Chapter II

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROFILE OF TRIBAL PEOPLE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Demography

The tribal population in Andhra Pradesh resembles a miniature tribal India in its ethnic, social, economic and cultural complexities. Nearly 33 tribal groups are inhabiting the large forest tracts of Andhra Pradesh. These tribal groups are found dwelling in the border areas of the state adjoining Maharashtra in the north, and Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in the north-east. Most of these tribal groups, nearly 30 out of 33 recognised scheduled tribes, are residing in an area of 30,030 sq. kms of scheduled and non-scheduled sub-plan areas of nine districts, namely, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam, Warangal, Adilabad and Mahaboob Nagar.¹

The tribal population of Andhra Pradesh constitutes 6.14% of the total population of the country. As per the provisional estimates of 1991 Census, the total number of tribal people in the state is 41.99 lakhs, and they constitute 6.32% of the total population of the state.²

The growth rate of scheduled tribe population in Andhra

---

² 1991 Provisional Census, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Govt. of India.
Pradesh between 1981 and 1991 census is 32.22%. As per the Census, Andhra Pradesh ranks seventh among all states and union territories in the size of scheduled tribe population, whereas in the percentage of scheduled tribe population to the state population, Andhra Pradesh is ranked at 15th place in the country. However, the state has the largest concentration of scheduled tribe population among the four southern states of India.

Table 2.1 Concentration of scheduled tribe population in southern states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total population (lakhs)</th>
<th>Scheduled tribe population (lakhs)</th>
<th>Percentage of S.T. population to State population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>665.08</td>
<td>41.99</td>
<td>6.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>449.71</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>4.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>558.59</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>1.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>290.71</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Provisional Census 1991, Registrar of Census, Govt. of India

As per 1991 census, the highest concentration of scheduled tribe population in Andhra Pradesh is in the districts of Khammam (5.59 lakhs), Visakhapatnam (4.69

---

lakhs) and lowest in Hyderabad district (0.29 lakhs).  

Among the tribal groups, Lambadis are numerically preponderant with a total population of 11.58 lakhs, the Koyas, Yanadis and Yerukalas occupy next positions with a population of 3.59 lakhs, 3.20 lakhs and 3.00 lakhs respectively (1981 census). Radically Chenchus and Yanadis exhibit negrito strain whereas the Khond and Savara have some Mongoloid features. All the remaining tribal groups have proto-Austroloid characteristics.

Diverse Regions

The tribal areas in Andhra Pradesh are divided into five geographical areas based on the similarities in geo-ethnic characteristics. They are:

a) Gond-Kolam region: Tribal areas of Adilabad district fall in this category. Around 42% of the area is covered by the forests. The region is characterised by its black and loamy soils with several mineral deposits.

b) Koya-Konda Reddi region: Tribal areas of Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, West Godavari and East Godavari districts fall in this category. The region is having extremely fertile soils and the river Godavari flows through this

---

4 Ibid. p.80.
5 D.R. Pratap, Tribal Situation in Andhra Pradesh, (Hyderabad), p.229.
region. Coal deposits, iron ore and lime stone are found in huge quantities.

c) Khond-Savara region: This region spreads from forest and hill tracts of Srikakulam district to Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Though several rivers flow in this region, but the tribal areas are not benefited much. Around 41% of the area is covered by the forests. Minor forest produce is found extensively in this area.

d) Chenchu region: Forest tracts of Nallamala hills in the districts of Guntur, Prakasam, Kurnool, Mahboobnagar, Nalgonda and Vikarabad area of Ranga Reddi district come under this region. Most of the area is irrigated by river Krishna. Mostly Chenchus who depend on food gathering, hunting and minor forest produce are the inhabitants of this region.

e) Plain areas: A few tribal groups are also located in the plain areas throughout the state. Yanadi, Yerukala, Lambadi are the important tribes which inhabit the plain areas and live in exclusive tribal settlements.

Social Structure

The social structure of tribal groups in the state displays significant regional and ethnic variations. The scheduled tribes of Gond-Kolam region are having a well developed four fold phratry organization. Savara social
structure on the other extreme is characterised by conspicuous absence of clan organization. The remaining tribes like Koya, Gonds, Kondareddy, Bagatha, Nooka Dora, Mannedora and Valmiki fall in between these two extremes, having an organization based on totemic clans. The Kond and Gadaba tribes on the other hand have social organization with loose phratry set up mainly due to marital relations and traditional exchange relationship. For example, the tribes of Visakhapatnam district are having the following totemic clans: Korra (Sun), Pangi (Kito), Ontala (Snake), Killo (Tiger), Gollori (Monkey), Kimudu (Bear), Matsya (Fish) and Chelli (Goat). Each clan member prefixes the name of the totem object as surname. The tribal groups claim mythical affinity with these species and they consider these totem objects as sacred. Killing or eating flesh of their totem object is a taboo among the tribal people. Thus, the horizontal stratification of tribes in Andhra Pradesh show regional and ethnic variations. As far as the vertical stratification is concerned, tribal groups in each geo-ethnic region have been placed in a hierarchy of superior and inferior status groups according to the status criteria evolved by their commensual and other interactional patterns. For instance, in Visakhapatnam agency area, the

9 Ibid., p.8.
Bagathas occupy the highest position, and the Valmikis occupy the lowest position in the social hierarchy. The remaining tribal groups like Konda Dora, Godaba, Kotiya, Porja, Nooka Dora etc., occupy the middle rung positions in the social hierarchy. The Valmikis are ranked low in the social hierarchy of tribal society due to their pig rearing and beef eating practices.¹⁰

