

TRIBAL CUSTOMARY LAWS

THE VASAVA

208

TRIBAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
GUJARAT VIDYAPITH-AHMEDABAD-380014

1987

204

TRIBAL CUSTOMARY LAWS

THE VASAVAS

TRIBAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
GUJARAT VIDYAPITH : AHMEDABAD - 380014

INTRODUCTION:

Vasava is a tribe listed in the list of Scheduled Tribe of Gujarat State, as ablied tribe of the Bhils. Its Population is mainly found in Bharuch, Surat, Vadodara and Kaira districts of the State. According to the 1961 census its population is 2,25,314

The present report on the Vasava customary laws is based upon t two months field work done by two Vasava graduates after undergoing two weeks training on customary laws at the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. The faculty consisted of the senior research personnel of the Institute, along with the Director of the Institute. A hundred page field guide covering questionnaire on different aspects of tribal customary laws was provided to the investigators.

VILLAGE OFFICIALS:

In a Vasava village, following three types of traditional village officials are found :

1. Potalia, 2. Kotwal and 3. Bhuva.

1. Potalia:

Potalia is a Vasava synonym for 'Police Patel'. He is the hereditary leader of the village, which passes from the father to son. If a Potalia father has more than one son, the Potaliaship passes by rotation to each of the sons beginning from the eldest son. In such cases the period of Potaliaship is generally for Five years.

2. Kotwal:

'Kotwal' is a person who works as an attendant of 'Talati'. He has to receive the talati when the ^{later} ~~taken~~ visits the village. He lift the bag and other accessory of the talati. He has to call on the farmer on order of talati. He also carries, any other official message from home to home on important social, cultural, or administrative occasions. The post is generally hereditary. The Kotwal is known as 'Kamdar' in Vasavi.

3. Bhuva:

Bhuva is religious leader whose ^B consulted on almost all important socio-religious affairs of the village either by the villagers or patients. He is the leader whose words have 'weight' in the socio-religious village affairs and his words are hardly disobeyed in traditional Vasava village.

VASAVA PANCH:

Vasavas have two tier panch system one at the village level while the other at the religious level. The village level panch includes Sarpanch, Police Patel and other male elders of the various falias of the village. The complainant requests in advance, to the Sarpanch, Policepatel and some other important men of the village or falias, informing them his grievence, and according to their convenience, the panch is called upon under some tree or at any public place or at somebody's residence, depending upon the overall circumstances and situation.

When the panch meets at the fixed place, the purpose of meeting is narrated either by the complainant or Sarpanch of the village. After this initial announcement, the plaintiff is called on to put his case before the jury. After listening the complain, the defendant is called on, and the complain is put before him by the judge and his explanation regarding it is demanded. ~~on hearing of his explanation regarding it is demanded.~~ ^{on hearing of his reply} the cross questions are made, jointly by the judge and jury members, not only to the defendants but also to the plaintiff, and after carefully listening the oral representations of both the parties, and after ~~examining the~~ examining the testimonies the judge and jury members, jointly come at some conclusions, which are later announced by the judge in the form of a judgement. The judgement is accepted by both the parties. Quite a few salient features of the Vasava Justice emerges from its procedure i.e. (1) The Principle of natural justice is generally accepted. (2) Both the parties are heard before giving verdict. (3) The Tribal court meets in local familiar environment

and as participants and observer include many of the villagers.
(4) Verdict is given after taking into account all the aspects of the case. (5) Generally, no outsider has any role tribal themselves are involved in the whole process. It gives an opportunity to the tribe to look ^{back} ^{its} after to their own views and way of thinking and provide an opportunity to reinterpret ^{its} their own customary laws. (6) Vasavi, the language of the tribe is used in the whole court procedure, which gives an opportunity even to a simple villager to fully understand the whole proceeding.

It also gives an opportunity to fully express one self, to all parties concerned.

LAW OF INHERITANCE:

The Vasava is an patriarchal, patrilocal, patrilineal tribal community. As Vasavi, the language of the tribe, does not possess a script of its ^{own} ~~won~~, and as Vasavas, till recently were a preliterate tribe, in testate inheritance is prevalent among the tribe. Though monogamy is practised by majority of the tribe, there are may instance of bi-gamy. All the sons of an individual have equal rights in landed property of his father, irrespective of their motherhood. The daughters are not considered co-perceners in the property of their father though they can get land through the institutions of khandhadia, and they always have right of maintenance in their natal home, in case of their failure in marriage. They also get a calf or a cow at the time of their marriage, as a marriage gift. In some cases they get some ornaments also at the time of their marriage. But besides these exceptions, Vasava customary laws do not consider daughters and co-perceners, widows have usufructory rights in the property of their late husband, which they loose, in case of their remarriage.

