CHAPTER III

THE FIELD WORK

In the earlier chapter an attempt was made to describe the habitat of the Yanadi. In this chapter efforts will be made to describe the experiences gained during the field work among the Yanadi of Sriharikota.

Sriharikota was taken over by the Indian Space Research Organisation for space research purposes in 1970 and SHAR project was initiated the very year. The barrier of relative isolation of the island was broken as a road was constructed to connect the island with the mainland in the same year. The space research necessitated the evacuation of all the island population. So they were rehabilitated on the mainland. Theoretically, this process turned Sriharikota into an uninhabited place. After the take over of the island a new population arrived on the island. They were scientists, engineers and technical and auxiliary staff to support the space research programme. In reality, a good number of island population continued to live in Sriharikota. It is because those who had left the island earlier returned to Sriharikota and continued to live unauthorized in different parts of the island. This necessitated to start the
"Yanadi Action Research Project" by Indian Space Research Organisation in 1975 to: (a) rehabilitate the Yanadi and (b) develop plans for the integration of the Yanadi into the technical plans and future objectives of Indian Space Research Organisation. For this purpose two anthropologists worked in the island for a period of five years, and the researcher was one among them. The thesis is based on the data collected during the project period.

Field Work

The researcher worked on the Yanadi Action Research Project in a 'dual' capacity. First, he had to study the culture of the Yanadi and secondly, suggest developmental programmes for the upliftment of the Yanadi and also help in the implementation.

The researcher worked in the project from November 11, 1976 to June 30, 1981. He lived with the Yanadi as a participant observer for about twenty-two months. Later he worked for about nineteen months in the island, away from the Yanadi settlement, for implementing the action programme of the project and another fifteen months out of the island mostly working with the project director.
Twenty two months spent in the Yanadi settlements as participant observer can be divided into three phases. The first phase of the field work was for six months from December, 1976 to June 1977; the second phase for eight months in between July 1977 to March 1978 and another eight months in between October 1978 to July 1979 formed the third phase of the field work.

For nineteen months the researcher lived on the island and away from the Yanadi settlements. During this period he commuted between the Yanadi settlements and government offices, to meet different officials either to discuss or to help in the programme implementation. Sometimes, the researcher had to go to Nellore to meet the state tribal welfare officials; to Sullurpet, quite often to meet the block development officials to get their help in the implementation of state government developmental schemes. The researcher had to stay at Ahmedabad for fifteen months, with the project director, for consultation, discussion and for attending seminars and conferences and writing progress reports.

Entering the Field

The researcher reached Sriharikota on December 13, 1976. He was put up in SHAR hostel temporarily and
it is here he met two young Yanadi for the first time.
For this casual first look these two looked very much
like non-Yanadi of the island and the Yanadi of
mainland where he conducted field work earlier (Suri
Reddy () 1974). During the first month, the time was
spent in visiting the Yanadi settlements to build up
rapport, collecting census and genealogies. The Yanadi
settlements were scattered all over the island ranging
from 2 kilometers to 14 kilometers of distance from
researcher's camp (See Map-3). He used the vehicle of
the Forest Officials of SHAR centre to reach these
settlements.

The researcher first visited Pitcharigunta, a
settlement which was situated on southern side of the
island, near the sea coast. There he saw rectangular
shaped huts at the entrance, which belonged to non-Yanadi.
Walking further into the settlement he saw a few circular
and dome shaped Yanadi huts. The Yanadi were away from
their homes and was told by the non-Yanadi that the
Yanadi had gone out for work and to collect tubers.
Then he visited another settlement commonly referred as
B.N. Road settlement, situated near the northern coast
of the island. It consisted of seven huts on sand
mound. Two women and a grown up girl were sitting on
the bare sand in front of a hut. The forest officials introduced the researcher to them, saying that "He has come here to stay with you and look after your welfare."

