

ADILABAD



CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME II

ANDHRA PRADESH

PART VII-B (16)

Fairs and Festivals

(16. Adilabad District)



A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
Superintendent of Census Operations, Andhra Pradesh

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FOREWORD

Although since the beginning of history, foreign travellers and historians have recorded the principal marts and entrepôts of commerce in India and have even mentioned important festivals and fairs and articles of special excellence available in them, no systematic regional inventory was attempted until the time of Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in the beginning of the nineteenth century. One of the tasks set before him by a resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council in 1807 was "to examine with as much accuracy as local circumstances will admit": "an account of the various kinds and amount of goods manufactured in each district...the ability of the country to produce the raw materials used in them...how the necessary capital is procured, the situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods...commerce: the quantity of goods exported and imported in each district; the manner of conducting sales, especially at fairs and markets."

That he discharged his duty very thoroughly will appear from his statistical accounts of Mysore and the northern districts of Bengal and Bihar.

The great Revenue Surveys of the middle of the nineteenth century made no attempt in this direction, and accounts of fairs and festivals in districts were neglected until W. W. Hunter took up the compilation of statistical accounts again in the last quarter of last century. For the purpose of notifying holidays in the East India Company's offices the Board in Calcutta had since 1799 been in the habit of "procuring an accurate Bengalee almanac properly authenticated by brahmanical astronomy" from the Nabadwip Court (letter from Secretary of Board to Collector of Nadiya, 5 July, 1799, No. 8217, W. W. Hunter's Unpublished Bengalee MSS Records). Satis Chandra Vidyabhusan in his *History of Indian Logic* wrote that "almanacs were prepared by the Pundit Samaj of Nabadwip which were supplied to the Nawab's Court of Murshidabad as well as to the East India Company, the Supreme Court, etc...the Nabadwip Panjika under the imprimatur of *Nabadwipadhipateranugya* was accepted by all the landlords of Bengal". This *Nabadwip Panjika* which remained the standard almanac for Bengal continued in use throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and each issue contained a list of important fairs and festivals in every district. A valuable almanac was that published by the Vernacular Literature Committee's Almanac published in 1855-6 (1262 B. S.). It gave an account of 309 famous fairs of Bengal in its second part. The *Gupta Press Panjika* or almanac which virtually replaced *Nabadwip Panjika* made its first appearance in 1869 and continued to publish a useful list of important fairs and festivals in the country. But this list was by no means exhaustive nor were W. W. Hunter's which he published with each Statistical Account.

Meanwhile native crafts, industries and objects of artistry decayed rapidly and thoroughly as a result of the East India Company's policy of extinguishing them, and official interest in fairs and festivals declined, although these occasions, divested of much of their glory; still continued to attract livestock, grain, merchandise and handicrafts from far and near. The *Imperial Gazetteers* published between 1880 and 1910 gave a minor place to these

important seasonal markets or temporary inland ports. Even the District Gazetteers, which still are the fullest and most compact accounts of districts, make but casual mention of fairs and festivals in the country and attach little economic importance to them.

For, indeed, the importance of fairs and festivals—as the meeting ground of livestock and agricultural commodities of many religions and many cultures, crafts and motifs from far and near, of ideas and design, workmanship, excellence and finish, of tools and appliances, of trends of the future and vanishing practices of the past, of adaptability and local variation, of skill and imagination—declined with the punitive export policy of the East India Company and the unrestricted import of machine-made goods, so much so that at the close of the last century fairs and festivals were reduced to a matter of concern only for the Public Health Department. They were no longer regarded as important centres of trade and commerce, but were now from the Government point of view merely a collection of human beings among whom epidemics were to be prevented from breaking out. Fairs and festivals continued to be a matter of law and order and the Police Department and the District Board continued to maintain full lists of them in their local offices, a source which has so far remained unquarried.

Following the census operations of West Bengal in 1951, a slim volume, containing a list of fairs and festivals arranged according to districts and their Police Stations, was brought out as part of the West Bengal scheme of Census Publications. This list was mainly made up of information supplied by District Boards and Superintendents of Police of districts. The two lists were collated to make up a comprehensive list containing several columns: the name of the village arranged under its district and Police Station, with its Jurisdiction List number, the name of the festival or fair by which it is commonly known in the locality, the English month of the year in which it is held, the duration of the festival or fair, and finally the number of persons attending it. Although merely a list, and not quite complete at that, this volume attracted attention and received the appreciation both of scholars and the general public. Its general value lay in its being a compendium and its particular value lay in presenting a distribution throughout the country of particular festive occasions. The Superintendent of Census Operations for West Bengal, who continued in an honorary capacity, was plied from time to time with requests to undertake an extensive survey of the subject which seemed to accord well with the Superintendent's own personal desire. For one thing, quite a few of the old and traditional fairs and festivals of West Bengal are on their way to extinction on account of various forces working against them and a record of these rapidly vanishing fairs and festivals could be made only now as never again in the future. In the next place, the Census Office considered it its duty to sustain by a more searching survey the interest that the publication had aroused.