Among Vasavas the fullblood relative get deference over the half blood. In the property otherthen, especially in ornaments, the real children of the mother have exclusive right. In the same way, the cows which are given at the time of marriage by the mother's parents also considered in some cases as exclusive property of the children and mother jointly, ^{especially} In case of second or more marriages of their father.

A child in the womb of mother at the time of the death of a person who dies intestate will have the same right to succeed as if he or she had been born before the death of the person.

Devolution flows as single course, irrespective of the fact, whether the property was ancestral or self acquired each member of the Vasava joint family acquires by birth or marriage in the family (in case of women) a right in the ancestral family property ~~the~~ as co-perceners and the rule of survivalship prevails with respect to succession.

MAINTENANCE:

A minor child an aged parents and deserted wife have a right of maintenance from their parents, son or husband respectively. If the parties concern do not perform ~~the~~^{one's} duty, the sufferer has right to approach village elders and redress shes grivences. In the case of deserted wife this right is continued till she gets married elsewhere and in case of children ^{if} they gets married or becomes major parents have right of maintenance till their death.

ADOPTION:

Adoption is socially accepted practise among the Vasavas. Only parents without male issues can adopt, a male member from their next generation (i.e. nephew). Adopter is generally atleast older by one and half decade, and before adopting he must get consent from his spouse as well as parents of the adoptee. The adoptee has all the rights which a son has ^{and} he should perform all the duties which a son does. Adoption takes place in presence of elders and village leaders of both the families and friends and considered to be a permanent and life time bond.

MORTGAGE:

Among Vasavas, tradition of mortgage is prevalent since generations. In time of need they have to put their land, ornaments, animals or cart as a mortgage to any other Vasava or non-Vasava mortgagee. If the land is put as a mortgage, its price is fixed by the quantity of rice or jowar sown in the field. Ornaments like necklace and chahro are generally not put as a mortgage as there is ^{adanger} of

small things to be taken out. While ornaments like 'kada', 'Bangles',

'Vale', 'Sarvaniya', 'Jeharia' are preferred to put as a mortgage. Among animals bullock is generally offered as a mortgage and its price as an mortgage object is generally considered from Rs.250 to 300/- now a days.

The object of the mortgage is considered as a guarantee on the part of debtor and it does not absolve him from paying interest. He has to take the money at as high an interest as 25 to 50% or some time even more than that. Many a time it so happens that his object of mortgage is confiscated by the creditor as part of full or partial payment of the debt.

OCCUPATION:

Vasavas are traditionally basically agriculturists. They consider it as their occupation of their forefathers'. Most of the Vasavas are marginal farmers or small landholders and as very few of them are having irrigation facilities, majority of them do only one season agriculture i.e. rain fed Agriculture.

They also work as agriculture labourers either in the area or at some faraway places in Navsari or Bardoli area. Vasavas rear cows and buffaloes also. As the cow provide ^{them} ~~them~~ oxen, they definitely prefer it, though now a days, under Govt. dairy scheme, buffalo population has increased in the area.

Vasavas are very fond of country made mahua liquor. Now a days it has virtually become a cottage industry, and many households earn an income from its selling.

Though on smaller scales and mainly for household consumption, eggs and chickens are source of income, to meet pocket expenditure especially for the ladies of the household.

Collection of Minor forest produce like Mahua flowers, Mahua fruits berry, jamun powad, tendu leaves and gums are collected by them. Wood-cutting and fuel wood selling are the other subsidiary occupations in many areas. They also work as forest labourer in different ^{run} coups by the forest cooperative societies.

RELIGION:

The Vasavas worship following Gods and Goddesses.

(1) Govaldeo, (2) Nanduro deo (3) Vagh deo (4) Gib

(5) Devlimadi (6) Dev kurli

Dashera, Diwali, and Holi, are other important festivals which are celebrated with great funfair among the Vasavas under study. They are under the influence of neighbouring hind customs.

