CHAPTER – 4

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

The Chenchus believe in a world of invisible powers that influence human life and are accessible to the invocations and offerings of man. These powers are thought to be personal beings, but it would be a misinterpretation of Chenchu ideas, if we denominated them “supernatural”. For the Chenchu seem to draw no sharp distinction between the human world and that of the gods whose existence he accepts without much speculation on their origin and nature. His attitude towards the gods is characterized by an often astonishing realism, and is equally devoid by mysticism, religious fervour or superstitious fear.

In its present form Chenchu religion, if we may use this term for an uncoordinated mass of beliefs and ritual, is no rigid theological system, but an expansive framework that constantly embraces and assimilates new objects and forms of worship. The difficulty is ascertaining the nature of the Chenchus’ indigenous religious beliefs lies in the fact that with the displacement of their former language by Telugu, their deities must have lost the original names and were henceforth described by Telugu terms. Thus their identity was obscured, and they have gradually become confounded with certain deities of the Hindu pantheon. Moreover increasing contact with populations of the plains has led the Chenchus to adopt the cult of various deities of rustic Telugu religion. It is impossible to state when exactly this process began,
but such a point has now reached that many of the deities worshipped by the lower Telugu castes are now recognized and sometimes propitiated by the Chenchus. The cult of these deities, however, only thinly veils the original Chenchu beliefs, which clearly discernible beneath the veneer of Hinduism have not yet lost their importance.

The most systematic approach to Chenchu religion might be to penetrate to the most ancient beliefs by a method of exclusion, i.e., to examine each deity with the attendant ritual and to set aside all those whose cult is evidently borrowed from the local Hindu castes. But this method, if followed in the disposition of the material, would not be conclusive to clarity, and the author Haimendorf proposes to adopt the contrary policy and to deal the aspects of Chenchus creed which appear most ancient.¹

**Garelamaisamma:**

The cult of deities closely linked with the traditional occupation of a tribe can generally be regarded as indigenous, and since undoubtedly hunting ranks among the most ancient of Chenchus activities, great antiquity may be attributed to the belief in a deity controlling the activities of the wild animals of the forest and the luck of the chase. Among the Chenchus it is Garelamaisamma, who is accredited with these powers. Not a single Chenchu able to say what and how Garelamaisamma looks like and where exactly she resides and, although described as a female deity, she is addressed in prayers not only as mother”, but also sometimes as “father”.
When a Chenchu goes hunting, when he brings down an animal, and when he returns home with his kill he plays to Garelamaisamma in whose hands lies the success and the failure of the chase. One learning the village he invokes her help with a short prayer.

Chenchu prayers are seldom strict formula, but generally spontaneous variations on a traditional theme and on this occasion an offering is promised to Garelamaisamma if she helps the hunter who puts his faith in her. The Hindi word ‘puja’ is here used as an offering which as little has in common with the puja of Hindus.

If the hunter is lucky and kills an animal or finds a fresh tiger’s kill, which Chenchus by no means despise, he will cut off a small piece of the hind-leg and perhaps a piece of the liver, roast it on the spot, and throw it into the jungle for Garelamaisamma. Saying:

“Memu tintunnam, nuvvu tinu”

We eat, you eat

Later, when returning home, the successful hunter says a prayer of thanks to Garelamaisamma.
“Our mother, your favour with us found a prey, for this we say thanks to you many a time”.

With this prayer the Chenchu acknowledges that his success has been due to the favour of Garelamaisamma.

From this it is evident that Garelamaisamma is thought to influence the results of the chase and to be in control of the wild animals. Tradition says that in the old times the Chenchus killed only male animals. For to kill a female angered Garelamaisamma. If a man killed a female animal by mistake, he prayed, to Garelamaisamma. For forgiveness lest she vented her wrath on him by withholding food from both the culprit and his family.

No spoil part is given to Garelamisamma if a squirrel or hare is caught by dogs, no to the Chenchu make any offering when they are successful in fishing.

The offering of a small part of an animal killed in the chase on the very spot where it was brought down is a form of worship found among many of the most primitive tribes of the world and commonly described by ethnologists as “primitial offering”. In essence, this offering is entirely different from the ordinary ‘puja’ of the Hindus, and in the case of the Chenchus it must be undoubtedly be considered as indigenous to their own culture. However, even in this site the influence of Hindu ceremonial is already noticeable and sometimes the offering is made in a slightly
different form. If a man was fortunate enough to shoot several pigeons, he would prepare some of the flesh in the same way as it is cooked for human consumption and put it down on some flat stones sacred to Garelamaisamma saying “God as much as you gave, so much we are offering to you”.

This food is left there for some minutes and then taken away to be eaten by Chenchus themselves. Here the common Hindu practice is followed of placing the offering in front of the deity, who is supposed to feed on its spiritual substance, while later the worshippers enjoy the material part of the food. The difference between this complicated conception of the two-fold substance of food and the simple offering of a piece of roasted flesh, which is left in the jungle and not ultimately eaten by the hunters, is striking and typical of the change that is revolutionizing Chenchu religion.

The stones which now serve as a kind of “altar” for offerings to Garelamaisamma usually lie under a large tree near the village. They consist of three or four upright stones about ten to fifteen inches high and of a few flat stones, sometimes arranged in a rough semi-circle. The Chenchus themselves say that they learnt to keep such stones from their neighbouring plains, and similar arrangements of stones sacred to other deities lie all around their settlements.

Garelamiasamma is not only a deity of the chase, but also of various other aspects of jungle life. She causes the flowers to blossom and the fruit to swell and ripen. Shortly before any one of the main fruits of the fruits come into season, the
Chenchus collect a small quantity of the half-ripened fruit and the men of the settlement place them on the flat stones to Garelamaisamma.

Garelamaisamma is promised that if all fruits ripen well she will receive an offering during the rainy season. The most remarkable feature of this prayer is that Garelamaisamma is addressed as “god father” although the Chenchus are convinced that she is a women.

As soon as the first fruits are fully ripen, again a few of the first to be plucked and are placed on the altar with a prayer.

Here Garelamaisamma is called upon to watch over the Chenchus while they climb the trees to gather the ripe fruits and to protect them against slipping or falling.

These first fruit offerings are performed with the berries of Buchanania latifolia, the fruits of wild mango, tamarind and several other fruits, eaten by Chenchus, and when the first mohua flowers are collected, some are cooked on a hearth close to the sacred place and then put down on the stones in the same manner. But it is noteworthy that no offering of roots or herbs are ever tendered to Garelamaisamma. The details of these rites, in which all male members of a settlement take part, do not follow a uniform pattern and it seems that in some places the first fruit offerings are altogether omitted. Growing contact with the plains
people has had a disintegrating effect on Chenchu beliefs and some of the old practices are gradually disappearing.

