

# Yerukulas: Changing Trends of Livelihoods: A Study of Ex-criminal Tribes in Andhra Pradesh

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## Abstract

Yerukulas carry the *social stigma of ex-criminal tribes* and experience social exclusion. The present paper seeks to examine the *changing trends of livelihoods* among the yerukula tribe of rayalaseema in the last ten decades. More specifically our analysis is pertained to the opportunities for pursuit of traditional occupations and modern occupations across four generations. A multistage random sampling technique was adopted to draw the study sample. The sample comprises 85 urban house holds, 135 semi urban house holds and 85 rural house holds spread in kurnool and anantapur districts of rayalaseema region of andhra pradesh. The study reveals that yerukulas are not free from social exclusion. The low or non – existence of better levels of education, modern occupational skills are compelling them to experience social exclusion.

**Keywords:** Yerukula; social stigma; ex-criminal; livelihood

## Introduction

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 The government of India repealed the Criminal Tribes Act in 1952 and Yerukulas are now listed among the scheduled tribes.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* and experience social exclusion.

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 reformatory efforts, constitutional safeguards and the general development and welfare efforts by the government led to changes in the levels

of living conditions of Yerukula tribe.

The present paper seeks to examine the *changing trends of livelihoods* among the Yerukula tribe of Rayala Seema in the last ten decades. More specifically our analysis is pertained to the opportunities for pursuit of traditional occupations and modern occupations across four generations i.e. Grand father (g<sub>1</sub>), father (g<sub>2</sub>), respondent (g<sub>3</sub>) and respondent adult employed sons (g<sub>4</sub>). these four generations space the last one hundred years and covers both pre-independence and post-independence periods to till date.

## Backdrop of Yerukula Tribe

Yerukulas are spread mostly in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and are referred differently. Yerukulas were once nomadic traders and transporters, hunters and also believed to be dacoits and robbers, thieves. Ramaswamy (1960) noted that the advent of indian railways has deprived the Yerukulas their trading opportunities and forced them to take up dacoity during British India regime. The British have enacted Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 to curb and control the criminal activity of Yerukulas along with such other communities. The notorious groups were forced to settle down in specially created settlements and others were dispersed and encouraged to lead settled life. A

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**Table 1. District wise population of Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh-2001 Census**

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Total Population (In Lakhs)	ST Population (In Lakhs)	% ST population to Total Population	Yerukula Population District wise	% total population to Yerukula population
1	Adilabad	24.88	4.16	16.74	-	-
2	Nizamabad	23.45	1.65	7.07	5409	1.03
3	Karimnagar	34.91	0.91	2.60	13215	0.37
4	Medak	26.70	1.34	5.04	13264	0.49
5	Hyderabad	38.29	0.34	0.90	6595	0.17
6	Rangareddi	35.75	1.46	4.09	11340	0.31
7	Mahabubnagar	35.13	2.78	7.93	21039	0.59
8	Nalgonda	32.47	3.42	10.55	18531	0.57
9	Warangal	32.46	4.57	14.10	19774	0.60
10	Khammam	25.78	6.82	26.47	-	-
11	Kadapa	26.01	0.61	2.36	18399	0.70
12	Kurnool	35.29	0.70	1.97	32445	0.81
13	Anantapur	36.40	1.27	3.49	36279	0.99
14	Chittoor	37.45	1.28	3.42	23161	0.61
15	Srikakulam	25.37	1.52	5.96	-	-
16	Vizianagaram	22.49	2.14	9.55	-	-
17	Visakapatnam	38.32	5.57	14.55	-	-
18	East Godavari	49.01	1.91	3.91	-	-
19	West Godavari	38.03	0.97	2.54	18152	0.47
20	Krishna	41.87	1.07	2.57	32445	0.77
21	Guntur	44.65	2.08	4.66	68349	1.53
22	Prakasam	30.59	1.18	3.86	29042	0.94
23	Nellore	26.68	2.42	9.08	24289	0.91

Source: Census of India, 2001

strict police watch was maintained. The tribe acquired the *social stigma of criminal tribe*. They are considered as social exclusives. But they are not untouchables. Their spread in Andhra Pradesh state is presented in table 1.

