

**Ethnicity and Livelihood Practices
at the Confluence of
the Local and the Global:
*A Study of Paniyas in Wayanad***

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Abstract

The main intention of this study is to have an in-depth enquiry into the expanding spaces of the global and local in the livelihoods of various communities in relation to their developmental aspirations. The basic question addressed was how an *adivasi* community like Paniya negotiates between the 'local' (i.e. Local asset endowment and relations of power) and the 'global' (i.e. the accelerating economic, political and cultural forces they are exposed to) in shaping their livelihood practices vis-à-vis other communities. This leads to a direct question of the formation of capabilities, agency and corresponding livelihood practices for the community.

Important manifestations of the increased interplay of the global and the local are understood as 1) Extreme instability of the prices of agricultural commodities as a result of increased integration of Wayanad economy into global one which is causing livelihood vulnerabilities for all communities including Paniyas 2) State decentralization (as a global discourse) with a focus on participatory local development and the increased role of globally networked NGOs in development actions 3) the social and political movements based on new imagination of indigenous (i.e. *adivasi* or *tribal*) identity. 4) Increased penetration of media into the everyday life in the region, especially with the emergence of electronic media. It has been a constant catalyst behind various governmental actions.

Hence the study has the following major research objectives:

- I. *To explore the livelihood practices of Paniyas as interlinked with the livelihoods of others in the study village within different regimes of development in a historical perspective;*
- II. *To investigate the role of decentralized governance and participatory development in the local livelihoods mediated by the governmental and non-governmental organizations with focus on Paniyas;*
- III. *To examine the livelihood responses within the Paniya community to the changes in labour and product markets, seasonal migration and social movement in the present context,*
- IV. *To analyse the differential capabilities and agencies of communities like Paniyas and others at present in negotiating the local and global in relation to their livelihood practices*

Empirical evidences from the present study suggest that intensified interlinking of the local and global at present has created a certain manoeuvring space for Paniyas through their individual agency. However, absence of socio-political networks as a decisive resource – which was achieved by other community as part of collective action at local for building a development infrastructure over the years and it helped them to access a development space at present as the horizontal level of social interactions- in order to influence the local power structures has been not yet been resolved even in this interface. But it has been found that Paniyas, as individuals, are increasingly expanding their manoeuvring space by engaging actively with the actors of state, civil society and market, though it doesn't bring capabilities to the community as a whole. This expanding space seems to be instrumental in creating a section of Paniyas with a certain amount of capabilities in negotiating the development space which is also a field of uneven power relations. However, emergence of an empowered section of Paniyas with a potential to challenge the local power relations is also possibly going to lead a process of differentiation within the community in the coming years.

PREFACE

The genesis of this PhD project was accidental. I was part of a research project on globalisation of the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), a premier social science research institute in Kerala (India) and the Development Study Group of the Department of Human Geography of Zurich University, Switzerland. My entry into this project was through My supervisor, Dr Vineetha Menon, who was one of the senior researchers in a large collaborative.

My enthusiasm to be part of the larger project of CDS conducted in Western Ghat region was due to two reasons. The main attraction was the umbrella theme of the larger project - globalisation and state decentralisation-which was close to my heart though my understanding of it, as I realised later, was too naive and a bit too straight forward. Another reason, quite personal, that I was also looking for a way out of the shallowness of being reporter in a television channel and wanted to specialise in some topic in the long term pursuit of knowledge.

The topic of my research evolved over a period through my association in the research project, especially through the interactions with the North –South research network and my academic interactions in CDS. The research questions for the study have been thoroughly shaped and reshaped through and interactions to the 'academic globalisation', though problem identified for this research project remained same,

I made my entry into Wayanad, a region which is very close to my home district Kannur in northern Malabar, as part of the research team from CDS during an extremely difficult period for the people there. These people attributed it to an agrarian distress caused by 'globalisation'. This period of livelihood distress had also been instrumental in creating anger, distrust, and cynicism among the people in the region- a very uncongenial time for any kind of research.

State decentralisation programme had already got institutionalised by this time and people's enthusiasm over it had begun to fade. Still there were some who believed in it as a panacea for all problems, while some others blamed it for all faults. A polemic had been formed around the discourse of decentralisation within the state by the time of our research providing a framework for the extreme perceptions at the local level.

It was an interesting and dynamic socio-political and economic context gave the empirical as well as epistemological entry point for the present study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Wayanad, a Western Ghat region in the southern Indian state of Kerala is one of the agrarian districts in the state. The literal translation of *Waya(l)nad* is the 'land of paddy'. At present, however, the land is known for the cultivation of cash crops. The district is also the abode of the largest number of *adivasis* in the state¹. Living standards of the marginalised sections of *adivasis* in the district embarrass the world-renowned human development achievements of the state. In indices like literacy rate, birth rate and infant mortality and sex ratio, Kerala ranks better than other Indian states and compares well with many developed countries in the west. Ex-bonded *adivasi* communities like Paniyans of Wayanad are stark exceptions to the acclaimed model of Kerala development experience: in the development parlance they are best categorized as 'outlier' (Oommen 1998, George 1993).

Wayanad has attracted the attention of policy makers and researchers recently with the increased vulnerability faced by farmers and labourers due to the continuous instability in the prices of major commodities and resultant turmoil in the local labour market which has a large ethnic presence with the Paniyans who were the traditional source of labour power.

This district also has the lowest density of population in the state, with 369 people per sq.km. According to the 2001 census, the total population was 6, 72,128 of which male population was 3, 41,958 and female 3, 30,170.

¹ 36% of the total *Adivasi* population in the state belongs to Wayanad which is 1, 14,969. Scheduled caste population comes to only 1% of the state population which comes 27,835(GoK 2003).

Physical features

Part of the Deccan plateau, Wayanad region is situated in the Western Ghats on the eastern portion of north Kerala at a height between 700 meters and 2100 meters above the mean sea level. It is bordered on the north by the Kodagu district of Karnataka state, on the east by the Mysore district of Karnataka state, the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu state on the south, and the west by Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Kannur districts of Kerala.

Wayanad, lying on the southern tip of Deccan plateau forms the highest altitude of the western border; the plateau of Wayanad gradually slopes downwards. The northern area of the district has high hills whereas the eastern area is flatter and open. Towards the south and the west, the mountainous region descends in height except for some lofty hills. The evergreen forests on the slopes and the deep valleys of the east abound in bamboo forests. The hills and valleys of the south and the west are areas of cultivation, there are both east as well as west flowing rivers in the district. The low hills have plantations of tea, coffee, pepper and cardamom (Nair 1986).

High lands comprising parts of the Western Ghats, the prominent geographic feature of peninsular India, is the most prominent physiographic province in Kerala. The presence of the majestic Western Ghats with lofty ridges interspersed with deep valleys is considered as the chief glory of Wayanad region.

Wayanad district consisting of Mananthavadi, Sulthan Bathery and Wythiri taluks came into existence on 1st november 1980. Under the British government, Wayanad was an independent division within the Malabar district, but in 1924 it was given the status of division and was added to the Thalassery division. In independent Kerala, two taluks, south and north Wayanad, fell in two districts situated away from the district headquarters, causing much inconvenience to the people. The north Wayanad taluk was renamed as Mananthavadi taluk and South Wayanad was split into two taluks: Sulthan Bathery and Wythiri taluks.

Natural resources

As per revenue records, the total forest area is 76,500.62 sq.k.m. which accounts for 36.58 per cent of the total area of the district. Of the three types of forests in the region, viz., plateau deciduous, tropical evergreen, and tropical semi-evergreen, the most common is plateau deciduous, found at about 700-1000 meters above the mean sea level, mostly located on the eastern side of the district on the Begur and Chedleth range in an area of high precipitation. This area has a valuable belt of teak forests. The tropical evergreen forests found at a height of 300 meters and above are mainly concentrated in the Lady Smith reserve forests in the Chedleth range. Semi-evergreen forests in which teaks grow abundantly are also found here. Most of the thick forest areas were replaced by the plantation of coffee, tea and cardamom (Census of India 2001).

Agriculture is the principal occupation of this district, coffee, pepper and paddy are the most important crops, which are cultivated in all the villages. More than 75 percent of the coffee production in Kerala is from this district. Other major crops are tea, ginger, cardamom, rubber, coconut, lemon grass and cocoa

Communities and livelihoods

Wayanad is a region having a large array of communities with a wide range of livelihood activities. This is due to the presence of indigenous communities, including *adivasis* and early Hindu migrants, late migrants in the 20th century including Hindu, Christian and Muslim populations and the vast stretches of thick forests. Due to this, many suggest that district is the ethnic and cultural showcase of Kerala².

Wayanad had witnessed a massive influx of people from Kerala plains from 1950 onwards. Cash crop cultivation has been the major source of livelihood for most of the people belonging to settler communities who toiled the soil in incomparable

² Especially in the post distress period a new thrust has been found in the tourism sector and the promoters, both in government and private sector, find the ethnic diversity as a useful niche for aggressive tourism 'packages' for the region.

ways to change the landscape forever in tune with their agrarian dreams. Major inhabitants in the region prior to the migration included indigenous communities like Paniyan, Kattunayikkan, Mullu-Kurumann, Urali-kuruman, and Adiyann.

Earliest Hindu settlers of the region are Chetty communities - Waynadan Chetty, Mandatan Chetty and Idanadan Chetty - who followed a Hindu tradition and were mainly settled farmers who had migrated from the plains of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka from different directions in a very early period dating back to the period of 15th or 16th century. There is also a small section of Jain community members who migrated from the Mysore plains and engaged in agricultural production on a large scale. The rest of the population, the tribal communities who inhabited the Wayanad forests, were gatherers, hunters and shifting cultivators.

Among them, *the* Kurichiyas are considered as the first agricultural tribe who migrated from the plains of Malabar to Wayanad (Menon 1967). They practiced shifting cultivation, which was referred to as “*punam*’ cultivation in the local language. Kurumans were another indigenous tribe who practiced both paddy cultivation and *punam* cultivation on the slopes of the hills.

All the “authentic versions of history” of *Paniyans* and *Adiyans* start with the settled agricultural production system introduced in a much later period by the Hindu and Jain migrants between the 10th and the 16th centuries (Menon 1997). They are referred to as the bonded labourers. Urali- Kuruma was the chief artisan tribe of Wayanad. They were skilled black smiths, carpenters, potters, and basket-makers. Kattunaikas collected forest products and their life recorded around the forest till recent decades.

Wayanad and its Development Space

In the present study, the central theme - the local and the global- spins around the social scape of Wayanad with cash crop cultivation as the major livelihood base. It is understood in the study that the local – global interfaces in the region have a historical continuity, finally entwined in development space negotiated differently by different local communities. We look at this differential nature of negotiations in relation to different phases in the livelihood practices among various communities.

Problem context of the present study

Globalisation provides the problem context of the present study. Increased interconnections between the global and the local due to the great socio-economic changes at different levels have manifested as different issues within the livelihood realities of local communities. Contemporary changes that pertain to our study context, like elsewhere, are mainly due to the increased flow of money, ideas and technology embedded in a political regime of open economy, but also owing to a widely subscribed global development discourse. We assume that these changes have great potential to reshape the power relations at the local also. In locating the trajectory of changes, it is imperative to lay threadbare these inter-twined interplays of different processes among the communities..

Though living in a marginal spatial as well as social and economic context, the Paniyans are also deeply exposed to and thus interlinked with the various manifestations of globalisation that bring in changes on an unprecedented scale. Our research problem lies in the differential ability of the local communities in negotiating these changes. Capabilities are greatly varied across the communities, especially between marginalised communities like Paniyans and the others. Communities' ability to negotiate the global and the local is dialectically linked to present changes at the interface in the livelihood practices and local power structures; hence these processes, through the changing structures, relations and practices, become instrumental in shaping the agency of the communities in further negotiating the processes.

The specificities that are of interest to this study are outlined below:

1. Wayanad region has been facing livelihood vulnerabilities due to the extreme instability of the prices of agricultural commodities as a result of increased integration into global economies. As a matter of fact, coffee and pepper have faced an unprecedented fall in prices and price fluctuations since the mid 1990s. This period of price crash corresponds to the restructuring of the global economy – especially under WTO – and the opening up of the Indian borders for free international trade. The fluctuations in the cash crop economy have affected the

already historically deprived Paniyan population, being mostly agricultural labourers in the cash crop economy.

Thus, through their main income source of agricultural labour on the (small) farms of landowning groups (mainly erstwhile settlers), and integrated into global economic processes through the production of coffee and pepper, the Paniyans too are now exposed to the uncertainties of global processes. The livelihood vulnerability has increased, among a section of Paniyans, and consequently, the trend of seasonal labour migration to the neighbouring state of Karnataka as one of the coping strategies has increased.

This local–global interface which is specific to Wayanad and the livelihood issues that stem from it have become a contested global space of livelihood struggles across the national boundaries.

2. Another context of local –global interface, not an area which pertains exclusively to Wayanad, is of state decentralization (as a global discourse) with a focus on participatory local development and the increased role of globally networked NGOs in development actions. In order to promote effective local democracy in India, the Indian parliament has made in 1993 the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, which are known as Panchayati Raj amendments. Accordingly, all the state governments are mandated to conduct regular elections to the local bodies and institutionalize them to govern locally. State governments have to devolve a major part of governmental responsibilities to these local bodies.

Decentralisation has created new sites of development practices in the region, bringing – in principle – the many actors with different interests together to act upon. Governmental and non-governmental organisations have been assigned new roles in this participatory development regime. This has been also an area of divergent interests and conflicts. As a consequence, Paniyans are having to deal with changes in the political sphere as well

Development is a contested category and process, actively resisted, accepted and modified by local actors over time. In these processes though, Paniyans were made

the so called 'outlier' in the development pattern of Kerala: marginalised people, not sharing the otherwise high development standards of Kerala.

3. Another space which demarcates the global –local interface is the one of the social and political movements based on new imagination of indigenous (i.e. *adivasi or tribal*) identity. New farmers' movements are also critical in the case of Wayanad. Poor farmers and *adivasis* took part in significant ways in these movements in recent years. Collective action in terms of mobilisation on the basis of identity has been an instrument for negotiating the local institutions. Expansion of indigenist activities have been observed across the world in the recent decade along with the UN declaration of the rights of Indigenous People in 2007 exerting pressure on the national regimes to have a new understanding of indigeniety (Merlan 2009).

Wayand witnessed an *adivasi* uprising in recent years for the legitimate demand for land redistribution, i.e. gaining access to land resources to secure livelihoods. The Paniyan community was in the vanguard of this movement which was supported mainly by civic organisations and the media. Following this, land redistribution became an immediate agenda for the state and political parties also.

4. In this context, the media have become an inevitable part of the everyday life in the region, especially with the emergence of electronic media. It has been a constant catalyst behind various governmental actions. Local happenings including farmers and *adivasi* movements in the region have been widely telecast by the visual media. The voices of the weakest were able to be heard in public spheres through its mediation. People also watch similar events in other parts of Kerala, India and the globe; hence they are able to connect the logic of events transcending the local barriers.

But, the penetration of media relations into the locality does not itself play as a major source of changes but all of the global-local manifestations discussed above are mediated through the live media interventions which have global reach today; globally produced images are most powerful catalysts at present in the formation of 'identity' and 'otherness'.

Through the history of the region

In Wayanad, linkages between local livelihood practices and the global markets exist since colonial times. This region for example, was an area where the British government rehabilitated soldiers from the plains of Kerala who took part in the second world war under an agricultural extension programme known as 'colonisation scheme'. In the postcolonial period of democratic regimes, political parties represented mainly by this settled population became the powerful agents of modernisation and development. These emerging elites in the area represented the "grand nation-building project" based on modern agriculture supported by the green revolution programme.

Evidenced history of the region dates back to the recent past. Only with the British intervention following the invasion of the kingdom of Mysore, the rebellion of the raja of Kottayam against the British and the establishment of the colonial administration in the 18th century, did Wayanad start to become visible in the 'authentic' historical accounts. Much of the versions of ancient histories are derived from the local myths transmitted through the local populations and the interpretations made by the experts on inscriptions, which were found in different parts of the region. This has not been fully authenticated. Rest of the writings are mostly produced as part of the larger colonial project.

According to colonial historiography, it is widely believed that the whole region was an abode of 'jungle tribes' like Paniyan and Adiyani till the 5th century A.D. and since then the movements of people from the plains started to penetrate into Wayanad region. The Wayanad area, densely covered by malaria -ridden tropical forests, is observed as one of the least hospitable areas for human habitation in prehistoric times. There is archaeological evidence of human occupation in the eastern half of Wayanad during neolithic times. The Paniyans, Adiyans and other 'backward tribes' are believed to represent the earliest food gathering settlers of Wayanad. These early settlers are referred to as vedars (hunters) in the legends of Wayanad (Aiyappan 1992).

The presence of Hindus and Jains in different parts of the area from the 10th century onwards is proved by sculptures and the relics of temples mostly in Mysorean style

found in these regions. Thiruneli was known as a Hindu pilgrim centre since the same period and this temple is more than 1,200 years old. Movement of people from Mysore to Wayanad region was believed to be frequent in medieval times especially in the eastern part of this region. But the population declined due to unknown reasons. Malaria is likely to have been one of the causes of this depopulation (ibid.21).

Historically it is believed that Wayanad came under the control of Kottayam dynasty as a gift from the king of Kolathiri in the 8th century A.D., though direct control was minimal in the early epochs due to the inaccessibility of these difficult terrains. According to one legend, the *vedar* chief of Waynad, believed to be a tribal king, was assassinated by the rajas of Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kurumbranad and his country invaded by them as revenge against him for having captured the prince of Kumbala on his way to Thirunelli temple and compelling him to marry his daughter. After the killing of *vedar* raja Wayanad was shared by the rulers from the plains among themselves. A representative of Kottayam raja was assigned to undertake the administration of some parts of the area. It is believed that the major portion of Wayanad became under the control of Kottayam raja after the tragic event of the *vedar* raja assassination. This event also ended the tribal dynasty in Wayanad region. As a result, “socio-political system concentrated wealth and power in the hands of a few Brahmins, Kshatriya and samantha chieftains and their Nair feudatories. Both, economic and political power got reduced at the lower rungs of the ladder of caste and became nil among the untouchable communities (ibid.22)”.

Feudal land relations based on slavery of the ‘untouchables’ developed in the subsequent periods. Many characteristics of the Hindu caste system penetrated into the local social life and value system. Internal stratification on the basis of purity and pollution, a universal feature of the pan Indian caste system, made its marks even among the tribal people in the area. It is observed that this process of Hinduisation was not as rigid as it was practiced in the plains, especially for the ‘untouchable’ serfs or slaves due to the reasons discussed below (Aiyappan 1992).

At that point in time, Wayanad area, densely covered by malaria-ridden tropical forests, was perhaps one of the least hospitable areas for human habitation. The extremely inhospitable nature had posed problems to all and many of them could not withstand the devastating epidemics like malaria, which decimated the population until the 19th century. The slave communities like Paniyans had greater adaptive potential within the wild ecology of Wayanad which gave them a comparative advantage over other dominating communities. At another level, a process of 'tribalisation' of caste Hindu immigrants might have been taking place as part of their adaptive exercises in an alien ecological setting.

At the end of the 17th century, the king of Mysore, Hyderali and his son Tippu Sulthan invaded the Malabar regions of Kerala via Wayanad for expanding their territory. Wayanad came under the direct control of Tippu sultan, while the rest of the Malabar region came under indirect control which led to conflicts with the British East India company which at the same period was trying to convert their trade interests in the region into political domination. Mysore army passed through the Wayanad four times and each time they conducted raids in these areas and robbed the rich houses and cattle (Nair 1909, Gopi 2002). Ultimately, the British could overpower Tippu and establish rights over the captured areas, but later they had to face rebellion from the raja of Kottayam who had claims over Wayanad. In 1805 the British forces brutally killed the raja of Kottayam, popularly known as Pazhassi raja and established their supremacy over this region. This was an end of one epoch in which royal families and local chieftains had played a crucial role in local politics.

Major shift in the local social setting, after the end of the domination of local rulers, was related to the incursion of colonial power through the new administrative structures and with the introduction of new production process involving the global economic forces. This is the period in which British government introduced new administrative reforms, focusing on revenue collection from the local people; the new governance structures conferred much power to important local Nair families, legitimizing their customary feudal rights.

In the beginning of the 20th century, it was the turn of Christian migrants from southern Kerala to experiment with the large-scale production of cash crops. This event marks the beginning of the historic 'Malabar migration', which drastically changed the destiny of Wayanad. These earlier migrants were people who had exposure to European planters and plantation systems and could internalise the logic of agricultural practices that was required for a commercially viable agricultural production.

Immigration from southern Kerala had been qualitatively different from the rest of the migrations to the Wayanad that took place in different phases of its earlier history. The compelling motive for this greater inflow of human beings was exposure to the market, especially global market as far as the cash crop economy is concerned, and the adaptation to a monetised economy.

'Otherness' of *adivasis* in the context of development

As far as the marginal *adivasis* are concerned construction of 'otherness' happens largely in the development context of Kerala society. Popular discourses of development constructs 'otherness' in terms of the categories like Forward/Backward, Progressive /Non Progressive, etc. A contrast like non *adivasi*/ *adivasi* is also often used in the same context. Though *adivasi* backwardness is a fact in material terms, popular construction and imagination of it works entirely on the basis of a historically constructed otherness.

Anthropological representations have often been questioned and critiqued for constructing such an otherness by presenting 'them' in stagnant terms and stereotyping their culture (Marcus and Fischer 1986, Clifford and Marcus 1990). Case of *adivasis* in Kerala, especially in Wayanad is also not much different. Their life and livelihoods have been documented from the colonial period. Preparation of ethnographic notes and administrative reports during the colonial times was largely part of an overall project of colonial regime to bring all communities and localities in the country under surveillance.

Considerable literature has been produced on Kerala during the British period. Extensive efforts have been made to understand as well as to "introduce the

aboriginal tribes and castes” of the then states of Madras, Cochin and Travancore (Thurston 1907, Iyer 1909). Many administrative reports and gazetteers discussing the socio-economic condition of the area and the people were published in the same period (Logan 1897, Innes 1908, Nair 2000).

Efforts of anthropologists to describe the alien *adivasi* communities and their cultures continued even after independence in tune with the foundational interest of the discipline of the period. Serious attempts were made to identify the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and for a holistic description of these communities. The primary focus of these efforts had been the issue of tribal integration with mainstream society.

Most of the anthropological studies confined either to the ethnographic descriptions of individual communities, with a major focus on tribal lives and cultures or ethnographic description of village life (Aiyappan 1948, 1988, 1992, Lewis 1962, Mathur 1977, Bhanu 1989, Misra 1977) many of these works produced in the post-independent period contained the narrations on ‘backwardness’ of these communities in their cultural contexts and the issues involved in the state led ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ projects. An emphasis on the specific ways of lives and world views was present in many of these studies. Disciplinary concern was on the in depth description of the communities, which were largely “untouched by the modernization wave” as well as on the public misconceptions about the cultural specificities of tribal communities and their problems in adapting to the modern ways of living.

Case of Paniyan ‘otherness’

Paniyans, an ‘exbonded’ labour community, constitute the majority of the agricultural work force in Wayand today. Paniyans in Wayanad consider themselves indigenous to the area and the word Wayanad literally means ‘land of paddy fields’. The meaning of the ethnonym Paniyans - those who toil on the land - is also connected to land and labour. They were part of a livelihood system based on wetland agriculture controlled mainly by the land owning communities like Nair and Chetty. Colonial accounts on the area and people and traditional ethnographies on the community describe them mainly as ‘slave communities’ who were ‘enslaved’

and 'domesticated' by the landed communities as part of the feudalist power relations and hierarchies (Nair 1911, Nair 1976, Aiyappan 1992, Thurston 1907, Menon 1996).

Colonial ethnographers use the information derived mainly from the accounts given by the European planters or the informants at hand. Thurston (1907) introduces the Paniyans as dark skinned tribe, short in stature with broad nose and curly hair, inhabiting Wayanad and those portions of the Eranad, Calicut, Kurumbranad and Kottayam taluks of Malabar which skirts the base of the ghats and some parts of the Nilgiri district.

Thurston has recorded “ a common belief based on their general appearance, prevailing among the European community that the *Paniyans* are of African origin and descended from ancestors who were wrecked on the Malabar coast” (Thurston 1907), although he himself does not agree with such a theory.

A definite account about the origin of the Paniyans has been not formed and how they reached Wayanad to choose it as their 'original' abode. While inscriptions found from the Wayanad region are silent about the Paniyans, it is only in the British administrative records that Paniyans are mentioned. They were referred to as the slaves whom the British employed as guides and scouts for getting information about the movement of the Pazhassi raja, a great rebel against British, and his followers inside the Wayanad interiors (ibid).

However, according to a tradition, Paniyans consider themselves as the successors of a couple who belonged to the Banasura fort in North Wayanad which they called 'ippimala' (Aiyappan 1992, Nair 1976, Nair 2000). Accordingly, later they were 'trapped', 'domesticated' and trained to be agricultural labourers by the Chettys and Goundas, who were the immigrant agriculturalists. According to this narration, Paniyanr feared outsiders and were reluctant to appear outside during day time till they were 'caught' by Chettys and Goundas. Healthy Paniyans are described in these narratives as very efficient for doing risky agricultural works in swampy fields. Reportedly they were 'enslaved' to do these types of works for the landlords and cultivators belonging to different communities until the mid 20th century.

The system of bonded labourers has been widely reported and discussed in independent Kerala. Earlier reports refer to it as a system of 'slavery' and a Paniyan along with his family was supposed to do agricultural work for his landlords for a year (Panoor 1969 Nair 1976, Aiyappan 1992). His master had every right to transfer him like a good to others for a fixed price once his work for the year gets completed. This system was known as '*kundelppani*' (Nair1976) and in some other parts as '*vallippani*'.

Some of the popular writings though sympathetic ones, had a tremendous impact in constructing an *adivasi* otherness in Kerala, described the "slavery" in Wayanad on par with that of their African counterparts. Series of such popular representations of Wayanad and Paniyans invoked the images of Africa and the blacks' historically unjust ways. Naturally, settlers could absorb the image of 'white invaders'. Common knowledge about a community like Paniyans in their neighbourhoods is also mostly from such popular representations. Personal experience in living in a Paniyan neighbourhood suggests to me that even the local representations are rooted deeply in the cultural bias historically nurtured.

Development Space and Paniyan 'Otherness': Personal Encounters

My personal encounter with Paniyans did not begin with my role as an outside researcher in a distant marginal environment. It goes further to my childhood days when I met Paniyans in the agrarian neighbourhoods of my maternal home in the highland village of Kannur district which is also situated adjacent to the slopes of the Wayanad hills, where we were sustained in a shared agrarian livelihood environment but with an extremely different existence. As a researcher who is sharing a development space and aspirations of Kerala society, it is now possible for me to look back to my childhood days and see how a 'development –other' had been made out for Paniyans in everyday lives .

Manu and Vinu, siblings of Balan who worked as a coconut plucker in our neighbourhood and also did some additional agricultural works for daily wages, were in my age group and they used to take food from our houses along with their father whenever they came for work and even when there was no work. They

climbed on the trees for catching birds or plucking fruits. We watched the boys with curiosity but never played with them. We were told by our elders that they never go to school and were not appropriate company for us to hang around with.

Another Paniyan boy named Babu from a nearby settlement had stayed with us in our home for looking after cows and did other non agricultural works. In those days, it was considered normal for large farmers to employ Paniyan youth as attached labourers in the absence of workers belonging to other lower castes who declined to work in that arrangement. Babu was a good singer but a primary school dropout who did not find any importance in education. I was very happy in his company as he could sing popular Malayalam film songs in a loud voice and introduce me to different types of birds and plants I was completely ignorant of. But I knew nothing about his family.

Another occasion when I happened to hear more about Paniyan during my childhood was in the early 1980s when a conflict occurred between the local landowners including my grandfather, and the Paniyan families. There were accusations on some Paniyan families in the neighbourhood of encroachment and “collective theft” of cashew nuts. There was a heated debate within our family on this issue. My father, as a trade union leader in the region, took a different position on this issue. The incident which was painted as the ‘collective theft’ was actually extension of a customary practice. Paniyan had enjoyed the freedom to collect the leftovers in the cashew plantation when the season was declared to be over by the landowners by ‘kulukki pari’ (clearing of cashews trees) after the vishu festival which marks the beginning of a new agrarian year. But in that particular year farmers enjoyed record price for their product. So they had postponed the ‘*kulukki pari*’. Unmindful of this, the Paniyan families had collected cashew nuts from the gardens which ultimately led to the conflict that reached an extent of physical harassment on each side. The perceived “arrogance” on the part of the otherwise silent labourers was attributed to be the influence of Naxals (left extremist groups). However, politically and economically powerful farmers could finally manage to suppress the Paniyan voice and collect the crop till the season was over. Continuation of the same practice by

farmers in the following years compelled the Paniyan families to give up their customary rights over the left over produces.

Another curiosity in my childhood days about Paniyans was a tribal school in the area. It was on the way to our barber shop. Children of the school were always seen outside the classrooms and even in the nearby paddy fields and streams. There was always total chaos. My uncle who used to accompany me would explain that it is a school run by the government freely for Paniyans. There would never be enough number of teachers and they run it for a joke, I was informed.

Actually, we were not aware of the real life world of the Paniyans in our neighbourhoods. We knew them as labourers but of a different sort; labourers from our own community were considered part of ourselves. As children we grew up on stories of the Paniyans being unhygienic, uneducated, and a primitive lot with anarchic family orders. They were often ridiculed by the elders in front of us for speaking their own dialect which was treated as inferior *Malayalam*.

Underdevelopment was the main marker to notify them in such a lower status. They constituted a development “other” in our neighbourhood, outside a space for which the rest of the communities aspired for. This space was one which was claimed and shared by rest of the communities, broadly sharing similar socio-economic processes which was carving out a specific development pathway for Kerala society. Construction of this “otherness” of the Paniyans and most other *adivasi* communities is to be understood in the context of development aspirations, mainly based on ethnicity. This development “Otherness” is rooted in the depths of collective consciousness of the *Malayalis*. Going again by my own experience, once I was sarcastically referred to as an *adivasi* by a senior professor during my short tenure in a research institute in Thiruvananthapuram when I told him that I did not know cycling or typewriting.

Development processes within Kerala have created a social space in which many of the erstwhile downtrodden communities have been emerging as powerful socio-political agents with increased mobility and dominant socio-economic status by successfully negotiating the modern institutions (Osella and Osella 2000, Frankie

1996) Relatively successful implementation of land reforms in the state helped most of the erstwhile tenants- mainly middle order communities - to procure the entitlement of land. Changes in the economic order were very much in tune with the development aspirations of people of Kerala including those in Wayanad also. Better education, living space and health practice facilities became basic demands for a decent living. National and international migration became an important means for people in Kerala to follow their aspirations and hopes for development. In the case of Wayanad, shift in the livelihood base was from wet land paddy cultivation to commercial crops like pepper and coffee in the absence of international migration.

But communities like Paniyans were largely excluded from these processes which created modern Kerala and its characteristics. This was mainly due to the double subjugation they faced, i.e.: through the absorption into the lowest strata of the Hindu caste system and in the 'internal colonization' of their localities in the highlands by Kerala people from the plains in the early 20th century for expanding the cultivation of plantation crops. In this process, Paniyans became landless agricultural labourers and marginalised *adivasis*.

It is in this context that an inquiry into the livelihood practices of a community like Paniyans, who are excluded from the macro-development processes within the state and also from the circuits of national and international migration – which shaped the development trajectory of Kerala – would be interesting to understand how an indigenous, i.e. *adivasi* community in Kerala negotiates the globalization process in historically and culturally specific ways and specific times. By livelihood, we mean not merely assurance to means of life, but holistically, a way of life with multiple dimensions that range from labouring ability to the formation of identity. And local level inquiry of globalization is meant here to be the critical investigation into the development trajectory of a community in its wider socio-political and economic contexts. To understand the historic processes of Paniyans' marginalisation, their present livelihood practices, as well as to explore pathways for their social as well as economic empowerment, their livelihood experience needs to be researched by focusing on the 'local' as well as 'the global' – and specifically how global processes shape the local – and thus the lives of Paniyans.

The Research Question

The basic question addressed in the present study is *how a community like Paniyan negotiates between the 'local' (i.e. Local asset endowment and relations of power) and the 'global' (i.e. the accelerating economic, cultural and political forces they are exposed to) in shaping their livelihood practices vis-à-vis other communities*. So, the study is trying to put forward an analysis of the presence or absence of capability of the communities in relation with their mode of agencies in negotiating the local and the global which is epitomised as a development space in the present research.

The Research Objectives

Hypothesizing that power relations– access to and/ or ownership of resources– are crucial for the local communities in shaping livelihood practices and in also creating the capabilities to negotiate the global changes, the study has the following major research objectives:

- V. To explore the livelihood practices of Paniyans as interlinked with the livelihoods of others in the study village within different regimes of development in a historical perspective;
- VI. To investigate the role of decentralized governance and participatory development in the local livelihoods mediated by the governmental and non-governmental organizations with focus on Paniyans;
- VII. To examine the livelihood responses within the Paniyan community to the changes in labour and product markets, seasonal migration and social movement in the present context,
- VIII. To analyse the differential capabilities and agencies of communities like Paniyans and others at present in negotiating the local and global in relation to their livelihood practices

A comparative understanding of the communities' capabilities in negotiating a development space would be expected to enhance the scope for further

generalization of study. This is being done by adopting a perspective from below which could sufficiently reflect the *emic* understanding of a marginalised community of Kerala on the empirical realities of their existence.

Notes on methodology: Conceptual Frame and Tools

As an anthropological study which focuses on contemporary socio-economic processes, attempt made in this thesis is to bring the communities of a region—Wayanad-- and their livelihood practices under ethnographic probe. In line with that study is basically a qualitative one, but quantitative data based on primary and secondary surveys are used for explanatory purposes wherever appropriate. Numbers are used mainly for showing the livelihood activities, resource base etc., across the communities in understanding their differential capabilities in the negotiation of the development processes.

The power of anthropology in giving space to the powerless through incorporation of their own voices is now well-recognised. An emic understanding of reality helps produce an alternative perspective to the ‘mainstream’ one or ‘authentic’ understanding of social processes(Oommen 2004). Putting the powerless in the centre and bringing out their voices as a powerful critique of an unjust social order have been anthropological practices for long. So, our inquiry into the processes of globalisation at the local level necessarily brings out the context of asymmetrical power relations incorporating a perspective from below about the contemporary social processes. Micro level processes of globalisation will be zoomed in here with the peripheral lives of Paniyan people of Wayanad region in Kerala brought to its centre. An attempt is made to understand the local –global interconnections with a focus on communities and their livelihoods, thus desisting from the conventional ethnographic practice of probing in to a single community in isolation, but with central focus on the Paniyan.

The methodology adopted here is also bringing to focus a regional perspective. A region is always marked by certain specific geographical and economic characteristics which influence the livelihood practices of the people that may be unlike those found in other regions within same state or country. A regional

perspective also gives us better understanding of a locality by relating to general trends in economy and society with which people in a common cultural environment need to interact continuously. Besides, a micro study of global processes makes the inquiry necessarily move beyond a locality as locality can not be viewed as closed one; many of the influences on it and its people are mediated at the supra-local/regional levels and the local-level actions or decisions decisively linked to the local livelihoods are often, taken outside of it to a regional scale, if not to global.

Present study is done in a village taking into consideration a close representation of the regional characteristics and the manifestations of the local and global interconnections and scanning the social changes over the years but the regional context has been brought to bear in the analysis. This kind of approach is accepted here in tune with the recent trend in anthropology to look beyond the micro locations and to view them not as closed living spaces, but within a political economy framework, especially in the genre of anthropological studies of globalization (Nash 2001, Appadurai 1997, etc). However, this attention to the supra-local is not being done overlooking the traditional ethnographic peculiarities on a particular people shaped in relation to the locality or place they live in. The depth and vigor of an anthropological analysis continues to be a major strength of research in our study too, with the in-depth focus on the Paniyans.

The new thrust on multi-sitedness has methodologically created challenges in ethnographic practices. Research in a single site can no longer elicit the multiple dimensions of change coming into a local culture and society. As a shift in the ethnographic practice, it is attempted to link-up the traditional ethnographic close-up of every day practices, rituals, and social organisations etc. to the global changes. The 'local' and the 'global' are increasingly and inextricably interpenetrated in our understanding and it informs the methodology of tracing the local- global interpenetrations.

Local linkages with global processes are more significant than ever and such linkages are understood historically and in relation to the changes in the different layers of macro social systems. Thus, to suit the analytical rigours demanded in this

era of globalization, the livelihood practices of the households within a community are explored as being perhaps, intricately linked to the livelihood dynamics of other households in other communities or to the changing structures or practices in the larger social system.

Critical ethnography addresses issues like politics of representation, disintegration of bounded cultures and communities, changing meaning of places and spatial practices related to fieldwork, multi-sited ethnography (Gupta and Ferguson 2001, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986, Appadurai 1988, Trouillot 2003).

Present study is not strictly a multi-sited ethnography. But we have understood the meaning of multi-sited ethnography in studying the contemporary social changes and it has been used for gathering information from extended sites which are important in explaining the meaning of living and livelihoods under the study village. Sites of social movements, NGO mediated development practices and destinations of the labour migration are some of the extended sites in our study region which have the potential to change the livelihoods in our primary site of ethnographic probe.

So this study on local –global interface fuses three different levels of inquiry i.e. Individual, communal and societal within a broader development space of their interrelations, with the community as the central entry point.

In this study, one of the administrative wards in an agrarian Panchayat of Wayanad district in the Indian state of Kerala was selected as the basic site of the study, which was extended during the course of field work to some other sites found to be relevant for study objective and Paniyan livelihoods in the study village.

As part of the larger study undertaken in CDS I had exposure to this selected village which prompted me to take up a deeper ethnographic probe here. The study village was selected on the basis of the manifested local–global interconnections. As part of the earlier study which had undertaken comprehensive survey of livelihoods, household socio-economic data was available. So the basic information about the population profile, asset distribution etc from the first survey, in which I was a part, are used. Some of the other data related to SHGs, labour migration and share cropping among the Paniyan were collected using separate questionnaire. Use of

these data was mainly to draw the general patterns among the population which was helpful for developing the questions with regard to our study objective and to identify the possible exceptions. Case studies used in the study were selected on the basis of this understanding of general pattern and exception to it.

The study starts with a special focus on locality as a physical entity. An administrative ward is the basic territorial unit of political life in the village, especially after the implementation of decentralisation. This division of physical place has a direct impact on the livelihood practices of the communities in different ways, though it reveals little about their social spaces of living and experience or imagination of identity. A focus on physical locality would help us to understand the socio-economic classifications including the population profile, unequal distribution of material resources etc., with the help of quantitative data. Investigation into the socio-economic spaces of living and the livelihood practices at the multiple sites largely at the conceptual level of understanding, it is hoped, would enable us to construct a critical and reflective ethnography of micro processes at local level.

But qualitative probe is not confined merely to the study village alone. Often it goes beyond the boundaries of ward to region for selecting cases which are found important in explaining the connections and differences in terms of the livelihood practices of the communities, especially of Paniyans, in the village. There is a general pattern in the livelihood practices of Paniyan as they constitute the landless agricultural labour force in the area. Practices within and outside the village on the basis of the presence or absence of livelihood assets are treated as separate cases which could explain the meaning of agency and capabilities at the level of community, households and individuals in negotiating the complex changes. The spatial dimensions of the physically bound living get importance in such case studies. An individual journey through different physical sites in different points of time in their livelihood struggles though each identified with a definite site as one's own locality, configures a specific space of existence especially in the context of changes. As far as the Paniyan of this particular village is concerned participation in the land movement is such an experience. Migration is yet another one. Development practices mediated by the local NGOs also construct such a space which goes beyond

the well defined boundaries of the study unit. Case studies are found useful in such contexts to delineate the spatial dimension of livelihood practices.

Translating the practice of multi-sited ethnography in real research experience is highly challenging. Need for such an approach depends upon its appropriateness in a particular research theme. Common strategy behind such ethnographic practice is to follow a person or commodity. Establishing different linkages and identifying relevant sites are important steps.

Inquiry into different sites is used mainly for building different cases related to migration, social movements, and NGO activities.

Interviews and participant/ non-participant observations are the main techniques used in this study. Life histories of individuals are used in building cases. Semi-structured interviews of key informants and oral narratives are used to depict the regional history, traced out from secondary sources. Secondary information collected from the earlier team- surveys and newspapers are used in describing the livelihood changes in the region. Sources like oral histories, folk tales, etc. have been corroborated with triangulation of facts (Fielding and Fielding 1986).

Suitable techniques that could complement participant observation like focus group interviews, structured and unstructured interviews and case studies have been employed in addition to secondary data collection from official records, census reports and other government documents, newspapers and magazines allowing synchronic and diachronic data collection on the area and the population under study. From the household survey purposively selected samples of community-wise stratified agricultural labour and cultivator households were drawn for in-depth qualitative interviews.

Theoretical and Conceptual Outlining

As it is put elsewhere, the major thrust of the study is to analyse the impact of local – global interpenetrations into the livelihood practices and local power structures of the Paniyans vis-à-vis others – which are being shaped and reshaped by global capitalist processes embedded locally. An empirically informed and grounded theory of

practice has become the underlying framework of the study which interlinks livelihood practices,(development) *habitus* (Bourdieu 1979),understood in our context as a space, assets or resource base, capabilities and agency.

Implied thesis is that those who have higher claims over the development space with diversified livelihood practices and resource base are having an advantageous position in the local power structures. With increased capabilities and agency they are also found to be in a better position to negotiate the new global processes resulting in further social mobility. Power structure is also meant to be the differential access to various resources (ibid.). The given processes under study have also resulted in the increased conflicts and competition over the limited resources on the one hand and collective mobilisation on the other. In this context, capabilities to negotiate the same processes by the local communities depend on the type of agency they have acquired historically through the changing livelihood practices, resource base and power relations.

Traditionally, the in-migrants from the Kerala plains used to control the land resources in Wayanad, while the landless *adivasis* like Paniyans had to depend on these migrants for wage labour. But the new processes have become instrumental in bringing fissures in these well established categories. Livelihood practices are analysed here to understand historically the ruptures and continuity which structure and restructure the power relations at local. In the following part we try to elaborate on the different concepts used in the study.

Livelihood practices-- Bourdieu's Conceptualisation

Practice is a crucial term in this study which would interlink theory, methodology and empirical context in a logical and meaningful way. According to Bourdieu (1979), practices cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them or from the past conditions which have produced the *habitus*, the durable principle of their production. Practices can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the *habitus* that generated the practices was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented.

The concept of practice connects past and present actions which are historically constituted through the habitus. 'the *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present (Bourdieu 1977).

Social practices are defined on the grounds of an analysis of their impact on the field and the rules they are guided by within this field. "this means that social practices are highly dependent on the habitus (a "system of dispositions" according to Bourdieu) and on capital (economic, cultural, symbolic) of the practicing party, within a specific field. Thus, we could consider social practices as ways of doing, of acting, actions or activities with practical effects that have an obligatory social, spatial and historic context. "A social practice is what exists dynamically "between" the actor and the system – i.e. a process. It is thanks to social practices that the actor establishes an active relationship with the system he is part of"(Pedderazini et.al 2005). Understanding of the contexts, which are historic, geographic and political, is important in analyzing the logic behind the social practice.

Individuals take decisions on livelihood strategies within the institution of households, which can also be sites of conflict and power relations. Nevertheless, livelihood practices are not merely the outcome of subjective and independent decisions of households, but shaped in relation to the system of collective dispositions shared by the agents within a socially structured situation. Historical epochs bring in changes in the material condition of the society, hence formulating new practices and reproducing existing structures and modes of relations. Livelihood practices also undergo changes according to the macro institutional pressures and policy shifts that often create livelihood crises. It may compel agents to pursue new strategies for survival that ultimately produce new livelihood practices and the changes in the existing structures through collective or individual actions.

Livelihood approach

The "livelihood approach" has already become orthodoxy in development research with a huge amount of literature outpoured in empirical as well as conceptual levels.

Livelihood has been widely discussed as a useful concept to understand the dimensions of rural poverty and livelihood strategies for living. A formal framework of sustainable rural livelihoods (SLR) for analysing rural livelihoods promoted by international agencies like DFID, World Bank, etc has become popular in recent years as it was found useful in their poverty alleviation programmes as an evaluation tool. In this approach emphasis is shifted from groups of people obliged to undertake multiple livelihoods for survival to individuals creatively combining multiple activities in order to minimize risk in the context of vulnerability.

Livelihood, according to a definition, comprises capabilities, assets (both material and resources) and activities required for a means of living (Chambers and Conway 1992 in Ellis 2000, Scoones 1994, Ellis 2000).

Generally and conventionally, the starting points of the 'framework' are the assets owned, controlled, claimed or accessed by the households through some other means. These are the basic building blocks upon which households are able to undertake production, engage in labour markets, and participate in reciprocal exchange with other households. Assets are further divided into five categories, physical, natural, financial, human and social categories that constitute the material condition for livelihood strategies (Ellis 2000).

The multi-dimensional orientation of the "livelihoods approach" has been welcomed by many. However, the often mechanical application of the framework has led to much critique. These critiques often focus on the lack of attention to the power structures and processes in multiple levels. Livelihood activities are observed as not neutral, but engendering processes of inclusion and exclusion (Haan and Zoomers 2005).

Therefore, **political asset** is identified in some of the works as crucial, which address the question of livelihoods and local power structures more explicitly (Baumann 2000, Korf 2004). Political asset refers to the relationships and networks of people related to local power centres that they have an advantage over others in enhancing their livelihood chances. In the study about the war economy of Sri Lanka, Korf found that the role of social and political assets is essential as

instrumental in enabling individuals, households, or economic actors to stabilise or even expand their livelihood options and opportunities.

The **access** that individuals or households have to different types of capital, opportunities and services is an important attribute of livelihoods. Access is defined by the rules and social norms that determine the differential ability of people in rural areas to own, control, otherwise claim or make use of resources such as land and common property (Scoones 1998). Access is also understood in relation with the ability to benefit from things (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Importance of political decisions derived out of the interventions of powerful groups and institutional conditions at the 'local' has been realized in order to understand people's access to various resources and benefit (Sikor and Lund 2009).

In sum, a mere documentation of livelihood complexity and diversity would be ignoring a deeper understanding of social inequalities. The absence of 'class' in the analysis has been also subjected to criticism. By focusing on 'empowering the poor' while giving little attention to the processes by which people are being disempowered or reduced to being powerless, many of the popular studies limit the political space. From a Marxist perspective, purposeful displacement of the category livelihood is argued accusing it of being a "troubling retreat from history, politics and class analysis" (Laughlin 2002). The livelihood approach thus is critiqued for presenting itself without a theory, especially, without a theoretical understanding of political space that can be translated into empirical analysis.

In the present study we reject the mechanistic models of livelihood analysis dominating in the mainstream development discourse, but share the paradigm shift within the development thinking, which proposes a humanistic perspective by rejecting teleological and functionalist tendencies, with a fresh focus on the actors and their actions in relation to the local structures, following the hermeneutic tradition within anthropology and ethnography. Possession of and /or access to assets -analytical core in the livelihood approach- are not counted in absolute and materialistic terms alone; but more than that, we see it as symbolic power which is capable of producing differential and relative spaces of livelihood actions.

Locality of Study

In the present study, though we look at the processes in the regional level Waynad, which share some common socio-economic characteristics and with regards to the historical changes, a locality called Kappikkunnu is selected to get the concrete manifestations of the global processes. This locality also suitably represents Wayanad region in the population profile with the presence of *adivasis* and others in similar proportion and the livelihood combination with settler communities as holding major share of the land and landless *adivasis* as agricultural labourers.

This is also an area which strongly manifests the global –local interconnections better than any other localities in the region. This village has also been in the forefront with an innovative farming community having high development aspirations and increased livelihood diversification. Detailed description of the study village is given in chapter three.

Field work

Field work extended between January 2006 and January 2007 covered all the important seasons. For a period of five months, my stay was in a Paniyan neighbourhood in a small rented room. It was a two storied building made by a large farmer in the area for accommodating the skilled migrant labourers from other districts of Kerala. There were two carpenters, one mason and also a rubber tapper in the building as my fellow inmates.

Rest of the months I stayed in a rented quarter close to the town which is becoming the heart of local life with people's increased interactions across communities. There were around ten families living in this quarter, mainly of workers in the formal and semi formal sectors. Most of the important organizations in the village including local Panchayath, tribal development office, agricultural extension office, unit level offices of NGOs, offices of the political parties, etc., with which livelihoods of poor people are getting increasingly enmeshed in, were near to this quarters. This helped me to closely observe the day to day interactions of the people.

Initial access to the field – especially as it was not through local power centers- was extremely difficult for me like to many other researchers. Unless and until the people feel equal stake in the research or are assured of some material benefits out of it, a sensitive researcher is put to tremendous pressure. Building up trust in the people is the real test in the field. People in this Kerala village also were no passive recipients of information, not even when the source appeared authentic. All the explanations and rationale for the research can be continuously contested and challenged, In our situation, much of the cynicism and mistrust was due to the context of vulnerability and increasing interpersonal competition.

Though I did face some problems in the initial phase of my field work, I could soon get over them with the help of my contact persons who enjoyed a good reputation in the area. They became referees when people in the village came to interact with me. Tacitly some of the identity markers, like upper caste, educational background, fellowship from a foreign university etc, also appear to have played some role in making smooth my entry to the field.

In the initial week of my research I was interviewed by a group of people at a teashop during their morning session (it is still a local habit to come and have a cup of tea at around 7-8 am in the morning at the teashop and discuss fresh news in the morning newspaper) In this meeting, an old farmer who enjoyed some clout in the neighbourhood declared: “he looks like a *tharavadi*” which means a person from a good family or genealogy. Most of the settler community members, now distanced and uprooted from their *tharavads* place great value on being a *tharavadi* name and prestige of the family and some of them are even nostalgic about it. Frequently I had to face subtle questions about my whereabouts and identity.

Initial difficulty in getting acceptance among the *Paniyans* in the village was not due to the well known anthropological reason of ‘cultural otherness’. Past experiences of false promises and cheats from external agencies and individuals have taught them to distrust others. Due to the same reason they used to avoid me in the early days.

Disintegration of their social organization has lost the chances for any researcher to make an entry into the local life with the blessings of powerful elders(*mooppanmar*)

in the community. In a cultural environment of general distrust, proximity with a particular person or family has been perceived with great suspicion by others in the settlement. Any kind of personal interactions have been tempted to be perceived as a type of 'vested deal' involved by economic interests. In the initial days of field work I was confronted by a group of agitated young Paniyans in the midnight at a puberty ceremony in one settlement. Heavily intoxicated, they showered their frustrations and anger on me. This was after the failure of land struggle at Muthanga forest and the settlement was known to be very close to the movement. There is also a deep feeling among them of having being betrayed by outsiders. Naturally it took considerable time and energy to get the trust of people and convince them that I have no secret agenda in my data gathering.

It was the educated young 'men' who helped me to have an access to their day to day living. Nowadays educated Paniayas, even though maximum level of education is found to be higher secondary, enjoy good command over others in their community due to a perception that they have better awareness about the outside world. However opportunity to interact freely with female members in the settlements were seriously constrained; as some of my Paniyan friends had cautioned precaution about the possible troubles it could create in the family life. All the interviews with the female members were done mostly in the presence of other members in the family or in the presence of my Paniyan friends.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in the following order.

In the introduction, we discuss the context of research in general and outline the research objective, questions and methodology. This chapter also gives a brief introduction to the people and area within a historical background.

Chapter II discusses the meanings of the global and the local in relation to the theoretical insights informing the study and the empirical context of the research. Through a focused survey on the literature of globalization it interlinks the global and local in relation to the livelihood practices. In the second section of this chapter, theoretical debate is contextualized in the regional specificities of Wayanad. What is

globalization in general for this region and how the global –local interconnections are manifested in Wayanad and in our study village in the overall context of Kerala and India are explored.

Third chapter looks into the changes in livelihood practices in the area in a historical perspective. It tries to see how a development space has been created over the years and how it caused to diversify the livelihood practices and differentially enhance the capabilities of various communities. This chapter also looks into the recent years of vulnerability and differential responses of communities.

Fourth chapter focuses on the specific question of negotiation between communities and the processes of decentralization and participatory development. Paniyan community is given special attention while doing so. The local politics of complex interactions and interrelations within these processes are sought to be unravelled.

Chapter V is an exclusive highlight of the case of the Paniyan in terms of their livelihood issues at the crossroads of global – local interpenetrations. Differences within the community are looked at in relation to their livelihood strategies within the changing power structures.

In the concluding Chapter, the discussion is on why communities like Paniyan struggle to access the development space as an avenue of diversified livelihood practices and how they fail to break the developmental impasse enmeshed with their identity

With an understanding that the interpenetration of local and global as a continuous process mediated by the colonial and national governments with an idea of development has resulted in the creation of a development space we argue that new intensive interface of local and global has been instrumental in creating new arena of livelihood practices for Paniyans with a potential to create certain capabilities in order to access the development space. Major constraints observed in the process are the continued absence of social networks beyond the internal networks of the community based on the kinship and friendship and the continued presence of political and economic domination of settler communities who could historically carved a social space of horizontal interactions on the basis of collective action.

However, study argues that the recent changes in the livelihoods are also becoming instrumental in creating certain potential for the Paniyans to challenge the day to day domination,

CHAPTER II

THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL: THEORY AND CONTEXT

Increased interplay between the global and the local has been getting greater attention from social science researchers and academics of late, courtesy the processes of globalization. Communities, individuals and livelihoods, which are very much placed in complex interrelations, are undergoing tremendous changes due to the forces, processes, institutions and imaginations at global scale. Realms of these forces, processes, institutions and imaginations are understood as different dimensions of globalization which are often clustered or overlapped in their empirical manifestations and are in constant interaction with the local. Our attempt in this chapter is to interlink the macro debate on globalization split into four major dimensions i.e. social, economic, cultural and political, juxtaposed with the relevant fields of livelihood practices and social interactions in the context of present research. This is being done with an understanding that the process of globalization is marked by a new global regime of capitalist development, which gets manifested specifically in varied local contexts.

In the first part of this chapter, literature on various dimensions of globalization has been critically surveyed in order to understand the complex interrelations between the global and local. In the second section of this chapter, theoretical debate is contextualized with the regional specificities of Wayanad in national and sub-national contexts. Drawing from the macro debate on globalization, it is tried to explain how the global –local interconnections are manifested in Wayanad and in our study village in the overall context of Kerala and India.

Differentiating the notion of Globalisation

The global and local interface has been mediated by various interconnected processes on different scales. Scholars across disciplines have been trying to encapsulate these processes, i.e. globalisation, from various perspectives. Understanding of these various theories and perspectives on global changes would enable us to study the local realities in much more interconnected ways. Macro understanding would also help us locally to identify the flows, structures and linkages which are shaped and reshaped at the confluence of the global and the local. Globalisation has been widely accepted as a short hand for describing these multi-dimensional changes (Fig.1).

There are strong tendencies to reduce these complex processes into the polemics of economic logic alone. While one of the reductionist tendencies is based on a neo-liberal project for globalization controlled by the powerful economic institutions at the macro level scale to transform the world into more globalised and liberalized, allowing the capital to flow freely across the national boundaries with an expectation to expand the market space and deepen the market relations which alone is considered to be the facilitator for opportunities.

Opponent school, represented mainly by Marxian orthodoxy, also tries to reduce the entire processes into an economic one in the efforts to negate the globally dominant neo-liberal project and its discourse. Although there is a political correctness in this, it is highly flawed in reducing the complex processes into single-dimensional and uni-directional one. They fail to see a social field in which various actors actively respond to various processes at differently in different contexts. In the present study, we would rather argue for a social analysis which goes beyond the binary economic orthodoxies and see globalization as multilayered as well as multidimensional processes which change the localities in intricate ways within the capitalist regime of development.

Globalisation is viewed as multidimensional in the sense that the changes are neither confined to any particular facet of society nor are determined by economic processes alone. It is multilayered also because it is primarily a process, secondly an awareness and thirdly also a project (Hamel 2001). Different projects of globalisation, which include advocacy and pursuit of particular forms of globalization including that of neo-liberalism, attempt to manage and steer globalisation in a particular direction and sometimes even

take the form of anti-globalist movements from below and are often concurrent, overlapping and interactive.

Different dimensions of this complex process described as social, economic, cultural and political are discussed briefly in the following part. Though there are differences in

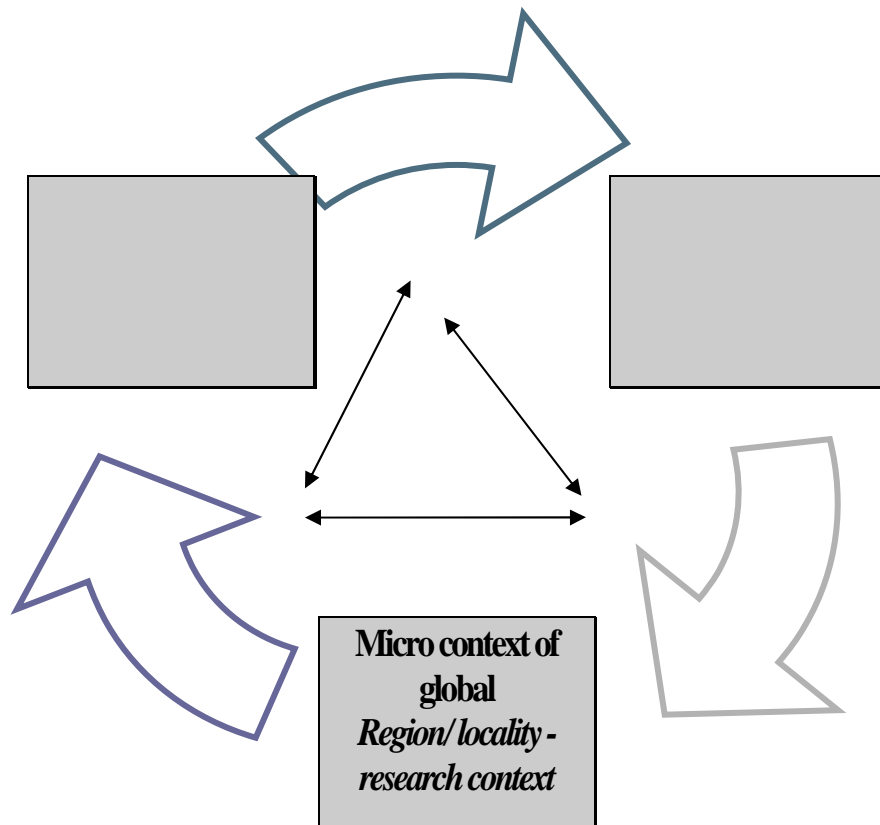


Fig 2.1. Interrelating global, national or sub-national and local contexts

details most of the authors admit to an ushering in of a new phase in the social life of humanity which is qualitatively different from the past. Difference among these theorists is basically political which can be broadly classified according to their underlying conceptualization of capitalism as a system. Some of them, for example David Harvey (1990), try to explain how capitalism as a distinct structure of relations is getting changed in accumulating profit under the process of globalisation and changing the local in

intricate ways, while many others like Giddens (1992) take it for granted as being on par with modernity.

