

MADIGA'S TRADITIONAL FOOD CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE

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Why the people of Madigas are used dry food, the Madigas almost daily food hunters from the century's, the Madiga people closely related natural resources. Madigas traditionally lived in hamlets outside mainstream village life. By the twentieth century both British administration and Nizam's administration began to employ them as village messengers. Madigas lived by tanning the leather and it was the "duty" of the Madiga family to provide chappals and other leather goods to the upper caste families with whom they were tied. Madigas contributed a lot to the music and dance. life system started Madiga with the marriages are contracted by negotiation among the Madigas and its allied castes. This is the only type in existence³ in these castes. Marriage with the following relatives is preferred among these castes (i) mother's brother's daughter, (ii) father's sister's daughter. Except the Madigas of Rayalaseema regions all regions, all others including the allied castes accept own sister's daughter also in marriage. One can also marry his brother's wife's younger sister. Marriage is exogamous, i.e. marriage will not be contracted among the people of same intiperu. The custom of child betrothal exists.

Key words: Culture, Life Style, Jambhava, Lord Shiva, Jwohari, Ornaments, Tattoos.

The origin for the Jazz drums comes from the primitive but exact rhythm and beat producing "Thappeta" tanned skins covered on the wooden round frames and were played by beating them with two sticks. The sound variation they bring by warming them when the weather is wet and humid. A few households of Madiga, Arundhatiya, Jaggali and Jambuvulu in different the regions of Andhra Pradesh. The latter three communities appear to be satellite communities to Madiga.

Madiga Culture reflects in the name Madiga has been derived from the word *Ma diguvaru* (people next to us) used by Malas to identify these people. In course of time, the name *Ma diguvaru* became Madiga. One of the brief story related Chinnayya was asked to take care of the divine cow, Kamadhenu. Having tasted the milk of the cow and finding it to be very delicious, he desired to taste the flesh of the same. He implemented his wicked desire. But the dead body was so heavy that even the gods could not move it. So Siva thought of Jambavanta who was doing penance and called him by the term '*Mahadigaru*' (a great one who came

down).Jambavanta thus received the name Mahadiga or Madiga and attended to the called of Siva. He moved the dead body and cut it into pieces Chinnayya was asked to dress the beef and Siva invited all the Gods to a feast. He moved the dead body and cut it into pieces Chinnayya was asked to dress the beef and Siva invited all the Gods to a feast. While cooking, Chinnayya in order to put off the effervescence, spat into the cooking pot. This was noticed by the Gods who left the dinning hall. Siva became angry and crushed Chinnayya them by assigning them to the lowest cast. Jambavanta’s descendants are called as Madigas while those of chinnayya are known as Malas. As Jambavanta consumed the leavings of Chinnayya and took water after him, the Madigas are regarded as inferior to Malas. The above narrated three stories find place in Hassan’s note on Madiga (Hassan S.S., Volume I.-pp 409-420). Why they people use dry food, the Madigas almost daily food hunters from the century’s, the Madiga people closely related natural resources. Madigas traditionally lived in hamlets outside mainstream village life.

The Arundatiyas are dwelling of these Madigas is locally known as *thataku illu* or *gudise*. Usually the clusters are located on the outskirts of the village. NO special importance is attached to the selection of the house site. Whenever they build houses, they consult the Brahmin or a leaned man to know whether the site is good for their family. It the site is considered to be good, then they celebrate the ceremony concerning the commencement of the house construction. A Brahmin is consulted to fix up the day, on that day, the site is cleaned and cowdung water is sprinkled. At the northeast corner of the plot, a pole that ends in “V” shape is fixed. The family God is worshipped and a coconut is offered. *Pandaram*, a mixture of coconut pieces, jiggery and *borugulu* (puffed rice) is distributed among the invitees. The ground plan of the *thatakuillu* is rectangular. Usually these are built on high plinths.



Tappedu

Their Jangalis are dwelling is known as '*puri-illu*' while the local pater is *penkutillu*. AS obtained from the informants, the colony of Jaggalis is situated usually at the eastern corner of the village. Importance is not at all attached to the selection of house site. Mostly these people suffer from lack of land for house construction. The ceremony concerning the commencement of house construction is not observed in this cast. The reason for this may be their poor economic status. Both family ad hired labour are used for house construction. Jaggalis live is dormitory type of house. A lengthy wall is constructed with mud and stones to a height of 8 feet and on both sides of the wall the houses are built. *Arundatiyas and Madigas dressing Pancha* (dhoti) and *Lalchi* (loose shirt) are respectively the lower and upper garments of males. Generally dhotis of 3 ½ yards are used. *Lalchil* requires 2 ½ yards of cloth. Banians are also used by males. The dress of a female consist of *Koka* (saree) of 7 or 8 yards in length. They prefer mostly red and white colours. Women generally do not wear blouses after the first confinement. Not wearing jackets is an indication of elderliness. The pattern or dress is the same in the case of Arundhatiya and Jambuvulu.