After independence the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 was repealed in the year 1952. Yet the social stigma and social exclusion continues to be felt and experienced by the most Yerukulas and practiced by the society in general. As a consequence, Yerukulas were a suppressed, poverty ridden, neglected and thus socially excluded lot. Though they are no longer nomadic, yet, they retain semi-nomadic tendencies and experience social exclusion. The social stigma on Yerukulas and their social exclusion as criminal tribe evoked interest

among the sociologists, anthropologists and ethnographers. A limited body of literature was built which throws some light on this tribe. A few of the note-worthy writings and reports are: Papa Rao Naidu (1905); Thurston, e. (1909, 1975 rp); Hasan SS (1920); Ethoven RE (1922); Census of India vol. Ii (1961); Ramaswamy (1960); Simhadri YC (1973; 1974, 1979); Pratap (1973); Parthasarathy (1981); Lalitha (1995); Shashi (1995); Singh RS-ASI (1998); Ashok Kumar & Baskar Sen (2006); Viswanath Reddy & Venkateswarlu (2006) Umamohan, Ramana & Naganna (2006); and a monograph on Yerukulas by tribal cultural research & training institute, Hyderabad. These writings do not shed light on the levels of living and the changing trends. Hence the present efforts.

## Study sample

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 eight habitations of which two urban centers, three semi urban centers three rural habitations were selected. Similarly one urban center, four semi urban centers four rural centers from Kurnool district were selected. Thus our study sample constitutes 300 Yerukula house holds. The sample comprises 85 urban house holds, 135 semi urban house holds and 85 rural house holds, 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 from April to July 2006.

In India, traditional social status and social mobility are of corporate in nature. However, the modern developments have ushered changes and facilitated individual mobility. In this context occupations pursued by an individual assumes importance in determining one's status and as well opportunities for social mobility. Similarly, the levels of development is also understood with reference to transition and changes in the occupational structure, viz; primary, secondary, territorial occupational sectors; agrarian - industrial; industrial - service.

Therefore, in the present paper an exercise is made to examine the occupational pursuits, occupational mobility trends & changes to understand the impact of development programmes and resultant changing trends of livelihood amongst Yerukula.

For this purpose the analysis is presented in the following sections, viz; (1) the distributions of occupational pursuits; deviation from

traditional occupations;; inter-generational; changes in pursuits of the livelihood and stability of livelihood.

Almost one and half centuries ago, the Yerukulas were nomads. They are considered as tribals. As such they did not have a place in rural occupational hierarchy. In rural India occupations are always associated with caste. Besides Yerukulas had a tendency of criminality and known for their bravery and audacity. Hence, occupationally they were marginalized & socially excluded. They chose such occupations lively hood pursuits which were caste free and allowed them to practice their criminal skills such as thieving, dacoit as well.

They made a living by basket-weaving, rope-making, mat weaving, fortune telling, snake-charms, tatto-makers, musicians, engaged in marriages, acrobats, sellers of salt, tamarind curry- leaf and pluses (Thurston 1909, Papa Rao Naidu 1905). Being venders in the streets or villages, they were always on the move from one village to another. Apart from earning their livelihood by traditional occupations, some of them resorted to such antisocial activities like robberies, decoities and petty thefts. When the criminal behaviors of the Yerukulas became a problem for the then British government, it felt it necessity as preventive and deterrent purposes to declare the entire tribe legally criminal. Therefore, the British government enacted the Criminal Tribe Act of 1871 with the assumption that unless the entire tribe was put under certain preventive measures and restricting it would be difficult to deter the professional criminals. (Simhadri-1979:28), marginalized livelihood pursuits, nomadic and semi-nomadic life style and stigmatic label as a criminal tribes have furthered their marginalization, social exclusion in the pursuit of livelihood. The strict police watch, establishment of criminal tribe settlements, reformation rehabilitation were some of the unsuccessful efforts made by the British to transform Yerukulas. However, since within the past one hundred and fifty years, the Yerukula culture and society have undergone several referable changes.

It was during the post-independence era, that the Yerukulas had a chance to reform their life style. The socio-economic changes in the rural

areas, universal adult franchise, repeal of Criminal Tribe Act (1871) relaxation of police harassment and the community development programmes have offered a chance to lead a settled and sedentary life and pursue such livelihood pursuits which are in demand for rural/ peasant markets such as bamboo basket weaving. Though the stigma of criminal tribe and the marginalization of livelihood pursuits have continued the intensity was a declining trend.