However, some tribal groups are trying to elevate their status vis-a-vis the other tribal groups. A process of socio-cultural mobility can be seen among the tribals of Andhra Pradesh. Some minor tribes which have comparatively low status are attempting to merge with the dominant tribes in order to improve their social status. For instance, in the Visakhapatnam agency tracts some of the educated Porjas are now-a-days claiming that they are Konda Doras. There are some primitive tribes who are emulating the customs and practices of a dominant tribal group in that area. For instance, in Srikakulam district, the hill Savaras are adopting the clan organization and system of surnames of Jatapus. Similarly, Kolams, Thotis and Pardhans have adopted Gond clan names and also modified them to suit their cultural set up. A process of 'social amalgamation' by which a low status group merges with the high status group and a

process of 'elitist tribalism' by which a tribal group becomes a model for emulation of other small tribal groups around are taking place in Andhra Pradesh.\textsuperscript{11}

Ritual Aspects

There are broad similarities among various tribal groups in the state in ritual beliefs and practices. The existence of 'Bhima cult' among these tribes is noteworthy and many of them claim their mythical origin to Pandavas and to Bhima in particular. Most of the tribal groups in the state celebrate the first fruit eating festivals, and other seasonal festivals. In addition, performance of fertility festivals and life cycle rituals are common among all the tribes. But most of the tribal groups, except 'Samantha' do not allow the female members from taking part in ritual performances. Among the 'Samanthas', the women are given vital role to play during the ritual performances and festivals.\textsuperscript{12}

Social Control

Almost all the tribal groups in the state are having their own traditional institutions to maintain inter-tribal and intra-tribal harmony, without which the conflicts which

\textsuperscript{12} D.R. Pratap, op cit., p.229.
arise in the multi-ethnic composition of the tribal villages can not be solved. Every tribe has a community council of its own, with a hereditary headman, which looks into intra-tribal issues. The village level tribal council is composed of representative leader/headman of each tribal group, which mainly deals with the problems of village as a whole and the inter-tribal disputes. The tribal groups have their own collectively accepted regulations and laws to maintain social control.

Economy

The tribal economy in Andhra Pradesh is heterogenous in nature ranging from food gathering, fishing and hunting to pastoralism, shifting cultivation, settled cultivation, artisan and mining labour. The tribal groups which live in Nallamala hills, mainly the Chenchus, have a subsistence economy depending on the collection of minor forest produce. The Yerukala, Yanadi and other tribes live in plains earn their livelihood by practising professions like midwifery, catching rodents and snakes for skin and venom, pig rearing etc. These groups lead a semi-nomadic life style. The Chenchus are also dependent on hunting and collection of birds and animals, roots, medicinal plants, tubers, wild fruits for both domestic consumption and for sale. The

13 Ibid., p.230.
Yanadis are traditional fishermen.\textsuperscript{15}

There are some pastoralists among the tribes such as Banjaras and Gondus. Though these pastoralists were nomadic in the past, they are now settled cultivators along with the cattle rearing. Gondus of north coastal Andhra are good pastoralists.\textsuperscript{16} The shifting cultivation is an ancient practice of tribes which is locally known as 'Podu' and 'Padaka' (Gonds). Savaras and Jatapus of Srikakulam district, Khonds, Khonda Doras, Nooka, Doras, Kotiyas, Valmikis, Porajas, Bagathas of Visakhapatnam district, and Konda Reddis of Godavari districts are known for their practice of shifting cultivation. However, this practice is declining due to growing awareness among the tribes. Some tribals simultaneously practice both shifting and settled cultivation depending upon the land pattern and the resources at their disposal. The shifting cultivation or Podu is practiced extensively in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari and Khammam districts. According to an estimate, 62,504 families are practicing podu cultivation over an area of 62,948 hectares.\textsuperscript{17} A sample study on shifting cultivation was conducted by Tribal Cultural Research & Training Institute, Hyderabad revealed


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} K. Mohan Rao, 1993, op. cit., p.16.
that out of 479 tribal families studied, 434 families are either partially or fully dependent on *podu* cultivation, i.e. nearly 91% of the tribal families. The study also brought out a startling revelation that the "income is three times more than the investment" in shifting cultivation.\(^{18}\) Since most of these families spend on festivals, occasions and drinking, they are under 'debt trap' and a sizeable portion of this debt is from the private money lenders.\(^{18}\)

Among settled cultivators, Bagatas, Reddi Doras, Gonds, Kotias, Valmikis and Koyas can be mentioned. As per 1981 census, 43.21% are cultivators and an equal number 43.72% are agricultural labourers among the tribal communities of Andhra Pradesh.\(^{20}\) The crops cultivated by the tribals include food grains and commercial crops. The tribal people in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam grow mainly Ragi, pulses and coffee. The tribes in East Godavari, West Godavari and Khammam like Koyas, Konda Reddis, Nayaks etc., cultivate jowar, maize, ragi, paddy, various pulses, and commercial crops like oranges, cashew-nuts, chillies, tobacco etc. But only 10.32% of the cultivated land in the tribal areas is irrigated, against the 23.97% of the

---

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p.18.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

cultivated area in the state being irrigated.  

Some of the tribes are migrating to nearby urban areas in-search of livelihood. Most of them are employed in the factories, coalmines, construction sector and brick manufacturing as daily wage labourers.

The weekly markets in the agency areas are the places of exchange and social interaction among the tribal people. Unfortunately, these markets became the centres of exploitation of tribals by the merchants, middlemen and money lenders. The weekly markets or shandies are known as 'hat' in Visakhapatham area and 'santa' in other tribal areas. These are specialised weekly markets where items like livestock, vegetables, agricultural implements etc., are exclusively sold. Further, there are general weekly markets where several items of daily consumption including groceries, meat, vegetables, cosmetics, prepared eatables, ghee fruits, clothes etc., are sold or exchanged.  

Due to the innocence of tribals and availability of precious items the merchants from the nearby urban centres come to shandies and procure items at very low prices. The exploitation in the shandies is in numerous ways. In many cases, the merchants or traders employ some local tribal youth to negotiate with the tribals in their dialect.

