

# **ETHNOHISTORY OF TRIBES IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY**

*By*

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis titled, **ETHNOHISTORY OF TRIBES IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT**, submitted for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by Sri. FUCKAR ALI C.A., under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any degree before.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, FUCKAR ALI C.A., hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **ETHNOHISTORY OF TRIBES IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT**, is a bonafide record of research work done by me under the supervision of Dr. K.J. JOHN, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degrees.

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## **PREFACE**

The present study, *Ethnohistory of Tribes in Malappuram District*, is an attempt to trace out the culture and traditions of various tribes in Malappuram district of Kerala state in an ethnohistoric perspective. Though strictly confined to Malappuram district, this study is a pioneering one. The previous ethnographic accounts on Kerala tribals are admirable in terms of throwing light into life and culture of Kerala tribes. They are in the forms of Census reports, ethnographic reports, administrative accounts, travel accounts, essays, novel, thesis and detailed studies having no material aim. However, majority of them give only sporadic mentions on tribes, therefore, are not conducive to give comprehensive and exclusive information touching all problems related to the tribals of Kerala. To comprehend all aspects of tribal life, one should focus the study on region basis. During the colonial period, ethnographic accounts of the communities were of the three regions of Kerala - Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. However, they had followed no scientific methods. Kerala, in the later part of the 20th century, witnessed a number of detached tribal studies in anthropology and sociology. Even though, until now, no study on the tribals of Kerala has come out in an ethnohistoric perspective.

Ethnohistory is an interdisciplinary approach of collaborating the theory and methods of both history and anthropology. Ethnohistorian tries to depict the culture and tradition of a group of people especially that have not developed the art of writing, from their early past to the present. The present study is focussed on the tribes of Malappuram district. Malappuram district has been the home land of various tribal communities. According to 2001 Census, the total Scheduled Tribes (ST) population in the district is 12,267 which constitute 3.3% of the total ST population of the Kerala state. As per the latest information available, the total

number of ST population in the district is 14,831. *Aranadan, Cholanaickan, Kattunayakan, Kuruman, Mala Muthan, Mala Panickan* and *Paniyan* are the Scheduled Tribe communities in Malappuram District. There are 223 tribal settlements that are stretched in the hill ranges as well as plains of the district. The settlements are mainly scattered in Nilambur and Eranad Taluks. As most of the tribal settlements are in the less accessible hilly areas of Nilambur valley, it is very difficult to visit all these settlements for data collection. More over, the tribal people consider outsiders as exploiters and thus they keep aloof from the visitors to maintain their cultural identity. For the tribes, their culture and tradition are sacred and therefore they hesitate to disclose them to outsiders. The wholehearted cooperation and support of these tribal people is the essential prerequisites for the study. Some times they are given money and food to achieve the goal.

In the preparation of the thesis I am very much indebted to many. At the outset I bow my head and heart in all humility to God Almighty for showering His blessings on me to overcome all difficulties for the successful completion of this work. I express my great sense of gratitude to my esteemed supervisor, Dr. K.J.John, former Head, Department of History, University of Calicut, for his encouragement and help in the preparation of the thesis. It was his inspiring support and guidance always put me on the right track towards achieving the goal.

I am greatly indebted to my respected teacher, Dr. N.K.Musthafa Kamal Pasha, former Head, Department of History, P.S.M.O.College, Tirurangadi, who inspires me to take up this topic for research work. I am grateful to Dr. N.Vishwanathan Nair, former Director, KIRTADS, Calicut, for valuable information enlightening me on the basic issues of ethnohistoric research at the very beginning of the study. I extend my sincere thanks to

Prof. B. Ananda Bhanu, former Head, Department of Anthropology, Palayad Centre, Kannur University, for the useful discussions I had with him on the research topic and his valuable suggestions to prepare the thesis. I express my gratitude to Dr. Seetha Kakkoth for her valuable advice and help for field work and data collection. I remember with gratitude the help of Dr.K.N.Ganesh, Reader, Department of History, University of Calicut, for the useful discussions with him on the topic. Sincere thanks are due to Prof.Kesavan Veluthat, who spent time to discuss certain aspects of the topic and to give some valuable information.

I remember with a great sense of gratitude a few individuals like officers, staffs and promoters of Nilambur ITDP, without whose support and help the field work and data collection would not be completed. I express my special thanks to Krishna Girish, Forest officer, Karulai Range, Nilalambur, for granting permission to do field work in the forest regions. I also extend my gratitude to Moinkutty. V.P. of Cholanaickan Co-operative Society, Mancheeri , for his help to visit the *Cholanaickan* settlements in the interior regions.

I extend my sincere thanks to the staffs of various departments and libraries like C.D.C. Thiruvananthapuram, Archives, Thiruvananthapuram, Regional Archives, Calicut, CHMKC Libraray, University of Calicut, KIRTADS, Calicut, Kerala University Library and Department of Anthropology, Palayad, Thalassery. I gratefully acknowledge the support and help extended to me for the completion of this work by the librarians and staffs, Department of History, University of Calicut.

I also remember the support and help offered to me by my friends and colleagues in the preparation of this thesis. I remember with gratitude the help of Suresh K.M, and Ajesh C.A in the field work. Special thanks are offered to Sreejith K. for the technical help. I offer special thanks to my student, Chithra .C, for her help to

draw the pictures. I express my sincere thanks to my colleagues, Bijo Joesph, Manoj Mathew, Santhosh Kumar.V.P and Benaseer Fahima for their help and support to complete the work.

Sincere gratitude is expressed to the I.C.H.R for supporting me with a contingent grant for field work. I remember with great sense of indebtedness for the financial support rendered me by ISM, MSM and MSS. Special thanks also due to informants of various tribal settlements in Malappuram districts; all their names cannot be mentioned here as the list itself is very large. I extend my sincere thanks to Dr. K. Gopalan Kutty, the Head, Department of History, University of Calicut, for his help to submit the thesis.

The ultimate word of gratitude is rendered for my father and mother for their encouragement and inspiration to complete the work despite financial difficulties and unhealthy problems. Above all, I express heartfelt gratitude to my wife for her keenly help and support in drafting and preparing the thesis. I hereby record my profound gratitude to my other family members whose personal sacrifices during all these years of my research led to the successful completion of this work. Last but not least, I express my sincere thanks to Bina Photostat for typing and printing the thesis.

**FUCKAR ALI C.A.**



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# **ILLUSTRATIONS**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Kerala, a 600 km long strip of land lying between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats in the Southern most part of the Western coast of the Indian sub-continent, is considered to be an Ethnological Museum. Karnataka lies to its north and north-east, to its east and south is the state of Tamil Nadu. The unique geographical position has enabled it to enjoy measure of relative isolation<sup>1</sup> from the rest of the country and to develop its own way of life, culture and social institutions unaffected by the major political upheavals that shook the rest of the country. However, this isolation has not prevented the advent of various groups of people into Kerala. “The open door policy followed by the local chieftains of Malabar brought the Chinese, Egyptians, Arab and Europeans, who mingled freely with the indigenous populations”.<sup>2</sup>

People of diverse ethnic groups came one after the other and mingled with indigenous population resulting in the admixture of various physical types. Who were the original inhabitants has been a subject of vehement debate among the anthropologists and historians. It is believed that Negritoes and Proto-Australoids were the earliest physical types to reach the sub-continent. But the existence of the traces of Negrito elements among the

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<sup>1</sup> Bernad S. Cohn, *India, the Social Anthropology of a Civilization*, New Jersey, 1971, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> S.Bhadra, “Recent Race Mixture in Kerala: Some Social Aspects”, in L.K. Balarathnam, ed., *Anthropology on the March*, Madras, 1963, p. 124.

ethnic groups of Kerala is questioned.<sup>3</sup> Based on the study of the dominant physical characteristics, it has been made possible to identify two major ethnic groups or physical types in the population of Kerala. They are the proto-Australoids and the Palae-Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup>

Kerala has its own traditional clusters of communities. Though each community stresses its identity, it shares with other communities many of their traits that are derived from its history, culture, language, literature, resources etc. Therefore, the materials they share are more than the traits they do not have in common. Moreover, though sharply divided along caste, communal and even class lines Kerala's composite identity has nevertheless deepened, sharing the language, the literary, artistic, classical and folk traditions have been creatively articulated. The many elements of its culture, both spiritual and material, and the many struggles for an equal and human order have enabled the communities of Kerala, like communities elsewhere, to hold together and march ahead. In short as K.M. Panikkar has pointed out, "It may be said with justice that Kerala is a living museum of ethnology, culture and religion, presenting every stage of development".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> S.S.Sarkar denies the existence of any Negrito strain among the South Indian tribes on the ground that the so-called physical features of the Negritos are found also in other races. For details, see S.S. Sarkar, *The Aboriginal Races of India*, Calcutta, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. Gupta, *Disposal of the Dead and Physical Types in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 269,270.

<sup>5</sup> K.M. Panikkar, 'Introduction' in L.A. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala and Her People*, Palaghat, 1961, p. 4.

Kerala is also the abode of a vast tribal population having diverse culture and tradition. According to 2001 Censes, there are 35 Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Kerala totalling 364,189 (Table 1-1). The majority of this population is found in Waynad, Palakkad and Idukki ditRICTS. Numerically, Waynad has the largest tribal population in the state that is about 37.3% of the total Scheduled Tribes population of the state (Table 1-2). They inhabit in the high land mountainous regions of the Western Ghats extending from Thiruvananthapuram in the South to Kasargod in the North. The isolated or relatively isolated regions of Western Ghats have been very suitable to maintain the unique cultural ethnicity of the hill dwellers.<sup>6</sup> The Western Ghats along the Western Coast have formed almost in an unbroken wall guarding the eastern frontier. However, the passes in the Ghats, like the Perambadi Pass (access to Coorg and Periya), the Thamarasseri Pass (access to Waynad and Mysore), the Palghat gap<sup>7</sup> (connects Kerala and Tamil Nadu), and Aruvaimozhi Pass (connects Trivandrum with Tirunalveli), facilitated the

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<sup>6</sup> The exponents of the school of 'environmental determinism' like Friedrich Ratzel, Semple and Ellsworth Huntington share the view that the history, culture, lifestyle and stage of development of a social group, society or nation are exclusively or largely governed by physical factors (terrain, climate, drainage, fauna and flora ) of environment. The determinists generally consider man as a passive agent on whom the environmental factors are acting and determining his attitude, decision-making process and lifestyle. See Friedrich Ratzel, *History of Mankind*, 3 Vols., London, 1896; Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment*, New York, 1911.; Ellsworth Huntington, *Civilization and Climate*, London.

<sup>7</sup> The Palghat gap is the major break in the long chain of the Western Ghats running for a thousand miles along the triangular plateau, between the Nilgiris and the Cardamon hills. The gap is apparently of tectonic origin. It has been regarded as the ancient valley of a river flowing either from the east or, before the assumed Arabian Sea subsidence, from the west. See O.H.K.Spate and A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan, Land, People and Economy*, London, 1960, pp.20-24.

immigration of diverse social groups into Kerala and subsequent cultural interaction with the early inhabitants of the region. More over, these passes also have great role in moulding the climate of the state and in providing a favourable environment to the tribal people of Kerala to lead a sheltered life of their own through centuries.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it could be assumed that, their life and culture have been evolved and adjusted according to this ecological and physical environment, which may be described as ‘ecological adaptation’.<sup>9</sup>

In Kerala, tribals are found almost in all districts. However, there is no single tribe that is found scattered throughout the state. Their living regions divide them in to seven territorial groups taking into account of their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations.<sup>10</sup> They are,

- a. Kasargod-comprises the two taluks of Kasargod and Hosdurg.
- b. Waynad -consists of North Waynad and South Waynad.
- c. Nilambur- evergreen forest area in Malappuram District.
- d. Attapady-situated in the Mannarkkad taluk of Palakkad district.

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<sup>8</sup> Ellsworth Huntington, the American geographer, views climate as a fundamental factor in the rise of cultures, which is ‘climatic determinism’. He described the ideal climate as one in which the mean temperature seldom fall below 38 degrees or rises above 64 degrees Fahrenheit. But temperature is not alone important. Moisture is also essential, and the humidity should average about 65 per cent. Finally, the weather must not be uniform: cyclonic storms or ordinary storms resulting in weather changes from day to day must have sufficient frequency and intensity to clear the atmosphere every once in a while and produce those sudden variations in temperature which seem to be necessary to exhilarate and revitalize human beings. Ellsworth Huntington, *op.cit.*, pp.220-223.

<sup>9</sup> Radcliff Brown, *Structure and Functions in Primitive Society*, London, 1976, p.9.

<sup>10</sup> P.R.G. Mathur, *Tribal Situation in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1997, p. 7.

- e. Parambikulam-located in the Chittur taluk of Palakkad District.
- f. Idukki-comprises the mountainous taluks of Pirumedu, Udumpunchola, Devikulam and Thodupuzha.
- g. Trivandrum-consists of Nedumangad and Neyyattinkara taluks.

Present study is focused on the tribes living in Malappuram district. According to the 2001 census the total Scheduled Tribes of the district is 12,267 which constitutes 3.3% of the total ST population of Kerala state (Table 1-3). *Aranadan, Cholanaickan, Kattunayakan, Kuruman, Mala Muthan, Mala Panickan, and Paniyan* are the Scheduled Tribes of the district. In Malappuram district, the tribal people are scattered in the Nilambur valley of Western Ghats.

Nilambur valley in Malappuram district is the abode of various tribal communities. The valley is also important due to the habitation of primitive hunter-food gathering tribal groups. They live in forest eco system with subsistence economy and pre-agricultural level of technology. The Nilambur Valley lies south of Waynad and to the west of Nilgiri district of Tamilnadu. It has an average height of 120m. above the sea level; the rainfall range from 100” in the east to 300” in the west, the daily temperature range between 80<sup>0</sup>to 90<sup>0</sup>. The entire valley is covered by good forests, which is evergreen in the Ghats and semi-deciduous in the foothills. The trees grow to immense

size. This valley is famous for its teak plantation that was started in 1840 by Mr. Conolly, former Collector of British Malabar. Logan mentions, “no better site for planting could have been chosen. The Nilambur valley is of horse shoe and lies 4000 ft. above mean sea level beneath the shadow of amphitheatre of hills.”<sup>11</sup>

The soil of the valley is an alluvial deposit of immense depth and high fertility. The valley abounds in a variety of forest produce including ginger, dammar, cardamom, honey, arrowroot, pepper etc. In the foothills, Christian and Muslim planters have also recently introduced tapioca and paddy. The trees generally grown in these forests are pali, (*Palaquin ellipticum*), pine (*Pinus wallichiana*), thambakom (*Hopea parniflora*), punna (*Calophyllum innophyllum*), vellakil (*Dysoxylum malabaricum*), anjili (*Artocapus incisa*), kulamavu (*Buchanania lancellata*), bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*), kara (*Elaeocapus tuberculatus*) etc. The deciduous forests are found in the plains and the lower ghat slopes and some evergreen trees are seen along the riverbanks. The valuable trees of these forests are teak (*Tectona grandis*), venteak (*Lagastromia lanceolata*), rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), maruthu (*Terminalia paniculata*) etc. Elephants (*Elaphus maximus indicus*), wild dog (*Cyon dukhnensis*), deer (*Rusa unicolor*), civet cat (*Vivertiscula indica*), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), wild boar (*Sus cristatus*), spotted deer (*Axis axis*), mongoose (*Herpertes vitticolis*), wild buffaloes (*Bubalis bubalis*), bison

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<sup>11</sup> Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I. reprint, New Delhi, 1989, p. 9.



(*Bibos gaurus/Bos gaurus*), tiger (*Panthera pardus*), blue monkeys (*Macaca radiata*), bears (*Melursus ursinus*) etc. are found in the forests along with a variety of birds and reptiles. Forests are the main source of raw material for a number of wood-based industrial units. Besides timber, firewood and green manure, forest produces like honey, medical herbs, spices etc are collected. The tribals collect minor forest produces.

The antiquity of Nilambur goes back to the pre-historical period. Evidences of pre-historic cultures are reported in the forms of choppers of quartzite pebble tools, bifacial as well as unifacial scrapers of palaeolithic period.<sup>12</sup> Mesolithic sites are also found at Pandikkad in the district.<sup>13</sup> The archaeological evidences for the proto-historic phase can be located in the rich megalithic culture unearthed from various parts of Malappuram district. The Megalithic monuments like *kodakal*, dolmens, slab cists, rock-cut caves, urn burials, stone circles etc are found in abundance in many parts of the region. The modern history of Nilambur town traces back to the establishment of Nilambur *Kovilakam*. It has been said that the Tacharakkavil Eradis who came from Nediyrippu in 13th century AD built the Kovilakam. *Tampran*, *Raja* and *Tirumulpad* were the honorific titles given to them. Nilambur and

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In the valley, Palaeolithic sites are found at Kunnattubealu, Valluvasseri, and Karumpulakkal. See P.Rajendran, "The Palaeolithic Industries of North Kerala" in *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, No, I, Poona, 1981, p.155. Also see P. Davadas, *Archaeology of Eranad*, Ph. D. Thesis, Unpublished, Calicut, 1993, p.11.

<sup>13</sup> P.Rajendran, "The Mesolithic Industries of North Kerala" in V.N.Misra and Peter Bellwood, ed., *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific Prehistory*, Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Poona, December 19-21, 1978, pp165,166.

*Amarambalam Tirumulpads* owned extensive forests, reside in the Nilambur *amsom*. In the early days, they were the *Naduvazhis* (local chieftains) of the entire eastern territory including some parts of Gudallur and Tamilnadu. They brought many Nairs and Chettis and settled them around the *Kovilakom* to enhance agriculture and business.<sup>14</sup>

Historical studies on tribes give insight in to the human past. Historically speaking, the tribes live in hills and forests are the descendants of the early inhabitants of the region. The dwelling of tribal communities independently according to their own rules and customs dates back to the earliest time of recorded in history. The infiltration of advanced populations into tribal territory resulted in closer interaction between aboriginals and the advanced. The defence of tribal territory against a group of people of superior culture with advanced technology proved impossible for the aboriginals. Their traditional cultivating lands and hunting and gathering grounds were taken from them and the new comers automatically reduced many to serfdom. Gradually, they were amalgamated as outcastes in to the lowest strata of the caste-ridden society.<sup>15</sup> The untouchable castes of *Cherumar* and *Paniyar* of Kerala were probably at one time independent tribes. Some of them escaped into areas comparatively free of new settlers. Those who took asylum in the

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<sup>14</sup> *Vikasanarekakaal, Nilambur Taluk*, Vol. III, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p.13.

<sup>15</sup> Kosambi views when these food gatherers were subjugated, they were reduced to the lowest *jati*, so low as to be outside the four *varnas* altogether. D.D.Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Calcutta, 1977, reprint, pp.170-173.

remote areas stubbornly retained their nomadic and hunting habit and refused to give up their traditional way of life. The descendants of this group are today found in the hills and forests and they are described as *Adivasis* (*Adi*=early or original and *Vasi* = inhabitant). Samuel Mateer called the hill people who are scattered over the mountains as 'aborigines of the country'.<sup>16</sup> They have been arrested in their primitive stage of culture and found no urge to advance to a higher stage. Their culture and tradition has survived through the ages. In order to preserve their cultural integrity and inner values they have developed the habit of withdrawal from the mainstream of the society.

The term 'tribe' has been derived from Latin root, 'tribuz'. The Middle English term '*tribuz*', meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped, came to evolve into the modern English 'tribe'<sup>17</sup>. To Romans, the tribe was a political division while the Greeks seem to have equated it somewhat with their '*fraternities*' at times, with geographical divisions at others.<sup>18</sup> In certain areas of the world and certain periods of history, it stood for divisions of territory allotted to a family or community.<sup>19</sup>

Nowadays, the term *adivasi*<sup>20</sup> is widely used in India to refer to the tribal people in connection with other related terms such as 'aboriginals',

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<sup>16</sup> Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, Madras, 1991, reprint, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Sachchidananda and R.R. Prasad, ed., *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, New Delhi, 1998, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> The equivalents in Hindi for the terms 'aboriginals', 'forest-dwellers', and 'hill-dwellers' are respectively *Adivasi*, *Vanyajati* and *Pahadi*.

'autochthonous', 'forest-dwellers', 'hill-dwellers' etc., but *adivasi* is not an unanimously accepted term. Referring to them as 'So-called Aborigines' or 'Backward Hindus' G.S.Ghurye criticises the term *adivasi* as they have various elements of Hindu culture.<sup>21</sup>The Oxford English Dictionary meaning of the word aboriginal is 'first inhabitants or those found in possession by colonists'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the first inhabitants of India were no doubts, who were found already in occupation of the country when the Aryan and the Dravidian speaking peoples first came in contact with them. The anthropological and official literature of India use the term 'tribe' rather than 'aboriginals'.

S.C. Dube<sup>23</sup> has tried to identify the characteristics of Indian tribes as follows; 1. Their roots in the soil date back to a very early period, if they are not the original inhabitants, they are at least some of the oldest, inhabitants of the land. 2. They live in relative isolation of the hills and forests. 3. Their sense of history is shallow for, among them, the remembered history of five to six generations tends to get merged in mythology. 4. They have a low level of techno-economic development. 5. In terms of their cultural ethos-language, institutions, beliefs, and customs - they stand out from the other sections of the society. 6. If they are not egalitarian, they are at least non-hierarchic and undifferentiated.

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<sup>21</sup> G.S.Ghurye, *The Scheduled Tribes*, Bombay, 1963, p.20.

<sup>22</sup> *Oxford English Dcitionary*, London, 1998, p.17.

<sup>23</sup> S.C. Dube, ed., *Tribal Heritage of India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1977, p. 2.

Robert Redfield calls this type of group as 'Little Community'<sup>24</sup> of little tradition<sup>25</sup>. According to him, Little Community is a small group of individuals living together that are having their own culture and largely away from large complex culture<sup>26</sup>. He has mentioned the following characteristics of a little Community:<sup>27</sup>

1. *Distinctiveness*: A Little Community has its own individuality or distinctiveness. According to Redfield, in a sense it is distinct, where the community begins and where it ends. The distinctiveness is expressed in the group consciousness of the people of the community. It is known, who is a community member and who is outsider.

2. *Smallness*: Little Community is a small group of individuals having mutual relationship. However, it is not possible to determine the numerical strength. But the number of members in a little community should not exceed beyond a point where a direct and first hand contact among members become difficult.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Redfield, *The Little Community*, Tenth Impression, Chicago, 1973, pp.1-4

<sup>25</sup> Robert Redfield developed two concepts of great and little traditions to study a civilization. One was formal, written, literate and reflective few. On the other hand, another is informal, oral, illiterate and unreflective many. Redfield called the former as Great tradition and the latter as little traditions. He observed Great tradition being cultivated in school and temples located at different places. Peasants visited these places. He also observed teachers and priests mediating between the two traditions. Thus, great tradition is cultivated in schools and temples with the help of teachers and priests to mediate, whereas little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of unlettered village communities. Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture*, Chicago, 1973, pp.41-42

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Robert Redfield, *op.cit.*, (n-24), p.4. *The Little Community*, Chicago, Tenth Impression, 1973, p.4.

Therefore, little community is a unit of personal observation fully representative of human whole.

3. *Homogeneity*: In a little community, activities and state of mind of all persons belonging to a sex and age are alike. Similarly, each generation repeats activities of the preceding generation. Therefore, little community is slow changing. The members of community show similarity in matter of dress, way of life, language and cultural outlook, ethos or worldview.

4. *Self-Sufficiency*: little community is characterised by self-sufficiency. It satisfies all needs of its members from birth to death. It is because of this fact that Redfield has called little community as a cradle-to- the-grave arrangement.

In fact, the term tribe has no universally accepted definition. We have only one legally acceptable frame of reference viz., the schedule of the constitution of India, where a number of communities have been defined by enumeration as 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST).<sup>28</sup> The 'Scheduled Tribes' connotes tribal groups, who for their protection, educational, social, economic and political rights need special and separate considerations or concessions and hence have been included in a particular schedule of the Constitution of India. The constitution provides for periodical revision of this Schedule, including

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<sup>28</sup> Article 342 of the Constitution of India defines Scheduled Tribes as “the tribes or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities” which the President of India may specify by public notification.

and excluding communities. The specification of tribes and tribal communities as 'Scheduled Tribes' arose only after the constitution came into force. In the list of Scheduled Tribes, prepared in 1950, the *primitiveness* and *backwardness* were the tests applied for specifying a Scheduled Tribe. The chief characteristics that are common to all the Scheduled Tribes are tribal origin, primitive way of life, habitation in remote and less easily accessible areas, and general backwardness in all aspects.<sup>29</sup> For the convenience, present study is focussed only on the tribes of Malappuram district who are included in the official list of the Scheduled Tribes.

### **TRIBAL ETHNOGRAPHY IN KERALA: A REVIEW**

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there had been a plethora of ethnographic literature on the communities of Kerala. But the anthropological studies on the hill tribes of Kerala were very rare. By the beginning of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a tremendous change can be seen. Ethnographic reports, information by Christian missionaries, administrators, Census authorities and later by professional anthropologists on Kerala tribes were produced during this period. We also get brief notes on tribes along with the Census of 1881, 1891 and 1901.

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<sup>29</sup> Sachchidananda and R.R. Prasad, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Padre Fenicio's account<sup>30</sup> on the Todas of Todamala in 1603 is the earliest ethnographic reference on the tribals of Kerala. His accounts are in the form of letters, they give brief description on the material and spiritual aspects of the Todas. The contributions of Samuel Mateer<sup>31</sup> of the London Missionary Society, *The Land of Charity* (1871) and *Native Life in Travancore* (1883) have been considered as pioneering step. In *The Land of Charity-A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People*, Samuel Mateer has devoted two chapters to describe the manners and customs of the people whence he also has touched upon the life of hill tribes like *Kanikkar*, *Malayarasar* etc. He gives a full-length chapter for the hill tribes and brief explanations on the tribes of *Kanikkar*, *Mala Arayan*, *Ulladars*, *Uralis*, *Mannans* and *Hill Pandarms* are given in the second book cited. But even before him, Ward and Conner<sup>32</sup> in *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin* had mentioned some tribes of Kerala such as *Moodavenmar* (*Muthuvan*), *Crowders*, *Vaishwans*, *Arreanmars*, and *Oorallays* (*Uralis*).

Logan's *Malabar Manual*<sup>33</sup> gives many sporadic references about the hill tribes like, *Paniyar*, *Malasar*, *Kurichiar*, *Kurumbar* or *Kuravar* etc. Though sporadic, his reference to these people support the arguments that the community represents today as hill tribe were the early inhabitants of the land.

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<sup>30</sup> D.Ferrolli, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, vol.1, Banglore, 1939,pp,472-480.

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and Its People*, New Delhi, 1871; *Native Life in Travancore*, 1883, New Delhi.

<sup>32</sup> Ward and Conner, *Memoirs of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin*, Madras, 1863.

<sup>33</sup> William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, 2 Vols, New Delhi, 1887.



The first ethnographic survey report on South India was published in the form of *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* as a result of the eager attempt of Edgar Thurston<sup>34</sup>. This pioneering work, dealt exclusively with the customs and ceremonies related to marriage, death, religion etc. of the South Indian aborigines. Thurston's second work *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 7 Vols.<sup>35</sup> is a systematic and detailed ethnographic description of South Indian castes and tribes. The focus of attention in this work was however on the way of life, customs and manners, religious beliefs and superstitions and other such details of the tribal communities in the region. Another peculiarity of Thurston's work is that it gives detailed accounts of all the castes and tribes in South India in alphabetical order.

T.K Gopala Panikkar's *Malabar and its Folk* <sup>36</sup> gives a brief description on the hill tribes such as *Malayars*, the *Kadars* and *Naidis* (*Nayadis*). According to him, "the *Malayars* and the *Kaders* are identical race living about the Western and Eastern sides of the Ghats respectively."<sup>37</sup> He mentions their language, occupation, dress and ornaments, religious beliefs, marriage customs etc. He introduces *Naidis* (hunters) as the lowest race of people in Malabar. He pays attention to the cruelties practiced by the upper classes on these depressed communities, whom he considered 'a threat to swap the country'.

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<sup>34</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, 2 Vol., Madras, 1906.

<sup>35</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 7 Vols, Madras, 1909.

<sup>36</sup> K Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, Madras, 1900.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.163.

The classic work of L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer<sup>38</sup>, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, III Vols, give information about *Kader, Malayan, Ulladan, Eravallan* etc. He tries to show light into the tradition, origin, ceremonial rights, religious beliefs and occupation of jungle and fishing communities. His observation on the dynamics of culture change also shows how tribes are fast changing. He also discusses the social changes that take place among the tribes due to the interaction with upper class people. About the method adopted for the study he says, "Investigation on the various tribes and castes herein dealt with were made by myself first hand, but in handling of such a large number of facts errors both of omission and commission can search avoided. Accuracy in the statement of facts, as far as possible, has all along been my aim, so that the errors, i hope, will be found to be neither numerous nor serious"<sup>39</sup> It would not be a false to say L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer was the first native 'official' ethnographer.

V. Nagam Aiya's,<sup>40</sup> *The Travancore State Manual*, 3 Vols. describes on seven hill tribes such as *Kanikkar, Urali, Ulladan, Hill Pandaram, Mannan, Muthuvan* and *Malaparayan*. He attempted to trace their origin, nomenclature, habitation, occupation, material culture, language, religious belief etc. C. Achutha Menon,<sup>41</sup> in his *The Cochin State Manual*, deals with the erstwhile

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<sup>38</sup> L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, III Vols, New Delhi, 1908, 1912, 1924.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xi.

<sup>40</sup> V. Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, 3 vols., Trivandrum, 1906

<sup>41</sup> C. Achutha Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Trivandrum, 1911.

Cochin state. While dealing with pollution and polluting castes, he refers to hill tribes like *Kader*, *Malayar*, *Ulladan*, *Nayadi* etc in the state. His accounts are very brief and mainly concerned with their position in caste hierarchy.

The work of M.A. Sherring,<sup>42</sup> *The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency*, gives brief accounts on the tribes of the former Madras Presidency of which Malabar was an integral part. Among these, *Irula (Pujari) Malayali*, *Kader*, *Kurumar*, *Kurumbas* etc. belong to Kerala region. A notable feature of his work is that he categorises the tribes as Nambutiri tribes, Brahmin tribes, Muhammadan tribes, Christian tribe, Jews, Black Jews of Cochin etc.

L.A. Krishna Iyer<sup>43</sup> followed the path of his father L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer. His report on 'Primitive Tribes of Travancore' was added to the Census Report of 1931. He undertook another ethnographic survey in 1933, which was published in three volumes under the title, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes* (1937-41). The first volume, gives account of seven hill tribes (*Kanikkar*, *Malakuravan*, *Malapandaram*, *Malavedan*, *Malayarayan* and *Mannan*) and their origin, tradition, subdivisions, marriage customs, material culture, physical characteristics and social condition. The folk songs of *Kanikkar* are appended to this volume. Second and third volumes present the descriptive accounts of the Travancore tribes and he discusses the influence of

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<sup>42</sup> M.A. Sherring, *The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency*, Madras, 1909.

<sup>43</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes*, Trivandrum, 1937.

the social forces in the life and life cycle ceremonies and customs and traditions of the tribes. In another work, *Kerala and Her People* (1961), Iyer dealt with Kerala's earliest inhabitants, the hill tribes who have been classified as Negrito, Proto-Australian and Dravidian. He also shows light into the social, historical and cultural aspects of the early aborigines of Kerala.

