CHAPTER – 2

SOCIO – CULTURAL CONDITIONS

The tribal group is an ethnic entity. India is among the few nations of the world noted for its tribal concentration. According to 1981 census, the tribals in India account for 7.18% of the total population or approximately one tribesman for every seventeen Indians. About 80 per cent of them live in remote forest areas and hill tracks without any access to modern socio-economic inputs. The tribal groups number about 426 out of which 72 groups or about 1.4 million are identified as primitive people. Although there are ethnographic variations in terms of their ‘anthropological identity’ most of them share certain common characteristics:

Nature of rurality,
Speciality of illiteracy,
Relative isolation,
Economic backwardness and
Social deprivation.¹

One very predominant characteristic of a tribal group is its ethnicity. It is today in wide currency and is used to describe a variety of collectivities. There is universal agreement that its connotes a combination of biological (racial) and cultural characteristics. The ethnic character of a tribal group is closely related to its class or
caste (sanskritic) structure. The state is also a strong determinant in the process of class formation among the tribals. The tribal stratification like any other social stratification means social inequality.

The members of a tribal group share a common ethnicity. The ethnicity, too, has its own historiography. It is like a cultural stream which passes from generation to generation. There is some alteration in the structure of ethnicity which provides identity to a particular group. The practice of polygamy as the tradition of living in scattered villages is the ethnic trait of tribal group. It provides a special identity to the group. If the ethic traits are lost in the process of transformation it is possible that the group loses its identity. The problems, therefore, with the tribal groups of the country is to retain their ethnic identity on one hand and on the other, to integrate themselves in the wider national society by accepting technological, secular, democratic and socialistic social order. Ethnicity thus is related to state and political ideology. In fact, the tribal ethnicity has a close linkage with the state and its various developmental packages. In other words, the tribe or its ethnicity has its identification with the government policy of development, and the party ideology elitist or socialistic – determines to a great extent the continuity or rejection of tribal ethnicity.²

During the Paleolithic Age, the vast forests and park-lands of the South India were inhabited by bands of nomadic people, who lived by hunting and the gathering of wild fruits, tubers and edible roots. The only traces left by these early food
gatherers are crude stone implements found on the surface of many party of the Deccan, in some isolated parts of the subcontinent, small groups of aboriginals persisted until modern times in a way of life which outwardly had changed very little since Stone Age.

The Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh are one of these ethnic splinter groups, which were left behind by the material advance of the great majority of the South Indian population. Their present habitat was confined or concentrated to the rocky hills and forested plateau of the Nallamala Range, extending on both sides of the Krishna River. A majority of them are concentrated in the districts of Guntur, Prakasam, Kurnool and Mahbubnagar. According to the 1981 census of India, their population was 2,84,34. until 1947 Krishna river formed the border between the princely state of Hyderabad, officially known as His Exalted Highness the Nizam’s Dominions, and the Madras Presidency of British India. At that time Chenchus were found both in Hyderabad and in British territories, but today their entire habitat lies within the state of Andhra Pradesh, which contains the overwhelming majority of the speakers of the Dravidian tongue of Telugu, the language also spoken by the Chenchus.

Although, in the census of 1971 more than 18,000 Chenchus were enumerated, only a few hundred persist today in their traditional life-style as semi-nomadic forest dwellers.
Presently, the Chenchus live in permanent settlements known as gudem or pentas comprising clusters of huts scattered over a wide area. The migrant people of the plains live adjacent to the villages.

The appellation ‘Chenchu’ usually applies to people who have traditionally inhabited the Nallamalai forests leading to nomadic hunting and gathering way of life. A few groups with cognate appellations like

Chenchu Dasari
Yanadi Chenchu
Ura Chenchu
Telugu Chenchu
Koya Chenchu
Krishna Chenchu

Bonta Chenchu also exist. However these groups have n linkages with the Chenchus of Nallamala. Sometimes the latter, to distinguish their cultural identity, call themselves as Konda (Hill) Chenchus or Adavi (Jungle) Chenchus. The jungle Chenchus as social group comprises loosely organized, exogamous sub-groups known as kulam or intiperce (Surname). About 45 groups are seen distributed in the Nallamala and its adjoining areas. The members of each kulam proclaim that they are all related as either brothers or sisters or as sons and daughters of father. But no reference is explicitly made as to their descent from a common ancestor. The siblings
tend to identify with the relatives of one’s wife, sister’s husband, married daughter or maternal relatives. The major function of *kulam* is to regulate marital relations with other *kulams*. The *kulam* is a patrilineal group to the extent that the name of the *kulam* is passed on in the male line, the girls after marriage, adopt the name of their husband’s *kulam*. However, *kulam* is not strictly unilineal descent group as descent is reckoned bilaterally. Originally each *kulam* group among the Chenchu might have been a territorial group or a band owning a tract of land and owing to the practice of local exogamy and optional residential rules, the members of each group spread into the territories of the neighbouring groups.\(^8\)

Chenchus are egocentric groups which are roughly known as *gumpus*. Each represented by a cluster of huts (sometimes 2 or 3) comprising a set of kindred of both male and female lines. Each settlement has 3 to 4 *gumpus*. The members of the gumpu help each other in day-to-day activities sharing goods and services. Residence is virilocal or uxorilocal and sometimes neo-local.\(^9\)

Chenchus are an aboriginal tribe and are perhaps the oldest inhabitants of the Nallamalas of Kurnool district. Chenchus existence in this part even in 1694A.D. when Aurangzeb’s son Muazzam passed through this district, is recorded. Once a plundering and menacing tribe, they have been gradually setting down as agriculturists. Some others engaged themselves pursuits as labourers also. They live in small communities called *Gudems* which are generally placed near the plains and
villages. The huts are either in the shape of beehives or oblong with sloping roof. They speak Telugu in a rough and peculiar tone.\textsuperscript{10}

Chenchus inhabit the Nallamala off shoot in the upland taluks of Guntur district and live on roots, honey, wild fruits and the small crops they raise.\textsuperscript{11}

The Chenchus lived in the jungles between the Cuddapah district and Bellary. In habits they are finer race of men. They are daring criminals and have but little regard for human life. \textsuperscript{12}

In Karimnagar district, Chenchus were fifty in number in 1961. out of this 26 are males and the remaining 24 are females.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\textbf{1961} & \textbf{Chenchus – total} & \textbf{male} & \textbf{female} \\
& 50 & 26 & 24 \textsuperscript{13}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

In Warangal district, Chenchu also form a numerically important tribe along with gond, Koyas, Konda Reddis, and Kolams. Chenchus have adopted the customs of higher Telugu castes, as they have influenced by these Telugu populations. And have assimilated a good deal more of rural Telugu culture. The old tribal customs and beliefs are still the backbone of their cultural life.
The Chenchus are the primitive and backward tribe in the district of Prakasam. They are short in stature with complexion varying from dark-brown to black. They have rather coarse and frizzy hair high and prominent cheek bones, broad noses with spreading nostrils and black and piercing eyes. They are numerous in Markapur division and live chiefly in the Nallamalas. They have less aptitude for agriculture and roam about the hills and daks in the Nallamala forests with their women. They are good hunters and archers. They kill animals even from a distance with their arrows, the ends of which are smeared with poison. They swallow gum mixed in butter milk. Their common food is squirrels but their favourite food comprises rabbits and deers. They also eat roots and fruits available in the forest. Hunting is part of their daily activity. They work for wages in forests and collect minor forest produce like soap nut, Moduga and Tunki (beedi) leaves, tamarind and myrobalans. They are experts in collecting honey and cutting bamboos. They worship Ankalamma, Potaraju, Venkateswara, Narasimha of Ahobilam, and Mallikarjuna of Srisailam. There are 36 Chenchu villages scattered over the Nallamal range and 1300 families are estimated to live in them.

They normally take the herbal curing and even resort to sterilisation of their women by means of herbs.
Regarding their dress, the males wear scanty cloths, that is, a piece of cloth called *Gochi*.

The Chenchu live in nuclear families in beehive shaped with wattle walls. They observe clan exogamy and practice monogamy though polygamy was not prohibited among them. Young men and women are allowed to choose their life partners, and the elders perform their marriages. During the wedding, they indulge in drinking liquor and arrack prepared by themselves. A Chenchu never leaves his wife alone and takes her with him even on his hunting expeditions. In their tribe if a man dies, his wife lives with her husbands brother.\(^{15}\)

The Chenchus are the most numerous tribes in the district of Mahbubnagar living in their own settlements called ‘Pentas’. They speak Telugu with an intonation of their own. A few Urdu words are also current among them. Even though they are no longer such wandering tribes and have taken to more steadfast pursuits, nevertheless, they still retain something of their peripatetic pattern of life. The Chenchus live in forest regions of Amarabad plateau in Mahabubnagar district and sustain on fruits, roots, honey and wild gum. A very large number of Chenchus have given up their abode in the hills and are pursuing the occupation of farming in the plains. In most villages there are Chenchus families who own buffaloes, cows and goats. Dogs are their pet animals. Some had taken to cattle breeding.
The Chenchus have not yet emerged fully from the stage of hunting and collecting. In every Chenchus village community there is a headman who generally settles their disputes but has no power to punish or fine any member of the community. Marriage among the Chenchus is mostly monogamous and arranged by parents or relations. Haimendorf says, “although there is a definite preference for marrying girls from families related either by blood or previous alliance, theoretically a man may marry any Chenchu girl however distant her home village, provided she is not of his own exogamous unit.” When a boy begins to grow a moustache his parents looks for a suitable girl. The proper ceremonies are performed only in those cases where both families welcome the marriage. On the wedding day the bridegroom, his relatives and the peddamanishi’ of his village set out with the presents for the bride and her mother. The bridegroom hands over a saree and a ‘choli’ (blouse) for the bride and a choli for her mother. The bride dressed in her new saree is made to sit on a mat beside the bridegroom. The ‘Peddamanishi’ then obtain the consent of the birde and bridegroom. Finally, the end of the bride’s saree is tied to the ‘gosh batta’ of the bridegroom. All bless the couple and shower them with rice. Liquor is handed round, eating ad drinking continue until late at night, and when all are slightly intoxicated they begin to dance.

There are no ceremonies or rites to accompany a Chenchu’s last moments. As soon as life is extinct the corpse is washed and wrapped in the deceased own cloth.
The dead are either buried or burnt. No deity is invoked during the funeral nor is any formal period of pollution observed involving the observance of tattoos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1961</th>
<th>Chenchus –</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4611</td>
<td>2333</td>
<td>2278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 1961**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Chenchus –</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahbubnagar</td>
<td>4611</td>
<td>2333</td>
<td>2278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warangal</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimnagar</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The northern most extension of the Nallamala Hills is generally known as the Amrabad Plateau. It lies between 16° and 16° 30´ north latitude and 78° 30´ and 79° 15´ east longitude. The whole of the plateau belongs to the Mahbubnagar District, but a few scattered Chenchus live on the other side of the Dindi River in the District of Nalgonda.

In the north the plateau, rises steeply about 800 feet over the plains and in the south and east drops precipitously into the valley of the Kistna River. The country of
the Nallamala Ranges south of the river is identical with that of the Amrabad Plateau and is inhabited by the Chenchus with whom those of Hyderabad stand in close and constant contact.

The Amrabad Plateau (Mahbubnagar) falls naturally into two definite parts: the lower ledge to the north-east with an elevation of about 2000 feet, which slopes eastwards to the Dindi River, and the higher ranges to the south-west averaging 2500 feet. On the lower ledge, where there are large cultivated areas, lie Amrabad, Mananur and other villages inhabited by populations resembling those of the villages of the plains with only here and there small hamlets of Chenchus. The higher ranges are a pure forest area and almost inhabited by Chenchus. The Krishna River, however, which has forced its way from east to west through the Nallamala Hills carries water throughout the year. The climate of the Amrabad Plateau is essentially the same as that of the whole of the central Deccan. There is a hot season which lasts from the middle of February to the end of May, and evening the highest places the temperature rises to about 102º, but in the contrast to the plains there are light breezes and the nights are generally cool.17

In general character the Chenchu country is a typical refuge area of a tribe of primitive hunters and collectors. The poor quality of the soil on the higher ranges offers little to the cultivator and thus it is that these forests have remained so long immune from the incursions of the expansive agricultural population of the plains,
while yet affording sufficient livelihood to a people dependent on the produce of the woods.

On the higher ranges between 1500 and 2800 feet, which forms the milieu of the Chenchus, the rainfall is heavier and the vegetation consequently of a richer type. *Tamrindus Indica* and various species of ficus mainly Ficus Bengalensis, as well as *Mangifera Indica* grow near village sites and in the vicinity of water.

A characteristic feature of the forest of the higher regions is the great profusion of climbers such as *Bauhinia Vahii, Vitis Latifolia, Combretum Ovalifolium* and *Cryptolepis Buchanani*. In sheltered places and particularly near the courses of streams, bamboos frequently intermixed with trees, grows in abundance.

Such is the country of the Chenchus in the cold weather a pleasant parkland, in the rains a luxurious jungle, and in the hot weather, an arid, sun-baked desert.

There are considerable number of bears, panthers, hyenas, wild cats and wild dogs, and on the southern side of the plateau towards the Krishna, as well as in the vicinity of Mananur, tigers are constantly reported of these animals it is the bear the Chenchu considers most dangerous to man, while the panther causes most damage to his young stock. Sambar, spotted deer, wild goat, milgai, four-horned antelope and wild pig are hunted by the Chenchus.
As long as the Chenchus remained the only inhabitants of the upper part of the Amrabd Plateau, their environment suffered no artificial change.  

In general the Chenchu is of slender, medium stature, the average height of the men being 163 cm. and though there are many men under 155 cm. the colour of the skin varies from dark black-brown to a rich copper colour. The eyes are generally brown and sometimes almost black. The strong coarse hair is wavy or curly.

The extreme primitiveness of physical type found among the Chenchus tallies with the basic characterists of Chenchu culture. The physique of the Chenchu is locally believed to be extremely poor, but such generalization is entirely unjustified. The average Chenchu man and woman is strong and well – built.

In his village the Chenchu has always vessels and bowls from which to drink and during the seasons of the year when large leaves are available, these are employed as leaf cups, but failing he drinks from a pool or stream by scooping up the water in his cupped palms or kneels down. Solid food is invariably eaten with the fingers.

In the performance of bodily functions Chenchus do not observe much privacy and although women are slightly more modest. Every morning they rinse the mouth and rub the teeth with a forefinger or a small twig often applying powdered charred wood and even gargling the mouth and throat. Hands are washed in the morning, and
before partaking of food. This is the normal routine. On coming to a stream or tank, a Chenchu often washes thoroughly, standing on a rock and splashing the water over his back and head.

Certainly a few pieces of cloth which the Chenchu wraps round his body are seldom very clean. The Chenchus near the tank of Borama cheruvu frequently washed their cloths, beating them in the usual Indian manner on a stone, and in other villages clothes are washed in the same spring or well which provides the water for household purposes. Naturally cleanliness varies greatly from individual to individual, from village to village and season to season, and although wrapt in the most filthy rags can be encountered, the conditions of their jungle life, the continual contact with the soil, and the meagerness of the water supply during certain seasons must be taken into account.

It is on the hair, however, that the Chenchu lavishes most attention, washing it at least once a month and if he is rich anointing with ghee to make it smooth and shiny; both the sexes frequently comb the hair with small wooden combs, or prune their tresses with the fingers, while delousing is an almost daily ritual. Most men never cut their hair, but let it grow to its natural length, tying it into a knot on the top or back of the head, or slightly on one side. They use old combings twisted into a cord to bind the knot.
Women part their hair in the centre and twist it into a knot on the nape of the neck, and even those with strongly curled locks succeed in screwing it into a small knot though they find it hard to make it appear straight and tidy. A piece of string or a strand of creeper is used to bind women’s hair before the knot is made, but ornaments are never worn in the hair.

The plains people’s customs of crapping children’s heads is now widely adopted by the Chenchus of the plateau while a child is about two years old the head is shaved for the first time hair of this first cutting is thrown into a stream or pond with an offering to the water goddess, but later no care is taken in disposing of the hair.

A few Chenchu women are tattooed on the forehead and at the corner of the eyes, but tattooing is not a general practice among the Chenchus.

At first sight the Chenchus will hardly rank among the prepossessing or handsome primitive races of India. But those who get to know them more intimately will find many individuals who are definitely attractive to the observer brought up with other standards of aesthetic feeling. Very beautiful are the little, excellently modeled bodies of some men, and their energetic faces with the frank smile that shows their magnificent teeth make a very strong appeal; some young women have a great deal of charm. A few girls have pretty faces, with regular features and a straight narrow nose, but the young women of the more primitive type can also be very
attractive with their bright expressions and their radiant smile and animated ways of talking.¹⁹

In ancient times Chenchus clad themselves in jungle leaves and this type of dress lingers still in the memory of the present generation, is still occasionally donned at dances, and survives in a phase of the marriage ritual. Leaf-clad Chenchus have been mentioned by early observes, Edgar Thurston writing of the Chenchus of Madras says that “leafy garments have been replaced by white loin – clothes and some of the women have adopted the ravike in imitation of the female costumes of the plains. Today men and women wear clothes and ornaments bought from bazaars or wandering traders and with the growing intercourse between jungle and plains folk stimulating the demand, these new commodities constitute a continual drain on an economy which is ill-suited to any but the smallest cash expenditure. Leaves were certainly not only cheaper but probably more hygienic than cotton cloth which is so rarely changed and when drenched with rain is allowed to dry on the body.

Today the everyday dress of the Chenchus man consists of a waist-string (molatadu) made of twisted fibre and a small piece of cotton cloth (gosh batta). When it is cold, the Chenchu wraps himself in a cotton cloth and this he uses alternatively twisted round the head as a turban, but some men possess two cloths, a body cloth (pei batta) and a turban (rumal batta). Younger men twist narrow lengths of cloth (kash-koka) round their waists like a cummerbund when they go visiting or
attend dances or ceremonies such as marriages and these are generally white with fringed and coloured ends.

Many men have broad leather belts in which to stick their knives and these generally have small pouches attached, though separate leather pouches are sometimes worn slung over the shoulder on a leather thong. Both these articles the Chenchu buys when he has the means from the Madigas (cobblers) of the plains.

