

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

Social Change and Migration among Telugu communities

Dr. R V R Murthy

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Social Change and Migration among Telugu communities

Dr. R V R Murthy

2024

First Edition: June 2024

Copyright: International Council for Education Research and Training (ICERT)

ISBN: 978-93-95789-77-6

Price: 500 INR/ 10 USD

Disclaimer

The author is solely responsible for the contents of the book. The publisher and printer don't take any responsibility for the same in any manner. Errors, if any, are purely unintentional and readers are requested to communicate such errors to the editors or publisher to avoid discrepancies in future.

**Published and Printed By
International Council for Education Research and Training
(ICERT)**

Visit us at: www.icert.org.in

Email: icertpitara@icert.org.in, contact@icert.org.in

About Book

This book deals with the social change and migration among Telugu community of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Telugu presence in Andaman Islands dates back to colonial times and their contribution towards overall development is unparalleled. In fact, ethnic Telugus were brought to Andaman Islands as convicts, prisoners during 1870s, 1920s and subsequently as laborers / work force during late 1940s-50s when the forest economy emerged for semi-skilled and unskilled laborers. Telugu migration in the beginning of twentieth century was an important dimension coincided dynamism with the greater integration into Andaman society. Indeed, Brichgunj village was the first such Telugu settlement. On the other hand, Haddo became hub of Telugu concentration in the early years of 1950s and later they have spread out into other islands as part of relocation for the purpose of jobs and other social compulsions. Generally overlooked in every sphere of life today Telugus constitute third largest population of the island territory and it is needless to say that Telugus are among those who shaped the islands with their hard work and social responsibility.

Most Telugus migrated to Andaman Islands in the post-independent India in search of jobs / employment / business and allied activities. At present the island ethnic Telugus here belongs to composite culture and mostly hails to the second generation. Indeed through this study it was focused to understand social variables and other reasons compelled the process of migration of Telugu population from the northern districts of Andhra Pradesh was said to be voluntary, free and un-aided by the A & N administration except the first batch of Telugus of Baruva village of present Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, have brought to Andaman Islands on the government expenses to meet the labor requirements of forest department and Chatham Saw Mill. They constituted more than two-third of all the Telugus settled herein and constitute about 12% of the total population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Census 2011). This research work was carried out for two years with the help of monetary grant sponsored by South-Eastern Regional Office (SERO), University Grants Commission (UGC), Hyderabad between 2012-2014. To make available to readers, it was requested to Research and Publication Division, ICERT to bring into a book form. This book would be useful to academics and students who engaged in research in this area.

About Author



Dr. R V R Murthy

Teaching is a noble profession. I had started teaching as a career in the year 1995 and since then am associated with the HEIs for pursuit and dissemination of knowledge by shaping young minds to build better career for future. The mission of a teacher would be mainly to bring potential and shape students in their pursuit of knowledge. I have made the students to genuinely enjoy my teaching so that they come to class with a smile on their faces. As a teacher I hold more responsibility to secure future of the students. Besides teaching I was associated with administrative branch of HEIs administration to contribute beyond teaching, like Public Information Officer (PIO), Programme Coordinator for National Service Scheme (NSS), Drawing and Disbursing officer (DDO), Venue supervisor for UPSC exams conducted at Port Blair centre w.e.f. October 2020 and also performed as Observer duties for various tests conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA), Ministry of Education, GOI.

Currently I am holding the Post of Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre, Port Blair with a commitment to improve the IGNOU activities in remotest part of India. in the last six months a large number of outreach programmes conducted with the help of NGOs and other HEIs. The very objectives are that to secure its mandate, I am committed to enrol more and more students with IGNOU. In the absence of university system at Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the mandate vested on IGNOU, Regional centre, Port Blair is to fulfil the dreams of thousands of students who are an anvil pursuit knowledge by providing easy access to admission to till the award of degree. Further it is to submit that I am equally prove myself to the post of Registrar and will follow all the norms of IIT, Tirupati in strict compliance and uphold the values of such premier institute of technical learning. It would be a great pride to serve the IITT, which is replica the land of lords Sree Namo Venkateswara

Contents

Preface

Acknowledgement

1. Introduction	16
2. Historical Accounts of Telugu Migration to A & N islands	40
3. Telugu settlement in A & N islands	62
4. Linguistic –cultural changes among Telugu of A & N islands	82
5. Social Change among Telugus of A & N Islands	98
6. Conclusion	113

Bibliography

Preface

Telugu presence in Andaman Islands dates back to colonial times. In fact, Telugu ethnic and linguistic groups were brought to Andaman Islands as convicts, prisoners during 1870s, 1920s and subsequently laborers/ work force during late 1940s-50s when the forest economy emerged were served chiefly semi-skilled and unskilled laborers. Telugu migration in the beginning of twentieth century was an important dimension and coincided with the greater integration into Andaman society. Indeed, Brichgunj was the first Telugu settlement, on the other hand, Haddo became hub of Telugu concentration in the early years of 1950s and gradually Telugu have swell into other islands as part of in- migration for the purpose of jobs and other social compulsions. Generally overlooked in every spear of life, today they (Telugu) constitute third largest population of island territory and it is needless to say that Telugus are one among who shaped islands with their hard work and social responsibility.

