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# THE TRIBES OF ANDHRA PRADESH



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## Koya

The Koyas are a sizeable population of Andhra Pradesh. They number 2,20,146. They are inhabiting the forests as well as the plains villages of East Godavari, West Godavari, Adilabad, Warangal and Khammam districts of Andhra Pradesh. The Koyas are said to belong to the great Gond Family. The language of the Koyas is a dialect of Gondi. But most of them speak Telugu. The Koyas are simple minded people. They look poor and untidy.

The Koyas live in very small villages which are very picturesque. They are built in groups of five or six houses, in some places even a smaller number, and there are very rarely as many as ten or fifteen.

Ethnologically and linguistically the Koyas are divided into two main groups; those who speak a Gondi dialect influenced to some extent by Telugu and those who speak the Telugu of the rural classes. The Teluguized Koyas refer to themselves as Doralasatam and as a rule do not inter-marry with the other group. But there are still several sections of Koyas such as Raja Koyas, Gutha Koyas, Adlai Koyas, Dallope Koyas, Bommu Koyas etc. Closely associated with the Koyas is a caste of Traditional bards called Patari by those speaking Gondi and Patadu by the Pardhans or Patari of the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad, but they speak the language of their Patrons,

Gondi or Telugu according to locality. They play an important role in the cult of the Koya clan deities (Yelpu devudu) but are of lower social status than the Koyas. The clan names of the Gonds and the Koyas of Warangal are different and so the names of the Phratries known to the Gonds as "Saga" and the Koyas as "gotbram", but there is a close similarity between the two social systems.

The marriage system prevalent among them is *monogamy*. *Polygyny* is also observed by them. Marriages are generally by proposal, but marriage by force or elopement and by capture are also socially accepted. The Koyas generally marry at the fair age and infant marriage is *unknown*. *The maternal uncle of a girl has always the right to give her hand in marriage with one of his sons. The marriage dance with bison-horn-headresses is one of its striking features.*

The religion of Koyas includes the cult of "Bhudevi" or "Bhumatha" the Goddess of agriculture. For the fulfilment of their vows and supplications, they celebrate Jatharas every year. They offered human sacrifices also in the past and no trace of it is found among them at present. The Koyas live symbiosis with Reddies in the villages of Eastern ghats.

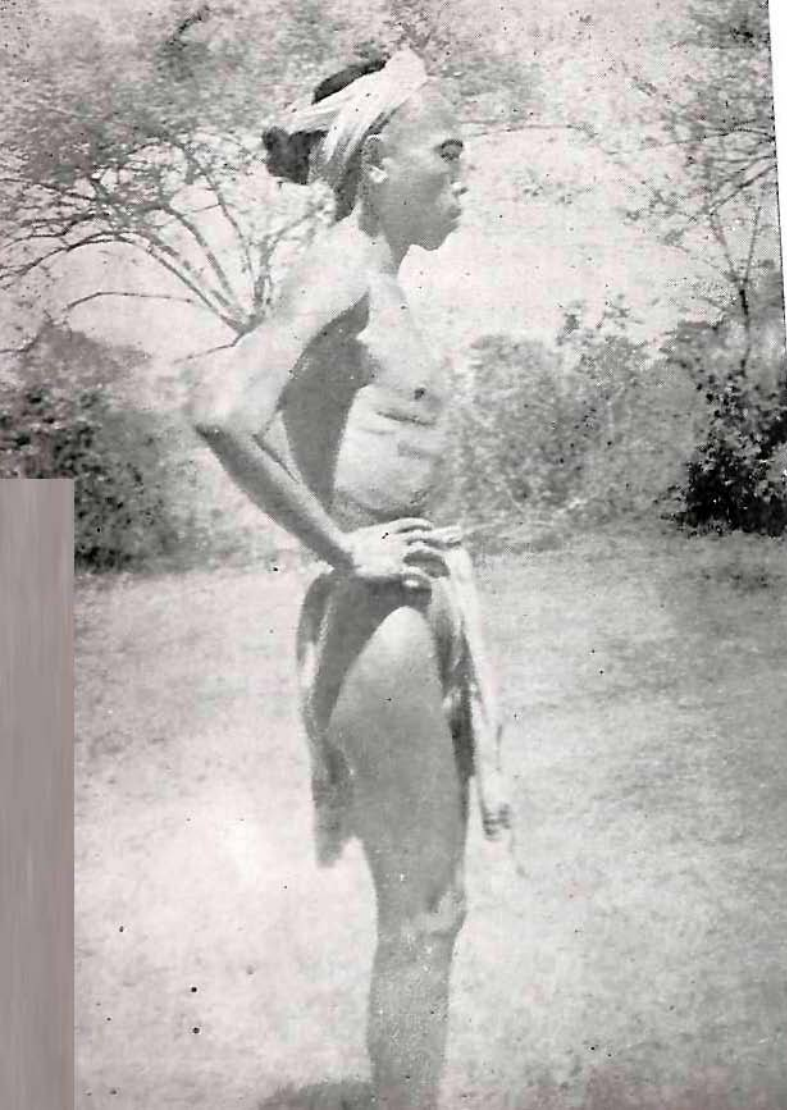
The main and the chief occupation of the Koyas is their traditional Podu cultivation. This is simple and most unprofitable kind. But the Koyas of Bhadrachalam collect herbs and roots and use them as indigenous medicines and they also sell them to the Plains people. They are also forest labourers. Their characteristic settlement, reminiscent of the old economy, is groups of hamlets scattered over the village land at places convenient for the cultivation of their fields. (The Koya type of agriculture is that of the ordinary Telugu peasant, except that the Koya is not a very skilful rice-cultivator and relies more on "Sorghum Vulgare", and particularly on a huge and hardy variety known as "Konda-Jonna" or hill-millet, which is sown during the rains is not reaped till the middle of the cold weather.)

Among all the aboriginals of Andhra Pradesh, the Koyas are the only group which has taken in any appreciable degree to industrial employment. Gradually the Koyas began to work, occasionally at the coal mines, at first only on the surface, but later also underground. No tribal feasts or ceremonies are celebrated in the mines, there is no dancing or singing and indeed no real community life. This is due to culture-contact with the other non-tribal folk. Their character is a curious medley. They excite admiration by their truthfulness and simplicity; contempt by their drunkenness, listless and want of thrift. Their truthfulness is proverbial though it is said to be less characteristic than of yore and they never break their word. Their drunkenness is largely due to the commonness of the Ippa tree (*Bassialatifolia*), from the flowers of which strong spirit is distilled, and is most noticeable when this is blossoming.

*Koya women dance* →







## Yanadi

The "Yanadi" is the largest tribe next to Koyas in Andhra Pradesh, consisting of 2,05,381 population. The "Yanadi" land lies between the river PONNERI in extreme South and river Godavari in the North. Its western border is the Eastern-Ghats and the Eastern boundary is the Bay of Bengal.

The Yanadis are the plains living tribe. They are predominantly found in Nellore, Guntur, Krishna and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. The Yanadi can be identified by his distinct features, "tall in stature, bony in structure, some what dark in complexion with frizzly hair, snubbed nose-ridge, lanky legs and thick lips". The primitive Yanadi wears a loin-cloth or GOCHI as his complete dress to cover his nudity. The name "Yanadi" has been the subject of much etymological speculation. Some derive it from a "Primitive" and "Nathu" (Lord or protector) and it may mean that they are not included in the ruling or principal castes. The word "Yanadi" would seem to be derived from Sanskrit "Anadi" i. e. whose origin is not traceable. The people, perhaps, elongated the vowel sound so that it became "Yanadi".

The entire Yanadi tribe is known into two subdivisions viz. "Manchi Yanadi," who are better or superior than the other, and the other are called "Chetha Yanadis", the inferior class. The "Manchi Yanadis" are

treated on par with other Hindus in social status. The Yanadis live in the dome-shaped huts with palmyrah leaves-roofing with a single door way. They generally settle near the water sources outside the village.

The Yanadis fall under the strata of food gatherers and hunters. Their economy is essentially one of hand to mouth existence. They live on jungle edible fruits and roots, and yams. They know small hunting, like hare, fox, jungle rat, antelope etc. and also fishing. At present most of them are farm labourers, watchmen of the corn-fields in the plains villages. The only occupation of the females in this community is *pounding of the grain in the houses of the other community people in the village*. This occupation, generally, they acquire during the dry seasons and harvest season of the year. The men and the women are in fact good singers. They perform "Veedhi Bhagavatham", as part of their livelihood.

They know neither agriculture nor crafts. The Yanadi economy lies in securing some food and eating it. He has no ambition to earn, much less to store; and he has no planning and in fact no economy. Having no economy is the main feature of his economy.

Marital life among the Yanadis is an uninterrupted stream of unforgettable happiness, spiced by occasional

bickerings which are frequently interspersed by ribsplitting fun and frolic. The union is based on the consent of parties and that only; the man and woman without consulting their friends, themselves arrange the matter and afterwards the friends are assembled, betel and nut distributed, the marriage string tied around the neck of the bride and she is taken to her husband's house. The Yanadi woman never marries before attaining the age of puberty. The marriage among the Yanadis is of very loose bond; widow remarriage is allowed. Polygyny is practised, some men having as many as seven wives. The marriage ceremony is no indispensable necessity. The Adavi Yanadi as a rule avoid it and the Reddy Yanadis always observe it.

The Yanadis adore the popular deity the Narasimha of Ahobilam. The Gods Venkateswarlu and Ranganayakulu are also worshipped. Next to them come all the village deities whether they be of the vishnava category or of the sivite school.

Mahalakshmi is an entirely benevolent deity. She is earnestly invoked and her name is lustily cheered during epidemic times and she is credited with great curative as well as preventive powers.



## Gond

Gonds are the most prominent aboriginal tribe of Andhra Pradesh both in numbers and historical importance. Their physical features and complexion are closely related to the Dravidian stock. The Gonds who number 1,43,680 predominantly inhabit the wild and mountainous tracts of Adilabad and sparsely the districts of Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar.

Gonds are the largest aboriginal race in the heart of India, described after them as Gondwana. They were once a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. In the writings of early Muslim historians we find references about Gond



States. During 15th century the Gond dynasties were firmly established their Kingdoms at Garha, Deogarh and Chanda. The Rajas of Chanda ruled over the largest part of what is today known as the Adilabad district. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed due to successive invasions of Moghul and Maratha armies. Even after the fall of Chanda Kingdom the feudal system with Gond chieftains in control of small tracts of land persisted in the inaccessible hill regions of Adilabad for many years. But it seems that in some parts of plains the Marathas appointed Gonds as well as Hindus of higher castes as hereditary officers (deshmukh) in-charge of certain tracts of land, and some of these deshmukh families have retained their feudal rights upto this day.

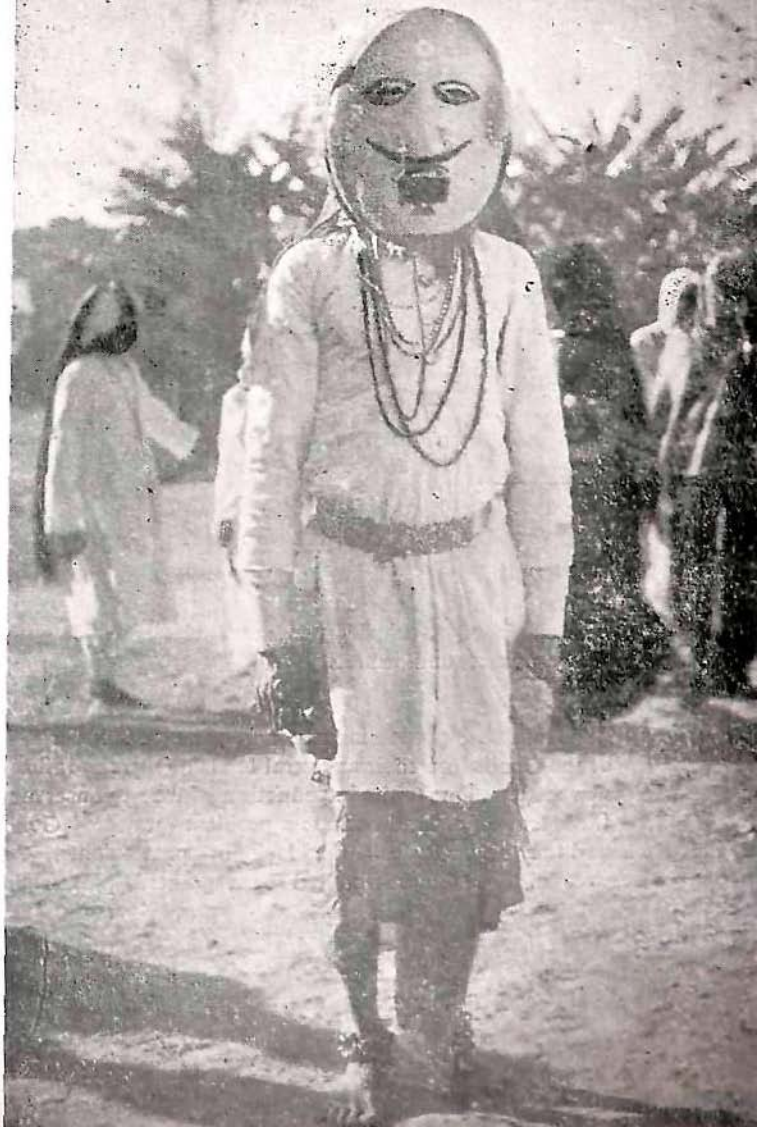
All the Gonds of Adilabad except for an insignificant section of Dhurwa Gonds, consider themselves as Raj Gonds. In former days only ruling families were described as Raj Gonds. But in recent times the name Raj Gond has also been claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status. Until a few generations ago they were the predominant race throughout the length and breadth of the district, and the ruined forts at Utnur and Sirpur of Gond Rajas testify still to their former political power.

