CHAPTER IV

CONCEPT OF HEALTH AND DISEASE
Many factors determine the health status of the Chenchus. As seen from the descriptive analysis of physical and hygienic conditions surrounding the Chenchus a few factors do help the Chenchus in avoiding infections and disease but a few other factors are likely to cause infection, disease and sickness. Shifting guđems and geographical isolation in the past did work to their advantage in health. Further as long as deforestation and poaching of non-tribal people in the Chenchu territory was marginal the Chenchu did enjoy a large variety of vegetable food gathered in the forest contributing to their nutritional standards. On the other hand lack of personal care and hygiene have made them vulnerable to a variety of diseases including skin diseases particularly among the children. Opening of Ashram schools (residential schools) and their poor sanitary conditions has increased the vulnerability of Chenchu children to infections and through them the Chenchu elders.

The importance of being healthy is well recognised in almost all human societies. In India, just as elsewhere, the maxim (axiom) "health is wealth" is quoted contextually in day-to-day life. In a reductionist sense health may be conceptualised as a state of the human body devoid of any physical disorder, pain and other discomforts. Absence of any symptoms or aberrations in the normal functioning of the human body is the commonly held attribute of health.
Medical anthropological literature is replete with accounts producing evidence to the existence of interaction between culture and illness. Kunstadter (1975) writes that "illness generally seems to imply interference with normal functions, and health seems generally to be considered as a state in which normal functions are possible, but there has been virtually no systematic attempt to discover the content or range of these concepts cross-culturally" (683).

What constitute health and how health is conceptualised and perceived in different cultures are elusive. Obviously the notions about health differ cross-culturally for the simple reason that "normal function" is not universally uniform. For instance among the pastoral families in rural Andhra Pradesh, busy and strenuous work schedules of long hours seem to be normal function whereas leisurely trips to forest and short periods of work seem to be the normal function among the hunter gatherers (for example Chenchus). For some individuals, bubbling, fast behaviour is normal function whereas to few others calm, quiet and slow rhythm seem to be normal functioning.

Obviously "healthy state" is universally viewed as essential for life- actions performed day in and day out. While physical well-being or fitness is thought as essential condition for human survival and for performing the day-to-day 'normal' chores in a society, the fitness itself is conditioned by other
factors/conditions, forces, beings etc. Sometimes fitness as a manifestation of health may have several dimensions other than physical strength. Attitudes, behaviours, emotions, reactions and responses, countenance, social wellbeing etc., define fitness and reflect the state of health.

Happiness is said to be prime manifestation of healthy state; sad state is supposed to be a reflection of something that is wrong or unwell with the bodily health or mental health. A smiling face is an index of good health whereas a reserved countenance is resented as unpleasant, branded as pain in the neck. Jealousy is said to be an unhealthy state. In rural Andhra Pradesh, jealous people are said to be very thin and never put on flesh even if fed well. Excessive indulgence in erotic talk is said to be a syndrome of mental illness, or insanity.

Thus physical well-being or fitness alone is not regarded as health. However physical and biological aberrations constitute a significant aspect of health and warrants some action to remain healthy or to regain normalcy after afflicted with ill-health.

The health related concept and practices among most of the people in the world today are drawn from the tradition. They are evolved during antiquity. Ancient civilisations have developed their own medical systems. The ideas about equilibrium of the health was well developed in ancient
Greece, China and India. Ideas about the way the body falls into imbalance based on humoral theories were first elaborated in the classical texts of medical sciences several thousand years ago. Those theories have some biological premises. The human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile; these things are directly related to pain and health. Health is primarily the state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity, and are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances is deficient or in excess or is separated in the body and not mixed properly with the other (Foster and Anderson, 1978).

The non-western people tend to believe that unless pain and discomfort are present, there can be no illness. They define health as feeling good or is the absence of symptoms of ill-health (Ibid, 1978). From the stand point of introducing scientific medical care into the traditional world, the definition of health as "feeling good" has important negative consequences (Ibid, 1978). However, even in these society, various dimensions are added to this simplified common sense meaning of health depending upon the dialectical situation of perceiving the overall meaning of health.

This chapter discusses the ideas, perceptions, beliefs related to health and disease among the Chenchus.
CONCEPT OF HEALTH

FITNESS OF THE BODY

The Chenchus say that the health of an individual is perceived by the firmness of the body. They compare a firm body with that of a bonda (stone slab). According to them unmarried persons above the age of 15 years start developing firm body (hardness of the body) and continue to maintain the toughness till 40 or 45 years. The firmness of the body depends largely upon the food. Usually persons of this age get their "lion" share or earn their share of food. Food is considered to be very important during this age. In order to undertake arduous activities, sufficient amount of food is to be eaten by these people. If sufficient food is not available they usually abandon doing arduous work.

The Chenchus say that they wander in the rocky terrain. This requires a hard body which can be developed by eating adivi mansam (forest meat that is, meat of wild animals). Eating this meat is said to induce toughness into the human body. But the body should be made to work hard (vollu vanchi pani cheyali). Then only the body firmness and muscles acquire hardness.

In the past, the Chenchus used to exhibit their strength of the body by means of exhibiting certain feats: tree climbing, lifting stone called allipi gundu (smooth stone) with one hand or with knees, etc. Individuals would
compete to excel in order to show their strength. Doing any work without appropriate speed and ease, attracts ridicule. In a situation like that, an able person may volunteer himself to show how the work is to be executed. Food contribution to the maintenance of toughness of the body reach a nadir after 45 years. After this age the value of the food has only diminishing returns on health. To have a good health even after 45 years of age, an individual must exhibit proper behaviour, and stoic disposition right from young ages.

HEALTH TERMINOLOGY

There is no term in the Chenchu language equivalent to the English term health. The Telugu equivalent to health, arogyam is however known to them. But it is used very rarely Saanthosham is another cognate term which means happiness, a manifestation of health. Bagu or Bagu is also a term reflecting general well-being, state of satiation, repletion/abundance, devoid of turbulence from ill-health or family crises. When the Chenchus meet their friends or relatives, they enquire the well-being by saying bagundara. Specifically, this word subsumes two components: health and happiness. Conversely, the enquiry is directly related to anarogyamu (ill-health) and kalathalu (crises, worry, wrtiment, turbulence, vexation, anxiety). Though the enquiry is more a formality, each Chenchu adult makes a conscious attempt to ask about the well-being of their relatives living elsewhere. The wider meaning of Bagu is thus overall happiness.

