

**RAMPA REBELLION IN ANDHRA PRADESH ( 1879 AND  
1922-1924**

**RAMPA REBELLION IN ANDHRA PRADESH (1879 AND  
1922-1924**

**NALAMATI LAKSHMANA RAO**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfil-  
ment of the requirements for the  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

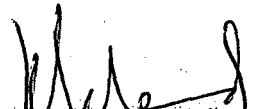
**Centre for Political Studies  
School of Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi-110067**

**1 9 8 1**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES

C E R T I F I C A T E

This dissertation entitled "RAMPA REBELLION IN ANDHRA PRADESH (1879 AND 1922-1924)" submitted by Nalamati Lakshmana Rao for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. We recommend this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for the evaluation.

  
PROF. K. SESHADRI  
Supervisor

  
PROF. RASHEDUDDIN KHAN  
Chairman

CONTENT

	Pages
PREFACE ...	i - v
INTRODUCTION ...	1 - 14
<u>Chapter - I</u>	
THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE KONDA REDDIS AND THE KOYAS ...	15 - 31
<u>Chapter - II</u>	
THE BRITISH POLICIES TOWARDS THE TRIBES OF GODAVARI AND VISAIKAPATNAM AGENCY	32 - 49
<u>Chapter - III</u>	
RANPA REBELLION OF 1879-80 AND 1932-24 ...	50 - 69
<u>Chapter - IV</u>	
CONCLUSION ...	70 - 91
BIBLIOGRAPHY ...	92 - 98

\* \* \* \*

## PREFACE

Historically, the tribals in India kept themselves aloof from the plainsmen. As and when they came into conflict with the plainsmen, they were forced to go deep into the forest areas to live. However, this had not been so at all times. The tribals did live along with their neighbours and in effect were also subjected to cultural interaction. Whatever the degree of cultural interaction that took place, the tribals after having assimilated some aspects of the Hindu culture, did succeed in maintaining their identity.

However, the pattern of relation of the tribals with their Hindu neighbours started to change with the establishment of British colonial rule in India. Since the aim of the British was to integrate all

sections and classes of Indian society within the parameters of the colonial state, they made laws which suited their interests. Roads and railways were constructed which ran through the hills and forest areas and thereby, making the communications much easier from one place to another.

When the commercialisation of agriculture started to take place landlords from the plains went in search of new lands and also started to penetrate into the hills. The colonial government extended its law and order to the tribal society, and this enabled traders, moneylenders and contractors to establish their hold in the tribal villages. The government took over the management of the forests and declared some areas as 'Excluded Areas'. A ban on the traditional 'Podu' cultivation was also imposed. The government insisted on licenses with regard to the domestic consumption of toddy. As the traditional cultivation was replaced by the

commercial one, the tribal peasants were forced to borrow money from the sowcars for various agricultural operations. Exorbitant rate of interest was charged. Since the tribal people were unable to clear the debts, the lands passed on to the sowcars. Mittadari system reduced the tribals into serfdom.

Having been thrown into such humiliating conditions, the tribal people were left with no other choice but to take up arms against their oppressors, of all kinds.

The present study examines two tribal revolts in the Godavari and Visakhapatnam agencies in Andhra Pradesh. Since the revolts occurred in the Rampa area they came to be known as "Rampa Rebellions".

This dissertation is divided into four chapters.

In the introductory chapter an overall view of the subject matter is given. The social, cultural and economic life of the two tribes i.e., Konda Reddis and the Koyas is described in the first chapter. While describing the cultural life of these tribes, Hindu influence over them is also noted. It is hoped that the study of the cultural interaction of the tribals with the Hindu would be helpful in analysing how the outside leadership could succeed in organizing the tribals.

In the second chapter, the British policy towards the tribals is discussed. The way the Britishers intruded into the tribal society, and how they ruined the traditional tribal economy is also analysed.

In the third chapter, the background and the immediate causes and the course of the revolts are discussed.



In the concluding chapter, characterisation and a comparison of these two revolts is made. The importance of the political leadership is highlighted.

This study is mainly based on government documents which are in the nature of primary and secondary sources. The published books and articles on the subject have also been consulted.

While thanking all those who have helped me in collecting the material for this dissertation, I wish to place on record my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. K. Seshadri, who has all along been a source of inspiration in completing this work.

*N. Lakshmana Rao.*

N. LAKSHMANA RAO

**I N T R O D U C T I O N**

The tribals are the original inhabitants of India. They have been living in the relative isolation of the hills and the forests. Regarding their cultural ethos, language, social and political institutions, beliefs and customs they are different from the other sections of the society. If they are not egalitarian, they are at least non-hierarchical and undifferentiated. They have been free from many social evils from which the civilised society is suffering. What the sophisticated society is striving for is very much natural for the tribal people. The healthy aspects of their cultural life are the absence of caste-distinctions, equality of the sexes, preference for adult marriage, the liberty of divorces and the freedom for widows to remarry. In the economic field, the concept of private property is unknown to them.

In the tribal communities the personal relations are direct and intimate. If one accepts man-woman relation as the criterion for judging any society's development one has to accept the tribal society as the relatively free one. The women enjoy equal rights as the men do. The attitude of the tribal people

towards sex is a simple, innocent and natural. Both the young men and women grow up without much inhibitions and repressions. Pre-marital <sup>sexual</sup> relationship is not a subject of objection. The institution of youth dormitory provides a socially safe place for pre-marital sexual relations.

In the matter of marriage, due weight is given to the views of boy and girl. Generally marriages are held with mutual consent. Even though monogamy is prevalent, polygamy, and polyandry also exist.

In the field of religion nature worship is prevalent. For all the tribes the whole world is full of spirits.

However, all these general characteristics of the tribal society cannot be found in particular tribes. Especially the tribes of South India have assimilated many of the cultural traits of Hinduism. The Konda Reddis and the Koyas, of Godavari Agency that are studied in the present work have much to do with Hinduism.

As the Konda Reddis speak a very high class grammatical Telugu with a peculiar accent, the Koya

language was said to be a dialect of Gondi. They were using a many Telugu words.

Some kind of caste element entered the Konda Reddis. There were higher and lower classes. The higher class among the Reddis usually lived on hill tops. Each class had its own cluster of houses. Unlike the Konda Reddis, the Koyas were a semi-nomadic tribe. They did not remain long in the same place. Four years sufficed to exhaust the soil in one locality. They would migrate to another spot, where they could make a fresh clearing, and create a new village.

Both the Reddis and the Koyas considered themselves as Hindus. Whereas beef-eating was strictly prohibited in the Reddis, among the Koyas it was restricted to death and annual ceremonies.

Both these tribes worshipped village deities like Mithyalamma. Both of them celebrated some of the Hindu festivals. Like the caste Hindus, the Koyas did not eat at the hands of Harijans and Mohammedans.

The pattern of marriage and marriage customs were similar, in both the tribes, to those obtaining ordinarily

in the Telugu community. Marriages were always post puberty. Child marriage was rare. As a rule widow remarriages was not allowed. Marriage rites were done on Hindu lines.

The social organization of the Konda Reddis as well as the Koyas functioned democratically. The village was a unit of administration. They had the Kula Panchayat. The headman of the village was elected. A group of villages formed Telugu Panchayat in the Reddis and Samutu in the Koya community. All the disputes were settled in the villages by the Kula pedda. The Panchayat conducts the enquiries.

In the economic field, the Hill Reddis did extensive 'Podu' cultivation. They used the plough for cultivation. Muttadari system was prevalent in both the communities. The Muttadars collected the tax. The Koyas suffered from want of food. For four months in a year the Koyas lived on toddy and on some kind of roots. They dig up from the forests. The reason for their being left without food except toddy for four months was not that they got less from the land but that they were so truthful to their word that they gave up last grain to the creditors.

The economy of the tribals was ruined the moment various agencies and forces intruded their economy through which the tribal culture was also affected. Before the Britishers came to India, the tribals' economic relations with the plainsmen was negligible. Their interaction with the Hindus was in the field of culture only. Despite the assimilation of Hindu culture, the tribals could keep their identity and self-image undiluted. But with the advent of British rule in India the basic structure of the Indian society was changed.

As the colonial state wanted to integrate all the sections and classes of Indian society, the hitherto isolated tribal society was no exception. To complete the process of integration, the British made many policies. By simply establishing their claim over the tribal society would not help the colonial state. They had to introduce the money economy by abolishing the simple barter economy of the tribals. That would not suffice. The concept of private property should be introduced into the egalitarian society of the tribals. To accomplish this task, laws were made accordingly.

The colonial state needed abundant financial resources to maintain the vast administrative machinery throughout India. Since industry was in its infancy, large amount of revenue had to be extracted from the agrarian sector into which the tribal economy was already made an integral part.

For successful introduction of money economy, for collection of revenue, to maintain law and order, the state had to introduce some new institutions into the tribal society. The mechanism that connected the tribal village to the colonial empire consisted many intermediaries like the <sup>a</sup>mittadars, forest contractors, officials, merchants and moneylenders. The mittadars were the incharge of collecting land tax from the tribals.

The government took over the management of the forests and declared some tracts as Reserved Forests into two categories, Excluded Areas and Partially Excluded Areas. A ban on the Podu cultivation was imposed. The government insisted on a licence for domestic consumption of toddy and thereby attempted curbing the tribal customs. As the plainmen introduced their mode of cultivation



the tribal peasants had to borrow money from the sowcars for various agricultural operations. The merchants and moneylenders had played their role in the naked exploitation of the innocent tribals. Exorbitant rate of interest was being taken even for small amounts of money. Unable to clear the debts the tribesman had to pass his lands to the sowcars and thereby worked as a labourer in his own land. Even for collecting fruits or for felling trees and rearing their cattle in the forest the officials forced them to pay rents of various kinds. In effect their dependence on the money-lender increased. Thus the muttadari and moneylending system almost reduced the tribals to serfdom.

Having been thrown into such humiliating conditions the tribal people were left with no other choice but to take arms against their oppressors of all kinds. The spark could be lit off by any particular incident.

The Rampe region was ruled by a Mansabdar called Rambhupati Devu. The East India Company made a settlement with him in 1813. By that agreement he was not to pay any tax but to maintain order in the hills. He died in 1835 leaving a daughter and an illegitimate son.

His daughter was recognized by the Muttadars as heiress to the Zamindari. But afterwards she was driven out as her chastity was suspected. After grave disturbances, her brother was accepted by the Muttadars to perform old police duties on the condition that their united quit rent should not exceed Rs. 1000. It was when the Zamindar demanded that the Muttadars should pay fees for the right to tap toddy, and to levy an additional tax the tribal people revolted against the Zamindar, officials and contractors.

The immediate cause of the rebellion of 1922-24 was the extraction of free forced labour from the tribal people of Andhra Agency for constructing a high-way penetrating thick jungles and across low hills from Narsipetnam to Chintapalli. The road was a necessary one for the easy movements of the troops in a country which had already witnessed a few insurrections before. The hillmen never worked for wages. The labourers from the plain were unwilling to risk their health in a highly malarial country. Under such circumstances a Tahsildar by name Bastian, an Indian Christian, was posted to implement this hard work. He began to insist on forced

labour from the tribals who lost no time in resisting the demands. Force was employed by Bastian and this worsened the situation further.

