

hereditary rights. *Naivedyam* is distributed to the servants of the temple and *palavelli* is distributed in the village.

In this connection a fair is held with about 50 shops selling eatables, toys and coconuts. Merry-go-rounds and recitation of stories are the items of entertainment. Some devotees pass their time merrily in *chindulu veyuta* (dance), *veerangamu veyuta* and *veerathallu vesukonuta* which are Dravidian customs.

Source: *Sri Muppaneni Radhakrishna Murty, Village Munsiff, Ramachandrapuram*

20. **Singarabhotlapalem** - Situated at a distance of 7 miles from Kandukur and 16 miles from Singarayakonda Railway Station.

It is said that Singarabhotlu, a Brahmin was doing *tapas* (penance). He had exposed his cloth to the sun. But the cloth went on adjusting itself in such a way that Singarabhotlu was always protected from the sun. The Nawab of the place realised that this strange phenomenon was due to the *Tapassakthi* (power of penance) of the Brahmin. He gave this village as an *inam* to him and hence the village goes by the name Singarabhotlapalem from that time (*Palem*-suburb or village or locality).

The population of the village is 1,044 and it is made up of the following communities; Caste Hindus - Brahmin, Vaisya, Reddi, Vadde, Muthracha, Yadava, etc.; Scheduled Castes' people 223; and Scheduled Tribes' people 58. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditional occupations.

Temples of Siva with His idol, Rama with His image, Poleramma, Ankamma and Bangaramma are the places of worship.

Maha Sivaratri (Nandiseva Uthsavam) is celebrated for one day on *Magha Bahula Triodasi* (January-February). River bath is observed. The procession of Eswara is taken through the village. This is of ancient origin though of local significance. Brahmins patronize the festival. Local Hindus congregate. *Pujari* is Turlapati Subbaiah, a Brahmin of Koundinya *gotram*. *Prasadam* is distributed to all.

Sri Rama Navami is celebrated for five days from *Chaitra Suddha Navami* to *Triodasi*. Fasts and river baths are observed. This is of ancient origin though

of local significance. Brahmins patronize the festival. Local Hindus congregate. A Brahmin, Sri Turlapati Subbaiah of Koundinya *gotram* is the *pujari*. *Prasadam* is distributed to all. There is free feeding. *Hari-kathas* take place.

When epidemics and cattle diseases break out in the village, ~~Gramadevatala Kolupulu to Poleramma, Ankamma and Bangaramma~~ are celebrated. Generally this is observed once in 2 or 3 years according to the convenience of the villagers. He-buffaloes and fowls are sacrificed. This is of ancient origin and of local significance. All local Hindu communities congregate. *Pujari* is a Yadava. *Prasadam* is distributed to all.

Source: *Sri Anantabhotla Sankaraiah, Singarabhotlapalem*

21. **Vellatur** - Situated at a distance of 3 miles to the north of Ponnalur on Kandukur - Kanigiri motor route, 6 miles from Kandukur and 13 miles from Singarayakonda Railway Station.

The total population of the village is 842 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus - Brahmin, Vaisya, Kamma, Vadde, Golla, etc.; Madiga, Mala, Scheduled Castes with 149 persons; Scheduled Tribe only 1 person. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture and agricultural labour.

Mastanaiah tomb and some stone images in the names of village deities such as Poleramma and others are worshipped. There is an idol of Siva in the form of Lingam in a temple which is in ruins.

Gramadevatala Kolupulu are celebrated once in 3 or 4 years according to the convenience of the villagers and when epidemics like cholera and cattle diseases prevail. Animals are sacrificed. This is of local significance. Hindu devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages congregate. There is free feeding.

Mastanaiah, a Muslim saint died here and a tomb is erected. Every Thursday, puja is offered. Janda (flag) is taken in procession. It is believed that by doing pradakshinams (going around) to the tomb, devotees possessed by evil spirits are relieved of them. Since one year, this is in practice and is confined to this and the neighbouring villages. All communities patronize and congregate.