The researcher visited Kothachenu Yanadi settlement next day, situated near the western edge of the island and two kilometers away from his camp. He found three Yanadi households at the farthest end of the settlement. After further walk more than a dozen Yanadi huts were visible in the midst of the forest. Maulam, another Yanadi settlement, could not be approached as it was marooned with rainwater. On way back he saw a few Yanadi of Maulam who were returning home after day's work. The researcher saw all the Yanadi in bare minimum clothing. All his earlier assumptions that they look like mainland Yanadi, shattered down at the sight of lean and dark Yanadi with only loin cloth covering their genitals and with uncut curly hair and beard. They held in their hands a knife and an aluminium container for carrying food for noon.

The Yanadi settlement Solladararuwa, was situated near the north coast of the island, when the researcher visited this settlement he saw a Yanadi youth standing
at a hut, hesitating whether to come or not. The researcher waved at him to come and on coming asked him why he was not gone for work. He told that "his body is not good" meaning that he is not feeling well. After a few days accompanied by a Yanadi boy of Keepakam, the researcher visited Penubakam Yanadi settlement. The settlement was inside thick forest and the footpath under knee deep water here and there. The Yanadi were very much pleased by the visit of the researcher and told him that so far nobody had ever visited them to ask about their welfare.

One evening, the researcher went to see Kama-lapelem settlement by bicycle. It was four kilometers away from the camp towards south of the island. Later he could not ride the bicycle and so kept it on the road side and walked into the forest along a footpath. The researcher was told by the Yanadi at the camp that it takes hardly five minutes from the road to reach this settlement. But even after a walk of 15 minutes, it could not be located. He could not see the huts which were low and covered with the forest growth. However, after a search for half an hour, he could reach the settlement. The Kalavagu settlement was
situaté in the midst of thick forest also marooned by rain water and it could be approached only after two weeks.

**Enumerating the Yanadi**

The researcher started taking census and genealogies after making the initial contact with the Yanadi. For this purpose, the Yanadi could be contacted only during the evening time. Since the Yanadi have no form of lighting their huts the torch light was used for filling the census schedule. The response was poor as the Yanadi felt exhausted after a day long labour and were busy with cooking and eating. These problems could be minimised by taking census and genealogies during those days, on which Yanadi had no work. The collection of census and genealogies, gave the researcher opportunity to know the name of every Yanadi and their network of relationships. One major problem was that while the census was taken the Yanadi shifted from one settlement to another which is quite common among them. Hence, serious efforts were made to minimise duplication and at the same time omission of any individual. During this period it was decided to stay in the B N Road settlement having that as a base for conducting the study as at
that time the largest number of Yanadi were living there. At the same time, it was possible to visit other settlements from here. But by the time the census was completed a large number of Yanadi had already moved out from B N Road. However, the researcher continued to live there and visited other settlements to collect data. After a month, the entire Solindaruvu settlement shifted to B N Road settlement thereby the Yanadi population increased here and it further increased when the Mulas settlement also shifted here due to a death in the settlement.

The table-8 provides the details of the Yanadi population on the island enumerated in January 1977. It shows there were 810 Yanadi distributed in 134 families. The analysis of this table clearly indicates higher male population over female among the Yanadi. According to the observations made during the field work, it can be attributed to the less female birth rate. However, it needs deep and longitudinal investigation.
TABLE 5

SETTLEMENT-WISE YANADI POPULATION

IN SRIHARIKOTA BY SEX DURING 1977*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Settlement</th>
<th>Number of Male</th>
<th>Number of Female</th>
<th>Total of Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>B B Road</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Keepakani</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kalavaga</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Karnalapalem</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mullan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Penubekam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pitcharigunta</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Solladamavu</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Census collected by the researchers in 1977.