Some merchants have recently included shirts among the wares which they trade to the Chenchus, but these have not become popular. Many men cannot afford such a luxury and those who can do not seem over-anxious to add this new item to their dress. Dark blue appears to be the colour most worn, but the chenches say that it is not a question of choice for they can only buy what the merchant will bring and the trader consider the colour dark blue most suitable for jungle folk.

Such is the meager outfit of the Chenchu man, who is still happiest going about his daily work with the sun on the naked skin, for whom the gosh batta and molatadu are the most general wear and a few simple rings the only ornaments. In the helix and lobe of the ears the Chenchu sometimes wears small rings of brass, white metal or silver, but near the kistra it is fashionable to hang fine chai pendants loaded with coloured glass in the lobe of one ear. Some men wear copper spiral finger rings as talismans against angry bees in the belief that they have the power to prevent bee slings from swelling.
Chenchu women have adopted the clothes of the neighbouring peasantry. They wear a *choli* or bodice, a saree, and under the saree a short, generally rather ragged piece of cloth, which they keep on when bathing.

The saree is worn rather short, reaching only half-way between knee and ankle, and women of the plateau never gird it between the legs like the agricultural workers of the plains and seldom drape it in folds in front like the women of the higher castes; they wrap it round the hips and tuck the end in at the waist. On ceremonial occasions at weddings and dancing parties during the mohura flower season, girls and young women dress in bright coloured full length saree, but for daily wear it is only those women in frequent contact with the Madras Chenchus or those of the plains, who have perhaps been born in these more civilized localities, who wear the ankle length saree with the end over the head.

Perhaps women on the plateau are too poor to affect the fuller fashion, for they own at the most one or two sarees, and these are continually mutilated by the demands of husbands, brothers and some for *gosh batta*, and sisters and daughters for loin clothes, until there is little left to the woman but a faded length of cloth that goes three or four times round her waist. But for life in the jungle and the digging for roots amongst under growth and thicket this abbreviated garments is more practical than a full ankle length skirt.
Although women’s ornaments are more varied than those of men, they are of little value; poor in quality when compared to those worn in the plains, and poor in quantity when compared to the ornaments of other aboriginal tribes, they are nevertheless treasured by the Chenchus and even the poorest girl has a few strings of beads to hand round her neck and a couple of glass bangles for her wrists. In olden days women made most of their ornaments themselves. During the rain, they collected the oval brown seeds of Karivepaku tree (*Murraya Koenigii*), the thin white seeds called pullipusalu, the green kernels of the kalab fruit, and small black berries scarcely larger than pepper-corns, all of which they dried in the sun, pierced with thorns and strung into necklaces on strands of fibres of jungle creepers. When the men shot a peacock the quills stripped off features and coiled round the neck were worn as collars, while young girls plaited narrow collars of cane (*tiga gazel*) for each other and twisted themselves wristlets and armlets of the flexible tendrils of some of the giant creepers (*pimpa tiga*). Today few of these ornaments are to be seen, and some old women still possess the wild berries necklaces, the young girls infinitely prefer the glass bazaar beads to peacock quills and bracelets of glistening metal to those of twisted cane.

Thus the majority of women wear glass beads of manifold colouring and shape strung in necklets, collars and necklaces. Rich girls and women have many strings, some fitting tightly round the throat, other hanging down, but poor women and those mothers who have bequeathed most of their necklaces to daughters have often to be content with one or two strings.
All women possess bangles, Aluminium and lead bracelets are the most treasured, these are broken circles of metals which a woman wears all her life, even when she is widowed. A well-to-do woman has four, two on each arm, and in addition as many glass-bangles in red, yellow, blue or green as she can collect. Chenchus are practical people and they do not choose the elegant and fragile varieties so often seen in the plains, but select bangles that are fairly solid and will stand a certain amount of head wear. Broad rings of aluminium, copper and silver are also worn on fingers and toes, some women with rings on all fingers except the thumb.

Most women have their ears pierced and wear small rings or studs of various metals in the lobes, and some have the nostrils perforated and wear nose-studs of aluminium, brass or silver. The piercing of the ears is done with the thorn in childhood, and though girls often perform the operation for each other, it is equally often done by the mother. There is no special time or age assigned for the piercing of the ears and nostrils, and it is sometimes carried out before the girls have the necessary ornaments and then the holes are kept open with small splinters of wood.

Small Chenchu children seldom wear clothes, but run about naked with only a few strings of beads round their necks. When they are about five, boys appropriate scraps of close to use as gosh batta and when they are old enough to go visiting on their own they may borrow their father’s kash koka or his rumal, but they seldom acquire cloths of their own till they mature and can buy them for themselves. Girls of
six and seven get skimpy pieces of cloth to wrap round the waist. Often a girl’s first new saree and *choli* (blouse) are those given her at her marriage by her husband, but some parents try to deck out their nature daughter’s in new clothes for the dancing in the mohua flower season. Girls and boys’ ornaments are the exact replicas of those worn by adult women and many a Chenchu acquires jewellery only when a child and as parental gifts, for ornaments are not treated as ceremonial presents to be given on puberty, marriage or child birth. Small bone knives (*gorenka kata*) are made for children by their parents and worn on a string round the neck, to be used for opening nuts before the nails are strong enough for this purpose, and some girls like to wear these knives as ornaments even when they no longer use them.

Chenchu children use flowers as personal ornaments. In hot weather men as well as women adorn their hair knots with yellow flowers of Gmelina arborea or loop the long-stemmed water lily round their shoulder while they bask in the sun after bathing, and in the rains the heads of the small woodland flowers are sometimes suck in nostril or ear-lobes but such flowers are only used when the Chenchu comes across the blossoming in his path. Neither there is any relation between dress or ornament and social status, nor any difference in the attire of the married and unmarried, and if today distinctions are discernible in the apparel of the individual Chenchus these distinctions are solely due to wealth. The Chenchu has borrowed almost everything he wears from the plains people, and his present-day clothes and ornaments have no significance in his own culture.\textsuperscript{20}
There can be few Indian tribes so poor in earthly goods as the Chenchus when moving house, he and his wife can often carry with them all that they possess, but this mobility, certainly advantageous so long as the Chenchu retains his semi-nomadic mode of existence, is gradually disappearing, and with a more settled life and the growing contacts with people of superior material culture with whom he can barter goods of foreign manufacture the number of his possessions is on the increase. Yet his feeling for property is still undeveloped and he seldom holds anything in his keeping which is not of immediate practical use to him in his struggle for existence.\textsuperscript{21}

Chenchus common food is honey, the roots of trees, plants and the flesh of animals caught in hunting. They are exceedingly black with long hair on every part of their bodies and on their heads wore caps made of leaves of trees. Each man had with him unbarbed arrows and a bow for hunting. They live in caverns or under the shady branches of trees.\textsuperscript{22}

Today the Chenchus have learnt to build houses of bamboos and to thatch them with grass, but they have by no means abandoned their nomadic habits and it would be erroneous to suppose that all Chenchus dwell in solidly built houses and permanent settlements throughout the year. Certainly the villages of Sarlapalli, Railet and Pulajelma are inhabited permanently, but in these places the Chenchus are not entirely dependent on the food collected in the forest, for owing to the proximity of the cart-track, the bungalow, and the continual contact with forest officials and contactors, they have many sources of supply and have become to a certain extent
emancipated from Mother Nature. The Chenchu does not regard these migrations as a burdensome necessity, however, but seems to be driven to them by a strong nomadic instinct. For even groups who find sufficient food in the vicinity of their permanent villages will leave their comfortable homes, as the time of the annual migrations approaches, and erect temporary shelters in the jungle.

The whole of the Chenchu area is divided into clearly defined tracts, belonging to the various village communities. Within each tract is one permanent settlement, and it is by name of this that the whole community is known. The permanent village is invariably inhabited during the rains and the greater part of the cold weather, but in January it is frequently deserted either by all or some of the individuals families, which disperse and live in small temporary settlements during the next three or four months. Many of these settlements lie low down on the banks of the Kistna River, but others are hidden in the jungle in places where water and food is assured. Towards the end of March when the corolla of the Mohua flower (*Bassia latifolia*) provide ample food and the raw material for distilling liquor, the Chenchus seek out places when these trees are plentiful and move from the valleys up on to the plateau, either back to their permanent village or to other temporary settlements on the hills.

The functioning of the migratory habits can be shown best by a concrete example of Irla Penta village. Irla Penta lies on the ridge at a height of about 1800 feet, only three and half miles north of the Kistna River. The Peddamanishi or headman, who owns cattle, moves down to the woods on the banks of the Kistna
River, where he and one other family of his clan build temporary houses or shelters on a site called Terkaldari. There they remain for two or three months, but at the time of the mohua season they go back to the hills, either spending a short time at Vakarmamidi Penta, a site on a ridge near Terkaldari, where each of them has a small hut, or return directly to Irla Penta. Three other families of Irla Penta settle six miles upstream on the open bank of the Kistna and a family from Boramacheruvu had joined this group.

They had built no proper shelters, but lived on the rocks near the water, only wedging a few branches between the cracks to protect themselves against the rain and shine. Each family had its own hearth, but except for a few pots and collecting baskets, they had brought no other household goods.

The households of Irla Penta move every January to a site on a narrow rock-ledge over-looking the month of Kampu vagu, a couple of furlongs from the Kistna, where they find sufficient fodder and water for their cattle. At the end of March they shift to Nardi Penta, or a nearby spur, where each family owns a proper house. They too return to Irla Penta at the beginning of the rains.

Although most groups now follow the same migratory routine year after year, their movements are fairly elastic and each family is free in its choice of a camping group for the hot weather.
The annual migrations of the people of Irla Penta have close parallel in other villages. The Chenchus of the neighbouring village of Medimankal follow a system which, for they have two villages with permanent houses for all families namely Medimankal and Sangrigundal, and in addition two subsidiary settlements, Lingabore and Pandibore. Since there is no water in Medimankal during the hot season, the inhabitants move between these alternative village – sites, at times foregathering in Sangrigundal, and at others splitting up into smaller groups living at Pandibore and Lingabore, while some families even cross the Kistna and stay for a time on the other side of the river.

Though these semi-nomadic habits have been best preserved among the Chenchus in the south-west of the plateau, they exist to a lesser extent among those of the Vatellapalli ridge and even some of the Chenchus on the Amrabad ledge are, in spite of their symbiosis with plough cultivating plains people, not really settled, but often move up into the hills at times when various kinds of fruits or the mohua flowers are in season.

It is difficult to determine which aspects influence the Chenchu when selecting a site for a permanent village. Fruit bearing trees and a plenty of mohua is certainly an asset to a locality and though a perennial water supply is an important factor, it is apparently not a decisive one, for both Medimankal and Malapur have no water during the hot season, and at Appapur and Rampur there are times when it becomes extremely scarce. The Chenchu seems to favour equally an open site on the top of a
ridge, with a wide view over the surrounding hills, and one situated in a hollow, well protected by high forest. The people of Boramacheruvu were to the effect that they build their villages in positions from which they can quickly disperse when danger threatens. Perhaps this is a relic of olden days when they lived in the open, alert to every danger, but it may also date from more recent times, when they learnt the advantage of avoiding outsiders. Settlements are never built close to water for fear of the wild animals that come to drink, but in a clearing some distance away; at Sangrigundal, where a cool shady valley with running perennial water would seem to offer an ideal site, the houses stand about three furlongs away on a barren stretch of sheer rock.

Permanent village sites are occupied for periods ranging from ten to fifteen years, but houses may be shifted a few feet when they are rebuilt every two or three years. If disease ravages the village and many deaths occur, a site is often deserted and then the settlement may be rebuilt some distance away or in extreme case completely abandoned.

In march 1940, the average number of houses in a village of the Jungle Chenchus is about six or seven. There is a tendency for the larger villages to split up into smaller settlements situated within a shorter distance of each other; thus we find that Irla Penta, Boramacheruvu and Rampur each comprise two groups of houses while in Sarlapalli there are three.
Chenchu villages on the Upper Plateau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Houses</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irla Penta</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medimankal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boramacheruvu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appapur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rampur</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikit Penta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pullai Palli</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malapur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulajelma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railet Banda</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vatellapalli</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarlapalli</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patur Bayal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timmareddy Palli</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koman Penta</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two definite types can be distinguished among the sites of permanent settlements. In the park – like country of the northern side of the plateau villages such as Sarlapalli, Vatellapalli, Koman Penta and Puljelma are built on level clearings surrounded by tall trees. The layout of these villages does not follow any definite plan, but the houses are generally arranged in a rough crescent, often open to the east,
and there is a tendency for blood relations to build their houses close together, a little apart from other kin-groups. Generally the village consists only of dwelling houses, but in such villages as Vatellepalli which are in constant touch with outsiders there may be an occasional shed for goats and rough stands for fodder.

The other type of site for a permanent village, which predominates in the south-west part of the area, is characterized by the stretches of naked rock on which the houses stand. The Chenchus select these barrer places on which to build these settlements on account of the great advantages they offer during the rains when the water drain rapidly off the slanting rock, leaving both site and foundation clean and dry.

Quite different conditions are taken into consideration when choosing a site for a temporary settlement, for during the hot season the Chenchus seek protection from the sun, favouring sheltered positions in the depth of the forest. But although most ‘Summer Settlements’ lie beneath trees, the Irla Penta camping in the open among the rocks of the Kistna bed would suggest that when other advantages are sufficiently great the Chenchu will forego the comfort of the shady camp. At a time of the year, when food is usually scarce, it is of the greatest importance to live within easy reach of good collecting grounds and the primary motive for the annual migrations is undoubtedly the quest for food. Thus the Chenchu moves from place to place within the Chenchu moves from place to place within the boundary of his
village lands as the fruits in the various regions come into season, leaving each particular tract as food grows scarce.  

**Houses and House-Building:**

The Chenchu builds his permanent house solidly with a circular wattle wall and a conical thatched roof. Generally, this house is rebuilt every two or three years, though much of the old material is incorporated in the new building. The door is made of wattle. Doors are often woven in large bands of alternating green and white weft, 5 or 6 inches deep.

The entrance to the house is generally situated to the right of the centre post, and the door, which opens inwards, stands ajar when the owners are in the village. But when the Chenchu is away from home, he pulls the door to and fasters it by a knot of fibre twine.

To the left of the door stand the pots, bamboo vessels, wooden spoons and grinding stones that are used in the preparation of food. The three stones that serve as the hearth lie to the left of the centre post, while the family takes its food in the space to the right, and against the wall opposite the doorway stand a medley of baskets and brooms. Bows, arrows, milk-chunners, wooden spoons and nit combs are all stuck in the roof thatch, while honey baskets and gourds generally hang from the rafters.
The inside of a Chenchu house is very orderly. The floor is swept twice a day and the ashes are thrown on the rubbish heap. The Chenchus with cattle smear their floors with dung. The dwellings in the temporary settlements are much elaborate and can usually construct in an hour or two. The most solid are the low grass huts (*Pandiri illu*), which in form fall between beehive and cone.

Even simpler than the low, grass huts, are shelters constructed of leafy branches (*Kotam*) which as long as they remain green, provide moderate protection against light showers, but when after sometime the leaves shrivel and dry serve only as screens against the sun.

In most temporary settlements several types of huts and shelters are to be found and in the summer settlements of Boramachruvu there were two grass huts, two square leaf shelters and a rough lean to shed.

There can be no doubt that the primitive leaf shelters, today found only in temporary settlements during the dry season, represent a survival of one of the early types of dwellings, in which the Chenchus must have lived in those days before they learnt to build proper houses.24

The second organization is perhaps that part of Chenchu culture which has undergone least change through the developments of recent years casual contacts with outsiders has modified the material culture, and in a superficial manner even
influenced religious ideas, but it has left intact the basic principles underlying the structure of Chenchu society. Even the gradual transition from a nomadic to more or less settled life has not yet produced any revolutionary effects in the social sphere, although it is probable that in the course of time Chenchu society will adapt itself to changing conditions. Presently, the social organizations of the Chenchu is still representative of those early types of human society found among races who have not yet emerged from the stage of hunting and collecting.

All Chenchus, whether living in the jungles of the Amrabad Plateau, in plains villages, or on the southern side of the Kistna River, recognize their unity as a race distinct from the surrounding populations, and in various spheres Chenchus will tender aid free to other Chenchus, while for the same service they demand payment from outsiders the principal units of Chenchu society are the clan, the local group, and the family. Often when a Chenchu is asked his name, he gives not only his name, but also that of his *kulam*, i.e. his clan. It is the same as that of his father and all of his kinsmen on the father’s side, while his mother and her relations are members of a different clan; in the choice of the wife, he must observe the laws of clan exogamy, which forbid Rim to marry a girl of his own or a related clan.

The following clans are found among the Chenchus of the upper plateau:

1. Mentur
2. Tokal
3. Nimal
4. Sigarlu
5. Nallapoteru
6. Eravalu
7. Pulsaru
8. Urtalu
9. Daserolu
10. Mamedi
11. Katraj and

The first seven of these are numerically strong, while the others are represented only by a few individuals. All of these clans occur also among the village Chenchu near Amrabad, Mananur and Lingal and it is here that the clans, rarely met with on the upper part of the plateau, have a wider distribution.

The clans are exogamous, but they do not all intermarry. Surveying the marriages, it would seem that the ten clans represented on the upper plateau constitute four exogamous groups, consisting of the following clans:

1. Menlur, Daserolu
2. Sigarlu, Urtalu
3. Tokal, Nallapoteru, Katraj
4. Nimal, Eravalu, Pulsaru
Before knowing the possible origin of these groupings, it is necessary to consider their distribution, we cannot entirely restrict ourselves to the Chenchus living in the forest, of the upper part of the plateau, but must also refer to those in the villages near Mananur and east of Amrabad and in the plains round lingal.

The clans are by no means evenly distributed, but each tract of country is mainly inhabited by one or two clans, although individual families of other clans may live in their midst.

South-western part of the plateau, comprising the villages of Irla Penta, Medimankal, Boramacheruvu, Appapur, Pullaipalli and Malapur was once the domain of the Nimal people. According to tradition they used to intermarry with the people of sigarlu clan, inhabiting the neighbouring tract to the east. A long time ago a man of Tokal clan is said to have come from the southern side of the river and married two sisters of Malapur. From him are supposed to be descended the many Tokal people, now living in Medimankal, Boramacheruvu, Appapur and Pullaipalli. This tradition need not be taken literally, but is probably reminiscent of a time when the Nimal people intermarried frequently with their Tokal neighbours on the other side of the Kistna River. The whole tract between the Kistna river to the south, yemlapaya vagu to the west and kaklet vagu to the east, stretching as far north as Malapur is described as Tokal-Nimal land, and is inhabited mainly by these two inter marrying clans.
Pulajelma, which lies immediately north and has a mixed population, is said to have been the centre of the Eravalu clan, which is bordering on extinction.