Source : 1. *Sri Ch. Kotaiah, Teacher, Kalavalla*
2. *Sri A. Jacob, Teacher, Kalavalla*

32. **Dappalampad**—Situated at a distance of about 8 miles from Kandukur and 12 miles from Thettu Railway Station of which 7 miles can be covered by bus and 5 miles by walk.

The total population of the village is 510 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus—Kamma, Chakali, etc.; Madiga, Mala Scheduled Castes with 13 persons; Yanadi Scheduled Tribe with 19 persons; Muslims and Christians. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditional occupations.

A temporary pandal is erected during Ankamma Tirunala and the fierce looking earthen image of Ankamma in female form prepared for the occasion by the Kummari is installed and worshipped.

Ankamma Tirunala is celebrated once in three years for 3 days from *Jaishtha Suddha Purnima* (May-June). Prior to the Tirunala, *jatara* is celebrated on a Sunday or Tuesday. At midnight on one of the above mentioned days, an earthen image of the deity is prepared and installed in the centre of the village with trumpets by village headmen accompanied by *Kommulavandlu* (those who blow pipes). A he-buffalo is sacrificed and *poli* (rice mixed with blood) is scattered around the village for the welfare of the villagers. During Tirunala on the first day, the earthen image of Ankamma is brought in procession with trumpet by the villagers to Kummarasetty's (potter) house where the Kummarasetty prepares an earthen image of the deity and after reciting the story of the deity by the Pambala the earthen image is installed in a temporary pandal erected for the occasion. Animals are sacrificed while bringing the deity from the Kummari's house and also while installing Her. On the second day afternoon, *naivedyam* is offered and the devotees fulfil their vows. Recitation of stories is done by Pambalas. In the night a palanquin is decorated with flowers and *papa veshamu* (the deity decorated as a young girl) is taken from house to house in procession with music. This is a very attractive function. People present clothes and cereals to the deity. On the third day at 2-00 p. m. devotees fulfil their vows by arranging carts and *prabhas* with decorated bulls. Rams, goats, he-buffaloes and fowls are sacrificed. At 6 p. m. the deity is left outside the village in procession. This festival is of local significance. The villagers patronize the festival. Local people congregate. *Pujari*

is a Yadava with hereditary rights. The Kummaris who prepare the image of Ankamma deity also have hereditary rights.

Source : *Sri P. Panduranga Rao, Teacher, Dappalampad*

33. **Kondareddipalem** — Situated at a distance of 3 miles from Machavaram to its west and 6 miles from Kandukur.

The total population of the village is 322 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus—Byneedis, Kommuvandlu, Yadavas, etc.; and Scheduled Castes (281). The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and weaving.

Temples of Kumaraswamy, Ankamma and Poleramma are the places of worship. The stone images called *Gali Devathalu* which are outside the village and in the fields are worshipped in human form.

When epidemics like small-pox and cattle diseases break out in the village Gali Devathala Kolupulu are celebrated for two days. *Pongallu* and *guggilam* (resin) are offered to all deities respectively. For two days, Ankamma is worshipped and the story Renuka Yuddhamu (battle of Renuka) is recited and *pongali* is offered. He-buffaloes, goats, rams and fowls are sacrificed to Ankamma and Poleramma. Animals are also sacrificed when, in the course of the recitation of the story of Renuka, etc., the heroine appears for the first time.

Ankamma is believed to be the *avataram* (incarnation) of Renuka, the wife of Jamadagni. Renuka was bringing water early morning from the river for the worship in a vessel prepared out of sand with the power of her *pathi bhakti* (devotion to husband). One morning, she saw a beautiful prince taking bath in the river and looked at him in admiration. She could not prepare the sand pot and she was forced to confess the fact before her husband as an explanation for not bringing water. The enraged husband asked her sons to cut off her head. Though others refused, the youngest son Parasurama cut off her head and in return for his filial duty requested the father to give his mother back to him. But, as the head had fallen in the Harijan colony it was not possible. Renuka is worshipped as such by caste Hindus and she is worshipped as a Kshudra Devata by Harijans with several names. This is of local significance. Kapus and Karnams patronize. Byneedis, Pambalas and Madigas are the followers. Devotees from this and nearby villages congregate. *Pujari* is a Kummari with hereditary rights. A few shops selling eatables, utensils, etc., are arranged for the occasion.

