CHAPTER VII

CULTURAL PERSONALITY

In the previous chapters, efforts were made to present the socio-economic life of the Yanadi, their world view and the child rearing practices. In this chapter, the cultural personality of the Yanadi with variables influencing in the formation of the personality is discussed.

Yanadi Concept of Harmony

Harmony means a normal and satisfying state of peacefulness and order in the relations of visible and invisible worlds, with self and to each other. For the Yanadi "normal" reflects ongoing life without any disruptions or hindrances physically as well as emotionally. Even starvation is a part of normal life if not forced upon by others. Premarital sex relations for a young Yanadi man and woman is normal so long it is with mutual consent.

The Yanadi is satisfied with the life so long, there is some fruits and roots available to eat and there is a peaceful spouse in the hut. This satisfaction emerges out of freedom that the Yanadi enjoy in the forest of which
they are part and parcel. Natural catastrophies like rain and cyclone do not rueful the Yanadi. On the other hand, they accept it and live with it without disrupting it. It is this reason, that the Yanadi would stay in their huts undisrupted even during the heavy cyclones and gales. The satisfaction is more 'emotional' than a 'material'. They remain satisfied with themselves if they are left alone without being questioned or disturbed.

It is very important for the Yanadi to maintain order between self and beings of visible and invisible worlds. This is done in two ways. First the Yanadi consciously adopt-a-strategy which minimizes any disruption/conflict in their visible world. This they try to achieve through maintaining congenial and compatible relationships with self, family, the band, the non-Yanadi, and the flora and fauna on the island. For keeping a similar order with the invisible world, they continuously take the help from *rankadu* as described in the chapter VI. Almost every day a *rangam* is performed for almost any observed disharmony in the Yanadi life whether loss of life (*Yatabond*), body imbalance or marital maladjustment. The same is achieved through identifying the wrong deeds and correcting through appropriate acts as described in chapter VI. In short this is what has been characterised as concept of harmony and goal of the Yanadi life.
Harmony in the Visible World

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this stage Chinnamaa once again alleged Masthan that he was 'visiting' Chinnammi. Since then, she started showing indifference towards Masthan and was not regular to her household duties and stopped talking to Masthan.

One evening Masthan after return from work asked his wife to give hot water for bath. In reply, Chinnamaa asked Masthan "why did you not take bath in a pond while returning home from work". This clearly showed that she was very unhappy with him and thereby showing her dissatisfaction. Masthan was also dissatisfied with her behaviour and also depressed over hot water issue and said "One should catch hold of the person while sleeping with another woman. What is the use of alleging without concrete evidence". Further he said, "when a wife says so it is as good as not having wife. Husband and wife would talk freely, joke with each other and then only they would be satisfied". After a few days of this incidence, Chinnamaa moved to her older sister's hut in the same settlement and Masthan also joined his parents in Parambakkam. The couple therefore separated instead of leading a disharmonious life.

The couple staying with a band would like to be in harmony with the rest of the couples in the band. When there occurs an incident leading to strained relationships,
the couple either moves the hut to a far away place in the same settlement or leaves the settlement altogether. Thus, it is seen that the Yanadi in order to maintain harmony, maintains not only social distance in terms of interaction but also physical distance in terms of locating their hut.

At Kalavagu, Jayaramaiah (65) was staying. His two married sons Chencheiah and Muththaiah and married daughter — Nagamma, were living very close to him. The huts of these four couples were formed a separate cluster in the settlement. Muththaiah's wife and Nagamma's husband were working in the same work spot. One day when they were carrying palmyra leaves from one place to another Ramaiiah (Nagamma's husband), happened to lift the bundle over the head of the wife of Muththaiah. Nobody was present there at that time. In the evening, she complained to her husband that Ramaiiah tried to make advances in the forest. This resulted in an argument between Muththaiah and Ramaiiah. The disharmony thus created by the strained relationships resulted in the shifting of the hut of Ramaiiah to another settlement and thereby re-establishing harmony.

It is not only the individual who would like to maintain harmony but also the group as a whole. The Yanadi strongly disapprove the presence of such couples
who quite often argue or quarrel. The reaction of the Yanadi in the band was, "we have to send them out of the settlement. It creates disturbance (rachcha) here". This reflects the Yanadi attitude of keeping harmony without quarrels and disturbance.