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There are few other words which are related to health. The Chenchu say that "bidda boddu ga vunnadu" (the child is of solid build). They also compare a healthy person with that of a knife (Chaku’ Kathi). A healthy woman is compared with a garden of red gram: Kandi chenu madiriga nava nava laduthunnadi (Red gram garden like agile swaying). Also healthy woman is teased passionately as misa misa laduthunna ve or niga niga laduthunna ve. This means the woman is twinkling or shining. These terms also convey a meaning that a woman is working as hard as a man and reflects overall healthy state.

Sometimes good health is conceptualised in terms such as kovvu (fat, not fat body) and balisina pirralu (enlarged buttocks). In reality the Chenchu men and women are lean. Obesity is almost absent. However the Chenchus say "vadu baga kovvu meeda vunnadu, meaning, that person is possessed with ample fat which means, that person is very agile, unyielding and indomitable. Poguru pattindi or madam pattindi or kanda kavaram are terms which indicate full growth replete with vigour usually manifested in arrogance. Conversely a weak person is not capable of exhibiting pogaru. Pogaru literally means arrogance. But poguru pattindi convey that the body has acquired a 'high' vigour. Madam means semen. Madam pattindi means one is lustfully arrogant. The people say that such a person should be married off to
reduce his madam. Kanda means muscle; kanda kavaramu means fully developed muscles which exude or prompt arrogant behaviour. Though these terms kovvu, pogaru, madam, kanda kavaramu are used to reprimand and restrain the "unruly" snobbishness, health of such individuals is considered to be good and agile. Presumably, the Chenchu yearn to have such a state of health. Some Chenchu informants eloquently proclaimed that such a state facilitate one to become a successful hunter, take several wives, become a leader, be active in social life, etc. In the same way, the Chenchus comment: aadiki gudda balisindi", meaning, that "person's buttocks are jutting out". Particularly women whose buttocks are prominent, are considered to be attractive and hence healthy.

Ditta maina nadunu (firm waist) indicates healthy state particularly with reference to women. Nadunu vangipoyindi (waist is bent) indicates onset of old age and weakness. The waist is not supposed to develop folds on the back, for, it is thought that waist lost its biguvu (firmness). Mokalla lo csava indicates power in the knees. This is usually applied to adolescent boys and adult males for their sexual capacity and perseverance. Besides a person unable to trek the forest or expressing weakness in legs is supposed to have lost csava (strength) in his knees. Csava is usually applicable to inner rings of the tree trunk which indicate toughness. The implication of applying this word to knees is obvious: strong knees are like matured tree trunk for the
arduous trekking in the forest and scaling steep hills. The marrow of the bones is also called csava, rasam or moolaga. If marrow is not present in enough quantity, csava is said to be low. If csava is low, the legs go weak and briskness will diminish. Powerful arms are compared to that of eguna's grip (udumu potti). Grip which do not slacken is attributed to strength of arms. Men are supposed to have this capability. Climbing trees, holding rope in honey collection, catching the animal's leg or tail in hunting, holding axe during cutting operations etc require firm grip.

The strength of the neck is also assessed. Neck is supposed to be the strongest parts in the body. Meda vali poyindi (droop of neck) is an indication of climacteric, where the life of an individual is very critical. Children are prone to exhibit this often and more quickly in the event of serious illness. That is why children's neck is given care and massaged with oil. The Chenchus say that healthy person would not bend his neck even if head loads carried across the hilly terrain.

**BODY TYPES**

On the basis of human body qualities, individuals are classified into:

1)" vedi sareeram / vollu" (hot bodied persons) and 2)"seethala sareeram / vollu" (cold bodied persons). People believed that whether a person's body is cold or hot is determined at birth.
Vedi Sareeram Vallu

The "Vedi Sareeram Vallu" are people with hot bodies; warmth is felt, if their body is touched. According to the Chenchus, this category of people have more stamina. Hot body people can work hard and do not get tired after strenuous work. They are capable of walking long distances. People prefer this type of body because they can work and bring more food, firewood, walk long distances in the forest and collect more minor forest produce (MFP) and can easily escape from the attack of wild animals. The main advantage of the people with hot body is that cold weather usually does not affect their body. In summer they should be very cautious while consuming hot category foods. Usually this category of people get ‘heat related diseases’.

Seethala Sareeram Vallu

The "Seethala Sareeram Vallu" means people with cold bodies. Some individuals sweat proposely especially in the palm and sole. The Chenchus opine that the people with excess water in their bodies get tired very soon. These cold body persons have less strength and stamina, compared to hot bodied persons. These people cannot do hard work and walk long distances. They tend to suffer from ayasam (asthma), nasal congestion, sinus and severe headache. The Chenchus individually feel that they should not acquire cold body features. People with cold bodies are not prone to heat related
ailments. This category of people frequently suffer from cold related diseases. During winter and rainy seasons they should be careful about their food. These people are subjected to disease of cold category such as cough, cold, throat pain, heaviness in the head etc.

ELEMENTS OF HEALTH

The Chenchus were asked to explain the elements or forces underlying health, and what is responsible for health.

At the outset, the Chenchus recognise that good health is god's gift. This conception is widely prevalent among the Hindus. However the Chenchus have other dimensions, regarding the elements influencing their health. Good health depends upon one's deeds and attitudes towards ancestors who are considered to be the potential agents to protect or inflict health. Ancestor's benevolence is very important throughout one's life to have good health.

Good health is also attributed to food intake which in turn depends upon the health (state) of environment. If the forest yields good produce, ample food is available to them throughout the year. The role of food in the maintenance of health, various preparation of food, and food as medicine are discussed elsewhere.
Some elements in the body are supposed to be the chief forces for good health. The first one is *nethuru* (blood). Blood of a healthy person is believed to be in a state of warmness. Such a blood is considered to be almost red in colour and sticky. Ill-health is associated with lack of blood. A pale person is said to suffer from *pandu rogamu* (anaemia). Besides, a person may have *voobu vollu or boda vollu* or body comprising *bohi* (hollow). Here the body is compared to a stalk of *boda* - a kind of thatch grass whose inside comprise soft material which is considered as non-vital compared to the watery liquid seen in succulent plants.

Some people are believed to possess body full of water (*neeru vollu*). Water is said to enter the body if *chedda* (bad, undesirable) *vasthumulu* (eatables) are eaten. The body becomes bloated with water and such people are also said to have *nacchu vollu* (indolent body). Warm Blood is believed to carryout *sathkava* or *balam* (vital force or energy). The Chenchus hold that as one advances in age, his/her blood tends to loose its 'heat' and viscosity thereby its vitality. Such a state is called *nethuru challa badindi* (blood became cold and diluted). This would mean loss of vitality. If blood darkens, the Chenchus say it is spoiled. The loss of vitality is considered to be normal as a natural consequence of ageing process, but, change of blood colour is considered to be due to poisoning or presence of an alien fatal substance in the body or due to evil action like black magic.
Menstrual blood is supposed to be *chedda* (spoiled) and 'bad'. However the *Chenchus* have no idea why the blood of women get spoiled every month. Some muse that menstrual blood is the excess blood.