Garelamaisamma is invoked not only when the first mohua flowers fall to the ground, but also on the day that when first mohua liquor of the year has been distilled. Then the Peddamanishi and one or two other men pour some liquor over the stones and say in this prayer, Garelamaisamma is petitioned to prevent man from committing acts of drunken violence during the dancing which follows most drinking parties, and this may lead us to believe that Garelamaisamma is thought of as the deity who controls not only the wild life of the forest but also the behaviour of the man. Although Chenchus today rarely makes statements to this effect, the old stores afford many examples of the protection which Garelamaisamma extends to those in need and in danger. In these stories she appears invariably in the likeness of an old women who helps men by miraculous means.

There are indeed few critical occasions when a prayer to Garelamaisamma will not prove beneficial: in cases of difficult labour, her help is invoked when all other means and powers fail; in sickness to her assistance is sought, though less frequently then that of other deities, and she is apparently believed to exercise a certain power over the souls of those men who after this life turn into evil ghosts; for it is on Garelamaisamma that the Chenchu calls when such ghosts trouble the habitations of the living. While all personal names are derived from the names of gods and
goddesses, no child is ever called Garelamaisamma, for as the Haimendorf was repeatedly assured, it would die if given this name.

Occasionally it is stated that Garelamaisamma is greater than the other gods, but most men contest this and say that Bhagavantaru, the sky god, is higher than all other deities, but that Garelamaisamma ranks immediately after Bhagavantaru. The fullest statements on Garelamaisamma were those made by men of Nagaluti, a village on the southern side of the Kistna in Kurnool District, where the Chenchus sacrifice to Garelamaisamma after a successful chase in the same way as in Hyderabad. Garelamaisama lives in the jungle and only comes to the villages to look after the people; the Chenchus added that Garelamaisama is really like two deities, one male and one female god, but that these have both the same name. This was probably an attempt to express Garelamaisama’s dual personality of “mother” and “father”. The present aspect of Garelamaisama may be due to the impact of a culture I will a predominance of female deities on a primitive supreme being or perhaps only a powerful silvan god indigenous to Chenchu culture.

In contrast to many other deities Garelamaisama is considered a benevolent being who, if appropriately worshipped, gives men luck in the chase, a plenty of edible fruits and protection from evils. The Chenchu believes that if he prays to her, Garelamaisama will answer his prayers by actively rendering him aid, while to most other deities he only prays that they may leave him in peace, avoid his house and village and abstain from afflicting him with disease.
Bhagavantaru:

The other important god of benevolent character is Bhagavantaru. The name is evidently the same as that of the Hindu god Bhagavan, but it must not be assumed that the Chenchu thinks of Bhagavantaru in terms similar to those of Hindu theology.

The Chenchus are sure that Bhagavantaru resides in the sky. They say that they are not certain whether he can see them from there, but their prayers clearly reveal the conviction that Bhagavantaru can help them and protect them against dangers.

In the morning when leaving for the jungle they pray—here the meaning is that Bhagavantaru should protect them when they go to the jungle in the morning and allow them a safe return to their houses. There is no corresponding prayer in the evening before they go to sleep; they just say “Sami, Narayana, Bhagavanta”, and lie down.

As the god of the sky Bhagavantaru is responsible for thunder and rain and when there is a thunderstorm the Chenchus pray: Bhagavantaru we are down and you are above, take care of us.

The idea of creation is foreign to the Chenchu, who accepts the world as he finds it without questioning how it came into being. No deity is therefore, attributed
with the making of the earth or any living creature. There is, however, the belief that the soul (jiv) of every individual comes from Bhagavantaru and returns to him at death; but Bhagavantaru may refuse to take back the jiv of a man whose deeds in this life were evil, and such jiv returns into dayyam, a malignant ghost.

Bhagavantaru is seldom worshipped with offering; he is never given any of the first fruits or a share in the spoils of the chase, but when a couple remains childless for several years, they will pray to him for offspring and promise to give a large offering of rice and other eatables if the grants their wish.

Garelamaisama and Bhagavantaru have certain features in common and they definitely stand out from among all the other deities worshipped by the Chenchus. They are both considered beneficent deities controlling the forces of nature and human life, and although Bhagavantaru lives in the sky and Garelamaisama in the jungle, they are both in some way omnipresent and always within the reach of man, while other deities have definite dwelling places and only occasionally visit other localities. As in the case of Garelamaisama, no child is ever named after Bhagavantaru, although it is he who is supposed to bestow children on man.

The attitude of the Chenchu towards these two deities is difficult to describe. It is certainly not one of fear, but neither is it one of fervent reverence. He feels himself dependent on them without worrying, however, about the exact nature and origin of this dependency. The Chenchus certainly believes that the gods are not unconcerned with the morals of humans, but the concrete expressions of this belief
are few, when Guruvaru of Appapur died prematurely after committing clan-incest, his death was considered just retribution, but as a rule it is not believed that Garelamaisama or Bhagavantararu will spontaneously mete out punishment for individual violations of tribal law. They may, however, grant a prayer for the chastisement of an offender and consequently inflict him with illness, and here we come to a certain difference between the two main deities of the Chenchus: while Garelamaisama may punish a wrong-doer by striking him with illness, Bhagavantararu is never the bringer of disease, either he leaves a man unscathed or kills him outright by removing his jiv.

The neglect of her cult, the failure to perform the first fruit offerings, however, induces Garelamaisama to withhold the fruits of the forest from the Chenchu, and it is believed that in old times she exacted heavy penalties for the killing of female animals. But the Chenchus does not express himself easily on abstract matters and in everyday life, there are few concrete cases when a crime is so swiftly followed by misfortune that it may unquestionably be ascribed to the wrath of a deity and the lack of belief in the divine sanction of moral laws may therefore be only apparent. The Chenchu undoubtedly believes that Garelamaisama and Bhagavantararu watch over him closely and he expects their help and protection in his daily quest for food; at times he even prays to them for guidance in his own actions and this, together with the belief that Bhagavantararu refuses to accept the jiv of “bad” people in his abode, would seem to suggest that these gods are not considered altogether indifferent to human behaviour.
Lingamaya:

The most popular Chenchu names are Lingaru and Lingama and the god after whom they are called is lingamaya. Some Chenchus assert that he is the greatest god, but curiously enough this conviction finds little expression in acts of cult. It is clear that Lingamaya is a hypostasis of Shiva, but he Chenchu has no idea that Lingamaya means really “god of the phallus,” though he knows that an idol called lingam is worshipped in Srisailam. The Chenchus of the upper plateau say that Lingamaya’s home is on the ridge of Chandragupta, where there are still the ruins of a fort and a temple; and the Chenchus of Vatellapalli and Sarlapalli, when hunting is in the vicinity, make an offering to Lingamaya in order to ensure a successful hunt. Moreover, near some settlements there are groups of small stones sacred to Lingamaya.

