‘When Women Unite!’

The Making of the Anti-Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh, India

Marie Larsson
Contents

1. Introduction ...................................................................................... 5
   Conceptual Frameworks of Alcohol and Gender .................................. 9
   Conceptual Frameworks of Social Movements and Gender ....................... 14
   Anthropological Studies of South India ........................................... 21
   Andhra Pradesh ............................................................................... 22
   Methodology ..................................................................................... 25
   An Outline of the Book ..................................................................... 28

2. How Temperance Became A Woman’s Issue:
   A Review of Social Movements from the
   Colonial Period Onwards ................................................................. 31
   The Social Reform Movement ......................................................... 31
   The Temperance Movement ............................................................... 33
   The Caste Association .................................................................... 35
   The Nationalist Movement ................................................................. 37
     The Extremists ............................................................................ 37
     Gandhi ......................................................................................... 38
     Women’s Movement ..................................................................... 41
   The Post-Independence Period .......................................................... 41
     The Women’s Movement ................................................................. 44
     Protests Against Alcohol Consumption .......................................... 45
   Mobilization for Women’s Rights and Temperance in Andhra Pradesh .... 48
     The Social Reform Movement ......................................................... 48
     Caste Associations ....................................................................... 49
     The Nationalist Movement ............................................................... 50
     The Communist Party ................................................................. 53
     The Telangana Armed Struggle ..................................................... 54
     The Post-Independence Period ........................................................ 56
     The Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh .................................................... 58

3. The Anti-Arrack Movement in Nellore District ......................... 61
   Nellore District ............................................................................... 62
   The Literacy Campaign .................................................................... 66
4. Intra-Households Relations and Discourses on Gender in Rural Andhra Pradesh

- Intra-Households Relations and Discourses on Gender in Rural Andhra Pradesh
  - Marriage
  - Married Life
    - The Daughter-in-Law
    - Married Life and Breadwinning
    - Motherhood
  - Discourses on Gender
    - Purity and Impurity
    - Auspiciousness
    - Female Energy (strī śakti)
    - Self-Control and Household Responsibility
  - The Gender of Drinking
  - Limitations of Women’s Participation in the Protest
    - The ‘House’ and the ‘Street’
    - Age and Marital Status
  - From Hidden to Open Resistance

5. Protest Politics Among the Middle Class

- Protest Politics Among the Middle Class
  - The Movement Organizations
    - Nellore District
    - Chittoor District
  - The Middle-Class Activists
    - Narrating Personal Involvement
    - Experiences of Female Activists
    - Discourses on Villages
  - Leadership within the Movement
    - Collectivism and Individuality
    - Charismatic Leadership
    - Multiple Leaders
      - P.S. Manohar
      - Reena
  - Movement Intellectuals
    - Marxist Frameworks
    - The Feminist Controversy
    - Two Writings
      - Saaraamsam
      - Again Liquor
6. Advocates, Adversaries, and Beneficiaries
Within the Prohibition Field

Social Structure and the Market for Liquor

The Liquor Industry
- The Toddy Tappers
- Arrack Businessmen
- Manufacturers and Traders of Foreign Liquor and Beer
- Sellers of Illicit Liquor

The Political Field
- Advocates from the Political Field
- Politicians in the Liquor Trade
- The Excise Staff
- The Withdrawal of Prohibition

Curbing the Protests
- The Court
- The Police
- Hired Gunmen

7. The ‘Imagined Community’ of Protest

The Press
- The ‘Newspaper Revolution’
- The Telugu Press
- The Journalists
- The TV

Cultural Constructions of the Movement
- Shared Origin
- Shared Aim(s)
- Shared Experiences

Collective Action
- Protests at District and State Level
- Demonstrations
- Public Meetings
- The Power of Speech
- Dharmas and Rasta Rokos
- Historicity and the Importance of Memory

The Travel of Activists
- Travelling by Train
- The Padayatra

Cultural Activities
- The Street Theatre in Andhra Pradesh
- Music in Andhra Pradesh
- The Artistes
- Visual Art
8. The Anti-Arrack Movement Between Global/National Processes and Local Contexts……………………..……..238
Struggle Against Liquor at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century…………………………….………245

Acknowledgements…………………………………………………………………………………252
Abstract…………………………………………………………………………………………254
References………………………………………………………………………………………255
Index……………………………………………………………………………………………..272
Tables and Illustrations

Tables
Inhabitants in Chintala Palem (1996) ......................................................... 83

Figures
Alcohol consumption in Andhra Pradesh ............................................. 168
Revenue receive ................................................................. 188
Excise revenue derived from shops in Andhra Pradesh ....................... 189

Maps
Andhra Pradesh ............................................................... 23
Nellore District ................................................................. 64

Illustrations
Mural painting from Tirupati ......................................................... 233
State placard from Tirupati ......................................................... 233
Painting by Nellore artist .......................................................... 234
Cartoon from Eenadu ............................................................. 234
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIWC</td>
<td>All-India Women’s Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APCLC</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Backward Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGVS</td>
<td>Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi (the India Science Knowledge Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>Communist Party of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCID</td>
<td>Central Bureau of Criminal Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>Communist Party of India-Marxist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI-ML</td>
<td>Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRO</td>
<td>District Revenue Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENA</td>
<td>Extra Neutral Alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCRO</td>
<td>Foreign Contribution Regulation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMFL</td>
<td>Indian-Made Foreign Liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Indian Administrative Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPTA</td>
<td>Indian People’s Theatre Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVV</td>
<td>Jana Vignana Vedika (People’s Science Forum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSSP</td>
<td>Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (Kerala Science Literacy Society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGR</td>
<td>Minimum Guaranteed Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRO</td>
<td>Mandal Revenue Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAWO</td>
<td>National Alliance of Women’s Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLMA</td>
<td>National Literacy Mission Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTR</td>
<td>Nandamiri Tarak Rama Rao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPDR</td>
<td>Organization for Protecting Democratic Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDSU</td>
<td>Progressive Democratic Students’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Progressive Organization of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWG</td>
<td>People’s War Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISE</td>
<td>Rural Institute of Social Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Scheduled Castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHG</td>
<td>Self-Help Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO</td>
<td>Rural Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>Student Federation of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASMAC</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDP</td>
<td>Telugu Desam Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS</td>
<td>Toddy Shops’ Cooperative Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTS</td>
<td>Tree for Tapper Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAO</td>
<td>Village Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCTU</td>
<td>Women’s Christian Temperance Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes on Transcription

All words are transcribed from Telugu in accordance with the model presented by Gwynn (1991). However, proper names, geographical names, and the names of castes as well as those of movement organisations and state programmes are spelled in their anglicised forms.
Introduction

In 1991 women from Dubagunta, Nellore District in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, drove the liquor contractors out of their village. This is said to have been the beginning of the so-called Anti-Arrack Movement (Saara Vyathireka Udyamam), which finally led to the prohibition of alcohol in the state on 16 January 1995. It has generally been assumed that the local state administration, the literacy campaign and the newspaper Eenadu were the key factors behind the spread of the movement to other parts of Andhra Pradesh. The main participants in the early struggle were poor, rural women, predominantly from Scheduled Castes (S.C.) and Backward Classes (B.C.), supported by voluntary organizations and later on by politicians from the opposition parties.

Saipeta, situated in the dry and mountainous western part of Nellore district, was the third place to take part in the protests against arrack — a customarily consumed alcoholic beverage distilled from molasses. It was a small village typical of the area, with around 3,000 inhabitants mainly engaged in agriculture and belonging to the official categories of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. Vijayamma, one of the female activists, recalled in an interview carried out at the beginning of my stay in Nellore district in 1995, how the womenfolk had suffered before the movement was

---

1 The classifications, Scheduled Castes (S.C.) and Backward Classes (B.C.) or actually Other Backward Classes, (O.B.C.) have been introduced by the Indian government with the aim of giving persons belonging to these groups a certain percentage of educational places and jobs within the state sector. The label, Scheduled Castes, was first applied in 1935, when disadvantaged groups were placed on a schedule to obtain access to reserved places. Despite the fact that most of the people embraced were customarily viewed as ‘untouchables’, not everyone included in the register actually belongs to these castes (Hardtmann 2003:1 n.1). In addition, the Kakar Kalelkar Commission, established by the Government of India, recognized more than 3,000 castes and communities as ‘Other Backward Classes’ (Castes) in 1956. While the Mandal Commission considered that 52% of the inhabitants should be incorporated under this label in 1980, several state governments have set up commissions to classify those castes that can be described as ‘socially and educationally backward castes/classes’ (Shah 1990:122). Despite the fact that other Backward Classes usually consist of people included in the Sudra category according to the four broad ‘social classes’ in the traditional varna scheme, i.e. they are not ‘twice-born’, not all Sudra groups are on the list. For example, Reddis and Kammas, the influential landowning castes of Andhra Pradesh, are not included.

2 In this example I have chosen to use the proper name of the village as the protest events have become common knowledge in Andhra Pradesh. This story was told to me by the women of that place at the beginning of my stay in Nellore district in 1995.
launched, from the men’s growing consumption of liquor. A climax was
reached when one man in an intoxicated condition stabbed his own father to
death. Apart from this incident, Vijayamma mentioned how she was
embarrassed when relatives of hers visited the house and how to her shame
they were scared away from the village by the obscene language of her
closest neighbour who was a heavy drinker. She felt ashamed and thought
that Saipeta would be a much better place without arrack.

There were two liquor shops in the locality. The village men used to go
straight to these places in the evening when they returned with their wages
from their day’s work, and they came home late at night completely drunk.
Only if they had any money left, would they hand over some for the
household. At times, when their earnings were not enough to buy liquor,
they incurred debts or stole household articles like goblets, plates or even
their wives’ saris.

As in other parts of the district, the literacy campaign had started in the
village in 1991. The women read about the incidents at Dubagunta in the
second book of study material used in the classes, which led to their bonding
together to stop liquor sales in Saipeta as well. The men scolded the women
when they went to night school instead of staying at home, but the women
managed to slip out anyhow and go to the lessons. Vijayamma explained to
me that the spokespersons they had chosen and other women in the village
had encouraged them by saying that they could achieve anything if they
were united. They met and discussed the arrack problem at the literacy
classes, particularly at those held in the settlements of the Scheduled Castes
and Backward Classes as these categories suffered most from the men’s
abuse of alcohol. The women preferred to talk about these issues at the
course in the evening, rather than meeting in their homes during the day
when they were occupied with earning their livelihoods and performing their
household duties. After a week’s discussion they decided to send petitions to
the Collector’s office, to the village president and to Ravula Ankaiah Goud
—one of the big arrack contractors in the district, who was responsible for
the distribution of intoxicating beverages to Saipeta.

The women chose to stop the sale of liquor by attacking the shops and
above all the local godown. Whenever the shopkeepers needed arrack they
would open the store, take out the goods, and then lock it up again. Two
hundred villagers gathered outside the storage point when the new spirits
arrived. The workers were trying to unload the goods but the women
prevented them, urging the sellers to leave the place with all the arrack.
While the traders insisted on unloading, as they had not received any other
orders from above, the women told them that this was their village, where
the villagers had authority. ‘We won’t allow you to drop off the beverages
and if you want you can make a complaint against us’. With such words they
forcibly obstructed the traders who finally agreed to their demands but with
the reservation that the women should leave the stock untouched until the
contractor arrived. The protesters agreed and the sellers stopped unloading, telling the villagers that they would return the next day. They left in a jeep after having been warned by the women that if they did not turn up the following day, the women would break into the store and throw out the goods.

The arrack contractor arrived four days later, telling the villagers that their way of protesting was not proper and that they should rather go to the Collector in Nellore town, the district capital, and obtain a mandate from him to stop the liquor sale. Since the contractor was paying excise duties to the government he was entitled to carry on his business as long as the state representatives did not give orders to the contrary. Nevertheless, the arrack trader promised to remove all the stock on the very day that he received such instructions from the Collector.

The Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO), a junior government official under the District Collector, arrived in the village. He told the contractor that it would be better to discontinue the trade for four days because of the villagers’ protest. In the meantime the MRO would discuss with his senior, the Revenue Development Officer (RDO), and find a solution to the predicament. Although the sales stopped, the Mandal Revenue Officer did not turn up on the day he had promised to come. The villagers waited for his arrival but when he did not appear 200 people went to Kaligiri, the mandal headquarters, to see the officer. They were told to go to the Revenue Development Officer, who lived in Kavali, the centre of the revenue division located about 35 kilometres to the east from Kaligiri. Consequently, twenty women went on to his residence where they arrived at about 10.00 pm. When the officer came out to ask them what they wanted the women explained to him why they wanted the sale of liquor to be stopped in Saipeta, recounting their sufferings and the recent patricide. Since they could no longer bear such pain, arrack had to be rooted out from their village.

After listening to them, the officer stressed that if they did not want heavy drinking in their village, matters should be as they wished since the government could not do anything against the wishes of the people. Accordingly, the women went to all the liquor shops. The traders, however, had already relocated the store to a place two kilometres away from Saipeta, and they started to transport arrack into the village in small quantities. The women watched them to begin with but on the fourth day they went to Arundhakti-

---

3 The Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) is a lower-level state official who is in charge of the Revenue Department at the administrative stratum above the village, i.e. the mandal, but ultimately he/she is under the authority of the District Collector. Administratively, the hierarchy of personnel within the Revenue Department is made up as follows: District Collector (coordinating all the state departments in the district); Joint Collector (responsible for the Revenue Department); District Revenue Officer, DRO; Revenue Development Officer, RDO (Revenue Division); Mandal Revenue Officer, MRO (mandal); and Village Administrative Officer, VAO (village).
4 There are three revenue divisions in Nellore district: Kavali, Guntur, and Nellore.
nagar — a settlement on the outskirts of the village where the Madigas, a caste previously regarded as Untouchable, lived. There they stopped the bicycle on which the liquor was being transported, pulled down the box, and burnt 200 packs of arrack, telling the delivery man that if the traders wanted to bring a charge against them, the women would give him all their names. However, instead of lodging a complaint the traders filed cases against the Village Administrative Officer (VAO) — the local state employee under the District Collector — and the teachers. As the women got to know about this after the cases had been registered, they decided to carry on a dharna (sit-in) at Kavali, where the Revenue Development Officer was situated, their argument being that since a crowd of two hundred of them had come forward to burn the liquor packs it was not right to file cases against particular individuals.

At this juncture local issues had turned into affairs of public concern in the district, as different state representatives had become directly involved in the alcohol issues of the village. After the dharna the name of Saipeta became well known all over the district since the press had covered the events extensively. In consequence, people from other places followed Saipeta’s example and the movement spread, to use the words of the activists, ‘like wildfire’ (kaarciccu laagaa).

The overarching goal of the present study is to examine how people’s political and private activities were able to be integrated into a larger movement. In the following chapters I shall focus more specifically on the following questions: What are the social mechanisms for mobilization and how does the translation from the private to the general occur? Where do the leaders of a movement get their ideas from? What is it that sparks a special question among the broad international repertoire of social issues relevant for local and regional intellectuals? Why are such middle-class people interested in mobilizing the poor? What methods do they use? What are relations like between the participants in the movement, the political leaders and the state administration? This analysis will also try to follow how the women’s temperance movement in India relates to issues of feminist mobilization as well as to class and caste emancipation. In addition, I shall link the arguments of the Anti-Arrack Movement to discourses about self-control and purity as well as to ideas of rationality and modernization.

According to mythology Arundhati (the Morning Star) was the faithful dedicated wife (patiwratha) of Vasishta, a Vedic sage. Given that this woman is assumed to have been a Madiga, the settlements of this group are often referred to by her name.
Before continuing with an overview of my theoretical framework, I have to touch briefly on the definition of ‘temperance’ since the concept has two meanings that might lead to confusion, namely, those of moderation and of total abstinence from liquor. The word was attached to anti-liquor movements in Western Europe and the United States in their early years (1820s), when the doctrine was not yet as extreme as it came to be later on. Today the label is commonly used in the literature on mobilization against alcoholic beverages. The Temperance Movement has all along demonstrated two different types of moral reform: ‘assimilative reform’— making the drinker acquire the habits of the reformer — and ‘coercive reform’ — forcing the drinker to change his habits by the use of prohibitive law, i.e. prohibition (Gusfield 1988:6-7). Given these connotations, it is necessary to make clear whether the notion of temperance refers to attempts to restrict or to prohibit the use of hard drinks.

Conceptual Frameworks of Alcohol and Gender

In the social sciences there are different opinions about the degree to which the physical effects of alcohol change the behaviour of people and to what extent drunken comportment is itself governed by cultural perceptions, as some anthropologists have argued (see, for example, McAndrew & Edgerton 1969; Douglas 1987b; Heath 2000). An anthropological focus on the social uses of intoxicating beverages has met with some criticism, among others from Robin Room (1984) who maintains that anthropologists have ignored the problematic aspects of alcohol use, focusing too much on the socially integrative aspects of joint drinking. During recent decades, however, certain anthropologists have also taken up issues relating to problem drinking, and, of course, the interpretation of drinking as a predicament is in itself a social fact worth investigating (Marshall & Marshall 1990; Eber 1995; Dahl 1991; Harvey 1994; Huby 1994; Avila Palafox 2001). The cultural meaning of abstention from alcohol is, however, not simply the inversion of the message that alcohol consumption carries.

Even though drunkenness is not regarded everywhere in the world as a moral issue or as problematic, it is widely believed in Andhra Pradesh that liquor is something evil and is detrimental to moral and physical health. When considering the everyday use of liquor in India, it is striking that the lower castes have taken the major part in it, while the higher castes usually refrain. There are some acknowledged pan-Indian lifestyle principles stereotypically associated with each varna. Most importantly, the whole Hindu population regards the vegetarianism and teetotalism practiced by the Brahmans as superior, since these practices are symbols of higher religious status (Dumont 1980:146f; Shukla 1987:519). Nevertheless, heavy drinking is accepted among the Kshatriyas, the ruling castes (cf. Dorschner 1983a;
Dorschner 1983b), while Sudras and Untouchables have traditionally had a more permissive attitude towards alcoholic beverages. 6

Groups lower in the social hierarchy often try to improve their status by copying and taking over the ideas and practices of categories in a superior position. In India this happens when lower castes adopt the lifestyles of higher ones, especially those of the Brahmans, a process referred to by M.N. Srinivas (1962:44) as ‘sanskritization’. Abstinence from inebriants is a source of prestige and has been used in order to rise in the caste hierarchy.7 In contemporary India there are, however, other criteria for claiming status than those provided by the traditional caste ideology, as Western consumption ideals have replaced more ascetic attitudes among people in the upper strata and also affect the attitude to alcohol. Srinivas acknowledges this, but he describes the resultant pattern in terms of relations between castes, not by reference to categorizations based on social class or gender. Generally, however, it can be observed that poor people drink the indigenous beverages — arrack and toddy — while the middle and upper classes prefer the more expensive Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL or IMF), which includes beer.

In daily life people often behave according to contradictory ideals. A person who today is a teetotaller may change his/her drinking habits tomorrow. Describing how peasants in Uttar Pradesh mix global development discussions with Ayurvedic concepts and arguments pertaining to caste, class, and gender, Gupta (1998:5-6) notes that ‘hybridity’, the fusion of conflicting reasoning and incompatible debates, is part of ‘the postcolonial condition’. Alcohol use and teetotalism in Andhra Pradesh belong to a similarly changing scenario characterized by the fact that ideas about class, caste, and gender are combined with traditional notions of heat and coldness.

The Indian classification of food, including liquor, into hot and cold relates closely not only to health issues but also to concepts of sexuality and self-control. Most importantly, ‘heating’ dishes are thought to increase the

---

6 Bourdieu (1984:56) has taken as his point of departure the existence of lifestyle differences that distinguish French classes or class fractions from each other, e.g. those richest in cultural capital from those richest in economic capital. In his view taste is often demonstrated by the rejection of the manners of other social groups, manifested as distaste and a feeling of sickness at the mere thought of contrasting habits. He traces these variations to the fact that the social organization consists of two separate hierarchical principles — the profane status and the spiritual status, i.e. the businessperson and the intellectual (ibid: 317, 469f). Even though we find the same distinction between spiritual and temporal in the traditional Indian varna model, represented by the Brahmin and the King, what was specific to India was that spiritual status was regarded as superior to economic, political or military status.

7 Raj S. Gandhi (1977:249) describes how the present Brahmin lifestyle is an effect of the influence of Jainism, first taken up by Kshatriyas but afterwards dominating the practices of Vaishyas. At that time Vedic Brahmans used both meat and soma (according to Gandhi a kind of liquor) in their diet (op cit:251; cf. Srinivas 1962:42), but they soon adopted many Jainist rules — non-killing (ahimsa), vegetarianism and teetotalism — in order to withstand the competition from the Vaishyas (Gandhi 1977:255). Consequently, sanskritization was originally more related to the habits of the Vaishyas than to those of the Brahmans.
temperature of the blood and heighten sexual desire (Cantlie 1977:561; Busby 2001:198). Arrack and IMFL are considered to be ‘hot’ (weeDi) drinks, while fermented beverages, beer and toddy, are thought of as ‘cold’ (cali).

In various parts of the world there is a gender difference in drinking patterns: men drink while women abstain or drink less (see, for example, Horton 1945; Douglas 1987a:7; Nkokwey 1987; Bjerén 1992; Gefou-Madianou 1992; McDonald 1994; Cantarero Abad 2001; Heath 2000:73-74; Plant 1997). Some scholars have explained women’s participation in temperance activities by referring to their culturally constructed responsibility for defending the family against the threats caused by the way men booze in places designated as male (Epstein 1981; Marshall & Marshall 1990; Bordin 1981). In India too, a strict division between male and female spaces is visible in that drinking takes place in all-male settings outside the domestic domain. As will be illustrated in the next chapter, protests against liquor have for a long time proved to be a legitimate way for women to enter the public sphere. Such struggles have sometimes resulted in a critique of the wider gender order allowing related issues, such as wife battering, to be put on the agenda. This does not exclude that men too take part in and support anti-liquor movements. For example, Gandhian voluntary associations have frequently had abstention from alcoholic drinks on their agenda. However, organizations of drinkers who practise self-reform, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, have until recently been quite rare in India.

Several studies have pursued the connection between drunkenness and wife battering, often tracing the root of the violence to the substance itself. Mac and Leslie B. Marshall argue that ‘the stage is set for disagreement and confrontation along gender lines’ when members of one sex use an intoxicating substance to such an extent that it leads to family problems and disruption of the community (1990:7). During the past two decades, nonetheless, some authors have begun to focus on how cultural ideas about alcohol and maleness and femaleness might promote aggressive behaviour under inebriation. Criticizing those analyses of hunters and gatherers that explain domestic violence merely as an effect of heavy alcohol use per se, Dahl (1991) indicates that we should broaden the perspective to consider the social patterns behind high alcohol consumption and why it results in violent behaviour. Writing on the situation in Greenland, she suggests that heavy drinking in itself might be connected to a crisis in the masculine role. Similarly, Harvey (1994) explores wife battering in highland Peru, and maintains that drunkenness, associated with masculinity, brings to the surface a contradiction between the assertiveness related to masculine identity among the Peruvian Indians and their low status as part of a subjugated indigenous population. Nevertheless, men try to rise above these contradictions through violence against women regarded as subordinate to men (ibid: 226).
We need to widen our understanding of the process before the husband resorts to violence. Alasuutari (1992:80) has drawn attention to the way nagging has been used as a weapon by Finnish women in protesting against the excessive drinking of their men, which has often escalated into a struggle about power and about male self-determination. It is therefore essential to pursue the question of how squabbles about alcohol can represent a gender struggle in which the masculinity of the husband is at stake, and where the drinker might try to compensate for his lost status vis-à-vis his wife by means of violence. Hydén (1994:53) argues in a study about wife battering in Sweden that the physical act is often preceded by a verbal confrontation in which the woman may be active as well, but, irrespective of the roles men and women have taken in the argument, the distribution of power act to the husband’s advantage the moment he raises his hand against his wife. There is little doubt that quarrels over drinking in Andhra Pradesh (cf. Tapper 1987:27) often developed into physical abuse and wife battering when the husband was inebriated. Drunkenness has been considered a legitimate excuse not only for violence but also for other sorts of anti-social behaviour.

MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) suggest that many cultures accept drunken behaviour as a ‘Time-Out’ from ordinary social norms since heavy drinkers are not held accountable for their actions when under intoxication. They give ethnographic examples from different parts of the world but also a more detailed overview of the role of alcohol in the lives of North American Indians during the early period of colonization. Nevertheless, accepting drunkenness as a temporary relief from accountability is not a universal rule, as Hill (1978) demonstrates by showing how, among Sioux Indians in the 1970s, even boozers were faced with negative sanctions if they broke the rules. In his critique of MacAndrew and Edgerton, he ignores, however, these authors’ acknowledgement that there is no absolutely clear-cut ‘Time-Out’ in contemporary societies where there are no longer any common norms on which everyone can agree; what is excusable to one, may be abominable to another. On the same grounds I shall in this ethnography consider the heterogeneity of contemporary Andhra Pradesh as related to how men and women conceptualize drunken behaviour.

Doubtless, differences in drinking habits, the ascription of accountability, and especially the reasons why some people refrain from liquor reveal the importance of ideas about self-control. Elias’ (1994:98) landmark work has been influential in analyzing how notions about self-control involved an ever-increasing restraint of expressions of emotion and instinctual drives — the subjugation of that part of the human being that is thought to be ‘animal’ and therefore closer to nature (cf. Foucault 1977: 101) — spreading first in the Western world and then in its colonies from the sixteenth century onwards. This monograph will illustrate that Indian ideas of self-restraint
also have their own local sources visible in the religiously oriented asceticism found in Hinduism.\footnote{Foucault (1977) has demonstrated how ideals of self-control, the so-called ‘disciplines’, arose in Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, causing restraint of the movement of the body. In contrast to asceticism and ‘monastic disciplines’, they had the aim of increasing utility in society and not renunciation of the world (ibid:137). Conversely, it is unlikely that European notions of self-control have been without religious meanings. For his part, Weber (1930) examines in The Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism the asceticism of certain Protestant churches — Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and the Baptist sects — and how they actually contributed to the development of modern society, as the ideal-type Protestants, in contrast to monastic ascetics, did not withdraw from the world but acted within it.}

The themes of self-control and asceticism turn up in various contexts in relation to Indian religion and society: first, caste ranking is determined according to ascetic values such as vegetarianism, non-violence, teetotalism and sexual restraint (Cantlie 1977:261; Carstairs 1954:231),\footnote{Cantlie (1977:263) explains this by the fact that purity does not exist except as a negation of impurity, and as a result only impurity can be transmitted to other people. Broadly speaking, higher castes are then forced to differentiate themselves from lower ones, resulting in a devaluation of life and nature within man.} and secondly, the religiously inspired renouncer has a significant role in the Hindu tradition, as the Indian ascetic ideal has sometimes been seen as standing in contradiction to the collective notions inherent in caste society. Since the \textit{sannyasi}, the ascetic renouncer, is an individual who abandons his ordinary existence in the social world in order to commit himself to his own spiritual redemption, he/she stands outside society and is not part of the hierarchical caste model, based on purity and impurity (Dumont 1980:185f, 190). Ideas about self-control are related to the distinction between culture and nature, as well as to the opposition between pure and impure castes, explained by the fact that the impurity connected with ‘low’ occupations — which are for that reason a monopoly of ‘low’ castes — undoubtedly obtains its stigma from its required close connection with organic procedures. The higher the rank of a caste, the more plentiful are the kinds of food it cannot eat, the livelihoods it cannot follow and the avoidances demanded of its members (Cantlie 1977:263). As the higher castes distinguish themselves from everything that has roots in organic life, they are seen as more self-controlled than the lower ones. Apart from their close connection with caste stratification and the religious renouncer, Indian ideas on self-control have often involved a blending of Western and indigenous traditions that became closely related to health issues in the early nineteenth century, reflected in the activities of social reform organizations, the Boy Scout movement, the \textit{akhara} wrestling culture and Gandhi (cf. Watt 2005; Alter 2000).

Significantly, there are gender differences in self-restraint, since women have often been expected to act as their husbands’ controllers, reforming them from their vices, including drunkenness, whereas at other times they have been regarded as less self-restrained and more lustful than their
husbands. Writing on Tamil Nadu, Daniel (1997) argues that several gender models co-exist, according to which women are either more self-controlled than men, less self-controlled, or no different from them in terms of this criterion. As has been noted by Busby (2001:198-99), lower caste men from Kerala were previously regarded as more ‘hot’ and less self-restrained, but today they are believed to have acquired these characteristics by imbibing alcohol, an external substance. The position taken in this book is that women’s mobilisation against liquor in Andhra Pradesh was a way of restraining husbands who, under the influence of the drink, were involved in various forms of irresponsible behaviour.

In the foregoing discussion I have dwelt on personal drinking habits and alcohol-affected conduct, but these frameworks have not systematically explored the collective formation of ideas about the restriction and prohibition of drinking. For this latter purpose, studies on the Temperance Movement are a useful entry to the field of drinking as a ‘social evil’ (saahaajika looTu) and a ‘social problem’. Disregarding Antze (1986), who is not an anthropologist, but who has made an interesting study of Alcoholics Anonymous from a symbolic perspective, there are to my knowledge only two anthropological studies of temperance organisations. Bateson (1971) discusses Alcoholics Anonymous from a cybernetic perspective, while Marshall and Marshall (1990) explore the mobilization of women for alcohol prohibition on the island of Truk.

But these studies have allowed me no analytical room for the process that translates a private problem into a common concern around which to mobilize. To address this issue, I turn to studies on other social movements that have more comprehensively taken up this aspect in their analyses.

Conceptual Frameworks of Social Movements and Gender

Apart from the pioneering works of Worsley (1957), Wallace (1956) and Linton (1943), anthropological studies of social movements were for a long time conspicuous by their absence, resulting in sociologists and political scientists dominating the debate. When the anthropologists arrived at the topic, as latecomers in the present decade and the previous one (Abelmann 1996; Edelman 1999; Escobar 1990a, 1990b; Hardtmann 2003; Stephen 1996, 2002, Starn 1992, 1999; Fox & Starn 1997; Fisher 1995, Nash 1992, 2005; Warren 1998), they found that other social sciences, especially in continental Europe, had already dealt with the ‘New Social Movements’ as forms of mobilization around cultural questions and identity formation (Touraine 1978, 1995; Melucci 1991; Offe 1985; Laclau 1985). The writers quoted have made a distinction between the mobilization campaigns that developed from the 1970s onwards — in the form of the student, peace, the women’s and the environmental movements — and the old working-class movement of the industrial society. Significantly, the ‘New Social Move-
ments’ have been described as rejecting institutional politics, and as being located in an intermediate space, linking the political sphere with everyday life.

While theories on ‘New Social Movements’ focus on cultural and identity issues previously underrated in the West, i.e. the ‘why’ of social protest, they also have many limitations. Outside the Western context it is apparent that people have mobilized around cultural concerns for a long time (Abelmann 1996; Worsley 1957; Basu 1992; Escobar 1992a); for example, Melanesian cargo cults with the aim of reversing the colonial order by acquiring Western goods, or the Social Reform Movement in nineteenth-century India that tried to revitalize Hinduism by removing ‘evils’ such as child marriages. In addition, a strict division into new and old movements ignores the continuity between them and the fact that often the same individuals have participated in both ‘old’ and ‘new’ struggles.

In the United States, on the other hand, theories of collective behaviour (Turner and Killian 1987; Smelser 1962), resource mobilization (Zald & McCarthy 1987) and political process (Tarrow 1994) have been developed in order to deal with the way diverse forms of structural strain are converted into collective action. These theories have been important in analyses of the state, and of organizational structure and strategy, i.e. the

---

10 Rejecting the assumption that ‘New Social Movements’ are confined to Western postmodern society, many scholars who focus on the ‘Third World’ have described social movements of later decades as having characteristics such as their rejection of traditional political parties and having civil society as their arena of action (Wignaraja 1993; Basu 1992; Routledge 1993). Studies of ‘New Social Movements’ in India have explored the Environmental Movement (Fisher 1995; Guha 1991; Routledge 1993), the Dalit Movement (Omvedt 1993; Hardtmann 2003) and the Women’s Movement (Omvedt 1993; Basu 1992; Calman 1992).

11 Theories of collective behaviour reflect a changing emphasis of interest from that of individual motivations to people’s visible behaviour. Great attention has been paid to social movements as a vital ingredient of the ordinary working of society as well as a sign of larger courses of change. When current structures of meaning do not act as an adequate source for social action, new models surface that define the present condition as unreasonable and in that sense a motive for struggle (Della Porta & Diani 1999:5-6). Consequently, the individual is driven to confront the social arrangement through diverse types of nonconformity.

12 In the 1970s American sociologists started the existing research on ‘resource mobilization’ by examining procedures by which assets indispensable for collective action are activated. In their analysis, social movements represent an expansion of the usual types of political acts; the participants take part in such performances according to rational calculations, pursuing their interests; and, finally, organizations and movement leaders play a crucial part in the administration of the collective resources on which the protests are grounded. Their premise is that the ability for protest hinges either on the physical resources (money, work, concrete benefits, services) or on the non-physical resources (authority, moral engagement, faith, friendship) available to the group (Della Porta & Diani 1999:7-9).

13 ‘Political process’ theories draw attention to the connection between established political performers and dissent. When confronting a certain political situation, social movements cooperate with persons who have a secure place in society. The notion that has had the most success in explaining the traits of the exterior context, applicable to the growth of social movements, is that of ‘political opportunity structure’ (Della Porta & Diani 1999:9).
‘how’ of collective struggles and their internal dynamics. If we choose this analytical approach the Anti-Arrack Movement can be seen in terms of the ‘political opportunities’ available (Tarrow 1994), since the movement arose at a time when people from the state administration and politicians were favourably inclined towards it. However, it is important to note that the state, and the organizational set-up and strategies pursued, are also culturally shaped. In later decades there have been efforts to unite the diverse theoretical standpoints developed in continental Europe and the United States into a new combination (Klandermans et al 1988; Eyerman and Jamison 1991; Tarrow 1994; Melucci 1996; Meyer, Whittier & Robnett 2002). Some scholars, many of them from an anthropological background, have tried to merge the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of social movements by suggesting that all protests are culturally loaded and historically contingent (Abelmann 1996; Fox and Starn 1997; Starn 1999), thereby rejecting the idea of culture as a profoundly fixed and enduring tradition.

Contemplating the sins of the system, painting banners, making speeches, marching — these bold actions are wound around an armature of cultural meanings before they power up social protest. As dissent grows and protest erupts, there may be improvisation, there may be inclusion (and exclusion), there can be persistence and success, and, very often, there will be failure. Every step in the process involves the creation and diffusion of cultural meanings. At every step, too, historical events create new social conditions within which these meanings deploy (Fox and Starn 1997: 8).

Broadly speaking, social movements are integral to the contemporary transnational world, and movements in various regions have traits in common. Despite national or local differences, they are often in touch with each other through the media and international conferences contributing in a peripheral and decentralized way to the spread and ‘creolization’ of culture across the globe (Hannerz 1991, 1996; see also Fox & Starn 1997, Hardtmann 2003). There are, of course, differences in the attention devoted to separate movements outside their geographical core area of action and in the intensity of their interaction with similar organizations across regional and state boundaries. The Anti-Arrack Movement is an example of a struggle that was mainly confined within the borders of Andhra Pradesh, even if some of its members were influenced by ideologies and events in the global and pan-Indian arenas, such as feminism, Marxism and, to some extent, Gandhian ideas.14

14 Gandhi was inspired by Orientalist notions circulating in the global arena at that time, which highlighted Sanskritic Hinduism as the essence of Indian society (see Chapter 2). On the other hand, Gandhian ideas have been a source of inspiration to social movements in the West during recent decades, a passage starting in the 1920s and culminating in the mid-1950s when Martin Luther King, Jr, used Gandhian non-violence in the United States as part of the mobilization against racism. Fox (1997) explains the process whereby an oriental idea of
Before continuing this discussion, I need to define the concept of social movement as it is used in this book. A social movement should be seen as a process, or a sequence of reactions, rather than as a fixed organization and mass mobilization is its prime source of social authorization, in contrast to political parties, which depend on election votes. In India the word ‘movement’ has sometimes had a different definition from that implied by the concept in the literature of the social sciences, since it is employed by politicians to define different mobilization campaigns directed from above that are rhetorically labelled ‘movements’ when the state wants to emphasize their spontaneity and popular basis — for example, the cooperative and family planning movements (Oommen 1990:38-39). In Telugu the word for movement is *udyamam*, which, according to the dictionary, is a Sanskrit word meaning growth (Brown 1992). There actually exists a distinction in the Telugu language between a campaign, *pracaaram* (‘propaganda’, ‘spreading’, ‘publicity’), and a social movement, demonstrated by the fact that many governmental programmes, such as the literacy programme, the podupu lakshmi (saving schemes) programme and the health programme, were spoken of as *udyamam*. I shall, in contrast, use the term ‘movement’ with the same meaning as in the academic literature and not with the emic uses of the word in mind.

An examination of the anti-arrack agitation illustrates how important it is to distinguish between a movement and the organizations that are part of it. While networks often extended to people from voluntary organizations, NGOs, political parties and the agencies of the state, the relevant agents to include have been not only those who are favourably disposed to the struggle but also its adversaries. Klandermans (1992) has provided a framework for such discussions by introducing the concept of a ‘multiorganizational field’ that comprises both favourably inclined and opposed groups. Given the course of events in Andhra Pradesh, it would be useful to describe the mobilization against arrack as a ‘movement field’ rather than a ‘multiorganizational field’ in order to emphasize that not merely formal organizations should be incorporated but also other categories and networks of people.

Many of the village women who protested against arrack were not members of any organization, but only came to participate in demonstrations and meetings. It is not so difficult to temporarily mobilize people living close to each other in neighbourhoods and villages. People who participate in mass activities might for example, be enrolled through organizational ties, or ties of friendship, kinship or common residence (cf. Garcia-Gorena 1999: 3). The involvement of individuals also varies over time, with powerful bursts of activity at critical periods, after which the participants often back out into what Melucci (1991:77) has described as ‘submerged networks’ founded on Gandhian non-violence could be incorporated into occidental movements by emphasizing not its orientalist ‘difference’ but its ‘similarity’ to protest techniques in the West.
amity and other everyday bonds. One of the most striking propositions that Melucci makes is that people forming these networks are mobilized only occasionally as a reaction to specific questions. Similarly, campaigners in the anti-arrack struggle were not constantly active during the ups and downs of the movement but they were more or less continuously in touch with each other through networks of individuals and organizations.

This monograph demonstrates that we cannot comprehend the temperance mobilization without including in our analysis the urban middle-class who coordinated the actions at district and state level. As noted by Fox and Starn (1997:11), social movements should be described not only from the viewpoint of ‘below’ but also from ‘above’ and ‘across’. While the middle-class activists entered the anti-arrack agitation through voluntary organizations and NGOs, they often became leaders and coordinators, they analysed the struggle, and they presented it to outsiders.

The views of the Anti-Arrack Movement as seen in the framework of social movements and as relating to women’s emancipation are topics that meet in this work. While theories on gender might give us a broader understanding of why and how women participate in social struggles, such questions have often been missing from the social movement literature. It should be clear that the approach adopted here is an attempt to integrate gender studies with research on social movements.

In the early period of what came to be recognized as ‘the anthropology of women’, Rosaldo (1974) took as her point of departure the universal dichotomy between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’, in which women were associated with the private or domestic domain because their work often consisted of nurturing and training children, whereas men, on the other side, were thought of as belonging to the public sphere of politics and culture. Rosaldo has been criticized for applying a unified theoretical framework to the lives of women in different parts of the world based on a dichotomy that has developed in Western society (see e.g. Reiter 1975; Sacks 1979, McCormack & Strathern 1980, Leacock 1981, Rosaldo 1980, Yanagisako & Collier 1987).

Lugo and Maurer (2000) have demonstrated how the theories of Rosaldo are still relevant if we use them in a critical examination of how through colonialism Western ideas have spread to other parts of the world. In their view contemporary local notions about ‘public’ and ‘private’ result from a fusion of indigenous and Western concepts. Whether local notions about ‘public’ and ‘private’ exist in any particular place, and the degree to which they are indigenous or imported, is, however, an empirical issue and cannot be seen as a matter of principle. In India the distinction exists and has become associated with another dichotomy — that between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ — related to the ‘house’ and the ‘street’. Chatterjee (1999) indicates that anti-colonial nationalism thought of the non-domestic, external world as a material sphere where Indian society had to adapt to technological and
political changes. ‘Home’, in contrast, signified the Indian spiritual self, and indicated an area where India was far superior to the West, revealed in the fact that the home should continue to be unaffected by activities and thoughts pertaining to the material sphere (ibid: 120). As the woman became the symbol of the home, she came to personify the true Indian self. It was then feasible to relocate the boundaries of the home from the material confines previously delimited by the regulations of purdah to a more flexible field laid down by the distinctions between socially accepted male and female manners (op cit:130-31). While this new womanhood was originally a middle-class ideal distinguished from that of the lower classes (op cit: 127), in contemporary India ideas about the inner and outer spheres have also been propagated and spread to people lower down in the social hierarchy by being ideologized in or applied by social movements such as the Peasant and the Nationalist Movements (cf. Kannabiran & Lalitha 1989). The present study, and Chapter 4 in particular, describes local notions among activists in Andhra Pradesh about ‘the house’ and ‘the street’, according to which women were able to leave their houses and enter physical male space by organizing to defend the ‘home’ from the male drinking habits of the street.

The old distinction between a public male sphere and a domestic female domain has also been actualized by social scientists considering women’s participation in social movements. Kaplan (1982) has drawn attention to the fact that women who have internalized their domestic role may organize themselves when they feel that they are no longer able to perform their female duty to preserve life. What distinguishes ‘feminist movements’ from ‘women’s movements’ is that the former resist the gender division of labour, whereas the latter reinforce it (cf. Molyneux 1985; Castells 1997:259). In a similar vein Kumar (1993:3) differentiates feminist movements from anti-patriarchal campaigns in India. She demonstrates that anti-patriarchal protests do not necessarily ask for any change in gender relations, since they focus on issues that are regarded as the ‘concerns of women’ seen as housewives — water, fuel, and lower prices on food — whereas feminist

---

15 Kannabiran and Lalitha (1989:193,199) demonstrate that women who participated in the Telangana Armed Struggle of Andhra Pradesh were judged by the moral code of the private domain according to which they had to conform to middle-class norms such as modest dress and behaviour in front of their male ‘comrades’.

16 Molyneux (1985) has a similar perspective, differentiating between ‘practical gender interests’ — that is, concerns reflecting existing gender roles in society including female subordination but also the assertion of rights — and ‘strategic gender interests’ signifying the goal to overthrow women’s inferiority. Castells (1997:259), for his part, introduces the word ‘practical feminism’, emphasizing that many female participants in social struggles — for example among workers or community organizations — are ‘feminist in practice’ at the same time as they refuse to recognize such a classification or are conscious of their struggle in these terms.
movements, on the other hand, contain a tension between a quest for equality and a reverence for the feminine.

The dichotomy between feminist and women’s movements, in addition to feminist vs. anti-patriarchal struggles, is difficult to sustain as a basis for classifying such fluid and fuzzy entities as social movements. My premise is that all the women who participated in the agitation against arrack might not have done so for the same reasons, since women’s mobilization can simultaneously be explained as an extension of their household roles and as part of a quest for equality and reversal of the gender order (cf. Stephen 1997:268; Marchand 1994:137; Amy Conger Lind 1992).

According to postmodern feminist theory identities and the interests that are linked to them should be seen as ‘contradictory, partial and strategic’ (Stephen 1997:18; cf. Haraway 1990:197; Butler 1999:181). Following Della Porta and Diani (1999:100) who note that members of a movement do not always share a standardised and homogeneous world-view, I shall argue in this study that women have divergent and fluctuating interests. While they might at times share them with men and at other times oppose those of men, the ability of groups of women to act derives from common issues being raised at the same time as they value their differences (Stephen 1997:21; cf. Ray 1999:19; John 2005:126; Eschle 2001:122).

In the 1980s, certain feminist scholars, previously concerned with the negative aspects of women’s inequality vis-à-vis men, started to pay attention to how women positively celebrated their difference from men by focusing on traditionally underrated female characteristics such as mothering (Garcia-Gorena 1999:124). Ruddick (1995) was influential in this debate with an argument about ‘maternal thinking’, built not on the biological basis of motherhood or motherhood as an identity, but on the tasks of protection, nurturing and training carried out by mothers. Consequently, people can be perceived as mothering at different times in their lives and in diverse and often shifting sexual and social situations (ibid:xi-xii). At the centre of many social scientists’ reservations, Ruddick has ignored how motherhood varies between social groups and parts of the world (see e.g. Schepers-Hughes 1992). Conversely, the 1990s debate has to a large extent focused on the heterogeneous experiences of motherhood (Ross 1995).

Most of all, I am concerned here with the relevance of the theoretical debate on mothering for understanding the temperance crusade in Andhra Pradesh. There are many examples, especially from Latin America, of how women have organized themselves primarily on the basis of their self-identification as mothers. Many scholars have interpreted the ‘motherist

---

17 The most famous example is the Mothers of the Disappeared who in 1977 started to gather every Wednesday at Plaza de Mayo in Rio de Janeiro, Argentina, to protest against the disappearance of their children under the military regime. In addition, the Comité Antinuclear de Madres Veracruzan of Mexico was founded in early 1986 with the aim of educating mothers throughout the state about the danger of nuclear energy. Interestingly, the members
movements’ as a legitimate way of transferring mothering from the private to the public arena, since women have used the beliefs existing in society about the motherly role to enable them to make political protests when and where other people have found it impossible (Stephen 1997:273; cf. Garcia-Gorena 1999:120; Ruddick 1995; Eschle 2001:111). I shall show in subsequent chapters that motherhood was an important motivation for women in the Anti-Arrack Movement, but not the only one.

**Anthropological Studies of South India**

Andhra Pradesh, together with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, is part of the so-called Dravidian South, a region characterized by similar languages, historical connections, and kinship rules. Anthropological studies of this area have for a long time focused on Tamil Nadu, but interest is now growing in the neighbouring states as well, including Andhra Pradesh. Most of the anthropological literature on Andhra Pradesh deals with the locality around its capital, Hyderabad (Hiebert 1971; Robinson 1988; Leonard 1994) or the northeastern coast (Tapper 1978; Herrenschmidt 1989; Säävälä 2001), and there is not much written on the southern part. Apart from Säävälä (2001) few scholars have paid attention to gender relations in this area, although there are some studies on women’s lives in the other South Indian states, some of them by authors from other disciplines (Caplan 1986; Uyl 1995; Daniel 1997; Kapadia 1995; Busby 2001; Ram 1991; Lindberg 2005). Busby (2001), Kapadia (1995) and Lindberg (2005) are of particular relevance to the present study, as they have concentrated on changing familial relations from the perspective of low-caste poor women in the rural areas.

Very little anthropological work has been done on social movements in India (including the southern states), though Robinson (1988) has made an interesting study of local politics undergoing change in rural Andhra Pradesh, looking at the questioning of traditional power relations that took place in the late 1970s. Caplan (1986) has analyzed women’s organizations in Chennai (Madras), Tamil Nadu, from a gender perspective but she portrays mainly welfare associations of middle- and upper-class women in the urban areas and not low-caste rural people, who constituted the largest number of participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement. Nevertheless, her study, together with a similar work by Mageli (1996) on women’s

---

18 A non-anthropological exception is an ethnography by Mies (1982), a sociologist, on the lives of women employed in the lace-making industry of Narsapur, Telangana.

19 Mageli (1996), a sociologist, has made an interpretative analysis of styles of leadership in two women’s organizations in the city of Chennai. In contrast to Caplan, she focuses on so-
organizations in Chennai, is highly relevant when considering the role of the middle class in the protests against liquor, as these works deal with the interactions of urban activists with poor lower-caste women.

Andhra Pradesh

Bounded on the north by Maharashtra, on the northeast by Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the west by Karnataka and on the south by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest state in India with an area of 275,909 km² and a population in 2001 of about 75.7 millions. On 1 November 1956 it formally came into existence as a state by merging, on one side, the regions of Coastal Andhra (Sarkar) and Rayalseema which had both belonged to the Andhra state with, on the other side, Telangana — the former Muslim Nizam empire. Andhra Pradesh became the first state in India to be based on a common language, Telugu.

Most inhabitants of Andhra Pradesh are engaged in agriculture. In 2001 three-quarters of the population lived in rural areas, primarily occupied as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Their main crops are rice and cash crops like tobacco, groundnut, chillies, cotton and sugar cane, while plantations of such fruit as mangoes, grapes, and guavas are also very common. In the 1950s, a land reform programme was carried out that to some extent changed the customary power configuration. Traditionally there had been a close interrelationship between the Hindu caste hierarchy and the agrarian structure, as the large landowners belonged to the upper castes, the cultivators to the middle castes and the agricultural workers to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other marginal communities (Sankaran 1996:17-8). It was mainly small-scale farmers who benefited from the reforms, while the number of landless people grew, visible in that Andhra Pradesh has a larger percentage of agricultural workers than any other state in India, and also the most substantial participation of women in agriculture (op cit:11; John & Lalitha 1995:15). During the last decade the state authorities have concentrated on the IT software industry resulting in the fact that many professionals in this sector come from Andhra Pradesh.

In both the past and the present, large social and economic differences have existed between the various regions of Andhra Pradesh. While Coastal Andhra is the part of the state that is most prosperous, Telangana has been a traditional agricultural area, dominated by big landlords. This is one reason why the Naxalite Movement, the Maoist guerrillas, has had such large support in these districts, above all among the tribal groups.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{20}\) Since its formation Andhra Pradesh has suffered from a growing tension between poverty-stricken Telangana and the rest of the state, culminating in violent campaigns for dividing it into two separate parts, notably during the Telangana Agitation of 1969 and the Andhra
Hyderabad\textsuperscript{21}, the capital — situated in Telangana on the Deccan plateau surrounded by rocky hills — is characterized by remains from the Muslim period. The broad avenues in the new town are a big contrast to the crowded bazaars of the old city around the Charminar building, where the Muslim population are dominant. Today immigrants from Coastal Andhra and Raylaseema have invaded Hyderabad, leading to the native citizens claiming once again to be in a political minority, dominated by outside administrators, as was the case during the Nizam period when many of the government officials were recruited from North India.

![Map of Andhra Pradesh](http://www.mapsofindia.com)

**Map 1.** Andhra Pradesh with the districts indicated. Source: mapsofindia.com.

There are practically no Kshatriyas in Andhra Pradesh and the influence of the Brahmins has waned because of the Anti-Brahmin Movement at the turn of the twentieth century, even though the Brahmins were never as influential in Andhra Pradesh as in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. The big landowning castes, Reddis and Kammas classed as Sudras in the traditional \textit{varna} scheme (Omvedt 1994:65f; Kohli 1988:996),\textsuperscript{22} dominate the economic

\textsuperscript{21}Hyderabad has actually grown together with Secunderabad — the Twin Cities.

\textsuperscript{22}The \textit{varna} system consists of the following broad categories: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders) and Sudras (cultivators) who are said to come from the mouth,
and political life of the state. While the Reddis constitute about 10 percent of the population and are evenly spread throughout Andhra Pradesh, the Kammas are concentrated in a few pockets — mainly in Coastal Andhra and particularly in Guntur district — making up about 5 percent of the state’s inhabitants. From the 1970s onwards, the Kammas have been more involved in business activities, whereas the Reddis for a long time dominated the politics of the state (Kohli 1988:996; Ram Reddy 1989:285).

Malas and Madigas — forming 10 and 5 percent of the population respectively — constitute the formerly untouchable categories now by and large included under the official label of Scheduled Castes, and increasingly referred to by themselves and social scientists as Dalits, a term meaning ‘oppressed’ or literally ‘broken’ (Hardtmann 2003:5; Fuchs & Linkenbach 2003:1541). Malas traditionally worked as labourers in the fields, while Madigas (sometimes referred to as Adi-Andhras, i.e. the original Andhras) were occupied in leather and agricultural work. During recent years both groups have been employed in the industrial sector. Although the Madigas, unevenly distributed throughout the state, represent the bulk of the unskilled workforce (Omvedt 1994:71), their members have benefited less than the Malas from the system of offering quotas for government jobs and educational places, resulting in their often being poorer and less educated.23

The Backward Classes (B.C.), another administrative category, represent a very large proportion of the population and a heterogeneous lot including many different castes — for example, Kapu, Chakali and Golla. Some groups within the Backward Classes are today a force to be reckoned with in the state, both economically and politically.

The majority of the Muslims in Andhra Pradesh belong to the Sunni sect, the largest sub-groups being the Shaik, Syed, Mughal, and Pathan groups (Rajagopal 1977:52). In contrast to the Hindu categories of caste, these are not endogamous units. After marriage the wife takes the name of her husband’s group, to which their children will belong. Religious conflicts between Hindus and Muslims have been less frequent than in northern India, with the exception of the old city of Hyderabad where there have been violent clashes between the communities since 1978 (Ram Reddy 1989:286).

Politics in Andhra Pradesh was for a long time dominated by the Congress Party, and this state was one of the few parts of India where Indira Gandhi still had undiminished support when she lost the elections in 1977. It

---

23 Although both Malas and Madigas have been included in the Scheduled Castes the former have benefited more from the reservation of jobs and educational places. In 1998 the Madigas started to agitate through a movement called Madiga Dandora Rashtra Samiti for a separate reservation quota that would give them a higher percentage of places. Three years later, in 2001, the group finally got a separate quota.
therefore came as a surprise that a regional party, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), was able to take power with a massive majority in 1983. The party was strongly supported by women and by the Backward Classes (Innaiah 1984:45) as well as by the Kammas — above all, from the film, hotel and media sectors (ibid:45; Kohli 1988:996). Organizationally it lacked a traditional party structure and instead everything centred on the personality of its leader, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, usually known as NTR, a popular figure in the Telugu film world (Innaiah 1984:87). On 30 August 1995 NTR was removed by his son-in-law, Chandra Babu Naidu, supported by a majority of politicians within the party, and some months later the former leader died of a heart attack. At this juncture Lakshmi Parvathy, NTR’s widow, started another party, TDP-NTR, but up to now it has played only a marginal role in the politics of the state. In 2004 the TDP era came to an end as the Congress won the elections with a considerable majority, after which Raja Sekhar Reddy became the new chief minister of the state.

Since Andhra Pradesh is still an agrarian society, the political leadership has adopted redistributive schemes with broad popular appeal, the so-called ‘populist policies’ (Gupta 1999:63) exemplified by rice for two rupees a kilo which went ahead with Indira Gandhi and were continued by NTR. Populism, centred on these charismatic leaders, then started to dominate the political scene (cf. Ram Reddy 1989:268). The importance of these policies for the liquor trade follows from the fact that the state government issued more and more liquor licences, since there were few sources of revenue apart from the sale of alcoholic beverages, to finance the ever growing state programmes.

Methodology

This study is based on fieldwork that I conducted in 1994-6, with a short interruption in Sweden for around two months, and a three-month return visit in 1998 as well as a brief two-week return in 2004. Although the Anti-Arrack Movement had extended all over Andhra Pradesh, I decided to concentrate my study on the rural areas where the majority of the participants were residing. As many people told me about the strong women of Nellore who had brought the government to its knees, I wanted to find out what the village women — whom everybody talked about but who did not

---

24 According to Kohli (1998b:998f), the Telugu Desam Party did not have more Kamma members or ministers than in other political groups, but a characteristic of the party was the dominance of well-educated professionals with little political experience. Significantly, even if Kammas do not dominate the party, the caste has improved its position in politics in the 1980s compared with the previous period (ibid:998). In addition, Rama Rao himself belonged to the Kamma caste.

25 In the view of Kohli (1988a:191), populist leaders have neither the capacity nor the incentive to build party organizations, as they rule by theatricalities rather than by the painstaking mundane tasks of building party cells.
speak for themselves — thought about the movement and the alcohol prohibition.

I chose Chintala Palem, an isolated place in the mountainous western part of Nellore — since it had been one of the first villages in the district to engage in the movement, but not the original one. I arrived there for the first time during the hot season when everything was dusty and the temperature rose above 40°C, and we met Venkateswarlu, a member of the voluntary organization the JVV (Jana Vignana Vedika or ‘People’s Science Forum’), to look at some houses where I might stay. Finally I decided to rent a room from a Muslim widow who lived close to the bus stop, and one month later I moved to the place together with my assistant to start my work.

Given that nobody in the area spoke English and my knowledge of Telugu was still very basic, I had a lot of problems at the outset in finding a female interpreter and assistant who could stay with me in the village, an isolated place without any modern conveniences where urban middle-class people hesitated to live for any prolonged period. Furthermore, many young Indian women were carefully guarded by their parents and not allowed to leave their homes for any length of time before marriage. While few young women were prepared emotionally to be away from their parents, older married women were often engaged in their responsibilities as housewives and mothers and at the time few of them had a knowledge of English.

Apart from staying in a village, it became crucial to trace relations between individuals within the movement who were considered important in the temperance crusade. I have followed the conflict (cf. Marcus 1995:110) regarding the sale and use of liquor, as it has evolved between those involved in the Anti-Arrack Movement and their adversaries, who are especially people in the liquor business, politicians and government officials. Since middle-class women and men from different coordination committees as well as village women were included in the networks I traced, the fieldwork involved substantial social and geographical mobility. Nevertheless, I concentrated my study on Nellore district, but the villages I visited were spread across the area with clusterings in the northwest and northeast where the movement had been strong. As well as going to the Nellore countryside, I went to some places in Chittoor district in the region of Rayalseema. The important spokespersons during the campaign — for example, the freedom fighter Vaavilala Gopala Krishnaiah, Mallu Swaraiyam (known for her participation in the Telangana Armed Struggle in the 1940s) and the feminist Malladi Subbamma — lived in different parts of the state. The movement field also extended to people outside the elitist solidarity committees and groups of village women, for example, to individuals from political parties or the state administration as well as to journalists, in particular those who were living in Hyderabad.

I have already indicated that the ‘targets’ and adversaries of the movement were principally those representing the liquor business and the
government. I met them more formally, and naturally they were quite suspicious in the beginning, though my contact with people from the Excise Department facilitated interaction with those involved in the trade in alcoholic beverages. In addition, I received a good response from the toddy tappers who shared their experiences with me without hesitation. In this context it is important to recognize the fluid borders between antagonists and supporters of the movement (cf. Klandermans 1992:95), discernible in the fact that the toddy tappers, in contrast to other representatives of the liquor industry, often welcomed the movement, as toddy was not included in the prohibition and their trade was prospering.

Participant observation and interviewing have been the main methodology in my study. I often followed the villagers of Chintala Palem in their daily lives, for example when the women went to fetch fodder grass or were working in the fields. Given that it would not have been feasible to describe a movement as widespread as the anti-arrack campaign based on research in a single village, I participated in meetings all over Nellore district and elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh. As part of the investigation, I undertook formal and informal interviews at both village and district level as well as to some extent with state representatives. Furthermore, I recorded a number of life stories of selected women who had been active in the movement.

Some written sources have added to what I saw and heard. At the beginning of my stay I discovered by coincidence that the alcohol issue had an important place in the press, resulting in my collecting cuttings from what was at that time the largest circulating Telugu paper, Eenadu, which is credited with having played a major role in the spread of the movement. Besides Eenadu I collected cuttings from Andhra Jyothi and the then recently started Vaartha. For comparative purposes, I brought together articles from the English press as well, concentrating on The Hindu and to a lesser extent the Indian Express and the Deccan Chronicle. However, I sometimes had problems in finding the English newspapers, as they are not easily available at village level. Finally I made an arrangement with a friend in Nellore who kept the newspapers at his home. My analysis has also been based on documentary films about the movement as well as songs, mural paintings and cartoons.

It might already be apparent that there are special ethical problems to be handled in anthropological fieldwork, since all the research should be based on the consent of the individuals concerned. This can in practice be difficult, in view of the fact that individual approval has to be based on a pre-understanding of how and why such investigations are being carried out, and what results could come from them. Such consent may well be difficult to obtain when a large part of the population cannot read or write. Even though I explained to the villagers over and over again, some people continued to believe that I was working for the Indian government or was involved in social work. The middle-class intellectuals never had any problems in
understanding what I was doing, though some of them asked me if I was going to do ‘social service’ afterwards or would simply get a well-paid government job. Another problem relates to the final written text, as the aim of any study should be to safeguard the individuals involved. Although villages (apart from the example at the beginning of this chapter) and individuals in this book have been protected by not using proper names, I have used existing names of public people, such as urban leaders, journalists and politicians in the cities, except when they have revealed personal or delicate matters to me. It is also ethically important that different voices are represented in the text, but this cannot always be fully achieved since some people are more articulate than others. I have tried, however, to solve this dilemma by representing various categories of people involved in the struggle both as participants and antagonists of the movement. Moreover, the anthropologist often comes in contact with people who are marginal in their own society and who are therefore able to reflect on it. For instance, an old Muslim widow, who knew how to read Urdu, Telugu, and Arabic, often came to my house to tell me religious stories and gossip without my asking for it. Over the years, my conversations with certain people from NGOs and voluntary organizations have resulted in close friendships.

An Outline of the Book

In the following chapter I shall analyze some significant social movements in India dating from the colonial period up to the present, with the centre of attention on how these campaigns have managed to mobilize people around the two issues of alcohol and gender. I shall illustrate how such activities were related to social, political, and cultural changes in the subcontinent. My account will begin with an all-embracing, pan-Indian perspective and then go on to concentrate on the course of events in Andhra Pradesh.

The ethnographic examination in Chapter 3 focuses on the development of the Anti-Arrack Movement in Nellore district as an illustration of the importance of places in translocal struggles. From the vantage point of Chintala Palem, a rural community in the western part of Nellore that has become acknowledged for its powerful temperance mobilization, the chapter shows how the literacy campaign and the subsequent struggle against arrack arose at the beginning of the 1990s. This part offers an image of village life, after which I go back in time to consider how and why people from Chintala Palem joined the anti-arrack protests.

A large proportion of the campaigners against arrack were poor women from the villages. Consequently, Chapter 4 provides a detailed ethnography of gender relations, ideas on femininity and masculinity as well as married existence in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. Attention is directed to how the communicative framework within which the women acted included a range of beliefs and actions linked to purity/impurity, auspiciousness, female
power (* strii śakti *), as well as to ideals of self-control and conscientiousness in household dealings. Clearly, there existed gender distinctions related to drinking, since women abstained while men did not, and I shall therefore dwell on how women constructed alcohol as a problem when bringing up health issues and wife battering for example. As there were limitations to women’s participation in the movement, I discuss in the following section local ideas of a public and a domestic field, i.e. a distinction between ‘the house’ and ‘the street’, and internal dissimilarities between village women according to age and marital position. The chapter ends with a portrayal of women’s hidden as well as open resistance in the villages.

Middle-class people from the urban areas representing voluntary organizations and NGOs designed and synchronized a range of protest performances. The aim of Chapter 5 is to analyze the organizations implicated in the movement and the importance of social work among the middleclass in Andhra Pradesh. I shall explore the lives of urban activists — their task as mediators, the motivations behind their attachment to the movement, and the problems many of them encountered, especially the women. The place of leaders in the struggle will be scrutinized as well as ideas on leadership. I close the chapter with the role of ‘movement intellectuals’ (Eyerman & Jamison 1991) in the struggle and the way they introduced the movement to outsiders, exemplified by a review of two books.

Many people were in indirect ways affected by the protests against liquor, and they reacted either by supporting the movement or organizing against it. In Chapter 6 I shall discuss these issues by identifying the main actors involved as opponents and advocates of the movement. The analysis traces people working in the liquor industry — such as manufacturers, distributors and sellers of different alcoholic drinks — as well as representatives from the civil administration and certain politicians. Here I focus on how the latter two agents either sided with the temperance struggle or were connected with the liquor trade. The chapter then turns to the public discussion about the ban on alcohol introduced by the Telugu Desam Party that ultimately brought about its removal. Finally, I examine how the opponents used the police, the law and hired gunmen to curb the struggle.

The aim of Chapter 7 is to illustrate the formation of a movement identity by bringing in the role of the press, above all the Telugu newspapers, which was significant in the production of meaning and the spread of the movement. In discussing the formation of a collective identity among participants I shall focus on various events such as demonstrations, meetings and sit-ins, including the part played by protest travelling as a ‘liminal’ incident. Finally, the chapter explores cultural activities — theatre, music and dance — that have been central in several gatherings to stop alcohol in Andhra Pradesh. In this perspective I also turn to the implication of visual art as a disseminator of the struggle.
The last chapter attempts to gather up the threads of the discussion in the various chapters and examine the Anti-Arrack Movement in relation to these issues. The second section situates the struggle within the wider framework of recent transformations in Andhra Pradesh exemplified in renewed temperance activities, and how some people from the state raised women’s anti-liquor protest as a theme at the World Social Forum in Mumbai in 2004.
In order to approach the contemporary discourse on alcohol, gender and social struggle, it is essential to sketch a broad sweep of history stretching from the colonial period onwards. In this chapter I shall scrutinize some Indian social movements of the past in an effort to portray and explain how they have addressed alcohol and gender issues in their mobilization of support. Many times such campaigns have been intertwined with status struggles between castes and resistance to the British colonial government. I am concerned here with how the woman’s question was dealt with in terms of the complementarity between the sexes, i.e. the women’s role as mothers. Subsequently, the chapter shows that the New Social Movements that developed in the post-independence period, in contrast to earlier protests, agitated for women’s equality and rights. My presentation will start at the broadest, pan-Indian level, and then narrow the regional focus to look at how women mobilized against liquor in Andhra Pradesh.

The Social Reform Movement
The organizations of the social reform movement of the early nineteenth century were normally religious in character, such as the Brahmo, Prathana and Arya Samajis, which attempted to revitalize Hinduism by removing ‘social evils’, among which they counted unscrupulous religious practices and atrocities against women (Heimsath 1978:21-2; Gandhi 1996:88; Sarkar 1989:70).

Many social reformers came from a new indigenous occupational category — the ‘educated classes’ — consisting of, among others, lawyers and civil servants who had come into contact with Orientalist ideas flourishing during the second half of the nineteenth century and providing an ideology through which the centre of the global order could culturally dominate the

---

1 Jones (1994:46-7) has drawn attention to the fact that people working within the colonial administration were caught between two different value-systems — pre-colonial ideas and those of the British who often looked down on the native population. Conversely, the Indian culture had already changed completely during this time as many old rituals and customs had found new meanings (Fox 1989:44).
periphery (Fox 1989:91-92,99; cf. Said 1978). While the early reformist organizations imported the Orientalist denunciation of contemporary India, they simultaneously glorified the ancient Aryan age when this part of the world had been powerful and enlightened (Fox 1989:95).

The need to improve the situation of women has played a significant part in the Social Reform Movement from its beginnings, visible in the concern of mid-nineteenth-century social workers with the role of women as mothers (Kumar 1993:7). As women were seen as objects of reform rather than as being active themselves, widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage and women’s education became important themes (Kishwar 1985; Jones 1994:91,101f,105; Omvedt 1986:8; Kumar 1993:15; Forbes 1997:27). Instead of defending the rights of women to lead an independent life in the public sphere, the early reform organizations emphasised the differences between women and men (Shah 1990:132). Some scholars argue that the campaigners were limited by the values of their time and therefore often supported the hierarchical family structure, thus strengthening patriarchal ideas (Gandhi 1996:94; Omvedt 1986:8).

In spite of the normative separation of the public from the private made by the Social Reform Movement, many women from the upper caste and class elite, who previously had been restricted to domesticity, could thanks to this take part in the public sphere. It is important to note that these early campaigns were essential for the development of an autonomous Indian women’s movement, discernible in the fact that the first All-India women’s organizations were often established under the Arya and Brahmo Samaj umbrellas (Kumar 1993:54).

At the beginning of the twentieth century the reform organizations changed character, as they began to defend Hindu practices strongly through campaigns against cow slaughter and a growing negative attitude towards alcohol (cf. Kumar 1993:25; Sarkar 1989:72). This transformation coincided with a modification within Orientalism itself, towards a positive evaluation of the contemporary non-Western society as contrasted with the degenerate West. Fox (1989:106-7) calls attention to the fact that this new Orientalism included both European mystics and marginal personalities, such as Annie Besant and sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), as well as Indian nationalists like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Critics of Western society employed standardized images of India to reject the present social order in Europe and the United States, and Indian nationalists used these ideas against colonialism. Even if such notions were part of a cultural defiance of the West, they could not counteract the key idea used to

---

2 Max Müller and other German Sanskritists were important scholars contributing to the growth of orientalist thought, but these ideas also flourished outside the academic world, represented by missionaries and British administrators (Trautmann 1997:18; cf. Said 1978).
3 There was a shift in occult circles from Egypt to the Himalayas (Washington 1995:57).
legitimize Western control — that Indian society was based on ancient frozen rules, even though they substituted India for the West as the ideal society (ibid:103).

The Theosophical Movement, founded in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott, is one example of how these stereotypical images of India were used for a cultural critique of the West, since the theosophists, in contrast to many indigenous social reformers, were reluctant in their criticism of India and defended religious orthodoxy and the status quo. Presenting Hinduism with its organic caste society and its spiritualism as superior (Jones 1994:167,179,183; cf. Fox 1989: 127), a critique of Western society was not extended to the social order in the colony. Many persons from the native elite were attracted by the theosophist ideology, especially people from the Brahmin caste (cf. Jones 1994: 177, 179). Annie Besant, who became the president of the Indian Theosophical Society in 1907, later on joined the Congress Party, though her role became very marginal after she disagreed with Gandhi over the issue of the so-called Non-Cooperation Campaign of 1921-22 (ibid:175-76; Kumar 1993:48). She was involved in the establishment of several women’s associations in South India, arguing that men and women should have equal rights. Nevertheless, Besant stressed the complementarity and distinctive nature of the sexes, which can be seen in her ideas about Hindu women’s self-sacrificing nature as a source of strength — an aspect that Gandhi later on developed further (Kumar 1993: 48,57).

While some of the earlier reformers had permitted alcohol use as a means of overcoming caste bans, the new emphasis on defending Hindu (Sanskritic) practices led to an increasingly negative attitude towards liquor (ibid:8,15). By this time the international temperance movement had also started to agitate in India.

The Temperance Movement

While British Imperial revenues were often dependent on the sale of alcohol, the export of intoxicating beverages to Africa, India, and the Pacific islands
increased in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Tyrell 1991:144). In India, the income from liquor revenue already exceeded that of opium by 1900 (ibid:159). At the end of the nineteenth century, the colonial authorities in the state of Gujarat imposed a heavy excise tax on indigenous alcoholic drinks such as *daru* (country liquor) and toddy, which had previously been exempted from any duty at all, and manufacturers in central distilleries along with liquor dealers benefited from these changes (Hardiman 1995:99). Although the government auctioned licenses to manufacture and sell spirits on an annual basis, in practice the sums paid to the state bore little relation to the actual quantity that was produced and sold. Consequently, many people became indebted to the liquor vendors and mortgaged their land to pay their arrears, so that gradually these salesmen became the big landowners in Gujarat (ibid:106-9).