---

22 Ibid. pp.21-22.
Studies on the exploitation in *shandies* reveal that the prices of several commodities like Jack fruit, ginger, bananas, maize etc., have remained unchanged for the last 30 years.\(^{23}\)

**Folklore and Art Forms**

The folklore and tribal arts are well preserved among the tribes of Andhra Pradesh and are continuing till now. Many tribal groups have elaborated mythologies, folktales, which mainly describe their origin and the greatness of their ancestry. The *savaras* trace their descent from the ascetic sabasic, drawn mainly from their mythology embedded in the folktales.\(^{24}\) As mentioned earlier, the Koyas claim their ancestry from Lord Bhima and the Kolams from Edumala Devi i.e. Goddess of two mountains (Hidimbi). The Lambadis or sugatis trace their descent from Mola and Mota.\(^{25}\) The Gonds of Adilabad believe that the Goddess Parvathi had brought up their ancestors.\(^{26}\) The Yerukala tribe has a folklore which describe Dharmaraju, the eldest among

\(^{23}\) Ibid. p.23.


\(^{25}\) They were brothers and were supposed to have served Lord Krishna.

pandavas, as their ancestor.\textsuperscript{27} The Chenchu tribe claims mythical affinity with Lord Shiva and believe that Chenchu Lakshmi was born in their community.\textsuperscript{28}

Dance tradition is a significant aspect of the cultural life of tribes in the Srikakulam, 'Dimensions' dance of Viskhapatnam tribes, 'peacock' dance of Rhonds, 'Bison hoon' dance of Koyas, 'Dandasi' and 'Damsa' dances of gonds and kolams and 'mask mimicry' of Naikpods are worth mentioning. These dances promote socialization of younger generations into the culture of the community and provides entertainment also.\textsuperscript{29}

Literacy

The literacy of tribal people in Andhra Pradesh is very low compared to that of national and state averages. The literacy figures of tribal population in the country and the state are given below starting from 1951 census:

As shown in the Table 2.2, the literacy level among the Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh has been extremely low when compared to the national average for the same category. Further, the rate of increase in literacy levels has also been very slow when compared to increase of general literacy levels at national and state levels.

\textsuperscript{27} K. Mohan Rao, op. cit., p.20.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.20.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
Table 2.2 Literacy Rate of Scheduled Tribe and General Population from 1951-1991 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Census period</th>
<th>All India Literacy%</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>A.P. Literacy%</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>population</td>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
<td>population</td>
<td>population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>15.81</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>24.57</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>11.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.23</td>
<td>16.35</td>
<td>29.94</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>36.23</td>
<td>16.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>29.80</td>
<td>45.11</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>29.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A Brief note on Tribal Development in A.P.

Government administration in Tribal areas was started only with the then British rule. Until then, the tribal areas in the state were in isolation and the tribal people had a greater autonomy and control over their habitat. The British Government spread their administration slowly into the hitherto untouched tribal areas, not directly but indirectly through intermediaries like the Zamindars and Muttadars. The British exercised loose control over tribal areas and used to intervene whenever there were disturbances in these areas. The policy of non-interference

---

by the British Government and certain legislations which were not implemented properly helped the traders, landlords and moneylenders to enter the tribal areas and grabbed the lands of tribal people. This led to the deterioration of the self-sufficient tribal economies and gradual alienation of their ancestral land. The encroachment of outsiders on their land and other economic resources and the increasing burden of taxes on them provoke the tribals to revolt against the rulers. The Rampa Rebellion in the East Godavari district by the Hill Reddis against the British Government, was one such instance. Though the tribal uprisings were suppressed early by British Government, it had realised the burning problems which caused the otherwise calm and innocent tribals to revolt. Thereafter, the British Government passed several orders to ameliorate the conditions of the tribal people in East Godavari district as well as other tribal areas.

The first important legislation brought out to protect the interests of tribal people was 'The Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act, 1917'. This Act restricted the transfer of land from tribals to outsiders and put ceiling on interest rates charged on tribals for their

32 Ibid., pp.36-38.
borrowings.\textsuperscript{33} However, the provisions of the Act had not been implemented in full spirit though it remained in force till 1959. The only consolation was that the conditions of tribal lot in Andhra area were relatively tolerable during 1917-47; in contrast, the conditions of tribal population in the adjoining Hyderabad state under the Nizam's rule were similar to the other aboriginals in the country. There were no serious and concerted efforts made for protection of tribal people by the Nizam's administration until 1940s in contrast to the administration of other provinces of British India.\textsuperscript{34} The present tribal dominant district such as Adilabad, Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar were part of Hyderabad state and the tribal people in all these areas were being exploited by the 'Shahukars' and 'deshmukhs'.\textsuperscript{35} Tribal groups such Gonds, Kolams, Koyas and Konda Leddis were alienated from their land.

It was mainly due to the best efforts of two personalities - Haimendorf and W.V. Grigson - that the amelioration of tribal population in Hyderabad state got a fillip during 1940s. While the former was an Anthropologist

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p.28.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pp. 38-40.

\textsuperscript{35} 'Shahukars' were moneylenders and 'deshmukh' was a marathi title of a hereditary officer incharge of a cluster of villages.
who extensively studied the tribal problems and submitted a services of reports to the Nizam's government, the latter was a Revenue Minister of Hyderabad state who had a genuine concern for tribal problems.

