TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE PRACTICES

Basing on the main concept of the study, the objectives were formulated and the instruments were prepared accordingly. After the statistical analysis of data the results were interpreted more rationally. The inferences of the present study were compared and discussed in the light of other available studies at regional, national and international level.

The major issues related to health and perspectives of the tribals, which are interest of anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, health workers and medical practitioners are as following:

1) Magico-religious practices
2) Ethno medicine practice

I. MAGICO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Savaras are nature worshipers and believe in the existence of supernatural beings, which are not visible to the naked eye but are responsible for health and ill health, happiness and misery. If proper respect is not paid towards them by the non-observance of different ceremonies to appease the spirits and the deities, their displeasure is expressed through the various diseases and bodily injuries and other forms of health ailments. They believe that these spirits resides on the trees, in the hills, in the hill streams, tanks and wells and the outskirts of
the village. The Savara pantheon of Gods, Goddesses and spirits are categorized into four major kinds.

The Gods and Goddesses which protect their villages like *Jakara devata* (main deity adopted from the Jatapus), *Andangson* (Kite God), *Ahorsasun* (Snake God), *Dorison* (God of a Cattle), *Godalsum* (God of Thacth grass), *Sunnapu devudu* (the God of Fishing and Hunting).

The second category are those benevolent spirits which are pious, helpful and believe to protect the Savaras to overcome from their illness, such as *Galiloddalu*, *Kondaloddalu*, *Desaloddalu*, *Kotemloddalu*, *Intiloddalu*, *Pantaloddalu* and *Sodangi*. *Nyonanji*, *Kulbaji*, *Sonumgi* and *Adaja*. These spirits are believed to reside in the stones, agricultural implements, tree stumps, snake pits, thick shrubs and ravines. A few of these spirits resides in the Savara houses which are called as *devatha biddalu*. (*Biddi*) small earthen jars are located in the inside of the house or near the walls where they depict the wall paintings of a Sun God, Moon God, Snakes, man, Horse, Elephant, Goat, Pig, Peacock, Floral plants and trees (Cariyota palm). They are worshipped with the offerings of rice and pulses which are placed in the biddis.

The third types of Goddesses are malevolent and are responsible for common ailments, diseases and believed to cause abortion to the pregnant women such as *Gusada*, *Gojyo*, *Sathalamma*, *Kanenivhojan* and *Jamma*. *Alambson* (who causes fever and rickets). *Bayson* (causes
madness), Gajjisun (causes itch). The malevolent spirits also resides in the houses of the village which are referred to as *deyyam biddalu* such *Alazinuodag* as *Jamudhodaj*, and *Sittatum*. The Savaras, ties small earthen parts on the roof of their thatched houses for these malevolent spirits, which they believe cause ill-health and injuries, if they are not properly satisfied. They are offer the rice, red gram, onions, millets like *korras, sama, vooda, jonnalu* and bangles, beads and ear rings to these spirits by placing these in the earthen jars to satisfy both male and female spirits (*deyyum biddalu*). They are believed to enter in to their houses during night time. If the household member hear sounds of agricultural implements they believe that the male spirits (*deyyum biddalu*) have visited their houses. If the Kitchen utensils are disturbed, they believe that it is the work of the female spirits (*deyyum biddalu*).

The fourth type spirits are ancestral spirits which tries to protect their progeny from various diseases and other misfortunes. The Savaras do believe the existence of a soul which ranked below to that as Gods and Goddesses, which they call it as “Gali”. They believe that after the death their ancestors took the form of Gali (ancestral spirits) which are invisible to the naked eye but acquire supernatural power and looks after the well being of their descendants trying to protect them from ill-health. They believe that these spirits attend to all the life cycle ceremonies performed in the family and non-performance or faulty performance angers them,
resulting in failure of the crops and spread of the diseases. They also believe that the souls of the dead relatives who died of unnatural causes become Ghosts which are of evil in nature. Such Ghosts are not worshipped by the Savaras and they tries to drive them away with the help of manthragadu (magico religious specialist).

They perform the following to mutual’s and festivals to appease the supernatural being.