There is, however, no one-to-one connection between the growth of liquor consumption and the rise of the Temperance Movement, as there were substantial variations between different parts of the world as to whether or not alcohol was regarded as a problem. Tyrell (1991:154,165-66) notes that the growing trade in intoxicating substances and westernization caused visible social disruption in certain parts of southern Africa, but this did not result in any mobilization against drinking. This line of reasoning leads to analysis of the Temperance Movement itself in order to understand why protests against liquor played such a significant role in India.

In the 1890s British agitators launched the first temperance association proper — the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association (Carroll 1976:424) — consisting of different branches in close contact with the mother organization in Britain. Although the WCTU (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) emerged as one of the earliest transnational federations, its main base was in the Anglo-Saxon world, especially the United States. Tyrell (1991:164-68) demonstrates that researchers have neglected the role of the WCTU in the rise of Indian nationalism, despite the fact that the organization, unlike most Indian temperance bodies, was organized throughout India. The WCTU did not succeed in improving the behaviour of the British government, but contributed to the rise of an Indian nationalism that completely rejected colonialism by using arguments from the WCTU’s critique of colonial liquor policies to condemn foreign domination.

In her study of the Indian temperance movement, Carroll (1976:438-41) comes to the conclusion that it dealt more with economic and health issues than with religious ideas based in Hinduism, exemplified by ‘sanskritization’ or Gandhianism. However, according to her analysis, indigenous temperance campaigners appeared to react passively to attempts from abroad to organize resistance. Tyrell (1991:168), in contrast, concentrates on the dynamic

---

7 As early as 1878 a Bengal temperance league was copying the Ohio crusaders by praying outside Calcutta’s liquor shops and singing gospel songs (Tyrell 1991:19f).
aspect of the encounter between Indian and Western ideas. In his view, the reason for temperance agitation playing such an important role in India relative to its role in other colonies was that there already existed similar ideas about purity and self-control. Put another way, Carroll and Tyrell trace two important strands of the Indian temperance discourse — one more concerned with purity and self-control, the other with economic factors and health matters — although they often overlapped in practice (cf. Alter 2000).\footnote{A telling example is how Gandhi raised the issue of self-control in an attempt to improve the health of the Indian people, which according to him had deteriorated due to the colonial economic strategies and modern biomedicine (Alter 2000:11-12)}

By mobilizing around the issue of teetotalism and prohibition, even when they did not suffer from drinking problems within their own families, women from the upper class and caste elite could affirm an image of togetherness for themselves as women. Some authors have drawn attention to the WCTU as an early form of feminism (Bordin 1981; Tyrell 1991). One of the most striking features of the organization was the fact that a number of women were sent from Europe to India at the beginning of the twentieth century, which led to the framing and the meaning of the Temperance Movement and its spread across the globe (cf. Hannerz 1996; Tyrell 1991:83). Pandita Ramabai, a prominent figure in Indian women’s mobilization and a member of the WCTU, founded a women’s wing of Arya Samaj called Mahila Arya Samaj, but later on she converted to Christianity and became relatively isolated from the rest of the reform organizations, which had by then turned to a stronger defense of Hindu practices. Instead, she continued with her missionary endeavours within the framework of the educational institutes for women that she was running (Kumar 1993:44,107-8). Pandita Ramabai never accepted uncritically any directives from abroad as regards her religious activities, and she strongly opposed the distribution of sacramental wine during the Holy Communion by maintaining that it was ‘unindian’ (Bapat 1995:237). Accordingly, she introduced at an early date the idea that alcohol consumption was foreign to Indian culture.\footnote{Bapat (1995:238) explains the negative feelings of Ramabai towards alcohol in terms of a nationalist opposition to the colonial liquor trade, but her attitude could also be related to the fact that she came from a Brahmin family whose members, according to their tradition, abstained from alcoholic beverages.}

The Caste Association

The Indian caste system underwent a thorough change during the colonial period, when new castes were even ‘invented’ by the Indian gazetteers\footnote{Covering every district in India with detailed physical, cultural, and social information, the British authorities made an effort to publish Provincial and Imperial Gazetteers in the early twentieth century. The works by Dr Francis Buchanan on Bihar and Bengal as well as district manuals and histories in the 1840s had been the forerunners (Cohn 1984:154).} and
censuses carried out by the colonial administration (Fox: 1989:100; cf. Jones 1994:184; Trautmann 1997:18). Endogamous caste groups started to form organizations in order to change their position in society. Such movements had replaced the previous, more religious, social reform movement by the turn of the century. In contrast to earlier reformers, the caste associations — with a few exceptions such as the Sanatist Movement — seldom took up the predicament of women in society. On the other hand, they engaged in the reform of drinking habits.

There is no doubt that the lower castes tried to improve their position in society by imitating the lifestyles of higher ones, the so-called sanskritization attempts (see Srinivas 1996, Heimsath 1978, cf. Molund 1988). Like the more religious reform movement, such efforts gained inspiration from the immense influence of Orientalist ideas on intellectuals in India during the colonial period (Srinivas 1996:99). However, the concept of ‘sanskritization’ may be confusing when describing the ideas about alcohol held by caste associations since many low-caste groups tried to claim Kshatriya status at the same time as they adopted the Brahmin life-style of abstaining from meat and alcohol. As Kshatriyas, in contrast to the Brahmins, traditionally consumed both meat and liquor, the notion of ‘sanskritization’ ignores the contradiction between an espousal of Brahmin manners and claims to Kshatriya status.

The early decades of the twentieth century were characterized by the growth of secular caste ‘conferences’ and associations, often organized by small groups of intellectuals from intermediate castes. This tendency is often referred to as the Backward Classes Movement, and can be exemplified by the Nadars of Tamil Nadu and the Ezhavas of Kerala who both over time changed their concerns from ritual sanskritization to a focus on more secular issues (Heimsath 1978, cf. Srinivas 1996). The Backward Classes Movement adopted a radical form in the 1920s, when the Anti-Brahmin Movement in Tamil Nadu attacked the dominant societal position of Brahmins. In Maharashtra the movement simultaneously developed under the leadership of Dr Ambedkar into the Dalit Movement, which first rejected the caste system as such and finally turned against Hinduism. In the process, abstention from liquor as a means of rising in the caste hierarchy disappeared from the agenda of the caste association.

Personal teetotalism as well as direct attacks on liquor shops formed part of many rebellions by tribal and peasant people from the colonial period onwards. Hardiman (1995:54,163) discusses how the Bhils, a tribal group in South Gujarat, organized against liquor in the late nineteenth and early

---

11 In fact, however, the Kshatriyas have also accepted the Brahmin lifestyle as a superior ideal, provided that the Brahmins, being at the top of the religious hierarchy, have a particular duty to pursue these regulations. In the nineteenth century some Kshatriyas gradually adopted the Brahmin values and propagated for the restriction and even prohibition of liquor (Unnithan & Corzine 1987:190, Carstairs 1954:231).
twentieth centuries, as they adopted Brahmin abstention in order to question the values of their immediate exploiters, the Parsis, who were both landowners and liquor dealers. Hardiman points out that ‘the ban on daru and toddy occupied a pivotal position because of its dual function of providing the chief weapon against the Parsis, as well as serving as an index of purifica-
tion’ (ibid:165). Teetotalism became an important weapon in local power struggles, functioning to enhance the standing of the winners’ way of life and reduce that of the losers. Clearly, in the 1920s lifestyle had developed into an issue of interest and contestation in the form of ‘status politics’ (cf. Gusfield 1988). On the other hand, temperance protests were not yet gender-
based since both women and men engaged in these struggles.

Women united on a mass basis against liquor for the first time during the 1920s under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Their involvement in his Nationalist Movement resulted in alcohol abuse becoming considered as a woman’s problem. In the following section I investigate how the nationalist campaign and its different sub-groups addressed women’s issues.

The Nationalist Movement

The Extremists

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Nationalist Movement was domi-
nated by ‘moderates’ who preferred arbitration with the colonial power, but they were soon followed by so-called ‘extremists’ demanding self-rule and using the tools of mass mobilization or revolutionary terrorism. By 1910 some women had joined the extremist ranks, often to bring up the issue of women’s rights (Kumar 1993:53). Among the ‘extremists’ the image of the indigenous mother-goddess or śakti (female energy), represented by Kali and Durga, was evoked when confronting the colonial power. The erotic and martial elements of the goddess were stressed at the same time as she was identified with Mother India. Kumar (1993:44-9) argues that the notion of śakti in its most dangerous manifestation related to ideas about women’s failure to restrain their energy in their own homes. Since Kali in the rhetoric of the extremists became associated with the independence struggle, the threat was diverted from the Hindu male to the Western colonizer, providing a space for women in the nationalist struggle.
In contrast to earlier ‘extremists’, Subhas Bhose\(^\text{12}\) (who in 1943 formed the Indian National Army) regarded the women who were involved in the armed struggle not as revengeful mother goddesses but as nurturing mothers protecting their Indian children (Forbes 1997:xix). In his rhetoric, the erotic and dangerous aspect of sakti had given way to the benevolent and nourishing aspect of femaleness. Interestingly, the change in the debate among extremists is related to the influence of ‘Gandhian feminism’ all over the Indian subcontinent (cf. Kumar 1993:67).

**Gandhi**

In the 1920s and 1930s Gandhi mobilized poor women in the nationalist struggle by emphasizing the concept of women as nurturers rather than wage-earners (Kumar 1993:67). Like the earlier social reformers, he addressed the responsibility of women in the family, but separated the idea of femaleness from the Hindu religion by defining the role of women in biological terms in which men and women had a different function in society (Gandhi 1996:82). As Gandhi’s redefinition of gender ideology consisted of transforming negatively loaded feminine aspects into virtues, women were seen as a potential force in the struggle for a new society. In contrast to the foregoing social reformers, Gandhi also regarded women not as victims and objects of reform but as active agents who could change their condition (ibid:96; Kishwar 1985:1691).

The characters of Sita and Mirabai\(^\text{13}\) from Indian mythology and history became models for Indian femininity, symbolizing the self-sacrificing and strong woman — contrasted with Draupadi\(^\text{14}\) or Rani of Jhansi\(^\text{15}\) present in the extremist discourse on women, who had a more martial outlook. Gandhi thought that women were especially suited to non-violent forms of resistance since they were accustomed to such methods in their daily lives. Patience,

---

\(^\text{12}\) On 21 October 1943 Subhas Bhose reached Singapore where he set up the Indian National Army - I.N.A. After the Japanese surrendered, the members of these forces became prisoners of war and Bhose mysteriously disappeared, probably killed in an aircraft. Significantly, there existed a women’s division within the I.N.A., called the Rani of Jhansi. Even though the women soldiers were regarded as ‘heroines’ who gave up everything for ‘Mother India’, they never took part in any fighting and when the British captured them they were soon set free (Forbes 1997:xxviii-xxix).

\(^\text{13}\) Mirabai, a well-known woman saint in the history of North Indian devotionalism (bhakti), was married but her love for Krishna made her leave her husband to become a wandering ascetic, thereby overcoming the purdah rules and entering public life. Interestingly Mirabai never questioned the patiwrata ideal of a devotional and loyal wife, though she regarded herself as the faithful spouse of Krishna (Harlan 1995:210).

\(^\text{14}\) The story of Draupadi, who was married to the five Pandava brothers, can be read in the Mahabharata, but it is also part of a living oral tradition. In a gambling match, Yudisthira, one of the brothers, lost their kingdom and Draupadi to their rivals, the Kauravas. When the enemies sexually molested Draupadi, she managed to fight back and gain freedom, not only for herself but also for her five husbands, followed by the retreat of the Pandava brothers to the forests where they stayed for thirteen years.

\(^\text{15}\) Rani of Jhansi was a famous widow who took part in the Sepoy revolt.
which was often required in such activities, was presented as part of the female ‘nature’. This discourse, paradoxically, made it easier for women to enter the political field, even if in a limited way. The emphasis that Gandhi himself placed on celibacy, *brahmacharya*, also facilitated the entry of women into the public arena without opposition from their families (Gandhi 1996:103-5).

While Gandhi restricted the contribution of women in politics to demonstrations outside liquor shops, masses of Indian women were for the first time able to leave their homes to participate in public life (Kumar 1993:83; Gandhi 1996:78-79). Since the issue of problem drinking was considered to be part of the household domain, women joined the political arena as representatives of the domestic sphere — i.e. as mothers and housewives. In the process the notion of liquor abuse as being particularly a woman’s issue was born, to unite all women independent of class, caste or creed (Kumar 1993:83,103).

After Independence (1947) the sale of alcohol was prohibited according to article 47 in the Constitution, while each state had the responsibility of implementing the law. Although several states introduced a more active prohibition policy — Uttar Pradesh, Mysore, Harayna, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh — in practice the law has never been effective. At the centre of many scholarly observations is the financial difficulty in implementing the programme (see, for example, Das & Krishna 1997:72f). In 1971 there was no part of India, apart from Gujarat, where prohibition was in force.

The foregoing discussion evokes the question as to why Gandhi was so vehemently opposed to the imbibing of liquor. He came from a caste, the Vaishya, which had put a taboo on alcoholic drinks, but one can also trace the influence of Jainist ideas on Gandhi from an early age, in the advocacy of vegetarianism and teetotalism. Later, Orientalist inspiration motivated attacks on liquor shops and abstinence from alcohol as part of a cultural resistance to foreign control. Ideologically Indian women were portrayed as the carriers of the Hindu tradition (cf. Chatterjee 1999). Nevertheless it has to be recognized that Gandhi was somewhat constrained by these ideas. Deliberately disregarding the fact that alcoholic beverages had existed in India even before the British colonization, he preferred to treat liquor consumption as a result of Westernization, thereby ignoring the heterogeneity of Indian society in favour of a stereotyped ‘Hindu’ social order juxtaposed with a Western Other.

When late in life Gandhi took his vow of celibacy, *brahmacharya*, he became very preoccupied with issues regarding the effects of different kinds of food on the intensity of sexual desire (Kakar 1989:91; Gandhi 1927:175-183).

---

16 Despite the fact that women had earlier taken part in spinning and making *khadi* (Indian cloth) in their homes, they were not allowed to participate in the illegal manufacture of salt, which was considered to be a male activity (Kishwar 1985:1695-96).
According to Hindu ideology, the preservation of semen stands for the mastery of the soul over the body, and hence control over other people. For Gandhi desire itself was not perceived as a sin, as it was in the Victorian era in the West, but as a weakening poison that twisted the thoughts (Kakar 1989:101), and this led him to employ various methods to control his sexuality. According to the Ayurvedic system — representing the indigenous system of medicine from the Vedic period (2,000 - 800 B.C.) — most foods are believed to bring either heat or coolness to the body. Although Gandhi was sceptical about Ayurveda (Alter 2000:13), he refrained from ‘heating’ foods including alcoholic beverages, which were thought to raise the blood temperature and heighten sexual desire (cf. Cantlie 1977:561).

In fact, Gandhi linked Indian religious ideas with more secular issues. The purpose of his ascetic practices was not his own personal salvation or withdrawal from the world but political action, to attain ‘truth’ (satya) and to change society. Influenced both by Indian notions of diet and sexuality, and by Western ideas on self-control — for example, those of Tolstoy — Gandhi’s understanding of self-restraint probably represented a fusion of these traditions. Both Hindu and Victorian praxis were apparently based on the idea that sex as such is detrimental to male vitality (ibid: 286; cf. Gavanas 2001:93-97; Seidler 1987; Alter 2000; Favero 2005:161-3; Kakar 1989:94f; Tyrell 1991:164f).

Gandhi’s views on alcohol represented a change from those held by earlier caste associations. Teetotalism was no longer an individual or group issue, but involved the reform of the entire society. Gusfield (1988:7) has...

---

17 In the Hindu tradition semen is characterized achieving holy properties, since its force can either descend and be lost through sexual intercourse or rise via the spinal chord and benefit the brain (Kakar 1989:101).
18 Gandhi also refrained from other substances — tea, coffee, as well as cannabis and tobacco (Caplan 1987:276).
19 Alter (2000:59-60, 76) explores how Gandhi was influenced not only by Tolstoy but also by the German nature cure doctors of the middle to late nineteenth century — such as Louis Kuhne, J.H. Rausze, and Adolf Just — who advocated natural treatment in the form of mud baths, nude sun bathing and hydrotherapy to cleanse the body of excess heat and cure all kinds of diseases.
20 Criticizing Foucault (1980), Seidler (1987) describes the spread of Western ideas on sexuality in the Enlightenment period and culminating in the Victorian age when a distinction was made between ‘nature’ and ‘society’ that was mirrored in the opposition between the body and the mind. Consequently, masculinity became identified with reason, while sexuality was thought of as closer to the ‘animal’ nature and preferably concealed, which delineated men who could only affirm their ‘humanity’ by management over the material sphere and by becoming skilled in controlling their emotions and cravings. If this argument about the link is sensible, then it follows that the model of masculine self-restraint was identified with domination. Gavanas (2001:93-4) demonstrates that such notions have not been limited to Victorian times but can be identified in the ideology of some groups in contemporary United States, for instance the Fatherhood Responsibility Movement. To this end she introduces into her analysis the term ‘the hydraulic model of gender’ (Weeks 1985) — based on a separation between ‘nature’ and ‘society’ in which ‘natural drives’ must be controlled by monogamous marriage and fatherhood.
drawn attention to how ‘coercive reform’ (see Introduction), such as the prohibition policy in the United States of the 1930s, became a means of enforcing middle-class values in society via the law. Similarly, the prohibition policy put forward by Gandhi was based on the presumption that Sanskritic Hinduism advocated by the Brahmins should be inculcated into the rest of Indian society (Srinivas 1986:99; Unnithan & Corzine 1987).

**Women’s Movement**

The Nationalist Movement both changed the content of feminism and contributed to turning resistance to alcohol into a woman’s issue. But the activities of women were still confined to the domestic domain, except for short periods when they entered the streets en masse. However, when the campaigns were over, the women tended to return to their daily lives, apart from a few individuals from the higher castes and the urban areas who had come forward as leaders. By the early twentieth century these spokespersons, who principally were apolitical and in favour of the existing societal order, started to form women’s own associations (Kumar 1993:1).

Of the three Indian women’s autonomous organizations established in this period — the Women’s Indian Association (WIA), the National Council of Women in India (NCWI), and the All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC) — the last is the oldest as well as the largest one, spreading to all parts of the country. In the 1930s and 1940s its membership rapidly increased, after which the AIWC became considered as coterminous with the women’s movement (ibid:71). The association was especially involved in welfare activities, while more broad-based organizations challenging the leadership of the AIWC first emerged after Independence. Recent studies of the Indian women’s movement have drawn attention to an alternative trend, as women took part in anti-caste, peasant, Gandhian and communist-led struggles in the early twentieth century (John 2005:108).

**The Post-Independence Period**

In the post-Independence period, India was for a long time dominated by the Congress Party, while their main opposition, the Communists, were too fragmented to come forward with any real alternative. In the first two decades after Independence — the 1950s and 1960s — the two parties were united in their confidence in large-scale industrialization, economic growth and rational planning, the so-called Nehru Model (Linkenbach 1994:63; Omvedt 1993:28; cf. Baviskar 1997:80). Nehru thought of village life as backward and rooted in the past, arguing that it would disappear in the course of time (Linkenbach 1994:64; Omvedt 1993:29). According to this line of reasoning, women too were backward because of their occupation with low-technology tasks and domestic work (Omvedt 1993:29). In general,
feminist activity decreased in India after Independence compared with the mobilization of women during the struggle against the British.

In contrast to Nehru, Gandhi had rejected modern civilization and industrialization by simultaneously agitating for traditional village life and women as the solution to the problems of India (cf. Linkenbach 1994:64-5). Vinoba Bhave was authorized to carry forward the ideas of Gandhi, but he emphasized a more moderate approach that more or less accepted the status quo in society. Bhave and his followers often used the term Sarvodaya to separate the contemporary Gandhian project from that of the freedom struggle (Fox 1989:173), providing a space for certain Gandhian ideas to survive below the surface until the 1970s when there was an upsurge in protest activities looking for an alternative to the Nehru Model.

From the start, the Communist tradition depended on directives from Moscow (Gupta 1984:11) in which neither gender questions nor alcohol abuse were considered important. The Russian Revolution, based on the mobilization of the working class, was seen as an ideal model for transformation in India, even if the majority of the Indian working class lived in the countryside. After the Chinese Revolution in 1964, the Indian communists split into two different parties — the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M or CPM). The latter advocated a strategy similar to the Maoist revolution in China with its base in the rural areas among the peasants. Conversely, the CPM tried to be independent of directives from abroad, which resulted in a third split in 1969 when CPI (M-L) — the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) — was formed. As the ‘M-L group’ sympathized with the armed rebellion among the peasants in Naxalbari, Bengal, they rejected parliamentary democracy and emphasized armed struggle (Hanumantha Rao 1983:97f). At the end of the 1960s members from such Maoist groups, which often went under the name Naxalites, intensified their activity in several parts of India, including Andhra Pradesh. Some authors have characterized these clusters as the beginning of the New Social Movements of the 1970s, since, in addition to class oppression, they took up the issues of gender and caste inequality (Omvedt 1993:313; Calman 1992:36-7).

\[21\] Many contemporary activists have actually rejected Gandhian notions, believing that these legitimate the existing hierarchical order between castes, classes and genders. Fox (1989:173) adopts the opposite stand that there is an important difference between the thoughts of Gandhi and Bhave who followed him. The former had a ‘utopia’ and was therefore critical of the present order while Bhave advocated the more gentle methods of satyagraha to persuade the adversary instead of forcing him/her to submit.

\[22\] Fox (1989:217) demonstrates that Hindu Fundamentalist groups have managed to take over the ‘Gandhian Utopia’, effectively changing its content into orthodoxy as they defend high-caste and Hindu interests together with the present societal order. On the other hand, Fox passes over the fact that more liberal Gandhian ideas have survived in some of the New Social Movements that developed in the 1970s.
Calman (1992:25-35) relates the growth of the New Social Movements in the 1970s to the structural crisis in the Indian political system caused by Indira Gandhi’s attempt to concentrate the Congress leadership around her own person. Politicians at state level came to receive backing from above but not from below, and they generally lacked institutional means to organize popular support. In consequence, the urban middle class lost confidence in party politics and took their protests into the streets. After the declaration of an Emergency in 1977, even more people looked for new solutions outside parliamentary government and the Congress fold.

The lack of institutional channels to canalize protest contributed to the appearance of a new political arena unrelated to the traditional economic and political space of the trade unions and the political parties. A new category of people, the activists — mainly recruited from the middle class and engaged in the voluntary sector — grew in importance during this period (Kothari 1993:70-1). New communication technologies enabled the emerging group of activists from different organizations to be aware of and in easy contact with each other, and to coordinate their activities. The extension of networks of transportation made it easier for men and women to travel in large numbers to protest in the capital against different state measures. In brief, the creation of a political sphere outside party politics, the appearance of the activists in public life, and technological development all contributed to an upsurge of movement activities in the 1970s, qualitatively different from those of the previous period.

Social scientists have portrayed the movements that developed in India as consisting of organizations independent of political parties (Calman 1989,1992; Routledge 1993; Kothari 1993), single-issue-oriented (Calman 1989,1992; Routledge 1993), local (Calman 1989,1992; Routledge 1993) and non-hierarchical in their structure (Calman 1989,1992; Kothari 1993). Many of the new groups are based not on the working class but on other forms of affiliation such as caste membership, gender or common residence in marginal areas, as was the case for many tribal groups. Even though they seem to have many traits in common with the idealized image of the so-called New Social Movements in the West, material demands (apart from identity issues) have a more important place on their agenda than in that of Western struggles. Moreover, many New Social Movements have developed from earlier ones (Omvedt 1993:301-4,315). They are caught up in a criticism of the post-war paradigm of development, based on the idea of unlimited progress (Baviskar: 1997:42; cf. Linkenbach 1994:64-5). Broadly speaking, they question the Nehru Model and look for new definitions of development by searching for alternatives in ‘Liberal Gandhian’ thought (cf. Omvedt 1993:313) or the ideas of Rammohar Lohia who could be described as representing a mixture of Gandhian and Marxist ideas. Omvedt (1993:313) traces both Gandhianism and Lohianism to the pluralistic aspect of Hinduism, while the emerging Dalit Movement has searched for an
alternative outside Hinduism itself. Finally, the Farmers’ Movement grew in importance at this time — particularly in Punjab, Harayana, and Western Uttar Pradesh. It engages in a populist critique of development that emphasizes the disadvantages of the rural and ‘real’ India, Bharat, as against the urban and industrial nation-state India (Gupta 1998:74-88; Brass 1994).

The Women’s Movement
One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Women’s Movement in the 1970s is that it can be traced to certain specific events at both national and international levels. In 1974 the Indian Status of Women Commission released the report Towards Equality, which was a documentation of women’s low and declining status. Furthermore, the United Nations declared 1975 as ‘the International Women’s Year’. Consequently, all over the country the debate was growing about the situation of women, stimulating feminist agitation and the creation of new organizations.

In the 1970s and 1980s a number of party-autonomous women’s associations arose in India (Patel 1985; Omvedt 1986:17-18,1993:84; Gandhi 1996:111; Sen 2004; Forbes 1996:243), while women’s centres were set up in several cities. These new bodies acknowledged other forms of stratification than gender inequality, for example according to caste, language, religion, or class criteria. Although they searched for their identity in the Hindu tradition, their models differed from those of the old Women’s Movement. The equality of the sexes and women’s rights entered the agenda for the first time through three major campaigns — the Anti-Dowry Campaign, the Anti-Rape Campaign and the Anti-Sati Campaign.

23 As demonstrated by Kumar (1993:2), women’s groups of the 1970s, in contrast to the pre-independence movement, have not focused on women as mothers but on the roles of the daughter and the working woman, by challenging many Hindu ideals including the Sita model of an obedient wife who never questions the behaviour of her husband (Omvedt 1986:18; Omvedt 1993:83). Moreover, ideas about sisterhood came into the limelight in the 1980s emphasizing solidarity and friendship between various categories of women. It is obvious, however, that many women at that time found inspiration in religious notions about šakti (Kumar 1993:144). Given the appropriation of such religious notions by Hindu fundamentalist forces in the 1990s, members of women’s groups have today become more reluctant to use ideas about šakti when reflecting on women’s struggles.

24 In 1975 the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) launched protests against dowries in the city of Hyderabad, followed two years later by a new campaign that took shape in Delhi. These protests were directed against the proliferating assassinations of young wives — the so-called dowry deaths. They substituted a rhetoric that talked about these deaths in terms of suicide, with one that saw them as cases of murder.

25 The protests against rape remained isolated from each other until 1980, when the so-called Mathura rape in Maharashtra set in motion a series of protests by women’s groups, which led to a strengthening of their networks. In this situation, the mobilization was taken over by the political parties and somewhat lost its force.

26 The agitation against sati — i.e. the burning of a widow in her husband’s funeral pyre — started first in 1986 after the death of Roop Kanwar in Rajasthan. It spurted to a large debate both for and against sati in which Indian feminists were often branded as ‘westernized’, ‘colonialist’ and ‘cultural imperialists’ (Kumar 1993:174).
Furthermore, there was an increasing interest among female activists in the 1980s in documenting women’s struggles of the past and in contemporary India (Kumar 1993:2-3,143-46). In the 1990s Dalit women started to form autonomous organizations and to draw up a Dalit feminist perspective (Reddy 2005:211, 319; Hardtmann 2003:91-8; Rege 2004).

Apart from the activities among middle-class feminists, women in the rural areas also mobilized around various issues. From the 1970s onwards a growing number of poor women participated in different mass movements (or ‘anti-patriarchal movements’ in Kumar’s terms) among the agricultural labourers and peasants, such as the Anti-Price Rise and the Chipko Movements. In contrast to earlier associations, there is an ambivalence in the way these movements relate to their educated activists. Given that women in these struggles experience both dependence and a drive for autonomous self-assertion, they have attacked the sale and consumption of liquor, even at times when the leadership has not regarded this issue as important. The following section will illustrate how marginal women from the Shramik Sangathana (Labourers’ Organization) in Maharashtra and the Chipko Movement in Uttarkhand addressed the alcohol question.

Protests Against Alcohol Consumption

In 1972 the Shramik Sangathana was formed in the Dhulia district of Maharashtra among tribal Bhil landless labourers who were trying to defend their rights to land and to higher wages. It was middle-class urban activists with a Marxist ideology who had founded the organization, but many rural women also took part, focusing on the problem of liquor. A turning point occurred at a women’s conference held in Dhulia town (1972), after which a number of women went together to the places where liquor was sold in order to smash the pots, ignoring the opposition of their own formal

27 The interests of women campaigners, who often came from a middle-class and academic background, to document women’s struggles and daily lives contributed to the creation of Women’s Studies as a separate subject at the universities, confirming the observation by Eyerman and Jamison (1994) that the knowledge concerns of social movements influence the academic discourse.

28 Several associations in India have fought against intoxicating beverages, even if not all have addressed the gender issue to the same extent as in Maharashtra and Uttarkhand. One activist in Andhra Pradesh referred to the Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) as a ‘successful’ anti-liquor campaign, initiated by Shabkar Guha Niyogi, a charismatic leader who later on was murdered. In the 1990s the organization struggled for the improvement of workers’ livelihoods and regional autonomy in the area of Chattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, followed by the establishment of the locality as a separate state. Most importantly, the movement addressed the alliance between liquor barons and politicians, ending up in powerful temperance campaigns in the area.

29 Although the region had a history of a strong social reform movement and a Sarvodaya organization existed in Dhulia district, in contrast to the latter Gandhian-inspired movement, Shramik Sangathana had a Marxist ideology (Basu 1993:82,117).

30 In 1979 the Shramik Stree Mukti Sangatha was formed as a women’s wing within the organization.
leaders. While the wave of jar smashing spread to other villages, the campaign became radicalized and women started to focus on wife beating independently of whether the man had consumed liquor or not. In addition, they began to publicly beat up men who maltreated their wives and force them to apologize (Basu 1993:86f; Sathe 1990:129; Kumar 1993:100-101). Indirect protests against violence in the family had thereby escalated to a questioning of the gender order in society. In 1981 the leadership of this organization was becoming interested in entering the formal political arena. Village women, however, were disadvantaged because of their illiteracy, inexperience and preoccupation with everyday life, leading to the alcohol campaigns and protests against wife beating petering out (Basu 1993:97).

The anti-alcohol demonstrations took a somewhat different turn in the Chipko Movement that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s against the felling of forests in the Uttarkandh area. Many researchers have discussed the significant and undeniable participation of women in the struggle. Guha (1996:175) and Routledge (1993:95), among others, have argued forcefully that women were the ones directly engaged in direct use of the forest and therefore more intensively in contact with its degradation. Several authors nevertheless maintain that, even though a large numbers of women joined the movement, they never became part of the leadership (Routledge 1993; Linkenbach 1994). Routledge (1993:96) characterizes the Chipko Movement not as a women’s struggle but as a peasant campaign with an ecological agenda in which many women participated under the leadership of Sarvodaya activists, who were often middle-class men. Other authors emphasize the leading role women took in the movement (Jain 1984; Shiva 1988). The interesting point, nonetheless, is not simply whether the Chipko mobilization was a women’s struggle or a feminist one or neither, but that it has been claimed to be so. As demonstrated by Kumar (1993:147-48), nobody saw the agitation as a women’s campaign when it surfaced in the mid-1970s, while one decade later there was a growing interest, in the media and among feminist scholars, in the role women took in the struggle. This paved the way for the idea of Chipko as a Women’s Movement.

Campaigns against alcohol have emerged several times in the Uttarkandh area, as all three wings of the Chipko Movement have organized against

---

31 At this juncture a faction of Shramik Sangathana decided to join the Communist party (CPM) and the rest formed the Shramik Mukti Dal Party.
32 The debate among feminists contributed to a growing discussion within the Chipko Movement itself about women’s issues (Kumar 1993:148).
33 The three groups — Dashauli Gram Swaranya Sangh (DGSS) under the leadership of Bhatt, Uttarkandh Sangharsh Vahini (USV), and the Sarvodaya Movement led by Bahuguna — diverged in their analyses of the causes of forest degradation and the solutions they offered. As members of USV have insisted that the association between human beings and nature is part of the relationship between people, representatives of this body have been involved in social movements that challenge the state. Bhatt, on the other hand, has been more concerned with reconstruction work such as afforestation and biogas plant. Finally, Bahuguna has
the sale of illicit liquor. Many women participated in the so-called Prohibition Campaign 1965-71 — ‘the mother of the Chipko Movement’ — when Gandhi-inspired Sarvodaya workers led thousands of women to protest successfully by picketing liquor shops and demonstrating against the widespread distillation and sale of intoxicants, which culminated in a ban on alcohol from the area (Guha 1989:154; Routledge 1993:83-4; Kumar 1993:99).

Twenty years later, in 1983-4, the Uttarkhandh Sangharsh Vahini (Uttarkhandh Flow of Confrontation) (USV) organized a number of environmental camps and marches (padayatras). The organization related the question of problem drinking to environmental degradation, since many tribal groups living in the area were selling land in return for booze. Liquor was poured away and pots and shops destroyed in village after village. The vendors were forced to apologize in public at some places, and women humiliated the alcohol sellers and drinkers by blackening the latter’s faces or making them march through the streets (Kumar 1993:187). In contrast to the earlier prohibition campaign led by Sarvodaya activists, that organized by the USV was ignored and even opposed by the government, a situation which can be explained by the fact that the association lacked access to senior officials (Guha 1989:177 n. 57).

According to Kumar (1993:101), what distinguishes anti-alcohol protests in Uttarkandh from the activities of the Shramik Sangathana in Maharashtra mentioned above (p 44-5), is the fact that representatives of the former focused on alcohol as the main evil, whereas in Maharashtra women moved from protests against the sale of liquor to direct attacks on wife-beaters. In Kumar’s view gender relations were challenged only indirectly in the Uttarkandh agitation, with the main target being instead the growing commercialization of the area exemplified by the construction of large dams and expanding mining ventures. Other authors have not distinguished so sharply between these campaigns. Sathe (1990:139), for example, indicates that the members of the Marxist-inspired Shramik Sangathana never actually discussed alcoholism outside the class framework. Another unresolved question is whether there were any differences in the way the two waves of anti-alcohol agitation in Uttarkandh (those led by the Sarvodaya workers in the 1960s and those organized by USV in the 1980s) depicted gender relations.

confronted through articles, lectures and foot marches (padayatras), what he regards as the modern materialist society. The variation of rhetoric can be traced to the importance of Gandhian ideas among people from the DGSS and the Sarvodaya Movement, whereas those from USV have been more influenced by Marxism.  

34 The basic argument of Sathe is that the activists in Maharashtra attacked liquor not on ethical grounds but because of the link between drunkenness and wife battering. To be sure, there were some differences between the more moralistic anti-alcohol agitation in Uttarkandh and that of Maharashtra.
In brief, the Social Reform Movement had from its early days at the beginning of the nineteenth century problematized the situation of women, while opposition to drinking came much later onto its agenda. On the other hand, the caste associations did not consider women’s problems, but nevertheless rejected alcohol use from the beginning as part of their attempt to rise in the caste hierarchy. In the course of time they came to concentrate less on status and more on economic and political rights. Only under Gandhi did rural women mobilize in large numbers, with inebriants becoming one of their principal targets of protest as women were allotted the mission of confronting colonialism through attacks on the sale and use of liquor. Gandhi, like so many people in the pre-independence period, emphasized the complementarity of the sexes and the role of women as mothers, at the same time as the issue of women’s rights entered the political agenda. It was only in the 1970s, when new movements emerged independent of party politics, that women’s rights became equated with equality of the sexes in the sense of sameness. By taking up the problems of dowry and rape, women’s groups then multiplied all over the country. Even more significant for the analysis of the Anti-Arrack Movement is the fact that rural women joined as rank-and-file members of mass organizations. While many of them attacked the sale and consumption of alcohol, these women focused more explicitly on the economic problems connected with the use of intoxicants, as compared with the temperance campaigns of earlier social reform organizations and the Nationalist Movement, which had dwelt more on moral issues. The situation in Andhra Pradesh followed this general trend but also had its own characteristics, which I shall turn to in the following pages.

Mobilization for Women’s Rights and Temperance in Andhra Pradesh

The Social Reform Movement
At the beginning of the twentieth century, the present Andhra Pradesh consisted of two separate parts — the Andhra region belonging to Madras Presidency (included in the British Empire) and the princely Hyderabad state that the British controlled only indirectly. Indeed, the movements that arose in these two parts had to adjust to different circumstances.

In the Andhra area the Social Reform Movement was above all represented by Veerasalingam Pantalu. By 1878 he had founded the Rajahmundhry Social Reform Association with the aim of supporting widow remarriage but also addressing such issues as dowries, prostitution, the
corruption of state officials and the removal of untouchability. Apart from the Rajamundhry Reform Association, Veerasalingam also established the Brahma Samaj in Coastal Andhra (Omvedt 1994:115; Sarkar 1989:71). As has been noted by Ramakrishna (1983 cit after Ram Reddy 1989), the organizations founded by Veerasalingam were limited to the urban environment of Rajamundhry, located on the coast of Godavari district. The campaign neither reached beyond the upper stratum in society (Ram Reddy 1989:274) nor spread into the districts of Rayalaseema including the nearby Nellore district.

In the Telugu-speaking area, a widow remarriage campaign was launched, in which the use of the vernacular language contributed to the rise of a self-conscious Telugu nationalism. One of the most remarkable features of this mobilization is the fact that it stimulated literary activities among women and the establishment of their autonomous associations, paving the way for a more predominant role for women in Andhra public life than in many other parts of India (Leonard & Leonard 1981:27, 36).

The Andhra Mahila Sabha (Women’s Conference of Andhra), an organization for women founded by Mrs Durgabhai, a female follower of Veerasalingam, became very strong all over Andhra Pradesh in the late 1930s. Despite the fact that the leadership of this regional organization came from the middle and upper classes, women from all strata in society joined at the grass-roots level (ibid:39). The Andhra Mahila Sabha was, like many women’s bodies of the time, mainly involved in welfare activities and did not question the inequality between women and men.

**Caste Associations**

Although attempts to improve the status of castes by sanskritization have played only a minor role in Andhra Pradesh (Eliott 1995:141), the Kayasths — a caste group whose members were employed in the administration of the Muslim Hyderabad State — organized themselves into caste associations in Hyderabad city in the 1890s. Several such groups were created around the temperance issue (Leonard 1994:201-7, 251-5). As the international temperance movement, represented by the Anglo-Indian Temperance Society, has recognizably influenced many Kayasth organizations in India (Carroll 1976:439), the bodies in Andhra Pradesh too were probably either directly or indirectly affected by this connection.

In the 1920s and 1930s the lower castes in both Coastal Andhra and the Hyderabad state organized themselves in caste associations. They brought up issues of personal reform, such as abstention from the consumption of alcohol and meat as well as the abolition of customary prostitution (Omvedt 1994:117, 121). The Dalit Movement under Dr Ambedkar, however, never

---

35 The reference by Omvedt (1994:71-72) to customary prostitution in terms of Devadasi might be somewhat deceptive since this tradition is common amongst both higher castes, i.e.
attained a foothold in Andhra Pradesh, mainly because the Communists took up the same issues as the Ambedkarites — vethbagar or weTTi (forced labour) and ‘land to the tiller’. Consequently, the autonomous caste movement disappeared at the end of the 1940s and did not become a force to be reckoned with in the state until the 1990s (ibid:125,291).

The Nationalist Movement

At the beginning of the twentieth century, both the Andhra region and the Hyderabad state became involved in the Nationalist Movement, which was initially limited to intellectuals and businesspeople, but then followed by people from the rural middle class, in particular from Coastal Andhra. While the leadership to a large extent consisted of Brahmins, the non-Brahmin agricultural castes, such as Reddis and Kammas, gradually became engaged as members (Ram Reddy 1989:276; Elliott 1995:142-44). Apart from the activities of the upper and middle classes, there were many spontaneous uprisings of peasants during the Independence struggle (not least the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921-22). For example, there were such rebellions at Palnadu and Chirala-Parala in Guntur district. Under the leadership of Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah the population of the latter place refused to pay taxes and moved out of the town for eleven months to live at a nearby site. In the 1920s and 1930s N.G. Ranga formed peasant associations (kisan sabhas) with the aim of challenging the power of the zamindars, the rent-collecting intermediaries between the peasants and the British authorities.

As in the rest of India, thousands of women participated in public life for the first time with the Nationalist Movement in the 1920s and 1930s. Mrs. Surya Devara Raya Lakshmi, a well-known woman who took part in the Independence struggle in Andhra Pradesh, described her experiences as follows:

My village is Veerlapadu of Nandigama Taluk located in Krishna District. Our family were farmers. We cultivated the land with the help of agricultural labourers. It was an ordinary family.

Although my brother was a graduate he abandoned his idea of going abroad. At that time he had become influenced by Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah who visited the Hindu College in Guntur. Guntur was our mother’s brother’s native place, where my brother studied. Instead of going overseas, he decided to farm the land even though he was a graduate, since it is independent work. As my mother’s brother had no children, his family wanted my brother to emigrate, but he refused to serve under the British. I was then ten years old and the decision of my brother influenced me. I started to read historical books. They had opened a library at our native place where

Devadasis, and lower ones referred to by people in Andhra Pradesh as Matangis, Basivis or Matammas. While Devadasis, who worked as dancers in the temples, often had sexual relations with Brahmoin priests and Kings which contributed to their somewhat higher position in society, women from lower castes remained in their native villages and after a ceremonial marriage to the god they were thought to be available to any man.
I spent a lot of time. I became inspired by the historical stories and wanted to do something for my country. In addition, social reformers such as Kandukuri Veerasalingam motivated me. Meanwhile, the Nationalist Movement had grown in importance.

In the 1930s I was sixteen or seventeen. Gandhiji wanted us to spin cloth and I sang to the spinners to encourage them. ‘This is the spinning wheel of the dawn. The birds have already woken up. Come swing’. Such were the songs that inspired us. By this time the salt satyagraha (‘soul force’, in the sense of non-violent resistance) had been declared. Although I did not participate in the manufacture of salt we traded in small packets of salt made by the satyagrahis. My classmates and I sold them and sent the earnings to fund the Independence Movement.

We moved to Chebrolu village in Guntur District. Many men and women, who had gathered to participate in the mobilization for independence, were imprisoned at that place. However, the nationalist feeling had been planted in our native area and it grew all over the district. Our village was on the highway close to Guntur town and everything happened in front of our eyes. The basis of the Independence Movement was the Ranga couple, N.G. Ranga and Bharati Devi Ranga. You must have heard about them. Their native place was Nidubrolu but they often came to our village, which is situated nearby. Thus, we were in the centre of the independence struggle.

On 26 of January 1932 I participated in the satyagraha together with my two female cousins. As we practiced purdah, we evoked a lot of interest by offering satyagraha wearing the veil. This led to a large gathering and the police resorted to beating with bamboo sticks (lathi charge) according to section 144. We were arrested and kept in the sub-jail at Pennur. Finally, we were sentenced to one year’s imprisonment and a fine of 100 rupees. Since we failed to pay the penalties, we had to stay in prison for another three months. So altogether we were locked up for fifteen months.

There were many women amongst us, for instance Mrs Durghabai. Likewise, Mr Madhava Menon, who later became the chief minister of Kerala, was confined in the same place. There were people representing all the languages of south India.

The central prison was situated at Vellore, and the political prisoners were sent to this place. We got the ‘C’ class and detainees under that class have to work.

**Anuradha (my assistant):** How was the food?

**Devara Raya Lakshmi:** What kind of food is offered to a ‘C’ class inmate? As soon as we got to the prison they broke our bangles. We protested against this, arguing that Hindu women should wear such bracelets according to our tradition, but they told us that they had removed our glass bangles since they suspected that we might harm ourselves with the glass. Our leaders suggested that we should wear rubber armlets and the guards supplied us with these items.

The food was very bad. The contractors increased their profits by using the cheapest ingredients and vegetables that were cooked in brass vessels. They had very few ingredients and a lot of water. Sometimes there were

---

36 According to section 144 assemblages of more than four persons were illegal. The law is still applied against people gathering at meetings and demonstrations, for instance when people mobilized in the Anti-Arrack Movement.
worms in the food. After they had cooked all the rice together the *saambar*\(^{37}\) was brought in a huge vessel and poured over it. When we were about to eat we saw the worms. We started a *satyagraha*, demanding that we should be given some money so that we could make an agreement with the suppliers to the ‘A’ class prisoners. Many of these inmates were leaders, who were allowed to have cooks chosen from their fellow prisoners. Finally they conceded to our demands.

I studied most of my Hindi in prison. We spent our time reading Hindi and learning to sew. Many of us were very young. I was locked up for a year in this place.

Several people went to prison and I was bold enough to face it. Even though my relatives were against it I participated in the Non-Cooperation Campaign. Then I came forward as an individual *satyagrahi* (1940-41).\(^{38}\) We were opposed to the war as Gandhiji said that the Indian people would lose by participating in it. He stood firm against it and the individual *satyagraha* started. I got permission since I had been continuously immersed in the independence agitation. A *satyagrahi* took a pledge to oppose the war and raise slogans against it in public. Only well-known persons were permitted to offer *satyagraha*. I was either the third or fourth to be selected. We didn’t allow any police officer to arrest us, unless he had at least the rank of Circle Inspector. Finally we were sentenced to three months imprisonment but this time it was an ‘A’ class prison.

‘A’ class meant better amenities and we could buy anything with our own money. I was sent to Ongole sub-jail. When I reached Ongole late at night the District Collector opened the jail gates to receive me, as was the rule. Belonging to a nationalist family he told me that his own brothers had offered *satyagraha* and been incarcerated. The Collector narrated this in Hindi as my cell was being prepared. This time the sentence was only for three months and it ended quite early.

**Anuradha:** As you know the Hindu tradition — including our own families — does not permit women to go outside their houses. How could people like you participate?

**Devara Raya Lakshmi:** It was the tide of the Independence Movement with a lot of propaganda going on all over India. There was a change in thinking throughout society that facilitated our participation.

As in the rest of India, the liquor business became a target for the campaign in Andhra Pradesh, and women were considered to have experience in non-violent resistance as well as the patience needed for such protests (acquired in their daily lives in the household). In the 1920s and 1930s many toddy shops in the state were shut and their jars destroyed. Most importantly, multitudes of women participated in the picketing of liquor shops. Surya

---

\(^{37}\) South Indian dish based on lentils and different spices.

\(^{38}\) The individual *satyagraha* (1940-41) emphasized personal opposition to the war instead of a mass campaign. By that time, leaders of the Congress felt the need to show its hostility to the British while its members neither wanted nor had the capacity to organize a collective Non-Cooperation Campaign. Instead each Congress committee turned into a *satyagraha* working group, listing those who had acknowledged non-violence and carried out ‘constructive work’ such as spinning and betterment of the situation of ‘Harijans’ — Untouchables (Brown 1989:326-27).
Devara Raya Lakshmi narrated how, after the men had been arrested, they organized against intoxicating substances at the town of Tenali in Guntur district, propagandizing outside the places of sale in a non-violent manner but never forcing any shop to close.

This period also witnessed a strong anti-liquor movement among tribal men in the Rampa region (in the northern part of Godavari district). Alluri Sita Rama Raju, inspired by Gandhi to start village councils (*panchayats*) and to campaign against alcohol, led an armed rebellion among the tribals between August 1922 and May 1924 (Sarkar 1989:240; Ram Reddy 1989:279; Rao 1993:115; Arnold 1994:135). According to Arnold (1994:135), Alluri Sita Rama Raju carried on a tradition among people in the hill area, and instigated them to revolt against the growing penetration from the external society. In contrast to earlier uprisings, he wanted to extend the struggle to the plains area. As his aim was to attack British colonialism itself he differed from Gandhi in believing that Indian Independence could only be attained by armed force. The tendency of leaders of armed rebellions in Andhra Pradesh to disapprove of women joining their ranks might be the reason why the absence of women was conspicuous in his movement (cf. Kumar 1993:97; Vindhya 1990:41).

I have demonstrated above how in the regions of Hyderabad and Andhra activities specifically directed against drinking started with the caste associations. However, women became more generally politically active already during the Social Reform Movement and they entered into public action in their thousands during the Independence struggle. As in other parts of India, women then mobilized around the question of alcohol, but a significant particularity of Andhra Pradesh was that the Communist parties became very strong at the end of the colonial period. In the next section I shall investigate how the Communists approached the issues of temperance and women’s rights.

**The Communist Party**

In the 1930s the Communist Party had gained a firm foothold in Coastal Andhra and led the struggle in the countryside against the *zamindars* (Gupta 1984:12; Suri & Raghavulu 1997:33; Ram Reddy 1989:278; Sarkar 1989:364). In contrast to the rest of India, where the Brahmins were dominant, the Communist Party in Andhra Pradesh recruited its members from the non-Brahmin agricultural castes — Reddis and Kammas (Omvedt 1994:284). As these castes achieved a strong economic position in the Krishna delta, many of them became critical of the old Gandhian leadership and many young people became influenced by Marxism and joined the party (Elliott 1970:147). Especially during the 1952 election the Communists won a large percentage of the votes in both the Andhra and Hyderabad areas. Subsequently their importance declined, mainly because of a split within the...
party in 1964. Nevertheless, different communist groups have remained an important opposition voice in the politics of the state.

The personality of Puchalapalli Sundaraiah — who took part in the Independence struggle as well as in the Anti-Toddy Campaign, announced by the Congress — has been significant for the direction of the communist mobilization in Andhra Pradesh. Sundaraiah had been influenced by the ideas of Gandhi at an early age, but later on in his life differed from the Nationalist Movement. Mr Jakka Venkaiah, an active elderly member of the CPM party in Nellore district, referred to the high valuation of a simple lifestyle including rejection of alcoholic beverages as a heritage from Gandhi. Its importance is reflected in the fact that people who drink are excluded from the party. Sundaraiah disagreed with the national leadership on the role of the peasants in the assumed coming revolution, since he thought that the struggle had to be based on the countryside (Omvedt 1993:159). By addressing this issue he contributed to the course of events in the Telangana Armed Struggle in which rural women participated in great numbers.

The Telangana Armed Struggle

The Hyderabad princely state (1724-1948), ruled by the Nizam dynasty, consisted of the Telangana area in Andhra Pradesh and parts of present-day Maharashtra and Karnataka. Gupta (1989:7) portrays the state as a concentration of both power and land in the hands of the landlords (cf. Ram Reddy 1989:275; Rao 1979:151; Sarkar 1989:368,442f). Forced labour among both women and men was common in the area, but women suffered additionally from sexual abuse by the landlords (Kannabiran & Lalitha 1989:182). The armed struggle led by the Communists, 1946-51, started among tenant cultivators and landless labourers in Nalgonda and spread into

---

39 When he was imprisoned during the Non-Cooperation Campaign of 1932-33, Sundaraiah came in contact with people with radical ideas such as Amir Hyder Khan, ending up in his joining the Communist Party.

40 In 1941 60 percent of the land consisted of khalsa or diwani tenures, characterized by the fact that government officials collected the revenue not through intermediaries but directly from the peasants. In addition, there were special tenures called jagirs, i.e. land offered to noblemen by the Nizam, as well as the system of sarf-e-khas, the Nizam’s personal estate. Gradually, the holders of jagir land increased, as the landowners, the deshmukhs, controlled nearly every village including the non-jagirdiri areas and they had taken over a large part of the peasant land (Rao 1979:151; Gupta 1984:4-6; Sarkar 1989:368,442f; Ram Reddy 1989:275).

41 In the last years of the Nizam’s rule, the Muslim Party (the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Musilmeen) created an armed wing — the Razakars — under the leadership of Qasim Razvi. The group considerably intensified Muslim terrorist activity, above all in rural areas where the Communists were strong.
the neighbouring districts of Warangal and Khammam. Especially during the early phases of the struggle large numbers of women participated. On 13 September 1948, the Indian army marched into Hyderabad to bring about the integration of the state into the Indian Union, and afterwards the Telangana Movement was gradually suppressed.

The liquor business as such was not a target of attack during this struggle. Given the consumption of toddy by women and men within the family, alcohol never became regarded as a problem in Telangana in the same way as in the coastal districts. Mallu Swaraiyam, who had participated in the Telangana Armed Struggle, reflected on why the Communists hesitated to propagandize against alcohol use in the occupied territories:

Although the liquor business was not as lucrative as it is today we propagandized against drinking. A person could not join the party if he was a heavy drinker. The most common intoxicating drink in Telangana was toddy. We were not against toddy. We were not even interested when Gandhiji preached with anti-toddy slogans. Toddy is not as harmful as liquor is. However, such beverage of good quality is not available today. When workers consumed fresh toddy together with boiled millet they got enough nutrients and felt well during the summer. Thus, we did not propagandise against this drink. Neither were there any complaints about abuses or wife battering by drunkards during our struggle. On the other hand, men beat their wives to manifest their authority over them independent of whether they were intoxicated or not. In those days, people only used liquor during festival days. Local Goudas prepared the beverage and the landlord families consumed most of it.

**Anuradha:** Why didn’t the labourers drink?

**Mallu Swaraiyam:** They wouldn’t work if they drank and the landlords would beat them if they were found inebriated.

Interestingly, Mallu Swaraiyam indicated that labourers would not be able to work under the influence of liquor. This is contrary to the ideas expressed by rural people in present-day Andhra Pradesh who often stress that they use hard drink in order to be able to endure the heavy physical labour (see Chapter 4).

The communist attitude towards alcohol use during the Telangana struggle was characterized by both pragmatic considerations and moral arguments. On the one hand, the stance that intoxicating beverages were something evil was discernible in the fact that the consumption of spirits, including toddy, was forbidden for members of the party (Sundaraiah 1972:57); on the other hand, the Communist Party joined a campaign launched by the Congress to cut down toddy trees in Telangana but with-

---

42 The beginning of the uprising is considered to be on 4 July 1946, when some hired men killed Doddi Komaraiah, after he had stood by a poor washerwoman against the invasion of her land. The parallel administration, set up in between 3,000 and 4,000 villages, abolished forced labour, gave the real properties back to their earlier owners and redistributed other land among the tillers (Omvedt 1994:309; Ram Reddy 1989; Sarkar 1989:442-44).
drew from this operation when they realized that they would lose the support of the tappers (Gupta 1984:15; Sundaraiah 1972:57). Conversely, the masses of women who were active in strikes and demonstrations during the earlier phase of the Telangana Armed Struggle did not protest against toddy but focused on other ‘female problems’, such as wages, wife-beating, hygiene and the right to breast-feed infants while at work (Kannabiran & Lalitha 1989:186-7; Kumar 1993:97). When the movement went underground, women were not allowed to join the guerrilla squads; yet they were expected to contribute by doing minor duties such as offering shelter or acting as messengers (Kumar 1993:97). 43

Even if the lives of women were considerably improved in the course of the struggle, ideas about the hierarchical complementarity of the sexes were still hegemonic at this time. The Communists were constrained by the patriarchal ideas dominant in the surrounding society, and emphasized a rigid division between a private, female sphere and a public, male domain. Middle-class norms were inculcated in peasant women who had not previously maintained an equally strict dividing line between the public and the private. This implied new difficulties for women to get their problems recognized and household tasks remained delegated to them (Kannabiran & Lalitha 1989:190; cf. Kumar 1993:97). Another consequence was that many women faced obstacles in obtaining a position within the party.

The Post-Independence Period

There was an upsurge of movement activities in Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s, as the declaration of an Emergency and its aftermath led to the questioning of the political parties, particularly the Congress. Dr G. Vijaya Kumar, a member of the JVV (Jana Vignana Vedika or ‘People’s Science Forum’), described how the Emergency period made him reassess his earlier political beliefs:

I have been in student activities from my undergraduate days, that is, probably from my intermediate course around 1974, 1975, or so. I used to support the Emergency and the Congress Party. Afterwards many articles appeared in the newspapers, notes from several important people who were imprisoned during this period. They made me reconsider my stance with the Congress Party and with Indira Gandhi and its socialism. Before the Emergency I was committed to socialism, but believed that it was the Congress that would bring it into India. In the post-Emergency period there was a vacuum and I have been trying to associate with any organization that has been committed to socialism. I have been in search of that.

Although Vijaya Kumar, like so many others in the state, looked for an alternative largely within the Marxist framework, he no longer considered

---

43 Even Sundaraiah (1972:344), who has highlighted the important role of women in the uprising, never questioned that very few of them were allowed to join the guerrilla squads.
the political parties to have the solution and approached the social movements instead. Many of the New Social Movements that arose all over India, based on other identities than class and more independent of political parties, were still missing in Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand, women’s groups increased their activities in the state.

Middle-class women from Hyderabad and other urban areas initiated various autonomous activist groups. The first demonstrations against dowries by the contemporary Indian Women’s Movement were launched in Hyderabad in 1975. Three years later women’s organizations, for example, the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) and Stree Shakti Sangathana (the Organization of Women’s Power), joined the protests against the rape by several policemen of Rameeza Bee, a poor Muslim woman in Hyderabad (Kumar 1993:128). These two campaigns, however, never broadened into a pan-Indian movement, as the groups still lacked a network connecting them to similar associations in other parts of the country.

The 1970s were also characterized by a growing dissatisfaction among Maoist women with the hierarchical organization of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). As many of them became influenced by feminist ideas, they started analyzing how women’s problems were connected with other forms of social inequality at the same time as independent associations were being formed (cf. Calman 1992:80). In 1974 POW (the Progressive Organization of Women) was founded, an early example of the present women’s movement, and small POW groups were created all over the Telangana region. According to the manifesto of the organization, women were subjugated because of the genderized division of labour and the culture that legitimated it. One of the most interesting features of the analysis of the POW is the reference to women’s oppression in terms of a division of labour instead of biological differences between women and men (Kumar 1993:104-6).

During the Emergency, many associates of the POW became victims of police repression due to their links with Naxalite groups, and they went underground thus contributing to the weakening of the organization in this period. Instead, the collective Stree Shakti Sangathana, formed in 1978, became a leader in the Women’s Movement of Andhra Pradesh during the 1980s. In contrast to the POW, this group broke away from the political party, even though members continued to be influenced by Marxist principles. While Stree Shakti Sangathana made public and ‘ politicized’ what it regarded as women’s issues, for example, rape, family violence, dowry murders, and contraceptive methods (Reddy 2005:310-12), its representatives became caught up in a collection of material on women’s struggles, manifested in a volume about female participation in the Telangana Armed Struggle. After the organization dissolved in 1989, several of its members formed a new association called Anveshi, whereas others started the group Asmitha. While Anveshi has focused more on research, Asmitha, apart from
its writings, has provided training to NGOs as well as legal help and activities in the slums. The inheritance of both bodies from Stree Shakti Sangathana can be seen in their documentation of the Anti-Arrack Movement (see Olga, Kannabiran, & Kannabiran 1994; Lalitha et al 1993).

Affiliated to the AIWC and without much contact with the new women’s groups, many organizations concerned with welfare activities expanded in the 1970s, simultaneously with women’s wings of the political parties broadening their activities to include protests against rape and dowry deaths. An outstanding participant in many meetings on women’s issues in Andhra Pradesh has been Malladi Subamma, who is a ‘humanist feminist’ running several institutions. It is obvious, though, that she represents an older form of feminism emphasizing the complementarity of the sexes.

As we have seen, women’s organizations emerging in Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s shared many traits with those of other parts of India by organizing similar campaigns against dowry and rape. Indeed, the contemporary women’s movement arose at a very early date in the state. Many of its urban groups use some kind of Marxist framework for their analysis of gender oppression, even though their approach is more holistic than was earlier the case. Female associations with a Maoist ideology, at work in the rural areas and the slums, addressed the problems poor women were facing. By the 1970s, however, these groups were still not concerned about the domestic difficulties that arose due to alcohol abuse, whereas the Naxalite guerrillas included the liquor business as a target of protest.

The Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh
While the first armed Naxalite struggle was carried out in Srikakulam district in 1967-70, numerous women participated in the early days of the movement, especially tribal women from the hill area. Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham (Andhra Pradesh Women’s Association) — the women’s wing of the then undivided Communist Party of India — organized an anti-alcohol campaign, and women joined in large numbers in smashing the brewing pots. It is important to know that the liquor merchant was often the same person as the moneylender in the villages, to whom a large part of the tribal male population had become indebted (Vindhya 1990:30-31). Women’s temperance mobilization decreased, however, when the conflict between landlords and tribals became militarized. Since the leaders were reluctant to

44 Already in 1958 the Girijan Sangham (the Tribal Association) was formed by the then undivided Communist Party of India (CPI). The armed struggle started on 31 October 1967, when landlords at the village of Levidi opened fire on some tribal people who were peacefully on their way to a conference at the village of Mondemkhal. As the struggle intensified there were confrontations with the police and the leaders were either killed or arrested. In 1969 the heads of the Srikakulam struggle aligned themselves with the CPI(M-L) at central level under the guidance of Charu Majumdar. The movement finally declined after the local commanders, Satyanarayna and Kailasam, had been killed in July 1970 (Ram Reddy 1989:315; Vindhya 1990:34-5).
let women engage in the armed squads, many of them withdrew from the movement when the repression by the government increased in the area (ibid:40-41).

When the struggle in Srikakulam slackened, the Naxalites increased their activities in other parts of Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s. As a result the movement spread into the plains of Karimnagar, Khammam, Nalgonda, and Warangal districts, as well as the tribal areas of East Godavari and Adilabad (Ram Reddy 1989:315; Hanumantha Rao 1983:101). In the late 1980s different guerrilla groups, but above all the People’s War Group (PWG), started a boycott of heavy drinks in Telangana. They made an issue of the high prices of arrack, but as the rates went down many people started to drink more, which brought growing criticism of the Naxalite policy on alcohol. In consequence, these groups took up the fight for a total ban on arrack by smashing drums and setting fire to depots, jeeps as well as packets, and some liquor contractors were murdered. Traders and the administrative authorities then decided to sell arrack in front of the police stations, causing growing confrontations between the police and the Naxalites in the area.

In contrast to what happened in Srikakulam, women in the districts of Telangana did not take part in these anti-liquor campaigns while many of them suffered from the growing violence in the region. Mr Bala Gopal from the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee — a human rights organization that has often has defended Naxalite cases in the courts — reflected upon why the party did not succeed in mustering women against the sale of intoxicants:

The Naxalite groups, like all Communist parties, have their virtues and they have made major contributions. I’m not denying that. Still, they have for the most part focused on men when they mobilized agricultural workers. Many women are also employed as labourers, but they mainly organized men. Although they don’t have an articulated principle on this, they have not reflected on whether women should participate in equal numbers in the unions. So, this male-oriented method of organization has been characteristic of the revolutionary movement.

45 On 20 April 1980 Kondapally Seetaramaiah (K.S.) broke away from the Central Organizing Committee of CPI(ML) and founded the People’s War Group (PWG), the largest Naxalite organization in Andhra Pradesh. In 1992 there was a split in PWG as Mupalla Laxmana Rao Ganapathy replaced Seetaramaiah. The other two major Naxalite groups — CPI(ML) C.P. Reddy and CPI(ML) Praja Pandha — have generally been less violent and they have taken part in the elections. At this time there existed in addition around twelve smaller Naxalite factions and a number of local armed bands, consisting of rural young people without any ties to the organized parties (Asia Watch 1992:17).

46 In 1992 a ban was imposed on the People’s War Group, and protests against the ban became the priority of the party leading to an end of the struggle against arrack. The Congress Party withdrew the ban after it had achieved power in 2004, but it was reintroduced after a few months.
At the beginning the issue of liquor was raised by Naxalite groups, not by mobilizing women but by mustering their own cadres who were mostly young males. The youth would go and blow up the liquor shop or attack the arrack businessman, kill him, nail him or set the shop on fire. Then the police would come and take action against these boys, harass them, torture them, and maybe kill them. This took place over the heads of the real victims who should have been activated. Unfortunately, they made a very sad choice. After the movement came to Nellore, the Naxalites realized their mistake and some of them tried to rally the women, but it didn’t work well in Telangana.

In this chapter I have discussed how certain popular movements have mobilized women against liquor from the colonial period onwards. It is clear that alcohol first became recognized as a woman’s problem during the Independence struggle under the direction of Gandhi. Although Andhra Pradesh followed a pan-Indian pattern, I have tried to show that this state had its own traits discernible in the strength of the Communist parties. Many women participated in the struggles of Telangana and Srikakulam, though they withdrew into the background when the movements turned into armed conflicts. Whereas the women in Telangana did not consider liquor to be a problem, those who took part in Srikakulam fought vehemently against the sale of such beverages. One reason behind these differences might be that the consumption of toddy typical of Telangana had not resulted in social disruption, while the opposite was the case in Srikakulam where the tribals had become indebted to the liquor contractors. There was an upsurge of movement activities after Independence, with the appearance of new women’s organizations and growing Naxalite mobilization in the countryside. Women’s associations focused on female issues but overlooked domestic violence and the economic difficulties caused by the growth of problem drinking among poor men. While Naxalite groups organized peasants against the liquor trade within a framework that ignored the difficulties many women were facing, the women’s temperance crusade emerged within a quite unexpected environment — the ‘Total Literacy Campaign’ in Nellore district. The next chapter offers a close reading of the form the Anti-Arrack Movement took in this part of Andhra Pradesh.
The first time I met Reena, a middle-class activist involved in the protest against arrack, she explained how the movement was started by women in the village of Dubagunta in Nellore district and underlined the advantage for me of carrying out my study in that particular part of Andhra Pradesh. Dubagunta was a notorious ‘drunkards’ village’, she continued, where the women had raised their voices since they could no longer face the atrocities from their intoxicated husbands. Moreover, inebriated men disturbed the literacy classes. Even the children had become accustomed to liquor by drinking arrack diluted with water from the packs, which the men had thrown on the ground. I often heard similar stories of why the struggle had started in Dubagunta and how it had spread via the literacy campaign to other villages of Nellore district.

This chapter highlights the meaning particular places acquire in the discourse on translocal social movements. Gupta and Ferguson (1997:39) call attention to how in a world where places have become less distinct, ideas of culturally and ethnically different localities have increased in importance. Consequently, places often come to be socially constructed as central signs, sometimes on the basis of real qualities, sometimes on imagined ones. My suggestion is that Nellore and its villages became vital symbols of the struggle disseminated in speeches, songs, plays and newspaper articles. For instance, there were many stories about people’s local resistance to the liquor industry and the state alcohol policy or about women entering the temperance mobilization in reaction to their husbands’ violent drunken behaviour. Broadly speaking, these ‘master frames’ (cf. Fine 1995) illustrate the significance of the Anti-Arrack Movement as a discursive phenomenon.

The idealized image of Nellore as the place of the Anti-Arrack Movement, however, leaves little room for the heterogeneity of the struggle in its different villages and towns. Routledge (1993:37), a cultural geographer, has provided a framework for discussions on the value of places in social movements by demonstrating that both power and resistance to it are lived at specific localities where local conventions play an imperative part. My

---

1 Routledge (1993:28), following the ideas of Agnew (1987), divides the notion of place into three different aspects: the locale (the situation in which daily affairs are constituted), the location (the social, economic, and political courses of action around the locale), and the sense
objective is to show how people in the villages of Nellore district countered not only powerful arrack contractors and excise staff from the district headquarters but also shopkeepers who were their neighbours and friends. Each village had its own specific history and vocabulary of protest, yet it was also connected with activities in other places (cf. Roddmann 2003:212).

In light of the foregoing discussion, this chapter explores issues related to place and, more specifically, to the local form the Anti-Arrack Movement took in Nellore district. How was the movement experienced in the villages? What connections existed between the rural areas and the larger society? The chapter begins with a general description of the economy, social structure, and geography of Nellore district. Thereafter I shall go back in time to discuss how the literacy campaign and the subsequent Anti-Arrack Movement developed in the area. The focus will then be on Chintala Palem where I carried out a large part of my fieldwork — a village situated in the mountainous western part and known for its strong protests against arrack. After having portrayed the everyday life of the locality, the chapter reviews the emergence of the movement at this place in the beginning of the 1990s. Finally, my approach examines the meaning of Nellore in the narratives of the struggle.

Nellore District

The word ‘Nellore’ is Tamil for ‘the place of rice’, in reference to the once big rice plantations of the area. Today the majority of the population is still engaged in agriculture, and industry is hardly developed. Since there is a scarcity of land in the region, due to the Green Revolution and the land reforms, tenants and smallholders with less than 2 hectares of land dominate agricultural activities (Reddy 1996:18n.3).

Apart from Reddis and Kammas, which are the largest cultivating castes, the district has a big Muslim population concentrated in the west, primarily in the mandal of Ananta Sagaram, where Shaik is the most important sub-group. Quite the reverse of the case in Hyderabad, there have barely been any conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. Goudas, the toddy tappers’ caste, are numerous on the coast. They are above all engaged in toddy trade, but have recently improved their lives considerably by also entering the distilled liquor business.

The fertile eastern coastline of Nellore, with a landscape dominated by the characteristic palmyra palm rising high against the sky above the rest of the vegetation, stands in sharp contrast to the rest of the district. In the northern part a lot of coconut trees grow as well. During the prohibition
period 1995-97, toddy — exempted from the ban — became a flourishing business, when morning and evening women were busy trading the beverage in ceramic vessels at the roadside.

In the 1970s large, often transnational, companies introduced the cultivation of tiger prawns in salt ponds on a grand scale in the coastal area. As a result, the drinking water has become saline due to sinking levels of fresh groundwater. In addition, cyclonic storms have increased following the felling of the mangrove vegetation that acted as a barrier against the wind coming from the sea. The fish stock has disappeared into deep water, which means that more expensive equipment is required for fishing, and many poor fishermen have left the area for good. Several NGOs have agitated against the prawn culture, but these protests never developed into a broader movement.

The mountain chain of the Eastern Ghats, known locally as the Veligonda Hills, stretches in a north-south direction through the western part of Nellore district. Given that few people can make a living out of agricultural activities, seasonal and permanent migration has speeded up in more recent decades, and the area is now only very sparsely populated (Rajagopal 1977:13). The inhabitants mainly grow dry crops such as different millets locally known as sajja (Holcus Spicatus) and ragi (Cynosurus Corsemus). In the interior northern part, around the town of Kaligiri, cash crops such as mango have now replaced the traditional rice cultivation.

The middle region, between the coastal belt and the western mountain chain, is the wealthiest part of Nellore district in which most of the towns are located, interspersed with large paddy fields and fruit plantations. Despite its relative prosperity, the area has faced decreasing work opportunities due to immigration from the east, west and north. Moreover, in the latter half of the 1990s many paddy fields have been converted into ponds of fresh water prawns, causing a further loss of employment and seasonal unemployment in the agricultural sector, especially for women. Apart from the sale of toddy in the hot summer season, smuggling of Indian Made Foreign Liquor increased in the prohibition period, especially in the urban areas.

---

2 The cutting down of the mangrove foliage has been one explanation of the destructive impact, in terms of human lives and material damage, of the tsunami that in December 2004 swept in a south-western direction from Indonesia over South-east Asia. However, the calamity had only a limited impact in Andhra Pradesh with a death toll of around 110 persons, 20 of whom came from Nellore district, in contrast with 7,968 dead individuals in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu (www.ndmindia.nic.in/Tsunami2004/sitrep32 [access 051008]. On the other hand, there has been severe physical damage to the tiger prawn ponds and fishing boats in the coastal area of Andhra Pradesh.