The Yanadi feel that the disharmony created by one individual or a couple affects the harmony in the life of other couples and the band. Therefore, the Yanadi express great concern when there is a quarrel among couple or if some one threatens to commit suicide. They say "when one does such wrongs, everybody would be held responsible which disturbs the peaceful life in the band".

According to the Yanadi conception, every non-Yanadi is superior to them. Therefore, the Yanadi try to maintain harmony without coming into conflict with them. When the Yanadi see a non-Yanadi, they disappear into the bushes. In front of the non-Yanadi, they stand with folded hands and nod their head to whatever they say. They try to meet the demands of the forest officials and maintain harmony as far as possible. They try to avoid their wrath and thereby abuses by supplying them either fish, honey or firewood, whichever they want, even at the cost of hunger. The same can be illustrated by a case study.
A non-Yanadi took cane cutting contract on the island and engaged the Yanadi for cutting the canes. He also employed an educated Yanadi namely Govindaiah as an assistant. His job was to bring rice from Sullurpeta for distribution and also to keep the accounts and to supervise the work. He was promised a remuneration of Rs. 150/- per month and lured the labourers with higher wages. He told Govindaiah that he would give the total amount after the completion of the work. Govindaiah also thought of taking his entire wages at one time. After the work was completed the contractor shifted the cane to Sullurpeta and took the accounts book from Govindaiah. He paid wages to the labourers at a lower rate than originally promised. When Govindaiah asked for his salary the contractor in turn asked Govindaiah to refund him Rs. 300/- which was paid to him/excess. He further added that he would report to the police if he failed to repay the money soon. Govindaiah in order to maintain harmony kept quiet on the issue without putting up any fight.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officials who came to the island recently, are conceived by the Yanadi as malign beings. Therefore, the Yanadi try to avoid them in order to maintain harmony in their life.
Yanadi also maintain harmony with the flora and fauna of the island. They collect only salubrious food available in the island and avoid insalubrious food. They collect these fruits and roots not more than what is required for a day. When the children or adults go into the forest, they eat as much as they can and return home with empty hands. Their philosophy is "when it is available readily, why should we bring and preserve". They would cut rafters and Palmyra trees not more than what they require for hut construction. They only collect dead wood for use as firewood.

The Yanadi consider themselves as part and parcel of the nature. While describing animals or birds, they describe them like human beings attributing human qualities and quite often imitate them. They like to watch and enjoy the fighting, running and walking of animals. The Yanadi believe that all the animals have had been human beings once upon a time and when behave badly become an animal or bird after death, when Brahma puts them in the wombs of animals or birds. Often they refer and address the animals as human beings. Their pet dogs are named as Rani, Lakshmi, Rangadu and the like.

There exists the knowledge of fishing through poisoning method among the Yanadi. But the Yanadi rarely
practice this method of fishing as they feel, "Why to kill all other small fish also". In other wards they do not want to damage the nature beyond their immediate needs in any circumstances.

Harmony with Invisible World

The antecedents of any physical disharmony in the Yanadi life is associated with the beings of invisible world who are unhappy with some deeds of the Yanadi in the visible world as described in chapter VI. The performance of rangam as mentioned earlier helps in identifying the reasons of disharmony which are quickly corrected by adopting appropriate behaviour or by satisfying or promising appropriate behaviour in the future. In essence the Yanadi plead for forgiveness by putting oneself in an inferior position and by submitting oneself to the mercy of gods and deceased ancestors. In case devils harm them, they go to gods and achieve harmony with their help and intervention. The same can be illustrated by a case study.

Nageiah fell ill without any known reason. Hence rankadu, Jejaiah was requested to perform rangam. On that evening Jejaiah performed rangam. He started praising the gods and requested them to come into his vision. The rangam was conducted to know the reason for sickness of
Nagaiah, his wife's brother. Jejaiah, after an hour, could see the gods - the personal god, the goddess Chenchamma and their deceased ancestors. Jejaiah requested the gods to tell the reason for the sickness of Nagaiah. The gods told that the head life of Nagaiah was caught by a devil at Maulam settlement. Jejaiah told these words from his mouth to Nagaiah. In general, the rankadu acts as medium of communication to convey the feelings between sick person in the visible world and beings of invisible world and vice-versa.