The popular legend traces the origin of Gonds to the Pandava Prince Bhimasen and demon damsel Hidimbi. The dialect spoken by Gonds belong to the Dravidian linguistic group and stands closer to Tamil and Kanarese

than to Telugu. The predominant physical characteristics of the tribe are, a short flat nose with spreading nostrils, thick and projecting lower lips, and complexion varies from black to dark brown, with medium stature.

Gond Society has both its vertical stratification and horizontal divisions. The basis of social structure is a system of four phratries. These phratries consist of seven-wen kin group, six-wen kin group, five-wen kin group and four-wen kin group. The 'wen' means 'divine ancestor' and the members of each phratry trace their origin from seven, six, five and four mythical brothers respectively, who are now revered as ancestors. Each phratry is further associated with one or more totemistic animals which may be neither killed nor eaten by phratry members. Each phratry is strictly endogamous and subdivided into a number of clans. Sex-relations within the phratry are considered incest and can never be legalized by marriage. On the other hand members of other phratries are considered as potential mates. But seven brother and five brother phratries are considered related and hence marriage between the two groups is prohibited.

The men of Gond tribe wear a white dhoti and a white or coloured turban. In modern days the shirts have become increasingly popular. Girls and women wear a small loin-cloth under the saree which is tied firmly round the hips; one end of which is drawn between the legs and tucked in at the back, while the other is thrown over





*A Gond Belle*

(Courtesy--Sri Azam Hussain)

the right shoulder, its folds covering the stomach and breast. Most parts of the back, shoulders, and arms are adorned with elaborate designs of tattooing. The women wear silver heart-shaped pendants, silver necklets and heavy anklets and armllets.

Gonds are predominantly an agricultural tribe. Many of the Gonds lost their ancestral lands due to the influx of new settlers. Due to the introduction of forest conservancy the retention of land became a problem for the Gonds, and they began to feel the lack of patta-rights. And even of those Gonds who had been granted patta-rights,

many lost their lands in later years to non-aboriginals through dealings of money lending. Moreover plain-men of wealth and influence often succeeded in contesting the validity of Gond patta and depriving them from the ownership of the lands. They cultivate panicum miliare, panicum italicum sorghum vulgare and various oil seeds, and whenever a field showed signs of exhaustion they took up another piece of land. They are fond of hunting and fishing also.

Each clan worships a clan-god, described as 'persapen' or 'great god' and in many cases the shrine of this deity lies within the ancestral clan-land. The cult of the persapen lies in the hands of clan-priest or 'Katora'. The cult of the clan deities stands certainly foremost in Gond's religion. The other prominent deities are Akipen, the village-guardian and Auwal, the village mother, whose places of worship are universal features of every Gond village. Shrines of Bhimanna, Jangu Bai, Boani, and Rajul pen, all deities are found in many villages, but their cult rests in the hands of individual families and is usually not the concern of the whole community. All deities are thought of in anthropomorphic terms, and their reality is for the average Gond as great as that of his material environment. He got the great conviction that man can prosper in his life when he is in harmony with the supernatural powers.

*Ghusadi Dance* →



## Naikpod

There are 2,902 Naikpods inhabiting Adilabad, Khammam and Karimnagar Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Naikpods living in the depths of the forest follow podu cultivation, but Naikpods living in the plains have taken to plough cultivation, sometimes independently and often as agricultural labourers. They collect and sell Minor Forest produce also as their supplementary occupation.

Few of them, who live in hill-villages are in close contact with Kolams. They are not only different from the Kolams in speech and social organisation, but also in physical appearance. An average Naikpod is of a slender and graceful stature with delicate features and a prominent nose. On the other hand, the faces of Western Naikpods are broader and coarse though, on the whole, they are also of a less primitive type than the Kolams.

Naikpods are an intelligent amicable and sturdy people, modest and obliging in nature, honest in character, industrious and reliable. They are least quarrelsome by nature.

Their language shows close affinities to Kolami and this makes it probable that the Kolams and Naikpods represent two branches of an ancient aboriginal population which belonged to the cultural stratum of hoe-cultivators. This language is, however, confined to the Naikpods in the

West; all those in the East of Boath and in the Taluqs of Adilabad, Nirmal, Utnoor and Asifabad, speak Telugu as their mother tongue.

The clans of Naikpods are exogamous but with comparatively smaller units than that of Gonds. The majority of Naikpods have Telugu clan names or Intiperulu (Surnames). Naikpods of the Western side also have the same sort of exogamous clans.

Their religion resembles almost in all respects with that of the Kolams. Their main deity is Bhimanna of the Pandava heroes of Mahabharata epic. They claim to be "Varaputras" which means the blessed sons of Bhimanna the second brother of Pandavas. Their popular female deity is "Laxmi Devara". "Laxmi Devara" puja is performed once in a year when they go round the villages in procession and during that time they observe strict vegetarianism. They do not even sleep on cots and avoid drinking and smoking. They worship the stone images of "Poshamma" and 'Mysamma' the village deities of the low caste Hindu pantheon. When they are in distress they pray these Goddesses with a great belief in their blessings.

Naikpods consider themselves higher in status than that of Gonds and Kolams. They abstain from eating beef and pork and do not inter-dine with Gonds.



In case of difficult delivery, they seek all kinds of magical cures and worship all deities. In spite of all this, if the woman does not deliver, they approach the soothsayer woman and also offer a fowl to "*Poshamma*" deity. After the birth of the child the baby is laid naked on the grain considering this as the first sleep on the "*Anna Devudu*". After performing puja to "*Kula Devatas*" and offering a sacrifice to the village deity, the mother is allowed to feed the baby for the first time. After 12 days, when the woman and the new-born child are taken to the husband's house, a name-giving ceremony is celebrated. They observe hair-tonsuring ceremony and ear-piercing ceremony also.

During the first menstruation, the girl is secluded and is not allowed to go outside the house for 7 or 9 days. She is considered unclean and is not allowed to touch food or anything. The Naikpods believe that the girl may be infected by the evil spirits, if she goes out. The same procedure is followed during every following mensus.

Marriage by service is common among the Naikpods. The Naikpods who are better off and are having daughters of marriageable age, adopt a poor boy who serves the family till the age of marriage. The wedding expenses are borne by the bride's parents and the bride-groom is not required to pay the bride-price. The term of service is usually three to five years. Marriage by capture was also prevalent among the Naikpods but now it has become

very rare. Widow marriages are permitted but no usual rites of marriage are performed for such a marriage. It is customary, that a widow should marry one among her deceased husband's kinsmen. Her husband's younger brother will have the first right to marry a widow whether he is already married or unmarried.

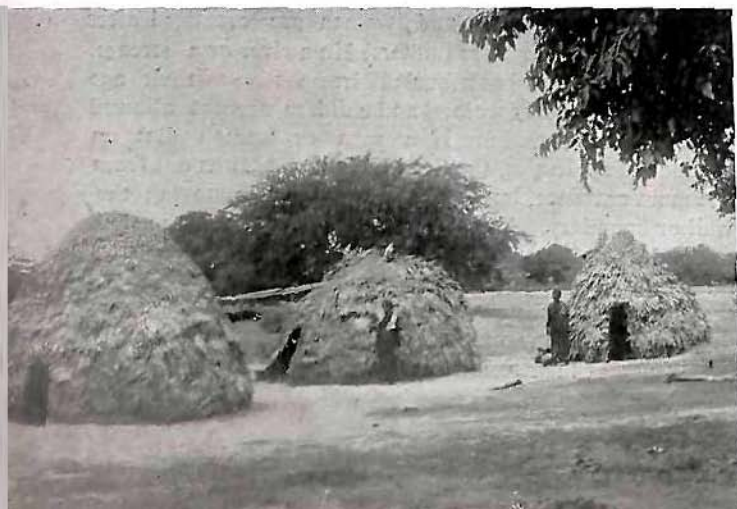
Polygyny is permitted and practised especially among the wealthy families, who crave for children.

The reasons for divorce are adultery, barrenness and domestic quarrels. The divorce takes place after mutual consent. The party desirous of dissolution has to pay a compensation to the aggrieved party as per the decision of the "*Panchas*".

All married men and women are cremated after death and their ashes are immersed in a river or a stream. The unmarried dead are buried irrespective of their age and sex. Generally women and children are not allowed to the funeral ground. If a man or woman dies on account of epidemics, the dead body is not taken out from the main entrance, but from the backyard removing the wall or boundary. This is due to the belief that the soul of the deceased may not recognise the path and may not attack the other members of the house. The members of the deceased family cannot attend any socio-religious function unless they complete the mourning period, (which is 11 days), at their residence.

## Yerukula

'YERUKULA' is one of the largest tribes of Andhra Pradesh, numbering 1,26,024. They are predominantly found in Guntur, Nellore, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Krishna and East Godavari districts and sparsely spread over the other districts of Andhra region of our State. They are found in the vast area extending from the gorges of Godavari in the North, down to the plains of river Pinaikini in the South. They are plains living tribe. This tribe is as old as the Epic Mahabharatha. They had dominions over the forests and they were good bowmen and experts in archery during the Mahabharatha period. History also shows that they rose to political eminence and social importance prior to the inception of Kakathiya Era.



