

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AMONG YANADI'S IN NELLORE DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

In southern India Yandi's are one of the major scheduled tribes of Andhra Pradesh the total population of Yandi's was 5, 78,205 as per 2011 censuses. SPSR Nellore district is populated with. 2, 43, 001 Yandi's. Among these 2, 11,613 are scattered in 46 mandals. Over populated in Kovur mandal where the sample studies are made, 31,388 are in urban areas. Apart from Nellore they distributed in Chittoor, Prakasm and YSR. Kadapa districts, 92,781. 73,469, 27,859 respectively (<http://aptribes.gov.in>). Literacy rate among Yanadhi is 35.35 as per 2001censuses, In the present study it was submissive, to say changed to 39±1%.

Belief in supernaturalism is known as Religion, Emile Durkheim “ unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practises which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them”. (Taves, Ann (2009), p. 176). Yanadis are associated with primitive religion, naturalism, animism, animatisms, totemism, besides Hinduism

These people are semi-nomadic, mostly moving one place to other in search of work. However it was observed they are colonised, indispensable, and most trusted tribes for doing specific works needed by other communities. So ethnographic profile of the Yanadi was changed from semi-nomadic to Static by 90%. The Yanadi maintain their identity and do not claim explicit connections with other communities. The data focused mainly on the religious devotees worship by Yanadis in Kovur Manadal Nellore district. This is based on primary data.

Key wards: Yandhi's, Semi-nomadic, communities, primitive, scheduled tribes)

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The proportion of tribal population has been increasing from census to census. The Anthropological Survey of India under the 'People of India Project' identifies 461 tribal communities in India (K.S.Babu, 2012).

Yandi tribe, a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) residing in Nellore Chittoor and Prakasm, districts of Andhra Pradesh. The main focus of the paper is to study the traditional etiquette regarding religious and marital status of Yanadi tribal's.

Introduction

Yanadis have been divided into 4 sub-castes namely Reddy-Yanadi, Challa Yanadi, Kappala Yanadis and Adavi Yanadis. The Reddy Yanadis are called because when the Reddy kings ruled over parts of Andhra, they employed these tribals as their trackers and bearers of arms when they went for hunting. The name Challa Yanadis was given because they were doing menial jobs and working as scavengers were give Challa (buttermilk) as payment. The "Kappala Yanadis are mostly inland fisher men who hunt in ponds, streams and sell their catches nearby villages. At one point of time they were catching frogs, which were being exported to foreign countries. The Adavi Yanadis are those who even now live in forests far away from human habitation. This classification varies district to district (Tribes in Nellore district [ttps://subcollectorgudur.](https://subcollectorgudur.))

There are many communities being tribal's but not included in the list of ST's. In contrary there are communities have not been trebles but included in the list. For instance the Swagalas in Himachela Pradesh are treated as ST's but they are Brahmins³. Siilar studies are also reported in MadhyaPradsh (Mukherjee, B, 2004).

Kovur is a Mandal in Spsr Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh State, India. Kovur Mandal Head Quarters is Kovur town ("District Census Handbook – Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore, 2016). It is located 10 KM towards North from District head quarters Nellore. Kovur Mandal is bounded by Kodavalur Mandal towards North, Spsr Nellore Mandal towards South, Nellore Rural Mandal towards west, Indukurpet Mandal towards East. It is under the administration of Nellore revenue division ("HandBook_2013-14_SPSNellore_final, July 2017). It forms a part of Nellore Urban Development Authority (Mandals and villages covered under Nellore UDA limits, 2017). Kovur is located at 14.5001°N 79.9859°E and at an altitude of 19 m (62 ft)

(Maps, Weather, and Airports for Kovur, India". *fallingrain.com*.) The town is spread over an area of 6.28 km² (2.42 sq mi).¹¹ Penna River is the major river flows in the proximity of the Town (Handbook 2013-14 SPS Nellore Final, 2017).