Social dimension of globalisation

The social dimension of globalisation is viewed largely in connection with the modernisation project started two centuries back. Increasing interconnectedness among people and places is seen as the result of modernity (Giddens 1992). To Giddens, industrialisation of modern societies and the accumulation of material resources are closely linked to the process of globalisation. He describes globalisation as the continuation of modernity rather than a break. He considers modernity as getting inherently globalising. The contemporary period, according to him, is a phase of high modernity. By this he means that modernity has now moved into a global stage where individuals are confronted by globalised social institutions in a world society.

He identifies three factors in the 19th century which have resulted in contemporary globalisation: first, the invasion of European nations on “tribal” societies and the subsequent colonisation through the establishment of ruling colonial communities; secondly, the comparative peace that prevailed in this period which allowed the British, in particular, to invest resources in advancing colonial ambitions; and thirdly, the European bureaucratic skills which enabled them to develop diplomatic networks and transnational political and business agencies.

Giddens views the dual processes of the compression of time and space as the main characteristics of contemporary globalisation. It is through ‘distanciation’ that time and space are organised in order to connect presence and absence. Social relations are lifted out of their local contexts and thus ‘disembodied’ and restructured across indefinite spans of time and space. Time/space distanciation is the measure of the degree to which the friction of space has been overcome to accommodate social interaction and, globalisation is essentially action at a distance, predominating absence over presence. As such, globalisation can be defined as the “intensification of world-wide social relations which

link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens1990).

David Harvey also has pointed out the fact of time and space shaping social relations and events. Referring to the class characteristics of the process he noted the absolute freedom to move capital whenever and wherever it is required which gives the capital –owning international bourgeoisie a decisive advantage over the mass of workers who are restricted in their movements and migrations. Analysing the contemporary nature of capitalism in the context of greater temporal advantages through the technological revolution, he finds that the profit for the capitalist is greater with greater speed with which it is launched into circulation and recouperated. The time of production together with the time of circulation of exchange are referred to as the turn- over time of capital. This turnover -time of capital is much less under globalisation.

Roland Robertson (1992) presents contemporary globalisation as pre-dating modernity and the rise of capitalism. He argues that globalisation in our time is qualitatively different from the earlier manifestations. Tracing the origins of globalisation he identifies five phases of Globalisation in Europe from 1400 to date. Accordingly, the present phase of globalisation started from 1969.Thus Robertson sees the relationship between globalisation and modernity quite differently from Giddens. While claiming that the problem of modernity has been expanded to, or even in a sense, subsumed by the problem of globality, Robertson also warns that the present concern with globality and globalisation cannot be comprehensively considered simply as an aspect or outcome of the western project of modernity. Last decade witnessed an unprecedented acceleration of the longstanding process and presently it has moved to a level of consciousness of the people. There has been compression of the world because of an increasing interdependence and the possibility of events and happenings in one part of the globe, influencing and shaping the lives of people in other parts of the globe (ibid.). This compression of the world intensifies the global consciousness.

Globalisation is arguably changing the very nature of the social with shifts in the pattern of consumption as well as the informational mode of production (Beck 1998). It redefines the way individual actors cope with professional and interpersonal networks. It also

contributes to a deep revision of the sense and experience of spatial belonging that social actors once underwent in industrial society as it has a great impact on the lived experiences of social actors too (ibid.).

Axford (1977) has defined globalisation as the historical process through which the world is being made into one place with systemic properties. He argues that globalisation is a complex, contradictory and multidimensional historical process. For him, it is a convenient shorthand for a number of complex processes which are serving to compress the world in terms of time and space, and to redefine all sorts of borders – to taste and imagination as well as to territory and identities.

While Axford perceives a compression, Held and McGrew (2002) see globalisation as denoting the expanding scale, growing magnitude and speeding up and deepening of the impact of transnational flows and patterns of social interaction. To them globalisation refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human organisation that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions and continents. In its nature it is deeply divisive and vigorously contested also, since a substantial proportion of the world's population is largely excluded from the benefits of globalisation. The unevenness of globalisation makes sure that it is far from a universal process experienced uniformly across the entire planet (ibid).

Economic Globalisation

The opening up of the national economies, especially erstwhile socialist countries and other developing nations, forms the major characteristic of economic globalisation. Uninterrupted expansion of world capitalism and creation of a world market became possible in the wake of the collapse of Soviet Union and its satellite countries. It was in this context that countries like India became compelled to open up the economies. Transnational agencies, like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have become important players in determining the domestic policies of the “developing” economies, mostly comprising of the Latin American, Asian and African countries.

The contemporary period of globalisation is marked with the widespread introduction of liberalisation policies across the developing world since the early 1980s. With the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc, global polity has received a boost and increased the

importance of international organisations and the regimes in organising a new global political space (Short and Kim 1999).

The most important aspects of economic globalisation are, hence, observed as the breaking down of national economic barriers; the international spread of trade, financial and production activities, and the growing power of transactional corporation activities and international financial institutions (Khor 2001).

It is argued that globalisation as an uneven process, with trade and investment being focused in a few countries, creates impacts on almost all countries. Even a low-income country, though it may have only a limited world trade, has to face different socio-economic impacts of the process because of the changes in demand for or prices of its export commodities or a policy of rapidly reducing its import duties (ibid). National policies and policy-making mechanism have been increasingly globalised, which is observed as one of the unique features of the current phase of globalisation.

Most of the decisions are taken by national governments in tandem with the obligations and commitments made to the international bodies in connection with the free trade policies. So, most of the policy-makings, which were under the jurisdiction of the states until recently, as well as people themselves, have increasingly come under the influence of international agencies and processes.

National governments are seen at the receiving end of the whole process as they are at a disadvantageous position in the negotiations compared to the rich countries, and hence, often incapable of protecting the national interests. “The uneven and unequal nature of the present globalisation process is manifested in the fast growing gap between the world’s rich and poor people and between developed and developing countriesthe south’s weakness in the international negotiation also stems from its lack of bargaining and negotiating strength in international relations. Being heavily indebted and depended on bilateral aid donors and multi lateral loan organisations, developing countries have been drained of their capacity to negotiate” (ibid.). Competition among the unequal partners in the world market is feared to be detrimental to the weak economies by leading to the complete domination of powerful nations over others. In this sense, globalisation process is a re-colonisation process (Patnaik 2002).

Developing countries are said to be losing control over their trade and are often unable to determine on their own the speed at which their exports grow, though they may be able to control the pace at which their imports and thereby, the inflow of the products increase, mainly because of the Agriculture Agreement in the WTO, which is supposed to result in import liberalisation and reduction of domestic support and export subsidies for agricultural products (Ibid). Developing countries have also suffered from serious declines in the price of their export commodities and their terms of trade.

Empirically, international agribusiness is noted to reduce formerly independent farmers into agricultural workers or to serfs in their own lands (Starr 2000). The development of capital-intensive production systems results in many farmers losing their land due to debt. As a result of the reforms, formerly self-sufficient rural people are found to be leaving their villages to urban areas in search of wage labour. They are compelled to depend on corporate jobs for meagre amounts to fulfil their basic needs. Pushed out from traditional communities and livelihoods, people around the world accept consumer culture as the definition of 'good life', which increases their dependency on cash wage and urban economies.

International agencies are relentlessly criticised for their obvious role in supporting the unjust trade practices inherent in the current process that helps powerful nations and multinational corporations to take advantage of economic globalisation. International trade and investment policy, from the formation of the IMF in 1944 and the World Bank to the creation of WTO in 1994, are organised to facilitate and subsidise transnational corporate activities, giving them advantage over small-scale, locally based, owner-managed enterprises in every country of the world and forcing open those economies, with huge subsidies to corporations (ibid.). Meanwhile, when the third world countries started defaulting on loans the IMF and the World Bank stepped in and gave loans to repay the private banks, especially in the Latin American countries in the 1980s. Correspondingly, these institutions started imposing structural adjustment conditionality on loans which include freezing the minimum wage at current levels, repressing labour organising, cutting social services, devaluing the currency, privatising the state-owned industries and state services like transportation, and enacting free trade

policies. Structural adjustment policies direct these countries to focus much on debt payments.

In the case of world trade, there has been an informal mechanism since the 1950s to regulate trade controlled by the international bodies representing the governments of the economically most important countries. Formally the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has regulated the system, in a contentious series of negotiating rounds in which the poor countries of the Third World generally considered themselves to have been badly treated by the rich countries of the First World. In April 1994, 125 governments signed a global trade treaty in Morocco to set up the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Sklair 2002).

WTO is often accused of protecting the interests of the economically powerful countries and unable to control the trade manipulations in the global market, which strengthens the position of MNCs, mostly based in developed countries, against the interest of the third world farmers.

“..... Mono crop economies are particularly vulnerable to the instabilities in the world market directed not by some hidden hand, but by the actions of profit maximising capitalists, based mostly in the First World countries and often acting in unison through cartels. Despite fluctuations, the prices paid to producers in the third world for

Table 2.1. Primary commodity price in 1990 (In US \$)

Commodities	Years		
	1980	1990	2000
Coffee,Robusta(cents/kg)	450	118	90
Coffee,Arabica(cents/kg)	481	197	190
Cocoa((cents/kg)	362	127	90
Cotton (cents/kg)	284	182	129
Tea, average,3auctions	230	206	186

Sugar (cents/Kg)	88	28	18
Rubber (cents/Kg)	198	86	68

Source Data compiled from world Bank, in Sklair(2002)

most commodities have declined since the 1980s, notably for coffee, cocoa, cotton, tea, sugar, and rubber” (ibid:17). (Table1.2).

Most of the scholars of globalisation analyse these policy changes and reforms historically and try to see the process as a continuity. Many of them view capitalism as a driving force behind the transformative changes that happen globally today in an unprecedented scale. It is often referred to as capitalist globalisation which is observed as the rise of massive globalising corporations, the rapid spread of so-called free trade, the oft-cited weakening of states and governments, the penetration of mass media to all corners of the globe and the denationalisation and privatisation of former state monopolies. This is seen in the context of the emergence of a global system since the second half of the twentieth century (Hoogvelt 1997).

It was in the 16th century that the new economy namely capitalism bloomed especially in the European geographical region. Capitalism and a world economy are the two sides of the same coin. World economy is characterised by a single division of labour but multiple polities and cultures. Agricultural capitalism developed in the entire Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century within the framework of a world economy with a single division of labour and a hierarchy of occupational tasks yielding different rewards for labour (Wallerstein 1974). Expansive initial stage of capitalism was characterised by the extension of the fundamentals of trade and productive investment, even further into more and more areas of the globe. But the current phase of globalisation has now superseded its earlier manifestation by a phase of deepening, but not widening capitalist integration (Hoogvelt 1997).

In the modern world–system, institutionalised primary consideration of those who own or control the means of production is the endless accumulation of capital as the world production has been carried on by the rules of the capitalist world economy. According to

the world-system theorists, a network of commodity chains across the globe linked production activities across multiple political jurisdictions. National governments are not seen to be neutral in the process; instead, they have regularly claimed to be both effective managers of 'national interests' and guarantors of the long term stability of the world system and its overall capacity to ensure the endless accumulation of capital ((Hopkins and Wallerstein 1996).

The essential feature of the capitalist world economy is stated as the production for sale in a market in which the object is to realise the maximum profit. It is only with the emergence of the modern world economy in the 16th century Europe that the full development and economic predominance of market trade was seen. Long distance trade in the old period was administered trade and not market trade.

Current phase globalisation is also viewed as accelerated globalisation to distinguish it from long term trends, which are interwoven with many of the contemporary trends and referred together as globalisation in academic as well as public discussions. Contemporary accelerated globalisation comes in a package together with informalisation, flexibilisation and the reconfiguration of state and regionalisation (Hamel2001).This accelerated globalisation, which is driven or conditioned by technological changes, coincide with the prominence of neo liberalism, leading to free markets. Structural adjustment in such a scenario means the alignment of economic regimes and standards of accounting to Anglo-American standards.

If previously global integration was driven mainly by the economic logic of capital accumulation in terms of the growing unification and interpretation of the human condition, today it is the unification of the human condition that drives the logic of further capital accumulation (Hoogvelt 1997). Some other scholars distinguish the current phase of globalisation or global "transformation" as revolutionary one without much parallel events in world history. Only comparison for this transformation from "industrial society to information or post-industrial society" is with transformation of Europe two hundred years back from an agrarian society to industrialised society. Accordingly, this socio-economic transformation of 'revolutionary proportions' is impacting most communities around the world (Solbrig 2001).

Globalisation is also seen in terms of the socio-economic flows into the depth and breadth of the world and it is considered to have brought about a greater degree of interdependence and economic homogenisation (Sclair 2002). It has been observed that a more powerful burgeoning global market, financial institutions, and computer technologies have changed the traditional economic practices overwhelmingly. The trajectories of several national, regional and local economies have become even more enmeshed within a network of global financial flows and transactions. This is seen as a new geography of centrality cutting across national boundaries and across old North – South divide.

Some rigorous critiques of economic globalisation (Hist and Thompson 1996) do not permit any distinct feature for current processes of globalisation. Going to an extreme, they find that all hype about the globalisation is hollow and describe the whole process as precisely a myth. They do not agree with the argument that highly internationalised economy at present is unprecedented, instead according to them the current international economy is less open and integrated than the regime that prevailed from 1870 to 1914. According to their analysis, capital mobility is not producing a massive shift of investment and employment from the advanced to the developing countries. Rather, foreign direct investment is highly concentrated among the advanced industrial economies, and the third world remains marginal in both investment and trade, a small minority of newly industrialising countries apart. They arrive at a conclusion that the level of integration, interdependence, and openness of national economies in the present era is not unprecedented.

Considering the two extreme positions on globalisation, a great majority of scholars follow the position of Harvey who takes a middle path. He classifies two polemic stands regarding the ongoing process; the first is globalist, which sees a transformation that is so radical, related to every dimension of social life, and the second is the conservative position, which sees nothing new in globalisation.

As for the Globalists, they see this transformation as so radical that none of the old ways of doing and thinking can be applied to any dimension of social and political life.

Conservatives opine that there is nothing like radical change about capitalism and in its search for increased flexibility of or locational advantage.

Adopting a middle ground Harvey argues that there is a transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation, a mix of highly efficient Fordist production in the US, Japan or South Korea and more traditional production system in other regions. Accordingly, such a situation has changed “the nature and composition of the working class” and the conditions of the consciousness formation and political action. As he comments, in the current phase of globalisation, unionisation and traditional left politics are very hard to ‘sustain’.

The uneven nature of the globalisation process has been discussed by many scholars (Held and McGrew 2002). Many see the powerful developed nations as the beneficiaries of the entire process. Overtime unequal exchange among the countries, retained by the political interference on the part of strong states over weak ones as part of the global capitalist system, results in not only the appropriation of surplus value from a labour, but also the appropriation of the whole economy by the “core” areas (Wallerstien1996).

Beyond the disparity among the countries, especially between the core and the periphery, inequality within the countries has been given focus by many scholars. Zygmunt Bauman (1998) offers a spatial image of the wealthy who globe-trot freely searching for adventures, whilst the poor and the globally disadvantaged are chained to place. This is similar to the view expressed by Ulf Hannerz and Bauman about the global cosmopolitans, the new travelling middle classes who privilege an identity based on mobility and fluidity rather than territory (Bauman and Hannerz in Mamel 2001). Places of exclusion can even appear in areas that are command centres for economic globalisation, such as global cities, where there are low income areas starved of resources and spaces disconnected and excluded from the circuits of globalisation (Kim and Short 1999).

Cultural Globalisation

Many anthropologists are much more concerned about the cultural globalisation which is supposed to be reshaping the identities and cultures across the world, especially of the communities with local distinctiveness and cultural specificities. It is considered largely

a result of the market driven and technologically mediated production of desires in tune with the big bang of consumerism in the recent times. Theories regarding the homogenisation of culture and creation of a global village have been discussed widely even in the early 1990s owing to the greater penetration of electronic media (McLuhan and Powers 1989). But in the recent debates on globalisation, it is emphasised that the changes are not unidirectional or simple as it was thought to be but demands a comprehensive understanding of local responses within the framework of the dialectic of the local and the global (Appadurai 1996, Robertson 1992, Tomilson 1999).

Contemporary cultural globalisation has to be seen as the latest manifestation of a set of historical processes (Held, et al. 1999). Historic migration of people, the global spread of the major world religions, the influence of powerful western nation states and modern nationalism, including the outward expansion of Europe from the sixteenth century and the transnational flows of capitalism are exemplified as the instances of the historical processes. But it cannot be reduced to any single causal process as it involves a complex configuration of casual logic of politics, military, economy, migration, ecology, and culture. However, 'local' people and cultures can no longer stay away from the global processes. Even though most people remain related in a local or national culture and local place it is becoming increasingly impossible for them to live in that place disconnected culturally from the world within which it is situated (Fisk 1989).

While analysing the cultural dimension of globalisation almost all authors emphasise on the role of media and advertisement. Consumerism has made an impact on people all over the world due to the global proliferation of products like coca-cola, Mc Donald, and a wide range of consumer goods using the electronic media. Newly created consumerist culture is not confined to any particular country or geographical region, but supersedes the national boundaries. Cultural locals are hence absorbing the elements of mass – mediated global culture which produce insatiable demand for new cultural products (Cretkovich and Kellener 1997, Fisk 1989).

Global consumer capitalism appropriates aspects of the local with profit potential; repackages them in idealised, de-contextualised forms; and then promotes them in terms of their novelty values (Fisk 1989). Cultural globalisation is also a global ecumene of

persistent cultural interaction and exchange through which the world is increasingly becoming one not only in political and economical terms but also in terms of its cultural construction (Hannerz 1991).

Total commodification of human life is considered as a central feature of the connection between contemporary culture and economy. This is closely related to globalisation, particularly because transnational corporations have to sell their products in a variety of different cultural contexts in an age of consumerism (Bourdieu 1998).

Arjun Appadurai (1997) sees cultural globalisation as a process, 'a largely unsettled one witnessing complex movements of people, ideas, finance, technology, labour and culture', rather than outcome or impact. Analysing the global processes, he puts forward the innovative notion of different flows. He identifies five dimensions of major global cultural flows which are found useful to explain the contemporary processes, namely ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples, and ideoscaples. His flow model offers more mobile, dynamic and fluid framework for exploring the process, dispensing the centre-periphery framework due to the deeply disjunctive relationships among the human movement, technological flow and financial transfers. By ethnoscape, he means the landscape of persons, especially moving groups like tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers etc, who constitute the shifting world. Technoscaples means the global configuration of technology, which moves at high speed across the 'national' boundaries. Global capital flow is now more mysterious, rapid and difficult and is referred in terms of financescaples. Mediascaples refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information and to the images of the world created by these media. Ideoscaples refer to images, but largely are confined to the ideologies and counter ideologies related to state power and politics. Different types of flows are carried on by a variety of agencies and are "inflicted by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors, whether nation-state, multinationals, sub-national groups and religion, political and economic movements, villages, neighbourhoods and families(ibid 35)".

The homogenisation of culture is also discussed in relation with the process of globalisation. It is a major argument of many scholars that emerging global consumerist

culture would endanger the very existence of regional cultures and result in a levelling up of cultural differences. The fear shared by many scholars is that local cultural difference is eroded by the onslaught of mass –produced western goods. This ‘coca-colonisation’ is interpreted by some as a re-colonisation of the non-western world by fetishised western goods. Re-colonisation theorists see the homogenisation of cultures as a result of the neo-colonialist agenda of American imperialism. But many scholars of globalisation want to demarcate between globalisation as a process and imperialism as a project (Tomilson 1991). Accordingly, globalisation is a far less coherent or culturally directed planned process. The idea of imperialism according to Tomilson, contains at least, the notion of a purposeful project: the intended spread of a social system from one centre of power across the globe. Instead, the idea of globalisation suggests interconnection and interdependencies of all global areas, which happen in a far less purposeful way. These happen as a result of economic and cultural practices which do not, of themselves, aim at global integration, but which none the less produce it. The effects of globalisation are accordingly, to weaken the cultural coherence of all individual nation states, including the economically powerful ones (Tomilson 1991).

But dispensing the worries of cultural homogenisation, Hannerz points out that while some local cultures are self-sufficient and can resist global influences (for example, Japan), less developed (or long colonised) countries may have weakened cultures and less economic power to resist global cultural influences (Hannerz 1991). He uses the concept of hybridisation of the local cultures as a result of the asymmetrical interaction between cultural centres and peripheries.

But Axtman (1997) argues that recipients of media texts attribute their own meanings to them and interpret them in line with their own cultures, modifying cultural products in tune with personal needs and making it impossible to create a global culture because of this reason. He concludes that globalisation will result in the proliferation of cultural “particularisms”, collective identities, and the political creation of “otherness”. Accordingly, cultural globalisation also reinvents ethno-nationalism and religious fundamentalism as attempts to reconstruct traditions in the face of homogenisation. Besides, as Robertson (2001) observed, globalisation does not necessarily lead to

increasing social homogenisation, because “distaniciated” relations are frequently engaged in a dialectical transformation.

Political Globalisation and Decentralisation

Globalisation also has a political dimension. In the ongoing process, a section of society is able to make use of the opportunities and accelerate accumulation as they are already in an advantaged position. Consequently elites continue to connect and make alliances; the poor and the dominated remain largely excluded, by virtue of relative immobility and exclusion from communication technologies, from the possibility of making equivalent counter alliances (Ossella 2001).

Political dimension of globalisation is also discussed in connection with the weakening of the states and vanishing of the nation. While economic globalisation necessitates the downsizing of the government by withdrawing from the public provisions and investment, the major characteristics of political globalisation are the end of sovereignty; re-orientation to serve supra-territorial as well as territorial interests; downward pressure on public –sector welfare guarantees; increased reliance on multilateral regulatory arrangements (Scholte 2000). These factors are more or less about the reorganisation of the state. It has been noted that the centrality of the state is being hollowed out from above as well as from below (Schuurman 2001). Process of globalisation has given a new focus on locality. It is argued that the importance of the state has been reduced in favour of either global governance or local governments. This broader paradigm shift in the case of governance emerged from different directions with different reasons. The Bretton woods Institutions try to reorganise the state for an effectively functioning global market. Specific areas and issues are demarcated for governance at the global, national, regional and local levels (Schotle 2000). It has been often accused of compelling nations to withdraw from welfare activities and also economically and the state is seen disappearing as an economic actor through privatisation supported by deregulation. There is also

growing importance of the global financial markets, where daily about \$US 1500 billion are shifted around the globe, which weaken the centralised state economies (Schuurman 2001).

There is a remarkable shift in interests and concern today in favour of democratic decentralisation and to the local self-government institutions. Decentralised governance has become a motto of policy makers, academicians and administrators of our period (Jha 1999, Stoor 2000, Issac and Franke 2002). Greater participation of the people in governance and the need to deepen democracy become the major interests of the experts, irrespective of their differences in contested political issues. Decentralisation means that different solutions may be relevant for different areas depending on their respective historical conditions, resources and problems (Stoor 2001). Good decentralised governance is defined as the “forms and procedures that allow a society to achieve at the subnational and local levels the goals of poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, environmental regeneration and gender equity” (Robertson 2001; 23).

Globalisation and decentralisation are perceived as linked in ambiguous ways (Dahrendorf 1995). While many countries introduced decentralisation for more flexible and adaptable decision-making, it has created individualisation, atomisation and a loss of solidarity. Meanwhile, globalisation is in one-way centralisation and the competitiveness in the world markets result in the destruction of local communities. Accordingly, this can be resisted by the empowerment of local communities and the strengthening of the public domain on practical basis (ibid).

A shift towards decentralisation is also seen because of the impact of world capital market and economic globalisation that affect the lives of the people on which centralised and decentralised governance has to make vital decisions. This changed context demands greater understanding on the imperatives of decentralised governance. Newly emerged commitment towards decentralisation is seen as an end product of a given historical process (Jha and Mathur 1999). Decentralisation is also suggested as a potential tool for resisting the current economic globalisation driven by global capitalism and proposed as the democratic empowerment of common people (Issac and Franke 2002). But, those who admit decentralisation as a neo-liberal project undertaken by

transnational institutions believe that though it seems paradoxical, both globalisation and decentralisation are overtly and covertly managing the society, government and the market (Palanithurai 2002).

Decentralisation of powers is being perceived as yet another course of action in the 'development process' within the society. Accordingly, decentralisation of powers is oriented towards building the capacity of the people to administer development and social equity by using a new device, though it takes place at different levels in different countries. The major difference between these two thinking of decentralisation is obvious; on the one hand, it is largely an administrative reform to make governance more transparent and sensitive in the context of structural adjustment programme. On the other, decentralisation gives stress on local empowerment of people as a political action against the larger systemic inequalities.

Interlinking the Global and the Local: Emerging Anthropological Thrust

Generally, studies on globalisation have brought about a new thrust on locality among contemporary anthropologists, who show much more concern about the changing nature of the concept of locality in the context of global changes (Appadurai 1992, Kerney 1995, Eade 1997, Nash 2000, Eriksen 2003, Jackie and Fuller 2005). Anthropological revisiting of communities, with a focus on global dimensions of social movements, cross territorial migration, environmentalism etc., has gained momentum in recent years. This genre of studies, looking at the interpenetration of the global and the local is starkly different from the conventional ethnographic accounts of bounded cultures and communities. Anthropological documentations of the contemporary processes also show how the abstract ideologies circulating at global scale – neoliberalism, political democracy, development, modernization, all are transformed into the common sense within the historically and culturally specific local contexts (Rankin 2003).

Recent works in social anthropology have challenged the assumption that the flow of influence, power and cultural products in the global system are all in one direction, that is, from the core to the periphery. It has been pointed out that there is a relativizing of both the core and the periphery under the impact of globalising forces and a preference for an interpretation of the relationships between local and global in which local identities

may be confirmed and even intensified by global process. According to Appadurai (1993) three critical forces bear upon local reproduction: the nation state and nationalism, diasporic flows, and electronic communication.

Robertson claims that globalisation entails the reconstruction and production of 'home', 'community' and 'locality'. Rather than the local and global constituting analytical opposites, he treats locality as an aspect of globalisation, albeit with some reservations, and suggests that "glocalisation" might be a more accurate term to describe the global/local relationship (Robertson 2001). Glocalisation refers, in the subjective sphere, to the construction and invention of diverse localities through the global flow of ideas and information.

Globalisation is also seen in association with a new dynamics of re-localisation (Morley and Robins 1995). It is about the achievement of a new global-local nexus, about new and intricate relations between global space and local space. It is considered as a matter of inserting a multiplicity of localities into the overall picture of a new global system. The global-local nexus is about the relation between globalising and particularising dynamics in the strategy of the global corporation, and the local is proposed to be seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in and through its relation to the global (Morley and Robins 1995).

The 'local' no longer exists purely as local, but is embedded in historical sediments of extra-local influences and practices. These processes are very much relative and different in their manifestations from country to country and region to region (Luke 2001). They often pull in different directions and are locally engaged and translated in ways not always predictable.

But localities are also considered as an ensemble of people and their networks that devise practices to attract, retain, boost, and otherwise resist the forces that seem to be beyond their control (Taylor et al. 1995). Thus, one can see resistance from below, which emerges as a feeling of anti-globality, being an aspect of globalisation as well. Such resistance can be stronger when the changes brought in by globalisation are perceived to cause threats to livelihoods of people. But even when livelihoods are threatened, responses of various

populations can differ. This implies that the confluence of the global and the local is also differential and context specific.

So, the local obviously becomes more important not merely because of the time and space compression but due to the fact that a good proportion of the people all over the globe has been excluded from the processes described here – people who are still placed at the margins in search of livelihoods to maintain their daily life. All these global institutional or environmental changes have now a greater impact on these local marginal livelihoods.

Within this study we understand global not merely as a neutral dimension of contemporary social life, but as a strong political category of analysis. Going by Akhil Gupta, an understanding of the hegemonic discourse of development and its meta-narratives is important in deciphering the meanings of local practices. Changing development regimes in relation to the embedded nation building projects have been contested by the local practices which have been shaping up the global – local interfaces and corresponding development trajectories (Gupta 1999). To quote him,

“.....modernity may have been instituted as a global phenomenon through colonial capitalism, but it was in the process, resisted, reinvented and reconfigured in different social and historical locations. ...in the period after the second world war, when demise of direct colonial rule appeared inevitable, the apparatus of development institutionalised a new mode of global governmentality. Inaugurated by the Bretton Woods institutions, a new era of global politics began that recognised the geographic division of the world into formally equal nation –states. ...in this new regime of global governance, development discourses and institutions interpolated the newly independent nation –states of the third world into particular temporal and spatial locations...(1999).”

From Theory to Context: Linking local Livelihoods and Global Changes

In many of the marginal regions especially in the economically backward countries, local livelihoods become a matter of concern in the context of global processes. Globalisation, as a historically continuous process, makes impact on the existing local structures through which local livelihoods are organised and reproduced. How far the disadvantaged

communities are able to negotiate these changes become a significant question in the context of reproduction of uneven and exploitative structures.

Linkages between the processes of globalisation and local livelihoods are not always unambiguous and straightforward. Changes from different directions have their own

<p>Theory (<i>Understanding of globalisation from different theoretical locations</i>)</p>	<p>Relevant manifestations in research context (with a potential to change the local power relations)</p>
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impacts on people's lives and livelihoods. Rural poor interact continuously with the local environment, institutions and local power structures in search of their livelihoods.

Table 2.2. Linking theory and context according to the major dimensions of globalisation

Major Dimensions	Indexing of the major manifestations of each dimension in various literature	Major theorists referred	With a regional (Wayanad) focus in the (sub) national context
<i>Social</i>	<i>high modernity, compression of time and space, intensification of worldwide relations, increased speed in the transfer of capital, globality as a result of increased global consciousness, glocalisation, international migration, , changes in the production sites, globalism...</i>	Giddens, Harvey, R.Robertson, Beck, Axford, Held and McGrew	intensification of world wide relations, increased international migration, increased speed in the transfer of capital, globality
<i>Economic</i>	<i>Liberalisation, Privatisation breaking down of national economic barriers, increased importance of MNCs and international financial institutions, free world trade, weakening of the state, re-colonisation, forced migration, Targeting the welfare, global economic system, network of commodity chain, regionalisation, globalisation as a myth, financial exclusion ...</i>	Short and Kim , Martin Khor, Patnaik, Starr, Sklair, Hoogvelt, Hopkin and Wallerstein, Patnaik Hamel, Solbirg, Hist and Thompson Zygmunt Bauman,	Free world trade (increased exposure to markets), privatisation, increased importance of MNCs and international financial institutions, network of commodity chain
<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Mass mediated global culture, reshaping the cultures and identity, homogenisation of culture, consumerism, global ecumene of cultural interaction and exchange, commodification of human life, cosmopolitan migration, Hybridisation, re-invention of ethno nationalism and religious fundamentalism</i>	Mcluhan, Appadudari, Robertson, Tomilson,Fisk, Cretkovich and Kellener, Hannerz, Bourdieu , Axtman	Consumerism, reshaping or reassertion of identities, ‘Mass mediated’ reality
<i>Political</i>	<i>Decentralisation and local governance, people’s plan campaign, weakening of the state, global governance, displacement, social movements, de-territorialisation</i>	Scholte, Schuurman,Robertson ,Dahrendorf,Issac and Franky	Decentralization and local governance, participatory development(peoples plan campaign), social movements based on livelihoods and identities

Communities like Paniyan have been facing drastically changed conditions of living in recent times as many of the institutions like local government, product as well as labour markets and labour itself, have been undergoing changes as part of the many processes discussed in the above sections.

After an elaborated discussion of the diverse theoretical understanding of the local and global, an effort is made here to ground the theoretical debate in the empirical context of Wayanad in Kerala, India. This is an attempt to explain and narrow-down the larger theoretical debate to an empirical context and see the theoretical debate more grounded (Table 2.2).

Global and local in the context of Kerala and Wayanad

As a sub-national unit of India, Kerala society interacts with all the dimensions of globalization in various levels. Though there are common institutional changes allied to certain global economic and political processes and also an emerging global pattern of consumerism, not all the dimensions are uniformly intersecting the regions and the different categories of population across the state. Hence, the interface between global and local becomes context specific.

In the livelihood scenario of Wayanad in Kerala, the thrust of the global –local interface is more linked to the economic and political dimensions of globalization. Social and cultural dimensions also play subsidiary roles in shaping livelihood practices in the wake of present changes. The context of present research is directly linked to the economic and political dimensions, which are mainly globally derived price fluctuation of agricultural commodities and state decentralization. Other subsidiary dimensions, which are manifested mainly in the forms of development space, consumerism, and renewed identities, also influence the communities and individuals in shaping the livelihood practices at present.

In the present study, global and local interface is not understood as a completely new phenomenon as empirically it is not so. As far as the study region is concerned global – local interaction has a history of around 200 years. But a fusion of the global and the local into an inclusive development space is qualitatively attached to the recent stage in the history of constant interaction between these two. Other phases in the local history of

such interfaces are relatively in a lesser degree with regard to the evolution of a global consciousness and the ability of the local agents in negotiating the changes. An attempt is made here to link the dimensions of globalization to contemporary global – local interface in Wayanad and it is also tried to understand the historical genesis and evolution of global and local in the area through different phases in connection with its impact upon the present in creating differential abilities in livelihood practices.

Economic dimension

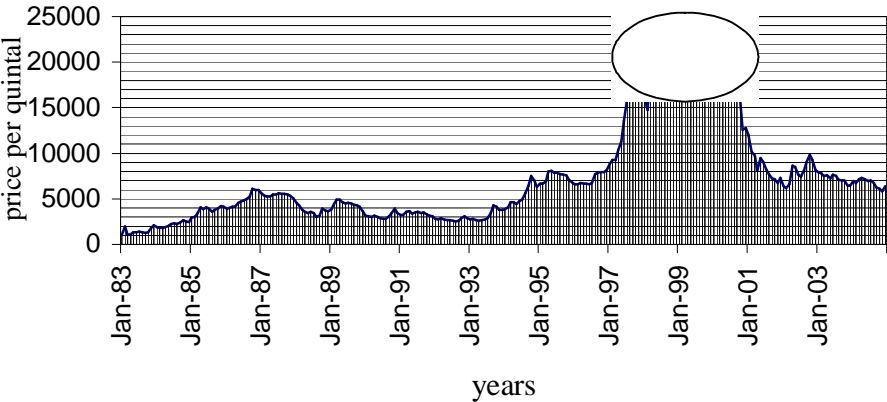
Wayanad's economy has its main source of income from agriculture, especially cash crops. Agrarian economy is a major specificity of the region whereas the major portion of the economy of the state has already been shifted to service sector. Marginalised communities in Wayanad, like the Paniyans, solely depend upon agricultural labour for their livelihoods. Exclusive dependence of marginalized communities on agrarian labour has been another specificity of the region.

The region had witnessed a sudden economic shock due to the crash in prices of almost all cash crops in the area. Since the last quarter of the 1990s prices of the major crops started to fall simultaneously (fig.2.2 and 2.3). Pepper experienced the largest fall in prices. From an average of Rs. 40 for 1 kg pepper in the beginning of the 1990s, farmers got Rs. 180 by 1997-98 and even up to Rs 200 for a short period in 1999-2000. In 2000-2001 it declined to Rs. 170 and in the following years it faced a drastic slump. Price per Kg touched around Rs.60 in the coming years (Nair et.al 2007 a, 2007 b).

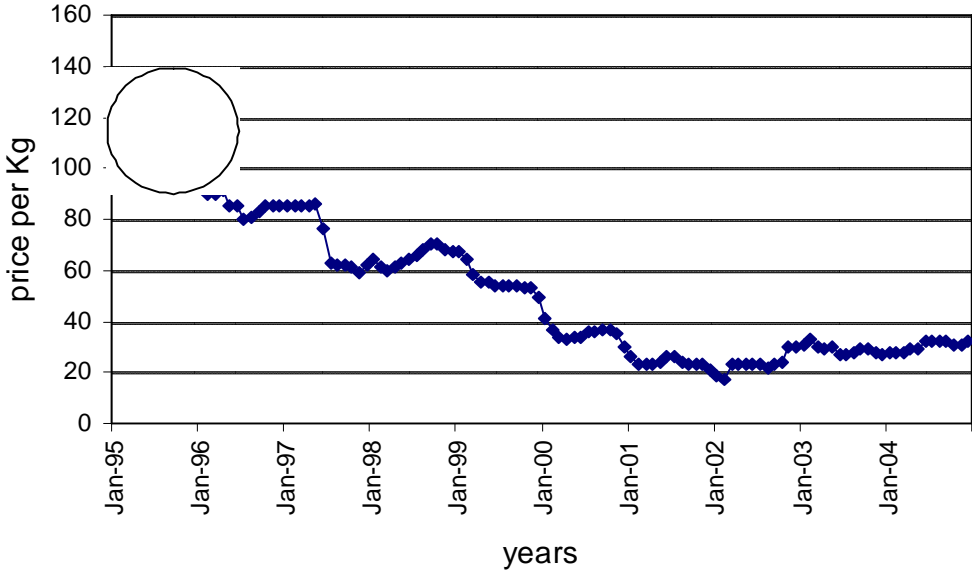
Coffee is another major crop which faced a crash in price since the late 1990s. Its price had shot up from Rs.40/kg to Rs80-85 in the 1995- 1997 period, but started to decline in 1997-98 to Rs 64. A slight resurgence of price was evident in 2000 as it hiked to Rs.76, but from the 2001 onwards it fell steeply to Rs.28/Kg. According to a data available from Coffee Board, cultivation of coffee in the state is 84735 hectares and in Wayanad 70327 hectares, as many as 60000 farmers are engaged in coffee cultivation (ibid).

Figs 2.2 & 2.3. Peaks and falls in the prices of Coffee and Pepper in the 1990s

Movement of pepper price



Price movement of coffee



Source: Spices Board of India 2005, Coffee Board 2005

Prices for pepper and coffee have not revived to the same level, even though in the later years it has showed a slighter improvement. In the last two years it has again shown resurgence. The fluctuation in the price is not uncommon as it is determined mainly by the global production and demand. Shooting up of the prices of pepper and coffee and its subsequent fall felt in the 1990s are mainly attributed to the decline and revival in production in Brazil and Indonesia. However, complete receding of the state in terms of the institutional patronage made the prices of local commodities more vulnerable to the global economic trends. This was very clearly evident in the case of Coffee, for which procurement and marketing were completely bestowed upon the coffee board under central government without passing the vulnerabilities of huge fluctuations in the global market till early 1990s. It was after the wrapping up of the Board that local farmers experienced such steep rise and fall in the coffee price for the first time ever (figs. 2.2&2.3).

Local perception of the increasing fluctuations and unprecedented falls in the prices also goes with the findings of government commission on the issue. Local traders think that the export agencies have become powerful international players as they don't confine their activities to the producing nations, but have become global players with trans-national interests. This shift has lost the edge of local traders in the negotiation and transactions as the export agencies are free to collect the products as per the demand from wherever it is produced - a freedom they have gained from the import liberalization.

The commission appointed by the government of Kerala also points out the consequences of trade liberalisation in cash crop economy within the state. It also justifies the impact of trade liberalization in farm products, as a result of the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) of the World Trade Agreement from 1995 onwards, as a price crash of unprecedented proportions.

Bilateral agreement between the countries on trade liberalisation has also been observed as a fact behind the fall in prices of agricultural products. In the case of pepper, it was import from Sri Lanka under bilateral agreement that became a threat to farmers of the state. Kerala's economy is also considered as most vulnerable to WTO and AOA related

concerns in the country because of a high proportion of trade dependence of the commodities produced (Nair et al. 2007).

According to an estimate the quantity of pepper imports increased from 4028 metric tonnes during 2000-01 to 6328 tonnes during 2001-02 and to 15750 tonnes during 2002-03 (George 2005). It has also been observed that the basic change observed in the global demand pattern also brings advantage to the international export giants over their national counterparts.

In the case of coffee, according to an estimate in 1992 producer countries earned \$10 billion from a global market worth around \$30 billion. In 2002, they made less than \$ 6 billion in a market that had doubled in size. This drop in share of revenue from 33 per cent to less than 10 percent within a decade hit poor producers worldwide (Khor 2004). In a region like Wayanad situation became worse than most in the absence of an internal market for coffee.

For a community like Paniyan who does not produce coffee or pepper but provide labour, impact was more in terms of the reduction in wage as well as employment days as most of the small cultivators stopped work at their gardens in the wake of an income fall.

Another interesting economic dimension at present in Wayanad is the booming of a tourism economy. Especially in the post vulnerability phase, government and private players are making a concerted effort in promoting the region as one of the important tourist destinations of the state. According to an official estimate, the total number of foreign tourists who came to Wayanad increased from 749 in 2004 to 4,093 in 2007. In the case of domestic tourists, the increase is from 1, 87,701 in 2004 to 2, and 56,190 in 2007(GOK 2009). Inflow of domestic tourists to the region is significantly linked to the booming software sector in neighbouring Bangalore and Mysore.

Political Dimension-- As State Decentralization

India became part of a global consensus for decentralization and local governance for empowering the communities in decision making and the management of local resources with the 73rd and 74th amendments of the constitution which made decentralized governance a responsibility of the state governments. Indian parliament made the

constitutional amendments in 1993, which are known as the Pachayati Raj Amendments. Accordingly, all the state governments are mandated to conduct regular elections to the local bodies and establish them to share governance locally. Governments have to devolve a major part of governmental responsibilities to these local bodies.

Although the experience of implementation of local governments in individual states varies Kerala has come to the forefront in the effective implementation of local democracy as well as decentralised governance. In Kerala, this significant administrative reform was launched as a campaign, known as Peoples' Campaign for Decentralized Planning and *janakeeyasoothranam* (*people's planning*) in short hand Malayalam, by the Left Democratic Front ministry in 1997. This administrative reform was acclaimed widely as it made mandatory devolution of 40% of the state budget grant to the local bodies. Participatory local level planning was the entry point adopted by the state to operationalise decentralization in Kerala by harnessing public action. A big-bang approach was adopted 'to push the system and force the process' by releasing finance and power straight to the local structures using a trial and error method (Issac and Franke 2002).

Fiscal Decentralisation is one of the central features of the decentralisation process in Kerala. An untied plan grant equivalent to above one-third of the approved plan size of the State is devolved to local bodies.(This came to Rs.1317 crore during 2003-04). Grama Panchayaths, Municipalities and Corporations have been assigned own taxes namely, Property Tax, Profession Tax, Entertainment Tax, Advertisement Tax and Service Tax (a tax for providing services) besides other user charges (Economic Review 2005).

In the context of the transfer of substantial responsibilities to the local governments, new organizational forms and structures have been created. The key accountability systems are *committee* system of decision making, right to information, participatory budgeting, due process in selection of beneficiaries by ensuring maximum transparency, committees of technical experts to ensure and evaluate the quality of the projects, audit systems including a semi-structured social audit, awareness building, and filing of the property statements by all the elected representatives immediately after the election.

High degree of autonomy enjoyed by the local *Panchayath* in the use of transferred resources is also notable. Within a general framework, local governments are able to decide any scheme and prepare detailed projects according to their priority. Grama Panchayaths get the larger share of the devolved fund. The rural and urban shares are as per the population and within the rural share, the Grama Panchayath gets 70%. Rest of the portion of the amount is shared by block and district *Panchayath s*.

As far as the *adivasis* communities are concerned, special *gramasabhas* known as 'oorukoottam' (village council) were introduced as their presence in the general gramasabhas was found meagre and inadequate. Village councils are supposed to discuss their needs and take necessary decisions in the presence of ward member and tribal extension officer in the area. A new arrangement for appointing tribal promoters on a temporary basis was also made, to effect the linking of the village council, state department and *adivasis* settlements.

Another political dimension which is relevant in the case of the *adivasis* in the region is their social movement based on identity. An intensive land struggle was launched in the region by 2002 under the leadership of a tribal woman leader, C.K. Janu, which culminated subsequently into a bloody clash between *adivasis*, especially Paniyans, and the police and finally suppressed by the state. State's historic failure in redistributing land among the *adivasis* in Wayanad happened to be coupled with the livelihood vulnerability in the period of agrarian distress; hence the upsurge of movement on an unprecedented scale. The movement had been networked with civil society organizations and rightist groups in the country within a newly carved global space of social movements based on placed identities.

Other Dimensions

An emphasis on the importance of political and economic dimensions of current global and local interface with regard to the livelihood practices of the communities does not imply any exclusivity for the same. It only means that focus of the present study is linked directly to these dimensions of globalization as the major research themes. Meanwhile, socio –cultural dimensions have been obviously present in the contemporary socio-economic processes discussed in the study. For instance, decentralization cannot be

discussed without considering the production of a global social space of development. Cultural connections of the study objectives cannot be devoid of the streams of consumerism, renewal of cultural identity etc. from the everyday lives.

Genesis of Global in the History of the Local

As far as the region of Wayanad is concerned, origin of global - local interface, though a qualitatively different one, dates back to the colonial expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries through the forceful acquisition of the area into a colonial administrative system and by bringing fundamental changes in the relations of production in relation with the emerging capitalist demands in the west. Hence the political and economic dimensions became critical in global and local interface in this period too.

The result was a new interface between local communities and a new governance system and economy. British used many of the existing structures of power relations by incorporating the local elites in order to bring in the changes that could serve their own interests. British capital was drawn to Wayanad in order to nurture an economy based on plantation crops which became instrumental in shaping a new socio-cultural-scape. This was the primary stage in the evolution of a global–local interface in the area. Main feature of this phase is that of complete autonomy of the British in exploiting the resources in the absence of local capabilities and agencies in order to negotiate or resist the changes.

But there is also another phase which started in the last decades of colonial rule which marked the inflow of the cultivators from the plains, comprised of Christian population in large numbers from the southern parts of Kerala, motivated by the new thrust in the cultivation of cash crops. In the initial stage the move had patronage from both the colonial as well as national governments in view of the strengthening of a national economy. Nation-state and its political forms started mediating the local and global by this stage of independence.

New Governance System

In the case of Wayanad after the fall of King Pazhassi, a local Hindu ruler who fought against the British, the foundation was laid for a new institutional setting for modern

governance. Implementation of new administrative reforms by the British government focused on revenue collection from the local people and the new governance structures conferred much power to important local Nair families legitimizing their customary feudal rights. It was by the second half of the 19th century that colonial administration under the Madras Presidency got extended to remote regions. Malabar district was divided into village (*amsam*) and its sub-divisions (*desams*), with *adhikari* as the village headman assisted by an accountant (*menon*) and two helpers (*kolkar*) (Logan 1995). Wayanad was one of the *taluks* under the Malabar district of Madras Presidency.

Adhikari was a constituted position and the incumbent was authorized to intervene in all civil and criminal disputes and conduct revenue administration. Later, it became a hereditary position enjoyed by the upper caste Nair families. Compulsory taxation of agricultural lands restricted open access and common properties and led to the development of private properties. British policies also created strong dissent among the tribal cultivators in the region.

After the death of Pazhassi vast tracts of land including a major portion of forests had come under the holding of the British. Many local landlords also claimed rights on private forests. British decided to survey the whole area and bring the activities and ownership on land accountable by fixing taxes as part of implementing revenue administration. Because of the peculiar circumstances of Wayanad it was decided to retain the tax for cultivated produces as against the practice of taxing occupations as had been implemented in the plains lands.

According to the land settlement scheme thus implemented after a survey, cultivable land was divided into wetland, comprising swamps and paddy, flatland, and dry-land, including all other lands whether cultivated with traditional millets or special products. Soil was classified and arranged in classes and sorts to correspond to money rates. Dry land was also arranged into four classes and the highest class included forest lands and the estate lands.

Shifting cultivation of all kinds was prohibited on forest lands of the first class type and was allowed only in the inferior classes of dry land. Cultivators were also instructed to

pay the tax in money, which is equal to the market value of one fifth of the total produce, instead of products as such (ibid.).

Government introduced a series of reforms and rules as per the local requirements and emerging situations. Landlords were given protection and were made mediators between company government and people in practice (Gopi 2002). Total area of the land in the region came under the possession of the British East India Company, temples and some of the local landlord families.

Because of the new system of taxing cultivation, a large extent of land was given up by the cultivators. It is estimated that by 1895-96, 19,420 acres of occupied land was relinquished and 18,826 acres sold for arrears of revenue, of which 13,076 acres was bought by government. Of the total area relinquished and bought in by government only 6,561 acres was taken up again for cultivation (Menon 1962).

The colonial government introduced new institutions in relation to land and revenue administration undermining the 'traditional' land relations and practices. Widespread local agricultural practices like *punam* cultivation (Shifting cultivation) had begun to be treated as ecologically damaging and attempts to check it was undertaken. Taxing the cultivated land compelled local cultivators to stop extensive agriculture and possession of additional lands. These 'traditional' agriculturalists in the interior forest tracts were relatively free and mobile in exploring the resources like land in the earlier regimes.

But later, the government provided concessions considering the peculiar conditions of Wayanad where the population was observed as steadily decreasing and the shortage of labour started to adversely affect the cultivation. Special rules were introduced to exempt the land from levy of fare if it was left barren and as waste.

Even before the end of the 19th century, all the modern administrative mechanisms came into existence in Wayanad with the office of the sub-collector, forest sub-assistant conservator, sub registrar, courts, telecom services, etc. Modern medical facilities were also introduced in the area. A series of laws, enacted by the government systematically to preserve and to 'exploit' the state's forests, made their impacts in Wayanad too. Besides the impact of macro state policies, this region also had special attention from the government in lieu of the quality of forest resources. In 1878 all felling of living trees

was stopped and the state's forest department turned its attention to the utilisation of the wind fallen and dead trees which were being annually destroyed by fire. It started timber trade in a systematic way and conferred contracts to private parties for removing the selected trees from the reserve forest under the control of officials.

Local Resistance from the Margins

It was the steps for systematic surveillance of the state and the accountability of local economic life, a completely alien experience to the local population that had created unrest among them in the formative phase of colonial administration which resulted in the tribal rebellion.

The beginning of April 1812 witnessed a rebellion of Kuruma and Kurichiya against the British. It was a local response and resistance against the reforms in economy and governance initiated by the colonial government. The people chiefly the Kurichiyas and the Kurumbars of the east of Wayanad, revolted in protest against the extraction of land revenue in cash which was too considerable for them to pay. This protest was also against the administrative reforms that changed the mode of land revenue payment in cash instead of kind (Menon 1962). The local police were attacked with bows and arrows in their attempt to disperse an assemblage of agitated people at Nallore nadu. They also besieged the British force at Manathavady (North Wayanad) and Sulthan Bathery (South Wayanad). Government deployed more forces from Mysore in the problematic areas, especially in the hamlets of tribal cultivators. Kurichiya and Kuruma youths fought bravely, their women and children sent away safely into the interior tracts of forest for protection. Though they had prior experience in fighting the British alongside of Pazhassi Raja, the movement was brutally suppressed by the British using superior weaponry against the tribal bows and arrows. For about a quarter of a century after this rebellion in Wayanad, Malabar was free from resistance against the British and the colonial government. British had a free hand in initiating internal reforms to assert their supremacy and the people settled down quietly to their agricultural pursuits (ibid). In order to establish British supremacy in the region, the government of Madras Presidency established a chain of posts stretching to the north of Sulthan Bathery namely

Porakknady, Pakkam, and Moodarmoly besides Panamaram and Sulthan Bathery (Logan 1897).

New Economy

A number of forest depots were opened for timber trade at the convenient spots in different parts of the region. Such commercialisation of the forest resources was not merely meant for domestic trade; it had serious implications on the global economy. Teak plantations were started by the government in different parts of Madras state including Malabar. Nilambur plantation in the Eranad taluk was one of the model plantations started by the British government, which mainly served the demand of the global market especially that of Britain. The demand for teak wood as an ideal raw material for constructing war ships was tremendous (Menon 1996).

It has been observed that deforestation in the western and northern parts was accelerated sharply in the 19th century to supply railway sleepers for British India. In India and later Burma, the export of teak and other tropical timbers became important. European countries had already become too deforested to supply enough timber for construction and maintenance of their wooden ships before the age of steel ships. Tropical timbers also had a wide range of other construction and manufacturing needs (Gadgil and Guha 1992). Widespread destruction of natural forests and the long run changes in the local ecology have been the consequences of the introduction of the plantation system. Meanwhile, the shifting cultivation (Punam), which was the primary means of livelihood for most of the local communities especially, *adivasis*, was discouraged and prohibited, accusing that it destroys environment.

It has been widely admitted that the imperial expansion of the European powers for four centuries in humid tropical Asia took its toll on the forests generating large scale degradation of forests. In Africa, Asia and America, they introduced commercially driven agriculture and forest policies, which had far reaching repercussions on the concerned societies. During their regime, they found it more profitable to extract surpluses from traditional cultivators through land taxes collected by local intermediaries and through price relationship manipulated by market monopolies aided by trade and credit policies.

Introduction of plantation industry and the production of cash crops for the remote markets made great impact on the local economy and livelihoods. European planters and administrators played a major role in the initiation of the plantation system in the area as well as in the whole country.

Pepper was an indigenous crop in Kerala especially in Malabar having the greatest demand among all the spices of Kerala, which had spurred on ancient trade. Trade relations with the East as well as the West were with 'loose authority structures of local rulers and indigenous traders' until the European interventions for trade monopoly in the 18th century (Baak 1997). Pepper cultivation was not plantation production until this period and a great number of actual cultivators worked in an authoritarian hierarchical organisation, producing pepper for distant markets. It was British East India Company that disintegrated the state controlled pepper production in Travancore and established a commercial agent in order to control the foreign trade of the state. British officials also stimulated the creation of Western oriented crops by indigenous cultivators (ibid.). European trading companies had made their first attempts to grow coffee in south-west India even in the early eighteenth century.

Coffee as a plantation crop, and its systematic cultivation, was introduced into Malabar by Murdock Brown in his plantation at Anjarakkandy in the northern part of Kerala at the end of the 18th century. Later it was introduced into Mananthavady in Wayanad by a few officials at the Mess compound in an experimental way. Between 1830 and 1840, Messrs. Parry and Co, on their way up to the estates on the Baba Budhan hills in Mysore, found the fully grown coffee plants at Mananthavady. According to their suggestion a new coffee estate, 'Pew estate' was opened in the hills. The venture prospered gradually and soon estates sprang up all over the taluk. Tea cultivation was also introduced to Wayanad by Messrs. Parry and Co., who grew it for many years on their Perindotti estate. Since 1892 many coffee estates have been converted into tea gardens.

Large-scale conversion of coffee estates for tea and pepper production took place mainly due to two reasons. In 1865 there was a widespread disease, which devastated many of the coffee estates. Again in 1875, the disease destroyed the plants in the whole district.

The decline of the industry was accelerated by the fall of prices due to increased production in other countries like Brazil (Innes 1908).

Disease and price crash were not confined only to coffee alone. The next turn was for tea and pepper. Price crash of Tea was mainly due to the over production and that of pepper, mainly from wilt disease. Symptoms of this disease in pepper were wilting of the vine and loss of foliage due to diminished supply of sap, which even made the soil too toxic.

A major impact of the introduction of plantation system in the area was the burgeoning of a labour market mainly comprised of immigrant labourers who were brought to Wayanad by compulsion. It is reported that the labour on the estates was totally imported (ibid.) because of the labour shortage in the region. This had been a common characteristic of all plantation economies the world over. Plantation economies have consistently based their profits on cheap labour. Where local workers refused low wage rates, a frequent response has been to recruit from outside national borders. Seasonal labourer and often whole families were employed during harvesting (Spaulding 1977).

In the Wayanad situation, a vast majority of *adivasis* labourers were not ready to cut their bondage with the age- old indigenous production system. Subsequent labour shortage compelled the planters to search for cheap labour, especially from the ‘untouchable’ castes in the plains. This has resulted in the servitude of these labourers in a modern plantation system (Umadevi 1984, Breman 1990, Raviraman 2000). However, a segment of local populations got familiarized with this new system in which wage was paid for labour instead of kind. This had greater implication in terms of their livelihood practices. It was a process by which small cultivators and bonded labourers were introduced to a new regime of labour.

New economy and entrepreneurial natives

The next phase in the evolution of global in the history of Wayanad begins with the immigration of farmers from the southern parts of Kerala which has been known as Malabar migration in which thousands of people moved out of their ancestral villages in search of a promised land in the alien environmental recess of the highlands of Malabar, especially of Wayanad.

In the beginning, British state was sponsoring the move by setting up a colonisation scheme for rehabilitating the army men who fought for them in the Second World War. Along with the colonisation scheme large scale Christian farmers also started to migrate for buying the new fertile lands in the mountains of Malabar. But most of the later migrants, especially those who came in the post independent period, were small peasants who finally started encroaching into the revenue and forest land in Wayanad. However this phase in the history became critical for other native communities who still found it difficult to cope with the market oriented production relations. In the following section, it is tried to briefly sketch this movement of people from South Kerala to North.