There can be no doubt that cult of Lingamaya is a relatively recent addition to Chenchu culture, perhaps dating from the times when the forts on the plateau were occupied by Hindu garrisons; a cult which is ever strengthened by the annual contact with pilgrims who traverse the Chenchu country to worship Shiva and the Lingam at Srisailam. The god whose cult is connected with a civilization so vastly superior to that of the Chenchus naturally impresses them as powerful and it is thus that Lingamaya is occasionally even described as the “highest deity”, although when questioned most Chenchus will agree that the greatest god is Bhagavantaru, with Garelamaisama ranking next. The prestige of the worshippers of Shiva lends prestige
to Lingamaya, and while there is no site or prayer peculiar to his cult, there is a tendency to transfer to Lingamaya certain acts of worship generally tendered to Garelamiasama, or to be on the safe side, to worship both gods alternately.

**Potsamma:**

While Lingamaya is considered a benevolent god and is worshipped for the help he may render, other deities are much dreaded and propitiated to avert the evils with which they would afflict the Chenchu. Foremost among these is Potsamma, the small-pox goddess of the Telugu country, sometimes addressed also as Ammavaru.

Unfortunately epidemics of small pox have more than once wrought havoc among the Chenchu population and it is therefore understandable that above all else he fears the visits of Potsamma. To humour her he will now and then place some food on the stones and say “Mother Potsamma, eat of this food, but leave us, do not attack us; if more food falls into our hands we will again offer some to you”.

The Chenchu is not pedantic as to the exact character of an illness, and although a disease may have nothing to do with small pox, he often attributes it to the malignant influence of Potsamma and tries to placate her by offering, or rather by the promise of offerings on the patients recovery.
Potsamma is said to have a brother called Potraj, who is of a more harmless character than his sister; he is not worshipped by the Chenchus of the upper plateau, but is sometimes represented by a small stone placed next to Potsamma. Both Potsamma and Potraj are deities of the Telugu peasants and those Chenchus who live in their villages also worship Potraj.

**Minor Deities:**

In addition to the gods recognized and worshipped by all Jungle Chenchus, there is a multitude of minor deities whose cult is confined to certain localities and groups.

The majority of the minor gods and godlings can be classified under two heads:

1. Those who are believed to abide in a certain locality of the Chenchu country, and
2. Those described as ‘gods of the Hindu people, living in their houses’.

No traditions or legends explain the association of deities with particular villages or areas where they are worshiped, for Chenchus emigrating from their old village-land sometimes retain the cult of its local deity and introduce it to their new environment.
Typical of the local deities is Guruvappa a god living in the region of Malapur, Appapur and Medimankal, and worshipped mainly by the people of Nimal and Tokal clan, who show a preference for the names of Guruvaru and Guruvama. He is thought to be entirely benevolent and in times of crises is worshipped in houses as well as at sacrificial places in the open.

**Female Deities:** Two female deities believed to reside in the vicinity of Malapur are Lachamma and Vidamma, and many Nemal and Tokal women are given these names.

Very occasionally, they were offered some food, but their importance is small and the Chenchus have no clear conception of their attributes or character.

Lachamma is presumably identical with Laxmi, and the Chenchu, make an offering to her before planting millet and Indian corn. The Chenchus of Boramacheruvu invoke on certain occasions the goddess Borama, who is connected with the ruined temple near the tank and is worshipped at Srisailam as Bhramaramba devi.

The local god of Irla Penta is Irlu and it is after him that many people of that village are called Iradu (yiradu) and Irama (yiri). Now and then he receives food
offerings, but he is not reversed outside the boundaries of the Irla Penta. Land, while Guruvappa is also worshipped in Irla Penta.

Darabaya, “a god like man, and a very good man’, dwells near Sangrigundal, where a small stone image believed to represent this god, one of the main resting places of the pilgrims to Srisailam. The frequent Chenchu names Bayeru and Bayema are derived from this god.

Ankamma is a ‘very small goddess’, who is not worshipped; she resides near Vatellapalli, and although she enjoys no cult, a few Chenchus are called after her Ankamma and Ankaru.

A goddess of great power is Yellamma, whose cult is widespread throughout Telangana. Near Tirmalapur, east of Amrabad, is a small temple devoted to Yellamma and every Wednesday the local Hindus of all castes sacrifice there. It is the Chenchus most in touch with the peasantry of the villages on the lower ledge who have adopted her cult, and these are mainly people of Menlur clan, who lived at Elpamachena and Tatigundal. Potaru’s children Anmi and animagaru are so called after the god Anumantarau (Hanuman), to whom an old shrine near Elpamachena is dedicated. As a rule the Chenchus do not worship Hanuman and know nothing of his role in Hindu mythology, although they have learnt from the stone images at Elpamachena and Mananur that he has a monkey face and a tail.
Deities connected with a particular locality are believed to follow their worshippers when they migrate to other places. Thus once a year the Chenchus of such villages as pulajelma perform a ceremony for Maradugu Maisama, the goddess of Maradugu, a village between Amrabad and the Dindi River. Maradugu was apparently a former centre for the Menlur people, whence many came to the upper plateau, bringing with them their local god. Maradugu Maisama was described by Guruvaru (Nimal) of Boramacheruvu as ‘not very great and of little use to the Chenchus’. But the Pulajelma people will run no risks and they have built her a semi-circle of small stones near a path to the village. During the hot season they worship there, after placing some food on the stones and pray as that the Chenchus of Pulajelma; far from being delighted that Maradugu Maisama followed the Menlur people to their new home, perform a special puja in order to divert her dangerous influence from the village.

Another village deity is Elpamachena Maisama and since Elpamachena is now deserted, she has turned her unwelcome attention to other villages. The place sacred to this goddess, which lies under a large tree, was cleared of grass and creepers and the stones righted; there were four upright stones at the back and three flat stones in the front. The upright stones were smeared with saffron in the manner customary among the local Hindus.

Vutikanka was considered responsible for miscarriage. She is the only deity—or perhaps it would be more correct to call her an evil spirit, although the Chenchus
call her as devudu and not as dayam, - whose existence and origin is explained by a kind of myth. Vutikanka is said to have resembled a Chenchu woman and was married to a man who inspite of her miraculous deeds never realized she was a goddess until she disappeared.

