

Pichiguntala @ Helava @ Vamsharaj: Genealogical nomadic tribes of India

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2023, 17(01), 133–149

Publication history: Received on 27 November 2022; revised on 02 January 2023; accepted on 05 January 2023

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.17.1.0005>

Abstract

Pichiguntala are one of the ancient Genealogical Nomadic Tribes in India. Their existence only found in the southern parts of India. The origins of these nomadic tribes are dating back to 8th Century C.E. These people have very meagre in their populations numbering less than 0.05% of the total populations of the southern states. These Pichiguntalas are basically from the Telugu speaking areas of present day divided Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States. They are found to be the heirs of legendary Shaivite religious Hindu leader Kunti Malla Reddy of Srisailam (Nallamala Hills). The word Kunti means to a lame and Pichi means to mad or beggar in Telugu, hence the Pichiguntala means to a lame beggar who do service the cultivating families on their genealogical aspects for alms. It is found that during times of pre-Medieval Period, these people were engaged to record the population studies, keepers of revenue records and recording of census data under the Rashtrakutas, Kakathiyas and Reddy Rulers in India. It is observed that during 12th Century C.E., the religious movements instituted by legendary Shaivite leader Basavanna @ Basaveshwara (who formed the Lingayuth Community) against the Jain Rulers of Bijjalas of Basavakalyan; had attracted these Pichiguntalas leading mass migrations to non-Telugu speaking areas of Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, Goa, Pondicherry, Orissa and other parts in India. Presently, their socio-economic conditions are very pathetic due to their nomadic life styles. They do not have the basic facilities such as food, shelter, housing, schooling, educational and economical avenues, etc. Most of them are either school dropouts or illiterates; and have not entered government jobs or have any political representations. Since, their population size and vote bank is meagre; they are living as numerical minorities without any welfare and developmental interests by the Government. There is need for the safe guarding of their dilutions and extinctions in the society. There exists a threat that these people are slowly opting for religious conversions for their betterment. These Pichiguntalas are also called as Helavas in Kannada, Helavi in Marathi, Vamsharaju in Telangana, Kudi Panians in Tamil, and are referring themselves as Kunti Malla Reddy Reddys in Andhra Pradesh. Here, the author is aiming to bring out the details & socio-economic status on the Pichiguntalas in India with an objective to create a reference for the future researchers and the State Governments.

Keywords: Pichiguntala; Helava; Helavi; Vamshraj; Vamsharaj; Pitchgunta; Genealogy; Kunti Malla Reddy; Helvi; Helwi; Karnataka; Telangana; Andhra Pradesh; Kudi Pandiandi; Nomadic; Tribe; Pastoral; Vamshavali; Kula; Gavara; Vellala; Kudi Paniyan; Mirasi; Gothra; Caste; Community

1. Introduction

Nomadism refers to any type of existence characterised by the absence of a domicile. The word Nomad is derived from Greek word Noms which means wandering in search of pasture. Nomad refers to a group of people without fixed habitation and to describe mobile hunger-gatherers. The people who move from one place to another in search of livelihood or social customs are known as Nomads. The Sociology Dictionary (1961) defines Nomadism as the habitual or traditional movement of people in response to their needs for subsistence. A nomad is a member of race or tribe who has no fixed abode, but moves about from place according to the state of the pasturage or food supplies, having no permanent abodes. Nomadism has its roots to ancient times in the beginning of the human civilization; with the root

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cause is livelihood. The primary requirement for any living species for fulfilling the needs of sufficient feeding in their dwelling places, started to move somewhere in order to satiate their hunger. A nomad is a member of a community of people without fixed habitation who regularly move to and from the same areas, including nomadic hunter – gatherers, pastoral nomads, and tinker or trader nomads. Whereas, any wanderer, itinerant, a member or people or a tribe that has no permanent abode but moves about from place to place, usually seasonally and often following a traditional route or circuit according to the state of the pasturage or food supply or traditions, are referred as Semi-Nomads. It is found that there were an estimated 30 to 40 million nomads in the world, as on 1995. There are about 2.4 million of them – 1.5 million of who still keep to a nomadic lifestyle. There are 315 Nomadic Tribes and 198 De-notified Tribes in India. The Nomadic pastoralist tribes are known as Vimukta Jatis or Free / Liberated Jatis as they were classed as such under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, enacted under British Rule in India. This act was repealed by the Government of India in 1952, after the Indian Independence. The tribes designated as “De-notified”, “Nomadic” or “Semi-Nomadic” are eligible for reservations in India. The Government of India established the National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes in 2005 to study the developmental aspects of such tribes. During the Ancient times, the human beings life nomadic by nature. Nomads are known as a group of communities who travel from place to place for their livelihood. Some are agriculture and cattle rearing or traders, salt traders, fortune tellers, conjurers, Ayurveda healers, jugglers, acrobats, actors, story tellers, snake charmers, animal doctors, tattooists, grindstone makers or basket makers, etc. It is observed that one of the Pastoral Community named as Pichiguntala in synonym with Helava and Vamsharaj recorded under southern States of India are engaged in Genealogical Services since more than 1000 years. Originally these people were the sub-sects of main stream Reddy Community in Telugu speaking Andhra Pradesh; but later during the 12th Century C.E., have deviated, diverted and migrated to other non-Telugu speaking areas (of southern India) as Nomadic Genealogists. Presently, they are facing the times of dilution and extinction. The Author hereby working on their origin and socio-economic status factors with an objective to create a reference for the future researchers and the government thereof.

2. Definition of a Pichiguntala

Pichiguntalas are defined in the dictionaries and authenticated by erstwhile writer Syed Siraj Ul Hassan in his book “Castes and Tribes of the Nizam’s Dominion” at page 569, that these people are “Telugu caste of wandering beggars, genealogists and mat makers who are supposed to derive their name from Bhiksha Kuntala (*Bhiksha* mean begging, *Kunti* mean lame) probably an opprobrious epithet denoting a lame beggar”.

2.1. Origin of Pichiguntalas

An accepted legend on the origin of Pichiguntalas in India states that during the ancient times, there was a family belong to Roddi @ Rashtakuta community from Deogiri (City of Gods) presently in Maharashtra near Aurangabad, migrated to the Deccan areas of present Andhra Pradesh. The family members were disciples and worshipers of lord Shiva migrated to Srisailam and settled to serve lord Shiva (Mallikarjun). The family head was known as Maribeth (Maribethi Reddy) and his wife Lakshmi had 12 sons and their family members went in search of plains land in Nallamala forest of Srisailam on the banks of Krishna River, settled as agriculture farming community. Whereas, out of 12, there were 3 childless couples settled at Srisailam, continued their prayers to Mallikarjun for children; and finally the couples were blessed. Among them, Pedda Mangamma and Vanamadevi got healthy children, whereas Chinna Mangamma and Sathyama Reddy blessed with a lame physically handicapped son (without a hand and a leg). The lame child born with the blessing of Mallikarjun was named as Malla Reddy; and since he was a physically handicapped he was also called as Kunti Malla Reddy (Kunti means lame in Telugu). The lame boy was unable to do any type of regular cultivating / agricultural activities by his own because of his physical handicapness. So the Jangamas (preachers of Shaivism) of that period in Srisailam (at Mallaikarjun Temple), trained the lame boy in recording Vamshavali (Genealogical services in Kula-Gothras) for the cultivating communities such as Reddys & Kaapus of that time. The Jangamas (Shaivite preachers) trained the lame boy in telling of Vamshavali (Genealogy with 85 lakh house hold names, gothras, titles, thanakas, poems, etc.) and later married to an inter-caste girl known as Pichamma. The lame boy was also given with a name of Gothrakumara by the Jangamas and was appointed as the Kula Guru for Reddy Community to carry out the Genealogical / Vamshavali activities. Thereafter, passage of Kunti Malla Reddy and wife Pichamma, their heirs were accepted as Kula Gurus by Reddy Communities and lived harmoniously with other Reddy families (Dr. Chandrasekhar Reddy, 1998), on condition that these Pichiguntalas will serve only the Reddy Community by a written agreement on a copper plate document (Raagi Rekha Shashanam).



