

CHAPTER - III

Man is the doer and this universe is his work spot. Man has certain special features that distinguish him from the rest of creation. He has a clear vision of things and he sees things in three dimensions. From among the animals, man alone can stand erect on his two hind legs, letting the two front legs (hands) free to hold things and perform many other very useful functions. A thumb is there among his fingers, which gives him a firm grip to hold things. These distinctive characteristics are enough to set man apart from the rest of the living creatures¹. There are many more special gifts, he is endowed with, and the most significant of them is, however, that he can think, and is able to make his impact felt upon his surroundings. He can visualize things and comprehend and express them through symbols. His genius essentially lies in codifying signals; received from his five senses, and respond. The more the complications in the relationships in his neighborhood are, the sharper, the keener and the more complex becomes his thinking faculty.

How the association with nature set man's thinking in the way he thought, how the community as a whole began sifting the collected data, which formed the foundation for the wealth of ideas, activities and rituals, what course the function of cultural vision had taken, and at what stage it had taken this course and many more things are there for our study of the inner principles underlying these things.

Language not only serve the purpose of communicating with the outside world, but its use also lies in supplying the raw material to the thought, which codifies the given facts for effective expression. In this world of codes and symbols, language is the prime and effective medium. Language is a vehicle to contain the experiences of people within its fold and communicate them to the

people of generations to come. In a similar way, the rituals, ceremonies and traditions followed by the society through ages instruct, the aims and attitudes of men through ages, which may possibly be changing eternally. After all, change is the law of life. Language is the medium, which records these changes in the life style of man. It may not be easy to analyse these abstract formations as clearly as we analyse economic equations. However difficult this analysis is, one should make the effort in the proper place and the proper manner.

Trying to trace the cause for one's distress at an unlikely place is similar to the efforts of a drunkard, who, having lost his key-chain at the bar, searches for it under the streetlight, assuming that the light there may show him the lost key-chain.

In the early times, the hunters used to imitate the voice of their prey, to attract it to their side. It was then the idea of communicating with others through language came to their mind. They used to dance and sing as expressions of joy. Gradually, people learnt to express their ideas, emotions, feelings and many more kinds of expressions through language. Depending on the skill of the user, language has acquired many nuances of meaning, thus shaping different artistic devices with the help of language. Gradually, rhetorics came into existence as a science to measure the beauty of art. Ethnologists say that there are fourteen instincts. Artistic use of language contributes more to the growth of imaginative aspirations and utopias.

The importance to production has lead man towards improving his skills in many directions, at the same time leading to division of labour. As time passed, each item of work required specialization to do it efficiently and thus each work had become a separate profession. Professional expertise became necessary in

every field. Experts brought surplus in production bringing in leisure, freedom. They allow the talented to go lyrical in arts, create an imaginary world, a utopia or a paradise. Their style of language and their conventional use of language distanced them from the common usages of words, thus creating their own special jargon, which in the long run became symbolic of their professional idiom.

Names (నామ) and forms (రూప) constitute the universe. Examining the names, the physicists noticed the personal influences exerted upon them by the men who coined the names. They even discovered how the names get corrupted through use and misuse. In an attempt to unfold the actual reality, they discovered that it transcends the likes and dislikes of men. The senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight cannot catch the truth of reality. Subjectivity refracts and twists the actual reality into something, which is not it. Mind adds its own colour to the messages it received from the senses and thus subjectivity enters the field still further to spoil the true vision of reality. The physicists even tried to do away with entities like form, time, weight, idea and relativity. They studied the atom and analysed the structure of it. They discovered that waves and particles are interconvertible and in fact they identified wavcles as well, which are neither waves nor particles. They could put the whole thing into mathematical equations and symbols. From names they could travel down to numbers, discovering 'zero' in the ultimate analysis.

Thus the physicists studied the whole universe from the level of microcosm to that of macrocosm, universalizing its scrutiny of the created universe, all in an objective fashion. The study has totally done away with the subjectivity, which purely depends upon man's feelings, emotions or experiences. Almost the same thing, music or art has done it, affecting the inner psyche of man. Science has externalized the whole process of creation and made its study of it from that angle,

where as art made an internal study of the process of creation, while philosophy has taken the total universe – both external and internal – for its study. In the case of modern philosophy the same principle of objectification has become the law. Philosophy proclaims that the knowledge of the self can only be had, when man is devoid of all tendencies, rooted in the mind.

Thus science makes an external study of the universe in an objective fashion, where as music draws one's attention towards the inner nature of the universe through its melodies of universal appeal, which even transcend literature. Philosophy excels in the self-knowledge that transcends all feelings, senses and tendencies of the mind.

It is one thing to store images in the mind through works of art and it is another to recall their fragrance by just looking at a rose or a similar other beautiful object. Only the person, who has been a part and parcel of a culture, can recall the experience, an object brings in. The tune, the context invokes unique experience these feelings may arouse him into an excited dance. To the person who is alien to that culture, it may look as lunacy. Those who are one with such cultural experiences, the tune arouse some dormant memories, which come out from the subconscious, where they are stored. This stirring from within excites the nerves, touches and moves the heart. This therefore is the function of the symbolic machinery, which constitute the inner ethos².

Man's surroundings not only fulfill his needs but they stir in the mind feelings and thoughts as well. They even provide a kind of inspiration, on the basis of which, mythology and rituals have been springing up and they in turn confirm and establish a culture, suitable to the surroundings. Thus the nature and the culture depend upon one another, one affecting changes in the other in cyclic process. The

animal nature in man is given to him by nature. In it, there are no sense of relationships like brother, sister, father, mother, wife and husband and so on, though the relationships are actually there. Man, by virtue of his higher intelligence, gives cognizance to them by assigning an animal totem as a distinctive mark for a clan, group or family. Although the animals lack the rules of consanguinity, man has these animals (totems), perhaps, because he likes to draw a dividing line between nature and culture. The give-and-take relationship between nature and culture sets up new conventions and new models to the society, leading to a new fund of knowledge. The culture grows in such a scenario.

Tribal life is a strictly restricted and fixed round-the-clock methodically routine life, which may be due to their living in some fixed surroundings.

The body, mind and the soul are not one and the same, among the societies of the tribes there is no dividing line between them. It is not just that only. Not only the name and form, being linked to each other, but even the shadow of a person is considered to be one with the name in the simple tribes minds. So much so, the tribes hesitate to address one another by their names, for the simple reason that the other may use his name to do some harm to him by some witchcraft. In necromancy or black magic, the practitioners use the name, hair or a nail of the person whom they intend to do harm. No one in the tribal communities address the other by his name. Also, they do not ask any one his name.

There is another reason also for the tribes hesitating to address each other by their names. The police used to take down the names of the tribes of rebellious nature to implicate them in some cases...Therefore, if the person, who asks the name, was from the plains, they would naturally be afraid and ask back “Why, do you ask my name; to get me arrested?”

When, in any context, they have to refer to a dead person, they talk of him using the pet name of their childhood, but never by the name given to him at the time of the naming ceremony. They take this precaution, because they are afraid that if in any case the dead fellow passes by the route in the air, at the time of this reference, he may stay there for ever with them causing any undesirable misery. A doubt may be raised to the effect that if the body and soul be one, what has he to do with the air, after he had gone and how he could hover in the air ever after he ceases to exist, body and soul. But the tribes believe that the relation between name and form is like that between word and matter. Even after the matter is gone, the name exists in use for sometime.

What happens to his soul, after a man is dead? They think that as long as the corpse is at home, the soul hovers around – it does not leave the body. So they live in fear as long as the body is at home. All villagers assemble and do bhajans, at least in Visakha manyam. They wait till the relatives arrive, lest the soul should take it amiss. There is no respite to them until the dead body is cremated in the earth. They are of the conviction that the dead fellow would possess some one and harass one and all. They also have a firm faith in feeling that he acts like a soothsayer and diviner.

Among communities, where there are neither economic disparities nor any sense of worldly honour or dishonour, there need be no legacy or ‘carry forward’ of the good and bad of the previous births that should defend oneself against. No anxieties need end up in suicides. If not happy with his spouse, one can choose another. If there is no living for a tribe at one place, they can move to another village to make a living. They build yet another hamlet in the dense jungle. All

animals or spirits are divine in their simplistic religion. Animal life, therefore, is by no means inferior.

