

# Time Cycle of Festivals Representing Cultural and Crop / F.M.P of Tribals in Seethampeta Mandal, Srikakulam District, A.P.

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Agriculture is the prime and predominant occupation of tribals and the culture of the tribal communities is reflected in their agricultural practices. Their main entertaining modes or ways are the celebrations of different festivals in different seasons that relate to and depend on agriculture produce. The study was made in Seethampeta Mandal tribal areas on their socio- cultural traits influenced by the crops and forest mining produce that they acquire. This paper details the analysis of how influential the crops and F.M.P. are on the tribal's socio-cultural activities in Seethampeta Mandal and understanding the thematic perception of each festival that the tribes celebrate in different seasons as well as to analyze the concept of cultivation based much on spiritual confidence rather than logical process of production. The encouragement and support from the government legislation for the progress of tribal music and dance have inculcated a new sense of pride in their music and social ethos play an important role.

**Keywords:** Crops & F.M.P., Primitive tribal groups, Spiritual confidence, Time cycle, Tribal culture.

## Introduction

The tribes generally have a group of families living together and these groups have pre-historic economy, with several rituals and customs. Certain tribal languages have no script except speech. They live in interior forest areas far away from the civilized world. They have slash burn cultivation and hunting of the wild animals as the way of life. They have a common religion, common customs and live as a community. In general tribes are of peculiar type of people living all over the world. Agriculture is the prime and predominant occupation of tribals and the culture of the tribal communities is reflected in their agricultural practices. The agro-climatic conditions and the resource potentialities differ from one tribal area to another. This is due to the nature of soil, fertility, availability of water etc. Due to prevalence of unemployment and underemployment, agriculture alone cannot sustain them throughout the year. So the tribals must rely on labour works and the forest produce which occupies and play an important role in their daily life. Hence the tribal economy may rightly be called as agro forest based economy. The isolated location of the tribes from the main stream of life is hindering their economic activities. The illiteracy among the tribals and the rich forest produce tempted the money lenders and small traders to exploit the tribals. India ranks the second in having the tribal concentration in the world next only to Africa. India holds unique position in the concentration of tribal communities.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the States where the tribals with different cultures especially in Seethampeta Mandal of Srikakulam District, the important tribes are Savara (Hill and plain) and Jatapu. Savara are one of the important Mundari speaking tribes of India, on linguistic and ethnological grounds. Savara can be considered as pre-Aryan and pre-Dravidian. Though, there were so many sub-divisions among Savara, broadly they are treated as Konda Savara (Malia Savara) and Kapu Savara. Savaras are divided into a number of endogamous tribes. It has been noted that among sub-tribes the Konda Savara tribe have restricted themselves to the tracts of hill and jungle covered valleys. But as the plains are approached, traces of amalgamation become apparent, resulting in a hybrid race, whose appearance and manners differ but little from those of the ordinary citizens. The culture of the hill Savara is very ancient and they are considered by government as primitive tribal groups (PTG) and the Savaras in plains are not considered as PTG in the Srikakulam district. The researcher has observed considerable differences between Konda Savaras and plain Savaras and also they are equally numbered in tribal population of the district.

The other important tribes residing in Seethampeta mandal are Jatapu, who are socially, economically and culturally advanced tribe in the Seethampeta mandal. Actually, the other tribes residing in Seethampeta mandal are insignificant in number. Konda Savara, plain Savara (hereafter mentioned as Savara) and Jatapu are in equal proportion and they consist of nearly 92 per cent of the total tribal population of the

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Seethammapeta Mandal. Their main entertaining modes or ways are the celebrations of different festivals in different seasons that relate to and depend on agriculture produce.

### Objectives

- To analyze how influential the crops and F.M.P. are on the tribal's socio-cultural activities in Seethammapeta Mandal
- To understand the thematic perception of each festival that the tribes celebrate in different seasons.
- To analyze the concept of cultivation based much on spiritual confidence rather than logical process of production.

### Present Study

The study was made in Seethammapeta Mandal tribal areas on their socio- cultural traits influenced by the crops and forest mining produce that they acquire. Tribal celebrate most of the festivals with respect to the crop grown at particular seasons and throughout the year. In the survey throughout the year, it is revealed that in all the 12 months, they celebrate different festivals by which they worship their traditional gods and goddesses in association with agricultural and forest mining produce. This paper deals with wholesome information about how different cultural traits, traditional festivals are influenced by the crops (Agricultural & F.M. Produce) in Seetampeta Mandal, Srikakulam District.

### Time Cycle Representing Cultural And Crop Related Festivals

**January:** January is an important month for all Hindus of Andhra Pradesh for the most auspicious festival Sankranthi is celebrated in a grand way, similarly tribals also celebrate it, but the way and process of celebration is somewhat different. They accompany the crop red grass with Sankrathi, conventionally called as 'Redgram week festival'. They have the custom of tasting newly cultivated redgram only after this celebration refers that it should be presented to the god first. Sankranthi in this month is also celebrated in a distinguished way that the entire tribals worship village Goddesses regionally called as GRAMA DEVETAS by sacrificing crows and continue the procession of the Goddess with all relatives. Another festival in this month called Tiger Festival which they call as PULI PANDAGA in which a goat is sacrificed to the Yojjos in the name of the persons who got expired in the family. They enjoy by taking part in dances like Dhinsa, ancient orchestra and tribal games in this festival. Dancing in the villages provides them opportunity for collective rejoining as well as inculcates in them a sense of cultural solidarity.

**February:** Siva Ratri is pretty famous in this month even for tribals and their customary practice is to celebrate the flowers festival (POOLA PANDAGA in their language) in such a way that all the tribals gather flowers from all corners of the forest to

worship the Goddess and then onwards flowers are used for other personal and commercial purposes.