Among different sect of hindu religion, Shathi panth, Swaminarayan, Sanatan (Maksa Margiya), and Kabir panth have made inroad among the Vasavas under study.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP:

Vasavas follow the practise of ancestor worship, on the completion of 'Barma Ceremony' which is performed on the twelfth day of the death, or any other convenient day to the family, the memorial stone or wooden memorial gets prepared and installed by the Bhagat or Bhuva with all the prescribed ceremonies. As per the Vasava customary laws the varved memorial is concealed in some neighbouring house from which the Bhagat in transe has to find out on his own. When the Bhagat succeed in finding out the memorial it get erected with proper ceremony and atleast for initial year it is worshiped every day by lighting the earthen lamp every day twice e.g. in the morning and evening. This worship is performed by son of the deceased, on his death this worship is either discontinued or followed by some other member of the family.

In some special cases the ~~the~~ tomb or samadhi of the dead is prepared, which is square, and some time a sign of a leg on the upper surface is carved, where also earthen lamp gets lit every day regularly, atleast for initial quite a few months. Some time this type of structure is prepared in the burial ground itself, but in majority of the cases, for the sake of convenience of the family, and the worshiper, the samadhi or memorial gets erected at the end of some field or at some place near by. Now a days, in many instances, a new development is visible, i.e. of photo worshiping. The dead person is adorned with his new clothes, and then his photo is taken. Some time his past photo of his life time is framed and get put on the front

wall of the household, and worshiped by the eldest son, or daughter, but generally no daughter in law of the deceased, ^{is allowed to} worship this photo, as ^{she is} considered as a person coming from out side only in extraordinary exceptional circumstances she ~~six~~ is allowed to worship but generally it is the prerogative ^{and} ~~one~~ domain of sons and daughters.

An ^{enemy} ~~every~~ of the family, to get ones vengence deform the memorials of the Vasavas.

Above two features are the special charactor^{sties} ~~ity~~ of the Vasava ancestor worship which are rarely found elsewhere.

WITCHCRAFT:

Witchcraft and sovcery are practised in Vasava society even now. Those who want to learn the art has ^{to} give as a sacrifice ones close most relative, i.e. the first wife or the first child or the first son.

This art is learned through a guru in the days of Navratri and it takes atleast ten days. On the first day the learner has to go to ones guru, with a cock, whose blood is given to him to drink. On the second night one has to go to burial ground where he has to sit above there, and has to pass through the ordeal of attacks of different ghosts and other super natural elements in the form of tiger, wolf etc.

In subsequent nights one has to stand in the cold water in the river or pond, and there he gets the knowledge of how to attack on an enemy through blackmagic and how to save one self from such attacks from the enemy.

NAMING CEREMONY:

On the fifth day of the birth of the child, naming ceremony of ~~a~~ child is performed which is called 'Pachroo' on that day neighbours, ladies of the clan and children are invited. A piece of loaf is put on the grind stone, 9 children take grounds around it, and along with the piece of the loaf they go out and chant the name given to the child, which is generally given by members of the ~~six~~ audience, and selected by the elders of the household. On 'Pechro'

midwives are specially ~~invited~~ invited. Jaggary is distributed after the naming ceremony. Small feast is given to children, and the midwives.

MARRIAGE:

Among Vasavas following three types of Marriages are prevalent.

- (1) Marriage by ~~an~~ elopement.
- (2) marriage by capture
- (3) Marriage by full social sanctions and social consent of all the parties concerned.

(1) Marriage by elopement:

When the bride and bridegroom want to marry but either of the parents are not agreeing or where parents are ^{not} capable to share the burden of regular marriage, the bride and bridegroom secretly go away to some relatives home, to stay as husband and wife for a few days from where negotiations for the settlement and consent starts. On getting consent especially of boys parents the couple ~~return~~ returns to bridegroom's father's home and from there negotiations for final settlement starts, and after quite a few deliberations with the village elders of both the side and on payment of bride-price and other dues to the bride's parent the couple is subsequently accepted as husband and wife.