A different approach suggested itself as the new task was viewed in terms of collection of extensive first-hand material on each fair and festival. It was necessary therefore, in the first place, to approach as many individuals as possible in each locality, and not restrict the enquiry only to Government or semi-Government sources, Departments or organisations. In the second place, a satisfactory questionnaire was considered most essential. A number of aims were kept in view in framing the questionnaire. These were:

(a) The questionnaire should be very simple and precise in language, designed primarily for the understanding of a person of primary education standard. At the same time, the question should be suggestive enough to invite ancillary information. Were this objective achieved, it should be possible to obtain exhaustive information without irrelevant detail.

(b) It should succeed in obtaining a

of staff placed by the State Governments at their disposal. State Superintendents were quick to recognise that such a survey would be of great help to those who might care to investigate the religious centres and festivals, inland trade and commerce, art motifs and designs, circuits of trade, ancient trade routes and special manufactures. It would give the student of toponymy much valuable clue and the student of history much valuable insight into the organisation of markets.

The proposal to conduct this survey was accepted in the Second Conference of Census Superintendents held in August, 1960. Various aspects of the survey, then in progress, were discussed again in the regional meetings of Census Superintendents held in Trivandrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June 1961. My colleagues were able to report further progress at the Census Social Studies Camp held in December 1961, when several elaborations of the original questionnaire and in investigational methodology were also discussed. It was further proposed to undertake more intensive surveys of a small number of very important fairs and festivals in each State. At the third Conference of Census Superintendents in February 1962 my colleagues took the further decision to prepare maps of fairs and festivals on the basis of districts and even of tehsils or taluks, some States having already made much progress in this direction.

The scholar will find in these lists much to excite his curiosity. First, they show what an extensive network of seasonal and perennial markets, village fairs still provide to native craftsmanship and industry. Secondly, they help to connect economic streams with social and religious movements. Thirdly, they suggest how a succession of small fairs in a time series culminate in a very big fair, almost always in the heart of a particular area, and how this big event gradually subsides through another time series of small fairs, so that an endless cycle of trade, social and religious intercourse is kept in motion. Fourthly, they insinuate a great deal about what Buchanan-Hamilton was charged to investigate a century and a half ago: "the situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods, the usual rate of their labour, and any particular advantages they may enjoy: their comparative affluence with respect to the cultivators of the land, their domestic usages, the nature of their sales, and the regulations respecting their markets." Fifthly, they can very greatly help in reconstructing ancient and not so ancient trade routes in the country, and, again, what Buchanan-Hamilton was asked to investigate; "the nature of the conveyance of goods by land and water, and the means by which this may be facilitated, especially by making or repairing roads."

NEW DELHI,
September 5, 1964

ASOK MITRA,
REGISTRAR GENERAL, INDIA

PREFACE

I must acknowledge that the inspiration for attempting a survey of Fairs and Festivals of Andhra Pradesh came from a note that the Registrar General of India, Sri Asok Mitra, circulated on the efforts he made to bring out a compendium of Fairs and Festivals of West Bengal, following on the 1951 Census.

The Survey was somewhat ambitious in scope. It was proposed to make a complete and comprehensive collection of information on every fair and festival celebrated in all the villages and towns of the State. The fairs and festivals celebrated by the community in different areas truly reflect our culture, history and tradition. In the present tempo of change of

ANNEXURE

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Questionnaire

Name of Village :—
 Name of Piska :—
 Name of Taluk :—
 Name of District :—

A. The Village :

1. Indicate the location of the village and the chief means of communication with the village? Mention the name of the nearest Railway Station and its distance and also the motor or boat route and its distance. Give distance by road from Taluk and Sub-divisional Headquarters.

2. Give an account of the history or legend, should there be any, connected with the origin of the village.

3. What are the castes and classes that live in the village? What are the chief means of livelihood of the various sections of the population?

4. Give details of places of common religious worship?

5. What is the religion which majority of the villagers profess?

B. The worship of deities and festivals in the village and fairs in connection with them.

(i) The Worship of Deities & Festivals :

6. Name of the festival, its occasion and the time. (Give the English as well as Telugu dates).

7. How ancient is the festival? If there is any history or legend connected with this particular festival, please narrate it. Is this festival a particular festival of the particular village/area/caste/class and limited within its fold? Or, is this festival commonly and universally held and observed throughout the entire district and region?