Semen is also considered to be an element of health. The *Chenchus* equate a drop of semen with 16 drops of blood. (Kakar's (2000) Baba puts one drop of semen as equivalent to 40 drops of blood) Semen is believed to be specialised form of blood or made out of blood. Loss of semen is considered to result in drowsiness and weakness. Women receiving semen *during sexual intercourse gain additional health in compensation of loss of blood during menstruation*. Though 'withdrawal' technique is known to the *Chenchus*, some women are said to insist insemination, as this would prevent the body from going hot. Close male informants confided that their women are very particular that semen should be released only in vagina. The *Chenchu* males also explicitly consider that ejaculation in sleep, dreams etc is bad and cause loss of vitality of the body.

Women also release a sticky whitish mucus which is, however, not semen and do not have vitality. But women to get exhausted due to its release. The essential aspect here is that semen and lubricant secretions carry meanings of potentiality which is regarded as an important ingredient of health.
Thus the *Chenchus* view blood and semen as the force of vitality. Energy to the body is supplied by blood in order to perform day-to-day chores. Hence blood is considered essential for healthy state.

Another force of vitality is called *dammu* or *gesa*. The rough English equivalent for these terms is stamina on account of good respiration. It is also equated with energy on account of food intake. Stamina and energy are used contextually. For example to fight with a bear, if at all an encounter occurs, what is needed is *balamu* (strength). But to undertake an arduous task like honey collection from a cliff, one requires *dammu / gesa* (stamina). The *Chenchu* recognise that stamina though depends upon physical strength an inner drive or perseverance which is more a mentalistic attribute, is needed.

*Dammu pattadam* is bearing the burden of an arduous task or activity. While scaling a steep mountain terrain, the *Chenchus* do it in minimum number of spells of rest. Such activities require perseverance. Stamina is essential for this. While executing an arduous activity, panting occurs. The *Chenchus* refer to this as *dammu*. To the *Chenchus*, stamina is an important aspect of health. One's health is judged in terms of his stamina. Lack of stamina is a clear indication that one is not healthy though he may not exhibit any symptoms of disease or illness. They recognise that stamina decreases with advancement of age. However elderly persons may undertake an activity
stoically though not briskly and may require rest before resuming another activity.

Health is also gauged by facial expressions, body postures, body movements and physiological functions like sleep, appetite, digestion, hearing, eyesight, sensitivity etc., In day to day life, the Chenchus use certain words which reflect a specific meaning regarding facial expressions. To an outsider, the Chenchu temperament appears to be that of reservedness manifested usually by solitude or aloofness. However, the Chenchu delineate individual differences among themselves. There is subtle difference between temperament as a psychological attribute and also as an attribute of health. Psychological attributes are more latent. Facial expressions on the other hand reflect general well-being, a day-to-day condition of the self. Countenance as an attribute of health is concerned more with facial expression in accordance with the context, event, incidence. A person failing to exhibit appropriate / suitable expression, in tune with the context is considered sub-normal, lunatic, eccentric or unsocial. The Chenchus have a few worlds; mucchu moham (unsatiated face); mánu maadiri (like a tree trunk); thikka moham (perplexed face); kullu moham (jealousy face); pokiri moham (mischievous face); sachhu moham (inactive, dull face); debari moham (inert face); Kothi moham (monkey face-mischievous); Kala moham (glowing face); jiddu moham (oily face); padu moham (unworthy countenance); pedi moham (face of a hizra);
devidi moham (contrite countenance); pooku moham (face likened to vagina); dongu moham (countenance of a thief): sotta moham (distorted face); gadida moham (donkey face); thoogu moham (languid face). These words are used when an individual do not respond appropriately to a particular event or incidence or occasion. These terms indicate a particular disposition (indisposition) of an individual that is not normal.

The Chenchus hold that a person should not lie down during day time to take rest. Squatting is the normal mode of resting wherein, the legs are drawn close to the chest and buttocks touch the ground. An individual lie down only when something is wrong with the health. If a person is found lying down, the Chenchus usually enquire about the state of his health. A person who cannot walk fast, carry and work actively is not considered healthy. Good sleep, good appetite and digestion are considered as attributes of good health. Vision and hearing are also indicators of health.

Anatomical Parts

The Chenchus have limited ideas regarding anatomy of the human body. Body appearance is not very significant to them. The Chenchus are uncertain of functions of anatomical organs. Their knowledge of anatomy is confined to certain organs such as potta (abdomen), pegulu (intestine), gunde (heart), kandaralu (muscles), emukalu (bones), oopiri thithi (lungs), naralu (tendons, vessels, nerves), medadu (brain), karjalu (testicles). Potential fatal
sites are head, dokka (either side of the portion between lungs and abdomen), testicles, chest. The Chenchus view that dokka holds oopiri which has several meanings like gali (air), svasa or sasa (respiration) and panem or ayuu (life). Ayuu pattu is the word meant for the part where the 'life' is held. For animals also the same word and location is used. Dokka is considered by the Chenchus as the ayuu pattu.

As already pointed out blood is identified with energy. This notion is only vague and the Chenchus do not explain the actual relationship between blood and energy. The Chenchus have no idea about blood circulation. They only feel that muscles or body contain blood. They say blood loss will be high in injuries causing a cut in the naram (vessel or nerve). Thus there is a vague idea that blood passes through vessels but have no idea of blood circulation with its significance.

The presence of water in the body is also very important. Dryness in mouth known as betta is an obvious indication of dehydration. The Chenchu call a serious form of dehydration as vada debba - a term very popular throughout the arid regions in Andhra Pradesh. Betta is used for mild sun stroke. Too much of sweating calls for a temporary rest and splashing water on face, neck, arm and chest followed by gulping palmful of water a few times. Chenchus are very conscious of thirstiness. They usually consume a lot of water. Water is carried to work places in leather pouches or a small
earthenware container called Thabetikaya (tortoise shaped vessel). The Chenchus believe that water is essential for maintenance of body temperature and for digestion of food. Uduku chesindi, literally means the body has become hot, is a symptom that water loss in the body is substantial as a result of which urination becomes painful as urine comes out drop by drop. Prolonged exposure to hot sun result in the loss of water in the body leading to increase in body temperature. When adequate quantity of water is absent in the body, the skin as well as organs dry up just as a plant dry up without water.

