Chapter – II

THE AREA UNDER STUDY
Fig. 1: Sugali Village Entrance

Fig. 2: Bird view of Udiripikonda thanda
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The Area

Whether we study man or any other living creature, the dimension of space is as important as that of time. It is a well known fact that geographical environment governs the course of human events, though it cannot absolutely determine the progress of civilization. Every culture develops in some sort of physical setting. Every civilization is exploitative of the resources of its environment. It is with this point in view that an attempt is made in this chapter to furnish information on the geographical background of the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh in general Anantapur, Kurnool two districts and the four Sugali thandas under study in particular in order to evaluate the relative impact of ecological conditions on the Sugali community. Further, an attempt is made on the historical perspective of the Sugali as also account of their ethnography.

The Region and two Districts

Andhra Pradesh is the fifth largest in area and fifth most populous state of India. It occupies the eastern side of the peninsular and the southeastern part of India. It has a geographical area of 2,75,254.0 Sq.Km. with a population of 8,46,65,553 (Census-2011). The density of population per Sq. Km. is 308 and the Decennial Population Growth Rate during (2001 - 2011) - 11.10%.

The State, situated between the latitudes 12° 40’ N and 19° 54’ N and the longitudes 76° 50’ E and 84°54’ E, displays a considerable amount of diversity in its physiographic, socio-economic and historical conditions which led to the formation of three distinct regions namely, Coastal Andhra, Telengana and Rayalaseema. The Rayalaseema region, where the present
study area is situated, is named after Sri Krishnadevaraya, the mighty Vijayanagara ruler who ruled this region during the 16th Century. During his regime peace and prosperity flourished in the Telugu Desam (land of Telugus). Kurnool, Cuddapah, Anantapur and Chittoor districts lying on the southern plateau of the state constitute the Rayalaseema region. (This is bounded on the south by Tamil Nadu, on the east by the Guntur and Nellore districts of Andhra Pradesh) as also Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Karnataka state and on the north by the Thungabhadra river as well as Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh.

Further, Rayalaseema region is the most sparsely populated and economically the most vulnerable part of Andhra Pradesh. This is typically a dry tract of Andhra Pradesh and has been declared a part of famine zone in South India. Drought and famine conditions are of common occurrence in this region for the past ten decades. Broadly speaking, this region has generally been styled “the stalking ground for famines”.

Anantapur District lies between 76°58' and 79°34’ of the eastern longitude and 14°54’ and 16°18’ of the northern latitude. It is bounded on the west by Bellary district of Karnataka state and on the north by Chittoor and Cuddapah districts.

Kurnool District lies between 76°58’ and 79°34’ of the eastern longitude and 14°54’ and 16°18’ of the northern latitude. It is bounded on the west by Ballary district of Karnataka state on the north by Chittoor and Kadapa districts (The Rayalaseema region accounts for 26.76% of total area of the Andhra Pradesh. The district-wise split-up of the area is - Kurnool 8.68% ; Cuddapah 5.60% ; Anantapur 6.97% and Chittoor 5.51% respectively).

On the climate side the region is characterised by a dry and agreeable climate. The months of December to February comprise a dry and comparatively cooler season whereas the season from March to May is
characterised by summer. The remaining two seasons from June to September and from October to November constitute south-west monsoon season and retreating monsoon season respectively.

The average annual rainfall in Rayalaseema region is 670.4 mm, the highest the lowest figures being recorded in Chittoor (827.5 mm) and Anantapur (544.1 mm) Districts respectively while in the other two districts (Kurnool 624.4 mm; Cuddapah 685.5 mm) the rainfall values are closer to the region average.

There are no perennial rivers in Rayalaseema region; the farmers mostly depend on tube-wells, step-wells, tanks and a few irrigation canals. However, there are a few seasonal rivers such as Papagni, Pincha, Arani, Kalyani, Pennar (Pinakini), Pandameru, Bahuda, Chitravathi, Swarnamuki, Thungabhadra with its tributry the Handri (Hindri), the Krishna, the Kunderu and the Gandlakamma.

Red soils predominate the region though black soils are found in parts of Kurnool and Cuddapah Districts. There are only patches of Alkaline and saline soils. The black soils of these area are highly retentive of moisture and become sticky when they are wet and hard when they are dry. Cracks are formed on the surfaces of the soils during hot weather. Soil erosion has been identified as one of the worst problems in this area.

The main crops in Rayalaseema region are food crops such as paddy, jowar, bajra, ragi, korra and nonfood crops like sugarcane, groundnut and cotton. All the dry-land crops such as groundnut, jowar, red-gram, blackgram etc., depend on the charity of monsoons.

Anantapur is 19,130sq.km being the largest district in the state. In Anantapur district agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the district. Above 74% of the total main workers are engaged in agriculture and above 84% of the population living in rural areas.
About 12.50 per cent of the total cultivable area is irrigated under Thunga Badhra (TB) medium irrigation projects like Bhairavani Teppa on river Vedavati etc.

Out of the various schemes which are being implemented for the development of agriculture in the district, special food grain programmes, protection of redgram crop against pod bores is a central sector scheme. DPAP scheme for control of pests and diseases in endemic areas.

The soil and climate conditions such as temperature, rainfall and relative humidity are important agro-based industry in the district.

The area under mulberry has grown from 29,659 acres in 1981 to 75,000 acres in 1991. Anantapur District stands first in the state in terms of area under mulberry.

National sericulture project which comes into existence in 1989-90 with the assistance of world bank has helped in the creation of 3,735 areas of mulberry, 5 drainages, 17 releivious units, 25 terusting units all in private sector.

The total area under forestry is 1953 sq.km which is 10.20 per cent of the total geographical area of the district. The forest blocks are scattered all over the district. Due to poor rainfall accruing in the area majority of the forest area is dry. Deciduous forests which were once existing have deteriorated into shrubs forests.