3 Mango plantations, in contrast to rice cultivation, are very labour-extensive and unemployment has therefore increased in the region. Dubagunta, the village where the Anti-Arrack Movement is supposed to have started, is located in this area.
Nellore, the central town and headquarters of the district, is located in the middle part, spreading along the banks of the seasonal Pennar River that almost dries out in the summer. The town is known as the place of Tikkana, the poet who translated the *Mahabarata* into Telugu, and of Potti Srimulu who died after a hunger strike as he campaigned for a separate Andhra province. Its commercial importance has increased since paddy and other cash crops are grown in abundance and exported to other parts of the state.

The Congress Party has for a long time dominated the locality, even though it is disadvantaged by internal problems with competing sections. Traditionally village life in Andhra Pradesh was characterized by factional disputes within the dominant castes, i.e. the Reddis and Kammas, as brothers, kinsmen, and lineage groups mobilized people from the lower
castes in patron-client relations over issues of land and prestige (Elliott 1970:126). With the establishment of the local government system, *panchayat raj*, several Kamma and Reddy landowners became active as middlemen in the Congress Party by providing government services and funds to their followers (ibid:135). Consequently, they successfully mobilized voters from dependent castes, politicizing traditional village factions all over Andhra Pradesh including Nellore.

With the emergence of the Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes in the public arena, factional politics based on rivalries within the dominant caste has faded away from the 1970s onwards (Kohli 1988:1016). In 1994-96, when I did my fieldwork, the Telugu Desam Party had become a political alternative, especially in the state polls, while the Congress still led in the national elections. Mr. Somireddy Chandra Mohan Reddy, a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from the Telugu Desam Party who contested the Sarvepalle constituency, became a Minister in the government in 1996. Several activists in the area thought that this man had been promoted within the party because of his backing and participation in the anti-arrack struggle in the district. Finally, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M or CPM) had considerable support in the coastal area, explained by the fact that Sundaraiah, a prominent member in the early days of the party, came from this part of Andhra Pradesh.

Different state programmes aimed at improving the living conditions among the poor have shaped local politics and everyday life in Nellore district. In contrast to the situation in many other parts of Andhra Pradesh, such as Chittoor, the NGO sector with its transnational connections has not been very strong: in 1996 it consisted of around 50 registered organizations, most of them concentrated in the coastal area. Instead, the voluntary association the JVV — *Jana Vignana Vedika* (‘People’s Science Forum’) — acted as an intermediary between the state and the local people. Members of

---

4 As authority at village level was built on ownership of land, larger landholders in the village could employ farm labourers, they had capital to lend, and they could move outside the place to show cases to state officials (Elliott 1970: 125,215).
5 When central and state elections were held in Andhra Pradesh in 2004, the Congress came back to power with a large majority in the constituencies of Nellore district. Previously the party had won several local elections in the area.
6 In 1996 S.R. Chandra Mohan Reddy was Minister for Youth Services, Sports, Small-Scale Industries, *Khadi* (Indian home-spun cloth), Village Industries, Lid Cap (leather), and Self-Employment. Three years later, after the State Assembly Elections, he became the Minister of Information and Public Relations.
7 At the moment (2006) Chandra Mohan Reddy has left Hyderabad and moved back to Nellore as the party lost both the central and the state elections. He now runs some businesses in the area and is the district president of the Telugu Desam Party.
8 With the aim of improving the nutritional status of children under the age of five as well as pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, Anganvadi, health and educational centres, have been established in several villages under the Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDP). In 1995 there were Anganvadi centres at 100 places in Nellore.
the organization strictly emphasized that they received no financial support from abroad (they are actually against it) and that they were therefore not a NGO. In contrast, the JVV was closely connected with the local state administration, illustrated by the fact that some of its members participated in the district council (zilla parishad) and were thus involved in government programmes carried out in different villages.

Despite the fact that alcohol use has been no higher in Nellore than in other parts of Andhra Pradesh, the district is known for its temperance tradition, and alcohol is still today considered to be a social evil, something that is reflected in the fact that villages with a widespread use of intoxicating substances get a bad reputation. The area was included in the prohibition enforced by the Andhra state of the 1950s, before its connection with Telangana with the formation of Andhra Pradesh. Rather than explaining the Anti-Arrack Movement merely in terms of the existence of abstention from liquor in the area, I would argue, however, that we must look beyond traditional ideas on drinking and consider how people came together in the literacy campaign.

The Literacy Campaign

In the 1980s there were a number of programmes in India characterized by a strong involvement of the state aimed at adult education. According to Venkatesh and Athreya (1996:86-8), these campaigns were limited by their ‘centre-based’ approach and failure to involve the local communities. When the government of Rajiv Gandhi came to office in 1988, it established a number of new policy schemes including the ‘new educational policy’ according to which the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) was set up at central level in Delhi under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. On 26 January 1989 the KSSP, Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (Kerala Science Literacy Society) launched a literacy campaign in the district of Ernakulam in Kerala, a local initiative that was funded by the NLMA. Ernakulam was declared the first fully literate district in the country on 4 February 1990, and the BGVS, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi (the India Science Knowledge Association) was formed at central level one year later to coordinate organizations involved in the alphabetization drive in different parts of India.

9 These programmes were the National Adult Education Programme, NAEP (1978), the Adult Education Programme, AEP (1982), and finally the National Programme of Adult Education, NPAE (1986) (Athreya & Chunkath 1996:85).

10 Two reasons underlie the establishment of BGVS. First, it was inspired by the success of the Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha of 1987, the science marches that converged at Bhopal. The other source of influence was the fact that the central administration had revised its earlier approach
Many of the associations that joined the literacy campaign were already connected with each other through the network of the People’s Science Movement. One expression of this is that their names all contain terms that in English could be translated into ‘science’, especially the Sanskrit words *sastra* and *vijnan*. Whereas *vijnan* refers to the universal and essential features of science, *sastra* signifies the openness of science to correction on the basis of predictions that do or do not come true (Zachariah & Sooryamoorthy 1994:20). One of the most noteworthy features of these groups was their attempt to spread ‘science’ and a ‘scientific attitude’ to poor people in the rural areas. In other words, they shared the aim of the Nehruvian model of spreading modernization and progress to India’s ‘backward’ villages characterized by superstitious beliefs and illiteracy.

As the alphabetization campaign was carried out in partnership with the district administration, the Collectors coordinating government schemes in the districts had to adapt the programme to local circumstances. The first locality to participate was Chittor, but Nellore soon followed suit. In Andhra Pradesh the BGVS — the networking association — overlapped with the JVV which was strong in Nellore. In addition, some people from the JVV had gone to Ernakulam in Kerala and become very impressed with the way towards adult education by involving the people in the rural areas, instead of implementing the programme from above. The charter of BGVS consists of the following points:

- To build a people’s network to provide grass-roots support to total literacy campaigns.
- To assist in the planning and conduct of all aspects of the campaign – environment building, training and monitoring – in such a way as to ensure that the spirit of a people’s movement is preserved and strengthened.
- To continue to interact with officials, political parties, voluntary groups, trade unions and service associations, intellectuals and people from all walks of life so as to continuously build an environment that welcomes, encourages and facilitates total literacy campaigns.
- To contribute to the evolution of the district literacy organizations and to build the BGVS organization at the district and state levels in such a manner that literacy campaigns become the beginning of a sustainable process. Such a process should lead on to post-literacy immediately and subsequently to universal elementary education, women’s development, a health movement, a cultural awakening and eventually empowerment of the people. With the knowledge, organization and confidence gained from the TLCs (Total Literacy Campaigns), these processes and programmes should lead to a more democratic society where people can and do decide the course of their own development.

11 However, in India there is another approach towards science, the ‘Alternative Science Movement’ represented by Ashis Nandy and Dharampal (see Guha 1988). The movement is characterized by Gandhian ideas and by the attempt to regenerate traditional scientific and technology practices (Zachariah & Sooryamoorthy 1994: 156-57).

12 Potter (1996:222) focuses on the ways the Collector has wielded immense local power as head of the magistrates, the revenue collection, government departments and the urban and rural authorities from the colonial period onwards. Consequently, the Collector was not subordinated to, but came to preside over, the new local political system, the *panchayat raj*, which was established in the 1950s and 60s. In other words, the power of the state administration at local level has to a large extent remained untouched since British times.
the programme was carried out there. Although the main interest of the organization was to ‘propagate science’ in the rural areas, its members became attracted to literacy as a means of achieving this end. The district administration in Nellore also developed an interest in the mobilization for alphabetisation, and the campaign started in the district on 7 April 1991.

The District Literacy Committee, Zilla Saksharata Samithi, was formed with the Collector as the chairperson while other members represented voluntary organizations, NGOs, political parties, or were teachers. The Academic Committee was part of the literacy body but all of its members belonged to the JVV. They considered that the primers used by the Adult Education Department for the past fifteen years were unsuitable and took on the task of writing new ones in the local dialect, which were afterwards approved by the National Literacy Mission Authority in Delhi.

The authors of these books were influenced by notions about ‘functional literacy’ according to which students should become self-reliant in reading and numeracy, be aware of the reasons for their poverty, learn skills to improve their socio-economic situation, and absorb certain ideals such as national integration and women’s equality (cf. Athreya & Chunkath 1996:240). Each lesson was supplemented with a discussion topic, printed in a separate book, called ‘the Good Topic for Today’ (iirroojju manci wiSayam), with the idea of starting a discussion after the classes on various subjects including arrack. In an interview Dr Sudhakar Reddy from the JVV later told me that at the outset of the literacy campaign they had not considered the liquor theme to be of any major importance:

**Dr Sudhakar Reddy:** They were discussing lots of things, including the habit of consuming arrack. It was one of our last priority issues. Let’s say we had some ten issues. First of all there was health, women’s health, dowry, something like that. We had about ten different points, and this was the last one.

**Marie:** Why?

---

13 To begin with, the District Literacy Committee spread information about the programme only in Nellore and Gudur mandals, but as the local population responded well they extended the propaganda to the other districts.

14 Many people were released from their ordinary work to involve themselves full-time in the campaign, which was referred to as being ‘on duty’.

15 The primers were prepared either by the State Resource Centre or the BGVS, and they were first used in classes after being approved by the NLMA at Delhi. Whereas the books of the State Resource Centre were used in districts like Mahabubhnagar, the primers by the BGVS (in practice overlapping with the JVV) were used in Chittoor, Nellore and Khammam.

16 The authors of the educational material from the JVV were influenced by ‘the pace and content of the learning method’, which meant teaching small words together with the letters. Indian students generally start by studying only letters and it often takes a long time before they are able to read sentences. In contrast, the approach advocated by the JVV had the advantage that the students would feel encouraged to continue their studies, since they were able to read some words from the beginning.
Dr Sudhakar Reddy: I don’t know. It was like that. Since I’m a doctor I feel that health is the most important topic. Another person might see something else as the number one concern. My perception will be through my own eyes. Therefore the biggest problem will be whatever I regard as the most important one, like that.

The Story of Sitamma (siitamma kaTha) in the first primer was the narrative that according to common opinions inspired the women in Dubagunta to drive the liquor sellers out of the village in the months of April and May 1991. The chapter is entitled ‘Unity’ (aykamatyam) but was often referred to as ‘the Story of Sitamma’, since these were easier words for neo-literates. The Story of Sitamma actually came from the literacy books which had been used by the State Resource Centre during the earlier adult education programmes, and which had been slightly modified later on by members of the JVV:

Unity
Sripuram is a wealthy village, but the women here have no happiness. It is full of arrack and liquor shops. All the earnings of the menfolk are spent on drinks. Women who get in the way of the men are beaten up. How to make the men give up drinking is the problem of the women.

All of them went to Sitamma. They believed that the educated Sitamma could guide them. Sitamma understood their sufferings. ‘If you are all united, you can do this’, she said, and told them what they ought to do.

As she suggested, they all joined hands. The local youth also helped them. All of them went in a procession and forced the arrack shops to close. For this the women were tortured by their menfolk, but the women were steadfast and convinced their men. At last, the men were converted. They stopped drinking.

If there is unity, anything can be achieved. The women of the village proved this.

Following the incident at Dubagunta a public meeting against arrack was held in Nellore district at the village of Tegacherla, Rapur Mandal, on 12 December 1991, which was organized by a Marxist-Leninist group called the Agricultural Workers’ Committee (Rythu Kuli Sangham). In spite of the fact that the police refused them permission to use the microphone, the gathering proceeded peacefully, but problems started afterwards when more than sixteen students and peasants were taken into custody. Nevertheless, the meeting remained as a single incident and did not develop into a movement.

In 1992, at the beginning of January, the Post-Literacy Campaign started, the second phase of the alphabetization drive, characterized by the learners being reorganized into small ‘Centres for People’s Awareness’ (jana caytanya keendramlu, JCK), which were provided with some printed material, for example, a fortnightly magazine, akSara diipam (the Light of Literacy) with contributions from the neo-literates and the volunteers. Important for subsequent events, however, is a story about what happened at
Dubagunta, included as the third chapter in the primer. The author of the story told me that the idea behind it was to introduce one narrative from ‘real life’, that is, what had actually happened in one village in Nellore district during the alphabetization programme. They wanted both to show what literacy could do and to encourage the reader to follow the initiative.

**When Women Unite**

This is not just a story; it has really happened. It is about what we women were able to achieve at our night school.

Our village is Dubagunta. It is in Kaligiri Mandal. We are a hard-working people. We produce gold from mud, but what is the use? All our labour is wasted on arrack and toddy. Our menfolk not only spend money on these things, but also sell anything they have – pulses, chillies, rice, butter, and ghee – for this purpose. Locking our houses does not help as men open the doors with duplicate keys.

Those who drink arrack do not keep quiet; they use foul language. They raise their voices, brawl and beat the children. They make our lives miserable. What can we women do?

Meanwhile, the night schools were opened. There was training of volunteers in the village. They read ‘the Story of Sitamma’ in the primer. They studied ‘Who is Responsible for this Death’ in the guides. This was so much like what was happening in our village. Literacy centres came up and we womenfolk united. Everyday we discussed the arrack menace — in the fields and at the community wells.

One day, we asked the village president (sarpanche) and the village elders to remove the arrack and toddy shops. They agreed, but were unable to do anything.

Next day, some one hundred of us gathered together. We went to the outskirts of the village and stopped a toddy-cart. ‘You cannot come into the village’, we told the carter. ‘Throw away all the toddy.’ Each of us offered him a rupee to do so. The carter was astounded. From that day on, no toddy came to our village.

Then a jeep with arrack packs arrived. We surrounded it and demanded that it returned without unloading the goods.

The police came after two days. ‘Those who bid at auctions have the right to sell arrack’, they said. ‘We don’t care. We will go to the collector; we won’t keep quiet if it is sold here’, we said. The arrack contractor got cold feet. He made many plans, but nothing came of them. Then he gave up.

By these events we got so much strength. All this could happen only thanks to literacy. We studied well. This year, no one has come to our village to bid at arrack auctions.

Why can’t you do this? Think about it!

---

17 As the conflict within the JVV intensified following the withdrawal of prohibition in 1997, the non-party faction has presented an alternative view of the identity of the author of the chapter ‘If Women Unite’. In their opinion Ramana Reddy from UTF (United Teachers’ Federation) in Atmakur was the original writer and not Bala Subramaniam as had previously been claimed. Whereas the former had left the Academic Committee soon after the literacy campaign was started, Bala Subramaniam remained active throughout the literacy drive.
In order to address the issue why the protests gained strength one year after the incident at Dubagunta, one needs to focus on the differences between the two stories in the literacy primers. In the second one the women have taken the decision among themselves instead of listening to those who are educated and there is a direct call to the reader to follow their example. In addition, the explanation could be sought outside the books in terms of the importance of literacy for the rise of social movements, as has been demonstrated by Tarrow (1994:53) in the case of Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Given that a person could read about a great event on the same day as thousands of others he/she did not know, they all became part of the same invisible community of readers at the same time as the popular press took on interest in rebellions all over the world (loc.cit.). In 1990s Andhra Pradesh, literacy would eventually unite the pupils of the classes, but at this stage of the movement the conditions for an invisible community rested more in the pre-existing networks between volunteers, which facilitated the spread of the protest as they all discussed the latest events at the lessons. Dr Sudhakar Reddy recollected how the alphabetization programme led to the mobilization against liquor, ‘There were about 30,000 to 40,000 literacy centres in the entire district. The whole district was involved in discussing the same thing at almost the same time. Naturally it took the form of a movement.’

The Anti-Arrack Movement

In April 1992, one year after the incidents at Dubagunta, villagers destroyed the arrack shop in Ayyawaripalle followed by the spread of the temperance agitation from this place to other parts of the district. One of the literacy volunteers in the village narrated the local episodes:

---

18 The question remains of how to deal with whether the ‘Story of Sitamma’ actually influenced the women in Dubagunta to stand up to the liquor contractors or not. Bala Subramaniam from the JVV argued that it was impossible for the learners to have reached that story in their studies when the protests broke out. According to him the literacy volunteers took up the account for discussion before they had got as far as this in their classes. When I talked to women in Dubagunta they all were very vague when referring to the story of the primers. Some of them even brought up Indian mythology by maintaining that the Sita of the narrative was the wife of the god Rama.

19 Many people from the JVV felt that the literacy programme failed as repercussions against the anti-arrack activists hit the programme. With the spread of the protests, the state government withdrew the literacy books that had been praised at central level, on the grounds that only study material printed by the State Resource Centre should be allowed. Moreover, people who were ‘on duty’ had to return to their ordinary jobs. On the other hand, the literacy campaign drew the JVV into the temperance struggle, which changed the association from being a science group with a few intellectuals into being a mass organization consisting of teachers and village young people.

20 In this example I have retained the proper name of the village since it would misrepresent the movement to hide the identity of such an important locality. Furthermore, it is impossible to use a pseudonym, as Ayyawaripalle was the second place that took part in the mobilization. Nonetheless, I have used fictitious names for the people involved in the village struggle.
On 27 April (1992) the pupils at the third centre started to read the lesson ‘If Women Unite’, which described what had happened in Dubagunta. We had already dealt in our puppet shows with the problems caused by arrack. The story in the literacy primer evoked the lives of many people in this village. Venkata Adivamma, Pullamma, Hanumayamma and other women of this place had suffered a lot. There were quarrels every day in their families. They usually survived only by taking refuge in neighbouring houses. Daily for two to three hours they had to put up with this situation. There was not enough food for their children. So, we considered doing the same in this place as the people in Dubagunta had done earlier. The members of the three centres discussed this issue. We, the teachers, supported and guided them. Finally, they attacked the arrack shop in our colony (the settlement of Scheduled Castes on the outskirts of the village) but from the beginning they wanted to end the liquor trade in the whole village.

We felt very happy when we managed to stop the arrack business from New Year onwards. Dubagunta has become famous because they started the movement, while the role of Ayyawari palle has been neglected. Still, we have mobilized to make our village famous. When the movement started in Dubagunta nobody knew about it and their struggle did not expand within their own mandal. On the other hand, the events at Ayyawari palle were unique since they contributed to the spread of the movement. This is a fact. Can anybody tell us the opposite? If they planted the seed, we poured the water and made it grow into a plant. Mr Illaiah (literacy volunteer), Ayyawari palle

The quotation above illustrates the value of being the origin of the protests in the discussion carried on by participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement. Indian social movements have often been closely associated conceptually with their supposed starting points, such as Naxalbari for the Naxalite Movement and Reni for the Chipko Movement — the village where women hugged the trees for the first time. In Andhra Pradesh villagers often argued that they had started the temperance struggle before people mobilized in Dubagunta, as the birthplace of the movement had become loaded with prestige and fame in which everyone wanted to have a share.

Many of the participants in the agitation against arrack were poor, rural women, mainly from Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. The movement has been described as spontaneous, which may be true in so far as there was initially no coordination of activities when people mobilized in separate

---

21 The low ritual status of Scheduled Castes in South India is manifested physically by the fact that they reside in separate settlements on the outskirts of the villages. Although these groups traditionally were not truly part of the villages, they were simultaneously integrated into the interdependent relations of castes (Fuller 1992:139).

22 With the fame came economic benefits. For example, Dubagunta and Ayyawari palle were both rewarded with a television set by the District Collector. In the latter village the donation resulted in a long drawn-out conflict between two factions, due to the fact that the TV had been placed in the home of a literacy volunteer instead of at the panchayat building.
places under the slogan ‘we don’t want arrack in our village’ (*maa uuriki saaraa waddu*). Sometimes the women acted violently by setting fire to the arrack shops and beating the contractors with brooms and leather sandals. The latter are associated with dirt and pollution leading to its being very humiliating for the victims when these items are used as weapons (see Chapter 4).

Middle-class and urban people also quickly took an interest in the upsurge of protest activities in the rural areas. On 15 August 1992 the Anti-Arrack Solidarity Committee (*Saara Vyathireka Sangheebhava Samithi*) was formed at district level, with the lawyer Ananta Ramaiah as president, its aim being to express solidarity with the movement and to provide legal aid when necessary. A few days later, on 23 August, the Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee (*Saara Vyathireka Samanwaya Samithi*) was formed, consisting of 30 voluntary organizations that supported the struggle, including ‘M-L groups’, i.e. those sympathizing with the Naxalite Movement (CPI-ML). Dr Vijaya Kumar from the JVV (People’s Science Forum) was elected convenor of the committee.

This means that the members of the JVV came to play a leading role in organizing protests against arrack in Nellore District. The turning point was a district conference of the organization held at the town of Udayagiri in the western part of the district, at which 2,000 women from different villages unexpectedly turned up to demand that the JVV side with them in their struggle against arrack.23 In fact, representatives of the organisation found that this meeting contributed to their becoming directly involved in the movement instead of merely supporting it.

The growth of activism at this time was palpable in protest endeavours on a larger scale: sitdown-strikes in public places (*dharnas*), demonstrations, public meetings, collections of signatures from villagers, etc. As the slogan of the movement was no longer ‘we don’t want arrack in our village’ but instead ‘we don’t want arrack in other villages’ (*mii uuriki saaraa waddu*), a village protest had turned into a translocal movement. There are estimations that within three months the agitation had spread to 50 villages in the district and after another two months 600 villages were involved in the struggle (Room et al 2002:214). After some time a gap developed within the coordination committee between the ‘ML-groups’ and the rest on whether to cooperate with the state or to use more violent methods.

The two factions also had divergent views regarding the origin of the agitation. According to the ‘ML-groups’ the protests against arrack did not start in Dubagunta but were initiated in Telangana by the Naxalites (cf. Chenchaiah 1992). Other members recounted how the villagers of Tegacherla in Nellore district had mobilized against liquor with the support

---

23 Afterwards the JVV arranged a meeting for its members at which they decided that those who were ready to face the problems would join the agitation against arrack.
of a Naxalite group, before the women of Dubagunta had driven the liquor contractors out of their village. Clearly, this is another example of the way people selectively traced the origin of the temperance agitation to certain places at the expense of others. It seems, however, that over time Dubagunta became established as the source of the movement, even when taking account of the Naxalite faction. When I interviewed activists with Naxalite sympathies in 1998, they all (in contrast to earlier interviews) suggested Dubagunta and Nellore district as the origin of the movement. Bala Gopal from the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), who even earlier had hesitated to attribute the start of the present temperance crusade to the Naxalites of Telangana (see Bala Gopal 1992:2459-60), expressed his ideas in the following way:

Although the Naxalite groups have claimed in some of their publications that they were the ones to show the way, I don’t think there was any link with them at all. Subsequently we all went to Nellore to talk to the women of Dubagunta and other villages. Obviously they had not even heard of the Naxalites. Nellore is very far from this place. It is almost close to Madras. Thus there is no link at all between the Naxalite Anti-Arrack Movement of Telangana and the protests against liquor in Nellore district.

On 11 September 1992 a demonstration and a public meeting against the auctioning of arrack (saaraa weelampaaTalu) were held in Nellore town at which 50,000 people turned up.

We didn’t anticipate so many people at the September 11th rally. We expected around 15,000, like that. It was a massive rally. I think it was the biggest one ever, as far as Nellore is concerned. The participation of women was so significant, and when the men refused to drive the tractors to take the women to Nellore they themselves came forward as drivers. There were all possible kinds of transport — lorries, bullock carts, buses, and trains — and people were also walking from nearby villages. Women and men poured in from early morning onwards on 11 September to attend the rally that started in the afternoon. Dr Vijaya Kumar, the Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee

The Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee organized a peaceful march in the town, while two ‘ML-groups’ — Rythu Kuli Sangam (Agricultural Workers’ Committee) and PDSU (Progressive Democratic Students’ Union) — began an attack on the auction grounds at the A.C. Subba Reddy Stadium itself, supported by the Progressive Organization of Women-Stree Vimukthi. Both groups succeeded in their intentions as the sales of arrack were postponed to the next day because of the protests. That day, however, the coordination

24 At this time some people had started to talk about the movement in terms of failure; with the disappearance of the positive undertones, it might not have been so significant to be associated with the origin of the movement.
committee also participated in the storming of the stadium. Mr E.V.S. Naidu, a man from the board, described how the activists attacked the barricades on this day:

I saw pregnant women when we opened the barricades on 12 September. Behind each barrier there were 600 police officers. At the forefront, before the rally, were Dr Vijaya Kumar and myself. Although we did not see anything we broke through and entered the grounds. Ahead of us ran old and pregnant women together with the constables who threatened us but did not go any further. Instead of using violence they ran in advance across the five barricades. I witnessed women whose saris were blowing off and they were running in their underwear.

The weak response to the protests from the district administration, and above all from the Collector, K. Raju, partially explains the growth of temperance activism in the district, in view of the fact that the Collector had been an enthusiastic supporter of the literacy campaign and subsequently ignored the demand of the liquor traders that he should intervene against the demonstrators. However, afterwards K. Raju was transferred and replaced by Sambasiva Rao, then the Sub-Collector of the district. In Chapter six I shall investigate more closely the role of the district administration in the movement.

While the temperance activities spread to other parts of Andhra Pradesh, a networking body was formed at Hyderabad, the Women’s United Forum for the Prohibition of Arrack\(^{25}\) (Saara Nischeda Aikya Mahila Vedika) on 28 September 1992, with representatives from the women’s wings of the opposition parties as well as from autonomous organizations.\(^{26}\) Although the JVV had been active in the protests in Nellore district the association did not become a member of the state federation that was dominated numerically by groups from the state capital.\(^{27}\)

\(^{25}\) A month later, on 12 October, various intellectuals had established a solidarity committee in Hyderabad, the Anti-Arrack Women’s Movement Solidarity Committee, with Mr Kaloji Narayana Rao, Mr B. Tarakam, Ms V. Olga and Ms K. Lalitha as convenors. The body issued various statements, including the condemnation of the government’s practice of earning money though revenue from liquor that would lead to the ruin of the economy and the end of social harmony in many poor families. Moreover, some of its members travelled to the villages with the aim of expressing its support by studying and spreading knowledge about the movement (see, for example, John, M et al. 1993; Olga, V., Kannabiran, K. & V. Kannabiran 1994; Ilaiyah 1992).

\(^{26}\) The party-affiliated women’s associations consisted of, for example, Telugu Mahila Desam Bhagyam (of the Telugu Desam Party), Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham (Andhra Pradesh Women’s Society of the Communist Party of India - Marxist), and Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samakhya (Andhra Pradesh Women’s Federation of the Communist Party of India). In addition, POW (Progressive Organization of Women) — a women’s group on the extreme left with links to CPI (ML) — as well as autonomous women’s organizations were included in the body.

\(^{27}\) In fact, the state-level body lacked a continuous structure, and for a while there existed two networking coalitions: i.e. the committee referred to above and the Women’s United Forum
In Nellore attacks on the stadium continued until midnight on 30 September when the government was forced to put an end to the auctions for an indefinite period. Instead, arrack was sold directly by the state, sometimes in secret through police officers and excise officials. This was a critical moment in the history of the movement, as government officials and the armed gangs (gundas) of the contractors started to use violence against the participants. Concurrently local politicians entered the struggle more openly, and in October 1992 the All-Party Committee (Akhila Paksha Committee), consisting of all the political parties except the ruling Congress, was formed in Nellore. The committee cooperated with the non-political body referred to above, but also organized certain activities independently, for example, a demonstration march (padayatra) covering 120 kilometres. Conversely, relations between the local Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPM) and the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) became tense following the demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya by Hindu fundamentalists on 6 December 1992. This dramatic event had been followed by a local incident at the village of Narukur (in the coastal area) in which a man associated with the BJP killed Mr Vedicherla Narayna from the CPM during protests outside an arrack shop. As the conflict escalated, the BJP left the political coordinating committee.

With the purpose of uniting the villagers in the district against repression from the police and armed gangs, the Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee in Nellore organized a demonstration march (padayatra) covering hundreds of kilometres between 2 and 19 December. Many people from voluntary organizations have emphasized the uniqueness of the march, their feelings of togetherness during the hardships of the journey and the enthusiastic response of villagers (see Chapter 7). The walk had already started when Hindu fundamentalist groups destroyed the Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya, resulting in violent confrontations between Muslims and Hindus all over India including the old city of Hyderabad. Nevertheless, in Nellore women from these groups joined hands as they welcomed people from the padayatra troupes into their villages. Finally on 15 April 1993 the government gave in to the pressures of the campaign by prohibiting the sale and consumption of arrack in the district. The temperance agitation continued, however, in other parts of Andhra Pradesh with the consequence that a ban on arrack was established throughout the state from 1 October 1993.

At this time, some women from the village of Leguntapadu on the coast (Kovur mandal) started ‘Thrift and Credit Groups’ under the guidance of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). It was thought that a lot of savings would be available within the families after the disappearance of arrack. The success of this model in Leguntapadu contributed to the

for Total Prohibition (Sampoorna Madhya Nischeda Mahila Aikya Vedika) consisting of various voluntary organizations and individuals, with Malladi Subbamma as president.
formation of similar groups in other parts of the district, and in consequence a Thrift and Credit Programme, Podupu Lakshmi (the Savings of Lakshmi), was initiated and implemented by the DRDA with the help of local teachers, voluntary organizations and Village Administrative Officers. Each member saved one rupee per day in the common fund for a period of three years to begin with, and the group members could take out loans after one year. In addition, the Podupu Lakshmi scheme functioned as a forum for contacts between different women. The achievement of the programme inspired comparable saving groups to be started in many other parts of Andhra Pradesh.

Even if arrack was prohibited, other forms of liquor were still available. Significantly, the government introduced ‘Cheap Liquor’, consisting of intoxicating beverages produced from distilled but not properly purified spirit and sold at much lower prices than other Indian-Made Foreign Liquor. According to many activists, ‘Cheap Liquor’ was nothing but ‘coloured arrack’.

The movement for prohibition continued, but now turned against Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) as the number of outlets had increased all over the state including Nellore. Since this campaign was more urban and organized in character, fewer people participated during this phase compared with the earlier anti-arrack protests. Indian-Made Foreign Liquor was more a problem for urban middle-class women, who were thought unlikely to leave their houses to walk out in the street en masse. In Nellore district, agitation against shops selling spirits began in the eastern part of Nellore town under the leadership of Seturami Reddy, and spread to the entire area in January 1994.

The months of December 1994 and January 1995 were characterized by the election campaign for the State Legislative Assembly in which the alcohol question played a major role. In fact, all parties had total prohibition on their agendas quoting the ideas of Gandhi and his demand for a ban on hard drinks. Conversely, it was the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) under the leadership of Rama Rao that had campaigned for a liquor prohibition already at an earlier stage. On 12 December 1994 it was declared that the Congress Party had lost power in the state and that the TDP had won the elections. After assuming the presidency the party introduced a total prohibition on 16 January 1995. Interestingly enough, toddy had been excluded from the ban, due to the fact that it was not assumed to be an alcoholic drink and that many

---

28 Lakshmi is the Goddess of Fortune and the wife of Vishnu in his diverse incarnations. Regardless of her total faithfulness, most noticeably revealed in her incarnation as Sita (the wife of Rama), she is also portrayed as the ‘fickle goddess’, since the wheel of fortune is always shifting. The deity is normally characterized as an attractive golden woman, generally sitting or standing on a lotus, her symbol. Despite the fact that she actually has four arms, as the model of feminine beauty she is frequently portrayed with only two.
poor toddy tappers depended entirely on the manufacture and sale of toddy for their livelihood.\textsuperscript{29}

Tappers from Tamil Nadu, belonging to the Nadar caste, migrated into Nellore as profits in the business increased after the prohibition. In contrast to the Goudas, who specialized in palmyra tapping, the Nadars knew the art of drawing sap from the coconut trees, which could be used throughout the year and not only in the summer season (which is the case with the palmyra palm). They often diluted the beverage with water and then mixed it with different chemicals to make the drink intoxicating and at the same time cheap to produce. In contrast to middle-class members of the coordination committee, rural women in the coastal area demanded that toddy too should be prohibited. Although various protests were organized in the villages, there were never any attempts to coordinate activities against toddy at the district level, due to the stand of the middle-class activists. Noteworthy is the struggle by villagers from Sri Ranga Rajupuram, who hugged the toddy trees in a manner similar to that used by the Chipko Movement but in this case to prevent the tapping and sale of toddy.

Following total prohibition, the Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee in Nellore district changed its name to the Anti-Liquor Coordination Committee (Madya Vyathireka Samanwaya Samithi) at the same time as it extended its membership from 30 to 50 together with an increase in the percentage of women.\textsuperscript{30} The enlargement of the committee was an attempt to control the growing smuggling of inebriants within the urban areas. Moreover, Mr Rama Gopal from the All India Lawyers Union replaced Dr Vijaya Kumar as a convenor of the committee after the latter had decided to return to his ordinary work as a doctor. Despite these changes, the JVV still held a leading position within the body. In the aftermath of the alcohol proscription, the temperance movement became organizationally very weak and more urban in its character as many rural people had now calmed down and were leaving the responsibility to the state.

After Chandra Babu Naidu replaced Rama Rao as Chief Minister rumours grew that the prohibition would be lifted in view of the financial crises of the state (see Chapter 6). In Nellore district the women once again left their villages to participate in meetings and demonstrations organized by the Anti-Liquor Coordination Committee. Due to the extensive protests all over the state, the Chief Minister was forced to announce that the ban would be

\textsuperscript{29} There were a lot of other exceptions — for instance, the issuing of permits to foreigners, Non-Resident Indians, those who had medical certificates and the Armed Forces. As the exemption policy encountered a lot of criticism from the public, Chandra Babu Naidu withdrew the licences for people with medical certificates soon after he assumed office as Chief Minister.

\textsuperscript{30} The members of the committee consisted of representatives from various voluntary organizations and NGOs but also a few eminent persons who were not associated with any group.
continued, while the price of subsidized rice was raised from 2 rupees per kilo to 3.50 rupees.

At state level a new federation, the State-Level Anti-Liquor Coordination Committee (Rashtrasthayi Madya Vyathireka Samanwaya Samithi), was formed in 1996, consisting not only of women’s groups but also including voluntary associations and NGOs — exemplified by the JVV, AWARE (Action for Welfare and Awakening in Rural Environment) and Andhra Pradesh Dalit Maha Sabha (Andhra Pradesh Dalit Great Assembly) — and trade unions, as well as public personalities like Surya Deva Raja Lakshmi and Vaavilala Gopala Krishnaiah, two veteran Gandhians who had participated in the Independence Struggle. In general, however, a weakening of the movement was visible in the state, with infrequent protest endeavours and the spread of apathy among participants. The liquor interests were simultaneously able to unite against the prohibition. One year later, the state government once again took up the issue of partial withdrawal of the ban, by focusing more on the growing smuggling activities than on the loss of revenue.

In consequence, the sale of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor was permitted on 26 March 1997. Representatives of women’s and voluntary organizations challenged the government’s decision in the High Court but to no avail. The state authorities of Andhra Pradesh were determined not to yield to the protests, which were also becoming much weaker. On 15 April there was a demonstration at Nellore town against the auctioning of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor, which was about to take place at Kasturba Kalakshetram, a building in the southern part of the town. It is noteworthy that the establishment chose to sell arrack licences at the place where the office of the JVV was located — the voluntary organization that had earlier taken such a lead in the mobilisation against arrack in the district. The rally took a different turn from the auctioning five years earlier when the people had stormed the barricades; now there was a confrontation with the police at the Gandhi statue leading to arrests and beatings with sticks (lathi charges) by the constables. Dr Satyam, who participated in the protest endeavours, described the encounter in the following words:

It was an openly declared rally and we wanted to stage a peaceful protest. We sought to obstruct the licence auctions without brutality. It was not at all a violent march. When we came to the site they just started to hit people and to arrest them. The police took over the entire Nellore town. They marched and beat up several individuals. People were molested everywhere within an area of ten square kilometres — women and men, who as employees and passersby, were not involved in the agitation. I think that more than a thousand persons were maltreated in this situation. The entire auction area was fenced with barbed wire.
It is not surprising that the confrontation took place at Nellore if one considers the strength of the movement and its non-violent tradition in the district. Venkatamma, one of the activists, thought that the rough treatment by the authorities was a way of curbing the anti-liquor struggle, as Nellore had become its best known symbol. After the bad experience of violence in some places including Nellore, the dream of a liquor-free society temporarily vanished and the movement declined. When I visited Andhra Pradesh for a second time in 1998, there was a mood of disappointment among many of the urban activists who had participated in the movement and of anger among the women in the villages. A growing number of middle-class campaigners felt that the political parties had betrayed them, especially the Left that had supported the protests against arrack when they started in 1993.

In this section of the chapter I have attempted to portray the emergence and spread of the Anti-Arrack Movement not only over geographical borders but also across social boundaries, as the protest field was extended first to include rural women and men, then urban activists and finally the power nucleus of the state. What I found most striking about Nellore, compared with other areas of Andhra Pradesh, was that the movement never completely died out in the rural places where it started. In the next section I turn to one of these villages, Chintala Palem in the western part of the district.

Chintala Palem

Chintala Palem is located in Variguntapadu mandal, about 150 km or four hours’ journey by bus from the district capital of Nellore. The place is beautifully situated in the foothills of the Eastern Ghats, surrounded by craggy mountains with thorny bushes and cactuses dominating the vegetation. A distinctive trait of the village is its many winding streets that are covered with muddy water during the rainy season. Facing the street, small stone-built houses and huts are placed close to each other with the effect that several families share the same yard. The heart of Chintala Palem is made up of a large open space next to the platform (arugu) constructed over the remains of one of the arrack shops and with on one side a dargaa, a small Muslim temple in honour of Maulau, one of their saints. Near the dargaa is the panchayat headquarters, which did not have a door or a proper floor when I stayed in the village in 1995-6. Close to the centre is a temple dedicated to Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, where villagers used to gather to sing religious hymns (bhajana) in the evening, which, thanks to the loudspeakers, were heard all over the neighbourhood. In addition, there is another temple, situated outside the village on the mango fields, and dedicated to Ganesh, the elephant god. On the fringes of the settlement there

31 There were violent confrontations between demonstrators and the police in other parts of the state as well, above all at Ongole and Anantapur.
is a well for drinking water. Around six o’clock in the morning the women and children bustle up the street from the well with brass vessels on their shoulders or heads.

The fields of the village are situated further away, irrigated by bore wells or from a small dam that often dries up. People spend many hours at these sites cultivating different dry crops such as millets as well as vegetables — for example, chillies, tomatoes, and sweet potatoes. Most women are engaged in the fields in Chintala Palem and nearby places or collecting daily grass for the buffaloes on the outskirts of the village. Frequently they go to the mountains to collect firewood. A common sight in the afternoon is the women in their colourful saris, half running to balance 2 meters-long bundles of firewood on their heads.

 Outsiders consider the village a poor and ‘backward’ place, as it has not benefited from the large barrage nearby from which some more distant localities have succeeded in obtaining irrigation water. Ghousia, a Muslim woman from Chintala Palem, argued that its residents either could not afford or did not know how to bribe or pressurize the state officials, as they were all poor and ignorant.

According to a census carried out by me in 1996, Chintala Palem had 916 inhabitants, 405 men and 511 women, divided into Forward Classes (11), Backward Classes (461) — above all Balija Naidu (Kapus) and Gollas — Muslims (209), Scheduled Castes (234) (mainly Malas but also some Madigas), and Scheduled Tribes (1). The Muslims — primarily Shaiks but also a few Syed families — were occupied in the manufacture and trading of brass vessels to northern India. During recent years the prosperity of the Balija Naidu people had grown, since, in addition to their main occupation as farmers they increasingly engaged in business enterprises. Some Gollas (or Yadavas) — herdsmen and traders of butter and milk — continued with their traditional occupation, whereas others earned their livelihood as day labourers. Furthermore, there were a small number of washermen (Chakalis) and carpenters (Acharis or Kamsalis) in the village as well as some Vaishyas owning small provision shops.

Caste considerations were very important in village life, since the division of occupations reflected a clustering of certain castes in particular jobs. In addition, the government’s reservation policy assured jobs in the public sector to Dalits under the label of Scheduled Castes. Finally, social catego-

32 I have included in the census all the men who migrated seasonally to find work in other places, but not those men who worked more permanently in some cities and had left their families in the village for good. Moreover, I have not included those entire families who had abandoned Chintala Palem for employment in towns such as Chennai and Bangalore or women who had settled in other places after marriage. This might clarify the discrepancy between the numbers of men and women in my census as the latter have remained in the village to a larger extent. It could also be an explanation of the differences between my sample and that of the headmaster, according to which there were 835 men and 836 women in the village in 1995.
ries were ranked in a hierarchy according to criteria such as the *varna* scheme, diet, religion and political categorizations related to the reservation strategy (cf. Harriss-White 2003:177-82). The first time I met Peddaiah from the Malas, a Dalit community (conventionally sweepers and gravediggers), he asked me if I wanted to know anything about untouchability, as he considered the discrimination he felt as a member of this group to be more important than the alcohol problem. The two Dalit units lived in separate settlements (so-called colonies) outside the main village and did not use the same temples as the other villagers, not even for the village goddess Poleramma, something that finally resulted in the construction of a separate building to the god Venkateswarlu\(^{33}\) in the Mala settlement. In general, the Dalits were not allowed to sit and eat together with other castes. When I invited them to sit down with us, my host informed some of her friends that my assistant and I did not know that they were Malas. The local hierarchy between castes was also seen in the fact that Malas could not collect drinking water from the well outside the village. As explained by Peddaiah, it would only cause quarrels and they wanted to avoid what had taken place at Chundur in Coastal Andhra, when 21 persons from the Mala community were killed by the upper castes.

Nonetheless, the life of the Malas had improved a great deal recently and they could now drink tea together with the rest of the villagers at the bus stop. According to Peddaiah, some Malas had achieved a better position by participating in the literacy campaign and joining the JVV. The villagers now treated these Malas with respect since they were acquainted with important state officials. Moreover, a few Malas had obtained good jobs through the system of caste reservation of educational places and jobs in the public sector, for example as a ‘dealer’ in the ration shop or as Village Administrative Officer (VAO).

In contrast, Madigas (sweepers and drummers), the remaining Dalit group in the locality, were still very poor and despised by the other villagers. Traditionally their position had been lower than that of the Malas, since they worked with leather, which is considered strongly polluting. Some of them were still busy in their long-established occupation, making sandals of animal skin, often that of the cow. Their houses were isolated, having no proper access roads — only small paths bordered by thorn bushes — and in contrast to the rest of the village they did not have electricity. None of them had benefited from the reservation system. Thus very few children went to school and the unemployment rate was high, with the result that several families eked out a living by begging for food among the higher castes in the village.

---

\(^{33}\) The famous temple at Tirumala, situated on the mountain outside of Tirupati, is dedicated to the god Venkateswarlu, an incarnation of Vishnu. In fact, the word *wenkaTa* has the meaning of ‘the hill for the worship of Vishnu’.
The rest of the population, mostly belonging to Backward Classes and Muslims, lived scattered but within the main village, even if different groups were concentrated in separate areas. Although there was a colony for the Backward Classes, many of its houses were empty since their inhabitants preferred to live in the main village. The only residents left in the colony settlement were poor families from the Balija Naidu, Golla and Chakali castes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forward Classes:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaishyas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward Classes:</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balijas</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gollas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakali</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achari</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims:</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaik</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Castes:</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malas</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madigas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribes:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamula</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Inhabitants in Chintala Palem (1996). Source: Census of the village in the beginning of 1996.

The distribution of land holdings in the village was uneven, characterized by the fact that the majority of the residents owned only a few acres or nothing at all. In contrast, a man from one of the major cities in Coastal Andhra owned 150 acres of land — where mango, lime, guava and other fruits were grown — while a relative of his possessed 70 acres, cultivated with teak. Some villagers supervised these plantations, since the owners did not live in
Chintala Palem. Due to the scarce facilities for irrigation, many of the local men had left the village in the hope of earning money in other parts of India. Male migration had become an important aspect of economic and social relations among Muslims and Balijas, as some of these men spent several years at a time out of the village. Whereas Muslims went to Gujarat, Nagpur and the Arab Emirates, the Balijas went to Karnataka and Chennai (Madras) to sell pearls and clothes. Women and children from these groups remained in the village, surviving on their own labour and on the remittances sent back by the men. In contrast, entire Dalit families had migrated to the city of Bangalore in Karnataka, and a few members of the other castes had moved to destinations all over India. Apart from long-distance male migration, women moved after marriage to nearby villages.

Except among the Vaishyas, a large proportion of the women and men of the locality worked as daily labourers (kuuli) whenever employment was available. Consequently, only few women stayed at home as housewives, and sporadically the men had to rely on the income of their wives. After the construction of the nearby dam, the facilities for finding work in neighbouring places had improved considerably. As in other parts of India (cf. Athreya, Djurfeld & Lindberg 1990:139-46; Kapadia 1996:218-32; Alm 2006), the women had become organized in contract labour groups and in that way managed to increase their wages. In 1997 there were five such groups among women in the village headed by a recruiter, who informed and assembled the members of her team whenever work was available and afterwards distributed the earnings among the associates.

According to a census carried out by the headmaster of the school, the literacy rate was 52% (36% among the women and 64% among the men) in 1994/95, i.e. after the alphabetization campaign, although in my experience the effective figure was much lower than that. School attendance was also low, though there were big differences according to age, gender and caste.\footnote{For example, 81% of the men aged over 50 had not attended school at all, while as many as 95% of the women did not have any education. The numbers were even higher when considering the Golla, Achari, and Chakali communities, although the fact that there were only a few members of these castes in the village might make the figures a little deceptive.}

What was striking was the high educational level among the Malas, which was the only community, apart from the Balijas, whose members had normally attended education above intermediate level.\footnote{There were two schools in the locality with classes up to the fifth standard, one in the centre and one in the harijanwaada, a separate area where the Malas live. Despite there being positions for five teachers only three were employed. Moreover, the drop-out of girls from school was high since they had to look after their younger brothers and sisters. When I asked the parents why they did not send their daughters to the classes, they answered that the girls would finally be married into another household. Apart from primary education, two villagers were involved in non-formal teaching for the drop-out children, mainly girls.}

Chintala Palem exemplifies how the consequences of reservations of seats for women in the local government sometimes differ from what was
intended. In 1995 the village council (panchayat) was elected; it consisted of eight members, two of whom were women and one of them the village president (sarpanche). Belonging to the Vaishya caste (one of the higher groups in the traditional varna scheme), neither the president nor her husband came from the village. Before being elected, she had never been active in the politics of the locality or in any state programme at local level. The female leader of the Anti-Arrack Movement never tried to get appointed to the village council, maybe because she supported the Congress Party. Neither was Venkateswarlu from the Mala community elected, although he had worked in many local welfare schemes and was entitled to a reserved Scheduled Castes seat. One of his friends said sarcastically that the president had got elected according to the ‘higher castes women’s reservation’ referring to the fact that this village was reserved for a woman. His comment illustrates the conflict between the reservation for women and that for Scheduled Castes, as few women from the latter group have benefited from the reservation policy (cf. John & Lalitha 1995:172). The family of the village president belonged to the Telugu Desam Party. She had decided to offer herself as a candidate in the local elections after some pressure from the members of the council. On the other hand, she also had some ideas of her own about why she should involve herself in politics, pointing to the fact that she thought she could learn something from this task, could ‘develop’ as a human being by participating in different meetings. However, she felt very insecure in her new position and refused to talk in public, arguing that she knew nothing about politics. When she went to meetings outside the locality her husband accompanied her. He often took over the gatherings while she remained silent, causing the villagers to refer ironically to this woman as ‘the sarpanche’s wife’.

Since the council was not very active and not involved in any rural projects the JVV became the main agency to mediate government schemes at the local level, probably part of the policy of the state to delegate its programmes to different NGOs and voluntary organizations. Around 100 people from the village were members of the association but only fifteen were active participants, all of them from the Mala community. Representatives from the district council of the JVV often visited Chintala Palem, as the group took part in a number of state activities in the village, such as the Health Programme (Arogya Deepam), Non-Formal Education For Drop-out Children (Bala Vedika), and the Podupu Lakshmi saving scheme.

Apart from the JVV there were two other organizations present in the village — a farmers’ association with the aim of helping the members to

---

36 In 1996 she was not yet officially recognized as sarpanche, but was waiting for the decision of the court.
37 In 1998 Bala Vedika was abandoned, as this programme had not achieved any noticeable results.
obtain credit, and the Ambedkar Youth Club with Malas and Madigas as members. While the latter organization was confined to Chintala Palem, the farmers’ body was spread out in twelve different places.

The larger society made its presence known not only through different programmes carried out at local level but also by the way differences relating to national or regional polities were reflected in relations between the villagers. Political competition cut across all the caste groups and sometimes even across kinship ties, which meant that Chintala Palem was divided between, on the one side, the Congress Party and on the other the Telugu Desam Party allied with the village’s communist minority. After the central elections at the turn of the year 1994/95, a lot of quarrels had broken out between the distinct groups, partly because the voters whose parties lost were disappointed about the loss of expected benefits. 38

Chintala Palem used to have the nickname of ‘the drunkards’ village’. It was generally believed in the surrounding area that before the protests against arrack broke out, ‘no one dared to enter it’. We therefore need to broaden our understanding of how the place got its present reputation as a village of prohibitionists, by returning to the time of the literacy campaign.

Local Anti-Liquor Protests

As in the rest of Nellore district, the alphabetization drive started in Chintala Palem on 16 April 1991. One is still reminded of that period by slogans on the walls propagandizing the advantage of reading and writing skills in words such as: ‘The way of illiteracy is like thorns. The way of literacy is like jasmine’. While the state authorities had selected the headmaster of the village school as coordinator of the programme, there were twenty teaching volunteers, each with ten members in his/her class, apart from Venkateswarlu who taught sixteen candidates at his centre. He remembered the hardship of walking to the classes in the evening, as the course was held on the outskirts of the village and the area was full of snakes. About eleven members in his group passed the literacy test, while many others stopped coming to the lessons after they had learnt how to sign their names. Peddaiah, another literacy volunteer, had more problems with his classes, as the pupils came from the Madiga settlement that, according to him, was very

38 One Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Congress Party had previously contributed to the construction of 60 houses on the edge of the village that became a Backward Classes hamlet. Only a few of these buildings were ever used, whereas the majority of the intended beneficiaries lived in the centre of Chintala Palem. Many people from the Congress faction hoped that they would get irrigation facilities for the village if the party won the central elections. When the Telugu Desam Party instead got the majority of the votes from Andhra Pradesh, rumours circulated in the village that the Muslims who had voted for this party would benefit by the construction of a separate settlement, leading to many quarrels and fights between the two factions.
‘backward’ in terms of education and only three people passed the final examination.

When the alphabetization programme started in Chintala Palem the rate of illiteracy was high. In 1996 many elderly women still could not read or write, for example, Guravaramma, the anti-arrack leader of the village, who was very tired when she attended the classes after a full day’s work. Ghousia, another woman from the locality who took part in the protests against arrack, was not even present at the lessons, arguing that she could neither learn at her age nor benefit from reading skills on the labour market as her role in society would soon be over. Obviously, literacy was not the main impetus behind the agitation against arrack in Chintala Palem.

In 1992 the post-literacy project, the second phase of the alphabetization campaign, started in the region. People in Chintala Palem also heard of how women in Dubagunta had driven the arrack traders out of the village, even though some, as in many other localities, claimed alternative starting-places. During April two men from the village died, indirectly because of excessive consumption of alcohol. One was a man from the Madiga caste, a notorious drinker, who went while he was intoxicated to drink some water from a well and drowned. The other man came from the main village but worked in the state of Karnataka where he lived with his mistress, every year visiting his parents, wife and children for around ten days that often ended in quarrels due to his extra-marital affair. On this occasion he was already inebriated when the argument started, and afterwards he went to the fields and drank pesticide. At the classes the women talked about these incidents; they all believed that liquor was the main reason behind the tragedies. As women continued to discuss the matter whenever they met — at the well, in the fields and at other places — they finally decided to unite to free the village from arrack. Ghousia, referred to above, explained the background to the first protests against intoxicating beverages in the village in an interview carried out by me and my assistant, Anuradha:  

Every day men and women went to work early in the morning. When they returned in the evening, the men went straight to the arrack shop and they spent all their earnings at this place. Some of them even borrowed money from others and no one went home with any money in their pockets. That was the situation.

Dubagunta… No, no. Women first revolted in Bukkapuram and they stopped the arrack at that place. All of us got to know about the incident after reading about it in the newspapers. As Bukkapuram inspired us, we decided that all the women should unite to fight against liquor in our village. Some people in the locality assured us their support. The next day we got to know that a jeep loaded with arrack packets was approaching our place.

These people regularly brought arrack packs to be traded in Chintala Palem. On that day we collected kerosene from all the houses in cans and rushed to the culvert on the outskirts of the village where people wash their
clothes. Four of us stopped the jeep on the road itself, warning them that we would burn the vehicle if they did not return with the spirits. They became frightened and murmured that they had got a licence to sell liquor but we answered them by saying: ‘We don’t care about your licence. Throw it away on the mound, as we don’t need these beverages. Arrack should be banned in Andhra or at least in Nellore district. Although we are very poor our men spend all their earnings on it. Like gambling no money is sufficient to satisfy their cravings for it. There is no food in our houses and when drunk the men quarrel with the women and beat them. Their children are crying. The families of drunkards have neither food nor clothes, not even oil for their hair. They are almost starving. This situation has turned into a hell for us. To buy arrack our men are stealing rice, ghee, flour and everything from our homes. With empty stomachs we are unable to go to work. They are even pawning the axes, the tools that are required for our daily work. How can we go to work without these implements? Suppose you gave my husband ten rupees after he had pawned the axe for seven. Would you return it to me without getting the money? He is earning twenty rupees and is spending ten on drinking. The remaining amount will not be sufficient to meet our basic needs. If we, the women, could also earn some cash then our needs would be fulfilled. How can we go to work when there is no axe and no tool in our house? Who would give them to us? This has become our sad lot.’

We explained these matters to the traders and told them to go back, since we didn’t want arrack any more in the village. As they did not take note on our words and fetched some police officers, we threw away the liquor packets from the jeep by force.

**Anuradha:** Who was the first person to throw the packs?

**Ghousia:** It may have been anyone. When there is a crowd any participant follows the others. All of us reacted at once by throwing away the packs, resulting in the traders requesting us to stop with their palms pressed together (a sign of respect). When they finally came back they had changed their timings and started to enter the village irregularly and at odd times. Once we were able to catch the jeep.

**Anuradha:** Where?

**Ghousia:** In this neighbourhood, on the way to Venkateswarlu’s house (outside the village close to the Mala colony). As before we protested and they ran away.

After that incident some organizations arranged several meetings in our village. At these gatherings they gave us confidence not to allow the traders to sell arrack in Chintala Palem. They said that if we stopped spirits in our place they would do the same in the towns. They would not be able to come to the village every day to support us, and the dealers would change the timings when arrack was transported into the locality. Therefore they encouraged us to organize among ourselves against the local sellers.

At that time we became united with Nellore Guravaramma and Kantamma as our main leaders who directed us in the struggle. When they confronted the liquor agents they were strong, as we were behind them. The sellers could not do us any harm, since we were more numerous.

As one of the owners (a woman) secretly started to sell arrack again two weeks after the shops had been closed, many villagers led by the women went to destroy the building where the sales were taking place. After
discussing among themselves and with the village elders, they decided to build a platform (arugu) over the remains of the shop, each family contributing with two rupees whereas the men built the podium. Venkateswarlu explained to me that they tried to turn the arrack shop symbolically into a tomb for arrack (saaraa samaadhi). In Andhra Pradesh there are stories and sayings, according to which evil things can be permanently destroyed if they are covered with earth. When Eenadu, the local newspaper, reported this incident, Chintala Palem became famous as the village of those who buried the arrack. The construction of the platform shows that concrete places not only provide the settings for social struggle, but also through their endeavours activists are contributing to making places by providing meanings to particular sites (cf. Routledge 1993:36). Today the platform is an important gathering place in Chintala Palem. Official meetings have replaced the earlier drinking sessions at the same site, illustrating its significance as public space, strategically located at the heart of the village.

At the time of the Udayagiri meeting, arrack was already prohibited in Chintala Palem. Its inhabitants had signed a petition stating that they did not want liquor, and handed it over to the Collector who approved of their request. It was announced in the village that anyone who drank, sold or produced spirits would have to pay a fine of up to 500 rupees, depending on his/her financial position, and be beaten with leather sandals five times.

Clearly, this locality was not isolated from the activities of the larger movement as one of the four teams from the padayatra (demonstration march) passed the settlement, though its members did not stay overnight. While the villagers received the group on the outskirts of Chintala Palem with due signs of respect such as putting red marks (tilakam) on the foreheads of the marchers and strewing their path with flowers, food was arranged in the house of Guravaramma, the anti-arrack leader of the place. During the procession into the village people shouted slogans like ‘We don’t want arrack’ and ‘The arrack robbing us of the tali (wedding chains of women) should vanish’.

In September 1992 thirty men and forty women from Chintala Palem travelled by one hired lorry to participate in the meeting in Nellore of which they had been informed by the JVV. They marched in the forefront of the procession with their banner, since the village had become well known due to their temperance struggle and the construction of the symbolic grave. After the arrack prohibition the place was involved in an oath programme that was carried out in the district on 2 October, i.e. Gandhi’s birthday that was celebrated as an anti-arrack day, culminating in all the ‘drunkards’ from the village going to the platform and pledging that they would not drink from that day forth.

The period after the arrack prohibition was characterized by some, albeit limited, smuggling of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor into Chintala Palem, mainly from Prakasam and Cuddapah districts, at the same time as many
men travelled to nearby towns to drink.\textsuperscript{39} While the consumption of hard drinks was minimal immediately after the arrack ban, the government soon decided to sanction a small shop selling IMFL in each panchayat. The local activists were alerted and submitted a petition to the district authorities demanding the withdrawal of the permit.

One of the most important and long-lasting effects of the Anti-Arrack Movement was the Podupu Lakshmi savings programme. At its initiation in the village in November 1993, five saving groups were formed and after six months one more was added. Three years later, two of them had stopped functioning. The difficulties in implementing the scheme in Chintala Palem had a cluster of interrelated causes. It was teachers and administrative staff at mandal level — including some people from the JVV — who selected the Podupu Lakshmi leaders. No meetings were held in the village and few of the superiors attended those gatherings that were arranged at mandal level. None of the groups had utilized the possibility of taking loans from their common fund since the members suspected that these credits would never be repaid. The complications were also bound up with local politics, discernible in that Chintala Palem was politically divided. Finally, since many of the group leaders were old, illiterate and not very active, the headmaster was in charge of their account books. One of the Podupu Lakshmi batches led by Guravaramma, the spokesperson of the villagers in the Anti-Arrack Movement, discovered that the headmaster had squandered their money (later returning it) leading to the closure of the group. Parvathamma, who was married to this man, had a lot of problems with her Podupu Lakshmi unit when the associates accused her of not informing them about all the possibilities of taking loans. She explained that it was difficult for her to know about these opportunities, as her husband did not allow her to attend the Podupu Lakshmi meetings.

In the course of time, people started to buy illicit distilled liquor from a number of neighbouring villages through agents who entered Chintala Palem at the time of festivals to collect their orders. As in many other places, toddy sellers have occasionally been attacked, although nobody in Chintala Palem had a licence to manufacture and sell the beverage from the palmyra or wild date trees growing around the village. However, a poor man from the Mala community imported small quantities (ten to fifteen litres a day) from nearby places, which he sold in secret during the summer season. Opposition from local women finally forced him to stop his business. Venkateswarlu, an activist in the Anti-Arrack Movement, had a lot of problems since the toddy distributor was one of his closest friends. According to Venkateswarlu, some of his political opponents in the village had persuaded his companion to start

\textsuperscript{39} Although village committees had been established all over the district after the arrack prohibition, most were inactive including that of Chintala Palem which consisted of the sarpanche, the VAO, and some local activists.
the toddy business. Afterwards they accused Venkateswarlu, the former anti-arrack campaigner, of being behind the sale.

Smuggling into the village increased after rumours about a partial withdrawal of the prohibition started to circulate with Chandra Babu Naidu taking over as Chief Minister of the state. In 1997, when the licensed sale and consumption of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor was once again allowed, some villagers began to trade alcohol illegally, for instance, Muttamma, a woman who had previously sold liquor, and Umamma, one of the anti-arrack leaders. Both of them were businesswomen in charge of small provision shops trying to eke out their income by selling spirits. ‘What can we do?’ one old anti-arrack activist asked me when we discussed the movement, ‘The local leaders sell liquor and those who arranged meetings don’t react anymore’.

Although Chintala Palem had traditionally been a village divided by caste ties and political loyalties, people had overcome these divisions for a short period and united. When smuggling activities expanded in the area, Ghousia lamented their loss of togetherness by maintaining that anything could be achieved as long as there was unity:

> When the movement started in the village I joined it even though my husband was not habituated to arrack. Many women took part in the struggle just like me. Our village became famous as we stopped all the bad habits. In those days everyone participated except women with young children and infants. Today there is no such spirit. Women refrain from protesting on the pretext that their husband does not drink or that they must go for grass. If we had continued the struggle for another year with the same courage, it would have become successful. At that time there was no liquor in our village. Actually there was no liquor in the entire Nellore district.

Maybe the villagers have found that unity once again, as Muttamma and Umamma were finally forced to stop their business, resulting in inebriants no longer being sold in Chintala Palem when this book (2006) was written. There is little doubt that the movement has had some lasting effects in some of the villages involved, even if it has faded away at district level.

**The Senses of Nellore**

Up to now I have focused on the mobilization against arrack in Nellore district and the way the villagers in Chintala Palem appropriated and maybe translated the available protest traditions connecting the village with the outside world. In the remaining few pages of the chapter I shall point to the nature of Nellore as an ‘imagined place’ among participants in the movement. Fernandez (1988) shows how localities have often been used as metonyms for larger regions, such as Andalusia for the whole of Spain. Certain traits or customs associated with a particular place are then selected
as representing that locality as well as the larger unit (ibid:32). In the activists’ narratives the struggle against arrack in Nellore became a metonym for the larger translocal movement, by emphasizing the rural character of the protest and the large-scale participation of underprivileged women in it.

In their stories participants interwove ideas about the temperance struggle with notions about the place of Nellore embodied by its women. People referred to the poor but strong rural women of Simhampuri (‘the land of lions’ or ‘the land of fighters’), an expression used for Nellore at the time before the British, signifying its resistance to foreign conquest. Furthermore, in Andhra Pradesh women from Nellore are referred to as neeraajanam with the meaning of either ‘intelligent and skilful woman’ or ‘deceitful woman’. At a session about the Andhra Pradesh Anti-Liquor Movement, held at the World Social Forum in Mumbai in 2004 (see Chapter 8), a contributor from this part of India expressed disappointment with her experiences in Dubagunta. According to the general view, women from Nellore had been ‘more dominant’ compared with those from other districts, but when considering the local struggle against liquor women were neither active as temperance campaigners nor interested in discussing the matter. The reputed assertiveness of Nellore women and their current weak response in the protests against inebriants appeared to her to be a contradiction.40

The centrality of Nellore in the struggle against arrack was also brought up in many songs that evoked local events and the strength of Nellore women. By the early 1990s the following lyric, written by Nalli Dharma Rao from Vijayanagaram district, was a kind of ‘anthem’ of the movement, as it was performed in villages and towns to motivate people to join the protest.

If Gandhiji\(^41\) had been alive he would have come to their homes
and he would have been proud,
Oh Nellore thou art an inspiration and thy fame is now far and wide.
The sins of the Government and the liquor drums have perished from mankind.
The whole village rose like a wave of the sea
and it gave a taste of the people’s movement.

Have you seen the eyes of the oppressed mother?
She came forward and shouted that the fight should never stop.
So many years of pain ended without a murder!
So much pain had burnt her tender heart!

\(^{40}\) A man from Nellore responded at the session by saying that Dubagunta had never been a strong site in the movement, even though it was in the limelight at an early stage. According to him, women were still struggling in many other villages of the district, whereas the people in Dubagunta had stopped already before the prohibition was introduced.

\(^{41}\) Ji comes from Hindi and is an honorific suffix added to names of persons and professions. There is an equivalent suffix in Telugu, gaaru, though people in Andhra Pradesh used the Hindi word when speaking about Gandhi.
Like a venomous snake, liquor has made the lives of the poor bitter. There are tears everywhere, broken families and hard labouring people. There are many stories about the battering of wives and children. There are stories of how adulterated liquor has claimed lives.

Who has heard these stories? Did the government take the lead? It never made a sign of worth but you came in thousands, and stopped the auctions.

You have turned into a legend, The people are proud of what you sustained Nothing can be compared with the pride of Nellore! The state is filled with a warm light from the conquest of ideals and progress.

In the lyric the mobilization in Nellore is traced to a Gandhian non-violent tradition of moral reform in society, pointing to the importance of reminiscence and the historicity of the struggle (see Chapter 7). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, certain factions within the movement questioned the significance of Nellore and introduced alternative ‘imagined places’ as they traced the temperance agitation to the armed struggle in Telangana. In their turn, the ‘adversaries’ of the movement tried to launch counter images of Nellore, for instance, by referring to the bootlegging activities by former temperance campaigners in Dubagunta and to how people in the district drank as never before. Broadly speaking, Nellore had become a ‘contested space’ (cf. Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003:18) in relation to how the struggle against liquor has focused on that particular district.

♣

The inferences of this chapter are threefold. First, I have attempted to link the emergence of the movement to certain events in Nellore district at the beginning of the 1990s. What I found especially significant were the existence of a temperance tradition in the area, according to which drinking was regarded as a problem, the way in which the literacy campaign provided a space for people to come together — thereby turning individual sufferings into shared predicaments — and the role of the district administration, along with the voluntary organization of the JVV, in supporting and even taking part in the agitation. Second, I have explored the events in Chintala Palem with the aim of illustrating the local aspects of a translocal movement, in which activities not only addressed distant government agents but also adversaries who were local traders, neighbours and friends. Although the locality was a ‘drunkards’ village’ feared by people in the vicinity, residents of the place joined together and discussed alcohol abuse at the literacy
centres. However, the struggle in Chintala Palem was also inspired by broader social and spatial links, for instance, the bonds with middle-class activists from the surrounding urban localities who informed villagers about protest events in the district capital. One of the most remarkable qualities of Nellore was that the movement never completely petered out in the villages. A telling example is that people in Chintala Palem, despite their political and social divisions, managed to overcome them and drive out the liquor business from the village.

Third, my goal has been to convey an understanding of the importance of Nellore as a metonym and symbol of the movement, showing how the district became imagined as a place of dissent, especially in view of its ‘dominant’ women. Whether this image of Nellore women as particularly assertive is correct may be difficult to judge, but it is true that local participants drew upon pan-Indian ideas in which women were portrayed as powerful and fierce goddesses. In the next chapter, we shall take a close look at local notions on gender and intra-household relations in rural Andhra Pradesh that to a large extent are based on examples from Nellore district.
Intra-Household Relations and Discourses on Gender in Rural Andhra Pradesh

The possibility for different categories of women to participate in social movements varies, and so does their ability to be politically active. This chapter portrays practices and discourses on gender in the countryside of Andhra Pradesh, where the majority of participants in the movement consisted of poor women belonging to Dalits, Muslims and the official category of ‘Backward Classes’. What are the roles of men and women within the household? How are intra-household relations in Andhra Pradesh connected with patterns of drinking? What limitations existed concerning women’s ability to mobilize and be politically active? Are there any differences between women with reference to their activism, and by which criteria can we understand such differences? My intention in raising the above questions is to call attention to why rural women regarded male drinking as a problem. In contrast, the next chapter will highlight the role of the middle class as organizers and interpreters of the movement.

Let me start with a definition of the concept ‘household’, as the term, in contrast to ‘family’, implies a broader meaning than that of kinship alone. Always a construct contingent on local, cultural, economic and historic conditions, the idea of household has connotations of other types of social relations, i.e. those of production, provision, and consumption, while it is constituted where, in a particular context, these patterns are joined spatially by the fact of co-residence (cf. Gray & Mearns 1989:22). In general, the households of Andhra Pradesh have a very fluid composition, as people who are based in the rural areas often work temporarily in the cities and leave their children in the villages. Moreover, pregnant women go for several months to their native place and stay there until the birth, and children live with relatives in the towns during their studies. Finally, fathers take their sons with them in the course of their seasonal work migrations to other parts of India. In general, then, households are constantly changing their members.

With this setting in mind as an organizational framework for women’s lives, I shall start the chapter by describing married existence in Andhra Pradesh in terms of the relations between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law and between husband and wife. In this context I shall discuss conflicts
between spouses regarding the duties of breadwinning and managing the family economy. From this issue, the chapter moves on to ideas on motherhood and how women mobilized for the survival of their children and families. The discursive framework within which the movement’s participants acted included various ideas and practices related to purity/impurity, auspiciousness and female power (stirī sakti). In addition, beliefs about self-control and responsibility in household affairs are essential when we consider the scope women had in their temperance agitation, since they were in some situations acting as superior to men, whereas at other times they used their ritual subordination and low status as strategic resources. Drinking patterns followed gender: women often refrained from drinking while men did not. My focus will thus be on how women presented men’s drinking as a problem by bringing up health issues and domestic violence. I shall then look at how the constraints on their involvement in the campaign related to local notions of a separation between a public and a domestic sphere, expressed in terms of a distinction between ‘the house’ and ‘the street’. The following section deals with how differences of age and marital status affected rural women’s level of mobilization, while the last part relates the temperance struggle to women’s techniques of resistance in the villages.

I shall illustrate my discussion with examples from both the Muslim and Hindu communities, as Muslims in India are to a large extent influenced by the dominant Hindu culture. In Andhra Pradesh there were many similarities between the lives of women from these two groups and their members participated equally in the temperance struggle.

