

## **Dispersion, Knowledge Erosion And Identity Crisis: Adaptive Strategies And Struggles of The Yanadi**

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**Abstract:** *The present paper is intended to understand broad contours of spatial dispersion, loss of traditional knowledge, and various adaptive strategies adopted in the different conditions and changing circumstances by a tribal community namely Yanadi of Andhra Pradesh. The paper deals with 1. A brief ethnographic account on the Yanadi focusing on their relationship with forest and water bodies and mobility; it also highlights their association with the agricultural villages and agricultural fields belonging to the local ryots; this section also brings out some salient characteristics of their culture; 2. A sketchy account on their ancestral land, various forces and factors which caused the dispersion of the Yanadi from their original ancestral land; 3. Present ecological features of the selected Yanadi settlements and subsistence patterns, 4. Traditional knowledge system of the Yanadi, and 5. Identity crisis, identity generation and assertion.*

**Keywords:** *Dispersion, Knowledge erosion, Identity crisis, Adaptive strategies, The Yanadi*

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Date of Submission: 16-01-2018

Date of acceptance: 27-01-2018

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### **I. Introduction**

Tribal communities in India have been intimately associated with forests. A large number of tribal communities inhabit the agency areas surrounded by mountainous forests. A variety of occupations are professed by them which include food gathering, shifting cultivation, rainfed and terrace cultivation of cereals and pulses, vegetables, fruit and aromatic crops. Some also utilize the water bodies for irrigation. Apart from these, they collect non-timber forest produce (NTFP), work for the Forest Department in afforestation, plantation and deforestation activities. They also depend on forest for various domestic needs such as food, fuel, fodder, fiber, timber for shelter to humans and live-stock, medicinal plants, for manufacturing implements and household equipment etc. Further their world-view and religious life is intertwined with forest, its trees, animals, water bodies, mountains, soils etc. Number of their customs, practices and beliefs are said to help protecting the forests and its biodiversity.

For the past several decades, the bondage between the tribes and forests has been breaking away due to various reasons. The tribes are subjected to three broad types of socio-economic and political risks and negative influences: various policies and programmes of the Government; exploitation by various non-tribal people, merchants, local government personnel; and various activities (mining, large scale mono-crop plantations, timber wood cutting, construction of dams, establishing industries etc) of government and private sectors which deteriorated the natural environment and depleted the biodiversity. All these three influences and interventions have crippled the life of tribes in general and their dependence on the local ecological base. Tribal people are one of the vulnerable segments who are frequently subjected to eviction from their ancestral habitations and catchment areas. They are increasingly getting dispersed breaking away from their ancestral homes and bio-resources which are causing loss of identity, landlessness, decapitalization and loss of traditional knowledge.

### **II. Objectives of the study**

The present paper is intended to understand broad contours of spatial dispersion, loss of traditional knowledge, and various adaptive strategies adopted in the different conditions and changing circumstances by a tribal community namely Yanadi of Andhra Pradesh.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **Sample settlements and tools of data collection**

Yanadi people are versatile in the choosing their settlements and accordingly carved out their subsistence strategies. Though the authors have not documented exhaustively various types of ecological niches of different settlements, they were selective in choosing some settlements which represent a major

representation of a variety of settlements. There are other types of settlements (for e.g. those in semi-urban locations) which are not covered in this paper.

The settlements are selected not by means of any statistical methods but by way of accidental choice over a period of five years (2010-2015). The authors carried out data collection on a few topics like maternal morbidity, ethno-medicine, economic organization, worldview, rituals (*chenchoru pooja*, *Yanadi panduga*, *melam*, *rangam*, *seva*). Besides, the researchers have also studied a few settlements. The following are the settlements:

1. Padma sarassu (Karvaeti nagaram mandalam, Chittoor district)
2. Kondla palle (Vootukuru mandalam, Kadapa district)
3. Krakambadi Yanadi centre (Renigunta mandalam, Chittoor district)
4. Chaitanyapuram (Renigunta mandalam, Chittoor district)
5. Veerapuram ( Yerpedu mandalam, Chittoor district)
6. Siddala palle (Rajampet mandalam, Kadapa district)
7. Paathumala gunta (Yerpedu mandalam, Chittoor district)
8. Krishnagiri colony (Yerpedu mandalam, Chittoor district)
9. Lingireddy palle (Rajampet mandalam, Kadapa district)
10. Thatikona (Chandragiri mandalam, Chittoor district)
11. Venadu St colony (Sullurupeta mandalam, Nellore district )

Data for the present paper are drawn from discussion, interviews and observation. Transect walk, resource mapping are also used.

