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Changing Trends in the Social and Cultural Practices of the Chenchu Tribes in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: ***The Chenchus are a very backward tribal group that mainly depends on food gathering for survival. They were in the pre-agricultural stage of the economy and had low literacy. From the beginning, the Chenchus had different cultures and traditions than the common people. The government has been putting a lot of effort into these backward tribes' overall development for several decades by introducing various developmental programs. Thus, they have changed their attitudes and behaviors towards family, health and education, religion, culture, social image, and group identity in the new ecology. The present study is focused on changing trends in the social and cultural practices of the Chenchu tribes in Andhra Pradesh.***
Keywords: Chenchu, Culture, Religion, Literacy, Social.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chenchu people of Andhra Pradesh are among the ethnic subgroups that were displaced by the majority of South Indians as they advanced materially. Their present range is limited to the Nallamala Range's rocky hills and forested plateaux, which extend beyond both banks of the Krishna River. This river served as the boundary between the British Madras Presidency and the princely state of Hyderabad, formally known as His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Dominations, until 1947. Chenchus were formerly found in both Hyderabad and British territory, but today their entire habitat is located in the State of Andhra Pradesh, home to the vast majority of Telugu speakers, who are also speakers of the Dravidian language.

The districts of Prakasam, Kurnool, and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh; Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, and Rangareddy in Telangana are home to the majority of them. They all assert that the Srisailam female deity Brahma Rambha is a member of their community. According to history, the Chenchu people inhabited the Andhra Pradesh region long before the Dravidians did.

The Chenchu people depended on the Nallamala for their livelihood, as the forest played a significant role in shaping their cultural customs, spiritual beliefs, and sense of unity with the natural world.

In addition to having dark complexions and generally short, slender bodies, they also have sparse facial and body hair growth. They typically have a strong, well-proportioned physique, are well-built, and have excellent endurance for long forest treks. The male members occasionally take down small games with their bows and arrows for self-defense. To comprehend the social conditions of Chenchus, there are internal divisions.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

An essential exercise is a review of the literature, which provides the researcher with a roadmap for the study.

Appa Rao Thamminaina (2015) in his study on the implecations of migration of Chenchu's in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states that The Chenchus are choosing a wider range of careers, and their attitudes are evolving. It is also observed that, despite their adherence to their cultural customs and identities, the Chenchus do not oppose the government's programs.

Snehalatha Padma. (2007) in their study on socio-economic characteristics of the primitive tribal groups, including the poraja, parangiporaja, and kondh tribes. In addition to providing information on the socioeconomic and living conditions of the tribes, the study also highlights the role that the government plays in promoting the best possible development of the tribes, including information on food habits, customs, traditions, and other activities.

Archana Sinha (2006) critically examined the economic empowerment and amelioration of tribes in India since independence. The study covered how the housing, eating habits, dress code, health, and welfare aspects of the tribes' way of life have changed. The impact of the alterations made to the aforementioned aspects was also evaluated by the study. The report also suggested a number of preventative actions to raise the tribes' economic standing and preserve their cultural legacy.

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III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study fallows the main objective:

- To study the Changing Trends in the Social and Cultural Practices of the Chenchu tribes.

IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study has followed a descriptive design. The purpose of this study in Andhra Pradesh State has been selected. These are based on purely secondary data collected from different journals, news papers, research projects, and ITDA reports.

V. CHANGING TRENDS IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE CHENCHUS

As part of the implementation of various development programs by the government and various NGOs taking initiatives for the development of the Chenchus, there have been some changes, especially in their social and cultural lives. In that part:

A. Family

The Chenchus' primary and most fundamental socioeconomic unit is the family.The majority of families consist of a husband, wife, and any children they have not married. Not only was it accurate in the past, but it is also true now. There are very few joint families, either vertical or horizontal, although a Chenchu family (household) may occasionally have one or two relatives. Families among the Chenchus, according to Haimendorf, are financially independent. while also issuing a warning not to place undue emphasis on this particular aspect, as "practically every family has times in their lives when, without outside assistance, its very existence would be in jeopardy. Right after union, a Chenchu man starts his own family. A man may occasionally migrate. Despite the advice of his wife's parents, he establishes a different household.