Source : *Sri P. Narasimham, Headmaster, Zilla Parishad Special Elementary School, Kandukur*

34. **Kandukur** (Skhandapuri) is the headquarters town of the same name, situated at a distance of 9 miles towards the west of Singarayakonda Railway Station on Madras-Vijayawada broad gauge section of the Southern Railway. It is a coastal taluk bounded on the north by Podili Taluk of the same district and Ongole Taluk of Guntur District separated by river Musi; on the south by Kavali Taluk; on the west by Kanigiri Taluk and on the east by the Bay of Bengal. It is an important road junction. Ullapalem-Singarayakonda-Kandukur road, Kandukur-Chundi road and Kandukur-Boganampadu road meet at this place.

"It is said that about 880 years ago, Somanatha, a Brahmin, conquered the fort with the armies of a King. At that time this was a forest area. He rested his army here (Skhandhavaram) and hence the place acquired the name Skhandhapuri which in course of time corrupted into Kandukur. Komatigunta, Kesarigunta, Gunnamkatta, Ankulukunta, etc., are in ruins. The ruins of the fort and the *kandakam* (moat) are still to be seen. It is unknown to what period it (fort) belongs. The site of the fort and part of the ditch have been brought under cultivation. The only ruin to be seen is the old stone gate".¹

The total population of the town is 12,436 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus - Brahmin, Kamma, Vaisya, Mangali, Chakali, Muth-racha, Vadde, Yadava, Sale, Kummari, Kammari, etc.; Scheduled Castes of Madiga, Mala with 791 persons; Scheduled Tribes of Yerukula, Yanadi with 595 persons; Muslims (Dudekula) and Christians. The usual offices like a Taluk Office, Police Station, etc., that are found in a taluk headquarters are located in this town. There is one high school in the town besides eleven elementary schools. There is also a reading room and a library. The post office has telephone and telegraphic facilities. There is a Government hospital, apart from two private hospitals. There are two rice mills in the town. The important cottage industry is handloom weaving. Weaving is the hereditary occupation of some of the castes like Padmasale and Adi Andhra. Fine cloth is produced here. Other means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditional occupations.

Someswara temple is said to have been constructed by Somanatha, the Brahmin who conquered the

fort about 880 years ago as a trophy. He named the deity as Someswara after his name. On the temple walls battle scenes are carved. This temple is located by the side of Gunnamkatta (bund) and there is a banyan tree. There is a *koneru* in front of the temple and Someswara is worshipped in the form of a *lingam*.

According to a local tradition during Muslim period, a Muslim King conquered the fort (Skhandapuri) from the Vijayanagara King. They first destroyed Janardhana temple in the fort and threw the deity in a well. But daily *naivedyam* was offered by the *pujaris*. They approached the Brahmin minister of the Muslim King for his help and the Brahmin minister promised them that he would help when occasion arises. After sometime, the Muslim king suffered from severe stomachache and all treatment proved futile. The Brahmin minister advised him to worship Janardhana and build a temple for Him. The king made up his mind to do like that and slept. Janardhana appeared in his dream and the stomachache was cured. The king fulfilled his oath. Janardhana's image is worshipped in human form. It is said that even in Kasi (Banaras) particulars about this temple are enquired by the devotees. Lord Someswara and Lord Janardhana are praised by several Telugu poets.