L.A. Krishna Iyer published a few papers on the 'Customs and Religions of the Tribes of Travancore' and wrote an analytical paper on taboos among the tribes of Travancore.<sup>44</sup> He analysed the nature of matriarchy among the *Kanikkars* and concluded that under the impact of modern civilization, the *Kanikkars* have been less matriarchal and their present social structure reflects the elements of matriarchy and patriarchy. L.A. Krishna Iyer was eager to analyse the history of Kerala through the eyes of an anthropologist as evidenced through his work '*Social History of Kerala* (1968)<sup>45</sup>. *Anthropology in India*,<sup>46</sup> together with his son, L.K. Bala Rathnam deals with South Indian tribes and their life in a lucid manner. At the same time, Iyer has failed to depict the tribal culture in scientific manner as his lack of training in modern anthropology. L.K. Balarathanam's<sup>47</sup> *Serpent Worship in Kerala*, gives details about the religious belief of the early inhabitants of Kerala, with special emphasis on the background of serpent worship. His

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<sup>44</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer, "Marriage Customs Among the Muthuvans of Travancore", in *Man in India*, Vol.IV, 1924; "The Religions of the Primitive Tribes of Travancore", in *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society*, Vol. 24, No.3, Banglur, 1934.

<sup>45</sup> L.A. Krishna Iyer, '*Social History of Kerala*, 2 Vol. Madras, 1968.

<sup>46</sup> L.K. Bala Rathnam and L.A. Krishna Iyer, *Anthropology in India*, Madras, 1961.

<sup>47</sup> L.K. Balarathanam, *Serpent Worship in Kerala*, Madras, 1946.

edited work, *Society in India: Anthropology on the March*,<sup>48</sup> gives information on the tribes in Travancore.

M.D Raghavan,<sup>49</sup> an indologist by profession, did many field researches among the *Jen Kurumbas* of Travancore and published paper that deals with the house pattern, means of livelihood, habits and the features of social organisation of these tribes. K.P Padmanabha Menon,<sup>50</sup> had prepared notes based on the letters of Canter Visscher and published the well known, *History of Kerala* in four Vols. These notes on Visscher's letters give much information on various tribes of Kerala, such as *Kader, Malayans, Kurichias, Kurumba, Muthuvan, Mannan, Urali* etc. He deals with the designation, subdivisions, social status and the pathetic condition of tribes due to the slavery and observance of pollution.

The contributions of A.Aiyappan<sup>51</sup> for the tribal studies of Kerala deserve special mention. He was greatly influenced by the ideas of Malinowski, a prominent British anthropologist who propounded functional approach in sociological studies. Aiyappan attempted to study the social changes in Kerala adopting Malinowskian concept. The Malinowskian influence can be seen in his work, *The Social and Physical Anthropology of*

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<sup>48</sup> L.K.Balarathanam, *Society in India; Anthropology on the March*, Madras, 1958.

<sup>49</sup> M.D. Raghavan, "Jain Kurumbas: An Account of their life and Habits," *Man in India*, Vol.9, Bihar, 1939.

<sup>50</sup> K.P Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, 4 Vols., Delhi, 1924, 1929, 1933, and 1937.

<sup>51</sup> A. Aiyappan, *The Social and Physical Anthropology of the Nayadis of Malabar*, Madras, 1937; *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Madras, 1948.

*the Nayadis of Malabar*, published in 1937. Aiyappan's another work, *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, is a remarkable achievement in the anthropological studies, through which Aiyappan throws light into social and economic conditions of all tribes of the Madras province. He has furnished detailed accounts of *Edanadan Chettis*, *Wyanadan Chettis*, *Mandathan Chettis*, *Kurichiyas*, *Mulla Kurumbar*, *Urali Kurumbar*, *Kunduvatiyans*, *Karimpalans*, *Kaders*, *Pathiyans*, *Uridavans*, *Thachanad Muppans*, *Kanaladis*, *Adiyans*, *Paniyar*, *Pulayans*, *Jen Kurumbar* or *Ten Kurumbar*, *Irular*, *Aranadans* or *Ernadans*, *Mavilans*, *Vettuvans*, *Malakkarans* and *Malayans* of Kerala in his report. A striking and thought provoking description that Aiyappan has made in this work is that, he includes *Irulas* as one of the criminal tribes of *Einar* group comprising *Villian*, *Vedan*, and *Malayan*. However, it is not certain that the *Irulas* of Kerala can be included in this group. His blood group study among the tribals of Waynad may be the pioneering attempt in this regard.<sup>52</sup>

The village survey monograph forming a part of the 1961 Census operation covering nine districts and 33 villages (two of the volumes dealing exclusively with tribal areas) carry ethnographic accounts of major tribal communities. *Census of India 1961*, (V-VII Kerala, Parts VI-A-VI-H) and *Census of India 1971* (part 5-B (i) included Ethnographic Notes on Scheduled Tribes like *Hill Pulaya*, *Malai Vetan*, *Urali* and *Kader*. *The Kerala District*

<sup>52</sup> A. Aiyapan "Blood Groups of the Pre-Dravidians of the Waynad Plateau", in *Man in India*, Vol.XXXVI, reprinted in *Current Science*, Vol.IV, Bihar, 1936, pp.493-494.

*Gazetteers* were compiled and edited by Sreedhara Menon for Alleppey (1975), Cannanore(1972), Ernakulam(1966), Kottayam(1975), Kozhikode 1962), Quilon (196), Trivandram (1962), Trichur (1962) and by C.K Kareem for Palaghat (1976). Each Gazetteer devotes the third chapter to a description of the people in terms of religion, caste and tribe along with religious belief and practices, fairs and festivals, inter caste relations, manners and customs, funeral ceremonies, property inheritance marriage and house life. They also give a brief description of the tribes each district.

The Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) studied a few tribes inhabiting in Southern India, especially on *Kanikkar* and *Uralis* of Kerala. K. Gnanamabal<sup>53</sup> studied the religious and magical practices of Kanikkars and Uralis. M. K. Naga's study<sup>54</sup> gives emphasize on the family structure and demographic pattern of the *Kanikkars* of Travancaore. *The Kaders of Cochin* of U.R. Ehrenfel<sup>55</sup> deals with the various aspects of culture and tradition of *Kaders* of Cochin. The work analyses the influence of forest laws on traditional tribal economy and other factors of changes in their indigenous culture. His analysis is thought provoking. His work, besides giving on ethnographic report on the tribes, provides information regarding tribal

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<sup>53</sup> K. Gnanamabal, "Kanikkar of Travancore: Their Religious and Magical Practices", in *Bulletine of the Department of Anthropology*, Vol.III, No.2, Madras, 1954; "The Magical Rites of the Uralis", in *Man in India*, Vol. IV No.2, Bihar,1955.

<sup>54</sup> M. K. Naga, "A Demographic Study of Kanikkars of Travancore", in *Bulletine of Department of Anthropology*, Vol, 3, No. 2, Madras, 1954.

<sup>55</sup> U.R. Ehrenfel, *The Kadars of Cochin*, Madras, 1952; *Mother Rights in India*, Madras, 1941; *Aboriginal Womenhood and Culture Contact*, Madras, 1949; *Kadar Clothes and Culture Change*, Madras, 1948.

interaction with other communities and its consequences on their culture. His other works are *Mother Rights in India*, *Kader Clothes and Culture Change* and *Aboriginal Womenhood and Culture Contact*.

A.A.D. Luiz, the former chairman of the Kerala State Tribal Enquiry Committee of 1957-58 and the Chairman of all India Nomadic Tribe Enquiry Committee of 1962, published a first rate work on tribes of Kerala under the title *Tribes of Kerala*<sup>56</sup>. According to him, Kerala has been the house land of 48 tribes and no tribes found in Kerala has been categorised as 'criminal tribe'. Giving a common introduction, he depicts the settlements, origin, material culture, social structure, religious practices, customs and ceremonies, law of inheritance and occupation of these 48 tribes. He gives accounts on each tribe in alphabetical order. His study is unique and different from that of Thurston and Lyster in the sense that it is exclusively on the various hill tribes of Kerala, giving a fairly and good account of the changing pattern of their social life in the context of the socio-economic evolution of the state as a whole. His emphasis, however, is on the sociological aspects of tribal life. Luiz also has made a sporadic observation about the tribal welfare programmes.

The studies of S.K.Nandi<sup>57</sup> and Rajalakshmi Mishra<sup>58</sup> on *Mala Ulladans* and *Mullakurumbas* provide unique ethnographic reports showing light on the family, kinship, marriage as well as social control and the

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<sup>56</sup> A. A. D.Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1962.

<sup>57</sup> S.K.Nandi et al, *Life and Culture of Mala Ulladans*, Calcutta, 1971.

<sup>58</sup> Rajalakshmi Mishra, *Mulla Kurumbas of Kappala*, Calcutta, 1974.



religious rites and practices of the aforesaid tribes. P.R.G Mathur's work *Tribal Situation in Kerala*<sup>59</sup> is an excellent attempt presenting some of the tribal problems in Kerala. After describing the demographic profile of the tribal population of Kerala he depicts the culture of the two primitive communities, the *Cholanaickar* and the *Kurumbas* of Attapady in the first part of the work. In both these chapters he has recommended the economic programmes to be taken up for the development of the above two tribes. He also gives valuable information regarding certain crucial tribal problems like land alienation, bonded labour, electrification in tribal areas, status of tribal women, education of the tribal etc.

Ananda Bhanu's studies marked a landmark in the tribal studies of Kerala. His work *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*<sup>60</sup> gives details on the habitation, economic organization, nomadism, primitive elements, socio-cultural elements, etc of the *Cholanaickar* of Nilambur valley. Brian Morris<sup>61</sup> studied the *Mala Pandaram* of Kerala, which highlighted some aspects of social and cultural changing patterns. K. Kunhaman<sup>62</sup> had made notes on the tribal life of Kerala especially on the bonded labour system among the tribals of Kerala and their progressive changes.

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<sup>59</sup> P.R.G. Mathur, *Tribal Situation in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1977.

<sup>60</sup> B.Ananda Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, Culcutta, 1989.

<sup>61</sup> Brian Morris "Settlement and Social Change Among the Hill Pandaram", *Man in India*, Vol.56, No.2, Bihar, 1976.

<sup>62</sup> K. Kunhaman, "Bonded Labour in Kerala: Among the Hill Tribes of Waynad", in P.N.Varghese, ed., *State and Society*, Vol.3, No.2, Kottayam, 1982; "Understanding Tribal Life", in P.N.Varghese, ed., *State and Society*, Vol.4, No.2, Kottayam, 1983.

The Anthropological Survey of India launched a project in 1985 to produce descriptive anthropological profile of all the communities in India. Three volumes of this project, *People of India*, edited by K.S Singh <sup>63</sup> covers all the tribals of Kerala along with other communities of the state. '*Tribes of Kerala*', in the series of Encyclopaedia of Indian Tribes, edited by S.S.Shashi <sup>64</sup> deals with the tribal communities and their life, culture and customs in the state of Kerala. The second chapter of this work (Two Tribes in Transition) discusses the conditions of *Cholanaickar* and *Kurumbas* of Attapady. The work also shows light into the social customs of *Kanikkar*, religious worship among *Kader*, and family and kinship system of *Mala Ulladan*. More over he gives brief accounts on some other tribes like *Allar*, *Arandan*, *Kurichians*, *Kurumba*, *Chingathan*, *Eravallan*, *Maha Malasar*, *Koragas*, *Kochuvelan* and *Kattunayakan*. *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidain Tribes* in 3 vols, edited by T. Madhava Menon and M. Sasikumar<sup>65</sup> is a remarkable achievement in the field of tribal studies in Kerala. The first volume gives a thematic introduction and the next two give details on all Dravidian speaking tribes in India.

*Encyclopaedia Profile of Indian Tribes* <sup>66</sup> edited by Sachchidananda and R.R Prasad seeks to present a concise and comprehensive account of the socio-cultural profile of all the Scheduled Tribes in India. Each profile gives

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<sup>63</sup> K.S. Singh, *People of India*, Culcutta, 1994.

<sup>64</sup> S. S. Shashi, *Tribes of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1995.

<sup>65</sup> T. Madhava Menon and M. Sasikumar, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidain Tribes*, III Vols, Trivandrum, 1996.

<sup>66</sup> Sachchidananda and R.R Prasad, ed., *Encyclopaedia Profile of Indian Tribes*, New Delhi, 1998.

accounts on the geographical distribution of the tribes, designation, means of subsistence, economic and social organisation, religious beliefs and practices, life cycle rituals and ceremonies, the political institutions and modern social changes among the tribes. The praise worthy merit of the work is that the tribes are arranged alphabetically that favours easy reference to scholars studying tribes and to all those who are eager to familiar with Indian tribes.

The thesis of Baby Francis Kulirani,<sup>67</sup> *Emergence of a Small Town in Tribal Waynad: A Study of Pulpally*, is a study on the emergence of Pulpally village, mainly concerned with the period before the coming of immigrants to Waynad. The impact of immigration on the traditional life of the tribals in the area is the main theme of the study. M.Sasikumar's<sup>68</sup> study *The Tribe Non -Tribe Interaction With Special Reference to the Kanikkars of Tiruvananthauram District*, describes their material culture, economic, social and political organisation, religion, life-cycle ceremonies etc. He elaborately discusses the tribal interaction with non-tribes and its impacts on life and culture of the tribes with special reference to *Kanikkars*. B. Bindu<sup>69</sup> has been made a research on the '*Socio-Economic Change Among Tribes of Waynad*'. Her study focusses on *Kattunayakan, Adiyar and Mullakurumban* in Waynad.

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<sup>67</sup> Baby Francis Kulirani, *Emergence of a Small Town in Tribal Waynad: A Study of Pulpally*, PhD. Thesis, Calicut University, Unpublished, 1996.

<sup>68</sup> M.Sasikumar, *The Tribe Non -Tribe Interaction with Special Reference to the Kanikkars of Tiruvananthauram Distrit*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Calicut University, Unpublished, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> B. Bindu, '*Socio-Economic Change among the Tribes of Wynad*', Ph.D.Thesis, Calicut University, Unpublished, 1997.

The study gives details on the socio-economic changes among these tribals in the particular eco-cultural context. The Ph.D dissertation of Seetha Kakkoth<sup>70</sup>, *Three Tribes of Nilambure Valley: A Study in Inter-relationship between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture* is an anthropological study on three diminutive hunter gathering tribal groups such as *Aranadan*, *Kattu Paniyan* and *Pathinaickan* of Nilambure valley. Through a detached study, *Death, Funeral and The Ancestors Cult of the Dead and the Malabar Tribes*, Manjula Poyil<sup>71</sup> has made an attempt to expose the burial practices prevalent among the tribals in Malabar. Her study revealed that the burial practices of Megalithic people are still survived among the present day tribals in Malabar.

The studies on tribes of Kerala in the vernacular are very limited. They are not written in an anthropological and sociological point of view. Various works of K. Panoor,<sup>72</sup> such as *Kerlathile Africa*, *Malakal Manushiar Thazhvarakal*, *Sahyante Makkal* and *Yente Hrudhayathile Adivasi*, deal with the tribals and their problems with historical sketch. Though he has not discussed the problems in a scientific manner, his description throws light into the very pitiable and pathetic condition of these tribals. Nettur P. Domodaran's work<sup>73</sup> *Adivasikalude Keralam* is in the mode of travel account

<sup>70</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, *Three Tribes of Nilambure Valley: A Study in Inter-relationship Between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture*, Ph.D. Thesis, Calicut University, Unpublished, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Manjula Poyil, *Death, Funeral and The Ancestors Cult of the Dead and the Malabar Tribes*, Ph.D. Calicut University, Thesis, Unpublished, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> K. Panoor, *Kerlathile Africa*, Mal., Kottayam, 1963; *Malakal, Manushiar, Thazhvarakal*, Mal., Kottayam, 1982; *Sahyante Makkal*, Mal., Kottayam, 1990; *Yente Hrudhayathile Adivasi*, Mal., Kottayam, 2005.

<sup>73</sup> Nettur P. Domodaran, *Adivasikalude Keralam*, Mal., Kottayam, 1984.

that very much depends on Luiz work to describe the customs and ceremonies of the tribes. The works of Somasekharan Nair<sup>74</sup>, *Paniyar* and *Paniya Bhasha* deal with the life and Paniya language exclusively. In addition, he has attempted to categorise all the tribes of Kerala in a systematic manner.

*Kerala Charithram*, 2 vols.<sup>75</sup> comprehends the history of Kerala in the vernacular dividing Kerala history into various phases. In the first volume, chapter XVIII is devoted to aborigines or hill tribes of Kerala. The chapter deals with their origin, racial elements, social organisation, cultural evolution, material culture, taboos and customs, means of subsistence, marriage customs, law of inheritance, religion, tribal dances etc. P. Ravindran's<sup>76</sup> *Akalingalile Manushyar* is informative on various aspects of tribal life. Ambattu Sukumaran Nair<sup>77</sup> in his *Adivasikalude Nattil* deals with the life and culture of six tribes of Kerala. *Keralathile Adimakal* by Vettiyyar M. Premnath<sup>78</sup>, gives very brief accounts on the material culture, social laws, language, customs and ceremonies, occupation, means of subsistence etc. of hills tribes of Kerala. More over very short description on nineteen Scheduled Tribes and a special account on ex-criminal tribes are also given. He briefly describes the background that these tribes have become criminals. *Paraya*,

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<sup>74</sup> Somasekharan Nair, *Paniyar*, Mal., Kottayam, 1976; *Paniya Bhasha*, Mal., Kottayam, 1977.

<sup>75</sup> Kerala History Association, *Kerala Charithram*, 2 Vols., Mal., Ernakulam, 1973.

<sup>76</sup> P. Ravindran, *Akalingalile Manushyar*, Mal., Thiruvananthapuram, 1980.

<sup>77</sup> Ambattu Sukumaran Nair, *Adivasikalude Nattil*, Mal., Kottayam, 1982.

<sup>78</sup> Vettiyyar M. Premnath, *Keralathile Adimakal*, Mal., Thrissur, 1966.

*Paniyan, Pulayan, Kuruvan, Kanakkan, Kalladi, Velluvan* and *Thandan* are categorised as ex-criminal tribes.

The book of Sree Narayanan Mavoor,<sup>79</sup> *Cholanaickarum Kaakkappokulam*, deals with the tribes inhabited in the districts of Kozhikkode, Waynad, and Malappuram. D. Chako, Kannattunodi's *Kurichiyarute Lokam*<sup>80</sup> deals with *Kurichias* of Waynad. All aspects of *Kurichiyas'* life are elaborately discussed. K. Velappan's work<sup>81</sup> *Adivasikalum Adivasibhashakalum* is not a description only on the language of aborigines, but a collection of selected accounts on the life and culture of the aborigines of Kerala. Kumaran Wayaleri's study is on the life and culture of *Kurichias* titled *Kurichiarute Jeevithavum Samskaravum*<sup>82</sup> is a detailed account on their social, economic, religions and material culture. T.V. Achutawarrier's *Gothrasathyangal*<sup>83</sup> is one of the latest works on issues of Kerala tribals. The author has succeeded in a certain extent to present the tribal problem in an historical perspective. The works of Sister Seeliya Thomas<sup>84</sup>, *Keralathile Adivasi Kalaparamparyam* and *Keralathile Adivasikalude Jeevithavum Samskaravum* show light in to the folk tradition and life pattern of the tribes of Kerala .The former depicts the tribal culture

<sup>79</sup> Sree Narayanan Mavoor, *Cholanaickarum Kaakkappokulam*, Mal., Kottayam, 1992.

<sup>80</sup> D. Chako Kannattunodi, *Kurichiyarute Lokam*, Mal., Thiruvananthapuram, 1994.

<sup>81</sup> K. Velappan, *Adivasikalum Adivasibhashakalum*, Mal., Thiruvananthapuram, 1994

<sup>82</sup> Kumaran Wayaleri, *Kurichiarute Jeevithavum Samskaravum* , Mal., Kottayam, 1992.

<sup>83</sup> T.V. Achutawarrier, *Gothrasathyangal*, Mal., Thrissur, 2003.

<sup>84</sup> Sister Seeliya Thomas Perumpanani, *Keralathile Adivasi Kalaparamparyam*, Mal., Kottayam, 2004; *Keralathile Adivasikalude Jeevithavum Samskaravum*, Mal., Kottayam, 2005.

that has been transmitting through tribal folk songs and dances. The latter gives details about ten tribes of Kerala such as *Urali, Malayer, Ulladan, Mannan, Irular, Paniyar, Malai Pandaram, Malayarayan, Malai Pulayan (Hill Pulayar)* and *Muthuvan*.

### **ETHNOHISTORY: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

In the last decades of the first half of twentieth century there have been a number of attempts to bring together historians and anthropologists with a view to merge the approaches and methods of the two fields in a fruitful collaboration for the purpose of teaching and research. This disciplinary hybrid blossomed into the large-scale collaboration of history and social anthropology in theory and method and gave birth to a new discipline called ethnohistory. It is a special set of techniques and methods for studying cultures through the use of written and oral traditions. As it is a technique having formed with due qualities of many disciplines, ethnohistory can make no claim of uniqueness independent of history and anthropology. Ethnohistoric approach has been widely followed by both historians and anthropologists in recent times to trace the cultural origins of pre-literate people who have not developed the art of writing. The methods of their

studies have been either diachronic or synchronic,<sup>85</sup> but, as far as ethnohistorian is concerned both these methods have equal importance.

It would be relevant here to discuss how anthropology and history are interrelated and how they are different from each other. In many ways both these disciplines are closely related. According to Bernad S. Cohn, historians and anthropologists have a common subject matter, 'otherness'; one field (anthropology) constructs and studies 'otherness' in space, the other (history) in time. Both fields have a concern with text and context. Both aim, whatever else they do, at explicating the meaning of the actions of people rooted in one time and place, to persons in another. Both form of knowledge entail the act of translation"<sup>86</sup> and "history can become more historical in becoming more anthropological, that anthropology can become more anthropological in becoming more historical".<sup>87</sup> Both history and anthropology are related to human society. While social anthropology discusses the human actions that are responsible to social events, history gives a description of these events. An anthropologist, while aims to achieve complete understanding of the present condition of the society, does not attempt to study bow it came into being. It

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<sup>85</sup> When time will be taken into account, the procedure is called diachronic method. Synchronic method is taking of snapshot of culture at one moment in time. In this method, the existing cultural patterns are depicted. These are two different but complementary ways of understanding any cultural or social phenomenon. It is possible to concentrate on one type, ignoring the other nearly completely, but more complete understanding it is needed the use of the two. Ethnohistory is the method of brining the two integrating the approaches of both history and anthropology.

<sup>86</sup> Bernad S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.



would mean that his central interest is in the present and not in the past, but often the past may be directly relevant in explaining the present. According to John Beattie "history is important to social anthropologists not only as an account of past events leading up to and explaining the present but also as the body of contemporary ideas which people have about these events".<sup>88</sup>

The similarity between this kind of historiography and social anthropology, according to Evans-Pritchard, "has been obscured by the fact that social anthropologists make direct studies of social life whereas historians make indirect studies of it from documentary and other sources, by the fact that social anthropologists study primitive societies<sup>89</sup> which lack recorded history; and by the fact that social anthropologists generally study synchronic problems while historians study diachronic problems."<sup>90</sup> Kroeber opines, "these are differences of technique, emphasis, and perspective, and not of aim or method, and that essentially the method of both historiography and social anthropology is descriptive integration, even though anthropological synthesis is usually one a higher plane of abstraction than historical synthesis and anthropology more explicitly and deliberately than history aims at comparison and generalization."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> John Beattie, *Other Cultures*, London, 1987, pp. 23, 24.

<sup>89</sup> Evans-Pritchard describes primitive societies as those societies which are small in scale concerning numbers, territory and range of social contacts and which have by comparison with more advanced societies a simple technology and economy and little specialization of social function. See E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, reprint, New Delhi, 1990, p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.60, 61.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61.

The significant differences between history and social anthropology, according to I.M. Lewis, "lie in the two subjects' conflicting evaluation of the importance of antecedent events"<sup>92</sup> and he further argues that the historical approach within anthropology was represented by two main groups, that is, social evolutionists and the diffusionists.<sup>93</sup> Thus the two approaches are mutually sustaining and the anthropologists certainly need historical data to elucidate many aspects of the structural processes in which he is interested. In order to have a better understanding of the social processes an anthropologist has to resort to historical methods. Similarly, for a better understanding of the social and cultural formations in the past, historian has to adopt anthropological methods.

The initial form of synchronic structural study that developed within American anthropology of Red Indian tribes later has given way to the use of the direct historical approach.<sup>94</sup> In the American context, anthropologists who studied the living cultures of Indian tribes were forced to use historical evidences to reconstruct the culture of the group by working backward for which they had to identify archaeological sites where the material evidences

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<sup>92</sup> I.M. Lewis, *History and Social Anthropology*, ed., London, 1968, p. XII.

<sup>93</sup> While the former tended to explain institutions in terms of a line of progress through immutable stages from earlier forms, the latter sought in any particular settings the origins of institutions in terms of the effects of external contact and connections.

<sup>94</sup> The use of direct historical method to reconstruct the history of aboriginal societies was questioned. Kroeber stated, "for the study of poor dateless primitive . . . we do not possess even one document written before our day". See A.L. Kroeber, *The Nature of Culture*, Chicago, 1952, p. 63. The history-oriented research in anthropology was also questioned by Radcliffe Brown and Malinowski in England in the 1920s. Both focussed on the unavailability of documents for the study of primitive societies.

of the group lay buried. This diachronic approach formulated by uniting ethnology, history and archaeology has generally become known as ethnohistory. Its primary aim is to gauge the degree of change that occurs in culture and to comprehend the historical factors involved in and determining change.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, one can say that the discussion on collaborating history and anthropology took place mainly emphasising on two things. Firstly, both history and anthropology do the same things; that is, tracing the origins of culture and the factors leading to cultural changes; secondly, historians are chiefly interested in the past while anthropologists are interested in the present conditions of a culture. Thus, both disciplines are different in their approach in the study of man though the objectives have no much difference. However, ethnohistory assumed its present form by adopting the basic features of both history and anthropology. As far as historian is concerned, he is more interested with material cultures of past illiterate communities, while social anthropologists is concerned material culture of living communities.

### **Defining Ethnohistory**

Ethnohistory has been defined in different ways. In certain contexts, it is defined as "The reconstruction of the history of an area and people who

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<sup>95</sup> James Axtell, "Ethnohisotry: An Historian's View Point", *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 26, Lubbock, 1979, p.3.

have no written history”.<sup>96</sup> It is also used to denote the field of studies concerning the past of the primitive or preliterate societies. Ethnohistory is also defined as the "use of anthropological theory and methods in historical practice."<sup>97</sup> Clark Wissler was the first to use the term 'ethnohistory' in 1909 at mentioning of reconstructing prehistoric culture by combining available "ethnohistorical and archaeological data". For him 'ethnohistorical' was a synonym for documents produced by non-natives.<sup>98</sup> But in the 1940s some North American cultural anthropologists, archaeologists and historians used the term systematically "to describe their writings and researches on the history of the aborigines of the New World".<sup>99</sup>

In the initial years of the development of the discipline, anthropologists had dominated while defining and structuring its methodology. This domination may be the reason behind defining of ethnohistory as "the study of the history of the peoples normally studied by anthropologists".<sup>100</sup> They viewed ethnohistory as the use of written documents only for the study of primitive people, that is, the use of non-anthropological evidences for their own purposes and ethnohistory was considered as sub-branch of ethnology or sub-discipline of cultural anthropology. According to them, ethnohistory

<sup>96</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*, New York, 1987, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Shepard Krech III, 'The State of Ethnohistory' in B.J. Siegel, ed., *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 20, Rhode Island, 1991, p. 347.

<sup>99</sup> See Bernard S. Cohn, "Ethnohistory" in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, New York, 1972, p. 440.

<sup>100</sup> William C. Sturtevant, "Anthropology, History, and Ethnohistory" in James A. Clifton, ed, *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, London, 1968 pp. 453, 454.

"represents a common-law marriage of history and ethnology, whose purpose is to produce scholarly offspring who bear the diachronic dimensions of history and the synchronic sensitivity of ethnology".<sup>101</sup> Recently the frontier historians<sup>102</sup> and practitioners of new social history began to adopt more anthropological concepts in their approach in the study of the past. Their complementary approach has further strengthened the need of interdisciplinary collaboration of history and anthropology.

In the 1960s, we could observe the broadening and refining the definition of ethnohistory. Both historians and anthropologists began to agree that ethnohistory "is essentially the use of historical and ethnological methods and materials to gain knowledge of the nature and causes of change in a culture defined by ethnological concepts and categories."<sup>103</sup> Both anthropologists and historians have attempted to redefine ethnohistory in different dimensions. While "anthropologists tend to specify that it relies on written documents (the narrow definition of history), the historians tend to use the label only for studies of the past societies wherein written records are lacking or scanty (the broad definition of history)".<sup>104</sup> For more clarity, it is to be stated that anthropologists use historical documents for his purposes

<sup>101</sup> James Axtell, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Frontier history is essentially a history of only one side of the frontier even as set forth in its own terms. The frontier may be conceived alternatively as a region shared by several societies of varied cultures; who sometimes compete and sometimes cooperative, but that sort of conception leads to a different sort of history. See Francis Jennings, "A Growing Partnership: Historians, Anthropologists and American Indian History" in *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 25, Lubbock, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>103</sup> Cited in James Axtell, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> William C. Sturtevant, *op.cit.*, p. 354.

whereas historians use ethnological data of contemporary illiterate communities for historical reconstruction. At the same time, ethnohistorians use both historical and anthropological evidences with equal importance. The three dimensions that characterise ethnohistory are concentration on the past or the present, the use of written or unwritten documents or ethnological data from the field and synchronic or a diachronic emphasise.

The two basic interests of ethnohistory are historical ethnography and the historiography of non-literate cultures. Historical ethnography is the reconstruction of a synchronic ethnographic description of a past stage of a culture, especially a description based on written documents contemporary with that stage.<sup>105</sup> But for more well rounded description of all aspects of culture the field ethnographic data in the form of oral traditions, comparative ethnology, archaeology genealogies etc. Historical ethnography becomes necessary as culture change speeds up everywhere in the world. Increasing technology and communication, and the intrusion of modernism over isolated tribal groups mean that ethnohistorical methods are necessary to provide a wide range ethnographic account of various aspects of tribalism.

An ethnohistorian will be evolutionary in approach while studying the cultural history of illiterate communities. He combines the available historical sources with the data collected through ethnographic fieldwork among the present day members of the tribal societies for the reconstruction of their

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

unrecorded past. The goal of ethnohistorian is to present rounded history which Bernard. S. Cohn aptly called 'proctological history'<sup>106</sup> that is, "the study of history from the bottom up"<sup>107</sup> and according to him "history from the bottom up sends the historian to smaller and smaller localities so that he may observe the lives of people in the round."<sup>108</sup> Ethnohistory gives special emphasise to the study of particular cultural units, equivalent to the field anthropologists' ethnographic accounts. Ethnohistorian differs in approach from that of conventional historian in several respects. The ethnohistorian usually has wide range of field experience in the area; this experience increases his understanding of the indigenous society and its functions. His interpretation of documentary evidences depends on his understanding of functional aspect of the society. Shortly, ethnohistorian tries to perceive historical events from the viewpoint of aborigines even when he is using the administrator's documents. Other wise he tries to relate all historical events with life and culture of the aborigines.

### **History of Ethnohistory**

Ethnohistoric research goes back to the time of Lewis H. Morgan who left a variety of historical records on *Ancient Society* (1877).<sup>109</sup> Then the

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<sup>106</sup> Proctological history is the study of history from the bottom up that is, the study of the masses, the inarticulate, the deprived, the disposed the exploited, those groups and categories in society seen by earlier and more elitist historians, not as protagonistic but as passive and therefore not a proper historical focus. Bernad S. Cohn, *op.cit.*, (n-86), p. 39.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>109</sup> Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society: Reserches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*, Cleveland, 1877.

scholar like Bandelier (1878),<sup>110</sup> Nuttall (1901)<sup>111</sup> and Swanton (1931)<sup>112</sup> undertook ethnohistoric studies. A.G. Baily (1937)<sup>113</sup> published the first major ethnohistorical study in *American Anthropologist*, entitled 'The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Culture 1504-1700'. This study highlighted the importance of understanding native cultures subsequent to European contact. Works like Robert Redfield's (1936) *Outline for the Study of Acculturation* and Linton's (1940) *Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes* were milestones in the development of ethnohistorical studies.<sup>114</sup> As a result of these studies some anthropologists became aware of the need to understand native cultures in an historical perspective.