The vegetation on the eastern and southern sides is better because of the gradual elevation and better climatic conditions.

Anantapur district is well known for availability of gold and diamond deposits in addition to minerals like lime stone, dolomite, steatite etc.
Gold is being exported by M/s Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., at Ramagiri and diamonds are available in Kimberlite pipes of Vajra Karur Lattavaram belt.

Other important minerals available are iron ore in Obulapuram and Seddapuram steatite Musukote and Tabjula areas and barites in Julakalva and Rangaraju Kente area. High grade lime stone is also available in the district.

Due to ever increasing bioni pressure and climate conditions which are not congenial, the dominant species now present in most parts of the district are through should type like acacia Sandra (Sundra) acacia levcopholea (Tella Thumma) Accacia lantronum (Paki thumma), Dichrortachys Cinerea (Jele Jammi) Heteropogan contortur Pandi Mallu – Gadate).

On the lands outside the reserve forest predominant species are prosopeis juliflora (Sarcan themna) phoenix sylvestis (Ethachethu) is also seen along the banks of streams and rivulets.

Anantapur district has a variety of fauna important among them are predatos like lepard and bean, hyena, jackal and walt dogs spolted den, bluejay (palapitta) the Andhra Pradesh state raid parakeets, redjuyle foul wood peckess, peackock, are notable among them.

One endangered species the great Indian Bustard was spotted near N.S. Gate, Muddenayanipalli and few other places.

The total cropped area of Kurnool District is 1,121,717 hectares. Food crops are raised over an extent of 683,511 hectares forming 60.93% of the total cropped area. Jowar, Paddy, Bajra and Korra are grown extensively under food crops. Jowar is raised over an extent of 42.15% of the total area under food crops. Under the non-food crops groundnut is an important
commercial crop, which accounts for 60.10% of total area under which non-food crops, followed by cotton (33.97%).

The forest area ranges from about 10% of the total area of Kurnool district to 30.5% of the total area of Chittoor district. The flowering plants are known to comprise about 11,000 varieties besides 100 plants grown in towns, villages, and agricultural lands. The flora in the eastern ghats covering Tirupathi, Mamandur, Talakona and Seshachalam range of hills is very high. Further, Anantapur district occupies a unique place in the matter of forests which cover an area of 3,57,683 hectares accounting for 20.32% of the total area of the district. The main forest belts are the Nallamalais, the Erramalais and Velgode Reserve Forests. The forests covering the Erramalais and the Velikondas are of inferior type. Superior quality of Teak (Tectona grandis) is available in these forests. Bamboo (Bambusa dendrocalamus) forests in these forests. Bamboo (Bambusa dendrocalamus) forests in the district area also important. The other types of timber available in the forests of this district are Yepi (Hardwickia binata), Inumaddi (Terminalia tomentosa var typica), and Chandanapu (Santalum album).

The Rayalaseema region is not very rich in game. However, Anantapur is one of the richest districts of the state for the variety and abundance of fauna. The depletion of forests, inception of railways the ever increasing road mileage to the progressive opening up of all the earlier inaccessible tracts, the increasing tempo of motor traffic, the indiscriminate exploitation of wild life etc., cumulatively led to a near total extinction of many species. The forests are inhabited by wild animals such as tiger (Panthera tigris), leopard (Panthera pardus), Wolf (canvis Lupus), Jackal (Canis aureus), wild dog (Cuon alpinus), hyaenea (hyaena hyaenea), Civet cat (Viverricula indica), bear (Melursus), mongoose (Herpestes edwardsi), etc., all of which come under mammals. Among the herbivora, Chinkaral (Gazella gazella0, blackbuck (Antilope cervicapra), blue bull (Boselaphus Tragocamelus), sambar (Cervus unicolour), spotted deer (Axis axis), jungle sheep (Muntiacus
muntjak), wild-boar (Sus scrofa), porcupine (Hystrix indica) etc., are important animals found in this area. Further, birds such as duck, jungle fowl (gallus), peal fowl (Paro cristatus), pigeon (Colombia livia), reptiles such as lizards (lacertide Spp), kraits (Bungam Spp), cobra (Nagal) etc. and rodents such as rabbits (Cryetologus cuniculus), squirrel (Sciurus) etc. are of common occurrence.

The People

The Hindus account for an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Rayalaseema region as elsewhere in the state of Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India. The rest of the population consists of Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists. The Hindus of this region are organised on the basis of castes and sub-castes. The broad divisions among them are Brahmins, Vaisyas, Kapus (or Reddis), Kammas, Balijas, Gollas, Kuravas (or Kurubas) Boyas, Sales, Kamsalas, Veera Saiva lingayats, Madigas and Malas. Among other castes in the region mention may be made of Velmas, Bestas, Gandlas, Jangams, Jogi, Kshtriya, Togatas, Sathanis, Medara, Kummaras, Chakalas, Mangals, Idigas, Oddes, Dommaras, Dasaris, Devangas, Patra, Pichchigunta, Tamballa etc.

