

## **LIVE STOCK PROPERTY AND BANJARA COMMUNITY IN WARANGAL AND KARIMNAGAR DISTRICTS A CHANGING SCENARIO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Andhra Pradesh is home to 35 communities officially designated as Scheduled Tribes. According to population census 2001 the population of Scheduled Tribes is 50,24,104, Banjaras are one among the Scheduled Tribes. They are however different when compared with the other Tribes. Because they are mainly agriculturists. Telangana Region of Andhra Pradesh consists 10 districts. In almost all districts Banjaras are existing. They used to depend on their milch property for their economic and overall development. In this regard they gave much importance to their live stock property which is considered as an instrument for their agriculture implementations and also for white revolution in their community. The Banjaras in Telangana districts maintain good relation with non-Banjara resident communities. Implementation of latest scientific technical knowledge in the field of agriculture brought unfathomable changes in agriculture. This has influenced livestock property of Banjaras. This article throws much light on the changes of the institution of live stock property among Banjaras of Telangana districts. Though changes are traced in the live stock property, yet Banjaras give much importance to their cows and bullocks. Live stock property is considered as part and parcel of the life of Banjaras in Telangana districts of Andhra Pradesh.

**KEYWORDS:** Ghorbanjara, Vanachara, Turushka, Gypsies, Agnikulakshatriyas, Pastoralism, Habitats, Peninsula, Plateau.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The origin and spread of Banjaras could be traced to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Banjaras have been inhabiting through out the Andhra Pradesh with different nomenclatures such as Sugalis, Lambadas, Banjaras etc., who are in fact one and the same. In Telangana the neighbouring castes generally called them as Banjaras as well as Lambadas. The Banjaras are very tall and handsome so they have been called Lambada meaning people who are tall. They are tremendous toilers by nature. The traditional occupation of Banjaras or Lambadas was trade and commerce. In the past Banjaras were trading and transporting the food grains from one place to another place. They came to Southern India as transporters of food suppliers for the armies of Delhi Sultanates, Mughals, Marathas, Nizams and the British. They supplied food grains to the armies of Mughal and the British during the wars. It may be

very interesting to note that Banjaras gave much importance to their pack of oxen in their trading which became very useful medium of transactions between the North and South India.

## **METHODOLOGY**

With regard to methodology the writer has to a large extent utilized the primary data collected by interviewing the sample respondents. A sample of 26 respondents representing male and female as well semi urban and rural residents of Warangal and Karimnagar districts were interviewed for eliciting their views in regard to the objective of the article. This type of interview and discussions were of immensely helped in making this Article. The writer also followed observation method for the collecting information pertaining to the paper. The writer paid personal visits to the villages / Thandasin the settlement of the Community Warangal and Karimnagar districts and stayed there for some days and made observations and from there collecting relevant data according to the object of paper. In addition to the above the writer also scanned substantial published material available in different libraries of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Abundant literature pertaining to Society and Culture of Banjaras is available. It can be traced out in various studies explaining their changing lives Banjaras Tribes is given Society A few studies with Region bias has recently been done on the Banjaras, one of study made by All India Banjaras Seva Sangh and by **Jeevala Naik** Banjaras Charithra (Samskruthi – pragathi) by **B. Chiniya Naik** which presents the population distributors of Banjaras in different states of India and their Socio Economic conditions. A monograph by **Vyas** portrays the historical, social and Economic life of Banjaras of Rajasthan along with similar aspects of their counter parts in Andhra Pradesh, **Punjab** and **Gujarath** is regarded as a comprehensive treatise on the regional ethnographic studies on the Banjaras **Prakash Rao R.** made an attempt to study on some more aspects of the cultural life of nomadic Banjaras. This work gives some description of the life cycles of Banjaras and their nomadic past and presently **Reddy K.B.** has studied the transitional aspects of the life of the Lambadas tribe and noted that Banjaras have not lost their original ethnic identity despite the phenomenal changes **Pratap D.R.** makes an attempt to study some aspects of cultural life of nomadic Banjaras their past and present. He has made an effort to study the influence of the urban, semi urban environment on the life and ceremonies of Banjaras

## **SPREAD OF BANJARAS – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Banjaras belong to the clan of Rajputs. Rajputs ruled the northern India from 6AD to 11AD. After destiny of the Rajputs Kingdom in the period of Prithvi Raj Chouhan the regiment /soldiers fell apart divided into three divisions, among them one division settled in Rajasthan, second spread over into the forests for survival and third division migrated to the other countries. Thus, the Banjaras / Lambadis disbursed from Rajasthan to all over India and were known as “**gypsies of India**”. Thus, they become nomads since then.

