

CHAPTER - III
OGGU KATHA-ITS CULTURAL
MILIEU

III. OGGU KATHA - ITS CULTURAL MILIEU

Theatre as seen in the previous chapter structured on its own grammar, is bound to survive on the inter relationship that exists between the units such as text, context / space, performer and audience. In the process of relationship among the events the meanings are conveyed. Since the meanings have to have bearing within the units, an inevitable interplay of the units takes in sharing that which is called as Traditional Knowledge. Language in general and theatrical language in particular is shared by the folk, which owns it and understands it to general consequences. Therefore to read a language it is imperative to understand who speaks it in what contexts. Unless one understands the people and their language, one may not be able to understand the different ways of communicating in different contexts. The language refers to the language system shared by a community of speakers, where as "Parole" refers to the individual speech acts made possible by the language. i.e., the concrete utterances by individual speakers in actual structures (Saussure. 1966; p. 149).

Therefore, to understand the language, it is imperative to understand the community, which speaks it. Arguing from their standpoint a theatrical grammar should essentially relate itself to the relationship between the audience and performers who share and understand the language of theatre. For this reason, to understand Oggu Katha form from a theatrical perspective it is most proper to understand the community, which owns it and perpetuates

it. Therefore, in this chapter, as cultural milieu to Oggu Katha, ethnographic details of the community of Kurumas / Gollas and their priests known as oggupujarulu who actually perform this katha (Narrative) is studied. This study is crucial because the material objects used to invoke certain signs while performing the narrative is shared by the community during various rituals, be it at familial or communal levels. Similarly the verbal expressions in the narrative of the performance are also shared by the community at various contexts. Unless one understands such background, one may not perhaps understand better the theatrical grammar that is implicit in Oggu Katha.

Oggu Katha, which manifests itself in different places, with different motives, in its most indigenous, untouched and pure form is found in 'Einavolu'. Einavolu or Inole and or Eileni as it is popularly known is a remote village near Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh state (plates 1 & 2). The Mallikarjuna Devasthanam of Inole is maintained by the endowment department of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. The inscriptions found in the temple premises read that the temple was built by 'Ganapathi Deva' of Kakatiya Dynasty around 11th century A.D. and installed deity is called 'Mailaru Deva' (plate 3). Mailaru Deva is one of the many names given to Mallanna, the caste deity of the pastoral community of the Andhra Pradesh. The family of Oggu Pujaries serving this temple bear the surname of "Majjiga" which means butter milk itself hints at the origin of the community. These Oggu Pujaries at Inole perform and narrate the story of Mallanna exclusively. They belong to Kuramas sub-sect of pastoral community of Andhra Pradesh,

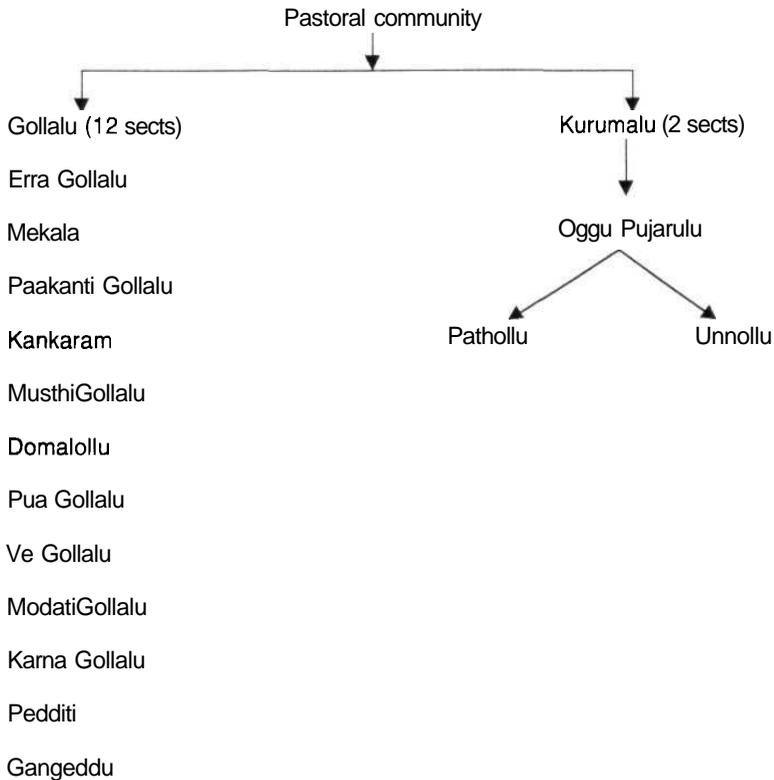
which makes their livelihood from cattle, and sell milk and milk products. They are also shepherds. The community popularly called as "Yadavas / Yadavulu" owe their origin to Lord Krishna. There are two major divisions amongst the community. The 'Gollas and the Kurumas'. The 'Gollas are again of as many as twelve sub-sects and Kurumas are of two divisions. "Sarlandri Balamma'. who belongs to the "Golla" community and is of 75 years of age explained thus on the division of ' Gollalu', *"Maa Mandila Unnattu iga inka ewarila ledu'. Memu Krishnuniki puttinnollam gada andukiinni teerluga unnamu. Krishnuniki eduguru pendlalu gollala manta. Aayana pillalnnattu iga kurmolemo Mallanna biddalu. Gollalu pannedu theerlunnaru, konni perlu chepta: Erra Gollalu, PaakanatiGollalu, Mushti Gollalu, Domalollu, Pua Gollalu, Ve Gollalu, Modati Gollalu, Karna Gollalu. Kurumollalo kuda rendu theerlunnaru: Pathollu, inka, Unnollu. Allane Oggu Pujarolu, Kurmollu antam. Gollollu Mallannanu puja cheste, Kurmollaku BeerannaDevudannattu"*¹