A deity believed to have once been an ordinary human being is Nensalamma. She is worshipped only pulajelma, and it is said that, she was a grazier. Woman, who came annually to pulajelma with her cattle and always treated the Chenchus with great kindness, giving them millet, milk and curd. So good that she turned into goddess.

Deities, who are known to the Chenchus but are believed to live only in the houses of their Hindu neighbours are Balamma, Buchamma and Mutelamma. They enjoy no cult on the part of the Chenchus but some children are named after them –

   Baligaru

   Buchigaru and

   Mutaru.

Peddamma is also a goddess of the plains people and mainly associated with the cattle care.

Gangamma, the water deity, and when Chenchus crossing the Kistna, say a short prayer asking her protection.²
The Chenchus of Lingampalle, 2 miles from Parupalle or Mahbubnagar – konda bus route, worship Yellamma. Even local Hindus also worship.

Pochamma/Potsamma being worshipped by kuchchrekal, Raipalle, Rajapur, Kodgal, Lingampet hamlet, Gollapalle, Moosapet hamlet of Sankalmaddit, Janampet, bharmapur, Mahbubnagar, Palkonda, china Gopalpur Chenchus and local and neighbouring Hindus who belong to Mahbubnagar taluk.

In shadnagar taluk: Pochamma being worshipped in chowdoor, Pinjerla, Lingamdonda Kondedu, china Adiryala, Tommidirekula.

Mysamma took the lead in china revalla, china adiryala

Anuma being worshipped in lalapet hamlet of Ummental, Yedra. Iokirevu, Velijerla, Lingamdonda, Kondedu

Fairs & Festivals of Mahbubnagar District

I. Mahbubnagar Taluq

1. Yellamma - Lingam palle
2. Hanuman - Vepoor,
   Mallapur,
   Ibrahimbad,
   Lingampet hamlet of Kodgal,
   Janampet
   Dharmapur
   Mahbubnagar
   Palkonda

3. Lingam (Shiva) - Ippatur,
   Tirmalapur
   Kodgal
   Vallur
   Polkampalle
   Hasnapur
   Karvena

4. Pochamma - Kuchcherkal
   Raipalle
   Rajapur
   Gollapalle
   China Gopalpur.

5. Mysamma - Rajapur (Gandipeta)
   Machanpalle (Kota)
   Moosapet
2. Shadnagar Taluq

1. Hanuman - Lalapet hamlet of ummental,
Velijerla
Lingamdonia
Konedu,
Yedra

2. Pochamma - Chowdoor,
Pinjerla,
Lingamdonia

3. Lingam - Mogilgidda
Jogammagudem
Chegur
Joshiguda hamlet of Punjerla
Kaknoor
Pedda Adiryala

4. Mysamma - Chinna revella

3. Kalvakurthi Taluq

1. Mysamma - Julapalle,
Veldanda
2. Hanuman - Julapalle
   Antharam
   Urukonda peta
   Chilveru
   Vaspul
3. Edamma - Madharam
4. Gulvalamma - Vangur

4. Atchampet Taluq

1. Anjaneya - Uppunuthala (Upnotla)
   Kondareddipalli
   Manajipet
2. Siva - Banala,
   Rangapur (Mahbubnagar, Amrabad)
3. Mysamma - Manajipet
4. Pochamma - Manajipet

5. Kollapur Taluq

1. Posamma - Mahammad apuram
   Annavaram
Dondaipalle
Davajipalle
Gopalapuram
Madhavarao palle
Kollapur

2. Maisamma - Banda palle
Pasupula
Peddakothapalle
Chinna Karpamula
Kollapur

3. Edamma - Panugallu
Tumukunta

4. Anjaneya - Rayampalle
Dedinemipalle

5. Mantalamma - Janumpalle

6. Satyamma

Yellama Pasupula
Veera Nagamma

7. Ranganayaka swamy - Ambathupalle
Mahasamudram

8. Siva (Eswara) - Kalwarala
Malleswaram
9. Gangamma - Dagadapalle
10. Peddamma - Gaddabe Samapuram

6. Nagarkurnool Taluq

1. Anjaneya - Avancha
   Sirasawada
   Mangunuru
   Lattupalle
   Gouravaram
   Parvatapuram
   Bandapalle
   Naganool
   Uyyalawada
   Polkepahad
   Nagapur
   Komatikunta
   Jeelugupalle
   Tudakurthi

2. Yadamma - Telkapalle

3. Mysamma - Yedulla,

4. Edamma - Mushtipalle
5. Posamma - Komatikunta  
Jeelugupalle

6. Boddurayi - Komatikunta  
Jeelugupalle

7. **Wanaparthi Taluq**

1. Hanuman - Chowdarpalle  
Basavaipalle  
Konnur

2. Lingam - Vemula  
Ponnakallu  
Kandur  
Nelividi

3. Edamma - Ghanapuram  
Maddigatla

4. Peddamma - Nelividi

5. Godadevi - Srirangapuram

8. **Alampur Taluq**

1. Anjaneya - Kondapeta

2. Thimmama - Udandapur,
3. Gattu Thimmappa - Venkatapur
4. Thimmagurudu - Maramunagal
5. Nandyalamma - Langanavai
6. Siva Lingam - Takkasila
                   Itikyalpadu
                   Kadavelli
7. Jogulamba - Alampur

9. Gadwal Taluq

1. Lakshmamma - Gurram palle
2. Savaramma - Palcherla,
                 Daudarpalle
3. Hanuma - Chinna chinta revula
            Aloor
            Chintalakunta
            Arugidda
            Medikunda
            Ieeja
4. Maisamma - Malkalapalle
5. Jammulamma - Jammichedu
6. Karremma - Marlabeedu
             Thatigunta
7. Maremma - Thatigunta
8. Peddamma - Tappetla morsu
9. Injamma - Induvasi
10. Yellamma - Chagadona

10. Atmakur Taluq

1. Gajjalamma - Patherched
   Kottapalle
   Kadmur
   Anugonda

2. Anjaneyudu - Patherched
   Lalkot
   Pedda chinta kunta
   Chinna Raja-mooru
   Hajlapur
   Gaddeguda
   Balusupalle
   Dokur
   Damaganapur
   Undyala
   Kadmur
   Kondadoddi
   Panchalingala
3. Kota Maisama - Jakkannapalle
4. Yellamma - Teelair, Bekkerpalle
5. Siva - Gaddeguda