Besides the above two temples of Someswara and Janardhana the temples of Ankamma, Maremma, Pole-ramma, Nancharamma, Bangaramma and Pothuraju with their images in human form, the newly constructed Sri Kodandaramaswamy temple with His image in human form, mosques and a church are the places of worship. Ankamma is the village deity. She is located near 'Mutyalakatta' tank. It is believed that the deity Ankamma goes round the village during nights to guard the village. There is a seven headed tomb on a small hillock in a pond situated in the heart of the town called Gundarukunta in commemoration of the seven warriors slain in the battle of Allinagar *alias* Gandavararam of Kovur taluk. Tradition says that seven headless corpses dropped down here from the backs of horses flying from the battlefield. There is also a *darga* of Saint Shahjehangir.

Ankamma Tirunala is celebrated once in 3 or 5 years for 5 days from *Sravana Suddha Purnima* (July-August). Cocoanuts, green gram and jaggery water are offered with *kavadis* (strings tied with vessels on either side of a stick) and music. On Tuesday, Friday and Sunday devotees coming with their relatives offer sarees. Daily *naivedyam* and *deeparadhana* are observed. *Pongalla bandlu* are taken round the temple. Fowls, rams and

1. *Nellore District Manual* (1873), p. 430

villages congregate. *Pujari* is a Vaishnavite Brahmin appointed by the Endowments Board. *Prasadam* is distributed to all.

Source: *Sri P. S. Narasimha Rao, Teacher, Zilla Parishad Hindu Elementary School, Pedapavani*

38. **Ammavaripalem** — Situated at a distance of 11 miles from Kavali Railway Station of which 8 miles can be covered by bus and 3 miles by walk and 15 miles from Kandukur, i. e., 5 miles by footpath and 10 miles by bus.

The total population of the village is 753 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus — Brahmin, Vaisya, Reddi, Kamma, Chakali, Balija, Yadava. etc.; Scheduled Castes (79) and Scheduled Tribes (43). The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditional occupations.

Margosa trees in the names of the village deities Poleramma, Ankamma, Mahalakshamma, Mari and Kanaka Durgamma and a church are the places of worship. There are no temples.

Poleramma Jatara is celebrated for 2 days in *Margasiram* (November — December). He-buffaloes, fowls and sheep are sacrificed. Coconuts are offered. People worship Mari and Kanakadurga when they are in troubles. This is of ancient origin and of local significance. Yadavas patronize the festival and all Hindus organise it. Local people congregate. *Pujari* are Janigarla Pedda Subbaiah's sons who are Pambalas. *Prasadam* is distributed to all.

Source: *Sri K. George, Teacher, Ammavaripalem*

39. **Gudlur** — Situated at a distance of 8 miles from Thettu Railway Station and 10 miles from Kandukur.

It was called Netrapuri in the olden days. In the 16th century Vennelakanti Suranna translated *Vishnu puranam* into Telugu and dedicated it to Ravuru Basava Raghava Reddy who ruled with Gudlur as Metropolis. He addressed the king as *Netrapuradheswara*. The name Gudluru, the colloquial form of Netrapuri came into vogue. "There are the remains here of a mudfort, said to have been built (A. S. 1607, A. D. 1685) by Godavu Chukravarti Reddy." ¹ It is said that Errapragada, who translated *Aranyaparvam* of

1. *Nellore District Manual* (1873), p. 430

the *Maha Bharatha* used to sit and write in the temple of Neelakanteswara.

The total population of the village is 3,834 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus — Brahmin, Kshatria (Raju), Vaisya, Kamma, Kummari, Reddi, Balija, Chakali, Mangali, Vadde, Kaikala, Jangam, etc.; Scheduled Castes (194); Scheduled Tribes (240) and Muslims. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour, trade and other traditional occupations.

Temples of Venugopalaswamy, Neelakanteswara-swamy with his image in the form of *Lingam*, Anjaneya, Poleramma, Ankamma, Bangaramma, Gangamma and Kamakshayya Mutt with his tomb are the places of worship in this village.

