

THE CULT OF NOOKALAMMA IN NORTH COASTAL ANDHRA

**A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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TO
My Parents

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled: *The Cult Of Nookalamma In North Coastal Andhra* submitted by Sujatha Devarapalli for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Center for Regional Studies, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad is a result of the bonafide research work she has carried out under my supervision. This work or a part of it has not been submitted to any degree or diploma. I recommend that the thesis be sent to the examiners for evaluation.




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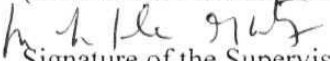
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This is to certify that I, Sujata Devarapalli have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under PhD ordinances of the University.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of research degree of any University.


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Chapter I

Introduction

I.1.Characteristic Features of the Village Goddesses: An Overview

Humans live on hope and faith in God. At every stage, they have to face several risks, hazards, and challenges. If they do not have belief that some one unseen is protecting them they will be worried and thereby suffer insecurity. Especially in village India, epidemics and natural calamities cause duress and people seek redress from that unknown, indescribable supreme authority, i.e. 'God' (Srinivas, 1976).

The present study is about the worship of village goddesses and the belief system of the little communities in rural Andhra Pradesh. In the context of Indian village religious life, the worship of the village goddesses plays an important role in the belief system of different social groups, especially of the lower social order. The lower castes find a degree of compensation for their low rank in their role as priests in the shrines of mother goddesses. As observed by Pauline (cited in Henry 1973) persons from social groups belonging to the lower social order are the priests of non-Sanskritic deities, and they enjoy power and prestige in the village including the higher castes. This contributes to group pride (Henry, 1973).

One of the most striking features of the rural India is the worship of the local goddesses. As Indian culture is primarily a village culture the most significant and powerful divine presence is the *Gramadevata* (village goddess), a deity who is especially identified with the village and whom the villagers worship with a great affection as a protector deity.

The *Gramadevatas* are usually represented by uncarved stones, trees or small shrines, termite mounds, dolmen like structures, hills that does not contain an anthropomorphic image. The unbridled energy and power (*Sakti*) of the *Gramadevata* is enshrined in a sacred stone called *Saktirayi* (*rayi*: stone), or *Boddurayi* (*Boddu*: navel). Such sacred stones symbolically form the fixed points of linkage between the sacred and profane in the cultural topography of the village settlements system (Murty, 2004). The villagers propitiate a wide variety of local deities presiding over epidemics such as smallpox, cholera, and plague. The *Gramadevatas* protect the village from the epidemics in return for propitiation. The generic name for the deity presiding over epidemics is *Atalamma* or *Ammavaru*. There are several presiding deities over cholera and in different parts of the country, different deities are propitiated. The Vedic literature prescribes worship of Rudra for averting cattle diseases. Perhaps, after some time the wife of Rudra, got the same position and she was also worshipped in the form of Chandi or Kali as

the presiding deity of cholera or 'cholera mother' (Savithri, 1998). The goddesses of different villages were distinguished by prefixing the village name to *Amma*, for example Pathapatnam *Ammavaru* (goddess of Pathapatnam), Peddapuram Maridamma (Maridamma of Peddapuram), Kattipudi Satteramma (Satteramma of Kattipudi), Vizianagaram Pyditalli (Pyditalli of Vizianagaram).

The great gods and goddesses of the Brahmanic pantheon (the great tradition) are also acknowledged by the villagers but with a less interest. The great gods are worshipped by the Brahmans and other upper castes of the village, and the local gods and goddesses (the little tradition) are worshipped by the little communities. There are so many differences between the little and the great traditions. In the great tradition Brahman priesthood is central and ritual patterns involved are subcontinental in distribution. The little tradition centers on non-Brahmanic priesthood and regional lore and usage. Most of the villagers who belong to the lower castes are not allowed into the precincts of the temples of the Brahmanic deities. The village goddesses, in contrast, engage the villagers directly by being associated with their local existential concern. The goddess is perceived as their deity and her concern is their well-being and that of the village.

The other important difference between the great and the little traditions is, in the former, the great deities are the subjects of sacred Sanskrit texts (Singer, 1972). They are generally attributed with superior power and greater purity. In the little tradition, folk deities are ignored by the Sanskritic writers. At the Sanskritic level the important goddesses can be divided into two groups. One group includes Parvathi, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi, the consorts of Trimurthi. They are characterized by mildness with their subordination to and dominance by their male consorts. The goddesses of the other group, which include Durga, Kali, Chandi, Sambhavi, etc., have a dual nature. They can either be benevolent or destructive. In this respect, they are like the non-Sanskritic mother goddesses.

In the non-Sanskritic complex, the mother goddess has a dual nature. They are benevolent and malevolent, the former being contingent on satiation in propitiation rituals. Individuals and families venerate the goddesses and fulfill their vows seeking redress for the cure of ailments and illness, begetting children, well being of the family, success against odds and tiding over crisis situations like disputes and enmity etc. But the goddesses protect only when their children (devotees) have first taken care of making offerings to them at their shrines. Otherwise they can be painfully and dangerously destructive and can resort to all sorts of mischief. The malignant mothers are

the goddesses of diseases, cruelty, hate, malice and revenge. These goddesses are uncertain in temper, fierce and terrible by nature, and can create havoc. They get appeased by receiving offerings of blood and drinks, propitiation and processions.

Various interpretations have been offered to explain the phenomenon of the worship of the village goddesses in India. The colonial administrators who furnished accounts of the village cultures including religious behaviour, mostly relied on the accounts of missionaries, travelers, and their own experiences and interviews. Later researchers examined various facets of belief systems on the goddesses in the context of phenomenological and epistemological approaches. Anthropologist Johan Jacob Bachofen in his *Das Mutterrecht* put forward the concept of 'mother right' on the basis of the evidence of matrilineal descent in ancient Greece, and among the primitive peoples of Africa and the Americas, and asserted that in the earliest stage of human history, a condition of promiscuity prevailed. It was universally followed by 'mother right', which was reflected in the worship of female deities (Bhattacharya, 1970). Even Sigmund Freud expressed that goddess worship was linked to an earlier stage of matriarchy. According to him goddess worship represents universal unconscious fantasies characteristic of a stage in early psychic development in which the mother

seems to be all-powerful to the child (Bhattacharya, 1970). In the Indian context, the 'mother right' is historically connected with the early agricultural economy, which created the material conditions for the social supremacy of the female. The goddess worship is associated with the lives of the masses, as majority of them still remain the tillers of the soil.

The special feature of the village goddesses is that they are unmarried, independent female deities, belonging to particular communities (both in the urban and rural areas), although their characteristics actually differ very little from place to place. Goddesses are often ritually represented alone without husbands. From the earliest times women were seen as a concentration of dangerous power. So the power should be circumscribed and controlled. The major form of control is chastity. The chaste women safeguard the life and prosperity of the male relatives to whom she is attached, and chastity itself is thought of as imbued with divine power. The image of the woman as a source of violent and menacing power is given full expression in the myths, while at the same time the insistence on virginity is in no way compromised. The virgin goddess is a focus of violent eroticism; she is, indeed at her most powerful as long as her virginity is intact, so that, in marrying her god exposes himself to an intense, even lethal danger (Shulman, 1980).

Moreover it is essential for the good of her devotees that the goddess should remain powerful (Shulman, 1980).

The sole object of the worship of these village goddesses is to propitiate them, and to avert their wrath. When a misfortune comes, it is a sign that the goddess is angered and it is time to take steps to appease her. They are thus associated with the attribute of heat and require to be cooled. There is no act of uniformity and no ritual calendar regulating the festivals or forms of worship of village deities. Often, offerings are made once or twice a week on fixed days, usually on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. These offerings consist of fruits, flowers, cooked rice, curds and occasionally goat, sheep, pig, and fowls.

One of the chief offering to the village goddesses is blood sacrifice. In earlier days a he-buffalo sacrifice was a must. When the village rituals are not performed to the gratification of the goddess for too long, or performed to her dissatisfaction, she commands by possessing (*Punakam*) individuals, and her commands have got to obey. Lest she may turn malevolent and calamity may befall on the village.

While there are rites for observance of purity in the folk realm, no taboo of pollution is attached to blood offerings and also the officiating priests are of

lower social order. The blood of the sacrificed animal mixed with *Kumbam* (cooked rice), is sprinkled in the houses and along the *Polimera* (village border) to rid the village from the dangers of evil spirits and shades of the dead. The belief is that, the ritual act of sacrifice transforms the animal victim into a sacred object as its life is given over to the spirit world.

The mother goddess thus comprises several subsets of supernatural beliefs and practices. By studying the ritual performances and practices, verbal texts and mythologies of the goddesses it is possible to see how some of these variations appear to have resulted from the interaction between the religion of the upper social groups and the cults of the masses. It is difficult to characterize the complexity of the religious life of villagers.

For the purpose of the present study, Nookalamma, one of the popular deities in north coastal Andhra is selected. According to Bishop Whitehead (1921), she is the most dreadful female deity of this region. At the Sanskrit domain she is worshipped as Nookambika and at the mass level she is worshipped as Nookalamma. Most of her devotees belong to fishermen, Pambala and Mala communities. The royal families like Vizianagaram Gajapathis and Pithapuram Maharajas worshipped her as their clan deity.

I.2. Brief History of North Coastal Andhra

The region of north coastal Andhra comprises the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts. This region was a part of Kalinga during the ancient and medieval times. Kalinga is a region of the Indian subcontinent, which has been mentioned in the Asokan inscriptions found at Dhauli and Jaugada (ca.260 BC). According to Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, Kalinga stretched from Tosali in the upper valley of river Mahanadi in the north to river Godavari and later to river Krishna in the south.

The political history of northern Andhra region underwent a series of changes from time to time. It was from the time of Kalinga war (ca.261 BC), the authentic history of this land had been recorded. After the Mauryan rule, it was under Chedis for sometime. During the early centuries of the Christian era, it was under the sway of the great Satavahana ruler Gautami Putra Satakarni. Subsequently the region of northern Andhra was ruled by minor dynasties like the Mataras and Vasisthas in 4th and 5th centuries A.D. The Gangas who took over the control of the region towards the end of the 5th century AD ruled for nearly nine centuries till the end of Bhanudeva's rule in 1435 AD. The first capital of the Gangas was Dantapura identified by scholars as Dantavarapukota in Srikakulam district. Subsequently, the

capital was shifted to Kalinganagara identified as Mukhalingam in the same district during the reign of Devendravarma (535 –544 AD). However it was during the rule of Ananthavarma Choda Ganga (1077-1147AD) the political complexity of the region had completely changed, with the shift of the Ganga's capital from Kalinganagara or Mukhalingam to Kataka, the modern Cuttak in Orissa. After the Gangas, the Gajapathi and the Bhoja dynasties ruled over the northern Andhra from their Orissan capital till the region fell into the hands of the Sultans of Delhi and Golconda, the Pasupati dynasty of Vizianagaram, the Velamas of Bobbili and finally the British in the 18th century (Hemalatha, 1991).

Regarding the religious life of the people of this region, the land of Kalinga was famous for Jain and Buddhist religions as revealed by caves located at Udayagiri, Sankaram, Ramathirtham and Salihundam. However, these two religions declined by 12th century AD, due to the revival of Brahmanism, misuse of public donations by monks etc. Later this region was dominated by Saiva faith as revealed by Saiva temples at Mukhalingam, Narayanapuram and Draksharamam. By the end of 11th century AD the Vaishnava cult spread its roots in northern Andhra with the patronage extended by Ananthvarma Chodaganga (Hemalatha, 1991). Consequently several faiths and cults simultaneously continued harmoniously. The other

popular cults that flourished in northern Andhra are the Sakthi and Tantric cults.

I.3. Historical Evidences of the Worship of the Goddess Nookalamma and Other Village Goddesses in North Coastal Andhra

The earliest mention of a village goddess comes from an inscription of Amma II, a king of the Eastern Chalukyas, which mentions the boundaries of the village in a grant to the temple of Punisvaramma (Fleet, 1884). The Dirgasi Inscription found at Nileswara temple of Narayanapuram throws light on the practice of worshipping Sun known as Aditya, and Durga, the mother goddess. Such goddesses also enjoyed royal patronage. The Inscriptions at the temples constructed by Eastern Chalukyan kings indicate that Eastern Chalukyas worshipped *Sakthi*. They described themselves as Matrigana Paripalithanam. i.e. those who are protected by the 'seven mothers'. Panels of Sapthamatrakas are found in almost all important temples of this periods and places like Vemulavada and Draksharamam. In the Ideru inscription of Amma – I, the name of the village goddess by name Durga Bhagavathi was mentioned and that the temple was situated on the northwest corner of the village (Iswaridutt, 1968). Even now we find a number of Mahisasura Mardini figures in the Siva temple of Vemulavada and Panchadarala. Early Reddy kings were the followers of Saivism, and

festivals like Sivaratri were celebrated with great enthusiasm. At the same time practices of social customs like *Sati*, *Chakra Puja*, i.e. throwing one self and the babies to death under the moving wheels of the God's chariot, were regarded as great service to the religion. Women who committed *Sati* were elevated to the status of demi- goddesses and worshipped as *Perantalu* (Raghunatharao, 1994).

The worship of village deities continued to enjoy popularity during the period of Vizianagara kings. Kings and their subordinates encouraged the *Jataras* performed in honor of the deities. Taxes like the *Maharajagutta* or *Maharajaprayojanalu* were collected for the purpose from all classes of people. According to Satyanarayana, it was a gala day for the people, especially for the hard working toilers belonging to the lower castes. Including animals, human beings were also sacrificed to propitiate the goddess. There were also instances of selftorture and selfimmolation. A person must pull out his eyes with the nailparer if he wanted to secure the gift of seeing distant objects; he must cut off his tongue with the sword if he expected to obtain knowledge and learning. Swinging by hook through the skin high up in the air was one of the ceremonies still continuing with little changes (Satyanarayana, 1982). In the classical Telugu (medieval) literature ca. 13th to 15th centuries AD) the goddess worship is mentioned at various

occasions. In *Sakunthala Parinayam* written by Pinaveerabhadru, *Barigoriyalu* are mentioned. *Barigoriyalu* means sheep to be sacrificed to the goddess. In *Panduranga Mahatyam* (by Tenali Ramakrishna) there are references to animal sacrifice. The celebrations during annual *Jataras* are elaborately described in this work. In those days the diseased animals were sacrificed in front of the goddess. The *Chatimpu* (announcement) for animal sacrifice was the duty of the officials. Women used to drink toddy during those days. In *Bhimeswarapuram* along with *Sapthamatrikas* such as Brahmi, Maheswari, Koumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamundi, Kalika, Havisha, Sarika, and Vadhatri, village goddesses like Gogulamma, Nookalamma, Ghattatalli, Aramjyothi are also mentioned in several occasions.

The goddess Nookalamma appeared at the Bhimeswara temple (ca.1200AD) constructed by Eastern Chalukyas at Draksharamam along with other local deities Ghattambika, Gogulamba, and Manditalli. The stone inscriptions found at Donakonda, Nellore district, give an authentic reference of the goddess Nookalamma, worshipped by the Vijayanagara kings.

I.4. Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the present study is to understand the belief systems centered on the village goddesses, the role of social groups of the lower order in worship, reversal of roles, the contextuality of the goddesses in village harmony, rituals and ceremonialism.

- (i). The objectives of the study are: to examine the socio cultural matrix of the goddess Nookamma in the region;
- (ii). To evaluate the belief system of the little communities in north coastal Andhra;
- (iii). To find out how far the female characters in the myths of the local goddesses can be connected to the day-to-day life of the women in the Indian society;
- (iv). To situate the participation of different communities with regard to the communal harmony through the cult of the goddess Nookamma;
- (v). To explicate the privileges of the priests of lower social order in propitiation rituals and reversal of roles; and

(vi). To explain the ecology of cultural landscapes through the distribution pattern of the cult centers of the goddess Nookamma with reference to sacred trees/groves, anthills, rivers and streams and the village 'whole'.

I.5. Methodology

The present study is conducted in the selected villages of north coastal Andhra. The study adopted qualitative methods for the collection of data. The source materials for this thesis are collected in the fieldwork of nine months and they comprise oral narratives, informal interviews, endowment records and village rituals and festivals. Initially, a pilot survey was carried out in the months of March and April-2000 in this area. During this period temples at various places are identified for the study. In the districts of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram, as the goddess Nookamma is not much prominent, I have selected two villages from each district; and in the Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts, where the goddess worship is quite popular, I have selected four villages in Visakhapatnam and six villages in East Godavari district, respectively.

After this an intensive fieldwork was done during October- December 2001 and from February to June 2002 and again in 2003, during the months of March, April and October To collect the data, both anthropological and

ethnographical techniques are employed. Initially, at some places the villagers were reluctant to furnish information. The main reason is they suspected the researcher to be a government official. As the animal sacrifice is banned by the government, the villagers suspected the researcher as a government informer. However, a good rapport was established after frequent visits to the villages and by making lengthy discussions and explanations regarding the purpose of the study. Then the villagers started giving information. The key informants are generally old people of the village, priests or patrons of the temple, traditional storytellers and officials of the Endowment Department.

Participant observation method is adopted in this study, especially during the time of annual *Jatara*. Without participating directly it is not possible to document the various ritual practices. Informal interviews are taken giving due importance to the devotees belonging to all castes.

The secondary sources are collected from Census Records, Archival records and Inscriptions.

I.6. Chapterisation

The present study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction and review of literature. In this chapter the general

introduction on the worship of the village goddesses and views of different scholars on folk religion as well as the worship of the mother goddesses are given. The second chapter is on the distribution of the cult centers of the Goddess Nookalamma, in which the identified cult centers are described. The third chapter is on socio cultural matrix of the folk deities with reference to the cult of Nookalamma. It deals with the different forms and patterns of the worship of Nookalamma like the goddess of disease, goddess of harvest, goddess of fertility and fecundity, and goddess of royal families. This chapter also tries to find out the historical connection to the worship of the goddess by referring to inscriptions and classical literature.

The fourth chapter deals with myths and rituals of the goddess. This chapter has two sections the first section deals with myths of the goddess and the second section deals with the rituals of the goddess. In the first section the narratives of the goddess collected during the fieldwork, and the depiction of female characters are interpreted. In the mythology the goddess is cast in female roles that appear contrary to the social roles of females. In these myths the problems of an ordinary woman in Indian society such as single hood, virginity, sexuality and marriage are applied to the goddess. The goddesses are also depicted as untraditional, unconventional, and even experimental. She is depicted as both antagonist and protagonist. In the

second section, various rituals and their changing patterns from time to time are discussed elaborately. Good crops, rainfall, good hunting, good health which brings wellbeing to the village are the occasions to perform rituals at the individual level or at the village level. The ritual practices at the time of the annual festival and other occasions are explained in this chapter. The sixth chapter is on the nature of worship and the cult of Nookamma. Since ages, the relationship between man and nature is very significant. Early man depended upon trees and plants for food and shelter. This relationship provided man to look at the nature with reasonable respect to balance the ecological conditions properly. The association between the worship of the goddess Nookamma and nature are discussed in this chapter.

Review of Literature

Until 19th century, the popular religion did not receive much attention among the scholars of religion. With the efforts of sociologists and anthropologists, the religion of little communities is brought into limelight. Some of the scholars like Bishop Whitehead, Elmore and other scholars have concentrated more on the ethnographic accounts of the village goddesses than interpreting the origin myths and rituals of the goddesses. With the emergence of feminist studies, the role of women in religion also came for debate. During this course many scholars like David Kinsley,

Sarah Caldwell, Mercia Eliade tried to interpret the myths of the goddesses in the context of gender. Some scholars tried to look at the whole phenomenon in caste perspective.

The myths and stories of the local gods and goddesses, the meaning and the idea behind the worship of them and the beliefs and motifs in celebrating certain rituals are best seen in W.T.Elmore's work *Dravidian Gods of South India* (1913). According to Elmore these village goddesses are Dravidian in origin. According to him the object of the buffalo sacrifice is to honour the god with the blood of the conquered enemy, and the feast in the presence of the temple is for the purpose of communion with the deity. While talking about the question of morality, he says that the morality of the Hindus is a matter of caste and not of religion. When there is nothing wrong in *lingam* worship by upper caste Hindus the worship of village goddesses with practically no change in the rituals from time immemorial by lower castes is also not degrading.

One of the most important ethnographic accounts that give first hand information about the worship of the village goddesses is *The Village Gods of South India* (1921) of Bishop Whitehead. He has gathered material from his observation and enquiry. He took a long trip in Madras Presidency and collected myths and narratives of the origin of the village goddesses and

participated in the rituals. The buffalo sacrifice which was in practice during the early nineties in north coastal Andhra was described by him with great enthusiasm.

Another important ethnographic study presented by James, J. Preston in his work is *Cult of the Goddess* (1980). For this study he has selected Goddess Chandi in Orissa. This is also a fieldwork-based study conducted in Cuttack city. This is about the religious changes like impact of urbanization, new secular patrons and emerging popular styles of Hinduism taking place in a Hindu temple located in one of the largest cities of India. The interesting feature of this temple is that, when many temples have declined under such pressures of change, Chandi temple is flourishing. He felt that the Hindu temple is becoming commercialized. Government officials as well as priests have become corrupted in religious institutions. He also felt the need of government intervention in the affairs of temple whenever necessary. He noticed that the advanced technology is attracting devotees, as they feel prestigious to attend a temple, which has neon lights, fans, bus service, loud speakers etc. He has given an elaborate ritual process including animal sacrifice along with the reactions of the audience. He says that though some people oppose the sacrifice they participate in the ceremony; and some people feel that it is an ancient custom and it should be continued.

The Cult of Manasa (1966) by Pradyot Kumar Mythy is another important ethnographic study on a local cult called Manasa in Bengal. In this work, along with the ethnography, the author tries to find out the history of the goddess Manasa by considering the snake cult in India. He has given various legends, stories and myths to analyze the worship of the goddess. He has reconstructed the gradual evolution of the goddess in the region of Bengal.

The worship of village deities is connected to the worship of the dead and graveyards. Venkata Ramanayya in his work, *An Essay on the Origin of the South Indian Temple* (1985) noted that a large number of the village deities especially in Andhra Desa, begin their career from the confines of the graveyard. In course of time, they are established as powerful deities. The instances given by him, like the connection of hut urns with the temple of *Gramadevata* (village goddess) confirms the view that the shrines of the village deities are linked to the cremation ground/cemetery. The “hut urns” are “urns” shaped like huts, which were used in ancient times for burying the ashes of the dead. These resemble very closely a class of temples dedicated to the village deities.

David Kinsley gave a list of various forms of Indian goddesses and tried to find out the origin of the goddesses by giving the myths and roles of the goddesses in his work *Hindu Goddesses* (1985). This book begins with the

goddesses mentioned in Vedic literature and closes with village goddess worship in folk realm. This book can be called as a source book for the students of Hindu religion. He has concentrated more on Vedic and Puranic goddesses like Aditi, Ratri, Saraswati, Sita, and Radha, than village goddesses. As the author himself pointed out, there is no historical sequence while presenting the material on goddesses. Though he did not completely neglect the folk goddesses, he has given limited but useful information about the worship of local goddesses such as Sithala and Manasa. The goddesses like Radha, Durga, and Kali are depicted as untraditional and unconventional where as Sita represents all the qualities of a good woman and an ideal wife.

Another important work, which tries to find out association between the worship of the local goddesses, and women in general, is *Oh Terrifying Mother* (1999) by Sarah Caldwell. For this study she has selected the cult of Bhagavati in Kerala. She is associated with both Sanskritic and local goddess tradition. Every community in Kerala worships her. In the chapter landscape of feminine power, the goddess is shown as an earth goddess. Here the trees, especially coconut trees are closely associated with the fertility of young virgin girls in ritual. As coconut is the most important food and cash crop in Kerala every important ritual event is marked with the

presence of a coconut flower bud standing in a measure of raw rice. Not only coconuts, the jack wood and bales of rice, all epitomize the fierce goddess as the spirit of agricultural fertility. A general saying is that Kerala women are independent than other parts of India but according to Sarah, it is not true. She says that they don't have any freedom and they are conservative and restrictive like any other women in India. There was a tradition of sacrificing the pregnant women at the temple of Bhagavathi. Even in the rituals women are degraded a lot. If the goddess possesses a man it is called divine inspiration and if a women gets possessed it is called demonic inspiration. The author tried to present the reasons behind the possession of women by giving views of various authors like Obeyesekhare and Freud, on the psychology of women who are in distress. While describing the ritual of Mutiyettu a kind of dance drama, which emphasizes the goddess Bhadrakali, a woman who shouts or expresses anger, the author suggests the Kerala woman to take the role of Bhadrakali as role model to empower themselves.

According to Narendranath Bhattacharya, the woman was not only the symbol of generation, but also the actual producer of life. In the earliest phase the life-producing mother is central figure of religion. In due course, the maternal principle was personified as mother goddess. He gave so many

evidences of the worship of the mother goddess all over the world in his work, *The Indian Mother Goddess* (1970). The worship of mother goddesses by the royal families in medieval period was clearly shown by the epigraphical records viz., Hathigumpha Inscription which mentions the names of the goddesses Sri or Lakshmi. The Chebrolu inscription (1213AD) and the Bhilsa inscription (878 AD) mention the popularity of the mother goddesses. One more important thing is that the worship of mother goddess is not confined to Hinduism but also existed in Christianity, Toism, Budhism and Jainism.

In recent years the scholars of environmental studies have realized the role of religion in sustaining environment. Ignorance of religion prevents environmental studies from achieving its goals. Various studies are coming up explaining the importance of religion in maintaining the balance: the-human -nature- and -ecology. One of the important works that deals with ecology and religion is *Environmental Crisis and Hindu Religion* (1987) by Dwivedi. It deals with the role of religion in influencing individuals to acquire a positive attitude towards the environment. The author has given references of the relationship between man and nature and the need of protecting environmental conditions in sacred classical literature. In *Arthasastra* of Kautilya there is a mention of side effects due to seasonal

changing and the precautions to be taken by the people. In the Charaka *Samhita* suggestions are given to purify water ponds and it is also suggested that one should not create pollution, which causes diseases. According to Dwivedi the present ecological crisis is due to the lack of environmental ethics in man.

Another important work on ecology and its association with the religion is *Hinduism and Ecology* (2000). This is a collection of articles by various authors, edited by Christopher Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker. This book examines the concept of nature from the Hindu tradition point of view and the attitude of modern Hindus towards the ecological conditions in India. This work also examines the social realities of the environment in India today and in earlier periods in Indian history. Mahatma Gandhi's love for the concept of clean and green and Sundarlai Bahuguna's movement for environmental protection are given due importance by the authors of this volume. The discussions on forest preservation explains how the kings of yester years took action in giving top priority to the preservation of forests and the consciousness of the little communities in protecting environment.

* * *

Chapter II

The Cult Centers of the Goddess Nookalamma in North Coastal Andhra

II.1. Introduction

The village goddesses have different names in different places. Some are called after the village where their primary shrine exists such as Pathapatnam Ammavaru, Thalupulamma Lova, Kathipudi Sattemma, Kandrakota Nookalamma, Yalamanchali Ramachandramma, Vizianagaram Pydithalli, Ravulammampalem (Ravula Palem). According to the local myths, there are 101 goddesses. They are cognates and figure as seven sisters and they have a brother Poturaju. In some versions, Poturaju is mentioned as the brother and guardian of the seven sisters and in some stories he is mentioned as the husband and guardian of the seven sisters. In the folk realm, these goddesses are Supreme Powers (*Ghanamyna Sakthulu*).

The focus in this chapter is the dispersal of some of the shrines of the goddess Nookalamma and her cognates in north coastal Andhra, her cult centers, belief systems and rituals. The region north coastal Andhra is situated in the state of Andhra Pradesh which is located between latitudes $12^{\circ}38'$ and $19^{\circ}55'$ north

and longitudes 76° - 45° and 84° - 45° east forming the southeastern landmark of India. It is bounded by Maharashtra and Chattisgarh in the northeast, Maharashtra and Karnataka in the west and Bay of Bengal in the east.

Andhra Pradesh consists of three distinct regions: (1) the coastal region, made up of nine districts generally called coastal Andhra; (2) the western plateau region consisting of four districts collectively known as the Rayalaseema in the southwest; and (3) the Telangana region in the northwest, consisting of nine districts.

The present study is confined to the northern part of coastal Andhra covering of four districts, i.e. Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, and East Godavari (Fig.1).

II.2. Srikakulam District

This district is situated in the northeastern tip of Andhra Pradesh and lies between 18° - 20° and 19° - 10° of the northern latitude and 83° - $5'$ and 84° - $50'$ of the eastern longitude. Srikakulam district is bounded in the north and in the west by Koraput and Ganjam districts of Orissa and on the south by Visakhapatnam district. This district can be divided into two natural regions viz, the hilly region called the agency area in the northwestern part and the plain

portion, which is sandy on account of its proximity to the sea. The important rivers that flow in the district are Nagavali, Vamsadhara, Suvarnamukhi, Vegavathi, Gomukhi, Mahendranagar, Champavathi and Kumbhikatagadda. In this district, Nookalamma *Panduga* (festival/ritual celebrated as a festival) is celebrated in the following villages.