**Ankadu pandaga or koppidi devatha pandaga ceremony:** This festival is performed once in a year in the month of October on Sunday. The exact date is fixed by the Voori Janni (main priest of Jakara Devatha). This festival is officiated by the Yajjodu. A small hut is erected in their village, the inside of which is cleaned with the ippa sarai (intoxicating beverage) made up of Mahuva flowers. They offer rice, and mullets like chiodi, gantel, jonnalu, koralu, oodalu, samalu along with the raw onion and pray the deity to protect their people from fevers and other diseases. This procedure is commonly referred to as “Kanikaveyyadum” or “manayinchadum”. Depending upon the financial position they sacrifice either a buffalo, a pig or a goat to the deity.

**Nandi devatha pandaga ceremony:** The Savara perform this festival along with the other tribals of this area like the Jatapu and the Konda Doras. In the study area, this festival is referred to as “ammavarini degapettadum pandaga”. This festival is mainly performed once in a year
to propitiate the deity to protect them from epidemics like small pox, chicken pox and other communicable diseases. The date of the festival is fixed by Janni and performed by Yajjodu. On the day of festival, they religious functionaries prepare toy models of bullock cart, bulls, male and female figurines, figures of birds and weapons with the wood. These models along with the live bird are carried to each house by the religious functionaries chanting the name of Nandi Devatha Ammavaru and request her to come out of their houses. After covering all the houses in the villages, these models are taken in the village outskirts with a request to the deities not to enter into the village. The prayer is as follows "Please do not come to our houses as we are dirty and smell awful. Hence do not come nearer". They sacrifice a pig to the deity and request her to satisfy with these offering and not to cause any worries. This bullock cart model is referred to as Ujjani bandi and they believe that if this is placed on the children, their diseases will be cured. The investigator has observed that even the infant children are placed in the ground in the sunlight and place the Ujjani bandi on bodies.

**Kondaloddala pandaga ceremony:** During podu cultivation they perform this festival to protect the families from injuries and other causes of ill-health. If any of the family members sustains an injury they believe that is due to the crime committed against these spirits by the individual and on finding the reason of their displeasure from the Yajjodu who inform
the people (basing on the kanika) they sacrifice, the animals such as the goat or pig is sacrificed to appeals the deity. In addition to the above they perform Chukka pandaga, Dammula panduga, Kondem kotta panduga, Mamidi kotta pandaga, Tenka panduga etc. Though these festivals are mainly intended for agricultural production, the non-performance of these festivals results in illhealth.

**Moyumpur Ceremony**: This ceremony is performed to appease the dieties. Sandanyopur agolaemae or Kurtari tungtur, to save the pregnant women during delivery.

**Adodapur and kommiboipur Ceremony**: These ceremonies are performed to appease the spirits and not to cause illness to the children.

**Kabienyopur Ceremony**: This ceremony is intended to save the children from the epilepsy.

**Akkotayalum Ceremony**: It is a ceremony to appeal the malevolent spirits not to cause illhealth to the people especially the children.

**Agothalkaenyotus Ceremony**: It is a ceremony preformed to the spirits with a request to save the children from fever.

**Asiyaranyotur Ceremony**: This ceremony is performed in order to protect the children from persistent cough.

**Ajerejanyodan ceremony**: This ceremony is mainly intended to appeals the deities to restore health to the children.
**Gargonsam or Samdasum ceremony:** This ceremony is celebrated once in every month to propitiate the deity with a request to prevent the evil spirit from entering into the village and causing ill-health.

Religious functionaries of Savara community:

The Savara religious Organization compares three religious functionaries.

1. The *Desari* or *Muhurtagadu*
2. The *Zanni* or *kudanan*
3. *Yajjuralu* or *Yajjodu*
4. *Buya*
5. *Tonaimer*
6. *Ragaboi*
7. *Guarkumboi*

The *Desari* also known as *muhratagadu* who mainly fixes the auspicious time for all religious, function, agricultural operations, house building and all life cycles ceremonies except the death ceremony. The office of the *Desari* is not hereditary and technically is open to any person in the community. However it is noticed that the village *Desari* is usually hails from the dominant *Kulam merangi* group of village. Through this office not hereditary, it is noticed that the hereditary principal is being followed in many villages. A rigorous training is imparted to the youth who
wants to become a *Desari*. Women are prohibited to practice this profession. The knowledge of the constellation of the stars in the universe is imparted to the individual by his teacher and during the training many restrictions are imposed on him which is very severe.