### **Yanadi Ethnography**

The Yanadi is a Scheduled Tribe of Andhra Pradesh. They are predominantly seen in the districts of Nellore, Chittoor, Prakasam and Kadapa. The Yanadi are said to possess characteristic physical features, psychological dispositions and intonation (Thurston 1909; Raghavaiah 1962). Traditionally the Yanadi are considered as fisher-folk, gatherer-hunters. Presently they profess a variety of rural and urban based occupations.

Thurston (1909) noted that the “The tradition of the Yanadi as to their origin is very vague. Some call themselves the original inhabitants of the wilds in the neighbourhood of the Pulicat Lake”. Some authors (Raghavaiah 1962) hypothesized that Yanadi are the descendants of Chenchu of Nallamala of Eastern Ghats. Whatever may be the original ancestral place, Yanadi are seen distributed almost in all parts of Andhra Pradesh, but densely concentrated in the order of Nellore, Chittoor, Prakasam and Kadapa districts. It is a great puzzle that the Yanadi could grow well in their population strength of about 0.85 lakh in 1891 to 4.6 lakhs in 2001. In Andhra Pradesh Yanadi constitute 9.2% of the total tribal population; this proportion has decreased from 15% in 1961 (Rani 2013). This is mainly due to the inclusion of Sugali/Lambada tribe in the list of STs who constitute a highly skewed proportion of 41% to total population of STs. Koya (11%) are the next to the Sugali followed by Yanadi (9.2%) and Yerukala (8.7%). Total schedule tribal Population of Andhra Pradesh is 5,918,073 as per census of 2011 and this population is about 7.0%.

The worldview of the Yanadi of India is to live in complete harmony with god, man and nature (Agrawal, Reddy & Rao, 1985). The Yanadi are a completely peaceful and nonviolent people who avoid unpleasantness, provocation, drunkenness, and crime. They have no memory of warfare - it does not even figure in their mythology (Raghavaiah, 1962)

Yanadi social system is designed basing on

1. Married couple as a working dyad with a flexible or interchangeable division of labour; the couple though form an economic entity, conjugal fidelity and solidarity; the couple as long as they are in the union, stay together; wherever they go or whatever they do, the couple must be together.

2. Family life is the immediate organizing domain of individual life; that is an individual life is meaningful only in the context of family; family usually comprise husband, wife and unmarried children with one or two additional relatives like widowed mother or father or unmarried brother or sister; in all likelihood, these extra members leave or live separately.

3. An extended kindred who may be located within the ego's settlement or in other places; kindred comprise an important unit of sociability and solidarity which are expressed in an invariable attendance to rituals and life cycle ceremonies, economic cooperation (labour exchange, forming into action groups during fishing, hunting, honey collection), loosely articulated group in activities like broom-making where the group members help each other in the collection of date-palm leaves but make one's own brooms and earn individually; the same arrangement is also seen in fishing, an obligation of exhibiting personal presence during time of strife.

4. Division of kin into *dayadulu/palollu/ antu vollu* (patrilineal descendents of a known ancestor) and *bandugulu* or *sambandeeekulu* (persons related in any manner usually affinal relatives).

5. Yanadi tribe has some sub-divisions. It appears that these sub-divisions are based on the occupational specialization and varies from region to region. Thurston (1909) recorded four sub-divisions: *Reddi* Yanadis (working for the Reddy caste, they are also called *Manchi* or *rythy* Yanadi), the *Challa* (refuse-eating), *Adavi* (jungle dwellers), and *Kappala* (frog-eaters). In Sriharikota, the Yanadi are subdivided into *Sarkar* Yanadi (Working for the government Forest department), *Company* Yanadi (working for private forest contractors) and *Vooru* Yanadi (workers in plantation work under the caste farmers) (Reddy 1995). Some authors have included *Paki* Yanadi (sweepers and removing night soil). Presently these divisions are not rigid endogamous units. Apart from these sub-divisions Yanadi also have *inteperlu* (surnames). These are exogamous patrilineal kin groups approximately qualify the term clan; Inter-marriage between the members having the same surname is strictly prohibited as they consider that the members are the descendants of a common ancestor. Some Yanadi HH also possess *gotra* (for e.g. Ummadi surname has *gurugaku gotram*).