In terms of caste-community background and social composition most of the Telugus were drawn from the following castes and communities of Andhra Pradesh were Agnikulakshatriyas / Palli, Vanniyars (fishermen/ boatmen), Setti-Balijas/ Nadars (toddy tappers), Golla (shepherds) Tsakali (washermen) Mangali (barber) Telaga- Naidu- Kapu / Reddy, Kamma, Gavars, Malas (Schedule Castes), Adi Andharas and Medari (Basket makers) were also emigrated as a vast majority of the Telugus of northern districts of present Andhra Pradesh.

Most Telugus migrated to Andaman Islands in the post-independent India in search of jobs/ employment/ business and allied activities. At present the ethnic Telugus here belongs mostly to the second generation. The migration of Telugu population from the northern districts of Andhra Pradesh was said to be voluntary, free and un-aided by the local government except

the first batch of Telugus of Baruva village of present Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, have brought to Andaman Islands on the government expenses to meet the laborer requirements of forest department and Chatham Saw Mill.

Andaman Islands offered an ample of field of labor at the high rates of wage. Migration to Andaman Islands was essentially a Telugu phenomenon of northern coastal districts of Ganjam (present Srikakulam), Vizagapatam and Godavari constituted more than two-third of all the Telugus in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and they constituted about 12% of the total population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Census 2011). The majority Telugu of Andaman Islands belongs to Hindu religion constitute approximately 85% of Telugu population and remaining were Christians and very few of Muslims.

Significantly, Telugus from northern districts of Andhra Pradesh ventured into Andaman Islands in the post-independence era and it becomes an important place of destiny in the post-Burma crisis in 1960s. Andaman Islands became attractive because there exists better facilities, easy availability of lower rungs of employments opportunities particularly for less educated or illiterate and subsequently ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors encouraged people to migrate from these districts in times of famine, scarcity and dire distress. For instance, Telugu was initially worked in the forest department and later opted jobs in agriculture department, shipping, civil supplies, Municipal, electricity and Port Management departments of Andaman administration and those who have unable to find government jobs they worked as self-employed, semi-skilled daily laborers, petty shop owners, shoe makers, toddy-tappers, barbers, washer man, basket-makers and fishers.

The pattern of migration of Telugus was different as compared to Tamils for instances the Tamil laborers / workers usually went home town for harvest and returned at the close, but Telugu migration to Andaman Islands was permanent and family based. They do attend some yearly festivals or marriage of kin and kiths or for some other reasons not very frequently they do visit home town, but remitting large sums in the meanwhile to their families at home town at Andhra Pradesh. Here in Andaman Islands, they live in small houses, barely enough for survival but most of them have constructed RCC houses with all modern facilities at their native village for the sake of presence, prestige, also a feeling of their belongingness and keeping their family relations intact with kinship relatives. Nevertheless, second generation Telugu of Andaman Islands worked mostly as professionals, employers, contractors, daily laborers on commission basis and small traders and others as manual laborer in many fields of manual work. The present occupation of second-generation Telugus is different from those of their fathers and they had all been entered to government service on the basis of the qualifications and skills.

The distinct Telugu identity in Andaman Islands articulated through the discourses of various socio-cultural and religious festivals. They tend to foster cultural unity among the Telugu-speaking communities cutting across caste, class and regional distinctions. Language, kinship bonds, caste-community affiliation and ancestral origin also became significant symbols for the construction of Telugu cultural, ethnic identity and consciousness. Telugu of Andaman Islands just took advantage of the social and material benefits and adopts some of the ideas and institutions are in practice that makes their new homes better places to live and raise families. The integration with rest of island society promotes the spread of ideas like inter-caste and inter-religious marriages and institutions that encourage order, justice and economic efficiency. Over the years, Telugu acclimatized to Island situation at the individual level and also at group level.

All of them had a working knowledge of Hindi and some of them are expertise in Hindi and it is a commonly noticed that they had learned other than their mother tongue.