II.2 (a). Chinkalam

This village is situated in between Bobbili and Seethanagaram Railway station. Here Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated for one day in *Phalgunam* (February -March). The image of Nookalamma is of wood, in human form. Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated annually in this village. It is of an ancient origin but of local significance. The Pujari belongs to Koppula Velama caste and enjoys hereditary rights. Goats and fowls are offered to the deity.

II.2 (b). Subhadramma Valasa

This village is situated near Parvathipuram. The temple of Nookalamma is the only place of worship in the village. *Ammavari Panduga* is celebrated for a week in every year with no fixed date. Two wooden images of the deity are prepared for the occasion and worshipped. Vows are fulfilled. Sarees are offered to the deity. This is an ancient festival confined to this village only. Pujari belongs to Koppula Velama community.

II.2 (c). Pudi Jagannadha Puram

The important deities in this village are Nookamma, Bridamma and Asiramma. Usually every house of the Palli (fishermen) community of this village has a small room for these deities. All the images are made of wood. They are believed to be the daughters of the fishermen families and their worship would ensure the prosperity of the family.

Grama Ammavari Panduga (festival of the village goddess) is celebrated once in or three years whenever epidemics breakout in the village. The festival is celebrated between January and July. It is an ancient festival. There is no Pujari. The goddess possesses women devotees. goats, fowls and sheep are sacrificed. The devotees offer new saree, turmeric powder and vermilion to the deity.

II.1 (d). Amalapadu

This village is situated near Tekkali. In this village, the temples of Nookamma and Rajamma are the places of worship. *Ammavari Panduga* is celebrated for 3 to 5 days in *Jyestami* (May- June). The festivals confined to this village and is celebrated once in five years.

II.2 (e). Baruva

It is a seashore village, 5 miles from Sompet. Here, the deity Nookamma is worshipped on Thursdays. People congregate to fulfill their vows and to offer carbons. No *Jatara* is celebrated for her.

II.2 (f). Konangipadu

This village is situated 12 miles from Palakonda. There are no temples for the village deities. The wooden images of Nookalamma and Tegalamma are worshipped under a neem tree.

Grama Devatha Sambaram (*Grama*: village; *Devatha*: goddess; *Sambaram*: festival) is celebrated in *Sravanam* (July-August). The devotees of the village congregate. All communities take part in the festival. Fowls and sheep are sacrificed to the deity. The devotees take purification bath in the river. Observe fasting and *Jagaranam* (keeping awake all through the night. For this they perform *Bhajan* i.e. group singing of devotional songs. They also hire professional dancing troops- popularly called recording dance to enact dancing scenes of popular cinema songs) during festival days.

II.2 (g). Pedda Sowlapuram

This village is situated at a distance of 16 miles to the north of Srikakulam. The deities worshipped in the village are Asiramma, Nookalamma, and Mahalakshamma. *Grama Devathala Jatara* (*Jatara*-ritual) is celebrated for 7 days in the month of *Asada* (June-July). Fowls and goats are sacrificed during the *Jatara*. The other popular deities in this district are Pathapatnam *Ammavaru*, Asirithalli, Itchadevi, Bhoolokamma or Gangamma. Here Perantalu and tree worship are also very popular.

II.2 (h). Tree Worship

In some parts of the district, Tree is worshipped in the name of *Ammavaru* (as *Ammavaru*). In Munsabpet, a hamlet of Singupuram, *Ammavari Chettu* (a palm tree named as the mother) is the village deity, which is worshipped. There is neither a temple nor an image for her. The leaves of the tree are never cut. This deity is believed to be in the form of a young lady.

In Ravivalasa, a village situated near Srikakulam, the goddess Asirithalli is symbolized in a neem tree. The tree is worshipped on all Tuesdays. *Pasupu*, *Kumkum* are offered to her.

In Thamminaidupet, a village near Cheepurupalle, there is a sacred grove where a neem tree is worshipped in the name of *Ammavaru*. This sacred abode is on the eastern side of the village.

Ammavaru Panduga is celebrated once in 3 or 5 years, after broadcasting operations for 3 days, from a Monday to Wednesday in *Sravanam* (July-August) according to the convenience of the villagers. It is also called *Pedda Panduga*. All Hindu devotees of the village congregate. Goats, fowls and sheep are sacrificed to the deity. Arrangements are made on Tuesday afternoon. The deity

Asirithalli is brought from the temple to the village on Monday evening. On Tuesday the deity is taken in a procession to the sacred abode and there, *Kommala panduga* is celebrated. That means worshipping the branches by offering sweets and meets to the branches. Later the branches are taken to their fields and planted there for a good harvest.

II.2 (i). Perantalu Worship

Self-immolation of a woman on the funeral pyre of her husband was prevalent in India since medieval times. This kind of self-immolation is called Sati (those women who performed Sati were deified and are worshipped, as Perantalu in Andhra). The worship of Perantalu is also popular in this district. One of the popular Perantalu of this region is Lakshmi Perantalu.

The tradition associated with this festival is as follows- once a newly married couple Bugatha Ramanna and his wife Lakshmi of Kapu caste, were going through a forest area of Cheepurupalli. On the way, they found the footprints of a tiger. Ramanna asked his wife whether she would remarry if he dies. Lakshmi replied him that *Kattetho Kailasam Bonditho Vaikuntam*, which means that she prefers death and going to heaven or Vaikuntam than living after her husband's death as a widow. They reach the village Palavalasa the father-in-law's place of Ramanna. After spending few days there, Ramanna returned to his native place. A few days later, Ramanna fell ill and sent a word to his wife.

Immediately after seeing his wife he breathed his last. Lakshmi decided to die along with her husband. She requested all the villagers to prepare *Payasam* (a kind of sweet prepared with milk sugar and rice) She decorated herself with turmeric and vermilion. She entered into the pyre of her husband. Since then the villagers started worshipping her as Perantalu. Once in two years *Jatara* is celebrated for one day on Thursday in the bright fortnight of *Vaisakham* (April-May) People of all communities participate in the *Jatara*.

Other popular goddesses worshipped in this region are Pathapatnam *Ammavaru* (Asirithalli), Kondamma, and Bhoolokamma.

II.2 (j). Pathapatnam Ammavaru

Pathapatnam is situated near Parlakimidi (Orissa), 3 miles from the boundary between Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. This was originally the native place of the ancestors of the Maharajas of Parlakimidi. Hence it is called Pathapatnam (old town). Pathapatnam *Ammavaru* is the most famous deity and people from different parts of the district, nearby villages visits the deity, and makes votive offerings to her. The temple is at a distance of a few furlongs distance from the village towards its southern side. The deity is symbolized in a stone idol in human form of 2 feet height. She was found about 100 years ago by Sri Anumanchipalli Ramalingam, a Viswabrahmin of the village, while he was ploughing the land. A hut shrine was built and Pujas are being performed from that time. *Deeparadhana* (lighting a wicker lamp) is done all 24 hours (the

wicker lamps is kept burning continuously). *Annabhogam* (free food service) is offered in the night. About 40 people visit the deity daily and make offerings in carbons, coconuts, plantains, *Pasupu and kumkum*. Fowls, sheep, goats and rams are also sacrificed by people in fulfillment of their vows. On Tuesdays, over 100 people visit the deity and make offerings. There are one- and -half acres of land and 2 acres of dry land in the name of the deity. *Jatara* is celebrated in the month of *Vaisakha* (May) for three days.

II.2 (k). Bhoolokamma Festival

In the Srikakulam district fishermen worship Bhoolokamma and Korla Satti, as their caste deities. They celebrate the *Jatara* of these goddesses every year with a difference of one week. In Kasipet, Jalaris celebrate Bhoolokamma festival in the month of *Gandhamavasya*, a week after Korlasatti festival on a Sunday. Fruits, *Pasupu, Kumkum* are offered to the deity. Vegetarian dishes are prepared on this day. This festival is celebrated to invoke the help of the deity in their fishing expeditions in the Sea. They believe that if such offerings are made, the deity will be pleased and blesses them with good fish catch.

II (3). Vizianagaram District

The district has derived its name from its headquarters town Vizianagaram. It was named Vizianagaram after its founder Vijaya Ramaraju in the year 1713 AD. The district lies between 17⁰-15' and 19⁰-15' of the northern latitude. The

total area is 6,539 sq.km with a coastal line of 28 km. The district can be divided into two distinct natural divisions' i.e. Plains and Hills. The district is drained by the rivers Nagavali, Gostani, Suvarnamukhi and Vegavathi. The people inhabiting this district could be classified into two categories viz, the people of the Plains and tribals of the agency area. The tribal communities are Savaras and Koyas.

Besides the common festivals like Sankranthi, Sriramanavami, Ugadi etc. some important fairs are being organized at various places of the district. Most of the tribal people have immense faith in lord Appala Narasimhaswamy of Simhachalam. In this district, Pydithalli Ammavaru is very popular besides Pydithalli Panduga people also celebrate Nookalamma Panduga at various places.

II.3 (a). Bhogapuram and Pusapatirega

These two villages are situated near Vizianagaram. In these two villages Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated in *Chaitram* (March-April). Pujari is a kapu. Fairs are organized on every Wednesday.

II.3 (b). Boddam

This village is situated near Sringavarapukota. Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated in *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (Febrary- March). On every Sunday,

fairs are organized and it is estimated that not less than ten thousand people participate in such fairs.

II.3 (c). Kannapudoravalasa

This village is situated at a distance of 11 miles from northeastern side of Parvathipuram. Here, Asiramma Nookalamma, Maridamma are worshipped without temples.

Asiramma *Panduga* is performed once in two years for 15 days from *Phalguna Sudha Padyami* to *Purnima* (February- March) for the prosperity and welfare of the villagers. Other deities are worshipped after this festival. Maridamma symbolized in a small shrub is first worshipped by offerings cooked rice and drumstick leaves. Nookalamma deity symbolized in a figure of Neem wood is worshipped on the following day. A small pig is sacrificed to the deity. Asiramma deity is symbolized in a shrub on the eastern side of the village.

II.3 (d). Gadabavalasa

This village is situated at a distance of 23 miles from Parvathipuram. In this village, Sothemma (symbolized in an anthill), Jakaramma, Ghativaralu (symbolized in old broom sticks collected for the festival) and Nookalamma (symbolized in a bush) are worshipped on all thursdays and on all festive days.

II. 3 (e). Pentasriramapuram

This village is situated at a distance of 12 miles from Vizianagaram. In this village, Nookalamma *Theertham* is celebrated in *Pushyami* (December-January} for one day. Pujari is a Vaddara.

II.3 (f). Alamanda

In this village, Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated for 7 days in the month of *Choitram* (March-April). On every Monday fairs are organized which attract pilgrims from far and near. Patrons are Kapus.

In the Vizianagaram district, the other popular village deities are Pydithalli, Jakara devatha or Bob Devatha, Sirasu Panduga, Goddali Devatha etc.

II.3 (h). Pydithalli *Sambaram*

Pydithalli *Panduga* or *Sambaram* is celebrated for 9 days from a Monday, once in two or three years, according to the convenience of the villagers. Prior to the abolition of Zamindars, the Maharajas of Vizianagaram used to give generous contributions for Pydithalli *Sambaram*. The Rajas used to take great interest in the worship and festival of all local goddesses particularly of Pydithalli.

The day of celebration of the *Panduga* is made known to the people by tom tom a week before. Early in the morning of the first day a small cart called *Uggidi bandi* is taken through all the streets of the village to collect food from

all the families of the village. The food collected is later distributed among Malas and Madigas. On the same day *Devara Thechuta* (inviting the deity} is celebrated in the night. The villagers go to the temple of *Ammavaru* beating of drums (*Dappu*) to bring the deity. The deity then is buried in a pit. Three balls of mud from that spot are taken in new *Jangellu* (container) to be brought along with the deity. All this time the people make loud noise with hand sticks to frighten the evil spirits. In the middle of the procession, another fowl is sacrificed to satisfy the other village deities that are supposed to be on their way. The deity is at last taken to a specific place called *Ammathalli Chadumu*, where she is worshipped during the *Utsavam* (celebration). The *Valakams* (imitating and pointing out the defects in the villagers) takes place, which are very interesting. Next day *Thottelu* (swing) is performed. Throughout this night, there are entertainments like *Rotimeeda Pata*, a song sung by a person sitting on a mortar. Food and grains are distributed to the village. After that song, they mix the grain in the seeds to be sown the year. On the next day *Anupu* (sending off the deity) is performed. Later children will bring *Vasantham* (scented and colored water) from their houses to spill on the out skirts of the village where a lamb is sacrificed and the intestines are worn as a *Jandhyam* (sacred thread) by the *Paladhariman*, who can either be a Mala or a Madiga. He is then taken in a procession through out the village carried by a set of people appointed for the purpose. Again, a loud noise is made to frighten the evil spirits during the

procession fowls, goats, and sheep are sacrificed in a large number by the villagers to discharge their vows. This is an ancient festival in which large number of people participate with great pomp and show.

II.3 (i). Deities Worshipped by Savaras (Scheduled Tribes of this Region)

In the agency area of Vizianagaram district Savaras worship mainly two deities- Jalai Demudu also known as Sandi Demudu and Bob Devatha or Jakara Devatha also known as Durga. The other deities they worship are Neelamma, Nookalamma, and Maridamma etc. Jalai Demudu is symbolized in a wooden post of 4 feet height. This deity is worshipped a Sunday or Wednesday in any month at the convenience of the villagers whenever there is an outbreak of epidemics. *Kumbam* (rice cooked with drumstick leaves) offered by all the households is heaped in front of the deity, a fowl is sacrificed and the blood is sprinkled over the *Kumbam*. All the people offer prayer to the deity to safeguard them from the epidemics (or other evil effects). The sacrificed fowl is cooked and eaten by the villagers at the hill stream.

Jakara Devatha or Bob Devatha is symbolized in a stone under a tamarind tree in the village. This deity is worshipped on the following Sunday after the new moon day in the month of *Margasira* (November-December). This festival is otherwise known as *Kandikotha Panduga*. The deity symbolized in an axe (Goddali Devatha) is brought to the Jakara devatha on a Thursday. On the

Friday, the Janni (Preist of the village deity) cooks one seer of rice. The goddess is given bath and decorated with turmeric and vermillion. Some rice is kept before the deity and a cock is allowed to eat the rice. The heart of the cock and rice are cooked, adding turmeric powder and salt. This is first offered to the deity and then distributed among all the people by the Janni. All the people dance before the deity to the beat of drums. Then the deity is taken to the neighbouring villages, all within a distance of 3 miles until Sunday evening. On Monday morning all the villagers take bath. The cow that is to be sacrificed to the deity is taken to the deity Durga by an unmarried male and it is made to touch the deity.

The cow is then sacrificed in the name of the deity on the out skirts of the village. The blood of the sacrificed cow is cooked adding salt and turmeric powder to it. One seer of rice is also cooked separately. The cooked rice and blood are kept in 3 leaves in the name of the deity. The remaining cooked blood and rice are served among the villagers. On the same day, the deity Durga is kept in its original place to the accompaniment of local music and dancing. People enjoy heavy feasting and drink.

II. 4. Visakhapatnam

This district lies on the eastern coast known as coromondal coast between 17⁰-10 and 18⁰-25 of the northern latitude and between 85⁰- 50 and 80⁰- 55 of the eastern longitude.

This district is divided into two natural divisions i.e. the Agency and the Plains. This district has a coast of about 154km. Machkund, Sarada, Varaha, Gosthani, Champavathi, Tandara, Sarugudu Gedda and Meghadri Gedda are the important rivers in the district.

In this district the temples of Nookalamma exist in many villages including the Plains and Agency. The following are the villages where Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated with great pomp and show.

II.4 (a). Anakapalli

In the Visakhapatnam district, Anakapalli is not only known as business centre for Jaggery but also known as the most important pilgrimage centre of this region. The temple of Nookalamma is situated at a distance of four furlongs from the municipal bus stand of Anakapalle. It was constructed in 1618 by Sri Kakarlapudi Appalaraju, a military general under then Arcot Nawab. In front of Anakapalli fort, Appalaraju installed a *Sakthi* and named it Kakathamba. Later this region was ruled by Vijayanagara kings who succeeded Appalaraju. They changed the name of the goddess into Nookambica commonly called as

Nookalamma. Sri Ananda Gajapathiraju of Vizianagaram was in charge of the fort till recently. The old idol of the deity is said to have been broken some years ago by some members of the managing committee due to some factions. In its place a new awe – inspiring cement idol of the deity in female form of 18 feet height, painted in colors with four hands holding a sword in one hand and one hand in *Abhayahasta* pose and trident and *Kumkumbharani* in the left hands. Pictures of the Nava-Durgas are painted on the inner side of the walls around the sanctum sanctorium. On Sundays and Thursday's devotees attend in large numbers. Foreigners also make visits to the temple. This deity is worshipped for protection against epidemics like smallpox, cholera, chickenpox, and plague. She also confers benefits on her devotees and fulfills their wishes. Many people bear the names after the deity as Nukaih, Nookaraju, Nookalu etc. Nookalamma *Jatara* is one of the most important and widely known festivals of the district. The main function takes place on *Kotha Amavasya* (February-March). Devotees observe *Jagaram* on *Amavasya*. *Vendi Ghatams* (silver brass), silver and gold ornaments, sarees, mirrors, new clothes are offered to the deity. Some devotees offer hair. Until 1950, animals were sacrificed; after that, government prohibited animal sacrifice.

II.4 (b). Tsuchikonda

This village is situated at a distance of 13 miles from Anakapalli. In this village, *Sambaram* of Nookalamma is celebrated for 15 days from *Phalguna*

Bahula Padyami (February- March). On the last day sheep, goats and fowls are taken to the temple and sacrificed before the deity by the Pujari. Malas and Madigas are the patrons. Pujari is a Vaddera.

II.4 (c). Kasimkota

This village is situated at a distance of 23 miles from Visakhapatnam. In this village in the temple of Nookamma, Nookamma's 6 feet height life like image is installed.

Nookamma *Aradhana* is celebrated for 3 days from *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (February-March). Pujas are performed and *Pasupu* (Turmeric Powder), *Kumkum* (Vermilion), flowers, fruits, cash and clothes are offered. Vows are fulfilled and fowls and sheep are sacrificed at homes by some devotees belonging to non-Brahmin castes such as Mala, Madiga, Gavara, etc. Prior to 1950, this festival was celebrated at Anakapalli. As the ornaments of the deity were stolen, the festival was stopped. Meanwhile, in this village in the land of the Zamindar, an anthill grew with the signs of *Bharina* etc. showing the presence of Nookamma. People heard some sounds for five days and they visited the place. The deity asked a Gavara man to construct a temple and install her. With the help of the villagers, the land was bought, and the temple was

constructed. *Nitya Deepa*, *Dupa*, *Naivedyam* are being offered. Once in a year *Jatara* is celebrated since that time. The Pujari of this temple is a Gavara.

II.4 (d). Pallapu Anandapuram

This village is situated at a distance of 8 miles from Anakapalli. The image of Nookalamma *Thalli* in her temple is in human form.

Nookalamma *Thalli Sambaram* is celebrated for 15 days from *Phalguna Bahula Padyami* to *Amavasya* (February- March). Sheep, goat and fowls are sacrificed to the deity. This is of ancient origin and is confined to this and neighboring villages. Different hindu communities participate in the *Jatara*. The Pujari belongs to the Vaddara community enjoying the *manyam* lands.

II.4 (e). Chinthala Palem

This village is situated at a distance of ten and half miles from Anakapalli. Here the *Panduga* of Nookalamma is celebrated for 15 days in *Chaitram* (March-April). Plantains are offered and fowls are sacrificed. The devotees observe *Jagarana* during these 15 days.

II.4 (f). Ganaparti

This village is situated at a 11 miles from Anakapalli. The *Panduga* of Nookalamma is celebrated in this village, in *Phalgunam* (February- March). Sheep, goats and fowls are sacrificed to the deity.

II.4 (g). Maduthuru

II.4 (g). Maduthuru

This village is situated at a distance of one and half miles from Visakha - Yellamanchali motor road. In this village, Nookalamma *Jatara* is celebrated for 3 days in *Magham* (January- February). According to the traditional observance of the festival, a Mala man observes fasting during the day. In the evening one young sheep is brought and the intestines are taken out of its body through a cut at the naval made by a Madiga. Then, the Madiga wearing the intestines around his neck and accompanied by the young sheep is taken in a procession followed by the villagers armed with spears. The welfare and the prosperity of the village of that year are estimated by the distance walked by the animals before it is sacrificed. They return to the temple and celebrate with the display of fire works and crackers. Some devotees observe *Jagaram* and fasting.

II.4 (h). Nadimpalle

This village is situated at a distance of 10 miles from Anakapalle. The temples of Nookalamma and Pydithalli with the images of deities in human form, Durgamma and Mamidivalasa Pydithallamma represented by an anthill and stone respectively are the places of worship. Nookalamma festival is celebrated for 15 days in (March- April). Fowls, sheep and goats are sacrificed to the deity. Meat offerings are made and the villagers make a feast.

II.4 (i). Velcheru

This village is situated at a distance of 3 miles from Yellamanchali Railway Station. Here, Nukalamma festival is celebrated for 9 days from *Phalgun*

Bahula Saphami to Amavasya (February- March). The 9 days of the festival are called *Navrathrulu* and Pujas are performed. Vows are fulfilled. Fruits, goats and sheep are offered. The main part of the festival is on the last day. Taking bath, cleaning the house, preparing sweets and enjoyment are the domestic observances. The patrons are Malas.

II.4 (j). Krishna Puram

This village is situated at a distance of seven and half miles from Yellamanchali. In the temple of Nookamma, the deity's wooden image painted in colors, is in female form and in sitting posture. It is 5 feet high and with brass *Garagas*.

Nookamma *Panduga* is celebrated for one day from *Phalguna Bahula Navami to Amavasya*. A hut with palm leaves is put up at the center of the village on *Panchami* itself on an elevated platform, called *Banda*. If the *Panchami* falls on a Sunday or a Thursday the *Utsavam* commences on the same day itself. An earthen pot called *ghatam* is prepared and decorated with *Kumkum*, *Pasupu* etc. This *Ghatam* is regarded as the deity herself and is placed in the hut along with two *Garagas* and brass pots. Every morning Puja is performed to the deity by a Kamsali at the *Banda* while a Rajaka (washerman community) women performs the Puja in the temple at the same time. Fruits and flowers are offered and goats and sheep are sacrificed to the deity. Every night the *Ghatam* is taken in a

procession in the village by a *Bhakthuralu* (a woman devotee) while the *Garagas* are carried out in the procession accompanied by music of drums by Mala and Madigas and dance by Yatas(a tribe). Next a huge crowd of the villagers follows. Rice and *Upaharam* (cooked rice) are offered by every family while the *Ghatam* is brought to their house. At about 10 o'clock in the night the procession ends and the *Ghatam* is placed in the hut. The villagers then gather at the hut to be entertained by fancy dresses and humorous conversations in which proud vain and cruel people are ridiculed and criticized. On *Chatirdasi* night, there are entertainment programs like *Bommalata* (Puppet show). On *Amavasya*, *Ghatam* is taken in a procession in the afternoon and is brought to the temple of Nookalamma in the evening. A ram known as *Pattapothu* is sacrificed and the blood of the sacrificed animal is collected in an earthen plate called *Baddipattuta*. After three days the village elders see the plate of blood. If the blood dots well with a smooth surface, that year is believed to be a prosperous year and healthy one. If the surface is rough and splits, that year is feared to be a bad and unhealthy one.

A cradle is prepared in front of the temple for the deity on the last day of the *utsavam*. This is an ancient festival confined to the village. The income from the one- and-half acres of *Patta* land of the deity is used to meet the expenses of *Utsavam*. All the villagers irrespective of caste or creed congregate. Pujaris at

the hut shrine are Kamsalis. The temple Pujaris are Rajakas with hereditary rights.

II.4 (k). Pentakota

This village is situated on the left bank of Tandava river. The village deity, Nookamma with her 5 feet high stone idol and Mutyalamma with her 1-foot high wooden idol are also worshipped by the villagers. These deities have no regular Pujas. Nookamma deity has 2 acres of wetland. *Jatara* for the deity is celebrated for 3 days during the month of *Kotha Amavasya* (*Phalguna Amavasya*) every year Pujari is of Vadabaliya (marine fishing community).

II.4 (l). Lingampet, Hamlet of Kothamallampet

This is situated at a distance of 13 miles from Narsapatnam. Here a thatched house built for Nookamma is the place of worship. Her awe - inspiring image is about 6 feet high in human form painted with colors. This deity had established herself 200 years ago. Nookamma *Jatara* is celebrated for 10 days from *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (February- March) with great pomp for the first 3 days during both nights and days. Puja is performed on the first day with offering of a new saree and *naivedyam*. A goat is sacrificed on the 2nd day animal sacrifices are also made at homes on that evening. Fruits flowers cloths hair etc., are offered to her. A Kapu is the patron. This deity owns 36 acres of

land, which was enjoyed by the Pujari. Later on, the government took it up. The Pujari is a kapu.

II.4 (m). Narsipatnam

This is situated at a distance of 29 miles from Anakapalle. In the temple of Nookamma the deity's image is one and half feet high painted with colours. An image of Poturaju is in front of the temple of his sister Nookamma.

Nookamma Panduga is celebrated for 9 days from *Phalguna Bahula Saptami* to *Amavasya* (February- March) every year with a belief that they would be protected from epidemics. There is a belief that many people in the village died of epidemics because the festival was not celebrated regularly once in a year. *Garagas* and *Prabhas* are taken in a procession during the nights for 9 days observing jagarana. Women belonging to the Velama or Golla castes are the Pujaris and they often get possessed by the goddess.

II.4 (n). Sabbavarm

This is situated at a distance of 12 miles from Anakapalle. Nookamma, Durgamma, Mutyalamma Bangamma Maramma, Paradesamma are the places of worship. *Gramadavathala Pandugalu* are celebrated for 7 days from *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (February- March) keeping one day for each of the

seven village deities. Each deity is taken in a procession in the night. Vows are fulfilled. Pujaris are Settibalijas.

II.4 (o). Kokkirapalle

This is situated nearly 3 miles from Yellamanchali. In this village, seven sisters are worshipped. The eldest sister Peddappathalli had a temple in the past, but now there is no temple. Some wooden images kept in the shade of a tree are worshipped. Nookalamma, Maramma and Chinna Polamma or Chinnappathalli with their images in human form are worshipped. Nallamaremma is worshipped in the form of an anthill under a neem tree. The annual *Sambaram* is celebrated to Chinnappathalli and Nookalamma. Chinna Polemma *Utsavam* is celebrated for fifteen days in *Vaisakham* (April- May). Nookalamma *Panduga* is celebrated on *Phallguna Bahula Amavasya*.

II.4 (p). Jaggarajupet

This is situated at a distance of one and half miles from Duvvada. In this village, there is only one temple, this is for the goddess Nookalamma, constructed with palm leaves and the image is made of wood. The *Panduga* of Nookalamma is celebrated for one day according to the convenience of the villagers in *Chaitram* (May).

This village is situated at a distance of one mile from Duvvada. There is the only temple of Nookamma with a wooden image in human form. The *Panduga* of Nookamma is celebrated in the bright fortnight of *Chaitram*. Animals are sacrificed and the devotees fulfill vows.

II.4 (r). Thallapalem

In this village, nine days before the festival of Nookamma dramas and *Bhagavatham* entertain the people in the nights till the festival day. The *Ghatams* are taken in a procession from the evening till the late night. On Amavasya through all the main streets cooked rice and dhal that are offered to the deity at homes are put in the *Ghatam* by the housewives. The *Ghatams* are then taken to *Satakampattu* (a temporary abode of the deity in the village) from where animals that are vowed to be sacrificed along with the *Pattapothu* are taken in a procession to the temple with *Prabhas* and music. *Agnigundam* (fire pit) is prepared in front of the temple and devotees who have taken a vow jump in the *Gundam*. Then the animals are sacrificed, the first being the *Pattapothu*.

II.4 (s). Pedanaidupalem, Hamlet of Sabbavaram

In this village Nookamma *Theertham* is celebrated for one day on *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (Febrary – March). Fruits, flowers and *kumkum* are offered. Animals are sacrificed to the deity. Fishing and *Jagaran* are observed during these days. Pujari is a Mala. He is paid from the income on *Inam* lands of the deity.