The Sigralu clan seems to own the ridge of Vatellapalli, Sarlapalli, Timmareddypalli and Patur Bayal. Its members have intermarried mainly with Menlur people from Koman Penta and the now deserted villages of Tatigundal and Elpamachena. The Menlur people who inhabited the villages on the edge of the higher plateau, but have recently dispersed and moved to villages like Pulajelma, Malapur and Rampur are found in great number on the lower plateau between Amrabad and the Dindi River and probably this tract was at one time their main stronghold.

Nallapoteru, Daserolu and Urtalu are the predominant clans among the Chenchus near Mananur and Amrabad, although a few individuals live in villages like Sarlapalli and Railet. All the members of Pulsaru clan at present on the plateau, are descended from one man, who came from the southern side of the Kistna. Katraj, Mamedi and Balmor are clans centred in the plains near Lingal.

It appears that the clans were once regional units and in possession of clearly defined tracts of land, but this system has suffered partial disintegration through the opening up of the forest and the disturbance of the old life by the activities of various outsiders; villages such as Pulajelma, Railet and Sarlapalli have gathered families from various settlements and consequently consists of several clans.
The Chenchus appear to have no generally accepted traditions relating to the origin of their race, or of humanity in general. They say that they always lived in these jungles and do not know how man came into being. They say, however that the first people to inhabit these hills were called Iruvalu. Irulu means in Telugu “darkness-blackness” and that only later came a people called Kongavalu or monkey people. When the Kongavalu first arrived in the land, they approached the Iruvalu and asked a girl of them in marriage. This demand was acceded by the Iruvalu, who accordingly betrothed one of their girls to a Kongavalu boy, but since she was still very small she remained in her parents’ house. Ten years passed, but the kongavalu never came to claim their bride. The Iruvalu regarded this as an insult and in great anger went to the Kongavalu, and reproached them for be speaking a girl and then never claiming her. In this way a quarrel arose and since in those days the Iruvalu and the kongavalu were ‘strong like gods; they fought against each other until many people on both sides were killed.

The Kongavalu had a dress, till then unknown to the Iruvalu and the man who hit it, called Dopuvalu, was cut into two during the fight; they also had a trumpeter, Komuluvalu, and he too was killed (on the path between Boramacheruvu and Medimankal there are two mounds, which are supposed to mark their graves). After the fight had gone on for a long time, a ‘big man’ of the Iruvalu approached the Kongavalu and offered them a great name in the land if they would stop fighting. So peace was made and after that the Kongavalu people were always called ‘Menlur’. Inspite of the peace, however, the Kongavalu captured the girl (betrothed) and cut her
in half, taking away the upper part; the lower part turned into stone and is still to be seen near Medimankal. (Two small menhirs, one on either side of the Medimankal-Boramacheruvu path, were pointed out by Chenchus, as being the petrified parts of the unfortunate girl).

This is the story of the Tokal and Nimal people of the Boramacheruvu – Medimankal tract, but a man of Menlur clan from Tirmalapur says a slightly different version. According to him, the Iruvalu, were the forefathers of the sigarlu people, and when the kongavalu asked a girl of them in marriage, the Iruvalu, though first acquiescing, later married the girl to another man. Over this defection the quarrel arose, and the Kongavalu cut the girl into two pieces and carried away the head with the upper portion of the body, leaving the legs behind. The Kongavalu were the Menlur people of today and with them fought the people of silam clan, now only found in the villages between Amrabad and the Dindi River, while the Nimal and Tokal people fought on the side of the Iruvalu.

These traditions, however, vague and contradictory in many respects, clarify the situation as regards the first inhabitants of the plateau who seem to have been the people of Sigarlu, Tokal and Nimal clans, while the Menlur people are immigrants of the later date. The Menlur people themselves say that they came originally from Macherla, a place south of the Kistna and first settled at upnotla, where they are still found in large numbers. There are only two Peddamanishi of Menlur clan on the plateau; those of Koman Penta and Pulajelma. The Menlur people intermarry with
all clans, except the Daserolu which seems to be associated with them in some way. In Jangamreddy pally, a village north of Amrabad, where the clan is fairly strong.

Sigralu, among the Telugu words Siga (sikha) meaning crest, tuft or hair-knot on the top of the head. Since the majority of the Che nchu s wear their head tied up in a knot “Sigarlu” may mean ‘top-knot people’.

The Urtalu clan, which forms together with the sigarlu an exogamous unit, is possibly called so after the urtal, the squirrel, occurring on the Nallamala Hills in two varieties.

Toka means “tail” in Telugu and the Tokal people themselves give different explanations for the name of their clan. Tokal people wearing a narrow strip of cloth covering their private parts so long, that it hung down at the back like a tail. Other Tokal man says that there was once a man, who showed a special preference for the tail of every animal killed in the chase, and he was therefore given the nickname ‘tail man’ which name remained to his descendants.

Nallapoteru and Katraj are clans linked with Tokal for purposes of exogamy. According to one it is said, that there was once a man who ate and drank so much that his stomach swelled up like that of an animal, and since at dances he blackened it in Chenchu fashion with charcoal and ashes, he was called by his fellow villagers Nallapoteru, “black animal”. The other story prefers to a time when the Nallapoteru
people used to pray to a god called Manpotu (male deer) and therefore the sigralu people, with whom they intermarried, called them at first Manpotu from which Nallapoteru is said to be derived.

The fourth of the principal clans of the upper plateau is Nimal. The tract mainly inhabited by Nimal people abounds with peacocks and it may be that Nimal is derived from the Telugu word ‘nemali’, Peacock.

One of the sub-clans of Nimal is Eravalu. A long time ago there was a man of Nimal clan, who although he looked everywhere could not find a wife and so at last married his own sister. This incestuous marriage made all his relatives very angry, and when a son was born they refused to recognize him as a clan-member or to accept him into the Nimal clan, it gave him the name Eravalu, after the edible tuber eravalu gadda. This happened in pulajelma and even now the Eravalu people, who are his descendants, are only to be found in pulajelma and the neighbouring villages.

Pulsaru belongs to the exogamous unit formed by Nimal and Eravalu. Those in the Amrabad forests are all descended from one clan, who came from the country south of the Kistna.

With this we have exhausted the list of clans, occurring among the Jungle Chenchus. Mamedi and Balmor are clans centred in the plains villages near Lingal and have only a handful of representatives on the plateau. There is general agreement
that Marredi is called after the mango (mamidi) while Balmor is the name of the plains village and the name may have been adopted by the Chenchus living there.

The Chenchu is not really interested in his clan. He has no pride of belonging to one particular clan, no desire to prove that his own clan is of nobler origin, or greater antiquity in the land, or in any way superior to other clans. The only exception is the traditional superiority of the Menlur clan, which is, however, confined to the Amrabad plateau. Clan-Prestige, so strong an motive to social behaviour of many primitive races, is an empty conception to the Chenchus, who does not consider himself in anyway linked with the welfare or the strength of his clan.

The regional distribution of clans is still noticeable and it seems to be confirmed by a statement made by a Peddamanishi of Pulajelma, who said that to Haeimendorf “in the beginning each clan lived in a separate village and only later by intermarrying and making friends did the clans mix and now several clans live together in one village”.

Whether in a permanent village or in a temporary abode the Chenchu is almost invariably a member of a community sharing a common settlement and common collecting grounds. This community fluctuates throughout the year, swelling and shrinking from season to season, may be aptly termed as ‘local group’ as distinct from the “village-community”, although both often coincide. The average Chenchu settlement consists of between two or ten houses, shelters or huts assembled in one
place. The families inhabiting such a settlement form the local group, a community whose cohesion, so long as the local group exists, is based on common interests and more or less identical activities.

In daily life, complete equality seems to reign among the members of a group, those permanent members, born in the locality, who participate in the ownership of the surrounding tract of land, and those individuals whose inclusion is only temporary either as mates or as ‘guests’ of blood relations already within the group. Between the two classes there are, however, no discriminating rights on the fruits of the soil and the spoils of the chase in the surrounding country, for those setting in a village are *ipso facto*

*entitled to the produce of its land.

The structure and changing components of the local group are regulated by no definite rules, and since they are largely dependant on personal inclination, they will be best understood by observing the movements of one particular group over a period. The village of Boramacheruvu at the beginning of the February, the people were living, not in their permanent houses, which stood on an open slab of rock on the north-west of the tank, but in a small settlement well hidden in the jungle. At that time, there were also three houses on the top of the hill on the South side of the tank, inhabited by families from Appapur and Irla Penta, who had come to Borama cheruvu for the dry months on the account of the ample water supply.
On 9th February, 1942 the jungle settlements consisted of the following families:

- Tidgaru of Tokal clan
- Guruvaru of Nimal Clan
- Lingaru of Tokal clan
- Gangaru of Tokal clan
- Merkal Guruvaru of Tokal clan
- Papama of Tokal clan

There was also a broken down house belonging to Lingaru clan. At this time the inhabitants of the settlement in the jungle and that on the hill hardly came in touch. Those of the jungle settlement went collecting roots or fruits together, while Papama and Guruvaru of the hill settlement joined on their daily excursions. Even the children of the two settlements did not intermingle in play groups.

On 12th February, 1942 an old lady Lingama (Sigarlu), the widow of Tidgaru’s elder brother, and her daughter, Gengi (Tokal) arrived in the jungle settlement from Appapur, to see their relations, and occupied the empty leaf shelter of Lingaru (Tokal) who later lived in the grass hut of Lingaru (Sigarlu). At first they were treated as guests and given milk and food but after a few days, when they decided to prolong their visit, they fetched their own cooking pots from Appapur and were absorbed into
the community. They remained members of the jungle settlement till the mid of April.

On 22 February, 1942 Merkal Guruvaru (Tokal) of the hill settlement moved with his whole family and his buffaloes to Sangrigundal for the purpose of selling milk to the pilgrims. Papama moved alone on the top of the ill, came down into the jungles settlement, where the men built a leaf-shelter for her and her daughter, between that of her brother Tidgaru, the Peddamanishi, and that occupied by Lingama her sister-in-law.

In the days between March 5th and 10th, 1942 the time of the great temple feast at Srisailam, there was a fair amount of movement in the village. The four men, Tidgaru, Guruvaru, Lingaru and Gangaru went to Srisailam and found work among the pilgrims. In the mean time Tidgaru (Nimal) of Appapur arrived in Boramacheruvu hoping to pick up a coolie job with passing pilgrims.

On 9th and 10th March, 1942 all the men and women returned from Srisailam and with them came Lingaru (Sigarlu) with his wife and son.

On 22nd March, Merkal Guruvaru (Tokal) of Appapur returned to the hill settlement from Sangrigundal together with his whole family to Boramacheruvu in the hopes of persuading his wife Guvurama to come with him to his village on the other side of the river. Papama remained in the jungle settlement.
On 23rd March with the blossoming of the mohua flowers, Papama’s daughter Irama and her son-in-law Lingaru (Tokal) came again to Boramacheruvu from Medimankal to spend the mohua flower season.

When the mohua flower season begins, the inhabitants of the jungle settlement grew restless, and talked of moving back to their permanent (settlements) village. The people remaining in the jungle settlement made minor repairs to their permanent houses, and transferred most of their pots and belongings and installed themselves in their permanent village. The permanent settlement consisted of the households of Tidgaru (Tokal) the Peddamanishi, Lingaru (Sigarlu), Lingaru (Tokal), Guruvaru (Nimal) and Lingama (Sigarlu).

A group centred round Tidgaru, the Peddamanishi of Boramacheruvu has been reduced to three households, his own and those of his two sister’s sons, Lingaru (Sigarlu) and the unmarried Lingaru (Tokal). The families in a new settlement on the edge of a large clearing are about a mile away from the old permanent village, where they had built solid houses. They declared that they would not return to the old ‘permanent’ village which they had occupied for the last ten years, for it was too exposed to storms. The site on which they had built their new houses had been inhabited by the villages of Boramacheruvu, the proximity of the running water, shows that it is more favourable than that of the previous village. Lingaru (Tokal), who had stayed or the Kistna during the hot weather, was then in Malapur, where one of his daughters is married, he would return to Boramacheruvu during the rains.
Though many changes in the composition of the local group of Boramachervu may appear rather confusing, taken as a whole, they elucidate several important factors in Chenchu settlement. The local group as exemplified by the jungle settlement does not constitute a rigid unit, but an elastic grouping capable of the immediate absorption of any individual, or number of individuals, with blood-ties within the group. The families forming the local group are generally blood-relations, kinship in the female weighing equally with that in the male line.

Although the families of a group are not bound together by any system of definite rights and obligations, each family being free to sever its ties with one group and to join another, there exists between members of a local group a spirit of great mutual helpfulness. Thus, a couple visiting another village for a few days, are sure that their children will be cared for while they are away, and a sick man or woman received help and food from all the other members of the group, particularly if he has no family of his own. The bachelor Lingaru (Tokal) was repeatedly ill and hardly ever well enough to collect food for himself, but he was looked after by all the villagers, and Guruvi, his mother’s sister daughter cooked for him, while Lachi provided him with milk.

Children of one settlement form definite play groups, which seem to be so bounded by locality, if a family moves a few furlongs away, the children of the two groups abruptly terminated their connection. For Chenchu children have no fear of the jungle and sometime during the day they should find it possible to meet their one-
time play-meter, if they so desired. This attitude is offered by the children of Papama, when they moved back to the hill settlement, and is further demonstrated in Rampur and Sarlapalli, where there are two and three settlements respectively, the children of which rarely intermingle.

Although individuals join at will any local group where they may have relations, they always remain for certain purposes linked with their home-village that is the permanent settlement where their parents lived and where they grew up. Guruvaru returned to his home village Malapur, when a second marriage obliterated his connections with his first wife’s village. It is probable, that had one of his sons lived and grown up in Boramacheruvu, this son would have become a permanent and fully privileged member of the community of Boramacheruvu, inheriting a right in the land through his mother, and no doubt, had Guruvaru’s wife Gengi lived, he himself would never have left Boramacheruvu.

There are village communities which are constituted entirely of members of one clan and their mates, in Irla Penta or Malapur, and others where two or more clans live side by side. The latter settlements are often arranged in such a way that the houses of related families form separate groups within the village, and in Sarlapalli and Rampur this grouping almost amounts to the constitution of separate communities. The development of such large mixed settlements, as for instance, Pulajelma, can in most cases still be reconstructed. It is generally agreed among local
Chenchus that Pulajelma was originally a village inhabited solely by people of Eravalu clan.

With the exception of settlements which have later experienced a large influx of new comers, the village community, as distinct from the fluid local group, is the sum of the families who hold a tract of land in joint possession, and form practically an exogamous unit. This fact is never actually stated by the Chenchus, who assert that alliances between members of intermarrying clans may be contracted within the village community marriages between members of the same village community are, except in the large mixed villages, extremely rare.

Broadly speaking, the Chenchu is not only under an obligation to seek a marriage partner outside his own clan, but also outside his own village community, and this confirms us in our belief, that the clans were originally local units, and strengthens the character of Chenchu exogamy as a form of exogamy determined by locality.

We must assume therefore that either the clan was not the original unit exercising ownership rights over the land, or that the matri local marriage and consequently the succession of rights in the mother’s land is a later development.

The local group and village community may be linked to intersecting circles, for most members of a village community are at the same time members of local
group that inhabit the land belonging to that village community. Other members, however, may have joined local groups that live on the land of neighbouring village communities, and their children can under certain circumstances be absorbed into those communities.

The local group, on the other hand, consists of members born to the land as well as those status is that of guests, and although often short-lived, it is a very real community, stirring all the primal social impulses which are at the root of community life in every human society.26

Among the social units of Chenchu society is the smallest, most outstanding and clearly defined. It is the nucleus of the whole social structure of Chenchu life and the larger units, such as clan, local group and village community are but congregations of individual families. In its composition it is more permanent than the local group and in the satisfaction of profound social and biological needs, as well as in the influence it exercises in moulding the individual, it is immensely more powerful than the clan.

The great majority of families consists of wife and husband, and their unmarried children, few men took two or even more wives. Invariably the members of the normal Chenchu family share one house or shelter, even grown children sleeping in the same house as their parents until their marriage, when they leave the family unit to form house-holds of their own; only if the season is unfavourable for
house – building they and their mates spend the first months of marriage under the parents, roof. Thus the Chenchun family constituting a household generally covers two generations; in rare cases an old widowed parent may stay with a married son or daughter, but it is more usual for widow to live in a separate small grass but close to the house of one of their children.

Husband and wife are for all practical purposes partners with equal rights and their property is jointly owned; nominally, however, everything belongs to the man, except those personnel belongings a wife acquired from her parents. This equality of status of wife and husband is strongly emphasized by the concurrence of parti local and matri local marriage of so married couples recorded in the village census, 52 live in the husband’s village and 28 live in the wife’s village.

But whether a couple besides in the wife’s or husband’s village, the household is largely a self-sustained unit and economically so independent, that men such as Gangaru (Nimal) of Irla Penta and Gangaru (Tokal) of Medimankal live atleast part of the year with their families in single house settlements far away from the rest of the village community. Owing to the absence of specialisation in Chenchu economic the family relies normally on its own members for its supply of food and other necessities, but in times of stress the help of blood relations is sought and as a rule easily forthcoming.
In times of child birth and the subsequent weeks, when the mother is hampered in the search for food, or the serious illness of either husband or wife are such periods of crisis, and when children are too large to be carried, yet not strong enough to accompany the mother to the jungle, she must depend for their care on older children or some old woman who stays behind in the village while she is away gathering food.