"We in our community have different sects this is mainly because we are the descendents of Lord Krishna. Krishna had seven wives and we are his children. Children of each wife become each sub-sect. We are nearly twelve sub-sects in Gollas. I will tell you as many names as I remember: Erra Gollalu, Paakantai Gollalu, Mushti Gollalu, Domalollu, Pua Gollalu, Ve Gollalu, ModatiGollalu, Karna Gollalu. And there are two sects under the Kurmas- they are Pathollu and Unnollu. They are called as Oggu Pujaries and Kuramas. While the gollas worship 'Mallanna,' the kurmas worship 'Beeranna."

" In earlier days each sub-sect used to get their child married in their own community. We paakanti gollalu never used to give our girls in marriage to Erra Gollalu or others but now-a-days everything is possible.

Figure giving the details of various sub-sects of Pastoral community in Andhra Pradesh.

Figure - III.2



"The 'Kuruvas' popularly called as 'Kurumas' are mainly seen in the Rayalaseema and Telangana regions of the State. The Kurumas are also

called as 'Birappala Varu ' or 'Goravas' in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. There is a famous anecdote regarding the origin of Birappa and Mallanna- the caste deities of kurumas and gollas, which says that the first drop of sweat of Lord Siva became 'Birappa' and the second drop became 'Mallanna'. But the story narrated by Oggu Pujaries says that Mallanna is the son of Adireddi and Neelima Devi who was born by the grace of Lord Parameswara and the Oggu Pujaries are his descendents, that is they belong to the lineage of Mallanna and his Brahmin wife Bapana Ratnangi. Having come from the womb of a Brahmin mother gives them a status to serve the God in the temple." The Kurumas and the Gollas are devotees of Siva and worship him in different forms. The Kuruvas (also pronounced as Kuruma in Telangana) and the Gollas worship this god in his various incarnations - Birappa, Bira Lingeswara, Samba Siva, Sambhudu, Sankara Mahadeva, Rudra, Golla Mallayya, Chenchu Mallayya, Parvathala Mallanna, Srisaila Mallanna, Komarelli Mallanna, Katta Mallanna, Mailara, Maillari, Jangama, Khadelraya etc., for the pastoral community their god is Vira / Hero), with an awe inspiring personality sitting on a horse back with his consort (satisametha Sayudhasvika Virudu) (Murthy 1994;. 66 (ed.)). This extract from the article "Siva: The god of shepherds" by Murthy, M.L.K. gives a list of the various forms of Siva worshipped by the Pastoral community. 'Majjiga Chandraiah', the oldest surviving of Oggu Pujaries of Inole also gave a similar list of various places of worship of kshetras and the names, "Mallanna is also called as Mailaru Devudu. There are many Malign gudis (temples). They are Eiloni, Komarelli, Odela, Katta Mallanna, Katterasala, Jagityala, Parvatala, Yalala,

Srisailam and Egulagunta. So also there are few Oggu pujari families who attend the deity in temple. Their surnames are Majjiga, Bandari, Are, Sera, Marate. All these families are linga dharulu and narrate the Mallanna katha."². The Kurumas or Kuruvas are called as Kurubas in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. A detailed note on the Kurubas of Karnataka given by Edgar Thurston is as follows:

"The popular tradition as to origin of the caste is as follows. Originally the Kurubas were Kapus. Their ancestors were Masi Reddi and Nilamma, who lived on the Eastern Ghats by selling firewood and had six sons. Taking pity on their poverty, Siva came begging to their house in the disguise of a Jangam, and gave Nilamma some sacred ashes, while promising prosperity through the birth of another son, who was called Undala Padmanna. The family became prosperous through agriculture. But, unlike his six brothers, Undala Padmanna never went out to work in the fields. They accordingly contrived to get rid of him by asking him to set fire to some brushwood concealing a white ant hill, in the hope that snake within it would kill him. But, instead of a snake, an innumerable host of sheep appeared. Frightened at the sight of these strange black beasts, Undala Padmanna took to his heels. But Siva appeared, and told him that they were created for his livelihood, and that he should rear them, and lives by their milk. He taught him how to milk the sheep and boil the milk, and sent him to distant town, which was occupied by rakshasas, to fetch fire. There the giants were keeping in bondage with a Brahman girl, who fell in love with Undala Padmanna. They managed to