The Tribes

While there are 35 scheduled tribes in the state of Andhra Pradesh numbering about 17.58 lakhs (Census, 2011) which accounts for 7.0% of the total population, there are 18 scheduled tribes in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Each tribe has its own habitat and environmental set up, dialect socio-cultural traditions and historical way of life. They differ in size and distribution. Among the tribes of Rayalaseema region, the Sugali (43.26%), the Yerukala (26.16%), the Yanadi (24.22%), and Kammara (2.73%) are the most numerous. The Sugali are a semi-nomadic tribe of Andhra Pradesh on whom the present study has been conducted. A brief ethnographic account of the tribe is given below.
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<td>Bihar and Jharkhand</td>
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<td>Maharashtra</td>
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<td>Chadamgpa, Garra, Gujjar, Gaddi</td>
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The Sugali

In a slowly or rapidly changing community knowledge of the past is indespensable to comprehend the present pattern of social interaction. In a strictly structural functional analysis one may ignore the factor of time but a more fruitful understanding and exposition of a transitional society requires knowledge of the past social life. Infact, analysis of change requires a thorough study and understanding of non-change. Further, the available information on the Sugali way of life helps one to tringulate change and provide the frame-work within which the resultant dynamic processes can be analysed. Such an explanation about the socio-cultural dynamics will also lay foundations for an understanding of the patterns and the processes of change with reference to the Sugali of Udiripi Konda thanda and Sekshana Palli thanda of Anantapur District as well as Pasupula and Ulindakonda thanda of Kurnool District for the present study.

Origin

The Sugali seem to have been one of the ancient tribes of India since their name is found in old works like Dasakumara Charitra written by Dandi in 11th and 12th Centuries. On the basis of this reference H.M. Elliot (1869) has described the Sugali as nothing but the some ancient tribes which were in existence during 4th Century B.C. Traditionally, they have been carriers of supplies and drivers of pack-bullocks. They are said to have helped Alexander the Great carry towards Greece the wealth amassed during his campaign in North India. They are supposed to be the descendants of the original Aryan Gypsies or Roma Banjaras of North-West India whose descendants are also found in various parts of Central and South Europe, Central Asia and America. Recent research reveals that there are striking similarities between the Roma Banjara (Gypsies), and Sugali. The links between these two communities are not only linguistic but also cultural in terms of dressing and in performing certain ceremonies (Ramaswamy Aiyar, 1962; Jost, 1982; Shampan, 1983). Further, though the Sugali are known
variously in different parts of the country as Lambadi, Labhani, Lambani, Labana, Charan, Baryara, Boipari etc., they all prefer to be called by their original generic name ‘Banjara’.

Many speculations have been advanced on the origin of the Sugali. They can be classified as i) Etymological; ii) Racial; iii) Linguistic and iv) Mythological.

Various etymological meanings of the word Banjara are given in the Gazetteers; (i) it is another form of the word Vanjara, Burners and inhabitants of woods, (ii) it is a derivation of the persian word Biranjar, meaning a rice-carrier; (iii) the true derivation is perhaps from the word Vanija (trader), which is also the common root for the words like Baniya and Banajiga (trader); (iv) it may be the derivation from the Sanskrit word Vanachara (wanderer in the forest) indicating the nomadic character of the tribe (Nanjundaiah and Iyer, 1928).

The regional names like Lambadi, Sugali, etc., are supposed to have been derived from the Sanskrit words such as Lavana, meaning salt, and hence, the Lambans being the salt-carriers and Sug-wala (good cowherd). Further there is also another speculation which traces the tribe’s name to a mixed parentage. Siraj-Ul-Hassan (1920) observes thus “There can be no doubt that these people so varied in their characteristics, were recruited from different races of Northern India and bound together by ties of common occupation”.

With regard to racial explanation it can be stated on the basis of physical appearance that the Sugali have descended from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab. This fact is also confirmed by a study of their physical features. The prominent nose long face projected chin and fair skin colour are the main physical features of the Sugali which place them nearer to the people of Northern India rather than to those of South India. However, it is somewhat
difficult to locate the exact place of origin in India to which the Sugali originally belonged.

The linguistic speculation as well as the celebration of Holi festival by the Sugali support the racial explanation which points out that the Sugali are of North Indian Origin. Their dialect shows connections with North Indian Languages like Hindi Rajasthani and Punjabi. However the Sugali dialect in South India is mixed with the surrounding Dravidian Languages (Thruston, 1975).

The mythological speculation reveals that the Sugali claim to have descended from the off-spring of Vali and Sugriva, the two mythological figures in the epics, ‘Ramayana. But Siraj-Ul-Hassan (1920) writes that the Sugali claim to have originated from Mota and Mola, the two brothers who tended the cows of Lord Krishna, an important mythological personality in the epic, Mahabharatha. From Mota Sprang the ancestors of modern Marwaris, Mathura Banjaras and Labhanas.

**Present Day Distribution**

The Sugali are an ex-criminal and semi-nomadic tribal population of Andhra Pradesh. They are also sporadically distributed in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Harayana, Delhi and Bihar. While in Harayana, Delhi and Karanataka, they are classified as Scheduled Castes, in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal they are classified as Scheduled Tribes.

Their present day distribution in the state of Andhra Pradesh (Table 2) shows that they inhabit 16 out of 22 districts belonging to all the three regions of Andhra Pradesh. They numbered about 1,36,463 of which a majority are found in Anantapur district (43,345) of Rayalaseema region followed by the Guntur district (27,045) of Coastal Andhra region. Further, in the region Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra region of Andhra Pradesh they
are called Sugalis and Lambadis respectively. In Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh they are known as Banjaras and Lambadis. When their criminal activities became intensified for some time prior to independence they were even denotified under the Criminal Tribes Act and a keen watch was kept over their environment. However, after India became independent the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 and the Sugali were denotified. Till 1977, they were treated as a nomadic tribe in all parts of Andhra Pradesh except in Telengana region. However the list of Scheduled Tribes has been revised by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendement Act), 1976 in order to remove area restriction in respect of Sugalis.