All men and women able to trace blood-relationship either in the male or the female line consider themselves related, but the dimensions of the kin-group are restricted by the Chenchus limited power of memory. Many do not even remember the name of their grand father, while second cousins, unless they happen to live in the same village, may hardly be recognized as such. A man considers the brothers and sisters of both parents as relatives as well as their children and grand children. The cohesion within this group of blood relations is family marked and is strengthened and freshened by frequent visiting. Blood-relations have a definite preference for dwelling close together and many local groups are made up entirely of blood-relations and their mates. Thus, the inhabitants of Malapur, consisted of the family of the Peddamanishi, his daughter and son-in-law, the widow of his brother’s (elder) son and her two sons, who are both married. A few months later Guruvaru, the Peaddamanishi’s father’s elder brother’s son’s son, moved from Boramacheruvu to Malapur.

Chenchus do not like to live where they have no blood-relations and should a man find himself in such a situation owing to the death of all his relatives in one
village, he will leave that settlement and join the village of his wife or that of some other relations.

Widows frequently return to their home village after bereavement, particularly if none of their married children live in the husband’s village.

The cohesion of the kinship group and its tendency to become detached from unrelated families of demonstrated by the composition of the local group during the seasonal migrations which is described above under the heading settlements and dwellings, and by the distribution of houses in the large mixed villages. In Sarlapalli there are three settlements, each about one furlong from the other. The upper settlement consists of five houses and these are inhabited by

1) Lingaru (Sigarlu) Peddamanishi of Sarlapalli.
2) Lachungaru (Sigarlu), the Peddamanishi’s brother’s son.
3) Tidgaru (Sigarlu), the son of Lachungaru.
4) Lingaru (Sigarlu), the Peddamanishi’s father’s brother’s son
5) Pedigaru (Menlur) who is married to a daughter of the Peddamanishi’s wife by her first husband

The middle settlement is composed of a group of families, which was centred round Papaya of Pulsaru clan from Peddacheruvu south of Kistna. Rampur consists of two settlements, each consisting of one kin-group.
Even within large permanent village the various kin-groups cluster together, and build their houses at some distance from those of other families. In smaller villages such as Koman Penta, Appapur or Malapur, there is also a tendency for married children to build houses next to that of their parents, while in settlements of only two or three houses, such as Patur Bayal, Timmareddipalli or Bikit Penta, the inhabitants are brother and sister, father and son, or other close blood-relations.

The kinship ties between different villages are strengthened and perpetuated by the custom of marrying back into the mother’s kin and village.²⁷

The relationship system of the Chenchus is of the classificatory type. The Chenchu society appears clearly divided into two classes:

1. Consisting of those men called according to age either father, brother or son, and of women addressed respectively as mother, sister or daughter.

2. Comprising those who, as potential and actual relations by marriage, are addressed as father-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law and the corresponding female relatives.

Clan-members as well as members of related clans fall within the first group and with these intermarriage is forbidden, while the second class includes not only the wife’s clansmen, but the members of all other clans from which mates may be chosen.
Relative age plays an important role in the choice of the address, an elder is never called by name, while in speaking to younger persons wither the relationship term or the name may be used. Terms used between relatives of the same generation are never reciprocal, for the younger always addresses the elder by a term different from that by which he is addressed by the elder. The only reciprocal terms occur, as among other primitive people between grand father and grand son.

Husband and wife never address each other by name nor it is customary for them to use any relationship term, although a man may occasionally call his wife Portsa and she may call him mama.

1. **Tata** – father’s father as well as mother’s father.
2. **Avva** – grandmother.
3. **Ayya, Appa, Naina** – father.
4. **Peddayya, Peddappa, Peddanaina** – father’s elder brother.
5. **Chinnayya, Chinnappa, Chinnaina** – father’s younger brother.
6. **Amma** – mother.
7. **Peddamma** – mother’s elder sister.
8. **Chinnamma** – mother’s younger sister.
9. **Mama** – mother’s brother, father’s sister husband, father-in-law (husband’s father).
10. **Atta** – mother’s brother’s wife (wife’s mother) mother-in-law, father’s sister.
11. Anna – elder brother.

12. Tammudu – younger brother.


14. Chelli – younger sister.\(^{28}\)

15. Bava and Bavamaridi – father’s sister’s son, sister’s husband, Husband’s or wife’s brother.\(^{29}\)

16. Vodina and Maradulu – father’s sister’s and mother’s brother’s daughters as well as husband’s and wife’s sisters.


19. Alludu – son-in-law, husband’s sister’s son, wife’s brother’s son.

20. Kodalu – daughter-in-law, husband’s sister’s daughter, wife’s brother’s daughter.


The general character of the Chenchus relationship system tallies well with the main traits of their social organizations and confirms the dominance of the family and kin-group over all other social units. It must not be forgotten, that the Chenchus use the ordinary Telugu terms for most degrees of relationship, therefore we must reckon with the possibility that the present system is not purely Chenchu, but partly influenced by Telugu custom.\(^{30}\)
In every Chenchu village community there is one man who has a certain prominence in all the community’s dealings with outsiders. He is called Peddamanishi, “big man” judging from the statements of Chenchus concerning his function, he is described as a headman. Those living in a Chenchu settlement will soon realize that the Peddamanishi has very little authority. As a rule, though not always, the Peddamanishi belongs to the clan with the strongest representation in the village. He is usually an old or middle aged man, but not necessarily the oldest man in the community.

The duties of the Peddamanishi are difficult to define. When the whole community makes an offering to a deity it is generally the Peddamanishi who pronounces the first prayer, and at the weddings he blesses the couple before the relatives. When a village is shifted the Pedamanishi chooses the new site, but his house is not necessarily the first to be built. If the members of the village community quarrel among themselves the peddamanishi tries to settle the dispute assisted by those men not involved.

As to the succession of the Peddamanishi, most Chenchus will state that a Peddamanishi is always succeeded in office by his eldest son, but this rule is by no means always followed, and that any sensible man may become Peddamanishi, even if the deceased holder of the office has a son.
In Malapur, the Peddamanishi is of Nimal clan and claims that his ancestors have held this dignity for long time.

In pulajelma the situation is entirely typical. This was originally a village of the Eravalu clan. The father of the Peddamanishi was a Menlur man from Gottipalli, who on marrying an Eravalu girl from pulajelma came to live in his wife’s village. After some time, all the older men having died, he became Peddamanishi and was succeeded by his son, who again married an Eravalu girl from Pulajelma.

Some decades ago a man of Pulsaru clan, who had immigrated from Peddacheruvu on the other side of the Kistna, became Peddamanishi of Vattelapalli, but he was not succeeded by his sons, who went to live in Sarlapalli and Appapur.

Considering the degree of uncertainty attached to the succession of Peddamanishi as well as their lack of prominence at functions, we may say that this institution is not deeply rooted in Chenchu culture. It was probable only then that Chenchus, who had hither to lived in small nomadic groups, began to build larger settlements with permanent houses, and it is easily understandable that the men most capable dealing with outsiders gained influence and prestige, and were described as “big men”. This would explain how men from the country south of Kistna could become Peddamanishi on the Amrabad Plateau. For in Madras Presidency, the Chenchus seclusion had ended earlier and a knowledge of the plains-mens ways and manner’s seems to have enabled the immigrants to take a lead in the first trade
contacts of the Hyderabad Chenchus. As spokesmen of their communities the Peddamanishi have profited most from the boom of the sale of forest produce, which followed the opening up of the forest and were enabled to purchase buffaloes and cattle.

There must always have existed men to personal influence who were the natural leaders of the various local groups, and in the frequent quarrels over the infringement of boundaries or breaches of tribal law, the older men of two or more groups gather to discuss and decide the dispute. The Peddamanishi, once they had gained prestige through successful dealings with outsiders, easily assumed a prominent part in the councils, but it is highly improbable that there was ever an assembly composed only of Peddamanishi. In their ceremonial functions they stepped into the role, which of old had been played by the oldest or most respected man of the group.

Chenchu society is, like that of practically all the most primitive races, intensely democratic, and although Peddamanishi the first man in the village his authority and influence depend entirely on his own abilities and character.\footnote{31}

Chenchu children have no world of their own like the children of more advanced races. From the moment they have gained proficiency in the mastery of their own body, they follow a routine closely resembling that of their parents, and by the unconscious process of imitation they soon assimilate the pattern of adult life thus
the children of the Chenchu village are not a separate body, excluded from the occupations of the grown up men and women and immersed in the interests of their own, but form from an early age part of the general social fabric.

Though Chenchus are most affectionate parents and take a great interest in their children they seldom know their age unless a child is very young. In fact the Chenchu child soon learns to take his place in the local group and once he can walk sturdy on his legs, he becomes quickly emancipated from the mother and joins others of his age in their daily activities.

Although even the small children have a tendency to separate in play and work groups according to sex, there is no taboo which compels boys and girls of any age to avoid each other’s company.

No systematic education is given to children buy by being daily in the company of adults and listening to their conversation a child soon grasps the main facts of life. For in Chenchu culture there are few subjects beyond the comprehension of a child of eight or ten, ad when a boy or girl reaches maturity there is little left to be learnt. No complicated ritual, no magical formulae, no lengthy songs have to be committed to memory by the average Chenchu, an elaborate etiquette requires the mastery of an intricate system of rank and kin-ship relations and of social taboos.
Now we are in a position to review the status of women in general, we will differentiate between theory which reflects to a certain extent the influence of Hinduism, and practice, which is expressive of the old Chenchu attitude. In theory women are legally inferior to men; they cannot inherit any substantial property although they can own property, they are dependent on their relatives in concluding marriages, and have to abide by their husband’s decisions in regard, for instance, to place of residence. But actual life presents a different picture. We see the Chenchu women as the equal companion of Chenchu man, doing as much if not more of the work in maintaining the common household, and consequently considering herself, and being considered by her husband, as joint possessor of the family property in so far as it is acquired by their concerned labour. In all her daily tasks she acts exactly as she thinks right and her husband seldom interferes in the domain which is hers. Moreover she may go alone on visits to other villages or to the bazaars, and may spend as she likes any small sum which she happens to possess. She eats with her husband and may smoke in his presence. She questions as the moving to another local group or the purchase or sale of any important article are discussed between wife and husband, alone he makes no decision of any consequence. Naturally much depends on the character of both the partners. Chenchu women show no shyness in front of strangers and when visitors come to the village they join in the conversation on equal terms with the men. No taboos bar them from any activity, ceremonies or recreations, and those who have attended drinking party cannot doubt the equality of Chenchu women in social life. Unfettered by social conventions they may live with any man of their choice, should a first marriage prove unsuccessful, and there are not
two different moral codes, one for men and one for women. The equality is also reflected in the folk-tales of the Chenchus in which women act as independently as men and sometimes even take the initiative in the approaches to marriage with the infiltration of foreign marriage customs the girls freedom to choosing their mates is gradually becoming endangered, but in general the excellent social status of Chenchu women remain unimparred.\textsuperscript{33}

Chenchu knows no means of preventing conception. No superstitious beliefs surround the birth of twins; they are considered neither lucky or unlucky. Some Chenchus name a child while it is still in the mother’s womb in order to facilitate delivery, and this is feasible owing to the dual character of Chenchu names, for each of which there is a male as well as a female form. The practice of naming a child before birth is not only followed in cases of difficult birth/labour, but is sometimes employed in the hopes of securing the help of the invisible powers at the outset of confinement. If the child is not named at this early stage the parents may wait a few weeks and even months before deciding on a name. In deed many children die nameless.

The Chenchus have no kind of name-giving ceremony; the result of divination or the decision of the parents is considered sufficient sanction. The range of Chenchu names is small, and it would almost seem as if the function of names were not so much to distinguish one person from another, as to solicit, the protection of a deity. Some people call as many as three or four of their children after the same god or
goddess, and in such cases identification is only made possible by the attachment of attributes as pedda big, nulla middle and china small.

Most Chenchu names are derived from those deities. The male form terminates in - aru (Lingaru).

(Guruvaru) or in short forms simply - a (Linga, Guruva).

Female names end in - ama (Lingama, Guruvama) or simply - I (Lingi, Guruvi).

The physique of the jungle Chenchus is on the whole fairly good and their health is in no way inferior to that of the surrounding plains people. After the rains, when every depression is filled with stagnant water, they undoubtedly suffer badly from Malaria.

Many children have enlarged spleens due to malarial infection. Among the epidemics which from time to time ravage the plateau, small pox ranks foremost. Yaws occur among the Chenchus. Venereal diseases as well as leprosy seem to be practically non – existent and even no skin disease. The most frequent of the minor ailment are inflammation of the eyes, from which both adults and children suffer.
Faced by any illness the Chenchu is more or less helpless and sets all his shoes on appeals to higher powers. But for curing external injuries and the more common of the minor complaints the Chenchus use certain practical remedies. Any kind of internal pain, be it in chest, hip or leg, is treated in the manner which is in common usage throughout the Telugu country, namely by burning the skin over the ache with a twig of *Pala tiga* (*Cryptolepsis Buchanani*) the Chenchu has great faith in this remedy.

In cases of stomach ache, Chenchus simply rub the stomach, but if the pain persists they take the leaves of a shrub called *baranka* (*strablus asper*) and rub the milky juice over the aching part. They have few medicines which they eat or drink for internal aches and pains, but they willingly take any quantity given them by outsiders.

For fever the patient is sometimes made to drink a mixture of onions, garlic and ginger, pounded and stirred in water. Chenchus attacked by tooth ache grind the leaves of a certain tree and pour the juice into the right ear of the aching tooth is on the left side and vice versa. When children suffer from swollen tonsils, a crude remedy is employed. Railaku leaves are rolled an inserted as far up the nostrils as possible, the operator then hammers on the stiff cylinder of the rolled up leaf till the blood streams from the nose cuts and wounds are usually left to dry and receive no treatment.
Serious wounds caused by bear – bite, or fall from the tree are treated with a paste of saffron mixed with the crushed leaves of *Chloroxylon Swietenia*.

Any illness the cause of which is beyond the understanding of the Chenchus is attributed to the malevolence of a deity or the angered jiv of a deceased kinsman, and the only way of countering such an influence is to discover which deity or jiv is responsible. No formal prayers are said or ceremonies performed during illness and the gods are only promised offering if they assist the patient to recover.

When a Chenchu is dangerously ill and lapses into unconsciousness, it is believed that his soul (*jiv*) leaves his body. Some Chenchus say that the *jiv* goes to ‘god’, and here they use the term *sami* without being able to say which god.

There are no ceremonies or rites to accompany a Chenchu last moments, and he is allowed to die quietly in his shelter. As soon as the life is extinct, the corpse is washed by any of the relations, the feet is smeared with saffron and legs with ashes, and hair is loosened and washed and then anointed with ghee; finally the corpse is wrapped in the deceased cloth’s. The dead are either buried or burnt, but the custom of burning is comparatively recent innovation. It is most prevalent among the Chenchus of Sarlapalli and Vatellapalli, who are strongly influenced by the Telugu peasantry of the villages near Amrabad, while the Chenchus in the south-west of the plateau retain the old custom of burial, and they say that only persons killed by tigers or panthers are burnt.
Burial takes place within an hour or two of death and there is thus neither time nor opportunity to summon relations of neighbouring villages; they are informed afterwards and assemble only for the subsequent ceremonies. If a man dies in a permanent village the body is laid to rest in the burial ground. In large settlements the nearest male relatives of the deceased carry the corpse and dig the grave, but when there are only two or three families living together, all the men help in the interment or burning.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{Chenchu villages on the upper Plateau:}

\textbf{Irla Penta:} This village is situated on a ridge 3½ miles north of the Kistna, about 1743 feet above sea-level. It is divided into two groups of houses lying at a small distance from each other. The first group consists of the houses one to five, which are those of the Peddamanishi, who is of Nimal clan. All householders of other clans are men from other villages married to Irla Penta women.

Although Irla Penta comprises nominally eleven households, there are seldom times when all eleven families stay together in Irla Penta. The population is generally dispersed among its sub settlements. –

Nardi Penta,

Vakarmamidi Penta,
Medimankal: Lies on a broad ridge stretching from Boramacheruvu to the Kistna River. During the hot weather it is uninhabitable owing to the lack of water and the inhabitants move then to Sangrigundal, a site three miles south, where each has a well–built house. Perhaps we may speak of twin–settlement Medimankal–Sangrigundal, for both have the character of permanent villages. There are two subsidiary villages, Lingabore and Pandibore; the Peddamanishi never stays in Medimankal itself, but spends the hot weather in Sangrigundal, and the rains and the cold weather in Pandibore.

The village community in Medimankal consists of the households of Gangaru (Tokal), the Peddamanishi, whose father came from Bramacheruvu, his three married sons, his step-son, his sister and her married son. The latter is of Nimal clan, while all other householders are Tokal people.37

Boramacheruvu: Only households 1, 2 and 3 have remained that the Peddamanishi, Yidgardu and the sons of his two sisters for permanent nucleus of the community. Guruvaru (house 4) has moved to Malapur, Gangaru and Gengi (house 5) went to live in Papaya, where Gengi’s brother is settled. Lingaru (house 6), who
seldom lives in one place for long and stayed with the households 6,8 and 9 of Irla Penta on the banks of the Kistna during the dry season, did not return to Boramacheruvu. During the rains he went to live in Malapur where one of his daughter is married, apparently decided to reside permanently in Boramacheruvu her home village.

Boramacheruvu consists of one settlement some distance away from the tank, where the Peddamanishi and his group live and a few houses situated immediately above the tank, where Merkal Guruvaru of Appapur spends half the year, and where visitors settle during the mohua season.38

**Appapur:** It is situated on the edge of a large open clearing and water is available throughout the year, but not in sufficient quantity of cattle. Every year the Peddamanishi Guruvaru (House 1) moves to Boramacheruvu for the dry season also visiting Sangrigundal other households spend the hot weather at kakar penta, a site south of Rampur, while Lingama (House 2) stays frequently with her deceased husband’s family in Boramacheruvu. Yidgaru’s family (House 7) remain in Appapur throughout the year.

The majority of the householders are of Tokal clan, and the few who are of other clans are married to Tokal women. The only householder not belonging to the circle of related and intermarrying families, inhabiting the villages Medimankal, Boramacheruvu, Appapur, Pullaipalli and Malapur is Gangaru (Pulsaru) (House 8),
whose father came from south of the Kistna and was for some years Peddamanishi of Vatellepalli.39

**Rampur:** Consists of two settlements, about 2½ furlongs apart and separated by a narrow strip of jungle. The larger settlement comprises houses 1,2,3,4 and 5 and its inhabitants either come from the plains near Lingal or have close connections with plans villages. The Peddamanishi is of Balmor clan, which does not occur in any villages of the upper plateau except Rampur and Bikit Penta, it seems to be well established in Marlapaya; the Peddamanishi father lived in Bikit Penta (House 2) but originally he came from Marlapaya. The households 2 and 3 are those of the Peddamanishi sister and her son and in house 4 lives a man of Katraj clan, whose home – village Dharawaram lies in the plains close to Lingal. He came to live in Rampur on his marriage with a Rampur girl, and his presence shows, that there is not only emigration from the plateau to the plains, but occasionally individual migrations back to the hills. Gangaru (house 5) comes from the disbanded village of Elpamachena near Sarlapalli.