They name their offspring after their elders. This naming function is held on the day when the child begins taking solid food. It is an occasion for a big feast, when all the near and dear attend. On that occasion, one of them chants, ‘You are Gangadu, Singadu touch the name-morsel, hold the bow and arrow. (గంగడవు సింగడవు పేరుముద్ద ముట్టో, విల్లుబద్దపట్టో) Thus they keep reciting the names like Gangadu and Singadu and that name, which was pronounced at the time of the child touching the first morsel of food, sticks to him as his name for life.

Many among Konda reddy give the names of weekdays for their children.

If ever some one calls a grown up by his name, he at once retorts, admonishingly, “Did you eat at my naming ceremony function, that you are calling me by my name?”

If the obsequies of the dead are not satisfactorily done, the dead person’s spirit comes home in the form of a grasshopper and tries to violently fall into this fire or that and die. It may be a way that the dead person expresses his anguish or displeasure against some one or some wrong done to him.

Incidentally, it may be noted that the tribes address the spirits of dead persons as ‘parrot’. (చిలుక)

The bodies, whose obsequies have been completed, excommunicate those, whose funeral rites are incompletely performed. In such circumstances, the living, closely related to the dead person tie a thread symbolically to a grasshopper,

promising to fulfill a vow. The tribes say, 'A cotton thread is worth a hundred gold coins'. (నూలుపోగు నూరువరహాలు)

The bodies of the warriors who die sudden deaths are not taken for burial for the fear that they become ghosts. Such bodies are cremated. There is a difference in the attitudes between burial and cremation. Cremation, they say, is done with spite. The Pallalavaru and Pattapu Kattulavaru used to worship such ghosts. These ghosts are called 'dandu' ghosts. (దండుభూతాలు) These families also worship places of land mines. (పండుపాతరలు)

It was also believed that the 'dandu' ghosts and the explosive mines were hidden in a castor oil pond in Pamuleru stream bed. (ఆముదం మడుగు)

Besides those Pattapu Kattulavaru, there are some local Kattulavaru. They are called 'baligela' kattulavaru. More precisely, they are men with a large retinue. (బలిమిగలవారు)

The name 'Kattulavaru' is attributed to them because it is believed that there are 'swords' among the wells in near by hills. Some stories are circulated among the people of these settlements that these swords can be drawn only to the water level.

Fathers become paternal gods after their death. They are called 'petaras'. They are given their share in the meat, obtained in hunting. In some places, it was a custom to offer meat in three leaves separately. The offering in the middle leaf contains raw meat, which is allotted to Katamayya. The cooked ones on either side are for the 'petara'. Elsewhere, the custom is to offer meat in seven leaves.

This kind of meat-offerings to gods and “petaras” is made with the expectation that they too would get similar ready-meat in their hunting expeditions. They pray for such a thing, while the offering is made. Thus goes the invocation.

‘May the beast’s two eyes be pierced, four legs broken, like we cook spinach or such leaves and make stock of them, May the meat welcome us wherever we go?’

‘May we get meat right in front of us? Neither stale nor used, dry meat as dry and raw meat as raw, may we get’.

(‘రెండుకళ్లు దొరగబొడిచి, నాలుగుకాళ్లు కులగొట్టి, జీడెంకూరతీగతో దోరపిడ్డట్లు, మాకు ఎదురుగుండ మాంసం కావాల.;పులసకుండ, వాడకుండ ఎండిన మాంసం ఎండినట్లు, పచ్చిది పచ్చిదున్నట్లు మాకు దొరకవాలె’)

After they return from the hunt, they offer a fraction of each of the animal’s tongue, heart, ear, nail and tail to the invisible deities, the cowherds known as ‘red golla’ (ఎర్రగొల్ల), ‘yellow golla’ (పచ్చగొల్ల), ‘gold-coloured golla’(పైడిగొల్ల), ‘sala golla’(పాలగొల్ల), ‘dark golla’(నల్లగొల్ల) and ‘fair golla’, ‘Golla’ means a cowherd. The colour of the cowherd is only a figment of the imagination. These ‘gollas’ are believed to be the protectors of the herbivores in the forests.

The ‘petaras’ are supposed to have joined the ranks of the deities. They do not have a fixed base or home for them. They visit their near and dear, whenever they like.

All hills are playgrounds for the kings. Katamaiah is the chief of forest kings. Katamraju hill near Gurtedu in the East Godavari district is one of the tallest and is reported to have miraculous powers. Dummu konda, on the other hand, is renowned for medicinal herbs. Idala raju was named after Idala wetland which is

present near Kallepu Gondi. Kannama raju, renowned for his magical powers, came to rule Gurtedu, some five or six generations ago. Even the Pandava rajus are among these kings. There is, however, a major difference between the two. While the ‘adavi rajus’ are the masters of the jungles, the ‘Pandava rajus’ are the masters of the crops. One represents nature while the other represents culture.

It is believed that these gods visit the villages on the ‘tanam’ festival days at the harvesting time to accept the hospitality of the villagers and return soon after. Bhima is the beloved deity of the tribes. The tubers difficult to digest are called Bhima’s tubers. Sheet rocks (పసుకులు) on hill sides are called Bhima’s gyms.

The tribes worship the ‘babbi’ cave (ఱాగ) in the valley of Gurtedu. They are ‘Bhima’s lagalu’, ‘Bhima’s panukulu’ and so on. Bhima holds his ‘darbar’ there. While there is an edible pumpkin, (కూరగుమ్మడి) there is a forbidden pumpkin as well and it is called the divine pumpkin. (దేవగుమ్మడి) Some water ferns are there which are allotted to nymphs. All forbidden fruits, roots so on are allotted to gods. Steep hills that cannot be climbed are allotted for gods. Humans cannot hunt there.

‘Dharala dumma konda (దారలదుమ్మకొండ)’ and ‘Basa dumma konda (బాసదుమ్మకొండ)’ are two well-known hills in the East Godavari district known for water falls and thick forests respectively. If the tribes have to hunt on Basa Dummakonda hills (Basa - Language), they should camouflage certain words in their talk. They should call an arrow as a thorn bush, a colleague as an untouchable and food as excrement. It is believed that some spirits of the ‘kings’ dwell there. If they spot the humans, they carry them away, show them their world and return them later. All this is to admonish them for trespass. To avoid these complications, humans talk in disguised language.

The tribes believe that the spirits are fond of women. Just as going to the market place with a woman is taxing the man's purse, so is a walk in the forest with her. She may point to a flower or a bird and say that the flower is lovely, she wants it and the bird is delicious and she wants it; so saying she tempts the man to go after it. Even Sri Rama could not escape from such a temptation and went for hunting a fake deer, to satisfy his spouse's wish. There is another reason for avoiding women, while going into the jungle. Women in menses are unpure and anger the 'kings', they say. (అడదానితో అడవి నడియకూడదు)

The presiding deities of waters are either virgin's nymphs or mermaids. Water bodies are their dwelling places. Their entourage insists of frogs, crabs fish, tortoise, pond skater etc., Desecrating the sources of water in the hills is prohibited. One should take drinking water in a leaf cup, come out of the pond and then drink. Women pay obeissance to a frog, after the days of delivery period are over. They seek the frog forgiveness for the pollution caused by their newly born offspring. Ponds kater (గన్నిక పురుగు) is an insect treated with great reverence.

Some of the larger hills are known as 'frog' hills, (కప్పకొండ) a manifestation of water deities. It means that a wetland or water source can be discovered on the hill-top there. The crab hill (ఎండ్రిక పర్వతం) is the highest in the Visakha district and 'Matsya gadda' (మత్స్యగడ్డ) in Sileru is the primary life-source of ever flowing rivulet. Visakha manyam is Matsya desa. Perhaps, the 'Matsya gundam' nearby Paderu is a pilgrim centre since ancient times.

Madugula chieftains wore the totem of fish. Matsya desa was the country where the Pandava princes came to live for 'ainata vasa'. 'Matsya gadda' is a tributary to Sileru River. Sileru means the 'crab river'.

While the people here celebrate the 'tree festival' (చెట్టుపండుగ) with 'jeelugu' palm trees, they recite an invocation like this, addressing the presiding deities of the waters:

'O, Nymphs of yellow waters, blue waters and red waters! These waters are yours till now and from now they are ours and we claim them with your permission.'

(ఠాసుకన్నెలు, మురికి కన్నెలు, నీలి కన్నెలు, ఎర్ర కన్నెలు, అందరు ముట్టుదురు, ముట్టుదురు. ఈఠోజునుండి వఠాది, ఇంతదాకమీది)

Thus submitting, they feed the season's first wine drops to the anthropomorphic virgins of the waters. They say in that connection, 'you have enjoyed the wine till today. It is our turn from now on. Accept our offerings.'