The rankadu requests the gods to catch hold of the devil and free the Yathabondi of Nagaiah. The personal god of Nagaiah, goddess Chenchamma and the deceased ancestors go to the goddess of Maulam, Pokyalama and told that a devil caught hold of the yathabondi of Nagaiah and requests her to help them in searching for it. They searched the entire village and finally caught hold of the devil. They beat the devil and freed the yathabondi of Nagaiah. The gods then told that they have freed the yathabondi of Nagaiah and he would recover.

Chengaih, one night, conducted rangam to know the cause and cure for Sesaiah's stomachache. As usual he praised the personal god of Sesaiah, Chenchamma and the deceased ancestors of Sesaiah. When they appeared
to him, he requested them to tell the reason for Seshaih's stomachache. The gods told that Seshaih had suffered stomachache because he ate kami vaathuvulu, which did not suit him. In other words, the stomachache originated due to biological imbalance and hence the gods suggested the rankadu to use the herbal medicine. Therefore, Seshaih used the herbal medicine and achieved biological harmony in the body.

Sarojamama (14) an unmarried girl residing in B.N. Road settlement once suffered with tooth-ache and her cheek swelled. When the pain became severe, she was admitted in the hospital. But she came back from the hospital before it was cured. Next day her parents took her to Penubakam settlement, where Kristaih conducted rangam. In the rangam, it was found her deceased ancestor - Father's mother, was angry with Sarojamama as she was beaten once by her father and therefore, she wanted to take her to the invisible world.

One day, Sarojamama's father came home in drunken state and asked his wife for food. She asked Sarojamama to serve him food. It was late and he was hungry and also tired since he had walked back from a village on the mainland. Sarojamama did not comply with her mother's request. In drunken state, Sarojamama/beaten. The rankadu
had to passify the deceased grandmother of Sarojamma saying that the father of Sarojamma would not repeat it in future and she should pardon them and save Sarojamma. Finally she agreed and said that Sarojamma would recover from the pain soon.

The three above descriptions depict the disharmony of Yanadi because of devils, biological upset and beating of the child. The Yanadi therefore tried to bring the harmony with the help of rankadu. In each of the three case studies presented, the effort was made by the rankadu to help the Yanadi to achieve harmony in the visible world. This was achieved by accepting the verdicts of the gods and through their help. The importance lies in the efforts to bring about harmony and not so much the actual results achieved through the technique. This effort is significantly associated with the life of the adult Yanadi who seek harmony in their life at any cost. It is in this perspective that the Yanadi cultural personality would be described.

Yanadi Cultural Personality

The Yanadi adult personality is characterised by a strong sense of individualism in the band and submissiveness to all superior beings of visible and invisible worlds outside the band. These two personality characteristics are commonly observed among the adult Yanadi of the island.
In the light of the analysis presented in Chapter VI and VII and the Yanadi's quest for harmony described earlier seems to help in creating individualism and submissiveness. The semi-nomadic life of food gathering, fishing and hunting and wage labour in the tropical climate of Srikakulam seemed to have contributed in the development of such personality characteristics as an adaptive mechanism for survival in the island.

The Yanadi Individualism

In order to understand the Yanadi individualism, it would be important to describe the Yanadi life cycle and identify the variables that are influencing the personality. As indicated in chapter IV as soon as the Yanadi gets married, the couple builds a new hut and live independently. No matter how a hut is acquired, couple starts a 'neolocal' residence. The individual possessions even after acquiring the new status continue to be individually owned and used by them. Even other relatives like mother and father are expected to take permission for using the implements.

The Yanadi enjoy and have longings for companionship. It is this 'natural' desire of companionship that keeps the couple together in which equality and mutual liking are binding forces. Respect and sense of equality
is expressed by respecting each other's wishes and mutual consultation on topics of common interest. More so, each one is expected to perform his/her defined role, amicably and without grudges. When the husband learns that his wife has developed interest in another man, he even weeps and requests her to remain with him. This may be due to the disadvantageous position where he cannot get another woman easily because of the more number of males among the Yanadi. The wife, on the other hand, would act indifferently when she comes to know that her husband has developed liking for another woman. In either case, seldom that the man would beat or physically assault the wife or wife would be aggressive towards her husband. Incidents of beating, physical assault, outbursts of arguments and abuses are heard only when the Yanadi are in drunken state, which is not common.

