

**THE SOCIETY IN TRANSITION: THE CHOLANAICKANS,  
PANIYAS AND MALA ARAYA TRIBES OF KERALA - A  
HISTORICAL STUDY**

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**HISTORY**

*By*

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I certify that the thesis entitled “**The Society in Transition: the Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Araya Tribes of Kerala - A Historical Study**”, submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History by **Tmt. NISHA JOSEPH** is the record of research work carried out by her during the period from July 2008 to January 2012 under my guidance and supervision and that this work has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other titles in this University or any other University or Institution of Higher Learning.

Place : Chennai.

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I declare that the thesis entitled, “**The Society in Transition: the Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Araya Tribes of Kerala - A Historical Study**”, submitted by me for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History is the record of research work carried out by me during the period from July 2008 to January 2012 under the guidance of **Dr.G. Venkataraman**, Professor and Head, Department of Indian History, University of Madras and that it has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or other titles in this University or any other University or Institution of Higher Learning.

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*Date :09.01.2012*

  
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## ABBREVIATION

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| ADS       | - | Area Development Society.                                |
| ADSS      | - | Adivasi Dalit Samara Samithy.                            |
| ATCOFARMS | - | Attapadi Co-operative Farming Society.                   |
| ATMAMS    | - | Akhila Tiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Maha Sabha.             |
| CDS       | - | Community Development Society.                           |
| CMS       | - | Christian Missionary Society.                            |
| COSTFORD  | - | Center for Science and Technology for Rural Development. |
| EASF      | - | Evangelical Social Action Forum.                         |
| FCA       | - | Forest Conservation Act.                                 |
| ILO       | - | International Labour Organisation.                       |
| IRTC      | - | Integrated Rural Technology Center.                      |
| ITDP      | - | Integrated Tribal Development Project.                   |
| JPC       | - | Joint Parliamentary Council.                             |
| KAS       | - | Kerala Adivasi Samajam.                                  |
| KGS       | - | Kerala Girivarga Sangham.                                |
| KUT       | - | Karshaka Thozhilali Union.                               |
| LDF       | - | Left Democratic Front.                                   |
| MACF      | - | Mala Araya Christian Federation.                         |
| MASS      | - | Mala Araya Samrakshana Samity.                           |

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| MOEF   | - | Ministry of Environment and Forests.                   |
| NABARD | - | National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development.    |
| NEFA   | - | North Eastern Frontier Agency.                         |
| NFP    | - | National Forest Policy.                                |
| NGO    | - | Non-Governmental Organisation.                         |
| RASTA  | - | Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement. |
| SGSY   | - | Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana.                   |
| SHG    | - | Self-Help Group.                                       |
| SMPT   | - | Special Multi-purpose Tribal Blocks.                   |
| TDB    | - | Tribal Development Block.                              |
| UDF    | - | United Democratic Front.                               |
| UPA    | - | United Progressive Alliance.                           |
| VCIB   | - | Vikas Credit and Information Banking.                  |
| WASSS  | - | Wynad Adivasi Swayam Sevak Sangh.                      |
| WPA    | - | Wildlife Protection Act.                               |

## GLOSSARY

- Alai - Rock Shelter used by the Cholanaickans as dwelling place.
- Arupathinalu - Bride price collected after marriage by Paniyas.
- Attu-Pundyattu - The Pre-delivery ritual performed by the Paniyas.
- Atukuri - Midwife of Paniyas.
- Bhoodams - Evil Spirits.
- Chenmam/tsenmam - The Cholanaickan's territorial division.
- Chenmakkaran - The territorial chieftain of Cholanaickans.
- Chittal - A separate hut made by the Cholanaickans for the specific purpose of confinement.
- Cholanaickan - The Chieftain of the Grove.
- Daivakottai - The Divine Basket in which the Cholanaickan keep the images of their deities and spirits covered in red cloth.
- Daivam/Devan/Teyyam - Various terms used for God.
- Daivamkaddethathu - Identification of supernatural causes of an illness possessed by Cholanaickans.
- Devivakkam / Velichapadi - An oracle among Paniyas and Cholanickans
- Edipithyottu - Capturing the girl forcefully.
- Ennu - Wife of Cholanaickan is called Ennu.

|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Erumadam/Anamadam      | - | The tree house.                                    |
| Illateyya              | - | The Clan God.                                      |
| Iravu Bhagavan         | - | The Lord of the Night.                             |
| Jenmi                  | - | The non-tribal landlord.                           |
| Kadubhagavathy         | - | The Goddess of the Forest.                         |
| Karnemare              | - | Spirit of the ancestors.                           |
| Kathukuthoo            | - | The ear piercing ceremony.                         |
| Kolagam                | - | Measurement of grains<br>(1 Kolagam = 750gm).      |
| Kottu Kalidaivapadathu | - | The Songs of the deities.                          |
| Kundal pani            | - | Bonded Labour.                                     |
| Kuzhal                 | - | Pipe used by Paniyas.                              |
| Mala Daivam            | - | The God of hills.                                  |
| Mandipanam             | - | Clap fee to the wife's mother's sister<br>(Aunt).  |
| Manjal Kanji           | - | Rice porridge prepared with turmeric.              |
| Moopan                 | - | Headman of the Village Assembly of<br>Mala Arayas. |
| Nadu Devva             | - | The God of the Plains.                             |
| Nilalu                 | - | The shadow of evil spirit.                         |
| Nippu panam            | - | Advance paid to the Paniya slaves.                 |
| Ole Devva              | - | The God of the Streams and Rivers.                 |
| Oorukoottam            | - | Village Assembly.                                  |

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Oppamalattu     | - | Sleeping together.   |
| Padi/Paddi      | - | The Paniya settlement consisting of five to fifteen families.  |
| Pakal Bhagavan  | - | The Lord of the Day.   |
| Patachavan      | - | The Creator.   |
| Pattamadam      | - | Segregation house.   |
| Pattuvaipu      | - | Recitation of spells.  |
| Pena            | - | Spirit of a dead man.  |
| Peramaban       | - | The Mala Araya Chieftain appointed by the Raja of Punjar.  |
| Peramb          | - | The cane.  |
| Pettukarathi    | - | Midwife of Cholanaickans.  |
| Polay           | - | Pollution by birth or death.   |
| Ponthechetti    | - | Leaf Shelter.  |
| Poya            | - | The basket made out of Bamboo in which the rice is kept by the Paniyas. The basket in which they keep the spirit of their dead people. |
| Pullanechorutte | - | The first cereal feeding ceremony.   |
| Puthariperunall | - | The New rice offering festival.  |
| Sayippu         | - | The Whiteman.  |
| Shoal / Chola   | - | Grove.   |
| Terumana        | - | The Chariot House.   |
| Thettu          | - | Offence.   |

|                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Thettubekku    | - | The payment of fine imposed to allieviate mystical retributive punishments by the Cholanaickans. |
| Thinka         | - | Menarche.  |
| Thiruvanakettu | - | The ceremony of tying the mundu to the bride and bridegroom among Paniyas.                       |
| Thudi          | - | Drum.  |
| Thumakuli      | - | Purificatory bath.   |
| Ucha           | - | Annual Festivals.  |
| Uru            | - | Life.  |
| Vellam Markkal | - | The blessing method of the newly married couple among Paniyas.                                   |
| Viripu         | - | Double crop fields.  |

# *Introduction*

## INTRODUCTION

The words such as Tribes and Tribals have come to acquire extensive usage in our discourse on social change. The tribal population is characterised by a heterogeneous cultural pattern with variegated economic conditions and activities depending largely on ecology.<sup>1</sup> The Anthropological literature characterizes tribe as a habitat in hilly or hill clad areas and forests or forest-clad areas, isolated or semi-isolated from the wider community, having economic sufficiency, subsistence economy with no surplus production, technologically backward, lack of division of labour, having mechanical solidarity, economic exchange based on reciprocity or on barter, political autonomy or having their own political system, egalitarian values, having their own faith in animism, naturism, totems or magic and witch-craft and finally a sense of belonging to the community.<sup>2</sup> These are the characteristics labeled by colonial construction of tribes and the situation has changed considerably, at least within the structure of tribal communities.

These are the conventional attitudes about the term tribe. There are myriads of changes that took place in this notion. With reference to the tribes of India most of these qualities or characteristics are invisible. Nevertheless, that means that they are not tribes. This study attempts to unravel the present day social, economic and political factors responsible for these changes.

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1. S.S. Shashi, (Ed.), *The Tribal World in Transition*, Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes, Anmol Publication, (New Delhi, 1995), p.2.
  2. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, Published by Bharati Library, (Calcutta, 1877), p. 235 and *The Hindu*, (Chennai), 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2000.

India is the second largest country having highest number of tribal population.<sup>3</sup> Southern India mainly consists of four states—Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In all these states highest tribal concentration of tribes is in Andhra Pradesh and lowest in Tamil Nadu. In these states, almost same categories of tribes inhabit. In Kerala, there are about thirty-five notified tribes inhabiting mainly at Palakkad, Kottayam, Idukki and Wynad districts.<sup>4</sup>

Kerala is the smallest state in the south-west of the Indian peninsula. The State of Kerala was formed in 1956 by merging the three Malayalam speaking regions i.e., Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.<sup>5</sup> Geographically this state can be divided into three regions from west to east. On the west is the Arabian seashore, running from south to north. The next section is the middle land. The region here is known as plains of Kerala. The third region is the mountain region which is called high ranges of Kerala and it forms part of the Western Ghats. There are several tribes living in this mountainous region. In this mountainous region several interesting native races are living. Among them, this study concentrates on the Mala Araya tribes who inhabit the hilly area of Kottayam district<sup>6</sup> and Paniyas and Cholanaickans of Wynad district<sup>7</sup> and

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3. Padmaja Sen, (Ed.), *Changing Tribal Life; A Socio – Philosophical Perspective*, Concept Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 2003), pp.1-4.
  4. L. A. Krishna Iyer, “*Dating the Past in Kerala*,” in V. Sudarsen and S. Sumathi, (Eds.), *Reminiscing Anthropology*, University of Madras, (Chennai, 2005), pp.131-150.
  5. A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, National Book Stall, (Kottayam, 1967), p.366.
  6. Henry Baker, *The Hill Arrians of Travancore*, British Book Society, (London.1862), pp. 4-5.
  7. K. Panoor, *Keralathile Africa*, India Press, (Kottayam, 1963), p. 113.

also on their social, cultural, economic and political development. A historical study is made on the Paniyas and Cholanaickans of Wynad district and Mala Araya tribes of Kottayam district. Among these tribes the Mala Arayas are now on the way of progress. Both the converted and the non-converted Mala Arayas have their own practices. But the economic progress of these Mala Arayas is an interesting aspect for investigation.

## TOPOGRAPHY

Kottayam lies between Latitude 90° 15' and 100° 21' and Longitude 760° 22' and 770° 25'. Kottayam literally means the interior of a fort ***Kotta+Akam***.<sup>8</sup> The rulers of Munjanad and Thekkumkur had their headquarters at Thazhathangadi in the present Kottayam town. In 1753, in order to extend his territory Marthanda Varma (1706-1758)<sup>9</sup> of Travancore attacked Thekkumkur and destroyed the palace and the Thaliyil fort.<sup>10</sup> The remnants of the palaces and forts are still found here. Kottayam district lying a little south to central Kerala has a total area of 2208 sq. km and the district is bordered on the north by Ernakulam, on the east by Idukki, on the south by Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta districts while the Vembanad Lake forms the western boundary. The Pumba, the Manimala, the Meenachil, and the Arakkulam rivers water

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- <sup>8</sup>. G. Rajasekharan, (Ed.), ***District Hand book of Kerala; Kottayam***, Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Kerala, (Trivandrum, 2003), pp.6-8. Hereafter referred as G. Rajasekharan, ***Kottayam***.
- <sup>9</sup>. V. Nagam Aiya, ***The Travancore State Manual***, Vol-III, Government Press, (Madras, 1989), p.333.
- <sup>10</sup>. A. Sreedhara Menon, ***Kerala District Gazetteers, Kottayam***, State Editor Kerala Government, (Trivandrum, 1975), pp.34-35. Hereafter referred as A. Sreedhara Menon, ***Kerala District***

this region. The majority of Mala Arayas live along the banks of the above rivers and its tributaries.<sup>11</sup>

Wynad lies between northern Latitude 11° 27' and 15° 58' and eastern Longitude 75° 47' and 70° 27'.<sup>12</sup> It is bounded on the east by Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu and Mysore district of Karnataka, on the north by Coorg district of Karnataka, on the south by Malappuram and on the west by Kozhikode and Kannur. The altitude of Wynad varies from 700 to 2100 meters from sea level.<sup>13</sup>

## TRIBES OF KERALA

The Scheduled Tribes of Kerala are mainly concentrated in Wynad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasaragod districts. According to the 1991 Census Report 35.82 percent of the total tribal population of the State lives in Wynad, which forms 17.11 percent of the total population of that district. There are 35 communities notified in the list of Scheduled Tribes in the state.<sup>14</sup> They can be classified into four categories, namely hunters and gatherers, agricultural labourers, shifting cultivators and settled

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11. Joy Gnanadason, *A Forgotten History*, Gurukul Lutheran Theological Seminary and Research Institute, (Madras, 1994), pp. 18-19.

12. G. Rajasekharan, (Ed.), *District Handbook of Kerala; Wynad*, Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Kerala, (Trivandrum, 2003), p.8. Hereafter referred as G. Rajasekharan, *Wynad*.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

14. P. K. Sukumaran Nair, *Scheduled Tribes of Kerala at a Glance*, Kerala Institute for Research Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS), Government of Kerala, (Kozhikode, 2003), pp.4-5.

cultivators, based on their traditional economic activities.<sup>15</sup> Most of them are inhabitants in the proximity of forests in the Western Ghats.

There are 35 communities notified in the list of Scheduled Tribes in the state. Their names are Adiyar, Arandan, Eravallan, Hill Pulaya, Irular/Irulan, Kadar, Kammara, Kanikkaran, Kattunayakan, Kochu Velan, Konda Kapus, Kondareddies, Koraga, Kota, Kudiya, Kurichchan, Kurumans, Kurumbas, Maha Malasar, Malai Arayan, Malai Pandaram, Malai Vedan, Malakkuravan, Malasar, Malyan, Malayarayar, Mannan, Marati, Muthuvan/Mudugar, Palleyan, Palliyan, Palliyar, Paniyan, Ulladan, and Uraly.<sup>16</sup> A few communities such as, Kurumbas, Koraga, Kadar, Kattunayakan and Cholanaickans (which are not included in the Scheduled Tribes list of Kerala), have been classified as “*Primitive Tribal Groups*”, considering their relative isolation from the rest of the population of the State. Moreover there are also a few tribal communities, which are not included in the Scheduled Tribe list and they were Allar, Malayan, Malavettuvan, Malamuthan, and some other communities. They have been included in the list of Other Eligible Communities for educational concessions normally showed to Scheduled Tribes.

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<sup>15.</sup> Richard B. Lee and Richard Daly, (Eds.), *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge, 1997), pp.232-234.

<sup>16.</sup> O.P. Sharma, *Scheduled Tribes: Population and Literatures*, Kar Karipa Publication, (New Delhi, 1991), pp.132-141.

## SITUATION OF THE TRIBALS IN KERALA

The term tribe is used to describe certain human social groups. On the basis of their character the term tribe has been defined in each place.<sup>17</sup> The Cholanaickan tribe follows an entirely different way of life from other tribes of Kerala. They are called Cholanaickans because '*Chola*' means '*forest*' and "*Naickan*" means '*king*', and the community is thus called '*kings of the forest*' and also the term '*Naickan*' broadly used for the tribal people.<sup>18</sup> The scholars like K.S. Singh, B.A. Bhanu and a few others interpreted the term '*Chola*' as '*forest*' and '*Naickan*' as '*King*', but in Dravidian dialects the exact meaning of the term '*Chola*' is '*grove*' and '*Naickan*' is equal to a '*chieftain*' or '*leader*' thus, the real meaning of the term Cholanaickan is '*the chieftain of the grove*'. The Cholanaickans mainly inhabit in the forests of Nilambur valley in Malapuram district and Neelimalai and Mudumalai<sup>19</sup> in Wynad district. The first reference about the Cholanaickan is seen in 1974 from the writings of P.R.G. Mathur.<sup>20</sup> Until then they were considered as a sub-group of Kattunaickans. From the Census Reports of 1981 onwards their name started appearing in the Census Reports of Kerala as the '*Primitive Tribal Groups*'.

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17. *The World Book Encyclopaedia*, Vol- 19, Scott Fetzer Company, (London, 1999), p.440.

18. K.S. Singh, (Ed.), *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-I, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), p.349.

19. B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, Anthropological Survey of India, (Calcutta, 1989), p.1.

20. T. Madhava Menon, (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidian Tribes*, Vol. II, The International School of Dravidian Linguistics, (New Delhi, 1996), p.33.

The Paniyas, a major tribal group of Kerala, are the inhabitants of the erstwhile Malabar region mainly concentrated in Wynad and Malappuram districts and in parts of Palakkad and Kozhikode districts.<sup>21</sup> According to the Census of 2001 the total population of these tribes is 81,940 forming 22.5 percent of the total tribal population in the State.<sup>22</sup>

The Paniyas are dark-skinned tribes, short in stature, with broad noses and curly or wavy hair.<sup>23</sup> The etymological meaning of the term '**Paniyan**' indicates that they earn their livelihood from labour as the term '**Pani**' in Malayalam means '**Labour**'. Thus the word '**Paniyan**' literally means '**labourer**' or '**worker**'.<sup>24</sup>

The Mala Arayan is enumerated as the Malai Arayan and the Malayarayar in Census Reports, but it so happens that both are the same. L.K. Krishna Iyer reports that the word '**Mala Arayan**' means '**Mala Arachan**' which means the '**lord of the hills**'.<sup>25</sup> The Mala Arayan is mostly short-statured. They have a long and narrow head shape and a short and broad nose.<sup>26</sup> Mala Aryans are the inhabitants of Kottayam and Idukki districts. They are seen at Kosadi, Punjavayal, Murikkum Vayal,

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21. K.N.K. Sarma, *A. Note on the Paniyan of Kerala*, in *Man in India*, Vol. 72, No.3, (New Delhi, 1997), p.359.
22. *Census of India 2001, Data Highlights: The Scheduled Tribes of Kerala*, Office of the Registrar General, (New Delhi, 2001), p.1.
23. Subadra Channa, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes and Castes*, Vol. 17, Cosmo Publication, (New Delhi, 2004), p.5222.
24. K.S. Singh, *The Scheduled Tribes*, Vol. III, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, (Chennai, 1994), p.974. Hereafter referred as K.S. Singh, *Scheduled Tribes*.
25. K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-II, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), p.809 and A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District op.cit.*, p.56.
26. K.S. Singh, *Scheduled Tribes, op.cit.*, p.718.

Mangapara, and Mundakkayam of the Kanjirappally Taluk and Adukanam-Mala, Vellani, Melukavu, and Erumapra of the Meenachil Taluk.<sup>27</sup> According to the Census Report of 1901 Mala Arayans are described as, “a class of hill tribes, who are little more civilized than the Mannans and have fixed abodes on slopes of high mountain ranges”.<sup>28</sup>

They also gradually started embracing Christianity in 1849, in response to the evangelical activities of Rev. Henry Baker of the Church Mission Society.<sup>29</sup> The Mala Arayan Christian is following a sect of Protestant Christianity under the Church of South India. But the majority of Mala Arayans are not converted Christians and they are following a mixed type of life with tribal and Hindu contents.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the studies on tribal communities are undertaken on the religious and social perspectives. In the case of tribes such as Mala Arayas the same is the situation. But in the case of Cholanaickans and Paniyas, there are number of studies that focus on their problems. A. A. D. Luiz, Chairman, the Kerala State Tribal Enquiry Committee 1957-1958 in his work “*Tribes of Kerala*” gives an interesting ethnography of all the tribes of Kerala. He discusses in his work the way of life of the tribes of Kerala. This is one of the basic books regarding the entire life of the ethnic groups of the state.

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<sup>27</sup>. A.A.D. Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala*, Bharathiya Adimjathi Sevak Sangh, (New Delhi, 1961), p.120.

<sup>28</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, Government Press, (Madras, 1909), p. 10.

<sup>29</sup>. T.I. John, *History of St. Peters C.S.I. Church Erumapra 1849-1999* (Malayalam), Erumapra Church Committee Publication, (Erumapra, 2000), p. 28.

Another important study by L. A. Krishna Iyer, is "*The Travancore Castes and Tribes*" which focus on the cultural and economic problems of the tribes of Kerala. Some interesting accounts on the origin of the tribes are also included in it which makes this study a distinct one. This work also gives a detailed account of cultural, economic and social life of Mala Arayas, Cholanaikans, and Paniyas and several other tribes of Kerala.

Edgar Thurston's "*The Castes and Tribes of Southern India*" is also one of the authentic works that describes the life and explains the primitive customs prevailed among the tribes of South India. This mainly covers all the tribes of South India. It also gives considerable importance to the tribes of Kerala. Though there are so many studies undertaken on tribes of South India, this is one of the authentic works even today.

An edited work by H. S. Saksena and others, "*Scheduled Tribes and Development*" is also an important source of information about the tribes of India. Especially in the matter of development it is a valuable source. It also gives a clear picture of the term, tribe.

Another important work was by K. S. Singh, and his work "*The Scheduled Tribes*" also remains as a great ethnic work about the tribes of India even many years after its publication. It gives a detailed study of the social organizations in these groups. Along with that, it also mentions about their exact economic sources and their traditional occupations.

"*The Hill Arrians of Travancore and the Progress of Christianity among Them*" by Henry Baker is one of the earliest books written about the Mala Araya tribes of Kottayam district of Kerala. The book also

provides valuable information about the community, their food habits and their life in the jungle.

K.G. Daniel one of the eminent scholars of the Mala Araya community writes in his book entitled "*Let the Hills Rejoice*" that Mala Arayas are the people who have their own culture which was far more developed from other tribes and also it refers to the social organizations, customs and traditions of the people.

Samuel Mateer was one of the Christian missionaries who visited these people during his missionary tours in India and he has written a book entitled "*Native Life in Travancore*". He provides in his book a detailed account of Travancore society and the problems of social change among various castes and tribes. He documented interesting details of the physical features and life experiences of the Mala Arayas and also the pattern of houses they constructed in the trees.

The book written by Jose Peter "*Kalahikkunna Charitram*", in Malayalam is one of the valuable books. This book describes both past and present situations among the Mala Araya tribes of Kerala. This work clearly describes the life of the Hindu Mala Arayas and the Christian Mala Arayas and the factors that led to the conversion of the tribes. It is a re-enquiry into the conversion of these tribes. It explains about the coming of the Mala Arayas to Kerala from Central Asia but this had no evidence or reliability. That makes the work little bit confusing too. However, the work is a rich source of many conflicting ideas about these people.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The tribes chosen for this research study i.e., Mala Arayas, Cholanaickans and Paniyas represent a divergent socio-economic groups in Kerala. Among them Mala Arayas leads a far better life two in education, social status and are far more developed than the other two tribes. Yet, they are still backward in the political and administrative fields.

The Paniyas mainly inhabit in the hilly areas of Wynad and its neighbouring districts. Their main economic source was labour. Though a number of land reform measures have been implemented for the tribes, they are the people who even now follow the life of bonded labour. Among the tribes they also got some area of land on the basis of the Land Reform Act by Kerala Government. They lost their revenue-fetching forest land due to outsiders' encroachment and massive deforestation. Thus, they were alienated from their sole right.

In the case of Cholanaickans, the situation is entirely different, they are tribes in all sense. These tribes are only partially touched by modernity. These three categories of tribes have different types of progress. The possible solutions to acquire equal rights for the all-round development of these tribes are also suggested in this study.

Language and the dress code of these tribes are too important to come under the study. Dress is a custom imposed by climate, by vanity and by missionaries. It is in the civilized life that the tribes are so closely

related to the fabric of modernity.<sup>30</sup> However, some of the modern styles didn't touch the way of their life. For instance, food; but more than that dress played a prominent role in that. So the concept of dress and their dress code, i.e., how they accept this modernity in their own perspective is an important matter of scholastic analysis. In Kerala history, the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the period of great social change, mainly on the basis of dress, and up to that time the lower castes were not allowed to dress like upper castes. Then these tribal groups though living in forests were also affected by the consequences of this move. That is why they came under the influence of Western style of dressing.

In the semiotics, dressing was considered as one type of sign system, along with language, body gestures, spatial usages, ritual practices and expressive systems such as arts.<sup>31</sup> With this study it will be profound to do it on the basis of signs and that helps to find the exact role of modernity among the people who inhabit in the hilly areas.

In Kerala whatever may be the tribe and wherever they live, their language is a mixture of Malayalam and Tamil, and this similarity is visible in all three districts mentioned above. So, this shows the connection of these people with this old Dravidian language i.e. Tamil, and thus by analyzing this one can see that the language is the sign of some cultural transition and it basically symbolized the relation between traditional language and this age-old communities in the hills.

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<sup>30</sup>. Lillian Eicher, *The Custom of Mankind*, Vol. II, Gian Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>. William J. Frawley, (Ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*, Oxford University Press, (California, 1992), p.66.

Economic development of a society is visible through its produce and production system. In most of the tribal societies the main source of income has been agriculture. The tribes give an important place to agriculture and most of their food grains are high yielding varieties. This study is also trying to examine the agricultural practices and methods of their house construction. A comparative analysis is also made on the social life of these tribes in Kottayam and Wynad districts.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is well known that tribes, the original settlers and forefathers of all civilizations, are characterized by native values and technologies. In course of time they were pushed back to the corners by migrants all over the world. The present day governments are striving to modernize them in their attempt to integrate them with the mainstream social life. The governments both at the Center and the State are attempting to change their conditions and uplift them through specially designed programmes. However, truth remains that no government or its officials try to understand their genuine problems and needs. But they are the part of our society and their practices are the remnants of our ancient heritage. Hence, the study, on the basis of their social structure, governing systems, life in isolation and cultural values is very relevant.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- The main objectives of the study are the following:
- To study the historical antecedents and history of the tribes inhabiting in the hilly areas of Kottayam and Wynad districts;

- To examine the cultural change and political interventions in the above specified areas;
- To analyze the role of various NGOs in the social transition of the tribes of Wynad district;
- To study the transformation of the faith system in the life of these people;
- To analyze the historical content in their myths; and
- Finally to examine the relationship between the main stream society and these tribes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a historical approach to explain the socio-economic background and political scenario in the tribal settlements of Kottayam and Wynad districts. The field work and ethnographic data collection were carried on in the course of the study. Similarly, the study tries to bring under consideration some of the relevant arguments on tribes and their relations with the main stream society.

It is also important to understand the reason for their social backwardness. Though there are a number of reservations and concessions for the SCs and STs nothing significant is visible in the form of their progress.

## **SCHEME OF THE STUDY**

This study is divided into five chapters with introduction and conclusion. The introductory chapter describes their way of life and

common features along with the review of literature, statement of the problem, relevance of the study, methodology and chapterisation of the study.

The **First Chapter** discusses the economic development of the Paniyas and Cholanaickan tribes of Wynad in comparison with the Mala Araya tribes of Kottayam district. This also discusses the concept of society among these three tribes, and their divergent methods of cultivation. A description on the rituals associated with the cultivation, new changes in cultivation, the rituals associated with the ploughing, agricultural labourers, forest resources, live- stock, their trade practices, pattern of consumption and their economic resources are also included in this chapter.

The **Second Chapter** deals with the comparative analysis of the Paniyas, Cholanaickans and Mala Araya tribes on the basis of their culture and traditions. Especially their myths of origin and its realities, customs and traditions, their purity concepts in relation with other tribes, kinship, marriage and family relations, kinship organization, the descent groups and their principles and operations, concept of ancestor worship, kin and affine, marriage among them, its meaning, rules, rituals, and divorce and extra-marital relations are comprehensively narrated. Their family organization-structure of the family, pattern of inter-personal relations are also specifically analysed in it.

The **Third Chapter** is about the development policies of government and NGOs and their achievements. It also includes the policies of the government for the upliftment of these tribes, and the major and minor development programmes introduced for their welfare.

The merits and demerits of the above programmes and the purpose and functions of the NGOs working among the tribes and tribal women's empowerment programmes, and particularly the role of Self-Help Groups working among these tribes are discussed in this chapter.

The **Fourth Chapter** is about the political organization of the tribes. This chapter mainly deals with the aims and objectives of this organization. It further analyses the role of Panchayath Raj in their development. The political history of tribes of Kerala, and the political relations the tribes developed during the British period and after Independence are succinctly discussed in this chapter. Further, the tribal peoples' attitude towards contemporary politics and their election involvement are also traced.

The **Fifth Chapter** narrates the faith system and its importance in the tribal communities are specified in this work. Their concept of Animism, belief in supernatural forces, Gods and Goddesses, attitude towards conversion to other religions, ritual specialities in relation to traditional medicine and the impact of Hinduism on their belief are clearly specified in this chapter.

A summary of findings is given in the conclusion. Some suggestions for the uplift of these tribals are also presented here.

With this retrospective and comparative study, the most important aspect analysed here is the crisis among the tribes. Nowadays they face number of problems. They look up eagerly on the governments' attitude of encouragement and the main stream society shows not much interest to accommodate them. How far the government and its laws are helpful to them is also a question to be answered. On the basis of the above

situation there are two categories of hill tribes. First, those groups who really repudiate the intervention in tribal settlements. But that will cause their separation from all social systems and mainstream society. Second, those people who are remonstrating for the participation of tribes in the mainstream society. Those who tried to get into the mainstream society were faced with number of critical problems. The people who skillfully survived in these entire crisis reached the trajectory of social progress and economic advancement.

*Chapter- I*

*The Social and Economic  
Organization  
of the Tribes*

# CHAPTER- I

## THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBES

This chapter deals with the social and economic system of the tribes such as Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas. It narrates the social life of the tribes and their major sources of income and the ways by which they have made use of the income in their day-to-day life.

### THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY AMONG THE TRIBES

The scholars who attempted studies in tribal history during the last century had taken efforts to distinguish between tribal and modern society in terms of their legal and political institutions. Morgan Lewis, one of the social scientists, avers that tribal society had been a social organization and not a political organization. The basis of the tribal society was kinship.<sup>1</sup> To anthropologists, the ideal tribal societies are small in size which are restricted in spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations, and they possess morality, religion and world view of corresponding dimensions.<sup>2</sup> Tribal society exhibits a remarkable system of economy of design and has a compactness and self-sufficiency, that is lacking in modern societies.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lewis H. Morgan, (Ed.), *Ancient Society*, Leshi A. White, Mars Baknap, (Cambridge, 1964), p.46.
  2. David L. Sills, (Ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol.V, MacMillan Publishers, (London, 1972), pp.146-147.
  3. Max Gluckman, *Political Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, Aldine & Co., (Chicago, 1965), p.166.

For each tribal community the concept of society is different. However, the structures were almost the same. Another important thing is that for them both society and economy are inseparable. The influence of modernization and new social changes fully or partly influenced the tribal social system. Thus the present day features of each tribal society are a hybrid variety of primitive and modern concepts. It is about five or six decades ago that the study of society and social organization of tribes had begun.<sup>4</sup> Till then the important subject of an anthropologist was the study on the religious beliefs and ancient practices of the tribes. Further, when a researcher starts to explain the society of the tribes, he cannot explain this without their economic organization. According to Andrew Beteille, one of the leading sociologists, it is too difficult to separate tribal society from its economy and economic concepts.<sup>5</sup> Hence an attempt is made on this aspect.

The essence of a human life is his/her social life.<sup>6</sup> It grows out of constant moulding of social interactions and relationships among human beings.<sup>7</sup> When we think generally about the concept of society and social life of the Indian tribes, there are certain common characteristics visible on the basis of prevailing conditions of their social life. They are as follows: the natural environment, population, material technology and

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4. S. C. Dube, "*Social and Cultural Factors in Development*", in Yogesh Atal and Ralph Pieris, (Ed.), *Asian Rethinking of Development*, Abhinav Publishers, (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 237-238.

5. Andrew Beteille, "*The Definition of Tribe*", in Romesh Thapar, (Ed.), *Tribe, Caste and Religion in India*, Macmillan Company of India, (Meerat, 1977), pp.7-9.

6. B.K. Rai and L.P. Vidyarthi, *The Tribal Culture of India*, Concept Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 1985), p.145.

7. Jaganath Pathy, *Anthropology of Development*, Gian Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1987), p.6.

social environment.<sup>8</sup> In these factors, natural environment is always considered as the basic one. All societies depend on it for their basic needs such as food, fuel, shelter etc. The people provide the raw materials for a well organized society as it is always composed of relationships among the tribes and organized society. Material technology is always inseparably linked with social life. This technique helps in obtaining natural resources, erecting a shelter, making tools, in preparing food and so on. The range of material technology is a parameter for the society to be called as advanced or backward.<sup>9</sup> Apart from these three characters, another factor of paramount importance is the social environment. The social environment is a group of other social environments, that includes aspects like sex differences, age, kinship, locality, social status, political power, professions, religions, magic, totemism and volunteer associations.<sup>10</sup> So the society or social organization includes all these factors.

Among the South Indian tribes there are two common social systems. The more popular social units are clan and family. The clans are mostly named after the settlement or territory and the clan is an exogamous group.

## **THE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CHOLANAICKANS**

The concept of society among Cholanaickans is that they are distributed in various territorial groupings called '*Chenmam*'.<sup>11</sup> Their

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<sup>8</sup>. Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, Waltz & Co., (London, 1961), pp.42-45.

<sup>9</sup>. Raymond Firth, *Human Types*, Waltz & Co., (London, 1956), p.109.

<sup>10</sup>. R. Piddington, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, Macmillan & Co., (London, 1956), pp. 56-71.

<sup>11</sup>. *Chenmam* is the territorial divisions of the Cholanaickans.

society is politically acephalous. The headman of a '*Chenmam*' is called '*Chenmakkaran*'<sup>12</sup> who is the decision maker regarding the social, political, religious and economic matters.<sup>13</sup>

A *Chenmam* has two to seven primary families who are patrilineal kins and each primary family rely on each other during emergencies and sickness. The *Chenmakkaran* is also the official priest.<sup>14</sup> He is believed to possess control over the deities and spirits and has the power to send mercenary spirits to harm others and punish the trespassers of this *Chenmam* through magical acts.<sup>15</sup>

Nuclear family is the primary social and economic unit. After marriage, the young couple starts an independent economic life. Residence is generally patrilocal, but exceptions are there.<sup>16</sup> Husband and wife share the burden of running the family. Like many other tribal social systems they also have their own rules and norms in their family and social relations. The responsibilities of the family are shared that is husband and wife had equal responsibilities in household chores-cooking and child tending.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12.</sup> *Chenmakkaran* -The territorial chieftain.

<sup>13.</sup> P.R.G. Mathur, *Health, Medicine, Health Report Services in Tribal Areas*, Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies Report (Unpublished Report), (Calicut, 1978), p.17.

<sup>14.</sup> M.G. Nag, "*Tribal Population, Its Growth and Structure: Review*", in *Man In India*, Vol. 10, (New Delhi, 1980), pp.1-5.

<sup>15.</sup> C. Goplan Nair, *Malabar Series: Wynad; Its People and Traditions*, Higginbothams and Co., (Madras, 1911), pp.59-60.

<sup>16.</sup> N. Viswanathan, *Tribal Health and Medicine in Kerala*, D.C. Books Publication, (Kottayam, 2008), p. 29.

<sup>17.</sup> B.A. Bhanu, "*Boundaries, Obligations and Reciprocity Levels of Territoriality among the Cholanaickans of South India* ", in Aparna Rao and Michael J. Cashmir, *India Readings in Sociology and Social Anthropology*, Oxford University Press, (New Delhi, 2003), pp.246-251.



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The Cholanaickans consider *Tsenmam*<sup>18</sup> into a number of *Nadus*.<sup>19</sup> *Nadus* are further territorial sub-divisions of a *Tsenmam*. A *Tsenmam* may have two or more *Nadus*. The function of a *Nadu* is to facilitate easy demarcation and identification of the entire territory of a *Tsenmam*. The *Nadu* are also demarcated in the same way as in the case of *Tsenmam*. Thus the Cholanaickans follow a separate life from other tribal communities. Their rules are strict in their society. So the concept of society among them is the symbol of unity.<sup>20</sup> Besides, they are ready to accept people from other tribal community like Pathinaikans, and the Cholanaickans share their collected goods with their society or *Chenmam*. This again emphasises the kinship among them. In all this the Cholanaickans' social organization is a combination of socio-cultural elements like territorial organization –*Nadu* and inter-*Nadu* relationships and kinship.

## THE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF PANIYAS

The Paniyas, a major tribal group of Kerala, are the inhabitants of erstwhile Malabar region mainly concentrated in Wynad and Malapuram districts and in parts of Palakkad and Kozhikode districts. The term 'Paniya' is reported to have originated from the word '*Pani*' which in Malayalam means work. Thus the word '*Paniya*' literally means worker

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.248. and B. A. Bhanu, one of the eminent Anthropologists who studied about Cholanaickans; he uses the term *Tsenmam* for *Chenmam*. p. 22

<sup>19</sup> *Nadu*: Sub-division of a *Tsenmam*. The limits and boundaries are demarcated by natural objects. Each sub-division has a name.

<sup>20</sup> B.A. Bhanu, "*The Nomadic Cholanaickans of Kerala; An Analysis of their Movement*", in *Nomads in India*, (Calcutta, 1982), pp. 215-226.

or '*labourer*'.<sup>21</sup> The social organizations of Paniyas are different from that of Cholanaickans and Mala Arayas. Paniya as a whole may be categorized into two broad sub divisions according to their dwelling pattern, that is, Paniya of the plains, those living in contact with other non-tribal people and those living in hilly forests more or less in an isolated state with limited contact with the people of the plains. So the social concept and society among these two groups are different. However, this particular study is concentrating on the tribes who inhabit in the forests of Wynad and its plains. As mentioned above the Paniyas are not just labourers but bonded labourers. So their social system is an elaborate one that comprehends the whole group or even large sections of it.<sup>22</sup>

When compared to the other tribes of the plains the Paniyas in Wynad enjoyed certain advantages which are reflected in their slightly better standard of life. Till the explosive growth of population of Wynad by migration, the forests of Wynad were a rich source of tubers, wild fruits and edible greens and grams, which kept the Paniyas better fed than the plain labourers.<sup>23</sup> In Wynad area and its neighbourhood, the Paniyas were a majority in the agricultural labourer force and the farmers valued them highly for their efficiency. As a matter of fact, agriculture in Wynad would have been almost impossible without the support of Paniya

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<sup>21</sup> K.N.K. Sharma, "*A Note on Paniyans of Kerala*", in *Man in India*, Vol. 72, No.3 (New Delhi, 1992), p. 359.

<sup>22</sup> A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas ; An ex-slave Tribe of South India*, Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, (Calcutta, 1992), p.77. Hereafter referred as A.Aiyappan, *The Paniyas ; An ex-slave*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.77-78.



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labourers.<sup>24</sup> This life led them to make regular contacts with non-tribal communities like Christians, Muslims and Nairs. This situation still remains among the Paniyas in the plains. However, both plains and forest Paniyas followed a particular social system that will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

In the social system of the Paniyas the territorial division is an important one. The territorial divisions of Paniyas are called *Nadus* or traditional Paniya groups. Each traditional Paniya group or *Nadu* has a hereditary headman called *Koyma* (literally ruler). The office of *Koyma* service is found only in a few places. Under the *Koyma* there are assistants called *Chemmi*.<sup>25</sup> The position of *Chemmi* is usually hereditary, deriving from father to the eldest son or to the eldest male member of the lineage. He is the decision maker over disputes. It is he who represents the hamlet on important occasions in a neighboring hamlet.<sup>26</sup> In practice in many places the succession is patrilineal, but occasionally matrilineal. The *Koyma* families are likely to have been families of slaves attached to the royal farms.<sup>27</sup> The *Koyma* is considered as the leader who presides over all social activities connected with the transition rites and meetings of elders to settle cases mostly concerning elopements. As a presiding officer he does very little and most of the duties are performed by the *Chemmi* with whom he shares the perquisites which are sent to him by the *Chemmi* in case he is not able to be present

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<sup>24</sup> R. R. Prasad Sachidanandan, (Ed.), *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, Vol. III, Discovery Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1996), p. 794.

<sup>25</sup> *Chemmi* is a corruption of the word *Jenmi* which means landlord.