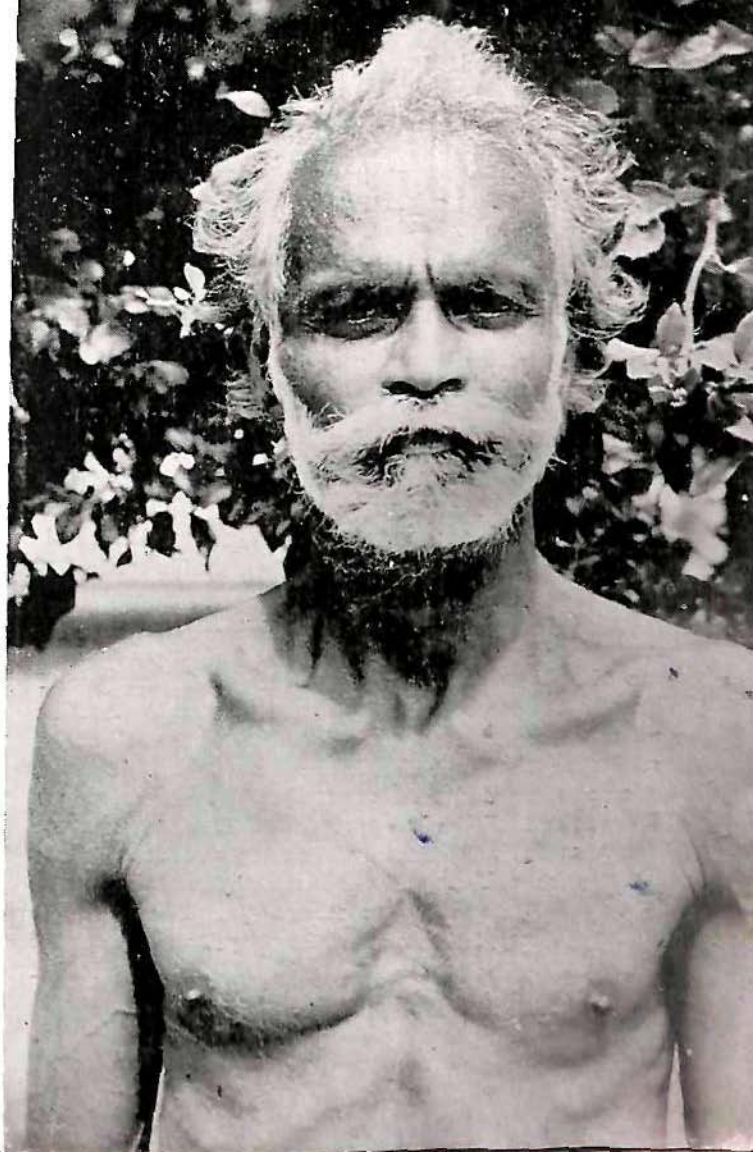
The Yerukulas are also called 'Korva' in Madras State. From North Arcot district upto the ceded districts, viz. Cuddapah, Kurnool, Ananthapur and Chittoor, they are called 'Korchas' or 'Korchavandlu'. At present these are called 'Yerukulas' in all the districts of Andhra Pradesh. Etymologically the word 'Yeruka' means the 'knowledge' of disclosing the facts of present, past and future of one's life. Since the Yerukula women are carrying the occupation of "fortune-telling", they are named after it as "Yerukulas" or "Yerukulavandlu". In Telugu, Yerukulavandlu would mean fortune-tellers. It is highly probable that the name and the occupation of the fortune-telling "Kuruvandlu or Kuluvandlu" induced the Telugu people to call this tribe Yerukulavandlu. When the Yerukula woman is strolling in the streets with her fortune-telling basket on head, shouting "Erukamma - Eruka" means "prophesy mother", the unsophisticated village women invite her. When the Yerukula woman starts fortune-telling she invokes all the Gods and Goddesses, and places on the basket the winnow, rice betel-leaves and areca nuts and the Wicker Tray. Holding her clients hand over the winnow (Kollapuramma) and moving it about, she commences to chant and name all sorts of deities. Some times she touches the hand of the person whose fortune is being told with the stick (Voosapulla). The Yerukula women are very clever in extracting information concerning the affairs of a client before they proceed to tell fortune. They speak a polyglot of Telugu, Tamil and Canarese. The Yerukulas call this language Oodra or Yerukulabhasha, which seems to stand

for gibberish or thieves' slang or as they say, something very hard to understand.

The Yerukula society is purely a patriarchal one and all the rights of descent, property holding are vested in man only.

The entire tribe is known by numerous sub-sects and acquired their names from the particular occupations they followed as an ostensible means of livelihood for many generations. A few of the occupational groups are as follows :

1. "Dabba Yerukulas" : Bamboo basketry.
2. "Yeethapullala Yerukulas". ... Date-basketry.
3. "Kunchapuri Yerukulas" ... Make the weaving-brushes.
4. "Uppu Yerukulas" ... Business of salt.
5. "Yeddu Yerukulas" ... Carried merchandise on the pack-bullocks in the past.
6. "Karevpaku Yerukulas" They collect the Karevpaku or murrayakoenigii or curry leaf from the jungles and sell to the villagers on barter-exchange for grain and cereals.



7. "Kavalí Yerukulas" ... Watchmen of the corn-field in the villages.
8. "Voora Yerukulas" ... Settled in the villages and live on agricultural labour and pig-breeding.
9. "Parigamuggula Yerukulas" ... The females live on sooth-saying and the men on singing ballads and casual labour.
10. "Koot Yerukulas" ... Occupation is tattooing.
11. "Bhajanthri Yerukulas" ... Perform acrobatic feats and earn livelihood. The females perform dance and music.
12. "Kothula Yerukulas" ... Who play the monkeys and make their livelihood.

13. "Nara Yerukulas" They live by preparing ropes and cot-thread and "Utlú" and sell them in the weekly fairs.

The entire tribe has been represented by four major exogamous clans i.e. "Sathupadi", "Kavadi" "Manpadi" and "Mendraguthi". These clans are further sub-divided into numerous exogamous "septs" or "intiperu". The marital bond is allowed between Sathupadi and Kavadi, Manpadi and the Mendraguthi clans. The Mendraguthi clan offer their daughters, to all the three clans, and the first "Sathupadi" clan offer and receive spouses from the "Kavadi" clan only. The general system of marriage in vogue in the Yerukula social milieu is monogamy and polygyny is also practised. The man is at liberty to select his spouse while the woman is to tender her willingness for the proposal brought out by her parents or the maternal uncle. Widow marriage is also allowed in the Yerukula society. But the younger brother is not allowed to marry the widow of his elder brother.

The principal diety in Yerukala Pantheon is Lord Venkateswara. They worship also numerous malevolent spirits. They offer animal sacrifices before their dieties.

The Yerukulas are highly superstitious. Before they start on house-breaking or decoity, they look out for omens, and they sacrifice a fowl or a sheep. Water is first poured over the animal, and, if it shakes its body, the



omen is good, while it stands perfectly still, there is misfortune ahead. It is unfortunate when starting for marriage negotiations or any campaign, to see widows, pots of milk, dogs urinating, a man leading a bull, or a bull-bellowing. On the other hand, it is down right lucky when a bull bellows at the scene of the criminal operation. Sprinkling urine over doors and walls of a house facilitates breaking into it. The number "seven" is considered ominous and so the house-breaking expedition never consists of seven men.

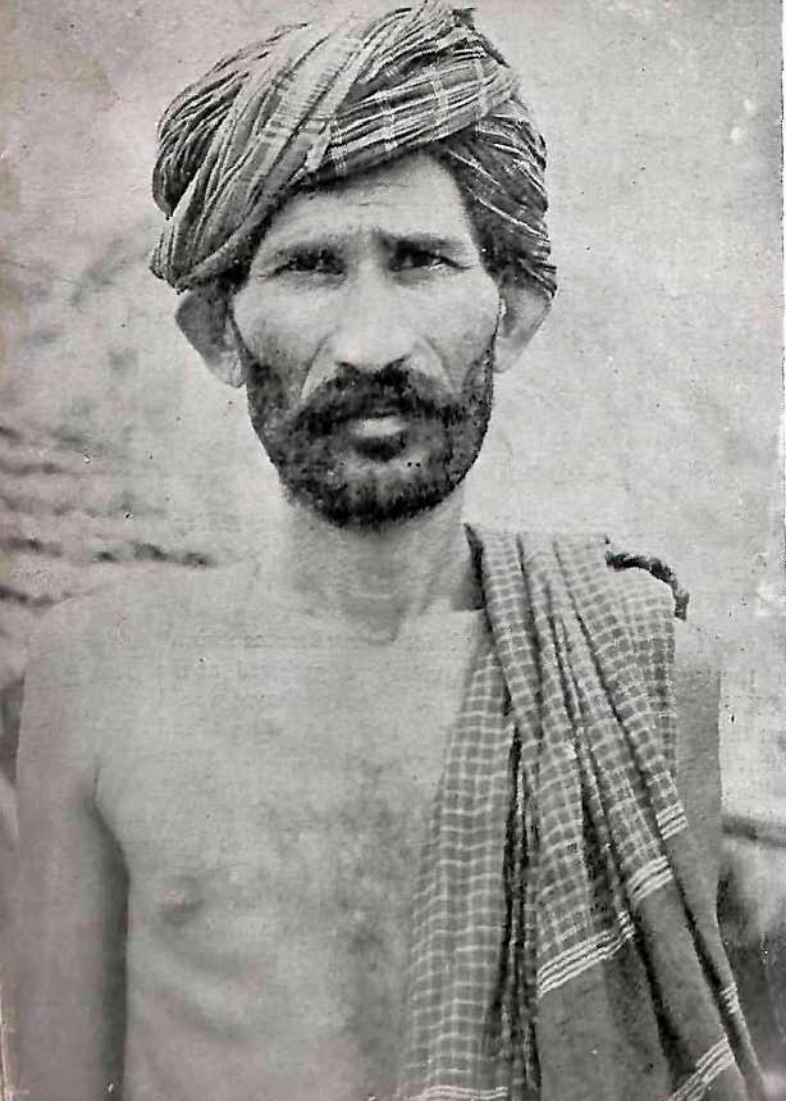
The process of disposal of dead is akin to the Hindu custom. The death is regarded by the Yerukula as an *indomitable force which cannot be overtaken by any other force except by the God "Yamadharmaraju"*, as depicted in the Hindu pantheon. Both burial and cremation of the dead are observed in the Yerukula society. The corpse is dangled to the "Pade" or stretcher made of two bamboo poles, if the dead is a married one. When an unmarried dies, only one bamboo is used for "Pade or stretcher. When a pregnant woman dies, she will be neither buried nor cremated, but tied erect to the "Banyan tree" or "Bonthajunku" tree at the outskirts of the village.

The "Kula" Panchayat" is a salient feature of the Yerukula social organisation. The Panchayat comprising five members who are called "Berumanosom", is vested unquestionable powers to try the cases referred to it and to solve the disputes and inflict punishments on the culprit. The Panchayat will never inflict any physical infringement on the culprit but impose fines to be spent on community feasts. Both the accused and the aggrieved are



*Kunchapuri Yerukala woman—fortune telling*

allowed to express their doubts before the "Berumanosom" in the midst of their clan members gathered at the "OKUSTHALAM" or Panchayat. The Panchayat would test the truth through severe ordeals like "lifting of red burnt iron crow-bar", and "dipping the hand in the boiling oil", and carrying the water filled pot without spilling a drop" etc. The major punishment which the Panchayat inflicts on the culprit is an excommunication. The Panchayat will excommunicate such an individual, who elopes and marries a girl from the low caste and sometimes all the members of the clan to which he belongs, are excommunicated. The individual is readmitted into the caste-fold after undergoing the purification ceremony with a community feast given at the expense of the individual who committed the breach of social norm.



## *Sugali*

The Sugalis are found throughout the Andhra Pradesh State. They are termed as Sugalis in the Andhra Region while they are known as Banjaras or Lambadis in the Telangana region of the Andhra Pradesh State. The total population of the Sugalis in Andhra Pradesh as per Census 1961 is, 96,174. The Sukali, Lambadi, Lambani, Lamane Labhani, Banjara. Vanjara and Gohar-Herkeri (Carnatic) are the synonyms of the Sugali Tribe.

The Sugalis are strong, sturdy and virile-looking people of medium height with medium to fair skin colour, bearing a Rajput caste of countenance. The men are fine muscular fellows, capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. The women are, as a rule, comely, and above the average height of women of the country. Their costume is the lainga (Langa) or gown of Korwar cloth, red or green, with a quantity of embroidery. The Chola or bodice, with embroidery in the front and on the shoulders, covers the bosom and is tied by variegated cords at the back, the ends of the cords being ornamented with cowries and beads. Their jewels are very numerous and include strings of beads of ten or twenty rows with a cowry as a pendant, called the cheed, threaded on horse-hair, and a silver hasli (necklace), a sign of marriage equivalent to the Tali.

They speak a peculiar dialect, an admixture of Punjabi and Gujarati. These different dialects are ultimately to be referred to the language of western Rajaputana. It is noted by Mr. Grierson that the Banjari dialect of southern India is mixed with the surrounding Dravidian languages.

They used to live by pack-bullocks trade, and carried their goods of commerce sometimes even the soldiers' baggage; and even to-day in such parts of the dominions one meets picturesque troupes of the Banjaras with bullocks loaded with grain. They live in detached clusters of rude huts, called thandas, at some distance from established villages. Some of them have, of late, settled in permanent villages and taken to agriculture. In the villages adjacent to the forests, the Sugalis who have settled, rear the cattle of their own as well as the cattle of the other plains people on reasonable remuneration. Due to deterioration of their Traditional business many of them have resorted to agricultural labour and those who live in the urban areas thrive through casual labour only. They eat goat, sheep and pig, fish and fowl, and they are addicted to alcohol to a greater extent.

The general system of marriage in vogue in the Sugali social milieu is monogamy, but polygyny is also practised to a great extent. Child marriages are rare among the Sugalis and the girls are not married below 12 years of age. The general mode of marriage prevalent among them is, the marriage by negotiation and the custom of bride-price is



bride's residence. The marriage in this society is formal and no Brahmin is employed and no hymns are recited at the marriage occasion. The custom of levirate marriage is also common among the Sugalis. The younger brother may marry the widow of his elder brother, but in no case the elder brother marries the widow of his younger brother. Divorce and widow marriage are common in the Sugali society.