When the Yanadi commit mistake or take loan from somebody, they are expected to be answerable individually. Ponniah (12) was working in Forestry and Horticulture Section as a casual labourer. He saved Rs.100/- and gave it to his parents. His parents went to Sullurpeta and purchased a brass pitcher for Rs.75/- and had the name of Ponnaiah engraved on it. They spent the rest of the money on provisions and liquor.
Jayaramaiah, father of Ponnaiah, had borrowed Rs. 30/- from Muniswami. One day Muniswami while leaving for work asked his wife Varadamma to demand the refund of the loan from Jayaramaiah. When she asked to return the money Jayaramaiah refused to pay her. Jayaramaiah said he has borrowed the money from Muniswami and not from her. He further argued that since she was not working and earning for the family and the money was earned by Muniswami alone, she has no right to ask for it. Varadamma shouted that she would take away the new pitcher. Immediately, Jayaramaiah's wife Vekatama told that pitcher belongs to Ponnaiah and not to Jayaramaiah as it was brought from the savings of Ponnaiah. Therefore, he has no right to give the pitcher to her. Further, they have lent money to Jayaramaiah, and so it has to be taken back from him only. Ponnaiah who was present also added that the pitcher was purchased out of his savings and so he shall not give it to anybody, even to his father.

This case study reflects the Yanadi attitude towards their individual possessions and how they maintain their individualism.

Yanadi individual makes all decisions - marital, familial, economic and religious including the choice of
a band in which he/she wants to live. In the spouses selection, the individual's decision is final. The Yanadi also resort to elopement if the parents of the boy or the girl show unwillingness for their marriage. In Maulam, Ravanaiah had a daughter by name Kristamma (11). In order to marry her, Mangaiah (25) was staying with them. He was supporting the family of Ravanaiah by his earnings when Ravanaiah had no work. After few months, Kristamma attained puberty. Mangaiah spend nearly Rs.200/- on the puberty ceremony of Kristamma. After that they started staying together in a separate hut. But after four months, Kristamma developed interest towards another Yanadi by name Ratnaiah, who was staying at the same settlement. Since then Kristamma was irregular to work. She was not going along with Mangaiah for collection of forest food, fishing and the like. Therefore, Mangaiah felt unhappy and told this to his father-in-law and who in turn asked Kristamma to remain with her husband. Kristamma said "I am ready even to die rather than living with my husband". She then left Mangaiah and joined Ratnaiah. Her decision to do so was accepted by every one though Mangaiah became a loser in the process. In spite of this, he had to accept the separation. This case study reflects that there is an inequality between the sexes and both maintain a very strong sense of individualism.
The Yanadi individualism is also reflected the way they approach for work either to a contractor or to a SHAR official. Each couple would approach for work separately. The Yanadi strictly confine to their own affairs and seldom a couple or an individual interferes in other's affairs. This is well reflected in their interaction with the non-Yanadi. A few Yanadi were working with public health section of SHAR. The public health officials while making attendance, ask the Yanadi about the persons who were absent on that particular day. The Yanadi replied "we do not know". The public health official was surprised on this answer as he expected that they should know about other Yanadi in their settlement.

The Yanadi try to keep themselves aloof when two persons quarrel. Even if they are present when inquired by others would indicates no knowledge of the incidence.

The Yanadi who have goats also distribute them among the family members. When they sell a goat, the money has to be spent according to the likes and dislikes of the person to whom the goat belongs. Though the parents are the persons who spend the money for family expenditure, that is done on the concurrence of the individual. The parents do not sell the goats of their children against to their wishes.
In the religious domain the notion of having an individual god, is fairly unique among the Yanadi. As described in Chapter VI each Yanadi has a personal god who is associated with the person from the birth until death. This personal god plays the role of an elder who provides love to the child who cares well but chides and punishes when the child misbehaves. The god's behaviour includes not being beaten by any one and not to beat others. The Yanadi are conscious that he/she should not annoy his/her personal god lest that affect his physical being a high reliance on the invisible world.