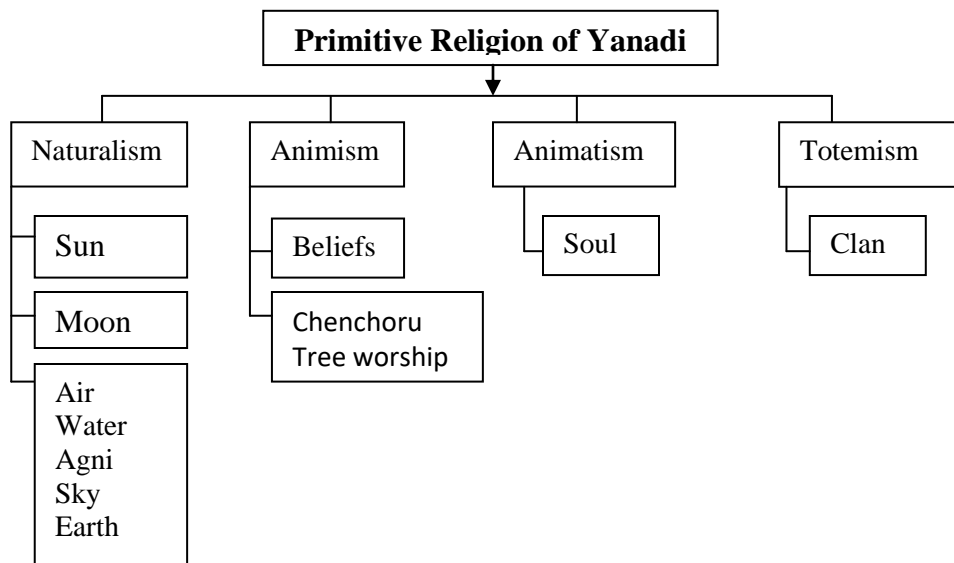
Table 1: Kovur Mandal, Data of population

	Total	Male	Male%	Female	Female%
Population	76598	37842	49.40	38756	50.59
Schedule Tribe	12287	6196	8.089	6091	7.951

The Survey of present Authors in 2015 Mach, vouch for its efficiency from the all villages of Mandal. (Table.4.) It discloses the dispersed tribal group (DTG) is increased to 17.35%, and 16% to 18.81% of total population respectively.

Table 2: List of Yanadi Villages in Kovur Mandal

	Village Name	Village code	Population	Yanadi	% of Yanadi
1	Cherlopalem	592114	1,673	400	23.91
2	Gangavaram	592110	2,228	650	29.17
3	Inamadugu	592118	7,509	1300	17.31
4	Kuvur	592113	32,082	5500	17.14
5	Leguntapadu	592117	3,045	450	14.78
6	Modegunta	592115	1,093	150	13.72
7	Padugupadu	592112	13,919	2500	17.96
8	Patur	592109	4,883	1000	20.48
9	Pothireddipalem	592111	4,981	1300	26.18
10	Vegur	592116	5,185	1150	22.18
	Total		76598	14400	18.81



Naturalism of Yanadis

The Yanadis have many religious beliefs and festivals connected with the forest flora. Ceremonial visits are traditionally made to the forest to show respect to nature and diseased ancestors, worship health Gods and give reverence to the plants that keep them healthy. In the past the entire family used to go to the forest for livelihood and for collection of non-timber forest products.

In Primitive stages the Yanadis will have strong belief that all natural things such as natural objects (Prudvi (earth), Akasam (sky), Air (Gali), Fire (Agni), Water (Varun). Called as “panache buthas” in Hindu mythology will have a Spiritual things or consciousness can influence human events. we will find this belief in all major religions particularly in Hinduism. The modern Science (Developed Sciences) i.e. the ecological Segments Lithosphere,(God’dess:Bhudevi) Hydrosphere,(God: Varun) Atmosphere, ,(God:Vayu,&Agni) and Biosphere (interactions with in the Biotic & Abiotics, also between the Biotic & Abiotics) are also spiritual, in the Hindu myth called as “Pancha Bhuthas”.(Gob’lin). So the traditions followed by Yanadis from their Primitive days till today prove they are 98% Hindus. Further it was observed even if a small percentage (aproxematley 2%) are converted into Christianity in both Mandals still they follows the traditions of Hinduism, they converted only for lively wood ,money and other amenities provided by the Christian missionaries. This fact concludes even though they are DTG how they are transited in compliance with other groups and settled as static groups from nomadic status.