Telugu were conscious and active participants of party politics and their indivisible association between political parties and trade unions and loyalty of trade union leaders was interesting. The electoral politics in Andaman and Nicobar Islands were based on linguistic consideration. As a linguistic group, Telugu is playing decisive role in electoral politics of Andaman Islands since 1967. Irrespective of socio-economic and occupational statuses, the relative betterment of life of the Telugu over the past few decades gained support for the Congress and they were good sympathizers of INTUC.

This research work was carried out for two years with the help of monetary grant sponsored by South-Eastern Regional Office (SERO), University Grants Commission (UGC), Hyderabad between 2012-2014. Gratitude is due to Officers and staff of SERO-UGC, Hyderabad for financial support throughout the Minor Research Project (MRP) for 02 years. I appreciate SERO-UGC, Hyderabad for funding such project, which is of historical importance would not have been successful.

For the first six months of research for this study was spent on general reading, formulate reproduction of historical connections, preparing the questionnaire and initial data was collected from different peoples and libraries across the country. The reminiscence of early Telugus has been collected through oral accounts from the elders of the neighborhood and few documents were also acquired from State Archives, A & N Administration for research study. I have visited National Archives of India, (NIA), New Delhi during September 2013 and subsequently also visited Andhra Pradesh State Archives (APSLA), Andhra Pradesh State Assembly, Hyderabad to elicit information or in search of supportive documents of Telugu presence in Andaman Islands.

The survey was conducted at major concentration of Telugu settlement across in Andaman Islands and travelling to all the islands of A & N islands for collection of firsthand information in the form of records or photograph or a piece of information and it was very rewarding experience.

Timely completion of this sort of study needs enormous strength and I was fortunate in being able to call a wide range help from many peoples, institutions and academicians. I sincerely express gratitude to all those who have extended support in accomplishing the horrendous task of collecting information from such community, who has no idea of records keeping and most accounts are oral communications. My Special gratitude to all, who have directly and indirectly contributed valuable information in the form of oral memories and recollected hearsay, since this information lacks records, there is absolute dearth of literature on this subject matter, the elders acted as catalyst in collecting under buried information about first generation of Telugu people. Most of the first-generation Telugu people were passed away and their siblings are now are at Middle Ages and they hardly remember the hardships met by their parents in the early settlement. The A & N Administration was also failed to keep records of these people except some records found in the official correspondence at State Archives. When I have venture into this study, there was nothing except some knowledge about the people from my village, who have come long back to these islands as a forest worker and I recollect my childhood memories especially my father narrated hardships they met during the repatriation from Burma and subsequently, that pre-independence, there was a port at Baruva Village, which connects to Burma and elsewhere. In those days every household of this particular village visited Burma for accumulation of money and every villager have enough to meet the expenses. I have also visited Baruva Village since it is my birth place, during Summer Vacation 2014 to recollect

the events and places to reconcile the information, which gathered during the interviews. The descriptive information collected from P. Bairagi, (Retd) employee of Chatham Saw Mill and a resident of Haddo was most useful in interpreting the sequences and related information available in the State Archives, A & N Administration. I am thankful to the people of Baruva village and people of Telugu origin of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for cooperation and hospitality extended to me during the field work. It was really a learning experience for me for interaction all age groups which provided me an exposure to the different facets of social changes taking place in Telugu of A & N Islands.

Shri. Hari Kishen, Assistant Secretary (Retd) resident of Goal Ghar, narrated how his great grandfather transported to these islands and his knowledge of recalling the events since his childhood very crucial in connecting the historical accounts of Telugu existence since 1870s. Since I have married in pre-42 Telugu family of Brichgunj also incited me to know more about these people. While writing books on Andaman Islands several times I encountered with these issues and I want to do more research to reveal the facts about the historical accounts of Telugu people, for known reasons are not properly highlighted in the historical records and government reports. Indeed, this intrinsically made me to find out the facts about pre-42 Telugu settlers, finally my in-laws Shri. G D Rao, Head Master (Retd) helped me in several ways and his familiarity with the local community made survey work relatively easy.

Acknowledgement

At the outset my sincere thanks and acknowledgements for all Telugu speaking people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. I express my sincere thanks to all the pre-42 settlers of Brichgunj (Local Born) for their precious spare time and weekends and also shared information and reminiscences freely and generously. I extend gratitude to Shri. Ahmed Mujtaba, Principal (Retd), Mrs. S. Rajamma w/o Late. S. Appa Rao, and son of Late. S. Veeraswamy, Mr. Srinivas Rao, Mr. Vadivel and Shri. Hemanta Rao for their kind support. Special thanks to Shri. Surya Rao and Shri. Kesav Murthy, President and Secretary of Andhra Association respectively.