Colonisation Scheme

According to the rules of the colonisation scheme implemented in 1948, which was primarily intended for rehabilitating ex-service men, each settler would be given land not exceeding 10 acres for cultivation but the ownership of the land would be retained by the government. The jurisdiction of the central office of the Colonisation scheme, in Ambalavayal, extended over an area of 33,802 acres comprising the villages Sulthan Bathery, Ambalavayal, Nenmeni and Noolpuzha. This office was the sole agency for the administration of colony area, rehabilitation of the landless ex-service men, issuing agricultural grants to the persons settled, and reclamation of land, improvement of agriculture and promotion of a co-operative spirit, among the people with the aim of co-operation in farming, industry and commerce.

For this purpose government made acquisition of 9,802 acres of *patta* land besides 24,000 acres of revenue land. The scheme was primarily financed by the P.W.S.R (Post War Service Reconstruction) fund, while the expenditure for maintaining the administrative office establishments was borne by government (Census of India 1961). According to the figures reported by the colonisation office, 2,940 households were settled under this scheme. These comprised of households of 1917 ex-service men and 209 *adivasis* and the rest were landless civilians, political sufferers, and local resident (ibid).

Under this scheme ex-service men were given grants for land reclamation, agricultural operation, house construction and domestic expenses. Besides this, interest free crops and

loans were given to the agriculturists who are settled here. Under the scheme a paddy – husking co-operative society and clay worker’s society had been organised. In addition, co-operative farming was also encouraged among the agriculturists.

Before 1944 and later, there had been a continuous influx of people to this place from all other parts of the state. Those immigrants other than those who belonged to the colonisation scheme encroached upon the revenue as well as forest land bit by bit and began to cultivate the same. Government had not given permission for the encroachment and it levied prohibitory tax from the encroachers for unauthorised occupation. Those who settled earlier grabbed as much land as possible.

Malabar Migration

In the beginning of the 20th century, it was the turn of Christian entrepreneurs from southern Kerala to experiment with the large-scale production of cash crops. These earlier migrants were the people who got initial exposure to European planters and plantation systems and could internalise the logic of agricultural practices that was required for developing commercially viable agricultural production. The majority of the migrants were Christians belonging to the Syrian catholic denomination. It was the Syrian Christians belonging to the Roman Catholic denomination who were predominant among the migrants (Tharakan 1976, Baak 1997).

Many reasons are given for the aspiration of this section of people in coming forward and experimenting with this new venture. European patronage, by employing them as the clerks and managers in the newly started estates to create an intermediate group above predominant low-caste coolies from the Madras Presidency, had assisted them in earning money and familiarising themselves with the organisation of plantations (Baak 1997). This helped them to invest and start estates in moderate ways after serving their European masters for some period. They were also observed as more ‘entrepreneurial and far more ‘dynamic’ and ‘flexible’ in contrast to Nairs a Hindu forward caste community who enjoyed higher social status. Syrian Christians were largely concentrated in areas like North Travancore and Mundakkayam, which were the most suitable places for the then successful plantation crops, like rubber. Unlike the *Nair tharavad* (joint family) system, in which the elder single person in matrilineage played the dominant role, the

family structure of the Syrian Christians was patriarchal with each male member having claims over the ancestral property. This enabled them to pursue profitable endeavours individually rather than as a family as in the case of Nairs (ibid.). Because of the partitioning of land among the family members Syrian Christians faced severe shortage of land in their own area which forced more and more of them to resort to commercialised agriculture (Tharakan 1976).

Europeans had occupied large tracts of lands in many parts of Travancore with their influence in state politics, while large number of indigenous cultivators grabbed the available government lands. Resultant shortage of land became a major reason for the large-scale migration to Malabar including Wayanad that took place since the 1930s, where large tracts of forests and revenue lands were left open to be encroached as well as vast fallow lands were kept accessible for rent by the landlords. This is why it has been observed that the Malabar migration was the result of the explosive development of plantation crops in Travancore (Baak 1997).

Immigration from southern Kerala had been qualitatively different from the rest of the migrations to Wayanad that took place in different phases of its earlier history. The compelling motive for this greater inflow of human beings was exposure to the market, especially global market as far as the cash crop economy is concerned, and the adoption to a monetised economy.

Mainly, three phases of migration have been recorded. During the first stage between 1920 and 1930, it was mainly big farmers owning considerable acreage of land at their original place who migrated to Wayanad (Tharakan 1976). Pioneering big farmers who started plantations did not stay there permanently, unlike the small farmers, but retained strong links with their parent villages in Travancore.

Later migrants were mainly small farmers and their greater flow occurred in the decade 1940-50. Price fluctuation in the 1930s, a period of recession, would have made impact on these small farmers in Travancore including the losing of land in the context of price crash. These later migrants were the people who already entered into the cash crop cultivation and were vulnerable to the fluctuation of the market. New settlements that emerged during the 1950-1960 period were either off-shoots of earlier settlements in the

nearby areas or independent ones. Number of immigrants in the earlier settlements also increased. Migration to Wayanad continued till the late seventies. The Malabar migration of the Travancoreans is unique in the annals of the migration as it turned out to be a mass movement of half-a-million people which is seen as having occurred without any design or organization or centralised leadership.

Those immigrants from the south had to encounter totally alien environment in Wayanad. They underwent a lot of hardships due to the animosity of local climate, forests and wild animals, diseases and authority. Death by malaria and other diseases in the highlands of Malabar was naturally greater than at the foot of the hills. It has been reported that according to church records the average death rate of the Travancorean immigrants in the 1940s was 177 for 1000 people in an year. The total number of deaths out the settled population of 12000 amounted to 2808 when the normal death rate of Syrian Christian in Travancore was 12 per 1000. Average Indian death rate at that time was 25 per 1000 (Sebastian 2000). It has been reported that besides the adversities of nature and the onslaught of diseases, they were also cheated by the land agents or brokers who collected a good sum from these people as commission, despite the fact that the land value was very cheap in those days.

The majority of the migrated farmers obtained land measuring five to ten acres on lease for 12 years. On several occasions, they found themselves cheated by the agents: both natives and Travancoreans. Many of them were threatened by other claimants to the land they had purchased, even after the land had been developed partially. Rich planters, who arrived earlier for plantation industry, often exploited the poor peasant settlers. 'A kind of slavery or compulsory service' existed in such estates of the region (ibid.68). Peasant settlers were faced by eviction threats from the traditional landlords such as *jenmis*, *eda-jenmis* etc. It created tensions in many parts of the district. They faced eviction threats from the government too, especially after the enactment of The Malabar Private Forest Act of 1946.

Historical Impact on the Present

In the history of native communities of Wayanad there are different moments of colonisations which are marked in their written or narrated histories mainly in relation to the migratory movement of populations from different directions, mainly early migrants belonging to Chetty and Jain communities and in the later stage by Christians and Izhava communities from southern Kerala. However these two streams of migration were qualitatively different. First stream was mainly linked to the wetland paddy cultivation, while the second stream got introduced and expanded due to the cash crop cultivation. Globally embedded market regime started functioning in the region along with the second stream of migration which was fuelled by the motivation of money and profit within a larger system of production and supply (Table 3).

Genesis of the interaction between global and local actually starts in the region along with this stream of migration which took place in different stages in different periods. The ruptures and continuity in the evolution of global and local into the culmination of a development space at present are intersected also with the changes in the local power structures and the evolution of individual and/or communal capabilities in resisting or negotiating these changes also.

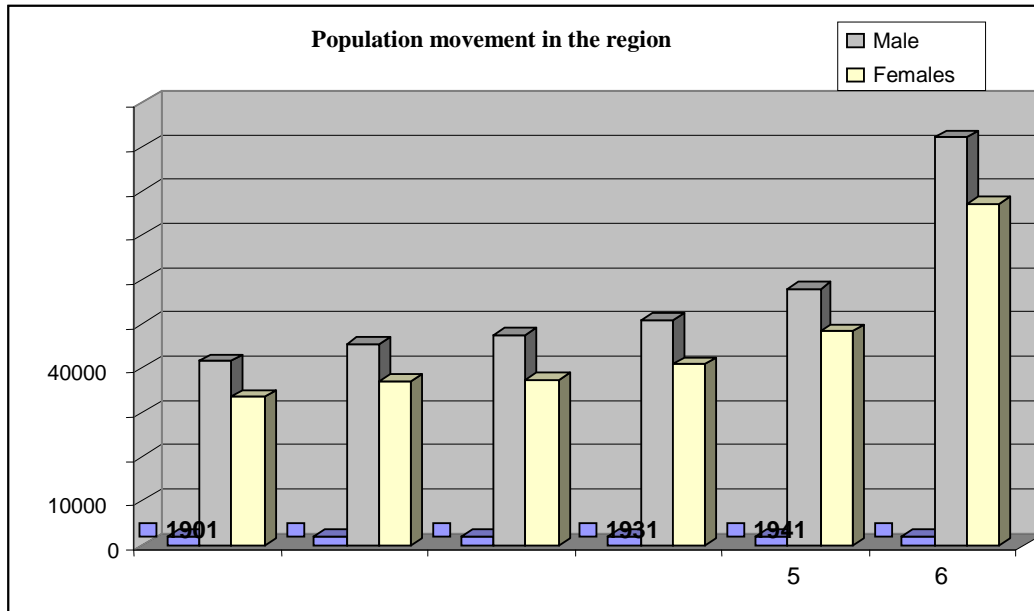
The important consequence of the in-migration and colonisations is naturally the tremendous increase in the number of population. Though Wayanad was not a demographic friendly region and always showed declining trend in the population, the situation was changed dramatically after the colonisation scheme and the migration from southern Kerala. Outgrowth of the inflow affected the demographic composition of the area whereby other communities outnumbered the local population including *adivasis* like Paniyans. According to the first census in 1881, the whole population in Wayanad taluk, with 10 *amsams* including some parts of Gudallur in the Nilgiri district, numbered 88,091 persons in total of whom 76,898 Hindus, 9,056 'Mohammadans', 1,983 were Christians and 154 belonged to other castes. Male were 49,661 and females 38,430 (Logan 1985).

Table2. 3. Mapping the local and global according to historical phases in Wayanad

Phases	Major Manifestations	Combination of Agents involved in the process	Shift in the livelihood base and practices of local communities	
			Livelihood base	Livelihood practices
Earlier Colonial 1790- 1940	New administrative system, Plantation, Monetized market relations	British government Local landlords Plantation owners	wetland cultivation based on reciprocity/ forest /bonded labour/ dry land cultivation based on cash crops	traditional activities including wetland cultivation With no diversification Bonded labour Wage labour in limited scale
Later Colonial 1940-50	New administrative system, Emergence of 'elected' state, Plantation Product and labour Markets	British Local elites Big and small planters, Large holders of land Political parties	Wetland cultivation based on reciprocity, From wet land to dry land	Traditional activities with least diversification Bonded and wage labour
Centralized/ post-independent state 1950- 90	New state centric development, market relations, global market mediated by state agencies	Political parties Local elites Social and political movements Communities with greater empowerment Except marginalized <i>adivasis</i> Women in work space	Wet land cultivation based on reciprocity, From wet land to dry land From land to money Market	Traditional with diversification In agriculture Bonded and wage labour
Decentralized State Post 90s	New decentralized development, increased role of local government and NGOs, increased exposure to global market	Political parties, Communities , NGOs Social movements of marginalized groups, Women (in public space)	From land to money, Market money to money ³	Increased diversification Within agriculture and from agriculture to non agriculture Wage labour

³ Tourism and national- international migrations have been coming in big ways in recent years following the Kerala pattern.

Fig2. 4. Variation in population in Wayanad taluk during 1901-1951



Source Census of Madras (1951)

Increase in the number of the Christian population was another interesting feature of the demographic explosion in this period. The Christian population in Malabar, which stood at around 54,000 out of a district total of over 3 million in 1921, increased to around 1,54,000 in a district total around 47,50,000 in 1951. The Syrian Christian population in Malabar increased from over 21,000 in 1921 to slightly over 23,000 in 1931.

From the population table, it is clear that the largest inflow was during the period of 1941-1971. Total population increased from 1,06,350 in the 1941 to 4,13,815 in 1971. Density of people, that is number of persons per sq.km. also increased dramatically during these years. Though growth rate declined from 1971 to 1981, density of population increased considerably. This shows that there was a shortage of land during this period. The immigrants were mostly small cultivators or agricultural labourers in this period.

Another impact of migration was a shift from the wet land based paddy cultivation to cash crop cultivation. Although, small farmers who immigrated into the area initially cultivated mainly subsistence crops, with limited resources at hand they could shift very slowly to commercialized agriculture. Cultivation of tapioca was introduced in the area

by the immigrants from southern Kerala which they used for their own consumption and sold in the domestic market. Along with this, they began to develop small plots for cultivating coffee and pepper. Cultivation of coffee was more suitable to this area.

Shifting cultivation which fed the local *adivasis* for centuries ended forever partially, due to government policy prohibiting it and also due to shrinkage of the area with the large scale colonisation of plainspeople. Millets like *chama* and *ragi* faded out of the usual menu of the communities like Chetty, Paniyan and Kurichya. Wetland cultivation of paddy remained prominent among all communities as subsistence as well as commercial crop.

The inflow of the greater number of immigrants and their effort to grab land by any means for expanding the cultivation of cash crops was at the cost of the *adivasis*.

Especially among *adivasis* like Paniyans, commercialised cultivation was more or less unknown and they did not attach much value to ownership of land. Some others were vulnerable to illicit liquor which was prepared and supplied by the immigrants in their bid to snatch land from the *adivasis*. With the immigration of plains people, majority of the *adivasis* became landless (Aiyappan 1992, Nair 1911, Nuri-Bird 1987, Menon 1969, Menon 1996) and came to depend on agricultural labour.

Local ecology, consisting of the wet land as well as shifting cultivation along with abundant natural resources, played a great role in the construction of livelihoods in the pre-migration period. Changes brought about by the colonial governance and plantations together transformed the local ecology and economy in the long run.

But it was with the immigration of Kerala people on a massive scale into the region that the life style of the Paniyans underwent dramatic changes. Commercial innovations in the agriculture and the introduction of market relations in production and consumption made them depend upon the cultivation of cash crops and settled population. Newly found demand for dry-land in the area limited their access to natural resources and it also caused the alienation of their own land. Although the state had failed in protecting the tribal rights over the land, it put in place a separate institutional set-up for the 'upliftment' of *adivasi* population, which, however, didn't yield any favourable results.

These populations were main inhabitants in the region of Wayanad since centuries and were adapted to the natural environment of Wayanad amicably. In the later period people belonging to different religions and castes penetrated into Wayanad life. A marked shift in the traditional life happened with the establishment of British supremacy by introducing new production practices and forces, and governance structures which had an inbuilt tendency to create a modern institutional environment. Steps to introduce and promote commercial crops for export through the plantation industries became instrumental in bringing about the global forces within the local arenas of lives and livelihoods. It was the first phase of globalization for this region, which had made unprecedented impacts on the lives of local populations. But this impact was not sudden or direct; instead, it was mediated by the formal and informal institutions in very many ways, purposely as well as unintentionally.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been tried to theoretically understand the important dimensions of globalization which are influencing the fundamental nature of global –local interface. Although many of these processes appear to have manifested in autonomous ways, they are actually intersected according to the logic of capitalism that is expanding on a global scale and producing a space of development which is constantly negotiated by the local agents. In this sense we try to understand the global - local interpenetration as continuous, evolving as well as historical. Accordingly, in the second part of this chapter we tried to interlink again the major dimensions of globalization with the empirical context of Wayanad in its historical background.

In the case of Wayand, the first phase of local–global interpenetration starts with the introduction of plantation sector with the inflow of global capital absorbing the local resources. This is also one stage in a development order completely dictated by colonial regime. System of governance and economy was on par with the empirical interests of the period. This interface has deeper impact upon the local livelihoods in Wayanad like elsewhere.

Second phase of the local–global interface is linked to the processes of nation building under the sovereign command of post independent governments under which

development was a nationalist project, but with strong global embeddedness. This is a phase marked by the consolidation of various indigenous institutions.

Formation of political parties and expansion of representative democracy along with the emergence of strong interest groups at the 'local' characterised the social arena of interaction among the communities in this phase in Wayanad also. Power relations among and within the communities took new turns and local power structures also underwent remarkable changes during the period. Local empowerment in terms of the upward mobility of the erstwhile disadvantaged communities in certain historical circumstances is also realised in congruence with the development of physical infrastructure for creating an access to public education and health.

At present, economic and political dimensions of global through increased exposure to markets and decentralisation of state and development practices are found to be important in the context of Wayanad as far the local communities and their livelihoods are concerned. So, we try to see how the hitherto excluded communities like Paniyans are now engaging with these changes along with others in the long pursuit of their negotiation of a development space and livelihood practices.

Chapter III

COMMUNITIES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT SPACE AND LIVELIHOOD TRAJECTORIES

Introduction

This chapter describes the changes in livelihood practices of local communities in Pulpalli village in Wayanad from the colonial - post colonial periods till recent times. Changes in the livelihood practices are analysed in relation to the periodical shifts in the livelihood base⁴ and *habitus*⁵ of the communities in relation to the changing political and economic dimensions of the local and the global. These two dimensions are found to be significant in creating changes in the lives and livelihoods of people in the long run.

Formation of a development space in the village is discussed here as an outcome of long-term historical changes and hence, a culmination of the interplay between the local and the global, diachronically and synchronically. It is a public space developed over a period, shared by individuals on the basis of their collective aspirations and action for development. In this historical process of creating a horizontal space of social interactions many settler communities hitherto known as 'backward' could emerge as active players in the making of such a development space. But, there are also *adivasi* communities like Paniyanin our study village who have been excluded from taking an active role in this process and even in accessing the development space. This chapter tries to unravel the historical processes which caused changes in livelihood base, practices, and the *habitus* of the communities and the differential nature of their access to the development space.

As a background to the detailed ethnographic history of these processes, the chapter begins with a mapping of physical and population profiles of the village. This introductory section is expected to provide an overview of physical structure of the

⁴ Base is a bundle of resources by which communities organize their practices. Community is defined as real, on-the-ground associations and imagined solidarities that people experience (Gudeman 2000). Communities in our study context are the social groups based on caste and religion.

⁵ *Habitus* is 'understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks' (Bourdieu 1977: 82-83)

village in terms of geographical features, infrastructure, climate, land use etc. and the short description of major communities and their present livelihood practices. This section is intended to provide the material conditions of Pulppalli village and the communities living there in relation to their differential access to various resources and livelihood options.

Physical Profile of the Village

Pulppalli is a typical Wayanad village Panchayat comprising of hill, slopes, valleys and forest. This area is surrounded by forest on three sides as its natural boundaries. Rivers *Kabani* on the western side and *Kannarm* on the eastern side geographically separate Pulppalli from other neighbouring villages. Our base study locale- Kappikkunnu- which is more or less representative of the whole village is one of the administrative wards of Pulppalli Panchayath and Kappikkunnu also represents the same physical features with forest cover almost on three sides.

Around 38% of the total area in Wayanad comes under forest, which is around 8% of the total forest in the state. Forests in Wayanad fall under three categories : (i) Plateau Deciduous; (ii) Tropical Evergreen; and (iii) Tropical Semi-evergreen. The most commonly found is Plateau Deciduous found at about 700-1000 meters above the mean sea level, mostly located on the eastern side of Wayanad. This area has a valuable belt of teak forests of which forest in Pulppalli area belongs. The tropical evergreen forests are found at a height of 3000 meters (Panchayat 1997).

Climate of Pulppalli is also reportedly different from the rest of Wayanad, dry and less availability of rain, comparable to the neighbouring Mysore plains of Karnataka state (Panchayat 1997). Though district-wise data show the decline in rainfall as a general trend across Wayanad, severity was more visible in Pulppalli during the early period of my field work.

Land use pattern in the village was dissimilar to the rest of Wayanad, with the intensified cultivation of cash crops like coffee, pepper, rubber, banana, and ginger. Wayanad justified its name as the lands of paddy fields until recently when massive

conversion of paddy fields began. With a high altitude, the district has a characteristic cultivation of perennial plantation crops and spices. The major plantation crops include coffee, tea, pepper, cardamom and rubber. Coffee-based farming system is a notable feature of Wayanad. Coffee is grown both as a pure crop and as a mixed crop along with pepper. Pepper, rubber and coconuts are cultivated on the top plateau and coffee is cultivated on the slopes. Paddy, banana, coconut and areca nut are cultivated mainly in the plains area. Pulppalli was particularly known for the intensive cultivation of commercial crops. Pepper mono-cropping was a widespread practice till recently in many of the areas in Pulppalli. In some parts of the village pepper is still cultivated as a single crop. Vast stretches of wet land which was traditionally used for paddy cultivation, has been widely converted for the cultivation of permanent and semi-permanent cash crops.

Another major characteristic physical structure of the location is the high density of roads, soled as well as metalled. Pulppalli Panchayat has the highest number and largest area of roads in the state. According to a Panchayat estimate, there are roads more than 200 km long. Economic and topographical reasons are cited for the high density of roads here. This is one area in Wayanad where hilly terrains are relatively less. This is also an area where heavy timber-logging is reported

Currently there are four metalled roads in the study locale of which, one perceived by the people as the main road is connecting Pulppalli town to many important towns in the district. The other three roads are off-shoots to the interiors of the locality. Study locality is a constellation of a number of neighbourhoods which are now well connected by a number of small roads like a nerve system.

Different neighbourhoods are well connected by roads metalled or non- metalled. Mud roads are seen only in few stretches. Some of the special roads to the *adivasi* settlements constructed under tribal welfare schemes in the village Panchayat are non-metalled. One such road exists in the study village also. Our study locality is divided by three important parallel roads apart from the main road which touches these three roads at different points. Other roads are crisscrossing the area in

different directions. Boulder roads inside the forest are maintained by the Forest Department which are mainly used by *adivasis* in the interior settlements.

Administrative units

Under the state's revenue system, the district is divided into revenue divisions, taluks and revenue villages, while under *the local self-government* the district comprises of statutory towns, development blocks and Panchayat. Pulppalli Panchayat, having 16 administrative wards is under a single revenue division consisting of 3 taluks and 48 revenue villages. The district has three development blocks: Mananthavady, Sulthan Bathery and Kalpetta and 24 Panchayats. Pulppalli village Panchayat comes under Sulthan Bathery block Panchayat, the head quarters of which lies around 20 kilometres away from the village in Sultan Bathery town. District headquarters is in Kalpetta town, about 40 kilometres away.

Population

According to the 2001 census, the total population in Wayanad was 6, 72,128 of which male population was 3, 41,958 and female 3, 30,170. An important feature of the population profile of the district is that it stands first in the number of *adivasi* population among the districts in the state. 36% of the total *adivasi* population in the state belongs to Wayanad district (Census 2001).

This village Panchayat also shares the population characteristics of the region. In Pulppalli, the total number of population is 34293 of which 17425 male and 16868 female. Total number of *adivasi* population in the area comes to 7143 (Census 2001). In this Panchayat, there are people belonging to three major religions i.e. Hindus, Christians and Muslims. *Adivasis* are generally considered to be of Hindu

faith. Though Christianity is much more influential in this part of the region, conversion of *adivasi* or non-*adivasi* population has not been reported on any significant scale. In the study village, the total number of the population is 3051. Number of female population is 1487 and male 1564. The total number of tribal population in the village is 967 with 421 male members and 546 female members. Christians are 734 and Hindu *Ezhavas* come to 527 (Survey data 2004).

Profile of the Communities

Communities in the village can be broadly classified into two categories, i.e. settler and native communities. This classification is mainly based on their relationship to the livelihood system of cash crop cultivation and modern development in the village. The same classification is found meaningful to the local population also. Settler communities are the major chunk of the population who migrated mostly from the southern districts of Kerala in connection with cash crop cultivation. Rest of the communities, who called themselves “the people of Wayanad” by asserting their identity as native people, include traditional cultivators and tribal or *adivasi* population.

Christians and Hindu *Ezhavas* are the major settler communities in the village. There are also other OBC and upper caste communities among the settlers. They come to around 57% of the total population in the village. Christians are the majority with 24% of the total population, followed by Hindu *Ezhavas* with 17%. Others constitute 16% of the total population (Table 1).

Among the native population, there are three non tribal cultivator groups generally known by the generic name *Chetty*, but divided in three different groups. They are

Wayanad *Chetty* who consider themselves as the people from Wayanad, Mandatan *Chetty* who are considered originally from Tamil Nadu and Idanadan *Chetty* from Karnataka. This differentiation is based mainly on the dialects they speak. While the Waynadan *Chetty* use Malayalam, the native language of Kerala, Mandatan *Chetty* are speakers of Tamil, and Idanadan *Chetty*, Kannada speakers. This is quite natural as Wayanad shares its boundaries with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Settled wetland cultivation in Wayanad is associated with the *Chetty* communities. Together, they constitute 12 % of the total population in the village.

Rest of the communities among the native population are *adivasis* or tribal communities. Among the *adivasis*, there are significant differences based on their traditional livelihoods. Though Mullu-Kuruman belong to *adivasi* groups in the village they traditionally practiced cultivation and cattle rearing like *Chetty* communities and therefore, more proximate to the later in livelihood practices. They were also traditional shifting cultivators. Paniyan and Kattunayikkan are the two other tribal communities in the village who are considered traditional bonded labourers and forest gatherers; they had traditionally never occupied land for cultivation. Paniyans are the largest community among the *adivasis* in the village. Percentage of Paniyan and Mullu-Kuruman in the village is 19 and 7 respectively. Mullu-Kuruman comes to around 5% of the village population.

Settler population in the village is generally known among the other native communities as *thaaaze nattukar* (people from low lands) or simply *nattukar* (*plains-people*). After almost three generations of migration, this categorisation is not at all

acceptable to the settlers. They refuse this kind of differentiation⁶. Contrarily, most of the native people in the village assert this difference. They call themselves the *Wayanattukar* (people of Wayanad).

Wayanad is known today for the increased marginalisation of farmers and workers, but this perception has not made any changes to the internal division between settlers and natives on the basis of perceived identities.

Table 3.1. Settler and Native Communities (Based on their population) In the village

Local Categories		Major communities	% to the total population	
<i>Settler communities</i>		Christians	24	57
		Hindu Ezhavas	17	
		Others	16	
<i>Native</i>	Traditional wet land cultivators	<i>Chetty s</i> (Mandatan, Wayanadan, Idanaadan)	12	12
	<i>tribal/ativasi</i>	Mullu-Kuruman	5	

⁶ Native classification is often sensitive and sometimes problematic. The region has witnessed alienation of *ativasi* land on a massive scale over the years mainly due to encroachment by settlers. There is always a fear among a section of settlers who either encroached the land or bought it from second or third party about losing these lands. So the settler population do not want the label 'outsiders'.

	communities	Paniyas	19	31
		Kattunayikkans	7	

Source Field survey(2007)

Native Communities - Adivasis in the village

Here, we focus on Paniyan community as the case of a marginalised *adivasi* group to see how they differentially negotiate with the historical changes in comparison to others, especially settler communities. Though the term *adivasi* means original inhabitants, all the population coming under it do not form a single homogenous category, in our study village as well as in Wayanad. The three *adivasi* communities in our study are, as noted elsewhere, Mullu-Kuruman, Paniyan and Kattunayikkan. These groups are different in terms of their livelihood practices as well as access to various resources. Among them Paniyan and Kattunayikkan are marginalised sections without landholdings and were traditionally bonded labourers and forest gatherers respectively. As we have seen, Paniyans are a numerically large *adivasi* community in the village.

In the following section, short descriptions are given on these three groups in order to understand the differences among the *adivasis* in terms of their livelihood trajectories.

Mullu-Kuruman

Unlike the other two groups, mode of living of Mullu-Kuruman has been substantially different for a long period owing to their possession of land and cattle. They did cultivation, especially shifting cultivation locally known as '*punam krishi*'

and reared cattle in large numbers, probably in a later period under the influence of *Chetty* immigrants.

Kurumas enjoyed superior status in the traditional local life owing to their capability for cultivation, ability to undertake major hunting and exposure to other immigrant communities. Mullu-Kuruman considered themselves superior to *Uralikuruma*, Paniyans and *Kattunayikkans* and inferior only to *Kurichiyas* in Wayanad.

Kattunayikkan

Kattunayikkans are known as the ``traditional gatherers of Wayanad'' as they depend mainly on forest products for the survival. Food gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping are their traditional occupations. Women also play different roles in agriculture, fishing, collection of fuel, fetching of potable water and participate in social affairs. In our village, though a few Kattunayikkans are land-owning cultivators, majority of them are now agricultural labourers.

Kattunayikkans have been often described as indigenous tribal people living in open spaces all day long, and sleeping round a lighted fire at night (Shashi 1995). Huts, even if they occupy, were of poor condition. They were long, but very low, and the floor is level with the ground. The sides were of flattened bamboo and the roof made with straw or grass. Often the *Kattunayikkans* lived under windbreaks resting against tree or in a hollow of trees.

According to descriptions, majority of Kattunayikkan subsisted on roots, herbs and honey available in the forests of the Western Ghats and consumed all kinds of flesh, but avoided eating beef and drinking alcohol.

In later period, settlers also started to use them as labourers especially for clearing the plots, for bringing building materials from forest and constructing huts. As said earlier, they are usually seen engaged in a variety of activities like gathering for consumption as well as trade, fishing, honey collecting, hunting etc (ibid). In general, they did not set out upon any one particular forest-based activity.

Paniyan

Origin myth of Paniyan traces their beginning to a mountain *ippi mala*. There was a brother and sister pair who came to this area from *ippi mala* whom they call *ippimala muthan* (grandfather) and *muthi* (grandmother), as the myth goes. These siblings, children of sky and earth, are considered their ancestors. According to the myth, as directed by an oracle from their gods on the mountain the pair mated and had children, giving birth to the lineage of Paniyas. Narrating this story of their origin an old *Paniyan mooppan* in the village remarked that they were in Wayanad since time immemorial. According to early literature, Paniyans are the erstwhile 'bonded labourers' in Wayanad (Panoor 1971, Nair 1976, Aiyappan 1992). They were obliged to do agricultural work for a period of one year under the local landowners. Masters or land owners had every right to hand him over to others for a fixed price after the completion of the work in the respective year. This system was known as '*vallippani*' and in some other parts as '*kundelppani*' (Nair 1976). Their cultural past before evolving the *vallippani* system is unknown and it has been reported that they were 'domesticated' by the local landlords after capturing them from their wandering life within the forest. But in my field study, such a representation of Paniyan bonded labour has been denied by both Paniyans and *Chettys*. Although everyone subscribes the existence of a bonded relationship between Paniyan and *Chetty* and the vertical nature of power relations in favour of *Chettys*, presenting it as a slavery system that once existed is considered unjust. It is in fact a perceptual issue which we will discuss elsewhere.

In the colonial ethnographic reports the Paniyans are portrayed as a strange and indifferent group of people 'naturally inferior' to other groups and inherently carrying 'mischievous instincts' (Thurston 1907). According to Thurston's description some of them had got exposure to the European estates where they got wages in cash.

It is only in the recent decades that they were completely freed from the bonded labour system⁷ and fully absorbed into the local labour markets. The formation of new settlements along with the immigration from southern Kerala and shrinkage of land restricted the mobility of Paniyans within the region and they were compelled to continue their stay within the settlement by ending the yearly shifts of labour.

Chetty Communities

The three types of Chetty communities in the village- Wayanadan, Idanadan, Mandatan- are considered early Hindu migrants who came in different points of time from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states, but there is no evidence for this other than their different dialects. But, many prominent members of the Wayanadan Chetty community do not consider themselves migrants. They believe they are indigenous to Wayanad.

Many among the Chetty community in the village now claim scheduled tribe status as they feel they are also indigenous to the region. Some of the local historians of the community challenge many references made by known historians alleging their position to be based on colonial historiography. They criticize the work of C. Gopalan Nair who was the sub collector of Wayanad who wrote a book in 1911 under the title 'People of Wayanad' at the direction of the British collector. In this book, he had described the Chetty communities as equal to Nair community in the plains. Krishnan Chetty, who is a retired state government official engaged in serious research on the history of his community and Wayanad region, challenges these assumptions⁸. Citing their own rituals and traditional practices Krishnan Chetty rejects any suggestion of Chetty having had any link with caste system or the

⁷ Slave labour was legally abolished in the British period and a law was enacted in 1862. Kerala government enacted another law in 1962 which ensured 10 cents of land for each landless families including that of bonded labourers. But a diluted form of bonded labour was practiced in Wayanad till the late 1970s.

⁸ Construction of own histories by community according to the demands of present is some extent part of 'invention of tradition'. This kind of construction is not some thing specific to Chetty community alone. I met one 'progressive' scholar activist in Wayanad who is an Orthodox Christian writing a book to establish a link between ancient Jewish population and Wayanad region through an ancient migratory route and want to dispute the division of native and settler population from a Christian perspective. But attempts like writing indigenous history of Chetty community provide more insights from an *emic* perspective about the community and its past.

mainstream Hindu pantheon which he contends, was introduced by Hindu colonialism represented by the Nair occupation of Wayanad. There was a loose concept of caste, but it was to maintain the purity of the group and not in any way connected to the production process. “If someone asks about my father, he was a *Chetty*, and about grandfather, he was also a *Chetty*, and so was his grandfather. That is why we (Chetty and Nair) did not intermarry. Kuruma and Paniyan did not have intercourse with our ladies and we did not do it with theirs too”, says he empathetically. According to him they lived toiling on the soil along with the Paniya, Kuruman and Kattunayikkan communities. Land did not belong to any individual, but only to the family. They had kept hundreds of cattle too. “We all worked in the fields. Our fathers, grand fathers, children, all together, along with Paniya, Kuruma etc. Our ladies did not work outside, they prepared food for us. If we did not work, Paniyans too had to starve,” he tries to portray an ideal situation where all the native communities co-existed harmoniously. However, he admits that they did not take food from Paniya, Kuruma or Kattunayikkan. However, to him, the differences and caste based exploitation in the region were the contribution of Nairs⁹.

Whatever may have been the historical facts about their past, *Chetty* communities might have been ‘*tribalised*’ to an extent, given the secluded situation of this community. In the case of our study village an ecological recess was evident with three sides of the village surrounded by forest and vast tracts of marshy field surrounded by the hills. There are other neighboring regions also like the Nilgiris here early Hindu migrants from the plains were ‘*tribalised*’ in many of their practices and native tribal communities were contrarily Hinduised through their livelihood interactions. Hierarchical division among the communities according to caste-based

⁹ Historically a number of Nayar families were brought to Wayanad region according to the directive of Kottayam Raja by dividing the region into different *Nadus* (*principalities*). Though there are no traditional Nair families in the study village there was influence of the chieftain families in the respective Naadu. Those *adivasis* under the direct control of these Nair and other landlord communities in a rigid caste system transformed literally to ‘slave castes’, especially in the colonial period.

social distances is a classical example of Hinduization processes over the years in both cases¹⁰.

Settler Communities

Christians and Hindu Ezhavas are the dominant communities in the village. They are pre-dominant numerically as well as in terms of the possession of land which is the basic resources in an agrarian society. Christians in the village belong to different denominations including Syrian and Roman Catholic and other new evangelic groups like believers' church, seventh day Adventists etc,. However, Roman Catholic believers are predominant in the village.

Ezhavas are one of the other backward communities (OBC) of Kerala. They have emerged as a strong community in the short period of social transformation through embracing modernity and development in a rapid pace (Osella and Osella 2000). In the village, a number of Ezhava families have become successful in cash crop cultivation and further diversifying their assets and livelihood practices in the new economic avenues along with Christian community members.

These two communities are highly organized groups in the village. For the Christians, church is all powerful and the community is very cohesive with an efficient organizational order centered on church and with sound channels for internal communication.

Interestingly Ezhavas are now-a- days trying to follow the rigidity of the church by replicating its functioning through establishing a cohesive social organization through their community organization, SNDP (Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam) which was established by the spiritual leader and the social reformer Sree Narayana Guru. This organization has a strong influence among the Ezhava community in southern Kerala. Within the village to SNDP has established a good organizational hierarchy with a strong internal communication network.

¹⁰ In the case of Nilgiri mountains native communities are emically perceived according to the social distance based on the acceptance of cooked food. Parallel to Wayanad experience there are also native communities like early Hindu migrants Badagas along with tribal communities Paniya, Kota, Kuruma etc. see. Paul Hockings 1998, Blue Mountains, OUP.

Among the other communities belonging to settler population in the village, there are a few households belonging to the Forward Caste Nairs, and some Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Other Eligible Castes (OEC). There are also a few households belonging to scheduled caste communities¹¹. Families belonging to some of the Hindu communities in the village are not part of the settler population from southern Kerala. Elderly members in these few families, mainly from neighboring districts of Wayanad, reached here in the first half of the twentieth century to work as school teachers.

Spatial Distribution of Communities

Our base study village is comprised of four major *kunnu* (hills) that lay parallel, namely Karymbathi kunnu, Mundakutti kunnu, Kolarattu kunnu, and Kappikunnu. A '*kunnu*' referred to the traditional neighbourhood comprised of generally landholding Chetty households and labouring Paniyanor other *adivasi* households based on a notion of territoriality. The place name prefixed with a Kunnu is the household name of traditional Chetty joint family in the study locale. Village was clustered around these *Kunnu* neighbourhoods unlike today's dispersed pattern.

Surrounding each *kunnu* lay an area of large paddy fields. In the village, all the traditional Chetty houses overlook paddy fields and houses of the settled farmers mainly face towards the roads. Migrant farmers occupied mainly the garden-land, which had no importance in the *Chetty* scheme of agriculture. Tribal colonies, especially of Paniyas, are in the secluded locations of the village. These settlements are inside the forest (Table 3.2). Hardly any traditional huts are found in the tribal settlements as most have been replaced with the tiled and concrete structures

¹¹ Forward Caste (FC), Other Backward Caste (OBC), Other Eligible Caste (OEC) and Scheduled Caste (SC) are constitutional categories made in relation to reservation policy and positive discrimination.

constructed under the housing scheme carried out by the state government. The number of concrete houses has increased considerably across all sections of people.

Table3. 2. Paniyanand Kattunayikkan Settlements in the village

Name of the settlement Colony	Name of the communities	Number of households	Erstwhile landlord communities	Forest Proximity (Y/ N)
Puthiyatam	Paniya	10	Idanatan Chetty	Y
Thazhe kappu	Paniya	23	Wayanadan Chetty	N
Mele kappu	Paniya	42	Wayanadan Chetty	Y
	Kattunayikkan	7		
Paikkam moola	Kattunayikkan	28	Wayanadan Chetty	Y
Kurukkanmoola	Paniya	36	Wayandan Chetty	Y*
Mataparambu	Kattunayikkan	6	Wayanadan Chetty	Y*
Athirattukunnu	Paniya	5	Wayanadan Chetty	N
Manalambam	Paniya	5	Wayanadan Chetty	Y
Mangakanti	Paniya	9	Mandatan Chetty	Y

Source Panchayat Development Report Year (2004)

* These settlements are inside the forest.

After the colonisation of the settler communities physical characteristics of the locality were thoroughly changed with the introduction of new meanings for the spatial construction. Development of the local infrastructure in terms of the construction of roads, bridges, electricity and public utility centres such as schools and health centres reconfigured the spatial distribution of the communities.

Communities concentrated on both sides of the roads are mainly settlers. *adivasi* and other traditional land owning communities largely remain in their old settlements. Most of the early roads in the village were constructed by the settlers; in the later years many roads were built into the tribal settlements under different government schemes which were also utilised more by the settler population as their understanding of its utility was higher.

In our study locality on the sides of the main road are mostly the well-to-do households belonging to settler communities. Usually these pieces of land are more expensive than land in the interior village. Most of the occupants are relatively early settlers who could occupy such lands and some of the other households in the same route are of salaried groups who bought the plots paying the price in a later period. Those Chetty and *adivasi* neighbourhoods within the forest have poor connections to these main roads.

Well-to-do households situated on the sides of the main road in the locality are seen to have built strong brick walls alongside the plot, demarcating the boundary from the road and put up iron gates. Many households in the lower economic strata use a kind of thorny shrub fence for the same purpose. No *adivasi* household in the locality is found maintaining such walls, but some of them have tried to emulate the practice of fencing even though there are no roads at all.

Natives and settlers- Identity and livelihood practices

In this portion we try to make a comparison of present livelihood practices of three categories of communities i.e. settler, traditional cultivators and *adivasis*, by focusing on Christian and Ezhavas, *Chetty* and Paniyans respectively.

Cash crop cultivation is the base for most of the communities in the village for organizing their livelihood activities. Large section of settler communities and *Chettys* combine land and household labour in the production process, while *adivasi* Paniyans depend merely on their own labour in constructing their livelihoods. Currently, local people across these categories depend on cash income for a living, through their participation in the market ruled production process. Other two important sources of income-based livelihoods are non agricultural sector which includes temporary and quasi-permanent manual jobs, regular salaried employment and collection of forest produces. Here forest collection is the exclusive source of livelihoods for marginalized *adivasis* like Kattunayikkan.

It is possible to categorise three different sets of livelihoods on the basis of the major occupations from which income is derived, despite the various combinations of livelihood diversifications of people at the individual and household levels. According to this categorization of initial livelihoods, market oriented agriculture seems to predominate in the village. Following this is non – agricultural, formal employment. Next in importance is the marginal collection of forest produces. This is the income source exclusively for the forest dependent *adivasi* communities. However, within the village a few settler families are also seen combining agricultural and non agricultural livelihoods. Constant flow of money is found to be determining the stability of livelihoods in the village. It is meaningful to make a comparison of each set of livelihoods across the communities which would explain the differences with regard to the choices of living for settlers, *adivasi* and other natives, especially for *Chettys*.

Table 3.3. Agrarian based livelihoods (Percentage distribution of workers according to community and main occupation)

Communities	Cultivators	Labourers
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Settlers	Christians	41.3	9.1
	Ezhavas	9.8	15.2
	Others	9.3	15.1
<i>Chetty s</i>		22.2	9.4
Adivasis	Paniya	4.7	39.1
	Others	12.7	12.1

Source. Nair and Vinod(2007)

As per this classification highest number of cultivators in the village belongs to Christian community. Meanwhile Paniyan community constitutes the largest chunk of agrarian workers in the village. Christians are making 41.3 percentages of total cultivators in the village. Ezhava community constitutes around 10 per centage of total cultivators in the village. As traditional wet land cultivators *Chetty* community has its members with 22 percentages of total cultivators in the village. In the case of Paniyas, though they are the second largest in population, in making a living by cultivation, they are far behind other populations. But, around 40 percent of the total agricultural workers belong to Paniyan community (Table 3.3).

Table 3.4 shows the participation of different communities in the livelihood activities in non-agricultural sector, mainly non agricultural manual labour. Timber trade is one of the major areas providing work in the non agricultural sector in the village. There are also drivers, carpenters, painters though not in significant numbers. Regular employment in the formal sector is another area other than agriculture to provide a stable income and relatively stable livelihood.

Table 3. 4. Non-agrarian based livelihoods (percentage of community members having employment with fixed income)

Communities		Non - agriculture labour	Regular/ salaried	Professional / technical
Settlers	Christians	12.5	59.7	67.0

	Ezhavas	20.7	21.1	-
	Others	41.6	-	33
Chetty s		13.1	-	-
Adivasis	Paniya	5.7	-	-
	Others	6.4	19.2	-

Source Nair and Vinod (2007)

Even though Christian community constitutes only about one-fifth of the workforce, they are the main contributors in the more stable sector like regular salaried employment, professional and technical jobs. In fact two-thirds of the professionals, 60% of the salaried class, are from this community.

As already noted, livelihoods that are forest-dependent are of least value. Traditional forest dwelling community, Kattunayikkan is involved in the forest related livelihood activities. In their case they live within the peripheries of the forest belt. They have been forest dwellers for a long time and are the only people depending on forest produce for a living. Agricultural labour is the only alternate occupation for the community. One speciality of this area is the possibility of a forest-based livelihood. Kattunayikkan is the only community having primary dependence on forest with the collection and selling of non-timber forest produces.

Table 3.5. Forest based Livelihoods

Communities		Forest dependency
Settlers	Christians	-

	Ezhavas	-
	Others	-
<i>Chetty s</i>		-
Adivasis	Paniya	-
	Others (Kattunayikkan)	100

Source Nair and Vinod (2007)

When we analyse the spectrum of communities and their livelihoods, we find that the Christian community has more livelihood options and Paniyas, the least. Ezhavas are also able to diversify their livelihood options, next only to Christians. But within the communities, households are differentially capable of making their options, though we don't focus much on it here. Paniyans and Kattunayikkans are occupationally the least diversified groups in the area, having a nominal presence in the non-agricultural sector.

However, in the case of our village, these differences in making livelihood options at the level of communities or households are linked to various capabilities in accessing or not accessing resources like land, education, social and political networks which are acquired through long historical processes. The local-global dynamics played an important role in shaping the local history throughout the colonial and post colonial periods. Meanwhile, indigenous ecology and religion seemed to dominate the creation of a *habitus* for the local communities in pre-colonial periods. Income-based livelihoods in the village at present are the outcome of a long historical process with livelihood bases for the communities in different times.

Livelihood Practices in the Pre-colonial Period

Demarcation of historical periods using qualifiers like 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' etc. may be questionable in the case of Wayanad as its native people and nature had witnessed different movements of colonization in the annals of its history. From the perspective of local communities, they have seen forces of internal and external

colonialisms at different historical points if the nation state is taken as the unit of reference. However, in this study the term colonial explicitly refers to British colonialism which represents the genesis of the 'global' in our study context. It integrated the local population and resources with an international system of political economy. It introduced a governance system which laid the seeds of fundamental changes in the livelihood practices of the communities.

Writing the tradition of native communities may be problematic in the absence of a definite account of the local history prior to the colonial period. Many things viewed now as traditional in the 'authentic' texts and in the people's versions of histories might be proved as something with recent origin in a deeper probe. 'Invented traditions' are the results of varied categories of perceptions among the local communities which may create pitfalls in the re-presentation of the past. In such a context, description of an ethnographic past of a community or region has its own limitations.

In the pre- British period, Wayanad became part of the Hindu Kingdom of Kottayam Malabar in the medieval period and hence under the control of a number of Nair chieftains. This was one of the defining moments of internal colonialism in its history which consolidated the pan- Hindu *jaati* (caste) based relations of production through the establishment of a caste based power structure even absorbing the local communities in its fold. In the case of this village such rigid caste structures are not reported in its early history. As an ecological recess, the village was insulated to an extent from the clutches of landlords and a rigid caste system. It remained as a low profile abode of Chetty and *adivasi* communities till the time of colonial expansion. Concept of caste-based social division on the basis of purity was loosely followed in the social life.

In the following section, we describe the traditional interrelationships among the native communities and the livelihood practices in detail. We try to trace out various social institutions –before the origin of local-global dynamics in the village- which controlled and mediated their social interactions and livelihoods. Many of these

traditional interrelationships have larger ramifications, as they are found influencing and shaping livelihood practices at present too.

Native Communities in a Traditional Social Subsistence Space and Livelihood Practices

People belonging to adivasi and Chetty communities in the village consider themselves as the natives of Wayanad as they share a common past in a closed ecological setting of forest and valleys of this region. Local life was with minimum external influences. Life in this period is viewed by Chettys and *adivasis* as a stark contrast with the lives of those communities who came from the plains in the late centuries and cleared the forest for converting it permanently for plantations. They make this kind of differentiation mainly within themselves; such distinctions are made very rarely in public. The settler communities enjoy a numerical dominance and clout in the village today and the 'native' populations do not wish to offend the 'intruders'. However, privately they assert the difference very strongly since their livelihood practices have been dramatically changed after the 'intrusion' of others in to their 'native' life.

Adivasis are considered more indigenous to the area as original inhabitants than those who arrived later. Though constitutionally and administratively they have been grouped as a single category, viz. 'Scheduled Tribe' (ST) population, they are socially, economically and culturally different in actual contexts. In our study area they are divided into three major sub-groups. Apart from Paniyas, Mullu-Kuruman and Kattunayikkan are the two other scheduled tribe communities in the village. Though it is not clear who came first to the region, researchers generally agree with the idea of the pre-existence of *adivasis* compared to other communities including

Chettys. But today, there is a consensus among these communities to perceive themselves as indigenous in comparison with the migrants from southern Kerala.

Paniyans are numerically the most predominant in the village than Kattunayikkans and Kurumas are consecutively in second and third positions in terms of their population. Remote history of these communities is too vague to trace the prehistoric livelihood practices in the area. In colonial and post independent anthropological writings Kurumas are represented as shifting cultivators, Kattunayikkans as forest gatherers and Paniyans mainly as bonded labourers.

Social Organisation

In the village, various communities were clearly linked to a livelihood system based on wet land paddy cultivation. There are three types of *Chettys* found in Wayanad as well as in our study area, as earlier noted. *Chetty* community was the originator of settled wet land cultivation of paddy. In our study village relationship between *Chetty* communities and Paniyanlabourers was at the core of the traditional livelihood system based on wet land cultivation.

A coherent social organization was the main feature of all the communities in the village. For the Wayanadan *Chetty* community, who is dominant in our village, there were five *sthanikanamar* (chieftains) as the headmen for the five *naadu* (areas) in the north east side of Wayanad region. Five nadu comprised of Cheeral, Kolappalli, Thomatt, Peruvakkott and Chethalayam. The eldest *karanavar* in a particular lineage in Cheeral naadu had played the role of chief headman of all these *naadu*. The community had a common body to discuss its internal affairs which was known as *Kazhakam* based at *Cheeral*. This body, as a council of elders, could sort out the

differences and conflicts within the community. *Chetty* community in this village came under the purview of Chethalayam *Chetty*.

This *naadu* was further divided into different *desams* (locales) and *desams* into *kunnu* (hills). In our village, *Kaappil* was the main *kunnu* family and elder *karanavar* in that family had a special role in their life cycle rituals. He had to be first informed in case of marriage, death and other rituals. Eldest *karanavar* in the Paniyan family bonded to this particular *Chetty* family also was important for the rest of the Paniyan community in the village.

Everybody in the family took part in the production process and nobody disobeyed the decisions of elders taken in common interest. Issues within the community were dealt with at corresponding level i.e. *naadus*, *desam*, or *kunnu*. A dispute between the members in the same village was dealt with by the elders in the corresponding *kunnu* under the headship of a particular family *karanavar*. A dispute between the members belonging to different *kunnu* divisions were dealt with by the *karanavars* belonging to the corresponding *Kunnu*. Within the *nadu* division it was dealt with by a council of *karanavars*. In the village *karanavar* of *kaappil* family belonging to Kappikunnu (the name derived from *Kaappil*, the family name and *Kunnu*, the social division) neighbourhood was the head who handled the disputes between members in the village.

Paniyans were divided into different clans (*kolam*) though hardly anyone can identify it at present. Integration of Paniyan community into a *valli* system of production might have disintegrated their larger unit of social organization to a great extent. However families in each *kunnu* neighborhood in the village were related to each other by blood or marriage. Mostly, settlements of Paniyans were formed by a

kindred consisting of the members belonging to a patri-lineage and their affinal relatives. It might include brothers and sisters and their spouses and children. However, a *mooppan* (headman), normally the eldest in the lineage, was in charge of these families. Sometimes a *mooppan* could control two or three settlements across the *kunnu* neighbourhoods in the locality.

Within the community *mooppan* was the person who performed rituals during different ceremonial occasions like marriage, puberty, burial etc. They had to know long sequences of different categories of chants according to the contexts of ceremonies which were orally passed on through generations and learned by heart. The position of *mooppan* had to be recognized by corresponding *Chetty* families who brought them to work. In certain cases there might be a *mooppan* who was not ritualistically legitimised by the community, but assigned the status by the *Chetty* families. In such cases, that *Chetty* family was responsible to hire a ritually sanctioned *mooppan* from other villages during the ceremonies. They would bear all the expenditure – normally two *sers* of paddy, some oil, betel leaves and tobacco.

Mooppan was responsible for maintaining discipline among the members in family. It was told that nobody would disobey the commands of *mooppan* with regard to work and life. He was treated with utmost respect. He acted according to the ‘truth and justice’ of the community under the perceived surveillance of their god *gulikan*.

Yearly festival for making offerings to god *gulikan* for one week, known as *theyyakkolu*, was an occasion for asserting the internal order of the community. All the families and relatives would be invited for the occasion. It was conducted annually at the end of harvesting season normally in April. In the night a communal feast was served followed by dance and music in the night. The cost of the feast was met from a common pool from family members and relatives.

Interesting part of this festival with regard to their social organizations is an assembly on the last night. All the complaints and disputes were settled in this assembly. Those who were found guilty were punished by *mooppan*. He would use his bamboo staff on this occasion to beat the persons who were found guilty. It was his discretion to decide the severity of punishment. Young couple who had eloped

would be punished at this ceremony in order to legitimise their marriage. All the internal tensions and ill feelings among the community members in the village were supposed to be cleared in this night. The next day marked a new beginning for all the members.

'Valli'system of Agricultural Production

Though the history of *Chettis'* arrival in *Wayanad* remains obscure they were people well equipped with the technical know-how of settled agriculture and they could 'domesticate' (the term was used by Thurston in his book) the *Paniyan* labour and engage them in paddy cultivation in the wetlands and dry lands. They possessed the pre-modern technology in carrying out the agricultural operations for which they had used locally available raw materials. Their simple but efficient technologies such as *njavari*, an instrument they used for ploughing the murky fields and *kommakuda* a special umbrella made out of palm leaves to cover the entire body of the worker while working on rainy days were appropriate for the local environment. Agriculture was a collective affair as acute natural hazards compelled them to lead a collective life.

Valli is grain of paddy which was cultivated in the typical marshy lands of the area.

Chetty community used to manage the lands especially wet lands, and used *Paniyan* community to work on them. In return they were given paddy i.e. valli. So this system of production is locally known as *vallippani* (labour for valli) in contrast to *koolippani* (labour for wages) of modern times. *Chetty* communities and *Paniyans* in the village were interlinked through this specific system of agricultural production.

It was a labour tying mechanism to assure enough labour to undertake agricultural operations each year. On the day of Vishu, that marks the beginning of the agricultural year, *karanavar* (the elder uncle) in the *Chetty* joint family takes on *Paniyan* workers by giving them paddy, two-piece of clothes and essential condiments including oil. Once the *Paniyans* accept this customary contract they would not leave that particular family during that agricultural year starting from

vishu day in April to *uchhal*, the harvest day, in February. God-fearing Paniyan followed the system without much coercion as this adoption of labour was done with sufficient ritual accompaniment.

In this system, *Chettys* could extract the indigenous labour of *Paniyans* through a customary relationship which made possible the free flow of labour required for paddy cultivation and cattle rearing in those days. A *Paniyan* family is supposed to surrender their labour power to the 'landed family' who took them customarily for a period of year by providing shelter, food and other basic requirements. A *Paniyan* man along with his wife and children would work for them in the field as well at home for a period of one year.

In this subsistence economy Paniyan livelihood strategies centred mainly on the labour they provided to the *Chetty* households. Wage was given in paddy and not in cash. A male labourer used to get two *ser* (a local measurement) paddy and females one and half *ser*. At the end of the season each male and female worker was given one *pothi* (around 30 kg) paddy each. They were also free access to the vast tracts of forests, streams, and marshy fields in the surrounding areas where they could hunt small animals, collect nourishing vegetations and catch fishes.

During this contractual period, Chettis looked after the affairs of the dependent Paniyan families; food and shelter were provided; and two meals a day were given. On the special occasions like Onam and Vishu they were given *sadya* (feast), two pieces of cloth, oil and even liquor.

Besides the agricultural work, both male and female workers had also to do domestic works like collection of water and firewood, and wood cutting in the *Chetty* houses, though not cooking. Paniyan women were expected to do domestic works, like grinding of coffee beans, paddy etc, sweeping and cleaning around the homestead, collection of water etc. Paniyan men also had to do some other hard works like logging fire wood. Children also helped the elders in doing the household work.

While boys were made to graze the cattle, girls assisted their mothers in domestic works. *Adivasi* labourers were not allowed to enter the insides of the home, but had a designated space in the corner of the veranda. Women had to continue their work at home in the night too after the day's drudgery as they had to prepare supper after grinding and husking the paddy they got as the wage for the day.

Organisation of Labour

Chetty joint family households, with a *karanavar* and extended family members, managed the vast tracts of wet lands in the village and converted it into paddy fields absorbing the Paniyanlabour into the production system along with their own labour. Land was under the possession of joint family households and elder persons in the matri-lineage who controlled the production processes.

The eldest male member played the dominant role in the matrilineal joint family system (*tharavad*). Younger male members in the family were expected to participate in the agricultural activities along with the Paniyan labourers. Female members were largely confined to play the roles within the domestic arena. They were not allowed to do any type of outside activities in the field. They were engaged mainly with the in-home duties like food preparation.

Women were expected to rise early in the morning and to clean the interior and surroundings of the house using a mixture of cow dung. Only after cleaning their body, they could enter the kitchen for making food. They were supposed to prepare food for the men who worked in the fields.

Usually, a settlement associated with *Chetty* family in the area comprised of a cluster of extended families of brothers and sisters. There was a strong association between the brothers-in-law among the Paniyan families involved in a *valli* system. A settlement may include the families including a person's sister and spouse or his wife's brother and his wife. Among the Paniyan families in the neighbourhood an older male in the lineage was assigned to mobilise the labourers required for cultivation. Usually it was through him that the *Chetty Karanavars* were able to appoint the labourers. Generally this person was addressed as *mooppan* by *Chettys* and *Chemmi* by Paniyas. This particular person's position in the lineage as an elder man and some of the roles he played in the rituals associated with cultivation made this relationship sacrosanct and authoritative among the Paniyas. He was influential among the Paniyans with his close contact with *Chetty* headmen and the *mooppans* in other areas. Paniyans showed respect and fear towards their headman. Normally, each neighbourhood had its own Paniyan *mooppan*. Sometimes, a *mooppan* was in charge of more than one neighbourhood under the joint control of *Chetty* families in the corresponding *Kunnu* neighbourhoods.