The table-9 provides the age-wise distribution of Yanadi by sex. It shows that the Yanadi in between 0-14 and 45 and above age groups together constitute nearly fifty per cent of the total population. The table-10 gives the marital distribution of the Yanadi. It shows that more than fifty per cent of the Yanadi are married.
### TABLE 9

**AGE STRUCTURE OF THE YANADI POPULATION IN SHIMARIKOTA DURING 1977**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Settlement</th>
<th>0 - 14</th>
<th>15 - 44</th>
<th>45 &amp; above</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>B. N Road</td>
<td>9 7</td>
<td>10 8</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kespakam</td>
<td>16 11</td>
<td>22 20</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kalavagu</td>
<td>16 17</td>
<td>15 14</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kamarapalum</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>7 6</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Maulam</td>
<td>23 12</td>
<td>26 26</td>
<td>8 4</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Panubakam</td>
<td>13 7</td>
<td>9 13</td>
<td>9 5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pitchariguanta</td>
<td>20 13</td>
<td>15 14</td>
<td>4 2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Solladaruvu</td>
<td>19 20</td>
<td>24 25</td>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 128 89 127 126 34 21 519

* Collected by the researchers in 1977.*
TABLE 10

MARITAL STATUS OF THE YASADI POPULATION
IN SHIVANIKOTA DURING 1977*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Settlement</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Widow/Divorced</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B N Road</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Keempakam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kalavagad</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kambala-palem</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maulan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Penubakam</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pitchari-ganta</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Solladaruvu</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Collected by the researchers in 1977.
By the time the census was completed it was possible to know and address every Yanadi by his/her name. Generally non-Yanadi labourers and officials do not address Yanadi by their name since they consider the Yanadi to be inferior. Addressing them by first name generated a sense of equality between the Yanadi and researcher. He also sat on the sand with them when he visited their huts. The researcher fondled their infants and admired them. He enquired about their difficulties and heard them sympathetically. Their ideas and activities were not criticized on their face the way the Officials did. He entered into their huts and looked into their pots and utensils to see if they had food for the day. Yanadi felt very happy when old women and men were addressed by their kinship terms like grandmother (avva) and grandfather (tata) respectfully. They were appreciated while singing their tribal songs and asked to repeat. They felt more happy to repeat the song whenever it was asked for. All these helped the adults and children to feel close and friendly with the researcher.

**Participant Observation**

One month after researcher’s arrival on the island he moved into one of the Yanadi settlements by
name B N Road settlement; to live there. The researcher was provided with a small, single roomed, rectangular shaped but which was three feet height side-wise and about 10 feet in the centre, roofed with palm leaf leaves and a wooden door. The floor was made of concrete. It had a window in the back side. A camp cot, a bed, a tape recorder, a camera, note books, pair of clothes, utensils, a primas stove and provisions formed part of his luggage. This luggage was transported by jeep to the settlement. Children and women who gathered at the hut were surprised to see the amount of luggage for a single person. In the evening, after the seals, an old Yanadi visited him at the hut. He was soon followed by others. They were hesitant to sit till they were asked to do so. On the initiation of the researcher they started the conversation. Their first question was "what have you done for food? We see no hearth and fire". When told the food was cooked on Kerowene stove, they were surprised to hear that. By next morning news about the stove spread to others and both men and women came and started peeping through the window at the functioning of the wonder stove.

First Phase: During the first phase of the field work the researcher's emphasis was to collect the ethnography
of Yanadi. A guideline was prepared before coming to the field, with topics to be covered and areas to be investigated. It included the traditional anthropological topics like marriage, kinship, family, political organisation, economic organisation and religion. The day-to-day observations and interviews were recorded on separate notes.

At first the Yanadi seldom talked to the researcher voluntarily and also rarely visited his hut. In the beginning the researcher thought they were indifferent towards him. But later on, it was learnt that it was their 'cultural trait'. So the researcher himself visited them at their respective huts and initiated conversation. He observed that the Yanadi could not give sufficient information on any particular aspect of their culture during the formal interviews. However, such information could be easily gathered while participating in their socio-cultural events. Thus, gradually the researcher realised that the field work would have to be based more on participant observation than on formal interviews. The researcher therefore, attached the greatest importance to regularly attending events in every aspect of their life. The researcher
found participating in their day-to-day activities and talking with them informally to clarify the doubts, helped a lot.