6. Bilateral tendencies.

7. Yanadi is also culturally unique due to the practice of *rangam* (divination), performance of *melam* (a hilarious, obscene dance cum musical event during all sorts of rituals, delightful or gloomy, melodrama).

8. A house of deity erected by the divinator; sharing and reciprocity.

Rao (2002) summarizes the social organization of the Yanadi 'Yanadi society is organized mainly on the concepts of working team, playing sex related roles, representation of groups, sharing bodily substance. Relatedness, differences of sex, age and caste, opposition, solidarity, segmentation, dualism, complementarity, interdependency, hierarchy, unity and equality'.

In the present day, many of these features are altered or Sanskritized / syncretized without losing the originality.

### **Ancestral land and dispersion**

Written documents do not contain relevant information on the migration and dispersal of Yanadi. Historical data on spatial distribution of the Yanadi are highly sketchy. Even today, ecological features of Yanadi settlements are not systematically codified; this lacunae may be due to multiplicity of ecological niches in which the Yanadi are nestled and the neglect of the implications of such occupancy and lack of historical data. As such any attempt to trace out the ecological features and the history of settlement in such ecological spaces ought to be based on oral narratives or episodes and anecdotes.

It is not well known about various factors contributed to the vast dispersal of the Yanadi: it may be population growth, expansion of agriculture and agricultural castes pushing away the Yanadi into different areas, or the peculiar life styles (residential shifts; multiple residential rules; in case of a dispute, Yanadi would settle in a different place). Sriharikota Island is often cited as the ancestral place of the Yanadi. Reading Thurston's account it appears that the Yanadi, even at that time itself, were seen in many places in Nellore district. Way back in 1900, Yanadi colony is reported to have existed on the embankment of *Thathayya gunta* – a famous water tank (in Tirupati) nearby which the Gangamma (the presiding deity of annual *ganga jatara*) shrine is located. Some habitations were recently established whereas some were in existence for almost five to seven generations.

In a sense Yanadi is a gregarious community: it is not independent of other communities; it is also not isolated in the sense of a closed society; but a group which is capable of surviving on their own in several types of ecological niches even in the absence of some linkages with the agricultural communities. However there is a caveat: an un-obstructive entry into the wilderness of land, forest, hills and hillocks, water bodies and commons. They could carve out a neglected space into a habitable one. They can survive on a number of tubers, creepers, climbers, herbs, shrubs, trees, lichens, insects like *eesullu* (an eatable variety of termite), fish, crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, aves and mammals which are normally avoided by caste people of the villages.

The Yanadi settlements are characteristically small; on an average the studied settlements have had 26 households. Usually the colonies (government allotted site) comprise one main lane with houses on either side usually facing eastern direction with one or two more lanes with house on one side. Each side of the lane may comprise about 10-12 houses. Some settlements are irregularly constructed and comprise less than 10 households. Large settlements are highly uncommon but settlements like Siddala palle had 127 households in 2008. However by 2011, 52 household migrated to different villages in Nellore district. It appears that Yanadi settlements shrink and swell over time due to splitting of kin groups, residential shifts which involve temporary residences in other Yanadi settlements in the pursuit of livelihood. For example, five families from Thatikona have shifted their residence to Paathumala gunta for collection of leaves of wild date-palm for making brooms which had demand. During fishing seasons, it is very common for the Yanadi to camp by the side of *chervulu* (water tanks) or reservoirs such as Mallimadugu in Renigunta Mandal 15 km east of Tirupati, Siddalagandi Project, about 7 KM. North of Bodovandlapalle Village in Yerravaripalem Mandal, Somasila reservoir in Anantha Sagaram mandal of Nellore district, Pincha project located near the Mudumpadu village,

T.Sundupalli Mandal, Kadapa District. They also camp in various spots in Seshachal hills, Veligondas, Mamamdur forests, Penchalakona forest in Chittoor, Kadapa and Nellore districts for collection of NTFP, honey and medicinal plants.