Another interesting cultural means to organize the labour on a massive scale for completing planting of paddy seeds in the vast area of paddy lands in the village was known as *kambalm natti*. It was a festive mode of paddy planting. For completing the planting of paddy at a time, all the workers in the locality would be called to the fields. Hundreds of male and female workers would do the ploughing and planting work simultaneously with the accompaniment of music and dance as a group. Chetti landlords entrust *Paniyan* headman (*mooppan* or *chemmi*) for bringing the labourers. *Mooppan* would visit every *Paniyan* household in the locality and give some paddy in advance to ensure their participation.

This system of bonded labour was paternalistic rather than coercive. *Chetty* elders intervened in the conflicts among Paniyars. They were also responsible for the security and welfare of Paniyan labourers under their control. The incidents of the absconding of the Paniyan labourers were very common, especially when the relation between the cultivator *Chetty* family and labourer was not comfortable. He might end up with another family with whom he has a better relationship. It was not difficult for the first family to locate the absconder as they would not have fled very far. The `absconders' once found were severely dealt with. So absconding did not mean fleeing away forever from the vicinity and it carried only a symbolic meaning, implying a public display of the relationship going sour. It also shows the flexibility of this system in the area.

If the *karanavar* in the second family was more sympathetic to this labourer he could decide to keep him by paying compensation to the first owner. There were such instances of absconding in the village too. In rare occasions, a labourer could break the contract by paying back the compensation or service and join another kindred, mostly of his brother in law who had been working comfortably with another *Chetty* family in another place

Cycle of agricultural work and Subsidiary Livelihoods

Wetland paddy cultivation was only one crop a year. Presence of deep marshy wetlands called *kollis* and continuous shallow rains were conducive to paddy cultivation. There were two prominent types of paddy cultivation. One is known as *naatti* as it is known elsewhere too, and other as '*podivitha*'. *Natti* was the cultivation done normally in marshy wet lands and *podivitha* was the type of paddy cultivation which was done either on the dry land or on the normal paddy field during the summer. Season for *naatti* was between the Malayalam months *edavam* and *chingam*

(May–September). Harvest was in ‘*thulam*’ (October– November). Podivitha was done in the summer months *kumbham* and *meenam* (March–April) with the help of irrigation. They had used indigenous Wayanad variety of seeds. Even today aromatic *gandhakasala* variety of paddy are cultivated only by the Chetty community in Wayanad. They treat this particular variety of seeds as an identity marker and a Chetty tradition in paddy cultivation.

Though land was the major resource base in this livelihood system, concept of ownership of land was not much deep among the local people in those times. The availability of land resource in abundance made the competition for it virtually non-existent. There was open access to forest and other natural resources. Wet land was more important compared to the dry land. Dry land was also used for doing *punam* cultivation (shifting cultivation) of millets by Chetty and Kuruman communities.

Cultivation of tobacco was very popular in those days. It was also linked to their practice of large scale cattle rearing. They had specially set up a fenced area in round circle in the open field to keep their cattle in the night. This land became very fertile after a period with the cattle dung and suitable for the cultivation of tobacco. This cultivation was undertaken by the male members of the households with the minimal assistance of the workers. Tobacco was mainly for household consumption. But the surplus quantity would be transacted through barter system.

Coffee was introduced to the area only after 1870 when the British started plantation in the nearby region. They cultivated it randomly on the garden mainly for household consumption. Vegetables, mainly varieties of yams were also cultivated on the dry land. Besides, different kinds of banana plants were also cultivated on the dry land. Green chilly was cultivated as the interim crop in the wet lands. Pasture land became helpful for cattle rearing. Households were mainly on the hill slopes adjoined to wetlands.

Hunting was also not uncommon among the *Chetty* families. Trapping of tiger and killing it using their special spears had been an important sport in the olden times. A net made of certain creepers was set for the tiger when there was news about a tiger killing cattle or other domestic animals. All the people in the village would be informed and people would surround the forest where the tiger was supposed to have been spotted. Tiger-hunt was associated with certain rituals too. When the tiger got trapped in the net people who carry the spears would start to attack it. This particular event, a ceremonial hunting of tiger, is known as '*narikkutthulsavam*'. In every joint family household, they had the practice of keeping a variety of spears for this ceremony.

Small hunting was part of the life of all the communities. Deer, rabbit, wild poultry, and monkeys were the games they sought for. Hunted games were distributed among the households in the neighborhoods. Paniyan households got their share according to their household size.

The possibility for occupying limitless land, free access to nearby forests and the abundant supply of *adivasi* labour made possible the large-scale cattle rearing practiced once in the village. It also corresponded to the cultivation of paddy and tobacco by using cattle manure as the most effective ingredient of production. The use of cow dung as fertiliser and cattle ploughing were the reasons for cattle raising in large numbers.

Large numbers of cattle of *Chetty* households were kept in the open fields in the off-rainy seasons. The kraal was arranged with bamboo posts specially erected in a circular shaped fence. It was known as '*petali*' and usually contained 50 to 100 numbers of cattle. In the rainy season they were kept in permanent sheds structured on the garden land. They used the local varieties of cattle exclusively for fertilizer and ploughing though their productivity was comparatively very low. They were considered immune to many of the diseases and very much adapted to the local environment. Milk products like ghee were transacted in return for goods like cloths from seasonal visiting vendors from the plains.

Paniyan children were employed in the cattle-grazing, but they never reared cattle or used milk or milk products, although milk and milk products were main components of *Chetty* diet. Excess milk is reported to have been poured out into streams. Cattle rearing complemented the agricultural practices. Cow dung served as the sole manure.

Vertical Reciprocity

The role of *Paniyans* as agricultural labourers (the vary name of *Paniyan* means “those who work”) was linked to their ability and skill in adapting and working on the local environment which was highly suspicious of outsiders in this agricultural system. But this role was also re asserted and reinforced through the ritually organised labour practices. Ritually sanctioned system of *valli* production became a natural order by its incorporation into their religious world through the position of *mooppan* as the intermediary between god and the community and *Paniyan* and *Chetty* .Labour was their sole resource, without the technological know-how of settled cultivation. Ritually sanctioned division of labour within the *valli* system might have gradually absorbed into a local version of division of labour on the basis of *Jaati* system.

Chettys did not eat food cooked by the *adivasis*, but accepted cooked food from Brahmins and Nairs, though they were not very much part of social life in this period. Interestingly, lack of commensality existed between *adivasis*. Kuruman did not take cooked food from *Paniyans* in the village, though they accepted it from *Chettys*. *Paniyan* and other *adivasis* accepted food from Kuruma and *Chetty* households. Most interestingly, *Paniyan* and *Kattunayaka* who were landless *adivasi* communities, avoided accepting food from each other (Table3.6).One of the traditional markers of social distance in Indian caste system has been lack of commensality or acceptance of cooked food by communities considered superior in caste ranking. For this feature to have crept into the tribes is interesting.

Prototype of an occupational division is also evident in the traditional life of the village. *Chettys* were the cultivators while *Paniyandid* agricultural works. *Kuruman* also did shifting cultivation and hunting. *Kattunayikkan* were known for their skill in collecting honey. Another *adivasi* community *Uralis* in the region prepared the implements using the technology of iron and prepared pottery items.

Table 3.6 .Social Distances in the pre-colonial village according to Commensality

Communities		Hierarchical order of acceptance of cooked food	Traditional livelihoods
Mainstream Hindus (outside the village)	Nairs		Local rulers/ cultivators
Native Hindus	<i>Chetty</i>	↑	Wet land Cultivators
Adivasis	Kuruman	↑	Shifting cultivators, small hunters
	Paniyan-Kattunayakan (do not accept mutually)	↑ ↑	Bonded labourers
			Forest Gatherers

Source Field survey (2007)

Initial division of labour among the *adivasi* community may not have been on the basis of an ideology of casteism, but it was through the colonization of Hindu upper castes in the area that many features of caste system got enmeshed with the indigenous livelihood system. Because of this reason, many of the cultural forms presented as the markers of identity of local communities might actually have been the products of the medieval interactions among the communities based on the local variety of casteism.

Reciprocal exchange of produce existed between Chetty and other local communities. Whereas Paniyan exchanged their labour to *Chetty* for certain amount of paddy which was institutionalized later as *valli* system, Nayakan exchanged honey with Uralis who gave them iron implements and pottery goods. Reciprocal exchanges existed mainly for paddy which was cultivated by *Chettys*. However, such reciprocal relations were extremely fluid; there was no compulsion for any community other than Paniyants to provide services to *Chettys* in the village.

Koozham kodukkal was one kind of market interaction that existed in the area in which Kurumas played the role of intermediaries between *Chetty* producers and local market. Kuruman would collect unprocessed paddy after harvest from Chetty households to be sold in the markets 30 or 40 kilometers far from the village controlled by Muslim traders in those days. In return, they collected certain amount of processed paddy.

Within the village Chettys gave paddy to other communities for getting many services in return. They got labour from Paniyas, forest produces from Kattunayikkans and iron implements from Uralis, who were not inhabitants of the study village, but came from other parts of Pulppalli. For the *Chetty* community, they could use paddy as a means of getting services while for the receivers, paddy had subsistence value. This reciprocity among the community had a vertical order. Possession of paddy became a source of power for getting services from other communities.

Local Perceptions

Settlers in the village perceived the *valli* system as slavery in tune with some of the popular writings on Wayanad. But *Chettys* in the village strongly object to such a view about their past system of livelihoods. Basis for such an undisputed perception of settlers about Paniyants as mere slave workers (*adimappanikkar*) in this system was mainly due to paddy as the mode of wages. According to their perception 'Chetty landlords' exploited the Paniyants by tying them into servitude. One of the old settler

informants described it like this: “Before we came to this place there were only some Chettys and Paniyas. *Paniyans* were slaves to those Chettys. They were very much scared of outside people. They had to work day and night for their Chetty landlords. In return they earned only a handful of paddy. Paniyanmen, women and children all surrendered their labour completely to those Chetty landlord families. Chetty families had every right to punish those who disobeyed them. Sometimes they can even kill...Often they were beaten up by the Chetty landlords...”

In most of the written accounts about the *valli system*, it has been depicted as a slave system associated with a famous Hindu temple-- Valliyoorkavu (temple)-- about 25 kilometres away from the village. The *vlliyookavu*, which is a Hindu temple and a place for yearly congregation of all the *adivasi* and other *Jaatis* of Wayanad since generations was described more or less a slave market. Some of the popular writings about the tribal situation in Kerala also authenticated this version (Panoor 1967).

According to a popular version of slavery associated with this temple, there was a slave market in *Valliyoorkavu* where large number of Paniyans and communities like Adiyas would assemble in large numbers during the festival season. The festival lasted one week. Chetty landlords would go there and buy Paniyan ‘slaves’. Local narratives in the village draw a picture that is close to the system of African slavery. This perception is clear from the title of a popular book written about *adivasis* in Wayanad, viz., ‘*Keralathile Africa*’ (Africa of Kerala). This image of slave market and slave labourers is very strong among the settler communities. However, such a version of slavery was subscribed to by only a few among the Chetty s and *adivasis* of the area. Though the festival was important for both *adivasi* and Chettys and well

known among them, they do not agree that a slave market existed in Valliyoor *Kaavu*.

Local historians of *Chetty* communities in the village out rightly reject such a version of slavery. According to them, Paniyans had no skill or interests other than their labour to work in the marshy wet fields of the area. Paniyans were obedient workers and they had every freedom to leave the place if they did not like to work with a *Chetty* household. Absconding was very common in those days. According to a *Chetty* elder, Kottamarattil Krishnan *Chetty* who is 78 years old and a respected member of one of the *Chetty tharavads* in the locality, his community had special bondage with Paniyan families who worked on their fields. It was the duty of a *karnavar* (senior-most person) to look after the production process in his household. He made contact only with the senior person in the Paniyan families, addressed either as *mooppan* or *jenmi* which means head, in conducting the agricultural activities in different seasons. These elders were well respected in both the communities. Nobody dared disobey the instructions of the elders in his community or among Paniyas.

“We all were very obedient to our karnavar. Mooppan also drew this reverence among the Paniyans and all obeyed their directions. Mooppan of a Paniyanclan was very honest and obedient to the Chetty karnavar. They received orders from our karnavar and arranged the labourers and works accordingly. In reverse we could fulfil all their requirements. In those times we all led a humble living. There was no lavishness in our lives or theirs”.

Krishnan Chetty’s narrative is somewhat representative of his community.

Interestingly, Paniyan responses to the question of slavery are mixed ones.

Differences in perceptions are largely based on generations. Older generation, although only a few of them who were really part of this livelihood system are still alive, is less critical of their old ways of life. Their experience of the past is largely encompassing. They do not talk merely about their labour surrendered to Chetty families, but also about the forest where they could enter freely, vast stretches of open areas where they could roam around and collect plants, endless marshy open fields where crabs and fish items were available in plenty etc.

Bellichi, an old Paniyan woman in her 90s who does not know her exact age, now stays with her grandchildren in Puthiyetam Chetty neighbourhood where they have been coexisting with that family for at least four generations now. According to her, 'that time' was completely different. There was no scarcity for anything. Everything was in abundance.

“Now everything has changed. Nowhere you can go freely now.. Even the climate is changed.. Sun is too hot now. There was happiness on every faces on those days.. is it life today? You have to beg in front of strangers...(In those days) even a quick raid in the forest brought everything we needed. Besides, for our work they (Chetty family) would give us one ser paddy and each year two pieces of cloth. It was enough.... There were no hospitals and diseases too. We had medicines in the forest for all the diseases we knew. Now you have to run after the doctors in town hospitals for everything.”

But Gulikan, a 56 year old man who is a *mooppan* in Kappikkunu neighbourhood, though in name alone, says that Chetty *karanavar* in his neighbourhood was very

cruel. He remembers bitter childhood experiences and gives testimony that they could be beaten up by the masters even for small mistakes without considering their age or gender. If somebody felt that a Paniyan man did not properly respect him or his woman it was reason enough for punishment. Younger generation is very much critical about this old livelihood system. What one can find out from the youngsters is the reassertion of settler narratives on slavery. According to them, their forefathers were in fear and they feared all others.

Whatever may be the perceptual differences about this system, there are traces of the existence of a system of interdependence very much rooted not only in the collective memory of Chetty and Paniyan communities, but also in many current livelihood practices, which will be analysed elsewhere in the thesis. On the basis of the narratives of those who were either familiar with this system or have knowledge of this system, bond up interdependence was ritually sanctioned.

Among the Chettys, elder persons normally addressed as *karanavar* (great uncle in mother's line) had played a role in economy and rituals. For example, even today an eldest in a local Chetty *tharavad* (matri-lineage) holds an important customary position in the local temple to conduct annual festival. In olden times as it is referred to, *karanavar* played a key role in organising the economy and livelihood activities. Within the families they controlled the distribution of harvested grain kept in a granary.

Among the Paniyas, an all-encompassing ritual world was very active under the supervision of *mooppa* who had endowed enormous authority in the life and livelihoods of the community. A division between the world of rituals and of

livelihoods was very bleak in their everyday life. Even today *mooppan* can display power in the ritual field given their religious and god-fearing nature without much authority in the social organisation. Current interpretations of slave system may not be justified in describing the interrelationship between Chettys and Paniyans in the village. Except those in the position of *Karanavar*, rest of the Chetty members had hardly any power in terms of possession of resources, except their own labour.

Circumstantial Egalitarianism in an Ecological Recess

Evidences from the past life in the village suggest that there was an egalitarian basis for the traditional life of the communities. Criteria of modern or even feudal societies in Kerala may not be enough to interpret their living. Entangled in the ecological recesses of the forest, valleys and hills, communities in the village did not have many options. A system of interdependence seemed to have developed out of this context from a compulsion for mutual dependence.

Chetty community had the indigenous technology for doing settled cultivation. They also worked in the fields. They could also extract the Paniyan labour who were very much adapted to the local ecology in order to carry out the highly labour-intensive agricultural practices. Deep marshy fields (known as *aathi* or *korava kandam*) were dangerous and strongly built. Paniyans had the skill and physique in order to work in these difficult terrains.

There is hardly any evidence found in the histories of the families about any surplus extraction from the production process beyond subsistence requirements. After harvesting, grain was shifted to specially made storage (*ara*). Chetty producers used it under the control of *Karanavar* for own consumption during rest of the year and also for exchange in return for Paniyan labour and various produces and services from other communities. They had to allot a share of it for the common ritual functions too.

A rigid caste system was not known to exist in such an ecologically difficult life -scape. Patterns of caste system in terms of division of labour among different tribal

groups and a vertical order of non acceptance of food do not seem to be similar to the feudalist caste hierarchy that existed in other parts of Kerala society. Such a system was introduced in the later period by Hindu rulers and re-asserted during the colonial period.

However, in this particular historical context, a value system or broadly a common *habitus* of the local communities in the village in olden times was based on a reciprocal / redistributive/ egalitarian livelihood system that stemmed from an ecological necessity. A compulsory circumstance of such a moral economy can be traced out from an ethnographic past of the local communities. But it was not stagnant. History played out over the centuries made a significant impact upon local life creating different livelihood trajectories for different communities. There were instances of pre-modern forces exerting pressure on the livelihood system of the village in the later decades especially in the early and late colonial periods. Direct penetration of colonial forces can be observed in the village through the introduction of new governance system and economy largely using the instruments of pre-modern structures.

Changing livelihood practices in the early and late colonial periods

King of Malabar Kottayam, popularly known as Pazhassi Raja who fought the British forces hiding in the forests of Wayanad, was killed by the British army in an encounter around six kilometres away from Pulppalli. Native communities like Kuruma and *Chetty* had helped Pazhasi Raja in his fight against the British. Kuruma members had involved directly in the fight with their archery skills of using bow and arrows. However, *Chettys* did not directly involve themselves in the struggle, but, according to local narratives, provided food grains to sustain Pazhassi and his supporters while in hiding.

British supremacy was established in Wayanad after the death of Pazhasi raja.

Following this, the British government confiscated the entire region which was under

the king but controlled by some of the elite Nair families. The British surveyed the entire area and entrusted the vast area to the care of the very same families and gave them titles. The whole of Pulppalli region including some parts of the village also came under the control of a Nayar family who supported the British after the fall of Pazhassi Raja.

The British introduced a comprehensive system of revenue and forest administration in the area subsequently. It became the beginning of a series of colonial interventions into local livelihoods. Many new governmental practices like land surveys, land survey distribution, tax reforms, new procedure for local civil and criminal administration etc., were brought into the local life (Nair 2000, Logan 1995)

Introduction of commercial crops and the origin of larger plantations also happened parallel to this development. Cultivation of crops like coffee and pepper was one kind of plantation in the area, teak plantation in the forest being of another sort.

Concept of Private Property

After colonial land survey, land was divided into four categories: i) Titled Land for cultivators like Chettys for the area they had cultivated; ii) Revenue Land which lay in between the titled land without occupation; iii) Those surveyed land without occupation that became Private Forest, entitled in the name of big landlord families in the area; and iv) those areas that remained as un-surveyed that became reserve land. In the village there were titled lands owned by Chetty and Kuruman communities, revenue land and a small portion belonging to private land owned by landlord family in the area.

Legal ownership of private property in the modern sense along with the distribution of titles to the respective lands was introduced in the village as part of the new revenue administration by the British. In the land survey in our study village, only Chetty families and some Kuruman families occupied land in vast stretches for agricultural purposes. They had not possessed much dry land as their agricultural practices were confined mainly to wet lands in the area. Ownership of these lands was with the joint families under the control of a *Karanavar*.

The Paniyan communities in the village did not occupy lands for own cultivation, but worked in the lands of *Chetty* families who brought them for work. But they could use all the lands, including forest, wet and dry land for different purposes. They were never questioned if they did some cultivation on the dry land attached to their shelters for their own use. Similarly, they could also undertake some vegetable cultivation on the wet land when the land became seasonally free from main cultivation. They were also completely free to collect any vegetation. During these periods people in the village in general had in their menu a wide variety of leafy items from the fields. They could collect small types of fishes and crabs from the ponds and streams on the wet land.

Survey of the land resulted in differentiating and demarcating private and revenue land in the village. It created new physical and mental boundaries over the land. Land-owning communities also became vigilant about the scale of cultivation. Survey of land and fixation of tax according to the extent of land possessed and cultivation on it restricted use of land resources by the local cultivator families. The new tax policy also stopped the local cultivator communities from occupying vast

areas of land. The earlier practice was to tax only the produce. Later the system was changed and the land under possession began to be taxed¹². As a result, Chetty cultivators stopped occupying more land than what they could cultivate. For communities like Paniyan, free and open use of land resources began to be restricted in the long run.

According to the fresh re survey carried out by the colonial government in the village, there were three types of land. One type was land with title mainly occupied by Poothadi and Kuppathottil Nair families, second type was reserved forest and third one was revenue land which lay in between the boundaries of those two titled lands. A number of Chetty and Kuruma families were also provided *patta* (title) lands in this area. Chettys and Kurumans occupied mainly wetlands, as they found not much interest in occupying dry land.

There were around 15 families who got *patta* for their land after the re-survey. Title was given for the land they cultivated, in the name of *tharavad karanavar* (head of the joint family). Thazekappil, Mele Kappil, Kottamarattu, Puthiyadam, Madavayal, Madaparambu were the important *Chetty* families who got title for their lands in the village. All the Paniyan settlements in the village belonged to the kunnu neighbourhood around these Chetty households.

Marumakkathayam (matri-lineage) was the system of inheritance among the *Chettys* in the earlier period. It helped them to tightly knit the families together and arrange them for production activities. But a transition from *marumakkathayam* to

¹² There was strong protest from the local communities in the region against this policy, especially from Kurumas who had earlier assisted King Pazhassi in his fight against the British. Male members belonging to Kuruma community started physically fighting the government revenue officials. However their protest was brutally crushed by the colonial force.

makkathayam (Patri-lineage) became evident in the family structure in the later colonial period as an impact of colonial policy to bring in new civil laws of inheritance. This subsequently led to the disintegration of *tharavads* and the fragmentation of land in favour of increasing private ownership.

Kuppothottil Nair family and Poothadi Nambiar family had been given titles to around 90,999 acres and 10035 acres of land respectively by the British government after the land survey. Private land, known as *janmam* land owned by these landlord families was given to the cultivators belonging to Chetty and Kuruman communities for rent.¹³

Changes in forest-related livelihoods

The forests of Wayanad came under the British rule after the fall of Pazhasi Raja. Captain Gibbs was appointed as the first District Forest Officer, Wayanad, whose office extended to the whole of Malabar including Palakkad. It was British planters who cleared the extensive areas for raising plantations of tea, coffee and pepper (Nair 2000). Two important development programmes during the British regime were the conversion of natural forests into forest plantations and the development of commercial plantations by clearing the forests.

Following the implementation of the Act¹⁴, the Government imposed a number of restrictions on using forest resources (Chundamannil 1993, Amruth 2004). Forest

¹³ From the interviews with Mr. Krishnan chetty and Mr. Krishnan Master

¹⁴ The Madras Forest Act of 1882 had detailed clauses for strict control over forest lands and resources. However, local people started to experience it much later.

was surveyed and boundaries were fixed in our study village also as per the colonial policy of conservation and utilisation of forest resources. The forest was clearly demarcated from the revenue and private land. It was in 1938 that resurvey was completed in the area.

The process of boundary demarcation was locally known as *jenta kettal* which was experienced in the local life symbolically as marking of new territorial borders that obstructs the natural movement of people and restricts their access and rights on forest, hitherto enjoyed by the indigenous populations. *Jenta* were boundary posts which were erected after separating clearly forest and non-forest areas. Many of the traditional rights of local people were curtailed and they had to confront new power structures which were till then alien to them.

A system of issuing special entrance pass for using the forest for grazing was introduced as part of the institutional interventions of the Forest Department in the earlier period of forest governance. Cattle grazers were supposed to show the tax payer's receipt for grazing. Cutting down of bamboo for any purpose was also restricted by the Forest Department. Special permission was needed to cut down the bamboos which had many purposes in the local life including the construction of houses. Processed bamboo could remain undamaged for a long period, the availability of which was plentiful in the local forest. Hunting was also banned gradually.

In the day-to-day experiences of the local populations, confrontation with these new institutional structures was not so simple and direct. Officials of the Forest Department, mainly up to the ranger level, were mainly from the plains especially belonging to the upper caste Nair and Nambiar families. They established relationships with the local populations and mainly the Chetty households who served them during their visit to the area. They identified relatively well-to-do Chetty families in each locality where they were given food and shelter. Related to their

official duty, in the initial period they lacked basic facilities and had to walk all the distance through the vast area of forest.

By providing good food and comfortable stay for these officials, host families could draw favours and concessions with regard to the collection of bamboos, permission for grazing and cultivation on wetlands under the possession of the Department. Rangers and foresters belonging to Nair/Nambiar families could enjoy certain levels of command over the local populations. It was a continuance of hierarchical caste order embedded within the fields of property and power relations.

Sometimes for some families such relations became more beneficial than small incentives. Family of Krishnan Chetty, 78, a retired headmaster from the local higher secondary school received such helps from some of their official guests. There was a Nair and a Brahmin (they are identified according to their caste affinity) officer who used to visit his family. When they came to visit the camp offices in the region, as it was very difficult for them to cover the whole area in one day due to lack of proper transportation, they used to spend their nights in his family. Though their house was not big enough, they had kept aside an attached space to the house for accommodating such official friends.

These two officers became good friends of his father. They had the habit of taking drinks. So they would bring chicken and liquor whenever they came to stay. His father was also a good hunter having possession of a gun. His mother specially cooked the game meat of deer etc. for serving the special guests. In the night there would be a lavish feast. It was friendship with these officers that helped him get higher education; they advised his father to send him for teachers' training course. They provided all the facilities during his education in a far away town.

As described earlier, the Kattunayikkan community had full access to the forest and they had the capabilities to survive within the forest without much vulnerability. They had greater adaptation within the forest than the rest of the village inhabitants, but new regulations and rules of colonial forest governance ended their free access to the forest forever.

However, it also opened new livelihood avenues for the community as the forest officials were compelled to seek the assistance of Kattunayikkan informants to gain accessibility to the difficult and alien terrains of forest resources. . In return for introducing them to the secret routes inside the forest, these forest officials became the sources of information to many Nayikkan informants about the outside world.

This direct relationship with the colonial administration helped them to informally maintain the forest based livelihood practices to an extent during the British period. A few of them were even given jobs as forest guards in later years.

Commercialization of Forest

Wayanad had very rich tropical forests, which was very famous for the availability of 'rich' and 'royal' trees like rose wood, sandalwood, teak etc. Clear felling of natural forest for constructing teak plantation was a major offshoot of colonial administrative policy grounded on the broader economic policies related to the imperial demands. Rampant commercialisation of forest resources was also a 'contribution' of colonial government. They replaced subsistence value of forest with market values by systematising the timber trade with the introduction of chain of depots and auction centres across Wayanad. They also introduced large scale commercial cropping of coffee from the 1840's onwards. Large areas of natural forest were converted subsequently into monoculture commercial plantations. The introduction of tea estates in the early 20th century led to the disappearance of forest on a large scale. The great need of British forest officers to earn revenue and timber from Wayanad led to over exploitation of trees.

Within our village there is no forest cleared for teak or other plantations. But there are both types of plantation in adjacent areas, started in the late colonial period. This had constrained the free movement of *adivasis* through the forest. Movement of *adivasis* was controlled by their own understanding of territory marked by certain geography markers like river, streams or hills etc. Especially for Kattunayikkan, there were their own territories for limiting their gathering or small hunting in the old days.

But for Paniyas, such demarcations of territories are not known. In their narratives about the past they describe forest as a free space with unlimited freedom of movement. However, in short, there was no externally imposed order of territory on forest within the village in the pre-colonial era. But this freedom was curtailed along with the development of the plantations within the region.

Introduction of Market Relations

British colonisation of the area resulted in the development of new towns like Kalpetta and Mananthavadi. Expansion of plantations in the area caused large-scale labour inflows into Wayanad. Labourers belonging to untouchable castes from the plains of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were brought to the plantations on a large scale. This also caused the development of local township where a large number Muslim merchants from different parts of Malabar set up shops for trading food grains, condiments, cloths etc. and tea shops. This created a situation where personalised transactions among the households got weakened and local *Chetty* households started to depend on the local traders. Households established relationships with the local shops and they made transactions directly to the shops exchanging commodities, especially food grains for other items required for household consumption.

Meenagadi and Panamaram developed as two small towns accessible to the people of Kappikunnu in the early quarters of the 20th century. This reduced the importance of Mysore market in Karnataka. External contact with the Kerala plains gradually increased with the construction of new roads, which accelerated the exposure to the market places of Malabar. Changes of this kind that took place in Wayanad also

increased the demand for skilled persons like teachers, *vaidyans* (traditional ayurvedic practitioners), carpenters etc. However, pre-modern relations continued in the exchange of labour. For instance, the teacher who was allowed to stay with the major Chetty households in the area for teaching the lessons, mainly traditional Malayalam literature, to the children in their home surroundings was gifted with cloths, food grain, ghee and other available produces in return for the knowledge he imparted. Likewise, carpenters were made to stay at home for long periods to complete the work in exchange of goods

Village Administration

A new administrative mechanism for collecting tax and controlling the social life in the village life introduced by British was experienced by the people through the intervention of Poothadi Nambiar family, a family that held the formal right for the position of *adhikari*. The new governance structures for local administration had conferred much power to important local Nair families legitimising their customary feudal rights. Our village came under the Poothadi *amsam* (revenue village) and Veliyambam *desams* (sub-divisions of the village), with *adhikari* as the village headman assisted by an accountant (*menon*) and two helpers (*kolkar*).

Adhikari was a constituted position and the incumbent was authorized to intervene in all civil and criminal disputes and conduct revenue administration. Later, it became a hereditary position enjoyed by the upper caste and rich Nair families. If a suitable person was not available in that particular family, the position became open to members of other Nair/ Nambiar families. A written exam was made mandatory, but in reality it was a mere formality as people saw it.

On rare occasions, some Chetty men came into the positions of *menon* and *kolkar*. However, according to local Chetty elders, these people, especially *kolkar* who played the role of policemen in those days, were feared. When they were seen in the vicinity of the village, family members, especially women, would withdraw into the houses. They allegedly beat people for flimsy reasons and put fear into them. People would give them food and whatever they wanted on demand. These *kolkar* passed on information about the village to *adhikari*.

Amsam adhikari or village headman was very powerful and people feared him. As an upper caste member he had all caste biases and values which he brought into his day-to-day interactions. All the civil and criminal disputes were sought to be solved in front of *adhikari*. He would call for the meeting of the parties concerned once a complaint was received from the aggrieved person. Both parties could bring enough people to the meeting where they could argue out their case with the support of facts and evidences. However, the final decision taken by *adhikari* was indisputable. This system of conflict resolution continued even after independence for quite some period.

The Paniyans did not face any problem with this new governance system since they had no land. By the end of the colonial period, village life had become more or less hierarchical. Within this new system of village administration, Chetty families were recognised as similar to 'landlord' families with more powers to *Karanavars* in the family. It became the responsibility of these *karanavars* to control the Paniyan workers. A vertical order of the transfer of power and legitimacy changed the manner of organisation of labour at the local level. Pressure from above passed on to

lower levels. Liberal arrangement of Valli system of labour changed into an enforced one. Disobedient workers were directly punished by the Chetty elders. Some of the Paniyans in the village made references to cruel *karanavars* in some of the local Chetty families. Such traces in their collective memory, especially in the youngsters, are the reasons for describing the old *valli system* as equal to slavery.

Differentiations based on the caste system are found here legitimised by the vertical flow of colonial power.

Political Consequence: Nationalism and Political Movement

One of the unintended effects of colonialism in this village is the emergence of a new group of people with increased political consciousness and education. Among the Chetty families in the village those who emphasised the need for educating their youngsters also were benevolent masters to the Paniyas. Two Chetty families in the village which are described as having been cruel to Paniyans in the later colonial period are now almost poor without much land or formal occupations. There was no single person in the family who got higher education. Getting Elementary School Leaving Certificate (ESLC) under the Madras state education board was considered an important achievement for the Chetty youth. Irrespective of gender, at least six young people belonging to Chetty families in the village, all relatives by blood or marriage, obtained this qualification.

With the emergence of nationalism, the local Chetty community members were drawn into its politics. The intersection of development and politics in a later colonial historical setting of the village is significant. The political scape of the

village changed dramatically after the 'colonisation' of settler communities. The following life story is illuminative of this.

Kottamarattil Krishnan Chetty, teacher in Waynad who passed ESLC and teachers' training course and retired from a local school as head master. As noted earlier, he got assistance from some of the colonial officers, guest friends of his father, in completing his education. Education earned him many educated friends inside and outside the village.

When he was a student in school in Manthavadi where he was resident in a hostel, they raised the flag of the Congress Party inside the school and led a demonstration march. But he was caught by two policemen belonging to Nair community who were known to his father. They advised him not to participate in the independence movement as he was only a student. They said that it was his duty to fulfil his father's dream and become an employed person. After getting a job he could continue politics. He took their advise and stopped politics. But after becoming a teacher in the school he became a member of the Congress Party and worked along with some of the educated youth from respected Nair families of the area.

Meanwhile, many other Chetty people in the village started working with political parties especially with the nationalist movement and the Congress Party. There were two Chetty households in the village which subscribed to the nationalist newspaper, Mathrubhumi. Kelu Chetty, father of Narayanan Chetty, 70 years, of Madaparambu family was one who filed paper cuttings on different issues. Though his father had no formal education, Narayanan Chetty got formal education and became a clerk in a local Bank. He continued there till his retirement.

Kelu Chetty actively associated with the Congress Party. Interestingly some members of Poothadi *adikari* family were local leaders of the party in the region. Most of the leaders who came to the area were from well to do Nair families within and outside Wayanad. Kelu Chetty worked with them and became the leader of the Congress Party in the village. They were active in the election campaign for Madras state assembly election conducted by the British government. Many leaders visited the village during this period. Even Narayanan Chetty's mother had gone to Mananthvady, around 25 kilometers away from the village to cast her vote in this election which was won by the Congress Party.

Communities like Paniyan were not aware of any of these socio-political processes. They remained more or less as mere workers. No one in the village had any idea about such historical events. They were not benefited directly from politics or election in this period. But there was an indirect effect. A new school was set up in the present Pulppalli town by a group of people who were friends of Krishnan master. They were motivated by the ideals of Gandhiji for giving education to backward communities. Some Paniyans in our study village got primary education from this school in later years. Another effect of the nationalist movement was a campaign against casteism. It conscientised the Chettys to stop the practice of untouchability and practices like bonded labour which was already banned by the colonial government. However, these practices continued for some period even after independence as the communities like Paniyans remained helpless in the absence of choices for them other than depending on the *valli* system of livelihoods.

Yet another phase of major livelihood changes in the village happened along with the initial decades of independence which marked the historic migration from southern Kerala to Wayanad region. A shift from subsistence agriculture to export crop cultivation, typical to all other villages in the region, had coupled with the expansion of a governance system based on multi-party democracy safeguarding the interests of different segments of society hitherto excluded from the political processes. This happened within a development regime created by highly centralised planning and decision making process.

Livelihood Practices under Centralised State and Development

This section tracks the livelihood changes in the post independence period till the 1990s. As far as the study village is concerned migration of southern Keralites that started in the early 50s was the most important feature in relation to the livelihood changes in the period. Migration became a powerful agent for bringing in modernity and development in the area. Migration and changes that followed transformed the lives and livelihoods of native communities in the village beyond their imagination.

The 1950s became the watershed in the history of the village with the influx of the first set of *thaze nattukar* or people from the lower plains of Kerala into the area. This part of the region was known for large scale illegal encroachment of revenue and forest lands unlike in the eastern parts of Wayanad where initial migration had an official legitimacy as it was part of a 'colonisation scheme' implemented by the British government for resettling the army men fought in the Second World War.

The process of development in the village through which communities differentially acquired various resources is also important for our understanding of how the intensity of the direct interpenetration of the local and global reduced largely in this period with the new mediating structures of the nation-state and its development

apparatus coming into existence in powerful ways. However, a global agenda of development continued to play actively in more embedded and subtle ways at the local level under the elitist networks of bureaucrats, politicians and large farmers within a centralized regime. Global market for cash crops like pepper and coffee became more important as their cultivation with active support and mediation of the state became major sources of livelihood for the local people.

In Search of Land

Migration from South Kerala

Pulpalli was one of the geographically isolated areas unlike other centres of migration in Wayanad. It was surrounded by dense forest in the earlier period. So there was no pressure in the earlier phase of migration in the early 50s. Besides, the major chunk of land was either reserved forest or *patta* land attached to the landlord families and Pulpalli temple. There was also some portion of revenue land in the area. This was the area encroached by the initial migrants in our study village. Number of total migrant households in the area was very less. Around 30 families came to this area and encroached land in the initial period.

Two types of migrants are found in the village. One set of families came to the area in the 1940s and the early 1950s and occupied large areas – mostly 10 to 20 acres of land- which they could manage with their families. Division of land was based on a family unit which consisted of father, mother and children. But they came to the area in big joint families, although encroached the area as family units. There were around 30 such families, mostly Christians. There were two Ezhava families also in the village belonging to the same category.

Flow of the other set of migrants, larger in numbers than the first category, started at the end of the 1950s and continued till the end of the '80s, though the peak was in the '60s. Period of arrival is an important factor in deciding the possession of land. Those who came at the end of the '60s became small cultivators who could occupy 3-4 acres of land. Those who reached the area in the 70s became mainly the attached labourers of large holders (Table 3.7). However, some families could expand their

possession by buying land from local *Chettys* or encroaching upon the land of *adivasis*. There were also cases of families who came in later years but with good amount of money and bought up land from those who had to sell their land in distress. But these are only exceptional cases.

Table 3.7. Pattern of land occupation in different decades

Years	Land (Acres)	Category of migrants
1941-1950	> 10	Large farmers
1951-60	>10	Large farmers
1961-70	< 5	Small cultivators
1971-80	< 2	Small cultivators and workers
1980s	<1	workers

Source Field survey (2007)

In our village, occupation of land was largely ‘illegal’ in nature. People themselves called it as ‘*vettipitutham*’ (winning over). A differentiation is made now between ‘*vangiya bhoomi*’ (purchased land) and ‘*vettipidicha bhoomi*’(win over land) when people talk about the history of their land. Some families also bought land in addition to encroached land from local Chetty landholders who kept dry land unused. Some early ‘won-overs’ also sold out their land for a good price after putting in some initial work on it and developing it and used this money to buy new pieces of land in other parts of the village, thus becoming legitimate land owners rather than encroachers.

Even in the early 1950s, immigrant families had started to settle in Kappikunnu one by one, encroaching upon the revenue land. This is one of the earliest locations in Pulpalli region where migration took place initially. Unlike other forest-ridden parts

of Pulpalli, major portion of Kappikunnu belonged to revenue land where a number of Chetty and Kuruman households undertook cultivation. Rest of the area of Kappikunnu was under the possession of Pulpalli Temple, which was gradually handed over to the immigrants on lease.

Some of the early migrants moved towards the north-east parts of Pulpalli by the 1960s and started to encroach into the vast forest tracts under the possession of Pulpalli temple. Many others preferred to stay back here as they feared to move out from the revenue land and encroach *jenmam* (private) land, though the quality of the soil in Kappikunnu was relatively poor. By the mid 1970s, the inflow of people reduced considerably and by this time almost all the land had been occupied by the people.

Forest land which was encroached upon by migrants does not fall in our study village. 2-3 kilometers away from the village, a number of families had occupied a large tract of forest under the possession of Kuppathod Nair family who had donated their land to the local temple. Manager of the temple land belonged to Kuppathod family. He divided the land into small pieces of 2-3 acres to families for Rs 40 per acre. There was also an order from the Collector of Malabar to the temple authority to distribute lands to the poor peasants who migrated from the southern district in the wake of famine and poverty. But many of them encroached more lands and manipulated documents. But in the late '60s, the inflow of people increased considerably and they started large-scale illegal encroachments into the area, spreading over fourteen thousand acres of land in the Pulpalli region. Those portions of lands already transferred by the temple authorities were part of this area.

State and Land Redistribution

Kerala state and various political parties had played a major role in transforming land encroachment to legal ownership rights although initially there was no much

support from the state agencies. There was aggressive movement on the part of the people to get legal sanction for their encroached land.

It was in the sixties that on the plea of temple authorities the ruling Congress government set up a police camp on the site and started evicting the migrant occupants of the land. Those illegal migrants were largely poor cultivators. Though most of them belonged to Christian community, who traditionally supported the Congress Party, government was reluctant to allow the intrusion into the temple land mainly due to the influence of temple authorities on the government.

During this period, many huts erected by the migrants were set on fire by the police and temple authorities. Even temple elephants were used for eviction. At the local level, irrespective of the political affiliations, migrant farmers fought to get *patta* for the land they had encroached upon. After a series of deliberations in the forms of negotiation and protests they managed to get approval from the government. Political parties, especially the communist parties, and farmer's organisations under the Christian church were instrumental in organising migrant cultivators against the eviction initiatives of the Government.

Communist leaders like A.K.Gopalan arrived on the spot and made inspiring speeches for stimulating the peasant protest. Many old people in the village remember his fiery speech and his angry outburst to the government: '*why does god need land?*' This momentous speech of AK Gopalan was important in bringing the immigrants under the influence of the Communist Party. Most of the poor families who had possessed lands and set up huts raised red coloured flags, asserting their occupation over the land.

But even the communist government which came to power could not solve the issue on priority basis. One of the Ministers of State, a prominent leader of the Communist Party, provoked the local leaders by urging them to organize an aggressive movement instead of waiting for the mercy of the government. This was the reason why some of the local leaders of Communist Party in the area joined the left extremist group (its movement is known as Naxalism) to wage an armed struggle. Parameswaran who was a local leader of the Communist Party was one among the

delegates who visited the minister in the state capital. He also realized that there would be no decision without strong action from the people.

It was in this context that with the support of leaders like Kisaan Thomman, that Parameswaran and a group of Naxal activists attacked the police camp at Pulpalli and killed a policeman which later came to be known as the “Pulppalli station attack”. This created a panic situation in the area and the police suppressed the protest. However, this event speeded up a government decision to distribute the title for encroached lands. Migrant cultivators were given titles to their land following a blood-shed agitation against the government in Pulpalli.

Distribution of *patta* (title) to the encroached land became more or less a convention in the state after this incident. A new state-level political party, the Kerala Congress, was formed under the auspices of the Church, split out of the Congress Party, which stood with the Christian encroachers in later years. Organized encroachment in ghat/forest region by the small cultivators and subsequent distribution of *patta* to those lands became a political strategy to expand the base of the political parties, mainly of the Kerala Congress and its splinter groups.

After all the encroachments got legalized, people in this area now hold three types of *patta* land: (i) the *old patta* land that was distributed by the British government since the resurvey; (ii) the *patta* distributed by the state government for the encroached revenue land; (iii) the *patta* allotted to the land of the Temple which was already a *jenmam* (*private*) land owned by the Kuppathot Nair family. Farmers had no right to cut down the scheduled trees like teak, rose wood, etc., from the revenue land. But there was no such restriction for other types of land. For getting land people had to make a nominal payment separately for trees and land. Revenue officers would count the trees on the garden land to fix the amount. On many occasions farmers bribed the officials to get it fixed low.

Land Market

Market force played a decisive role in organising the movement of migrants from their original place of residence to this village. Pulppalli was not the first destination for many migrant cultivators. Most of them travelled a long distance and stayed at different points for different periods before they ended up in the village. In almost all the early cases of migration, the migrants had sold their lands at origin for a very good amount and come to Wayanad and bought mainly dry land, where ever they got it cheap. Personal network of migrants, who came mainly from certain areas in the southern districts, helped them find out about available land and they moved out from their home towns when they got information about better land at cheap prices.

Varghese, 78, who came from Eranakulam district in the late 40s had stayed in three such points. He came to Wayanad all by himself. Belonging to a trader family he fled from home while in his teens after a dispute with other family members. He first reached Balusserry, on the slopes of Wayanad hills on his way to Wayanad. He bought one acre of land there. Later, he sold that land and bought more land in the eastern uphill area of Wayanad. In the early fifties he reached the village and bought 5 acres of land from another migrant and encroached upon another two acres of land. Information about the possibility of encroaching in to more fertile land was the driving force for him.

Mundayam Parambil Narayanan, 85 years old now, had made such moves thrice. He had come to Wayanad along with his father and brothers, selling their original land. They first reached the northern side of Wayanad, bought some land and developed it. Then they brought the rest of the family, his mother and sisters. After settling their parents and sisters in this place, he and his brothers moved to another place and bought some land there. In the early 50s, he came alone to the present location and encroached around 12 acres of revenue land in the village.

In the case of Ramesh who is now one of the largest land holders in the village, his father and brothers bought land in the eastern parts of the neighbouring Kannur district adjacent to Wayanadan hills. Then he alone moved to Wayanad along with his wife and two sons and bought the temple land for cheap price. He could occupy about 20 acres of land.

In contrast to these in the sixties, many Chetty families sold their land to migrants at throw away prices as they did not have much exposure to land market. Moreover, they did not attach much value to dry land as they were mainly involved in wet land cultivation. Some of the Chettys were served self-brewed liquor by migrant cultivators who got their land for very low price. According to Chettys in the village, an elder uncle of a Chetty family in Thazekappil was a victim to this. He became addicted to liquor brewed by some of the migrant families in the village who initially served him liquor free of cost but once he became addicted, began to charge money. And gradually, he was reached a stage of having to sign documents in return for the liquor. Some of the family members now do not see anything wrong in the action of migrants, but they blame their uncle for having been unwise and ignorant. Similar experiences of losing land to people who offered drinks happened to some of the Paniyan families also in the village.

Knowledge about the market and exposure to the transactions had a major role in the initial occupation of the land in the village. Those who were well-informed about the availability of land and were strongly networked could easily access the land at cheap prices. Many of those who came later overcame their delay through many manipulative strategies in the market. Meanwhile, lack of market-based understanding of property relations and manipulative strategies made some of the Chetty and Paniyan families to dispossess their legally occupied land.

Reciprocity, social networks and subsistence among the migrant families

Except a few families, most of the migrants who came to the village at the end of the 50s and in the '60s were poor. They lacked resources unlike the 'rich' early migrant families to organize productive activities on land. Most of these poor migrants reached the area through the network of friends and relatives. The same networks helped them to survive in the initial days of migration. These networks within the village worked irrespective of the differences of caste and creed. The same networks helped them to organize labour for productive activities.

Kootipani or *mattal pani* (collective labour or exchange of labour) was born out of this context as a mechanism of labour reciprocity between networks. This helped to

ensure the required labour input at the crucial time of production activity. This mechanism became useful for all the productive as well as non-productive activities. All the families worked together to get rid of the initial difficulties. If a new house had to be built, groups of people in the locality and friends and relatives from other areas joined together. They collectively went to the forest to gather the required bamboo for making the wall. They pooled their work in constructing these mud polished bamboo houses. Food was prepared and served. No one expected any wage for their service. It was not money but labour power which helped them survive with loyal reciprocities.

Because of the lack of resources most of the settler cultivators did not start plantation of cash crops like coffee or pepper in the initial stage. They started cultivating food crops including grain, tubers and roots which secured their calorie requirements in the initial years. Tapioca was introduced in this area by the immigrant cultivators and which was widely cultivated on the garden land. Cultivation of paddy was limited as the possession of paddy fields were exclusively attached to the traditional paddy-cultivating communities. So they could compensate it with the cultivation of tapioca on the dry lands left uncultivated by the Chettys or encroached / purchased by the immigrants.

The first cash crop cultivated in the area was a type of grass (*pullu*) which was very common in some of the southern regions of Kerala such as Kothamangalam and Perumbavoor. They made aromatic oil out of this grass (*pullenna*) which was in good demand in the local market. Cultivation of this grass was wide-spread in the area. Brewing oil from this grass was a highly labour-intensive work for which also they used the reciprocal networks.

Another livelihood practice based on reciprocity was related to cattle rearing. There existed a practice of poor households adopting a calf from households having more calves, rearing them till they mature and return after its first delivery while retaining the newly bred ones. This was a wide-spread practice in the early period of settlement formation which however, declined gradually.

Thus, for the migrants in the early years of settlement in the village, old and new networks of relationships became most effective resources in a horizontal order, in contrast to the local patterns of vertical reciprocity among the native communities. A strong feeling as settlers worked explicitly above all other divisions like caste and communities among the migrants in their effort to overcome the struggles of relocating and establish a solid foundation for the new existence. Though collective actions were born out of the necessities of survival in a difficult and unfamiliar circumstance, memories of informants point to a spontaneity in those actions, indicating that it was no conscious strategizing, but was almost like a natural outcome.

Shift to monetized regime and the emergence of a 'pepper economy'

Cultivation of food crops like tapioca and different kinds of tubers along with brewing of 'grass oil' made surplus income for many families given the market demand in the plain lands of Kerala. Those households which could make surplus from the cultivation of grass and tapioca subsequently turned to the other cash crops like coffee and pepper. This was mainly in the '70s and by the end of the decade many families could develop good gardens especially of pepper.

State had extended full support to develop agriculture through its extension programmes and various schemes. Agricultural loans were disbursed in this period as part of the government policy for the development of agriculture. According to the local farmers, many of the loans sanctioned were for fertilizers. Government promoted the use of fertilizers to increase productivity. Agricultural stations distributed good quality pepper creepers for planting. Coffee Board, a central government organization to promote coffee cultivation in the country through extension services and marketing was very active in procuring coffee and imparting knowledge.

In most parts of the village, soil was so virgin and fertile that there was no need for artificial fertilizers. Cultivators mostly tried pepper as a mono crop which was very suitable for the soil and less labour-intensive, unlike coffee. The creeper also could give yield within five or six years. There was also coffee procurement monopoly of

the Coffee Board , besides people's perception that they were being denied the price internationally determined. One of the reasons why people opted for pepper was the resentment they had with this state agency. Pepper had both domestic as well as international markets and they could easily access the trade networks of pepper through the local traders. This earned the village fame as the capital of pepper cultivation in the region in later years. Slowly a pepper-based economy was developed in the area. Cultivation of coffee was mostly intercropped with pepper. And, there were several plots with pepper mono-cropping.

Pepper was a crop which experienced fluctuations in its price. However, there were periodic booms in the pepper price. In the early 1980s, for instance, pepper got a good price in the market and many of the local farmers who could crop by this time benefited from the price. This is considered to have been the cause for pepper cultivation becoming so wide-spread across the region that it came to be referred to in Wayanad as the 'Pulpalli Effect'. This boom helped the farmers to further invest and expand the cultivation of pepper. Those who had more assets and accessibility to different institutions could further make investments and expand the production till the late '90s when a sharp decline was experienced in the production and price of pepper.

As for timber, there was no trade outside the government department in the initial stage. So, huge trees in the forest land in the village were reportedly burnt down by the people in order to clear the forest for cultivation. But later, once people started realising the demand for timber, they began to negotiate with the traders from neighbouring districts visiting the village regarding the value of trees on their plots. It was in the late '70s that timber trade became rampant in the village. New roads were built in plenty to make the cultivators transport timber. Density of roads in the village was connected to the expansion of timber trade in this period. However, initially people did not get real value as they were in the receiving end of the negotiation with desperation for money.

Some of the settlers slowly started diversifying their livelihoods of cultivation and cattle rearing with petty trading. Some people opened tea shops too. Initial trade was

in the form of house-to-house selling of products. Some of them would go to the distant town market and buy condiments and other materials in a bamboo container and go around selling them as head-loads. After a period, some people opened shops for such goods. People also started going to the nearby town which was developed by that time with some shops and new building. The town shopping centre became like a village centre with roads and transportation improving. Those who became rich through pepper were the first people who invested in building and shops in the town. Apart from the traditional wealthy people, and the early settlers who came with money and bought land on a large scale, a new rich emerged: some settlers who had been encroachers, but went into pepper cultivation and became rich due to the boom in the price and productivity of pepper. Periodic repeat of boom in the pepper price in the '90s further strengthened their economic base and helped them further diversify with the surplus from new investments.

Changes among the native communities

Though colonial government laid the infrastructural foundation to usher in new forms of development through the introduction of a system of a new governance and economy, it was the southern migration which brought in fundamental changes in the livelihood practices of native communities like Chettys and Paniyans in the village.

A transition to cash crops among the native communities was also a result of the changes. Shifting cultivation which fed the local *adivasi* for centuries came to an end forever due to shrinkage following the occupation of dry land area by the settler population. Millets like *chama* and *ragi* slowly disappeared from the diet of the communities like Chetty and Paniyan. Although wetland cultivation of paddy remained considerably prominent among all communities as subsistence as well as commercial crop, focus was slowly shifted to dry land cash crop cultivation. This shift had strong ecological dimension too which was also directly linked to the subsistence practices of native communities, especially of *adivasis*. Even though the area was an ecological recess from an etic point of view, it provided ample and accessible resource for the material and emotional survival of the local communities.

Paradoxically, in their own perspective, it became an ecological cage for the *adivasis* after the influx and colonization of settlers.

Disappearance of Vallippani and Emergence of a Labour Market

Formation of a migrant settlement and the introduction of new production practices weakened the traditional labour arrangement like *Valli* system. Although it had been legally banned even in the colonial times, practically the system continued in the absence of any significant changes in the production relations at the local level. Greater influx of migrant cultivators decreased the availability of land and by the end of the '70s Chetty monopoly in cultivation ceased to exist. Increased demand for free labour with regard to the intensification of cash crop cultivation and the political pressure against the *valli* system paved the way for a dynamic labour market.

However, *valli* system was not broken down naturally. There was a consistent pressure from the settler cultivators to release the possession of Paniyanlabour from the hold of Chetty cultivators. This social pressure resulted in a lot of manipulative strategies on the part of the migrant cultivators to get the control of cheap labour especially in the context of labour scarcity in the area.

Attempts to get the control of Paniyanlabour in the village drew a new field of power relations between chetty communities and settlers. There were no direct confrontations or explicit tensions between them. Although there was no organised effort on the part of settlers as a group to attract the Paniyanlabourers to them, the strategies adopted by settlers had a homogenous character.

Such uniformity in the strategies adopted by the settlers in absorbing the Paniyan labour into the production activities was not confined to this village alone, but common to the whole region of Paniyan habitation across Wayanad and the adjacent areas of neighbouring districts. A famous Malayalam novel '*vishakanyaka*' written by a nationally acclaimed writer, S.K.Pottakad, on migration experiences based on field work in the same period in the northern border areas of Wayanad region depicts nicely the strategies which are reported to have been practiced in our study village also. A part of the novel depicts how one Paniyan along with his friends get lured into breaking a traditional relationship with a landlord to accept work offered

by a settler at alluring wages which was far higher than the prevailing wage. The settler, however, is reducing the wages after a couple of weeks, as the story goes. These were not merely figments of imagination; such stories are recalled by my informants.

Paniyans were extremely scared of the new people who were colonizing their surroundings. They never closely interacted with the settlers. According to elder Chetty informants, in the beginning, Paniyans used to hide if they accidentally encountered any settler. Settlers also corroborate such accounts of Paniyan fear and intimidation. They say that Paniyans were frightened by the stories about settlers that they were eaters of cows and even human beings. They could see it in the case of cows, which no Paniyan could ever imagine as food. As settlers were seen going to Chettys to take away their ailing or old cows for meat, this rumour was confirmed. The distance from the settlers in some ways, brought Paniyans closer to their *Chetty* families. Perhaps it was this distance and revulsion of the Paniyans rather than their attachment to the Chetty landlords that the migrants had sought to overcome by strategizing even unethically.

Apart from introducing wage for work which was a new practice in the village, many settlers indulged in brewing liquor from locally available products. Many among them produced, distributed and consumed liquor lavishly. Luring the Paniyans to liquor became finally the fatal strategy for settler to break them away from their bond with Chetty community in the village and elsewhere in the region. Many Paniyan labourers were trapped in this strategy. A new addiction to alcohol which came to be more or less linked to Paniyan identity, was introduced among the Paniyans by settler communities through this practice of labour extraction.

There was also a strong political dimension to the disintegration of *vallippani*. Communist parties and activists in the village and region depicted it as system of feudal relations of slavery and bondedness. They threatened the Chetty families for following this kind of relations with Paniyans and asked them to give wage for their work. In some other parts of the Wayanad region, where Paniyans worked under mainstream Nair, Muslim and Jain landlords, where the system was more

exploitative according to accounts of Paniyan elders in those settlements, the opposition turned very aggressive. Story of Belli, 80years, a Paniyan worker and *mooppan* from Panamaram region is a case in point. He got the title for his land from a Muslim landlord in the area after a series of confrontations including physical one between him and the son of the landlord and only after his case was decreed in his favour in the court of law with the support of Communist Party. In areas like Panamaram, Thirunelli, and Thrisillari, Paniyans became activists of Communist Parties and groups. Such changes in other parts of Wayanad had made impacts in our village also.

The old system however, did not disappear overnight. Most of the Paniyan families retained their age- old relationship with Chetty families. Although Chettys stopped the practice of giving paddy as wage, many families in the village did not start giving their Paniyan labourers wages in cash immediately. Instead, they gave money to the shops from where Paniyan could buy certain amount of household items. Sometimes, they got goods on credit also; shop owners would give a receipt in a small piece of paper and Chetty family head would pay the amount. But this kind of practice, known as *cheettezhuthu* lasted only for a short while, as transition to a cash economy could not be postponed for much longer.

