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## Livelihoods Of Chenchus In Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh

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### Abstract

Chenchus, the indigenous and primitive tribes of Nallamala region of Andhra Pradesh formed a rich cultural heritage through their unique way of life. They have exceptional cultural distinctiveness which is intimately tied up with forest ecosystem. The traditional occupation of Chenchus is hunting and gathering. They supplement their food with the flesh of forest animals they hunt. They collect seasonal forest products like wild fruits, roots, tubers, green leaves, gum, resin, mahua flowers, honey etc and after domestic consumption, they sell the surplus in local markets to get some additional income. At present, the Chenchus are opting for agriculture and taking up other livelihoods due to restricted environment in the forests and the provision of alternate livelihoods by government and non government sectors to uplift their lives. In this context an attempt is taken up here to study about the livelihoods of Chenchus in Kurnool district.

**Keywords:** Chenchus, Livelihoods, Alternate livelihoods, Kurnool district.

### Introduction

According to 2011 census, there are about 47,315 Chenchu population in Andhra Pradesh accounting for only 1.73% of total scheduled tribe population of the state. The Chenchu tribes are spread over in all the districts with varied numbers, but significantly concentrated in the erstwhile Prakasam, Kurnool and Guntur districts, where there are 59% of total Chenchu population of the state. According to ITDA data, in the erstwhile Kurnool district, there are 42 Chenchu gudams with 2133 families accounting for 8160 persons in total. Of them, 4138 persons are males and the remaining 4022 are females. Integrated tribal development agency (ITDA), Srisailem, which is listed under Government Organisations of Kurnool district, taking up many activities with an aim to improve the socio-economic conditions of Chenchus through different developmental and welfare programs.

### Study Area

Kurnool district is the third largest district in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state occupying 17,658 sq kms of area, which account for 6.41 percent of the total geographical area of the state. It lies between the northern latitudes of 14°54' and 16°18' and eastern longitudes of 76°58' and 79°34'. The district is bounded on the north by Tungabhadra and Krishna River as well as Mahaboonagar district, on the south by Kadapa and Anantapur districts, on the west by Karnataka state and on the east by Prakasam district. It is one of the districts of Rayalaseema region. Before the reorganization of the districts, Kurnool district comprises 3 revenue divisions (Kurnool, Nandyal and Adoni) consisting of 54 Revenue mandals. The general altitude

of the district varies from 300 mts to 600 mts above mean sea level. Nallamalas and Erramals are the two important mountain ranges in the district running parallel from north to south. The major rivers flowing in the district are Tungabhadra, Hundri, Krishna and Kunderu. The total area under forests is 7, 86,412 acres accounting for about 18% of the total geographical area of the district. The major soils of the Kurnool district are hilly soils, deep red sandy soils, shallow red sandy soils, black soils and alluvial soils. The net area sown is 8.69 lakh hectares which forms 49.26% to the total geographical area. The major crops cultivated are paddy, sunflower, groundnut, coriander, horse gram, jowar etc. The district ranks 7th in population with 40,53,463 Persons accounting for 8.21% of the total Population of the state as per 2011 census.

## Objectives

The main objective is to study the livelihoods of Chenchus in the selected villages/gudems of Chenchus, exclusively.

## Data and Methodology

Primary data has been used in the study collected through a sample survey. Multistage random sampling method was used to collect relevant data in the eight selected Chenchu villages/gudems, namely, Sikaram, Hatakeswaram, Mekalabanda, Manikyammaseela, Bairluty gudem, Nagalooty gudem, Palemcheruvu and Chadarampenta. About 200 respondents were interviewed with a pretested questionnaire to get required information. Depending on the availability of respondents, samples were collected from each of the above villages. The number of respondents interviewed during the sample survey are, 19 from Sikaram village, 25 from Hatakeswaram, 30 from Mekalabanda, 26 from Palemcheruvu, 25 from Manikyammaseela, Bairluty gudem, Nagalooty gudem and Chadarampenta Chenchu gudems each. The surveyed data has been analysed using suitable statistical methods and tabulated accordingly.

## Results and Discussions

In Andhra Pradesh, about 82.66% of Chenchus have their main occupation as agricultural labourers or daily wage workers. In the sample villages of Kurnool district also, most of the Chenchus are working as labourers for their livelihood at present. ITDA, TRIFED and some other government and non government organisations assisting them financially to provide alternate livelihoods to uplift their living standards as their primary occupation of gathering and hunting is not so productive and feasible due to restrictive forest laws and conservation methods.