(2) Marriage by capture:

Where the bride or the bride's parents do not accept the proposal of the bridegroom's father, or where atleast the bride does not want to show her consent against the will and wishes of her father, marriage by capture occurs. There would be ^{the} bridegroom, ^{who} would hold the hands of the bride and lift her and put her in a cart specially brought for carrying away the bride from the fair, forest, farm, or any other convenient place. The bride is not allowed to go even if she cry, and is taken to some relatives of the bridegroom or to some thick forest. As this sort of ~~assault~~ ^{assault} creates ~~tremor~~ ^{trouble} in the girl's home, and they are sure to make attack ~~retaliation~~ ^{retaliation} in return to boy's house, resulting in damaging roof tiles, and beating some of the male relatives of the bridegroom, the couple has to change their hide out frequently, in order to escape fury of

of the bride
father and brothers. In such events, cases have been reported, where not only the bride was ^{snatched} away from the abductor but also, was severely beaten by the father and brothers of the bride. After a few days or months when they feel that now the ~~and~~ has settled, through some relative secret ~~message~~ is sent to boy's father. Initial contacts are made. Through some influential people negotiation starts which generally result in subsequent approval of the affair. As in this sort of marriage initial consent of the bride and her parent is not there as a rule, heavy bride-price is taken which is generally twice or thrice, the original amount by way of punishment to the bridegroom.

(3) Regular marriage - Vidhisar Lagan:

Among Vasavas most respected marriage form is 'vidhisar lagan' (~~ikil~~ marriage performed by observing all the rules.).

When the boy attains a marriageable age, his father asks his relatives to find out a suitable pair for his son. The relatives suggest some girls from their known circles or keep in mind the suggestion and search for suitable pair. When they find some girl, the enquiry is made about her house, character and skill of doing household chores. If she passes through the initial tests of the relatives the name of the girl is suggested to the boy's father. On getting his consent, the girl's parents are approached by the father and if he is also affirmative the boy and girl are shown to each other at some relative's home or at home and after ascertaining their consent the day is fixed to go to see the bride-groom's house. They enquire about the landed property, cattle, house, grains etc and on their return the girls parents and others decide, whether they want to marry their girl or not. If they decide to, reply in affirmative the girl's father send a messenger to the boy's father with the message that they can come on any suitable date for ~~chanlle~~ i.e. betrothal.

On receipt of this message, the boy's father and his relatives fix up a suitable date for betrothal ceremony, send the message accordingly to girl's father and alongwith some village elders, they go to girl's house for betrothal, on foot or by a cart,

provided the boy's father can afford it. They are well received at the girl's father's house. Elders of the village assemble there and the negotiations for the fixation of amount of Dahej bride-price starts. Bride-price may vary from Rs.1000/- to 2500/-/ This amount is used to purchase ornaments for the bride by the bride's father. After the fixation of the bride price the bridegroom's father has to give the amount for the distribution of sugar or jaggery which is around Rs.200 to 250 and it is called 'Pagvat' in Vasava language. The Vasava saree and blouse piece is given by bride-groom's father surbat is prepared by the bride's father and served to all the people present on the occasion.

Ceremonial greetings by all the members of bride-groom party, to the bride occurs afterwards. An arti is prepared. The ^{bride} girl sits inside the house, and each member goes inside the house one by one, put some coins in the arti, make a 'chanla' in her forehead and return. The bride groom's mother presents a silver necklace, called 'Hakul' ^{to} the bride. This ceremony provides an opportunity to see the bride personally to all the members of the bride-groom party. Women folk sing songs on the occasion. After 'arti' date for the marriage gets fixed according to the convenience of both the parties and then bride groom party returns to its own village.

Preparation for the marriage starts well in advance. For preparing rice and wheat flour, the girls of the village assemble at the bride or bride groom's house and while working they sing beautiful marriage songs in full mood. Juice is served to all the participants. The young men of the village clearing the Mandap ground, go to the forest along with a bottle of wine, tandul and water mixed turmeric. They sprinkle 3-4 drops of the wine on the earth by taking it in a leave cup. After wards whole cup is pured on the earth. The rest of the wine is consumed by the party. After drinking the wine, the party starts wood cutting for the mandap, they load the woods in the cart and bring them to the house of the bride/bridegroom.

Before three four days or a week of the marriage, turmeric coated rice, along with 10 paisa coin covered in Khakhra leaves, is sent to relatives of the bride/bridegroom. It is called 'Nevta' (invitation) in Vasava language.