There are blood red scratches on one side and milky white scratches on another side to the *Lingam* in Neelakanteswara temple. It is said that Eswara, in the form of a snake, was emptying milk from the udder of a cow leaving nothing to the owner. The owner suspected the cowboy and with an axe in hand he followed the cow. Hiding behind a bush he noticed the strange phenomenon and in great fury he hit the snake with his axe. The snake disappeared and a lingam appeared with a notch on its head and blood red stains and milky white stains on either side.

On *Magha Bahula Chaturdasi* (January-February) Sivaratri is celebrated for one day in Sri Neelakanteswaraswamy temple. Cart procession is held with *prabhas*. A cloth with the figures of puranic persons stitched on it is tied on front portion of the *prabhas*. Sri Chenchaiyah, a Jangam of this village prepares all the figures. The cloth costs about Rs. 600 to Rs. 700. Five or six such *prabhas* are prepared for the occasion. In the night they are taken in procession on carts. A Jangam Devara offers *naivedyam* and performs puja before the procession is held. One Jangam Devara sits on the cart with a bell and blows the conch. Saivite *dandakam* is recited in the procession. Water and coconuts are offered. Fast and *jagaranam* are observed by the devotees. This is of ancient origin and of local significance. Local people patronize the festival. About 7,000 devotees from this and the nearby villages congregate. *Pujari* is a Brahmin of Koundinyasa *gotram*.

Kamakshaiyah Ayyagari Aradhana is celebrated for one day on *Phalguna Suddha Chaviti* (February-March). He was an *Ajanma Sanyasi* (*Sanyasi* even from childhood). He attained salvation on 11th April, 1932 and

a *Mutt* was constructed on his tomb. *Aradhana* is celebrated once in a year. For the past 30 years, this is celebrated and is confined to this district and Guntur District as well. About three thousand devotees from both the districts congregate. There is free feeding and *prasadam* is distributed to all.

A fair is held in this connection. Shops selling eatables, lanterns, medicines, pictures, photos and clothes are opened. Pandals are erected and free feeding is arranged.

Occasionally and when epidemics break out in this village, *Maremma Jatara* is celebrated along with the *jatara* of the other village deities such as *Poleramma*, *Ankamma*, *Kanakadurgamba* and *Nadiveedhi Sakthi* according to the convenience of the villagers. Strangely, a figure of Chuttala Saheb, a Muslim by birth, is placed beside *Maremma* and is taken in procession. Devotees fulfil their vows. In *Nadiveedhi Sakthi Jatara* sacrificing a buffalo is an important custom. The sacrificed head of the buffalo is placed on the head of a person and a lamp is lit on the sacrificed head of the animal. The head is taken in procession and is left on the boundary of the village. All the while, sticks are waved on the head as if to prevent the *Devathas* from taking it away. This is of local significance. Villagers patronize the festival and local people of all castes congregate. Chakalis (washermen), Yadavas and Kummari are pujaris. In the festival formerly *Madigas* were dancing with their 33 ensigns such as yellow shirt, sword, shield, *vummayi pitta* and *kaliki turayi* (turban), etc. But these are reduced to 5 from 33 by an order of a court due to the conflicts between *Madigas* and others.

There is a family deity for *Vadde* caste people. There is no proper shape for the deity which could be expressed in correct terms. Articles of 1 or 2 inches placed in a casket are observed sacred and are worshipped daily. Occasionally *jatara* is celebrated for one day and several thousands of rupees are spent for the occasion by the *Vaddes*. All devotees take sea-bath. For the past few years, this is celebrated, and is confined to this district and Guntur District. *Vaddes* patronize the festival. About 3,000 Hindus from both the districts congregate. Pandals are erected and devotees are fed free. The two local *bhajana brindams* entertain the devotees.

There are *inam* lands for *Venugopalaswamy* and the *pujari* is a *Vaighanasa Brahmin* of *Bharadwaja gotram*.

On Friday and Saturday, *Parvati Devi*, consort of *Lord Siva* and *Anjaneya* are worshipped with *kumkum* (vermilion) and leaves respectively. A *Brahmin* is the *pujari* in *Anjaneya* temple.