The head man of the village is entrusted with the responsibly to select the *Desari*, however in practice he is selected from the dominant Kulam *merangi* group of the village. The village *Desari* is consulted by the Savara in all the important events and ceremonies like fixing the auspicious dates for marriage negotiations, naming ceremony, nose and ear pierce ceremony.

His role is communal and important during religious celebrations. Expect the *Zanni*, no other person in is entitled to touch the images of the *Jakera* devata of Savaras. *Zanni* is the only person entitled to prepare *Bonam* (rice cooked with water) to offer the *Jakera*devata. The *Zanni* before praying *Jakera*devata first cleans the holy group with water by himself and prepare a design before the shrine with millet floor.

*Zanni:*

*Zanni* or *Janni* is the main religious functionary of the village who is the priest to village Godesses *Jakaramma*. This deity which is the principle deity of Jatapus and Khonds is adopted by the Savaras and was included into their Patheon of Gods and Godesses. In the Savara society his office is associated with important religious function. In contrast to *Desari*, his
role is prominent only at the time of religious ceremonies that are conducted in the village. The nature of this office is such that he works not for individuals but for the community. **Yajjodu:** The *Yajjodu* is a magico-religious medicine man among the Savaras. His appearance is of feminine type in the pattern of dress, bodily movements and habits. Hence, the local non-tribal of the area generally believe him as enunch, but infact, they are not enunchs as they are leading normal family life. Speaking of Yajjodu, Pareek(1977) observes that among Jatapu’s “*Yajjodu* is a distinct person than *manthragadu*, through their duties may be combined and performed by the same person. He is invariably a man, though he is always dressed like a woman”. The *Yajjodu* is consulted by a Savara’s during the spread of the diseases, ill-health, injuries and other Calamities which they believe are caused by the supernatural beings. They believe that he has powers to communicable with Gods and Goddesses and ancestor spirits and inform them about the reason for their anger or displeasure. The *Yajjodu* of this Savara tribe are considered as more powerful than the *Yajjodu* of other tribes of this area with the result. In case of the difficulty, they approach Savara Yajjodu to perform a magico-religious ceremony called as *Puchchini* to drive away the evil spirits. Pareek elaborates the ceremony as follows.

**Buya:** Buya is also a religious functionary who perform marriage ceremonies and harvest festivals. The deviner and the disease detector is
called as *kudammer*. The *Tonaimer* is a magico-religious functionary who performs rights to protect the people from sorcery. The *ragaboi* or *ragamaran*, is a medicine man within the tribe. Funeral rights and ceremation are performed by *Guarkumboi* and *siggamaren*.

The Savara consider the children as very important for the continuation of their tribe. Hence many ceremonies illustrated above pertains to the health of the children. Surya Narayana (1977) observes that among the Savaras the absence of the children is regarded as very bad and this is reflected in their custom of permitting a barren wife's husband to marry again. Among Savaras, a pregnant women is highly respected and she works almost to the day of delivery. Their idea of conception is both biological and Supernatural. They generally believe that the soul of the dead persons of the Ancestors enter into the womb of the pregnant women. During pregnancy, she is forbidden to eat the flesh of all child bearing animals, wild pig, snakes and eatables like cucumbers, papaya fruit etc. Surya Narayana(1977) observes that a barren women like a women who loses her children due to infantile mortality takes on oath to the spirit KITTUNG to whom a pig is to be sacrificed. The same practice is observed among the Savaras in the areas of the study. The Savaras attribute the abortion of a pregnant women as the work of malevolent spirits to whom they sacrifices which vary from village to village. Prenatal care among Savaras shows the importance, they gave it to the pregnant
women as well as to the infants. Sexual intercourse is a taboo after 6th month of pregnancy. An elaborate ceremony is preformed on the 7th month of pregnancy known as moyunpur ceremony. The non-performance of this ceremony, they may result in the death of the mother and the child. For the 1st pregnancy, the Savaras sacrifice a goat to the God Kurtans to save the pregnant women during delivery. The ceremony such as kumkumbobpur ceremony, kadaenyopur ceremony (tonsure ceremony) kannibasu ceremony, kadaenyopur ceremony, the kanniyo ceremony aggottalpur, kuddipuran (name giving ceremony), uangsum (thanks giving Ceremony) uangsunpur (child care) etc to appease to deities and spirits to Protect men from ill-health. In addition to the sacred methods of healing using the Magico-religious ceremonies the Savaras also resort to the secular method of healing mainly with the use of herbal medicine.