<sup>26</sup> N. Viswanathan, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>27</sup> B. Francis Kulirani, *Ethnographic Structure and Process: The Paniyan of Wynad*, (Unpublished Monograph), Anthropological Survey of India, (Mysore, 1984), pp.11-15.

in person at a particular function.<sup>28</sup> These are the responsibilities of the headmen, who acts as an intermediary between the tribes of his own community and other tribal communities and non-tribal people. Here the powers and functions of the headmen are well defined. But the most important feature of Paniya societies is their clan system. The Paniya society is sub-divided into numerous clans like, Manjankodan, Pattiampan, Narrikkodan, Chathankodan, Punangodan, Vazhawatoom, Erumadan, Nallivampadan, Cholappram, Manantodiyam, Adumpattan, Eranatan and Choyimoolan. These clans are generally named after a place, where they largely inhabit.

The clan exogamy is observed strictly and violation of this is tantamount to incest. This is because that if a woman elopes with a non-Paniya she is expelled from her clan for some years; by submitting a plea for pardon in front of an assembly of the hamlet people and by touching the feet of *Chemmi*, the offender can come back to her *Illam* or clan.<sup>29</sup> But the male member's marriage with non-tribal woman is not a matter of importance. It clearly denotes the prevalence of patrilineal system of tradition among the tribes. The *Chemmi* collects Rs. 10 as a fine from the woman who is expelled. This payment of fine was known as *Thettupaisekettal*. The *Chemmi* spends this amount for religious purpose.<sup>30</sup>

However, now a days the authority of the traditional social control mechanism has diminished as a result of extraneous influence on the

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<sup>28</sup> S. R. Das, "*Paniyans and Kurumbas of Wynad*", (A Study in Contrast), in *March of India*, Vol. VI, Part. II, 1953, pp. 44-46. Hereafter referred as *Paniyans and Kurumbas*.

<sup>29</sup> Edgar Thurston and K. Rangacharya, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, Cosmo Publication, (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 52-57.

<sup>30</sup> P. Somasekharan Nair, *Paniyar*, National Book Stall, (Kottayam, 1976), p. 9.

formal, social and political institutions like adult franchise and Panchayath Raj. Present youth of Paniya community ignore the words of *Chemmi*. His role became perfunctory. Some Paniyas complained that these days even the socially deviant women are escaping from punishments. Monogamy is the dictum, and there are a number of instances of hamlet endogamy. Violation of social taboos such as incest, clan endogamy etc... is believed to be punished by ancestral wrath leading to pregnancy difficulty and famine conditions.<sup>31</sup>

Nuclear family is the basic social and economic unit of Paniya society. Both man and wife share the burden of running the family. The husband is the head and decision maker. Most of the families have dependents in their houses. In 20 percent of the huts more than one conjugal family is housed. There is no social stratification in the families of a hamlet. Generally, the hamlet members are patrilineally related i.e. the men folk mostly belonged to the same clan and the women folk often belong to different clans of distant hamlets. So they share with one another their sorrows and happiness and even food during the lean period.<sup>32</sup> This kind of social system is the symbol of a reciprocal relation. That itself denotes the primitive system of life. In the Paniya community they have headman and other sub-authorities to control their activities, so it is the responsibility of this authority to sustain the power structures. But what actually happens is that modern changes largely influence the Paniya society. That led to the changes in their social system. Thus, at present Paniyas are under full control of local authorities - Panchayath

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<sup>31</sup>. S.R. Das, "*Somatological Study of the Paniyans of Wynad*", in *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology*, Government of India, Vol.4, Part-1, (New Delhi, 1955), pp. 51-60. Hereafter referred as S. R. Das, *Paniyans of Wynad*.

<sup>32</sup>. B. Francis Kulirani, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

and other political authorities that diminished the power of traditional authority. That led to the large scale intrusion of modern authority into the social system.

## **THE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF MALA ARAYA TRIBES**

The social organization and concept of society among Mala Araya tribes are different from the other tribes. They have a slightly advanced social system from other tribes of Kerala. Here one thing which must come under consideration is that there were two types of Mala Arayas - Hindu Mala Araya and Christian Mala Araya. Before the coming of the Christian Missionaries during 1849-1850 there was only one group of Mala Arayas. During 1849-1872 majority of the Mala Arayas of Meenachil, Mundakkayam and Thodupuzha areas embraced Christianity and led to the formation of Christian Mala Arayas. So it is pertinent here to discuss first about the concept of society and social organization of Mala Arayas, before 1830s.

The social organization of the tribes was built on the foundation of exogamy.<sup>33</sup> In some parts they are divided into six clans called illam. But here these clan names are taken from the various gifts presented to a chief. Among most of the South Indian tribes the clan names come from the features of the place where they dwell, say for instance the Paniyas, living in Mananthavady, a place 35kms away from Kalpetta, the headquarters of the Wynad district, their clan name is called Mananthodiyam. Unlike other tribes the Mala Arayas had their clan names

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<sup>33</sup>. K.G. Daniel, *Let the Hills Rejoice*, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (New Delhi, 1998), p.1.



**Mala Arayas of Kottayam District**

on the basis of the presents they give to the Ambalapuzha Chief. These *Illams* are the *Vala Illam*-belonging to the descendants of the man who presented bangles (*Vala*) to the Ambalapuzha Chief, *Enna Illam*-belongs to the descendants of the man who presented oil to the chief, *Mundu Illam* belongs to the descendants of the man who presented cloth to the chief,<sup>34</sup> *Puthani Illam* was to the man who presented flowers to the chief, *Korangani Illam* refers to those who habitually eat monkeys and *Panthirayara Illam* refers to those who attend festive occasions. The last two *Illams* do not have any recognized origins behind them and were considered inferior to the other four *Illams*.

There are five more existing *Illams* and these are named after the presents given to the Cheraman Perumal. From the gift of garlands originated the name *Mala Illam*, and from the gift of paddy created the name *Nellipalli Illam*. The *Modalikad Illam* are the descendants of one who squeezed through a small hole.<sup>35</sup> *Vala* and *Mala Illams* are brother *Illams*. *Modalikad Illam* is said to be inferior to the other *Illams*. The other three *Illams* are *Brother-in-Law Illams*.<sup>36</sup> Many of the above named clans exist, but the clan rules are either forgotten or ignored. This was the situation that existed during the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that these clan names are given to them by a king to whom they gave the presents.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>. Jose Peter, *Kalahikunna Charitram*, (Malayalam), Christian Sahithya Samithy, (Thiruvalla, 2003), p. 45.

<sup>35</sup>. A. A. D. Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala, Kerala State Enquiry Committee 1957-1958*, Bharathiya Adimjathi Sevak Sangh, (New Delhi, 1961), p.121.

<sup>36</sup>. K.G.Daniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>37</sup>. L.A. Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes*, Government Press, (Trivandrum, 1937), pp. 169-170.

Though they have different clans, the Mala Arayas believe that each clan has descended from a common ancestor and are thus blood relations. Solidarity was shown by the fact that each member in the same clan was considered as brothers.<sup>38</sup>

In the early years of Mala Araya history, there existed a council of elders. The aim of this council was to discuss and solve the disputes and matters of public concern of villages. The headmen were selected by the people and approved by the government forest officers. From the writings of Henry Baker, the CMS missionary who worked among them says that “these people are restrained by the local chieftain, the Puniyatu Raja. As the symbol of power the headman was given a cane tied with a silver thread. So he was called *Peramban* that means (*Peramb* = *Cane*) one who holds the *Peramb*, is called *Peramban*.”<sup>39</sup> That was the sign of his power over the people of his village.

The social organization of the Mala Arayas is different from the Christian Mala Arayas. They mostly inhabited in Mundakkayam, one of the tribal centered areas of Kottayam district. It is not wrong to call them Hindu Mala Arayas because they had temples of Hindu gods under their control and the tribes were worshiping these deities. For instance, the temple at Kosady at Mundakkayam is one of the Siva temples under the control of Hindu Mala Arayas. Even today they live separately from other communities. They have their own traditions and ways of social relations. But this practice is common in their religious faith also which is manifest

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<sup>38.</sup> *125 Years Church History (1872-1997), Holy Immanuel CSI Church*, Published by Church Committee (Koovapally, 1997), pp. 20-23.

<sup>39.</sup> Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam* (Malayalam), Translated by A.N. Sathyadas, Arrow Books, (Trivandrum, 2005), pp. 121-123. Hereafter referred as Samuel Mateer, *Keralam*.

in their large number of adoptions from the neighboring societies. In the case of education also they are somewhat better. But vast majority live still in poor condition.<sup>40</sup>

Endogamy is the practice of the Mala Araya community. Marriage is regulated from *Illam* (clan exogamy). Cross-cousin marriage is permitted among them. Family based on monogamous union is the basic social unit among the Mala Arayas. Also, nuclear family is predominant among them.<sup>41</sup>

The Christian Mala Arayas have matrilineal clans same as the Mala Araya counterparts. The role of these clan divisions in the regulation of marriages is not an important criterion among them in recent times, and many are unaware of the clan names. The Christian Mala Arayas like the Syrian Christians are increasingly using family names like Adchumakan, Pakkampulli, Kodakallam and Tharamundakkan, which were the earlier names of family lineages under clans. These family names are traced in the paternal line. In the local tribal social milieu, they consider themselves as superior to other tribal communities of the area, namely Mala Ulladan, Mannan, Urali, and Muthuvan.<sup>42</sup>

All these reveal that the social organization of Mala Arayas and Christian Mala Arayas is slightly different from one another. However, the three tribes have different types of social systems based on their

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<sup>40</sup>. Personal Interview, Kannan, Priest, Sree. Cheruvalli Devi Mala Araya Temple, Mundakkayam, Kottayam , 02/05/2010.

<sup>41</sup>. N. Suseela Devi, "*Malai Arayan/Mala Arayan*", in K.S. Singh (Ed.), *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-II, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), p. 812.

<sup>42</sup>. S. Johns, *One Hundred and Twenty Five Years History of Melukavu Christ Church*, Published by the C. S. I. Diocese, (Melukavu, 1977), p. 25.

habitat i.e., in forest or in plains. The Cholanaickans had a social system that fully upholds the pure tribal background. The Paniyas had a system which is a combination of modern social system and tribal social system, whereas the Mala Arayas have a social system mixed with modern systems. This will become clearer if their modes of cultivation are analysed.

## **THE DIVERGENT METHODS OF CULTIVATION**

It is believed that man has been existing on this planet for two million years. All the time he has survived by getting food from the land, and for 99 percent of it he has done so by hunting and by gathering plant materials.<sup>43</sup> Even today most of the tribes continue to be food gatherers and rarely do they practice cultivation. For them the agricultural products are not fully satisfying their needs. The cereals will remain for a few months after harvest. After that they have to depend on hunting and other food materials like wild tubers and seeds. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the importance of cultivation in the lives of the tribes like Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas.

## **THE RITUAL PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE CULTIVATION**

In this study, the three tribes who inhabit in different districts of Kerala State have their own food habits and modes of agricultural production. Cholanaickans and Paniyas inhabit in Wynad and Malapuram districts of Kerala. These are districts of high altitude facilitating

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<sup>43</sup>. Robin Clerk and Geoffrey Hindly, *The Challenges of the Primitives*, Jonathan Cape Ltd., (London, 1975), p. 19.

plantations and spice cultivators. The major plantation crops are coffee, tea, cardamom, ginger and rubber.<sup>44</sup>

The rice fields of Wynad are in the valleys formed by hillocks and in majority of paddy lands, only a single crop is cultivated. Paddy is cultivated in 19,308 hectares.<sup>45</sup> This is the general agricultural situation in Wynad district.

The districts like Kottayam and Idukki have large areas of plantations and other crops cultivations. The Mala Araya tribes inhabiting these districts are mostly engaged in plantation cultivation. They cultivated varieties of paddy in the early years. But due to grater income in the plantation cultivation they turned to this cultivation. The most important reason is that they have more lands. Although, the tribes have some rituals in association with the cultivation of land, that are different in each of the tribal communities. It is relevant here to have a discussion on the cultivation rituals of Cholanaickans.

The tribe named Cholanaickans usually inhabit the inner forests of Wynad. They have only a limited contact with the outside world. In the forest lands they depend mostly on ecology for food. In other words the environment to a certain extent moulds the food habits of people. The Cholanaickans' subsistence system can be grouped into two, i.e., plant food and animal food.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>. G. Rajasekharan, (Ed.), *District Handbook of Kerala; Wynad*, Department of Information and Public Relations, (Wynad, 2003), pp. 17-20.

<sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>46</sup>. B. A. Bhanu, "*Social Development in a Pre-Agricultural Society, Cholanaickan; The Cavemen of Kerala*", Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Mysore, (Mysore, 1984), p.13.

The first category i.e. the plant food includes leaves, tubers and roots, fruits, seeds, mushroom etc... The second category includes animal food like fish, crabs, turtle, birds, rabbits, deer, pigs, wild buffaloes, monkeys etc., so they have no connection with cultivation. But in some areas the Cholanaickans living in Malapuram district practice shifting cultivation. However, nowadays much of the primitive life style has changed and now they are ready to come out from these forests and like to lead the life in the plains. During her visit this researcher met a number of Cholanaickan family members in the Neelihills near Kalpetta, the Wynad District headquarters. Their main occupation is plantation cultivation. They have no land of their own, they are living in the plantations of landlords, by taking care of the tea or coffee plants.<sup>47</sup> For food they depend on ration shops only, because they don't know cultivation or they do not own lands to experiment with the methods of cultivation. So throughout the twelve months they depend on ration shops for rice, forests for animal food and wild streams for fish.

The Cholanaickans are not basically agriculturalists. They are the cave men of Kerala. Once they come out from the forests, their total life style will change and it will compel them for a settled life. Their life in the estates are not secured and at any moment they have to leave these estates and will not have any employment. The present Forest Acts-the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act 1980 totally denied the entry of tribes into the forests and it is a grave injustice to them.<sup>48</sup> However, a recent shift in approach, the Parliament has enacted

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<sup>47</sup>. Personal Interview, Ponnan, Paniya Tribal Labourer, Kallikeny, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>48</sup>. Indigenous Issues, *Indian Forest Rights Act of 2006: Illusion or Solution? Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network*, Available at <http://www.aitpn.org/>.

the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 to undo the historical injustices' suffered by the tribal communities.<sup>49</sup>

The Paniyas are declared "*Agrestic Slaves*" and are sold with the land to which they are attached as slave labourers.<sup>50</sup> Till recently they were working as agricultural labourers in the lands belonging to the Chettiars of Wynad. They have their own rituals and traditions in relation to cultivation. Particularly the whole rice cultivation in Wynad is carried out by the Paniyas. In most cases these lands belong either to temples or landlords.<sup>51</sup> The rituals start from the clearing of land for cultivation. First of all they divide them into various parishes and each of these has a '*Kuttan*' who alone is entitled to plant the first rice seedling in the year.<sup>52</sup> This institution of Kuttan or headman, is usually selected by the landlord on whose farm they settle. He is obeyed and respected, but nothing is paid for his maintenance. Among some groups office of the headman is hereditary.<sup>53</sup> The *Kuttans* also have some other responsibilities especially in marriages, which will be discussed later. When planting paddy or

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49. Lovleen Bhullar, "*Comment the Indian Forest Rights Act 2006: A Critical Appraisal*", in *Environment and Development Journal*, Vol. IV, Part-1, Law, New Delhi, 2008, p.20.

50. S. R. Das, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

51. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas of the Nilgiris; Paniyas of Malabar; A Chinese-Tamil Cross; A Cheruman Skull; Kuruba or Kurumba; Summary of Results*, Asian Educational Services, (Chennai, 2004), pp.19-20. Hereafter referred as Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas*

52. A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture and Welfare*, Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, (Madras, 1988), p.70. Hereafter referred as A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture*.

53. A. A. D. Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

herding cattle, the Paniya is seldom seen without the *Kontay* or basket-work to provide protection from rain.<sup>54</sup>

In the past, the Paniyas relied on forests for fruits and tubers, along with labour works in the land owned by the *Jenmi's*. But at present they have completely given up their forest life and have started to live fully in the cultivation fields. So it is necessary for them to get sufficient food for their lives.

As mentioned above the Paniyas are primarily agricultural labourers, but very few families possess land holdings. They are traditionally *Bonded Labourers* or *Kundal-Panikkars*. Nowadays their economy is well connected with that of non-tribal settlers like Christians, Muslims, and Nairs, who control their occupational patterns and thereby influencing their fiscal means. Since they are employed for agricultural operations only in the sowing and harvesting seasons, they remain unemployed in the remaining three to four months.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the Paniya economy is balanced by this agricultural labour and this clearly indicates the importance of cultivation in their lives. Though they are clever agricultural labourers, they are underpaid. At present, the most serious problem they are facing is their alcoholism to which they are much addicted. But the tribes like Mala Arayas are entirely different from all other tribes.

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<sup>54</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup>. P.G.Padhmini, *Adivasi Kathakal*, Samayam Publications, (Kannur, 2008), pp.8-9.

In the early years, as K.G. Daniel denotes,

*“Some of the Arrians were rich, being large cultivators of the hill tops, and they cleared jungles in the dry season and sowed during the rains”.*<sup>56</sup>

Thus, they produce abundance of rice. In the early stages, they were nomadic farmers. Now they are leading a settled agricultural life. The tribes consider cultivation as very sacred. They perform some *Pujas* before selecting the ground for cultivation. Woman during menstruation period should not go near the work spot for seven days.<sup>57</sup> They follow - terraced cultivation in this mountainous region. In choosing a piece of ground for cultivation in the jungle and before cutting the trees in the jungle they take five strips of bark of equal length, and knot all the ends together, holding them in the left hand by the middle. If they, when tied, form a perfect circle, the omen is good and lucky and the position in which the cord falls on the ground is carefully noted by the bystanders.<sup>58</sup>

They place their agricultural implements in the fields for *Pujas* every year. On the twenty-eighth day of *Makaram* (January- February), they gather all their implements and perform *Pujas* by breaking coconuts and sacrificing fowls.<sup>59</sup> For a long time the day of *Vishu* the auspicious day of Earth has been important for them. All these show that they give much importance to agriculture. They make offerings to the hill gods before cultivation and also after harvesting. Using guns also is considered as a blessing from their guardian spirits, they are experts in weaponry and

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<sup>56.</sup> K.G.Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>57.</sup> Jose Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>58.</sup> Edgar Thurston and K.Rangachrya, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, Asian Educational Services, (Madras, 2001), p. 393.

<sup>59.</sup> Samuel Mateer, *The land of Charity*, Dodd and Mead, (New York, 1870), p.77.

guns.<sup>60</sup> Harvesting has been an important festival for them and it is called “*Puthari Perunnal*” (New Rice Festival). Among Christian Mala Arayas, every church celebrates its harvest festival by giving first reaped fruits and agricultural products to church to commemorate their past lives.<sup>61</sup> Thus, both Paniyas and Mala Arayas give much importance to cultivation. In addition, for their betterment they conduct pujas in cultivating lands with offerings from their agricultural products to the god.

## DEVELOPMENT IN CULTIVATION

The Cholanaickans who are living outside forest area are interested in plantation works. During the visits of the researcher in Cholanaickan colonies, one thing has become very clear and that is the fact that they are living in the lands of their landlords and are cultivating in the coffee and tea plantations. Only a few people own land and by cultivating in these lands they buy weekly ration from State Government Ration Shops.<sup>62</sup> They carry on their life in this way.

With the coming of the English in Kerala particularly in Wynad, a major change took place caused by ever increasing consumption of coffee and tea by the English. As a result many tribals give up the cultivation of ragi, paddy and other agricultural crops and turned to plantation work. Beginning of the cultivation of cash crops was also the great change that

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<sup>60.</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61.</sup> Personal Interview, K.J. Joseph, General Secretary, Mala Araya Samrakshna Samithy, Muttom, Idukki, 25/04/2010.

<sup>62.</sup> Personal Interview, Neeli, Cholanaickan Tribal Woman, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

took place in these areas.<sup>63</sup> At present most of the hills and valleys are dotted with tea, coffee and pepper plantations. During her visit to the field studies, the researcher witnessed the new changes in the cultivation of crops, i.e., change from cultivation of cereals to cash crops. Similarly a very few Paniyas own lands and do agricultural work as independent farmers. Therefore, these changes are visible in these fields also.

Mala Arayan tribal people are facing the same situation. Though they are living in the mountain ranges, they develop terraced cultivation especially of varieties of paddy and other cereals. Besides rice they cultivate varieties of crops such as tapioca, yam and other grams. The Mala Arayas are very much concerned about the climatic changes in relation to the cultivation. In their chain of cultivation of rice, they follow the method known as "*Virip*". It is a kind of multi-crop cultivation; first, they cultivate *Moden* (a kind of rice) because they could reap it much ahead of other varieties, and then *Malamundan* and *Punja*. But it takes longer time for growing and for reaping. But the yield is more than all other varieties of rice which is cultivated on the hills. These are quite unknown to the present generation of tribals.<sup>64</sup> The main reason for this lack of awareness is because of the coming of Christian Missionaries to these hills; they converted them and taught them a new way of life adopting to the practice of drinking coffee and tea instead of traditional beverages. They began to cultivate commercial crops like coffee, tea, rubber and spices. Thus, the cultivation of cereals by Mala Arayas was

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<sup>63</sup>. K.S. Mathew and Joy Varkey, (Ed.), *Migration in South India*, Shipra Publication, (Thalassery, 2005), p.215.

<sup>64</sup>. Nisha Joseph, *Conversion and Social Transition of Mala Araya Community*, Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation, The School of Social Sciences, Mahathma Gandhi University, (Kottayam, 2006), p. 18.

replaced by plantation cultivation.<sup>65</sup> To day these are the major plantations in these areas.

## **THE RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH PLOUGHING**

There are no special rituals in relation to ploughing, among these tribes. However, they offer worship to native gods and perform a few rituals when they begin their agricultural activities.

## **AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

The three tribes viz., Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas, follow an entirely different life style from each other. The method of cultivation and their ways of life clearly show this. Cholanaickans only occasionally practice cultivation. Those people who came out from forests had started living in plains. They depend on landlords for plantation cultivation and the wages from this work are spent for their livelihood. The children of this people are also not getting proper education.

According to A. Aiyappan, the Chennai Anthropologist, the Paniyas were actually agrestic slaves, bought and sold with the land, to which they were attached as slave labourers. Years of virtual slavery has made the Paniyas, a demoralized community. However, it is to be remembered that the Paniyas are on the whole, a hardy people, and under very difficult conditions in Wynad district during the seasons of malaria

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<sup>65.</sup> T. I. John, *Church History 1848-1999, St. Peters CSI Church Erumapra*, Published by Erumapra Church History Editorial Board, (Kottayam, 2000), pp. 84-85.

and other dreadful diseases and very humid climate, the Paniyas alone can do the hard agricultural work.<sup>66</sup>

The word Paniya means worker. From their legend itself, they are termed as bonded labourers. According to A.A.D. Luiz, these tribes are clever agricultural labourers, especially in rice cultivation. In the early times till 1980 there was a custom that was followed in the *Valliyur Kavu temple* in connection with its annual temple festival. Hence, it is most important to know about the connection of Paniyas with this temple.

During her field study, the researcher visited this temple to know about the history of the temple. At that time, the Pujari (priest) of the temple explained that the *Valliyur Kavu* is the temple which was frequently visited by the chieftain Pazhasi Raja and his ancestors. Long ago, there existed a tradition that from Kodungallur, the place near Aluva, in Eranakulam district, an oracle regularly visited Northern Malabar with a sword from Kodungalloor temple in the month of *Meenam* (March-April). Once, in his journey to Northern Malabar, when he reached the area near the present temple he became tired and took rest on the bank of a stream, when he woke up he did not find his sword. He became frightened and cried from there that he lost his sword. At that moment, he saw some tribal cowherds and asked them to help him to find out the sword. They all started to search and in a few minutes a Paniya cowherd found the sword tied with strings in the present *Valliyur Kavu Temple*. The oracle became happy; but in a few minutes, the sword disappeared again. Then the Raja of Malabar who was from Kottayam royal family,

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<sup>66</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture, op. cit.*, p. 89.

constructed the present temple at this place where they found the sword.<sup>67</sup> They all believe that this temple has divine powers and it is for this reason that the Paniyas are more attached to this temple.

This was the connection of Paniyas with this temple and later the temple festivals became important to the tribes. They take part almost in every festival of this temple especially at the time of *Meenam* 1-14 (March-April). Along with the festival, the temple authorities conduct a trade fair also. In annual fairs, the Paniya could sell himself and his services to the highest bidder, thus his position was changed from 'an independent labourer' to a 'bonded labour'.<sup>68</sup> Such a condition reveals the fact that poverty and economic dependency renders social freedom disfunctional. That means this sale of labour power pushed him to slavery. As it says, "The owner knows that the slave will certainly come for some money to go to the *Kavu*. He will come and stand a few feet away in silent expectation. The master will remind him of all his falling in the last work year. This is also a warning for the next year. After the lists of 'dos' and 'do not's' the slave is given *Nippu Panam* (Advance paid to the slave). This varies from place to place from Rs.5 to Rs.10. Once this money is accepted from the master, a slave has to work under him throughout the next year."<sup>69</sup>

This custom was actually practiced in relation to cultivation. But nowadays the cultivation has undergone several changes. This ritual or

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<sup>67</sup>. Personal Interview, Krishnan, Temple Committee Member, Sree. Cheruvalli Devi Mala Araya Temple, Mundakayam, Kottayam, 20/04/ 2010.

<sup>68</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An ex-slave, op. cit.*, pp.13-12.

<sup>69</sup>. P.G. Padmini, *Keezhala Jeevitha Mudra* (Malayalam), Published by Department of Scheduled Caste Development, Government of Kerala, Samayam Publication, (Calicut, 2008), pp.7-11.

yearly market came to be bargained for their labour power. That just became a sales product. Gradually that turned to slavery because; they have to transfer with their landlords property. That was also a bond for a fixed period. Each landlord wanted 40 or 50 slaves and gave the slave money to these tribes. The wages for such slaves used to be two-seer paddy for men and one seer for women. This was given only in the working days. Other days they have to depend on the forest products. The landlords were people who belong to Gowda, Nambiar, Nair, Christian and Muslim communities.

This cyclic system of bonded labour centered round the temple Valliur Kavu, near Mananthavady in Wynad District and the practice of slave marketing were given an aura of social and religious sanction. Kerala witnessed a number of uprisings against landlords and against the enslavement of backward communities during the British period till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The slaves at that time were the agricultural labourers in the paddy and coconut cultivation. This practice was continued until the 1980s, apparently not in the actual form, even though, the bonded labour abolition act was enacted in 1976.<sup>70</sup>

The reason for this land alienation and development of bonded labour systems were due to the migration of non-tribal communities, especially the Christians to the tribal areas of Kannur and Wynad districts. But the Kerala Scheduled Tribes Act of 1975, restricted the transfer and restoration of alienated lands. No doubt, there are laws to restore the properties of tribes from non-tribes. But they are merely in papers and not in action. For instance, during the researcher's field visit, she met a Paniya named Velutha, a forty-eight year old man. Velutha

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<sup>70</sup>. K.S. Mathew, *op. cit.*, p.217.

and his wife had three Children, two sons and a daughter. When the researcher reached their home at 7.00 a.m. in the morning, they were going to agricultural work in a Chetties land. He said he studied up to fifth standard. He and his complete family were doing this work for trivial wages. Whenever the researcher went to meet these people in their colony called '*Padi*' to meet them, in the morning around 7.30 a.m. they were seen going to work and in the evening they would come back after 8 o'clock.<sup>71</sup> They work hard for their life from morning to night but all that money is spent on liquor. This habit lands them in debts and causes many youngsters to commit suicide, at a later stage for not paying the loans. This is the situation among the Paniyas. When we come to the Mala Araya tribes, the situation is far different.

The Mala Araya tribes are agriculturists. The very old data about these tribes is by Henry Baker Jr. He says,

*"The Arrians are, many of them, rich being large cultivators of the slopes, which they clear of jungle in the dry season, sowing during the rains. Every Man, however, has to watch with guns during seedtime and harvest, to protect the crops from elephants, deer and other animals as well as from swarms of birds".*<sup>72</sup>

The statement of Henry Baker Jr. gives emphasis that Mala Arayas are rich cultivators and in the dry season they clear the jungles and sow during the rain. These people considered cultivation very sacred. That is

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<sup>71</sup>. Personal Interview, Velutha, Paniya Tribal Labourer, Vaduvanchal, Wynad, 22/04/ 2010.

<sup>72</sup>. Henry Baker, *The Hill Arrians of Travancore and the Progress of Christianity among Them*, Vol. I, No.7 Missionary Publications, (London, 1862), p. 8.

why they made offerings to the hill gods before cultivation and after harvest.<sup>73</sup> They use different varieties of high yielding rice for cultivation, like *Punja, Moden* and so on.<sup>74</sup> A Mala Araya woman named Alice Daniel gives this information to the researcher; she is about 70 years old, from Meenachil Taluk, which was one of the areas where large numbers of Mala Arayas inhabit in the Kottayam district. They cultivate tapioca, rice, ragi, grams and other pulses. So they are both cultivators and profound hunters.<sup>75</sup>

But now the situation has changed. Besides the cereals they now grow cash crops like pepper, arecanut, coconut, rubber, coffee, cashew nuts, cocoa, ginger and turmeric. This is a great development from their past system of cultivation. In most of the Mala Araya settlements cash crops like coffee, tea, and rubber are the major plantations. Therefore, a few Mala Araya landlords have enough money. Poormen of this community are working as agricultural labourers in these lands. They receive fair amount as wages from these tribes. Thus, they are now engaged in different kinds of occupations such as agricultural labourers, white-collar employee and businessmen. Thus the Paniyas and Mala Arayas are primarily a agricultural labourers and the Cholanaickans are following an entirely different way of life from that of the other two tribal communities.

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<sup>73</sup>. K.G. Daniel, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>74</sup>. Personal Interview, Alice Daniel, Mala Araya Tribal Woman, Erumapra, Kottayam, 05/05/2010.

<sup>75</sup>. W.S. Hunt, *The Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin 1816-1916*, Vol. I, Church Missionary Society Press, (Kottayam, 1918), p.182.

## FOREST RESOURCES

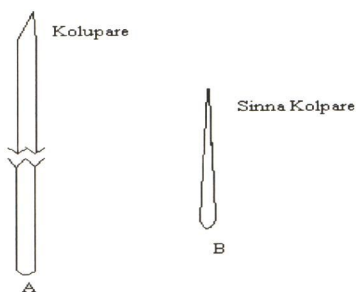
For most of the tribal people, the most important source of income and food is the forest resource. They have no life without these forests. Like the fishermen who revere water bodies as their gods, the tribal people consider forests as their mother goddess. Also, the gods, whom they worship are mainly related to the hills. For instance, the Cholanaickans worship *Neelimala Deva*, because they are living in this hill and its forests foster them. Therefore, for the Cholanaickans of the hills Neeli Mala is their saviour. Thus, the forests play a considerable role in the day-to-day life of the Cholanaickans.

As it was indicated, the tribal people are depending on the forest mainly for food. In every society the major techniques of securing food depend upon the nature of the environment with which the people interact and the availability of food to them. The important techniques used for securing food by the Cholanaickans can be classified into two categories. Namely (1) food gathering and (2) collection of minor forest products. Under food gathering major techniques are (a) gathering of tubers and roots, (b) hunting and (c) fishing, and in the second category the collection of different forest products and their details are discussed in the later pages.

The Cholanaickans gather various kinds of edible roots, tubers found in the different parts of the forests. Some of the important roots and tubers gathered are Nurai, Kavala, Benni, Chola Benni, Naarai, Gas Benni, Savalu, Koyne, Pathy benni, Neyyalu, Iranai Mothekka and Palbenni. Some of the above tubers are identified in Dioscora family of

the plant species and the leaves including Phaseols Dalzeellii (Family Papilionaceae), Fleurya interrupta and Gaud (Family Urticaceae).<sup>76</sup>

The forest is the major economic resource for the Cholanaickan community. Foraging, fishing and hunting are their three major activities. Rice and other commodities are available to them through exchange of minor forest produce at the Girijan Co-operative Society.<sup>77</sup> They roam in the forests for collection of minor forest produce. Minor forest produce during the monsoon months i.e., October - November and May-June are much less compared to the other seasons. They continue this process and move from one place to other in every month or once in every two weeks in search of tubers and roots.<sup>78</sup> The technique of gathering tubers is very simple. The traditional digging tool known as *Kolu Paare* (Fig:A) mode of wood is used for digging up tubers and roots.



A- Typical traditional digging stick.

B- Stick to kill animal in pitfall.

Fig. A.

<sup>76</sup>. B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, Anthropological Survey of India, (Calcutta, 1989), p. 115. Hereafter referred as B.A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan*.

<sup>77</sup>. *Girijan Co-operative Society* is a unit of the co-operative department of the State Government. This Society was established in 1976, in order to stop exploitation and to promote fair trade with the Cholanaickans.

<sup>78</sup>. Personal Interview, Neeli, Cholanaickan Tribal Woman, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/ 2010.

The gathering of tubers and roots has become relatively a less important activity now-a-days for Cholanaickan tribes as they are wholly dependent on the rice and other commodities which are available to them through the Girijan Co-operative Society. They keep themselves fully engaged in the gathering of minor forest produce to exchange them for commodities from the Girijan Co-operative Society. Forest produce such as dammer, cardamom, ginger, pepper, turmeric, and astringent fruit, medical roots and barks, oilseeds and honey are collected for barter.<sup>79</sup> Here, barter means that they give the forest produce to the Girijan Co-operative Society and in return they get rice and other commodities like onion, chilly, salt and dry fish.

They also collect fruits and leaves from the forests for direct consumption and fruits like Mango, jack fruit, guava fruit, and other edible fruits found in the forests are collected with the help of *Kolmula* and *Kovani* (see Fig: B) and consumed.<sup>80</sup> Thus for Cholanaickans forest is like their mother. They make use of all kinds of forest resources for their daily life. Even to day, many of them are living in the interior forests with these resources.

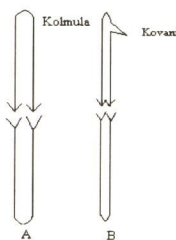


Fig: B

A- Supporting stick  
B- Fruit removal hook

<sup>79</sup>. Personal Interview, Bhaskaran, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>80</sup>. B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan*, p.116.

The Paniyas are hardworking agricultural labourers in both plantation and rice cultivation. But the remuneration that they receive is extremely very low, and as such, poverty continues to be a sad aspect of their life. A few are seen employed as mahouts and care takers of forest lands and their duty is to check the burning of wood lands by criminal elements for their personal profit and they are appointed by the Forest Department. However, in the off-season when there is no agricultural work to do, the Paniya labourers have a hard time.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Paniyas had to rely on forests due to two reasons. First of all, the inadequate wages in the cultivation work in the landlord's property. Secondly, during the off-season they have no income from cultivation and so they have to depend on forests for their livelihood. The employer is not bound to give the wages or even some subsistence allowance. Moreover he buys the Paniya labourer from the yearly market of *Valliyur Kavu Temple* festival and he does not have the responsibility to take care of him for all the time.<sup>82</sup>

During this off-season the tribes go to forests in Wynad and there are plenty of edible wild tubers and fruits to be gathered. They not only collect fruits or tubers but also fire-wood to sell in the bazaars. Another important forest resource is bamboos and they make various articles with bamboo and sell them in the markets.<sup>83</sup> This has been the situation for a long time and recently some visible changes are found in the conditions of the Paniyas.

Now the Paniyas are not dependent on the forests for livelihood. They are doing cultivation work in the *Jennis* land from morning to

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<sup>81</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>82</sup>. Personal Interview, Karuppy, Paniya Tribal Woman, Kallikeney, Wynad, 22/04/2010.

<sup>83</sup>. *Ibid.*

evening. Mostly Paniya women are very good agricultural labourers. Male Paniya spend their days in home without doing any work. During the visit the researcher, came across a family where only husband and wife were living in the home. He rests in the house and does not work, but his wife goes to work with other Paniya women and earn money. With that money they spend for drinking and for buying some rice and vegetables for their daily food.<sup>84</sup> Majority of the Paniya men and women are alcoholic. Hence, they have short life expectancy and majority of them commit suicide between 35 and 40 years due to their poverty.

Only a few Paniyas hold land and they have a comfortable life when compared to those living in colonies or Padis. In this context the lives of Mala Arayas are entirely different from these people.

The Mala Arayas had their own '*Fixed Villages*' on the western slopes of the Western Ghats of Kerala State. From the beginning, they are following a settled life and they are found in the woodlands of Kottayam, Idukki and Wynad districts in the jungles of Kerala.<sup>85</sup> In 1862, Henry Baker wrote about their villages as,

*"Their villages are often lovely spots, generally in a ravine not accessible to elephants, near to some gushing rivulet falling over rocks, and surrounded by gigantic trees and palms, rarely at a less elevation than 2000 or 3000 feet above the sea".<sup>86</sup>*

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<sup>84</sup>. Personal Interview, Koyma, Paniya Tribal Woman Labourer, Kallikeney, Wynad, 22/04/2010.

<sup>85</sup>. *Mala Idavakakalude Manimuttom*, Published by Church History Committee, St. Luke's C.S.I. Church Caleyland, (Thodupuzha, 2002), p.127.

<sup>86</sup>. Henry Baker, *op.cit.*, p.7.

The entire narration is about their villages in the middle of forests in Kottayam, Idukki and Wynad. Now the whole system is changed from the early period. Forests are cleared and many of the Mala Arayas lost their properties, and neighbouring Roman-Syrians acquired their properties in the valleys. However, they tried their best to regain them back.<sup>87</sup> Majority of them struggled hard and later converted themselves to Christianity, and the reason was that they needed a new social protector from all these kinds of exploitations, and in the missionary like Henry Baker Jr., they found their protector. Thus, many of the Mala Arayas were converted to Christianity.

The Mala Arayas, who were converted to Christianity, give importance to new economic changes and in agriculture follow techniques different from conventional methods of cultivation. They started plantations and thus they became totally separated from the forests. A few of them had become rich and their neighbouring poor Mala Aryans continued to be the same as wage earners. Originally they were wage earners and agricultural labourers; later, they had a comparatively progressed life from that of Paniya and Cholanaickan tribes. Present generation is also transformed and these tribal people accepted new changes brought about by other people. Number of cultivators or agricultural labourers leave their labour and joined some companies or white collar jobs for better living. At the same time, they yearn for proper education and demand chances to get jobs in government sectors. All these made Mala Arayas (both, converted and non-converted) to develop from other tribes namely Paniyas and Cholanaickans. Thus,

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<sup>87</sup>. P. K. Sajeev, *Raman Meetur; Karmadheeranaya Nethavu (Biography)*, ATMAMS, (Punchavayal, 1998), p. xxv.

these three tribes have a different agrarian life in time with their mental attitude and environmental changes.

## LIVE STOCK AND TRADE PRACTICES

In the trade practices and live stock development, the tribes are always victims of traders. The non-tribal communities exploit these people in every aspect of trade. Regarding this there are number of instances one can find in their day-to-day life. In the case of Mala Araya tribes, they were cruelly exploited by the Mohammedan traders, who buy pepper from these tribes for cheap prices and sell tobacco, dry fish, clothes and things like these to them with high prices. They utilized the ignorance of these people that is happening even to this day. The primary reason for their conversion to Christianity was to relieve from this ignorance and exploitation of other people. Baker states that “*some Mohammedan and Romanist Merchants, had been in the habit of practicing extortion with these simple mountaineers*”.<sup>88</sup> So, the merchants feared and protested against the missionary activities among the tribes. Hence, at times the exploiters of the plains particularly the tax collectors of Punjar Raja, stole or butchered the cattles of the tribes.<sup>89</sup> This was the situation in the early period.

Now a days, the Mala Arayas carry on a life free from all exploitations. They have poultry farms and cattle and there was no fear of exploitation of outsiders. Though there are traders from neighbouring areas, only a few people do trade with them. Others are going to main

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<sup>88.</sup> Henry Baker, *op.cit.*, p.15.

<sup>89.</sup> W.J. Richards, “*A Visit to the Hill Arrians*”. CM Intelligencer (London, 1879,), p.485. As quoted in J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and Peoples Movement in Kerala*, C.D. Sidhy Publication, (Kottarakara, 2004), pp. 40-41.

markets for the sale of arecanut, coconut, rubber sheets, cocoa, and products like these.