II.4 (t). Lothugedda

This village is situated at a distance of 16 miles from Chinthapalli. The hill stream here is at a distance of 2 furlongs from the village is very deep hence it is called Lothugedda. This is an agency area and the tribal people, here are called Bhagatas. In this village, the image of Nookaiaamma is carved in a stone in human form with no hands and legs. This image is placed in a pot decorated with flower garlands around its neck. The *Panduga* of Nookalamma is celebrated for 45 days from *Phalgunam Bahula Amavasya* (February- March). The festival actually commences 15 days before *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya*. The head of the village gives money to the Pujari to purchase fruits, flowers, and milk. The Pujari observes fasting for 45 days by taking fruits and milk only. During the festive days he should not smoke. Daily Pujas are performed upto *Kotha Amavasya* and on a Monday and Tuesday, before *Amavasya*, a big *Utsavam* is celebrated. On Tuesday, the villagers go for hunting animals in the forest. In the night a feast is arranged. With the meet of the hunted animals, food is prepared. Then sheep and goats are sacrificed to the deity. The Pujari is a Bhagata tribal with hereditary rights.

II.4 (u). Konda Palem Agraharam

This is situated at a distance of 10 miles from Chodavaram. In this village, the village deity Nookalamma's temple is the only place of worship. The stone image of Nookalamma is kept in the temple. A story of the image of

Nookalamma is told by the villagers. About 300 years ago Araya Somayajulu Dakshina Murthy was ploughing his land with his servant and when the plough came to the place where the present Nookalamma temple is situated, it broke down. When Dakshinamurthy was again ploughing with another plough, his servant fell down at the same place. On that afternoon, he observed fasting. In his dream, Nookalamma told him that she was lying in his land and asked him to worship her from *Phalguna Bahula Saptami* to *Chaitra Sudhdha Padyami* every year. Then he found a stone image of the deity at the place and he constructed a temple for her. Then onwards Nookalamma *Aradhana* (worship) is celebrated for 10 days from *Phalguna Bahula Saptami* (February- March) to *Chaitra Sudha Padyami* (March- April).

Along with Nookalamma, the other female deities worshipped by the people of this region are Mutyalamma, Asirithalli, and Ramachandramma etc.

II.4 (v). Mutyalamma

In Visakhapatnam, the Mutyalamma *Panduga* is celebrated for five days from *Phalguna Sudha Ekadasi* to *Purnima* (February- March). This festival usually commences from a Sunday and ends on Thursday in the third week of March. The devotees observe fast, go to the temple and offer fruits, coconuts, and Sarees to the deity. There is no animal sacrifice. Thousands of people congregate.

In the presence of the woman Pujari, belongs to fishermen community, all the rituals are performed. If she is not available, the festival will be postponed. On Thursday, the procession is taken with music dance fancy dresses and Koya dances around the village until the evening and in the night, the deity is sent to the temple.

II.4 (w). Ramachandramma

In the village, Yallamanchali Ramachandramma Festival though celebrated once in two years is very popular. People from almost all parts of this taluk and other parts of Visakhapatnam and neighboring districts congregate. The legend about the deity and the faith of the devotees in the bestowing benefits by the deity draw a huge crowd. But the fact that the deity invariably manifests herself in the form of lighting during the festival is a special attraction. The legend is that Ramayamma and Chandramma were sisters who were greatly attached to their father. He was the solitary solace for these motherless children begging was the only source through which he maintained them. One day the father who had gone to a neighbouring village for begging, did not return home till late in the afternoon. The anxious children waited for him outside the village only to receive the heartbreaking news that their father was no more. The innocent and resource less girls imposingly fell into the nearly well. That well is still there in the village. They together manifested themselves in an anthill as

Ramachandramma and revealed the matter to several elders of the village in their dreams. The united efforts of these elders resulted in the construction of a temple while some landlords donated land. Liberal contributions were collected for the biennial festival. The celebration is practically for a month in *Vaisakham* (April – May) though the first and the last day are very important. It is on the first day that a huge crowds from far and near approach the temple with music and wait in front of the temple to witness the deity manifesting herself in the form of lighting. Her *Dandakam* (praying in the form of verses in Telugu is of a special meter) at invoking her that is read aloud by one that fasts the whole day. It is believed that lighting is seen by everyone on the top of the hill.

The next lighting is seen a little behind the temple and the third is in the sanctum sanctorum. On verification, same assert that after the second lighting the third one appears to be actually entering the sanctum sanctorum. Only a few officers and police can witness this last one. But the Brilliance inside the sanctum sanctorum is witnessed by all devotees who visit the temple during this month and fulfill the vows according to their convenience. The send off function takes place in the last day when several animals are sacrificed. The deity is taken in procession through all the important streets of the town for over 6 hours with music and fore works and is brought back to the temple. This festival attracts 30 to 40 thousand devotees. The Pujari is a Kapu.

II.5.East Godavari District

The old Godavari is divided into East and West Godavari in 1925. The principal river in the district is the Godavari from which it takes its name. This district lies between 16°-30 and 18°- 30 of the northern latitudes. This district is geographically divided into three zones- Agency, Plains and Delta. Draksharamam, Pithapuram, Annavaram are some of the historical places in this area. The important rivers are Godavari, Vasistha, Gouthami, Vainatheya, Eleru, Pampa, Thandava.

Like in the Visakhapatnam district, in the East Godavari district also Nookamma is worshipped at various places. It is also believed that the Goddess Nookamma originally belongs to this district only.

The following are the villages where Nookamma is worshipped with great revelry.

II.5 (a). Kakinada

It is the head quarters of East Godavari District. Kakinada was associated with Rajamahendravaram from the time the area came under the yoke of Gopilesvari Gajapathi of Orissa in the first half of 15thc. It remained under the Gajapathis till it was conquered by Sri Krishnadevaraya. This town played some important part during the European wars in India. The stone image of Nookamma is 6

feet in height and 5 feet in width in feminine form adorned with human skulls round the neck.

The *theertham* of Nookalamma (*theertham*; ritual/festival) is celebrated for forty one day from *Phalguna Sudha Padyami* (February- March). In Telugu *nooka* means rice. Offerings are made to Nookalamma every day doubtless on account of her temper. The annual festival of this Goddess lasts for a whole month, ending on the New Year Day of the Telugu Calendar.

II.5 (b). Mamidikuduru

This village is situated at a distance of 6 miles from Razole. Here, Nookalamma Jatara is celebrated for 5 days from *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (February-March). Before commencing the *Jatara*, *Asadis* go round the village from house to house carrying *Garagas* on their heads for collection of *Prasadam*. On the last day of the *Jatara*, *Siribomma* collaboration is held and fowls are offered to the deity in fulfillment of vows.

For the *Siribomma* ritual, a vertical pole is fixed to the ground and a light horizontal beam is fixed at the top with a hole in the middle so that it can rotate at the top. To one end of the beam a rope is tied to rotate the beam round and

round. To the other a doll of human size is tied. While the doll is rotated at the top children try to hit it with plantains. These plantains are gathered by the crowd as *Prasadam* for themselves and to be distributed among others. The Pujari is an Asadi with hereditary rights.

II 5 (c). Kirlampudi

This is situated at a distance of 12 miles from Samalkot, in a hilly region. In this village Nookamma is worshiped with her 8 feet high image in a sitting posture and in an awe – inspiring form with 4 hands. Nookamma *Theertham* is celebrated for 15 days from *Chaitra Sudha Padyami* (March- April). Money, fruits turmeric and Kumkum are offered. Goats and fowls are also offered but not sacrificed. The Pujari is a Besta (fishing community) and the patrons are Velamas.

II.5 (d). Peddipalem

This is situated at a distance of 8 miles from Prathipadu. In Peddipalem, the image of Nookamma is in feminine form with 8 hands holding a sword and with a crown over her head. Nookamma *theertham* is celebrated for two days from *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (February- March). The local people congregate.

During one of the nights, a goat is taken in a procession around the village with margosa leaves tied round its neck and sacrificed before the deity on the

following morning. This festival is celebrated by collecting subscriptions from villagers. A petty fair is held with a few shops.

II.5 (e). SanthaPydipala

This is situated at a distance of 13 miles from Annavaram. In this village, Nookamma festival is celebrated for 8 days from *Phalguna Bahula Astami* to *Amavasya* (February-March). The *Garagalu* of the deity are taken in a procession daily for a week in advance during nights. *Theertham* is celebrated on the last day.

II.5 (f). Thimmarajupet

This is a hamlet of Kottam, situated near Tuni. Nookamma festival is observed for a day on *Phalguna Bahula Amavasya* (March- April). The following legend is narrated regarding this deity. When some local agriculturists were ploughing the land, an image was discovered in the earth. The image was identified as the goddess Nookamma and kept on a bullock cart by the villagers, to be taken into the village. However, the bullock could not draw the cart and they died. The people heard a voice saying that two young calves might tie to the cart in the place of the bullocks. It was done accordingly. The calves dragged the cart to an elevated place and stopped there. Nookamma was installed there and a temple was constructed for her. At their houses, the

devotees plant a branch of Margosa tree, worship it with *Kumkum* and offer *Saris* in the name of the deity.

II.5 (g). Kandrakota

This is situated at a distance of six kms from Peddapuram. There is a wide spread belief that the goddess Nookamma originally belonged to the village of Kandrakota. The story about Kandrakota Nookamma follows like this. Once upon a time, the present village was ruled by a king named Khan. When the king failed to repay his debt to the Nawab of Hyderabad the Nawab imprisoned the sons of Khan, Then, the queen of Khan prays to Elamuni, a great sage and requests him to show his miracles to get her sons back. Elamuni imposes superpowers on Nookamma, Mala widow and sends her to Hyderabad. Nookamma brings back the princess very safely to Kandrakota with her powers. Then Elamuni asks Nookamma “are you willing to stay as powerful women (*Sakti Swarupini*) or come back to the original ordinary human being? Nookamma replies that she wants to remain as *Sakti Swarupini*. From then onwards, Nookamma became the deity of Kandrakota. The annual festival is celebrated for 37 days from *Falguna Bahula Chaturdasi*. Two hundred years back, the Maharajas of Peddapuram constructed a big temple for the deity in Kandrakota. One month before the *Jatara*, every night 3 decorated *garagalu* are taken in a procession. Each *Garaga* is decorated with 9 saris. *Poola Garagalu*

(pots decorated with *Moduga* flowers) is a very famous procession taken by *thoorpu Kapus* (sub caste of Kapu).

On *Ugadi* (Telugu New years Day) a bowl of nine different pulses mixed in Pumpkin juice is offered to the Goddess and the whole day the temple doors will be kept closed. The next day the doors will be opened to see which variety got good sprouts and according the crops will be selected for that year. This celebration is called *Badde Kadugu Utsavam*. With this the *Jatara* ends. At present this temple is under endowments department.

II.5 (h). Kolanka

This village is situated at a distance of 6 km from Pithapuram. In this village Nookalamma Sambaram is celebrated for one month (February- March). One of the interesting features of this celebration is *Sidibomma Thipputa* (dool swinging). In olden days there was a practice of Hook swinging in which, a goat is tied up to the end of a long pole, which swings horizontally on a pivot at the top of a high post. A heavy stone is tied to the other end of the pole to balance the goat. A man is then tied beneath the goat and both are swung round and round, the man showering down betel leaves on the people. This practice was

prohibited by the goat. At present, instead of a man a doll is tied to the hooks. This practice is prevalent mostly in Konaseema and Pithapuram regions.

Chellamma the queen of Kolanka constructed the temple of Nookamma in Kolanka. The Pujarini is a Kapu. *Garagalu* are decorated with flowers and saris by Chakalis. Mangalis and Madigas play *Dappu*; *Sidibomma* celebration is performed by Malas. The committee of the temple is called Sri Nookambika *Samkshema Samgham*.

II.5 (i). Uppada

Uppada is a seashore village, situated near Kakinada. Mayapatnam, Etimoga, Vakalapudiet are the hamlets of Uppada. In all these villages, Nookamma *Sambaram* is celebrated with great zeal. The annual *Sambaram* is celebrated in the month of March on *Gandha Amavasya* or *Ugadi*. The *Sambaram* starts on Tues day and ends on Thursday. Before the day of *Sambaram*, fishermen built a thatched house on the beach of Uppada. All the villagers go there and install a temporary deity in the house. People offer turmeric and vermilion fruits etc. to the goddess. All the three day *Garagalu* will be taken in a procession. In the last day goats and pigs are sacrificed.

II.5 (j). Pithapuram

This is situated at a distance of 15 km from Kakinada. Pithapuram Nookamma is very famous in this region. Many years back, Ayyanna, A Kapu wanted to dig

a well in the place where the present Nookalamma temple is existed, when he started digging the well, instead of water he found blood in the ground and he also found a female image. Immediately he took out the image and installed the idol there itself.

After a few years a king (the details of the king are not known, but it is said that he must be a Reddy Raja or Pithapuram Raja) visited this place while he was going for a war. He prayed to the goddess for his success in the war and he promised that if he gets success in the war he would build a temple for the deity. Accordingly, he got victory in the war, and he built the temple and the idol was named as Nookalamma. The present Pujarini belong to Maraka community (sub caste of Fishermen Community).

The *Jatara* is celebrated for 15 days after Sivaratri. Before one month of the *Jatara* rice, money and other things are collected from the villagers. The *Jatara* is celebrated in the next day of *Ugadi*. On that day, *Navadhanyalu* (nine varieties of Pulses) mixed in the blood taken from a goat offered to the Goddess and the doors are kept closed for the whole day. The next day i.e. *Jatara* day, the doors are opened for the devotees to offer their oaths to the Goddess. In the night Pothuraju, brother of Nookalamma and Nookalamma will be swing in a Golden *ooyala* (cradle). People from all communities come and congregate.

The other famous village goddesses in the district of East Godavari are Thalupulamma, Maridamma, Basheer Beebi, Sattemma etc.

II.5 (k). Thalupulamma

Thalupulamma is one of the famous village deities in this region. In a hilly village called Lova situated near Tuni, the temple of the goddess exists. She is also called *Vahana Devatha* (Deity of the Vehicles). Owners of the vehicles like Lorry, Taxi, and Autorickshaw visit the temple atleast once in a year.

II.5 (I). Maridamma

Maridamma, popularly known as Peddapuram Maridamma as she originally belongs to the village Peddapuram, situated 15km from Kakinada. As a Goddess of Cholera, she is also called as Maremma. For her annual *Jatara*, thousands of devotees not only from that region but also from other region come for the celebrations.

II.5 (I). Sattemma

Goddess Sattemma is a community deity of Kapus, which is a very dominant caste in this region. In many villages, Sattemma is worshipped with out any idol. She is symbolized as pots, coconut trees, toddy trees etc. Pambalas (bards) play a very important role during Sattemma *Sambaralu*. The annual *Sambaram* is celebrated in the month of *Chiatra* (February – March).

CHAPTER III

Socio Cultural Matrix of Folk Deities with Reference to the Goddess Nookalamma

III.1.Introduction

In north coastal Andhra, the worship of the Goddess Nookalamma is not confined to one particular caste or village. She is worshipped in different forms and patterns through out this region. She is worshipped as the goddess of deceases, goddess of harvest, goddess of forest, goddess of fishermen, goddess of royal clans and goddess of fertility and fecundity. She is the *Gramadevata* (protector deity) of the villages of this region. In some parts of the region she is worshipped as the Goddess Nookambica, an incarnation of the goddess Parvathi. Her annual festival is celebrated as *Kotha Amavasya* or *Gandha Amavasya*, on the day before 'Ugadi', the Telugu new year day (February – March).

The discussion that follows on the Goddess Nookalamma and her cognates in this region is based on the fieldwork (during the years October- December 2001 and again from February to June 2002 and again in 2003, during the

months of March, April and October) by the researcher in the north coastal Andhra.

III.2. Goddess of Disease

In several parts of the world, the mother goddesses have often been associated with diseases. Disease is seen as a favor of the goddess. The goddess loves you. She wants you to be a part of her. But disease is also her way of punishment. If she can give life she can also take it away. Through disease she interacts with the universe and humanity. Worshipping disease is a way of appeasing the goddess. Traditionally, the goddess of disease is most active in the peak of the hot season, when contagious diseases and epidemics pose great dangers. When rains are needed, the worshippers approach her, requesting coolness and rains (Obeysekhare, 1984).

Epidemics occur due to the imbalances in the ecosystem. Its bad influences create fear among the natives. They seek protection from the 'Devine Mother' whom they believe as the goddess of nature. The village goddess in the belief system embodies the very life and health of the people. She can cause, prevent and alleviate disease. She is associated with deadly pestilences. As a small - pox goddess (the goddess who causes the outbreak of small pox; *Masuchi*) she has got to be cooled. An increase in the element of heat is due to the anger of

the goddess. The anger of the goddess in turn is due to the sins committed by the humans. The failure to propitiate the goddess causes anger and this anger results in excess of heat. The goddess is loved, venerated, worshipped, and propitiated annually or cyclically to ensure the well being of the village community (Obeysekhare, 1984).

The festival of the goddess confronts and overcomes the demons, the representatives of disaster, and in this struggle the village community entirely depends on the goddess to mitigate their sufferings. It is a contradiction to say that goddess causes disaster and epidemics. Rather she receives the brunt of the onslaught but she needs appeasement and devotion to protect the village.

The reason for worshipping the goddesses more than the gods for healing is that the goddesses have nurturing qualities (eg. the mother: mother goddess). They are the primary and original sources of life (Kinsley, 1985). Goddesses are also linked to the darker experiences in the human condition. The healing and the quest for wholeness are universally associated with goddess worship and not with the worship of male deities (Elaide, 1987).

The goddess of disease is a form of 'Devine Mother' adored under different names throughout India. In north India, especially in Bengal, the goddess of disease is called Sithala Devi. The name of the goddess indicates the function of cooling. She is worshipped everywhere in Bengal. In Bihar, she is

worshipped as Kalakuri Mata, the most dreaded Phul Mata and Pansahi Mata, who attack children between seven and fifteen (Bhattacharya, 1977).

In Madhya Pradesh she is known as Mata Masani. In Assam she is known as Āi and is conceived as one of the seven sisters who cause diseases. In Orissa she is Thakur Rani. In Tamil region the goddess of disease is Maridamma or Mari. In all these places she is referred to as the smallpox goddess (Bhattacharya, 1977).

In Andhra Pradesh the goddess of disease is known by different names like Maremma, Maridamma, Usuramma, and Nookalamma. In north coastal Andhra region the goddesses of disease have different names. The goddess of cholera is called Maridamma; the goddess of smallpox is called Nookalamma; the goddess of chickenpox is called Muthyalamma. Among all these the small pox goddess is much dreaded because she may either avert this disease or cause it. She is Nookalamma, the most frightening goddess.

Nookalamma, as noted by Bishop Whitehead (1921) she is very ill tempered and gives much trouble. She is a very harsh mother. The goddess of smallpox is called as *Atalamma* (*Ata*: play; *Amma*: Mother) because; by causing these dreadful diseases she plays with the lives of the people. Though smallpox is

now eradicated, the belief and the methods of cure that were practiced earlier are relevant in this context.

In the Godavari region there is a belief that if the food offered to the goddess in the temple is not sufficient, she will enter the households of the village in the form of epidemics. That is why the desires of the smallpox affected persons need to be satisfied immediately. If the affected persons desires are fulfilled the goddess also gets satisfied. Through ritual process the disturbed elements are controlled slowly; and the diseased person is treated very carefully, until he/she gets cured. The symptoms of smallpox are high fever associated with gradual eruptions on the body. It takes one month to get cured. Application of a paste of neem leaves (*Azadirachta indica*) and turmeric (*Curcuma domestica*) are the best traditional medicines to cure smallpox. The patient is made to lie down on a bed of neem leaves. Every day, early in the morning, the patient is given a few globules of tender neem leaves pounded into a paste with turmeric powder. Whoever visits the patient they hold fans made of leaves in their hands so that they will be protected from infection. The traditional medical practitioner who cures smallpox kind of disease is called *Ganachari*. She offers coconuts, curd rice, and fowls to the goddess. She sprinkles turmeric water on the eruptions on the body of the patient and when they start disappearing she/ he will be given head bath. Before giving bath the

paste of neem leaves and turmeric will be applied to the patient and the patient is bathed with hot water boiled with neem leaves. Then *Chaldiannam* (cooked rice mixed in curd and onion which is attributed with cooling property) will be offered to a washerman (this is for cooling). With this the pollution of the family members will be over. After two or three days, again, the patient takes head bath, visits the temple of Nookamma and offers coconuts *Chalimidi* and other cooling ritual foods. Then all the family members take the same food as *Prasadam* so that the heat is controlled and the disease is prevented from spreading. Whenever epidemics break out the village as a whole performs different rituals until the disease subsides. One of these rituals is *Challaghatam Oregimpu* (*Challa*: which has cooling property; or buttermilk; *Ghatam*: Pot; *Oregimpu*: procession) (procession of buttermilk pot). Asadis of the village carry two new earthen pots (*mattikundalu*) decorated with turmeric and lime. One pot is filled with buttermilk, the other pot is kept empty in which during the procession, and each householder brings buttermilk and pours it in. In return, the Asadis give some buttermilk as *theertham* (sacred liquid) from their pot. Taking processions for the goddess continues until the epidemic is prevented. If any person dies due to epidemics people say that the person has gone to the temple of Nookamma (Nookamma *Gudiki Poyinadu*). If a child dies, his family members offer cane sticks (*Karra Bettalu*) to the temple of Nookamma. With that the spirit of the dead child

will not affect other children. In the agency areas, during epidemic season (*Anturogala Kaalam*) every night, villagers get together at one place and make loud noise by beating drums to frighten the spirits. In the fishermen community the belief of Bestas (a sub caste of fishermen) is that if they keep wooden dolls in the center of the house on the name of dead persons of their family Nookalamma won't enter their house. In some villages, once the epidemic subsides, *Jatara* will be celebrated. During the days of *Jatara*, coconuts, fowls, goats are offered to the goddess. A special cooling food made of *ragi* (millet, *Elusine corocana*) powder mixed in buttermilk brought from Golla's (pastoralist community) house and onions will be offered to the goddess. Later this cooling food will be distributed among the devotees. On the last night of the *Jatara* a fire pit (*Agnigundam*) will be arranged. Devotees, whcever got cured from the *Atalamma*, walk on the fire, showing their gratitude to the goddess. These devotees observe fasting for the whole day. Turmeric mixed water will be sprinkled on the devotees in their fire walking. Sometimes the devotees while walking on the fire pit go in to a trance; in order to keep them conscious, the observers sprinkle turmeric water on them.

III.3.Goddess of Fertility and Fecundity

Fertility is another wide spread characteristic feature of the goddess. The Goddesses are often portrayed as earth mothers identified with the fertility of

fields. From the remote past, humans looked upon the earth as a personification of the deity of fertility. The fertility of the soil and that of women has been one of the salient features in agricultural societies in all times.

The great goddess everywhere is the ruler over the food that springs from the earth and all the usages connected with human's nourishment are subordinated to her. She is the goddess of agriculture whether its product is rice, corn or wheat, barley or any other fruit of the soil. The life producing mother was the central figure in reproduction in the human and animal world alike and then extended to the vegetable kingdom when mother earth became the womb in which crops were sown (Savitri, 1997). The concern with the fertility of the earth is repeated in the wide spread association of goddess worship with human fertility. Barren women in Europe, India, Africa and many other parts of the world turn to female divinities to ask for aid in pregnancy. Here goddesses become a source of life so that the human community may be sustained (Elaide, 1987).

The fertility cults related to mother goddess are the oldest and longest surviving ingredients of the religions of the ancient world. In West Asia, one of the early centers called Catal hyuk, where agriculture developed, a figurine

of the great mother was found in a grain bin. The figure was placed in the grain bin obviously to promote the fertility of crops (Srivastav, 1979). Throughout the world, earth was identified with women in all stages of culture. The fecundity of earth was taken to be equal to that of women. In Egypt, Isis, mother of heaven is identified fertility.

Regarding the fertility rites and beliefs of the ancient period, Bhattacharya (1977) in his work *The Indian mother goddess* says that the early Vedic tribes whose material culture and social institutions have been reflected in the *Rig Veda* were predominantly supplemented by agricultural ritual of their neighboring tribes which were based on fertility beliefs. The adoption of the ritual of a particular group of people by another group is essentially connected with the social changes by the shifting tensions in the mode of food production.

Baron Omar Rolf Ehrenfels in his book *The mother Right in India*, says that the mother right element in India is stronger than in any part of the world. In the pre Vedic age mother right was in full fledged from until the importance of male was recognized with the establishment of husbandry and domestication of flocks and herds.

According to Chottopadyaya (*Lokayata*) the initial stage of agricultural economy created the matriarchal conditions for the social supremacy of the female (cited in Srivastav, 1979).

The earth goddess is definitely associated with agriculture. In one of the seals discovered at Harappa, a nude female figure with legs apart and plant issuing from the womb, and on the other side there are men and women figures with a man holding a plough share or oblation spoon in one hand and in the other a clod of earth and the women in squatting posture before him with raised hands. This representation of earth goddess is related to vegetation. The clay figurines represented by a child suckling the figurines were kept in every house and streets of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. It symbolizes the nourishing or the feeding mother since a baby is being allowed to suckle milk from the breast. Creation is the duty of women. Only mother has the power to create and produce.

In north India Durga Puja is celebrated from the first to the ninth days of the bright half of the lunar month of Asvin, which coincides with the autumn harvest. It is thus clear that this ceremony is a harvest festival in which the Goddess is propitiated as the power of plant fertility (Dhanda, 2001).

In north coastal Andhra, the goddesses of fertility are worshipped in different ways. In the agency areas of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram agricultural deities are worshipped during the festivals of *Kandikotha Panduga*, *Mamidikotha Panduga*, *Sirasu Panduga*. In the East Godavari and parts of Visakhapatnam regions, *Tholakari Jatara*, *Oodpula Panduga* or *Pasara Panduga* are celebrated. In the agency of the Godavari region *Pappu Panduga*, *Baddi Panduga*, *Boodamma Panduga* are celebrated annually.

III.3(b). *Kandikotha Panduga*

This festival is associated with the harvest of red gram (*Kandi*: red gram, *Cajanus cajan*; *Kotha*: harvest; *Panduga*: festival). This festival is celebrated in the month of *Margasira* (November-December) on the following Sunday after the new moon day in the agency areas of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram. The communities of Koya, Bhagatha, Konda Reddi, celebrate this festival in shifting cultivation or *Podu*, cultivation. This *Kandikotha Panduga* is exclusively for the harvest of the first crop of *Kandi*. As majority of people live on agriculture in this region, they will be very happy if the whole crop reaches their house without any calamities. The village chief or priest makes the first harvest, only after that the others follow. The deity Jakarta Devatha symbolized in a stone is kept under a tree of tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) in a grove. On Friday Janni (priest of the community) cooks rice. The deity is

given bath and decorated with turmeric and vermilion. Some rice is kept before the deity and a cock is allowed to eat the rice. When the cock finishes eating it will be sacrificed. The heart of the cock will be removed from the body and mixed in the boiling rice adding turmeric powder and salt. The cooked food is offered to the deity and then distributed among all the people by the Janni. All the people dance before the deity to the beating of the drums. Then the deity is taken to the neighboring villages, all within a radius of three miles till Sunday evening. On Monday morning, all the villagers after taking bath take a cow to the deity by an unmarried male and it is made to touch the deity. Later, the blood of the sacrificed cow is cooked adding salt and turmeric powder to it. Rice is also cooked separately, the cooked rice and blood kept in three margosa leaves in the name of the deity. The remaining cooked blood and rice are served to the villagers. The flesh of the cow is distributed to all the villagers. On the same day, the deity is kept in its original place accompanied by music and dancing. People enjoy heavy feasting and drinks.

III.3(c).*OodpulaPanduga*

This festival (*Oodpu*: harvesting the Crop; *Panduga*: Festival) is celebrated during the harvest season in the month of November- December. Before taking away the annual crop from the fields to their homes this festival is

celebrated. In the plains of the Godavari region this festival is celebrated similar to the annual *Jatara* of village goddesses. On that day *Naivedyam* (ritual food offering to the deity) prepared with new rice sugar and milk will be taken from the temple to the fields in a procession. A small fair will be conducted in front of the goddess temple.

III.3(d). *Tholakari Jatara*.

Tholakari means the first showers of rains in the year. As most of the agriculturists depend on rain for their fields the first drops of rain are very precious to them. When the goddess bestows rain in return they celebrate the occasion by *Naivedyam* to her.

III.3(e). *Pappu Panduga*

It means festival of pulses (*Pappu*). This festival is celebrated in the agency area of the Godavari region in the month of February-March. After harvesting the pulses some quantity of pulses will be offered to the temple of the village deity. Pujari of the temple boils these pulses with turmeric and salt and distributes the pulses in the village by taking as a procession of small kids. Only then people will use the new pulses.

In all fertility rituals there is the belief in the magical power of sex as the driving force is conceived as a creative principle capable of generating life, rejuvenating natural forces and revivifying things (Pradyot Kumar, 1966).

All women must be chaste or self-controlled in regard to their sexual desires. In India marriage is the central point in which a woman gets the highly desired state of *Sumangali*, the embodiment of auspiciousness. By worshipping the goddess they acquire this state.

When the goddess blesses her unmarried women worshippers with *Mangalyam*, in return, the newly wed women with their husbands visit the temple of the goddess Nookamma in a procession with *Ghatams* decorated with flowers and *Dappus*. Newly wed women carry three *Ghatams*. During the procession the couple distributes *Kumkum* (vermillion) and *Pasupu* (turmeric) to the people around. Later they call the storytellers to recite the story of the greatness of the goddess.