escape from the clutches of the rakshasas by arranging their beds over deep pits, which were dug for their destruction. To save her lover, the girl transformed him into a lizard. She then went with him to the place where his flock was, and Undala Padmanna married a girl of his own caste, and had male offspring by her as well as Brahman. At the marriage of these sons, a thread kankanam (bracelet) was tied to the wrist of the caste woman's offspring, and a woolen kankanam to that of the Brahman girl's sons. The sons of the former were, therefore, called Atti (cotton) kankanadavaru, and those of the latter Unni (woolen) kankanadavaru. The latter are considered inferior, as they are hybrid origin. A third sub-division is that of the Ande kurubas, named after the small vessel (ande) used in milking goats. In a note on the Kurubas of Alur, Thikka, meaning a simpleton, is given as the name of an important division. It is noted in the Mysore Census report, 1901, that the Kurubas have not taken kindly to education, and are by nature so simple that Kuruba has, in some places, become a byword for a simpleton. The Kurubas are also known as Halu Mata, or milk caste, as they believe that they were created out of milk by Revana Siddeswara. In Hindustani they are called Dhangars, or rich people. Some, inspite of their poor dress and appearance, are well-to-do. At the Madras Census, 1901, Kavadiga, Kumpani, and Rayarvamsam (Raja's clan) were returned by some members of the community. In Mysore, the Karubas are said to be divided into Hande Kurubas and Kurubas proper, who have no intercourse with one another. The later worship Bire Devaru and are Saivites. According to another account, the Halu Kurubas of Mysore have sub-divisions according to the day of the week, on

which they offer puja to their God i.e., Aditya Varada (Sunday) Brihaspati Varada (Thursday), Soma Varada (Monday). "The Kurbas" Mr.H.A. Stuart writes," are again sub-divided into clans or gumpus, each having a headman or guru called a gaudu, who gives his name to the clan. And the clans are again sub-divided into gotras or septs, which are mostly of totemistic origin, and retain their totemistic character to this day. The Arisana gotram is particularly worthy of notice. The name means saffron (turmeric), and this was originally taboo; but, as this caused inconvenience, the korra grain has been substituted, although the old name of the sept was retained"

EXAGAMOUS SEPTS

NAME OF THE SEPT.	SYNONYM IN ENGLISH
Agni	Fire
Alige	Drum
Andara	Booth
Ane	Elephant
Arashina or Arisana	Turmeric
Arathi	Wave offering
Ari	Ebony
Ariya	Noble
Avu	Snake
Bandi	Cart
Banni	Prosopis spicigera
Basale	Basella rubra
Batlu	Cup
Belii	Feronia Elephantum
Belu	AgegleMarmelos

Bende	Hibiscusesculentus
Benise	Flint
Bevu orBevina	Melia Asadirachta
Binu	Roll of woolen thread
Bola	Bangle
Chandra	Moon
Chelu	Scorpion
Chilla	Strychnos Potatorum
Chinna or sinnata	Gold
Deva	A tree
Emme	Buffalo
Gali	Devil
Gauda	Headman
Gulimi	Pick-axe
Halu	Milk
Hatti	Hut
Honnungara	Gold ring
Lbabire	Tortise
Lrula	Darkness
Iruvu	Black ant
Jelakuppa	Fish
Jirige	Cummin
Jivala	An insect
Kalle	Bengal gram
Kanchu	Bell-metal
Kavada	Coloured border of a cloth
Kombu	Stick
Kori	Blanket
Mana	Measure
Malli	Jasmine
Menu	Pepper

Minchu	Metal toe-ring
Mise	Mostache
Mugga	Loom
Muttu	Pearl
Nali	Bamboo tube
Nayi	Dog
Othu	Goat
Putta	Ant-hill,; snake hole
Ratna	Precious s.one
Samanthi or Savanti	Chrysanthemum
Sama	Millet,Panicum Miliare
Samudra	Ocean
Sankhu	Cocunch shell
Sarige	Lace
Sury	Sun
Thuppa	Clarified butter
Turaka	Muhammadan
Ngara	Ring
Uppiri	earth-salt

*Mysore Census Report, 1901.

The titles of members of castes are gouda or heggade and the more prosperous go by the name of Kaudikiaru, a corruption of Gaudikiaru. Many, at the present day, have adopted the title Nayakkan. Some are called Gorava Vandlu" (Edgar Thurston. 1987; pp. 139-142).

The traditional singing of Kurmas and the Oggu Pujaries is seen in its continuity in many parts of Telangana, and in the district of Warangal,

Karimnagar and Ranga Reddy in particular. There is a four hundred years old temple of "Mailanna" at Amberpet in Hyderabad where the annual festivals of Mailanna are celebrated and the Oggu Katha is performed by Oggu Pujaries who follow the 'Khandoba' tradition, their dressing reflects their tradition. The Khandoba tradition is seen in Maharashtra. These Oggu Pujaries probably could be the one referred as Maratis by Majjiga Chandrayya. There is also a residential area in Hyderabad where in all the Kurumas live and this place is called after the Kurumas as 'Kurmaguda'. Similarly, a remote village near Warangal which is resided by a sect of Kurmas who live on agriculture and Oggu Katha performances is also known by the same name of the performers as 'Oggonipalle'. The uniqueness of this village is that the whole village consists of forty families who live in huts built in a single street. Thus the whole village is of a single street.

