



OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES & MOBILITY: AN INTRA- GENERATIONAL STUDY OF YERUKULAS IN RAYALASEEMA

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Yerukulas are one of the ancient and the largest tribes of Andhra Pradesh. One and half century ago Yerukulas were nomads and some of them were notorious for their criminal activity. They were brought under Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and thus their Criminal activity was brought under control. The government of India repealed the Criminal Tribes act in 1952 and Yerukulas are now listed among the Scheduled Tribes. Yet even today Yerukulas carry the social stigma of Ex-criminal tribes.

Since the enactment of Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 in general and in particular after the repeal of the act in 1952, the Yerukulas have settled in and around the rural, semi-urban places and urban centres and are involved in a variety of occupational pursuits. Notable among them being basket weaving, Pig-rearing. The reformative efforts, constitutional safeguards and the general development and welfare efforts by the government led to changes in the life style and occupational pursuits of Yerukula Tribes.

The present paper seeks to analyze the occupational changes and occupational mobility trends among the Yerukulas. Such an analyses will throw light on the equality of opportunity as envisaged by the Constitution of India and the life chances of stigmatized Scheduled Tribes.

Method of study:

In the Rayalaseema region Yerukula Tribe population is more in the districts of Anantapur and Kurnool districts (33,259 and 24,174 respectively 1991 censuses). A multistage random sampling technique was adopted to draw the study sample. For; this purpose 10 percent of Revenue mandals (With Yerukulas tribe concentration) and 10 percent of Revenue villages in each selected mandals were selected. From each of this selected habitation 10 percent of the Yerukula house holds were selected randomly. Thus from Anantapur five habitations of which two urban centers, three semi urban centers three rural habitations were selected. Similarly one urban centers, four semi urban centers four rural centers from Kurnool district were selected. Thus our study sample constitutes 300 Yerukula house holds. The sample compares drawn from 85 urban House Holds, 135 semi



urban house holds and 80 rural habitations spread in Kurnool and Anantapur districts of Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh.

Data was collected by administering an interview schedule supplemented by focus group discussions. The study was undertaken during the months of April to July 2006.

The analysis is carried out, by adopting intragenerational occupational mobility approach by using mobility matrix. For this purpose the respondent's first adult occupational pursuit at the age of 20 years and the occupational pursuit at the time of data collection were considered. Majority of Yerukulas were found to be involved in more than one occupational pursuit and hence primary occupation as reported by the respondents alone have been considered for the purpose of analysis.

The occupational distribution at the two time periods is matched through mobility matrix₁ to analyze the occupational mobility trends and to calculate the structural mobility.₂The minimum amount of mobility required to accommodate the changing occupational distribution is referred as structural mobility and in general it is measured by the index of dissimilarity.₃ In other words index of dissimilarity measures the amount of mobility introduced by so called structural changes that is, the shifts in occupational distribution. The difference between the total volume of mobility and the minimum structural mobility has often been denoted Exchange mobility. It reflects the turnover or exchange among individuals and positions rather than formation of new positions. The index dissimilarity is computed as follows:

$$\text{Index of dissimilarity} = \Delta = 1/2 \sum t [at - bt]$$

Where

at =occupational distribution of first adult occupation

bt =occupational distribution at present.

Brief Profile of Respondent

The respondents under reference all are married .The average age is found to be 45.17years the standard deviation is found to be 8.9. Only 10.3% of the respondents were found to be below 30years of age. In other words majority of the respondents productive age falls within the last two and half decades. Thus their occupational changes & Mobility trends refer to the period of 1980 to till date .Majority of the Yerukulas under reference are found to be poor and their mean annual income of respondents to be Rs.7430. Majority of these (72percent) earn between Rs.6 thousands to twelve thousands; and 18.3 percent of them earn less than Rs. Six thousands per annume.The highest & lowest income were Minimum Rs.2000 Maximum Rs. 60000.The Standard of deviation 5206.65.

The Yerukulas under reference have reported to represent such occupationally endogamous groups as Dabba Yerukula (48.7%) Kunchepu Yerukula (27.3%); Yeetha pulla Yerukula (19%) and Nulaka Yerukula (5%). Majority of them (76.3%) are found to be illiterate. Only five percent of them are



found be have attained matriculation and above level of education. An overwhelming majority (97.7%) of them have nuclear families, and (71.3%) of their an hut dwellers. Majority of their (80.3%) are land less. Eighty percent of their reported that they have exercised their adult franchise.

The Traditional occupational setting of Yerukulas:

As noted earlier the Yerukulas are stigmatized tribe. The social stigma they carry is Ex-Criminal Tribe. As such interest was evinced on ethnographic details of Yerukulas prior to independence and later to learn the impact of reformatory efforts. Some of the note worthy reports and works are mentioned below.

