

Research Article

Jangam: An Indigenous And Nomadic Community Of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract:

Jangamas are the people who propagate the *Shaivaite* cult and act as priests for performing religious rites. They also propagate the miracles and powers of Lord Shiva to the lay people. These people are spread in both the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana of Indian union. The people of the community move in small bands from place to place by putting up typical tents on the outskirts of the villages and at the inns constructed by the village panchayats. In most of the cases they beg food from the households in the villages. Hunting and making of palm leaf mats was the main avocation. Decreasing of forest cover, urbanization and invention of plastic goods led some of the community people to shift to hawking plastic pitchers. Along with the hunting and mat making they also go for the foretelling in different ways. Some go for foretelling with parrot, some with palm *grandas* (*taLLA patra grandas*), some for alms collecting and some for blowing the *coanch* in front of every house of the rested village. The street vending was a recent phenomenon. Since they had experience to sell leaf mats on the streets, they could easily adopt to vending plastic utensils. Recently they also adopted the profession of selling balloons for money and for hairs. The community practices its own set of rules for marriages, divorce and settlement of marital disputes.

Introduction

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villages. Hunting and making of palm leaf mats was the main avocation. Decreasing of forest cover, urbanization and invention of plastic goods led some of the community people to shift to hawking plastic pitchers. Along with the hunting and mat making they also go for the foretelling in different ways. Some go for foretelling with parrot, some with palm *grandas* (*taLLA patra grandas*), some for alms collecting and some for blowing the *coanch* in front of every house of the rested village. The street vending was a recent phenomenon. Since they had experience to sell leaf mats on the streets, they could easily adopt to vending plastic utensils. Recently they also adopted the profession of selling balloons for money and for hairs. The community practices its own set of rules for marriages, divorce and settlement of marital disputes.

Geographical distribution and census:

These people are spread in both the Telugu states viz. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. According to 2011 census, the population of *Budaga* and *Beda Jangamas* in both the states is 16,119 population. These people are spread in all the districts of Andhra Pradesh Telangana in small bands. Most of the population in Andhra Pradesh concentrated in Guntur and Rayalaseema. In Guntur these people are spread in Sattenapalli, Piduguralla, Kuchipudi, Nagaram (repalle), Bellam konda, Guruvu palem (Tenali), Thullur and Rayapudi (Amaaravati), Gollapudi (vijayavada), Gurajala, Saduluru and venigal of Andhrapradesh. In Telangana Hyderabad Medak and Mehabubnagar districts.

Methodology

For the study Amravati the new capital of Andhra Pradesh is selected and Hyderabad from Telangana are selected. Sreenu Jangam and Rajamallu Jangam are the people who have given the data for the study. Along with them the other community members are also participated in the study. Lingua and SPPEL questnaaires are used to collect the ethno linguistic information and some linguistic aspects which are used for intra communication purpose.

Classification of Jangams

Jangams are classified into three groups viz. Beda Jangam, Budaga jangam and Jangam Devarlu under the generic name called Jangams. Beda means rupayi (one rupee). These Jangams are treated as least people in community who cannot even earn a single upee for the day (tinṭaniki 'for eatig') gaduvanoḷḷu (who can't gain)). Second type is Budaga which means foreteller. As it was discussed in the introduction, these people go for foretelling in various ways. Third type is Jangam devaralu who means guru. These people go for the alms collection and rituals at death funeral and on the Karma days (taddinalu). All the three types of Jangams spread the Shaivaite cult through the songs and stories. Along with these three sub types another sub category called **kaṭipapaḷḷu** are also part of this community but due to the different mode of living and performance of magic of deception, they are considered differently.

Political Organization

The community practices the three-fold system to run the community. Three main people will run the community viz. **Guḍegaḍu**, **Motadu** and **Naigaḍu**. Guḍegaḍu will take care of the temporary settlement, when the community people go for the daily duties. **Motadu's** duty is to convey the messages

to the community people which come from the **Naigaḍu**. **Naigaḍu** is the one who acts as a Kulam pedda, decision maker and as the priest of the community. He fulfills all the duties of priest who performs rituals at birth, death and marriage rituals. These three people run the community with peace in unity.