The ornaments that are used by women folk are varied which are following Madigas of Rayalaseema region use palmyra mats as the bedding material. They also use bed sheets. In Coastal Andhra, Madigas and Arundhatiya, Jambuvulu and Jaggali use cots invariably. Some of them also use blankets. Telangana Madigas use *gongali* (a carpet made of she's hair) as bedding. The cots are locally known as *nulaka manchalu* (cots that are woven with jute or hemp threads). The main source of income for Madiga and its allied castes is agricultural labour. The occupational distribution of Madigas according to 1961 Census also confirms this observation. A few among them also till the soil. If they do not possess land they take land on lease from others. The traditional occupation of Madigas is tanning and leather work. In the villages each Madiga household is attached to a fixed number of cultivating households. Ht Madigas are paid in kind yearly buy these cultivators and in turn these Madigas have to prepare leather buckets and chappals for them. The dead cattle are given to them by the cultivators on the condition that two pairs of chappals should be given in return. For the preparation of leather buckets the farmers themselves supply the leather. Though their traditional occupation dos not provide sufficient bread hardly any Madiga departs from his age-old occupation. With the introduction of machine-made chappals, people have lost interest in the chappals prepared by Madigas and hence most of them have been discouraged and have given up making of chappals to a large extent. However, they are invariably attending to the preparation of leather buckets. The following are the implements used by Madigas for the preparation of leather goods.



Jambahva

Implements

- (i) Are : Sticking needle.
- (ii) Gutam : An iron block use for driving nails.
- (iii) Kahti : Knife to cut the leather.

Agriculture among Madigas is of a traditional type. The factors responsible for the low yields obtained by them may be poor soil, lack of proper irrigational facilities, inadequate of maturing, ignorance about the techniques of crop rotation and crop mixing, and use of primitive agricultural implements. Madigas use indigenous ploughs and follow the ancient methods of cultivation. In this connection main life system started Madiga with the marriages are contracted by negotiation among the Madigas and its allied castes. This is the only type in existence³ in these castes. Marriage with the following relatives is preferred among these castes (i) mother's brother's daughter, (ii) father's sister's daughter. Except the Madigas of Rayalaseema regions all regions, all others including the allied castes accept own sister's daughter also in marriage. One can also marry his brother's wife's younger sister. Marriage is exogamous, i.e. marriage will not be contracted among the people of same intiperu. The custom of child betrothal exists. However this is observed rarely only when the parents of the boy or girl fall ill seriously. At that time the age of the girl or boy is not taken into account and to please the persons who are seriously ill betrothal is performed with an assurance that the marriage will certainly be performed. Marriages take place both before and after the attainment of puberty by the girl. The age of marriage for the girl ranges from 15 to 22 years. Among all sections the venue of the marriage is the bridegroom's residence. The procedure of marriage is almost the same with slight variations here and there. The father of the boy goes in search of the bride accompanied by some elderly men of the caste. They consult some

of the neighbouring villagers and go to see the girl. If the girl is found suitable to them they take food at the girl's house. In acceptance of the girl they keep a vermilion mark on the forehead of the girl. The parents of the girl are invited to visit the groom's place. The girl's parents then leave for the groom's place and enquire about the conditions of the groom's family. They are treated to a feast consisting of non-vegetarian food and liquor.