The ferns that grow on the banks of the canals are called water ferns, 'kannela jeelugu'. (కన్నె జీలుగు) They are plants, which physically resemble a jeelugu plant. They do not bear flowers, where as jeelugu is of a flowering species. The comparison, therefore, is only of looks. As the ferns are earmarked for virgins, it is hoped that they do not touch the jeelugu tree proper. As the virgins command waters, offerings are made to them, during the toddy festival (kallu panduga కల్లుపండుగ) The deities of the hill folk experience hunger. They kidnap people, it is believed. They may even grow fond of them. While dealing with nature, therefore, the hill-folk should consider the likes and dislikes of these deities. While making

any alterations in the nature around, there are many doings and don'ts with which the presiding deities are to be propitiated.

Before burning a field for podu cultivation, the locals yell in all humility, thus:

‘Oh, the living creatures in their millions, all, listen to us! Oh, mangoos, lizards, grasshoppers, chameleons, snakes and ants, please move away! We are putting fire to our fields, please keep away’.
(‘డొక్కులార, మిందెలార, పాములార, చీమలార, సిరుకోటి జీవులార, మా పంట చేసుకు నిప్పు పెడుతున్నాం కా బట్టి తప్పుకోండో’)

The rat, the grasshopper, the lizard, the chameleon and mongoose are their spiritual teachers (Gurus). The Bandicoot or the ‘moordha’ is the almanac person. The almanac people are the ones, who fix the exact date and time auspicious to do any important thing. The ‘disaris’ or ‘valmikis’ do not eat bandicoot meat as the bandicoots are held as almanac persons.

The wild cat, palm civet (పండుపిల్లి), is fond of ‘jeeluga’ wine and it is called the toddy thief. The man, who killed the wild cat, must not therefore climb the tree to tap toddy. If he does, they believe, that the tree dries up.

The hound (రేచు) and the tiger hunt and kill wild beasts. The meat of the animals thus hunted is defiled and hence it should not be offered to the gods. A gun is given a share in the meat, but a dog cannot get the same. If it is shared with a dog, the tribes believe that they do not get ‘game’ again.

The tribes know affinity among the species in the nature. If they violate this relationship, they feel that there will be terrible retribution.

Beliefs generally accumulate, being supported by the links, bonds and inter connections that stand to the test of a sort of empirical experimentation in nature. The eco-system and the belief system of semantic domains join and flow together⁴.

Termite builds ant-hills on the ground

It is the one that builds houses out of sand (ఇసుకను మప్పినవాడు)

It is as small as a grain of cumin

But lets out elephant-sized excreta, (జిలకర్రంత జీవుడికి ఏనుగంతగొద్ది)

It is of the minutest size, red in colour with seven throats.

(ఎర్రటి బుడ్డికి ఏడుగొంతుకలు)

It is a known fact that plants (except tamarind and jack) do not grow in termite-prone soil. The ant-hill is like the chicken-pox, with which the mother earth is infected. (భూమికి గంగాదేవి) Nevertheless, a major festival during the farming operation is centered round it. In the folk-lore related to the festival, the animal kingdom performs its role in tune with the tradition.

The flames that rise up (అగ్ని) are identified as the medium (హవ్యవాహన) between the human and divine by the Vedic seers. In a similar fashion, the house-building termites have become a medium between tribes and their super natural world.

Jambavan, the great mythological bear of the Ramayana period, who lived on the termites of the anthills, was believed to have organized the delivery of the mother earth Thus he feasts on them. (పుట్టకూడు)

If a bear or a wild boar is caught soon after the mother earth festival, it forebodes a rich crop

. A wild boar is a must for this festival. The saying goes: ‘Give a boar to get a rich crop’. (పందికిస్తే పచ్చికకు బలం) The boar digs up the soil and spoils the crop; so they offer it in sacrifice.

‘Earth is the mother and sky is the father’ the creator, Brahma Deva (తల్లిభూదేవత, తండ్రి ఆకాశవేణ్ణి పుట్టించిన బ్రహ్మదేముడ). This is at the root of every vow, a tribe takes. In Visakha, when any one arbitrates disputes, the parties swear on the mother earth and the village deity, Sankulamma. These deities entered the scene at the time of production and as such they have a role to play only in such disputes, which relate to production. They have nothing to do in the settlements of moral issues. There the matters are best left to the village elders, who settle the issues independently. All are aware of this subtle difference. In this context, it may be remembered that there was a saying “Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and give unto Christ that which is Christ’s”. However, the village penalizes a person, if he violates any code of ‘game’ or any code of consumption of crop. Geography cannot discard latitudes and longitudes to fix a place on a map. In a similar fashion, the tribes cannot do away with the deities while thinking of any issue in nature. Population growth, depletion of natural resources and such other things worry the modern civilized communities. Even so, the tribes worry regularly that the tigers or some natural calamities like epidemic plagues them, if the presiding deities of nature are not properly propitiated. In such circumstances, they feel that their very existence is at stake⁵. In these spiritual matters, the priest’s word is the last and final and the village elders like the ‘pettandar’ and the ‘munsab’ have to obey the

priest's command. The person who first built a house in a place, where a village develops later is considered the priest of the village. In course of time, his 'household gods' become the presiding deities of the whole village. (పూజారి) He becomes the head of the village, too. He who joins him becomes his relative and assistant. (తొంక) Contacts with the outside world grew over a time. The role of the munsib and muthadar has become significant in maintaining a link with out-side world.

Superstitions always weave a web around the mind. Some of them are cast around the sorceress bird called 'titrika'. When the bird drops its excreta upon a tree, the seeds contained in it take root. The tender leaves that spring from the roots look like a tumour and the tribes call it 'badanika' parasite. In the feather world, the sorceress bird is believed to portend disaster.

If diseases are not healed with normal herbal treatment, with such analogies at the back of their minds, they suspect witchcraft and approach 'vejju', offering goats, fowl or wine to drive out the evil. These 'vejju', bring out a nail or a plastic piece from the body with teeth. This tumour treatment requires the bark of a tumour-infected branch (mistletoe బదనిక, చణం) of a tree. Our modern doctors cannot give such treatments. So they say that the medicines are not suitable to these diseases.

The tribes believe that the evil eye is the cause for the ailments. Understandably then, the tribes reciprocate in such matters. Hate for hate and evil for evil. This gives them some relief.

These suspicions and prejudices eat up the vitals of communal living, just as the pest eats up a beautiful flower.

In the villages of Visakha, tribes perform 'Nandi' festival, for every three years. Whenever the soil-fertility is found poor, the tribes invariably suspect some one doing something mischievous 'neeti kattu', which has dried up water. They suspect other villages doing this, by diverting evil spirits to their villages. Then they resort to some special rituals to get rid of these evil spirits.

A familiar cure for body pains is branding the skin (వ్రాత) with a hot wild cashew nut. The hot cashew oil that oozes out burns the skin and it becomes a festering wound. It is a fact that the bears and wild cats, which are fond of these cashew nuts, eat them and have their mouths torn apart.

Cashew nut marks are made over the tombs of the dead on behalf of each family, lest the spirits of the dead would harass the living before the obsequies are over. While putting the cashew nut mark on the tomb, they pronounce the name of a family for each of the marks. Thus they say 'the mark of the Kalumula family, the mark of Kadabala family', (కలుములవారి బొట్టు, కడబాలవారి బొట్టు) so on and so forth for each of the mark they put on the tomb.

While winnowing the grain, in the threshing floor, they fix wild cashew leaves to prevent grain being blown off (కరిమోయటం) by too much blowing of the wind. Lest the hill demon king, 'konda danugudu' be tempted to have jeelugu wine, they tie around the tree a wild cashew nut, worn-out footwear and a smoky half-burnt cloth. All this is to ward him off from the temptation to come near. The cashew nut acts as a warning threatening the demon 'we will brand you, if you

come near'. The worn-out footwear is both an admonition and an appeal to make the demon understand that it is both unjust and unworthy of such a great demon king to be after an inferior wine. Both shrewdness and cowardice intermingle, when they are confronted with situations which are beyond their physical control. All god-fearing people possess this weakness with a peculiar kind of sagacity.

When going to ask for a girl in marriage, vermilion marks (బొట్టు) are put on her forehead, while reciting the names of all among her kin, 'Katlavari bottu, Matlavari bottu, Vishnu bottu, Easwara bottu', and so on. After this interesting pronouncement, they announce, 'We are adorning you with a necklace of black beads, now you are our daughter-in-law'.