Economy

The Sugali are said to have come into the Deccan (South India) as transporters of supplies or merchandice for the armies of Delhi emperors (both Afghan and Moghul) in their raids in the South early in the 17th Century (Craufurd, 1742; Ibbetson, 1883). When the army had to face severe difficulties due to bad communications and lack of transport the Sugali helped the army by quickly supplying rations and other necessities with the help of their thousands of pack-bullocks. When their duties as suppliers of rations and provisions to the Moghul armies ended, the Sugali with their pack-bullocks started trading and became a useful medium of transaction between the South and the North. They carried salt from the coast and grains from inland. At that time they were unsettled nomads and resorted to robbery frequently (Craufurd, 1742; Ibbetson, 1883). Some of the Sugali returned to the North but some stayed behind and carried on petty trade during periods of peace until 1850s. In the 18th Century they had taken up service under the Maratha rulers of Satara the Peshwas of Poona the Nizam of Hyderabad and the British in their Mysore and Maratha wars (Nanjundayya and Iyer, 1928, Vol. II; Craufurd, 1742; Siraj-Ul-Hassan, 1920).

With the advent of the British rule, the Sugali lost much of their traditional occupation of transpporting goods on the back of pack-bullocks due
to the introduction of mechanized transport and laying of roads and rail lines by the then Government. Hence, they depended upon the forests for their livelihood by cutting wood and collecting other forest produce. But this avocation could not provide enough to live by as much of the forest in the country was cut down to provide wood for industry and rail-laying. Being poor, illiterate and lacking skills, they degenerated and took to crimes like robbery, dacoity, cattle-lifting and kidnapping of children until the middle of the last Century (Panakal and Penekar, 1961). In order to control their criminal activities, the then Government also brought them under the purview of the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871.

Further, despite the precarious economic position they did not like to adopt wage-labour as it was against their proud spirit and tradition. Therefore the Sugali men did not stop poaching in the forest though it had been banned. Their women took up collection of forest produce and later, agricultural wage labour on the farms of neighbouring peasants, out of sheer economic necessity. Thus, after 1880’s forest labour, sale of forest produce and pastoralism became their main occupation. However, by 1930, the forest work had ceased to provide them enough earings because of deforestation, strict implementation of forest protection measures and declaration of some forests as reserved forests. This situation compelled the Sugali men to turn their attention towards agricultural and other types of labour in order to supplement the earnings of their women. However, after 1930, they ultimately settled down first as pastoralists and then as agriculturists, although agriculture had never been their occupation in their history (Halbar, 1982).

Now the Sugali have new opportunities to work for their socio-economic betterment. Now-a-days, most of them have taken to pastoralism, agriculture and various types of labour, although a few (as in Western Rajasthan) still carry on their traditional occupation of salt-trade. But this section, too, is finding it difficult to carry on its occupation because of shortage of grazing lands for cattle (Malhotra and Bose, 1963). Their habit of living in
isolated groups away from others, which was a characteristic of their nomadic days, still persists. Even today, most of them continue to live in exclusive habitats away from the multi-caste villages, though often a few Sugali families also live in multi-caste villages and towns.

Internal Structure

Various accounts are given regarding the internal structure of the Sugali (Naik, 1968; Crook, 1974; Russel and Hiralal, 1973). The screening of all these accounts reveals that the Sugali can be divided into 17 sub-tribes such as (1) Mathura, (2) Labhani, (3) Baid, (4) Dhadi, (5) Dhalia, (6) Charan, (7) Turkiya, (8) Mukeri, (9) Dhankute, (10) Kangi, (11) Shirkiband, (12) Sanar, (13) Navi, (14) Shingadya, (15) Badi, (16) Jogi and (17) Rohidas on the basis of sub-tribe endogamy, territorial affiliation, avoidance of commensality etc. (fig.1). The present study is conducted on the Charan sub-tribe of the Sugali. A brief account of each sub-tribe of the Sugali is given below.

The Mathura Sugali claim to be of the highest rank and purest blood, coming probably, as their name indicates, from Mathura in upper India. Their thandas are chiefly confined to the hilly tracts of Kinwat and Hadgaon taluks of Maharashtra, and Bodhan taluk of Andhra Pradesh. They are divided, according to Mr. Cumberlege (1882), into four clans, viz., Pande, Dube, Tiwari and Chanbe, all of which are common titles of Hindustani brahmins. It is probable that these groups are exogamous marrying with each other.

The Mathura Sugali are fairer in complexion than the other sub-tribes of the Sugali and unlike the latter are neat and clean in their habits. They wear the sacred thread, know the Gayathri Mantra and obstain from meat-eating and consuming of liquor. They do not take food cooked by any other tribes. While eating their meals they keep a fire burning; if the fire goes out by chance, they stop eating. Widow remarriages are not allowed among them. Till the age of puberty, a Mathura Sugali girl is required to retain as a symbol, cowrie shells and betel nuts (Piper betle) tied in the skirt of her
garment. Mathurias have their own Bhatt or genealogists for the settlement of marriages. Their important festival is Gokulasthami (the celebration of Sri Krishna’s birth day). They speak of language which is mixture of Hindi and Gujarathi.

The second sub-tribe, the Labhani may derive their name from ‘Lavana’ (salt) and probably devoted themselves more to the carriage of this staple. They are said to be Rajputs and to be descended from Mota and Mola, the cowherds of lord Sri Krishna. They carried on extensive trade by means of large herds of bullocks. Later they are said to have taken to agriculture as an additional means of livelihood.

The third sub-tribe, the Baid are reported to have earned their livelihood by working as carriers, doctors and weavers. They are chiefly spread in Pilibhit, Kant and the adjoining places of North-Western provinces. The Baid Sugali are divided into ten clans namely, (1) Jhaloi, (2) Tandar, (3) Hatar, (4) Kapahi, (5) Danderi, (6) Kachani, (7) Tarin, (8) Dharpahi, (9) Kiri, and (10) Bahlim.

The fourth sub-tribe viz., the Dhadi are considered inferior to other sub-tribes. They are hybrid tribe of Muhammadan and Hindu. It is believed that they embraced the faith of Islam during the reign of emperor, Humayun (1961 Census, 1965). They undergo circumsision like Muhammadans but worship Hindu deities, especially the goddess Saraswathi. Their marriage are carried out in accordance with ‘Nikka’ rites, but they also go through the Sugali form of marriage except that marriage pots are not placed in the pandal. At burials a Fakir is called to read the prayers.