Before the fixation of the day, the groom's father settles the bride price to be paid. Then the girl's parents return to their place and make necessary arrangements for the marriage. The marriage is celebrated for three days. On the first day of marriage, a pandal is erected in front of the house of the groom, in a rectangular form. Four wooden poles are fixed in the ground, over which jowar plants are spread. On all the four sides, mango branches are tied in series. Inside the pandal a square platform of 6 feet is formed which is smeared with cowdung and decorated with white and red coloured designs. The bridegroom's party also celebrates the occasion of *pellikodukunu cheyuta* (observing the formalities to prepare the boy for marriage). New pots are brought from the potters house which are used for worship at time of marriage and also for cooking purposes. Two days before the marriage the groom's father sends *pradhanam* (special menu sent to the bride's parents) to the bride's house. The contents Madigas and its allied casts. The variations are given separately. The contents of *pradhanam* are used on the next day for a feast. The bride's party starts for the groom's place after celebrating the ceremony called '*pellikuthurnni cheyuta*' (observing the formalities to prepare the girl for marriage). The bride's party that arrives on the first day of marriage to the groom's place, rest near the temple of Pochamma or under a tree just on the outskirts of the village, and informs the groom's party, of their arrival. Immediately the groom's party followed by the musical instruments goes there and receives them and arranges a place for their stay. In the evening all the relatives and invites of both sides (bride's and groom's) are given a vegetarian feast. During the early hours of the second day, the actual ceremony takes place. Four small earthen pots are kept at the four corners of the dais in the pandal, and are connected with turmeric dyed threads. The bridal couple is seated on the dais and threads. The bridal couple is seated on the dais and anointed with oil and gandham (sandal paste). On the four sides on the dais, paddy is poured in a straight line connecting the pots. The couple is then given bath and dressed in new cloths. Bhasingams are tied to their foreheads (Fig. 21). These are prepared with cardboard and small beads. The paddy poured in between the small earthen pots is replaced by rice. The couple after being dressed in new clothes is seated side by side on the dais. The officiator repeats some mantramulu and a branch of a tree known as palakomma is placed before the couple and is worshipped by the couple. Then the couple is asked to take three turns round the object of worship and then seated at the respective places. Before the couple goes round the object or with their, their garments are tied to each other in a knot. All the invitees are given akshintalu (vermillion or turmeric smeared rice) and at the auspicious moment the bridegroom ties the marriage locket and all the invitees a shower the akshintalu on the couple. After his the

couple is seated one opposite to the other and pour rice mixed with betel nuts and turmeric roots on each other's head. This ceremony is called talambaralu poyuta. In the afternoon all the invitees are given a feast consisting of sweet dishes. In the evening the bridal couple is seated on the dais, where the invitees and relatives give some presents either in cash or kind. The celebration is concluded either in cash or kind. The celebration is concluded for the second day. Only vegetarian meal is served to all during the night and liquor is supplied. On the third day, at about 10. A.M. a non-vegetarian feast is arranged to all the people. In the evening the couple is taken to Pochamma or Nallamma temple and a coconut is offered to the Goddess. The bridal couple is taken in procession to the house. If the girl had attained puberty before marriage, the nuptial ceremony is performed on the same night, otherwise it is postponed till she attains puberty. It was the practice with Madigas and its allied castes to get the girl's married before the attainment of puberty but this is not observed always now-a-days. The payment of bride price differs from region to region.

Widow re-marriages are accepted in all these sections of Madiga. In case the widow marries again the children (borne by her former husband) have to be handed over to the nearest relations of the deceased husband and the present husband has to pay some money for their maintenance.

The widow re-marriage ceremony is very simple. After obtaining the permission of the Caste Panchayat, the groom goes to the residence of the widow and presents her a saree and a blouse. She comes back with him after wearing the new saree and blouse. Divorce is an accepted institution among the Madigas and its allied castes. A divorced woman may remarry. The Caste Panchayat settles any disputes in this context. If the divorce is initiated by the woman, then she has to pay Rs. 100 towards the expenses incurred at the time of the marriage. If it is initiated by the male on the grounds of her adultery etc., no compensation is paid.

Food habitués The family god is worshipped and a coconut is broken. Milk is boiled. While boiling the milk, they see that the boiled milk float out of the vessel. They call this particular rite of the ceremony as *palu pongichuta*. Vegetarian food is served to all the friends and relatives. The nine cereals and pulses are *Biyyam* (paddy), *Godhumalu* (Wheat), *Kandulu* (redgram), *pesarlu* (Greengram), *Semagalu* (Bengalgram), *Minumulu* (Blackgram), *Ulavalu* (kidney bean), *Nuvullu* (Gingly), and *Alasandalu* (cowpea). Vermilion and turmeric are applied to the pole and puja (worship of God) is performed. All the invitees are given the pieces of coconuts offered to the God along with Dry meet and Vorugulu also.

Those are shows on the heritage of the Madiga community, national wide these are called Chamars, Mochis and Sangarka etc.

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