



## **CHAPTER - II**

Man's Life in Nature

### **In the Forest – regions of the Telugu Land**

Man enters into Nature through Science.

Nature enters Man through Art.

Elements (పంచభూత) are blended together into a creative mould and evolve a habitat.

The nature of the soil and the atmosphere around fill this evolutionary creation with variety and plenty and establish harmony in different regions in different ways. In the regions, where perfect harmony is established, the land, the flora, and the fauna of the place are at peace with one another.

Plants grow depending upon the fertility of the soil and the rainfall. Monkeys and birds live on trees. In fact, all the living beings live on plants - the vegetarians directly and the non-vegetarians indirectly. Seasons in the year take sufficient care to sustain all the creatures. The food habits and the habitats of the different creatures are so perfectly adjusted and even the limbs of the different creatures are so suited to the purpose that all of them obey the formula of 'live and let live' competing with each other.

In mathematics, multiples on multiples increase in an ascending order with the resultant products one depending on the other. In a similar fashion, things in nature are mutually interdependent. A change of a single number in multiplication

affects the total product. Similarly, a single missing link in nature leads to a world of difference. Nowhere else is this phenomenon more manifest than in a forest<sup>1</sup>.

Forest is forest wherever it is. Nevertheless, the trees and animals differ from one another, depending upon the nature of the soil and the extent of rainfall in the area. So also, the Telugu tribes who reside in various regions in the forests lead their lives very differently, one tribes different from the other. The culture of a tribe is in consonance with the type of forest of the region near about. The forests are the backbone for the tribe's culture that flourishes in a region. Its influence is truly reflected in what little scientific and technological advancement the tribes have acquired. Their skills, life styles, recreation reflect their adaptations to their unique surroundings<sup>2</sup>.

While travelling by bus in Visakha manyam, one passes the village, Garikabandalu beyond VaddadiMadugula, a four thousand feet Minumulur Ghat looms large and high in front, all of a sudden.

In the meadows of Visakha, the hills gradually merge in the plains between the hills. Much of the soil here, in geological terms, is of khondalite or red soil. The soil gets its name from 'Khonds' who inhabit the place. Khondalite soil is ideal for the growth of forests. The annual rainfall is between 150 and 200cm.

Here the tribes classify the agro-climatic zones into six divisions. Arulla, Pasibalyalu, Dorasi, Gudem, Kotla and Bayalu.  
(ఆరుళ్ళ, పసిబయలు, దోరశి, గూడెం, కోట్ల బయలు)

Along the hill range are six villages: Minumuluru, Vanthalu, Gaduthuri, Gammeli, Lochili and Solabham upto Gangarju Madugula the mandal head

quarters. Hence this region is noted as 'Arulla' (a land of six villages). They harvest two crops: the first, a low yielding crop during the season of pumpkins (గుమ్మడికాయ ధాన్యం). The second crop in summer is known as the mango season crop (మామిడికాయ ధాన్యం), which is rich in yield.

The saying that the Arulla people have two hungers, for they have two crops.  
(ఆరుళ్లవారికి రెండాకళ్లు)

'Pasibayalu (పసిబయలు the yellow coloured meadow) is part of Gangaraju Madugula mandal. Turmeric grows mainly in this region. Chintapalli, Gudem mandals adjoining East Godavari District, is all forest. It is called 'Chaligudem' (చలిగూడెం) or 'Puligudem' (పులిగూడెం), because 'much cold and many tigers' exist in these parts.

Some five hundred feet down Minumuluru Ghat, just past Paderu (headquarters of revenue division of Visakha Manyam) and upto Matsyagadda near Gamparai, it is all 'Dorasi' (దోరశి) covering the Paderu mandal. Matsyagadda at Gamparai village in this Mandal is referred as 'Kotla datu jore' (కోట్లదాటు జోరె) because one reaches Kotla crossing the stream. Beyond it is 'Kotla' territory. This was once the border to the Andhras and Orissa. Now, beyond 'jore' until Jwalaput, some 60 km and more, it is well within the state of Andhra Pradesh. Dorasi is all an open dry land. There are puddles of crab-water (ఎండ్రీకనీళ్లు) in these lands. It means that crabs dig deep into the land. Guttulupattu, a major commercial centre lies within Dorasi region and a major weekly fair for 'pippali' is held here.

Dorasi is hailed as ‘Donti kunda Dorasi’, (దొంతికుండ దోరశి) because files pots full of cooked food and vegetables are always in store here, which speak of abundance.

Next, Kotla is a region, too cold. Crops take a quarter year more time for harvest in these parts than in other regions, because of excessive fog, inadequate sunlight and primitive farming practices.

‘Janle kotla – najanle katraru banta’ (జాన్లెకోట్ల - నజాన్లె కంఠ్రారుబంట) is a Khond saying. It means that it is Kotla for those who are familiar to it and a path of sharp-edged knives for those who are new to the place.

The stretch from Hukumpeta to the famous Araku, it is all open country. It is called ‘Bayalu’. The erstwhile Zamindaris Kasipatnam, Srungavarapukota are situated on its borders. Though the place is dotted with hills, it is all an extensive meadow. Whether one goes down from the steep Srungavarapukota or along the fortress-like walls of Minumuluru above Vaddadi or Chintapalli Ghats (above Narasipatnam) the visible upland is fortified by these hill tracts on all sides.

The non-Telugu tribes near Araku call a plough or ‘nagali’ as ‘Telugu nagore’ because the Telugu people brought the plough to this place for cultivation. The non-Telugu tribes say, in a mildly sarcastic tone, that the Telugu people who inhabit ‘Galla’ (గొళ్ల) (plains) are fond of rice. (గొళ్ళవారికి అన్నంమీద ఆశ ఎక్కువ)

The podu cultivation in these parts specialized by the Konda Doras is, indeed, remarkable. These toilers fell the trees, burn them and sow seeds in the area that is so cleared, no matter how dense the jungle is.

Very unfortunate indeed it is, to note that a few 'jeelugu', mango, jack and tamarind trees that grow in and around a village are all that is left of the forest!

With the vanishing green cover and the heavy rainfall, there is a massive erosion of soil with huge landslides (ఉగంకొట్టడం) draining the soil down and depositing it in the riverbeds and in the reservoirs. When the reservoirs on Sileru, were silted some time ago, the power generation had come to a standstill at Machkhund Hydro power station. The Kirandool – Vizianagaram railway line frequently gets buried under the land slides in many a place.

Among some traditional farm practices, enriching the soil with manure is one. In the soil so manured, the tribes grow high-value commercial crops like pippali, turmeric and ginger. They celebrate festivals, 'Nandi and Koluvu', to drive out the evil spirits that inhabit the soil and to ward off the evils spirits. Demons or forest kings (కొండదాసుగుడు) in and around, observing some monthly taboos (దోషం) on farming observed with great faith and devotion.

The smiths and potters use the wheel. Men of these trades and carpenters and others of other crafts – all do farming in these regions. Every farmer prefers podu cultivation on hill slopes to grow 'sama', 'ganti' and 'chodi' (ragi) – all of the millet family. They grow pulses on light soils (గరువు) and pippali, turmeric and paddy in wetlands. Yet a few own these lands and many others work in fields as farm-labour.

The residents of these forest regions suffer different types of mist like Manchu (మంచు)-Fog, 'Buggimanchu (బుగ్గిమంచు) - Frost', 'Mudimanchu (ముడిమంచు) - mist', 'Pogamanchu (పోగమంచు) - smog', and 'Gandu (గాండు) - Dew'. The residents need

sturdy and strong houses to protect themselves against fog or mist. The houses are status symbols as well. They light bonfires in front of their houses to protect themselves against the cold there. They use large quantities of wood for lighting bonfires and building strong houses. The houses have sloping roofs to let rain and dewdrops fall down. The houses can withstand winter's chill as well. With fine woodwork, the houses are cosy, giving out warmth. The month of February is known as 'Pogunu' (పొగును) (bonfire) in this area. In and around Kotla, the burning of 'Pogunu' is a great and grand festival, celebrated on a large scale by the tribes. Much wood in the forest is being consumed for all these purposes.

Podu is for uphill, lower down, it is light gravel region, (చెలక, గరువు) and on the plains, it is irrigated land. Dotted in the middle of the trees, there appear beautiful densely populated hamlets on the terraces of hills.

The stones fixed around the hamlets for boundaries make them look like tiny fortresses. (దుర్గం)

In the midst of a hamlet, there is a 'chavadi' (చావడి) having stones for an elevated seat and a back-supporter.

A special seat there is for the accused on trial to defend him. It is called 'Simmalagaddi' (సిమ్మాలగడ్డె). Yet on another side, there is a place for 'Sankulamma' (సంకులమ్మ), the village deity.

In the center, there is an open place for a bonfire (నెగడుబస), and on the front side, there is a playfield (ఆటబయలు). Again, on an elevation, there is a hunting field

(వేలంబయలు - వేటబయలు) (an open place where all gather for ‘Itim’ festival, before starting on a hunting expedition). A little ahead, there is ‘gotna bayalu’ (గొట్టబయలు) or open-land, where cattle are gathered before they are taken out for grazing.

With men of varied vocations and trades settling in a hamlet, each hamlet is self-sufficient and there are about five or six hundred inhabitants in each. There may be a tiled house or two in a hamlet. Now however the government is encouraging building of houses in colonies.

Almost all the huts have doorframes and strong inner locks. They have smoothly plastered walls with red clay mixed in cow dung. ‘Kopirigaddi’ or straw-roofing is neatly set on top to let snow-drops slither.

Each house boasts of a small raised platform, a ‘peene’ (పీనె a pial), on which is placed a small pot ‘goonakuduru’ (గూనకుదురు), in homage to the departed family elders. It is auspicious in troubled times if the elders are propitiated; they will be worshipped during family functions and festival days as well.

Each house has a ‘kuduru’ (కుదురు) or depression in stone or dried clay for ‘varpu’ (వార్పు) or separation of boiled water from cooked rice or grain and another ‘kuduru’ or flour-pot for fermenting porridge (పిండికుండ). Next to the hearth, there are holes to let the adjoining hearth light itself for fire and a ‘jolaru’ (జోలారు) a bamboo wattle shelf above it.

A house has a middle room, (నడిమింటి) an inner room (అయినింటి) and a living room, (వసారా) on a raised platform. There are separate pens for poultry, (కోళ్లదొర్లి) pigs and goats (పందుల దొర్లి, మేకల దొడ్డి) and lattices for bean plants (చిక్కడు పందిరి) next to the house.

A swing (ఉయ్యాల) hangs, in front of the house by a tamarind branch. Firewood is stacked in between the braches of the tamarind tree. There are holes in the tree trunk where oilseeds are crushed to extract oil. (నూనెబల్లలు)

Each hamlet has a 'jakarimetta' (జాకరిమెట్ట) on an elevated hillock and it is intended for propitiating the Mother Earth. In the month of August, the tribes eat pumpkin-mixed cooked Sama millet, the first crop in a feast to propitiate the Mother Earth.