Marriage system

Marriage system is very rigid system in the community. Different types of marriages are performed in the community. Among the different types of marriages arranged marriages given most importance. They will not accept the people to marry outside the community. Cross cousin marriages are seen in the community.

Arranged Marriage

It will be granted after the lot of discussion between the two parties. In each party wine is served. Wine is very common thing in these kind of meetings. They don't brew their own wine as it is done by other indigenous people in India. Whenever both the parties come for the negotiations regarding marriage, they use the sixteen belted (**patella**) mat is used. It is a symbol of marriage in their community. Both bride and grooms decision is more important. **Nine beetel nuts** and **nine beetle leveavs** are exchanged by groom and bride as an acceptance of marriage. Instead of nuptial code they use **Rudraksha** tied to an allow rope. No band **meḷam** is used during the marriage time and all the community members are invited for marriage. Third day (**Akkeri**) will be arranged (first night). Only kith and kin of the clan are invited for purpose. Food is served on the marriage day. Very normal food is served during the marriage day. No animal or bird is cut on the marriage day because they treat it as an auspicious day.

Love Marriages

Since they live in small bands love is revealed very easily by their actions of love. If parties of the parents do not accept the couple tries to elope. This type of marriage is not given much importance. Four and half beetle nuts and four and half beetle leaves will be exchanged between the boy and girl. The reason for the four and half instead of nine is, already half of the marriage work is over without discussions and wine. This type of marriage is named as (**marumanum**). In some cases, if both of them reject to marry, all the expenditure which happens during the arranged marriage time have to be paid by both of the them. If one of them rejects, the rejected person has to bear all the expenditure to the community.

Remarriages

Remarriages are allowed in the community provided if the evidence is shown to the community. A lady without children will be accepted very easily, because she will not be a problem in future to a married person. If a widow is marrying, she has to change the earlier husband's house name and has to marry the new bride. She has to use the parents initial as she had used for the first marriage.

Divorce

Divorces are often seen in the community. In most of the cases it is the lady who initiates for the divorce than man. If both the man woman are willing to divorce, they come to the **Naigaḍu** for the divorce.

After listening grievances from the both the sides, **Naigadu** will give them ten days' time for the discussions. If they are willing to live together they are allowed to promise in front of everybody and they start a fresh life without any hesitations. If they are not willing to live together, they are called on the tenth day and allowed to take diverse. They will not be given any official document of divorce but only oral promise will serve the purpose. They can marry anybody, whomever they want after the divorce. If the couple has Children, they will be shared by both of them. Sometimes mother will take care of them.

Adultery

Adultery is strictly prohibited in the community. If anybody is found doing adultery, they have to pay punishment money to the community. If a man is found doing adultery with a widow (**mundamopi**), he will be always suggested/judged to marry her with the consultation of first wife. If he doesn't marry, he has to pay punishment money to the widow. In most of the cases adultery is not entertained. Polygamy is seen in the community, provided if the exiting wives accept.

Death

Death rituals are very different from the other communities in the area. Whenever a person dies in the night, death fire is lit throughout the night. **Talakorivi** (lighting the fire at funeral) is done by elder son only. If the deceased has two wives, the first wife's son puts **talakorivi**. The body will be carried on a funeral bier to the burial ground. The custom of the community is to bury the dead bodies. When they bury the dead body, they remove all the earthly things on the body and bury the bodies. For man and woman, they remove everything including clothes. If it is for a woman, they remove even the nuptial code. The reason for the thing is we come to the world with bare body and we go to gods with bare body. **Savam** is equal to Shivam. While burying, community people first throw the mud on the body and then outside people put the mud on the body. They have the pollution period up to three days. Third day they offer the **Pindam** (rice) to the deceased at the burial place. They cook all the things (fish, meat, leafy vegetables, wine, toddy etc.) in a pot and takes to the burial ground for offering. Same day before offering the **Pindam** they adorn the tomb with flowers and other things. All the community people also offer something or the other to the deceased. The third subcategory people in the community called Jangam Devaralu will be called for flattery of songs on him at the tomb. They come and recite and sing songs on him with flattering. Once the rituals are over on the third day, the deceased family will offer the food to the community. In order to count the people for the Karma dinner, they count the members in the community with the palm leaves. Fifth day small Karma is celebrated with the family members only.