In 1943 a scheme for the Gond Teachers and establishment of special schools for Gonds was launched by the Nizam Government, which indicated the positive initiative and concern of the Government towards tribal problems. Further, a special officer for the tribal areas of Adilabad was appointed and the tribal people were allotted land on permanent tenure with legal titles in their names to safeguard their interest. In addition to these initiatives, the Government had enforced strict discipline on local Government officials of Revenue, Police, Forest and other departments working in Tribal areas to eradicate corruption and harassment. Nizam's Government had also realized the need for creating a separate agency to deal with the tribal people and thus a new Department of Social Services was established with adequate staff. To strengthen all these positive initiatives, the Hyderabad state had ultimately promulgated an act, known as the 'Tribal Areas Regulation, 1356 Fasli' (1946 A.D.). This Act empowered the Government to make necessary rules for the better administration of notified tribal areas. This Act was

---

37 Ibid., p.43.
further reinforced by another legislation, known as 'Tribal Areas Regulation 1359 Fasti' (1949 A.D.) and the Government issued orders and framed necessary rules to give effect to the above acts, under the title, 'Notified Tribal Areas Rules 1359 Fasti' on 16 November 1949.\textsuperscript{38} These rules and regulations made it clear that the Court of Law shall not have any jurisdiction over tribal areas and empowered the village/tribal Panchayats to be competent to try all cases. Further, instead of having to deal with several offices which belonged to various departments, the tribals were to deal with only social services department which was "vested with sufficient powers to prevent the alienation of tribal land as well as the exploitation of tribals by unscrupulous moneylenders and others".\textsuperscript{39}

All these measures and the approach of Hyderabad state appealed to the tribes and gave them confidence that they could manage their affairs through Panchayats. The Tribal Areas Regulation of 1949, remained in force till 1963 even after the formation of Andhra pradesh state in 1956 by merging Telangana and Andhra districts. Later on, it was replaced by the already existing Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Areas Land Transfer Regulation, 1959. The 1959 Regulation aims to protect the tribals by prohibiting the land transfer from tribal to non-tribals. However, it did not have any

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.43.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.45.
provisions for the maintenance of tribal Panchayats. Moreover, the powers of social service department officials were reduced by stripping off 'the judicial powers vested with them by the earlier Nizam Government. Now the enforcement of laws prohibiting land transfers comes under the purview of Revenue officials and the civil courts. Thereafter, the tribals in many parts of Andhra Pradesh were alienated from their traditional landholding, due to the authority in the rules, apathy of Revenue Officials and delays in adjudication by the civil courts.40

The Government of Andhra Pradesh had brought a few amendments to the 'Land Transfer Regulation of 1959' in 1970 and 1971, which prohibit all kinds of Land Transfers in Scheduled Areas. Though these changes in the rules curtailed the land transfers from tribals to non-tribals, the illegal occupation of tribal land by outsiders is still going on.

It was only after the Independence that the government machinery came into direct contact with the tribal people and several developmental programmes were launched to protect and uplift the tribals. The Indian Constitution provided for the notification of scheduled tribes and their protection by special legislation. Community Development programme was launched in 1952 as part of First Five Year Plan with an objective of multisided development. During the

40 Ibid., p.46.
First Five Year plan period, only one out of the four pilot projects which were launched in Andhra Pradesh had covered the scheduled areas. During the Second plan period, the Community Development programme was renamed as multipurpose project and much more emphasis was laid on tribal areas. In Andhra Pradesh, the multipurpose projects were launched in four tribal pockets namely Utnoor in Adilabad district, Narasampeta in Warangal district, and Paderu and Araku in Visakhapatnam district.

The committee on special multipurpose tribal blocks which had assessed the effectiveness of these projects, submitted a detailed report to Government of India in 1960. The committee found that the multipurpose projects benefited the non-tribals in tribal areas more than the tribal people, as the programme lacked specific orientation towards tribal needs. Instead these programmes laid more emphasis on spending money on non-essential buildings.41 The committee had recommended changes in priorities of the projects to meet the urgent needs of tribal people. However, there were no perceptible and concrete changes in the approach as well as implementation of the developmental programmes even during the Third and Fourth plan periods. Only change was that the multipurpose projects were again renamed as Tribal Development Blocks during the Third Five Year plan period.

41 Ibid., p.46.
The Naxalite movement from 1969 to 1972 in Srikakulam district which was launched with the support of numerous tribal population was the result of tribal unrest over the non-implementation of developmental programmes and the continuous exploitation by outsiders. The movement, though politically motivated, "reflected the shortcomings of the State's Tribal Policy." The Naxalite movement was generally viewed as an aggressive movement with an objective to safeguard the interests of poor tribals from the exploitation of landlords and money lenders.

In 1977, a new administrative setup known as Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) was established as part of the Fifth Five Year plan. High priority was given to agriculture, minor irrigation, communication and electricity in tribal areas under this administrative setup. In addition to the infrastructure, establishment of small scale industries was envisaged to provide employment for landless tribals. Girijan cooperative corporations were set up to provide improved marketing facilities for minor forest produce and to supply essential items to the tribals. Each ITDA was assigned specific tribal area and the ITDAs had to plan and execute socio-economic developmental schemes and programmes relevant to the area of operation and suitable to

42 Ibid., p.47.
the individual tribal groups. A separate administrative machinery for ITDAs was designated with a project officer at the helm of affairs supported by various line and staff agencies. As Haimendorf points out, "the plans under the Integrated Tribal Development Agency are admirable on paper, but have suffered from grave deficiencies in their implementation." The deficiencies were mainly administrative inactiveness and insufficient orientation of grassroots level officials towards tribal issues. However, the official reports claim that several thousands of tribal families have been covered under ITDA sub-plan approach.

In 1986, single line administration has been introduced in a sub-plan area. ITDAs coordinate the activities of all departments both developmental and regulatory, for better results. Until 1987, all the Government departments had to spend a stipulated percentage of their funds for the benefit of tribals under a departmental sub-plan. But in practice many a time these funds remained unutilised by several departments. For better utilisation of funds, the state Government had decided to bring the funds allocated under all departmental sub-plans, under a single demand from 1987-88. This had an immediate positive result in utilisation of funds so much so that during 1988-89, nearly 86.5% of the amount allocated had been utilised. The tribal sub-plan covers all facets of development like agriculture,

---

*CVF Haimendorf, op.cit. 1985, p.47.*
irrigation, education, health etc.