Animism of Yanadis

Chenchoru

The Yanadis have many religious beliefs and festivals connected with the forest flora. Ceremonial visits are traditionally made to the forest to show respect to nature and diseased ancestors, worship health Gods and give reverence to the plants that keep them healthy. In the past the entire family used to go to the forest for livelihood and for collection of non-timber forest products. The head used to educate his/her kith and kin regarding the identification and usage, sustainable collection etc. That way knowledge generation and transmission continued unabated and new knowledge was added. (S. Vedavathy,2010,p.9).

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. However, Yanadi seem to have realized that their culture, customs and practices are very important for the survival.

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.

Animatism of Yanadis

They have no legends or mythologies of wars in their past, and their life style matches their world view, which is to live in harmony with the gods, humanity, and nature. They believe that when people die their souls go to Lord Brahma, the creator god. In making his judgments, Brahma examines the deeds recorded on the "life sheets" of the souls. He disapproves of extra marital sex relations but he approves of good deeds such as helping people in need, avoiding abusive speech, or picking thorns from the feet—and lice from the hair—of others. He puts the souls of the good into the wombs of higher caste women to be reborn, while the souls of bad people go into the wombs of dogs or jackals.

Totemism of Yanadis

The Yanadis feel a mythical affinity with certain species of nature and even with inanimate objects. They regard these as their ancestors. This belief system and associated practices are called totemism. The totemic objects are considered sacred and killing or eating the

flesh is taboo. If the totemic animal dies the clan members (i.e. entire Yanadi community) come together and observe all kinds of rituals and ceremonies. The social organization of yanadis is not only based on totemic objects but is further aligned on the basis of exogamous kinship (i.e. marriage outside one's own kinship group). The totemic living objects consisting of animals and trees are found simultaneously in each kinship group (or phratry) and all these objects are sacred - even cutting the trees is taboo. The members of a particular phratry believe that the animals or plants they represent protected their ancestors while they faced dangerous situations. The Yanadis believe that the origin of life and the Gods and Goddesses that protect them are in the forest (adavi). The prayers (puja) and invocation they perform calls the God that is in the forest to come to their temporary abode given by the Government and rescue them from evil eye (a look superstitiously believed to cause injury or bad luck). Here the people appeal to the spiritual bodies to address their inability to live in the midst of them. Even now they go and live in the forest stealthily during famine days to get sustenance.

Dishti or Evil Eye

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Hindu Religious and Traditional Etiquette

In Nellore District Particularly Kovur Mandal, among the different groups of Yanadi tribals only two are popular they are Manchi yanadi, (Reddy yanadi also referred as Bhumanchi Rddies) and Challa yanadi. Among them challa yanadi are with most passivity. Reddy Yanadi because traditionally they have been serving for agriculturists as agricultural labour as well as

domestic servants in Nellore District. Challa Yanadi also called Adavi (forest) Yanadi because they are provenders in the forest for vegetable gathering and hunting, frequently the Bumachi reddie also depends on forest for their livelihood¹³. This pattern is more common among the Yanadis of Nellore District. The present study is with religious traditions of both.

Regarding Yanadi religion in Kovur Mandal most of them are Manchi Yanadis are colonised, except Challa Yanadis still nomadic, few are Seminomadic, for their prosperity, happiness and misery, worshiped with Penhall Narasimha Swamy of penchallakona, Narasimha Swamy of Narshimakoda, Venkateswara swamy of Thirumula, are the Gods. Their house hold god is mostly “Chenchudevatha” (ChechuLakshmi) they chant the house hold god in special path usually called as “Sodihi” for their “welfare” and to save from the “Grief”, this practice is not only for them they also do for other community people living in the Village neighbourhood to their colony. they also provide “Thayath” or “Chitaku” which are tagged to the Neonates’ and their Mothers for the Good health, divinity and to protect from evil spirit.

