



Socioeconomic Profiles of Yanadi Tribal Pre-School Children: A study from South India

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Abstract

The tribal standard of living condition is far below compared to non-tribal population with the chronic poor nutrition shows greater impact on the mother and child health. Demographic profiles information might be the best predictive tools to identify the lacuna and search for suitable intervention measures related to economic, social, nutrition and health perspectives. The present investigation was carried out at Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh among Yanadi tribal preschool children (3 to 6 years) as Yanadi sub-tribe represented the highest proportion of tribal population. The target group was further sub-divided into three age groups viz., 3 to 4 years (n=67), 4 to 5 years (n=67) and 5 to 6 years (n=66) with a sample size of 200 boys and 200 girls. Demographic profiles were collected using structured questionnaire on the important parameters such as age and gender of the child, educational and occupational status of mother, family income, type of the family and family size. The results clearly denoted that nearly half of mothers found to be illiterates of both boys (73.5%) and girls (76.5%) and maximum of about 71.5 per cent were engaged in daily wage works. The data on family income revealed that majority of the respondents belong to very low-income group of Rs. < 1,00,000(77.2%) followed by Rs 1,00,000 to 2,00,000 monthly family income(21.0%) and the least of about 1.8 per cent earned between Rs. 2,00,000 to 3,00,000. The important observation to be noted that none of them fall under high income group which might be focused for initiating income generating activities to enhance the condition of standard of living. The earlier joint family system prevailing was noticed to be shifted towards nuclear family (63.2%) as evidenced by only about one third of joint families (30.5%) and a smaller number of extended families (6.3%) with majority family size of 4 to 7 members. The findings well demonstrated a need for the plan of suitable nutrition

intervention measures to mothers of tribal preschool children as the

mothers were the primary caregivers.

Key words: *Tribal children, Nutritional status, Anaemia, Green leafy vegetables, Anganwadi.*

1. Introduction

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of tribal people in India between 2011 and 2018, despite their distinct differences in geography, culture, and terrain. A sizable number of tribes inhabit Andhra Pradesh (AP), particularly in the forested portions of the state's north coastal region. These tribes, known as Yanadi, are dispersed throughout the districts of Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor, Krishna, and Kadapa and coexist with non-tribal communities. Originally from Sri Harikota, the Yanadi tribes of the Nellore district were distributed to various regions, with the mandals of Kovur and Allur being the main hubs for their aggregations.

According to the 2011 census, Yanadi's population was 5, 33,746 in the state of AP, and its literacy rate was 35.35 percent. Yanadis are categorised into four main groups based on their occupations: Manchi Yanadi or Reddi Yanadi, who work primarily as cultivators and servants; Adavi Yanadi, who typically live in forests; Paki Yanadi, who primarily engage in scavenging; and Chella Yanadi, who typically gather leftover food from leaf plates found in dust bins (Padmaja and Marella, 2020).

When compared to the non-tribal population, Yanadis' standard of life is determined to be significantly lower, which has a negative impact on their nutritional, health, and educational status. Due to a lack of awareness about dietary deficiencies and the resulting malnourishment that results in a higher prevalence of anaemia and child malnutrition, chronic poor nutrition has a stronger negative influence on the health of both the mother and the child.

2. Review of literature

According to WHO forecasts, the number of stunted children globally will reach 131 million by 2025 (27 million more than the goal decrease of 40%), while the incidence of wasting will continue to be significantly higher than the 5% target (De Onis et al. 2013). Low-income and lower-middle-income nations continue to bear the lion's share of the global burden associated with childhood undernutrition (Romieu et al. 2017; Victora et al. 2011).

In 2019–2020, 32.1% of children under five in India were found to be underweight, 19.3% were wasting, and 35.5% were stunted, according to the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS-5) (NFHS-5,2021). The NFHS-5 statistics showed that stunting and underweight prevalence were, respectively, 21.2% and 30% in Delhi. India now has a 28/1000 under-five mortality rate, with undernutrition being a major contributing factor (Singh, 2020).

3. Methodology

Purposive random sample was used in this study to select the Yanadi tribes, a well-known tribal group living in the Nellore district's coastal districts who had not yet been thoroughly studied to determine their nutritional and health status. Selecting preschoolers from the Yanadi tribes in the Nellore area who attend tribal Anganwadi preschools and range in age from three to six years old was the first step in the study. The primary goals of the research's second phase are to gather preliminary data on the socioeconomic level of the preschoolers who were chosen and to evaluate their nutritional status. In the current study, a structured questionnaire was used, and Anganwadi teachers and mothers of children were interviewed in order to gather the relevant data.