Figure 1 Kunti Malla Reddy –Ancestor of Pichiguntalas & Kula Guru for Reddy Community

The services of the Pichiguntalas were highly respected, recognized and remunerated by the Reddy families in the form of a share in their agricultural produce, cloths, gold coins, cows, goats, etc., but no shares in their properties; lived as Reddy family members till 12th century. Another, version of the Pichiguntala Caste is that the Jangamas (Shaivite Saadhus) who trained Kunti Malla Reddy gave him a Bull (Ox) for travelling and a Holy Bell (Ganta) named it as Bicchaganta (Bell for Begging and Alms). It became symbol and identity of Kunti Malla Reddy; and his heirs and later referred as Bikshaganti @ Picchaganti to Pichigunti (Lame Beggar) (?) (B.J.Ramakrishna, 2004). Hence, the children born to Kunti Malla Reddy and their heirs were known as Mallabathullu or Gothrakumarulu. In the later stages, the heirs of Kunti Malla Reddy and Pichamma were given a household name Pichamma-kuntannavaru @ Pichamma-kuntimallannavaru @ Pichakuntintivaru. But, the name slowly becomes Pichikuntala to Pichiguntala which was a Household name with Reddy as their caste name, till 13th Century (?) (Dr.L.Ramakrishna & N.M.Dhanya, 2014).

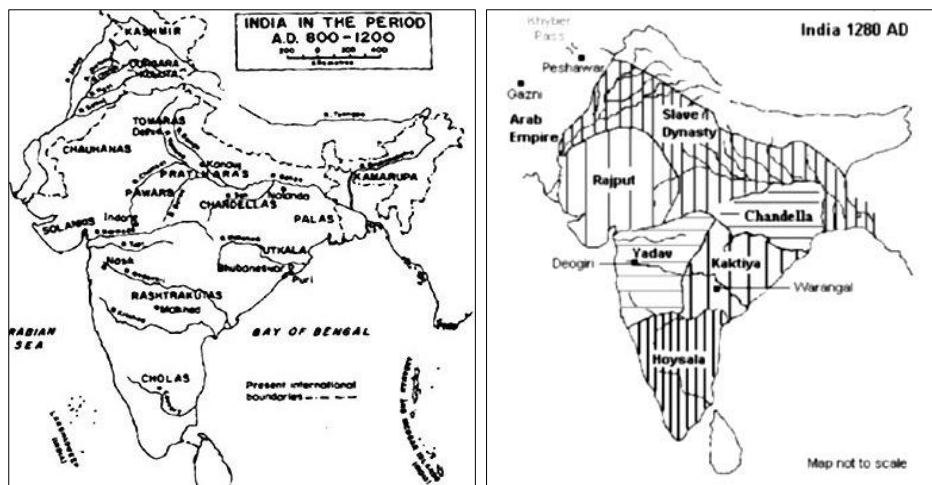


Figure 2 India during ring 8th to 12th Century

3. Pichiguntala: The Reddy brotherhood

It is observed that even today, the Kula-Gothras of both Pichiguntalas and of their original Reddy Community remains the same. *Out 360 Gothras among Reddys, 120 Gothras of Muttati Reddys are matching with that of Pichiguntalas. The religious and cultural practices of Pichiguntalas living in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are similar to that of their main stream Reddy origins.* Both the main stream Reddys and Pichiguntalas were lived as original brotherhood till the end of 12th Century; the influence Kunti Malla Reddy in the administration of Reddy rulers during their wars against the first Muslim invaders were recorded in the beginning of 13th Century. Thereafter, passage of Kunti Malla Reddy and wife Pichamma, their heirs were accepted as Kula Gurus by Reddy Communities and lived harmoniously with other Reddy families (RamiReddy Chandrasekhar Reddy, 1998), on condition that these Pichiguntalas will serve only the Reddy

Community by a written agreement on a copper plate (Raagi Rekha Shashanam). The services of the Pichiguntalas were highly respected, recognized form of a share in their agricultural produce, and remunerated by the Reddy families in the cloths, gold coins, cows, goats, etc., but no shares in their properties; lived as Reddy family members till 13th century. While telling the stories, Malla Reddy used tell that he was a cursed child by his own mother and become a made lame; living on alms from Reddy families, by way of begging as below:

"I am the child from your family; do live by your blessings; your families are the trees for my fate and troubles on this earth; you are the Gajabhima Reddys, you are Jai Rama Marthanada Rajavaishya Pradhatha (payers of royalties the geneological services by Pichiguntalas) offering alms for my work"

Even today, the heirs of the Kunti Mallareddy praise the Reddy community as great rulers and tell the story of Palnati Veera Charithra during their visits to Reddy families. One of the document by Palkuriki Somanath in writings on Panditharadhya Charithra, referred to alms lines by Pichiguntalas as below:

"I do not have hands to work; I do not have legs to walk; I belong to Andhakulam (lower category) Picchukuntalas; offer me alms; you are my parents and custodians"

3.1. Influence of Basavanna on Pichiguntalas



Figure 3 Legendary Basavanna of 12th Century – founder of Lingayuth Community

Basavanna @ Basaveshwara was a 12th Century Indian legendary statesman, philosopher, poet and was a social reformer in the Shiva focused Bhakti Movement; and was a Hindu Shaivite. Basavanna was the founder of Lingayath Community in India during the reigns of Kalyani Chalukyas and Kalachuri dynasties. He was active as social reformed during the rulings of both dynasties and reached the peaks of his influence during the rule of King Bijjala II. As the Chief Ministry of his kingdom, Basavanna initiated a public institution known as Anubhava Mantapa (an assembly hall of spiritual experience); and the institution was had many Shivite religious leaders as its members and associates from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life. His poetry work to spread social awareness is known as Vachanaa. In his social awareness, rejected the gender or social discrimination, superstitions and evil rituals. In his Shaivism reforms, he introduced Ishatalinga necklace with an image of Shiva Linga to every person regardless of their birth and to be a constant reminder of one's devotion to lord Shiva. Basavanna was strong promoter of Ahimsa; condemned the human and animal scarifies; and Lingayuths were declared as Pure Vegetarians. It is felt that during his regular visits to lord Mallikarjuna temple at Srisailam (present day Andhra Pradesh), Basavanna came across the Kunti Malla Reddy and his heirs as Pichiguntalas who were engaged in the spreading the awareness on Shiva, also pure Shaivites of that period. Basavanna met the representatives of Pichiguntalas of Srisailam and invited them to the Anubava Mantapa (the assembly hall of spirituality for Shaivites); he given titles for the Kunti Malla Reddy of Srisailam, the Pichiguntala Ancestor as Basavabringi and / or Mukthinatha.