III.4.Nookamma as a Caste Deity(Fig 20)

In north coastal Andhra, Jalaris, Vadabalijas, Pallis, Bestas and Maracas are the chief fishing communities. They live in the villages along the seashore and the *Lankas* (small islands formed by the meandering rivers). These settlements

of the fishermen are away from other societies. Fishermen of coastal villages are very traditional and have strong religious beliefs. They consider water as *Thalli* (mother) as they believe that they are also a part of the nature. Fishermen worship water, which is their chief source of livelihood. Besides Ganga (any body of water eg., river, lake even a water pool associated with sacrality is referred to as Ganga implying its equation to the sacred river Ganga) they also worship gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon as well as local deities. Though they worship gods like Siva all their ritual practices center around the local deities like Bhoolokamma, Paidamma, Mutyalamma and Nookalamma. Among all these deities Nookalamma gets very special treatment from many fishing communities. In the Visakhapatnam region, Vadabalijas worship Nookalamma as their family deity. In the Godavari region, also Bestas worship the goddess Nookalamma as their family deity. In the Palli community, along with other village deities like Maridamma and Asiramma, Nookalamma also have a small room in their houses. All these goddesses are believed to be their daughters. They also believe that these goddesses ensure prosperity of the family.

To get the help of the deity in their fishing expeditions in the sea they make offerings to the goddess. The belief is that if offerings are made to the deity, the deity will be pleased and in return blesses them with plenty of fish catch.

When they have good fish catch all through the season they make special offerings to the goddess on the annual function. These offerings made by fishermen are called *Mokkulu* (*Mokku* is fulfillment of a vow). The *Mokkulu* are performed by Pujaris called *Sivagallu* who belong to the Jangama caste. These *Sivagallu* appear on the annual festival of the goddess. They wear different colored long coat, and around the neck two different colored long saree pieces. They also wear *Rudraksha Mala* (chain of rosaries) and *Poosala Mala* (chains of beads); and on the top of the head, a fish basket modeled turban. In one hand they hold a bronze bell and in the other hand a seashell. In the center of the turban a small photograph of lord Siva is kept.

Fishermen make many types of *Mokkulu*, like *Teppa Vaduluta* (leaving a decorated small boat in the water) *Panpuveyuta* (lying down in front of the temple constructed temporarily at the bank of river or seashore on the day of the *Jatara* of the goddess).

III.4.(a). *Teppa Vaduluta* (Fig.10)

The devotees who have to make this offering (leaving a small boat in the waters of the river or sea as a votive offering), go to the river bank or seashore along with their family members. *Sivagadu* or *Pujari* arranges all the items (rice flour, jaggery, banana leaf to make boat, paper flag, oil etc.) brought by

the devotees. He prepares *Arati Teppa* (small boat made of Banana leaf) and an earthenware lamp also will be kept on *Teppa*. After arranging everything the *Pujari* chants mantras for sometime then he offers the decorated *Arati Teppa* to the head of the family. The head of the family takes *Aratitheppa* in his hands and leaves the *Teppa* in the water. He will stand there until the floating *Teppa* is visible. Later he will go to the temple on the riverbank with his family members in a procession accompanied by *Dappu* and *Garagalu* dances. In such occasions each family arranges dances of *Koyas*, *Garagalu* carriers some times recording dances, *Thappetagullu* (a traditional dance performed by *Mangalis* by wearing anklets till the knees). *Chekka Bhajana* (a traditional performance of songs and dance by playing a wooden musical instrument).

These *Mokkulu* are not only performed on auspicious occasions but also on bad occasions like death. In the memory of dead persons the *Mokkulu* are offered on the day of *Amavasya*. A belief is that the decorated boats which are left in the water will reach their beloved dead persons (some more details are given in the III.5.Goddess of Death).

III.4(b). *Panpuveyuta* (Fig. 8)

This is another form of offering given by fishermen exclusively to the goddess Nookalamma. As the goddess Nookalamma is the head of the dreadful diseases like chickenpox, when a person is attacked by the disease, his family members make a vow to that they will bring the person to her temple to perform *Panpuveyuta*, if he recovers from the disease soon. When the person recovers from the disease he or she will be taken to the temple of Nookalamma and made to prostrate in front of the temple. Then the Pujari or *Ganachari* (woman Pujari and also a medical practitioner) of the same fishermen community} takes a walk crossing over the devotees who are lying down. Later he will take the devotees and the family members to the seashore and there animals {goats and sheep) are sacrificed. Usually a pig will be sacrificed before sacrificing the animal. Flags will be hosted on each name of the goddess they worship (Bhoolokamma, Pydamma, Nookalamma).A Madiga beheads the animal in one stroke. Then all the devotees pray to the goddess to bestow good fish catch all through the year. With this the annual *Sambaram* of Nookalamma will be over.

The goddess Nookalamma is also associated closely with the community of Malas in the plains of the Godavari region. According to one of the myths goddess Nookalamma was born in a Mala family. Later she was made as

Sakthi by a saint called Elamuni. In another myth she is a Brahman woman who falls in love with a Mala man. She sacrifices her life in order to save Malas from her father an upper caste headman of the village who was annoyed with her love affair. The Malas treat her as their own daughter. In most of the temples of *Nookamma*, Malas are the Pujaris.

III.5. Nookamma as the Goddess of Death

In Hindu religion the cult of the dead has a very special place. In upper strata of Hinduism the belief is that death separates humans from the earthly world, but in the folk world death joins the dead persons to the earthly beings through the cult of the dead. In north coastal Andhra, The cult of *Maridamma* (who causes death) is associated with dead. The other goddesses *Mutyamma*, *Ankamma* are also treated as the cults of the dead in Andhra. In north India Manasa and Sitala are the goddesses usually associated with disease and devastation, which will lead to sudden death. The goddesses associated with disease and deaths are the guardians of the graveyards.

Myths of the origin of the village goddesses often associated with death. A sudden, terrible death transforms a human into a deity. Monuments are erected in honour of people who die a violent death, killed by an animal, in an accident, or in a battle and in honour of those women who performed *Sati*

(wives who immolates or cremate themselves on their husbands pyres). The hero stones erected in honour of those men who died in a battle are called *Veeragullu*. Memorial stones were associated in honour of those women who committed Sati. These Sati stones are worshipped as *Perantallu*. This tradition of self-sacrifice was widely prevalent in medieval period in different parts of India including Andhra Pradesh, and the hero stones and Sati stones are worshipped to this day (Satyanarayana, 1982).

Goddesses are often associated with death. The reason was discussed in *Mahabharatha* by referring a myth related to the goddess of *Mrtyu* (Death) (O'Flaherty, 1961).

According to this myth Long ago, Brahma produced creatures who increased greatly but did not die. There was no space anywhere for people to breathe in the triple world. Brahma was worried. He began to burn the universe on all sides including heaven and earth, Then Siva in the form of *Stanu*, lord of those who wander at night came to Brahma and requested him to have some mercy on the creatures. Brahma said I dont have any desire to destruct the universe but goddess of earth begged me to bring about an universal destruction as she is over burdened. Stanu suggested that Restrain his energy and to use some other means for the welfare of all creatures. Then Brahma restrained his

energy with in him self and created periodic creation and dissolution. And from him as he restrained the fire of his anger there appeared a black woman with red garments and red eyes Brahma called her 'Death' and told her to destroy every one. But Death rejected to perform such a cruel task, which is against dharma. Brahma convinced her by saying that "there will be no *adharma* in you". Creatures oppressed with diseases will not blame you. He also told that the tears shed by the goddess would be diseases, which will oppress men when their time has come. At that time of Death, you will cause creatures to be attached to anger and desire and so you will escape *adharma*. Yama, who is "eternal *dharma*" will assist you and so will diseases. Fearing a curse from Brahma, Death agreed and then onwards death deludes creatures with desire and anger and kills them, having abonded her own desire and anger .It is not Death who kills creatures but the destroyer herself takes away the breath of creatures, creatures all kill themselves. Because of this even the gods are known as mortals.

Though the goddess Nookamma is not completely treated along with the cults of the dead, she is also related to death, as she is the head of the much dreadful diseases. If any person dies attacked by such serious diseases people say that "Nookamma *Gudi Kadiki Poyindu*"(he has gone to the temple abode of Nookamma or he has won the favour of Nookamma)

Special Pujas are offered to the goddess Nookalamma in the memory of dead persons of their families. Connecting the funerary rituals and worship of the local deities Verrier Elwin in his *Tribal /Folk Religion in India* says that every ancestor, on entering the under world after the proper performances of the mortuary rites becomes one of the deities.

The offerings made in the memory of dead persons to the goddess Nookalamma are very common in north coastal Andhra. Devotees offer *Karrabettalu* (bamboo sticks) to the goddess if any small child dies in their family with the belief that by holding the stick the goddess will control the spirit of the child will possess other children of their family. In Fishermen community they keep small figures in a corner of their house in the memory of the dead persons. At the time of annual *Jatara* of the goddess these figures will be taken into a procession and later the figures will be offered to the goddess. In some families if any *Punyastree* (a woman who dies before her husband's death) dies, on her name bangles blouse, turmeric, *Kumkum*, a small mirror kept in a *Cheta* (bamboo tray) offered to the goddess. Devotees request the goddess to take away the spirit of the woman from their house.

III.6. Nookamma as the Goddess of Local Royal Families

In the medieval times, the entire northern Andhra region was covered with thick forests inhabited by a number of tribes who believed in nature and mother goddess worship. With the acculturation of these tribes with other social groups of the Brahmanical order, many elements of the tribal traditions became a part of the *Varnasrama* system. The village goddesses whose names and attributes varied from place to place were universalized as the consort of Siva. Such goddesses also enjoyed royal patronage. An inscription of Amma II, a king of the eastern Chalukyas mentions the boundaries of a village granted to the temple of the goddess Punisvaramma (Fleet, 1884). It records the grant of a field at the village of Gundugolanu in the vishaya of Vengi or Venginadu to a Brahman named VamanaSarma of the Bharadvaja gotra an inhabitant of the village of Kalluru. The grant was made by Amma II at the request of his wife's parents Kama and Nayamamba.

The inscription and the transcription of the inscription written on the copper plate grants are given in Appendix I-II.

The great goddess Nookamma appears at the Bhimeswara temple, 1200AD, constructed by Eastern Chalukyas at Draksharamam along with other local

deities Ghattambika, Gogulamba and Mandithalli. The Inscriptions indicate that the Eastern Chalukyas worshipped *Sakti*. They described themselves as *Matrigana Paripalithanam*. ie. those who are protected by the seven mothers. Panels of Sapthamatrakas are found in almost all-important temples of this periods and places like Vemulavada and Draksharamam. Some of the principle seats of the *Sakti* worship in Andhra, like the Hunkarini at Pithapuram are located in the kingdom of these rulers. In almost all the villages the presiding deity is a female goddess and every year there is the celebration of the *Jatara* to propitiate her (Suryanarayana, 1986).

After that, until 1600 AD no reference is found about the worship of Nookalamma by royal families.

In 1450 A.D, Mahmad Qutubshah, the Nawab of Arcot appointed Kakarlapudi Appalaraju as the military general. He waged a war against Kalinga-Andhra ruled by Mukunda Bahubalendra. In this war Appalaraju defeated Balendra and annexed Kalinga Andhra into Kutubshahi kingdom. For this success, Nawab gave AppalaRaju, a new kingdom called Anakapalli. Like that AppalaRaju became founder of Anakapalli. In front of Anakapalli he installed a Sakthi and named it Kakathamba. Later this region was ruled by Vizayanagara kings who succeeded Appalaraju. They changed the name of the goddess into Nookambica commonly called as Nookalamma.

III.6.2.The Vizianagara Kings

The Vizianagara kings were also the worshippers of Nookalamma. The stone inscriptions found at Donakonda in the Nellore district gives an authentic reference that the goddess Nookalamma is worshipped by the Viziayanagara kings.

One of the inscriptions known as Darsi inscription, dated 1406 1407 AD, is in Telugu and is on a stone in the temple of Gangamma. The translation of this inscription is given in Appendix III.

These two inscriptions mentions the goddess Nunkala Parameswari, Donakonda Ganga Parameswari, Ma(nu)kalamma and Nookambika. Nookambika is a famous goddess and incarnation of Sakti in Karnataka. It is plausible that under the influence of Vijayanagara kings the goddess Nookalamma is equated with the goddess Nookambika.

III.7.Goddess Nookalamma and Muslim Rulers

The local sources available in this region also show that the Muslim kings of this region were also associated with the origin of the goddess Nookalamma.

According to a local story, once upon a time a king called Khan ruled the village Kandra Kota. The king Khan failed to clear debts to the Nawab of Hyderabad. He died before he could clear his debts. After the death of the king Khan the Nawab of Hyderabad arrested his two sons and kept them in Jail. The queen (name is not mentioned) prayed Elamuni, a great sage, to show the way to get back her sons. Elamuni called a widow from the Mala community and gives her superpower to bring back the princes with the help of her powers. Later, Elamuni asked her whether she wants to remain as the supreme power or wishes to come back to her ordinary life. Then Nookamma says that she wants to remain as *Sakthi Swarupini*. From then onwards Nookamma becomes the goddess.

III.8. The Nizams

Some extent this story could be historically linked to the period of Nizam Ul Mulk (1714-48 AD). In 1730AD the Nizam appointed Rustum Khan as Foujdar to Rajamahendravara Paragana. Rustum Khan started annexing the surrounding kingdoms one after another (Pratapa Reddy, 1987).

In this process he annexed Peddapuram kingdom, which was ruled by Vathsavayis. Nagamma the queen of Peddapuram sent her son to Vijayanagaram and then committed suicide. Later Nooruddin, son of

Rushtumkhan became the foudar of Rajamahendravarum. He found that Jagapathiraju; son of Nagamma is under the protection of Vizayanagara kings. In 1734AD, he waged a war against the Anakapalli king Gopala Payaka Rao and Vijaya Ramaraju of Vizayanagara kingdom. In this war Nooruddin was defeated by Anakapalli and Vijayanagar kings. And Jagapathiraju was taken back to Vizayanagarum.

The similarities between the above local myth and the historical event that happened in 1730-34AD have similarities. As in the local myth that a king by name Khan ruled Kandrakota was mentioned while tracing the historicity of the Muslim kings in this region, and that Rusthumkhan, a Foudar of Rajamahendravarum who annexed Peddapuram kingdom. The kingdom of Kandrakota mentioned in the local myth is a part of Peddapuram kingdom. In the local myth the queen seeks the help of a sage, but probably the king of Vizayanagarum the savior of Jagapathiraju was treated by the local people as sage and as the king who is also a devotee of the goddess Nookamma. The whole credit was attributed to the goddess.

In the light of some of these references we could say that the goddess Nookamma is worshipped by the kings as well as common people during the early-late medieval period.

III.9. Annual *Jatara* of the Goddess Nookalamma and Communal Harmony.

Social anthropologists generally select a village community as the unit of field observation as most Indians live in villages and regard them as the basic unit of social life. The Indian village represents a small relatively isolated and self-contained community, with a population more or less cohesive. Indian villages have the traditional features of caste, joint family, festivals, fairs, beliefs, and traditional media (Malik 1992).

A village in this region consists of different communities viz, Brahmin (priestly community), Vysyas (merchant community), Velama (royal community), Kapu, Kamma, Kapu, Kamma, Reddy, Peasant communities); Mangali (Barber), Chakali (washerman); Kummari (Potter); Vadrangi (Carpenter); Mala (Peasant labor); Madiga leather worker); Pambala (bards); Vadabalija, Palli, Besta (fishermen communities); Konds, Bhills, Kondareddi (shifting cultivator communities). These castes and communities vary in composition from village to village in north coastal Andhra and the shifting cultivation in the uplands have their own exclusive settlements.

The gods of the great tradition are the Sanskritic deities- Vishnu, Siva, Rama, Hanuman, Ganesa etc. These gods are worshipped by castes of all ranks. Most of the festivals of great tradition are observed in the villages of the plains. In all these temples Brahmans are the priests and the worship follows Brahmanic traditions. This worship was largely supported by endowments of lands made to the temple in former days by the ruling dynasties. Unlike the great tradition, little communities worship local deities and other supernatural elements. The annual festival of these gods and goddesses are celebrated with a purpose to eradicate famine or epidemics or in honor of the goddess during harvest season. The festivals are celebrated not by individual families but the village as a 'whole' comes together to participate in the rituals of the village goddess. In the rites and rituals of the goddesses, different communities have their respective roles according to their services to the village. Though Brahmans and Vysyas do not participate directly in the rituals associated with blood sacrifices of the goddesses they visit the temples on the day of *Jatara*.

In the East Godavari district the goddess BasheerBibi is worshipped as the local goddess in the villages of Ponnada, Ravulapalem and Kothapalli. According to a local myth, she belongs to a Muslim family. Basheer Bibi and her friend Sundari were very beautiful. Basheer Bibi got married to the Diwan of Srikakulam. At that time Ponnada was under the control of Wazir

Khan (period is not known). He came to know about the beauty of the two women. He sent a person called Narayana Rao, Son of the Karanam of Tuni to capture the two women. Narayana Rao captured and brought them to the court of Wazir Khan. Wazir Khan kept them in a Palace with a tight security. But both the women rejected to surrender to the Wazir. A darga was constructed by the Wazir with the wish of Basheer Bibi. Even then Basheer Bibi did not surrender to him. To harass her Wazir captured her husband and kept him in prison. Basheer Bibi having come to know this decides to kill herself. Before taking her life, she curses the Wazir that he will see hell on the earth by loosing all his power, property and blood relations. Then she took the dead body of her husband and walked into the Darga. After a few days Sundari peeped into the Darga, Basheer Bibi was glowing like a golden doll. Sundari called her with love Bangaru Paapa. Basheer Bibi looked at her and told her that since then she will be called as Bangaru Paapa and be worshipped by both Hindus ad Muslims. Like that Basheer Bibi became the goddess of the village Ponnada.

This kind of a mixture of elements into the Hindu tradition is a part of the universalisation; the village culture experienced a kind of Sanskritisation. As both the little tradition and the great tradition lie in the religion of village communities, in course of time, a process of Sanskritisation from high caste to

low caste was started. In this process the local and regional deities were identified with Sanskritic ones, which are authoritative, refined and learned traditions (Singer, 1972). Many little traditions came to be related to a more universal great tradition and every local goddess was identified with either Durga or Kali. The common names of these goddesses are Ellamma, Renuka, Aranjyoti, Arundhati etc.

Sanskritisation also brought changes in the rites and rituals of the goddesses such as vegetarianism, chanting of mantras, offering coconuts, entry of Brahman priests and *Agamic* rituals. After independence, the government started taking control of these temples. The government started Sanskritising the culture of the little communities. It imposed ban on animal sacrifices and sale of meat and toddy on certain occasions during the *Jataras*.

III. 10. The Role of Media (Cinema, Radio and Television)(Fig.21,22)

The role played by media in promoting the culture of the little communities in recent years is very significant. The impact of audiovisual media on the life of the people in general has recently been very much effective. The films can be considered as the records of culture so far as they depict the style of life, aspirations and problems of various cross sections of the society. Since the inception of Telugu Cinema numerous films depicted supernatural elements

such as serpent worship, tantric activities and mythologies. The films like *Nomu* created a sensation all over Andhra. In this film a serpent plays a key role. Like a hero it punishes the villains and protects its devotees. For the first time a Telugu film was made taking the miracles of *Gramadevata* as a theme, by the director Kodi Ramakrishna, in the film *Ammoru*. In this, an orphan girl who was brought up in the temple premises by the Pujari is a great devotee of *Ammoru*. Whenever the girl is in a problem the goddess comes to her rescue. The goddess protects her devotee from the sufferings of her mother in law by incarnating herself as a girl child companion to the devotee. Highly technical graphics were used in the film that was a great success in Andhra. In some theatres, women audience were possessed while watching the film. In front of the theatres an artificial *Pamuputta*, termite mound, the abode of snakes was made and an idol of the village goddess was kept. Women worshiped the goddess at *Pamuputta* before entering into the theatre. At some places the theatre managers distributed *Pasupu* and *Kumkum* (turmeric and vermilion) to the audience. Like that this film has created a hysteric sensation in Andhra. Not only films but Television is also playing an important role in popularizing or romanticizing the belief of the little communities. A popular TV channel Maa TV is presenting a program *Maa Grama Devathala Kathalu* (the stories of our village goddesses) in all weekdays for half an hour. In this one selected goddess is taken to explain the origin of the goddess and her miracles. In other

popular channels like Gemini and ETV, sop-operas are coming up based on the stories of the village goddesses and serpents. Like that with its bigger potentiality television and films are playing their role in promoting the worship of the village goddesses. These days, temples are adopting all the possible ways of advertisements including Radio, TV, Print media and Public address system. In olden days before the commencement of the *Jatara*, a *Chatu* (announcement) was given by a *Madiga* to announce the commencement of the *Jatara*. Today, a great deal of revolution came up in advertising the annual *Jatara*. Pamphlets, cutouts, posters, announcements, in Radio and TV have become very common. Private audio and videocassettes are released in the market. Web sites are opened in the Internet. At the same time traditional media was not displaced. Traditional storytellers (bards) are still in demand in many places of this region. The storytellers like the Pambalas are treated as the direct representatives of the goddesses and they are maintaining their own status. Government is also using their services by employing them to spread modern messages of community development, literacy sanitation and new techniques in agriculture and industries.

Chapter IV

Myths and Rituals of the Goddess Nookalamma

IV.1. Introduction

From prehistoric India and aboriginal Australia to Africa and Polynesia, myths express the common experience of all humanity. The word myth is taken from the Greek word mythos, which literally means utterance or some thing one says. Myth is commonly expressed as a story involving gods or heroes (Eliade, 1987). Myths are not merely fabricated stories. They played an important role in meeting the psychological needs of different social groups in allover the world. A myth expresses that event, which throws light on the relationships and privileges of important characters and therefore indirectly expresses the contemporary ethos (Varshney, 1990).

Most myths directly or indirectly depend on the cosmogenic myth. The myths of the end of the world, as well as, the mythico - ritual pattern of a periodic regeneration of the universe are structurally related to the cosmogenic myth. As a matter of fact, they reveal not only how the world can be periodically regenerated and how consequently man can participate in this universal renewal.

In myths the actors are usually of divine origin most commonly, they are gods or culture heroes. In contrast to myths, folk tales deal with the lesser figures of

popular imagination. Some myths contain elements of folklore. In folk tales, the protagonists are frequently human beings or anthropomorphic animals (Rajesh, 1994). Mostly the folk tales of the village goddesses are a combination of folklore and mythology. Both the Great and Little traditions lie in the stories and songs of the village gods and goddesses. The present chapter deals with myths and rituals of the goddess Nookalamma, the depiction of female characters in the myths and the participation of women and different communities in the ritual practices of the worship of the goddess.

There are various versions of the creation myth of the goddess Nookalamma in different parts of the north coastal Andhra. Some of the important myths collected during the course of fieldwork at Pithapuram, Uppada, Kakinada and Anakapalle are discussed below.

IV.2. Creation Myth of the Goddess Nookalamma

The creation myth, which is being sung and performed by bards called Pambalas at Pithapuram, is as follows;

Goddess Nookalamma is born and brought up in the village Kandrakota. She is the Goddess of hundred plates and thousand eyes. Snakes are her ornaments. She is very beautiful and cunning. At the time of her birth, there was no sky, there were no trees, and there is nothing except *Omkara*. With the help of *Omkara* at first, the Goddess created the earth. From her sweat, she created river Ganga. She took bath in the waters of the Ganga. Then she took sand in her hands and

made three parts of sand. Then she created three eggs from the three parts of the sand. She became a black hen and sat on the eggs. After a fortnight, she opened the first egg and found water in it. She opened the second egg and found white part becoming the Sun and the Moon. Finally, she opened the third egg, at first Brahmadeva came out from this egg followed by Vishnumurthi and Eswara. But Eswara was born without head and legs. He was born like limestone (*Sunnapurayi*). She fed milk to them.

When they become young Nookamma fell in love with them. Rather than love, it was lust. According to her, seasoning the egg is not like directly giving birth. Therefore, she is the grandmother. In between grandmother and grandchildren, there is no specific relation. So, she can have sexual relation with them. She called Brahma and expressed that she wants to make love, as they don't have mother and son relationship. She asked him to fulfill her desire. Brahma refuses her proposal saying that if I fulfill your desire I will lose my eyesight. Nookamma got angry at his answer. She destroyed the body of Brahma and made the body into six parts. She called Vishnu and expressed her desire, when Vishnu also refused she turned him into a stone.

Finally, she requests Siva to fulfill her desire. Siva says that 'I have no objection to fulfill your desire, but I have no legs and hands'. Immediately, Nookamma bestows legs to walk, hands to catch and four eyes to see. Siva, standing in front of her tells the goddess that if she gives her ornaments he will fulfill her desire.

He started asking for all her ornaments, which are also her weapons like *Nattu Chintamani* the precious stone on her nose ring, *Kanureppala Kaluvalu* (lotus eyelids), *Ponnarapuvvu* (a shiny, fragrant flower), and her twelve hands. She fights with all these things.

After taking all these things from the goddess, Siva tells her that you are polluted; 'go and take bath in a sea; then only I can touch you'. As soon as Nookamma goes to take bath Siva rushes to his brothers (Brahma and Vishnu) and gets their life back. In order to escape from their mother they start running away. Nookamma seeing her sons escaping, follow them. On the way, her sons find some children playing; they request the children to stop their mother some how.

The children stopped Nookamma for a while by chatting with her. Eswara has taken all the weapons from the goddess except *Galidumaram* (windstorm) with which she caught them (her sons) but they fought with her with the remaining weapons and finally killed her. They prepared a funeral pyre, kept her body on it and lit the fire. Later, they made six parts of the ashes. Out of the six parts one share was given to the earth one share to the sky; one share to Ganga; one share to Brahma, one share to Vishnu and one share to Maheswara. Brahma left his share in the sea. Saraswati was born from it. Vishnu followed him; for him Lakshmi was born and for Esavra, Paravathi was born.

Nookalamma reappeared as the great goddess and called all her sons to bestow boons. She called Brahma and told him that as he did not fulfill her desire he will not be worshipped in a temple.

She called Vishnu and told him that who ever comes to you will go back with shaved heads. Then she called Eswara and told him that, as he is Eswara She cannot give him any boon. Then Eswara says, "You will be the Goddess of villages" In every village you will have a temple. You will be offered hens, fowls and goats but the goddess was not satisfied with this. Then Eswara threatens her that if she is not satisfied her head will break into pieces. Nookalamma accepts whatever lord Siva bestowed her. She also promises that she will eat all the food in *Chaitra Maasam* (April- May). Wherever Nookalamma is there, lord Siva also will be there.

IV.3. Origin Myth of the Nookalamma as Goddess of Diseases

The second myth, another version of the creation myth, collected from the fishing community, called Jalaris, at the Uppada village is as follows.

This version connects the goddess with diseases. According to this version once, lord Siva accompanied by his wife Parvathi, makes a visit to the earthly world. When they were going through a jungle, they saw seven just born female babies without any protection. Devi Parvathi wants to take these babies and seeks permission of her husband. Lord Siva agrees to bring up those babies. Like that, the seven babies were brought up by Lord Siva and Parvathi. When they become young, lord Siva gives seven places to each one of his daughters.

Likewise, Nookamma got KandraKota, Maridamma got Peddapuram, Sattamma got Cinnapalle, Poleramma got Kothapeta, Egulamma got Isaukapalli, Korrala Devatha got barren lands and Kasammoru got a single pillar palace in the sea.

Once, the king of Kasi went for fishing in the sea. While he was on the high seas, he comes across the single pillar palace coming in his way. He scolds Kasammoru that because of her palace he had to stop his hunting. Kasammoru got angry. She went to her father to seek permission to see the end of the king of Kasi, but Lord Eswara warns her not to go for a fight with him, because he is not a good person. Annoyed by this, Kasammoru creates problems to Eswara. He gets fever and smallpox. Parvathi calls her daughter Nookamma and pleads with her to save her father. Nookamma calls all her sisters. Except Kasammoru every one will attend. Nookamma sends Poleramma to bring Kasammoru. Poleramma brings Kasammoru by scolding her.

Nookamma requests Kasammoru to save their father but Kasammoru says if he gives permission then only she can save their father. Then Nookamma tells her that if their father won't give permission, she will give permission to Kasammoru. Satisfied with the words of Nookamma, Kasammoru cures her father's disease. Lord Siva shifts the powers of diseases from Kasammoru to Nookamma because she should not carry the diseases and go to Kasi. Since then Nookamma became the goddess of diseased. Kasammoru goes to the

town of Kasi, creates several problems to the king, and makes him to realize her greatness.