8. Is the festival connected with the worship of any deity? Mention the name of the deity with a brief description of the image. Is this a common village deity or a personal or family deity? Is there any temple or 'Sthan' (Sacred abode) for the deity in the village? If so, give a description of the same. If the deity has no anthropomorphic or zoomorphic image, then in what form is it worshipped? What other temples or places of worship are there in the village? Do all communities have access to the temple?

9. Is the festival observed in commemoration of the birth or death anniversary of any saint or 'Pir'? Give a detailed report on the life and religious preachings of the saint or the 'Pir', and also narrate the history or any traditional story associated with his life.

10. From what date does the worship of the deity and the

ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ లో జాతరలు, ఉత్సవాలు, పండుగలు

ప్రశ్నావళి

గ్రామం పేరు :-

ఫిర్యాద పేరు :-

తాలూకా పేరు :-

జిల్లా పేరు :-

(ఎ) గ్రామం.

1. గ్రామపురి ఉనికి, గ్రామానికి ప్రధాన రాకపోకల మార్గాలను తెలుపండి, అత్యంత సమీపంలోవున్న రైల్వే స్టేషను పేరు, దాని దూరం, మోటారు లేక పడవ మార్గం, దాని దూరం తెలుపండి. తాలూకా, సబ్ డివిజనులు ప్రధాన కార్యస్థానాల నుండి రోడ్డు ద్వారా ఎంత దూరం ఉందో తెలియజేయండి.

2. గ్రామ పుట్టుకకు చారిత్రక లేక పౌరాణిక ప్రాముఖ్యమైన నా ఉంటే దాన్ని వివరించండి.

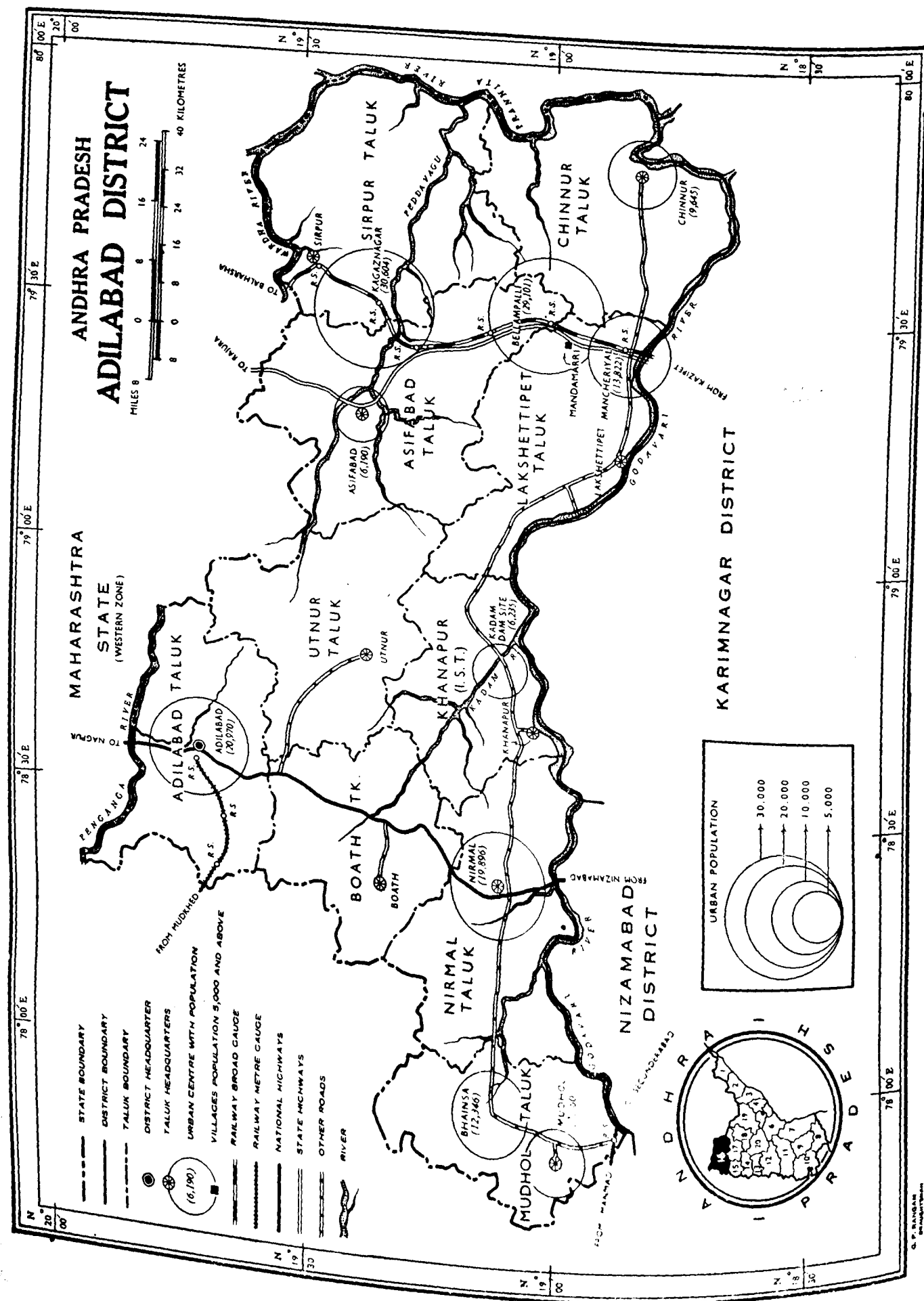
3. గ్రామములో నివసించే వారి కులాలేమిటి? తరగతు లేమిటి? వివిధ వర్గాల ప్రధాన జీవనోపాధులేమిటి?