Efforts to generate such a sense of individualism among the Yanadi begins at an early age. The Yanadi strongly disapprove kissing of the infants by others. When the child attains the stage of crawling, he/she sucks the mother's breast as and when chooses to do so. The mother neither resists nor avoids the child in doing so. The child is taken along when the mother goes to work. The child is left himself/herself to his/her own devices while the mother is working. The child is left at the hut under the care of the elder siblings when the child attains the walking stage or when the child is weaned away. But the Yanadi make no conscious efforts to wean the children in most cases.
When a child is left at the hut the elder siblings also leave him/her on their own as they play and move around in the forest. Whenever the child cries they give them food left at home. The children after three years of age are offered with food in a plate and left on their own to eat. The child is expected to clean the plate and hands and keep the plate in the hut. The parents strongly disapprove of children going in the others huts and touch their belongings. The children of about five years slowly increases their interaction with their surroundings. The parents raise no objection about their movements. Since then they go for fruit collection, fishing, hunting by themselves. The children go in groups of four or five.

The Yanadi child is given complete freedom till eight years of age. After that the Yanadi parents expect the male children to help them in collecting fish and tubers and the female children to help mother in cooking and bringing water. But the parents apply no force upon them to comply with their instructions. They take very lightly even when they do not conform to their demands. The children are given complete freedom to sleep wherever they want. The children when are chided leave their parents and join their mother's brother or sister's husband. The Yanadi parents therefore try to avoid chiding their children. This type of child rearing allow the children
to develop their own devices and a sense of individualism.

The Yanadi Submissiveness

The Yanadi while within the band manifest a strong sense of individualism, but while outside the band especially with the non-Yanadi they are quiet and submissive. It is commonly observed that a Yanadi stands very quietly keeping his head down in front of a non-Yanadi in almost all circumstances. He gives an impression of indifference, aloofness and listens all the instructions without question. The only expression heard from a Yanadi on such occasions is 'Sar' (Sir) or silently nodding the head in affirmation. However, when the Yanadi are accused of irregularity and lack of understanding they become completely quiet, dum-foud and try to hide their extreme sense of embarrassment and indignation which is difficult for a casual observer to discern. Their facial expressions change reflecting their hurt pride, beyond any redemption, which also expresses sense of helplessness. It is this sense of helplessness which leads to submissiveness of self to the malign and benign beings of visible and invisible worlds.

In the visible world, the Yanadi feel so helpless that they would submit to the non-Yanadi to any extent even
If the non-Yanadi try to force their woman for sexual pleasure. Such incidents are not uncommon before and after the takeover of the island. In the recent past, the Central Industrial Security Guards tried to force Yanadi women for sexual pleasure on three occasions. The Yanadi could do nothing but kept quiet. The Yanadi express their dissatisfaction about such incidents only under intoxication. The outbursts during intoxication, like "they (CISF) have come here to copulate with our wives", reveal this dissatisfaction.

The following case illustrates the Yanadi reaction about the ill-treatment of a Yanadi woman by a non-Yanadi contractor.

Maremma (20) and her husband Doraswamy (24) were working with a contractor by name Kondaiah who also lived in the same settlement. Doraswamy was incharge of the labourers working with the contractor. One day, Kondaiah asked Maremma to come to his hut and take the leftover cooked rice. But she did not go. The same afternoon, when Maremma was returning to her hut, Kondaiah under intoxication approached her, and caught hold of her hand. He asked her to lie with him. He told "I have sent my wife home. You should sleep with me till she comes". He closed her mouth with his towel and put her head under
his armpit. Mareemma tried to escape. In the struggle, Kondaiah tore her saree. Somehow she could come out of his grip and escape. In the evening, Mareemma told to her husband about the incident. Dossawamy became angry and went along with Mareemma's sister's husband, to the hut of Kondaiah to beat him. But the door was found locked. The Yanadi deplored, that 'Kondaiah was like a father to them since he provided food, but he tried to spoil his daughter'. As the non-Yanadi contractors are conceived as superior, the Yanadi could do nothing except stop going to work for him for a few days.