A pronounced shift of interest in anthropology towards history occurred since after the end of Second World War and a trend of linking topics and problems of both history and anthropology began to emerge. Because of this trend, ethnohistory was recognised as a natural meeting ground for historians and anthropologists. The factors that contributed to the emergence of

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<sup>110</sup> Aodlf. F. Bandelier, *On the Distribution and Tenure of Lands and the Customs with Respect to Inheritance among the Ancient Mexicans*. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Eleventh Annual Report, Salem Mass, 1878, pp. 335-448; *On the Social Organisation and Mode of Government of the Ancient Mexicans*, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Twelfth Annual Report, Salem Mass, 1880, pp. 557-699.

<sup>111</sup> Zelia Nuttall, "The Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilization: A Corporation Research Based on a Study of the Ancient Mexican Religious, Sociological and Calendrical Systems." Peabody Museum Papers in *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol.2, Salem Mass 1901.

<sup>112</sup> John R. Swanton, "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians", *American Ethnology, Bulletin 103*, Washington, 1931.

<sup>113</sup> Bruce G. Trigger, "Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects" in *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, Lubbock, 1982, p.84.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*



ethnohistory as a discrete methodology were mainly three. First, the widespread concern of anthropologists with problems of cultural contact, cultural change, acculturation etc. Frequently ethnohistoric researches began to enlarge the database and to provide greater time depth in tracing a particular sequence of culture change.<sup>115</sup> Second, during the same period there was a rapid growth of anthropological researches in Latin America, which brought investigators into contact with the copious archival materials that were recorded by administrative officials.<sup>116</sup> Third, the achievement of independence by a number of former colonies throughout the world. These new nations extended their support in the attempts of discovering their past that had been ignored by the colonial administrators.

At first, the ethnohistorical research was carried out by ethnologists who attempted to familiarise themselves at best they could, with the techniques of historiography. Most of them had been trained as filed workers and therefore were not accustomed to the methods of archival research and library references. They treated written sources as they would handle a native informant, and they would analyse historical documents as their own field notes. Thus, for a long time, North American ethnohistory remained as a part of cultural anthropology.

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Ralph L. Beals, "The Contemporary Culture of the Cahita Indians", *American Ethnology Bulletin* 142, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1945.

<sup>116</sup> For example, Paul Kirchhoff and Alfred Metraux, "The North Eastern Extension of Andean Culture", in Julian Steward, ed., *Handbook of South American Indians*, Washington, 1948.

The systematic ethnohistorical work began to appear in a volume of studies dedicated to John Reed Swanton and published by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC in 1940.<sup>117</sup> Swanton's use of documentary historical sources along with the ethnographic data for the reconstruction of the aboriginal cultures provided a new dimension in the study of primitive cultures. William N. Fenton used seventeenth and eighteenth century documents to trace the location and movements of Iroquois bands (1940).<sup>118</sup> He observes how field and library could be combined in the study of cultures. In addition, he broke new ground by writing ethnological and historical data to expose cultural-geographical differentiations among the Iroquois. William Duncan Strong demonstrated that documentary materials could be used with archaeological data collected from an aboriginal habitat to provide a continuous record from the past to the present. Julian Steward's study of Great Basin<sup>119</sup> societies combines ecology, history, archaeology and anthropology and yielded insight into their structural formulations and cultural dynamics (1940). The three studies indicated that the ethnohistorical

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<sup>117</sup> Bernad S. Cohn, *op.cit.*, (n-99), p. 440.

<sup>118</sup> Iroquois band is a band inhabited in Iroquois. Iroquois, a village in Eastern Ontario, Canada, is on the St. Lawrence River about 72 Km. southeast of Ottawa. The word Iroquois, 'derived from the Algonkin (A North American Indian Language) word 'Irinkhoiw' or "Real Address", denotes both Iroquoian language family and the six tribes that together formed the confederacy known as the League of the Iroquois. The six tribes were the Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Seneca, Onandaga, and Tuscarora. See *The Encyclopedia of America* Vol. 15, American Cooperation, New York, 1971, p. 468.

<sup>119</sup> Great Basin, in the Western United States, is a relatively unproductive area of interior drainage, occupying western Utah, Eastern California, Nevada and small parts of Wyoming, Oregon and Idaho.

approach was gathering formalised and that "ethnohistorical problems served to draw prehistorians, ethnologists and historians into a common enterprise."<sup>120</sup>

An explosion of inter disciplinary collaboration occurred shortly after Second World War. In 1945, an interdisciplinary Conference on Iroquois Research was conducted under the presidency of the well-known anthropologist, William N. Fenton.<sup>121</sup> In 1951, Stanely Pargellis, a professional historian, who was the then librarian of the Newberry Library, summoned a conference on American Indian Affairs at the Newberry. The participants who were invited to the conference represented both from the fields of history and anthropology. They included Charles Gibson, Erminic Wheeler, Voegelin, W.N. Fenton and Anthony F.C. Wallace.<sup>122</sup> Though the subject matter of Newberry Conference was American Indians, its orientation was strictly methodological. In 1953 the Institute of Early American History and Culture held a conference on "Early American Indians and White Relations", which addressed itself specifically to the problems of bringing together the humanist tradition of history and the scientific tradition of anthropology. These regional conferences rapidly expanded their scope, emerged as the American Indian Ethnohistoric Conference, and finally blossomed as the American Society for Ethnohistory.

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<sup>120</sup> Charles Hudson, "The Historical Approach in Anthropology" in John Hovingman, *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed., Vol. 1, Delhi, 1997, p. 121.

<sup>121</sup> Francis Jennings, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

The Ethnohistory Society began to publish a quarterly journal *Ethnohistory* since 1953. In the initial stages, the focal point of the journal was to promote interdisciplinary collaboration. However, the theoretical charter of ethnohistory appeared in Fred Eggan's Presidential address to the American Anthropological Association in the same year. He advocated a combination of the historical approach with the theory of social structure. Within American anthropology, this view was "pitted against the positivist and scientific tendency which had already come to dominate anthropological research by this time."<sup>123</sup> The Ethnohistory society was a sort of umbrella organisation under which scholars began to gather from more specialised groups. In 1965, the conference on the Fur Trade began.<sup>124</sup> In 1968, the conference on Algonquian studies started up.<sup>125</sup> A conference on Cherokee studies come together about every five years.<sup>126</sup> Edward Spicer's *Perspectives in American Indian Cultural Change* (1961) and his monumental *Cycles of Conquest* (1962) deserve special mention in the development of ethnohistory in USA.

In France, the historical research in anthropology was propounded with the publication of Claude Levi-Strauss' *Structural Anthropology* (1958). The fundamental difference between history and anthropology, as observed by Levi-Strauss, "is not one of subject, of goal, or of method. They share the

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<sup>123</sup> Ranajith Guha, 'Introduction', in Bernad S. Cohn, *op.cit.*, (n-86), p. XII.

<sup>124</sup> Francis Jennings, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

same subject, which is social life; the same goal, which is a better understanding of man; and in fact, the same method, in which only the proportions of research techniques varies. They differ, principally, in their choice of complementary perspectives. History organizes its data in relation to conscious expression of social life, while anthropology proceeds by examining its unconscious foundations.”<sup>127</sup> The distinctive task of anthropology is to discern the unconscious activity of the mind, and that this can more easily be discerned through the use of historical data, which permit the researcher to understand the underlying structural features that remain constant while actual cultural manifestations change. For Levi-Strauss history and anthropology are inseparable.

Evans Pritchard<sup>128</sup> in England put forward a forceful argument for a historical point of view in social anthropology. According to him, social anthropology is a kind of historiography. To support his argument that social anthropology and history differ not in methods or aims, but only in technique, he identified common factors in the phases of research in social anthropology and history. In the first phase, the anthropologist goes to live in an exotic society, mastering the language and observing daily life taking notes of his observations. In the next phase, he returns home and recounts the field experiences. In the third phase, he tries to make comparison between the

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<sup>127</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, Vol. 1, London, 1993, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> For details see E.E. Evand Pritchard, “Social anthropology: Past and Present” in Faber & Faber ed., *Essays in Social Anthropology*, London, 1962.

society he has studied and societies studied by other anthropologists. According to Pritchard, anthropologist's research is different only in the first phase from that of a historian's.

The theoretical contributions of Fred Eggan, Levi-Strauss, Evans Pritchard and others were not properly evaluated mainly because of the social and political factors in modern world. Their researches were mainly in four areas; (1) Studies of inferential history<sup>129</sup> and material cultures (2) Historical research by archaeologists, (3) Various forms of historical research by social anthropologists, and (4) Research in folk history. Though some of these theoretical formulations are a continuation of older lines of anthropological thought, some of them have stimulated recent thinking on ethnohistory. The methodology followed in cultural anthropology has proven to be congenial to historian. The concept of culture as an all-embracing idea covering behaviour and values of particular time fits well with historian's predilections. Stuvart Hughes has rightly put it down as follows "the approach of the cultural anthropologists so closely resembles that of the historians as frequently to be seen identical with it. Like the historical scholars, the students of exotic

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<sup>129</sup> Inferential history is based on the analysis of information not associated with absolute or relative dates. It is derived from data or phenomenon that so not yield up their historical content directly, their significance must be extracted from then by making one or more inferences. Inferences about history can be made from three kinds of data, that is, biological data on man, plants and animals, linguistic data and cultural data. This area of research has its roots in the work of the European diffusionists and was carried on by the first generation of American anthropologists, including Clark Wissler, R. Dixon and A.L. Kroeber. The methodological principles of inferential history were set out in detailed by Edward Sapir (1951) in "Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture: A Study in Method" in David G. Mandelbaum ed, *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*, Berkeley, originally Published in 1916.

cultures adopt a highly permissive attitude towards his data; he is perfectly happy in the realm of imprecision and of initiative procedures; he tries to grapple with what he regards as the central problem of the societies with which he is concerned.”<sup>130</sup>

Researches that are more recently ethnohistoric began to focus on divergent themes and areas. Some propose cultural or structural rather than ecological or demographic interpretation of behaviour.<sup>131</sup> Others emphasise the discovery of native perspectives and values through texts, ethnographic fieldwork, oral tradition and linguistic studies. Such studies mainly focussed on the traditional forms of village organisations,<sup>132</sup> migration<sup>133</sup> descent and politics,<sup>134</sup> gender relations and marriage<sup>135</sup> adaptations to colonial rule,<sup>136</sup> missionary organisations and ideology<sup>137</sup> and cosmology and chiefships.<sup>138</sup> And in methodology, ethnohistorians rely upon archaeology, historical

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<sup>130</sup> Stuvart H. Hughes, 'The Historians and Social Scientist', *American Historical Review*, New York, 1960. p. 34.

<sup>131</sup> L. J. Taylor, *Dutchman on the Bay: The Ethnohistory of a Contractual Community*, Philatelpphia, 1983; G.W. Conrad and A.A. Demarest, *Religion and Empire: The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism*, Cambridge, 1984.

<sup>132</sup> R. Behar, *Santa Maria del Monte, The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village*, Princeton, 1986.

<sup>133</sup> C.B. Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait: Population and History in a Portuguese Parish*, Princeton, 1987.

<sup>134</sup> Faure, D, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society: Lineage and Village in the Eastern New Territories, Hong Kong*, Oxford, 1986.

<sup>135</sup> A Lavrin, ed., *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, Lincoln, 1989.

<sup>136</sup> L.V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Small Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900*, Philadelphia, 1982.

<sup>137</sup> T.O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of An East African Mission at the Grassroots*, Bloomington, 1982.

<sup>138</sup> R.M. Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition*, Bloomington, 1981.

linguistics, physical anthropology, comparative ethnology along with the written records and oral traditions to reconstruct the unrecorded past.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the main objectives of the present study.

- To trace out the ethnohistory of tribes in Malappuram district
- To describe the ethnographic profile of the tribes of Malappuram district
- To assess the reasons of their isolation and backwardness.
- To analyse the changes and problems among these tribal people.

## **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

Each culture had its own independent history. The history of each group is distinct,<sup>139</sup> all cultures are taken as equal, and one culture may not be judged according to the standard of another.<sup>140</sup> Tribals are integral part of our society and culture. They possess a very rich culture and tradition. They represent the way of life that was common to India at the time when Indian

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<sup>139</sup> Franz Boas developed the concept of 'historical particularism' to explain the unique culture flourished in a particular historical situation. According to him, each culture was a unique product of discrete historical events and circumstances. His historical approach pictured cultures as historical accidents with too many combinations and permutations for generalisation about causation and cultural differences. Boas pointed out that the tribal people of the world had histories just as long as civilized peoples and that their ways of life had coherence and validity of their own. See Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*, New York, 1940, pp,627-34.

<sup>140</sup> This is the concept of 'cultural relativism' of Franz Boas. According to Boas, the position that all values are relative and there are no universal standards. *Ibid*.



culture first began. They also represent many values that other parts of India have lost. Their culture and tradition are changing and vanishing. The cultural aspects of the tribes should be recorded before they vanish under the impact of acculturation and other forces changes. This study will be helpful to reconstruct the tribal culture of the past. Tribal cultures give us an idea of the initial primitive level of cultural raw materials that contributed to the development of Indian culture. Modern tribes are unreflective and imaginative persons and their ideas throw light on the ideas of primitive society. The Nineteenth Century evolutionists used comparative method, that is, reconstruction of past through the use of living tribal people as examples of earlier stages. Edward Tylor, is often called the 'father of ethnology', developed the 'concept of survivals', which became important in the evolutionary reconstruction of past societies.<sup>141</sup>D.D.Kosambi<sup>142</sup> observes that India shows extraordinary continuity of culture and other living survivals of observances which can only have originated in the most primitive stages of human society. The past cultural traits that still survive among the present

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<sup>141</sup> By survivals, Tylor meant vestigial patterns from the past that had lost their functions but had been carried on into a later stage of society by force of habit. They continued in forms like various superstitions, customs and institutions. He took such survivals to indicate remnants from a past stage and proof that English society had passed through earlier, primitive stages. On the basis of comparing the survivals, material and non-material, Tylor concluded that contemporary savage people represented the earlier stages of cultural development, which had been traversed by civilized people. Thus, the three successive developments of societies were- savagery, barbarism and civilization. See Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, London, 1871, p.p.1-28.

<sup>142</sup> D.D. Kosambi has applied a liberal multi-disciplinary approach to historical investigation including the anthropological tools also. D.D.Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1990, pp.27,28.

day tribals are very important to the understanding of Indian culture because, as Kosambi has rightly observed, “the entire course of Indian history shows tribal elements being fused into a general society.”<sup>143</sup>

Tribal question is a burning question of the nation. The problems that these tribals face may hinder the all round development of the nation. The debate on tribal development is also a debate over modern development and its impacts on eco-system and marginalised tribals. As the tribals are the weakest and marginalised sections of the society, special program for their empowerment and upward mobility and to integrate them with the mainstream of the society, to be designed and executed. Knowledge of the present socio-economic and culture life will certainly be valuable for planning schemes for the betterment of the tribes, irrespective of their colour, physical stature and location of habitation. This study will be also helpful in assessing the need of tribes and providing the help where it is actually required. It may serve as an ‘eye- opener’ to the government authority and the people those who want to make progressive changes in our society. A shared vision of tribal history can lead to a common vision for an egalitarian society where the tribals get their due place amongst the other people of the county. More over tribal history should be reinterpreted from the perspective of contemporary problems like marginalisation, land alienation, globalisation, identity crises, social mobility etc. The writing of a common history of tribals and non- tribal should be done

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

with the aim of exposing the historical background of the tribal problems and the challenges which are found unsolved on the way of mobilising these marginalised.

## **SOURCES AND METHODS**

Fieldwork is the main method of the present study. The data from the study of the social institutions and material culture of the tribals are very important, as it is difficult to achieve the objective from the study of documentary evidences alone. Ideas relating to historical relationship and processes may actually be tested in the field where various aspects of the tribal society and culture are still in operation.

Standard anthropological methods and techniques (like interviews, observations both participant and non-participant) are used in the fieldwork. About all the tribal habitats in the district were visited and observed their life and culture. Without the tribals, non tribal people live in the neighbouring areas, forest officials, Tribal Development Department personals, *Anganwadi* teachers, *Badhal* school teachers, tribal co-operative staffs, Nilambur *Kovilakom* members etc. are interviewed. The data collected through interviews are verified by using observation methods and cross- checking the same with the key informants in each group.

Oral sources are widely used in the present study. In recent years, ethnohistorians and anthropologists with a historical interest have

demonstrated convincingly how oral tradition can be recorded, collected, checked and utilized for historical purposes. Oral traditions are found in a variety of forms covering a wide variety of subject matter. They reflect the history, the social units within the society, village and lineage, and cultural performances which will have accounts of their past. They also perform the specific function of relating groups to each other and which validate or correct local claims and support relationship.

As it is difficult to identify every individuals and groups adequately, the present study is supplemented by written documents also. The previous ethnographic accounts by anthropologists, official administrators, foreign travellers and Christian missionaries are referred. The official records, land surveys, legal documents are also used.

## **CHAPTERISATION**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter, 'Introduction', covers the problem and area of the study, relevance of tribal history, review of previous literature, conceptual framework on ethnohistory, objectives, sources and methods of the present study. The second chapter, 'Ethnographic Profile', gives description on various aspects of the culture and tradition of all tribes in the district in alphabetical order. Demography and habitation, name and origin, material culture, socio-religious organisations and life cycle rituals and ceremonies of each tribe are outlined from past to the

present in the chapter. The third chapter, 'Tribes in Isolation' analyses the factors that responsible for the isolation or marginalisation of the tribals in the district. A possible explanation is given to the tribal isolation in the district applying the three-fold method of Franz Boas, that is, an investigation in connection with geography, history and psychology. The fourth chapter, 'Tribes in Transition', deals with the changes that have been taking place among the tribes under study. The chapter also examines the factors that accelerate the changes and their consequences on tribal culture and tradition. The fifth and last chapter, 'Conclusion' presents the major findings of the present study based on the data obtained from the field as well as the previous ethnographic accounts.

**Table 1.1****Scheduled Tribes Population in Kerala - Census, 2001**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Adiyan	10,715
2	Aranadan	153
3	Eravallan	3,890
4	Hill Pulaya	2,893
5	Irular	23,998
6	Kadar	2,145
7	Kammara	39
8	Kanikkaran	21,677
9	Kattunayakan	14,715
10	Kochu Velan	36
11	Konda Kapus	12
12	Kondareddis	377
13	Koraga	1,152
14	Kota	40
15	Kudiya	447
16	Kurichian	32,846
17	Kuruman	26,177
18	Kurumbas	2,174
19	Maha Malasar	116
20	Malai Arayan	32,332
21	Malai Pandaram	2,694
22	Malai Vedan	6,186
23	Malakkuravan	260
24	Malasar	1,720
25	Malayan	5,696
26	Malayarayar	2,299
27	Mannan	7,764
28	Marati	27,824
29	Muthuvan	21,266
30	Palleyan	419
31	Palliyan	962
32	Palliyar	328
33	Paniyan	81,940
34	Ulladan	16,741
35	Uraly	11,103
36	Generic Tribes	1,153
	Total	3,64,189

**Table 1.2****District wise Distribution of Scheduled Tribes Population - Census, 2001**

<b>District</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%</b>
Thiruvananthapuram	9,890	11,003	20,893	5.7
Kollam	2,447	2,743	5,190	1.4
Pathanamthitta	3,184	3,365	6,549	1.7
Alappuzha	1,565	1,566	3,131	0.8
Kottayam	8,972	9,368	18,340	5.0
Idukki	25,510	25,463	50,973	13.9
Ernakulam	5,079	4,967	10,046	2.7
Thrissur	2,293	2,533	4,826	1.3
Palakkad	19,990	19,675	39,665	10.8
<b>Malappuram</b>	<b>5,996</b>	<b>6,271</b>	<b>12,267</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Kozhikkode	2,924	3,016	5,940	1.6
Waynad	67,394	68,668	136,062	37.3
Kannur	9,793	10,176	19,969	5.4
Kasargode	15,132	15,206	30,338	8.3
Total	1,80,169	1,84,020	3,64,189	100

**Table 1.3****Scheduled Tribe Population in Malappuram District Census, 2001**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Aranadan	64	73	137	1.1
2	Kattunayakan	809	738	1547	12.6
3	Kuruman	206	204	410	3.3
4	Muthuvan/ Mala Muthan	1329	1343	2672	21.78
5	Paniyan	3271	3635	6906	56.2
6	Others	317	278	595	4.8
	Total	5996	6271	12,267	100

## CHAPTER II

### ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Malappuram district has been the home land of various tribal communities. According to 2001 Census, the total Scheduled Tribes (ST) population in the district is 12,267 which constitute 3.3% of the total ST population of the Kerala state. As per the latest information available, the total number of ST population in the district is 14,831<sup>1</sup> (Table 1.4). *Aranadan*, *Cholanaickan*, *Kattunayakan*, *Kuruman*, *Mala Muthan*, *Mala Panickan*<sup>2</sup> and *Paniyan* are the Scheduled Tribe Communities in Malappuram District.<sup>3</sup> There are 223<sup>4</sup> tribal settlements that are stretched in the hill ranges as well as plains of the district. The settlements are mainly scattered in Nilambur and Eranad Taluks. *Paniyans* are the numerically largest single Scheduled Tribe Community in the district. They number 8833<sup>5</sup> which constitutes 59% of the total ST population in the district. Though they constitute the first place, they are the most backward group in the district. A group of *Paniyans* in the district are called *Kattu Paniyan* or *Kurinji Paniyan* after their area of habitation. They are found in the interior of the forest; therefore, they have primitive nature. *Aranadan* is the smallest group in the district. Their total strength is 169.<sup>6</sup> A unique feature of the tribal scenario of Malappuram district

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<sup>1</sup> *ITDP Census*, Nilambur, 2006, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Cholanaickan* and *Mala Panickan* are included in the ST list by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act. 10 of 2003) vide part VII - Kerala in the Second Schedule.

<sup>3</sup> *District Handbooks of Kerala, Malappuram*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *ITDP Census, op cit.*, p.1. The list of settlements has been furnished in the appendices.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



is the habitation of the two primitive tribal communities of Kerala viz., *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan*. They are found in Karulai and Chungathara ranges of the district.

### **ARANADAN**

According to 2001 Census, the total number of *Aranadan*<sup>7</sup> tribes in the district is 137 which constitute 1.1% of the total ST population of the district. As per the latest information available their number is 169. *Aranadan* is the smallest tribal group in the district. They are mainly concentrated in Kalikavu, Karulai, Chokkad and Amaranbalam Panchayaths of Nilambur Taluk. Presently their colonies are situated near the main bazars amidst of the more advanced populated areas and most of them are provided houses by the Government by establishing colonies. Unlike the other tribes in the district no *Aranadan* hut is found in the forest. They are also found in Kannur, Palakkad, Ernakulam and Kollam districts.<sup>8</sup> *Aranadans* "are very primitive and present many traits of primitive aborigines with physical features of platyrrhine nose, prominent eye brows and with curly hair . . . They are stern, muscular, long-armed, dark brown in colour and have all the external features of tribes".<sup>9</sup> "They are short of stature, platyrrhine with an unusually high cephalic index"<sup>10</sup>. *Aranadan* language "shows features of the northern dialects

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<sup>7</sup> *Aranadan* is singular and *Aranadans* or *Aranadar* is plural.

<sup>8</sup> Census, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *Tribes of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.II, reprint, Madras, 1975, p. 218.

of Malayalam, and of Kannada. Nasalization of vowels is a peculiarity; . . . Kannada influence is seen".<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1.4**  
**Scheduled Tribe Population in Malappuram District-2006**

Sl. No.	Tribe	Female	Male	Total	%
1	<i>Aranadan</i>	87	82	169	1.1
2	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	128	139	267	1.8
3	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	1,058	998	2,056	13.8
4	<i>Kuruman</i>	133	139	272	1.8
5	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	1,186	1,094	2,280	15.3
6	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	507	429	936	6.3
7	<i>Paniyan</i>	4,711	4,122	8,833	59.4
8	Others	8	10	18	0.1
	Total	7,818	7,013	14,831	100

### **Name and Origin**

*Aranadan* is the corrupt form of 'Eranadan' and they consider themselves as the original inhabitants of Eranad taluk of Malappuram district. The name *Aranadan* is a variation of Eranad and cannotes they are a tribe of Eranad taluk.<sup>12</sup> It is also believed that the name *Aranadan* might have originated from their life style of spending half time in jungles. In Malayalam 'ara' means 'half' and 'nadu' means 'country'. So *Aranadan* means 'one who lives half the time in the country.'

<sup>11</sup> K. Madhava Menon, *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidian Tribes*, ed, Vol. II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

There are different views about their origin and early habitation. One claim is that, they are early uncivilized Dravidian speaking tribals who came to Kerala several centuries ago from the neighbouring Dravidian speaking area. This argument is made on the basis of the language affinity and habitation of *Aranadan* in the neighbouring states. “*Aranadan* speak a dialect of Tamil language admired with the words of Malayalam and Tulu dialect, Mangalore based Dravidian dialect”.<sup>13</sup> It is also argued that a few *Aranadans* are still found inhabiting in Tamil Nadu.<sup>14</sup> Luiz considers a location named Aranadakulam as their original habitat.<sup>15</sup> But nobody knows where Aranadakulam is located. In the course of field work, a place named Aranadanpadam in Edakkara Panchayath in the district is located and where some *Aranadan* families are still found inhabiting. At the same time, Aranadankulam cannot be seen. So the former Aranadankulam may be corrupted into Aranadanpadam where these groups firstly settled. The place name is originated from their name.<sup>16</sup> The name ‘Aranadanpadam’ denotes ‘field of Aranadan’ (*padam* means field). In the 1901 Census, the *Aranadans* are described as "a hill tribe of Malabar".<sup>17</sup> Thurston describes them as "a small jungle tribe found exclusively in Malabar."<sup>18</sup> So they may be the

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<sup>13</sup> Jakka Parthasarathy, “*Aranadan*”, in Sachchidananda and R.R. Prasad, ed., *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes*, New Delhi, 1998. p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Census*, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Personal Interview with native people such as *Aranadan*, *Paniyans*, and Muslims, *Aranadanpadam*, Pothukalluul, 30-05-07.

<sup>17</sup> *Census of India 1901*, Vol.XXVI, Part-I, Report, Travancore, 1903, p.33.

<sup>18</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.217.

autochthons of Eranad and due to their habitation the area may be called Eranad.

### **Material Culture**

In the past, *Aranadans* were primitive hunters and food gatherers. Till the very recent time, they used to live in caves, subsequently, though semi-nomadic, they lived in temporary huts without walls or partition, erected near water course.<sup>19</sup> *Aranadan* huts were very small, all sides were opened, thatched with grass straw, and the floor was in a level with the ground. The structure and dimensions of the huts are extremely disappointing as a number of persons had to be accommodated. They do not care in keeping inside and outside of the houses clean. Bathing and washing were not found necessary. In the winter season they make fire in front of the house and all the family do sleep around the camp fire.

Earthen pots, vessels, and modern types of plates etc. are used now. In the past, they used *thazhuthal* (bamboo mat) to sleep. They use knives, sickle, hand-axe (*kodali*) etc. made of iron available in the markets. Their clothing was exceedingly scanty and when hard up they use wild plantain leaves for this purpose.<sup>20</sup> In the past, *Aranadan* women used to wear *Kallumaala* (stone necklace) not only as ornaments but also for covering their breast. Besides *Kallumaala* they also used glass bangles and rings of low level metals.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Personal Interview with *Aranadans*, *Aranadan Ceri*, Chokkad, 22-02-05.

<sup>20</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> Nettoor P. Damodaran, *Adivasikalude Keralam*, (Mal.), Kottayam, 1984, p.116.

Nowadays, they use all kinds of modern dresses like, pants, shirts, sarees, maxi, churidar and ornaments like bangles, finger rings, necklaces of silver, gold etc bought from markets. Their aged men and women only wear scanty dresses.

Natural resources were the main source of their income. They were mainly engaged in cutting bamboo and collecting forest produces, and a few participated in agriculture and cattle rising. As they were landless they were mainly agricultural or unskilled labourers under the landowners of the area. They were also hunters who used bows and arrows for hunting monkeys to the flesh of which they are very partial.<sup>22</sup> Even in the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century they used bows and arrows for hunting monkeys.<sup>23</sup> They also hunted pythons to collect oil from their fat and sold it to the people in the plains as a remedy for leprosy<sup>24</sup>. To hunt pythons they used net, hook and make pits and caves.<sup>25</sup> However, now they do not go hunting. While practising agriculture, the operations like ploughings, thrashing etc were done exclusively by men and their women who would engage in collecting vegetables, forest food stuffs like roots, tubers, leaves, etc. Activities of both men and women and also of children in which mutual cooperation was necessary.

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<sup>22</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op cit.*, Vol. II, p.217.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Nettor P. Damodaran, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

At present, a few *Aranadans* go to jungle to collect forest produce like honey, cardamom, tubers and roots and sell them to Girijan Co-operative Society. The transactions are in cash. Most of them are wage labourers in the forest who engage in cutting woods, bamboos, fire wood and collecting mushroom and some work in the paddy fields of Mappilas.<sup>26</sup> A few are working in government services as forest guards, teachers, clerks, etc.

Food habits of the *Aranadans* are mainly influenced by their neighbouring communities. They are non-vegetarians and are known to use toddy and indigenous arrack whenever available. They do not have the habit of preparing these intoxicants. They bring it from the market. Both men and women irregularly use them. But it is very rare and its rate is very low among them compared to the other tribes of the district. Betanuts, pan, *beedi*, cigarette, coffee, or tea, rice etc. are regularly used by both sexes. Flesh of python is a delicacy<sup>27</sup> to them and is consumed boiled or baked and without adding any condiments. Rice is staple cereal food. Fish, egg, *ragi*, wild roots tubers are major items of diet. The condiments like salt and oil for cooking are usually used. Milk and milk products are rarely used.

### **Social Organisation**

*Aranadans* have no institution of *Moopan* (headman) and caste council.

Matters of the community interests are decided and problems and disputes are

<sup>26</sup> Thurston reports that the *Aranadans* were employed largely in felling timber and cultivating fields in the early decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p.218.

<sup>27</sup> Nettor P. Damodaran, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

settled by *Chemmakkaran*.<sup>28</sup> *Chemmakkaran*, literally means the owner of the *chenmam* (ancestral land). Usually the *Chemmakkaran* is the eldest male member of a colony. His role is determined by age and not by any descent pattern. He has very limited powers. There is no any other social functionary to assist him. Luiz observes "The consequences of lack of leadership are very manifest for often disputes, especially over a kill in hut, end in bloodshed".<sup>29</sup> It is still continued. Alcoholism, sexual rivalries, neglect of family duties etc., create conflicts. Cases of murder, group violence etc., are reported. It is stated that, in the early times *Aranadans* acted as mercenary killers of landlords.<sup>30</sup> But now it is not found existing.

Among the *Aranadans* both endogamous and exogamous marriages are reported. Both cross cousin and parallel cousin marriages take place. Exogamy is a recent origin among them. Traditionally inter-tribal or inter-community marriages are not allowed. Since their population is very low, the non-availability of suitable spouses is a crucial problem among them. Recently, they are willing to marry *Paniyan*, *Kattunayakan*, etc. It is also evident that many *Aranadan* girls are married to other tribal people and even to non-tribe men.<sup>31</sup> There are several instances where the female spouse is

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<sup>28</sup> It is also pronounced as *Janmakkaran*.