As per the available records, Basavanna was born during 1131 CE at Basavana Bagewadi in Karnataka, to a Kannada Orthodox Brahmin Shaivite family parents Maadarasa and Madalambike. He was named as Basava and was brought up in Kudalasangama (junction of rivers Krishna and Malaprabha). He was married to Gangambike and was working as an accountant in the court of Bijjala king and later promoted to the post of Chief Minister. In his powers as the Chief Minister of the kingdom, Basava used the state treasury to initiate social reforms and religious movements focussed on reviving Shaivism, recognizing and empowering ascetics such as Jangamas (preachers of Shaivism). Basava was grown up in a Shaivite family; and as a leader he developed a new devotional movement named it as Virashaivas (ardent and heroic worshipers of Shiva). The innovative institution Anubhava Mantapa was established for public assembly and gathering that attracted men and women across various walks of life from distant lands to openly discuss spiritual, economic and

social issues of life; which was also composed of Pichiguntalas of Srisailam. Basavanna invited the Pichiguntalas of Srisailam to Kannada speaking areas of Basavakalyan to spread the awareness on Shiva and to extend their Vamshavali (Genealogical) services to the Lingayuths. The movement shared its roots to the ongoing Tamil Bhakti movement of Nayanar traditions over the 7th to 11th century. Basava championed devotional worship that rejected temple worship and rituals by Brahmins and replaced the same with personalised direct worship of Shiva through practices such as individually worn icons and symbols like a small Linga on the human body. The concept of Istalinga was emphasized by Basavanna as a constant personal spiritual development as the path to profound enlightenment. This approach was akin to the protestant movement of Ramanuja, in which philosophy revolves around treating one's own body and soul as a temple; instead of making a temple. Basavanna's trinity consisted of Guru (the teacher), Linga (Personal symbol of Shiva) and Jangama (constantly moving and learning). These people were very active during times of Legendary Lingayuth Leader Basavanna in recording the Birth and Death records and also the details of their properties in Kannada speaking areas of southern India (Harilal.K.Pawar, 1990).

3.2. Division from Reddy community & migrations

During 12th Century of religious revolutions leading to Bakthi Movements in parts of Hindustan were started, there were wars among rulers in the name of religions. The religious leaders and kings of that time started propagating religions of their interest such as Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. Among such religious leaders, Basavanna a minister under the kingdom of Bijjalas (Jains) was a pure believer of Shaivism (work to lord Shiva) was engaged in the creation of a Shaivism Religious Community in the name of Lingayuths (wearers of Shiva Linga) with the originated at Basavakalyan. Basavanna was a regular visitor to Srisailam for worships to Mallikarjuna Temple (Jyothir Linga), come across these Pichiguntalas also the disciples of lord Shiva and preachers of Shaivism with folk songs (starting as *Shiva.....Shankara.....Eswara.....Veerabadra.....!!!*), he met them (Kunti Malla Reddy & his heirs) with a request to help him in propagating Shaivism and the genealogical services to people in Kannada and Marathi speaking areas of Bijjala kingdom such as Lingayuths, Kurubas, Gollas, Vakkaligas, etc. This innovative Lingayuth movement of Basavanna largely attracted the Pichiguntalas of Srisailam leading to their migrations and immigrations to non-telugu speaking areas; this was also promoted by the domination of main stream Reddys on Pichiguntalas. The deviation and diversion their Vamshavali services to non-cultivating (non-Reddy & Kaapu) communities such as Golla, Kuruba and Lingayuths; made Reddys to boycott Pichiguntalas as traitors and *the word "Pichiguntala" as synonym of "Useless Fellow / Chandala" used to insult others.*

3.3. Curses by Reddys on Pichiguntalas

It is observed that, the migrations and services to other communities, these Pichiguntalas were cursed by the original Reddy Community as "Chandalas", losing their virginity with the Reddy Community and distanced themselves in their rituals such as births, marriages and deaths (which were previously carried out by the Pichiguntalas. Presently, there exists no major give and take policy between the Pichiguntalas and Reddy Community, even though there exists a legendary ancestral brotherhood relationship. Hence, the situation made the Pichiguntalas of Srisailam who were Telugu speaking community; were forced to deviate and divide as nomadic of main stream and original Reddy Community of Andhra Pradesh. Their division and deviation of genealogical services to others non-Reddy & Kaapu can be felt on the influence of Basavanna to non-Telugu speaking areas during 12th Century and thereafter. Even today, it is observed that in some of the families of Pichiguntalas, their next generations / children are born lames; most of them are poor, uneducated, living as lower classes, living with other lower castes and among masses in slums and as socially most backward. In rural areas, the Pichiguntala families do live and share common roof / shelter with domestic animals (cows, goats, sheep, etc.).



Figure 4 Pichiguntalas in Telangana & Andhra Pradesh

We can observe that large scale migrations Pichiguntalas were taken place during and after the 13th Century to the present day Karnataka, Maharastra, Tamilnadu, Pondicherry, Orissa and Goa. They stated living the lifestyles of Jangamas (preachers of Shaivism) and Nomadic in association of Kaadu Kuruba - Kaadu Golla in groups (on the outskirts of villages, near forests, hamlets, thandas, huttis, tentages, etc.) away from the mainstream communities. The next generation Pichiguntalas of non-Telugu areas assigned their ancestries of Adhi Golla and Adhi Kuruba (the word Adhi means Ancestor - the forefathers from Golla and Kuruba backgrounds), and hence even the present Pichiguntalas of northern Karnataka and Maharashtra term themselves from Haalumatha Groups (Milking communities such as Golla & Kuruba).

3.4. Pichiguntalas as helavas in karnataka

The original Pichiguntalas are Telugu speaking people from Andhra Pradesh; they have little knowledge on the Kannada language and were not good in reading-writing Kannada, and however by practice they started speaking Kannada and genealogy / Vamshavali telling to communities belonging to Kuruba, Golla and Lingayutha. Initially these Pichiguntalas of Telugu speaking were termed as “Heluvarau” (means tellers / speaking people) of Vamshavali (Genealogy) by the Kannada speaking communities of Basavakalyan and other northern parts of Karnataka. The term “Heluvarau” later become “Helavava” to “Helava” or “Helavaru” in short forms in the local Kannada languages by practice. In some cases, these Telugu speaking Pichiguntalas used to keeping telling genealogy verbally in storytelling and singing folklore formats, about their Kula – Gothra – Vamshavali - family names (genealogies) in Telugu language, and whereas with the help of locally educated Kannadigas or the village heads, the family details were recorded in their Register Books called “Chappudu”. Hence, these Pichiguntalas were referred as “Heluvarau” (Tellers) by the Kannada speaking people and in the later stages, the word “Heluvarau” become Helavaru and then to “Helava”. Even today, it is found that the people belonging to this group in northern parts of Karnataka are referred as “Helavaru” and those living in Telugu dominated areas such as in Kolar, Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapur, Bidar, Ananthapur, Ballary, Koppal, Raichur, Tumakuru, etc., adjoining areas (of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana) are referred as “Pichiguntala” only. As per the presently and last Female Telugu Genealogist Smt. Mallamma of Urvakonda in Ananthapur District, AP, the Telugu genealogists or the “Pichiguntala” do their Kula-GothraVamshavali only in Rayalaseema areas of Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka. The Pichiguntalas in Karnataka are broadly divided into two groups such as Gante Helavaru and Ettina Helavaru. (1) The Gante Helavaru are commonly referred to the Telugu speaking genealogists who keep walking place to place by foot, with a holy Bell (Gante) in their hands for doing genealogical services. The Gante Helavaru (Bell bearing Pichiguntalas) are generally Telugu speaking Pichiguntalas scattered in Telugu speaking areas such as Ananthapur, Guntakal, Ballary, Koppal, Tumakuru, Raichur, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Mysore, Chamarajanagara, Bengaluru Rural areas, etc. (2) Similarly, the Ettina Helavaru (Bull Riding Pichiguntalas) are mostly scattered in the Kannada speaking areas in Karnataka and Maharashtra borders. They do travel on Bull (Ettu) for doing genealogical services. The Ettina Helavaru are generally speak admixture of Kannada-Telugu-Marathi languages and term themselves natives of Karnataka. Their habitations can be seen most of the northern parts of Karnataka such as Dhavanagere, Hubballi, Shigaon, Dharward, Belagavi, Karvar, Chikkamagaluru, Kaduru, Dakshin Kannada, Shimogga, Bijapur, Bagalkote, etc., in addition to the bordering districts of Maharashtra such as Sholapur, Nanded, Kolhapur, Pune, etc. In most of the cases, these Gante and Ettina Helavaru are settled as Immigrated Pichiguntalas in Karnataka and Maharashtra.



