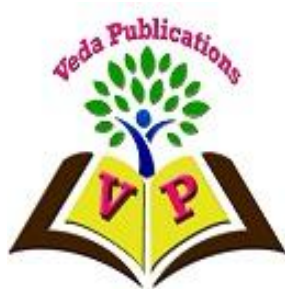


## INDIGENOUS MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE CHENCHU TRIBALS OF ATMAKUR FOREST AREA OF KURNOOL DISTRICT A.P.

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### ABSTRACT



Traditionally the Chenchus are semi-nomadic food gatherers living in the midst of forests. In olden days they subsisted completely on various types of food stuffs available in the forest. There was no specific staple food and the people engaged themselves in obtaining seasonal food stuffs. The present study will help to understand about chenchu tribal's life style and phyto resources used by them.

**Keywords:** *Renunciation, Divine spirit, The Indian and The Universal, Temperament, Protagonist, Self Realization, Myth and Reality, Archetypal Figures, Reluctant Guru.*

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Kurnool district, in the southwestern part of Andhra Pradesh, covering an area of 17,658 sq. Km is situated between 14°55' and 16°07' N latitudes and 76°59'50" and 78°50' E longitudes. The district consists of two distinct physiographic provinces viz., the undulatory gneissic terrain with low denudational hills in the west and a sedimentary terrain with structural plateaus and homoclinical ridges and valleys in the east. The climate of this district may be described as semiarid with annual rainfall ranging from 40 to 60 cm and the daily

temperature varying from 18° to 43° C. The Krishna River and its tributary Tungabhadra flow through the area in the north. And consisting good inhabitations of various tribes like chenchu, konda reddy, sugali, koya dora, konda dora etc,. Hence the present study aimed to find out the medicinal plants used by chenchu tribals in their daily life.

Traditionally the Chenchus are semi-nomadic food gatherers living in the midst of forests. In olden days they subsisted completely on various types of food stuffs available in the forest. There was no specific staple food and the people engaged themselves in obtaining seasonal food stuffs. However Chenchugadda a sort of tuber, brownish coloured with white complex was said to be much eaten tuber and of which Chenchu are fond of. But this tuber is available for about 6 months from August to December. Some 100 years back the Chenchus life was intricately interlinked with the forest and they did not know any sort of marketing or economic value of the forest produce except occasional exchange of forest produce to some necessary requirements (salt, chillies) from the plains people. Forest wealth forms the main economic resource to the Chenchus. A greater part of their income is earned by engaging in forestry works, keeping watch over others' agricultural fields, selling liquor, bamboo-walls, fire-wood. Minor forest produce and government service are also primary occupation to certain families. Besides all, collection of food produce from the forest is a subsidiary occupation. During favorable season, most of the people actively engage in collecting forest produce, both for consumption and selling purpose. During such seasons, the Chenchus do not want to work for daily wages in the forest department. They prefer to go to forest and collect food materials and eat.

Collection of honey is something more than a mere subsistence activity. Same is the case with respect to honey collection from trees, ant-hills and bushes. And all people cannot collect honey from various sources. One has to learn the art of collection starting from small

bushes and gradually develop his skills in collection of honey from trees and trunks of trees and then from ravines and cliffes. To collect honey from gorges, ravines and cliffes, one has to participate in a series of such operations helping in various aspects, starting from cooking fuel to squeezing honey from beebushes and weaving of rope from the fibre of a particular tree called Madapu chettu and helping the chief collector to descend into the valley and aiding him in approaching the honey-comb etc., This also requires a sort of skill in understanding the behaviour of bees. Perhaps, it is no other activity than food gathering towards which the Chenchu rely upon in gaining their sustenance. Even today the Chenchu recollect those bygone days when their ancestors roamed forests picking up wild fruits, digging up tubers and yams, collecting honey. It is reported by the Chenchu, that their ancestors used to inhabit particular spots where they erected small beehive shaped huts thatched with leaves or grass. When the resources available in these spots were depleted, they used to shift to other places. They always chose areas which were atleast one furlong away from water resources like stream etc.

The main types of forest plants in the reserve of bailuti darga, kottala cheruvu and lingamanna forest are southern tropical dry mixed deciduous forest harbours. Hardwickia forest and Deccan thorn scrub forests with much Euphorbia scrub. Important plant species here are: *Anogeissus latifolia* (axlewood), *Cleistanthus collinus*(odcha), *Terminalia* spp., *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Hardwickia binata* (anjan tree), *Boswellia serrata* (Indian frankincense or salai), *Tectona grandis* (teak), *Mundulea sericea* and *Albizia* spp. (silkpilants). The present study will help to understand about chenchu tribal's life style and phyto resources used by them.