Interviews with the Yanadi revealed the following reasons for shifting residences from one place to the other: Marriage; lack of adequate employment opportunities; drought conditions; spread of diseases like flu; unpalatable water quality; lack of drinking water resources; splitting of kin groups; presence of kin in other settlements; orphaned persons, etc.

In the past Yanadi used to change residences quite frequently; now-a-days, permanent settlements are increasingly established and residential shifts have been on the wane. There are some other reasons also for the decline of residential shifts. Government programmes and policies are directly influencing the residential shift. Yanadi are given house sites and agricultural lands. Ration cards, electricity connections, payment of house taxes, issue of Adhar cards, pensions etc are based on the permanent residence; Allotted sites for house construction must be completed in a stipulated time lest they forfeit the right. Further there are other policies which restrict free entry or exploitation of bio-resources. These interventions delimit residential shifts.

### **Yanadi as an ecological community and subsistence strategies**

One important characteristic of the Yanadi is that they mostly inhabit plain areas unlike many tribes who inhabit mountainous forests in Andhra Pradesh. However Yanadi are intimately connected with water bodies, forests and fringe areas or buffer zones not far away from bio-resources, and objectionable but tolerated spaces such as *dibbalu or guttalu* (small mounds), *gunthalu*(pits), *cheruvu katta* (tank embankment/bunds), uncultivable waste lands, outskirts- spaces not usually treaded (unlike the habitations of SCs which form separate segment of the main village situated within a walking distance). These spaces could be ecotones formed between forest and fields, a water tank and agricultural fields or edges of agricultural fields and open spaces or clearcuts, areas where sea meets land as in Pulicat lake, a bit away from estuary, They are also seen in riverine catchment zones but away from the main course. They are also seen inhabiting the outliers of dry deciduous open forests.

It appears that the Yanadi are not traditionally ordered by territoriality which is reported from many tribal communities. Perhaps this trait may be signal for one of their etymological meaning of Yanadi namely “a” (privative) and “*nathu*” (lord or protector), (Thurston 1909) which means those who are not included under the ruling or patronage of *bhumeesulu* (those who controlled land). The crux is that Yanadi occupied those areas which are considered useless by the ryots and the Revenue officials of yesterdays. At the same time the ryots also felt that the presence of the Yanadi was a blessing in disguise because the Yanadi were a source for obtaining rare resources such as wild animals and birds and plants which have medicinal and health value. Some main ecological characteristics of the settlements studied are given below:

1. Padma sarassu (by the side of a medium size water tank and under the foot hills of Seshachalam hill range; collection of NTFP; small rainfed cultivation; seasonal fishing)
2. Kondla palle (between a medium size hillock and a tank; small forest; agricultural labourers)
3. Karakambadi Yanadi centre (foothill of a barren hill of Seshachalam extension and about two furlongs away from a water tank; subsist exclusively on fishing, crustaceans)
4. Chaitanyapuram (flat land assigned by the government; small cultivators)
5. Veerapuram (On the tank embankment; agriculture labour)
6. Siddala palle (Nearby forest of Seshachalam hills, forest works and agricultural labour)
7. Paathumala gunta (in a flat land overseeing Seshachalam hills; collection of leaves of wild date-palm for making brooms and maredu gaddalu (*Aegle Marmelos*), pala gaddalu (*Mimusops hexadra/ Cryptolepis Buchanani*))
8. Krishnagiri colony (in a flat land overseeing Seshachalam hills; Collection of NTFP)
9. Lingireddy palle (In the midst of Seshachalam forest; dependence on forest and agricultural labour)
10. Thatikona (Foot hills of Chandragiri hill ranges; works in mango topes, herding goats, collection of NTFP)
11. Venadu ST colony ( in the Pulicat Lake; fishing, collection of lime-shells)