Marriage

Paramount among women’s motives for mobilizing against arrack were their family duties and the importance of marriage in Andhra Pradesh. While marriage is a sacred Hindu institution it is more of a contract for the Muslims, but nevertheless, a wedding is an important event for both religious groups and parents often control their children’s matchmaking alongside the wedding preparations without encountering any particularly strong opposition from the young people. Cross-kin unions have been very common in South India including Andhra Pradesh, i.e. marriages take place with mother’s brother’s son, father’s sister’s son or classificatory cross-kin.

---

1 Fatima, an elderly Muslim woman in Chintala Palem, once said ‘My father is a Muslim and my mother a Sudra’, explaining the fact that the Muslim invaders often married Hindu women and thus there were many similarities between these groups.
2 In Andhra Pradesh people divide what is called ‘cousin’ in the English language into two categories, marriageable and non-marriageable kin. Consequently, a person uses the same term for a male parallel cousin and his/her own brother, while he/she refers to a female parallel cousin and sister with the same word.
3 Kapadia (1995:47), writing on Tamil Nadu, demonstrates that women from Non-Brahmin castes married their matrilateral cross-cousins (mother’s brother’s son), while Brahmin
with a preference for unions with mother’s younger brother (cf. Kapadia 1995:16,48). Today the number of alliances with non-relatives has increased considerably. While divorce and remarriage are uncommon among the higher castes, they occur among traditionally lower castes such as the Malas and the Madigas. Many men just leave their wives in order to live with other women instead of arranging a formal divorce. Although some abandoned women in Chintala Palem had returned to their parents along with their children, none remarried and they remained at their native place.

Unions that are not arranged by the parents were generally referred to as love-marriages (preema peLLi). The most common Telugu word employed to denote what we in English describe as ‘romantic love’ or passion between a man and a woman is preema, while the notion waatsalyam is used when people refer to the quality of kin relations (such as parental love) and sneeham when considering friendship. Since love-marriages were thought of as ‘immoral’, it was believed that they usually end in divorce because they lack support from the families of the spouses. People often expressed their distaste for young people who ignored their family and caste duties by marrying ‘outside their group’. Arranged weddings are long-drawn-out procedures, which assert the collective character of the family and the larger kinship groups, while love-marriages are usually civil ceremonies involving only the couple and performed without a priest.

It is unusual to give a dowry in love-marriages, since the two partners are acting against the wishes of the larger family. Dowry marriages have otherwise become more prevalent, with the contemporary abandonment of the traditional cross-kin unions. Kapadia (1995) notes that the cessation of such kin marriages in favour of alliances with strangers with good education and salaried jobs is a sign of women’s deteriorating social position. In the past both husband and wife worked within the agricultural field, whereas today the man is the sole provider for the family and the woman stays at home as the housewife. Parents need a lot of money to give their daughters to such husbands and often have to look outside the kin group to find appropriate grooms. Even previously, according to Kapadia, people did not bother much about their marriage responsibilities to kin, but today this attitude can be justified by the urban morality that to rise in the class hierarchy by means of marrying up is more vital than kin obligations.

women espoused their patrilateral cross-cousins (father’s sister’s son). In contrast, in Chintala Palem women from all castes married both their patrilateral and matrilateral cross-cousins. Säävälä (2001:107) has made a similar observation from a village in Coastal Andhra, indicating that patrilateral unions are somewhat more widespread among the castes in Andhra Pradesh when compared with Tamil Nadu.

Kapadia (1995:41) has drawn attention to the existence of remarriage after divorce among women from lower castes in Tamil Nadu. Conversely, in Chintala Palem women from groups lower in the social hierarchy, above all Malas and Madigas, did not remarry after their husbands had left them.
Nevertheless, many people in the rural areas still live in cross-kin alliances. In Chintala Palem a large part of the existing marriages were with real or classificatory cross-kin. Säävälä (2001:108) has made a similar observation about a village of Coastal Andhra in which half of the families consisted of partners who were related to each other.

Today dowry-based matchmakings have also multiplied among rural families from the lower castes and classes (Seymour 1998:222; Kapadia 1995:14-5). The household of my hostess was not very rich but its members wanted to rise in the social hierarchy by marrying up. One of her sons went to Saudi Arabia to earn money for the marriage of his sister, the second daughter in the household, but his project ended in disaster and he had to come home after being robbed of all his earnings. Without sufficient money for a large dowry the family had many difficulties in finding a suitable husband, though, finally, they traced a candidate and were able to start to prepare for the wedding. However, in order to be able to go through with the nuptial preparations my hostess still needed to borrow a considerable amount from her eldest brother while, in return, she considered giving her second son in marriage to her brother’s daughter and accepting a rather low dowry because of her existing debt to him. Consequently, today cross-kin unions do not necessarily exclude a dowry, even though they might involve less expense compared with alliances with strangers.

Married Life

In Andhra Pradesh a woman must go through many changes after her marriage due to the practice of virilocality through which the wife often becomes a member of the extended family of her husband (cf. Seymour 1998:99; Kakar 1978:126; Fruzzetti 1982:98). Marriage thus brings her not only the problems of being a wife and a mother but also those of being a daughter-in-law.

---

5 Even if cross-cousin unions are decreasing in importance they are still regarded as morally superior to alliances with non-kin. Ammayyi kaapuram (‘The Home of the Husband’), a Telugu film, illustrated how an innocent girl from quite a wealthy family married a stranger instead of her cross-cousin. Even though a dowry was not required, the husband’s kin started to demand more and more gifts from the father of the bride, culminating in the spouse and the in-laws harassing the woman, and finally trying to end her life by pouring kerosene over her. However, she managed to escape and as a revenging goddess with her hair hanging loose she set the house of her partner on fire. At the end of the film, the woman marched towards the sunrise together with her cross-cousin who never had forgotten her.

6 This means that Muslims in South India quite often marry their cross-cousins even if the ideal among this group — both in the north and the south — consists of marriages with parallel cousins. Mines (1985:308) explains the difference between reality and ideal in Tamil Nadu as being an effect of the tendency to regard marriages with parallel cousins as incestuous, according to the dominant Dravidian culture (cf. Säävälä 2001:132).
The Daughter-in-Law

In South India a woman does not automatically leave her native village after marriage even if she moves to her husband’s household. Around half of all the married women in Chintala Palem came from the same locality as their husbands. When the woman comes from another village her transition to the new home is gradual, which means that she is likely to visit her natal place a number of times during the first year, and in the case of pregnancy she will go back to her ‘mother’s house’ (kannawaarillu) for several months and stay there until the delivery of the child.

In the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh many people from Non-Brahmin castes do not live in extended households. While about half of the domestic units in Chintala Palem were nuclear or simple, few extended households were of the ideal joint family type, consisting of an elderly couple, the spouses of the second generation and their offspring. Instead they often comprised a widowed mother who after her husband’s death had moved to live with a married son or daughter or a widow residing with her brother’s family.

Among wealthier people and higher castes, it is common for a young couple to live with the husband’s parents for some years before establishing a separate household. As the daughter-in-law has the lowest status in her new family, she will work hard under the supervision of her partner’s mother. Even if the young couple have set up an autonomous home, the parents of the husband usually live nearby. Säävälä (2001:106) shows how a young woman’s first years of married life tend to be characterized by the authority of the mother-in-law.

These differences in social position notwithstanding, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law had to face similar problems if the man was frequently intoxicated. In many parts of Andhra Pradesh drinking in itself has been seen as a reprehensible act and the alcoholic has a low position in society, while the reputation of a person as a ‘drunkard’ spills over to the name of the family at large. Despite the tensions inherent in the relationship, the mother and the wife of a problem drinker often find common cause in complaining about violent behaviour alongside the economic irresponsibility of the latter towards the rest of the family. Above all, these women are united in defence of the offspring of the domestic unit. Parvatamma from Akkadapalle, a village in the western part of Nellore district, was married to Narayana who

---

7 In the village there existed differences according to caste when considering the geographical distribution of alliances. A large percentage of women from the Balijas and Malas came from the same village as their husbands, whereas the Muslim wives came from nearby places. Mines (1985:309) has observed a similar pattern when comparing Muslims and Hindus in Tamil Nadu.

8 In contrast to North India, it was possible for a widow to live with a daughter in Chintala Palem, although the majority of widows in the village were either settled in simple households or in extended ones with their married sons.
often attacked the children when he was under the influence of liquor. For instance, he once tried to hang his son from a rope in the ceiling and on another occasion he threw the daughter up in the air and failed to catch her when she came down. Both times other members of the family intervened and rescued the children, in the latter case the mother together with the mother-in-law. Such bad experiences motivated the latter to start protesting against arrack in the village, and her daughter-in-law, Parvatamma, soon joined her. Although many women were inspired by their mothers-in-law to take part in the mobilization against arrack, younger married women with small children were less active as they were busy with their household responsibilities.

Married Life and Breadwinning

Conjugal relations were, of course, affected by the husband’s heavy alcohol use, above all when considering the responsibility for providing for the family among the poor. In this part of India the wife should respect rather than love her husband in the Western sense. Writing on Orissa bordering on Andhra Pradesh in the northeast, Seymour (1998:272f) suggests that ‘the rule of authority’ between husband and wife predominates over that of ‘love’, since the husband is often considerably older and better educated than the woman. A perfect wife, patiwrata, is a woman who has dedicated herself to safeguarding her spouse by assisting him, observing religious ceremonies for his well-being, and continuing to be faithful to him (Harlan 1992, in Chen 2000:19). For Hindu men and women, the behaviour of Sita, the wife of the god Rama, signifies the ideal woman and wife,9 chaste, pure, and faithful even when her husband rejected and banished her.10 According to this ideal girls are trained to be docile, selfless, humble, caring, diligent and emotionally attached to their homes (Seymour 1998:55). As the gender separation within the domestic sphere works to keep husbands and wives apart for a great deal of the sunlight hours, most men spend their days away from home and a young couple meet each other only when the wife gives the husband food and during the night.

In contrast to what is the case in the cities, women are not confined to a role as ‘housewives’ in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. They participate in agricultural labour alongside their men, working in their own fields or as day labourers in the fields of others. Mallu Swaraiyam, an activist from

9 Women often sang songs about Sita when they were working in the fields. As Muslims participated in chanting these songs in Telugu when they worked together with Hindu women, they knew the lyrics by heart and were familiar with the life of Sita.
10 According to the legend, Sita demonstrated that she had retained her honour when she was taken prisoner by Ravana in Lanka, by surviving unhurt after being burnt at the stake. Nonetheless, Rama was persuaded by people around him to doubt her purity and banished Sita, although she was pregnant, to the abode of the hermit Valmiki. After giving birth to two sons she continued in this place for around fifteen years.
AIDWA (All-India Democratic Women’s Association) residing in Hyderabad, describes the division of labour between husband and wife:

If the peasant goes early in the morning to draw water by mooTa (drawing water from the well with the help of a draught animal), his wife has to bring food to the fields. Clearly, the Indian wife is not only for sex. That is not the main purpose of matrimony. It may be the meaning of marriage in other places, but in Andhra Pradesh marital life includes raising dogs, cats and hens and looking after the plants in the backyard of the house. The wife must partake equally in this work with her husband. This is the main purpose of married existence. A farmer with agricultural land takes account of the health of the woman and her skills in domestic and agricultural work before he selects her for marriage. If her health deteriorates, the husband tries to get rid of her. Even today we have organized cells to assist the woman in such cases.

In Chintala Palem, the working day of women was very long as they played the role of wage earner besides doing all the household tasks. Quite the opposite of the men, who during the slack season often spent their time playing cards or drinking tea with their friends in front of the tea stall, women worked from early morning to late at night. They were already up before dawn, sweeping the earth yard in front of their home and, among the Hindu families, drawing muggus with chalks in beautiful designs in front of the entrance to their houses. Finishing this female task, they lit the fire (quite a time-consuming enterprise) as well as prepared breakfast and lunch. Older girls often assisted in taking care of their younger siblings and fetching water from the well. In the afternoon women spent several hours collecting grass for the animals or wood for fuel, as, due to an increasing drought in the area, they had to go further and further afield for these resources. In the evening they once again prepared food and then it was time to sleep, since people went to bed at nightfall.

As agricultural labourers women often had an income of their own. Although it was hard for them to find jobs that lasted the whole year round, it was even more difficult for men to get work within agriculture. Kapadia (1995:210) describes the present ‘feminization’ of agricultural labour in rural Tamil Nadu and explains it as a result of the mechanization of male tasks within this sector.11 Da Corta and Venkateshwrlu (1999:97) have made similar observations from Andhra Pradesh, arguing that women, in contrast to men, for the last 25 years have multiplied their number of annual work-days within agriculture (cf. Papola & Sharma 1999:9; Unni 1999:119).12

---

11 Banerjee (1999) demonstrates that the opening up of the Indian economy to global market forces in the 1990s through the launching of the New Economic Policies did not generate, as has often been claimed, growing work opportunities for women in export-oriented manufacturing industries but rather a feminization of the agricultural workforce.

12 In Andhra Pradesh women have formed the main part of the labour force concerned with the farming of paddy, sugarcane and cotton. An additional increase in the cultivation of these crops between 1981 and 1991 contributed to an almost 80% growth of workdays for women.
Rural men, particularly those with smallholdings, have been inclined to abandon cultivation, leaving women to tend the family patch (Banerjee 1999:312). With the entrance of women in the unorganized sector, however, female unemployment and underemployment become apparent (Harriss-White 2003:29). Women’s daily income is much lower than men’s, to some extent an outcome of their larger participation in ‘tied work’, while men’s interest in self-employment has increased (Da Corta and Venkateshwarlu 1999:110-11, cf. Harriss-White 2003:28). Contemporary ‘tied labour arrangements’ are characterized by the fact that agrarian entrepreneurs expand credit and/or hire out land to labourers provided that the latter promise to work for less pay compared with the rates in the competitive market. Moreover, tied labourers agree to work entirely for the employer/creditor for the period of the attachment and often carry out supplementary, unpaid labour.

Since the beginning of the 1980s men from Chintala Palem had migrated seasonally to other parts of India for trading purposes. While very few men (around 8%) had farming as their primary source of income, the women remained in the village, working on the few acres of land that they had available and at other times surviving on the wages they got as agricultural labourers in neighbouring villages. I did not come across tied labour in Chintala Palem, but many women participated as members of teams working on a contract basis in the vicinity (see Chapter 3). Moreover, the salaries of men were higher than those of women.

These changes in the labour market affected household relations between husband and wife, as men came to contribute more irregularly to the

(Banerjee 1999:311). However, in the 1990s there was a shift within agriculture in some areas of the state from the cultivation of rice and cereals to commercial crops and aquaculture aimed at global and internal markets. In 1994-98, when I carried out my study, aquaculture had increased in the coastal area of Nellore district and mango plantations had grown in the western locality, especially in the mandals of Kaligiri, Vinjamur, Jaladanki and Balayapalle, resulting in growing unemployment for men but, above all, for women, as the possibilities of finding work outside agriculture for the latter are limited. There are some indications that this trend has further intensified in the past decade.

13 Da Corta and Venkateshwarlu (1999:84f) note that male agricultural workers have been able to take advantage of those state policies that reduced employers’ domination over the workforce, making it possible for men to liberate themselves from long-established ‘permanent bonded labour relations’ and to start with small-scale commodity production as well as work outside agriculture.

14 Da Corta and Venkateshwarlu (1999:93) distinguish between ‘traditional permanent bonded labour’ (jeethagallu in Telugu) and ‘modern non-permanent tied labour’, in which the former is characterized by the fact that people worked every day for a predetermined period and for a set payment. These labour relations shared many traits with the old debt bondage: firstly, workingmen were engaged for a longer period, often several years; secondly, they were forced to perform their tasks by the customary power of Brahmins and Reddis who regularly used violence; thirdly, other members of the family could take over the repayment of the debt; and finally, the agreements were informal. In contrast, ‘modern non-permanent tied labour’ engagements are for shorter periods, are not so often established by violence or by customary power, and are more formally specified.
domestic economy. It has at times been assumed that women took such a large part in the Anti-Arrack Movement because their influence in household relations had increased with their share of employment (Da Corta and Venkateshwarlu 1999:77). However, women’s larger portion of agricultural work did not necessarily mean increasing authority vis-à-vis men in domestic decisions. Some studies have shown how the ‘feminization’ of agricultural labour has led to men’s withdrawal from their responsibilities to support the household in favour of an increase in personal consumption of tea, bidis (Indian cigarettes)\textsuperscript{15} or liquor, and entertainment such as cinemas or gambling (Da Corta & Venkateshwarlu 1999:107; Kapadia 1995:205-10; Ramamurthy 1991:17; Busby 2000:203).\textsuperscript{16} In the late 1990s the men in Chintala Palem often socialized in front of the tea stall, or withdrew to more remote areas of the village, where they played cards out of sight from the rest of the villagers. Before the prohibition they also gathered in front of the arrack shop. Personal consumption can be a way for a man to invest in social contacts and to increase his status in society but, on the other hand, such habits are often regarded as inimical to the interest of the larger family. Busby (2000:203), studying the Mukkuvar caste in Kerala, suggests that the men often felt squeezed between the need to give money to their wives and to spend it with friends. That the same kind of conflict was a source of strain within many households in Andhra Pradesh was evident from women’s complaints about how their husbands had sold the stock of, for example, millet flour, rice, butter or ghee from the family larder in order to finance their drinking. Sometimes the men took the saris that the women had left on the shelf in the bathroom and sold them as well or even traded the jewellery of the wife, including the tali — the gold necklace tied around the bride’s neck during the wedding ceremony, which in India has an almost religious significance. The following song, popular at the beginning of the Anti-Arrack Movement, expresses the economic hardship that women from the labouring classes faced:

\textsuperscript{15} Women have traditionally dominated the process whereby a special type of tobacco is manufactured and rolled into bidis.

\textsuperscript{16} According to a survey by Da Corta and Venkateshwarlu (1999:107f) male workers in Andhra Pradesh devoted 77\% of their wage earnings to family essentials in 1977 compared with 55\% in 1995. The authors suggest that men’s personal expenses had augmented since there had been a change in how they are paid, from payments twice a year in crops, which was the case under the customary bonded labour, to irregular and increasing daily wages in cash that was more readily spent on personal consumption including liquor. Furthermore, the mobility of workingmen in the public sphere was greater in the 1990s than before. While they no longer worked for their bosses in the evenings or slept on their terraces as they had done traditionally, they socialized in front of the arrack shop or tea stall, or met at political gatherings at which arrack was provided to get votes.
Wife:
Abbulu, I can’t live with you.
I have to face many problems.

Husband:
Subbulu, don’t leave me alone.
I can’t live without you.

Wife:
We have not had any peace
or happiness during our seven years of marriage.
You are spending all your money on arrack.
You are spending all my money on toddy.
I’m not asking you for fancy clothes and ornaments.
I’m only asking you to refrain from arrack and toddy!
We don’t have any other income.
Arrack and toddy will turn your heart to water.
The heart will melt into water.

Husband:
Subbulu, I’m tired after working on the fields of the landowners.
They give us a lot of work
and we have to labour hard both day and night.
I drink toddy to forget about the pains in my body.
Why are you quarrelling unnecessarily with me?
Subbulu, don’t scold me. I will stop taking toddy.
Believe me and don’t leave me alone!

Wife:
No, I can’t believe you!
I can’t afford to cook fish or ‘non-veg’ for you.
There is no money to buy medicine for our sick children.
I am going to my mother’s house.

The lyric exemplifies how closely the problem of drinking is connected with
the marital division of responsibility for the household economy. Even if
their husbands were not exactly ‘problem drinkers’, women often used
various methods to protest against what they saw as the unwillingness to
support the family, for example, refusing to cook or complaining to outsiders
about their situation (cf. Scott 1985, 1990). The story below, narrated by
Gouramma, a middle-aged woman from the coastal area of Nellore district,
was told as her husband sat beside her, not even trying to defend himself:

Gouramma: My birthplace is Chinna Somala. It’s very far from here. We
came from a poor family and we had to go to work from our early childhood.
I started in the fourth grade but I was not allowed to complete it. Instead I
went to work, as the members of the family needed my wages. Otherwise we
would not be able to get food.

Anuradha: How many children are you?
Gouramma: We are four sisters and three brothers. My father became ill and we therefore had to earn money to run the household. I was married when I was fifteen. From then on I had to occupy myself with family life — domestic troubles as well as problems with neighbours. All these matters exhausted me and there was no happiness. My responsibilities grew after the children were born. This is my situation. I don’t think others live like that.

Anuradha: Nonsense! Everybody has some difficulty or other.

Gouramma: Yes. They will have, but we keep it to ourselves. We are working in the party (CPM), but how should we lead a family life? My husband is not cooperating. After all, this is a family but he is not interested in discussing things to reach a mutual understanding. That is the situation among the poor.

Anuradha: Was your husband a relative before marriage?

Gouramma: No, no. It was a distant (duraam) alliance.17

Anuradha: Are the villages close to each other?

Gouramma: Yes. They (the parents) preferred the alliance on that basis. They were relatively better off then.

Anuradha: Did your parents pay a dowry?

Gouramma: Yes, there was a dowry. He was given 2,000 rupees and a wristwatch. As they wanted the wedding to be performed in our village, we paid 1,500 rupees and promised to settle the remaining 500 later on. However, they insisted on the whole sum and refused to get into the cart unless it was handed over. We therefore borrowed the amount and paid it and they came to the wedding. I was married 23 years ago, although we had no children for the first three or four years. One girl child was born but died soon afterwards, when she was about one year. This girl is the oldest one. These are my two boys.

Anuradha: Do you remember your wedding day?

Gouramma: Yes.

Anuradha: What happened?

Gouramma: (laughs) There’s nothing special about a wedding. I didn’t know anything about marriage. While the elders decided and planned the wedding I went to work. They insisted that girls should not be kept unmarried for a long time after they had reached maturity. I was married one and a half years after my first menstruation. Nowadays girls are not given away until they have reached eighteen. They are even insisting upon nineteen.

Anuradha: Did you stay in this place right after the wedding?

Gouramma: We stayed here but we had many difficulties. We didn’t even have a house for some time. My parents were not in a position to get me married, but this man was very keen about it and we married. My in-laws made me suffer even after our wedding though I resisted. I even denied him food.

Anuradha: Does he drink?

Gouramma: No, but there was another man who was a drunkard and he troubled us by coming for food when my husband was not there. Instead of eating he started to quarrel. This went on for some time. I took refuge in the neighbouring houses with my children as they were very young then.

Anuradha: Who was this man?

Gouramma: A relative of my husband.

17 In Andhra Pradesh people distinguish between whether you marry relatives, i.e. ‘close’ (daggira) or strangers, that is, ‘distant’ (duuram).
Anuradha: Did he quarrel because he was drunk?

Gouramma: No. He did it on purpose, but he could escape by blaming ar- rack. He came at odd hours, not bothering whether my husband was there or not. So I could not stay at home alone. I suffered like this. We lived in a cattle shed behind the house. As the parents of my husband liked their son, but were against his marrying into a relatively poor family, we had to face many difficulties. For some time we settled in the cattle shed, since it was vacant except for the cows that were tied there. We made a leaf partition and lived in that part. After a minor quarrel my husband and his parents demanded that I left their house.

On that day he came at about 6.00 p.m and told me to make myself ready to depart. I asked him why I should leave and where I should go, but he insisted that I must go away. As there were some vessels outside I wanted to bring them indoors. He told me that they were not of my concern and that I should start immediately. Why did this happen? Somebody had used bad words against my husband’s elder sister-in-law and when my brother was informed about this he compared her to Sita. ‘She is good and well mannered. Why should you start quarrels because of foolish words?’ This was my brother’s advice and he recommended my husband not to take it seriously. Nevertheless, my husband was not satisfied and he accused my brother of being indifferent. So he wanted to get rid of me.

Anuradha: Even if nothing had happened! He was just imagining things!

Gouramma: Yes! He wanted me to leave. Some people objected to the fact that he was forcing a woman to depart at such an odd hour, but he didn’t listen to them. He took me and left me at my parents’ house. I was then four months pregnant and it was considered inauspicious to travel in the fourth month. He didn’t care. He did not even come to my family’s house but he left me near some bushes and trees near the building. My husband returned to his own parents’ house after leaving me there. He wanted me to go to my parents’ home alone.

Anuradha: Weren’t there any buses?

Gouramma: No.

Anuradha: So you had to walk. Was it a long distance?

Gouramma: It was about a kilometre. Even if it was not very far, how could you expect a woman to go alone at night? I was very young then. My brother was feeding the oxen when I arrived and I leaned against a wall. He asked me what had happened but I could not answer. As he assumed something had taken place because of his conversation with them, he took a stick and tried to run after my husband. I grasped his hand very tightly and asked him not to go. ‘You should not go, even if my partner leaves me forever. We will decide what to do in the morning.’ My father was alive then and my maternal uncles were living in the neighbourhood. They all went to fetch my husband. When he saw our people he began to run. My family caught him and started to quarrel by asking him why he had abandoned me. ‘You should tell us what she has done and we will punish her if you can prove it. If you are leaving her, why do you bring her to us?’ My spouse did not say a word and he did not come back for seven months. Just after the birth of this girl he returned.

Anuradha: Did he drink?

Gouramma: No, never, but he is foolish and stubborn. He did not obey anybody. He said that he would marry somebody else. Even his parents wanted a divorce and proposed to give us half an acre of land for my mainte-
nance. They acted like this because he had married against their wishes and they wanted to get rid of me. Sita Rama Reddy was there at the time. As he was in our party he admonished my husband and told him that it was not right. He took our side and warned my husband not to go for a second marriage. I was sent back when this girl was three months old. My spouse does not have an income. We have two acres of land, but he does not pay proper attention to its cultivation. Instead he works within the party and he doesn’t care about the household. I therefore have to put up with it.

**Anuradha:** Is he active within the party?

**Gouramma:** Yes. He does not bother about the household. As the party work is his first preoccupation he is not worried about wife and children. I too like that kind of work. I also want to serve the masses. At the same time we must see to our own family.

Gouramma introduced this story in the course of talking about the evil of drinking among the poor, as an illustration of her own family life and the irresponsibility of her own husband. Most importantly, she wanted to argue that the family should come before other concerns, and that many men fail in this regard.

**Motherhood**

There is little doubt that motherhood stands for the completion of a woman in Andhra Pradesh. From the birth of her children she slowly changes her low status as daughter-in-law to become a respected mother and in the course of time herself a mother-in-law (cf. Seymour 1998:97,70; Kakar 1978:77-9). Given that childcare is part of women’s everyday chores, mothers and other females in the domestic unit carry on their daily work with infants on their hips. In households formed by a single nuclear family older sisters often look after their younger siblings. Seymour (1998:279) has drawn attention to the important role in India of multiple carers in the upbringing of the little ones, whereas Kakar (1978:79) demonstrates the strong tie between mother and child, at least in the first five years of the child’s life, showing that the birth of children gives the woman an opportunity to give and receive affection in a way denied between husband and wife. I too would argue that the mother has a very important emotional and ideological role in rural Andhra Pradesh, even if there are other carers in the household. In contrast to middle-class families in the urban areas, the woman usually sleeps in the company of her youngest child and not with her husband.

Nonetheless, there are situations where women do not put the well-being and care of their children before everything else, presented in stories about mothers committing suicide when they could not bear the harassment by husbands and in-laws, some also killing their offspring, others leaving them behind. Many of these cases were due to the consumption of liquor by the partner, contradicting the mothering situation described by Ruddick (1995), who focuses on tasks carried out in ideal circumstances — i.e. protection,
nurturing and training — and does not elaborate on economic and social conditions that might make the role difficult to fulfil.18

When village women entered the Anti-Arrack Movement, they brought up liquor as a family problem with potential dangers for their children, even if they never referred directly to their mobilization as a ‘mothers’ movement’ as women have done in Latin America (cf. Garcia-Gorena 1999; Marchand 1994). In contrast, the activists argued that their enrolment was done for the well-being of the whole family. The reason why they talked about themselves as participating in the movement not as ‘mothers’ but as representatives of their families might be because individuals in India are often thought of in a broader context. As we know from the work of Seymour (1998:279), dyadic relations within the family are subordinated in India to the larger collective unit.

Their silence on this issue should not make us disregard the possibility that the need to protect the offspring was frequently a motivating force behind the protests against arrack. Women often raised the issue of how the little ones had to go hungry or without medical care because of their father’s heavy drinking. During the Literacy Campaign in Nellore District, the Academic Committee, whose members belonged to the JVV, presented topics to be read and discussed at the classes. One of the chapters was called ‘Who is Responsible for this Death?’, which offered a short story that touched and inspired many women, as it formulated in words their own family experiences, especially the difficulties they faced in providing for their children:

It was midnight. The whole village was asleep. Loud shouts then came from Subbulu in the house of Rangadu. All the people came out when they heard her screaming and everyone wondered what had happened. One big (powerful) person said, ‘Subbulu lives with Rangadu. She is suffering a lot because he is addicted to alcohol’. One woman said, ‘This bloody idiot! He has given Subbulu a lot of trouble ever since he married her three years ago. Why did he marry her?’

Some women went inside the house to see what had happened. Subbulu kept her infant beside her and was crying loudly. She did not say a word to anybody. Her child was suffering from severe fever. What could the 25-year old Subbulu do? Her husband had not come back for three days.

18 Schepher-Hughes (1992:361-63) discusses different interpretations of mothering when comparing her material from the shantytown of the Alto do Cruzeiro, Brazil, with the theories of Ruddick. She maintains that mothering for Ruddick follows the metaphysical idea of ‘holding’, which starts with an attitude of ‘protectiveness’, whereas the mothers in the Alto do Cruzeiro were governed by the different and rather contradictory position of ‘letting go’, characterized by the quite rare loosening of negative maternal power, as in child violence, or, more commonly, a quiet and realistic acceptance of procedures that cannot simply be altered or defeated. So those babies who were thought of, for physical, psychological, and social reasons, as fighters and survivors were nurtured, while the other ones were neglected and permitted to die. From the last point we learn that mothering is guided by various ideas depending on the circumstances.
The women were convinced that the child would die if it was not taken to hospital. They all felt sorry for Subbulu. They told her that they would take it to a hospital the next day. Some young men went out searching for Rangadu.

Rangadu had a large income working as a contract labourer. He had studied up to fifth class and then started to earn a lot of money. He was influenced by some bad friends and began to drink night and day, forgetting his wife and child.

In the early morning Rangadu returned home. When he saw his child he was frightened and ran with it to the hospital. The doctor scolded him, explaining that the condition of the little one was very serious. The doctor examined the child. It was suffering from inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). He prescribed some medicines and asked Rangadu to get them.

Rangadu did not have a single paisa. He ran into the village asking his friends for money but they refused. He asked some big persons in the locality. All of them hated him since he was a drinker. It became difficult for Rangadu to get 100 rupees on that particular day. Finally he ran to the hospital with the required sum. By that time his child had passed away. It was dead. Subbulu was crying, holding it close to her.

Discourses on Gender

In their mobilization against arrack, women picked out arguments from various strands of gender discourse regulating and structuring the relations between husband and wife as well as other bonds within the household, for example, that between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or between mother and son. In the following pages I shall show that there are multiple models of gender in Andhra Pradesh, some of which present the woman as being more powerful than the man.

Purity and Impurity

In Andhra Pradesh conceptualizations of women’s impurity have emphasized aspects of the female body such as menstruation and childbirth. In her influential study, Douglas (1996:121) explores how social hierarchy is expressed by distinctions based on physical processes in which the human body tends to be used as a metaphor for the control imposed by civilisation and culture on nature, and thus for society. From this position she argues that substances coming from the orifices of the body, such as saliva, faeces and menstrual blood are considered dangerous, and that control of them conveys social value. Given that women cannot control their bodily fluids, they have often been regarded as closer to nature (cf. Ortner 1974; Ruddick 1995:197). Contemporary feminists have rejected the universal biology/society binary presented by Douglas, arguing that in all cultures there are dissimilar voices, fuzziness, and conflict rather than a constant, common and ‘bounded’ system (Lamb 2000:13; Gedalof 1999:12-13). However, even if contested, there is a
tradition in India in which women are constructed as impure during menstruation.

Such ideas about impurity (aśūchi) certainly persist in present-day Andhra Pradesh, even if there are variations between individuals and social categories in how strictly they are put into practice. Food restrictions were the most striking expression of such notions that I came across.¹⁹ As menstruating women were regarded as untouchables they abstained from going into the temple or the puuja room (the room where the gods are worshipped) during their monthly periods (cf. Seymour 1998:88, Fruzzetti 1982:97; Kapadia: 1995:93).²⁰ More traditional women, especially from Brahmin castes, did not even enter the kitchen, cook or touch elderly people when menstruating in order not to transmit their impurity and in that way offend old persons who should be respected (cf. Fruzzetti 1982:97).

Indeed, people did not always accept ideas about their own defilement by distancing themselves from them through jokes about their pollution or turning it into a strategic resource (cf. Kapadia 1995:176). Given that a woman cannot attend a life-cycle ritual while menstruating, participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement sometimes took advantage of their ritual pollution to attend a public meeting instead of fulfilling their family obligations.

Auspiciousness

Conflicting notions about women’s unrestricted auspiciousness and benevolent power (súbham) sometimes challenge ideas about female impurity (cf. Marglin 1985; Erndl 2000).²¹ Married women with a husband alive (kaLyaaNi, peeraNTaalu) are believed to be very auspicious by performing their tasks as wives, mothers and carers, while young teenage girls and especially widows are inauspicious.²² Consequently, a girl must marry as

---

¹⁹ Recently the Malas of Chintala Palem have started to travel around in the area as part of their duties within the state administration and their social work activities. When people from higher castes got to know about their position in the social hierarchy, they humiliated the Malas in various ways. For instance, Venkateswarlu remembered with shame how he once had to eat his lunch in a buffalo’s shelter.

²⁰ In Chintala Palem neither Muslim nor Hindu women entered the temple when menstruating. In 1996 the mosque in the village was still under construction, and it consisted only of a wall. While the men gathered at that place for prayer under an imam from a nearby village, women — who are not supposed to enter the mosque — went each Friday to the dargaa dedicated to the saint Maulali Swami. There, Fatima, who otherwise taught Urdu to the children, led their rituals in front of the idol of the saint.

²¹ Marglin (1985:40) first introduced the idea that the egalitarian ‘axis’ of auspiciousness/inauspiciousness can be seen as an alternative to the hierarchical model of purity/impurity, according to which women are subordinated to men. As Erndl (2000:95) has argued, this principle is at the same time used to subordinate women, based on the danger of their unrestrained power.

²² However, there are alternative views as to the inauspiciousness of young unmarried women, since the celebration of the first menstruation of a girl is performed among the agricultural castes in south India in a large and open style. Kapadia (1995:69) demonstrates that female
soon as possible after reaching maturity. Several of the elderly women from the coastal area of Nellore told me that they had been married soon after pubescence, but argued that women today are seldom wed below the age of eighteen. In remote areas such as Chintala Palem traditional customs persisted\(^{23}\) and many girls in the village, including the Muslims, married under that age. When girls continued in their parental home too long after their first menstruation, people in the neighbourhood started to slander them and question their character.

Women always faced the possibility that their auspiciousness would end with the death of their husbands. Since many Hindu women are convinced by rituals and myths that their dedicated care and commitment towards their husband will guarantee him a long life and wealth, they think that in some way or other they will themselves be guilty if their partner departs before them (Chen 2000:28). In rural Andhra Pradesh women were violently opposed to liquor because, according to them, it was the main reason behind many premature deaths among men. They therefore seldom blamed themselves, particularly not in open, when their husbands had passed away due to alcohol-related diseases, arguing that the evil of liquor was the main cause of these tragedies.

**Female Energy (strii śakti)**

In Andhra Pradesh notions about female creative energy (strii śakti), thought of as a fundamental force of existence, were applied to both the supernatural world and daily life. As śakti, a goddess supplies energy to her inactive male counterpart.\(^{24}\) No male divinity can act without śakti from the female deity. On the other hand, the goddess can operate without help as she personifies śakti, but she is for that reason also considered to be a dangerous power. The different female deities are manifestations of a single goddess, often called Mahadevi, Devi or Mata. According to Babb (1975), the Hindu pantheon is divided by gender: male deities are seen as benevolent and female deities as malevolent, if not controlled through marriage. His approach, however, does not allow scope for those cases in which the same goddess expresses both benevolence and malevolence. Following the ideas of Erndl (1993:155), it

---

23 In her study of a village in Coastal Andhra, Säävälä (2001:67f) observes the low age of marriage compared with average Indian standards, as the majority of women in the locality married within two years after maturity.

24 In line with popular Hindu ideas on divinity with their roots in ancient religious sources, goddesses embody the active female principle (prakriti) while gods, in contrast, express the passive, male principle (purush). Consequently, the male deities need female partners — their śaktis — to be able to operate (Fuller 1992:44).
may be better to use the Indian words for gentle (saumya) and fierce (raudra) to refer to the two traits of the goddess.25

As noted earlier, mortal women too are bestowed with ‘female energy’, seen in the fact that they do not need to be ‘empowered’ by the supernatural world since they already have ‘divine’ power and energy within them (Seymour 1998:276; Kapadia 1995:158). In everyday life, however, female power and sexuality must be subordinated to kinship ties and caste obligations (Seymour 1998:276). Women are not only under external control by male kin, but can also, under certain circumstances, control themselves, especially if the domestic unit is threatened, which is obvious in view of the enormous force seen in a self-controlled and chaste wife (cf. Hiltebeitel & Erndl 2000:18-19). Baker Reynolds (1991:35) describes how the wife in Tamil stories and myths is able to modify happenings in the world to save her husband from death or to improve his health and wealth.

Even if female energy was thought of as a dangerous power, there existed notions that valued women’s strength over that of men. This caused the Indian women’s movement to embrace ideas about female energy as something positive when their leaders started to celebrate women’s difference from men, searching for indigenous notions in the Hindu tradition to develop ideologically. Endl (2000:18) draws attention to the way activists have used this concept to form a common identity uniting women across caste, class, region, language and religious boundaries. Although I seldom heard village women consciously relate the strength of the Anti-Arrack Movement to fierce female goddesses or concepts about women’s energy, middle-class women and university students discussed and wrote about the struggle by referring to such ideas. On the other hand, notions about the vigour of female energy might well have inspired the women, even if they did not express it in words. Egnor (1991:27) makes the crucial observation that women in Tamil Nadu thought about female solidarity in terms of strii

---

25 The people in Chintala Palem (and in many other villages of Nellore district) did not worship goddesses from the Hindu pantheon in public, but there existed a belief in a village goddess, Poleramma, who was thought of as the tutelary goddess of the village and as guardian of the fertility of crops and animals. There were three temples on the outskirts of the locality dedicated to Poleramma, one used by people from the main village and the other two for Malas and Madigas respectively. All three constructions were very simple compared with the buildings dedicated to the Hindu deities. For example, one of the temples consisted of a small stone-built structure, and the other consisted merely of a stone pile. Inside the sanctuary there was a simple idol personifying the goddess, i.e. a stone with dots and lines of vermillion (kunkam) and turmeric (pasupu). Each year the villagers held a festival in honour of Poleramma. Significantly, this village deity was accompanied by Poturaju, her younger brother, and not by a husband. People sacrificed animals (bali) to her at times of ecological crisis, since they thought that the goddess was angry with disrespectful villagers. I witnessed such an incident that took place after an old woman had died of diarrhoea due to drinking contaminated water. In addition, the Golla, the caste of cattle-herders, worshipped Poleramma at normal times to ensure the well-being of their stock. At the other end of Chintala Palem there was another construction dedicated to a village goddess called Ankalamma, although the worship of this deity was not as widespread as that of Poleramma.
Likewise, rural activists in Andhra Pradesh referred to the unity and numerical strength of women when they wanted to emphasize the force of the movement. In addition, they stressed that nothing could stop women achieving what they wanted if they were determined to do so.

**Self-Control and Household Responsibility**

It might already be obvious that the importance of controlling female power, either by men or by women themselves, relates to discourses on self-control and responsibility for the household. There was a tension within the domestic domain between male authority and female power (cf. Gross 2000). The husband was considered the representative of the household in all official matters but women had taken the actual responsibility for its economy, at the same time as they criticized the men for not taking their duties seriously and forcing the women to shoulder this burden. Their protests against liquor could thus be seen as representing a crisis in the masculine role of providing for the family, in which women were trying to restore the ‘natural order’. Ankamma, a woman from a village in central Nellore district, lamented about women’s increasing economic load:

They don’t care about their family and children. While we work hard in the fields to support our families the men live on our wages and labour. What would happen to the children if we drank like the men? They would starve. When they are hungry the children ask us for food and not their fathers. This is why our husbands are able to escape from their responsibilities.

There was a widespread opinion in Andhra Pradesh that the wife should control the drinking habits of her partner, for example, by refusing him food and shelter if he overstepped the proper limits. According to this approach, women were more self-controlled than their husbands. On the other hand, men were in other circumstances thought of as more self-restrained and responsible than women, expressed by the Telugu word of *aaśa* when referring to the latter’s more emotional and impulsive nature (cf. Tapper 1987:28; Säävälä 2001:112).

The activists in the Anti-Arrack Movement objected strongly to the opinion that women should control the drinking of their husbands, and therefore expressed the impossibility of restraining an addicted spouse or men in general. Since the men would anyhow not listen to them, the only solution would be to stop the sale of alcoholic beverages. Dr Sudhakar Reddy from Nellore district brought up the following metaphor in this context:

There is an important distinction between the ideas of authority and power, since the former is an official entitlement that enables a person to make orders that others obey, while the latter means the capacity to influence how things turn out, even though one has no official authority to decide the matter (Gross 2000:108 n.1).
In Telugu there is a saying: ‘Be aware of jaggery\(^{27}\) — the ants as well as the flies go around it. They go to it. You can’t kill each and every ant and each and every fly. You can’t. The best way to prevent flies and ants coming is to remove the jaggery. That is the best way.’ Like that, if we remove the arrack shop the people will not drink.

This sort of thinking could be traced to Indian discourses on personhood related to various ‘coded substances’\(^{28}\) and concordant behaviour among the different jatis (species), in this case women and men. Daniel (1991:73) describes three different and co-existent codes of conduct among the genders in a village in Tamil Nadu, by arguing that these distinct rules coincide with the three forms of conjugal relationships between the gods Siva and Parvati in their different embodiments. According to one of these codes, the husband should dominate his wife since he is superior as a ‘man’ and because of his more self-restrained and responsible manners, whereas the second model brings up the idea that neither husband nor wife is morally better and neither should therefore direct the other. Finally, the last code, the ‘Minakshi code’,\(^{29}\) characterizes women as more self-restrained while men are irresponsible, lustful, and more concerned with their personal satisfaction than that of their families. Broadly speaking, the latter are associated with the ‘hot’ qualities of life and women should therefore control and reform them.

Hot traits coupled with irresponsibility and loss of control were thought of in Andhra Pradesh as either inherent within women or men, or acquired by imbibing liquor, a hot substance.\(^{30}\) Gender discourses on personhood were in

\(^{27}\) Course brown Indian sugar made from palm sap.

\(^{28}\) ‘Coded substance’ is a general label used first by McKim Marriott and Inden (1974) to accentuate the cultural circumstance that interrelations between bodily substance and code for contact are pervading the presumed predominantly ‘monistic’ Hindu world view with its emphasis on caste grading. In fact, divergently esteemed and grouped substances (jatis) are concealed behind the classification recognized as the caste system, which is only one of several external appearances of this categorization of graded substances (Daniel 1984:2).

\(^{29}\) It is Parvathy, in the incarnation of Minakshi that is considered to be not only the more important of the couple but also the more assertive. She was a queen of the Pandhyan Empire and her expedition to seize the earth was brought to an end in the Himalayas, when Siva descended from Mount Kailasa to the battleground. Afterwards, Siva went to Madurai to wed Minakashi and stayed there as Sundareshvara, the co-ruler with Minakshi of the Pandhyan Empire.

\(^{30}\) The categorization of food into ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ has been integrated into the ancient Ayurvedic theory of ill health through humoral imbalance in which there are five conditions of matter, freely interpreted as earth (prthvi), water (ap), fire (tējas), air or mind (vāyu), and sky, ether, or space (ākāsha). They are joined together in the body to produce three humours (dhātus), which are earth plus water (kapha), fire (pittha) and air plus sky (vātha). When embodied, the three humours generate three main characteristics (gunas) of people: earth and water representing the guna tamas that is associated with bravery and heroism but is often exercised through detachment, unawareness, and machine-like reaction; fire linked to guna sattva, which represents intellect, self-restraint and contentment reached through learning; and air and sky related to guna rajas, revealed in passion, force and in the love of benefits through thrilling deeds. Eating food that is in conflict with any inherent personality, or seasonal
this sense fluid in character, in line with observances by contemporary feminists, who argued that biology — and therefore femaleness — does not consist of pre-discursive and fixed facts. According to Butler (1999), who has been very influential in the current debate, the body (sex) and gender (culturally and historically variable qualities and activities) are not separated from each other but are, in contrast, reciprocally made up through recurring gender performances, i.e. the embodiment of gender through daily practice. However, her approach has the disadvantage of having an exclusive focus on language, ignoring the intricacy of women’s precise position in the manifold networks of power links, through which caste, religious, class and national identities develop (cf. Gedalof 1999:9-10,121). In the case of the Anti-Arrack Movement, women’s protests were soon taken up in the public debates conducted by the press, politicians and middle-class persons from NGOs and voluntary organizations (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Consequently, the importance attributed to women’s struggle against liquor could be linked to opposing and variable perspectives on alcohol connected with masculinity, femininity, religious identity, caste, and class hierarchy.

The Gender of Drinking

In Andhra Pradesh spirits were normally consumed in all-male settings, whereas men generally refrained from drinking at home in front of women and children. The same was observed by Dorschner (1983:541) in his study of a village in Uttar Pradesh where many men from the Rajput caste boozed at places where no women were present — at the liquor shop and when it closed, at bootleggers’ homes or at isolated men’s quarters. Given that the shops in Andhra Pradesh were often located close to railway and bus stations, women did not go near these places except when they wanted to get their drunken husbands home. Because the introduction of arrack packs facilitated the transport of the beverage in the pocket for later consumption out in the fields, it was no longer easy for the wives to find their inebriated husbands.

As a result of this strict spatial segregation of male drinking, the connection of alcohol with masculinity was reinforced. Consequently, very few women tipped in Andhra Pradesh, which partly explains why they were so angry about men’s increasing expenditures on alcoholic beverages. There is, however, some variation in the use of intoxicating substances in the domestic sphere. For instance, in Telangana both women and men drink toddy at home and it is regularly offered to visitors.

characteristics, can result in instabilities among the three humours and therefore various illnesses (Achaya 1994:77). For example, Brahmans and ascetic renouncers, usually associated with a sattvik personality, refrained from alcohol, meat and spicy food. Moreover, people in Andhra Pradesh told me that we could drink liquor in my country because it has a cold climate.
In the rural areas men often boozed during weddings, betrothals, and religious festivals, such as Holi and Diwali. Although the open use of hard drinks at wedding celebrations and religious festivals almost vanished in Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema during the prohibition period of the 1950s (Reddy 1956-7:2) and also during the prohibition of the 1990s, when I was carrying out my study, people often tippled secretly in connection with major celebrations.

As men were not normally expected to drink in everyday contexts just because they wanted to have a good time with friends, they hit the bottle in secrecy and often felt ashamed of it. This contributed to the fact that boozing was frequently represented as offering a source of relief from emotional problems, such as difficulties in their work activities or family conflicts. People described the beginning of intoxication as a state of unconcernedness far removed from their everyday troubles, but saw the condition as resulting later on in various forms of irresponsible behaviour. Kondaiah, a toddy tapper from the coastal area of Nellore district, quoted a Sanskrit verse to explain what happened when he was drunk. Clearly, the quote has many points in common with how Ayurvedic sources — representing the indigenous system of medicine from the Vedic period (2,000 - 800 B.C.) — describe drunken behaviour.

You first enjoy it like a crow
You bow your head afterwards, like a crane
Then you become Hanuman flying in the sky
without any worrying about the surroundings
Then you reveal the secrets of the family like Vibhishnan
Then you give anything away like Karna

---

31 Alcoholic beverages have been part of certain religious rituals in Andhra Pradesh as arrack is offered in the context of animal sacrifices to village goddesses (Reddy 1956-7:1; cf. Shukla 1987:513). Furthermore, it has been common to give liquor to single Hindu goddesses without a male consort who are assumed to be bloodthirsty and ‘hot’, such as Kali and Durga (cf. Shukla 1987:514; Fuller 1992:85). At their festivities even people who otherwise do not drink may participate and accept alcohol as prasad, tasted by the god and then returned to be consumed by the participants after the ceremony. However, these rituals seem to have disappeared from many parts of Andhra Pradesh, as liquor was not offered in Chintala Palem to Poleramma, the village goddess, whereas the sacrifice of animals, bali, was instead common.

32 For Kondaiah there was nothing odd in describing his personal experiences by referring to ancient texts full of religious symbolism. There exists a vivid oral tradition in Andhra Pradesh, and people identified with mythological figures and their sufferings. Kakar (1989:2f) shows that narratives in India are anchored into people’s own life experiences, since there is a belief in a higher level of reality beyond the empirical world.

33 According to these writings alcohol is poisonous but can, if used moderately, also have some medical effects. Intoxication is divided into four stages: (i) arousal when all the senses are sharpened and sexual desire increased; (ii) the senses are weakened and coordination fails; (iii) people no longer obey the authorities or existing rules in society, for example, by revealing secrets to outsiders; (iv) an unconscious, dead-drunk condition (Varma 1950:488).
Finally you go to sleep like Kumbakarna (who slept continuously for six months)\textsuperscript{34}

A far more important framework of interpretation regarding why people drink than that of sociality is that of alcohol as an anaesthetic, also relevant to work activities. In Andhra Pradesh drinking was regarded as a means of enduring heavy physical work among working men who explained that alcohol made the pain in their body disappear, with the positive effect that it was possible for them to sleep at night. To see liquor as a stimulant and not as a depressant was common among the labouring classes in the state and in other parts of India as well (see Hasan 1964:6).\textsuperscript{35} Women, on the other hand, seldom thought about using alcohol to lessen the soreness in the body and they rarely had time to socialize in the evenings when they were busy with household work. In addition, many women thought that drinking was irreconcilable with the interests of the family.

Wives often referred to illnesses that their husbands had contracted, which they thought were related to intoxicating beverages, for example, liver infections and stomach problems, accompanied by suicides that were common among both alcoholics and their spouses who could no longer endure being beaten by their partners. The frequency of deaths caused by impure liquor (as one instance of adulterated food) has often been covered by news reports in India. The following sad story, told by Mrs. Huymama from Peruru (in the coastal area of Nellore district), presented the severe health effects on her husband of imbibing methanol:

My husband started to drink pure alcohol to get intoxicated. Nowadays poison (\textit{paaSaNam}) is being mixed with the spirits to produce a stronger effect and these beverages have therefore become very dangerous to health. Our

\textsuperscript{34} We find these mythological personalities in the ancient Hindu texts, above all in \textit{Ramayana}. Hanuman is a monkey chief with supernatural powers that moved from India to Lanka in one leap. Together with other monkeys he assisted Rama (an incarnation of the god Vishnu) in his war against Ravana, who had captured Sita, the wife of Rama. Although Vibishnan was the younger brother of Ravana, he betrayed the latter and allied himself with Sita and Rama. Karna is the son of Kunti and Surya, the sun god, and the half-brother of the Pandava brothers (the descendants of king Pandu, who is written about in the epic \textit{Mahabarata}). He was born equipped with arms and armour, but the god Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, cajoled him out of his divine armour and later on he became the king of Bengal. Even though he was a relative of the Pandavas, Karna took the side of their enemies, the Kauravas, against them. Finally Arjuna killed him. Kumbakarna was a monster that slept for six months at a time and remained awake only for a single day due to a curse of the god Brahma. After being awakened by Ravana and winning the battle against Rama and the monkey army, Kumbakarna went to war after first drinking 2,000 jars of liquor. Eventually Rama took his life.

\textsuperscript{35} These ideas tie up with the traditional caste model, characterized by the fact that workers often belong to groups lower in the ritual hierarchy with a traditional occupation that involves hard physical labour and less strict drinking rules. Carstairs (1954:228) notes in this context that cannabis, the drug of Brahmins and holy men, is regarded as having an opposite effect, i.e. people will not be able to work when intoxicated by this substance.
relatives warned him but he said, ‘I have been drinking it for the last ten years. It is not taking me over. You are telling me this only because you want me to stop boozing. I will never stop.’ He used to drink during the day and then lie down on the bed at night.

That very morning my daughter went to wake him up. While she was cooking food and eggs for him, he washed his face and told her that he didn’t want anything to eat. Instead he wanted to buy some toddy. He left the house and walked into the street but immediately returned since he was unable to see anything. My husband had become blind. The poison in his body had started to work in the sun. He sat on the veranda and turned very pale. A neighbouring woman asked him ‘what has happened? Why do you look like that?’ He told her that he was unable to see anything except a white screen in front of his eyes. She rushed to inform us about it and we immediately took him by bus to the hospital. However, it was too late and his condition deteriorated. They gave him some oxygen but he did not survive.

In the above quotation Mrs Huyamma’s husband argued that he could withstand the desire for the drink. In contrast, participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement regarded heavy boozers as being unable to stop their habit. When talking about habitual drinkers people often used the Telugu term taagubootu, which means ‘drunkard’ or literally ‘a person who drinks’, or else they said taaguDuki baanisa, that is, ‘a person who has become a slave to drinking’. The latter meaning came to dominate the discourse within the movement which regarded alcoholism as an illness but, in contrast to what has been the case in many Western countries in recent decades, the origin of the craving was seen as based in the drug itself and not in the individual body of the addict (cf. Levine 1978).

Activists in the temperance struggle of Andhra Pradesh viewed liquor as an inherently addictive substance, reflected in the fact that its consumers soon lost control over their drinking. There was a saying, often cited by campaigners, that went as follows: ‘First the man takes the drink; then the drink takes the drink; then the drink takes the man.’ According to this vision, the only cure for the habitual drinker was total abstinence.

---

36 This might be the reason why Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) — a self-help group among people with alcohol problems that emerged in the United States and then spread to the rest of the world — has only recently made any impact in India, since according to its ideology alcoholism is an illness that only certain people develop. In the early 1990s when the Anti-Arrack Movement spread across Andhra Pradesh, such groups did not exist in the state but they were in neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

37 Conflicting views regarding how to stop alcohol abuse were expressed at the session about the Anti-Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh, held at the World Social Forum in Mumbai (Bombay) in 2004. A social worker specializing in psychiatry argued that it is impossible, in line with the disease model, to make an addict give up drinking. Accordingly, it is better to control the liquor consumption by each day giving him/her a limited amount of spirits. A man from the JVV countered this argument by saying that an alcoholic would need more and more booze in order to get the required ‘kick’. The latter point expresses the view that alcoholism is a progressive disease that can be only cured by totally refraining from liquor.
Apart from the addictiveness of the substance, many participants in the temperance campaign referred to various types of anti-social behaviour due to alcohol use, calling attention to the way domestic quarrels turned into violence and wife-battering when the husband was inebriated (cf. Hydén 1994). In addition to the wife criticizing her spouse’s alcohol habits, a dominant bone of contention at the stage preliminary to wife-battering was food, with the man coming home and demanding something to eat, often non-vegetarian curries, which the wife could not afford as he had already spent all his money on arrack. The crisis in the masculine role as provider would become more visible when he came home drunk without any money left, leading to his then trying to restore his authority through violence, mainly against his wife and children. The following story from Nellore district illustrates the brutality that many poor women were facing.

Parvatamma, referred to earlier in this chapter, was the only daughter of a family from the Mala caste. As her father was often ill, the members of the household depended on the income from the mother’s labour, forcing the parents to marry her to Narayana, even though he had a reputation as a heavy drinker. Since this man beat both his wife and his children when he was intoxicated, Parvatamma often sought refuge with the neighbours. However, her husband started to quarrel with them as well, so the neighbours became frightened and forbade her to come to them. Instead, she started to stay out in the fields with her children after work, only returning to the house when Narayana had fallen asleep. One evening her husband came home drunk while Parvatamma and her children were eating, and started a quarrel because his wife had not cooked the curry he had demanded. Parvatamma, for her part, argued that she had been unable to do so since he had not given her money to buy the required vegetables, ending up with Narayana throwing his wife out of the house onto the stony ground.

That not all cases of wife-battering were preceded by verbal disputes is seen in the life-story of Papaiah, a notorious inebriate from Chintala Palem belonging to the Madiga caste. When Subbamma, his wife, gave this account, Papaiah was already dead after falling into a well while drunk during the Sri Rama Nawami festival. Subbamma had married Papaiah, a relative of hers, when she was 20 years old and he was 40. Papaiah had started to booze at the age of ten, mainly arrack but also some toddy. He had

---

38 Dahl (1991) discusses the connection between alcohol consumption and masculinity when considering the Inuit of Greenland, by suggesting, among other things, that heavy alcohol use might reflect a crisis in the masculine role, apparent in that Inuit men are unable to provide for their families due to growing unemployment in the area.

39 In the Telugu month of Chaitramu (March/April) — or more precisely on the ninth lunar day after the Telugu New Year which often falls at the end of March — the Sri Rama Nawami Festival is celebrated in remembrance of the marriage between Rama and Sita at which wedding rituals are performed in the temple before idols of the gods. Papaiah had consumed a lot of alcohol during this festival before he performed ‘the festival dance’ to the sounds of the drums.
been married before but the first wife had died after he had hit her with a stick while he was intoxicated. Although he mainly worked as a woodcutter in the forest, he made his earnings last longer by occasionally making shoes — the traditional caste occupation of Madigas. Usually he worked continuously for fifteen days to earn around 500 rupees, after which he spent all the money on liquor. Under the influence of hard drink Papaiah became very violent. Afterwards he told his wife that his mind was not working properly on these occasions. On the other hand, he was very aggressive when he was inebriated. To avoid a confrontation Subamma never argued with him about liquor, but she was not always successful since Papaiah sometimes beat her for no reason at all. Once he suddenly hit her from behind with a stick when she was cooking, and the only solution was for Subamma to take her two children and hide with them in the bushes.

Because hot substances such as alcoholic beverages are related to violent behaviour and a loss of control, women never criticized wife-battering as an isolated issue but always regarded it as being an effect of drunkenness. In her study on Kerala, Busby (2000:211) focuses on women’s changing perceptions of male violence, arguing that earlier brutality had been thought of as something inherent in the nature of men from lower castes due to the greater heat in their bodies, whereas today their violence is attributed to the use of an external ‘hot’ agent, alcohol. Most importantly, in neither case are men themselves seen as the agents of their actions.

Similarly, men in Andhra Pradesh tried to avoid responsibility for their drunken behaviour by claiming that they were ‘not themselves’. The idea, evoked by men, of not being themselves can be related to the argument by MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969), who suggest that drunken comportment is often claimed as a ‘Time-Out’ from ordinary social norms. However, in Andhra Pradesh there are conflicting discourses on drunken conduct (cf. Hill 1978), and not everyone actually accepted that people were ‘not themselves’ when they were inebriated. Some, like Gouramma in the story told earlier in this chapter, even acknowledged that habitual drinkers took advantage of the fact that they were not held responsible for their actions. When a relative came to her home when her husband was away and started to quarrel with her, arrack was never, in her view, the root cause of this man’s behaviour but the fact that he could escape accountability by blaming it on drunkenness.

Limitations of Women’s Participation in the Protest

In the foregoing discussion I have related the way rural women have come to regard liquor as a major problem to the considerable changes that have taken place since the early 1980s in the division of labour between husband and wife, resulting in a changing allocation of responsibility. With men spending an increasing part of their earnings on personal consumption, especially, on liquor, women have had to bear an escalating economic burden to provide...
members of the household with food, clothes, and even medicines. When they failed to sustain the family, or questioned the division of responsibility, their husbands beat them, but the latter could avoid accountability for their behaviour by claiming that they were ‘not themselves’ when they were drunk. Women’s individual suffering cannot, however, explain the process whereby they joined the struggle against liquor, as there were many difficulties to overcome before they could turn into political actors. Many women were not able to be at the forefront of the movement because they were internally divided and often confined to their houses and not supposed to do anything in public. The following section discusses these issues before I end the chapter with a short portrayal of female resistance at the village level.

**The ‘House’ and The ‘Street’**

The dichotomy between ‘domestic’ and ‘public’ often came up when I discussed the Anti-Arrack Movement with people who brought up ideas about the house (illu) and the street (wiidhi), or in more extreme cases referred to the *purdah* rules. In Andhra Pradesh *purdah* segregation differs from the way it is in the North, which means that Hindu women do not conceal their faces in front of older male in-laws. Neither do Muslim women use the veil when they are inside their own natal village or that of their affines, and they only put on the *burkah* to travel or visit other places. Some Muslim women were not allowed to participate in anti-arrack meetings outside the village, but others, like Rabubi from the coastal part of Nellore district, insisted on joining the struggle even if it was against tradition.

A public/private dichotomy is reflected in women’s mobility in space but also in how they are supposed to behave in the male public arena. Women were expected to be shy and therefore hesitant to speak in public. When called on to make a speech, many younger women giggled and looked down before they started to speak. Sitamma, a village president (*sarpanche*) close to Atmakur in Nellore district, complained about the difficulties in making her voice heard in local politics, claiming that other women would talk

---

40 As Jeffrey (1979:3) has argued, *purdah* is not only an Islamic practice in India, since many Hindu women also follow it but not in the same way as Muslims. Because Muslim women after they have reached puberty abide by the *purdah* tradition in the sense of being completely veiled, they have to cover their faces in front of all men except near relatives. Hindu women, on the other hand, respect the rules first after marriage and only in front of their husbands’ older male kin. Muslim women use the *burkah*, while Hindu women turn to a shawl or drape the edge of their sari over their head and face.

41 Discourses on the public and domestic do not always and everywhere in the world focus only on female modesty. In his study of contemporary Iran, Khosravi (2003:72) has argued that the idea of modesty in this case is also in certain circumstances applied to men, who should be veiled in the general sense and in the physical implication of concealing bodily limbs regarded as ‘immodest’. The first sense is reflected in the fact that the Iranian youth ought to keep the difference and separation between kin and non-kin apart in their social practice, which safeguards the moral ethics of society.
adversely about her if she opened her mouth. In her view they would accuse her of talking to men without any sign of shyness, and the implication would be negative.

One might perhaps expect antagonism to develop between women and men when there is a strict separation between the female and the male worlds. On the other hand, gender difference may or may not produce antipathy, depending on the social relations within which that distinction is embedded. Epstein (1981:4f) relates the development of ideas about domesticity in nineteenth-century America to a sharpened division of labour between middle-class men and women as the latter mobilized under the slogan of ‘Home Protection’ for evangelism and temperance. Although their central goal was the moral reformation of American society, feminine domesticity was part of this ideology based on a common middle-class moral code regarded as superior and therefore to be imposed on society at large and even to be spread to other parts of the world (see Chapter 2).

In India we find an idealization of feminine values similar to that of Western domesticity, in which the domestic/public dichotomy is linked to the separations spiritual/material and Indian/foreign. Since women are regarded as having a higher morality than men by personifying the Indian spirituality of the inner domain (cf. Chatterjee 1999) they have been able to overcome the division between ‘the house’ and ‘the street’ in mobilizing for defence of the family and traditional Indian values.

Activists, at the level of both leaders and grassroots participants, maintained that when women joined the movement it led to a change in how they thought about their role in society. Rabubi expressed how her participation in the struggle changed her mentality in the following way:

I had a small child. At that time there was no electricity outside our house and I was terrified every day when it came to dusk. Now I don’t have that fear any longer. I can challenge any man. I am now considered to be a terrible devil. You see, I was then afraid but now I am fearless. While the movement was in full flow, we saw its advance. People burnt arrack everywhere all over Nellore (district). There were dharnas (sit-ins) and public meetings at many places. People gathered like ants. Every village was involved from Komarika to Ravur. I attended whenever there was a dharna. This was a change for me. I knew in advance about the activities and the movement provided me with some breathing space. I was overwhelmed and very happy. I became active and bold. I became fearless. The earlier shyness was gone.

Favero (2005:165) describes how the value of female domesticity has declined in importance among the contemporary urban Indian middle class, and has been replaced by an emphasis on a more assertive woman reconciling home and work. One could then conceive of the Indian dichotomy between the domestic and the public not consisting of stable categories but ones which are changing according to aspects such as locality, class, caste and time. I am concerned here with rural women in Andhra Pradesh who were not able to enter the public arena without jeopardizing their respectability in the early 1990s when the Anti-Arrack Movement started.
Women who took part in the movement have also in some cases argued in favour of equality with men, as they opposed the separation between ‘the house’ and ‘the street’. In brief, they did not just have feminine/practical interests connected with their household role, as Kaplan (1982) and Molyneux (1985) have maintained, but they also wanted to reverse the gender hierarchy.

In the beginning we did not care even if our husbands came home drunk and beat us, but something happened within us after Dubagunta. It is our custom that women should not leave their houses and come out on the street. In one family the husband was drinking and died. The president of our women’s society (mahila sangham) came and asked the men to send their wives to the arrack vendor with the intention of stopping the sale of liquor in the village. The men said that they did not allow their women to come out on the street. We told them that in other countries women do the same things as men. We convinced them. Venkatamma, old woman from the coastal area of Nellore district

Although Venkatamma stressed the importance of equality between women and men, she put forward the argument that the women did not organize against arrack before they had received permission from the men. There are alternative interpretations possible: one can see it negatively as a continuing sign of their submission to men or more positively in terms of an Indian tendency to negotiate and find collective solutions to everything.\footnote{Mines (1996:3) indicates that there are significant differences between Western and Indian individuality, as in the latter case a person has to defer to the collective concerns of family and caste. Consequently, Indian individuality is contextualized, that is, it is thought of within contexts of groups in which the individual has acknowledged statuses and power. In his view, the fluidity between private and public individuality contributes to difficulties in distinguishing between these aspects (ibid:21).}

**Age and Marital Status**

Given that not all women had the same opportunity to enter the public arena, an important distinction among rural female activists in Andhra Pradesh was that of age and marital status. Della Porta and Diani (1999:114f) have put forward the argument that young unmarried people often participate more easily in protests since they can bear the costs of their own action. The case of the Anti-Arrack Movement demonstrates that it has not always been these people who have been more prone to protest, as young unmarried women were seldom active in the mobilization against arrack in the villages. On the contrary, many participants were elderly women with grown-up children or grandchildren.

Following the ideal phases of human life of the classical Indian religious and legal sources, people in Andhra Pradesh generally divide the life-course into infancy, early adulthood (i.e. the married, economically active ‘House-
holder’) and old age when the man first withdraws to the forest and then, finally, enters the stage of the wandering ascetic. Broadly speaking, ‘old age’ (musali) begins when the children marry, in particular the eldest son. According to Säävälä (2001:177), it starts in Andhra Pradesh when women are in their thirties and men in their forties, because people marry when they are very young. Consequently, at that age a woman is symbolically post-procreative and genderless, which is manifested in the fact that senior women are allowed to walk more freely in village and neighbourhood.

Guravaramma, the anti-arrack leader in Chintala Palem, was such an elderly woman in her forties and with several grandchildren, who participated in many meetings in Nellore district at the peak of the movement. Nevertheless, when a team from the Anveshi Institute at Hyderabad invited her to contribute to a women’s conference at Jaipur, arranged by the National Network of Women’s Studies, Guravaramma declined the invitation, saying that she could not be away from her daily duties for such a long time as a whole week. In addition, her son had planned a pilgrimage to the temple Sabarimalai in Kerala to worship the god Aiyappaswami, which meant that she had to get up at five a clock in the morning to prepare a special meal for him as pilgrims have dietary restrictions.

Although Guravaramma had to take account of the wishes of her husband and her grown-up son, widows (muNDulu), especially if they do not have any male offspring, are more independent. A large percentage of widows were visible at the head of the protests against arrack at the village level, a remarkable feature in view of their low status according to traditional Hindu values in which they are inauspicious in comparison with married women.

On the death of her husband a woman must remove her tali and glass bangles. As expressed by David (1991: 102), she turns into a ‘non-person’ since she is no longer bound to her spouse. Moreover, she becomes a dangerous force, because she is not under the control of any man (Chen 2000:28). It was obvious, however, that through self-control and an ascetic life-style, a woman who had lost her husband could enhance her social position somewhat. According to Gandhi, it was the widow who was a true sati in the sense of a good and virtuous woman, as she had learnt to find happiness in suffering rather than setting herself ablaze on the funeral pyre, thus turning her into the ideal activist (Kumar 1993:83). The social situations of widows differ, but they are dependent not only on their ability to lead an ascetic life-style in order to be respected but, moreover, on the age of the woman when her husband passes away. Lamb (2000) argues that we have to distinguish between the social positions of young, fertile widows and the old, post-procreative ones who are considered to be less dangerous for their

---

44 The Telugu word for widow (muNDulu) refers not only to a woman bereaved of her husband but also has the meaning ‘slattern, ‘whore’ and is a common expression in insults.
social environment. Since women widowed at an older age with adult sons to provide for them, daughters-in-law to direct and a body grown physically asexual are therefore free, widowhood for them does not normally have disturbing social, economic, and emotional costs. In fact, widowhood in later life could mean enlarged freedoms and even high esteem. At that time women are less tied to the house by their duties — an acknowledgment of improved ‘purity’ and of ‘manlike’ and ‘godlike’ virtues (ibid:238).

In Andhra Pradesh some widows were more respected than others, due to their age or because they were mothers of several children. No longer dependent on their mothers-in-law, they were often heads of autonomous households. In Chintala Palem Fatima, an old Urdu-teacher, was such a well-respected widow, who had lost her husband when she was pregnant at the age of 35. At that time she met her guru, Sayed Kaja Rahamtullah, for the first time, and when I met her in 1996 she had been his disciple for the past 40 years. This woman had four daughters but none of her sons was alive. She commented on this: ‘I am not under anyone now. I am not controlled by anybody except God’.

Evidently, women could turn ideas about widowhood upside down and use them to their advantage. One of the many widows able to be active in the Anti-Arrack Movement was Rosamma from Dubagunta, a woman in her sixties who toured all over the state attending various public meetings after her husband had died of liver problems due to excessive drinking. Her hair was cut short — a custom among more traditional widows — and she was dressed in a white blouse along with a red sari, as was common among women deprived of their husbands from the Kamma community. Rosamma had been a member of both the State Propaganda Committee (Rashtra Pachaara Kamiti), initiated by the Congress government, and its successor, the State-Level Advisory Committee on Prohibition (Madya Nishedhasthayi Salaha Kamiti) set up by the Telugu Desam Party. She explained that her self-confidence had increased after she started to move all over Andhra Pradesh to propagandize against liquor as part of her work on these boards. Although this woman had not been the most active in the struggle against arrack in Dubagunta, she was highly respected and selected as the village representative in the temperance agitation since she was a vocal person and a widow who could easily travel without any husband objecting to her presence in public life.

There are differences between widows according to criteria such as region, caste, economic position, and help from native family and offspring. In addition, the position of these women is somewhat better in South India as compared with the North.