There are other places around. They are 'Nandiputta' (నందిపుట్ట), 'Danugudukonda' (దానుగుడుకొండ)

Brewed wine is fed to Nandiputta ('putta' means 'anthill') during Nandi festival.

'Danugudu konda' means 'a hill of the demon king of the jungle'.

A tableland in the meadow is referred to at different places as 'bayalu' (meadow) Singara bayalu, (Singara is a form of play) Cheru bayalu and Pedabayalu; 'cheru' means 'near' and 'peda' means 'big'

There are some other kinds of hills called ‘Maddivalasa vugam’ (మద్దివలస ఉగం), ‘Barrela mamidi vugam’ (బర్రెమామిడి ఉగం), ‘Palakonda vugam’ (పాలకొండ ఉగం) and ‘Galiguppa vugam’ (గాలిగుప్ప ఉగం). Vugam means land slide. (A hill struck by land slides).

This is how the villages, houses, fields and their surroundings are set in the forest regions in and around Visakha tribal area.

The farming in these hill-regions involves hard labour. Before sowing the seeds, the soil should be prepared for cultivation.

The ‘podu’ and dry lands are allowed to remain fallow once in two or three years, to let them recoup fertility. In swampy lands where crabs go down, (ఎండ్రిక నీళ్లు) salts and nutrients leach through the porous surface to the lower layers. These soils should be ploughed deep to receive full sun light. Such practice is even more necessary for turmeric or ‘pippali’ (పిప్పలి) crops.

In shifting cultivation, the ‘konda podu’ (కొండపోడు) soil is well prepared before the seeds are sown. The land is sufficiently trampled by cattle to make the soil loose (it is called ‘pasi yeda-పసిఎడ’). The first crop in these parts is ‘Kannesama’ (కన్నెసామ) ‘Korasama’ (కొరసామ) ‘Mysama’ (మైసామ), which is a kind of millet harvested in the month of September. From September onwards, the tribes resort to consume subsistence crops like maize, pumpkin, ‘Korra’ (a kind of millet), and tubers roots, even leaves to keep body and soul together. When rain pours down heavily for days on end, they move out in raincoats and hats made of ‘adda’ leaves. (తోక గిడుగు, బెంక గిడుగు) Some times, they cannot even stir out to collect tubers and roots.

(మునుకోలు నెలకు ముద్ద చేసుకుని కూచుంటారు)

On rainy days such as these, in the 'Kanne' month (August- September), they barter away the modest silver jewellery of their women-folk (anklet-like things) for food.

(కన్నెకు కడ కాళ్ళనుండి అమ్ముకు తింటారు - సవితీ పలకాలకు చట్టి, ముంతలు అమ్ముకుతింటారు)

For the Mukkanuma' in the month of December, the situation is harder. It is a must-sell-situation. Then women sell their nose-rings and all – all for food.

(ముక్కనుమకు ముక్కలు మూతులు పండుతుంటే - ముక్క కమ్మలు అమ్ముకు తింటారు)

'Jeelugu' wine serves the purpose. 'Rice being in short supply, the gruel pot is a must'. (అన్నం వార్చుకున్నా అంబలికుండ తప్పదు)

Cockfights (కోళ్ళపందాలు), women-related feuds (మగనాలి తగవులు) and the hidden costs in resolving disputes at the panchayats eat away what little gain the turmeric crop can show.

'By 'Sivaratri', even a drop of rice gruel is a luxury'. (శివరాత్రి తరువాత చిక్కెడు గంజైనా దొరకదు) With the 'Nandi' festival behind, hill-brooms alone help meet basic needs. As April approaches, jackfruits meet some hunger, after the fulfilling of the solemn jackfruit vows (పనసబాసలు) (vows not to eat them before celebrating the festival).

Proceeds from the tamarind and some other sundry crops, help the tribes run through summer's 'Itim' festivities. The tribes celebrate the festival for a week in

roadside hamlets and twice as long in the interiors. The festival is an occasion for the maidens and youngsters to let loose their erotic and erratic behaviour, which has been subjected to the rigours of discipline all the year round. The term 'Itim' or Itika may be a corrupted form of 'vedukala' (వేడుకల) or 'vetala' (వేటల), owing to some wrong classification of terms. Thus, in usage the 'vedukala' (fun and frolic) festival or the 'vetala' (hunting) festival might have become 'Itim' or 'Itika' festival. In the song of Nandi festival, they explain that since they are living in the country of 'Virata' (వీరట) King of Mahabarath epic, they are celebrating Vimata or 'Itukala' panduga.

Hunting by bow and arrows is rare. They make a track from up the hill down to the lower regions, where they lay a trap into which small birds like 'Kunne' (కున్నె) fall like balls in a row with the trap closing down on them at the end. This they call 'taarukodi veta' (తారుకోడివేట) (hunting the cock like birds along a track). They catch other birds by using 'eguruchitte', (ఎగురుచిట్టె) 'urimeetu' (ఉరిమీటు trapand snare) 'eene kandelu' (ఈనెకండెలు) and 'doone kandelu' (దొనెకండెలు) stick and glue. One can find some tribes in their leisure time weaving nets for a change, which are useful to catch fish in perennial streams. Bow and arrow, the catapult, stone-tipped arrow, the horn-spear and blunt spear are some of the weapons used by the tribes. However, these weapons are not much used nowadays even in the interior places. There are many other types of hunting practice in these regions. Even they are slowly becoming obsolete. After the rain, the huntsmen follow the trail of the animal. This type of hunting is called 'pompudu' (పొంపుడు) sometimes four or five people used to go after a game in the early morning before

sunrise. All these practices are not now in vogue. Even ‘sopu’ (సోపు) hunting and ‘tokkudu’ (తొక్కుడు) hunting are outdated.

The various tools used by the tribal farmers in agriculture reflect their improved methods of cultivation. They use for farming ‘baya nagali (బయనాగలి);’ (plain plough), ‘konda nagali’ (కొండనాగలి) (hill-plough), ‘burra nagali’ (బుర్రనాగలి) (a plough with a head) and ‘thoka nagali’ (తోకనాగలి) (a tailed plough).

A blacksmith is always well respected. His importance in the village economy is better acknowledged in the adage ‘Raju meeda ojulodu’ (రాజుమీద ఓజులోడు) (A king is next to the blacksmith). He has to quickly sharpen the implements of all the villagers before the Itukala panduga.

The analogy of the cashew-nut best describes the place of a blacksmith. The cashew plants are reared, not for the fruit, but for the kidney-shaped edible nut under the cashew fruit. The blacksmith is like the nut.

To go back to the Itukala festival again, the tribal girls swing in a “royal swing” (రాచ ఉయ్యాల), all meet at a royal ‘chavadi’ (court) (రాచచాపడి) during the festival days. These words smell the rule of ‘muthadars’ and ‘munsiffs’, the ruling elite. However, all these ruling groups belong to the Bagatha tribe. They enter into matrimonial alliances on the basis of their family totems (clan-mark). They annexe to their names hereditary suffixes like raju, dora, padal, nayudu, patro, These family marks are found in the names of tribes like Bakur rajus, Naidus of dokulur, Padandlu of Pathakota, Doras of Sikari, Subulari, Sukur majjis and so on.

The hereditary history of some of these names is interesting. These names mirror some to-and-fro migrations. Kilamkota people are better known as 'racheluka' (రీచెలుక) family (tree-shrew). It is said that the Matsyarajus of Gangaraju Madugula belonged to the Gajula (bangles) baliya community. They hail from Duduma Sujanakota. At their weddings, it is customary to fasten a bangle to a post. It is believed that they came to these parts selling bangles. 'Raju' is annexed to their family name at a later stage. The grooms of the Mattham family call themselves as 'Koyyuru jangalu' (కొయ్యూరుజంగాలు). At weddings, wearing the sacred thread is a must for them. Even those coming from Ginnelakota and Kilagada say that they hail from Matham. Seekari it is said, hail from places Srikakulam and 'Kimudu' (కిముడు) people from Parlakimidi. The Lagisipalli families are the Patros. As regard these family names, family settlements and other details, these are some popular sayings and adages to throw much light on their history. What is 'reddi' or Patel in Telangana is 'naidu' a respectful suffix in northern Andhra Pradesh.

The Bagathas of the border regions of Araku and Kilagada know Telugu better than the other tribes. Also, it is to be noted that Telugu is not the mother tongue for the Konda Dora in Novva, Mallisingaram and Guntaseema in Gannela valleys. But the Konda Doras of Paderu Gudem speak Telugu only. 'The famous linguist worked on the language of Kondadoras of this region.'

The forest of 'Gudem' (గుడెం) of Visakha district extends down into the East Godavari district, from Darakonda and Gurtedu to Rampachodavaram on the east and to the Papikondalu on the west. The Katamraju hill, (big hill), Darala Dumma hill, Basadumma hill, Visa hill, Vali hill, the hills of Gandiseema, Ijjalur and Madduluru and the Papi hills – all interspersed with many valleys, thickly-wooded

and their peaks rising above 3000 feet from mean sea level – very well match the description of the bard Annamayya’s description of the Tirumala hills as ‘padi vela Seshula padagala mayamu’ (పదివేల శేషుల పడగలమయము) (a region that looks like the serpent, Sesa with its ten thousand hoods raised on high). (The serpent Sesa, it is to be noted, is the divine serpent and bed of the Hindu supreme Godhead, Vishnu). These picturesque and majestic hills rise along the coast of the Bay of Bengal-one range extending towards Gurutedu Ramavaram Nagulakonda another towards Papikondalu or Papi hills known also as bison hills. The river Godavari passes through the bison gorge only 200’ in width.

Konda Reddis can also be found in about twenty to thirty villages on the other side of the river Sileru facing Mangampadu near Donkarayi (lower Sileru). They come in the state of Orissa. The lowlands of Rampachodavaram and Addatheegala are known as Bonuseema. The inhabitants of villages from Perantapalli and Kolluru to Chittamreddipalem and Kaltanur on the banks of the river Godavari above Papikondalu are said to be ‘Kommu’ (కొమ్ము) where as those residing in Kuturu, Tekuloddi and Uppanapalli gattu (near Yedugurallapali) are known as ‘Gutta’ (గుట్ట) hill people. Haimendorf, the famous anthropologist, studied mainly about these Konda reddis of the then Nizam state.

The ‘manyam’ with the rivulets and streams and swift currents of Pamuleru, Sokuleru, Sileru, Kanneru, Eeleru, Bodipetavagu, Seethapallivagu and the like, flowing down the Dharala Dumma Konda and other hills, the whole network looking like running live electric wires. It is a sight for even the gods to gaze at and enjoy, what with the tall and majestic ‘maddi’ (మద్ది), ‘vegisa’ (వేగిస), mamidi (mango) and jamun trees in the valleys, rising up skywards, longing for sunlight.

One can also find many flowering creepers like ‘adda’ (అడ్డ), ‘moduga’ (మోదుగ) and ‘gilla’ (గిల్ల) in fabulous colours reaching out and fastening tree tops and the whole scene looks like a maiden covering her face with a veil.