I also acknowledge all the Telugu families and groups especially who have migrated between 1950s and 1970s deserve special mention and without their valuable information this work could not be completed. Whenever I approached, they have shown kind affection and whatever required for this study has been obtained without much hesitation. Overall, the respondents were quite cooperative and also shared all the known information and photographs. The second-generation Telugu mostly government employees also contributed their knowledge by recalling childhood days in these islands and helped me to connect all the events in more systematic way. All of them deserve special appreciation for kind help and cooperation. The political, social and community leaders' contribution in this regard was immense. At every stage I must be thankful for their kind assistance in collecting oral accounts of their parents, arrival and other issues which I have discussed threadbare with them was more significant for this study.

I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance which I received on various occasions from staff of National Archives of India, (NIA), New Delhi, Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Archives (APSLA), Andhra Pradesh State Assembly, Hyderabad, (AP) State Archives, A & N Administration, Cellular Library, State Library, JNRM Library at Port Blair and MGGC

Library, Mayabunder. I am grateful for their kindness and cooperation at every stage of project. My special acknowledgement to academic and non-teaching friends especially who had lent moral support to subject deserve a word of appreciation.

This study would not have been possible without the help Dr. Iqbal Ahmad, Principal, JNRM for his instant support throughout study of extended all possible lend a hand to me even during my transfer to MGGC, Mayabunder. I also wish to record here my special gratitude to Dr. Iqbal Ahmad, ex-Principal, JNRM for his kind support and encouragement. My acknowledgement is also due to Dr. Francis Xavier, ex-Principal, JNRM for his courtesy all times, his advice and his patient editing of the manuscript. A special mention of Dr. F.H. Hashmi, Associate Professor of Plant Science, JNRM for his affection and kindness. Gratitude is due to Dr. R N Rath, Principal, MGGC, Mayabunder for his support at later stage. I express my sincere thanks given to colleagues of the Department of Political Science Dr. S.S. Sreekumar and Dr. S.K. Biswas. I appreciate Dr. V.K. Upadhayay, Associate Professor in Chemistry (Retd) for his longstanding moral support and kind help in my career. Last but not least, I express my sincere thanks to Dr. H.K. Sharma, Principal, JNRM, Port Blair for encouraging and motivation infused a confidence to convert this research work submitted to UGC, SERO, Hyderabad in the year 2014 into a book form in the times of crisis like COVID-19 pandemic. My special acknowledgements to all who have built confidence in me deserve special appreciation and thanks.

This project would not have been possible without the help of numerous people who have not only been there to provide the moral support that I greatly needed during the research process, but they have also assisted me greatly in your areas of expertise. Their wisdom and altruistic attitude gave me tremendous strength to complete this work and I am invaluable

indebted to all. Thanks to all for taking their valuable time to participate in the research. Not forgetting also, the individual representatives from the civil society as well as the island communities for consenting to participate in this research. Their invaluable contributions have made it possible for me to complete this work and I sincerely thank you all for your patience and efforts. I express my sincere thanks to all my friends and well-wishers for their help and assistance. I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to the authors of various books, periodicals, articles, journals and newspapers listed in the bibliography, whose works have helped me in completing this work in time.

Finally, I owe a great deal to my wife, sons and mother, whose patience and encouragement was source of inspiration. To be aided in one's scholarship is not to share responsibility for it. I alone am responsible for what is written in these pages and I would be anxious to know how far this research work conveys to the readers. Every effort has been made to trace out the hidden history of Telugu and the satisfaction for me that this project work still makes a small contribution to the accumulation of human knowledge, I will be truly happy.

Finally, I am thankful to Dr Sandeep Kumar, Secretary ICERT, and Executive Director Publication Division, International Council for Education Research and Training (ICERT) New Delhi for giving me this opportunity to work with them and publish my book under the banner of International Council for Education Research and Training (ICERT), gives me immensurable pleasure and happiness. I appreciate the efforts of Publication Division, ICERT to bring this work with so much of expertise gives a new dynamic in the publication of such scripts research based on a remote community like the Telugus will help the readers and researches in the era of domain of knowledge.

Chapter: 1

Introduction

Movements of human beings in search of better environment and opportunities are natural phenomenon. Migration is as old as human history, had occurred throughout human civilization and has played a significant role in change in lives of millions across the globe. A massive population movement occurred in the beginning of twentieth century given space for movement between regions / countries possible due to technological developments, rapid improved transport systems and has also given new dimension to movements and resettlement of population. There are a host of factors which have a propensity to move people between nations as well as between places for positive expectations of work, income, education, and residence. So, the movement from one place to other, Migration had a positive impact on some people while simultaneously negatively impacting others. Indeed, migration also changes the regional distribution of human beings, as well as human capital and motivated by certain welfare gains for the migrants.