This month is famous for marriages which are generally arranged under the direction of village Jannad in a formal and traditional way. There is a celebration of "cereal week" where no cereal produced is tasted till the celebration is held. Another festival in this month is "Toku festival" in which they construct a small hut in the middle of the village for their traditional priest called 'Yojjodu' as a representative of the God, is decorated with the feathers of peacock proceeded with a grand procession afterwards. There is another festival called 'Solapur festival' celebrated for the productive growth of cultivation by getting away from the evils, envious deeds and harmful thoughts from others.

**March:** New amavasya is pretty famous and tribals celebrate by being articulated as bear with appropriate make-up and Jannod the formal priest store seeds in a swing. Later all taste the newly cropped mongo. Then follows other festivals in this month called New Jaggary, Jakaramma Temple and tamarind festival are also celebrated.

**April:** There is a festival called "Ujjamma Goddess festival" for the welfare of the village in which they make a cart and fill it with a kind of fruits called Palli and worship with chik sacrifice and represent the same at the outskirts of the village. They also celebrate 'Perantal celebrations' for the welfare of the earth, forest and water which give better existence of them.

**May:** Tribals are very busy with agriculture in this month where 'Seeds Festival' is celebrated. All the tribals gather and clean all the agri-utencils and tools and worship them with water melted with rice powder. They also gather sample seeds from every family for puja (worship) with an animal sacrifice and then distribute seeds to all farmers assuming that the permission granted from the God to continue the process of cultivation.

**June :** In this month there are two festivals called Tenka festival and Corner festival (Mula Panduga) in which all tribals taste seeds firstly and celebrate with riped mango by digging them at the corner of every house. This is one of the important festivals for them as the crop of mangos from the forest give them good return.

**July:** There is a festival called Mokkalu Fest in which all tribals take out the unwanted plants in their fields to prevent deceases and increase the productivity of the crop. In this festival a cow is sacrificed to the God.

**August :** The major and important tool they use for the preliminary process of cultivation is ploughing and tribals celebrate 'PLOUGH WEEK' where the plough is neatly cleaned with turmeric powder, decorated with bangles and worship with again a cock's sacrifice so as they start cultivation ploughing with a new instrument.

**September:** 'ANKUDA' Leaves festival is celebrated in this

month to get away from the dangerous mosquitos and bees which cost their health. In this Connection they gather every different flower from the forest and worship their God.

**October:** DURGA FESTIVAL traditionally called DASARA is also celebrated by them just as every one of us does. They decorate all the tools, weapons, utensils and furniture with turmeric powder in order to worship the God. Another festival called 'NANDAMMA Goddess Festival' is also held at the time of the crop has been handed over from the fields. They celebrate this festival with articulations and roleplays by making up like their traditional Gods. They also worship JAKARI with potatoes and then the crop is taken back to home.

**November:** There is a different festival in the way of games called KANDI GAMES in which they play with their skills of playing with axes and dancing 'DHINSA' and the tiger festival as referred before also celebrated in this month.

**December:** CHUKKALA Festival is celebrated exclusively by the person who married second time after the demise of first wife. In order to the former wife should be satisfied in the heaven and assuming that there will be a problem if it is not celebrated, they present four animals' sacrifice to the God. There is another festival called AGAMA festival for preventing unnecessary demises in the family. At the end of the month KANDA festival starts and new red gram is tasted by all and will be continued to Redgram week in the month of January.

#### Findings and conclusions:

- In most of the festivals there is a common practice of presenting animals like cock, cow and goat to the God or Goddess whom they worship.
- The basic source of their lively hook is either agriculture or acquiring Forest Mining Produce, so they worship the God or Goddess with newly originated produce or endowrsed to the God and afterwards they enjoy by eating and selling them.
- Most of their practice of enjoying every festival with non-vegetarian, liquor, Dinsa dance & articulations.
- They celebrate festival for the most consumed crop or produce that is directly helpful and gainful to their livelihood such as redgram, cereals, tamannad custard apple and etc.
- They also give much importance to the utensils, tools and weapons in some festivals as their process of cultivation or FMP starts with them only.
- There are many superstitions they believe in and very proud to follow the traditional practices in every festival.
- They respect the mythological master called 'YOJJODU' and 'JANNADS' whom are believed as the representatives of the God or Goddess.
- They do not generally allow other castes to join their festivals as they look into them as almost their utmost responsibility much associated with community.
- They believe much in nature and in every festival they worship pancha bhutaas (Five Survivors i.e. air, earth, water, sky, and fire) for their survival is depended on them.
- The participation in every festival is found from every small village, every house and every person in the family. There is nothing like one exclusive festival is for one separate segment.
- Fishing hunt is one of the livelihoods for them exclusively for the tribals who reside at the bank of any river.
- It is found almost all the tools used by them for cultivation, hunting, and gathering produce from the forest are manufactured by them only.
- Step irrigation is the main system that they proceed with for cultivation.
- There are famous Gods and Goddess named Gramadevata, Durgadevi, Nandemma Goddess, Goddalama Goddess, Vijjamma Goddesses and etc.
- Traditional music and dance is slowly becoming less popular among the literate sections of the tribal society.
- The encouragement and support from the government legislation for the progress of tribal music and dance have inculcated a new sense of pride in their music and social ethos play an important role and significance of socio-cultural factors cannot be ignored in formulation of schemes for their all-round sustainable development.
- The degree of change with respect to traditional practices and celebrations of festivals is more in Jatapu and Kapu Savaras who are residing in the surroundings of Seethammapeta and in roadside villages. However, the degree of change for the same among these tribes is limited in the interior villages which are not having any transport or communication facilities.

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