Pregnancy and birth ceremonies

When a Jangam woman conceives, she is given utmost care in the community. She is offered **pasupu** and **kunkam** (turmeric and vermilion) at ninth month of the pregnancy time. Most of the time the women prefer to give birth at home only. In few cases they prefer to go to hospitals. Once the woman gives the birth, they name him on the same day. Each person in the community available on the day, give each name. Finally the name given by the parents remain ultimate one.

Festivals

Though their culture and customs say that they are the propagators of Lord **Shaivaite** cult, they also adore the **Mutyalamma** a female goddess. Every year in the month of September they meet from both the states at **Sattenapalli** where Goddess **Mutyalamma** shrine is built. At the temple **Guḍegaḍu**, and **Naigaḍu** will offer prayers to goddess. First pot of the Pongallu (Sweet rice) offered to Mutyalamma is given to Guḍegaḍu, and Naigaḍu. Once the first offering is taken by **Guḍegaḍu** and **Naigaḍu**, they both will give the other pots to the offered people by some part of the **Pongallu** to goddess. Along with **Pongallu**, they also offer country chicken, rams and goats to goddess **Mutyalamma**. Apart from the above gods and goddesses they worship deities such as **Perantalamma, Pedda Gosai, Yallamma, Maisamma, Poleramma and Sunkulamma**.

Crime

Crime and its rewards are entirely different from the other communities in the area. In most of the cases, the people never step the police station. Most of the crimes are being settled by the **Naigaḍu**. In rare cases they go to the police station. Molesting, eloping, stealing kind of crimes can be seen often. There different types of punishments are implemented to different types of crimes. Testimony and eye witness plays a major role in all types of crimes. If anybody in the community tries to molest a married woman, he has to pay lot of money to the victim's husband. Anybody who takes away a girl (elope) is called **menḍgaḍu**. No rapes are seen in the community. No concept of prostitution too in the community. Two types of plans are executed in crime situations in order to bring out the truth. One is **Pulla Kattaḍam** and the second one Oil dip. If anybody does one of the crimes mentioned above, they first execute the **Pulla Kattaḍam** (tying the stick) plan. For the plan first they spread cow dung water on the ground. Then they draw the seven circles on the ground. Finally they ask the victim to stand in middle of the circles with a stick. According to their custom anybody who lies in circles either will die or gets a big decease which can't be cured. Second one is oil dip. In the execution of plan, **Naigaḍu** and **Guḍegaḍu** will boil a pot of castor oil and ask the victim to dip both the hands in the pot. If he is cheat or criminal, his hands will gets boils and if he is not his hand will not be affected by it. Once the dipping process is over, **Guḍegaḍu** will give a hand full of paddy to rub out for the rice. If at all boils come, by rubbing the paddy the boils will burst. Then they offer a wet cloth and curd rice to the victim. In the present days the oil dip plan of execution is not being practiced. Only in rare cases they are practicing it.

Deceases

Most of the cases they often face the deceases like jaundice and chicken fox. During the chickenpox and jaundice, they are not allowed to participate in the sex. When chicken fox comes, the affected person is offered toddy every day. Neam leaves are poured on the person. They cook fish curry during the time and the person is exposed to the smell of the fish curry. If jaundice is attacked they use the some medicinal leaf juice in order to get rid of the jaundice.