Birds of different types and colours dwell in those bowers high up. One can also see there the sights of the barking deer and the peacocks gathering the left-over fruits, ripe and raw, dropped by parrots and baboons.

In a second line of trees there are trees like ‘usiri’ (ఉసిరి), ‘maredu’ (మారేడు), ‘deodar’ (దేవదారు), ‘mushini’ (ముసిని), ‘rela’ (రెల), ‘thada’ (తడ) and bamboo.

At the ground level are found wild crysanthemums, ‘papidi’ (పప్పిడి), ‘chitti jana’ (చిట్టిజాన), ‘konda vempali’ (కొండవెంపలి), coriander (కారియాండర్), the bushes of ‘sugandhi pala’ (సుగంధిపాల), ‘kanne jilugu’ (కన్నెజీలుగు ferns), ‘puttu vedurulu’ (పుట్టువెదురులు) and ‘chengali’ (చెంగలి).

There are also to be found bisons in the marshes, the ‘sambar’ deer grazing in the valleys (లోడ్డి), wild goats on hill-slopes (గండి), barking deers on hill top table lands (వేసం), the hounds here and there, peacocks on the sheet rocks (పసుకులు)

The grass covered tablelands on tops of hills (వేసం) become habitats for barking deer (కొండగొర్రె), which are locally called ‘venapu goggadi’. (వేనపుగొగ్గడి)

Lastly, there are civets climbing the trees and tigers treading cautiously along pathways, looking out for the slightest movement in the vicinity behind foliage. Bears are found almost in every place.

Not all this animal kingdom is quite visible to the naked eye. However, the alert baboons jumping from tree to tree and branch-to-branch and also the birds flying from bush to bush, signal the movement of the wild animals to every one.

Somewhere, at a distance, shouting ‘Kurdek’ (కర్డేక్) by birds named after its call, whine of the peacocks, calls of cuckoos and the ‘mainas’ (మైనా), the amorous fragrances of the blooming jungle flowers and the quickly leaping squirrels in their many colored splendour are all sights to see and get delighted. Pairs of blue jay birds give way to you, if you chance to pass by. You hear sounds of footsteps suddenly, as if from nowhere, sending shivers down the spine and you have to leave all fear to God, if you have a mind to enjoy the sights and scenes of these less known regions. You may even feel like trapping the pristine beauties of the nature around in the camera of your imagination while sunbathing in the middle of the streams. It is all paradise indeed!

This is all about the Godavari valleys.

Turning to the way of life, the customs, the food habits and other details of the Kondareddis ‘Podu’ cultivation is the main source of livelihoods. Roots and tubers: tamarind, shikakai, forest brooms ‘Karaka’ (కరక) (gallnut) ‘Kunkudu’ (కుంకుడు) (soap nut) are available in the forest, lower down.

‘sama’ rice (సామ) and the ‘ragi’ (రాగి) gruel (సామన్నం, చోడి అంబలి) are the staple food for the tribes here. They grow ‘Jowar’ (జోవార్) pulses, pumpkins and millets in the podu fields and ‘bajra’ (a kind of millet) at lower altitudes.

Shifting cultivation starts from February with the felling of trees. Huge logs belonging to the fallen trees are cut into pieces (కయ్యలుదిగడం) before they are burnt. A fortnight later, they sow seeds after celebrating the Mother Earth festival. In the months of May and June, the mango festival or the Gangamma festival is celebrated and after that, it is time for separating cinder from the useful logs. (మసికర ఏరడం) Then comes sowing, fencing, leveling the field and some other minor stages in farming. The stage called 'tuvvadam' (తువ్వడం) leveling is very difficult and it is only for those who can subject themselves to backbreaking toil. Moreover, even they may not often succeed in these gravelly low lands. However, palm wine, which is a kind of country toddy, is available to all until the Mother Earth festival. Even the hard worker closes his work by afternoon "yedageetha" (ఎడగీత) (tapping of toddy in the afternoon.)

After 'Yeda geetha', they go to hunt. At four in the evening, (పులివేళ when the tiger sets out on its hunt), is time for toddy again. After all a work minded labourer work in 'podu' field again for an hour in the late afternoon.

At every stage, there is a ceremonious celebration to appease the gods and goddesses. The existence of these godly spirits is a certainty for a tribe. He firmly believes that, if the gods are not appeased, they cannot lead happy and prosperous lives.

They sow seeds and celebrate Mother Earth festival.

At de-weeding time, they celebrate 'pacchika' (పచ్చిక) festival.

A saying goes: "offer a pig and it is good for the 'pacchika' festival"

(పందికిస్తే పచ్చికకు బలం)

At flowering time, it is 'potta saruvu' (పొట్టసరువు) festival.

'Baddi' festival (బడ్డిపండుగ) erecting "manchan" for protecting the crop from bird or beast (parrot or pig). After all these minor festivals, they celebrate 'poli' (పొలి), an offering to harvest in threshing field. Then they make a threshing floor, measure the heap of grain with an arrow.

A month after all the season's farm operations is through; there is the 'Konda rajula' festival. (కొండరాజులపండుగ)

In between, many crops like 'bontha' (బొంత), 'kanne sama', (కన్నెసామ) 'korra' (కొర్ర) and the like come through for harvest and they last hardly ten days each after they come home.

The old crop is exhausted and the new one is still on its way Season of Dasara with lack of cash, ogres and elves dance in the house. It is time when one cannot get even small baits to trap a bird.

(దసరాకు డాకు డాకు ఇబ్బందులు - పిట్టకు బొట్టకు దీము మెర్రని కాలం)

Hard times, incessant rain and shanties at a distance prevent one to move. Hunger forces one to eat anything and every thing – green leaves like spinach, bamboo shoots and bulbs, cucumber gourd, pumpkin, raw maize cobs and the like. Eating such stuff, one drinking muddy water from streams, They suffer from many kinds of diseases. Some gather mango stones, seeds of jack, seeds of tamarind, and stalks of 'jeeluga' stem and palm fruit and prepare gruel and bread with them.

They lay varieties of nets and traps (kudde కుడ్డె), meete (మీటె), adapa (అడప), ucchu (ఉచ్చు), padu (పాదు), odam (ఓదం). Lucky they are, if a bird now or a pig then is trapped and the day is for a rich feast! (కొత్తన్నం - గువ్వకూర)

‘A new field is like a grocer’s shop’ – (కొత్తచేను కోమటివాడి దుకాణం) a tribes proverb.

Every thing grows in it.

Millets like ‘Bonta’ (బొంత), ‘Sama’ (సామ), ‘Korra’ (కొర్ర), ‘Chodi’ (చోడి), pulses ‘Kandi’ (కంది) (redgram) and balckgram are all sown together in a field. Here and there, pumpkin and cucumber creepers grow on the ash heaps (బుగ్గిబుట్టలు) of the burnt logs in ‘podu’. This is for one year. The next year the fertility of the land declines and the yield too becomes scanty. The third year, it is worse. There are not many bushes to let the ‘puredu’ (పూరెడు) birds (birds like quails) to nest. (పూరేడుదాగు పచ్చిక)

There is some logic indeed in the jungle proverb – ‘A field that is old is a field for discard.’ (పిందె వట్టిన చేను చేయకు)

Be with a field for two or three years and then move off – this is the law of the survival. Move to another jungle, slash and burn it again – this is a corollary for the law!

Felling trees and beginning all over again is no easy matter. All hands must join. The owner of the farm should feed all who come to help him in the fieldwork. (బంటం) Baby sitting mothers get their share of food to their houses. (కలిమిముద్దలు)

Those others who are deputed on a work by village elders will also get their share (మూటకూడు). When the harvest comes home, even this must be shared with all who helped. (పొల్లాపులు)

This cooperative spirit and this affection are parts of tribal culture. They form the basis for a larger cooperation when they build houses or go for hunting or when they hold the village council or even for alliances among them.

A house dilapidates once in two or three years, just like the field that becomes old and less productive. As the tribes select a new 'podu' for cultivation, so they select a spot nearby for constructing a farm house. As the houses are built near 'podus', we find a house here and a house there scattered all over the jungle. However, when the tribes meet on festival days, once in a way, such occasions become centres of fun and frolic, dance and song – full of wild rejoicing, the revelry of all kinds. Unbounded joy and happiness is shared by all in plenty!

As the whole fields of the village become old and sterile, the families nearby desert the whole village. Sometimes, the people of a village are stricken with some pestilence or a contagious disease and this may be a reason for them to migrate. Whole villages become desolate. If a village is declared 'padu', it is definitely deserted 'padu' (పాడు). Even if a few persons stay in a village, such a village is not declared 'padu'. Such deserted fertile fields merged in the 'reserve' forest.

Oftentimes, the tribes believe that lands need the sacrifice of hens of a 'Kavadi' (shoulder bamboo with hens on two ends) or even a basket full of cocks and hens ('Kimma') are not sufficient. So, they leave fields and along with the

fields, whole villages. Among such migrants were the then Teendrati Kota Reddis of today's Chaparayee and the Seram Kota Reddis of the present Boddagandi.

When farm operations are in progress, the tribes build farm-huts nearby and live there. Soon after, they return to their own houses in the village. Joint family is a must for the agriculture of tribes. As such, they build rectangular houses with space enough to accommodate joint families. The houses have plastered wattles, 'kore' (కొరె) rafters, raised platforms ('Pakka peenelu' పక్కపీనెలు) for pials (వసారా) and the roof woven with grass.

Trenches are dug all around the house to prevent rainwater entering in. (వలుచందిరిపట్టడం) They build a variety of need-based huts, named farm-hut, (chenu paka) (చేనుపాక), 'cheta paka (చేటపాక)', 'kokki paka (కొక్కిపాక)', 'gone paka (గోనెపాక)' and so on. (Paka means hut).

"Till the land, build a hut, enjoy the girl and rear the child" – a tribes saying.  
(చేను చెయ్యవాలె, చేటపాక వెయ్యవాలె - బొక్కుదెంగవాలె, బొట్టెకత్తవాలె)

In the front yard, there is a bower of beans and next to it, a pen for poultry.

Adjacent to the house, there is a backyard for 'chema' plants (చేమదొడ్డి) (people eat their roots), next to it, a country tobacco garden, (పొగతోట)

Tamarind groves (చింతమాను చివటలు) in the middle of the village.

Bamboo mats infested with bugs, houses are full of soot and they smell country tobacco. Ignore all these, and you have much entertainment and more enlightenment in their country talk, which is pure, pristine and innocent.

The Reddis are excellent basket makers. They make bamboo screens, mats and baskets for the market. Bamboo, bottle gourds (డిప్ప) constitute a very important part of their culture. They use bamboo tubes as bottles to draw toddy from 'jeelugu' (జీలుగు) or Palm trees. They make large bottles out of the dry shells of gourd to collect toddy from trees. They also make a variety of dry shell containers to serve food or drink (శోకి) and some other big bamboo pipes and leaf-cups to pack meat. (వెదురుపొట్లం) This is all about their crockery!

There are no potters in these jungle regions. They do not have the particular argillite clay either, necessary to make pots. Maredumili, a tribal village, gets its pottery from the plains – from Krishnuniapalem near Gokavaram. Blacksmiths buy their iron requirements at the weekly fairs.