Those were the days of non-Cooperation.

Seetharamaraju who was a plainsman cited Gandhiji's preachings and asked them to non-cooperate. His mission was passed from one corner to another. The entire agency from one end to the other was ab<sup>a</sup>ysed with insurrection.

Under the leadership of Raju, the revolutionaries adopted a systematic policy of raiding police stations so that they could get hold of ammunition depots and arms. In the months of August and September of 1922 police stations of Chintepalli, Krishnadevipet and Rajavomangi were raided.

Since the local police were unable to handle these incidents, the Reserve Police and the Malabar Police were brought in to take stock of the situation. When small parties of police under one of two officers had been scanning the country to locate and round up the 'rebels', the tribal revolutionaries under the strict

instructions by Raju killed the British officers without doing any harm to the Indian sepoy. This fight continued till 1924 May. As the resources were coming to an end Raju with his followers attacked some other police station. There, Raju and his group got set back when most of the <sup>people</sup> police were killed. Later many revolutionaries were captured and the villagers were harassed and tortured. Finally the death knell of the rebellion sounded when Raju was killed on May 7, 1924.

We can make comparative study of these two revolts regarding the socio-economic situation of the tribals, the then existing contempt among all the other classes of Indian society against the colonial rulers, the role played by the leaders and their ideology.

Even though there was vast gap of forty years between the two rebellions, both the Konda Rebellion of 1879 and the Koyas of 1920s had experienced equal sufferings. The external interference in the form of government regulations i.e. restrictions on Podu cultivation, excise tax and so on, the oppression by government officials, introduction of money economy and immigration of plainmen like merchants and moneylenders

created much dissatisfaction. All these forces disturbed both the economic and social relations of these tribes.

If we look at the political situation in the context of Indian society during these two revolts, a qualitative difference would be found. The freedom movement was extremely limited to the upper-middle classes and the Indian National Congress was not yet born by 1879. The vast rural society was untouched and unmoved by the freedom fervour, on the contrary by 1920 Gandhi was leading the Indian masses completely on new lines. The freedom fight had become the movement of the masses. In the primary level, all the sections of Indian society had seen their common enemy in the colonial state. Inspired by this, Alluri Seetaramaraju had the strategy of coordinating the tribal revolt with the other sections of society. Liberation of India was his aim. Unlike this, the rebellion of 1879 was limited to the small society of the Konda Reddis of Rampa region only.

Organizationally, in both the rebellions, the social and traditional political leadership came into full play. As every village had a headman, and group

of villages forming into a council of villages headed by a council, launching of a revolt had become easy task. That was why in the 1922-24 revolt Raju did not face any difficulty in organizing the tribals.

Another point is how could outside leadership get the confidence of the tribal society that lives in its own world. In other countries, generally the immigrants either drove the aboriginals or killed them. Unlike that, in India the tribal people could live along with their neighbours without losing their identity. 'In the background of centuries long association of the tribals with the non-tribal Hindus, the cultural influence of the Hindus on the tribals has worked in the most natural and spontaneous manner. With the cultural borrowings and change of model from tribal to Hindu, the tribals have also made themselves exposed to the Hindu leadership.' In some regions where tribals and non-tribals live together in the same villages, a leader of the tribal community may have his followers and admirers among the non-tribals and vice-versa. Since both the tribals and Hindus worship some goddesses like Kali, it is naturally easy for the leader from the plains to inspire the tribals by worshipping the particular goddess.

After independence we will find lot of difference in the tribal social life and in the nature of their problems either. Due to many factors like various government schemes, educational facilities, employment, the efforts of social reformers, activities of the political activists and parties, and industrialization, the tribal society is undergoing a qualitative change.

If we accept some features of the tribes as basic like living in forests and hills; speaking the same tribal dialect; following primitive occupations like hunting and gathering of forest produce, most of the tribal people do not possess them. Anthropologists classify the existing tribes into four categories: (i) Those who are still confined to the original forest habitants and follow the old pattern of life; (ii) those who have more or less settled down in rural areas and have taken to agriculture; (iii) Those who are engaged in modern industries and vocations and (iv) those who have totally assimilated in the Indian population.

By this classification we can understand that most of the tribal people are moving much closer to the

non-tribal society. Thus having assimilated in the modern society, now the tribal people find themselves in the company of the oppressed sections of the plains. Either in agricultural activities or in industrial work, both of them experience the same problems. Their common exploiters are landlords, contractors, moneylenders, officials and businessmen. These are the forces that are uniting all labouring people.

This is the reason we find a qualitative difference in the various movements launched by many tribes after independence. Their demands and objectives have changed. Their political consciousness has gone much higher. However, in the present study, I have confined to the two revolts that occurred in the Todavari Agency. As I compared them with regard to aims and objectives, a qualitative difference would be found between the two. In the same manner we can find much difference in the tribal movements that are being launched in these thirty years. The purpose of this study is to find out how much political was the Rampa Rebellion of 1922-24 when compared to that of 1879 in the same area.



Chapter - 1

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE KANDA REDDIS  
AND THE KOYAS

This chapter deals basically with the typology of the life style of the hill-tribes. There were a number of tribal groups in the region, namely Bagetas, Konda Doras, or Konda Kapus, Godabas, Konds, Paidis, Valmikia, Kammaras, Kummara, Savaras, Kondulus and Gondus. But this chapter deals primarily with the two major hill tribes namely the Konda Reddis and the Koyas. An attempt would have been made to throw light on the other groups of hill-tribes but due to the paucity of material, this task looks very difficult. Hence, I would confine this study to the two (Konda Reddis and Koyas) major tribal groups in the region under study.

#### Konda Reddis or Hill Reddis

The Konda Reddis lived in the hills south of the Godavari river on both sides of Papikonda range. Chiefly, they were found in Kondamadaly, Akur (at a distance of 24 miles west of Chodavaram, Kondada, Bodulu, and Chevala Muttans in the East Godavari Agency).

"A peep into history shows that the Reddis were a ruling class in the Andhra country. The fact that they continued to battle for power even from their hill resorts is suffi-

cient proof of their valour. But time and again, they got reconciled to the hills and valleys, shorn of all glory, but yet maintaining in purity many of the noble qualities of the Reddis."<sup>1</sup>

The Reddis speak a very high class grammatical Telugu with a peculiar accent. In general outline the social organization of the Reddis was similar to that of the Koyas. They had <sup>a</sup> an actively functioning kula Panchayat. The Reddis did not believe in the law courts of today, but prefer a Panchayat. According to them, a Telug panchayat as an appellate body will ensure correct behaviour by the village or mullah panchayat. The Panchayat, they believed, must be elected on adult franchise. In a Mullah or Taluk Panchayat, they wanted communal representation. The tribes lived in their own caste communes.

"It is interesting and useful that these democratic institutions hold their ground still on these hills whilst the more cultured Hindu of the plains has allowed his village Panchayats to perish and is incapable of reviving the ancient corporate sense."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. A. Aiyappan, Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras, (Madras, 1948), p.64.

2. Ibid., p.67.

The highest class among the Reddis usually lived on hill tops. Each class had its own cluster of houses. They would come down from the hill only for salt and cloth. The Reddis had the habits of caste Hindus, as a rule, they did not eat beef, but ate pork.

They were all Hindus Saivites. They worshipped the Pandavas, the spirits of the hills whom they called the sons of 'Racha', Muttalouvulu and the village deities — Muthyalamma, her brother Poturaju, Saralamma and Unnamalamma.

The pattern of marriage and marriage customs among the Reddis were similar to those obtaining ordinarily in the Telugu community. Marriages were always post-puberty, but parents of the bride and the bridegroom might arrange engagements even before puberty.<sup>3</sup>

As a rule widow re-marriage was not allowed, but there was no objection to anyone having a widow as a keep. When a widow or a seduced woman was kept by a man, she functions as his wife for all purposes and her

---

3. Ibid., p.65.

children were recognized as legitimate, but no religious ceremonies were performed for this inferior type of 'cohabitation'. If the man had already a married wife, the keep could not come into the house without the express consent of his legal wife.

In cases of seduction, the Rula Panchayat levied a fine on the seducer a portion of which was paid to the injured husband of the woman as compensation for the expenses incurred by him for the marriage.

If a proper marriage after negotiation was performed, a Brahmin priest would officiate and a 'Tali' was tied. During marriages and festivals they indulged freely in drinking and arrack. Mostly, they used to take sage toddy. The dances were performed on the Koya model -- the men wearing the Bison horn head-gear, peacock feathers and long robes.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding crimes, the Reddi generally would come down to plains as a witness in murder cases. Murders usually related to sexual matters. Sometimes persons

---

4. Ibid., p.66.

suspected of witchcraft were murdered. The peculiarity was that the Reddi readily would confess his guilt in the court.

In the economic field the Hill Reddis were purely agriculturists; they did extensive 'Pudu' cultivation. A good number of them owned land and cattle. Unlike the Savaras, they used the plough for Pudu cultivation. Wet cultivation was rare. They paid tax to government at the rate of Rs. 6 to Rs. 7 per acre.

Those Reddi women who could afford, wore a lengthy saree while the poorer wore a shorter one skirting round the waist and another small piece to cover the breast. The men invariably wore a 'kumpeena' and a turban. Some well-to-do Reddis wore a cloth round their waists when they were to come down to the plains.

"They do not touch beef but will eat pork".<sup>5</sup> The Reddis were addicted to drink, but they indulged freely in it during festival occasions. But they would not get

---

5. B. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, vol. IV, (Madras, 1909), p.354.

much intoxicated. "The Reddi women collect tubers, and other edible roots by digging the earth with a primitive sharpened digging stick. Men gather honey, collect several vegetable edible herbs, nuts and fruits for the cooking pot."<sup>6</sup>

The Muttah system was in vogue also in the areas in which the Reddis lived. The office of the Muttahdar was hereditary. Every Muttahdar was given Rs.40/- per village as pesh cash and a local cess calculated at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas in the rupee by the people of every village. He was also given a 'mamool' of one fowl and one 'Thavva' of ghee at the time the tenants paid the pesh cash. He would get free labour - vetti - also from a number of villagers and in turn he would give them some food on the days they worked for him.

"To quote an instance, M. Raja Reddi was a Muttahdar aged 40 years. He was getting Rs.500 as pesh cash in addition to local cess calculated at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas in the rupee plus some miscellaneous fees, all of which would amount to Rs. 600 per year. In addition he was paid

---

6. V. Raghavaiah, Tribes of India, vol.I, (New Delhi, 1969), p.68.

by the government Rs.500 per annum towards the forest rights which his fore-fathers had relinquished some 60 or 70 years ago. Out of the total annual income of Rs.1,100 he had to pay the government a pesh cash of Rs.100 only a year."<sup>7</sup>

### The Koyas

"Godavari Valley, from where the Indravati joins it to the apex of the valley, is the Koya land. The agency i.e., the hilly and the forest area of north-western Andhra Pradesh, extending over 3,678 sq.miles is called the 'Godavari Valley'. The area is studded with 660 Koya villages scattered all over."<sup>8</sup>

The Koyas were divided into twelve sub-divisions i.e. Raj Koya, Manne Koya, Gotta Koya, Chitta Koya, Banda Koya, Gumpu Koya, Chenchukoya etc. Each sub-division had some 'Gottas', some three Gotta, some four, five, six, and seven Gotta; Gottas mean Gods.