The Oggu Pujaries amongst the Kurumas who serve as the temple priests has a dignity of status. Both Oggu Pujaries and the kurmollu dwell as Oggu katha performers. Though the place of their performances vary their story, narration, performance to a great extent remains the same. The distinction between two kinds of performances is explained thus by a kuruma of the Oggonipalle 'Uttareni Komarayya' "Aalla Tandrule Allaku Gullichinru Maa tandrule Maaku Urlichinru-Their fathers gave them temples and they do not perform outside the temples. We move from place to place, village to village and perform the Oggu Katha and during the agriculture season we are busy with the work here (showing the fields)"³.

The difference between the status of the Oggu Pujaries and other kurumas is explained in the caste legend Mallanna Katha. The Oggu Pujaries are believed to be the direct descendents of the off spring's of Mallanna and Bapana Ratgnangi. However, we can find a positional difference amongst the Oggu Pujaries. The Oggu Pujaries who perform the household rituals and the patnalu during the jatara's differentiate themselves from the Oggu Pujaries who perform the rituals at the sanctified places of kshetras like Einavolu, Komarelli, Odela, Sri Sailam, Katta etc. This issue was very clearly putforth by a Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad who works for the Caravan Malleswara Swami Gudi Munge Narayya, "we are Oggu Pujaries. All the months of the year except the ashadamasa are good for the Mallanna Pelli (marriage). We perform the rituals at the caravan Malleshwara Swami gudi in the season from Sankranthi to Ugadi. We also go to houses of gollalu to fulfill their mukkulu. We draw the patnalu and perform the ritual. So also we become a part of the marriage celebrations. There will not be any marriage without our involvement. We sing the auspicious songs and narrate the Mallanna Katha, Ellamma Katha, Beerappa Katha, and Narashima Katha, suiting to the 'mokku' and occasion. We use the Oggu Dolu and the 'Talam' for this purpose. The Oggu Pujaries at big temples like Komarelli, Eiloni, Odela and katte use Jaggu an instrument, which looks like "Damaru", and they are called as Jaggollu. They do not come to houses. They perform 'patnalu', laggalu' and other activities within their respective temples' (plate 4).⁴

The right to perform at the temple to conduct the rituals and then to perform at households and to perform for public without being connected with the rituals is strictly followed by the Kurmas and the Oggu Pujaries. . So also are the duties assigned to the Oggu Pujaries. The rites executed by the Jagollu in the kshetras can be broadly divided into two types- the first being those which are done daily and the second being those rites which are done occasionally.⁵ The rites that are executed daily are regarding the services of the temple deity. Cleaning the temple, sanctum sanctorum early in the morning before the arrival of the pujari to perform puja is regularly practiced in the Einavolu Mallanna temple. Majjiga Chandraiah, belonging to the Oggu Pujari family gave the following duties regarding their duties at the temple. "We people the Oggu Pujaries in Eileni belong to Majjiga family. Each of our families serves the temple for a period of one year. And the duty of attending the temple services is rotated to each family and is usually done by the eldest member of the family. Right now this year my nephew - my brother's son Majjiga Lakshminarasayya is serving".⁶ The details given by Majjiga Chandrayya throw light on the importance of Oggollu as priests. Though the Endowments department has employed a priest in the temple the services of Oggu Pujaries are practiced even today. And regarding their occasional duties are to perform patnalu during pandagalu, or to fulfill the mokkus during marriages of the God etc. Narrating Mallanna Katha is also a part of their occasional duties.

The ritual acts that are invariably the job of Oggu Pujaries are very organized. Normally the rituals conducted by these pastoral families can be classified into two:

1. Rituals at household
2. Rituals at Mallanna Temple

RITUALS AT HOUSEHOLD

These rituals are conducted by Oggu Pujaries at the houses or at temples. Munge Narayana Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad elaborated on the household rituals by Oggu Pujaries similar to the observations of Edgar Thurston, which is given hereunder:

"When a girl reaches puberty, she is kept in a corner of the house for eight days. On the ninth day she bathes, and food is taken to her by an old woman of the house. Kuruba women are invited to be present in the evening. The girl, covered with a blanket, is seated on a raised place. Those assembled throw rice over her feet, knees, shoulders, and head and into her lap. Coloured turmeric and lime water is then waved three or five times round her, and ravikes (body-cloths) are presented to her.