Before two or three days of marriage the mandap is erected. Among Vasavas nine pole mandap is preferred. The pits are dug at appropriate distance according to its size. A bottle of wine is brought along with this bottle, rice grain and vermilion, and a few coin the chief worshiper perform puja. He takes a new basket specially meant for it, put rice grain, vermilion and coins into it, put a tilak on the mandap pole, put rice grains on the earth, pour a drop of wine on the earth. This action is known as 'Sak Padvi'. Only after this ceremony, the pole could be put in the whole meant for it. Afterwards rest of the poles also are fixed, on the roof of the Mandap branches of khakhra alongwith its leaves are put. Thus mandap is prepared atleast before the date of marriage.

All the relatives get to gather either on the date on which marriage party is to start to go to the brides village or on the previous day. Turmeric is grinded on that day. The action songs on turmeric are sung on occassion.

All the village people assemble, at the bride or bridegrooms home. The drummers are invited. They are served a bottle of wine, they pour a drop of wine on the earth, then taste the wine and start beating the drum.

Before turmeric is applied to the bride/bridegroom, he/she is given hot water for bath. Then nine maidens, who have not attained puberty are called, who apply turmeric to the bride or bridegroom through pipal leaves. Among Vasava there is a belief that if black-magic of some grown up witchcraft has its ill-effect, the bride/bridegroom may die subsequently, hence this precaution is taken as the small girls are not supposed to know or are capable of knowing witchcraft atleast before they pass through 'teen'age. After the initial application of turmeric by these small girls, any other women apply turmeric to the bride/bridegroom. Then sword with lemon pierced on the top is given to the bridegroom. Bride/bridegroom made

to seat on a wooden seat and lifting him/her, nine circles are taken by his/her friends while dancing. Some time the dance goes on for the whole night. The wine is also served in between to the interested kin men and special invited. Some time their friends and relatives lift the bride/bridegroom on their shoulder and dance. The next day they start for the bride's village either on foot or by cart or any other suitable conveyance. When they reach bride's village a fire shot in the air is made, the party is received by the kin of the bride and a shelter is given to the party under some tree.

The ladies of the bride groom party take a brand-new Dhoti to bride's house singing relevant songs for the occasion and put the dhoti on the head of bride's mother or aunt, this ritual is known as 'ER' in Vasava language. The same ritual is afterwards, performed by the bride's side, which is known as 'bride's er'. The bridegrooms party then goes again to bride's house, along with a turmeric dish covered with a new cotton cloth-piece ~~thoter~~ is pour in turmeric along with scent. The turmeric is applied to the hands and feet of the bride. Few ladies try to apply turmeric on each other. The same process is followed by the brides party too. They apply turmeric to the bridegroom and their kins men. This ritual is known as "Ido badla" in Vasava language. The dress for the bride is purchased by the bridegroom party. They have to purchase and bring saree, blouse, hair oil, bangles, powder, and atleast an ornament called hakul. These things are ceremonially adorned on the bride by the bridegroom party. Then along with the bridegroom, Seated on the horse back, and youths dancing on the tune and beats of musical instruments, reach the mandap, where members of both the parties ceremonially greet each other and dance again with full of joy. After a few women the bride-groom is taken inside the brides house, where an end of a spare dhoti of the bridegroom is knotted by a (one rupee and twentyfive paisa con knotted) saree of the bride, which is known as 'chheda hegadia' in Vasava language. Then bride and bridegroom are brought in mandap by lifting them. Both made to stand on a wooden seat. After taking their shoes off. Both have to face in eastern direction. The groom remain in north while the bride in the south.

Then the toe of the bride groom made touch to the brides toes on the upper side. A person climb on a side of the mandap and from there throw away an eating^{able} called 'umbara', which is collected by the children standing below and eaten up. Water is also sprinkled alongwith it. Then the bride is taken inside. Where all the women relatives greets her with tears in their eyes. The bride is made to sit in a cart specially brought for her by the bridegroom party. All the utensils given to her as 'Chandla' also put in a sack, alongwith trunk, quilts and other things the bride and bridegroom alongwith the party given sand off by the relatives and on return of the bridegroom party, it is given ceremonial welcome at the bridegrooms house.