They burn and also bury the dead. The married dead are burnt and the unmarried dead are buried. When they

and head pointing to the south.

The Principal deity of the Sugalis is "Kalika Devi" or "Bhavani" There are numerous minor deities also, like "Mari Ai", "Sitala Devi", Khanderao etc. who are propitiated and appeased by the sacrifice of sheep, goats, fowls and liquor. They celebrate "Dasara and Divali" festivals also and "Holi" is their favourite festivity and their joy and merriment is unbounded on that occasion. They perform dances in their traditional pattern during their festive occasions. This dance is called "Sivabhayya".



## Konda Dora

The Konda Doras inhabiting Srikakulam, Vizag, East Godavari and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh are hill-cultivators known as Konda Kapus and Ojas, they speak Telugu.

They are divided into two socially distinct groups namely, Pedda Kondalu and Chinna Kondalu. The former have remained in their old semi-independent position, while the latter have come under Telugu domination. The Chinna Kondalu have adopted the Telugu system of *intiperulu* (Surname) as their *exogamous septs*, whereas, the Pedda Kondalu have retained the totemistic divisions. Among the Chinna Kondalu, the custom of *Menarikam* (Cross-cousin marriage) is common.

A girl is married before or after puberty. When a marriage is arranged the girl's parents receive a present (*voli*) of four rupees and a female cloth. On an auspicious day, fixed by the *Chukkamusti* (astrologer), the bride is taken to the home of the bridegroom. The contracting couple are bathed in turmeric water, put on new clothes presented by their fathers-in-law and threads are tied on their wrists; the same day, the bride-groom ties 'Sathamman' around the bride's neck. On the next day, wrist threads are removed, and the newly married couple bathe.

Among the Pedda Kondalu also a girl is married before or after puberty. When a man contemplates marriage, his parents carry three pots of liquor to the home of the

girl. The acceptance of these presents by her father is an indication that the match is agreeable and a *Jholla tonka* (Bride Price) of five rupees is paid to him. The bride-groom's party has to give three feasts to that of the bride's family for which a pig is killed. Then the girl is taken to the house of the bride-groom, and if she has attained puberty, remains there. Otherwise, she returns home and joins her husband later.

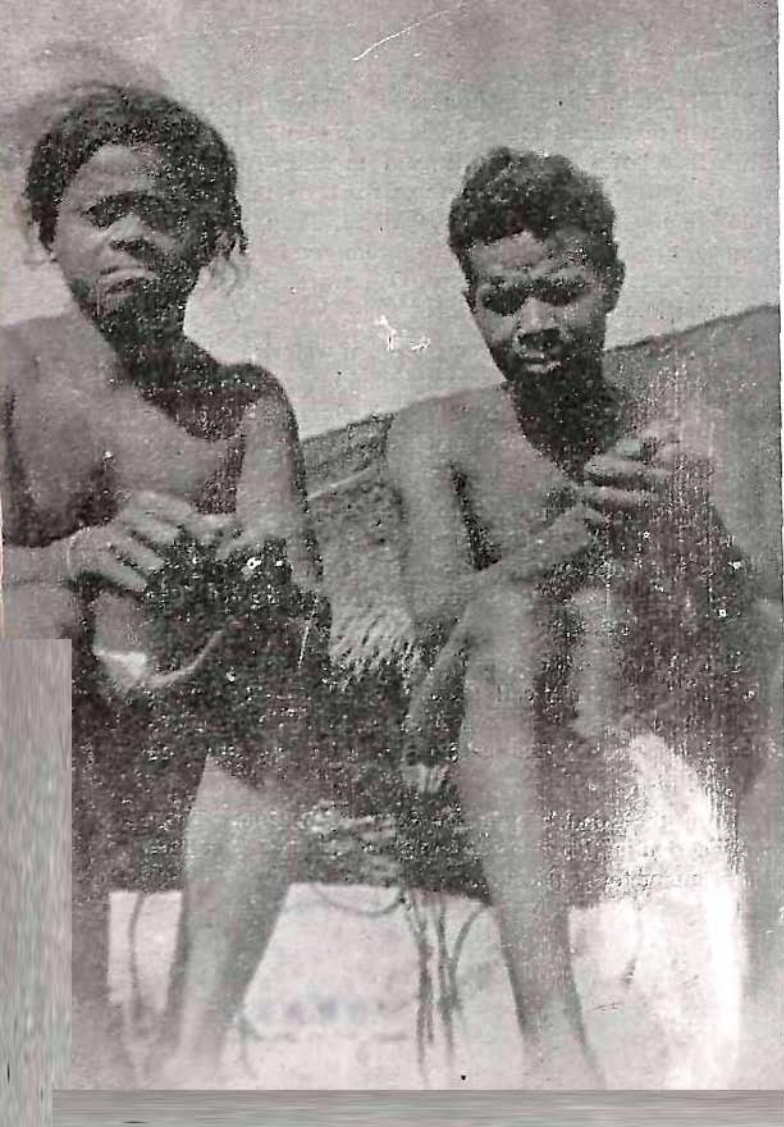
Both the Doras allow remarriage of widows. Among the Pedda Kondalu younger brother may marry the widow of his elder brother. Among the Doras, divorce is permissible and a man who marries a divorcee has to pay her first husband a compensation.

The dead are burnt by both the groups. Pedda Kondalu kill a pig on the third day and hold a feast. Much liquor is consumed on that day; whereas, the Chinna Kondalu celebrate after death ceremony called *Chinna roju* like any plains-living caste.

This tribe is in the transitionary stage between animism and Hinduism. They call themselves Hindus, and worship the Pandavas and a goddess called *Talupulamma*. They drink alcohol and eat pork, mutton, etc. and dine with Kapus.

Both the Kondalu practise Podu cultivation. Their scanty agricultural produce is supplemented by the collection of minor forest produce.





## Savara

The Savaras are 68,185 in Andhra Pradesh and form 5.14 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. More than 98 per cent of them are inhabiting the Parvatipuram, Palakonda, Patapatnam, Tekkali and Sompeta Taluqs and the bordering taluqs of Srikakulam District with the neighbouring Orissa State.

The Savaras are an ancient tribe. They were referred to as nomadic food-gatherers and as Nishads in the epics and as Kings ruling extensive areas.

They speak the Savara Language, which belongs to Kol-Munda group of the Austro-Asiatic Linguistic family. They are of medium height, women are shorter than men. The skin colour varies from light yellowish to dark brown. Hair is wavy, it is generally thick on the head and scanty on the beard. The faces are small and heart-shaped with straight or flat noses with round nostrils. Many middle-aged women and children have pot-bellies.

Men usually wear a small dhoti; they also wear a turban of red or white cloth. They do not put on any upper garment. The women generally tie a cloth of 10 to 12 feet round their waist taking it across the shoulder, which is called "Jijeenam"

There are two endogamous groups of Savaras, namely, the "Kapu Savaras" and the "Bhima Savaras". The

Kapu Savaras are further sub-divided into endogamous sects. They neither inter-dine nor inter-marry.

The Savaras live amidst several tribal and non-tribal groups. The pattern of Savara settlement varies from region to region. The Kapu Savaras of Parvatipuram and Palakonda Taluqs live in two linear rows of houses facing each other. Every village constructs a dwelling for "Gusada Devata" at the outskirts of the village.

The Savaras are agriculturists, but a few of them possess cultivable land. Those in the hilly areas depend upon Podu cultivation. Most of their land has been alienated to the Plains Sowcars to clear off the debts. Tradesmen have entered the tribal areas for business and established contacts with them during the weekly shandies. Not only they traded in the minor forest produce and the daily requirements but also provided them with the credit facilities at higher rates of interest for which Savaras have to surrender all their produce only to clear off the interest accruing on the principal amount. Sometimes they even surrender their immovable property to the traders. The co-operative credit facilities available cannot meet their requirements.

Savaras cultivate the land as tenants to their absentee land-lords; they work as labourers and farm servants under their absentee landlords; they work as agricultural labourers and farm-servants under the neighbouring caste or other tribal groups. Their agricultural operations comprise Podu, Wet cultivation, (including terracing) and dry cultivation. They change the plots once in three

years. The next important source of their livelihood is food-gathering and collection of minor forest produce. They subsist on a variety of roots, tubers, leaves and fruits gathered from the forest. They supplement their economy by the sale of Minor Forest Produce to the Andhra Pradesh, Scheduled Tribes cooperative Finance and development corporation.

The Savaras do not have the exogamous clans (totemic or otherwise) but represent a cluster of families related by blood and marriage: Their kinship terminology is of classificatory type and a few descriptive terms are also used. They practise different ways of acquiring a mate i. e.,

- (1) by negotiation and mutual consent.
- (2) by elopement.
- (3) by service.
- (4) by exchange.

Marriage by elopement is more frequent in the Agency; whereas marriage by negotiations and mutual consent are common in the Plains. The widow generally re-marry but for such a marriage no bride-price is required. Their marriage pattern is generally monogamy, but polygamous marriages are also not uncommon. The reason for polygyny is purely economic.

The Savaras attribute death to the evil spirits. They generally burn the dead. Those die of cholera and small-pox and women died during pregnancy are only buried. They offer memorial service to their ancestral spirits on all

ceremonial occasions. They offer all the crops to their deities and ancestral spirits before consumption.

Savaras consider that all ailments are caused by the evil spirits and their cure includes magical charms and oblations and sacrifices coupled with the native medicinal herbs.

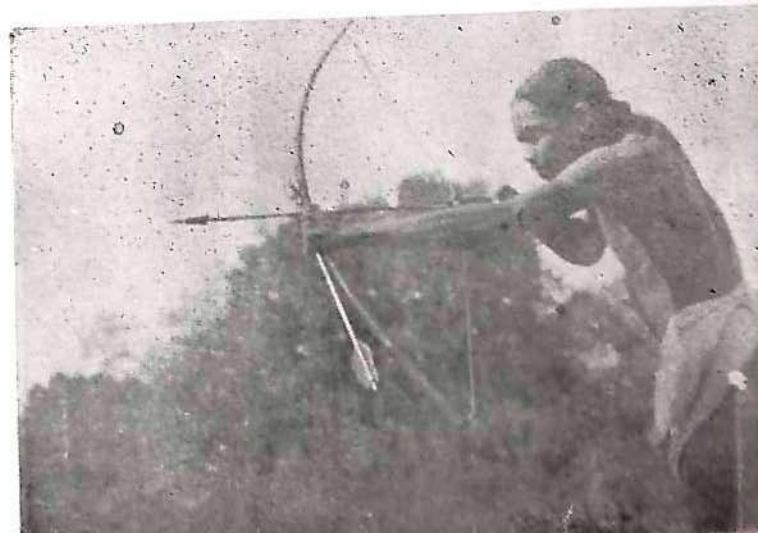
Savaras offer a little of everything brought by them on return from the shandy to 'Gusada Devata'. They use 'Ippa Sara', (a liquor prepared out of Mohva flower), on all festive occasions. It is believed that the deities will not be pleased if it is not used in the rituals.



## *Jatapu*

Jatapus, according to the 1961 Census are 62,794 strong. They are chiefly inhabiting Parvathipur, Palakonda and Salur taluks of Srikakulam District. Jatapus are considered to be the 'civilized' section of Khonds or Samanthulu of visakhapatnam District. They style themselves as Jatapu 'doralu' (lords) whenever they are required to say about themselves to the strangers. They speak 'Kui' dialect which is closely related to the Dravidian linguistic family.

Jatapus are divided into a number of totemistic septs like, Thorika (a species of wild fowl) Kadrika (another species of fowl) Mamdangi (bull or cow) Addaku (Addaku, Bauhiniaracemosa) Konda Gorre (wild sheep) Navalipitta (peacock) and Arika (paspalum scrobiculatum).