The Paniyas follow a different method from that of the other tribes in respect of sale of products. As indicated they are hardworking agricultural labourers. The only thing they had to sell is their labour power that is sold in the yearly market of *Valliur Kavu Temple* festival as mentioned in the earlier part. Many of the Paniyas did not rear cattle, sheep or poultry. This was the situation in the early period. However, not those who have landed property and proper houses rear cows and goats.<sup>90</sup> But others do that. That is one of the sources of income for them. Nevertheless, Cholanaickans had no connection with the rearing of these animals, they still follow a life of hunting wild animals for their occupational purposes. Therefore, the three tribes never take up to the profession of traders. They follow a free life from the exploitation of such traders. In the case of Cholanaickans they collect forest products that are sold in the Girijan Co-operative Society formed by the government of Kerala.<sup>91</sup>

## **PATTERN OF CONSUMPTION AND THE OTHER ECONOMIC RESOURCES**

The household is the unit of consumption. The head of the household controls the resources and manages the income accruing from different sources such as selling of cash crops, minor forest products like,

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<sup>90.</sup> Personal Interview, Susheela, Paniya Tribal Woman, Kallikeney, Wynad, 22/04/2010.

<sup>91.</sup> K.S.Singh, (Ed.), *India's Communities, People of India*, National Series, Vol. IV, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, (New Delhi, 1998), p. 700.

wax, honey, herbs, fuel wood and jackfruit. Among the Cholanaickans the systems of consumption is different from the other two tribes. As indicated they largely depend on forests for their sustenance. They are traditionally engaged in food gathering pursuits, namely hunting, fishing and trapping birds and animals. Their other economic resources are basket making and collection of forest products like dammer, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, sweet potato, arecanut, pepper corns, soap seeds and honey. They bartered them for rice, tobacco, dry fish, chille, salt, betelnuts, household articles and implements from Girijan Co-operative Society.<sup>92</sup>

Another important feature of their territorial life is that they have council for each territory. Moreover, the territorial chieftain i.e., *jenmakkaran* presides over the council. The council meets and discusses the affairs connected with the extraction of forest produce and other territorial and religious problems. In the case of those who have not enough forest produces the other Cholanaickans are bound to help to get rice by giving his share to them.<sup>93</sup> They have mostly nuclear families, and perhaps the forest life and food gathering system may have made them to live such a life.

Among the Paniyas the pattern of consumption is different from that of Cholanaickans and they depend on agriculture for the consumption; but during the off-season periods they go to forest for food. If these are the patterns of consumption, the other economic activities of the Paniyas include cutting of bamboo forests, cutting trees, doing casual

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<sup>92.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.701.

<sup>93.</sup> Bulletin of the International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research, Issue No. 39-41, New Delhi, 1998, pp.31.

work for the shop keepers, carrying head loads of produce to the shops, gathering grass for cattle, and such other works and jobs which help the Paniyas through the lean months. They do casual work other than these and in recent decades the offer of higher wages for certain works tempt them to leave their work and this creates troubles between landlords and the Paniyas. This was the situation in 1940s, and nowadays the situation has changed. Though they are doing the same agricultural work, they are underpaid and the money they acquire from these works are not saved but are used for drinking purposes. That is mentioned in the earlier part, and this evil destroys the health of these poor tribes. During her visit the researcher met a tribal lady Susheela, who is 35 years old, and she is not doing any agricultural work. Her mother is doing the whole labour and she earns money for their livelihood.<sup>94</sup> She maintains a single family and they have no other economic resources except their labour power.

The life style of Mala Arayas is developing for good and now they are good agriculturalists. They consume same as the non-tribal people, because now they have good education, so that they could get good government jobs. Thus, there is no need for them to depend on forests for their day today life as in the past. Their major economic resource is land and plantation cultivation, Government jobs and jobs in other private companies are another source of income to them. This is the situation among a few rich Mala Arayas. The poor Mala Arayas have only their daily wages from their work in the rich Mala Aryan and other non-tribal people. They experience a very miserable condition in the rainy season<sup>95</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup>. Personal Interview, Chenna, Paniya Tribal Woman Labourer, Kallikeney, Wynad, 22/04/2010.

<sup>95</sup>. Personal Interview, Alice Daniel, Mala Araya Tribal Woman, Erumapra, Kottayam, 27/04/2010.

However, they survive all these sufferings and have good life expectancy than other tribes now.

The tribes have a different socio-economic patterns of life. Only a particular study makes us to understand what kind of life really each one of them has. In the case of economic relations, agricultural work, and its methods the Cholanaickans are semi-agriculturalists and in most of their time they depend on forests for livelihood. However, Paniyas do not own lands, and they work in others lands as wage earners and are in slavery of a new form. In the case of Mala Arayas, there were both rich and poor Mala Arayas and so they have two types of life styles as rich and poor. At the same time the importance of agriculture is not lost from their life. Thus Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Aryans have three different types of life style though they live in the adjacent regions in the Kerala State. They have also developed traditions and customs of their own through the long years of their existence.

## ***Chapter-II***

### ***Intra - Cultural Differences Among the Paniyas, Cholanaickans and Mala Arayas***

## CHAPTER-II

### INTRA - CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AMONG THE PANIYAS, CHOLANAICKANS AND MALA ARAYAS

This study as indicated earlier, is on the three different tribal groups and the term tribal is interpreted on certain pre-defined norms, but in this chapter the term intra culture, is explained in a way to specify the differences between tribal groupings. There are only a few studies about Cholanaickans, whom the social scientists defined as “*Cave-men*” of Kerala, and Paniya tribes are called bonded labourers. But Mala Arayas are considered as tribes with dynamic changes; but still they follow certain basic features of tribal culture. For instance, trust-worthiness, belief in omen and worshipping of hill Gods are their qualities.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this chapter mainly focuses on these intra-cultural differences and also on the factors that describe these differences. Further, the origin of myths and their influence on the life of the tribals are also narrated in this chapter.

With the intra-cultural aspects, the study goes through various phases of the cultures of the tribes. This chapter is divided into four parts, first it will discuss the early myths and the realities in them, and then the customs and traditions related to birth and death, and later on the concept of purity and kinship, marriage and family. Regarding the early myths of the tribes Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas, the myths are

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<sup>1</sup>. John J. Honigmann, (Ed.), *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. I, Rawat Publication, (New Delhi, 1997), pp.327-328.

different from one another. Also, this study attempts to analyse the similarity among their cultures.

## **THEIR MYTHS AND SOME REALITIES**

The analysis of certain myths of the tribes reveals some elements of moral aspects and a scattered history of their past. Their myths are the ways of accounting for their activities as they are and that offer explanations for everything that they believe.<sup>2</sup> Though in its style, the myths look like mere legends, they contain the realities of the past society and its culture.

The tribes such as Cholanaickans and Paniyas are inhabiting in the Wynad district which is bounded in the East by Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu and Mysore districts of Karnataka State, on the North by Coorg district of Karnataka, on the South by Malappuram district and on the West by Kozhikode and Kannur districts of Kerala.<sup>3</sup> Wynad is on the Southern tip of the Deccan plateau, which is also connected with the Western Ghats. Therefore, there were chances for the immigration of the tribes from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Wynad district has the highest concentration of tribes in Kerala.

## **MYTHS OF CHOLANAICKANS**

The Cholanaickans have practically nothing to narrate regarding their origin and early history. They claim themselves to be autochthones of the Western Ghats, and that is admissible, even though they have

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<sup>2.</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Harper Row (New York, 1969), p. 10.

<sup>3.</sup> G. Rajasekharan, (Ed.), *District Handbooks of Kerala; Wynad*, Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Kerala, (Wynad, 2003), pp.8-9.

nothing to corroborate this claim.<sup>4</sup> However, the Cholanaickans describe themselves as Malanaickan who migrated from the neighbouring forest areas of Karnataka. The community name is derived from the words '*Cola*' or '*Shola*' means '*Forest*' and '*Naickan*' means '*the King*' i.e., '*the kings of forest*'.<sup>5</sup> Scholars differ in their opinion about the origin and migration of this group of people to Wynad forests. They speak a dialect which bears the influence of Tamil and Malayalam and this creates confusion in fixing the exact origin of these people. It can be solved through the references made by the early writers on Cholanaickan tribes.

The first ever reference to the Cholanaickans occurred in Madras District Gazetteers of 1908. W. Francis, the editor of the Gazetteer writes that, the Kurumbas, Kurubas or Kurumas of the district seem to be of at least three classes namely, the Kurumbas who lived in hamlets on the plateau, the Ur-Kurumbas around Nellialam region, and the *Jen Kurumbas* or *Shola Nayakas* who are numerous in the Wynad and especially on the Mudu Malai side of it.<sup>6</sup> But this information also does not throw adequate light on their exact origin. This may be due to their self-imposed isolation in the interior forests of Nilambur Valley. Until 1973, there was no detailed information about this tribal people as they were included in the group of Kattunaickans, which is another tribal community living in Wynad and Malappuram districts of Kerala. Their distinct identity came to be known to the outside world through the

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4. A.A.D. Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala*, Kerala State Enquiry Committee 1957—1958, Bharathiya Adimjathi Sevak Sangh, (New Delhi, 1961), p. 87.

5. K.S. Singh, (Ed.), *People of India, National Series*, Vol-IV, India's Communities A-G, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, (New Delhi, 1998), p.700.

6. W. Francis, (Ed.), *Madras District Gazetteers: The Nilgiris*, Vol. I, Government Press, (Madras, 1908), p.153.

writing of journalists, who narrated many peculiar customs and practices of this tribe. Thus it made scholars curious to know more about the Cholanaickans. In fact, in recent times many MLAs, MPs, Research Scholars, Journalists, Government Officers and some others visited their caves to know more about them.<sup>7</sup>

Since 1941, Census reports do not mention Cholanaickans as a separate group. The earlier ethnographers like Edgar Thurston, L.K. Krishna Iyer, Luiz and A. Aiyappan who were the experts on the studies on Kerala Tribes classified them along the category of Kattunaickans. The 1908 Madras District Gazetteer also supported this misunderstanding of Cholanaickans as Jen Kurumbas. This repetition of errors was caused by the ethnographers because they accepted and adopted the information given by Edgar Thurston without testing its validity.

B.A. Bhanu and P.R.G. Mathur did the first anthropological investigation on the Cholanaickans in 1974. During 1970s, certain writings on the Cholanaickans by Mathur (1977-1979) began to appear in the forms of articles. The first article by Mathur was published in the book, *Primitive Tribes: The First Step*, edited by S.C. Sinha and B.D. Sharma in 1977. The second one is a brief article in the book, *Tribal Situation in Kerala* published in the same year. The third article by the same author entitled, 'The Cholanaickan, the Cave-men of Kerala', was published by P.K. Misra and *Man in India* (1980) and *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, (1980) by B.A. Bhanu, are the works with

<sup>7</sup> B.A. Bhanu, "Is Development Desirable? A case study of Cholanaickan the Cave-Men of Kerala", p.36, in B.G. Halbar and C.G. Hussain Khan, (Ed.), *Relevance of Anthropology: The Indian Scenario*, Rawat Publications, (Jaipur, 1991), p.56. Hereafter referred as B.A. Bhanu, *Development Desirable*.



valuable information about Cholanaickans and their way of life. These works truly bring out the history and life of these forest dwellers.

## MYTHS OF PANIYAS

There are numerous assumptions regarding the origin of the Paniyas. Some scholars are of the opinion that they are African tribes who came to India after a shipwreck on the West Coast. Their cephalic and nasal indices (index) indicate a resemblance to the long - armed African Negroes or Kapiries.<sup>8</sup> When they get alarmed, the Paniyas call out '*Ippi*'! '*Ippi*'! as they run away, and they believe that this '*Ippi*' is the name of the country once they came originally from. But now they are unable to identify *Ippimala*, which they call '*Ippi*'.<sup>9</sup> The Paniya himself, though he occasionally puts forward one or the other (Africa/Ippimala) of the above places as the home of their forefathers, has no fixed tradition bearing on their arrival in Malabar, beyond one to the effect that they were brought to Malabar from a far -off country, by a Raja, who captured them by means of hunting nets and brought them here.<sup>10</sup>

Another myth about their enslavement and arrival at Wynad was as follows:

Once upon a time, there lived *Uthappan* and *Uthamma*, the great great grandfather and grandmother of all the

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<sup>8</sup>. K. Panoor, *Keralathile Africa*, (Malayalam), India Press, (Kottayam, 1963), pp.91-92.

<sup>9</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas of the Nilgiris. Paniyans of Malabar; A Chinese - Tamil Cross; A Cheruman Skull; Kuruba or Kurumba, Summary of Results*, Vol. II, No.1, Anthropology, Asian Educational Service, (Chennai, 2004), p.18. Hereafter referred as Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas*.

<sup>10</sup>. K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-II, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), pp.118-182. Hereafter referred as K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala*.

Paniyas. One day when they were wandering through the jungle in search of food and fruits Ippimala Gowda, (a landlord) saw them. He decided to bait them with the remains of his food. A net was fabricated by the Bhattekuruma tribe of Ippimalai Gowda. The net was cast and Uthappan and Uthamma were lured by the smell of the cooked food. They were caught and brought before the Gowda. He asked their caste and clan. They replied, "***We are the lowest castes, lower than all castes, all clans. The Gowda made them his slaves. The present Paniyas are the descendents of Uthappan and Uthamma***".<sup>11</sup>

The Paniyas till date are the labourers of the landlords. The above mentioned story describes the making of Paniyas as slaves. This situation continued upto 1980s. They were slaves or bonded labourers of Wynad Chetties and Gowdas. They are the agrestic slaves and labourers bought and sold along with the land to which they belonged.<sup>12</sup>

All these legends provide the most important information that they were captured and brought as slaves. The life of the Paniya as a slave is a true situation in Wynad but how and why they came here was not clearly indicated. The available materials state that the Paniyas were slaves for a long time. Until the middle of the 17th Century, Wynad was inhabited exclusively by the tribes under the control of Veda Raja.<sup>13</sup> Kurumas and

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<sup>11</sup>. K.J. Baby, *Nadugadhika* (Malayalam), National Books, (Kottayam,1993), pp.7-10.

<sup>12</sup>. P.K. Misra and R. Misra, "***Development and Planning Strategy; A Case Study of Two Tribes of South India***", in Budhadeb Chaudary, (Ed.), ***Tribal Development in India; Problems and Prospects***, Inter-India Publications, (New Delhi, 1990), p. 262.

<sup>13</sup>. William Logan, ***Malabar Manual***, Vol-I, Part. III, Government Press, (Madras, 1887), p.CCCXXXIII.

Kurichias were numerically the predominant tribes of the region, living in separate geographical divisions and ruled by tribal chieftains.<sup>14</sup> Towards the end of the 17th Century, Wynad was captured by the Raja of Kottayam, a principality which is located between Telli-Cherry and Wynad.<sup>15</sup> From then onwards the subjugation of these tribes of Wynad started.

By the middle of the 18th Century, owing to intermittent rivalry among local chieftains there occurred an immigration of people from the plains of Kottayam to Wynad and consequently they took to agriculture in the valley lands of the region.<sup>16</sup> The newcomers confiscated the fertile region and enslaved the tribes.<sup>17</sup>

In the wake of the Mysore invasion of Malabar under Haidar Ali in 1766<sup>18</sup>, the expansion of agriculture further quickened.<sup>19</sup> In the process, some differentiations in the tribal society were sown during this period. The able-bodied men among the Kurichias and Kurumas (both were martial tribes) had been recruited by Pazhasi or Palassi, the Raja of

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<sup>14</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Government Press, (Madras 1909), pp. 469-470. Hereafter referred as Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes*.

<sup>15</sup>. A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, National Book Stall, (Kottayam, 1967), p. 203.

<sup>16</sup>. N.Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar*, Chugh Publications, (Allahabad, 1979), p.252.

<sup>17</sup>. Joy Varkey, "Alienation of Tribal Lands in the Wayanad District of Kerala: Towards a Historical Perspective", South Indian History Congress, XXVII Annual Session Proceedings, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Department of History, Rajapalayam Raju's College, (Rajapalayam, 2007), p.417.

<sup>18</sup>. Lewin B. Bowring, *Haidr Ali and Tipu Sultan and the Struggle with the Musalman Powers of the South*, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1997), p.139.

<sup>19</sup>. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mysore - Kerala Relations in 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Kerala Historical Society, (Trivandrum, 1975), pp.12-14.

Kottayam Royal Family, into his army in order to resist the onslaughts from Mysore by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.<sup>20</sup>

It must be pointed out in this context that labour was at this time the main constraint on the expansion of agriculture. The Chetties and Goundans from the plains (on the other side of the Western Ghats), who purchased forest lands for permanent cultivation in 1773 faced acute labour shortage as by then all the available labour force had already become attached either to Palassi's troops or to the individual landlords. Therefore, it caused the Goundans and Chetties to bring with them large numbers of Paniyas and Adiyans from Mysore and Nilgiri forests lying contiguous to the Wynad forests.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the analysis of the myth of the Paniyas it may be understood that they were brought to Kerala as slaves to work in the agricultural fields of the landlords. The myths and temple traditions also support the fact that the Paniyas were slave labourers. At the end of the wars between Mysore rulers and the Palassi Raja, the Paniyas and Adiyas became agrestic labourers, since they had no other occupation.

## MYTHS OF MALA ARAYAS

Like Paniyas, the Mala Arayas also have a number of myths regarding their origin. However, it is too difficult to find the realities in them because most of them are full of exaggerations. According to Henry Baker Jr.,

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<sup>20</sup>. T. P. Sankaran Kutty Nair, *A Tragic Decade in Kerala History*, Kerala Historical Society, (Trivandrum, 1977), p.12.

<sup>21</sup>. William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol-II, (Reprint), Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 2004), p. 708.

*"the Arrians, have their fixed villages and reside generally on the Western slopes of the higher ranges of mountains or their spurs. The Government officials called them as "Mulla Vellens" and are considered to rank in caste above all the mechanics, and equal to Mohammedans and Jews".*<sup>22</sup>

However, to accept this conclusion, more supporting evidences are requires. Luiz says that

*"The Mala Arayas claim themselves as autochthones of Kerala and that their early homes were at Chinganpara and Karimala in the reserve forest of Central Travancore".*<sup>23</sup>

There are many claims regarding their original home. Some are of the opinion that they were the offsprings of Sage Gautama and his wife Ahalya, the latter was turned into a rock by her husband on being found in a compromising position with Indra. Sri Rama on his sojourn restored her so as to be reunited with Gautama. The Mala Arayas claims that they are the descendants of reunited couple i.e., Sage Gautama and Ahalya. Therefore, they claim superiority over all the other tribes in social status and style themselves as '*Karingal Brahmins*' where '*Karingal*' means '*Granite Stone*'.<sup>24</sup> However, their way of life and beliefs reveal that they are tribes. According to another very popular legend Sage Agasthya

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<sup>22.</sup> Henry Baker Jr., *The Hill Arrians of Travancore and the Progress of Christianity among Them*, T.C. John and Son Printers, (London, 1862), p.7.

<sup>23.</sup> A.A.D. Luiz, *op.cit.*, p.121.

<sup>24.</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, Government Press, (Trivandrum, 1937) p.162.

brought them to Kerala from the northern districts of the Madras State.<sup>25</sup> This legend is also not specifying what their occupation was and why they came with the Sage to Kerala.

Though there are so many exaggerating stories of their origin most of them confirm that they were tribes. M. Srinivasa Iyengar noted that

*“Sage Agasthya returned to Dwaraka (Tamil Tuvarupati) and took with him eighteen families of ‘Velirs’ and moved on to the South; among them were the Aruvalar tribes, who seem to have been the ancestors of the Kurumbas.”*<sup>26</sup>

According to Dr. A.H. Karve, Kurumbas are “the progeny of the Pre-Dravidian tribes of Southern India.”<sup>27</sup> The Kurumbas erected many dolmens in their settlements. The dolmen is a burial chamber in which the people of the Neolithic period buried their dead. In the habitats of the Mala Arayas dolmens are found in the uplands.<sup>28</sup> Among Mala Arayas these dolmens are often surrounded with long splintered pieces of granite 8 to 12 or 15 feet long set up end, with sacrificial altars and other remains which are evidently centuries old. It is believed that the spirit of the departed is supposed to pass into the granite figure. The Mala Arayas had the practice of offering milk, rice, toddy and clarified butter to their

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<sup>25.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.163.

<sup>26.</sup> V.V. Joseph, *“Tribal Development in Kerala: A Critique”*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Mahathma Gandhi University, (Kottayam, 2000), p.125.

<sup>27.</sup> L.A Krishna Iyer, *op.cit.*, p.163.

<sup>28.</sup> V.A. Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I, Government of Madras, (Madras, 1989), p.164.

buried ancestors.<sup>29</sup> They kept brass or granite figures in the burial and this box shaped *Arra* (cave) is called *Pandikulies* or *Pandikuri*.<sup>30</sup> Samuel Mateer also noted the fact that they “make little cells of pieces on stone, the whole forming a box of a few inches square; and on the death of a member of any family, the spirit is supposed to pass, as the body is being buried, into a brass or very small image, which is shut into this vault; if the parties are very poor, an oblong smooth stone suffices.”<sup>31</sup>

The dolmen-builders are said to be Pre-Dravidian in origin. Therefore, based on these evidences, the Mala Arayas are truly the hill tribes of Pre-Dravidian origin who have settled down on the Western Ghats of Southern India that is the eastern hills of Kerala State. They have no connections with the fisherfolk who are called *Kadal Arria*.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, the myths of these three tribes indicate that they are the original tribes of South India having different myths about their origin. Though they are myths they contain some grains of truth. In the case of Cholanaickans - the name itself suggests that they had existed from the days of the Cholas. The Paniyas are labourers and their myths state that they were labourers from ancient times serving other communities. Likewise, the term Mala Arayas - denotes that they are dwellers of the hills; attending to cultivation work, and their ways of life reveal their

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<sup>29</sup>. Buddhadeb Chaudari, (Ed.), *Tribal Transformation in Indian Religion, Rituals and Festivals*, Vol. V, Inter-India Publications, (New Delhi, 1992), p.47.

<sup>30</sup>. Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam* (Malayalam) Translated by A.N. Sathyadas, Arrow Books, (Trivandrum, 2005), pp.118-119. Hereafter referred as Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam*.

<sup>31</sup>. Samuel Mateer, *The Native Life in Travancore*, W.H. Allan & Co., (London, 1883) p.75.

<sup>32</sup>. Henry Baker, *op. cit.*, p.11.

tribal character. Thus, these myths and cultural traits clearly indicate that they are the tribes of South India existing from olden times.

## **THE CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS IN RELATION TO BIRTH AND DEATH**

The customs and traditions are inseparable parts of tribal life. Customs are flexible since additions and deletions are possible; but in tradition, it is not possible since it is rigid and does not permit changes from its old form. Every community and every tribal society follow some traditions. In the case of Cholanaickans, it is observed that they keep themselves away from outside world; and that kind of attitude helps them to sustain their old culture. They are living in the interior forest areas where aspects of basic education and advances in science and technology are not heard of. But they are aware of certain common as well as intricate and delicate details like how pregnancy occurs and unto what period the husband can continue intercourse with his pregnant wife. They normally continue it until the seventh month of pregnancy. They also know that pregnancy continue for about ten lunar months. The pregnant women generally continue to move around the forests with her husband helping him in his food collection pursuits. During the confinement, her mother or sisters-in-law who are called as *Nadini* will assist the pregnant woman in her domestic activities.<sup>33</sup>

The birth care practices of Cholanaickans are different in each range. Among Cholanaickans of Karuli range the woman is taken out of the rock shelter to a separate shelter called *Godimara*, which is erected by the woman accompanying her. If there is any delay in birth the

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<sup>33</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *Tribal Health and Medicine in Kerala*, D.C. Book Publication, (Kottayam, 2008), p.30.

Chenmakkaran, the territorial chieftain, performs the role of a diviner, a religious doctor and a sorcerer.<sup>34</sup> He is summoned and he boils a little amount of gingelly oil in a vessel and its residue is given to the woman for consumption. After some chanting of holy verses he gives a little coconut oil to be smeared over her abdomen, which is done by the attending woman.<sup>35</sup> By massaging with this oil, it is believed that the position of the baby is corrected. The umbilical cord is cut with a sharpened knife or with a freshly sharpened reed splint and tied with a piece of cloth.

The juice squeezed out from the leaves of "*Orunthukali*" (Ui) plant is given to the mother for quick expulsion of '*Marooti*' (after birth). The husband or other menfolk are not allowed to see the mother and child for 15 days.<sup>36</sup> Violation of this is considered as detrimental to the health of the mother and the child. The woman attending the mother acts as the medium for communication. The baby is breast fed for three to four years or until the next child is born. Further, the child is named only after completion of five or six years. Usually the tribal chieftain of the territory names the child. The names are selected either from the father's or from the mother's side.<sup>37</sup> The naming pattern is in such a way that the name of the grandfather is given to the grandson. If the child falls sick after it is named, pet names such as *Badukan* (for males) and *Kungi* (for females)

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<sup>34</sup>. P. Somasekharan Nair, *Paniya Bhasha* (Malayalam), National Book Stall, (Trivandrum, 1977), p.18.

<sup>35</sup>. P.K. Misra and B.A. Bhanu, "*Boundary Maintenance among Cholanaickan: The Cave-Men of Kerala*", in *Man in India*, Vol.60, No. I, (New Delhi, 1980), p.54.

<sup>36</sup>. Bulletin of the International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research, Issue-39, (New Delhi, 1998), p.34.

<sup>37</sup>. Seetha Kakkaoth, "*Social Support for Hunter-Gatherers: Care or Curse?*" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIV, No. 36, September, 2009, p. 72.

were given to the children.<sup>38</sup> However, now a days there are no such pet names. The children are given of non-tribals names, such as Vasantha, Suseela, Bhaskaran and Kunjan. While parents are gone for work children are generally under the care of grandparents.<sup>39</sup>

The Cholanaickans believe that death occurs when the soul leaves the body in the form of air. If a person dies in an *Alai* (Rock shelter or Cave), the dead body is buried in the very small Alai; the Cholanaickans inhabiting in Nilambur had their own burial ground called Savanthi.<sup>40</sup> They still live like Neolithic people in respect of their burial practices and majority of them inhabiting the forest areas depend completely upon the forest for their livelihood. P.K. Mishra (an anthropologist from University of Mysore) says that there are now very few groups in the entire world which continue to live by food gathering and hunting. Their life is connected only with forest.<sup>41</sup> They know the troubles in the life of the outside world and many of them had experienced those troubles and so the Cholanaickans are unwilling to come out from that. They bury the corpse with all the personal possessions of the dead person such as axes, digging sticks, knives, pots, cooking vessels and rings made of copper or brass. They believe that by placing these things in the grave, the departed soul can continue the earthly activities even after death.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38.</sup> B.A. Bhanu, "*The Band and Band Exogamy Among Cholanaickans; The Cave-Dwellers of Kerala*", Paper Presented at Seminar on **Marriage Systems in India**, Anthropological Survey of India, Nagpur, February, 1983, p.155.

<sup>39.</sup> Personal Interview, Neeli, Cholanaickan Tribal Woman, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>40.</sup> N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit*, p. 34.

<sup>41.</sup> P.K. Misra, "*Boundless Vitality of Little man*", in **Man in India**, Vol.58, No.3, (New Delhi, 1978), p.5.

<sup>42.</sup> Personal Interview, Suseela, Paniya Tribal Woman, Kallikeney, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

The burial rituals are officiated by the neighboring Chenmakkaran who is paid Rs.10 which is called '*Savapanam*'. Before covering the dead body with earth, a ring is waved over the body. It is believed that the spirit of the dead man will enter the ring. This ring is kept in the custody of the Chenmakkaran. Then slowly the pit is filled sand and covered.<sup>43</sup>

The last man leaving the burial site cuts a twig of *Chudalimullu* (a plant with spines) and places it across the path, so that the spirits from the burial ground are prevented from following the mourners.<sup>44</sup> After the burial, the mourners take a dip in flowing water and adjourn to a new *Alai* or camp site. Then the ring which is supposed to have the spirit of the dead is dropped by the Chenmakkaran into a small vessel containing water. It is believed that if the ring stands still or erect at the bottom of the vessel as it is dropped, the soul is happy with relatives, if not the act is repeated to find out the cause of the unhappiness of the soul. To appease the soul, suitable offerings like tobacco or coins are given. After this, the ring is kept in the *Daivakottai* (divine basket) along with the icons of deities.<sup>45</sup> That clearly specifies their custom of ancestral worship. Moreover, Chenmakkaran is the sole custodian of the idols of the deities and spirits of their ancestors.

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<sup>43.</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, "*Three Tribes of Nilambur Valley. A Study in Interrelationship Between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture*", Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of Calicut, (Thalassery, 2001), p.25.

<sup>44.</sup> Personal Interview, Bhaskaran, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimal, Wynad, 20/04/ 2010.

<sup>45.</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, "*The Primitive Tribal Groups of Kerala, A Situational Appraisal*," in *Tribes and Tribals*, Vol. III, Part. I, 2005, p. 50. Hereafter referred as Seetha Kakkoth, *The Primitive*.

The spirits of the dead Chenmakkaran and his wife are believed to be the guardians of a newly buried individual's spirit. The Cholanaickans place periodical offerings such as bundles of tobacco, betel leaves and coins for the dead at the burial site.<sup>46</sup> They believe that the ancestral souls are always watching all their activities and no one can conceal any misdeed or disrespect shown to them. This belief restrains them from their misbehavior and disrespectful activities. During the collection pursuits, whenever they come across a burial site they offer tobacco or betel leaves or coins.<sup>47</sup> Obeisance to ancestral spirits is made to guard the members of the community from danger and health maladies. Spirits of people who were met with unnatural deaths are believed to turn as malevolent spirits. Thus the Cholanaickans, the cave men or primitive tribes of Kerala, though they are living in the inner forests as nomads, have their own values for birth and death. These people fear the spirits of their ancestors as they believe these sprits restrain the people from every wrong doing and behavior.

## THE RITUALS AMONG PANIYAS

The Paniyas give great importance to the birth of a baby in their families. Pregnant women are respected much. They consider the safe delivery and the birth of a healthy child as a gift of *Thampuratty*, a female deity. A pregnant woman continues to work in the paddy fields or engages in household activities until she enters the confinement bed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46.</sup> Personal Interview, Kannan, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>47.</sup> P.K. Mohanthy, (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Primitive Tribes in India*, Vol. I, Anmol Publication, (New Delhi, 1985), pp.99-101.

<sup>48.</sup> Personal Interview, Madhavi, Paniya Tribal Woman, Vaduvanchal, Wynad, 22/04/2010.



**Thudi and Kuzhal used by Paniyas**

During the sixth month of the first pregnancy, the Paniyas perform a warding off ceremony called *Kettiyattam* to drive away the *Pretham* and the spirits of unnatural deaths called *Pisathi* and also demons such as Kuliyan, Mampiathi and Neerkali which are believed to have entered her body. They believe that unless and until *Kettiyattam* is performed, the health of the mother and baby would be in jeopardy.<sup>49</sup>

The *Kettiyattam* is performed after sun set at the husband's hut on their auspicious days such as Tuesdays or Fridays. An offering is made which includes coconut, fowl and cotton wick lamp. The pregnant women sit in front of the *Velichapadi* or *Devivakkam* (oracle) who invokes the guardian deity of pregnant woman, the *Thampuratty*. He performs trans-dances shouting and ordering the spirits and demons to leave her body. Worship of the devil in various forms is popular and they have a large collection of *Mantrams* (chanting of holy verses).<sup>50</sup> After a while he calms down and starts the chanting of magical spells with the accompaniment of '*Thudi*' (drum) and '*Kuzhal*' (pipe) music and 'take out' the malevolent influences by waving a strip of plantain leaf over her head and throwing the leaf at the root of a milky tree. He breaks the coconut and severs the head of the fowl with a chopper and the blood is sprinkled over the head of the woman.<sup>51</sup> The woman is then supposed to be free from the evil influences.

It is observed that for the Paniyas of Vythiri, the ceremony equivalent to *Kettiyattam* is called *Velikkala*. There it usually starts on Saturday evening at the husband's hut. A booth is erected for the trance

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<sup>49</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>50</sup>. A.A.D. Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>51</sup>. Subhadra Channa, (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes and Castes*, Vol. XVII, Cosmo Publication, (New Delhi, 2004), p.5223.

dance called *Aattupandel*. The booth is decorated with tender coconut leaves. Along the sides, colour patterns are drawn with rice dough. A solution of turmeric powder and lime is prepared which is deep red in colour. On a plantain leaf, Rs.3 and paise 50 in coins, a coconut, 1.25 kg of raw rice, puffed rice, and beaten rice are placed. An oil lamp is lighted in front of it. Then the *Daivakkaran* (the priest) of the area sits in front of it and starts reciting *Aattupattu*, the magical incantation meant for the occasion. He sits there throughout the night. This is done to the accompaniment of Thudi and Kuzhul. On the next day morning, about 8.30 a.m the pregnant woman dressed up in red colour, brought to the front side of the booth after her bath. Then the apprentice of the *Daivakkaran* dresses up like *Thampuratty* and performs the *Attam*. He paints his body with white streaks and also with rice dough. The *Daivakkaran* wears a pair of red clothes as his dance attire and ties a string of bells around his ankle. He also holds a magical stick. Two men start dancing around the booth. The pregnant woman is attracted towards *Thampuratty* and utter some words incoherently since she is in a trance. However, she is not allowed to dance in frenzy and is asked to sit in the centre of the booth in front of the offerings. When the *Daivakkaran* stops his dance, he unties the bells and keeps it in a winnow (vessel) filled with rice. Then he takes the red solution after some magical spells, sprinkles a portion of it on the head of the woman to satiate *Thampuratty*. The apprentice also stops his dancing by now.<sup>52</sup> After a feast, everybody leaves around afternoon. It is believed that failure to perform *Velikkala* can lead to foetal or mother's death in confinement.

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<sup>52</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes, op.cit.*, p.142.

Her husband takes the pregnant woman after the 7<sup>th</sup> month to her natal home for her first delivery. He doesn't stay back at the wife's hut during the advanced stages of pregnancy. However, he pays all the expenses connected with the delivery. The confinement usually takes place in a separate hut called *Chittal*. Generally, the delivery takes place in the dwelling hut itself and other members may shift their residence to a neighbor's hut for sometime. The experienced elderly woman of the hamlet act as the midwife and she is called *Pettukarathi* or *Attukari*. In case of difficult delivery, special offerings are made to the deity Thampuratty. After the delivery, the child is given mother's breast milk only after discarding the first few drops, as they believe that this milk was stagnant for the last few months and was exposed to malevolent influences. It is also believed that pollution due to birth lasts for 14 days and until then the mother remains within the premises of Chittal. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, the woman and child are ritually purified. Along with this, the house where the delivery took place is also purified by cleaning the floor with cowdung solution.<sup>53</sup> Another important ceremony or ritual in the birth of a child is the naming function. Normally, this is done on the tenth or twelfth day of the birth of the child by the Chemmi. He ties a cotton thread on the groin of the child.<sup>54</sup> These are the rituals they conduct on the occasion of child birth.

Children's ear boring function is also considered as an important ritual in the family. All relatives and friends attend this function and all of them are given a feast. This ritual is performed normally when the child

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<sup>53.</sup> N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>54.</sup> K.N.K. Sharma, "A Note on Paniyan of Kerala", in *Man in India*, Vol.72, No.3, (New Delhi, 1992), p.361.

attains the age of three. In the case of a female child leaf-scrolls of different sizes are replaced at intervals for dilation of the ear-lobe.<sup>55</sup>

Rites connected with death are very significant and consequently they are most expensive of all the ceremonies conducted by the Paniyas. When a man is about to die, water is given by a close relative who happens to be present near him. The dead man's thumb and big toes are tied together with a string before rigor mortis sets in. News about the death is first sent to the head of the local group, the Chemmi, and also to the Koyma, the Kuttan and also to the employer. The sons-in-law act usually as the messengers to inform the death to the kith and kin.<sup>56</sup>

The corpse is given a bath by the relatives and is placed on the pier. A small measure of rice is placed on a leaf near the head, and on the heap of rice is placed a coconut broken into two halves. The water from the coconut is collected in saucer and placed near the leaf with rice. Over the rice is placed a lighted cotton wick. With a leaf-spoon, the Chemmi and other functionaries pour a few drops of the coconut water into the mouth of the corpse. While doing so, the Chemmi says: "So long you gave us water. This is the last time we give you something. Hereafter, we cannot give you anything."<sup>57</sup>

In case the deceased is a man of some means, rice will be placed at the foot and on his sides twenty-five or fifty paise coins will be placed on all four heaps of rice. Then the Chemmi collects the rice and coins on one large banana leaf and hands the whole of it to the son of the deceased

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55. *Ibid.*

56. A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave Tribe of South India*, Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, (Calcutta, 1992), pp.140. Hereafter referred as A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave Tribe*.

57. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op. cit.*, p.22.

man, saying: "In the presence of the functionaries of the hill of the region, with the knowledge of the people of the region, here I hand over these to the heirs". The son receives the rice etc. in a piece of cloth and keeps the bundle on the small platform for propitiating the ancestral spirits inside the hut. It remains there for seven days.<sup>58</sup>

The Chemmi is believed to be the owner of the burial ground and is paid seven Panams (Rs. 1.75) for the 7 ft. x 3ft. spot for the grave. The Chemmi digs up four clods of earth at the four corners of the grave pit. These four clods of earth are kept apart undisturbed. Then coffin of the dead is kept in the pit in the north south direction.<sup>59</sup>

There is little difference in the burial procedure for men and women. In the case of women a couple of her bead strings or necklaces are placed in the grave under the head. The Chemmi then stands at the foot end of the grave with a pot of cow dung solution in water, makes a hole at the bottom of this pot and then tosses it towards the head end. Then he addresses the spirit of the dead person:

***"In our district a death has occurred. No one is to be blamed for it. The Kali (goddess) of the graveyard will come roaring. Do not be afraid."***

The smashing of the pot symbolizes the destruction by death of the body. The dead man's mourners have to undergo a series of purificatory rites. The mourners take bath and return home taking care to wash the articles used in digging work and a twig of *E:ychill* (a typical plant mostly seen on the river banks of interior forests of Wynad district) with

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<sup>58.</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes, op.cit.*, p.471.

<sup>59.</sup> Personal Interview, Kothuvan, Paniya Tribes Man, Kallikeney, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

a few leaves from the foot of the grave. This twig is kept wrapped in a towel on the platform of the shades inside the hut and used in the ritual later on.<sup>60</sup>

The description given above is of the burial practice in and around Manenthoddy and is not different in any detail from that in east Wynad. After the burial, some rice grains are scattered around the grave by the Chemmi and his object being the removal of the god of death. The farewell formula of the Chemmi however is different:

*“You have been separated now from us by the soil. I leave you through water by having a bath. With the six by quarter three leaves, you go and rest in the te:rumana (the chariot house) of the Fathers, Grand-fathers and Grand- mothers of yesterday.”<sup>61</sup>*

Thus, the concept of death among Paniyas was that it occurred due to the malicious attacks by evil spirits sent by men of the higher castes or by other Paniyas. The whole rituals are performed to release this clutched spirit by propitiating its captor. In addition, it reveals that for them life and death are a struggle to save themselves from the clutches of upper castes or others who subjugated them.

## **THE RITUALS PERFORMED BY MALA ARAYAS**

The Mala Arayas also have rituals and traditions in relation to birth and death. They are agriculturists, and they always hold the view that everything must be pure and safe from all kinds of evils. They live a life

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<sup>60.</sup> Personal Interview, Chemmi, Paniya Tribes Man, Kallikeney, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

<sup>61.</sup> A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave Tribe, op. cit.*, pp.142-143.

of trustworthiness and they believe that everything in their life as sacred. When a woman is about to become a mother they build a separate shed. The shed is the place where the mother delivers the baby. It is always erected away from other inhabiting area and also secure from the attack of animals. The shed will be on the top of a tree. As Henry Baker denotes, the birth of each child renders the mother impure for one month, when she must reside out of the village, cannot cook, go near the springs, enter the provision grounds, or touch any implement or vessel; she generally lives in a hut on the top of a tree. The father also is impure for a week, and must not eat rice, but like the mother must live on roasted roots and water.<sup>62</sup>

The birth of a child is a happy moment for them and they give more importance to the male child. However, they do not have aversion towards girl children. Mostly the elder women perform the duty of midwife. Soon after a child's birth they will give honey, Vayambu and a small amount of gold added paste in the baby's mouth. Mother's milk is the important food for the child until one year. A child, on being a month old, is seated on the father's lap and fed with sweetened rice; the omission of this ceremony implies that the child is illegitimate.<sup>63</sup> The child is usually named after the ancestors of the mother's family. To indicate that the child is legitimate, the father or the maternal uncle must do the first feeding of rice.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the new born child is considered legitimate.

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<sup>62.</sup> Henry Baker, *op. cit.*, p.9.

<sup>63.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>64.</sup> K.S. Singh, *The Scheduled Tribes*, Oxford University Press, (Chennai, 1997), p.720. Hereafter referred as, K.S. Singh, *Scheduled Tribes*.