Housing System

Jangams do not have permanent housing system. Since they move in small bands from village to village, they arrange a typical Jangam tents at the out skirts of the villages. All the people live either under the trees or inns built by **panchayats** of the villages concerned. During the stay sexual activities are visible

to each other. By understanding they don't interfere mutually into others sexual activities. This is a great hindrance to the children. By the time they are eight or ten they know all about sex. This results in the early child marriages in the community.



Education

There is no education/book/school in the sight of **Jangams** even after fifty years of independence. Only a few members in the community have education. But this education does not help them any type of job opportunities. Most of the children in the community go for hunting and spend their life in vending and collecting plastic things.

Rights

Equal rights are given to men and women in the community. The example for this equality is 'juttubagalu' Whenever a **Jangam** person brings something by hunting, it is equally shared among the community. If a woman is pregnant, they even give a share of embryo which is yet to come into this world. Such kind of rich quality of equality is seen among the members of the community. Even at the time menstruation, the women do not have any restriction in the community.

Excommunication

Excommunication is very frequent thing in community. They should never reveal the secrets of their profession. If anybody reveals the internal things of the community they will be excommunicated very easily. For every act action, one has to take permission from the **guḍegaḍu** and **Naigaḍu**. Without their permission one can't do on their own anything. If anybody overcomes the rules of the community, they will be excommunicated.

Daily life and food habits

The daily life of Jangams is very simple. Early morning they start the life with the chanting of Lord Shiva. After the duties of foretelling, **Yachakatvam** (begging) Chlaka pasti (parrot for telling), they involve in hunting between eleven to four. The community men hunt and eat anything that crawls aright from wild cat, jackal, lizards, **enṭava, squirrel, crows, tortoise, mongoose, fish, monster lizard, and other all types of birds including eagles they eat**. After the 4, most of them drink toddy, liquor and other types of narcotics. However, the community men were discarding hunting due to restrictions and the shrinking forest area. They have very good habit of eating. Before the foxes cry, they have to finish their evening meal and before the cock crows morning meal. They don't feel any type of shame to get the food and eat the food because everything is natural to them.

Black art

Jangam people do not perform any type of black art or necromancy. Only small things like anjanam to chase away evil spirits which possess the children, elders and women. **Collyriums are used** for disti. Different types of **pendants** with snake, Hanuman, Jesus, Shiva, Kali, frog, pictures are sold. These are used as protectors from all sorts of bad events in the life. Three types of **Rossary peas** or **Abrus precatorius** in white, black and red (**Guriginjalu**) also sold for the good things to wear them in the finger rings. Apart from the above things they sell **Nagamusti** bark and roots, and **rudrakasha** which is used to chase away snakes from the backyards.

Reservation

Jangams are in a pathetic conditions depending upon **yachakatvam** (begging). Before 1956 Telugu states are distributed under **Nizams** rule and Madras presidency. According to presidential order in 1950 **Jangams** are given scheduled caste status in Telangana. After the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 these people were given same SC status in nine **Telangana** districts but not in thirteen Andhra districts. In addition to the presidential order 1950, an amendment is made to give scheduled caste status to **Jangams** of Andhra Pradesh. According to this amendment Jangams in the both place of **Telangana** and Andhr Pradesh are given scheduled caste status. Later complaints given by the people saying that scheduled caste reservations is being misused, Government made another amendment in 2002. According to this amendment they re-imposed the 1950s reservation policy and restricted the scheduled caste status to only the nine **Telangana** districts. Again in 2014 under the reorganization act these people are recognized as scheduled castes only in Telangana districts.

After the bifurcation of united Andra Pradesh these **Jangams** are not given either scheduled caste status or backward class status in newly formed Andra Ppradesh state. A one man commission was put up by the new Andhra Pradesh government to settle the reservation matter. In 2010 another commission was put up under the supervision of a retired judge **Motilal Nayak**. The committee has never submitted its report till the date. Due to the settlement of the reservation policy in newly formed Andhra Pradesh, these people not even issued caste certificates which had become great hindrance to the education, and other subsidies given by the states. No reservation is provided to the people in Andhra Pradesh. This situation led many of the community children to lose their primary education and become hunters. The government is

claiming that, once the report is given by the one man commission it will submit to the central government and central government will examine it take the decision.