The Yerukulas, either on their own accord or on account of the efforts of the government have settled in and around the villages, semi-urban places and urban centres and pursued their traditional occupations besides adopting non traditional ones. This brought some changes in the spheres of their livelihoods and social, political life. The Government of India repealed the Criminal Tribe Act in 1952 and legally changed the term criminal tribes to notified tribe them to denotified tribe (Vimuktajatis) and finally included the denotified tribe under the Scheduled Tribe. Now the Yerukula is a scheduled tribe.

The enactment of Criminal Tribe Act 1871 labeled and stigmatized people as criminal tribe. Thus they were branded with an and undeniable stigma of criminal tribe. Since this act was repealed in 1952 after independence the yerukulas gradually assumed sedentary settled life. Most of them however pursued traditional occupations.

#### **Yerukulas and traditional occupations**

The traditional occupations are distinct in each of the endogamous group of Yerukulas. The endogamous Yerukula sub-groups are identified with a particular pursuit (s) and referred as such. The writings of Papa Rao Naidu 1905; Thurston 1909; Hassan SS 1920; Ethoven 1922; have reported the occupational endogamous of Yerukulas sub-groups and their livelihood pursuits. Some of these sub-divisions are exogamous, but in their common pursuits of criminal activity (robbery or snatching away or theft), they are all identical with no distinction among them. Such were the people who were brought to the settlements and dubbed as a criminal tribe.

After independence also some of these occupational traditions have continued. But some of the livelihood pursuits have been lost. The post independence scenario particularly the first two decades of post independence is reported by Shashi 1995; Lalitha 1995; K.S. Singh 1998; Simhadri 1974 (table 2).

#### **Occupational distribution and changes: The Twenty First Century scenario**

The Yerukula respondents under reference have reported that they are distributed in as many as twenty one different occupational pursuits. Most of which are traditional ones. It is also observed that the majority are involved in more than one pursuit. Their lively hood pursuits are presented in table 3.

The occupations reported were classified into ten occupational categories based on their nature such as traditional; semi skilled; cultivation; business; skilled; white collar; executive; professional; and other miscellaneous occupations, agriculture labour and construction labour.

Traditionally, 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.

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; mat weaving with leaves of wild date palm; natural fiber rope making; tending pig, 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

**Table 2. Yerukuls: Endogamous sub - groups & lively hood/ occupations**

SI	Yerukula Endogamous sub-group	Occupations	Reported By
1	Dabba yerukula	Split Bamboo Basket weaving	Paparao Naidu(1905),Thurston (1909) Shashi (1995)
2	Yeetha pulla Yerukula	Wild date palm leaves mat weaving	K.S.Singh(1998)
3	URA Yerukula	Pig rearing	K.S.Singh(1998)
4	Kunchepu yerukula	Makers of weavers comb	Shashi (1995)
5	Uppu yerukula	Salt hawkers	K.S.Singh(1998) Lalitha(1995)
6	Karivepaku yerukula	Hawkers of Curry leaves	Thurston(1909)K.S.Singh(1998)
7	Nara yerukula	Rope makers (with fiber)	Thurston (1909) K.S.Singh(1998)
8	Kavali yerukula	Crop Watchers	K.S.Singh(1998)
9	Yeddu yerukula	Transporters of Merchandise on Bullock	Thurston (1909) K.S.Singh(1998)
10	Parika muggula yerukula	Sooth Sayers, Beggars	Lalitha(1995)
11	Kothula yerukula	Acrobats	K.S.Singh(1998)
12	Bajanthi yerukula	Musicians&Acrobats	Lalitha(1995)
13	Kooth yerukula	Taltooers	Lalitha(1995)
14	Thabbi Koravas	Mats,baskets,ropes, stigma,graneries	Lalitha(1995)
15	Kavalkar koravas	Watchmen	Lalitha(1995)
16	Kallu koravas	Mending stones and working wadde yerukula on roads by carrying stones and mud	Lalitha(1995)
17	Gadihatti kaikaries	Basket making	Lalitha(1995)
18	Konche koravas	To make brushes for sale	Lalitha(1995)
19	Koot kaikaries	Koot means dancing so they live by prostitution	Lalitha(1995)
20	Pan kaikaries	Exhibit serpents from door to door beg	Lalitha(1995)

legal/ authentic certificates. Tractor driving; auto 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 (4) which is a professional pursuit; bank clerk (1) bus conductor (1) are white collar positions; bus driver (1) is skilled one and require formal training, license and educational attainment. All these occupations are modern and secular occupations and are achieved.