The Mala Arayas bury the dead after the corpse has been washed, dressed and covered with a new cloth and smeared with holy ashes.<sup>65</sup> The grave is on the southern side of the habitation and is dug by those who are not expected to carry the corpse. This is done only after a few grains of rice or paddy are thrown over the spot. The grave is swept clean and lined with two plantain leaves before the corpse is lowered into it. The corpse is covered with new dress brought by friends and relatives and again it will be covered with a plantain leaf. A piece of metal is placed over it before the grave is filled with earth.<sup>66</sup>

A funeral prevents the family from entering their cultivation for a week. Each village has its priest, who when required, calls on Mulla, i.e., the demon resident of the hill. If he gets afflatus he acts in the usual way, yelling and screaming out the answer requested. Baker denotes that there are many tumulis (burial places) of buried persons is visible in those hills. The graves of the Chieftains are differentiated by the fragments of brass, pottery, iron weapons etc... These tumulis are often surrounded with long splintered pieces of granite 8 to 12 or 15 feet long, set up on end, with sacrificial alters and other remains which are centuries old. On the anniversary day offerings are made, the stone is lifted off and again quickly closed.<sup>67</sup> The spirit is supposed to be enclosed; no one ventures to touch the cell at any other times.<sup>68</sup> But now a days the converted (Christian) Mala Arayas also follow some of these beliefs. They fear to go near the cemetery even in the daytime. They conduct prayers at the

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<sup>65</sup>. Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Caste and Tribes of Southern India*, Asian Educational Services, (Madras, 2001), p.388.

<sup>66</sup>. A.A.D. Luiz., *op. cit.*, p.125.

<sup>67</sup>. T.I. John, *Erumapra St. Peters C.S.I. Church History 1849-1999*, Erumapra Church History Editorial Board, (Erumapra, 2000), pp.184-185.

<sup>68</sup>. Samuel Mateer, *Njan Kanda Keralam, op. cit.*, p.119.

40th day of the death and until then the relatives of the dead man will not take non-vegetarian food. They even now fear the souls of their ancestors. Thus, these three tribes had their own types of birth and burial rituals but what is common among them is that they consider the spirit of the dead person as their protectors and one of the gods.

### **THEIR PURITY CONCEPT IN RELATION TO OTHER TRIBES**

The purity concept among these three tribes is different, because Cholanaickans always living in the forests and they had no connections with the outside world. However, they have contacts and alliances only with the Pathinaickans a similar community of people inhabiting there. In addition, they have no contact with outsiders and if anybody does a mistake he is penalized. For example, if a member marries an outsider he or she must pay the fine to the Chenmakkaran when they return to their own territory.<sup>69</sup> The Cholanaickan rarely comes out from the forests so they have limited contacts with other people. They observe “touch – pollution” between brothers-in-law, violation of which is punishable by fine called *Thettubekku*, which varies from 50 paise to Rs.2.<sup>70</sup> Though they had marriage alliances with the Pathinaickan community, they consider Pathinaickan as inferior in social status.

Among the Cholanaickans, during *Thinka* (period of menstruation), the girl is secluded for five days in a *Ponthkettu*-a small leaf shelter erected away from the sight of the men folk, as she is considered unclean. On the sixth day, she takes a ceremonial bath called *Neeratal* in flowing water. For subsequent menstruations, she is secluded

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<sup>69</sup>. Personal Interview, Bhaskaran, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>70</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.30.

only for three days. She can bring water and dig roots and tubers but she does not take part in cooking or any other household activities. Further, cohabitation during this period is tabooed and they believe that it will cause the wrath of sylvan deities.<sup>71</sup>

As it is mentioned in the earlier parts, Paniyas are the people, doing agricultural labour in the lands of Jenmies. Therefore, they have no such purity concepts and most of them marry from their own community; but clan will be different. It is not impure to marry from the same clan. The notion of purity in the case of menstruation is very strict among them.

The ceremony performed on menarche is called '*Thoomakalyanam*'. The girl is segregated in a separate hut called *Chittal* or *Charivu* for seven days. She has to cook food for herself and takes *Manjal Kanji* (rice prepared with turmeric). The purificatory bath (*Thumakuli*) is on the seventh day. During the regular monthly periods, a woman is secluded for three days. The Paniyas detest menstrual blood and consider it as polluting. Only after the purifying bath on the fourth day and after sprinkling cowdung emulsion all over the hut a woman is permitted to perform house hold activities.<sup>72</sup>

The Mala Araya people have a variety of purity concepts. Especially in their relations with the out side people they consider themselves as superior to other tribal communities. They traditionally did not accept cooked food and water from the Urali, Mannan, Paliyan or Muthuvan. They accept water and cooked food from Hindus like

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<sup>71</sup>. P.K. Misra, "*Boundless Vitality of Littleman*", in *Man in India*, No.3, Vol. 58, (New Delhi, 1978), p.236.

<sup>72</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op. cit.*, pp.19-22.

Nambuthiri, Nayar and Izhava.<sup>73</sup> In respect of puberty, also they have concepts of pollution. A girl attaining puberty and woman in menses, and at child birth are isolated in the *Pattamadom* (segregation hut) erected when necessary. Often females share such huts. Such segregated females are called *Kattilayi*. A young girl on attaining puberty is segregated for seven days. On the seventh day, the girl will take bath in the tank, then her relative women will throw seven betel leaves and pepper leaves and areca nuts on her and she collects these in a particular manner and order which, it is believed, will reflect her behaviour in future. At the time of woman's menstruation period man may not approach her for fear of pollution<sup>74</sup>. Thus, among the tribal communities the pollution concepts check certain activities which also became a custom, and such customs help them to lead a healthy life.

## **KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

### **KINSHIP ORGANIZATION**

The kinship system is one of the oldest and most important aspect in the study of social organization. It includes socially recognized relationships based on genealogical ties. These ties or bonds are of affinity (relation between spouses), relation of consanguinity (relation between siblings), and relation of descent i.e., relation between parent and child.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>. K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala, op. cit.*, Vol. XXVII, p.816.

<sup>74</sup>. K.G. Daniel, *Let the Hills Rejoice*, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (New Delhi, 1998), p.13.

<sup>75</sup>. Seetha Kakkoth, "*Kinship and Tribal Lore*", in *Indian Folklore*, Vol.2, Issue - 3, Chennai, January - March 2003, p.22.

For heuristic purposes, kinship can be seen as having three co-existing aspects. 1. Categorical level, 2. Jural level and 3. Behavioural level. The categorical level comprises forms of nomenclature and classification. These provide the conceptual framework whereby people experience and understand their environment. The relationship terminology is the most important example in kinship.<sup>76</sup> The categorical level is the most suitable aspect in this context of kinship among the tribes which is focused in this study.

Thus, kinship refers to a set of persons recognized as relatives either by virtue of blood relationship or by virtue of a matrimonial relationship.<sup>77</sup> In different societies, ties of kinship give people claims to land for cultivation, to other kinds of property, to mutual assistance in pursuit of common interests, and to authority over others. The organization of kinship is based on the recognition and implementation of relationship derived from descent and marriage.<sup>78</sup> Thus, it plays an important role in the social and cultural life of the people by defining kin through its nomenclature or terminology by regulating inter-relationship or behaviour. The basic concept of kinship revolves round descent and inheritance.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76.</sup> Alan Barnad and Jonathan Spencer, (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, Routeledge Publication, (London, 1996), p. 312.

<sup>77.</sup> E.E. Evans Pritchard and Fred Eggan, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society Essays and Addresses by A.R. Radcliff Brown*, Cohen & West Ltd., (London, 1971), p.51.

<sup>78.</sup> Irawati Karve, *Kinship Organization in India*, Asia Publishing House, (Bombay, 1965), pp. 16-22.

<sup>79.</sup> H.C. Upreti, *Indian Tribes Then and Now*, Pointer Publishers, (Jaipur, 2007), p.72.

## THE DESCENT GROUPS

As mentioned above the basic concepts of kinship is descent. The term descent groups means a person socially affiliated with the group of his or her parents. In some societies, he/she is regarded as descendant of both the parents, though usually titles and surnames are passed down from the male line i.e., the individual belongs simultaneously to several descent groups - those of the two parents, four grand parents and eight great grand parents and so on. The descent can be three types. One is with the group of father, i.e., patrilineal descent; another is with the group of mother, i.e., matrilineal descent.

However, there are some societies where children affiliated to the group of one parent for the purpose of property and other parent for the purpose of inheritance or ritual or ceremonial roles.<sup>80</sup> The third type is called unilineal descent. Among the Cholanaickans, of these three types of descents or kinships, the most visible one is exogamous that is they marry from outside their descent and they are patrilineal because the sons mostly marry from outside the territory and will bring their wife (*Ennu*) to live in his father's territory.<sup>81</sup> This is actually to establish the authority over his father's property. For the joint life, they prefer the consent of the chieftain and people of the locality. This only proves that their descent types are patrilineal.<sup>82</sup> In addition, through these marriage alliances all the territories are closely related or well knit.

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<sup>80.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.73.

<sup>81.</sup> Raymond Firth, *Human Types an Introduction to Social Anthropology*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, (London, 1956), p.122.

<sup>82.</sup> K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala, op.cit.*, Vol. XXVII, p.350.

Among the Paniya tribes, the kinship relation is almost similar to that of the Cholanaickans. The Paniyas also have patrilineal relationship with the members of their hamlet. The men folk mostly belong to the same clan and the woman folk belong to different clans of distant hamlets.<sup>83</sup>

The kinship among Mala Arayas are classificatory type. In some places they follow matrilineal system, but now a days both Christian and non-Christian Mala Arayas are strictly following the patrilineal kinship relation. Mala Arayas are divided into five or six exogamous clans. Even now, those men who marry out side the community can continue his lineage.<sup>84</sup> In the case of a girl, she will be out of her clan permanently. In the case of Paniya woman if she marries non-Paniya she will be expelled, if she needs to come back to her clan, she must submit a plea for pardon in front of an assembly of the hamlet by touching the Chemmi's feet. Further, she had to pay a fine of Rs.10. Then she will be delivered from her crime and this fine is called *Thettupaisekettal*.<sup>85</sup>

## PRINCIPLES OF DESCENT AND ITS OPERATION

As it is explained in the earlier part, the descent line always binds father and son, a man and his father's successors, a man and his mother's successors, and ward man and his mother's successors and ward and his

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<sup>83</sup>. M.R. Chakravarthy, "*Dermatoglyphics of the Nayadis and Paniyans of Madras*", in *Man in India*, No.2, Vol. 38, (New Delhi, 1958), p.200.

<sup>84</sup>. T.I. John, *op. cit.*, pp.187-188.

<sup>85</sup>. V.R.P. Dikshitar, "*Some Hill Tribes of Malabar*" in P.K. Naryana Pillai, (Ed.), *Kerala Studies: A. Gopala Menon Commemoration Volume*, University of Travancore, (Trivandrum, 1955), p.131.

marriage lords.<sup>86</sup> Descent principles are trying to validate right over people and property, succession to status and property; they also function as an aspect of legal, political and economic institutions.

### **MAJOR ASPECTS IN DESCENT ARE THE FOLLOWING**

(a) **Exogamy:-** Marriage with the persons outside the group but not outside the community, say for instance, a Paniya can marry from any of the clans in his territory.

(b) **Patrilineal descent:-** That is every individual belongs to one descent group formed on the principle of patrilineal descent. Descent among these three tribal people are determined by physical ties of fatherhood. In the case of Cholanaickans the boy marries outside his Chenmam and bring his wife to his father's territory to establish his physical tie with his father i.e., father to his son is the principle of descent.

(c) **Bilateral system of descent:-** The bilateral system of descent consists of several descent groups like those of two parents; four grand parents and eight great grandparents and so on. Among the Mala Arayas from ancient period to till date, they have bilateral system of descent. However, they are living in a single house which has a joint family, the elder male member of the family will be the head of whole system of the house.<sup>87</sup> In the joint family, there will be parents, grand parents and their relations with the mother's parents will be peaceful. In this, a son will

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<sup>86.</sup> Robert T. Brain, *Bungwa Kinship and Marriage*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1972), p.45.

<sup>87.</sup> K.G. Daniel, *op. cit.*, p.15.



**Basket of Spirits or Poya**

have a close relationship with his parents and claim lineage from four grand parents on mother's and father's side.

Thus among these three principles of descent, the three tribal people belonged to the three categories. There are exogamous, patrilineal and bilateral descent principles in these three tribal groups.

## CONCEPT OF ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The concept of ancestral worship is the basic feature of a tribal society. Among the Cholanaickans, ancestral spirits are their patrons, who guard and protect them from all troubles. At the time of burial, the chieftain of the neighbouring territory will be the priest and the most important ritual in this burial is capturing the spirit in a ring. Then that ring will be kept in the custody of Chenmakkaran. In addition, they offer reverence and give a godly incarnation to the ring that will be kept along with the other deities in the divine basket. This clearly shows their belief in their ancestral spirits which are their protectors.<sup>88</sup>

The Paniyas believe that at the time of death, life (*Uru*) from the body moves out through the foot in the form of air. They believe in rebirth and hold the view that if bad deeds are done in the present life, an individual will be reborn as beast of burden and such beliefs guide their earthly behaviour.<sup>89</sup> In the celebrations, they give offerings to these ancestral spirits in the form of cooked rice, pappad and curries over the Thara (platform). The Paniyas also keep their benevolent spirit (*Pena*) in a basket called *Poya* and it is highly revered by them.

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<sup>88</sup>. P. Somasekharan Nair, *Paniyan*, (Malayalam), National Book Stall, (Kottayam, 1976), p.90.

<sup>89</sup>. Sachidanandan and R.R. Prasad, (Ed.), *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, Vol. III, Discover Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1996), pp.794-795.

The objects of Mala Arayas' worship are the spirits of their ancestors, and certain local demons supposed to be residing in rocks or peaks and are having influence only over particular villages or families. This specifies the relationship of the spirits of ancestors with their family or locality where they lived. They fear the spirits of unnatural deaths and they are called '*Arumkolai*' and the good demons are kept in each family, in which the spirit is supposed to reside. However, what is contradictory among this is, that they make offerings and conduct festivals only to deprecate (protest against) the anger of these spirits and not to seek benefits. However, now a days they worship the gods of hills such as Manjakkamala, Azham Mala, and Thalapara Mala.<sup>90</sup> This shows that even now they believe in the spirits whose abodes are in the hills and mountains.

## **KIN AND AFFINE**

The major difference between kin and affine is that kin belongs to one's own lineage and clan, whereas the affine are drawn from different lineages. Among the tribes, the Cholanaickans consider affine relation, which is the relation between brothers-in-law are sin and fines were imposed if anybody violates this rule.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, males avoid speaking with mother-in-law and similarly females avoid father in law. This clearly states the affine and kin relation.

But among both Paniyas and Mala Arayas after marriage woman will maintain her relationship with her agnatic group but at the same time

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<sup>90</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.30.

<sup>91</sup>. Bulletin of the International Committee on Urgent Anthropology and Ethnological Research, Issues- 39-41, Social Science, (New Delhi, 1998), p.32.

she becomes a member of her husband's natal (one's own birth) group. This indicates that a woman maintains an effective kinship ties with her agnates after her marriage, but her filial status and ritual bonds are terminated from them. She is fully free from her father's authority and comes under her husband's authority. This makes the descent groups of both Paniyas and Mala Arayas a strong patrilineally organized society among them.

### **MARRIAGE AMONG THESE TRIBES**

There is a popular concept that marriages among tribal people are more flexible than that of the non-tribal marriages. However, when we specifically analyse, it becomes clear that, among tribal communities marriage is binding to their relationship in the society as man and his wife. For them marriage fixes all kinds of relations and rights with a group to a family. Marriage is a symbolic representation of sharing of rights, relations and property of the two people.

### **MEANING OF MARRIAGE**

The institution of marriage is significant in the life cycle of all the tribes. A lifelong bachelor or an unmarried woman is inconceivable among them. The lineage will continue only through the birth of a child and is possible only through marriage. Children born to unmarried woman are not recognised in any of the three tribal communities. For them marriage is considered essential for continuation of life. If a husband and wife having no children they will not adopt other child as the adoption might lead to accommodate a child outside their descent.

Among them the attainment of puberty is a great festival since that signifies that their daughter is eligible for marriage or it is an occasion for them to inform indirectly that their girl is ready for marriage. In addition, after attaining puberty she will not be allowed to move around freely and she will not be allowed to move with male friends. Expertise in household work is considered to be a good qualification of a girl for marriage.

## **RULE OF MARRIAGE**

The rules of exogamy is strict to Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas. In almost all South Indian tribes, exogamy is the rule for them and clan is an exogamous group for all.<sup>92</sup>

The three tribes have clan exogamy and settlement exogamy among them. This is the normative pattern found among them. The Cholanaickans will not marry from their settlement. The marriage relations are usually between the members whose territories are closer to each other. Through the marriage all the territories are closely knit. The territory based kin groups are exogamous.<sup>93</sup> In many cases, they marry from Pathinaikans a sub-group of Kattunaickan community. These marriages will not last long. Anand Bhanu quotes an example of a Cholanaickan named Maatan of Kuppanmala who married a Pathinaickan girl named Battimati of Saayivala settlement. After six months she came back to her home saying that she was not ready to live with Maatan any more.<sup>94</sup> Later Maatan married a girl from his community and such

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<sup>92</sup> L. P. Vidyarthi and B. K. Rai, *The Tribal Culture of India*, Concept Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 1985), p.163.

<sup>93</sup> B.G. Halbar and C.G. Hussain Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

<sup>94</sup> B.A. Bhanu, *op. cit.*, p.96.

situations are common among them. This was a notable instance for the marriage by settlement exogamy.

The Paniyas nowadays follow marriages by negotiation. The clan exogamy is very strictly observed in Paniya community.<sup>95</sup> Marrying non-Paniya is also a punishable crime for them which is clearly specified in the earlier part. They select their spouses generally from distant hamlets and from different clans. Violation of social taboos like clan endogamy, incest etc. is believed to be punished by ancestral wrath. It is in fact, a surveillance to their bad habits.

The rule of marriage among Mala Arayas is also not different from Cholanaickans and Paniyas. They are very strict to exogamy. Cross cousin marriage is popular among them and in it, the children out of this union will become brothers. Mother's brother's daughter can be married and that means both of them will be from different clans but they have an affinity. This kind of marriages take place mainly to continue the right over the property.<sup>96</sup> However, nowadays among the Christian Mala Arayas cross cousin marriages are quiet unpopular. They conduct marriage mostly by negotiation and there are rare cases of love marriage also. Thus the rule of marriage in these tribal people are based on clan exogamy generally and settlement exogamy particularly.

## THE MARRIAGE PROCESS: RITUALS

According to Lucy Mair, marriage is a union between a man and a woman and children born to that woman are recognized as offspring's of

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<sup>95</sup> P.G. Padhmini, *Keezhala Jeevitha Mudrakal* (Malayalam), Samayam Publication, (Kannur, 2008), pp.18-24.

<sup>96</sup> Henry Baker, *op. cit.* p.7.

the ancestral parents of both.<sup>97</sup> However, in the case of tribal people, there will be some strict laws regarding marriage. Yet, the girl and boy will have freedom to select their partners. For them marriage is for (a) sex, and (b) siblings. The present generation of tribes especially the educated tribes are not following forefathers' methods and they have flexibility in the marriage systems.

## CHOLANAICKANS MARRIAGE

There is no particular custom or tradition in Cholanaickan marriages. Friendship is the beginning and that will lead to love and that enters into a stage where the actual sex act is carried on without the knowledge of other members. If both of them like to continue their relations they enter into the next stage that is openly moving outside together so that other members can see them sleeping together this is called '*Oppamalatu*'.<sup>98</sup> From there the couple join together and return to the groom's territory. Monogamy is the form of marriage and bride-price (*Kana-Ana*) is paid in cash, and residence after marriage is patrilocal. Among the Cholanaickans, a feature of the marriage ceremony is said to be for the bride to roll a cheroot of tobacco leaves, which both parties must smoke in turn.<sup>99</sup> The couple may stay outside the cave close by or stay in the cave with other members. There are cross - cousin marriages, junior sororate and junior and senior levirates which are also allowed. They encourage widow remarriage. If a widow has children from the

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<sup>97.</sup> H.C. Upreti, *op. cit.*, p.68.

<sup>98.</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p.701.

<sup>99.</sup> K.P. Bahadur, *Caste, Tribes and Culture of India, Karnataka, Kerala & Tamil Nadu*, Vol. IV, Ess Ess Publications, (New Delhi, 1978), p.66.

earlier union, the new husband has to take care of them and the children remain with the mother as long as she lives.<sup>100</sup> Divorce is absent or rare.

In the early years and in recent years most of the Cholanaickans marry from the group Pathinaickan, another tribal community. The shortage of girls for marriage from their own community leads to such problems. Moreover, they marry at early age and these earlier marriages with the Pathinaickans show that most of the marriages did not last long. N. Viswanathan Nair in his study writes that “Minmutty Kunkan (a Cholanaickan) in his youth married a Pathinaickan woman called Dodalapotti Mathi. Their marriage lasted only for five years. When he found a suitable spouse from his own community, he deserted Mathi”.<sup>101</sup> There are so many such instances in the early period.

Nowadays, the situation is changing and most of them prefer marriage by negotiation. In the early years there were no *Thali* or rituals in their marriages. However, they give bride prices that may be either Rs.10 or more than that.<sup>102</sup> During the visit to the Cholanaickan settlements of Neelimala the researcher interviewed a few Cholanaickan elders, and asked their opinion about marriage and found that it was different from that of the early days. Now they have rituals in marriages, first, the suitable age of marriage for male and female are found to be 20 and 18 respectively. The parents of the boy will see the girl first, and then only the boy will see her. If both are willing, marriage date will be

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<sup>100</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture and Tribal Welfare*, Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, (Madras, 1988), p.104.

<sup>101</sup>. B.A. Bhanu, “*Could be an Alternative to the Institution of Marriage among Food Gatherers: A Case of Cholanaickans, the Cave-Dwellers of Kerala*”, Paper Presented at Seminar on **Marriage Systems in India**, Anthropological Survey of India, Nagpur, February, 1983, p.141.

<sup>102</sup>. B.A. Bhanu. *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.



**Twenty-five Paise Thali of Cholanaickans**

fixed. Marriage is always in girl's house. In these marriages the chief priest will be the elder male member and he will do some chanting from their traditional knowledge and give the *Thali* (pendent) made of twenty-five paise coins connected in a yellow or black string and the boy will tie it on brides neck and after that they give a feast to the people who are gathered there. After a few hours of stay in girl's house, couple and their relatives will go back to their house and there will also be a big feast.<sup>103</sup> For them marriage is an important occasion.

The marriage process and rituals among the Paniyas are different from some tribal people and similar to a few of them. The rituals in Paniya marriages include the practice that the bride and bridegroom will stand on two small bags (*Kana-Muda*) of about 1kg of Paddy and their feet are washed and two pieces of cloth (*Thiru-Mana-Mundu*) are wrapped round their waist. This is the last of the ceremonies of the marriage.<sup>104</sup>

The Paniyas strictly follow the clan exogamy as mentioned earlier. Every one is expected to remember his/her clan he or she is being the member by birth. It is the duty of maternal uncle (Maman) of the Paniyas to find out a suitable bride for his nephew. Betrothal known as *Kettu Kalyanam* takes place at the girl's house. After a brief ceremony, the Chemmi approves the betrothal and announces the date of marriage. The girl and boy then meet at times. Later the marriage rituals are performed

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<sup>103</sup>. Personal Interview, Bhaskaran, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

<sup>104</sup>. A. Aiyappan, "*Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Provinces of Madras*, The Superintendent, Government Press, (Madras, 1948), p.99. Hereafter referred as A. Aiyappan, *Tribes of the Provinces of Madras*.

at the bride's house.<sup>105</sup> When marriage procession reaches the bride's house, the people there will wait out side the courtyard to welcome the guests. Marriage ceremonies will start by invoking the '*Karnemare*' (ancestor's spirit) of bride's father's illam by the Chemmi, who officiate there as the religious functionary. '*Tiruvanakettu*' (tying the mundu to the bride and bridegroom) '*Vellammarikal*' (blessing the newly married couple), '*Arupathinalu*' (bride price collection known properly as 64 panam or Rs. 16), '*Mandipanam*' (offer of clap fee to the wife's mother's sister) are the major rituals. By pouring water over the head and feet of the young couple is the Chemmi's sacred ritual on the marriage contract. Not only bride price, but also every year husband has to make an annual present to his wife's parents and failure to do so entitles them to demand their daughter back.<sup>106</sup> In the Paniya marriages the *Thali* is tied by the female relations of the bridegroom in the marriage and feast will be prepared for the dear and near and new guests from bridegroom's family. The *Thali* will be tied when the Paniya women dance to the tunes of pipe and drum music.<sup>107</sup> After the marriage they build up a separate hut for them; but the new hut will be quite close to that of his parents.<sup>108</sup>

For the Paniyas night is the suitable time for conducting marriage. The bride price is also collected in Paniya marriages but it was formally fixed by the girl's parents and paid by the groom's maternal uncle for the groom and he will hand over this money to bride's father<sup>109</sup>. There are

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<sup>105.</sup> B. Francis Kulirani, "*Marriage among the Paniyan: Economic Stresses and Alternative Modes of Procuring Mate*", Paper Presented at Seminar on *Marriage Systems in India*, Anthropological Survey of India, Nagpur, February, 1983, p.256.

<sup>106.</sup> A. Aiyappan, *Tribes of the Provinces of Madras, op.cit.*, pp.98-99.

<sup>107.</sup> B. Francis Kulirani, *op.cit.*, p.257.

<sup>108.</sup> A.A.D. Luiz, *op.cit.*, p.220.

<sup>109.</sup> K.N.K. Sharma, *op.cit.*, p.362.

numerous instances when, on failure to pay, the wife has been called back by her parents. A primitive custom of the bridegroom being slapped affectionately by the headman has been discontinued. Eating together is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. As the rituals are over, all relatives and friends of both the parties are invited for a feast arranged in connection with the marriage ceremony. The feast is followed by singing and dancing performance accompanied by musical instruments. Before the departure, Chemmi will give a piece of advice to the bridegroom. On their arrival they will be received by bridegroom's relatives. It is customary among Paniya community that the husband has to make an annual subscription known as *Thalappattom* for his wife's parents. On the *Uchal* (annual festival) day, the amount is fixed as thirty '*Kolagam*' (one *Kolagam* is = 750grams of paddy) during the first year and ten '*Kolagam*' of paddy in subsequent years.<sup>110</sup>

Number of changes take place in the Mala Araya marriages from the past. Scholars state that there are distinct changes between the tribal marriages and non-tribal marriages. In the years past the most important function or ritual in the Mala Araya marriages was that bride and bridegroom will take food from the same plantain-leaf sitting side by side and this shows their close relationship. This only means that they must share everything in life in the years to come. After this the bridegroom ties the *Thali* on the bride's neck, and a collection is made for the happy couple.<sup>111</sup> Their *Thali* were similar to that used by the rural people. It has been recorded in 1907 Census of Travancore State that the marriage function ends with the seizing of ornaments or vessels by the bride by

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<sup>110.</sup> V. Sudarsen and S. Sumathi, *Reminiscing Anthropology*, University of Madras, (Chennai, 2005), pp.9-10.

<sup>111.</sup> Henry Baker, *op. cit.*, p.9.

saying “this is my fathers” and her husband appropriates them.<sup>112</sup> They consider marriage as sacred and indissoluble. The seizing of father’s vessels or ornaments is the end of the whole marriage function. There is no payment of bride price (dowry), but at present, customs make it imperative that the bride be provided with jewellery and a share from her parent’s property. Even non-converted Mala Arayas also had made additions in their marriages. This is because of the influence of Hindu marriage and its rituals. The converted Mala Arayas have also made necessary additions in their marriages. They have not only the practice of tying *Thali* but also giving new clothes to the bride and a ring which is an important ritual in it. Further, divorce has become common among them.<sup>113</sup> They prefer Mondays and Thursdays and check the *Muhoortham* time for conducting marriage though they are converted to Christianity. Their traditional beliefs and customs are not entirely changed due to conversion.

## TYPES OF MARRIAGES AND DIVORCE

The tribal people live in the midst of myriads of rituals. They also follow different types of marriages. The three tribal people narrated here follow different types of customs and rituals in relation to birth and death, as well as marriage. The Cholanaickan people who are semi nomadic and food gathering tribes, follow mainly three types of marriages - *Oppamalattu*, *Edipithyotu* and marriage by negotiation.

*Oppamalattu* / *Oodibiduvattu* (elopement) is the practice of sleeping together. When one reaches his adulthood he moves to other

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<sup>112.</sup> *125 Years Church History 1872-1997*, Church History Committee, (Koovappally, 1997), pp.23-25.

<sup>113.</sup> L.K. Krishna Iyer, *op. cit.*, p.172.

territories with or without the intention of finding a suitable mate for himself. During these visits, if he comes across a suitable girl of his liking he develops friendship with her by the way of offering gifts and prefers to sleep with her one day. In the next stage, they want others to see them sleeping together. Then the couple together return to their territory and begin their marital life.

*Edipithyotu* – In this practice, the boy likes the girl and the girl does not yield for a union, and she is then forcibly carried by the boy and such a capture is known as *Edipithyotu*.<sup>114</sup>

*Negotiation* –Most of the marriages are held by negotiation between the girl and boy's parents of the Cholanaickans.

Divorces are rare or absent in Cholanaickan community if the girl or boy marry from their own community. But those who marry from Pathinaickan community face problems and marriage relations end in divorce. In such cases the girl will run away from her husband. The widows, widower and divorcees are permitted to marry again. Levirate and sororate are still in practice. But polyandry and polygamy are tabooed relationships. An instance of fraternal polyandry was reported sometime back but it was not publicised to the outside world.<sup>115</sup>

Within three or four years after attaining age, most of the girls among Paniyas get married. The marriages are generally conducted in a simple manner and marriages are generally arranged and negotiated, and a few marriages are by elopement. Also, parents and guardians are

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<sup>114.</sup> B.A. Bhanu, "*The Nomadic Cholanaickans of Kerala; An Analysis of their Movement*", in *Nomads in India*, (Calcutta, 1982), p.216.

<sup>115.</sup> Personal Interview, Kannan, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.

interested in arranged marriages on account of the various pre-marital relations.

In marriages by elopement, if gifts to the girl's parents are not paid fine is imposed and that sometimes is taken by the elders of the group<sup>116</sup>. Divorcees are rare among Paniyas, but they have the right to remarry. The levirate and sororate are strictly avoided. Sometimes, the boy who is in love with the girl goes to her house and helps the parents of the girl in their day-to-day activities. Impressed by his services, the girl's parents decide to offer the girl to the boy and accept to conduct their marriage. This type of marriage is called service marriage. Nowadays marriage by elopement and by service is not in vogue among them. The initiative for entering into marital alliance is taken by the boy's family. It is customary among Paniyas that the boy's party should visit the girl's house three times before fixing the date of marriage.<sup>117</sup>

The Mala Arayas from early period to till date have only two systems of marriage - love marriage and arranged marriage. The love marriage takes place generally when both are living in the same locality, or when both are studying in same institution. The divorce among Mala Arayas are higher than other two tribes but in total percentage of the State it is low. The divorcee has the right to remarry and there is no stipulation for that and either he or she can marry a widow or widower or any girl who is willing to marry.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>. V. Sudarsen and S. Sumathi, *op. cit.*, pp.8-10.

<sup>117</sup>. K.N.K. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p.361.

<sup>118</sup>. Personal Interview, C.P. Krishnan, Member, Mala Araya Temple Committee, Mundakkayam, Kottayam, 29/04/2010.

Thus, the marriages and divorces among these tribes are common. Also, the Mala Arayas do not like the interference of court in the marriage matters. However this is quite unknown to the other two tribals.

## **EXTRA - MARITAL RELATIONS AND CHANGE IN MARRIAGE RITUALS**

In these three tribal communities, extramarital relations are rare. In the case of Cholanaickans, they live always with their wives and never allow them to go deep into the forest in fear of non-tribal people in the forest. The most remarkable change in their system of marriages is that they started using '*Thali*' in their marriages. That is the major change in their marriage ritual and this may be due to the influence of the Hindus in the neighbouring areas of forests.<sup>119</sup>

The Paniyas sometimes have extra marital relations; but they are rare cases. Some Paniyas are believed to be gifted with the power of changing themselves into animals; and there is a belief among the Paniya dwellers in the plains that if a Paniya wants to secure a woman whom he likes, he goes to her house at night with a hollow bamboo, and goes around the house three times giving signals. The woman then comes out, and the man, changes himself into a bull or dog, fulfils his wicked will. The woman, it is believed, dies in the course of two or three days.<sup>120</sup> However, there are some rare occasions when married Paniya will have sex with the landlord's wife. However, these incidents are known not to the outside world.

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<sup>119</sup>. Personal Interview, Bhaskaran, Cholanaickan Tribal Labourer, Neelimala, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

<sup>120</sup>. B. Francis Kulirani, *op.cit.*, p.257.

The Mala Araya tribes both converted and non-converted are mostly educated and so extramarital relations are rare among them. There are lots of changes or transformation which had taken place in the marriage rituals and practices of Mala Arayas which are explained in the following chart.

| <b>Rituals</b>                            | <b>Practiced in early period</b> | <b>Whether practiced now</b>                    |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Couple eating from same leaf              | Yes                              | No  |
| Thali tying                               | Yes                              | Yes   |
| Wearing rings                             | No                               | Yes   |
| Puja or chanting Mantras                  | No                               | Yes   |
| Belief in good and bad omen               | Yes                              | Yes   |
| Seizing of father's vessels and ornaments | Yes                              | No  |
| Cross cousin marriages                    | Yes                              | Continue rarely among Non-Christian Mala Arayas |

The change is found in every field and these changes are inevitable as they are found in every other field and this is the general rule. So these societies are transforming themselves and undergo cultural changes to achieve dynamic progress and thus these people move from their primitive life to the present modern life.

## **FAMILY ORGANIZATION**

Family is one of the most important primary social institutions. It is one of the oldest institutions of the human society. Sociologists state that the family is the basic unit of a social organization. The family is an

organized group in a society. Its members occupy a definite set of mutual statuses, interact according to definite behaviour and patterns, and are motivated by reciprocal attitudes and sentiments. In every society, the basic unit of economy and society will be a family and in the case of tribal people also this is the basic unit.<sup>121</sup>

## STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The most important nature of the tribal families is that they are nuclear families. This type of family consists of father, mother and their unmarried children. This is the basic structure of Cholanaickan, Paniya and Mala Arayas family. The Cholanaickan family does not represent in any way the joint family system of Hindus. When a grownup son marries, he separates from his parents and establishes a new family. The nuclear family consists of the male head, his wife and unmarried children.<sup>122</sup>

The Paniyan society's basic economic and social units are their nuclear families. Both husband and wife share the burden of running the family. The husband is the head and decision maker. Most of the families generally have dependants in their houses.<sup>123</sup>

The basic social and economic unit of the Mala Arayan community is their nuclear family that consists of father, the Supreme head of the family, mother and their unmarried children. In most of the families there

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<sup>121</sup>. H.C. Upreti, *op. cit.*, pp.41-42.

<sup>122</sup>. P.R.G. Mathur, *Tribal Situation in Kerala*, Kerala Historical Society, (Trivandrum, 1977), p.30.

<sup>123</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.91.



**Cholanaickans Hut at Neelimala Forest Range, Wynad**

will be dependents like parents and unmarried brothers and sisters. They live in peace with out any misunderstanding among them.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The tribal people mostly live in the huts made out of wild leaves and palms leaves. Those houses are the basis of their tribal life. The researcher during her visit, observed the houses of both Cholanaickans and Paniyas. The Cholanaickans living in Neelimala and Mimmuttery ranges in Wynad have good houses. These house walls are built of mud and stone with asbestos or tarpaulin as roofs. In the rainy season, it is too difficult to stay in such houses. They have no concrete houses. Inside the houses there are walls to separate the Kitchen, bedrooms and other rooms but these walls are not very high to touch the roof.<sup>124</sup>

The interpersonal relationship between these tribes is very friendly and this continues between members of the family and community. Among the Mala Arayas, a number of changes took place in their house construction. In their houses, every man will have separate room, into which no one intrudes excepting the wife. There is a general store for provisions for the family, which is provided for all in common, and the general store is called *Pathayam*. In the houses these tribes use bamboo mats for sitting and sleeping.<sup>125</sup>

In the early periods, these tribes constructed good houses with wood and stone. The workers from the plains built these houses for

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<sup>124.</sup> A. Aiyappan, "*Marriage by Elopement among the Paniyans of Wynad*", in *Man in India*, Vol.XVI, Part-I, (New Delhi, 1936), pp.27-37.

<sup>125.</sup> Field Visit.



**The House of Paniyas at Kallikeny, Wynad**



**Tree Houses of Mala Arayas at Mundakkayam Drawn by Mrs. Henry  
Baker around 1850s**

them.<sup>126</sup> Even today there are some houses made of wood and stone which are found in Meenachil area.

Mateer describes that the Mala Arayas built their houses in some parts of the region over the trees and they are called tree houses or *Erumadam* and *Anamadam* and they are reached by a bamboo ladder. Being afraid of attack from wild elephants, the family takes shelter in these houses and drives away wild elephants by shouting. Usually cooking place would be a hut out side the main hut.<sup>127</sup>

Now a days most of them have beautiful houses constructed with the help of Panchayats under house construction scheme and wealthy Mala Arayas have concrete houses in all these areas such as Meenachil, Mundakayam, and Kootikal.

These tribes usually have a family which consists of parents, children and grandparents staying together in the house. Even today this is the general situation in all the houses. The family members also have mostly a very cordial interpersonal relations. Very cordial relations are found among brothers and sisters and close relations. They do not get estranged even at testing times and this is the characteristic of their family life.

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<sup>126</sup>. Henry Baker, *op.cit.*, p.7.

<sup>127</sup>. Eira Dalton, *The Baker Family in India*, C.M.S. Press, (Kottayam, 1963), pp.44-45.

***Chapter- III***

***Development Policies of  
Government and NGOS –  
A Critique***

# **CHAPTER- III**

## **DEVELOPMENT POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT**

### **AND NGOs-A CRITIQUE**

The Central and State Governments had formulated number of development programmes for the uplift of tribal and other backward communities. As regards State's responsibility, the government periodically monitors the working of its Development Programmes to ascertain their progress. The Government considers that it is the time to reassess the situation as to how far these programmes reached the objectives or whether the development plans really benefited the people. There are certain Non-Governmental Organizations working among these backward people, to know whether the government succeeded in their measures taken for the attainment of improved standard of living of the tribal people. It is very clear that from the early period particularly from the time of the beginning of the British rule, these people were under the control of the administrators who introduced a number of development programmes for them. But still there are number of tribes who are leading a nomadic life, living in the interior of the forests, away from all development concepts. Hence, it needs a critical analysis to find out why the development programmes did not reach them? In addition, it is also necessary to know how far the government's policies succeeded in bringing them out from their primitive life to take up to modern living.

The Government of India and the Government of Kerala had put forward a number of development schemes for the uplift of the tribal people. According to the Census of 1991 there are 67.76 percent of

population in India belonging to Scheduled Tribe community.<sup>1</sup> There was considerable progress among the tribals in early post-Independence period. The percentage of Scheduled Tribe population has marginally increased from 7.83 percent in 1981 to 7.95 percent in 1991. The Scheduled Tribe population increased by 0.12 percent during the decade of 1981-1991. The growth rate was considerably high in comparison to the total population of the country.<sup>2</sup>

The term development always comes under controversial discussions among economists. However the main objective of development of a society is to raise the standard of living of the people and secure justice, freedom, equality and security for them in the society.<sup>3</sup> This chapter mainly discusses the government policies for the tribal development and it also analyses the Central and State government's role in this process.

## CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

The main aim of development is to provide increasing opportunities for a decent life for all kinds of people. It is essential to bring about more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting social justice and efficiency of production to provide greater

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1. *Census Report 1991, Government of India, Census of India, Kerala State Census Hand Book*, Planning Board, (Trivandrum, 1991), p.1.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

3. *The United Nations Development Administration: Current Approaches and Trends in Public Administration for National Development*, New York, 2001, E 711 H-1, p.8.

variety of facilities like education, health services, shelter, job opportunities etc.<sup>4</sup>

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines development as a process, which involves improvement in the quality of life of weaker sections and a greater participation and involvement of the masses in the process of decision making in the economic, social, political and cultural life of a society. Joseph Shumpeter defines development as only a change in economic life that is not forced upon it from without, but arises by its own initiative from within.<sup>5</sup>

But here the definitions mainly center around economic development. However, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) definition of development includes every field of development - social, political, cultural and economic. This is the mode of process which can uplift a society suffering from backwardness. The involvement of government in this process is inevitable, because it can only achieve the planned or predicted goals.<sup>6</sup> It does not mean others cannot do that, but in the case of tribal people, there is no other responsible institution than government. Therefore, it is too important to get the support from the concerned government authority for their progress.