## Livelihoods of Chenchus

### Source of Primary Income

There are four types of main livelihoods in the sample villages of Chenchus in Kurnool district. Among these, majority of the respondents are leading their life as labourers, where there are about 133 respondents accounting for 66.5% to the total sample survey. The second important livelihood is self employment, where there are 29 persons engaged in it with 14.5%. Thirdly, 20 respondents are working as salaried persons with 10% of the sample size. The remaining 18 respondents are depending on Agriculture in the sample villages accounting for 9%. Highest number of labourers are noticed in Bairluty gudem and Palemcheruvu villages. Maximum number of self employed are seen in Chadarampenta, more salaried persons in Hatakeswaram and Sikaram villages and highest number of Agriculture dependents in Chadarampenta village/ gudem. This village is having relatively more number of self employed or Agriculture dependent respondents rather than the other categories of livelihoods (Table-1).

## Other Livelihoods

As stated earlier, different government organisations such as ITDA, TRIFED etc supporting the tribal people for their livelihoods through various programs. Among the sample villages, more number of respondents i.e., 63 persons (31.5%) have been sanctioned goat or sheep units for their livelihood. Different shops like kirana/ milk/ pooja items have been set up by 38 respondents (19%). The pooja items shops were mostly established at Srisailam and other surrounding temples. About 29 respondents (14.5%) have been given calf rearing units/ pasukranthi units. Petty businesses such as small tiffin centres, sale of Boruglulu (puffed rice), Uppusenagalu (salted bengal gram) and Palleelu (roasted Ground nut) etc have been sanctioned and financed to 28 respondents (14%). About 14 persons were sanctioned by Kiranam units, 10 Chenchus were made as Auto drivers by sanctioning autos to them and 4 persons making their livelihoods through vegetable shops. Very few Chenchu respondents

were established Photo studios, electrical tool kit units, Metal casting units etc with the assistance of government (Table-2).

### **Types of Labourers**

Of the total of 133 labourers in the Chenchu sample villages as mentioned in Table 3 have been sub categorised into 4 types depending on their nature of work. Among these, 45 persons (34%) are working as agricultural labourers meant for planting, weeding and farming activities. About 37 persons (28%) are engaged as labourers in MGNREGS works. Nearly 28 respondents (21%) are involved as labourers in forest and tourism related activities and the remaining 23 Chenchu respondents (18%) are engaged as construction workers such as road repairs, house construction etc. Relatively, more number of Agricultural labourers are noticed in Bairluty gudem and Palemcheruvu villages. Where as maximum number of MGNREGS labourers are observed in Mekkalabanda and Nagalooty gudem, construction workers in Sikaram and Manikyammaseela villages and the labourers working in forest and tourism departments are found in Bairluty gudem and Manikyammaseela villages (Table-3).

### **Government/ Salaried workers**

The total government salaried persons numbered 20 (10%) as mentioned in Table-1 are sub classified into the following, namely workers in forest base camps (7 persons), Forest garbage collectors (4 persons), security guards (3 persons), Temple workers (2 persons) and only one person working as cook in government student hostels. Relatively more number of salaried persons working in forest base camps are reported in Sikaram and Hatakeswaram villages, forest garbage collectors in Mekalabanda, sanitation workers in Sikaram and Hatakeswaram, security guards in Manikyammaseela, temple workers in Mekalabanda and one salaried person working as cook in government hostel reported only in Hatakeswaram village (Table-4).

### **Sources of Secondary Income**

In the sample villages of Chenchus, of the total 200 sample households, only 133 persons have secondary source of income in different forms. About 69 persons are getting their secondary source of income through forest products and hunting, 35 persons through livestock rearing and 29 persons through non-timber forest produce trade. Maximum number of beneficiaries in forest products and hunting are seen in Manikyammaseela village (12 persons) followed by Bairlutygudem (11 persons), Palemcheruvu (10 persons) and so on. More number of secondary income beneficiaries in Livestock rearing are noticed in Bairluty gudem (6 persons) and in non timber forest produce trade, Chadarampenta village is having highest number of respondents with 6 persons (Table-5).