The day starts for Yanadi with the rooster of cocks or budapitta (a local bird). The sounds of birds are confirmed against the position of a star referred to as dawning star (thellavāru chukka). Immediately the women-folk get up and start cooking food for the day. After eating food both men and women leave for work. Therefore, the researcher had to adjust to their time schedule. Otherwise they would leave the settlement by the time the researcher would wake up and finish his morning ablutions. The researcher joined the Yanadi and observed their morning activities and also conversed with those who were found free. During winter mornings men, children and occasionally women, gathered around fire to warm themselves. The participation in these gatherings facilitated in knowing their experiences about hunting, fishing and food gathering and encounters with the non-Yanadi. This type of gathering also helped in observing their gay and free life.

The researcher walked with the Yanadi who went
for work, This helped him in understanding their way of working. It also gave him a good opportunity to observe their behaviour in presence of the non-Yanadi and officials, the nature of relationship between the Yanadi and their employers. While returning to the settlement, the discussions with the Yanadi revealed their feelings about their employers and their behaviour, which in turn reflected the Yanadi cultural values.

In the settlement, the researcher spent most of the time with children and adolescent boys and girls. He observed interaction among themselves extensively. He also participated in their forest food collection activities, hunting of rats, squirrels, varans and also fishing. He thus, could observe their techniques and methods of food collection, fishing and hunting. He was fascinated by their ability to recognise the footprints of the animals and using this knowledge in hunting. While moving in the forest with them and on coming to a particular place, he heard many of their accounts about their past life. Their narration was much related to the places rather than time.

After the day's work the Yanadi returned to the settlement in the evening. As they come, especially women,
bring firewood with them, men come with fish in their hand and fishing trap (otha) on their shoulder. On their arrival the Yanadi become busy with a few taking bath and others in cutting and cleaning fish.

The researcher sitting at the hut observed the women cooking the food and later their behaviour, while serving it to various household members and eating it. This information could not have been collected otherwise. The adult Yanadi especially the married go to sleep soon after their meals in the night since they will be tired and again they have to get up early in the morning.

However, the children and adolescents stayed awake till late in the night playing games and singing songs. The researcher joined them which helped him to understand their games and behaviour. After the games the children went to their respective huts and a few children and adolescents gathered in a separate hut to sleep. The researcher also sometimes, slept along with them, heard them singing folk songs and exchange riddles. It was a good opportunity to record their folk songs and riddles.
Often one or two adolescent boys and a few children, slept along with the researcher in his hut. During the conversation at this time they used to talk about their knowledge of the forest and its different locations; their beliefs regarding the gods, devils and their deceased ancestors. Sometimes they also narrated their sexual experiences. They were quite helpful to the researcher in collecting information on divorce, remarriage and domestic quarrels which were generally concealed by their elders.

In spite of the researcher's close interaction with the group, the Yanadi women were less communicative with him than men. He could gain the confidence of a few elderly women and adolescent girls. They often gathered at the researcher's hut whenever they were free. He also used to go along with them when they were out for collecting firewood and wild fruits in the surrounding forest. They were free and frank with the researcher and talked with him about every aspect of their life. Though the married women changed their relation with him later, major source of information on conception, pregnancy, delivery and other details related to women were collected from the older women folk.

\[ \text{\textcopyright 1581} \]
The researcher was a participant observer in many of fishing expeditions of the Yanadi. He observed how the Yanadi fish with different implements and teach their children the art of fishing. Apart from enjoying the trip the children helped their parents in carrying the palmyra baskets and collecting fish caught by their parents. The researcher observed how they catch the rabbits during rainy season, when the low lying areas were flooded. He also accompanied the Yanadi in their honey collecting expeditions. During such trips the Yanadi revealed their knowledge about the flora and fauna, how they utilise it for their benefit and so on. This helped him in collecting the data on their economic life.