The general information included information about the personal and family profiles of the children attending the tribal Anganwadi centres in the district of Nellore. With a total population of 2963557 and a ST population of roughly 285997, the newly created Nellore district

consists of 46 mandals, 708 villages, and 1778 habitats. The ST population holds a 9.65% share in the district. Within the tribal groups, the Yanadi community was found to be comparatively larger at 251677 compared to the non-Yanadi tribes, which accounted for roughly 34320, meaning that 88 per cent of the population was Yanadi.

4. Results and discussion

The Yanadis' level of living has been determined to be significantly lower than that of the non-tribal population, which has a negative impact on their nutritional, health, and educational prospects.

4.1. General profile of the sample

This section presents and discusses the results of the questionnaire designed specifically to gather personal and family profile information from the tribal Anganwadi children. The data were tabulated and displayed in tables.

4.1.1. Gender and age of Tribal Anganwadi children

The children's chronological age as stated in the Anganwadi registries was used to determine the sample's age. Two hundred boys and two hundred girls were chosen out of about 400 children, whose parents all agreed to have their children take part in the study. According to the table, the percentage of boys (33.5%) and girls (33.5%) who were chosen from the 3–4 and 4–5 year age groups within the sample under study was equal. 200 girls and 200 boys between the ages of 3 and 6 made up the entire sample (N=400), which was composed of 33 percent boys and 33 percent girls from the 5–6 age group.

Table No 1: Distribution of Anganwadi children according to their Age

Variable	Categories	Boys (200)	Girls(200)	Total
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Age of the child in years	3-4 years	67 (33.5)	67 (33.5)	134 (33.5)
	4-5 years	67 (33.5)	67 (33.5)	134 (33.5)
	5-6 years	66 (33.0)	66 (33.0)	132 (33.0)
	Total	200 (100.0)	200 (100.0)	400 (100.0)

Note: Values within parenthesis indicate per cent values

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) offers a range of services to children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers, including early childhood education, nutrition and health education for mothers, and adolescent girls. It also addresses the nutritional and health needs of children under the age of six.

The sample size distribution was displayed in the table, and 200 boys and girls were equally distributed for purposive sampling. Of these, 67 were in the age groups of 3 to 4 and 4 to 5 years, as these were found to be the age groups with the highest percentage of anganwadi centres overall. In contrast, 66 preschoolers in the third age group—ages 5 to 6—from both the boy's and girl's groups were examined. The first two age groups appeared to have percentage values of 33.5% and the third age group of 33.0%.

When the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme was introduced on October 2nd, 1975, it became the largest community-based programme in the world. The beneficiaries include women who are pregnant or nursing, have children under six, are in their adolescent years, are reproductively inclined, and, of course, are all in the age range of 15 to 44. According to Dev et al. (2022), there are currently 13.46 lakh Anganwadi Centres in operation, serving 365.44 lakh preschoolers between the ages of 3 and 6 as beneficiaries of preschool education. In order to understand how the nutritional status of boys and girls varies with age, the examination was conducted during the current study as well, focusing on preschool-aged children between the ages of three and six. These children were then divided into three age groups.

4.1.2. Educational status of mothers

Mothers' educational status may have an impact on their child's nutritional status because education promotes knowledge and understanding. Nutrition for preschool-aged children is critical because the child requires appropriate proteins and calories to support developing body demands. Furthermore, nutrition during this age influences the child's overall development and provides the groundwork for future health and nutrition status. To investigate the influence of mothers' educational status on the nutritional health of tribal Anganwadi children, data on mothers' educational status were collected and presented in figure 1.