The following account of the marriage ceremonial was recorded in Western Bellary. When a marriage has been settled between the parents of the young people, visits are exchanged by the two families. On a fixed day,

the contracting couple sits on a blanket at the bride's house, and five women throw rice over five parts of the body as at the menstrual ceremony. Betel leaves and areca nuts are placed before them, of which the first portion is set apart for the god Birappa, the second for the Gauda, another for the house god, and so on up to the tenth. A general distribution then takes place. The ceremony, which is called sakshi vilya or witness betel-leaf, is brought to a conclusion by waving in front of the couple a brass vessel, over the mouth of which five betel leaves and a ball of ashes are placed. They then prostrate themselves before the guru. For the marriage ceremony, the services of the Guru, a Jangam or a brahman priest, are called into requisition. Early on the wedding morning, the bridal couple are anointed and washed. A space, called the irani square, is marked out by placing at the four corners a pot filled with water. Round each pot a cotton thread is wound five times. Similar thread is also tied to the milk post of the marriage pandal (booth), which is made of pipal (*ficus religiosa*) wood, within the square a pestle, painted with red and white stripes, is placed, on which the bride and bridegroom, with two young girls, seat themselves. Rice is thrown over them, and they are anointed and washed. To each a new cloth is given, in which they dress themselves, and the wrist thread (kankanam) is tied on all four. Presents are given by relations, and arathi (red water) is waved round them. The bridegroom is decorated with a bashingam (chaplet of flowers) and taken on a bull to a Hanuman's shrine along with his best man. Coconuts, camphor and betel are given to the priest as an offering to the god. According to the another account, both bride and bridegroom go to the shrine, where a matron ties on their forehead chaplets of

flowers, pearls etc. At the marriage house a dais has been erected close to the milk post, and covered with a blanket, on which a mill-stone and basket filled with cholam (andropogon sorghum) are placed. The bridegroom, standing with a foot on the stone and the bride with a foot on the basket, the gold tali, after it has been touched by five married women, is tied round the bride's neck by the officiating priest, while those assembled throw rice over the happy pair, and bless them. According to another version, a bed sheet is interposed as a screen, so that the bride and bridegroom cannot see each other. On the three following days, the newly married couple sit on the blanket, and rice is thrown over them. In Western Bellary, the bridegroom, on the third day, carries the bride on his waist to Hanuman temple, where married women throw rice over them. On the fifth morning, they are once more anointed and washed within the irani square, and, towards evening, the bride's father hands her over to her husband, saying "she was till this time a member of my sept and house. Now I hand her over to your sept and house". On the night of the sixth day, a ceremony called booma idothu (food placing) is performed. A large metal vessel (gangalam) is filled with rice, ghi (clarified butter), curds and sugar. Round this some of the relations of the bride and bridegroom sit, and finish off the food. The number of those who partake thereof must be an odd one, and they must eat the food as quickly as possible. If anything goes wrong with them, while eating or afterwards, it is regarded as an omen of impending misfortune. Some even considers it as an indication of the bad character of the bride.

Concerning the marriage ceremony of the Kurubas of North Arcot Mr. Stuart writes as follows: "As a preliminary to the marriage, the bridegroom's father observes certain marks or curls on the head of the proposed bride. Some of these are believed to forebode prosperity, and others only misery to the family, into which the girl enters. They are, therefore, very cautious in selecting only such girls as possess curls (*suli*) of good fortune. This curious custom obtaining among this primitive tribe is observed by others only in the case of the purchase of cows, bulls, and horses. One of the good curls is the *bashingam* found on the forehead; and the bad ones are the *peyanakallu* at the back of the head, and the near the right temple. But widowers seeking for wives are not generally particular in this respect. (As bad curls are supposed to cause the death of the man who is their possessor, she is, I am informed, married to a widower.) The marriage is celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and, if the bride belongs to a different village, she is escorted to that of the bridegroom, and is made to wait in a particular spot outside it, selected for the occasion. On the first day of the marriage, *purna kumbam*, a small decorated vessel containing milk or ghi, with a two anna piece and a coconut placed on the betel leaf spread over the mouth of it, is taken by the bridegroom's relations to meet the bride's party. There the distribution of *pan supari* takes place, and both parties return to the village. Meanwhile, the marriage booth is erected, and twelve twigs of *naval* (*Eugenia Jambolana*) are tied to the twelve pillars, the central or milk post, under which the bridal pair sit, being smeared with turmeric, and a yellow thread being tied thereto. At an auspicious hour of the third day, the couples are made to sit in

the booth, the bridegroom facing the east, and the bride facing west. On a blanket spread near the kumbam, 21/2 measures of rice, a tali or bottu, one coconut, betel leaf and camphor are placed. The Gaudu places a bail of vibhuti (Sacred ashes) thereon, breaks a coconut, and worships the kumbam, while camphor is burnt. The gaudu next takes the tali, blesses it, and gives it to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck. The Gaudu then, throwing rice on the heads of the pair recites a song. In which the names of various people are mentioned, and concluding Oh! Happy girl; Oh! Prosperous girl; Basava has come; remove your veil; .The girl then removes her veil and the men and women assembled throw rice on the heads of the bridal pair. The ends of their garments are then tied together, and two girls and three boys are made to eat out of the plates placed before the married couple. A feast to all their relations completes the ceremony. The Gaudu receives 21/2 measures of rice, five handfuls of nuts and betel leaf, and twelve saffrons (pieces of turmeric) as his fee. Even though the girl has attained puberty, the nuptial ceremony is not coincident with the wedding, but is celebrated a few months later". In like manner, among the Kammas, Gangimakkulu, and other classes consummation does not take place until three months after the marriage ceremony, as it is considered unlucky to have three heads of a family in a household during the first year of marriage. By the delay, the birth of a child should take place only in the second year, so that, during the first year, there will be only two heads, husband and wife, At a marriage among the Kurubas of the Madura district, a chicken is waved in front of the contracting couple, to aver the evil eye. The maternal uncle's

consent to a marriage is necessary and, at the wedding, he leads the bride to the pandal. A Kuruba may, I am informed marry two sisters, either on the death of one of them or if his first wife has no issues, or suffers from an incurable disease. Some twenty years ago, when an unmarried kuruba girl was taken to a temple, to be initiated as a Basavi (dedicated prostitute), the caste men prosecuted the father as a protest against the practice.