IV.4. Goddess Nookalamma as a Warrior Deity

There is another version sung and performed by the bards called Asadis, which is recorded at Anakapalle. In this narrative the goddess, Nookalamma is a warrior deity. The narrative is as follows;

Once upon a time, the demons wanted to conquer the whole world. For that they did '*tapas*' to get a boon from Lord Siva. Lord Siva, satisfied with the demons *tapas* asks them as to what boon they want from him. The demons replied that from their each drop of blood thousands of demons should rise. Lord Siva bestows them the boon. From then onwards they started conquering all kingdoms including *Indraloka* the kingdom of deities. Finally, they come to wage a war against Lord Siva himself. In order to escape from demons Lord Siva hides under a black rock. Goddess Parvathi comes to know about all this, she asks their daughter Nookalamma to save her father somehow. Nookalamma decides to see the end of the demons.

She went to Lord Siva to take his permission but Lord Siva tries to stop her because she is a woman. If she wants to go to the demons place, she should return before sunrise. Nookalamma takes her brother Pothuraju with her and

reaches the demon's place. There she meets the sister of the demons Yamuralu. Nookamma pleads her to help but when she refuses, Nookamma tells her that if she agrees to help her she will give her brother to Yamuralu in marriage. Then Yamuralu agrees to help her. From there, all of them go to '*Boothala Patnam*' the town of demons' and devils. When Nookamma starts killing the demons Yamuralu was ready to lick the blood immediately to prevent even a drop of blood falling on the ground.

Thus, they defeat the demons Lord Siva also gets satisfied with the success. Earlier he used to feel that he doesn't have sons who will take care of him if any problem arises but when his daughter filled the place of a son he felt very happy and presented an egg to her But Nookamma refuses to take such a small gift. She asks her father to sacrifice a he-buffalo. That is why on the *Jatara* of Nookamma a he-buffalo sacrifice became compulsory.

IV.5. Myth Related to the Goddess Nookamma and Incarnations of Lord Vishnu

The narrative sung by the Asadis at Anakapalle also points out the incorporation of the Nookamma cult into Vaisnavite fold.

In this myth, Nookamma is shown as the incarnation of Sri Mahalakshmi, consort of Lord Vishnu. When Vishnu was in the incarnation of Lord Rama, he was dedicated to only one wife. At that time, Nookamma an incarnation of Mahalakshmi happened to see Lord Rama falls in love with him. As he is an

‘*Ekapatnivrata*’ (principle of having one wife), he refuses her proposal. Annoyed by this, she curses Lord Rama to become womanizer in his next birth. In return, Lord Rama also curses her that until *Kalki Yuga*, she will wander like a lustful woman and only when he gives birth as Kalki then she can marry him. Then Nookalamma goes to Lord Siva and request him to make her as his own daughter. Lord Siva being not yet married, asks Nookalamma to stay in a river until he gets married.

Later Siva gets married to Gouri Devi and gave birth to two sons Vinayaka, Veerabhadra and Kumara, as they don’t have daughter. Gouri asks Siva for a daughter. Siva takes her to the river and makes her to drink the water. Gouri drinks the water in seven sips. Through the water, Nookalamma also enters the womb of Gouri Devi. As Gouri drank water with seven sips, she gives birth to seven daughters. Nookalamma is the eldest of them. Lord Siva tells his wife that these seven women will be roaming around lustfully. Therefore, it’s better to keep them in a secured place.

He creates a garden near water pool and keeps all his daughters there. To look after them a woman called Daddamma and a man called Poturaju are created. Like that with all facilities and securities, the daughters of Lord Siva started living there. One day Nookalamma is taking bath in the water pool, Lord Krishna comes to that place grazing his cattle. The cattle come to drink water in the water pool where Nookalamma is taking bath, and spoiled the water.

Nookalamma gets angry. She wanted to curse the grazer, but while looking at him, she falls in love with him. Lord Krishna reminds her about cursing each other in their previous birth. He tells Nookalamma to possess married women and he will possess married men. So that, they can make love. He also tells her that in his *Kalki Avatar* he will definitely marry her; until then she will be worshipped as the goddess Nookalamma by the devotees.

IV.6 (a). *Stalapuranam* Related to the Goddess Nookalamma at Kandrakota

This myth is narrated by Jogarao, farmer trustee of the temple of Nookalamma at Kandrakota. According to this myth, Nookalamma was a young widow belonging to the Mala community. Two hundred years ago a king called Khan ruled this region. As he became indebted to the Nawab of Hyderabad, the Nawab caught his two sons and took them to Hyderabad. A saint called Elamuni meets the king Khan and promises him to bring back the princes safely from Hyderabad. For that he needed a pure girl of ten years old. However, no one comes forward to give his or her daughters to the saint. At last, the sage finds a girl from a Mala family. The saint makes the girl a *Sakti* (powerful) and sends her to Hyderabad.

The *Sakti* brings back the princes from Hyderabad. Then, the sage asks the girl as to whether she wants to become an ordinary woman or will remain as a *Sakti* and look after the welfare of the region. Then she replies that she would be remain as the goddess. Since then, she became as a goddess and princes of the

kingdom constructed a temple at KandraKota. Like that, Goddess Nookalamma is originated at KandraKota.

IV.6 (b). *Stalapuranam* of the Goddess Nookalamma at Kolanka, East Godavari District

This myth is narrated by the villagers of Kolanka, East Godavari district during the course of fieldwork. According to this myth, in a village called Kolanka, the Karanam or village head had only one daughter. He brought her up very luxuriously. The Karanam used to give whatever his daughter wanted. When she became young, he was in search of a good bridegroom for her. But his daughter has fallen in love with a Mala man.

The Karanam came to know about the love affair of his daughter. He couldn't bear his daughter loving a lower caste person. He couldn't even imagine in dreams that a lower caste man becoming his son-in-law. He took it as a prestige issue. He decided to kill his daughter. His daughter came to know about her father's plan. She ran away from her house to the *Malawada* (the locality in which Malas live). The Karanam sends killers to all four corners of the village. Finally, they find her in the *Malawada*. The Karanam threatens the Malas with live consequences. In order to save the Malas from her father (Karanam) she comes out of the Mala's house and immolate herself in the centre of the *Malawada* by saying that after her death she will become the goddess and people will call her Nookalamma. She will also be known as *Malavari Adapaduchu*.

After her death, she appears to Chellamma, the queen of Kolanka, in a dream. Queen Chellamma constructed a temple for the goddess and named it after Nookalamma. Since then Nookalamma is worshipped in the village Kolanka as *Malavari Adapaduchu*.

IV.6 (c). Myths Related to the Greatness of the Goddess Nookalamma

This Myth is sung and performed by the Pambalas during the nights of the annual *Jatara* of the Goddess Nookalamma. Once upon a time, the Goddess Nookalamma goes on an universal tour to test her devotees that whether or not they still believe her. She wears a beautiful saffron colored saree and snakes as jewels. She stops at the bank of the river Godavari. To cross the river, a boatman is carrying people from one bank to the other by taking some amount of money. She too requests the boatman to take her on his boat to the other side of the river.

As Nookalamma was disguised herself as a young woman, the boatman thinks that she is an ordinary woman. He wants to know about her. He starts asking her questions. Then Nookalamma replies that she is from a village called Salampugoyya; her mother- in- law is from Anakapalli; her father- in- law is from Mandapeta and her grand father from Katri Kota. As her husband is not a good person, she left her in- laws house. She doesn't want to go to her mothers place, because she fought with them too. She requests the boatman to help her in crossing the river. But to take her in his boat he demands five rupees as she hasn't got any money she tells the boatman that she will definitely pay him the

money while returning from the other bank. The boatman goes near to her and sees the necklace on her neck. He asks her to give a piece of the golden necklace; then only he can take her to the other bank. Nookalamma tells the boatman that the necklace was gifted by her in-laws, and that she cannot give that to him in her own hands. She asks him to take it with his own hands. As the boatman does not know that Nookalamma wears snakes as jewellery, he tries to take out the ornament from the neck of the goddess. Immediately he was bitten by the cobra. Poisoned by the snakebite the boatman becomes unconscious.

Nookalamma takes the duty of the boatman and all through the night, she runs the boat. On the next morning, the boatman's mother, Pydamma, brought food for her son and called him out by his name. As her son is not in consciousness, Nookalamma replies his mother. The goddess wants to test his mother because her son failed to recognize her as a goddess. Now it is his mother's turn. The Goddess wanted to find out whether this elder woman will recognize her or not. The goddess replies his mother by saying, "oh mother in law! I am your daughter in law I will help you in all your household duties. I will cook for you. I will fetch water for you". When Pydamma hears this voice, she thinks that her son being a young man brought some woman as his wife. Thinking like that, she goes close to the goddess.

When Pydamma saw the woman closely, she could identify that the woman is the goddess Nookalamma. Immediately Pydamma stopped praising the goddess asking her forgiveness on behalf of her son. Pydamma promises that if the

goddess saves her son, she will offer sarees every week, she will walk on the fire mound and she will offer two baskets of chickens and other sweets and eatables. Nookamma felt pity on her, as Pyadamma is also a woman like her. She doesn't want to make her cry any more. The goddess brings back the consciousness of the boatman. Pyadamma tells her son, that the goddess is not an ordinary woman and that she is the goddess Nookamma. She also tells him to take the boat to the other side of the river.

The boatman asks her to forgive him and invites her to sit in his boat. When the boat reaches the midst of the river, the boatman looks back at the goddess as she was sitting silently. To test him again, the goddess shined like a golden doll. It became uncontrollable to the boatman. He wanted to have her, as she is alone in the midst of the river. He expresses his love and tries to hold her hand. The goddess tells him that if he leaves her, she will call all her one hundred and one sisters and that he can select whomever he wants from among them. With her call, all her sisters arrive in front of her. After seeing all the beautiful women together, the boatman becomes crazy. He wants to build a house for them and make them his wives. With this Nookamma becomes furious. She did not want to leave such a wicked fellow on this earth any more. With the help of her sisters, she kills the boatman and throws his body in the river. Then again, she the goddess, continued her tour to find out that how much belief people have on her.

IV.7. Miracles of the Goddess Nookalamma

The following incident is narrated by the clerk of endowments office of the temple of Goddess Nookalamma at Anakapalle. According to him recently, a Muslim girl called Muneera, from Visakhapatnam got chicken pox. During those days, she used to get dreams of Nookalamma temple at Anakapalli. She never visited Anakapalli. However, she used to describe, lucidly, the windows, doors and premises of the temple. On every Tuesday and Sunday, she used to cry for a red sari. According to her description, their neighbors traced it out as the temple of Nookalamma at Anakapalli.

They suggested the Muslim family to take their daughter to the temple, and then everything will be all right. With out any hesitation all the family members visit the temple and offered fruits and a red sari to the goddess. With in few days Muneera is cured. Since then, she became a devotee of Nookalamma. At least twice in a month, she visits the temple with their family members.

Another incident that happened in Anakapalle was narrated by a devotee of the goddess Nookalamma at Anakapalle. This is a story of Apparao, a native of Anakapalle who is also known as Nookalamma Apparao. He was an atheist. He never believed in gods and goddesses. He was very rich and educated too. He had three wives. He never allowed his family members to visit temple. There is a belief that people should not enter the premises of Goddess temples during the nighttime. Opposing this belief, Apparao wanted to check what will happen if

any one enters the goddess temple in the nighttime. One day, he drank full, entered the temple of Nookamma, and started scolding her. After some time he fell unconscious. In the next morning itself, he was attacked by some unknown disease. His family members did not allow him into the house. He used to roam around the temple of Nookamma and died after a few days. Since then, he was called as Nookamma Apparao. People say that Nookamma punished him for his mistakes.

The following incident is narrated by a devotee of the Goddess Nookamma. This is his own experience. K. Satyam, forty year old, a native of Kakinada, is a businessman of fishing. He has two motorboats. Before starting his business, he promised the Goddess Nookamma that if his business goes well he would visit her temple at Anakapalli with all his family members. Years passed and he earned good profits in his business but he forgets to fulfill his promise. Slowly his business started falling down.

With in two years he had to sell away his two motorboats. Still he couldn't remember his promise. He lost his business completely. One day he sat alone on the beach in the mid afternoon; far from his sight, preparations were going on for the annual *Jatara* of the goddess Nookamma, and then (suddenly) he remembered his promise to Nookamma. Immediately he borrowed two thousand rupees from their neighbor and took all his family members to the temple of Nookamma at Anakapalli. They sacrificed two fowls and offered a

sari and bangles to the goddess asking her forgiveness. After this, his business started picking up again. Now he is a regular visitor to the temple of goddess Nookalamma at Kakinada. According to Satyam Goddess Nookalamma is a very strict deity. If we give a word, we should keep the word. We should not make her angry. If she gets angry, she will see our end.

IV.8. Myth Related to the Goddess Nookalamma and Poturaju

Lord Siva had seven daughters Maridamma, Nookalamma, Sattemma, Gouramma, Lakshamma, Bhoolokamma and Mutyalamma. As they didn't have male assistant all the seven sisters requests their father to bless them with one brother, Lord Shiva creates Poturaju from a rock and tells him to assist his sisters wherever they go. Once Lord Siva orders Nookalamma to wage a war against demons in return Nookalamma asks her father seven carts of sarees, she sends this message through her brother Poturaju to her father. Lord Siva replies that instead of all other seven items he will give her seven horned animal. Satisfied with this, Nookalamma fights successfully in the battle. After the battle, she asks her father to fulfill his promise. Lord Siva brings one cock with seven frills on her head and gives sacrifice in front of her temple. Poturaju laughs at her sister saying that their father made her fool. Annoyed by this, she kicks her brother out of her residence. Since then, Poturaju was made a permanent resident in front of her temple.

One more myth follows like this. Once; the seven sisters were threatened by the king of Orugallu, called Giri Raju. In order to protect themselves from the king who is very cruel, they created Poturaju. Maridamma, their elder sister gives her daughter Ernamma to Poturaju in marriage. Once, Poturaju visits Nookalamma's residence along with his wife. Nookalamma offers fruits and other delicious food but Poturaju refuses to take the food. He tells her sister to cook a seven-horned animal. To teach him a lesson Nookalamma goes to an old women's house and steals one egg. While she was coming from the house the egg falls down. From that egg a cock come out. She brings the cock, which has frills on her head and offers it to Poturaju. Poturaju feels had with his sister's treatment. He decides not to go to her temple residence again. Since then, he stayed in front of the temple of Nookalamma along with his wife.

IV.9. Women and the Worship of the Village Goddesses

The study of gender in religion as a crucial variable in religion examines its function in the symbolization of religious traditions, the institutionalization of roles in religious systems and the dynamics of interaction between religious systems and the personal, social and cultural condition of women. The contemporary development of women's studies has been in large measure a result both of renewed controversy about the proper role and status of women in religion and modern women's moments. A primary characteristic of women's studies in religion is the under scoring of the powerful connection between religious conception of reality and social institutions. More specifically, women

studies underscore the relationship between the image and status of women in theology and cultural patterns defining women's social roles and status (Eliade, 1987)

Rosemary Redford Riveter was one of the first to point out the systematic nature and significance of gender symmetry in western culture. She argued in her book *"new woman, New Earth": Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (1975) that the asymmetry of male and female the subject object relationship of domination and subordination is the primary form of and mold for all dualisms. As a result masculinity and femininity the most fundamental structural opposition have come to symbolize a normative pattern of greater and lesser value that pervades intellectual as well as social systems.

Women studies scholars do not accept the history produced by traditional scholarship of religion such as Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism. They see these histories as accounts of human experience that are both partial and skewed by unexamined gender assumptions. They felt the need for writing history that can recover the lives of women and other people commonly overlooked by historian. One of the first works based on reinterpretation was *"Women of Spirit": Female leadership in the zenith and Christian tradition* (1979) edited by Rosemary Ruther and Eleanor McLaughlin. This work rejects the assumption of traditional male centered historical methodology that women have not been a force in history is so far as they have been excluded for the most

part from positions of official religious and social leadership. (In rejecting this assumption, feminist historical methodology makes an important distinction. Emphasis on the historical conditions of women's lives entail a new approach in religion to the treatment of historical texts written by men as they are discovered or reinterpreted, and the increasing number of historical texts written by women.

This new feminist approach does not take texts on their own as accurate descriptions of social reality but reconstructs the historical reality behind the text as a necessary step in understanding the meaning of the text and its point of view. Texts are examined in relation to the broader socio historical context out of which they arose and particularity in relation to the social condition of women's lives. The works on women and religion not only emphasized the western traditions but also on non-western women and traditions. Investigations were done in relation to non-western world religion including Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism.

O'Flaherty explored sexual metaphor in *Hindu Mythology* (written by men) and the image of women and sexuality in Hinduism in his "*Women Androgynes and Other Mythical Beasts*" (1980). David Kinsley provided a list of goddesses and their chronological history of the evolutions into various figures .he also discussed about principles of feminists and the feminist aspect of the goddesses while referring various goddesses. The feminist qualities of the Hindu goddesses

are discussed by many scholars eg; Shulman's *Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Devine Marriage in South Indian Saiva Tradition*, O'Flaherty's *Hindu goddesses*, James J, Preston's *Cult Of the Goddess*, Caldwell's *Oh Terryfiyng Mother*, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan *Is Hindu Goddess a Feminist*. Certainly, the Hindu goddesses are radical in the mainstream of deities as their devotees are drawn largely from lower caste women and even non-Hindus.

In the Indian society, a tradition of worshipping the 'ideal' woman and neglecting real women is a common phenomenon. 'Ideally' women were accepted as a living force in society the embodiment of Shakti and a symbol of purity, religiousness, spirituality and sacrifice. In practice, however, they were subjected to suppression many deprivations and exploitation.

When a community's object of worship and veneration is the female, it is logical to expect that a woman in general benefits by sharing that elevated status. The widespread acceptance, even valorization of positive construction of femininity in goddesses' figures must serve as models for women to contest or displace the more prevalent models of female meekness, subordination and obedience (Rajeswari, 1997).

In Hinduism gender stereotypes of female divinities are broken down in the attribution of power whether negative, unruly destructive, sexually unbridled; or positive- maternal and protective; sexual, to female divinity.

The problems of virginity and singlehood of ordinary women are also applicable to the goddesses. In a patriarchal and patrilineal society, it becomes critical to control the sexuality of women so that a man can be certain that his children are his (in matriarchal societies all children were legitimate off-spring of the mother). Thus, it was decreed that a woman must be a virgin at marriage and refrain from sexual intercourse with any man but her husband. In this context the polarity between virgin and wife develops. It was in the context of patriarchal society that the concept of the virgin goddess arose, reflecting a separation of the maiden from the mother. The goddess designated as virgin never became fully subordinated (Eliade, 1987).

All women must continually strive to be chaste or self controlled, with regard to their sexual desires. Sexually aggressive, independent or unwed goddesses are usually regarded in Hinduism as dangerous and inauspicious whereas properly married are passive and subservient goddesses and embody auspiciousness and wellbeing.

In Hindu culture, marriage is the central point, which converts a woman into the highly desired state of motherhood. The woman whose desires are properly satisfied in a ritually sanctioned union, and who bears healthy offspring for her family, is the embodiment of auspiciousness and goodness. The image of the sexually frustrated insatiable young women so prevalent in the ancient folklore

is fuelled by different social conditions. The paranoid male fear of female sexuality displayed in folk - lore surrounding the goddess continues to hold great power over the imagination of people. In the creation myth, the goddess Nookalamma pleads the Trinity to satisfy her desire. Lord Siva cheats her. By making a false promise, he takes away all the powers of the goddess and leaves her help- less. In a society where a woman is not expected to express her sexual desire, Nookalamma crosses her social norms and expresses her desire.

Nevertheless, the great gods refused her proposal because it is essential for the goddess to remain powerful and the power of the goddess is linked to her virginity. She will be the most powerful as long as her virginity is intact. If the gods accepted her proposal, they themselves are exposed to an intense danger that is why the gods killed the goddess by cheating. In order to keep the goddess powerful, ultimately the god has to come for her risqué. Here lord Siva is shown as most powerful as goddess and however great the goddess may be she has to obey the order of the Lord Siva. Because, when both (the goddess and god) are powerful, the cumulative power of their sexuality places the entire universe in danger.

In the second and third myth, the goddess is depicted as the daughter of lord Siva, a virgin and a warrior deity who is thirsty for blood. In these two myths, Nookalamma is depicted as an obedient and dutiful daughter who serves her father when he is in need. At the same time, she is also shown as the dreadful

woman fighting the demons. Lord Siva underestimates his daughter's strength because as a female she may not be able to fight with demons. He advises her to take her brother Pothuraju with her. At the battlefield, Nookalamma wanted to prove the feminine power by winning against male demons. Here the goddess violated the model of the Hindu women. She is not subordinated to masculinity.

A woman in Indian society is defined solely in terms of her familial roles. These roles are those of daughter, mother, wife, daughter-in-law and widow. Their special qualities are grace and tenderness, peace and affection, surrender and sacrifice (Geeta and Anjali, 1986) but the goddess here came out of all those paradigms and played the role of a man. However, she tries to prove to her father that daughter is also equal to a son.

The myths of the village goddesses often cast males in disruptive roles. The goddesses represent the order and civilization of the society whereas the male represents the destructive element in the society (Kinsley, 1985). In this myth the goddess, Nookalamma, disguised as an ordinary woman, requests the Jalari to help her in crossing the river. The Jalari by seeing a woman all alone tries to snatch her ornaments but the goddess makes the Jalari to fall unconscious. When the mother of the Jalari enters the scene, the goddess by seeing a woman like her feels pity and saves the Jalari. Here the goddess is not showing pity on the Jalari, but on his mother. In this myth also, the goddess is quite considerate to the other woman. The goddess did not tell the mother of the Jalari directly what the Jalari

did to her. She thought that as an old woman she could not bear if something happens to her son. When the Jalari's mother came to know that the young woman is not her daughter-in-law but the great goddess, she immediately started praying and begging to give back her son's life. The goddess also could not see an old woman crying in front of her. She brings back the life of the Jalari. But the Jalari (a man) did not learn his lessons. This time the Jalari wants to marry her. Even then, the goddess was observing patience, shows her cognates or her sisters who are altogether hundred and one in number, to choose one from among them.

However, the Jalari wanted all of them. He wanted to get married to every one including the goddess. Then goddess thinks it's high time to punish him. With the help of all her hundred and one sisters, she kills and tears his body into pieces. In this episode of the Jalari's wish to marry all the 101 sisters including the goddess, apparently there is a fantasy. All the same, it incorporates the male dominated social practices in the sense that the male has the sanction to practice polygamy. Interestingly enough the goddess who is all powerful (she can alone kill the Jalari), musters the help of his 101 sisters. This can be taken as a metaphor to indicate that women collectively will be able to tackle the male dominated society.

In the other two myths, along with gender, the caste aspect also figures while depicting the female characters in the myths of the goddess. In ancient times,

there was a tradition of making lower caste virgin girls into *Saktis* by the royal families. By closing all the nine holes of the body the selected woman was forced to death. After her death a *Sakti* or power will be incorporated into the body. That was called sakti. This *Sakti* was to be installed at the northwest corner of the fort. As the northwest corner is the place of devils and demons in order to protect the fort from evils the *Sakti* was installed. This tradition has different forms.

In another form, as it was described in the myth a lower caste young widow was selected to bring back the princes from the prison. There are no evidences to tell why they have to choose a lower caste woman to perform '*Sakti*' ritual. It could be interpreted as a human sacrifice, performed for the release of the princess from the prison.

In the other myth, this is also based on caste, the differences between the so-called upper caste and lower caste groups led to the death of an upper caste woman. The village head not only refused to perform his daughter's marriage with a lower caste man but he also tried to immolate the colony of the lower caste, in which his daughter was hiding. Ultimately in order to avoid the conflict between the two groups the Karanam's daughter immolates herself and dies. Due to caste biases, in marriages (hypergamous and hypogamous) women have to suffer in the hands of men.

After taking into consideration all the myths of the goddess, one can wonder to what extent the goddess can be understood in the context of the recent feminist approach. Because in the form of goddess a female was able to conquer the world by slaying demons but in the form of an ordinary woman, she silently suffered the cruelty of men. Though the argument of the feminist goddess continues, it is true that there is a great scope for ordinary women to express themselves while worshiping the goddess. In the Indian village life, women spend a considerable amount of time in fasting and worshipping and participating in the rituals of the local goddesses.

During the *Jataras*, some women get possessed by the goddess. They get into a trance. In this trance they pronounce their claims and spell the kinds of exploitation by the males and how the goddess would punish the (male) evildoers. This ritual process, which is lived and experienced by the community, makes the male surrender and subjugate himself to the female divine power (*Sakti*). The phenomenon of 'possession' by the women at the psychic plane surfaces as a resistance to oppression or devaluation in the family through the supernatural mechanism.

Various authors felt that exorcism is one of the options for Indian women to resist their powerless roles in their new families, because whatever rights the women demand during these curing rites can be imputed to their spirits. Women also can use these opportunities to complaint about female inferiority and subordination with in Indian society. Normally women who are afflicted by the

spirits expose the victims (men) often behave aggressively utter obscenities and curses.

However, the myths provide ample scope for personal reflection, catharsis and Progressive spiritual transformations, in the range of responses of along the gender lines. The fierce goddesses provide a rich source of indigenous symbols to Indian women, to counteract their anger and traumas. The aspirations of women for their freedom and empowerment are implicit in the mythologies of the goddess. In this process, the woman is deified.

In the ritual process of the village community, the male surrenders to the females, the goddess is worshipped as Sakti. One of the striking features related to the goddess worship is that the *Pujaris* in the temple of the goddesses are usually females unlike in the Brahmanical temples, where the male performs the rituals. The women *Pujaris* (**Fig.2**) belong to lower castes like Mala, Chakali, Besta, Maraka, and Vodabalija. Even in the Kapu dominated villages where the Nookalamma is treated as '*Kapu vari adapaducha*', Chakali woman is the *Pujari*. Most of the women *Pujaris* are hereditary ones. The duties of women *Pujari*'s are looking after the temple including cleaning the temple premises, giving bath to the idol in the morning decorating the idol, and offering *Naivedyam* to the goddess. The woman *Pujari* doesn't chant any mantras all these duties are done silently. Except during animals sacrifice women do stand around as onlookers, though not always! If the woman *Pujari* doesn't have

daughters, her daughter-in-law will become the *Puajri*. Priesthood in the temple of the goddess gives women a kind of autonomy and power over others. It also enhances her social status. The woman *Pujari* acts as a direct representative of the goddess. During the annual *Jatara*, the woman *Pujari* gets possessed by the goddess. Through her, the goddess makes a prophecy of the coming year the good and bad things that are going to happen in the year. Women *Pujaris* are not only the priests but they are also the medical practitioners (*Ganachari*).

The woman *Pujari* do '*Digadudupu*' (draining out of the evils) to the patient who is suffering from the attack of evil spirit and commands the spirit to leave the patient. Later she will offer *Puja* to the goddess. Devotees of the goddess believe that if they take the globules of the Paste of turmeric and neem leaves from the hands of the *Pujari* they will be cured immediately. As the *Pujari* has the power of curing diseases villagers respect her lot. Though she belongs to lower caste, the upper caste people also treat her with respect. But the status of women priests has come down because of these temples taken over by the Endowments Department of the Government, and due to the employment of the Brahman Priests. Despite all these developments, the non-Brahmanical *Pujaris* (both men and women) continue in many of the shrines because of the strong belief among the local communities in their priesthood. Some of them however, were deprived of these hereditary rights. In Anakapalli, just besides the main temple they occupied a piece of land, built a hut, and went to the court to get their rights back. This case is still pending since two years. In Kakinada temple, the husband

of the woman *Pujari* took '*Agama*' training and was officially appointed as a priest by the Government. Unofficially his wife Vijayabharathi is looking after the temple activities. In some places, women pujaris became beggars in the same premises of the temple where they held priesthood.

IV. 9 (a). A Case Study of a Woman *Pujari*

Forty years old Vijayabharathi of Vodabalija community is the present unofficial *Pujari* of the temple of Nookamma situated at the market center of Kakinada. She is the daughter-in-law of Kola Nanchamma., who was earlier the Priestess of the temple. Since the last five generations, the same family has been serving the temple. As Nanchamma did not have daughters, she trained her daughter-in-law, wife of her only son Kola Rambabu and made her as a priest. But when a certificate of *Agamic* studies became compulsory kola Rambabu took training and got the certificate as Vijaya Bharathi is not a literate. Though certificate is on the name of her husband Rambabu, Vijaya Bharathi is only maintaining the temple according to the tradition. According to Vijaya Bharathi, since generations women are only working as Pujaris of the temple of Nookamma.

When men go for fishing, they don't come for days together. They don't find time to look after the matters of temple. The duty of the *Pujari* is to decorate the idol daily with turmeric, vermillion and tie a sari and offers *Dhoopam* (camphor flame) and *Naivedyam* (ritual food) in time.