---

7. A. Aiyappan, op.cit., pp.66-67.

8. V. Raghavaiah, op.cit., p.72.

DISS  
307.772095484  
R1803 Ra



TH798



TH-798



The Koya language was said to be a dialect of Gondi. They were using a many Telugu words. Aiyappan noticed in their language some typical Kannada forms in addition to the Tamil and Telugu ones. There were <sup>a</sup> dialectal differences between the speeches of different areas. "The whole northern folk appeared to retain the more ancient speech which perhaps was close to 'Kui', the language of the Khonds in Orissa."<sup>9</sup>

Aiyappan opined that the Koyas were honest, truthful, law-abiding, chaste patient and were endowed with a great degree of fortitude and sense of gratitude. The bad element of criminality was absent in them.

The Koyas did not remain long in the same place. They were a restless race. Four years sufficed to exhaust the soil in one locality, and they did not take the trouble to plough deeper, but would migrate to another spot, where they could make a fresh clearing, and erect a new village. Their huts were covered generally with melons and gourds, the flowing tendrils of which give them a very graceful appearance, but the surrounding jungle

---

9. E. Thurston, op.cit., vol.IV, p.37.

makes them damp and unhealthy. When the cultivation season was over, they were busy of scaring away the wild animals and birds from their fields.

Tigers and Cheetas (leopards) often resorted to the fields. Poorer kinds of grain were also grown, such as millet and maize, out of which the people made a kind of porridge, called java. They likewise grew a little cotton, from which they made some coarse cloth and tobacco. The ippa tree was much praised. The Koyas ate the flowers of this tree. They ate them either dried in the sun, or fried with a little oil.

They did not live in the villages in which other castes reside. They preferred a secluded life, away even from the Hindus. For shaving they used their teddy-tapping knife instead of razors. The Koyas, says Aiyappan :

"...are all Hindus. The women put caste mark on their foreheads as Hindu women do. Reference has been made to the beef-eating of the Koyas which is often held out as a pointer to non-Hindu origin. But, a thorough study of all these will only seem to emphasize

the fact that the Koyas of all classes and castes are Hindus in origin and upbringing. Beef eating is, in certain areas, restricted to death and annual ceremonies.\*10

The Gods and Goddesses worshipped by them were the Sun, Nuttial Anna, Mahalakshmi Anna. Materials for worship were turmeric and saffron. They celebrated two festivals called Bhumi Pandaga and Kothal Nandaya. "All the Koyas seem to hold in great respect the Pandava brothers, especially Arjuna and Shima..."<sup>11</sup> They did not eat at the hands of Harijans or Mohamadans. In spite of very zealous efforts by Mrs. Caine, a Missionary lady to convert the Koyas to Christianity they remained unyielding owing to their natural conservatism.

All forms of marriage, including elopement, recognised by the ancient Hindus obtained among them. Rev. J. Caine writes that "the Koyas generally marry when of fair age, but infant marriage was unknown. The maternal uncle of a girl had always the right to dispose of her hand, which he frequently bestows upon one of his

---

10. A. Aiyappan, op.cit., p.61.

11. E. Thurston, op.cit., vol.IV, p.56.

own sons. Marriage rites were done on Hindu lines.<sup>12</sup>

The Koyas were very affectionate towards their women and children. The woman as a rule, remains faithful to her husband to whom she is attached for the time being. There are also many cases of widows observing strict widowhood. 'Tali' — Mangalasutram — is tied even when a widow is remarried.

Aiyappan describes analytically about their social organization. The Koya society is controlled by an extremely democratic organization the "Kula Panchayat". The village is a unit of administration and over it is a "Pirma Pedda". The office is hereditary but a democratic principle is applied to it. When a Pirma Pedda dies, his heir is usually elected in an assembly of village elders. Above him there is 'Kula Pedda' or Patol who is recognized by the government, the office is hereditary — corresponding to our village munsiffs.

A group of some ten or twelve villages forms a Samutu in the Koya country. Over the Samutu presides the

---

12. Ibid., p.48.

"Samutu Dora" or Kula Dora or Pedda Kapu", but he is only a Chairman of the Council and has to be guided by the opinion of his colleagues. The Samutu is appealed to against the Pinna Pedda or the Patel, who is also liable to "Tappu" as any ordinary citizen.

The fines are levied in three equal parts as Kula Theppu, Guru Theppu and Raja Theppu or the fines payable to the community, to the religious head and to the State, each being Rs.6/-, totalling Rs.16/-. All the money is appropriated by the commune only.

All the disputes are settled in the village by the Kula Pedda whose decision is normally final. The Panchayat conducts its enquiries in an orderly and dignified manner. Some witnesses are of the opinion that the Pedda Kapu is a tyrant who levies heavy fines, appropriates most of these amounts for himself. Refusal of payments of fine amounts to different kinds of punishment like carrying heavy stones on head, hanging of a man by his hands from a tree for a few hours.<sup>13</sup>

The Koyas live in thatched houses which are built in a circular or rectangular fashion. Their chief

---

13. Aiyappan, op.cit., p.59.

occupation is agriculture and agricultural and forest labour. They do extensive Podu and a bit of wet cultivation. They do not cultivate Podu more than for their requirements. They do not do it as a business proposition i.e. to raise Paddy or Cholam for sale. Another vocation for the Koya is gathering forest produce. Some do basket-making and weaving of mats with bamboo and 'thunga'. Some of the Koyas own a considerable number of cattle, but many of them have no bulks for cultivation and for carts.

Cattle are badly bred and poorly fed. Pasture is available for six months only in the rainy season. The forest demarcations are too close to the villages and as a result, ample grazing ground is not available. They experience great difficulty for drinking water. Apart from this, for crops they have no irrigation facilities like canal systems or wells. The Koyas are so poor that they cannot afford to wear more than 'kempena' and a cloth for the head. The most refined dress they could think of is a 20-count cloth.

Generally, they take gruel and the roots and barks of some trees. A gruel is prepared out of tamarind

which is injurious to health. They eat wild lizards, flesh of rabbits, deer, wild bear and buffalo meat. During obsequies they kill cows. As a rule, on all occasions of death, a buffalo is killed and feasted upon. The Koyas drink a lot. The common beverages are the juice of the Palmyra and arrack distilled from ippe flower. The Koyas suffer from want of food. It is universally stated that for four months in a year the Koyas live on toddy and a tuberous root which they dig up in the forests.

According to one of the witnesses, the reason for their being left without any food except toddy for four months is not that they get less from the land but that they are so truthful to their word that they give up the last grain to the creditors.

To mention in brief, the Konda Reddis and the Koyas of Godavari Agency assimilated most of the Hindu cultural traits. These two tribes had, in the background of continuous interaction with their Hindu neighbours, lost some of the chief traits which are most natural for the tribes in general. In S.C. Dube's opinion the following are the certain specific characteristics of the

Indian tribes.

They are the original inhabitants of the land. They live in the relative isolation of the hills and forests. They have low level of techno-economic development. In terms of their cultural ethos — marriage, family and property relations, beliefs and customs — they are different from other sections of the Indian society. If they are not egalitarian, they are at least non-hierarchical and undifferentiated.<sup>14</sup>

By accepting these criteria, one can judge, how far the Konda Reddis and the Koyas maintained their identity. It is true that both these tribes lived in relative isolation. However, geographical isolation does not imply cultural isolation. The institution of marriage has become rigid among these tribal people. In Verrier Elvin's opinion the tribals' attitude towards sex is innocent, simple and most natural. The institution of youth dormitory provides a socially safe place for premarital sexual relations.<sup>15</sup> But among the Koyas

---

14. S.C. Dubo, Tribal Heritage of India, (New Delhi, 1977), p.4.

15. L.P. Vidyarthi, Tribal Culture of India, (New Delhi, 1977), p.278.



and the Konda Reddis the marriage system had slowly been petrified. Widow remarriage was not allowed among the Konda Reddis. Although formally widow remarriage was allowed, mostly widowhood was observed. There was no objection among Konda Reddis to anyone having a widow as a keep.<sup>16</sup> Thus monogamy and male chauvinism had been dominating. Such social evils from which the civilised has been suffering spread to the tribal society either.

Another healthy characteristic of the tribal society was that they were unhierarchic and undifferentiated, i.e. absence of caste system. Even this evil to some extent penetrated the tribal society. There has been a gradual change from tribe to caste and many are in the process of conversion from tribe to caste. "Most of the lower castes of today had a tribal origin".<sup>17</sup> Aiyappan found the Konda Reddis differentiated themselves into higher and lower classes. Each class had its own cluster of houses.

In the economic field, the tribal society had been least exploitative within itself. The property was

---

16. A. Aiyappan, op.cit., p.65.

17. K.N. Sahay, "Tribal Self-Image and Identity", S.C. Dube, (ed.), Tribal Heritage of India.

communally owned. Barter system was practised in economic dealings. During the British rule money economy was introduced. To integrate the tribal economy and society into the colonial system, the British government made several laws accordingly. With the introduction of new administrative rules and economic laws, new agencies like moneylenders, merchants and middlemen like muttahdars entered the tribal society. All these forces affected the tribal society and disorders occurred. The British policies towards the tribals, how they affected the peaceful tribal life and their reactions will be analysed in the next chapter in detail.

Chapter - II

THE BRITISH POLICIES TOWARDS THE TRIBES OF  
GODAVARI AGENCY

British policy towards the tribals was related to and interrelated with their policies towards other agencies, sections and classes (for example muttandars, moneylenders, sowcar, officials, etc.) and therefore to be viewed in its complete totality. Further "since the colony had to pay the cost of its transformation the burden on the colonial peasant rose steeply".<sup>1</sup> The consequent result was that most of the policies related to Agrarian structure affected and in turn were affected by all the section and classes connected with it. The burden on the Agrarian structure during the process of the development of the underdevelopment will be more evident considering the fact that India has an agrarian economy and that what British wanted from her, was mostly agricultural products. Obviously, as the tribal people were part of the Agrarian structure, though with their distinctive feature, the impact of the British policies fell on them too. However the appropriation of the social surplus from many of the sections of the colony including the tribals, carried out

---

1. A. Aiyappan, Report on Socio-Economic Conditions of Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras, (Madras, 1940), p.67.

by the British was not that of a direct and simple one; instead it was an indirect one involving many other agencies who acted as intermediaries and from whom the British derived their benefits finally.

This indirect exploitation of the sections of the colony gave way to the creation and protection of new classes, so that the process of integration of the colonial economy with that of metropolis could be effectively handled and completed:

"In fact throughout the Indian social structure, new relations and new classes — a new internal structure — were evolved which were the product of and fully integrated with colonialism."<sup>2</sup>

Hence the British policies towards a particular section of the colony (here the tribals) need not always be a direct one; instead they have to be viewed in the light of other policies related to the new classes and relations.