Papa Rao Naidu (1905), Thurston E (1909, 1975 RP), Hassan SS (1920); Enthoven RE (1922); Censes of India Vol.II (1961), Shashi (1995), Lalitha (1995), ASI- RS Singh (1998) Parthasarathy (1988), Pratep DR (1973), Ramesan N (1960), Simhadry YC (1973, 1974, 1974, 1979) and a monograph an Yerukulas by tribal cultural research and training institute, Hyderabad; Asok Kumar and Basker seen (2006) Viswanath reddy and Venkateswarulu (2006), Uma Mohan, Ramana and Naganna (2006).

The writings throw light on the traditional occupational pursuits of Yerukulas during the last half and one century.

The Yerukula are divided into several occupational endogamous tribes, namely Dabba Yerukula (those who make baskets with split bamboo). Yeethapulla Yerukula (those who make baskets with wild data-palm leaves). Kunchepuri Yerukula (mantufacturers of weavers combs). Uppu Yerukula (salt hawkers). Yeddu Yerukula (transporters of merchandise on bullocks). Karivepaku Yerukula (hawkers of curry leaves), nara Yerukula (rope-makers), Kavali Yerukula (crop-watchers), Parikinuggula Yerukula (soothsayers and beggars) Kothula Yerukula (acrobats and musicians) Ura Yerukula (pig-rearing). Bajanthi Yerukula (acrobats and musicians) Kooth Yerukula (tattooers).

Obscured that the advent of Indian Railways has deprived Yerukulas their trading opportunities and forced their to the up dacoity. However, some of their continued the today of curry leaves etc, even during the decades of 1980. The growth of market economy, commercial agriculture, and transport facilities home made under to abandon the pursuit of transportations trading/ hawkers. They were once nomadic traders, now most of them have settled down at several places. Their primary occupation is basketing and allied products chiefly that depends on bamboo. Some of them have shifted to agriculture; they also make mats, baskets of date palm, ropes, twines and slings from fiber.

Thus the traditional occupations of the Yerukula tribe range from basket-making to pig-raring.



The Yerukula communities are landless and derive their livelihood by making baskets, Mat weaving, rearing pigs, herding cattle and gathering forest produce. Their women seek alms and tell fortune to the clients while playing the tambura. Some of them work as agricultural labourers. Children are engaged in rearing pigs and in making baskets. The traditional relations are restricted within the community. Their children do not attend schools since they lead a semi-nomadic life.

Occupational Distribution and changes: The Twenty first century scenario:

The Yerukulas under reference have reported that they are distributed in as many as nineteen different occupational pursuits. Most of which are traditional ones. It is also observed that majority are involved in more than one pursuit. The occupations reported were classified into Nine occupational categories based on their nature such as Traditional; semi skilled; cultivation; business; skilled; white collar; executive; professional; and other miscellaneous occupations.

Traditional occupations are those occupations which are carried out owing to ascription or simply due to their involvement traditionally. These are mostly craft oriented, agrarian related and dependent on ecological & environmental resources; some of them are being practiced as caste occupations by certain other castes. Basket weaving with split bamboo; leaves of wild date palm; fiber rope making; tending goat/sheep/dry milch cattle etc., are some of the examples. Semi skilled occupations are those which emerged in the recent times and are not necessarily ascriptive, they require some amount of acquired/ learned modern skills but with out legal/ authentic certificates. Tractor driving; tailoring are a few of such occupations. These are caste free occupations.

Cultivation is an open occupation. In an effort to reform Yerukulas some of the Yerukulas were encouraged to take up cultivation during pre-independence era and later by the state government. Some of the Yerukulas have acquired land on their own enterprise. Traditionally Yerukulas were known for their trading and transport service activities, particularly before the advent of Railways in India. Even now some of them practice various business activities. The Business activities include activities like commission agency; arrack dealership, petty business, money lending etc., all these viz., traditional, semiskilled; cultivation and business pursuits do not require any formal training or educational attainments and are mostly either parent conferred/ascriptive by tradition.

Occupational categories such as skilled, white collar, Executive professions are modern occupations which require varying definite levels of educational attainment and for some certain level of formal training. These are achieved positions and are by and large secular in nature.

The different occupations pursued by the respondents are as follows: Teacher (2) which is professional pursuit, police constable (10) which are executive



positions; Bank clerk (1) Bus conductor (1) are white collar positions; Auto rickshaw driver, Busdriver (5) is skilled ones and require formal training, license and educational attainment. All these occupations are modern and secular occupations and are achieved.

Mango garden commission agent (10) money lending (1) petty business (6) Arrack dealer shop (6) are business activities; Tractor driver, Tailor, Autodivers (12), are semi-skilled activities; these are partly manual too.