Muchchintal
Waddeman
Chandraghad
Atmakur

11. Makthal Taluq

1. Gajjalamma - Perapalla
2. Edemma - Upparpalle
3. Yellamma - Lingampalle
4. Gattu Thimmappa - Madhavaram
5. Beerappa - Neradagum
6. Maremma - Bhairampalle
7. Thimmappa - Sukra Lingampalle

12. Kodangal Taluq

1. Yellamma - Kodangal

Kudurumalla (Naga)
Polepalle
Damaragidda
2. Chowdeswari - Kodangal
3. Bangaramma - Suraipalle
4. Edamma - Damaragidda
5. Karkulamma - Bommanapahad

**Fairs & Festivals of Kurnool District**

### 1. Kurnool Taluq

1. Sunkulamma - Budidapadu
2. Chowdeswari devi - Kodumur
3. Thimmaguruduswamy - Gudur

### 2. Nandikotkur Taluq

1. Sangameswara - Sangameswaram
2. Chowdeswari - Pathakota
3. Nageswara - Pathakota
4. Mokshewara - Pathakota
5. Yedlamma - Vaddemanu
6. Mallikarjuna - Konidyala
7. Rangaswamy - Tarturu
### 3. Atmakur sub-Taluq

1. Lingamayya - Kokkerancha
2. Indranatha - Kurukunda
3. Tikkayya - Atmakur
4. Nandulu / Nandeeswara - Iskala

### 4. Markapur Taluq

1. Bangaramma - Venkatreddipally hamlet
2. Chennakesava - Medapi,
3. Yogayya - Chennampalle hamlet
4. Poleramma - Kolukula
5. Ankalamma - Gangupalle hamlet

### 5. Giddalur Taluq

1. Ankalamma - Pitikayagulla

### 6. Allagadda Taluq

1. Poleramma - Srirangapuram
2. Ahobileswara - R. Krishnapuram
   
   Yadavada
   
   Allagadda
7. Nandyala Taluq

1. Sunkulamma - Pusuluru
2. Gangamma - Pusuluru
3. Katamarayuni jatara - Pusuluru

8. Banganapalle sub- Taluq

1. Chowdeswari Devi - Nandavaram

9. Koilkuntla Taluq

1. Nela Bilam - Abdullapuram
2. Veera Papamma - Singavaram
3. Masanamma - Sanjamala
4. Sunkulamba - Kanala,
   Nossam Harivaram
5. Chowdeswari Devi - Bondaladinne
6. Mulapeddamma - (Uppuneella) U.Govidinne
7. Ankalamma - Pedda Emmanur
8. Gangamma - Bodenumanur
9. Chowdamma - Pedda Emmanur
10. Dhone Taluq

1. Amruteswara - Pendekal
2. Sunkulamamma - Rudravaram
3. Maremma - Muddavaram

11. Pattikonda Taluq

1. Kasi Veerappa - Perapalla
2. Gutali Prabha - Banavanuru
3. Sunkulamamma - Ratana
4. Maremma - Gadderalla hamlet of Kunkanur
5. Hultheppa - Peddahulthi

12. Alur Taluq

1. Rangamma - Ingaladahal
2. Devaragudem jatara - Neriniki
3. Kadu Siddappa - Muddanageri
4. Mangamma Avva utsavam - Karidiguddam
5. Ayyalappa - Manekurthi
6. Tippanna tata tirunała - Chigali
7. Uchuveerappa jatara - Pedda Hothur
8. Bangaramma jatara - Aukera
9. Goluguttaiah jatara - Virupapuram

13. Adoni Taluq

1. Yellamma jatara - Adoni, Kosigi
2. Mangaraya Swamy - Adoni

Fairs & Festivals of Guntur District

1. Guntur Taluq

1. Poleramma - Lam
2. Gramadevata jatara - Peddakonduru

2. Tenali Taluq

1. Nukulamma Kolupulu - Butumalli, hamlet of Jampani
2. Ganganamma - Tumuluru
3. Peddintamma jatara - Pedagadelavarru
3. Atmakur sub-Taluq

1. Tallamma & Addanki Nancharamma - Pudivada
2. Nadivelamma jatara - Razole
3. Gramadevara jatara - Thotapalle
4. Poturaja jatara - Kamaraju gadda
5. Yallamma - Dhulipudi
6. Prakkalamma - Nagaram
7. Idulamma and Addanki Nancharamma - Idupalle
8. Magadaramma jatara - Nizampatnam
9. Ankamma jatara - Totakuravarpalem

4. Bapatla Taluq

1. Poleramma - Nanduru Kondapatur Veerannapalem Kottapeta
2. Sitalamma - Narasayapalem
3. Urlamma - Ganapavaram
4. Nagarapamma - Vetapalem
5. Ongole Taluq

1. Poleramma - Addanki
   Modepalli
   Hanumapuram
   Ammanabrolu
   Trovagunta
   Padarathi
   Vasepallipadu

2. Gangamma - Garlapadu

3. Ankamma - Doddavaram
   Vasepallepadu

4. Jalamma - Alakurapadu

5. Ankalamma - Ammanabrolu

6. Maremma - Vasepallepadu

6. Narasaraopet Taluq

1. Poleramma - Gorijavolu
   Purushottapatnam
   Timmapuram
   Ameena Saheb Palem
   Gonepudi
   Jonnathali
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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**7. Vinukonda Taluq**

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**8. Palnad Taluq**

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8. Addanki Nancharamma - Gamalapadu
   Karalapadu
   Dachepalli
   Tangeda

9. Mutyalamma - Kesanapalle

10. Palnati Veerulu,
    Veera silalu - Karempudi

11. Sarangadhareswara - Madinapadu

12. Kota Satemma - Kotta Pullareddipuram

9. Sattenapalli Taluq

1. Gangamma - Orvakallu

2. Tirupatamma - Thalluru

3. Perantalamma - Gudipudi

4. Poleramma - Gundluru

5. Addankamma - Thondapi

Fairs & Festivals of Hyderabad District

Town Group:

1. Yellamma - Golconda Fort

2. Pochamma - Somasundaram Street (Secunderabad)

3. Dokkalamma - Shivajinagar (Secunderabad)

4. Andalamma - Shivajinagar (Secunderabad)
### 2. Medchal Taluq

1. Mallanna - Nootankal  
   Dommara Pochampalle

2. Pochamma - Suraram  
   Bahadurpalle  
   Kowkur

3. Mahankalamma - Kowkur  
   Mahadevpur

### 3. Hyderabad East Taluq

1. Mallanna - Munuganoor

### 4. Ibrahimpatnam Taluq

1. Ambavayamma - Golluru

2. Pochamma - Nagaram  
   Nandipalle  
   Arsiguda h/o Mankhal  
   Kappapahad

3. Mammayi - Mangalpalle
4. Polkamma - Polkampalle
5. Somanna - Manthangoud
6. Yellamma - Bodakonda
7. Mallanna - Japal

5. Hyderabad West Taluq

1. Chintalamma - Moosapet
2. Pochamma - Narsingi
3. Gandi Mysamma - Gandipet

6. Pargi Taluq

1. Eadamma - Roopkhanpet

Naskal

2. Mysamma - Badlapur

Brahmanapalle
Badampalle
Butla Chandaram
Mallepalle
Dongayenkelle
Kanmankalwa
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<td>Dadapur</td>
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### 7. Tandur Taluq

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Jalalpur
Marepalle
Jangaon
Devanoor
Nagsamandar

2. Bakkappa - Bopanwaram
3. Bhavani Yellamma - Kothlapur Buzurg

Yallal

4. Boranamma - Bagaipalle
5. Yellamma - Muddaipet

8. Vicarabad Taluq

1. Bakkappa - Buchampalle
2. Peddamma - Phullmamidi

Yellakonda

Fairs & Festivals of Krishna District

1. Bandar Taluq

1. Gogulamma - Jinjeru
2. Maremma - Jinjeru
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<td>Pedana</td>
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**2. Divi Taluq**

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**3. Gannavaram Taluq**

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3. Rangamma - Telaprolu
4. Buchamma - Mudunur
5. Veeramma - Vuyyur
6. Nancharamma - Vuyyur

4. Vijayawada Taluq

1. Ganganamma - Venkatapuram
   Nidamanuru
2. Ankamma - Cheemalapadu
   Ramavarappadu
3. Achamma - Kavulur
4. Papaiah - Kavulur
5. Tirupatamma - Kanuru
   Tenneru

5. Nandigama

1. Muthyalamma - Gummadidullu
   Pochampalli
   Kodaratikallu
2. Tirupatamma - Penuganchiprolu
3. Ankamma - Jayanthi
   Veladi
   Muppalla

4. Alivelamma - Chandarlapadu

5. Nukanamma - Chintalapadu

6. Perantallamma - Lingalapadu

7. Gantalamma

8. Poliramma - Ganiatkuru

9. Ganganamma

6. Tiruvuru Taluq

1. Mutyalamma - Vutukuru
   Akkapalem
   Konduru
   Polisettipadu
   Gollamandala
   Madhavaram (east)
   Muchinapalle

2. Ankamma - Kothapalle h/ochina Konisa
   Munukulla
   Madhavaram (east)
3. Malachamma - Kothapalle h/o China Konira

4. Peddamma - Raghavapuram h/o Reddygudem

7. Gudivada Taluq

1. Putlamma - Janardhanapuram

2. Ganganamma - Parnasa h/o Moturu

3. Veeramma - Mamidikolla

8. Kaikalur Taluq

1. Peddintamma - Kolletikota

Fairs & Festivals of Nizamabad District

1. Armur Taluq

1. Mallanna - Ratnapur

Nagapur

Ankapur
### 2. Kamareddy Taluq

1. Uradamma - Sarampalle  
2. Pochamma - Kachapur  
3. Mallanna - Devunipalle  
4. Gangamma - Jangampalle  

### 3. Yellareddy Taluq

1. Mathadi Pochamma - Lingampet  
   Shetpalle  
   Sangareddy  
2. Nallapochamma - Chionur  
   Nagareddipet  
3. Pochamma - Gopalpet  

### 4. Banswada Taluq

1. Mathadi Pochamma - Nachpalle  
   Borlam  
2. Pochamma - Konapur  
3. Musamma - Durki  
4. Arayal Mysamma - Wajidnagar
5. Nalla Pochamma - Tirumalapur
   Peddannaram
   Vaddepalle

6. Yellamma - Achampet
   Arepalle

5. Madnur Sub- Taluq

1. Mysamma - Lachan
2. Mathadi Pochamma - China Takadpalle

6. Bodhan Taluq

1. Gajjalamma - Ambam
2. Lingamayya - Pothangal

Fairs & Festivals of Medak District

1. Sangareddy Taluq

1. Pochamma - Masanpalle
   Khambalpalle
   Munderunipalle
   Pashamailaram
   Ghanpur
   Poti
2. Durgamma - Kondapur
   Sangareddy
   Chitkul
   Sadasivpet

3. Chitramma - Kancharlaguda

4. Mallanna - Sultanepur
   Pocharam
   Kardanur

5. Mylaram Mallanna - Manmole

6. Somanna - Manmole

2. Zahirabad Taluq

1. Mallamma - Raipalle

2. Urdamma - Mannapur

3. Mallanna - Bilalpur

3. Narayankhed Taluq

1. Badrappa - Kalher

2. Eramma - Raparthy

3. Pochamama - Borancha
   Mangalpet
   Raparthy
4. Yellamma - Ryakal
5. Mysamma - Mangalpet

4. Andole Taluq

1. Pochamma - Hasan Mohammedpalle
   Ellupet
2. Mathadi Pochamma - Kodpak
   Borlam

5. Narsapur Taluq

1. Pochamma - Chilapuchedu
   Devalpalle
   Muturajupalle
   Siripuram
   Nastipur
   Imamnagar
   Royyapalle
   Venkatepuram
   Madharam
2. Maisamma - Siripuram
3. Mallanna - Yellamaguda
   Solkapalle
   Gollapalle
   Ratnapur
   Sadullanagar

4. Gattu Mallanna - Ootla

5. Nalla Pochama - Thunki

6. Beerappa - Pedda Gottimukkala

7. Durgamma - Wailal
   Madharam

6. Medak Taluq

1. Pochamma - Rajpet
   Burugupalle
   Pathur
   Asulapalle
   Sangaipet
   Yengandla
   Rajpalle
   Komtoor
2. Durgamma - Burugupalle
   Rampur
   Rajpalle
   Khajapur
   Manepalle
   Bonal

