



## Social Life of Lambada Community

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**Abstract:** The Lambadas are the largest and historic formed group in Telangana and also known as BANJARA. The Lambada peoples maintained a unique and separate tribal identity. This uprooted their tribal identity and displaced them from their forest right. Lambada unlike any other people have a unique tradition of socio-cultural life, Thanda settlement, dress, language, festivals, gods, customs and manners as independent of public life. unique tradition of livelihood, and much evident in their lifestyle, food habits, festivals, rituals, worship, likes and dislikes, dances, songs, languages, clothing and Thanda life. The lambada are a colorful, versatile and one of the largest people group in telangana. Lambadas does not follow the caste system, rather have a clan system. The lambada are their own gods and goddesses, festivals, and worship practices. However they follow Hinduism in their practice of religious and social life. During Deepavali and Holy lambadas sacrifices goats to deities and go from house to house; the social and cultural life of Lambada distinguished them from other people. The lambada of telangana call themselves as Lambada and they believe that Lambada. Lambada and Banjara both are same, rather they are synonyms. The two names appear each under many variations, Such as Banjari, Vanjari, Brinjari, Lambhani, Kabani, Lebona and Lambadi, reat Lambada as synonym of Banjara.

**Keywords:** Lambadas, separate tribal identity, unique tradition

### Introduction

The Lambadas are the largest and historic formed group in Telangana and also known as BANJARA. The Lambada peoples maintained a unique and separate tribal identity. This uprooted their tribal identity and displaced them from their forest right. Lambada unlike any other people have a unique tradition of socio-cultural life, Thanda settlement, dress, language, festivals, gods, customs and manners as independent of public life. unique tradition of livelihood, and much evident in their lifestyle, food habits, festivals, rituals, worship, likes and dislikes, dances, songs, languages,

clothing and Thanda life.<sup>1</sup> Lambada people live in "Thanda" keeping a distance from non-Lambada people. The community was held above the individual interests and "Naik" (head of the community) led the community both in matters of socio-political and religious life. The settlement of Lambada in camps outside the non-Lambada habitations was called Thanda/encampment. It was their exclusive characteristic to live in "Thanda" which they acquired from the days of their nomadic life. In the Modern time though have Settled still continued to live in Thandas. The Lambada settlement was a sign that they did not



mixed with others. Lambada lived outside the villages in camps keeping the distance from other non-Lambada people. This helped them to preserve their unique socio-cultural life, language, dress, the songs and religious life. The political organization of Lambada tribe was headed by the Naik/chief for the disciplinary and juridical matters of the community.<sup>3</sup> Naik is the head of the both spiritual and secular matters of the Thanda and governs his people standing in front. Each Thanda was under a Naik and this post could be mostly hereditary but sometimes people chose able persons.

**Marriage of Lambadas:** Marriage in Lambada community has certain special features. Marriage among the Lambada is based on principle of community endogamy and clan exogamy. The Lambada tribe was divided into four clans, namely, Rathod, Pahmar, Chauhan and Vaditya with a number of sub-clans within them. Each of this clan was exogamous and cannot marry within the same sub clan as they are considered as brother and sister. The different clans in Lambada society are having different gotras 'which have not social significance.<sup>4</sup> A man can marry his sister's daughter, mother's brother daughter. Lambada man cannot marry maternal uncle's or anti's daughter, such is considered as incest. For girls the age will be 14-16 years and for boys the marriage age was 17-20 years. A non-Lambada girl will be taken in marriage but a Lambada girl will not be given to a non-Lambada boy. Normally the marriage continued one month, but due to increasing expenses it was reduced to three days. Apart from marriages held

with general consensus other types of marriages were also present.

**Place of Women:** Lambada women were not strictly subordinated to men and at the same time not fully free. Women were allowed to divorce, remarry, and also if unjustly deserted she will be given half the portion of husbands property. Women also involved in agriculture, animal husbandry, collection of firewood, cattle breeding, and they contribute to the income of the family by making liquor. The women can participate in social, religious and political activities but only men have the voice and perform the ritual ceremonies, it is allowed among the Lambada, the usual cause being unfaithful with partners.<sup>5</sup> the cases of divorce are settled the caste Panchayat. Both are move the caste Panchayat. The Panchayat consists of the nayak and some elder persons. The decision is taken only after hearing both the parties.

**Food:** The Lambadas essentially are non-vegetarians but Badavath Clan is vegetarians. The traditional food of Lambada people were:

Ragi,  
Jowar,  
Daliya (mixed cereal),  
Bati (roti),  
Saloi (made from goat or sheep or pork blood and intestines),  
Ghuggari (boiled cowpea, red gram, land gram etc.) And occasionally relish this roti along with many dishes like mutton, fish, chicken, dal, they must eat it.<sup>6</sup>  
Lambadas drinks Daru (liquor) which is prepared by them selves. They offer daru to the guest and relatives. Women also drink daru. KADO; Its made with Ajmo, Lavanga, Kalimirchi, Soonti, Tulasi, These ingredients are grinder and mixed



with jaggery and cow ghee and they prepare the KADO its medicine of delivery women .