In the village Fatima was unusual since, though an elderly woman, she could read and write three languages – Arabic, Urdu, and Telugu. When I met her she was in her eighties and she had been teaching Muslim children to write and read Urdu since 1992. Furthermore, she assisted at the ritual baths taken at maturity, marriage, the fourth Friday after the wedding, births, and at the time of death.
From Hidden to Open Resistance

In private and never consciously thought of as opposition, women protested against their husbands’ drinking habits by quarreling, refusing to cook, nagging, divine possession, and by temporarily leaving the house. Scott (1985) explains such small-scale and often covert undertakings as the ‘weapons of the weak’. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990) he develops these theories further by arguing that there is a hidden culture made up of those private discourses and practices that back up, oppose, or modulate what comes out in the public arena. Critics often challenge Scott for not taking into account gender differences and for overestimating the consciousness as well as the transformative perspective of such tiny acts of opposition (Hart 1991:94, Kaplan 1996:5; Starn 1997:3). My point rather is that such a focus on concealed and informal resistance among poor women in Andhra Pradesh might broaden our understanding of why and how they entered a more organized and open protest in the form of the Anti-Arrack Movement.

Camp (2004), studying slavery in the American southern states, relates women’s everyday struggle to plantation space, i.e. the relative enclosure and mobility of enslaved women and men. She draws attention to how women benefited less from mobility than men in the ‘geography of containment’ and in the alternative ‘geography of motion’ where they were much more highly represented among temporary ‘absentees’ as compared with ‘permanent fugitives’. Likewise, in Andhra Pradesh women’s mobility in space was limited and they only temporarily left their homes when they could not bear the harassment by their husbands any longer. In contrast, many men from lower castes could leave their family for good if they were dissatisfied with married life. Women’s fear of being banished by their spouses prevented many of them from ‘speaking out’ publicly about their husbands’ use of alcohol when the movement started. In an interview Ghousia from Chintala Palem expressed this concern:

We never complained about our husbands. My partner may be a drinker and he may be ignorant. However, where should I live if I complain about him? They are drunkards and they will get angry and beat us. They may tell us to go to our native place and stay there. What will happen to the children if we dare to betray the men for the welfare of society? Who will look after them? That’s why we could not complain about them. Where should we live after defaming our husbands?

As the protests spread from place to place the resistance took on a somewhat more organized and overt form in physical attacks on liquor dealers and inebriates. While the methods employed by the women in their struggle had a long tradition in rural Andhra Pradesh, and in other corners of India as well, I have brought up these issues for discussion in this section as part of a
transition from hidden to public resistance (cf. Scott 1990:202-227). Village female activists used brooms and chillies as weapons in confrontations with their opponents that added humiliation to injury as it was seen as degrading for men to be attacked by women armed with household items. Another form of humiliation was found when drinkers were beaten with leather sandals (*chappals*) since in India the sole of the foot is one of the most polluted parts of the body and one of the most serious offences is to be hit with an old shoe. For instance, in Chintala Palem the villagers decided that every person who was found drunk should be beaten with a leather sandal five times or pay a fine of 50 rupees to the local activists. In other places participants blackened the faces of male culprits and paraded them through the main street of the village with the aim once again of humiliating them in front of their communities, as the blackened face symbolized loss of face.

Kumar (1993:4) characterizes these acts as ‘shaming’, whereby the adversary is forced into admitting that they have transgressed important social rules, although the usefulness of such techniques hinges on their application within a tight-knit society: if a person is to be embarrassed into recognizing his disobedience to the rules of his community, then these rules have to mirror values held by both the punishers and the punished (cf. Scott 1990:103). Accordingly, the efficiency of shaming in the present society has decreased with anonymity and chances of escaping being recognized by moving to another area (Kumar 1994:4). In this chapter I have suggested that there exists a tradition in rural Andhra Pradesh according to which men ought to provide for their families whereas women should take care of the household work. Such a division of responsibilities had deteriorated and women made men remember this by shaming them and, above all, by reminding inebriates and liquor dealers that drinking is a blameworthy act according to Hinduism. That men shared this view with women clarifies their lack of hostility in almost passively supporting the movement, and many ‘ex-drunkards’ sheepishly explained how their lives had improved after they had stopped drinking.

Protests against liquor among women in Andhra Pradesh often took the form of a ‘symbolic inversion’ (cf. Scott 1990:166-72) of gender and caste

---

47 Scott portrays various forms of symbolic inversions, such as the sixteenth century paintings in Western Europe in which the world is depicted as upside-down, or religious rituals (cf. Gluckman 1954, Turner 1995) as well as the carnival and other similar festivals in different parts of the world. Likewise, Ambjörnsson (2003:209-10) describes an inversion from contemporary Sweden when a young woman tries to invert the gender distinction of ‘whore’ – a word often used by teenage boys towards girls — by offering the man money after having sex with him. My final example is Gusterson (1996:209) who dwells on how the American ‘humanistic middle class’ became drawn into a protest against the ‘masculinity’ of the arms industry by mustering ideals and individuals from domestic space. This activated ‘archetypal women’ against ‘archetypal men’, i.e. the acceptance of the customary gender order, but turned the attached ideals upside down in valorizing women over men as they stood for caring mothers in opposition to the insensitive masculine world of combat and arms (ibid:211-13).
hierarchy, according to which low-status women were beating up men from higher castes and thus demonstrating the possibility of a new social order. Similarly, Rabubi from a village in coastal Nellore argued with a high-caste man when he talked to her in an offensive manner, as people from higher castes traditionally have done to persons of lower status (see Chapter 7). However, Rabubi did not accept the insult and threatened to burn his jeep if he adopted that tone to her again. What needs to be recognized is the awareness among people in Andhra Pradesh that the arrangement of society is far from ‘natural’ but rather is a random human construction (cf. Scott 1990:168; Butler 1999:86-7).48

When the Anti-Arrack Movement started, a large percentage of the participants consisted of poor women from lower castes and labouring classes in the countryside. In this chapter I have tried to identify how and why they came to recognize liquor as a problem by referring to intra-household relations, changing responsibilities between husbands and wives, and women’s difficulties in providing for their children. At the heart of this process are changes in the labour market due to the opening up of the Indian economy to global market forces, resulting in the ‘feminization’ of agriculture together with unemployment and underemployment at the same time as men have withdrawn their earnings from the household economy.

My perspective has been concerned with the gender of drinking in Andhra Pradesh, namely men boozing whereas women usually refrained, and with discourses on self-control related to wife-battering and men’s failures in sustaining the family. As women mobilized multiple and opposing gender ideas they brought up the issues of equality and female power but also contested and negotiated notions about their own impurity and auspiciousness. Clearly, social movements are often involved in this way in the formation and dissemination of meanings.

Another way to look at the protest is to draw attention to the limitations women had to overcome before they could be politically active. In Andhra Pradesh there is often a division of space into public and private, in which elderly and post-procreative activists were thought of as genderless and less dangerous while widows, even if inauspicious, were no longer restrained by

48 Butler (1999:176f) draws attention to how the dominant gender order is resisted through ‘parody’, i.e. the deconstruction of the symbolic system by rejecting any idea of primary identity, illustrating her argument by gender drag plays that by means of mimicry uncover identities that are always set up without any ontological reality. In her view, such a decomposition of identity does not involve a decomposition of politics but rather confirms as political the actual condition through which identity is expressed, the ‘foundationalist’ scheme of feminism (ibid:189).
men from taking part in public life. Finally, I have discussed how hidden resistance to men’s drinking could become public when women activated the various available forms of humiliation and symbolic inversion for their protest. Most importantly, the dichotomy between public and private resistance limits our understanding of contentious activities because the same individuals might be involved in both forms of dissent and both are characterized by a struggle over manifold and contradictory meanings.
In the previous chapter I attempted to describe how rural women came to perceive male drinking as a problem. On the other hand, there was never a straight line between women’s individual grievances and their entrance into a wider struggle across local and regional boundaries. Consequently, we need to include in our analysis the urban middle class who coordinated the activities at district and state level. Harriss-White (2003:61) has characterized the Indian middle-class as people with quite a high income, engaged in ‘modern professions’ as well as a growing consumption of import-intensive, branded and high-technological commodities. Its constituents have multiplied from an assessed 60-80 millions in the 1980s to around 300 millions in the 1990s (cf. Stein 1998:394; Kohli 1990:328).\(^1\) According to social scientists such as Kothari (1993:70), sections of the class have become disillusioned with the current situation in society, and with party politics in particular, and are thus attracted to social movements. Moreover, in India many of the middle class have been engaged in social work, a tradition that started with social reform organizations such as Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society at the end of the nineteenth century.

The disgruntled Indian middle class supplies part-time or full-time activists who through their membership of various associations have become involved in social movements and who were related through affinal and consanguine ties.\(^2\) Such bonds were less vital in the metropolis of Hyderabad, but in this part of the state people were linked by significant ‘submerged networks’ (Melucci 1991) from earlier agitations. For instance, several women who had been involved in the mobilization against dowries (1975) and protesting against the rape of Rammeza Bee (1978), had become close friends and were still in touch with each other. Other people embodied links with previous political struggles such as the Telangana Armed Struggle and the Independence Movement.

Many organization members earn their living in professions such as lawyers, teachers, or doctors, but a growing number have also become

---

\(^1\) Assessments of the size of the Indian middle class have varied a lot, ranging from a figure of 200 millions to the, probably overestimated, number of 500 millions (Varma 1998:170).

\(^2\) According to various surveys there are around 20,000-30,000 organizations within the Indian voluntary sector, and the country is thus the largest NGO place in the world. While some associations are of a voluntary type, the majority have salaried employees (Kudva 2005:203).
engaged as whole-time social workers employed in the ‘voluntary sector’. To follow the argument by Melucci (1996:313), a social movement can only exist over a longer period if it is able to establish quite a permanent structure. Until recently (cf. Fischer 1997; Kudva 2005; Starn 1999; Staggenborg 2002), very little work has been done on the role of formal organizations in contentious politics because social scientists have often thought of these bodies as bureaucratic, institutionalized agencies, differentiated from the shifting and elusive quality of social movements. My point, rather, is that both fluidity and permanency are aspects to consider since social movements consist not only of loose networks but also of more stable membership organizations. As has been demonstrated by Staggenborg (2002:124), studies of the organizations, the ‘meso’ level of the movements, could connect micro-sociological research on the individual behaviour behind the protests and macro theories concerned with larger, more enduring courses of action. In this chapter I shall discuss the middle-class men and women of the anti-arrack struggle and the associations they embodied. What kind of groups did they represent and which networks existed between these bodies? Why were middle-class persons interested in organizing poor villagers, mainly women, in protests against liquor? How did they perceive the role of rural people in the agitation? In what way did they describe the movement and their own part in it?

The chapter starts by characterizing the organisations active in Nellore and Chittoor, the districts situated in the south-eastern part of the state and bordering each other. I then turn to factors behind the multiplication of middle-class activists in projects in the rural areas, their reasons for entering the struggle, and the problems they faced. From these issues I move on to analyze changing attitudes in Andhra Pradesh towards social work, followed by a discussion regarding stances on village life and rural people among middle-class participants. After focusing on the role of leaders and ideas about leadership prevalent in the mobilization, the chapter ends with a presentation of the ‘movement intellectuals’ and their attempts to display the struggle to outsiders.

In the following pages I shall frequently refer to the JVV (the People’s Science Forum), since the organization was a very important agent in the emergence of the struggle in Nellore district where the movement started and where I carried out a large part of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, I have also included material from Chittoor district and from the state level, which I hope will counterbalance the heavy focus on Nellore.

The Movement Organizations

Countless voluntary groups became occupied in the protest against liquor and joined networking committees in the district capitals. Apart from their apparent effects on good administration and management, organizations can
be extremely important for mobilization since they form connections between people who were not previously related by informal attachments (Gould 1995:202).

Although movement associations with different structures and objectives entered into the liquor protests, they were not evenly spread across the state and there were large differences in the form the organizations took in the various regions. For instance, many groups in Telangana were affiliated to the Naxalite guerrillas, while the JVV, a voluntary organization with ties to the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI [M]) and involved in government programmes in the countryside, dominated Nellore District. Other parts of the state — such as Chittoor, Anantapur and Cuddapah — have been characterized by associations with transnational connections, which means that they are funded by overseas NGOs, foreign governments through bilateral institutions, or multilateral agencies.\(^3\) In Andhra Pradesh the term Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was used when referring to such bodies, but the term has often been applied in the literature when describing any groups outside the state and market sectors without differentiating between organisations with foreign funding and associations involved in more traditional voluntary work. The approach offered here suggests that NGOs are intermediary agencies between marginalized groups and translocal or transnational forces and foundations, enabling middle-class people to work through various projects for social transformation, often funded from abroad (cf. Starn 1999:192-233, 296 n.3; Norström 2003:126-163).

Organizations of the ‘voluntary’ sector in India, regardless of their financial sources, are not independent of the state, since they are involved in state programmes, receive economic contributions from various administrative agencies, and must register according to the Societies Registration Act of 1860 in order to be officially recognized as voluntary bodies.\(^4\) In addition, these groups are recorded in accordance with various federal government acts, the Indian Trust Act of 1882, and the Charitable and Religious Act of 1920. Associations receiving foreign assistance should be listed at the Ministry of Home Affairs according to the Foreign Contribution Regulation

---

\(^3\) The flow of foreign aid has fluctuated widely, depending on circumstances such as wars, the establishment of sovereign nations, and natural disasters. In the 1990s donor agencies shifted their interest from South Asia towards Africa and Eastern Europe, and towards Afghanistan and the Middle East in the early 2000s (Kudva 2005:246). After the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami calamity of 2005 the course of funding has once again been directed to South-east and Southern Asia.

\(^4\) In fact, there are two valid acts in Andhra Pradesh: The A.P. (Telangana Area) Public Societies Registration Act, 1350-Fasli and the Societies Registration Act of 1860. In 1940 the Nizam approved the first applicable today, whereas the British had initiated the latter one that has been revised from time to time by the Indian government (www.accountaid.net [access 060211]).
Act (FCRA)\(^5\) and they must hand in an official audit of their accounts to the central state administration to qualify for registration.\(^6\)

It is obvious, however, that the groups taking part in the Anti-Arrack Movement must be seen within a larger political context. Ray (1999) introduces the concept of ‘political field’ as a variant of ‘social field’ in keeping with the ideas of Bourdieu, according to whom a ‘social field’ is a system of relations between positions taken up by people and institutions in the struggle over common material and symbolic resources (Broady 1990:271; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:101). As has been put forward by Ray (1997:7), the political field embraces such players as the state, political parties and social movement organizations, which are linked to each other in both friendly and hostile ways. In her study the author compares a hegemonic political field in which one party predominates — Calcutta — and a more heterogeneous domain such as Bombay. Although the situation in some parts of Andhra Pradesh resembles that of Calcutta in that voluntary organizations with links to the CPI (M) prevailed in the protests against arrack,\(^7\) the Communist Party was never hegemonic in this state and the party line did not totally command what issues people mobilized around. The following section looks at Nellore and Chittoor, with a focus on alliances and conflicts between movement organizations.

**Nellore District**

When the Anti-Arrack Movement expanded from village to village in Nellore district, middle-class people from voluntary organizations in the urban areas started to consider how to support the rural women and possibly how to translate the new protest energy into political credit for their own causes. The first committee founded with this purpose, the Anti-Arrack Solidarity Committee, had the aim of manifesting agreement with the movement by providing legal aid to people who were arrested.\(^8\) While the

\(^5\) In the Emergency of 1975 the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) was enacted by Indira Gandhi to stop overseas supplies to the opposition parties. However, in 1984 the act was modified to check more directly the flow of money to the voluntary sector.

\(^6\) The dependence of NGOs on state authorities could be seen in the anxiety expressed by an activist from the Rural Institute of Social Education (RISE) after the association had formed a union for handloom workers fighting against false cooperative societies, which led to a dispute with the CBCID (Central Bureau of Criminal Investigation Department). In fact, the member feared that RISE might lose its Foreign Contribution Regulation Identity (FCRI) number, i.e. the right to get financial help from abroad.

\(^7\) This is in line with observations by Kudva (2005:240) who has drawn attention to the fact that the left has influenced the voluntary sector in West Bengal, Kerala and parts of Andhra Pradesh together with Maharashtra, whereas associations with Gandhian ideas have been predominant in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

\(^8\) From a general point of view, the member associations differed according to structure, aims, and ideas. For instance, Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) is a state-wide organization that from the start has fought against police violence against people belonging to different ML-groups, even though the body over time has become engaged in more general human rights cases by publicizing atrocities, giving information and analysis of various
initiative was taken by the Organization for Protecting Democratic Rights (OPDR), several other organizations joined at the first meeting: Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), Telugu Maha Sabha (Telugu Great Assembly), Dalit Maha Sabha (Dalit Great Assembly), the JVV, and Jagrithi (Awakening). One week after this policy was formulated the JVV called for another meeting to which an even wider range of groups was invited. The choice of name, the Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee, reflects the fact that it had a broader aim than the one initially formed, namely, not only to express solidarity with the movement but also to participate in it. Despite both bodies continuing to exist side by side, the first one, the ‘solidarity committee’, was never very active. In the course of time, conflicts developed within the coordination committee, above all between some Naxalite-affiliated groups and the JVV, obvious in the former’s criticism of the bureaucratic structure of the body and the ascendancy of the JVV within it.

Both committees were dominated by middle-class, educated urban people, while women from the villages did not participate. Suresh, who was representing a Dalit association and was an ex-member of the People’s War Group (PWG), argued that it was ‘outsiders’ who founded the bodies. With the exception of the JVV, they had no contact with the rural women in the beginning. In his view, the protest therefore secured a foothold in the urban areas where it was wholly taken over by ‘outsiders’.

The differences between members of the coordination committee crystallized when the auctioning of arrack licences was approaching. While some Naxalite groups organized a public sit-down strike (dharna) outside the auction venue at the A.C. Stadium the majority of the committee preferred a peaceful demonstration in Nellore town (see Chapter 3), fearing that mobilization outside the sales area would incite violence, i.e. clashes between the rural women and the police. At that moment the BJP, whose
members also wanted to confront the liquor business, arrived at the place and succeeded in traversing the barricades. Significantly, people from the different factions recounted the incident in somewhat different terms. For their part the Naxalite groups maintained that they managed to get into the stadium by storming the barriers blocking the entrance, resulting in a postponement of the auctions. There was no serious confrontation with the police, which the majority of the coordination committee had feared, and the next day other organizations joined these groups at the stadium, as their tactics had proved successful. In contrast, the retrospective stories of individuals representing the rest of the coordination committee do not refer to the way the Naxalite group and the BJP had managed to enter the area. In his description of the incidents on 11 September Dr Satyam from the board focuses on the rally in the town:

The groups which argued in favour of attacking the AC Stadium wanted the people to go and storm it and face the consequences, although many associations including the JVV did not want this. We thought that it was the first time village women had come to a rally and as far as possible we should not expose them to police harassment. Our assessment was that the auctions would anyhow not take place at this time. Instead you could call volunteers on subsequent occasions when the sale of licences was planned. Then you could issue an open call and collect people who are ready to handle the situation and be more prepared to confront events. Our judgement proved to be correct, they couldn’t conduct the auctions. All the people went back peacefully from the public meeting with a lot of confidence. Afterwards, on the next day, we selectively summoned people from the villages when the public sale was announced.

When I asked about the storming of the barricades he said:

The coordination committee didn’t go there, though others, especially the BJP, which is a political party, came together with an extremist group. I think it was CPI-ML Jana Shakti.\(^\text{10}\) They went to the place, but were stopped nearly one kilometre away from the auction hall and not allowed into the area. Thirteen BJP activists were, however, able to enter it but they were removed immediately. Interestingly, these two groups are the two extremes — one is the extreme right and the other the extreme left. They happened to hold the same opinion. I don’t think that the claim that the auctions failed to take place because of these incidents is correct. The reason why they were not conducted was the massive public opinion against liquor.

The division within the coordination committee regarding whether or not to enter the selling place of arrack licences by force reflected how these factions thought about the use of violence. According to Tarrow (1994:20), a controversy that often develops within a social movement is that between

\(^{10}\) Apart from the People’s War Group, there are other Marxist-Leninist bodies active within Andhra Pradesh, among others, CPI-ML Jana Shakti.
people attracted to conventional methods and those who feel drawn to more uncompromising forms of collective action including violence. In Nellore district the more moderate section was dominant, and its representatives often stressed their stand in tactical terms, in which the need to sustain the movement in the long run and to avoid confrontation with the government was an important theme. After the incidents at the auctions, the Naxalite group and certain other people left the coordination committee.

The hegemony of the JVV in the movement was to a large extent a result of its participation in the Total Literacy Campaign, since there already existed a network in the villages through the literacy volunteers. Nevertheless, the organization did not manage to involve women in its activities on a permanent basis, either in the rural or in the urban localities as coordinators. When in 1993 Samatha (Equality) was organized as an all-Indian women’s wing of the groups that had been active in the literacy campaign, the association had difficulty in recruiting women to leading positions in Andhra Pradesh, which made them dependent on assistance from men belonging to the JVV.

Within the JVV the Anti-Arrack Movement resulted in a widening gap between ‘communists’ and ‘independents’ that finally (2003) caused a split in the group. The disintegration of the JVV can be interpreted as a result of dissatisfaction on the part of the party over the growing sovereignty of the body, which is in line with the observations by Ray (1999:58) that the CPI (M) has gone against organizational autonomy of social movements in West Bengal. The fact that the CPI (M) in Andhra Pradesh supported the Telugu Desam Party in its partial withdrawal of liquor prohibition aggravated the situation. One member of the JVV expressed his disappointment by arguing that the dominance of party interests had resulted in declining support for the organization among the public. Instead of being ‘the tail’ of a political party, he wanted the JVV to be a voluntary association of middle-class people and intellectuals.

11 The Samatha Vigyan Utsav (SVU), an all-Indian federation with the aim of increasing the ability and consciousness of women, is centrally administered from national to local levels, primarily by means of workshops conducted at the village, block, district and state levels. Establishing assistance for rural women through Self Help Groups, Continuing Education Centres and Health Groups, Samatha extended its network to more than 6,000 villages all over India by 2003.

12 The Samatha units had similar difficulties in other parts of India in finding a balance between the need for autonomy and support from the organizations to which they belonged. In fact, this issue was discussed at a convention held in Nellore between 1 and 4 August 1995 at which delegates from various parts of India pointed out that they wanted to grow as leaders, though with continuing support from the existing network of the Science Movement in which men predominated.

13 Significant is the fact that the ‘communists’ accused the ‘independents’ of accepting foreign aid, which is against the principles of the JVV, while the ‘independents’, for their part, have argued that the ‘communists’ have tried to subordinate the organization to the party and gone against the involvement of the JVV in the Anti-Arrack Movement.
In contrast, Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham (Andhra Pradesh Women’s Society) — an association with links to the CPI (M) today referred to as AIDWA (All-India Democratic Women’s Association) — managed to involve many rural women in the organization. Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham is concentrated in the coastal area of Nellore district and is not very active in the more isolated mountainous part in the west. Together with other women’s groups it has participated in mobilization against dowry death, rape, sexual harassment, posters marketing nude films and beauty competitions. Consequently, the society was more closely associated with concerns of the women’s movement than with those of the party, as the latter often ignored issues that were not related to class-based analysis (cf. Ray 1999:164-65).

Belonging to the caste Velama Naidu, one of the landowning agricultural groups in the state, Nirmala was a woman in her late thirties who was very active in Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham and the Anti-Arrack Movement. She lived with her husband, who was a high school teacher, in a recently built middle-class neighbourhood in Nellore where I also stayed when I visited the town. I often met her early in the morning on her way to the CPI (M) building at which the office of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham was located.

When Nirmala joined the organization after her marriage in 1980, she formed a district committee together with 20 other middle-class women by contacting Jakka Venkaiah, a MLA from the CPI (M). To begin with, she was not very active since she had given birth to several children and was occupied with household work; but in 1992, when women started to protest against arrack in the rural areas, she was part of a group that went to Saipeta and Ayyawaripalle to encourage the inhabitants to join the movement. Travelling every day in a jeep from six o’clock in the morning till one o’clock at night they covered around 200 villages in that year. During these visits she wrote down the stories of rural women and published them in the local newspapers. Nirmala often took her eight-year-old daughter with her, as she could not be left alone in the house. Once a rural woman compared the girl with her own poor, unhealthy children, pointing out the difference in living conditions between village women and the urban activists. According to Nirmala, the alcohol habit among men was the main reason behind the deprivation of families in the countryside.

As the members of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham involved themselves more directly in the protests in the villages by burning arrack packs, the body of Nirmala was often thick with the smell of alcohol when she returned.

---

14 Velama Naidu is concentrated in the border between north-eastern Telangana and northern Andhra.
15 At present (2006), Nirmala has left Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham and is now active within the Congress Party.
Moreover, there were many incidents when inebriated people threatened the urban activists with sticks. Nirmala also took part in the attempts of rural and urban protesters to stop the arrack auctions from 26 to 30 September 1992. She remembered how the arrack contractors ran away after the campaigners had surrounded the Collector and demanded that he stop the sales. On 30 September they were making a dharna in front of the excise station as they had heard that arrack was being sold there, when hired gunmen suddenly surrounded them. Like many times before and after, a government official from Guntur town rescued the activists.

Even if many members denied the connection, both the JVV and Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham were front organizations of the CPI (M). According to Calman (1992:88), the party is struggling to achieve power in the state and its affiliated groups share this strategy by involving themselves in agitation rather than in more violent methods. Mass demonstrations have been one of the preferred tactics (cf. Ray: 1999:57), perhaps explaining why the coordination committee in Nellore district, apart from arranging public meetings, also preferred this method in its confrontation with the enemy. The movement organizations of the neighbouring district had more diverse activities on their agenda but the anti-arrack mobilization was also carried out peacefully in the territory of Chittoor, to which I shall now turn for my second example of the associations that joined in the struggle against liquor.

Chittoor District

By August 1992 the Anti-Arrack Movement had reached the eastern part of Chittoor district and extended quickly over the area. Although the protests against arrack were strong in this corner of the state, in contrast to Nellore the involvement of middle-class people in the movement was not dominated by a single organization. Significantly, several of the groups that participated in Chittoor were registered at the Ministry of Home Affairs since they received financial contributions from abroad. Women at village level organized themselves in women’s societies (mahila mandalis), which were connected to these organizations. In 1997 there were around 250 associations with links to women’s societies spread out in more than 200 places in the district (Reddy & Patnaik 1997:42). Moreover, many organizations taking part in the protest in Chittoor consisted of so-called ‘action groups’, i.e. small autonomous entities with a more or less leftist ideology. In contradistinction to Nellore, the movement spread not through the literacy campaign but through the press. Nagamma, a woman from a locality situated in the south-eastern part of Chittoor district, told me how she got to know about the Anti-Arrack Movement through the Telugu newspapers. After reading the reports of what had happened in places like Dubagunta, the villagers decided that they too should fight against arrack in their vicinity, leading up to their hiring a tractor and going to the Rural Institute of Social Education (RISE)
office in a nearby town to persuade its members to support them in their struggle.

The Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee, Saara Vyatireka Udyamam, was formed in Chittoor about one month later than in Nellore, when Bandaru Dattatreya (a leader of the BJP) and people from the JVV organized a big public meeting at the Salami Bhavan building on 26 September 1992. At that gathering it was decided that the headquarters should be located in Tirupati instead of Chittoor, the district capital, as the former city was more centrally located and accessible by both train and bus. The committee represented 24 organizations such as Prajwala (the Flame), Mahila Shakti (Women’s Power), Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, RISE and Dalit Maha Sabha. Suseela from RISE was elected as convenor of the board. Apart from the Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee there was another federation, ‘the Quit Liquor Committee’, consisting of organizations with a Gandhian philosophy. In general, the two bodies planned their activities separately, the Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee being more active.

Even though women attacked arrack shops in the rural localities, the mobilization in Chittoor was more urban in character. Village women turned up at protest activities that were arranged in towns all over Andhra Pradesh — Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Kakinada. The Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee coordinated sit-down strikes in public places (dharnas), blocking roads and railways (rasta rokos), attacks on the bottling unit at Putalapattu, hunger strikes, as well as organizing marches (padayatras) and cycle rallies to the countryside to spread their message. After reading in the newspaper about the arrival of the Chief Minister in Tirupati, the activists performed dharnas (sit-ins). Moreover, when they read about the public oath-taking programme in Nellore district, the committee in Chittoor decided to follow suit.

In contrast to Nellore, the Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee of Chittoor has not been very effective following the arrack ban, evident in that there was no reaction from the public or the voluntary organizations when its members proposed a protest. Nonetheless, after they got to know that the government was planning to partially lift the prohibition, the committee became more active and conducted protests and hunger strikes. Its associates erected a dharna tent at the Mandapam building on the Gandhi road, the

---

16 According to one member of Prajwala, a flame cannot be created but can only be strengthened since it already exists within people. In 1985 the organization started with the aim of increasing consciousness within Dalit communities and enabling them to break free from the idea of untouchability by, for example, campaigning for the registration of trade unions among agricultural day labourers.

17 Mahila Shakti, a Maoist women’s group working in the slum areas of Tirupati, was founded after a gang rape on a train in 1990. Significant features of the association are that its members work on a voluntary basis and that the activities are funded by individual donations.

18 The Telugu word maNDapam signifies a temporary building consisting of four stones, a roof and a platform to sit on, but the term is also used when referring to larger and more
commercial quarter of Tirupati, but when they informed people from the surrounding rural areas about the protests, only a few responded. Apart from Tirupati the body conducted sit-ins in four or five other mandals of the district. Many member organizations arranged travels to Hyderabad to participate in the agitation against the withdrawal of prohibition that was being coordinated by NAWO (National Alliance for Women’s Organizations). As in other parts of Andhra Pradesh (see Chapter 3), the protest activities had petered out by 1997 with the reopening of the liquor shops, and there were only a few isolated demonstrations beside schools and temples.

I have already mentioned that a representative from the organization RISE (Rural Institute of Social Education) became the convenor of the district committee. In 1984 young people who were engaged in various voluntary organizations established RISE, though the association has since changed from a ‘development’ approach towards ‘empowerment’, by, for instance, taking up a campaign for land rights among tribal people and a tree plantation programme. Tribal village women from Somala in Puttur mandal in south-eastern Chittoor district, came in contact with RISE after they had formed a women’s society which became engaged in the illegal cultivation of wasteland, not knowing that they could apply for legal title. While some farmers from higher castes had destroyed the fields and huts of the villagers, RISE helped them to make a dharna at the mandal headquarters and to apply for authorized titles to the land. Nagamma, who lives in Somala, recounted how RISE taught them not to fold their hands or bow their heads when talking to state officials.

RISE was registered at the Home Ministry and funded by an organization in Belgium. In 1995 Stree Shakti Sanghatam (the Organization of Women’s Power) was formed as the women’s wing of RISE, and one year later, it

permanent constructions (pavilions) at which marriages, sport events and public meetings are held.

In 1995, following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, NAWO was created to realize the programme of the conference, to force the Indian state to respect its international promises, and to coordinate the endeavours of various local groups into the international process for women’s rights (Desai 2002:79).

The change of approach by RISE is related to a process that started in the 1970s, whereby NGOs became influenced by new thoughts about the reasons behind poverty, in which education and consciousness-raising were regarded as important means of bringing about social change and the catchwords became ‘appropriate technology’, ‘awareness building’ and ‘empowerment’. The shift in emphasis was inspired by the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire, at the same time as many Western Protestant donor organizations supported projects with these aims (Kudva 2005:242).

Stree Shakti Sanghatam has established women’s societies at village level after which they selected some active women from the rural groups through which the organisation implemented its programmes. The association has undertaken rape cases, small-scale saving schemes, protests against beauty contests and, above all, education and rehabilitation of matammas, traditional prostitutes among lower castes. One more example requires mention: the convenor of the Anti-Arrack Committee became the director of the organization.
was registered as a separate organization. Although there were some negotiations with an Australian association, Stree Shakti Sanghatam had not yet succeeded in getting money from abroad when I last visited the area in 1998. In consequence, the society was still dependent on men from RISE for financial help and infrastructure.

The Middle-Class Activists

In the foregoing discussion I have dwelt on the movement organizations that coordinated many of the anti-arrack protests at district and state level as well as certain persons that embodied them. The majority of the members and leaders came from the middle class, and many were activists in the voluntary sector. As referred to in the introduction to this chapter, several were doctors, teachers, lawyers, and social workers. Like the ‘humanistic middle class’ described by Gusterson (1996:193) in his account of the US Peace Movement that fought against the nuclear weapons industry, they relied on ‘cultural capital’ (cf. Bourdieu 1992) rather than ‘economic capital’ for their funds.

Numerous middle-class campaigners in the Anti-Arrack Movement regarded voluntary ‘service’ to the poor as superior to the professionalization of social work, which can be traced to the growth and change in the voluntary sector in Andhra Pradesh. As various people from the urban middle class became involved in social work in the 1970s, they started to distinguish themselves from the philanthropy and relief work of earlier associations dominated by the upper castes and classes. The government provided economic security for some organizations, while others got financial help from abroad, and some worked voluntarily. Broadly speaking, the voluntary sector had become more heterogeneous at this time, as regards aspects such as funding sources, activities and membership.

These transformations were intimately linked to the growing importance of the Indian middle class, a group that emerged in the colonial epoch as a favoured class between the British and the majority of citizens. Varma (1998) describes how it changed during the Independence struggle into an elite seen as having a certain assignment for the nation. Given that the economic strategy of the Indian government at the time was focused on the abolition of poverty, and the middle class was believed to share these aims by adopting the simple lifestyle as a superior ideal, it was considered crude to demonstrate one’s wealth in a poor country like India (ibid:29-30).

22 Kudva (2005:246) calls attention to the fact that funding from the central government to the voluntary sector increased tremendously in the 1990s, as the state gave financial support to various associations for implementing its programmes but under strict central directives. Writing on Peru, Starn (1999:222) discusses the growing blurring of distinctions between ‘governmental’ and ‘non-governmental’ associations with the formation of ‘semi-official’ bodies involved in various development programmes.
Nevertheless, the middle-class was quite small until the 1970s.23 With the appearance of Rajiv Gandhi on the political scene, India was believed to be entering the world economy with a reliance on the middle class and its capacity to consume (op cit:113),24 a process in which many members became, in the words of Ståhlberg (2002:17), ‘frivolous spenders’ instead of ‘self-sacrificing intellectuals’. Although voluntary workers were not outside these larger transformations many continued to reject in public the claim that social work should be a livelihood rather than a calling.

In the 1980s and 1990s an increasing number of Indian organizations started to receive economic contributions from abroad,25 resulting in a loss of social credentials since voluntarism started to arouse associations of an affluent lifestyle, money, and permanent employment rather than asceticism and simplicity (Sooryamoorthy & Gangrade 2001:5). As it was widely believed in Andhra Pradesh that the staff of NGOs lived like ‘kings’ while the rural people were starving, members of these groups came to internalise such negative feelings. The president of an NGO from Chittoor district once expressed his worries about the spread of ‘the NGO culture’ in India since many organizations had become dependent on Western donors and often had to adapt to their priorities. In particular, he was disappointed about how ‘competence’ had replaced ‘commitment’ among members of the voluntary sector (cf. Kudva 2005:248). This conceptualization of ‘NGO culture’ specifically referred to the employees’ lifestyle, as it was seen to contrast with the simple way of life claimed for earlier voluntary service, carried out without any personal benefits.

However, in the latter half of the 1990s the existence of many middle-class activists was still quite simple according to Western standards, whether they worked on a voluntary basis or were employed. Their homes were sparsely furnished, consisting of some iron chairs, maybe a wooden bedstead and a cupboard for writing materials. While the electric equipment consisted of a fan in the ceiling, a refrigerator, and an obligatory television set, very few owned a car and they often travelled between villages by scooter or rented a jeep for the purpose. Thus the negative feelings towards NGOs cannot be explained simply as a reaction to the members’ accumulation of

---

23 The middle class mostly comprised people from the state administration, qualified professionals, businessmen, traders as well as teachers in the cities and in higher educational institutes (Ståhlberg 2002:16; Varma 1998:26-7).
24 Many agricultural entrepreneurs, people from the small-scale sector, and the lower-level bureaucracy, earlier on the outer edges of the middle class, became new entrants to the group (Varma 1998:40-4).
25 Andhra Pradesh is, after Tamil Nadu, the second Indian state when considering the amount of foreign-funded organizations. In 1996/97 there were 1,226 such groups but they had increased to 1,616 by 1999/2000. The all-India figures are 12,136 and 13,986 respectively. In fact, the organizations in Andhra Pradesh received in total 3,527,221,000 rupees in 1997/97 and the figure had grown to 5,369,879,000 in 1999/2000 (www.accountaid.net [access 060211]).
material wealth but have to be connected to the conflict between the professionalization of the sector and indigenous notions of ‘service’ (seewa) and ‘the gift’ (daana). As we know from the work of Watt (2005) these ideas had lost their religious connotations and become related to philanthropy by the end of the nineteenth century.

Given that the Indian concept of service (seewa) conventionally had the implication of paying respect to, or worshipping, a god, religious teacher, or elders, these more restricted notions of service were extended to mean unselfish assistance to the general public by the beginning of the twentieth century (ibid:106-7). While Gandhi carried on this tradition, he changed the focus of voluntary work from social and religious reform to political change and nation-building (Kudva 2005:240; Fox 1989:157). Nonetheless, it has continued to be associated with the positive undertones of asceticism and modesty. After Independence, voluntary organizations became seen as founded on the principle of unconstrained help for poor and marginalized groups, with the underlying assumption that such work should be done freely and not for a livelihood or for personal gain (cf. Caplan 1985:141-2; 157).

The gift, daana, on the other hand, has a prime place in the established Hindu dharma scheme — the overarching order of society and the cosmos (Sooryamoorthy & Gangrade 2001:39 — since the concept is understood to stand for a ‘pure gift’ from which the donor does not anticipate any equal reciprocation in his/her life span (Watt 2005:69; cf. Parry 1986). Consequently, the rich offer daana, often at the end of their lives, as a way of achieving liberation from rebirth and removing their misdeeds (Watt 2005:69; Sooryamoorthy & Gangrade 2001: 39). The social reform organizations that arose at the end of the nineteenth century contributed to the situation that gift-giving was no longer an individual responsibility but instead was carried out by voluntary associations. Indeed, donations were no longer motivated by individual merit (puNyam) applicable to the subsequent life but instead by improvement of the whole society (Watt 2005:69),

---

26 Watt (2005:7) has demonstrated that social reform organizations had started the nation-building process by carrying out voluntary work even earlier than Gandhi. Nevertheless, I suggest that the latter has played an important role, considering the development of these activities in India as he carried on, reformulated and spread the practice. According to Fox (1989), social work became a mass movement through Gandhi’s satyagraha (non-violent protest, literally ‘truth force’) campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s.

27 The offering of daana, or other kinds of gifts, often implies the subordination of the recipient to the donor (Raheja 1988), according to the general patterns observed by Mauss (1969:72). In a similar vein, Johansson (1992) describes for Bolivia the unequal gift-giving of Pentecostal missionaries who by presenting gifts become ‘blessed’, at the same time as the mission ideology denies this asymmetric relationship by more readily stressing equality between donor and benefactor, even at times the idea of ‘service’ from the missionary part (ibid: 190).

28 The earlier reform associations managed to broaden the concept by linking it to education, i.e. the gift of knowledge (vidyadaana) and the gift of land (bhumidaana) for a school (Watt 2005:70). Vinoba Bhave, who carried on the Gandhian tradition after Independence, widened
hopefully achieved through altruistic donations with the aim of alleviating poverty.29

The fact that social work has become a livelihood among many middle-class people, resulted in a conflict between the reality and the ideals of voluntarism inherent in notions such as ‘service’ and ‘the gift’. Conversely, not all middle-class participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement were full-time activists engaged in NGOs. Many of them worked within various professions and dedicated themselves to the struggle in their leisure time, whereas others who were engaged in the literacy campaign were relieved of their ordinary occupations as government employees to be able to involve themselves in the programme without losing their income. The latter were referred to as being ‘on duty’. Their role as government wage-earners became a problem when the temperance protests broke out, as the activists faced the alternative of losing their former employment or withdrawing from the anti-arrack struggle. Several men from the JVV solved this dilemma by using pseudonyms to avoid being discovered by the authorities.

Subramaniam remembered how fear and excitement were accompaniments of his work under cover at the peak of the movement. Together with P.S. Manohar, who also took an active part in the literacy programme, he once went by jeep from Udayagiri to Guvvadi — small towns in the interior of Nellore district — transporting 1,500 rupees, a microphone and some pamphlets against arrack. When they reached Kovur, a village two hours’ journey from Udayagiri, a police constable stopped them to ask for a lift. As the man seemed to be suspicious, they feared that they might be arrested and finally the driver pulled up the jeep pretending that the engine had failed and advised the police officer to catch a bus since it was getting late. After the constable had gone to the nearest bus stop, the driver drove the jeep to the outskirts of the next village where Subramaniam and Manohar took a short cut to an agreed place, fearing that the police would catch them if they travelled in the jeep. Anyhow, they reached the vehicle safely without any mishaps.

This incident took place on 31 August 1992 and the next day there was a big public meeting in Nellore town. As Manohar and Subramaniam were

the idea of daana further to include different types of donations for the improvement of the entire Indian nation: gifts of labour (shramadaana); gifts of money, earnings or wealth (samitidaana); gifts of mental capacities in social work (bhudidaana); and a commitment to live for society (jeevan daana) (Sooryamoorthy & Gangrade 2001:47f).

29 Donations are still not without self-interest, and the hope of remuneration or rescue in a future existence has been a common motivation for charity. Moreover, gifts have played an important part in power relations. As has been brought up by Mines (1996:11,42), generosity and philanthropy are central qualities of South Indian public existence, and donations are employed by important persons to create and uphold social contacts, although they have attained a reputation for conduct that is actually a refutation of self-interest. Such a denial was also palpable among middle-class activists in Andhra Pradesh, who often claimed that they were involved in social work without any personal gain.
supposed to bring rural women by lorry to the gathering, they split up and spent the night at different places so that at least one of them would be able to organize the assembly as planned. Nothing happened and the meeting proved to be very successful.

**Narrating Personal Involvement**

Although middle-class activists like Subramaniam and Manohar might have joined the protests against liquor for different reasons, they often explained it in a similar manner. Gusterson (1996:202) describes how the participants in the US Anti-Nuclear Movement focused in their narratives on ‘transformative moments’ marked by emotions resembling conversion, when they were able to ‘dramatically’ rearrange their preferences (cf. Ryan 2001:202). Campaigners of the Anti-Arrack Movement expressed their involvement as the outcome of a prolonged process during which they had been influenced by their social and cultural environment — by other people, books, but above all by their family background and their parents.\(^{30}\) When Venkatamma, who participated in the movement in Nellore district, was asked about the grounds behind her engagement she told a long story about her childhood and marriage:

> I come from a political family, as my parents were active in CPI and my in-laws in CPI (M). The native place of my father is Chinnapur close to Narasimhakonda in this district. My mother was orthodox and even followed the rules of untouchability. At one time a man from an intermediate caste was dragged out of a cart and beaten because he had not got down when he saw a Reddy. My father protested against this and the entire Reddy community therefore boycotted him. This episode changed my mother.

> She started to read Vivekananda and other social reformers. I was brought up in such a rational atmosphere. My father exhorted the lower classes to unite against the Reddis and organized a strike among the workers and other villagers who worked for them. My mother supported him in this campaign. Although the Reddis tried to kill my father, the working people stood behind him. While he went underground, the police filed cases against him and established a police post in our village.

> We were thus raised in an atmosphere of struggle and egalitarianism. Even if we were not aware of communism we wanted all people to be happy. I married the son of the district secretary of CPI (M) who was working in the Student Federation of India (SFI).\(^{31}\) His family had given him the freedom to choose his life partner. He selected me and we were married with the consent

---

\(^{30}\) This does not mean that Indian activists never expressed their participation in social movements by referring to experiences resembling ‘transformative moments’ as described by Gusterson. Hardtmann (2003:158), writing on the Dalit Movement, discusses how some campaigners referred to ‘turning points’ in their lives — often after reading the biography of Ambedkar — when they suddenly recognized discrimination and prejudices against the Dalits.

\(^{31}\) This association is the students’ wing of the CPI (M).
of both families. This was the Emergency period. We were married in March 1977.

Both of us became lawyers instead of involving ourselves as full-timers within the party. However, we practise certain morals and do not defend theft and rape cases. When the Anti-Arrack Movement started we asked our co-advocate not to champion disputes involving violation of the dry law. We have firm principles. Both of us are motivated by the same values.

Anuradha: How did you join the movement?

Venkatamma: I have already said that we mainly concentrated on our practice. As party people, we became close to the Literacy Movement. The administration staffs approached our party, which is always on the side of the poor. At the time the Anti-Arrack Movement emerged we became attached to it. We had never experienced a movement like that. The party supplied us with infrastructural support such as transport facilities and Praja Natya Mandal (People’s Theatre Society) joined us by writing songs that even drinkers identified with. All our members were occupied in different professions. Dr Rama Devi, who now lives in Anantapur, worked at Dr Ramachandra Reddy Hospital and so did Dr Vijaya Kumar. Others were teachers or engaged in various professions. Although everybody had family responsibilities, we all took an active part and spent much time travelling to different villages.

That was the situation when I entered the protests. However, my participation was still limited since I thought that there would be a conflict between the demands of the movement and my profession. As advocates, we must be available at any time if we are to survive in this competitive atmosphere. There are lawyers who, like Krishna (her husband), live up to their principles but I could not do it since I was the only female advocate at that time. My husband, anyhow, insisted that we should both attend and I participated in a conference of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham at which I was elected as the vice-president. I had had an inclination for social movements since my childhood due to my family background, which I have already told you about. Therefore I totally involved myself at the cost of my practice.

Doubtless, Venkatamma considers her family milieu to be the main reason behind her devotion to the struggle. She starts her story by referring to it and she returns to this topic when Anuradha, my assistant, asks her about how she became tied up in the movement. Similarly, many people described their engagement by referring to their family background, illustrating that participants in the Anti-Liquor Movement often regarded themselves as part of a larger group, whether family, caste, or party.

Experiences of Female Activists

By entering the Anti-Arrack Movement middle-class people faced various personal difficulties discernible in that some of them spent a large part of

32 Praja Natya Mandal, one of the front organizations of the CPI (M) in the state, is engaged in cultural activities, above all, street theatre and musical performances in different parts of Andhra Pradesh (see Chapter 7).

33 Krishna (pseudonym), the husband of Venkatamma, is known for his altruistic character and commitment to whatever project he pursues.
their income on the movement, whereas others experienced harassment from the police and gunmen (gundas) hired by the liquor contractors. While several men were away from their wives and children for months, women active within the struggle ran into special problems, having left the domestic sphere seen as appropriate for women and travelled around in rural areas, with the outcome that their reputation as honourable and modest women became questioned. For this reason many of them abandoned the mobile activist life as soon as they married. I sometimes had problems in locating middle-class women who had been very dynamic in the earlier days of the agitation before the arrack ban, and other members also did not know where to find them after they had married and left their organization.

In many parts of the world participants in social movements have been squeezed between the desire to get involved in a romantic liaison and their political commitment. Mischle (2001:151), writing on Brazil, demonstrates that the strategy for dealing with such a conflict between family and movement has been to choose a partner who was active within the same struggle. Rama Devi, who was a member of the CPI (M) and Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, made such a choice of companion in order to continue being active within the party. Although she focuses on the living conditions of the 1950s, many Indian female activists still face similar difficulties.

My wedding was in 1954. As I was not willing to leave the movement and settle down I didn’t want to marry at all. Actually I wanted to give up matrimonial life. In those days comrade Sundaraiah decided not to have children. He requested the cadre to get married but without children, as a woman who stayed single in society might be scandalized one day. My husband and I worked together. I was active for two years before becoming pregnant with my first son. We then had to set up a home. I went to my brother and asked him for my share of land. As my husband’s family had neither property nor land, he could not leave politics and work to maintain a wife and children. For my part, I came from a family with a lot of land.

My aim was to intertwine our political and family life. When our first son was born I considered rearing him for six months and then giving him to somebody in order to be able to participate more actively in the party. Then the second birth came. There was no family planning in those days. I wanted to find a well-behaved affluent family that could raise the children carefully. Milk is the main link between mother and infant and I provided that. The son had become two years old. A girl was born. Nobody came forward to take care of them.

Anuradha: Didn’t your husband object to your plans?

---

34 With this remark Rama Devi is referring to the decision by Sundaraiah to undergo a sterilization so that he could dedicate himself wholeheartedly to the communist struggle. As this man was an important personality in the early days of the Communist Party in India, he influenced its direction in Andhra Pradesh and when the party split into two factions he joined the CPI (M) wing (see Chapter 2).
Rama Devi: No, he wanted me to participate in politics. That had been our agreement from the beginning. Marriage and settling down had never been part of our arrangement.

Anuradha: Did you only want to live with him if you could continue in political life?

Rama Devi: Yes, but he never influenced me. I decided it myself.

Anuradha: Did you like him?

Rama Devi: Yes, I liked him because he was a communist. If I had married a non-political man he would have drawn me into family life.

Finally, Rama Devi had to withdraw from her political activities to take care of her children until they were old enough to be put in a student hostel, which is the custom in many Indian middle-class families. In contrast, contemporary married female activists practise family planning and many choose a life without children, whereas others encounter objections from husbands and the strain between household work and their involvement in the movement. On the other hand, some middle-class women have a job outside the home that adds to their workload. One of these is Uma who had to start working since her family could not live on her husband’s salary alone. It was a ‘love marriage’ and the couple did not have any support from their parents. Since they wanted to give their children a proper education, her spouse persuaded her to take up a job as a teacher. In the beginning she was hesitant, being afraid that the children might be neglected, but later on, when her husband asked her to stop working, she refused because she enjoyed her job very much. As she was a teacher she became involved in the literacy campaign and then also in the Anti-Arrack Movement.

Although men are free and have all the opportunities, many of them do not involve themselves in social work. We therefore feel that they don’t have any commitment. Women have this aptitude but their husbands may object and obstruct their participation. I was able to throw myself into the movement since nobody opposed it. I am proud that I took part, even if I didn’t have much time. I feel happy about it and satisfied that I have done something to change society. I have got self-confidence to participate in similar movements in the future.

Anuradha: Did you find any differences or commonalities between yourself and the village women?

Uma: The common problems belong to domestic life. While both rich and poor people have economic difficulties, women in addition have their own obstacles. Those husbands who are against the advancement of their wives might discourage them. Others don’t want their spouses to be at the centre, which is a dilemma for many women. For my part I have had no such experience. I would have engaged myself in it even if he protested since I felt that it was a good cause. However, he never objected, as my household work was always discharged.

Anuradha: What would have happened if you had participated in the movement at the expense of your tasks in the household?
Uma: If I had ignored the family and my responsibilities? No, I wouldn’t have participated! Every woman feels committed to the family members and their well-being. Furthermore, I have to be a successful teacher and a good social worker.

Uma describes the difficulties women encounter in finding a balance between voluntary work, household activities and their employment. The participation of women despite these problems could, according to Uma, be a sign of their greater devotion to social struggles. Likewise, other female activists pondered about the dedication of men and women to the temperance struggle.

Discourses on Villages

An issue that often came up when discussing with middle-class people was the importance of education and the spread of middle-class manners in ‘backward’ rural areas (cf. Elias 1994). Apparently, country people internalised these ideas and constantly apologized for being ‘uneducated’ (nirakSaraasyuDu) and having crude manners. Writing on Sweden, Frykman and Löfgren (1979) have demonstrated how middle-class culture became standard for the rest of society and how people from this class have been involved in reforming the labouring classes, for example through welfare activities. In India the nationalist middle class similarly regarded ‘peasants’ as uncomplicated and ignorant, not knowing that their poverty was the outcome of the colonial order, while the former shouldered the task of awakening rural people to the destructive nature of colonialism (Chatterjee 1999:159).

On the other hand, there was a counter-image, represented by Gandhi, who searched for the solutions to the problems of humanity in the villages. At the end of the 1930s Gandhi became engaged in village work through which he aimed to reshape Indian society by incorporating several earlier features of his assignment: khadi (manufacture of hand-spun cloth and yarn), constructive work, proper diet, educational endeavours and Harijan welfare work (Brown 1992: 297). According to Gandhi, India’s rural population were the inheritors of its ‘civilization’ and the real people of the sovereign social order that he imagined — swaraj (ibid:298; cf. Favero 2005:75). In his own words, ‘Take away the encrustation [of crudeness], remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be’ (Gandhi 1939; cit in Brown 1992:298). Consequently, Gandhi argued that the model society could be found in the villages, as here the key values of perfect social administration

35 Gandhi’s constructive programme developed from 1915 to 1945 and brought about, among other things, the charkha (spinning wheel that is placed on the ground), khadi, basic education, liquor prohibition and removal of untouchability.
are entirely integrated: self-support, autonomy and self-determination, founded on non-violence and truth (Linkenbach 1994:64-65).

Recently a growing number of middle-class people have appropriated the Gandhian image of village existence as embodying the true India (cf. Favero 2005:75), evident in the number of participants in social movements — above all, representatives of environmental agitations — who have given prominence to life in the countryside as the perfect society. Urban activists in Andhra Pradesh emphasized, in a similar vein, the feeling of togetherness and harmony of village existence by stressing that people in such areas, in contrast to the towns, still lived according to traditional values of simplicity and hospitality at the same time as there had been a ‘cultural degeneration’ even in these localities, middle-class campaigners pointed out, due to the growing alcohol abuse among the male population.

In contrast to Gandhi, Nehru thought of village life as intellectually and culturally backward, something which could present no basis of knowledge for the future. For a long time the Nehruvian picture of provincial places came to dominate the Indian development discourse, which, in line with Gupta (1998:11), focuses on the position of a nation-state relative to other similar entities, but also providing a form of identity, reflected in the metonymic connection of the individual life-cycle with the progress of the nation.36 Conversely, notions on development are not only used when comparing nation-states but are also part of a dichotomy between rural and urban areas. In the words of Gupta (ibid:9), ‘The first axis — modernity — is associated with progress, development, “the West”, science and technology, high standards of living, rationality and order; the other axis — tradition — is associated with stasis or even stagnation, underdevelopment, the Orient, conventional tools and technologies, poverty, superstition, and disorder’.

Also in Andhra Pradesh discussions on development, abhiwdhdi, referred to both the nation and the individual with the meaning of ‘growth’, ‘increase’, ‘expansion’, ‘improvement’ and ‘progress’ (cf. Gwynn 1991). A

36 ‘Development’, an idea with roots in the Enlightenment period, spread quickly over the earth with the economic expansion of the West, in which leaders of sovereign neo-colonial states elaborated development programmes as part of the nation-building process. Some studies have dealt with how discourses on development, regardless of the notion’s universalizing assignment, are constantly carried out locally and how these might result in unexpected processes (see Dahl & Hjort 1984, Dahl & Rabo 1992; Crush 1995; Rangan 2000). Escobar (1992) explains the rise of New Social Movements as a consequence of a predicament of modernity and the fact that ‘development’, one of its organizing doctrines, is no longer reasonable. Other writers, such as Rangan (2000:144), have argued that participants in such movements have often not protested against development but are actually part of its procedures. She continues by pointing out that the Chipko Movement in Uttar Pradesh was not a protest against growing commercial penetration of the forests but a mobilization by its inhabitants against ‘the lack of development’ in the region, since local people, in contrast to timber merchants and contractors, had become marginalized in not having access to the forest area, credit, or market networks.
related term is backwardness (*wenakabaaTutanamu*), which people often brought up when contrasting their living conditions with those of the West but also when describing the rural areas. Many were horrified when they heard that I was living in such a ‘backward place’ as Chintala Palem, for instance V. Sekhar, an activist from the JVV, who argued that the locality was not only economically but also ‘morally backward’, that is, lacking in education and knowledge. As I have stated in Chapter 3, the JVV was part of a larger pan-Indian movement concerned with the spread of ‘science’ and ‘scientific attitude’ in provincial places, and the view of Sekhar reflected these broader aims of the organization.

Urban people often saw it as morally important to reform villagers and save them from ‘social evils’ such as liquor and prostitution. When conversing with middle-class people, but never with the rural people, a subject that often arose was sexual atrocities such as rape and sexual harassment due to intoxication. A common story was that of the incestuous husband, who, when he came home drunk, could not differentiate between his wife and his daughter. Most activists had never experienced such incidents themselves but had heard about them. Nearly all the reported episodes were said to have taken place in Dalit settlements in the countryside, while people belonging to the latter groups, for their part, never referred to such events. Aside from the ‘evil’ of liquor, middle-class advocates often recalled other ‘bad habits’ (*ceDu alawaattlu*) that ruined the health and economy of village people, exemplified by gambling, cockfights, smoking or chewing tobacco, as well as chewing areca nut with betel leaves.

37 In Andhra Pradesh people often referred to cockfights and gambling as other ‘bad habits’ but did not see them as being as serious as liquor use. For instance, Dr Sesha Reddy invoked the story of Yudishthira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers, described in the *Mahabharata*, in which Durjodhana, an envious cousin, provoked Yudishthira to cast dice with him. When the king started to gamble he lost everything — his whole kingdom, his fortune and even his brothers and wife who became slaves. Another example is how some villagers in the coastal part of Nellore district recounted the religious festival of Sankaranthi as an occasion for cockfights in the colonial period. However, the struggle for Independence contributed to youth festivals replacing the competitive cockfights, which often ‘heated the minds’ and ended in fighting. An old man described how they tried to restrain the youths from quarreling during such sports by collecting the youngsters for different, more controlled, games where the winners obtained prizes in order to divert their anger.

38 The use of tobacco is very common in Andhra Pradesh. Many men smoke and women chew tobacco, while in the northern districts of Coastal Andhra (above all in Vishakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari) people, including women and children, smoke *cheroots* — cigars open at both ends. Furthermore, tobacco is exchanged between friends, though this substance does not have the same religious importance as betel. Sometimes both drugs are mixed and masticated together. In recent years cigarette smoking has become very common all over India and it is today a sign of modernity, resulting in some people starting to campaign against smoking it, regarding it as an addiction which is bad for the health. Nonetheless, the protests against tobacco never became as widespread as the anti-arrack campaign.

39 The areca nut and betel leaves, *taambuulam*, mixed with a lime and heartwood paste (*chunan*), are chewed together, often after a meal. In Andhra Pradesh both women and men
In this section I have discussed how middle-class people romanticized rural life and at other times regarded villagers as ‘backward’, meaning specifically that they were often torn between an idealization and a derogation of the lifestyle in the countryside. Schweizer (1988), writing on Sardinia, shows how individuals from this class have thought of shepherds, the main symbol of village existence on the island, as closer to nature, and their descriptions reveal both positive and negative connotations. On the one hand, rural people are represented as ‘uneducated’ and ‘uncivilized’; on the other, they signify a more authentic way of life that has become threatened by the urban consumer society.

The latter perspective was evident when considering how middle-class participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement described the mobilization against arrack by women in the villages as more genuine, since it had arisen amongst the ‘oppressed’ who for a long time had been reduced to silence. Our premise is that the part played by outsiders in raising awareness, in encouraging and occasionally even directing the agitation, was then played down (cf. Linkenbach 1994:70). Most importantly, the idealization of the protests in the countryside became more palpable, the further away people were located from the realities of rural existence (cf. Schweizer 1988:226), illustrated by the following remark of Mageshwar — a university teacher, freelance journalist and activist in Hyderabad:

I became interested in the movement because this is the nature of any intellectual and any educated person. Local people’s struggles impress us. This is quite a common response of intellectuals all over the world. It is reflected in how a person like you has come all the way from Sweden to write about the people’s protest in a small village. Like you, we responded, as this is a movement of the voiceless and a mobilization of the local people. It is not a struggle for political power but rather a struggle for empowerment. When voiceless and helpless people unite to ascertain their rights it’s a true reflection of democracy.

Leadership within the Movement
Some men and women had a more prominent role than others in the movement as they acted as spokespersons and organizers. The argument that take this substance on a daily basis, maintaining that they use it for digestion but that it has also become a habit — they have turned into ‘slaves’ (baanisalu) to it. The substance has a religious significance — it is offered to the gods and is exchanged in many ceremonies, for example during weddings. Because this substance is regarded as auspicious and serving it is a sign of hospitality, people give taambuulam and bananas to guests before they leave, especially during celebrations: the banana fruit symbolizes life; the betel leaves that you will have happiness (greenness) and the areca nut that bitterness will be overcome (since the bitter nut is chewed together with the leaves into a paste). Although middle-class people often objected to the habit of villagers chewing taambuulam on a daily basis, their disapproval did not develop into any organized attempts to get the practice stopped.
I am developing is that they became the leaders of the struggle, raising important questions about individuality in Indian society but also some general issues about the command in social movements that have frequently been downplayed in the literature.

**Collectivism and Individuality**

Many studies of Indian society have ignored the importance of individual leadership by considering this country to be a part of the world governed by collective values (see Dumont 1970). Mines (1996:13) argues that, even if individuality is not lacking in India, it has a close connection with family and caste, as people do think about individuality in public life in terms of a person’s superiority compared with the others within his or her group.

What struck me was the importance of leadership in the rhetoric of some activists. When I was walking in the mountains close to Udayagiri in western Nellore district together with P.S. Manohar and my assistant, the former suddenly asked me what I was going to do after I finished my project. Would I get a well-paid job or would I do ‘service’ to the poor by becoming a leader (*naayakuraalu*) in a voluntary association? I maintained that I did not consider this position to be all that important but Manohar insisted on it and told me a story about some rats harassed by a cat. The rats arranged a meeting to deal with their problem and decided to hang a bell around the neck of the cat. Nevertheless, after some time they started to quarrel about which one of them should fasten the bell round its neck. ‘Someone has to be in command’, Manohar continued, ‘many people still follow just like sheep as they don’t have any awareness.’ This man was a dedicated member of the CPI (M), which might be one reason behind his belief in the significance of leadership when considering social struggles. One of the most striking features of the party is its centralized structure based on a well-disciplined group of cadres (Ray 1999: 53).

Numerous participants, maybe in response to the more hierarchical view of organizers exemplified by the statement of Manohar, considered the protest against arrack to be a spontaneous uprising among rural women without any central command. As they were in favour of a loosely administered and fluid decision-making structure, those who became influential were not thought to be part of the struggle and denied their own significance in the movement (cf. Barker, Johnson & Lavalette 2001:1). Dr Vijaya Kumar from the JVV, for his part, wanted to reduce the vital role played by leaders in Indian society, as he suggested that the management must be shared and rotated every second or third year in order to give room for different opinions and skills. In his vision, leadership is part of a collective decision in which both the majority and the minority are valued. One may

---

40 This word is used when referring to women, while the corresponding Telugu term for a male leader is *naayakuDu*. 

153
see such statements as a renunciation of authority, but they are also a claim to legitimate control in a setting in which a popular base is seen as ideologically important. In a study of Chennai, Mageli (1997:71) has made a similar observation of the way women’s groups in the city created an alternative political culture by emphasizing group loyalty rather than identification with the chief activists.

Charismatic Leadership

Some outstanding people representing the Anti-Arrack Movement were recognized by their individual ability to inspire people and to involve their followers in the struggle by skilful public performances and speeches. Ideas about leadership within the social sciences have often focused on how people attract support through such personal traits, i.e. the thoughts on charismatic leadership developed by Weber (1978) in differentiating between traditional, charismatic and legal-rational control. In his view, these types are all based on people’s motives for submitting to orders without the use of explicit coercion. The charismatic leader gives an answer and demonstrates the way to the needs of the people by awakening them so that they can ‘change’ themselves: in other words, he/she identifies the purpose of the movement and presents himself/herself as the one who knows how to achieve it. Recently, this meaning of charisma has met a rising critique since the agency of the followers is trivialized. Instead leadership has been explained as a relationship between commander and adherents (Melucci 1996:333-36; Barker, Johnson and Lavalette 2001, Johnson 2001:109).

According to Melucci (1996:337), charismatic guidance is a peculiar variety of reciprocity in which emotional recognition of the remarkable characteristics of the leader and the intensification of the supporters’ personal and group identity prevail over other components.

In Andhra Pradesh oratory skills and performances were important ingredients in the meetings. This was evident in how often people recalled the jokes told and spoke in detail about the content of the speeches. Another significant individual trait that was admired in a leader was an ascetic lifestyle. As Indian political culture has often been dominated by such models, politicians and activists have enhanced their status and hence their importance as authorities by adhering to a simple way of life, at least in public, characterized by no drinking, no smoking and a vegetarian diet. Broadly speaking, these ideals have become part of the qualities required and expected from leaders of voluntary organizations and social movements. Sudhakar, a middle-class activist whom I met in Tirupati, confessed to me that he would stop his drinking and smoking habits if he decided to involve himself full-time in his organization. Dr Vijaya Kumar from the JVV, for his part, stopped smoking too in order to set an example, when he became involved in the anti-arrack struggle.
Multiple Leaders

Rather than a central command, there were many organizers in the agitation against arrack and at various levels. Several studies of social movements have observed that brief but intensive periods of activity demand informal decision-making and ad hoc spokespersons (Melucci 1996:345; cf. Ryan 2001; Barker, Johnson & Lavalette 2001:15; Robnett 1996). In Andhra Pradesh there were leaders representing the state and district positions, as well as local grassroots commanders. In general, state leaders travelled extensively to attend different sessions and were those who made statements to the press. Some of them were elderly people with links to past struggles and thus embodied the continuity of the movement, for example Vaavilala Gopala Krishnaiah and Surya Devara Rajaya Lakshmi from the Independence Struggle as well as Mallu Swaraiyam from the Telangana Armed Struggle.

At the local level, rank-and-file leaders interacted with rural women. Malyadri from the JVV praised the village young people who took part in the literacy campaign as the ‘alternative command’ in the rural areas, people who did not base their position on wealth or tradition. Nevertheless, many of them had their own reasons for taking part in the campaign and afterwards in the mobilisation against arrack. Venkateswarlu from Chintala Palem, a shy lean man in his twenties, came forward as a literacy volunteer, and later on became a member of the JVV. This man was a strong advocate in the locality for the organization’s rationalist ideas and the fight against superstition. Living in the Mala settlement outside the main village, Venkateswarlu’s participation in the literacy campaign, the Anti-Arrack Movement, and other activities of the JVV made it possible for him to improve his status somewhat. There was no caste discrimination within the organization and he became respected among higher-caste villagers due to his association with the state authorities.

This man was one of the many members of NGOs and voluntary organizations who acted as intermediaries or political entrepreneurs between marginalized local groups and the larger society at district, mandal and village level (cf. Jelin 1998; Alvarez 1998; Kothari 1993). Mischle (2001:138) characterizes social movement organizers as entrepreneurs, emphasizing their ‘in-between’ character at several levels. In a similar vein, the leaders of the Anti-Arrack Movement mediated between urban and rural participants, between movement organizations, as well as between the movement and its adversaries. I shall describe below two such persons in more detail: P.S. Manohar, who worked at mandal level in Nellore district and Reena, who was a district coordinator in the area of Chittoor.
Several people at district and mandal headquarters travelled around to the villages to coordinate activities. One of them was P.S. Manohar, a man in his thirties who often visited Chintala Palem from Peddakonda, a nearby commercial and administrative centre. Laughing and with a cigarette in his hand, Manohar was a common sight in the main street of Peddakonda close to the bus stop, which he often frequented together with his male friends. His wife had tried to make him drop his smoking habit by writing ‘no smoking’ on the wall of their home, but without any results. The simple house of Manohar, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen, was sparsely furnished with some iron chairs, a bed and a small table with a black-and-white television set. In the outer room there was a painting of Sundaraiah, the erstwhile communist leader of Andhra Pradesh, and on the wall the wife of Manohar had written in English ‘silence please’ as his friends made a lot of noise when they visited them late in the evening.

Manohar had previously been a teacher in a small village, but as a member of the JVV he became involved in the literacy campaign, and was then discharged from his ordinary work. In contrast to many middle-class male activists, he shared the household work with his wife, taking care of their young son in the mornings while his wife was teaching in a nearby village.

In his youth Manohar had joined the SFI (Student Federation of India), and then became acquainted with the people who later started the JVV. Most of all, he became influenced by rationalist ideas, apparent in his mission of spreading them among the common people. Once he described, with tears in his eyes, an incident that happened in Chintala Palem when a girl lost her sight due to ‘superstitious beliefs’. Furthermore, he vehemently opposed class differences and caste discrimination, maybe due to the fact that he came from a group low in the caste hierarchy. According to Manohar, you have to do something for society, otherwise there would be no difference between us and the trees and animals: we are just born, grow up to get married, give birth to children and finally die. His conviction made it important for him to join the protests against arrack, although he also had experience of alcohol problems in his own family.

When Manohar became preoccupied with the anti-arrack agitation, he was not yet married and, as I have already mentioned, he was working under a pseudonym and often changed residences. Remembering the intense emotions he felt as he threw himself into the struggle, this man compared the temperance crusade with the Independence Movement. At that time he and his friends were at the centre of the activities. While both the Literacy Campaign and the Anti-Arrack Movement had now petered out, they had provided a lifetime experience for him, Manohar concluded.

In 1996 when I had my conversation with him about the movement, he was very positive about the changes prohibition had brought to people’s
lives. When I met him two years later he had returned to his teaching position within the village and was no longer very active within the JVV. With the deepening gap within the organization between the CPI (M) and the faction without party links, Manohar lost a lot of his enthusiasm, whereas many members of the independent group were still active in projects in the countryside.

Reena

As a district-level leader, Reena had to mediate not only between rural and urban interests but also between different movement organizations and even between the movement and its adversaries, i.e. the liquor traders and the state authorities. This woman had been married to a social worker, who later on became the Director of the organization RISE (Rural Institute of Social Education). When the mobilization against arrack started in Chittoor District, she had been working as a coordinator for the organization since 1984. She lived in a joint family together with her husband, children and parents in the same building as the RISE office. They shared a large apartment on the ground floor with a lot of wooden furniture and fancy goods according to contemporary middle-class standards, that was still quite uncommon among social workers. According to Reena, her life changed a great deal after her marriage as she came into contact with her husband’s work in the rural areas:

I didn’t know anything about villages and provincial life before my marriage. I studied up to B.Com (Bachelor of Commerce) in Sri Padmavathi Women’s College at Tirupati and finished my degree in 1978. In those days I knew about nothing else except my home and college. I got married in 1982. After our wedding my husband moulded me like this by explaining many things and taking me to meetings in the villages. He told me that lots of people suffer from poverty and that we should do something for them. When mingling with rural women, I gradually became interested in social work.

Reena was chosen as convener of the Anti-Arrack Struggle Committee and became preoccupied with the movement. At that time a man called Rajamohan Reddy was selling illicit liquor in Nagari on the way to Chennai (Madras). One day when Reena heard about the illegal trade she rushed to the Excise Department office to complain to the officials, not knowing that the culprit was a relative of a staff member in the same office. After this incident Rajamohan Reddy threatened her and planned an attack on her. Although the members of RISE advised Reena not to move about alone, she did not restrain her movements and often came home late at night causing her family members many worries. Reena underlined that she herself was never frightened since she was encouraged by the support of a lot of people.