Further, according to Cumberlege, the Dhadi are both musicians and mendicants; they sing in praise of their areas and the Charan ancestors and of the emperors of Delhi. During certain seasons of the year they visit Charan hamlets, when each family gives them a young bullock or some amount of money.
The Sugali belonging to the fifth sub-tribe viz., the Dhalia or Sugali Mangs are attached as musicians to each Sugali thanda, eventhough their touch is regarded as impure by those of other sub-tribes. As Siraj-Ul-Hassan (1920) states, both the Dhadi and the Dhalia are said to have come to the Deccan with the armies of the Asaf-Jah, the Vazir of ShawJahan, Who compaigned against Bijapur in the year 1630 A.D.

The sixth sub-tribe viz., the Charan are the most numerous and important. According to Siraj-Ul-Hassan (1920), they are divided into five exogamous clans or sections ; (1) Rathod or Bhukiya, (2) Chowhan or Mude, (3) Pamhar, (4) Baditiya, and Tori, all of the eponymous character being the names of their founders, and the names of Rajput clans. Of the five Charan Sugali clans, the Rathod and the Baditiya are chiefly found in Maharashtra districts and adjoining Berar, and Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh respectively. The Sugali of the present study belong to four clans of the Charan sub-tribe (1) Rathod, (2) Pamhar, (3) Chowhan, and (4) Baditiya.

The next two sub-tribes viz., One Turkia and the Mukeri seem to be a mixed group of Hindus who may have embraced Islam as the religion of their employers. The Turkia Sugali assert that they came originally from Multan. They are for the most part occupied as carriers and are chiefly found in Maradabad, Bhilaspur etc., areas of North India. The Mukeri Sugali are mainly spread in the states of Maharastra, U.P. and West Bengal. They assert that they derive their name from their ancestor Makka Sugali, who helped the Father Abraham to build Mecca (Makka). Though they are professedly Muhammadans of Sunni sect, they follow many Hindu traditions such as worshipping Kali Bhavani, offering sacred food to the departed etc. Their occupation is grinding, selling flour and other provisions, and dealing in grain.

The Dhankute are engaged in husking of rice. The terms of other two sub-tribes, Kangi or Phanada and Shirkiband or Shirkiwala are used to those Sugali who are engaged in comb-making and mat-weaving respectively.
The Sugali of latter sub-tribe are mainly found in the states of Punjab, Harayana and Delhi.

Further, the names of the last six sub-tribes are referred to those Sugali who have taken up independent professions as per thanda administration. They include (i) the Sanar - goldsmiths, (ii) the Navi - barbers, (iii) the Shingadya - musicians specialised in blowing horns, (iv) the Badi or Bajigar - group singers accompanied by an orchestra, (v) the Jogi or Bharava-makers of Sugali ornaments, and (vi) the Rohidas-cobblers. The last six sub-tribes indicate that the Sugali have employed representatives of different artisan and servicing groups as found in Indian villages. However, in course of time the latter groups have stopped performing their traditional services to the Sugali, since the changed circumstances have also compelled them to settle down and seek other pursuits of economy such as pastoralism and agriculture.

**Early Sugali Identity**

By and large the Sugali is a beautiful tribe. A typical Sugali is dolichocephalous, with oval face, black of brown eyes, long hair and strait nose (Nanjudayya and Iyer, 1928). Both men and women are strong and are capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. They still retain their fair complexions despite the beastly summer of the Deccan.

According to Colonel Moore, the Sugali associated exclusively amongst themselves. In times of war, they marched and camped apart, relying on their own courage for protection. Even their women drove the cattle and were quite robust, capable of hard labour with apparent ease. They were chaste and affable and any indecorum showed to a women was resented by the men, who had a high sense of honour in this regard (Turston, 1975).

General Briggs (1877) was impressed by the ethic distinctness of the Sugali and said that their language, habits and manners differed from
those of the Deccan kingdoms so as at once to brand them as foreigners. Their women’s dress is most characteristic feature as it differs completely from the Southern dress. They wear a coarse, multi-coloured petti-coat, an open-backed bodice, and an odni or over-cloth in the making of which they spend lot of time and energy. They prefer red and yellow colours for their spacious frocks and tight bodices linked with cowries. They wear heavy costumes to which gingling cowries and resting beads are stitched to heighten the effect of their natural beauty. They also add massive rings of ivory round their arms as substitutes for lighter precious metal bracelets used by others. They wear cowries tied to their tufts of hair which dangle in front and sides providing a rhythmic movement keeping pace to their lively gait. The men wear dhoti with short trousers and frequently gaudy turbans and caps in which they indulge on festive occasions and are easily distinguishable from other men in the south.

The Sugali, though illiterate, are calculative and worldly-wise as any other community during their days of transport and trade. They buy and shell quickly if the prices are high and stock the grain if the prices are low with a view to maximizing gain. As the Sugali are acclimatized to camp life, they can withstand the vigors of the tropical sun and the heavy showers of rain, thereby acquiring a robust physique.

Despite rational calculation and employment with different armies thereby earning huge sums of money, poverty seems to have been their persistent lot, even in their hey day. This paradox can be explained in terms of their persistent lot even in their hey day. This paradox can be explained in terms of their nomadic habits, lack of frugality and habitual drunkenness. As a result, they are often unable to recoup the cattle lost in the course of their campaigns.