3. Nalla Pochamma - Burrigupalle
   Medak
   Bhopatpur

4. Mathadipochamma - Burugupalle

5. Chitragutta Mysamma - Gangapur

6. Mallanna - Rayalamdugu
   Chityal
   Yelduathi
   Ramanyampet
   Narlapur
   Komatpalle
   Masaipe

7. Mutyalamma - Sivaipalle

7. Gajwel Taluq

1. Posamma - Daolapur

2. Yellamma - Singannaguda
8. Siddipet Taluq

1. Mallanna - Kammaripalle
   Jangapalle

2. Pochamma

3. Mysamma

4. Yellamma - Dommat

5. Durgamma

Fairs & Festivals of Nellore District

1. Nellore Taluq

1. Ledotamma - Survepalle

2. Poturaju - Bandepalle

3. Kannetamamma - Molluru

4. Molaka Poleramma - Krishnapatnam

2. Gudur Taluq

1. Poleramma - Mekanuru

2. Nagarapamma - Vakadu

3. Mutyalamma - Kanupuru (east)
3. Sullurpet Taluq

1. Naguraiah - Gandangidibba
2. Ankamma - Annamedu
3. Poleramma - Annamedu
   Singanalathuru
   Sullurpet
   Gollalamulu
4. Mahalakshamma - Marlapalle
5. Masthanaiah - Naidupeta
6. Allemma - Pudur
7. Gangamma - Singanalathuru
   Uggumudi
   Sullurpet
8. Warthuramma - Warathur (north)
9. Yellamma - Aruru
   Kadapatra
10. Manikatlamma - Tadimede
11. Veerlaiah
   Veerlamma
   Kalluru
12. Suramma - Surapa Agraharam
13. Kamakshamma - Kotapoluru
14. Ankalamma - Sullurpet
   Damaraya
15. Chengalamma - Sullurpet
### 4. Venkatagiri Taluq

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5. Rapur Taluq

1. Poleramma - Ramasagaram

6. Atmakur Taluq

1. Poleramma - Chintalapalem
   Pongur Kandrika

2. Pateethamma, Achamma - Pongur Kandrika

3. Perumallamma - Pathapadu

7. Udayagiri Taluq

1. Poleramma - Pabbuletipalle
   China nagampalle
   Bodasiddayyepalle
   Chowdepalle
   Utukuru
   Yerukollu
   Duttaluru
   Pallavolu
   Allampadu
   Jangalapalle
2. Ankalamma - Pabbuletipalle
Chinese nagampalle
Bodasiddayyepalle
Krishnampalle
Gottigundala
Chowdepalle
Gudinarava
Appasamudram

3. Durgamma - Gundupalle

4. Easwaramma - Ayyavaripalle

5. Gramadevata - Kondayapalem
Viruvur
Papannagaripalle
Krishnamrajupalle
Mohammedapuram
Kurapayanipalle

6. Ankamma - Turakapalle
Turpur Terraballe
Pallavolu
Allampadu
Jangalapalle

7. Patitamma - Brahmeswaram
Lakshmipuram
8. Nandyalamma - Mandallapalle
9. Mahalaxmamma - Appasamudram

Singanapalle
Pallavolu

10. Eluramma

Poturaju

Mutyalamma Pallavolu
Peddamma
Gangamma

11. Chowdamma - Jangalapalle

8. Kanigiri Taluq & Podili

1. Akkamma - Kammapadu
2. Gangamma - Vengalapuram

Pedarikatla
3. Ankamma - Peda Alavalapadu
4. Kichamma - Gannavaram
5. Poleramma - Gullalamadugu

Pedarikatla

6. Ulleramma

7. Bangaramma Pedarikatla

8. Peddamma
### 9. Darsi

1. Ankamamma - Namassivayapuram
   Darsi
   Chandavaram

2. Poleramma - Turpu Veerayapalem
   Turkapalem
   Darsi
   Vaddipadu
   Boddikurapadu
   Veluguvaripalem

3. Gunti Gangamma - Somavarapadu
   East Gangavaram
   Nagambhotlapalem

### 10. Kandukur

1. Ankamma - Gurrappadia
   Dappalampad
   Vempadu
   Palukuru
   Chavatapalem
   Singgamanenipalle
   Kondareddipalem
   Kandukur
2. Poleramma - Vempadu
   Paletipadu
   Mulaguntepadu
   Palukuru
   Vikkiralapadu
   Narasingolu
   Ramachandrapuram
   Vellatur
   Badevaripalem
   Singamanenipalle
   Kondareddipalem
   Ammavari palem

3. Osuramma - Potlur

4. Nancharamma - Kalavalla

5. Jalamma - Pakala

6. Ulleramma - Chintalapalem

11. Kavali Taluq

1. Poleramma - Zakkepallegudur
12. Kovur

1. Poleramma - Alluru
                        Gogulapalle
                        Vidavalu
2. Poturaju - Beeramgunta
3. Kondalamma - Vavveru
4. Mathamma - Peyyalapalem
5. Puttalamma - Rebale
6. Ankamma - Rebale
                   Inamadugu
                   Vidavalur\textsuperscript{10}

Fairs & Festivals of Warangal District

1. Warangal Taluq

1. Yellamma - Mupparam
2. Sammakka - Agrampad
3. Pochamma - Range Saipet
               Kadipikonda
4. Mallanna - Narayana giri
2. Narsampet

1. Pochamma - Lankepalle
   Chandraipalle
   Itikalapalle
   Pongugodu
   Papaipet
   Gundrepalle
   Nakkonda
   Rajampalle\textsuperscript{11}

These were the local deities of the districts, not only the Chenchus worshipped but also the Hindus and neighbouring people.

The daily struggle of finding sufficient food in order to keep body and soul together allows the Chenchu little time to philosophise on his place in this world and his fate when this life draws to its inevitable conclusion. Just as he never wonders how the world and human race came into being, so he does not give much thought to the problem of what will become of him after death. But inspite of this apparent indifference he never doubts that a part of him, which we may call the soul, survives the decay of his body and continues to exist in unknown regions and circumstances with which he is not familiar. This part of man which survives death is called by the Chenchu his \textit{jiv} and he believes that as the \textit{jiv} came from god into the unborn child, so
it returns to god when life in the body is extinct. The Chenchu simply says ‘sami’, but when he expressed for a specification he declared that it is Bhagavantaru, from whom the \emph{jiv} comes and to whom it returns. He is entirely vague as to the fate which Bhagavantalu allots to the \emph{jiv} of the departed, but believes that the \emph{jiv} can maintain some contact with its living relations and the places where it used to live.