IV.10. Ritual Practices of the Goddess Nookalamma

According to Edmund Leach, ritual means culturally defined sets of behaviour regardless of its explicit religious social or other content. Such behaviour should be regarded as a form of social communication or a code of information (Eliade, 1987). Ritual appears in all religions though ritual practices differ with those aspects of ritualism with deeper spirituality and mysticism. Ritual often expands to fill every moment of daily life. The body is evidently more important in religious experience than is often thought. Religious ritual is evidently not a simple or infantile manifestation but is based on a kind of final summing of acknowledgement of, and submission to reality. Ritual engages all levels of experience and weaves them together.

All religious rituals have enormous value in the society which can enhance itself by fusing transcendental symbolism with its own norms and ritual can be quite functional in over coming tensions and divisions in the community.

Religious rituals are not for abnormal personal states but about normal social and natural life: The rainfall, the crops, good hunting, good health, children and social continuity. The community is re invigorated at times of religious festivals. In the case of village deities the villagers worship the goddess to ward off epidemics or other natural calamities, which occur if the village goddess concerned gets angry. She must be propitiated and satiated. The people of north

costal Andhra, performs rituals in the worship of the goddess Nookamma are called-*Jatara, Jalakam, Agnigundam thokkuta, Kavidikollu, Polimerakattadaatinchuta, Sidibomma*, animal sacrifice and 'Mokku' including *Chaluva Battala Mokku, Ganta Deepam, Garagala Mudupu or Paanpu Veyuta, Karra Bettala Mokku, Kagadala Mokku, Thalaneelala Mokku and Maalala Mokku*.

During the worship of the goddess, these rituals are performed by the communities called Pambalas and Asadis with the assistance and the support of all the lower caste groups of the village like Chakali, Mangali, Gouda, Mala and Madiga.

During the annual festival of the goddess Nookamma, the regular ritual practices celebrated are *Siribomma, Polimerakattadaatinchuta, Jaalakam, Agnigundam, Jatara, Kavidikollu* etc

IV.10(a). *Sidibomma* (Fig. 4)

Myth related to *Sidibomma*: Once a Brahmin woman by name Siri while passing the temple of Nookamma happened to see the huge image of Nookamma. By looking at her huge personality and large breasts, Siri laughed at Nookamma. Nookamma got angry and cursed her by saying that Siri will be insulted by her devotees on the day of her (the goddess) *Jatara*. Before starting the annual *Sambaralu* of the goddess Nookamma, a human size carved figure is sent to

the house of Mutyalas (community belongs to jaggery sweets business), who paint the image with different colors and tie a new sari. This image is the representation of Siri. They worship this image of Siri, take her in a procession by sprinkling turmeric water on her, they bring back the image to the temple premises and tie it to a beam fixed on a vertical pole. To the other end of the beam, a rope is tied to rotate the image.

While the image of Siri is swinging in the air devotees hit her with flowers, coconut pieces and bananas in the manner of insulting. In the evening, the image will be brought down and kept it in a corner of the temple. The image always remains at the same place. This ritual is popular in Godavari region.

This practice of swinging and rotating an image of a man, or an animal tied to beam (a form of hook swinging) is called *Sidi* or *Sidimanu*.

In upper part of north, coastal Andhra *Sidi* ritual was practiced in a different way in olden days. A ram (*sidipotu*) or a man (a devotee) swing by a hook in the same fashion as described above was in practice. The man was tied at one of the beam and the ram at the other end and they were rotated on a pole. While the man and the ram are swinging in rotation people used to throw betel leaves on them. This practice was prohibited by the then British government for some time. Later, again this ritual was started but, only a ram was tied to the top of the pole and on other side, an image of human was tied. This was also prohibited by

the government now only a human size image is allowed in this ritual. Since then, this figure called *Sidibomma* is used in this ritual.

There is one more ritual similar to *Sidi*, which is called *Sidithadi* or *Ooyalathadi*.

This ritual is practiced in Kolanka (a village in Pitapuram region). During the early hours of *Jatara* a procession of *Garagalu* is taken to select toddy trees. They select two toddy trees make cut marks with a knife and apply turmeric on that part. The next day again all the devotees will go cut the marked and trees bring back the trees to the temple. Again followed by *Garagalu* all of them go to a carpenter's house and bring a swing and go to a Gouda's house and bring a rope to swing.

The devotees dig a pit in front of the temple and erect both the toddy palms. The human size figure is now tied to each side of the two toddy trees, which are installed in the two sides of the pit and make the figure swing on the pit for some time. Later the tree logs will be arranged in the pit and are set on fire. In to the fire pit the human size figure will be thrown. In some places the *Asadis* (traditional priests) will swing, sitting on the ropes tied to the toddy logs keeping *Garagalu* on his lap. This is called *Pothuraju Ooyala*. Here the *Asadi* is regarded as *Pothuraju* the brother of *Nookalamma* and *Garagalu* are as the goddess herself. Devotees sing songs on the greatness of brother and sister relations while the ritual is taking place. All through the *Jatara* of the goddess only in this ritual *Pothuraju* is given prominence as a brother or as an attendant

to the goddess Nookalamma. No specific Puja is performed to Pothuraju. *Prasadam* contains turmeric, vermilion, fruits, and flowers will be offered to Poturaju only after offering to the goddess.

III.1 (b). *Jaalakam*

When epidemics like chicken pox spread, the patients of chicken pox are not allowed to come outside. It is believed that the desires of the patients should be fulfilled immediately. Otherwise, *Amma* will get angry. To get cured of this disease devotees of Nookalamma perform three *Jaalakalu*. *Jaalakam* means taking bath with water mixed with neem leaves after applying turmeric paste to the whole body. This bath will be taken on either Thursday or Sundays. Like that, if they take three baths they believe that they will be cured. If they are cured, they will visit the temple of Nookalamma and fulfill their vows. This is called *Jaalakam*.

If the devotees do not fulfill their vows *Amma* will get angry and she will cause all kinds of troubles. To cool her, *Upaharam* is to be offered. *Uparaham* means offerings of substitute food. To perform this, a papal or neem tree situated at the premises of the temple is decorated with turmeric and vermilion dots and stripes. The tree is the organic representation of the goddess and the tree trunk is decorated with turmeric and vermilion, two eyes are drawn with turmeric and a vermilion dot is decorated at the forehead. Devotees prepare food there itself. The food contains curry of *Telagapindi*, *Munagaaku Koora* (drumstick leaves

and sesame cake powder mixed with meat or chicken and rice). Some devotees offer toddy and some people offer *Chaldannam* (cooked rice soaked in buttermilk and onion for one night: this is a cooling food). The food will be kept in front of the deity with full vessels. It is believed that² after taking this *Upaharam* the goddess will become cool.

IV.10(c). *Polimera Katta Daatinchuta* (Crossing the boundary line)

This ritual is performed for the welfare of village livestock. All the animals mainly cattle are taken out of the boundary line (*Polimera*) of the village. The Asadi(priest) performs *Puja* by sitting in front of a big new cement container (*Golen*) and then sacrifices a fowl. Then all the villagers whoever have animals bring buttermilk in small containers and pour it in the cement container. The buttermilk will be mixed with starched water. This is offered to the animals to drink. Later on, a live pig is brought and kept in a pit covered with rice mixed with sacrificed animal's blood. An earthen lamp is kept on the head of the pig. This pit is dug on the boundary line (*Polimera Katta*) and the ritual is performed here. The animals which are already kept at the other side of the boundary line will be made to cross the boundary line. It is believed that if all the animals cross the line without any trouble animal's health will be well and good that year.

IV.10(d). *Agnigundam* (Walking on the Fire Pit)

The Asadi (priest) sits in front of a wide pit dug in front of the temple and takes a bowl of rice. He ties the bowl with a piece of cloth and keeps it in the pit. The

next day if the quantity of the rice is increased, it is believed that goddess has agreed to walk on the fire. Big trunks of trees will be burnt to make the *Agnigundam*. The burning trunks will be spread on the pit. Devotees whoever have to walk on the fire they have to maintain fasting. At first the Asaṛis, holding neem leaves in hands and keeping *Garagalu* on their heads they walk on the fire. Devotees follow them. In this fire walk, the burning charcoals are trampled and are reduced to ashes. These ashes, which are believed to have magical properties, are sprinkled in the houses and fields.

IV.10 (e). *Kavidikollu*

Kavidi is a water carrier consisting of a cross beam and two rope baskets hanging at either end of the beam. This *Kavidi* is carried on the shoulders. In villages, *Kavidi* is used for carrying water from nearby canal or lake. This *Kavidi* is also used in auspicious occasions like marriages. In marriages when the bride is leaving to her in-laws house for the first time her status will be estimated with the *Kavidis* holding sarees, jewellery, sweets etc. With the number of *Kavidis* she brings, her status also increases. In this ritual the devotees offer the goddess *Kavidi Kollu* means baskets full of fowls.

This is not a simple offering of the fowls. This is to also show their status. Before leaving to the temple fowls are kept in a basket decorated with turmeric and neem leaves of the *Kavidi* and the *Kavidi* is taken to the temple while the family members follow. Some times devotees offer *Kavidikollu* and *Ganda*

Deepam together that is by holding the *Kavidi* on the shoulders they carry an earthen lamp on the head and perambulate three times around the temple of Nookalamma. This is called *Kavidikolla Ganda Depamu*.

IV.10 (f) *Ganda Deepam* (Perpetual Lamp)

To perform this ritual, a new pot is decorated with turmeric and vermillion filled with toddy and buttermilk is brought to the temple by keeping an earthen lamp on the top of the pot. After circumbulating three times around the temple the pot with the lamp is offered to the goddess. This is called *Ganda Deepamu*.

IV.10 (g) *Jatara*

Some devotees take a vow that they will celebrate the *Jatara* for one day. Those devotees who have taken this vow will fast and keep awake the whole night (*Jagaran*). Professional bards are arranged to entertain them in the night by telling the stories of the greatness of the goddess. Early in the morning, they go in a procession to the beating of drums. While they are walking in the procession, water will be poured on their heads all through their way. After they reach the temple, they offer plates of fruits, flowers and sarces to the goddess. At the other side of the temple, they sacrifice an animal and cook there itself. After offering, the food to the goddess all the family members eat together and by evening itself, all of them will leave the temple premises. This type of vow (*mokku*) is offered by newly married couples and the parents of newborn child. In olden days before visiting the temple, they listen the stories of the goddess by

traditional storytellers for fifteen days. These days with in one day, the storytellers have to tell as many stories as possible. These storytellers are called Jakkulavallu or Pambalavallu.

IV.10(h). *Gummadikaya mokku: (Offering of Pumpkin)*

Devotees who are vegetarians offer this vegetable to the goddess instead of animals and fowls. In the temples where animal sacrifice is prohibited devotees, offer pumpkins. To offer this, a small hole is made on the top of the pumpkin, the pulp and seeds are taken out, and the inner part is cleaned completely. Turmeric, vermilion and water are filled and the hole is closed by placing in the removed top earlier to make the hole. The pumpkin is decorated with dots of turmeric and vermilion. In the premises of the temple, the decorated pumpkin will be broken by the devotees. With that, vermilion mixed water will fell on the earth like red blood. In this practice, pumpkin and vermilion mixed water are the referents for blood sacrifice.

IV.11.Vows to the Goddess in Fulfillment of Wishes

IV.11(a). *Chaluva Battala Mokku*

Devotees believe that clothes (*Battalu*) washed by a washerman (*Chakali*) keep the body cool (*Chaluva*). The patients of chicken pox don't change their clothes daily. Even if they change, they don't wear it for next time. These will be given away to a washerman. If any person or a family is attacked by chicken pox, all those days, clothes won't be given to washer man. Only when the disease gets

cured the Chakali will get a call from that house. Once the Chakali visits the house, anyone can go to their home freely, until then guests are not allowed to the house. That is why some devotees take a vow that if the disease gets cured they will visit the temple by walking on the clothes washed by the washerman, to show others that they are no more polluted and have become clean and pure.

IV.11(b). *Garagala Mudupu*(Fig.8)

To fulfill the *Mokku* three, four, or five *Garagalu* are taken to the house from the temple followed by *Dappulu* (drum beating). At home, a flowered bed will be arranged to keep the *Garagalu*. The *Garagalu* will be kept on the bed as idol of the goddess Nookalamma. Devotees offer *Naivedyam* of coconuts and flowers to the goddess. Relatives and neighbors visit the house. In the evening, they send back the *Garagalu* to the temple. The belief is that their own (the goddess) came to their house and going back to her residence. This is called *Digabettuta* (send off).

IV.11(c). *Puttu Ventrukala Mokku*

If a childless woman gets a child with the blessings of the goddess such a child will be given names like Nookaraju, Nookaalu, Nookalayya etc. The child's first tonsure hair (*Puttuventrukalu*) will be offered to the goddess. This is celebrated at their seventh or ninth month of the child's birth. If the wishes of the devotees are fulfilled then also devotees (both men and women) offer their *thalaneelaala mokku* to the goddess. In some of the temples of Nookalamma eg. Anakapalli, a

separate dais is constructed with bathing facilities to perform this ritual. This place is called *Kalyanakatta*.

IV.11(d). *Maalala Mokku*:

This is a new trend started at the temple of Nookalamma of Anakapalli. To fulfill this *Mokku* forty-one devotees perform this ritual for forty-one days. This is called *Deeksha*. This *Deeksha* can be performed by both men and women. While performing this *Deeksha* devotees have to follow certain rules and regulations: devotees should take one meal in the day time and in the night time they should maintain fasting or can take fruits and milk. They are not supposed to take intoxicants and non-vegetarian food. They should maintain Brahmacharya. They should wear a *Mala* (garland of *rudraksha*) in the presence of Pujari or their respective mothers. Women should perform this ritual for eleven days or twenty-one days. Men should perform the ritual for forty-one days and should give up *Deeksha* after forty-one days in the premises of the temple with the Puja performed in the temple. This is also called *Bhavani Maalala Mokku*.

IV.11 (e). *Mokkulu* Related to Children

IV.11 (e.1) *Karra Bettala Mokku* and *Karra Bommala Mokku*

On the name of the dead children, their family members offer sharpen sticks (*Karra Bettalu*) to the goddess so that their spirit will leave the house and go to the temple. It is also believed that the spirit of the dead child will cause harm to other children. To protect children from such spirits wooden figures (*Karra Bommalu*) are also offered to the goddess.

11.e(2). *Kagadala Mokku* (Fig.9)

Children who are suffering from ill health feel restless during the nighttimes and keep on crying in the nighttimes. Parents of the child believe that as the goddess Nookalamma likes children, she might have possessed the child, to take away the child with her. To please the goddess devotees offer *Kaagadala Mokku*. A cloath is tied to a stick, which is soaked in oil. This cloath is lighted and this burning torch (*Kaagada*) is carried in a procession of the Nookalamma during her *Jatara*.

IV.12. Animal Sacrifice (Fig.10)

Animal sacrifice is one of the chief characteristic features of the rituals of the goddesses during the *Jataras*. The term sacrifice is derived from the Latin word *sacri-ficiam* (*sacer*, holy; *facere* to make) and it carries the connotation of the religious act in the highest or fullest sense; offering is used as a synonym and means the presentation of a gift. Sacrifice is found in most of the religions in the world since primordial times (Eliade, 1987).

The important characteristic features of the sacrifice are it is a higher symbolic ritual act marked by fixed recurrent and formulaic expressive procedures aimed to bring about some desirable end, and it is set apart from the ordinary, mundane activity. It conveys an offering to a spiritual force whether a supreme god, divinity, or divinities between a pantheon of gods, ancestors and other spiritual

manifestations of incorporate natural forces. The sacrificial offering is a living thing usually an animal but some times a human being may ritually be killed on behalf of an individual or community. The ritual act of sacrifice transforms the animal or human victim into a sacred object as its life is given over to the spirit world.

Sacrifice takes many forms: clarified butter, a product of the sacred cow, is poured into the sacrificial fire as a burned offering. The horse sacrifice, which was very popular in ancient India slowly become extinct. There are evidences of human sacrifice having been performed in some goddess temples. Although the record of human sacrifice is well established, it is not extensive, the human victim still represents a surrogate for the individuals conducting the sacrifice and thus serves the same mediating function performed by animal sacrifice (Shulman, 1980).

There are various types of sacrifices performed to appease the goddess: At the Chandi temple in Orissa the ritual of animal sacrifice is performed during her annual festival. The ritual starts in the midnight with the ringing of the bell. Until then drums will be played at a high pitch and will suddenly, be stopped. Then the first goat is allowed to a small platform where the sacrifice was to be conducted then again drums are played with more intensity. Since the sacrificial animal in Hinduism is seen as an embodiment of the cosmos special purification rites must be performed to sanctify the animal. It is auspicious to kill the animal

by severing its head with a sharp sword with a single blow. The crowd becomes silent as the animal's head was carried to the altar and placed on the ground before the goddess. While the animal's head was offered on the altar, its body was returned to its owner who would take it home to share with family and friends (Preston, 1980).

The elaborate rites in the sacrifice are intended to make the animal a symbolic vehicle for communication with the supernatural. It is considered to be something of tangible value, which the devotee is able to offer as a gift to please the goddess and aid her as she struggles on his behalf. The animal offered to the deity is ultimately a symbol which man places on the sacrificial altar to redeem his soul from its inevitable fall into the depths of darkness, ignorance and despair (Preston, 1980).

There are some devotees who sacrifice themselves or part of their bodies in frenzy of devotion and self-sacrifice is more life, renewed strength and rebirth. The deity receives the offering and then restores it to the donor.

Self-torture to win the favor of the goddess was very much prevalent since ancient times: with the help of sharpened implements people demonstrated their faith to her. A person must pull out his eyes with the nail-parer if he wanted to secure the gift of seeing distant objects. He must pierce his ears with the arrow, if the object was to hear what was said in distant places; he must cut off his tongue with the sword, if he expected to obtain knowledge and learning; and he

must thrust his head between the two blades of the scissors and chop it off if he desired to kill his enemies without receiving any injury. In the absence of material means for attaining happiness on earth people sought for it in an imaginary world, one of the means they adapted for its attainment was self-torture (Satyanarayana, 1982).

Vedic literature gives evidences of sacrifices to the gods and goddesses. In *Aitareya Brahmana*, Goddess Aditi, one of the chief deities has close connection with the sacrifice. In *Yajna* ritual, a cow represented the Aditi. The sacrificed cow also signifies priestly fear or qualifies the cow as Aditi and is spoken of as a goddess the ancient milch cow. In Vedic sacrifices, horse sacrifice was considered as the prestigious sacrifice performed by the grant kings to establish their supremacy and to ensure the prosperity of their kingdom. The Tamils of the Sangam period regarded blood as the source of the life. Life resides in the blood and escapes with the blood poured out from a wound. Sacrifice offers a ritual expression of the identification of life and blood.

In Tantric religious rituals blood sacrifice is a compulsory event to appease the goddess, which is still continuing in the form of village goddess worship in south India. The prescribed animals for sacrifice are deer, goat, sheep, buffalo, pig, porcupine, hare, lizard, tortoise and rhinoceros but one may offer other sacrificial animals too according to the particular wish of the worshipper. Before sacrificing the animal, a man who knows mantras should whisper into the right

ear of the animal for this releases the bonds. He chants the mantra. In this way, the power and life force of the victim are transferred to the goddess or to the participants in the ritual. It is important to note that the blood sacrifice includes an implicit notion of the exchange or transfer of power.

Elmore (1913) has given notes on various types of animal sacrifices performed in different places in Andhra in his work *Dravidian gods of south India*. The following are some of the types of sacrifices:

In the Poleramma *Jatara*, before sacrificing the animal the story tellers recounts the deeds of heroes and gets the people into a high state of excitement. The drums are then beaten loudly while men seize the buffalo's head and body pulling it to keep the neck straight. The Pujari blesses the sword and hands it to the executioner, usually a Madiga. He worships the sword bowing to the ground before it then with one stroke he severs the head from the body. The head is then placed before Poleramma and one or quite commonly both front legs are cut off at the knee and placed cross wise in the mouth of the buffalo. Some of the fat is taken from the abdomen of the buffalo and spread over its eyes and a wick placed in a small vessel of oil is lighted and placed on the head.

The oil that is burned is supposed to be from the fat of the buffalo but this rule does not seem to be commonly observed. Water is then poured over the blood and later it is well covered with earth from fear lest some of it should be carried

to another village, as this would destroy the efficacy of the sacrifice. Later the out castes remove the body of the buffalo, which comes to them as a part of their pay for the work of the day (Elmore, 1913).

Usually the buffalo offered is a small one perhaps a year old. The executioner is allowed one to three strokes and if more are required, the offering is not acceptable. If the buffalo is small one, one stroke usually suffices, but with a large animal, many blows were required. There will be no evidence in these cases that the offering was not acceptable (Elmore, 1913).

In the *Anakamma Jatara* on the last day as described by Elmore, the cruel features of the worship as described by Elmore take place. The village carpenter prepares a rude cart on which are set stakes sharply pointed at the upper end. The usual number of stakes is nine. On these are impaled a live goat, a pig, a lamb, a chicken and other small animals. Then the storyteller drinks the blood of a sheep some times severing the jugular vein with his teeth and disguised as a woman mounts to the top of the cart. Here sitting on a boat prepared for him he rides to Ankalamma temple in the midst of the suffering animals. The cart is drawn with great tumult by the Madigas and Malas while the crowd follows with beating of drums and great excitement. After they have arrived at the temple, a live sheep is impaled on a stake set for that purpose in the ground in front of the temple. All of these animals of course die in their agonies. The usual explanation of the impaling of the animals is that Ankamma enters the man who is disguised as a

woman and is propitiated by this suffering and shedding of blood (Elmore, 1913).

In Usuramma *Jatara*, at the end of the ritual called *Domadi* or marriage feast in which only married people and whose partners are still alive will take part, a sheep is turned loose and all run after it. It is the prize of the one who catches it and the sheep is often almost torn to pieces. It is believed that if the sheep is caught it proves the truth of the goddess (Elmore, 1913).

IV.12(a). Animal Sacrifice at Nookalamma *Jatara*

The sacrifice of animals at the *Jatara* of Nookalamma contains two important rituals *Polimera Katta* and *Badde Kadugu Mahotsvam*. At Kakinada one of the areas in which fieldwork was conducted, the process of animal sacrifice is as follows:

III.12(b). *Polemera Katta*

One day before the *Jatara* three *Garagalu* accompanied by drums and devotees go in a procession with long sticks in their hands go to each boundary of the town and at each boundary, a stick will be installed and decorated with neem leaves. A coconut is offered, a goat is sacrificed, the blood of the sacrificed goat is mixed with rice and this is sprinkled at the boundary line. This ritual is performed at the four boundaries in the same manner. At Kakinada town, which has been growing beyond the traditional boundary lines, the traditional boundary lines are followed and every time they perform the ritual at the same places.

After finishing the ritual, the devotees return without looking back, they go to the house of Pujari in a procession and hand over the knife, to Pujari, which should be used in the next day's (final day) *Jatara*.

On the day of the *Jatara*, in the morning *Padmam* (flower) is prepared in front of the temple of Nookalamma *Paddam* or *Padmam* (means flower) is a design drawn on the floor with different colored powders of rice, charcoal, turmeric, vermilion and lime in the center of the *Padmam* rice will be poured and a new pot will be kept on the rice mound. The devotees will fill the pot with cooked rice, curries, sweets etc. This is called *Kumbam Kunda*. Then the first goat will be brought near the *Padmam*. The Pujari takes some powder from *Padmam* and sprinkles on the goat. Then the sacrifice will be performed.

The blood of the sacrificed animal will be taken into a bowl. Then the blood will be mixed with nine different seeds and the bowl is tied with cloth. The bowl will be kept in front of the goddess and then the doors will be closed. The whole day no one is allowed to enter the premises of the temple. The temple doors are closed with log of Palmyra. The next day, the Palmyra logs are cleaned with river water and removed from the doors. This is called '*Badde Kadugu Mahosavam*'. Later the Pujari will check the offered bowl with seeds. According to the growth of the sprouts, that year's agriculture production is estimated.

At the seashore temple (Uppada beach) of Nookalamma, the animal sacrifice is performed as follows: On the day of the *Jatara* all the hamlet people come together to the temporarily built temple of Nookalamma on the side of the beach. A pig or goat will be brought to the temple.

The animal will be decorated with turmeric and vermillion dots. Then everybody will go to the near the water taking the animal along with them. Then a small boat is prepared with banana leaf which is decorated with lime and Kumkum and an earthen lamp and a flag will be left in the water. Later in a great excitement drums will be played. Then a Madiga will kill the animal in a single stroke.

The blood of the sacrificed animal will be taken into an earthen bowl. The bowl will be tightly closed with a cloth and then kept in a sand pit. On the third day, if the blood becomes concentrated it is believed that in the coming year all villagers will be happy and no calamity will affect them. If the blood is broken, it is believed that some un auspicious things are going to happen in that year. With this prediction, the ritual ends.

At the Nookalamma temple of Maduthuru, Yalamanchali during the day of the *Jatara*, the priest, observes fasting in the evening one young sheep is brought and the intestines are taken out of its body through a cut at the naval made by a Madiga. Then the Madiga wear the intestines as a garland around his neck.

Accompanied by the sheep a procession will be taken by the devotees armed with spears. The welfare and the prosperity of the village of that year are prophesied by the distance walked by the poor animal before it is put to death. This animal is called *Pattapothu* granted by the official or head of the village. The blood of the scarified animal is collected in an earthen plate called *Badde Pattuta*. After three days, the village elders see the plate of the blood. If the blood forms well with a smooth surface, that year is believed to be prosperous and healthy if the surface is rough and gives away with lime that year is feared to be bad and unhealthy one.

IV.13.Ritual Process: The *Jatara*

Ritual process of annual festival of Goddess Nookalamma varies from one region to the other. Though the *Jatara* is celebrated in the same days on *Kotha Amavasya* (Telugu New Year Day) throughout north coastal Andhra, certain ritual practices like *Sidibomma* are not followed in every part of this region. The ritual process in fisherman communities is quite dreadful than other communities.

Throughout north coastal Andhra, the annual *Jatara* is celebrated on *Kotha Amavasya*. According to the popularity of the place, the numbers of days of celebration are decided in the temples at Anakapalle and Kakinada. The festival is celebrated for forty-five days. At Kandrakota, the festival is celebrated for

thirty-seven days. In small villages and other towns, which are not very popular, the festival is celebrated for nine days.

The forty-five days *Sambaralu* (celebrations) starts from *Falguna Bahula Amavasya* to *Chairta Bahula Amavasya* (March- April).

Fifteen days before *Sambaralu* starts an announcement is made in the village and neighboring villages. This announcement is called *Chatu*, done by a *Madiga*. By beating a drum (*dappu*) he announces that *Nookalamma Sambaralu* are about to start. People are intimated to be ready to celebrate. People go to temple without playing drums in a procession in the night of Thursday or Sunday, which comes after new moon day. The *Garagalu* (brass pots) will be taken in a procession to the head of the village community. There the house owner offers *Kumbam* in a *Cheta* (a bamboo tray usually a winnowing form) filled with sesame cakes, rice and *Pidakalu* (cakes made of dung to make fire). Then the procession will go back to the temple.

The *Garagalu* carriers wash the *Garagalu* and then offer *kumbam*. The carriers of *garagalu* are called *Asadis*. *Asadis* include different communities like *Gavaras*, *Malas*, *Madiga*, *Upparas*, *Washermen* and *Fishermen*. In some of the *Kapu* dominated villages for example at *Kolanka*, *Kapus* also carry the *Garagalu*.

To each *Garaga* one *Dappu* (drum) more is added. That means for two *Garagalu* three *Dappus* are played for three *Garagalu* four *Dappus* are played. If the number of *Dappus* comes to seven one more *Dappu* is added, thus making the number eight, since number seven is inauspicious.

In the first week of celebrations, three *Garagalu* (**Fig. 7**) are taken in a procession. In the next five weeks, five *Garagalu* are taken in a procession. In the last week on Thursday or Sunday, silver *Garaga* along with other *Garagalu* is taken in a procession. In the procession, the devotees collect rice and money from door to door. All these days devotees from different places visit the temple to fulfill their vows. In one of these days *Sidibomma* ritual is practiced in lower part of north coastal Andhra. All these days people visit from different places to offer their vows.

In the last two days, *Chinna Jagaram* and *Pedda Jagaram* are celebrated. *Jagaram* means keeping awake. On *Chinna Jagaram* until 12'O. clock in the night the temple is kept open and devotees are allowed to visit the temple. On *Peda Jagaram* temple kept open the whole night for the visitors. In these two days, devotees maintain fasting and traditional bards will tell the story of the greatness of the goddess Nookalamma.

On the day of *Kotha Amavasya*, *Polimera Katta* is prepared. That means at each boundary of the village, devotees sacrifice a ram or fowl. The blood of the

animal is mixed with cooked rice. With the rice, small balls are prepared. The devotees make a hut shrine with poles and neem leaves. A coconut is offered at the tent later they leave the food there itself and come back to the village without looking back. After performing the same ritual at all the four boundaries, they bring the butchers knife to the Pujari's house. In the same night, the knife and three garages will be taken into a procession. The same knife will be handed over to the Madiga to behead the animals and fowls, which are kept for sacrifice on the day of *Jatara*. Usually during the procession, the goddess possesses devotees. The goddess tells whatever she wants through the possessed devotees. Through out the procession *Garagalu* dance, *Dappu* plays, fire works and toddy drinking entertain devotees.