Dry Milch Cattle rearing to raise calves, goat/sheep, rearing (7); pig rearing (21); spilt bamboo basket weaving (89); mat weaving (54); agriculture labour (2); construction labour (14); begging; hunting, rope making (6); and thieving; cultivation (34). These are traditional occupations. Miscellaneous occupations (19).

It is observed that at present the Yerukulas of Rayalaseema are not involved in vending, trading curry leaves, rock salt; transport services; performing Modi; acrobats, or Kunchelu to which they were traditionally associated and are known.

The occupational distribution of respondents at two time intervals viz., respondent's first adult occupation at the age of 20 years (t_1). And the respondents primary occupation (t_2) now (in the year 2006) is presented in the mobility matrix (table 2)

In the mobility matrix the occupational distribution of the two time intervals are arranged exactly in rows (t_1) and column (t_2) to match and to observe the occupational shifts (mobility). The corresponding diagonal cells of the rows and columns denote the distribution of occupational immobility.

The mobility analysis (table 3) shows that a large percentage of respondents (58.0) per cent) are involved in traditional occupation. However, of the 174 respondents involved in traditional occupation for 41 respondents it was not parent conferred. It is interesting to note that 84 respondents have deviated from their parent conferred traditional first adult occupations. They have moved into better occupations ranging from semi-skilled to professional pursuits. Similarly, Yerukulas also have deviated from the pursuits of cultivation to other jobs and some of them even reverted to their traditional pursuits.

Thus, our analysis reveals that Yerukulas do not meekly bow down to tradition/parent conferred positions. Instead they constantly strive to improve their positions and aspire to acquire new skills if an opportunity is provided.

Our mobility analysis thus reveals that a good percentage of Yerukulas are mobile (51.0); the mobility is mostly from traditional and cultivation occupations; of which 32.0 per cent are upwardly mobile and only 19.0 per cent are downwardly mobile; these were those who reverted from. Semi-skilled and cultivation pursuits.



The index of dissimilarly measure reveals that the minimum structural mobility occurred during the two time intervals was 29.35 per cent. But the percentage of mobile Yerukula respondents were 51.0 per cent and thus the exchange mobility was 21.65 per cent. In other words there were not enough qualified mobile Yerukula respondents to move into the positions/opportunities that have resulted on account of structural shifts of the occupational distribution.

As our data suggest this is primarily due to lack of needed skills and educational attainments on part of the Yerukulas and thus, they are deprived of equality of opportunity as envisaged by the constitution of India

Conclusions:

The study of occupational changes and mobility trends reveals that majority of Yerukula's life chances are still at subsistence level; and are related to indigenously available local resources and opportunities. Our study reveals that majority of Yerukulas adherence to parent\tradition conferred positions is mainly on account of lack of requisite skills educational attainments. Our study further reveals that Yerukulas are enterprising and resilient and have remarkable adaptability to structurally changing occupational shifts.

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**Table 1: Present occupation**

Yerukula Respondents previous 20 years		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Total
Professional	I	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Executive	II	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White collar	III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skilled	IV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business	V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Semi- Skilled	VI	-	-	-	-	1	5	1	5	-	-	12
Cultivation	VII	1	-	-	1	6	2	7	9	31	-	57
Agriculture Labour	VIII	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	10	-	13
Traditional	IX	3	-	2	-	18	15	19	27	133	-	217
Others	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		4	-	2	1	25	24	27	43	174	-	300

Index of Disseminate = $\frac{1}{2} \varepsilon$ (Absolute) = $\frac{1}{2} \varepsilon$ (58.7)
= $\frac{1}{2}$ (10) = 5 = $\frac{1}{2} \times 58.7$ = 29.35
Percentage of Immobile (147) = 49.00
Mobile (153) = 51.00
Minimum Structural Mobility (1d) = 29.35
Exchange Mobility = 21.65
% of Upward Mobile = 32.00
Downward Mobile = 19.00

Table 2

	t ₁ Previous occupation	Percent (%)	t ₂ Present occupation	Percent (%)
Professional	1	0.3	4	1.3
Executive	0	-	0	-
White collar	0	-	2	0.6
Skilled	0	-	1	0.3
Business	0	-	25	8.3
Semi- Skilled	12	4.0	24	8.0
Cultivation	57	19.0	27	9.0
Agriculture Labour	13	4.3	43	14.3
Traditional	217	72.5	174	58.0
Others	0	-	0	-
Total	300	100.0	300	100.0

Upward
Percentage of Mobile = 32.00
Downward Mobile = 19.00
Mobile = 51.00
Immobile = 49.00
Minimum Structural Mobility = 29.35
Exchange Mobility = 21.65