Mango garden commission agent (5). money lending (8), petty business (6), arrack shop dealer (6) are business activities; tractor driver, autodivers (22), tailor (2) are semi-skilled activities; these are partly manual too and are caste free.

Dry milch cattle rearing to raise calves, goat/sheep, rearing (7); pig rearing (23); bamboo basket weaving (83); mat weaving (50); agriculture labour (27); construction labour (16); begging; hunting, rope making (11); cultivation (27). These are traditional occupations. Occupations (19).

#### Deviations from the traditional occupations

India is by and large a caste based society. The traditional occupational structure was therefore, too was caste based, as each caste was associated with a specific caste occupation. But traditionally the tribal's were not in this ambit. Yet some of the tribes have pursued certain occupations as their monopoly. The Yerukula tribal's traditional occupational pursuit was not very clear. It was reported prior to the advent of railways the Yerukulas were involved in transport of merchandise of rock-salt in the caravans, and the means of transport was donkey. The introduction of railways deprived Yerukulas from this livelihood pursuits and thus they were forced to take-up highway robbery, dacoity, theiving (Ramaswamy, 1960).

On the other hand the researchers have

**Table-3**  
**Respondents occupational Distributions**

SI	Item	No
1	Teacher	4
2	Bank clerk	1
3	Bus conductor	1
4	Bus Driver	1
5	Mango commit ion Agent	5
6	Money lending	8
7	Petty business	6
8	Arrack dealers	6
9	Auto Driver	11
10	Tractor Driver	11
11	Tailor	2
12	Cultivation	27
13	Dry Milch cattle rearing	7
14	Goat rearing	7
15	Pig rearing	23
16	Basket weaving	83
17	Mat weaving	50
18	Rope making	11
19	Hunting/Begging	11
20	Agriculture labour	27
21	Construction labour	16
	Total	300

reported that Yerukulas were divided into occupationally endogamous sub groups. This indicates Yerukulas follow certain occupational pursuits with monopoly. The Yerukula sub groups and occupations associated with them are presented in table 2.

For the purpose of analysis of occupational deviation the researchers refer to the above mentioned occupational affiliation.

The Yerukula respondents under reference represent such occupationally endogamous

**Table 4**  
**Occupational Distribution of Yerukulas**  
**Four Generations**

	G1	G2	G3	G4
Modern	-	-	31 10.3%	53 51.9%
Cultivation	-	-	27 9%	18 17.6%
Business	-	-	25 8.3%	5 4.9%
Traditional	300	300	174 58%	22 21.5%
Agriculture labour	-	-	43 14.3%	4 3.9%
Total	300	300	300	102

groups as dabba-yerukula (48.7), kunchepu yerukula (27.3), nulaka yerukula (5.0), and eeta yerukula/eetapulla yerukula (19.0). Our data shows that only 58 percent of yerukulas have adhered to traditional callings and none of the respondents are representing such traditional occupations like making weavers komb (kunchepu yerukula). Very small percentage are involved in fiber rope making (nulaka) (3.67%); equally small percentage were found to be involved in mat weaving (mats made of date palm leaves) and belong to etta pulla Yerukula (1.6). A large percentage however, are involved in spilt bamboo weaving (27.67) which is considered to be the vocation of Dabba Yerukula; and not all these members belong to dabba yerukula group. 7.6 percent are involved in pig rearing and 2.3 percent are involved in dry milch cattle rearing. A good percentage (42.00) are found to be involved in other occupations like

cultivation, agriculture labour, business, autodriving, moneylending, bus driver, conductor etc.

Thus, our analysis shows that in these modern days, Yerukula do not strictly adhere to their traditionally endogamous occupational callings. Further our data also shows that the yerukula are keen to adopt *and welcome changes in their occupational* callings that would improve their levels of living. The percentage of occupational deviation irrespective of sub-group affiliation is found to be 52.00 percentage.

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.