The second settlement consists of three houses, belonging to two brothers of Nimal clan from Rampur, and a young man of Sigarlu clan from pulajelma, who has chosen to live there, although he has no relations in Rampur and his wife is from Irla Penta.
Although inhabited by people of various clans, Rampur seems to lie within the domain of the Nimal clan, which alone among the main clans of the upper plateau is today well represented. Haimendorf inclined to think that Rampur once a site for a summer settlement of the people of Appapur.

In the hot season some of the Rampur people go to Dukkam penta and Agarla Penta, while others go to Rasul Cheruvu, a site on the fringe of the plains where there is a tank. Sometimes they visit Marlapaya, a Chenchu village near Lingal, whose inhabitants still live in the style of jungle Chenchus; during the mohua season the people of Marlapaya often come to Rampur.\(^{40}\)

**Bikit Penta:** It is a small village on a ridge some three miles south-west of Rampur. Gangaru (Tokal) (house 1) comes from Boramacheruvu; he left his home-village owing to some quarrel with his relatives. His son is married to the sister of the Peddamanishi of the Rampur, whose father Iraya (Balmor) also lives in Bikit Penta (house 2) although he and his wife originally came from the plains villages. The third householder is a man of Nimal clan of the plains villages of Appapalli, who is married to a girl from Rampur and settled in Bikit Penta on his marriage.\(^{41}\)

**Pullaipalli:** Which lies close to the cart track leading from Farahabad to Boramacheruvu was founded by the father of the Peddamanishi of that time; he was one of the four brothers of Tokal clan, who in their time furnished the Peddamanishi of Pullaipalli, Appapur, Boramacheruvu and Medimankal. Pullaipalli is thus a
creation of the Tokal clan and now is inhabited by Gangaru the Peddamanishi and his half-brother Yidgaru.

House 3 is inhabited by Pedda Bayeru of Nallapoteru clan, whose father came from Railet and married a girl of Malapur, where he lived till his death. Pedda Bayeru’s mother was the sister of the Peddamanishi’s mother, and he and his brother china Bayeru (house 1) were brought up by the Peddamanishi’s parents. Pedda Bayeru is married to Guruvama (Tokal) of Boramacheruvu, daughter of Lingama (Appapur house 2) and father’s brother’s daughter of Peddamanishi.

Along with this a fourth family, Guruvaru (Tokal), the son of the Peddamanishi’s father’s younger brother with his wife Lingi (Sigarlu) fro Sarlapalli and his three children lived in Pullaipalli, but they have gone to Kolapur, a plains village near Lingal.

Occasionally, in the hot season the people of Pullaipalli go to Agarla Penta and Burj Gundal.\(^{42}\)

**Malapur:** It lies on the edge of a large open clearing, where there is a small pond during the rains. It is an old settlement and for a long time it has been a strong hold of the Nimal clan. Tradition tells that when the first Tokal man immigrated from the south of Kistna, he married tow Nimal girls of Malapur and all Tokal people on this side of the River are their descendants. In 1940s Guruvaru (Nimal),
(Boramacheruvu house 4), the Peddamanishi’s father’s brother’s son’s son, who had lived for about fifteen years in Boramacheruvu, returned with his children to Malapur, where he built a house. Lingaru (Tokal) (Boramacheruvu House 6), the father of Gengi (House 4) occasionally spends the rains in Malapur and stays in a temporary hut.

During the hot weather the Malapur people move to a site in the jungle between Malapur and Pullaipalli, at some distance from the falls of Buga vagu where there is perennial water. Formerly they used to go to Jala Penta and Piman Penta for the dry season.43

**Pulajelma:** Marked on the map as Farahabad, is a village at a distance of less than a mile from the Farahabd Forest Inspection Bungalow, and it is therefore the village that is most frequently visited by officials. Previously Pulajelma was mainly inhabited by people of Eravalu clan, that then a family of Menlur people immigrated from Gottipalli and intermarried with the Eravalu people. Finally Tokal and Sigarlu people came to settle in Pulajelma, which has thus a mixed population.

The Peddamanishi, whose parents settled in Pulajelma when he was a small boy, is of Menlur clan, and his brother (House 7) and four of his sisters, (Houses 2, 3, 5 & 9) as well as his half-brother Guruvaru (House 5), all live in Pulajelma. Two of the Peddamanishi’s sisters having married sons, who also live in Pulajelma (Houses 8, 10 & 12). Thus most of the villagers are blood-relations of the Peddamanishi. The
only adult male member of the Eravalu clan is Lingaru (House 6) the brother of Peddamanishi’s wife.

Bayeru (Sigarlu) (House 11), whose parents live in Malapur, although his father’s original home village was Sarlapalli, came to Pulajelma when he married a girl of Eravalu clan his father’s brother’s son Lingaru (Sigarlu) (House 10) who until then had lived in Malapur, also settled in Pulajelma. Since Lingaru (Sigarlu) has a grown up son, there are now three households of Sigarlu people in Pulajelma.

Ultimately there are three Tokal households; this is due to the fact that three of the Peddamanishi’s sisters married Tokal men of Pullaipalli. The husband of the younger sister Bei was in (House 9) but the other two sisters are widows with grown up and married sons (Houses 4 & 8).

It is unusual for the people of Pulajelma to stay in their village throughout the year; only now and then some individuals go to Rasul Cheruvu for a new days. The possibility of finding occasional employment with visitors to the Farahabad Bungalow or forest contractors, who work on the Plateau at season curbs their nomadic instincts.44

**Railet Banda:** Or Railet as it is usually called, is a village three miles north-west of Vattellapalli, not far from the deserted site of Baureddipalli. The Chenchus
agree that it is a comparatively new settlement, mainly consisting of families who used to live at Bauredipalli.

The Peddamanishi is of Urtalu clan, but he is the only householder of this clan, and has few relatives in the village. The Urtalu clan is well represented, however, among the village Chenchus of the settlements near Mananur and since Railet lies on the edge of the Plateau. There are two men of Nallapoteru clan in Railet (Houses 3 & 8), whose grandfather also immigrated from a village on the lower ledge, namely Padra.

The four households of Sigarlu men (Houses 2, 6, 10 & 11) have all close connections with Vatellapalli and Sarlapalli, as well as with the four sigarlu families in Pulajelma who, although settled for a time in Malapur, came originally from sarlapalli. Most of the inhabitants of the old settlements of Bauredipalli were of sigarlu clan, for it seems that Railet belongs essentially to the sigarlu – Menlur area.

Both the householders of Tokal clan (Houses 5 & 7) came from Appapur, where they were born and have relations. Tidgaru (House 5) settled in Railet where his wife grew up and although Yidgaru’s (House 7) parents – in – law live in Pulajelma his brother-in-law lives in Railet (House 6).

The Railet people do not leave their village in the hot season, but are visited by many families of Vatellapalli. As far as the Sigarlu families are concerned it
almost appears that Vatellapalli and Railet are only alternative sites of the same village – community. This may explain how it is that Ankaru (House 10), the son of Vore Lingaru, of Vatellapalli lives in Railet, although his wife is not from Railet but from Pulajelma.\textsuperscript{45}

**Vatellapalli:** Which was spelt Vativellapalli, lies midway between the deserted site of Baureddipalli and Sarlapalli; besides eight households of Chenchus. The Chenchus say that until three generations ago there was no village at Vatellapalli, but it was founded by men of Sarlapalli.

The Chenchu households consist of Sigarlu and Nimal families and since the Nimal people can all be traced to one marriage with Medimankal. Vatellapalli must once have been inhabited solely by members of the Sigarlu clan. The fire sigarlu households (Houses 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6) are those of the Peddamanishi and his son, and of the children of his brothers and their children.

The Peddamanishi’s daughter is married to Lingaru (Nimal House 3) from Medimankal, thus accounting for one Nimal households. The two remaining Nimal households (houses 7 & 8) are due to the marriage of another sigarlu woman of Vatellapalli: Posi, the sister of Vore Lingaru (House 5), married to Nimal man of medimankal, who came to live in his wife’s village; later they moved to Railet (House 11), but two sons have married girls of vatellapalli and have settled there.
In the Peddamanishi’s house lives poteru (Menlur) from the deserted village of Elpamachena, the husband of the Peddamanishi’s deceased daughter, and their daughter yelli; In 1940s Poteru brought also his children by his second wife to vatellapalli.

During the driest months of the hot season there is scarcity of water in vatellapalli, and consequently most of the people go to Railet, at that time of the year.46

**Sarlapalli:** According to local tradition, Sarlapalli is an older settlement than Vatellapalli, and many of the families of Sigarlu clan of vatellapalli are said to have come originally from Sarlapalli. Sarlapalli is divided into three settlements.

The first settlement consists of the Peddamanishi, who is of sigarlu clan, his brother’s son (House 2), the latters son (house 3), ther Peddamanishi’s father’s brother’s son Lingaru (House 4), who lived for most of his life in vatellapalli, and finally the husband of the Peddamanishi’s wife’s daughter from a first marriage. Lingaru (House 4) that his grand father went from Sarlapalli to vatellapalli, when that village was founded.

The second settlement consists mainly of the households of three brothers of Nallapoteru clan (Houses 8, 9, & 10) and that of their sister (House 11), who is married to the father’s brother’s son of the Peddamanishi. Their mother lives in a
separate house (House 7) with a child of her second husband Papaya (Pulsaru). Papaya’s first wife Lachama inhabits another house (House 6) in the second settlement.

The third settlement comprises only two houses, which are both inhabited by men of Sigarlu clan; these have no close blood relations in the first settlement.

Many Sarlapalli people are married to men and women from the disbanded village Elpamachena, which lies to the east of Sarlapalli, where the Menlur clan was predominant. Others have found their marriage partners in Tatigundal, and such villages of the lower ledge east of Amrabad, as upnotha, Chittamgunta and Maradugu. Moreover there have also been some marriages between people of Sarlapalli and Chenchus villages south of the Kistna. Intermarriage with the villages of the Nimal – Tokal area (Medimankal, Boramacheruvu, Pullaipalli, etc), on the other hand, hardly occurs, the only two exceptions being the marriage of the Peddamanishi with a Tokal girl of Pullaipalli, and that of Lingaru (Nallapoteru House 10) with a Nimal girl of Malapur.

At first sight, it may appear that the principle of village – exogamy is not followed as strictly in Sarlapalli as in other settlements, for in several marriages both partners come from families domiciled in sarlapalli. Most of these marriages are between people of Sigarlu and Nallapoteru clan, that all Nallapoteru people are descended from a man, who settled in sarlapalli who settled just two or three
generations ago to the 1940s generation and are therefore considered outsiders for purposes of marriage.

It is not improbable, that the Nallapoteru clan people are descendants of the same emigrant from Padra whose other grand children live in Railet and Pullaipalli.

Now a days the people of Sarlapalli live in their village throughout the year in former times they used to move with their cattle to Bhavi Penta, Naradi Penta, Patasi Penta, and ullokatrevu penta; the latter is on the banks of the Kistna. All these entas lie within the sarlapalli vatellapalli land, which seems to consists of one track with no boundary between the two villages. Patur Bayal lying about a mile south of Sarlapalli is evidently only a sub-settlement of Sarlapalli.

During the mohua season considerable numbers of Chenchus from Upnotha, Tirmalapur, Maradugu and other villages east of Amrabad come to stay in Sarlapalli with their relations and friends for a few weeks or even days. Many of them came originally form Elpamachena and Tatigundal, these two villages were deserted some years ago after an epidemic, which claimed the major part of the population.47

**Patur Bayal:** Is a small settlement, about a mile south of Sarlapalli, consisting of only two houses. They are inhabited by the son and daughter of Lingaru (Sigarlu) (Sarlapalli House 4) who are both widowed. Patur Bayal has always been a sub-settlement of Sarlapalli and has only been used as a permanent settlement.48
**Timmareddipalli:** Lies about two miles of Sarlapalli, however, it does not seem to belong to the Vatellapalli – Sarlapalli group; it is not a sub-settlement of Sarlapalli, but a separate village probably with close connections with the now disbanded village of Tatigundal.

Tammareddipalli is inhabited by two cousins of Sigarlu clan and their mother who comes from Srisailam; she married as her second husband Papaya (Sarlapalli House 6), but never went to live in Sarlapalli, when Papaya had already two wives.

During the mohua season people from Upnotla come to Tammareddipalli to collect fruits and mohua flowers and often stay as visitors in one of the houses. Their right in the land dates back from the time when their fathers and grandfathers lived in Tatigundal and Elpamachena.49

**Koman Penta:** Is a prosperous village in the valley of the Nalla vagu, about four miles north of Sarlapalli and 600 feet lower. The large clearing on which it lies provides good soil for ploughing and the Peddamanishi of Koman Penta is the only Jungle Chenchu who practices this method of cultivation.

The Peddamanishi is of Menlur clan, or more precisely of Daunsen – Menlur, which is a sub-clan of the Menlur clan. Two of his sons live in Koman Penta, while the eldest son has settled in Srisailam, the village of his wife: both the Peddamanishi’s sister and one of his daughters are married in Srisailam and live in Kurnool.
The remaining four houses of Koman Penta are of a sub clan of sigarlu, called Jela, which is wide-spread in the villages east of Amrabad; three householders come from Maradugu and one from Chittamgunta, all of these are married to women of Koman Penta and thus live in their wife’s village. The Peddamanishi is married to the sister of Peddamanishi of Sarlapalli and one of his son’s to another girl from vatellapalli, but most of other alliance was with people from the villages east of Amrabad.

Thus Koman Penta stands sociologically, as well as geographically, midway between the Chenchus of the upper plateau and the village Chenchus of the Amrabad ledge.

Since there is no perennial water at Koman Penta, the whole community moves to Kollem Penta during the hot weather; this site is 1½ miles west of Koman Penta and here they build small grass huts. During the mohua flower season, the Koman Penta people are joined by people from Tirmalapur and Maradugu, some of whom belonged originally to the now disbanded village of Elpamachena. 

In Warangal district there are 68 Chenchu language speakers. At Macherla, the Chenchus are scattered at various places like Kandlakunta, Sirrigiripadu, Cottipalla, Gangalkunta, Bodelaveedu and loyapalli. They are economically very poor and cannot afford to own either agricultural implements or plough-cattle.
The Chenchus of Guntur district in 1961 were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>2,968</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>3213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age and marital status for Chenchus of Guntur district:

1. Chenchus: Males 1,713
   Females 1,500
   Total 3,213

2. Males 24,633 Never married
   Females 19,692

3. Males 22,325 Married
   Females 22,526

4. Males 1,312 widowed
   Females 3,908

5. Males 434 Divorced
   Females 627

At the age 0-14

6. Males 673
   Females 654
7. Males 667  
    Females 610  
   Never married

8. Males 6  
    Females 44  
   Married

9. Males --  
    Females 5  
   widowed

10. Males 4  
    Females 13  
   Divorced

Age 15 – 44

11. Males 710  
    Females 606

12. Males 192  
    Females 17  
   Never married

13. Males 493  
    Females 540  
   Married

14. Males 12  
    Females 36  
   widowed

15. Males 13  
    Females 13  
   Divorced
Age 45+

16. Males 330
   Females 240

17. Males 1 Never married
   Females --

18. Males 279 Married
   Females 126

19. Males 43 widowed
   Females 111

20. Males 7 Divorced
    Females 3

Education in Rural areas for ST’s in Guntur District

1. Chenchus:
   Males 1,576
   Females 1,392

2. Males 1,460 illiterates
   Females 1,379
   Males 77 literate without educational level
   Females 10
   Males 39 Education primary level
   Females 3
Mother Tongue and Bilingualism in Guntur District 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>1610</td>
<td>1443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total speakers**

**Rural**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>1386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Urban**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bapatla Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vinukonda Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chenchus of Guntur district were great crafts men. They were experts in basket making and rope making.