---

2. Bipan, Chandra, Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, (New Delhi, 19 ), p.27.

The process of integration of the colonial economy and society with that of world capitalism in general and of the metropolis in particular included the destruction of the pre-capitalist self-sufficient village economy and introduction of a new one:

"The British rule did shatter the economic and political basis of the old society — a new colonial mode of production came into being for example, the land-tenure system introduced after 1793 completely overturned the old agrarian relations. The new agrarian structure that was evolved to suit the needs of colonialism are, the impact of the economic forces released by it... was not the perpetuation of the old."

This is what happened in the Rampa country also. The history of the Rampa country prior to the rebellion of 1922-24, if properly studied, will unfold the British policies, resulting in the destruction of traditional tribal economy and the introduction of colonial mode of production.

#### Ban on Podu Cultivation.

To begin with, we can well say, that the enforcement of the ban on the Podu cultivation, may, in all

probability, be looked upon as an attempt to disrupt the tribal economy of the Rampa country. Even if it was not desired, the inevitable consequence was that it did in reality destroy the tribal economy. True that, the ban on Podu cultivation was mostly carried out under the pretext of conservation of forest resources. But the fact is that "most of the tracts used for this mode of cultivation are barren hill slopes, not much conducive to rich growth of forest trees".<sup>3</sup> The ban was, in fact, a direct result of the Government takeover of the management of forests from private hands.

To the question whether, the resentment of the tribals would have been pacified, if the government had understood the problems of the hill tribes before imposing the ban and taken an alternative step to provide sufficient permanent agricultural land available to the tribals at a reasonable distance from their village, we cannot answer at this stage. But the fact was that the Government had not done so and that in its opinion "the tribesmen resort to podu cultivation

---

3. A. Aiyappan, op.cit., p.72.

because they are lazy and expect quick returns".

Before going further, we would examine the validity of the above opinion because it is important to note how such an examination would reveal the fact that the tribesmen are obliged to take to podu cultivation owing to a number of unfavourable circumstances - most of which were the result of colonial mechanism. Briefly :

"...the best lands which they cleared, levelled and improved for permanent cultivation have all passed into the hands of the sowcars and other plainmen who manage to get a strong hold over them. From the common sense point of view there is little prospective gain, if they spend their capital and labour in improving their lands.

(1) The zamindar alienated the land for arrears which may be, after all, a very small fraction of the value. The moneylender compels relinquishment or gets the crop pledged for years together."<sup>4</sup>

Their common sense therefore, obliges the hillmen to see a living in podu; (2) where the sowcars are somewhat less

---

4. Provincial Banking Enquiry Report, Madras Presidency, Written Evidence, pp.49-50.



oppressive, the tribesmen do not have the capital with which to begin the seasonal work on the farm. The plough, cattle and seed have to be borrowed at exorbitant rates and any borrowing in the agency means economic suicide.

(3) The only agency which advocated small sums to meet the expenses being the sowcars the hillmen invariably are heavily indebted. A sense of obligation is deeply ingrained in them and this was most ruthlessly exploited by the sowcar. "To pay off old and new debts, the sowcars forced the tribesmen to 'podu' far more extensively than they need under normal circumstances. From this it is clear that it is not out of any necessity of their that the tribesmen cling to podu cultivation."<sup>5</sup> But it was unavoidable and inevitably created by the emerging conditions of the British colonials from time to time.

#### The Role of the Moneylenders.

Coming back, the question itself is a needless one, because the destruction of the tribal economy was completed not by the ban on podu cultivation alone. The task was accomplished by various other processes also — by the

---

5. Ibid., pp. 54-55.

commercialization of agriculture, the indebtedness of the tribals at the hands of the intermediaries and so on - which are all the outcome of British colonialism, whose ultimate aim was the integration of the colonial economy with that of the metropolis, so that the appropriation of the social surplus could be carried on effectively.

That the exploitation of the tribals through moneylending process was a profitable job... will be inferred from the variety of people engaged in this work in Andhra Pradesh. Thus we have:

"(1) Sowcars of various towns, (2) Rich ryots of different villages; (3) Merchants of towns; (4) Inamdars and absentee landlords who have leased out their lands; (5) Money-lenders from Guntur district; (6) The Marwaries; (7) Co-operative societies. Out of all these sources, we may note that sowcar rich ryots and cooperative societies played the most important role in supply of loans."<sup>6</sup>

---

6. Ibid., p.56.

Here some reference should be mentioned about the Government cooperative banks which though playing an unimportant role in the agency in the supply of capital.

"It is supposed to advance 'Taccavi' loans whenever demanded by the procedure followed in the loans is so crude and the machinery for the distribution of these loans moves so slowly that the total amount of it, demanded and offered is almost negligible from a comparative point of view."<sup>7</sup>

Further the hillmen though honest and straightforward were extremely ignorant and there were very few men amongst them who were capable of running a cooperative society, without constant official help and guidance even in petty details. Another point to be noted is, the drawback in that the landholders do not borrow from the co-operative societies and from the government, because they do not give the freedom to the borrower and hence he borrowed mostly from the private persons, so that he could discharge the liabilities in the manner convenient to him. This was done to the reason that if they were to borrow from a private moneylender, then they can discharge the

---

7. Ibid., p.57.

debt at any point of time and also they could discharge it in any shape. But in the case of Government loans and loans from cooperative societies they were to pay fixed instalment at fixed period.

Furthermore, the amount of suffering undergone by the tribals in the hands of these usurers can be known from the exorbitant rates of interest. According to N.G. Ranga:

"...the rates of interest has a tendency to raise to an almost impossible extent in the case of very poor tribals, but the rate of interest varies according to the kind of moneylender also. If he is a ryot the rate is never more than 18 per cent, but if he is a merchant who is interested in 'Namalu' and 'Jatti', it is never less than 50 per cent. If he is however a Marvari, the rate amounts upon atleast 36 per cent compound interest."<sup>8</sup>

These traders and moneylenders could demand exorbitant rates of interest for their loans to the tribals because

---

8. N.G. Ranga, Written Evidence, Provincial Banking Enquiry Report, pp.124-126.

they had the backing of the new legal system which was introduced by the British in the place of tribal customs and conventions. As a result, cattle and property worth Rs. 100 were attached to raise a debt of only Rs.5. All the attached goods were taken away with the police helping the mansabdar and the courts decree for him.<sup>9</sup>

Even, had the British wanted to prevent the moneylenders and other agents (whose creation and existence was the result of British colonialism) from harassing the tribals, they could not, we may say in all probability, have succeeded, because the existence of these agents was a must for the functioning of colonial mechanism, this is one of the many inner contradictions of the phenomenon. Here we may well quote a passage from 'Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India':

"...the usurer was a crucial cog in the mechanism of colonial surplus extraction. He kept the revenue machinery working and other agricultural processes going. He enabled not the production of export crops

---

9. *Ibid.*, p.126.

and their external export. He was responsible for the maintenance of the minimum agricultural functions including the reproduction of the peasant. He was the ultimate and the only safety value in the countryside. In fact he was much as the zamindar or the earlier revenue farmer. So the colonial administration abused and cursed him as an evil. But also declared him to be a necessary evil.<sup>10</sup>

The manner with which the British derived their revenue from the very existence of these usurers is vast and complicated. But what needs emphasis here, is that the hardship and the subsequent discontentment and reaction of the tribals were very often attributed merely to the action of these usurers, without remembering the fact that these intermediaries derived their strength and power from the British. As a result, the fituries in the Rampa country had been considered mostly due to the tyrant behaviour of the usurers rather than to the British colonialism and its policies.

Another question that the tribals could have kept themselves away from the moneylenders does not arise,

---

10. Bipan Chandra, op.cit., n.2, pp.332-33.

because under the emergence of new factors of the colonial phenomenon they were forced to fall in debt with the usurers. Some of the main causes for the agricultural indebtedness were: (1) the pressure of the population on the soil; (2) the existence of many uneconomic holdings due to the sub-division; (3) the lack of subsidiary means of subsistence; (4) failure of crops in years of short rainfall and the spirit of fatalism and improvidence based on insecurity; (5) thriftlessness and extravagance; (6) prosperity which expands credit and encourages borrowing for non-productive purposes; (7) loss of life from starvation and disease; (8) the failure of the cultivator to exert himself with a view to making most of his hands; (9) ill health over the years; (10) inhumanity of money-lenders and the inarticulateness of their debtors.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Mittadari System.

Leave alone the failure of crops due to the natural calamities there were other pressing necessities which compelled the tribals to take loan from the moneylenders and other agencies. The most important is, perhaps the

---

11. Provincial Banking Enquiry Commission Report, (Oral Evidence), pp. 129-31.

Muttadar system in the Rampa country. That the Muttadar was only entitled to collect taxes (under normal circumstances) which were definitely fixed for certain villages and it was not in his power either to increase these taxes or levy new taxes. But the :

"...distinguishing feature of the tribes of East Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam tribal areas is the existence of the Muttadari system which is a relic of the British feudal system in which a hereditary Muttadar is the head of a group of villages."<sup>12</sup>

The Muttadar collects land-revenue and pays a fixed 'Kattubadi' (revenue) to the Government, for his services to be retained, the land revenue was collected in excess of the time these authoritarian leaders had all pervasive powers and became supreme authorities in all walks of tribal life.

"The Muttadars would ill-treat the ryots, vetti labour was extracted. They do not issue receipts for the kist collected. They collect Rs. 2 for every plough. At the time

---

12. V. Raghavaiah, Tribal Revolts, (Nellore, 1971), p.11.



of marriage of people of the village the Muttadars take some 'Kotnam' (fees) from them. It varies from Rs.5 to Rs 50 according to the status of the party. 'Raja Lanchanams' are given in the shape of vegetables. The Muttadars compel the ryots to plough their land free. They also extract 'vetti' work to carrying loads without wages. Each ryot has to work for the Muttadar for about a week or ten days in a year."<sup>13</sup>

Considering the fact that how the practice of bonded labour perpetuated its evils even in the post-independent India, it will not be an exaggeration to say its prevalence during the colonial period. The prevalence of muttadari system almost reduced the tribals to serfdom. To pay the Muttubadi, Raja Lanchanams, the tribals needed money in addition to what they had earned little in their own lands if at all there was any. Further the custom of vetti and other forced labour handicapped the tribals to pay full attention to attend to their own livelihood. As a result, they are often forced to fall in the clutches

---

23. H.G. Rango, op.cit., n.6, p.128.

of the moneylenders. It does not stop with that, the muttadars themselves took advantage of the hillman's illiteracy, partiality for drink, illness, love for feast and ceremonies and improvidence and advanced him, with small loans at exorbitant rates of interest and in return quietly appropriated his produce and where possible, even the lands. The consequent fituris against the Muttadars are mostly viewed as mere result of their harassment of the tribals rather than the British patronage to the Muttadars to whom, the collection of Kattubadi from the tribals by the British officials directly would have been much difficult, if not impossible.