When the party return the bridegroom's home, she does not get down, before she gets promise from him, to receive some ornament or any other thing she is interested in. When the couple reach the main door, the younger brother of the bridegroom stands before the door, and does not make the way till he get promise to have gift of his choice. Then the bride and bridegrooms are taken inside the house. On that day there is no dancing or singing programme. But on the next day, the drum beat starts from the morning. On that day, the bridegroom has to give a feast to the whole village, the preparation for which starts^{is} from the morning itself. An hour or so before the noon, the bride and bridegroom made to sit under the mandap, where all the villagers make a 'Chandla' to the bride and bride-groom, and according to their relations and economic conditions, offer money, cloths or ornaments, on one hand the 'chanla ritual' continues while on the other hand dancing also continues, simultaneously lunch also gets served to the villagers. At the end the bride and bridegroom take their lunch. After a while the couple made to stand under the mandap facing east and the bride on the north side, and bridegroom on the south and the ritual of 'Umbara Padwa' is performed, exactly ~~as~~ ⁱⁿ the manner as it was performed at the house of the bride. Then a seat is arranged in the cart, and the couple made to seat on it and taken to the temple for worship of the traditional Gods and Goddesses accompanied by the dancers dancing on the beats of musical instrument.

drum. At temple 'pujari' the priest perform the puja-worshipping coconut is offered there and bowing humbly before the Gods the couple is taken to worship a tree called 'hegul'. After bowing to tree 'hegul' the couple is taken back home where it is brought inside the house while dancing. The 'har' - Neck Pae is taken out from their necks and is tied on a refter of the house. The couple is again taken back to mandap, where their hands and feet are washed which is called 'a lad utar' (lit. removal of turmeric) in Vasava language.

The dance continue even afterwards on the beat of the drum The drummer gets rewarded by giving him an ammount of Rs.25/- along with a wine bottle.

On the fifth day ^{if it} is so decided, the brides relative come for 'ana' to bring her back to natal home for a few days. They are given a ceremonial welcome and a dinner. When the party returns, within nine days the bridegroom party visits the bride's natal home and after having a ceremonial welcome and dinner or lunch they return to bridegroom village. It is the end of the Vasava formal marriage ceremony.

Besides this regular marriage, there is one more marriage form among the Vasava. This marriage form is the proof ^{of the fact} that Vasava customary laws have taken special care for the poors.

For those person who can not afford the heavy expanse of the marriage can perform ~~as~~ marriage after selection is made by the bride and bridegroom through regular social sanction, No chandla or bet^otrthal ceremony is made. Instead of on the convenient day for both the parties, the villagers of the bridegroom, ^{Accompanying} along with the bridegroom go to the bride's village, along with the cloths, key ornament called hakul, and the bride price. The villagers take their lunch or dinner at their own home only. When they reach the bride's village bride's villagers also assemble, and negotiation for the settlement of bride price start between the elders of both the parties. On fixation of the bride price the women folk of both the parties, start singing marriage songs. The bride is adorned with the new cloths brought by the bridegroom party, and Hakul or necklace is also

put in her neck. An amount to bring jaggary is taken from the bridegroom party, and jaggary thus brought is distributed among those who are present, or atleast among the children. The bridegroom party, singing marriage songs, return to their home, alongwith the bride. In this form of marriage all other ceremonies and rituals are omitted. The couple is considered as lawful husband and wife by the Vasava society here after.

From all type of Vasava marriage following generalisations can be made.

1. Except marriage by capture, in all other Vasava marriages consent of the bride and bridegroom has prominent place.
2. Vasava marriage takes place at-marriageable age - which is according to Vasava tradition mature age.
3. In all forms of Vasava marriage brideprice is taken. Bride price vary according to marriage form, the highest will be in the last marriage form described.
4. The Vasava marriage forms give all the persons a chance to marry irrespective of ones economic conditions.
5. All Vasava marriage forms have its root in the society itself, all rituals and services are performed by the member of the society. No outsider is required to perform any of the ceremony.
6. In all form of marriage, settlement of the bride price has an important role. only on its payment validity and social ~~legality~~ ^{legality} of the regulation vasava marriage arises.

KHANDHADIA:

Among Vasavas, if a person is male issue less than he can give property to his daughter through the institution of Khandhadia. Generally the youngest daughter of an individual is prepared for keeping as Gharjamai or Khandhadia. Before selection of an unmarried Vasava boy to keep as Gharjamai consent of one's brother is generally taken. After getting his consent, generally the offer is made to the prospective Gharjamais parents and on securing their consent, and after knowing the wishes of the bride and bridegroom concerned, the offer is made known to the villagers.

All the expenses of the marriage of Khandhadia is borne by the parents of the bride. Besides he does not have to pay the bride price. The Khadhadia does not get any right in landed property of his real father and he has to accept his in-laws as his guardian. Now a days written document is prepared to this effect in presence of Sarpanch and other elders of both the parties.