**Dress:** The Lambada dress for the male very simple others in the society. Their ordinary dress is the Dhothi (pancha), pagadi(turban). The Lambada women wear a colorful dress with rich embroidery, jewellery and mirror patch works. Their dress include

Phetiya (the skirt)

kanchali (blouse)

Kurta (the top)

Chantiya (The Veli)

The ornaments used were: The lambada women clearly deferent from other women, due to the distinctive ornamentation. Married women are wearing their bangles between the elbow and solder; unmarried girls wear them only between the elbow and wrist.

Baliya (bangles)

Kasautiya (armlet)

Sadak (skirts decorated with draw string)

Gagri/topli (clips worn by married women)

Pawlar Haar/Haasli (the necklace made of coins)

Bhuriya (nose ring)

Ghoogri-Chotla (metal flowers and balls suspended from the hair)

Kolda (leg ankle rings)

Winti (a silver ring with old coin)

Wankado (anklets larger in diameter and made of bell metal)

#### **BIRTH CERMONY:**

Lambada does not like that his first child should born at his father-in-law's house. But present send their wives to their parents house for subsequent deliveries. A women lambada will be observed `SUVADI` (a women delivered a child) for three month. In a thand lambada women generally do not consult any doctor. The elderly women of the

thanda will act a` daayi (midwife). All most all delivery cases in the thanda are attended to by the midwife only. After birth of children they give a bath to the child with hot water, and delivered women also take hot water bath daily two times. Immediately after the delivery the women has to take KADO,LAPSI with cow ghee and jaggery On the third day from the day of delivery, the women who gave birth to a child is made to eat the dried coconut which had been used for removing `nanzar` (the evil eye) on children.

#### **Marriages among the Lambada:**

Marriage in Lambada community has certain special features. Marriage among the Lambada is based on principle of community endogamy and clan exogamy. The Lambada tribe was divided into four clans, namely, Rathod, Pamhar, Chauhan and Vadiya with a number of sub-clans within them. Each of this clan was exogamous and cannot marry within the same sub clan as they are considered as brother and sister. The different clans in Lambada society are having different 'gotras' which have not social significance. A man can marry his sister's daughter, mother's brother daughter. Lambada man cannot marry maternal uncle's or anti's daughter, such is considered as incest. For girls the age will be 14-16 years and for boys the marriage age was 17-20 years. A non-Lambada girl will be taken in marriage but a Lambada girl will not be given to a non-Lambada boy.<sup>7</sup> Normally the marriage continued one month, but due to increasing expenses it was reduced to three days. Apart from marriages held with general consensus other types of marriages were also present.



### **FESTIVALS OF LAMBADAS:**

Lambada are nature worshippers. In the Lambada religious the animal sacrifices, ceremonies, gods, house, ancestors, stories and myths, sin and punishment, and future of death occupy the centre stage. The religious life of Lambada worshipped Nature, Sun, Fire, Water, and the Earth. Lambada people follow Hinduism but practices in their own way. They worship lord Krishna, Bull, Hanuman, lord Venkateshwara, and Shiva besides their tribal gods Tulja Devi, Maramma, and Seva Bhaya. They also worship cattle. Whole community participates in the religious celebrations. Lambadas celebrate festival with certain customs reflecting the comforts and peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the thanda. In the festival both women and men of lambada have equal rights and do not have any restrictions by their society.

**Seetla;** Seetla is the annual important festival in lambada community in the month of June and July. The Lambada believe that seetla (seven sisters). These seven goddesses are symbolically represented by seven stones. Opposite to the seven goddesses at a distance of thirty feet a male god called Lankadiya is also propitiated. A goat is sacrificed before the deities and its intestines are drawn out of the abdomen and stretched up to the idol of Lankadiya across the pit and tied there. Praying seetla is only for protection of cattle.

**Teej;** Teej festivals celebrate by the lambada unmarried girls with the Nayak permission during month of July and August. The unmarried girls of thanda will pick-up some soil in small baskets and mixture the manure with soil and seeds of wheat in those baskets. The Festival celebration they propitiate the

goddess `Meramma` and `Shevabhaya`.<sup>8</sup> The maidens do not take food with spices, chill, salt and turmeric.

On the tenth day of the festival they immerse the Teej, it is called `Teej Veraa Yero`. The women maidens keep their Teej baskets before their deities and offer sheep sacrifice to her. After sacrifice of sheep, they dance collectively. They also distribute some plants (Teej) among their relatives. Finally the maidens go to ponds to immerse their Teej basket. After immerse brother blessings by their sisters, finally they returns to their houses.

**TULJA BHAVANI;**Lambadas also importance to Tulja Bhavani Goddess. She is considered as a benevolent deity and is believed to have power over crops and welfare of the thanda, also have a faith that she will bless the couple who do not have children.

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