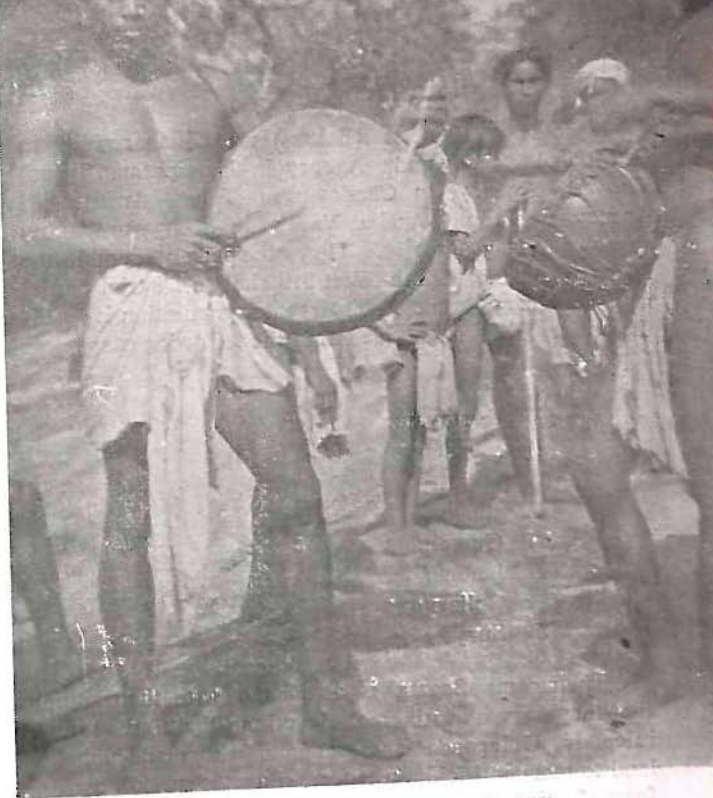




Marriage practice among Jatapus is very interesting. Whenever a marriage takes place in the Jatapu-community unmarried young boys and girls attend the marriage celebrations in particular than the elders. The most significant feature of the marriage is, to serve as the best opportunity to select future mates. A young boy whichever girl he likes from among the assembled asks for some money. If the girl likes the boy and desires to marry that boy, gives two to three paise. It indicates that the girl also likes the boy. Afterwards when they assemble at other marriage celebrations, the girl shall ask the same boy for money. The boy, this time, gives double the amount which he had already received from the girl. This practice of exchanging money continues at different marriage celebrations till they come to a decision for marriage. When they come to such an understanding, boy would take the girl to his house. Afterwards both of them would be acknowledged as wife and husband by their own relatives and their community.



Jatapus like other hill tribes, practise podu cultivation. Their chief deity is Jakara Devata. They propitiate this goddess with sacrifice of pigs, sheep and fowls before they broadcast their seeds in podu fields. Every Jatapu village has a village headman, called Nayudu and he is assisted by Janni, village Priest, who officiates at ceremonies and festivals.



*Jatapus Celebrating "Kotha"  
(Harvesting festival)*

## Bagata

Bagatas or Bhaktas (Baktas) are chiefly residing in G. Mudgole, Golugonda Agency in Narsipatnam Taluq, Viravalli Agency, in Chodavaram Taluq, Ananthagiri Agency including Araku Valley in Srungavarapukota Taluq of Vizag District. They are sparsely found in the Agency Areas of South-West Srikakulam District bordering the Vizag Agency. Their total population is 53,154 the entire tribe is divided into the following exogamous septs:-

- (1) Korravalu.
- (2) Pengi.
- (3) Majji.
- (4) Bundi.
- (5) Guntalu.
- (6) Janumu.
- (7) Gollari and
- (8) Surya.

Their name Bagata is associated with the tradition that they served with great devotion (Bhakti) the former rulers of Golugonda and Madgole, who made grants of land to them in Mokhasa tenure. Bagatas speak a corrupt form of Oriya.

The usual procedure of marriage is by negotiation. At first, the bride-groom's parents, accompanied by the

elders of the village, go to the girl's house. They usually take sweets and liquor to the bride's house. If the parents of the girl agree, both the parties share the sweets and the liquor brought by the bride-groom's party. The cross-cousin marriage is also widely practised among the Bagatas. Such marriages are arranged irrespective of inconsistency in ages. Marriage by elopement is also accepted by the Bagatas. Marriage celebrations are usually followed by "Dimsa-Dance". Child marriage, widow re-marriage and divorce are not uncommon. A married woman can elope with other man on payment of Maganali (compensation) to the former husband.

The girls are married either before or after puberty and Menarikam (cross-cousin marriage) is the general rule. An Oriya or Telugu Brahman officiates at marriages and the bride is presented with jewellery as a substitute for the bride-price (Voli) in money.

The Bagatas are both Vaishnavites and Saivites. The former get themselves branded on their arm by a Vaishnava Guru. The Vaishnavities burn their dead, and the Saivities bury them in sitting posture. Both the religious sects perform Chinna and Pedda Rojulu ceremonies (after death).



The Bagatas observe the Ittikala Panduga, which is celebrated by all the hill-tribes of Vizag District. Ittikala Panduga is usually known as the Chaitra festival; during this festival, the Bagata men go to the forest and stay there till they catch the game. The women folk will not allow them to enter into the community until they bring the game. They celebrate this festival continuously for one month and at the end of the festival a common feast

for the community is arranged, which would be followed by music and dimsa-dance.

Bagatas are agriculturists; they also resort to Podu cultivation and raise cholam, ragi, French beans, turmeric, chillies, and Niger. Besides Podu, they subsist on the collection and sale of minor forest produce like honey, soap nuts, tamarind, myrobalans, adda-leaves and broomsticks also.



## *Konda Reddi*

The Hill or Konda Reddis inhabiting the triangle between the Godavari River and the Polavaram Taluq of the East Godavari District subsist on Podu cultivation on the hill slopes by burning timber and sowing in the ashes pulse, millet and maize. It can be said that Reddi agriculture represents a crude form of cultivation.

They are a people with strong Vedit strain in their physical make up; their skin varies from yellowish light brown to a deep chocolate tone. But they are of lighter colour than the Chenchus. The stature is short to medium; but they are of a good physique. The hair is usually wavy or curly which they tie up in a knot. Compared to the women of the Eastern Ghats, Reddi girls, with a few exceptions, are not quite attractive.

Men wear only a small apron (Gochi) and in cold weather they throw a cloth round their shoulders. Women wear saris but do not cover their breasts. Usually, men carry with them a bill-hook, bow and arrow. Now-a-days, the Reddis have adopted the dress of their Telugu neighbours due to culture contacts.

Their Settlements are of various types. Sometimes three or four square shaped houses and sometimes even a single homestead in the middle of the forest is found. The villages on the Godavari bank are comparatively larger and the houses are also spacious.

Even though they collect Minor Forest Produce and gather roots and tubers, they do not exclusively depend on it, as their main interest lies in podu. Podu cultivation, though still surviving is rather a side-line than the centre of their economy, the reason for which being their cultural contacts with the Telugu and Koya cultivators.

The mode of life of Konda Reddis is almost the same as that of the Koyas except in the matter of beef-eating, widow re-marriage and other adopted customs of Hindu castes. However, they are better farmers than the Koyas and are self-reliant.

They speak Telugu with a peculiar accent.

The Konda Reddis are divided into three sub-sects namely, 1) Panda Reddis, 2) Raja Reddis, 3) Vamsa Reddis. They are Saivites and worship Pandavas, the spirit of the hills Mutthaiduvulu, and the village deities like Muthyalamma, Pothuraju, Saralamma and Unnamalamma.

During the first mensus, a girl is put up in a separate hut apart from the house and this hut is burnt down after she is given a bath.

They have a great faith in prophesies. An expectant mother is warned not to undertake long excursions or roam in dense jungle lest a Konda Devata, a hill-deity may harm

her; and she is strictly forbidden to enter a boat or cross a river. In difficult cases, a Veju or magician is called upon. As soon as the woman delivers, the veju makes the offering as promised

If a woman dies in child-birth, she is buried or burnt with ordinary rites, but a still born child is buried anywhere in the jungle without ceremony.

Although pre-marital sexual intercourse is not socially approved, lovers evoke merriment rather than anger. According to the conventional view, the boy or girl has no voice in the choice of a mate. As far as the boy and girl are concerned, betrothal alters little in their relationship. On the other hand, the intimacy between a formally betrothed couple is strongly deprecated.

A proper wedding as understood by the Reddis of Godavari District is an expensive affair. Monogamy is the common form of marriage and polygyny is rarely practised.

Adultery and abduction are offences that call for action by the village elders. There is no formal procedure for divorce. If a couple splits, the small children stay with the mother while the father takes care of the elder children.

Now-a-days, Reddis dispose of their dead by burying and burning. Previously, only earth burial was common. They observe Pedda and Chinna Rojulu death ceremonies.



## *Konda Kapu*

Konda Kapus are 29,823 strong according to 1961 census. They are chiefly found in Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, East Godavari and West Godavari Districts. Konda Kapus who are residing in the hill tracts speak corrupt form of Oriya, and some of them who have settled in the plain areas adopted Telugu as the mother tongue.

They are mostly cultivators and they domesticate fowls, cows, buffaloes etc. Some of them who are living in the vicinity of the hill areas practise podu cultivation. They gather minor forest produce and sell it in weekly shandies. Konda Kapus who are living along with the other Telugu speaking people are completely acculturated.

## *Kammara*

Kammaras are blacksmiths settled in the Agency areas of Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Srikakulam Districts. According to 1961 census they are 24,629 strong.

Kammaras manufacture all agricultural implements required by the tribals. We find in almost all tribal villages

Kammara households. They speak corrupt form of Oriya. Their material culture, religion, Social organization have close resemblances to that of other tribes living in the agency areas. Most of the Kammaras are giving up their traditional occupation and taking up to agriculture. They supplement their economy by collecting minor forest produce.

## Valmiki

Valmiki are found in Agency areas of Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and Srikakulam Districts. According to 1961 Census they number 22354. They claim that they are from famous sage Valmiki, the author of Ramayana. They speak a corrupt form of Oriya.

The Valmiki are divided into three endogamous divisions. Marriage by elopement, marriage by mutual consent, and marriage by purchase are widely prevalent in this tribe. Widow marriage and divorce are permissible.

Valmiki are agriculturists and forest labourers. Some of them became traders and petty money lenders. They

sell the earthen pots also in the regular shandies. They practise Podu cultivation on the slopes of hills.

Valmiki worship all the agency hill deities along with other Oriya speaking tribes. Their chief deities are Ganga Devudu; Sanku Devudu, and Pedda Devudu. They sacrifice fowls and goats on festive occasions. Some of the Valmiki have been converted to Christianity; yet it is found that they worship tribal traditional deities. Literacy among the Valmiki is comparatively higher than the other Agency tribes.



## Gadaba

Gadabas numbered 21,840 according to 1961 Census reports. They are predominantly settled in Scheduled areas of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts. Gadabas in olden days were employed as carriers of Palanquins to the former Rajas of Jeypore.

The entire tribe is divided into the following three main sub-divisions: Bodo (big) or Gutubi Ollamor Kathari and Parengis. Each sub-division is further divided into exogamous clans. Gadabas as a whole belong to two distinct linguistic groups. The Kathari Gadabas belong to the Dravidian linguistic group and other two sub-divisions namely the Gutub and Parengi Gadabas belong to Munda Linguistic group.

The Gadaba female clothes are manufactured by themselves from the cotton thread and the fibre of the trees. The dress of Gadaba women consists of two parts, the kilt (Kittaki) and upper cloth (Cherva Kittaki). The kilt is wrapped round the waist hanging down the knees and the upper cloth is knotted on one shoulder. Each piece consists of red, blue, or black and white stripes. The two colourful pieces are woven by Gadaba women themselves

on most primitive looms. The warp of the cloth is the hand-spun fibre of 'Palikamaren' or 'boddamaren' tree and wool is cotton yarn. In modern times young women are giving up this dress and taking to the plains dress.

Among Gadabas, several types of marriages are prevalent, such as marriage by negotiation, marriage by elopement, marriage by capture, marriage by service and marriage by intrusion. Cross-cousin and child marriages are also not absent. Pre-marital contacts are not seriously taken notice of until and unless the girl becomes pregnant; but extra-marital contact is considered as adultery and the guilty is liable to punishment. The procedure of divorce is quite simple—by paying compensation to the former husband.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the Gadabas. Some of them who settled near plain areas have almost forsaken Podu Cultivation. They cultivate paddy, ragi, ooda, korra, sajja, horse-gram, black-gram, green-gram, [red-gram and ground nuts. Gadabas also raise kitchen gardens in which they grow chilly, brinjal, pumpkin, gourd, lady-fingers and beans. The

landless Gadabas eke out their livelihood by working as agricultural labourers and stone-cutters etc.