Further, the Sugali are basically intelligent, faithful, honest and brave. Once they are gained over, they remain as devoted followers. Their virtues preponderate over their vices. Thus it is evident that there are
apparent contradictions in the opinion of officials, missionaries and travellers about the early Sugali. If their stealing and wandering habits and peculiar magical practices including human sacrifice are taken into consideration, they can be regarded as a barbarous community in a civilized country, while if they are regarded as members of an alliance with the Governments, one can not ignore their general utility to the state as promoters of commerce or transporters of merchandice for the armies. Therefore, the extreme views of them as ‘barbarous robbers’ or ‘noble savages’ are untenable.

Settlement

Since the Sugali are nomadic they live in detached clusters of rude huts called ‘thandas’ at some distance from the established villages. Siraj-Ul-Hassan (1920) writes that the Banjara thandas are always on the move; but during the rainy months they encamp on the outskirts of the villages, generally on some dry spots where there is sufficient fodder for the cattle, tents are made of coarse stout cloth fastened with ropes. Thurston (1975) writes that the lambadas of Visakhapatnam Agency encamp for night with fires lighted all around them in order to get rid of tigers and other wild animals. When the thanda or caravan starts on its long carrying trips, the young men and some of the women go with it, while the old men and the remainder of women and children remain to tend the breeding cattle in the hamlet. Colonel Sleman (Russel and Hiralal, 1975) notes that the Sugali on their carrying trips prefer by-paths through jungles to the high roads along cultivated plains, as grass, wood and water are more abundant along such paths, and when they can not avoid the high roads, they commonly encamp as far as they can from villages and towns with a view to obtaining sufficient supply of grass, water and wood.

Social Customs

The Sugali eat all kinds of meat including fowls and fork. Both males and females are addicted to heavy drinking. Arrack is their favourite beverage. Songs and dance are in their blood; their expression of art consists essentially
of chants, poems, dances and operas on mythological history. Some of those chants manifest the story of these nomads from Rajaputana. The Sugali are ranked below the cultivating castes and the Brahmins do not accept drinking water from them. Further the Sugali community is not closed to outsiders. Such outsiders (Jangud), who are either kidnapped or adopted, would be recognised as proper Sugali after seven generations only. In the mean time they have to suffer certain disabilities. They can not inhale smoke through the stem of the hukka when it is passed round the assembly, but must take off the stem and inhale from the bowl. They also can not touch the bell-metal plates of the master, as the latter are liable to pollution. Instead they are allowed to use brass plates.

**Political Organisation**

Each thanda (hamlet) or caravan has a Chief with the designation of Nayak (headman). The office of the Nayak is only partly hereditary and the choice also depends on ability. The thanda is named after the headman, whose word is law; he is treated with reverence and credited with supernatural powers.

The Nayak exercises complete authority over his men, settle disputes in the community and directs the movements of the caravan during the travelling. Further, he is privileged to receive two shares in case he participates in a robbery or other crime and a fee on the remarriage of a widow outside her family and on the discovery of a witch (Russel and Hiralal, 1975).

**Religion**

According to the 1891 Mysore census Report the Sugali are Vaishnavaits and their principal deity is Lord Krishna. They also worship Lord Venkateswara whose temple is at Tirupati and Hanuman, the monkey god. In addition they worship a few male deities such as Mithu Bhukia and Siva
Bhaia, and village goddesses such as Poleramma, Mallelamma, Ankalamma, Peddamma, Maremma, Banasankari Devi and Banjara Devi.

The Sugali are known to worship their cattle. When an individual or cattle is ill, he is taken to the feet of Hatadiya, a fully decorated bullock on which no burden is ever laid. They repeat many mantarams (magical formulae) over their patients. Whenever there is sickness they sacrifice a goat or a chicken. Several instances are also known of the Sugali having practised human sacrifice. Thurston (1975) notes that before setting out on a journey, they sacrifice a child to ensure a successful journey.

The Sugali believe in magic and witchcraft. They attribute a prolonged illness, a cattle murrain, a sudden death or other misfortune to witchcraft. The cause of these is known through the witches who help the bewitched person’s family by charging fee in finding out the witch. The punishment for being proclaimed a witch was death to the woman and a fine to be paid by the relatives.

The Sugali observe the Holi festival for the celebration of which money is collected in villages and towns. On the Holi day, the headman and his wife fast, and worship two images ad mud representing Kama (the Cupid) and his wife, Rati. On the following morning, cooked food is offered to the image which are then burnt. Men and women sing and dance in separate groups round the fire. On the third day they again sing and dance and dress themselves in gala attire. The men snatch the food prepared by the women and run away amid protests from the women, who sometimes chastise them.

The rites of passage that the Sugali perform are not many and not complicated. After the birth of a child the mother is unclean for five days and lives in a separate hut. On the sixth day she washes the feet of all the children in the hamlet, feeds them and then return to her husband’s hut.
Sugali marriage rituals are very lengthy. Their marriages are frequently held during the rainy season, as they usually move during the remaining period. At a betrothal the bridegroom and his friends come and stay in the village next to that of bride. The two parties meet on the village boundary where the bride-price ranging from Rs. 35/- to Rs. 1000/- and four bullocks is fixed. At the time of betrothal the parties go to a liquor shop and betal leaves and a large handful of sugar would be distributed to every body. Prior to marriage the prospective bridegroom has to spend a fortnight or a month in the bride’s house and all the time he has to blind-fold himself to disable himself from seeing or speaking to the bride. For the marriage ceremony they pitch a tent in lieu of the marriage-shed and on the ground they place two rice-pounding pestels, around which the bride and bridegroom make seven turns. The man who officiates at the marriage will be teased by grown-up women as a custom of frolic by pulling his tuft, his dress and other belongings and by pelting with rice, turmeric (Curcuma longa) and arecanuts (Areca catechu) and even pebbles to extract a cry from his which is believed to augur for a lucky future. It is noted that among the Mathura Banjaras of Berar the marriage ceremony resembles the usual Hindu type, which includes the performance of Homa (fire sacrifice) and Saptapathi (taking seven steps around the sacred fire). The sex life among the Sugali is healthy. They have a high code of morality; they never allow a widow to go out of the family and if an elder brother marries and dies without offspring, the younger must marry the widow. If, however, the elder brother dies leaving offspring, and the younger brother wishes to marry the widow, he must give Rs. 15/- and three oxen to his brother’s children. The custom here referred to is said to be practised, because Sugriva, the ancestor of the Sugali married his elder brother Vali’s widow. If the widow prefers another man and elopes with him, the relatives of the first husband claim compensation. Even during one’s husband’s life, a woman may desert him for anyone else, the latter paying the husband the cost of the original marriage ceremony. However, certain disabilities are attached to widow remarriages. Remarried widows are forbidden entry into a regular marriage
party, while their offspring are disabled from legal marriage for three
generations, although they are allowed to take wives from families similarly
circumstanced.