On the early morning of *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year's Day), *Baddekadugu* Utsavam (celebration of washing the threshold of the Temple) is celebrated. *Navdhanyalu* means nine varieties of seeds mixed in the juice of pumpkin are taken in a pot and offered to the goddess as *Naivedyam*. In some places instead of pumpkin, blood of the sacrificed animal, will be used. By cutting, the ear of a male goat the blood will be taken in an iron container and then the seeds are mixed in the blood. One full day and night the doors are kept closed by keeping a log in front of the threshold. The next day, the logs are removed and the threshold are cleaned with the water brought from the river Godavari. The Pujari checks the seeds in the pot. If the seeds become sprouts it is assumed that the coming year will bring prosperity. In the Besta or Vodabalija (fishermen)

community where blood is used instead of pumpkin, if the blood is concentrated they assume that every thing will go well in that year. If not some thing bad will happen to the village.

IV.14. Bards and Performers

The performing arts of a community are a reflection of culture and traditions handed down over the generations. They are colored in the social fabric of the community and have existed for long periods as they were transferred from one human repository to the other through the oral traditions of the community. Cultural continuity in the sense of perpetuation of cultural traits from generation to generation for centuries holds with in its unfolding a contradiction. It transforms the main essence through the ages- the stories are the same the myths are similar and the legends are undying. This continuity has been maintained through the rich oral tradition of a people especially through that group that has been specially ordained by society to perpetuate this heritage.

IV.14 (a) Pambalas

In north coastal Andhra, Pambalas are one of the traditional ritual performers and storytellers of the village deities. Pambalas are one of the sub castes of scheduled castes. The duty of Pambalas is to invoke and appease the goddess. In Andhra, there is a saying that "*Pamba Palikithe Kaani Amba Palakadu*" (until the Pamba sounds the goddess wont be invoked). Nearly two hundred families of Pambalas are living in Radhalpet, Pithapuram. Next to Pithapuram, Eluru is their highly populated town. The performance of Pambalas includes music, dance,

songs and narrations. Each troupe consists of three to five members. Pamba, Jamiki, and Sruthi are their musical instruments. Some of the popular stories they narrate are Kasi Majili Katha, Balanagamma Katha, Nookalamma Katha, Sasi Rekha, Sarangadhara, Siva Kumarulu etc. During Sattemma *Jatara* (caste deity of Kapus, one of the dominant caste of the Godavari region) *Sambaralu*, Pambalas play a very important role. They are highly respected by the Kapus during the *Jataras* of the village goddess.

Pambalas are not only performers they also do priesthood in the *Jataras* of the goddess. Instead of Madigas they do behead the sacrificial animals and fowls in many places. They also act as priests during the marriage celebrations of the Malas. Pambalas also act as healers. They give herbal medicines to the diseases like small pox and chicken pox. Though they belong to the scheduled caste, they don't accept that they are untouchables as they get respect from the higher strata of the society. They claim that theirs is an independent group. They visit Malas houses accept food from them. Very rarely, they have marriage relations between these two sub castes. Pambalas don't maintain any relation with Madigas. Though priesthood is hereditary, that is not their primary occupation. Apart from priesthood, they also do daily labour, as their life standards are very low.

According to Veerabbai, a Pambala, from Pithapuram, this is their last generation to tell Pambala stories. The coming generations are not interested in traditional

arts they are either going to school or doing some other work. Converted Christians stopped playing Pamba. The earnings vary from village to village. Usually they get ten to fifteen chances per year. For each performance, they get 300/Rs to 500/Rs.and free liquor. These days they are doing government programs of Janmabhoomi, literacy and anti liquor propagations.

Chapter V

Nature Worship and the Goddess Nookalamma

V.1. Introduction

Nature has been an object of interest to the humankind since its earliest existence. Right from the prehistoric times, the human species adopted to varied environments through the medium of culture. In other words, the human species has been surviving through cultural adaptation

Any community in the world gets its orientation directly from its environmental background in which it lives and the concerned people develop particular characteristics which give rise to their norms and traditions. Thus, the traditions --subsistence technologies, kinship, marriage and religious behavior-- respect the culture core of the concerned societies. (Ramesh and RamaKrishna, 1989).

The early ethnographers noticed that the preliterate people in many parts of the world maintained a definite relationship with various objects of nature living as well as non-living. This practice is known as totemism and thus developed from animism. Primitive humans believed that animals and birds possess wisdom and power to predict climatic or atmospheric changes as

well as the ability to foretell events, good or bad, for an individual or nature. Relics of Mohenjodaro in ancient India indicate that some forms of animal worship were common among these people (Dwiwedi and Tiwari, 1987).

In later stages animism developed into totemism, the practice of each group taking a plant, or an animal as its own emblem. People with great devotion worshipped the totem object and ceremonies are performed to ensure the increase of the totemic species (HanumathaRao, 1973). The wisdom of the Vedas, the Hindu religion and moral doctrines provided guidelines for the coexistence of the humankind and its environment.

This relationship made the humankind to look at the 'nature' with 'respect' to balance the ecological conditions properly. In this chapter the focus is on the worship of trees and groves as they are closely associated with the worship of the village goddesses.

V.2.Sacred Trees (Fig.13,14)

Since the earliest times humans depended upon trees and plants for food implements, clothing, shelter, fuel, animal fodder, manure, medicine, and other household necessities eg. cosmetics, toys, decorative items, instruments, and religious sacraments and ceremonies.

In the Indian villages majority of the population participates in the worship of trees and other nature gods such as *Gramadevathas*. Some social groups rarely injure, kill, or destroy their totemic objects and always identify themselves with plants, animal, birds, fish, reptiles, natural objects etc. of their neighborhood.

In South India, before the temple came into existence sacred trees are commonly worshipped. The trees, which symbolize the goddess, are Vepa, Vata, *Asvadha* etc. The belief is that the gods and the goddesses live in the abode of trees and groves. According to the opinion of Ferguson, mankind considered trees as the choicest gift of the divinities to the humans and that the branches spoke oracles through the rustling of their leaves (Ferguson, 1868).

They also believe that the deity who resides in these groves would get offended if any plant part or even a dead wood or twig is removed. Violation of this taboo it is believed would lead to punishment in various forms including death inflicted by the deity (Ratha and Behra, 1990).

Tree worship is the earliest and the most prevalent form of religion. Every tree is considered as a *Vrksadevata* (a tree deity) and is worshipped with prayers and offerings of water, flowers and sweets. The *Pipal* tree often entrained with the *neem* on the riverbanks, or tank bunds, or other sacred

places are even to this day, an object of worship. Thus the goddess worship is closely associated with tree worship.

The 'Goddess' is an important image in eco-feminism, a movement stressing that the domination and healing of women and the earth are interconnected. Women in India not only worship local goddesses but also worship trees and serpents for special reasons like marriage and barrenness. A belief among these women is that if a woman perambulates a sacred tree 108 times for 40 days (a *mandala*) she will be blessed with children (Chintaran, 1963). Unmarried women are married to trees if they have sufferings.

The marriage will be held with all nuptial ceremonies and then the person prays that the tree will take on the burdens of that human being and release that person from their suffering. After this ritual, the person is free to marry some one else. This kind of rituals restore relationships and regenerative qualities of particular plants which in turn cultivate and transfer auspiciousness from the natural world to humans (Vijaya Nagarajan, 2000).

In north coastal Andhra, worshipping trees and the goddesses under the trees is very common. In many parts of this region, roadside shrines under the trees are common. In the East Godavari district, Kathipudi Satteramma and Samalkot Nookalamma are very popular goddesses worshipped under a

tree at the side of national highway. In many parts of north coastal Andhra the goddess, Nookamma is worshipped in the form of trees, bushes and anthills under the trees. The trees, under which the image of Nookamma is worshipped, are Pipal, Mango, Neem etc. commonly at least one of these trees is found in the temple premises of the goddess Nookamma. At Anakapalle two such trees are worshipped as sacred. One is in the premises of the goddess Nookamma, under which is a stone image of the goddess in a sitting posture which is worshipped. The other tree is just besides the temple. This tree is called Pothuruju *Chettu*. Instead of an idle of Pothuraju, which is kept generally in front of the goddess temples, here a tree is treated as Pothuraju.

This tree gets all regular offerings. Not only these three trees, there are various trees and plants, the fruits, flowers, and leaves of which are used in the rituals of the goddess Nookamma. Along with trees and plants certain birds, animals and water are treated as sacred during the days of the *Jatara*. Various plants and trees play an important role in curative and preventive medicine. As disease and ill health are of most fundamental concern, man has developed his own methods for coping up with disease and created a native medical system. Herbal medicine is closely related to supernatural forces. The early man attributed disease and sufferings to the wrath of gods and the male violent influences of stars and planets. That is why the medicine was intermingled with superstition, religion, magic and witchcraft.

The following table shows the name of the sacred items their purpose and the ritual occasion.

Sacred Items	Purpose/Utility	Occasion
Margosa or neem tree	Insecticide; Pesticide;	Epidemics;
(Azadirachta indica)	Herbal Medicine;	Festivals.
(Leaves, Barks, Flower,	Domestic Purposes.	
Turmeric	Antibiotic; Natural Cosmetic;	Epidemics
	Domestic Purpose.	Annual Festival
Toddy/Palm tree	Toddy; To make	Annual
(Borassus flebilifera)	Fire for Agnigundam	Festival
Banana Plant	Daily Offering/Prasadam	Daily Worship,
Trunk, Flower, Fruits.	Rituals and Domestic Purposes.	Marriages and Functions
Pumpkin	Sacrifice;	Annual Festival
Bennicasa cerifera	Domestic Purpose	
Wood /elephant apple	A Special Offering	Annual Festival
Feronia elephantum	Domestic Purpose	
Pipal tree		A public meeting place;
Ficus religiosa		Village Panchayats; Shelter for travelers
Navdhanyalu	Rituals;	Annual Festival.
	Domestic Purposes	
Mandara	Supposed to be the favorite	Daily Worship
Hibiscus rosinensis	flower of the goddess; Hair care Decoration	
River water	Purification	Annual Festival

In north coastal Andhra in the worship of the goddess Nookamma, the medicinal plants neem and turmeric play a major role as both the plants have curative and preventive qualities of diseases like chickenpox (see chapter – III). neem is also used as insecticide. neem sticks are used to clean the teeth, which is supposed to be a first step towards dental care. neem flowers are the special ingredients in *Ugadi Pachchadi*(a special dish prepared on the day of Telugu new year). Like that, coastal Andhra people in their daily life use every part of neem tree.

Similarly, turmeric is also used in religious as well as domestic needs. Turmeric is one of the sacred items commonly used in all rituals. It is a custom in coastal Andhra in which on every Friday, women clean the threshold of their house and apply turmeric to the threshold. The turmeric-applied threshold is treated as Lakshmi Devi (the goddess of wealth). Turmeric is auspicious to *Sumavati* or *Sumangali* (married women). Whenever new clothes are worn, especially by children people put a little dot of turmeric on their clothes, so that evil eye will not fall on them.

Turmeric is also used as an antibiotic. That is why turmeric is used as a seasoning ingredient in all cooking items especially in meat curries. The goddess Nookamma is given turmeric bath on all Thursdays. In all the seven days, the original idol of the goddess is given a special bath on each

day eg. Monday – river water bath; Tuesday- milk bath ; Wednesday- buttermilk bath; Thursday- turmeric bath; Friday – kumkum bath; Saturday- sandal bath; and Sunday – oil bath .After giving bath to the goddess a small globule of turmeric (turmeric powder mixed with water and pressed in the shape of a small ball) is kept on the top of the idol. Small portions taken from this globule are given to the patients of chickenpox whoever visits on the day.

Another important tree that plays a major role during the rituals of the goddess Nookamma is toddy palm. Though toddy tree is not considered as sacred in general each and every part of toddy is useful to the people in this region. Toddy is a common drink taken by the people and it is an intoxicant. During the *Jatara* of the local goddesses, the devotees including drumbeaters and the priests who sacrifice the animals consume toddy in a considerable amount.

Small quantity of toddy is also put in the mouth of the animal before its sacrifice to bring some kind of intoxication in the animal. Similarly, toddy is also given to the devotees whoever want to walk on the fire (*Agnigundam*) during the *Jatara*. Sale of toddy is a common feature during the *Jatara*. Toddy trunks are used for preparing fire for the *Agnigundam*.

The parts of toddy palm trunks and leaves are used as roof sheets to the houses in the villages. Even today, toddy leaves cover most of the houses as a roof shelter. Toddy fruits are very delicious as well as nutritious. The pulp of this fruit is used as a special ingredient in many food items. Similarly Palm trees and leaves are also useful to the village people of this region.

Another important plant is banana plant. Banana is one of the nutritious fruit, which is available to the common man at a cheaper price. For any worship or any auspicious occasion offering banana is a compulsory in this region. Bananas along with coconuts are regularly offered to the gods and goddesses. Banana leaves are used for making small boats (*Teppa*) to perform the ritual of *Teppa Vaduluta* (discussed in chapter IV).

On all auspicious occasions, food is served in the banana leaves as plates as it provides hygiene. There is a belief that it is sin to eat non-vegetarian food in a banana leaf. In traditional families marriages are performed in the *Mantapam* (stage) decorated with banana trunks and leaves. Curries prepared with raw banana and banana flower (*Arati Puvvu*) are very common in this region.

Pumpkin is a fruit specially associated with the worship of the goddess, as it is used for sacrifice instead of animals. Since the government's ban on

animal sacrifice, devotees started giving pumpkin sacrifices. Pumpkin is also a part of normal diet.

Wood apple is one of the important fruits, which is used in rituals of the goddess. The belief is that Lord Siva resides in the abode of the wood apple tree. That is why a single leaf of wood apple can serve as a substitute to one thousand other offerings. The fruit keeps the body cool.

Mandara (hibiscus) flower is the most favourable to the goddess Nookalamma. *Mandara* flowers and leaves are also used for hair care. In this region growing *Mandara* plants in front of houses is a very common sight.

Navdhanyalu (nine varieties of grams) are considered auspicious during the worship of the goddess Nookalamma to foretell future or prosperity of the village in the coming year. *Navdhanyalu* include paddy, barley, mustard, til (sesame), ragi (millet), maize, green gram, red gram and black gram. Which are usually grown in this region. These sprouts are the microcosmic image of the fertility of the soil and vegetative life. The offering of *Navdhanyalu* shows the integration of agricultural productivity and festive activity. This is an eco-cosmic model of the worship.

Besides trees and plants, water is also worshipped as a fundamental natural element associated with local goddess worship.

V.3. Sacred Water

Water is meant for purification. It is a part and parcel of life. Without water there is no agriculture no trees, no plants, any life at all. Water keeps the body cool. To get rid of impurities every Hindu takes a ritual bath regularly. Sprinkling of water over ones head or a dip in a stream is sufficient to remove most kinds of daily pollution. Water is also affirmed to contain intrinsic powers of purification particularly when in motion (Feldhaus, 1995). In the creation myth the great goddess at first creates water, takes bath in the water, and then creates the rest of the world. Water is used in the rituals of the goddess Nookalamma as a sacred element.

During *Jatara* days, the water will be splashed on the feet of the carriers of *Garagalu* during the procession. As they walk bare foot through all the streets of the village to keep their feet cool water is splashed on their feet. To keep the temple surroundings clean and hygienic the premises are always cleaned with holy water. Usually holy water is the water brought from the sacred river Godavari. The threshold of the temple will be cleaned with the water brought from river Godavari before opening the door of the temple on the last day of the *Jatara*. This ritual is called *Badde Kadugu Utsavam* (discussed in chapter IV).

For fishermen, water is Gangamma (Mother Ganga). As they depend on water for their livelihood, they treat water as supreme. They celebrate all annual festivals of their native gods and goddesses at the seashore or at the riverbank in a temporary built temple. The Nookalamma *Jatara* is also celebrated at the seashore in a temporarily constructed temple. To bid farewell to the goddess Nookalamma on the last day of *Jatara*, the goddess will be taken to the river to give bath and after purifying the idol, the idol will be taken in a procession, accompanied by *Dappus* to the temple and kept in the temple. At some places the goddess will be immersed in the river.

While immersing the goddess, Pambalas sing obscene songs and request the goddess to come back again in the next year. The farewell ritual to the goddess is similar to that of a new bride while sending her to her in-laws house with all decorations.

In South India the festival and agriculture activities are interlinked. It is the sacred time that dictates the economic activity. When the land yields its bounties, people celebrate the natural order. In *Devi Mahathmya*, the great goddess also appears as *Sakambari* the nourishing mother; as *Annapurna*, mother of plentiful food; and *Sathakshi*, one who has one hundred eyes, who brings relief to the famine-stricken populace by over flooding the earth

with nourishment. In ritual worship to the goddess Durga, during the nine days of Dussehra, she is worshiped in the form of natural symbols such as sacred cosmic waters, the bilva tree and the vegetal icons the mantras recited express the goddess's domination over nature and *Nabpatrikas* which are useful to the community. The holy food that is disturbed in the temples at the end of Puja has a close link between food and seasons. The holy food is nothing but a natural product of a nutritional harvest (Madhukhanna, 2000).

IV.4 Anthills and Serpents (Fig.15)

Anthill worship occupied a central place in the religion varied social groups in India. It is associated with the ceremonies of marriage sickness and death. Anthills are the mounds made by termites, which is unrelated to ants. But folklorists, ethnographers used the term anthill. The termites will penetrate more than forty meters (130feet) of compact subsoil to reach water and bring it into the surface. This water is used to humidify the interior of their mounds, which never drops below 96.2%humidity irrespective of outside temperature (John, 1982).

According to Elmore, a termite mound is selected for worship when a passerby claims to have heard anklet sounds coming out of it. Thousand of people will rush to the spot with great devotion. They worship not the

mound or the insects that made it, but the serpent living inside. That is why termite mounds are called as snake mounds (*PamuPutta*) (Elmore, 1913).

The origin of serpent worship can be traced back to early days of civilization. The serpent was held in almost universal veneration in ancient times. Like other natural powers of the serpents have supernatural power. The other important reason for the worship of serpents is the faith in serpents as the bringer of health and wealth. Some scholars opine that the snake symbols in Harappan seals show that cobra was used as an emblem of proto Siva or it was the totem of devotees who worshipped the serpent god.

Lord Siva is associated with serpents by holding a cobra in his hand or twisted round his neck. As the destroyer everything that can add to the terrible was represented with him. In his hands, the serpent is as a sword or trident (Ferguson, 1868).

Lord Siva is also called as *Valmikanatha*, lord of the anthill. In one of the myths of Tamil region, Lord Siva is shown as the protector and punishes Vishnu to bring down his pride. The myth follows like this. Once the great gods *Vishnu*, *Indra* and the rest performed a sacrifice at *Kurukshetra*, having determined that he who would complete the sacrifice without hindrance would be the foremost among them. After a thousand years, the gods grew weak except Vishnu. He completed the sacrifice, since then he

became very proud. Lord Siva, commanded fire to spurt up toward heaven. The sacrificial fire spurted up towards heaven and a bow appeared in it. Vishnu took the bow in his hand, showered the gods with arrows. The gods fled to *Sakti Pura* like earlier when they fled from the poison produced from the churning of the ocean. Vishnu followed them there, but on entering that site he lost all his strength and fell asleep, resting his neck on the end of the bow.

The son of *Brhaspathi* explained to the gods that as Vishnu entered the spot with full of conceit he fell asleep through the power of *Parasakthi*. He also said that the bow is the bow of Lord Siva, it has the forms of sun, moon and fire and it will cut off the head of him who makes an obstacle to the sacrifice of gods and who is disrespectful to that place. He suggested the gods to dig an anthill make of white ants and gnaw through the bowstring. The gods did as he suggested and when the bowstring snapped the bow cut off the head of Vishnu. By the command of Siva the head fell into the vicinity of the sacrificial pit at *Kurukshetra*. Suddenly a great light arose in the form of a *linga* out of the anthill. The portents ceased and the gods worshipped the *linga*.

Siva appeared with Uma and told the gods that Vishnu's pride led him to lose his head. To place the head back on the body of Vishnu, Siva gave the bow to Indra; the Asvins replaced the head on the body; and thus Vishnu's

life was restored. As the myth suggests, the *linga* in the *Mulastana* rises up from an anthill (Shulman, 1980).

Anthills are worshipped in India as the abode of snakes because snakes commonly live in holes in the earth. That is why Nagas are personified as earth and associated with fertility, and hidden treasures of *Patala*(subterranean realm). Common belief is that if a Naga appears in a dream the person will be blessed with children. Because, snakes produce more eggs than any other creatures of common occurrence.

The agricultural communities believe that snakes contribute to the fertility of the soils and the health of the cattle. The sacred anthill is usually garlanded with flowers and one can see remains of food offerings in the form of eggshells, bananas and milk lying around the anthills.

Not only the Hindu religion but also the Buddhist and Jain religions are also closely associated with snake cult. According to Smith the early Buddhists worshipped spirits and their consorts.

In almost all Jain temples snake images are found. Snake is used as symbol of the Jain Parsvanatha. He is represented with a sevenhooded snake expanding over his head or as sitting on the expanded hoods of a snake with many heads (Ferguson, 1868).

In South India anthills are identified with village goddesses who are believed to have been born out of the anthill without human father or mother and who never has a consort. The goddess Matangi is said to have been discovered when a king pierced her anthill with his lance. Matangi rose from the anthill bleeding, with the heavens in her left hand and the cosmic serpent *Adisesa* in her right. Goddess

Manasa of Bengal is a serpent goddess worshipped not only in Bengal but in many parts of north India. The myth of Manasa follows like this: once Siva saw gandharvan birds mating. He was excited at this sight and he cast his semen upon a lotus leaf. It went down through the stalk and reached Patala, the kingdom of Vasuki. She realized that it was Siva's seed. The girl was named Manasa. Siva took her into his house. Siva's wife Parvati suspected her husband being married to another woman. Then Manasa told her story but Parvati did not listen to her. She told her to leave the house immediately.

Before leaving the place Manasa gives her signet with five jewels and asks her to call when Siva was in any danger. Siva arranged Bagul and Eta to protect his daughter. Since then Manasa stayed in the anthill accompanied by Bagul and Eta (Maithy Pradyot, 1966).

Similar to this story, the goddess Nookamma, who is also treated as the daughter of lord Siva, is associated with the serpent. The myth follows like this. Once demons waged a war against lord Siva; in order to escape from them, he (Siva) hides himself in a black mound (serpent mound). He lies down under the shade of a seven headed Nagendra. To save lord Siva, Nagendra gave birth to a girl child, Nookamma. When Parvati came to know about this, she replies that her father is lord Siva, and that he is hiding in a serpent mound to protect himself from the demons. Then Nookamma decides to save her father, she fights with demons and kills all of them.

After killing the demons, Nookamma goes to her father and requests him to stay within the mound itself with her, but he refuses to stay back in the mound. That is the reason why Nookamma always holds a serpent in her right hand. She wears small snakes as jewellery. She is always described as the snake mother by the Pambalas.

V.5. Ancestor Worship (Fig 10)

According to many scholars ancestors worship is the basic form of many religious traditions. It is regarded as a religious practice but not as a religion itself.

Rites of ancestor worship include personal devotion, domestic rites, and ancestor rites of a kinship group such as a lineage, periodic rites on the death day of the deceased and annual rites for collectivity of ancestors.

Throughout East Asia, ancestor worship is found in close association with shamanic practices. Shamanistic practices in East Asia are based on the folk notion that if a person suffers from an unusual or seemingly unwarranted affliction, the ancestors may be the cause. If the ancestors are offered inappropriate or insufficient ritual, they may cause some harm to their descendents (Mercia Elaide, 1987).

The beliefs in the transmigration of the souls of the dead into the bodies of animals were common to many races and are still in practice among a few of them. About snakes and ancestor spirits, Spencer writes: The other self of the dead relative is supposed to come back occasionally to the old house, in the form of creatures which commonly, unlike wild animals, come into houses, too secretly at night. The snakes that specially do this represent the dead. In many places, the serpent gods are worshipped as the deified rulers of an ancient people whose tribal or racial emblem was the Nagas.

Nagas and their consorts were worshipped as water spirits in the ancient period. They are the controllers of waters. They are beneficial givers of rains but if roused to anger they send down destructive hailstorms and ravage the produce of the fields. Thus, the Nagas and their consorts Naginis are worshipped as water spirits or genni of lakes and springs. The belief in the worship of dead kings and other persons originated among people who

worshipped snakes from fear and used them as symbols, and believed in the return of the spirits of the dead, particularly of important persons in the form of snakes (Mythy Pradyot, 1966).

The representation of nature in the rituals of local goddesses shows the inter link between festivals and ecology. This kind of respect between man and nature shown in the pre-modern times is not visible to day.

Earlier, each group respected the other group. Fisher folk and hunting groups had their own rules. There were seasons in which certain fish were not to be caught and certain animals were not to be hunted. It was a structured society that operated community level respect to the community rules. Early man not only respected the other man but he also shown his respect to nature to maintain ecological balance. The close man – environmental relationship is patterned systematically in the background of integrated synthesis of biological as well cultural adjust mental efforts.

The growth of human population and its ever-increasing needs led to an onslaught and indiscriminate use of natural resources and environment. The over exploitation of the natural resources would not possibly have stirred the conscience of the homocentric man had this impoverishment of non-human part of the creation been in his favor. Though Hindus believe in pollution and purification they are self centered and they don't bother about

the purity of public places. The whole concern of an individual focuses on keeping the pollution away from ones own being and the respect for the persons outside has disappeared.

Today, India's ecology is deep in trouble and environmental pollution has been the most important issue. Rivers are highly polluted. Industries, which consume enormous natural resources, systematically destroy long term biosphere sustainability, creating genocide in future for our grand children. Due to the mismanagement of the government and ignorance of people and the heavy demand for forest produce, forests are extremely exploited.

To solve all these environmental problems, India needs a major reformation in its social structure. It should not ignore the beliefs and customs of people, which are based on certain rules and regulations. This will entail creating respect for different communities within the vast web of hierarchies. At individual level also, one has to change his/her narrow outlook towards caste and class.

One should not think about himself and his purity, he/she should also think about larger society on which he/she has been depended. Men/Women should be more earth- friendly by promoting respect for each other and respect for nature. All the good things of religion should be strengthened, as nature worship is the basis of early religion.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

For many educated Indian people, popular religion is nothing but superstitions, blood sacrifices, wasteful expenditure and irrational. The educated Indians looked down upon the ritual practices of masses. Since a long time anthropologists and sociologists are trying to explain the motifs behind the religious beliefs of the little communities by considering the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the communities that worship the village goddesses.

The worship of the village goddess plays an important role in the day-to-day life of lower and peasant communities of a village. They feel that the presence of the protective deity of the village provides hope and courage in areas of life where uncertainty and anxiety are mostly prevalent.

The rituals and myths in popular religion often perform the functions of achieving the group solidarity. The rituals and myths of the goddesses give an ethnic identity to the lower caste groups. In the rituals the ethnic group creates an identity and conscious environment through the veneration of ancestors. Reawakening the essence of identity by ritual narration of a social group reinforces group solidarity. Feeling of continuity is an experience of identity. Myths and rituals embody such a feeling. They are the expressions

of an identity consciousness, which is lived, expanded, and culturally transmitted.

The rituals of the goddess during the *Jataras* show her close connection with vegetation, crops, and fertility. The first rite that is preparatory to her ritual is the sprouting of *Navdhanyalu* (nine variety of seeds), which is performed to ensure good rains and crops to beget children and to ward off epidemics.

In the agency areas of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram the communities of Koya, Bhagatha, Kondareddy etc celebrate the festival of shifting cultivation or *Podu* cultivation. This *Kandikotha Panduga* is exclusively for the harvest of the first crop of *Kandi*. As majority of people live on agriculture in this region, they will be very happy if the whole crop reaches their house with out any calamities

Women in India not only worship local goddesses but also worship trees and serpents for special reasons like marriage and barrenness. A Common belief is that if a Naga appears in a dream the person will be blessed with many children. Because, snakes produce more eggs than any other creatures of common occurrence. The agricultural communities believe that snakes contribute to the fertility of the soils and the health of the cattle.

In several parts of the world, the mother goddesses have often been associated with diseases. Disease is seen as a favor of the goddess. The village goddess is the belief system embodies the very life and health of the natives. She can cause, prevent and alleviate disease. The reason for female deities invoked more than the male deities for purpose of healing is that the goddesses have the attributes of nurturing qualities.

They are the primary and original sources of life like human mothers and they represent a reprieve from the more painful realities of death, decay and disease. Goddesses are also linked to the darker experiences in the human condition. The healing and the quest for wholeness are universally associated with goddess worship not with the worship, of male deities.

In the Indian society 'ideally' women were accepted as a living force in society, the embodiment of *Shakti* (Power) and a symbol of purity, religiousness spirituality and sacrifice. In practice, however, they were subjected to suppression many deprivations, and exploitation. The myths of the goddess cast females in roles that appear to the social rules of females.