'Saviti' (సవితీ) and 'Palakam' (పలకం) (the months of November and December) are the months when almost all the crops are due for harvest. (సవితీ పలకానికి జల్లున పంట)

It is the time when there is no dearth of food (చలికూటికి బాల యేడ్వని కాలం) (never hear even a child going hungry).

Flour festival (పిండిపండుగ) follows, when ragi flour is made into gruel. Then the festival of pulses (పప్పుల పండుగ) commences. These festivals are on in the entire area. Before the festivals, restrictions are imposed on visits by kith and kin so that

the villagers who have yet to celebrate are barred from eating at the villages where the celebrations are on.

After the celebration of the Sankranti festival, the tribes relax all restrictions on eating the new crop. It is called 'Desa vidi' (దేశవిడి). 'Desa' means 'country' and 'vidi' means 'freed'. (దేశమంతా పండుగ విడిపోయింది) It means that the country is freed from all restrictions to eat the new yield. At the time of 'Desavidi', the village elders declare 'the blessed harvest festival is past.

You can go or stay; now there is no bar in eating your crop'. (ఉత్తమ సంకురాత్రి పండుగ ఊళ్లమీద పోయిందయ్యా, ఇక ఉండేవారికైనా పోయే వారికైనా, ఇంక ఈరోజుతో అడ్డంకులు సరి) With this ritualistic declaration, the restrictions on eating fresh crop across the land stand withdrawn.

With the new crops on hand, plenty of toddy all around, joy becomes all pervasive and contagious. The tribes rejoicing during the 'tanam' (తానం) (village) and 'konda raju' (కొండరాజు) festivals is unbounded. They sing and dance to the beating of drum well past midnight. These month long festivities continue with fun, frolic and songs without any rule or rhyme. These rejoicings in the villages between 'tanam' and 'Gangamma' festivals look like the hell let loose and the tribes indulge in lawless revelry and hilarity. It is time for novel amusements at fairs as the tribes are flush with cash. It is also time for courting and wooing .It is also the marriage season up to the time of fresh rains.

The oracular declaration of the elders giving people license to eat does not apply to the unripe beans (చిక్కుడుకాయ). It is a known fact that a fruit gives us strength only when it becomes ripe. This control saves the yield for the rainy day.

The period of February is named after Indian coral tree Badita (బాడిత). A great variety of birds are regular visitors of coral tree when in flower in February.

Dressed in soft and tender leaves for Sivaratri, the ‘rella’ (రెల్ల) (Cassia fistula – Indian laburnum) trees are in full bloom by the ‘Gangamma’ festival (గంగాలమ్మ పండుగ). With the loosely hanging bunches of golden-hued rella flowers, the forest looks as though a Tribal beauty has adorned her hair with golden yellow flowers.

The twittering of the birds approaching the ‘boorugu’ flowers (Silk cotton) for nectar remind in the mid summer (మధ్యపితం) us of the scenic beauty, grandeur and the surge of the sea with its waves.

Until the tribes adorn their mother goddess, ‘Gangamma’, at the Gangamma festival, they are forbidden to pluck a flower. This may be due to their sense of beauty, which prompts them to allow Mother Nature to remain in splendour at least for a while. The express similar feelings for not milking cattle. After all, the milk is meant for the calf.

Putting the names of all the features in the surroundings together one can give an appropriate description of the whole forest.

The cliff of Katamraju hill looks like a row of tribal dances. So it is called gummaladoddi (gummala – maidens, doddi – row గుమ్మలదొడ్డి)

A corner eroded by rain fall/hill stream is called 'Karingina Gondi' (కరింగినగొంది). The rapids flowing through Maddi trees are known as 'maddimanu dookudu' (మద్దిమాను దూకుడు). The place where the sambar deer comes to lick the salt 'Kanju naakina raayi' (కణుజు నాకిన రాయి a stone licked by the sambar deer). They have a picturesque description of the moist spot where a stream winds in the thick forest regions. There butterflies perch among crickets and beautiful grasshoppers. This moist spot is 'tummedala bokka'. (తుమ్మెదలబొక్క)

The horns of high peaks are called 'Korukonda kommulu' (కోరుకొండ కొమ్ములు) and the twists and turns of a hill stream are called 'Korukonda vampulu'. (కోరుకొండవంపులు) 'Kommulu' means horns of the hill and 'vampulu' means twists and turns of the stream. Korukonda, the hill of Narasimha swamy is conical in shape.

A place in the slope of a hill is called 'Gandi' 'Tiyya mamidi gandi' (తియ్యమామిడిగండి) (which literally means a place in the slope where mangoes that bear sweet fruit grow) is a slope beside a cliff with honey combs. (తేనెగండిమోరు)

A drum like stone (ఔజం) is called 'Oujam kallu' (ఔజంకల్లు) ('kallu' means stone). Tableland (వేనం) at a higher altitude is called 'pikili pitta venam'. (పికిలిపిట్టవేనం table land of bulbuls) Date palm bushes and grassy lands cover such a table land on the hill tops.

Hill ranges that gradually slope down, level up (వాయువ ) and rise are known as 'thota mamidi vayava' (తోటమామిడివాయవ) (cleavage). A low point in a hill range

from where a hunted animal escapes is called ‘vusirika javuka’ (ఉసిరికజవుక) escape point at gooseberry tree. The moist valley where bananas grow is called ‘Antla loddi’ (అంట్లొద్ది). A stone that looks like an arch is called ‘thuru rayi kattuva’ (తూరురాయి కట్టువ). One should bend low to pass through it. A level ground (లంక) around a big mango tree is called ‘Baddi mamidi lanka’ (బద్దిమామిడిలంక).

A colony (వలస) near a mango tree, which bears fruit containing a lot of flesh in it, is called ‘gujju mamidi valasa’ (గుజ్జుమామిడివలస). The sheet rocks (పనుకులు) where peacocks dance is called ‘nemilata panuku’ (నెమలాట పనుకు). A bush around mango tree is called ‘Karamati chidaga. (కారుమామిడి చిడగ)’

The tree against whose bark the tiger gleans its claws is called ‘puli barukudu manu vampu’ (పులిబరుకుడు మానువంపు).

A high peak of papi hills is called ‘papi konda marrem’ (పాపికొండ మర్రెం).

The hunting tribes need a strict mental mapping of the jungle scene. As such, every detail is with a graphic nomenclature. A quarter of this nomenclature is woven round the mango tree or any other fruit-bearing tree in the jungle.

The mango tree is a loner. It leads a solitary life. It requires a certain area exclusively for its healthy growth. The quality of the mango fruit differs from tree to tree. The different types of mango fruits are called ‘gura mamidi’ (గురమామిడి), ‘aku mamidi’ (ఆకుమామిడి) ‘ambali mamidi’ (అంబలిమామిడి) ‘kisumula mamidi’ (కిసుములమామిడి) and the ‘natthala mamidi’ (నత్తలమామిడి) ‘Gura’ means bison. Bisons are fond of mango fruits. The juice of the ‘ambali mamidi’ is like gruel. The fruit

of the 'natthala mamidi' falls down upon the earth in rain and this water-soaked fruit smells like toddy and snails crawl in this damp floor and hence the name 'natthala mamidi'. 'Natta' is snail.

'Mamidi kottha' (మామిడికొత్త) is a festival celebrated before tasting the season's first mango. This festival is celebrated with utmost devotion, because the mango forms the staple food of the tribes. A kind of delicious jelly (జన్నెలు) is prepared out of its juice. The nuts in the stones pounded, soaked in flowing stream and baked (రోట్లె) fried. (సురువులు) The soup of mushrooms of a mango tree taste sweet and sour. Hence the tribes enjoy the fruit, the stone and mushrooms of the mango as cherished food. There is also the stone festival, after which the mango-stone is eaten. There is also 'janne kottha' (జన్నెకొత్త) for eating the mango-jelly. Before the festival, if they want to eat it, they ought to eat it with its skin. (నాకలి)

Before celebrating mango festival, the tribes don't drink toddy under a mango tree in full bloom, lest its flowers should fall in the drink.

There are many mango-related phrases in the tribal languages:

The February rains are called 'mamidi kommalu tadipe varsham' (మామిడికొమ్మలు తడిపే వర్షం) which means 'the rains that drench mango branches.

'Yerra gaya rondi' (ఎర్రగాయరొణ్ణి) is the name given by the tribes to 'Rohini karti' (రోహిణికార్తి), the time of the season when extreme summer heat reddens the mango. This season is also known as Kanuju (Sambhar) molaka (ears) rondi (summer) summer as dry as the ears of sambhar.

Two months in the summer season are named after mango fruits, 'Dulavidi' (దూలవిడి) and 'Peddavididi' (పెద్దవిడి). During 'Dula vidi' mangoes drop in large numbers. 'Pedda vidi' comes in the month of July. It is the month when the mango crop is finished.

'Busi' (బూసి) tree is with fruits of sweet and sour. Busikonda, Busigudem, Busigondi, Busikaluva thus flow the place names. 'Polamanu Gondi', 'Polova' remind sweet 'pola' fruit.

Hunting is important in the life of the tribe.

Burning the forest in the summer for better visibility of the games is a part of hunting. This enables to hunt without trampling on dry leaves. The group hunting is appropriate in this region, is called 'sopu veta' (సోపువేట). In it, the group closes in, pursuing the game from all sides. Some variations of the 'Sopu veta' are cornering the game with fire, or into watercourse.

There are many innovations in bowmanship. On the iron tip of the arrow, a furrow is curved at its lower edge (ఈనెలు పొడవడం) It looks like the curve on the hood of a cobra. As soon as the arrow is struck, the hook gets stuck and the arrow cannot be pulled out easily. Ripping blood-betray the beast even when it hides in the bush. On the park lands of the Nallamala forest, these kinds of tips are not necessary, because there is hardly any undergrowth there. Further the huntsmen in Nallamala are assisted by dogs. The tribes have the intelligence to invent the tools that match the environs.

Jack and mango stones and tamarind seeds are stored. People and bears play hide and seek for the fruit of 'konda mamidi' (wild mango) at dawn. They are also interested in gathering palmyra fruit as well. People run as soon as they hear the thud of a falling palm fruit on the ground. They bury its stone and as soon as it sprouts up, they eat its mushrooms. (తేగలు) They do not eat the tender palmyra jelly like we do. We call them 'munjelu' (ముంజెలు) and eat them with relish. They do not do it because these become ripe fruit at a later stage mushrooms of palm (తేగలు) are very popular. The stones of these fruits sprout up and the palmyra plants grow and they become trees soon.

The trees like tamarind, jack and gallnut in the center of the village are common property. (సూరింటి) All evenly shares the produce. Or else the sale proceeds are spent on common festivals. The birds of the poultry are needed at festivals<sup>4</sup>.

Some raise goats, if they are interested. Cattle are necessary only for those who do wet cultivation with the plough. Coming under the influence of the Saivite wanderers, the jangams, some Reddis do not rear pigs. But they like pork. Their reluctance to rear pigs is also due to the fact that pigs spoil the surrounding crops.