The name Rathod belongs to the clan of Banjaras. It is believed that the ancestors of Banjaras are Rathods. The kingdoms of **Solankulu**, **Bundels**, **Kalachurulu** etc., belong to the clan of Banjaras. There is no single opinion or common opinion among the historians about the origin and migration of

Banjaras. According to the **Calnal Todd**, Rajputs are foreigners and they migrated from middle Asia and they belong to the **clan of Sydian, Ahliya and Huni**. This argument was challenged by **Sri.C.P.Vydy&Sri.G.P.Oshu**, according to them Rajputs have great respect of the customs of Indian tradition and culture.

According to the Hindi poet **Chand Bardai** he described in his book “ Prithvi Raj Raso:, Rajputs as “**Agnikula Kshatriyas**”. They are nomadic people from the Indian state of Rajasthan, North West Gujarath and Madhya Pradesh. They belong to the clan of AgnivamshiRajputs, and are known as Banjari, KoraSugali etc., and also called as “gypsies of India”.

**MihiraBhoja-I** (836-885AD) was a ruler of the Gujarat Pratihara dynasty of India, his empire extended to Narmada River in the South, Sutlaj River in the North West, and up to Bengal in the east and foot point of the Himalayas to Narmada. MihiraBhoja was one of the outstanding personnel of pratiharas.

After the fall of MiharaBhoj the king of Gahadwalas, ruled the kingdom. They belong to the clan of Rathors. **JaichandRathore** ruled the kingdom of Kannouj during the period of **Prithvi Raj Chouhan** the king of Delhi. JaichandraRathore was already a rival of Chauhan. JaichandraRathore’s daughter **Samyukta** married Pruthvi Raj Chauhan against her father’s wish. Being a rival ofPrithvi Raj Chauhan urge the help of MohamudGhori. So, battle took place between Prithvi Raj Chauhan and JayachandraRathore and Md. Ghori in the year 1192, the **battle of Tarain**. In the second battle of Tarain, Prithvi Raj Chauhan was defeated and captured by **MouhamudGhori**. He was treated very badly. His eyes were burnt with hot iron rods and he was made blind.

Prithvi Raj chowhan did not lose his courage. A plan was made to kill Mohamed Ghori with the help of Prithvi Raj Chowhan’s friend and courts poet Chand Bardai. When the archery competition was organized by Md. Ghori, Prithvi Raj Chowhan participated and successfully targeted with his peculiar skill of Shabdabheri. Watching this, Mohammed Ghori praised prithvi Raj Chowhan’s skill by saying “Shabhas” by listening the voice of Md. GhoriPrithvi Raj Chowhan attacked Ghoriand Ghori was killed. Latter the Turushka soldiers killed Prithvi Raj Chowhan and his friend Chand Bardai.

After the fall of the last ruler of Delhi Prithvi Raj Chowhan, the Turushka soldiers got instructions to kill the kings of the clans Chowhan, Rathore, Damar and their people. Scared with the Turushkas the clans of Chowhans, Rathors, Damar migrated with all their belongings on burden animals like bullocks in order to lead better life with condusive atmosphere. Thus, they spread across the India and were recognized as Banjaras in Telangana.