The head is considered a part whose temperature needed to be maintained. The temperature of the head in turn regulates the body temperature. When head temperature increase, the eyes are said to turn red and swooning or stuficient sensation may begin. In order to keep the head's temperature within limits, oil (castor, sesame, coconut, pangamia or ghee) is applied to head. Head is wrapped with a piece of cloth or towel to protect from sun rays. Women draw the hem of their saree on to their head or a separate piece of cloth is wound around the cranium portion of the head.

The Concept of Jeevam and Other Drives

The word jeevam is a special concept among the Chenchus. Jeevam means life sensation. Jeevi means an organism especially confined to animal kingdom. Jeeva munnadi Jeevi (the one with life is organism). Jeevam is
most fundamental unified concept of life. It is considered as the ultimate force that resides in the body without a fixed location. The Chenchus view that Jeevan is like a glow and is eternal. When an individual dies, the Jeevan leaves the body and reenters some other body at birth. In this sense, Jeevan is equated with soul. With reference to health, Jeevan assumes the meaning of motion, dynamism, vigour. The Chenchus ridicule moody, morose, absent-minded persons as Jeevan leni (absence) varu (persons). The most healthy person is said to emit Jeeva kala (exuberance of life). Jeevan is said to influence health. It may also get disturbed. In some serious illness, the Jeevan may leave the body and / or certain illness may result if Jeevan is agitated. Jeevan is said to possess certain non-biological characters like emotion, compassion. Chenchus explain however that Jeevan is not simply life, a biological phenomenon. Jeevan is said to be an independent phenomena and exhibits four characteristics: oopiri or panamu (a force indicating the existence of life as opposed to non-living); Thelivi, sodinamu and buddi. Thelivi, sodeenam and buddi have different connotations. In a broad sense, these terms have the generalised meanings of memorised knowledge, sensation, recognizability or consciousness of the ambience.

Oopiri or Panam is considered to be the life-force confined purely to the bodily existence or body with life. Breath, pulsation of heart and wrist, body motion, movement of limbs, eyes, sensation for touch, smell, sound and
light etc are indicators to know that an individual possess panam or not. Without Panam the body is considered as a katte (dead wood). Panam is different from jeevam in the sense, that the former do not have independent existence outside or without the body unlike the latter. Panam is said to exist in specific locations like gunde (heart), dokka, head, testicles. Its presence can be felt prominently in the gunde (heart). Individuals differ from one another because each person's panam exhibit different intensities of tolerance for pain, sickness, trauma and turbulence in day-to-day social interactions. Gatti (strong) panam or gatti sareeram (body), gunde nibbram (heart tolerance capacity) are the worlds used as indicators of sound healthy body. Bolu (hallow) sareeram (body) is a phrase used to those individuals who are said to possess weak panam. The Chenchus usually say that panam baga ledu to convey that an individual's health is astray or suffering from illness. The state of body is felt and expressed through or by panam.

If a person's health is just normal, the Chenchu express as panam sallaga vundi (panam is cool) or panam boga undi (panam is doing well). The following convey different states: kona panam (in a serious state, and about to die; there is just a little life, but the person is not regarded as dead); panam alladiha vundi (panam is flickering, may or not die); Panam kottu kontavundi (panam is in agitated state over a trauma or accident and panam is still there); panam ledu or panam poyindi (No life).

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Thelivi means memorised knowledge, judgement ability, intelligence, comprehension, calculation and other forms of thinking with respect to daily chores, interactions having immediate social or emotional significance. It is related to social consciousness a person is supposed to possess in a given social context in relation to other person(s). The interaction stipulates a specific social meaning or relevance. Thelivi (intelligence) ihakkava (less, inadequate), manda (insensitive) buddi (mind) are the words used for mediocre, idiots, etc. Telivi is reflected in one's actions, thoughts, reactions. They are explicit actions and expressions of thoughts within the body.

If a person's health is not normal, it is supposed that person's thelivi is also affected. However, the symptoms of loss of Thelivi may not be evident. The Chenchus say that loss of thelivi is gradual and may not be identified till the rogam (ill-health) mudirindi (aggravated). Lose of Thelivi is a symptom of mental illness. Patients may continue to live without Thelivi. Lose of Thelivi is usually attributed to the supernatural actions and influences.

Buddi is the exalted form of thelivi. Though these two are used interchangeably the term buddi refers to wisdom. As it goes in their conversations, buddi is an attribute to be exhibited by adults. The oft cited maxim is that as "one age, he or she should cultivate buddi". Elders reprimand their sons or daughters, in the following way: you have grown up,
married and have children but you have no buddhi; you are sufficiently knowledgeable about life but still behave like a buddhi leni vadu (person lacking wisdom). The health implication of buddhi is that a person who maintains both physical as well as moral/ethical dimensions of life is said to have acquired the refined behaviour that is encapsulated in buddhi. The manifestation of buddhi is not necessarily associated with strong body extruding pogaru etc. In fact buddhi is a counteracting disposition vis-a-vis pogaru, madam, handa kavaram et. In other words buddhi is also a power that has a balancing function in the human body.

Sodeenamu means self-awareness and being in a state of self-consciousness. A person in Sodeenamu is capable of responding to his own biological and social needs as well as exhibit Thelivi in a social relation. Sodeenamu facilitates a person to be under self-control. A person is supposed to be not in his sodeenamu due to shock, excess alcohol consumption, influence of supernatural power. Some plants are said to be capable of inducing unawareness about self, if a person come in contact with them. Before death, a sick-person is said to lose Sodeenamu. But patients may lose Sodeenamu but need not die. They may regain consciousness. As already indicated, a normal person can also lose Sodeenamu but may again regain consciousness. Lose of sodeenamu is not always imminent before a person die.

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The Chenchu say that jeevam, panama, thelivi, buddi and sadeenamu are the basic ingredients or drives in human body. These are basic endowments of a human body. Jeevam has independent existence of itself. The other four exist simultaneously with the physical body, but, have more emotional or behavioural dimensions rather than biological dimensions.

AETIOLOGY: THE CHENCHU PERSPECTIVE

The Chenchus consider that ill-health is normal to the human body. They say that due to wear and tear, due to the action of environmental agents, due to strain of the body upon working, the body is prone to disturbances which in turn lead to impairment, ailment, sickness or ill-health. In the same way as the age advances, csava (strength) decreases, susceptibility to sickness increases and hard work results in 'blow' to health ultimately leading to reduced vigour and a crippled life. Any normal body is subjected to stresses and strains. The body gradually undergoes a process of decay ultimately ending in death. The above account is philosophical or generalised response related to theory of disease. The Chenchus have several other conceptions of disease.