It can be seen from the above that the Yanadi have settled at places where forest, water bodies and agricultural fields are located. However, in general Yanadi are seen in several localities like rural, semi-urban and to some extent in Urban places. Mostly, they reside nearby agricultural villages but with visible distinctiveness of their own cultural ethos be it their huts or houses with minimum utensils and own-made cot, *dappu* or *palaka* (drumming during nights), some absentee families away into forest or a water body, small garden with flowering plants, gourd creepers, egg-plants, chilli plants and shade-giving *vepa* (neem) or *kanuga* (pongamia) trees within the house premises and a small herd of goats and a tape recorder and recently mobiles with voice recorder. Their association with caste people is cordial. They are not treated as impure; many Yanadi

work as domestic-help and have into the houses of high castes including Brahmins. They have functional relations with the ryots in matters such as rat catching in agricultural fields, supply of labour, supply of forest resources like honey, birds, fish and medicinal plants. It is not uncommon for the caste Hindus seeking help of an expert Yanadi divinator to conduct *rangam* (divination) to mitigate personal problems of misfortune, ill-health etc.

Yanadi have adopted a mixed economy supported by multiple occupations. One important feature is their dependence on locally available food resources offsetting money expenditure. In small survey of income and expenditure of one household for one week in Thati kona settlement, it was observed that the Yanadi HH earned an amount of Rs. 750/- which was spilt into ration expenditure (Rs. 250) and contribution of the remaining amount to *sangam* (Self Help Group). Daily food was met from left-over food brought back by the wife from the Reddy HH where she worked as domestic help. Husband and two adolescent boys had hunted rats, one k.g. fish, three *gorinkalu* (Myna), four *rathri guvvalu* or cheekurallu (night birds, Flying fox). The HH did not use the purchased ration at all throughout the week. Though money has become very important, food is often gathered, as the HH head has revealed that they are habituated to eat non-vegetarian food and by gleaning the surrounding areas they could get wild food and cut expenditure on food. It is a common observation that the Yanadi working as agri-labourers or crop-watch, collect available food substances either cultivated vegetables, green leaves or arrange traps to catch small animals and birds. If informed about the availability of fish, lichen, birds, or harvested fields, the Yanadi prone to walk all the distance to collect the food.

### **Technological adaptations**

Yanadi have invented various methods of procuring animal and plant food. They use various indigenous contrivances to catch fish and animals and adopted culinary practices of the high caste Hindus with a tinge of their cultural taste. Bandicoot is usually caught in the fields by means of *kunda poga/voodara kunda* (smoke generated from the pot). However, the bandicoot may wander in other areas also, for e.g. in the premises of the house. In one incident, the Yanadi detected that one bandicoot resorted shelter in an irrigation pipe. Along with his son-in-law the Yanadi ego covered one end of the pipe with a jute bag and lifted the other side of the pipe so as to roll down the bandicoot into the sack to hit it to death. It is the presence of mind of a hunter. Similarly, Yanadi have replaced the traditional catamaran made of *Tella puliki* logs (*Givotia rottleriformis*) with thermocol sheets as floats for fishing. Instead of the traditional slings, they use *catapult* which is a tiny devise to be hidden not to draw the attention of onlookers or forest guards to hunt small birds like myna, *jemudu kaki* (Greater Coucal or Crow Pheasant (*Centropus sinensis*), sparrow and other small birds and *udutha* (squirrel). They also use tensioned metallic stretchers (ribs) of umbrella to make hunting contrivances. They make use of locally available material for making fishing and hunting devices and rarely purchase raw material. They have also invented a recipe for *eesullu* (termite swarmer) which is greatly desired in the country side as food enriched with proteins and fat.

### **Symbiotic relations**

Another strategy is establishing symbiotic relation with the caste Hindus where they supply rare forest produce in lieu of some grains or allow them to collect the fallen grains in the *kallam* (paddy reaping ground). Yanadi also gain a right to collect fallen paddy in the paddy fields after harvesting for the service of crop-watching and controlling the rat menace (a noose is erected at several places in the paddy field with bait to catch rats) Yanadi are not prone to work continuously for a fixed duration of time and for this reason they are not preferred for the agricultural labour. Instead, the ryots hire them for crop-watching, rat catching, grazing live-stock, cutting leaves for manure, logs for erecting sheds etc. All the more, ryots rely upon the Yanadi for medicinal food stuffs both flora and fauna.