---

41 As part of my conversation with Reena includes delicate matters I have used pseudonyms in this section, except when referring to the minister in the Congress Government.
At the time of the Anti-Arrack Movement, she met Rosaiah, then a minister in the Congress government and a member of the Cabinet Subcommittee formed to deal with the mobilization against arrack. Reena told me that she was the only person from the grassroots level who had been invited to the Secretariat, the government building in Hyderabad, for discussions. Though she established a very good contact with this minister, the movement activists had decided not to develop any type of friendship with politicians and she followed this rule.

Movement Intellectuals

Many eminent organizers, leaders, or spokespersons have jointly shaped the image of the movement as they formulated the strategies for struggle, presenting the movement to outsiders through writings and lectures and trying to construct the foundation of a new feeling of togetherness. In Selection from the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci (1996) reflects on the role of intellectuals in society by distinguishing between three kinds of subtypes — the traditional, the organic, and the partisan. While the ‘organic’ working-class intellectual acts deliberately to promote the cultural and political abilities of his/her own class, the ‘partisan’ intellectual, on the other hand, attempts to initiate a situation in which his/her ‘organic’ counterpart can emerge (ibid: 83). The latter category, described by Gramsci, has many traits in common with the ‘movement intellectual’, a concept introduced by Eyerman and Jamison (1994:94-5) as they develop these ideas to describe those persons who have achieved the social position and self-awareness of being ‘intellectuals’ through their participation in social struggles instead of through the academic establishment. Expressing the knowledge concerns of a social movement and facilitating an articulated and explicit ideology, they form the movement into a consistent social force (Eyerman 1994:198-9).

Movement intellectuals have often been accused of presenting an all too homogeneous version of diversified protests, making the varied nature of people’s experiences disappear in official versions (Linkenbach 1994:69-70; Ryan 2001:200). One has to remember, however, that these people often have the task of constructing a common identity to mobilize around, thus making it instrumentally necessary to ignore the heterogeneity of the movements. Callon (1986:223) brings in the idea of a ‘sociology of translation’ by focusing on how political leaders achieve a dislocation of other actors, but also on how they articulate in their own words what others utter or desire, gaining strength for their political intention of uniting various interests for a seemingly joint purpose that culminates in ‘voices speaking in unison’. As has been argued by Bourdieu (1992:433), political language in itself is founded on the skill of expressing not direct and unique experiences but universal notions that facilitate collective action. According to this vision, the ability to formulate such generalizations rests on educational
capital and class position (ibid: 417-8). This is evident when considering the fact that educated people from the middle class in Andhra Pradesh, if not asked explicitly, seldom expressed their participation in terms of individual experiences but more in general terms of movement characteristics.

Their discussions on protest methods brought up incidents both at village level and from a translocal perspective. For example, members of the JVV identified different types of villages by making a distinction between localities where there was ‘hegemony’ and places where everybody was on their own. While in the former one group or person was dominant and participants in the movement had to persuade him/her to support them, the second kind of community was characterized by many leaders and internal disputes, making it essential to unite the people before any mobilization against liquor could be organized (Vijaya Kumar, Malyadri and Bala Subramaniam 1996). The identification of the struggle at local level was taught to rank-and-file members; for instance, the different types of villages were recognized through role-plays.

Doubtless, people active in the Anti-Arrack Movement tried to use ‘arrack’ as an important issue to muster around. Eyerman (1994:198) draws attention to the way the movement intellectuals facilitate the creation and reproduction of objects of interest and social categories, which are important for the construction of a common identity. Nonetheless, the people who wrote about the Anti-Arrack Movement often already represented other social and political movements to which they had primary loyalties and they had difficulties in producing the basis for a collective identity.

These intellectuals evaluated the struggle in line with ideologies circulating in the global arena, such as Marxism, feminism and to some extent Gandhianism. In fact, they concealed the heterogeneity of the movement and the conflicts existing among its separate sub-groups in order to promote a positive understanding about it, but usually from their own ideological perspectives (cf. Barker, Johnson & Lavalette 2001:10). I shall now turn to some Marxist and feminist analyses of the agitation before I end this chapter by reviewing two books on the mobilization written by middle-class activists. I have chosen to omit the Gandhian view of the movement, as its representatives were not so dominant in the discussion, even though many such groups participated in the struggle and several people referred to the protests as ‘Gandhian.’

---

42 The Gandhian contribution to the movement was reflected in the dominance of moral issues, the fact that people referred to the agitation by Gandhi against liquor when tracing the history of the mobilization, and in the choice of protest methods (see Chapter 7). Nevertheless, few movement intellectuals with a Gandhian perspective tried to formulate any explicit theory for the struggle against alcohol.
Marxist Frameworks

How Marxists wrote and talked about the temperance crusade depended on whether they belonged to the front organizations of the CPI (M) or CPI-ML. When explaining the rise of the movement, intellectuals representing the CPI (M) often focused on how the Indian economy had opened up to global forces by emphasizing the growth of contract labour, especially for men, while the opportunities for women to obtain regular work in the agricultural sector had decreased. In line with this conception, a woman would have had some earnings of her own, even if her husband spent his salary on liquor. Moreover, there had been changes in cropping patterns from subsistence to cash crops, resulting in decreasing opportunities for employment within agriculture as fewer ‘man-days’ were available and, finally, the prices of food had increased. All these factors taken together contributed to an increasing burden on women.

Nevertheless, in the view of such thinkers, economic changes alone cannot explain the mobilization against arrack, as there must simultaneously be an awareness among the women for them to be able to mobilize. Kumar (1993) from the JVV differentiates between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ conditions, according to which the objective circumstances consisted of women’s economic sufferings while the literacy campaign satisfied the subjective environment: unity, organization and guidance. Other intellectuals were more explicit and argued that an aware leadership was provided by the CPI (M).

The other Marxist framework focused more on how state representatives and politicians were connected with the liquor industry, evinced in the fact that landlords had turned into arrack businessmen who became important in the politics of the state in the 1980s. Many ‘liquor barons’ became involved in politics — either indirectly by giving financial contributions or sending in their gunmen, or directly by evolving into politicians themselves — at the same time as the state government relied increasingly on revenue from the trade in intoxicating beverages to finance its welfare programmes.

It was obvious, however, that people with this perspective also underlined the movement’s historic roots in the Naxalite struggle. According to Bala Gopal (1992), a myth has been created which has ignored the liquor protests of the 1980s in Telangana. Similarly, Rudra Saman, the then State Joint Secretary of the Women’s United Forum for Total Prohibition (1996), discussed with me how many aspects of Indian history that concern the revolutionary struggle have been overshadowed by ubiquitous references to Gandhi, whereas the role of Subhas Bose has been disregarded. Saman continued his analysis by pointing out that the Anti-Arrack Movement actually started much earlier in Telangana, but that it was then led by the Naxalites. The course of events in Nellore district had often been explained by referring to the literacy campaign, the press, and the civil administration.
Intellectuals representing Naxalite-connected organizations liked instead to recall the memories of protests in the district undertaken by Maoist groups in the village of Tegacherla, some even arguing that the incidents in Tegacherla preceded and even inspired the women in Dubagunta.

**The Feminist Controversy**

In India feminism has often been held to be a foreign ideology that threatens the traditional mutual understanding between women and men. Instead, many middle-class activists preferred to characterize the anti-arrack struggle as a social reform movement of women against the ‘evil’ of liquor, seeing that their families were threatened by the increasing use of alcohol. Women were thus seen as protesting on behalf of other people and not fighting for individual rights (cf. Ray 1999:164). According to this image, rural women’s temperance mobilization was not a feminist struggle, since such ideas were not widespread in Andhra Pradesh, apart from some metropolitan cities like Hyderabad.

A few members of women’s groups had a somewhat different definition of feminism, as they wanted to expand its meaning to include issues brought up by poor rural women (see, for example, John et al 1993). Annie Namala, representing an NGO in Chittoor district, argued that they must reconsider and widen their concept of feminism to include the needs of larger sections of society by addressing problems under which the majority of women suffer, for example, poverty, landlessness, arrack-drinking and lack of public services. She pointed out that the notion of non-violence did not exist before Gandhi and, additionally, that Vandana Shiva had broadened the theories on women’s inferiority by introducing Ecofeminism. In a similar manner the Anti-Arrack Movement could be an ‘eye-opener’ for feminism, she concluded.

How some representatives from the Indian Women’s Movement reflected on the anti-arrack struggle is remarkable, as they had tried to elaborate the ideology to include the realities of poor Indian women. Other activists were more hesitant to refer to the struggle in feminist terms, as they knew that they would encounter criticism. Instead, they simply said that the mobilization against arrack could not be regarded as being feminist since the upsurge was spontaneous and no urban women’s group had led it.

**Two Writings**

As I noted above, movement intellectuals formulated from various perspectives a collective identity that they presented not only in speeches but also through books, brochures and pamphlets. In closing this chapter I shall bring up for discussion two representative writings that deal with the liquor issue and the Anti-Arrack Movement, noted down by people who also (more or
less) have participated in the campaign. One is *Saaraamsam*,43 written by Kalpana Kannabiran, Vasuntha Kannabiran and V. Olga (1994) from Asmitha,44 a women’s collective in Hyderabad, and the other is *Again Liquor? No! No!* by Vijaya Kumar, Bala Subramaniam and Malyadri (1996) from the JVV. As both books are published in Telugu, my analysis is based on their translations into English.

**Saaraamśam**

The authors of *Saaraamśam* claim that their intention with the volume is to record women’s struggles that otherwise would disappear without trace. Such a risk is present with the Anti-Arrack Movement which has been launched by rural, illiterate people. Starting with the early temperance crusade by social reformers, which was closely connected to an agitation against prostitution, the book presents a historical overview of the protests against liquor from the colonial period onwards. The authors argue that Gandhi, in his programme for the ban on alcohol, focused on the middle class, which meant that the moral rebuilding of the nation came to the foreground in his struggle. Then follows a description of the excise policy in Andhra Pradesh and how prohibition failed in the 1950s when illicit spirits became very common and the political influence of the contractors increased. According to the writers, the ML-wing of the Communist Party (Naxalites) was the first to open an attack against arrack in Telangana.

The authors offer a presentation of the Anti-Arrack Movement and why so many women participated in it, by discussing not only the struggle in Nellore but in several other parts of the state. They focus on the story in the literacy primer but also consider the impact on the countryside of the neoliberal reforms introduced by the government, which resulted in a reduction in the number of development programmes and a growing poverty in the rural areas. Most crucially, they point out that the protest against arrack turned into a movement against the government and its excise policy.

The second part of the volume is a collection of extracts from interviews with rural women about the struggle, collected by the team members as they travelled through eight districts of the state (Nellore, Prakasam, Kurnool, Chittoor, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Medak and Ranga Reddy) in the early days of the movement in 1993. At the end of the book the authors argue that women transgressed the line between the private and the public by participating in the crusade against liquor, and in the process became aware of the interconnection of these two spheres. As a result, women who earlier were differentiated according to caste and household roles (such as the roles

---

43 The title of the book, *saaraamsam*, is a play on words, resulting in its being able to be interpreted in two different ways, either as ‘arrack’ (*saaraa*) or as ‘essence’ and ‘summary’ (*saaraamsam*).

44 Asmitha was one of the members of the Anti-Arrack Women’s Movement Solidarity Committee that was formed in Hyderabad (see Chapter 7, n. 3).
of the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law) were able to unite in the struggle and understand the value of women’s unity. Although the movement should not be seen as an agitation for social reform but as a feminist mobilization for the self-determination of women, the writers regard the protest as proof of how feminists can identify with poor women’s dissent without assuming the leadership and by learning from other women’s experiences.

*Again Liquor*

*Again Liquor. No. No*, written by Kumar, Subramaniam and Malyadri (1996), is a booklet defending prohibition and criticizing the policy of the government to withdraw the ban. Put another way, the aim of this text is not to document the struggle but to spread the movement. It starts with a review of women’s status in the world and in Andhra Pradesh, followed by a presentation of different alcohol problems, both social and political issues as well as health concerns. While the authors give a historical summary of liquor use and prohibition in India, they consider the legacy of Gandhi somewhat more extensively. In addition, the influence of Gandhian ideas can be seen in the discussion of the present alcohol ban, which, according to the authors, is a patriotic action against the spread of foreign culture in the country.

Kumar, Subramaniam and Malyadri give a short description of the Anti-Arrack Movement in which the literacy campaign is portrayed as a catalyst, but never consciously planned to launch a movement against arrack. The struggle can in their view be divided into three phases: (i) the protests were spontaneous without leadership and planning; (ii) the mobilization was extended to include stopping the auctions, and coordination committees were formed; and (iii) the movement became a broader struggle with committees at the state level. Subsequently the authors describe ‘the great stab in the back’ when cheap liquor replaced arrack and the booklet continues with a review of the anti-liquor agitation under the ministries of N.T. Rama Rao and Chandra Babu Naidu.

The last part of the book is a critique of the then existent government policy of withdrawing the prohibition, and a defence of the movement. Emphasizing the roots of the protest among rural women, the authors argue that the government should ask these women their opinion of the removal of prohibition instead of seeking the advice of selected intellectuals or various other people. Moreover, they discuss whether the alcohol ban has failed and who in that case should be held accountable for the shortcomings, by stressing that drinking did indeed decrease in Andhra Pradesh and therefore the prohibition has not broken down, while the state is held responsible for any deficiency since its representatives are cooperating with the liquor contractors in the trade in illicit inebriants.

There are many striking differences in how the two teams of activists have chosen to present the movement. While Kumar, Subramaniam and
Malyadri highlight the Gandhian heritage and thus convey a moral and nationalist message, the women from Asmitha underline economic and gender aspects of the mobilization. The style of writing is also different as the booklet of the JVV contains a lot of statistical material, whereas the Asmitha book includes rural people’s voices in its narrative. What both have in common, however, is the presentation of the movement as primarily a struggle of village women, by ignoring the existence of the urban activists in the movement coordinating and thus contributing to the spread of the movement. Doubtless, they equally regard the rural protest among the poor and powerless as more authentic and spontaneous whereas their own role in the struggle in the form of coordinators and ideologues is played down.

By organizing protest endeavours in the district towns and the metropolitan city of Hyderabad, middle-class activists entered the protest against arrack. Compared with rural women, these people were more mobile and could cross boundaries between villages or districts as well as between rural and urban areas. In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate how the expansion of the class in the past decades is visible in a growing professionalization and heterogeneity within the voluntary sector that previously consisted of welfare associations dominated by the upper castes and classes. I suggest that it is crucial to include formal organizations in our studies of social movements, in particular, the NGOs in their role as intermediaries between larger social forces and marginalized people, a factor which has been lacking in much social movement literature. That the activities of such associations are not independent of cultural meanings was manifest in Andhra Pradesh in the way people regarded the growth of the NGO sector as standing in conflict with more traditional ideas about middle-class simplicity and voluntarism.

In the course of the temperance mobilization, middle-class activists encountered various difficulties, although female participants had their own problems. Significantly, both urban and rural women faced similar teething troubles due to the gender division of space into public and private spheres, in which women jeopardized their respectability by travelling and attending meetings. On the other hand, this chapter has shown that middle-class women had other dilemmas than village women, for example, when considering how they tried to find a balance between an activist life, their professional careers and their household responsibilities. Consequently, we must not take a collective identity among women for granted, but need instead to look at the circumstances in which they are able to raise common issues despite a diversity of experiences.
Many middle-class activists came forward as organizers and spokespersons of the movement. Although charismatic qualities played an important role with regard to leadership in Andhra Pradesh, people in general agreed on what defined a person as suitable to be in command, by referring to a simple lifestyle together with good oratory and performative skills, illustrating that leadership in social movements takes on culturally loaded and historically contingent forms.

In addition, this chapter has dealt with how middle-class campaigners analyzed the struggle in speeches, brochures and books contributing to a unitary identity so that the movement could appear as a coherent social force. Liquor was no longer a private problem confined to the family but had been translated into a common predicament which different people could mobilize around, independent of class, caste or creed. As these interpreters were part of pre-existing social and political organizations, they appropriated and fought over ideas — such as Marxism, Gandhianism and feminism — across local and state boundaries. What I found particularly important in their narratives was that they brought out the part played by rural women as more ‘authentic’, whereas their own role as organizers and interpreters was played down.
Representing the liquor industry, the state and political parties, many people were affected in indirect ways by the protests against liquor and reacted either by supporting the agitation or organizing against it. In the previous chapter I briefly introduced the idea of a ‘political field’ (cf. Bourdieu 1992; Ray 1999) in which the Anti-Arrack Movement was embedded. I shall now discuss ‘the prohibition field’, characterized by social movement organizations, state agencies and politicians but also by actors from the economic domain, i.e. the alcohol industry. Significantly, agents within the prohibition field are linked to each other through both friendly and opposing networks in the struggle for or against the prohibition as well as over its definition — which drinks should be included in it.

Although the sale of all spirits has risen considerably in the state from the 1970s onwards, offering power and wealth to individuals involved in the liquor business, the production and distribution of these beverages are not a uniform enterprise and the people occupied in the trade vary – from small shop keepers and liquor workers to large contractors and representatives of transnational companies. Given that the liquor industry was internally divided, these people had difficulties in uniting on a common platform against the Anti-Arrack Movement. Broadly speaking, neither the Temperance Movement nor its opposing camp has any clearly defined boundaries, as the networks of each extend into those of the opponent.

The growing engagement of the state in the alcohol business can be seen in its daily institutional procedures and governance related to the sale and consumption of intoxicants. We may actually speak of three ways in which state agents are implicated in dealing with liquor: firstly, many politicians have been liquor tradesmen; secondly, the distribution of inebriants by party representatives is a well-known phenomenon at Indian elections; and finally, the taxation of alcoholic beverages is also seen as giving the state a stake in the business rather than as an expression of ambitions to quell it, and its administrators have been concerned in carrying out these policies.

Studies of the modern state have often been based on the Weberian assumption that formal legal rationality omits cultural aspects, resulting in states in different parts of the world being regarded as essentially the same. Some recent works on the Indian state have instead emphasized the ‘imag-
ined’ character of the state and the culturally specific aspects of how it interferes in the daily lives of the citizens (Fuller & Bénei 2001:2; cf. Brass 1997; Blom Hansen 2001; Harriss-White 2001; Gupta 1995,2001), for example, by focusing on the practices of local politicians and lower-level officials. Harriss-White (2003:45) has demonstrated that one cannot separate state and market when considering rural and small-town India, as the economy is dominated by a diffuse union of stakeholders, referred to as ‘the intermediate classes’, consisting of the small-scale capitalist class, agrarian and agribusiness leaders as well as government officials. Businesspeople and state employees concerned with the liquor trade in Andhra Pradesh shared many traits with these ‘intermediate classes’. They benefited from the licence policies of the state and sidetracked money into the black economy by being either directly or indirectly caught up in the sale of untaxed spirits.

In this chapter I shall explore the businesspeople and state agents as beneficiaries, adversaries and advocates of the Anti-Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh. How did these people respond to the temperance agitation? Were there any differences in how they reacted to the protest? When did they join forces with the activists and when did they oppose them? I shall open the discussion with an overview of the social organization and market for intoxicating beverages in the state. The next section focuses on individuals engaged in the liquor trade, i.e. manufacturers, distributors and sellers of diverse alcoholic beverages, followed by an examination of how people within the civil administration and politicians have backed the prohibition campaign. Subsequently I shall analyze connections between the liquor trade and the state, by bringing in the everyday work of people in the Excise Department and the existing links between politicians and business. The chapter will then draw attention to the public discussion about the liquor ban introduced by the Telugu Desam Party which in the end brought about its removal. In the final section I discuss how antagonists at certain moments preferred to hold back the movement with the help of the police, the law and hired gunmen.

Social Structure and the Market for Liquor

As I have already mentioned the importance of gender in structuring drinking patterns, I shall in this section look briefly into other aspects of the drinking habits among different categories in Andhra Pradesh and changes that have occurred in recent decades. Note that patterns of drinking in India are strikingly divergent from those observed in the West. Around half the population are teetotallers, and many of those who could be classified as ‘moderate drinkers’, using alcohol only at festivals and with guests, drink only a few times a year (Dorschner 1983a: 539, 1983b: 56-8). Yet it should be obvious by now that daily consumption of liquor in some places is quite widespread. Among those who booze more extensively the quality of the
liquid is not deemed significant, and people who tipple do so with the aim of getting intoxicated as quickly as possible, with a preference for stronger alcoholic beverages.

There are large variations in how individuals from different categories drink, even allowing for gender differences. The traditional *varna* model is to some extent reflected in people’s alcohol habits, as people from Brahmin and Vaishya castes have traditionally abstained from liquor, whereas tippling has been more common in the settlements of Malas and Madigas. The widespread drinking among Muslims is remarkable. Partaking of wine was a common feature of court culture under many Mughal emperors, despite the Muslim prohibition of alcoholic beverages.¹ Liquor use is still more widespread in Telangana, the former Nizam Empire, than in Raylaseema and Coastal Andhra. Apart from Muslims, the area’s population consists of tribal groups — particularly the Lambadas — who regularly take toddy in particular. I would suggest that these differences in alcohol habits might be one reason why alcohol never became a moral issue in Telangana to the same extent as in other parts of the state.

![Graph of Alcohol Consumption in Andhra Pradesh between 1977/78 and 1990/91](image)

**Figure 1.** Alcohol Consumption in Andhra Pradesh between 1977/78 and 1990/91. Source: Naidu, cit in Rao & Parthasamy 1997.

¹ In contrast, abstention from liquor has been a significant part of Muslim identity in several Indian states, for instance Uttar Pradesh (Dorschner 1983b:53). One explanation of the customary boozing among Muslims in Andhra Pradesh is that they became associated with the Nizam elite, thereby adopting the lifestyle of the Kshatriyas, the kings according to the *varna* scheme, and this included meat eating, warfare and heavy drinking (cf. Dumont 1980:92; Carstairs 1954:221).
Today, the use of foreign liquor (IMFL) has become a source of prestige among the urban middle and upper classes, symbolizing a modern lifestyle. In 1990/91 (the year before the arrack prohibition) there was a consumption of 111.2-million litres\(^2\) of arrack, 18.1 million proof litres\(^3\) of IMFL and 49.9 million bulk litres of beer, which is an increase from 1977/78 of 75% for arrack, 500% for IMFL and 100% for beer (see Table 1). The most significant feature of these figures is that the largest expansion consisted of IMFL, while it was arrack that the early temperance mobilization attacked — the poor man’s drink.

**The Liquor Industry**

On closer examination, the liquor industry appears to be a heterogeneous branch consisting of different categories of people concerned in the process from distillery or brewery to shop — such as staff and owners of distilleries, contractors and retail sellers. I shall devote this section to a more detailed description of the business in Andhra Pradesh, starting with the toddy tappers who played a somewhat peculiar role in relation to the movement, gaining from the prohibition rather than being threatened by it.

**The Toddy Tappers**

In general toddy (kallu) is defined as the fermented juice of any kind of palm tree, such as coconut, brab, palmyra or date palm. Coconut trees are concentrated in certain areas, while palmyra palms are widely distributed all over Andhra Pradesh. It is possible to make a beverage from coconut juice the whole year round, while the palmyra season starts in January and ends in June. The sap is often drawn off the stem,\(^4\) and the amount tapped depends upon the quality of the tree.\(^5\) Toddy is usually consumed within 24 hours after tapping and its alcoholic strength varies with the type of palm tree used, the season when the beverage has been drawn and similar factors.\(^6\)

---

\(^2\) 40 percent of volume strength.

\(^3\) Standard of strength of distilled alcoholic beverages, around 50 percent by volume.

\(^4\) There is also what is called Ripe Fruit Toddy (panDu kallu), tapped from the fruit of the palmyra palm, which is common in the area of Telangana. Another variety of toddy is made in the districts of Guntur and Chittoor by shearing the trees after they have borne fruits.

\(^5\) There are two sorts of palmyra palms — one ‘male’ and the other, the ‘female’, is the one that produces fruit and from which toddy is produced. Early in the morning the tapper shears the branch with the fruits and when the twig is cut with a knife the juice turns white and begins to drop. When the sap collected comes into contact with the humid air it stiffens into a black cake. By noon the dropping has petered out and the tapper goes back to shake the tree that once again starts to drop, continuing like that until the evening. It is easier to tap coconut palms than palmyra trees, as the latter have to be climbed three times a day while the coconut is climbed only twice.

\(^6\) The average percentage of alcohol per volume of toddy made from different trees is as follows: date (4.9), palmyra (5.2), coconut (8.1) and sago (5.9) (Narasimha 1998:1083). No fermentation will take place if the inside of the pot is rubbed with lime or prepared with
The tapping and trade in toddy are the traditional occupation of a special caste called the Gouda or Gavandla. Those Goudas who survive on the sale of toddy are normally very poor. As it is a dangerous job to climb the trees, accidents among tappers are common. Consequently, more prosperous members of the caste have turned to the trade in foreign liquor or, before the ban, arrack.

While auctioning toddy shop licences to the highest bidder was abolished in the revenue year 1993/94, today toddy shops are managed either on a registered cooperative basis – Toddy Shops’ Cooperative Societies (TCS) – or according to the Tree for Tappers Scheme (TFT). In the first case licences are issued to the societies whose members mainly consist of toddy tappers from the Gouda community. On the other hand, the right to draw and sell this drink on an individual basis according to the Tree for Tappers Scheme is given after officers from the Excise Department have checked whether people know how to climb the trees to siphon off the toddy.

Apart from the fact that each cooperative society has one shop, a specified number of trees, the so-called ‘ration’, is fixed for the cooperative every year by the excise office at state level. The members of the cooperative have to pay the tree tax and, if the palm grows on private land, the rent to the owner as well. Previously the shop was the only selling point, but in 1998 members of the societies were permitted to sell near the trees. Although it was still forbidden to sell at the roadside, the regulation was not observed and the wives of toddy tappers often marketed the beverage in nearby villages.

The formation of toddy tappers’ societies had limited the power of the large contractors who obtained their licences at the auctions held by the state. Kondaiah, the president of a tappers’ society in two villages in the coastal area in Nellore district, narrated how this society was formed in 1976 to counteract the exploitation the tappers experienced from one of the contractors in the area, who demanded payment in advance before the tappers could approach the trees. They had to compensate him, even if the tree did not yield any toddy. In instances where the tappers refused to pay, the contractor simply called the police.

The toddy manufacturers in general welcomed the Anti-Arrack Movement and the prohibition, even if they did not directly participate in the temperance agitation. Kondaiah thought that their living conditions improved due to the boom in the toddy trade caused by the prohibition of arrack and foreign liquor. This was discernible in the fact that the toddy tappers were able to construct stone-built houses to replace their earlier huts and even purchase some land. Many of them would have abandoned their

calciuimcarbonat (sunna). The non-fermented juice, neera, is not very commonly consumed nowadays as the majority prefer the toddy drink.

7 The ration is calculated in terms of date trees, in which three palmyra palms are treated as equal to four date varieties (Narasimha 1998:1084-5).
old occupation if the ban had continued for another year. Toddy became a highly demanded commodity and many tappers doubled their drawing from the trees. In spite of this, the supply was not sufficient compared with the demand, so to increase their profits the tappers either mixed the toddy with water or added sedative drugs such as Diazepam (valium) and Chloral Hydrate.

Coming without their families to stay for between three and six months in a year, Nadars from Tamil Nadu migrated to the coastal area of Nellore during this period. As some men from the Gouda community learnt how to tap coconut trees from the Nadars, today they can themselves tap the palms. Nevertheless, the Nadars left when the rumours of the impending withdrawal of the ban had started to circulate. After its cancellation in 1997, the demand for toddy decreased considerably. Sometimes it was even less than before the prohibition, since the government had by then increased the number of licences to IMFL shops. Broadly speaking, the golden days of the toddy tappers were over.

Even if numerous tappers increased their wealth during the proscription against alcohol, this did not necessarily mean a better standing in society, as distilling and brewing have customarily not been regarded as respectable occupations among Hindus. The low status of toddy tappers and manual labourers in the liquor factories is partly explained by their direct association with the intoxicants. In addition, many tappers multiplied their surplus during the period, which augmented the distance between them and others involved in the business. For instance, liquor workers, who also were poor and had a low status, accused the toddy traders of reaping the benefits of prohibition as the politicians had resorted to a politics of appeasement to win votes from the group.

Participants in the Anti-Arrack Movement were not unanimous about whether or not toddy should be included in the ban, since tapping was a livelihood among poor people from a caste with a low social position. Some activists from the Telangana area thought that toddy, in contrast to arrack, did not represent ‘the establishment’ and that since women also consumed toddy it should be exempted from the proscription. Their attitude to this beverage might reflect the fact that different alcohol habits ruled in this region. In contrast, in Raylaseema and Coastal Andhra many movement campaigners agitated against toddy. One of them was Annie Namala, representing a NGO in Chittoor district, who forcefully argued that all people have to make sacrifices. She continued by pointing out that Madigas, customarily working with leather, were not employed as workers in the factories when their handicraft became industrialized. Consequently, why should the traditional occupation of the toddy community alone be protected? What was more, in coastal Nellore there was strong opposition among women against toddy as the men had turned to this beverage instead of arrack after the arrival of the Nadars who knew how to tap the coconut
trees. The women were particularly hostile towards the coconut drink, as the palmyra toddy is only made for a few months while coconut toddy can be produced the whole year round.

**Arrack Businessmen**

Arrack (*saaraa*) is made out of ‘rectified spirit’ distilled from molasses, i.e. syrup produced from refined raw sugar. Since its foundation by the government in 1987, the Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation Ltd prepared and packed arrack into bottles and packets, whereas it was previously manufactured in small licensed distilleries, many functioning as cottage industries in rural areas. In contrast to toddy, a lot of money could be amassed through the sale of arrack. At the end of the 1980s the trade increased considerably and the availability of the drink expanded even in remote villages, at the same time as the prices rose, due to heavy taxes and the sale of the rights to trade the beverage by the state government.  

The contractors had to pay rent to the government for the licence to sell in a specified area — the so-called *abkari* region — after the arrack contractor and representatives of the state had settled on a Minimum Guaranteed Quantity (MGR) of liquor to be consumed by the people in the *abkari* region. The amount paid as rent depended on the MGR agreed upon: while the state aimed at raising the minimum granted in order to get more revenue, the contractors wanted to define a lower level so that they could pay a reduced rent. When the trader sold more than the guaranteed quota he had to pay a higher fee to the state. In reality, however, a contractor would often manufacture his own arrack illegally, delivering it in state packets and with state labels, in order to get additional income. Branch distributors employed by the contractor and in charge of four to five villages would deliver the arrack to the rural areas.

In the 1980s the auctioning of arrack licences in sections replaced the earlier village sales, with one such section consisting of 20 to 30 villages and the auctions being held at the district headquarters. The big contractors therefore formed syndicates that would have the right to sell arrack in specified districts with no one to counterbalance them, except another cartel, at the auctions. It became impossible for small individual traders to have any part in this system, whereas the wealth of the larger contractors grew considerably.

On 1 January 1987 the Telugu Desam Party introduced the ‘flow of liquor’ (*varuna vahini*) scheme, partly in order to finance its welfare programmes. The result was that arrack was delivered in plastic packets of 50 or 100 ml that facilitated transport from distillery to village. As the official aim was to provide ‘pure’ and unadulterated arrack to everyone in Andhra

---

8 The prices of arrack (90 ml) at the shops were 10 to 12 rupees, while its manufacture costs only between 1.5 and 2 rupees.
Pradesh, this made it much easier for consumers to carry liquor with them for later consumption. While Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation was set up to increase the oversight of the bottling and packing process together with the distribution, the auctioning of village shops was reintroduced, making it easier for minor contractors to benefit from the trade. Most importantly, the Anti-Arrack Movement arose at this moment when the power of the larger dealers had decreased and the hold of the state over the business had increased. As the introduction of arrack in plastic packets led to a growth in the sales in all corners of the state, the prices continued to rise and poor people spent an increasing part of their income on a beverage that was very cheap to produce at the same time as the profit went into the pockets of the contractors or into the state budget.

Although toddy tappers and small shop keepers selling liquor usually admitted that they themselves boozed, some of the larger arrack merchants tried to acquire respectability by distancing themselves from the drink. F.G. Bailey (1996:96) has demonstrated how distillers in the village of Bisipara, Orissa, who were just above the line of untouchables, managed in the 1960s to climb the social ladder by adopting the manners of respectable castes. In Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, the Nadars, a toddy tapper caste, have enhanced their position in society during the past century, not by manipulating traditional caste values but by entering the political arena. Concurrently they tried to disassociate themselves from liquor, like the Bisipara distillers, either by leaving the business (or at least the distilling or brewing process) or by personally refraining from the drink (Hardgrave 1969). One of the larger contractors in Nellore district was Ravula Ankaiah Goud from the Gouda community, who forcefully stressed that he had never worked as a toddy tapper, while his employees told us the opposite. According to him, the main reason for his entering the arrack business was that he wanted to trade, not that it was the conventional occupation of his caste. Ankaiah Goud was respected for his ‘simple lifestyle’, which implied that he abstained from coffee, tea, meat and inebriants. He explained why he did not touch alcohol, by bringing up the fact that cinema producers did not play the roles in their films. Likewise, his job consisted of selling drinks to other people, whereas the business would only be spoilt if he were intoxicated.

The arrack dealers supplied liquor through their branch distributors to the village shops, which in the rural areas were to a large extent owned by women. One of them was Muttamma, a widow from the Golla caste in the village of Chintala Palem — a quite slim woman in her sixties with some of her teeth gone and the rest red from the continuous chewing of betel. When I lived in the village, Muttamma sold tomatoes, which her family grew in their fields. In addition, she had a small breakfast stall where she primarily sold doośa, a pancake made from a mixture of rice and some other flour, often black-gram. Her grown-up sons were all wealthy by village standards, since they owned a considerable amount of land. This woman was known for her
toughness and people said that she could even beat up the men if necessary. She used to sleep alone at the shop without any fear. Previously Muttamma had even stayed out in the fields at night, in contrast to the rest of the villagers, she did not believe in the spirits (dayyalu) that were presumed to reside outside the village where the arable land was located.

Lakshmamma, a traditional midwife (mantrasaani) from the Mala community, was a close friend of Muttamma. Since the two women were inseparable, their friendship crossed both caste and political boundaries and endured in spite of the fact that Lakshmamma took part in the Anti-Arrack Movement. Muttamma and her family took care of their companion during her last days, and when she died Muttamma was very sad. However, she could not forgive her friend for participating in the protests. She complained that, since nobody from Lakshmamma’s family consumed liquor, why did she join the other women as they travelled by tractor to attend anti-arrack meetings. This was why she died in such a horrible manner with diarrhoea and pain, Muttamma assumed.

Her arrack shop had been situated on the very site where the village platform was constructed later on. Before the arrack prohibition, nearly everyone went to Muttamma’s place where they could easily get both booze and betel on credit. The villagers destroyed the shop because she had continued to sell in secret, despite the joint decision to stop sales. Muttamma told me that she earned around 10 paisas for each packets that she traded, whereas the contractor got a much larger profit. In fact, one such man had offered her 70,000 rupees if she continued the sale, but she refused because ‘the whole village was united against the arrack business’. Anyhow, she argued that she gained as much profit from her present commerce, i.e. selling tomatoes and doośa to the villagers, as she did during the days of arrack.

The shops of village women like Muttamma were the main targets of the early protests against arrack as long as the movement was confined to the villages, where everybody knew each other and interacted on a daily basis. One would presume that the protests aggravated personal bonds for a long time afterwards. In the case of Muttamma, they led to strains in the relationship with one of her closest friends.

Manufacturers and Traders of Foreign Liquor and Beer
Like arrack, Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) is made from molasses, the cheapest material for large-scale production (Narasimha 1998:1114). A significant feature of liquor distillation is that it consists of two different stages: the extraction of rectified spirit and the further distillation that removes impurities to turn it into ‘extra neutral alcohol’ (ENA) needed for
the manufacture of IMFL (ibid:1115). The two processes are not always performed at the same place. Rectified spirit is utilized in special distilleries for the fabrication of arrack and ‘cheap liquor’ — the latter introduced after the arrack ban — and for industrial use. Furthermore, there are also liquor factories (for the manufacture of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor) and breweries in Andhra Pradesh, which in 1997 amounted to thirty liquor distilleries and five breweries. While these had been closed during the period of total prohibition, the manufacture of rectified alcohol was still allowed. The ‘foreign’ beverages are made by blending different spirits, for example malt liquor with that extracted from the molasses, or just by adding colouring and flavourings to the extra neutral alcohol diluted with water.

The distilleries varied from small local factories to large companies with branches in other states and sales all over the world. S. Venkat Reddy — an owner of a small liquor-producing enterprise in a medium-sized town in Chittoor district — was an elderly, quite stout man, with grey hair and dressed in a white _panca_, the traditional loincloth worn by men, and an unbuttoned white shirt. As a sign of his wealth, he wore a large gold watch together with a big gold ring. He had 40 workers employed in his factory, operating a conveyor belt on which the bottles were tapped, sealed and given labels. Venkat Reddy was very upset when Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation took over the distribution of IMFL to the shops (see below), claiming that the profits went into the pockets of the excise personnel and the state coffers, whereas he earned very little in comparison from the business.

As the alcohol in the district largely came from Rectified Spirit Distilleries, situated at the towns of Naidupeta and Puttur, it was kept in large drums until redistilled into extra neutral alcohol before adding colouring and flavourings. However, this was not considered to be high quality liquor as it was based on molasses and not blended with other spirits. I encountered people from the middle class who hesitated to buy it, as exemplified by a teacher from the university who maintained that he would never drink these beverages since he believed that the factory was not very clean.

Instead, the Pearl distillery, located at Singaraikonda in Prakasam district, was a much larger unit that produced high quality liquor. Together with the Paramount branch in Hyderabad, the distillery had been established by Magunta Subbaram Reddy. While in 1981 this man started the Balaji group

---

9 The redistillation into extra neutral alcohol improves the quality of the spirit by separating aldehydes from the higher alcohol, which is needed for the production of IMFL (Narasimha 1998:1115).
10 In 1998, however, there did not exist any alcoholic beverage made of rectified spirit (Narasimha 1998:1135).
11 Actually the IMFL drinks should be blended with liquor made from malt for whiskey, grapes for brandy, etc, but often only colouring and essences are added in India. Even rum that is made from sugar should not be produced from the molasses but directly from the cane juice.
that today has distilleries in several states, he later on expanded his activities outside the alcohol business and, most significantly, entered politics by contesting for the Congress Party. Extra neutral alcohol was extracted at Singaraikonda but the technology for making the beverages belonged to another company – McDowell, an enterprise from Karnataka that today is involved in the sale and manufacture of liquor all over the world. Among other brands that they produce we find King Fisher beer and Bagpiper whiskey. One representative of McDowell claimed that it was the eighth largest producer in the world, concentrating on the Asian market. In contrast to the local factory of Venkat Reddy referred to above, blending took place at Singaraikonda, but the different spirits (such as grape or malt liquor) were transported from other McDowell units in India.

In fact, the majority of the workers engaged in the distilleries were women. Some managers said that they preferred to employ women since they did not touch the intoxicants and instead concentrated on their work, while others argued that women’s small fingers were more suitable for the delicate operation of bottling the beverages (cf. Ong 1999: 151-53). As total prohibition was introduced, many liquor workers lost their jobs. I was struck by their silence during a large part of this period. Liquor workers first started to protest after the rumours of the withdrawal of the ban had begun to circulate when they organized in demonstrations for the removal of prohibition and for compensation to the workers who had been fired — a promise by the government that was never fulfilled.

In Andhra Pradesh excise revenue has mainly been derived from licences allotted to shops on a yearly basis. Quite the reverse of arrack permits that were given by means of auctions to the highest bidder, Indian-Made Foreign Liquor has been sold by fixed individual licences. On 1 January 1994, the IMFL trade was taken over by the government via the Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation, set up seven years earlier on the lines of TASMAC (Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation) in Tamil Nadu. The aim was to control the loss of revenue by supplying all the shops with liquor and avoiding intermediaries extracting some of the profit. In the process each district got a godown that distributed to all the retailers in the area.

By excise year 1998/99, one year after the prohibition had been lifted, a ‘free licence system’ was introduced according to the market principles of

---

12 The founder of McDowell was Vijaya Malaya from Karnataka. Apart from Kingfisher Beer and Bagpiper Whiskey, the firm is involved in manufacturing of following brands: No 1 Brandy, Kerala Malt Whiskey, Golden Hearts Brandy and Dr. Special Brandy.

13 While liquor is sold in bottles of three different quantities — 180 ml (nip), 375 ml (pint), and 750 ml (quart) — the prices vary according to the quality of the beverage.

14 The licence fee was based on population in the area, and divided into the following categories: (1) 200,000 rupees: up to 10,000 people; (2) 300,000 rupees: 10,001 to 50,000 people; (3) 600,000 rupees: 50,001 to 300,000 people; and (4) 900,000 rupees: above 300,000 people. I have obtained these figures from Sri N. Ananta Ramaiah, Joint Commissioner of Prohibition and Excise, Hyderabad, 1998.
free competition, in which everyone who could afford it got a permit that was issued at any time of the year. A large number of liquor shops had been established in each and every corner of the district when I returned to Nellore in 1998. According to Mr Venkata Swamy, Superintendent of the Prohibition and Excise Department of Nellore district, the majority of them had been opened in the coastal area whereas the number of retail outlets in the state as a whole went up from 3,211 in 1997/98 to 9,461 one year later. Supports of the Anti-Arrack Movement and smaller liquor shopkeepers were united in their opposition to the free licences. Conversely, the liquor industry as a whole was divided on this issue, with smaller shopkeepers complaining about losses due to the heavy competition whereas the larger proprietors welcomed the free licences. The latter argued in favour of the rule of market forces that would improve the profitability of the business because those who did not know anything about commerce would not be able to continue with it.

Many of the shopkeepers selling IMFL were men. The shops were located in towns where, according to general opinion, women would face many problems as sellers because social control was less efficient than in the villages. When booze was sold illegally in the countryside, women also took part in the trade. A telling example is Chintala Palem where only women engaged in the sale of foreign liquor, among others Muttamma who previously had sold arrack in the locality.

Coming from a village in the vicinity of Nellore, K. Sekar was a typical owner of a medium-sized shop who had obtained a licence to sell foreign spirits. Like many others involved in the business, Sekar belonged to the Goudas. Continuing the tradition of his caste, he started as a toddy tapper, but became a small-scale arrack contractor in the 1980s. The fact that he came from a Gouda family was important for his choice of business, as he believed that he ‘grew up’ in this profession while many others had entered it by their own decision. In his view laundry had similarly been continued by the same washerman caste when the traditional service became commercialized. During the prohibition he reverted to the sale of toddy but after the release from restrictions in 1997, he opened four liquor shops in Nellore town. One year later he became the president of the shopkeepers’ association. Sekar was critical of the free licence system recently set up by the government, as he considered that only the state profited from it, arguing that the prices of liquor had come down due to the serious competition and he himself had made substantial losses in his business.

Although Sekar had started with toddy tapping and then turned to the sale of arrack and liquor, in contrast to Ankaiah Goud, the arrack contractor referred to earlier, he did not deny that he had a past as a toddy tapper.

---

15 I have obtained the numbers from Sri N. Ananta Ramaiah, Joint Commissioner of Prohibition and Excise, Hyderabad, 1998.
Neither did he refrain from spirits. On the contrary, he insisted on inviting me to a dinner consisting of non-vegetarian food and alcoholic beverages.

**Sellers of Illicit Liquor**

In India local people generally prefer illicit liquor (akrama madyam), defined as smuggled or illegally fabricated hard drinks outside the formal tax system, as it is normally cheaper than either legally produced arrack or IMFL. There are estimates that the trade in unlicensed intoxicants is equal to, or even exceeds, the official sales of spirits (Isaac 1998:153; Mohan & Sharma 1995:136). Clandestinely distilled alcohol has often been mixed with chemicals and methanol resulting in ‘hooch tragedies’ — incidents where sometimes over a hundred people have died.\(^{16}\) While the worst casualties in Andhra Pradesh occurred in Cuddapah and Rangareddy districts and involved ten to twenty dead persons, there were no larger cases of deaths due to consumption of illicit liquor during the prohibition period (1995-7). Although some manufacturers have become very rich from the trade in prohibited liquor in India, for example the hooch barons in Bangalore city who, from the 1950s onwards, competed with the legal arrack contractors in selling to the urban poor (Manor 1993:62-76), in Andhra Pradesh the wealthiest merchants participated officially in the licensed trade in spirits and earned a considerable income in the black market on the side.

Special castes have also taken part in unauthorized distillation for centuries, resulting in a low position in the caste hierarchy due to their implication in the manufacture of alcohol. In Nellore district there are only two major centres for the secret production of spirits, Venkatagiri and Kapparalla Tippa, where different ingredients for distillation — jaggery, gallnut, the juice of the acacia tree, and even battery cells\(^ {17}\) — are used to get a quick fermentation\(^ {18}\) in large jars or drums containing hundreds or thousands of litres before distillation takes place. In the prohibition period these manufacturers smuggled the liquor for about 30 km to sell it in surrounding places.

Otherwise, the most notorious illicit producers in Andhra Pradesh are the Lodha Khastris from the area of Dooholpet, located in the old town of Hyderabad, who are believed to have entered the state from North India when the Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb, seized the fort of Golconda, situated

---

\(^{16}\) One of the larger cases of deaths occurred in Bangalore in 1981 when around 300 people died after consuming methanol. In line with Manor (1993:71-5), this tragedy resulted partly because the Excise Department staff concentrated on turning down admission to molasses and potable alcohol from distilleries instead of invading the places selling illicit liquor. Anxious for materials, the hooch producers looked further and further afield to places they knew less about.

\(^{17}\) According to excise personnel, battery cells contain carbon powder.

\(^{18}\) Manor (1993:49) describes how illicit liquor sometimes contains substances — copper sulphate and a little methyl alcohol or even rotten leftovers, cow dung or cockroaches — added to the alcohol that give it an ‘exotic taste’ that is believed to increase the intoxication.
outside the city, in 1556. Around 20 percent of the members are assumed to be tied up in illegal extraction and trade in a type of spirit that goes under the local name of guDamba (cf. Afzal 1988). Like other liquors of Andhra Pradesh, guDamba is made from molasses and is a popular drink among poor people in Hyderabad, probably because it is cheap and easily available. After total prohibition, the Lodha Khastris demanded that the government should include them in the list of Backward Classes since their whole existence had become threatened, and the government finally agreed in 1995. Consequently, the Lodha Khastris also benefited from the alcohol ban as their trade probably improved when legal arrack and liquor were not available, but they also had to pay increasing bribes to the prohibition staff.

Joining into groups that transported spirits in lorries across the borders, smugglers profited from the alcohol proscription and their prosperity grew. According to the excise and prohibition officers, the profit per bottle sold was between 80 and 150 rupees depending on quantity and quality. Since the smuggling was quite a complicated procedure it was often difficult to locate those who were guilty. Personnel from the Excise and Prohibition Department told me that the drivers of lorries transferring the liquor usually did not know where the journey started or where it ended. A representative of the smugglers would approach the driver on the outskirts of towns where all transport companies are usually located, after which a local person took the lorry into the city to load it there. Accordingly, the driver did not know where the goods came from, and for the transportation he earned around 20,000 rupees. Furthermore, many poor people have entered into bootlegging activities, especially women who smuggled smaller quantities by bus or train carrying the liquor in suitcases or inside their petticoats or jackets. Indeed, women had the advantage that nobody suspected them and that the police would hesitate to search their bags and bodies.

The Political Field

I have opened this chapter with an analysis of some categories from the liquor business and their different reactions to the Anti-Arrack Movement. Representatives of the state and the political parties similarly varied in their responses to the agitation, leading to the boundary between adversaries and advocates at times being very blurred. This section focuses on how the latter thought about and acted regarding the temperance mobilization, in particular civil administrators and politicians, as well as excise and prohibition personnel.

---

19 The word guDamba is Sanscrit in origin and is derived from the guDam, meaning of jaggery (Brown 1992).
Advocates from the Political Field

Both liquor businesspeople and activists agreed about the significance of local representatives of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) — the legendary ‘steel frame’ of India — for the spread of the Anti-Arrack Movement in its initial stages. On their side, the staff admitted that their attitude towards the protests had influenced the course of events, but also stressed that they never openly opposed the policy of the government. Nonetheless, the fact that they chose to postpone the arrack auctions in Nellore town instead of confronting the movement could be seen as a move against their superiors. As expressed by a member of the service: ‘We allowed the auctions to be postponed and for the first time in history the excise policy of the government was defeated.’

In general, we should expect that people from the Indian Administrative Service possess great power — especially at district level and above all the Collectors — since the body was responsible for many of the state programmes affecting the lives of poor people in the rural areas. Potter (1994:64) comes to the conclusion in his study of the administration that both the organizational structure from the colonial period and the values associated with it survived after Independence. British-inspired service ideals had been inculcated in the officers during their training and earlier postings in the field, according to which being a self-controlled and independent servant of the state was an important part of their identity. As argued by Potter, this was reflected both in their positive self-assessments and in how they devalued submission to their supervisors (ibid:74). People from the administration working in Andhra Pradesh expressed similar ideas about the independence of the personnel. One officer argued that not even the Chief Minister could direct the District Collector to go against his conscience or the rules of the service, as there is a clear line between politics and governance. Perhaps this attitude gave them leeway for not opposing the mobilization against arrack or, alternatively, the answer could be that some of the staff considered ‘service’ to the poor to be an important part of their ethics.

There are many opportunities to serve the people and to reach the poor, especially while you are in the field during the first ten years. You can change the lives of the impoverished in the villages. I always tell my junior colleagues that nobody can really exercise a power comparable to that associated with the Collector’s position. This authority could be used to bring about small changes in the lives of the poor. I keep telling my junior officers that we must use our rank to really reach the needy and change their living conditions. As other people find their way out they don’t require our assistance. Take, for example, the rich or powerful landlord gentry who have their own methods to improve their circumstances. On the other hand, the poor, the voiceless, and the marginalized need the support of officers. We have the power to really turn things round. K. Raju (IAS Officer)
A noteworthy aspect of the service is the frequent transfers among its staff. This trend has increased in recent years as politicians have used this opportunity to get rid of inconvenient administrators, manifested in the displacement from Nellore district of K. Raju, the Collector who sympathized with the Anti-Arrack Movement. Nevertheless, when the agitation started in the district most personnel from the Indian Administrative Service had been there for some years, so they were acquainted with the area and through the literacy campaign they had been in touch with members from voluntary organizations and NGOs. While K. Raju had been posted in the district for nearly four years, Sambasiva Rao, who succeeded him, had previously been Sub-Collector in the same part of the state and had worked with the alphabetization programme together with K. Raju. Representatives of the liquor industry recalled that even Sambasiva Rao marched under the banner of the Anti-Arrack Movement, whereas some activists argued that the administration had become more negative during his time compared with the earlier days of the protest. On the other hand, Sambasiva Rao never went against the movement and once the prohibition was introduced, the aim of the temperance struggle had become state policy.

Aside from officials of the Indian Administrative Service, who indirectly gave their support, some politicians also entered the struggle. Close relations between those engaged in a social movement and politicians can be both advantageous and hazardous. Sometimes protests might pass through movement networks and public debates, penetrate the policy ground and lead to an intensification and spread of democratization, as in the Brazilian case argued by Alvarez (1997:100). Conversely, as Tarrow notes (1994:98,185), the actors in social movements have to make many compromises to gain the attention of party representatives, which may cause their original message to change character and other people to take over the protests. One way for the establishment to deal with popular struggle is to ‘hug it to death’, a policy followed by the opposition parties in Andhra Pradesh as they joined the mobilization against liquor. Tarrow observes that politicians enter social protests more often in decentralized party systems than in those dominated by one party (ibid:92). Indeed, the Anti-Arrack Movement arose at a time when the Congress Party had lost its hegemony, while the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), and in the course of time also the BJP, had become important in the politics of the state. It was obvious, though, that it was the TDP under the leadership of N.T. Rama Rao that first put the issue of liquor on its agenda.

20 The Brazilian network of the Popular Movement (Movimento Popular or MP) — consisting of local community organizations but in the course of time also NGOs, radical left-wing associations, as well as representatives from the church and academia — reached the opposition parties in the 1980s. With the opposition winning several local and state elections, ‘issue-specific citizens’ councils’ were established through which people could make suggestions on subjects that concerned them (Alvarez 1997:92).
Activists generally explained the support given by politicians to the movement by the fact that they had become aware of its strength and hoped to win votes among women in the forthcoming election by supporting prohibition. Geertz (1993:335) has brought up cultural aspects of statehood by discussing the ‘theatre state’ of pre-colonial Bali, negara, as a polity whose source of power was its reflection of the supernatural world. The aim of Balinese politics was the drama itself, rather than politics being a matter of making choices on different issues, so that a person gathered a large following through his/her performance. This could be a starting-point when considering Andhra Pradesh politics in the early 1990s, especially the popularity of N.T. Rama Rao (NTR). Kohli (1988:999) has called attention to the fact that the political symbols and the language the NTR used to convey his points were as vital as the essence of his campaign pledges. Dressed in his saffron mantle — the colour of Hinduism and customary attire of India’s holy men — and touring in a convertible transformed into a chariot, NTR could have been a character from the Mahabarata, brought back to defend the poor (cf. Naidu 1984:135-36). In 1993 he toured the villages in the same dramatic style propagandizing for the introduction of liquor prohibition and announcing that the ban of alcoholic drinks would be the first item in his party’s election manifesto. Subsequently, politicians from the other parties made prohibition one of their central demands. Consequently they never thrashed out the question by focusing on the implementation of the ban or on alternative income sources to compensate for the losses of revenue on spirits.

In Nellore district politicians entered the struggle at an early date, when some of them gathered at the auctions of arrack licenses to discuss how they should support the struggle that led up to the formation of the All-Party Committee (Akhila Paksha Samithi), which consisted of all the political parties except the ruling Congress. In contrast to the non-political board, the committee stopped functioning after the arrack ban, as the parties then became distracted by other issues, primarily the election campaign. For the BJP the confrontation at Ayodhya (see Chapter 3) had already led to conflicts with the Leftist parties within the committee and they therefore withdrew.

Somireddy Chandra Mohan Reddy of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) was elected as the president of the political board, partly because his party affiliation allowed him to act as a mediator between the CPM and the BJP. In his view, the Anti-Arrack Movement was an opportunity for women to express their suppressed feelings in a way that had been very difficult in Indian society, and he was hopeful that the agitation would lead to further activities among women. Together with other politicians, he daily obstructed the auctions at the AC Stadium, as they collected in front of the site in the early morning and stayed there for the rest of the day. In fact, they kept
watch at night as well, as rumours started to circulate that the government officials planned to hold auctions after office hours.

When Mohan Reddy was selected in 1996 as the minister for ‘youth services, sports, small-scale industries, khadi (Indian home-spun cloth), village industries, lid cap (leather), and self-employment’, people thought that his participation in the struggle against arrack had contributed to his promotion. On the other hand, he followed the party line as the TDP became more negative towards total prohibition, which led to a lot of criticisms from participants in the movement. It is important to note that he had already from the beginning been more concerned with the ban on arrack, the poor man’s drink, than with prohibiting IMFL associated with the middle and upper classes.

In 1994, after the arrack ban, the Congress government installed the State Propaganda Committee containing some well-known public figures such as Mr Vaavilala Gopala Krishnaiah, a ‘freedom fighter’ in the Independence Struggle, as well as certain individuals from Nellore District including Mr Ananta Ramaiah, an advocate, and Mrs Rosamma, a widow from Dubagunta who had become a symbol of the movement. The board soon dissolved as Krishnaiah resigned, due to the introduction of ‘cheap liquor’. A new body, the State-Level Advisory Committee on Prohibition, was established after the TDP won the elections and initiated total prohibition in 1995. Its members comprised, apart from Krishnaiah and Rosamma, Mrs Malladi Subbamma in charge of several women’s groups in Hyderabad, Mrs Sandhya Vandanam from the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) and several other prominent activists who travelled all over Andhra Pradesh campaigning for prohibition and advising the government on how to implement the ban effectively. However, Krishnaiah left the committee on 10 June 1996, this time because of a growing conflict within the Prohibition Department and reluctance on the part of the government to uphold the ban. It was evident that the government-initiated board had difficulties in carrying out its task due to lack of financial resources and limited power to influence the policies of the government. The plan to install similar committees at district, mandal, and village levels was not completely realized either. In contrast to the observations by Alvarez (1997) on Brazil, in Andhra Pradesh movement demands and networks created new political arenas but they were set up on unequal terms, thus holding back a growing democratization.

Among some participants there was from the beginning criticism of the politicization of the movement, while others lost their faith in party representatives in the course of time, concluding that only voluntary organizations should coordinate future struggles instead of the untrustworthy politicians. It would be easy to assume that the temperance mobilization had no effects at all on the political culture of the state, but one needs to look beyond the prohibition issue before coming to any conclusions. Tarrow (1994:172-81) has described how the European and American Student Movements of the
1960s were co-opted by the establishment at the same time as people’s experiences, widened perceptions and new abilities through these struggles contributed to a growing ‘politicalization’ and ‘empowerment’ culminating in a new wave of activism in the 1980s. There is little doubt that many women in Andhra Pradesh had left their houses to take part in public life for the first time, bringing about a changing consciousness and political awareness that might be realized in future struggles.

**Politicians in the Liquor Trade**

Apart from their decision to ban the sale of liquor in the state, many politicians had long-established ties with people from the trade in intoxicating beverages, thus causing a fluid line between adversaries and advocates of the prohibition struggle. The Janus-faced appearance of politicians — as supporters and opponents of the movement — could be a consequence of the ‘duality of the state’, a concept introduced by Blom Hansen (2001:226) in which the image of the Indian state has two sides. On the one hand, there is the ‘profane’ aspect reflecting the assumed self-interestedness and corruption of local politicians and administrators, and on the other hand the ‘sublime qualities’ of abstract juridical principles and high moral values projected on the distant state. Although the lifestyles of those who represented the state in Andhra Pradesh could be either affluent and boisterous or express Gandhian ideals of simplicity, many people lived up to both principles depending on the circumstances.

After Independence wealthy landowners became important intermediaries between the local society and the state, as they organized their clients from lower castes for elections of kith and kin in the urban areas and channelled state resources to their rural supporters (Elliott 1995:135). In Andhra Pradesh the landlords often came from the cultivating communities, i.e. Reddis and Kammas, although their influence in the politics of the state decreased and liquor businesspeople replaced them in the 1980s. Capital unaccounted for from the trade in alcoholic beverages then reached the pockets of legislators to finance campaign expenses, since open contributions to political parties from business are not allowed in India (cf. Rudolph & Rudolph 1987:85). In addition, party representatives depended on the liquor traders to distribute spirits during election campaigns.

In the beginning arrack contractors gave financial support and physical protection by their armed gangs to selected politicians. However, the categories of statesman and liquor businessman soon overlapped, especially in the districts of Kurnool and Cuddapah of Rayalaseema. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned the case of Magunta Subbaram Reddy who was the largest distributor of the McDowell company in South India, and who later on started the Telugu newspaper *Udayam* that was closed down in 1995, according to himself because of financial difficulties. The same year Subbaram Reddy entered politics as a candidate for the Congress Party in the
central elections, though his short career came to an end when the Naxalites shot him. Other liquor merchants who entered politics were the late Maganti Ravindranath Chowdhary, a Member of Parliament (MP) from Congress (I), Bala Goud, a Congress (I) MP, and Indrakaran Reddy and G. Ganga Reddy, who were MPs from the Telugu Desam Party but later on defected to the Congress (I) (Prasad 1992:53).

Like the earlier landed elite, these arrack and liquor contractors came from agricultural castes. Dr Hari Gopal, of the Department of Political Science at Central University, Hyderabad, states that the percentage of Reddis is higher within the liquor business, while Kammas have concentrated on cinema and industry. In the other communities, many contractors originate from the Gouda caste.

Put another way, the arrack trader emanated from a rural background, he had a lot of power in his neighbourhood and he often came from the same castes as the earlier landowners. When I first met Ankaiah Goud, the merchant described earlier in this chapter, he was dressed like a landlord in a white panca together with a colourful silk scarf. His employees spoke of him respectfully as taata, grandfather. While this man came from a village in coastal Nellore where he still owned a lot of land, in 1963 he entered the liquor business, first as a toddy contractor and later on as an arrack trader. Before the prohibition of arrack he controlled the trade in Nellore, Guntur and Ongole, which people in general referred to as Ankaiah Goud’s ‘arrack kingdom’ (saaraa raajyam) in which he even had the power to direct the elections by telling people which party to vote for and protected his interests by employing a large number of gunmen (gundas). In 1998, however, Ankaiah Goud was living at the district headquarters of Nellore where he had invested his money not only in liquor shops but also in several other enterprises, such as cinema halls, commercial complexes and land. In addition, he had produced some films but without any major success and soon left the business. In the early 1990s he contested for the Congress Party as Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in Rapur Constituency and as Mandal Parishad President in Podalakur Mandal, but lost in both elections. After the 1996 split within the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Ankaiah Goud became the District President of NTR-TDP, founded by Lakshmi Parvathy, the widow of N.T. Rama Rao.

Doubtless, wealthy liquor traders obtained considerable influence over the government of Andhra Pradesh in the 1980s onwards and, like people from ‘the intermediate classes’, they based their power on wealth acquired by diverting funds into the black economy (cf. Harriss-White 2003:48). At that point in time many people in Andhra Pradesh had already lost their trust in

---

21 Personal communication 1998.
22 He had even bought some houses in Chennai (Madras), the capital of the neighbouring state.
the modern state. In line with Gupta (1995:385-89), the debate on the post-colonial Indian state has focused on the accountability of its representatives to the people, based on ideas on representative democracy and citizenship at the same time as a discourse on corruption characterizes the general image of politicians circulating in the press. Harriss-White (2003:100) has instead directed attention to corruption as only one observable trend among many, but one focused by the way people generally come across, imagine and talk about the local state. In her view, tax evasion is economically much more important than bribery since it allows capital to flow into the black economy instead of being reallocated through the state.

In daily practice, though, people often included tax evasion in their discourse on ‘corruption’ by referring to the money unaccounted for collected by politicians from ‘the liquor mafia’ or ‘liquor lobby’ that created a dependency of representatives of the government on people trading in alcoholic beverages. Ananta Ramaiah, a lawyer from Nellore district, who had participated in the Anti-Arrack Movement, argued that society was ‘corrupted from top to bottom’ as the legislators needed money to finance their election campaigns. In Andhra Pradesh they collected such money from the ‘liquor lobby’, who in reality controlled the politics in the state, whereas previously the ‘rice lobby’ had dominated the public arena, and became politicians in the course of time. Likewise, many middle-class activists expressed opinions on how untaxed money from the liquor industry reached the hands of state officials.

Villagers, on the other hand, recalled many incidents when excise personnel had taken bribes from people involved in the illicit liquor trade. Note that both urban and rural activists shared a widespread disbelief in Indian public servants and the government. This is illustrated by the following account given by Ghousia, a woman from Chintala Palem.

This is a corrupt (lancagoNDi) government! The (excise) police have booked cases against innocent people and acquitted the real culprits and drunkards. Is this justice? Why do they work as police officers? Why are they paid each month? The person who has employed them doesn’t lose anything. Instead he collects the money from the public. Why does he occupy that post when he can’t solve any problems? Why does he hold that position when he is unable to think about us? Why has he become a Chief Minister at all? He is the head of the state. Although I am the head of my family I look after the welfare of my children.

**The Excise Staff**

However plausible it may appear, the politicians were not simply puppets in the leading strings of the businesspeople. As regards excise revenue, the interests of political leaders and the liquor executives went in different directions, as the excise tax in India has grown into one of the most significant sources of income for the state governments, making up as much as 23
percent of the revenue in a number of states (Room et al 2002:70). Manor (1993:50) has demonstrated that indirect taxes have many advantages, among other things that they are less apparent to taxpayers and they are cheap to collect. In addition, excise revenue has become even more important as the central government turned out to be reluctant to transfer funds to the federal states (ibid:52).

If we look back into the history of Andhra Pradesh we shall see how state policies have underlined the value of either prohibition or excise revenue (cf. Naidu & Banu 1992).23 After Independence, a ban on alcohol was introduced in the separate Andhra State, i.e. the regions of Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema. In 1960, two years after the formation of Andhra Pradesh, the proscription against liquor was lifted in the Andhra area and the Hyderabad Abkari Act of Telangana was extended to the entire state. Subsequently, excise revenue became an important source of income for the whole of Andhra Pradesh, and the Excise Department was formed.

There are large differences between people working within the department in terms of social background, educational level, salary, and working conditions. The Excise Commissioner at the top of the hierarchy was often well educated and came from an urban, upper-class background (cf. Brass 1997:53). During prohibition the holders of the post were recruited from either the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or the Indian Police Service (IPS).24 Below the Excise Commissioner there are the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) who are each in charge of one of the state’s seven administrative zones, and below them the Assistant Commissioners (ACs). Inside the district, the head excise officer is the Excise Superintendent (ES), under whom there will be an Assistant Superintendent (AS) and several Circle Inspectors (CIs), Sub-Inspectors (SIs), Head Constables, Constables and Home Guards. The postings of lower staff were either limited to the

23 Naidu and Banu (1992:248-49), writing on Tamil Nadu, demonstrate that there have been changes in Indian prohibition policy either prior to or following state elections. For example, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIDMK) led by M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) set up total prohibition after the party won the elections in Tamil Nadu in 1972. When it came back to power in 1981, following a brief interlude, the liquor embargo was withdrawn. Once again AIDMK brought back prohibition in 1986/87 but this time it established a partial alcohol ban, i.e. arrack was proscribed whereas IMFL including beer was permitted.

24 The Department suffered from internal problems, with the outcome that the Excise and Prohibition Commissioners were often transferred, creating difficulties in carrying out the prohibition. As time went by, personnel from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who at the beginning of the liquor ban had occupied that post were less frequently recruited, although according to general opinion they were better suited for the post by being familiar with the total administration in India. In 1996 there was a nearly seven-month-long conflict between the Prohibition Minister, Janardhan Reddy, and the Excise and Prohibition Commissioner, Dinesh Reddy, which had arisen because of their different ideas on displacements and postings of Superintendents and Assistant Commissioners. The discord escalated and they did not even speak to each other, which in the end led to the transfer of both of them. Thummala Naheswar Rao replaced Janardhan Reddy as Prohibition Minister and Jannath Hussain superseded Dinesh Reddy as Excise and Prohibition Commissioner.
district (Head Constables, Constables and Home Guards) or to the zones (CIs and SIs).  

![Figure 2](image_url)

**Figure 2.** Revenue receipts (rupees in millions). Source: Mr. Ananta Ramaiah, Joint Commissioner, Excise Department, Hyderabad, 1998.

Their work consisted of issuing arrack sale licences at auctions and admitting permits to IMFL shops. When the Andhra Pradesh Prohibition Act came into force in 1995, the Excise Department changed its name to Excise and Prohibition Department and its role altered overnight from the collection of revenue on spirits to carrying out the liquor ban. The Andhra Pradesh Prohibition Act continued until 31 March 1997 when the proscription was partially lifted.

As the main work of the excise personnel following prohibition was to curb smuggling, the number of check posts increased to 56 in order to control contraband from neighbouring states (Narasimha 1998:1006). How well the ban worked depended on whether or not the district was situated close to a ‘wet’ state, since a lot of smuggling was taking place over the state borders. Furthermore, some localities had castes and tribal populations who for centuries had been preoccupied with illicit distillation for home con-

---

25 Andhra Pradesh is divided by the Excise and Prohibition Department into seven zones for the purpose of administrative convenience, each consisting of around three districts. The districts of Coastal Andhra are distributed in the following zones: 1) Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Visakhapatnam; 2) East Godavari, West Godavari, and Krishna; 3) Guntur, Prakasam, and Nellore; and 4) Kurnool, Cuddapah, Anantapur, and Chittoor.

26 In 1995 it was decided that a prohibition and excise court should be installed in all district headquarters to deal with the growing number of pending cases due to violation of the dry law.
sumption, and who tried to get additional income by selling their products on the black market. In Nellore district a lot of bootlegging came over the border from Tamil Nadu and from Karnataka via the adjoining Chittoor district. The constables working at the check posts told me that they mainly caught lorries, often filled up to the height of a man with liquor boxes, with some top covering such as steatite powder to hide the load. In this period people often consumed liquor when visiting Tamil Nadu and if they were still intoxicated when they returned, the excise and prohibition constables would arrest them.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3.** Excise revenue derived from shops in Andhra Pradesh (rupees in millions). Source: Mr. Ananta Ramaiah, Joint Commissioner, Excise Department, Hyderabad, 1998.

The staffs have experienced many changes in their work during recent decades, as they were themselves engaged in the sale of arrack before 1993. Sometimes they even sold it directly, for example immediately after the postponement of the auctions in Nellore district, which led to several confrontations between excise personnel and angry protesters setting fire to the stock depots. In 1995, when I had just started my fieldwork, I met some people from the department for the first time, accompanied by a woman from a local NGO that had participated in the Anti-Arrack Movement. At that time the excise and prohibition representatives were very irritated with the alcohol ban and their new tasks, since they thought that it was impossible to check each and every lorry passing through Andhra Pradesh from one ‘wet’ state to another ‘wet’ state. They accused the activists of the Anti-
Arrack Movement by telling my companion, ‘Earlier you were out on the street demonstrating, but now when we need your help you just keep quiet.’

During my visit in 1998 I was therefore astonished by the positive attitude of the staff towards the prohibition, noticeable in the fact that many of them criticized the government for withdrawing it. Why did they change their attitude to such a large extent? Some people believed that the excise officials earned a lot of money by taking bribes from smugglers. Indeed, the constables themselves admitted that bootleggers whom they caught offered them money. One of the employees confessed that it was impossible to live on their meagre earnings, without trying to get some additional income. Another explanation could be the aura of excitement and adventure surrounding their work, as the newspapers wrote about their heroic achievements — a counter image to the ‘corrupt state official’ in which they were the good people chasing bad smugglers like in a Wild West movie. The excise and prohibition personnel were, however, certain that it was unfeasible to implement the ban if it was not imposed at central level. They also complained about the sudden changes in their tasks caused by the whims of politicians.

The Withdrawal of Prohibition

In the course of time, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) became more hesitant about the value of prohibition, especially after Chandra Babu Naidu came to power. Before its partial cancellation, there was a public debate going on for more than a year between opponents and advocates as to whether or not the ban should be continued. Chandra Babu Naidu started it as a ‘referendum’, asking for suggestions from the people, in particular selected intellectuals, of how to solve the financial crisis in Andhra Pradesh (see Chapter 3). Afterwards the government changed its arguments for the withdrawal of the ban by focusing more on the fact that it was inefficient and that a lot of smuggling had taken place, with the final outcome that the prohibition was halfway lifted in 1997. The ban on arrack is thus still there, but the sale of IMFL and beer is permitted.