<sup>29</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, *Three Tribes of Nilambure Valley: A Study in Inter-relationship Between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, 2001, p.126.

<sup>31</sup> For example Bindu P.C., *Aranadan* girl, Vellikatta colony, Karulai is got married with a Muslim named Hikmat Ibn. Personal Interview with Bindu P.C., Vellikatta, Karulai, 07-03-06.

elder to the male and vice versa. A male marrying a widow or a divorcee is common.

The earlier writings reveal that in the past some strange customs and practices prevailed among the *Aranadans*. Thurston notes that “One of their customs is very singular viz., the father of a family takes or used to take his eldest daughter as his second wife.”<sup>32</sup> Other customs prevalent among them were to allow the wife to the guest and exchange of wives. Luiz reports that “...the practice of permitting a visiting *Aranadan* to enjoy the host’s wife was, till recently, considered to be a sign of good hospitality. There are also many known instances of wives being exchanged.”<sup>33</sup> He also attests the practices of polygamy, fraternal polyandry, and sororate and levirate marriages.<sup>34</sup> But now these customs are not found in practice.

*Aranadan* family is nuclear in nature. It is very rare to include one of the parents of either the husband or the wife. The youngsters are controlled by the adult members of the family. This check on their freedom is the main cause of conflict in the *Aranadan* family. Inter-family relations are very cordial. *Aranadans* are the followers of *Makkathayam*. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family after the father's death. *Aranadan* women, *Aranadathies*, enjoy equal status to men and can participate in all social, ritual, religious, and economic activities. They usually engage in non-skilled

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<sup>32</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.217.

<sup>33</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



labour. She can have a great role in contributing family income of controlling family expenditure.

*Aranadans* are considered as polluting groups and treated as the lowest in the tribal society by others. Even the other tribal communities keep distance from them. Thurston observes "they are considered to be the lowest of the jungle tribes by the inhabitants of Malabar, who consider themselves polluted, if an Eranadan approaches in their hundred yards. Even *Paniyans* and *Pariahs* give them a wide berth and they are prohibited from coming within four hundred yards of village".<sup>35</sup> Their colonies are therefore located in isolation. It is found that in the Chokkod Girijan Colony Nilambur Taluk, they are provided with houses away from the other tribal communities in a particular locality which has been called as *Aranadan-cheri*. However they are increasingly coming into close contact with other people.

### **Religious Organisation**

*Aranadans* have no unique form of religious belief and ideology. They "have no religious and not even a correct conception of animism and totemism".<sup>36</sup> They have a household God called *Aluroopam*, which is covered in a loincloth and kept in the corner of the room in their house. They also worship deities named *Thampuratti* (Mother deity) and *Malachi Daivom* (Hill goddess). They believe that Sun is the supreme God and the Creator. They call

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<sup>35</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol.II., p. 217.

<sup>36</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

the Sun as *Pakal Muthappan* (grandfather of day-time), the Moon as *Irava Muthappan* (grandfather of night) and believe that stars are the children of Sun. They start their day facing east and invoking Sun for luck.<sup>37</sup>

They have no separate temples or shrines in their colonies. It is said that they were used to perform *pujas* at a temple called *Kaareeri* situated in the dense forest 12 km from Karulai range office.<sup>38</sup> The offerings included rice, arrack, betel leaves, tobacco and beaten rice. Now they do not go there as the temple is demolished. There are some consecrated stones considered sacred and the place is considered as the abode of *Thampuratti*. *Chenmakkaran* performs religious rites. They worship and propitiate the spirits with certain disciplines. At present, they have a good knowledge of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses and they have no hesitation to be called Hindus. Some of them irregularly visit Hindu temples.<sup>39</sup> They visit Chembanthitta temple at Karulai, dedicated to Goddess *Bhagavathi* and the temple at Nilambur town dedicated to *Vettakkorumakan* deity during the time of *Nilambur pattu*. The *Aranadan* males have keen interest to go Sabarimala pilgrim centre. The Hindu pantheons like *Karimkali*, *Gulikan* etc. are also worshipped and offerings are given and received favours. However, they are ignorant about the sacred Hindu scriptures and mythologies. *Aranadans* are

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<sup>37</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, *op.cit.*,p.129.

<sup>38</sup> Personal Interview with Neeli, Vellikatta, Karulai, 01-03-06.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

averse to the activities of religious missionaries and are not willing to convert to Christianity or Islam.

### **Life Cycle**

*Aranadans* observe different life cycle rituals and ceremonies on the occasions of pregnancy, birth, naming the new born, puberty, marriage, death etc. These ceremonies are socially approved. But the rituals and ceremonies that required huge financial burden are not regularly performed. There is no special ceremony traditionally performed in connection with conception or pregnancy. They believe that the *Malachi Daivom* gives life to foetus when it is four months old. The pregnant woman is forbidden to eat beef, mutton and pork. In the last months she is also prohibited to go outside for hardwork. Delivery takes place in a temporary hut called *Pira* erected at husband's house, very rarely takes place in her own house. She is assisted by her own mother or mother-in law or other experienced female of the community. After delivery, *pula* (pollution) is observed for 15 days. During this period, men folk are not allowed to see woman or child. The pollution removal ceremony is called *Pathinanchadal*. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, she is taken to the nearby river by her mother to the accompaniment of a sounding bell. She is then given an ablution to free her from pollution. The house and surroundings are cleaned and sprinkled with diluted cow dung. From the 16<sup>th</sup> day onwards she can resume a normal routine. Recently, they began to visit local hospitals for

medical check up and delivery. In such cases, *pula*, connected with birth, is not observed.

The naming ceremony is called *Naalpathaduka* (fourtieth day bath). It is observed on the forty<sup>th</sup> day after the child birth at the child's father's house. The *Chemmakkaran* or father of the child has the right to give a name and to feed the child first. The names are traditionally that of their grandfathers or grandmothers. Now they accept any name that is usually given in the Hindu community. A feast is also given occasionally. In the early days the ceremony was performed at the houses, but now the *Aranadans* began to go Hindu temples nearby for the ceremony.<sup>40</sup> So the role of *Chemmakkaran* is of little significance.

When a girl attains puberty, she is secluded to a corner of the house for 7 days as she is polluted. This is called *pettikayant appa* (become broken). She is assisted by her maternal aunt, *achi*, to take bath in the nearby river in the morning and evening. She is brought to the river veiled with a white cloth and to the accompaniment of a sounding bell. Pollution is generally observed for one week. On the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> day, a purification ceremony is observed. The house is cleaned and purified by sprinkling of diluted cow dung. The girl is returned to the home and dressed up and she is seated on a mat with *achi*. A single plate of food is served to them and *achi* feeds a handful of rice to the girl after which they partake it. Because of their poverty, they do not go for

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<sup>40</sup> Personal Interview with Bindu P.C, *Aranadan* Colony, Vallikkatta, Karulai, 01.03.07.

grand feast for rituals. *Aranadans* have no special hut for segregating her women at the time of their menses time.

Marriages are generally after puberty. Arranged marriage is customary. The mates are fixed only after negotiations by the elder members of the family. Marriage by elopement was not treated as sin, but now it is very rare. *Talikettu Kalyanam* was also rarely performed. The age of marriage is increased and frequency of divorce is less. Both sexes have rights to divorce their mates. In the past, bride price is about six rupees and the same amount has to be paid every year as long as the wife's parents are alive. Luiz opines that this is the evidence to the practice of marriage by purchase.<sup>41</sup> Now the bride price is above fifty rupees

*Aranadans* perform the marriage ceremony at the bride's residence. Bridegroom ties a *Thali* called *Kallumaala* (a collection of beads or shells threaded on a black cord) around the neck of the bride. It is considered as the symbol of marriage. Another rite is tying of a red cloth by the groom around the waist of the girl. This marks the consummation of the marriage. They are given food in a single plantain leaf. They put in each other's mouth. All their relatives and neighbours are invited. They are treated with feast. Then the new couple are led to the bride groom's hut by their relatives. The holding of hands of bride and bride groom is an announcement that they began to live together. Now-a-days, due to the economic problems they do hesitate to

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<sup>41</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op.cit.*, p.41.

perform marriage ceremonies grand. Ceremonies are seldom observed in the occasion of exogamous marriages.

When death occurs in a settlement, *Aranadans* send two or three members to inform the news others. Death ceremonies start only after the arrival of the relatives. They place the corpse inside the house on a jute sack spread on the floor. The corpse is smeared with cocunut oil and is given a hot water bath using crushed soap nut. Then the corpse is covered with new cloth and placed inside the hut as head towards the east. Two wicks are lighted on either side of the head. These rites are performed by the eldest son or nearest male relatives.

For the disposal of the dead, the *Aranadans* follow burial custom. In the early days their burial ground was far away from their houses. But now, due to the scarcity of land, the *Aranadans* bury their dead in their habitat. The burial pit has six feet depth and three feet width with a special inner hole scooped out at the head portion to insert the head of the dead person. They place a *thazhuthal* or *thaithal* (flattened bamboo) on the earth and other four sides of the pit, over which a layer of *malampunna* leaves are spread. Before placing the dead body in to the grave, the relatives touch the feet of the corpse. Body is placed on the *thazhuthal* and is kept in the grave in the east west direction. All personal belongings of the dead are also palced. Above the body, about at the centre of the pit, bamboos are cemented to give support and

the *malampunna* leaves are laid out on the bamboos. Then, the grave is filled up to the top with earth. *Aranadans* do not build tomb above the burial. Two feet high heap of earth is made throughout the length of the grave. Then the relatives perform a dance around the grave clapping and thumping to appease the dead. After this, they take a bath in a river nearby and return. Men, women and child accompany funeral procession.

At the settlement, in the evening, a ritual called *aattamvaipu* is performed to know whether the soul of the dead is pleased with the behavior of the relatives. It is as follows; “ The *Chemmakkaran* takes six small brass beads in a winnow and starts shaking it for a while creating a rattling sound. After a while, he begins to show signs of possession. In this possessed state, he utters whether the dead ancestor is pleased with the present offerings and what should be done in future for prosperity.”<sup>42</sup>

Death pollution is observed for seven days. During this period the chief mourners are segregated inside the hut and are forbidden to take non-vegetarian food, go to work, cut hair and wear colourful dress. A lamp is lit and placed near the grave for seven to fourty days. During these days they offer food and water to the departed soul. The *Aranadans* believe in the ancestral spirits. They believe that death of a person occurs only due to the malevolent activities of the spirit. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day after the death of a person, *Aranadans* perform a magical rite to ascertain the cause of the death which is

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<sup>42</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, *op.cit.*, p.142.

called *Naalivekkal*. It is usually conducted at night under the supervision of their oracle called *Kalladikkaran*. He jingles three or four *kudamani* (anklet) in a *kunthamuram* (winnoing basket) to invoke the spirit. Thus, they believe that, the dead man's soul enters into the oracle's body and he could announce the cause of the death. After the bath, a feast is served. Annual ceremony is called *Adiyanthiram* which is usually observed in the Malayalam months of *Makaram - Kumbam* (February - April). On the day all *Aranadans* of the district are gathered and a feast is served. According to their belief, *Adiyanthiram* is observed to appease the ancestral spirits; otherwise, they will be the victims of the malevolent spirits. To be safe from the ancestral spirits they perform certain *pujas* and wear an amulet worn given by *Panikkan* (astrologer).

### **CHOLANAICKAN**

*Cholanaickan*<sup>43</sup>, a primitive tribe of Kerala, is found exclusively in the Nilambur valley. They are popularly known as the 'Cave men of Kerala'. Bhanu calls them 'classical food gatherers'.<sup>44</sup> According to the latest available records, the total number of *Cholanaickar* is 267.<sup>45</sup> They are included in the Scheduled Tribe list in 2003. They are found in Karulai and Chungathara ranges and divided into ten territorial groups demarcated by natural boundaries. Their territories are Karimpuzha, Paanapuzha, Kuppanmala,

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<sup>43</sup> *Cholanaickan* is singular and *Cholanaickar* is plural.

<sup>44</sup> B. Ananda Bhanu, *The Cholanaickan of Kerala*, Culcutta, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> ITDP *Census*, *op.cit.*, p.2.



Poochappara, Talipuzha, Korampuzha, Alakkal, Ambilimala, Olikkatodi and Manjakkadavu.<sup>46</sup> They have their own dialect among themselves and use Malayalam to speak to outsiders. Only a few know Malayalam to speak. Their dialect consists of words from Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam languages.<sup>47</sup> *Cholanaickar* have short stature with sturdy body. Their complexion varies from dark to light brown. Their faces are round or oval with depressed nasal root, the bridge being medium and the profile straight lips are thus to medium, hair tends to be curly.<sup>48</sup>

### **Name and Origin**

The word *chola* means forest and *naickan* means king, thus *Cholanaickan* means, king of the forest as they inhabit in the interior of the forest.<sup>49</sup> They call themselves as *Cholakkar*. It is believed that they migrated from the forests of neighbouring Karnataka. They believe that they are the descendants of the Cholas, one of the three powers of early medieval South India. A belief regarding their origin exists among themselves is as follows. "Badukan and Bahthan were the Nayakans (military chiefs) of the Chola army who were totally defeated by the Cheras in the Chera-Chola war and took asylum in the interior of the Nilgiri hills and from there one group migrated to Nilambur region and another to the Waynad region. In Waynad there is a

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<sup>46</sup> B. Ananda Bhanu, *op cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>47</sup> K.S. Singh, K.S. Singh, *People of India*, Kerala, Part II, Culcutta, 1994, p. 349.

<sup>48</sup> B. Ananda Bhanu, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

place called Badukan (one of the ancestral brothers) where a few *Cholanaickan* families are still living and we, the *Cholanaickar* of Nilambur vally, have regular contact with them.”<sup>50</sup> The place Badukan in Waynad is not located. But the possibility of the origin of the name *Cholanaickan* is that in Malayalam, *Chola* means stream or river and *naickan* means leader or king, so *Cholanaickan* means leader or king of stream. In the field work it is found that, all the *Cholanaickan* alais (caves) are situated on the banks of streams or rivers (Table 2.1). Another thing to support this argument is that *Cholanaickan* is one of the two sub groups of *Kattunayakan*.<sup>51</sup> Another group *Pathinaickan* means ‘leader or king of foot hill’ (*Pathi* means foot hills). It means that the *Kattunayakan* inhabiting in the foot hills (*Pathi*) are called *Pathynaickan* and the *Kattunayakan* inhabiting on the banks of *chola* (streams or rivers) are called *Cholanaickan*. Both the two are distinguished after their area of habitation.

## Material Culture

The settlement of the *Cholanaickan* is called *Kallu Alai* (rock shelter). These *alais* are scattered in the inaccessible dense forest on the banks of streams or rivers. There are about 100 *alais* spread over in the forest.<sup>52</sup> The name of *alai* is called after the significance of the area of the *alai* or the trees or plants stand beneath the *alais*. Each *alai* is a separate kingroup unit. The

<sup>50</sup> Personal Interview with Balan, Mancheeri, Kruali, 01-03-2006.

<sup>51</sup> Kattunaickan means 'king of the forest.' *Kadu* means forest *naickan* means king.

<sup>52</sup> Personal Interview with Balan, Mancheeri, Karuali, 01-03-2006.

number of households in an *alai* varies from 3 to 5. The interior of *alai* is divided into 3 to 5 hearths, each family sharing one. The hearth is composed of three stones embeded in the earth so as to form a trippod for cooking pots beneath which fire wood is burnt. The parents or newly married couples generally sleep around the hearth. A burning fire is also kept always inside as well as infront of the *alais* around which the unmarried girls and boys sleep respectively. The women and children often found squathing by the side of the fire place. A *Cholanaickan* family consists of a man and his wife and 2 or 3 children and aged or widowed parents and perhaps an unmarried younger brother. As the *Cholanaickar* lead a nomadic life throughout the year, they resort *alais* only during the rainy season. During the hot weather season they build small huts on the top of rocks by poletheen cover.

They also dwell in *mana* (leaf shelter) erected in open camp site called *potti*. They mainly erect *mana* when the *alais* are unsafe owing to the natural calamities like landslips and floods. There are seven open camp sites at Karulai and Chungathara ranges. *Mana* are erected using reed poles,twigs and thatched with either reed leaves or wild palm leaves. The most important weapon is *kodali* (axe) made of iron. It is not only a formidable weapon but also a hand axe that comes handy for cutting trees, splitting bamboos and slaughtering wild animals. Some times it is used for cutting hair. Digging sticks filled with iron spikes and iron axes are other tools. They do not have the technology for iron smelting but they bought iron from the market nearby.

To gather food they use *parai* made out of bamboo or aramula. They are experts in making of basket called *poonikottai* and *chooralkottai* (cane basket) which are used to collect forest produce and storing goods. Their main utensils are *kotta andai* (bamboo pot) and *kolambi* (bamboo dishes and plates). For stirring the rice at the time of cooking and also for serving the food they usually use coconut shell with handles named *kayilu*. Recently, they began to use modern vessels made out of steel and aluminium and earthen pots.

In the past, *Cholanaickan* used to wear tree bark (*Aranhithelu*) to cover their private parts. Now they use cotton clothes. Their men use a small bit of white cloth reaching up to the knees while *Cholanaickan* women use a short cloth (*selai*) covering the lower part of their body and a scanty cloth to cover the breast. Both men and women wear new clothes when they attend festivals like *Nilambur pattu* in honour of *Vettakorumakan* deity. Neck ornaments (*Gattilakha Sangalai*) nose ornaments, ear rings and armband etc. of various shapes and colours are used. The ornaments are mainly made of aluminium. Some men also use neck ornaments. There is no practice of tattooing. They have no habit of cutting hair and shaving regularly. They use reed splits or bamboo piece (*otha*) or *kodali* for cutting and shaving. Now they also use blades and knives. Women's hair gets matted. They do not use oil. The fire making technology of the *Cholanaickan* is very primitive. The bamboo splits are made from a single piece of bamboo. One of them is peeled to a plait

thong or bamboo fire thong (*aramula*) about one foot, the shreds whittled from it being used with bark cloth or shreds of cotton cloth as tinder.

The *Cholanaickar* are hunters, foodgatherers and collectors of forest produces. The animals they hunt include both arboreal and terrestrial. Primates like Nilgiri langur, Bonner macaque and Slender Ioris etc., are caught by trapping them in nets placed at strategic points. Many species of birds are caught for food. The important among them are horn bill, maina, dove and wild fowl. Among the terrestrial animals they hunt civet cat, rabbit, sambur, wild goat, wild boar, spotted deer, mongoose etc., are important. They employ dogs in hunting these animals. They also use pit-trapping to catch some of these animals. They often hunt fishes. Rarely do they hunt large animals like deer, wild buffaloes, bison, etc.

The main occupation of *Cholanaickan* is collection of forest produce. They are the only classical food gatherers. They collect dammar, ginger, turmeric, soap seed, tree barks, cardamom, pepper, cheenikai, astringent fruit, medicinal roots and barks, oil seeds and honey. These are bartered to the forest contractors or to the Girijan Co-operative Society (GCS)<sup>53</sup> for articles such as clothes, rice, tobacco, arecanut, betel, spices, matchboxes, iron-tools, utensils of modern items. Some times, they sell the collected items for money which is used to go Nilambur for seeing cinema, and to drink alcohol on the

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<sup>53</sup> The Girijan Co-operative Society (GCS) was introduced by the State govt. in 1977. In Mancheeri, there is a GCS where the *Cholanaickar* sell their forest produces collected.

occasions of festivals like Vishu, Onam, and *Nilambur pattu*.<sup>54</sup> Hunting and gathering are still continuing and thus they have a certain degree of nomadism. This situation does not offer any scope for domesticating animals. Dog is their only domesticating companion.

### **Social Organisation**

Each *Cholanaickan* group inhabit in a specific area which is called *tsemmam* or *chanmam*.<sup>55</sup> It is the territory over which a kin group wields its economic rights and other privileges. A *tsemmam* has two to seven primary families who are patrilineal kins and each primary family rely on each other during emergencies and sickness. The *Cholanaickan* of a particular *tsemmam* do not trespass the rights of others and violation of these rights can lead to violent quarrel. In a way the *Cholanaickan* society is politically acephalous.

The head of the *tsemmam* is *tsemmakaran* or *janmakkaran* or *sanmakaran* as he is variously called. He is the territorial chief. His office is hereditary. He is a diviner, a doctor, and a sorcerer. He possesses great power and his permission is required for all matters. His words and decision in disputes are final and carried out by all members irrespective of territory. He is considered as the protector of *tsemmam*. He is believed to possess the power of magical retribution called *koottupattickal* to punish the trespassers of his

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<sup>54</sup> Personal Interview with Moinkutty, Girijan Co-operative Society, Mancheeri, Karulai, 01-03-06.

<sup>55</sup> *Tsemmam* is a territorial division and its boundary is fixed by hills, rivers, trees, rocks, etc. B.Ananda Bhanu, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

*tsemmam*. In his presence all are free from any kind of fearing and they believe that his *aneuruva* (elephant God) can stop any wild elephant from approaching their cave. He is believed to be a person having capacity to identify the causes of the *danna* (illness). In the diagnostic process he acts as a mediator with their Gods and ancestral spirits. The consultation with the spirits is called *devvavalastatu*.<sup>56</sup> The simplest diagnosis is *uratsatu*. It is an act where the chieftain sits by the side of the sufferer and blows air on the body of the patient. The blowing is done in one direction starting always from head to bottom or from head to sides. This blowing is repeated more than ten times. If the forehead of the patient is touched by hand is the signal of ending the blowing. The last blowing is done across the body. If the condition of the patient still remains unchanged the *janmakaran* shifts his diagnosis from *uratsatu* to more complicated one which is called *devvavalatsatu*. If this also fails he moves to next one which is called *aadikkanatu*. It is performed as follows:

"The chieftain sings and dances with his ritualistic instrument *biida*. During the dance the chieftain gets possessed by the spirits and he pronounces that the disease is due to this or that reason".<sup>57</sup> Thus, the *janmakaran* "not only acts as a 'doctor', a diviner, an oracle, but also acts as a judge in the

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

tribal meeting or council and he takes the final decision which will be binding in one and all".<sup>58</sup>

The family of the *Cholanaickan* is called *kudumba* which includes father, mother and their children. Majority of them are nuclear type. Bhanu<sup>59</sup> divides the *Cholanaickan* family into four types in terms of their mode of exchange. The first is that a portion of the gathered food is given directly to other families. The second is that when the forest produce is bartered, a portion of the raw food articles is given to other families in a territory. The third exchange is when a family gets a gift, it is bartered in the Girijan Co-operative Society and converted into gift provisions and a portion of it is given to other members. The fourth is the sharing of cooked food with others.

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<sup>58</sup>

*Ibid*

<sup>59</sup>

B.Ananda Bhanu, "Cholanickan" in K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 351.



## Religious Organisation

*Cholanaickar* worship the *Maladaivam* (jungle God), who is believed to be omnipotent and omnipresent and ancestral spirits, *Nilalu*.<sup>60</sup> *Maladaivam* is an anthropomorphic jungle God carrying a sword. *Devva* is a term generally used for all Gods. *Vilakkutamparati* (Idol of a lamp) is the supreme Goddess of *Cholanaickar*. *Cholanaickar* worship a number of gods and goddesses. They are called after the name of the hills, natural objects and natural phenomenon. They also worship zoomorphic spirits in the form of elephant, tiger and oxen called *anauru*, *puliuru* and *kalauru* respectively.

Important *Cholanaickan* gods and goddesses<sup>61</sup> are *Vilakkatampurati* or *Koolitampurati* (the Idol of lamp, the mother Goddess and deity of dawn and light), *Koolimaladaivam* (the God of animals), *Thandanaadudaivam* (God of health and remover of illness like leanness), *Odakolli daivam* (God of health and remover of illness), *Manjaranadu daivam* (God of health and remover of chicken pox), *Cholassan daivam* (God of progeniture), *Arinjanadu daivam* (Protector of forest), *Karidaivam* (God of fortune), *Thalai daivam* (Goddess of rain), *Ole devva*<sup>62</sup> (God of the river) and *Naadu devva*<sup>63</sup> (God of the plain). *Cholanaickar* always carry the figure of a tiger (*Puliuravu*) and image of

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<sup>60</sup> They use the term *nilalu* for spirit. It is believed that *nilalu* is shadow of evil spirit and if the shadow falls on the body they will fall sick.

<sup>61</sup> Personal interview with Balan, Mancheeri, Karulai, 01-03-2006.

<sup>62</sup> They believe that the deep tanks and pools in the river are the seats of *ole daivam* and they prevent their children to go there.

<sup>63</sup> They believe that if any one is cursed by *naadudaivam* he will fall sick which cannot be cured.

human being (*aalu uravu*) which bought from Nilambur and Karulai markets in the *daivakottai* (divine basket). The *Cholanaickar* of Punchakolly, Chungathara ranges worship some of the Hindu gods like Ganapathy, Lord Ayyappa and Serpant Gods. They also practice magic.<sup>64</sup> Anually they propitiate and make offerings to *maladaivam*, ancestral spirits and sylvan deities. This ceremony is called *aandaruthi*. It is performed on tsenmam basis in front of the *alai* in which the *daivakottai* (divine basket) is kept. Inshort, *Cholanaickar* are the followers of animism, shamanism, polytheism and worshippers of natural objects and ancestor spirits.

*Cholanaickar* do not have an established temple. But it is said that there is a separate holy place in the hill of Karulai range near Mancheeri, where they regularly perform rituals to appease their gods and goddesses.<sup>65</sup> They do not like to say the exact place. *Cholanaickan* men are allowed to go there. The chieftain perform rituals (*puja*) after the observance of 7 days fast and regular bathing.<sup>66</sup>

### **Life Cycle**

Pregnancy among the *Cholanaickar* is referred to as *oddalayaruthu*. The pregnant woman is secluded in a hut called *godimma* for forty days for delivery. When the labour pain starts a midwife called *Othachi* is called to assist the woman. The new born is bathed by the *othachi*. After forty days

<sup>64</sup> Personal Interview with Panapuzha Mathan, Panapuzha, Karulai, 01-03-06.

<sup>65</sup> Personal Interview with Balan, Mancheeri, Karulai, 01-03-2006.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

the mother is bathed in hot water. The mid wife cut the umbilical cord. The naming ceremony is observed at the *alai* called *Pyara alai*.<sup>67</sup> The name is selected by the *janmakkaran* from the mother's line.

No puberty rite is observed among the *Cholanaickar*. The menstruating girl is secluded in one corner of the *alai* for fourteen days and on the 15<sup>th</sup> day a purification bath called *neeratal* is taken. A woman during the menstruation period is called *thinka* who is supposed to be unclean for two weeks. Some times she is secluded in a small temporary leaf shelter called *Ponthakettu*.

Immediately after attaining puberty the *Cholanaickan* girls are married. Child marriage is also common because of the paucity of girls in the community. They calculate the age of their girls by their body build up and of boys by their capacity to go for hunting and gathering. The *Cholanaickar* are endogamous in the sense that they seek alliances within themselves. They follow *tsemmam* or *janmam* exogamy. Usually, the young man has to find out his mate, but the approval of the parents and chieftains of the territory is necessary to continue their relation as husband (*ganda*) and wife (*ennu*). The forcible capture of the wife is known as *edippiyodu* and their cohabitation is called *oppamaladu*. If they are allowed to live as *ganda* and *ennu* the marriage is complete. They do not have any ceremony in connection with

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<sup>67</sup> Personal Interview with Panapuzha Mathan, Panapuzha, Karulai, 01-03-06.

marriage. *Thali* and other marriage symbols are not used. Marriages by negotiations are on the increase.

Matrilineal cross - cousin marriages are allowed but patrilineal and parallel cousin marriages are prohibited. Though the *Cholanaickar* are the followers of endogamy,<sup>68</sup> recently they began to violate this rule. One of the main reasons for the violation of this rule is that the paucity of women among them.<sup>69</sup> This results in capturing of the wife of elder brother by younger brother and exogamous marriages.<sup>70</sup> Among the *Cholanaickar*, women have special considerations due to their shortage in number. Levirate and sororate marriages are also reported. Marriage by elopement is a general phenomenon. If the lovers remain unseen they will be captured and one of them will be killed.<sup>71</sup> So they keep aloof from the family for one to two months. *Cholanaickar* are monogamous. Divorce is rare. They encourage widow remarriage. The new husband has to take care of the children of the widow that she has in the earlier relation. Polygyny and polyandry are prohibited relationships.

The *Cholanaickar* believe that death occurs when the soul leaves the body in the form of air. In the *alai* or *savanthi* they bury their dead body. If a

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<sup>68</sup> P.R.G. Mathur, *Tribal Situation in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1997, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>69</sup> Personal Interview with Mathan, Karimpuzha, 06-05-05. According to *ITDP Census of 2006* the sex ratio of *Cholanaickan* is 128: 139.

<sup>70</sup> Balan, a *Cholanaickan*, is working as a forest guard in Karulai range has got married a Paniya girl and when he was appointed as forest guard, he was not ready to join the service immediately as he was afraid of his wife that she will be kidnapped.

<sup>71</sup> The punishment is inflicted only after discussion among the elders. The killing of the lovers is not prevalent today. Personal Interview with Mathan, Karimpuzha, Karulai, 06-05-05.

person dies in the *alai*, the dead body is buried in the very same *alai*. But in certain areas of Nilambur vally they have permanent burial grounds called *savanthi*. The body is buried in a shallow grave with the head towards west in the burial ground. The personal belongings of the person are also buried including a *kathi* (knife), digging sticks, pots, cooking vessels, rings and axes. *Janmakkaran* has the responsibility of the funeral procession. In the case of women, a hearth is made over the burial site and its left side and left burning after the burial in the belief that she is the one to arrange the cooking area in the other world. It means that they have belief in the life after death. In the case of a child, milk, toys and other things used by the child are kept.<sup>72</sup> Before covering the dead body with earth a ring is waved over the body. It is believed that the spirits of the dead man has entered the ring. The ring is kept under the custody of the *janmakkaran*. Then slowly the pit is filled and covered. The burial site of *Cholanaickan* is marked by two stones, one each on the head and foot portions to mark the site.<sup>73</sup> This is the simple and rudimentary form of megalithic burial practice of early inhabitants. The burial practices of *Cholanaickar* clearly indicate the cult of the dead and their belief in life after death.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Ajit Kumar, 'An Ethno-archaeological Appraisal of *Cholanaickan* at Nilambur' in M.R. Manmathan, ed., *Archaeology in Kerala, Past and Present*, Calicut, 2007, p. 84.

The mortuary rite is observed after one month. *Janmakkaran* is the priest of the ritual. The day suitable for the rite is either Tuesday or Wednesday. On the day, cooked rice is placed in a leaf for the dead and *janmakkaran* and the kin groups dance around the food on the leaf throughout the night. In the morning the *janmakkaran* eats the rice and boiled rice is placed in another leaf. All the spirits of the dead ancestors are also worshiped by offering food.

*Cholanaickar* have no regular and cordial relation with outsiders. They have contact with Pathynaickan, a tribal group living in the foot hills of Nilambur valley. They hesitate to speak to outsiders. Maximum they try to keep a distance. They rarely come out of the forest and hence they hardly get more chances to contact with others. The development programmes implemented between 1971 and 1986 with a view to modernise and mobilize *Cholanaickar* did not produce expected results. However, the attitude of *Cholanaickar* towards education is encouraging.