The researcher participated in their life cycle ceremonies such as puberty, marriage, postnatal and post funeral and noted how they performed these ceremonies and the roles played by different kin. The Yanadi were rather very happy to receive the researcher who was though an outsider. On these occasions country liquor was liberally consumed by the Yanadi and which broke inhibitions and made the Yanadi to come out and talk freely with him. He used all these occasions to the maximum extent to get information, which otherwise could have not been collected.
Whenever Yanadi were in festive or happy mood, the adolescents and adults start a musical, song and dance performance locally known as malam, after their evening meal and participated by everyone irrespective of the age and sex. It was the only entertainment activity they have at group level. The researcher also participated in them and observed their behaviour and heard their conversations. The theme of their conversation and action mostly revolved only around sex.

The Yanadi visited the researcher's hut when they had a complaint to make, to seek help, and a quarrel to settle. The investigations into their quarrels between wife and husband, neighbours revealed that they occurred regarding marriage, divorce and the like. This gave him a good understanding of their values.

Second Phase: The second phase of the field work coincided with the reorganisation of eight Yanadi settlements into Kothanchenu and new Ponubakam by SAR authorities. The researcher followed the Yanadi to the new Ponubakam and started living there with them in a newly constructed, brick walled room. The Yanadi who
lived in B N Road, Solladaruvu, and Penubakam shifted
to the new Penubakam and those who were in Pitcharigunta,
Karnalapalem and Keepakam shifted to Kothachenu. Therefore,
the new Penubakam consisted of 350 Yanadi with 91
families. During the second and third phases of field
work the researcher lived in new Penubakam and visited the
second settlement, Kothachenu from time to time.

After the six month’s first phase of field work,
the researcher could only come out with an ‘impression-
istic’ view of Yanadi culture. During the first phase
he was in a hurry to collect the data on their urgent
socio-economic and other problems. The inter-relation
of all these areas were not thought of. The data
therefore could not answer many questions like: why the
Yanadi conduct rangam for each and every ailment? What
is his characteristic outlook towards the world? In
other words, what is his world view? In a broader sense,
there was a necessity to understand Yanadi way of thinking
to understand all these questions. With all these
questions in mind the second phase of field work was
started from July 1977, which lasted for another eight
months.

In the first phase of field work, the researcher
could know what is there in Yanadi culture. During the second phase he started knowing why it is there. Therefore, the field research concerned with critically examining all of their cultural elements, beliefs, their actions and situations. As a participant observer, the researcher became a participant questioner. The researcher questioned the Yanadi with such questions as why they do so? Why they behave so? and why they think so?

In the beginning, rangam was taken casually by the researcher. Later when it was observed that on an average, there was a rangam conducted by some one every day, this aroused the curiosity of the researcher to investigate deep into it. The focused informal interviews and observations of rangam helped him to understand the entire belief system of the Yanadi and how their way of life centres round the rangam and thereby their cultural behaviour. This in turn helped him to know their world view and its influence on their behaviour.

Further probes into their social organisation revealed many important aspects such as the dichotomous division of their relatives into dāvādulu and saṃbāndulu and their role in the entire fabric of social relations.
The participation of the researcher and critical analysis of social occasions and the social relations existing between different relatives gave an insight into their social organisation.

Third Phase: As indicated earlier, the researcher lived in the new Ponubakam during the third phase of field work which started in October 1973 and lasted for nearly eight months. In this phase the researcher concentrated on the child-rearing practices of Yanadi. Most of the time was spent in observing the children in different natural settings, while at play, fishing, food gathering, eating food and during ceremonies and *salam*.

The researcher informally interviewed the Yanadi parents to know how they divide the human life into different periods and similarly the childhood and their beliefs related to children. The researcher interviewed the mothers to understand their motivations to train the children in a particular way during a particular situation. It was observed that mostly the children acquire the skills and the knowledge through imitation and observation of the actual settings. The researcher was attentive "to socially patterned acts,"
thoughts, feelings..." (Freilich 1970:274) and their behaviour.

An attempt was made to collect the life histories. But researcher could collect only short life histories which mostly reflect their semi-nomadic nature and their economic life.

This continuous close interaction and participant observation gave the researcher a clear understanding of the Yanadi culture, their child rearing practices and major personality traits.

In this chapter the field work and the experiences gained during the data collection has been described. Data thus collected will be analysed in the following chapters.