A short and significant view of the important theories of migration is provided in this study is followed by an examination of the factors affecting migration as evinced by various empirical studies. It is generally referred that migration as a change of residence from one place to another. Further it is also known that migration could take place at an individual level or at a group level and the distinction between the individual level migration and the group level migration gets vague at some stage and hence a major volume of migration tends to be associational and companionable in character involving family and kinship networks of various types. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, to migrate

means to “move from one place to another”. According to Webster New World Dictionary, it means to “move from one place to another, especially to another country”. Migration has defined as “broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restrictions are placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act and distinction is made between external and internal migration” (E.S. Lee: 1966). According to Weinberg “human migration is the changing of the place of abode permanently or when temporarily for an appreciable duration as e.g., in the case of seasonal workers. It is used symbolically in the transition from one surrounding to another in the course of human life”. Further, defines migration “as the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another. This transition usually involves abandoning one’s social setting and entering another and different one” (Eisenstaedt:1953). According to “migration is a relatively permanent moving away of a collectively called migrants from one geographical location to another preceded by decision making on the part of the migrants on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values or value ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants (J.J. Mangalam:1968). Caplow states that “migration is strictly speaking a change of residence and need not necessarily involve any change of occupation, but is closely associated with occupational shifts of one kind or another”.

Some of the above-mentioned definitions observe that migration as a permanent change or residence. However, as the term is commonly understood today, includes even certain temporary changes of residence provided this temporary period is not very short. A distinction may be made between migrants and movers. Migrants are those who move between political units, whereas movers are those who move within them. This at any given time, the total population of a region can be divided into migrants and non-migrants, movers and non-movers.

This classification established the mobility status of the population. Internal migration refers to migration from one place to another place within a country whereas external migration or international migration refers to migration from one country to another country. The terms immigration and outmigration are related to internal migration whereas immigration and emigration are related to international migration. Immigration refers to migration into a place from another place within the same country and outmigration refers to migration out of a place to another place within the same country. Thus, the term outmigration is used with reference to the area of origin (departure) of the migrant and the term immigration is used with reference to the area of destination (arrival) of the migrant. On the basis of the description of migration, migration may be classified as voluntary, sequential migration and forced migration. The migrant has the opportunity to exercise his own discretion in deciding whether to migrate or not in the matter of selecting, the place of migration; it is regarded as voluntary migration. Sequential migration on the other hand is the migration due to some element of customary obligation and suggestions of compelling circumstances (for example, migration following marriage, migration of children associated with the migration of the guardian etc. Forced migration is the migration caused by compulsion or coercion like separation, political or religious persecution, eviction, etc.

Migration research can be classified into two broad areas: determinants of Migration and consequences of migration. The determinants of migration are factors affecting migration including the characteristics of the sending and receiving locations and those of the migrants and their families. These factors include personal characteristics, geographical factors, economic factors and policy factors. The consequences of migration include the impact of migration on the sending and receiving location, as well as on the migrants themselves, including the performance of migrants in their new locations (Greenwood: 1997). Both the study of the determinants of

migration and the consequences of migration are especially useful for policy making. Therefore, both the study of the determinants of migration and the study of the consequences of migration have long been a concern of economists, demographers, sociologists, governmental and regional policy makers as well as the social service organizations including NGOs and researchers.

Most of the previous studies on internal migration have measured the economic efficiency of migration. These studies are based on economic assumption and economic outcomes such as the impacts of migration on the income of migrants and the impacts of migration on the regional and national economy. In recent study Upadhyay and Rutten (2012: 59-61) call for series of “ethnographically thicker” and “regional level” developments. Drawing upon some emerging micro-level studies of the impact of diaspora remittances investments and philanthropy within specific Indian localities, the authors argue that this is because:

..... transnational flows are shaped and influenced by the specific histories, social structures and political-economic formations of the migrant sending regions....a series of regional-level studies will allow for comparison of (...transnational) flows across regions (of India)...paying more attention to the historical and sociological specifics of different regions and their transnational social fields...will generate a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the migration and development nexus in India.

The purpose of this study and research

Migration plays a significant role in the livelihood of migrants, yet little attention is paid to the nature of this relationship in the context of social change. In this perspective present study explores the interactions between Migration and social change among Telugu of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Using a theoretical framework of Migration and social Change, the researcher