For generations, the settlers from plains have been growing chilli and tobacco in the rich alluvial soil of the banks of the river Godavari. The Konda reddis who work as labourers in the timber trade carried on by boats and launches and goods train like floating rafts (వెదురుకట్టు) and those who worked as farm hands know the way of the world. They would always be observing the matters and movements of the world outside.

Rekhapalli on the bank of Sabari River was the capital of Musunuri chiefs. Later these areas were under Nizam territory. There is no mutthadar rule as in British India. As a result of the entire history above, there was no ruling hierarchy left in these regions. The priest is the head of the rituals and the chief of the village is patel పటేల్, (పిన్నపెద్ద) finnapeddal is his assistant.

Koyas are spread in lower reaches of the hills. Reddis chisel canoes out of the trunks of mango and 'booruga' (silk yielding variety) trees, which are being used by them for fishing in the river. They use similar canoes for their transport from one village to the other. A variety of outer influences made the Reddis of the two adjoining districts of Khammam and Godavari differ in some of their customs and traditions. From these differences we get some seminal clues in the adopstation of these tribal societies to plain environs.

The Valmikis, who form the bottom end of the caste structure in the Visakha-East Godavari manyams, are also the last in the list of the immigrants. Traditionally they are village servants and as such every village should have at least one village servant. This fact necessitated every village to have at least one Valmiki household. While in the past a visit to the shanty is an annual feature, it is now no longer so, and now the tribes visit the shanties of and on, Valmikis who controll the trade and transport, have the horses and packed bullocks in their charge, and also possess skill in trading and literacy. With their quick grasp, obedience and sense of cleanliness, they could easily win the confidence of the higher ups. Entering farming via trade, they bought all the farms and plantations near around. They are the only tribe in the manyam which do not do shift cultivation. Only they were literate among the tribes and they could interpret the almanac. They popularized the epics 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharatha'. Their role

as bridges in integrating the manyam with the outside world is quite significant. They are shrewd and business-minded. They had little or no role in the Rampa and Ramaraju revolts. However they took part in the freedom movement. They are smart and imaginative enough to grab an opportunity.

There are many proverbs in usage referring to the Valmikis among the tribes, which contain a sort of derisive comparisons. A few of them are listed here:

A mala's talk elongates as much as the whiskers of a prawn.

(మాలకు మాటలు పొడుగు - రొయ్యకు మీసాలు పొడుగు)

A mala's talk is as light as a bundle immersed in water.

(మాలవాడి మాటలు - నీళ్ళమీద మూటలు)

As the banana leaf is soft in the whole forest, the mala is mild and so lenient to the whole village. (అడవికి అరిటాకు మెత్తగ - ఊరికి మాలవాడు మెత్తగ)

The 'mala's words are as false as the clouds in Sankranti.

(మాలవాడి బొంకులు - సంకురాత్రి మబ్బులు)

When tempers rise, the mala is the best arbiter.

(మాట పెరిగితే మాలవీధికి పోవాలె) (మాలవాడి మాట - మంచి మిరియం గిడ్డ - the word of

Mala is like black pepper)

A person may be cool or hot, the Mala can switch him on to his choice of mood, by his clever talk.

As the Valmikis are shrewd, worldly and more successful than the rest of the tribes, no wonder such derisive proverbs have come into being against them. It is true, however, that an ordinary tribe acts realistically in a forest while the Mala is

market driven and acts with self interest. Each one is right and the outlook differs, that is all.

Among the Reddis, late Pallala Lingareddi of Gujju mamidivalasa among the Valmikis, Gorle Nagayya Dasu and, Rama Krishna Dasu of Gurtedu switched to the 'achala' religion of Siva Raja Yogi of Lakkonda and Rama Sarana Baba. It is, however, among the Valmikis alone this order has been spread. Rama Saran Baba claimed that he was a descendent of the sage Valmiki<sup>5</sup>.

To erase the stigma of untouchability, the Valmikis do persevere their superiority spiritually through their practice of Haribhajans, building Ram temples and performing Trinadh rituals. They add their economic superiority as well, to get out of the stigma.

A majority of the Valmiki community in Rampachodavaram and Yellavaram areas (except Gurutedu, Daragadda, Vetukuru and Ramavaram) were converted to Christian faith ever since. It is a pity that other tribes are hardly able to avail themselves of the opportunities, benefits and facilities given by the state for their uplift on par with Valmikis.

With such conspicuous disparities in merit, talent and exposure, the tribes live and the government polices treat all of them on the same plane. As such, the more aggressive among the tribes are mopping up all reservations to the detriment of the advantages of others.



Nallamala forest spread over to Guntur, Kurnool, Prakasam and Nalgonda, Mahaboobnagar districts of the Andhra and the Telangana regions of Andhra Pradesh constitutes slate and other clays. As the Krishna ranges bear sand stone rock upto a depth of 150-200 ft, cliffs and deep gorges formed when swift river currents (canyons) cut through. Though the Nallamala range rises as high as 2000 ft, above sea level, bring in a rain shadow region the average annual rainfall in the Rayalaseema and Telangana parts covered by the hills and forest is hardly 40-50 cm<sup>6</sup>.

The forest here is a scrub and moderate jungle, growing on sedimentary soils. The area cannot retain rainwater even a few inches deep; neither can the roots penetrate deep enough to permit the luxurious growth of a tall tree.

Billudu, (బిల్లుడు) eepe (ఈపె), anduga (అందుగ) and chirumanu grow there some four to five meters height.

There is a rich growth of 'ippa' (ఇప్ప) or mahwa trees in Farabad-Amrabad region of Mahaboobnagar district. Chitimuti (చిటిముటి), Jana (జాన), Deodar (దేవదారు), Parimi (పరిమి), Tuniki (తునికి), and Velaga all of small size are the succulent fruits available here.

The top soil can hardly absorb water and as such, the canyons become very swift. The sheer force of these currents cuts through the rocks and becomes 'pathala ganga' (పాతాళగంగ) at some places. Not just the river Krishna Veni, but every other stream in the vicinity tends to become 'pathala ganga' (పాతాళగంగ) because of the swift flow of the waters cutting the rock to lower depths. Walking across this scrub jungle is no easy task; because the rugged stone there, the slippery

pathways, the gorges in ravines the fast-flowing currents do not allow the journey to run smooth.

Pilgrims to Srisailam, once, used to pray, yelling, ‘Mallayya, pull us up, Mallayya’, (చేదుకోపల్లయ్య) finding it impossible for them to walk down the lowest depths of the canyons like ‘Bhimuni kolanu’, ascending to the hill-top. Mallayya is no other than the presiding deity of Srisailam, Lord Siva.

While stepping down the hilly slopes  
To reach the stream below so steep,  
How our hearts throb and gasp for breath  
Is known to us, the tribes here-  
Along the rock-folds honeycombs hang,  
And deep down the pervious hills,  
The river of Hades gently runs  
With canyons and cliffs awful on either side,  
And pasture lands in the plains’ round.

In going down the deep gorges, past the swift currents and again up to the plateau high up the mountain on the other side, man’s ingenuity, skill and the adventurous spirit in him are of no avail. So perilous is their journey that the dread of slipping and falling thousands of feet down followed by loud prayers used to push them on safely. This long and deep canyon Bheemuni Kolanu (భీమునికొలను) can be seen on the way from Peddacheruvu to Srisailam on the ancient pathway of the pedestrians. It could be a hitchhiker’s paradise and a major tourist attraction today. The pilgrims of Veerabhadra of Palanka (enroute Yerragondapalem to Palanka) are witnesses to the awe-inspiring ‘Guttala chenu’ (గుట్టలచేను), a field with

innumerable hillocks and ‘the kuravas’, the slippery pathways into the deep gorge. These could stop one’s heartbeat at least once. (గుట్టల చేనుకురవ - గుండెల్లోగస)

Honey combs in the folds of the steep cliffs, the streams winding their way into the canyons, thick scrub jungle on either side of the descending walks leading to the running streams, grasslands on the mountain-table and the running deer, the sambhar, spotted deer and many hounds, tigers, bears, foxes, wolves that hunt the barking deer, wild cats, mongooses, iguanas, squirrels and hares are all sights to see and enjoy. The peacocks, wild fowls, puredu (quails) and other kinds of birds all these and many more wild animals and some birds from the feather world are feast to the eye.

The habitations of the Chenchus of Nallamala are called ‘pentas (పెంట)’. They build their ‘pentas’ near ponds or streams though not very far a little away from them, out of arm’s way in any case, to protect themselves and their cattle from the wild animals that frequent these water bodies.

Water and food being scarce in these near arid places, the Chenchus live in small ‘pentas’, not more than ten families in each.

Dog is a part of the chenchu household. The Chenchus believe that they are the descendents of a golden dog. (కాలభైరవ) These fleet-footed dogs help them in hunting ‘iguana (ఉడుము)’ and other small game. Iguana skin is wound round the bow and a squirrel tail is fashioned to the butt of the shaft. A normal hunting party constitutes just a couple. Squirrels, hares and iguanas constitute the normal game. As the chenchus usually hunt with the hounds, they are not usually skilled archers. However, they keep their arrows ready. They either buy the metal tip for the arrow

or they buy iron and prepare the tip themselves. This metal tip caps the wooden shaft-head are formidable.

Though hunting does not call for much teamwork, the Chenchus climb down steep wall-like cliffs, and draw honey from the honeycombs. They cut 'eepe' tree, take out its fibre, and tie it round a fresh bamboo pole the different strands twisted together by winding in the act of twining, making the whole thing in to a thick rope. This, then, is lowered down along the side of the cliff-face. There is a clear division of labour, when they do the whole job together. About ten men are involved in the work, while the heavy pole is sent down the cliff. One collects twigs; another makes a fire, which lets out smoke to drive the bees away, yet another removes leaves. Another person readies the fibre, another gets the right bamboo, while one descends top the honeycomb, holding the bamboo with the rope. Another man holds the bamboo at the top of the cliff.

The man going down along the cliff (ಸೃ) gets no more share of the honey collected, although his is the riskiest and most dangerous of jobs. The Chenchus believe that all roles are equally vital and complementary to one another, whether hunting or the dangerous honey collecting. The job over, the bamboos and ropes are left where they are and they leave the place. A honey basket, a small knife and an axe are all that they carry back to their home. The basket, wax-lined, has a lid, too. They collect honey in it. However, the tribes in the agency of the Eastern Ghats collect honey in bottle-gourd containers.

As regards the diet of these Chenchus, some seasonal fruits apart, various kinds of roots and tubers constitute their diet. The chenchu gadda, nula gadda, elavaragadda, wild betelgadda, chemagadda, korinthagadda, thunga and

dondagaddas are the roots and tubers they eat. They replace the soil, after they dig out the tubers and roots.