(పూససేకు నీకు వేస్తున్నాం - ఇకనుండి ఫలానావారి కోడలు)

In the sacred rituals of great tradition the eldest son places his hand on the top, have the upper hand, whereas in unholy rituals the younger ones take the lead. Except these differences, the ritual part for both a wedding and a funeral is almost the same. Yellow rice symbolises the auspicious rituals, where as white rice and black sesamum for inauspicious rites. Right is considered auspicious and left is inauspicious. This subtle binary opposition in conventions deserves deeper scrutiny.

Certain trees are considered sacred for specific purposes. Meat is offered in 'parimi' leaves for cowherds, kings and to one's forefathers. When some one dies of an epidemic like cholera, such a person's tomb is covered with thorny bushes and the path that leads to the tomb is covered with 'parimi' thorns. After all these rites, the people who go to the tomb return without looking back. All this is a

notice to the departed to become one with the ancestors. The ‘parimi’ is a dividing line, which the spirit should not cross.

The thorn would ward off infection. The disease is to the body, not to the soul. So the body should be buried deep down in the earth. If, in any circumstance, the disease is to the soul, which may happen when a person dies with some unfulfilled desires with burning hatred, anger, certainly such spirits should be warded off.

The wild black plum, ‘Neredu’, is considered sacred for another reason. Its wood has cooling effect. The unwed boys or girls are prevented from brushing their teeth with a ‘neredu’ twig. At weddings, elders stand on a ‘neredu’ bench to bless the couple. Neredu is used as the main post while building a house. It is very auspicious; if a village diety could be located under a ‘neredu’ tree. The idol carved with ‘neredu’ wood is called ‘sanku’ god.

It is held as a sign of auspiciousness, they sprinkle turmeric water, drawn from a Lakshmi vessel on their feet with ‘neredu’ twigs before entering a threshing floor.

When cut, ‘Vegisa (వేగిస)’ tree, oozes out red fluid. It likens to human blood. So it is human among trees. So it is used as wheels of toy cart driven to the village boundary during ‘Path festival’. (దారిపండుగ)

Gangamma is a deity of the red-route. (ఎర్రమార్గం) This goddess causes chicken pox and she kills humans. The tribes offer food mixed with turmeric in a small pot placed on three vegisa stumps embedded in the floor.

Pepul tree (ཅེན) is considered sacred. Its leaves are entwined as bracelets or bangles. Marriage tokens are made of peepul leaves. Newly-weds go round a peepul tree.

Medicinal herbs are treated with utmost reverence. Before plucking a herb, coins broken rice is placed at the foot of the plant paying obeisance to it. The tribes believe that plant life too has its own likes and dislikes and as such the plants should be honoured, before they are touched. 'Atuku bacchala' plant is useful for bandaging broken bones. But there is a fear that in the house some one would break his bone, if this plant is brought home for planting.

An antidote for snake bite requires a plant with a mark resembling the hood of the snake. The antidotes for snake bite and tiger bite should not be stored at home. It is believed that their spirits might roam about in the house. It is also believed that the things in the house might slip off one after the other, just like the snake that slips of.

The stirring of goat meat with 'papaya' twig and the iguana meat with 'voddi manu' twig ensure faster cooking. The logic behind this belief is that the tree and the animal are no friends to each other. It may be an exaggeration, but the tribes believe that if a 'voddi' flower falls upon on iguana, its body would be chopped off to that extent.

Similarities in the natural qualities of things tempt one to attribute the attributes of one thing to another. As a result, many beliefs and customs came into being. Some of them have even extended to an extent of redundancy. All this may be natural and it is even a part of culture. Distance and time can not be bars for the extension of such information. If messages must be transmitted through time and

space, one cannot but apply one's self to the process of linking similar things to one another. Among these similarities, some are accidental coincidents (కాకతాళీయం), some very distant kinship and some others still more far-fetched verisimilitudes. (బాదరాయణ సంబంధం) Some times, some totally dissimilar things are also somehow yoked together (మోకాలికి బట్టతలకు ముడివేయడం) as if they have relationships at some distant branches (శాఖా చంక్రమణం) of these beliefs.

In understanding these beliefs, the science of rhetorics has come to our rescue in converting them into literary conceits. As such, some of them have become hyperboles and some similes or metaphors and so on⁶.

This is proof enough for the statement that once there is a let up in the free play of the beliefs of the mind, the wealth of the societies and the physical forces in matter, there is no holding back. In spite of the unlimited spreading of these strange beliefs, which is like the growth of the vast banyan tree from a small banyan seed, the grain of truth remains unchanged and life quivers in it for any one to feel it, if only he cares to do so. Knowledge grows basing on this nugget of truth.

If perception, transformation, learning and codification must advance to let knowledge grow appropriate to the output, then the transformation of experience into beliefs and the beliefs into fables along with some kind of performing arts have to be passed on from one generation to the other in one form or the other.

Our philosophers and men of vision let this boundless creative power to assume a number of shapes for the expansion of the mental horizons and ideals.



The ‘Chenchus’ know only to gather food. Ankamma, the presiding deity of Nallamala is not a mere jungle goddess. She is ever their guardian angel. Bayyanna and Pothuraju are her sons.

While collecting honeycombs, they invariably set apart a piece of cake (పల్లమృగ్ధ) to the mother Mallamma. Mallamma is the goddess of the hill. ‘Mala’ means ‘hill’ and as such Mallamma means the goddess of the hills. She should be propitiated fittingly.

‘Kanika’ or ‘kanyaka’, the virgin nymphs and goddesses live in wells. They too are to be propitiated once a year by offering jaggery and coconut. If these ‘kanikas’ cause diseases, ‘gadde gadu’ has to heal them. Worship of these goddesses has no time-schedule. Any time, whenever one gets a ‘game’ or honey or whenever a person is afflicted with a disease – they have to be appeased with appropriate rituals and offerings.

Rearing fowl, goat and pig were nothing new and this practice has been continued. They were necessary for offering to the deities. In hunting wild animals and in felling trees for cultivation, a certain serious kind of discipline and cooperation are necessary and these qualities made it possible to earn surplus, which is utilized as capital. The same discipline and cooperation helped them to emerge as an organized labour force.

There are festivals while growing the crop and festivals again at the time of harvest. While the festivals of the growing crop help enhance faith in the crops, the festivals at the time of the harvest warn of the uncertainties of the future.

There is much farming activity among the tribes in the Visakha district. They observe taboos (దోషం) twice or thrice a month. One such is called *danugudu* for *kondaraju* another for diseases called *maveli* and a third for pests called *ammatali*. On such occasions, all farming work gets suspended. The tribes, who settle in agriculture, have a natural fear of their surrounding forest. Though they have a firearm or two with them and a shepherd, to guard their cattle, these cannot insulate them from sudden dangers in the forest.

Go to a forest and become ash, (అడవికి పోతే మసి)

Return lucky,

Count we can, as one among us. (ఇంటికి వస్తే పసి)

Lose your head and die,

Lucky you are, even if a tail is left.' (తూలిలేతల - తేలితే తోక)

Such sayings are born out of scare of wild animals – scare to enter the forest.

In folklore, myths or legends, there is an eternal confrontation between the divinity and the demon. For the Visakha tribes, the Kondarajus of the Kondareddis are the hill demons, which are always at loggerheads with the cultured Pandavas.

Arulla is a windy region. There the wind currents move quite fast. Separate fields have been earmarked for separate festivals; thus there are 'Ganga' field, 'Nandi poojari' field and 'tasari' field. 'Itim' festival is common to all villages. The local 'Kondhs' perform these rituals with great care. Konda Doras, Bagathas and Valmikis follow them.

These communities, who lack interest in looking after the cattle, do not observe the rules of these rituals as meticulously as they do as agriculturalists.

There is no unanimity on the practice of beef eating among them. The beef includes the flesh of either a he-buffalo or a she-buffalo, either a cow or a bull and also wild bison.

‘Bagathas’ and ‘Konda reddis’, being the ruling classes, avoid eating beef. But all the tribes are one in shunning the meat of a cat or a dog or any such stray animal.

There is less of economic interest in poultrying and goat-rearing. The fowls or goats are needed more for sacrifice during the festivals and useful prey against witchcraft. They cut the nail of a toe of a fowl or a goat as a reminder to a vow. A cock or a hen with a cut-nail (గోరుకోసిన కోడి) indicates that it is reserved for fulfilling a certain vow.