Medico-magical man, shaman, or which crafter performs a range of traditional beliefs and practices concerned with communication with the spirit world, anthropologists, define a medico magical man, shaman, or witch crafter as an intermediary between the natural and spiritual world, who travels between worlds in a state of trance. Once in the spirit world, the medico magical man or shaman or witch crafter would commune with the spirits for assistance in healing, hunting or weather management.

Some social scientists comment on the term “medico magical man”, “shaman” or “witch crafter” arguing that is a culturally specific institution
and that by expanding it to fit and healer from any traditional society it produces a false unity between these cultures and creates a false idea of an initial human religion predating all others. However, others say that these anthropologists simply fail to recognize the commonalities in diverse traditional societies.

There are many variations in the institution of medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter throughout the world, though there are some beliefs shared by all forms of shamans. The spirits can play important roles in human lives. The medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter can control and cooperate with the spirits for the communities benefit.

- The spirits can be either good or bad
- Medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter engages various processes and techniques to incite trace; such as singing, dancing, meditating and drumming
- Animals play important role. Acting as omens and message barers
- The shaman’s sprit leaves the body and enters into the supernatural world during certain tasks
- The shaman can treat illnesses or sickness
- Medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter are healers, gurus and magicians
Medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter claim the ability to diagnose and cure human suffering and in some tribal and primitive societies the ability to cause suffering. They have ability to control the weather, divination, the interpretation of dreams, astrophysical projection and travelling to upper and lower worlds. Medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter traditions have existed throughout the world, since pre-historic times. Medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter is basing on the premise that invisible forces or spirits that affect the lives of the living pervade the visible world. Medico magical man organized priests of instinct.

Etymology: Medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter is referring as traditional healers of central and North Indian tribals. Buddhist Monk borrowed the word “shaman” from talisman ultimately from Sanskrit shaman. However, it is disputed whether the connection with ancient Sanskrit is actual or merely apparent due to the words’ similarities. Another explanation analyzes this word as containing root “sa” this means “to know”, “Shaman” is one who knows, a person who is an expert in keeping together the multiple codes through which this complex belief system appears, and has a comprehensive view of them in their mind with certainty of knowledge. In its common usage, it has replaced the older English language term witch doctor, a term that unities the two stereotypical functions of the shaman knowledge of magical and other lore
and the ability to cure a person and mend a situation. However, this term is derogatory and anthropologically inaccurate. Both academics and traditional healers themselves have raised abjections to the use of shaman as generic terms as well; given that the word comes from a specific place, people and set of practices.

Function: The Medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter may fulfill multiple functions in the community such as healing, leading as sacrifice, preserving the tradition by story-telling and songs, fortune-telling; acting as a psycho pomp (literal meaning, “guide of souls”). As a psycho pomp, the shaman may accompany the incarnating soul of a new born body, or inversely, the departing soul of the newly dead. They may also serve the community by maintaining the tradition through memorizing long song and tales.