The herbs in this region can be easily located, as the forest is moderate. Nallamala, therefore, is renowned for medicinal herbs and the siddhas (spiritual healers) are ever on the look out for these. These forests are also home for sandalwood, red sanders and such other rare species of trees. They abound in many forest products like Gum, 'Sarapappu', 'Eppa puvvu', 'Tamarind', Gallnut, slate, 'Poliki' wood (Kumara poliki or erra poliki), timber for agricultural tools, fodder for cattle, honey, bees' wax, deer horn, deer skin and 'iguana' hides. Chenchus trade them to buy their necessities.

In Telangana, the Chenchus make liquor out of the edible 'ippa' fruit. In the Andhra region, where 'ippa' does not grow, Chenchus brew country liquor with jaggery, adding babul bark for fermentation. Chenchus, by the by, are heavy addicts to liquor. When prohibition was in force, the tribes were exempted. The people of the plains used to frequent the woods for a drink. As they were brewing the liquors, the Chenchus were used to drink liquor, becoming addicts to it. They brew country liquor with honey and fruit, too.

As the Chenchus are just food-gatherers rather than producers, they can not reside at a single place for a long time. Nature, as well as culture, did not allow them live in joint families. Their house is a small round hut to accommodate a single couple. They should be constantly on the move. As such, the house they construct is only a round hut with straw roof. It is enough for a nuclear family. When a son's marriage is planned, a second hut is built. Normally, the younger son inherits the father's house.

Many vanquished kings and chieftains of yore took refuge in these forests in the heart of the Telugu land. Everywhere there are relics of the erstwhile glory in these parts a fort here and a fortress there, a temple here and an inscription there. At Alatham Pacchibayala fort, Manthanala fort, there are seen even today neatly laid out tracks to the cavalry, dilapidated and desolate and fields under a thick growth of bush and weed which speak volumes about past glory. Peddacheruvu boasts of the remnants of a large tank built by Krishna Deva Raya as also many other irrigation tanks and farm wells and fields in disuse and degradation, the impact of political upheavals through ages was less on the Chenchus than the influence of the Lambadas on them, exercised through 150-200 years of co-existence. As a result, the Chenchus took to farming. They took to dairying too. The 'Yanadis', we see today, are none but Chenchus. Pre-historic and linguistic studies have to identify their commonalities. Ban on cow-slaughter brought the Lambadas and Chenchus together. However, Lambadas are traders and dairymen, besides being farmers, where as the Chenchus lag way behind them. Only the few villages with cultivable land like Nagulati, Bairutli, Rolla Penta, Pedda Cheruvu, Palutla, and Guttla Chenu have some density of Chenchu population. The cliffs having honeycombs are closer to these villages. Although living on the banks of the river Krishna, fishing did not suit the Chenchus. They cross the river by crude wooden rafts.

The agricultural practices of the Chenchus are no different than those of the plains. They store their grain in a kind of country granaries (gade), as in the plains. They build bi-winged shelters for cattle. There were no major changes till recently in building their huts, as farming was carried out in a very small scale. The bulk of the lands in these areas are owned by the Lambadas, as they happened to be a more enterprising lot.

The local place names reflect the special features of the particular places, while bearing some more special significance in the drought-prone and water-scarce Nallamala.

A stagnant pool in a water depression is called 'gundam' (గుండం). A pond at a point where the hill shrinks is termed 'jouka' (జౌక). A small water-pit or a spring bears the names 'madugu' (మడుగు) 'chelama' (చెలమ) or 'kunta' (కుంట). The fast-flowing current in gorges is 'cela'. (సెల) పడియ - Puddle

The sprouting leaves and blooming flowers help the honey-drawing Chenchus to identify the seasons. When the bramble with fine pink bulbous flowers called 'korinda' blooms, at Deepavali, the bite of the bee is less intense, and when the sal tree or 'eepe' blooms, the honey combs go empty. (ఎపెలు పూసేటప్పుడు ఉట్టితట్టలే) It is then the month of Shravana, when they get only wax and no honey. When the 'erra balusu' flower splits, the honey is at its sweetest best. The sting of the bee pains more at that time, as if to say that whoever covets the honey at that time will be severely punished. (ఎర్రబలుసుపూత పగిలినప్పుడు తేనెరుచి ఎక్కువ, కాటు ఎక్కువ) The star that appears at dusk at the time of the first rains is called the rabbit-star, (కుందేటిచుక్క) because many rabbits during that season will be trapped before dawn.

If we contrast the tools of the Reddis and the Chenchus over a period of time, it is the latter that prove themselves superior, although the 'gacchali' (గచ్చలి), the tool for digging tubers is the same for both. Soft soils enable Reddis to take to farming. They could store jack seed and mango stone for the rainy day. While the Reddis group together in hunting a game, the Chenchus do the same in drawing honey.

The Reddis, however, do not venture into the highly hazardous job of extracting honey at such heights<sup>7</sup>. It is also to be noted that there are fewer cliffs (తరుము) in the lands where Reddis live. They do not use fibre-ropes to draw honey like Chenchus do. Kondareddis are basket makers and know about bees-wax, the large gourd-bottles available with them. Such availability eliminated the need to innovate wax-lined baskets (తేనెబుట్ట) to carry honey.

‘Shrub forests where ants are not interested to enter in’. (చీమలు దూరని చిట్టడవులు)  
Ants prefer forests that abound in trees bearing fruits with sweet juice. They are the jack tree, wild black plum, and mango, orange and sweet lime. Ants innumerable can be found marching in long lines in the eastern forests, where fruits are here, there and everywhere.

‘Iron links between hill and hill’ (ఈకొండకు ఆకొండకు ఇనుపలంకెలు) -this riddle best describes the long ant lines there.

Sabari-Sileru forest is thick,

‘Where village crows can not enter’ (కాకులు దూరని కారడవులు)

Jungle crows (జముడు కాకి) can only enter

These forests are known as ‘giddu jungles (గిడ్డుటడవులు)’, containing arboreal hunting birds like ‘ornam giddu’, ‘koppu giddu’, ‘anno giddu’ etc. ‘No wonder, but even eagles can not enter them’.

There are also some forests, in whose tableland, eagles alone dare enter, and the arboreal birds cannot reach. (గిడ్డులు దూరని గద్దవేనాలు) They are: ‘giddulu cherani gadda venalu’.

The eagles cannot descend in to thick tree-covered valleys.

(గద్దలు చేరని గిద్దుటడవులు)

Tigers always walk along a beaten track.

Therefore the tiger is 'the strongest, walking along path ways'. (దారికి దడ్డడు)

There are some interesting sayings among the tribes, relating to the beasts and birds of the jungle:

'The jungle-dancer the peacock' (అడవికి ఆటగాడు)

'The danger for the fields the rabbit' (చేనుకు చేటగాడు),

Wild goat (మెట్టకుమేలగాడు)

'Yelling across the plateaus and hill-tops the barking deer'

(వేనపుగొగ్గడి - కొండకుకోలగాడు)

'The bears fear treading' into red thorny bushes. (ఎలుగులు దూరని ఎర్రచిడగలు)

The eastern forests and valleys permit horses and the bullocks that carry loads.

In the Nallamalas, there are many near-vertical pathways, where mules alone can move about. They are the only means of transport over there. Forest growth being sparse in this region, visibility is clear. As a result, vultures and eagles hover in the sky to catch the sight of carcasses on the ground.

Chenchus eat cooked 'adda'. Adda is a forest climber, whose leaves are used as leaf-plates. They also cook tamarind seeds and eat them. This is next best to

starvation. Food is not particularly abundant in these parts. They also mix 'Jana' ashes in tamarind for a kind of food. Jana is a kind of fruit tree. (చింతమద్దులు)

Unable to get leafy vegetables like spinach, they cook deodar leaves for food in these arid and famine-prone regions. In the eastern forest, they fry 'adda' nut and eat its nut. They also fry the tamarind seeds; soak it after separating the husk, to make a sort of gruel for food. In the jungles here, different kinds of strange leafy vegetables are available.

The tribes of the East remove the seeds from the tamarind, store it and sell it when the price is high. But the Chenchus sell the tamarind without caring to remove the seeds. Poverty clubbed with their hurry for a drink force them to sell the tamarind raw, with out deseeding. Though the Chenchus picked up dairying farming, they could not become cowherds like the 'Lambadas'. Haimendorf suggested that the Nallamala forests should be reserved for cattle-feed and the Chenchus should be trained to become cowherds.

Although the Chenchus know dairying, fortune did not favour them to become farmers. Kondareddis took to farming, though they do not use a plough. The Kondadoras and Bagathas of Visakha are farmers sans dairying. Valmiki are farmers in trade.

Lambadas and Chenchus are the only two tribes inhabiting Nallamala. There are six or seven tribes like Konda reddy, Koyas, Valmiki, Konda kapu, Kammaras, and the like in the Godavari and Khammam districts. In Visakha, we come across many tribes like Bagatha, Gadaba, Ghasi, Goud, Jodiya, Khond, Kotadi, Konda Dora, Konda kapu, Koya, Kotia, Malakar, Mali, Mannedora, Mukadora, Moolia, Oozu, Pengu, Porja, Reddi Dora, Rona, Samantha and

Valmiki. The Baghatas, Konda Doras, Konda kapus, Konda Reddis, Valmikis and Oozus' mother tongue is Telugu. Having no forest to fall back, the Chenchus end up as labourers. They are gradually migrating in to the areas lower down. The eastern tribes either withdraw into the interior regions or become timber-labour, but they never would leave the forest. The Chenchu food is popular in the Rayalaseema. As forest dwellers, the Chenchus relish some strange kinds of food.

Ragi porridge and rabbit curry. (రాగిసంకటి - కుందేటి కూర)

-a delightful combination

Honey of Kanne comb and meat of land-turtle (కన్నెగుల్ల తేనె - మెట్టతాబేలు మాంసం)

-a delicious dish indeed!

No woman can resist a man, if these are gifted, the Chenchus say.

Konda reddis like to eat the bread of the mango stone with honey and also palm wine with meat, adding some suitable side dishes. As there is less 'game' and more cultivation in the Visakha manyam, the tastes and traditions are more agricultural in this region.

The only tools before the arrival of Konda Kammaras (black smiths) were a mere digging stick (gacchali) to dig tubers, bow and arrow, a mortar and the pestle.

The need for a grinding stone arises only when the yield from the field is substantial. Kondareddis have the skill to carve their own grinding stones. They grow millets such as ragi, jowar, pulses, besides 'bontha' (బొంత) and 'kannesamalu' (కన్నెసామలు). In the case of the millets like ragi, 'bontha' and 'kannesamalu' or other similar millet crops, the seed is sown by the method of

broad casting. It is unlike the case of jowar, maize, and pulses, where the seeds are sown in separate pits dug with digging stick.

The knives and axes manufactured by the Visakha smiths look different from those made in the plains. The axe is inserted into the bamboo handle. A sharp axe that shines brightly is wrapped round a wooden handle (పెంగినొడ్డలి) by the Visakha tribes and it is ornamental.