Even before death the \emph{jiv} is able to leave the body, and dreams are explained as experiences of the \emph{jiv} who wanders about while a man sleeps. During serious illness too the \emph{jiv} leaves the body, and then the patient becomes unconscious, but if the recovery sets in the \emph{jiv} returns. Only with death does the separation becomes final and then the \emph{jiv} goes to Bhagavantaru. The Chenchus have no conception of any ‘journey of the dead’, but vaguely believes that a man’s fate in the next world is determined by the actions in this life. The funeral ceremonies and the subsequent attitude to the dead could perhaps be taken as expressions of that man has more than one soul or that his spiritual substance splits at death into several parts, but it is certainly not consciously held by the Chenchus, who experience no difficult in assuming that the \emph{jiv} of a dead man goes to Bhagavantaru and yet in need of the food placed on his grave. It will be remembered that during the memorial ceremony a parcel of rice is put down on the path to the burial ground and another parcel is left on the grave itself. Some say that if the food is eaten immediately by crows it is a sign that the deceased was a good person and will in future help his relatives, while if the food is untouched no help should be expected from his \emph{jiv}.
If a dead man turns into dayam he haunts the house in which he lived, produces strange noises among the cooking pots, and overthrows the baskets.

He is then a great danger to his kinsmen, for if a child is born at this time, he will destroy it, and in certain cases he will even try to abduct adults, who will get pains in their arms and legs. The only remedy is to seek the help of a man well-versed in dealing with dayam, and he will pray to Garelamaisamma to banish the dayam to a place outside the village where he can do no harm. The haunted house is then deserted for a few days, but reoccupied when the dayam is thought to have been finally driven away.

It is remarkable, that although Bhagavantaru is responsible for the existence of dayam, it is Garelamaisamma who is invoked to banish them from the houses of their Kinsmen. Whereas a deity of this early Garelamaisamma is thought to be more concerned with the ghosts roaming near human habitations, than Bahgavantaru who lives far away in the sky.

No connection between the temporary incarnation of a jiv in a particular animal and the deeds of the deceased in this life is assumed by the Chenchus, and they do not regard transformation into crow or kite as punishment for any particular crime. Neither is the manner of death believed to have any influence on the jiv’s future fate, and the Chenchu does not consider a violent death unlucky or fraught with magical dangers for the surviving kinsmen. The funeral ceremonies are therefore
performed as usual. The Chenchus say that the reincarnation of jīv in human shape and with the retention of the memory of the previous life occurred in old times and that they do not know whether nowadays the jīv of the dead can also be reborn.

A very attitude is adopted towards the transformation of a jīv into dayam. This represents not only a menace to the kinsmen of his evil deeds during this life.

The Chenchus believe that the immediate cause for the jīv’s transformation into a dayam is Bhagavantaru’s refusal to accept the jīv into his abode, which thus condemns the soul to roam the vicinity of its former home.

The souls of the departed sometimes visit their relatives in dreams and talk to them either or only stand nearby. The day after a Chenchu has had such dream he will try to procure some saffron, and with this he will draw a rough figure of a man, called Pedra, on the house floor and will prepare some food and place it in front of the figure.

The Chenchus definitely believe that their departed relatives with to be remembered that they will help those who think of them and give offerings of food. If a man does not think of his dead relatives that they will make him ill. A food offering quickly appeases the angry jīv and his forgetful kensmen is consequently restored to health.
The Chenchu’s attitude to the souls of the departed is one of the moderate reverence and in cases of near relatives naturally also of affection, but there is no fear of the dead and the places of burial or burning are not shunned as places of danger. Although the jiv of a disgruntled relative may occasionally cause sickness, terror of ghosts or of places they haunt rarely disturbs the sober realistic Chenchu.\textsuperscript{12}

Few Chenchus are experts in divination, an art which is practiced in various circumstances. The most important requisite is an oral, smooth river pebble called \textit{Shakunam rai}, which is a family possession and handed down from father to son. Not all Chenchus own such stones, but there are, as a rule, more than one in each village.

Both men and women may act as diviners, but no special social status is attached to those proficient in the art, nor is the diviner paid for his services; usually he receives a share in the food offered to the deity after the patient has recovered.

Divination is employed for no other purposes than the curing of sickness or the speeding of delivery; the Chenchu does not resort to divination when embarking on such enterprises as the conclusion of a marriage or shifting of a village.

The belief in omens is practically non-existent among Chenchus, and no particular day or time is thought luckier than any other.
Chenchus do not attach undue importance to dreams but when they wake in the morning, they sometimes relate their dreams to each other and discuss whether the dream may be lucky or unlucky. To dream of a wedding is unlucky considered, while dreaming of the funeral of a friend or kinsman is believed to foretell fortunate events.  

The continuous contact with Hinduism has not unnaturally had an effect on the religious ideas of the village Chenchus, although the influence is in no way uniform and varies from village to village. The Chenchus of Mananur and Mulkamavidi has given up the cult of Garelamaisama for the worship of Hindu deities Lingamaya, Potsamma, Potraj and Elamma, and they also make puja for Hanuman. But is Jangamreddipalli the Chenchus still pray to Garelamaisamma and they declared that Garelamaisamma accompanies them to the jungle whenever they go to gather roots and fruits.

In Tirmalapur, Garelamaisamma is not worshipped while puja is made for Lingamaya, Peddamma and Vidamma. The cult of Ellamma, who has a small temple near Tirmalapur, has been adopted by the Chenchus, but they do not participate in the weekly puja by the Hindus.

The Chenchus of Upnotla, declared that Garelamaisamma and Lingamaya are the greatest gods, and that whenever an exceptional amount of food falls into their hands they give an offering to Garelamaisamma.
In plains villages such as Kondanagol, and Balmor, Garelamaisamma is still occasionally propitiated, though Lingamaya, Ellamma, Vidamma and Potsamma are seen to be more prominent in Chenchu minds, while in Lingal the Chenchus seem to have forgotten even the name of Garelamaisamma.

Thus it would seem that among the village Chenchus the cult of Garelamaisamma is on the decline, for as a deity mainly connected with jungle life she is naturally losing importance in the changing milieu, where the gods and godlings of rustic Telugu religion are now firmly established. Garelamaisamma is unknown to most Hindus, Bhagavantam, on the other hand, is revered by both Chenchus and Telugu people.14

When we look into the religion and the deities of the Chenchus of Madras Presidency, the most prominent deities are Garelamaisamma, Lingamaya and Bhagavantararu, while occasionally Amba Devi, Vidamma and Potsamma are also worshipped. When a hunter kills an animal he cuts out the liver, roasts it on the spot and offers a piece to Garelamaisamma with a prayer of thanks for future success. The Chenchus of Nagalute tells that Garelamaisama lives in the jungle.

Where there are Hindu shrines the Chenchus participate in the worship of the local deities and the Chenchus of Srisailam have learnt to reverse Siva and Lingam. Here the influence of the temple Brahmins appears to be so strong that the Chenchus have entirely given up the cult of Garelamaisamma.15
REFERENCES


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