They cut a toe-nail of the corpse of the human being and take it together with some soil upto the tomb and leave it in a canal. (సిలగలపడం). It is believed that if the spirit of the dead goes to the gods, at least a part of the body, the toe-nail, is to be sent with the spirits as a token. On a day after the funeral rites, a cock or a hen is offered as a sacrifice.

On ‘potta saruvu (పొట్టసరువు)’ festival, they let a cock or hen touch pearls, while yelling out, ‘O Earth, the mother, sky, the father, O Brahma, the creator! Don’t hesitate we pray to you, please protect us! Take the responsibility of our safety into your lap!’ If the cock or hen picks up a pearl or two, it means that the gods are pleased with their prayers. (తల్లిభూదేవత, తండ్రి ఆకాశవేణ్ణి, పుట్టించిన బ్రహ్మదేవుడా, అంకిలివద్దు, అనుమానంవద్దు, నీదేభారం)

‘The fowl is a seven-horned red cock’. (ఏడు కొమ్ముల ఎర్రపోతు)

‘The pig is a black spirit’. (నల్లజీవుడు)

These sacrifices are the medium between humans and gods. In Visakha, they slaughter goat as an offer to ‘Pothuraju’ and ‘Danugudu’ to protect their crops from pests. They celebrate ‘jalda’ festival by erecting ‘kasimi’ and ‘seethamma’ posts in the field.

At Dasarah, some ears of corn are tied into a bundle as a dedication to the deities. Now, during the ‘rajula’ festival, all male members mix some new ears of corn to the ones in the bundle, cook both together and eat the cooked food together. Before eating the food ceremonially, they say, ‘we made the bundles then, we mix the ears of the crop now’ (అప్పుడు మూట కట్టాం, ఇప్పుడు ఈతలరాసులు కలుపుతున్నాం)

As Rajula festival is to be performed with sacred rites, all amusements are strictly within bounds. The aujam (drum) has to be sculpted out of (గుమ్మడి) wood, with the sculptor staying in forest. Only the Lela songs that invoke gods are permitted on such occasions. Though some mischievous songs creep in, in the same tune, they are kept within wraps. This festival is celebrated in a variety of modified forms by the various strata of tribes.

During savithi-palakam (November and December), the Visakha tribes bring home on an auspicious day some ears of paddy, tie them up into a bundle and hang the bundle from the roof of goona kuduru (place for deities and ancestors). Early in the morning, a sweet halwa (topa) is cooked with fresh corn and after ceremonially propitiating it, it is fed to all in a function. They cannot, like the tribes of East Godavari, afford to postpone the ceremony till February as they do not have a

forest that provides alternate foods. If they do not hang the new corn by the goonakuduru and celebrate the festival of feasting, they cannot eat anywhere.

At Gandiseema on the Godavari bank in East Godavari, Rajula festival is celebrated to the accompaniment of “aujam” beating, while in the Kanivada region it is celebrated during Sankranti, as goopi festival with the accompaniment of the beating of a “dola” (a different kind of drum). The region is full of forest and hence the food crops in the near by field yield rich harvests. There, in the “goopi” festival, they cook food with millets and make them into morsels of food (కుడుములు) before placing them on the stump of a silk cotton tree. If the youth could strike the bundle of these morsels on the silk cotton stump with their arrows, it is expected to have a successful game.

If they hit the mark, it is a good omen for a bumper crop to follow; if their first shot misses, it portends poor crop. If the second too misses, it could be a famine. Therefore, before taking aim they take a solemn oath: “May this arrow find the target and shoot it so that our village prospers, its feasts and songs flourish and its cattle increase, thus ridding itself of all sorrows and ills.” The silk cotton tree is majestically tall with its roots growing deepest and it symbolizes the earth. The cooked millet is a symbol for crops.

(‘మాగ్రామంలో పంటండు, పాటండు, దూడండు, దుఃఖమండు కష్టాలుగాని లేకుండా ఉండాలంటే ఈదెబ్బతగలాలి’)

In the open field of village centre, there is a wooden seat and panicum grain is spread over it. Besides the grain, there is an empty pot and on it is placed a rugged staff which symbolizes the deity of crops, Gupemma. They draw with a stick on the floor, if there is a sound like girr....., it signifies the blessing of

Gupemma. They mockingly say that the Gupemma has many holes and shout “the bitch has eaten a potful!”

(‘కుండాన తిన్నదోయ్ - కుండగగ్గ ముండయా’)

Man and women compete to break the staff. If women win, there is abundance and if men win there is famine. The next day they place pulagam (rice cooked with dal) on a lotus leaf and a loaf of bread is placed on top. They have to strike the bread from a distance. This is all fun and frolic followed since ancient times. Cattle feast is clubbed to this. Kudumulu (rice flour mixed with dal, cooked in steam and made into morsels) are made to hang round the necks of cows and buffaloes. The speciality of this festival is that new priests (goravulu) are initiated during this period.

The tribe’s priests undertake certain vows solemnly in the festival. They say ceremoniously:

“మాడోలలు మువ్వకుండలలో మోగవాలె

పుట్టగపూజార్లము, పెట్టగ లంకెలము, పెట్టుపోషకర్తలము, పేరుగల్ల దాతలు మీరు, ఘనముగల్ల తల్లులుమీరు. కీడనక, కింకరనక, రోమనక, రొచ్చనక, మనయాటకళ్ళాలకి, మీరు తర్లిరండి బాబు, పరుసాలుపలారాలు. తల్లేడుతల్లులవారు, తల్లేడు తానాలవారు, ఇరమట్టి భూమియిది, పొరమట్టి భూమియిది, వన్నెలభూమియిది, పంచేడువన్నెల భూమియిది, తారిన భూమియిది, తాటివన్నెల భూమియిది, పుట్టిన భూమియిది, పూరేడువన్నె భూమియిది, ఏలిన భూమియిది, ఏడువన్నెలభూమియిది. గరికతో గరిక ఎంచి, మట్టితో మట్టిఎంచి, భూమితోభూమిఎంచి, పంచుకో రపాలించుకోర, కాకలుకాకుంట, కచ్చలుకాకుంట. మీరుఎంచి రండుడుబాబు. ఎంగిలై ఉన్నానుబాబు, సంగిలయి ఉన్నా ను బాబు, కొండలు తిరిగినగాని మెట్టలు తిరగలేను, మేడలు తిరిగిన గాని మెట్టలు ఎక్కలేను, నిక్కాకు నిగుడకుబాబు, చక్క దయసేయుడు” “May our drums sound like a pot with tinkling bells, priests are we by birth, disciples are we to the goddesses, donors renowned you are and noble women are you; May you come to our fields of play, do not demur, do not complain, do not pose a problem of any kind; O the seven mothers from seven

places! We shall joke, we shall feed and we shall give you offerings plenty! Red earth is this, loose earth this is, rainy land and hunting field, multi coloured, fertile and blessed by you, this is the land that has grown many a crop; palm-coloured is it, our native land; this is the land of the colour of the bird puredu, land of the rulers once upon a time! this is the land of colours seven; blades of grass compete with more blades of grass to flourish; clay for clay and soil for soil; share it amongst yourselves and gain mastery over it; don't get heated and don't get offended; no jealousies, no quarrels; come down to own it with great wisdom; blesses always with a bounteous heart! Polluted are we with intermixtures with others; inferiors are we, roaming on the hills; can't roam about in the plateaus now; floors we climb, stairs we can't; don't remonstrate, demonstrate your grace! Please come over, please bless us!"

While the priests invoke thus, the elders join in chorus and say "aye, aye, O kings!" (చిత్తం చిత్తం రాజుల్లార)

The collection of hill-brooms starts after Rajula/Nandi festival. Even while celebrating the new crop, both the old and new grains are cooked together. This is a ritual called 'Kottalu Kalapadam' (mixing the new grain with the old). On the occasion they say "eat the new grain and get fat, eat the old and get big – ride roughshod over my compeers!"

(కొత్తన్నం తిని కొవ్వి, పాతన్నం తిని బలిసి, నాయాడువారికి తోడువారికి పడదొబ్బుకు పోవాలె)

The old merges with the new and the new merges with the old. It is a transmission of beliefs, customs etc by practice, custom or word of mouth handed down from generation to generation. The tribes tradition flows uninterrupted as a perennial and life sustaining river.