The Yanadis of Kovur Mandal along with all remaining 44 Mandals once in a year in the month of June celebrate Venkateswara Swamy “Samaaradhana Ustavam” along with “Shimaha Puri Vydya SevaSamithi” (SVSS). A Voluntary Social organisation working for the health with minimum cost for all people in particular for Yanadis Organising 10 bedded ward for free of cost to any extent with aid off Central Govt, of India and with help of donors in and around the Nellore District.

After the cultural performance the team sent by TTD, Board will organise the Kalyanostavam for the Idols of Seven hills,) which was followed heartfelt lie by gathered Yanadis with Devin Assiduity. On the night of that day they did not sleep (Jagaran) continuously Chant Govind Namalu till to next day morning.

Then they went to the Sacred Temple of Raganayakulu Swamy in Ranganaykulupet at Nellore. with a Special permission of Temple Charity they pray before the Idol for their journey to Tirumula without any obstructions until to come back to their colonies. Then they start their journey and reaches the temple of world famous Lord Venkateswara of Tirumula, had the Dharsan of Idol of Venkateswra Swamy. Returning to their House by undergoing Upavasam removes the sacred wreath.

Religious activities of Yanadi



Yanadi devotees carrying their offerings



Yanadis worship activities of Lord Venkateswara



Religious activities of Yanadi



Cultural performance of Yanadis

In the day of celebration they execute their traditional and resorial, skills which are in practice from ancient to till date in the Domain of DTG of Yanadi even they are educated and colonised did not forget their culture which is transient from prior to present generation, it is a tremendous , Good 'stigma'. These cultural activities neither unconnected nor distasted even *Bharth* was invaded by no of foreigners who are disturbed traditional, cultural, ritual, socio-economic conditions, and all living conditions today the Hindusthani's following. So the Yanadis are either knowingly or un-knowingly safeguarding the Hinduism.

Purity and Pollution of Yanadis

Purity and pollution of Yanadis they maintain “Antu’and they follow the rituals of death very strictly ‘Antubaputa’, the other who have marital connection with them, the relatives offers clothes at the time of karmakandalu. Death news of death is circulated by a dayadi and a Sambandi. Carrying a stick is the symbol of new of death they inform all the relatives in different settlement. The sambandi of the dead man informs the news to his sambandi. At that time the dayadi should not speak. Food is not prepared in any hut, till the dead body is taken away. The main affinal relatives (mother’s brother) supervise the burial and post-funeral ceremonies. The dead body is carried by four persons, preferably by two sambandulu and two dayadulu.

Two sambandulu dig a grave chest-high of tree feet breath. The ditch faces the north. The dead body is placed in a prostrate position, the face facing east. The ditch is filled with sand. A pot of water is kept at the side of the head.

The Yanadi conduct two ceremonies after the death. They are paluposukovadam and punyaham for children and karamanthralu for married adults. When a person dies, the dayadulu of that person become impure (antudarlu). After conducting punyaham or karmanthralu they are purified (Binod C. Agrawal, N. Sudhakar Rao, P. C. Gurivi Reddy, 1985, p.33)

Conclusion

Yanadis mostly distributed in Nellore district. Besides their nomadism they are agriculturalist and domestic servants in rural and urban areas. The primitive religions of Yanadis follow Naturalism (Chenchoru), Animism, Animatisms, and Totamism. Besides that they worship Lord Venkateswara Swamy, Lord Ranganayakula Swamy and Lord Penchal Narasimha Swamy. They follow the rituals of purity and pollution. They follow traditional beliefs and customs and they believe in supernaturalism.

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