Initiation and learning: In the world, tribal cultures the magical man, shaman or witch crafter plays a priest role. The priest is the socially initiated, ceremonially inducted member of a recognized religious organization. He holds certain ran and functions as the tenant of an office that was held by other before him the Medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter is one who as a consequence of a personal psychological crisis has gained a certain power of his own. Medico magical man, shaman or witch crafter may be initiated via a serious illness, by being struck by lighting and dreaming of thunder to become one might follow a calling to
become a shaman. There is usually a series of cultural imagery expected to be experienced during medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter initiation regardless of the method of induction, meeting a spiritual guide, being “dismantled” and “reassembled” again, after with implanted amulets such as magical crystals. The imagery of intuition generally speaks of transformation and granting powers to transcend death and rebirth. Among the tribals the medico-magical man, shaman or witch crafter powers are consider to be inheriting whereas in other places have require lengthy training. Among the Savara’s one may behave in ways that medical clinics would perhaps characterize as psychotic, buy which Savara people may interpret as possession by a spirit who demands that one assume the shamanic vocation. Among the Eastern Ghats medico magical man shaman or witch crafter are called in their dreams. They seek communion with spirits through a vision quest whereas bonds seeking the power to defend their family against enemies, apprentice themselves to accomplish. Similarly, the gonds and koloms have an elaborate cosmological system predicated on the ritual consumption.

The tribals of Srikakulam particularly the Savara has always believed in the existence of supernatural powers around them. Some like the Sun, Moon, Earth, fire and water which were visible to them, but most were invisible, mysterious and omnipresent. Social anthropologists reveal that
the essential traits of folk medicine are similar and differ only superficially. To tribes there was no distinction between magic (spiritual protoplasm) religion and medicine. The tribal attributed the causation of disease to good and evil spirits. Diseases were to be treated by religious rites, propitiation or magical procedures.

The Savara tribe in the Srikakulam is quite interesting. They are blended with the admixture of the divine traits born out of the religion, rituals, worship, prayer and self surrender to indigenous Gods and to socio-economic activity. With deities of 21 orders, celebrated many festivals at the level of village, about a dozen at the family level and a host of rituals relating to disease, cure and life cycle, about half of a dozen specialists in each village to conduct the religious ceremonies and rituals and sacrifice of not less than dozen animals/birds by each family on an average in a year, clearly indicate the rich and complex religious life of the Savara. The religion plays a dominant role influencing all other aspects of social life of the Savara. The special feature of the festivals is that they are coupled with allimgadu (traditional liquor), dance in a fit of myth and joy surcharge heavily in tune with music and rhythm. The festivals are celebrated over a period of one day/ week/ fortnightly. Similarly different deities and spirits are connected with various diseases. They identify the supernatural powers with a group of powerful forces, which controls and
influences the happening in the community. Thus they have specific gods for their health and disease and for calamities and so on. All these deities have their own respective departments, areas of influences, effect and control and nature of action. The Savara and other tribes in this area have a village deity who is the general protecting goddess. They are Ammathalli, Adilakshmi, Jakaramma, Gangamma, Asiramma, Kuchalamma, Nandi devudu, Polamma etc., Specific deities like pothuraju and ammavaru are connected with an epidemics like chickenpox and cholera.

Social festivals include those celebrated during the life cycle process like birth, name giving, puberty, marriage and death. The festivals classified as religious are to propitiate the numerous deities and spirits offering sacrifices. The festivals are intended to please deities and thus avert the evils that may befall before the community. These festivals are celebrated jointly by all households in the village. Such festivals as Ooru panduga, Takari devata panduga, Agalu, Goddalamma devata etc come under this category. Of all the pandugalu, agalu is the most important and expensive for the Savara. This is conducted once in three or five years.

Among the Savara, specialists for conducting the religious ceremonies and rituals do not get the knowledge by professional training. As per the orders of the God in the dream, one enters into the job and becomes professional. The different specialists associated with religious
life of the Savara are: 1. Desari: one who fixes the muhurthams (auspicious time) for conducting all the religious performances. 2. Kundan/kudanboi: one who conducts the ceremonies. 3. Ittalmaran: specialists to make drawings on the walls. The female members cannot be the specialists in fixing up of muhurthams to conduct the rituals or Ittalmaran to draw the figures on the walls. But, they may become kundanboi to conduct the rituals. Kundanboi is particularly involved in rituals relating to disease and cure.

