 vegetarian restaurants, equal number of non-vegetarian restaurants, a couple of bars selling foreign liquor and a few government sponsored *arrack* shops. People of KMJ have developed a habit of going to *pete* every evening with a main intention of fulfilling gustatory pleasures in the restaurants.

The occasions for ceremonial eating are on the increase. The calendarical festivals are celebrated much more elaborately than before. The number of *pujas* being performed is on the increase. The life cycle rituals are now celebrated with more pomp and show. In all such occasions the number of people being fed is on the increase, and the course of the lunch or dinner, more elaborate and diverse.¹¹

These outer manifestations of gastronomic and other experiences with development - as conceived in terms of increased income, new job opportunities, and absence of food scarcity - furnish a picture of comparatively better *today* than *yesterday*. These civilisational changes have become widespread in a short duration of two to three decades. The members of the older generation cannot believe this as real. My paternal grand mother, who is 95 years old, finds our activities in experiencing development as quite astonishing and hence meaningless. Mocking at the comforts that development has been offering to us, she recalls an old saying: "*alpanige aiswarya bandare madhya ratrialli kode hiditane*" (If a person suddenly becomes rich, not knowing how to use wealth, he holds umbrella even during midnight when there is cool moon light). People of her reasoning react to the changed circumstances in a philosophical calm: "All this is *maya*, a mad rush to get something that is not there." But for all others around me, developmental experiences are as real as their breath.

Amidst this transformation by name development I find certain concepts, some old and some altogether new, playing their role in shaping the activities of my people. These concepts are as bothersome to my people internally as the earlier concepts during the time of scarcity. These concepts are well expressed in many sayings which people always use in their conversations.

Now people want to make money as much as possible and as fast as possible. Why? They always quote an old saying: "*Navu sarikaredurige tale yetti nillabekalla*" (We have to stand equal to peers, you know). To achieve this we have to renovate our houses, purchase as much new gadgets as possible, get new clothes, send our children to English medium schools, and what not. The outcome of consumption - consuming more, consuming new, and showing what one consumes - is pleasure for people in KMJ, and as Baudrillard (1988: 48 quoted in Warde 1997: 57) posited, such a consumption has become obligatory.

There is now competition to consume and to do that they have to earn more. To illustrate, a reference to the organisation of a marriage reception can be made. Usually, a marriage is celebrated with three *uutas* or *outhanas* (elaborate dinners) - the first on the day of marriage (to be hosted by the bride's party), the second on the next day (to be hosted by the bridegroom's party), and the third on the subsequent day (to be hosted again by the bride's party). Any careful analysis of the conversation of the people participating in these dinners shows that most of the time the topic of discussion remained food: food items being prepared, their taste, grandeur and so on. People find pleasure judging the developmental standards of both parties through the pretext of items served in the dinners. The current ceremonial dinners in KMJ subscribe to the Veblenian thesis of food as means of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1953 originally 1899). However, such consumption is found not only among the *nouveau riche*, but also among all class and *jati* categories.

In fact, instances of communal feeding are salient features of ritual occasions of all kind - *mangala* (for example, life cycle rituals before death and special *pujas* of myriad kinds) and *amangala* (death related ceremonies). Now with development, communal feedings are being associated with even non-ritual celebrations such as winning an election and organisation of a cricket tournament.

All such celebrations now consume as less time as possible. Now the time taken to complete a ceremony is less: the number of hymns being chanted is less. I can give the example of *shradha* - the annual propitiation of ancestors. Earlier, the propitiation alone used to consume more than four hours from 11 AM to 3 PM. Only after the ceremonial feeding of the Brahmins the guests and relatives were fed. Now the whole performance hardly takes two hours. The time-consuming and leisurely celebrations had fitted well into the agrarian work schedule, which was elastic. Consequent upon development, people are now busy with their routines associated with non-agricultural occupations, reinforced by certain external agencies, and consequently rigid. The visitors to the native from the cities on ceremonial occasions too are very busy due to their engagements in the out-migrated space. Now, therefore, the celebrations are not elaborate.

Earlier, communal dining associated with any celebration was a communal affair in the real sense of the term - right from morning till evening the relatives and neighbours gathered to take part in various activities associated with food preparation, distribution and consumption. The oral tradition associated

with vegetable cutting, food preparation, and allied activities reiterate collective participation. However, now paid labourers do much of these works. Several new categories of paid works such as serving and cleaning have come up. The community integrative functions of communal dining are fast disappearing. This has been indicated by the shorter time that people spend in the communal dining. On any such occasion from 12.30 PM the invitees start flocking in and by 2 PM, soon after the dinner, they disperse.

The number of such communal dining has increased. The result is that the invitations and participation have now become more formalised and obligatory. These developments need to be understood and interpreted holistically in relation to the process of development itself.

Development, Stress, and Re-inventing Tradition

As shown in the previous sections KMJ experienced economic development as reflected by out-migration, mobility, increased purchasing capacity, and market expansion and availability of a variety of commodities. In this context we can cite several cases of re-inventing tradition. If we take hotel keeping as a case for reference, the Brahmins at the first instance and non-Brahmins at the later stage creatively responded to the situations of transformation by channelling their indigenous knowledge contained in their gastronomic oral tradition. We can also mention here the cases of other occupation-based *jati* categories using their indigenous knowledge contained in oral tradition for mobility - the Vishwakarmas, the Poojaris, and the Magers. A probe in to the nature of these creative responses calls for a separate ethnographic attention.