#### The Introduction of Abkari Cons.

Like the ban on the pedu cultivation, yet another interference by the British in the tribal way of life in Rampa country was the introduction of abkari (excise) cess. Drinking was a part of the tribal social and cultural life and they consume toddy which has a low alcoholic content. Aiyappan in his report reveals that the hillman have little or no food for months, and sweet toddy supplies this want to some extent. Upto 1872, the tribes with the

inhabitants in the rest of the presidency had enjoyed the privilege of leaving most of the toddy for domestic consumption without a license under the provisions of section 28 Act III of 1854 Madras, except the agency tracts of Ganjam and Visakhapatnam. But Godavari area was shut out from the privileges.<sup>14</sup> "There can be no doubt", says Sullivan, "withholding from the Rampa hill tribes, a principle which has been conceded on all sides to their neighbours whose country, castes, habits and customs were identical with theirs, a grave error was committed.

"From 1875 onwards, a separate lease for toddy, free of all levies on the Government waste. However in Rampa, it was quite different in the sense that the private land was of the Muttadars and his tenants, hence the project of the rentier demanded from the muttadars, a payment of a fee for each mutta for the privilege of drawing toddy within its limits. Hence the sub-renters started squeezing the hillmen as much as possible."<sup>15</sup>

From the time of the passing of the forest laws restricting podu cultivation, the tribesmen not only lost their right

---

14. Sullivan Report, p.69.

15. Sarojini Regani, Highlights of Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh, p.41.

to toddy but were, to put in totality as a whole, saw their whole tribal economy on which they depended being ruined. These laws, however one should emphasize, were of the type by which the tribesmen were taken unawares.

Again the immediate cause of the rebellion is attributed to the "high handed misbehaviour of one Bastian the then Tahsildar of Gudem who was provoking tribes everyday by enforcing forced labour on them for constructing the Narasipatnam-Chittapalli Agency road". However, instead of limiting Bastian's actions to individual behaviour and arrogance, we may try to look at it, in the colonial perspective, while remarking about colonial mechanics.

In the third stage of industrial capital

Dr. Bipan Chandra says)

"...moreover it was now even more important that colonial administration should penetrate every party of colonial society and that every port, town, village be linked with world economy."<sup>16</sup>

The administration had become more bureaucratic, detailed and repressive. With this understanding the extraction of

---

16. Bipan Chandra, op.cit., n.2, p.19.

free forced labour from the tribal people of the Agency for constructing a highway, penetrating jungles and across the low hills from Marsipatnem to Chintapalli and the consequent arrogance of Bastion should be studied as forming part of colonial prices.

Chapter - III

RAJWA REBELLION OF 1879-80 AND 1922-24

In this chapter three aspects of the Rampa Rebellions of 1879 and 1922-24 will be discussed. Since the British policies were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, here a general outline will be given regarding the way the basic tribal social set up was disturbed due to the policies of the state and the role played by the merchant-moneylenders. The immediate causes of both the revolts will be discussed as the second aspect. In the third part will be on the course of the revolts.

At the time of the Permanent Settlement of 1802-3 the Rampa country was disregarded and the settlement was made. During the disorder in the early 19th century the Mansabdar (Zamindar) Rambaleti Deva descended with an armed force from the hills and took forcible possession of some villages but later he was driven out of these and then submitted offering to acknowledge forever the sovereignty of the company. Then in 1813 for the first time a settlement was made with him and the villages he had taken were resorted to him as "nokhasas"<sup>1</sup> and along

---

1. Nokhasas are villages leased out by Government against a fixed revenue.

with his ancestral possessions in the hills were confirmed to him free of peshkash on condition "that he maintained order in them and prevented incursions into the low country".<sup>2</sup> He had further leased the villoges to certain subordinate Hill Chiefs or Muttadars whom he required to keep order in their own charges and from whom he received an income of Rs. 8,750 per annum.

The Mansubdar had died in 1835 leaving a daughter and an illegitimate son named Madhuvati Ranbhupati Devi, and the former was recognized by the Muttadars as heiress to the Zamindari. Sometime afterwards her chastity was suspected and she and her brother were detested and were driven out of the country. They were maintained by the Government and in 1840 the Estate was placed under the court of wards. Grave disturbances were followed and the Zamindarini surrendered the estate in favour of her brother and in 1848 after State intervention and protracted negotiations the Muttadars had agreed to accept him as Mansubdar and perform their old police duties on condition

---

2. Homingway, C., "Aboriginal Rebellions in the Deccan", in Mag. in India, vol. 25, no. 4, 1945, p. 252.



that their united quit rents should not exceed Rs. 1000 and that the Mansabdar should never attempt to extract more from them.<sup>3</sup>

As I have stated in the earlier chapter the exactions of the Mansabdar, Government officials and oppressive decrees obtained by traders in the lower country courts against their ignorant debtors (Hillmen) contributed to the dissatisfaction of the Hill Reddis and resulted in an outbreak. On the 9th of March 1879, the Rampa Division Police Inspector received information of the projected rising and an attack on the police stations.<sup>4</sup> "The insurgents have spread out rumours," writes a government official "that they would attack those places where they could find the government officials when they want to kill".<sup>5</sup>

Course of the Revolt: To begin with the insurgents beat the jungle peons and tied them to a tree. Meanwhile

- 
3. Sullivan, Report on the Rampa Outbreak, (Madras, 1948), p.5.
  4. Madras Administration Report 1879-80, (Madras), p.6.
  5. Letter from Tehsildar of B. Cholan to Collector of Coimbatore, Dated 22 July, 1879, Sullivan, op.cit., p.4.

the forest Darough had received information that the insurgents were coming to Waddigudem and he had made his escape without informing the village.<sup>6</sup> When they arrived at Waddigudem it is said that they first sought for the Darough and then sent a word to the people on the Nizam's side to send away him to Waddigudem who was their opponent. Then the insurgents plundered the Malguzar of the village and attacked the Jaipur Police. In fact their intention was not to plunder but to kill the Darough and the Chief police constable who had given them troubles.<sup>7</sup> There were no casualties on the Government side upto April but of the constables despatched into the Northern parts of Rampa on the 18 March 1879, several were captured and two were murdered by a rebel leader called Taman Dora.<sup>8</sup> By the end of April or so the disturbance began to extend to Northwards into the Gudam Hills of Vizagapatnam and into Rekepally and Bhadrachalam taluks. Meanwhile a party of police

---

6. Sullivan, op.cit.,

7. File No. 77-80 (Home Police), January 1880.

8. Madras Administrative Report 1880-81.  
p.7.

marching from Kota in Rampa to Addateegala Station were fired on and a head constable was killed. Chandraiah, the Chief leader of the revolt had conducted his struggle in northern parts of Peddapuram and in Southern parts of Golkonda taluk, burnt two police stations and later surrounded Mr. Elliot at Addateegala station and defeated him when he endeavoured to force his way out. Add to this a dramatic attack was made on Shamovock<sup>9</sup> (Steamer) and the police had not the least courage to put down the rebellion.

The reported attacks on police stations and the failure of the police compelled the state to employ army to suppress the revolt. Mr. Colonel Buck, Commandant of 30th Regiment Madras Native Infantry was entrusted with the command of the troops in the disturbed area.<sup>10</sup> Apart from Madras both Central Province and Hyderabad Governments had sent their troops to the disturbed areas of the Rampa country to prevent the insurgents from crossing over into Bastar and Ehadracholan.

---

9. D. No. 23 (Home Police), Sept. 1879.  
10. F. No. 8-11 (Home Police), 1880.

Within four months (i.e. from September 1879 to December) the troops could drive the rebels out of Rampa, Rekapally and Golkonda but they had crossed into the Hill Madgole and Pachipenta. However, the army attacked the rebel leaders from all sides with the help of the local zamindars. Finally Chandrasiah (the chief leader) who had been the most active leaders of the insurgents was killed on the 10 March 1880.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, most of his followers were captured, some of them were shot dead by the army and by May 1880 quiet was restored in the Rampa country. In fact initially the army had faced tremendous difficulty in dealing with the hillman because they employed hit-and-run tactics of the partisan warfare and also the nature of country which was full of mountains and dense forests was most unfavourable for military operations resulting which 1/4 of the army was sick and some died. It should be noted that 2,400 troops besides 600 police were employed and Rs. 25 lakhs were spent to put down the revolt and they made little impression on the disturbance until the chief of the rebels was betrayed and killed.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. P. No. 8-11 ( Home Police ), April 1880.

12. P. No. 8-11 (Home Police ), April, 1880.

Nonpa Rebellion 1922-24:

This section deals with the main causes of the rebellion 1922-24 immediate causes of the revolt, course of the rebellion and state intervention and suppression of the revolt.

The usually well-known grievances of the people and the main causes which can be attributed for the rebellion are (1) "the restrictions placed by the forest officials on the wasteful cultivation of 'Podu', the slash and burn method by the tribals which even now constitutes as a chief factor, of tribal discontent".<sup>13</sup> (2) "Forest rules and restrictions which are still an eye sore for the tribal people as farmers inhabiting villages bordering on reserved forests, throughout the country. (3) The highhanded misbehaviour of one, Bastien, the then Tahsildar of Gukur who was provoking the tribals everyday by enforcing the forced labour on them for constructing the Narsipatnam-Chintapelli Agency road."<sup>14</sup> It is the opinion of the British officials that Sri Alluri Seetharamoreju (the

---

13. V. Raghavaiah, Tribal Revolts, vol. IV, pp.39-40.

14. Ibid.

leader who led the rebellion) had the courage and influence to work on this combustible material.

The immediate cause of the rebellion was the "the extraction of free forced labour from the tribal people of Andhra Agency for constructing a high-way penetrating thick jungles and across low hills from Narsipatnam to Chintapalli".<sup>15</sup> There are two opinions on the desirability and the necessity of such a road which would open the highly malarial, wild beast infested and impenetrable country for the doctor, social worker and the government officials for extending the much needed comforts that modern life could grant—of course depending on the cultural and economic ability of the people in these areas to receive and enjoy. It became also easy for the moneylender, land-grabber, government servant to take the same road for the easy movements of troops in a country which had already witnessed a few insurrections before. The hillmen never worked for wages. Labourers from the plains were unwilling to risk their health in a highly malarial country, like the Andhra Agency. It was under these circumstances that a

---

15. V. Raghavaiah, Tribal Revolts, n.13, p.39.

Tahsildar by name Bastian, an Indian Christian, was posted to implement this rather hard-work. He began to insist on forced labour from the tribals who lost no time in resisting the demands.

"Force was employed by Bastian and this worsened the situation further. He attached plough cattle of the tribals, stopped the inflow of food-stuffs from outside for the use of the people and took recourse to violent methods for achieving his objectives."<sup>16</sup>

By this time Seetharamaraju who "gave up his studies in the high school courses and took to life of meditation and prayer when he was only 18 years old"<sup>17</sup> had arrived in these woods and was living like a hermit in one of the tribal villages. As he evinced such interest in the well-being of the simple, unsophisticated tribals of the area, the latter sought his help in escaping from the exactions of the unscrupulous road-builders.

These were the days of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience, preached by Mahatma Gandhi.