### **Traditional Knowledge**

Yanadi have developed a rich knowledge about plants, animals and other bio-resources including water and soil. They utilize plant and animal resources both as food and medicine. They are very fond of fish, field rat and bandicoot, tortoise, squirrel, flying fox, *jangu pilli* (jungle cat; *Felis chaus*) for their taste as well as medicinal value. Yanadi are well versed with the behaviour of fish, animals, birds and insects (honeybee and termite swarmer). They are familiar with the habitat and life cycles of various plants and animals. The hunting and fishing contrivances are ingeniously made using locally available materials. Further they are very well known for their knowledge of medicinal plants and treatment for snake or scorpion bites. It is said that they always keep the medicinal plants for treatment of snake bites. There are specialists in providing treatment for certain ailments or ill-health: rheumatic pains, arthritis, back aches, skin diseases, wounds, abscess and blisters, bone-setting, infertility, abdominal convulsions/pains during menstruation, midwifery, *Erra koka* (hemorrhage); *Vayuvu* (pre-eclampsia); *Janne* (eclampsia); *Balintha jabbu* (Puerperal Infection); prolonged or obstructed labour; *maya cheththa nilavadam* (retained placenta); breech presentation etc.,. Some of the above listed ailments

are highly complicated and only experts could treat them. Many common disorders are treated by any Yanadi, though as rule of thumb, senior persons are consulted. Ummadi Gangamma of Lingireddy palli has learnt several procedures from her grandmother who lived for 90 years. Several Yanadi women revealed that they learnt about medicinal plants and treatment of various diseases from mother-in-laws; maternal aunts, grandmothers and husbands.

Yanadi also believe that mere tutelage is not enough; the ancestor's will is necessary. The belief is that some Yanadi male or female are blessed by their ancestors who possess and make them wander in the wilderness without food or water for a few days; it said that during possession times, the possessed person do not have worldly consciousness but indulge in continuous communication with the supernatural agent. The ancestors pick up some people whom they bestow with capabilities of a medicine person or a divinator. These divinators (most of them are also medicine men) have to observe a strict code of conduct such as fasting, daily ablutions, worship of *chenchoru* and keeping the premises of *devara illu* or house of god. Thus traditional knowledge is also surrounded by supernatural beings or forces.

### **Identity crisis, identity generation and assertion**

Traditionally the Yanadi managed the fringe forest areas and derived their primary source of livelihood from sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products. The conservation policies and forest laws and development induced displacement and development programmes during pre and post Independence days have sidelined the Yanadi from utilizing forest resources and also restricted fishing in local water bodies or streams/ponds etc as these are also auctioned to private merchants. The traditional knowledge of the Yanadi is closely interlinked with bio-resources. These resources are derived by continuous access to and observation of the natural resources. Knowledge generation and maintenance is dependent on their traditional lifestyle, culture and heritage. The identification, location, sustainable harvesting, storage, consumption, food value and therapeutic properties are known to them. However, their access to the natural resources is largely prohibited. Agriculture in the villages is suffering as the occupation proved to be unremunerative and the yields are declining and remunerative prizes are becoming a far cry to the farmers. Most of the land is now being converted into mango and other fruit orchards. Real estate business is picking up as a result of which land is increasingly coming into the market. Yanadi are suffering from displacement and in some cases double displacement. All these factors have their influence on the Yanadi.

Traditionally Yanadi did not own any private property and many leas regarding agricultural lands. Their traditional knowledge is facing a setback due to the emergence of scientific medicine, hospitals and PHCs. Many Yanadi have discarded their old tradition of dependence on the bio-resources as these are not only disappearing but also suffering a stigma in the modernization context. Though Yanadi *vaidugulu* (traditional healers/ medicine men and women) are seen in the Yanadi settlements, collection of herbal medicines has declined drastically. Their symbiotic relation with the ryots has also declined due to non-availability of forest or riverine resources. Use of mechanized harvesters also deprived Yanadi from collecting fallen grains. Increasingly Yanadi are depending on non-farm wage works or regular employment, small trade, kirana shops, servant maids or as watchers in the apartment constructions or orchards etc. All these factors have alienated the Yanadi from the agricultural castes. This has led to an identity crisis in the sense they have become alien people.