‘Birinda’ is the basic social unit, for the individuals’ immediate emotional and biological needs are satisfied by being a member of this group. The Birindha acts as a unit in the organization of rituals. The most important of these rituals include assandele (at the time of menstruation of a girl); sirruning (marriage); agnathi (when the women have conceived) and ayatojong (death ceremony). In addition to these rituals, brindha also takes care of other rituals, conducted for example for the safe delivery of a child, for the good health of a new born child etc. The members of a birinda show great concern in case of disease to any of its members. As it is believed that disease is due to the displeasure caused to the dead ancestors, the Savara adopt a magico-religious approach for cure. The head of the birinda takes the responsibility to consult the kudon or kudanboi to get to know the reason for illness to one of the members of his
birinda and also what he should do for restoration of his health. The kudan or kudonboi invokes the dead ancestors and finds out which action of the head caused displeasure to the ancestors. He/she also reveals the demands of the ancestors. The head of the birinda, accordingly takes the responsibility of organizing the rituals for restoration of good health of the member suffering from a disease. All the expenditure to be incurred towards organization of such rituals is met by the members of the birinda.

The Savara believe the four types of spirits. They are: 1) Protective deities or spirits believed to safe guard the welfare of the village and are worshipped at a common Moon, Earth, jakaramma, kuchalamma etc. 2) Benevolent spirits who are worshipped at the family level lest they bring disease, death and other calamities are gali loddalu, desiloddalu, pantaloddalu, sodanga etc. 3) Evil or malevolent spirit and deities controlling chicken pox, fever, abortion, etc- Ammavaru, santhalamma, kannibojana, gusada etc, and 4) Ancestral spirits who are very benevolent and protect the family members- include bhootha, peeri and pisachi, deyyam, etc.

The Savaras have such a strong faith in deities that figures are drawn on the walls or the ground. Sometimes an altar is erected near to the house to drive away sickness. While analyzing these beliefs, it is important to understand and identify the cause of illness and nature of
treatment. Religious performances occupy a prominent place in treatment of disease. Most of these diseases can be cured of treated by religious rites or by propitiating these deities, spirits and gods directly or through medico-magical man/ Yejjodu/ Shamans/ Magical procedure.

It may be pointed out that disease and treatment, particularly in the tribal communities cannot be properly understood in isolation. Health and treatment are very much connected with the environment and forest ecology. Since, the forest happens to be the main source of getting medicinal plants, the different forest laws restricting the use of forest resources are adversely affecting the health and treatment in tribal communities. In our field visits and health camps in tribal areas of Srikakulam district, observed how the janni and yejjodu or medico magical men were facing that this medical culture was low-cost, less hazardous and more culturally acceptable than that of any other curative system.

Medico-magical man/ Yejjodu/ Shamans/ Magico religious practitioner/ medicine man in tribal areas, there are a group of specialists- The janni (priest), magicians (yejjodu), of medicine man whose services are sought depending on the cause of illness. Among the Savaras, there is the janni religious headman and yejjodu or the spirit doctor. The yejjodu worships the deities when epidemics or disease are happened in the village. The janni through magical performances controls the malevolent
spirits. Among the Savaras, the religious headman propitiates the village Gods and deities. The religious headman propitiates to ward off the evil spirits. The medico-magical man and villagers have a common faith in the techniques and quite often, both share the same cultural tradition. Illness believed to cause by magic must be prevented by counter magic and wherever the magic concept of disease prevails great variety of protective measures have been derived and a large number of objects with magical properties are used for such purposes, fetishes, amulets and talisman for example.

In the agency area of Andhra Pradesh, the healers are known as “yajjodu”. Their ritualized ingestion of masculine bearing for the divination and diagnosis of sorcery. They are famous throughout the region for their intricately complex and symbiotically dense healing alters. Savara Sibbu has argued that the dualistic ideology under planning the practice and 22 years of experience of malliguda village shamanism. The physical embodiment of the supernatural opposition between benevolent and malevolent energies the shaman acts also as a manager of scare ecological resources. The rich symbolism behind shamanism has been documented in some in-depth field works. “Yajjodu” serves the community by performing ceremonies to cure diseases, ward off evil, influence the
weather and harvest, and by practicing other forms of healing such as herbalism.

In agency area region of Andhra Pradesh the *adivasis* refer to their shaman's as 'clever man' and 'clever women', *adivasis* use their purported magical powers. Besides healing contact with spiritual beings initiation and other secret ceremonies, they are also enforcers of tribal laws, keepers of special knowledge and may ‘hex’ to death, one who breaks a social taboo.