Language

Jangam people do not have a separate language, they speak Telugu language with some accent on it in Telangana as well as AndhraPradesh. But they have a separate argot used for hunting and separate themselves from the mainland people. Intra communication in most of the cases takes place with Telugu syntax by mixing their secret argot. Some of the examples from the argot of **Jangams** can be seen below.

Human Body Parts

palm	‘hasta koti’
head	‘sirs ba:m’
eye	‘na:n koti’
beard	‘da:di bam’
penis	‘konkaḍam’
testicles	‘piccakayalu’
fubic hair	‘kævalu’
firt	‘sadda koti’
breast	‘kaddalu’
yoni	‘gottam’
fore skin	‘pingu’
vermillion	‘bandar’
mole	‘macca guttigaḍu’
throat	‘saram/pika
blood	‘rattam guttigaḍu’

Plants

neem	‘vepacettuguttigaḍu’
branch	‘komma guttigaḍu’
seed	‘vittuguttigaḍu’
plant	‘mokka guttigaḍu’

All the plant names are Telugu names only but they are adding ‘guttigaḍu’ to each word.

Animals

manoose	‘mingi’	tortoice	‘kurumga:ḍu’
squirrel	‘todsiga:ḍu’	rat	‘ra:siga:ḍu’
hen	‘pakhi’	pig	‘mandga:ḍu’
monster lizard	‘valimga:ḍu’	forest cat	‘jangaskam’
house cat	‘vuragasakam’	buffalo	‘barisam’

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dog	‘kaik’	fish	‘pakiḍiga:ḍu’
snake	‘ya:sam’	monkey	‘kotiguttiga:ḍu’
fox	‘naḍsiga:ḍu’	parrot	‘paccanaga:ḍu’

House and related

thief	‘pacciga:ḍu’	fruit	‘paccatakam’
cooked rice	‘bandar’	curry	‘katta’
bag	‘baṭva’	house	‘gara’
shirt	‘kendamuṭi’	stick	‘lakaṭam’
brandy	‘nalupu’	toddy	‘puranam’

Kinshipterms

mother	‘ammi’	father	‘ayya’
dead person	‘karsipoyna’	oldman	‘mutkarigaḍ’
old woman	‘mutkarigani’	devil	‘kasikam’
enuch	‘sodepittigaḍu’	group	‘mankalu’
mob	‘pankilu’	boy	‘balaka’
hunting	‘shikaru’	marriage	‘tigada’

Pronouns

He (sing)	‘mankaḍu’	he (pl)	‘manKallu’
She (sing)	‘gandi’	she (pl)	‘gandilu’
Ladies (pl)	‘santilu’	police (sing)	‘guttoḍu/jobboḍu’

Only third person singular and plurals are different in their argot, for the rest of the pronouns they follow the Telugu system.

Conclusion

The life of **Jangams** is very pathetic. Even in the 21st century they live either in typical tents laid by them or stay at the inns constructed by the panchayts of concerned villages. Due to reservation policy they are unable to get even the cast certificate which is necessary to get all the benefits and subsidies like education, scholarship, ration cards etc. Even today they depend upon **Yachakatvam** for their daily life. By looking at the cross cousin marriages and retroflexion sounds in the word list, one can say that these people are Dravidian people. Since they are nomadic community, they picked lexical items from different areas of the state and country.

By looking at some of the words it is convinced that one’s upon a time these people might have maintained separate language for intra communication. As the time passed in the course of time, due to the globalization, technological developments, local language dominance their language might have lost. Only it is fossilized in the domains of hunting, house related and some body parts. If government could give the proper upliftment to the community members, their lives will in good condition.

Future Study

Prof. Umamaheswara Rao (2019) says that if a detailed study is carried out on Cenchu, Yanaadi and Katipapllu, a clear information on Jangams language can be brought out. A detailed field work is necessary to decide the Jangams status in the field of Dravidian linguistics.

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