At the outset, the Chenchus conceptualise the disease as panam bagaa ledu (the life-force is not well or indisposed). This means that a person is not well or incapacitated, or bed-ridden and may or may not require the help of
somebody to perform normal chores. A person whose panam is not well, may not like to eat food, may be disinclined to perform daily chores. But strong bodied persons tend to ignore indisposition and may continue to participate in daily chores. Thus panam bagaledu indicate an uncertainty with respect to one's own health condition. Such persons may stay back but may not lie down.

Another concept of disease among the Chenchus is a state of not feeling well. Ill-health is termed as 'Jabbu'. If someone asks about the health condition, the afflicted person may say that "jabbu chesinde", meaning sickness rendered. Compared to the earlier phrase, that is Panam bagaledu, "Jabbu" connotes definite condition or certainty of ill-health. Jabbu is a state of the body where the affected person is incapacitated and fail to carry out normal activities. The Chenchus prefer to be confined to the home and remain lie down. A person suffering with Jabbu is usually advised to stay awake and avoid sleep. Besides he is encouraged to do errands instead of remaining idle. Jabbu is cognised differentially depending upon the intensity, nature and symptoms. Jabbu also connotes fever. When the body's temperature is higher than normal, the Chenchus say Jabbu chesindi. Jabbu tho padinamu connotes that a person was bedridden with fever. Jabbu does not include pains, itches, wounds, aches etc. Jabbu maniski is a phrase used to designate an individual who is suffering with some disease for a prolonged
period of time. TB, leprosy, are some examples of Jabbu. Thus Jabbu is a
word used to designate fever and also certain critical diseases.

A person who is slightly unwell is said to be in a state of nalatha. This
state is characterised by feverish feelings, body pains or reeling,
drowsiness, slight shivering. Most likely Nalatha may turn into Jabbu if
proper precaution is not taken. Food restrictions and restriction from getting
exposed to cool weather and getting wet are to be observed in order to
prevent the ill-health getting aggravated. There is one more term for ill-
health. It is rogamu. But the word rogamu is usually applied to individuals
who are exposed to repeated sickness. Rogamu is also a derogatory term, a
term of scorn, a term of exasperated enquiry over an unknown and unyielding
illness. However rogamu also means serious illness causing concern among
the kin members.

The Chenchus also have explanations regarding what caused the illness
to occur. Usually the Chenchus say that illness occur as matter of fact. In
their own language "rogatu" (ill-health) manushulaku (to human beings) raka
(coming or inflict) makulaku (to trees) vasthaya (come or inflict). According to
this statement, it is natural that human beings get afflicted with ill-health and
not trees or stones. The Chenchu seem to be not believing in contagion. They
do not segregate a sick person though leprosy and pandu rogamu (anaemia)
are dreaded. No stringent social stigma and isolation are reported. However,
some restrictions like sexual abstinence, physical distance are observed. No special care is taken with reference to persons infected with skin diseases. This casual outlook towards illness, does not, however reflect a lack of serious concern. Many of the complaints are trivial and do not as such cause concern.

According to the Chenchu, ill health is categorised under two classes: mamoolu jabbulu / rogalu (natural or common diseases with known signs and symptoms) and maya rogalu (unnatural, incurable or uncommon diseases and clear known symptoms of the illness may not surface externally).

Another categorisation of diseases is based on the source of disease viz., 'within' and 'without' the human body. Onti jabbulu are those diseases that originate 'within' the human body. The diseases that originate from 'without' have no specific local name. Onti jabbulu are believed to be caused by natural means, i.e. by wrong diet, occupational hazards, disturbances in the body, bad weather, etc. Onti jabbulu are easily diagnosed and cured. These diseases are also expected in the event of appropriate context, climate, diet, etc.

Diseases that originate from 'without' have largely supernatural explanation, though, the Chenchus include hereditary diseases also. For example epilepsy, lunacy, paralysis are included under this category. The
Chenchus believe that certain diseases are not originated from within the body of patients. Some ill-health conditions, difficulties in the delivery, sudden indisposition, diseases that wouldn't respond to treatment are believed to have been transmitted from another person or agency. It is believed that a person's transgression of custom or un-accomplishment of vow, diabolism, peccant tendency, improbity, odious betrayal of one's own relatives etc are said to result in a backlash wherein one of his own kith or kin may be inflicted with a disease.

Ill-health occurs, according to the Chenchus because of 1) disturbance in the body system; 2) bad weather; 3) supernatural powers; 4) magical means; and 5) new diseases.

DISTURBANCES IN THE BODY SYSTEM

According to the Chenchus, human body gets disturbed due to a) muriki (pollution) that is deposition or contact with pollution; b) changes in the body temperature due to climate.

Human body is said to maintain a certain level of body temperature, "wetness" (thadi) and excretionary action like urination, defecation, sweating. The body is said to react when something unsuitable material or agent come in touch with the body. The body is said to contain three elements called pyhyamu, nemmu or galka and wayu. These are called pitta (bile), kapha
(phlegm) and vayu (gas) respectively in Indian Ayurveda. The Chenchus view that when these are produced in excess in the body, they become pollutants and health gets affected. These elements are sensitive to food and climatic conditions. Food is believed to cause disturbances in the levels of pythymu and vayu. Water and weather influence nemmu or gilla. Sometimes certain food substances also influence gilla. Eating chedda or cherupu vasthuvulu or padarthalu (bad commodities or etables) or padani vasthuvulu (unsuitable etables) result in pollution getting deposited in the body. Pollution in turn result in nalathu or cause weakness, swellings, scabies, pains, shivering, burning sensation etc.

The Chenchus identify the following as pollutants: sweat, dust, menstrual blood, hair, nails, faecal matter, phlegm. They say that pollution may not get adequately ejected from the body due to improper habits or hygiene. Besides if a person comes in touch with pollution, his health gets affected.

Bad or unsuitable food is supposed to cause 1) mandam 2) pythymu 3) luduku (hot) 4) rompa 5) sethalam (phlegm or cold) 6) janne 7) seldi (itch) 8) vayyu or vayi (pains or convulsions) 9) ajeerthi (indigestion).

Mandam: Mandam is related to imbalance in the digestion system. The affected person becomes inactive and experience bloated feeling and
discomfort in the stomach. Usually 'strong' food is supposed to cause *mandam*. When the ability of the body system is less compared to the strongness of the food, *mandam* results.

*Selddi*: If certain foods, unsuitable to the body of a few persons or food which cause some bodily reaction, are eaten, the body develops allergy or itching sensation. This usually get expressed in sores, patches of scabies etc. Such bodily reaction is called *selddi*. Several forest yams and tubers need repeated washing or prolonged soaking in order to get rid off substances that cause *selddi*.