There has, of course, been a lot of reflection both about why the proscription on alcohol did not work properly and why it was cancelled. In general, supporters and opponents were agreed that the ban did not operate very well. While the adversaries said that it did not work because of smuggling and argued that drinking should not be controlled by law, the advocates argued that prohibition did not function because the government was not committed enough. Some also thought that the level of activity sank among the participants in the movement after the interdict was introduced, since the latter then left the responsibility of implementing it to the state.

The modification of governmental rhetoric coincided with a growing interest on the part of the World Bank in the policies of the state. The interference of this institution in the internal affairs of states increased
strikingly in the 1980s with the change in its approach following the debt crisis in Third World countries, from an emphasis on financing specific projects towards the fund-cutting transformation of national economies – the so-called ‘structural adjustment’ schemes of privatization and reduction of public services along with welfare programmes. While Miller (1997:42) has characterized the Bank as influenced by an economic model of ideal conditions, ‘pure economy’, rather than concerned with the heterogeneity of economic life, George and Sabelli (1994), on their side, have compared it with a church guided by a rigid religious doctrine. Note that the neo-liberal principles have been considered as a solution to a range of problems in very different contexts that also included the suggestion of lifting the ban on alcohol in Andhra Pradesh.

The government of the state became more prone to follow the directives of the World Bank after a change in its leadership manifested in the fact that Andhra Pradesh under Chandra Babu Naidu became one of the largest borrowers in India. Naidu has claimed that the loans were given on two fiscal conditions, managing the deficit and reorienting government costs (Naidu 2000:126). As the TDP abandoned many of its once dominant populist programmes, such as the scheme offering rice at two rupees a kilo and lower power tariffs for farmers, it introduced new forms of projects — characterized by larger responsibilities being put on the local community with less involvement of the state — in the form of self-help groups and participatory projects. The change of governmental policy in Andhra Pradesh can be related to a changing ‘governmentality’ in line with the ideas of Foucault (1991) who with this concept calls attention to all the practices governing people’s behaviour — institutions, agencies, debates, norms and identities. Gupta (1998:320) applies the theories to contemporary India by suggesting that there is a modification of governmentality that was previously closely connected to the nation-state but that today is being reconstituted at the global level through various treaties, agreements and institutions.

In 1996 a confidential paper, written by a team from the World Bank, circulated within the government administration stating that the biggest loss to the exchequer was the alcohol embargo and the subsidies on rice. A year

27 The main participatory scheme, Janma Bhumi, implies that development work should be taken up in the villages in consultation with the inhabitants at village meetings (gram sabhas) where rural people will be able to criticize state administrators and their own representatives regarding the implementation of the programme. Janma Bhumi is considered the continuation of two schemes: Prajala Vaddaku Paalana (taking the state administration to the door steps of the people), introduced by N.T. Rama Rao in November 1995, and Sramadanam (contribution of labour), launched in January 1996. The basic idea in the latter project is that instead of paying construction companies to carry out development projects (such as dams, schools or health centres) the state should use financial sources and voluntary work by local people who will ‘benefit’ from the programme. The choice of name reflects how the government tried to give the scheme a positive image by relating it to Indian ideas of voluntary gifts (daana) for the welfare of society (see Chapter 5).
later the details came out officially (World Bank 1997). The document had been discussed a lot in the media and among representatives of the movement, even before its formal release. In the debate participants evoked the report as symbolizing the growing influence of the World Bank on the policy of the state.

In Andhra Pradesh the defence of prohibition was in that sense a critique of the Bank and it often contained a nationalistic element. Already Rama Rao had maintained that directives of the World Bank or the IMF should not govern Indian states and the same line of reasoning often came up at meetings and in the press in 1996-7. For instance, Dr Vijaya Kumar from the JVV discussed the withdrawal of prohibition by relating it to a growing dependence of the state on orders from global institutions:

Chandra Babu Naidu started to take loans from the World Bank and the IMF. He’s supposed to be the most intelligent Chief Minister although he has received a lot of loans on deposit. At the time of the Independence struggle a person was thought to be a non-patriot if he brought anything from abroad into the country. Foreign clothes were then burnt and the masses used only national products – clothes, leather sandals, everything. Now the mood of the people has changed so much that the person who goes abroad with a begging bowl to borrow money is praised. Chandra Babu Naidu is admired in the newspapers as he has admitted that he will make loan applications for the state. These are loans which have to be repaid with interest.

Curbing the Protests

Up to now I have explored how the political parties entered the prohibition field by putting the ban on alcohol onto their agenda. As the goal of the movement became state policy there was less activism, which meant that most committees no longer met regularly and the networks in the villages weakened. Put another way, the movement was pacified and it was thus easier to withdraw the liquor ban. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how the anti-arrack protests were suppressed through direct repressive confrontations carried out either by the courts, the police or the hired gunmen of contractors — the gundas.

28 Many protests against the free rule of global market forces have been expressed in a nationalist idiom. For instance, in France the farmer José Bové led a protest against McDonald’s, and in India Professor Nanjundaswamy, leader of Karnataka’s Farmers Association (Karnataka Rajya Ryota Sangham — KRRS), initiated assaults on offices and restaurants of transnational corporations such as Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and McDonald’s in 1993. According to Gupta (1998:328) the new governmentality instituted at global level has resulted in anxiety and confusion that is manifested in ‘contradictory logics’. On the one hand, this governmentality is expressed in well-known notions about the world such as a nationalist fight against colonialism and, on the other, actions contradict the ideas of the nation-state as people make ‘nongovernmental’ and ‘postnational’ alliances.
The Court

When activists of the Anti-Arrack Movement were arrested they were not kept in custody for longer periods than one or two days. Tarrow (1994) has demonstrated that fingerprinting and registering the names of campaigners generally replaced jail as ways of curbing protests in the latter half of the twentieth century all over the world including India. Arrests of non-violent champions – such as Gandhi and the leaders of the American Civil Right Movement – only place the government in an unfavourable light; moreover, activists get a political education in jail and an opportunity to form new networks (ibid:95f).

Instead, many participants complained about how they suffered from ‘pending cases’ going on for years, a phenomenon that characterizes India’s judicial system and has proved to be an efficient way of dealing with dissent. Balaiah, a thin man in his thirties with a frantic look in his eyes, is one example of a man who had undergone this mental torture for a long time. My assistant and I had come to his place to ask about a protest against arrack in which Naxalite groups were involved when Balaiah told us his story. In contrast to the rest of the villagers, he was no longer afraid to talk about these things and had even at times considered suicide. Cases had been filed against him, in which he was charged with participating in anti-liquor activities and demanding a rise in wages for workers in the forest. The fact that Naxalite groups had supported him in his claims aggravated his difficulties.

I was kept in the police station for one month and later I was brought before the court that sent me for remand (back to custody to allow for further inquiry). From there, I was sent to Nellore sub-jail but I was released on bail. This case is still going on after eight years. I have spent 4,000 rupees on lawyer’s expenses and used up 100 rupees in travel charges to attend the court. Therefore I became discouraged and have stopped frequenting the court for the last four months. During those days there was an encounter in which three Naxalites were killed. The police took me to the site of the clashes and asked me to identify the bodies, whether these were the people who had conducted the meeting and who had talked to us. I answered, ‘yes. I don’t know their names but I have talked to them since they addressed us in a friendly way.’ That’s all. I am now getting into a panic about whoever may come to our village. … To speak frankly, all the people struggled a lot to eradicate liquor and toddy in this locality. We did not know what happened in Dubagunta, but we did the same thing in our place. Later on I went to anti-arrack meetings in other villages and many cases have been fabricated against me — for abusing the Chief Minister, giving meals to the Naxalites, and instigating people against the police. The cases have been under trial for the last eight years.

The villagers lacked enduring networks to outside organizers supporting them at the court, as the local meeting had been a single incident with no ties to the larger movement. Another protest event took place at Ravur, situated
on the coast of Nellore District, where people encountered police officers and liquor vendors culminating in the police booking cases against them, officially for throwing chillies at a competing team at a kabaDi (game played by two teams) competition. Although the court suits were pending for several months, in this case the defendants had the support of middle-class activists from the coordination committee who attended the court on their behalf.

The Police

On the whole we should expect that many activists experienced confrontations with the police. In Andhra Pradesh the civilian police are normally unarmed except for a baton or the Indian bamboo stick identified as a lathi. Clearly, lathi charges, beating with bamboo sticks, are a widespread feature of many demonstrations in India, while continued corporeal punishments occurred after the protesters had been taken into custody. Nonetheless, I did not witness any confrontations with the police during my stay in Andhra Pradesh at the time of prohibition. The constables were often standing peacefully with their lathis in their hands at the side of the road, chatting with each other and watching the demonstrators. In 1997 there was a larger encounter between police and demonstrating ML-groups in Hyderabad at which I was not present, and more such incidents took place when I had left the country. Consequently, I shall in this section discuss participants’ narratives about more violent events, not my own observations.

A striking feature in confrontations with the police has been the shaming of demonstrating women by tearing their saris and blouses. Artexaga (2001:58), describing strip searches of female IRA prisoners in Northern Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s, finds that the aim of these inspections was to discipline political women prisoners into models of ‘passive femininity’ and of ‘the colonial order in Northern Ireland’, i.e. control of the Catholic population. Women thus experienced British and male power in a physical form and this occurrence became part of their changing political identities. In the beginning the Irish prisoners criticized the strip searches as being a humiliating assault on their privacy but over time they were explicitly

29 KabaDi, an ancient Indian sport, is very popular and prestigious in Andhra Pradesh. Two teams, each consisting of five players and three reserves, take part in the game on a ground divided by a central line, starting with a person from one of the groups trying to cross the middle line singing ‘khabadi, khabadi’ without losing voice, and at the same time tapping as many persons as possible of the competing team, and returning as he/she tries to touch the line while members of the contesting group prevent him/her from doing so. If the opponents manage to catch the person or if he/she stops singing the team loses points to the other group. Similarly, the game continues but with the roles between the teams reversed in the second round.

30 This is a method used by both sides and not only by the police, exemplified by how liquor vendors in temperance campaigns have been paraded in their underwear through the main street of the village (cf. Kumar 1993:186).
talking of the checks in terms of rape and sexual offence (ibid:52). Conversely, in the Andhra Pradesh of the 1990s the women did not explicitly link the tearing of their saris and blouses by police staff to gender-related notions, e.g. to rape and sexual abuse. Instead they regarded these actions as being just degrading deeds of violence in line with the *lathi* charges.  

The police did not in general use violence without approval from above. According to Brass (1997:54), Indian local politicians have for various reasons chosen to control and use the police for their own benefit instead of professionalizing the corps or improving the deplorable working conditions and low salaries of the personnel. Aside from the attitude of local politicians, the strength of the government in power and their approach to protesters were factors influencing police behaviour. Della Porta (1996) describes how the ‘policing of protests’ in Germany and Italy fluctuated depending on how the political parties in power dealt with the struggles. Such variations over time in the stance of the constabulary towards the movement can also be seen in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in Nellore where the police acted very differently towards similar protest endeavours — mobilization against arrack auctions in 1992 and against the public sale of permits to IMFL shops in 1997.  

Note that the first incident took place when the Congress Party was in power. It hesitated to counter the movement directly in its earlier phases, whereas five years later the Telugu Desam Party under Chandra Babu Naidu had taken a more confrontational direction after pressure from the World Bank.

Excluding some minor confrontations with the constabulary, some groups from the coordination committee and, by coincidence, people from the BJP carried out protests outside the arrack auctions in 1992 quite peacefully (see Chapter 3). This lack of overt conflict can be explained in terms of the way the District Collector reacted after a number of individuals from the BJP had entered the auction area, when he met the campaigners and promised to

---

31 On the other hand, a discourse on gender-based violence has not been absent in India. The Indian police force has been notorious for gang rapes of women after they have been taken into custody and sometimes after parading them naked in the streets, often to subdue women lower in the social hierarchy such as representatives from tribal groups. In 1978 Rameeza Bee, a poor Muslim woman, was raped by several police officers and when her husband protested against the atrocity he was murdered. Moreover, Mathura, a 14-year old tribal girl from Maharashtra, was raped by local police officers in 1980. The defence of the constables was that Mathura had a boyfriend and was thus a 'loose' woman. In the same year Maya Tyagi — a daughter of a well-off farmer’s family in Baghpat, Harayana — was stripped naked, paraded through the streets and then brought to the police station where she was raped. These cases have become well known by being extensively covered by the press but there have also been several reports about gang rapes by military and paramilitary forces in the rebellious Northeast. The Indian women’s movement has discussed these incidents as part of both gender-based and class-based power, the latter referring to the traditional sexual right of large landowners to women from lower castes and tribal groups (Kumar 1993:128).

32 Before the free licences were introduced in 1998 there was a brief period in which the state auctioned the rights to sell IMFL to the highest bidder.
postpone the sale. In a similar vein, the police officers did not react strongly when members of the coordination committee and village women stormed the barricades at the auctions the next day.

Some people, like Dr Sudhakar Reddy from the JVV, were convinced that the stand of the civil administration influenced the behaviour of the constabulary, arguing that ‘the police could not be very militant against us because the Collector and other important persons supported the movement’. The incidents at the auctions held in 1997 give a very contrasting picture, as everything was planned in detail to prevent a repetition of the occurrences of 1992. For instance, the buses were cancelled so that many people from the rural areas were not able to turn up and police constables from neighbouring districts had been brought in. Venkatamma (pseudonym), one of the participants in the demonstration, describes her experiences of the succeeding violent confrontation with members of the force:

Associates from Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, DYFI (District Youth Federation of India), JVV and our party (CPI-M) went on the day of the relaxation of the ban to stop the tenders at Kasturba Kalakshetram (building in the southern part of Nellore town). The administration of Chandra Babu had brought in police from other districts, as it believed that the local constables would not be harsh enough. The demonstration took the form of a symbolic funeral procession and we carried a dummy in the image of Chandra Babu Naidu. On this day, the police beat several of the activists: Dr Vijaya Kumar, Mrs Usha Rani, Mrs Reshma, Mrs Nirmala, Mrs Arigella Nirmala, and Mrs Laxmamma. When the entire shirt of Dr Vijaya Kumar was completely ripped, some women tried to prevent this but were thrown to the ground and their blouses and saris were removed. The Town DSP (Deputy Superintendent), Chandra Sekar Reddy, humiliated us by keeping all of us in the police station and closing the roads to the town. He did not even allow the children to go to their exams and the town buses were routed to the police station. I got an injury on my finger.

We were released at noon but the police officers were very angry because we had insulted them. They wanted to suppress the movement in Nellore district and they planned to murder Dr Vijaya Kumar. When we reached the Gandhi statue the police reappeared and said that they would arrest us. As we told them that we had just been let out from custody they asked us if we could prove that we had been arrested. Threatening us with tear gas and firearms, the constables stopped people from all roads from reaching the Gandhi statue. The strategy was to provoke us and then to shoot at us. The DSP ordered lathi charges when the atmosphere was peaceful. They knocked Vijaya Kumar down and four police officers started to beat him.

**Anuradha:** Did they hit you a second time?

**Venkatamma:** Yes, they beat us again. I argued with them that they should not harm us and I physically tried to prevent them and got lathi beatings on my thigh and leg. My foot was injured and blood oozed from my white sari but I did not notice it. Some police officers commented that I was a lawyer and told the others that they should not punch me. Some party members approached them and said that I was bleeding resulting in the police
stopping the *lathi* charges. In that way I saved Dr Vijaya Kumar. If I hadn’t been injured they would have continued to beat the doctor and afterwards shot him pretending to fire in the air. They did all this to influence the public, as ordinary people would think that when even the leaders are thrashed to such an extent, they themselves would be even more severely beaten.

According to Venkatamama the police violence was not spontaneous but well planned, with the most severe confrontations and *lathi* charges taking place when the arrack auctions had been completed and far away from the sales area. Note that people from the movement, instead of returning the violence, started to argue with the police and question the latter’s use of force against the demonstrators. A verbal dispute broke out between police and activists along with physical abuse from the constables. Furthermore, the *lathi* charges by the police in 1997 are an example of how the force used roughness selectively against certain individuals and groups, evident in that the BJP people, who stormed the barricades five years earlier, were not targeted to the same extent.

The control of anti-liquor protests also became more violent in areas where Naxalite groups led the agitation. In general, there has been an increase in the number and brutality of confrontations between the Maoist guerrillas and the police in these regions, resulting in atrocities also against the rural poor, and persecution of human rights organizations and journalists (Ram Reddy 1989:316; Kohli 1988:1001; Asia Watch). Consistent with Della Porta (1996:64-5), studies on protest policing are important for an analysis of how activists understand available ‘political opportunities’, which means that there is a negotiation over the meaning of the struggle — as a ‘citizen right’ or a ‘disturbance to public order’ affecting the course of events. To begin with, the protests against liquor in Telangana were dealt with as a problem of ‘law and order’, whereas in Nellore they were regarded as part of a reformist movement. In the first case, the use of violence led to a polarization of the struggle between the Naxalites and the police or military forces, ending in many villagers hesitating to participate and the

---

33 The paper on Andhra Pradesh by Asia Watch (1992) refers to the widespread practice of ‘encounter’ killings, especially in areas where the Naxalite guerrillas are operating. In the majority of these incidents the victims have first been kept in police custody and afterwards proclaimed as having died in an encounter with the security forces.

34 There are several such incidents in Andhra Pradesh, concentrated in the region of Telangana but also spread out to other parts of the state. For example, the Peasant Workers Union (Rythu Kuli Sangam) arranged a meeting at the village of Tegacherla, close to Rapur in Nellore district, in December 1991, at which the organizers were not allowed to use the mike but anyhow conducted the gathering without any major problems. Afterwards there were confrontations with the police when eighteen people, including villagers, were arrested and cases filed that were still pending in 1998. Another instance is the arrests and *lathi* charges by the police of members from the Andhra Pradesh Struggle Committee for the Protection of Welfare Policies as the latter were organizing *rasta rokos* (road and railway blockings) in several parts of Hyderabad in 1996. Many demonstrations against the proposal to lift the liquor ban were organized at this time but their participants were not arrested or beaten.
movement never becoming as widespread in Telangana as in Raylaseema and Coastal Andhra.

**Hired Gunmen**

Apart from relying on government institutions, arrack contractors and liquor merchants used private armies of gunmen to defend their monopoly from other traders or from poor communities occupied with home distillation. Foucault (1977:280) describes how the elite from the nineteenth century onwards have used hired gunmen recruited from the sizeable force of delinquents to protect their interests and even to participate in certain illegalities, such as smuggling liquor during prohibition. The groups involved in different kinds of commissioned violence and criminal behaviour in Andhra Pradesh were called *gundas* in Telugu or rowdies in English. Activists have claimed that there are about 35 such groups in the state, specialized in various crimes, such as theft, burglary, threats or murders. Whereas the leaders often come from the upper castes, the rank-and-file members are people lower in the social hierarchy, such as Dalits and Backward Classes.

At the time of the Anti-Arrack Movement there were several confrontations between *gundas* and activists in which the former used different kinds of weapons such as clubs, guns, knives and axes. The contractors either hired them on a regular basis or a group of *gundas* were paid for some specific purpose such as obstructing meetings and demonstrations.

In this chapter I have discussed responses to the anti-arrack agitation from agents within the ‘prohibition field’ representing politicians, government officials, and various liquor traders ranging from distillery to shop. Within this field the boundary between foe and friend fluctuated as people adopting different positions continuously struggled and negotiated over collective interests and identities. The material presented in the chapter also indicates that power configurations between the participants in the field varied over time, as manifested in the change of government rhetoric and policies towards the alcohol ban after Chandra Babu Naidu came to power. At this time the field also included individuals from transnational foundations such as the World Bank, indicating a change in the autonomy of the nation-state.

It is clear that politicians and government officials are vital to the spread and strengthening of social movements at the same time as there are constraints when protests move from local actors to centres of decision-making in which multiple social forces participate. Most importantly, social movements are not simply spontaneous uprisings from the grassroots and we
need to include in our analyses the part played by state bureaucracies and
global institutions.

While some state agents were involved in the enforcement of prohibition,
others representing the courts, the police and the hired gunmen of contrac-
tors (gundas) confronted temperance activists more directly through physical
and psychological repression. Note that violence can be seen as a kind of
discourse in which the adversary disregards the rights of campaigners to
participate in the political sphere. In Andhra Pradesh this language was
spoken when the police were more repressive in areas where Naxalite
guerrilla groups were operating, towards specific leaders, and at certain
times when the government in power was more negative towards the aims of
the movement. Moreover, the confrontations were also carried out in terms
of gender as state officials tried to subdue women by tearing their blouses
and saris, whereas the latter themselves never conceived of these acts
according to this vocabulary, i.e. as sexual molestation and symbolic rape.

In the course of the struggle rural and urban activists became aware of
how the liquor trade was organized and about the links that existed between
businesspeople and politicians as well as the role of lower-level bureaucrats
like excise officials and police constables. Their growing understanding was
expressed in terms of the corruption of state officials and politicians,
illustrating how the state was ideologically constructed in the discursive
terrain of the anti-liquor protests.
Struggling for a liquor-free society, campaigners of the Anti-Arrack Movement were conducive to the creation of an ‘imagined community’, while they assembled in various protest events like meetings, demonstrations and sit-ins, attended cultural activities, or read and debated articles about the ongoing agitation. Anderson (1991:6-7), discussing how nationalism developed in Europe and the colonial world, maintains that all communities of face-to-face contact larger than villages are illusory. Like members of a nation, temperance activists in Andhra Pradesh take part in a community that can be considered as more imagined than real, since associates will not know or see most of their counterparts, but will still think about their unity, perceiving it as a profound expression of horizontal companionship.

This chapter makes an attempt to grasp the processes whereby participants in the mobilization against liquor conceive of themselves as part of a larger movement. In line with the arguments by Holland and Lave (2001:24-25), the Anti-Arrack Movement could be understood through cultural practices that simplify and give precedence to some ways of understanding and taking part in the agitation according to certain ‘subjectivities’ at the expense of others — such as general aims, shared experiences and reasons for entering into the struggle, as well as common understandings of the movement’s origins. In the following pages I shall show that the activists fighting against arrack fulfilled these requirements to some extent but not totally, as they expressed, for example, divergent opinions regarding the beginning of the protests.

The construction of shared identity should not, however, be thought of as a requirement for joint action but, in contrast, it is through collective undertakings that a feeling of togetherness is either strengthened or undermined (Della Porta & Diani 1999:87). Tilly (1986:3) calls attention to the fact that people act together in ‘contentious collective action’ to protect their interests and to manifest them to others, though they do so irregularly, i.e. they act for a short time and then stop. In a similar manner, temperance endeavours in Andhra Pradesh consist of moments of activity and inactivity, but also of unforeseen twists and turns.

Most of all, I am concerned here with the cultural aspects of collective activities. Clearly, culture has been taken into the theory of social movements in recent years, above all through the expression of ‘framing’ that brings the study of social movement action into the category of discourse
studies (cf. Hunt, Bent & Snow 1994). I would, however, prefer to see the movement culture as the result of a process of creative recombination than a procedure based simply on a selection from the ready-made frames offered by the cultural repertoire of the surrounding society. The authors of History in Person, edited by Holland and Lave (2001), use such a perspective as they focus on relations between contentious activities and shifting subjectivities mediated through locally placed practice in which both persons and social struggles are always incomplete and in progression.

In light of the foregoing discussion, the mobilization against liquor in Andhra Pradesh should be seen, to use the words of Fox and Starn (1997:6), as a ‘process of continuous becoming’ instead of as an already realized condition (cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1998:21; Howard & Lave 2001). While being formed by the larger environment, social movements provisionally go beyond the particular conditions from which they emerged. As has been emphasised by Eyerman and Jamison (1998:21), they should not be reified as coterminous with the organizations or establishment that they finally turn out to be; what is essential is their impermanence, their temporality, and their fluidity.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the process whereby a sense of togetherness could arise among associates spread out in multiple sites and with heterogeneous experiences. How did campaigners create the common identity and culture that make it possible for us to talk about the Anti-Arrack Movement? The first section discusses the importance of the press for the construction and spread of the temperance crusade. I shall then address whether the participants in the agitation shared an idea of common aims, experiences and origin. Thereafter the centre of attention will be shifted towards different forms of collective action — such as demonstrations, meetings and sit-ins — by bringing up their meaning to participants and how a feeling of togetherness was created. The role of protest travelling and its significance as a ‘liminal’ phenomenon will be considered in this context. Finally, I shall highlight the importance of cultural activities — theatre, music and dance — in many collective undertakings against liquor in Andhra Pradesh, before closing the chapter with a brief look at visual art as a bearer of the anti-liquor struggle.

The Press

The ‘Newspaper Revolution’

The press was important for describing scattered contentious endeavours as part of a movement and for the spread of the agitation, which should be understood at two levels. First, it contributed to a feeling of togetherness among participants by minimizing differences between the protest endeavours by connecting them to a nationalist tradition and a women’s struggle
against the ‘evil’ of liquor; secondly, activists used the media to spread their message among the public by arranging protest events to demonstrate their numerical strength and making statements at press meetings. An understanding of the significance of the press for the creation of an imagined community of protest could be deduced by taking the Indian ‘newspaper revolution’ of the 1980s into account — a radical change of technology that transformed publications of texts in the Indian language into a mass medium (Jeffrey 2000:33). Two printing improvements arrived simultaneously in this part of the world at the end of the 1970s: computer typesetting and the ‘offset’ press (ibid:38).

In the same period literacy was spreading in India with the number of literate persons increased by seven times between 1951 and 1991 into 350 million of potential readers (op cit:30). In Andhra Pradesh the increase was somewhat smaller, but even in this state there was a large market for newspapers. According to Tarrow (1994:51-53), the increase in literacy is an important factor behind the growth of social movements, since the man or woman who reads about an important incident concurrently with a large number of other people he or she does not know, is part of the same ‘invisible community’ of readers. The practice of reviewing the news aloud in front of others has the consequence of broadening the influence of the press far beyond its primary spread. While the men gathered in Chintala Palem in front of the teashop studying papers in the morning, women came together to read aloud to each other in the coastal area that had a higher rate of female literacy.

Significantly, the press built the setting for an extended public field as it informed widely on subjects that interested and affected people in their daily lives (Jeffrey 2000: 216). Habermas (1989) discusses how in Europe a public arena arose in the early eighteenth century, which was founded on a rising bourgeoisie and the printing press, but was later replaced by the mass industrial society in which the mass media are administrating consensus and maintaining consumer culture rather than giving public information and stimulating debate.

Considering the impact of the newspaper revolution in India, Jeffrey (2000:13-15, 217) tests the applicability of Habermas’ analysis by arguing that the mass media have formed a public field, in which readers, instead of being compliant thickheads, have interacted with the media and created a ‘publicity’ aimed at altering their lives, the programmes of governments and how politics is carried out. The Anti-Arrack Movement in Andhra Pradesh is mentioned as an example of a campaign that would never have occurred without the newspaper revolution (ibid:13-5, 217).

The Telugu Press
In the early 1990s the major Telugu dailies — Andhra Jyothi (the Light of Andhra), Eenadu (Today), and Udayam (Morning) — were united by a focus
on local issues. While Udayam closed down in 1994, Vaarta (News) started two years later as the main competitor to Eenadu, with a previous reporter of the latter as editor. A characteristic feature of the Telugu press is that a large part of their pages are designed for ‘local’ news (cf. Jeffrey 2000:87-98; Ståhlberg 2002: 69).¹ In contrast, the major South Indian newspapers in English — The Hindu, Indian Express and Deccan Chronicle — were not circulating in the villages of Andhra Pradesh, and they focused more on national and state-level events.

News articles in the Telugu press have portrayed various local struggles against arrack, but particular major themes dominated the reporting, whereas other issues were ignored. Writing on foreign correspondents, Hannerz (2004:143) claims that certain ‘story lines’ have been attached to different regions, for instance, conflicts between Arabs and Israelis in Jerusalem coverage and narratives of cultural difference when considering Tokyo. Similarly, ‘story lines’ on the Anti-Arrack Movement of Andhra Pradesh focused on the strength of the rural women from Nellore and specifically Dubagunta. Most importantly, many articles linked the temperance agitation of Andhra Pradesh to a broader pan-Indian struggle by comparing it with the Independence Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Uma Maheshwar Rao brings forward an alternative ‘story line’ in the article entitled ‘Dubagunta and Tegacherla — Two villages in the initial stages of the Anti-Arrack Movement’, published in Andhra Jyothi on 20 November 1994. In this story he contrasts the struggle in Dubagunta with the situation in Tegacherla, where villagers supported by a Naxalite group initially succeeded to close the arrack shop. According to the author, there were many similarities between the anti-liquor protests in those two villages, but the struggle in Tegacherla was suppressed due to its links to the Naxalites, whereas Dubagunta became highlighted as the origin of the movement. This alternative narrative was limited to Maheshwar Rao and never dominated the press exposure on the movement. In fact, the media lost interest in the agitation after the establishment of total prohibition, when the news items came to dwell instead on smuggling incidents and statements by politicians who accused each other of being involved in the trade in illicit booze.

Of the Telugu papers, Eenadu was outstanding in broadcasting stories about protests against arrack in remote places, thereby carrying the movement across village and district borders. At the beginning of the 1990s it took the lead over other Telugu dailies in running more than 70 percent of the everyday circulation (Jeffrey 2000:98). While the paper had been started by Ramoji Rao in Visakhapatnam on 10 August 1974 with 4,000 copies, set up by hand and produced from an old flatbed cylinder press, it embarked on

¹ In line with Ståhlberg (2002:95), national news is not absent from the vernacular press though there is a division in the way these newspapers imagine society, as ‘state’, ‘politics’ and ‘bureaucracy’ are detached from the practices at local level.
a new period of growth in 1989 by setting up the ‘district dailies’ to improve its local strength. The journal consisted of eight or ten full-size pages with news about Andhra Pradesh, India and the world, and a tabloid attachment with comparable local information from the district on four or six pages. By 1996 Eenadu was produced in nine electronically connected centres and it traded nearly 600,000 copies each day (ibid:83-4). The other Telugu papers followed the journal in introducing district dailies in tabloid form but Eenadu kept the lead.

This was the first paper to recognize the importance of the mobilization against arrack, illustrated by how Eenadu reported the struggle in the early days of the protests and launched a broad publicity campaign. After the postponement of auctions in Nellore, it allotted one full-size special page to the theme ‘Fight against arrack’ (saara pai samaram), publishing related news from all over the state in this sheet. The journal collected slogans against arrack from its reporters based in the districts, bringing out one catchword a day in the paper until the ban on arrack had been set up.

The question is why Eenadu and not other Telugu dailies took the lead in the coverage of the Anti-Arrack Movement. Many activists argued that Ramoji Rao, the owner of the paper, was motivated by competition from Udayam — a journal that was run by Magunta Subbaram Reddy, a liquor businessman. Uma Maheshwar Rao, referred to above, told me that, in contrast, the paper Andhra Jyothi did not afford such importance to the agitation in the beginning. Although the main aim of all the dailies was to reach out to the villages and increase their circulation, the management of Andhra Jyothi failed to assess the significance of the movement whereas Eenadu did so very early, he concluded.

Literacy volunteers collected newspaper cuttings regarding the involvement of ‘their village’ in the struggle, which they kept in separate files. In Chintala Palem Venkateswarlu had amassed such articles and proudly showed them to me, pointing to an item that had appeared in Eenadu on 5 November 1992 entitled ‘The platform is a tomb for the arrack demon’. As there was a photograph in this piece of all the villagers standing in front of the raised area built over their former arrack shop, Venkateswarlu underlined that the village had become famous for their involvement in the struggle. In such a way the press contributed to the fact that participants spread out in various parts of the state came to conceive of their local struggle as part of a larger movement.

The media can help movements to attract an early interest but the opposite might be the case later on, as the press does not rely on movement undertakings for reports (Tarrow 1994:127-9).2

2 As the ascendancy of protest activities is related to the interest of the media in the events, new associates expect to encounter what they see on television and read in the press. In The Whole World is Watching, Gitlin (2003) discusses how the American media represented the
objected to the lifting of the liquor ban in 1997 but it did not attempt to renew its prohibition campaign. Many activists criticized the stand of the paper, arguing that its silence was because the journal supported Chandra Babu Naidu, the Chief Minister, but also because Ramoji Rao, the editor, had started a film studio in Hyderabad and liquor was sold there. Most importantly, given the media’s search for newsworthy and dramatic stories (cf. Gitlin 2003:3), tidings about the mobilization against liquor were no longer considered to have the potential to increase the circulation of Eenadu as the movement had turned into a routine matter of everyday life.

The Journalists

Different kinds of journalists were involved in the process whereby articles on the Anti-Arrack Movement became released in the press. The base of the newspaper employees comprises ‘stringers’ who are not regularly employed but who convey stories to the journals from their area and, if their news item is printed, are remunerated according to ‘space rates’ — a predetermined amount for each column centimetre that appears in the paper.

Stringers have other sources of income, mainly eking out a living as teachers, lawyers, and shopkeepers, while others are students with no earnings (Jeffrey 2000:144). Several of the representatives of this category whom I met were based in the area surrounding Chintala Palem but they had only recently settled down in this part of Nellore district and they had not been living there when the temperance agitation started. All of them had other occupations, yet they tried to send stories to the newspapers, including one about the foreign anthropologist studying the mobilization against liquor.

In addition to stringers, there are the part-time or full-time paid reporters of the dailies who may be placed as local agents in a particular area or at the town where the journal is produced. Clearly, they are involved in a discussion with their editors about which news should be printed (ibid:143). Significant for the Telugu press, and the Indian-language press in general, was the fact that hardly any women or Dalits were employed as reporters or stringers (cf. Jeffrey 2000:160; Ståhlberg 2002:134-142). Men from higher and intermediate castes therefore wrote and edited the articles about the mobilization that appeared in the press.

According to him, participants internalised the images of the movement presented by the news by, for example, transforming ordinary leadership into ‘celebrity’ and amplifying eloquence and ‘militancy’.

3 Writing on the Hindi press in Lucknow, Ståhlberg (2002:137) claims that the majority of journalists are Brahmins, which he contrasts with politics and administration where positive discrimination of jobs for people from lower castes is practised. Moreover, the pre-eminence of Brahmins in newspaper writing could be related to their traditional role as intellectuals and tutors (ibid:139). In contrast to Uttar Pradesh, many journalists in Andhra Pradesh belonged to the landowning agricultural categories, Reddis and Kammas.
In the early days of the temperance agitation Sri Ram was an important male newscaster, who had joined Eenadu as a stringer, but had been promoted to be a staff reporter in 1984. Between 1989 and 1994 he was employed in Nellore district, where he supervised the entire coverage for Eenadu and every evening received news from 46 stringers located in all the district mandals. Sri Ram became familiar with the rising anti-arack struggle in Nellore as he was based in the same locality. In his articles he described different incidents from the villages as well as meetings in the district town and the march by temperance campaigners across the district (padayatra).

This reporter recollected the first account from Dubagunta that Eenadu had received from a local stringer in 1992. On 2 October, on Gandhi’s anniversary celebration, they published an article about the protests entitled ‘The dream of Mahatma Gandhi… The struggle is going on’. After some time village women began to mobilize in other localities and the movement spread rapidly. Sri Ram read all the reports on the struggle coming from mandals and villages, and then wrote a big story, which was put in the main paper, stating that a social revolution against arrack had started in Nellore district. The decision to print the report in the state version of Eenadu was a turning-point as news about the movement had previously only appeared in the local edition.

In 1998 when I met Sri Ram he had been promoted to a post in Hyderabad. He characterized his time in Nellore as a good period in his career as a journalist, but it was also a busy time when he worked day and night collecting and editing stories about the agitation. Ramoji Rao, the editor, had personally told the reporters that they should support the temperance crusade, stating that it was a popular movement of importance. The stand of the editor contributed to a growing tension between journalists and representatives of the liquor trade, which for Sri Ram involved threats from gunmen (gundas) employed by a contractor, who wrote anonymous letters and made phone calls to his house. Although nothing happened to him personally, there was an incident in the district when some hired men roughly handled a stringer who had reported a local struggle.

TV

When the agitation started at the beginning of the 1990s the printed press was the main medium for its expansion and not television, as the latter did not focus on village incidents to the same extent as the Telugu newspapers (Jeffrey 2000:222). While the corporations of Ramoji Rao started Eenadu Television (ETV) in the late 1990s, the TV had already begun to record the struggle; but activists maintained that news on the television had no major impact on them, apart from a limited circle in the urban areas. However, television news spread knowledge about the movement outside the state and in that sense influenced similar struggles in other parts of India.
If the printed press had a clear male bias, some TV programmes, particularly from Doordarschan — India’s state television — broadcast information on women’s issues, manifested in the fact that several women, mainly from North India, produced documentaries on the anti-arrack mobilization of Andhra Pradesh. Most noteworthy is ‘When Women Unite: The story of an uprising’, a co-production by Drishti Research and Media Group from Gujarat and CEDIT (Centre for Development of Imagining Technology) from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, with Shabnam Virmani from Drishti as the producer. Drishti has previously made films about the daily life and struggle of Indian women, whereas CEDIT concentrates on ‘development and science’. ‘When Women Unite’ is available in three versions: Telugu, Hindi and English. It won the Earth Vision Grand Prize in Tokyo in 1997, and another award at Bombay as the best documentary film.

The film team came to Andhra Pradesh four or five times, interviewing village women in Nellore district about their struggle as well as talking to urban activists in different parts of the state. Apart from questioning participants, the method employed in the film could be characterized as ‘docudrama’, consisting of different sequences of drama and documentation when members of the film team and activists in the movement together recreated scenes of what had happened in the villages. According to the producer, the process is as important as the end product, since she believes that people are not ‘passive objects’ whose perceptions and feelings can be employed without reciprocity (The Sunday Times of India, 29 October 1995). In contrast to other documentaries, many campaigners referred to the film, above all those who had taken part in the recomposed episodes. For example, Gouramma, living in the coastal area of Nellore district, brought up the title of the film, ‘When Women Unite’ when confirming her argument that the temperance agitation was a women’s movement. Endowed with this meaning, the documentary influenced some activists and they used the discourse of the film when describing their mobilization.

Cultural Constructions of the Movement

Activists struggling for a liquor-free society were united by numerous ‘sets of relationships’ (Melucci 1985) essential for the shaping of a common anti-arrack community. The agitation spread from village to village and into the urban areas through a multiplicity of contacts between activists, expressing vicinity in space, kinship bonds, joint membership in NGOs or other voluntary organizations, through meetings and by participating in the literacy campaign. Network analysis is mostly known in connection with a ‘realist’ vision of social formations, which sees how such webs connect actual people through specific ties, either directly or indirectly. Conversely, the concept and metaphor of network has come to be central to a less empiricist type of analysis, which does not put the emphasis on concrete
relations but concentrates on the inseparable link between social bonds and, in the words of Hannerz (1996), ‘cultural flows’ (Diani 2003:5; cf. Alvarez 1997). Consequently, meaning was formed and transferred in Andhra Pradesh through various networks, which drew the associates into a shared set of ideas and a collective identity even if they were not in face-to-face contact with each other.

In the process, participants in the temperance mobilization expressed their togetherness according to ideas about shared origin, shared aim(s), and shared experiences. Conversely, different sub-groups within the movement had conflicting and contradictory perspectives about the content of their collectivity making it difficult to manifest a common identity. Although I may be repeating what I have discussed in earlier chapters, I shall briefly elaborate on whether the three aspects mentioned above were fulfilled, as they were essential for the creation of an ‘imagined community’ of protest.

**Shared Origin**

Participants were like-minded in their view that the activities against liquor started among women in rural areas, and consequently the movement was partly based on primordial identities, i.e. gender, and a shared origin in space. On the other hand, several activists emphasized that the mobilization was not a feminist struggle, as feminism in their eyes was confined to urban people with a ‘Western’ ideology. To put it simply, participants came to understand and describe their agitation as a ‘women’s movement’ originating in the rural areas and in that sense embodying the ‘real’ India.

Individuals representing different factions of the movement often offered divergent stories about their shared origin. While people with Naxalite sympathies emphasized the heritage of the armed struggle by linking the Anti-Arrack Movement to the Naxalites in Telangana, members of the other camp focused on the importance of Nellore as the place, and in particular Dubagunta, and on the literacy campaign, some even tracing the agitation back to Gandhi’s temperance crusade in the 1930s.

**Shared Aim(s)**

Participants in the mobilization were united in their request for a liquor-free society, although they wanted it set up at different levels and did not include the same beverages in it. Villagers who had engaged in the pre-prohibition movement targeted the sale of arrack, the main drink of the rural areas at that point in time, with the intention of abolishing it from their locality. For example, activists from Peruru argued that their main concern was to stop arrack entering their village, and they did not bother about the situation in other places. When middle-class people joined the struggle and coordinated protest activities at district and state level, the movement became more directly aimed at state policies, i.e. the prohibition of alcohol, first in Nellore.
district and then all over the state. Some even expressed the hope of introducing the ban at an all-Indian level.

Participants were divided, however, regarding the issue as to whether or not toddy should be forbidden, discernible in the fact that several middle-class activists hesitated to demand the proscription of this beverage, arguing that poor tappers depended on it for their livelihood. There were for a time two networking committees in Hyderabad, one demanding total prohibition including toddy and the other asking for its exemption from the ban. Furthermore, women in the rural areas of Nellore unanimously demanded the embargo on toddy, while members of the coordination committee were hesitant to include its disallowance in the agenda of the movement.

Shared Experiences
In Andhra Pradesh people in general reflected on the temperance agitation in terms of a female struggle due to problems womenfolk faced in the domestic domain. Rural women explained their mobilization against arrack in terms of their suffering under their husbands’ and sons’ alcohol abuse. On the other hand, many men supported the protest, but male activists often played down their own importance claiming that they were not ‘part’ of the movement and that they ‘only’ had a ‘networking role’.

Strikingly, men and women as well as urban and rural participants came to share experiences in the course of the mobilization, as they congregated at meetings, demonstrations and sit-in strikes, confronted the police, were arrested and travelled together to attend protest events. Such common experiences were essential for the growth of a kind of imagined ‘anti-arrack’ community.

Collective Action
People made their points heard through various forms of collective action: public meetings, petitions, demonstrations (*pradarśanam* in Telugu) and a range of different obstructions, especially sit-ins (*dharnas*) and *rasta rokos* (road blocking). In social science studies such protests have been characterized by their intermediary character as standing at the crossroads between revolution and personal resistance (Fox & Starn 1997) or between institutional politics and individual dissent (Tarrow 1994:100f).

Although ‘the vocabulary of protest’, a term borrowed from Guha (1997:26-30) to describe protest actions employed by social movements, has united struggling groups, the methods have also varied in meaning and aims over space and time. Tilly (1983,1996) makes a distinction between the ‘old’ and ‘new repertoires’ of dissent when discussing Western Europe and the United States. While earlier techniques that tackled local people or the local representatives of national agencies were precise and straightforward, the
types of collective action started to change in the nineteenth century with the rise of capitalism and the national state. The ‘older repertoire’ was then replaced by one that was widespread and independent: strikes, public meetings, petitions, marches, and social movements. Tarrow (1994:19) suggests that the ‘new repertoire’ used by social movements could be taken over by a number of actors to achieve various aims, whereas the older ones were local and more restricted to a specific target. However, the fact that temperance campaigners in Andhra Pradesh took part in divergent endeavours — demonstrations, meetings and sit-ins in the cities as well as local protests such as shaming the enemy and burning down arrack shops — demonstrates that methods with differing logics intermingled. It is helpful, then, following the arguments of Guha (1997:28) to think about collective operations as both instrumental and expressive, with participants equally protecting their interests and demonstrating opinions on the existing social order.

A way of theorizing collective contentious activities in both rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh is to move our interest to the processes whereby collective identity is shaped, which I prefer to do by introducing the term ‘rituals of dissent’. Rituals are crucial in building a common sense of togetherness, presenting publicly available symbols that people can organize around (Swidler 1995:27; cf. Geertz 1973) and providing an experience of continuity between otherwise temporally distinct events. Predetermined procedures also help to bring participants back together, and repeat to them messages about their position in a movement and their place within an established tradition of resistance (Eyerman & Jamison 1998:35). Rituals finally provide fixed scripts for action that are mutually intelligible when strangers meet (cf. Kaplan 1992).

---

4 Tarrow (1994:33) offers an insightful criticism of Tilly by arguing that the latter has focused on social movements as a form of collective action instead of dealing with their rise in connection with changes in protest activities from direct and restrictive to more general ones.

5 In discussing the Narmada Movement in India, Guha (1997:29-30) divides the ‘vocabulary of protest’ into the following four subdivisions: (i) a collective demonstration of force manifested in public marches; (ii) Disturbance of the economy by using more radical protest operations, exemplified by hartals or bandhs (‘shut-down strikes’) and rasta rokos (road blockings); (iii) disturbance aimed at an individual target, with the intention of either obstructing activities at an explicit place through dharmas (sit-ins) or hampering the mobility of senior public administrators through gheraos (surroundings); and (iv) morally pressuring the whole state by means of bhook hartal, that is, an imprecise hunger strike commenced by an eminent spokesperson of a social movement, or by jail bharao andolan (movement to fill the jails) when campaigners non-violently and intentionally break the law in order to be taken into custody with the hope that the government will be placed in an unfavourable light.

6 Kaplan (1992), writing on the city of Barcelona in Spain, describes how civic rituals — arranged by state officials, artists or anarcho-syndicalists — were important in forming a common urban identity between 1888 and 1937, a time when there was a lot of immigration to the city.
Protests at Village level

When I carried out my fieldwork in 1994-8, the movement at village level had almost disappeared in many places. Rural protests had, however, become part of participants’ collective memory and in that way provided a common repository that was able to mobilize people and thereby contribute to the creation of an ‘imagined community’ of protest. In the early struggle collective activities in the countryside took various forms depending on the context: in some places villagers lay down across the road in front of the liquor lorries to prevent them from unloading the goods, and in Sri Ranga Raja Puram, located in coastal Nellore district, activists broke toddy pots and hugged the trees to stop the tappers from extracting toddy. Significantly, women developed a method of collective vigilance, as they stayed up all night taking turns in preventing arrack from entering the village (Pande 2002:362; cf. Starn 1999). The resistance was at times symbolically highly expressive, illustrated by how women danced together in triumph after burning the shops, the vehicles and the storage places for arrack, or when the inhabitants of Chintala Palem transformed the liquor shop into a symbolic grave by burying it under a platform. In some places people resorted to shaming liquor sellers and drunkards by shaving their heads and making them ride on donkeys through the village, a traditional way of humiliating a person in Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India as well.

The use of gender-related household items, such as brooms, chilli powder, sticks and sickles as weapons in the struggle has been a wide-spread phenomenon in India observed in various anti-alcohol campaigns but also during the Telangana uprising in Andhra Pradesh (Basu 1981:253, Kannabiran & Lalitha 1989:182). As the efficiency of the weapons lies in their potential to shame the adversary rather than in the physical danger they cause, the risk of being beaten by women contributed to people sometimes giving way instead of continuing the combat. Gouramma from coastal Nellore district explained that a man attacked by women with brooms would be regarded as having lost his manhood and he would therefore avoid such a confrontation by closing his arrack shop.

Some incidents from the village of Peruru in coastal Nellore district, recounted by Rabubi, will illustrate how the struggle took shape at village level. In this place the protests against arrack started when four women stopped a man transporting spirits into the village on a bicycle and told him to take it back. Every day the trader returned to challenge the protesters by

---

7 Keeping watch has existed as a ‘vocabulary of protest’ in different places but endowed with various meanings depending on the local circumstances, exemplified by the Rondas Campesinas (peasants who make the rounds) of the Peruvian Andes studied by Starn (1999). He describes how the villagers kept watch in the night to protect their local livelihood against the escalating crime trend in the late 1970s, which in the 1980s developed into a widespread movement throughout the rural northern region by incorporating other issues such as the organization of justice assemblies.
asking them how they would be able to stop the sale in the locality when it was sold everywhere in the mandal. The women replied that they were not concerned about the other places but did not want it in their village. Keeping watch day and night, they confiscated the packets of arrack, threw them on the road and burnt them. The contractor, Satyanarayana Reddy, residing in a neighbouring village, was an important man and brought in Excise Department officials from Indikurpeta. Although the constables summoned the protesters to the local platform (caawaDi), the latter refused to go there as accused people, considering that they had done nothing wrong. When the excise staff then agreed to come to the local shop, a quarrel broke out between them and the villagers. This was the first incident that took place in the mandal, Rabubi stressed. The women asked the village president (sarpanche) to help them but he refused and the arrack trade continued in the night. More and more women left their children at home and for seventeen days they obstructed the sale by sitting on the road and blocking the vehicles.

Finally, a jeep managed to enter Peruru with arrack. All the people went to Rabubi’s house, tapping on her door to inform her about what was happening. They decided jointly to obstruct the sales and when they arrived at the trading place the jeep was already there. As it was raining, the women stood under a flat thatched shelter, which was too narrow, resulting in their having to crowd together and many of them getting soaked in the rain. At first they just watched the place where the salesmen were about to sell the arrack, but later on they surrounded the vehicle and forced the driver to come out. On that particular day the contractor had decided to come to the locality to supervise the trade and he was sitting in the jeep. He called Rabubi ‘amme’, a colloquial way of addressing women, usually used to close friends and relatives, but when the elite address lower-class women in this way it signifies a difference of status. Rabubi was angered by the insult and she retaliated by saying, ‘Who do you think you are (ewaduraa niwu)? Why do you call me amme? How dare you? If you talk like that we will burn your jeep’. The driver, who had heard the conversation, went directly to the police station in Nellore to file a complaint against the campaigners for abusing the contractor and trying to burn his vehicle. Knowing this, the women borrowed a tractor to go to the station in the district capital, but before leaving the village they called at the house of Krishna Kumar, the teacher of the literacy campaign, since they needed his help in writing a petition demanding a stop to the sale of arrack in the locality to present to the state officials — the original to the District Collector and a copy to the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO). After visiting Nellore they immediately

---

8 This word literally means, ‘Who do you think you are’, but signifies insult or hatred against the person addressed.
returned to Peruru, apart from a few women who stayed in the town to visit their children at the hostels.

In the meantime twelve police officers had that very same morning been engaged in the sale of arrack in Peruru. Rabubi got back to the village at 2.00 p.m and went straight to her house. As nobody was at home, she was sitting by herself reflecting on the incidents in the town when twelve people carrying short poles (gujjulu) as weapons arrived by bicycle to let her know what was going on in the village. Rabubi went with them to the place arrack was being sold, in spite of the fact that she had had nothing to eat or drink. It was also her menstruation period and she had severe pains in her back. The contractor had returned to the village provoking the campaigners by saying: ‘Yesterday you burnt arrack but the police have now arrived at your place. We will see if you are able to confront them’. This man had already insulted Rabubi and she started furiously collecting chilli (mirapapoDi) powder, which the women were preparing in small packets and distributing to everybody. She also brought a bundle of 100 broomsticks and laid them on the road. The police started to laugh so that Rabubi got even angrier and summoned everybody by going from door to door.

When the traders saw all the people who had gathered ready to confront them, they informed the crowd that they would close down after five minutes. The villagers wanted to stop the sale immediately, and shouting slogans they started a dharna (sit-in). All the sales representatives began to leave, but one constable took a stick and beat Rabubi on the chest. Her mother, standing nearby, feared that her daughter might be killed and took some chilli powder and threw it in the face of the policeman. There was a scuffle between the villagers and the police, in which the former used their chilli powder and broom sticks as weapons. When the younger people started throwing stones the constabulary gave up and ran away, leaving their caps and bamboo sticks (lathis) behind. The chilli powder itched and burned and they plunged into a pond on the outskirts of the village.

As the constables telephoned the rural Circle Inspector to complain against Rabubi who had led the protests, the latter officer planned to come to Peruru to arrest her. Rabubi had no previous experience of any such struggle and she could not predict the consequences. Her apprehension grew since she was a Muslim woman who should not have been acting in the public arena. At that time the villagers were not yet associated with any of the urban activists who entered the struggle later on. While the liquor traders had networks involving agents of the state, the protesters in the village only knew a local politician in whose house Rabubi took refuge.

The most interesting feature of the incidents in Peruru is the way the villagers used household items such as chillies and brooms in their protest techniques, as they confronted the liquor traders and tried to stop the sale of

---

9 Gujjulu are vertical posts attached to the sides of a double bullock cart.
arrack in the locality. Mobilizing signs of pollution and thwarted femininity, their activities were both symbolically and physically more direct and more violent than those arranged at district and state level.

Protests at District and State Level

The middle-class activists who organized collective action at district- and state-level were often concerned about sustaining the movement for a prolonged period. Clearly, the mobilization was carried out in a more disciplined manner without elements of violence and they tried to calm down such actions as burning shops or beating up drunkards and salespeople. Tarrow (1994:109) has demonstrated how collective action in a peaceful way was theorized by Gandhi and then spread all over the world in the twentieth century. In Andhra Pradesh various forms of non-violent means of struggle were used and urban networking committees arranged public meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins, petitions and referendums in an attempt to influence the powers that be to stop the sale of arrack on the basis of their manifestation of strength in numbers (cf. Della Porta & Diani 1999:173). In the same way as political parties had a large number of voters who sustained them, the participants demonstrated the strength of the movement by the multitude of protesters who turned up at collective activities. Consequently, the underlying logic is the same as in representative democracy, i.e. political change through the expression of the will of the majority (ibid:174).

Demonstrations

As many demonstrations were performed in a stylized and recurring pattern, they functioned as rituals of dissent shaping a common identity among people who came together from different places. Schechner (1993), following the theories of Turner (1969), characterizes rallies of social movements as setting up a ‘liminal’ period, in which people can convey both their revolt and their yearning for liberty through rituals: song, dance, nakedness and sexuality. Telling examples are episodes when more conventional marches have resulted in general uprisings with a muddled composition, more like carnivals, such as the breaching of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the ‘democracy movement’ of Beijing in the same year. Some incidents against the sale of liquor in Andhra Pradesh took place in a similar manner, i.e. the storming of the barricades set up by excise staff and police constables to protect the auctioning of arrack licences at the AC Stadium in Nellore. Conversely, anti-liquor demonstrations were in general more similar to parades arranged by

---

10 Illustrative is the manifestation of collective strength through the signature campaign of Nellore District. On 8 September 1992, International Literacy Day, two representatives from each locality went to the Town Hall in Nellore to hand over the signatures from the inhabitants of 800 villages to the District Collector.
the establishment and carried out in countable rectangular and linear lines with a beginning and an end in both time and space (cf. Schechner 1993: 48, 82). Demonstrations that begin as disturbing activities may in the course of time become legalized, resulting in the establishment of sanctioned codes, a common culture (Tarrow 1994:107; cf. Turner 1969), and the disappearance of the disruptive element in favour of a materialization of the power of numbers. Significantly, shouting slogans in a formalized and repetitive manner was an important component of many demonstrations, and popular catchwords were circulated and spread among activists (cf. Pande 1997). In addition, marching down streets and occupying squares in the cities signifies a symbolic seizure of the municipality and an expression of a community of shared values (Kaplan 1992:36,13). The rally at the Assembly in Hyderabad will serve as an example of such a symbolic capture of the capital but also of the festive character of demonstrating.

In 1996 there was a rally in Hyderabad which 10,000 women from different parts of Andhra Pradesh attended under the banner of NAWO (National Alliance of Women), as part of the programme ‘the March to Assembly’ (Chalo Assembly). I had travelled from Tirupati together with some people from the NGO, Rural Institute of Social Education (RISE), to participate in this event. Because I was planning to stay for a longer period in Hyderabad I had to leave my luggage at a hostel, and having done so I met my companions at the Exhibition Grounds from where the main demonstration was supposed to start.

People unfurled their banners and formed into two lines with the intervening space left free for functionaries to walk shouting slogans and seeing that people kept their positions. At the front of the procession was a violet banner with the text ‘National Alliance of Women’. The participants walked region-wise: first, Coastal Andhra, followed by Telangana and finally Rayalaseema to which Tirupati belonged. Members from organizations that took part in the rally, including those from RISE, marched together under their own banderols.

Slowly the demonstration started to move and people called out catchphrases like ‘Demand total prohibition’, ‘We want rice for two rupees’ or ‘Long live women’s unity’. Soon the music took over in this part of the demonstration. While Nagamma, a village woman and artiste from RISE, started to sing to the sound of a tambourine, an old woman and some men surrounded her dancing rhythmically to the music.

People walked to the Secretariat, the government building, where the road was blocked (rasta roko) for an hour. As it was nearly +40°C and the

---

11 J. Seturami Reddy, an activist residing in Nellore town, has collected and written down several slogans including the following: 1) ‘If you don’t drop the bottle you will only have dust in the home’; 2) ‘The villages that refrain from liquor will make history’; 3) ‘The flame of arrack burns up the life of a person’; 4) ‘We don’t want the drinker’s path; we want Gandhi’s path’; and 5) ‘Don’t drink and make us beg for food’.

---

215
participants started to become exhausted and irritated, one of the arrangers in desperation asked some other functionaries for two big tins of water to quench the thirst of the protesters. The demonstration then slowly moved back to the Exhibition Grounds via the Telugu Mother Statue, the New MLA Quarters, Assembly Road, and Nampally Road. There were some arguments with the police at the Mother Statue but the conflict did not escalate into a physical confrontation as is common at Indian rallies.

Although though demonstrators had invaded the main streets of Hyderabad to express their togetherness and the aim of the movement, the squabble with the police at the Telugu Mother Statue shows how orderly rallies can at any moment dissolve and become violent, giving the constabulary an excuse to arrest the campaigners. Kaplan (1992:28) has illustrated with examples from Barcelona how other people than the original organizers — police and terrorists — can interrupt civic protests and celebrations and give them an alternative meaning.

Public Meetings
At public meetings, arranged immediately after the demonstrations, the numbers of participants who turned up articulated the force of the movement, while also strengthening the feeling of solidarity among the members. Several such gatherings were organized as an answer to some specific event on which participants wanted to communicate their opinion, knowing that the press would report the occasion. A striking example is the assembly (and demonstration) in Vinjamur (1996) that was scheduled in reaction to the fact that Rosamma had been attacked at an earlier reunion in this place, but also with the aim of asserting dissent against the growing illicit distillation and bootlegging activities in the area.

Rama Gopal, the convenor of the Anti-Liquor Coordination Committee, introduced the meeting by mentioning how hired gunmen had insulted Rosamma the previous time and stressing the importance of stopping the sale of country liquor manufactured in Ravipadu and other villages of the mandal. Apart from Rama Gopal, other members from the JVV and local political leaders made speeches emphasizing the importance of preserving the prohibition and expressing their indignation over the aggression against Rosamma. In the middle of the meeting there were some disturbances caused by intoxicated men and a rumour got abroad that spirits were being sold in the vicinity. Some activists went to the place indicated but found nothing and the assembly continued as planned.

When Rosamma appeared on the dais, a murmur swept through the audience since word had got about that she would not attend. After sitting silently, she turned into a lively performer with a loud voice and intensive gesticulations. She pointed out that she felt very close to Vinjamur as many girls from Dubagunta had been married to men from that village. Rosamma therefore believed in the people from Vinjamur and had been very hurt when
certain individuals from this place had insulted her a week earlier with slipper beatings. According to her, this was not only a personal offence but also an affront to the whole of Vinjamur. In contrast to what was generally assumed, she had not started the affair but, together with many other people, became involved in the struggle because it was ‘written on her forehead’, i.e. it was her fate. Rosamma pointed out that she took part in the temperance agitation not for the sake of her own family or for money but on behalf of other women, children and families. Being 62 years old, she was not afraid of losing her life in the protest. Finally, she dwelt on the prohibition and the endeavour to withdraw it by Chandra Babu Naidu who had contributed to the ruin of ‘the temple of Nellore’. She therefore encouraged the women to tie their saris round their waists, in other words to prepare for a struggle, and join her in a campaign all over the district against the sale of liquor and arrack.

As this meeting was a local gathering to which people from different villages and towns in the district had turned up with the aim of expressing solidarity with Rosamma, its arrangement in the same place where she had been assaulted was in a sense a symbolic recapture of Vinjamur by the movement. The efforts by representatives from the liquor trade to obstruct the gathering by hiring inebriates did not succeed. At the same time, the meeting was also held as part of a larger agenda in which organizations all over Andhra Pradesh convened similar reunions to challenge the government in its attempt to reintroduce the sale of spirits.

The Power of Speech

Speeches were imperative to motivate people in the anti-arrack agitation, as they depicted the roots of dissatisfaction and disseminated dominant ‘accounts’ for action and frameworks of interpretation (cf. Fine 1995:132). Analyzing the rhetoric at protest meetings, Fine (1995:135) argues about the importance of narratives, and social movements accordingly in his view rest on a ‘bundle of stories’ that people at meetings give to other participants and by which they construct or add to a collective movement memory. In his

12 In Andhra Pradesh it is generally believed that the future of a person is written on the forehead at his/her birth.
13 A similar unsuccessful attempt to dissolve a public meeting by the spreading of rumours and confusion that might provide a pretext for the establishment to bring in the police and arrest participants took place in Hyderabad after the march to the Assembly arranged by NAWO in 1996. At the end of the convention following the rally, reports got around that the total prohibition would be lifted, with the outcome that delegates who were just about to go with their memorandum to the Chief Minister instead announced its forthcoming withdrawal. While the participants in the meeting reacted in silence, despair and anger, the convenor told everyone to go home and continue the struggle at district and Mandal levels, stressing that they could not do anything else at the moment. A woman sitting next to me commented that the liquor interests actually expected them to resort to violence so that they could call for the constabulary to take the activists into custody. Eventually, the meeting was dissolved without any further disturbances.
view there are three ‘master frames’ that should be essential in our studies: stories of shared insults to the protesters (‘horror stories’); stories of shared incidents within the struggle (‘war stories’); and narratives that reiterate the importance of the protests for attaining the aims (‘happy endings’). The speech by Rosamma, referred to above, could be characterized as a ‘horror story’ since she focused on the abuses against her one week earlier. In addition, some orations dwelt on the power of rural women when confronting and defeating liquor traders, primarily a ‘happy ending’ narrative but with reference to pan-Indian ideas on ‘women’s power’ (strīśakti). In other instances, however, the speeches could not be thought of in terms of the three master frames suggested by Fine. In simple words, an alternative ‘master frame’ put forward in addresses by activists in Andhra Pradesh was characterized by throwing discredit on the enemy on the basis of their self-interest. The narratives pinpointed on how politicians had supported the struggle with the aim of winning the election and how they hesitated to enforce the ban because of their links to the liquor business. On many occasions, however, speakers talked about various issues, some in narrative form but also in the form of exhortations to movement associates and government authorities. Powerful metaphors were used to illustrate the orations. For example, Dr Vijaya Kumar described in a speech how a tiger was haunting the village and that people should not wait to fight it but instead should start sounding the drums to thwart it. The performance was as important as what the words expressed in his speech, exemplified in the way the emotional appeal to togetherness was seen in his facial expressions, the intonations of his voice and the dramatic gesticulation.

Activists argued that the ‘good speaker’ would convince his/her audience about the state of the world by using illustrations, showing his/her anger and sorrow, as well as making the listeners feel the same sorts of sentiments, thereby strengthening a sense of collectivity among the participants. According to Dr C.A. Prasad, a cultural activist, speeches were a kind of ‘cultural activity’ demanding artistic talents. Referring to some spokespersons of the movement and to the politician N.T. Rama Rao he said that the orations of some people sound like songs since they have an innate talent to persuade the audience by their words. In contrast, others regarded the ability to deliver addresses at meetings as an acquired skill that could be learnt and mastered. Dr Brahma Reddy from the JVV has published a booklet instructing the activists in how to be eloquent speakers. Another example is Rosamma who had learnt to speak in the course of the struggle; she remembered that she was terrified in the beginning, knowing that she was ‘uneducated’ and using an unrefined rural language, but in the course of time she gradually grasped the art.

14 Such ‘master frames’ were not confined to speeches but were also important ingredients of songs and press articles.
Dharnas and Rasta Rokos

Public meetings and marches referred to above were held to demonstrate the force of the movement in the number of people that turned up, but participants also joined these activities to express festivity and a sense of community. Dharnas (sit-ins to block the completion of work), on the other hand, had an element of disruption revealed in their military analogy, i.e. the aim was to cause the adversary the greatest harm possible for the least amount of loss (Della Porta & Diani 1999:173).

Disruption might take many forms, illustrated in Western history by assaults on an offender’s home or on a miller’s grain stock in the eighteenth century, the barricades of the nineteenth century and the sit-ins and sit-downs of our own time (Tarrow 1994:107f). There are many culturally recognized forms of interruption in India as well, such as rasta roko (blocking roads and railways) and gherao (surrounding managers or blocking buildings with government tractors and bullock carts). In addition to the physical manifestation of a movement’s willpower, they impede the everyday actions of adversaries, onlookers or representatives of the establishment, sometimes causing material, but not bodily, harm. Finally, disturbances expand the conflict as they pose a threat to ‘law and order’ and involve the state in the contention (ibid:108).

The sit-in to stop the auctions in Nellore was carried out for 20 days between the 11 and 30 September 1992 (see Chapter 3). Villagers described how they lay down in the road in front of the Collector’s office, challenging the auctioneers to drive their jeeps over their bodies. Although there were heavy rains at the time people never quit the place, sleeping outside on the street during the nights and eating snacks brought by volunteers and distributed among the participants. In view of the fact that only rice is regarded as real food in Andhra Pradesh, since the same word (annam) is used for both cooked rice and food, the time people spent keeping watch at the sit-in was equated with fasting (cf. Abelmann 1996:63), and in this sense participants’ experiences of the hardship at the dharna resembled those of religious pilgrims, a feature of protest activities that I shall return to below.

Despite the fact that the dharna was on the whole carried out peacefully, probably because the Collector never made any statement openly against the protests, there were certain moments of outbursts of violence from the police in which activists were beaten up and charged with lathis. One woman from Kollure reminisced about how the constabulary threatened her and some other women from her village that they would shoot them one after the other, 

---

15 There are various pre-colonial disruptive protest methods, such as dharna, hartal and gherao. For example, in dharnas Brahmans compelled their adversaries to surrender as they sat fasting in front of the latter’s residences. According to Bondurant (1965:118-20), Gandhi changed the logic of these techniques from the use of coercive methods and force against the opponent into that of non-violent resistance. While Bondurant emphasizes the difference between pre-colonial and Gandhian protests, Irschick (1986:1281-82) stresses their continuity.
with the result that the women challenged the police by asking them what happened after the murder of Alluri Sitarama Raju. This man had led a successful anti-liquor struggle in the Godavari region in the 1920s (see Chapter 2) and was shot on 6 May 1924, while the rebellion continued a few more months until September when the British finally eradicated it. Probably this woman wanted to make the point that, even if the British crushed the uprising, the colonizers finally had to leave the country and India got its independence.

**Historicity and the Importance of Memory**

The latter incident indicates the importance of memory and the historicity of the struggle offering a rich and adaptable symbolic language that over time is shaped and reshaped by participants underpinning their feeling of belonging together in a common tradition of struggle. Writing on South Korea, Abelmann (1996:20) characterizes the meaning of ‘memory’ as an individual reserve or common storehouse of tools that is able to mobilize people. Gandhi played a major role in the collective memory in many protests against arrack, and some of the methods used had Gandhian connotation such as the march (*padayatra*), which I shall describe later on.

Many incidents were also linked to struggles over symbols related to Gandhi (cf. Fox & Starn 1997:10), discernible in the dispute over the garlanding of the Gandhi statue in Hyderabad by the then Congress Chief Minister on 2 October 1994. By organizing a sit-in, anti-liquor activists tried to stop him from garlanding the statue, arguing that Gandhi had been in favour of prohibition, whereas the current government was encouraging the sale of liquor. The police came to the site, arrested, knocked down, and *lathi* charged the demonstrators, and when news of this incident spread around the state the government earned a bad reputation for apprehending and maltreating old women who had arranged a peaceful protest.\(^{16}\)

Another successful symbolic issue was the celebration of Gandhi’s birthday by organizing protests against the sale and use of arrack. This was done for the first time when men all over Nellore district gathered in villages and towns as part of the Oath-Taking Programme, promising not to drink from that day onwards. As former problem drinkers joined the women in the mobilization the movement was no longer an agitation for the moral reform of the drinker but rather a self-reform struggle in which inebriates and teetotallers united with the aim of changing the entire society through the

\(^{16}\) The Gandhi statue has provided an important key site in the anti-liquor struggles carried out in various places. On 2 October 1992 demonstrators garlanded the statue with arrack packets at Jagityal, Karimnagar District, as a protest against the ‘dual standards’ of the government, i.e. the fact that the Congress Party advocated Gandhian values at the same time as it supported the arrack sale. In addition, the police confronted and *lathi* charged anti-liquor campaigners at the Gandhi statue in Nellore town in 1997.
law. Over the years, movement associates have similarly celebrated 2 October in defence of prohibition.

The Travel of Activists

In marches, meetings and dharnas people from different areas gathered at specific places, giving physical shape to their imagined collectivity and intensifying their sense of solidarity as they shared experiences in the struggle. Abelmann (1996:58) has analyzed the ‘geography of protest’ among participants in a tenants’ movement in South Korea and how the spaces of dissent were extended in the course of the struggle from the rural areas to the political, economic, and cultural centre of Seoul. In a similar manner, the first and most obvious ‘protest spaces’ in Andhra Pradesh were the local selling places for liquor, but these were widened to include, for example, the mandal headquarters, the auction site and the Collector’s office in Nellore town as well as the power nucleus of the state capital, i.e. the Secretariat, the government building.

Travel between different places was an important part of the struggle and of activist sociality far removed from women’s everyday life of labour and family maintenance. While village women went by tractor, lorry and even bullock cart to the district towns singing together and calling out slogans, they travelled by train to attend activities further away, above all at the state capital — Hyderabad. The travel was often described as an unforgettable and happy moment when people left behind their everyday problems and spent their time chanting in unison and exchanging experiences. Such journeys are reminiscent of the concept of ‘communitas’ as defined by Turner (1969), a liminal period characterized by amorphous or imperfectly ordered and quite undifferentiated social relations.

Travelling by Train

I joined some women from Stree Shakti Sangatham (the Organization of Women’s Power) then still a sub-group within RISE (Rural Institute of Social Education), while they were travelling from Tirupati to Hyderabad as part of the March to Assembly programme in 1996.

Village women in simple saris had gathered on the railway platform of Tirupati surrounded by their luggage and banners for the demonstration. In front of them stood Rama Krishna, the leader of the association, shouting rallying cries, and they repeated in unison the last words of each slogan. For example, Rama Krishna cried ‘Long live women’s unity, Long live the Organization of Women’s Unity’ and the women answered ‘Long live the Organization of Women’s Unity’, signifying how demonstrating was regarded as a skill that could be learned but also mirroring the existing hierarchy between participants in which the urban activist was the teacher and the rural women the learners (cf. Abelmann 1996:50). We boarded the
train, which was crowded and it was difficult to find seats. As the compart-
ment consisted of wooden benches with barrack beds above them where
people could put their bags or lie down, the men from RISE climbed up and
sat bent forward with legs folded. Everyone was talking in a lively fashion,
excited about travelling to the state capital and the forthcoming events. I
shared a bench with thirteen other women including the convenor of Stree
Shakti Sangatham, and noted how even the aisle became crowded after some
time. Outside the window, people had attached a white banner with the text
‘Stop thinking about diluting prohibition! Continue the ban on liquor!
Implement prohibition strictly! We want a kilo of rice for two rupees’.