In the course of time Paniyan labourer was absorbed in the local market. Now they had more options. Some families did not go for outside work as they had enough work with their Chetty families. Some others diversified labour. Some, mostly older Paniyan couples who had been with Chettys since their childhoods, would go to *Chetty* families and others, mostly, youngsters started going to work with Christian and Ezhava families. By the beginning of the '80s, some Paniyan families in the village started to attach themselves to certain settler, especially belonging to Christian, families. They were people who had started working for Chetty families in their childhoods including boys helping their fathers in cattle rearing and girls helping mothers in domestic work. Similar pattern of giving family labour was transferred to the settler families. In other cases, Paniyan children had taken their own decision to work for settlers even when parents continued to work for Chettys

This created a new division among Paniyan labourers: a category of workers who started working for the settler communities in their early childhood days and attached themselves to those families for many years have come to be known as *sthiram panikkar* (permanent workers). They earned more status than the other Paniyans (workers). The term *sthiram panikkaran* in due course came to carry with it greater prestige as well as greater exposure to material goods.

The case of Pathiyan, a 43 year old Paniya, who became a *sthiram panikkaran* for a Chirstan settler family and left the village when he was 17 years old, although the rest of his family remained with their old *Chetty* family in the old neighbourhood is very illustrative. He was one of the first permanent workers from the area who went outside the village to work for a settler farmer. *Mothalali* (*the person who owns property*) was the term they used for those new settler masters, instead of *pappan* (kin term) with whcih they used to address their *Chetty* landlords. Once, when Pathiyan was idly standing around in town, *mothalali* approached him and asked whether he was interested to work for him and he went along on the spur of the moment. He did not ask permission from any one before taking that decision or think twice. It was a momentary decision. He worked for that owner for around 25 years. Most important effect of this kind of attached labour in this period was the introduction of wage in cash into their livelihood system.

Some of the old Paniyans remember the wage they got as cash: Rs.2 for women and Rs.3 for men in the place of one *ser* paddy for women and two *ser* paddy for men in the old system. In the old system measurement of paddy as daily wage was fixed to cover their subsistence. They also got additional quantities of paddy twice a year and also had the freedom to access other resources. Wage in cash, on the other hand, increased every year depending on the season and demand for labour. A competition among the settler households for securing required labour in the season was the mechanism for wage hike. In good seasons when price for the crops are on the increase or anticipated to rise, and production is better, demand for labour increased.

Other cultural and ecological dimensions of changes

In this process *adivasis* like Paniyan lost their own world without gaining a new one. Dispossession of the original resources, forest, grazing lands, streams, wet lands etc became critical in defining their livelihood trajectories and even deciding the nature of negotiations with the modern development space in later years. Although disintegration of *valli system* might have been an apparent case for a shift in the livelihood base, as a direct impact of changes, other cultural and ecological dimensions of changes in the livelihood practices of local communities cannot be seen in isolation. All these factors were mostly interconnected and interdependent.

As far as the Paniyans were concerned, disintegration of *valli system* also meant the disintegration of their social organization. During the period of *valli system* a social order was established through the control of elders. *Mooppanmar* (headmen) within the families and communities were important not only for organizing the production activities under the guidance of Chetty elders, but also for arranging the rituals and ceremonies in the community. Some of the *mooppanmar* were considered as the intermediaries between the community members and gods and spirits. Community members had feared spirits and gods a great deal. They annually performed special rituals under the blessings of *mooppanmar* in the households, ritual grounds and graveyards possessed by community as a whole. According to the aged Paniyan and Chetty members in the village there was a strong sense of discipline that existed in that period. There was no habit of drinking alcohol. Everybody obeyed *mooppanmar* in the respective families or village. Elders were respected. This sense of discipline and obedience was mainly drawn from their fear of the supernatural. Break up of the *valli system* and the penetration of market relations in the production activities broke the social organization of Paniyans too. Elders lost their superior role in taking decisions within family and community as young people started going for work for cash outside. Settlers normally encouraged the youngsters to question the authority of elders including *mooppanmar*. They were made 'aware' of the regressive role played by the elders in the community by guarding the old beliefs and superstitions. They were taught about the kind of slavery their fathers and forefathers had

undergone. Ultimately new generations among the Paniyans started looking down upon their own community and elders.

Ecological degradation followed by the changes had an adverse effect on *adivasi* life in the area with the destruction of common property resource which existed as a life supporting system hitherto for the indigenous people. Drastic changes in land utilisation practices and large scale clearing of forest resources has done irreparable damage to the local ecology. Widespread cultivation of crops like tapioca resulted in soil erosion. Encroachment of forest and deforestation also has made long-term changes in the local environment that the situation compelled the Chetty landowners to stop the practice of large-scale cattle rearing. According to some of the Chetty informants, some of the migrants would capture the cattle if they were found 'trespassing' the boundaries. Even theft cases involving settlers stealing cows were reported in those days, according to them.

There has been large-scale conversion of paddy land mainly due to the intensification of commercial cropping. Permanent conversion however, has been due to the cultivation, mainly of areca nut and coconuts. Once land got permanently converted, people also started intercropping with the cultivation of pepper and coffee.

One major impact of the changes in land utilization has been the drying up of paddy fields which has had a chain effect. When a plot is converted, it causes shortage of water, compelling the neighbour to follow suit. Many people in the area observe that the lowering of water level in ponds and wells is a consequence of land conversion.

Paddy conversion also resulted in the levelling up of the traditional water pits, locally known as 'ooli' used as water sources for domestic purposes by the traditional communities of the area, which were plenty in earlier days. Marshy paddy fields, once found commonly all around Wayanad, have almost disappeared from the area. These were also the traditional water pools that absorbed the streams from the forest valleys. Factors like changes in agricultural practices and climatic condition have contributed mutually in the drying up of ponds. Many such fields had been dried up artificially even in the initial phase of migration, by filling them up with the

leaves of teak tree as part of their attempt to domesticate the environment which they found alien and risky for agricultural work.

Native communities in the village largely abstained from these practices although in later years these became standard practices in the region. Still there are households belonging to the native communities, Chetty and Kuruman, though a few, who do not use fertilizers in their fields. Many of them still continue paddy cultivation on a wide scale though it does not yield much profit to them. Many Chetty households are not ready to convert the wet land simply on the ground of sentiments, not going by the economic rationale of the settler communities.

Alienation of tribal land

The inflow of the great number of in-migrants and their effort to grab land by any means for expanding the cultivation of cash crops was detrimental to the *adivasi*. Mostly, later migrants who were poor and did not get a chance to encroach upon revenue land in the village were the people who alienated the *adivasi* and *Chetty* lands through different means. As we have seen, home-made liquor was an important means to seduce the *adivasis* or *Chettys* to drop their soil for throwaway prices and sometimes free of cash. Paniyans in the village did not have the concept of individual property and commercialised cultivation was more or less unknown. They had also not attached much value in that period for occupying land individually.

All the *adivasi* families in the village got land after the land reforms by considering them as the tenants of Chetty landowners. Most of the Chettys removed their Paniyan families from the prime sites to corners of their plots as they feared losing their land. Heads of the each Paniyan settlement, in their capacity as the eldest members in the corresponding joint families in the settlements, got some plots around their huts after the reforms. Many of the settlements in the Chetty neighborhoods could maintain one to two acres of land. But it became fragmented in later years by distributing it among their joint family members to construct houses under government schemes. There are two cases in the village where 10-15 cents of additional land got alienated by the encroachment of poor settlers in the later years.

But there is an exceptional case of a Paniyan in the Karyampathi kundu neighbourhood who maintained a relatively larger portion of land. He had occupied some portion of revenue land in addition to the land he got from Chetty families. His two sons inherited this property which came to around five acres of land.

There are a couple of large holders who are accused of inheriting a portion of *adivasi* land in the village Panchayt of Pulppalli. There is one case of a rich settler who encroached around one acre of land that was possessed by a Paniyan family years back. It is a land attached to one Paniyan settlement which has now become a congested 'colony' of Paniyas. Although this case of encroachment is widely known, the land ownership has already been legalized. A Paniyan member in this settlement, whose father had the possession of the land, is now showing his anger by verbally abusing the family members of the settler family every night under the influence of alcohol. It has become a matter of joke for the people in that neighbourhood. Most of the other occupants of *adivasi* land in the village are now small farmers. The encroachments have been already legalized by successive governments. There are a couple of later migrants who in recent decades encroached on a few cents of the *adivasi* land but are under the fear of legal action. There are two such cases in the village.

Though encroachment in the initial decades had got legal validity, largely it was at the expense of the *adivasis* all over Wayanad. According to official accounts, which are available for the whole region, redistribution of land to the settlers alienated a vast area of land from the tribal possession. While 39.52 percent of the area transferred was in the form of cash sales to settlers, 28.23 percent was alienated through mortgages to the settlers. The settlers grabbed the 20.97 percent of the tribal lands through illegal encroachment. Of the total area alienated 2.42 was lost through share cropping, whereas 3.22 % was lost due to cash sales to persons other than settlers and tribals. Cash sales to tribals accounted for 1.61 % of the area (Mohandas 1986). According to Land Use Board data as on 30.11.96, in Wayanad, out of the total 3344 acres of land distributed, ST population got 1538 acres.

Marginalization of *adivasis* in the village was complete with the alienation of land and loss of common resources with which they had open access. Even the changes in the physical environment resulted in the distinct patterns of habitat. They were pushed to the corners and rehabilitated in exclusive settlements called ‘colonies’ in cheap quality houses constructed under government schemes. This shift from *paadis* (Paniyan term for their traditional settlements) to rehabilitated tribal *colonies* (cluster of houses constructed under government schemes) has become instrumental in eroding the collective dignity of the Paniyas.

Alienation from forest: loss of traditions

One of the most important impacts of migration into the area was loss of traditional rights of *adivasis* on forest. This was besides degradation of forest due to the increased population pressure. Although the colonial government had legally brought in restrictions on forest use, *adivasis* could still manage to use it informally. Their forest practices had never made any changes in the physical structure of the forest. Unlike *adivasis* most of the migrants had no exposure to life associated with forest. Generally those people from plains were not sensitive to forest. Besides, massive clearing of forest on their encroached land was necessary to establish a successful cash crop cultivation system. The people who resided near forest areas who had started intensive commercial cropping began depending on forest for many farm and off farm requirements.

Besides, many among the settlers directly involved in illicit activities like felling of valuable trees, poaching of elephants and other animals, theft of sandalwoods to smuggle out, etc. In the post independence period, the Forest Department became the custodian of forest. It did not make any differentiation between the use of forest by *adivasis* and others. But in many cases in our village, department officials safeguarded the illegal activities of many settlers. There were cases of at least three persons in the village who became rich through illegal activities supported by forest officials according to the narratives of local people, which have become part of the local folklore. But *adivasis* were treated badly in the forest and often charged for theft by officials to cover up their illegal activities according to most of the *adivasi*

informants who are also traditional forest users. The state department is said to be corrupt and safeguarding the interests of a small section of settlers who abused the forest resources and became a hindrance to the genuine livelihood requirements of *adivasis*.

Alcoholism

As we have noted earlier widespread use of alcohol was a contribution of settler communities. Consumption of liquor was not new to the local population. Native communities were not fully unaware of making toddy. Some of the Chetty families in the village were known to make toddy from the palm, which was shared among the Paniyas too, but very limited in quantity as well as variety, once or twice a year during festive days. In the later periods, elder persons in the prominent Chetty families had the rare habit of buying bottled liquor from the local towns where shops were opened during the British period. Being expensive, younger members and labourers could rarely afford to have a taste of it.

But the situation changed when the settlers introduced the technology of brewing local arrack. We could see the political economy of spreading the culture of alcoholism among the native communities, especially among the Paniyas. Settlers made and used self-brewed arrack for many purposes: to resist the unfriendly climate, to earn money, to get free labour, and to occupy land by deception. Once they were able to make the labourers addicted, alcohol replaced the wage for labour. It was reported that many farmers in the area served it to the Paniyan labourers before the work season so as to extract the labour completely and make them dependent. Interestingly if tobacco was the symbol of attachment between *Chetts*, who cultivated it in their fields and made ritual transfer of a certain quantity of tobacco in each year when they get new Paniyan labourers or renew the bondage with old labourers according to the *vally* system, and Paniyas, *alcohol* became a new symbol of bond between settler communities, especially Christians, and Paniyas.

Genesis of development

This section looks into the processes through which the settler communities constructed the infrastructure of development on the basis of collective action and how this developmental infrastructure got transformed into individual resources. Infrastructure of development means the state measures and public organizations including land redistribution, increasing road connectivity, educational and health organizations, co-operatives, collective and political actions etc. In the case of our study village formation of resources for individuals and households were the outcome of their negotiation of this infrastructure. Thus, ability of the individuals to access and negotiate this infrastructure became a critical component in the process of negotiation of development over the years. Creation of different resources helped the people to further diversify their livelihood practices. However, there is a marked difference between the settler communities and *adivasis* in the village in acquiring major resources, land and education, mainly due to their disability in accessing the development infrastructure.

In the process, Christians and Hindu Ezhavas became dominant communities in the village. Dominance of these communities is understood in terms of their numbers and the extent of their social influence, derived from the possession of major resources, land and education. Although local history of their social living in the village does not go beyond the second half of the last century, they maintain overall supremacy in every walk of life.

Roads

Migration had marked the beginning of development in its modern guise in Wayanad as well as in our study village also. Stories of development successes were narrated often on par with the localised experiences of clearing the forest, creating a popular saying: “kaadu nadaya katha”, which means the story of how forest (kaadu) became

mainland (naadu). Protagonists of development became migrant communities in creating its infrastructure.

All the common roads in the village were constructed after the influx of settlers. Primarily, there were all forest paths. Also, Forest Department had built some roads for their exclusive use. When migrants reached the village, they initially built main road which connected their village and main town centers in the region through *sramadanam* (collective action giving free labour) under the leadership of local church and the involvement of people from all the neighborhoods.

Some of the villagers who participated in the work still remember the way all contributed to the work. Hundreds of people including women, children and the old, from all parts of the village as agreed upon assembled at a geographical point early in the mornings and proceeded to the site under the direction of local priests, in queue, carrying work implements like shovel and spade. Local leaders of political parties also actively took part in the action. They prepared food for all, for which people contributed their share, normally, tapioca. Plenty of pocket roads were built in the following years in every neighbourhood through *sramadanam*, mainly out of the requirement of the new economy that needed roads for transportation of timber and other commodities.

But the differential nature of proximity and access between settlers and *adivasis* to those new roads in each neighbourhood was evident. Communities concentrated on both sides of the roads were mainly settlers. *adivasis* and other traditional land owning communities largely remained in their old settlements. Most of the early roads in the village were constructed by the settlers. In later years many roads were built to the tribal settlements under different government schemes which were utilised more by the settler population as their interactions to outside world were more.

In our study locality the sides of the main road are presently occupied mostly by the well to do households belonging to settler communities. Usually these pieces of land are more expensive than other land in the interior village. Most of the occupants are relatively early settlers who could occupy such land and some of the other

households in the same route are of salaried groups who bought the plots by paying cash in a later stage. Those Chetty and *adivasi* neighbourhoods within the forest have poor connections to these main roads.

Land

Migrant population reached here to occupy land for cultivating cash crops. They mobilised themselves to get rights over the land from government. Hence land became a solid resource base for most of the settler families in the village. Along with the new practices of cash crop cultivation the focus was shifted from wet lands to dry lands. Possession of dry lands became more valuable than wet lands in the later years. It was the absence of any notion of possessing own land or doing cultivation of cash crops that stopped the *adivasis* from grabbing land in the initial period when land was available in abundance. In later years they lost whatever they had under the pressure of settlers who were aggressive and left no stone unturned to occupy the maximum area of dry land in the village. This created extreme disparities in the distribution of land among various communities, especially between settlers and *adivasis* (*Table3. 8*).

Around 63% of Paniyan in the village have virtually no land. They all possess houses constructed under government scheme. The land on which they constructed their houses does not belong to them. They got only the right for constructing house in the settlement where one or two acres of total land was rested upon an elder member. Five percent of the Paniyan families occupy land to the extent of 50 cents to one acre. This is mainly inherited land. Around 60% of Christian families hold more than one acre of land. But percentage of Ezhavas in the same category is 24%. Interestingly there is no Chetty household in the village without land below 20 cents. Nevertheless, it is justified given their tradition of wet land cultivation.

Table 3.8. Distribution of land across the communities

<i>Land holding (in cents)</i>	<i>Paniyan</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>Ezhava</i>	<i>Chetty</i>
Land less	--	0	7.8	--
1 – 10	63.2	0	14.8	--
11 – 20	10.5	7.2	17.6	--
21 – 50	21.1	6.6	21.8	13.7
51 – 100	5.2	27.6	7.8	58.9
101 - 200	--	26.2	8.4	13.8
201 - 300	--	13.0	7.8	--
301 - 500	--	19.4	0	--
500 & Above	----	0	14.0	13.6

Source Nair and Vinod(2007)

Most of the families with smaller sizes of land possession- almost 8% of Ezhavas are also landless—are mainly later migrants who joined the ranks of the labour class in the village. There are also later migrants belonging to Ezhava community who came in search of work, and not land. However, land redistribution as an important process

and infrastructure of development made land into an effective resource for the communities except in the case of *adivasis* like Paniyan.

Education

Modern education had two streams of origin within the village. First stream represented charitable attempts by certain individuals and families. Even before the arrival of settlers there was a missionary-run elementary school near a cluster of settlements of native communities, 5-6 kilometers away from the study village. Another elementary school was started by a group of young educated nationalists under the leadership of local Nair elite under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi. It was a conscious attempt to provide education to tribal children in the area. There was only one teacher and around 12 students in this school, which was run in a thatched shed in the centre of the village, which later became a small town.

The second stream of education started with the migration. Settlers and their leaders took an active interest in bringing new educational establishments at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Initially they supported the school started by the Nair family in the village centre. Although it was started for educating tribal children, after the arrival of migrants it opened up to include children from settler communities also and became a school catering for all. People took active interest in promoting the school. Till a permanent school building was built, people, mainly settlers, put their collective effort in thatching the school building and giving other free services to the school. In later years through the active involvement of settler leaders the school got upgraded with secondary and higher secondary levels. In the meantime, another school was started by a settler in a plot gifted by another settler, which was later handed over to the local church.

Today there are a number of educational establishments from lower level to college levels, which came into existence under pressure and demands from the people. Community organizations like Christian church and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), a community organization of the Ezhavas that spearheaded a major social reform movement in Kerala, also manage a number of educational institutions in the area.

In the village, all the early large land-holder settlers had sent their children to school. There was no difference between Christians and Ezhavas among the settlers in this. Among the Christians, church played an important role in imparting the value of education. Immigrants from southern Kerala appear to have given utmost importance to education. This was mainly due to the relatively earlier exposure to the modernisation process in the erstwhile Travancore province from where the major migrant community of the Syrian Christians have come. Missionary activities have also influenced their attitude towards education as explained by the Christians families in the village. Even the first generation settlers belonging to Christians had ensured basic education to all their members.

The Ezhavas, another dominant community in the village, it was influenced by fellow Christians in imparting education to the young. SNDP played a role in conscientising the Ezhavas into giving education to children. Narayanan, an early migrant, had migrated with only three years of formal education, but he educated his two sons who became graduates, one taking up a job while the other decided not to look for jobs, but to join his father in agriculture. Narayanan was an active worker of the Communist Party of India who later he became active in the SNDP and became its office bearer in the village. His father, an illiterate, was also active in the SNDP in the pre-migration period. Naryanan recalls that his father got the idea of sending him to school due to his exposure to SNDP although he himself could not continue his formal schooling beyond the primary classes. Narayanan also used to attend the meetings of SNDP in his childhood days along with his father where much knowledge about the modern world was imparted. It was this knowledge that guided him in life, as Narayanan remembers.

Education had caught the imagination of the settler population even in the period of settlement formation in the village which helped them later in diversifying their livelihoods and in acquiring further socio-economic mobility. Accordingly, the number of people with jobs in non-agricultural sector and salaried employment increased among the Christians in the village. Modern education was one of the major determining forces in the 'habitus' of the settler communities.

The situation was very different among communities like Paniyan. Concept of modern education was nowhere in their worldview. Children continued to work in the fields or roamed around the forest along with their parents even long after the arrival of settlers in the village. Those Paniyans who worked as *Sthirampanikkar* in the settler households, especially of the Christians, were the first generation Paniyans who took active interests in sending their children to school. This too happened only in the late 1980s. Influence of settler families was critical in spreading awareness about education among Paniyas. Although the state facilitated education for *adivasis* through the Tribal Welfare Department by distributing financial assistance as scholarships for uplifting Paniyan children, it has not had much impact.

Today new generation of parents are well aware of the importance of education in helping them diversify their livelihoods. However, even now most of the Paniyan students in the village do not go beyond the 5th standard in school. A majority of them are illiterate, mainly due to their living conditions which do not allow them to pursue education with one-track mind. Irregularity in attendance and drop-out are commonly found problems of Paniyan children in the village.

There are a number of reasons for the Paniyan children's irregularity in school. Many Paniyan children seasonally alternate their residence between mother's and father's natal households depending on the seasonal availability or non-availability of work for their parents in the respective neighborhoods. As traditionally they used to have bi-local residence, networks of brothers-in-law and their families play an important role in exploring and accessing work opportunities. This mobility and frequent shifts residence hinder many children's regular school attendance.

Dropout is also a serious problem among the Paniyan children. Many among them loose interest in school due to various reasons, like the alien environment in the school which does not offer any immediate incentives and the temptation to go for work as it will bring money. Rajesh and Manoj, who are both 11 years old and staying in the same settlement, dropped out of school when they were in the fourth standard as they were beaten up by a teacher one day for some fault. They threw a

stone at her and ran away from the class room, never to return to school. There was demand for their labour in the village to pluck areca nuts, collect pepper etc. When they are without work in the village, they sneak into the forest and roam around there, catching small birds. Their families are not keen to send them back to school as they earn money and take care of themselves. Both Rajesh and Manoj are outside parental authority as one is from a broken family with a deserted father and another with an alcoholic father and mothers in both cases are unable to exert any authority or influence on their children's actions.

These are not exceptional cases in the village, but part of the general pattern. Development infrastructure in the village has not helped communities like Paniyantu use education as a useful resource helping them to increase their livelihood options. Meanwhile, settler communities with their early understanding of the importance of education in social mobility fully participated in developing and making use of the developmental infrastructure of education and became successful to an extent in turning education into an effective resource in order to diversify their livelihood practices and also trying for further socio-economic mobility.

State, Collective Action and Party Politics

Post independence state was not very friendly with the settler population in the village. State became more hostile towards the migrants when they started encroaching the forest land of Temple. Migrants, especially who came in the 1960s were poor, but outside the village, there was an impression of them being illegal and exploiting encroachers. Though majority of the Christian immigrants were supporters of the Congress Party in their places of origin, the party did not do anything to protect the interests of the migrants who encroached upon the temple land in the village, given the dominance of upper caste Hindu leadership in the region. Congress leader, M.Kelappan, who was known as Kerala Gandhi and a leader of freedom movement in Kerala referred to them as '*a section of people from*

southern Travancore with intrusive religious ideals who came to encroach the land of Hindu Temple'¹⁵ reflecting the sentiments of the Congress Party at that time.

Locally, all political parties supported the cause of migrants and they had even formed an organization at the local level to fight the state, but aversion on the part of the state leaderships drove these poor migrants into the fold of left extremists. This finally culminated in an attack on the police camp in Pulppalli and the assassination of a police man which gave an extremist label to the people of this village.

But once the encroachment got authorized by the state with distribution of title to the encroached lands, a new political process was set in motion at the local level. All the violent agitations and aggressive politics faded out in course of time. Local leaders from settler communities, especially from among Christians, became influential in the state level politics as they emerged as a strong vote bank. Most of the leaders naturally, were with the Congress Party; it seemed a natural choice, with their Christian background. Slowly, this settler leadership replaced the upper caste Nair leadership and the dominance of the Chetty communities that existed in Wayanad and these new leaders began championing for the creation of an overall developmental infrastructure in the village.

This new political process took place alongside the introduction of a new state-initiated infrastructural development. There was a break as well as continuance in the process. New power relations emerged at the local level with the burgeoning of democratic institutions with new structures of governance, created by colonial modernity and later strengthened by the post-independent state, in which migrant population played a crucial role, both numerically and economically.

Even in the first election held for the local Panchayat in 1962, no Chetty or *adivasi* member got elected. Although the election was not contested on party basis, except for one member from the Jain community, all those who had been elected to the executive body of the Panchayat were from settler communities. Although the lone Jain community member became the President, he could not continue for long in the

¹⁵ Vadana Joseph, an early settler quote a newspaper report published by Mathrubhumi news paper in 50s while recollecting the history of the settlement formation in Vijaya Higher Secondary school Silver Jubilee Souvenir , 1990.

chair. He resigned from the post citing the reasons on personal ground. After six months, a settler community member replaced him as the President of the Panchayat. The Panchayat ward, including our study area, was represented by a local Congress leader, member of an early migrant family in the village belonging to Christian community, having wider acceptance among the people.

In the 1970s, these settler leaders played a significant role in bringing in state institutions into the area in accordance with the interests of the then native leaders within the Congress Party. It created a new infrastructure of development, linked to the development of agriculture and tribal populations, local governance, credit supply, education and health. In this development of the development infrastructure, power was getting concentrated more and more in the bureaucratic structures.

The narrative of the establishment of the local public health centre provides a classic example of collective action co-ordinated by the local settler leaders. According to K.U.Mathai, one among those settler leaders who gave leadership for the collective action, there was an outbreak of diarrhea in the village in the early '70s which killed many children and made people frantic and helpless. The two medical practitioners in the village could not bring the situation under control. The local leaders from the settler communities took initiative and organized a public meeting which collectively decided on sending a group of leaders to Kozhikode, around 50 kilometers away from the then district head quarters to meet the District Medical Officer (DMO). The group also visited important daily newspapers in the town to inform about the epidemic in the village. By the time they reached government guest house to meet the DMO, it was already night and the doctor refused to meet them, fearful of the rumoured Naxalite connection of the village. The group blockaded him and finally, the police were called in. After negotiations with the police and the DMO, they managed to get a team of health officials including the DMO to leave for the village the same night. With police escort, they arrived in the village by early morning and set up an emergency medical camp in the local school. It was this incident of co-ordinated local action under settler leadership that became instrumental in the establishment of a medical centre in the village.

Agricultural office in the area was locally known as “*Elam* (cardamom) Office”. Elam Office provided scientific knowledge and other services to local farmers. Regulated commodity market was also a feature of the period. Local merchants had a major say in the transactions in this market and in the case of crops like coffee, the government played a major role with its monopoly in the market. Coffee Board, a state institution, which developed elaborate and widespread bureaucratic structures became the sole agency for the procurement and sale of coffee in the area. It restricted the local farmers from free movement of the product with mechanisms like quality checks and delayed payments of prices.

What is significant about this period is the nexus that was created among the important families, mainly of early migrants, who had begun to amass wealth by this time, and the political leaders, especially of the Congress Party which was dominant in the village, and the bureaucrats. It was through these new ‘elite’ networks that programs were implemented and benefits distributed, especially those related to agricultural extension. The bulk of the other settlers who were the aspiring poor supported and tried to get benefits from this nexus through their favour. Most of them were scared of government officials and bureaucratic procedures due to ignorance and lack of exposure. Naturally, they became dependent on this local elites with new found money and power for recommendations for beneficiary schemes, introductions for bank loans, information about how to get access to various departments and officials, and other such newly formed necessities.

Among the native communities, only the *adivasi* Kuruma, got some access to these networks. This limited access to the Kuruma is linked to the policy of reservation in electoral bodies and government employment ensured to scheduled tribes in the Constitution of the country. A section of Kuruma, who were traditionally a landholding community and upper strata among the *adivasis*, naturally became beneficiaries of this policy. A Kuruma leader emerged from the village in the Congress Party during this period when a local Kuruma teacher was identified by some Congress leaders to contest under their banner to the State Legislative Assembly as the ward was a tribal reservation constituency and none other than a tribal could contest in the election from that constituency. This Kuruma teacher thus

became the local MLA affiliated to the Congress Party and through him, a major section of Kuruma community became supporters of the Congress Party.

Although there were local leaders in the village in the Congress Party from *Chetty* community also, especially in the pre-independence period, with migrants becoming more powerful within the Party in the village, their role in local politics became considerably diminished though most of them continued to be the workers and sympathizers of the Congress Party. In the new context, they tried to use their old upper caste connections within the Congress Party outside the village and even region, and in various government departments. However, beyond a level they could not succeed in this due to the lack of exposure and of networking within the political parties.

Paniyanand Adivasi Development

Though Paniyan was completely outside the political processes that took shape in this period, there were new state institutions exclusively made for the welfare of tribal populations that had a space for them. For instance, the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) was implemented in the 1970s with the objective of overall development of tribal populations. As per the ITDP, its offices functioned at the district/block level and village levels, under the overall authority of the state department. Tribal sub-plan was specially constituted and the amount was disbursed through the department intended for the creation of developmental infrastructure for tribal population.

A tribal extension office came into existence during the period in the village. A tribal co-operative society was also established for the procurement of forest produces collected by the tribal people and intended for the welfare of tribal populations. Tribal extension officers were mainly from other areas, even from outside the Wayanad region. Co-operative society was however, under the control of Kurumas. The local MLA from Kuruman community was instrumental in carrying out many projects in the area. The establishment of the tribal co-operative society was his contribution to this area. But there was no single person from the other tribal communities like Paniyan or Kattunayakan

in the governing body of this Society. Most of the elected body of directors belonged to the MLA's family or his community. Its first President was his brother who continued in that capacity for a very long time. Kuruma community hence emerged as a creamy section among *adivasis* in the area under the patronage of this particular MLA and the Congress Party. Whenever any reservation posts in the elected bodies had to be filled, someone from this community became the natural choice. Tribal Extension Office also functioned in close contact with the new class of leaders from this community. This exposure helped them grab most of the employment opportunities in the government sector.

There was a clear disjuncture between Paniyans and the processes of creation of development infrastructure in the early period in the absence of any influential leaders from this community and their lack of education. Collapse of their social organization had already discredited their traditional, community leadership. Absence of resources like land, education and political networks which were found to be critical in transforming the developmental infrastructure into individual resources, made the community extremely vulnerable in these changes in the village and the Wayanad region as a whole. Failure of the state and the community's agency to organize collective action, which were the strengths of the settlers which had legitimized their new life worlds, and the settlers' means to extract Paniyan labour into the extremely competent new production processes hindered the Paniyan from breaking into the closed and monotonous cycle of livelihood practices that opened up in the period of centralized development.

Changes in the '90s and creation of a development space

The 1990s witnessed extreme turbulences in the livelihoods of people belonging to all the communities in the village. The extremes were between the buoyancy followed by a price boom extended to almost an entire decade on the one hand and a fall in the prices of almost all the products at end of the decade on the other. Price for pepper and coffee shot up in an unprecedented way in the decade but plummeted at the end of the decade. Adding to the burden, the agricultural sector saw a drastic

decrease in productivity due to the increased use of chemicals, mainly an offshoot of the price boom, and a severe shortage in rainfall. Another significant factor of this period was the decentralisation program which deployed more money and power at the local level of governance which unleashed a new dynamics in the local politics. For the local communities, the changes in this decade made visible the new political economy of increasing conflicts and competition. Money became the logic of individual actions and hence creating a monetary base for most of the livelihood practices was the crux of the new social mobility. Inter-household competition within the neighbourhoods for augmenting their resource base breached all limits of reciprocal understanding and collective action among households and families hitherto maintained in the village. But the crisis at the end of the decade urged them to reinvent the abandoned tradition of collective action based on a sense of reciprocity, but now with a monetary basis.

Formation of a development space was a culmination of the continuous processes of creation of developmental infrastructure and augmentation of individual resources. This creation of development space was interpenetrated with the above-described changes which have helped individuals and communities in varying degrees to enhance their capabilities to negotiate with the state structures at the local level which were formally becoming more people oriented. It means that by the end of the 1990s with the implementation of state decentralisation and the increased dynamics of market in the local life through the boom and fall in the cash crop prices and corresponding changes in commodity and labour markets an inclusive and participatory space has been created on the one hand and certain level of capability

has been formed for the local people to make individual choices based on self interests. Generally this public space of social interaction among the communities has been evolved over the years through these processes through the setting up and functioning of a series of organisations under both state and private ownership.

The 1990s have witnessed a proliferation in the local organisations with state decentralisation and participatory development. The functioning of these large number of public organisations under state and non –state actors enabled an increasing social space of horizontal interactions among individuals which in turn, also contributed to the creation of the development space in the village. Although functionally located at the levels of village and village Panchayath, most of them are embedded structurally at the regional, national, and global locations as well and the functioning dynamics of these organisations at these higher levels.

A number of community/ public centres and organisations (Tables 3.9&3.10) exist within atwo kilometre circumference of the village which have been found playing important role in the livelihoods of local communities. They are also treated here as part of the physical structure of the village. Developmental activities linked to the livelihood practices of people are mediated and carried out by these wide array of varied organisations which are controlled by governmental, non governmental and sometimes private agencies. Listing of these centres and organisations will be helpful to understand the density of the developmental organisations with which communities in the village are exposed to interact in their day to day living.

There are certain centres within the village directly under the control of government department and local Panchayath like lower primary school, one common play school and another one exclusively for tribal children, a health centre with the service of a full- time nursing assistant and a literacy centre where school drop outs

and old people can continue their education informally and appear for secondary exam.

Some other centres for projects like check dam and drinking water supply are state-initiated but run by local people. There is a Public Distribution Shop owned by a private individual but running under government supervision and subsidy. Milk society is one of the most important organisations in the area with its head office very close to our study village. Run by an elected body, it collects milk from local people through five collection centres in the village and market them through local milkmen.

All the major political parties, like the Congress, Communist Party of India (M), Communist Party of India (CPI) and BJP have units and active workers in the village. There are trade unions and farmers organisation associated with each of these political parties. Each of these parties show their strength and influence in the respective neighbourhoods by putting up their party flags very high and decorating the area surrounding the posts. In two of the four junctions adjacent to the different neighbourhoods in the village these party flags fly high.

There are two farmers' organisations which were formed in the wake of agrarian crisis in the region: Farmer's Relief Forum (FRF) and INFAM. The former is an organisation largely confined to Wayanad region under the leadership of some farmers, whereas the latter a state wide organisation controlled by the church. Both organisations are very active in the village.

Besides, there are three major Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) undertaking different developmental as well as income generating activities. Two of them are directly under the control of Christian churches belonging to different denominations, while the third one is under the control of an individual. Area of activities of these three NGOs is mainly Wayanad district. There are also a couple of small groups with a few households, functioning occasionally and irregularly. All the NGOs active in the village have their offices in the town.

Internal organisations of various communities are also very strong and powerful in the village. SNDP for *Ezhava*, Church organisations for Christians, NSS for Nairs

and Chetty Service Society for Wayanadan Chettys are the common community organisations. They organise activities like micro credit, weekly meetings and prayer groups etc., besides their involvement in the life cycle rituals of community members.

There are important governmental organizations surrounding the village. Town junction is just two kilometers away and most of these organizations are situated in the town. Role of local Panchayat has increased after decentralization in taking many administrative and development decisions directly affecting the livelihoods of local population. One can see a huge crowd throughout the day in the Panchayath premises.

There are other important government offices too in the town centre proximate to the village. Agricultural department deal with extension works related to farming and distribution of government subsidies mainly through local Panchayat. There is also Forest Department Office which is in charge of forest maintenance and protection. The tribal extension office which is nearly six kilometers away from the village is working in tandem with the local Panchayat in organizing tribal village councils (*oorukoottam*) and distributing benefits. There is also a tribal co-operative society which collects minor forest produce from *adivasis*, especially Kattunayakan.

Health and education are two other areas where maximum number of organizations and establishments in public and private sectors function in the region. Number of private schools and colleges has increased recently. There are health establishments both in private and public sectors. There is one community health centre in the region with in-patient treatment facility which is also the headquarter of the two primary health centres. There are also health service extension units. Primary health centres have limited number of beds for in-patients. There are two private hospitals in the town and around five dental clinics too. Besides, there are also seven doctors undertaking private practice in the region.

Banking sector is becoming important for all sections of people in the village. Dependence on banks is inevitable after the implementation of the micro-credit program in the village. Besides, workers in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), a scheme of the Government of India that guarantees minimum hundred days employment to one member of each and every family demanding employment, draw their wages through banks. There are three public sector banks and two co-operative banks which are functioning in very formal ways in providing credit and investment facilities. There are also Co-operative banks implementing innovative loan programs in the village. Four private banks in the village are having very informal arrangements which make available loans easily, which entices people, mostly the very poor and the illiterate, but charge high interests and are locally known as ‘*blade companies*’ indicating the cut-throat interest rates on loans and the ruthless treatment of defaulters.

Table3. 9. Public organisation within the study village

Name of the organization	No	Function
Lower primary school (Government run)	1	Free education with noon meal
<i>Play School (Anganwadi) (Govt.)</i> Common	2	Free pre-primary education Free noon meal
<i>Play School Anganwadi (Tribal, attached to settlement)</i>	1	Free pre-primary education Free noon meal
Health centre (<i>maternity centre</i>) Govt. run	1	Immunisation programmes, Awareness programme for women, Free first aid.
Literacy centre (Govt. run)	1	Continuation of complete literacy programme, SHG activities
Drinking water supply (Govt funded)	1	Distribution of water under people's/households' committee
Check dam (Govt funded)	2	For agricultural purpose and water conservation

PDS (Public Distribution System) shops	2	Distribution of cereals, free supply of drain for tribal population
Milk society (Cooperative)	1	Collection centres; Distribution of subsidies
Political parties	3	CPI, CPM, Congress, BJP
Farmer's organizations	4	INFAM, FRF, Karshakasangham
NGOs	3	Micro credit, Rain water harvesting, watershed projects, Organic farming
Recreation club	1	Sports and arts, reading room with newspapers and magazines
Organisations (intended for social and economic uplifting of various communities)	6	SNDP, NSS, Church, CSS, Regular meeting of members, prayers, SHG- micro credit activities

Source Filed survey(2007)

Table.3.10 Public organizations Within the village Panchayat Source Filed survey (2007)

Name of the organization	No.	Function
Panchayat	1	Local governance and development
Gramasabha		Participation of the people/empowerment
Agricultural office (yelum office)	1	Extension services
Tribal department	1	Extension services, oorukoottam (conducting meeting of exclusive meeting of tribal household members) Tribal development
Forest department	1	Forest management, administration Participatory management
Tribal cooperative	1	Collection and selling of forest produces
Police station		Welfare activities
Marketing cooperatives	1	Marketing of agricultural products
Village office	1	Revenue administration

Milk cooperative	1	Collection and distribution of milk Self help group activities for farmers
Education/Schools	3	
Higher secondary (Aided 2 private 1)		Free education/ Noon meal
Upper primary (Aided- 2, private -2) ¹⁶	4	
College (Aided -1, private- 2)		Higher education
Teacher training college (private)	3	
	2	
Health		
<i>Community health centre</i>	1	Free treatment, treatment for inpatients
<i>Primary health centre</i>	2	Extension service
<i>Private hospitals</i>	2	Treatment for out patients, extension services Paid treatment
Banking	3	
Public sector	2	Credit facilities (agricultural and non agricultural)
Cooperative	4	
Private		
NGOs		
Government sponsored	1	SHG activities, Organic farming, watershed development, Construction of houses under government scheme
Church based	3	
Independent	2	
Public library	1	Reading room, lending of books , career guidance

There is a recreation club in the village founded mainly by the settlers which has become a common place for people across the communities and political parties to come around for group activities. They organize sports and arts events during the

¹⁶ Aided schools are financially supported by state government in disbursing the salary for staff, owned by private management. There are private schools mushroomed in the 90s, mainly English medium schools, owned and run by private management

time of festivals, including that of Christian and Hindu, and some other important days like the Independence Day. Office bearers of this club are mainly male members belonging to settler communities. But people belonging to all communities and categories participate in the annual events. Club has its own land and building and a reading room with a couple of newspapers and magazines. However, *adivasi* participation is very marginal in the activities of club.

In the town there is a public library attracting large sections of educated people and students cutting across communities. It has a good collection of books and internet facilities in a new two storied building built with government financial grant availed through local MLA. They also keep a good reading room with a number of Malayalam and English newspapers and magazines. They are also conducting career guidance classes for young people and special seminars and talks on environmental and other social issues. However, there is no *adivasi* presence in the reading room or other activities of the library.

All the people in the village are linked to these organizations in one way or other, though the social distance /access of the communities to them are widely varied. The differential access is found on individual as well as community levels. At the level of community, the difference is stark between *adivasis* and the others.

Land to money

In the 1990s, the forces of market and decentralisation have played a significant role in creating a level playing field to an extent with money becoming the basis of social interactions related to livelihoods. During this period, with regard to market, farmers irrespective of early migrants or later migrants made benefits from the boom. Natural fragmentation of land through succession of second generation had made a change in status of some families as large holders to small ones. It was the easy conversion of land into cash due to the incredible returns that raised the individual aspirations and dreams which further accelerated the demand for shares from family which resulted

in the fragmentation of land and sometimes, family relations. Production of pepper from even a small plot of land earned a lot of money when it fetched Rs.180-200 per kg. It gave symbolically a superior status even to small holders who owned just 50 cents of land, during that period.

Flooding of money was not merely from the product market. Banks, both public and private, and individual money lenders not only from Kerala, but also those traditional lenders from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state became omnipresent pumping money into local life. This encouraged the farmers to invest money in various agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises.

As a new trend, many small-scale farmers too began investing money in ginger cultivation in Kodagu region of nearby Karnataka state where fertile land was available in large tracts. Production of ginger was highly vulnerable to market risks. Some farmers faced the fate of the gold mine fortune hunters of the 18th century who came from the West and ended their lives after making fruitless mining in the Wayanad hills(Gopi M 2002) while some made huge benefits from the cultivation.

Story of a tutorial college teacher was often narrated in the village when they talk about ginger cultivation. This person wanted to join a private higher secondary school in the area. He was asked to give around Rs. 75,000 for the post by the school management as a contribution to the school fund. This was a normal practice. He had with him only Rs. 50,000. So he negotiated with the management, but in vain. Then he decided to invest the money in ginger cultivation in Kodagu. He got a bumper crop as well as a huge profit, which according to the local narrative, was four times more than his investment. He became one of the important ginger cultivators in the

village. In another case, Raju and his brother, who were small-time brokers in cattle trade in Kappikkunnu neighbourhood, started cultivating ginger in Koadagu and earned huge profits. They turned to construction work, trading of spices etc in the following years. They shifted from the neighbourhood and bought a new plot near the town and constructed a huge house with a big compound wall and guarded by Alsatian dogs. People cite such examples of ordinary settlers who became rich through ginger cultivation. They have also stories of failed cultivators who committed suicide after becoming indebted following the huge loss in ginger cultivation in Kodagu.

Besides the ginger cultivation, large holders in the village transferred their money to non –agricultural sectors. Mr.Ramesh, one of the earliest settler families, invested money in constructing a tourist home and some buildings to lease out for trade. He started a cattle farm with all modern facilities and became one of the few large scale individual milk producers in the state. Narayanan’s family also constructed a building in the town for trading purposes. Buying jeeps became a craze in the village during the same period. There were newspaper reports of transporting jeeps to this area in bulk from Mahindra company showroom in Kozhikode in this period. Owing a jeep became a prestige symbol for most of the medium and large holders.

Households in each neighbourhood competed to get an upper hand in this. Some households used these vehicles for their own purposes while others plied taxis employing drivers.

Large land holders were also capable of investing in agriculture. They started diversifying cash crop cultivation with planting of other high value cash crops like

vanilla and rubber. Most of the large holders in the village had diversified their cultivation in this period. With the introduction new crops, mono cropping of pepper and inter-cropping of coffee paved way for multi-cropping of more than two crops in these gardens. By this period land as such became unimportant for most of the farmers. Importance of land was considered purely in terms of the money it would bring in. Over-use of fertilisers and pesticides on the soil became an inevitable outcome of this process.

Land to human resource

Another area where farmers commonly made investments was in the education of their children. Aspiration for education which was very much there even in the first generation migrants, grew to new heights in this period. Intend on livelihood diversification, people started sending their children to self-financing professional courses inside and outside Kerala. Nursing, engineering, Maters in Business Administration, animation, etc., were some of the courses chosen by the parents. Elder son of Mundyamparambil Narayanan, an early settler in the village, who taught his children upto graduate level, sent his two boys for an animation course paying heavy capitation fees. A number of parents in the village sent their children for nursing courses to Bangalore city. A local leader of the CPI(M) who was also a small scale farmer sent his two children for engineering in self-financing colleges in Banglore for which he collected some amount from a businessman by keeping his land as collateral security. Except Paniyan and other marginal *adivasis*, all other people spent money for education during this period.

Educating children in English medium schools became a norm even among the small-scale farmers. In the village a government school was started during the same period under pressure from local people. But interestingly no children from farmers' families came to that school. Gradually it became a school for children from nearby Paniyanand other *adivasi* settlements. Meanwhile at least five new private English medium schools started functioning in the nearby town 2-3 kilometres away from the village. All the children belonging to settler families irrespective of their financial background sent their children to these new schools. Even in the first school in the village, where all the first generation migrants educated their children, number of students from settler families came down drastically. This school also subsequently got the image of an *adivasi* school where majority of the students were from Paniyan community and the working class families from among the settler communities.

Housing

Housing was another area where people spent money during this period. All the grass thatched houses in the village got transformed into tiled or concrete ones. Boom in the housing sector during this period was described by people in general as 'there are no houses in the village that has not spent at least one sack of cement'. Among the settlers, houses were multiplied in each single plot by constructing new houses according to the number of married couples. Nuclear families became the norm and the basis of such a housing boom in the village during this period was individualisation. This was not new or introduced by the changes in this decade. Consciousness of individualism and nuclear family was prevalent among even the first generation migrants. Material circumstances became extremely favourable in

this period with the boom in the commodity and financial market and implementation of decentralisation programme which offered housing schemes for the poor sections of people.

End of a period of buoyancy

As already noted, the boom did not last long. By the end of the decade people started experiencing a downfall. Prices for pepper and coffee fell steeply. Although they had seen a fluctuation in the price for pepper in the previous decade also, it was for the first time that they had to face a steep fall after an unbelievable rise in the price, thanks to the increased exposure to international market.

Two other things which flared up their distress were severe shortage in the availability of rain and the dramatic reduction in the crop production. Though there was a reduction in the availability of rain over the years from 1990 onwards people in the village experienced a severe draught in the 2004 summer. Decline in the production was mainly due to the loss of soil quality and spread of pests and diseases. This was a result of over use of fertilizers and pesticides by the local farmers during the period of boom.

Most of the people in the village were on half-way from reaping the benefits of their investments. Large holders in the village were in a position to manage the downturn with their diversified activities. A few of them had emerged as really rich with no financial ramifications of this downfall to affect their base. Some of them turned to real estate business with a corresponding fall in the land price and the development of a tourism based economy in the region. The places closer to the forest were in good demand in the new situation. In the village, an old house on a *patta* land amidst

the forest was bought by a large farmer who turned business man to convert it into a tourist motel.

Vast segments of small holders, those who owned just two acres and below but had a status of farmers with good prices for their crops, became poor in the price crash.

This group included all categories including early and later migrants, native communities like Chetty etc. Drastic reduction in the production severely affected even some of the large holders. Many poor farmers started going for manual works. Revival of collective practices like '*koodippani*' or 'exchange of labour' was a major response among these 'newly poor' segments of population. But it was qualitatively very different from the practice we had seen in the initial period of migration. Earlier they reciprocated with free labour. But now, they reciprocated with corresponding monetary wage.

The situation can be illustrated with a case in one of the neighbourhoods in the village. Sabu and his wife Sheeba, both from early migrant families with large land holdings, together owned around three acres of land. Sabu had got two acres after his marriage as share from his family and Sheeba got one acre of land as dowry. Both of them have higher secondary level education. Sabu was also active in the Congress Party as an ordinary worker and associated with all other social activities including the functioning of the local club, temple committee, community organisation (SNDP), etc. He was a farmer and employed Paniyan labourers from his neighbourhood for doing all his farm work. He cultivated mainly pepper and coffee on the dry land and seasonally, paddy and ginger on 50 cents of wet land.

They have two children and Sabu wants to give them useful professional education which would give them good opportunities in the job market. He gave the children, elder boy and girl, English medium education in the private sector. Sabu and his wife considered education of their children as the most important thing in their life. He wanted to get his boy into an engineering course. His daughter wants to become a media professional. Price boom inspired them to cherish these dreams. He modified his old house during this period. He used to do ginger cultivation also in the same period in leased-in lands. He took most of the household decisions in consultation with his wife. She managed the household and farm-related day to day works. Sabu dealt with selling of produces, buying of agricultural inputs, and children's education besides his other social activities.

The distress period doomed their ways of living. The immediate step they took in the context of price crash was to stop hiring labour. They decided to work on their farms themselves. But certain works like planting and harvest of paddy and ginger necessitated additional labour. Both of the cultivations demand a long cycle of labour-intensive activities from clearing and preparing the field to harvesting. By this time within the village a network of self-help groups had formed in the context of decentralisation. In their neighbourhoods also they started interacting with self-help groups supported by local panchayth and other NGOs also. Neighbours found a new space of interaction within these groups. There were also other families in the neighbourhood in similar situation who finally came together to meet their requirements. Intervention of SHGs reinvented the tradition of *kootippani* in finding a solution for this labour shortage. Hence Sabu and Sheeba found some families in

the neighbourhood with whom they could workout a relationship. In the new form of *kootippani* they exchanged the labour not for free but for normal wage. But they would not sell their labour in the open market. They took up work for wage limited within three –four families. In the case of Sabu there were three families included in the network. Husband and wife from each of these families took part in the *koodippani*. Children also started to help Sabu in doing agricultural work after their school time. His wife started to keep additional cows and selling milk to local co-operatives. Sabu and Sheeba joined the micro credit activities of SHGs. They joined the collective farming through SHGs putting their share as labour and sometimes, in cash.

But what is the most important thing is that they did not disrupt the education of their children. Their son passed plus two level of schooling with good marks. He got admission for a degree course in a science subject in the nearby college. Although he could not make it for engineering, Sabu has not given up that idea. Their daughter is also continuing her education in higher secondary class. Although they made cuts in the labour and other input costs, in the intake of calorie foods like meats, the consumption of liquor, shopping, etc., and almost given up using gas stove for cooking, watching movies in theatres, dining out etc., he has not compromised on the children's education. He had some loans from the local banks which were overdue. He struggled hard to make both ends meet.

In this distress situation, adding to his burden he was charged with a police case for illegally cutting down the teak trees from his own garden. His family got title for the revenue land from which they had no permission to cut down the teakwood. Those

trees were marked and entitled to government. He wanted to escape from the indebtedness by selling these trees. But someone in the neighbourhood informed the police and they came in the night when he tried to load it. The timber has been left on the road- side to rot. He has found a job as a driver in a carrier lorry having national permit and is moving between states. He goes off from the house often and leaves his wife to manage the agricultural and other household works on her own. Although Sabu does not get much time to work for club, party or community organisation they maintain close contact with all the useful networks which are very much linked with various activities of their SHGs too.

Paniyan workers stopped working for Sabu after a while. They started complaining against him for not giving their wage even if they worked for reduced wage. Gulikan from *Puthiyedam* neighbourhood is a usual worker for Sabu said that they could not trust him any more as he cheated them by not distributing their wage for long days. Everyday at the end of the work Sabu used to postpone their payment.

“ He repeated this repeated for some days. But he gave us one time meal, but what is the use with out money. We get free rice so it is not difficult for us to get one time meal. So we stopped working for him. We will not work there any more even he offers higher wage”. Guikan asserts.

Another major response from the local people to distress was migration to distant places within and outside the state and sometimes to other countries also. Although international migration is a major phenomenon in the state, generally it did not happen in the whole region in a big way. But there are people in the village, mainly from rich Christian families who have migrated to US and Europe. But the members

of poor and medium families started moving out from the village only after the price crash. They are going mainly for manual jobs. In the first stream of distress led migration one set of people including some young people belonging to farmers' households went to Thirupur in Tamil Nadu for working in garment factories. However, most of them did not continue their work more than six months as working condition and wage were bad. Though this migration did not help them find meaningful livelihoods, they continued their movement moving to neighbouring districts for doing non agricultural works like driving, construction work etc. Some women from the village moved out for doing domestic work in migrant households where elderly people are left behind in their own. The men find it very difficult to find any jobs due to absence of skills. There are a number of cases of women working in the Gulf countries as maids from Christian as well as Chetty households. Christians have wider networks for making such movements possible. Chetty women, who are considered as earnest and sincere in their working, are getting chances through their exposure to some of the migrant families.

Case of James 38 years and Leena, 32, is a good case in understanding the emerging phenomenon of gulf migration. Leena who holds educational qualification at higher secondary level left to gulf where her brothers are working. They have 50 cetns land got as a share from James' father, who was an old settler with four acres of occupied land which he later distributed to his four sons including James, worked for wage in *koodippani* after the collapse of market. They have two children and they made all their efforts including going for more collective work like *koodippani*, SHG activities, etc., to continue life as usual. Leena got a visa arranged by her brothers in

the gulf in 2006 for the post of a 'sales girl'. To quote James to see how James describe their condition,

“ it is a good opportunity for us to escape from this struggling. Though her brothers are eager to bring me there what can I do? I don't know any thing other than a job of cultivator. What I am going to do there with shovel ? We were not eager to continue our education. We hoped that we could flourish more doing agriculture. If I had done any vocational training I would have been in gulf. Now I look after my children. They are small and want to meet their mom. Still I manage it. Now I am learning driving and once I complete it I will also go to the gulf. Then she can come back and look after the children”.

However, some of his 'envious' neighbours say that his wife is working as a house maid and hence makes money.

But for younger generation, situation is different from these 'family men'. Educated youth, male and female, especially belonging to settler households now see migration as a generational continuity as hired through blood and want to move out wherever they can go to work which would increase their social mobility. This is quiet un-similar with the whole Kerala situation where migration is a source of upward mobility.

Reena, the eldest among three daughters of a small-scale cultivator household, reached Andhra Pradesh using the contact of a distant relative and joined as a teacher in a pre -primary school. School owner, who is also from Kerala, pays her Rs.1500 per month as salary besides food and accommodation. Her father, an ailing cultivator, and mother, who is working as an agricultural labourer, explains that

though the amount is less, she is no more a 'burden' to them and whatever she is earning can be saved for future. Accordingly, this job also gives an exposure and experience for her to explore other opportunities. And back at home there is nothing much left to be offered. There are also households from which girls have moved to the more remote areas like Punjab and Rajasthan.

Most of the households from which the girls are moving out belong to the Christian community, thanks to the wider net work of migrant relatives and friends and above all the institutional presence of the Church in the parting as well as in the landing areas. Strong ethos of self-dependency and reliance also works as a springboard for such migratory shifts.

Affluent local youth creates a new social space of international connections, networks and identity in their efforts to migrate. Local internet café is an assembling place for many of these young people. Internet has become a source of information and connections for those aspiring for international migration. They prepare resume and application to various posts sitting and chatting in a cafe owned by a young man belonging to a large holder Ezhava community. It is a practice for local Christian youth to indicate their religious background in their resume or applications to be uploaded to western countries. They would use standard phrase like "*I belong to an ancient aristocrat Syrian Christian family in Kerala*" in their resume which they create in group and send it from café. They make sarcastic comments to each other over their poor condition of living when their grandfathers reached in the village. Nursing is an attractive job for many girls who are aspiring for migration. It is the first preference of parents in the village when they pick up a course for their

children, especially for girls. There are a number of cases of parents in the village who have sent their children to self financing colleges even in the period of distress either by selling their properties or borrowing land from private people by giving their house or land as collateral. There are also cases of some of the nursing colleges in Bangalore arranging loans for these students. There are agents who attract the parents and students for these courses. It is the hope that their children would get a good job abroad that encourages these parents to take risks even in the wake of a grim economic situation.

Insistence of settlers in providing professional education to their children, even if it was expensive has reaped benefits for many families in the context of distress. In the family of Narayanan, one of the oldest settlers belonging to Ezhava community, who provided education to his sons up to degree level even in the 1970s, his grand children got admission for an expensive animation course during the period of distress. After passing out the course the boy immediately got a job in a MNC in Bangalore, the major IT hub of the country. By this time, the second grandson also joined for the same course and his brother helped him to find a job in Bangalore.

There is a clear trend among the farmers in the village to shift their children from agriculture to other skilled jobs. No farmer in the village likes to see his son take up agriculture as the sole source of income. Majority of them think that there is no future in agriculture alone. Their experience in this decade of boom and doom with an extremely fluctuating market has strengthened this conviction. Now-a-days, the state is also envisaging a future for the region in tourism and IT-based services.

There is a consensus about this irrespective of the political cleavages.

Local Panchayath President, a local leader of Communist Party of India (M), talked about his vision about the village in a spirited way. He says that considering the geographic and climatic proximity of this place to Bangalore, there was a great chance for developing this area into one of the subsidiary IT hubs as growth in Bangalore and nearby Mysore would soon reach an optimum level of development. Panchayath and parents give utmost attention to the education of children and so the local human resource can be used for the growth of this sector. According to his dream about the development of the village, tourism is also an important sector which will bring growth and prosperity to the people if they properly make use of the potential of natural environment.

Re-invention of collective action and decentralised state

The tradition of collective action was reinvented in the context of distress from the period of settlement formation in the village. Basically there are state supported and state-independent collective actions but made use of by people in general. State in this period with its new forms of decentralised structures provided the local people with a support system for organising such collective practices within their neighbourhoods. New mantra of decentralisation and participatory development enabled to create a new social space for collective action, especially for those who have become poor materially and symbolically in the context of distress.

State support which made changes in the livelihood practices during the period helped to create an enabling environment for collective action through decentralised structures of governance and implementation of various programmes. Introduction of participatory bodies by facilitating common space for face to face interaction of

people in the neighbourhoods cutting across different social categories and formation of self-help groups for facilitating various collective economic activities fulfilled an indigenous demand for the creation of such a common space. But economic distresses shifted the realm of competition between the households within the neighbourhoods from a consumerist space to a collective space. So people now try to re-assert their social and political networks within and beyond their neighbourhoods related to various collective actions.