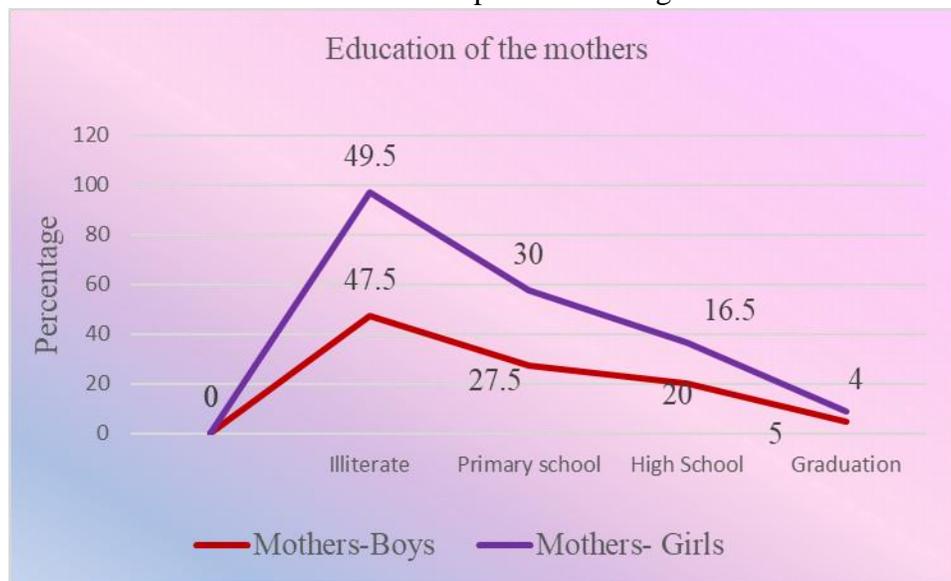


Figure 1. Distribution of mothers according to their educational status

Figure 1 shows that the majority of boys (47.5%) and girls (49.5%) mothers were illiterate, with 27.5 percent of boys and 30.0% of girls' mothers having completed basic school. A significant proportion of males (20.0%) and girls (16.5%) mothers had completed high school, while just a small proportion of boys (5.5%) and girls (4.0%) mothers had graduated. This demonstrates that the majority of mothers of tribal Anganwadi children were illiterate and had a poor educational level.

4.1.3. Occupation of mothers

Mothers' employment is linked to a significant rise in poor child growth in the slums analysed. These conditions develop when there is a lack of family support and proper nutritional care for the children of working mothers in low-income homes. Early childhood care and support

for children from low-income households to enhance their nutrition and health status may address the issues of malnutrition and stunting in children under the age of five (Win et al. 2022). In this study, mothers' livelihoods were defined as their occupation, which also impacts the hours of work, distance from home, and amount of spare time available for mothers to feed and care for their children. Table 2 shows the distribution of mothers based on their occupation.

Table 2: Distribution of mothers of Anganwadi children based on their occupation

Variable	Categories	Mothers of boys		Mothers of girls		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Occupation of mother	Agriculture	23	11.5	13	6.5	36	9.0
	Daily wage earner	139	69.5	147	73.5	286	71.5
	Government employed	6	3.0	4	2.0	10	2.5
	Private employed	14	7.0	9	4.5	23	5.8
	House wives	18	9.0	27	13.5	45	11.2
	Total		200	100.0	200	100.0	400

Table 2 depicts the job status of the mothers of the children under study, revealing that the majority of boys' (69.5%) and girls' (73.5%) mothers earned a daily pay. Almost one-tenth of them worked in agriculture (9%), while more than one-tenth were housewives (11.2%). A tiny percentage of children's mothers worked for the private sector (5.8%) or the government (2.5%). The nature of most mothers' jobs keeps them busy, leaving little time to spend with their children which might be influenced child's nutrition and health status.

4.1.4. Annual family income

The families' food purchasing ability is determined by their cash income; many workers in agro-based sectors and domestic servants receive cooked/raw food in addition to their salary. These families' diets are determined by their income and the food they obtain from their jobs. The current study gathered information on annual family income to determine their food purchasing ability to feed their children and other members. Table 3 depicts the families of the selected tribal preschool children organized by annual income level.

Table No 3: Distribution of anganwadi children based on their annual family income

Variable	Categories	Girls		Boys		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Annual family income in Rupees	< 1,00,00	157	78.5	152	76.0	309	77.2
	1,00,000-2,00,000	41	20.5	43	21.5	84	21.0
	2,00,000-3,00,000	2	1.0	5	2.5	7	1.8.0
	>3,00,000	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

According to Table 3, the majority of households (76% of boys' families and 78.5% of girls' families) earned less than one lakh rupees annually. According to the Andhra Pradesh government, households earning less than 1 lakh rupees per month or less than 1 million rupees annually qualify for white ration or D cards, which entitles them to all BPL benefits for their family. Within the current study, the majority of children come from households classified as Bottom of the Pyramid (BPL), which receives financial aid as well as support for housing, health, nutrition, education, and other services from state and federal government programmes.

A little more than 20% of them earn between Rs.1,00,000/- and Rs.2,00,000/- (boys: 21.5%; girls: 20.5%), a very small number earn between Rs.2,00,000/- and Rs.3,00,000/- (boys: 2.5%; girls: 1.0%), and none earn more than Rs. 3,00,000/- annually.