Adilabad District:

Age and Marital Status for Scheduled Tribe

1. Chenchus: Males 13
   Females 7
   Total 20

2. Males 7
   Females 4
   Never married

3. Males 5
   Females 3
   Married

4. Males 1
   Females --
   widowed
Age 0-14

1. Males 4
   Females 2
   Total 6

2. Males 4
   Females 2
   Never married

Age 15-44

1. Males 8
   Females 4

2. Males 3
   Females 2
   Never married

3. Males 5
   Females 2
   Married

Age 45+

1. Males 1
   Females 1
   Total 2

2. Males -
   Females 1
   Married
3. Males 1 Widowed \(^{58}\)
Females -

Education in Rural Areas only for Scheduled Tribes in Adilabad District:

1. Chenchus
   Males 13
   Females 7
   Total 20

2. Males 12 Illiterate
   Females 7

3. Male 1 literate (without education level) \(^{59}\)
   Females -

Mother – Tongue and Bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes of Adilabad District:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lakshettipet Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mudhol Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Karimnagar District:

**Mother - Tongue**

1. **Chenchus**
   - Males: 15
   - Females: 8
   - Total: 23

2. **Males**
   - 15
   - Females: 8
   - Total: 23

3. **Male**
   - 15
   - Females: 8
   - Karimnagar Taluq (rural) 61
Age and Marital Status for Scheduled Tribes in Karimnagar District:

1. Chenchus
   - Male: 26
   - Females: 24
   - Total: 50

2. Males: 15, Never Married
   - Females: 12

3. Male: 10, Married
   - Females: 10

4. Males: 1, Widowed
   - Females: 1

5. Male: -, Divorced
   - Females: 1

Age 0 – 14

1. Chenchu
   - Male: 15
   - Females: 12
   - Total: 27

2. Males: 15, Never married
   - Females: 12
Age 15 – 44

1. Chenchu  
   Males 9  Married
   Females 10

2. Males  
   Divorced
   Females 1

Age 45 +

1. Chenchu  
   Males 2
   Females 1
   Total 3

2. Males 1  Married
   Females -

3. Male 1  Widowed 62
   Females 1

Education in Rural Areas only for Scheduled Tribes in Karimnagar District:

1. Chenchus  
   Males 26
   Females 24
   Total 50

2. Males 26  Illiterate 63
   Females 24
Mother – Tongue and Bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes in Karimnagar District:

### Total Speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rural**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Manthani Taluq (Rural)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nellore District:

Age and Marital Status for Scheduled Tribes

1. Chenchus
   - Males: 118
   - Females: 107
   - Total: 225
2. Males  60  Never Married
       Females 47

3. Males  54  Married
       Females 53

4. Males  2  Widowed
       Females 6

5. Males  2  Divorced
       Females 1

Age 0 – 14

1. Chenchu  Males  44
              Females 49
              Total  93

2. Males  44  Never married
              Females 46

3. Male -  Married
              Females 2

4. Males -  Divorced
              Females 1

Age 15 – 44

1. Chenchu  Males  51
              Females 42
              Total  93
2. Males 15 Never married  
Females 1

3. Males 35 Married  
Females 40

4. Males - Widowed  
Females 1

5. Males 1 Divorced  
Females -

Age 45 +

1. Chenchu Males 23  
Females 16  
Total 39

2. Males 1 Never Married  
Females -

3. Male 19 Married  
Females 11

4. Males 2 Widowed  
Females 5

5. Males 1 Divorced 65  
Females -
Education in Urban Areas only for Scheduled Tribes in Nellore District

1. Chenchu  
   Male  --  
   Females  1  
2. Males  -  Illiterate 66
   Females  1  

Rural

1. Chenchu  
   Male  118  
   Female  106  
2. Males  118  Illiterate 67
   Females  106  

Mother – Tongue and Bilingualism in Chenchus of Nellore District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Urban

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rapur Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Kavali Taluq (Rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mahboobnagar District:

#### Mother Tongue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.Tribe</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kallapur Taluq (Rural)

Chenchu

Males  13
Females  15

Age and Marital status:

1. Chenchu  Males  2333
Females  2278
Total  4611

2. Males  1158  Never Married
Females  882

3. Males  1076  Married
Females  1072

4. Males  77  Widowed
Females  295

5. Males  22  Divorced
Females  29

Age 0-14

1. Chenchu  Males  1061
Females  1005

2. Males  196  Never Married
Females  23
3. Males 818 Married
   Females 837

4. Males 28 Widowed
   Females 125

5. Males 19 Divorced
   Females 20

Age 45+

1. Chenchu Males 306
   Females 330

2. Males 3 Never Married
   Females 1

3. Males 251 Married
   Females 152

4. Males 49 Widowed
   Females 170

5. Males 3 Divorced
   Females 7

Education in Urban Areas only for Scheduled tribes:

1. Chenchu Males 50
   Females 1
2. Males 49  illiterate  
   Females 1  
3. Males 1  primary Basic educational level  
   Females -  

Rural Areas:

1. Chenchu  
   Males 2283  
   Females 2277  
2. Males 2211  illiterate  
   Females 2259  
3. Males 62  literate without educational level  
   Females 17  
4. Males 10  primary educational level  
   Females 1  

**Kurnool District:**

**Mother Tongue**

1. Chenchu  
   Males 3  
   Females 2  
   Total 5  
2. Chenchu  
   Males 3  Rural  
   Females 2
3. Chenchu Males 3 Giddalur Taluq
    Females 2

Chenchu population particulars in Kurnool District in the 1961 census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>5794</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5837</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chenchus form an important but one of the most primitive tribes of the state who have made the Nallamalai forests their area of habitation. Special schemes for their uplift are being administered through the Forest Department.

Age and Marital status for scheduled Tribes in Kurnool District:

1. Chenchu Males 2965
    Females 2872
    Total 5837

2. Males 1635 Never Married
    Females 1295

3. Males 1156 Married
    Females 1310

4. Males 145 Widowed
    Females 245

5. Males 29 Divorced
    Females 22
### Age 0 -14

1. **Chenchu**
   - **Males**: 1278
   - **Females**: 1293
   - **Total**: 2571

2. **Males**: 1273
   - **Never Married**
   - **Females**: 1267

3. **Males**: 5
   - **Married**
   - **Females**: 26

### Age 15 – 44

1. **Chenchu**
   - **Males**: 1229
   - **Females**: 1289
   - **Total**: 2518

2. **Males**: 314
   - **Never Married**
   - **Females**: 27

3. **Males**: 846
   - **Married**
   - **Females**: 1161

4. **Males**: 57
   - **Widowed**
   - **Females**: 80

5. **Males**: 12
   - **Divorced**
   - **Females**: 21
Age 45 +

1. Chenchu  Males  458
    Females  290
    Total  748

2. Males  48  Never Married
    Females  1

3. Males  305  Married
    Females  123

4. Males  88  Widowed
    Females  165

5. Males  17  Divorced
    Females  1

Education in Urban areas only for Chenchus in Kurnool District

1. Chenchu  Males  23
    Females  20
    Total  43

2. Males  19  Illiterate
    Females  19

3. Males  2  literate without educational level
    Females  1
4. Males 2 Primary educational level\textsuperscript{76}
    Females -

Education in Rural areas only for Chenchus in Kurnool District:

1. Chenchu Males 2942
    Females 2852
    Total 5794

2. Males 2497 Illiterate
    Females 2630

3. Males 308 literate without educational level
    Females 192

4. Males 136 Primary educational level
    Females 30

5. Male 1 Matriculation and above\textsuperscript{77}
    Female -

Mother Tongue and Bilingualism for Speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenchu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>2962</td>
<td>2870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Mahboobnagar district, the Scheduled Tribe population is only 4750 persons forming 0.3% of the population of the district. Almost all of them are found in the rural areas. More than 60% of them are found in Atchampet taluq and about 18% in Kollapur taluq. Mahbubnagar taluq contains about 10% of the Scheduled Tribe population in the district. Almost all the Scheduled Tribe population is accounted by the tribe Chenchu with a population of 4611 persons out of a total Scheduled Tribes population of 4750 persons in the district. Among the Scheduled Tribes is found agricultural labourers and cultivators.

**Chenchu:** Also known as Chenchu, Chanchikulam, Chanchalwad – a non-Aryan tribe dwelling in the hilly tracts which run parallel to the Kistna river and form the southern boundary of the Hyderabad Dominions. They are a well built race, shorter than the neighbouring Hindus, with complexions varying from dark brown or
black and rather coarse and frizzly hair. Their physical characteristics are high and prominent check bones, broad noses with spreading nostrils and black and piercing eyes.

**Customs and Manners:** The habits of the tribe are of the most primitive character. The men are almost nude, wearing merely a piece of cloth round their loins, while the more savage members of the tribe are said to cover their nakedness with aprons made of leaves. They make clearings in the forest and live in bee-hive shaped huts. They are still in a half savage state and are engaged as watchmen and guides in the mountain passes. They speak Telugu with a peculiar intonation.

**Origin:** They have a tradition which states that their first ancestor had seven sons and one daughter. From the sons sprang seven forest tribes, one of them being the Chenchus. The daughter was given in marriage to the god Krishna and had a son by the deity, who became the progenitor of the Krishna Chenchus.

**Internal structure:** The Chenchus are divided into four endogamous groups:

1. Telugu Chenchus
2. Adavi Chenchus
3. Krishna Chenchus
4. Bonta Chenchus
The Telugu Chenchus and Krishna Chenchus are beggars, and collect alms by dancing and singing songs before the Hindus of the plains. The chief distinction between the two is that, while the former beg by blowing a long horn, the latter obtain alms by ringing bells and playing on a bamboo flute. Both these sub-castes live by hunting as well. When begging, the Krishna Chenchus wear crowns of peacock feathers and garlands of beads. The Adavi Chenchus form the savage portion of the tribe and are to be found large numbers in the neighbourhood of Sri Sailya on the river Kistna. They are confined to the secluded parts of the forest clad hills and obtain their living by hunting deer, wild hog and hare with their bamboo bows and arrows. Some of them visit the villages of the plains and live in patch-work tents which explain their name Bonta chencus. They bring for sale bamboo seed and bamboo flutes, which they baites for grain to the villagers.

The information regarding the exogamous system of the tribe is rather incomplete. The section names appear to be partly totemistic and partly territorial. The following specimens may serve as an illustration:

1. Nalabotawaru
2. Myakalawaru
3. Avlawaru
4. Kudunuduwadlu
5. Waregallingu
6. Manulawaru
7. Gogulawaru
8. Maripallipapidi
9. Jalamuttadu
10. Kanya bainodu

A man may not marry a women of the own section; but he may marry the daughters of his maternal uncle, uncle or paternal aunt.

**Marriage:** Chenchu girls are married after they have attained the age of puberty, and free courtship is said to prevail among them. Infant marriages, however, are not entirely unknown though, as a general rule, they are practiced only by those who have come into contact with the Hindus of the plains. Girls are occasionally forcibly carried away and married. Sexual license before marriage is tolerated, and if a girl becomes pregnant her lover is required to marry her; if however, he declines to do so she is married to some other man, provided that the rule of exogamy is carefully observed in the previous liaison as well as in the subsequent marriage. The marriage ceremony is a simple one. The bridegroom’s father proposes for the girl and, if his offer is accepted, the wedding day is fixed and a hundred and one peacock feathers are delivered as the bride-price.

The bride is brought by her friends and relations to the bridegroom’s house, where both bride and bridegroom are dressed in white and seated opposite to each other, while the intervening space is filled by drummers who beat the tribal drums in
honour of the occasion. A great deal of drinking and dancing follows after which, the bridegroom ties a string of black beads round the bride’s neck. The bridal pair then retires into a separate hut to consummate their union. The bridegroom first reappears, and after him the bride, the pair is then greeted by the company as husband and wife.

**Widow-Marriage:** A widow may marry again, but she is not expected to marry her late husband’s younger or elder brother. No special ritual is ordained for the marriage of a widow. The bridegroom brings the widow to his house and provides a feast for his tribal brethren.

**Divorce:** Divorce is permitted for adultery and a divorced woman is allowed to marry again.

**Religion:** The favourite deity of the Chenchus is Ganga, represented by a small stone set up under a tamarind tree outside the village. A sheep is sacrificed to the deity, one of its legs is suspended from the tree and the rest of the carcase is taken by the votaries. The deity is worshipped only once a year. The Chenchus firmly believe in evil spirits and ascribe every sickness or calamity to their malevolent action. Brahman as have not yet been introduced and all religious functions are discharged by a member of the tribe.
**Disposal of the Dead:** The dead are buried in a lying position or posture with the head to the south and the face downwards. Mourning is observed for 10 days. On the 10th day after death a goat is sacrificed, the flesh is offered at the grave and after it has been touched by a crow, the mourners bathe, drink liquor and return home. No sradha is performed nor are any funeral rites observed afterwards.

**Social status:** The social rank of the tribe cannot be precisely stated. They are still beyond the pale of Hinduism. No castes, except Malas and Madigas, will eat from their hands. The influence of the great Hindu sects has already reached them and they are divided into Tirmanidharis and Vibhutidharis. These will not accept food from the hands of Mangalas, Chaklas and the lowest unclean classes. They eat the flesh of goats, swine, fowl, field rats, mice and jackals, and drink liquor distilled from the flowers of mohua (Bassia latifolia).

**Occupation:** The wildest of the Chenchus subsist by hunting and also live on forest produce and roots. Their weapons are a bamboo bow and reed arrow tipped with iron. They collect honey, tamarind, wood apples mohua flowers and herbs, which they barter for grain and cloth. Those who are settled on the outskirts of villages earn a livelihood by guarding the crops and cattle of the village farmers. A few only have taken to cultivation.80

About 45 groups are seen distributed in the Nallamala and the adjoining areas. The members of each Kulam proclaim that they are all related as either brothers and
sisters. But reference is explicitly made as to their descent from common ancestor.

Each kulum group among the Chenchu might have been a territorial group or a band owning a tract of land and owing to the practice of local exogamy and optional residential rules, the members of each group spread into the territories of the neighbouring groups.

Traditionally the Chenchus depended on seasonally available forest food for sustenance. A variety of animals were hunted by men. Day-to-day subsistence, food-sharing, gift exchange and simple implements, collective consumption rights were the features of their traditional economy.

Traditionally social relations are regulated by means of village council of elders known Kula Panchayati. The council was headed by raju (king) of Bhumani Kulam assisted by Pradhani (minister) of Kudumala kulam and kollagadu (whip attender) of uttaluri kulam. The British government had appointed headman or Reddy or deputy headman or Karanam as government employees to supervise and to take attendance every evening as a check over unruly behaviour and nomadic habit of the Chenchus. Now these designations are obsolete and the council comprises a body of elders headed by Pedda Manishi (big man). In spirit, the Chenchu society is acephalous. Temporary polycentric roles are enacted by individuals of suitable skills needed in specific situations.
The Chenchus customary law and justice seek to re-establish societal harmony. A breach of custom is resented, compensation extracted for a feast to resolve the dispute. Maintenance of physical distance between the disputants is the usual mechanism to avoid further aggravation of the dispute.

The Panchayati Raj has little influence on the Chenchus though a few of them are elected as sarpanch or members of the local Panchayats. Most of the Chenchu villages are annexed to the Panchayats of the plain areas dominated by high caste Hindus. In Interior pockets, the panchayats are either not existing or dysfunctional. Being illiterate and little exposed to the political arena of the modern society, the Chenchu find it hard to utilize the local self government for their benefit. Major offences are taken to the police and courts.

The Chenchu society is undergoing transformations from a food gathering, nomadic way of life to settled way of life by adopting agriculture and wage labour in the forestry. The Chenchu society is gradually transforming into patrilineal social organization with emergence of male dominance and power groups organized in agnatic lines. The people are also adopting principles of caste system especially commensal relations, purity and pollution which reflect in inter-community linkae and new cultural adoptions like puberty pollution, post-natal pollution, death pollution. The Chenchus have imbibed various omens, beliefs from the caste pollutions. The Chenchus are exploited by merchants, forest contracts and sometime by the ryots by denying remunerative prices for the forest produce or labour.
Extending as advance, partial payment to the Chenchus puts the merchants and contractor at advantageous position to extract more work or forest produce for lower prices. As the forest rules have become more stringent, their dependence on forest produce is hampered forcing the people to depend upon locally available employment opportunities. If the wage work is not available the people have to starve.\textsuperscript{81}

The Chenchus or chentsus are a Telugu speaking Jungle tribe inhabiting the hills of the Kurnool and Mahboobnagar districts. In a letter addressed to the Bengal Asiatic society, transmitting vocabularies of various tribes inhabiting Vizagapatnam, by Mr. Newill, it is stated that “the Chenchu tribe, whose language is almost entirely corrupt Hindi and Urdu with a few exceptions from Bengali, affords one more example to the many forthcoming of an uncultured aboriginal race having abandoned their own tongue”. The compiler of the Kurnool Manual (1885) remarks that Mr. Newill’s vocabulary’s seems to belong to the dialect spoken by lambadis, who sometime wander about the hills.

In the census Report 1901, Chenchu is said to be the name by which Irulas of North Arcot and the Mysore plateau are called sometimes, and in the census Report, 1891, Chenchus is given as a sub division of Yanadis. Mackenzie, in the local records collected by him, speaks of the Chenchus as being called Yanadi Chenchus.\textsuperscript{82}

In Taylor’s ‘Catalogue raisonne of Oriental Manuscripts’, the Chenchus are described as people who live westward of Ahobilam, Srisailam and other places, in
the woods or wilds and go about constantly carrying in their hands bows and arrows. They clothe themselves with leaves, and live on the sago or rice of the bamboo. They rob travelers, killing them if they oppose. This people afflict every living creature”.

The Chenchus barters the produce of the forests in which he lives, namely, honey, wax, deer horns and hides, tamarind, wood apples (Feronia elephantum), and Mohua (Bassia latifolia) fruit and flowers, and realizes a very considerable income from these sources. He applies fire by rubbing two dried sticks together, and walking in the wake of the flames, pricks up the horns disclosed to view by the reduction of the vegetation to ashes. He supplements this method with his bow and rifle, and by latter means alone obtains his hides.

A pure type of Chenchu:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stature, Cm</th>
<th>Nasal index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Av. 162.5</td>
<td>Av. 81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max 175</td>
<td>Max 95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min 149.6</td>
<td>Min 68.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Chenchus bear on the head a cap made of wax-cloth, deer or hare skin. By the more fashionable the tufted ear or bushy tail end of the large Indian squirrel (Sciurus Indicus) is attached by way of ornament to the string with which the hair of the head is tied into a bunch behind. Leafy garments have been replaced by white loin-clothes, and some of the women have adopted ravika (bodice), in imitation of the
female costume in the plains. Boys, girls and women wear bracelets made of phoenix or palmyra leaves. By some pieces of stick strung on a thread, or seeds of *Givotia rotelliformis*, are worn as a charm to ward off various forms of pain. Some of the women are tattooed on the forehead, corners of the eyes and arms. A few men tattooed on the shoulder as a cure for rheumatism.

The huts of present day gudem is composed are either in the shape of bee-hives like those of the Yanadis or oblong with sloping roof, and situated in a grove near a pond or a stream. The staple food of the Chenchus consists of cereals, supplemented by yams (*Dioscorea*) which was up rotted with a digging stick tipped with iron, forest fruits and various animals such as peacock, crow, lizard (*Varanus*), bear and black monkey. They are very fond of young flowers and buds of mohua tree, and tamarind fruits, the acidity of which is removed by mixing with them the ashes of the bark of the same tree.85

During the Paleolithic era, the vast forests and Parklands of South India were inhabited by bands of nomadic people. The Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh are the ethnic splinter group, which were left behind by the material advance of the great majority of the South Indian Population. Their habitat is confined to the rocky hills and forested plateau of the Nallamala Range, extending on both sides of the Krishna River.
In other parts of India, there are still some comparable groups of food gatherers who have so far resisted the pressure to move out of the forests and change over to a more settled life of special interest are the parallels between the Chenchus and the veddas of Sri Lanka, the first South Asian Tribe of hunters and food gatherers. But during some brief encounters with groups of semi-settled veddas, it would be difficult to distinguish members of the two population if brought together in one place.\(^86\)

The property of the Chenchus is clearly divisible into two categories:

1. The hunting and collecting grounds which are owned communally and
2. The moveable property consisting of clothes, implements, household goods and cattle belonging to individual men and women.