Folk medicine and belief: Folk belief is a body of traditional knowledge by means of which a community or individuals conceptualize and interpret the natural and the supernatural world

- It is a belief that is unofficial, informal and
- It is circulated by word of mouth (belief legends, songs, dance etc) observation and demonstration
- Limited control and concern about what exist beyond the visible world tend to be the basis of folk belief. It involves relating to or manifesting faithful devotion to an acknowledged reality or deity.

Superstition: Traditional and informal or local explanation for fortune or misfortune, luck or bad luck, either by individual or by folk groups, these includes beliefs surrounding:

- Interpretation of dreams
• Premonition (involving waking up from sleep in the morning from your left hand side: hitting your left foot while going in search for something; black cat crossing the road in front of you, owl crying on your roof top at night, and weather forecast)

• Beliefs surrounding fairies

• Using certain items or objects either for protection or to being good luck

• Bad luck signs involving breaking mirrors, opening an umbrella inside the house etc.

• Folk beliefs related to weddings

• Folk beliefs about the dying, the dead wake keeping, burial and funeral,

Animism: Belief in the supernatural power and divine role of inanimate or non-living thing or objects such as lakes, rivers, mountains, hills, sacred groves and rocks.

Witch Craft: Belief in the supernatural power of some individuals to cast spells, haunt or have ‘second sight’ and to carry out other forms of communication through time and space. Practitioners worship gods and goddesses represented by natural phenomena such as moon, stars, sun and mother earth.
II. ETHNO-MEDICINE PRACTICES

Anthropology as an integrated science of man deals with biological and cultural aspects of man. Presently anthropologists are more involved in applying their knowledge and techniques for human welfare.

Ethno-medicine is a sub-field of medical anthropology and deals with the study of traditional medicines: not only those that have relevant written sources (e.g. Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda), but especially those, whose knowledge and practices have been orally transmitted over the centuries.

In the scientific arena, ethno-medical studies are generally characterized by a strong anthropological approach, more than a biomedical one. The focus of these studies is then the perception and context of use of traditional medicines, and not their bio-evaluation.

Ethno-medicine refers to “those beliefs and practices relating to disease which are the products of indigenous cultural development and are not explicitly derived from the conceptual frame work of modern medicine” (Misra et al, 2003).

The culture of a people comprises the complete structure of their ideas, beliefs, morals, laws and language plus all the tools, weapons machines and other devices. It expresses how a man in the past has
reacted to his environment, which consists of the external and material as well as of the environment spiritual. The environment life and culture influences the tribal people. They had rich traditional culture of worshipping, nature and sharing and living in harmony with nature. Their festivals were based on nature. They celebrate festivals for every flowering, harvesting and initiation of new agricultural produce. Forests abound with flora and fauna, many of which have medicinal properties. Tribals through generations of observations have discovered these properties.

Every culture, irrespective of its simplicity and complexity, has its own beliefs and practices concerning diseases. Every culture evolves its own system of medicine in order to treat disease in its own way. This treatment of disease varies from group to group. If a health policy meant for tribals is to be formulated, it is important to study these traditional practices and their implications for modern medicine. Unfortunately, very little work has been on the interaction between traditional and modern medical practices. Data on health, the concept of disease and the nature of the treatment are particularly non-existent.

Traditional health care system still persist in most of the tribal settlements in Srikakulam agency are including the present study sample mandals, where the present study was carried out. Traditional health care
systems in Srikakulam agency area is referred as “Natu Vaidyam”. It is popularly even today in almost all the tribes in the agency areas of Srikakulam district. Natu vaidyudu or Yejjodu plays a key role in this system of medical treatment in tribal society. Herbal medicine has been largely used in the traditional health care system. Still large majority of the interior tribals are primarily depending on herbal medicine for curing various diseases which they get affected. This treatment of disease varies from one culture to another culture. These tribals in the study area still have the belief in evil eye, sorcery, witchcraft and super natural powers or spirits. They attribute the causes for certain of the diseases due to super natural powers.