Apart from their languages the Banjaras / Lambadis speak the state languages where they settled. Because of speaking the state language they were also known as lamanvelamans. The 27 groups and 17 subgroups are nomadic and they are “gypsies of India”. They are also known as Banjaras or GhorBanjaras. GhorBanjaras spread majority in the Rajastan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Central India, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

## **DYNAMISM IN LIVE STOCK PROPERTY OF BANJARAS**

The economic life of the tribal people constituted of the cultural features of their system of life. Every community has its own way to meet its basic needs for the existence of its members otherwise they are threatened with extinction. Nature here comes forward and joins hands with them to fulfill their needs fashioned in their own way depending on their customs, traditions, demographic structure etc.,. The study of the economic system of a community can take us a considerable way towards a general understanding of a human needs that determines individual's behavior and individual relationships. For an assessment of the tribal economy in such situation special analytical concepts are necessary because social organization and culture is different and kinship, political organization, religious life would directly affect economic organization and performance sensitively in tribal communities is crucial that is why only a socio-economic approach which considers explicitly the relationships between economy and society is capable of yielding insights and generalization of tribal importance. The economic system is designed to satisfy material wants of the people, to organize production and to control distribution and to determine the rights and claims of ownership within the community.

Banjaras flourishing trading operations have thrived mainly on their pack-bullocks which provided them a dependable means of transport at a time when roads were not developed and other modern means of transport were quite unknown. But as normally restored with the firm establishment of British empire in India, the Banjaras who were moving from place to place had to slowly give up their nomadic habits. Further, the introduction of quick moving modern means of transport facilities hastened the decline of their business operations as their slow moving pack-bullocks could not complete with fast moving busses, trains etc., Hence they were forced to give up their unprofitable traditional occupation of itinery trading under the changed conditions and took to agriculture and sedentary life. But still some of them maintain the traditional skill in cattle rearing and breeding and this old pastoral trait which largely helped them in carrying out their once flourishing trade also contributed in no less measure to their shift to agriculture. The tribal habitat by and large devoid of sophisticated economic development activity till the era of planned development set in fast and radical changes. Several projects were launched for exploitation of water, mineral and forest resources in the tribal areas both for the development of the tribal and their inhabiting area and besides other schemes taken up on resource availability considerations. It may be very interesting to note that the situation which was either to near static has acquired a dynamic character modern technological culture is penetrating into the traditional tribal system. In the process of exploitation of natural resources the simple tribal folk who have been living in these regions are visibly and indirectly subjected to exposure to the developmental activities undertaken by the mechanism of political system.

## **IMPORTANCE OF BULLOCKS IN THE ECONOMICS OF BANJARAS**

Banjaras flourishing life mainly thrived on their pack of bullocks, which were treated as an important property by the Banjaras. Historical evidences prove that Bhangi and Jhanginaiks of Banjara Community had with them one lakh Eighteenthousand bullocks. Bhagvandas possessed 52,000 bullocks.

These people followed Asaf Khan carrying his provisions into the Deccan. Asaf Khan gave good protection to their property of bullocks in order to keep up the supply of grain and fodder. Asif Khan also gave to Bhangi and Jhanginaiks the prescriptive rights saying:

**Ranjankapanichapparkaghass**

**Din ka teen Khunmaaf**

**AurJahonAsafJahkeghore**

**WahanBhangiJhangike Bail**

The above prescriptive rights say that Bhangi and Jhangi may freely have pots of water and grass for choppers (roofs). Three murders a day will be pardoned because where AsafJah's horses (cavalry) are, these Bhangis and Jhangi's bullocks are present. This plate remains in the possession of the descendants of Bhangi and on the death of the representative of this family his successor would receive a khilat from his highness the Nizam.

Live-stocks took an important role in the survival of Banjaras. Banjaras take care of their animal husbandry cows and buffaloes are the main source of income of Banjaras. They became a part of their lives. The domestic animals will have resistance in all seasons. Banjaras provide sufficient grass for production of milk. The milk contains all the food including proteins, fat, sugar and other nutrients. Milk is good for health. Vitamins, Proteins present in milk helps to grow up healthy and have a strong body with full of energy. Because of in taking milk Banjaras look healthy and beautiful with fair colour.

Buffaloes are an inseparable part of agriculture used in forming initial cultivation of soil in preparation for sourcing seeds. They used in ploughing, planting and weeding, for transporting the products. On the occasion of Deepavali Festival they perform special worship by decorating colorfully the animals' i.e., cows, oxes, buffaloes etc. and its horns. When the cows / buffaloes / oxes become older and unable to work the Banjaras will train up their cubs for work. Live stock is used as a powerful fertilizer on crop fields, for floor coating. Dung is used for fuel production. The ashes of dung are used for cleaning vessels or pots. Dung is natural antiseptic medicine also. By using dung as a fertilizer Banjaras will gain more crop production which is a major income for their survival.