**Table 2.1 Cholanaickan alais**

Sl.No.	Name of Alais	Name of Stream/River	Features
1.	<i>Makibara alai</i>	Karimpuzha	'Maki' means 'child'. A story regarding the origin of the name reads "once a <i>Cholanaickan</i> couple left their two children for collecting forest produce. When they came back, the children were found caught by a bear." Major festivals like <i>adiyanthiram</i> , Onam, Vishu etc. celebrated here.
2.	<i>Pyara alai</i>	do	'Pyara' means name. The naming ceremony of the new born is done here.
3.	<i>linth kodannhara alai</i>	do	'Iinth' means bamboo. This alai is surrounded by bamboos.
4.	<i>Iruttu alai</i>	do	'Iruttu' means darkness. The cave is always in darkness.
5.	<i>Panthakallu alai</i>	do	Alai is like a <i>panthal</i> , shed.
6.	<i>Baramathala alai</i>	do	
7.	<i>Kula alai</i>	do	Alai surrounded by Kula, a plant found in forest.
8.	<i>Als alai</i>	do	Alai surrounded by the wood <i>alsu</i> , jack tree.
9.	<i>Meenmutti alai</i>	do	Alai with fish found largely, nearby.
10.	<i>Pulkuthimala alai</i>	do	Alai surrounded by 'pullu' means grass.
11.	<i>Narichalai</i>	do	'Nari' means bat. Alai in which bat are always found.
12.	<i>Cheenikkamala alai</i>	do	Near this alai the <i>cheeni</i> plant (a kind of chilli plant) is found largely.

Sl.No.	Name of Alais	Name of Stream/River	Features
13.	<i>Bheekkalai</i>	Manjakallampuzha	Alai surrounded by bheek, a wood found in forest.
14.	<i>Kalikkallalai</i>	do	Inscription like 'Kalli' (square) inside the alai.
15.	<i>Anjalai</i>	do	'Anja' 'Anja' means hunger. It is believed that the members of this alai always have great hunger.
16.	<i>Mukkalai</i>	Pananapuzha	'Mukku' means corner. This alai is near the corner of the river.
17.	<i>Velinkalai</i>	do	The alai situated near a wood called <i>veli</i>
18.	<i>Paappanalai</i>	do	The alai situated near a wood called <i>Paappan</i> .
19.	<i>Aarukadavalai</i>	do	'Aaru' means tamarind tree. Near the alai there is a tree of tamarined.
20.	<i>Mannanthi alai</i>	do	'Mannanthi' is the ant-eater. In this alai ant-eaters also live.
21.	<i>Dondakalla alai</i>	do	'Donda' means huge. The alai is roofed with a huge stone.
22.	<i>Cheepakappalai</i>	do	'Cheep' means <i>Saathan</i> , evil spirit. This alai is believed to be the habitat of <i>Saathan</i> .
23.	<i>Malank alai</i>	do	'Malanku' means a long type of fish. Near the alai this type of fish is largely found.
24.	<i>Manjakallalai</i>	do	Near the alai there is a wood called ' <i>Manju</i> '
25.	<i>Odalai</i>	Uyyanmaathipuzha	'Oda' means drain or gutter. Near the alai there is a small drain. This alai is also called 'Alsalai' as there is a jack fruit tree nearby.
26.	<i>Alaikalai</i>	do	'Alaya' means swan. In this alai swan is found.
27.	<i>Undu chottan alai</i>	Ariyakkayyam puzha	'Unduchottan' is hornbill bird. It is found in this alai.



Sl.No.	Name of Alais	Name of Stream/River	Features
28.	<i>Thanthi alai</i>	do	'Thanti' means the wood 'thani', It is found near the alai.
29.	<i>Ulisthaalai</i>	do	'Uli' means tiger. A tiger is found dead in this alai.
30.	<i>Poovanalai</i>	do	'Poovan', a tree which does not bear fruit, is found near this alai.
31.	<i>Anakkodan alai</i>	do	Anakkodan is palmyra tree. A palmyra tree is found near this alai.
32.	<i>Gunda lai</i>	do	'Gunda' means small. This alai is very small
33.	<i>Analai</i>	do	Elephant usually comes to this area. 'Ana' means elephant.
34.	<i>Kalliveru alai</i>	do	A square is found inside the alai naturally formed by the roots of a pipal tree.
35.	<i>Maavalai</i>	do	Near the alai there is a mango tree.
36.	<i>Ullalai</i>	do	It is situated in more interior region.
37.	<i>Maaluvillalai</i>	do	'Maalu' is a tree which does not carry fruits. 'Villu' means root of tree. In this alai a big root of Maalu tree is found hanging.
38.	<i>Thandalai</i>	do	Near the alai there is a tree called 'thandu'.
39.	<i>Thrippalai</i>	do	'Thrippa' means step. Ther is a step in front of the alai by rock.
40.	<i>Saipalai</i>	Cherupuzha	The alai where 'Saip', a British, stayed.
41.	<i>Kilikkodi alai</i>	do	'Kilikodi' is a part of their <i>janmam</i> .
42.	<i>Adukkalai</i>	do	'Adukku' is name of a tree. Near the alai there is a adukku tree.
43.	<i>Onna alai</i>	do	'Onna' means Indian Laurel tree (Punna tree). A <i>Punna</i> tree is found near the alai.
44.	<i>Kattalamala alai</i>	do	'Kattala' means bamboo. The alai is surrounded by bamboos.

Sl.No.	Name of Alais	Name of Stream/River	Features
45.	<i>Barkalai</i>	do	'Barka' means shivering due to cold. Inside the alai it is very cold.
46.	<i>Vengalai</i>	do	Near the alai, there is a venga tree.
47.	<i>Thudipattalai</i>	Karimpuzha	'Thudippata ' is a plant found in forest.
48.	<i>Korangusatha alai</i>	do	A monkey is found dead in the alai.
49.	<i>Odiynalai</i>	do	'Odiyan' usually comes to this alai.
50.	<i>Kanaikkayyala</i>	do	
51.	<i>Kooralai</i>	do	'Kooran' means deer. Deer usually comes there.
52.	<i>Maruthuthrippalai</i>	do	Infront of the alai there is a step ( <i>thrippu</i> ) naturally formed by the root of wood ' <i>Maruthu</i> '.
53.	<i>Miladialai</i>	do	Peacock regularly came there and danced.
54.	<i>Dhadal alai</i>	do	'Dhadal' means plain place. The surroundings of this alai is plain.
55.	<i>Moochalai</i>	do	
56.	<i>Odakkalai</i>	do	<i>Alai</i> surrounded by the plant Oda (aramula).

## **KATTUNAYAKAN**

*Kattunayakans*<sup>75</sup> are one of the two primitive tribal groups inhabiting in the district. They are mainly found in the panchayaths of Vazhikkadavu, Amarambalam, Pothukallu, Chaliyar, Chungathara, Moothedam, Kalikavu, Karuvarakundu and Karulai in the district. They are widely found in Waynad district. They are also distributed in the adjacent districts in the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. According to 2001 Census, their total strength in Malappuram district is 1547 which is 10.5% of the total *Kattunayakan* population of the state and 12.6% of the ST population in the district.<sup>76</sup> As per the latest information, they number 2056, is the 13.8% of the total ST population of the district.<sup>77</sup> *Kattunayakans* have their own dialect which is used among themselves. Others call it *Naickanbasha* (language of Naickan). It has no script. To converse with others they attempt Malayalam.

### **Name and Origin**

The name *Kattunayakan* is derived from *Kadu* means forest and *nayakan* means King or leader. So *Kattunayakan* means King of the forest. They believe that they are the chief community of the forest. Their synonyms are *Jenu Kuruba*, *Ten Kuruba*, *Ten Karumban*, *Venukoyyo*, *Sholanayakan* and

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<sup>75</sup> In the earlier ethnographic records they are termed as *Kattunaickan*, but in the official list of the Scheduled Tribes they are termed as *Kattunayakan*. This term is used here. *Kattunayakan* is the singular and *Kattunayakans* is plural.

<sup>76</sup> According to 2001 Census, the total strength of *Kattunayakan* population in the state is 14715.

<sup>77</sup> *ITDP Census*, Nilambur, 2006.

*Naickan*.<sup>78</sup> The two subdivisions of *Kattunayakan* in the district are Pathynaickan (who inhabit in the *pathis* or slopes of hills) and *Cholanaickan* (who inhabit in the *chola* in the forest).

According to a myth prevalent among them, "*Kattunayakan* are the children of Bheema (the second Pandava and son of Kunthidevi) and Hidumbi of Mahabharata".<sup>79</sup> *Kattunayakans* believe that they are the progeny of Padmakhya (*Padma*) *alias* Hundadabhata, the gourmand son of a Heggade chief by his *rakshasi* wife, who was the daughter of Hidimba and Sumalini, daughter of Sudanda.<sup>80</sup> Another belief is that, *Kattunayakans* are the modern representatives of the ancient Kurumbas (Pallavas) who dominated South India and when they were defeated by the Cholas, Konga and Chalukya Kings, and finally by the Chola King Adoni in the seventh century they were forced to live in the forests.<sup>81</sup> The taluk of Kurumbranad is believed to have got the name from them. The habitation of the *Kattunayakan* in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and the linguistic affinity with Kannada and Tamil indicates that the *Kattunayakan* living in Kerala may have migrated from these adjacent states.

### **Material culture**

<sup>78</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-10), Vol. IV, p. 165; A. Aiyappan observes that they were very backward speaking tribes similar in customs and manners to the Jen Kurumbar who found in the alternative names as Waynad district. Ten Kurumba is the alternative name as their principal occupation is honey gathering. They are the same as the Jain Kurumba and Kadu Kuruba of Mysore. A. Aiyappan, *A Report on Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes in Madras Province*, Madras, 1948, pp. 100-101.

<sup>79</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 588.

<sup>80</sup> A.A.D. Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

*Kattunayakans* live in very small single roomed mud hut thatched with leaves built in a row. The *Kattunayakan* house is called *mana*. The sides of *mana* are flattened bamboos and the roof covered with straw or grass. Upto the recent years, many were noticed to live in the open all day long, and to sleep round a lighted fire at night.<sup>82</sup> Many of their houses are built with the temporary purpose to exploit the natural resources available in the region, after which vacating the hut they move to another place where they also build another hut. When they go to the forest, they return only after one or two weeks. In sum, they are semi-nomadic.

In the past, bamboo inter-nodes and earthen pots were the chief household articles. They used baskets made out of bamboo, or *otha* or *chooral* for storing grains. Now-a-days they have various types of modern vessels and utensils made out of aluminium, steel, etc. Usually *Kattunayakan* wear a scanty loincloth. Now it is replaced by *lungi*. Their aged women do not cover their upper parts of the body, but they have always a *mundu* on the shoulder and when they meet outsiders they cover the breast using this *mundu*.

Traditionally *Kattunayakans* were hunters and food gatherers. Presently they lead their life gathering forest produce mainly. They consume gathered food such as wild tubers, roots, leaves, seeds, fruits, meat and fish. Rice, vegetables, dry fish, pulses grains brought from markets also have been used. They eat non-vegetarian dishes like beef, pork etc. They also engage in

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

cultivating plantain fruit, coconut, arecanut, tapioca, and various kinds of tubers and roots for their own consumption.<sup>83</sup> It indicates that these tribes have a tendency to be self sufficient in their habitat. Now-a-days, wage labour is becoming the primary means of livelihood of *Kattunayakan*.

### **Social Organisation**

The *Kattunayakans* have the institution of *Moopan* who is obeyed and respected. "The *Kattunayakan* respect and obey their headman, nothing can happen in a settlement without his approval. In the past he had civil and criminal jurisdiction over his community. He is often the priest or *Shaman* of the settlement and acts as their oracle".<sup>84</sup> In the past, this institution was hereditary but now the eldest among them is elected as *Moopan*.<sup>85</sup>

The whole *Kattunayakan* population is grouped into two moieties having a number of households. Sometimes two or three settlements will be under the leadership of a religious leader called *Mudali*. He has various roles on the occasions of life cycle ceremonies like child birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc. *Kattunayakans* are endogamous tribe. Cross cousin marriages are not preferred, and are punished.<sup>86</sup> *Murapennu*, daughter of the maternal uncle or paternal aunt, is the popular bride among them. Polygamy is an increasing

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<sup>83</sup> Field observation, Appankappu, Kumbalapara, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

<sup>84</sup> Stephan Futch, *Aboriginal Tribes of India*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 255.

<sup>85</sup> Personal Interview with Bomman Chathn, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-06-05.

<sup>86</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

phenomenon. Divorce is common and widow remarriage is allowed. When plurality of wives exists they are provided with independent huts.<sup>87</sup>

Among the *Kattunayakans*, women have freedom to choose their mates. They take part in all economic activities except hunting. Besides the household duties they also engage in gathering of wild plants, tubers, fruits, leaves, food and often in fishing. They also collect fire woods and sell in the markets. They are forbidden to take up those tasks which require climbing on the roof or trees for honey collection. The *Kattunayakan* women have also the right to lighten the lamps in their temples regularly.<sup>88</sup> *Kattunayakans* believe that they are the overlords (*nayakans*) of all the land and hence, have superior position among the tribals. They do not receive food and other necessities from *Paniyans* as they consider them as inferior class. At the same time, they consider the non-tribal communities in the plains more superior to them and they have their own dialects to salute them. They call Brahman as *aruver* (*aruvandru* female), Nayar as *Tambra* (*Tambratti* - female), Tiyya as *achcha* (*amma* - female), Chetti as *Ode* (*Oduthi* - female), Christians as *Chettan* (*Chettathi* - female), Mullukurumba as *elanaru* (*eluthamma* - female) and *Paniyan* as *Kuttu* (*Kuttachi* - females).<sup>89</sup>

## Religious Organisation

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<sup>87</sup> Personal Interview with Bomman Chathan, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 589.

Though L.K.A. Iyer<sup>90</sup> called the *Kattunayakan* 'pure animist', they worship many Gods and Goddesses. They give divinity to the hills of their habitats. Their supreme God is *Odiyan* and Goddess is *Odithi*. They also worship *Maladaivom* (hill God), *Nammilichi* (clan God), *Nammaliedathi* (*Mariamamma* –Goddess of small pox), *Kammili*, *Vaalemude Ethan* (Shiva) *Shimmalachi* (Parvathi) *Elamannamma*, *Kali*, *Gulikan*, *Kuttichathan*, *Badrakali*, *Malavillathi*.<sup>91</sup> *Kattunayakans* keep their Gods and Goddesses in the *daivakottai* (divine baskets).<sup>92</sup> They dislike to exhibit their Gods and Goddesses to outsiders because they believe that if they do so they will fall sick.

*Abba*, the daiva festival is observed in the harvest season to appease their Gods and Goddesses. They make a doll with *rugi* flour and assign a supernatural power to the doll. They also use rice (*achiri*), coconut (*tenginukkay*), banana (*bala bannu*), sand wick (*udu bathi*) and camphor (*duppa*) to the performance of the rituals. *Muttarukkal*, a custom of *Kattunayakan*, is performed before doing anything to know the net result of the activity. It is performed as follows: Placing one or two leaf of betal, one or two coconut, one glass of water and two or three coconut shells full of toddy in a plantain leaf and a coconut is placed on a wooden piece and cut into

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<sup>90</sup> L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1988, p. 296.

<sup>91</sup> Personal interview with Mathan, Kumbalapara, Pothukallu, 10-05-05.

<sup>92</sup> Their *daivakotais* consist of Moorthi (Lightening), Badrakali, and symbolic spirits of ancestors, figures of elephant, tiger, snake and *kalampeyi*. Field observation, *Kattunayakan* colony Karuvarakundu, 20-05-05.



two by a knife. If the inside of the pieces come out, the result of the activity will be favour otherwise the result will be harmful. *Kattunayakans* observe *uttu* (feast) on the occasions of Vishu and Onam.

### **Life Cycle**

The puberty rite of *Kattunayakan* is called *Thirandukalyanam* or *Narda* or *Nardmeevad*. At puberty, a girl is secluded in an isolated shed called *gumma* or *tindalpura* for 7 days. She is bathed in morning and evening with turmeric water. The *janmathi* (wife of *janmakkaran*) assists her. No male is allowed to see her during this period. After a week she takes another bath in hot water with the assistance of *janmathi* from *gumma*. After a feast the *gumma* is destroyed by *mudali* (religious head). *Mudali* has the right to put off the *Thirundukalyanam* in the case of falling sickness of any one from girl's side. On the seventh day, cowdung water is sprinkled (*toppisallada*) around the house and cowdung paste is smeared (*manasarasadu*) on the floor of the house.

Childbirth among the *Kattunayakans* is called *Kusu erika*. In the past, *Kattunayakan* secluded their pregnant women in a special hut called *littupura* for delivery for forty five days. Now it happens at their living hut itself. Separate vessels are kept for the mother for taking food and water. A woman in their settlement attends the mother and child. If there is any delay in the delivery, their ancestral spirits are consulted through divination. If necessary,

actions negating wrong (*tettu*) committed by the mother or other kinsmen are taken. For two or three weeks, the mother and the child are considered polluted. Purification bath is taken by sprinkling water. The mother is adorned by her aunt with new dress and baby with black bangles and the father ties a thread around the waist.

The naming is by *janmakkaran* (head man of the settlement) or the father. No fixed date is for naming. It is observed at any time during the first six months. The first cereal feed is by father when it is about a year. Ear and nose piercing ceremonies are done by father's sister at the age of three. Marriages are negotiated only for adults. The initiative is taken from the boy's side. The boy can go and see the girl first. Then the father, mother, uncle, elder brother and *janmathi* of the settlement of the boy visit the girl and tie *tali* around the girl's neck. Marriage among the *Kattunayakans* is known as *Mude* or *Maduva*. In an arranged marriage the *mudali* is informed first and in his presence bride price, *Kana kana* is given to the parents of the bride. Two pieces of clothes, a sari (*chela*), dothi (*Karamundu*) and rice are also given. The boy sleeps in that house and if he feels well the marriage is fixed. Marriage badge *mudathali* is tied by the boy. Bride price called *mothal* (3½ - 10½ *pana*) is usually given before the marriage ceremony.<sup>93</sup> Marriage by elopement also exists among the *Kattunayakans*. If it occurs, the *jenmadeva* is informed by the father of the girl and the boy and girl are punished by

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<sup>93</sup> Personal Interview with Bomman Chathan, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

penalty of producing one bottle of arrack, items for chewing, four dothies, nine *pana*.<sup>94</sup> Polygamy exists among the *Kattunayakans*. Divorce is allowed and widow remarriages are encouraged.<sup>95</sup>

*Kattunayakans* bury their dead body. Among them the death is called *savu*. The *Mudali* is informed the *savu* news first and then all relatives are informed. The funeral and burial customs of *Kattunayakans* is as follows.

The body is given a hot turmeric water bath. A person is sent to bring a crab (*nelli*), two kinds of tree barks and a leaf. Once these are brought, the body is given bath. The *mudali* pours water first and then *mudali's* wife, followed by others. Coconut oil is smeared all over the body and new dress is put on (*savu chela*). Body is adorned with bangles, rings and flowers if female, and a ring is put for a male. A cadder bier is made in bamboo poles and the body is kept on it. A 25 paise coin (*kal rupa*) is kept in the mouth of the deceased. Paddy and *ragi* in certain quantities are tied in a cloth and kept on the shoulder of the *mudali*, who holds a stick in his hand, called *Badukka*. The body along with the bier is brought to the burial place. While walking the *mudali* throws away the grains (*dana salladu*) from the bundle. Some are thrown on the body too. It is done thrice and each time the *mudali* sits on the bier with his stick. Before the body is brought to the burial spot, it has to be kept in the ground at three places. The headman marks the spot of the burial

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<sup>94</sup> Sreenarayanan Mavoor, *Cholanaickarum Kakkapookkalum*, (Mal), Kottayam, 1992, p. 64.

<sup>95</sup> Personal Interview with Bomman Chathan, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

pit using *Badukka*. The dig a pit of three feet deep and another cavity (*alla*), of 'L' shaped is made towards the side. The body is pushed into this cavity.<sup>96</sup> It is reported that they have a peculiar rite at the graveyard. The whole funeral party, in chorus, request the dead person to dig the grave by himself by saying *Bega Ninakkulla Manai Bega Akku, Ithu Menakkettu Ninthale Aappathille, Begananga Hokku, Nanahottekku Thini Kane, Sathavanu Ini Onthum Kane* (Your grave should be dug by yourself; we don't have much time to waste for it; we want to return fast; we have to satisfy our hunger; the dead doesn't have any more worries).<sup>97</sup>The soil from inside the grave should not be left unused; it has to be filed over the grave. They call their graveyard *Chodalai* or *Chudumalai*<sup>98</sup> and the side cavity as *Hoddamannu*. A small piece of cloth is removed from the *savu chela*. Tree barks and leaves are kept at two places over the body. The pit is covered and two stones are kept on the ground, one on the head side and another on the leg side. In a piece of cloth taken out from *Savu chela*, the crab is crushed along with turmeric on the stone kept on the side of the head. The juice is then smeared on everybody's hand except the women. The crushed crab is then kept on the burial ground. The cloth piece is kept inside the hole of a tree. The members after taking a bath in a stream come back and burn sandal or camphor powder in a burning ember and

<sup>96</sup> The body is placed with head towards South and face towards East to see the sunrise. Personal Interview with Ramani, Anganwadi teacher, *Kattunayakan* Colony, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

<sup>97</sup> Cited in K. Panoor, *Keralathile Africa*, Mal, reprint, Kottayam, 2000, p.87.

<sup>98</sup> Cherumar, a lower caste, in the area also call their graveyard *Chodalai*, and if it is in the hilly region it is called *Chudumalai* or *Chudalakunnu*.

allow the smoke (*oge*) to spread everywhere in order to wash away the pollution.<sup>99</sup>

Along with the body, all belongings of the deceased like dresses, tools, utensils, betel box etc. are buried. The weapon used for digging pit is also buried. They do so to be relieved from the disturbances of the spirit of the deceased.<sup>100</sup> In the case of children, breast-milk is placed in a *kumbil* near the head. If it is woman a ring on finger (*ungar*) and a chain (*vangar*) around the neck, nose-ring, bangle etc. are also buried.<sup>101</sup> In the early days a *pandal* is built over the grave. A ring is tied on a tag and *jenmadeva*, the chief morner encircle the grave seven times and murmur the reason of the death. It is called *Daivomkuta*.<sup>102</sup>

Pollution after death is observed for 7 to 15 days. The adult male who dies before marriage is called *virika* and his spirit is believed to be very mischievous. Two plates of water and gruel are offered to the spirit for seven days. Betel leaves, arecanuts, *Beedi* are also offered to the dead. A feast is arranged in the last day. *Dodda pola* is another ritual performed after one month. On this day, a chicken is cut and curry is prepared with potato, onion, cucumber, dhal and served. The *mudali* is gifted with rice, arecanuts, betel leaves etc. Ancestral spirits are consulted through oracle and future course of

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<sup>99</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 591-92.

<sup>100</sup> Personal Interview with Ramani, Anganwadi teacher, *Kattunayakan* Colony, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

<sup>101</sup> Sreenarayanan Mavoor, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>102</sup> Personal Interview with Ramani, Anganwadi teacher, *Kattunayakan* Colony, Appankappu, Pothukallu, 08-05-05.

activities are decided.<sup>103</sup> Now-a-days most of the *Kattunayakan* do hesitate to observe all the rituals and ceremonies in their strict sense as they are highly expensive.

*Kattunayakans'* attitude towards education and modern changes is encouraging. Due to the introduction of tribal residential schools and special *Ashrama Vidyalaya* (Manjeri), their literacy and educational level are steadily increasing. Though they accept the modern facilities like TV, radio, etc. they are not willing to leave their natural habitat, forest. Even now, in some areas of the district, they hesitate to speak to non-tribals and outsiders.

## **KURUMAN**

According to 2001 Census the total number of *Kuruman*<sup>104</sup> in the district is 410 which constitute 3.3% of the total ST population of the district. As per the latest information their number is 272 which is only 1.8% of the total ST population<sup>105</sup>. They are scattered in the panchayaths of Moothedam, Chaliyar, Vazhikkadavu and Chungathara as in eight colonies.

### **Name and Origin**

According to Thurston, "The name *Kuruman* is merely another form of *Kurumban*, but as they differ from them the ordinary Kurumbas, it seemed better to show them separately, they were originally identical with the

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<sup>103</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 592.

<sup>104</sup> *Kuruman* is singular and *Kurumar* is plural.

<sup>105</sup> *ITDP Census, Nilambur*, 2006, p.2.

shepherd Kurumbar".<sup>106</sup> Logan reports that "the *Kuruman* were originally shepherds and herdsmen and from their having given their name to such and unpastoral portion of the district (district east of the ghat) as Kurumbranad".<sup>107</sup> For Luiz, "their name originates from their occupation of tending *Kuru*, sheep or from Tamil word *Kurumbo* (mischief) because of their savage state they were very arrogant and mischievous".<sup>108</sup>

*Kurumar* are called by different names such as *Mulla Kuruman*<sup>109</sup> and *Mullu Kurumba*.<sup>110</sup> In the Census report of 1891, the Kurumbas or Kurubas are presented as the modern representatives of the ancient *Kurumbas* or Pallavas... who were scattered far and wide. Many fled to the hills, and in the Nilgiri and the Waynad, in Coorg and Mysore.<sup>111</sup> Luiz disagrees with this view and argues that *Karumbans* are the *Vetas* (*Vetans*) of South India who after coming into Malabar were called *Kurumans*.<sup>112</sup> They are found in Waynad district and also in the adjoining district, Gudalloor Taluk of Tamil Nadu. In the official list they are *Kurumans*. Another subdivision is *Urali Kurumar* who are found in Waynad and Hose Durg taluk in Karnataka adjoining Waynad where they are called *Betta Kuruman*. Officially the community is known as *Kuruman*, a ST which comprises *Mulla Kuruman* also. *Kurumar* have medium height, dark complexioned and have many of

<sup>106</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-10), Vol. IV, p. 156.

<sup>107</sup> William Logan, *op. cit.*, Vol.I., p. 729.

<sup>108</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-10), Vol.IV, p. 156.

<sup>111</sup> The Report on the Census 1891, Vol.XIII, Madras, 1893,p.289.

<sup>112</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, 116.

the external features of the Dravidian speaking tribes. Their dialects very similar to that of Tamil.<sup>113</sup> It is found that they are very poor in talking Malayalam particularly their aged persons.

### **Material Culture**

*Kuruma* houses were erected on bamboo supports with a flimsy roof covered with straw or leaves. They live in settlements of 4 to 5 huts. Often they wander away for months and return to the same dilapidated huts. Even now they build huts in their traditional model with mud-bricks (walls) and coconut leaf (roofs). Their house is called *pera* or *illa (illam)*. In the past, their household articles comprised of earthen pots, various kinds of bamboo baskets for storing food and other household items. Now they also use modern type of utensils of aluminium, steel, plastic, etc.

In the past, *Kuruma* men were semi-naked. They used to wear a loincloth around their waist which is called *Chinda*<sup>114</sup> and a *pochumundu (thorthu)* on the shoulder. Old women still wear a piece of *thorthu* tied on the left shoulder. Those days their women wear blouses, sarees, rings, earrings, bangles and coloured beads. Even now they wear very simple and scanty dress. Modern type of shirts, banyans, and dothies are used. The women do not go outside. Usually they wear a long piece of cloth called *chela* round their waist.

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>114</sup> Personal Interview with Neeli, Parakkode, Chaliyar, 15-05-05.



*Kurumar* were vegetarian in the past. Tubers, fruits, leaves of various plants, *ragi*, paddy, *chama* were their main food items in the past. Now rice is the staple cereal food. They usually take food only one time a day. In the evening they prepare rice and the balance gruel is used in the morning. They have no lunch. They also take black-tea, coffee, betel nuts, *beedi* and often alcohol.

Till the recent past, *Kurumar* were hunters and food gatherers. "They are not conversant with the use of bows and arrows and their hunting consists mostly of trapping and snaring animals with the assistance of *pariah* dogs. Some are seen tending goats. They have never worked with a plough; nor do they have a taste of agriculture".<sup>115</sup> Honey from the forest was the chief item collected. Presently they are working in the paddy fields of Mappilas as wage labourers and occasionally they collect honey. They are also engaged in cutting bamboo. In recent times they cultivate plantation fruits, coconut, etc. for food purpose in the plot granted by the government. They do not engage in hunting.

### **Social Organisation**

Among *Kurumar*, *Moopan* system was existing. Now it is only nominal. The headman of *Kurumar* was called *Arason*.<sup>116</sup> In the past he had an assistant called *Varijin* and an executive officer known as *kolkaran*. The

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<sup>115</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 119.

social problems are usually discussed and decided at tribal meeting. The headman presides over it. His office is either elective or hereditary but once elected; a man is headman for life. Personal qualities and abilities are the basis of his authority. *Kuruman* or *Kurumban* is, according to Stephen Fuchs, "a tribe claiming aristocratic origin though now much reduced economically".<sup>117</sup> Now, the headman system is under vanishing.

They are a distinct tribe with a culture and history of their own, and treat the other tribes low and polluting. Their superiority is asserted on the basis that they do not eat beef and are not agricultural serfs. They consider *Aranadan* tribe as polluting group and keep maximum distance from them.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Stephen Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

<sup>118</sup> Personal Interview with Gaunan, Moochiparatha, Moothedam, 16-05-05.

## **Religious Organisation**

The favourite deity of *Kurumar* is *Sanchali Karuppan* who is described as the manifestation of Siva. It indicates the influence of Hinduism on their belief. They also worship *Kali*, *Kannimar*, *Malaidaivam*, *Pulidaivam*, *Pannidaivam* and *Kuttichathan*. They keep their gods in a divine basket (*Daivakottai*) covered by a red piece of cloth. They offer sacrifices and what is offered is eaten after the ceremonies. They occasionally make offerings of *aval* (flattened rice made from fried paddy) and bran of rice to appease their Gods. *Kurumar* are ancestor worshippers. Toddy is offered to their gods in *Samkranthi* (*Karkitakam*). In the past they performed *daivam kotuthi* (Giving to God). It is an annual celebration (*Aandaruthi*) observed for seven days successive to Vishu festival in the name of their forefathers. In this day their special offerings of *aval*, bran of rice, toddy are placed in a plantain leaf and dance around it with music and a rhythmic movements. At last, a grand feast is served to the gathering. Now they do not celebrate this regularly due to the financial problems. *Kurumar* have belief in rebirth and life after death.

## **Life Cycle**

The pregnant woman is segregated for a month and a half. She is sent to the house of her parents for the first delivery. No segregation shed is built.

But she is considered polluted and is prohibited to enter kitchen and do any work. A strange belief among the *Kurumar* is that during the pregnancy of the wife, the husband is expected to refrain from killing animals, carrying a funeral bier, thatching houses and even from shaving.

The naming of the newborn is twenty-eight days after birth. Now it is called *Choorunu*<sup>119</sup> done at Modavanna or Edakkara Hindu Temples. *Kathukuthu Kalyalam* (boring ears ceremony) is observed on any convenient day after naming ceremony. On the occasion the child is given a coin by an elder. A feast is served after boring the ear of the child.

A girl attaining puberty is considered polluted and secluded for 15 days. The puberty ceremony is called *thirandukalyanam*. A small *illam* is built to segregate her. She is prohibited to talk others. *Achi* (aunt) assists her in daily routines. A woman in menses is segregated for one week. Now it is in a corner of the house. She is prohibited to touch household articles. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day she is bathed in turmeric water and the house and surroundings are cleaned. A feast is served after the purification ceremony.

Marriage is only after puberty. The age of marriage of girl and boy is 18 and 22 respectively. In the past, they were the strict followers of endogamous marriage system.<sup>120</sup> Now, both endogamous and exogamous systems are followed. To marry the daughter of the maternal uncle is

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Stephen Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

particularly recommended and encouraging. The father of the boy takes initiative for negotiations. Bride price, called *tera* or *Noottukal* (100¼) is given to the girl before marriage ceremony. Marriage is usually observed on Monday night. Presentation of cloth and tying of a string of coloured beads are on the night of the day. In the past marriage by elopement or by force was usual. Polygamy was common. Inter-tribal marriages are reported. They are got married with Paniyans, Thiyyas, Christians, Nairs etc. Divorce is allowed and widow remarriage is encouraged. Married women are not invited to widow remarriage functions.