Iron tools add to efficiency. Iron tips are fitted at the top of the arrow and to the digging stick called 'gacchali' (గచ్చలి) 'voluva' (ఓలువ). For harvesting jowar and redgram crops, 'selapu' (సెలపు) knife and 'volava' knife are in use. These tools, which are very efficient in use, brought in by the outsiders, made cultivators out of konda reddis and they enhanced greatly the stability of them as a farming community. They began visiting fairs and shanties to buy pots to cook these new foods. It has now become possible, thanks to the Telugus who introduced the 'burra' plough to dig up the wet soils soaked in 'crab' waters. (ఎండ్రెకనీళ్ళు) The crab water lets the bulk of lime settled on the surface filter down into the lower layers of the soil. The efficient 'burra' plough simply brings up the lower fertile soil, helping the yield to increase. Along with the plough, it is believed; the seed sown must also have come from the plain.

Man's life style, intertwined with nature over a period of time, tried to dominate nature and in the process got itself alienated from nature. Did this alienation start at the start of the human race! Be that as it may, recent events have only added to the pace of this alienation!

Historical evidences testify to the fact that the agency area was under the rule of the chieftains from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. As per the Sringavarapukota inscriptions, Ananta Sakti Verma, a son of Vasisti and descendent of the Sakti and Mathara dynasties had declared himself as the king of Kalinga. Thus even as per historical evidences, the tribes of these regions were under the rule of kings, in the early ages. The tribes were uniformly hospitable to the powerful kings who came to live with them. They even allowed the commoners to live with them, if they wished to settle down amongst them. They never objected such settlements and welcomed such company as they felt that such hospitality would open for them a window into the civilized community.

These tribes did not object even when people from outside descended. They occupied all lowlands levying tax on timber. Neither did they protest even when the Muthadars levied a house tax (గడపపన్ను) of Rs 2 for each house. They kept on paying away the taxes, hoping that the stature of the Muthadars would help resolve their minor disputes, when they were entering the uncharted areas.

Their sense of understanding in cooperating with the Muthadars in every possible way including building the latter's houses reflects a high degree of discipline of the tribes implicit obedience to the village elders. When the village elders preside over in arbitration in a dispute and levy a penalty over an accused, the accused willingly pays a part of it to the elders as fees, accepting the fact that they have attended to his work inconveniencing them. Whenever the elders sit in arbitration, the whole village turns up and the accused feeds them all. Depending upon the nature of the offence or the capacity of the accused, he may be let off with a nominal fine and then he would just distribute tobacco leaves (పొగరీకులు) among all of them.

Such a high degree of culture, gentleness, civic sense and politeness were misconstrued by the Mansabdars as weakness, subjecting them to drudgery, abetted by the zamindars, thus dividing the already fragmented castes playing up one against the other following the policy of divide and rule.

In this background, sparks flared up into fire in 1840 and the result was the explosion of the historic Rampa mutiny. The Rampa mansabdar had been confiscating the childless muttadars following the precept of doctrine of lapse. Adding fuel to the fire, the Mansabdar suddenly enhanced the taxes, which led to the flare up.

The British Government put down this very serious revolt in 1862 and deployed police force for the Mansabdar's security. This added further strength to his cruelty and persecution reached its nadir, when, by turns, the Britishers and the Mansabdar between them levied twin taxes on palmyra wine, which was more than mother's milk to the tribes. While the British govt. taxed the palm tree (మొదలుపన్ను) the Mansabdar imposed tax on palm wine. (చిగురుపన్ను) It was the proverbial last straw on the camel's back.

The Nizam state transferred Rekapalli (which is now in Khammam district on the banks of the river Godavari), to the British Government, The government of Madras enhanced the land revenue three-fold and banned shift cultivation. Added to that, the Golugonda zamindari fell in arrears East India Company bought away the zamindari in 1837.

In 1890, the British streamlined the Muttadari systems in Rampa, removing incumbent Mansabdar, the head of Muttadars.

The state descended with its forest, police and revenue machinery. Humiliations followed suit. The British officer, Bastian, got the local tribes to lay the ghat road from Narasipatnam to Chintapalli subjecting them to any amount of torture and humiliation. This led to the Rama Raju revolt. Thus for 80 years, the manyam from Rekapalli to Paderu (1840-1925) was on fire and it became a veritable battlefield. Unprecedented cruelty, persecution, immorality, chaos, injustice and many more atrocities were committed on the tribes.

The conditions that prevailed during that period were best described in Pusarla Balesu's poem (a Valmiki resident of Pullangi) in 1935.

While hunting like wild dogs for Raju

(రాజుగారిని బట్ట రానుపోనూ లోను)

(మధ్య మధ్య ప్రజలకు రద్దు కలిగె)

Fair

Heavy loads they were forced to carry,

(సప్లాయి కోసమై చాలమంది ప్రజల తిట్టుచు కొట్టుచు తీసుకెళ్ళి)

They troubled the hill tribes of and on:

The rulers used their police force,

And put the tribes to great hardships:

Beat them, abused them and harassed them,

(చెయ్యరాని పనులు చెయ్యించి మొయ్యించి)

And bid them do indecent works:

And build without need many a house; (అనవసరపు ఇండ్లు అధికంగా కట్టించి)

All this they did to torture them: (ప్రజలకు కష్టపెట్టుటె కాని పరకయింపా!)

So miserable was the people's plight, (అయ్యయ్యె ప్రజలెంత ఆయాసములు బొంది)

That some of them on reaching home, (ఇండ్లకు రాగానె)

Died of the blows they had received: (కొందరు చచ్చిరి దెబ్బల వల్ల)

The child Tirupalli Viswanandh, (తిరుపెల్లి విశ్వనాథను పిల్లవానికి)

The Malabar police seized and killed: (మలబారు వారలు పట్టిచంపె)

(మలబారు మిలిటరీ)

They broke the hand of Viswa Reddy, (విశ్వరెడ్డికి చెయ్యి విరుగగొట్టిరిగాని)

But none did care to cure his hand: (వారెవ్వారికి బాగుచేసినారు)

Yerra Venkanna (ఎర్రవెంకన్నటా ఎలమతో ప్రజలకు)

Harshly beaten the people: (ప్రేమలేకను గొట్టె పెంకెబోతు)

The mindless acts of military men (ముఠాదార్ల మునసబుల మృదువైన పెద్దల)

Brought down the dignity of Munsiffs (మరియాదలన్నియు మంటగలిసె)

And elderly people in the village:

When that was the fate of village heads (ముఠాదార్లకే యింత ముప్పుతిప్పలు బెడితె)

What would have been the common man's fate? (ప్రజలకు దిక్కెవరు ప్రేమజూపా)

The wretched rulers beat them with shoes;

(కులములో లేనట్టి గురుతప్పు కొట్టేటి)

(చెప్పుతో కొట్టిరి చెడ్డవాండ్లు)

Their beastly-acts their culture proved. (ఆడవారికి పడక కంపుడని అడుగగా)

Though favourable were the departments all, (అన్ని డిపార్ట్మెంట్లు అనుకూలమేగాని)

Hostile among them was the Forest Department: (ఫారెస్టు డిపార్ట్మెంట్లు పరమ శత్రువు)

When hill-tribes all on forest yield lived, (అడవంత ప్రజలకు ఆధారమైయుంటె)

Against them was the forest sealed: (అడవి కట్టేసిరన్యాయముగానూ)

The tribes suffered untold loss, (బ్రతుకు పడిపోయెనని బ్రమసి ప్రజలందరూ)

A wrongful loss of their livelihood:

They sobbed and sighed and bitterly cried- (దుఃఖించు చున్నారు మిక్కుటముగా)

It was, alas, a cry in wilderness.

The poor entered into the forest deep, (బీద ప్రజలందరు బిరబిరనడవికి)

Collected stems and tubers in their reach, (వెళ్ళి కూరా తీసి గంపలో పెట్టుకుని)

And homeward turned with loads on heads, (ఇంటికి రాబోతె అదొకతంటా)

One anna for basket however carried- (గంపకు ఒకఅణా కావడికి రెండణాల్)

But lo, they were not allowed to move, (గట్టిగా పెట్టమని కదలనివరు)

Mounds

The poor were hungry, thirsty and tired, (అడవంత తిరిగియూ ఆకలిదప్పులతో)

They left their loads and back to homes, (వచ్చిన వారికి వదలకండి)

Somehow raised the amount required, (వుసూరుమని ప్రజలు ఊరెల్ల)

And brought and paid and got they freed: (తిరిగియు బాలకష్టపడి సంపాదించి)

(తెచ్చి చెల్లించియు సెలవుతీసుకొని, అడుగక ఇంటికి అరుగురయ్యె)

Telagas and Koyas who lived on (తేనెమైనము వల్ల తెలగాలు కోయల)

Honey and wax they used to collect (బతికేటి బతుకల్ల భంగమయ్యె)

Were dismayed when they too were taxed:

What all the Vyshyas and the Malas (కోమట్లు మాలలు కొనియమ్మినందున)

In buying and in selling gained, (వచ్చేటి లాభముల్ వరద గలిసె)

Was washed away by heavy floods:

Villages lost and employment gone, (ఊర్లు పాడాయెను ఉద్యోగములు పోయె)

The hapless poor had left the village (పరగ్రామమున ప్రజల్ పాటుపడిరి)

And suffered a lot in unknown lands:

Killing people for growing forests, (మానుల పెంచియు మనుషులను జంపియు)

Is robbing Paul and feeding Peter: (ధనము సంపాదించె దారియిదియా)

This was the means of earning money,

The British rulers practised here:

There were more tortures added to the sufferings. They were recorded in prose,  
given hereunder:

(ఫారెస్టు రిజర్వులలో ప్రయాణిస్తూ పండ్లు భక్షించినదే నేరమని జుల్మానా వేసెను. అడవిలోఉండే దుంపకూర పండుఫలము జీలుగచెక్క మామిడితెంక వెదురుకొమ్ములు యిప్పపువ్వులు, ఈతకొమ్ములు, ముఖ్యమైనది కల్లు, యివి వారిభోజన పదార్థములు. ప్రజలకు అక్కరకురానివీ శ్రీగవర్నమెంటు వారికి పనికివచ్చేవీ కర్రతీసుకొనిపోవచ్చును. వెండిరాగి వగైరాగనులుంటే న్యాయమైన వెలయిచ్చి ప్రజలకు సంతోషపరచి తీసుకొని పోవచ్చును. అంతేకాని సదరుతాలూకాలో ఫారెస్టు వేయకూడదు. ప్రజలబ్రతుకు పడగొట్టి దుఃఖపెట్టకూడదు'.)

“The tribes were penalized for moving freely and eating the fruits or roots in the reserved forest. Their food consisted of forest tubers, roots, fruits, ‘jeelugu’ bark, mango stones, bamboo shoots, ‘Ippa’ flowers, shoots of dates and the liquor there of. These are the foods.

There is no harm for the tribe, if the government lifts the forest timber, which is of little use to the tribes. Even the silver and copper mines in the forest can be exploited by the government, giving some just price to the locals. No reserve should be created restricting the access to the forest. The government should not deprive people of their living.”