Until quite recently the most valuable property of the Chenchus was the land on which they lived, but this has been taken over as ‘Reserved State Forest’ by the Forest Department, which recognizes no individual or communal ownership of the land, and the Chenchus are thus, theoretically, deprived of their old right. This development has revolutionized the legal status of the Chenchus and now-a-days he is only tolerated, where he was once the undisputed lord. For the moment, however, we will disregard this comparatively recent development and describe the system of property rights in the land as it has existed for centuries and indeed still exists in the eyes of the Chenchus, who finds it impossible to understand that the forests which
have always been the home and inalienable possession of his forefathers should now no longer be his own.

Each village community possesses a certain tract of land, which is the common property of its members. The boundaries are clearly defined and recognized by the Chenchus of the neighbouring groups, while they are jealously guarded against infringement by members of the other communities. These boundaries follow natural features of the countryside, running along rivers, valleys and ridges, but in places where no such feature is available, specially large trees or boulders are utilized as landmarks. Each tract bears the name of the permanent settlement of its owners and the Chenchu speaks of Irla Penta or Medimankal land as denoting the tract which belongs to one of those villages.

The individual tracts vary very much in size. Pullaipalli and Rampur villages near the ear track have been founded within the memory of the generation of 40’s we may presume that in the old times the land was more evenly distributed among the inhabitants of the plateau. In the olden days, the individual tracts were larger, each probably consisting of one whole ridge and were owned jointly by the members of several local groups; which moved freely within the boundaries of the territory; moreover, it seems likely that the members of these local groups within one tract of land belonged to mainly one clan. Thus the whole ridge with the villages Sangrigundal, Medimankal, Boramacheruvu, Appapur and Pullaipalli appeared to have comprised one tract, divided by deep valleys from the ridge of Irla Penta in the
south-west, and the ridges of Malapur and Sarlapalli in the north-east. As the Chenchus became more settled and learnt to build permanent dwellings, they may have divided the land between the various local groups, which then developed into village communities. This would perhaps account for the frequent inter-village migrations which even today are common occurrences within these major territorial divisions.

The Chenchus declare that in the olden days relations between neighbouring groups were often strained and the most of the quarrels were due to the members of one group trespassing on another’s hunting and collecting grounds. Any encroachment on the land of the neighbouring group was fiercely resented and offenders risked being shot by the lawful proprietors of the land. A wounded animal crossing a boundary was considered the property of the hunter.

Even in these days, when the punishment for infringement of a neighbour’s land is no longer so drastic, the boundaries are usually respected. Those collecting roots and fruits on the land of another village are reprimanded by the owners, who may appropriate the ill-gotten gains. On a journey, however, a Chenchu may collect enough food for his immediate needs on any of the lands en route, but he is not allowed to carry any of the produce collected over the boundary.

A group in joint possession of an individual tract of land, can be acquired in two different ways. A Chenchu may be born into the community to which his father
and grand father belonged or, raised in his mother’s village, he may have acceded to the joint ownership in the land through his matrilineal descent. Thus ownership in land may be established through either the male or the female line and this potential ownership entitles a man to hunt and collect in the lands of both parents. Living in his father group he has a right to his father’s ancestral lands as well as those of his mother’s kin; like wise, if inhabiting his mother’s village, his inheritance is not only the land pertaining thereto, but also that of his father’s village. Moreover marriage initiates a man into the freedom of the land of his wife’s group while she gains the corresponding right to the fruits of her husband’s lands a right which persists even in the event of his death and her eventual return to her own village community.

The Chenchus recognize no individual proprietorship in land, nor do they recognize any individual right on fruit bearing trees. Even the bananas planted by the father of the Peddamanishi of Boramacheruvu do not rank as his son’s property, but are the heritage of the whole community and the fruit is shared by all the members of the group.

Although all land is a communal possession, there is a very pronounced conception of individual property. The Chenchu considers that labour expended on any product creates a right entitling the labourer to unrestricted ownership though that same product as long as it lies fallow is the communal property of the village on whose land it flourishes. Similarly animals killed in the chase become the property of
the hunter, though there is usually a tacit understanding among men out hunting together that all spoils should be shared.

The same principle applies to the ownership of personal property, such as weapons, tools or household goods. A man is the exclusive owner of the bows and arrows which he has manufactured or the utensils which he has purchased.

Some women own buffaloes presented to them by their parents, either on marriage or at some later date, and these as well as any ornaments and utensils which were acquired from their parents are considered their personal property.

There are no hard and fast rules of inheritances, as this is probably due to the paucity of the Chenchus’ material possessions which until recently hardly constituted anything inheritable.

Lingaru (Sigarlu) of Sarlapalli, on the death of his grandfather, who was very rich, the three sons divided the cattle almost equally the eldest taking one buffalo more than the other two brothers.

Papama of Irla Penta (House II) has three buffaloes, which she received from her father on her marriage to Kanuru, who owned no cattle.
The case of late Peddamanishi of Irla Penta affords another example for the division of cattle among both sons and daughters for not only Guruvaru (Nimal), the later Peddamanishi of Irla Penta, but also his younger brother and sister received shares of their father’s large herd.

In the absence of any strict laws of inheritance, the Chenchus seem to depend on their sense of a fair deal effecting an equal distribution among all the children; although theoretically daughter have no proper status as heirs in questions of personal property they receive their share as a do *natio inter vivos*.

In the rare event of a man or women dying childless, personal property is said to pass to the nearest blood relations in the male line. If the deceased had resided among his mother’s kin, his maternal relations would acquire his belongings with the possible exception of his cattle.

Houses embody no particular value in the eyes of the Chenchu and though a widow will continue to live in her late husband’s house. The house of a deceased relative will not be occupied by others, but will be left to decay in the face of the elements.

The Chenchus present reaction to breaches of custom and law undoubtedly differs from their attitude from century ago. For in olden times the Chenchus were
practically an autonomous group and the only sanction for unlawful behaviour was
that meted out by the members of the community.

Before we go into the various forms of breaches of law and the reactions they
provoke, it is necessary to recognize the general principle underlying Chenchu justice.
Every infringement of the established order gives rise to two sentiments on the part of
the community anger at the disturbance created by the offender, which may result in
immediate infliction of corporal punishment and the desire to re-establish the
disrupted harmony and to settle the question in a manner which preludes any
repetition of the incident.

There is no crime in Chenchu society which cannot be expiated and the
customary manner of atonement for violation of the law is the feasting of the
responsible men of the community. The gathering together of elders is essential for
rectifying the evil consequences of an offence and such a gathering must invariably
be accompanied by a feast at the expense of the culprit. Once the feast has taken
place, the crime is blotted out and the culprit resumes his normal place in the society.

Gathering of Pedamanishi and elders are no common occurrence for self-
reliance of the individuals is one of the cardinal principles of the Chenchu’s sense of
justice.
Boundary disputes and quarrels over women were two of the chief causes that in the olden days gave rise to homicide, but when a feud between two groups lasted over a long period peace was re-established through the intervention of the old men of a neutral group.

Few offences call for punishments by the community as a whole, breach of the law of clan-exogamy is always severely punished by the whole community.

From the tales of the olden times, it is said, when offenders were shot or beaten it would seem that breaches of law and custom were then dealt with much more severely although punishment was presumably rather the outcome of the immediate anger on the part of the members of the community than of any legal procedure.

Certain crimes common in more highly developed societies, are practically unknown among Chenchus. They do not steal from one another.

The subject which causes most friction in Chenchu society and which leads most frequently to bickerings and quarrels is the relations between man and woman.

The seducer of an unmarried girl who has become pregnant is usually persuaded to take her into his house should be refuse, he has to pay a fine which is
‘eaten’ by the elders, and the child is brought up by the girl’s family, but belongs to the father’s clan.

Councils of elders meet not only to re-establish the law but also to mediate if a man wishes to settle a question with the backing of public opinion.

The difficulty of describing of the Chenchu’s attitude to law and its enforcement by penalties is due to the fact that no strict code of legal sanctions exists. The rough and ready justice meted out by the members of the community in a manner devoid of all formality is based almost entirely on the tide of the public opinion arising over the individual case. Chenchus have undoubtedly a clear idea of right and wrong, but the decision of the appropriate action to be taken in the face of a breach of law is largely left to the inspiration of the moment. ⁸⁷

For the Chenchu life changes little with the seasons and his activities. If we observe any group of families from the early hours of dawn till the fire burns down at night, we will gain a picture of the Chenchu as he lives and has lived for thousands of years in the forests that were and are his natural home.

There is seldom food in a Chenchu settlement in the early morning, roots and fruits are consumed when brought home in the evening; there may be a handful of nuts, milk, some curd and this is given to the smallest children Far over rolling hills,
into deep valleys, and over steep ridges the Chenchu wanders in the search of food. He follows paths only visiting other villages.

Women like to linger in the village in the morning after the men have gone to the jungle. As shadow shortens (half past nine) the young girls take their digging sticks and baskets and wander off in small groups; Men and Women go to jungle hungry, but as soon as they have collected some handful of roots, they make a fire and roast enough to satisfy their immediate need.

The Chenchu is a child of nature and through every vein of his life there runs the instinct to follow his own inclinations. Even his hours of leisure emanate that same spirit of independence, individualism and spontaneity which characterizes his more serious activities, and it is therefore not surprising to discover that adult Chenchus indulge in no organized form of sport, that children have few community games, and that both singing and dancing are expressions of mood, based on improvisation rather than on stereotyped forms.

Hunting to Chenchu is not a sport, but a means of filling his stomach. Chenchu does not hold races or wrestling matches as indeed any other kind of games by which to try his strength.

Dancing holds no religious or magical significance for the Chenchu, to him it is a purely social function, and one in which he indulges when he has imbibed liquor.
Temperament and Character:

A stranger arriving unannounced in a Chenchu settlement is usually greeted with friendliness, but with a certain initial restraint Chenchus are fairly quick in understanding and learning, the Chenchu boys are more efficient and quicker at grasping what he wanted, than the Telugu men from Aurabad and Mananur. In Madras Presidency, the Chenchu children are not dull at school and a considerable number have reached High School standard and later employed as forest guards and teachers in primary schools. Chenchus can adapt to new conditions, if they understand the advantages of the change and it is possible to arouse their interest in the new enterprise. Cattle’s breeding has been accepted among the Chenchus while plough-cultivation found no favour. Neither attitude can be invoked as proof of the existence nor non-existence of a trait of adaptability in the Chenchus’ temperament, for the adoption of the one and rejection of the other occupation were due to their relative compatibility with the general pattern of Chenchu culture. Lack of perseverance in the Chenchus character, prevent them from applying concentrated effort on any one objective for very long.

Quite unjustly the Chenchus have acquired a reputation for being sullen and unanuiable. Sullen they are, if their villages are invaded by unwelcome visitors. Compared with most primitive races the Chenchus can hardly be described as sociable. He has a definite predilection for living in isolated small groups and some families live at least a part of the year in one house settlements, divorced from the rest
of the community. Chenchu is quite content to live with his nearest relatives and not at all anxious for the advantages of large companies, but at the same time he is no introvert, but definitely communicative towards those with whom he happens to live. Chenchu enjoys good company. Yet, he has no desire to expand his social horizon, to the other side of Kistna, where food is more plentiful he had no wish to see strange faces. On the sight of the tiger, the Chenchu do not show any sign of panic. The Chenchu is brave enough so long as the danger he has to encounter falls within the orbit of his experience.

Chenchus are subject to moods, which follow each other in quick succession; they may be full of enthusiasm over a certain plan today and have forgotten it tomorrow, and they have been accustomed to follow the dictates of their momentary inclinations, there exists no steadying influence arising from education to counteract this vacillating temperament. The Chenchus themselves are quite conscious of the rapid changes of their temper, and say that men who quarrel in the evening and even hit one another will be the best of friends next morning closely linked with the unstability of his mood is the Chenchu emotionalism. Although in many respects a sober-thinking realist the Chenchu is easily carried away by his emotions, which are at times violent and unrestrained.

The excitability of the Chenchu finds expression in his manner of talking and his lively gesticulations.
Aesthetic considerations play a very small role in Chenchu life.

When we turn to the more tangible influences on Chenchu culture, we have the advantages of two definite landmarks:

1. The introduction of iron, and
2. The adoption of Telugu as the language of the Chenchus.

Today all Chenchus use iron weapons and tools and there remains no recollection of a time when they had to do without metal. Once higher developed populations in the neighbourhood had learnt the use of iron, the Chenchus must soon have acquired objectives of the new material and thus experienced its vast superiority over their earlier implements. The introduction of iron must have given rise to a system of barter where by the Chenchus obtained metal tools and weapons in exchange for forest produce and it is not unlikely that the closer intercourse accompanying such transactions ultimately led to the ousting of the Chenchus original language. The Chenchus of the oldest cultural stratum were undoubtedly of Malid stock, but now-a-days a strong strain of a less primitive type is discernible and this is probably due to the contact with the Telugu speaking plains population which are predominantly of a more progressive, though also dark skinned type.

The Chenchus funeral rites, and particularly the more elaborate ceremonial accompanying and following cremation as practiced by them of the vatellapalli
Range, are undoubtedly modeled on the customs prevailing among the neighbouring plains population.

The most recent impact of a materially superior civilization on the forest dwelling Chenchus began less than a hundred years ago when the opening up of the upper plateau for purposes of forest exploitation brought them forcibly into extensive and sustained contact with outsiders.

The aboriginal tribe whose geographical location is closest to the Chenchu are the yanadis of the Nellore district in Madras Presidency, with whom they are also related in physical type.\textsuperscript{88}

The Yanadis dwellings, described as, “conical, circular huts” with a long centre-post from which small spoke like beam radiates, seem to be almost identical with Chenchu houses.\textsuperscript{89}

**The Village Chenchus of Hyderabad:**

The Chenchus may no longer be reckoned as purely a jungle race. Those leading the life of food gatherers in the forests of the upper plateau are today in the minority, and most of their tribesmen within the borders of Hyderabad now live in symbiosis with the peasant folks of the lower plateau and the plains between Lingal
and Atchampet, while a smaller group dwells under similar conditions in the adjoining Nalgonda District.

In the census of 1931 the Chenchus were recorded only in the Mahbubnagar District and their number was given as 2264. At the time of Haimendorf investigation apart from 426 individuals counted by him on the upper plateau, about 1800 Chenchus must live on the lower ledge and on the fungi of the plains, while those of Nalgonda District had obviously overlooked during the census operations. The figures of the census of 1941 confirm this view in so far as

- 2008 Chenchus have been recorded in Amrabad Taluq, and
- 312 in Nalgonda District

But they reveal, on the other hand, a surprisingly large member of persons returned as ‘Chenchus’ dispersed over other areas. Thus the total number of Chenchus in H.E.H. the Nizam’s Dominions is given as 3865 in 1941, of which

3280 were returned in Mahbubnagar,
312 in Nalgonda District,
107 in Karimnagar and

The rest in Atraf-e-Balda, Gulbarga, Warangal, Medak and Nizamabad; two Chenchus were even found in Hyderabad city. While the fluctuations of the village Chenchu population between the low lands of Amrabad Taluq, where many have turned into landless agricultural labourers, and other parts of the Mahbubnagar
District are understandable, the occurrence of Chenchus in districts as far as Karimnagar on the Godavari calls for an explanation.

Small numbers of so called Chenchus have in former census operations been recorded also in the Chanda District of the central provinces. Syed Siraj-ul-Hassan mentions besides the jungle Chenchus three other endogamus groups:

Telugu Chenchus,

Krishna Chenchus and

Bonta Chenchus

The former two are described as beggars, who “collect alms by dancing and singing before the Hindus of the plains”. The Telugu Chenchus are said to beg blowing long horns, while the Krishna Chenchus, wearing crowns of peacock feathers, play on bamboo flutes, and the Bonta Chechus live in patch work tents, which is said to account for the name Bonta, and subsist by bartering jungle produce. When in 1921 a total of 6121 Chenchus were returned in the Dominions

Census of 1921 – 6121

1931 – 2264 drop

1941 – 3865 increase

of Chenchus.
The 2008 Chenchus recorded in the Amrabad Taluq and those smaller groups in the adjacent taluqs are all genuine members.

No historical information is available as to the time when the first groups of Chenchus settled on the outskirts of Telugu villages. The Chenchus near Mananur declare that their forefathers have always dwelt there, and this is probably correct, for although temples of considerable antiquity point to old Hindu establishments, it was only within last century the plains people came to live in great numbers on the Amrabad ledge. In the olden days this part of the plateau must have been largely covered with forest, and inhabited by the Chenchus who led much the same life as the Jungle Chenchus of the present day.

The position of the Chenchus on the fringe of the plains near Lingal and Atchampet is slightly different. Majority of these Chenchus were once inhabitants of the adjacent hill country and have only come down to the plains in recent times. This emigration has not yet ceased and many Chenchus of Boramacheruvu, Pullaipalli, Irla Penta and other jungle villages have near relatives who live in lowland settlements, while on the other hand a few Chenchus from the plains have resettled on the upper plateau in such villages as Rampur and Bikit Penta. There have also been movements of population on the eastern side of the plateau; for with the abandonment of such villages as Elpamachena and Tatigundal, many Chenchus left the upper plateau for villages on the lower ledge like upnotla and Tirmlaapur, where other hamlets of Chenchus already existed.
Wherever close contact between Chenchus and Telugu peasants has been established, be it through the emigration of Chenchus into the plains or the invasion of the uplands by plains folk, the Chenchus have had to relinquish their old mode of life and adopt themselves to the economy of their more progressive neighbours. This adaptation has of necessity led to a gradual transformation of their entire culture pattern, and is one more phase in an age-old process which for thousands of years has been at work in the Deccan.

Roughly speaking it is possible to classify the Chenchus into two groups, representing different degrees of assimilation. Those Chenchus who dwell in the plains villages between Lingal and Atchampet and in the villages in the westernmost part of the Amrabad ledge such as Mananur and Mulkamavadi have proceeded further along the path of material progress and consequently consider themselves superior not only to all the Jungle Chenchus but also to the other and less prosperous group which is located mainly in the villages east of Amrabad such as Madhavanpalli, upnotla, Tirmalapur, Chitimangunta and Maradugu.