In the North Arcot district, according to Mr. Stuart, "the mother and child remain in a separate hut for the first ten days after delivery. On the eleventh day, all the Kuruba females of the village bring each a pot of hot water, and bathe the mother and child. Betel and nut are distributed, and all the people of the village eat in the mother's house. On the next market day, her husband, with some of his male friends, goes to a neighbouring market, and consults with a Korava or Yerukala what name is to be given to the child, and the name he mentions is then given to it". In a case, which came before the police in the Bellary district in 1907, a woman complained that her infant child had been taken away, and concealed in the house of another woman, who was pregnant. The explanation of the abduction was that there is a belief that, if a pregnant woman keeps a baby in her bed, she will have no difficulty at the time of delivery

Remarriage of widows is permitted .The ceremony is performed in a temple or dark room, and the tali is tied by a widow a women dedicated to the deity, or a Dasayya (mendicant) of their own caste. According to another

account a widow is not allowed to wear a tali, but is presented with a cloth. Hence widow married into families, in which no widow remarriage has been taken place and are treated like ordinary members of the community.

In Western Bellary I, gathered that the dead are buried, those who have been married with the face upwards, others with the face down wards. The grave is dug north and south, and the head is placed to the south. Earth is thrown into the grave by relations before it is filled in. A mound is raised over it, and three stones are set up, over the head, navel, and feet. The eldest son of the deceased places on his left shoulder a pot filled with water, in the bottom of which three small holes are made, through which the water escapes. Proceeding from the spot, beneath which the head rests, he walks round the grave and then drops the pot so that it falls on the mound, and goes home without looking back. This ceremony is a very important one with both Kurubas and Bedars. In the absence of a direct heir, he who carries the pot claims the property of the deceased, and is considered to be the inheritor thereof. For the propitiation of ancestors, cooked rice and sweetmeats, with a new turban and cloth or petticoat, according to the sex of the deceased, offered up. Ancestors, who died childless, unless they left property, do not receive homage. It is noted, in the Bellary Gazetteer, that "an unusual rite is in some cases observed after deaths, a pot of water being worshipped in the house on the eleventh day after the funeral, and taken the next morning and emptied in some lonely place. The ceremony is named the calling back of the dead, but its real significance is not clear.

Of the death ceremonies in the North arcot district, Mr. Stuart writes that "the son, or, in his absence, a near relative goes round the grave three times, carrying a pot of water, in which he makes a hole at each round. On the third round he throws down the pot, and returns home straight, without turning his face towards the direction of the grave. For three days the four carriers of the bier are not admitted into their houses, but they are fed at the cost of the deceased's heir. On the third day, cooked rice, a fowl and water are taken to the burial ground and placed near the grave, to be eaten by the spirit of the dead. The son, and all his relations, returns home, beating on their mouths. Pollution is observed for ten days, and, on the eleventh day, sheep and fowls are killed, and a grand feast is given to the Kurumbas of the village. Before the feast commences, a leaf containing food is placed in a corner of the house and worshipped. This is removed on the next morning, and placed over the roof, to be eaten by crows. If the deceased be a male, the glass bangles worn by his wife on her right arm are broken on the same day" (Thurston 1987, 143-150).

Munge Narayan, a Oggu Pujari of Hyderabad said so regarding the various rituals conducted by them. "We perform different rituals right from "Jeeva" (human) kalyanam to the 'deva' (God) kalyanam and the drawing of patnam is done only on the demand of the devotees. If at all there is a mokku only the patnam is performed. Depending on the kind of mokku on whom it is owed we draw the 'patnam', and invite the God or Goddess to accept the

offerings made by the devotees. Different items are used for different patnams. For example the moduga aku and tangedu aku powders which are a must for the Mallana's patnam. The figure drawn as patnam contains the pictures of Trisulam', Paadaalu, 'Jaggu' and 'Om'. The only difference between the patnalalu done by Oggollu coming to the houses and the Jaggollu is the use of Jaggu the Oggu Pujaries at different kshetras use jaggu while singing the various songs."⁷