The Gadabas believe in the existence of spirits. It is believed that every one's soul, after the death becomes a spirit and still remains in close contact with its own descendants. Such spirits are also the main guardians of

their descendants and could be placated by means of offerings. Hence ancestor-worship has become one of the essential features of Gadaba religion. Besides the cult of ancestor spirits, they propitiate Jakara, (the village deity) Ratal Polamma, (the deity-in-charge of crops,) Sita Devaja (the house-hold diety) and Desammavaru (the deity of diseases and epidemics).



## Khond

The khonds otherwise known as "Samanthulu" numbered 21,754 according to 1961 Census. They are chiefly residing in the hill tracts of scheduled areas of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. The origin of Khonds is obscure, but most probably the word Khond might have been derived from the word 'Konda' means a hill. Since these people are invariably living either on top of hills or at the foot of hills, they might have been attributed as Khonds of Kondalu.

Khonds are divided into a number of totemistic groups. Each such unilateral group consists of all the blood relatives, near and distant, that are believed to be related through a common descent. Each clan has its own distinct name and also its own clan deity (Illupenu). Each clan worships its respective deity on festive occasions. The clans being patrilineal ones, only the male members adopt the name of a clan which is used as a prefix to the name of an individual. For instance, if the name of one individual is Ruppa and if he belongs to Tadinga clan he is referred to as 'Tadinga Ruppa'. Each clan is an exogamous group. A member of a clan should marry from among the clans other than his own. An analysis of the names of the clans reveals the fact that most of them derived their names from some animal, bird or plant. Thus Milleka, means Peacock, Mandinga means Tiger, Sirikka stands for fly, Mooska for Ape.

*A Khond woman with palm leaf basket*



The women folk adorn themselves with distinctive and picturesque ornaments. They wear masses of white-bead necklaces which almost cover their breasts. The men wear a small piece of cloth (Gochi). They usually grow long hairs and twist them into a knot on their heads. The most widely spread types of marriages are, marriage by elopement and marriage by capture.

Khonds practise podu cultivation on slopes of hills. When compared to other tribes in agency area, this tribe practise more podu cultivation than settled cultivation. They were once famous for their skill in hunting and fishing. But, because of restrictions of hunting in the forest areas, gradually it has become negligible source of their livelihood. Apart from this, they work as agriculturists and forest daily laboureres. They also gather a number of edible

roots and tubers. They collect the minor forest produce and sell it in weekly shandies.

Khonds believe that some supernatural powers take abode in certain natural objects. The word for god is 'Penu' in khonds language. Some of the chief Gods (Penus) of Khonds are, Bhima Penu, (Penu of Rains) Jakeri, (Penu of the village), Illu Penu (Penu of house), Ruga Penu (Penu of diseases) Tokki Penu, the Mother

Earth. Among these, Bhima Penu is believed to be their most powerful God on whose mercy depends their agriculture. Upto the early part of 19th Century they sacrificed human beings (Meriah sacrifice to the Earth Goddess.) They got the strong belief that if they sacrifice human beings to Earth Goddess, they would be blessed with abundant crop. This practice was severely discouraged during the British regime.



## Chenchu

The Chenchus are the Telugu speaking aboriginals, inhabiting the hilly-country and dense forests north of river Krishna, generally known as Amarabad plateau in Mahaboobnagar district and a few scattered on the either-side of Dindi river. Some are inhabiting the Nallamalai forests on the southern side of river Krishna.) There are few Chenchus living in the villages of Nellore and Guntur districts and assimilating the plains culture. Prof. Haimendorf has said of their primitiveness.....! "the facts of world where people can hold out in the economic style or stone Age man are limited, and even in the hills and forests of India there are few races on so low a level of material development. One of them is the Chenchus of the Nallamalai Hills, and among them it is the jungle Chenchus of Hyderabad who have best preserved their traditional way of life."

The Chenchus are small, with very dark skin wavy or curly black hair, and primitive facial features, broad faces, broad and flat noses, a weak mouth with open very full lips! The Chenchus who wore once leafy garments have replaced it by a loin-cloth; and the women wearing saree and bodice in imitation of the female costumes in the plains! The Chenchus of Nallamalai Forests generally wear the Loin-cloth covering their nudity.

A Chenchu lives in a bee-hive shaped hut, with wattle walls, which can scarcely accommodate his wife and

children. They belong to the strata of food gatherers and hunters! Foresight and economic planning are foreign to the jungle Chenchus' mentality. He seldom stores food, but lives to-day as his Stone Age ancestors lived thousands of years ago, a son of the forest who gleans each day "What nature provides" giving little thought to harnessing her resources to his own enterprises. The Chenchus possess very poor material equipment such as bow and arrow, a knife, a digging-stick, some pots and baskets and a few tattered rags! They are forest labourers and they collect minor forest produce like soapnuts, Moduga and Tunki leaves (Beedi leaves) Tamarind and Myrobalams etc. They are very good experts in honey collection and one shouly watch a Chenchu collecting honey from the highla placed honey-combs, from the cliffs and rocks. They are also very good experts in bamboo cutting in the forests!

A Chenchu has a definite prediliction to live in isolated small groups. Some families live in single house settlements, at least in a part of the year, divorced from the rest of the community people. When he drinks liquor he forgets all about himself. With least pretext he recollects the past rivalry and plunges into wrangle with his enemy. The Mohuva season is very pleasant for all the chenchus including children as well as women.

The Chenchu society is a patriarchal one and the father is the central figure in the family; all authority is vested in him and lineage and descent are traced through him. All the Chenchus live in nuclear type of families. The patriarchal system of family is in vogue in the social milieu. The status of women in this society is quite elevated and in many respects she enjoys similar rights as men do. She has equal responsibility for the quest of food and to maintain her offspring and she is considered to be an equal companion of a Chenchu in economic pursuits and also she does more work than

what her husband does. She is not barred to perform the rituals during the festivities, at the marriage occasion the woman first bids welcome to the bridal party with water of saffron and vermilion at the threshold of the bridal residence. After the death of her husband she is at liberty to choose her life-mate once again, provided she is young enough. A Chenchu woman dances along with her husband during the Mohua season. During "Dasara" and "Ugadi" festival, the Chenchus perform their Traditional dance.



*A Kolam playing on his flute →  
(Courtesy—Sri Azam Hussain)*



## *Kolam*

The Kolams are the inhabitants of Adilabad and Warangal districts and they were found in the adjacent districts of Maharashtra. They extend all along the Kandi-Konda or Pindi Hills on the South of the Wardha river stretching East and North of Manikgadh in Maharashtra State and thence South to Danthanpalli, running parallel to the Western bank of the Pranhita.

The Kolams are of shorter stature and stockier build with features coarser than those of the average Gond and a skin of dark-brown colour. Their fore-head is rather low, the nose broad and fleshy, and the mouth very full and sometimes with a slight tendency to prognathism, the chin is generally small, pointed and weak. The hair is black and often wavy. Most Kolams strike one as far more primitive than the surrounding Gonds.



*A Kolam*

{(Courtesy—Sri Azam Hussain)}

Unlike Chenchus and Reddis who have lost their tribal tongues and speak Telugu the Kolams still speak a tribal language, which belongs according to Grierson to the so called intermediate group of Dravidian languages, but seems to have more affinities to Telugu than has the Gondi of their neighbours.

Many of them speak Telugu, the local language. Since they are living in the vicinity of Gonds, they have adopted the Gond customs. Many of them speak the "Gondi" also.

The Kolams cultivate podufields with hoe and digging-stick but many have taken to plough cultivation. The Kolams have no sub-tribes, but are divided, for purposes of marriage, into a number of exogamous groups. Marriage between members of the same group is forbidden and a man may not marry two sisters.

The Kolams recognise no God as a principle of beneficence in the world; their principal deities are Sitha, to whom the firstfruits of the harvest are offered, and Devi who is the Guardian of the village, and is propitiated with offerings of goats and fowls to preserve it from harm. She is represented by two stones set up in the centre of the village when it is founded.

The Kolams are held to be lower than the Gonds, because a Kolam will take food from a Gond, but the latter will not return the complement.

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## *Kotia-Bentho-Oriya*

Kotias, who number 11,008 according to 1961 Census mostly concentrated in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts. They speak a corrupt form of Oriya language. The modern civilization has not penetrated deeply into their Social customs and traditions of Kotias although they are living in the vicinity of Telugu speaking people. One can find much similarity in the material as well as nonmaterial aspects of culture of the different tribes who are living in the same agency area. The women folk of Kotia tribe are much conservative to the winds of change. They adorn themselves with scanty costumes in their traditional fashion.

The chief regulating factor of matrimonial alliance in Kotia community is surname (Intiperu) Cross-cousin marriages are popular in this tribe. Generally the boy's parents go to the girl's house and leave some presents (usually two pots of drink). If the girl's parents accept the proposed alliance, they accept the presents given by the boy's party. The bridegroom has to pay bride price (Oli or Jola) to the girl's parents. The bride price varies according to the economic position of both the parties. If the girl's parents refuse to give her in marriage, the boy's party would capture her either in forest or in fields

*A Kotia dancer*









*A Kotia woman*

when she is found alone. After minor quarrels between both parties and after paying bride price to the girl's parents, both of them would be recognised as wife and husband. Divorce and widow marriage are universally accepted in this community. In cases of divorce, if the divorced wife goes and lives with another man the new husband must pay penalty called "Moganali" to the aggrieved party.

The religion of Kotias is animism. They worship Pedda Devudu, Ganga Devudu, Nandi Devudu and Jakaram. They sincerely believe that if these deities are

properly propitiated they would grant them good crops and protect them from all diseases. None of these deities have proper shrines. They believe that these deities are taking abode on the hill tops and in the valleys, to which they sacrifice goats and fowls regularly. Kotias both men and women perform "dimsa" dance on festive occasions. Kotias, along with other tribes of agency observe Chaitra festival or "Ittikala Panduga". This festival generally falls in the month of Chaitra (March, April). This is the most jovial occasion to all the tribes of the agency area of Visakhapatnam district. The month is spent in feasting, night-long dancing and singing (in which young men and maidens take opposite sides). During this month all able bodied men stay out often for days together, until they catch hold of animals. Then only the womenfolk allow them in their respective houses. If the men folk return empty-handed, the women collect and pelt them with most unsavoury things, and they will be looked down as effeminate.

Kotias are predominantly an agricultural tribe. They practise podu cultivation on the slopes of hills and collect minor forest produce. Most of the Kotias are immensely benefitted by the recent introduction of minor irrigation schemes. They cultivate paddy in the wet lands. Some of them are raising coffee plantation gardens also.

## Muka Dora

According to 1961 Census Muka Doras number 9,965. They inhabit the hilly-areas of Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and East Godavari Districts. Their physical type is progressive. They are in fact one of the primitive hill-tribes, but their customs at present show a great deal of Country influence. They speak Telugu and their personal names are in pure Telugu. They speak other tribal dialects also, as they live amidst different linguistic groups.

They are agriculturists and may be seen working as forest labourers also. They irrigate their lands with liquid manure.

Muka Doras are divided into two groups, i. e., Kora-Vamsam, which reveres the sun and Naga Vamsam, which reveres the Cobra. They are sub-divided into exogamous sects or intiperulu.

Girls are married either before or after puberty. Menarikam, (cross-cousin marriage) is in vogue. When a girl attains puberty, she is placed apart in a room and on the last day, a twig of the Neredi tree is plucked, planted on

the way to the village stream and watered. As she passes that spot, the girl pulls it out of the ground, and takes it to the stream, into which she throws it. She then bathes therein.

The dead are burnt and death pollution is observed for three days, during which the traditional occupation is not carried. But on the fourth day "Pasupu Muthukovadam" is performed.

The relatives of the deceased return to the spot where the corpse was burnt, collect the ashes and sprinkle cow-dung, Neredi, tamarind water over the spot. Some food is also cooked and three handfuls are thrown to the cows. Then the ceremonial ablution is performed. This corresponds to the "Chinna Roju" ceremony of the country castes. The well-to-do Muka Doras perform "the Pedda Roju" on the 12th day or even later. The relatives of the deceased then plant a plantain on the spot where he was burnt, and throw turmeric, castor oil and money. The coins are collected and used for the purchase of material for a feast.



## Pardhan

The Pardhans mostly populated in the Adilabad District are also found in the adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh. Their population in Adilabad District is 9,701. They are musicians and the hereditary bards to the Gonds. The Pardhans preserve the memory of their great Hira Suka Pardhan, who was the adviser of Gond Chiefs and who had saved the Gond Heroine Manko. Thus the Pardhans are mythologically affiliated to the Gonds. The songs and stories they preserve and transmit orally are the important treasures of Gond culture. Their musical instrument is called 'Kingiri'. Where the Gonds have lost their position, the Pardhans have had to look for some other source of income and have taken to cultivation or agricultural labour. Thus many of them have lost their skill in singing and do not even speak Gondi. A few of the Pardhans have become independent peasants.