Table No 4: Mean annual family income among tribal preschool children in different age groups of boys and girls

Variable	Mean± SD (Rs)					
	Age group	Girls	Boys	T-Value	P-Value	Total
Annual family income in Rupees	3-4	1,21,624 ± 45,999	1,22,272 ± 39,143	0.0798	0.9365 ^{NS}	1,21,948 ± 46,829
	4-5	1,02,022 ±36,640	1,06,072 ±38,534	0.6184	0.5374 ^{NS}	1,04,046± 37,824
	5-6	98,098 ±32,047	1,00,989 ±35,069	0.4944	0.6219 ^{NS}	99,544 ±33,495
	Total	1,07,294 ±39,862	1,09,822 ±41,911	0.6181	0.5369 ^{NS}	108558 ±40,867

Note: ^{NS}@ Not Significant

According to the table, families of early tribal preschool children had the highest mean income and the lowest in the age range of 5 to 6 years, both in boys and girls. It was discovered that boys' families had slightly higher mean income values than tribal girls, regardless of age, and that these values appeared to decrease with increasing age in both boys and girls. Whatever the variations, the statistical analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences. The household income for each age group was determined to be Rs. 1,22,272 ± 39,143 and Rs. 1,21,624 ± 45,999 for children aged 3 to 4; Rs. 1,06,072 ± 38,534 and Rs. 1,02,021 ± 36,640 for children aged 4 to 5; and Rs. 1,00,989 ± 35,069 and Rs. 98,098± 32,047 for children aged 98,098± 32,047 for boys and girls, respectively.

Boys had a little higher mean annual family income (Rs. 1, 09,822 ±41,911/-) than girls (Rs. 1, 07,294 ±39,862/-), however the statistical difference was not statistically significant. The preschool-aged tribal children's mean yearly income was determined to be Rs. 108558 ±40,867. The average income was only marginally above the poor income category and actually very close to the poverty line, suggesting that proactive measures to improve their financial situation should be taken into consideration. These actions could then have a positive impact on the preschoolers' health and nutritional status by making better food more affordable and, consequently, enabling them to consume at least the recommended amounts of nutrients.

The current study's findings also coincided with the fact that the tribes have a high prevalence of poverty, as indicated by the fact that the majority of the families analysed belong to the low income group (77.2%). The government has carried out a variety of developmental

measures to improve the standards of the tribal population, including a specific place in numerous five-year plans. The projects may prove beneficial in the long run in terms of closing the income gap between tribal and non-tribal people and reducing poverty rates.

4.1.5. Type of family

The type of family was determined by its structure, which included nuclear, extended, joint, and other options. The family structure determines young mothers' decision-making authority in terms of food preparation, distribution, and care within the family. Figure 2 depicts the distribution of children by family type in boys and girls, as well as the overall sample in each age group.

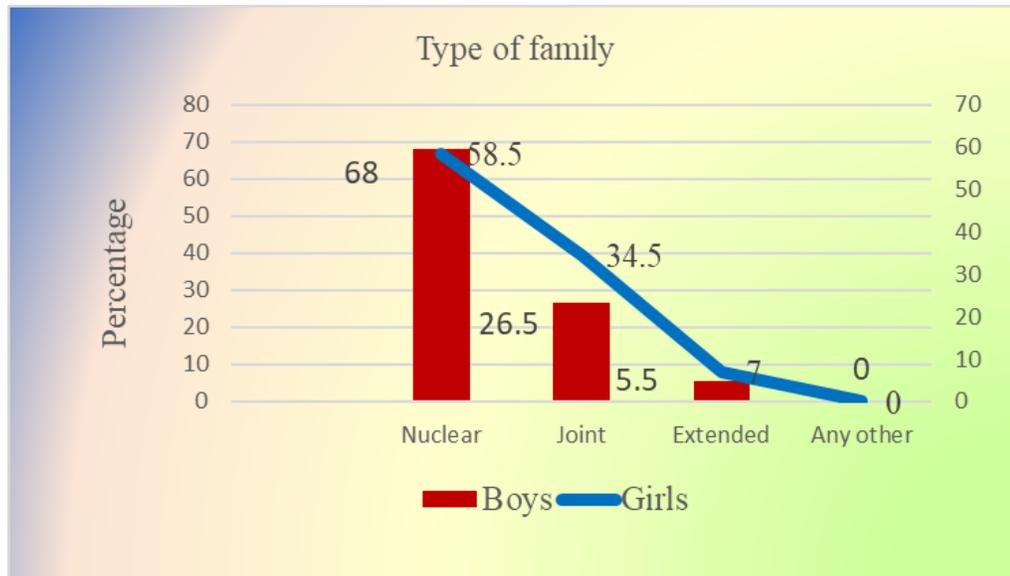


Figure 2: Distribution of Anganwadi children based on their type of family

The data shown in Figure 2 indicates that the majority of children (68.0% of boys and 58.5%) belonged to nuclear households. The remaining percentage of boys and girls (34.5%) hailed from joint families. Only 5.5% of males and 7.0% of girls were from extended families, indicating that nuclear families are still popular even in tribal communities.