B. Material Culture

1) Housing

In the past, the Chenchus had no houses and were roaming in the jungle and living under trees or rock shelters because they were completely dependent on forest for their livelihood and wandered from place to place in search of food their habitations mainly lied in the hills and thick forests along the Krishna River and its tributaries

Now there is a marked change in their settlement pattern and the Chenchus settlements. They build huts with the bamboo wattle wals. Generally 3 types of huts i.e chuttu gudisha (round hut), mula gudisha (square hut) and kottamu (rectangular hut) are found in a chenchu settlement. The chuttu gudisha is the traditional type that is generally thatched with katterra gaddi (forest gross) and usually not partitioned inside. At present, houses are being built with bricks in some areas through the Indiramma house scheme introduced by the government.

2) Dressing

The Chenchu men's clothing consists of a waist string (molatadu) made of twisted fiber and a five- or six-inch-long piece of lion cloth (goshbatta) to cover their private areas. The Chenchus wrap a cotton cloth around their bodies in the winter, and some of the men even wear two pieces of cloth—one for their body and the other for a turban. When young men go out or visit certain locations, they tie a length of cloth around their waist. Access to the contemporary market resulted in changes to clothing styles and materials. The Chenchus' "dressing style" has completely changed as a result of the accessibility of modern clothing materials, their increased earnings and income, and even their increased interactions with plain people. They now wear the same dress that the townspeople and villagers are wearing. Stated differently, it is rare to find a Chenchu who carries just a "piece of loin's cloth" these days. The plains people's attire has been taken up by the Chenchu women. They dress in a choli, or bodice, that covers their upper body, a sari, and a kind of petu, or short petticoat, worn underneath the sari. Older women cover their bodies with the folds of their sari instead of wearing choli.

3) Ornamates

In general, men don't wear much jewelry aside from tiny rings in the lobes and helix of the ears made of brass, white metal, or silver. Some men wrap spiral rings around their fingers. Women wear relatively few and very low-quality ornaments. Women from Chenchu always wear a few chains of colorful beads around their necks. Currently, the women wear konkipulla, or silver ear rings. The majority of women wear cheap brass ear rings called mukkari that are set with white stones. Additionally, a nose screw, or mukku pudaka, made of aluminum, is worn on one nostril.

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Most women wear glass bracelets around their wrists. There are also wrist bands made of aluminum called kadiyalu. These decorations are all taken from the weekly Shady event. In terms of women's jewelry, a matte or toe ring, a tali (marriage locket), and a string of black beads are representations of married status. The widows are not permitted to wear glass bracelets. The Chenchus either get their ornaments made by the goldsmiths who reside in the surrounding plains villages or they get them from the shantytowns wherever they go. German silver and plastic ornaments are currently in style among the younger Chenchus, who live close to the plains villages.

C. Language

The native dialect of Telugu is spoken by the Chenchu people. Haimendorf, however, is of the opinion that the Telugu spoken by the Chenchus is not their native dialect because some of the words they employ are from their lost original language rather than Telugu.

D. Education

The last two decades have seen the emergence of the I.T.D.A. and general developmental programs. They have played a part in the younger generation of Chenchus achieving higher levels of literacy. Through the cultivation of knowledge, skills, and values appropriate to the evolving socio-economic and political structure, education serves to both stimulate and accelerate the process of change.