Even after independence, the planning processes don’t change. The government has hardly given any opportunity for the tribes to improve their age-old skills. The self-same schemes adopted for the backward classes of the plains, were adapted to the tribes in the forest taking no account of the ethos of the ‘adivasi’. The people at the helm of affairs should bear in mind that the talents of the tribes and their psyche are confined and limited only to the forest. As a result the tribes were unable to adjust themselves to these changes, and they were just aping the modern civilized methods, losing their unique genius.

Degradation had set in, in the life of the tribes as the forestland was acquired by the state, which was handed down to timber merchants. All this resulted in hunger, starvation, diseases and extinction for the legitimate guardians of the forest.

These, then, were some of the fundamental changes that affected the tribes and their life style had changed ever since.

## నంప్రదించిన గ్రంథాలు - ఉపయోగించుకున్న ఉట్టంకింపులు

1.

మానవ విజయం. రచన ఇలిన్ మరియు సెగాల్. అనువాదం: వి.ఆర్.శాస్త్రి. విశాలాంధ్ర ప్రచురణాలయం. 1954 - పుట. 52.

2. Encyclopaedia of anthropology David E. Hinde Philip Whitter. Harper & Row Pub. 1976 Page 76.

Cognition: Cognitive anthropological research emphasizes an intellectual approach to the interpretation of culture, which is usually defined in terms of the categories of each society uses to organise its universe and to convey messages among those who share culture. This approach facilitated our understanding of the way in which prediction within a cultural system takes place.

3. A Grammar of Kuvi language 1911, Madras, V.F.V.P. Schuzle.

P.8. "The big tribe Khond is divided into five different classes, 1.Mukhadora, 2.Mannedora, 3. Kondadora, 4.Jatapudora Poraja or Kodulu or Kuvi, 5. Gadaba. The first two tribes lost their original language as they amalgamated with Telugus but each of the caste has its own language".

4. The Rampa Agency of East Godavari District. M.R.Ry. V.N. Seshagiri Rao Avargal. Govt.Press, Madras. 1931.

P. 15. Village communal property is carefully preserved. Topes are the joint property of the villagers and the income there from, **especially** from tamarind, is distributed amongst the shareholders. New-comers have no claim to a share.

The fruit is collected by the villagers in common from time to time as it ripens and the yield is then and there distributed among the shareholders. When labour is needed for any Government work, one man from each house is expected to present himself, and his wages are distributed amongst all the villagers, the old, the blind, the maimed and the widows all getting a share. Thus it can be seen that the peculiarities of the joint village system are carefully preserved.

Serious crime is rare and theft is almost unknown. In fact, the entrances to the dwellings are not secured by bolts or other fastening. Harvested crops are left in the field or threshing-floor and no one is set to watch them. Seldom does a village resound with the quarrels or wrangles of either sex, and in this respect it presents a marked contrast to the frequent street brawls in the so-called civilized towns.

The people live undisturbed by the rush and bustle of the out-side world. While the village remains entire and its internal economy undisturbed, the Agency man cares not who administers the land.

P.25. Persons suspected of witchcraft are most cruelly treated. It is stated that they used to be taken to the top of a hill where the victims would be actually stoned to death. Even to this day there are several places known as "Chidipi Gandis" places where sorcerers were killed.

Witches are supposed to transform themselves into tigers and to draw the blood of their victim by sucking his toe. The witch turned tiger is supposed to retain one of its human legs.

P.26. Sexual laxity before marriage with a member of a lower caste is punished with instant expulsion from caste, the parents being heavily fined. If the lover is of the same caste he is made to marry the girl and to feed the tribesmen. If a married woman runs away with another of her own class, the aggrieved husband can claim Rs.66-4-0 towards marriage expenses from the lover; if she elopes with a man of inferior caste while in her husband's house, the husband and his family are fined. Polygamy is permitted. Widows are allowed to remarry. Divorce is not common.

P. 27. The Hill Malas style themselves as Valmikis.

These form the smallest percentage of the population. They are generally literate, and somewhat refined in the Rampa. Mala is certainly a better type of man than the low-country Mala. He is fairer in complexion, better in build and neater in appearance with his cropped head and neatly combed and greased hair. He is a trader in hill products, and a petty sowcar in the Agency. Most of the Malas own pack bulls which they use for the transport of the hill produce to the markets. Unlike the other hillmen, most of them live on rice which they get from Malkanagiri in the Vizagapatnam District. Almost all the fruit gardens in the north of Chodavaram Division have passed into their hands, for the brainy Mala finds an easy prey in the unsophisticated hillman. Most of the Malas in the Chodavaram Division are converts to Christianity and belong to the Dummagudem Mission, which appears to have done a lot of good in uplifting the condition of these people. But the Yellavaram Malas stick to their old faith. They are generally hated by the other classes for their usury and extortion. Almost all the village servants in the Agency belong to this class. A few are engaged as Muttah clerks. There is a flourishing Christian Settlement at Pullangi.

5. గుర్తేడు వాస్తవ్యుడు, వాళ్ళీకుల గురువు గొర్రె నాగయ్యదాసు చెప్పిన సీసం ఆధారం.

6. Studies in the eco-climatology of A.P. 1979, Ms. Hemamalini. Thesis submitted to Geography Department, Andhra University

P.No. 6. IV. Though the region is under the influence of both the southwest and northwest monsoon its location (Rayalaseema) in the rain-shadow region appears to be handicapped. Though the thermal factors are favourable to the luxuriant growth of vegetation, the moisture factor is inhibiting factor except at higher elevation.

P.No.11. Nallamala seventy miles long, twenty five miles broad, forest cover is thin due to porous soils and deficient rain fall.

P.No.62. The moisture regime and the thermal regime through A.P., has enormous thermal potential. Its moisture efficiency is very poor with the result that it cannot support forest type of vegetation excepting at higher elevation where water requirements are low and water availability is adequate.

P.67. The dry sub-humid zone in the extreme northern portion is represented by moist semievergreen forests and the rest of the state with dry deciduous vegetation except for a few patches of Mangrove vegetation in deltaic area.

Forest working plan - A.P. Govt., Kurnool Division 71. P. 11.

Abandoned cultivation, fortifications, distinct avenues of Tamarind and Banyan trees, old pagodas some of them deserted and in ruins and numerous tanks in vain, some of them which served as irrigation sources in the past bear testimony to the facts that the country was at one time more populous and prosperous and consequent depopulation followed by the relinquishment of cultivated holdings it has lapsed into jungles.

Terrestrial Environments. J.S. Cloudsley Thompson, London 1975 - II; P.14. Under humid conditions stable salts are leached away.

P.No 30 Morphological adaptation of animals inhabiting various types of terrestrial environment in relation to locomotion, feeding and escape from enemies. Physiological adaptation are also mentioned briefly and the adaptational importance of diurnal and seasonal rhythms is stressed.

P.No.55. Savannahs – dominated by graminea (grass family). There is usually a delicately balanced interaction between climate, soil, vegetation, animals and fire.

As the tree canopy develops more stories, the forest floor becomes poor in lianas and epiphytes.

Trees may be overtopped by tall grasses during rainy seasons. Bulbous and the other geophytes are often abundant. Many trees become selected for fire resistance. Woodland is open rich in terrestrial herbs, tolerant of drought habitat thorn woodlands are even more erophylous; plants with woody photosynthetic stems, fruits are succulent and juicy.

P.No. 61. Termites destroy growing plants especially in the time of drought and their mounds have topographical effects.

Birds Ostrich Emus. Game birds, predatory and scavenging birds such as eagles, falcons and vultures thrive on account of good visibility. Concealment is difficult so cursorial. Season rhythm –diurnal, nocturnal rhythm. Ecological optimum – Ethnological optimum - Economic optimum.

TIGER: The Story of Tiger, Kailash Shankala 1978. Rupa & Co.

One of the brakes of efficiency of the Tiger is that he cannot easily walk over broken, thorny ground so that grass country chase is beyond his powers. The Tiger never allows the contents (meat) mixed with the flesh. The Tiger prefer high meat as it is softer. Also they do not want to have to repeat the process of dressing their dinner.

7. The Reddis of Bison Hills - Haimendrof. P. 73. The Reddis are fond of honey and eager to acquire it, but they do not show the same ingenuity and courage in its collection as the Chenchus are jungle tribes of the South. Once on the way to Kutturwada, I saw a great number of honeycombs on the face a high cliff that would have

fallen an easy prey to Chenchus, but the Reddi declared that they would not venture on such and since they never use ropes in taking honey. Their hesitation was perhaps understandable.

◆ Current Anthropology, A Lomax & Conrad Arrensberg 1977.

P.672 . Nomadic fickle and warlike character of Amazonian cultures has been due to lack of protein. Game is arboreal and scarce. In the leafy world, meat is precious. And the hunter is pursued with sexual promises.

◆ The Reddis of Bison Hills.

Gangamma panduga which is observed throughout the Telugu country even among Brahmins and in Gurtedu, Bodlanka muthas... This has been combined with ceremonial first-eating of mangoes. It comprises such non reddy elements as the use of sacred pot a shrine for the Goddess with a Candelabrum, cockfighting and similar amusements.

◆ Cognitive development. A.R.Luria, 1976, Harward University Press . Men can deal even with absent objects duplicate the world through words, which maintain the system of meanings whether or not the person is directly experiencing the objects, the words refer to. Hence a source of productive imagination arises.

◆ Census 1961 volume II part (A) (i) Page10

Next to the coastal plains to the West, except for a widest stretch of about 100 miles between the Godavari and Krishna a series of Hills are met with both to the North of River Godavari as also South of Krishna. These are referred to as Eastern Ghats. Unlike the Western Ghats of India these Hills do not form a continuous running from the northern edge to the Southern edge. It is perhaps a misnomer to call them Ghats. D.H.K. Spate (India and Pakistan; a general regional geography P.No. 6790" the term Eastern Ghats is honoured by time, but by nothing else, the use give a misleading impression of comparability with the Western Ghats and suggests an entirely non existent homogeneity.

The reason is more in the nature of an uplifted peneplain which is broken by the inter-fluvial uplands of the Krishna and Godavari. It may be convenient to deal with these Eastern Ghats or Eastern Hills in different sections in which some definite group of hills are discernable. In the northern sections which cover the area from the borders of Orissa to river Godavari, the hill ranges run from northeast to southwest and reach elevation of 2,000 feet to 4,000 feet above mean sea level. They are formed of Khondalites (Gneisses and schists-perhaps the oldest rocks of India and Charnockites), between these two rivers for over 100 miles the ghats almost completely disappear. South of Krishna again a section of eastern hills cover the Nallamalai, Erramalai, Seshachalam, Palakonda ranges. This Southern region forms a very interesting geomorphological formation.

◆ Culture and Public Action, Ed. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton 2004. Permanent Black. P. 99.

Material poverty results from low productivity, which is caused by intractable coordination problems.

బరక : పనికీరాని పొలం. మాండలిక పదకోశం,1970.

గొమ్మనేల : గోదావరి వరదతాకిడిగల నేలలకు ఆ ప్రాంతంలో ఉన్న వ్యవహారం.

జవుకు నేల : వానకురిస్తే దిగబడేనేల.

మాండలిక వ్యవసాయ పదకోశం, 1974.