Figure 5 Living Conditions of Nomadic Pichiguntalas in Karnataka

3.5. Pichiguntalas in other parts of India

The principles and religious movement of Basavanna were attractive to Pichiguntalas, the heirs of the Kunti Malla Reddy, hence started moving to the other areas as propagators of the greatness of lord Shiva; in addition to their genealogical services to the people other than Reddy Community. Initially the Pichiguntalas started migrating to the

non-Telugu areas of Kannada and Marathi speaking areas; and later into Tamil, Malayalam and Omiya speaking areas. These Pichiguntalas as a first step moved into Bijjala kingdom or Basavakalyan, later deeper into other non-Telugu areas and expanded their genealogical services to non-Reddy communities deeper into Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and parts of Orissa, Pondicherry, etc. This act of violation by these Pichiguntalas against the mutual agreements on a copper plate by their ancestors made the Reddy Community People in boycotting these Pichiguntalas to their families as Kula Gurus and termed them as Chandalas. Thereafter, joining the religious movements of Basavanna, the Pichiguntalas basically Telugu speaking people migrated to Kannada speaking areas of present day northern districts of Karnataka and Southern parts of Maharashtra as Nomads and Wanderers on narrating jobs of genealogy. *Initially, these Pichiguntalas were narrating the genealogical aspects in story telling forms in Telugu, the Kannada speaking people were calling them as Heluvavaru (Story Tellers) and later on the Heluvavaru word become Helavaru in Kannada.* Similarly, these Pichiguntalas used their Bulls for travelling distances into Marathi speaking areas of Sholapur and other parts, these people as Helavas were referred as Panguldadas (Pungal means to Bull Riders) by the Marathi people. Whereas, few immigrated Helavas settled in Maharashtra have assigned their caste name as Helve (nomadic people in Maharashtra). The presence Pichiguntalas as Helve @ Helava can be traced in most of the districts in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Orissa, etc. The Pichiguntalas are scattered all over the districts in Karnataka as Helavas such as Hubli, Dharwar, Belgaum, Gulburga, Raichur, Chitradurga, Davangere, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Tumkur, Kolar, Bengaluru, Mysore, Mandya, Ballary, Hospet, etc. These Pichiguntalas can traced as Pangul @ Helve in parts of Maharashtra State adjoining the Karnataka State such as Sholapur, Latur, Nanded, Kolhapur, Satara, Pune, Sangli, Miraj, Wadi, Sedam, etc. Similarly, these set of Pichiguntalas immigrated to Tamil speaking areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Pondicherry and Kerala are referred to as Kudi Paniyan, Paniandi, Pichayandi @ Pachchatti, Thottiyani (Dr.L.Ramakrishna, N.M.Dhanya, L.Ranju Meenakshi & Kannan, 2020).

3.6. Pichiguntala ancestor: The Trinity

The Ancestor of Pichiguntalas, the legendary Kunti Mallanna @ Bikshakunti is termed as (1) Kunti Mallanna @ Kunti Malla Reddy, (2) Basava Bringi @ Basava Bringeeshwara and (3) Mukthinathaiyah @ Mukthinatheeshwar, by his followers as below in Table 1:

Table 1 The Trinity of Pichiguntala Ancestor

	Kunti Mallanna @ Kunti Malla Reddy	Followers – Telugu speaking Pichiguntala in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Karnataka living in association with Reddys, Kaapus, etc.
Ancestor of Pichiguntala	Basava Bringi @ Basava Bringeeshwara	Followers – Kannada & Marathi speaking Pichiguntalas living in association with Lingayuths such as Helava
	Mukthinathaiyah @ Mukthinatheeshwar	Followers – Kannada & Marathi speaking Pichiguntalas such as Helava / Heleve / Helwi / Helvi living in association with Jains.

Most of the Pichiguntalas irrespective of their geographic location, do speak Telugu in family and other local languages outside. The original Ancestor of Pichiguntalas the Legendary Kunti Malla Reddy of Srisailam is the trinity of these nomadic people. The Telugu speaking people refer their ancestor as (1) Kunti Malla Reddy @ Bikshakunti (in Telugu speaking areas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana populated by Reddys); as (2) Basava Bringi @ Basava Bringeeshwara (in Kannada speaking areas of Karnataka & Maharashtra populated by Lingayuths) and as (3) Mukthinathaiyah @ Mukthinatheeshwar (in Kannada & Marathi speaking areas of North-West Karnataka and parts of Maharashtra populated by Jains (Dr.L.Ramakrishna, 2021). *The people in Karnataka, believe that the ancestor for Helava @ Helavaru as Bringeswar or Basava Bringi (A lame disciple of lord Shiva), referring to the carvings of Lepakshi Temple in the present day Andhra Pradesh (?).* It is being told that lord Shiva has blessed the Bringeswar with Nandi and Linga Mudra, and hence the Helavas are referred as the heirs of Bringeswar. These Helavas were used as advisers to the then rulers in their previous generations, their family details, previous rulers and their rulings, genealogies, programs for the people, etc. The legendary Basavanna @ Basaveshwar, the founder of Lingayuth community may had selected these nomadic people who keep moving from village to village suitable for his objectives of creation of Shaivite Community, propagation of Shivism and recording their populations (Dr.L.Ramakrishna & N.M.Dhanya, 2009). But, it is observed that in most of the people belonging to nomadic genealogy telling / practicing sects who living in association with Kaadu Golla and Kaadu Kurubas, believes themselves as descendants of Halumatha Kaadu Golla and / or Halumatha Kaadu Kurubu groups belonging to Scheduled Tribes in Karnataka, in terms of their religious and cultural practices? and Adhi Golla as their Ancestor? (Dr.L.Ramakrishna & N.M.Dhanya, 2020).

3.7. Genealogical work by Pichiguntalas

The Pichiguntala @ Helava person, who practice the recordings of genealogical histories for the other castes, normally keep migrating from their settlement / hamlet villages to other villages during the winter months by a tented bullock cart. He makes are a hutment on the outskirts of the village either by himself or in groups or gatherings with other Pichiguntalas @ Helavas for the same purpose. *They divide the villages for narrations by themselves in practice (known as Mirasi System or jurisdiction of their working area)* and go for the purpose in the morning to evening with their safeguarded records and books called "Chappudu"? . These Archival Record Books are wrapped in Fluorescent Pink Shawls and carry them on their shoulders with at most care during their travelling. Normally a typical Helava Genealogist in Karnataka y, their Bullock Carts are used as convertible shelters or tents. The women take care of their children, collection of fire wood, cooking and serving of food, etc. Sometimes, these Helava people make group camps in a common place on the outskirts of several towns and villages every year on a prefixed duration or during the harvesting seasons. Each of the genealogy narrating Helava makes foot travelling covering 10 to 20 houses in day. Presently, some of these Helavas are using two wheeler bikes to reach the villages. Even though, they do not have proper living homes for their families, these Helavas preserve their ancestral archives with utmost care (Amoolya Rajappa, 2019). Helava @ Helavaru have few number of subgroups and subsets among themselves, *normally those who practice the narration of genealogical histories termed as Etihasa Helavaru (History Narrators) are treated with higher values.* These Etihasa Helavas do presents, recite genealogies and record the family histories for other castes are believed to be an unadulterated group of Helavas who does not mingle with their other subgroups. Based on the living and working cultures, these Helavas are regrouped into sub-sects such as Ettina Helava, Gante Helava, Goobe Helava, Kappe Helava, Mandala Helava, Advai Helava, etc.



Figure 6 Pichiguntala as Ettina Helava / Helave / Pangal



Figure 7 A typical Pichiguntalas @ Helavas on Genealogical work

As mentioned earlier, these Helavas elaborate narrations for other caste families such as Vokkaliga, Lingayath, Kuruba, Golla, etc., including the details of family pedigrees, dating back to four or five generations. Helavas also recount the migratory history of families (from one village to another) in a folklore song manner. Their oral storytelling narrative sessions last about an hour and more. Each recital ends with updating new details related to births, deaths, and marriages. Thereafter, these Helavas are rewarded in cash and kind as alms for their services, in the form of food grains, brass vessels, bells, gold jewelry, money, cloths and even some occasions with cattle. Special gifts in cash and kind are given to them during occasions such as births and marriages, whereas, nothing else sometimes such as a death. It is

found that during the olden days, these Helavas were given a grand welcome by the villagers during their annual visits and were treated as special guests and gurus visiting their families (Lakshman Helavar, 2019).