The Reddies of Uppanapalli and Yedugurralapalli assemble in groups (సంఘాలు) for felling the forest for farming. Among these groups of Reddis, those who religiously follow this tradition can be expected to be relieved of this pledge only when their villages back home have already feasted. The festivals are not over at one go, when the groups of people belonging to different places work together forming themselves into a single group. When they go on such outright migration, they give value for the rituals back home, at least for their generation. In such cases they relieve themselves of the pledge only when all the villages from which they have migrated have had their ritual feast together in their different villages.

In and near Maredumilli area the villages have become more stable economically, the road-communication being a reason for their relative improvement. In such places it has been possible for all the inhabitants to celebrate this feasting on a single day. They have permanently installed the necessary apparatus for performing this ritual at a single place. All the restrictions have largely been removed after “flour festival”, (పిండిపండుగ) free movement of kith and kin is allowed. Thus, with the mango festival all obstacles are gone. Then the people are flush with cash and it is wedding season! So the adage goes, though used in a negative sense, “Korra Kottha – Koduku pendli, asrakudu – dasara bhojanam.” (కొర్రకొత్త, కొడుకుపెండ్లి - అసరకూడు దసరా భోజనం) It means that the ritual of mixing the old crop with the new would not go together with the marriage of the son. Likewise sumptuous feasting and the Dasara cannot come together because during Dasara the tribes have to keep both ends meet. Old and new crops would go together This proverb is used when the impossible has to be said. The observance of the difference between boiling and frying helps the continuity in tradition and it is

useful for fixing a timetable; at the same time it serves the purpose of thrift in the consumption of food stuffs.

With the king's festival (Rajula Panduga) behind, one is relieved of the rigour of a vow. One has the satisfaction of satisfying the elders and deities with their vows. Now with the mango festival due, the joys and other accessory passions are aroused and the rivalries of the farming season find wings. Collection of fruits, collecting mango Kokkulu (mushrooms), baking bread with the kernel of mangoes are all women's duties. On this festival day, they perform mock-weddings between mango trees – between maiden mango (గుబ్బట్లమామిడి) and youngster mango. (గోవులమామిడి) Dances, songs and jublations are at their peak. Eating the new mango on the banks of the Godavari is a joyous festival.

The Malas or Valmikis are the most refined of all in the manyam. They dominate trade and they are shrewd in all the jobs, where intelligence and skill are required. Stories about the illicit relationships among such Valmikis and Reddis abound in some of their folk-lore. The Reddis may be reflecting these in their songs for settling scores with the Malas. When young men and women compete with each other in songs that arouse passions, it could infect even the onlookers. They believe that the goddess does not get pregnant (పైచెంగు వేయదు) unless these obscene songs arouse passions in her. The earthen pot (ghatam) symbolizes Gangamma, the deity. Until the festival is celebrated in its entirety to every one's satisfaction, no one can clear the fields of its cinders. On the closing day of that festival, they go hunting. From then on, the farm work resumes. The cursing of the evil spirits and the banishing of them with wornout sandals and old broom, a torn winnow and excreta of poultry. They bid farewell to Gangamma when she is escorted to her lodge on the village outskirts.

In some villages, pothu festival substitutes Gangamma festival as per their convention (Boddagondi, Pedda mallu, Pola manu Gondi, Jalaga lova; Cheruvu, Mamidi vada, Gondikota, Chapa rayi, Karu mamidi, Polova and Banku lova are such villages). On this pothu festival men perform kolatam (a dance with sticks by the people who form a ring). There is no place for obscene songs. In some other villages they celebrate this festival in a grand style and propitiate Mother Earth.

The black drongo is considered a peon among birds. It is a servant of the Konda Rajus. Like a Police patel of the villages, it hounds other birds. It nests in between the horns of a lone sambar deer. This bird, perched atop the backs of cattle, is a common site in villages. They believe that the Sambar Deer is the servant of Katam Raju, the Konda Raju. It carries a mark on its forehead and they say that it brings ill luck on them who hit the king's deer. They do however kill it by following a ritual in atonement.

Black is the drongo,

Black is the Mala

No wonder, both are servants.

The humour and mockery in this adage, an outsider may not grasp!

In the itim festival in Visakha, kith and kin spray water on each other, rubbing skin to skin. They honour elders, washing their feet and placing vermillion dot on the forehead, (ವಿವಾಳಿ) then they collect money in return. They chase men out of the village for game. These are some delights. Just as they insist on spraying water, they take pleasure in giving head bath and sumptuous food. During the festival they first pay the ironsmith and get the ploughs, knives and arrow tips

sharpened. This is nothing but recognition of the importance of these crafts. Some of the first corn from the threshing floor is reserved as a share for the smith. They decorate the plough with a garland of Bheemudijata creeper, mango leaves and champak flowers. Then they apply to it turmeric powder, vermilion and lamp black. Then they further invoke the blessings of the deities by breaking a coconut and often a fowl.

‘Godugulettadam’ and Tharasi are similar to mango and “Kotthalu” festival. *Tharasi* means a game with male and female puppets playing together.

The women tie tender mangoes in a cloth and open them after four days. If there is a stain on the mangoes, it is an omen speaking of success to her men who have gone for hunting. If there is a stain and yet he gets no game, it forebodes evil.

After all these rituals, they are free to eat mangoes. These celebrations of the mango festival go on from seven to fifteen days. On the first day they eat maarupappulu. On the second day they prepare Ragi halwa sweet. (తాప) In the middle of the festival time they eat mango food and chicken or the meat of a wild beast. They eat sumptuously on these festival days after offering food to the deities. (పండుగకు తిన్నది పదెత్తులు - పెళ్ళికి తిన్నది పెడతట్టు) They feel relieved if the ceremony passes off without a hitch. All trades and castes and classes get represented at these ceremonies. The youth who are the happiest through these festivals look forward to a hopeful future. Their happiness knows no bounds while waiting for a fruitful future.

It is the village priest who conducts these festivals. In bigger villages, he has an assistant. (తండ్రి) The priest and his assistant are often related. They have a share in

the grain at the threshing floor and Goravalakotti (గొరవలకొట్టి) (good meat from the hip of a hunted animal). Their responsibility it is to pray for the well-being of the entire village. Traditionally or as per convenience, there is a separate priest for each festival in Visakha. These positions are hereditary. This organized arrangement apart, there is also Vejjulu, who heal common ailments and drive away evil spirits. There are a couple of women–vejjulu on the Godavari banks. Consulting them is optional in Godavari district but during Nandi panduga in Visakha it is they who dominate. If they do not render their whole hearted cooperation, the festival will fall flat. There are different people as the one who distributes ash, the one who sacrifices a fowl and the one who draws ornamental patterns on the floor. (బుగ్గిమంతరించేవాడు, అక్కర, పూట పనివాడు, పట్టు వాల్చేవాడు) The better known among them are normally less amicable and over indulgent. In the society, the ruling class, the priest, the goravalu and the commoners are all there as different categories; but all of them are commoners.

However, among the tribes, there is no separate class of people who tie up faith with rituals and believe in religion for its own sake. So there are no religious fanatics among them. Still the goravalu serve the community as saviours in times of epidemics and mental depressions. After sopuveta (సొపువేట) (collective hunting) the meat is shared equally among the huntsmen, but in individual hunting, he, who is the most skilled at archery, is the one who will get a major share. Even when others cooperate, he who watches over his crop with utmost diligence reaps the most. He who dares to go to distant lands and cultivates there, benefits the most. He who pleases others with his looks and words attracts others most. No institution can ever take away or deny a man anything he gets by his own effort and skill.

“Know a man by the way he shares/serves the meat, and know a woman by the way she serves food” (మగోని గుణం మాకాడ - ఆడదాని గుణం కుండకాడ) Where one cannot come out openly against another, they find two covert devices to let their steam out. According to the first, they drink away their frustration and still fight. According to the second, they rejoice at their rival’s suffering. These twin forces constitute the genesis of the influence, the goravalu exercise, in terms of the prevailing culture of the communities. For everything there is a straight road and a short cut. To pray for one’s own success may be a kind of devotion for self-preservation; but to invoke the gods to work against the one who is envious of his success is a kind of third rate and reprehensible negative thinking (vamachara) ⁸.

It is comfortable to stave off one’s afflictions by knowing through the priests the mistakes and omissions made against gods and take steps to retrace. But to suspect people and resort to black magic is a wicked practice. The societies are destroyed by these envious practices. To the tribes who play the roles of spectators, actors, and patrons every emotion is a visible concrete shape; every setting in nature is an abode of some god or the other. It is a kind of trade with feelings and emotions where the external world is stamped on one’s mind. But this trade depends upon time and space. However in this trade of transfer, there are dangers of illusion and speculation. In such circumstances even an epidemic spreads all around with this speed of the mind because the fear in the mind is the cause for the spread of epidemics.