If a widower remarriages, he may go through the ordinary marriage
ceremony or a simple ceremony in which he declares his selection of a bride
to four or five community men whom he feeds. Thanda have to depend only
on pastoralism as the mainstay of their economy mainly because the ecological
setting in which they inhabit is much suitable for cattle husbandry, as the
adjoining forests provide sufficient fodder for the cattle. In addition, the
existing ecological constraints such as highly hilly nature of the surrounding
area and limited cultivable land hinder them from taking to cultivation; on the
contrary, the Sugali of Sekshan Palli thanda had to take to agriculture as the
primary source of their livelihood due to multiple reasons such as inadequacy
of grazing ground, gradual decline in cattle population availability of cultivable
land, etc.

Furthermore, the influence of forest is reflected on every aspect of
Sugali culture. It appears that a comprehensive understanding of their culture
can be had by examining it in relation to the forests, as the latter are sources
of fodder for the cattle, medicine, raw materials for the preparation of country-
liquor both for domestic consumption and for supplementing the income. The
forests also provide raw materials such as bamboo, grass etc. for the
construction of huts, fire-wood both for selling and domestic consumption and
necessary land for cultivation. The familiarity of the Sugali children with the
ecological setting develops gradually from the very beginning of their childhood
as they spend most of their time in the forest grazing the cattle and collecting
fire-wood, grasses and herbs. The names of many trees and plants are
familiar to the boys and girls including the young ones of each thanda under
study. While grazing they ought to know what fruits or leaves or roots to eat,
and what to avoid owing to their poisonous nature. They also come to know
about the herbs and such other medicinal objects of common use which may
help them in case of hurt wound or fracture, and other common ailments. Thus the forest is very close to the Sugali from the very childhood and it penetrates in the very ethos and world view of these forest-inhabitants.

Further, the forests also provide suitable setting for the abode of the wild animals, some of which are suitable games for the Sugali. However, one should not think that the Sugali of either thanda are good hunters, as they closely associate themselves with the forests. In fact, they are pre-occupied with either pastoralism or agricultural pursuits. There are no regular hunters except on in each thanda. Even mass hunting is hardly undertaken.

**The Setting of Udiripikonda Thanda and Sakeshana Palli Thanda in Anantapur District, Ulindakonda Thanda and Pasupula Thanda in Kurnool district**

Udiripikonda thanda came into existence in the present site around 1890’s. This thanda, too, one of the four hamlets of the once-existed revenue village of Marutla lies 15 kilometers to the northwest of Kuder, the mandal headquarters town in Anantapur district. It is situated between 78°20’ and 78°25’ east longitudes and 15°20’ and 15°25’ north latitudes. Like the Udiripikonda thanda, it is also a big, uniethnic, nucleated settlement with a total population of the thanda can be approaches by bus from Kuder town. The total population of the thanda is 425.

Ulindakonda Thanda came in to existence 1980’s this Thanda they can be approach by bus Kallur town.

Ulindakonda Thanda located 23 km towards south from district headquarters Kurnool. Banaganapalli, Chapirevula are the nearby cities to Ulindakonda Thanda.

Kotla Railway station, Kurnool town railway station are the railway stations near to Kurnool town.
Birla Gate APSRT Bus Station (C.Camp/ Kurnool APSRTC Bus Station are the near by bus stations Ulindakonda Thanda.

These village own mobile phones are connected to the rest of the world through television 80 channels are operated. Paspula is a village located in Banaganapalli mandal of Kurnool district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Pasupula is known for its natural liveliness with greenery and peace all around. Paspula is easily accessed by road from Banaganapalli APSRTC is renewing buses from Banaganapalli. The nearest railway station to Pasupula is Banaganapalli. Nearest towns from Pasupula villages are Adoni, Banaganapalli, Bethamcherla. Near by tourist places of their village are Belum caves, phone, Kalva Bugga, Mahanandi, Mantralyam, Omkaram, Srisailam, Yaganti, etc.

Thus, the foregoing account of the socio-cultural conditions of the nomadic Sugali of historical past reveals that their life has been conditioned by the limitations of the physical environment, technology and economy their turbulent history, their subjugation to almost two hundred years of colonial rule etc. A cursory examination of several cross-sections of the Sugali points out that the society and culture of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Sugali have undergone a few changes. The society and culture of the Sugali of Udiripikonda thanda Pasupula Thanda can be treated as essentially pastoral, while the society and culture of the Sugali of Sekshana Palli thanda Olindekonda Thanda can be regarded as peasant type. This dissimilarity has mainly arisen due to the difference in the environmental setting in which the four Sugali thandas under study are located. The following chapters pinpoint the patterns of semblance and difference between the pastoral and the peasant Sugali society and culture.
TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF SUGALI IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2001 Population</th>
<th>2011 Population</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adilabad</td>
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<td>495794</td>
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<td>18.09</td>
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<td>192941</td>
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<td>168985</td>
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<td>5.57</td>
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<td>48937</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.24</td>
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<td>1.97</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>159165</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
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</table>

During his regime peace and prosperity flourished in the Telugu Desam (land of Telugus). Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur and Chittoor districts lying on the southern plateau of the state constitute the Rayalaseema region. This is bounded on the south by Tamil Nadu, on the east by the Guntur and
Nellore districts of Andhra Pradesh as also Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Karnataka state and on the north by the Thungabhadra river as well as Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh.