*Kurumar* bury their dead in a common graveyard close to their settlement. The elder son is the chief mourner. The body is washed and covered with clothes. A pot of water is broken in front of the corpse and move to the funeral procession at grave. The body is taken to the grave in a mat made of leaves called *thazhuthal* or *thaihal*. Burial practices are performed under the auspice of *Moopan*. *Chavittikodukka*<sup>121</sup> is the first step. It is a method of selecting site for digging the burial pit. *Moopan* measures the length of the dead body and measure the site by his foot.<sup>122</sup> Then he starts digging. Pit has about five to six feet deep. Body is laid on back in East-West direction. All the personal belongings of the person are also buried. After burial a small *illam* is built on the graveyard<sup>123</sup>. All people gathered for the

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> It is a similar practice of with *Kattunayakans* of marking site for burial pit, but one difference is that *Kattunayakan* head uses a stick called *Badukka* to mark the site.

<sup>123</sup> Stephen Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

funeral bath in the nearby river before entering their respective houses. All weapons used for digging are washed. Women folk also attend the funeral ceremony. Before returning they place a lighted lamp on the grave. In the case of an infant some breast milk in a cocunut shell or in a *kumbil* (plate by leaves) is placed on the grave. Some times it is placed in a corner of the *illam*. This practice is continued for 90 days. Water and rice are placed in the open near the *illam* with a belief that this would be consumed by the spirit of the deceased. They believe that the soul has a life after death and also in rebirth. On the third day cooked rice is placed on the grave to be eaten by birds, believed to be possessed with the spirit of the deceased.

Pollution, *pula*, is observed which lasts for 14 days. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day a grand feast is served to the kinsmen gathered. During these days one member of the family takes fast who is restrained from taking food except black tea. Wife takes fast for husband and vice versa. Mother takes fast for children. For seven days food is placed in the graveyard or in the house. When one year is completed *Adiyanthiram* is observed to appease the departed soul. All kinsmen are invited. *kalladi*, religious head supervises the ceremony. A grand feast is served to the gathering.

## ***MALA MUTHAN***

*Mala Muthans*<sup>124</sup> are a tribal group inhabiting the district having a unique culture and tradition. They are found in the Panchayaths of Chungathara, Edakkara, Amarambalam, Chokkad Chaliyar, Vazhikadavu, Urngatri, Mampad, Pothukallulu and Edavanna. About 64 percent of the *Mala Muthans* are dispersed in two Panchayaths, Urngatiri (827) and Mampad (628). They are also found in Kozhikkode district. According to 2001 Census their total population in the district is 2672 which constitutes 21.7% of the total ST population of the district. As per ITDP Census of 2006, they number 2280 which is 15% of the total ST population of the district. They are included in the Scheduled Tribes list under the name *Muthuvans*.

*Mala Muthans* are sturdy, long-armed broad chested, dark in colour and have most of the external features of the Dravidian speaking tribes. They have their own language which is locally called 'Muthan Bhasha.' It has no script. It is very difficult to grasp. With outsiders they talk in Malayalam.

### **Name and Origin**

In Malayalam '*mala*' means hill and *muthan* means old man, hence *malamuthan* means 'old man of the hill'. They are called *Muthan* or *Muthanmar* by the local people while in the official records they are referred to as '*Muthuvans*' (though the *Muthuvans* of Idukki district is a different

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<sup>124</sup> *Mala Muthan* is singular and *Mala Muthans* is plural.

community). Thurston<sup>125</sup> named them as *Malakkaran* while Luiz<sup>126</sup> used *Malakkaran* and *Mala Panickan* as synonymous to *Mala Muthan*.

Nothing is known definite about their origin. There is a belief among them that has been disseminating through generations that they were Brahmins and were kept aloof from the rest of the society and were excommunicated in the remote past. In a folk song, their early history is as follows. "Pullankode in Pullaninadu was the homeland of *Mala Muthans*. There flourished progress and prosperity under their rulers Ramankurman and Raman Kannan. The envious native king attacked Pullankode. *Mala Muthans* prayed a lot. Kelu, a legendary hero, placed a packet of gold, in front of the army who came to attack Pullankode. The packet began to move. One of the soldiers pinned it down with a spear. When the packet was broken a swarm of wasps came out and attacked the soldiers and the army retreated. But the *Naduvazhi* invited Raman Kurman and Raman Kannan to *Nilambur Kovilakam* and treacherously killed and thus Pullankode became under the control of the *Kovilakam*".<sup>127</sup> The present *Mala Muthan* generation is unaware about this origin- myth.

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<sup>125</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.* (n-10), Vol. V, p.306.

<sup>126</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>127</sup> Sreenarayanan Mavoor, *op.cit.*, pp. 89-90. This mythical story is also told by the members of *Nilambur Kovilakom* in a personal interview with them.



## Material Culture

The *Mala Muthan* house is called '*illam*'. The walls of the *illam* are formed by bamboo plastered with mud and its roofs are thatched with wild grass. The roof is very low which brought down to one feet or two above the ground. An opening in the front is served as the entrance. *Illam* has only one room and a corner is used as kitchen. Three stones are placed in such a way as to form the hearth.

In the past they used earthen pots, wooden poles, bamboo poles, wooden bowls, *Kotai* made out of tree bark etc. for daily use. Hand axe (*kodali*) and knives (*vaikathi*) of iron were also used. It is said that they bought iron from the nearby market. A ceiling *chova* formed over the hearth supported by four bamboo poles, was used as shelf for storing grains.<sup>128</sup> Bamboo splits are used to cut the umbilical cord of the new born. Now they use modern types of vessels and utensils of aluminium, steel, plastic and fibre.

*Mala Muthan* men usually wear a loincloth, *mundu* and a towel which they fling across the shoulders. Their women also have an under cloth below the *mundu* and prefer to be topless. They believe that if they cover the breasts, their Gods will be angry.<sup>129</sup> At present, all *Mala Muthans* are found in modern dress pattern. In the past, their men wore *Kuduma* and *Vallikammal*

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<sup>128</sup> T. Madhava Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, p. 208.

and women wear *Kombuvala*, copper rings and men wore brass or silver earring. *Pontali* was a silver necklace usually used by their women.

*Mala Muthans* were purely vegetarians in the past.<sup>130</sup> Now they also take non-vegetarian foods. The *Mala Muthans* who live in the interior regions do not take the beef. Their staple food is rice. They take two meals a day, in the morning and at night. They usually use coffee and tea. Some use milk. Many of them drink alcohol, smoke *Beedi* or cigarette and chew betal.

It is said that *Mala Muthan* were hunters and food gatherers in the past and then became shifting cultivators.<sup>131</sup> The animals they hunted include hare, deer, sheep, and birds like black minorka, dove, goose etc. Bows and arrows, and gun given from Nilambur *kovilakom* were mainly used. They domesticated dogs for the purpose of hunting. Now they do not go for hunting regularly but often they engage in fishing and trapping of birds and animals. They also found their livelihood as farm labourers and watchmen and by collecting forest produces. They were also engaged in wood cutting, bamboo cutting, and often in trapping elephant<sup>132</sup>. At present the community is mainly landowning. Each *morad*<sup>133</sup> has agricultural land in the name of the headman, who distributes this to each *illam*<sup>134</sup> for agricultural purposes. Presently they

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<sup>130</sup> Personal Interview with Krishnankutty, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>131</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op.cit.*,p127.

<sup>132</sup> These trapped elephants were sold to the Mappila *jenmis* who used them for bearing woods. Personal Interview with Krishnankutty, Palakayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>133</sup> *Morad* is the area of settlements which comprises of several *illams*.

<sup>134</sup> *Illam* is also often an economic unit.

cultivate paddy, *ragi*, tapioca, pepper, and various tubers mainly for their own usage.<sup>135</sup> In many areas they possess acres of rubber estates.<sup>136</sup> Many of them are tappers in the rubber estates of non-tribals like Mappilas and Christians. A few of them are employed in government services. Animal husbandry, collection of minor forest produce and non-skilled daily wage casual labour are secondary occupations. They have direct contact with markets to sell their gatherings. The transactions are in cash.<sup>137</sup> Many of them have shifted their habitat to the area where co-operative society functions. In effect, it is shift from traditional tribal economy to the money market economy.

### **Social Organisation**

Family is the smallest unit of the *Mala Muthan* social organisation. *Mala Muthan* family is nuclear type which comprises of husband, wife and their unmarried children. Each family has their own house called *illam*. The area of settlement which comprises of several *illams* is called *morad* (hamlet). A *morad* has organisation with two groups representing the two *moiety*s. Each *moiety* has a head called *Chemmi* or *Kothammakkar*. Their common leader for whole community is called *janmakaram*. *Janmakkar* has power to settle disputes and to order punishment. Ex-communication was the usual method of punishment, it is not following now. Recently, *Janmakkar* has lost many of his powers. It is said that the monetization of their economy and

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<sup>135</sup> Personal Interview with Krishnankutty, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Personal Interview with Raman and Swapna, Peruvampadam, Chaliyar, 17-05-05.

subsequent individualisation among the young generation is the basic reason of loosing traditional social cohesion.<sup>138</sup> But, even now, he is a binding force of all social institutions. He is invited to all social and religious functions and ceremonies.

The social control mechanism among the *Mala Muthan* is maintained through inter-*illam* ties. *Janmakkaran* acts as a binding force and all family members, irrespective of the *moiety*, *morad* and *illam* are always willing to co-operate in all matters. The *Mala Muthan* tribe is divided into two exogamous moieties called *Palan* and *Paramban*.<sup>139</sup> They consider *Palan* and *Paramban* as brothers or as sun and moon or as day and night. The son of *Palan* marries the daughter of the *Paramban* and vice versa. This differentiation is at social level to regulate marital alliances. It also indicates the lineage and ancestry of a particular person.<sup>140</sup>

In the past, *Mala Muthans* did hesitate to accept food and water or any other items of daily needs from other tribes or non-tribals. Recently this situation is changing, but it is very rare for them to mingle or co-operate with other tribes. They do not allow intercommunity or inter-tribal marriages. In the past they did not use public buildings, schools, temples, roads, markets,

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<sup>138</sup> Personal Interview with Valiya Raman, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Vennekkode, Chaliyar, 21.05.2005.

<sup>139</sup> The *Mala Muthans* have no idea regarding the base of this division. It is said that the system has been following from the early time and the identification has been possible observing the use of gold and silver. They believe that *Palan* use gold while *Paramban* use silver. According to their belief, using gold is harmful to *Paramban* as silver to *Palan*. Personal Interview with Krishnan Kutty, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>140</sup> C.R. Prakash, "*Mala Muthan*", in K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 795.

vehicles, wells, shrines etc. Luiz observes "they consider it polluting to touch any community lower than the Nairs of Kerala. Some who are farm labourers refuse to work with the *Aranadan* and *Paniyans* and to yoke the bulls on the ground that they are polluting. After the day's wander they enter their huts or place of rest only after a bath. They are non-vegetarians who drink and smoke but avoid beef, bison meat and flesh of monkeys. They consider themselves a very superior group and prefer to live isolated. They are fearless and loyal".<sup>141</sup>

*Mala Muthans* consider themselves at the top in the social hierarchy and have a fear of being polluted by contact with outsiders. So they build their huts/settlements of six to ten houses far away from other tribals or non-tribals. Luiz calls them as the 'terror of the forest'.<sup>142</sup> Regarding this terming they replied that "because of our rigidity in observing pollution we try maximum to keep aloof from others and those who come from outside are found dangerous and are attacked. We do not allow anybody to enter or to touch our *illam* and other household articles. If our *illam* is polluted with the entrance of outsiders the *illam* will be burnt and the household articles will be demolished or given up. So we try maximum to be kept out even from the shadow of outsiders. This attitude may be the reason to call us the terror of the forest"<sup>143</sup>. The exact term that can be used to call them is that 'Brahmins of forest' after their beliefs and unique customs and traditions.

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<sup>141</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Personal interview with Raman and Swapna, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Peruvampadam Chaliyar, 16.05.05

## Religious Organisation

*Mala Muthans* have their own deities and mode of worship. Their chief deities are *Mala Daivam*, *Pottenthiruvadi* and *Pullali*.<sup>144</sup> Pottenthiruvadi temple at Koodaranji near Thuiruvambadi, Kozhikkode district, is considered the main centre of their rituals where they often perform *pujas* and conduct annual festival in the month of *Thulam* (October - November) and *Kumbam* (February - March) respectively. Other local Hindu temples are also venerated by *Mala Muthans*. *Janmakaram* is expected to perform *pujas* and to the *paina*,<sup>145</sup> for the protection from evil spirits. He also acts as a sorcerer. *Koduthi* or *Daivam koduti* is a festival on ancestor worship celebrated in February and March. They have strong belief in ancestral spirit which is called *paina*<sup>146</sup> and they believe that *paina* causes calamities when they are not propitiated and is present at all socio-religious ceremonies. *Vettakorumakan* has been worshipped as the personification of spirits. In all the *morads* there are temples dedicated to *paina*.

Raman Kurman and Raman Kannan are their community deities. Hinduisation process is steadily increasing among the *Mala Muthans*. They have belief in Hindu gods and goddesses. They worship *Kuttichathan*, *Gulikan*, *Bagavati* and *Karuvon*. *Mala Muthans* have belief in the existence of

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<sup>144</sup> Personal Interview with Kalyani, *Mala Muthan Colony*, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

the soul after death, but only the good will be reborn as human being.<sup>147</sup> They offer visit to Hindu pilgrim centre, Sabarimala and other local Hindu temples. All the rituals and practices in connection with the Sabarimala pilgrimage are strictly observed. Onam, Vishu are also celebrated.

## Life Cycle

The pregnant woman is secluded for delivery in a special shed called *Kummali* which is built before one month. *Chemmi* is invited to ward off the evil spirit. Delivery occurs in the sitting posture. The mother is assisted by a few women. All men folk and colony members gather around the *Kummali* and pray to their God (*Mala daiva*). If the new born is boy they proclaim, "*edakkum, padakkum nanjinum nayattinum chekkan piranne*" and if it is girl "*littinum pettinum pennu piranne*".<sup>148</sup> The umbilical cord is removed with a bamboo piece and the blood that comes out is embalmed on the lips of the new born to make the lips bloody and fleshy.<sup>149</sup> Plantain is the cereal food to mother during this period. On the 21<sup>st</sup> day she is bathed and *kummali* is burnt. Then the mother and new born are sprinkled with *punyaham*. Purification rituals are performed by Peruvannan. The utensils used are given up. Then for further 8 days the mother and new born are secluded in the house.

On the twenty eighth<sup>th</sup> day the naming ceremony is observed. The naming ceremony of *Mala Muthan* is called *Irupethiettu Kalampidium*

<sup>147</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>148</sup> Personal Interview with Kalyani, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

(twenty eight rituals for the touching of cooking utensils). Rman, Kurman, Chairan, Unneeran and Chirutha are their traditional names. This day is observed as the birth day which is called *piranal adiyanthiram*. A copper ring is tied around the neck of the infant. Upto three years the infant is not placed on ground. Breast-feeding is a must during this period.<sup>150</sup>

The puberty ceremony among *Mala Muthans* is called *Thirandukalyanam*. As being polluted she is secluded for 15 days. Every day she has to take bath in the early morning. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day the relatives of the girl gather and perform the rites and she is brought to the house after the purificatory bath. The *illam* is cleaned and sprinkle *punyaham* brought from Nilambur *illam*.<sup>151</sup> A feast is served to the gathering.

Marriages are only after attaining puberty. The negotiations will be initiated by the parents of the boy. Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence. The bride price is payable in cash which varies from Rs.12 to 100 depending on the economic status of the family. It is to be given to the maternal uncle of the bride in whose house the girl has been staying since puberty. The days considered auspicious for wedding are Sundays or Wednesdays particularly in the months of *Vrichigam* and *Dhanu* (October - January). Tying of *thali* in the presence of the elders, presenting new cloth, copper ring, and half a bottle of liquor by the boy, are the elementary aspects

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*



of the ceremony.<sup>152</sup> Both boy and girl fall at the feet of the elders. Then the new couple sit together and take feast in a single leaf and exchange a rice ball which is considered as symbolic of sharing the life in future. Then a grand feast is served to all invitees. The ceremony is presided over by the *chemmi*. Although the new couple is allowed to sleep in a single room, for seven days after marriage, sexual relations are not allowed. After marriage the couple begins to live in a separate hut built before the marriage. Then the boy has no right to enter the house of his father.<sup>153</sup>

*Mala Muthans* inform the news of death only to their clansmen as they follow strict rules of pollution. More over, they believe that if they inform the outsiders a second death would happen. They call the dead body *marippu*<sup>154</sup>. They also use the term *savam* to call the corpse<sup>155</sup>. The deadbody is placed on the floor inside the *illam* and draw two circles around the corpse with rice and paddy respectively. They believe that the spirits fear circles and cannot cross them. The body is not washed. They believe that they come to the earth without taking bath, so the returning should also be in the same nature. The deadbody is covered using the oldest cloths that they have with a belief that if they return with an old one, they will be given a new one by God in the after life. In the past each *Mala Muthan* house has to provide a piece of cloth and

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Manjula Poyil, *Death, Funeral and the Ancestors Cult of the Dead and the Malabar Tribes*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, 2006, p.137.

place it on the corpse. Now it is not practiced and the number of pieces of cloths is fixed to seven. Using one piece they cover the body and the remaining pieces are just placed on the body. The bier by bamboo is called *kattil*. If a person dies while lying on a bamboo screen he has to be taken to the graveyard on the same screen. The deadbody is placed on the bier and taken to the graveyard as the head towards the *illam* and legs towards the graveyard. Taking of the corpse to the burial ground is called *marippedukkal*.

*Mala Muthans* bury their dead. The burial ground is very far from the living settlements. Nephew is the chief mourner. The grave is dug only after the body is brought there. They dig a special type of grave. They first dig an unusually wide pit which is six feet in length. Then in the middle of this pit they dig another narrow rectangular pit of the same length. Grave is five feet deep. A bamboo screen called *thaithal* is laid at the bottom of the pit and the corpse is placed on it with the head to the south. Along with the body they also bury the broken pottery or utensils, coconut shell, old cloths, *beedi*, betal box, etc. They bury the old and broken belongings with a belief that new ones will be given by God in the after life. And they also place rice, paddy, salt and chilly with the belief that if they face any difficulty to get food in the life hereafter they can use these other items to prepare food for themselves. They place the belongings near the legs. They do not deposit iron weapons or strong vessels as they believe that the spirit of the dead may use them against their enemies. They are just placed on the grave. In the case of infants they place

breast milk of the mother on the grave in cocunut shell for seven days. Some times it is placed inside the house where the body was laid. It is believed that, in the absence of this practice the spirit of the child will suckle the breast of the mother causing it to dry up. They believe that if the mother's milk is offered daily to the spirit, the process of the drying up of the milk can be delayed.

*Mala Muthans* do not put stones on the grave as they believe that, by doing so, the corpse will have to suffer the weights of the stone, which will invite the wrath of the spirit of the dead. Besides, they do not plant anything on the grave at all, because, they believe that the plants will grow by eating up the flesh of the deceased and also will cause hindrances to the soul in coming out of the grave.

After the burial of the body the *illam* is closed by the nephew and the members of the family of the deceased live in nephew's house. In the case of the husband his wife goes to the burial ground and places a copper ring having seven lines.<sup>156</sup> When they come back to house, they put seven pieces of a stick in the way. They do it so with a belief that when the spirit of the dead comes to the house the stick pieces may prevent him and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day the spirit may return. They do not look back when they return to the house after burial. All persons should take bath from a *kadavu*. The family members of the deceased have no food on that day. The weapons used for burial are kept far away from

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<sup>156</sup> Personal Interview with Kalyani, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

the *illam* for 3 days and on the third day, a purificatory bath with the help of *Peruvannan* is taken. On this occasion, all the weapons are also washed. It is believed that when *Peruvannan* sprinkle the cow dung the dead person will open his eyes. *Aaramravu*, (sixth day night) is considered dangerous because they believe that on this night the spirit visits all the places which he visited in the life time to say good bye. On this night no food is kept balance and they scatter ash in the house and around the bed. On the seventh day morning the relatives visit the grave and place *beedi* and *betal* on it. After seeing the relatives and saying good-bye the deceased person is taken to God by *kaalan* or *malaki*.<sup>157</sup> On this day the nephew opens the closed *illam*. All the household articles are placed in the yard. All these articles are distributed by the *Chemmi* to the family members. In the past paddy and corn were also distributed. The property of the deceased is inherited to his sister and sons.<sup>158</sup>

In the past, the *Mala Muthans* followed a strange custom that if the person dies in his dwelling house they burnt or demolished the house to prevent the return of the dead spirit. The Census of India, 1961, attests this, “*Mala Muthans* do not allow a person to die in his dwelling house. The moribund person is taken out of the house before he breathes his last. If

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<sup>157</sup> *Malak* is a Qura’anic word which means angel. Muslims believe that the soul of the deceased is taken by a *malak* named *Azraa’il*. The usage of this term by *Mala Muthans* is due to the large scale contact with Muslims in the district.

<sup>158</sup> Personal Interview with Krishnan Kutty, *Mala Muthan* Colony, Palakkayam, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

anyone happens to die lying within the hut, it will be considered polluted and will be burnt down.”<sup>159</sup> But now, they do not practice this custom.

*Mala Muthans'* attitude towards education and modern changes is encouraging. Their boys and girls study usually up to secondary level and many up to college levels. Many *Mala Muthans* work in government services. They have a positive attitude towards health and medicare. They favour in family planning. Generally their women get sterilised after having 3 to 4 children. The main sources of drinking water are spring and dug wells in the locality launched by the government. Their fuel resource is firewood. Organic manure, chemical fertilisers and insecticides are used in their agriculture. Rain water and rivers are the main sources of irrigation. The old observance of pollution is vanished. Now they accept food, water and other items from non-tribals like Muslims, Christians, Tiyya, Nayar, Nambiar etc. But it is very rare to accept the same from the tribals other than *Mala Muthans*. Most of them are the dependants on money lenders and shopekeepers for their immediate needs. Modern civic amenities and development schemes are available to *Mala Muthans*. T.V, radio, telephone, electricity, roads are widely used. Folk songs and folk tales have wide significance and are sung when performing dance by both men and women during the occasions of festivals and ceremonies. But unfortunately the present generation is unaware of these songs and traditions.

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<sup>159</sup> M.K, Devassi, *Census of India, 1961:Kerala, Part IX, Village Survey Monographs, Tribal Areas*, Madras, 1974, p.264.

## ***MALA PANICKAN***

The name *Mala Panickan*<sup>160</sup> was included in the Scheduled Tribes List in 2003.<sup>161</sup> Up to 2003, they were included in the Other Eligible Community (OEC) list of the Government of Kerala. The total population of *Mala Panickar* is 936<sup>162</sup> which constitute 6.3% of the total ST population of the district. They are mainly found in Nilambur, Moothedan, Vazhikadavu, Mampad, Edavanna, Karuvarakunda, Edakkara, and Wandoor Panchyaths in 31 colonies. They are of medium height and very light to dark and brown in complexion. They speak Malayalam with a particular intonation which makes it unintelligible to outsiders.

### **Name and Origin**

The name *Mala Panickan* is derived from the two words *mala* (hill) and *Panickan* (worker) meaning hill worker.<sup>163</sup> Local people call them *Malakkaran* because they believe that they are hill dwellers. The name Panickan may be a respected title given to them by others for their services, as black magic performers, or they presumably adopted title for their social status and in course of time the community as a whole came to be known by the name *Mala Panickan*.

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<sup>160</sup> *Mala Panickan* is singular and *Mala Panickans* or *Mala Panickar* are plural forms.

<sup>161</sup> Inserted in the list by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (Amendment) Act, 2002, (Act 10 of 2003). Vide part VII - Kerala - in the Second Schedule.

<sup>162</sup> *ITDP Census*, Nilambur, 2006,p.3.

<sup>163</sup> Edgar Thurston and A.A.D.Luiz use the name *Malakkaran* as synonymous to *Mala Muthan*. Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.* (n-10), Vol. V, p.306. ; A.A.D.Luiz, *op.cit.*, p.126.

About their early history Luiz reports that "they are the progeny of the early Nairs, who centuries ago were obliged to leave the developed coastal regions and take refuge in the mountain tracts of Malabar. It is possible that they are the offspring of the early Nair soldiers who served under the Rajas who had domain of the mountain tracts of Malabar. Their general appearance, rules of pollution, customs and dialect permit classifying them as autochthons of Kerala. They treat all communities lower than the Nairs as low. There is clear evidence that in their early society *Marumakkathayam* (succession through female) was the rule".<sup>164</sup>

*Mala Panickar* claims that they were the hill dwellers and once they were brought and settled in the present habitats by Nilambur *kovilakom*. A story that exists among them regarding this is as follows:

"Once Samuthiri (Zamorin) offered a visit to Kashi and during his absence his nephew took the throne. When Samuthiri came back the nephew had to abdicate the throne and took asylum in the jungle. When he was wandering on a rainy day, he found a hut of a *Mala Panickathy* (*Mala Panickan* Woman) in the jungle and he knocked at the door. The *Mala Panickathy* was alarmed and she gave all the sweets (milk, molasses, and plantain fruits) that she had with a shouting of '*Pottenayalum Chekidanayalum vendilla, ithe ulloo*'. Thus *Thiruvadikal* became *Potten Thiruvadikal*. The disturbances of *Potten Thiruvadikal* alarmed Nilambur

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<sup>164</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, pp.147-48.

*Kovilakam* later. As a solution *Kovilakom* brought *Mala Panickar* from forest and settled them in the area adjacent to *Kovilakom*".<sup>165</sup>

Another story is as follows, "A woman had two daughters, and they married and settled in the Eranad hills. When the non-tribals penetrated into the area, the descendants of the younger daughter came down to the foot of the valley (*pathi*), after crossing the Chaliyar, and lived among the non-tribals, especially the Muslims, and were excommunicated. They formed themselves into a sub-tribe called *Mala Panickan*. The descendants of the elder daughter continued to stay on top of the hills and are the *Mala Muthans*."<sup>166</sup> The historicity of this story cannot be negated because, even now all of the *Mala Panickans* of the district are living amidst the so called modernised people while many *Mala Muthan* live in the remote hilly areas. More over both observe pollution and similar practices. But *Mala Muthans* in the interior areas follow these practices strictly as they have not much outside contact, while *Mala Panickan* do nominally.

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<sup>165</sup> Personal Interview with Ramankutty. Kottepadam, Chaliyar, 18-05-05.

<sup>166</sup> T. Madhava Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 216.



## **Material Culture**

*Mala Panickans* lived in isolated settlements in the single roomed houses constructed on a raised platform. Their walls are mud and plastered smooth with clay obtained from the river banks and roofs are thatched with grass and leaves. The houses are surrounded by a *varandah* hall. The interior and surroundings are plastered with cow dung paste and renewed from time to time. Their houses face towards south as they have some superstitions. Usually, the interior of this house is mainly divided into sleeping compartments and kitchen.

Men and women like to be semi-naked while at home. When going out, now-a-days, the men wear *dhothis* and shirts, and the women an under cloth, a *mundu* and a *blouse*; sarees are becoming popular. They wear ear-ring, nose rings, and necklaces formed of black threads. *Mala Panickans* are non-vegetarian, with no obligation to eating beef. Rice is their staple cereal food. It is often supplemented with roots, tubers, and yams. Pulses are also consumed. Onion, turmeric, chilly and salts are common. Rarely smashed coconut is used. The cooking medium is coconut or palm oil. Plantain fruits are consumed. They have no taboo in the consumption of milk and milk products but consumption is rare and is generally along with tea or coffee. They consume liquor for their own needs. Both sexes use *beedi*/cigarettes and betel.

In the past, they used to practice shifting cultivation. Now they engage in cutting woods, stones and digging the earth and collecting fire wood and scantlings, which they sell in the market. Women supplement the family income by collecting and vending fire wood. In some area they are still bonded labourers, under the local Muslims, landlords, whom they term as *Kurukkal*. Traditional methods of medicine are practiced.

### **Social Organisation**

*Mala Panickans* have no system of *moopan*.<sup>167</sup> They are divided into two moieties, (*Kirikams*) named *Kadamkadan* and *Parampan*. They follow *kirikam* endogamy. Each is formed based on lineage or *taravad*. The *taravads* are named after the respective places. For example Kainikkara, Thuvakad, Irainickal, Elicode, Kumangal etc. *Mala Panickans* consider themselves as higher class and observe pollution. They keep maximum distance from other tribals as well as non-tribals to maintain their purity. They receive oil from Nairs for lighting lamps (*Vilakku thelikkal*) in their shrines, but do not allow others to light lamps and to enter the shrine or to touch their *puja* items.<sup>168</sup> *Marumakkathayam* (succession through female line) was the rule<sup>169</sup> but now they follow patrilineal system.<sup>170</sup> It is very recently they have started

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<sup>167</sup> Personal Interview with Nalanunni, Promoter, ITDP, 18-05-05.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>170</sup> Personal Interview with Ramankutty, Kottepadam, Chaliyar, 18-05-05.

reckoning their descent through the male line. The father has dominant role in the family. Their family and residence pattern are nuclear.

### **Religious Organisation**

*Mala Panickans* have their own religious beliefs and practices. They were not animists in their past.<sup>171</sup> They claim to be Hindus and worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses along with their own deities. *Pottenthiruvadi* is their favourite deity. They have special shrines or temples dedicated to *Potetnthiruvadi* where they offer sing and regularly light lamps. They often pay visit and make offerings at *Pottenthiruvadi* temple at Koodaranji near Thuiruvambadi, Kozhikkode district. They also visit Hindu temples. They often perform various forms of black magic and devil dancing. Women are not permitted to perform or participate in religious ceremonies. They do not like the entering of outsiders in the temple or shrine as they observe pollution. They have a sacred specialist called *Villian* who acts as a priest and sorcerer. *Mala Panickans* have no belief in life after death. Onam, Vishu and Sivarthri are the three major festivals that they observe other than their own festivals.

*Noottonnu* is ceremonial *puja* performed by *Mala Panickans* to appease their deities. It is called after the use of 101 coconuts for the *puja*. It has two phases. The first phase is called *Uthamam*. In this phase 120 *edangazhi* paddy, 3 *edangazhi* (12 *para*) dry rice and 101 coconuts are used.

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<sup>171</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

Six plantain leaves are laid out in which 25 coconuts are placed in line in the order of 9, 7, 5, 3 and 1 and the balance is taken by the old *tharavadus* after the *puja*. The ceremony lasts for 7 days. During this time *Mala Panickar* who offers the *puja* are expected to take fast. *Puja* starts with burning six lamps for which they receive oil from Nairs. Their men engage in pounding paddy. The second phase of the *puja*, *Madyamam* is performed by offering cock and toddy to their pantheons. At last a grand feast is served. Thus the seven days' fast is broken.

The folk dance related with this *puja* is called *Ayyarukali* which is played on the night. It is performed to find out solution to drive out the malevolent spirit. A fire is prepared. But the dance is around an *uralu* (wooden mortar) on which a kerosane lamp along with a brass vessel and seven betel leaves, arecanut and pepper are placed. The dance starts at night and continues till sunrise. The dancers chew betel leaves and arecanut in order to refresh themselves and eat pepper to clear their voice. The dance represents the *kolkali* of the Mappilas of Malabar. Instead of sticks (*kol*) used by Mappilas, *Mala Panickans* clap hands in rhythm to make sound in accordance with song and footsteps. They sing folk songs which are mainly related with *Kurukshetra* war. *Chenda* and *thudi* are used. In the course of the dance, one of the spectators gets possessed by an ancestor-spirit and it begins to reveal its complaints through the person, requests for a resting place. The

headman accepts the demands of the spirit and by throwing rice on the face of the affected person he install the spirit on a cactus plant.