As a conclusion, I may call our attention to one of the general trends observable in the wake of development, that is, the continuation of *stress* from past to present. And people have re-invented a specific concept (*upadra*) in oral tradition to explain it. Earlier, the stress had been due to scarcity, and uncertainty in arranging for the necessities. Now, I feel, the stress is due to mobility, competition and peer pressure. Such a situation can be located in the interface between simultaneous operation of two forces, 'individualisation' and 'communification',¹² operating at all levels - individual, family and community.

The concept *upadra*, as described earlier, signified the wrath of supernatural forces. The way out of *upadra*, popularly understood as *shamana*, is possible by offering certain *pujas* or presentations through such mediators as *patris* (spirit possessors) and priests. One comes to know the nature of *upadra* by

surrendering to specialists like Future Tellers, Horoscope Readers, and Magic Women/Men. Their number is on the increase along with the number of professional priests. In almost all households of KMJ the number of *pujas* and offerings associated with *upadra* is on the increase. The related culinary culture - associated with offering of food to Brahmans, gods, goddesses, and manes - has been re-articulated and strengthened. These trends make me ask the question: whether development itself is an *upadra* (a problematic experience) for the people of KMJ? The answer to this question may render intelligible the social, cultural, and economic implications of development for the different categories of the people of KMJ - (1) Brahmans, touchable non-Brahmins, and untouchable non-Brahmins, (2) the rich, the middle class and the poor, (3) migrants and non-migrants, and (4) traditional occupational holders and occupationally mobile.

Table One
JATIS AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN KMJ

Main Jati	Jati Subdivision	Occupation		Ritual Status	Family Type
		Traditional	Present		
Brahmins	Kota	Purohit Owner Cultivation	Purohit Owner Cultivation Hotel Keeping and White Collar	Highest	Makla Santana*
	Shivalli	Temple Priesthood Owner Cultivation	Temple Priesthood Owner Cultivation Hotel Keeping White Collar	Highest	Makla Santana
	Saraswat	Trade	Trade White Collar	Ritually superior but closed	Makla Santana
	Sthanik	Temple Servancy	Temple Servancy Hotel Keeping White Collar	Inferior Brahmin	Makla Santana
Touchable Non - Brahmins	Viswakama	Craft Work	Craft Work business White Collar	Intermediary	Makla Santana
	Ganiga	Oilseed Pressing	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary	Makla Santana
	Shettigar	Weaving	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary	Makla Santana
	Bunt	Soldier	Owner Cultivation White Collar	Intermediary	Aliya Santana*
	Moger	Fishing	Fishing Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary	Aliya Santana
	Devadiga	Musicians	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary	Makla Santana

Main Jati	Jati Subdivision	Occupation	Ritual Status	Family Type
	Jogi	Bangle Making	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary Makla Santana
	Madival	Washerfolk	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary Makla Santana
	Bahandari	Barber	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Intermediary Makla Santana
Untouchable Non-Brahmins	Poojari	Toddy Tapping	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Lower Aliya Santana
	SC	Manual Labour	Owner Cultivation Agricultural Labour	Lower Makla Santana
	ST	Basket Making	No Specific Occupation	Lower Makla Santana

- * Family line continues through sons
- * Family line continues through nephews

Table Two
FAMILIAR FOOD ITEMS IN KMJ

Jati	Orientation	Breakfast	Lunch	Supper
Brahmin	Vegetarian	Men: Ganji Women and Children: Remainder of last night's meal	Freshly cooked rice and side dishes	Remainder of Lunch
Non-Brahmin	Non-vegetarian	Remainder of last night's meal	Ganji	Liquor and Freshly prepared rice and side dishes

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Endnotes

1. Kota is one among the thirty-two Brahman settlements accounted in the *Gramapaddhati* compiled by Holla (19240. [See Rao (2000) for an analysis of Shivalli, a Brahman Settlement of Dakshina Kannada.] The tradition of following a human guru or *swamiji* is absent in Kota. The deity is the Guru and the temple itself is *gurusthan*, the abode of guru.
2. Quoted from one of the interviews appeared in *Udavani*, Kannada daily, dated 10-05-1995. In his authentic novel *Marali Mannige* (reprint 1996), Dr. Shivaram Karanth narrates the many aspects of traditional food ways and food ideologies of KMJ. He considers the novel to be a realist account of the poverty-stricken life of the people of KMJ from 1850 to 1940.
3. Beardsworth and Keil (1997:2) consider secure food supply to be one of the reasons for sociological neglect of food and eating in the West. Whereas, anthropologists studying the 'native others' holistically took cognisance of practices related to food and eating.
4. *Umbli* means the donations of fields made by the head of the government to officers and priests in recognition of the services rendered.
5. Culturally induced compulsion has been contained in such expressions as, *navu sarikaredurige tale yetti nillabekalla*, we have to be on par with the peers.
6. It is not astonishing that in one of the recent occasions of public feedings (18-04-2000 to 28-04-2000) for 5000 people under the auspices of *Shakala Riksamhita Yaga* in Sri Gurunarasimha temple a person belonging to the family of *Varatara Sanna* was in-charge of *ugrana*.
7. In their study of stress, change and mental disorder in KMJ, Carstairs and Kapur (1976) discovered a high prevalence of psychiatric symptoms.
8. *Mantrawadi* is a magical healer.
9. *Alige*, meaning a barrel refers allegorically to belly.
10. There is scope for a systematic study of latent consequences of Tenancy Reforms in Coastal Karnataka.
11. See Rajalaxmi (1997) for a discussion on the courses of a ceremonial eating.
12. A detailed exploration into these and other forces need to be undertaken to understand the process of development in KMJ.

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