4. సాధారణ మతారాధన ప్రదేశాల వివరాలను తెలుపండి.

5. గ్రామస్థలలో అధిక సంఖ్యాకులు ఏ మతస్థులు? (బి) గ్రామంలో దేవతారాధన, ఉత్సవాలు, పండుగలు వాటికి సంబంధించిన జాతరలు లేక సంతలు (తీర్థాలు, తిరునాళ్లు, పుష్కరాలు వగైరా):-
(i) దేవతల ఆరాధన, ఉత్సవాలు :-

6. ఉత్సవం పేరు, సంద

ADILABAD DISTRICT



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ADILABAD TALUK

During Mahasivaratri, the villagers take river bath and observe fasting and *jagarana*.

SOURCE : *Sri Aasanna, Compost Fieldman, District Agricultural Office, Adilabad*

16. Ankapoor—Situated at a distance of 7 miles from the Adilabad Railway Station and town. As there is the temple of Ankanathswamy, the village is called Ankapoor.

The total population of the village is 343 and it is made up of a few sub-communities of Caste Hindus ; and Scheduled Tribes (175)—Raj Gond. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture and basket making.

The temple of Pochamma is the place of worship in the village. Jala Devara represented by a pole to which a hair is tied is also worshipped by the villagers and there is no temple for the deity.

Jala Devara Jatara is celebrated for 3 days from *Vaisakha Suddha Purnima* (April-May). Arrangements are made one day in advance. *Aradhana* is performed with turmeric, *kumkum* and *akshinthalu* (rice mixed with turmeric). Goats, fowls and sheep are sacrificed. This festival is of ancient origin and the local hill tribes participate. *Pujari* is a Raj Gond with hereditary rights. *Prasadam* is distributed to all.

River baths, fastings and *jagarana* are observed during Mahasivaratri.

SOURCE : *Sri Aasanna, Compost Fieldman, Agricultural Department, Adilabad*

17. Ankoli—Situated at a distance of 6 miles from the Adilabad Railway Station and town. Half a mile from the village there is a ruined Venkateswara

temple. Hence the village was named after the Lord as Venkoli which with the passage of time became Ankoli.

The total population of the village is 1,259 and it is made up of several sub-communities of Caste Hindus ; Scheduled Castes (140)—Mala and Madiga; Scheduled Tribes (232)—Gond ; and Muslims. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditional occupations.

The ancient Venkateswara temple is the only place of worship in the village. The image of deity is carved on a slab in human form with four hands holding *sankhu* (conch), *chakra* (disc), *gadha* (mace) and *padma* (lotus). The image is very beautiful but the legs are cut off. There is also a mutilated stone

The guarding deity of the village is called Aki Pen and is worshipped at the time of first sowing. The deity is represented by two small wooden poles fixed to a big pole with a white flag. While installing the deity some kind of leaves are kept beneath it. A day is chosen for performing ceremonial rites to the deity in consultaion with the village elders. This deity is worshipped for the successful germination of the seeds. A fowl or a goat as decided upon by the villagers is sacrificed and prayers are offered to the deity for blessing them with a good harvest. Generally, the ceremony concludes by midday and the villagers sow seeds immediately.

Avul Pen *alias* Pochamma is worshipped in the months of *Chaitram* (March–April) and in *Sravanam* (July–August) to ward off epidemics. A goat is sacrificed to the deity. The meat of the sacrificed goat is equally distributed among all the households in the village. Newly married couple worship the deity for being blessed with happy and prosperous married life.