The journey from Tirupati to Hyderabad took around 24 hours. Except for
men and women sitting separately, there was no spatial division between the
members. It is also relevant that the space was organized according to
criteria that emphasized the unity of the protesters: rural and urban women
as well as people from different castes and classes sat together in the same
compartment. In addition, the activists shared food with each other, which
strengthened the unitary feeling as higher castes traditionally did not accept
food from lower ones — a rule which still applied in many rural places.
Nagamma, a village campaigner who was sitting opposite me, had brought
her tambourine and the section was soon filled with music and song. This
woman had composed the lyrics herself. One of them dealt expressively with
the problem of arrack among the poor: ‘I don’t want this drunkard as a
husband. He beats me when he returns home intoxicated. I don’t have any
sari or blouse to wear. I don’t have any ornaments. How can I go to the
wedding of my relatives? I don’t want this drunkard as a husband.’ By the
time a male singer from RISE accompanied the songs by tapping on a small
drum, a large crowd had already gathered outside our compartment.

The Padayatra

The use of the march (padayatra) by social movements in India could be
understood as part of a pilgrimage (thirta-yatra) tradition within Hinduism.
Turner (1974) argues that such journeys are liminal events that demonstrate
in their social relationship the value of communitas. Some social scientists
studying Indian pilgrimages have criticized Turner for over-emphasizing the
egalitarianism of these journeys, as hierarchy among the associates is never
Significant in the Indian context, however, is that the travelling itself is of
crucial importance for the participants since the archetypal wanderer is the
renouncer. Missions on foot, characterized by physical hardship, are
therefore regarded as more meritorious (Fuller 1992:214). We can link this
to what has been said above about the relevance of an ascetic life for the
leadership of social movements.

In 1930 Gandhi revived the pilgrimage for political purposes when to-
gether with 71 male ashram members he started the month-long salt march
from Ahmedabad to Dandi on the Bombay coast. Despite the fact that he saw it as a sacred journey, the aim was to educate villagers about the Civil Disobedience Campaign. Bahuguna continued this tradition in his endeavour to change the minds of the uninitiated outside Uttarkhand about the Chipko Movement by travelling 4,000 kilometres on foot across the Himalayas in 1983. The coordination committee for the Anti-Arrack Movement in Nellore district decided to carry out a march in a similar manner. In this *padayatra*, however, many women participated in contrast to the preceding traditions associated mainly with well-known “male pioneers”.17

In December 1993 four different *padayatra* groups walked in total around 1,200 kilometres in 17 days, covering the following routes: (i) Sitarampuram to Dubagunta (and then by bus to Nellore); (ii) Kavali via Bitragunta to Nellore; (iii) Tada to Nellore; and (iv) Marripadu to Nellore. All four groups converged at the Pennar Bridge in Nellore town on the final day of the *padayatra* and marched together to the Town Hall, singing songs all the way.

Representatives of the coordination committee claimed that they arranged these marches to strengthen the unity of the participants and to inform villagers about the government’s plans to sell arrack in secret after the postponement of the auctions, proving that this movement was going to be very protracted. Dr Vijaya Kumar from the committee underlined that they regarded the *padayatra* as a campaign method which allowed the activists to go directly to the people, to meet them and talk to them.

Several members from the voluntary organizations taking part have emphasized the uniqueness of these marches, their feelings of togetherness during the hardship of the journey and how the villagers, attracted by the songs and music, responded to them with enthusiasm. The participants in the *padayatra* compared the event with the independence struggle in terms of the number of people who turned up and the strong emotions that the march aroused among the team members. They described how they walked in the hot sun, how their hair was dishevelled, how the men were not able to shave and how the sun tanned them black. People left their families behind and crossed forests and streams. It is clear that the *padayatra* was something extraordinary in their lives:

*It was a beautiful movement. I was then 44 years old. In those 44 years all my duties had been equated with the struggle against arrack, together with the people. The march was the most effective of all the programmes in the movement. I am not trying to analyze this but it is a fact of my life. I feel like this because of my experiences. Dr C.A. Prasad, cultural team member*

---

17 While around one-third of the members of the march were women, in addition multitudes of rural womenfolk met the teams on the outskirts of the villages and followed them until they reached the next place.
In every village a public meeting was arranged, with the inhabitants coming to welcome the groups as they entered the village and following them afterwards to the next place. As villagers met the participants they garlanded them with flowers, put dots on their foreheads (tilakam), cracked coconuts and gave auspicious blessings with a camphor flame on a plate (aarati). During puuja, the Hindu ceremony in front of the gods, the gesture of the camphor flame reproduces and strengthens the transmission of divine power through the insubstantial means of the flame. Blessings with camphor are also used on auspicious occasions such as receiving a bride for the first time or after the completion of building a house. On some occasions villagers cut their fingers and put blood as tilakam on the foreheads of the members of the teams. Dr Vijaya Kumar explained to me that the use of blood signified the intensity of the blessing and in medieval times in India the wife cut her finger to put blood on the forehead of her husband before he went off to war. This is another example of how participants built selectively on pan-Indian vocabularies when expressing their dissenting consciousness and commonality.

Cultural Activities
Music and other cultural activities were significant in the padayatra and on other occasions when campaigners of the Anti-Arrack Movement came together. Eyerman and Jamison (1998:10) assert that social movements utilize artistic idioms to make exchanges with the broader society and thereby often politicize or repoliticize ‘popular culture’. The use of various ‘traditions’ plays an important part in these interchanges, linking a selected past with the present, but rules of tradition are constantly destroyed or modified to revitalize the genres (ibid:29). In contrast to Hobsbawm (1983) who explores the invention of traditions, Eyerman and Jamison (1998:47) give them an independent importance: on the one hand, traditions provide links between movements and generations of struggle, and on a creative level they supply material that can be turned into resources for collective identity building. Consequently, the cultural activities of artistes involved in the temperance crusade provided bridges to earlier protests but also to theatre, dance and musical folklore in Andhra Pradesh that were important when building up cohesion among participants and also in attracting newcomers to the cause.

Street Theatre in Andhra Pradesh
As popular songs and folk theatre were essential in the cultural life of the state and had been used in earlier social struggles, cultural teams from NGOs and voluntary organizations employed these genres to illustrate social problems and to initiate discussions about the havoc arrack created in many homes. Bhatia (2004:3-5) believes that the centrality of drama and perform-
ance in colonial and post-colonial contention has been overlooked in favour of the print media, in particular the novel. In view of the comparatively low literacy rate of India, she argues that the theatre presents a significant site of resistance with specific characteristics such as its emphasis on the visual, the importance of collective involvement and expressions of common histories, its mobility, its possibilities for involvement of the audience in the performances and its spatial manoeuvrability.

Numerous cultural groups engaged in the anti-arrack struggle were dedicated adherents of the ‘street theatre’ that had evolved with the birth of IPTA (Indian People’s Theatre Association) in 1942 from the cultural wing of the then undivided Communist Party, at first concentrated in Bombay and Calcutta and then growing into a nation-wide movement. IPTA extensively copied popular traditions from different regions but added present-day or humorous embellishments; the group preferred outdoor performances, and subsequently developed the notion of ‘travelling theatre’, facilitating an interaction with audiences spread out in different parts of India (Yarrow 2001:179-80; Bhatia 2004:77,83). Although ‘progressive theatres’ in both Western Europe and the Soviet Union had influenced members of the association, they appropriated European theories on theatre and dramatic performances with the aim of countering colonialism and fascism. After 1947 IPTA began losing its mass character and the body finally disintegrated with the split of the Communist Party in the 1960s (Bhatia 2004:90-92).

Enthused by IPTA, Garikapati Raja Rao from Krishna district founded Andhra Pradesh People’s Theatre Society (Andhra Pradesh Praja Natya Mandali) as a state branch of the association in 1943. Since the organization’s cultural troupes used various folkloristic styles in plays and songs performed all over Andhra Pradesh, they contributed to the spread of local traditions across the state, for example the Telangana folk tune entitled ‘Tying Bullock Cart After Bullock Cart’ (bandinaka bandi gaTTi) that became very popular in Coastal Andhra. The text of the song invites people to assemble by bullock cart, the common transport mode at that time, to overthrow, assassinate and bury the Nizam, the ruler of the Telangana state, under a tombstone, thereby permanently bringing the empire to an end. As the Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-51) went on, Andhra Pradesh People’s Theatre Society went underground. In the early 1960s with the partition of the Communist Party it crumbled into two parts — Andhra Pradesh Praja Natya Mandali associated with the CPI and Praja Natya Mandali linked to the CPM. Dr. A.P Vittal became influential within the latter group and,

---

18 In the 1970s and 1980s A.P. Vittal, a secretariat member of CPI (M), set the tone in the association. He was active until the end of the 1990s when he left the party including its cultural mass organization, and he is at present no longer engaged in the political life of Andhra Pradesh.
inspired by Safdar Hashmi (see below), he raised the idea of a street theatre in Andhra Pradesh.

By the 1970s and 1980s Safdar Hashmi from New Delhi, together with his theatre group, *Janam* (People) was carrying on the tradition from IPTA. In their plays they used rhyme, naturalistic conversations, songs or satire in changed mixtures. Significantly, the performances are characterized by improvisation, fluid locations, and the use of various artistic genres (Yarrow 2001:184). On 1 January 1989 Hashmi was murdered, probably by agents hired by the Congress Party, while performing a play at Sahihabad located east of Delhi.

Cultural activists in Andhra Pradesh acknowledged the influence of Hashmi on the present street theatre. In addition, many members from the JVV were inspired by the KSSP (Kerala Science Literacy Society) in Kerala. In 1987 the JVV took part in the nation-wide ‘cultural caravan’ (*kala jatha*) organized by the KSSP, a tour carried out by a group of artistes travelling from place to place with the aim of stopping in the localities to initiate and carry on debates, hopefully resulting in suitable action. The performers travelled by train from different parts of India and the activities culminated at Bhopal. The KSSP also arranged similar cultural processions on a smaller scale in the literacy programme, with artistes travelling by foot, bicycle or any other means of transport, influencing activists from the JVV who visited Kerala and later on organized similar tours during the alphabetization campaign in Andhra Pradesh.

Conversely, many cultural troupes, including those of Praja Natya Mandali and the JVV had problems in recruiting women, both as performers and writers. To follow the arguments of Bhatia (2004:118), this could be related to the fact that female actresses have been regarded as ‘prostitutes’ in the past and several of them still hesitated to perform in public. After Independence many leftist groups, including the IPTA, focused on national issues at the expense of a concern for women’s difficulties in the domestic field. However, from the 1970s onwards a women’s street theatre has developed in India, represented by groups such as Jagori (Awakening), Stree

---

19 While Gandhi had started month-long marches visiting the countryside to gain knowledge of the rural poor Samudaya, a ‘socio-cultural movement’ of Karnataka, brought the theatre by similar tours to the villages in 1974, when members of the organization for almost a month toured the entire state by bicycle stopping to act on the way (Srampickal 1994:139). In the early 1980s associates of the KSSP were in contact with *Samudaya* and became influenced by the latter’s approach towards cultural activities.

20 The cultural troupes were part of the JVV from the very beginning, since they played a vital role in the science march of 1987 paving the way for the formation of the association. In the literacy campaign and the succeeding anti-arrack agitation, numerous such troupes worked actively in Nellore district setting up street theatre plays written by well-known writers of the area, such as Dr. V.V.Giri, Devendar, and Gumma Venkaiah.

21 The tour lasted for forty days with five groups passing through the north, west, south, east, and north-east of India, each putting up at over 500 localities, covering approximately 25,000 kilometres and ultimately meeting at Bhopal (Srampickal 1994:139-40).
Mukthi Sanghatana (Women’s Liberation Movement) in Maharashtra as well as the Theatre Union and Saheli (Friend) in Delhi (ibid). In Nellore district many women were members of Arunodaya (Sunrise), a cultural troupe with Naxalite leanings that put on various performances in the early days of the struggle, above all at the dharna outside the A.C. Stadium. In addition, in 1993 women came in as actors and writers in street theatre performances in a women’s cultural tour (Vanita Kala Jatha) arranged by Samatha with the aim of propagandizing against arrack throughout Andhra Pradesh.

Characteristic of the street theatre is its simplicity. There is no need for a stage or a mike, or much costume; members of the cultural troupes simply sing while beating a small leather drum (Dappu or tappeTa) to attract people to the performance, and one person might portray four or five different characters. The artistes put on the dramas in residential neighbourhoods, arguing that local people would otherwise not come and watch them, since they would be too preoccupied with their everyday lives. Finally, there is flexibility and dialogue between actor and audience. Kondaiah, a cultural activist, maintained that the members of the troupe often knew well the area where they performed. To get people’s attention, they used the local dialect and included the problems people faced in the area in their acts.

Street theatre groups in Andhra Pradesh have usurped various traditions in the Telugu drama, but with a political undertone added. Noteworthy for the Indian folk plays is the fact that speech, song, and dance are incorporated into a cohesive dramatic mode. Among the dances taken up in the performances, the stick dance (kolatam) in which both hands are used to beat with two sticks has been very popular in the state as well as in parts of Maharashtra. Kavali — characterized by two groups of singers standing on opposite sides of the stage each either repeating or contradicting the words of the other — was initially a Muslim art form, while it is now used in many street theatre performances. Artistes have sometimes communicated their message about the destructiveness of liquor through the medium of shadow puppet shows (tholu bommalata),22 distinguished by the use of leather

22 Shadow puppet shows were used in the literacy campaign and the succeeding anti-arrack agitation, in which the artistes used two characters, a male and a female, to educate and empower the local population by means of humorous conversations mixed with music and dance. At that time the troupes manufactured new puppets more suited for these performances, such as the village teacher or even the drunkard. Nonetheless, shadow puppet dramas were of minor importance in the movement and there were only one or two active groups in Nellore district. One of them was the troupe from a neighbouring village of Chintala Palem that put on a shadow puppet show based on stories from the Mahabarata as part of the farewell meeting arranged before I left the locality. Although the members came from a family that had practised the art for generations and the ensemble had toured in several foreign countries, the villagers were not impressed and many of them were rather disappointed that we had not hired some videos with Indian films. This is an example of how the theatre form, popular in the rural areas one or two generations ago, is slowly disappearing.
puppets that do not appear before the audience but are manipulated by a person holding them close to the screen, silhouetted by a light from behind. *Veedhi bhagavatham*, consisting of romantic dramas from Hindu mythology performed in an open space, is an ancient folk theatre genre from the late sixteenth century that has lost a lot of its popular appeal; but some artistes claimed that they practised this form during the anti-arrack struggle. In contrast, *palle suddulu* (village good words), a traditional folk drama conducted by the Golla caste of Telangana, is still very popular. Like *veedhi bhagavatham* it includes dialogue, song and dance but has a more comic appearance and permits a lot of improvisation. Venkateswarlu from Chintala Palem told me about one such play that he was involved in:

There were three artistes in this *palle suddulu* programme. The first one came on to the dais, calling for Ranga, another actor. After three or four calls Ranga would respond from the audience with the words, ‘coming, coming!’ They both sang a song together, while dancing rhythmically to it. The first artist asked, ‘Where is Yellanna? I have not seen him since the morning.’ The second performer called for Yellanna, i.e., myself. My role was the main one in this *palle suddulu* play. I joined the other actors coming from the audience. We three sang several songs against liquor while dancing. There were a lot of dialogues about the ill effects of arrack. We three performed this play dressed as village shepherds with ankle-bells.

**Music in Andhra Pradesh**

The artistes used popular tunes including film music, but underlined that they preferred older film songs to newer ones. Above all, they liked various forms of traditional music such as *kathas* (stories), long tales sung to one or more standard melodies. *Hari katha* is characterized by a single person narrating the story in a cadenced way, whereas *burra katha* is a ballad sung to a tune on the single-stringed tambura (*burra*) while dancing rhythmically backwards and forwards on the stage, accompanied by two instrumentalists beating a two-headed clay drum (*Dakki*) that creates a metallic resonance. Both musical forms are disappearing today but their popular appeal has in the past been exploited by political parties to spread their messages.

According to Manuel (1993), the current importance of folk music in Andhra Pradesh is related to the arrival of cheap cassette technology in the late 1970s and the reduction of import levies in the early 1980s. The low price of the cassette tapes and the ease with which they can be mass-produced have given rise to recordings in regional dialects, along with folk genres and, in contrast to the film music, songs on contemporary political or social issues (ibid:153-195).

Although few Indian progressive folksingers gained repute, Gummadi Vittal Rao, generally referred to as Gaddar, is a much admired artist in to be replaced by the electronic media at the same time as middle-class activists are trying to revive the art.
Andhra Pradesh. His music has spread through audiocassettes along with live performances at which Gaddar, together with his group Jana Natya Mandali (People’s Theatre Society), has attracted vast audiences. This artiste was born in a poor Dalit family in Medak district of Telangana and sings in the local dialect. While Gaddar adapts folk tunes by providing them with new texts that deal with the mistreatment of tribals and subjugated classes by liquor barons and unethical landowners, he turned from a class discourse to one more openly based on caste in the 1990s. Jana Natya Mandali and Gaddar have close connections with the People’s War Group, the largest Naxalite cluster in Andhra Pradesh (see Chapter 2). At the performances they are dressed in simple costumes, often just a rug, while holding sticks and singing to the sound of a folk drum (Dappu). Gaddar became personally involved in the movement through writing songs about poor people’s suffering under arrack addiction and performing at numerous public meetings. Several cultural activists admitted that Gaddar had influenced them, but argued that the popularity of this singer had led to a focus on his person whereas their work was a collective enterprise.

The lyrics of the songs were an important motivating force at assemblies and demonstrations, reinforcing participants’ sense of unity and camaraderie. Many texts took up how drinking has resulted in wife-battering and poverty in the rural areas. The following song elaborates on the significance of rural Nellore as the birthplace of the movement. It also encourages collective action in which women, men, different castes and classes, together with people from various villages, join in the common struggle (cf. Pande 2002:363).

The Anti-Arrack Movement is the talk of each village.
Oh sister! Show your strength and power to bring the stars down to the earth.

The movement is the voice of a people with empty stomachs.  
It is the lifestyle of a people with tears in their eyes.  
It arose like thunder and lightning in one remote village in Nellore district.

It aroused the society from its sleep,
they fought against liquor and their lives became happy.  
Come sisters and brothers!  
Let’s join hands to eradicate arrack from our villages.  
As our health will improve our lives will be filled with the light of joy.

A mother is not a robot or a machine to give birth to man.  
If her eyes become red she will turn into Mother Kali (Kali Mata).  
Now the women have tied the ends (pallulu) of their saris.  
The problem of arrack will come to an end.

In the final image of this song the revengeful and red-eyed goddess-like women have fastened the ends of their saris round their waists instead of
letting them hang loose draped shawl-wise over their shoulders, signifying that the women are ready for a physical confrontation. The following lyric deals with the political system that supports arrack production, challenged by the power of female energy, strii śakti. Women will mimic taaNDawam, a furious dance by which Shiva and his spouse accomplish the annihilation of the world at the end of an age.

Every heart and village is burning.
Mothers and sisters are united into a group.
The government and the arrack contractors will not fool us.
Women roar like lions and they dance Shiva taaNDawam.

The people will break the legs of government persons who oppose them.
The constables are our brothers. They too are born of poor mothers.
They will not lathi charge us. Oh contractor, you must realize this!

Who is that man that comes from Ballari to Nellore to attend the auctions?
There will be some auctions in Cuddapah district,
but we will expose you if you conduct them behind the screen.
(Praja Natya Mandali)

Significantly, several rural women had started to write plays and sketches about difficulties in their everyday lives, calling on women not to accept the current situation, i.e. the beatings of their inebriated husbands and their wasting of the family income on liquor. They were the authors of many popular songs, for example ‘My Stylish Husband’ (wyyari naa moguDu), a love song in which the wife pleads with her husband not to waste his income on liquor and instead to think about the prosperity of his family and children. As argued by Pandhe (2002:362), such songs have become public expressions of women’s individual sufferings and a way for them to entreat their husbands to change. Most importantly, the songs disseminated stories of shared sufferings among women from different villages, religions and castes, encouraging them to join the translocal Anti-Liquor Movement.

The Artistes
Members of cultural teams ideologically underlined the collectivity of their performances. The plays were written by a group of people who would meet and work out a rudimentary sketch of the drama based on the problem of arrack. Somebody would draft the conversations and the text of the songs, after which the group once again met to discuss and make modifications. In contrast, some eminent writers and artistes of these troupes — from lower classes and castes in the villages and from the urban middle-class environ-

---

23 Women also tie the end of the sari round the waist when they are working.
ment — were well-known in the area as individual performers and writers rather than anonymous members of the troupes.

Middle-class associates of the cultural ensembles from movement organizations emphasized that they took part in these activities because they were not artistes but activists with songs as weapons in their struggle. In the words of Dr C.A. Prasad ‘your message will reach a much larger number of people if you turn your artistic skill into a weapon’. He continued by distinguishing the work of an activist from that of an artiste:

In Telugu, the activist is referred to as kaaryakarta and a volunteer in cultural activities (in this sense an artiste) is called kalakarudu, which means ‘the actor who participates in cultural activities’. An activist, on the other hand, is a person who organizes different events. He is an organizer. I am a resource person of many things. I am not saying this with pride but with humility. I have acquired many skills. I can sing. I can direct. I can compose tunes for new songs. I can even write lyrics. I am a resource person for conjurer’s performances, children’s projects and women’s schemes.

While several illiterate women from the countryside became well-known performers, entering the public arena for the first time in their lives, they came into contact with various traditions by travelling around the state. Nagamma was a poor woman from a tribal settlement (Scheduled Tribes in Telugu often referred to as Yadavas) in Chittoor district who had become engaged in cultural activities after the villagers came in contact with RISE (Rural Institute of Social Education). In 1998 the women in her settlement formed a women’s society (mahila mandali) called ‘Chenchamma Women’s Society’ after the deity of their community. The association then presented a drama with the aim of encouraging people from neighbouring villages to start a land struggle in the mandal. As dialogues and incidents were taken from people’s experiences and everyday lives they attracted large audiences. After this success Nagamma became a full-time activist of RISE at mandal level.

In her work this woman attended anti-arrack meetings in urban areas such as Hyderabad, Madanapalli, Molakala Cheruvu, Cuddapah, Badvel and other places where she came in touch with drama and music from several parts of the state. Furthermore, quite a few film songs, for example those from ‘Orey Rickshaw’, inspired her. Nagamma kept the tunes but added new texts that focused on the sufferings and experiences of herself and her like. For Manuel (1998:131-32) the term ‘parody’ refers to the practice in Indian classical, folk and film music of setting new words to a borrowed melody, as improvisation is more important than compositional ability. In a similar way

---

24 Scheduled Tribes (S.T.) is a state categorization listing communities under this label according to article 342 of the Constitution. 212 tribes were declared as S.T. in 1950 and later on more groups have been added (Shah 1990: 85). In 2001 they constituted 84,326,240 people or 8.2% of the total Indian population (www.censusindia.net, access 050723).
Nagamma and other cultural activists in Andhra Pradesh composed songs about the arrack menace to well-known tunes, that led to the incorporation and reworking of various traditions — folk musical genres, film music and local artistic idioms — into the culture of the movement essential for a shared consciousness among participants (cf. Abelmann 1996:62; Eyerman & Jamison 1998).  

**Visual Art**

Apart from music and street theatre, various artists contributed to the struggle by making posters and paintings illustrating the power of women and the evil of liquor. While several pictures depicted strong women as fierce Hindu goddesses defeating the enemy, others exemplified the destructiveness of alcohol by using mythological beings like snakes and demons. Artists thus mobilized and modified the Hindu tradition in the struggle against the trade in intoxicating beverages in which powerful metaphors were used. I shall clarify my argument with four examples: a mural painting of the arrack demon, a poster of a poisonous snake coming out of a bottle, an image of a woman blowing into a conch shell, and, finally, a cartoon from Eenadu showing how the then Chief Minister, Chandra Babu Naidu, is forcing a man to drink spirits.

In a middle-class neighbourhood of Tirupati there was a mural painting of an ugly, gorilla-like evil spirit drinking alcohol with the text, ‘deliver us from the claws of the arrack demon’. In Hindu legends demons (raakSasulu) stand for the forces of evil and are feared because they attack human beings. The artist of the fresco is trying to convey that people’s lives are threatened in a similar way by liquor.

In 1995 there were several state placards were put up all over Tirupati propagandizing against liquor and for prohibition. Our next example is a threatening snake coming out of a bottle with its head high and its neck swelling signifying its aggressiveness. In the top right hand corner are written catchphrases with the words: ‘Don’t be a prey to the bite of the arrack snake. Arrack is equivalent to poison’. Beneath the text there is a small illustration of a bottle with a red cross drawn over it encircled by the slogan ‘Implement the ban on arrack’. The majority of snakes in Hindu mythology are demons, but a few have been privileged as divine. Kakar (1989:57) emphasizes the various meanings the snake takes on in India, depending on the circumstances. In the form of the cobra it may signify male sexuality but in other contexts dangerous feminine forces are represented by

---

25 Interestingly, Nagamma could neither read nor write, preparing the texts on her own while members from RISE noted them down and ultimately released a booklet with the lyrics.
the snake’s venom or by the strength of the python strangling its victim.26 People in Andhra Pradesh generally did not link femininity with the python but instead with the ‘rattlesnake’. On the other hand, they argued that the cobra was male, sometimes divine but also venomous. The snake in the placard is a cobra, as reflected by its head lifted ready to attack its victim.

Plate 1. Mural painting from Tirupati showing the arrack demon.

Plate 2. Placard from Tirupai depicting the poisonous arrack snake.

26 The python is not poisonous but, like the boa, it strangles its prey. Normally it does not attack human beings but only smaller mammals.
Plate 3. A woman blowing the conch shell which is causing the defeat of the liquor business. This painting by G. Srinath, a local artist from Eenadu, was part of an exhibition at a Samatha convention.

Plate 4. Cartoon by Strider, published in Eenadu, the Telugu newspaper. The Chief Minister, Chandra Babu Naidu, is telling the woman, ‘Don’t cry! I’m forced to this for the welfare of your family and I’m doing it with sorrow’.

The third example is a painting by a Nellore artist, G. Srinath, whom I met at a meeting in Nellore, organized by Samatha, and attended by representatives of voluntary organizations from North and South India. Srinath contributed with some works presented at an exhibition that was part of the convention.
This picture shows a woman with a slate, a symbol of the literacy campaign, triumphantly blowing into a conch shell from which the viewer’s eyes move towards several tiny representations: burning arrack packs, broken liquor pots, frightened tradespeople and a politician coming towards the woman to greet her. The message is that the women have through their struggle defeated the nexus between the government and the liquor traders. In fact, the blowing of the conch shell was a common motif in many anti-arrack posters. The sound was considered auspicious and associated with warfare as the warriors trumpeted the conch in ancient times before going into battle.

The satirical cartoons of Strider in Eenadu, illustrating how politicians were mixed up in the liquor trade and earning money from the affliction of the poor, the strength of the women’s movement and the flow of liquor instead of water into the villages, have been considered important for the spread of the temperance mobilization. In her study of the American Plantation South, Camps (2004:93-116) shows how the mass-produced propaganda of the abolitionists intended for Northern sympathizers was appropriated, interpreted, and disseminated among illiterate slaves. The illustrations conveyed ideas of the struggle for emancipation and contributed to the shaping of a larger abolitionist identity in which both whites and blacks were included. In contrast, the cartoons of the journals played a minor role in the struggle in Andhra Pradesh, since only a few newspapers circulated in the villages and not many people came into contact with these images. However, some cartoons were presented in an enlarged form at exhibitions held in connection with public meetings or demonstrations, so that illiterate rural women were able to see and discuss them, thus causing the formation of a broader identity. The fourth drawing shows Chandra Babu Naidu, the Chief Minister, forcing a man to drink, while his wife is rushing screaming towards them. The woman is poor and dressed in a plain sari and by her side a naked toddler is crawling. In the caption the Chief Minister is telling her not to cry, as he is forced to make the man drink for the welfare of the families in Andhra Pradesh.

In this chapter I have attempted to sketch the cultural processes whereby a movement identity was shaped among people who were not in face-to-face contact with each other. In general, then, the movement was always in ‘a process of becoming’ as associates by means of manifold networks formed and passed on cultural significances. While they made choices about how to

27 In the olden days the conch, the shell of a huge mollusc, was blown before people went into battle, while praying to a god, and at significant events, since its sound was extremely auspicious (Basham 1967:386).
understand their unity and take part in the mobilization against liquor, they simultaneously expressed various ideas regarding the content of their togetherness. Campaigners were not unanimous about which drinks should be included in the prohibition, whether the agitation was a feminist struggle or a social reform movement, or regarding its roots in previous contentious activities. Indeed, social movements are based on varied and conflicting identities in which memory is mobilized and modified by participants.

This chapter has, moreover, demonstrated how the press connected a range of local protest endeavours with a broader ongoing struggle and in that sense added to the idea of the Anti-Arrack Movement and to a common identity among its associates. In Andhra Pradesh the Telugu newspapers, and above all Eenadu, played a significant part that could be traced to the growing circulation of the dailies due to technological innovations and the spread of literacy. The articles often raised a few ‘story lines’ in which certain individuals were presented as leaders and the struggle was equated with the non-violent tradition for social reform embodied by Gandhi. On their side, activists deliberately used the press by arranging public demonstrations of their strength and making statements at press meetings. Significantly, the media changed their attitude towards the agitation over time and thus reacted with silence when the prohibition was withdrawn. This is an example of the ambiguous stance of the press towards social movements — contributing to the knowledge of contentious activities, even though in a twisted shape, while at other times ignoring such struggles as not newsworthy.

The proliferation of collective action meant that participants increasingly shared similar experiences, first at village level by destroying arrack shops, burning packets and shaming the salesmen and then at state- and district-level through meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins (dharnas) and road blocks (rasta rokos). Many of these undertakings functioned as ‘rituals of protest’, creating a feeling of togetherness and continuity between separate events as the same publicly available symbols provided understandable and rigid scripts for action when participants who did not know each other came together. One could then posit that protests are loaded with meaning and historically specific, leading to the abandonment of ‘culture’ as an enduring tradition in our studies.

I have shown that many contentious activities resembled ‘liminal’ periods with unclear and fluid social relations and a strong sense of togetherness, which became very prominent in different forms of protest travelling when activists moved together to attend events in towns and villages. My point has been that the ‘geography of protest’ (cf. Abelman 1997) included ever widening areas — first auction sites and Collectors’ offices in the districts and then the government building in Hyderabad. Outstanding was the march (padayatra), linked to the Hindu pilgrimage tradition but modified by Gandhi for political purposes. What I am suggesting is that social move-
ments select and adapt various practices and thereby contribute to the construction of a common identity among associates but also to cultural change in general.

Artistes active in the Anti-Arrack Movement mobilized traditions in a similar vein, connecting generations and maybe aesthetic styles from different parts of Andhra Pradesh. Note that the street theatre appropriated customary folk theatre forms at the same time as it emerged from the political institution of the Communist Party in the 1940s. The texts of dramas and songs have brought up certain themes such as the value of unity among people — otherwise separated by gender, religion, caste, class or region — the corruption of politicians and government officials, and the potentiality of women’s power, strii śakti. Significantly, these subjects were not only raised in song lyrics but were also ingredients of public speeches and were visualized in paintings and posters. Consequently, it is plausible that social struggles are carried out at various levels and in multiple arenas, together contributing to an imagined community of protest.
In this book I have attempted to trace the Anti-Arrack Movement of Andhra Pradesh to the opening up of the Indian economy to global market forces in the 1980s. This process took place at the same time as the then Chief Minister — N.T. Rama Rao (NTR) of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) — continued the so-called populist policies of Indira Gandhi, basing his support on favoured rural programmes such as rice for two rupees a kilo. The state government became increasingly dependent on revenue from liquor, particularly arrack, to finance its welfare schemes — a trend that continued when the Congress Party came back to power in 1989. Due to the protests against arrack, politicians soon realized that a ban on alcohol was an important issue in the election campaign, which finally led to the introduction of total prohibition by the TDP in 1994. However, by the late 1990s there was a change in governmental rhetoric as Chandra Babu Naidu, Rama Rao’s successor, endeavoured to withdraw the ban as a condition for obtaining loans from the World Bank. I have sought to interpret these changes in liquor policy in terms of an increasing interconnectedness at the global level, as the state of Andhra Pradesh was integrated into transnational structures of governance. Gupta (1998:321) has demonstrated how ‘governmentality’ (Foucault 1991) — all the practices by which the behaviour of a populace is directed — formerly connected with the nation-state, is today reconstructed at the global level through various agreements and contracts with supranational institutions including the World Bank.

The scope of the issues that the protest against arrack raises for social movements, and maybe for anthropology, is related to such global changes at the turn of the twenty-first century. Social scientists have explained the increase in social movements as an outcome of the state-building process between the late eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth centuries (see, for example, Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1986). Governments have united societies by generating procedures for large populations and regulating rules for the inhabitants to follow in their dealings with the establishment. Consequently, confronting groups were provided with ‘cognitive frameworks’, in which they evaluated their conditions to more preferential electorates and found
supporters (Tarrow 1994:66). Today a new critical area of study is to analyze the role of social movements in a world where the sovereignty of the nation-state is declining and where activists are creating transnational networks and coalitions. One of the most striking features of the anti-arrack mobilization is its intermediary character standing between larger processes and local contexts. Hannerz (1991) characterizes the cultural flows between ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ that pass through the movement framework as more decentralized compared with the state and the market. Movements differ, however, in the extent to which they can be classified as translocal or transnational, exemplified by the Dalit Movement described by Hardtmann (2003), which is extended beyond the Indian state through activist networks involving the Diaspora but also through sets of relations linking up with other social struggles and global institutions such as the United Nations. In contrast, this ethnography of the temperance agitation in Andhra Pradesh is an attempt to outline a more confined interconnectedness, linking villages, districts and regions of the state into a common translocal protest.

The relationships between separate places of the globe through the flow of ideas, people and goods are not a new phenomenon even though the circulation may have increased in intensity and speed. From a historical point of view, I have in Chapter 2 tried to mark out the development of anti-liquor activities among women by distinguishing between three different periods: the early nineteenth century when international temperance associations and Indian social reformers tried to revive Hinduism by taking up women’s issues; the late nineteenth century with a growing affirmative reassessment of contemporary India, with teetotalism as an anticolonial expression; and the 1920s to 1930s when women mobilized against the sale and consumption of liquor under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. More generally, women’s agitation against intoxicating beverages has profound historical roots, which can be traced to the Independence struggle but also further back in time to the spread and transformation of Orientalist and temperance ideas across the globe in the nineteenth century.

Given the escalation of globalization in recent decades, social movements should be seen as processes rather than as delimited units and islets. In this study I have pointed to the fluidity and incompleteness of the Anti-Arrack Movement (cf. Fox and Starn 1997:6). In 1993-4 there were bursts of activity and the movement spread rapidly in connection with the literacy campaign, to remain hidden in the ‘submerged networks’ of everyday life described by Melucci (1989) and then reactivated when people mobilized against the withdrawal of prohibition. However, the agitation of the late 1990s reveals that the ties between urban activists and village women had weakened, since these protests were more sporadic compared with the struggle a few years earlier. Naturally, it was easy for the adversary to counter the movement at this moment. The crucial point here is that the
volatile networks connecting rural and urban activists from various parts of the state were both opportunities and obstacles in the struggle.

This leads to a consideration of how the participants in the temperance crusade were connected with advocates and adversaries within a larger ‘prohibition field’ (cf. Bourdieu 1989, Ray 1999), consisting of actors such as the liquor industry, state administrators, politicians and movement organizations that were all related in benevolent or conflictive networks. The perspective I have taken proposes that we should include in our studies of social movements the elastic and incomplete boundary between opponents and supporters. For example, politicians took up prohibition in their programmes at the same time as many of them were drawn into the trade in alcoholic beverages, either by directly participating in it or by receiving unaccounted-for capital from the liquor traders. In addition, in Nellore individuals from the IAS (Indian Administrative Service) were positively disposed towards the movement whereas in other districts the civil service personnel were more indifferent about the protests. Representatives from the liquor industry, for their part, comprised small shopkeepers and workers in distilleries as well as big contractors and people from transnational corporations. While excise personnel eked out a living with bribes from smugglers transporting intoxicating beverages across the state border, magistrates and other court employees made their earnings last longer with the enticements of prolonged pending cases against demonstrators. I have put forward the argument that these actors taken together shared many traits with the ‘intermediate classes’, described by Harriss-White (2003) as a heterogeneous combination of state officials, and industrial and agrarian capitalists, who derive their authority and prosperity from getting round central price policies, being caught up in the parallel economy and siphoning off money to the black market. What is more, the prohibition field was extended in 1996 to include people outside of Andhra Pradesh as the World Bank interfered in the liquor policies of the state.

My analysis in Chapter 4 has focused on the origin of the protest and its genderized nature in terms of women’s everyday problems in the rural areas, local patterns of household relations and gender discourse. Relating to notions of purity/impurity, auspiciousness, women’s power (strīśakti) and self-control, it also attempts to demonstrate that household dealings were ordered by diverse gender ideals. One of the purposes in writing this book has been to explore the movement in line with the gender of drinking and the discourse on alcohol abuse in Andhra Pradesh. We have seen that men drank far away from their homes out of sight of wives and children, which strengthened the association of spirits with masculinity while women, on the other hand, refrained from alcohol. Wife-battering was widespread after the husband came home inebriated, but women also described a range of illnesses and untimely deaths due to men’s liquor habits. Such a scenario has been connected to the globalization of the Indian economy, with a growing
feminization of agriculture in the 1980s. While women entered the sector as
day labourers, men abandoned it for self-employment at the same time as
they squandered their growing income on personal consumption including
intoxicants.

What is central in this book, nonetheless, is the issue of why women with
everyday problems in their families decided to mobilize across household,
village and regional boundaries to eradicate liquor from the state. Even if not
all associates suffered under husbands’ alcohol addiction, the campaigners in
the movement came to share aspirations and aims, added to which their
private difficulties became transformed into a common matter around which
to mobilize. This study is an endeavour to outline how middle-class activists,
the press, and collective action were central in the formation of a general
feeling of togetherness among participants who were not always connected
by direct individual ties.

In Chapter 5 I have sketched the role of middle-class people who coordi-
nated the protest activities in different localities and worked as representa-
tives of the movement by mediating between rural and urban people,
between different movement organizations and between the movement and
its opponents, i.e. the liquor industry and government agents. Although my
perspective here has been concerned with how leaders won support through
individual ‘charismatic’ characteristics such as rhetorical ability and a simple
lifestyle, it has been more concerned with the reciprocity between leader and
followers and the existence of multiple spokespeople at state, district and
village level. Consequently, the case of the Anti-Arrack Movement argues
that we need to explore the leadership of social movements, which has often
been downplayed in favour of decentralized networks and spontaneous
uprisings from the grassroots. Moreover, middle-class associates acted as
‘movement intellectuals’ (Eyerman & Jamison 1994) involved in analyzing
the struggle and forging a sense of solidarity by explaining people’s different
forms of participation in the protest in terms of general concepts facilitating
collective action (Callon 1996, Bourdieu 1989). I have also tried to suggest
that they wrote and talked about the agitation in line with the thoughts and
discourses circulating in a global arena — such as Marxism, feminism or
Gandhianism — contributing to diffusion and modification of these ideas in
the course of the struggle.

Many of the activists we have come across in the preceding pages be-
longed to women’s groups, which were implicated in national networking —
such as the NAWO (National Alliance of Women’s Organizations) and the
IAWS (Indian Association for Women Studies) — or caught up in transna-
tional links, for example sporadic visits to overseas universities and
conventions (Reddy 2005:319-320). I have suggested that feminism has
often been regarded in Andhra Pradesh as a foreign ideology that destabi-
lizes the long-established shared understanding between husband and wife
and thus the solidity of family life. In the 1990s this issue caused ongoing
strains along with discussions and many members of women’s organizations hesitated to claim that women had mobilized against arrack as part of a feminist struggle. Other ‘movement intellectuals’ tried to adapt feminism by embracing the problems of poor Indian women (see Kannabiran, Kannabiran & Volga 1994; John, M. et al 1993), in that sense contributing to its ‘creolization’ (cf. Hannerz 1991; Eschle 2001:195-196; Kalpagam 2004; John, M.E. 2005). Further ethnographic studies might broaden our understanding of how female activists deal with the contentious issue of ‘feminism’ and their search for alternatives based on women’s multiple experiences and struggles at local level.

As I pointed out in Chapter 7, the press added to a common movement identity by portraying separate actions as part of a larger struggle, and thereby, as noted by Ståhlberg (2002:13), Indian local newspapers offered continuity between the lived experiences of people and their images of other places and lives. The Telugu dailies constituted a location for an unlimited public field since they reported broadly on matters that concerned people in their daily existence, including among other things, the mobilization against arrack, thus contradicting the arguments of Habermas that the media in the existing mass industrial society are only upholding consumer culture (cf. Jeffrey 2000:13-15, 217). It has been suggested that the Telugu press was a carrier of the anti-liquor protest, in particular, Eenadu. Conversely, the paper has been criticized for ignoring the reintroduction of liquor shops in 1997, indirectly supporting the policies of the ruling TDP by this silence. I have argued that male journalists from upper and intermediate castes were involved in the dissemination of a few ‘story lines’ (Hannerz 2004:143) or ‘master frames’ (Fine 1995), as, for example, they wrote about the struggle by referring to its roots in the Nationalist Movement and in rural women’s struggles for the survival of their families. However, in the late 1990s TV had become vital as a medium documenting the anti-liquor crusade, even though it had minor importance in the villages. In contrast to the press, which was dominated by male journalists, it transmitted programmes about the Anti-Arrack Movement made by women, who presented alternative ‘story lines’ emphasizing female solidarity and women’s rights.

The third aspect of identity formation, collective action, took place as anti-arrack associates gathered to burn liquor shops in the villages, wrote petitions, or participated in public meetings, demonstrations and sit-ins (dharnas). In Chapter 7 I have dwelt on the extension of these protest techniques across the globe through a range of social movements. Nevertheless, in the process the methods have been modified and have obtained their local form and meaning, exemplified by the way Gandhi mixed both Western ideas of civil disobedience and Indian traditions of peasant mobilization as he built up his ‘vocabulary of protest’ (Guha 1997:30). The proliferation of Gandhian methods in the anti-arrack struggle, such as marches across the countryside (padayatra) and the use of non-violent direct
action, is an example of the significance of historicity and how memory could function as a shared depository of implements that were able to mobilize people (cf. Abelmann 1996:20).

Most importantly, collective contentious activities drawn on in the struggle against arrack could be characterized as ‘rituals of dissent’, which are essential in constructing a common identity, providing accessible symbols that people can organize around and supplying an understanding of the connection between distinct actions. Central were the marches in ranks with starting and closing stages in time and space, making the resistance concretely visible and, in addition, denoting a symbolic capture of vital places in the cities. Speeches were crucial ingredients at the succeeding public meetings when participants presented narratives of the struggle that became attached to a collective memory, but orations were also considered as ‘art’ performed in a stylized manner like a ritual.

Another vital issue revealed in the Anti-Arrack Movement is the way collective protest activities were carried out in specific places, and in that sense urban and rural space became an important ingredient of the struggle, giving material form to their imagined collectivity and strengthening their feeling of togetherness. The travel itself became a central part of the mobilization, exemplifying a liminal phase (cf. Turner 1995) when activists went together by bullock cart, tractor, bus or train to participate in events in the towns. Noteworthy was the march across the countryside (padayatra), constructed on a Hindu tradition of pilgrimage but adapted by Gandhi for political purposes and later on practised by several contemporary social movements. In addition, I have tried to examine, especially in Chapter 3 and 7, narratives on local struggles that were spread through speeches, songs, and various writings. Indeed, the Anti-Arrack Movement demonstrates that displacement and mobility of both people and ideas were part of the struggle, although mainly confined to Andhra Pradesh and India at that point in time.

Moreover, my analysis has pointed to the centrality of music and street theatre, activating traditions of protest generations and aesthetic styles of Andhra Pradesh (cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1991). These activities mobilized illiterate people who did not require reading skills to understand the messages. There is little doubt that the street theatre was founded on various folk theatre forms but was also influenced by the political tradition of the Communist Party of the 1940s. Manuel (1993:153-195) has demonstrated how Indian folk music with texts on contemporary and social issues has spread following the introduction of low-priced cassette technology in the late 1970s and the reduction of import tariffs in the 1980s. Likewise cassettes were multiplied in Andhra Pradesh with songs about the struggle for a liquor-free society that incorporated folklore from various parts of the state into the movement culture and in that way contributed to identity formation among associates spread out in space. The texts encouraged a broader unity among people from different gender, castes and classes and
depicted the political system behind the arrack trade, i.e. the nexus between tradesmen and politicians as well as how the state coffers were filled with money from the sale of spirits. In addition, the lyrics touched on women’s domestic problems evinced in abuse and battering by drunken husbands, but they also drew on a Hindu tradition by portraying women as powerful and revenging goddesses.

I have shown considerable interest in the shaping of a collective movement identity that was important for the spread of the protests against arrack. On the other side of the debate, the focus has been on differences between participants’ experiences and positions in the struggle according to age, class, caste, religion and gender. Chapter 4 dealt with variations between women according to age and marital status revealed in the way old women and widows moved more easily in the male public arena. Furthermore, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Anti-Arrack Movement was the dominant role of the middle class as organizers and translators, while simultaneously denying their own importance in the struggle. There also existed factional divergences within the temperance agitation. Significantly, an important dividing line within social movements, including the protests against alcohol in Andhra Pradesh, is that between people supporting violence and those in favour of a peaceful struggle (Tarrow 1994:20). This ethnography has pointed to such a distinction in the state by mapping out the form the movement took in separate regions, illustrated by the Naxalite armed praxis in Telangana contrasted with the more peaceful protests of Raylaseema and Coastal Andhra.

The book has also suggested that there was a split between people’s loyalties to their movement organizations and the larger struggle. What took place in Andhra Pradesh during the Anti-Arrack Movement implies that associations varied in structure and aims. In Chapter 5 I have indicated that there was a local differentiation between NGOs receiving financial contributions from other countries and with employed staff versus bodies whose members worked on a voluntary basis. As there has been a growing professionalization of the voluntary sector in recent years, many middle-class persons today earn their livelihood from social work. It is possible to conclude that the negative feelings regarding this trend express widespread beliefs that gifts (daana) should be given without any self-interest, and that social work should be based on service (sewa) to the poor. In this volume I cannot offer more insights into the role of the NGO sector in the movement, since its importance was only incipient in the early 1990s. However, their growth in Andhra Pradesh indicates the need to explore these groups and their multiple networks with the state, international donor agencies, social movements and residents in villages as well as shantytowns. In the discussion I have also focused on the link between movement organizations and political parties and the difficulties in uniting these groups into a common platform. This was shown in how cautious the front bodies of the CPM were
against the withdrawal of prohibition, since the party was at that time in coalition with the ruling TDP. Diversity within the movement is one explanation of why the adversary so easily confronted it, facilitating the cancellation of the ban.

**Struggle Against Liquor at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, one can construct opposing visions of the future for the Anti-Arrack Movement. One may look at the movement pessimistically, since the total prohibition was partially relaxed in 1997 and free licences were introduced a year later, causing growing consumption of liquor in the state. More optimistically, the escalation of anti-liquor activities was evident in Andhra Pradesh when I revisited the locality in 2004. In closing, I want to turn to these recent developments in temperance practices and discourses.

Life in Andhra Pradesh had changed considerably compared with six years earlier. Hyderabad, the capital, had expanded, with broad avenues bordered by big stores selling commodities such as cars and furniture, fashionable cafés with music, and supermarkets where you could buy almost all the food products existing in the global market. A sign of the new Andhra Pradesh was the technical park, HITEC (Hyderabad Information Technology Engineer Consultancy) City consisting of office space provided in two immense buildings, Cyber Gateway and Cyber Towers. The proliferation of a consumption-inclined middle class also included many of the activists in the Anti-Liquor Movement, whose earlier simple houses were now furnished with wooden tables and chairs in traditional Indian style, computers and CD players. Mobile phones, previously owned by very few individuals, had become an important medium in arranging protest endeavours and campaigners travelled to different events by car instead of by scooter. Nevertheless, it was evident that the poverty in the rural areas and the slums of the cities had not simultaneously disappeared. Many women who earlier had earned their livelihood through cottage or local food industries — like the manufacturing of bidis (cigarettes), chilli powder or chips — had become unemployed, due to competition from transnational companies. In addition, farming had become a risky enterprise owing to the fact that there was an increasing cost of production in agriculture and a growing dependence on groundwater resources and failing monsoons that had resulted in severe droughts. The government had increased user charges for a range of public services, including drinking water and transport, while the rice scheme had become diluted. By the early twenty-first century there were growing

---

1 The rate was raised to 5.25 a kilo and smaller quantities were permitted per family.

245
reports in the Telugu press of suicides among farmers who had gone bankrupt.

Since I left the field the liquor policies of the state have been remoulded by processes whose strength was already apparent when I was last in the area. The introduction of free licences had resulted in the escalation of IMFL shops. In the excise year 2003/4, Andhra Pradesh was, after Tamil Nadu, the state with the largest revenue from liquor (*The Economic Times*, 22 February 2005). Outstanding was the year 2001, characterized by the reintroduction of ‘Cheap Liquor’, the permission to sell spirits at clubs, bars, and restaurants, and the entitlement of the Commissioner of the Prohibition and Excise Department to issue new licences at any time of the excise year. Anti-liquor activists argued that the excise staff in the districts were encouraged by various means to boost sales and punished if they failed. In these circumstances there was an increasing sale of liquor in the so-called belt shops, a new phenomenon consisting of unauthorized corners in the ‘belts’ of IMFL shops, in stalls and even in grocery (*kiraNa*) stores. According to estimates by activists, the number of belt sale places had increased from 25,000 in 2000/1 to 100,000 in 2002/3.

There was an emergent dissatisfaction among women in the rural areas who mobilized against the belt shops. Many of these women had participated in the Anti-Arrack Movement and were still connected through ‘submerged networks’ provided by the savings groups, in recent years often referred to as Self-Help Groups (SHG). The contrast of these protests with the earlier movement was that they remained isolated incidents in villages located in different parts of Andhra Pradesh: Gangalagunta in Chittoor district, Tidatapolur in Nellore and Marripadu in Kurnool district. According to one middle-class activist, there were many ‘sparks’ but they did not turn into a ‘fire’.

In the wake of the growing rural mobilization against the belt shops, in September 2004 middle-class campaigners in Hyderabad formed a networking committee, the Anti-Liquor Committee (Madhyam Vyatireka Aikya Vedika), with representatives from around 60 voluntary organizations and NGOs. Consisting of a ten-member board and a larger advisory committee, the federation contained participants from the earlier struggle together with younger members who had not previously participated in the movement. The autonomous organization of formerly unified JVV was active, while the CPM wing had withdrawn together with Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham (Andhra Pradesh Women’s Society), the second body now referred to as AIDWA (All-India Democratic Women’s Association).

---

2 In 1998 AIDWA — the national federation in which Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham is included — held its Fifth National Conference in Bangalore, Karnataka, where it was decided that all the affiliated bodies should have the same name as the coalition.
Many of the ‘opportunities’ that played such a large role in the Anti-Arrack Movement of the early 1990s — the interest of the press, the networking through the literacy campaign, the support of IAS officers, and the involvement of politicians — were largely lacking a decade later. Moreover, women from the rural areas were not as dynamic compared with the earlier agitation. V. Sandhya, an activist from the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) who has participated in the temperance protests from their beginning, characterized the present struggle as built from ‘top-down’, dominated by middle-class women and not as ‘militant’ as before.

After its formation, the Anti-Liquor Committee released a programme containing several claims, among others the demand that the political parties should put prohibition in their manifesto for the forthcoming elections and that no party should give seats to liquor contractors. Furthermore, deaddiction centres should be founded and the permitted opening hours of the bars should be restricted, together with more dry days. Similar committees were organized in the districts, coordinating different activities like the arrangement of a human chain throughout the state, several sit-ins and demonstrations. In March 2004, there was a cultural tour propagandizing against liquor, starting at Tekkali in Srikakulam district and finishing up in Hyderabad.

Urban temperance campaigners argued that boozing had increased alarmingly in Andhra Pradesh as a consequence of the globalization of the Indian economy and culture. In their stories many started with the liquor problem and then turned to other difficulties like unemployment, growing female prostitution and child trafficking. According to this image the growing ‘individualism’ and ‘self-centredness’ in society had resulted in deteriorating human relationships including those of the family with violence, maltreatment due to liquor and husbands deserting their wives. Some people dwelt on a number of incidents when young people had died from liquor abuse on New Year’s Eve, a seasonal event that was hardly celebrated at all six years earlier. For the activist of the early 2000s, the serving of spirits in taverns became a symbol of the struggle as they mustered against bars located close to schools and temples — places at which the sale of liquor had been unimaginable in the past.

In 2004 the Congress Party returned to power in Andhra Pradesh when Y.S. Raja Sekhar Reddy became elected as the new Chief Minister. The defeat of the TDP was noteworthy, above all in Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, and Nellore districts where the party obtained only 4 of the 50 seats in the Assembly. The withdrawal or weakening of many of the earlier ‘welfare programmes’, including prohibition, has been a common explanation for the party’s defeat. Promising a ‘phase-wise’ proscription and the closing down of the belt shops, the Congress took up the liquor ban in its manifesto. However, in 2006 the shops have still not been banned while, in contrast, the
new government has given permission for ‘drinking in the backyards’, i.e. the placing of some benches for customers behind the sales area.

One might draw the conclusion that the Anti-Arrack Movement has failed, as liquor consumption has escalated all over Andhra Pradesh. The movement lacked the former atmosphere of drama and exhilaration, so fewer participants turned up at collective endeavours compared with a decade before. However, I shall not end the account of the anti-liquor agitation with breakdown and defeat. I have suggested in this book that the movement should not be regarded as a finished product but as a continuous process. The activities of 2004 broke out because of earlier networks concealed in the savings groups and ties between activists who had been caught up in the previous temperance mobilization. Moreover, the broader achievements of the movement might the participation of women, who earlier were confined to their houses, in a struggle in the male public arena, their empowerment and their possible future involvement in social movements. Nevertheless, it struck me that the methods used in the protests have gone from ‘contention’ to ‘convention’ (Tarrow 2004), since there has been a shift from keeping watch outside sales places in the form of sit-ins and road blockages that might invite repression to more conformist methods such as public meetings, seminars, and cultural tours.

In Andhra Pradesh people generally regarded the savings groups — starting in Nellore district under the name of Podupu Lakshmi (the savings of Lakshmi) and now referred to under the general label of Self-Help Groups (SHG) — as the most imperative long-term effects of the Anti-Arrack Movement. Small-scale savings batches among women have multiplied considerably since 1995. According to some estimates there were around 180,000 such groups in existence all over Andhra Pradesh in 1999. In this chapter I have attempted to show that networks created through these groups were important in the mobilization against the belt shops. On the other hand, this scheme did not always work satisfactorily, as illustrated by the negative experiences in Chintala Palem where women were unaware of lending opportunities and their husbands were negatively disposed towards the groups. Secondly, another disadvantage is that the savings entities have been heterogeneous in character and work according to a number of designs.

The anti-liquor struggle entered the so-called Global Justice and Solidarity Movement, since there was a session on the temperance activities in

---

3 The state development machinery — above all, the DWACRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) programme — has been behind the formation of some of the groups, while NGOs have taken the initiative in the construction of others. In addition, lending is provided through different patterns: for example, loans to groups; credits to groups to distribute among individuals; and accommodations with individuals. Finally, funds have been offered by various sources: from the savings of the associations, the DWACRA programme, the commercial banks, and apex financial institutes such as NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), the rural lending branch of the Reserve Bank of India.
Andhra Pradesh at the Fourth World Social Forum (WSF) held in Mumbai between 16 and 21 January 2004. The workshop was organized by the JVJ under the title ‘the Anti-Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh — India’ and I was invited to talk about my experiences of the Anti-Arrack Movement. Conversely, there was a lot of disunity connected with this session since Indian people, including those of Andhra Pradesh, felt that the organizations participating in the World Social Forum were funded from abroad, for example by the Ford Foundation and Oxfam. Consequently, many people who were expected to participate in the session did not come to Mumbai. Other activists from the Anti-Liquor Committee, representing different Maoist groups, were engaged in a number of alternative events arranged all over the city as a criticism of the World Social Forum, above all the Mumbai Resistance — the largest of these proceedings located at the Veterinary Grounds on the opposite side of the Western Express Highway. Other campaigners were engaged in their own women’s seminars and did not turn up either.

The forum was held at the Nesco Ground, a former industrial area in the suburb of Goregaon located north of Mumbai, a place already crowded with people when I entered it together with other participants from Andhra Pradesh. Dalit cultural troupes were singing and dancing in between people from other parts of the world marching and shouting slogans against the violation of the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, the American war in Iraq, and ecological destruction or for self-determination in Tibet. While many campaigners were dressed in colourful outfits contributing to a carnivalesque atmosphere, my companions were completely silent and no cultural troupe from Andhra Pradesh had joined them. In the beginning the

---

4 Behind the organization of the World Social Forum is a network of diverse associations and movements with roots in protests against corporate-directed globalization, neo-liberalism and US-promoted war. The First World Social Forum was opened by NGOs, trade unions and individuals, above all from France and Brazil. However, the Forum was related to broader protest currents through an unofficial event, known as the ‘Call of Social Movements’ frequented by the participant organizations that signed its statements. The ‘Global Justice and Solidarity Movement’ is a name proposed for the broader protests by the call (Waterman 2004:55). While the Forum has been held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, between 2002 and 2003, the initial Asian Social Forum was held in Hyderabad in 2002 and the first World Social Forum outside Brazil was organized in Mumbai in 2004. India was selected since it is a big nation with strong traditions of social and political movements as well as being strategically positioned in Asia, a continent that had been weakly represented at the previous assemblies (Sen 2004:294). After an interlude in Porto Alegre in 2005, the aim to ‘globalize’ the Forum has continued with decentralized gatherings in separate regions of the world in 2006, and the next World Social Forum is scheduled to take place in Africa in 2007.

5 Mumbai Resistance was organized by the International League of People’s Struggles, a global network with ties with the Filipino Communist Party and Indian Maoist groups, which organized parallel meetings at the same time as it criticized the World Social Form for being funded by dubious agencies, above all, the Ford Foundation, and for not allowing armed groups to take part in the meeting. Some Maoist clusters even boycotted Mumbai Resistance for having parallel sessions instead of completely boycotting the Forum.
members from the JVV had problems with their registration, as the rival group with the same name had taken the inscriptions that they had paid for. My friends also suspected the CPM of being behind the location of the session in a marginal area⁶ and feared that only a few people would turn up. In the end around 25 individuals attended the meeting, a normal number at many of the minor sessions⁷. However, it was remarkable that only Indian people frequented it, indicating that the struggle against liquor was not a subject that interested an international audience. Maybe the issue was too closely associated with the championing of a teetotal lifestyle that is unfamiliar to many participants living in societies where liquor has become a facilitator of sociability. Moreover, women were conspicuous by their

---

⁶ In 2001 World Social Forum India was formed on the proposal of the Brazil Organizing Committee (BOC) and some members of the International Council (IC). Nonetheless, it became dominated by people from political parties on the traditional left and above all groups affiliated to CPI (M). Jai Sen (2004) — a member of the Indian World Social Forum Committee during its first year — points out that the control of the party was reflected in the themes chosen at the key committees and, additionally, that ‘open space’ has been lacking in the Forum as some groups have been privileged at the expense of others (ibid:296-297). The critique of the participants from the JVV might be seen against this background.

⁷ Since many participants in the meeting came from Andhra Pradesh, the session was dominated by a debate on prohibition, taking up aspects such as smuggling, prohibition as ‘social reform’ vis-à-vis drinking as an ‘individual right’, and the role of the political parties in the withdrawal of the ban. A member from the JVV focused on the globalization of the Indian economy, characterized by the fact that foreign liquor brands have entered the market and the growth of the alcohol trade with tourism. One of the few women who attended the discussion brought up the question of whether prohibition is an alternative today, in view of more recent research on alcoholism as a disease. Dr Chinnaiah Suri, Nagarjuna University, in his speech related the Anti-Arrack Movement to the rise of ‘New Social Movements’ independent of political parties. One man from the audience suggested that the protest was a ‘New Social Movement’ but in an ‘old bottle’, referring to the fact that mobilization for prohibition had existed in the past.
absence from this session, with female activists prioritizing gatherings with topics such as unemployment, violence and prostitution. Nonetheless, liquor had not disappeared as a subject worth mobilizing around but, on the contrary, was brought up as an example of poor women’s suffering at many of the seminars organized by women’s groups.

With the World Social Forum, the field of the Anti-Liquor Movement had expanded to include associates very far from the poor village women in Nellore district where the agitation had started almost ten years earlier. On the other hand, the difficulties of involving people from other parts of the world reflect the geographical limitations of the movement, since transnational networks among temperance advocates were lacking and the protest was largely confined to Andhra Pradesh with the exception of some all-Indian connections. Perhaps the Anti-Arrack Movement would point to the fact that not all contemporary social movements are transnational, but neither are they completely independent of larger global processes.
Like so many of the events described in this book, the fieldwork and the writing process have been cooperative activities, although none of the collaborators are accountable for my final explanations and analysis. I am especially grateful to Gudrun Dahl, my supervisor, for her thorough, perceptive and liberal comments on earlier and later drafts. My heartfelt thanks also go to Bengt-Erik Borgström, my assistant supervisor, for commenting on different versions of the manuscript throughout the years. Several colleagues at the Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, influenced my thoughts and provided an inspiring intellectual milieu. When I first started as a graduate student, I was encouraged by many conversations at the Gender Theory Seminar and discussion groups of the project ‘Development as Ideology and Folk Model’ (UTVID). In later years I have been particularly grateful to the scholars involved in the ‘Stockholm Anthropological Research on India’ (SARI) network with whom I have been able to exchange views on India and anthropology and who have given comments on excerpts from my manuscript in its different versions: Eva-Maria Hardtmann, Per Ståhlsberg, Christer Norström, Charles Camara, Paolo Favero and Björn Alm. I also appreciate the discussions and suggestions on my work from Eva Kodrou and Sigrun Helmfrid. My thanks also to the administrative staff at the department who at different times have assisted me with various practical matters: Anne-Charlotte Krus, and Martina Aronsson, as well as Marit Hämäläinen and Riita Määttälä who now work in other branches of the university. I am particularly indebted to Lena Holm who helped me with converting the tables into diagrammes.

My appreciation for financial support for this project goes to Folkhälsoinstitutet (National Institute of Public Health), Svenska Institutet (the Swedish Institute) and Kinanders fond (the Kinander Fund) of Stockholm University. An earlier draft of Chapter 4 was written in Copenhagen at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), which generously provided funds for a four-week stay at the institute. Many people at NIAS were kind enough to provide me with new insights into my work. At the 17th and 18th meetings of the ‘European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies’ (ECMSAS) — held at Heidelberg in Germany and Lund in Sweden respectively — I benefited from remarks on parts of Chapters 4 and 7.

In India my thanks go to Prakash Reddy, Department of Anthropology, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, who kindly affiliated me with his
department and together with his family provided me with a home at the beginning of my stay in Andhra Pradesh. For their friendship and hospitality I am profoundly indebted to K.A. Parvathy, Department of Women’s Studies, Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, and her husband, V.J. Naidu, Department of Economics, Sri Venkateswara University. At their home I spent a lot of time discussing the excise policy and gender issues of Andhra Pradesh. In the course of my fieldwork I visited numerous voluntary organizations and came across people who have been generous with their time and ideas. I owe much to the members of RISE (Rural Institute of Social Education) in Tirupati who often assisted me in various ways. Moreover, I am more than grateful to the members of JVV (Jana Vignana Vedika): among others, Sudhakar Reddy, Lakshman Reddy, G. Malyadri, Bala Subramanyam, K. Srinivasulu, C.A. Prasad, E.V. Narayana and Chenna Kesuwulu. I shall always be indebted to G. Vijaya Kumar of Nellore, for practical help and fascinating debates on social struggles in India and elsewhere in the world. In Hyderabad I owe credit to V. Sandhya from the Progressive Organization of Women (POW), the members of Anveshi who kindly let me use their library, and during my last visit also to P. Mitra who had recently moved to the city. Sri Hari, Bhagya Lakshmi and Nirapurna Rao have generously helped me with translations of written material and interviews. Above all, I want to express my gratitude to the villagers of Chintala Palem and other places in Nellore district, who received me in their homes and shared their experiences with me. This book would have been impossible without their help. I am also obliged to my research assistant and interpreter, M. Anuradha, who spent time with me in 1996 and unhesitatingly lent a hand during my return visit in 1998. Thanks also to the three other assistants — Vidyalatha, Maheshwari and Usha — who helped me during various periods in 1995-6.

For their camaraderie I acknowledge with appreciation those people outside the university who have encouraged me throughout the years and put up with my frequent physical and mental absences — Catrin Hedlund, Kerstin Fhärm, Anne-Marie Nilsson, Ingela Karlsson and Cecilia Drott. Finally, I am indebted to my family without whose encouragement this book would not have been feasible. My late father, Sture Larsson, and my mother, Brigitte Larsson, were a constant source of support and strength. I also appreciate the assistance from my sister, Gunnel Larsson, and her partner, Niklas Lange, who provided me with some break from the interesting but exhausting process of thesis writing.
Abstract

In 1991, women from Dubagunta, Nellore District in the state of Andhra Pradesh forced the local liquor traders to leave the area. This incident is believed to have been the origin of the Anti-Liquor Movement, which finally led to alcoholic beverages being prohibited in the state. The main participants in the early struggle were underprivileged, rural low-caste women. They were supported by voluntary organisations and later by politicians from the opposition parties.

This study presents an analysis of the process whereby the political and private endeavours of individuals were integrated into a broader social movement. It discusses discourses on gender and household relations in rural Andhra Pradesh and the involvement of urban activists as organisers, leaders and translators of the struggle. The attention is on how politicians, representatives of the state administration, and liquor traders either sided with the temperance movement or worked against it, and on the blurred boundary between friend and ‘foe’. It demonstrates how the media coverage and the gathering of participants in collective activities — such as demonstrations, meetings, sit-ins, and protest travelling — were vital for the formation of an ‘imagined community’ of protest.

The Anti-Liquor Movement of Andhra Pradesh is shaped by global processes. The Indian economy opened up to global market forces in the 1980s and at the same time local activists became involved in transnational debates on feminism, Gandhianism and Marxism. Even so, as the study reveals, the movement as such was mainly confined to Andhra Pradesh.


Chenchaiah, U. 1992. *saara raajyam praja raajyam kaavali* (‘We Don’t Want the Rule of Arrack but the Rule of the People’). Kavali: VIRAMSAM (The Revolutionary Writers’ Forum).


Della Porta, D. 1996. ‘Social Movements and the State. Thoughts on the Policing of Protests’; in McAdam, D., McCarthy J & M. Zald (Eds.). Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.


Abelmann, 14, 15, 16, 219, 220, 221, 232, 243, 255
abkari, 172
agriculture, 5, 22, 62, 101, 102, 128, 160, 241, 245
All-Party Committee, 76, 182
Alvarez, Sonia, 155, 181, 183, 208, 255, 258, 259, 263, 269
Anderson, Benedict, 200, 255
Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation, 176
Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, 58, 75, 137, 138, 139, 146, 147, 196, 246
Andhra Pradesh Prohibition Act, 188
Anti-Arrack Coordination Committee, 134
Anti-Arrack Movement, 21, 61, 90, 103, 108, 115, 155, 158, 161, 181, 186
Anti-Arrack Solidarity Committee, 73, 133
Anti-Liquor Committee, 246, 247, 249
Anveshi, 57
arrack, 8, 59, 61, 87, 100, 109, 133, 156, 160, 169, 171, 174, 183, 203, 204, 208, 211, 212, 220, 223, 238, 242
Asmitha, 57, 162
auspiciousness, 28, 240
authority, 15, 154
Ayyawaripalle, 71, 72, 137
backwardness, 151
belt shops, 246, 247
BJP, ii, 76, 134, 135, 139, 181, 182, 195, 197
Chandra Babu Naidu, 25, 78, 91, 163, 190, 191, 192, 195, 196, 198, 205, 217, 232, 234, 235, 238
Chittoor district, 138, 140, 161, 171, 246
Coastal Andhra, 82, 97, 111, 134, 215
Congress Party, 24, 33, 41, 56, 59, 64, 77, 85, 86, 137, 176, 181, 184, 185, 195, 220, 226, 238, 247
Culture, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269
Dalits, 24, 95
Distilleries, 175
Dubagunta, 5, 63, 70, 71, 72, 125, 138, 193, 208, 254
Eenadu, 27, 89, 203, 234, 235, 236
Eyerman, Ron and Andrew Jamison, 16, 45, 158, 201, 224
Feminism, 257, 259, 261, 263, 264, 265, 268
Feminism,, 263
Foreign Contribution
Regulation Act (FCRA), 133
Goudas,, 62, 78
Hinduism, 34, 43
IAS, ii, 180, 187, 240, 247, 266
Identity,, 258, 259, 265, 269
IMFL, ii, 10, 11, 77, 90, 169, 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 183, 187, 188, 190, 195, 246
IPTA, ii, 225, 226
Kammas, 5, 50, 62, 64, 184
KSSP,, 66, 226
Leadership,, 267
Liquor workers, 176
Madigas, 8, 24, 97, 134, 171
Magunta Subbaram Reddy, 175, 184, 204
Malas, 82, 84
McDowell, 176
Nadars, 171, 173
Nationalist Movement, 48, 50
NAWO, ii, 140, 215, 217, 241
Naxalites, 42, 193, 203
NTR, ii, 25, 182, 185, 238, 264
Places, 259, 261
Populism, 25
POW, 57
Praja Natya Mandali, 146
Ramoji Rao, 204, 205, 206
Revenue, i, ii, 7, 8, 188, 212
RISE,, 140, 215
Rosamma, 183, 217, 218
Routledge, Paul, 15, 43, 46, 47, 61, 89, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 265, 267, 268, 270
Ruddick, Sara, 20, 21, 107, 108, 109, 268
Samatha,, 234
Science, ii, 26, 56, 65, 66, 67, 73, 131, 136, 185, 226, 261, 271
SHG, ii, 246, 248
Sitamma, 121
Srikakulam, 59, 60, 188
Starn, Orin, 14, 16, 18, 126, 131, 132, 141, 201, 209, 211, 220, 239, 255, 256, 260, 261, 269
Stree Shakti Sangathana, 57
Sundaraiah, 65, 156
Tarrow, Sidney,15, 71, 135, 181, 183, 193, 202, 204,