Srikakulam area is ethno-medically and ethnically very rich in the possession of high diversity of medicinal plants and herbs. Tribals possess a wealth of knowledge concerning the utilization and conservation of medicinal plants. The age old traditional knowledge is confined to contain family groups of tribes they lived in the agency area for many centuries and established symbiotic relationship with the forests. Forest flora and fauna form their principle sources of livelihood. They employ wide variety of plants and animals for curative purposes in the native system of medicines.
In tribal’s medicine (horopathy), herbs from an integral part of health care system. Besides this, herbs are used in the preparation of various cosmetics, colours and other beautification items for body. The tribals employ herbal drugs for various ailments. In recent times, tribal farmers cultivate medicinal herbs such as pipplamodi, papaya and turmeric in their kitchen gardens and agricultural farms. *Pippalamodi* has potential medicinal and cultural value. It is an economic crop which they cultivate through organic farming method. Some of the non-timber forest produce items collected by the tribals in the forest have medicinal value and these are procured by GCC for distribution purposes to the pharmaceutical companies.

Still large majority of the interior tribals use herbal medicine to cure certain minor and major ailments. First they try to cure certain ailments home remedies, falling which further they approach local medicine men for treatment with the herbal medicine. The tribals have faith in their own traditional healers; these traditional healers (tribal medicine men) have much knowledge in herbal medicine. In agency area, *natu vaidyam* is very popular in which *yajjodu* has a key role. The tribal people in the agency area also collect the medicinal plant in the forest for marketing purpose as well as for their own use in cure of certain diseases.
Besides medicine man, many tribes had herbalists, who had a wider knowledge of herbs and their medicinal uses were consulted in the case of minor ailments not requiring ceremonial treatment. The Savara identify the male and female trees/plants on the basis of quantity of production. The tree/plant, which gives less production, is considered as male and more production as female. The following medicinal plants are found in Srikakulam agency is described in Table-4.

Table-4: Plants used medicinally by the Savara tribes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Local language of the plant</th>
<th>Botanical name</th>
<th>Type of disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Usiri</td>
<td>Emblica Officinalis</td>
<td>General pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nalla jeedi</td>
<td>Semicarpus Anacardium</td>
<td>Cough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ganneru</td>
<td>Thevetia Peruvina</td>
<td>Wounds and cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pukejam</td>
<td>Leucas Cephalstus</td>
<td>Pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gantham</td>
<td>Santhanalum album</td>
<td>Headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ankudu</td>
<td>Ficus specis</td>
<td>Wounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Karakkai</td>
<td>Terminalia chebula</td>
<td>Cough and cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tutibodda</td>
<td>Lamblogyn</td>
<td>Bone fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lankaidam</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Bone fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Osendra</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Gasto-esophageal disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rakasi</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Eye diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ramabalam</td>
<td>Annona squamosa</td>
<td>Menstrual disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pindi kura</td>
<td>Amarthus sps.</td>
<td>White discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Musti</td>
<td>Strychnos nux-vomica</td>
<td>Menstrual pains, malaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tulasiti</td>
<td>Oscimum sanctum.</td>
<td>Cough and cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dasari aku</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jammi aku</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kanuga aku</td>
<td>Pongamia pinnata</td>
<td>Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Vellulli</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nalleru</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Paralysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Megasiri gedda</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Impotency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NA- Not available
In the light of above, the interacting influences of the socio-cultural milieu towards essential biological and physical maladies should be analyzed. Socio-economic factors are accepted as multiple causes of diseases. Among the tribes of Srikakulam, illness and its consequent treatment is not always an individual or family affair, but the decision about the nature of treatment of made at community level. In some specific diseases, the entire community is expected to observe certain taboos or norm of food habits. One cannot deny the impact of this psychological support in the context of treatment and cure. This aspect has to be borne in minds, while introducing modern health care facilities. The unprecedented depletion of forest has deprived their traditional sources of nutrition and medication. Traditionally, the tribals were able to medicate themselves from the wealth of herbs, leaves, roots and plant juices.

Some experienced tribals have shared their knowledge with the authors about the cure of some important diseases like diarrhea, chronic dysentery, chronic constipation, piles, snakebite, rheumatism, diabetes, leucoderma of skin and urine infection. This information is being reported by us for the first time (not reported by earlier investigators i.e., Saxena et al. (1988) as well as Jain (1991).