### **Life cycle**

A *Mala Panickan* girl, when she attains puberty, is lodged in a separate hut, for 7 days, used also for the seclusion of woman during their periods. A ceremony called *Thirandu Kalyanam*' is celebrated to announce the attainment of sexual maturity. Singing and dancing are important parts of this ceremony. Conventionally, the *peruvannathi* gives a bath and dressed her. Before entering the hut the girl and her cross-cousin of the same sex perform the *uriidal* where a pot containing two packets, one with sacred ash (*bhasma*) and the other with rice, is placed in the yard. The girl and her cousin pick out a packet each from it. Later the maternal uncle gives the girl betel to a feast. Now the *uriidal* function is almost extinct and the feasting alone is performed. After the ceremony the hut is burnt. The *Mala Panickan* women were also secluded in a separate hut during their menses time, but now it is in a corner of the house.

In the seventh month of pregnancy, the parents of the pregnant woman visit her husband's house. This ceremony is called *Vayarukanal* (seeing the belly). The occasion is celebrated with a feast. For delivery *Mala Panickans* erect a special hut called *tuchala* . The delivery is attended by an experienced woman of the community. Pollution observed for twenty eight days and a

woman of the washerman community *peruvannathi* brings a piece of cloth (*mattu*) believed to remove pollution. After bathing for twenty eight days, she is freed from pollution. On this day a thread is tied around the loin of child. The ceremony is called *Charadukettu*. A feast is offered to relatives.

Marriages among the *Mala Panickans* are only after puberty. The age fixed for marriage is 16 and 20 for girls and boys respectively. Before attaining puberty they have a form of marriage which is called *Thalickettu Kalyanam*. They follow both endogamy and exogamy rule for marriage. The most prevalent mode of finding life partner is negotiation. Marriage negotiations are initiated by the relatives of girl. It is due to the importance of girl or women in the *tharavadu* as they were the followers of the system of *Marumakkathayam*.<sup>172</sup> The *Mala Panickan* boy gives bride-price called *Janma panam* or *Dhakshina*<sup>173</sup> to the father or head of the family (*Karanavar*) of the bride. It is usually Rs. 101. It was, in the past, given to the maternal uncle.<sup>174</sup> *Tali* (marriage badge), the symbol of marriage, is tied by the sister of the bride groom or, in her absence, a senior female of his family. The *tali* made out of metal in a black thread is expected to be worn as long as her husband is alive. Feast at the houses of both parties is served.

Divorce, (*Karyam theerkal*) is permitted. Now it is an increasing phenomenon among the *Mala Panickans* When they divorce, the husband

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*

takes back his wife to her parental house and re-entrusts her to the parents or relatives. If the husband takes initiative, he has to give *Acharapanam* (ritual money) to his wife and which is followed by a ritual called *Oothi viduka* (blowing away of thread taken from his loincloth). If wife takes initiative she breaks the *tali* and gives back to the husband. Widows, widowers and divorcee are free to remarry. Polyandry is not noticed but polygyny is practiced.

*Mala Panickans* bury their dead in a burial ground far away from the settlement. But in the past, if the deceased happened to be above twelve years old they would cremate the body. Now, they prefer burial in all cases because of the heavy cost of cremation, the only exception in the case where the body is that of a deceased tribal elder. The elder son is the chief mourner and in his absence the nephew performs the rite. The mourning rite of *Mala Panickans* is called '*Ponnum neerum kodukka*' (giving rice and water). *Thaliyan* (priest) the chief ritualist, supervises the procession.

The dead body is washed and covered with a new cloth called *mudupadam*. The body is taken to the burial ground in a *thazhuthal* of bamboo. The graveyard is 5 to 6 feet deep in which the body is placed with head towards south.<sup>175</sup> The old cloths of the deceased are also buried. Women are not allowed to participate in the funeral rites. Pollution is observed for 15 days. During these days the relatives have to take fast and are

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<sup>175</sup> Personal Interview with Nalanunni, Promoter, ITDP, Nilambur, 18-05-05.

refrained from non-vegetarian food. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, pollution removal ceremony *Pulakuli Adiyanthiram* is observed. They are bathed and the house and surroundings are cleaned and cow-dung or *punyaham* is sprinkled. A feast is served.

*Mala Panickans* have a favourite attitude towards the modern changes. Most of their children study upto secondary level while a few even study upto college level. Poor economic background is the main reason for drop out from studies. They are mainly dependent on money lenders and shop keepers for their immediate needs. All modern amenities are available to *Mala Panickans* and they avail of them. *Mala Panickans* have an oral tradition. They transmit folk songs, folk tales, and superstitions of their glorious past. They are valuable and very helpful to depict their history. But their new generation have no interest in the tribal traditions and they urge to be modernised. Thus the tribal traditions and customs are not transmitted to the new generations.

## **PANIYAN**

The *Paniyan*<sup>176</sup> is the largest single Scheduled Tribe in Kerala. According to 2001 Census, they number 81940 which is about 22% of the total ST population of the state. In Malappuram District also they possess first rank in terms of total Scheduled Tribe population. As per 2001 Census, the

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<sup>176</sup> *Paniyan* is singular and *Paniyans* is plural.



total *Paniyans* of the district is 6906 which constitutes 56% of the total ST population of the district. At present their total strength is 8833 which is the 58.6% of the total Scheduled Tribes of the district.<sup>177</sup> They are mainly found in the panchayats of Chungathara, Edakkara, Amarambalam, Pothukallu, Chaliyar, Nilambur, Moothedam, Kalikavu, Karulai, Vazhikadavu, Mambad and Wandoor. A group of Paniyans in the district are called *Kurinji Paniyan* or *Kattu Paniyan* as they are found in the interior forest areas. They are very primitive in nature.

*Paniyans* are a dark skinned tribe, short in stature (157.4 cm) with broad nose (nasal index 95.5 cm and cephalic index 74 cm). The average distance from the tip of the middle finger to the top of the patella is (in men) only 4.6 cm relative to stature 100; which is very closely to the recorded results of measurement of long limbed African Negroes.<sup>178</sup> The *Paniyans* are, as already stated, of low stature, dark-skinned, with curly hair and broad noses. The average height of the men is 157.4 cm, and of the women 146 cm. The men have very long hands and feet. The average length of the latter (25 cm), in fact, exceeds the average breadth of the hips (24.3 cm) by 7 cm.<sup>179</sup> Their women have long hair, sometimes trimmed off at shoulder length, the curls over the forehead may be also trimmed off. The *Kattu Paniyans* in the district, both men and women trimmed off them at neck length.

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<sup>177</sup> *ITDP Census*, Nilambur, 2006. p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, (n-10), Vol. VI, p.71.

<sup>179</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Madras Govt. Museum, Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 1, Madras, 1897, pp. 25, 26.

The *Paniyan* language “is a debased Malayalam patois spoken in a curious nasal sing-song, difficult to imitate; but most of the *Paniyans* employed on estates can also converse in Kanarese”.<sup>180</sup> The *Paniyans* have their own spoken language without any script, which they use within the kin groups. The dialect contains words from Tamil, Tulu and Malayalam languages. It is very difficult to grasp. They attempt Malayalam to converse with others.

### **Name and Origin**

The term *Paniyan* is derived from *pani* and *an* means one who works. Thurston<sup>181</sup> says that *Paniyan* means labourer, and they believe that their original occupation was agriculture. Logan<sup>182</sup> presents *Paniyans* as the agricultural labourers of *Nattu Rajas*.

There are various views regarding the origin of the *Paniyans*. Their own tradition says that their origin was from *Ippimala*, a mountain near Banasura Peak of Waynad. Mythically there was a temple on *Ippimala* called *Ippimalamyla* for the god *Ippimalateyya*. One *Embrachan* (*Embrandiri*, Brahman priest) and a Gounder priest performed the *puja* and *UraliKuruman* (an artisan tribe in Waynad) cleaned the temple. He came across with two children, a girl and a boy, and they fled at the sight of *Uralikuraman*, who with the consent of the priest, caught them and reared them in captivity. All

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>181</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, (n-10), Vol. VI, p. 58.

<sup>182</sup> William Logan, *Malabar Mannual, op.cit.*, Vol.I, p. 548.

attempts to trace their kith and kin were futile. The boy and the girl assisted those in the temple, when they grew up, the temple priests and UraliKuruman got them married. They had ten children, 5 boys and 5 girls. When the children grew up, they were separated and later got married. According to myth they were the foremost ancestors of the *Paniyan*, who refer to them as *Pantirappanmaara* meaning twelve ancestors. The *Paniyan* venerate them, especially the first two who are separately referred to as *Ippimala muttassi* and *Ippimala muthappa*.<sup>183</sup> "The Nair janmis (landlords) say that when surprised in an act of mischief or alarmed the *Paniyan* calls out 'Ippi!' 'Ippi!' as runs away, and they believe this to have been the name of the country whence they came originally; but they are ignorant to where *Ippimala*, as they call it, is situated".<sup>184</sup> Thurston opines that "a common belief, based on their general appearance, prevails among the European planting community that the *Paniyans* are of African origin, and descended from ancestors, who were wrecked on the Malabar coast.... Kapri (Africa or the cape?) is also sometimes suggested as their original habitat, but only by those who have had the remarks of Europeans communicated to them. The *Paniyan* himself though he occasionally puts forward one or other of the above places as the home of his forefathers".<sup>185</sup>

## Material Culture

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<sup>183</sup> Baby Francis Kulirani, "Paniyan: Ethnography Structure and Process", Unpublished Monograph, 1984, Quoted in K.S. Singh, *op.cit.*, Vol. XXVII, Part III, p. 1181.

<sup>184</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-10), Vol. VI, p. 57.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

The *Paniyan* huts are called *pire* which are generally erected along the fringes of wet paddy fields. In the past their master *Jenmis* provided timber required for the posts on which the structure could be built. Its walls were of bamboo wattle plastered with mud and the roof thatched with paddy straw or grass in rows. Generally the huts are single room, some times partitioned into two by a wattle divider. This room is served as kitchen and as living room. The *varandas* at the back and at the front was served for all other purposes. A corner of the back *varanda* is fixed for women during their menstrual periods and girls at puberty. Till recently, "during the hot weather, in the unhealthy months which precede the advent of the south-west monsoon they shift their quarters to live near streams, or in other cool, shady spots returning to their headquarters when the rains set in".<sup>186</sup>

Every *Paniyan* household had a mortar (*uralu*) and wooden pestle (*ulakka*) for grinding paddy. Aged members use a miniature mortar and pestle for pounding betel nuts. They used to have earthen posts and bamboo internodes as storage vessels, but now aluminum and steel vessels are preferred. There were baskets and mats out of reeds and bamboo. Agricultural implements consist of sickle (*arrival*), bill hooks (*kolukutti*), knife (*karikathi*) and two types of axes, *mavu* or *mazhu* and *kodali. kontai*,<sup>187</sup> a

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Kontai*, an effective substitute for umbrella hat of the Malabar Coast, is made of split reeds interwoven with arrow roof leaves, and shaped something like huge inverted coal-scooped turned on end and gives to the individual wearing it the appearance of a gigantic mushroom. *Ibid.* p.60.

basket work protection from the rain and *maravi*, a wooden shallow vessel used for mining gold from Chaliyar river were also in use.

In the past, the *Paniyan* men used to wear only a simple loincloth and an under wear covering their middle part. He did not have any unique style of dress by which he could be identified. But their women can be identified by their particular way of wearing of sari called *cela*, which they wrap around the body under the shoulders reaching down just above the knee, with both ends brought up and knotted together at the right. A sash (a long narrow piece of cloth) called *aratti* is tied and worn around the waist, which may be used as a purse, vanity bag and miscellaneous container. Colour of the *aratti* has regional varieties. Nowadays, they began to give up all these distinctive styles and to adopt the modern shirts, trousers, sarees, churidars, maxi, etc. and latest hairstyles.

*Paniyan* women used a bamboo comb called *ireli*, bead necklaces and ear ornaments. They wear three types of ear ornaments, which they themselves make, *murula* (a piece of light wood with conch shell in the groove at edges); *ole* (one dried role of pandanus leaf); *chootumani* (dried pandanus leaf rolled with a central canty, filled with beeswax, in the side of which small red seeds are fixed). They were found of wearing 20 to 25 bangles in their writs and upper arm *tol bale* and finger rings. Tattooing used

to be in the past.<sup>188</sup> Old form of dress and ornaments are found only among those who live in remote areas.

As the name indicates *Paniyans* were agricultural worker in the paddy fields of Nair or Mappila *Jenmi* or elephant workers of Mappilas. Today, as the *Paniyans* are landless, most of them are wage labourers. They were attached to the land of the *jenmi* and later become bonded labourers until when the system was abolished by central legislation. Under the provisions of the Kerala Land Reforms Act (1970) they got a few plots of land, in which they irregularly cultivate varieties of vegetables but which do not provide a share in their income. They consume roots and tubers and fruits occasionally.

In the past, the forest was also an economic resource but owing to the massive deforestation by the immigrant encroachers only the reserve forest remained but with entry restriction. Unlike other tribes of the district, about 80% *Paniyans* live amidst the modernised communities and are adjusted with the income from field labour. The forest produce they gather include roots, tubers, mushrooms, edible leaves etc. Often they engage in mining of gold from the river Chaliyar using *maravi*.<sup>189</sup> It has been a major source of their income. They used to purify the gold with mercury and sell in the nearby

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<sup>188</sup> Somasekharan Nair, *Paniyar*, (Mal), Kottayam, 1976, pp.71-73.

<sup>189</sup> Francis Buchanan attests the mining of gold from the river flowing through Nilambur. Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar-1800*, Vol.II, reprint, Delhi, 1988, p.441.

market for Rs. 20. It is said that, they were exploited by the merchants giving them the amount of Rs. 20 without measuring the quantity of the gold.<sup>190</sup>

A few are working in government services. Most of them are wage labourers under the non tribals. Often they are exploited by not giving decent wages. The forest produces are sold in the bazars where they were extremely exploited by merchants as they could not count the cost of buying and selling items. In the past, their staple food was *ragi* which was supplemented by wild roots in addition to animal food.<sup>191</sup> The *Paniyans* are non-vegetarian. At present their staple food is rice. They also use *ragi*, grain and leafy vegetables. They consume roots, tubers and fruits occasionally for the purpose of food. They accept milk and milk products. *Beedi*, betel leaf, tobacco and arecanut are used. Both sexes drink alcohol.

### **Social Organisation**

The *Paniyans* are divided into various lineages known as *illam*. Members of an *illam* trace their lineage from common ancestor. They believe that they are descendants of *Ippimalamuttappa* and *Ippimalamuttasi*. There are innumerable *illam* among them, of which four are associated with special status. They are *Muthettan*, *Koyimuttam*, *Nattilapadam* and *Padikan*. They practice endogamy at community level and exogamy at *illam* level. The headman of the village is called *kuttan*. He is appointed by the Nair *jenmi* to

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<sup>190</sup> Personal Interview with *Paniyans*, Padikunnu, Nilambur, 30-05-05.

<sup>191</sup> A.Aiyappan, *op.cit.*, p.99.

look after his interests, and the responsible to him for the other inhabitants of the village. The investiture of the *Kuttan* with the powers of office is celebrated with a feast and dance, at which a silver bangle is presented to the *Kuttan* as a badge of authority which is called *kuttambala* or *kootambala*. He is entitled to plant first rice seedling in the year. Next in rank to the *Kuttan* is the *Mudali* or head of the family, and they usually constitute the panchayat. Both *Kuttan* and *Mudali* are called *Moopanmar* or elders.

In the past, the local *jenmy* used to appoint headman *Kuttan* for every settlement. They have also a patrilineally hereditary headman *Koyma*. His appearance is as follows: "He wears loincloth covering upper knees and waist, a waist-belt of red-colour in which a knife is kept and silver bangles in hands. He is the saviour, punisher, physician and sorcerer of *Paniyans*".<sup>192</sup> Now they have *chemmin* or *shemmi*, that is, a sort of priest or minister, appointed by the chieftains under whom the *Paniyans* worked. They were assisted by messengers called *Karayma*. There is a religious functionary called *attali* who is a combined hymnist, ritualist and medium dancer, engaged for rituals in honour of the gods, the spirits of the dead, and for exorcising evil spirits who possess persons and ordinary medium dancers called *velichapad*. The *Paniyans* have double descent system in which both paternal and maternal sides have equal importance. Most of the *Paniyans* follow the patrilineal inheritance and the immovable properties are inherited

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<sup>192</sup> Sreenarayanan Mavoor, *op. cit.*, p. 71.



by the sons. Daughters get the share of the property in the absence of male heirs. The *Paniyan* women engage in agricultural operations, animal husbandry, bringing water, collection of fuel besides their domestic duties. They can participate in socio-religious rituals and functions, but do not have a leading role in both family and social mechanism.

### **Religious Organisation**

The *Paniyans* are polytheists. They worship many Gods and Goddesses. Their chief deity is *Thampuratty* or *Kuli* or *Gulikan*. The resting place of *Kulikan* is *Kulitara*<sup>193</sup>, where they perform offers and bloody sacrifices. *Mariyan* is their clan God.<sup>194</sup> The other Gods and Goddesses are *Kala Gulikan* (God of agricultural land), *Thazhathal Gulikan*, *Kuttichathan*, *Maladaivom*, *Kuttivellan*, *Idivetti daivom* (God of Lightening and thunder), *Mariamamma* (Goddess of rain), *Kattu Bagavati* (Goddess of forest), *Kaattilamma*, *Kali* and *Bagavati*. In this regard they are also natural worshippers.

The *Paniyans* are animistic. There are two huge stones called *Tampuratikallu* (White colour) and *Tampurankallu* (Dark colour) which were given divinity by the *Paniyan* tribes of the area. They are situated near Mundery seed farm in Pothukallu Panchayath. The place is called

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<sup>193</sup> *Kulitara* is either in the shrines or in the places allotted for ceremonial *pujas* in the courtyard.

<sup>194</sup> Personal Interview with Velutha Vallan, Chalikkal, Pothukallu, 16-05-05.

*Thampuratikallu*.<sup>195</sup> Till rvery recent times, the *Paniyans* in the area were used to go there and perform *pujas* and offerings.<sup>196</sup>

In almost every *Paniyan* colony there is a temple in the centre of the colony. Their Gods and Goddesses are consecrated there. They regularly perform *Vilakkuthelikkal* (lighting lamp) there. Ladies are allowed to this performance. In some colonies we see *Tulasithara* on which *Vilakkuthelikkal* is performed. This is evident for the Hinduisation of tribal religion. The *Paniyans* believe that they are Hindus. No elements of conversion are found even though most of them live amidst non-tribal people.

Worship of devil in various forms is popular and they have a large collection of *mantras*. They perform black magic with greater faith. They believe in the existence of soul after death.<sup>197</sup> *Paniyans* believe that *peyi* or the evil spirit is the cause of illness. Black magic is practiced as remedy. *Koima* will be the sorcerer. *Nalivekkal* is practiced to identity the reason of illness. "It's a practice of shaking bell and paddy in a muram (shallow basket) murmuring of mantras".<sup>198</sup> This practice is believed to be a magic of identifying the reason of illness and also for a remedy. "Some *Paniyans* of Malabar are believed to be gifted with the power of changing themselves into animals; and there is a belief that, if they wish to secure a woman whom they

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<sup>195</sup> *Tampuratikallu* does not exist now as it was broken. *Tampurankallu* still exists there, but the tribals do not go there for *pujas* as it is of a private property.

<sup>196</sup> Personal Interview with Awunjipurath Alavikkuty, Chalikkal, Pothukallu, 18-05-05.

<sup>197</sup> A.A.D.Luiz, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>198</sup> Personal Interview with Unnikrishnan Master and Vijayalakshmi, Mukkarshi, Nilambur, 19-05-05.

lust after, one of the men, gifted with the special power, goes to the house at night with a hollow bamboo, and encircles the house three times. The woman then comes out, and the man, changing himself into a bull or dog, works his wicked will. The woman, it is believed, dies in the course of two or three days".<sup>199</sup> Now this is not found in practice among the *Paniyans* of the district.

### **Life Cycle**

During pregnancy the *Paniyans* observe special rituals and ceremonies. A unique ritual called *perikkala* is observed by the *Paniyans* to remove the disturbances of evil spirits to the pregnant women in the second months of the pregnancy. It is performed by a sorcerer. He encircles a lighted *pandham* (rags dipped in oil and tied at the end of a stick) the head of the women murmuring *mantras*. Then the hair of the woman is trimmed and puts it into the fire. With the burning of the hair, they believe that, the evil spirit will also be burnt. If so, the delivery will be normal. Another pre-delivery ritual is called *putayotta* or *attupundayattu*<sup>200</sup> which is performed during the 8<sup>th</sup> or ninth months of pregnancy. It is performed to ward off evil spirits. '*Kalayamvekkal*' is performed at the time of delivery to know the nature of the delivery. "*Moopan* takes half glass water and one or two coconut shell; and throws the coconut shell towards the back standing east-west direction of the

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<sup>199</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Part I, Delhi, reprint, 1975, pp. 317, 318.

<sup>200</sup> In the successive pregnancies this rite is called *Muriyattu*. Nettoor P. Damodaran, op. cit., p. 75.

house, if the coconut shell falls down in the same direction the delivery will be normal other wise dangerous".<sup>201</sup>

In the early days, the delivery is attended by *atukari* or *pettichi* (mid wife), from the same community. Nowadays, however, most of them go to hospital. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day a purificatory ceremony called *punyaham* is observed, rice mixed with turmeric powder is cooked and served to her along with vegetable. Post-natal restriction exists for a period of one month. The baby is bathed in water boiled with turmeric continued for 21 days. The house is then cleaned and mother is bathed and dressed and a vegetarian feast served, marking the end of pollution period.

Naming ceremony is observed on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of *punyaham*, in the case of first child. The child is given a bath by the father's sister and is adorned in new dress; she then calls the name in the presence of all relatives. The first feeding ceremony called *pullane choruttu* is observed during the 5<sup>th</sup> month. Presence of paternal and maternal uncles and aunts is a must for this ceremony. Ear piercing ceremony called *kathukuttu kalyanam* is performed for either sex in the presence of the maternal uncle during the ninth month. A grand feast is served for all.

A girl at puberty is considered polluted and segregated to the corner of the *Varanda* for 7 days. In the past, she will be brought into the mother's

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<sup>201</sup> Personal Interview with Damodaran, Akampadam, Chaliyar, 22-05-05.

house and at first she is bathed. Purificatory bathing is called *Thirandu kuli* and which is taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.<sup>202</sup> The girl is seated on a mat facing the sun. An elderly man and women feed her with *putu*. At the time of bathing the young men sing to the accompaniment of *tudi* drums. After bathing she has to enter house only by taking a pottery full of water and using this water her legs and face are washed by their relatives. A feast is served to all gathering. *Paniyans* have no special hut for segregating their women at the time of their menses. But, the *Paniyans* of Vettilakolli colony, they segregate their women in a special hut called *Kummali* at their periods for 15 days.<sup>203</sup>

Marriages among the *Paniyans* happen only after attaining puberty. The age for fixation of marriages, is 16 and 18 years old for boys and girls respectively. The two types of marriage exist among the *Paniyans* are marriage by negotiation and marriage by elopement. In the early days marriage by elopement was exceedingly common among the *Paniyans*. Now it is mostly by negotiation. The initiative of the negotiation should take by *Mamen* (mother's brother) and *Munnayikaran* (elder-son-in law). If they like the girl, the very next day they will offer *avakasapanam* to the father of the girl at the presence of *koima*. After the dedication of *avakasapanam* to Gods, the marriage ceremony will be started. Marriage is done only after one month.

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<sup>202</sup> One should take fast for seven days. Personal Interview with Geetha, Paadikunnu, Nilambur, 03-05-05.

<sup>203</sup> Personal Interview with Palan, Vettilakolli, Chaliyar, 21-05-05.

The *Paniyans* follow endogamy at community level and exogamy at *illam* level. Consanguineous marriages are not allowed.

In the previous day of the marriage, *Munnayikaran* brings the dress and ornaments and other items for daily use to the girl. Usually the wedding is in the harvest season. The ceremony is observed at the girl's house. Marriage symbols among the *Paniyans* are *tali* and nose-ring. *Tali* is tied around the neck of the bride and such crude jewellery is also worn by the female relatives of the bridegroom. Bride price, *kanam*, is payable in cash and kind. It is known as *aarupattinnalu* ie 64.<sup>204</sup> The *chemmi* presides over the function and after tying knot *tali*, he will pour pure water over the head and feet of the young couple. A feast is served to the gathering. The bride groom is expected to afford all expenses of the function. An annual present called *talapattam* is given to the father-in-law by the son-in-law and if the father-in-law is died it should be given to his brother-in-law. The *Paniyans* are extremely jealous in sexual matters. The man will not tolerate his wife speaking with another, has always the anxiety about the loss of the wife. So, as soon as the marriage he builds a separate hut for him and his wife quite close to that of his parents.

About 50% of them appear to have married in this way. A man may not have two sisters as wives, nor can he marry his deceased wife's sister. Remarriage of widow is permitted. Adultery and other form of issues are

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<sup>204</sup> A.Aiyappan, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

settled by the panchayat of the headmen by inflicting punishment to the guilty. In the case of proved adultery, a sum of 16 *panam* (the amount of the marriage fees) and a sum of equal to the expenses of the wedding should be given back to the parents of the bride. It is the usual form of punishment.<sup>205</sup> Elderly widows remain with their sons but younger men return to their fathers or brothers, taking their little children with them. Polygyny is practiced while polyandry is prohibited. Divorce and widow remarriage is allowed, inter-tribal marriages happen.<sup>206</sup> *Paniyan* woman, *Paniyathi* is found with due respect and she has to play a role in the income of the family but has no controlling power. She can participate in rituals and ceremonies.

*Paniyans* have a custom of consulting the *komaram* to find out the reason for the illness and death. This practice is called *sastram nokkal*. He twinkles a bell in a winnowing basket while murmuring and he gets possessed and proclaims the reason. *Moopan* gives the last drop of water to the dying man. The corpse is called *marippu* among them. If *Paniyan moopan* dies the elders of the tribe beat a kind of drum called *thudi* as a symbolic of death. The deadbody is placed in the *varanda* of the house. The body is bathed in warm water and head is anointed with oil and hair combed. Raw rice paste is applied on the forehead. After washing the corpse the body is taken to the burial ground. The bier is prepared by bamboo which is called *thaithal*. They

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<sup>205</sup> Personal Interview with Cheerangan Kunju Mohammed, Edivanna, and Mariyan, Chalikkal, Pothukallu, 10-05-05.

<sup>206</sup> It has been also given as *acharapanam* (Rs. 51¼) or *mothal* (101¼). Personal Interview with Kuttivallan, Peruvampadam, Chaliyar, 15-05-05.

believe that the ancestral spirits are eager to gather around the soul. Hence to drive out these spirits, people accompanying the corpse to the burial ground make loud noises and carry out.

*Paniyans* bury their dead.<sup>207</sup> The body is taken to the burial ground where a trench of 4 or 5 feet deep is dug in north-south direction. At the bottom of the grave the earth is scooped out from the western side on a level with the floor, so as to form a receptacle for the corpse, which, placed on a mat, is laid therein upon its left side with the head to the north and feet to the south.<sup>208</sup> The scooped side is covered with a bamboo mat (*thaihal*) and covered with the leaves of rose wood. Then the trench is filled up. The aim of this kind of digging, they say, "this is better to keep corpse from wild animals and *Aranadans* who scratch out the body to use for *odimarichil*".<sup>209</sup>

If the dead is male, the *kootanbala* (Semmi's bangle) is put on the hand and in the case of female the *Kallumala* (beads necklace) is tied around the neck. The body is kept on a bamboo bier over a plantain leaf and covered with a white shroud. By the side of the head, a lighted circle and some rice on a plantain leaf are kept. The chief mourner, the eldest son, places one *panam* (25 paise coin) in the in the mouth of the deceased and pours a few drops of

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<sup>207</sup> It is said that the *Paniyans* do not cremate the dead body because they believe that the soul cannot afford the heat of the fire. See Kavalam Narayanapanicker, *Keralathile Nadodi Samskaram*, (Mal), New Delhi, 1994, p.83.

<sup>208</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-199), p.144.

<sup>209</sup> *Odimarchil* or *Odi Cult* is a black magic which enables them to become invisible to others and do mischief to enemies. It is believed that the buried dead body is used for this black magic. It is said that the practice of *Aranadan* is the reason behind the feud among the *Aranadans* and *Paniyan*. Personal Interview with Velutha Vallan, Chalikkal, 16-05-05.



coconut water, followed by their family members and kin.<sup>210</sup> In the grave, the *Paniyans* also place all the personal belongings along with the body, as they believe that these are needed for the daily use of the deceased ancestors. A knife and a sickle are placed along with body of men and female respectively.<sup>211</sup> They also bury a piece of iron, and one ribbon is tied around the middle part of the body.<sup>212</sup> The patrilineal kins are the chief mourners.

"They place rice at a distance of 50 to 100 yards from the grave by *jenmi*, who claps his hands as a signal to the evil spirits in the vicinity, who, in the shape of a pairs of crows are supposed to partake of the food, which is hence called *kaka kanji* or crow's rice".<sup>213</sup> Now as there is no *jenmi* system this is done by the *Shemmi*, who is the owner of the burial ground. A unique burial practice which was existing and now vanishing among the *Paniyans* is breast feeding. If the deceased is an infant, in the past, *Paniyans* bury in the house itself and make a hole on the grave and a stem of *papaya* plant is put in to the grave direct to the mouth of the deceased. Every day, the mother of the deceased used to pour out breast-milk through this stem. It continued for twenty eight days. Now they bury in the burial ground and place breast-milk on the grave in a leaf bowl, called *kumbil*.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> K.S. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 1185-1186.

<sup>211</sup> Personal Interview with Kuttivallan, Chalikal, 16-05-05.

<sup>212</sup> Nettoor P. Damodaran, *op. cit.*, p.203.

<sup>213</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, (n-199), p. 143.

<sup>214</sup> Personal Interview with Mani, Mailampara, Karulai, 25-05-05.

On the seventh day they conduct a post-burial rite called *pulathoyam* or *cheriya kakkapula*, which is officiated by *chemmi* and assisted by *attali* (the trance dancer of ancestral spirits). There is a recitation of spells throughout the first night. But on the second day evening the *attali* prepare for trance dance. For this, he keeps a string bells in a winnow basket and shakes it while reciting. Sometimes he gets possessed with recently departed spirit and utters whether the soul is happy or not. If it is undergoing a few coins are offered as fine to appease the soul and this act is called *kuttom theerkkuka*. Pollution is for 7 days (*arapula* half pollution) during which close relatives should abstain from chewing betel, taking non-vegetarian or dried food chilli and salt, removing facial or head hair. The closest matrilineal consanguineous has to observe *Maranapula* or *kakapula* (full pollution for 12 or 14 days).<sup>215</sup> The pollution removal ceremony of the *Paniyans* is called *valiya kakkapula*. It is conducted continuously for three years after a death and it is compulsory to be finished before the starting of the *uchchal*. *Valiya kakkapula* is also officiated by *chemmi* and assisted by *attali*. It is believed that only after this rite, the deceased will become one among the departed.

A day before the the ritual a *pandal*, made of seven bammbboo poles and thatched with palm leaves is constructed on the courtyard of the departed. On all the three days of *valiya kakkapula* cooked rice and meals for each of the dead are prepared by the *balikkarathi* (brother of the dead person).<sup>216</sup> All

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<sup>215</sup> Personal Interview with Damodaran, Akampadam, Chaliyar, 26-05-05.