Their physical type is far more progressive with a longer face, prominent nose and delicate stature. They speak Marathi and are proficient in Gondi also. The ease with which the Pardhans narrate the history of the Gonds and sing songs of Gond glory in Gondi is superb.

The houses of Pardhans are constructed little apart from the Gond houses, and are of a smaller type. Presently, many a Pardhans have taken to agriculture and work on the fields.

The important possession of a Pardhan is his Kingiri, which is played while singing hymns or reciting epics. On festive occasions, the most prominent Pardhan plays the Kingiri. This recitation usually lasts till the early hours of the morning and is much enjoyed by the Gonds.

In dress, Pardhans are not different from Gonds, but women wear a bodice of the type of lower Hindu castes with a red caste mark on their foreheads.

In their social organisation they follow the Gond pattern, but their songs are generally in Marathi. Their social organisation is a system of phratries with which totem animals are associated. These animals may neither be killed nor eaten by the concerned phratry members. The members of each phratry trace their origin from the mythical ancestors who are most revered. These phratries are exogamous and are sub-divided into a number of clans. The Pardhans bear the same clan names as the Gonds.

Clan deities are considered most sacred and they worship the Earth Mother also. According to their faith, man in harmony with the supernatural spirits can only prosper in this world. They worship the Gods as the Gonds, but never take the part of an officiating priest.



## Porja

Porjas are 9,350 strong as per 1961 census report. They are mostly found in agency areas of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts. The word Porja is said to be derived from the Sanskrit term "Prajā" which signifies 'subjects or people. The Porjas are much akin to the other agency tribes like Kotias and Konda Doras. They speak a form of Oriya.

The Porjas are divided into the following sub-divisions :- Barang Jhodia, Pengu Porja, Kondi Porja, parengi Porja, Nanga Porja, Tagara Porja and Dur Porja. When a marriage is contemplated among Porjas, the Parents of the young man carry two pots of liquor and some rice to the parents of the girl. The girl's parents, if they are

favourable to the match, accept the presents. If it is accepted the future bridegroom's party renew the proposal a year later by further presents. On the following evening the bride, accompanied by her relations go to the village of the bride groom, where the marriage will be solemnized. Divorce and widow remarriage are generally allowed.

Porjas are Agriculturists. They also practise podu cultivation on the hill slopes. They gather minor forest produce like tamarind, myrabalans, Addaleaves and sell them to the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation. Porjas worship Bhumi Devata (the earth goddess). They cremate their dead.



## Manne Dora

Manne Doras' total population according to 1961. Census is 8476. They are found in scheduled areas of Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and East Godavari districts. They too like Konda Doras consider themselves as the lords of the hills. Manne Doras who are living in the interior forests speak Oriya whereas others who settled in plain areas speak Telugu.

Manne Doras practise Podu cultivation on the hill slopes. They supplement their economy by collecting minor forest produce. They domesticate fowls, cows, buffaloes etc. They believe that certain supernatural powers are residing in certain inanimate objects, to which they regularly sacrifice fowls, goats etc. In addition to the Hill deities, they propitiate Hindu Gods.



## Goud

Gouds are the pastoral tribe, predominantly found in the scheduled areas of Visakhapatnam and sparsely in Srikakulam, East and West Godavari Districts. Their population is 3,392.

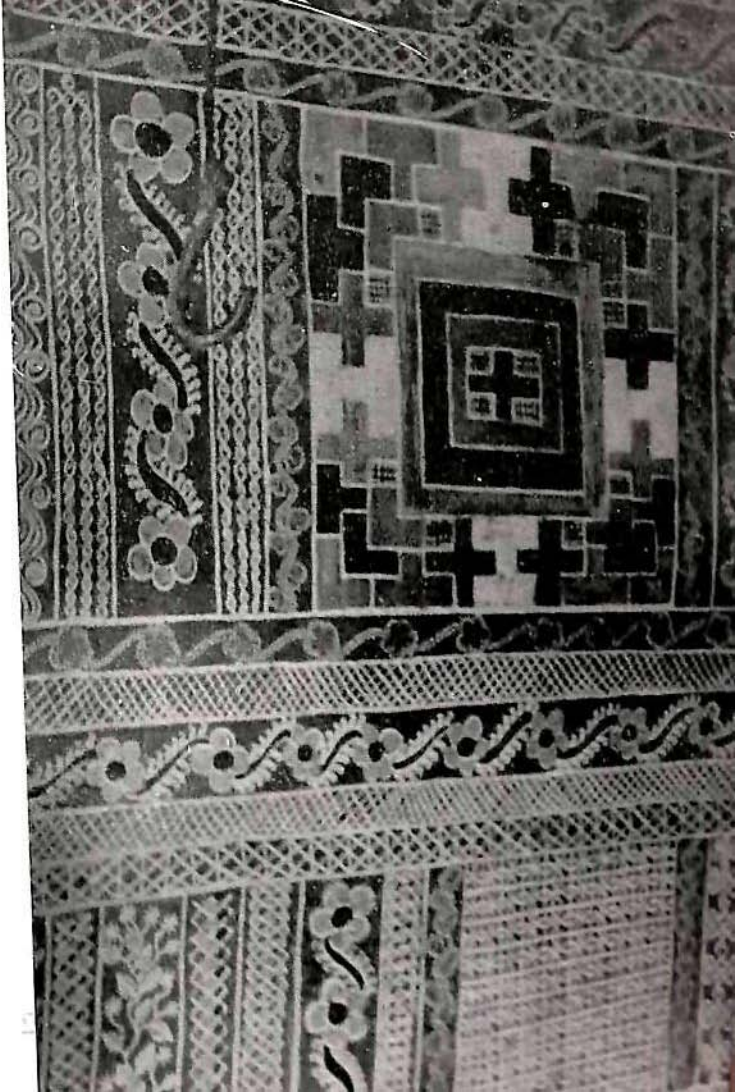
The Gouds claim that they descended from the Yadava community in which Krishna was born. There are numerous subdivisions among Gouds, some of them are **apoto**, **behara**, **bolodiya**, **dongayato**, **dumalo**, **goppuriya** and **sollokhondia**.

Many of the Gouds are herdsmen and milk sellers. Besides rearing and breeding of cattle, some of them are doing agriculture also, Gouds who are residing in the vicinity of hill tracts, practise podu cultivation. They supplement their economy by collecting minor forest produce. Marriage practices among Gouds are similar to those of the marriage practices of other Oriya speaking tribes of agency. Child marriages are not totally absent in this tribe. Gouds worship goddess Lakshmi on Thursday in the month of November. The dead except children are burnt.





*A Tribal Decorative Art*



## *Reddi Dora*

The Muka Doras also known as Nooka Doras are mostly found in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts. The Muka Doras of the Paderu and Chodavaram Taluks are known as "Reddi Doras". The Reddi Doras of Arladda and the Nuka Doras of Boorj and the adjacent villages are related by blood and marriage. They are one and the same people and their social structure is strikingly similar.

They are endogamous and have exogamous clans which serve as regulatory forces in their matrimonial alliance. They mostly speak Telugu. A few Nuka Doras inhabiting interior villages of the agency and living amidst Oriya speaking people also speak Oriya. Wherever they

live in exclusive settlements of their own, their hereditary village chiefs administer law and order to the people of the community. Since most of them live mixed with other caste and Tribal people, they have got communal headmen each having jurisdiction over a group of villages for settling their communal disputes.

They are mainly agriculturists and podu cultivators. They are also engaged in agricultural labour. They supplement their economy by the collection and sale of minor forest produce. They subsist on food gathering for most part of the year.

## *Nayak*

The Nayaks, who number 2,902 are inhabiting the districts of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Khammam and Hyderabad of Andhra Pradesh. Some jungle folk in the Wynad are also locally known as Naiks or Naikers.

They speak Oriya and also Telugu. These were the chiefs or Naiks under the kings of Vijayanagar. At present they have taken to agriculture and they practise podu cultivation also. They claim superiority over some of the lower castes. Most of them depend upon agricultural labour. They collect minor forest produce also.

The general mode of marriage in practice among this group is monogamy and polygyny is also practised. This is a Patriarchal type of Society. The father is the head of the family and he is an authority for anything in the family.

The Naiks at present display their dances during the harvest season. The females, for once, were good dancers and most of them were taken as the temple dancing girls in the Carnatic country.

## Andh

Andhs number 1,464 in Andhra Pradesh and are chiefly found in the hill tracts of western part of Adilabad district. Andhs are dark in complexion, with thick lips and prominent cheek bones. The language, customs and religion of Andhs are closely resemble to those of Maratha kumbis. The Andhs in Adilabad district, are recent immigrants from adjacent districts and are so acculturized that the Gonds consider them in the same light as other Maratha castes. It seems highly possible that the word Andh is a corruption of Sanskrit "Andhra", a name given by the ancient Aryans to the aboriginal tribe dwelling in Andhra Desh.

The Andhs are divided into two endogamous sub-septs, (1) Andhs, and (2) Sadhu Andhs. The two septs eat in the houses of each other but do not inter-marry. Their exogamous sections are based upon the model of those of

the Maratha Kumbis. A few are totemistic, bearing the names of trees and animals. The totems, however, are not taboos to the members bearing the totemistic names. A man may marry two sisters, so also, may two brothers marry two sisters. Marriage with the daughter of maternal uncle and paternal aunt is permitted. However it is disallowed with maternal aunt's daughter. Generally the arriage celebrations takes place in the brides house.

The majority of Andhs are engaged in agriculture and are good and industrious cultivators. Some of them are landless daily labourers, bringing fire-wood from the forests and collecting wild honey. They are good hunters too. They worship the Hindu gods and employ Brahmins for religious and ceremonial purposes. They cremate the married- dead persons and unmarried are buried.

## Mali

The Malis, the traditional gardeners and cultivators, are 1,443 strong according to 1961 Census. They are found settled in agency areas of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Districts. They claim that their ancestors lived originally at Benaras whence, they migrated to serve the Rajahs of Jypore. They speak corrupt form of Oriya. Malis are mostly cultivators, but their traditional occupation was making garlands. They are skilful in growing vegetable gardens.

Malis are divided into the following six endogamous subdivisions, Bedo, Pondra, Kosalya, Pannara, Sonkuva,

and Dongurdiya. They wear sacred thread. Generally the marriage takes place before the girl attains puberty. A Jholla or voli (Bride Price) should be paid to the girl's parents. Usually marriage celebrations take place at bridegroom's house. In olden days among Pondra Malis, if no suitable husband was found by puberty time a mock marriage was performed without any bridegroom. Widow remarriage and divorce are permitted, and the younger brother usually marries the widow of his elder brother. They cremate their dead and death pollution lasts for ten days.



## *Thoti*

They are largely inhabiting Adilabad District. The total Thoti population is 546. Thotis are very primitive and are of dark complexion. The male members are engaged in making small articles of bamboo. They also collect and sell medicinal herbs to the plainsmen. The women are experts in tattooing. Like Pardhans, they are professional bards and musicians to the Gonds. Their mother tongue is Gondi. Most of them live on daily labour though a few of them are agriculturists.

In physical appearance, they are of a more primitive

type than the Pardhans and in Social status also they rank lower than Pardhans. The stories and folksongs recited by them are mostly the same as those of Pardhans; but their only speciality is the stories of God Bhimanna. They also play on Kingiri, which is different from that of Pradhans.

However, in all respects they are like Pardhans except for their unwillingness to exchange their ancestral profession of bards for agriculture.

## *Kulia*

Kulias are found in the scheduled areas of Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari districts. They speak Oriya and they also speak Telugu. They know agriculture. But most of them rely on agricultural labour. They also collect the minor forest produce and sell it to the Government Agency only. They raise vegetables and sell them in the weekly shandies where all the Tribals and non-Tribals gather for market. During harvest season, they work as agricultural labourers pick up

grains and store them in heaps in the agricultural farms of the non-Tribals and during the dry season of the year, they engage themselves as the forest labourers.

Kulia practise monogamy and polygyny. The custom of neither levirate nor sororate marriage prevalent in social milieu of the kulias. During the marriage occasions and the festivities, they display their dances which are akin to the "Itikala-dance" of Kotias.