It is very clear that the focus of development is now increasingly on the equitable distribution of wealth and income, full utilizations of

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4. Bhupendra Singh and Neeti Mahanti, (Ed.), *Tribal Policy in India*, Tribal Studies of India, Tribal Study Series-181, Inter India Publication, (New Delhi, 1997), p.18.

5. L.P. Vidyarthi, *Tribal Development and its Administration*, Concept Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 1981), pp .12-14.

6. Aired Diamant, "*European Models of Bureaucracy and Development*" in *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. Viii, No.3, 1967, p.310.

manpower, better utilization of natural resources and the protection of natural environment etc.<sup>7</sup> In all these developments there must be change and growth, which includes, increase in social facilities, modernisation and protection of human environment. Thus, development generally focuses on all these aspects.

## **TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT: MEANING AND SCOPE**

The tribal development in India is based on Nehru's "*Tribal Panchsheel*". This is summarized in a foreword to Verrier Elwin's book on NEFA. The Nehru's Five Points on tribal development are the following.

- I. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
- II. Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.
- III. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical people from outside will no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

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<sup>7</sup>. *The United Nations, Development Administration: Current Approaches, op. cit.*, p.8.

IV. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with multiplicity of Schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural instructions<sup>8</sup>, and

V. We should judge results not by statistics or by the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is involved.

This five point formula enunciated by Nehru stand as the cornerstone of the India's Government policy in respect of tribals.<sup>9</sup> This was further elaborated by Elwin, who emphasized the need for the tribal people to come to terms with their own past avoiding danger of pauperism and without creating a sense of inferiority. Elwin stressed on recognizing the contribution of the tribal people in helping the Indian society as a whole, so that they may feel that they are part and parcel of India as any other citizens.<sup>10</sup> And also, he felt, that the inclusion and exclusion of a community to the tribal category can be made only by Parliament under Article 342 (2).<sup>11</sup>

The Five Point formula of Nehru had some defects too, because the tribal people can attain development only by breaking all their previous mode of life. Otherwise they cannot come out from their environment without breaking it. What they need for development is that they must give-up to some extent what they uphold as their inheritance. The term

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<sup>8</sup>. H.C. Upadyay, *Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*, Anmol Publications, (New Delhi, 1991), pp.167-168.

<sup>9</sup>. K.S. Singh, (Ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Tribes and Tribal Policy*, Anthropological Survey of India, (Calcutta, 1989), pp.3-4.

<sup>10</sup>. Elwin Verrier, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, Advisor to the Government of Assam, (II-Edition), (Shillong, 1959), p.296.

<sup>11</sup>. Aradhana Sukla, *Indian Tribes: Psychological and Social Perspectives*, Kanishka Publishers, (New Delhi, 2005), p.5.

development itself means a change from undeveloped condition and that denotes change from one stage to another. Thus the only aspect that they can continue to practice is their religious beliefs and social customs. With all these the society must also accept them since they are helpless and their need is the protection from exploitation.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, tribal development aims at progress in strengthening the material aspects of tribal culture and increase the income through better utilization of the environmental resources - forests, minerals, agriculture, animal husbandry as well as the skills of the tribal people.<sup>13</sup> This can be categorised into two objectives, Long term objectives and Short term objectives.

(a) Long term objectives are.

- (1) To narrow down the gap between non-tribes and tribes.
- (2) To improve them from primitiveness to a quality life.<sup>14</sup>

(b) Short term objectives are

- (1) Elimination of exploitation of all kinds, through rapid economic development.
- (2) Improving organisational capabilities and
- (3) Building up inner strength of the tribal people.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>. Prakash Chandra Mehta, *Tribal Development in 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Durga Taldar Shiva Publishers, (Udaipur, 2000), p.10.

<sup>13</sup>. H.S. Saksena and et.al., *Scheduled Tribes and Development*, Serial Publication, (New Delhi, 2006), pp.90-91.

<sup>14</sup>. A.B. Ota, (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Tribal Development*, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute, (Bubhaneswar, 2009), p.212.

<sup>15</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.23.

## **GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR THE UPLIFT OF THE TRIBES**

The Government of India and Government of Kerala had initiated a number of schemes for the development of the tribes. But the real beneficiaries of these schemes are very few. Those who receive these benefits are not getting expected benefits. The policies for the uplift of these tribes of Kerala by the Government of Kerala are many. It will be more effective if a narrative is made from the British period onwards on major tribal issues and the schemes for their development.

### **KERALA PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE**

During the period of British rule there was no Kerala state as such; it was divided into three parts. Malabar was under direct control of Madras Presidency and other two parts Travancore and Cochin were ruled by local princes. Malabar is the northern part, Cochin is the middle and Travancore is the southern part of Kerala. The larger concentration of tribal population of Kerala has been in Malabar region particularly in the Wynad district. During the British period the policies towards tribal communities had diverse impact. For instance, in 1903, the Hamilton Settlement Act was passed to offer special protection to tribes in Travancore.<sup>16</sup> At that time in the British Malabar, especially in Wynad, majority of the tribes except Kurichiyas were under slavery and bonded labour. The main features of this Act were:

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<sup>16</sup> L. A. Krishana Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillai, "*The Primitive Tribes of Travancore*", *Census of India 1931*, Rep., Appendix-I, Government Press, (Trivandrum, 1935). p.4.

(1) The hill men might collect and use for their own consumption or sale, or for both, any minor forest produce not collected by the Government or leased by the Government to contractors or lessees.

(2) The hill men were free to catch fish and engage in animal hunting. For this purpose, and for the protection of their person and property, each settlement could keep one gun, ordinarily in the custody of the headman.

(3) Divisional Forest Officers were appointed to check whether there were any kinds of trouble to them from outsiders especially in trade transactions.

(4) The hill men's contact with the outsiders was to be strictly regulated by the Government.

(5) If the hill men willfully violated these rules they would be liable to be expelled from their settlements, temporarily or permanently, besides being subjected to the penalties prescribed in the Forest Laws.

However these provisions could not protect the tribes from the trespassers from plains who captured their land. This was the situation that prevailed then. Even today one can see that majority of them are still landless. Thus the condition of the tribals in Kerala was far from satisfactory during the British rule.

## **SCENARIO AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

### **THE DEBAR COMMISSION - 1961**

The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission was appointed under Article 339 of the constitution and it was headed by U.N.

Debar. The Article 339 ensures the control of the Union over the administration of the Scheduled tribes; i.e., the President may at any time and shall at the expiration of ten years from the time that the Constitution came into force by orders can appoint a commission to report the administration of the Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State.<sup>17</sup> The Commission recommended that all tribal land alienated since January 26, 1950 - the day Constitution came into force be returned to the original Adivasi owners. But nothing considerable came out of it.<sup>18</sup> It was only after a decade substantial progress was seen in the direction of tribal welfare.

### **ORDERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY KERALA STATE-1962**

After the formation of Kerala State, major decision on the Scheduled Communities of the State was taken in 1962. In 1962, an Evaluation Committee was formed on the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Communities, the main objectives of the programme were:-

(a) Assess the volume of work done for the uplift of SC, ST and other Backward Communities during the First and Second Five Year Plan periods.

(b) Suggesting ways and means to rectify the defect found.

(c) Include the deserving that had been left out from the SC, ST and OBC list.

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<sup>17</sup> H.C.Upadyay, *op.cit.*, p.181.

<sup>18</sup> R. Bijoy and K. Ravi Raman, *Muthanga: The Real Story; Adivasi Movement to Recover Land*, in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.72, 17 May 2003, p.1977.

(d) The Committee recommends to the government the deletion of those who attained economic stability from the list of SC, ST and OBC.<sup>19</sup>

This evaluation committee did a fruitful attempt from its methodology itself. They visited all the important Tribal Settlements in the State, and held discussions with the tribal people and their representatives. The committee then submitted a detailed report on programmes of tribal welfare and development undertaken during the first two Five Year Plans.

### REHABILITATION SCHEMES FOR TRIBES

Several measures have been undertaken by the government before and after Independence for the development and rehabilitation of tribal people. Under the Tribal Welfare Department's control a number of major projects were started with the financial support of the Central Government. They are:

1. Suganthagiri Cardamom Project.
2. Attappadi Co-operative Farming Society (ATCOFARMS).
3. Chokkad Colonization Scheme.
4. Priyadarshini Tea Estate.<sup>20</sup>
5. Vattachira Collective Farm.

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<sup>19</sup>. M. Kunhaman, *Development of Tribal Economy*, Classical Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 1990), pp.10-13.

<sup>20</sup>. Jose Chathankulam and M.S.John, "*Issues in Tribal Development; The Recent Experience of Kerala*" in G.C. Rath, (Ed.), *Tribal Development in India; The Contemporary Debate*, Sage Publications, (New Delhi, 2006), p.184.

After Independence, the most remarkable move taken for the rehabilitation of these landless tribes were the projects mentioned above. At Chingeri in Wynad a Co-operative Coffee Plantation was established in about 600 acres of land and houses were built for the tribes. After the implementation of Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 1976, many of the Adiya and Paniya tribes became jobless. With a prime objective of rehabilitating them the Sugantha Giri Project was initiated. It is one of the biggest plantation enterprises in the country spreading over an area of 1200 hectares of forest land accommodating about 750 tribal families.<sup>21</sup>

The ATCOFARMS was established using about 1080 hectares of forest land under cultivation of different crops and 420 tribal families belonging to Irula and Muduga communities were rehabilitated there. Another colony was established at Chokkad at Nilambur in Malapuram district to rehabilitate 60 tribal families. Rubber and coconuts were cultivated in 105 hectares of vested forest land allotted for this project. The Priyadarshini Co-operative Tea Plantation was established near Mananthavadi in Wynad in 1988 in about a compact area of 512 acres of land and rehabilitated there about 100 families of Adiya and Paniya communities.<sup>22</sup>

The tribal collective farm at Vattachira was established in 1981 to rehabilitate 60 selected freed bonded labourers. An area of about 120.5 hectares of vested lands were utilized for this project. Chokkad and Priyadarshini all other schemes are running at a financial loss. With these

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<sup>21.</sup> *Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Tribals in Kerala (1976-78)*, Government of Kerala, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, (Trivandrum, 1979), p.15.

<sup>22.</sup> M. Sasikumar, "*Towards Muthanga and After: The Tribal Movements for Land in Kerala*", in R. M. Sarkar, (Ed.), *Land and Forest Rights of the Tribals Today*, Serials Publications, (New Delhi, 2006), p.136.

project and programmes, altogether 1089 persons were resettled in 3,295 hectares of land.<sup>23</sup>

### **TRIBAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT - 1975**

In connection with the Fifth Five year plan, Kerala Government founded the Tribal Welfare Department in 1975. For the implementation of tribal development programmes, they divided the State into five tribal development areas - Wynad, Nilambur, Attappady, Idukki and Punalur.

The 1975 Act was significant for it had acknowledged the inalienability of tribal land and the need for restoration of alienated land to them. The Kerala State Scheduled Tribes Restriction on Transfer of lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands Act 1975 was an optimistic step to reduce the land problems of Kerala tribes. This act passed unanimously by the Kerala State Assembly promised to restore all the alienated lands of the tribes since January 26<sup>th</sup> 1960 after seizing it from encroachers.<sup>24</sup>

The most remarkable personality who deserves special mention and remembrance in relation to this Act of 1975 is Dr. Nalla Thampy Thera. Though he was born and brought up in Madurai, better part of his life he lived among tribes of Wynad. After his M.B.B.S. from the University of Madras, he went to Wynad got married to an Adiya woman and lived among the tribes until his death in 17 June 2010.<sup>25</sup> Though he was a medical doctor, his active role was remarkable in tribal land rights agitations. It was during his constant struggle against the Government of Kerala that Nalla Thampy submitted public interest petition seeking the

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<sup>23</sup>. Jose Chathankulam and M.S.John, *op.cit.*, p.186.

<sup>24</sup>. M. Sasikumar, *op.cit.*, p.136.

<sup>25</sup>. *Malayala Manorama*, (Chennai), 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.

intervention of the Kerala High Court; consequently the Kerala High Court issued an order in October 1993 calling for restoration of alienated lands.<sup>26</sup> That led to the opening up of new laws on tribal land alienations in Kerala. The other major surveys and Committees to enquire and recommend tribal and other backward people's progress are listed in the following table A.1.

**TABLE A-1**

**Major Survey Reports of the Committees Formed for Scheduled Castes, Tribes, and Other Backward Class people under the Government of Kerala (1965-79)**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Agency that Published Survey Reports</b> | <b>Name of the Survey</b>  | <b>Repeated or Not Repeated Surveys</b> |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| 1965        | Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala  | Report on the Sample Survey on the Problem of Indebtedness among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes         | Not Repeated                            |
| 1968        | Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala  | Socio -Economic Survey on castes and communities   | Not Repeated                            |
| 1968        | Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala  | Drafted Preliminary Report on Integrated Areas Development Programmes and sub-plan for Tribal Area Development | Not Repeated                            |
| 1976        | State Planning Board, Kerala                | Integrated Tribal Development Project for Attapady   | Not Repeated                            |
| 1977        | Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala  | Report on the Survey of Bonded Labour in Wynad Area  | Not Repeated                            |
| 1979        | Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala  | Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Tribals in Kerala   | Not Repeated                            |

<sup>26</sup>. Kerala Shabdham, Vol.47, July 2010, p.49.

Each report, particularly the Report of 1968, 1976, 1977 (Bonded labour Wynaad and Schemes implemented in Tribal Development Block Attapady) 1979 are exclusively for the Scheduled Tribes. The 1968 Socio-Economic Survey on Castes and Communities, succeeded in improving the Socio-economic position of the Scheduled Tribes and the non-tribal communities. It also facilitated the survey of inter-tribal comparison with regard to the degree of socio-economic development attained by the various tribes.<sup>27</sup>

*"The 1975 Report on Tribal Integrated Area Development Programme and Sub- Plan for Tribal Area Development"* was another important report submitted to the Kerala Government by State Planning Board of the Kerala Government. This was actually the outcome of the fifth Five Year Plan. The aim of this approach was to quicken the pace of development of the tribal areas with emphasis on the advancement of Scheduled Tribes by implementing a variety of beneficial schemes pooling the resources under various development sectors. But the Surveys and field studies conducted for bringing out the real conditions of the poor sections ended in failure and this severely affected the programmes for uplifting the tribes. During 1973, Special Officers were appointed for it. No useful or supportive measures came out from their report.<sup>28</sup> The delay in appointing Special Officers, and the lack of time made them to rely on the secondary data. All these made the report unstable. Thus the fragile and distorted information became responsible for the paradoxical

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<sup>27</sup>. M. Kunhaman, *op. cit.*, p.16.

<sup>28</sup>. In 1973, Special Officers Report, Sri. C. Gopalan Nair's Report on Wynaad, (1) Debar Commission Report, (2)The Report of the Study Team on Tribal Development Programmes by Planning Commission in 1966, (3) Report on Forest Economy in Tribal Areas, (4)Report of the Task Force on Welfare of Backward Classes in Kerala in 1972.

situation to understand the real condition of the poor tribes, and today that causes the tribal area to remain undeveloped.

After that in 1976-78 another Socio-Economic Survey of Tribals in Kerala was conducted. The main objective of this Survey was to study the educational and socio - economic condition of all the tribes in the State and to study their agrarian problems. A separate bonded labour survey was conducted in the Wynad area since the beginning of the Socio-Economic Survey. But this survey didn't find anything useful to save these tribes from their troubled life. Had it collected hamlet-level details then it would have been very useful for the formulation of the strategy of tribal development at all levels. It also did not provide valuable information about the aggregate output produced and the productivity of tribal agriculture.<sup>29</sup>

#### **ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES**

The annual reports of the Commissioner for SCs and STs contain different types of information relating to the Scheduled Tribes of Kerala. These Reports are mainly utilized for obtaining time-series data on the expenditure incurred on tribal welfare and development. These data for the Commissioner was collected by the officials of the Harijan and Tribal Welfare Departments and other details contained in the reports were collected by the Commissioner directly from individuals and voluntary organizations. But the problem here is that whatever, information they collected cannot be taken as the actual situation relating to the tribes.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29.</sup> *Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Tribals in Kerala (1976-78), op.cit., p.16.*

<sup>30.</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26-27.

Along with these Surveys and Reports there are some major policies of the government incorporated in the Five Year Plans.

## **MAJOR AND MINOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AMONG THE TRIBES**

The development plans can be divided into two i.e., (1) Major Plans in the Five Year Plans and (2) Minor Plans or Schemes of development.

### **THE FIVE YEAR PLANS**

In 1972 under the chairmanship of S.C. Dube an Expert Committee was set up for advising on the formulation of a new strategy under the Fifth Five Year Plan. The Planning Commission laid down the objectives and strategies for tribal development from time to time. The following are the various welfare programmes introduced for the tribes through each five year plan.

#### **FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN (1951-1956)**

The following are the policies taken for assisting the tribes in the First Five Year Plan.

1. Assisting the tribes to develop their natural resources and to develop a productive economic life and keep them safe from outsiders' exploitation.

2. It is not desirable to bring about changes in their religious and social life, except at the initiative of the tribal people themselves and with their willing consent.

3. It is accepted that there are many features in tribal life which should, not only be retained, but also be developed.

4. The qualities of their dialects and the rich content of their arts and crafts also need to be appreciated and preserved.

On the basis of these policies mentioned above the First Planning Commission noted that,

*“There may be a good deal of justification for such (isolation), a policy of non-interference; but it is not easily practicable when tribal life has been influenced by social forces without, and tribal communities have reached a certain degree of acculturation accompanied by the penetration of communications in the tribal areas, and of social services for the betterment of their lives”.*<sup>31</sup>

In the First Five Year Plan, Community Development Projects for all round development of rural areas, especially the weaker sections were started.

## **SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN (1956-1961)**

During this plan period the Ministry of Home Affairs provided funds to the Ministry of Community Development to establish Special Multi-purpose Tribal Blocks (SMPT) in the areas with prominent tribal population. This new SMPT plan helped to reach the remote tribal

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<sup>31</sup>. *The Report of the Planning Commission, Government of India, First Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi, 1951-1956), pp. 636-640.

majority areas to identify their problems.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the personnel in charge of the Blocks had done a good work during this period in identifying and suggesting measures for the problems of the tribals.

### **THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN (1961-1966)**

Towards the end of the second plan in 1959 the Government of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Verrier Elwin to renew the SMPT Blocks. According to the report of this committee, the SMPTs were renamed as Tribal Development Blocks (TDB) and the report suggested that many Blocks may be opened in all areas where over 60 percent of the population were tribal people. It fixed an amount of rupees 12 lakhs to the community development block and a provision of three stage development was followed from 1966-1969.<sup>33</sup>

### **THREE ANNUAL PLANS (1966-1969)**

As mentioned above, during this period special funds were provided for tribal development. In the first stage, 10 lakhs were allotted and in the second stage the Blocks were provided with Rs. 5 lakhs and in the third stage an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs was given to TDB. However in 1969-70 a decision was taken to extend the total life of TDB to 15 years by incorporating three more stages.

### **FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1969-1974)**

In the fourth plan period a remarkable change occurred. The attention had changed from group or area concept to individuals who

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<sup>32</sup>. Devendra Thakur and D.N.Thakur, *Tribal Development and Planning, Tribal Life in India*, Vol. IX, Deep & Deep Publication, (New Delhi, 1994), p.104.

<sup>33</sup>. *A Statistical Handbook of Tribal Welfare and Development*, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1976), pp.78-79.

were qualified for special attention to certain objective criteria. The programmes such as Small Farmers Development Agencies and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labours Development Agencies were started for this specified purpose. During the middle of the plan period i.e., 1972 the Planning Commission set up a "*Task force on Development of Tribal Areas*" with L.P. Vidyarthi as the Chairman. Along with this the Fourth Five Year Plan started a new programme on area based and group based. The Drought Prone Area Programme paid attention to the problem faced by an entire region which was quite undeveloped because of its agro-climatic situation. However the Fourth Five Year Plan also faced some setbacks in the functioning of TDBS. The Fourth Five Year Plan tried to rectify this drawback by adopting the integrated area development approach.<sup>34</sup>

#### **FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1974-1979)**

The main agenda of the Fifth Five Year plan was to observe the activities of task force in its monitoring on implementation of the various development programmes. Taking into account the recommendations of the task force and other previous committees, during the Fifth Five Year plan an altogether new approach was adopted towards tribal development. This was termed as Tribal Sub-Plan and it envisaged the total development of tribal areas through the mechanism of integrated development through the activities of both government and semi-

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<sup>34</sup>. *The Report of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India, Fourth Five Year Plan*, (New Delhi, 1969-1974), pp. 210-212.

government organizations by financing through the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP).<sup>35</sup>

### **SIXTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1980-1985)**

The Sixth Plan continued the Sub-plan approach of the Fifth Plan. The main objectives of the Sixth Plan period were the following.

1. A progressive reduction in the incidents of poverty and unemployment.
2. Improving the quality of life through minimum needs programme.
3. A reduction in inequality of income and wealth.
4. Infra-structure development for further exploitation of potential of the tribal region.

Through these plans, unlike in the previous plan, the administrators gave more importance to family-oriented programmes than to infra structure development.<sup>36</sup>

### **SEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1985-1990)**

During the Seventh Five Year Plan basic premise of the Tribal Sub-plan continued. The Tribal Sub-plan strategy comprised of the following.

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<sup>35</sup> Meenakshi Hooja, *Policies and Strategies for Tribal Development*, Rawat Publications, (New Delhi, 2004), p.26.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Working Group on Tribal Development During the Sixth Plan*, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1986), p.50.

1. Identification of the Development Blocks where tribal population is in majority and their constitution into ITDPs with a view to adopting there an integrated and project based approach for development.

2. Making available of funds for the Tribal Sub-Plan and ensuring the flow of funds from the State plan.<sup>37</sup>

### **EIGHTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1992-1997)**

In the Eighth Five Year Plan, taking into consideration of the implementation of schemes for the tribal development, the Planning Commission tried to be more realistic. The objectives of the Eighth Plan are detailed below.

1. Progressive reduction in poverty and creation of employment thereby providing reduction in income inequalities.

2. Improving the quality of life through a minimum needs programme.

3. Development and strengthening of infrastructure.

4. Development of confidence of tribes along the desired lines through intensive educational efforts.

In this plan also family-oriented schemes have been stressed, but the community development programmes were given second priority.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>. P.C.Mathur and Rakesh Hooja, *Projects Planning and Development Administration*, Rawat Publications, (Jaipur, 1996), p.14.

<sup>38</sup>. P. K. Bhowmick, "*Reports of Scheduled Tribes an Appraisal*" in L. P. Vidyarthi (Ed.), *Tribal Development and its Administration*, Concept Publishing Company, (New Delhi, 1981), pp.56-78.

## **NINTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1997-2002)**

Ninth Five Year Plan had the strategy to achieve a seven percent growth rate for the economy. The main objectives of the Ninth Plan are the generation of adequate productive employment, eradication of poverty and empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups.<sup>39</sup> The Ninth Plan also passed a new covenant on the Intellectual Property Right, which really helped to safeguard the ownership and patent rights of the tribal people in respect of minor forest produce vis-à-vis use of medicinal plants. Thus the Ninth Plan contemplated to implement people-oriented planning in which the government and the people particularly the poor can fully participate.<sup>40</sup>

## **TENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (2002-2007)**

The main objectives of the Tenth Plan were the following.

Reduction of poverty by 5 percent by 2007 and more importance was to given to education. Empowerment of tribal women was another important matter of concern. It also evaluated the works of ITDP and other major projects working among tribes.

## **ELEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (2007-2012)**

The Eleventh Plan gives stress to the income generation activities among the tribal poor. It also envisaged to improve the condition of the tribals in all possible ways.

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<sup>39</sup>. Bhupendra Singh and Neeti Mahanti, *op.cit.*, p.25.

<sup>40</sup> *Planning Commission, Government of India*, Approach Paper for Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002).

## SCHEME FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

The tribal majority areas in the country are broadly divided into three categories, viz., (i) predominantly tribal state/ union territories, (ii) Scheduled area and (iii) Non-Scheduled areas in the state. They placed the tribal majority union territories and States to a separate category to allot funds. The development of these areas was considered as a responsibility of the Central Government even though they are integral part of concerned States. Financial provisions for their development were considered in detail by the constituent assembly itself.<sup>41</sup>

The schemes have been divided into two categories, viz., (i) central sector programmes which are fully financed by the Central Government, (ii) the centrally sponsored programmes which are partly financed by the Central Government and partly by the State Government.<sup>42</sup> On the basis of this, each state was undertaking development programmes for the tribal poor. However the exact benefit of these is not properly reaching them and it is a great setback to the tribal development.

## MERITS AND DEMERITS

The merits of these plans and schemes are that the development programmes to an extent reached the tribal poor's houses. That helped them to change their traditional way of life to a life of modernism influenced life. Even a few among them had got good education, got opportunities to government jobs and, many of them improved their infrastructure facilities. But when one analyses the development schemes

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<sup>41</sup>. R. N. Thakur, "*Tribal Development: Need for a Fresh Perspective*", in *Kurukshetra*, March-April 1997, p.92.

<sup>42</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.93.

and plans, only then it will show the exact effect of these programmes. For instance the Forest Act 2006 was a direct neglect of the rights of each Adivasi in India. This was also just like any programme which government introduced in the previous years. There are ITDP's in each districts of Kerala that mainly provide funds for higher studies to students belonging to the scheduled communities. But most of these are unknown to the tribal students. Those who know have to overcome many hazards to get this amount in hand. Thus, the development schemes have their own merits and demerits. What government can do to solve these problems is to give much opportunities to the educated tribal youth and experienced people for more involvement in the implementation of the development programmes.

### **THE MAJOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING AMONG THE TRIBES**

The accredited Non-Governmental Organizations working among the tribes are the Centre for Science and Technology Rural Development (COST FORD), Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC), Vikas Credit and Information Banking (VCIB), Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) etc., RASTA (Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement) is an NGO, which has been in operation among tribal poor and other backward people of Wynad since 1984. As indicated by their name, RASTA is dedicated to improve social condition of the rural communities, as well as promoting their technological skills.<sup>43</sup> This NGO is particularly dedicated to empowerment of women and environmental issues. This is one of the important institutions that started to work

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<sup>43</sup>. Personal Interview, Bhagyalakshmi, Public Relations Officer, RASTA, Kalpatta, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

among the tribal people. This will be discussed in detail in the second sub-point of this narration on major NGOs working among the tribes.

During the field visit the researcher met a Paniya woman of 35 years and when she asked her about the activities of NGOs among them it was quite unknown to her.<sup>44</sup> It only means that there are some people who still live quite away from these social activities. At the same time most of the NGOs have liberal and compassionate policies towards the rural poor and socially and culturally backward people. But they cannot sacrifice their funds among these people, besides they get interests of loans properly if they distribute the loan among economically progressed communities. If the Government gives loans, the NGOs will collect that from these people with the interest. Certain NGOs collect higher interest rate whereas others collect low rate of interest than Self Help Groups which are organized through Panchayaths.

The NGOs also provide administrative assistance and technical advice to secure the loans. They also make sure the participation of these people in social activism and capacity building through various skill based training. For instance, the Kottathara Panchayath, at Wynad district, is located 20km from the district headquarters, Kalpeta. It is a multi-religious and multi-caste Village. Tribal population in the Panchayath are predominantly Paniyas and Kurichias. There is a total of 87 tribal colonies, and close to about five thousand Scheduled Tribes.<sup>45</sup> Under this NGO there were 74 Self-Help Groups. From 1993 onwards

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<sup>44</sup>. Personal Interview, Susheela, Paniya Tribal Woman, Kallikeny, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

<sup>45</sup>. *Panchayat Development Report, 2002*, Kottathara.

these are working there in the tribal colonies. But the problem they fear here is to work among the tribal poor, because they had no skills of savings for future. They achieved only little success while involving the tribal population. This may be attributed to various factors. (1) Scheduled tribes are the poorest members of society, and they lack the capacity to make weekly contributions. (2) Tribal societies are culturally distinct and often they are socially excluded from the mainstream society. (3) Many tribal compounds are geographically isolated and it is difficult for NGOs to frequently visit them due to time and financial constraints.<sup>46</sup>

This is the attitude of most of the NGOs towards the tribal people. During an interview with one of the officials of ESAF (Evangelical Social Action Forum) established in 1999 at Mannuthy, Thrissur for the same purpose of safeguarding and supporting the economically backward people of the society. He also had the same opinion about the functioning of their organization in a culturally backward area.<sup>47</sup>

This organization working among Mala Araya tribes of Melukavu Panchayath and Moonilavu Panchayath of Kottayam District. But only a few are progressing, others are not properly remitting the loan amount received and so they are on the verge to dissolve these Self-Help Groups. This is the general situation in the relationship of the NGOs with the tribal people.

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<sup>46</sup> K.S. Mohindra, *A Report on Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Kerala State, India a Public Health Perspective*; A report prepared for FCRSSS/IRSC March 2003, p.26.

<sup>47</sup> Personal Interview, Dominic John, Area Manager, ESAF, Thrisur, 05/05/2010.

## NGOs WORKING FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBES AND TRIBAL WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES PARTICULARLY THE ROLE OF SHGs

In India, Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) were initiated by NABARD (National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development), with the support of local NGOs.<sup>48</sup> These Groups witnessed the implementation of two other forms of SHG programmes, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), launched by the Ministry of Rural Development<sup>49</sup> and Kudumbasree, sponsored by local self - government institutions or Panchayaths.

These groups were mainly focusing on women groups, which has been the main thrust of the SHG Movement.<sup>50</sup> SHGs are generally defined as homogenous groups' for the members tend to be similar in terms of socio - economic status, and live in close approximation to each other.<sup>51</sup> In their meeting mostly conducted in any one of the member's house and each group generally has ten to twenty members. These groups start their meeting with a prayer, then proceed to business affairs, and finally conclude by tea and socializing. During each meeting they will make their weekly contribution of minimum ten rupees.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>. D. Narayanan, "*Consultation with the Poor*", in *Development*, Vol. 44, Part-I, pp.15-21.

<sup>49</sup>. Annual Report 2005-2006, *Ministry of Rural Development*, Government of India, New Delhi, 2007.

<sup>50</sup>. There are Male Self-Help Groups also. Many groups emerged through demand and after men witnessed the benefits accrued by their wives and female family members.

<sup>51</sup>. There are Self-Help Groups particularly for tribes and Below Poverty Line members.

<sup>52</sup>. This rate could be higher if the Self-Help Groups Choose to raise the sum.

The funds are collected and deposited in the bank by the group's president and secretary, who also carefully record all transactions and minutes of their meetings in notebooks. The positions are in rotation in each year, distributing power and sharing responsibility among members. Each member will have a passbook, where they record their personal transactions. SHGs follow a predetermined set of rules, formulated by the group, for loan distribution and repayment. After an initial savings period, SHGs are able to begin taking the loans. The power structure of SHGs is represented in the chart below.



The NGOs give loans to these people and in these backward areas most of them would not repay the loan and this causes problem between officials and SHG members. The interest rates also are different from other Banks. These are generally small loans, particularly they range

between 100 to 3000 rupees only. These programmes are not likely to get fruits in the tribal population like Paniyas and Cholanaickans. The main reason is that they are the people who have no habit of saving for future. They spend their money in unwanted activities and particularly the Paniyas, in drinking. During her visit, the researcher met so many Paniya women and elicited information on the case in point. They said that in the beginning they were keen to conduct the meetings, and would do much savings; but after a few months most of them would not attend, some of them would have no money, those who had money would not go for the weekly meetings, and thus gradually this would come to an end. This is the case with a Paniya colony consisting of 25 families near Meppady temple at Vaduvanchal which is 22 km away from Kalppatta the Wynad district headquarters. Under this condition no NGOs would work among.

However, in the case of Mala Arayas they had both NGOs and organisation like Kudumbasrees. As mentioned in the beginning, ESAF is the only NGO that is working among them for the past two years. But most of them have stopped attending the meetings to avoid repayment of loans. Some people are very responsible; but when people do not repay loans it affects the whole functioning of SHG. But in places like Melukavu and Kudayathur the ESAF and the Kudumbasree are working well and they had considerable deposits in them.

## **KUDUMBASREE**

Kudumbasree, sponsored by local self- government institutions or Panchayaths had been really a success in many tribal centered areas like, Melukavu and Moomilavu Panchayaths in Kottayam district, and

Thodupuzha, Kudyathoor, Pathippally near Moolamattom in Idukki district. These are mainly Mala Araya centered areas where the researcher visited a few Kudumbasree members, and was able to get valuable information about Kudumbasree.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Kudumbasrees were initiated by the Left Front Government, under the People's Decentralization Plan. Kerala's People's Planning Campaign has been a massive and radical movement for decentralization which aims to ensure State responsibility and good governance in the form of greater transparency and accountability, while concomitantly providing greater powers and resources to local bodies and civil society.<sup>53</sup> This programme aimed to organize women in all the local levels with the goal of eliminating poverty absolutely in the state by 2007.<sup>54</sup> Kudumbasree means "*Prosperity of the family*" and the mission of the programme is to reach families through women, and to reach communities through families. The programme began in 1996 in urban areas and then it was extended to the rural areas in April 1999.

The Kudumbasree has a three - tiered hierarchical system of organization. At the bottom level is the neighbourhood groups (NHG) equivalent to the SHG. These groups are then federated at the ward level

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<sup>53.</sup> T.M. Issac and R.W. Franke, *Local Democracy and Development*, People's Companion for Decentralized Planning in Kerala Left Word Books, (New Delhi, 2000), pp.10-12.

<sup>54.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

into Area Development Society (ADS). The highest level is the Community Development Society (CDS). The CDS is presided by an elected member of the ADS and it includes the Panchayath President. In Melukavu and Moonnilavu Panchayaths, there are already 77 Self-Help Groups, clustered in 77 ADSs and 13 CDSs in Melukavu Panchayath area and 72 Self-Help Groups clustered in 72 ADSs and 13 CDSs in Moonnilavu Panchayath area.<sup>55</sup>

The Kudumbasrees at these tribal centered areas are working very actively. Athulya a Kudumbasree group in Erumapra under BPL members of the community, states that "with this new gathering we got a great opportunity to take active part in social activities and now we can deposit money without much troubles of going to bank in distant place". Due to this situation they have group agricultural work and they also get fixed amount for each working person from the Panchayath. It helps them to buy uniforms, umbrellas and school bags for their children. For their necessities they get small amount of loans also. Thus Kudumbasree working in these areas, have been doing a good work for over a decade for the welfare of the tribals.

But in the case of Cholanaickans they even do not know anything about Kudumbasree and its functions. These tribes live with limited goals and carry on their activities with much enthusiasm without much support from any external agencies.

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<sup>55</sup>. Personal Interview, Sara Johnson, Upper Division Clerck, Melukavu Grama Panchayath, Melukavu, Kottayam, 16/11/2011.

The Paniya people inhabiting at Vaduvanchal had not much connection with Kudumbasree. In the beginning they actively participated in it and now nobody is in that group. It may be due to insufficient resources with them to join the Kudumbasree group. Though, these organizations are giving opportunity for women's empowerment and participation in social activities, many of the tribals fail to enjoy the benefits due to the lack of awareness about various opportunities available to them and about the service organisations working for them.

*Chapter –IV*

*Political Organizations  
of the Tribes*

## CHAPTER -IV

### POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE TRIBES

#### POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE TRIBES OF KERALA

The political history of tribes in general is a very vast subject, and it requires a deep insight. Traces of political aspects start from the primitive stage of the tribes. The present study is not on all the tribes of Kerala; but on tribes in certain places of Kerala State. They lived in different territories headed by territorial chieftains. There were a number of sub-leaders and among them religious leaders were considered as political leaders and they were believed to have some supernatural powers. Thus among most of the tribes, the religious leaders were their political and social leaders. The political history of the tribes of Kerala in the modern period starts from the rule of the British in the Kerala region. The history of political life of Kerala tribes can be split into two – Northern part around Wynad, Kasarkode, Kozhikode, Kannur and Malapuram and Eastern part around Kottayam and Idukki areas. However, Wynad is the area where large number of tribes inhabit and this study centers on the Paniya and Cholanaickan tribes of Wynad. Therefore, the Northern part here means the Wynad region and Eastern part here comprises Kottayam and Idukki regions. The political aspects of Wynad tribes reflect the administrative details of the descendents of Kottayam Royal family, because they were under the control of the Kottayam kings.

The establishment of the feudal administration of the Raja of Kottayam in Wynad was the culmination of the process of subjugation of Wynad plateau earlier by the landlords of the plains who migrated from

Travancore region. The domination of Mysore over Wynad also took place during this period. These developments took place over several centuries beginning at least from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.<sup>1</sup> During these years many outsiders like Gowdas, Chetties and other landlords from the plains migrated to the area and subjugated the poor tribes. Those who resisted were left with their lands but others became slaves. This was the general condition of the Wynad tribes till the arrival of the British.

The inhabitants of some of the Eastern parts of Kerala were Mala Arayas, Muthuvans, Uralis, Mannans and some other tribes, who were under the control of the Rajas of Punjar. According to tradition recorded by K.P. Padmanabha Menon the ancestors of the Punjar Raja were kings of Pandya country and their original home was Madurai.<sup>2</sup> The chief of the family who migrated to Kerala was one Mana Vikrama Kulasekhara Perumal. Earlier, the Pandya kingdom was subjected to the incessant onslaughts of the neighbouring rulers and hence Kulasekhara was forced to migrate with his family and with his treasures to the neighbouring Kerala country. It is believed that their migration took place before 12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.<sup>3</sup> The Edapalli Raja of Cochin allowed the members of the refugee family to settle in the island of Cochin which belonged to him and conferred certain dignities on them. The Edapalli Raja himself married one of the princesses in accordance with the Kerala custom of Sambandham. They gradually gave up the Tamil way of life and adopted Malayalam customs. However, on the death of the Edapalli Raja, the young princess and her family had to leave Cochin, since the new chief

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1. A.Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave Tribe of South India*, Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, (Calcutta, 1992), p.8.
  2. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1998), pp. 85-91.
  3. A. Sreedhara Menon, (Ed.), *Kerala District Gazetteers, Kottayam*, State Editor Kerala Government, (Trivandrum, 1975), p.32.

was unfriendly to her. During their sojourn in Vadakumkoor<sup>4</sup> the Pandya king Kulasekhara and his family came to know that the country known as Punjar lying to the west of the Western Ghats was available for purchase. He sent his emissaries to negotiate the purchase of the tract with the Raja of Punjar. At a later meeting the Punjar Raja formally transferred the territory to Kulasekhara.<sup>5</sup> Later Kulasekhara took control of the area completely and started collecting taxes from the tribes of the neighboring hills with the support of the landlords in the plains. Thus the taxation burden fell on the tribes from the beginning of the modern period. This was the general situation in Kottayam region until the coming of the British. Hence, it is clear that the policy of the rulers in respect of the tribes was severe exploitation of and Uzhiyam<sup>6</sup> from the tribes and other low caste people of the society.

### **THE POLITICAL INTERACTIONS OF THE TRIBES DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD**

The above mentioned situation prevailed in the areas of the tribes until the coming of the British. When these colonizers came to Wynad and Kottayam regions the situation of Paniyas and Mala Arayas were very pathetic as they remained as slaves. The Cholanaickans came to be known to the outside world only after 1909 as a result of Census operations.<sup>7</sup> The British employed the Paniyas as guides and scouts. As their knowledge of the terrain was excellent and their loyalty could be

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4. The early period, rulers of Thiruvithamkoor divided their principalities into three - Desinganad (Kollam), Thekkumkoor (Changanasery), and Vadukkumkoor (Eattumanur, Kottayam) areas.

5. A. Sreedhra Menon, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33.

6. *Uzhiyam* means services rented to the rulers without any payments.

7. Misra P.K. & B. A. Bhanu, "*The Principles of Boundary Maintenance among Cholanaickans the Cave-men of Kerala*," in *Man in India*, Vol. 60 (1-2), 1980, p.15.

easily purchased, the Paniyas were found to be very good scouts for getting information about the movements of the Raja of the region and his force of Nayars and Kurichiya and Kurumba tribesmen whom the British wanted to subjugate. As reward for their services, they got nothing except their wages. While the supporters of local Raja became owners of land and cultivators, Paniyas became agricultural slaves of the landlords.<sup>8</sup> When the tribes of Kottayam and Idukki districts, suffered cruel exploitation from the local rulers, they turned towards the British Missionaries and sought their protection.<sup>9</sup> Thus the Paniyas and the Mala Arayas of Kerala depended more on the alien support in the early modern period.