"Seetharamaraju who was a plainsman and who came from the village of Negallu cited

---

16. Raghavaiah, op.cit., n.13, p.38.

17. Ibid.

cited Gandhiji's preachings and asked them to non-cooperate with the result that his advice was immediately accepted and word was passed from one end to the other of the agency to resist all demands on their labour.<sup>18</sup>

The British authorities who were struggling hard to suppress Mahatma's countrywide agitation scented greater dangers in allowing a tribal revolt to have its way in the agency areas, in view of the previous experiences the British had in the Rampa country. The revolt which was already in the blood of the tribals burst forth and the entire agency country from one end to the other was ablaze with insurrection.

Now that the chief reasons for the outbreak of the Rampa rebellion such as oppression of the tribals by local taluk office, the Pattadari system and the forest reservation policy of the British government,<sup>1</sup> one may perhaps proceed further with the report of Haggell,<sup>2</sup> a British officer, that Bostoremanraju went to Chittagong in the month of July, 1921 and participated in the secret meeting of the revolutionary committees. After returning from

---

18. V. Raghavaiah, op.cit., n.13, p.36.



Chittagong, he toured Gudur Hills and visited Peddavalasa, Autada and other villages and preached temperance among the people. As early as 20 January, 1922, there were rumours at Krishnadevipet that Sotharamaraju wanted to start a 'fituri'. So he was kept under police surveillance. "On the pretext of going to Nepal, he visited the agency areas and prepared the ground for the rebellion. The situation in the agency was highly favourable for organising an armed revolt."<sup>19</sup> "The people in the agency tracts were dissatisfied with the governments' agrarian policy and the restrictions placed on the 'poda' cultivation."<sup>20</sup> The repressive policy of Bastion the deputy tahsildar of Gudur and the other factor which accentuated the situation was the dismissal of Gam Mallu Dora from the office of the village Munsiff and also depriving gam Mallu Dora and Gam Gautam Dora of their lands. The two Gam brothers acted as two-able lieutenants of Raju and played a considerable part in influencing him to lead the people of the agency. These revolutionaries adopted a systematic policy of

---

19. Sarojini Begani, Highlights of the Freedom Struggle in Andhra, p.94.

20. Ibid.

raiding police stations so that they could get hold of ammunition depots and arms. Raju was kept in prison as a political suspect for some time. However after this, there was a raid in the month of August 1922 on the Chintapalli police station. In June 1922 Raju sent his mother, younger brother away to Naresapuram. This was the last good-bye to his mother.

During the course of the rebellion Aggiraju who died under imprisonment in Andamans played a dominant role in the rebellion. Mallu Dora suffered 13½ years imprisonment at Andamans and 3½ years of interment. All these record of events and personalities involved were recorded by Raju. The record of events show that:

"...there was a raid on Chintapalli police station in the month of August 1922. About 300 people surrounded the station. The ammunition they acquired in this drive numbered at 11 guns, 1390 bullets, 5 swords, 14 bayonets." 21

It is also noted by the Agency Commissioner Steward that after successful raiding of the police station, Raju and

---

21. Yerranalli Harsintha Rao, Sri Alluni Seetharamaraju Charitra, (Hyderabad: ), p.67.

his followers raised slogans like Gandhiki Jai. There was also a raid on Krishnadevipeta, on the 23rd evening during which the rebels snatched 4 pistols. Success in these two raids led to whole of the region Andhra Pradesh knowing about it." There was, on the next day itself namely 24 August 1922,<sup>22</sup> a raid on Rajavomangi station during which 8 rifles,<sup>23</sup> 825 bullets were taken."<sup>23</sup>

R.A. Graham writing to S.P.O. Dannel,<sup>21</sup> Secretary to the Government of India on the 16 September 1922 reports:

"...the gang is now believed not to number more than 80 or 100. The Telugu vernacular press displays considerable alarm concerning the rising in the agency,<sup>21</sup> but couples its demand for firm action with the usual apprehensions that the government will cause the innocent to suffer with the guilty and the entirely unwarranted assumption that the outbreak is the outcome of the over-bearing conduct of the local officials."<sup>23</sup>

Since the local police were unable to handle these incidents, the Reserve Police and the Malabar Police were brought in to

---

22. Yerramilli Narasimha Rao,<sup>21</sup> op.cit., p.47.

23. Fortnightly Reports,<sup>21</sup> Home Department (Political) Government of India, 1922 Simla Reports 16 September, 1922.

take stock of the situation. On September 21, when the tribals were celebrating the Kali pooja, there was a sudden attack by the police led by Talbutt and Sandos. It is said that Talbutt was killed. Regarding the number of tribals killed, we do not have evidence so far. On the 28 September the Viceroy writing to the Secretary of State states that: "...a news agency telegram just received states Scott-Coward, Assistant Superintendent of Police was shot dead by a gang in ambush, Gudum hills and 3 constables reported missing"<sup>24</sup> A clear idea of the situation prevalent during this period could be got if one examines the letter addressed by R.A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to S.P.O. Donnel, Secretary to the Government of India, on 3 October, 1922 stating as follows:

"The situation as regards the agency outbreak has by no means improved, and in fact operations are for the present at a stand-still, pending the arrival of reinforcements and the initiation of new plan of campaign. Hitherto small parties of police under one or two officers have been scanning the country in a vain endeavour to locate and round up the rebels. On the 25th, one of those parties under Mr. Scott Coward,

---

24. Fortnightly Reports, Home Department (Political) Government of India, 28 September, 1922.

a Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police whose services were recently engaged in connection with the Mopilla rebellion was ambushed as they were proceeding in single-file down a forest track through dense jungle. The rebels allowed the head of the column to pass and then opened fire on the two British officers who were killed immediately. Two of the men were also killed and two more wounded. This most regrettable incident was proved that the rebels are more dangerous than was at first thought and has made it clear that their hostility is mainly directed against the Englishmen and tactics hitherto employed must be changed. Owing to the nature of the country, communications and intelligence are the great difficulty coupled with the fact that the local police, if not actively supporting the insurgents have hitherto made little or no attempt to assist the Government pressure is now being brought to bear on the village headmen, to make them alter their attitude.\*<sup>25</sup>

This report is not only an indication of the then existing situation but also a warning of the things to come. On the one hand, understanding the situation as focussed by R.A. Graham, while on the other one notices the atmosphere

---

25. Fortnightly Reports, Home Department (Political) Government of India, 3 October 1922.

being filled with more and more tension. Mallu Dora was arrested on 18 September 1923. He was apparently deported to Andamans, for 19½ years with 3½ years interment.<sup>26</sup> A few months later, when the situation started to worsen the Assam Police Force was brought in. The happenings in the last stages of the rebellion could be seen from the report which N.E. Marjoribanks, Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras sent to J. Crowar, Secretary to the Government of India dated 16 April 1924, stating as follows:

"The Hon'ble Sir Arthur Knepp held a conference at Narasipatnam Road with the local authorities on April 10, and considered an appreciation of the situation which had been drawn up by an officer on the staff of the General Officer Commanding, Madras District, who had proceeded him to the area. The Government of India will be addressed separately on this subject, but the gist of the Government's conclusion is that the situation is not really a military one and that the crux of the whole problem is the attitude of the local population and their refusal to give information about the movements of the rebels. No success can be

---

26. Yerranalli Narayana Rao, op.cit.,

expected, except as a matter of chance, until the cooperation of the local people can be secured, and there is little prospect of securing it as long as the operation continues to be continued solely under the provisions of the criminal procedure code. The climate in the area is now extremely hot and the forces are not unnaturally, showing signs of slackness and fatigue."<sup>27</sup>

The later events of the rebellion showed that by now... the resources and the energies of the rebels was coming to an end. In one of the raids at Peddagadapalem, Raju's group had the first set back. As many as 13 were killed. From then on, things seemed to have favoured the English. Many of the sources indicate that many of the captured rebels were tortured, officials and maddars who helped Raju were punished and dismissed. There are indications of the sorry state of affairs which were entering the rebel camp. The death knell of the rebellion sounded when "Raju was dead and that was reported in a number of newspapers on May 7, 1924".<sup>28</sup> After this major incident, Marjoribanks, Acting Chief Secretary to the

---

27. Fortnightly Report, for the First Half of April 1924. Home Department, Government of India, File No.25, (Political) 1924.

28. Hindu, English daily newspaper, 7 May, 1924.

Government of Madras, issued a notice, dated 5 June, 1924 in which he states:

"I am directed to state that it would be premature to conclude that the rebellion has come to an end. After the death of the leader, there remained six rebels of sufficient importance to have a price set on them. The reports received by the government from their special officer in-charge of the agency operations show that the death of Raju has not changed the attitude of the villagers in the affected areas; they still withhold information and do not give the authorities any real assistance. The offer of the reward of Rs. 10,000 for the capture of Raju had no effect, for it cannot be doubted that, they wished, villagers would have brought Raju before the date on which the police chanced to come upon him."<sup>29</sup>

However, the rebellion more or less came to an end within a period of one month after the death of Raju.

The magnitude of this rebellion can be calculated in terms of the arms, ammunition and semi-military forces which the Government took to suppress it. "Madras authorities had in the field a semi-military force of

---

29. Home Department, (Political) File No. 104/D/1924.



over 1300 from August, 1922 to the spring of 1924."<sup>30</sup>  
 The strength of the operations may be judged by taking  
 the cost factor also into consideration. It is stated that  
 "unto March, 1924, they had cost 15 lakhs".<sup>31</sup>

This : "...revolt under the leadership of  
 Sotharamaraju is similar to the previous  
 revolts of Santals, Mundas, Gond and Dhils  
 in that all of them were provoked by genuine  
 grievances against the government officials  
 who were unimaginative and wooden. All the  
 three were major revolts in which a number  
 of tribals took part actively and staked their,  
 all for securing freedom from official inter-  
 ference and oppression. In all these revolts  
 the leaders paid the extreme penalty of death."<sup>32</sup>

The after effects of all these revolts were crushing and  
 disastrous to the defeated tribals. Coming to the points  
 of contact;

"... the Santals, Munda, Gond and Dhil revolts  
 were sparked off by agrarian grievances caused  
 by moneylenders and petty-muttadari zamindars

---

30. Home Department (Political) File No. 104/D/24.

31. *Ibid.*

32. V. Raghavaiah, *op.cit.*, pp.48-49.

while the immediate cause of the Raju-led revolt was the enforcement of the forced labour which the tribals resorted.<sup>33</sup>

Hundal, Santal, Dhil and Gond insurrections were short-lived and much simpler than the two year old continuous struggle of Raju's revolt, which kept the British army successfully at bay. Raju-led revolt in many ways was different. It had a positive programme of course, of Gandhi. In one way it can be looked as a part of national movement. It had an hidden-impact of the non-cooperation movement. In effect, this revolt had become a source of inspiration to the freedom fighters at least in Andhra region. The nature and evaluation of this movement in comparison to other revolts will be discussed in deep in the next chapter.

---

33. *Ibid.*, p.48.

Chapter - IV

CONCLUSION :

The objective of this dissertation is to study the importance of political leadership in a movement. In the conclusion we can say that leadership with a common political ideology is necessary to fight against any existing state authority by uniting all those people who are commonly affected by the state. In this present study we can highlight the importance of political leadership by comparing the two Rampa revolts. The comparison can be made <sup>regarding</sup> with the following aspects: characterization of both the revolts; the role of political leadership in the 1922-24 revolt; organizational structure and the ideological basis.