Certain special programmes like Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG), Dispersed Tribal Groups (DTG), Cluster Approach Programmes which include Integrated Rural Development Programmes and others form part of tribal sub-plan of Integrated Tribal Development Agencies. In 1991-92, financial year alone, as claimed by Government of Andhra Pradesh that 56,000 families were brought above the poverty line and for 1992-93 another 56,000 families were targeted under all above programmes of ITDAs.45

A special project, known as Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project, which aims to provide food security through natural resource development, to scheduled tribe families living in environmentally vulnerable hill slopes. This project specifically covers the ITDA areas of Seethampeta, Parvathipuram, Paderu and Rampachodavaram and was started during 1991-92. This project is being funded by International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome. Under this project, 63,371 tribal families living in 2077 villages would be covered during 7 years period with a total outlay of around Rs.78 cr.48

The State Government has established several

---

45 Tribal Development in Andhra Pradesh by Participatory Management. (Booklet) Tribal Welfare Dept., Govt. of A.P. (Hyderabad, 1993).

48 Ibid.
institutions like Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Cooperative Finance Corporation (TRICOR), Andhra Pradesh Girijan Co-operative Corporation (APGCC), Girijan Cooperative Coffee Development Corporation (GCCDC) etc., to cater to the financial and marketing needs of the tribal people. TRICOR's main aim is to provide institutional finance so as to ensure the economic development of tribals. APGCC intends to eliminate the exploiting traders and money lenders by procuring minor forest produce like gum, honey, soap seeds, etc. from the tribals directly and supply them a few domestic requirements at fair prices, through a network of 28 co-operative societies and depots all over the tribal areas. Whereas the main aim of GCCDC is to encourage tribals to grow coffee plantation in the slopes to wean away the tribal people from 'podu' cultivation and to enhance their socio-economic development.

In addition to the above, there are schemes for Economic Assistance for poor families among tribals, Rehabilitation of poor Yanadis and Rehabilitation of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) outside sub-plan areas. A master plan for Irrigation and Agriculture Development has been implemented to improve the irrigation potential to the lands belonging to tribals (approximately 2.85 lakh hectares), within a period of 10 years, with an initial outlay of Rs.417 crores.

The State Government has established a number of
educational institutions to develop the tribals educationally as part of the Integrated development. There are around 3,500 Girijana Vidya Vikasa Kendras in the state popularly known as 'single teacher schools' for the tribal children, up to class IV and V. In addition to these schools some primary and upper primary Ashram schools are also running in tribal areas. Ashram high schools have been established in all ITDA areas. Further, there are a few residential schools, ITIs, Polytechnics and Junior colleges in the sub-plan areas. However, the number of institutions and the strength in these institutions gradually decrease from single teacher schools to Ashram high schools and to residential Junior Colleges. For instance, during 1991-92, there were 3317 single teacher schools, 250 primary Ashram schools, 130 upper primary schools and 63 Ashram high schools. Furthermore, there were 7 ITIs, 3 polytechnics and 4 residential Junior Colleges (refer Table 2.3 below). The above figures indicate gradual reduction in retention of students in higher classes and possible high drop out rate after primary level of schooling. Moreover, the opportunities for tribal students to go for higher classes is denied as the number of institutions are less from upper primary level to Junior College level.
Table 2.3 Statement of educational institutions established by Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh upto 1991-92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Educational institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Single Teacher Primary Schools</td>
<td>3317</td>
<td>92,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ashram Primary Schools</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>25,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ashram Upper Primary Schools</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>19,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ashram High Schools</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I.T.Is</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Polytechnic Colleges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Residential Junior Colleges</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3774</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,52,449</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite these numerous programmes schemes and protective legislations the objective of integrated development of tribals could not be achieved so far. Majority of the tribal people are still below the poverty line, landless and do not have access to basic needs. The state is at the bottom of 18 Tribal sub-plan states and six union territories, when placed in the order of literacy levels. The programmes launched by the government for tribals development are devoid of tribal bias and not in accordance with the felt needs of the target group, mainly due to insufficient knowledge of tribal cultural matrix.
One should not be surprised by the fact that quite often the non-tribals settled in tribal areas are receiving more benefits directly or indirectly from these developmental programmes than the actual target group. Several studies pointed out the low incomes of tribal people and their consequent debt. The exploitation by the traders and money-lenders is still an obstacle in the socio-economic development of tribals in Andhra Pradesh. CVF Haimendorf has highlighted the role of traders and money-lenders in the exploitation of Gonds, Koyas, Konda Reddis and K. Mohan Rao has narrated the exploitation of tribes by the traders in Shandies in Visakhapatnam district. Further, the tribals in Andhra Pradesh are losing their ethnic distinctiveness. Increased contact with non-tribal populations has resulted in the erosion of tribal economic and social autonomy, particularly of tribes like Gonds which have complex religious and mythological systems. The tribal festivals and Jatras, which were traditionally celebrated in accordance with the mythological beliefs and rituals have now become artificial functions due to the

---


contact with modern world. The Keslapur Jatra of Gonds which has been transformed "from a tribal gathering devoted to the traditional worship of Gond deities to a great fair attended by thousands of non-tribals", is one instance of submergence of tribal culture in the dominant Hindu culture.  