The goddesses are depicted as untraditional and unconventional. All women must be chaste or self-controlled, in regard to their sexual desires. Sexually aggressive, independent or unwed goddesses are usually regarded in Hinduism

as dangerous and inauspicious where as properly married, passive, and subservient goddesses embody auspiciousness and well-being.

One of the important features of the annual festival of the village goddesses is animal sacrifice. In the words of Preston, a ritual sacrifice cannot be equated with everyday slaughter for food. It is to establish a symbolic relationship between man and god. It is an act of love, thanks giving or conciliation.

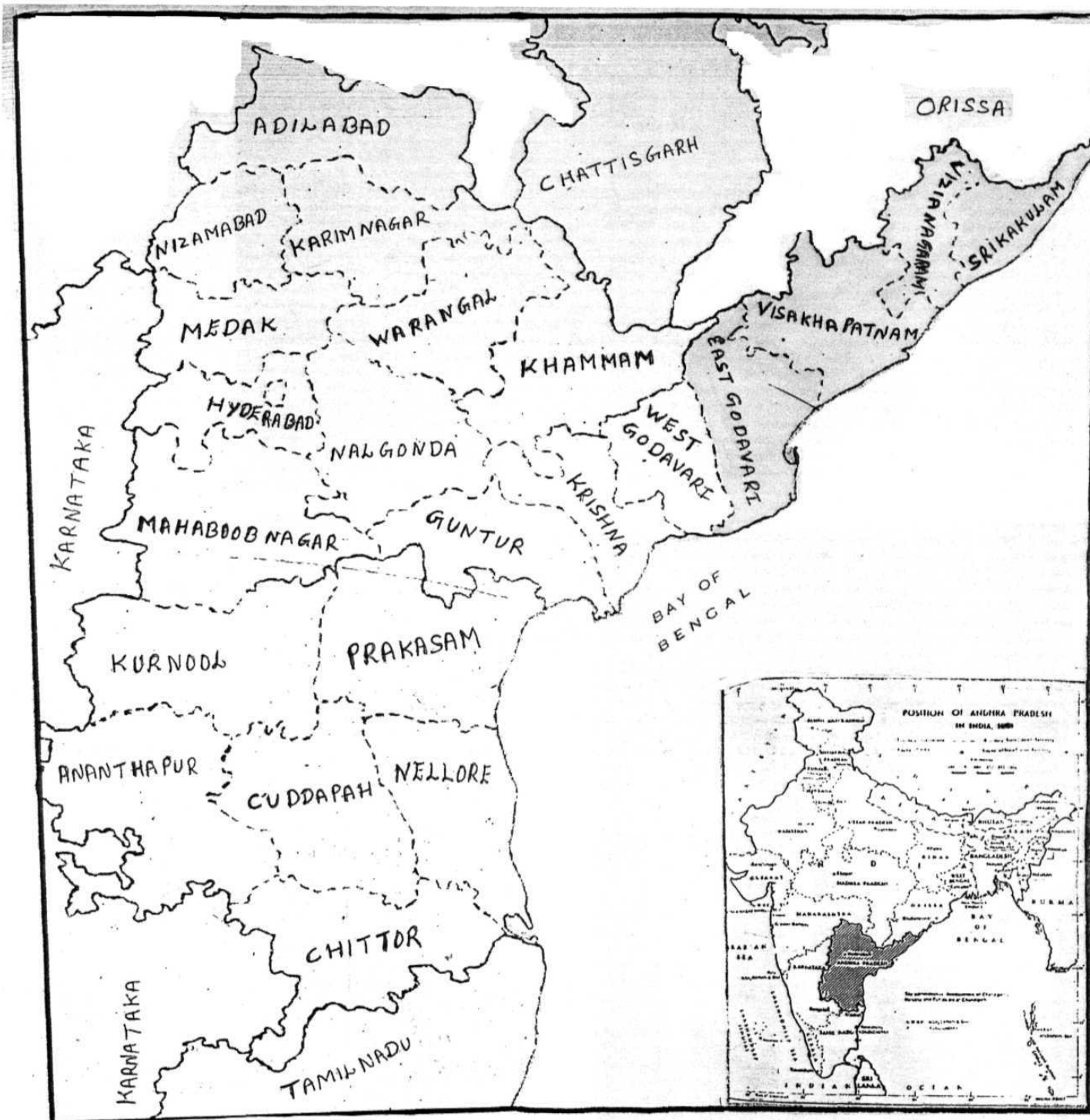
This is neither primitive nor barbaric but rather, an expression of special significance for devotees who strive to establish a sense of harmony with the cosmic order. The sacrifice may also be understood as representing the defeat of the invading demon or demons that are also associated with the consort of the goddess or husband who had afflicted or abused her in the myths.

The village goddess festival, which is held annually or cyclically, is one of the auspicious events for the villagers and the village as a whole. The *Jatara* provides an occasion for social gathering and helps in strengthening the intra village communal bonds and harmony. The *Jatara* is performed for the prosperity of the village and every individual of the respective village, irrespective of caste and creed, propitiate the goddess for her benevolence. At the personal level, individuals get great psychological strength by fulfilling their vows and thus obtaining rewards from the goddess.

Regarding the Sanskritisation of the village goddesses, the process of mixture of elements in the Hindu tradition has been going on from the earliest times and has resulted in a form of society and culture in which the interaction of the little and the great tradition has become endemic and relatively stable. The priesthood of Brahmins in the temples of village goddesses, the legitimating of village goddesses in the Sanskritic texts is a part of Sanskritisation of village goddesses. Although Sanskritic identification does not necessarily bring adjacent the little communities closer to each other, they do bring the great community closer to all the little communities.

At the other side the lower caste people gain influence over upper caste people through mother goddess beliefs. As the lower caste mediums are believed to have good rapport with the goddess during the time of epidemics the upper caste men worship her with the help of the lower castes in giving blood sacrifice and other ritual practices. The Pambalas, the traditional storytellers as well as shamans in north coastal Andhra invoke and appease the goddess with their traditional music and songs. In Andhra, there is a saying that "*Pamba Palikithe Kaani Amba Palakadu*" (until the Pamba sounds the goddess won't be invoked). These Pambalas get a great respect from the landlords of the region during the village goddess festivals. Thus the lower castes find a degree of compensation for their lower rank in their power to control the upper caste persons. Still, both the little and the great communities exist with in the

religion of village without confusing one another. The cult of the mother goddess shows how beliefs and practices regarding tangible matters of crucial importance allow the non-Sanskritic, little tradition to attract even upper caste followers, through of universalisation.



Map of Andhra Pradesh Showing North Coastal Andhra
(Fig. 1)

(not to scale)



GANACHARI

Fig.2



ASADI

Fig.3



SIDIBOMMA

Fig. 4

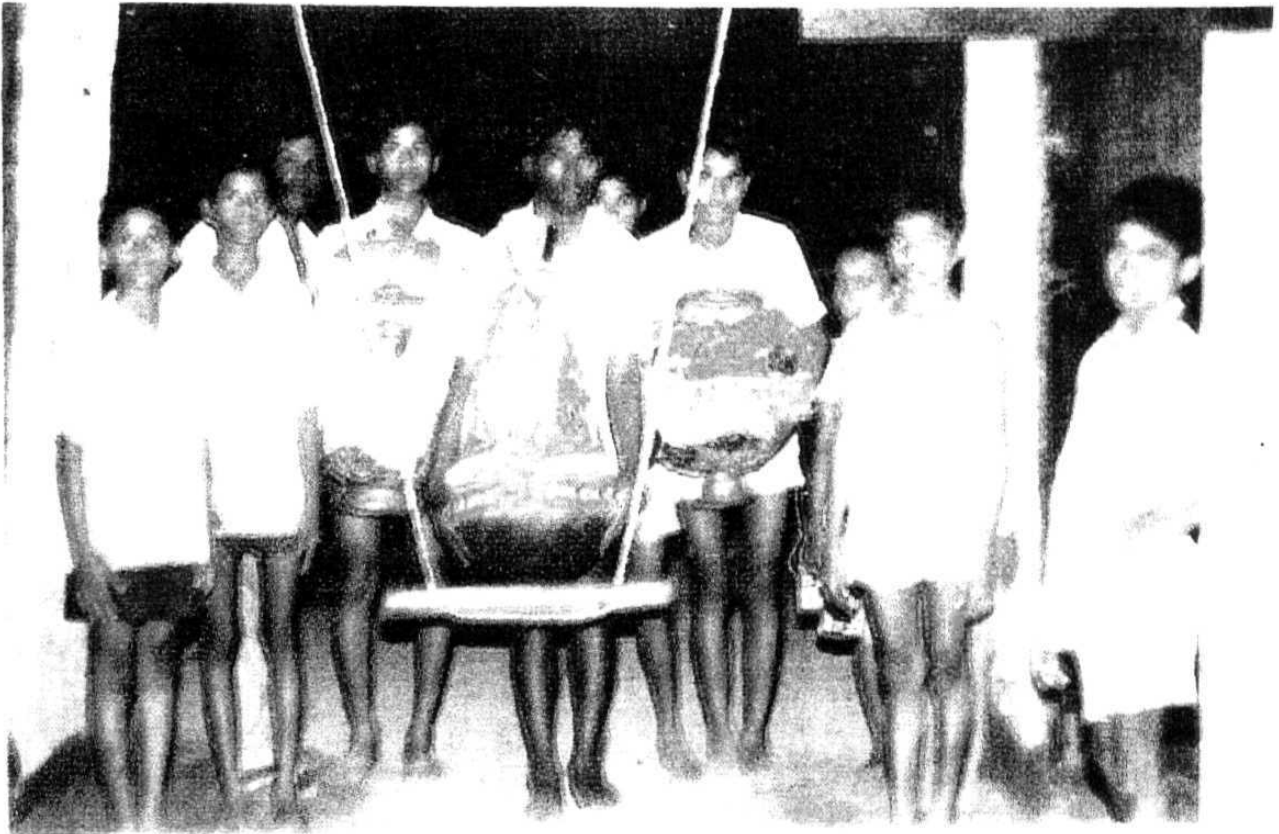


Fig.5 GARAGALA COYALA



GARAGALA PANPU
Fig.6



THE PROCESSION OF GARAGALU

Fig.7



GARAGALA MUDUPU

Fig.8



KAGADALAMOKKU

Fig.9



THE RITUAL PROCESS OF TEPRAVADULUTA

Fig.10



Fig.11

THE PAMBALAS, NARRATING THE STORY OF GOLDESS NOOKALAMMA

Fig.12





TREE WORSHIP AT THE TEMPLE OF NOOKALAMMA

Fig.13



GODDESS NOOKALAMMA WORSHIPPED UNDER

A MANGO TREE

Fig.14



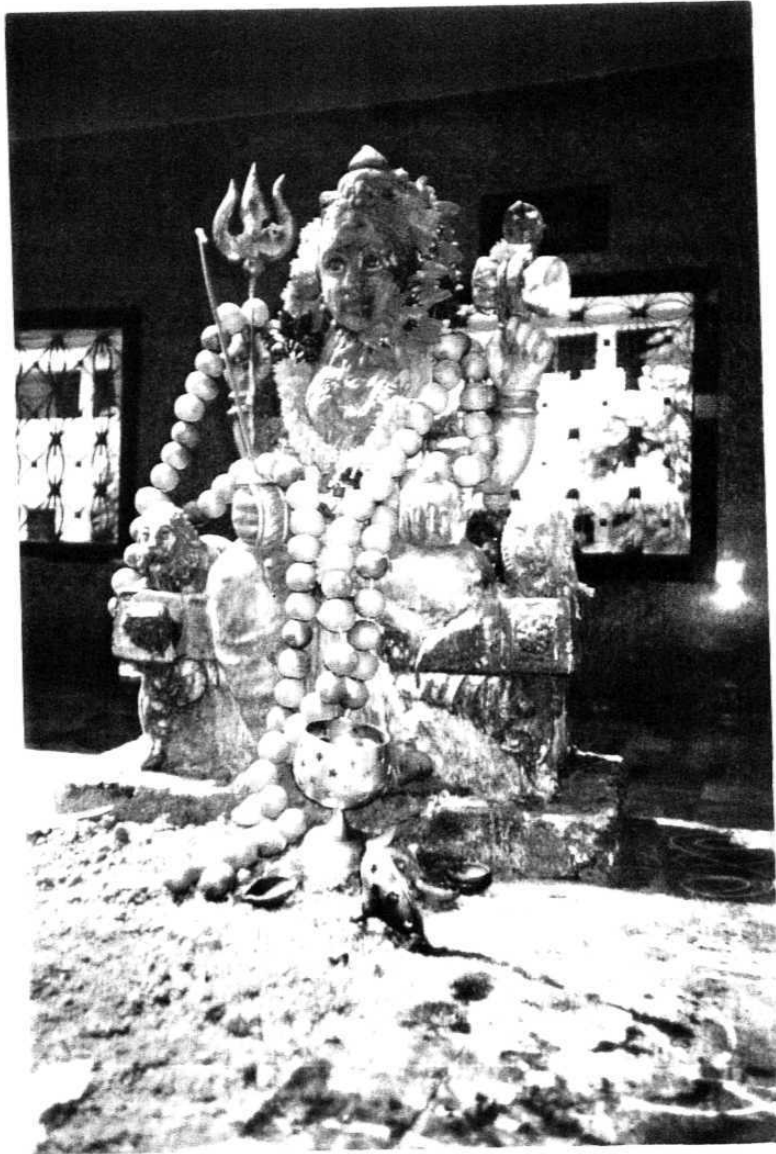
THE SACRED ANTHILL
Fig.15



MALE GOAT BEING TAKEN FOR SACRIFICE
Fig.16.a



MALE GOAT BEING TAKEN FOR SACRIFICE
Fig.16.b



THE IDOL OF SAKTI AT NOOKALAMMA TEMPLE
ANAKAPALLI

Fig.17



THE IDOL OF GODDESS NOOKALAMMA, KAKINADA

Fig.18



IDOL OF GODDESS NOOKALAMMA AT ANAKAPALLI

Fig.19



IDOL OF GODDESS NOOKALAMMA AT JAGANNATHAPURAM

Fig.20

Fig. 21

1. తీ అమ్మవారికి చెల్లించు ముడుపులు, ముక్కు దండలు, దక్షిణాలు, తానుకలు వగైరా సాంఘికాలలోనే వేయవలెను. గిర్రులు ఉంచి ఇతరుల చేతులకు ఇవ్వరాదు.
2. భక్తులు తీ అమ్మవారిని దర్శించుకొనుటకు 'కల్ప' వాటించవలెను. దళాతలను, మున్నవర్గులను ఆశ్రయించవద్దు తెలుపుచున్నాము.
3. భక్తులు తీ అమ్మవారికి చెల్లించు దండములు దేవస్థాన కార్యాలయము నందు చెల్లించ నలయున రకీదును పొందవలెను.
4. తీ అమ్మవారి జాతర కార్తవ్యము ఆరంభియై రేడియో, విశాఖపట్టణం వారి కేంద్రం ద్వారా ప్రసారం కాబడును.

తీ కొణతాల వెంకటరావు

పైన్, ఉత్తవ కమిటీ

తీ వి. పార్థసారథి సహాయ కమిషనర్ & కార్పొరేషన్ మాజీ అధికారి.

ఉత్తవ కమిటీ సభ్యులు :

బుద్ధ సూర్యేశ్వరరావు	రావి భోగింగేశ్వరరావు	భక్తవల్లి హను
మళ్ళ సత్యనారాయణ	పాలిమేర నాయుడు	కొణతాల నంపకలక్ష్మి
మారివెల్లి రామ ప్రసాద్	ఇ.వి. సత్యనారాయణ	కడిమివెల్లి భనులక్ష్మి
కర్తి వెంకట సత్యనారాయణ	ఎస్.వి.జి సత్యనారాయణ	వర్ధాని వెంకటలక్ష్మి
యల్లపూ సూరిలపార్వరావు	బొత్తేపల్లి రామకృష్ణ	

తీరస్సు

హంగుడి సుబ్బరాంజులక్ష్మి

మళ్ళసూసు



916 KDM, 22 CT. బంగారు ఆభరణములు వెండి వస్త్రపుల వ్యాపారం

చింతావారిపేట, అనకాపల్లి - 531. 001.



ఫోన్ : 226044 (S), 223407 (R)

ఉచితం

ఉచితం

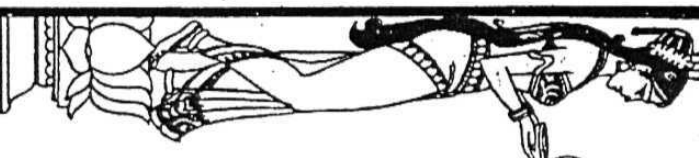
బంగారం మేరయు వెండి ఉచితంగా పొందండి

మూ పోరూపాను సందర్శించి మేము ఇచ్చే కౌపన్‌లోను మీ చిరునామాను పూరించి మా ఫ్యాబ్రియందు పున్న కౌపన్ బాక్స్‌లో వెయ్యవలెను. తేది 3-4-2003 నాయంత్రం జరిగే "క్రా" లో గెలుపొందిన విజేతలకు మొదటి ఓ మునుపటిగా బంగారం వస్త్రపు, రెండవ బహుమతిగా వెండి వస్త్రపు, మూడవ బహుమతిగా 10 మంది విజేతలకు గిఫ్ట్‌లు ఇవ్వబడును.

క్రా తేది 3-4-2003

అనేకాపేటి ప్రేమ ప్రేమ సోకారం జక్ అమ్మవారి కొత్త ఆమోవాసే జాతర మహోత్సవములు





ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వం ద్వారా నిర్వహించబడుతున్నది.



తేది. 31-03-2003 నామవారం రాత్రి జాతర
తేది. 1-4-2003 మంగళవారం కాత్త అమావాస్య
తేది. 2-4-2003 బుధవారం ఉగాది
తేది. 1-5-2003 గురువారం నెల పండుగ

ఉత్తరాంధ్ర ప్రజల ఇలవేల్పు ఆరాధనకు తీ సుకాంబిక అమ్మవారు హాజరు అవుతారు. నవ్యాంధ్ర జన్మించిన తీ సుకాంబిక అమ్మవారు ప్రసిద్ధి చెంది ఉన్నాయి. ఆంధ్రం 5104 చిత్రాగునునామ సంవత్సరం ఫాల్గుణమాసం బహుళ అమావాస్యనాడు వచ్చు తీ సుకాంబిక అమ్మవారి కొత్త ఆమోవాసే జాతర మహోత్సవములు తేది 31-03-2003 ది నుండి ఆరంభం ప్రారంభమగుచున్నది.

మూలావరణ తేది. 18-03-03 మంగళవారం ముందలలిక్ష్మి ప్రారంభం
తేది. 09-04-03 బుధవారం ఆర్ధ మండల దీక్ష ప్రారంభం
తేది. 26-04-03 శనివారం శేరిలింగంపల్లి జయప్రసాదము.

1.    

Appendix

Appendix I

First plate

(from the original text)

Om savasti Srimatam sakala-bhuvana-samstuyamana-Manavya-sa
gotranam hariti-putranam Kausiki-vara-prasada-labda-rajyam= matri
gana paripalitanam Svami-Mahesana-pad-anudhyatanam bhagavan-
Narayana-prasada-samasadita-vara-varaha-lamchcha(chcha)n-ekshana-
kshana-vasikrit-aratimanda-lanam=asvamedha-avabhrita(tha)-snana-
pavitrikrita-vapusham Chalukyanam kulam=alamkarishnos=
Satyasraya bhrata kubja-Vishnuvardahano=shtadasa varshani(||)

Tad-atmajayajayasimhas=trayas-trimsatam||Tad-anuj-Endra-raj-nandano

Visanuvarddha-no nava!(||)Tat-sunu=Mmamgi-yuvarajah pamcha-
vimsati(m)||Tat-putroJayasimha-

Second plate; first side

S=trayodasa(||)Tad-avarajah Kokkili(h)shan=masan(||)Tasya jyeshto bhrata
Vishnuvardhanas=tam-u-chchatya sapta-trimsatam(||)Tat-putro
Vijayaditya- bhattariko-shtadasa!(||) Tatsuto Vishnu-varadhanah shat-
trimsatam!(||)Tat-sutoVijayaditya-narendramrigarajas=sashta
chatvarimsatam(||)

Tat-sutah Kali-Vishnuvardhano=dhy-arddha-varshm!(||)Tat-suto Gunaga-
vijayadityas-cha.tus-chatvarimsatam(||)Tad-bhratur=yyuvarajasya

A circular ink stamp is located on the left side of the manuscript page. It contains the text "UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS" around the perimeter and some illegible text in the center.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥
 श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥ अर्जुनस्य उवाच ॥ धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता
 युयुत्सवः मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव ॥ तत्रैव त्रैलोक्यममृतमश्नुते ॥
 ॥ १ ॥



Vikramaditya-bhubhujā(h)Tat-tanaya(h)shan=masan Kollabiganda-
 bhaskara(h)(||)
 Tad-agra-nandano=mba-rajās=sapta varshani(|||)Tad-agra-sunur=bbalo
 Vijaya(ditya)paksham=ekam(||)Tam=akramya karagere nida(dha)ya
 Chalukya- Bhima-pitrivyam(vyo) Yudhamallatmajas=Tala-
 nripe(po)masam=(e)kam(||)Tad-anuVikramadityas=samvatsaram (||) Kolla
 bi ganda-tanujōBhi(bhi)mah ka-rayilladata.nam=asit dvadasa varsha(n)
 Vemgi(gi)-natodayada-vairi-timiram=apasya(||)Tasya
 Lokamahadvyam'm=Amma-rajās=suto =jani vikramen =Arjuno dharmme
 Dharmmaraja iv=apara(h)(||) Sa samastabhuvanasraya-Sri-Vijayaditya-
 maharajadhiraja-parameswara(h)paramabhattacharakahparama- brahmānya (h)
 Ve mggi-nadu-vishaya-nivasino raptra-(shtra)ku(ku)ta-
 pramukhan=kutumbina ittham=ajo(a)(payati) (!)Satyasya janma-
 bhumis=saj-jana-samsevitās=saro-na-tha(?)m(h)vikrama-gun-aika-
 dhamanripa-kamahpūjit-Essa-pada-kamalah! (||)Ru(ru)-pa-lavan(y)a-
 saubhagya-saya-dharmma-parayana Nayama (m) b = amgana tasya
 sarorūha-dal-ekshana(||) Tabhyam'm=asmadi(di)yya(ya)-svasrubhya(m)
 prartvya (rtthya) manair = asmaohi(h)Kalluru-grama-vastavya-
 Bharadvajagotra-Vajasaneya v(a)mana bhatta-pautriya Sivvanabhattacha-
 putraya Vamanasa-

Third plate ;first side

rmmane Gundu(?ntu)golanu-nama-ggra(gra)me purva-disi(si)raja-manena
dvadasakhondik-odrava-bija-vapakshetram=udaka-purvam=uttarayana-
nimitte dattam-ito viditam-astu ya(h)sarva-kara-pariha-rena sasanikritya()
Asya kshetrasy=avadhayah ()purvatah Tepalamupariya-dakshinata(h)
Punnisvaramma-nagaruvu!paschimatah Bhatari-panasa! Uttaratah
Gundi(?nti)yabhatlaveruvu!() Asy=opari na (na)kenachid=badha kartavya
yah karoti sa pamcha mahapataka –samyukti bhavati!() Tatha ch=oktam
Vyasena(!) Bahubhir=vvasudha data bahubhis=ch anupali.ta| yasaya yasya
yada bhumis =tasya tasya tada phalam |() Sva-dattam paradattam vayo
hare=tu vasumndharam shashti-varsha-sahasrani vishtayam jayate krimih()

Third plate; second side

Ajnaptih kataka-rajah| Etasya rakshakasyuruhastyubhayagana-sahasra-
dvitaye! Kalvapakshi – vumacheppu(?shu)-patayah Balaka-pimchcha-
chchatra-Velabhatah|| Madhavabhatasya kavyam |() Dattandraja-Ma-
Hendrasya Visvakarmm-opamena cha Kondacharyyena namm=atam
likhitam sasanamsubham||

First Side :

1. స్వస్తి శ్రీశ 2. కవరంపాయిలు 3. గతం అనుమతి 4. టిప్పయి
సంవ 5. త్వరకాథిక కలు 6. అప్తయారు 7. జెకాలు నువ్విరళలు
సుభిక్షముగా 9. నున్ను అనకొందు 10. గ్రామము పూ 11. జీత
ముగానున్న 12. దేవరా యవం 13. యోరాయలు 14. కొమారుం

Second Side :

15. కుర్రా 16. జ్ఞియెలు 17. చుం 18. రుగాను 19. కప్తకదె
20. వయని 21. చామ 22. పోడ 23. యలు 24. గ్రామ
25. మెలు 26. చుం 27. రుగాను

Third Side :

28. జొనికొండతి 29. రుమండ్లులపు 30. అను టి జిక కొ
31. మాళ్ళకు పుచ్చిం 32. ముగాను అ 33. 34. నకుంగల
పున్నము 35. గామండు పాలు 36. వెట్టింతు నూం 37. కలమ్మకు
కల్లుగు 38. డి కట్టించి పొరలు 39. గుడి కట్టించి ప్రాకార
40. రము కోట వెట్టిం 41. చెను ... ఆచంద్రకస్తా 42. ఇనాను
చొసెను ను 43.ంగళ మయా క్రిక్రిక్రి.

Appendix II

Hail! On the 5th day of the dark fort night of Kartika of the year Vyaya, corresponding to the year 1328 of the illustrious Saka era, while the 56 countries were prosperous with good crops while the village of Donakonda was flourishing while the son of Devaraya Maharayulu was ruling the king Dom, while the Kapatideva alias Chamavadayalu was ruling the village for the religious merit of Donakonda Tirumandalapu Tinitijika's son and for himself, he constructed a stone temple to "*ma''(nu)kalamma*" constructed a temple to the virulu (heroes) and caused to be raised a fortified enclosure. He did this to last as long as the Sun and Moon exist.

May it cause great prosperity!

4. రమాఘశం గు శ్రీమం 5. నృహా మండలేశ్వర రాజాధి 6. రాజరాజ పరమేశ్వర శీవీర
 7. ప్రతాప దేవరాయ. మహారాయల 8. కుంపుణ్యముగాను శ్రీమన్మహామ 9. మండలేశ్వ
 అంత్యంబరగండగుం 10. ముడూరి కామయదేవమహా రా// జుల కుమారుండు రామయ
 దేవ 12. మహారాజులు పినయెఱవలో 13. ను తదునాయం కఱానకుంజెల్లెదొ 14. న
 కొండ నుంకలా పరమేశ్వరికి ఇ 15. చ్చిన ధంమ ి శాసనం పూవాన్ అంమ్మ 16.
 గారి దియపు రాజ్యం వారికి యెందుం 17.కిం చెర్వుగుత్తులు.....స్లవంగ సంవత 18.
 రకాత్క శుద్ధఆరభ్యంగాను పండెటికిన్ని 19. గుత్తధాన్యము రాజ్యము వారు మాదిపూ
 20. 21.పం 22. డిన ధాన్యము వీరికి..... 23.రకం 24.
 అట్టుగా.....25.య్యంగాను తమ తల్లితం 26. డ్రుల దమ ిముగాను..... 27.ద్రాక ి
 స్థాగగాను దొనకొండ గంగా 28. పరమేశ్వరికి యిచ్చి వ్రాయం 29. చిన ధర్మము
 శాసనము స్వదత్తం 30. వరదత్తం వాయోహారేలి 31. వసుంధరా షష్టినష ి సహ 32.
 ప్రాణి విష్ణాయాం జాయతే క్రిమి// 33. స్వదత్తా ద్విగుణం పుణ్యం పరదత్తా 34. ను
 పాలనం పరదత్తా పహారేణ స్య 35. దత్తం నిష్పలం భవేత్ // ఎ..... త ఇందు
కా అంబ పాపం బుదం బోవువారు.

Appendix III

May there be Prosperity! Hail!

On Thursday, the 15th of the bright fort night of magha of the year Plavanga, corresponding to the year 1349 of the illustrious Saka era, this charitable edict was granted by Ramadeva maharaja, son of Sri man Mahamandalesvara Antymbara Ganda Gummaduri Kamayadeva MahaRaju to (nu) kalaParamesvari (goddess) of Donakonda which is attached to his chiefdom and is situated in Pinayerruv for the religious merit of an Sri Mahamandalesvara Rajadhiraja Raja Paramesvara Srivira Pratapa Devaraya Maharaja. Five times per putti according to the lease of the tank were formerly given to the rulers from the income of the goddess...This is to be relinquished by the rulers commencing from the first of the bright half of Kartika of the year Plavanga.

This is the charitable edict issued to Gangaparameswari of Donakonda as an act of charity to last as long as Sun and Moon exist.

{Two imprecatory verses

Will incur the sin of...

Will incur the sin of.....}

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