The relationship between the British and Paniyas was that of masters and faithful servants. This severely affected their relations later with the other members of the society. The tribes held the Whiteman / *Saiyippu* at high esteem.<sup>10</sup> They also worshiped *Saiyippu* (derived from *Saheb*), or Whiteman. During the seasons of religious celebrations, offerings were made to this alien spirit in the form of cigars, biscuits and arrack. They feared these sprits. During their rule the British had two forms of relations with these tribes of Kerala: (1) the Paniyas were subjugated and exploited and (2) but the Christian Mala Araya tribes and Pathirikuruma's (another group of tribes in Wynad who were also largely converted to Christianity), received the support of the British and were well treated under their sympathy. However, the converted tribes

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<sup>8</sup> A. Aiyappan, *op. cit.*, 1992, pp.8-9.

<sup>9</sup> T.I. John, *The History of St. Peters C.S.I, Church, Erumapra 1849 - 1999*, Erumapra Church History Editorial Board Publication, (Erumapra, 2000), pp.24-25.

<sup>10</sup> Sayippu - is the colloquial term for Whiteman/ British.

continued certain traditional religious rituals at the time of birth and death even after the conversion.

The British policy of settlement of land in the erstwhile Malabar district of Madras Presidency, did not protect the land rights of the tribes. Moreover, gradually they became alienated from their lands. Later it led to the sale of large acres of tribal lands to non-tribal people.<sup>11</sup>

The condition of the converted tribes also was not satisfactory. The society viewed them only as tribes and were marginalised. Thus they were struggling for equal position with other sections of the society but they were always neglected and isolated.

## **SCENARIO AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

After Independence, the Government of India in general and the Government of Kerala in particular passed myriads of laws for the protection of the rights of scheduled tribes of the States and Union Territories. The implementation of these laws within the fixed period became a severe problem. Against the injustices heaped upon them in several ways, the tribals have slowly begun to express their protest against Government's inaction. This was a major change in their political activity. Nevertheless, in this field also the non – tribals had infiltrated and taken up its leadership. In the early years of 1950's and 60's most of the tribal organizations were under the control of these non-tribals and even today non- tribals try to interfere in the political organisations of the tribals with a view to getting some political gains. However, the united

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<sup>11</sup>. Menon and M. Sasikumar, *Encyclopaedia of Dravidian Tribes*, Vol. I, International School of Dravidian Linguistics, (Thiruvananthapuram, 1996), p.153.

efforts of the tribes check their unwanted interference in the political activities of the tribals.

The interaction between non-tribals and tribals became worse by passage of time. The non-tribals illegally took possession of the lands belonged to the tribes. The tribes were completely alienated from their lands; starvation deaths and poverty became a common feature in the tribal areas and above all the sexual exploitation by the non-tribals, their oppressive attitude towards the tribals and the increase of unwed mothers among the tribes became the curse of the society. In such a situation these women were excommunicated and they became socially and traditionally alienated from the tribal society. Against these new and continuing challenges it became almost necessary that they become united and develop a Sangham or union as a strong organization for the promotion and protection of their rights.

### **MAJOR TRIBAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

From the year 1950 onwards gradually the tribes of the State began their organized fight for their rights. The major tribal political organizations to secure their social rights are the following:

1. Akhila Thiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Maha Sabha.
2. Wynad Adivasi Swayam Sevak Sangh.
3. Karshaka Thozhilali Union (Agricultural Labourers Union)
4. Adivasi Sangham
5. Kerala Girivarga Sangham
6. Kerala Adivasi Samajam.

7. Mala Araya Christian Federation
8. Adivasi Vikasana Pravarthaka Samithy
9. Adivasi Federation.
10. Adivasi Aikya Samithy.
11. Girijan Sevak Samithy.
12. All Kerala Tribal Workers Union.
13. Mala Araya Maha Samithy.
14. Adivasi Vimochana Munnani.
15. Adivasi Dalit Samara Samithy.
16. Adivasi Kshema Samithy.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATIONS**

### **I - Akhila Thiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Mahasabha**

This was the first organization that sprang up from the tribes. It was on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1950, under the leadership of Raman Mettoor it started functioning. He was the pioneer of this organization actively carrying on the progressive work. It was his intense desire that his community must get good education and achieve progress in the developing society. In April 1946, Mettoor met the Diwan of Travancore Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, and he promised them all his support to the formation of an organization. Thus with the support of the Diwan and the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, under the Thiruvithamkoor Company Act – 1114<sup>th</sup> –1119<sup>th</sup> Act of Company Act

58<sup>th</sup> Section, Mettoor got the license to organize his people under Akhila Thiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Mahasabha.<sup>12</sup>

**Aims and objectives of the organization:**

1. Social, Economic and Religious uplift of the community people.
2. Establishments of schools, handicraft industries, libraries, student organizations and temples.
3. Development of Unity and Co-operation among the members of the organization.
4. Economic assistance in education for their children.
5. Economic support for avocations like cultivation and commercial activities.
6. Gift of 35 percent of funds from each branch of the organization for giving economic support to the unemployed and to the people suffering from chronic diseases.
7. Affirmation of the co-operation from the similar organizations.
8. Co-operation of each member in all the activities of the organization.<sup>13</sup>

This organization which had been formed in 1950, still continues with its varied objectives and aims. The members stand for the progress of the people of their community and they have not supported other tribal

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<sup>12</sup> P.K. Sajeev, *Raman Mettoor; Karma Dheeranaya Nethavu (Biography)*, Akhila Thiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Young Men and Mala Araya Mahila Association Publication, (Punjavayal, 1998), pp.22-24.

<sup>13</sup> A Pamphlet published by ATMAMS, Reg. No.2086/50, Registered under Indian Companies Act 58, Punjavayal, 1950.

organizations. Their organization now have fifty-four branches both in Kottayam and Idukki districts.<sup>14</sup>

The present General Secretary of the organization is Mr. K.R. Janardanan and the President is Mr. C.P. Krishnan. They have a 15 member Board to decide all the matters of the ATMAMS. Another important feature of this organization is that they have temples in different parts of the two districts mentioned above.<sup>15</sup> These temples are under the control of ATMAMS and not under Thiruvithamkoor Devaswam Board.<sup>16</sup>

## II- Wynad Adivasi Swayam Sevak Sangh (WASS) – 1963

Tribes in Kerala State in recent decades have started protesting and resisting the injustice done to them in several ways. In Wynad as early as 1963, they had formed the Wynad Adivasi Swayam Sevak Sangh and G.M. Gulikan an Adiyar its early leader. The Organization submitted a memorandum to the government demanding the exemption of stamp duties for tribal litigants, restoration of their alienated lands and establishment of tribal tribunals as recommended by the Debar Commission. These are the main objectives of the WASS which spearheaded several agitations at local level. Later the organization broke into two and a section among them who were keeping alliance with the Jan Sangh Party formed the Wynad Adivasi Sangham, and a non-tribal

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<sup>14</sup>. Personal Interview, Rajappan, Board Member ATMAMS, Punjavayal, 29/04/2010.

<sup>15</sup>. Personal Interview, Sandhya K.R., Office Secretary ATMAMS, Punjavayal, 29/04/2010.

<sup>16</sup>. In Kerala, the whole temples are under the control of a Public Trustee named Thiruvithamkoor Devaswam Board.

person became its organizing secretary, who could not work vigorously for the welfare of the tribals. Thus, this organisation gradually lost its importance and became defunct in 1972.<sup>17</sup>

### **III – The Karshaka Thozhilali Union – 1968**

The Agricultural Labourers Union was formed with the objective to fight against the bonded labour system. About 400 bonded labourers joined the Union. The Karshaka Thozhilali Union demanded the abolition of bonded labour, adequate work and better wages. Before the beginning of this movement, the labourers were paid in kind and they had nothing to save for their future. The organization demanded several things like wages in cash, eight – hour work and better treatment as human beings.

In 1968, it started functioning at Thirunelli Village,<sup>18</sup> of North Wynad very actively. The Naxalites controlled the entire programmes and the relation of the organization with the Naxalites finally led to its collapse. All happened because of an incident in which a Brahmin landlord was murdered and it was suspected that the Paniyas and Adiyans in collusion with the Naxalites committed this crime. Consequently the police captured the Naxalites leader Varghese and killed him.<sup>19</sup> Under these circumstances the Marxist Party (which had all along been supporting the tribals) left the tribal organization and the situation became

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<sup>17</sup>. A.B. Bardhan, *“The Unsolved Problems”*, in **Freedom Jubilee Series**, No.5, Communist Party Publication, (New Delhi, 1973), p.78.

<sup>18</sup>. K. S. Singh, (Ed.), *Tribal Movements in India*, Manohar Publications, (New Delhi, 1983), p. 340.

<sup>19</sup>. M. Sundara Pandiyan, *Tribal Development in India*, Anmol Publication, (New Delhi, 2001), p. 22.

worse. The police then arrested some of the Adiyans and Paniyas put them as convicts for their participation in the Naxalite movement.<sup>20</sup>

Though it faced such difficulties on its way, the activities of the organization are still in progress. Actually the KTU was affiliated to the CPI (M). This long political association helped the State Committee of the CPI (M) to mobilize the tribes of the state for a better life. Now it continues its activity with the co-operation of Adivasi Kshema Samithy.

#### **IV – Adivasi Sangham – 1969**

The leaders of the Kurichians met the Jan Sangh leaders of Kozhikode in a conference held in 1969 at Kalpetta (Wynad) and formed an association called the Adivasi Sangham. It was a splinter group of the WASS. However, the Kurichia tribes formed it for their welfare and only 10 per cent of the members were from Paniyas, Kattunaickans and Mullukurumbas. The important aims of the organization may be described as follows:

1. To work for the retention of the tribal culture and heritage and to inspire a sense of solidarity and brotherhood among the tribal people of Wynad.<sup>21</sup>
2. To promote the cause of tribal enlightenment by establishing and running schools for them.
3. To work for the all-round development and welfare of the tribal population.

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<sup>20</sup>. K.S. Mathew, et. al., (Ed.), *Migration in South India*, Published by IRISH, (Thalassery, 2005), p. 218.

<sup>21</sup>. K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

4. To impart training to the members of the Adivasi Sangham.
5. To promote unity, understanding and close relationship, based on social equality, among the different tribes of Wynad.
6. To bring all the tribes of Wynad together for the promotion and protection of traditional tribal culture.
7. To enlighten the members about the constitutional provisions for tribal development.
8. To work for the restoration of alienated tribal land and to urge the Government to enact the Land Alienation Bill.
9. To oppose the imposition of unwanted levies by the Government.

In 1973, they formed an Action Council and the main objective of the Council was the exemption of the tribes from the payment of the levy, because in Kerala a farmer owning up to 2 acres of paddy land is exempted from the agricultural levy. However, those who are cultivating land which is more than 2 acres in size are required to pay a levy at the prescribed rate. Therefore, they conducted a Dharna in front of the Supply Office, Manantody demanding exemption from levy imposed by the government. They also picketed other government offices. The tribes soon became restless on this demand and finally the government conceded and ordered exemption of the levy. From the opinion of Raghavan, the then Joint secretary of Action council, it was due to their agitation that the tribes in Wynad got this exemption from the payment of agricultural levy.<sup>22</sup> However, the agitation could not be continued for long because of the declaration of Emergency. But the objective of the

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<sup>22.</sup> *Ibid.*

tribes had been achieved due to government's sympathetic attitude towards the tribes.

#### **V – Kerala Girivarga Sangham (KGS) – 1972**

In 1973, the Kerala Girivargha Sangham was formed under the leadership of leftist parties. The K G S was under the leadership of Annan, an ex-tribal (Kurichia) MLA (CPI – Marxist). In fact, a Thiyya social worker was the brain behind the formation of this Sangham. The Thiyya gentleman married a Paniya woman in order to identify himself with the cause of the tribes of Wynad. However, he did not do anything for the promotion of the KGS. The main motive behind the formation of the KGS was to terrorize the non-tribal settlers of Wynad.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, owing to the infiltration of some Naxalites, Girivarga Sangham failed to enlist popular support. The demoralized activities and crimes made this organization unpopular among the general public of the Kerala State.

#### **VI – Kerala Adivasi Samajam – 1973**

The Kerala Adivasi Samajam was formed in 1973 with the support of the Indian National Congress Party. The main objectives and aims of the Samajam are the following:

1. To struggle and press for the demand for the immediate creation of a separate department for tribal welfare.
2. To achieve economic and cultural independence to save the Adivasis from the exploitation of non-tribal settlers.

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<sup>23</sup> K.S. Mathew, *op.cit.*, p.218.

3. To protect the Adivasis as guaranteed by the Constitution of India.
4. To forge unity and solidarity among different tribal communities of Kerala in general and those of Wynad in particular.
5. To expedite and accelerate the economic developments of the Adivasis.
6. To create awareness among Adivasis about the constitutional safeguards and their rights.
7. To demand for the immediate classification of the denotified tribes of Kerala.
8. To integrate the activities of the Samajam and the Indian National Congress.
9. To bring all the tribal communities of Wynad under the banner of the Samajam.
10. To put an end to the neglect towards tribes by the officials working in tribal areas and mal-administration and corruption of Government officials.
11. To take appropriate steps for the preservation of tribal culture of the area.<sup>24</sup>

The Samajam claims that it was instrumental in the setting up of a separate department for the tribes in 1976. The leadership of the Adivasi Sangham was vested with the Kurichians who were eager to perpetuate

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<sup>24</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p.347.

their own tribal heritage, rather than serving the interests of the tribes of Wynad. They instigated the members of the Sangham to fight against the spread of Christianity in Wynad and against the intrusion of moneylenders and plainsmen. The Adivasi Sangham suspended its activities because of the declaration of emergency due to the Naxalite problems in the State and the murder of Naxal leader Varghese.<sup>25</sup>

## VII - Mala Araya Christian Federation – 1974

The formation of a federation of each tribal community of the State and Union Territories took place, soon after the information regarding the organisation of associations was received from the Central Government of India. A Commission for the Scheduled Tribes visited the tribes of Kerala and urged the need for such an organization mainly for the protection of their rights and also to act as a mediator for addressing their problems. Thus in 1974 MACF was formed. It was not supported by any political party. The organization had a president – T.H Hezekiel, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members from each Mala Araya centered churches. The aims and objectives of the MACF were to protect the rights of Christian Mala Arayas inhabiting in Kottayam and Idukki districts. Its office was located at Melukavu and later it was shifted to Kanjiramkavala near Melukavu because Melukavu was in a remote place.<sup>26</sup> The MACF did not work for a long time owing to a number of reasons. As per the opinion of Mr. A. H Thomas, Secretary, MASS, Chennai, the Mala Araya Christian Federation failed due to the following reasons.

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<sup>25.</sup> G. C. Rath, (Ed.), *Tribal Development in India; the Contemporary Debate*, Sage Publication, (New Delhi, 2006), pp. 183-184.

<sup>26.</sup> Personal Interview, P.E. George, Vice-President, MASS, Eranakulam, 23/12/2009.

1. Lack of proper leadership setup.
2. Scattering of Power into multiple hands.
3. Involvement of political parties into the affairs of the tribals.
4. The community certificate issued by the MACF was not accepted by the government and it was the cause for its failure.
5. Absence of power and failure to face problems related to the tribes.
6. Though a Christian Federation, Churches did not take active part in making the Organization an effective one.<sup>27</sup>
7. Many of the members of Mala Araya community lost their trust in the Organization. All these matters led to the decline of the organization.

## **NEW ORGANIZATIONS FROM 1980 TO 1990**

### **VIII & IX- Adivasi Vikasana Pravarthaka Samithy and Adivasi Federation**

The later half of 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the sprouting up of different tribal organizations in various parts of the State either with or without the support of political parties. The important among them are Adivasi Vikasana Pravarthaka Samithy and Adivasi Federation. Continuing its activities through Adivasi Sangamam with the purpose of bringing together all the Adivasis of Kerala, the Adivasi Federation of South Zone was started at Manantody on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1992. This

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<sup>27</sup>. Personal Interview, A.H. Thomas, Secretary, MASS, Chennai, 18/05/2010.

Sangamam was the beginning of the united efforts of the Adivasis. More than thousand tribes from all over South India participated in its deliberations and discussed the core issues faced by them. The issues such as exploitation, identity problems and development issues faced by them were the matters of major concern. The Sangamam of 1993 at Kodagu in Karnataka followed the activities of the early Sangam of 1992. These Sangamams organized with the support of South Zone Adivasi Federation, resolved to intensify their struggle for land and it initiated the process of tribe's active political participation in the state for their legitimate rights.<sup>28</sup>

Adivasi Aikya Samithy and Adivasi Federation were other Associations formed in Wynad by a few tribals of this area. Mala Araya Samrakshana Samithy at Idukki, All Kerala Tribal Workers Union in Pathnamthitta and Adivasi Vimochana Munnani in Kannur are the associations which also took up the cause of the tribals and effectively worked for the welfare of the tribes.<sup>29</sup>

#### **X- Mala Araya Samrakshana Samithy (MASS) - 1997**

The decline of the Mala Araya Christian Federation made some progressive people from the Mala Araya community to form an organization on the lines of secular sentiments. Thus in 1994 a new organization called Mala Araya Samrakshana Samithy was formed. The MASS had total fifty-four branches and only one is in Chennai. These

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<sup>28</sup>. M. Sasikumar, *"Towards Muthanga and After; Tribal Movement for Lands in Kerala"* in R.M. Sarkar, (Ed.), *Land and Forest Rights of the Tribals Today*, Serials Publications, (New Delhi, 2006), pp.138-139.

<sup>29</sup>. C.K. Bijoy and Ravivarman, *"Muthanga; The Real Story of Adivasi Movement to Recover Land,"* in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVIII No.2, 17 May, 2003, pp.1975-1982.

associations have the office bearers like the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Members. During field visits of the research scholar she met the present office bearers of the organization at Muttom in its Head Office. They said that the aims and objectives of the organization were to protect the rights of Mala Araya tribes, to fight against the torture of the non-tribals, to fight for the provision of proper road and drinking water facilities in the Mala Araya settlements and to conduct annual meetings of the organization for discussing their important issues. The Present office bearers are as follows:

|                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| President               | - Baby Mundappally            |
| General Secretary       | - K. S. Joseph                |
| Vice-Presidents         | - P.E. George & George Eappen |
| Youth President         | - T.L. Samkutty               |
| Youth General Secretary | - Albert Chacko.              |

Women's Representative Secretary - CiCily Johnson.<sup>30</sup>

The MASS envisages strong and valuable development policies for tribal people's progress. The office bearers give much importance to the unity and solidarity of the tribals of Kerala so as to help them through this organization. In every tribal centered area of Mala Araya tribes, the Association has working units. These units look after the problems of all the Mala Arayas. Empowerment of youth is another important matter of concern of the MASS. They also demand the establishment of

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<sup>30</sup>. Personal Interview, Thomas Machiyanickel, Office Secretary, MASS, Muttom, Idukki, 28/04/2010.

rehabilitation centers for all kinds of aged people in Mala Araya settlements. Above all its main aim was to bring all the tribes together and restore to them their due rights with sufficient means to development.<sup>31</sup>

### **XI- Adivasi Dalit Samara Samithy (ADSS)-2001**

Following the reports of starvation deaths from different parts of the tribal areas of the State especially from Palakkad, Kannur and Wynad Districts an organization called Adivasi Dalit Samara Samithy (ADSS) protested against government's inaction and took efforts to set up refugee camps and carried on agitations before the residence of the Chief Minister (Mr. A.K Anthony) and near the Secretariat on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2001. The agitations continued for a few weeks and the ADSS and the United Democratic Front Government, which come to power in 2001, reached an agreement on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2001. According to the agreement, the Government consented to give one to five acres of land to the landless tribal families of the State according to the availability of land in each area. The land distribution commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002 and was completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002. In addition, the Government promised to abide by the Supreme Court judgment regarding the 1975 Act, pertaining to the distribution of lands to landless tribals of the State.<sup>32</sup>

The State Government in November 2001 formed a Committee of Directors to prepare a master plan for the comprehensive development of the Scheduled Tribes. Further, the Government took steps to distribute

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<sup>31.</sup> K. S. Joseph, *Naya Roopa Rekha; MASS*, Reg. No.K-573/97, (Melukavu, 1997), pp. 3-8.

<sup>32.</sup> M. Sasikumar, *op. cit.*, pp.139-140.

lands to some tribes in Marayur of Idukki district. But, it failed to find lands elsewhere in the State for distribution.<sup>33</sup>

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2003, thousands of tribal people entered the forest area of the Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary, occupied it by erecting huts there with the support of the newly constituted Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha (AGM). These activities continued till 19<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and soon police entered the scene and used force to evict them from the land. When the situation went out of control the police resorted to firing. This further led to violent activities. In this incident a police officer and a tribe were killed. The prominent leaders like C.K. Janu (an Adiya woman) and her supporter, Geethanandan went out of the scene soon after, but later arrested by police. However, they were set free under the pressure of various campaigns by various Organizations and a judicial enquiry was ordered by the then Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Juel Oram. With the direction from National Human Rights Commission, a CBI enquiry was held. However, the CBI report that came in August 2004, did not favour the tribal communities. Their leader C.K. Janu was declared guilty and so she approached the National Human Rights Commission again for the grant of Justice.<sup>34</sup>

The Police firing and subsequent events helped in creating public hatred against the State government and that forced the government to remain immobile against fresh occupations by the tribes in various parts of the State and by tribal organizations like the Adivasi Kshema Samithy (supported by CPI (M)). C.K Janu contested from Idukki Parliament Constituency during 2004 General Elections, but was defeated in the

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<sup>33.</sup> *Malayala Manorama*, (Kottayam), 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2001.

<sup>34.</sup> C.K. Bijoy and Ravi Raman, *op. cit.*, p.1976.

electoral battle. However, the greatest success of C.K Janu (the Adiya woman in her thirties who is having no formal education) was that she could manage to bring together leaders from about thirty-six tribal communities to a common platform to spearhead their movement for land.<sup>35</sup>

## **XII - Adivasi Kshema Samithy**

Another important move was from Adivasi Kshema Samithy formed at Palakkad in March 2002. It made some inroads into the tribal areas and in many places by indulging in occupation of forest lands. This Samithy was under the control of CPI (M). It was a sub-organization of Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilali Union. This organization aimed at restoration of tribal lands which were captured by the non – tribals. They started agitations for this and that led to the arrest and imprisonment of 900 of its demonstrators who encroached upon forest lands and put up huts to pressurize the Government to negotiate with the tribes.<sup>36</sup> The CPI (M) District Committees in Wynad and Idukki districts were also instructed to mobilize the local tribes.<sup>37</sup> The Samithy was formed after the ADSS workers protest for restoration of tribal land. Most of these agitations were for reclaiming tribal land with the support of political parties. Though the tribals were partly successful in their agitations against the Government the life of the poor tribes still continue to be pathetic and many are still landless. They are even today trying to capture the lands encroached by non –tribes in the areas of Wynad, Attappady and other districts. But the government's Assignment of land to Adivasis

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<sup>35</sup>. M. Sasikumar, *op. cit.*, p.141.

<sup>36</sup>. *The Hindu*, (Chennai), 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2002.

<sup>37</sup>. Communist Party of India (Marxist), State Committee 2002. *'Party Letter 1/2002* (Malayalam), Memorial Printing and Publishing, (Trivandrum, 2002), pp. 13-20.

was confirmed by the Kerala High Court, vide Hon' able High Court Judgment in WA.348/08 dated 15.02.2008.<sup>38</sup>

## **NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Among the tribal organizations, only a few of them are really governed by the tribals. Others are under the control of Political parties through tribal leaders who were the brain behind the activities. The organizations like WASS, The Karshak Thozhilali Union, Adivasi Samajam (by INC party), and the new organizations of 1980-1990, are supported by the Left Democratic Front. But the MACF, ATMAMS, AGS, and MASS have only tribal background and had no relations whatsoever with the non-tribals or with any political parties. ADSS is the organization supported both by Adivasis and Dalits of Kerala. These are the connections of the Organisations with the political parties of Kerala.

## **TRIBAL PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTEMPORARY POLITICS**

Majority of the tribals are for leftist movement because their objectives were based on the Leftist ideology and it is quiet natural for them to support the LDF administration. During the field visit the researcher met, many of the Paniya tribes and they very clearly stated that they have trust in CPI (M) Government. United Democratic Federation and Left Democratic Federation helped the tribes in their tenure of office by assigning lands, establishing tribal schools and tribal development blocks and introducing measures for their general welfare.

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<sup>38</sup>. *Malayala Manorama*, (Chennai), 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.

The tribes had a mixed feeling towards the contemporary politics. Kothuvan, a Paniya man is of the opinion that “we don’t have complete trust in any political party.” However he appreciates the administration of LDF government.<sup>39</sup> But the Cholanaickans of Neelimala range have no particular opinion about the political parties. Majority of the tribes have no proper education. They are not interested much in elections and they are critical of both the fronts -LDF and UDF. A small group of them supports Bharathiya Janatha Party.

### **ELECTION ANALYSIS**

The tribes –Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas have in general a positive attitude towards elections and political parties. Though they are not able to read and write they know what is happening around them. In addition, they also know how to fight for their rights. The Cholanaickans inhabit in the inner forests of Wynad and Malapuram district. They know about the election system and the right to cast vote in the elections. For instance on 17.04.2009 in the Parliament elections, Cholanaickans of Meenmutti Mannala, and Manjiri cast their vote in Booth No.127<sup>th</sup> at Nedumkayam Nilumbur in Malapuram district. For casting their vote this group walked 40 kms from their settlement.<sup>40</sup> Panapuzha Chathan, his wife Veera, Karimbuza Mathan, Mannala Mooppan, Kannan a 90 year old man and his sons Mathan and Kunkan also came to vote along with their father.<sup>41</sup> This shows their attitude towards elections and voting system. Though they are known as the cave men of Kerala they are familiar with the administrative processes.

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<sup>39</sup>. Personal Interview, Kothuvan, Paniya Tribes Man, Kallikeney, Wynad, 21/04/2010.

<sup>40</sup>. *Mooppan* means the headman of the Cholanaickan.

<sup>41</sup>. *Malayala Manorama*, (Chennai), 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2009.

During the field visit, the researcher interacted with the Paniyas inhabiting in the Meppadi near Kalppetta, the headquarters of Wynad district. It is understood from their statements that they supported political parties in the elections and cast their votes, but they did not have any trust in any political party. They say that only during elections, the politicians meet them for demanding votes from them and they reappear only during the next election. But majority of them cast their vote in each election.<sup>42</sup> Also, they never think about mixing with political parties for getting any favours. It is only the middle men who have no interest in the welfare of the tribals play a double game and the tribals fall as a prey to them.

The Mala Araya tribes are to some extent educated and they know that the political parties do not play a role in their day today life. In each election there was 100percent polling in Mala Arayan centers. For the first time in the history of Mala Arayas, a person from this community contested in 1980. It was Mr. T.J. Joshua from Punjar Constituency but his opposition group was very powerful and so he withdrew from the election. Former IAS officer from Mala Araya Community Mr. M. S. Joseph contested in the Parliament election and he was defeated and this was due to the lack of number of Mala Arayas in the constituency and that adversely affected his election prospects. Though, he failed it his attempt only reflects the political awakening among the tribes of Mala Araya community.

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<sup>42</sup>. Personal Interview, Koima, Veruvan, Cheeru, Kovalan, Naickatty, and Chemblan, Paniya Tribes, Kallikeney, Wynad, 22/04/2010.

## PANCHAYAT RAJ

The Panchayat Raj-Municipality Act (Nagarpalika Act) enshrined in 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments of the Constitution came into force in the State on 23-4-1994 and 30-5-1994 respectively. As per the provisions made in the Act, a number of powers and responsibilities and projects of the Government were transferred to the local self-governments with effect from October 2, 1995. The Government decided to change the name of the Local Administration Department into the Department of Local Self-government.<sup>43</sup> For administrative convenience, the Rural Development Department was merged with the Department of Local Self-government and for the urban administrative matters special arrangement were made in the Secretariat. Thus for the purpose of participation of the tribes and other low strata people in the public administration the Government introduced Panchyat Raj among the tribes of Kerala. In every tribal settlement there were Oorukoottams and neighbourhood gatherings which mainly gather to give some subsidies to the tribals to buy cows, goats and poultry to be given to the needy people. The Mooppan (Headman) of the Oorukoottam decides who must get this. They also give loans to these people with low rate of interest to buy animals. Thus, in the twentieth century, the tribals under study gradually started involving themselves in the political affairs only to improve their position. Yet, their involvement is not adequately vigorous since they feel that they are only in minority position in the society.

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<sup>43</sup>. *Report of Tribal Development*, Tribal Development Department, Government of Kerala, (Trivandrum, 2004), p.12.

*Chapter-V*

*The Transformation  
of Faith Systems of the  
Tribes*

## CHAPTER-V

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF FAITH SYSTEMS OF THE TRIBES

The tribal life and society cannot be properly understood without understanding the aspects of their religion. Religion pervades all aspects of tribal life. Religion of a tribe is simple as far as it is expressed in everyday language and experience in everyday life. This chapter discusses the religious faith systems of the Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas.

The association of human beings with supernatural beings had been the practice from very ancient times. The tribes generally attribute sudden or mysterious happenings, natural disasters like drought, famine, sickness and any mishap or accident to the supernatural beings and deities. Even in modern times, inspite of the development of science and technology, human beings believe in supernatural aspects continue in the same manner, perhaps in a larger degree or with changed perceptions. This inextricable link has always aroused interest of the anthropologists so as to understand the structure and organisation of the society. Often it has been viewed as crucial to man's existence, particularly in tribal societies.

There have been innumerable explanations and interpretations to tribal religion. The earliest explanation was that of Taylor's '*Animism*' that is 'belief in spirits of the ancestors. For them all spots and places are holy as they are the seats of spirits.'<sup>1</sup> The theory of animism was one of

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<sup>1</sup>. Graham Harvey Taylor, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, C. Hurst and Co. Publishers Ltd., (London, 2005), p.7.

the important nineteenth century evolutionary theories on religion. Then come Marett's '*Animatism*'<sup>2</sup> and Muller's '*Naturalism*'.<sup>3</sup> The intellectual tradition established by Durkheim, Malinowski, Weber and Clifford Greetz, distinguished two domains crucial to human mind - sacred and profane.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between man and the sacred thing is similar to that of the relationship between man and society. Anything that is considered sacred in any religion, is called totem. Primitive man viewed society as sacred and symbolized it in the totem because totem was easier to visualize than a society. Therefore, primitive man worshipped a totem.<sup>5</sup> For Malinowski, religion is concerned with situations of emotional stress confronted by individuals that threatens social solidarity. For Weber, religion dealt with the centrality of the notion of the supernatural, religious ideas, attitudes, actors and institutions. He developed this view after examining the relationship of the religions and secular domains.<sup>6</sup>

Clifford Greetz, the reputed scholar of our times, visualized his notion of religion as a cultural system and a system of symbols. According to him 'religion is a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and

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2. R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, London, 1914, Quoted in Subbrowal (Ed.), *Dictionary of Sociology*, The McHill Companies, (New Delhi, 2009), p. 41.

3. Herbert Joseph Muller, *The Uses of the Past: Profiles of Former Societies*, Oxford University Press, (London, 1957), p. 16.

4. Kenneth L. Morrison, *Max, Durkheim, Weber: Formation of Modern Social Thought*, (II-Edition), Sage Publications, (California, 2006), p.234.

5. F. Max Muller, *Anthropological Religion*, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1986), p.121.

6. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism*, Dover Publication, (New York, 2003), p.52.

motivations seem uniquely realistic'.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Geertz's definition covers all aspects of religion. In every tribal society, the tribes will have a particular system of symbols to explain the cause or a supernatural intervention that motivates men to act further and thus linking it with the existence of orderly life in the society. Based on the definition this chapter will discuss the faith systems and perspectives of the tribes namely Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas.

### **THE CONCEPT OF ANIMISM AMONG THE TRIBES**

Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the form of religion practiced by the tribal people in India was regarded as '*Animism*'. The term animism is derived from '*Anima*', a Latin word meaning '*Soul*'. It considers human being as passing through a life surrounded by the ghostly company of powers and elements mostly impersonal in character.<sup>8</sup> The basic premise for this theory is that the animistic belief is to communicate with the supernatural beings, not about metaphysics or the dogmas of moral life, but about urgent needs - securing food, curing illness, averting dangers.<sup>9</sup> However, animism as a theory in social anthropology does not exhaust all that religion consists of, and therefore. The popular nomenclature now is termed as '*Tribal Religion*'.<sup>10</sup>

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7. H. C. Upreti, *Indian Tribes, Then and Now*, Pointer Publishers, (Jaipur, 2007), p.144.

8. M.C. Bebera, *Tribal Religion: Change and Continuity*, Common Wealth Publishers, (New Delhi, 2000), p.93.

9. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (X- Edition), p. 924.

10. Raghuvir Sinha, *Essays in Social Anthropology*, Concept Publishing Co., (New Delhi, 1990) p.177.

Almost all the tribes of South India venerate and worship the ancestors. The faith systems practices of the Paniyas clearly state that they believe in ancestral spirit. According to A.A.D. Luiz, Paniyas are still animists and the temples that they construct consist of layers of stones. Some of them who have an opportunity of living in close proximity with advanced societies declare themselves as Hindus and adopt Hindu names also.<sup>11</sup> Worship of the devil in various forms is popular and they have large collections of Mantras (the holy verses) to communicate with devil. They believe in black magic, is also indicative of their belief in spirit.<sup>12</sup> They call their deceased ancestors as "*Pena*" and an annual ceremony to propitiate these ancestral spirits is usually conducted.<sup>13</sup> Belief in devils of all sorts and sizes, professing worship of Hindu divinities and offering special reverence to the god of the jungle are remarkable features of the present day tribal societies. According to another version the deity called *Kuli*, a malignant and terrible being of neither sex, whose shrines take the form of a stone placed under a tree, or sometimes a cairn of stones. At their rude shrines they contribute as offerings to the *Swami* (god) rice boiled with the husk, roasted and pounded, half – a – coconut and some small coins. The banyan and a lofty tree, apparently of the fig trees are revered by them, in as much as evil spirits are reputed to haunt them at times. Tree so haunted must not be

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<sup>11</sup>. A.A.D. Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala*, Kerala State Enquiry Committee 1957-1958, Bharathiya Adimjathi Sevak Sangh, (New Delhi, 1961), p.220.

<sup>12</sup>. Subadra Channa, (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes and Castes*, Anmol Publication, (New Delhi, 2004), p.5224.

<sup>13</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture and Welfare*, Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, (Madras, 1988), p.70. Hereafter referred as, A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture*.

touched, and, if the Paniyas attempt to cut them, it is believed that they fall sick.<sup>14</sup>

The Paniya chieftains is believed to be gifted with the power to cure the disease. He is considered as their physician too. He cures the disease with the help of supernatural powers or ancestral spirit. The important decisions are taken through the revelation received from the ancestral spirit. For instance, the Paniyas have a caste council, which is headed by a leader known as *Semmi*.<sup>15</sup> Succession to this position is in paternal line and order of succession is based on the principles of generation of age, subject to ritual "*Approval of Kaarneemare*", i.e., the ancestors spirit.<sup>16</sup> In each walk of their life, ancestral spirit is their protector. However, now a days with the influence of modernization most of the Paniyas give up their tribal life. On the other hand, they are imitating the worship mode of the Hindus. Nevertheless, the situation among Cholanaickans is different and they continue to follow their traditional way of life. Anthropologists even now call them as '*Cave-men of Kerala*'.<sup>17</sup>

The Cholanaickans are considered as cave men of Kerala; and their religious life is more or less connected with the tribal gods.<sup>18</sup> For them

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<sup>14.</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas of the Nilgiris: Paniyans of Malabar: A Chinese – Tamil Cross: A Cheruman Skull; Kuruba or Kurumba : Summary of Results*, Asian Educational Services, (Madras, 2004), p.21. Hereafter referred as, Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas*.

<sup>15.</sup> Semmi is the head of the caste Council of Paniyas.

<sup>16.</sup> K.S. Singh (Ed.) *People of India, Kerala*, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi 2002), pp. 1186 – 1187.

<sup>17.</sup> *Malayala Manorama*, (Chennai), 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2009.

<sup>18.</sup> The Cholanaickans are not included in the Scheduled Tribes list of Kerala and they were included in the "*Primitive People*".

chieftain called Chenmakkaran<sup>19</sup> is the most respected person among them. The others, irrespective of their age and position carry out his words and decisions. The Chenmakkaran restrains their rituals and religious worship, political activities and all other matters. The Cholanaickan families believe that the chieftain has divine powers since he is the sole custodian of the idols of their deities besides the idols that represents the spirit of ancestor. He acts as a diviner during religious ceremonies. Diseases of all types according to them are either because of the punishment given by god for committing any offence, which displeases him, or by the invocation of evil spirit by sorcerers.<sup>20</sup> The Chenmakkaran finds out the reason for the *Danna*.<sup>21</sup> In order to find out the illness the chieftain performs different types of religious diagnosis.

These performances start from simple spell of a long complicated chanting and conversation with their gods and ancestral spirits. These things clearly reflect the role of animism in their life. The ancestral spirit will reveal the reason for illness and it will cure the diseases. It will also protect them from the attack of evil spirit. The Chenmakkaran is the connecting link between common people and god. Mathur in his work *Tribal situation in Kerala* explains that the Cholanaickans worship *Mala Daivam* (Hill God) and ancestral spirits.<sup>22</sup> These are the clear evidences of their ancestral worship. The other gods excluding ancestral spirits

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19. *Tsenmakaran*: The territorial Chieftain. He is the most respected person in a territory. He performs the role of a diviner, a religious doctor and sorcerer.

20. B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, Anthropological Survey of India, (Calcutta, 1989), p.62. Hereafter referred as, B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan*.

21. *Danna*: Illness or Uneasiness, Any deviation from the normal feeling is considered Danna.

22. P.R.G. Mathur, *Tribal Situation in Kerala*, Kerala Historical Society, (Trivandrum, 1977), p.31.

worshiped by the Cholanaickans are tiger, Ox, Snake and Ganapathi.<sup>23</sup> The supreme head of the Cholanaickan community is their Chenmakkarān who performs *Pujas* in their small temples. He respectfully calls the ancestral spirits and other gods to cure the diseases of his fellowmen. In short, the Cholanaickans are connected very closely with animism. However, nowadays they worship Hindu gods and also celebrate their festivals like *Onam* and *Vishu*.

Mala Arayas also follow a unique system of ancestral worship. They fear all kinds of spirits and worship them. But in recent times there are two types of Mala Arayas divided on the basis of their religious faith, and they are the Mala Arayas who worship both Hindu and tribal gods and the Mala Arayas who believe in Christian faith. There are clear indications that the Mala Arayas are animists. The missionary writings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century throw much light on the ancestral worship of Mala Arayas. It is recorded by Mr. M.J. Walhouse that on the higher ranges in Travancore there are three of Parasuraman's Cairns, where the Mala Arayas still keep lamps burning. They make miniature cromlechs of small slabs of stone, and place within them a long pebble to represent the deceased".<sup>24</sup> That shows their concern towards ancestral spirit. Walhouse continues his comments as follows:

*"Here we noticed them (miniature huts) in dozens. On inquiry, we were told that, when a child or relative dies, one is made, and when any pleasant food is cooked or*

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<sup>23</sup>. K.S. Singh, *People of India, India's Communities A-G*, National Series, Vol. IV, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1998), pp. 700-701. Hereafter referred as, K.S. Singh, *India's Communities*.

<sup>24</sup>. Edgar Thurston and K. Rangacharya, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Government Press, (Madras, 1909) pp. 3871 -72.

*beer brewed, a little is placed in the tiny hut for the departed soul, which is believed to enjoy it. So the Mala Arayas offer arrack (liquor) and sweetmeats to the departed spirit which is hovering near the miniature cromlechs”.*<sup>25</sup>

The experience of the missionaries in the Mala Araya villages clearly reveals the ancestral worship of the tribes. In most of the places, they make offerings to please the spirits, because they are considered as the protectors of their family from other evil spirits. They believe that when an ancestral spirit becomes angry it will cause severe problems in their family and their health will be affected. Therefore, they always please them with offerings like liquor and sweetmeats.<sup>26</sup>

Samuel Matter, another missionary who wrote about the Mala Arayas, says that,

*“The Arryans bury their dead; consequently there are many ancient tumuli in these hills, evidently graves of chief showing just the same fragment of pottery, brass figures etc....”*

On the death of the member of any family, the spirit was supposed to pass as the body being buried into a brass or silver image, which had shut into this vault; if the parties are very poor, an oblong, smooth stone suffices. On the anniversary they put offering on the stone suffices or on

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<sup>25.</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3872.