The findings by P.Sudhanandam, shows that the Pichikuntlas take donations from Kapu, Kamma, Reddy, Velama and Yadava castes by reciting their Gotras and family histories. Pichiguntala @ Pichikuntla is derived from Bikshakuntla (Biksha means begging and Kuntla-lame). The word Pichuka is derived from Bikshaka and Pichikuntla / Pichiguntala is thus, derived from Bikshakuntla. They migrated to Karnataka from Andhra Pradesh as Helavaru. At first they were attached themselves to the Golla caste and later associated with the Kapus. They narrate not only the stories of the Kapu and Golla but also the other stories like Palanati Veera Charitra, Kunti Malla Reddy Katha, Balanagamma Katha, etc., to earn their livelihood. Pichikuntlas / Pichiguntalas have Mirasi villages in Telangana, Andhra and Rayalaseema areas. Every Pichikuntla / Pichiguntala troupe possesses a copper plate inscription as proof of their authority to take donations while they go to the Gollas and Reddys entertaining them with the recitals of the stories of Kunti Malla Reddy Katha and Palanati Veera Charitra. Pichikuntlas / Pichiguntalas visit their respective areas (*Mirasis*) once in 3 years with their families and recite the stories of Kunti Malla Reddy Katha using the musical instruments. The troupe of Pichikuntla / Pichiguntala performers consists of three members. One is the main singer and the other two are supporting artists. Pichikuntlas are almost all Shaivites (*Vibhutidharis*) and worship Mallikarjuna as their patron god with offerings of sweet meats. We find these Pichikuntlas / Pichiguntalas in Warangal, Khammam, Ranga Reddy, Nalgonda and Guntoor districts in Andhra Pradesh (P.Sudhanandam, 2021).



Figure 8 Pichiguntala as Helave in Maharashtra

The Genealogical details recorded and maintained by these Pichiguntalas @ Helavas are treated as reliable records by most of the villagers of other castes. These Genealogical Record Books as called as "*Chappudu*" and are preserved as their ancestral achieves with utmost care. Each of these Genealogical record books consists of family details of people in 3 to 4 villages, from other castes. Even though, in the old days, only a single copy was persevered, the present day they make more than one copy of each book to avoid or against any theft or damage. It is found that in one of the Court Cases, the Belguam Civil Court has summoned a Genealogy practitioner Mahesh Helavar during the last two decades, in connection with families involved in property disputes. During these occasions, the Judges have questioned and ascertained the ancestral descents of the disputed families through Mehesh Helavar and collected the genealogical records maintained by him. The Courts have accepted the recordings as valid proof in some cases pertaining to family feuds and disputes such as property matters, legal heirships, etc. In some occasions, irrespective of their caste, several villagers still contact these Pichiguntalas @ Helavas for collection and clarifications or details about their family deities and their relations between different clans (called *Bedagu*) for match making for marriages, family relationships of bride and groom, etc. It is further, observed that these Pichiguntalas @ Helavas do not record child marriages in their genealogical registers which they treat as against the ethics and rules for the recording (Lakshman Helavar, 2019). It is observed that these *Pichiguntalas during Ancient pre-Medieval Periods were appointed as the authorities to record the Population and Census details during the Rashtrakutas (Reddy rulers) and also assigned the jobs as Qanungos (Care Takers of Revenue Records) during Medieval Periods of Muslim rulers.*

3.8. Social status of Pichiguntalas

The Pichiguntalas are the heirs of the legendary religious leader and Kula Guru for Reddys – Kunti Malla Reddy of Srisailam. Both Reddys and Pichiguntalas lived as brotherhood in harmonious association till 12th Century. On the influence of legendary religious leader Basavanna of Basavakalyan, the heirs of Kunti Malla Reddy started migrating to

non-Telugu speaking areas and started their services of genealogy to other non-cultivating communities such as Kurubas, Gollas, etc., which made original main stream Reddy Community to treated them as traitors and betrayers of the Copper Plate Agreement executed to them. This is one of the reason, *these Pichiguntalas are / were treated as "Chandalas"(children born to lower caste parents), the word "Pichiguntala" is / was used for making fun of others as Betrayers and Useless Fellows.* The domination of main stream Reddys also affected the mass migrations of these Pichiguntalas deeper into Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, Goa, Orissa, Kerala, etc., in search of new avenues for livings. Further, the people belong to Reddy Community cursed Pichiguntalas that their next generations will live a pathetic poor living for acting against the *Will / Agreement* of their ancestors and betrayals to their Reddy brotherhood. May be the reason, till this day, these Pichiguntalas are living a nomadic, poor and pathetic livings as Begging Community in India. The power of the curse is such that meaning of Pichiguntala in Telugu language is a *Lame Beggar / Handicapped Beggar*. Similarly, the meaning of Helava in Kannada language is a *Lame Person / Handicap*. In any way, these people even in the modern world are referred to lame beggars and handicaps by the local people. In the beginning, the word "Pichiguntala" was only a family / household name, but in the later stages it has become the caste name. Whereas, since the word "Pichiguntala" is a shame for the community, these nomadic genealogic tribes avoid exposing themselves as Pichiguntalas while in public gatherings and socialising events. They try to hide their real caste name and assign themselves with that other locally respected caste names such as Goll, Kuruba, Vokkaliga, Lingayutha, Nayaka, Bestha, Reddy, Gavara, Balaja, Bhataraju, Naidu, Kamma, etc. Dr. Harilal Pawar, the then Director of Publishing, Kannada University, Hampi in Karantaka who has written a series of books and papers during 1990s on these Helava community, observed that the next generations of these Helava heirs are not interested in making use of their services and becoming out dated. The work pertaining to census of the people in the States are being carried out by the Government, which were done by the Helavas during the erstwhile kings and rulers. The present day, children are interested in regular education system at par with other communities, which may lead to ending their caste professions. Since, *their nomadic lives are making their offsprings uneducated or school dropouts.* There is need for provision of hostels for the children these types of nomadic communities with free education system keeping in mind their poverty and lower financial income status. *Previously, the villagers were welcoming and used to usher the arrival of the Helavas with great honour, but the tradition is largely losing its importance due to changing lifestyles and alternatives.* In the olden days, the services of these Helavas were required as narrators of family histories since there were no institutional systems in place, the people were interested to know their family trees and such information was used in courts of law previously to resolve the family and property disputes. In the present day scenario, the aspects of Helava Caste Profession such as Government Census, Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates are being drawn through modern techniques by the Government itself. Only some villages with lower literacy rates are entertaining these Helava people as their genealogists. Similarly, people with more literacy, are not giving much importance to these traditions and not regarded as important for their families (Dr.K.M.Metry). *The Genealogical Telling Profession considered to be a respectable caste profession in the ancient years, is now being given-up (hesitating take up their professions) by younger generations / many people belonging Helava @ Pichiguntala communities (S. Bhattacharya, 2019).* Only, few families are being engaged in the narrating works on genealogy, but most of the others have assigned with other small time works such as agricultural, industrial helpers, construction workers, etc. Their education level is meagre, no official, government and political representations till this day. *The genealogical profession lasted for centuries, is being diminishing and diluting day by day. The children of practicing Pichiguntalas @ Helavas are showing little interest in keeping their customs alive.* Whereas, in today's scenario, with the advent of modern technologies and computerisation, the younger generations and children of these genealogical families are hesitating to take the professions of their ancestors as there is a lack of recognition of this profession both by the government as well as the people in the society. It is observed that most of their younger generations are trying to get education and move towards cities in search of employments and alternative jobs.