### **Tertiary source of Income**

It is a welcoming change in the Chenchu tribal villages that, they are not confined to only one type of livelihood for their sustenance. Some of the respondents in the sample villages are engaged to earn more in the form of tertiary source of income. About 43 respondents are involved in Micro finance and self help groups and about 30 persons are engaged in handicrafts making and other Artisanal works. Highest beneficiaries in micro finance and SHGs are found in Manikyammaseela and Chadarampenta villages with 7 persons each followed by Mekalabanda (6 persons) and Nagalooty gudem (6 persons). In the handicrafts making and other artisanal works, relatively more number of persons are in Nagalooty gudem (7 persons), followed by Bairluty gudem (6 persons) (Table-6).

### **Income levels**

It is found from the analysis that, the monthly income of sample respondents in the selected villages/ gudems is as follows. Majority of the respondents i.e., 121 persons (61%) are in the range of Rs 5001/- to Rs 10000/- per month followed by 44 persons (22%) in the range of getting Rs 10001/- to Rs 15000/- per month, 26 persons (13%) are sustaining with only less than Rs 5000/- per month and very few respondents i.e., 9 persons (5%) are earning above Rs 15000/- per month. In this high earning group, relatively more number of persons are noticed in Mekalabanda village with 5 persons. In the income group of Rs 10001/- to Rs 15000/- per month, highest number of the respondents (9 persons) are reported in Chadarampenta village followed by Mekalabanda (8 persons) and Nagalooty gudem (7 persons). Where as in the Rs 5001/- to Rs 10000/- income group, which is earned by majority of the Chenchu respondents in the samples, the maximum number of earners are seen in Palemcheruvu village (20

persons) followed by Bairutygudem (18 persons). In the least income earning group of less than Rs 5000/- per month, more number of respondents are observed in Sikaram village with 8 persons (Table-7).

## Conclusions

Decline of traditional forest based livelihoods due to implementation of forest conservation policies and the declaration of protected areas, establishment of Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR) within Nallamala forest together impacted Chenchus traditional livelihoods such as hunting and gathering of forest products. To address this, several potential alternate livelihood approaches have been introduced by ITDA and other organisations considering their skills, local situation and available resources and trying to improve their living standards.

**Table-1: Livelihoods in the Sample Villages of Kurnool District**

| S.No  | Sample Village/gudems | Self-employed |       | Salaried persons |     | Labourers |       | Agriculture |     | Total workers |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------|-------|------------------|-----|-----------|-------|-------------|-----|---------------|
|       |                       | Persons       | %     | Persons          | %   | Persons   | %     | Persons     | %   | Persons       |
| 1     | Sikaram               | 4             | 21%   | 5                | 26% | 10        | 53%   | 0           | 0%  | 19            |
| 2     | Hatakeswaram          | 3             | 12%   | 6                | 24% | 16        | 64%   | 0           | 0%  | 25            |
| 3     | Mekalabanda           | 5             | 17%   | 4                | 14% | 17        | 59%   | 3           | 10% | 29            |
| 4     | Manikyammase la       | 3             | 12%   | 2                | 8%  | 19        | 79%   | 0           | 0%  | 24            |
| 5     | Bairlutygudem         | 2             | 8%    | 1                | 4%  | 22        | 88%   | 0           | 0%  | 25            |
| 6     | Nagalootygudem        | 1             | 4%    | 1                | 4%  | 16        | 67%   | 6           | 25% | 24            |
| 7     | Palemcheruvu          | 3             | 12%   | 1                | 4%  | 22        | 85%   | 0           | 0%  | 26            |
| 8     | Chadarampenta         | 8             | 29%   | 0                | 0%  | 11        | 39%   | 9           | 32% | 28            |
| Total |                       | 29            | 14.5% | 20               | 10% | 133       | 66.5% | 18          | 9%  | 200           |