#### **Inter-generational changes in livelihoods**

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 centers. They 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 impact of the development programmes is best understood by examining changes in occupational pursuits, trends of life-opportunities and stability of livelihood pursuits. Therefore in the present section an attempt is made to examine occupational changes and occupational mobility trends to understand the impact of developmental programmes. Occupational changes are examined with reference to changes from ascriptive mode of occupation to achievement oriented occupations and also movement from traditional to modern occupations.

*Traditional occupations* are those livelihood pursuits which are being carried out since generations by virtue of caste affiliation or subsect cultural affiliation, these occupations are thus parent conferred occupations or caste occupations and are thus ascriptive in nature.

They do not require any formal training, qualification, or achievement. The only requirement is birth or affiliation to a certain culture. Generally speaking traditional occupations are specific monopoly of certain groups. By and large traditional occupations are based on the indigenous resources and ecology, indigenous technology, manual and artisan/craft oriented.

*Modern occupations* are those occupations which have emerged in the recent decades as a sequel of industrialization, technology, development and modern education. These occupations are by and large free from tradition/caste/cultural affiliation. These are achievement oriented and require some level of modern education or formal training/skills. In other words, modern occupations do not form a part of traditional agrarian occupational structure and are relatively newly created structural positions.

Occupational adherence and change spanning four generations were analyzed to examine the inter-generational occupational mobility trends and there by to assess the impact of development programmes, social exclusion, inclusion and equality of life chances. The four generations are respondent grand father ( $g_1$ ) respondent father ( $g_2$ ) respondent ( $g_3$ ) and respondent adult employed sons ( $g_4$ ). The  $g_1$  generation correspondence to the time period 1930 and above;  $g_2$  generation correspondence to the time period 1950 and above;  $g_3$  generation correspondence to the time period 1970 on words; and  $g_4$  generation correspondence time period 1990 on words.

The  $g_1$  generation represents pre-independence (British India) period. During this period the Yerukulas were haunted by Criminal Tribe's Act 1871 and were under constant police surveillance and were highly stigmatized. Though, the Yerukula were trying to settle down to lead sedentary life, they were not allowed by many villages. Because of stigma of criminal tribes they were also not encouraged to participate in agrarian's activities, the prime source of livelihood during that period. Further most rural occupations including the artisan activities were caste based and monopolized by specific castes which specialized artisan activities

by tradition. Thus, Yerukula were occupationally marginalized and socially excluded. They were left with very much restricted livelihood opportunities and lacked food security. Therefore, a large number of them have taken to pig rearing. Herding pigs involves movement from one village to other. Thus the nomadic nature of the Yerukulas persisted in  $g_1$  generation. By rearing pigs they could move to the villages. The use of pig dung as organic manure by the farmers slowly led to a harmonious relationship between the villagers and the Yerukulas. This has helped to ease the antagonistic attitude towards Yerukulas as the members of criminal tribes. Further, interaction with the agrarian communities facilitated the search for indigenous alternative livelihood opportunities. In this search, Yerukula found split bamboo basket weaving as one of the livelihood source. Split bamboo basket weaving incidentally is one of the occupational affiliations for Madera caste. The rise in agrarian activities and market activities has given a filip for the demand to bamboo baskets and allowed making bamboo products as a source of livelihood.

The second generation  $g_2$  represents early decades of India's independence. This period witnessed several far reaching structural changes. Which include legislation and progressives social emancipation and welfare of the down trodden; socio-economic reforms development of infrastructural inputs universal adult franchise etc., the Criminal Tribe Act was repealed in the period of  $g_2$  generation.

This prompted Yerukulas to lead a more sedentary life. The various programmes of land reforms enabled some of these members to acquire marginal land holdings. The accelerated agrarian, industrial and construction activities created good demand for bamboo baskets. Thus, split bamboo weaving could become a stable source of livelihood. Further, the rapport built by previous generations, shunning of criminal activities and the skill in basket weaving have prompted the villagers to tolerate the Yerukula settlements and habitats. Thus, relatively speaking Yerukulas were more acceptable. Yet, they were not liberally accepted in the use and participation of public institutions like educational institutions. The only exceptions



were those promoted by committed social welfare organizations sponsored by government or by certain other religious institutions like Christian missionaries.