Figure - III.3

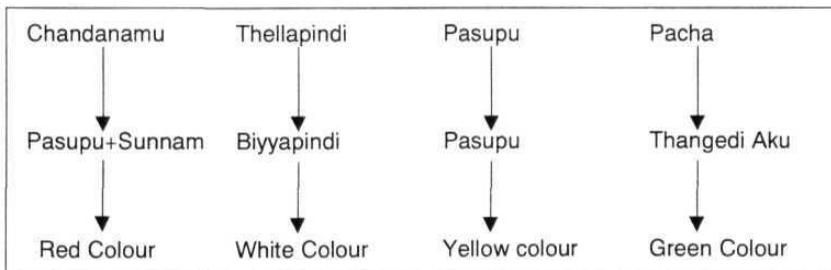
Colour Pattern in the Patnam

Chandanamu = Pasupu + Sunnam

Pasupu - Pasupu

Pacha = Thangedi Aku + Moduga Aku

Telupu = Biyyapindi

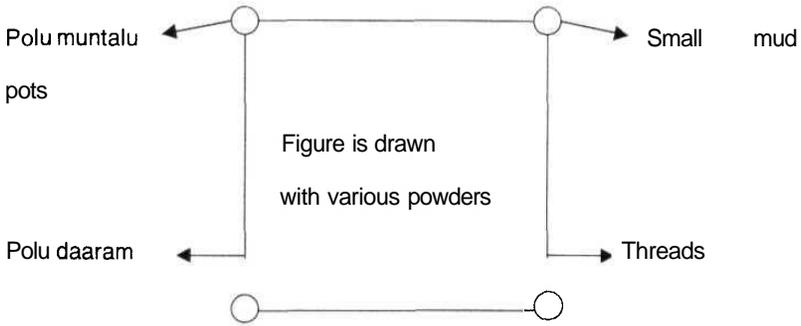


The mokkulu are of different and depend on the type of wishes and beliefs of the Golla community. Usually rituals at households are conducted on the occasions like birth, marriage and death ceremonies. The various types

of patnalu are maila patnamu, chilukala patnamu, pedda patnamu, inti patnamu etc. The patnalu are drawn to stand as the place of worshipping the God. A square is drawn with the following materials.

Figure - III.4

Patnam



Wooden slates are used to draw the patnalu. These wooden slates/palakalu are known as kangollu. The four small pots used as border to the patnam are called 'Polumuntalu' and the thread running across these four pots is called as 'Polu Daaramu'. A pasupumudda or turmeric ball is placed on a tamalapaku or betel leaf and placed on the patnam drawn. This pasupumudda is treated as Gauramma. Dry broken coconut halves are most important articles for this ritual; they are called as kobbare Kudakalu.

Besides the mukkulu and patnalu yet another occasion of great importance is that of the marriages. As said by Munge Narayana marriages or Kalyanams of both the human and the super-human are conducted by them.

The job of Oggu Pujari begins well before the day of the actual marriage and ends exactly after a week days after the marriage. The marriage described here was conducted by Munge Narayana and his son Munge Pochayya and the details given here are by Sarlandri Balamma (75 yrs) the grand mother of the bride 'Sunita' brides father S. Yadayya yadav's mother and Bola Boyini Lakshmamma bride's grand mother Yashodamma bride's mother.⁸ The Oggu Pujaries come home three days before the marriage in the evening when the girl is made 'pelli kuturu'. It is to their drum beat that all the proceedings such as giving the new saree, flowers, bangles etc., to the bride and then dressing of the bride is made. Then they again come on the night before the marriage to perform 'maila polu'. Actually the maila polu is performed by the mangali (barber) he draws a square like figure with jonnalu (jawar) of about 5 kgs and make the girl sit on it. This is called maila polu. While this act is being done the Oggu Pujari should play the Oggu dolu. He heads the pendli melam to the marriage place (function hall). Though we employ the music band it is only a mere ornamentation. It is the Oggu Dolu, which is important for us. At the marriage the Oggu pujari prepares the mutyala polu. Mutyala polu is prepared with rice grains, polu muntalu and polu daram. Beating of Oggu Dolu continues while the dias / Mutyala Polu is prepared. The bride and groom are made to sit on the dias. Though the Bapana Pujari conducts the actual marriage- tying the 'puste' and Talavalu (Talambralu) it is the Oggu Pujari who stands before and after the puste kattadam. After the puste is tied, the Oggollu conduct the Nagavelli. First they sing a song in praise of lord Surya. They make the newly wedded to bow to Suryadeva. It is called surya

namaskaram. Then they make the bride and bridegroom talk to each other for the first time where in they involve the bridegroom's sister as well. They sing songs on Mallanna Pelli like.

“Komarelli Mallanna Pelli Illa inta nedu Golla Ketamma Pendli ill inta nedu”. Then they also sing some Jola patalu, mangala aratulu and the like. The Oggu Pujari also announces the details of the 'katnalu' given to the bride and the bridegroom. Their presence is a must both in the 'pedda indulu (vindulu) given by the groom's family and the chinna indulu given by the bride's family. The playing of Oggu Dolu is a must in both these parties. Then they come again on the eighth day of the marriage exactly on the same day after a week days of the marriage and perform gadapa kadagatam (washing the threshold of the house). , Draw the muggu, perform puja and apply 'bandari to all the family members and go after taking their katnam” (plate 5). The role of bapana pujari is dominated by the Oggu pujari in the marriages of the Gollas. Though the ritual practices of Oggu Pujari on other occasions such as birth, bonalu, etc., have got minimized, their significance in marriages still continues.