<sup>26.</sup> Henry Baker Jr., *The Hill Arrians of Travancore and the Progress of Christianity among them*, Vol. I, No. 7, T.C. John & Son Printers, (London, 1862), pp. 8-9.

the silver or brass image.<sup>27</sup> They believe in the spirit of the deceased will remain there and if they go and touch them, it will attack. Hence, they believe that good spirit of normal death would never have wrath on them. However, the spirits of the people who committed suicide are feared to cause them diseases and curse.

Rev. W. J. Richard also narrates that when he visited them in 1881, in the mountains, the

*“Lamps to the memory of their ancestors were kept burning in little huts, and at stones used to represent the spirit of their ancestors.”*

Sometimes Arayas will make offerings to a Hindu God, and they attend the great feasts occasionally; but in no case do they believe that they were under any obligation to do so, because their own spirit was considered to be equal to the Hindu Gods.<sup>28</sup>

Thus ancestral worship was common among these tribes. Particularly in the case of Cholanaickans, they believe that it will cure their disease and protect them from every danger. Nevertheless, for Paniyas though they have such faith they are not as firm in their faith as other two tribes namely Cholanaickans and Mala Arayas. They do believe in Hindu Gods. However, for Mala Arayas their trust in ancestral spirit had been connected differently, because they always consider the spirit as dreadful and so they never tried to disrespect them. Therefore, they

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<sup>27</sup>. Samuel Matteer, *Native Life in Travancore*, W. H. Allen Publishers, (London, 1883), pp. 77- 78.

<sup>28</sup>. Edgar Thurston and K. Rangacharya, *op. cit.*, pp. 391 – 393.

always follow a systematic methods like lighting the lamps at burial spots and periodically apply oil on the stone tumuli.

## NOTION OF SUPERNATURAL FORCE

Tribal people in every part of the world have the belief that nature is the creation of the supernatural power and they are descendants of that symbolic power and the nature also becomes their family god. The forest is the home of the gods and the most important deity for them is *Kadu - Bhagavati* for Paniyans and *Mala Deva* for Cholanaickans. Mala Arayas worship five hills which are represented in five stones.<sup>29</sup> This shows their connection with the forest and that simply means the forest is considered by them as god or goddess because it provides all their need. This makes the forest something unusual to them. This creates a fear in their mind and hence they worship the mother *Kadu* or forest.

Another belief of the tribes includes their belief in life, death, totemic worship etc. The concept of life and birth closely linked to the creator. For Paniyas and Cholanaickans their creator is *Kadu Bhagavathi*. Further, the Mala Arayas consider themselves as autochthons. They believe in the sun and the moon and worship them as the children of one Goddess.<sup>30</sup> The Paniyas also believe that the sun and the moon create humans, send them to the world and at the end of the stipulated time, take

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<sup>29</sup>. Stephan Fuchas, 'The Religion of the Indian Tribes' in Buddhadeb Chaudhuri, (Ed.), *Tribal Transformations in India; Religion, Rituals and Festivals*, Vol. V, Tribal Studies Series T-151, Inter India Publications, (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 42-43.

<sup>30</sup>. L.A. Krishnaiyer, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

them back. They vaguely talk about a creator *Patachavan* and they always emphasize their trust too much in supernatural force.<sup>31</sup>

The Cholanaickans in general worship a number of gods and spirits. Their chieftain is the main person who does all rituals for them. He is the custodian of all ritualistic aspects.<sup>32</sup> The tribal society generally treats the supernatural force with more reverence and is afraid of its powers. The great aspiration of the tribes is to have control over these supernatural powers. Conception, birth and death are marked as taboos to be avoided as these are displeasing the supernatural. They carry pollution, food taboo and other interactional taboo. Another important matter about the Paniyas was their power of changing themselves into animals. It is a belief that the Chenmakkaran can change into animal and his wicked thought will enter into the woman whom he loves. The woman then it is believed, would die in course of two or three days.<sup>33</sup>

In relation to these, they have many other taboos. The Cholanaickans do not perform any rituals and ceremonies in connection with birth, childhood, marriage and death.<sup>34</sup> However, the Paniyas have a number of rituals in relation to birth and death. In the early days, the Paniyas observed the ritual *Attu-Pundyattu* (pre-delivery ritual) at the eighth or ninth month of pregnancy at husband's home. It is performed even today

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<sup>31.</sup> A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas; An Ex-slave Tribe of South India*, Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, (Calcutta, 1992), p. 87. Hereafter referred as, A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas*.

<sup>32.</sup> B. A. Bhanu, *op. cit.*, p.85.

<sup>33.</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op.cit.*, p.21.

<sup>34.</sup> K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-I, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), p.352.

by some people and the delivery assisted by the midwife / '*Atukuri*' is prevalent among some communities.<sup>35</sup>

On the 12th day of delivery, they perform a purificatory ceremony called '*Punniyaham*'. Rice along with turmeric powder along with vegetables will be served to her and the post natal restriction exists for a period of one month. Other ritual in relation to birth is the naming function. This is performed by father's sister and it is conducted only for the first child. When the child becomes 5 or 6 months old they offer food to the child called *Pullanechorutte*, and it is performed by the father's sister. At the presence of mother's brother, earpiersing ceremony another function i.e., conducted, for male or female children and this is called '*Kathu Kuttoo*'.<sup>36</sup> The pollution in relation to birth of the child in general is for one month.

The Paniyas have more rituals in every activity and they fear the supernatural elements. They observe pollution for a long period in case of death of a person. The dead is buried in a trench, four or five feet deep. They put a little amount of cooked rice into the grave for the consumption of the departed soul. The Chemmi is the chief priest in the death ceremonies. They believe that the people die because of the attack of the evil spirit sent by the high caste people or by other Paniyas.<sup>37</sup> They conduct rituals to release the spirit of the deceased person from the evil force. They believe that after the release, the spirit will rest at *Terumana* (the chariot house), where it takes rest with its mother, father and grant

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<sup>35.</sup> K.S. Singh, *People of India, Kerala*, Vol. XXVII, Part-III, Anthropological Survey of India, (New Delhi, 2002), p. 1184.

<sup>36.</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1185.

<sup>37.</sup> P. K. Misra, "*Boundless Vitality of the little Man*", in *Man in India*, Vol. 58, No. 3, (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 232– 235.

parents. These practices prove that they fear the spirits which are believed to live in another world.<sup>38</sup>

For three years these tribes observe pollution in succession, on the months of Magara and it is called *Kakapolay* or *Karuvelli*. The *Matham Polay* is held once in every three or four years, as a memorial service in honor of those who were specially respected. Throughout the Magaram month the mourners of the deceased observe *Polay* or pollution and one time fasting. At the end of the month, they erect a *Pandal* in the house of the deceased and prepare food for guests and not for mourners. When this has been partaken of, dancing is kept up round the central group till day break when *Pandal* pulled down and the *Kakapolay* is over.<sup>39</sup>

This above mentioned custom related to death is followed by the Paniyas. As indicated earlier, they fear the supernatural forces and so they try to please them by various rituals. In the case of Mala Arayas it is observed that they also have some similarities with the other two and they also follow mourning and pollution, but they are different from the practices of the Paniyas.

The Mala Arayas also fear the supernatural powers like the Paniyas especially they worship ancestral spirits. They consider death as something mysterious. They quite often make offerings to their ancestral spirits. They also have the belief that a person dies a natural death then there will be a good spirit. However, for unnatural deaths it is believed that the spirits will be devils of furious nature. The lighting of lamps and constructing of tumulis are the clear evidences of their faith in life after

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<sup>38</sup>. Subadra Channa, *op. cit.*, p.5222.

<sup>39</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *Tribal Culture, op. cit.*, pp. 143 – 144.

death and acceptance of supernatural forces. They give considerable importance to the birth of the child. Members of the Mala Araya society, give equal status to both man and woman. They sincerely believe that the birth and death have a close link with the ancestor's spirits. The woman after childbirth is isolated for seven days and sometimes it lasts for a month.<sup>40</sup>

As the Mala Arayas fear much in the ancestral spirits, the death of a person is also considered as very fearful. The pollution / *Polay* in relation to death had long been strictly followed. The Mala Arayas bury the dead after the corpse is washed, dressed and covered with a new cloth, and also smeared with holy ashes. After burial, the grave is kept clean and lined with two plantain leaves in front of the corpse and then it is lowered into the grave. The earth on the top of the grave be shaped in the form of a person, and three semi circular reeds are placed over it to indicate the location of the head, chest and legs and a few stones to mark the location of the grave. The eldest son is the chief mourner, if the deceased is the son; the father is the chief mourner. Pollution connected with death lasts for sixteen days. During the month of *Kumbam* (February – March) and in particular on the *Sivarathri* night they offer prayers and make offerings to the departed souls. They believe in the existence of the soul after death and also in rebirth.<sup>41</sup>

Among the three tribes, Cholanaickans do not generally follow any particular practice in relation to birth and death. But they have fear in the *Kadubhagavathi*. Besides, they give importance to the birth of the chief.

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<sup>40.</sup> *The Travancore Census Report 1901*, in Edgar Thurston and K. Rangacharya, *op. cit.*, pp.387 – 388.

<sup>41.</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1989),pp. 148 –149.

However, Mala Arayas and Paniyas follow different customs in relation to birth and death. They fear that there are some supernatural powers in everything and they are obsessive towards the practices of other castes or tribes. They believe that birth, life, and death are spiritual happenings caused by the wishes of supernatural beings.

## **GODS AND GODDESSES**

The foundation of faith systems of the tribals generally relies on the beliefs connected with the supernatural elements. However, these beliefs are symbolized through gods and goddesses, which they believe would help for the well-being of the society. The tribes – Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas have several deities each with specific functions and they are discussed in the following part.

### **Gods and Goddesses of the Cholanaickans**

The Cholanaickans worship a number of gods and spirits with whose help, they think, they can control the spirits and gods of the plains. The chieftain performs rituals for the spirits and the forest gods. He feels that he not only controls them by his rituals but also is capable of inflicting diseases on others.<sup>42</sup>

*Devan* is the term used by them for god and they have three important gods (1) *Kadu Devva* or forest god – it is a bell metal idol of an elephant with a Mahout and is propitiated by them. The idol is brought during the Monsoon period from an unknown cave where others are

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<sup>42</sup>. Sachidanand and R. R. Prasad, *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, Vol. I, Discovery Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1989), p.191.



**Pooja Room for Lord Ayyappan in Cholanaickan Hut**

prohibited to enter. Special Pujas are performed during this period.<sup>43</sup> (2) *Ole Devva* or river god – is a term used for the god of the river. The Cholanaickans always stop the children going near the water or taking bath in the river for fear of *Ole Devva*. The children are not allowed to drop stones in the river especially in deep spots.<sup>44</sup> (3) *Naadu Devva* or gods of the plains. They fear that if any one is cursed by a *Naadu Devva* he will not escape from the curse. Uneasiness, headache, fever etc. are attributed to the curse of the *Naadu Devva*.<sup>45</sup>

Their goddesses are the following:

1. *Villakkuthampuratti* / Lamp goddess – She is the supreme goddess. It symbolized in an idol of lamp. The idol is the figure of a lamp in conical shape made of bell metal.
2. *Kulithampurati* or *Koolitampurati* – is the idol of an elephant.
3. *Uliureva* – the idol of a tiger. This is also one of their important goddesses. The figure of the goddess is always kept in the divine basket and taken out whenever they move from one region to another.
4. *Tandanadu Devva* and *Aluruva* – This is a figure of human beings. After the death of a person, he / she is represented through these figures, which are brought from Karulai and Nilambur market.

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<sup>43</sup>. Seetha Kakkoth, “*Social Support for Hunter-Gatherers: Care or Curse?*” in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIV, No36, September, 2009, p. 72. Hereafter referred as, Seetha Kakkoth, *Care or Curse*.

<sup>44</sup>. Sachidanand and R. R. Prasad, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>45</sup>. Seetha Kakkoth, “*The Primitive Tribal Groups of Kerala, A Situational Appraisal*,” in *Tribes and Tribals*, Vol. III, Part. I, 2005, p. 49.

Along with many gods and goddesses, the Cholanaickans worship *Nilalu* or spirit. They believe that *Nilalu* is a shadow of evil spirits. If this shadow happens to fall on human beings, they fall sick.<sup>46</sup> Metal image of an Ox called *Kalaiuru, Ganapathi* and the snake god are the other gods, that the Cholanaickans worship.<sup>47</sup> Vigorous socio-religious movements of recent centuries had no influence on them, and only their traditional religious practices have undergone some modifications.

### **Paniya Gods and Goddesses**

The religious faiths and practices of the Paniyas resemble very much with those of the Hindus. The chief gods and goddesses they worship include "*Kuttichathan*", *Kuliyar*<sup>48</sup>, and "*Kattu Bhagavathi*" or *Kuli*, a malignant and terrible being of neither sex, whose shrines take the form of a stone placed under a tree or sometimes in a cairn of stones. At their crude shrines, they contribute as offerings to the swami rice boiled with the husk, roasted and pounded, half a coconut and some small coins.<sup>49</sup>

They also believe in another god who is considered as a creator or *Patachavan*. The Sun is called as *Pakal Bhagavan* or Lord of the Day and the Moon is considered as *Iravu Bhagavan* or the Lord of the Night.<sup>50</sup> For their gods and goddesses, the Paniyas had open shrines under

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<sup>46</sup>. P.K. Misra and B.A. Bhanu, "*Boundary Maintenance among Cholanaickans: The Cave-Men of Kerala*", in *Man in India*, Vol.60, No. I, (New Delhi, 1980), p.58.

<sup>47</sup>. K.S. Singh, *India's Communities*, *op. cit.*, p.701.

<sup>48</sup>. K. Parimurugan, (Ed.), *Tribes: an Anthropological Profile*, Anna Pathipagam, (Chennai, 2001), p.124.

<sup>49</sup>. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas*, *op.cit.*, p.21.

<sup>50</sup>. A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas*, *op.cit.*, pp. 87-89.



**Guliyam Teyyam of Paniyas**

trees. At the foot of the trees will be found a cairn of pebbles and on this cairn will be placed shapeless boulders each representing a deity.

Now a days the Paniyas profess Hinduism and their Supreme God is *Ippimala Teyyam*. In addition, they borrowed gods from other tribes also and they worship *Malakari* which is the god of the Kurichiyas. The goddess of small – pox with the name *Mariamamma* is considered as the deity borrowed from Wynad Chetties.<sup>51</sup>

*Teyyam* is the term used for god and their family god is *Guliyam* and each *Illam* or clan has the god called *Illataya*.

*Kuttichatan, Anjaliatayya, Kakuralamma and Valliacan* are some other tribal deities worshiped by the Paniyas. Besides these, there are *Tamburatti, Pudari Teyya* and *Pulpally Murkkan Teyyam*.<sup>52</sup> These are the gods and goddesses worshiped by the Paniyas. However, the most important feature in the worship of their gods is the influence of Hindu religion. They also have the practice of visiting some of the Hindu temples. *Valliyur Kavu* is a famous Hindu temple and the festival that take place here is only for the Paniya labourers. In such a way, the Paniyas are associated with the Hindu ways and practices.

### **Mala Araya Gods and Goddesses**

As indicated earlier, there are clear indications that the Mala Arayas are animists in the past. The objects of Araya worship are the spirits of their deceased ancestors and local demons which are supposed to reside in rocks and peaks of mountains and are having influence over

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<sup>51.</sup> *Ibid.*,p.88.

<sup>52.</sup> Sachidanand and R. R. Prasad, *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, Vol. III, Discovery Publishing House, (New Delhi, 1989), p.794.



**Azham Mala, Manjakka Mala, and Talappara Mala,  
Temple of Hill Gods at Punjavayal, Kottayam**



**Ganapathi Temple at Punjavayal, Kottayam**



**Sree Cheruvalli Devi Temple at Punjavayal, Kottayam**

certain villages and families.<sup>53</sup> At present the majority of the Mala Arayas are Hindus and they use Hindu names for their progeny and are considered by others as Hindus. The god, whom they worship mainly are *Sastha* of *Sabarimala* and, *Lord Muruga* of *Palani* and the goddesses are *Durga* and *Bhagavati*. They quite often visit Sabarimala and Palani temples. The Mala Arayas believe that the Sun and the Moon are the children of one goddess.<sup>54</sup> Also, they worship the spirit of the ancestors and *Bhoodams*, the demons. However, now a days myriads of changes take place in the worship of gods and goddesses. The influence of Hinduism and Sanskrit language over their life are quite visible. They use Mantras for chanting on auspicious occasions just like the Brahmins.<sup>55</sup> During the field visits, the researcher met Mala Arayas at Punjavayal (Kottayam district) and from them much of the information was collected. The Mala Arayas said that they had five major temples under their control and they are controlled by their collective organization named Akhila Thiruvithamcore Mala Araya Maha Sabha (ATMAMS). In all these temples, Pujaries are appointed by the ATMAMS, and most of them are from Thiruvithamcore Tantric Vidhyapeed. In the temples viz., Kalaketti and Pakkanam temples the main deity is Lord Siva. Other temples of Mala Arayas are at Punjavayal, Irumboonnikara, Kosady and Kalluvattam. The difference is that all these temples are known from their place names. However, they have Hindu deities as their main gods in

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<sup>53</sup>. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. III, Asian Educational Services, (New Delhi, 1993), p.561.

<sup>54</sup>. Buddhadeb Chaudari, (Ed.), *Tribal Transformation in Indian Religion, Rituals and Festivals*, Vol. V, Inter-India Publication, (New Delhi, 1992), p.46.

<sup>55</sup>. Personal Interview, Kannan, Priest, Sree Cheruvally Devi Mala Araya Temple, Mundakkayam, Kottayam, 29/04/2010.

those temples and they worship the hill gods such as *Azham Mala*, *Manjakka Mala* and *Thalapara Mala*.<sup>56</sup>

These are the gods and goddesses worshiped by Paniyas, Cholanaickans and Mala Arayas. In fact, it may be seen that the tribal faith systems and worship to a considerable extent, were influenced by Hindu religious practices and Hindu social life.

### **IMPACT OF HINDUISM ON THE BELIEF AND ATTITUDES OF THE TRIBES**

The attitude of the tribes towards other religions had been of respectful nature especially with Christianity has been very cordial. The Paniyas have a tendency to imitate their landlords in their tribal faith system and worshiping the gods. But the Cholanaickans are entirely different from them. They never trust in other religion. In recent times, among Cholanaickans, the influence of Hindu religion is very high. Most of them visit Hindu temples for worship. The plains god i.e., *Naadu Devva* is not worshiped by them but they fear this god. Among their major gods, the *Naadu Devva* is the third one, which is considered as the god of the plainsmen.<sup>57</sup> They worship *Muthappan* and *Aiyyappan* and these are actually gods of the plain.

The Paniyas in early period were very strict in their rituals in respect of their tribal gods. They worship only the tribal gods. However, the migration of upper caste Hindus from Travancore largely influenced them in religious practices. The Paniyas have begun participating in all

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<sup>56</sup>. Personal Interview, Rajappan, Board Member, Akhila Thiruvithamkoor Mala Araya Maha Sabha, Punjavayal, Kottayam, 29/04/ 2010.

<sup>57</sup>. Personal Interview, Neeli, Cholanaickan Tribal Woman, Neelimala, Wynad, 20/04/2010.



**Valliyur Kavay Temple at Valliyur, Wynad**

religious activities in Kerala. A small number of Paniyas have been going on pilgrimages during recent years to the *Subramaniya* temple at Palani in Tamil Nadu and to the *Sabarimala Sastha* temple in South Kerala.<sup>58</sup> Their participation in fire walking ceremonies connected with the worship of *Mariamamma* is another example of their adoption of Hindu practices. From their old position as marginalised Hindus, the Paniyas are slowly beginning to move up and mingle with other Hindus to participate in the common religious activities. This is indeed a remarkable change. Their observance of Hindu festivals in various seasons is also another evidence of the change in their religious practices. For instance *Onam*, *Vishu* and the festivals like these are celebrated by them.<sup>59</sup> These practices confirm the Paniya belief in Hindu gods and goddesses, *Mariamamma* is a popular goddess of small pox among Kannada speaking tribes.

For a long period Paniyas worshiped only their tribal gods. After that, changes occurred and they started worshipping gods of other tribes like Kurichiyas. In recent, decades they are worshipping Hindu gods such as *Subramaniya*, *Sastha* and *Valliurkavu Bhagavathi*.<sup>60</sup> These are some of the change that take place due to adoption of other religious believes. They are not in fact, changing from one religion to other. This is the situation among Paniyas.

The process of conversion of tribes to Christianity started in 1813 among the Khasis of North Eastern region.<sup>61</sup> The missionaries played a key role in the conversion of tribes to Christianity. The process in a

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58. *Ibid.*,

59. Edgar Thurston, *Badagas and Irulas, op. cit.*, pp.20-21.

60. A. Aiyappan, *The Paniyas, op.cit.*, p.119.

61. Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, Mackyard Ltd., (New York, 1924), p. 56.

phased manner gripped almost all over the Indian sub-continent. An interesting aspect was that the missionaries concentrated more on numerically strong tribal groups for their conversion. Tribals of Northeastern region constituted a very important segment of the tribal population. Other notable tribal groups, whose members largely followed Christian religion were Mizo, Garro and Nagas.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, in south India, Hill Pulaya, Mala Arayas and Palliar tribes of Kerala accepted Christianity.<sup>63</sup> The conversion of Mala Arayas to Christianity made great changes in their life. Through the church organization, western education, values and morals reached them. It was in 1848 that the first missionary Rev. Henry Baker Jr. came to the Mala Arayas of Mundakkayam to preach Christianity among them.<sup>64</sup> Their existing condition mainly was the cause for conversion to Christianity. The reasons for their conversion are as follows:

1. Failure of their tribal gods to save them from epidemics and calamities.
2. The existing political situation of the place i.e., – they were severely exploited by the Muslim traders and tax collectors of local chieftain, the Punjar Raja. The whole area had been held under the control of Punjar Raja, he was very strict in tax collection.
3. Failure of the missionaries in their work among the upper caste members who were converted to Christianity (Syrian Christians).

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<sup>62.</sup> H.C. Upreti, *op.cit.*, p.153.

<sup>63.</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>64.</sup> K.G. Daniel, *Let the Hills Rejoice*, Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (New Delhi, 1998), pp. 7-8.



**St. Peters Church of Mala Arayas**

4. The Mala Arayas were in search of a right person as a social and religious protector in the group of Christian Missionaries.<sup>65</sup>

The conversion undoubtedly changed the mode of life of the Mala Araya tribes. It brought considerable changes in the celebration of religious festivals, social interaction, economic life and other aspects of their culture. They got early benefits of western education and were more progressive in outlook in accepting the modern western values. However, alienation from tribal culture and its way of life at times created the rift between the Christian tribes and the Non-Christians of their community. Thus with the conversion, none of the Christian Mala Arayas can say that it caused havoc. Nevertheless, it made tremendous changes in their life.<sup>66</sup>

The changes in faith system of Paniyas and Cholanaickans are considered as a change from tribalism<sup>67</sup> to Hinduism<sup>68</sup> whereas the conversion of Mala Arayas it is from tribalism to westernization and Christianization.<sup>69</sup>

## RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Being the primitive inhabitants, the tribes have their own way of life, religious practices and medical treatment, which are entirely

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<sup>65</sup>. Nisha Joseph., *“Conversion and Social Transition of Mala Araya Community”* Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation submitted to the M.G. University, (Kottayam, 2006), pp. 27-45.

<sup>66</sup>. J.W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and People’s Movement in Kerala*, C. D. Sidhy Publication, (Trivandrum, 2004), pp. 77 – 78.

<sup>67</sup>. Tribalism--The meaning of tribalism in the particular context is the faith in tribal gods only.

<sup>68</sup>. Hinduism – Faith in Hindu Gods only.

<sup>69</sup>. By Westernization, it is meant the change from tribal life to Western life. Christianization means giving up all the religious practices of their tribal faith, and changing to Christianity.

different from modern medical treatment. Another important aspect is that the works of the priest, headman and medical practitioner is done by the same person in the tribal community. That makes the tribal community different from all others. The present study is on the three tribes such as Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas, who have distinct features in the field of traditional medicine. As regards Cholanaickans as mentioned in the previous chapters their territory has been divided into different *Chenmam* or *Tsenmam*, which means territory.<sup>70</sup> The chieftain of the territory is called *Chenmakkaran* or *Tsenmakkaran* and under each *Chenmam*, there are two to seven primary families. The headman of a *Chenmam* is believed to possess the power of magical retribution called *Koottupattickal* i.e., to punish the trespassers of his *Chenmam*. Each *Chenmam* / territory coincides with a particular river basin. For instance, Karimpuzha *Chenmam* is known after the Karimpuzha River. The *Chenmakkaran* is responsible for all happenings in his territory.<sup>71</sup>

In the case of illness too, the *Chenmakkaran* is to visit the patient diagnose and cure the disease. Whenever an illness occurs they suspect supernatural causes and these are decided by *Pattuvaipu* (Recitation of spells) which is done during day or night. For this *Pattuvaipu*, *Chenmakkaran* wears a red cloth and a string of bells around his ankles. Through magical incantation, he is believed to enter into supernatural world. He recites the magical spell while shaking the *Beeda*, which is a divine juggling instrument consisting of two dry ground shells filled with

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<sup>70</sup>. Seetha Kakkoth, *Care or Curse, op.cit.*, p.71.

<sup>71</sup>. A.Aiyappan, *Report on Socio – Economic conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, The Superintendent, Government Press, (Madras, 1948), p.25.

*Kunnikkuru* (seeds of *Abrus precatorius*). In the state of possession or *Daivamkanddethathu* he utters the reason for the illness. He acts as a medium of communication with the rest of the Cholanaickans and the supernatural world. Thereafter in the same way, remedies are also prescribed for the illness. The text of songs is called '*Kottukali Daivapadathu* (Songs of the Deities). At the end of the *Pattuvaipu* requests are made to the ancestral spirits for guarding them from all kinds of troubles.<sup>72</sup>

## CURING METHODS

When an illness is attributed to a supernatural cause, magical measures are taken by the tribes to cure it. The magical means of curing illness by the Cholanaickans are (1) *Orissadu* (2) *Kariorissadu* (3) *Chardorissadu* (4) *Daivadal* and (5) *Thettubekku*. They also use physical manoeuverings called *Pidichukodukkal* and *Oddanereyadkal* depending upon the nature of illness.<sup>73</sup>

### Magical Means

(1) *Orissadu: Orissadu* (removal of malevolent influences from a person by the blowing of air) is performed when wrath of ancestral spirits are suspected as cause of an illness. The invaded spirit is warded off by magical spells accompanied by the blowing off air on the affected part by the *Chenmakkaran*. For performing *Orissadu* he sites behind the patient and blows air repeatedly from the center of the head to neck and then to

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<sup>72</sup>. P.R.G. Mathur, "*Cholanaickans of Kerala*" in *Primitive Tribes*, (New Delhi, 1977), pp.65-66.

<sup>73</sup>. B.A. Bhanu, "*The Nomadic Cholanaickan of Kerala: An Analysis of their Movement*" in Misra and Malhotra, (Ed.), *Nomads in India*, (Calcutta, 1982), pp. 215 – 226. Hereafter referred as, B.A. Bhanu, *The Nomadic*.

the rest of the body. He repeats this for nearly 45 minutes. In one such instance, the *Chenmakkaran* has performed this act on a youth with fever for one hour each twice a day for three days and by that time, the patient was completely cured. It is said that most of the elderly tribal men know the art of blowing *Uratsatu Orissadu*. However, usually it is performed by the *Chenmakkaran*.<sup>74</sup>

(2) *Kariorissadu: Kariorissadu* or charming of charcoal is performed for stomach ailments, vomiting etc.... The *Chenmakkaran* gives the patient a small piece of charcoal after uttering magical spell and blowing of air on it to chew and swallow. This is done twice or thrice for an illness. It is important to note here that charcoal powder has a curative effect as a gas absorbant and this perhaps soothes most of the stomach ailments.

(3) *Charadorissadu: Charadorissadu* (tying of string) This is performed when invasion of malevolent spirits, demons etc., is suspected to have affected the persons. For this, a cotton thread is made from the yarns separated from a piece of cloth. Over it, *Chenmakaran* blows air for a while, recites magical spells, and makes a few knots at certain intervals. Each knot is made after a spell of chanting of some mantras. This is a warding off measure against any malevolent invasion. Usually this is practiced for illness of children.<sup>75</sup>

(4) *Daivaadal*: When an illness is attributed to the displeasure of deities *Daivaadal* (trance dance) is conducted. Generally, it is performed after dusk. The patient is made to sit in front of the *Alai* (rock shelter).

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<sup>74</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *Tribal Health and Medicine in Kerala*, D. C. Books Publication, (Kottayam, 2008), pp. 36 – 37.

<sup>75</sup>. B. A. Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan*, *op.cit.*, pp. 62 – 63.

The *Chenmakkaran* wears a piece of red cloth around his waist and a string of bells around his ankles. With the accompaniment of the rhythmic juggling of beads, he starts moving around the patient reciting the spells called *Daivapattu*. After a while, his movements get more frenzied and he enters into trance. Gradually his dance movements slow down. It is believed that the invoked deities have entered the body of the sufferer expelling all the malevolent influences.<sup>76</sup>

(5) *Thettubekku*: *Thettubekku* (fine payment) is done when the illness is attributed to the violation of tribal dictums such as disrespect shown to a *Chenmakkaran*, pollution due to the touch of a person on another person of prohibited degrees, disrespecting the divine basket etc., The *Thettu* (fine) is then imposed by the *Chenmakkaran*. It ranges from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10. The *Chenmakkaran* may perform a *Daivaadal* if required. The fine collected is usually spent for performing various religious ceremonies.<sup>77</sup>

#### (b) Unique Physical treatments

1. *Pidichukodukkal* : is a kind of massage done to cure severe headaches on the temple region. For men it is done usually by the *Chenmakkaran* or by an elderly man and for women their sisters or younger brothers.

2. *Oddanereyakkal* : This massage is done on the abdominal area when children particularly infants, suffer from stomach ailments. They believe that it is due to the misplacement of inner organs. During the

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<sup>76</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.37.

<sup>77</sup>. Seetha Kakkoth, "*The Primitive Tribal Groups of Kerala, A Situational Appraisal*," in *Tribes and Tribals*, Vol. III, Part. I, (New Delhi, 2005), p. 50.

physical manoeuvring the body contact between the therapist and the patient is a prolonged one. The atmosphere generated here is soothing and comforting and the patient feels warmth and affection.<sup>78</sup>

The Cholanaickans use both herbal and animal matters to cure illness. The Cholanaickans living in the reserve forests have less number of recipes and their applications of medicines are more crude than that of the accultured sections of the specified forest areas. Recent studies on them show the marked influence of allopathic medicine in the tribal medicinal practices in the developed areas.

## PANIYANS

Paniyas also their have traditional medicine, like other tribes. They also believe that supernatural forces create illness. Such causes are divined and have appropriate remedial measures are taken. Sometimes this process may go along with herbal therapy too. The divine measures are *Daivanthullal* and *Chatramvekkal*.<sup>79</sup>

### (a) *Daivamthullal*

The *Daivakkaran* (Headman of the tribes) is asked to find out the cause of the illness through his trance dance called *Daivamthullal*. This ceremony is performed after drawing a *Kalam* which usually a square or rectangular in shape and is divided into 16 to 18 smaller partitions with rice powder, charcoal of rice husk and turmeric powder. The *daivakkaran* wear a red silk loincloth, a white shirt and a new headgear. Strings of bells are tied around his ankles. He holds a sword in one hand and he

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<sup>78</sup>. N. Vishwanathan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 – 39.

<sup>79</sup>. K.S. Singh, *The Scheduled Tribes*, Oxford University Press, (Chennai, 1997), p.977.

moves rhythmically to the accompaniment of music on the drum. In his trance, he utters the cause of the illness and also the remedies to effect the cure. If the wrath of ancestral spirit is the cause then *Nikalattam* is performed and if it is by deities *Vazhipaduvekkal* are performed.<sup>80</sup>

(b) *Chatramvekkal*

Another method of divination is called *Chatramvekkal*. A patient's relatives approach the *Daivakkaran* for this and after invoking the tutelary deities, he takes out a pinch of raw rice or castor seeds from the *Poya* in a small winnow and start grouping the rice grain in pairs. If an odd number of rice remains, the suspected cause of illness is confirmed while an even number means rejection of the suspected cause. At the same time, relatives of the patient ask about the name of the displeased deities, the prognosis of the disease, and the appeasing ceremony that must be preferred. He answers all their questions after counting the rice or the castor seeds.<sup>81</sup>

## HEALING METHODS BY RITUAL

The ritual healing methods by rituals are (a) *Nikalattam* – This is performed by the *Daivakkaran* or *Attali*. The *Daivakkaran* dresses up in the ritual attire and invokes the ancestral spirits after holding the magical cane. This is accompanied by the beating of drums and pipe music. He moves around the patient in a frenzied mood for a while pleading the spirits to leave the body of the patient after accepting the offerings.

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<sup>80</sup>. N. Viswanathan Nair, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>81</sup>. K. Panoor, *Keralathile Africa*, (Malayalam), India Press, (Kottayam, 1963), pp.93.

- (b) **Kettiyattam / Velikkala:** These practices are associated with pregnancy of the tribal women.
- (c) **Vazhipaduvekkal :** The paying of offerings for safe delivery to the displeased deities and aggressive demons is called **Vazhipaduvekkal**. The **Chemmi** performs the **Vazhipaduvekkal** and the relatives of the patients will make offerings to him.
- (d) **Maaduchavittal:** This rite is conducted by the **Daivakkar** for pleasing the ancestral spirits or deities.
- (e) **Vaishymedukkal:** It is performed against sorcery.
- (f) **Thiriminnal:** for thiriminnal, the **Vaishyakaran** chants a magical spell to incite his patron deity. He lights a cotton wick in gingelly oil and waves the lighted wick over the patient for an odd number of times like 7,11,13,15 etc., After this, the wick is thrown away at a far of place. **Thiriminnal** is performed to ward off the effects of the aggressive demons.
- (g) **Charadukettal:** As a prophylactic and warding off measure, the Paniyas follow the practice of tying of a thread called **Charadukettal**. Mostly they use the cotton string, which is knotted at intervals after reciting the requisite spells, and is used as **Charadu**.<sup>82</sup> This is the ritual practice strictly followed by the Paniyas.

Among the Mala Arayas such kind of practices existed in the early period. However, the present generation is not aware of these practices. Their particular medicinal practice is **Thirummal**/massage. The headman

<sup>82</sup>. Sarkar, *The Aboriginal Races of India*, Anthropological Survey of India, (Calcutta, 1954), p.54.

or *Kanikkaran* is the practitioner of this method. When he sees a patient, he predicts the disease and cure the patient from a distance. However, with the influence of modern medicine, both Mala Arayas of Hindu and Christian fold discontinue this method of treatment with tribal medicines.

Thus, systems and institutions rely on the idea of a specific religion are necessarily a product of time and space. As the group advances in time or moves in space it necessarily undergoes a change. These tribes, due to contact with well developed people of the plains, governmental programmes, and missionary activities, and due to modern education, have adopted enormous changes, yet they retain their tribal character and identities. Among all these three tribes, faith system is closely associated with the traditional systems of cure. Among them, changes are to be effected to leave something and absorb a new. This is a severe challenge to the tribal cultural identity. What they should do is that they should retain their culture and move forward to educate themselves and free themselves from the clutches of certain unwanted elements who are intent to destroy their culture and traditions and introduce modern methods with the pretext of improving the tribals. But it is to be pointed out here that the tribes adapted the modern methods for their welfare; But they had retained their old practices, traditions and cultures which they had inherited from their ancestors long before.

# *Conclusion*

## CONCLUSION

In this study the three tribal communities' viz., Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas and their different ways of life besides social, economic and political activities are discussed. Generally, the tribes have unity in the case of social status and developments. In tribal societies, disparities are common in their socio-economic patterns of life, but a specific study makes us to understand what those disparities are? As regards economic activities, agriculture and forest products are the main sources of income for these three tribes and they utilize these resources to the fullest extent. These are analysed in this study.

Cholanaickans are semi-agriculturalists, and during most of their time they depend on forests for livelihood. However, Paniyas are primarily agricultural labourers and very few of their families possess land holdings. Traditionally they had been engaged as bonded labourers (*Kundal Pani*). Now-a-days the economy of Paniyas is well-connected with that of the non-tribal settlers who control their occupational patterns and influence their economic condition. The wage rate is very low when compared to that of other areas in Kerala, so that Paniyas continue to be the victims of the vicious circle of poverty.

In the case of Mala Arayas, there are both rich and poor Mala Arayas and so they have two types of social and economic activities. Few of them have personal small land holdings, so that they can depend both in their own land and in lean season they can go for work in the fields of others. At the same time the importance of agriculture is not lost totally from their life. Thus Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas carry on

their traditional activities. But the recent change is that they are cultivating not only cereals for food but also cash crops like coconut, rubber, coffee, coco, etc for sale in markets. But all these are seasonal activities and they cannot depend on these activities throughout the year. So they want to work and become wage earners in others lands. Thus their present social life and economic activities are shaped by the demands of present times. The Cholanaickans and Paniyas depend on agriculture and forest resources; but Mala Arayas have to depend only on cultivation as they are now separated from forest region. So, the conditions prevail in the regions of the tribes are closely related to land and forest; whether they work in their own land or of others.

The other economic activities of Cholanaickans and Paniyas are basket making and collection of forest products like honey, soap seeds, pepper corns etc. They barter them for rice, tobacco, chilly, salt and other products from other people of different regions. The Mala Arayas have missionary schools in their settlements and majority of them are literates and some of them are placed in government jobs too. In this way, the Mala Arayas are marginally better than other two tribes under study.

The family of the Mala Arayas consists of parents, children and grandparents staying together in a house. Even today this is the general situation in their houses. The family is well knit one and the members of the family are in unity in much of their activities. Their organizations also give importance to women's empowerment and to their participation in social activities. But most of them fail to utilize the opportunities and avail the benefits.

The tribes of Kerala have a notable culture. They also have good tradition and practices. The tribes have belief in natural forces and in the spirits of the ancestors. This study thus brings out the culture of these people that is manifested in their myths and in their customs and traditions related to birth and death. Their concept of purity in relation to other tribes and non-tribes and kinships and marriage systems of the tribes clearly testify to the individual tribal culture.

In recent decades, the Mala Arayas prefer nuclear family and the sons and daughters wanted to be away from parents and other relatives. But Paniyas and Cholanaickans have a single family setup that is father, mother and children. Among them if a boy gets married then on the very next day he is separated from his parents' house and land will be provided by his or her parents to have a separate family. The only difference is that it is mandatory for a Paniya to give yearly gifts in kind or money to his wife's parents. Otherwise her parents can call their daughter back. This system actually reminds the social responsibility of each Paniyan to look after the aged parents of his wife. But Cholanaickans have a custom different from that of the Paniyas. During the rainy season or calamities, a Cholanaickan should take care of the whole Chemmam. He must share what he collects from the forest and with others of his territory. With this sharing of resources they can easily survive the lean season. Thus it makes their life comfortable and make them reciprocal and responsible to each one of them. This they follow as a ritual or custom in their society.

There are a number of development programmes implemented by the Government. It was during the time of Jawaharlal Nehru, a "*Tribal Panchsheel*" was introduced. The main aim of this "*Panchsheel*" is not to interrupt their traditional way of life and at the same time we should accept them and include them in the development programmes without any restrictions.

The policy introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru became the back-bone of all tribal policies ever implemented by the Government of India. The Constitution of India also ensures their development through legislation. Thus the tribal development aims to strengthen the material aspects of tribal culture and increase the income through their own skills and better utilization of the forest resources. For this purpose, the Government of India and the Government of Kerala appointed various Scheduled Tribe Commissions like, the Debar Commission in 1961 and introduced rehabilitation schemes like Suganthagiri Cardamom Project, and ATCOFARMS. In 1975 a Tribal Welfare Department was formed as a part of the Fifth Five Year Plan. The Commissioner for Scheduled Tribes / Scheduled Castes examines the annual reports of various tribal development programmes implemented for scheduled tribes of Kerala. However, all these development programmes reached them only partially. Those who are benefited by these schemes never inform others to take part in them. Similarly majority of them are still backward in education and social activities as they are unaware of these programmes. The educated people among them want them to be included in the planning of tribal development programmes of the Government, since they only know the needs, weaknesses and strength of their communities. They believe

that only then the development and other social improvement programmes will reach them properly.