There is a library in the name of *Errapragada*. He is the third among the '*Kavitrayam*' who translated the great epic *Mahabharata*, a literary treasure for the *Telugu* people. His titles are '*Sambhu Dasudu*' and '*Prabhanda Parameswarudu*'. His work *Harivamsam* is dedicated to *Prolaya Vema Reddy*.

Occasionally, once in an year or two the Library authorities celebrate '*Erra Pragada Vardhanthotsavam*' in his memory. Renowned poets, scholars and critics are invited for the occasion. This is of local significance. The library authorities organize the function. Local people of all castes congregate. There is free feeding.

Source: 1. *Sri Suraparaju Kotaiah, Secretary, Sri Errapragada Grandhalayam, Gudlur*
2. *Sri P. L. Narayanaiah, Teacher, Zilla Parishad Higher Elementary School, Gudlur*

40. **Potlur**— Situated at a distance of 6 miles from *Kandukur* and 15 miles from *Singarayakonda Railway Station*. The bus from *Singarayakonda* to *Pamuru* goes via *Potlur*.

The total population of the village is 587 and it is made up of the following communities: Caste Hindus — *Brahmin*, *Kamma*, *Viswabrahmin*, *Baliya*, *Yadava*, *Kummari*, *Vadde*, *Vaisya*, *Mangali*, *Chakali*, etc.; *Scheduled Castes* (54); *Scheduled Tribes* (38); and *Christians*. The chief means of livelihood of the people are agriculture, agricultural labour, trade and other traditional occupations.

Osuramma temple at a distance of 4 furlongs from the village with Her image in female form, temples of *Rama*, *Siva* and *Madhavaswamy* are the places of worship.

In the bygone days, some inhabitants of *Gudlur* migrated to a distant place due to famine carrying their family deity *Osuramma* in a *vutti* (meat safe—a net work sling for suspending pots, etc.) but they left the deity on the way in *Pokuru (Potlur)*. At that time *Gattamaneni Varu* of the *Kamma* caste in *Pokuru* were searching for their missing cattle but in vain. In the night, *Osuramma* appeared to them in a dream and said that if they promise to construct Her a temple, their cattle would be traced. Accordingly, the next day the

cattle were found near the deity and the Gattamaneni-
 aru fulfilled their vow by constructing a temple. The
 horns of the missed cattle are preserved by the owners
 even now. From that time, Osuramma is worshipped
 as a village deity besides Ankamma, Poleramma and
 Gangamma.

Once in two years Osuramma Tirunala is celebra-
 ted for 10 days from *Jaishtha Suddha Panchami* to *Su-
 ddha Chaturdasi* (May-June). Rams and goats, he-bu-
 ffaloes and fowls are sacrificed for 9 days. This is of
 ancient origin and of local significance. Kammas pa-
 tronize the festival. Local Hindus irrespective of caste
 and creed congregate. *Pujaris* are Yadavas with here-
 ditary rights.

Source: *Sri J. Abraham, Headmaster, Zilla Parishad
 Special Elementary School, Pokuru (Potlur)*

41. **Yellurpad**, hamlet of **Chevuru**— Situated at a
 distance of about 3 miles from Thetlur Railway Station
 and about 17 miles from Kandukur.

The total population of Chevuru village of which
 Yellurpad is a hamlet is 2,326 and it is made up of
 many sub-communities of Caste Hindus: Scheduled Ca-
 stes (731); and Scheduled Tribes (102); Muslims and
 Christians. The chief means of livelihood of the people
 are agriculture, agricultural labour and other traditio-
 nal occupations.

There is a temple for Lord Siva. Sivaratri is cele-
 brated for one day on *Magha Bahula Triodasi* (January
 -February). This is of local significance and local
 people congregate.

Source: *Statement of Fairs and Festivals furnished
 by the Collector, Nellore*