Further, Rayalaseema region is the most sparsely populated and economically the most vulnerable part of Andhra Pradesh. This is typically a dry tract of Andhra Pradesh and has been declared a part of famine zone in South India. Drought and famine conditions are of common occurrence in this region for the past ten decades. Broadly speaking, this region has generally been styled “the stalking ground for famines”.

Kurnool district lies between 76°58’ and 79°34’ of the eastern longitude and 14°54’ and 16°18’ of the northern latitude. It is bounded on the north by the Thungabhadra and the Krishna rivers as well as Mahabubnagar district, on the east by Guntur and Nellore districts, on the west by Bellary district of Karnataka state and on the north by Anantapur and Cuddapah districts.

The Rayalaseema region accounts for 26.76% of total area of the Andhra Pradesh, The district-wise split-up of the area is — Kurnool s8.68%; Cuddapah 5.60%; Anantapur 6.97% and Chittoor 5.51% respectively.

Climatically the region is characterised by a dry and agreeable climate. The months of December to February comprise a dry and comparatively cooler season whereas the season from March to May is characterised by summer. The remaining two seasons from June to September and from October to November constitute south-west monsoon season and retreating monsoon season respectively.

The average annual rainfall in Rayalaseema region is 670.4 mm/ the highest and lowest figures being recorded in Chittoor (827.5 mm) and Anantapur (544.1 mm) districts respectively while in the other two districts (Kurnool 624.4 mm; Cuddapah 685.5 mm) the rainfall values are closer to
the regional average. There are no perennial rivers in Rayalaseema region; the farmers mostly depend on tube-wells stepwells, tanks and a few irrigation canals. However, there are a few seasonal rivers such as Papagni, Pincha, Arani, Kalyani, Pennar (Pinakini), Pandameru, Bahuda, Chitravathi, Svarnamuki, Thungabhadra with its tributary the Handri (Hindri), the Krishna, the Kunderu and the Gundlakamma.

Red soils predominate the region though black soils are found in parts of Kurnool and Cuddapah Districts. There are only patches of Alkaline and saline soils. The black soils of these areas are highly retentive of moisture and become sticky when they are wet and hard when they are dry. Cracks are formed on the surfaces of the soils during hot weather. Soil erosion has been identified as one of the worst problems in this area. The main crops in Rayalaseema region are food crops such as paddy, jowar, bajra, ragi, korra and nonfood crops like sugarcane, groundnut and cotton. All the dry-land crops such as groundnut, jowar, red-gram, blackgram etc., depend on the charity of monsoons.

The total cropped area of Kurnool District is 1,121,717 hectares. Food crops are raised over an extent of 683,511 hectares forming 60.93% of the total cropped area. Jowar, paddy, bajra and korra are grown extensively under food crops. Jowar is raised over an extent of 42.15% of the total area under food crops. Under the non-food crops groundnut is an important commercial crop, which accounts for 60.10% of total area under which non-food crops, followed by cotton (33.97%).

The forest area ranges from about 10% of the total area of Anantapur district to 30.5% of the total area of Chittoor District. The flowering plants are known to comprise about 11,000 varieties besides 100 plants grown in towns, villages, and agricultural lands. The flora in the eastern ghats covering Tirupathi, Mamandur, Talakona and Seshachalam range of hills is very high. Further, Kurnool District occupies a unique place in the matter of forests which cover an area of 357,683 hectares accounting for 20.32% of the
total area of the district. The main forest belts are the Nallamalais, the Erramalais and the Velgode Reserve Forests. The forests covering the Erramalais and the Velikondas are of inferior type. Superior quality of Teak (Tectona grandis) is available in these forests. Bamboo (Bambusa dendrocalamus) forests in the district are also important. The other types of timber available in the forests of this district are Yepi (Hardwickia binata), Inumaddi (Terminalia tomentosa var typica), and Chandanapu (Santalum album).

The Rayalaseema region is not very rich in game. However Kurnool is one of the richest Districts of the state for the variety and abundance of fauna. The depletion of forests, inception of railways/ the ever increasing road mileage to the progressive opening up of all the earlier inaccessible tracts, the increasing tempo of motor traffic, the indiscriminate exploitation of wild life etc., cumulatively led to a near total extinction of many species. The forests are inhabited by wild animals such as tiger (Panthera tigris), leopard (Panthera pardus), Wolf (canis Lupus), Jackal (Canis aureus), wild dog (Cuon alpinus), hyaenea (Hyaena hyanea), Civet cat (Viverricula indica), bear (Melursus), mongoose (Herpestes edwardsi), etc., all of which come under mammals. Among the herbivora, Chinkaral (Gazella gazella), blackbuck (Antelope cervicapra), blue bull (Boselaphus Tragocamelus), sambar (Cervus unicolor), spotted deer (Axis axis), jungle sheep (Muntiacus muntjak), wild-boar (Sus scrofa), porcupine (Hystrix indica) etc., are important animals found in this area. Further, birds such as duck, jungle fowl (gallus), peal fowl (Paro cristatus), pigeon (Colombia livia), reptiles such as lizards (lacertide Spp), kraits (Bungam Spp), cobra (Nagal) etc. and rodents such as rabbits (Cryetologus cuniculus), squirrel1 (Sciurus) etc. are of common occurrence.