#### The Rampa Rebellion of 1879.

The Rampa Rebellion of 1879, in Dr. Haimendorf's opinion, was defensive in character. To put it in his own words: "they (tribal rebellions) were the last resort of tribesmen driven to despair by the encroachments of outsiders on their land".<sup>1</sup> It is clear that this rebellion

---

1. Haimendorf, C., "Aboriginal Rebellions in the Deccan", Man in India, vol.25, no.14, 1945, p.5.

was the outcome of two distinct forces i.e. anti-British and anti-Mansubdar. The introduction of British rule had disturbed the normal way of life of the tribals and a crisis arose in their social relationships and the economic existence. The external interference in the form of government regulations i.e. restrictions on Pochu cultivation, excise tax and so on, the oppression by government officials, introduction of money-economy and immigration of plainsmen (i.e. sowcars, and forest and excise contractors) created much dissatisfaction and a feeling of being exploited among the tribals. On the otherhand, the exorbitant rates of interest, illegal taxes and aggression on the part of the Mansubdar, completely altered the social and economic structure of the tribal society. In other words, the inability on the part of the Muttadar (the tribal chief) to pay the accumulated arrears resulted in their replacement by others such as sowcars and so on.<sup>2</sup> The crucial factor in the Rampa

---

2. Sullivan, Report on the Rampa Outbreak, (Madras, 1948), p.39.

Rebellion as we understand, is rent exaction and the tribal people had been consistently resisting the Mamabdar in this respect right from 1850, and sometimes they had also driven him back. Hence we term the revolt of 1879 both defensive and offensive in nature. So far as the anti-British feeling was concerned it was defensive in nature, as response to British colonial policy. To quote a government official "I have endeavoured to show that during the last 30 years the hill-people have been harassed and oppressed in a manner which almost justified their rising or at least no room for surprise at their having done."<sup>3</sup>

#### Organization.

Organizationally, in the Rampa Rebellion the traditional structure of tribal chiefship (Muttadar) came into full play. It is interesting to note that the tribal (Reddi) villages are formed into groups and the

---

3. Ibid., p.4.

hereditary headmen over these are called by different names such as Dara, Kuttadar, Varnapedda and Kulepedda. And the headmen of the villages are known as Pettansars. Having a cohesive well-knit organization, the chiefs could and did rally the followers in an easy manner; that is, to say, the closely-knit chieftainship provided the necessary organization for united action. In fact it is the Kuttadars (tribal chiefs) who decided the whole course of the revolt and threatened those who did not participate in the revolt and burnt their houses.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Rampa Rebellion of 1922-24.

The "revolt under the leadership of Sactaramaraju is similar to the previous revolts of Santalo,<sup>1</sup> Kudes,<sup>2</sup> Gond and Bhis in that, all of them were provoked by genuine grievances against the government officials who were unimaginative and wooden. All the three were major revolts in which a number of tribes took part

---

4. Sullivan, n.2, p.36.

actively and stated their claim, all for securing freedom from official interference and oppression. In all these revolts the leaders paid the extreme penalty of death.<sup>5</sup> The after-effects of all these revolts were crushing, and disastrous to the defeated tribals. Coming to the points of contrast, "the Santals, Kandas, Gond and Ehal revolts were sparked off by agrarian grievances caused by money lenders and petty-mutadari semindars while the immediate cause of the Raju-led revolt was the enforcement of the forced labour which the tribals resented."<sup>6</sup> Kandas, Gonds, Santal and Konda Reddi insurrections were short-lived and much simpler than the two year old continuous struggle of Raju's revolt which kept the British army successfully at bay.

More than that primarily what distinguishes the Raju-led revolt from other revolts and fituris which had taken place in the agency on many previous occasions was that: "This was definitely a political movement

---

5. Raghaviah, op.cit., p.47.

6. Ibid., p.48.



inspired by the ideal of Swaraj which became widespread in the country by 1921. His aim was to overthrow British rule in the agency to start with and then to make it, the nucleus for freeing the rest of the country from the alien rule.<sup>7</sup>

Even though the Konda Reddis fought much vigorously against the British, their movement could not make any influence over other sections of people. The number of participants in Raju-led revolt was between 500-1000. Whereas in the 1855 Santal rebellion, 30,000 tribals participated to liberate themselves from the oppressions. After having submitted the numerous petitions to the government they concluded that nothing short of political power will terminate their grievances. The leaders of the Santal rebellion threatened to take possession of their country and set up a government of their own. In the course of the movement a large area came under their influence. In such a movement

---

7. Venkatarangaiya, H., The Freedom Struggle on Andhra Pradesh, (Andhra), vol.III, (Hyderabad, 1965), p.79.

the leadership did not think of liberating the country. 'The powerful steam, as a metaphor goes, evaporated for lack of a piston that would have compressed it at the decisive moment'. Certainly the driving force is the steam, i.e. the energy of mass participation and mass struggle and not the piston itself. Without this steam the piston remains a hollow shell. Yet without this piston, even the most intense steam is wasted and accomplishes nothing. That is what lacked in Santal Rebellion, i.e. the political leadership for the movement.

In this part of the chapter, I would make an attempt to assess the role of the leader, Raju, in the making of the movement, in the given conditions. 'The great man is always a representative either of existing forces or of forces which he helps to create by way of challenge to existing authority. But the higher degree of creativity may perhaps be assigned to those great men who, like Cromwell or Lenin, helped to mould the forces which carried them to greatness rather than to those who, like Napoleon or Bismarck, rose to greatness on the

back of already existing forces.<sup>8</sup> So long as Raju was fighting the British imperialists, the Indian National Congress did not support. It is only after suppression of the revolt, the Congress leaders like Gandhi, Bose and Nehru down to local leaders admired Raju's patriotism. What distinguishes Raju-led movement with the other ones like Santal and Gonds, was that Raju had a positive programme which was not different from that of Congress. Even while leading the struggle Raju always insisted on prohibition, unity among the tribals, and establishing village Panchayats. This was the other aspect of positive character of the movement. Unlike in the other tribal uprisings which were a sporadic response to the existing situation, Raju here moulded the forces in such way that with the same stroke tribal grievances would be solved and by driving the Britishers the country could be liberated from the imperialists. Perhaps, this may seem to be too unrealistic, but one should also

---

8. Carr, E.H., What is History. (London, 1977), p.55.

realize that only through such a powerful vision, was he inspired to lead the struggle. If individual revolutionary terrorists could hope to finish off the British imperialists, one could also state that Raju was as much a realist in his belief in armed people's revolution.

Here I would like to analyse the role of leadership in relation with the masses that followed. What were the common factors that helped both the leader and the masses to come together? How did the leader, Raju, could feel the pulse of the tribals? What was the role of religion and other values that were used by Raju in mobilising the people? What made him to follow the violent methods without at the same time not departing from Gandhi's aim of Swaraj.

#### The Role of Leadership

We find the influence of religion in the movement launched by the tribals of the Godavari Agency against the British under the leadership of Raju. If we critically observe, in the national movement, religion

played a greater role than the economic factor. Tilak onwards to Gandhi and all local leaders had roused the people with all kinds of religious symbols to mobilise the people to fight against the imperialists. In the same manner Sitarama Raju followed them. We have to look into the early life of Raju to find out how he was influenced by religious sentiments.

Since the tribals of Agency were also worshippers of Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism, the task of Raju became easier. According to Aiyappan : "Koyas are Hindus. The women put caste mark on their foreheads as Hindu women do. Reference has been made to the beef-eating of the Koyas which is often held out as a pointer to non-Hindu origin. But, a thorough study of all these will only seem to emphasise the fact that the Koyas of all classes and castes are Hindus in origin and upbringing. Beef-eating is, in certain areas, restricted to death and annual ceremonies."<sup>9</sup> The Gods and Goddesses worshipped by them were the Sun, Mattial Amma,

---

9. A. Aiyappan, op.cit., p.61.

**Mahelashmi Anma and Kali.**

**Raju's Early Life.**

Raju was born in 1897 in a middle class family. His father, a professional photographer died when Raju was very young. Hence his family was looked after by his uncle who was a deputy collector, who worked in various towns in Adhra. Raju had never been serious with his studies. In 1910, he stayed in Rajamundry with one of his relatives who was practising Yoga and studied Vedas and other literature. It seems that it was here that Raju developed a taste towards Vedic life and Yoga.

In Vizagpatnam, when Raju was sixteen he came into contact with a zamindari family. He loved their daughter but could not marry the girl, Seeta because of economic inequality. He prefixed Seeta to his name. He remained a bachelor. This might be the reason of his becoming a sage and taking to a lonely life.

When he was around seventeen or eighteen years of age, he left for Varanasi. Even before going to

Varanasi he took to the worship of Goddess Kali. He went to Haridwar from Varanasi. There he might have become Sanyasin. Some people say in his tour in North he came into contact with terrorist revolutionaries. But we can't have evidences. However, he would have got rich experience in visiting various places.

After returning from North, for many days he was wandering in forests and reached Vizagapatnam district. On a hill he meditated. Then to make some livelihood to his family, he settled down in Krishnadevipet. When he was meditating in some temple nearby, people started going to him to give milk and fruits.

In the course of time his spiritualism helped him to become a philanthropist. Tribal people developed a kind of respect towards Raju and Raju developed affection towards those innocent aboriginals. The Yogi of knowledge becomes Yogi of Action. Here he practices Krishna's advice to Arjuna.

Raju had possessed many talents. He knew astrology, palmistry and was giving herbs to cure the

diseases. Thus he could attract many people. He used to narrate various tales to people from epics, Ramayana and Bharatam. He used to recite hymns from Bhagavad Gita every day. He knew apart from Telugu, English and Hindi, Sanskrit also. Since he was a worshipper of Goddess Kali, he could attract people especially the tribals.

Here above I tried to trace origins and development of Raju's religious bent of mind from his early life onwards. Here I linked religious values practised by the tribals and Raju. That was the commonality between them.

Even though the practice of religious values was common in Raju and National Movement, he did not practise the peaceful struggles or nonviolent means of the national movement. This was the real break from the National movement. Here I would like to highlight two points: (i) Raju's personal belief and his family tradition believing in war as a Kshatriya; (ii) the tribals were naturally aggressive in their nature once injustice is meted out.



These were the days of non-cooperation movement, in many parts of India, particularly in coastal Andhra areas like Guntur district; the peasants were launching no-tax payment movement due to call given by Gandhi. Generally, people were peaceful in non-Cooperation Movement. Thousands and thousands of people were joining the movement. One wonders how having been inspired by that movement, Raju did not respond in the same way.

In spite of people's response to Gandhi's call for various movements, people were very much willing to resort to violence against the imperialists. That is what S.B. Choudhri feels. This was because of the peasants' natural response towards injustice and suppression. Since the national leaders come from middle classes, always they had been cautious in controlling the peasantry from their violent instinct. But Raju could feel the pulse of the people. Raju's family background also made him so.