4.1.6. Size of family

The number of people living in the household was taken into consideration when determining its size, and this factor affects how many hands are available to help with the children's health and nutrition. In addition, when an adult family member is unavailable to assist with domestic chores, parents are forced to rely on older children for child care and feeding. Thus, an attempt was made to gather the family size data, which is shown in figure 3.

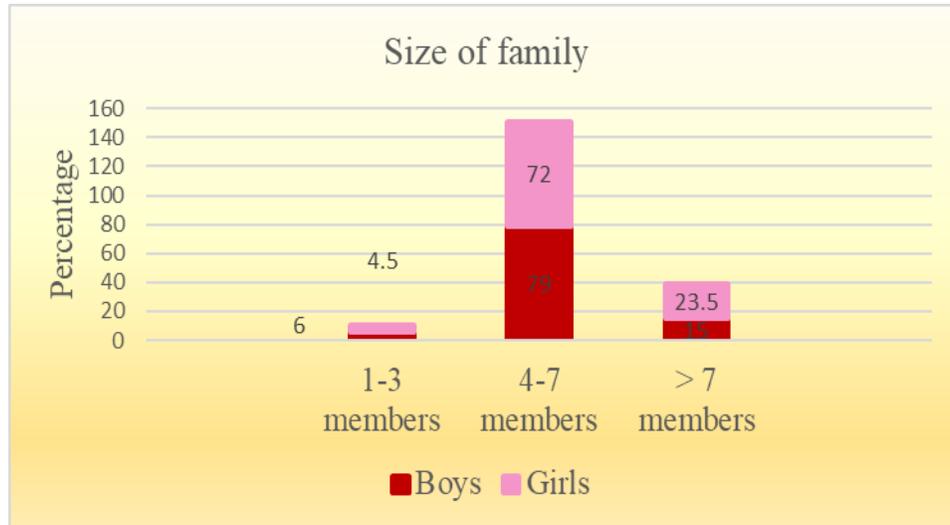


Figure 3: Distribution of Anganwadi children based on size of family

Figure 3 showed that the majority of children (girls: 72.0% and boys: 79.0%) had families with four to seven members, with the exception of 15.0% of boys and 23.5% of girls, who had families with more than seven members. Less than 10% of children (girls: 4.5%, boys: 6%) had a family size of three to five members. This is a very tiny percentage. The children of the Yanadi tribe discovered that mothers can leave their children to marry another person and abandon their family. As a result, while not all of the children in the family are born to the same lady, they are all born to the same father. The numbers show the gender distribution of children based on family size, indicating that boys and girls had similar family sizes.

5. Summary and conclusion

- There were 400 children in the age range of 3 to 6 years who made up the study's sample, 200 of them were Yanadi tribal preschool males and 200 of whom was girl.
- Three age groups (3–4, 4-5, and 5–6) were chosen with an equal ratio of boys and girls in each, which is 33.0% in the third age group and 33.5 percent in the first two.
- About 48.5% of tribal women were illiterate, more than one-fourth had only completed elementary school (28.8%), 18.3% had completed high school, and only roughly 4.5 had graduated. This information relates to the mothers' educational status. There was a somewhat lower literacy rate among moms of girls.
- The majority of tribal women (71.5%) worked for a living wage, followed by housewives (11.2%), and the remainder women (9.0%) held various occupations such as self-employment, private employment (5.8%), and a small percentage (2.8%) in government employment.
- According to the annual income findings, 77.2% of them earned less than Rs. 1,00,000, 21.0% earned between Rs. 1 and 2 lakhs, 18.0% earned between Rs. 2 and 3 lakhs, and none earned more than Rs. 3 lakhs. The indigenous preschool girls under study had, on the whole, lower socioeconomic levels.
- The sample distribution by family type showed that, even in tribal areas, nuclear families accounted for the largest share of families (63.2%), followed by joint families (30.0%), and extended families (6.3%).

- The majority of the families (75.5%) were medium-sized families with four to five individuals, followed by large families (19.3%) and families with one to three members (about 5.3%).

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