## Bhil

The Bhils are a very large tribe, spread over the large parts of Central India, Rajaputana, Gujarath and Khan desh. But they are very insignificant in Andhra Pradesh as a few of them are living in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh found in Adiladad District and are only 1468 in number. In point of physical characteristics the Bhils display remarkable variations. Those who live on the plains are well built, of tall stature and generally handsome features. He is hardy and active, with dark complexion, prominent cheek bones, wide nostrils and coarse features. Captain D. C. Graham writing on the conditions of the Bhils in Khandesh in the early 19th Century, gives a description of the wilder Bhils from which it appears that they may have lived in the style of Semi-nomadic food-gatherers. "Their hive like habitations formerly ousted the top of each isolated hill and these hovels not reared for permanent occupation but hastily put together to be crept into for a few months or weeks, were without regret abandoned on any occasion that induced the occupants to shift their quarters. Roving and restless by disposition and skilful hunters by necessity the woods and jungles supplied them with roots, berries and gann."

The name 'Bhil' is supposed to be derived from the Dravidian "Billu", a bow. They are one of the Pre-Aryan races. For ages the Bhils have been known as

daring marauders. Most of them still retained their tribal tongue "Bhili". A few of them own land, some hire land from the land owners of other castes and many work as agricultural labourers. As of old, Bhils function still as village watchmen and some have retained their familiarity with the jungle, engage in hunting with bow and arrows, in the collection of forest produce and in forest labour.

The Bhils eat carrion and beef and are on this account regarded by others as degraded. They are great hunters. The Bhils scrupulously observe the rule of exogamy, marriage within the section being strictly prohibited. The Bhils marry their daughters both as infants and adults between the ages of five and sixteen. Girls are sometimes dedicated to the temples or offered to the deities and in such circumstances receive the name of "murlyas". The bride-price is in vogue. Polygyny is allowed, and the Bhils impose no limit on the number of wives a man may have.

The Bhils worship 'Mahadeva' and his consort Bhavani, as symbols of terror, and hold as sacred to them certain groves and parts of forests in which they sacrifice. The local deities like Hanuman, Ai-Matha, and Sithala are propitiated with a variety of offerings. The Tiger God 'Wagh Deva' has no image, and is worshipped in the



headman's house at the beginning of the rainy season. The Bhils have no shrines but raise some platforms around some old trees and place their deities represented by maunds of mud and worship them.

The Bhils usually bury their dead and sometimes burn them with the head pointing to the south and the arms stretched along either side.



## *Kattunayakan*

The "Kattunayakans" are scattered in the coastal villages of Andhra Pradesh and chiefly found in Guntur District. Their population is 74 according to the 1961 Census. They are the counterpart of the "Chundi Nayakans" or "Suther-Nayakans" who migrated from the Southern parts of the Country.

They form an endogamous group. They marry among themselves from the exogamous 'septs' or 'intiperlu'. They prefer to marry the daughter of the maternal uncle; and they will also marry the daughter of their sister. "Kattunayakam" is the Patriarchal type of society. All the property rights are vested in the father and descent also is

traced through him. They live as agricultural labourers and many of them thrive as the watch-men of the fields in the villages.

There are two religious sects among the Kattunayakans. One group of people worship the Lord Siva while the other group are the followers of "Ramanuja matham". The followers of Sivaism will burn their dead and the ashes are thrown in the streams and the rivers nearby. But the followers of the "Ramanuja matham" bury the dead and on the third-day ceremony they offer food to the crows.

## Rona

Ronas numbered 23 according to 1961 Census. They are chiefly inhabiting the agency area of Visakhapatnam district. They speak corrupt form of Oriya. In the Madras Census Report 1891, it is noted that the Ronas are supposed to be the descendants of Ranjit, the great warrior of Orissa. In former days some of them served as soldiers to the local chiefs. The word 'Rona' means battle. Since their ancestors were Warriors, they might have been named after Ran. the battle.

The tribe is divided into the following four endogamous divisions; Rona Paiko, Odiya Paiko, Kottiya Raiko, and pattiya Paik. Each division is further divided into a number of totemistic exogamous septs such as Kora (Sun) Bhag (tiger) Nag (Cobra) Khindubi (bear) and

Matsya (fish). They wear sacred thread. They wear a necklace of Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) beads. When a girl reaches puberty, she is placed apart in a portion of the house where she cannot be seen by males even of the house-holds, and sits in a space enclosed by seven arrows connected together by thread. On the seventh day she bathes and is presented with a new cloth. Marriage by negotiation is popular among this tribe. Generally the Dasari (village priest) celebrates the marriage. The Ronas worship the deity Takurani.

Ronas at present are cultivators. Comparatively they possess much land. They gather minor forest produce and sell it in weekly shandies.



*Tribal Population of India (1961 Census)*

State/Union Territory	Total Population	S. T. Population	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1. Andhra Pradesh	35,983,447	1,324,368	3.68
2. Assam	11,872,772	2,068,364	17.42
3. Bihar	46,455,610	4,204,770	9.05
4. Gujarat	20,633,350	2,754,446	13.35
5. Jammu Kashmir	3,560,976	...	...
6. Kerala	16,903,715	207,996	1.23
7. Madhya Pradesh	32,372,408	6,678,410	20.63
8. Madras	33,686,953	252,646	0.75
9. Maharashtra	39,553,718	2,397,159	6.06
10. Mysore	23,586,772	192,096	0.81
11. Orissa	17,548,846	4,223,757	24.07
12. Punjab	20,306,812	14,132	0.07
13. Rajasthan	20,155,602	2,309,447	11.46
14. Uttar Pradesh	73,746,401	...	...
15. West Bengal	34,926,279	2,063,883	5.91
16. Nagaland.	369,200	343,697	93.09

Contd.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>Union Territories and Other areas.</b>			
	63,548	14,122	22.22
1. A & N. Islands	2,658,612	...	...
2. Delhi	1,351,144	108,194	8.01
3. Himachal Pradesh	24,108	23,391	97.03
4. L. M. & A. Islands	780,037	240,049	31.93
5. Manipur	1,142,005	360,070	31.53
6. Tripura	57,963	51,261	88.44
7. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	336,555	...	...
8. NEFA	369,079	...	...
9. Pondicherry	162,189	37,170	22.92
10. Sikkim			
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>438,608,104</b>	<b>29,883,470</b>	<b>6.81</b>

*Tribal Populātion of Andhra Pradesh*  
1961 Census

Name of the District.	S. T. Population.	Percentage.
1. Srikakulam	192,276	8.21
2. Visakhapatnam	213,820	9.33
3. East Godavari	100,343	3.85
4. West Godavari	44,058	2.23
5. Krishna	37,473	1.80
6. Guntur	95,457	3.17
7. Nellore	131,509	6.47
8. Chittoor	50,932	2.66
9. Cuddapah	22,457	1.67
10. Ananthapur	48,500	2.74
11. Kurnool	30,640	1.61
12. Mahaboobnagar	4,750	0.30
13. Hyderabad	1,551	0.08
14. Medak	85	0.01
15. Nizamabad	739	0.07
16. Adilabad	131,971	13.08
17. Karimnagar	13,116	0.81
18. Warangal	32,936	2.13
19. Khammam	171,284	16.20
20. Nalgonda	4, 71	0.03
Total	1,324,368	3.68

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# SCHEDULED AREA OF ANDHRA PRADESH

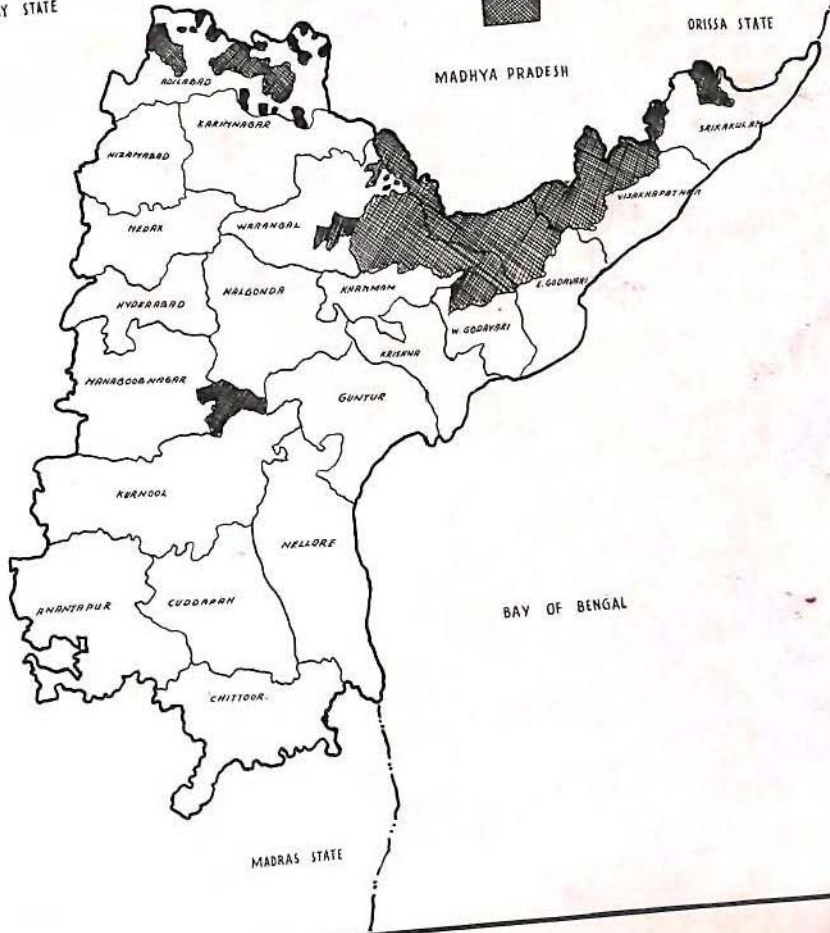
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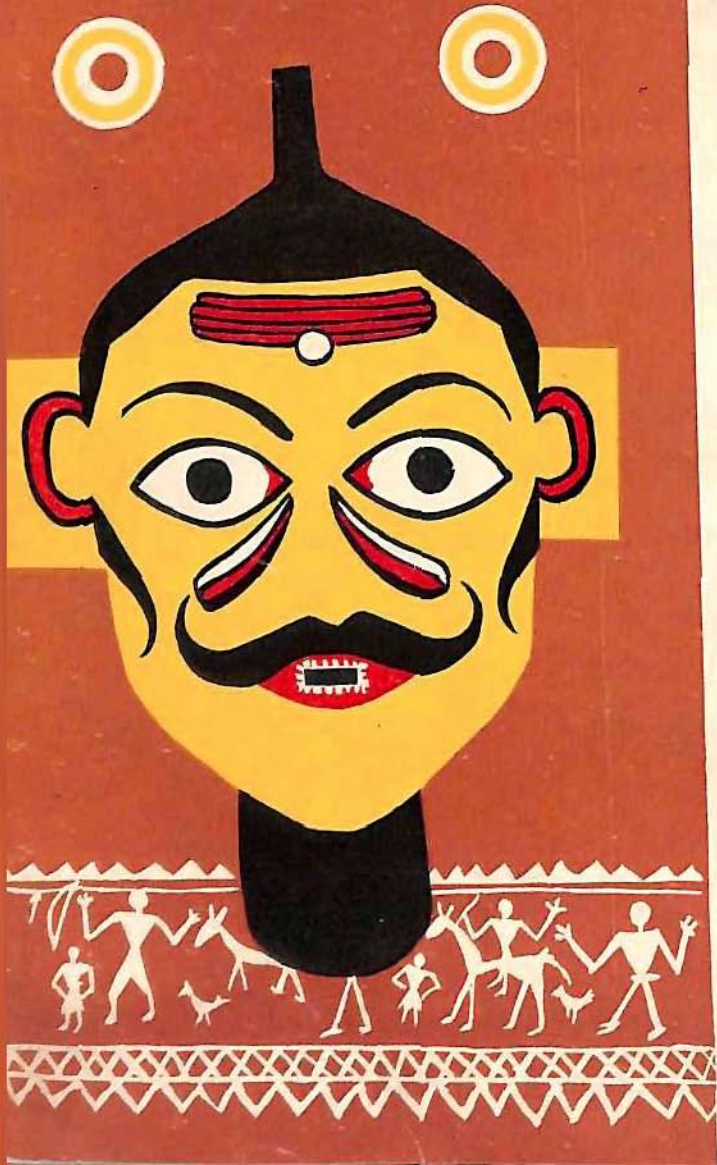
ORISSA STATE

MADHYA PRADESH

BAY OF BENGAL

MADRAS STATE





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