Other two occasions of the ritual performance of the Oggu Pujari are palu pattu and bonalu. During the palu pattu milk is poured in a bronze vessel and then some songs on Mallanna or Birappa are sung and then the Oggu Pujari drinks the milk. During the Bonalu festival falling in the month of Ashada the pastoral communities perform Bonalu of two kinds i.e. Mallanna Bonalu

and Birappa Bonalu. Bonam means food offered to God. A new pot is filled with cooked food and decorated from outside with turmeric powder, kumkum powder and rice powder. The women of the community wear new or silk sarees, adorn themselves with ornaments, apply turmeric powder to the face and feet, and put a big bottu with red kumkum. They place the Bonam on the head and go to the temple. All the members of the family together accompany them. They are lead by the Oggu Pujari who accompany them by playing the Oggu Dolu. Bonam is also offered as per the wish of the devotees, besides from the ashada masam.

Besides all these household rituals, the annual festival which is celebrated at a grand scale is the Mallanna panduga. Mallanna panduga begins at various kshetras such as Einavolu, Komarelli, Sri Sailam, Odela etc., begins from kartika Amavasya, or 'Satti Amassa'. The Sunday, which comes after this amasa, is called dandi varam or the big week. The devotees take up the deeksha of Mallanna and start their prayers. They fast on every Sunday and Wednesday. They do not eat non-vegetarian food on these days. The devotees who have the mokku go to the temples and ask the Oggu Pujari to perform the patnam. The 'Pedda patnam' is performed on the day of 'Siva ratri'. The Oggu Pujaries who has the right to perform this at that particular temple together draws the patnam. To perform these patnams they go to 'putta' (Anthill) and get the red soil of pit. This soil is called as putta bangaram. They prepare a small stage with the putta bangaram and draw the patnam on it. They ask the devotees to get the Mallanna Bonam and make aaragimpu

(offering of food) to the God. They recite the Mallanna Katha or Birappa through out the night of the Sunday. The Oggu Pujaries invoke the Gods to stay in the patnam, they also invite the Gods on the request of the devotees. If the devotees wish for the invocation of Ellamma, the Pujari invites Ellamma on the patnam. Thus the different patnams are seen on the name of each God or Goddess. The Einavolu or Eileni Mallikarjuna Swamy Devasthanam also comes to life during the time of Mallanna Panduga celebrated from Sankranti to Ugadi.

Though the changing times have decreased the number of occasions for performance of Oggu Pujari and Oggu rituals, the significance of Oggu Pujari in the society during the marriages and Mallanna Pandugalu remains the same. So also the performance of Oggu Katha. The Oggu Katha performance, which was recorded minutely for this study, was done by the Oggu Pujari of Mallikarjuna Swami Devasthanam at Einavolu. The Oggu Pujari performed the patnam as a mokku for a family of non-Gollas from Warangal and performed the Mallanna Katha on the same night.⁹. The participants of this performance were (plates 6,7)

Majjiga Lakshmi Narsayya - Pradhana Kathakudu

Majjiga Bhumayya - Vantakudu

Majjiga Sayilu - Oggu Dolu

Majjiga Mallayya - Talam

Are Mondayya - Talam

As observed earlier both, the Kurmollu and Oggollu perform Oggu Katha. While the Oggollu perform in temples and as part of the rituals, the kurmollu perform it for public and on the demand of the public. Whether the performance is by the Oggulu or the Kurmollu the performance inevitably takes the name of Oggu Katha. This is because the name of the performance is taken from the percussion instrument used by the performers that is the Oggu Dolu (plate 8), hence the name of the art form is 'Oggu Katha'. The Oggu Dolu is a significant part of both the rituals at the household and at the temples. It remains as an identification mark of both the performers and the performance and also for the community.

The performance doubled with a ritual base and religious background slightly varies from that of the secular performance. However, the dramatic input in the narration of the text, and enactment is found intact. The various theatrical elements involved in the performance of Oggu Katha are brought out in the following chapter.

NOTES

1. Interview with Sarlandiri Bamma 75 years of age, a Yadava lady, May 1998, Hyderabad.
2. Interview with Majjiga Chandraiah (80 years), at Inole, October 1995.
3. Interview with Uttareni Komarayya, at Oggripalle village near Warangal, October 1995.
4. Interview with Munge Narayana at Hyderabad, May 1998.
5. A similar practice was seen in the classical dance tradition of Odissi. The practice of performing inside the temple and outside the temple was strictly followed by the Maharis or Devadasis of the temple dancers of Puri Jagannadha Swami Temple. The dancers who perform in the temple were called Bither Gauni and those who perform outside the temple are called Bahar Gauni. They never exchanged their places of performances.
6. Interview with Majjiga Chandrayya at Einavole, October 1995.
7. Interview with Munge Narayana at Hyderabad, May 1998.
8. Interview with Sarlandiri Bamma and Bola Boyini Lakshamma and Yashodamma at Hyderabad, May 1998.
9. The ritual of Patnalu was performed in the guesthouse adjacent to the temple. The family and the relatives numbering nearly 50 have come from Warangal to fulfill their Mokkulu. Majjiga Laxminarsayya

who officiated the ritual was playing the Jaggu, a percussion instrument. As part of the sacred singing, he was mentioning the names of the head of the family who was fulfilling the mokku and glorifying their lineage.