While the experiences are transferred through arts from one mind to the other, through language, the words undergo semantic changes. Although there are some outmoded words in circulation, they prove defective in absorbing novel ideas, while inspiring others. In such circumstances, language is bound to create

new vocabulary of its own and absorb these new words into its diction. There are a good number of material reasons for nature's diversity and similarly there are social and psychological factors responsible to the changes in culture. Like in mathematics, nature's gait is straight forward. In the cultural stream all these technical tunes get merged in the melody of life.

In the villages south of Gandiseema and around Kanivada where the Malas live in large number, the mango festival is celebrated only formally, all the feasting and rejoicing being carried forwarded to the Gangamma festival in summer. Gangamma is a red route deity, who expects animal sacrifices. On ordinary days she is warded off because she is a deity hailing from an untouchable's family. (మాతంగకన్య) As such, she is kept on the outskirts and she represents epidemics like chickenpox. May be because of this fact, she is termed as a Mala's daughter. The seven Gangammams who manifested in the villages of Gandiseema, Munjamamidi, Kundada, Maredimilli, Satlavada, Vetukuru and Pullangi are all sisters.

It is said that when the king tried to molest the beautiful Malagangu, she committed suicide, cursing: "May such a beautiful woman as me not be born". Owing to the strength of her character and truthfulness, she manifested as the deity, Gangamma. Till her festival is over, the locals do not pluck rella flowers.

The Mala obeys the village elders and announces their instructions as their servant. The barking deer likewise draws the attention of other animals about the movement of wild animals in the forest. (కొండకు కోలగాడు) It goes on all about the forest barking, yelling and yelling. The Mala and the barking deer are similar in the perception of tribes.

The tribes and the rural folk are never inferior to the urbanites in their basic mental faculties. Each is a genius in his own setting. Some examples to corroborate this observation are given below.

The tribes use a banana leaf by reversing it, unlike the plains dwellers. Their answer is that the upper side of the banana leaf is covered with dust or the leftovers of birds.

The kite is the king of the feather-world in the folklore. But it is the owl which is the king in the folklore of the Godavari forests. The reason for the kite being out of their contention may be that these are dense woods where the kite can hardly enter. The Godavari forests are called Giddu vanalu. Giddus are arboreal birds. Only the owl or the giddu can hunt in the branches of trees in these dense forests.

As all of us know, our folklore and fables generally give an artistic explanation to what is merely an environmental probability. The tribes say that when the Pandavas left the forest for their kingdom, they blessed the tamarind to grow deep roots and the boorugu, shallow ones. They told the Boorugu and asked it to convey this blessing to the tamarind. The boorugu absent-mindedly pronounced the opposite before the tamarind. Owing to the force of character in the Pandavas boon, the tamarind grows extensively over manyam with its roots spread on the surface. Thus, the tamarind, which sheltered the great Pandavas once, has spread its roots on the surface and the boorugu has its roots deep in the earth, consequently being the tallest of trees. As a result, the tallest man in the plains of Godavari is mocked at with the comparison, "he is as tall as Boorugu". Alas! The short-rooted tamarind gets up-rooted easily during gales and storms.

Valmiki came to the hills from the plains. So they are smart. Once, one of them told the mutthadar. “Sir, I will show you a man in your exact likeness”. Amused by his words, the mutthadar promised him some land if he showed him one. The Valmiki promptly presented him a mirror. Astonished, the latter used to display the mirror proudly.

Environment is an inseparable part of the character of a community. Environment can not be viewed separately from the personality of the community. Literature and the rituals mirror the many phases of development in time, that lie in nature’s lap. And in that literature, we do get a hazy picture of the relative distances -distances in time or distances in space. From totemism to the pronouncements of justice, everything grows on the foundations of nature. Basing on the natural phenomena, the tribe interprets or adjusts the daily events of our life. Even his thought-process goes on changing in accordance with the changes of nature. The systems of society will be changing accordingly shaping themselves into ever new forms. The tale recounted by Mr. Korra Lakshmanna of Chintala Veedhi, Pathakota (Hukumpet Mandal of Visakha district) deserves narration in this context:

A she bird laid two eggs. Some hunters went there during *itikala* panduga to set fire to the forest. The male- bird suggested to its mate that they should flee the place. If the eggs were lost, she could lay them elsewhere again, he said. The mother-bird could not digest the idea of leaving her eggs. Unable to convince her, the male-bird fled the scene. The female bird prayed to God whereupon the fire got extinguished. The eggs were hatched; the chicks came out and enquired of their father. The mother-bird told them how their father left them in the lurch and advised them to forget him. One day the male-bird visited the family. There

ensued a quarrel between the couple about the possession of the chicks. Both the parents approached the king for justice.

The king had seven wives and as many sons. He was afraid of his fate, if his wives and children forsake him. So he gave a peculiar verdict citing a known example.

When a farmer fells a forest for podu and sows ragi seed, it would only be known as ragi field. If he sows bajra it would only be known as bajra field. And so, he told the female- bird, the mother of the chicks, that the chicks would naturally belong to the “seed” that is the father, just as in the case of an eloped wife. Unable to bear the agony at this verdict, the mother bird jumped into fire and met with her death.

It was born again to a couple as Chilakamma. She was their only daughter; every week her father gave her some coins to buy snacks at the weekly shanty. Chilakamma saved all that pocket money.

In the mean time, the king of that land, the same king who gave the verdict against the mother bird, fell unexpectedly short of money for shopping at a shanty, and goes to borrow from the parents of Chilakamma. Her father has then no ready cash to give the king. Then Chilakamma parts with her savings with a request to her father to buy her a spotted male calf. The king has with him such a calf and he readily sells it to her.

The calf has grown into a bull and the villagers sent all their cows along with the spotted bull to graze on the Godavari banks. They returned after some months, breeding some calves. Chilakamma then ties up in her place all the calves that

have spots about them. The people take it as a joke and allow her to do so for a time. She has continued this practice regularly. The villagers go to the king for justice. He is the same old king of our story. Chilakamma digs up the old verdict of the king and claims the ownership of the spotted calves because they are born to her spotted bull. The king remembers his old verdict of the ownership of the crop to rest with the seed. He becomes helpless and being scared of the girl, he silences her by marrying her. He shuts her up within a building without water or air.

It is the fate of the king, that none of the seven wives is accustomed to give him a warm water bath daily. So he is forced to take cold water bath (పచ్చినీళ్ళ స్నానం). Chilakamma gathers this information and requests a bandicoot (a rodent of the size of a big rat) to dig a tunnel to the bathing tank, where the king has his regular bath. Early one morning she sits on a lotus leaf in the middle of the deep waters of the tank. The king goes there for his regular bath, mistakes her for another lady in the dim light before dawn, advances towards her and dies in deep water.

The seven queens arrive to bemoan the king's death. On enquiry about why Chilakamma has not turned up, she comes out totally emaciated, looking almost a skeleton and narrates her story exposing the king's true nature. Thus goes the story of Lakshmana.

Natural resources deteriorate and transform as man's demands rise. Tied down to the same land, man has to innovate and adopt new farm-techniques to increase production. Thus the value of the property increases, resulting in the settlement of property rights. In the foregoing story, the lesson to be learnt is that a seed-oriented (వీజప్రధాన) family- order becomes a field-oriented one (క్షేత్రప్రధాన), owing to changes in nature. It may take some time to adjust to these fluctuations,

but change is certain. While doing both Kondapodu and low-land farming, experiences do vary, and it would be quite a dilemma about how to logically harmonize and reconcile the conflicting experiences.

Consequent upon these changes, the tribes gradually evolve into rural folk, mould themselves accordingly and overcome nature's barriers. Through increasing interaction with plains, they mould themselves in the process of integrating with the main stream of Indian value systems. They enrich Indian culture and make it many-faceted. Unlike the African and the other societies, who lose their sense of direction on coming in contact with modern civilization, these people are getting absorbed into the main stream of Indian culture.

సంప్రదించిన గ్రంథాలు - ఉపయోగించుకున్న ఉట్టంకింపులు

1. Leslie A. White "The evolution of culture" Cultural and Social Anthropology, ed. Peter B. Hammond. 1964, The Macmillan Co., P. 406 - Man, as an animal, possesses a number of characteristics which qualify him for culture. Among these may be mentioned, an erect posture, which leaves the forelimbs for non locomotory activities, an opposable thumb, which makes the hand an effective grasping organ; stereoscopic, chromatic vision; gregariousness; and possibly a few other traits, but the most important qualification of all is the ability to symbol.