Evolution of Scheduled Areas in Andhra region

The Andhra area was ruled by several rulers prior to Qutub Shahis. During that period the tribal tradition was recognised as an important aspect of Hindu tradition. Consequent of the frequent cultural interaction with the larger society made the tribal economy also to become a part of tribal economy. However, the tribal autonomy was safeguarded during this period without any outside interference. The Qutabshahi rulers of Golkonda had created an intermediary network to collect the land revenue from the tribal areas also. Thus, Zamindars were designated and were given authority over an area. These Zamindars in turn appointed 'muttadaris' in tribal areas to collect rents. In most of the cases, the muttadars were drawn from the upper stratum of the tribal society and some were from non-

50 Ibid., p.177.


52 'mutta' means a cluster of villages.
tribal plains background. For instance, in Visakhapatnam area the 'Muttadars' were mainly belonged to Bagatha tribe, which enjoys highest status in the traditional social hierarchy of that area. There seemed to exist cordial relationship between Zamindars and tribals through 'Muttadars' even during muslim period.53

Unlike their predecessors, the British tried to interfere in the traditional way of life which caused serious disturbances in tribal areas. Despite these disturbances British rulers attempted to bring the tribal areas under their direct control, so as to earn more revenues and tried to reduce the role of Zamindars.54 The introduction of 'Ganjam and Visakapatnam Act 1839' brought the tribal areas under the direct control of the district collector, whose main responsibility was the administration of civil and criminal justice and collection of revenue. The District collectors were designated as 'Agents' for the Government and the tribal areas were called as 'Agency areas'. The necessary rules for this Act were passed only in 1860 and this paved the way for enacting the Scheduled District Act of 1874.55

There was a positive attitude among the British

54 Ibid., p.23.
55 Ibid., p.41.
administration towards tribal areas after the Act of 1874. They were particularly concerned over the exploitation of tribals by outsiders which resulted in the passage of Agency Tracts Interest and Land transfer Act 1917. However, it was the Government of India Act 1919 which declared the Godavari and Visakhapatnam Agency areas as ‘Backward Tracts’.

On the recommendations of Simon Commission, British Government declared the 'Backward Tracts' as Excluded and partially excluded areas through Government of India Act, 1935. This assumes lot of importance as the 'Scheduled Areas' earmarked in the Indian Constitution are almost the same as the excluded and partially excluded areas.

Ethnographic Profile of Some Important Tribes in Visakhapatnam District:

As mentioned earlier there are around 20 tribes inhabit the Visakhapatnam district mainly in the Tribal sub-plan area of Paderu. There are three primitive tribal groups - Khond, Gadaba and Porja - also included in this. It would be appropriate to briefly outline the ethnographic profile of some tribes which are relevant for our study of Ashram schools. The ethnographic details help us to understand the education problems of tribal children. Though Edgor Thurston was the first to give a brief ethnographic details

---

58 Ibid., p.55.
of tribes of South India, of late there are several important contributions from social anthropologists on tribes of India and Andhra Pradesh.\textsuperscript{57} Here we attempt to bring salient features of each tribe from the Existing ethnographic accounts.

**Bagatha**

Edgar Thurston while describing *Bagathas* used the terms *Bhaktas* or Baktas as synonymous terms. Bagata is one of the numerically preponderant tribe whose members mainly live in Visakhapatnam district mainly in Chintapally tribal block. As per 1981 census, there were 87,994 people who belonged to Bagatha tribe. They speak Telugu language and do not know any tribal dialect. Though they are non-vegetarians they abstain from eating beef and pork.

The Bagatas were traditionally land owning group in the agency area. The tribe is divided into three endogenous groups viz., Padala, Kakari and Olangi. Each of these groups consists of more than two clans (Kulams or Vamsams). These clans are patrilineal and exogamous in nature, some of the major clans are Hanumanthee, Surbhi, Elugu, Naga, Matrya, Surya etc. All these clans which are totemic are

\textsuperscript{57} For detail account of tribes of Andhra Pradesh see: Edgar Thurston, "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" vol.I to VII 1909; CVF Haimendorf, op.cit, 1985; K.Sing (ed), People of India Series, (Calcutta, 1994), Sachidananda & R.R. Prasad (ed), Encyclopedic Profile of Indian Tribes, (Discovery, New Delhi, 1996) 4 volumes; and K.Mohan Rao. op.cit, 1993.
further divided into a number of surname or intiperu groups/lineages. Though there is commensal relationship among various lineages, marriage between persons of the same 'Intiperu' lineage are prohibited.

Marriage by negotiation, marriage by mutual love and elopement are common and socially approved ways of acquiring mates. However, tribal endogamy and lineage exogamy are strictly followed. The marriage age for boys is between 16-20 years and for girls between 13-16 years. Bride price is still prevalent and wedding takes place at bride's place. Cross-cousin marriage is preferred. Levirate, widow remarriage and sororal polygyny are practiced among Bagathas. Divorce is allowed.

Birth rite and puberty rites are observed much like the Hindu communities around. They worship of tribal and Hindu deities and most of them are Hindus. There are religious sects among them - Vaishnavites and Saivites. The Vaishnavites usually burn their dead and Savites prefer to bury them in customary sitting posture. Again, they perform 'Chinna Karma' and 'pedda Karma' death ceremonies like the caste Hindus. They worship tribal deities such as Sanku Devata, Jakara Devata, Nandi devata and Bali devata. They celebrate festivals like Etala Panduga, Chaitra prabha, Namidi-kotha, Chikkudukotha and Korra Kotha.

Their economy is mainly agro-forest based. Primary source of livelihood is agriculture and majority of them
around 83% are in cultivation. Around 14% are agricultural labourers. Land is individual proprietorship and practice both settled and shifting cultivation. Most of the crops are rainfed as there are no irrigation facility for their lands, very few of them are in government service. The literacy level of Bagathas is also very low as only 8.42% of them are literates (1981 census).

Belief in Astrology and Magic, sorcery and witchcraft are prevalent. Astrologer and Shamans are given much importance. Belief in spirits and superstitions are very common.

Bagatha tribe has four traditional political bodies, namely local tribal control (Kulokattu), regional tribal council (dai Kattu), traditional village Panchayat (Vooru Kattu) and Mutta Council (Mutta Kattu). There bodies maintain social control and settle disputes among bagathas at various levels. The councils at village and mutta levels are empowered to settle the inter-tribal matters.