### **INSEPARABLE ATTACHMENT OF BANJARAS WITH BULLOCK PROPERTY**

When internal communications improved after the introduction of railways and mechanized transits have come and simultaneously improvement in road transport. Then the Banjaras have lost their position. The armies which preferred fast moving transport system in the changed circumstances with the result they were forced to abandon the older and well established occupation. They have to seek other avenues for their employment. Their flourishing trading operations mainly thrived on their pack-bullocks which provided them a dependable means of transport at a time when roads were not developed and other modern means of transport were quite unknown. But still some of them retained their

traditional skill in cattle rearing and breeding and this old age pastoral practice largely helped them in contributing in no less measure to their recent shift to agriculture.

It may be very interesting to note that the displacement of their occupation by the railways and roadways may be a blessing in disguise in certain spheres of life. Though they have suffered economically they have abandoned their hazardous and nomadic and migratory life, and settled down in group permanently to earn their livelihood. Besides this, some changes have taken place in the sphere of marriage and other social customs due to this development. Now the family life is more compact and stabilized. Despite the precarious economic position, the Banjaras did not like to adopt wage labour as it was against their pride and tradition. Out of sheer economic necessity, the Banjara took up collection of forest products and later worked as agricultural labourers on the agricultural lands of neighbouring caste peasants.

After 1880 forest labour and sale of forest produce and pastoralism became their main occupation. However by 1930, the forest work had ceased to provide them enough earnings because of deforestation, strict implementation of forest protection measures and declaration of some forest as reserved forests. The situation compelled the Banjaras to turn their attention towards agriculture and other types of labour in order to supplement their earnings. And after 1930 they ultimately settled down first as pastoralists and then as agriculturalists, although agriculture had never been their occupation in the history of Banjara. Most of them have taken to pastoralism, agriculture and various types of labour for their means of livelihood. They are finding it difficult to carry on their occupation because of a declining demand for their goods and also because of shortage of grazing land for their cattle.

The habit of living in isolated groups away from other communities, which was a characteristic of their nomadic feature, still persists among the Banjaras. Even today, most of the Banjaras continue to live in exclusive habitats away from the multi caste villages, though often a few Banjara families also live in multi caste villages and towns. The cattle, which they used for good breed of bullocks for their economic avocation in the past, have helped them to have good calves for sale and supplement their income. By maintaining many cattles, these Banjaras started to work as agricultural as well as casual labourers in the fields of non-Banjara to earn their livelihood.

The present research scholar with much zeal and enthusiasm paid personal visits to some of the villages / Thandas in Karimnagar and Warangal districts of Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. With major interest on their live stock property he entered into discussions about the prevailing bullock property with some of the Banjara families. The scholar had discussions with 26banjara families in Warangal and Karimnagar districts. The data reveals that the Head of the families used to possess cows and oxen property in the past as shown in the following :

Table: 1

Sl. No:	Name of the Village & Mandal	Name of The District	Head of the Family & Father's Name	Cows owned	Oxen owned	Remarks
1	Pagidipally (v)	Karimnagar	JatothManjiNaik			
	Mutharam (Mdl)		S/o.JaggaNaik	4000	500	
2	Pagidipally (v)	Karimnagar	JatothBhav Singh			
	Mutharam (Mdl)		S/o. JaggaNaik	2000	400	
3	Pagidipally (v)	Karimnagar	JatothJumkilal			
	Mutharam (Mdl)		S/o. ManjiNaik	1500	200	
4	Pagidipally (v)	Karimnagar	Jatoth Narayan Singh			
	Mutharam (Mdl)		S/o. ManjiNaik	1000	200	
5	Pagidipally (v)	Karimnagar	JatothBhav Singh			
	Mutharam (Mdl)		S/o. ManjiNaik	1000	200	
6	Kamalapur (V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraManjiNaik			
	Bhupal Pally (Mdl)		S/o. Sri Ram Naik	1700	300	
7	Kamalapur (V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraUkkaNaik .S			
	Bhupal Pally (Mdl)		S/o. Sri Ram Naik	5000	1500	
8	Kamalapur (V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraRajuNaik			
	BhupalPally (Mdl)		S/o. Sri Ram Naik	800	200	
9	Kamalapur (V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraTakriyaNaik			
	BhupalPally (Mdl)		S/o. Sri Ram Naik	1400	300	
10	Kamalapur (V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraRamjiNaik			
	BhupalPally (Mdl)		S/o. Sri Ram Naik	1300	200	