Governmental and non-governmental actors are often overlapped in facilitating many livelihood activities, especially at the realm of SHGs. *Kootippani* or collective farming which has been resurfaced under SHGs are supported by local Panchayat and non –governmental organisations. We have seen in the case of Sabu how they are working in new labour arrangements in the wake of economic distress.

There was another form of collective action that took shape in the region based on people's mobilisation in order to safeguard the interests of farmers by pressuring the state to take relief measures and stopping the state agencies from taking any kind of loan recovery actions. New organisations which had become active in the context of distress like INFARM and Farmers Relief Forum became very popular among the farmers during the period of distress.

Impact of Changes in the 1990s among Paniyan

All these changes were significant for Paniaya families in the village too.

Penetration of market relations and money into the day-to-day living of Paniyan workers was a direct impact of these changes. A new generation of Paniyans had greater exposure to money-based relations rather than kind-based. They started

sharing a consumerist space along with all other communities in the village. The community was also exposed to decentralised state structures in the same period with the introduction of *oorukoottam*, an exclusive village council for *adivasis* and tribal promoters as the indigenous intermediaries between the state and the *adivasis*. These exposures gave a new kind of self assertion in local relations among the younger generation which was often perceived by others as 'aggression' or 'arrogance' on the part of the Paniyas.

During the period of boom in this decade there was a greater demand for labourers as farmers started diversifying and intensifying their activities in and beyond the village it was during these days that they started doing ginger cultivation in the Kodagu district of Karnataka. Even the marginal farmers were capable of employing labourers for their work. This led to a shortage in the number of workers in the village which was filled by migrant workers from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state. This resulted in an increase in the number of migrant workers that led to the creation of new settlements of Tamil workers in the area. A significant presence of Tamil workers in the area was seen in the three newly started theatres that showed exclusively Tamil movies, but following the distress these theatres closed down as the Tamil migrant workers returned due to lack of labour.

Extreme demand for labour in this period introduced new practices like contracting, piece rating, labour migration etc among the Paniyas. Contracting enabled their movement beyond the traditional boundaries of neighbourhoods in search of work. There were some areas outside the village where many families hold pepper plantation in 10 or 12 acres and there was greater demand for labour. The owners

would give contract to some persons, mostly settler workers who can mobilise labour, for undertaking their farm work in stipulated time. In one of the village neighbourhoods, Joseph who was a labourer himself became such a contractor who took orders from these areas through personal contacts and mobilised Paniyan workers from his neighbourhood. They were offered fixed wage for certain amount of labour measured either by area or by the amount of produce. So members from two –three Paniyan families including women and children would accompany him for work. Though this kind of day-to-day movement breaking the traditional and local boundaries of labour movement was a new experience for many in the neighbourhood, and this became a regular livelihood and social practice for some of them over the years.

Abundance of work made many of the younger generation workers to bargain for wage. Older generation had no mechanism earlier for the collective bargaining or wage negotiation. During the boom period they got unparalleled wages also. The money wage (other than food) that stood far below Rs 50 in the 1980s rose to Rs 100 for male workers and Rs. 60 for females and further rose to Rs 125 and Rs. 80 respectively by 1997-98. Price boom did not result in any asset intensification for Paniyas, but it became instrumental to a certain extent for a self-realization of their labour power. Notwithstanding that, increase in wage did not inspire them to provide good education to their children. Many boys and girls discontinued their education and joined the army of workers. Even a price boom did not help them nurture a habit of savings.

Meanwhile consumerist tendencies crept in at great speed into the Paniyanlife. Hotel, bar , toddy shops, film theatre, and petty garment shops became main locations where they spent almost all that they earned. Most of the younger generation female workers stopped the collection of tubers and roots from the forest and catching the small fishes and crabs from the fields which came to be perceived as disgracing practices by them. Eating out in hotels became very common. The most important impact was spending on liquor which increased manifolds as new bar attached hotels were opened in the town and it became fashionable for young people to go there and have drinks on a regular basis. Government's ban on arrack also pushed them into more expensive or even illicit liquor.

There is a bar attached hotel, a toddy shop and a government owned foreign liquor shop that they have access to. During the period of boom, going to this hotel where settlers also thronged in the evenings gave many young Paniyansin the village a false sense of equality. The bar room in this hotel located in the centre of the town is fully crowded in the evenings. People belonging to all categories come here and it became a public space of consumption without any discrimination attached. Major portion of the money the Paniyansearned in the boom was squeezed up by the hotel which was owned by a new rich settler in the village. Compared to most small towns elsewhere in Kerala, this hotel is somewhat big, with special rooms for private dining and stay.

The period of distress reversed the trend. When farmers stopped wage labour by cutting down their agricultural works and substituting family labour for hired labour, workers also started to experience the heat. Tamil workers left the area and all three theatres were closed down in following years. Paniyanslost jobs even in their own

neighbourhoods when small scale farmers started *Kootippani*. Many large holders in the area deliberately started employing settler workers instead of Paniyas, especially younger generation who had shown 'arrogance' during the price boom period. For many settlers Paniyans became a last resort. Most importantly wage came down to Rs 80 for male workers and Rs.60 for female workers. However, Paniyans continued to be the source of cheap and flexible labour in the ginger fields in many parts of the Karnataka districts as labour was in shortage in the vast fields under the scorching sun in the remote areas of Karnataka.

Period of distress introduced relatively new practice of share cropping between Chetty farmer and the Paniyan labourers. Interestingly, most of the Chetty farmers in the village could maintain trustworthy relationship with at least one Paniyan family in their neighbourhoods during the periods of price boom and distress. During the period of distress Chetty farmers also cut down on many agricultural works. Some of them cut down two-time paddy cultivation into one-time. Those farmers who did not do two-time cultivation showed willingness to give their land to their jobless Paniyan workers for share cropping. According to this practice of share cropping, land owner gave seeds and fertilisers and workers provided labour. Produce was divided equally between them. Most of the Chettys in the village were willing to give their land for share cropping only to their own Paniyan labourers. This was mainly due to their lack of trust on settlers who they feared would misuse land. The age old relation between Chetty and Paniyan community gained continuity in this distress-driven share cropping.

Struggle for land by *adivasi* communities especially under *Adivasi* Gothra Mahasabha, a vanguard organisation led by a *adivasi* woman leader, C.K Janu, reached its climax during the period of distress. Sudden exposure to a vibrant market and a consumerist space followed by distressing fall in works and wages was an unparalleled experience for the community as a whole. Newly found thrust for land was a result of this collective experience which inspired them to encroach on the government owned plantations and forest lands as part of their agitation during this period. Demand for land was raised by *adivasis* themselves for the first time in the history of Wayanad and many families from the village took part in the agitation and collective encroachment.

Discussion: Changes in livelihood practices and the meaning of development space

In the context of our study village, creation of a development space is the sum total of the historical changes in relation to the political and economic processes at the global and the local levels. Since its inception from the colonial period, interplay of global and local has been the underlying force in creating changes in the livelihood practices. This process as carrier of modernity and development evolved through the interaction of colonial and post colonial states and people has resulted in creating a horizontal space of interaction inclusive of the wider spectrum of population within various communities. This has become contemporarily a space shared by individuals with collective imagination for development, basically constituted by a triad of getting own land, 'good' house, and education to children, and their capability to aspire and achieve it.

Changes in the livelihood practices at local level are basically linked to the developmental aspirations of the communities. During this period colonial extraction of resources was the major factor carrying implications for the development of *adivasi* communities. Changes in local governance and economy in the colonial period made benefits for a few on the basis of *Jaati* relations. It did not largely affect the nature of local horizontal reciprocity though it created more rigid and jati based system for *adivasis*.

Immigration of settlers marks the beginning of development in modern guise in the village. Their entry into the area clearly made a shift from wet land based paddy cultivation to the cultivation of plantation crops on the basis of their new developmental aspirations. They were the people from south Kerala with good understanding of commercial cropping, monetary value of land, modern education, health care practices etc. Collective action, both political and social, of settler communities laid out the infrastructure of development in the village in the formative period of new settlement for a better living with regard to better connectivity, health and education. New settler leadership emerged in the process of making a democratic state by transferring power from upper caste Nair and some of their local Chetty subordinates in the colonial times to elite settler groups in the post independent period. This was also the beginning of a process of vertical reciprocal relations of a traditional kind prevalent among the native communities in the village to a more horizontal reciprocal relation among the individuals.

Paniyan Exclusion

There was a complete exclusion of Paniyan community in the village from accessing this development space. Absence of critical resources like land and education and their inability to aspire for acquiring those resources marginalised them in getting to play an active role in this new process of the making of development under state and collective action. Now the question arises: is it because of the absence of these resources that they lacked the aspiration for development? Or, is it the absence of aspirations that caused the lack of resources? There are contradictory perceptions among the people especially among settlers and *adivasis* themselves on this.

According to the general perception among the settlers in the village, this inability is intrinsic to the Paniyan community who they consider, are lazy, passive and over-pampered by the state. Among the Paniyan themselves, interestingly, there are two types of perceptions. Many among them criticise the state for its failure to provide them with land and accuse the settlers for alienating their traditional habitat. This perception is not based on their understanding of modern development, but its focus is more on their alienation from resources. But younger generation of Paniyan has now started criticising their forefathers for lacking 'consciousness' about their lack of progress. They accuse their forefathers for not having had the foresight to occupy land when it was in abundance in their time. Going by the rules of private property land ownership pattern, they now imagine that all the land now occupied by settlers should have belonged to them including even forest which they feel they lost due to ignorance or lack of consciousness (by which they mean lack of education of the community).

In the strong system of vertical reciprocity between Chett and Paniyan communities labour was the sole livelihood base for Paniyansin maintaining their daily subsistence. They were not very much aware about the land as a livelihood base even in that system. A shift in the livelihood base from wet land cultivation to cash crop plantation cultivation marked also a shift in the local power relations. Settler strategies to control the Paniyan labour was also part of underlying power struggles at the local. Though settlers became the vanguard for modern development in the village, and in the process, instead of breaking the structure of vertical reciprocity they transformed it into the new livelihood system of cash crop cultivation. They used various manipulative strategies to maintain the Paniyan community as a cheap source of labour without making much damage to their understanding based on vertical reciprocity even in a newly developed market scenario in the village. That is why many among the young Paniyan now talk critically about the lack of '*potham*' (*colloquial usage for Sanskrit word ' bodham' which means consciousness*) of their predecessors. This critical perception of a past emerges from a new sharing of the settlers' understanding of development. Mobilisation from below for land was a major political ingredient of development in the history of Kerala in general and in the case of region and village also to an extent. Lack of mobilisation among the Paniyan community to demand for land until recently may perhaps, have added to that self- criticism. This critical look on why they remain excluded, at least among a section of Paniyas, has now become the foundation for their claims over the development space also.

In the case of our village, decentralisation and the extreme economic changes in the decades have further widened the spectrum of development space in order to create developmental aspirations across the settler and *adivasi* communities. The recent time has witnessed aggressive movements for land by *adivasis* in the region with active involvement of Paniyans in the study village. Most of them in the village have successfully freed themselves from the shackles of vertical reciprocity derived from the principles of a caste centric *habitus* and a few of them have started trying to negotiate horizontal networks of reciprocity, though without much success.

The disjuncture between Paniyans and the creation of development infrastructure was mainly due to the absence of organized leadership and collective action, and the resources like land, education and political networks which were found to be critical in transforming the developmental infrastructure into individual resources for others. Failure of state and collective action, which legitimized the new life worlds of settlers, and the settler strategies to extract Paniyan labour into extremely competent production process not only hindered Paniyans from breaking the closed and monotonous cycle of livelihood practices, but also pushed them into the position of marginality which became the major disposition of their *habitus* in the period of centralized development.

However, accelerated interpenetrations of local and global in the recent years which became instrumental in creating a development space at the local shared by different communities with a common development - *habitus*, have created new livelihood options among Paniyans too. But for them, success or failures in the process of adopting new practices based on new understanding of the world will be determined by the course of struggles they carry forward in their everyday livelihoods. It is imperative to see whether these changes are capable of creating an agency for

Paniyans to aspire for the development space by moving out of the vicious cycle of the livelihood practices of past- rooted marginality.

Impact of the contemporary changes among the Paniyans will be further explicated in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 4

DE-CENTERED STATE AND PARTICIPATORY LIVES

As described in the previous chapter, local communities have been increasingly exposed to new structures and agents of decentralization and participatory development since the later half of the 1990s. It has increased the number of organizational forms in the village and the spectrum of horizontal interactions among the individuals. Local Panchayath, Self -Help Groups (SHGs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which are patronized mainly by community organizations like Church, SNDP etc as in the case of this village have started playing an important role in the creation of a new social space of development. Meanwhile the process creates a new local terrain of power relations with increased financial and administrative power to local leaders which is differentially negotiated by settler, Chetty and *adivasi* communities.

So the present chapter closely looks into the decadal experience of decentralization and participatory development in the village by exploring and differentiating the responses across the communities in order to see how the local people access the new opportunities in relation with their livelihood practices. In this attempt it tries to see the pattern of conflicts faced and strategies adopted by the people in getting access to various resources as the sources of power.

The chapter also specially focuses on the experiences of Paniyan in the overall context of decentralization and participatory development in the village. Active and exceptional responses of individual Paniyans to the process have been identified in order to understand the potential changes which could be brought in by the processes unleashed in the livelihoods of the community in the long run.

Reciprocal Networks and the Politics of Patronage: Understanding Peoples' Differential Use of Decentralisation

Pulpalli shares many of the characteristics of the political culture of other villages in Kerala, inherited largely from a democratic tradition of post-independence period. However it has distinctiveness in relation to the geographic and demographic specificities of the area which also deeply influences the making of its local history. In the case of many other villages in Kerala, local politics has strong roots in various streams of social and political movements in the pre-independence period. In such villages collective action under local Panchayath in the post-independence period is an extension of this political tradition. Local Panchayath did not wield much administrative power in those villages, but played an active role in promoting common good through collective action based on a politics of agitation.

In the case of Pulpalli there were similarities and differences with this pattern of local politics of pre-decentralization era. In the case of the settlers in the village, they did not share a collective memory of a common political past. They reached here from different parts of southern Kerala mainly with an economic reason. They wanted to encroach upon the land and start cultivation of commercial crops. There was a break in their political lineage of assertive movements. But they had a major thrust upon collective action on the basis of which they followed individual pursuit of development. Though collective action like *sramadanam* (contributory effort) was a common feature in the region and state, in the case of this village it was clearly

linked to the individual interests of settler communities, rather than for common good in larger sense.

First generation leaders in the village who emerged from the settler communities had earned the respect of local people irrespective of their political affiliation for giving leadership to the collective action of people. There were enough evidences for their consistent negotiation with the bureaucratic state structures. They used their influences in the state power structures including party and government hierarchies. Local Panchayath was part and parcel of the collective action of people rather than an external governance structure. Contrarily, flow of political power was mainly in a vertical order as people trusted and obeyed their leaders at the local level within an enduring system of patronage. Pre-decentralization period in the village also presents a picture of more cohesive and integrated domain of local politics controlled by the Congress party, supported traditionally by the Christian settlers, as well as native Chettys.

In the short span of decentralisation period the village witnessed a lot of dramatic events including the conflicts and splits within the coalitions, formation of new pressure groups, changing of loyalty from parties and leaders etc., coincidental to the extreme economic changes. The process of decentralisation has to be viewed in relation to this specific political tradition and culture of the village.

As a political party influential among the settler and Chetty communities, the Congress party ruled the Panachayath most of the post-independence period. Opposition led by CPI(M) got opportunity to be in power wherever there was a split in the Congress coalition. There was a crack in the Congress party in the beginning of this decade followed by a state level rift. Rebel group got the support of the disenchanted masses of poor farmers in the wake of the economic fall which also resulted in the formation of an independent organization of farmers (FRF) in the regional level. This split and frustration led to the debacle of the Congress Party in the village which has been a stronghold of right wing coalition. It thus brought into power a coalition of the left wing parties, the rebel congress and the FRF.

But after two- three years, by the year 2008, those events have now completed a circle with the Congress Party regaining its lost glory in a short period. A political culture based on purely individual interests has a strong influence in the formation of factions and realignment of factions and coalitions in the village politics. Along with the decentralization, spirited involvement of people in the local politics has increased much with a large pool of resources at stake and the resultant competition for it. A new generation of political aspirants got exposed to this competition with a shift in the meaning of power from a symbolic nature in the case of first generation leaders to an absolute one in the sense of getting control of financial and administrative powers.

Generational Reversal of Power

Generational reversal of power at the helm of Panchayathh is an effect of decentralization in the village. Power shifted in absolute terms from the initial group of settler leaders who laid the foundation for the development infrastructure to a new generation of leaders who have the fortunes of possessing more political and financial powers under decentralization programme. Meanwhile, earlier leaders did not enjoy such powers, and instead they had to depend on state department structures and the power hierarchies within their parties to fulfill the local requirement.

Panchayath in the pre-decentralization period had not much power and resources under its possession. According to K.U. Mathai who served as the President of local Panchayath for 16 years since its inception in 1963, they had to suffer without much financial sources and help from the state department in the initial period so could not undertake any large developmental projects. In those days, the powers of Panchayath were confined to a few areas like the registration of birth, death and marriage, construction of pocket roads, collection of taxes from the shops etc. Public work was undertaken through the collective action under the leadership of Panchayath members. There were only six members in the Panchyath earlier. Mathai belonged to the Congress Party but is not very active now in politics.

Although the first election held in 1963 was not on party basis in the Panchayath, it became a stronghold of the Congress Party thanks to the traditional loyalty of the settlers. Congress Party ruled the Panchayath for a long period. Leaders belonging to settler communities, especially Christian community led the congress party in the village. In the initial days of struggle most of the poor migrant families supported the left wing communist parties for legitimising encroachments of land , but they shifted their loyalty to the Congress Party once they got the title and aspired for more development requirements in the village. Settler leaders belonging to the Congress Party could negotiate with the state power structures more successfully due to their proximity to the power centres in the organizational hierarchy of the party and influential leaders like Mathai. People like Mathai had good rapport with the state level leaders of the Congress Party. They also had a good say in the decisions taken with regard to the new development projects in the village. They could influence the governmental higher ups through their influence in the party hierarchies on various requirements of the local people. However, they had only limited access to direct administrative powers in the earlier regime of governance. Nevertheless, people considered them the representatives of various leaders at the state level who were influential and capable of taking important decisions. A vertical order of trust existed among these state or regional level leaders, their local representatives in the village and the people who supported them at the local level politics.

Decentralisation in the village also paved way for a new generation of political leaders belonging to settler communities. Mostly educated, relatively young generation leaders contested in the election after the implementation of decentralisation programme. They represented a dynamic face of the new generation of settler communities. Persons like Paulose emerged as new faces in lieu of the old generation politicians like Mathai Paulose, who was a private (parallel) college teacher, with strong support from a section of his party men, has a good understanding of the political processes and requirements of the people. He contested the election and became President of the Panchayath. Later, he became President of the local co-operative bank, the same positions. Mathai had wielded in his period. Paulose is distanced by a generation from Mathai in his aspirations and

capabilities. The latter considered himself a low profile person without aspiring to climb the higher ladders of power hierarchies beyond the village. As an educated and ambitious person, Paulose however, has been working very earnestly towards an fulfil his ambition to carve out a space for himself in the district level politics for the time being. Decentralisation of state power helped him to find a way to move upward through contesting in the district council and he became the district Panchayath member. He has been able to occupy many other positions in the various committees of district level government. He uses the opportunity to prove himself effectively and is now emerging as an important leader in the district.

There are a number of examples of new generation ambitious political leaders from the area who are self-confident and capable in order to compete for higher levels of politics. Decentralisation has provided ample space for the new generation leaders to increase their possibilities and presence at the realm of politics and their capabilities to manoeuvre this space in best possible ways. Since decentralisation, unlike older generation leaders, they are entrusted with handling huge resources and administrative responsibilities. They occupy substantive power in comparison to their predecessors who formally had held only symbolic power. Besides their de-facto power through financial and political command at their disposal, they also enjoy formal symbolic power like old generation leaders through their close contact with many state level political leaders.

However, not all the ward members elected to the village Panchayath but only a few emerge successfully as leaders of the village. These successful few become the faces of the village. Unlike the old generation leaders, Panchayath has now become a powerful instrument for these new generation leaders to cultivate their profile and influence among the people. Few such leaders are able to handle their responsibilities in a very skilful and 'professional' way.

There are two important outcomes of the decentralisation program which are also corresponding to the generational shift in terms of the nurturing of a political culture in relation to the livelihood practices in general. Greater command of power at their

disposal for the local leaders is capable of creating a new system of patronage among the people. Secondly, possession of substantial power and its symbolic expressions in the day to day functioning creates a competition even among the common leaders in the village, based on their capabilities to acquire and maintain it. It has increased the number of aspirants who strive for the posts within political parties and government. These two effects are interlinked through the creation of a reciprocal networks based on personal interests involved by the political leaders and people at large at the local level.

Networks of reciprocity and the politics of patronage

Increased horizontal reciprocity and interaction among the people which we discussed in the earlier chapter have been explained in relation with the decentralisation. It implies that decentralisation has increased and strengthened the networks of reciprocity among the local leaders and people based on personal interests.

These new generation leaders had the opportunity to take many administrative decisions directly linked to the livelihoods of people and their responsibility for implementing these decisions. Consequently, this has increased their power which in turn, gathers a network of clients around them.

There are many cases of 'able' or 'successful' leaders who are in a position to use both these reserves of power, state power and support base, as good resources for further enhancement of their political manoeuvrings. What is found more interesting here is that the 'local' becomes an arena of political action in tune with the state level politics and its theatrics. Local leaders try to emulate the models of their state level leaders. Panchayath is seen on par with the State Legislative Assembly. Accordingly these local leaders perceive their corresponding roles.

Another way in which they try to amass symbolic power is through confrontations with employees in various government departments in the village which have been

brought under the Panchayath following decentralisation. Most of the employees in these offices, including in Panchayats office, address the political representatives in the Panchayaths as 'sir', unless there is a deliberate effort on the part of these leaders to avoid such formalities. For the people who experience or perceive the state departments and officials as inimical to them in their dealings with the offices, the success of the ward representative in dealing with these officials and getting their things done in the respective offices is a yard stick for a leader's power., the leaders rise in estimation. This also sometimes creates tensions among the employees and these political representatives. Most of the employees who are well educated and who got jobs after passing the examinations conducted by the Public Service Commission, the ward members, some of them poorly educated, are not equal to them. However, in many instances it is found that the Panchayath members and employees try to move along with an understanding, the employees trying not reveal publicly any disrespect they may feel towards the members.

Selection of beneficiaries for different schemes or programmes, especially for the poor, is a strong political tool for these successful representatives to gather or /and reinforce and expand the range of networks in the village. Poor people depend on their ward members expecting the later to include them in the beneficiary list and to ensure that they get selected so that some livelihood requirement may be met. Although there are set norms in selecting the beneficiaries, in practice there are other priorities. Active support extended to a particular candidate in the election is found to have become important criteria in the selection of beneficiaries. The affiliation to a particular party or proximity to a particular faction within the party or a particular leader may be determining factors in beneficiary selection.

The normally found practice in the village is that if there is a scheme which allows selection of beneficiaries, out of 10 eligible/applicant families or individuals, almost 7 will go to the families belonging to ruling party and the only the rest 3 will go to people or families belonging to opposition parties and this, who keep relatively better contact with the ward member. The latter are included due to a rationale that they are the potential supporters in future elections. Such a leader in his capacity as ward

member can influence the decision and include some of his own persons also in the list.

People in the village, especially the poor, who depend on the Panchayath more than other segments of population, have generally accepted it as part of the new rules of the game. According to this, if the families or individuals in the opposition party or coalition do not get any benefits from the Panchayath, they are accused of not voting for the candidate who is now in power, and that they can try their luck the next time. But in the case of those who supported the member in the election but could not make any benefits from the Panchayath through that member, they may retaliate and withdraw their support the next time. Normally nobody likes to make the ward member an enemy not just because of his/ her power, but also due to the fact this local leader is a part of a larger macro power structure at the higher party levels influential with state governance structures also. Those who are convinced that they are not going to make any benefit from the current rule in the Panchayath come out vehemently against the members and the Panchayath and try to remove them from holding such power in the coming election. Thus, individual interests become the bench mark in a person's decision to support or oppose the members and Panchayath and the members too try to ensure that they or party would stay in power.

Meanwhile, closeness to a leader in ones own party may be determined by factors like family, community, friendship circle, work group etc. Those who feel such avenues, access and closeness, potential or real, to a particular candidate work overnight for his or her success in the elections. Those who mobilise resources for the success of a candidate naturally would expect in return appropriate benefits for the loyalty shown in the election.

This is the way individuals, especially the poor who are more involved in the local politics in the village and the people's representatives in the Panchayath are now engaging in their reciprocal networks. This kind of reciprocity between the members and people is more horizontal in nature as it serves mutual interests and may be mediated by other relations or networks. The study village, except for the marginal *adivasis* like Paniyann most of the other communities are found having a social base

of such horizontal networks of reciprocity. These networks are found on the line of caste, community, occupation, politics, and even spiritual groups. Election to the local Panchayath has become a process of translating the social base of networks into also political base of negotiations of power. For the individuals, their capability in affiliating themselves with multiple networks gives them an edge over others in creating a political base in negotiating with the members and political parties and groups. Within them a successful leader is one who maintains contacts with these networks, replenishing good will and tries to get control over individual choice-making through such simple networks.

Election to the Panchayaths thus becomes a process of competition among the networks to get dominance at the local level structures and processes. Those who are actively involved in these networks belong to the categories of poor farmers and workers. Rich farmers are found giving only indirect support. Members in such families are found aligned to different groups within the party as well as different political parties. Those who are having formal employment, like salaried government employment, are not found very active in the election process.

Those members who emerge as leaders of the village are successful in manipulating these things and fulfilling the demands of their supporters to the maximum. They create these networks of reciprocity involving multiple networks both vertically and horizontally. In the case of our village, these members, mainly male, are rated as 'efficient' and successful with high levels of aspirations, though many of them have also been alleged to be part of the decentralised and local-level reproduction of corruption and nepotism.

Mohanan, 42 years, is an emerging leader in the village. He became a ward member in two consecutive terms in the decentralisation period. Belonging to the Ezhava community which is not a powerful force in the village power structure he has to struggle hard to emerge as the leader of the party confronting the powerful 'Christian group' in village. In his first term he contested the election with the Congress Party ticket. By the next term he had become a member of a splinter group of Congress

which contested the election with the support of the opposition front led by CPI (M) in the village. Defeating the official Congress candidate, he was again elected to the village Panchayath.

Congress party had a bad time in the village following the price crash. Party was accused for the liberalisation policies it pursued at the Centre, which was seen as the reason for the economic distress. A non-political farmers' movement like Farmers' Relief Forum became very active among the farmers who had traditionally supported the Congress Party. FRF decided to contest in the next elections including to the Panchayath and could give a severe jolt to the Congress Party in the village as well as in the region. Splinter group represented by Mohanan joined hands with FRF and the opposition coalition and hence they came into power under the CPI (M) led left democratic front. He used this opportunity to his advantage and to beat his opponents within the party which was competing to represent the new generation leadership in the village. Not only did he win twice but also got the opportunity to hold key positions in the Panchayath for two consecutive terms.

But after two years he again came back to the Congress fold part of the state level re-union of the splintered group into the party. Through such strategic decisions, he emerged as one of the powerful leaders with a good support base. Born in a small scale farmers' family and with a short stint of experience in student politics he entered in the local politics by contesting in the election into local Panchayath for which he quit the small job he held in a private organisation. Basic strategy of Mohanan to create a support base at the local level was to establish links with different social networks in the village. He used his caste identity and was able to build a base in the community organisation—SNDP-- in the village. There were also dissidents within the organisation, but he could efficiently overcome it with the support of the youth in the organisation.

He also became active in the programs of Amrithanandamayi Mutt which is a spiritual organization. Amritananadamayi, considered a god woman by large number of devotees across India and abroad including many powerful politicians, has wide global networks and source of funding and within the village the

organisation engages in various activities in education, health and micro-financing. They have good influence among a section of people in the village. During the period of economic distress a lot of local people found solace in this group and their spiritual activities. Mohanan is also an important face among the organisers of many activities of Mutt in the village. He is also a firm follower of Amritanandamayi. He is also very much part of the activities of the main local Hindu temple which belonged to an upper caste Hindu family earlier, but is now controlled by a people's committee.

Besides these organisational connections as the source of support base, Mohanan took part strongly in the factional politics within the Congress. To get an upper hand over other section of leaders he became active in another faction and got close connection with a state level leader of the Congress Party. Gradually he became a de-facto representative of that leader in the region. This image increased his symbolic power among the local people.

As a member in the Panchayath he could bring in many new projects like roads, water tanks, school, houses etc., in the ward. Distribution of individual benefits has been an important component of decentralisation programme. In the case of this village it has become critical in defining the trajectory of decentralisation programme. Although initially there was a good participation in the *gramasabha* meetings, gradually it came down substantially, due to the lack of transparency in undertaking projects and distributing individual benefits under the beneficiary selection in different schemes.

Although *gramasabha* (village council) is the supreme body of decision making in the village, people started to view it as a farce. Ideally *gramasabha* has to provide a space for collective decision on developmental priorities of the village and should decide who are the needy individuals and families for getting the social and economic benefits from the state. In the case of this village it did not happen. Initial enthusiasm for participating in the *gramasabha* had definitely some material outcomes in the form of construction and expansion of a number of new pocket

roads and the construction of a new irrigation project. But, these projects undertaken by the people's committees turned to be sources of corruption and gave rise to allegations. The newly constructed small irrigation project became a failure due to the poor quality in construction. People's committee came under the allegation of misusing the project fund. Actually some of the close aides of Mohanan were made functionaries of this committee and they in turn helped him to get the support of party workers in the factional feud within the party. Besides an economic down-turn in the village created greater demand for money among the people.

Joseph, President of the People' Committee in the construction project of the small irrigation dam was is a small farmer and a trustworthy worker in Mohanan's faction within the party. He has good influence in some of the neighbourhoods in the village. Economic condition of the village had affected Joseph also. He started constructing a concrete house during the period of economic buoyancy and sent his daughter away for a self-financing professional course. It imposed a huge financial burden on him following the unanticipated economic fall. He became active in Farmers' Relief Forum which physically resisted any move for revenue recovery action from the banks. Workers in opposite faction alleged that he mismanaged the fund along with some other workers. Whatever may have been the truth of the allegation, quality of the work done was very inferior as the dam developed cracks immediately after completion. However there was no further action in this as discussion was mainly on repairing the dam.

Under the last tenure of Mohanan, as is a common phenomenon in many other wards, in this Panchayathh also participation of people in the *gramasabha* became very poor in terms of quality. Number of male participants came down very drastically. By this time activities for Self-Help Groups for women had become widespread in the village and many beneficiary programs were undertaken through SHGs under the Panchayathh. This increased the number of female participation considerably in the *gramasabha*. Reluctant husbands, normally the 'head of the family', sent their wives to *gramasabha* hoping for some benefits. There was also a

compulsion from Panchayathh on SHG members to attend the *gramasabhas* if they wanted to avail any benefits.

Satheesh, a teashop owner in one of the village neighbourhoods where normally the *gramasabha* was usually held, stopped attending *gramasabhas* after two years. His father was a local leader of CPI (M) in that neighbourhood and he was also a sympathiser of the party. His family wanted financial assistance for constructing a house under Panchayathh housing scheme for his brother. He said that they were sure that Mohanan would not grant the assistance as they were known opponents. But he attended the meeting and participated in the discussion in the initial years.

“After a period we understood that attending the meeting is a joke as none of the decisions was implemented as per the discussions we had at the meeting. Discussion used to go one way and implementation another. Moreover, it became just a forum for distributing mere benefits which were decided beforehand by the member and his cronies. If you ask them why they do not consider us, then the simple answer is that we did not vote for them. Only fools would attend these meetings. That is why you can hardly see any men in the meeting. Now it has become a forum for women as they believe whatever those fellows say in the meetings”.

Satheesh had commented.

But the situation changed since. Satheesh’s family got a house under the scheme with the help of Mohanan. Satheesh became very close to him and changed his opinion about Mohanan. He now considers Mohanan as very helpful as his family could avail considerable help through the networks of Mohanan for the treatment of Satheesh’s mother who had to undergo major treatment in a far away metro hospital. Most interestingly, Satheesh’s father subsequently changed his politics from CPI (M) to Congress, once Mohanan returned to Congress. Now his family is very close to Congress and supports Mohanan for the help he has given his family in the hours of crisis.

Dominance of personal interests in selecting the beneficiaries to various schemes is very rampant in village. Ward member and some of the fellow workers, sometimes SHG functionaries who are also appointed on political lines, sit together, discuss and decide on the list of beneficiaries which will be passed in the *gramasabha* meetings without much protest. Sometimes the same beneficiaries, most probably close aides of the member, will be selected for a second time in the same schemes like construction of latrines. It is alleged that the amount allotted for the second time is to be shared between the member and the beneficiary. The beneficiary reciprocates by mobilising people for the political programmes to exhibit and enhance the influence of the leader.

According to Mohanan, ability of the leaders is measured by the crowd they can pull for a programme in the district or taluk headquarters attended by the state level leaders. Those who are attending the programme, taking a break from their day's work need to be helped. Usually they rent one or two buses for the programme and fill them with people they have mobilised from the village and bring them to the meeting spot. Often they are provided a *biriyani* (locally made Arabian dish which is very popular in North Kerala districts) and sometimes money, for losing their daily wage. As he said, "*Politics is very expensive*".

Keeping the beneficiaries as trustworthy clients for long is a very difficult job. There will be more and more demands which may be difficult to meet. People have also the options to move their loyalty between factions, leaders, and parties. So there is a widespread strategy to keep giving promises and fulfil some of them. Normally leaders like Mohanan are capable of maintaining a strong base of networks through the constant interactions and occasional assistance to those who require it. Increasing involvement in the activities of Amritananadamayi Mutt, SNDP, local temple committee, etc., are certain means to engage with the people and concretise the networks. It is not the ideology of the party that binds the relationships, but affinity with the ideology of these groups and the organisational positions within the groups that are advantageous to him in maintaining such networks. He makes sure of his

presence in all the activities of these organisations, like annual festival of the temple, charitable activities of the Mutt like distribution of benefits for poor, health camps, affairs of Ezhava community organised by SNDP etc.

He provides many facilities for these organisations in his capacity as a powerful leader from the area and a responsible person in the local Panchayathh. Organisations like SNDP and Mutt have wider organisational networks. He can use this vertical order of networks through these organisations and the people in political hierarchies to provide any help for the people in his own village as it was in the case of Satheesh's family.

Appropriation of political power through such creation of social base has been translated into an economic base also in the case of Mohanan. In his second term in the Panchayath he entered into a small-scale hotel business in the town. He started it in a building complex a short distance away from the town centre. Reason for starting it there was related to a decision of the Panchayath to construct a new bus stand near this place. He said that it was his shrewdness that led to a decision to build the new bus stand in the proposed area and he brought some real estate people from outside the district to buy land here and construct a building. He said that he started this business in partnership with a relative. Many people in the village now consider him a new rich. But to him, this is a part of the game and this is the way people grow; politics was an uncertain field and he would not go under once he became financially influential in the village even if politically lost.

Native communities, the social base of networks and decentralisation

Domination of settler communities in the field of local politics has become complete by the time of the implementation of decentralisation programme. There is no other member from any of the native communities having representations in the local Panchayathh, except a member from Kuruma community, that too thanks to the constitutional reservation. There is no single Chetty member on the front row of new generation leaders though the community had its own leaders earlier and some of them who closely associated with the Congress Party. At present there are hardly any

leaders within the community to politically compete with the other aspirants from settler communities.

Although Chetty community failed to produce any important local leaders, adivasi Kuruman community shows a slightly different trend. Given the facilities of constitutional reservation to local Panchayath, state and central constituencies and their historically advantageous position among *adivasis* there are some instances for showing their visibility in the local politics. There is a small section of leaders from this community who control mainly the organisations associated with tribal development and tribal co-operatives. Although most of them belong to the Congress party, they are not equally competent with the settler leaders in order to formulate strategies to get access to local power structures. Though *adivasis* like Paniyans are completely out of the picture in the competition for political power, there are feeble attempts from the community on individual levels to make themselves visible in the local field of power relations, discussed later.

Relatively, better access to various social organisations in modern forms as cluster of social networks across different socio-economic categories of population at the local level, is found to have played an important role for settler communities like Christians and Ezhavas in creating strong social bases for further negotiating the field of local power relations. Instead, it seems that the breaking up of old livelihood system based on wet land cultivation and social organisations had disintegrated their common base of social interactions. Besides, their initial lag in making sense of the modern forms of social organisations and the adaptive strategies may have contributed to their lesser access to various types of social organisations.

The table that follows (table4.1) gives a rough comparison of the communities in terms of their access to various social organisations which indicates the intensity of social base of networks among the individuals belonging to different communities in the village. We can see the poor status of *adivasi* communities like Paniyann and Kattunayiakkan with minimum number of members in these organisations.

Dominant communities—Christians and Ezhavas--have members in maximum numbers of social organisations. Although in the Table, participating in religious

organisation is shown as nil for the Christians, it only means that there is no organisation for them like SNDP in the case of Ezhavas. Most of the Christians in the village are very much attached to the respective parish churches. Justifying their dominant position in the old system, among the native communities, Chettys have relatively more membership in more numbers of organisations compared to other native groups

Table 4.1. Percentage of persons aged above 15 years participating in social organisation according to social categories(in %)

communities		SHGs	Political organization	Trade unions	Farmers' organization	Religious organisation	Credit co-
<i>Settler communities</i>	Christians	26	36	19	42	---	50
	Hindu Ezhavas	21	23	42	39	73	50
	Others	23	28	39	7	4	---
<i>Native communities</i>	Chetty	9	13	--	6	23	---
	Mullu Kuruma	9	---	--	6	---	---
	Paniyans	9	---	--	--	---	---
	Kattunayakas	3	---	--	--	---	---

Source Nair and Vinod(2007)

Reflecting on the intensity of changes related to decentralisation and participatory development in recent period, it may be observed that all communities in the village have members in Self-Help Groups. These SHGs are controlled either by the Panchayathh or an NGO. This is the only category of social organisation with

people belonging to all communities having access, signifying the potential of decentralisation for participatory development among the communities in the village. However, this trend is not uniform among all communities as the distribution of members in the SHGs is highly varied especially between settlers and native communities. Around 70% of the SHG members belong to settler communities. Settler leaders draw their strength mainly from the internal cohesion of their respective communities and relatively better access to different types of modern organisations

Most of the ordinary members of the settler communities are also capable of using these internal and external networks according to the situation. For instance, among the Christians, networks through the church have an important role in tracing livelihoods for the girls in some of the local families in the far away states in the country. At least three families were found in some of the neighbourhoods who send daughters to states like Punjab, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh for working as teachers in primary and pre-primary schools. Meanwhile, close linkage with SHGs under Panchayath and various NGOs makes significant impact in their day to day livelihoods for other families in the village.

There is a strong discontent among the members of Chetty community in the village on the domination of settler leaders in their everyday lives especially after decentralisation which placed a lot of resources at the latter's disposal. They are also equally frustrated over their inability to negotiate the external networks of power and to keep the internal organisation of the community as a useful resource in successfully dealing with the external power structures. Often such frustrations manifest in the form of public outrage in the *gramasabha* meetings.

Such an incident happened in one of the latest *gramasaba* meetings which found relatively better participation of native communities because of the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme¹⁷. Unlike previous *gramasabhas*

¹⁷ NREG scheme was started in 2007 as a flagship programme of Congress led first UPA government at centre. Local Panchayath is the nodal agency to implement the programme in the village.

this particular *gramasabha* had good attendance of Paniyans and Chettys. Chetty male members from a nearby settlement in the forest attended the meeting en-mass. Around 30 Paniyans, mainly women, participated in the meeting for the first time in the history of the *gramasabha*.

Events that took place later on in the *gramasabha* meeting proved that participation of Chetty and Paniyan community members was with a purpose. Demand of the Chetty community members in the *gramasabha* was to reconstruct a road through the forest to their settlement in good condition. Though they had raised the same demand many times before in the *gramasabha*, Panchayathh did not show any interest in the work. This refusal on the part of the Panchayathh had already created strong protest among the community members. It was in this context that they found NREG scheme a good opportunity for getting this work done. So in the present *gramasabha* they wanted to include the project under NREG scheme.

Narayanan Chetty who also belongs to the same settlement in the forest, had another personal reason for attending that meeting. Under the ongoing NREG scheme, the major work undertaken by Panchayathh was the construction of forest trench around the village boundary. There was some problem in digging the trench on the rocky portion of the forest which marked the boundary of his wn homestead. Because of the lack of sufficient depth for the trench in that portion, elephants started entering his field in the night. There was a small valley in a corner of his land with sufficient water source. A water source in a corner of his land was what attracted the elephants. Narayanan Chetty made complaints many times to Panchayath authorities, including Mohanan, with whom he had long-standing personal contact. Most of the Chetty inhabitants in the village were followers of the Congress Party and they all had voted Mohanan into power. Father of Narayanan Chetty was a leader of the Congress Party in the village who subscribed to the prestigious nationalist daily *Mathrubhumi* during the days of India's freedom movement.

Gramasabha meetings are entitled to take decisions on the nature and period of work. It ensures 100 working days for each family who demands. So in recent years there is a slight increase in the number of participants in the *gramasabha* meetings, especially those who belong to native communities.

When the issues were raised in the *gramasabha* (village council) meeting Mohanan was not ready to give any assurance that the road would be included under the Panchayathh scheme. Raising his issue, Narayanan Chetty complained that Mohanan was showing a lukewarm attitude to his repeated demands to solve the issue of elephants' intrusion. Later, Narayanan Chetty admitted that he was deliberately provoking the member. This intervention irked Mohanan.

He was further provoked by a comment from Narayanan Chetty that he would personally meet the District Forest Officer in this case who was very close to Narayanan Chetty. Suddenly, Mohanan picked up a mobile phone from his pocket and told Narayanan Chetty to call the DFO whose contact number was apparently stored in the phone. All the Chetty members in the meeting were agitated over this action which was seen as Mohanan showing off his power.

Besides, Mohanan had addressed Naryanan Chetty as 'Chettyar', which was seen as derogatory when used in that context. Normally he addressed Narayanan Chetty as Narayanan *ettan*, a kin term for elder brother, showing respect for his age. Repeated reference as *Chettyar* in a distant and derogatory manner therefore, deeply hurt the sentiments of all the Chetty community members who had assembled in the meeting. Narayanan Chetty had a reputed standing in his community in the village.

Suddenly the situation turned ugly with a Chetty member, who was under the influence of alcohol, started abusing Mohanan and describing the wrong doings of settlers in the village. Mohanan also started abusing the community members collectively from the dais. Voices were raised in such loud pitch that nobody could hear anything except some occasional abusive words. Mohanan completely forgot his responsible position in the Panchayathh as ward member. He was provoked to the extent of physically threatening the person who initiated the verbal attack on him.

An uneasy division formed between settler participants and Chetty community members in the meeting. Though Paniyans also had some problems with the ward member, they did not come out openly against him supporting Chettys. The meeting was called off by the member and he immediately left the scene angrily along with

other members and party workers. Majority of the participants, who were mainly women SHG members, became mute spectators in the meeting.

This was one of the rare situations in any of the *gramasabha* meetings in the village when native community members expressed their anger and discontent publicly. This incident brought to surface the underlying tensions in the native communities in negotiating the local power structures. There was a strong feeling among the Chetty community of being ignored by the settler politicians as a result of continuous neglect of their demands. This discontent increased since decentralisation as local politicians started exhibiting more power, real and symbolic, which was not there earlier.

Narayanan Chetty later explained that what happened in the *gramasabha* meeting was the result of the neglect shown by the local leaders including Mohanan. He admitted that they came to *gramasabha* on a collective understanding. They believed that they were neglected because as around 30 families in the neighbourhood belonged to Chetty and *adivasi* communities. Under decentralisation all other roads, those to settler neighbourhoods, have been repaired and well-maintained. He remarked:

“I know Mohanan from his childhood days. His family came to us for help when they first came to this area. I have had good relation with him and his family. I told him three-four times about our problem. He does not appreciate the seriousness of the issue. They know we are Congressmen traditionally and we won't do anything harmful to them. There is a feeling among them that as we are Chetty, anything can be done towards us. Earlier we too had leaders in the party, but all were sidelined.”

But to Mohanan, it was a misunderstanding on the part of some of the Chetty members in that neighbourhood. He says some of them have personal grudges against him. And that those people had used the opportunity. Moreover, they have an inferiority complex, he says. They also wanted to show their strength by expressing their solidarity in the meeting and get their things done. He asserted that he would

not budge an inch with all the threatening, but hoped that they would come back for a solution as they did not have a place to go.

There are efforts from community in the region to make their social organisation more cohesive through a formal organisation like the SNDP so that they will be in a more advantageous position to negotiate the political field at large. They have recently strengthened the activities of Waynad Chetty Service Society with a small office based in Sultan Bathery town and trying to bring the whole community under its banner by collecting a fixed membership fee from all. Currently Naryanan Chetty is an executive member of the organisation, representing the Chettys of the village. Strengthening the internal cohesion of the community is a priority for the organisation at present.

Besides, there is a new trend, especially among the young Chetty community members to find new networks based on religious identity. Some of the Chetty families in the village have already become activists of BJP, a right wing Hindu political party. BJP is not an influential party in the village in terms of votes and political power. But they are increasing their power nowadays through the strong networks of *sakhas* (physical and mental training units run by RSS)¹⁸.

Children's procession on the birth day of Lord Krishna popularly known as *sreekrishna jayanthi* has become an occasion for BJP to show their strength with the active participation of many Chetty families in the village. In one of the neighbourhoods, a Chetty family organised a group of Paniyan youth, some of them good singers, in the nearby 'colony' for singing *bhajans* (*devotional songs*) and parading them in the procession in the village town. Active participation of many Chetty families in this annual procession, not only in the village town but in the bigger towns in the region also, is becoming a symbolic means to counter the dominance of settlers. These networks are capable of providing an alternative political space for their contention and assertion of their self esteem.

¹⁸ RSS (Rastriya Swayam Sevak) is a cultural organisation with many other frontal socio-political units. BJP is a political outfit of RSS. RSS activists are also very active in spiritual organisations like Amritanandamayi Mutt in the village.

'*Kudumba yogam*'(family meeting in a neighbourhood), a Self-Help Group formation under Amritanandamayi Mutt in the village, is also found to be very popular among many Chetty families in the village. There are SHGs under SNDP and Church. Chetty families prefer to join the SHGs under Mutt, apart from membership in Panchayathh SHGs. Women in some of the Chetty neighbourhoods meet weekly and undertake activities under the support of the Mutt.

Madhavan Chetty's family in Karaymabathi kунnu neighbourhood is active in organising the activities of Mutt. He is a farmer with four acres of land. One of his sons is working as a driver under Mutt. His three sons live in separate houses in the same neighbourhoods and his two brothers are also in the same neighbourhood. Women members in these families assemble in any of the house once a week, mostly on Mondays like most of the other SHGs, sing *bhajans* in the group prayer and discuss the activities. They get active support from the Mutt.

Madhavan Chetty's father was an important leader of Congress Party in the village in olden days and he had been a Director Board member of the local Co-operative Bank under the party. Now his three sons are sympathisers of BJP. Though Krishnan Chetty, who is still a Congress sympathiser having connection with some of the regional leaders of the party, tried to get a job for one of his sons as a driver in the state health department, it did not succeed. This son is a taxi driver in the village and is very critical of Congress Party leaders and the developmental activities of the Panchayath. He is very critical of Mohanan also. Although his father and grandfather were workers of Congress Party, he says that he did not expect any help from the local leaders and Panchayath.

Certain networks related to their collective identity based on their traditional practices related to old livelihood system are slowly becoming resources for the community in some contexts. There are initiatives by the environmental groups in the region to respect the tradition of wet land cultivation of paddy undertaken by Chetty farmers. Most of the Chetty farmers in the area are doing cultivation organically and their agricultural practices have been identified as environment-friendly.

There was a district level programme in Muthanga in Wayanad, attended by the national level environmentalists to honour Chetty elders who continue organic farming without getting influenced by modern practices introduced by settler communities in the area. All the speakers applauded Chetty elders for their native ecological wisdom. This is part of a larger understanding of environmental sustainability in the agricultural practices of various native communities. Most of the Chetty families, especially those who have been referred to in this study, practice organic farming in wet land cultivation. Most of the Chetty farmers in the village are found contrasting themselves with the settler farmers in terms of their rich tradition of these agrarian practices. However, these new realisations and applications are yet to provide an advantageous position for the community in negotiating the political space of decentralisation.

“Ayalkkootam” or Self Help Group movement; Re- invention of collective action

Although the formation of *ayalkkootam* (*Neighbourhood group*) was part of the decentralisation programme in the state, in the village the name has already come to be synonymous with the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement under state and non-state actors. In principle, *ayalkkootam* has a broader meaning than Self Help Groups. It was conceived as an open space for the families in a neighbourhood as a basis of collective action for common good under the decentralisation programme. However, at present people use it to refer to all the SHGs under the state agency for poverty alleviation viz., Kudumbasree and many large NGOs engaged in micro-credit activities. Within their group meetings they refer to NGO-controlled SHG as *sangom* (collective). Despite people understanding that there is a difference between *ayalkkottam* and *sangom* in terms of the difference in sponsoring agencies, practically it has no relevance in their life.

The term *ayalkkottam* though gender-neutral, has a gender connotation by practice. In the everyday context it has been understood as a neighbourhood space for collective action by women. Although there are many SHGs for men under organisations like INFAM they do not call them *ayalkkootam*. Instead they would specify that they are going for INFAM meeting. For men in the village

ayalakkooottam is a sarcastic reference and a source of sarcastic comments. Though in private at the level of households most of the men encourage their women to participate in the *ayalkkoottam* meetings, in public they make sarcastic comments on *ayalkkoottam* with a gender bias. For a question on the effectiveness of the *ayalkkoottam* most of the men in the village gave negative opinions and they see only conflicts among the women in SHGs.

In one sense, such male responses reflect the impact of SHG movement on the women in the village. Coincident with the economic distress that began in the late '90s, launching of self help movement under local Panchyath and various NGOs suddenly became a big hit as a number of SHGs got newly activated in the village. According to a statistics on *ayalkoottams* in the village till 2004, apart from other SHGs sponsored by big and small NGOs in the region, it was in 2001 that most of the *ayalkkottams* were formed (Table4.2) The number came down sharply in the following years. After 2004, some of the groups ceased to exist, but as new ones got started, the total number of *ayalkkoottams* did not change much in effect.

Table4. 2. New SHGs started under Panchayathh over the years

Years	No. of <i>ayalkoottams</i>
2001	15
2002	5
2003	3
2004	1

Source survey (2006)

Broadly there are two categories of SHGs in the village. One category is directly under state level government agency, Kudumbasree, and the other category is under NGOs. Structurally, Kudumbasree *ayalkkoottams* are embedded within the Panchayathh organisation. In the Panchyat office building, there is an exclusive space set up for *ayalkkoottam*. There are three levels for the Kudumbasree: NHGs

headed by an IAS officer and assisted by various field level functionaries, organises *ayalkoottam* or Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) at the grass root level, Area Development Societies (ADS) at the ward level, which is a federation of various kudumbasree units, and Community Development Societies (CDS), which are clusters of ADSs at the Panchayathh level. CDSs are registered under the Societies Act with powers to borrow on behalf of its members and re-lend among them.

In the study village there are around 25 *ayalkoottam* and the Secretary and President of these *ayalkoottam* form a ward level body (ADS). As they are represented in ADS and ADS is represented at the higher body, CDS at the Panchayathh level and the local Panchayathh is instrumental in providing benefits and organising the activities, the wider power play of Panchayathh and its elected representatives creep into these organisations and influence the female functionaries.

On the other hand, the NGO SHGs are accountable only to the respective NGOs. Wayanad is a region with a number of NGOs claiming to be working for the upliftment of the poor especially *adivasi* communities. Sreyas Social Service Centre, Wayand Social Service Society, Hilda Trust, Wayanad Sarva Seva Mandal, and Amrithanandamayi Mutt are some of the important NGOs functioning in Wayanad. In the study village, SNDP, the community organisation of Ezhava, has been very active through the SHGs and introducing micro credit schemes. Mutt and SNDP SHGs function more or less along caste or religious lines. In the weekly meetings members perform rituals like lighting the sacred lamp and offering prayers.

Sreyas and Wayanad Social Service Society are functioning under the direct control of Church. Local office of Sreyas, which is the popular one in the village and region, are attached to the church in the locality. In Pulpalli, the area office is attached to the local Church and local priest is the director and in charge of all the units under the area office. Organisation of this NGO is divided into three levels, viz., corporate centre, based at Bathery diocese, area (*mekhala office*) offices, and units. The priest in the Pullppalli parish attends various *ayalkkoottam* meetings on demand and for requirements like annual reporting, celebrations etc.

Compared to the NGO *ayalkoottams*, Kudumbasree *ayalkoottams* have been functioning now directly under the influence of local politics. Power strife within the *ayalkoottam* organisation can reflect the tensions, conflicts and corruption in the larger politics of the Panchayat. Election to various organisational levels of local Kudumbasree has resulted in politically spirited conflicts among the women who are supported by powerful male politicians in the village. Especially in this village factional politics within Congress party is an important determining factor in the selection of representatives to ADS, CDS etc. Conflicts and reconciliation have become almost integral to the functioning of SHGs. Contrary to this, NGO *ayalkoottams* function with enough professionalism.

As a result of the over politicisation of *ayalkoottam*, there are instances of corrupt practices creeping into the functioning of ADS, CDS and *ayalkoottam*. These practices are closely linked to the political culture at large in the village. A number of young women in this area have been actively involved with the local political activities through their participation in the SHGs. They are reciprocated with more favours and responsible positions within the SHG organisation. Occasionally, some of them also get into corrupt practices in the process. One such active member, who had responsibility in Panchayathh level committee of *Kudumbasree*, was accused of distributing some application forms for price, which were supposed to have been given free of cost for the beneficiary selection. In major fraud, case that occurred during the field work period, the Panchayathh ADS chairperson and Secretary were accused of forging fake receipts for distributing gas cylinders in the *ayalkoottams* under a Kudumbasree scheme. These women in the positions concerned were democratically elected candidates and representatives of political groups and their leaders. They were asked to return the amount after an enquiry by Panchayat committee as they wanted to settle the issue without giving much publicity.

NGOs like Sreyas, controlled by Church, have strong organisational hierarchy with efficient bureaucratic support. Most of the staff are handpicked by the local Priest or responsible officials in the corporate office from the local area on the basis of their

efficiency, sincerity and commitment. Office staff in the regional and corporate offices has sufficient educational qualifications. Some of them are also with good understanding of ground level problems. However their local staff is in constant touch with the *ayalkoottams* in various neighbourhoods. Although, most of their staff members belong to Christian community, *ayalkoottam* members and their local co-ordinators are from different religious backgrounds.

These *ayalkoottams* run by NGOs are not accountable to the people. Members do not have any right to criticise their actions. Within the corporate set up in which they operate, they are only internally accountable and subjected to internal auditing. According to a local coordinator of a popular corporate NGO, Sherly, 45, who was earlier with another grass-root level organisation, they are functioning with an intention of making profits. Top management diverts these profits mostly to other ventures and activities. Ordinary members are completely unaware of these things. Meanwhile staff, except a few on the higher level, are not paid properly but are constantly overburdened with work.

“Earlier I was with a small organisation which functioned according to the no loss – no profit policy. There was no much pressure. Here they always want to achieve more and more results. We know that we can never satisfy our head at the centre. As a widow and mother of three girls I find whatever amount they give me a relief”.

Other staff members from the village who are working in the area and regional offices are not ready to share their experiences. Most of them feel that any job is a blessing in the time of distress and their job in this particular organisation symbolically provides a good status in the village.

Pattern of *ayalkoottam* meeting and activities they undertake are not much different across the Kudumbasree and NGO based SHGs. In their weekly meeting, held at a selected household of any of the members in alternate order, they start the session with prayer and introductory speeches by President and Secretary. Then they discuss the important issue of the weeks selected from the newspaper by one of the members who has been assigned to do it in that particular week. Then they move on to

financial issues. They take decision on the allotment of loans and then each of the members makes their weekly payments. Other economic activities like collective farming or small scale business etc are done among the members within the group. Snacks, often homemade, are distributed in the meeting. This is a more or less ritualistic and established pattern of an *ayalkoottam* meeting in both the categories.

There may be conflicts over delayed payment or in deciding the beneficiaries. Rarely these conflicts reach direct confrontation between members on issues like mismanagement of funds, corruption, mistrust etc. There were such cases reported from the Kudumbasree *ayalkoottams* in the village which appeared even in the newspapers. Male members in the households have important roles in creating such conflicts and confrontations. Though SHGs have emerged as a common space of interaction for women in the village, individual decisions by the members are in most of the cases taken at the level of households under the direction of their husbands or collective decision of the respective households. External economic and political interests are creeping into the *ayalkoottam* mainly through the households.

At present there is maximum network coverage of SHGs in the village under Panchayathh and NGOs. Most of the communities are now having the opportunity to access various NGOs in the village. As already noted, penetration of NGOs through SHGs and decentralisation have increased the horizontal level of interactions among various communities in the village.