Only a small number of main villages are having transport and communication facilities. Hence most of the Bagathas do not have access to or do not have electricity, communication and electronic media. Modernisation and frequent contact with caste Hindu has introduced changes in their traditional customs and practices.
Konda Dora

*Konda Dora* is a large hill tribe inhabiting agency tracts of Visakhapatnam district and are also known as Kondi Dora and Konda Kapu. They believe that they descended from the Pandavas of Mahabharata and call themselves *Pandava Rajas* or *Pandava Doras*. Their diet includes fish, pork, beef, and vegetables. Men and women consume liquor and smoke tobacco.

The tribe has several exogenous patri-clans such as *surya, peyya, ovaga, puli, dega, matsya* etc. All these clans are totemic in nature. They have their own dialect known as Kubi Konda and Adivasi Oriya. Their population was around 1.39 lakhs (1981 census) contact with Hindu culture made them to adopt the concept of social hierarchy. They place themselves in the middle order of hierarchy after Bagatha, Kotiya, Nuka Dora and consider Khondh, Samantha and Valmiki tribes as inferior to them.

Nuclear family is common among them. Marriage by negotiation and marriage by capture are prevalent among them. They follow surname exogamy. Cross-cousin marriages are preferred by them. Peculiarly, the marriage age for boys is less than the girls, while boys get married between 15-18 years, the girls marry between 18-20 years. Bride price is in vogue. Both monogamy and polygamy are observed. Levirate marriage is customarily practiced. Divorce is socially permitted. Descent is traced patrilineally.
Konda Doras practice several rituals periodically throughout year. Birth and death pollutions are observed. Their pantheon includes local deities like Nukalamma, pothuraju, Ammathalli and Hindu gods like Sri Rama, Hanuman etc. They celebrate festivals like Pusa Panduga, Itukala Panduga, Dasara, Ugadi, Sankranthi, Sivaratri etc. Most of them are followers of Hinduism. Animal sacrifices are offered to deities.

Only 64% of families own lands. The rest of them cultivate waste lands on hill slopes. Podu cultivation is common among them. Their cultivation is mostly rainfed. Animal husbandry, collection of minor forest produce, casual labour are other forms of livelihood. As per 1981 census 36.78% of Konda Doras were agricultural labourers.

Village headman is known as 'Naidu'. Konda reddis have traditional tribal council which settles the disputes within the tribe while 'Naidu' solves the inter-tribal disputes. Only 5.76% (1981 census) of them are literates. Some Konda Dora men are employed as teachers in primary schools and some other offices.

Kotia

They are also known as Kutiya or Kotiya and are mostly inhabited in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh and some villages of Orissa State. As per 1981 census, their population was 31,466. They speak Oriya.
or its dialect 'Kotia'.

There are two endogamous groups - Bodo Kotia and Sano Kotiya, which are further divided into a number of exogenous class and several surname lineages. In Visakhapatnam area, Bodo-Kota claim equal status on par with Bagathas and do not accept food from sano Kotia whom they consider as inferior. They have traditional dormitories known as Dangdigore and Dangada Basa for unmarried boys and girls. They establish ritualistic ties with neighbouring communities like Bagatha, Mukha Bora etc., Konda Dora, Porga and khond are engaged as labourers by the Kotia which indicate their high social status in the social hierarchy.

Marriage by negotiation (Bodobila), marriage by mutual love and elopement (Udaliyajibar), marriage by Capture (Dangdigikbar) and marriage by Service (Gorjuivai) are various ways of acquiring mates. Both levirate and sororate marriages are socially permitted.

They profess local forms of Hinduism as well as their traditional tribal religion. Sanku demudu, Nandi demudu, Jakaridemudu and Gangadevatha are their pantheon of gods. They celebrate festival like Soyuth Purab, Nandi Purub, Ashada Jatara, Gairam panduga, Bheemademudu, Panduga and Bodo devatha Panduga. 99.29% (1981 census) of them are followers of Hinduism and some of them are Christian converts.

Kotias practice both settled and shifting cultivation.
and also collect minor forest produce like tamarind, adda leaves and jackfruit. As per 1981 census, 44.28% of them are workers.

'Nayaklok' is the traditional mechanism of social control among Kotiya and is headed by a traditional leader called 'Nayak'. Most of the intratribal disputes are settled by this institution.

Literacy level among Kotia is 9.71% as per 1981 census. Female literacy is not very encouraging.

**Nooka Dora/ Mukha Dora**

*Nooka Dora* or *Mukha Dora* are inhabiting in the scheduled areas of Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and East Godavari districts. Their population, as per 1981 census, is 17,948. They speak Telugu and Adivasi oriya. They are district from Konda Dora and ranked next to Konda Dora. They also speak Kubi or Konda dialect due to their contact with Konda Doras.

The tribe is divided into two endogamous groups - *Kora* (Sun) and *Naga* (Cobra). These vamsams are further divided into several exogonous clans such as *Korra, Gammela, Kakara, Sugra, Kinchoyi, Chikudu, Mamidi*, etc. The name of the clan is prefixed to the person's name. The tribe is patriarchal and patrilineal in nature.

Nooka Dora strictly observe endogamy at tribal level and exogamy at clan level. Monogamy is the general rule.
Marriage by capture, by elopement by service and by negotiation are socially approved ways of acquiring mates. Bride price is an essential part of marriage. Divorce is allowed. However, preference is given for cross-cousin marriage.

They are non-vegetarians but they do not consume beef and pork. Men and women smoke and drink. They claim social status next to the Bagathas who are at the top of tribal hierarchy.

Nooka Doras worship Bodo devata, Nishan devata and Ganga devata. The elders of this community wear sacred thread and Tulası beads. They have belief in spirits and witchcraft. They celebrate all Hindu festivals. They often visit nodu Kondamma temple in paderu block of Visakhapatnam district. The local ‘Guruva’ is priest and religious head. They observe death pollution. Important festival for them being ‘Chaitra’ festival.