He had been an adventurist since childhood. He skilled in archery, horse-riding, shooting. In archery even the Kaya experts could not challenge Raju. He had known all the tactics of guerilla warfare. He got a political sense of the situation.

Here we had a poem of Raju that reveals his strong belief in Kahatriya Dharma:

The poem goes — (in a letter to a friend)

"Men's bodies are not immortal.  
But fame and infame are.  
Good and bad will last for ever  
War is natural for a Kahatriya."

(Warrior)

Raju had no less respect towards Gandhi. In his attack on Chintapalli Police Station, writes Agency Commission to Chief of Secretary, Raju shouted slogan in favour of Gandhi (Gandhi Ki Jai). By this even the officials and the state had to consider Raju's first attack as an act of freedom fighting. As Raju was a

reciter of Bhagavad Gita he understood and tried to practice Krishna's advice to Arjuna that a Kshatriya's duty to do war and annihilate the enemy to protect the good subjects. Not only literally, in essence also Raju was determined to practise his duty advocated by Krishna.

To mobilize and to win over the hearts of the people, he followed Gandhi and his religion. To drive out the imperialist enemy, he upheld the Kshatriya Dharma (Warrior Caste).

Now I would like to deal with the tribal's consciousness, their natural behaviour, and their part.

"In the tribals' view, the jungle was his ancestral home. It was his birth place and cradle. Every sound was familiar to him in the woods. He could recognize and name every bird, plant, animal and even insect. He loved the jungle and was in turn loved and adored by it. He never slew an animal for the mere love of hunt. He never cut any tree for satisfying his whim or fancy. He was nature's child and like a loving mother, Nature fed him, nursed him, lulled him, and

protected him as a mother. He worshipped Goddess of the jungle before each hunt. After each hunt, offered selected parts of the Kill to the Goddess. He collected a large part of his food from it in the shape of yarns he could dig, edible nuts, fruits, flowers and leaves he could pluck to satisfy his hunger."<sup>10</sup>

Such a peaceful life had been shaken, the economy was scattered. The British policies restricted them from doing Podu cultivation. They put many sanctions on their movement in the forests. The Forest Act reserved some parts of the forest. The officials and the police stopped the tribals even from cutting the wood for fuel. The moneylender plundered the innocent tribals. Vexed by all these chills the tribals had time and again been launching rebellions against the British. They had no longer been simple responses to

---

10. V. Raghavaiah, Tribal Revolts, (Bellare, 1971), p.17.

their local problems, but they are "the parochial reactions to major social dislocations".

Aim of the Movement.

"It was Raju's leadership that gave to the rebellion of 1922-24 a character which distinguished from the fituris which had taken place in the agency on many previous occasions. His was definitely a political movement inspired by the ideal of Swaraj which became widespread in the country by 1921. His aim was to overthrow the British rule in the agency to start with and then to establish a kingdom of his own in the area and then to make it a nucleus for freeing the rest of the country from the alien rule. All this might appear to be a fantastic dream but it was such a powerful vision that inspired him."<sup>11</sup>

His aim was very much clear in his letter to one of his friends in which Raju revealed his intention of fighting the British was to get freedom to India.

---

11. Venkatarangaiya, op.cit., p.79.

### Organization.

Regarding the organizational structure, one has to note that Raju attracted a good following within a short period of time. The process of leadership in tribal or peasant movements is divisible into two overlapping stages. Firstly obtaining a following, and secondly establishing an organization, and a sanction in order to maintain cohesion among the following and direct it towards the goal. We have seen how Raju could attract the tribal by using the powerful symbols.

Traditionally centralised social structure of the Koyas helped Raju's task of organising them. Aiyappan analyses the social organisation of the Koyas as follows: The Koya society is controlled by an extremely democratic organisation, "the Kula Panchayat". The village is a unit of administration and over it is a "Pinna Pedda". The office is hereditary but a democratic principle is applied to it. When a Pinna Pedda dies, his heir is usually elected in an assembly

of village elders. Above him there is "Kula Pedda" or Patel who is recognized by the Government, the office is hereditary-corresponding to our village municipalities. Having a cohesive well-knit organization the chiefs could and did rally the followers in an easy manner, that is to say the closely-knit chiefship provided the necessary organization for united action. The tribal people were very secretive and disciplined. The official letters reveal how secretly they were operating against the British. Even though they were subjected to severe repression they did not reveal the whereabouts of Raju.

Considering the ideological part in the course of the movement Raju did not have any concrete programme of his own, he felt that his own aim was no way different from that of National Movement, under the leadership of Gandhi. Perhaps he pursued violent methods in achieving his goal. Even here we see the influence of Gesta over him. He stated in a letter to his friend what Lord Krishna preached Arjuna the

Dharma of a Kshatriya. He convinced the tribals against drinking. Village Panchayats were founded by him by which the tribal disputes were settled and in the process boycotting the courts, established by the Government.

To sum up further we can find out three main differences between the Rampa Rebellion of 1879 and that of 1922-24. They are (i) the then existing conditions within the outside the tribal society; (ii) the leadership with a political ideology and (iii) the organizational basis. The conditions that existed in the Rampa country in 1922-24 was much different from that of 1879. By that time the colonial government and its mechanism penetrated quite well into the Royal society and economy. In India in general also the freedom movement had become a mass movement. As the colonial state wanted all the sections and classes of Indian society to be integrated, its policies affected all the people, thereby becoming



a uniting force. Unlike this, in 1879 the conditions in the Rampa were not that ripened and the national movement was also very much limited to the educated urban middle class.

Regarding organization we cannot find much difference between the two revolts since the social organization of both Konda Reddis and the Koyas were centrally organized. However, Seetharamaraju gave a new life to the existing social organization by educating both the tribal leaders and the people. His preaching of Gandhi's mission for Swaraj, advocating prohibition, reciting the hymns from Bhagavad Gita and telling stories from epics could all be considered as Raju's ideology. While the 1879 revolt was an isolated event, Raju thought that his movement was a starting point in liberating India. For this reason we have to consider the Rampa Rebellion of 1922-24 as a part of Indian national movement.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Aiyappan, A., Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes in the Presidency of Madras. (Madras, 1948).
2. Administration Reports of Madras Presidency, 1879 and 1880.
3. Census of 1921, Madras Presidency.
4. Fortnightly Reports, Home Department (Political), Government of India, (Files of 1922-24).
5. Madras Provincial Banking Enquiry Reports, vols. I to IV.
6. Report on Rampa Outbreak (1879), (Madras, 1894).
7. Statistical Atlas of Madras Presidency, (1894).
8. Godavari District Gazetteer, Homingway, (Madras, 1915).

SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Bataille Andre, "Land Hunger : Harmonic and Disharmonic Systems", Seminar, no.140, (Delhi, April 1971).
2. Bataille, Andre, "The Causes of Agrarian Unrest", The Citizen, vol.I, no.23, February 14, 1970.
3. Baliga, B.S., Studies in Madras Administration, (Madras: Government Press, 1960).
4. Bipan Chandra, Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, (New Delhi: Orient Longmen, 1979).
5. \_\_\_\_\_, Freedom Struggle, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1980).
6. Blackburn, Robin, (ed.), Revolution and Class Struggle, (Glasgow: Collins, 1977).
7. Blackburn, Robin, (ed.), Ideology in Social Science, (Glasgow: Collins, 1975).
8. Bose, Nirmal Kumar, Tribal Life in India, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1971).

9. Carr, E.H., What is History? (London: Penguin, 1977).
10. Datta, A.R., (ed.), Peasant Struggles in India, (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1979).
11. \_\_\_\_\_, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976).
12. Dube, S.C., Indian Villages, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1956).
13. \_\_\_\_\_, (ed.), Tribal Heritage of India, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977).
14. Dutt, R.P., India Today, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1947).
15. Elwin, Verrier, Leaves from the Jungle & Life in a Gond Village, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).
16. \_\_\_\_\_, Truth About India & Can We Get It?, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932).
17. Fan, N., Colonial Policy of British Imperialism, (London, 1938).

18. Fuchs, Stephen, The Aboriginal Tribes of India, (New Delhi: Macmillan India, 1973).
19. Furer, Haimendorf, Christoph Von, The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979).
20. Furer, Haimendorf, "Aboriginal Rebellions in the Deccan", Man in India, vol.25, no.4, 1945.
21. \_\_\_\_\_, "Primitive Aboriginal Cultures in the Deccan", Man in India, vol.24, no.2, June 1944.
22. Gupta, Sulokh, Agrarian Relations and Early British Rule in India, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963).
23. Gough, Kathleen, "Peasant Resistance and Revolt in South India", Pacific Affairs, vol.XLI, no.4, (Winter, 1968-69).
24. Hemingway, Godavari District Gazetteer, (Madras, 1915).
25. Joshi, P.C., "Pre-Independence Thinking on Agrarian Policy", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.XI, no.9, Feb.25, 1967.

26. Joshi, P.C., "Land Hunger : The Problem", Seminar, no.140, Delhi, April 1971.
27. \_\_\_\_\_, "A Review Article on Factors Underlying Agrarian Unrest", Seminar, no.129, Delhi, May 1970.
28. Mathur, P.N., "Landlordism in India", Indian Journal of Economics, vol.XXII, part 11, 1946-47.
29. Hibans, J.R., "Peasants, Moneylenders and Nationalists at the End of the Nineteenth Century", Indian Economic and Social History Review, vol.I, no.1, July-September, 1963.
30. Narasimha Rao, Sree Alluri Seetharama Raju Charitra, (Hyderabad: Sree Alluri Seetharamaraju Smaraka Sangham, Government of Andhra Pradesh), ( in Telugu).
31. Parulekar, Godavari, Adivasia Revolt, (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1975).
32. Plekhanov, G.V., The Role of the Individual in History, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1946).

33. Raghavaiah, V., Tribal Revolts, (Nellore, 1971).
34. \_\_\_\_\_, Tribes of India, (New Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, 1969).
35. Ranga, N.G., Revolutionary Peasants, (New Delhi: Amrit Book, 1949).
36. \_\_\_\_\_, The Economic Organisations of Indian Villages, vol. I, Bewada, 1926, vol. II, Bombay, 1929.
37. Regani, Sarojini, Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Andhra Pradesh, 1972).
38. Singh, Suresh, (ed.), Tribal Situation in India, (Simla: Indian Institute for Advanced Studies, 1972).
39. Sinha, Shanta, Maoists in Andhra Pradesh, (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University, School of Social Sciences, Thesis, 1976).
40. Seshadri, K., Studies in Marxism and Political Science, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1977).



41. Stokes, Eric, Peasants and the Raj, (Delhi: Vikas, 1978).
42. Thapar, Ramesh, Tribes, Castes and Religion in India, (Meerut: Macmillan India, 1977).
43. Thurston, Edgar, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, (Madras: Government of Madras, 1909).
44. Vidyanthi, L.P., and Rai, B.K., Tribal Culture of India, (Delhi: Concept, 1977).
45. \_\_\_\_\_, Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar, (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1976).
46. Venkatarangaiya, M., The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra), vol.III, (Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh State Committee, 1965).
47. Wolf, Eric, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, (London: Faber and Faber, 1971).