G<sub>3</sub> generation represents a period of poverty alleviation programmes, spread of public distribution system, banks nationalization, distribution of surplus land to weaker sections, stress on amelioration of poor living conditions of the weaker sections, encouragement to the health and literacy promotion programmes. During this period g<sub>3</sub> generation began to experience the fruits of development inputs sown in the first three decades of the independence. The foremost was the decline of social stigma of criminal tribe if not total elimination of the social stigma. They are now relatively free to choose occupations of their choice. They were also accepted by the larger society to pursue livelihood pursuits related to agriculture including vending, trading, agriculture commodities, and some of them could gain certain level of education and formal skills, health care and schooling for children.

The g<sub>4</sub> generation represents a period of globalization. During this period a greater accent and emphasis on universalization of primary education, mother and child health, poverty reduction programmes etc were laid. This period represents a period of hope and achievement. The social restrictions and taboos have become much more liberal and flexible. At least in the arena of public interaction and participation.

The broad trends of occupational distribution during the four generations of Yerukulas under reference is presented in table four. Our data shows that all the Yerukulas during g<sub>1</sub> & g<sub>2</sub> generations were involved in traditional occupations only. The pursuit of traditional occupations started declining from g<sub>3</sub> generation. 42 percent of Yerukulas in g<sub>3</sub> generation were involved in non-traditional occupational pursuits. In other words, 58 percent of the members were found to be adhering to traditional occupational pursuits. Further decline in the involvement of traditional occupations is observed during g<sub>4</sub> generation. Our data reveals that only 21.5 percent of g<sub>4</sub> generation members were involved in traditional occupational pursuits.

The non-traditional occupations represent agriculture labour, cultivation business (trading, vending etc) and modern occupations. Thus our data suggests that the occupational involvement and occupational opportunity structure has opened up during the g<sub>3</sub> generation and has considerably widened during the g<sub>4</sub> generations. In other words the impact of developmental programmes has begun and felt during the g<sub>3</sub> generation. 10.3 percent of g<sub>3</sub> generations members were found to be involved in modern occupations; and this has increased to 51.9 percent among the g<sub>4</sub> generation members. Similarly, 9 percent of the g<sub>3</sub> generation members were found to be involved in the pursuit of the cultivation; where as it has increased to 17.6 percent among the g<sub>4</sub> generation members. The occupational distribution by category across the four generations is presented in table 5.

Our data (table 5) reveals that unlike in the previous generation, g<sub>4</sub> generation members represent all occupational categories.

This trend indicates not only beginning of social inclusion but also the increasing trend of better life chances for Yerukulas.

However, it must be pointed out here that the educational attainments are very low and as such the level of modern occupations (profession, executive, white collar, skilled occupations) are of lower cadres. For instance, the profession represents only school teachers but not medical doctors, scientists, engineers or professor; executive positions represent only police constables but not higher level executives; skilled occupations represent only drivers but not technicians.

On the other hand it must be recognized and stressed that these are achieved positions; and are of secular in nature; and a beginning has been made in countering the social stigma. Further, the dependence on traditional occupations has very much declined.

### Conclusions

Our study shows that Yerukula tribe members of Rayalaseema region were socially excluded on account of social stigma as ex-criminal tribe. The progressive inclusive policies such as repeal of Criminal Tribe Act (1952) and the general developmental policies and programmes during

the last four decades have gradually helped these members to overcome the social stigma. Though the social stigma is not completely erased its

severity has declined. This is evident from their inclusion in various livelihood pursuits from which they were shunned earlier.

**Table 5**  
**Category wise Occupational Distributions**

	<b>G<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>G<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>G<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>G<sub>4</sub></b>
<b>Professional</b>	-	-	4 1.3%	20 19.6%
<b>Executive</b>	-	-	-	10 9.8%
<b>White collar</b>	-	-	2 0.6%	10 9.8%
<b>Skilled</b>	-	-	1 0.3%	5 4.9%
<b>Business</b>	-	-	25 8.3%	5 4.9%
<b>Semi- Skilled</b>	-	-	24 8.0%	8 7.8%
<b>Cultivation</b>	-	-	27 9.0%	18 17.6%
<b>Agriculture Labour</b>	-	-	43 14.3%	4 3.9%
<b>Traditional</b>	300	300	174 58.0%	22 21.5%
<b>Others</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	300	300	300	102

However, this is not to say that the Yerukulas are free from social exclusion. The low or non - existence of better levels of education, modern occupational skills are compelling them to experience social exclusion.

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