Nooka Dora have their own traditional council to settle disputes among themselves. The tribal chief acts like an opinion leader and settles disputes in consultation with other elder members. He is the supreme authority in decision making of political issues at community level.

Most of them have settled in agriculture and some depend on collection of minor forest produce.\(^{58}\) They

\(^{58}\) Minor forest produce includes gum, soap seeds, lac, honey etc.
were traditionally shifting cultivators, but of late preferring settled cultivation. As per 1981 census, 45.27% of them are workers – among them 73.79% are cultivators and 23.80% are agricultural labourers.

Only 3.84% of them are literates (1981 census) and none of them are in government service.

Porja

They are also known as Paraja, Parja and Puraja and are concentrated mainly in Koraput district of Orissa and Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Their population as per 1981 census, is 16,479. They speak in 'Parji' dialect, a corrupt form of Oriya.

The Madras Census Report of 1871 and Thurston (1909) recorded several endogenous sub tribes within this tribe. They are Parangi Porja, Bodo Porja, Jhodia Porja, Gadaba Porja, Pangu Porja, Kollai Porja and Bonda Porja. Each of these sub-tribes have their own dialects. They endogenous subtribes are further divided into several exogenous clans such as Killo (tiger), Korra (sun), samardi (bear), onthala (snake), Pangi (kite), Gollori (monkey) and Kimudu (bear). The sub tribes maintain commensal relationship but strictly follow endogamy in marriage alliances.

Majority of Porjas living in Andhra Pradesh are Porangi Porjas. They do not eat beef and pork. Porjas claim a middle rung social status in the hierarchy after Bagatha and Kotia
and they consider Konda Dora as equal to them. Nooka Dora and Valmikis are considered as inferior by them.

Porjas follow their tribal religion and worship sun kin in addition to their clan and village deities. The supreme deity is an unknown supernatural power which they call 'God'. They consider the deities as god sent messengers to look after their health, wealth, rain, agriculture etc. Religious functions are usually associated with ritual sacrifices, superstitutions, beliefs and belief in magic are prevalent. They observe birth, puberty, marriage and death ceremonies.

Marriage by negotiation and by mutual consent are common practices. Bride price is an essential aspect in marriage. Usually 'Guruvu' performs marriages. 'Shaman' attends to treat the ill-health.

Agriculture, animal husbandry, bee keeping, hunting, fishing, collection of minor forest produce provide them livelihood.

They have a headman for each endogamous group in a village and the leader (Naidu) for the entire village. Both posts are hereditary and they maintain social orders.

Only 2.88% of the Porjas (1981 census) are literates. Female literacy is at very low level.
Valmiki

The valmikis are notified as scheduled tribes in the agency areas only. They usually live in multi-tribal villages of Visakhapatnam district. As per 1981 census there are 42,944 Valmikis in the state. They claim their descent from the sage valmiki, the author of Ramayan (Thurston: 1909). They speak both Telugu and Oriya.

The valmiki tribe occupies the lowest place in the social hierarchy of tribal society. They accept food and water from all the tribes, but nobody accepts these items from them due to their eating of pork and beef.

Social structure of this tribe consists of mainly gotras (clan). There are clans like Sorya, Naga, Pongi and Kora which are further divided into surname lineages. They are and patrilineal. Eldest son inherits entire property.

Monogamy and polygamy are common among valmikis. Marriage by negotiation, by capture and by elopement are common accepted ways of acquiring mates. Cross-cousin marriages are preferred. The marriage age for girls is 14-17 years and for boys between 18-25 years. Child marriages are prevalent. Both levirate and sororate are accepted forms. Divorce is allowed and widow remarriages are common.

Valmikis worship a number of tribal deities and Hindu Gods. Their sacred specialist (Guruvu) officiates the rituals. They observe birth and death pollutions. Superstitions beliefs, sorcery and witchcraft are prevalent
among them. Animal sacrifices are also common. Due to the active role of missionaries a considerable number of valmikis (4.04% as per 1981 census) converted into different denominations of Christianity.59 The christian valmikis attend to churches on Sundays and celebrate festivals like christmas, Good Friday etc., and also celebrate their tribal festivals like Ztukula panduga, Nandipanduga etc. The Christian section of valmikis do not differ much from their main tribe in matters of rituals and observance of pollution. The main difference is that their children are baptized and marriages are conducted in the church by a pastor.

Their main occupation is agriculture and a sizeable number among them are petty traders. Around one-third of them are agricultural labourers. Rest of them (10%) are in various occupations (1981 census). Literacy among valmikis is comparatively high. As per 1981 census, 19.37% of them are literates. This is mainly attributed to the initiative taken by the Christian missionaries. Many of the educated valmikis are in government service.

59 Several christian missionaries are workers in the tribal areas. Many valmikis converted into different denominations. They visit Roman catholic church in Paderu, the Lutheran church in Hukumpeta, the Canadian Baptist church in Goodem village, the Pentecostal church in Goodem, the Evangelical church in Muliapet village, the church of South India in Muliapet and Pedabailu villages, United Christian Interior Ministreet (UCIM) in Konthili and Guthulput villages and Christ Gospel Mission in Muliapet village, etc.
The ethnographic profile of various tribal groups inhabitate the study area would reveal the heterogenity and complexity of the social-cultural life of these people. The issues discussed under various sections of this chapter, provide an essential backdrop for further analysis of tribal education. There is a broad cultural similarity among various types of Visakhapatnam agency area.

As part of socio-cultural profile of tribals in Andhra Pradesh, certain socio-economic problems faced by the tribal people have been presented. This includes the exploitation by outsiders, poverty, illiteracy and such. These issues will be focussed in the subsequent chapters on education in Ashram schools.