Table 4. 3. Percentage participation of women population in the whole SHGs to total women population aged above 15 years

communities		SHGs
Settler	Christians	67.7
	Hindu Ezhavas	72.9

Native communities	Others	72.8
	Chetty	45.6
	Mullu Kuruma	70.4
	Paniyans	23.7
	Kattunaykas	18.4

Source Nair and Vinod(2007)

Among the settler communities around 70% of the women members are having membership in any of the SHGs. Among the native communities, except Kuruman, all other communities have low participation of women in the SHG activities (Table 4.3). Lower participation among the Chettys compared that of the Kuruma community is mainly due to community-specific reason. In the normal situation Chetty community do not normally allow their women to go for outside work. This is mainly due to a continuity with the practice in the traditional livelihood system where Chetty women confined themselves mainly to the domestic works without directly involving in any economic activities. According to the data, number of *adivasi* women participating in the SHGs is very less. Though there are exclusive SHGs in the Paniyan settlements in the village they have been not yet proved viable in the functioning due to various reasons which will be discussed in the next section. Settlers are predominant in the Kudumbasree *ayalakoottam*. Though SHG movement under the decentralization program became very popular and effective in the village in terms of the participation of women and organization of economic activities, participation of native communities, especially marginal *adivasis*, is still far below the expectation.

According to the profile of *ayalkoottam* in the village, 43% of Hindu Ezhavas are members and percentage of Christians comes to around 33. Total percentage of

settler participation in the *ayalkoottam* comes to around 78. Among the native communities 11% of Chetty women are members of Kudumbasree *ayalkoottam*. Percentage of participation of Paniyan, Kuruma and Nayaka communities comes to 6, 11 and 3 respectively (Table 4.4).

But *ayalkoottam* has proved to be very effective for the women and their households belonging to the poor sections of settler population. Around 75% of the women in these SHGs are having land only below 50 cents. 6% of them have land between one and two acres. Those who are having land more than two acres come to only 4% of the total.

Large number of *ayalkoottam* members belong to the categories of agricultural workers and marginal farmers. 81% of the total members belong to these categories. The good response that SHG movement could create in the village should be seen in the context of economic distress. In the event of a fall in actual income from agricultural products male heads in most of the families became passive without any idea of future course of action.

Table 4.4 Participation of women in the Kudumbasree *ayalkoottam* according to communities

communities		SHGs (%)
Settler communities	Christians	33
	Hindu Ezhavas	43
	Others	2
Nativ	Chetty	11

Mullu Kuruma	2
Paniyans	6
Kattunaykas	3

Source Survey (2006)

It was in this context that SHG movement gave new openings for many families in the village. Around 90% of the members are married women and many of them started directly involving in the economic activities for the first time in their life. Many of them also started working as wage laborers in their neighborhoods through *koodipani* system. Non agricultural workers come to only about 6% of total members and the percentage of housewives comes to around 11.

Tables 4.5 Profile of the Kudumbasree ayalkoottam members in the village

Occupation	Distribution (%)
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Agricultural labour	45
Self employment in agriculture	36
Nonagricultural labour	6
Housewives	11
Not reported	2

Education levels	Distribution (%)
Literate	14
Primary	34
Upper primary	37
Secondary	10
Higher secondary	

Land holding (in cents)	Distribution (%)
1-10	29
11-20	30

21-50	17
51-100	14
1001-200	10

Marital status	Distribution (%)
Married	90
Un-married	5
Widowed	4
Separated	1
Not reported	0

Source: Survey 2006

Source Survey (2006)

Among the members in *ayalkoottam* differential access to resources like land and education has ramifications in the functioning of the group. Around 50% of the members in the *ayalkoottam* are having only primary education and 14% of the members are mere literates. There are 15% of women having education upto secondary or higher secondary levels. 37% of the women in the groups have upper primary level education (Table 4.5). In many SHGs it is found that women with low levels of education and no land and permanent labour become more silent. Often

women in this category face problem in paying their weekly installments in the micro credit scheme which would often invite the wrath of others. Lack of education also sometimes becomes an impediment for such women in opening up even in the women exclusive meetings. For this category of women, participation in the meeting is a ritual, though outcome of this participation is significant in their livelihoods.

Reinvention of the collective action under the leadership of women is an important effect of Self Help Goup movement in the village. The collective action which they used in various forms in the construction of development infrastructure during the period of settlement formation was mainly under the leadership of men. SHG movement introduced under the local Panchayathh system and the globally funded NGOs opened up a horizontal space for collective action for the women in the village. It coincided with an extreme distress period in their economic life. Collective actions they undertook include *koodipani* (exchange of labour), *panku krishi* (share cropping), production of various consumer items on the basis of their collective labour and small ventures like hotels, provisional stores, etc. Major difference between the new forms of collective action under the SHG movement compared to the old ones is the increased importance of individual interests and the role of decision making at the level of households now.

Commonly accepted result of SHG movement in the village is the enhancement of women's capabilities in order to negotiate various power structures from Panchayathh to households. Increased role in the decision making process especially related to economic activities, either in consultation with male members or in the decisions taken by male members, mainly husbands, is an important outcome of the movement. This is really a deviant practice from the previous period of economic buoyancy or even in the period of normalcy when most of the critical economic decisions were taken unilaterally by men. There are umpteen numbers of cases demonstrating the increased capability of women who came forward in order to open up and express their opinions and take initiatives in collective activities.

For male heads of the households, their women counterparts are found more effective through the collective platform like *ayalkoottam* in negotiating the local governance structure dominated mainly by the male politicians and bureaucrats.

There are many examples of women belonging to a backward community like Ezhava acquiring capabilities to undertake the responsibilities of the households economy and formulate strategies to shape the livelihoods of their households in the wake of decentralization and SHG movement through active negotiations. The story of Omana, 47 years old, is worth mention. Widowed, she had been a domestic help for nearly 20 years until she returned from Bangalore to the village in 2000. From then onwards she has been fully involved in the SHG movement in the village. She took active role in organizing different economic activities like share cropping, small ventures like production of packed food items, etc. She, along with her sister-in-law, borrowed goats through *ayalkoottam*. Another personal gain she made through membership in the SHG is a house allotted to her under a Panchyat scheme, although their family does not belong to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population for whom this particular housing scheme was implemented. She developed strategies for negotiating the bureaucratic and political power structure at the local level after working in SHGs for six years. In this, she had the influence of Mohanan in his capacity as ward member, even though her family does not belong to Mohanan's party, but to an opposition group. There was nobody in the neighborhood or SHGs to complain about this, mainly because of the ability she showed in organizing *ayalkoottam* activities in the locality. In the short span of time she developed the necessary skills to negotiate and convince the group members and others in agreeing to her plans to secure her livelihoods. Her life story illustrates the success of a woman belonging to a backward community in tackling and negotiating the asymmetrical field of power relations after a series of livelihood struggles.

She belongs to a migrant Ezhava family with nominal occupation of land. She is the second among five siblings and she is staying in a joint family that includes her father, mother, younger brother and his family and her own son. Her elder brother

and younger sister are married and staying separately with their own families. Her father was an agricultural labourer who is now more or less bed ridden. Her mother has been doing the job of housemaid from the days of her childhood. They occupy about one acre of land on which they do mixed cultivation. Initially they had occupied another area with smaller extent of land in another part of the village through encroachment.

Her father could not give any of the children education beyond primary level. She stopped at fourth standard.

“I got scabies on my head and my hair was cropped. I had to stop my education in the fourth standard. From then onwards I helped my parents in different works. We did different types of cultivation, like tapioca, grass, some kind of millets etc. ...By the time I was seventeen years old my parents decided to get me married to a person who migrated alone from the south recently. He was a good worker and capable of doing all kinds of work. He did not demand anything as dowry. So my parents were happy. But no one knew anything about his whereabouts. I later understood that he belonged to a Scheduled Caste ...Though he was caring, he used to drink heavily in the evenings after a day's hard work. After four years he decided to migrate along with me to the hilly terrains of Karnataka state where we could get land at cheap prices. By this time we had a baby boy. So we three moved to that forest area. We worked hard to clear the forest and started some cultivation. There was nobody to help us with anything. ... suddenly one day he became ill, vomiting and all. We had no facility to get immediate treatment. He died after a while. I had no idea what went wrong with him. We got some help from the local church for cremating his body and inform my relatives. My father and brother came after two days to bring us back home. We left that place leaving that soil and reached my home here.... I was completely clueless about our future. My son was six years at that time. For many days I did not come out of the room. .. Finally my mother found a job for me in the house of a priest in Bathery town. She literally sold me and my son to the priest. She got some amount for an year. Actually my life started again from that home. The priest's wife, whom I

called chechi, gave me directions on what to do. She taught me all works in the kitchen including making important dishes. Priest offered to get my son educated in a church-managed school and he was admitted in the school hostel under the guardianship of the priest... though I was not paid much and whatever I got was passed on to my mother, the help for getting my son educated that came from this family was the most important thing in my life.”

After about four years in that house, she was sent to Bangalore in Karnataka along with the priest's daughter who got married. She was assigned to look after the new born babies in that family. Hence she stayed in the city for about 12 years along with the family of the priest's daughter. Her son continued his education in the Church school under the priest's supervision. In Bangalore she could save her monthly salary as her son's educational expenses and her own expenses were taken care of.

By 2000, she stopped working in the far away town in the neighboring state and returned to her home and became part of her joint family along with her son. By this time he had completed post-graduation and joined for teachers' training course. But the situation at her home was very pathetic. The house was in a dilapidated condition with high chance of crumbling down. Father had become almost bedridden due to various illnesses. Mother continued working in many houses in the village on part-time basis. Her younger brother was whiling away his time with his drinking habit. She had bought an auto-rickshaw for him from her savings, but he spent everything for drinking and in playing cards. He married an orphan girl who used to do the job of a domestic help from her childhood days in Kozhikod. They have two small children. When she reached the village the entire responsibility came on her shoulders. So she decided to work for a known family in the village on a part time basis. Here she looked after an old woman whose children were away.

Soon she became active in the SHG in her neighbourhood. She could easily develop rapport with neighboring women through the *ayalkoottam* activities and became their leader, thanks to her ability to strategise and the relationships acquired through past experiences. She could get many benefits to individual households besides the share

of their collective activities. She pushed her sister-in-law to become a member and made her active in the *ayalkoottam*. They availed benefits from the schemes like distribution of goats, construction of new houses for poor etc. Besides these material benefits, she learned the ways to get things done in the system in a short span of time through her exposure to the people active in the local politics.

Though her family is sympathetic to CPI (M) it is her strategic intervention that could get her family included in the list of beneficiaries. Her brother and son were reluctant to approach the ward member, Mohanan for getting this done. She used the network of community through the SHG in which she is a member. This particular *ayalkoottam* consists of members in her neighbourhood who are mainly relatives and members of her own community. Most of them are Congress supporters, especially supporters of Mohanan as a leader from their community. So *ayalkoottam* stood behind her in getting approval from Mohanan for her application for a house. Most interestingly she got this house in the name of her son as the land was registered in his name. Meanwhile he got a temporary job in a government institution with a recommendation from her employer's family in the village. He got this employment producing a caste certificate which states that he belongs to his father's community and a scheduled caste. To get a house from the Panchayath in the name of her son, she however, used her own Ezhava identity.

They do not want to construct the house according to the standard plan approved by the Panchayathh. A foundation has been laid for the house with the help of an architect which is for a house double the size prescribed in the Panchayathh plan. But, till getting the last installment of the total allotment of Rs.one lakh, she plans to construct only a partial structure which will, she hopes, satisfy government norms and then Panchyath officials will not be able to make any formal objections. But she knows well that for completing the construction of the house as per her design, they require more money for which she is prepared to go to work even in a far off place. She also wants to get her son married once the house construction is completed.

Omana represents those women who have emerged in the process of SHG movement and decentralization in the village. As a widow and a female head of the

household she bears the responsibility of important decisions, though taken in consultation with her son and brother, and negotiates the external power structures.

Nature of women's participation in *ayalkoottam* activities is also varied according to the dynamics within their households. However, participation in the *ayalkoottams* has given opportunity for women to a large extent, to interact with the power centres outside the households and thereby develop a greater capability in negotiating with the power centers within the households. In the case of Omana too, she has carved out for herself an advantageous position within her household that includes three adult male members among others, through constant and successful negotiation with these outside power centers.

Though all the women who participate in the SHGs are not in the same category of women who enjoy authority within the household, like Omana, most of them are familiar with the similar kinds of strategies adopted in the *ayalkoottam* to tap benefits for their respective households. These strategies are often extended to the levels of *gramsabha* and Panchayathh. Strategies at the level of households are on the other hand resulted from their negotiations with the extended levels of *gramasabha* and *Panchayathh* also.

Paniyans in the domain of decentralization and participatory development

In this section we look into the impact decentralisation and participatory development brought into the lives of *adivasis* in the village. Decentralisation is expected to play an empowering role for the communities hitherto excluded from the development process.

There is a realisation that *adivasis* like Paniyans have been excluded from the processes of decentralisation and participatory development and through it from the development space in the village mainly due to the existing asymmetry in the power relations. Even in the initial stage of the implementation of decentralisation programme, the state conceived of exclusive *adivasi* councils, *oorukoottam* (village councils) under the *gramasabha*. There are also provisions to form exclusive *ayalkoottams* for *adivasi* households.

Oorukoottam

Participation of *adivasis* in the *gramasabha* meetings was virtually nil in the village till recent times. Though decrease in participation is a common trend among different segments of population over the years, there was hardly any participation of Paniyans from the beginning itself. *Oorukoottam* was specially created for *adivasis* understanding their reluctance in attending the general *gramasabha* dominated by non-tribal populations and taking note of their specific livelihood issues.

Oorukoottam brought the local Panchayathh, tribal extension office and *adivasis* together for discussing and implementing various welfare programs for solving their livelihood issues. The responsibility to convene the '*Oorukoottaam*' is with the local Tribal Extension Officer who does this in consultation with the local ward member. This meeting is supposed to discuss the problems and requirements of the households under its jurisdiction. Attendance of ward member and the extension officer is mandatory in the meeting.

Though *Oorukoottam*, a special *Gramasabha* exclusively for marginal people, was formed to ensure that their voices and demands are heard, many among them in the village are not still not very much aware of the importance and mode of functioning of an *Oorukoottam*. In many occasions it is convened according to the convenience of ward member and officials. There may not be a straight forward answer for the success or failures of *Oorukoottam* at this point of time. It has evoked mixed responses among the *adivasis* in the village. Many Paniyans in the village allege that there is a domination of Kuruman community over other communities in capturing the political space opened up by the process.

Decentralisation of state power among the *adivasis* through the *Oorukoottam* is associated with a major administrative step, that is the creation of semi-official positions of *tribal promoters* as the intermediary people between state department and *adivasi* communities / settlements. Tribal promoters are appointed from the *adivasis* on a temporary basis and attached to local tribal extension office in the village under the supervision of tribal extension officer (TEO). They are appointed from a list prepared by the tribal extension officer in consultation with the local

Panchayathh members. In principle educated and young committed people are to be included in the list prepared by TEO. A promoter may be responsible for one or two administrative wards in the village to inform the *adivasis* about the place and dates of *Oorukoottam*, the distribution of free rice under public distribution system, arranging treatment for those who are suffering form chronic diseases, imparting information regarding beneficiary schemes etc. Presently there are about 12 persons from different parts of the village and communities who are working as tribal promoters. However, many Paniyanns in the village are not aware of such meetings and they complain that they were often uninformed about the meetings.

This is mainly due to the conflicting interests among the people with regard to the functioning of tribal promoters. These conflicting interests are partially due to the unfriendly relationship among different communities and households. Paniyann households observe a Kuruman promoter often with suspicion. Even a promoter belonging to one's own community need not be having a good relation with other households or members in the same colony. Intra personal or household level distrust is also a major obstacle in the functioning of participatory bodies, especially with matters related to monetary benefits. Local tradition among the *adivasis* of maintaining certain social distances between communities plays a role in creating this mistrust. Proximity is minimal among the various *adivasi* communities. Even now, there is hardly any occasion for them to intermingle and inter-dine.

All the successive promoters appointed in the village belonged to Kuruma community. Preparing the list of promotes now has become a political affair. Those who rule the state has now a major say in deciding the list. Given the advantageous position within the political parties, Kuruma community gets prominence (table 4.6). Lack of leadership within the community is a major disadvantage for Paniyans in getting their name included in the list. Due to this, they lack the political networking and the power to bargain.

Table 4.6 Distribution of promoters among different communities in 2006-07

Community	No of promoters
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Kuruma	93
Paniyan	21
Kattunayka	20
Others	6

Source Local NGO (2007)

Satheesh from Thazhekaapp neighbourhood is an exceptional aspirant for the post of promoter among Paniyan community. He is 20 years old and with an ailing mother. He failed higher secondary (in Plus two class) exam and is working as an agricultural labourer. He is very helpful in the settlement and maintains good connection with tribal extension office and its officer. He is among the few young Paniyan in the village who passed secondary school. For a short period he has worked for an NGO also. According to TEO he is one of the most suitable candidates for the post of a tribal promoter among the Paniyans. Though TEO, Krishnan, who is now retired, belongs to Kuruma community he likes Satheesh for his sincerity and efficiency in work. He advised Satheesh to apply for the post of promoter. He attended an interview in the head office of tribal development in the district head quarters. Satheesh was quite confident as the TEO was familiar with him and he kept all the local politicians in good humour.

But his confidence did not help him to get in the list. The names were included according to the recommendations made by Adivasi Kshema Samithi (AKS) an *adivasi* outfit supported by ruling CPI(M). AKS formed in 2000 as a response to adivasi land movement led by CK Janu, a vibrant woman adivasi leader from the region. However AKS is now influential among *adivasis* and patronising most of the state-led development actions as they are in power. As a rule of the game it is now AKS' turn to have the informal authority in preparing the list of tribal promoters.

Interestingly, AKS has a woman leader, Seetha Balan, in the district level from Paniyan community. Her husband is also an active member of AKS and with a government job. Seetha and Balan are belonging to an area which had a history of workers' struggles under the Communist Party against upper caste Nair landlordism, which is far away from the study village. Father of Seetha was a communist party worker and Balan is also very active in the party activities from childhood days. However, going by the internal dynamics of AKS they don't have much power to take individual decisions. Most of the decisions are taken strictly on the basis of the directives from the Party. In our village AKS doesn't have any Paniyan leader, though they have many followers in the community.

Satheesh approached me as he is aware that as a researcher I have contact with some of the *adivasi* leaders of AKS at the district level to know about the position of the list. He did it also because I was making frequent queries about the status of the list whenever I meet him. I decided to call a leader and describe his story. After listening to the case patiently I was told that it would have been better if called them at least one month earlier before finalising the list. This was no answer for me. I expressed my helplessness to Satheesh.

Satheesh had a plan for attempting the post of promoter. He would get some amount (around Rupees thousand and five hundred) as remuneration for this part-time job. The rest of the time he would be able to study and pass the exam, he hoped. He wanted to try for a government job in long run for which he would be able to do enough preparation using the time and money from this job. He was aware that most of the Kuruma doing like this are making their way to government jobs. After losing this hope he has no other option, but to go for wage labour along with his friends in the settlement. But he keeps his optimism alive and wants to get what he aspires for—a government job.

Case of Sasi, 28 years old, a former tribal promoter from another ward of the village Panchayathh, illustrates how the *adivasi* discontent within the democratic institutions ends up in further marginalising their position within the local arena of politics. He is also a person better educated among the local Paniyan, possessing a higher

secondary level certificate. He got inspiration in social work through his participation in a state-sponsored Bharat darshan programme (all India tour programme sponsored by the Central Government for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students) when he was in high school. Later he also got an opportunity to attend a workshop for personality development conducted by KIRTADS in Kozhikode, a state-level research and training institute under the government department for SC and ST communities. Sasi associated with NGO activities in the village for some time.

The lone teacher among the Paniyans in the village and perhaps in the region too, is his elder brother. His father and mother were permanent workers (*sthiram panikkar*) with a rich Ezhava farmer. It was under his father's inspiration that they got education. Both of them got educated in the first school in the village where they got encouragement from some of the teachers too. Though Sasi is younger, he got married earlier and has two children. He has a younger sister too. They all are now living under the same roof. His brother is trying to buy some land and construct a house independently and only then he plans to get married. Sasi is now working as an agricultural labour along with his friends within the settlement.

What went wrong with Sasi in tribal extension office was a complaint he made to the higher-ups against a housing scheme implemented by TEO. He had alleged that there was corruption involved in the construction work. ITDP¹⁹ officer ordered an enquiry and officer from block level investigated the issue and gave a clean chit to the officer who faced allegation. He says,

“I was a fool for failing to understand that no officer would take action against his subordinate as they all need help from each other. I had a good chance to continue in the position of tribal promoter if I was in the good books of TEO. He deliberately avoided my name from the list the next time. I became a loser for raising my voice.”

¹⁹ Integrated Tribal Development Project is the district level government agency of state department for tribal development in order to coordinate different schemes under state and central government plans. Tribal Development Blocks and Tribal Extension Offices are lower levels of the hierarchy.

According to the officer belonging to Kuruma community who showed sympathy to Satheesh, but was opposed to Sasi, he was a permanent trouble maker and so he could not propose his name for another term.

What Sasi did next was to take the decision to contest in the forthcoming Panchayathh election as an independent candidate in the history of Panchayathh and Paniyan community. He was fully confident about his work he had done when he was a promoter and while working with the NGO. His inspiration to contest in the election was mainly from the *adivasi* land movement led by C.K.Janu from 2000 onwards. It was a historic struggle led by landless *adivasis* to get rights on land for a secure livelihood and overall development. Though his family was basically sympathisers of left parties especially CPI(M), he took the independent position to contest in the election. He was strongly persuaded from different sides, including party men, his family's employer etc to withdraw from the contest. He refused to budge, but finally, he lost the election. He could not muster many votes even from his own settlement, which came to around one hundred only. The local tradition of voting practice among the Paniyans is infamous. All parties try to buy their votes by distributing arrack, money, dress, etc., on the eve of election. Many among the Paniyan believe that it is their legitimate right to get something in return for casting a vote. Even if they politically support a party and go for their demonstrations, it doesn't ensure their votes. In the election time there is always a competition among the political parties for securing the Paniyan votes in the village. Sometimes this leads to confrontation. However, according to a general pattern of their voting they cast their votes for the candidates from whom they get more pre-poll gifts. No political party in the village trusts Paniyan votes, but all try to buy them.

Sasi's candidature did not make any change in the voting behaviour of Paniyan in the village. He is somewhat regretful about his candidature now. He reminiscences:

“By repeating the mistake like the one I had done against TEO, we are now becoming the victims. Our ward member does not consider my family and those families who supported me in the election in any of the beneficiary

schemes. Even they don't put electric bulbs on the common electric posts near our houses. They do not undertake the maintenance work of this short road which goes in front of our house."

Sasi seems to be very hesitant to go for any more confrontation with political leaders and parties. His experiences have taught him that nothing could be done without their co-operation. Even his relatives and friends in the settlement did not lend support to him as he expected. He now thinks that he might again approach the leaders of AKS for membership.

"To save our community we should use all the facilities provided by the Parties, Panchayath, and others. This is how nattukar (settlers) developed",

He concludes.

Though Oorukoottam meetings have almost become a ritual in the village, introduction of 'tribal promoters' as intermediaries of their livelihood requirements and the state department have a positive impact among the Paniyan. Despite of the looming mistrust among themselves and the Paniyan discontent over the domination of Kuruma and political parties in selecting the promoters, the office of TEO in the village has been identified as a place which they can depend on any time. A few of the tribal promoters are available in the office most of the time during the working hours besides other official staff. Even the office staffs are belonging to Kuruma community. Two successive Tribal Extension Officers have been from the Kuruma community.

Number of *adivasis* including large number of women visiting the office for different purposes has increased considerably in recent years. In contrast, village Panchayath office, which is always busy with people from all strata, is a least attractive place for most of the *adivasis*. Office environment in Panchayath is still completely alien to Paniyans. They are reluctant to go inside an office and tell their needs. Instead, most of them, irrespective of male or female, would stand some distance far away from the entrance without asking anything. Normally officials call them inside according to their convenience. In the tribal extension office they have people from *adivasi* communities. They can freely talk their dialects to each other as dialects of all

adivasi communities in the village are mutually intelligible. Besides most of the Kuruma promoters and other staff members are found sensitive to Paniyans.

Construction/ Corruption boom

Corruption in *adivasi* schemes is an age old phenomenon not only in the village, but also in the whole state. The village is one of the worst cases for the corrupt practices involved in *adivasi* projects. After the implementation of decentralisation programme local politicians also became party to this besides the contractors and officials. Increased role of Panchayath in the every day livelihoods of Paniyans is understood in relation with the authority of Panchayath in distributing different welfare schemes, mainly construction of new houses for the *adivasi* families. Major portion of annual plan fund has been directed to Panchayath for carrying out various projects. Major chunk of the fund is allocated for the construction of houses as there is a demand for it. Besides the village Panchayath, Block Panchyat and state department also allot fund for constructing houses for homeless *adivasis*.

In the ten years until 2007, local Panchayath has constructed 272 new houses for *adivasis*, besides 100 latrines. Panchayath had spent Rs. 1,18,88,969 for different projects in the same period with major portion of the fund allocation for house construction. In the 2007-08 tribal sub plan the amount allocated for house construction comes to around 35 percent of total sub-plan out lay(Table 4.7).

Construction of houses for *adivasis*, especially for Paniyans has become almost synonymous with corruption. This is mainly because of the lack of involvement of Paniyan in the construction process. These houses are constructed mainly by the contractors. They work almost in tandem with the ward members and Panchayath officials

Table 4.7. Number of projects under tribal sub plan for 10 years from 1998

Tribal sub plan (projects) No.	Total expenditure
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		in Rs
New Houses	272	
Latrine	100	
Goat	50	
Cow	18	
Diary development	32	
Agriculture		
Study materials	14	
House Wiring	100	
Drinking water	6	
Building	2	
Play ground, side wall	3	
Road tarring, maintenance	24	
,soling		
New Roads	1	
Irrigation canal	1	
		11888969

Source Panchayath document (2008)

Table 4.8 Tribal sub plan 2007-08

Projects	Amount in Rs.
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House construction	30,00,000
Land for house construction	2,00,000
House maintenance	1,00,000
Latrine	1,05,000
House construction(senior citizens, disabled)	6,00,000
Education related	10,92,625
Archery institute (Land acquisition)	34,43,931
Total	85,41,556

Source Panchayth document (2008)

so that they don't spend the total amount passed for a project. Earlier there were many cases of Paniyan male members in the family who got the amount from Panchayat office spending a portion of it for liquor and leaving the rest to contractor. The houses made would be in very low quality, and nobody could use them. There are still many structural reminders of such cases in different settlements in the village. In some other cases contractor who gets the amount for construction disappeared with the money from the area for long periods.

To resist the widespread corruption in these projects, now-a-days amount is issued only in the name of a female member of the household. Panchayath issues only cheques in installments according to the progress of the work. But still contractor is in the picture and only he can complete the work. Contractor brings all the beneficiaries together to the Bank or treasury to withdraw the amount. As the amount

is issued only step by step according to the progress all the projects are with the same contractors. What is happening is compromise on the quality of the work.

Contractors buy building materials including steal, wood, bricks, cement, sand etc., in bulk for cheap prices. They spend only half of the amount. Complaints are very common and frequent among Paniyans about the quality of construction.

Even though most of the families are aware of the lack of quality in the work they don't find any alternative. If they take up the work individually they cannot manage the workers and procure the materials. Once they give their work to a contractor they don't need to worry about any other things including verification visits of Panchayath officials. Their lack of exposure to skilled non agricultural work, especially in construction sector is the major reason for their reluctance and inability in taking up the work individually. However, very rarely some people like has dared to take up the work, but struggle to complete it. The case of Velayudhan from Thazhekapp neighborhood is testimony to this.

Velayudhan was confident of completing the work of his house with the help of some of his friends. He has had some experience of working in the construction sector. He got the house through *Oorukoottam* allotted by state department through TEO. He was advised by TEO to give the work to a contractor, but Velayudhan said that he would do the work himself. Officer then did not object, but reminded him about the criteria of the Panchayath about the plinth area. Velayudhan left some additional space attached to the original basement for constructing a latrine. This created the problem. Those who visited from the Panchyat complained to TEO about this additional space. Velayudhan was summoned to TEO and asked to give an explanation. He said that he has not made any expansion to the original basement plan of the Panchyat. What he did was to retain the space of an old latrine attached to the new basement. It had nothing to do with the new construction. TEO did not get convinced about his explanation and told him that he would visit the site. He was told to come and take the TEO to the work site. For this purpose alone Velayudhan visited the office four times. He had to wait for the officer for a long time in front of the office three times. Only the fourth time the TEO found time to accompany Velayudhan. After visiting the site, the officer advised Velayudhan to remove the

space of latrine or else he would not get the next installment on technical grounds. Though he overcame this first major obstacle by obeying the advice of the TEO, he had to continue his struggle to finish the work.

Case of Velayudhan is a rare example of a Paniyan in the village who decided to do the house construction on his own. But his experience shows the risks and difficulties in handling the official hurdles in completing the work. What he said about it was that there would be no problems if he had assigned the work to a contractor suggested by the officer. There are direct and indirect efforts consistently from the powerful nexus in the village to do everything possible to thwart any such individual or collective self reliance exhibited by the marginalized tribal people. If Paniyans don't go through the nexus they will have to face a lot of unexpected problems in completing the work. Panchayath member and the officials have the opinion that if Paniyans are entrusted with the work, the money would reach only the liquor shops. Moreover, many among the Paniyans have a feeling that they are getting a free house even if contractors and others are grabbing a major share of the fund that should be used on their house.

There is a tradition of corruption well established in the village through the development schemes implemented by the state in the post independence period. Beneficiaries of these projects were mainly government officials and local contractors with rare exceptions. Now decentralization has extended the net of beneficiaries to local politicians and Panchayath officials. But it has also brought in partial accountability in these projects. Earlier when state departments were the sole authority in carrying out such schemes no body had any idea about the flow of money. Paniyan beneficiaries are now fully aware of the scale of corruption involved in these projects. They are helpless only because of the lack of their individual resources and capabilities to resist such corruption.

The tradition of corruption involved in the *adivasi* projects has been taken for granted by the general public in the village. Decentralization has increased the competition among the locally powerful to patronize these projects. Mohanan as a powerful member in the Panchayath made a claim that through his influence in the

Pachayath and politics he bargained and ensured maximum number of houses for the 'poor' Paniyans in his ward. This kind of enthusiasm on the part of members to provide shelter to *adivasis* is understood from the Paniyan experience mainly as attempts for garnering maximum commission from the deal.

People in the village often cite the example of a one time nominal contractor who has become very rich in the post-decentralization period and diversified his economic activities mainly through the nexus he has cultivated by undertaking different Panchayath projects including the construction of *adivasi* houses. Many instances in the village show that corrupt economy at the local level has been rooted deeply in the history of *adivasi* (mainly Paniyan) labour and livelihoods. This economy has a strong lineage to the manipulative strategies adopted widely by the settler farmers in the early days of migration to extract the Paniyan labour. This tradition has created a *doxa* of the inactiveness of *Paniyan* which automatically gives those who feel they are active and powerful a 'right' to exploitation.

Paniyan and SHG movement

In 2002 / 03 period after the burgeoning of *ayalkootam* in the village, Panchayath took initiative to form five new SHGs exclusively for Scheduled Tribe (ST) women. Though initially ward member and CDS functionaries attended their meeting and gave some directives, all the five SHGs became almost dysfunctional in the course of time. Lack of leadership, lack of proper guidance from the Panchayath or Kudumbasree authorities, lack of money to deposit in weekly savings etc., are the chief reasons attributed for the failure of ST SHGs. In 2008 Panchayath again took initiatives to launch new SHGs for ST women. They formed around three new *ayalkoottams* exclusively for women.

But there are general *ayalkoottam* with nominal participation of Paniyan women in different neighborhoods. There are at least 10 *ayalkoottams* out of total 24 in the village with the members belonging to Paniyan community. There is only one SHG in the village having Paniyan women forming one third of the total members. The remaining nine SHGs have only nominal participation of Paniyan women (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Number of Paniyann members in general SHGs

Total number of members	Number of Paniyan members
16	3
13	3
10	2
18	1
14	1
20	1
15	1
17	1
13	5
13	2

Survey: 2006

After the failure of initial SHGs exclusively formed for Paniyans in the village three new *ayalkoottam* have been formed in two neighborhoods under the responsibility of two Paniyan girls with secondary level school education. Ward member took special initiative in forming these new ones. CDS functionaries are directed to attend the weekly meetings to give them special support.

Theses three new SHGs have 15 to 20 members. Two *ayalkoottam* are functioning in Melekapp neighbourhood, and a third one is in Kolarattukunnu neighbourhood. All the members belonging to these three *ayalkoottam* share more or less the same characteristics. 90% of the members are married women and basically agricultural labourers with maximum education at the primary level. But there are also two girls in Melekkappu and Kolarattukunnu neighborhoods having secondary level education. All the *ayalkoottam* groups have own name and hence the two *ayalkoottam* in Melekkappu are named as Aathira and Pratheeksha given by ADS functionaries.

Aathria *ayalkoottam* has two non- Paniyan members, two girls from nearby Mundakuuttikunnu neighbourhood functioning as the Secretary and President of the group as all other members are not ready to take up the posts. Because of this reluctance of the Paniyan women in the settlement it was also ware member's

suggestion to include two outsiders within the group. Gini and Bincy, the two non-Paniyan are teen aged girls from Christian families who are having higher secondary level education. Mothers of these girls are members of other Kudumbasree SHGs, though multiple memberships from a family are normally not allowed by rule.

Aathira *ayalkoottam* is the better functioning one compared to the other one. There are four aged women in the group in the age group of 60-65. Three of them are still doing wage labour. Bella, 65 years old illiterate woman, a widow, is the oldest of them all. She has with her now the family of her daughter who is with her husband and one child. Bella gets the money for her weekly installment towards the credit scheme from her monthly widow pension Rs. 130 disbursed by the state government. The amount does not reach her regularly, but two or three months together. Her son-in-law assists her to pay the amount when there is a delay in the pension. She has taken a loan for an amount Rs 1000 from the *ayalkotttam* for his son-in-law's visit to Sabarimala, a reputed Hindu pilgrimage centre in Kerala. This pilgrimage is somewhat expensive as the person has to travel a long distance with a lot of preparation. However this has recently become a widespread practice among the Paniyans in the village. Bella has repaid major portion of the loan. "There is a balance of Rs 305 plus its '*palisa*' (interest). I know it all now", she proudly explains. Using the word '*palisa*' is an important effect of SHG as far as an illiterate, old Paniyan woman like Bella is concerned.

Out of the total 15 members, except the two non-tribal girls, all are married. Six of them are working as wage labourers whenever they get work in and around the neighbourhood. Three other old women work occasionally and are often supported by their sons or sons-in-law in making the weekly payments. Four of them are not working as they have small children to look after. They continue in the group with the assistance of their husbands.

This *ayalkoottam* is more cohesive as there is no much reluctance from the members to meet weekly. Intervention of Gini and Bincy as functionaries of the group becomes helpful in coordinating the group and making sure of the attendance of all members in the meetings. Meanwhile the group Pratheeskha is having group leaders

from the same settlement. Ammini and Lakshmi are functioning as the Secretary and President of this *ayalkoottam*. Ammini has studied up to seventh standard and Lakshmi completed the eighth. Out of all 17 members none of the others have education beyond primary level. Some of them are illiterate also. Except for Lakshmi, all are married and agricultural workers. In the beginning there were a total of 20 members in the group.

The major problem this group is facing is the disharmony among the members. Ammini is a girl from another village who is married to a man from this settlement. Lakshmi belongs to the settlement. Between these two there are some tensions. On a meeting day we waited for Lakshmi for a long time. She did not come for the meeting but did not inform her inability to attend the meeting. Though she is not doing any work she goes to visit relatives and friends on Sundays. It became the reason for not attending the meetings. She never takes an effort to go and inform Ammini about her inability to attend the meeting. Inter-household tension is a major reason for this distance. Most of the other members are also frequent absentees in the meetings. So they fail to conduct meetings regularly.

Ammini fears to conduct the meeting without full quorum as she feels that she is not from the same settlement and most of the other members are from same settlement and elder to her. She fears that they may be offended if she makes any active intervention for their participation. Her family has an image of being a stable one with her husband having secondary level education and a *sthiram pani* (*permanent work*) and son being a regular student in the fifth standard in the town school. Her husband Balan, 34 years, considers himself as more progressive than most of the other members in the settlement as his upbringing was in a village which witnessed aggressive social movement under the Communist Party. He was in his mother's house in that village till he was 17 and reached this village after the death of his father who belonged to Melekappu neighbourhood. They have their own house here, received through *Oorukoottam*. He got just seven cents of land from the share of his father to construct this house. He did additional works on it and made it beautiful. He constructed a latrine attached to his house and made a fence around the small area of house using different garden plants. His elder brother is staying in the nearby house

constructed under Panchayathh scheme which is in a dilapidated condition. He is also under frequent treatment and his family, with two children under 15 years, depends on his wife for their livelihoods. She is also a member in Prathesskhsa *ayalkoottam*, but defaults payment and absents herself from the meetings. Ammini has a problem in taking a leadership role within the group where her elder co-sister is also a member.

There is also difference between these groups in terms of their ability in accessing the state resources allotted for *ayalkoottam* groups. Aathria *ayalkoottam* has accessed the revolving fund for *adivasis*, an amount of Rs 5000 through the initiatives of their non- ST functionaries Gini and Bincy. They have also benefited from the schemes like distribution of hen, goat etc. The other group did not avail any of these schemes provided by the Panchyat. Micro credit scheme is the only activity they undertake. Major reason for this inability on the part of Pratheeksha *ayalkoottam* is the lack of information on procedure and activities of Kudumbasree organization. As the Secretary and President of the group, Ammini and Lakshmi are supposed to attend the monthly meetings of ward level organization of Kudumbasree, ADS. They said they were not informed about the meetings. Gini and Bincy are able to attend the meetings given their better access to source of information and networks belonging to settler population. They are able to submit the application forms on time and raise the demands in ADS meetings and hence, able to make available maximum benefits from both General and ST categories.

Those who are in the elected positions within ADS under the supervision of ward member are responsible to make sure that these groups are functioning properly. However, in the village they are found mostly preoccupied with their livelihood issues and get sparsely any time to spend for attending the problems within ST *ayalkoottams*. Sheeba, 26 years, with higher secondary education is the secretary of ADS in the ward. She is also responsible to look after the functioning of these two *ayalkoottams* in Melekaappu neighborhood. She belongs to a small farmer's family with husband and two children. Husband's father was a large scale farmer and their land was fragmented after partition. They do not have any means for livelihood other than land and cattle. They now own one and a half acres of land. She was compelled

to take up the position due to political pressure. They belong to a traditionally Congress family and her husband is an active worker supporting Mohanan and younger brother is in the opposite faction of Mohanan within the party, hence there is a tension within the family too. Sheeba and her husband work very hard to meet their ends. They are staying now in a temporary shed after shifting from their joint family household. For Sheeba, time is not enough for fulfilling the duties between *ayalkoottam* and household. She is supposed to monitor and verify the accounts of other *ayalkoottam* and report it to CDS meeting.

Similar pressure is typical to all women in the village who undertake the responsibilities of *ayalkoottam*. They take up this pressure as part of their livelihood struggles and strategies. In such a situation they face serious limitation in facilitating the functioning of Paniyans *ayalkoottam* in the local neighborhoods which do not directly bring any benefits to their living. Even Sheeba is not curious about the success of these SHGs. She would use a standard phrase in describing the situation of Paniyans that '*athunglau nannavathilla saare...* (sir, they wont get better in their life, sir..). Using the term "athungalu" to indicate Paniyan is slightly derogatory while they use *ayalkoottam pennungal* (neighbourhood women) to address the fellow members in the SHGs. Facilitative role of outside women as in the case of *Aathria ayalkottam* has been proved useful to bring the Paniyan women on track and create a savings behaviour even among the old and illiterate. However this is not being done as a service; but those girls are getting benefits from multiple membership with their mothers having memberships in other *ayalkoottams* and also getting access to the exclusive schemes for *adivasis*.

Profiles of those Paniyan women who have the membership in the general *ayalkoottam* are more or less with the similar background. All these women or their immediate relatives in the households have somewhat stable sources of livelihoods through *sthirampani* ('permanent work'), share cropping, little patches of land, rearing of goats etc. Though their participation is only 6% of the total women members which is still marginal compared to their total population, these women

have been motivated by the concept of savings introduced into their culture through the intervention of *ayalkoottam*. They come simply to the *ayalkoottam* meetings for making a saving. Nobody has yet started participating in any production or income generating activities.

Maya and Santha from Karyampathi neighbourhood are members in the *ayalkoottam* from its beginning. Maya is married and living with her husband and two children. Her husband is a *sthirampanikkaran* and son a migrant labourer. Daughter is studying in secondary class. Maya and her husband have only primary level education. They undertake share cropping of paddy and ginger in the field of a nearby Chetty family. They belong to the few Paniyan families in the village that have relatively better and stable livelihoods based on multiple economic activities. Decision to join the *ayalkoottam* was taken collectively and she is punctual in participating in the meetings and making the weekly payments.

Santha belongs to the lone Paniyan family in the village who has occupied more than one acre of land. She is staying with her father, mother and two brothers. She is an agricultural labourer but not only working within the boundaries of their neighbourhood, but also beyond their village. She is a member of a group of contract workers from the settlement along with her brothers who get works in the neighbouring village Panchyath in the large plantations more or less on a regular basis. She has also secured better income based livelihood through *sthirampani* itself.

Even though Santha and Maya are valuable members and regular attendees in this *ayalkoottam* they are not very active in discussions and other interactions in the meeting. They have not yet completely assimilated with the group in terms of their wider economic activities and planning. They do not attach more meaning to this *ayalkoottam* than a saving purpose. This is mainly because they secure their livelihoods based on the kinship and friendship networks within the community and settlement. Moreover they are not at all accustomed to the highly formalised functioning of SHGs. They are found to be uncomfortable with the formal

procedures of the meeting. A formally structured meeting includes prayer, welcome and presidential speech, discussion on activities and documentation of accounts.

NGOs and Paniyanns

Even though NGOs in the region function in the name of marginalised sections of people they have not yet succeeded in facilitating Paniyans, one of the most marginalised communities in the region, into the SHG movement. Many NGOs are functioning in the village with adivasis having nominal membership. They do not do anything concrete for facilitating new livelihood practices among these people. There is only one settlement in the village Panchyath, that too outside our study village, where a corporate NGO has started *ayalkoottam* exclusively for *adivasis*. This settlement was formed through the forced encroachment of a state owned coffee plantation by *adivasi* labourers in 2004 as an impact of the historic land movement and Muthanga firing. There are around 203 workers who were distributed land from one to two acres under the supervision of an *adivasi* committee.

This is the reason why this NGO selected this settlement for organising new SHGs and related social service activities like the establishment of a primary level informal school. They identified the Paniyan girl Seena with plus two level education who studied in a state-sponsored boarding school in Palakkad district and appointed her as the local coordinator. Before Seena took charge of the SHGs in the locality, Lucy, a settler woman belonging to a labour household staying nearby the settlement was in charge the groups. However, these three groups are not functioning properly due to “*the lack of enthusiasm from the inmates.*” But according to some of the insiders of NGO like Sherly it is very difficult to get the committed people who can really work to make a change. Most of the women who work at the grass root level are also people who struggle to meet their livelihoods. Besides this, in the overall designing of projects of a corporate NGO like this one, utmost importance is given to economic viability and suitable strategies to achieve it. The case of Seena is a classic one to illustrate the economic logic of their social action.

Father of Seena was earlier a permanent worker in the plantation. In this capacity he got 2 acres of land allotted by the *adivasi* committee in the settlement. Besides

Seena, he has two other children. Eldest one is a girl who is now studying for nursing in Bangalore. Sending their daughter to a distant city for doing a professional course is a completely new thing among the Paniyan community in the village. He had also sent Seena to Palakkad for her better education. Seena took science group at plus two level which unfortunately, she could not pass. The youngest one is a boy who stopped education at the 7th standard. He said that he wanted to share the economic burden of his father from the educational expenses of his sisters. So he worked in their own field and did occasional wage labour also.

For sending his daughter to Bangalore for nursing course Seena's father had to meet a huge amount. His family had membership in one of the SHGs run by the NGO. Understanding the condition of this family corporate office directed to its regional office to provide a loan without interest and also without strict stipulation of the period of repayment. It is with this help that he could send her to Bangalore. They spent the money toward capitation fee, tuition fee, hostel fee, etc. Once she joined the course she realised the difficulty in continuing it in a completely alien environment.

Many of these nursing colleges in Bangalore are really notorious in their treatment of students which are often reported in the newspapers. Even many students in the village from settler families face difficulties in these colleges. Seena's sister has a strong desire to come back from the college, but family is advising her to continue the education braving all difficulties. They informed the NGO about the difficulties she faces in that environment.

In the context of uncertainty on the part of the girl, the NGO became alert of the repayment of the loan they disbursed for her education. They were planning to get it reimbursed from her when she completes the course and gets a job, probably in their own organisation. It was in this occasion that Seena came back to the settlement after completing her course in Palakkad. NGO management decided to train this girl for co-ordinating their activities in the settlement. So they appointed her as their coordinator in the settlement. She is assisted by their staff from area level office in undertaking the activities. She would get a remuneration of around Rs.1500 for her

services. But according to an agreement signed by her this amount would not be passed into her hands, but accounted towards the credit of her father who took the loan through the SHG.

This is a very rare case of the direct NGO intervention that happened in Paniyan life in the village. We cannot cite any successful experiment undertaken by either small or big NGOs to change the lives of Paniyans in the village, though they have been playing an active role in creating an SHG band among the people in general in recent years.

There is a strong criticism from the left wing politicians against the mode of current functioning of NGOs in the village. For instance CPI (M) leader and ex- Panchayath President Jankan criticised them for not taking up any volunteer services for the betterment of communities like Paniyans. They are accused for looking for only the projects which bring monetary benefits to them and not focussing on the areas where they actually ought to make meaningful intervention. According to their political critics, NGOs should stop duplicating the works of Panchayath and competing with Panchayath by working parallel to it. There was a decision by Panchayath to exclude the families who are members in NGO SHGs from the network of Kudumbasree ayalkoottam which has been not successful much. The reason is mainly because of the pressure from below. Even if Panchayath takes a strong decision to omit the Kudumabasree members who are also members in NGO SHGs ward members would fear to implement it anticipating a debacle in the coming election.

Conclusion

In context of decentralisation in our study village both the Panchayathh and NGOs have not yet been successful in taking up a facilitative role in ensuring the participation of Paniyans in the process of enhancing their resources and capabilities. Till now, these two powerful agents of change in the local livelihoods have influence on them only as external forces. Some of the members within the community try to engage and respond to these changes purely on the basis of their internal livelihood dynamics, i.e. whether they are *sthirampanikkar* or not, do they own land or not, etc. For Paniyans, creation of a horizontal space of social interactions, also as a

development space, through the decentralisation of state and the increased participation of different communities in development process did not help them to get equal access to various resources, especially social networks outside the community. Visible and invisible barriers historically inherited and socially constructed and reproduced through various processes, even development interventions and functioning of organisations set up for them as well as the attitudes of leadership and functionaries in development stopped them from freely accessing these resources within highly asymmetrical fields of power relations.

Contrary to this most of the other communities have established and accessed a wide network of social relations in the context of decentralisation. A new generation of leaders from village has emerged in the process using their power to patronise various networks and using it as potential resources. Individuals have also attained the power through these networks which have been accelerated through the SHG movement, to serve their own interests and making political choices. Decentralisation and SHG movement have also started changing the conventional pattern of patron –client relationship within the political arena. Instead of maintaining a life term commitment to a leader, party, and faction within the party, people try to keep their options open to make choices. As a result vertical order of power relations in the old pattern are getting slowly changed to a horizontal one.

CHAPTER 5

RE-INVENTING PANIYANS: LIVELIHOOD PRACTICES AT THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL

Introduction

Previous chapters have already shown how the absence of critical resources like land, education and social networks - an effect of larger political and economic processes - has constrained the Paniyan community in accessing the development space. Contrarily, how possession of these resources helps people belonging to settler communities to strategise in order to tilt the local power relations in their favour has also been shown. How these strategies enable them to construct livelihoods through increased horizontal level interactions and a sharing of common aspirations in the development space has also been revealed.

Nevertheless, there are strong signs of significant changes occurring in the livelihood practices within the Paniyan community as part of their struggles to survive in an extremely asymmetrical world of power relations. These changes are understood mainly in connection with the emergence of new practices hitherto alien to the livelihood experiences among a random section of Paniyas, but certainly with a potential to create a larger impact. Participation in the social movement for land, undertaking share cropping, increasing seasonal migration, the beginning of self – reliant migration to far away places and participation in the state-sponsored NREG schemes are the major instances of change with a potential to create a new resource base and capabilities for the community. Most of these new practices are neither generated in isolation nor insulated from the broader context of the local-global interpenetrations, but have intended or unintended consequences of contemporary social processes. A new quest for land and increased involvement of civic society and media organizations in the community's livelihood issues are happening. Expanding social space of market is a pull factor in their respective migratory movements. Even NREGS is a state intervention for giving a 'human face to globalization' by ensuring a basic living for those who are becoming insecure in the increasingly globalised economic environment. The following sections discuss these nascent level changes.

In a Quest for Land

Social Movement for land

Burning demand for land among the Paniyas became visible at the end of the '90s and in the early quarter of this decade. This newly found quest has been spurred on by reasons related to the economic boom and the followed distress in the village. Economic boom created a surge in production activities associated with a hike in the pepper price beyond all levels of imagination. Corresponding competition for local labour created an unprecedented and concomitant hike in labour charges also.

Paniyans in the village also got exposed to the universe of money and the possibility of converting the production on land into money in an easy way. They witnessed an abundance of money that even farmers with tiny pieces of land were making from the production of pepper during this period. Increasing realization of the gravity of the issue of landlessness among Paniyas, especially among the younger generations, had a link to the omnipresence of money experienced during this period. It was in this context a movement for retrieving the alienated lands was kicked off in the region, identified with the general mood among the Paniyas also.

But there was not enough participation in the land movement at this initial stage as the Paniyan had enough work at hand. There was shortage of labour in their village during this period. At the same time, there was also demand for labour in the far away ginger fields in the Kodagu district of Karnataka where farmers from the region and the village were investing the surplus in the leased –in cultivation of ginger with the assistance of Paniyan labour.

But this situation changed once the price came down steeply. An economic distress loomed large over the entire village. Work and wage were both cut down by the farmers drastically. It was thus, by the end of the year 2000 that the Paniyas also faced the worst livelihood crisis without any work or alternative means of livelihood to survive. And the movement for land among the *adivasis* became very active by this time.

There are two different streams in the movement for land among the *adivasis*. One stream is led by a woman *adiavasi* leader C.K.Janu from the region under a state wide organization called Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS) with the active support of civic society and media organizations. Other stream is represented by

Adivasi Kshema Samithi which is a feeder organization of CPI(M). These two organisations attracted many Paniyas during this period. By this time a widespread consensus in Kerala society over the pathetic condition of the **landlessness of adivasis** was formed through the intervention of media, civic organizations and prominent personalities. Images of shattered livelihoods and poverty during the times of monsoon season coupled with the economic distress of 2001 were widely telecasted by the new age television channels in an increasingly competitive media environment.

Protests at the wake of the livelihood crisis became very aggressive in the region. *adivasis* comprising largely of Paniyas, were attracted to protest movements in an unprecedented way. AGMS under C.K. Janu's leadership launched a fresh movement for land by encroaching on Muthanga wildlife forest area in 2003 along with hundreds of *adivasi* families, demanding land and creation of a scheduled area for *adivasis*. Following this, as a response to the movement of AGMS, AKS also started engaging in a separate stream of struggle for land. They encroached over some of the abandoned estates in the region in the same period. The encroachment episode of the movement of AGMS was brutally suppressed by the state force citing environmental reasons and it had a violent end with one *adivasi* and a police man getting killed. In the movement led by AKS, around thousand *adivasis* were arrested and imprisoned, but despite this, the rest of them continued to stay in the encroached coffee estates.

After the tragic end of 'Muthanga struggle', nobody from the village is now willing to talk about it openly. There are many Paniya families in the village who had participated in both the movements. Chamayan, 58, from Melekappu settlement is a Paniya *mooppan* who took part in the movement in Muthanga. Chamayan used to go for wage labour earlier but could not continue to work once he became ill. As happens normally farmers stopped calling him for work. With two daughters and an ailing wife at home, he started a new livelihood practice on an experimental basis, viz. rearing of a cow which he got through a Panchayat scheme. However, the experiment did not succeed as he could not market the milk. Meanwhile, he came to know about the movement for land through some members of the settlement who

along with their families, had been part of the encroachers in Mauthanga. Chamayan heard rumors in the environment about land that was being 'distributed' in Muthanaga. He joined a group of neighbors and relatives and went to Muthanga forest land where *adivasis* had already put up a fencing around a vast stretch of land. Each family who joined the struggle got an area allocated to it to work in and to construct its own dwelling hut. Along with a group of members from his settlement, Chamayan started doing preparatory works like clearing his area for cultivation. They got instructions from the leaders and joined in the night classes on different issues related to their life and struggles and also participated in the group recreations. But the happy days did not last long. Although they were aware of some kind of resistance from the police and the forest officials, they were confident that nothing untoward would happen. Besides they were also being guarded by the armed *adivasis* on the check post and around the encroached land.

There were a series of skirmishes between *adivasi* volunteers and forest forces and the situation inflamed as the forest caught fire. Chamayan thinks it was a conspiracy of the government that resulted in the forest fire. According to him, it was the forest guards who put fire to the forest although the *adivasis* were accused of it. Seeing a huge police force around the area, one morning Chamayan back-tracked along with his neighbours to the central area of their occupation. Chamayan explains what happened next:

“ I wanted to come back to my home in the village. I hid with some friends in the interior but in a visible distance. ..We all were terribly afraid. I had no idea about what happened there actually.....By noon, there was a large number of police and nattukar (non –adivasis) outside to chase us down. By evening, the police started attacking us...I ran into the forest and along with some friends we managed to escape from the area. We knew some easy routes through the forest and so, could reach the village late at night and hide inside our huts. Police came to our settlement in the following days in search of Paniyans. We could not go outside the settlement as nattukar were trying to catch us and hand over to the police.. We always escaped into the nearby forest and would return home only in the night....Finally, member (of the

Panchayat) Mohanan came to help us. He helped us to get rid of the police using his influence in the government. He came to the settlement in the night and told us not to flee and assured to give us protection from the police....I will never again go for such a thing in future. We cannot live here without the support of the nattukar. After this incident nobody gave us any job for a long period. Now everybody has started forgetting about this and people have started giving us work again as in the olden days....”.

Chamayan, however, has had to continue his struggle to rear a cow as he was not preferred for any work because he was known to be an ailing man. He later tried to get some patch of paddy field for doing sharecropping from a nearby Chetty household. All other members from the settlement who participated in the movement, most of who still fear to reveal their identity, came back to the settlement at different times from different corners of the region. They used the houses of relatives and forest as shelters for some days after the event. They all were freed from the case with the help of the Panchayath member, Mohanan.

But most interestingly Mohanan strategically played a double role in the action against the *adivasis* in Muthanga and protecting those from his own village. He was known in the region as a close aide to a particular minister who took initiative in evicting the *adivasis* from the area during the period of the then ministry in the state. Under the directions from this minister, it was he who took the frontline role in coordinating the actions against *adivasis* at the ground level on the day of eviction. His version of the event clearly goes in line with the popular perception of settlers about the *adivasis* and their movement. In a private talk, he narrated the episode, the role of *adivasis* and their leaders, in a very derogatory language. The sum and substance of his narrative was that the movement was inspired by the primitive, promiscuous and anarchic instincts of *adivasis* and their leaders. What he said about the *adivasis* in his village, especially about those who were in Chamayan's settlement, was that all of them were very active in the movement but that he had saved them all without getting them caught in any police case so that he could ensure their votes in the next election.

There are some other families, though their numbers are very few in the village, who took part in the struggle organized by AKS too. Madhavan, 27, was among the Paniya who went to Irulam area, about 20 k.m. away from the village, for encroaching into a coffee estate under the guidance of AKS. He is an agricultural labourer and stays with his wife's family. He is helping his wife's father as service attached to bride price in cultivating some coffee plants in ten cents of land around their house in Melekappu neighbourhood. When there was no job in the distress period some people from outside came and informed about the coffee estate in Irulam. They explained that he would be able to own some portion of land if he planned to join their struggle for land. Though he had no political belief he accompanied them to occupy the land. The estate was almost a fallow land. He constructed a temporary shed in the estate and occupied around one acre of land and started cultivating some tapioca and banana. But he found it difficult to continue to live in that place after some days as he was short of money and had no edibles with him. He returned to his wife in the village. All the plants in his portion of land were found destroyed by animals like wild elephants and pigs. So he abandoned that area and again came back to the settlement in Irulam area. He believes that he can still claim the same land though there was no legal document for the occupation. Unlike in Muthanaga, government did not take any action against the encroachment in these estates as the encroachment did not come under forest reserve areas and also due to the political strength of CPI (M) which threatened to organise mass resistance against forced eviction.

Though these movements have not made any immediate impact on the situation of Paniyas there is a consensus at all levels to distribute lands to landless *adivasis*. However, bureaucratic procedures are still going in a snail's pace. As far as the Paniyas in the village are concerned, there is a newly found confidence to not lose the Promised Land anymore. "*We are not like our forefathers who were ignorant and lost their holdings. Now we know how to use it.*" This is some kind of standard response among Paniyan, especially among the young generation. This awareness is a major achievement of recent land movements.

However, initial examples of land redistribution in estates like Sugandhagiri in Kalpetta taluk, and one settlement in Pulppalli Panchayat, a coffee plantation under the forest department, referred elsewhere show that land itself cannot provide sustainability to their livelihoods. In Sugandhagiri^{20[1]} where most of the adivasi families including Paniya, Kuruma, Kattunayka who got two acres of land as their share after re-distribution of land among *adivasi* workers find it difficult now to meet the expenses of cultivation. Most of the Paniya families in the plantation now lease out their lands to more capable families mostly belonging to Kuruma community and go out in search of wage labour. It shows the possibility of the emergence of a new class of haves from the community like Kurumas and have-nots among Paniyas. The situation in the second plantation is slightly different as most of them lease out their land to outside settler communities. But there are also a few families as in the case of Seena, an NGO coordinator about whom we have discussed elsewhere, doing intensive cultivation on the land bestowed upon by the *adivasis* committee.