Masoba, the boundary deity represented by a triangular shaped stone is worshipped during *Dasara* (September–October). A goat is sacrificed to the deity and the meat of the goat is distributed equally among all.

The village deity Satti Pen is worshipped in the month of November soon after the harvest. A convenient day is fixed for worshipping the deity and on that day all the villagers place a small quantity of their new crops before the idol and invoke the deity to bless them with prosperity. The villagers cook and eat only after the puja is over.

Hanuman is worshipped on every Monday. Cocoanuts, flowers and fruits are offered to the deity.

Bheemdev festival is celebrated for a day in the month of *Vaisakham* (April–May). This is a community festival and the day of celebration is decided

upon according to the wishes of the elderly people of the community. On the day of the festival only vegetarian dishes are prepared and little quantities of all the items prepared are offered to the deity. On the following day the image of the deity is taken to a nearby hill stream for washing.

Rajula festival is celebrated for one day, in the honour of Polam Raju or Nagoba deity, a God holding sway over the hills and forests who is supposed to protect the cattle and the herdsmen, on the Full Moon Day of *Ashadam* (June–July). All the male members including children with their cattle go to a nearby forest and sacrifice a goat to Rajula deity. There, *kheer* (sweet cooked rice) is prepared and a little bit is given to all the cattle and the rest is enjoyed by the members present. Afterwards a straight line of twenty or thirty yards is drawn with turmeric powder and cattle are made to cross over it and driven away into the forest without any guard and brought back on the following day. As the males perform puja, women look after the preparation of the feast. A non-vegetarian feast along with *kheer* is prepared and enjoyed. A goat is sacrificed collectively by the villagers and the meat is distributed among all. Till they observe this festival, they do not touch the leaf of teak tree. The belief in observing this festival, is that on that day if any cattle, that

ASIFABAD TALUK

on a rock who suddenly disappeared. Lakshmaiah narrated this incident to the villagers. From then onwards this festival is being celebrated.

The patrons are Vaisyas and Sudras. The local Hindus participate. *Pujari* is a Sudra. Free feeding is there.

A fair is held for 3 days in this connection near the Siva temple with a few shops. Eatables, lanterns, combs, mirrors, books, pictures and clothes, etc., are sold.

SOURCE : *Sri A. Sankar, Village Level Worker, Nambal*



SIRPUR TALUK

LAKSHETTIPET TALUK

KHANAPUR IND.SUB-TALUK

BOATH TALUK

4. **Kuntala**—Situated on the banks of Kadam river at a distance of 8 miles from Nagpur road and 14 miles from Boath.

It is believed that in the hoary past, saints used to perform *tapas* (penance) about Lord Someswaraswamy in this place. The place is blessed with natural beauty because of water-falls. It is sure to become one of the important places if there are proper transport facilities for the pilgrims. There is a proposal of the Government to make it a pilgrim centre. Sri Bheemsen Sachar, the then Governor of Andhra Pradesh accompanied by the Collector of Adilabad visited the place.

The total population of the village is 59 and it is entirely made up of the Scheduled Tribe, Gonds. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture and other traditional occupations.

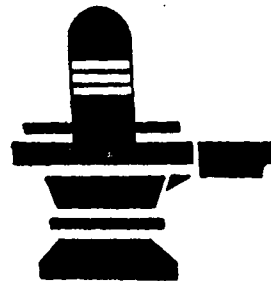
There is a stone Sivalingam near the water-falls which is to be reached through a mysterious opening in the rock. At present there is no temple to the Lord. The Andhra Pradesh Government seems to have sanctioned funds for the construction of a shrine to the Lord.

Mahasivaratri festival is celebrated near Someswaraswamy Sivalingam for a day on *Magha Bahula Chathurdasi* (January-February). The devotees take bath in the river Kadam and worship the Lord. About 5,000 devotees local and from distant places congregate. All Hindu communities participate in the festival.

A few shops are opened near the temple selling eatables, etc.

SOURCE : 1. Places of Interest in Andhra Pradesh published by Information & Public Relations Department, Hyderabad
2. Sri A.V. Raghava Rao, Teacher, S. B.S., Echoda

NIRMAL TALUK



Fowls and goats are rarely sacrificed at Mahakali temple by a few devotees in fulfilment of vows on ordinary days but not on festival days.

SOURCE: 1. *Sri P. Rajamohan Rao, Tahsildar, Mudhol*
2. *Article by Sri T. Rajeswara Rao in Andhra Prabha Weekly dated 28-8-63*



APPENDICES