The term political consciousness refers to the knowledge of the political phenomena. It constitutes knowledge about political institutions and processes and it is a key concept in the understanding of the political system. The political consciousness among people results in far-reaching consequences in society. Political consciousness of people can be judged generally at the time of elections to political bodies. The Cholanaickans, Paniyas and Mala Arayas have political leanings and their political institutions retain the remnants of their old traditions. The Cholanaickans have connections with political leaders, and they know election systems and they cast their vote in each election with independent will and option; yet they do not know how to address their problems to the political leaders and they are not having adequate political acumen. Even today also they are living in the interior forests of Wynad and Nilambur and are not exposed the present day politics and diplomacy.

In the case of Paniyas they are one of the major tribal communities of Kerala. During 1970s they worked with Naxalites for their emancipation from landlords, who had suppressed them for long. They move all political parties and join with their activities for getting benefit for them. In the previous years some of them associated with the major political parties of Kerala and later they withdrew from them because, they learnt that these political parties approach them only for vote and not for their welfare and development. Kothuvan who lives at Kallikeney, near Kalppatta the headquarters of Wynad district, says that each political

party meets them only at the time of elections and after that they forget them completely. So he remarks that he never trusts the politicians. They live in their Padi (Paniya settlement) in a hopeless condition and they have nothing to eat when they do not go for work. But they spend their money invariably for liquor since they feel that they get solace by taking liquor. Thus the life expectancy of these people is maximum 45 years, and majority of their younger generation is addicted to liquor and there have been instances of many committing suicide by them. According to Mr. Sasi, local political leader, maximum two suicides in a month are quite common among them.

The Mala Araya people are living a much better life than other two tribes. They have organisation to identify and address their problems and many of them are members in leading political parties. But this category includes only a few people and majority of them are still living in poverty. Majority of them do not have housing facilities and they possess no lands. But people in general feel that they have a college and a number of schools, and other facilities to support them. But it must be remembered that these are the efforts of missionary activities in their areas during earlier period. Most of these are Christian Missionary Schools, which were established between 1850s and 1920s.

There are a number of NGOs and Local Self Government institutions working among these tribes. These NGOs are offering certain financial assistance as loans to the tribes. When the tribes are unable to return the amount in time due to economic disabilities they leave the Non Governmental Organisations. This finally leads to chaos and dislocation

of their lives. Further, some of these organisations are also exploiting them to their advantage with high interest rates and fleecing of their resources. Thus some NGOs have no real interest for the welfare of the tribes. All these situations lead the tribes to follow an isolated life in their secluded places.

It is also to be pointed out that a study on tribal community is incomplete without a mention to their faith system. The religion of a community generally reveals the essence of their cultural life. These three communities during the early period believed in 'Animism' and in offering gifts to their ancestral spirits. By passage of time they began to worship natural forces. In its next phase what they combined both the worships of ancestral spirits and natural forces. In the last phase they adopted Hindu customs and practices and started worshiping gods like Lord Siva, Sastha of Sabarimala, and Lord Muruga of Palani. Also, many of them began to adopt the Hindu names for their children, and began to celebrate festivals like Onam and Vishu. During the field visit of the researcher, many Cholanaickans expressed that they want to be like the people in the plains. That is the reason why they call their children with names like Sujatha, Susheela, Kannan, Bhaskaran and so on. All these changes are the result of their increased contacts with the people of the plains. Further, some of the educated tribes do not like to call themselves as tribes and this is one of the main reasons that they adopted the names of plainsmen.

Thus, the systems and institutions embedded in the idea of a specific religion is necessarily a product of time and space. As the group advances in time or moves in space it necessarily undergoes a change. This modification is a response towards adaptation to changed circumstances; but they still retain certain tribal traits. Among them changes are taking place to leave something and take new aspects. But it is a severe challenge to the tribal cultural identity. Hence, what they want is not to give up their culture but to assimilate some benevolent aspects of the developed societies in their neighbourhood. They also want to educate themselves and make themselves to move with times and also to free from the clutches of certain unscrupulous elements who would very much like to exploit them for their own self interests. Thus the three tribes of Kerala under study are maintaining their traditions till this day, but at the same time, they endeavour to progress in all spheres of human activity like people in the State. This shows their progressive thinking and positive attitude towards life.

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*Appendix*

Population of each Scheduled Tribe, 1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |         |   |               |   |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---------|---|---------------|---|
|                         | Year             |   | Persons |   | Males Females |   |
|                         | 1                | 2 | 3       | 4 | 5             | 6 |

**Kerala ... (Contd.)**

|                |      |   |       |       |       |
|----------------|------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 4. Hill Pulaya | 1961 | T | 2,982 | 1,484 | 1,498 |
|                |      | R | 2,823 | 1,406 | 1,417 |
|                |      | U | 159   | 78    | 81    |
|                | 1971 | T | 1,152 | 596   | 556   |
|                |      | R | 1,133 | 585   | 548   |
|                |      | U | 19    | 11    | 8     |
|                | 1981 | T | 3,091 | 1,540 | 1,551 |
|                |      | R | 3,024 | 1,512 | 1,512 |
|                |      | U | 67    | 28    | 39    |

|                   |      |   |        |       |       |
|-------------------|------|---|--------|-------|-------|
| 5. Irular, Irulan | 1961 | T | 11,454 | 5,802 | 5,652 |
|                   |      | R | 11,454 | 5,802 | 5,652 |
|                   |      | U | ...    | ...   | ...   |
|                   | 1971 | T | 14,852 | 7,527 | 7,325 |
|                   |      | R | 14,839 | 7,520 | 7,319 |
|                   |      | U | 13     | 7     | 6     |
|                   | 1981 | T | 18,697 | 9,445 | 9,252 |
|                   |      | R | 18,690 | 9,439 | 9,251 |
|                   |      | U | 7      | 6     | 1     |

|          |      |   |       |     |     |
|----------|------|---|-------|-----|-----|
| 6. Kadar | 1961 | T | 957   | 512 | 445 |
|          |      | R | 924   | 494 | 430 |
|          |      | U | 33    | 18  | 15  |
|          | 1971 | T | 1,120 | 595 | 525 |
|          |      | R | 1,116 | 591 | 525 |
|          |      | U | 4     | 4   | ... |
|          | 1981 | T | 1,503 | 774 | 729 |
|          |      | R | 1,490 | 764 | 726 |
|          |      | U | 13    | 10  | 3   |

|             |      |   |     |     |     |
|-------------|------|---|-----|-----|-----|
| 7. Kammara* | 1961 | T | 270 | 123 | 147 |
|             |      | R | 255 | 114 | 141 |
|             |      | U | 15  | 9   | 6   |
|             | 1971 | T | 318 | 160 | 158 |
|             |      | R | 245 | 128 | 117 |
|             |      | U | 73  | 32  | 41  |
|             | 1981 | T | ... | ... | ... |
|             |      | R | ... | ... | ... |
|             |      | U | ... | ... | ... |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe, 1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |         |   |               |   |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---------|---|---------------|---|
|                         | Year             |   | Persons |   | Males Females |   |
|                         | 1                | 2 | 3       | 4 | 5             | 6 |

**KERALA**

|                      |      |   |         |         |         |
|----------------------|------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| ALL SCHEDULED TRIBES | 1961 | T | 212,762 | 106,076 | 106,686 |
|                      |      | R | 203,599 | 101,718 | 101,881 |
|                      |      | U | 9,163   | 4,358   | 4,805   |
|                      | 1971 | T | 269,356 | 134,996 | 134,360 |
|                      |      | R | 258,480 | 129,576 | 128,904 |
|                      |      | U | 10,876  | 5,420   | 5,456   |
|                      | 1981 | T | 261,475 | 131,243 | 130,232 |
|                      |      | R | 256,485 | 128,675 | 127,810 |
|                      |      | U | 4,990   | 2,568   | 2,422   |

|           |      |   |       |       |       |
|-----------|------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Adiyar | 1961 | T | 5,691 | 2,764 | 2,927 |
|           |      | R | 5,671 | 2,761 | 2,910 |
|           |      | U | 20    | 3     | 17    |
|           | 1971 | T | 7,073 | 3,455 | 3,618 |
|           |      | R | 6,951 | 3,395 | 3,556 |
|           |      | U | 122   | 60    | 62    |
|           | 1981 | T | 8,152 | 3,953 | 4,199 |
|           |      | R | 8,098 | 3,923 | 4,175 |
|           |      | U | 54    | 30    | 24    |

|            |      |   |     |     |     |
|------------|------|---|-----|-----|-----|
| 2. Arandan | 1961 | T | 43  | 22  | 21  |
|            |      | R | 40  | 20  | 20  |
|            |      | U | 3   | 2   | 1   |
|            | 1971 | T | 1   | 1   | ... |
|            |      | R | 1   | 1   | ... |
|            |      | U | ... | ... | ... |
|            | 1981 | T | 95  | 37  | 58  |
|            |      | R | 93  | 35  | 58  |
|            |      | U | 2   | 2   | ... |

|              |      |   |       |       |       |
|--------------|------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 3. Eravallan | 1961 | T | 518   | 286   | 232   |
|              |      | R | 484   | 265   | 219   |
|              |      | U | 34    | 21    | 13    |
|              | 1971 | T | 678   | 337   | 341   |
|              |      | R | 678   | 337   | 341   |
|              |      | U | ...   | ...   | ...   |
|              | 1981 | T | 2,071 | 1,050 | 1,021 |
|              |      | R | 2,071 | 1,050 | 1,021 |
|              |      | U | ...   | ...   | ...   |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |   |         |       |         |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---|---------|-------|---------|
|                         | Year             | T | R | Persons | Males | Females |
| 1                       | 2                | 3 | 4 | 5       | 6     |         |

Kerala ... (Contd.)

|                      |      |   |       |     |     |  |
|----------------------|------|---|-------|-----|-----|--|
| 2. Kondareddis       | 1961 | T | 9     | 3   | 6   |  |
|                      |      | R | 1     | 1   | 1   |  |
|                      |      | U |       |     | 5   |  |
|                      | 1971 | T | 180   | 89  | 91  |  |
|                      |      | R | 179   | 88  | 91  |  |
|                      |      | U | 1     | 1   | ... |  |
|                      | 1981 | T | 1,064 | 534 | 530 |  |
|                      |      | R | 220   | 116 | 104 |  |
|                      |      | U | 844   | 418 | 426 |  |
| 13. Koraga           | 1961 | T | 545   | 296 | 252 |  |
|                      |      | R | 528   | 287 | 241 |  |
|                      |      | U | 20    | 9   | 11  |  |
|                      | 1971 | T | 724   | 394 | 330 |  |
|                      |      | R | 684   | 370 | 314 |  |
|                      |      | U | 40    | 24  | 16  |  |
|                      | 1981 | T | 1,098 | 592 | 506 |  |
|                      |      | R | 1,057 | 571 | 486 |  |
|                      |      | U | 41    | 21  | 20  |  |
| 14. Kota             | 1961 | T | 8     | 5   | 3   |  |
|                      |      | R | 8     | 5   | 3   |  |
|                      |      | U | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      | 1971 | T | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      |      | R | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      |      | U | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      | 1981 | T | 41    | 24  | 17  |  |
|                      |      | R | 25    | 14  | 11  |  |
|                      |      | U | 16    | 10  | 6   |  |
| 15. Kudija, Melakudi | 1961 | T | 194   | 103 | 91  |  |
|                      |      | R | 194   | 103 | 91  |  |
|                      |      | U | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      | 1971 | T | 447   | 234 | 213 |  |
|                      |      | R | 447   | 234 | 213 |  |
|                      |      | U | ...   | ... | ... |  |
|                      | 1981 | T | 603   | 300 | 303 |  |
|                      |      | R | 591   | 296 | 295 |  |
|                      |      | U | 12    | 4   | 8   |  |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |   |         |       |         |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---|---------|-------|---------|
|                         | Year             | T | R | Persons | Males | Females |
| 1                       | 2                | 3 | 4 | 5       | 6     |         |

Kerala ... (Contd.)

|                        |      |   |        |       |       |  |
|------------------------|------|---|--------|-------|-------|--|
| 8. Kanikaran, Kanikkar | 1961 | T | 9,457  | 4,823 | 4,634 |  |
|                        |      | R | 9,437  | 4,807 | 4,630 |  |
|                        |      | U | 20     | 16    | 4     |  |
|                        | 1971 | T | 11,879 | 5,893 | 5,986 |  |
|                        |      | R | 11,850 | 5,869 | 5,981 |  |
|                        |      | U | 29     | 24    | 5     |  |
|                        | 1981 | T | 12,725 | 5,742 | 6,983 |  |
|                        |      | R | 12,549 | 5,644 | 6,905 |  |
|                        |      | U | 176    | 98    | 78    |  |
| 9. Kattunayakan        | 1961 | T | 3,907  | 1,976 | 1,931 |  |
|                        |      | R | 3,894  | 1,971 | 1,923 |  |
|                        |      | U | 13     | 5     | 8     |  |
|                        | 1971 | T | 5,565  | 2,798 | 2,767 |  |
|                        |      | R | 5,561  | 2,796 | 2,765 |  |
|                        |      | U | 4      | 2     | 2     |  |
|                        | 1981 | T | 8,803  | 4,532 | 4,271 |  |
|                        |      | R | 8,619  | 4,436 | 4,183 |  |
|                        |      | U | 184    | 96    | 88    |  |
| 10. Kochu Velan        | 1961 | T | 47     | 20    | 27    |  |
|                        |      | R | 47     | 20    | 27    |  |
|                        |      | U | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        | 1971 | T | 8      | 4     | 4     |  |
|                        |      | R | 8      | 4     | 4     |  |
|                        |      | U | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        | 1981 | T | 10     | 4     | 6     |  |
|                        |      | R | 6      | 3     | 3     |  |
|                        |      | U | 4      | 1     | 3     |  |
| 11. Konda Kpuz         | 1961 | T | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        |      | R | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        |      | U | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        | 1971 | T | 19     | 12    | 7     |  |
|                        |      | R | 19     | 12    | 7     |  |
|                        |      | U | ...    | ...   | ...   |  |
|                        | 1981 | T | 11     | 6     | 5     |  |
|                        |      | R | 10     | 5     | 5     |  |
|                        |      | U | 1      | 1     | 1     |  |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |         |   |               |   |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---------|---|---------------|---|
|                         | Year             |   | Persons |   | Males Females |   |
|                         | 1                | 2 | 3       | 4 | 5             | 6 |

| Kerala ... (Contd.) |      |   |   |        |        |  |
|---------------------|------|---|---|--------|--------|--|
| 16. Kurichchan      | 1961 | T | 11,849  | 6,018  | 5,831  |  |
|                     |      | R | 11,847  | 6,017  | 5,830  |  |
|                     |      | U | 2   | 1      | 1      |  |
|                     | 1971 | T | 15,700  | 7,996  | 7,704  |  |
|                     |      | R | 15,688  | 7,987  | 7,701  |  |
|                     |      | U | 12  | 9      | 3      |  |
| 181                 | 1981 | T | 22,215  | 11,293 | 10,922 |  |
|                     |      | R | 22,161  | 11,255 | 10,906 |  |
|                     |      | U | 54  | 38     | 16     |  |
| 17. Kurumans        | 1961 | T | 13,377  | 6,786  | 6,591  |  |
|                     |      | R | 13,334  | 6,762  | 6,572  |  |
|                     |      | U | 43  | 24     | 19     |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 15,116  | 7,737  | 7,379  |  |
|                     |      | R | 15,112  | 7,736  | 7,376  |  |
|                     |      | U | 4   | 1      | 3      |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 20,744  | 10,541 | 10,203 |  |
|                     |      | R | 20,709  | 10,524 | 10,185 |  |
|                     |      | U | 35  | 17     | 18     |  |
| 18. Kurumbas        | 1961 | T | 999   | 551    | 448    |  |
|                     |      | R | 998   | 550    | 448    |  |
|                     |      | U | 1   | 1      | ...    |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 1,319   | 678    | 641    |  |
|                     |      | R | 1,318   | 677    | 641    |  |
|                     |      | U | 1   | 1      | ...    |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 1,283   | 673    | 610    |  |
|                     |      | R | 1,274   | 669    | 605    |  |
|                     |      | U | 9   | 4      | 5      |  |
| 19. Maha Malasur    | 1961 | T | Not included in the list of Scheduled Tribes. |        |        |  |
|                     |      | R |   |        |        |  |
|                     |      | U |   |        |        |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | Not included in the list of Scheduled Tribes. |        |        |  |
|                     |      | R |   |        |        |  |
|                     |      | U |   |        |        |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 9   | 5      | 4      |  |
|                     |      | R | 5   | 3      | 2      |  |
|                     |      | U | 4   | 2      | 2      |  |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population |   |         |   |               |   |
|-------------------------|------------------|---|---------|---|---------------|---|
|                         | Year             |   | Persons |   | Males Females |   |
|                         | 1                | 2 | 3       | 4 | 5             | 6 |

| Kerala ... (Contd.) |      |   |        |        |        |  |
|---------------------|------|---|--------|--------|--------|--|
| 20. Malai Arayan    | 1961 | T | 2,115  | 1,000  | 1,115  |  |
|                     |      | R | 2,110  | 999    | 1,111  |  |
|                     |      | U | 5      | 1      | 4      |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 4,194  | 2,120  | 2,074  |  |
|                     |      | R | 4,178  | 2,112  | 2,066  |  |
|                     |      | U | 16     | 8      | 8      |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 24,499 | 12,247 | 12,252 |  |
|                     |      | R | 24,183 | 12,102 | 12,081 |  |
|                     |      | U | 316    | 145    | 171    |  |
| 21. Malai Pandaram  | 1961 | T | 813    | 421    | 392    |  |
|                     |      | R | 615    | 322    | 293    |  |
|                     |      | U | 198    | 99     | 99     |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 1,456  | 767    | 689    |  |
|                     |      | R | 957    | 498    | 459    |  |
|                     |      | U | 499    | 269    | 230    |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 2,121  | 1,077  | 1,044  |  |
|                     |      | R | 1,861  | 944    | 917    |  |
|                     |      | U | 260    | 133    | 127    |  |
| 22. Malai Vedan     | 1961 | T | 720    | 352    | 368    |  |
|                     |      | R | 720    | 352    | 368    |  |
|                     |      | U | ...    | ...    | ...    |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 1,258  | 638    | 620    |  |
|                     |      | R | 1,253  | 635    | 618    |  |
|                     |      | U | 5      | 3      | 2      |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 2,435  | 1,229  | 1,206  |  |
|                     |      | R | 2,301  | 1,149  | 1,152  |  |
|                     |      | U | 134    | 80     | 54     |  |
| 23. Malakkuravan    | 1961 | T | 246    | 127    | 119    |  |
|                     |      | R | 245    | 126    | 119    |  |
|                     |      | U | 1      | 1      | ...    |  |
| 1971                | 1971 | T | 144    | 73     | 71     |  |
|                     |      | R | 126    | 64     | 62     |  |
|                     |      | U | 18     | 9      | 9      |  |
| 1981                | 1981 | T | 260    | 117    | 143    |  |
|                     |      | R | 245    | 110    | 135    |  |
|                     |      | U | 15     | 7      | 8      |  |

**Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses**

| Name of Scheduled Tribe        | Total Population           |                            |        |         |         |         |  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--|
|                                | T                          |                            | R      |         | U       |         |  |
|                                | Year                       | Persons                    | Males  | Females | Persons | Females |  |
| 1                              | 2                          | 3                          | 4      | 5       | 6       |         |  |
| 24. Malasar, Malia Malasar (1) | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |                            |        |         |         |         |  |
|                                | 1961                       | T                          | 89     | 48      | 41      |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 89     | 48      | 41      |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | ..     | ..      | ..      |         |  |
|                                | 1971                       | T                          | 315    | 173     | 142     |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 314    | 172     | 142     |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 1      | 1       | ..      |         |  |
|                                | 1981                       | T                          | 967    | 501     | 466     |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 957    | 496     | 461     |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 10     | 5       | 5       |         |  |
|                                | 25. Malayan*               | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                                |                            | 1961                       | T      | 3,168   | 1,627   | 1,541   |  |
| R                              |                            |                            | 3,140  | 1,611   | 1,529   |         |  |
| U                              |                            |                            | 28     | 16      | 12      |         |  |
| 1971                           |                            | T                          | 3,616  | 1,856   | 1,760   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 3,566  | 1,832   | 1,734   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 50     | 24      | 26      |         |  |
| 1981                           |                            | T                          | 2,394  | 1,272   | 1,122   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 2,383  | 1,265   | 1,118   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 11     | 7       | 4       |         |  |
| 26. Malayarayar                |                            | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                                |                            | 1961                       | T      | 14,082  | 7,223   | 6,859   |  |
|                                | R                          |                            | 13,854 | 7,102   | 6,752   |         |  |
|                                | U                          |                            | 228    | 121     | 107     |         |  |
|                                | 1971                       | T                          | 13,813 | 7,078   | 6,735   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 13,604 | 6,934   | 6,670   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 209    | 144     | 65      |         |  |
|                                | 1981                       | T                          | 2,747  | 1,414   | 1,333   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 2,313  | 1,181   | 1,132   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 434    | 233     | 201     |         |  |
|                                | 27. Mannan                 | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                                |                            | 1961                       | T      | 3,610   | 1,828   | 1,782   |  |
| R                              |                            |                            | 3,555  | 1,801   | 1,754   |         |  |
| U                              |                            |                            | 55     | 27      | 28      |         |  |
| 1971                           |                            | T                          | 4,221  | 2,103   | 2,118   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 4,219  | 2,101   | 2,118   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 2      | 2       | ..      |         |  |
| 1981                           |                            | T                          | 5,812  | 2,907   | 2,905   |         |  |
|                                |                            | R                          | 5,602  | 2,804   | 2,798   |         |  |
|                                |                            | U                          | 210    | 103     | 107     |         |  |

\* Excluding the areas comprising the Malabar district as specified by Sub-section (2) of Section 5 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 (37 of 1956).

**Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses**

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population               |                            |        |         |         |         |  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--|
|                         | T                              |                            | R      |         | U       |         |  |
|                         | Year                           | Persons                    | Males  | Females | Persons | Females |  |
| 1                       | 2                              | 3                          | 4      | 5       | 6       |         |  |
| 28. Marati*             | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b>     |                            |        |         |         |         |  |
|                         | 1961                           | T                          | 14,829 | 7,543   | 7,286   |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 14,806 | 7,529   | 7,277   |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 23     | 14      | 9       |         |  |
|                         | 1971                           | T                          | 17,556 | 9,039   | 8,517   |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 17,533 | 9,023   | 8,510   |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 23     | 16      | 7       |         |  |
|                         | 1981                           | T                          | 22,196 | 11,241  | 10,955  |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 22,159 | 11,221  | 10,938  |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 37     | 20      | 17      |         |  |
|                         | 29. Muthuvan, Mudugar, Muduvan | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                         |                                | 1961                       | T      | 5,069   | 2,541   | 2,528   |  |
| R                       |                                |                            | 5,069  | 2,541   | 2,528   |         |  |
| U                       |                                |                            | ..     | ..      | ..      |         |  |
| 1971                    |                                | T                          | 7,972  | 4,055   | 3,917   |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 7,960  | 4,050   | 3,910   |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 12     | 5       | 7       |         |  |
| 1981                    |                                | T                          | 11,213 | 5,664   | 5,549   |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 11,204 | 5,660   | 5,544   |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 9      | 4       | 5       |         |  |
| 30. Palleyan            |                                | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                         |                                | 1961                       | T      | 1,354   | 682     | 672     |  |
|                         | R                              |                            | 1,354  | 682     | 672     |         |  |
|                         | U                              |                            | ..     | ..      | ..      |         |  |
|                         | 1971                           | T                          | 890    | 355     | 535     |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 885    | 351     | 534     |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 5      | 4       | 1       |         |  |
|                         | 1981                           | T                          | 30     | 16      | 14      |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 21     | 11      | 10      |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 9      | 5       | 4       |         |  |
|                         | 31. Palliyar                   | <b>Kerala ... (Contd.)</b> |        |         |         |         |  |
|                         |                                | 1961                       | T      | 19      | 7       | 12      |  |
| R                       |                                |                            | 19     | 7       | 12      |         |  |
| U                       |                                |                            | ..     | ..      | ..      |         |  |
| 1971                    |                                | T                          | 33     | 21      | 12      |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 32     | 20      | 12      |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 1      | 1       | ..      |         |  |
| 1981                    |                                | T                          | 793    | 406     | 387     |         |  |
|                         |                                | R                          | 784    | 400     | 384     |         |  |
|                         |                                | U                          | 9      | 6       | 3       |         |  |

\* In Hosdurg and Kasargod taluks of Cannanore district.

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Year | Total Population |   |        |         |       |         |  |
|-------------------------|------|------------------|---|--------|---------|-------|---------|--|
|                         |      | 1                | 2   | 3      | 4       | 5     | 6       |  |
|                         |      | T                | R   | U      | Persons | Males | Females |  |
| 32. Palliyar            | 1961 | T                | 210   | 106    | 104     |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 210   | 106    | 104     |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                |   |        |         |       |         |  |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 249   | 220    | 29      |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 249   | 220    | 29      |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                |   |        |         |       |         |  |
|                         | 1981 | T                | 425   | 214    | 211     |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 397   | 204    | 193     |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 28  | 10     | 18      |       |         |  |
| 33. Paniyan             | 1961 | T                | 37,068  | 18,545 | 18,523  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 37,057  | 18,538 | 18,519  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 11  | 7      | 4       |       |         |  |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 45,562  | 22,936 | 22,626  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 45,546  | 22,924 | 22,622  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 16  | 12     | 4       |       |         |  |
|                         | 1981 | T                | 56,952  | 27,910 | 29,042  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 56,874  | 27,876 | 28,998  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 78  | 34     | 44      |       |         |  |
| 34. Pulayan             | 1961 | T                | 61,097  | 29,369 | 31,728  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 52,923  | 25,527 | 27,396  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 8,174   | 3,842  | 4,332   |       |         |  |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 85,098  | 41,415 | 43,683  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 75,563  | 36,777 | 38,786  |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 9,535   | 4,638  | 4,897   |       |         |  |
|                         | 1981 | T                | Not included in the list of Scheduled Tribes. |        |         |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                |   |        |         |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                |   |        |         |       |         |  |
| 35. Ulladan             | 1961 | T                | 3,366   | 1,738  | 1,628   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 3,309   | 1,705  | 1,604   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 57  | 33     | 24      |       |         |  |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 3,692   | 1,982  | 1,710   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 3,619   | 1,929  | 1,690   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 73  | 53     | 20      |       |         |  |
|                         | 1981 | T                | 12,687  | 6,456  | 6,231   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | R                | 11,011  | 5,591  | 5,420   |       |         |  |
|                         |      | U                | 1,676   | 865    | 811     |       |         |  |

Population of each Scheduled Tribe  
1961, 1971 and 1981 Censuses

| Name of Scheduled Tribe | Year | Total Population |       |       |         |       |         |
|-------------------------|------|------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
|                         |      | 1                | 2     | 3     | 4       | 5     | 6       |
|                         |      | T                | R     | U     | Persons | Males | Females |
| Urut                    | 1961 | T                | 2,597 | 1,345 | 1,252   |       |         |
|                         |      | R                | 2,582 | 1,335 | 1,247   |       |         |
|                         |      | U                | 15    | 10    | 5       |       |         |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 2,639 | 1,388 | 1,251   |       |         |
|                         |      | R                | 2,613 | 1,370 | 1,243   |       |         |
|                         |      | U                | 26    | 18    | 8       |       |         |
|                         | 1981 | T                | 9,032 | 4,660 | 4,372   |       |         |
|                         |      | R                | 8,874 | 4,580 | 4,294   |       |         |
|                         |      | U                | 158   | 80    | 78      |       |         |
| Unspecified             | 1961 | T                |       |       |         |       |         |
|                         |      | R                |       |       |         |       |         |
|                         |      | U                |       |       |         |       |         |
|                         | 1971 | T                | 497   | 271   | 226     |       |         |
|                         |      | R                | 434   | 234   | 200     |       |         |
|                         |      | U                | 63    | 37    | 26      |       |         |
|                         | 1981 | T                | 4,615 | 2,829 | 1,786   |       |         |
|                         |      | R                | 4,556 | 2,793 | 1,763   |       |         |
|                         |      | U                | 59    | 36    | 23      |       |         |

# SCHEDULED TRIBES OF KERALA AT A GLANCE

There are 35 communities notified in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Kerala. As per 1991 census their population is 320967, which is 1.10% of total population of the state (29098518).

**Table - 1**  
**Scheduled Tribes of Kerala (1991 census)**

| Sl.No        | Tribe                         | Male          | Female        | Total         | % Of total tribal population |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1            | Adiyan                        | 4792          | 4898          | 9690          | 3.02                         |
| 2            | Arandan                       | 94            | 102           | 196           | 0.06                         |
| 3            | Eravallan                     | 1617          | 1522          | 3139          | 0.98                         |
| 4            | Hill Pulaya                   | 1463          | 1388          | 2851          | 0.89                         |
| 5            | Irular / Irulan               | 10983         | 10853         | 21836         | 6.80                         |
| 6            | Kadar                         | 1022          | 999           | 2021          | 0.63                         |
| 7            | Kammara                       | 56            | 67            | 123           | 0.04                         |
| 8            | Kanikkar / Kanikaran          | 7946          | 8518          | 16464         | 5.13                         |
| 9            | Kattunayakan                  | 6271          | 5884          | 12155         | 3.79                         |
| 10           | Kochu Velan                   | 18            | 18            | 36            | 0.01                         |
| 11           | Konda Kapus                   | 1             | 4             | 5             | 0.001                        |
| 12           | Kondareddis                   | 227           | 215           | 442           | 0.14                         |
| 13           | Koraga                        | 826           | 825           | 1651          | 0.51                         |
| 14           | Kota                          | 17            | 19            | 36            | 0.01                         |
| 15           | Kúdiya, Melakudi              | 381           | 370           | 751           | 0.23                         |
| 16           | Kurichchan                    | 14386         | 13901         | 28287         | 8.81                         |
| 17           | Kurumans                      | 11855         | 11589         | 23444         | 7.30                         |
| 18           | Kurumbas                      | 955           | 865           | 1820          | 0.57                         |
| 19           | Māha Malasar                  | 14            | 22            | 36            | 0.01                         |
| 20           | Malai Arayan                  | 12504         | 12445         | 24949         | 7.77                         |
| 21           | Malai Pandaram                | 1570          | 1369          | 2939          | 0.92                         |
| 22           | Mālai Vedan                   | 3105          | 3226          | 6331          | 1.97                         |
| 23           | Malakkuravan                  | 292           | 255           | 547           | 0.17                         |
| 24           | Malasar                       | 577           | 484           | 1061          | 0.33                         |
| 25           | Malayan                       | 3822          | 3720          | 7542          | 2.35                         |
| 26           | Malayarayar                   | 2699          | 2796          | 5495          | 1.71                         |
| 27           | Mannan                        | 3565          | 3520          | 7085          | 2.21                         |
| 28           | Marati                        | 13170         | 12872         | 26042         | 8.11                         |
| 29           | Mūthuvan/ Mudugar<br>/Muduvan | 8762          | 8616          | 17378         | 5.41                         |
| 30           | Palleyan                      | 118           | 118           | 236           | 0.07                         |
| 31           | Palliyan                      | 773           | 745           | 1518          | 0.47                         |
| 32           | Palliyar                      | 79            | 76            | 155           | 0.05                         |
| 33           | Pāniyan                       | 33273         | 34675         | 67948         | 21.17                        |
| 34           | Ulladan                       | 7424          | 7422          | 14846         | 4.63                         |
| 35           | Uraly                         | 5316          | 5019          | 10335         | 3.22                         |
| 36           | Unclassified                  | 839           | 738           | 1577          | 0.49                         |
| <b>Total</b> |                               | <b>160812</b> | <b>160155</b> | <b>320967</b> | <b>100.00</b>                |

**Table - 2**  
**Sex Ratio of Scheduled Tribes of Kerala (1991 census)**

| Sl.No        | Tribe                         | Male   | Female | Sex ratio |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
| 1            | Adiyan                        | 4792   | 4898   | 1022      |
| 2            | Arandan                       | 94     | 102    | 1085      |
| 3            | Eravallan                     | 1617   | 1522   | 941       |
| 4            | Hill Pulaya                   | 1463   | 1388   | 949       |
| 5            | Irular / Irulan               | 10983  | 10853  | 988       |
| 6            | Kadar                         | 1022   | 999    | 977       |
| 7            | Kammara                       | 56     | 67     | 1196      |
| 8            | Kanikkar / Kanikaran          | 7946   | 8518   | 1072      |
| 9            | Kattunayakan                  | 6271   | 5884   | 938       |
| 10           | Kochu Velan                   | 18     | 18     | 1000      |
| 11           | Konda Kapus                   | 1      | 4      | 4000      |
| 12           | Kondareddis                   | 227    | 215    | 947       |
| 13           | Koraga                        | 826    | 825    | 999       |
| 14           | Kota                          | 17     | 19     | 1118      |
| 15           | Kudiya, Melakudi              | 381    | 370    | 971       |
| 16           | Kurichchan                    | 14386  | 13901  | 966       |
| 17           | Kurumans                      | 11855  | 11589  | 978       |
| 18           | Kurumbas                      | 955    | 865    | 906       |
| 19           | Maha Malasar                  | 14     | 22     | 1571      |
| 20           | Malai Arayan                  | 12504  | 12445  | 995       |
| 21           | Malai Pandaram                | 1570   | 1369   | 872       |
| 22           | Malai Vedan                   | 3105   | 3226   | 1039      |
| 23           | Malakkuravan                  | 292    | 255    | 873       |
| 24           | Malasar                       | 577    | 484    | 839       |
| 25           | Malayan                       | 3822   | 3720   | 973       |
| 26           | Malayarayar                   | 2699   | 2796   | 1036      |
| 27           | Mannan                        | 3565   | 3520   | 987       |
| 28           | Marati                        | 13170  | 12872  | 977       |
| 29           | Muthuvan/ Mudugar<br>/Muduvan | 8762   | 8616   | 983       |
| 30           | Palleyan                      | 118    | 118    | 1000      |
| 31           | Palliyan                      | 773    | 745    | 964       |
| 32           | Palliyar                      | 79     | 76     | 962       |
| 33           | Paniyan                       | 33273  | 34675  | 1042      |
| 34           | Ulladan                       | 7424   | 7422   | 1000      |
| 35           | Uraly                         | 5316   | 5019   | 944       |
| 36           | Unclassified                  | 839    | 738    | 880       |
| <b>Total</b> |                               | 160812 | 160155 | 996       |

The ST population of the State is mainly concentrated in Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and Kasaragod districts. 35.82 % of the total tribal population of the State lives in Wayanad, which forms 17.11% of the total population of that district.

# Scheduled Tribes Population of Kerala State-2001

## Census by Sex

| Tribe                |       | Person<br>(Nos) | Male<br>(Nos) | Female<br>(Nos.) |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| All Scheduled Tribes | Total | 364189          | 180169        | 184020           |
|                      | Rural | 350019          | 173267        | 176752           |
|                      | Urban | 14170           | 6902          | 7268             |
| Adiyan               | Total | 10715           | 5141          | 5574             |
|                      | Rural | 10613           | 5107          | 5506             |
|                      | Urban | 102             | 34            | 68               |
| Arandan              | Total | 153             | 70            | 83               |
|                      | Rural | 142             | 67            | 75               |
|                      | Urban | 11              | 3             | 8                |
| Eravallan            | Total | 3890            | 1972          | 1918             |
|                      | Rural | 3798            | 1928          | 1870             |
|                      | Urban | 92              | 44            | 48               |
| Hill pulaya          | Total | 2893            | 1437          | 1456             |
|                      | Rural | 2862            | 1421          | 1441             |
|                      | Urban | 31              | 16            | 15               |
| Irular               | Total | 23998           | 12038         | 11960            |
|                      | Rural | 23809           | 11975         | 11834            |
|                      | Urban | 189             | 63            | 126              |
| Kadar                | Total | 2145            | 1067          | 1078             |
|                      | Rural | 2066            | 1023          | 1043             |
|                      | Urban | 79              | 44            | 35               |
| Kammara              | Total | 39              | 25            | 14               |
|                      | Rural | 17              | 12            | 5                |
|                      | Urban | 22              | 13            | 9                |
| Kanikkar             | Total | 21677           | 10325         | 11352            |
|                      | Rural | 20852           | 9971          | 10881            |
|                      | Urban | 825             | 354           | 471              |
| Kattunayakan         | Total | 14715           | 7425          | 7290             |
|                      | Rural | 14323           | 7201          | 7122             |
|                      | Urban | 392             | 224           | 168              |
| Kochu Velan          | Total | 36              | 20            | 16               |
|                      | Rural | 22              | 12            | 10               |
|                      | Urban | 14              | 8             | 6                |
| Konda Kapus          | Total | 12              | 3             | 9                |
|                      | Rural | 12              | 3             | 9                |
|                      | Urban | 0               | 0             | 0                |



|                         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Kondareddis             | Total | 377   | 193   | 184   | 5696  | 2818  | 2878  |
|                         | Rural | 165   | 89    | 76    | 5544  | 2745  | 2799  |
|                         | Urban | 212   | 104   | 108   | 152   | 73    | 79    |
| Koraga                  | Total | 1152  | 590   | 562   | 2299  | 1146  | 1153  |
|                         | Rural | 949   | 481   | 468   | 1991  | 987   | 1004  |
|                         | Urban | 203   | 109   | 94    | 308   | 159   | 149   |
| Kota                    | Total | 40    | 20    | 20    | 7764  | 3814  | 3950  |
|                         | Rural | 40    | 20    | 20    | 7467  | 3657  | 3810  |
|                         | Urban | 0     | 0     | 0     | 297   | 157   | 140   |
| Kudiya etc              | Total | 447   | 237   | 210   | 27824 | 13858 | 13966 |
|                         | Rural | 439   | 233   | 206   | 27498 | 13702 | 13796 |
|                         | Urban | 8     | 4     | 4     | 326   | 156   | 170   |
| Kurichiyam              | Total | 32746 | 16474 | 16272 | 21266 | 10764 | 10502 |
|                         | Rural | 32202 | 16167 | 16035 | 21104 | 10690 | 10414 |
|                         | Urban | 544   | 307   | 237   | 162   | 74    | 88    |
| Kurumans                | Total | 26177 | 13123 | 13054 | 419   | 214   | 205   |
|                         | Rural | 25326 | 12720 | 12606 | 404   | 207   | 197   |
|                         | Urban | 851   | 403   | 448   | 15    | 7     | 8     |
| Kurumbas                | Total | 2174  | 1132  | 1042  | 962   | 483   | 479   |
|                         | Rural | 2078  | 1078  | 1000  | 925   | 464   | 461   |
|                         | Urban | 96    | 54    | 42    | 37    | 19    | 18    |
| Maha Malasar            | Total | 116   | 64    | 52    | 328   | 155   | 173   |
|                         | Rural | 116   | 64    | 52    | 301   | 140   | 161   |
|                         | Urban | 0     | 0     | 0     | 27    | 15    | 12    |
| Malai Arayan            | Total | 32332 | 15916 | 16416 | 81940 | 40001 | 41939 |
|                         | Rural | 29947 | 14771 | 15176 | 79337 | 38740 | 40597 |
|                         | Urban | 2385  | 1145  | 1240  | 2603  | 1261  | 1342  |
| Malai Pandaram<br>56.57 | Total | 2427  | 1215  | 1212  | 16741 | 8187  | 8554  |
|                         | Rural | 267   | 127   | 140   | 13765 | 6721  | 7044  |
|                         | Urban | 6186  | 3005  | 3181  | 2976  | 1466  | 1510  |
| Malai Vedan             | Total | 5697  | 2757  | 2940  | 11103 | 5545  | 5558  |
|                         | Rural | 489   | 248   | 241   | 10827 | 5423  | 5404  |
|                         | Urban | 260   | 124   | 136   | 276   | 122   | 154   |
| Malakkuravan            | Total | 216   | 101   | 115   | 1153  | 582   | 571   |
|                         | Rural | 44    | 23    | 21    | 1058  | 535   | 523   |
|                         | Urban | 1720  | 859   | 861   | 95    | 47    | 48    |
| Malasar                 | Total | 1680  | 840   | 840   | 1058  | 535   | 523   |
|                         | Rural | 1680  | 840   | 840   | 1058  | 535   | 523   |
|                         | Urban | 40    | 19    | 21    | 95    | 47    | 48    |

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