Source : Sample survey

**Table-2: Other Livelihoods supported by different Govt organisations in the Sample villages of Kurnool District**

| S. n o       | Sample Villages/gudems | Aut o Drivers      | Shop s Kira na / milk / Pooj a items | Vegeta ble shops  | Goat units / Sheep units | Plou gh and Bull ock unit | Kira nam units     | Calf rearin g units/ Pasuk ranthi units | Other s Photo studio / Electr ical tool kit unit / Metal Casti ng unit | Total      |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1            | Sikaram                | 1                  | 2                                    | 1                 | 5                        | 1                         | 1                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 11         |
| 2            | Hatakeswaram           | 1                  | 2                                    | 0                 | 4                        | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 20         |
| 3            | Mekalabanda            | 1                  | 27                                   | 0                 | 28                       | 11                        | 5                  | 1                                       | 1                                                                      | 86         |
| 4            | Manikyammaseela        | 0                  | 2                                    | 0                 | 0                        | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 05         |
| 5            | Bairlutygudem          | 4                  | 0                                    | 0                 | 26                       | 0                         | 8                  | 28                                      | 1                                                                      | 67         |
| 6            | Nagalootygudem         | 0                  | 0                                    | 1                 | 0                        | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 01         |
| 7            | Palemcheruvu           | 1                  | 1                                    | 1                 | 0                        | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 03         |
| 8            | Chadarampenta          | 2                  | 4                                    | 1                 | 0                        | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                       | 0                                                                      | 07         |
| <b>Total</b> |                        | <b>10<br/>(5%)</b> | <b>38<br/>(19%)</b>                  | <b>4<br/>(2%)</b> | <b>63<br/>(31.5%)</b>    | <b>12<br/>(6%)</b>        | <b>14<br/>(7%)</b> | <b>29<br/>(14.5%)</b>                   | <b>02<br/>(1%)</b>                                                     | <b>200</b> |

Source : Sample survey

Table-3: Types of Labourers in Sample Villages of Kurnool District

| S.No  | Sample Village/<br>gudems | Agricultural<br>Labourers<br>(Planting,<br>Weeding,<br>Farming<br>etc.) | MGNREGS  | Construction<br>Workers<br>(Road repairs<br>, house<br>constructions) | Others<br>(Forest<br>and<br>Tourism<br>Related) | Total |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1     | Sikaram                   | 2                                                                       | 0        | 4                                                                     | 4                                               | 10    |
| 2     | Hatakeswaram              | 6                                                                       | 6        | 2                                                                     | 2                                               | 16    |
| 3     | Mekalabanda               | 4                                                                       | 7        | 3                                                                     | 3                                               | 17    |
| 4     | Manikyammaseela           | 6                                                                       | 4        | 4                                                                     | 5                                               | 19    |
| 5     | Bairlutygudem             | 10                                                                      | 3        | 3                                                                     | 6                                               | 22    |
| 6     | Nagalootygudem            | 5                                                                       | 7        | 2                                                                     | 2                                               | 16    |
| 7     | Palemcheruvu              | 9                                                                       | 6        | 3                                                                     | 4                                               | 22    |
| 8     | Chadarampenta             | 3                                                                       | 4        | 2                                                                     | 2                                               | 11    |
| Total |                           | 45 (34%)                                                                | 37 (28%) | 23 (18%)                                                              | 28<br>(21%)                                     | 133   |

Source : Sample survey

Table-4: Govt/ Salaried workers in the Sample Villages of Kurnool District

| S.No  | Sample Village/<br>gudems | Worker<br>s in<br>Forest<br>Base<br>Camps | Forest<br>Garbage<br>Collector<br>s | Sanitatio<br>n<br>Workers | Cooks<br>in<br>Govt<br>Hostel<br>s | Securit<br>y<br>Guards | Temple<br>Worker<br>s | Tota<br>l |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1     | Sikaram                   | 2                                         | 1                                   | 2                         | 0                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 5         |
| 2     | Hatakeswaram              | 2                                         | 1                                   | 2                         | 1                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 6         |
| 3     | Mekalabanda               | 0                                         | 2                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 1                      | 2                     | 5         |
| 4     | Manikyammaseela           | 0                                         | 0                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 2                      | 0                     | 2         |
| 5     | Bairlutygudem             | 1                                         | 0                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 1         |
| 6     | Nagalootygudem            | 1                                         | 0                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 1         |
| 7     | Palemcheruvu              | 1                                         | 0                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 1         |
| 8     | Chadarampenta             | 0                                         | 0                                   | 0                         | 0                                  | 0                      | 0                     | 0         |
| Total |                           | 7                                         | 4                                   | 4                         | 1                                  | 3                      | 2                     | 21        |