2. Rethinking symbolism -Don Sparber, Trans, Alice L.Morton, Cambridge Studies and Social Anthropology 1975. P.121-2.

For example, in the case of smells the evocational field comprises all recollection likely to corroborate the feeling of recognition, and it is these recollection that evocation passes in review. This relative freedom of evocation is at the very basis of the social use of this psychological mechanism, symbolism.

Richard I. Ford ' Evolutionary Ecology' Explanations for pre historical change James N. Hill 1977, A School of American Research Book. P.164.

Slowly the system becomes more complex, the information content increases and the physical environment is modified from homogeneous severity to patchiness of increased variability.

A Handbook of social & Cultural anthropology, ed. JJ Hannigmenn, P.No. 652.

Conscious ideologies and social organisations are always the dialectical and transformed expressions of a hidden infrastructural logic i.e. neither socio-economic not even historical but relational, symbolic, synchronic, systemic, universal, and ultimately neurological.

Page 653. The structure of unconscious mirrors the logic of language.

Culture and Public Action, ed. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton Permanent black, 2004, New Delhi. p. 151

According to Kant, the quintessential cultural value of a good is its ability to evoke an experience of the sublime. It has a quality that causes awe and "stirs the soul".

See <http://www.cultureandpublicaction.org/>.

One particularly interesting set of models has been developed by Chwe (2000, 2001), who analyzes rituals and other forms of collective cultural expression as solutions to coordination problems. In order to generate collective action, an individual within a group must know what others in the group know, they in turn must know what she knows, and she in turn must know that they know that she knows, and so on - what game theorists call common knowledge. This sense of culture as a coordinating system is close to the view of many anthropologists. For example, Geertz (1973b, 5) believes, "with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun". He takes "culture to be those webs" Douglas and Isherwood (1979/1996, 37) Link culture directly to economic life by arguing that "consumption is the essential function of its capacity to make sense" (Douglas and Isherwood 1979/1996, 40).

3. Culture & Experience, Hollowell.

To say so, may seem or suggest a paradox, for the aborigines can and does on some occasions conceptually isolate the "elements" of 'unity' most distinctly. But his abstraction did not put him at war with himself. The

separable elements I have mentioned are all present in the metaphysical heart of the idea of 'person'. But the overruling mood is one of belief not of enquiry or descent (body, spirit, ghost, shadow, name, spirit, site and totem).

4. A handbook of Social & Cultural Anthropology ed. JJ Honningman.

Belief Systems Mary B.Black P.545.

Beliefs at the higher levels constant through many domains allow economy in the individuals cognitive system.

Page 601, Symbolic instrumentation – sacrifice.

5. Implicit meaning. Mary Douglas 1975. Routledge & Keganpaul, Introduction Page 5.

Our fears about the perils of global over population or destruction of resources or the evil affects of the countless procreation match those of a tribal society worrying about epidemics unleashed by insect or game animals disappearing from the forests because of human quarreling.

6. Lore Munro S. Edmonson. Holt Rynherhard & Winston inc. 1970 P.49-50. We have developed as a species more communicative potential than we 'need' for environmental purposes and hence we transmit in culture an overload of highly consequential but entirely metaphorical structure.

7. Ecological & cultural factors in special perceptual development Berry I,W. Inh, Canadian journal of Behavioral Science. 1971. 3 (4) P. 324-336.

Hunting people are expected to possess good visual discrimination and special skill and their cultures are expected to be supportive of the development of these skills, through the presence of high number or geometrical spatial concepts, a highly developed and generally shared arts and crafts production and socialisation practices whose content emphasizes independence and self-reliance and those techniques are supportive and encouraging of development. Implicit in this argument that as hunting diminishes in importance across samples ranked in terms of the ecology dimension, the discrimination and spatial skills will diminish as will each of the three cultural sides.

8. Page 282. To think in terms of our category of natural causation vs. a function of their culturally constituted attitudes towards the nature of phenominal world, it is based on the idea that some material object can be projected by sorcery into person's body in order to cause illness. Doctors cannot cure this kind of disease. So native doctors will flourish.

9. ఆంధ్రజ్యోతి వారపత్రిక. విశ్వదర్శనం. కాంట్ జ్ఞానతత్వం మీమాంస. నందూరి రామమోహనరావు. 7-8-81.

సంవేదనలు అనుభవాలుగా మార్చుకొని అవగాహన చేసుకునేది మనమనస్సు అయినా సంవేదనలను కలుగచేసేది మాత్రం బాహ్యప్రపంచంలోని వస్తువులే. ఇక్కడ ఒక ముఖ్యవిషయాన్ని గుర్తుపెట్టుకోవాలి. మనస్సునిర్మాణంలో ఉన్నస్థలం, కాలం, పన్నెండుసూత్రాలు, మనకుదృశ్యమానమవుతున్న ప్రపంచానికే తప్ప, యదార్థవస్తువులు స్థలానికి, కాలానికి అతీతమైనవి. అలాగే మన అవగాహనాసూత్రాలకుకూడా అతీతమైనది. కాని మనస్సు అలా ఊరుకోలేదుగదా. కుతూహలం కొద్దీ స్థలకాలాలను అవగాహనా సూత్రాలను యదార్థప్రపంచానికికూడా వర్తింప చేయడానికి ప్రయత్నిస్తూ ఉంటుంది. అలా ప్రయత్నించినపుడల్లా కొన్ని వైరంధ్యాలు మనకు ఎదురువుతుంటాయి.

◆ The human direction James L. Peacock and A. Thomas Kirsch. Preface- XV, 1970, Meridith Corporation Publication.

Recognising the difficulties of analysing subjective phenomena such as religion, we acknowledge the advantage of concentrating on more objective factors such as technology and economics. The temptation to concentrate on easily discernible and further reason to assign it the status of prime mover in the evolutionary process isa drunk having dropped his keys in the gutter, proceeded to search for them on sidewalk under the light. A passerby, noting the gutter was the place the drunk had dropped his keys, asked him, why he did not search there instead of on the sidewalk. The drunk replied “there is more light up here”. The moral is that the place most easily lighted is not necessarily the place to find what one is searching for.

◆ The Reddis of Bison hills. P. 202.

◆ Hand book of social & cultural athropology, ed. JJ Honnigman, 1973.

Page 548. Since knowledge of the indigenous natural science classification is of value to the myth analyst ... 'Belief Systems' Mary B Black.

◆ Tribal India P. Gilbert. Page 179.

Aryans who invaded India a system of landownership in which the land was considered as the property of God of the Tribe or as God itself. This situation was clearly acknowledged by the invaders who in order to placate Gods of the place, setting aside their priests or Brahmins, engaged the services of the village priests of non-Aryan origin, who being the descendants of the protecting spirit of the place would know how to placate them. This practice was also followed by non-aryan invaders as Gonds and other presumably Dravidian tribes who employed as priests aboriginal tribes men of Mundarian origin –Baigas – Bhuyas – in order to propriate the Gods of the land which they had conquered. In the similar passion the Oraons, who in some regions invaded the land of Mundaries as priests Mundaries. Rajput Chiefs were led to throne by Bhils or Minas.

◆ Lloyd A. Fallers. Nationalism in Uganda in Cultural & Social Anthropology, ed. Peter B. Hammond. P.274.

African ideologists lack the cultural resources which their Asian counterparts find in the religions of High Cultures of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islamism.

◆ ఆకాశ హర్ష్యాలు నిర్మించే అల్పజీవి. ఆంధ్రప్రభ దినపత్రిక, 12 ఆగస్టు 81.

◆ Saivism (Origin, History & Thought) Telugu University 1994, V.N.V.K.Sastry, Chenchu Mallanna - then and now. P.62

ఒకనాడు శ్రీశైలం దేవస్థానంలో చెంచులసేవలు - పూజారులు :

1. కల్యాణసేవలో పల్లకీ సేవ.
2. దసరాతొమ్మిదిరోజులు, శివరాత్రిఐదురోజులు, సంక్రాంతిమూడురోజులు, ఉగాది రెండురోజులు వాహనసేవ.
3. తప్పెట్టసేవ
4. గంధం, పత్రి, బంతి, దివిటీ సేవలు.
తోకల, మండ్ల, పిట్టల వారు పూజారులు.