Thus, in the visible world the Yanadi because of their helplessness submit to the non-Yanadi. In the invisible world also because of the same reason and to make their gods and deceased ancestors happy, they adopt the same submissiveness. The following case study describes how Yanadi submits himself to the gods even at the cost of divorcing his wife.

Kannaiah (35) after his wife's death was staying with his elder brother. In the same settlement close to their hut, there lived a widow by name Ravanamma (26). One day Ravanamma's brothers offered a drink of arrack to Kannaiah's brother and asked him to ask Kannaiah to
*live* with Ravanamma. Kannaiah accepted his brother's advice and since then both Kannaiah and Ravanamma were staying together. After two weeks Kannaiah fell sick and he got *rangam* conducted by one of his relatives. It was divulged in *rangam* that the personal god of Kannaiah was not happy about his union with Ravanamma. But they could not tell why the god was unhappy. So, Kannaiah informed this to his elder brother. Kannaiah also told Ravanamma that he would not like to stay with her and asked her to leave his hut. But the reason given was that she interfered unnecessarily in the matters of others. Accordingly Ravanamma left him and began to stay with her brother.

When a Yanadi is humiliated by others or if he feels humiliated by any incident he commits suicide. This is the extreme form of submissiveness the Yanadi show when he feels that there is no other salvation to maintain harmony with the visible world. Only one such incident occurred during the field work. According to elderly Yanadi such incidents were not uncommon in the past. Some of the Yanadi working with the forest department tried to join the contractors. In such cases, the mestry who was employed by the forest department to supervise the Yanadi labour, brought them back forcibly. One or two Yanadi in such a situation committed suicide. The Yanadi parents
express their hesitation to chide their adult sons and daughters when they commit mistakes, because they think that they might commit suicide. Here is a case to elaborate the fact.

Tupakula Pattabbi was born in Chenugaripalem in the island. His father and mother died when he was in early childhood. He had been living with his father's brother. When he attained late childhood he started going to work. He had been moving with his father's brother according to the availability of contract work in the island. When he attained adulthood he started working independently. But he had been eating food in the hut of his father's brother. While he was working with a contractor near Kalavagu settlement he happened to see Pottemma and he wanted to marry her. She also liked him and therefore they started living together.

After some time, the island was evacuated and Pattabbi was also given compensation. He moved to a village, Pandaram, adjoining to the island on the mainland. They spent the money quickly. After two months, he and his wife together got wood cutting work there. When the contract work was over they had no other work. When Pattabbi heard from his relatives that there was contract work in the island he moved to the island.
He is a calm and quiet and unconcerned with others. He stays in his hut when he has no work. He always goes with his wife and four children, either for food collection or contract work. He participates in the malam. He sings and dances well. The residents of the settlement also like Pattabbi as he is quiet and does not interfere in others' matters.

Once Pattabbi had no work for a week and therefore they had to borrow rice from his wife's father. They were supplementing it with the tubers and roots collected from the forest. The rice was given to the children and the wife and husband were satisfied with the roots. When the rice exhausted after three days, they had to entirely depend on the tubers. One day he went to a contractor and got work and also little advance payment. By noon he returned home purchasing rice. Everybody was hungry and so he asked his wife to cook the food right away. But she said "it is warm outside and so cannot cook and asked him to wait till evening". Pattabbi felt insulted by his wife's behaviour. So he calmly went to a nearby bush and ate a poisonous tuber.

From there he went to one of his father's brother's daughter and said "You come to my hut in the evening. I will give you food. Afterwards, I may not give anything to you".
Sira could not understand the underlying meaning of his words and thought he was under intoxication. In the night, he was down with pain in the stomach and he was admitted in the hospital in the morning where he died.

In sum, the ideal goal of the Yanadi in life is to maintain harmony with the man, nature and god. Therefore the Yanadi interaction with the beings of both the visible and invisible world, reflect their harmony. In order to achieve this cherished goal, the Yanadi personality has got two characteristics - individualism and submissiveness. While interacting with his own men, he shows a sense of individualism and while interacting with the superiors like non-Yanadi of visible world and the gods, devils and deceased ancestors, he shows a sense of submissiveness. This personality facilitates the survival of the Yanadi.