Source : Sample survey

**Table-5: Secondary source of Income for the Head of the families in Sample Villages of Kurnool District**

| S.No         | Sample Village/<br>gudems | Total<br>Sample<br>Households | Forest<br>Products<br>and<br>hunting | Livestock<br>Rearing | Non-<br>Timber<br>Forest<br>Produce<br>Trade | Total<br>respondents<br>with<br>secondary<br>source of<br>Income |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1            | Sikaram                   | 19                            | 4                                    | 3                    | 2                                            | 9                                                                |
| 2            | Hatakeswaram              | 25                            | 9                                    | 5                    | 2                                            | 16                                                               |
| 3            | Mekalabanda               | 30                            | 9                                    | 5                    | 2                                            | 16                                                               |
| 4            | Manikyammaseela           | 25                            | 12                                   | 4                    | 3                                            | 19                                                               |
| 5            | Bairlutygudem             | 25                            | 11                                   | 6                    | 5                                            | 22                                                               |
| 6            | Nagalootygudem            | 25                            | 6                                    | 5                    | 5                                            | 16                                                               |
| 7            | Palemcheruvu              | 26                            | 10                                   | 5                    | 4                                            | 19                                                               |
| 8            | Chadarampenta             | 25                            | 8                                    | 2                    | 6                                            | 16                                                               |
| <b>Total</b> |                           | <b>200</b>                    | <b>69</b>                            | <b>35</b>            | <b>29</b>                                    | <b>133</b>                                                       |

Source : Sample survey

**Table-6: Tertiary source of Income for the Head of the families in Sample Villages of Kurnool District**

| S.No         | Sample Village/<br>gudems | Total<br>Sample<br>Households | Micro<br>finance<br>and<br>Self-Help<br>Groups | Handicrafts<br>and Artisanal<br>Work | Total<br>respondents<br>with Tertiary<br>source of<br>Income |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1            | Sikaram                   | 19                            | 4                                              | 1                                    | 5                                                            |
| 2            | Hatakeswaram              | 25                            | 5                                              | 2                                    | 7                                                            |
| 3            | Mekalabanda               | 30                            | 6                                              | 3                                    | 9                                                            |
| 4            | Manikyammaseela           | 25                            | 7                                              | 3                                    | 10                                                           |
| 5            | Bairlutygudem             | 25                            | 3                                              | 6                                    | 9                                                            |
| 6            | Nagalootygudem            | 25                            | 6                                              | 7                                    | 13                                                           |
| 7            | Palemcheruvu              | 26                            | 5                                              | 4                                    | 9                                                            |
| 8            | Chadarampenta             | 25                            | 7                                              | 4                                    | 11                                                           |
| <b>Total</b> |                           | <b>200</b>                    | <b>43<br/>(21.5%)</b>                          | <b>30 (15%)</b>                      | <b>73 (36.5%)</b>                                            |

Source : Sample survey

Table-7: Income levels in Sample Villages of Kurnool District

| Monthly Income in Rupees |            |     |            |     |             |     |             |     |       |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|
| Sample Village           | Below 5000 |     | 5001-10000 |     | 10001-15000 |     | Above 15000 |     | Total |
|                          | Persons    | (%) | Persons    | (%) | Persons     | (%) | Persons     | (%) |       |
| Sikaram                  | 8          | 42% | 9          | 47% | 2           | 11% | 0           | 0%  | 19    |
| Hatakeswaram             | 4          | 16% | 16         | 64% | 5           | 20% | 0           | 0%  | 25    |
| Mekalabanda              | 2          | 7%  | 15         | 50% | 8           | 27% | 5           | 17% | 30    |
| Manikyammaseela          | 6          | 24% | 15         | 60% | 4           | 16% | 0           | 0%  | 25    |
| Bairlutygudem            | 1          | 4%  | 18         | 72% | 5           | 20% | 1           | 4%  | 25    |
| Nagalootygudem           | 1          | 4%  | 15         | 60% | 7           | 28% | 2           | 8%  | 25    |
| Palemcheruvu             | 2          | 8%  | 20         | 77% | 4           | 15% | 0           | 0%  | 26    |
| Chadarampenta            | 2          | 8%  | 13         | 52% | 9           | 36% | 1           | 4%  | 25    |
| Total                    | 26         | 13% | 121        | 61% | 44          | 22% | 9           | 5%  | 200   |

Source : Sample survey

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