*Janne*: When blood becomes poisonous on account of sexual intercourse with menstruating women, the body reaction is called *janne*.

*Ajeerthi*: Due to dysfunction of internal organs, *ajeerthi* occurs.

*Vayu/Vayi*: The term *vayu* indicates air or gas. The *Chenchus* believe that production of excessive gas inside the body causes disease. Some of the food items like *tamarind, Cowpea, gumnadi kaya* (ash gourd), *Chenchu gadda* etc., are considered as *vayu padarthuramulu* (gaseous food items). They recognise two types of 'vayu' among them. They are a) *Vaiha vayu* b) *Voodu Vayu*. 

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a. *Vatha Vayu* is believed to tighten the nervous system and cause pain in the waist, the joints and stiffness at neck, calf muscles etc.

b. *Voodu Vayu* is believed to cause swelling of hands, legs, body etc., and it is supposed to be common among middle aged people. These diseases are treated with home medicine and by the herbalist or by a modern doctor.

**Pytham:** *Pytham* is believed to be an yellowish bitter fluid produced inside the body. Among the *Chenches pytham* is believed to be caused by excessive consumption of meat, tea, beedi smoking, chewing of betel leaves. The disease caused on account of *pytham* are reeling sensation, one side headache, itching of skin, rashes on the body and vomiting, pungent belching, burning in throat and chest.

**Rompa:** *Rompa* is heaviness in the head coupled with running nose and congestion in the chest. In the state of *Rompa, gala or cheemidi* (phlegm or snot) is produced which is a white jelly type of mucus coming out of the nose and mouth. Consumption of too much of cold food items during the cold seasons produces this element in the body. The *Chenches* state that *rompa* related diseases are more common among children and cold bodied persons. Cough and throat pain are *rompa* related diseases.
*Uduku*: Consumption of too much hot food is believed to produce excess heat in the body and cause diseases.

Disease caused by *Vedi* or *uduku* element are:

- *Volluanta*  
  Burning sensation in body
- *Kadupuloanta*  
  Burning sensation in stomach
- *Thalanoppl*  
  Headache
- *Kallumanta*  
  Burning sensation in eyes
- *Dappika*  
  Thirst
- *Kandluerupu*  
  Redness of eyes
- *OntikiManta*  
  Burning sensation in urinary tract
- *Gaddalu/gullalu*  
  Swellings
- *Kanithi/genthi*  
  Tumour

*Seethalam (Coolness)*: An excessive cold element in the body causes diseases like cold, sneezing, heaviness of the head, throat pain etc. Too much consumption of cold foods especially in winter and rainy season cause these diseases. People opine that this kind of disease commonly occurs among cold bodied persons.

All the above disturbances are said to cause *onti jabbu* (diseases pertained to the physical body). This idea clearly reflects in the diagnosis wherein the divinator or quack (*gadde cheppe vadu*) tells the relatives of the
patient as “ee (this) rogamu (ill-health) vonti (body) ke (pertained to) sambandinchindi (related)” or “ee (this) rogamu (ill-health) vonti (body) ninchi (within) putta (come out) ledu (not)”. 

Following are some the beliefs related to the diseases among the Chenchus.

- Eating all varieties of leafy vegetables can prevent diseases;
- Food preparation in earthen vessels is tasty and keeps body healthy;
- Decrease in the quantity of blood causes weakness;
- Food prepared in aluminum vessel causes many diseases;
- Working for too long under the hot sun cause headache;
- Borewell water causes number of diseases;
- Lunacy and mental sickness result due to unfulfilled vows;
- Persons taking bath in cold water are free from headache;
- Rice (Orchiza sativam) eaters have less stamina compared to ragi (a local millet) eaters;
- Wearing new clothes is said to produce rash or skin allergy to children; to prevent this effect, new clothes are to be washed;
- Pregnant women should avoid coffee made with jaggery because it causes abortion.
In summer eating of 'Saddi annanu', 'Saddi Pisuru', 'Saddikura', i.e., the previous day's, rice, ragi ball, and curry, is said to keep the body cool.

BAD WEATHER

The Chenchus believe that climate and weather condition affect health. Fluctuations in the weather are said to affect human body either internally or externally. Most of the external problems include skin diseases and injuries. They believe that first rains of the year cause ill-health particularly fever to children. Drinking new water is said to cause fever, headache, stomach-ache, diarrhoea, bloated stomach, cough and cold. Exposing oneself to hot sun during mid-day in the months of May and June would result in pain during urination and loose motions coupled with increased body temperature. Exposition to westerly winds soon after summer is said to inflict ill-health. Water, air, stones, certain plants like bamboo, and some like pigs, rats animals are supposed to cause ill-health. Certain places in the forest are also supposed to cause illness or injuries to the body.

The Chenchu state that earlier they were free from diseases, but now they are suffering from many diseases, owing to use of borewell water, alien food and using aluminum vessels. Taking bath in standing waters is believed to cause gajji (scabies) and also other skin diseases.
DISEASE CAUSED BY SUPERNATURAL POWERS

The Chenchus believe that supernatural forces are the potential agents capable of inflicting various diseases. Most of the diseases that defy mitigation owing to application of herbal medicines, are usually imputed to the wrath of the supernatural forces, beings or entities. Diseases caused by supernatural agents are classified as hereunder:

i. Devathala Jabbulu (Wrath of deities)

ii. Poorvikatu Jabbulu (ancestors-induced diseases)

iii. Spirit intrusion

Devathala Jabbulu

The Chenchus believe as mentioned earlier that many diseases are caused due to the wrath of the deities. They worship various deities both at the settlement and family levels to protect themselves from the diseases. The deity which protects the whole village is called gudem devara/gudem devatha (deity of the settlement) usually known as Chenchu devera. Deities worshipped at family level are called as Inti devara/devatha (family deity). Every year they perform 'jatara' (fair) to the Chenchu Devara. This is done in summer in the month of May or June.

Deity maremma is believed to cause disease like ammathalli (smallpox), sandula (Psychological Disturbance) and gacharamu (Fate) vanthibedi (Vomiting & Motions). All these diseases are popularly pronounced as
*Maremma sokindi* (Maremma's touch). In the event of its occurrence the elders of the village decide to celebrate *Maremma pooja* to pacify *Maremma*. A fowl or a goat is sacrificed. People believe that at least once in a year, *maremma* is to be worshipped and sacrifice a fowl to the deity. If not, the deity is said to be enraged and causes the above diseases. Family has got its own *intidevarat/devatha* (family deity) which is believed to protect the interests of the family.