Though there is a greater understanding of the value of land as a useful resource among Paniyas, its actual usage many not be understood in a similar sense. Pursuing agriculture as a stable source of income from the land may not be a viable option for many as they lack proper infrastructure and given the condition of bleak and extremely unstable market regime at large. In such a situation land may have a symbolic value to increase their self esteem and also as an ingredient in a combination of resources.

Motivated by the quest for land, most of the Paniya families in the village cherish dreams about possessing their own land. Some of them have already acquired the ability to manage land by doing sharecropping and cultivating cash crops in their own available patches of land. Many among them are open to admit the mistakes committed by their earlier

^{20[1]} Sugandhagiri, around fifty kilometers away from village, was a well acclaimed rehabilitation project for *adivasis* created as a society under the control of state department. Under this project *adivasis* from different parts of Wayanad were rehabilitated as workers in the cardamom plantation. By 2000 following a demand from the *adivasi* inmates and their struggle, government distributed the land for the families.

generation by selling the land for throw away prices and local arrack. Mohanan, inmate of Melekappu settlement and an active participant in the land struggle in Muthanga says:

“Our generation will not do such things. Our fathers were ignorant and scared of others. Nobody can cheat us any more. We have seen people outside the village and got enough information about all. Government has no land when we demand...why don't they see this forest.....they had given it to nattukar (settlers). Why don't they give it to us? If they give us this forest land, we will also clear it and do cultivation as they have done...we can cultivate coffee, pepper and all...”.

Share cropping

Share cropping, *pankinedukkal*, was popular among the settlers from very early times of settlement formation as a meaningful source of livelihoods. Paddy was the main crop earlier selected for doing share cropping. Some of them who came to the village without much land under possession but with large number of family members depended on those landed families to get the paddy land for doing cultivation when the land was kept unused by the owners. These families could create surplus from such practices and there are successful examples of those families who could later diversify their resources using this surplus. A fixed quantity of paddy was given as the rent for the land.

Though practice of share cropping came down significantly in the later period, it again got momentum following the economic distress in the region and the strengthening of collective action through SHGs. Women in *ayalkoottoms* have been practicing it widely at present for cultivating mainly commercial crops like ginger, yams, and tapioca. It was the inability of farmers to undertake maintenance works on their land due to the fall in prices for commodities that compelled them to give it away to others to do temporary cultivation.

However, as far as Paniyas in the village are concerned, experience of doing share-cropping is a recent phenomenon thanks to the environment of economic stress and the newly found confidence in managing production activities. Expression of this

capability to undertake production process is linked to a change in their realization of own identity not only based on labour but also associated with land.

It was the traditional relationship between Chetty community and Paniyas based on mutual trust which enabled the Paniya families to enter the sharecropping of paddy in the wake of acute unemployment followed by the economic distress. More than 90 percent of families are doing share cropping with their neighbouring Chetty families with whom they maintain age old relations. Following the distress Chetty families reduced the labour-intensive agricultural activities especially annual cycle of wet land paddy cultivation from two crops to one. For doing second crop they preferred their Paniya labourers to settlers who are known to do malpractices in order to increase production. Most of the settler share-croppers are infamous for practices like applying salt on the leased land for increasing production, which while giving an immediate result, has long term damaging effects on soil quality.

Sharing of similar world-views is the basis of the trust between Chetty and Paniyan communities. Chetty farmers in the village who normally practice nature -friendly farming by attaching non material values to the soil are certain that none of the Paniyas would misuse their land. They believe that Paniyas are god-fearing and also following similar world views. Chandran, a Paniyan youth from Thazhekappu settlement got around 50 cents of wetland from Raman Chetty in the same neighbourhood. They are well familiar with the mal-practices of settler share croppers. Even Raman Chetty had a bad experience from a settler share cropper from the same village. Chandran strongly rebuffs the attitude of settlers towards the soil and life. "They always worry about what they will get from it (soil), but not about what they can give. That is why they are reluctant to take care of their aged parents. You can see many people in the village like that." Chandran, drop out from primary school, is one of the very dynamic workers among the Paniyas in the village. He gets regular work in the season and also manages his own cultivation on leased-in land. Raman Chetty gives him seeds and manure besides the land. In return, Chandran has to give half portion of the paddy as his share.

Chandran's father is one of the few early share croppers among Paniyas in the village. He was from another village where he started doing share cropping even in the late 1980s. It was due to the benevolence of the land owner that he got the opportunity to undertake his own cultivation in a small portion of the land. The land owner was also not very particular about the rent. Hence Chandran's father is one of the precursors of this practice among Paniyas in the village. He and his wife are now staying with Chandran in his mother's settlement. Though Chandran had married earlier from Melekappu settlement, he left her after two years as she insisted that he should stay with her father and help him. He refused it as he wanted to continue work with his own father looking after their cultivation. Chandran works for Raman Chetty whenever he has work and also for a few other settler farmers. He always gives priority to Raman Chetty.

Share cropping among Paniya is confined mainly to paddy as they do not have enough resource to buy seeds of other crops like ginger which are very costly. Chetty farmers in the village find it very difficult in doing the risky ginger cultivation. It is as a tradition that they continue the cultivation of paddy even when the cultivation was at a loss. Raman Chetty does not cultivate ginger as he cannot bear any loss now. But Chandran is very much interested in doing the cultivation of ginger provided he manages to get some financial assistance from the Panchayat through Oorukoottam.

The only family among Paniyas in the village doing ginger cultivation as a share crop is found to be of Maya who is member in a general *ayalkoottam* in kayampathi neighborhood. Her case has been discussed in the section on SHGs. Her family got land from a nearby Chetty household and borrowed some money from the same family for buying the seeds. Her husband as a *sthirampanikkaran* (permanent worker) and son as a migrant non-agriculture worker support the cultivation. Son returns home whenever there is seasonal work. He has education up to higher secondary level and became the first Paniya in the village who resorted to migration as a livelihood strategy, especially in the non-agricultural sector. He got a job in Thamarassery, an important town in the neighbouring Kozhikode district, as ticket checker in a movie theatre.

Apart from ginger, Maya's family does paddy cultivation also under share cropping with the same Chetty household. In carrying out the labour-intensive production of these two crops, kinship becomes a useful resource for her family. Besides their immediate family members, they get assistance from the families of two brothers of Maya. Exchange of labour between brothers-in-law (*aliyanmar*) is a very normal and prevalent practice among Paniyas. One brother belongs to Melekappu settlement in the same village, while the other one is in a different village.

Mohanan who participated actively in the struggle for land in Muthanga is her brother from Melekappu settlement in the village. Though barely literate, he is well informed about all the strategies and practices associated with the commercial agriculture, thanks to the exposure he got through the land movement. That is why he demands that the government should distribute forest to *adivasis* to cultivate, as the quote given in the earlier section reveals. He is always available to his sister's family not only providing labour but also for giving advices too. He would say: "*nhan avarkku bhuddhi paranhu kodukkum (I tell them' intelligence')*".

Migration: seasonal and self-reliant

Seasonal migration of Paniya labourers to the neighbouring state of Karnataka for ginger cultivation is not a recent phenomenon followed by distress in the local economy. But migration to other districts of Kerala for doing manual jobs in non – agricultural sector is a completely new practice among Paniyas in the village. As part of this new migratory movement, Paniya youth in the village have also experimented with migration to the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu also for working in a textile factory.

In the local experiences of Paniyas, seasonal migration is understood in relation with their voyage to ginger fields in the neighbouring Karnataka where labour is required only seasonally. Meanwhile in the new practices of labour shift to other districts, Paniyas are found seasonally returning to the village during the occasions of annual village festival, harvesting time, etc. Making of decision to go in search of work and

fixing the time of returning home are found to be one's own choice. However, a definite pattern of this type of Paniya migration is yet to be emerged.

Seasonal Kodagu migration: new paternalism and bondage

Recent studies have identified that many of the poor workers in the rural areas are seasonal migrants and moving mainly to other rural areas rather than to urban centres. They are prepared to migrate even for lower wages as the employment in the area of origin has become scarce or even unavailable (Hann 2002). Accordingly, too little is known about this type of migration. But as far as the seasonal migration of Paniyas for doing ginger cultivation in Karnataka districts is concerned wage differences and economic stress in the village are not explanatory factors. They have gone for work even in the times of good work and wages in the village.

Paniyans all over Wayanad region have never been known for the labour migration in recent histories. In contrast to their experience of bonded labour, seasonal migration or the 'circulation of the labour' (as in Standing 1985) was found among *Paniyans* in the village as a large scale phenomenon in the 1990s. This was a relatively new phenomenon for Paniyas during this period. Collective movement of people to a completely distant region was against the tradition of immobility of the days of *valli system*. This circulation of labour was associated with the ginger cultivation in the nearby Karnataka state. Number of *Paniyans* from different settlements in the village started to move to Kodagu, a nearby district in the Karnataka state along with the farmers from Waynad for doing Ginger cultivation.

Though, history of ginger cultivation in Waynad dates back to colonial period, large-scale cultivation of ginger in the Kodagu region of Karnataka state was started in the 1990s by the farmers from Wayanad. Actually settler farmers played a major role in the expansion of this cultivation in Wayanad. Two different reasons can be pointed out regarding the expansion of ginger cultivation to Kodagu region by Wayanad farmers. Gradual decrease in the productivity of the soil made the farmers to explore the new fertile soil, where they would get bumper crop. In the major part of the 1990s, farmers got highest price for other plantation crops especially for coffee and pepper. This stimulated farmers to experiment by investing boldly in ginger

cultivation ignoring the risk factors involved in the cultivation of ginger. Hence, the fertile soil of the surplus land in Kodagu region became the new destination of Wayanad farmers. They took land in lease from the proprietors in Kodagu for either fixed amount or produce. It was the marginal and small scale farmers who thus experimented with the ginger in Kodagu soil. Some of them became incredibly rich and some others had committed suicide. Sooner, large scale farmers and business persons took over the control of ginger cultivation from the small scale farmers. Now ginger cultivation has become the enterprise of rich business groups who can make big investments. They don't really burn their fingers in the times of price fall as they can afford to keep the ginger under the soil till the next rise in the price which happens most probably in the immediate off season.

Kodagu migration of farmers started in the 90s became significant livelihood practice over the years among *Paniyas*, especially for young generation in the village. This is the first time they moved collectively from their own locality to another area. Even in the period of price boom they were attracted to travel to Kodagu for cultivation.. Ginger cultivators would spend money to entertain them in Kodagu. Manipulative strategies adopted by settlers in initial period of settlement formation were often used in facilitating the seasonal movement of *Paniyas*. They were given good money as advance and on the fields locally brewed liquor was served on demand. Once they reached the spot it would be really difficult to come back. During the period of price boom many of them migrated partially for fun. But in the following period of distress many of them were compelled to go for work as they received a good amount of advance.

There are observations of similar experiences in other parts of the country for using advances and complex payment arrangements as mechanisms to control a fluid labour force. As Breman (1996) noted, debt is often an 'instrument of coercion' producing a new form of agrarian labour bondage or neo bondage differing from agrarian bondage in being less personalized, more contractual and magnetized and lacking elements of patronage and protection of earlier forms of clientship..

Prasad, a 30 year old *Paniyan* youth from Madaparambu settlement had gone to Kodagu in three consecutive years for doing ginger cultivation. In his first trip in 1996, he went to Kodagu along with some other friends and relatives in the settlement. He gives the following testimony.

“it was a chettan (Christian) owner who is an advocate by profession who had the cultivation in Kodagu. He was not from our village. Our friends in the settlement who belong to his place informed us. They were usually doing his work in the village. We, around 12 people from this colony, decided to go as we had no job here at that time. They came here with a vehicle to take us. His contractor distributed a small amount as an advance to meet the expenditure on the way. I did not feel any problem, as our group comprised of only our relatives and friends. I was sure that I cannot stay alone without our people from the village. We constructed small huts to stay. We prepared food for ourselves. We were too scared of to go outside the work place. Local people in that area were also employed for some small work. They were not equally skilled and so got lesser wages. Their type of shovel was not suitable for ginger cultivation.... I stayed there continuously for one month. Some of us visited the houses two or three times in the middle. Wages were distributed only when we returned to our native place. They feared that we would leave that place once they gave us full amount. We worked 3 months a year during different seasons. I had gone three consecutive years, but each time for different muthalalis (capitalists)”.

Parsad is also one among those young people who could complete higher secondary education. His parents were attached labourers with a Chetty household. After the death of his father, he stopped studying and started to work for the same household.

Share-cropper Chandran from Thazhekappu settlement is one *Paniya* worker who admitted that he has personally achieved by learning various things from the seasonal migration to Karnataka districts. What he said was that he could understand differences between the people in different regions and different types of agricultural

practices etc. According to him, this kind of migration to other places for doing work increases the understanding of the world. He says :

“even people are very different from those in our place. We always fear Kodaganmar (local people of Coorg). Even our modalalimar (reference is to ginger cultivators) show fear and respect to those people. Though our modalalimar often behave badly to us they don’t show it to those kodaganmar. In the work sites we all keep quiet in our shelters and nobody makes any quarrel or speak in loud voice... Even in those villages, there are people like us, Paniyans. But they are adimapnikkar (slave labourers) to those kodaganmar as our Paniyan forefathers once were . Our muthalalimar cannot take people for work from those villages. All those workers are under the custody of different land owners in those villages...”

Chandran has undertaken seasonal migration four years in various districts in Karantaka state along with others from his own settlement. Through these journeys he has tried to understand the differences in social settings and power relations in Kodagu in comparison to his own village and its history.

Paniyan women who make such migratory movements for seasonal work are fewer in number compared to their male counterparts in the village. Most of these women who have the experience of the seasonal migration are married and usually they accompany their husbands to fields. Normally Paniyan men do not encourage their wives to work there as they have to work under scorching sun the whole day. On the part of middlemen and cultivators taking women labourers to neighbouring states, this has become risky nowadays as there were frequent reports of alleged sexual abuse of Paniya women in the ginger fields of Karnataka. Following this, police identification of workers has become mandatory in the last three years. Those who take workers from the village should report to the local police station with a photograph and address.

.Bella from Kayampathi settlement has been accompanying her husband Kariyan for four years to Kodagu region for doing ginger cultivation. Besides seasonal migration they also do share cropping of paddy with a Chetty land owner in Kariyan’s

settlement in neighbouring village. In Kudgu they are working for a Muslim merchant in Bathery town who used to lease-in vast area of ginger fields. Initially they were contacted by a middleman appointed by the owner. There are two – three middlemen who organise the required labour and supervise the work in the field. Bella has a good opinion about this particular owner. But she has mixed feelings about the middlemen.

“There are good and bad people. Our muthalali (investor) is a good person. We can’t say anything about others. There are bad persons among mesris (supervisors). Some of them behave badly in the field. They even beat us sometimes. But they all behave well with us as our muthalali likes us. After seeing our work during the first year he told us to come every time for his work. He visits the fields very rarely. He is very generous and wants to make workers happy. After the initial year I was assigned to cook for workers. We all live in temporary sheds on the corner of fields. We make food three times for all workers. Owner wants us to make Biryani weekly once.....we get the same wage in the village for working in Kodagu also. Besides we can ask for some help from muthlali if there is an urgent need of money. We will continue to work for him.”

But contrary to the cases of these workers with mobility, there are people like Gulikan, another worker from the same *colony* representing immobile nature of their traditional identity, who has never migrated to any other area outside his small locality where he was working since his childhood days. He has never gone to school. His father had deserted them when he was a small child. Mother always took him to the work places. He started grazing the cows for their Chetty landowner when he was ten years old. Since then, he has been working in the same area. He is also getting works at the households of that Chetty and other settlers. Now he is 42 and father of two children.

“I have never gone any other places for work. I have never liked that idea. If they give me job here, I can do. Otherwise, I will freely sit in my home... Our

people are all over the Waynad.. Then how can we go to other places? We will never go in search of jobs.”

Gulikan is a person representing a different generation of Paniyas. Life, relations and livelihoods, everything he owes belongs to this small piece of land within this village.

It is a fact that seasonal migrants in the village are mostly unmarried youth who have the flexibility in moving out unlike a person like Gulikan. But even the young generation is found commonly maintaining a tradition of not going out, even within their village, in search of work as a traditional marker of their identity inherited probably from the old *valli* system in which they had been brought for work by Chetty elders in each family. Most of the *Paniyan* respondents admit the fact, as Gulikan described, that they never go to others in search of work. Generally, *stiramapanikkar* (permanent workers) among them get their usual works. Rest of the workers get works on demand from the employers in the same neighbourhood. Normally settler farmers put their demand to a regular worker and tell him to bring the sufficient number of workers to finish the work as early as possible. They get work outside the village mainly through their relatives, especially *aliyanmar* (brothers- in-law) or sometimes through friends. For doing major works like ginger cultivation in Kodagu or regular works in the local plantations of large holders there are middle men who come in search of them with vehicles and take them to the spot.

Nowadays there are persons like Mohanan from Melekappu settlement, the man who has been quoted in earlier section as an active participant in land movement emerging as a middleman among Paniyas by identifying the requirement outside the village through other settler middlemen in the town. They gather workers from their own settlement and from other settlements through kin- networks and supply the labourers to the middlemen in town. He is very much proud of his job as a *mesri* (supervisor). He bought a new mobile phone in connection with his new job and it is found always tied with a jute string attached to his waist. *“I have to expect calls any time,”* he says proudly. Among Paniyas it has become a symbol increased mobility, because mobile phones in the village is now found mostly among the group of

migrant workers. By showing it off always in front of the young people in his settlement, he has got the nick name '*Mobile Mohanan*'. But for him most of his actions are messages to the young Paniyas as to how a modern Paniya should live and survive in this world.

Self reliant - migration

In recent years there is a new trend of migration which is largely voluntary and self – reliant, found among the young Paniyas in the village. There is a difference in the pattern of their movement depending on gender. Young unskilled men move in groups to other rich districts like Kottayam and Erankulam for doing jobs in hotels and company canteens, whereas a few girls are found individually moving out as domestic helps to neighboring districts like Kozhikode and Kannur. Unlike in the seasonal migration for ginger cultivation, they go independently to these places with the help of the information collected from the settler friends who are also working in similar jobs.

A group of 10 to 20 men in the age group between 15 and 25 years from Tazhekappu, Melekappu and Ariyakkottu settlements close to the village first started this migratory movement of men on a semi-permanent basis. These men split further into three-four smaller groups in making their movement. In the case of female migrants there are around 10 girls in the age range between 19 -26 years from the same settlements who have done work as domestic help for different periods in the past three to four years. After the initial wave of migratory movement, except three girls, the rest are back in the village, mainly for chances of marriage. Normally, no Paniya young man would show any interest in marrying those girls who work in far-away places.

The background of this newly found migration from these settlements is strongly connected to the changes in the village economy in recent years due to the distress following the economic boom. This made an indirect effect on Paniyas through the changes in nearby settler households. Many households in the village belonging to settler communities faced a steep slump in their standard of living following the distress. For some if it was a burst of a temporary bubble, for many others this

became devastating to their normal graph of living and long term planning. It was in this context that many people started seeking strategies to move out of the village in search of job which was not there earlier.

Though extreme economic changes have brought about troubles and desperations for most of the people in the village, as an unintended effect it has also resulted in levelling the field of social interaction to an extent among a section of young Paniyas and settlers. The neighbourhoods from where Paniya youth took the initiative to move out are the ones where such changes manifested in their social relations. In the case of this same neighbourhood some of the erstwhile rich Chetty families have already become poor over a period. Young people from these houses find the Paniya youngster from their nearby settlements as more trustworthy friends. For them Paniya youth is more up-to-date and exposed to the contemporary culture of life's better ways. Young Paniyas are found more influential within these neighbourhoods than these Chetty youngsters.

There is also a shift in the attitude of a section a younger generation belonging to settler communities as well. This shift is also a result of the increased economic interaction during and after the period of economic boom. There are some shops in a tri-junction of Thazekappu, Mundakutti and Areekod neighborhoods where people from settler, Chetty and Paniyan communities assemble. These shops were started during the time of economic boom by a settler and his sons and as Paniyas as their main consumers. With the smooth inflow of income Paniyas also spent good amount of money in these shops for buying day to day condiments.

They got things on credit too. Shop owners arranged a television set for public viewing to attract the customers, especially Paniyas to their shops. There is practice of Paniyan women and children coming to the shop for watching popular soap operas during the day time. This created a new environment for their social interactions.

The direct connection between many settler and Paniyan youth happened in relation to the habit of group consumption of alcohol. Period of economic boom had increased the habit of going to liquor shops, bar and hotels among the local people irrespective of the communities. Even many among them started the habit at the age

of 15. Increased demand for labour and price for commodities enabled the Paniya and settler youth to access the hard cash according to their personal desires. But once the economic chances for spending lavishly became bleak they turned to other options.

Apart from an obvious choice to drop the habit of frequent drinking, there were two other options in front of the local youth to continue it. First option was to go for a system of shared drinking. Earlier if the practice was 'sponsoring the day' by an individual consumer within a small group, now the situation turned to going for an open collection within the neighbourhood for buying a bottle for the day. This practice resulted in the intermixing of the groups of settlers and Paniyas. Paniyan youth also got included in the sharing group.

Second option was to depend on a person who is brewing illicit liquor in the locality. There is a person living close to one of the settlements who actually built his house encroaching into some portion of land belonging to that Paniya settlement. He is a later migrant who reached in the place only in the late 1980s. He is a share cropper and wife, a wage labourer. As a part time job he is now brewing liquor with the support of some of the Paniyas and settler men in the neighbourhood. He sells the liquor in very concealed ways and there are frequent customers belonging to both Paniya and settler communities. They depend on this person mainly because of a fall in the income so that they are no more frequent visitors of the local bar.

Such increased interactions between the youth among settlers and Paniyas in this neighborhood helped Paniya to gather new information regarding the possibilities of work outside village, in the far away towns. In the wake of price fall and the corresponding crisis, a number of settlers from these neighbourhoods had migrated to Tirupur and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. These are the centres of garment industry in south India which absorbs thousands of unskilled and semiskilled rural labourers who are pushed out from the distressed local economy. Around 12 people from our study area had moved to these cities in search of jobs in the cloth mills. But all have come back giving up their jobs after spending one to two months due to the precarious working condition there. It was in this connection that a group of Paniya young men from the same neighbourhood went to Tirupur with the guiding inputs from the settler forerunners.

Following the instructions of settler group, this six member group of Paniya took the train from Kozhikode to Tirupur. They met the settler group at the work place and got job in sewing section where they were shown to do just inserting the garment material in the correct position in the sewing machine. Though initial settler group returned to village from the factory due to reportedly bad working condition, Paniya workers continued working there. However a mistake made by one of them in the work resulted in the damage of the machine, destroying a whole set of needles. They were asked to leave the factory without disbursing the wage for the period they worked. Manager told them that even the salary of all of them would not be sufficient to repair the damage. They came back to the village without any grief because this journey gave them new experiences of working in an alien place and the courage to do it again. This was the first time experience of Paniyas in whole village in long distance migration for doing non –agricultural work.

Though there is a broader background for the Paniya migratory movement associated with the economic changes within the village, the inspiration for making such an experiment was drawn from the individual experience of a Paniya youngster in Thazekappu settlement. Biju is the first person who migrated to far away town from the whole village for doing a job for a monthly salary. Biju is one of the two children of his mother. His father is no more. His mother was an attached labour with a settler household in the neighbourhood. She has two sisters and their families in the nearby houses. Her mother is also staying with them. Though they all have separate kitchen under separate households they share food and there is a feeling of belongingness among all the members in these extended families. Biju is the elder boy of all the families. He got support from all the members in his growing up. He took enthusiasm in studying and he passed plus two examination from the higher secondary school in the village. When he completed education up to plus two level he was invited by a local NGO focusing on informal education among adivasis to join the group as an instructor. He worked in that NGO for almost two years and travelled to many villages in the area and stayed in the settlements of other *adivasi* communities like Kuruman, Kurichiyan etc.

After this stint in the NGO, Biju wanted to do a job other than agricultural work which would enable him to earn some money. Somebody informed his friends in the settlement about the vacancies in the newly started bar attached hotel in the village town. Along with some of his friends in the settlements in the neighbourhoods they approached the management and got the jobs. He got the job as an attendant in the bar and others as helpers in the kitchen. After the worst experiences in that hotel they all quit the jobs. “ It was

difficult to continue in that job. Most of those who came to the hotel were known people. Even otherwise, people from this area could easily identify us as Paniyas. When these people started to use commanding language I decided to leave. My friends were also fed up with the treatment of supervisors. ...Normally our people want to work in our own group so that we can speak openly and share things. So we left that hotel". This is how Biju explained his experience in the hotel in village.

After a few weeks someone in the neighbourhood talked about a hotel in Kozhikode, in the nearby district. Through this settler contact he got a job in the hotel in Kozhikode as a waiter. He continued in the hotel for about five months. During this time he met a person who was working as a supervisor in a canteen for a Nationalised Bank run by a private agency in Thiruvananthapuram. He asked Biju to come and work in the canteen in Thiruvananthapuram. Biju happily accepted the invitation and joined for the work.

"I am happy here because as the place is far away from my village, there is no chance of meeting any known people in this town. I don't speak our language at all with other friends here so they don't know anything about my background. Nobody in the canteen knows that I am a Paniyan".

It was Biju who became the inspiration for the young Paniyas in the surrounding neighbourhoods of Thazekaapu to move out of the region in search of jobs. From the same Thazekappu settlement there is another person, Kuttan, with more or less similar mobility pattern as that of Biju. Kuttan learned up to higher secondary level and joined the same NGO as a volunteer. He also attended some training programme conducted by tribal development department in Kozhikode. But moving through the similar route, Kuttan reached a hospital canteen in Kozhikode. He worked there for almost one year. Besides his work as waiter and a supervisor occasionally he even got the opportunity to sit in the cash counter. But due to the severe illness of his father he had to discontinue his work in the canteen and come back to the village.

Inspired by the experiences of Biju and Kuttan, a new group of Paniyas, including those who had gone to Tirupur garment factory, started exploring the possibilities to get jobs especially in hotels. Educational standard of the group members are between secondary and primary levels. Presently they are working in a canteen in a tyre company in Kottayam. Most of them do not seem to have any formal commitment with the employers in the destination. They come back to the village whenever they

want to come. Village festivals, marriages, cropping seasons, all are still found to be important for the Paniya migrant workers.

As far as the female migrants among Paniyas are concerned, settlers are found to be the major source of information with regard to the availability of domestic work far away from the village. A settler woman who had worked as a domestic help in the neighbouring districts is instrumental in connecting the placement agencies and Paniya girls in the village. There are many such well connected agencies in different regions in the state who trace the available female workers from regions like Wayanad to send them to different parts of the state, especially for Non-Resident Indian families in different districts. Settler women normally go to southern districts where a lot of households are left with old parents staying alone when people generally go to western countries. All the Paniya girls from the village migrated to neighbouring districts of Kannur and Kozhikode as they do not want to go beyond that distance and all these places are also connected by straight buses from the village.

However, except three, all other girls who had moved out for this job did not continue their work for more than one year in the destination homes. Most of them do not want to continue for long with this job as it would topple their marriage chances back at home. But some others found the job or the environment uncomfortable.

Bindu, 24 years old, from Areekod settlement is the first girl who migrated to the neighbouring Kannur district and worked for the longest period. She got information about this job through the above mentioned *Chechi* (settler lady addressed as elder sister). She told her about a vacancy in a rich Muslim family in Kannur and connected her with an agency in Kannur. She is currently working with the family of a doctor and comfortable in continuing the work. In the village she is staying with her brother's family along with their mother. Her brother has two children and her father is no more. She got education up to upper primary level and used to go for agriculture work along with her brother and his wife.

Every year she visits the village three –four times during the festival occasions in the village as well as in the community. She gets salary of all the months together when she returns home. She now gets Rs.1500 per month besides food, dress and accommodation. Her brother takes care of her income and spends it for family expenses. Because of the same reason he doesn't show much interest in her return. She left the village when she was 19 years old and has been working with that family now for almost five years. According to the community standard she has crossed her ``marriageable'' age.

However, experiences of working and the exposure have made a lot of changes in Bindu as well as in other girls too. Most of them are now able to cook all the major food items found in the local hotels. When Bindu is in the settlement all her cousins from neighbouring settlement also would start coming to her home bringing different items, mainly non –vegetarian stuffs like meat and fish for getting it prepared by her in the similar flavour as they taste it in the local hotels. Bindu is known as a good cook in their neighbourhoods with her long experience in a Muslim family as many popular Muslim dishes like *Biryani* is a craze among the people.

Dressing is another area in which this kind of migration made drastic changes. Though new generation of Paniya men and women have already changed the traditional dressing pattern to modern dresses like pants and shirts for men and Churidar and Saree for women, some of them including Bindu have used Jeans, Midi and top mostly during their to and fro journeys. Bindu normally changes her dress the moment she steps into the village to ordinary Churidar if she is in other fashionable outfits. She feels shy in wearing such urbanised attire in the village. She thinks she may face sarcastic comments from others in the village if she is seen wearing them. The girls who discontinued their work are also reluctant to present themselves in public in fashionable ways, though they have used this.

As far as the migrant young Paniyas are concerned a marked difference from others is the dressing pattern and hair style. They use ready made pants and shirts or tops bought mostly from the street vendors or low cost shops. Cheap garments in a variety of styles produced for mass consumption are available with these vendors and shops.

These young Paniyans are also very careful about getting their hair dressed in contemporary style from the shops in the towns. Normally people in these settlements do it themselves as there are some skilled persons available for doing the job. Interestingly, this fashion wave is not confined to migrant labourers alone, but also found among a section of younger generation who is studying in schools and getting financial assistances under government schemes.

Use of mobile phones among the young workers in these settlements is a recent thing but having a material effect on their livelihood options apart from its symbolic significance through a loud statement of fashion. There was regular contact between the migrant group and the rest of the youth in the settlement during their stay in the canteen. Those who stayed back in the canteen would often talk to the workers who had come back to the village and inform them about the situation in the work place. They would also be informed if they have to return immediately or the canteen manager needs more people. Mobile phone is also used in the neighbourhood constantly exhibiting it as a tool to have symbolic dominance over their Chetty counterparts and to connect with the settler counterparts.

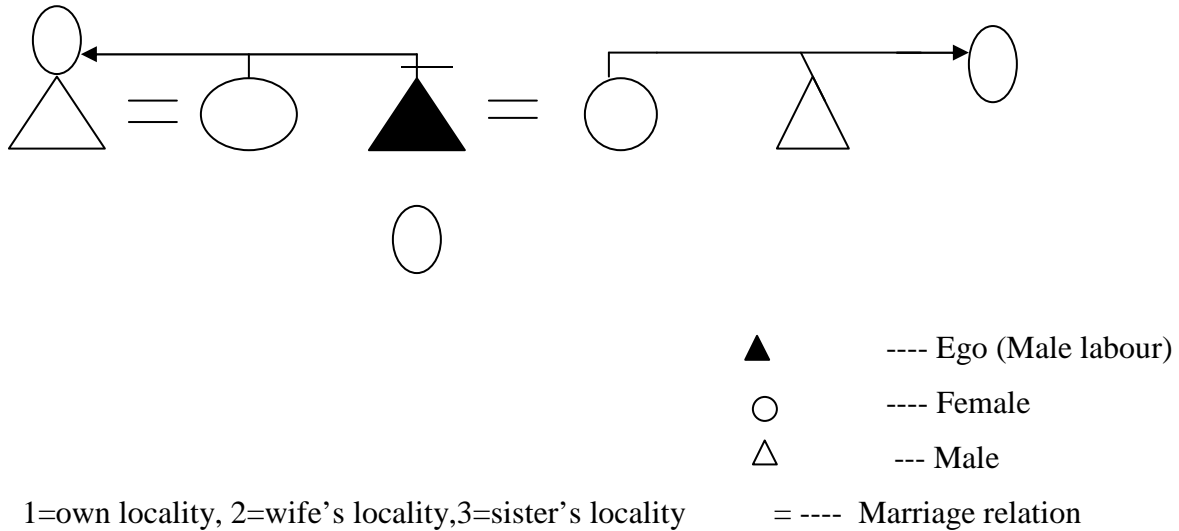
By presenting themselves in a fashionable style the young Paniyas are trying to send a strong message of their social presence in equal terms. There is a new-found assertiveness among them. This assertiveness has even led to a physical confrontation between settlers and this group of young Paniya during a festival night in the local temple. There was casualty and people from both sides were got admitted to the hospitals. Though tension broke out sporadically at the festival venue, there were pent up feelings and hostilities behind it. As a normal practice the festival committee is constituted by significant faces in the locality without any representation of Paniyas. The committee members are in charge of the peaceful organisation of the festival every year. Some of the young Paniyas had a strong feeling against some of the committee members who harassed them publicly in former times. So they planned to react if something happens again like that and all the migrant workers came back to the village for the festival.

here was a strict control of using illicit liquor on the temple vicinity this time according to a decision of the festival committee keeping in mind their bad experiences in the previous years. In the early night some of the committee members questioned two of the Paniyan group members in front of a sizeable gathering including women for allegedly taking liquor in the temple premises. Two young committee members belonging to well-to-do settler families in the locality had some unresolved issue with the Paniyan youngsters from these neighbourhoods. Hence the public abuse irritated them and they collectively took a decision to react. They waited for the two committee members on their way to home in the mid- night and beat them up in the narrow pathway by the temple. This led to a midnight fight between Paniyan young group and festival committee members. Around 20 persons from both sides were hospitalised for treatment. Settler members of the temple committee said that the 'arrogance' of Paniyan young men in the neighbouring settlements caused this unwanted conflict. But the young men from these settlements were adamant and gave a warning that they would react in future too if there is any harassment and public abuse on the part of the festival committee.

Pattern of Paniyan mobility and changes in livelihoods

Emerging self- reliant migration of young Paniya workers in these neighbourhoods is qualitatively different from the existing pattern of labour mobility. Even within the free labour market Paniya agricultural labourers usually do not go independently outside their neighbourhoods in search of jobs. If they do not get work in their own locality they idly spend time within the settlement, unless there is a demand from the localities where they have some kinship ties.

Figure 5.1: Mobility Options for a Paniya Labourer



According to this pattern, a Paniya male labourer can make movements to three different locations as shown in the figure. A Paniya male labour is free to stay either with his own father that is his own locality or in his wife's locality. Generally they are treated as the members of same locality and allowed to work in the region along with brothers in law. Staying in sister's residence is also not uncommon. According to the availability of work a Paniyan has three options to stay and work.

But seasonal migration for ginger cultivation brought new distant localities in their work related movements. However it did not help them to establish any work related connections and any chances of enhancing their skills. In this movement too, they again turn back to networks of kinship and friendship as a source of support and in their seasonal trips to distant localities in Karnataka state most of them accompany their friends and relatives either from own settlement or from brothers -in-law's settlements. In the destination localities they are not supposed to work beyond their own groups of friends and relatives and do only familiar works on the agricultural fields.

In the third pattern of self reliant migration in the village, Paniya workers move to distant localities within the state in small groups prepared to do non agricultural

works in mixed group of workers. Within this pattern too most of the workers make their livelihood voyage possible through their own group of friends and relatives within the community. However there are exceptions of two persons from Thazhekapp neighbourhoods who have plus two level education and exposure to external networks of NGO. It is found that in this pattern, they are free from the clutches of middlemen and the 'neo-bondage' created by the advance payment.

In the case of female workers, mobility is highly restricted by practice in their locality of living. They do wage labour either in their own neighbourhood and/ or the neighbourhoods of husbands. In the case of seasonal migration women workers do not go independently, but accompany their spouses. Children are the major reason for the work related immobility of Paniya women. Many Paniya women do not work for 2 -3 years after their delivery. Even if they work after this initial period, most of them bring their babies to the field or they go home and take care of their babies whenever they feel so. Even in the new pattern of migration to neighbouring districts only the women under marriage age are showing interest. In contrast to their male counterparts female workers go independently for doing the job of domestic helper, mainly due to the nature of work.

However, the community is the strong platform for making their journeys in search of work. Personalized relations and networks of kinship and fraternity still play a definite role in their day-to-day livelihood activities. Male members are found moving mainly in their own group pining for their emotional security in the group. Duration of stay for the female workers in the destination place is determined according to the prevalent standards within the community in relation to their marriage age.

Reinventing the labour: NREG and Paniyan

Paniyas in the village have recently found a new arena of labour and livelihood facilitated by a state sponsored job scheme, NREGS, with a potential to change their labour profile in long run. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a nation-wide job guarantee scheme enacted by central government in 2005. It provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every

financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Larger idea behind this scheme was to give a 'human face to economic reforms and globalisation' by redistributing the state fund to create employment opportunities at the local levels.

The scheme is widely known as '*Panchayat pani*' (*work of Panchyath*) in the village as the implementation of the scheme is the duty of the local Panchayat by identifying the works and providing the logistics. The term carries a connotation of formal government job which is also attractive to many Paniyas. Panchayat is undertaking the work in cooperation with the Kudumbasree organisation in the village.

Apart from the assurance of 100 days' work for each family a year, there are some procedural features which make it important for Paniyas. There is a muster roll and putting their name in the muster roll every morning of the working days creates an image of a formal system of labour relations. They draw their wage after a specific period of work in bulk amount from a nationalized bank through their accounts. They are working in mixed groups of workers. Finally, they are supposed to do mainly non-agricultural public works like the construction of trenches, roads, public well, dams etc which expose them to new areas of labour.

Though most of the families have got registered in the scheme under the initiatives of Kudumbasree, not all the registered families are appearing for the work. This is mainly because the differences in actual wage, practice of getting wages on daily basis in other private works, reluctance to stop working for the private owners in their own neighborhoods when both the works come simultaneously, etc. However, those who did the work under the scheme have good opinion and want to continue to work. Another impact of work among Paniyas in the village is the newly found interest in attending the *gramasabha* as it is the forum for taking decisions regarding future work and the evaluation of works being done. Moreover, many Paniyas feel that they don't need any more work under *modalalis* (settler owners) as they get job from the government.

Table5. 1 Participation of workers according to communities and sex

Community	Male	Female	Total
Settlers	19	50	69
Chetty	6	6	12
Paniya	9	32	41
Others	1	2	3
Total	35	90	125

Source Panchayat Muster roll(2007-08)

Majority of a mixed work group is comprised of female members belonging to settler households. Male members from these households, though they have registered in the scheme, do not appear for the work as they feel there is a disparity in wages between male and female workers as they get more wage for their ‘greater work’ as is the standard practice in the village. So most of them manage their own cultivation and if available go outside for private work instead of coming for *Panchayat pani*. Most of them do not like the supervision of Kudumabasree members. In the village, first work undertaken by the Panchayath was the construction of trenches on forest borders to prevent the attack of wild elephants. It required hard labour and experience in the work.

There are also ‘helpless’ marginal farmers like Ramanan and his friends from the Kolarattu Kunnu neighbourhood who were compelled to go for wage labour in this scheme due to personal reasons. Describing the situation in the work groups they are united in complaining against their female counterparts,

“they are humiliating usbecause they are majority in number.. they enjoy full freedom and tell us that if you don’t want to continue in this work group you can leave. Panchayath also supports them. We told the panchayath to form a different work group for us so that we will be able to finish work soon. But they don’t allow us to work separately. They said that law was against it....so

we suffer. They say that equal wage for equal work. But we know that they are women. Their make up is like that. They cannot do the kind of work being done by us, men....We do all those difficult work. It is due to utter helplessness that we come for this work”.

There are three other male workers --John, Gopalakrishnan and Gopi belonging to settler community in such work group in the village. Among Paniyas female workers took initiatives to take part in the job scheme as the work is available in their neighbourhoods. Though participation rate of Paniya male workers is very low there is no apparent feeling of apathy among them towards the scheme. They don't share the concerns of other male workers of settler communities on the equal wage for men and women in the scheme.

Unlike the dissent of male workers of settler communities on gender-neutral wage policy, there was protest from Paniyas over the functioning of work group dominated by settler workers. In the case of this village the composition of mixed group of workers including settlers, Chettys and *adivasis* has brought about certain conflicts too on the work sites in the initial stages of the scheme. Conflict was mainly between Paniyas and settler workers due to the division of work and the quality of delivery among the members. One work group in the village took more time to finish their amount of work due to the lethargy of some workers. Some of the settler members accused Paniyas for “not properly doing their work”. It became a big embarrassment for the Paniya workers in the group. They protested openly and disagreed to receive the implements for work in the next schedule from *Kudumabasree* supervisors. They complained that it was the ‘new labourers’ belonging to marginal farmers’ households who did not work properly as they did not have the habit of wage labour. They wanted to prove their point by forming an exclusive group of Paniya workers and to show how they could work. Panchayath allowed them to do so and they formed a new group by gathering Paniyas from various other groups. This incident became instrumental in increasing the internal cohesion of Paniya workers in the group.

The Paniyan group under the leadership of Velayudhan from Ariyakkottu settlement successfully used this chance to prove their efficiency in doing hard work on soil and rock. They were around 20 Paniyas from different settlements in the nearby neighbourhoods. Majority of them were women workers. They helped each other in completing the work even carrying out the work of absentees. Male workers helped the female workers when they had difficulty in doing certain works like removing the soil from the trench when it is deep by throwing it out over the level of head. They completed their work before five days to the stipulated period. Panchayath engineer and overseer certified the quality of the work done by this Paniya group of workers. This was one of the rarest occasions they had ever come across in the village by openly proving their competence in doing work in competition with settlers.

At the personal level, for most of the workers it was the first time in their life that they got the wages as a bulk amount for their free labour. Velayudhan's wife bought a gold ear- ring for their daughter for the first time in their life after getting the first installment of wages. After getting around Rs.1500/- as wage for the work in the first schedule Chamayan from Thazhekappu settlement, whose son is a migrant labour, made a shopping at Bathery town and bought a watch and jeans for his son who was to leave the settlement in the following week. Rest of the money was spent by him for buying condiments for the household for celebrating the forthcoming *Onam* festival.

Santha from Areekod settlement appreciated the government for giving their wage together as it will help them save the money. She felt that but for that, her husband would have spend it all on his daily consumption of liquor. What she did was to collect the whole amount from her husband on the day of its disbursal and gave him Rs. 300 for spending according to his wish. The rest of the money was spent in the immediate days for different household purposes. Some of them did not withdraw the whole amount from the account; for the first time in their life, they saved some amount in a bank account.

For Paniyans these are some of the changes, though small but significant, that happened with their participation in the NREGS. Whether these positive changes would last is yet to be seen. NREG scheme has created a 'new' labouring segment among the settler and Chetty community who other wise don't go outside their households for wage labour. Association of Paniyas with these groups of people as equal participants and their relative superiority in doing the work has increased their enthusiasm in further participating in the work. But it is yet to see what kind of impact will be brought in for Paniyas in their long term livelihood practices.

Conclusion

Even in the absence of critical resources for sustaining stable livelihoods and the resultant inability of Paniyas to access the development space, there are signs of changes in their livelihood practices at the contemporary interface of the local and global. Participation in the social movement for land, undertaking share cropping, increasing seasonal migration and the beginning of self –reliant migration to far away places and participation of Paniyan workers in the state-sponsored NREG schemes are some of the livelihood responses of Paniyas to the increasing interpenetrations of the local and global. These responses are manifested mainly in two basic domains of their livelihood base - land and labour.

Internal networks of kinship and friendship of the community and the trust found in the traditional relationship between Chetty and Paniyan are playing supportive role in their responses and corresponding formation of new livelihood practices. These responses are also linked to the intergenerational shifts in the worldviews and the consciousness of Paniyas. This is first time in the history of the community that there are responses within to engage the global and local interface by undertaking new strategies and practices in a collective manner. These changes are expected to have the potential to create a new resource base and capabilities at least for a section of the community.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The main intention of this study was to have an in-depth enquiry into the expanding spaces of the global and local in the livelihoods of various communities in relation to their developmental aspirations. The basic question addressed was how an *adivasi* community like Paniyan negotiates between the 'local' (i.e. Local asset endowment and relations of power) and the 'global' (i.e. the accelerating economic, political and cultural forces they are exposed to) in shaping their livelihood practices vis-à-vis other communities.

Empirical evidences from the present study suggest that globalisation at present has been linked to the local communities through their increased exposure to economic and political dimensions at the level of both discourse and practice. Increased integration of local producers with the international product market through import liberalisation and introduction of state decentralisation are the processes that create the new terrain of the local and global interpenetrations that give rise to new dynamics in the study area. This particular theme has been elaborated in the second chapter on theory and context by connecting macro theories on globalisation with the empirical context of the study area.

The third chapter unravels the global-local interplay in the study area as beginning with the colonial rule. This interplay as a historical process has made changes in livelihood base, practices and the *habitus* of the communities and their differential nature of access to the development space. The expansion of the local and global in different periods with the mediation of powerful actors has been understood historically from the colonial times to the present. It is argued that the culmination of the global and local at present has resulted in the creation of a development space in the state which is a horizontal space of social interaction with the participation of wide array of communities, but one that excludes the marginalised *adivasis* like Paniyan. This particular chapter on the creation of a development space and the

negotiation of the emerging space carved out by various communities show the different phases of local and global in terms of changes in the local power relations, linked very much to the shifts in the livelihood bases. It is shown that creation of strong socio-political networks set a strong resource base for the settler communities and the cash crop cultivation enabled them to further the advantageous position in the local arena. These changes had tilted the earlier existing local power relations in favour of the settler communities. The chapter outlined how access to socio-political networks helped these communities to have better claim over the development space in the long run. Collective actions at various levels through these socio-political networks resulted in the creation of capabilities for various communities, and hence better access to the development space and power relations.

Nexus of bureaucrats and local elites including politicians no longer plays the same role in the local arena of governance and development. Since decentralisation ordinary local members of political parties have acquired greater say in the process of selecting beneficiaries under different programmes and they wield their power corresponding to their access to different networks that help negotiate with local leadership of the party and the functionaries of the local self-government. This is more obvious with the increased activities, mainly economic in nature, of self-help groups, which are also becoming an arena of conflicting political interests.

But the case of marginal communities is different as social networks acquired by the members of these communities are very weak. Paniyans in the study village have only a weak network of relations outside the community, more or less in a similar pattern with the situation in the Wayanad region as a whole. But they still have strong intra community networks of kinship and friendships. Many of them still keep traditional labour networks with native Chetty community in the village. These inter community networks and their traditional labour networks have become sources of livelihood opportunities in the context of vulnerability for many Paniyans. But these networks, given their nature of powerlessness, do not enable them to access the development space and enable them to create more powerful political networks. However, there are possibilities and potential for certain livelihood practices mainly linked to new social movement for land, and decentralization and participatory

development, like migration in recent years. In these too, using the same intra community and customary networks are visible. In this critical context, many among the new generation of Paniyans are very much aware of the importance of the significant resources like land, social and political networking, etc which would help them access the development space.

The introductory chapter outlined the entry points into the study with details of research questions, assumptions and methodology and sets out the general theoretical perspective. The second chapter contextualises the larger debate on globalisation and illuminates the significance of the 'local' and 'global' interface within which the local empirical context in the Western Ghat region of Kerala is sought to be understood with a specific focus on the livelihood practices of *adivasi* Paniyans and other settler communities. The political economy of the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of local and global in this specific context is what gets unravelled through a cultural frame.

Although the present study accepts globalisation as a multidimensional process with tremendous impact on the global and local, this micro level inquiry shows that not all dimensions of the phenomenon are equally relevant in every contexts; instead, global processes are negotiated locally, culturally, and politically also besides economically. These bring to surface certain predominant manifestations of the global and local interpenetrations.

As the context of the present research is directly linked to the economic and political dimensions of globalisation, price fluctuation of agricultural commodities and decentralization of governance assume significance in our analysis. Steep price fluctuations and the crash in prices of most commodities following a boom that drastically changed life styles and world views, a new consumerism, and new senses of identities had to be countered through negotiating the new development space that was getting shaped through processes of political economy. Success of individuals and communities in such negotiations of power and economic benefits help shape their lives, identities and livelihood practices at present.

As far as the region of Wayanad is concerned, origin of global - local interface, though qualitatively different from the current one, dates back to the colonial expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries through the forceful acquisition of the area into a colonial administrative system and by bringing fundamental changes in the relations of production in line with the emerging capitalist demands in the west. Hence the political and economic dimensions became critical in global and local interface in this period too.

The British used many of the existing structures of power relations by incorporating the local elites in order to bring in the changes that could serve their own interests. British capital was drawn to Wayanad in order to nurture an economy based on plantation crops which became instrumental in shaping a new socio-cultural space. This was the primary stage in the evolution of a global –local interface in the area. Main feature of this phase was the complete autonomy of the British in exploiting the resources in the absence of local capabilities and agencies in order to negotiate or resist the changes.

Another phase started in the last decades of colonial rule which marked the inflow of the cultivators from the plains, mainly Christian population, in large numbers from the southern parts of Kerala, motivated by the new thrust in the cultivation of cash crops for international market. In the initial stage, the move had patronage from both the colonial as well as national governments in view of the strengthening of a national economy. Nation- state and its political agencies started mediating the local and global by this stage of independence, but through local power centres and functionaries.

Development space: culmination of global and local at present

The formation of a development space in the village, understood as the outcome of the long term historical changes, formed the thrust of another chapter. This public space developed over a period and is one that is accessed by individuals, but on the basis of their collective aspirations for development and also individual capabilities to negotiate the system and their vulnerabilities. This process has enabled many settler communities, including those historically known as ‘backward’ to emerge as

active players in the making of such a development space. But the Paniyans have been excluded from taking an active role in the process and accessing the development space.

In the case of Wayand first phase of local–global interpenetration starts with the introduction of plantation sector with the inflow of global capital absorbing the local resources. This is also one stage in a development order completely dictated by colonial regime. System of governance and economy were at par with the imperial interests of the period. The second phase of local –global interface is linked to the processes of nation building under the sovereign command of post independent governments under which development was a nationalist project, but strongly embedded globally.

Immigration of settlers marks the beginning of development in modern guise in the village. Their entry into the area clearly made a shift from wetland paddy cultivation to the cultivation of plantation crops on the basis of new developmental aspirations they hold. They were the people from south Kerala with good understanding of commercial cropping, monetary value of land, modern education, health care practices etc. Collective action, both political and social, of settler communities laid out the infrastructure of development in the village in the formative period of new settlement for a better living with regard to better connectivity, health and education. New settler leadership emerged in the process of making a democratic state by transferring power from upper caste Nair and some of their local Chetty subordinates in the colonial times to the elites among settler groups in the post-independence period. This was also the beginning of a process of vertical reciprocal relations in traditional kind which was prevalent among the native communities in the village to a more horizontal reciprocal relation among the individuals.

There was a complete exclusion of Paniyan community in the village from accessing this development space. Absence of critical resources like land and education and their inability to aspire for acquiring those resources marginalised them from getting to play an active role in this new process of the making of development under state and collective action. Whether it is because of the absence of these resources that

they were excluded from development or because they were excluded that they had a lack of resources is a tricky and inconclusive question.

There are contradictory perceptions among the people especially among settlers and *adivasis* themselves on this question. According to the general perception among the settlers in the village, this inability is intrinsic to the community whose members are considered as lazy, passive and over pampered by the state. Interestingly, there are two types of perception prevalent among the Paniyans. Many among them criticise the state for its failure to provide them land and accuse settlers for alienating their traditional habitat. This perception is not based on their understanding of modern development; instead, its focus is more on their alienation from resources. But younger generation of Paniyans has started now to criticise their forefathers for lacking 'consciousness' about their progress. Going by the rules of the ownership pattern of private property now they now imagine that all the land now occupied by settlers once belonged to them including even forest which they lost due to the ignorance or lack of "consciousness" (by which they mean lack of education) of the community.

In the strong system of vertical reciprocity between Chetty and Paniyan communities labour was the sole livelihood base for Paniyans maintaining their daily subsistence. They were not very much aware about the land as a livelihood base even in that system. A shift in the livelihood base from wetland cultivation to cash crop plantation cultivation marked also a shift in the local power relations. Settler strategies to control the Paniyan labour was also part of underlying power struggles at the local. Though settlers became the vanguard of modern development in the village, in the process instead of breaking the structure of vertical reciprocity, they transformed it into the new livelihood system of cash crop cultivation. They used various manipulative strategies to maintain the Paniyan community as a cheap source of labour without making much damage to their understating based on vertical reciprocity even in a newly developed market scenario in the village.

The disconnect between Paniyans and the creation of development infrastructure was mainly due to the absence of organized leadership and collective action, and the

resources like land, education and political networks which were found to be critical in transforming the developmental infrastructure into individual resources for others. Failure of the state and collective action, which legitimized the new life worlds of settlers, and the settler strategies to extract Paniyan labour into extremely competent production process not only hindered Paniyans to break the closed and monotonous cycle of livelihood practices, but also pushed them into the position of marginality which became the major disposition of their *habitus* in the period of centralized development.

Formation of political parties and expansion of representative democracy along with the emergence of strong interests groups at the local characterised the social arena of interaction among the communities in this phase in Wayanad also. Power relations among and within the communities took new turns and local power structures also underwent remarkable changes during the period. Local empowerment in terms of the upward mobility of erstwhile disadvantaged communities in certain historical circumstances is also realised in congruence with the development of physical infrastructure for creating an access to public education and health.

Social networks, capability and politics of decentralisation

Local communities have been increasingly exposed to new structures and agents of decentralization and participatory development since the latter half of the 1990s. It has increased the number of organizational forms in the village and the spectrum of horizontal interactions among the individuals. Local Panchayat, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Non Governmental Organizations which are patronized mainly by community organizations like Church, SNDP etc in the case of this village have started playing important role in the creation of a new social space of development. Meanwhile the local emerges as a new terrain of power relations with increased financial and administrative power to local leaders which is differentially negotiated by settler, Chetty and *adivasi* communities.

But, both the Panchayat and NGOs have not yet been successful in taking up a facilitative role in ensuring the participation of Paniyans in the process of enhancing their resources. Till now, these two powerful agents of change in the local

livelihoods had influence on them only as external forces. Some of the members within the community try to engage and respond to these changes purely on the basis of their internal livelihood dynamics, i.e. whether they are *sthirampanikkar* or not, do they own land or not, etc. Like in the case of other settler communities, creation of a horizontal space of social interactions has not helped Paniyans to get equal claims over various resources, especially social and political networks outside the community. Visible and invisible barriers, historically constructed and inherited, stop them from accessing these resources freely within a highly asymmetrical field of power relations.

Contrary to this, most of the other communities have established and accessed a wide network of social relations in the context of decentralisation. A new generation of leaders from the village has emerged in the process, using their power to influence various networks and using them as potential resources. Individuals have also attained power through these networks, accelerated through the SHG movement, to serve their own interests and making political choices. It makes patron –client relationship within the political arena fluid and the power dimensions more horizontal.

New livelihood practices and the development space: understanding a Paniyan pathway

Even in the absence of critical resources for sustaining stable livelihoods and the resultant inability of Paniyans to access the development space, there are signs of changes in their livelihood practices. Participation in the social movement for land, undertaking share cropping, increasing seasonal migration and the beginning of self –reliant migration to far away places and participation of Paniyan workers in state sponsored NREG schemes are some of the livelihood responses of Paniyans to the increasing interpenetrations of the local and global.

Internal networks of kinship and friendships and the trust derived from the old customary relationship with Chetty community are becoming useful resources in many of these new livelihood practices. Broadly, these new practices are also linked to the intergenerational shifts in the world views and the consciousness of Paniyans

in the context of accelerating changes. These changes would be expected to have the potential to create a new resource base and capabilities for a section of the community.

Deepening the spheres of state, civil society and market players in recent years have been visibly making certain impacts by drawing active responses from some sections of Paniyans. Price boom in the 1990s and the following price fall have created a level playing field among the poor settlers and a section of Paniyans mainly belonging to the categories of share croppers, permanent workers (*sthirampanikkar*) and those better educated. Many of the Paniyans have started falling upon the state provisions including welfare schemes, but delivery of these involves shades of corruption and irregularities. NREG is a state sponsored scheme creating a common labour space which is found having a remarkable impact among many among them.

Political parties and their feeder organisations are more responsive in recent years on the livelihood issues of Paniyans as result of the increased interventions of civil society organisations including media in the movement for land.

Though large scale NGOs have been proved not so successful in making any major impact in the lives and livelihoods of Paniyans, many youth at present use the space provided by these organisations in a practical way. However, the formation of *adivasi* organisations like AGMS, was significant in putting up a strong demand for land in recent years. Increased intervention of political parties, especially, organisations like AKS supported by CPI (M) is an impact of NGO interventions in the *adivasi* life. AKS is found systematically working to recapture the space occupied by the NGOs and re-assert their existing influences by intervening into the state programmes and development strategies. Movement for land, led by both AGMS and AKS was the first kind of collective action in which they took part in contemporary times. However, participation of Paniyans in this movement was largely on the basis of individual aspirations for 'promised' land.

Empirical evidences from the present study suggest that intensified interlinking of the local and global at present has created a certain manoeuvring space for Paniyans through their individual agency. However, absence of socio-political networks as a

decisive resource – which was achieved by others as part of collective action at local for building a development infrastructure over the years- in order to influence the local power structures has been not yet been resolved even in this interface. But it has been found that Paniyans, as individuals, are increasingly expanding their manoeuvring space by engaging actively with the actors of state, civil society and market, though it doesn't bring capabilities to the community as a whole. This expanding space seems to be instrumental in creating a section of Paniyans with a certain amount of capabilities in negotiating the development space which is also a field of uneven power relations. However, emergence of an empowered section of Paniyans with a potential to challenge the local power relations is also possibly going to lead a process of differentiation within the community in the coming years.

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