3.9. Recognition for Pichiguntalas

3.9.1. Pichiguntala as Vamsharaju in AP & Telangana

It is observed that, there exists shyness among these Pichiguntala as that they do not want to express their caste names openly in public; and they try to hide their real caste identity. The reasons may be different for different persons, but the common cause for the identify of their caste name in public is that *"Pichiguntala or Helava" means to a "Lame Beggar" or to a "Begging Community".* The people from other castes and communities use this caste name for making fun or scolding others in anger or as a Filthy word. So the use of caste name "Pichiguntala" in public is an insult to the members of these nomadic Pichiguntala @ Helava @ Helavaru community. In some case, the school and college going children, the women during socialisations, communal gatherings, religious occasions, etc., do feel shyness to express themselves belonging to Pichiguntala, as their caste name refers to Beggars in the society. *The representatives of the community / tribe, feels that the caste name Pichiguntala is being treated with disgrace and disrespect by others are causing considerable humiliation to the members of their caste.* So, normally, any person belonging nomadic Pichiguntala @ Helava @ Helavaru community, simply tell that he belongs to other local community where he / she is residing. In this aspect, the long pending request for the changing of their caste name was considered by the Governments of undivided

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by way of removing the word “Pichiguntala” from the caste lists initially. But, the Government its ruling again reassessed the grievance and passed another to retain the both names us to each other in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States (stating that the original name “Pichiguntala” was deleted vide G.O.Ms.No.27, BCW(M1) Dept., dated 23/06/1995 and again added as synonym in G.O.Ms. No.1, BCW (C2) Dept., dt.24/01/2009) superseding G.O.Ms. Presently, in the caste list of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana States the caste name “Pichiguntala” is synonym as “Vamsharaj”. Whereas, the Pichiguntalas of Andhra Pradesh; after division of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, have submitted their representations to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, with a request to replace the caste name “Vamsharaj” with new word “Kunti Malla Reddy” and retain the synonym “Pichiguntala”, under the leadership of Sri.VenkatasubbaReddy. These Pichiguntalas of present day Andhra Pradesh feel that their caste name should be renamed as “Kunti Malla Reddy” as the heirs of the legendary Kunti Malla Reddy; but with condition of grouping them in Group ‘A’ based on their social status. The representatives from Andhra Pradesh feel that the caste name “Vamsharaj” does not satisfy the definition of Pichiguntalas. The Ministry of Social Welfare Resolution, New Delhi, 10th September 1993, Notification No.12011/68/93-BCC(C), vide Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance & Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), OM No.36012/22/93-Estt. (SCT) dated 8th September 1993, against reservations of 27% for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as per the recommendations in Report of the Mandal Commission and the State Government Lists, for Andhra Pradesh Common List of OBCs, listed Pitchiguntala against Sl. No.17 (Group-A).

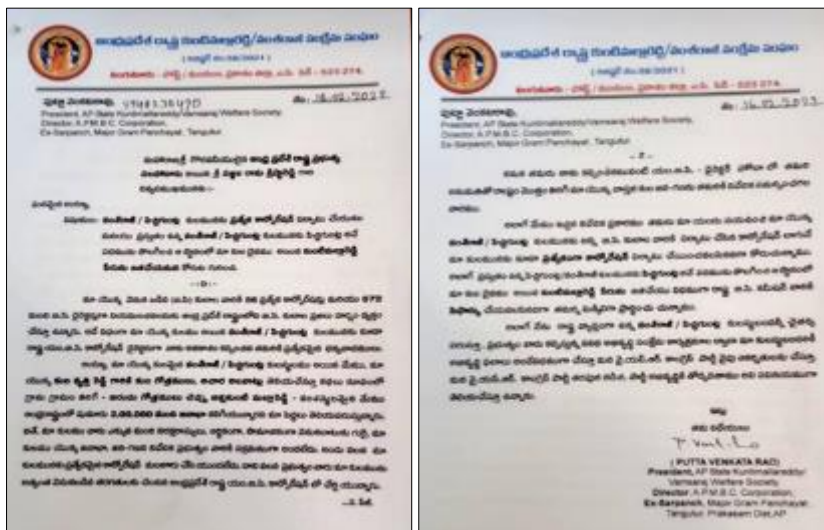


Figure 9 Representation submitted to the Chief Minister – Andhra Pradesh by Andhra Pradesh Kunti Malla Reddy / Vamsharaj Sankshema Sangam

3.9.2. Pichiguntala as Helava in Karnataka

The caste lists of Karnataka, shows that these Pichiguntala are listed under Category No.12011/68/93- BCC(C) I (as Backward Tribes, BT / Category - I) containing caste names of Helava, Pichiguntala, Pichigunta, Pichiguntala (in 6 different names for the same caste). The Government of Karnataka, in its Government Order No. SWD 225 BCA 2000, Dated: 30th March 2002, after careful considerations, through (1) The quantum of Reservation Specified in G.O. Dated: 1709 3101199S read at Sl. No. 1994 and (1) & (2) respectively is continued for admission to Educational Institutions and Employment and (2) The revised list of Backward Classes to this order as at Annexure I, recommendations of the BC Commission, is brought into force with immediate effect and (3) A new comprehensive Creamy Layer Policy as detailed in Annexure II to this Government order is brought into force with immediate effect. This creamy Layer policy does not apply to SC/STs and Category I of the Backward Classes. Candida II (A), II (B), III (A), and III (B) shall be entitled to reservation in the manner specified in the new comprehensive Creamy Layer Policy. The Helava Caste is listed against Category I, Sl. No.5 (j) Helava (k) Helova (l) Holeva and Pichiguntala is listed against Category I, Sy. No.5 (n) Pichigunta (o) Pichiguntala and (p) Pichiguntala. The Caste name “Helava” an equivalent of “Pichiguntala” Community is listed under Sl. No. 23, of Nomadic Tribes in Karnataka, in Report on “The Draft Lists of Denotified / Nomadic / Semi Balakrishna Ranke Commission, 2008; and related groups as reflected in the Socio against Serial No.24, a Hindu Group, with sub Nomadic Tribes in Southern India”, by The Report of the Second Backward Classes Commission, Volume III, by the Government of Karnataka, 1986, in its findings on, through the State level listing of castes and communities in Karnataka along with synonyms, sub-economic castes cum educational survey 1984, as listed Helava Community castes and synonyms as Helava, Helavaru, Pichigunta and Anadi. As reflected in its survey, it is seen that almost all the major Hindu castes have been reflected under Lingayatha groups as sub castes in Karnataka, including the Helava or Helavaru. The

study states that the Hindu Helava population as on 1984 is 24441 in Karnataka forming 0.07% of the total population in the State. The Ministry of Social Welfare Resolution, New Delhi, 10th September 1993, Notification No.12011/68/93-BCC(C), vide Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance & Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), OM No.36012/22/93-Estt. (SCT) dated 8th September 1993, against reservations of 27% for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as per the recommendations in Report of the Mandal Commission and the State Government Lists, for Karnataka Common List of OBCs, listed Helava / Holeva against Sl.No. 25, Pitchiguntala / Pichiguntla, Pichiguntala against Sl. No.43 (Group-A). The Pichiguntalas or the Helavas in Karnataka are generally grouped as (1) Kambi Helava, (2) Gante Helava, (3) Chape Helava, (4) Thitthi Helava, (5) Ettina Helava, (6) Dhoodhi Helava, (7) Kokanni Helava and (8) Mandhala Helava, based on their classifications among themselves.