**PURVIKULU JABBULU**

*Purvikulu jabbulu* means diseases inherited from the ancestors as well as those diseases caused by ancestral spirits. Frequent illness, repetition of the same illness, unmitigated illness even after trying various treatments, are supposed to be caused by the ancestral spirits. Such diseases are first suspected and divination performed to confirm the identify of the ancestral spirit.

The *Chenchus* believe that the souls of their dead ancestors (*purvikulu*) remain in the settlement for a certain duration. If the descendants fail to respect the ancestors and pay obeisance or forget them, the ancestral souls get angry and cause various kinds of troubles which include health problems also. To save themselves from the wrath of their ancestral souls the *Chenchus* worship the ancestors or remember them in a number of occasions like name giving, puberty ceremony, honey collection, hunting, collection of mahuwa,
distillation of mahuwa liquor, offering liquor and meat of animals hunted etc.
When a child is born in a family it is named after one of its dead ancestors.
The purpose of naming the child after child's ancestor is to pacify the ancestor
as well as to seek its benevolence for the protection to the child. It is believed
that repeated crying and frequent occurrence of illness to a child is an
indication of wrong name giving. In such a case, the child is named after
another ancestor after its identity elicited through divination.

SPIRIT INTRUSION

The spirits among the Chenchus are designated as 'gali' (malevolent
air). Intrusion of spirit is called "gali sokindi". When a person passes through
the places inhabited by 'gali', the spirit is likely to intrude into his/her body.
Symptoms associated with this are gloominess, shivering, becoming
unconscious, etc. In such cases mantragadu (spell-curer) gives a spell-cast
coconut to be kept with the victim for 3 to 5 days and latter to be left out in
flowing water together with betel leaves, areca nut and incense sticks.

Gali are considered as different from ancestral spirits and are
malevolent. Gali is conceived as originated either from human beings,
animals, natural forces, or inanimate forces. Bhuthamu, pisachamu,
Kauniyalu, are some of the terms used to refer these spirits. Human beings
who expired with unsatiated desires or met with unnatural deaths are also said
to turn into gali. The English equivalent of gali is air. Most of the beings or
forces falling in this category of spirits are in the gaseous state and hence the name gali. Further, these beings can also assume human form or animal form in order to deceive the humans and to enter their body (s). Sometimes, these spirit may appear in front of a passerby in a dreaded gear to frighten. They may repeatedly appear in dreams or possess the humans during sleep, etc. The Chenchus say that these demons or ghosts choose individuals who harmed them when alive or those who accidentally trespassed or those whom these beings desired when alive, etc. It is said that mostly women of young and adult ages and children are susceptible to spirit intrusion. The intruded spirit bewitches the person or the victim and takes over the his/her consciousness. Gradually the victim declines from indigestion, lack of peace, repeated fever, etc. Some of the precise forms of unnatural death are : plunged into deep valleys; fall from tree; death by hanging; death by drowning; death during pregnancy; death due to epilepsy; death due to poison; murder; plunging into well; death due to stone fall; death during honey collection; death during certain inauspicious days/ nights, etc.

It is said persons meeting an unnatural death, suffer too much and give a shriek before death. At that time the jeevam inside the body get agitated and pushed itself out. The state of turbulence is said to continue in which state the jeevam would be in constant search of a person whom it can enter to gain stability.
The Chenchu also recognise gali in terms of caste or tribe: Sugali; komati gali; bapana gali; yerikula gali; oddi gali; kamma gali; kapu gali; sale gali, etc. Spirit intrusion is said to be effected only when the victim has what is called rakshasa gana (affiliation to demon) as opposed to deva gana (affiliation to gods).

DISEASES CAUSED BY MAGICAL MEANS

Illness caused in this category is believed to be due to the intervention of a human being (Sorcerer). Among the Chenchu's two types of magical means of disease causation are reported: i.Chethabadi (Sorcery); and ii.Disti (evil eye).

Chethabadi (Sorcery or Black Magic)

Chethabadi among the Chenchus is considered to be very popular. The Chenchus suspect that most of the diseases are caused on account of Chetabadi. The main purpose of Chethabadi is to harm one's enemies. Sorcery is a secret act. Two types of sorcery are found among the Chenchus. They are “datuneeru” and "vishamuku koodu". 

Datuneeru is spell-cast water poured across the way which the enemy frequently uses. When the enemy crosses this water, he/she goes under the influence of the magical power which affects his/her health. The symptoms
associated with the disease caused by this type of sorcery are swelling of and appearance of blisters on the legs.

*Vishamnu koodu* (Poisonous food) is fed secretly to one's enemy. The enemy gradually looses appetite and suffer from indigestion and gets bed ridden.

**Disti (Evil eye)**

*Disti* is considered as one of the major causes of diseases. The *Chenchus* opine that persons have eyes with evil powers and children are prone to the wrath of the evil eye. Whenever the evil eye falls on a child, the child starts weeping and develops temperature. The child would not eat and loose weight. Even grown-up persons are also affected by the evil eye.

Any accident resulting in injuries, attack by wild animals, repeated collision of leg with stones, stepping on sharp spikes or stones, slipping, falling from tree etc are considered due to malevolent effect of evil eye. These accidents are also interpreted as actions of air, spirits or ghosts depending upon the time, location, seriousness of the injury, frequency of such incidences, unexpected twist in the events, unanticipated seriousness of the problem, omens, attack, etc.
NEW DISEASE

Certain diseases are considered as new. Blood pressure, scabies, coronary diseases, cancer, hepatitis-B, tuberculosis are some of the new diseases. These are also called as hospital rogahu. These diseases may be due to excess alcoholism, excess smoking and poor diet. According to the Chenchus the causative factors responsible for the "Hospital diseases" are cooking in aluminium utensils, drinking borewell water, eating hybrid grain etc. Further, they believe that these diseases could be cured only in the modern hospitals. The elder Chenchus also believe that traditional curative methods are not effective with the younger generation because of the mandulu (Fertilisers and pesticides) present in the food of the contemporary times.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of any disease among the Chenchus is made first by descriptive observation of symptoms. Ordinarily, patients feel the bodily disorders or symptoms and express them in descriptive terms. Several broad symptoms are identified: Noppi (pain); manita (burning sensation); vedī (hot); chalī (cold/shivering); maffju (dullness); Jīla (itching); gadda (swelling); breathing trouble; cough; sāchhū (weakness); Yomu (vomiting sensation); bedī (loose motion). Each of these symptoms is again divided into types basing on intensity, qualitative differences, frequency, duration, etc.
Basing on the symptoms, the Chenchu experts assess how the illness has occurred. For example, vomiting is considered due to indigestion; itching is said to occur due to increased content of sourness in the body; gadda is said to emerge due to accumulation of pollution in the body. However the explanation regarding disease causation may not be unvarying. Depending upon the nuances in the symptoms, causes of diseases are discerned. For instance, vomitings may be due to indigestion or morning sickness on account of excess production of pythamu in the body.