POLYGAMY:

Polygamy is unknown but polygamy is in practise among Vasavas. Reasons for the Polygamy are as follows ~~but~~ In majority of the cases of the type, the person would have two wives. Cases have been reported where a person has seven or eight wives at a time, though such instances are very exceptional:

1. When the first wife is barren.
2. When the person has more landed property and it becomes difficult for one wife to manage the affairs of the household singlehandedly and when she needs assistance of somebody.
3. When first wife suffer from some incurable diseases and is not in a position to perform the heavy household chores herself.
4. When an extra-marital relation of husband results in to pregnancy with some ^{un}married girl which becomes known to the villagers and to escape public criticism she decides to stay with him or ~~as~~ as a punishment forced by the villagers to keep her as wife.
5. When to satisfy his lust the husband wants to have another wife

Though polygamy is an accepted practise of the Vasavas society, and there are many cases reported in which the parents of the first wife have helped his son-in-law and daughter in arranging for a second wife in case of barrenness of the first wife or overburden of household work, in all other circumstances it's an affair of public criticism. It also reflects in the fixation of bride price, which is normally double or three times more in some circumstances.

Marriage by capture is the method which is widely used in Vasava polygamy. In this form of marriage, especially in these circumstances the bride price and subsequent share for wine of the leaders also shoots up.

The sons of all the wives of a Vasava gets equal property right. The parents generally stay with the youngest one. But mother generally stays with their real youngest son in the old age. If they do not have male issue, they may stay with any of the co-wife's real son, or as per requirement of the grand mother, wherever her service as an advisors and guide is needed.

DIVORCE:

Divorce is known as "fargati" among Vasavas. The Vasavas permit fargati for the following reasons :

1. When husband beats the wife severly and harshly times and again.
2. When husband and wife quarrels continuously.
3. When the wife is barren and unwilling to permit her husband to marry again.
4. When either of the spouse has extra-marital relations, and has been caught by the other party red-handed and does not want to pardon the guilty party or the accused.
5. When either of the person is suffering from some uncurable disease for a very long time .

For fargati generally, both the parties meet at the man's house, most preferably in the evening as it is easier for most of the village leaders to spare some time for this purpose. When important leaders of both the parties arrive the negotiations for the fargati starts. The party who wants fargati is asked first to present one's case. On listening ones case the other party is asked to reply the allegations. In this process, both the party starts quarrelling, but with the intervention of the leaders, both the parties are pacified. Before granting fargati the last effort is made to resolve the differences, and if it does not succeed the fargati is granted.

In fargati a new saree is given to the women alongwith a cash of Rs.125 to 250/-. If initiator^{ion} of fagati is from women's parents side, the cash amount need not be given, such fargati is known as 'Kori fargati' among the Vasavas. Generally now a days a written

document about fargati get prepared and signatures of the leaders in whose presence the fargati took place is prepared and a copy is given to both the parties. As among the Vasavas, no women is allowed in the panch deliberations, on her behalf, the signature is ^{secured} either of her father or in his absence his elder brother.

Except in the case of infants, the children go with the father. Even the infants also, later on return to ones father and has all legal and social customary rights over the property of the father.

ORNAMENTS:

Vasava women are very fond of ornaments. Among well-to-do Vasavas silver ornaments are mostly prevalent, with the exception of Nathni-nosedott which is often made of gold. Among poor Vasavas aluminium ornaments are used. Beads are made use of in artistic forms as neck-chains. Vasavas women adorn themselves with 'Hadul' an 'Sahli' in neck, 'chaklle' 'charaniya' and 'Jehariye' in legs, 'bagdi', 'got' and 'Patli' in hand and 'Kode' above elbow on the upper hand. Every Vasava woman ^{Adapt} wears bangles with the exception of widow. Many Vasava women are fond of 'akdo' which is adorned on the waist. Except ring no other ornament is used by the men.

CONCLUSION:

The Vasava customary laws are in vogue, through out the Vasava areas and they cover the most of the aspects of ^{typ} traditional Vasava life. The Vasavas feel at home in traditional setting in which justice is given by Vasava village panch. Though there are many areas where traditional customary laws of Vasavas are similar to Hindu law there are other areas where they very much differ from the former and keep their clear identify. In these circumstances it would be a great to the Vasava society, if justice is granted to the Vasavas, according to Vasava customary laws.