Figure 10 Representations submitted by Helavas of Karnataka to the Chief Minister – Karnataka, for inclusion under Schedule Caste List

Dr.Harilal Pawar, during 1990s observed that even though there exist no concrete studies on the present population of the community, the population was around 30,000 out of which a large chunk of people was engaged in the caste profession. The 800-year-old caste profession of the Helava community in Karnataka is threatened in the recent years (Dr.L.Ramakrishna, 2021). It is observed that eventoday, the Helava community in northern parts of Karnataka are living open areas without proper shelters and tents. Other than Genealogical services, these Helavas are engaged in making mats (Chape), sweeper sticks (Shendi porakke), landless agricultural and construction helpers, etc. Presently, these Pichiguntalas and Helavas are listed under the Caste list for Backward Castes, falling under Category – I in Karnataka. The reports by L.G.Havanore in 1975, D.K.Nayakar in 1992 and Dr.L.Srinivas, 2021; submitted to Department of Backward Classes, Government of Karnataka, they have given recommendations for their inclusion under the Caste list of Scheduled Castes (STs) in Karnataka State.

3.9.3. Pichiguntala in other states

Pondicherry

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Pondicherry. Whereas, there exists an entry against their existence in Pondicherry but not mentioned against any of the Caste Lists of Pondicherry. Backward Classes Commission Report on Committees and Commissions in India, 1979, Volume 17, Part – A, A Concept Report (S.P.Agarwal, 1979), has recorded the existence of Pichiguntala and his associated groups in Pondicherry. The Ministry of Welfare Resolution, Government of India, New Delhi, dated 19th October 1994, its Notification No.12011/9/91-BBC, vide Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance & Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), OM No.36012/22/93-Estt. (SCT) dated 8th September 1993, against reservations of 27% for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as per the recommendations in Report of the Mandal Commission and the State Government Lists, for UT:Pondicherry: Common List of OBCs, listed Helva against Sl. No.71 and Picchiguntla against Sl. No.194.

Maharashtra

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Maharashtra. Whereas, there exists an entry against their existence in Maharashtra, but not mentioned against any of the Caste Lists of Maharashtra. These Pichiguntalas are scattered in most of the adjoining areas / districts of Maharashtra with Karnataka

such as Sholapur, Nanded, Pune, Satara, Mumbai, etc. The Ministry of Social Welfare Resolution, New Delhi, 10th September 1993, Notification No.12011/68/93-BCC(C), vide Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance & Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), OM No.36012/22/93-Estt. (SCT) dated 8th September 1993, against reservations of 27% for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as per the recommendations in Report of the Mandal Commission and the State Government Lists, for Karnataka Common List of OBCs, listed Helave / Kilav against Sl.No. 198, Pangul against Sl.No.205.

Tamilnadu

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Tamilnadu nor any entry in the Caste Lists of Tamilnadu. These Pichiguntalas are scattered in most of the adjoining areas / district of Tamilnadu with Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh such as Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, North & South Arcot, Chennai, Kanchipuram, etc. It is observed that Baktavatsala Barathi, in his studies on Paannar Inavaraiviyal, recorded that there exists Pichiguntalas in Tamilnadu and being engaged as Kudi Paniyandis for communities such as KondaReddy, Kambazathu Nakkar, etc. (Ramachandraiah, 2003). It found that Picchai or Pinchikuntar are described in the Salem Manual as 'servants to the Kudianavars or cultivators - a namely commonly assumed by Vellas and Pallis. These Pichiguntalas in Tamilnadu as referred to as Picchi or Pinchikuntars (beggars or lame in Tamil language). These people are also defined as the descendants of Vellala Community. These people are treated as Kudipinnai (Inferior) by Vellalas, they receive their prescribed Miras (Fee) from the Vellala Community to whom on marriages and other festivals, these Pichiguntalas do service by relating the genealogists of their acquainted Vellalas, for doing helping works in agriculture, etc. Some of the Pichiguntalas in Tamilnadu live by begging and a caste of beggars of the Tottiyans are known as Pichigavadu (Edgar Thurston & Rangachary, 1909). They also make earning by making mats of leaves of Shendi / Eecha/Eatha (wild palm leaves), Sweeper sticks (Parake / Thodappam / Paraka), Pig Breeding, some of them are now engaged in agriculture as non-occupancy raitas and landless day laborers. Mason workers, construction helpers, coolies, etc.

Kerala

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Kerala nor any entry in the Caste Lists of Kerala. These Pichiguntalas are scattered in the adjoining areas / districts of Kerala with Karnataka and Tamilnadu such as Idukki, Ernakulum, Trivandrum, Malabar, etc.

Goa

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Goa nor any entry in the Caste Lists of Goa. These Pichiguntalas are scattered in few places in few numbers under Goa such as Vasco, etc., mostly migrants from Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Orissa

It is found that there is no recognition for the people belonging to Pichiguntalas scattered in Orissa nor any entry in the Caste Lists of Orissa. These Pichiguntalas are scattered in few places in few numbers under Orissa adjoining Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Other States

The Indian Genealogists are normally referred as Charans or Bards who traditionally keep the written genealogical records of various castes. Some of the places where the traditional genealogical records are being kept and preserved in India are Hindu Genealogy Registers at Haridwar in Uttarakhand, Varanasi and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, Kurukshetra in Haryana, Trimbakeshwar in Maharashtra and Chintpurni in Himachal Pradesh. Normally, the Indian Charans or Bards are from the northern parts of India and records thereby that of the people of northern Indian origins. It is observed that these Pichiguntala Nomadic Genealogical Tribes are concentrated only to the southern States in India and are originated from Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh (are the heirs of ancient legendary Kunti Malla Reddy) and are the sub-caste / dependents on the mainstream Reddy Community (Dr.L. Ramakrishna & N.M. Dhanya, 2021). There may be few people belonging to Pichiguntalas settled on their work assignments other than genealogical services, there is no recognition not any entries in the Caste Lists.

4. Common problems, challenges & demands of Pichiguntalas

- The Pichiguntalas Nomadic Community has no Government ID Cards such as Adhaar Cards, Ration Cards, Voter Lists, etc.

- They are facing indignities and harassment when they venture out to meet their very basic human needs of food and water.
- The State and Central Government Poverty Alleviation Schemes rarely reach them, as they do not own any land or any other immovable property in their names.
- Their lower social standing and marginal numeric population strength compounds their predicament.
- There is a need to answer their development barriers such as unemployment and underemployment, ill health and lack of education.
- They are experiencing powerlessness, alienation and loss of sense of control over their day-to-day livings.
- Most of the Pichiguntalas are living in Abject Poverty.
- Getting daily food is often a struggle and constitutes a problem of high percentage of meagre income. The average food intake is much below the nutritional requirements.
- A majority of Pichiguntalas belonging to De-notified and Nomadic Tribes have become domestic servants, rag pickers, sex-workers, country liquor brewers, firewood cutters, rickshaw pullers, beggars and petty thieves.
- Penury acts pushed them to the urban pavements and discrimination forced to confine to boundaries in the ramshackle village abodes and hutments.
- These Pichiguntalas even though they are not the consumers of dead cattle meat or beef, they do consume rats and frogs, in some lower groups.
- They are not accessible to regular education system due to their nomadic and migrant cultures, whereas they acquired skills and knowledge only through informal education. Their children are deprived of education and are not in a position to receive welfare measures of the central and the state governments.
- Their lower social standing further compounds this predicament of education and progression of the younger generations.
- Failure of the government in safe-guarding their interests of the nomadic and de-notified tribes will deter their living conditions and up-liftment of their community at par with the other lower classes.
- Only, few families are being engaged in the narrating works on genealogy, but most of the others have assigned with other small time works such as agricultural, industrial helpers, construction workers, etc.
- The caste lists of Karnataka, shows that these Pichiguntalas are listed under Category-I (as Backward Tribes, BT) containing caste names of Helava, Pichiguntala, Pichigunta, Pichiguntala (four different names for the same caste).
- The removal of Pichiguntala caste name from the Caste List of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana are not yet being considered by the Government Authorities.
- The request for the inclusion of Caste name Kunti Malla Reddy in place of Vamsharaj in the Caste Lists of Andhra Pradesh is not yet been considered by the Government Authorities
- There exists a continuous and long pending request / urge for the inclusion of these Pichiguntalas & Helavas in the Caste Lists of Scheduled Tribes in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana are not yet being considered by the Government Authorities.
- The rural Pichiguntala families do live with domestic animals under a common shelter / roof; and are need of proper housing, sanitation and hygiene living.
- The great services rendered by the Pichiguntala Nomadics of the ancient years are being fading away and their lives are under dilution.
- There is need for the safe guarding these Pichiguntala folklores living scattered and pathetic lives with any sort of recognition and support by the Government. A separate Corporation is required to look into the welfare and development of these ancient folklore communities against their extinction.
- There is a need for integrated studies on various aspects of lives of the Pichiguntalas in India.
- Since, *the same people are being listed with 6 caste names such as Helava, Helova, Holeva, Pichigunta, Pichiguntala and Pichiguntala*, caste name as “Helava” in Synonym with that of “Pichiguntala”; there is need to replace the caste name “Pichiguntala” with the new name “Vamsharaj” (as that in caste lists of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana).
- *The long pending demand for the inclusion of Pichiguntalas @ Helavas in Karnataka under the Scheduled Caste List is being not heard by the Government of Karnataka.*