However, the Yanadi are consolidating as a group by exercising their franchise and emerging as a unified vote banks. They are also increasingly depending on constitutional safeguards and eager to avail government programmes. Many NGOs have also supporting them. Yanadi women are very active as members of SHGs interacting with other low caste people in their localities. Particularly the Young generation are evincing much interest in wage employment and increasingly adopting monetary economy. Though occasional stray foraging is in vogue, cash earning has become the organizing principle of HH management. However, Yanadi seem to have realized that their culture, customs and practices are very important for the survival. They are ascertaining their identity by retaining their language intonation, intensifying the ritual field, and introducing novelty in *Melam*. Specialized troupes of artists are emerging. They celebrate tonsure at Tirumala temple of Venkateswara but also celebrate a ritual called *seva* which involve worshipping *Chenchoru* where the relatives go into trance and the men and women beat their backs with cloth wick lighted by means of dousing in oil. The latter practices are their traditional customs of worshipping. Knowledge lies in their minds, recollected occasionally but not used as they are not only afraid of punitive actions but also owing to the graceful gesture of respecting the law.

### **Development programmes**

Development initiatives for the Yanadi goes back to 1835, when the Sriharikota island came into the possession of the Government, which endeavoured to ameliorate their position by supplying them with a liberal allowance of grain, clothing, tobacco, and money, in return for the jungle produce. With a view to settle these

poverty-stricken Yanadi, land colonization schemes were started during the British period and continued after the Post Independence period for the rehabilitation of Yanadi. The State Government has also introduced land assignment schemes to provide land for cultivation to the landless Yanadi. Besides, the development schemes under the sectors like education housing, women and child development, medical, health and nutrition, roads etc are also under implementation for the benefit of the Yanadi.

The expected results could not be achieved despite all the above developmental efforts for the Yanadis. Therefore, a decision has been taken by the government of Andhra Pradesh on 09-09-1997 to establish a separate ITDA for Yanadi inhabiting Nellore, Chittoor and Prakasham districts. Recently few villages in Kadapa district also included. Yanadi Development plan has been prepared for the development of Yanadi inhabiting 3722 villages in 166 mandals on Nellore, Chittoor and Prakasham districts. The Government vide G.O.Ms.No. 136, Social Welfare (TW.Bud.2) Department dated 19-12-2001 issued orders for establishing ITDA for Yanadis. The headquarters of ITDA is located at Nellore town in Nellore district. Though Census recorded 30 % of population as literates, most of them studied upto primary levels and relapsed.

The programmes have to involve the Yanadi sustainable development of bio-resources by utilizing the knowledge. At least it is time to document authenticated information and validate the knowledge of the Yanadi.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The Yanadi is that they mostly inhabit plain areas unlike many tribes who inhabit mountainous forests in Andhra Pradesh. However Yanadi are intimately connected with water bodies, forests and fringe areas or buffer zones not far away from bio-resources, and objectionable but tolerated spaces. Yanadi have developed a rich knowledge about plants, animals and other bio-resources including water and soil. Traditionally the Yanadi managed the fringe forest areas and derived their primary source of livelihood from sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products. The conservation policies and forest laws and development induced displacement and development programmes during pre and post Independence days have sidelined the Yanadi from utilizing forest resources. The Yanadi access to the natural resources is largely prohibited. However, Yanadi seem to have realized that their culture, customs and practices are very important for the survival. They are ascertaining their identity by retaining their language intonation, intensifying the ritual field, and introducing novelty in *Melam*. Specialized troupes of artists are emerging.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The authors wish to acknowledge to University Grants Commission and the help and information received from the local Yanadi tribal people of Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Dr. Chandrika Thalari . “Dispersion, Knowledge Erosion And Identity Crisis: Adaptive Strategies And Struggles of The Yanadi.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention(IJHSSI)*, vol. 07, no. 01, 2018, pp. 33–39.