In the Chenchu settlements near Lingal and Mananur the houses are built of solid mud with roofs thatched with grass. Some have retained the round shape and conical roof of the traditional Chenchu dwelling, but others are rectangular like those of the local peasantry. The round houses are as large as the largest Jungle Chenchu houses and the mud wall partitioning off the hearth takes the place of the wattle
screen. But the rectangular houses are considerably bigger, being twice as long as broad, with a door that permits of entry without stooping and the roof that slopes from a ridge pole and is thatched on four sides. Generally they contain two rooms and from the mud walls shelves are hollowed for pots and drinking vessels.

Grouped in twos and threes round a common courtyard, where an occasional papaya tree grows, with walls gaily painted in patterns of red and white in the manner typical of that part of the Telugu country, these small hamlets present a cheerful and comfortable appearance. But these are the homesteads of Chenchus whom fate has favoured, and most of the Chenchu settlements attached to Telugu villages give the impression of poverty and untidiness. In Kondanagole, the houses stand huddled together at some distance from the main village and at the time of the author Haimendorf’s visit the wattle walls are precariously patched with dried leaves and the fences were dilapidated, while in the country east of Amrabad the average Chenchu hamlet consist of a few round houses which except for thin mud plaster on the parts of the wattle walls are exactly like those of Jungle Chenchus.

The material culture of the village Chenchus very much resembles that of the lower Telugu castes, but there is a wide range in quality and quantity of implements and household goods which varies considerably with the individual economic situation. In the Lingal-Mananur group the house often contains earthen jars two or three feet high for storing grain and brass vessels for cooking and serving food, while pounding blocks and pestles for husking grain as well as mill-stones are almost
universal possession. There are those men who have their own ploughs and agricultural implements and some Chenchus of Lingal even possess carts.

In their dress the village Chenchus are gradually conforming to the fashions of their neighbours. Men wears turbans of various colours and wrap themselves in white clothes. On the Amrabad ledge they still wear gosh batta and Kash Kako like Jungle Chenchus, but in the villages of Atchampet-Lingal plain men have adopted the short dhoti of the lower agricultural castes. Women dress in bodice and saree of brilliant colours, preferably blue and yellow.

Although they are as a whole much more sophisticated, with a greater wealth of material possession, there is no uniformity in the economic situation of the village Chenchus. In Lingal, Chechus owning not only dry but also wet fields, and cultivating rice, millet and certain vegetables to an extent which renders them entirely independent of jungle produce. They possess buffaloes, oxen, goats and chicken and use of their own bullocks for ploughing. Men who do not own fields sufficient for their support enter the employ of cultivators of other castes and in some villages such as Kondanagol and Balmor all the Chenchus of the hamlets attached to these Telugu settlements working fields of wealthy villagers and handing over half the harvest to their landlords in lieu of rent.

In Mananur, ten Chenchus cultivate their own fields, growing millet, maize and castor. Here many are indebted to money-lenders and merchants. The area
cultivated by the village Chenchus of the Amrabad ledge is not sufficient to secure their independence from other sources of food supply and they have still their digging sticks and go root collecting in the near by jungle when they run short of grain.

In Jangamreddipalli, which is a small village of twelve Chenchu houses and about an equal number of Telugu households, no Chenchus are independent cultivators.

Near the large Telugu village of Padra are two Chenchus settlements and here we find side by side representatives of the two main groups of village Chenchus.

- One settlement consists of Katraj and Daserolu clan closely resembles the villages of the Mananur type and the

- Second lying about three furlongs further east is inhabited by people of Jela, Menlur and Sirraru clan.

The people of the former settlement have a fair amount of cattle and although they have fields of their own. The second hamlet has a decidedly less prosperous look. Most of their wives come from villages to the east and there were women from the other side of the Dindi River.
In Tirmalapur, the Chenchus have no fields and no domestic animals except a few hens and dogs. Most families claim to have come from Tatigundal. People of Tirmalapur, have visiting relations with Sarlapalli, Koman Penta and Tiramaredipalli.

The Chenchus of Upnotla live under same conditions. Four of their houses stand close to the main village and five at a distance of one or two furlongs.

Very similar conditions exist in Maradugu, Ippapalli and all the settlements in the country sloping down to the Dindi River.

In their social order and customs the Chenchus in close touch with Telugu castes have not yet undergone any radical changes and differ indeed only slightly from those who dwell in the Jungle.

The clans occurring among the village Chenchus are found in the upper plateau and seem to have a regional distribution. Katraj and Nimal, Balmor and Urtalu predominate in the plains villages round Lingal and Atchampet while Nallapoteru, Daserolu, Urtalu, Kaniama and Katraj are the clans found in the Mananur groups. Menlur with its sub-clan Daunsen, Silam, Sirraru and Sigarlu with its sub-clan Jela on the other hand are restricted to the villages east of Amrabad.
A few isolated Nimal people are found in the Menlur group, but no people of Tokal clan live in any of the villages of the Amrabad ledge.

It is unusual to marry within one’s own settlement and most people find their marriage partners in neighbouring villages. The Chenchus of the Mananur group intermarry occasionally with the plains villages near Lingal, while those to the east of Amrabad entertain marriage relations with the Chenchus of Nalgonds District on the other side of the Dindi River.

The continuous contact with Hinduism has not unnaturally had an effect on the religious ideas of the village Chenchus. The Chenchus of Mananur and Mulkamavadi have given up the cult of Garelamaisamma for the worship of Hindu deities Lingamaya, Potsamma, Potraj and Ellamma, and they also make puja Hanuman. In Jangamreddipalli they still pray to Garelamaisamma. In Tirmalapur, Garelamaisamma is not worshipped, Puja are made for Lingamaya, Peddamma and Vidamma. The Chenchus of Upnotla declared that Garelamaisamma and Lingamaya are the greatest gods.

In plains villages such as Balmor and Kondanagol Garelamaisamma is occasionally propitiated, while in Lingal the Chenchus seem to have forgotten even the name of Garelamaisamma.
In Hyderabad there are no literate Chenchus. Government schools exist in all larger villages such as Mananur, Lingal and Mulkamavidi.90

**The Chenchus of Madras Presidency:**

Many references have been made to the Kinsmen of Chenchus of Hyderabad across the Kistna River, with whom they entertain marital relations and frequent social intercourse. In the census operations of 1941 altogether 9003 members of the tribe were returned. Of these 5878 lived in Kurnool district and 2104 in the neighbouring district of Guntur, while small groups were found in several districts.

For the past one hundred and fifty years the Chenchus of Kurnool have been a matter of concern for Government and various policies have been tried in an attempt to better their conditions and to wear them from their nomadic life and those habits which were thought to impede a successful exploitation of the forest.

As early as the first half of the nineteenth century agricultural populations on the fringe of the forests began to narrow the territory in which the Chenchus had hitherto been free to roam and in 1860 the introduction of forest conservancy resulted in a curtailment of their rights in the forest itself. It is probably safe to assume that originally the Chenchus of Madras were as inoffensive and as shy as those still living in the jungles of Hyderabad, but with the restrictions imposed on their activities a rapid change seems to have taken place; the Chenchus resorted to petty banditry, and
the authorities were soon inundated with complaints of such offenses as the willful firing of jungles, theft and robbery.

The necessity of safeguarding not only the property of the neighbouring cultivators but also the welfare of the thousands of pilgrims who come yearly to Srisailam led Government to institute various measures for controlling the Chenchus and these eventually culminated in the establishment of large settlements under the supervision of the Forest Department. The Chenchus were granted rights on all forest produce for domestic purposes as well as for sale, and were allowed to fish ad hunt freely and to graze a limited amount of cattle, sheep and goats. In 1883-84 the Forest Department, aiming at the exclusion of the merchants to whom the Chenchus, were heavily indebted, took over the collection of minor forest produce, and used Chenchu labour for this purpose. But the scheme was not a success and in 1897-98 this policy was abandoned and the Chenchus reverted to their original method of selling the minor forest produce independently to the merchants.

With the exception of the Chenchu settlement of Srisailam, which is closely attached to the temple and has only thirty houses, the lay-out of the villages bear the hallmark of outside supervision. In Peddacheruvu the hundred and twenty Chenchu houses are arranged in rows separated by broad streets. The houses are of round type with wattle walls and are fenced with either individually and or in groups of two.
A few papaya trees stand within these enclosures. In Peddacheruvu there live also Lambadis and people of lower Telugu castes, but Nagaluti and Bair tuti are pure Chenchu settlements. Nagalute contains seventy houses and Bairluti ninety-five and here too the houses are arranged in regular blocks. In these villages round houses are rare and are used as goat-pens, while the dwellings are square or rectangle with walls of wattle and pyramidal or ridged roofs of the thatched grass. Generally the larger rectangular houses contain two rooms and there is frequently a cow-shed and a goat-pen attached, the whole establishment being enclosed by its own fence.

All these settlements are clean and well kept. The villages of the Jungle Chenchus are so small and the relations between their inhabitants so intimate, that there is no need for any outwards expression of their unity, but these large settlements, which cover a considerable area, seem to lack cohesion and a social centre and it is hard to envisage how among a tribe with traditions like those of the Chenchus any community feeling should grow out of those straight and orderly rows of houses.91

In each village there is a headman and a deputy headman, who are both selected by Government on grounds of personal ability and education and receive a small salary; and in some settlements non-Chenchu plainsmen well versed in agriculture have been appointed as headman in order to teach the Chenchus cultivation. Chenchu headmen selected and paid by Government are considered as petty officials rather than natural leaders of the community. In each village there is a
man described as Peddamanishi who acts at puja and whose dignity is hereditary, but there is no hereditary Peddamanishi with secular authority. A note on the Chenchus of Kurnool in the census of India, 1931, mentions an exogamous sept of chieftains and priests called Bhumanas, who “have precedence and at ceremonies in East Kurnool acts as high priests.” It is further stated that “though there is no definite chieftain class and all do not obey a recognized leader in gudem where Bhumanas are represented one of them is generally recognized and obeyed as chief.” The same note speaks of three other occupational septs, namely

Kudamala (minister)

Desari (officiating priest) and

Uthaluri (village watchman).

It is obvious that such a division into occupational septs can only have developed in villages under strong Hindu influence.

The Forester in charge of a village or a group of villages exercises a fairly strict control over the social and economic activities of the inhabitants and deals with disputes and petty crimes in conjunction with the village headman and village elders. Serious crimes are brought before the regular courts, which wisely do not apply the Indian Penal Code, but pass judgement according to a code especially adapted to Chenchu conditions.
In 1916 the first primary schools for Chenchus were established, and later schools for boys and girls exist in all the larger settlements while in Peddacheruvu there is a special school for girls. These schools have been made attractive to the Chenchus by providing the pupils with a meal in the middle of the day, for which Government pays per child and in addition shirts and shorts are given to boys and frocks to girls. The attendance of the school is satisfactory in Bairluti 55 children are enrolled and in Nagaluti 49 children, nearly half of which are girls. The children learnt not only to read and write, but also such useful handicrafts as the plaiting of the mats, the manufacture of leaf-plates and basket-making. Moreover, they are given practical instruction in gardening and agriculture; in Nagaluti 5 acres are cultivated by school children under the control of the teacher and the average annual yield is 300 measures of grain.

In the Chenchu schools the children read up to the fifth standard and those pupils who do well are enabled to attend the Board High School at Atmakur, where Government provides them with full boarding and lodging as well as clothes and all school requisites.

Those who reach the final standard may undergo training as teachers and there are already several Chenchus employed as school-masters in primary schools. Others have the possibility of becoming the forest-guards or of finding employment in the Chenchu shops. Although there are not yet sufficient fully qualified Chenchus to
fill all the posts available they are employed in increasing number of the Forest Department and are said to make efficient forest guards.\(^{93}\)

Inspite of many excellent results of the 1940’s enlightened policy, involving incidentally an annual expenditure of about Rs.30,000/- for the development of Chenchus in the social sphere is far from satisfactory and the surprisingly high number of serious crimes seems to indicate a lack of social equilibrium. From 1940-43, nearly twenty cases of murders and manslaughter committed by Chenchus of Kurnool have come into court; the majority were crimes passionless and victims and accused all Chenchus. Three cases that occurred in Bairlut and Nagaluti in 1942 may serve as examples. Ankaru of Bairlut killed a man with an arrow in the course of a quarrel, but since the victim had also drawn his bow, Guruvaru was discharged on the grounds that he acted in self-defence. In the same year a man in Nagaluti caught his wife in adultery and killed her with an arrow. He was also discharged.

Cases of incendiaryism are also fairly frequent and revenge or personal hate are the motives usually. Chenchus seldom steal from each other and the theft of crops from other villages are generally petty offences.

It would appear that economic motives play little role in the cases of murder and incendiaryism and we may therefore question how it is that the Chenchus who in the jungles of Hyderabad are quite capable of settling their quarrels peacefully, should have so many murderers within their ranks in Kurnool. The only answer which
presents itself to this disturbing question is that the process of gathering the Chenchus into large settlements has undermined their own social organization and no new system had been evolved to replace the old order. All Chenchus in their pristine state are individualists and any man disagreeing with the other members of his group separates from them and joins another group. Thus friction is avoided and the expedient of flight saves many the bitterness of a long drawn out quarrel, absence blunting hate and personal prejudices and jealousies. But in Kurnool the Chenchus are unable and indeed forbidden to leave their villages and settle elsewhere, while their traditional customs which were sufficient to check outbreaks of violence in the case of small groups of closely related families, prove inadequate to govern the relations between the members of the large communities. In the old times, interference with married women was limited by the fact that the women of a man’s local group were usually either his clan-sisters or the wives of his brothers or first cousins, and that distance rendered intrigues with other women comparatively difficult. Now-a-days, the inhabitants of a settlement consists of members of many clans, between whom there appears to exist little of the cohesion and mutual loyalty necessarily for a healthy community life, and it may take a long time till the present un-widely aggregations of Chenchus in the settlements established by the Forest authorities develop into organic and responsible communities.

**Agriculture:** The Chenchus were permitted to cultivate an extent of 3457 acres of land, the area brought under cultivation was 1652 acres, as against 1632 acres during 1940. This indicates that they are evincing increasing interest in cultivation.
The Chenchus in two *gudems* have taken to wet cultivation – some Chenchus were granted loans free of interest to enable them to purchase bulls, casts and other agricultural implements.

**Co-operative Societies:** There is a Thrift and Loan Co-operative Society at Indireswaram in the Kurnool west division. It took up two fuel coupes in the Kurnool West division. There is also a Chenchu co-operative purchase and sale society in Atmakur of which the Chenchu of the *gudems* in Sivapuram, Bairluti, Pechereuvu and Gundlabrahmeswaram ranges are shareholders. It undertook to supply tamarind, galnuts and bel-wax to the jails.

A loan of Rs.10,000/- was granted to the society by Government for the working of society during 1941-42. Already a sum of Rs.6000/- was drawn as loan. The society is also contemplating the construction of a pucca godown at Bairluti at a cost of Rs. 1300/-.

**Education:** There are 24 elementary schools, of which one school at Pecheruvu is exclusively open to girls and is incharge of head-misters and an assistant. Education is imparted free in all schools. During the year 1943, 693 Chenchu boys and girls received education. During the year, 15 Chenchu students received higher education in the Board High School at Atmakur. A private tutor to
look after the boys was employed on a monthly salary of Rs.15/-. A Chenchu Home
was also run at Atmakur.

**Hospital (Medical Aid):** The Chenchu Hospital at Pecheruvu continued to
function. It was incharge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. The institution proved very
useful for the Chenchus.

**Employment:** Some Chenchus have been appointed as forest guards and
forest watchers. They are found to be useful, especially in the interior forests.

Owing to the material progress of the Chenchus of Kurnool, the differences
between them and their tribesmen on the other side of Kistna now appear
considerable, but in the olden days there can have been little distinction between the
Chenchus, south and north of the river. All the loans occurring among the Jungle
Chenchus of Hyderabad, with the exception of Eravalu and Balmor, are also found in
Kurnool, do to a certain extent look down on their less prosperous but proud brethren
of Hyderabad, they have no prejudice against intermarriage, and quite a number of
Chenchus now living on the Amrabad plateau were born in Kurnool district.⁹⁴

On the whole, there has been steady improvement in the general economic
condition of the Chenchus. The several ameliorative measures carried out have done
good to their well-being, and if pursued they are bound to make the conditions of the
Chenchus considerably better.
B. Distribution of Chenchus on the Upper Plateau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No.of Houses</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th></th>
<th>Children</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irla Penta</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medimankal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boramacheruvu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appapur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rampur</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikit Penta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pullaipalli</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malapur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulajelma</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railet</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vatellapalli</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarlapalli</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patur Bayal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timmaredipalli</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koman Penta</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
<td><strong>426</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


*Dress and Ornament*, pp.24-28.


*Ibid.*, Peddamanishi, pp.119, 121 -123.


36 Haimendorf, *Village Census*, Appendix 1, p.331.

37 Ibid., p.335.

38 Ibid., pp. 336-7.

39 Ibid., p.338.

40 Ibid., pp.341-2.

41 Ibid., p.344.

42 Ibid., p.345.

43 Ibid., pp. 346-7.

44 Ibid., p.348.


46 Ibid., p.355.


48 Ibid., p.362.

49 Ibid., p.363.

50 Ibid., p.364.


54 Ibid., pp.174-5.

55 Ibid., Table SCT- III part B(ii), p.178.

57 *Ibid.*, Sub-Table 9, Village and Town Directory, Distribution of Artisan Communities (Rural), pp.249, 262, 263.


59 *Ibid.*, Table SCT-III, Part B (ii), Education in Rural Areas only for Scheduled Tribes, p. 132.

60 *Ibid*, Table ST-1, Mother-Tongue and Bilingualism for Scheduled Tribes, pp.137-141.


64 *Ibid.*, Table ST-1, p.133.


Ibid., Table SCT – III, part A (ii), p. 144.

Ibid., Table SCT – III, part B (ii), p. 145.

Census 1961, Andhra Pradesh, District Census Handbook, Kurnool District, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Table C-V, 1964, pp.116, 118.

Ibid., People, Statement IV-7, p.XLIV.


Ibid., ST – I, pp. 147-8.


Haimendorf, Tribes of India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985, pp.4-5.


Ibid., pp.263-290.


***