11	Kamalapur(V)	Karimnagar	AzmiraValyaNaik			
	BhupalPally (Mdl)		S/o. UkkaNaik	3000	700	
12	Pagidipalli (V)	Karimnagar	KorraLachuNaik			
	BhupalPally (Mdl)	MukdipadT handa		2000	400	

Sl. No:	Name of the Village & Mandal	Name of The District	Head of the Family & Father's Name	Cows owned	OxenOwned	Remarks
13	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaHemaNaik S/o. ParthiNaik	2500	500	
14	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	Porika Soma Naik S/o. ParthiNaik	1500	300	
15	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaWoodaNaik S/o. Uma Naik	2000	500	
16	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaMeghuNaik S/o. Uma Naik	500	150	
17	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaLachuNaik S/o. Soma Naik	700	100	
18	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaJaganNaik S/o. HemaNaik Ex. MLA & Minister	2000	400	
19	Madanpally (V) Mulug (Mdl)	Warangal	BanothBhikyaNaik S/o. LokyaNaik	500	100	
20	Laxmi Devi Pet (V)	Warangal	JatothBhajyaNaik	2000	400	



	Venkatapur (Mdl)		S/o. Lal Singh			
21	Laxmi Devi Pet (V) Venkatapur (Mdl)	Warangal	JatothRoop Singh Naik S/o. BhajyaNaik	1000	200	
22	Gurram pet (V) Venkatapuram (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaHasalNaik S/o. RamuNaik	1500	300	
23	Gurram pet (V) Venkatapuram (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaDasruNaik S/o. KevuNaik	1000	200	
24	Gurram pet (V) Venkatapuram (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaDalpuNaik S/o. KevuNaik	1000	200	
25	Gurram pet (V) Venkatapuram (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaNamkuNaik S/o. RamuNaik	900	150	
26	Gurram pet (V) Venkatapuram (Mdl)	Warangal	PorikaSarvanNaik S/o. RamuNaik	800	150	

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the Banjaras are basically traders and of course also as Rajputs ruled some of the territories of the Indian Peninsula. When the Mughals got strong hold in South India, the Banjaras settled down in different parts of Deccan plateau. When their pack bullocks become free from the Mughal army, they started trading and became useful medium of transaction between the North and South. The property of bullock played important role in the life style of Banjaras. They used to own hundreds and thousands of pack bullocks. This is shown in the data presented vide Table No: 01. Two / three of them even possessed cows from 3000 to 5000. Even though, in due course of time most of them lost their live stock property due to deforestation lack of proper treatment for sick animals, maintenance problems, etc., a few of them continued till late 1980s. Later, because of the socio/ cultural / economic changes that have taken place in their life style, they also reduced their property to a great extent.

Further, due to modernization and urbanization also, many Lambadas or Banjaras of the present generation have given up not only their traditional occupations but also their dress pattern and life styles; including those belong to Warangal and Karimnagar districts. Besides, the recent scientific and technical developments of society had unfathomable influence on their institution of live stock property.

However, in spite of the fact that, the strength of their live stock such bullocks and cows have been drastically reduced still they treat their live stock property as very important aspect of their economic, social, cultural and religious life. Even today in their agricultural activities they give much importance to bullocks and cows besides latest Technical Knowho . In order to protect their oxen and cows, the Banjaras of Warangal and Karimnagar adopt traditional and latest methods of treatment of their cattles. This reflects the importance given to the property of cattle by Banjaras in Karimnagar and Warangal districts. From the above, it can be concuded that inspite of the changes taken place in the Society in different angles and their influence on the Banjaras due to the long and traditional association with cows and oxen , still Banjaras are taking care of their property and protecting them to the extent possible.

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