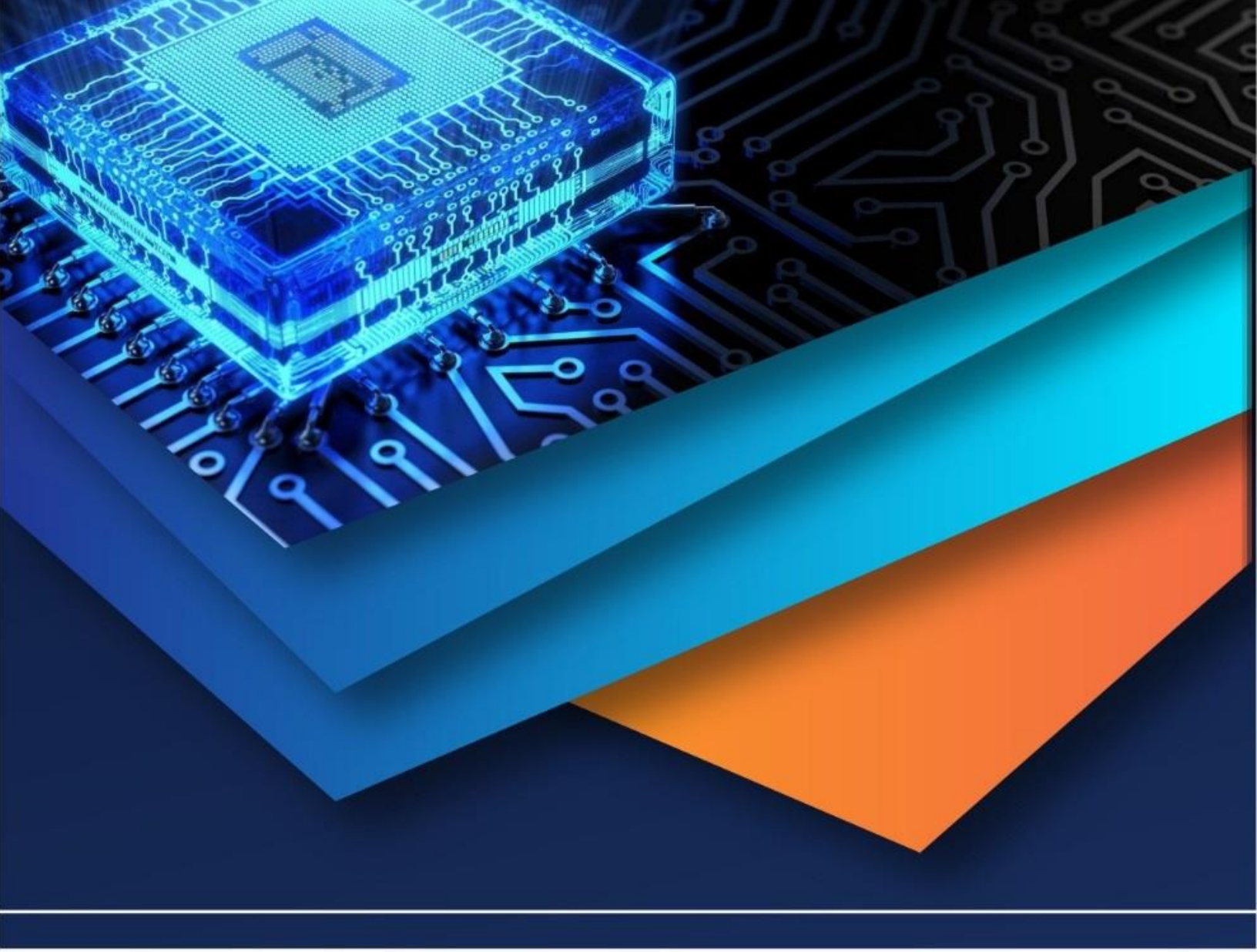
There are numerous gods and goddesses in the Chenchu pantheon, most of whom are well-known and revered. From the Hindu-caste people who live nearby. The gods' various names have some ambiguous meanings. Their understanding of the roles and beginnings of the gods is quite limited. Nearly all with a few exceptions, all deities lack shrines or abodes. The majority of these deities' images are neither zoomorphic nor anthropomorphic but only depicted as a slab of stone. The custom there is no specialists, but occasionally certain people take on the priestly actions.

VI.SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that there have been many changes in the Chenchu people since the last two decades. Through the various schemes introduced and implemented by the government and the efforts taken by the NGOs for the development of Chenchu people, they have undergone many social and cultural changes. They were also changed by coming into contact with many plain people and following them. Thus, they had many changes in their family system, including the construction of houses, dress, decorations, language, and literacy.

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