Diagnosis of diseases plays an important role in administering proper treatment. Among the Chenchu diagnosis falls under in two methods or categories:

i. Natural method; and

ii. Supernatural method

NATURAL METHOD

Natural methods comprise clinical observations of signs and symptoms. Some of the signs and symptoms are visible and some are felt. So signs and symptoms associated with diseases are classified under two categories: a) Internal signs and symptoms; and b) External signs and symptoms.
INTERNAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms which can be 'felt' but cannot to 'seen' are classified as internal symptoms.

The most important internal symptoms are:

a. Pain (nappti)  
b. Burning sensation (manta)

b. Itching (jila)  
d. Bulging of stomach (vubbaram)

e. Lose of appetite  
f. Loss of taste (nuluka sappa)

g. Thirst (dappika)  
h. Giddiness (mycanu)

i. Weakness (sachhu)  
j. Heaviness in the chest (gundelo baruvu)

Only the patient can feel and express these symptoms. By virtue of their experience, the medicine man/women or any adult expert can name the probable illness by means the symptoms expressed by the patient.

EXTERNAL SYMPTOMS

Certain symptoms get expressed on the body or by means perceivable pathological outcomes such as vomits, diarrhoea, high body temperature etc.

Some of the symptoms that get exhibited/expressed on the body are:

a. Swelling of a part or whole body (vapu);

b. Rashes appearing on the body (gajji);

c. Dullness in the face (alasata);

d. Shivering of the body (vonuku);

e. Colour of the eyes (kallu erra baruta);
Wounds (*kurupulu or debbatu*)

Vomitings (*vanthulu*);

Loose motions (*bedulu*)

Body temperature (*vedi*)

j. Puss (*cheemu*)

k. Whitish layer on tongue

Usually a specific sickness is designated by a single set of signs. There are unified sets of etiologies. However, disease designation and diagnosis also depend upon certain symptoms which may exhibit variance in certain 'essential' way. For example, if the eyes turn yellow in colour, it is one of the symptoms of jaundice. If eyes turn red in colour, it indicates excessive heat. 'Pus' formation in the wounds is believed to be due to blood becoming impure. Certain diseases like scabies, eczema are considered contagious skin diseases. Some diseases are considered localised diseases.

The *Chenchu* herbalists claim that they can diagnose many diseases by visual examination of the patient. They examine the colour of the eyes and urine for certain diseases like jaundice. In the case of measles and chicken pox, symptoms like eruption of pustules on the body and body temperature indicate the disease. The patients may not always consult the expert or medicine man in order to ascertain the nature of disease and diagnosis.
SUPERNATURAL METHOD OF DIAGNOSIS

The diseases caused by supernatural powers are diagnosed by divination. *Gadde Cheppe Yadu* (divinator) diagnose the diseases which occur on account of the wrath of deities or ancestors or malevolent air through divination. The divinator establishes communication with the spirits, ancestral spirits or deities in order to know the reasons for the illness of the patient.

Divination is known as *gadde* or *sode*. It is also known as *rangam* in certain places in the *Nallamalai*. When all herbal treatment fail, the *Chenchu* resort to divination to find out which supernatural deity or ancestral spirit is responsible for the imposition of the disease. *Gadde* is not a magic and the divinator is not a witch doctor. It is a form of invocation recital by a male divinator accompanied by music and *pathi* (repetition by a female attendant of the stanzas recited by the divinator). *Gadde* is performed during late hours after sun-set, around 9-00 PM within the hut of the divinator. A lambent fire is lit in the south-eastern corner of the house and the attendant assumes the duty of keeping the flame lambent.

The divinator after taking bath, sits with legs crossed, hair dishevelled and holds a light circular drum in front resting on his leg calvess. The attendant lady (the wife of the divinator) sits by the side of the fire. The diseased person sits in the middle of the hut in front of *muggu* (a drawing by means of fine powder of soft white stones). The divinator slowly starts
calling all the deities, spirits, ancestors, demons, etc. and builds up the tempo by throwing challenges, adumbrating provocative utterances and lastly chanting adulations in order to invite the supernatural force responsible for the disease causation to possess (valū) the divinator and explain the reasons for the sufferings. The recitation is not conformed in the manner of a standard text. The beginning includes recital of various places in the cosmos (bennandam equivalent to Brahmānandam) followed by utterance of a series of names of the deities. He may involve the leading Hindu gods like Rama, Krishan, Venkateswara, Narasimha etc. Now and then references to the patient is made imploring the deities to rescue the patient. The divinator also ostensibly ask the deities to spell out what gifts are to be offered and the patient is only pleased to provide them most obediently. Around mid-night or early hours of next morning, the divinator may enter into a trance. It is said that the deity or spirit falls on the body of the divinator. The possessed divinator directly speaks to the patient. This speech is usually concerned with some breach of taboo the patient has knowingly or unknowingly committed in the past. The patient also acknowledges the breach and expresses his difficulties in not fulfilling the vows. Some relatives of the patient present during gadde asks the possessed deity or spirit what compensation is to be offered. The possessed divinator, later gives out a procedure which may be in the form of offering animal sacrifice or sweet-preparation or observance of austerity for a defined period and propitiation of the deity.
The *Chenchus* knowledge about disease and health was local knowledge, of local climate and topography, local customs. This knowledge was dependent upon knowing how a multiplicity of causes influence sickness in individuals and endemic and epidemic diseases.

As Charles Rosenberg, has observed, "The model of the body, and of health and disease ... was all inclusive ... capable of incorporating every aspect of man's life in explaining his physical condition. Just a man's body interacted continuously with his environment, so did his mind with his body, his morals with his health. The realm of causation in medicine was not distinguishable from the realm of meaning, in society generally" (1979:10).

The *Chenchu* conception of disease causation seem to resemble the miasmatist theory of disease and the notion of causal sufficiency. This notion enunciates that a particular effect (a disease) might occur after exposure to one or more causal influences. A particular effect (disease) might be caused by several different conditions, and diseases might blend into one another. The disease theory of the *Chenchus* do not lend support to the notion of casual necessity, which is to say that in the absence of a necessary cause, a particular effect cannot occur. They explicitly hold that most disease states are the indirect outcome of a constellation of circumstances rather than the direct result of a single determining factor.