5. Observations made on Pichiguntalas

- Pichiguntalas are purely South Indians and scattered all over India and abroad.
- Pichiguntalas are the heirs of Ancestral father Munti Malla Reddy (brotherhood of Reddy Community) lived during 12th & 13th Centuries of Muslim invasions to south, Pre-Medieval Periods of Rashtrakutas and Kakatiyas.

- Kunti Malla Reddy is the Kula Guru for Reddy Community and was a great Genealogist and a Story Teller.
- Kunti Malla Reddy is commonly referred in names (1) Kunti Malla Reddy, (2) Basava Bringi and (3) Mukthinathaiah, based different geographic locations and local languages of southern India.
- The heirs of Kunti Malla Reddy are referred to as Pichiguntala, Helava, Vamsharaj, Reddla Kunti Mallareddy, Helevi, etc.
- Pichiguntalas are purely south Indian Genealogists and no way connected to Genealogical Communities north India nor to any other part of the world. They have originated from Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh in India.
- Pichiguntalas are Telugu speaking people; and practice other local languages in public and socialization.
- Pichiguntalas are referred to as Begging Community by great philosophers and researchers such as Edgar Thurston, Rangachari, Dr. Ramireddy Chandrasekhar Reddy, B.J. Ramakrishna, Ramasubbareddy, etc., as termed them as Bikshakunti @ Bikshagunti @ Pichigunti.
- Pichiguntalas are shy away people, they do not mingle with other main stream communities or higher castes.
- Pichiguntalas as genealogical community live in groups, in tents, outside the villages, in thandas and hattis (hamlet), adjoining forest areas, etc.
- Pichiguntalas have close living relations, styles and practices that of Kaadu Golla, Kaadu Kuruba, Jangamas, Konda Reddys, etc., belonging to Tribal groups; and they call themselves originated from Haalumatha Community.
- Pichiguntalas have populations less than 1% of the other communities in India.
- Pichiguntalas are nomadic tribes listed as Denotified and Nomadic tribes in southern States in India.
- Pichiguntalas do practice very ancient religious and cultural practices; in births, deaths, marriages, remarriages, puberty, festivals, prayers to gods – goddesses; most of them are Shaivites (disciples of lord Shiva); to make religious visits to Mallikarjuna Temple at Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh in India.
- Pichiguntalas are non-vegetarians, do engage in alcoholic Drinks (both men and women), they do have multi-marriages (polygamy), Widow-remarriages, Concubines, Child-marriages, etc.
- Pichiguntalas do have infighting among their own community people; have struggle for betterment and survival; egoistic among their own people; use bad language and harsh to the women, children and younger people.
- Pichiguntalas are Ayurvedic Medicinal Practitioners (Naati Vaidhyam) commonly referred to as Bandarillu and / or Mondollu.
- Pichiguntalas do share same / or similar Kula – Gothra – Bedagu – Vamshavali – Housenames – etc., with that of main stream Reddys from Telugu speaking areas.
- Pichiguntalas are the Chandalas of Reddys (children from inter-caste marriage / illegal relationships).
- The word Pichiguntala is used as a Bad Word for making fun of others, bullying, scolding, discouraging, disappointing, insulting, etc., by other caste people.
- Pichiguntalas wants to change their original caste to other names such as Helavaru, Vamsharaju, Reddla Kunti Mallareddy, Gothrala, Gothrakumara and Bikshakunti Reddy.
- They do not expose their real caste name in public and socializing or gatherings.
- They are Nomadic in their lifestyles.
- They are God fearing and keep their transactions on verbal agreements; leading to many legal disputes, losses, damages, land-grabing, encroachment, atrocities, etc., on both movable and immovable (landed properties) among themselves and by other higher caste / dominated community.
- They have no educational avenues, very meager literacy levels, no government jobs, representations, etc.
- Pichiguntalas live in association of Tribal and Adhivasi people such as Kaadu Golla, Kaadu Kuruba, Koracha, Yerukula, Jangama, Konda Reddy, Lambani, Banjara, etc., do live on forest produce, tree cutting, mat making, wild palm leave works, bamboo works, milking, grazing, hunting, etc.
- Pichiguntalas lack proper recognitions and concessions for development to the status of other main stream communities.

6. Conclusion

The Pichiguntala Nomadic Genealogist Tribe of India has a history of more than 1000 years. They were assigned the duties of collecting the population and census details of the cultivating communities during the Reddy rulers during pre-Medieval Periods. In the recent years after adoption of modernization and technological advancements, there exists little demand for these manual recording of genealogical details of some of the selected families by these Pichiguntalas, leading to lack of demand for their work and services. Their nomadic life styles making their children and next generations devoid of educational avenues, welfare and development programmes by the government. These people

continue to live in primitive livings in association with that of tribes such as Kaadu Kuruba, Kaadu Golla, Lambadi, Koracha, Yerikala, etc., in amalgamations away from the main living streams in towns and cities. There exists an urgent need for the government to look into matter for bringing these Pichiguntala de-notified and nomadic tribes to the main stream livings; and in special schemes and programmes in safeguarding their recorded genealogical documents and folklores. *There is need for a separate Caste based Census study on these Pichiguntalas on all India basis and for inclusion of their caste name in the government records / caste lists based on their actual socio-economic-educational status. The author who is also a member of Pichiguntala Community is keen to study their socio-economic status with an objective to bring out a reference for the future researchers and for the government initiatives to address their problems and demands.*

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

I, the Author of this Research Paper convey my sincere thanks to the Research Guides Dr.K. Somasundaran, Annamalai University and Dr.K.C. Chandrashekharaiyah, Geological Survey of India, for their guideless and support in carryout research work on Pichiguntalas. Also, I convey my special thanks to N.M. Dhanya, Research Scholar, Annamalai University and L. Ranju Meenakshi, PLV Community Welfare & Educational Trust for helping me during field surveys and literation collections. The valuable discussions with the Pichiguntala leaders such as H.S.Helawar, Sunil Helawar, Shankaralingaswamy Helawar, Ch.Malleswamy Vamsharaj, B.J.Ramakrishna Vamsharaj, E.Krishnappa Helawar, Nagaraj Helawar, Ramasubbareddy, Dr.Ramireddy Chandrashekar Reddy, Manchalli Nagappa, Pichiguntala Ganta Mallamma, Murali Krishna Vamsharaj, Yadarigi Vamsharaj, Balalaih Vamsharaj, Durga Reddy, Kannan Vamshraj, Ramasamy Vamshraj, N.V.Srinivas Helavar, P.V.Srinivas Helavar, Mallikarjuna Helawar, Yamanappa Helawar, etc., are duly acknowledged.

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