<sup>216</sup> *Melikkarathi* is the daughter of the sister of the deceased.

the stages of *cheriya kakkapula* are also repeated here and *attali* recovers from his state of trance and places the ancestor's walking stick near the decorated post inside the *pandal* and distributes betel leaves and arecunuts to the elders sitting there. He also places a *nali* (wooden measuring jar) full of rice and a cocunut shell full of water near the stick. He later suspends a betel leaf and ash cucumber on the middle post using a string. This cucumber is later broken into pieces and is distributed among the *chemmi* and the elders sitting there. On the third day, before the dawn the pieces are secretly thrown into the forest. They believe that these ash cucumber and betel leaves have spirit-scuring powers and in the presence of these the evil spirit does not enter in to the *pandal*. The crushing of cucumber symbolizes the destrucion of the evil spirit. Then the *chemmi* springles cow dung or tender cocunut water on the polluted persons cuts a lock of hair from the top of their heads and asks them to go out for bath. At the end of the *valiya kakkapula*, the spirit of the recently dead becomes regular member of the ancestors' world.

Every year *Paniyans* observe *Adiyandhiram*<sup>217</sup> which is called *Daivomkatuti*. *Paniyans* are the strict observers of *daivomkotuti* than the other tribes of the district. *Daivomkotuti*, means offering to god, is observed for seven days successive to Vishu festival for the spirits of their ancestors. It is performed to appease their god and to get salvation to their forefathers and

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<sup>217</sup> It is observed in three times according to their convenience, 3 days after death, 16 days after death, and one year after death. Usually they observe after one year. Personal Interview with Thankachan, Pallikuth, Chungathara, 04-05-05.

they believe that if their God is not appeased the god will anger them and they will fall sick. All *Paniyans* are invited and the gathering is served by feast on third day, sixth day and seventh day of the festival.

*Paniyans* are the most unfortunate and exploited tribes in the district. They were engaged in *Kundal pani* (bonded labour) and settled in the drier parts of their *jenmi*'s estate along the fringes of wet paddy fields where they were provided with minimum facilities. A.Aiyappan<sup>218</sup> attests the recruitment of *Paniyans* as slave labourers in Malabar at the time of *Vallur Kavuvu*<sup>219</sup> annual festival in the month of May. On this day, farmers of Waynad and other employers of labour and *Paniyans* assemble there. Groups of *Paniyans* can be found engaged in active negotiations with their prospective employers discussing the amount of advance to be paid for each group. The employers pay the *Paniyans* the advance of Rs.30 for a family and the *Paniyans* sign a promissory note for the advance. The validity of the contract is one year i.e., till the eve of the next *Vallurkavu* festival. The money advanced is not usually repayable, but is only a guarantee of the service of the *Paniyans* for the year.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> A.Aiyappan, *op. cit.*, pp.99-100.

<sup>219</sup> Vallur Kavuvu, a famous Hindu temple, is situated near Manantoddy, Waynad. A story regarding Vallurkavu that exists among the *Paniyans* is as follows: 'Once a *Paniyan* went to forest to collect woods when he was labouring in the house of Vemoth Nair. When he came back with wood, it was felt like gold to *Paapathi*. To the question of *Paapathi* from where you get wood, *Paniyan* replied it was from Vallurkavu. It was believed that the happening was due to the blessings of Valliyooramma. Vemoth Nair built a temple there'. Thus the origin of Valloorkavu temple was directly related with *Paniyans*. Sreenarayanan Mavoor, *op cit.* p. 70.

<sup>220</sup> For details see A. Aiyappan, *op. cit.*, pp.99-100.

According to Thurston, “their position is said to be very little reserved from that of a slave, for every *Paniyan* is some landlor's man; and though he is, of course, free to have his master, he is at once traced, and good care is taken that he does not get employed elsewhere”.<sup>221</sup> It is evident that even now, we can see about 98% of the *Paniyan* colonies in the district are situated along the side of paddy fields owned by the successors of the former *jenmis* from Nair family. Till recently these Nair families were the *mestris* (supervisors) of Nilambur *kovilakam* under whom the *Paniyans* laboured. It is observed that where there is a *Paniya* colony there is a Nair *tharavad* nearby. The *Kovilakom* lands were auctioned to these Nairs *jenmis* in which the *Paniyans* laboured. In the midst of the paddy field there was a *Kalam*.<sup>222</sup> *Kalam* was the farm house around which the labourers lived in small huts that made them available to the *jenmis* at any time required for work irrespective of day and night.

Recently, many changes have been taking place among these *Paniyans*. Their attitude towards education is increasingly favourable. Mostly boys and girls study up to primary level and they drop out mainly for economic reason.

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<sup>221</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op.cit.*, (n-10), Vol. VI, p.58.

<sup>222</sup> Cheerangam Kunji Muhammed who had been estate supervisor from 1958 onwards, said that the *Paniyans* of Edivanna were labourers under Govindan Nair, the then mestri of Manjeri *Kovilakom*. *Paniyans* at Peruvampadam colony were working in the *kalam* of Moideenkutty Haji (Mampad) of Manjeri *Kovilakom*. *Paniyans* of Ettapara believe that they were working in the *kalam* of Kanniyam Moideenkutty Haji after 1975 of Manjeri *Kovilakom*. The *Paniyans* of Athikkad colony (Chaliyar) were the labourers in the Kunnathachal *Kalam* under Sankunni Menon, he was the mestri in the Thrikkalur devaswam land Wandoor. The *Paniyans* of Adyanpara were working in the *Kalam* of Nalakath Veerankutty. These landlords employed the *Paniyans* for agricultural work cannot profitably employ than on the scale of wages that they get in the estates.

But their attitude towards family planning is not favourable. Under the self employment programme the *Paniyans* have got assistance for poultry and animal husbandry. As part of the programmes for the rehabilitation of bonded labour, several schemes were implemented. The community is increasingly aware of their political rights and members are now able to ensure that they get proper wages. The *Paniyans* avail of modern amenities and benefits like radio, cinemas, hostels, electricity, and midday meal for children, scholarship, loans, ICDS and rations through fair-price shops. In short, the *Paniyan* community is in a phase of rapid transformation.

### **Summary**

The profile reveals that the tribes in the district are still less advanced resorting to pre-level agricultural technology. However, though all the tribes of the district possess a certain degree of similarity, they do not have a common cultural pattern in all aspects of their life. Each community shows distinctiveness in certain ethno-culture makes, exhibiting their distinctive tradition, history and culture. All the tribals do not share common socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The characteristics of the primitive way of life, habitation in remote and less accessible hilly areas, nomadic habits etc. are not applicable to all tribes in the district. Many live in hilly tracts and forests, though some have been living with the non-tribals in the plains for centuries. They later have become a part of the rural social hierarchy working

as cultivators or agricultural labourers. At the same time, non-tribal households are also found in the midst of tribal settlements. They belong to shopkeepers, money lenders or cultivators. Those who live amidst of the modernized heterogeneous communities are totally different in culture and tradition and among them the range of changes is very high compared to others. *Cholanaickan, Kattunayakan* and *Kattu Paniyan* are the primitive tribal groups who still uphold tribal characteristics.

The whole tribes of the district can be divided into three categories in terms of their area of habitation. First category includes the tribes who live in the villages or countryside. All these tribes are living in the houses built by government as a part of rehabilitation. This group has lost fully of their tribal characteristics and becoming a part of the modernized heterogeneous communities. Most of them are wage labourers. Their dress and ornaments, house hold articles are completely of modern types. Most of their houses are electrified and have modern amenities of radio, television, telephone etc. The crucial problem of this group is social as they lost their tribal identity. *Paniyan, Mala Muthan, Kuruman, Mala Panickan* are the dominant of this group. *Paniyans* are the largest single Scheduled Tribe of these groups. The history and culture of *Paniyans* are entirely different from the other tribes of the district. They are the most exploited and unfortunate tribes in the district. The basic reason of this backwardness is that they were agrestic slaves in the past. It is found that most of their settlements or colonies are found along the

fringes of paddy fields where they laboured under their masters in the past. Second category is the tribes who live in the entrances or the boundaries of the forests, the largest of all groups. They are not fully integrated with the mainstream. All tribes of the district except *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* come under this category. The tribes who live in the interior of the forest come under the third category. Two dominant group of this category are *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan*. This category includes *Cholanaickan*, *Kattunayakan*, *Mala Muthan* and *Kattu Paniyan*. *Cholanaickan*, *Kattunayakan* and *Kattu Paniyan* are primitive food gathering groups while *Mala Muthans* are totally modernized. It is found that, the culture, tradition and the proportion of changes of these tribes vary according to the area of habitation.

All the tribes of the district have their own dialects that are the admixture of Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Tulu languages. They use their language only to speak among themselves; with other non-tribals they employ Malayalam to communicate. Their language has no script and is very difficult to grasp. Their younger generation use Malayalam and the medium of instruction in schools and communication is also Malayalam. Consequently, the present young tribal generation is unaware of their traditional language and thus, it is under the threat of fast vanishing.



The most significant feature of the tribal scenario of the Malappuram district is the disappearance of tribal characteristics and the consequent identity crisis. In the past, the tribes were simply hunters and food gatherers. Forest has been their traditional homeland. Each group had its own territory in which its members hunt animals and collect forest produces. Such a territory was often quiet extensive because the food gatherers hunt and collect only what the nature offers by it. The forest dwellers garnered wild-growing fruits in trees and edible roots and tubers in the jungle to supplement their food. The forest also provided them necessary timber and bamboos for the construction of houses and for the manufacture of various implements. They also collected honey, medicinal herbs and other minor forest produces which they could sell or barter in the weekly markets. They hunted in the jungle and fished in the rivers flow through their habitat and could supplement their vegetarian diet with meat food. Shifting cultivation was an integral part of the tribal economy. The tribes which preferred shifting cultivation deliberately chose hilly forest areas for their habitats. More over, the shifting cultivators always lived alone with forest and found leisure to get away from the full routine of monotonous farm work through hunting or fishing or the collection of jungle produce. They require no cattle for ploughing and were thus less tied down to their homesteads and stables.

However, recently, majority of the tribes have been deprived of their traditional way of life and sources of subsistence. The very basis of their

economy has been destroyed by an abrupt prohibition of use of forest and its produce. Without preparation they have to face radical changes and to cop up with the new pattern of life. Due to the absence of adequate knowledge on modern techniques of cultivation, the crops produced by them are very low. Soil erosion, lack of adequate fields and irrigation facilities further accelerate their problem. The subsistence of tribals is supplemented by forest produces and by hunting. As the large part of the forest has been declared reserved forest, all their traditional rights have been lost. Thus, the jungle does not yield them the important subsidiary substance as it did in the past. Due to the unauthorized alienation of tribal land and the deprivation of the tribals of forestry rights the tribal economy has been seriously deteriorated. Now their economy is based on wage labour and forests.

Many have lost their tribal character, to a large extent, owing to their large scale contact with non-tribal villages, though they are commonly kept at a distance. But, it is found that, some have stubbornly retained their nomadic and hunting habit and hesitate to give up their traditional way of life and identity. Their nomadic instinct is too stuck in them. They have attached themselves to the forest and continued to live in predominantly tribal areas. Among them, their ancient mode of life still exists with fewer disturbances than in the environment of a settled population. In spite of being short in number, they have no sufficient cultivable land due to the increasing deforestation and the strict control over the forest by the forest Dept. The

hunter gathering societies are diminutive and wage labour is becoming as their primary means of livelihood. *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* are the diminutive hunter gathering groups in the district.

## CHAPTER III

### TRIBES IN ISOLATION

The foregoing ethnographic analysis of the tribes of Malappuram district reveals that these tribes are still less advanced having pre-agricultural level technology and primitive way of life. It is found that their marginalisation from the rest of the society is the basic reason of this backwardness. The history of these tribals speaks their seclusion and isolated life from the rest of the society for centuries. They live in the less accessible hilly regions. It is notable that the tribals of Malappuram district, Kerala in general, are not part of any historical events or social movements.<sup>1</sup> It is relevant here to analyse the factors that made them isolated and marginalised.

The unique geographical setting of Malappuram district has played an important role in the history of tribal isolation. Malappuram, literally the land atop the hills, is a land of hills and valleys intersected by innumerable rivers and streams and of picturesque sea coast. The mountain barriers with dense forest, laterite hills and long rivers are the major geographic facts setting the historical geography<sup>2</sup> of the district. The district has a geographical area of

<sup>1</sup> There are only two tribal uprisings recorded in the history of Kerala tribals. They are Kurichia revolt of 1812 and Muthanga revolt of 2003 in Waynad.

<sup>2</sup> The historical geography of India has been conceived as the persistent interaction of three kinds of zones: 'perennial' or 'nuclear zones', 'route zones', and 'zones of relative isolation'. The 'nuclear zones' are the river basins and plains. These are attractive zones where culturally and politically important centres emerged. The regions cut off from the bulk of the rest by desert or high ranges or long rivers etc. are called 'zones of relative isolation.' The 'route zones' or 'shatter zones' are the regions through which large numbers of people have passed either in military or peaceful invasion. These areas connect the 'nuclear zones' and 'zones of relative isolation'. Bernad S. Cohn, *India*,

3550 Sq. Kms, which is 9.13 per cent of the total area of the Kerala state. The location of Malappuram district is 75 to 77 east longitude and 10° to 12° north latitude, in the geographical map.

The district represents a topography that is so typical of the Kerala state. Physiographically, the district consists of three natural divisions, low land, middle land and high land or mountain region. The low land stretches along the sea coast, the middle land in the centre which is fertile due to the flowing of rivers and conducive for vegetation and also covered by laterite hills and the highland region is thickly forested and lies towards the east and the north eastern parts. The topography of the district is highly undulating; starting from the hilltops covered with thick forests on the east along the Nilgiris. It gradually slopes down to the valleys and the small hills, before finally ending on the sandy flat of luxuriant coconut groves in the west.

The tribals of the district are mainly found in the hilly mountain regions of Nilambur Valley. Nilambur valley lies on the western slop of Western Ghats, covers an area of 272453.60 acres and has an elevation ranging between 40m and 800m above the sea level. It has a height of average 1525m from the sea level. The Nilambur forest, which covers an area of 760.29Sq.Km, is administratively divided into Nilambur south forest division and Nilambur north forest division. The Nilambur south forest division has an area of 366.17sq.km and has two forest ranges viz., Kalikavu (100.57 Sq.km)

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*The Social Anthropology of a Civilization*, New Jersey, 1971, p p.24- 29.

and Karulai ranges (265.608 Sq.Km). The Nilambur north forest division (394.120 Sq. km) constitutes three ranges viz., Nilambur (140.877 Sq. km), Edavanna (97.958 Sq. km) and Vazhikkadavu (155.285 Sq. km).

Based on physical features, the Valley can be classified into two distinct geographical units. The eastern high lands, which are mountainous regions, lay above 200m. of the sea level and the low lands with plain topography, situated at an altitude of 40m to 200m of the sea level. The mountain ranges of the Western Ghats form the southern, northern and eastern boundaries of Nilambur and are covered by forests. These forests are called New Amarambalam Reserve Forests and declared part of the Nilgiri Biosphere and covered largely by semi-deciduous and wet evergreen forests. These ranges form a gallery on three sides of the plains of the Valley. The upper reaches of the Valley are covered by the evergreen forests and the lower slopes by semi-deciduous forests. The forests of the lower slopes and the plains have been cleared for raising monoculture teak plantations managed by the Forest Department. In between the thickly populated rural villages and the evergreen forests, lie large tract of the teak plantations.

The Valley has almost the same climatic conditions prevalent elsewhere in the middle land region of Kerala, viz., dry season from December to February, hot season from March to May, the south-west monsoon from June to September and north-east monsoon from October to

November. The south–west monsoon is usually very heavy and nearly 75 percent of the annual rains are received during this season. The average annual rainfall is 290mm. The climate is generally hot and humid. The temperature varies between 17°C and 37°C from winter to summer. The summer is not felt in the recess of forest. Thus, the Valley is characterised by heavy rainfall, humid climate and moderate temperature.

Nilambur valley is rich with varied flora and fauna. The flora of this region is characteristically tropical due to the heavy rainfall and moderate temperature. The valley is well known for teak plantation. Trees of high commercial value like rosewood, (*Dalbergia latifolia*) mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*) and several species of cane, rattan, reed, creeper, liana, fern, orchid etc., are abundantly found in the forests of the valley. Varieties of bamboo are also extensively found in all parts of the forests. Bamboo for pulp factories like Mavoor Gwalior Rayons Ltd was mainly supplied from Nilambur forests via Chaliyar river. It is found that during the last thirty years, large tracts of forest land were converted into teak plantations and this resulted in the upsetting of the ecological equilibrium. The forest contains many species of animals, snakes and birds. The animals include both arboreal and terrestrial. Primates like Nilgiri langur, Bonner macaque and Slender Ioris etc. and the terrestrial animals like wild dog (*Cyon dukhnensis*), deer (*Rusa unicolor*), civet cat (*Vivertiscula indica*), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), wild boar (*Sus cristatus*), spotted deer (*Axis axis*), amongoose (*Herpertes vitticolis*), wild

buffaloes (*Bubalis bubalis*), bison (*Bibos gaurus/Bos gaurus*) etc., are widely found. The tribes inhabiting inside the forests hunt these animals. Many species of birds are caught for food. The important among them are horn bill, maina, dove and wild fowl. Edible roots, tubers, mushrooms, medicinal plants, ginger, turmeric, soap seed, tree barks, cardamom, pepper, chinikay (*Sapindus laurifolius*), astringent fruit, oil seeds, honey etc, are abundantly found in the forests. These were collected by the tribals and sold in the Girijan Co-operative Societies. Thus the bountiful forest of the district ensures abundant food supply throughout the year to the tribals and thus they remain fixated to the food gathering hunting stage. Due to the geographic features, Nilambur valley is cut off from the rest of the main land by the mountaneous ridges of the Western Ghats, and forms a distinct region which shares most of the charecteristics of an area in isolation.

The river system in the district also has a great role in making the region an area of isolation. Four important rivers of Kerala flow through Malappuram district. They are, Bharathapuzha, Chaliyar, Kadalundipuzha and Tirurpuzha. Bharathapuzha<sup>3</sup>, the second longest river in Kerala, (220Kms), originates from Anamala of Western Ghats and flows through Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, Palakkad district and by the southern border of

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<sup>3</sup> Thirunavaya, the land of Mamankam, is situated on the bank of Bharatapuzha, south of Tirur. Mamnkam was an ancient river festival of Kerala celebrated once in 12 years (*Panteerandu sabha* -Meeting of twelve years) under the presidency of the Zamorins of Calicut. The festival was politically as well as culturally important. For details see K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut, reprint, 1999, pp.89-108.



Malappuram district and joins the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. Its main tributary, Thuthapuzha, originates from the Silent Valley, flows through Thootha, Elamkulam, and Pulamanthol and joins the main river at Pallippuram. After a course in Palakkad and Thrissur districts, the Bharathapuzha again enters the Malappuram district at Thiruvegappura and from Kuttippuram onwards, the river belongs entirely to Malappuram district. Thirurpuzha 48 Kms long, originates from Athavanad hills in Tirur taluk, flows in a south west course upto Thirunavaya, deviates to encircle Tirur town and flows south west parallel to the sea, until it joins the Bharathapuzha near Ponnani port. Kadalundippuzha is formed by the confluence of two rivers, the Olippuzha and Veliyar. Olippuzha originates from Cherakomban hill and Veliyar from Erattakomban hill. They flow by the wilds of Silent Valley and traverse through Eranad and Valluvanad regions, before flowing into the sea at Kadalundi Nagaram. It has a circuit course of 130 Kms. Of these rivers only Chaliyar is perennial.

Chaliyar or Beypore river (169Kms length), one of the four medium rivers of Kerala,<sup>4</sup> originates from the Illambaleri hills in Gudallur taluk of Nilagiri district in Tamil Nadu. Important tributaries of this river are Chalippuzha, Punnapuzha, Pandiyar, Karimpuzha, Cherupuzha,

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<sup>4</sup> As per the national norm, rivers with drainage area of more than 20,000 sq. km. are called 'major rivers', lesser ones with more than 2000 sq. km, are 'medium' and the rest are 'minor'. According to this norm, Kerala does not have a single major river. It has four medium rivers, viz, Chaliyar, Bharatapuzha, Periyar and Pamba with a total drainage area of 8,250 sq. km.

Vadapurampuzha, Iringipuzha and Iruthilpuzha. The river Chaliyar flows through Nilambur, Mambad, Edavanna, Areacode, and Vazhakkad in Malappuram district and Feroke and reaches the Arabian Sea at Beypur six miles south of Calicut. Chaliyar and its tributeries flow through Nilambur Valley and have a significant role in the cultural uniqueness of the tribal communities of the Valley in many ways. Many of the tribal settlements, even now, are found on the fringes of the wet paddy fields on the bank of Chaliyar. The tribals of the area depend on the river and its tributeries for water, fishing and mining gold.<sup>5</sup> The tributeries of Chaliyar originate from the upper reaches of the Ghat sections and flows through the forests of the lower valley. These tributeries have also much importance in the life of the tribes. While they roam in the forest for n.w.f.p (non-wood forest produces) collection and food gathering pursuits, they camp in the rock shelters found on the banks of these tributeries and they take water from the nearby streams or tributeries for cooking and other purposes. More over, it is found that almost all *alais* and settlements of *Cholanaickan* are scattered on the banks of these streams.

The Chaliyar river system proved to be of a tremendous commercial significance. Many trade and industrial centres like Feroke, Kallai, Chaliyam, Kadalundi etc. emerged on the bank of Chaliyar owing to its facility of transportation. Even in the dry seasons country boats and light draught vessels

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<sup>5</sup> Francis Buchanan attests the mining of gold from the river flowing through Nilambur. Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar-1800*, Vol.II, reprint, New Delhi, 1988,p.441.

could ply upto Mambad almost touching the shadow of Chekkunnu hill,<sup>6</sup> on the outskirts of the Camel Hump range. The river has been used for floating down vast quantities of teak from Nilambur to Kallai. In time Kallai grew as the biggest timber mart in India. It is on the bank of the river, at Mavoor, that the Gwalior Rayons Ltd had a factory producing rayongrade pulp from bamboos and other timbers. Large quantities of bamboos were supplied from Nilambur forest via Chaliyar.<sup>7</sup> It is said that the tribals were largely recruited as labourers in cutting and floating the teaks and bamboos from Nilambur forest to the commercial centres like Kallai and Mavoor.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The name Chekkunnu is derived from two words, 'sheikh', means Sufi saint (in Arabic, the word means philosopher; Sufi saint is its technical meaning) and 'kunnu' (in Malayalam it means hill). It is said that a Shiekh from Kondotty came to the Aruvilakottai mosque near Urngattiri and he was used to go this nearby hill for meditation in solitude. Thus the hill became known as 'Sheikh Kunnu' means hill of Sheikh and later termed as Chekkunnu. ( *Vikasana Report*, Urngattiri Panchayath, 2002-2007, p.11). This story is also prevalent among the tribal and non-tribal people in the area. Logan also attests that a solitary Mussalman Fakir used to inhabit a tiger's cave in the Pandallur hill. See William Logan, *Malabar Mannual*, Vol.I, Madras, 1887, p.9.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Buchanan attests the floating of teak from Nilambur region through the river to Beypure port. Francis Buchanan, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.471,472.; Census reports also attests the floating of large quantities of commercial wood like timber, bamboos, rose wood, mahagony etc. to the commercial city of Calicut via Chaliyar in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. *Nilambur Valley Working Plan*, Vol.I, 1917-1918, Madras, 1921, pp. 60-65.

<sup>8</sup> They were also laboured in cutting bamboos and making huge raft to float large quantities of timbers. It is said that about 40000 bamboos required making a raft. Elaphants were used to carry huge woods from forest up to river banks. Tribal women were also laboured to make rope required for making raft which is locally called *Kamba*. The place where the *kamba* and food for elaphants are prepared is called *Naarumpura*. More over, up to seven members to each elaphant were recruited and separate duties are assigned to them. They were called *Theppukar*. One of them is *mestri* or supervisor and other one is *pappan*, and the remained five have to wash elaphant every day. *Odai* and bamboos were also used for making small country boats as well as large commercial boats. Personal Interview with Awunjippurath Alavikkutty, Chalikkal, Pothukallu, 18.05.2005.

Thus the river basins are the nuclear zones of attraction where many culturally and politically important centres also emerged. Natural and mineral resources near the river systems, fertility of the soil etc. play a dominant role in shaping the material culture of the tribals of the area. Developmental fabric of a socio-economic system, depends on agrarian expansion, which in turn is the by product of large deposits of alluvium, on the banks and its adjacent areas of these rivers. The river system made possible the dispersed settlement patterns in the district from the earlier times. The earliest settlements of non tribals in the district like Brahmins<sup>9</sup> and Mappilas<sup>10</sup> emerged in the fertile plains on the banks of these rivers and altered the tribals' life which has been proved in the thesis. The Hindu chieftains of the post-Sangam period also emerged and cocentrated on these fertile plains and peace and safety were guaranteed by the Western Ghats and Arabian Sea.<sup>11</sup> The rivers were used for internal transport and trading activities. The spices produced in the hilly areas and woods from the forests were transported to the coastal ports through these rivers. During the modern period the Europeans largely used these rivers to expand their domination to the interior regions.

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<sup>9</sup> Four Brahmin settlements, out of thirty two, emerged in Malppuram district, were on the banks of Chaliyar and Bharathapuzha. They were Karikkatu, Karantola, Alattur and Chokiram. Herman Gundert, ed., *Keralolpathi*, reprint, Trivandrum, 1961, pp. 5,7.

<sup>10</sup> It is found that due to the fertility of Chaliyar basin, the Muslim traders took their earliest settlements at the places like Mambad, Areakode etc. on the bank of Chaliyar. William Logan, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.13

<sup>11</sup> M.G.S Narayanan, *Cultural Sybiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, p.iii.

Laterite hills are another notable physiographical features of Malppuram district.<sup>12</sup> The Middle land area of the district mostly forms part of a laterite plateau.<sup>13</sup> In one hand, the laterite hills, though small, naturally make the area isolated curtailing the chances of easy communication. It is notable that, the Zamorins of Calicut besieged the Poralatiri, the ruler of Polanadu, understanding this disadvantageous position of Eranad, as it was cut off from the sea and was unfavourable for trade with Arabia and China. Then he shifted his residence from Eranad to the newly conquered country, Calicut.<sup>14</sup> On other hand, the slopes of the laterite hills are too stony and the soil lacks fertility.<sup>15</sup> So they were not suitable for paddy cultivation but very suitable for other crops<sup>16</sup>. Paddy has been the chief agricultural product of the tribal people from the beginning. As the laterite soil is not conducive for paddy cultivation, the tribals of the district chose hilly tracts and still live in these hilly areas.

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<sup>12</sup> It is notable that the laterite was first noticed geologically by Francis Buchanan in 1800 from Angadippuram in Malappuram district. Francis Buchanan, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp.440,441.

<sup>13</sup> The geology of the area, which lies between the Bharatappuzha or Ponnani river and Chaliyar or Beypore rivers, was originally studied in detail by Philip Lake in 1891. He characterized the geology of the region and identified three types of laterites in Northern Kerala, such as, Plateau laterite, Terrace laterite and the Valley laterite. See Philip Lake, *The Geology of South Malabar Between The Beypore and Ponnani Rivers*, Calcutta, 1891, PP, 221-237.

<sup>14</sup> K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *op.cit.*,pp.81,82

<sup>15</sup> Francis Buchanan observes that a major part of the district was covered by infertile laterite hills of stony slope and thus the area was not conducive for agriculture. Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp.440,441.

<sup>16</sup> The area is covered with cash crops like rubber, arecanut, coconut, banana, pepper plantations etc. Recently rubber has become the major plantation crops of the area. Jack fruit tree, arecanut and coconut trees are widely cultivated in the homestead plots of the people of the area.

The history of isolation and marginalisation of these tribals can be traced back to the period of Brahman migration to the area<sup>17</sup>. The Brahman settlements of Kerala are said to have originally prevailed in thirty-two villages.<sup>18</sup> Four of them, named, Alattur, Karantola, Chokiram and Karikkatu were situated in the present day Malappuram district.<sup>19</sup> It could be seen that it was on the fertile plains rather than on hilly regions or the coastal tracts that the original settlements took shape.<sup>20</sup> The tribal people had inhabited from the time immemorial in these fertile plains. It is obvious that the early inhabitants were nomadic and did not lead a settled life. They earned their livelihood as hunters and later as food gatherers. When they acquired iron technology, they moved to the alluvial plains or resorted to deforestation so as to make the land cultivable. These plains later became the main lands and the tribals became the owners of these lands. Thus from food gatherers they turned to be food producers. Each group had its own natural habitats and settlements. This phenomenon can be attributed to the whole world. In the case of Kerala, the earliest historical evidence of human habitation available is of the Iron Age megalithic builders.<sup>21</sup> That is, the descendants of these early farming

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<sup>17</sup> Though there are various views regarding the period of Brahman migration to Kerala, it is generally accepted that the Brahman society which had taken roots in Kerala atleast by the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. See M.G.S. Narayanan, *op.cit*, (n-11), p.iv.

<sup>18</sup> Herman Gundert, *op.cit.*, pp.5-7

<sup>19</sup> Karikkatu and Karantola fall within the Eranadu taluk. Karikkatu is a place in Trikkalangode village of Eranad. The place is predominantly a Hindu settlement area. One of the oldest temple of Eranad namely Subramhnya temple is situated at Karikkatu. Karantola is suggested to the village of the present Trippanachi near Manjeri. Recently a ruined Vishnu temple has been renovated there. *Ibid.* Also see Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, University of Calicut, 1978, pp.21-33

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.6.

<sup>21</sup> H. Sarkar, *Monuments of Kerala*, reprint, New Delhi, 1992, p.13.

communities of Kerala are the present day tribals which are evident from their surviving cultural traits.<sup>22</sup> Many types of Megalithic monuments are excavated from various parts of Malappuram district.<sup>23</sup> In fact every village of the district is rich with megalithic heritage.

The migrant new comers of great tradition subjugated the inhabitants and "claimed superiority over them and managed to re-orient the semi-tribal, semi-nomadic society into a temple-centered, agrarian, caste society".<sup>24</sup> When the newcomers dominated their power over the plains, the original inhabitants were either pushed back to more interior regions or they were enslaved and gradually forced to accept the supremacy of the victors. This physical subjugation was the first stage of tribal marginalisation.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the process of economic marginalisation and cultural isolation began. The early inhabitants lost their control over resources. Thus the advent of Brahmins was followed by the gradual decay and deterioration of the cultural heritage of the original inhabitants.

<sup>22</sup> K.J John, "The Megalithic Culture of Kerala", in V.N.Misra and Peter Bellwood, ed., *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific History*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.487-489.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Dolmenoid cists from Elamkur village of Eranad, Multiple hood stone from Cherukav village of Eranad, Slab cists from Pathappiriam of Edavanna and Amarambalam village, Stone circles from all above sites, Kodakkal from Areacode, Iruvetti, Pattarkulam, and Tripprangod, Rock cut caves from Vazhakkad, Pandikkad, Irumbuzhi, Manjeri, Karippur etc., See for details Robert Sewell, *Archaeological Survey of Southern India, List of the Antiquarian Remains in the Presidency of Madras*, Vol.I, Delhi,1882; Also See P.Devadas, *Archaeology of Eranad*, Ph. D. Thesis, Unpublished. University of Calicut, 1993, p.63.

<sup>24</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *op.cit.*p.6.

<sup>25</sup> It is stated that the agrestic slavery in Kerala was originated during the centuries of Brahman migration to Kerala and the gradual establishment of their dominance over the land and people. For details see Saradmoni, "Agrestic Slavery in Kerala in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" in T.K. Ravindran, ed., *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. 1. 1974, No. 2-3, p. 455.

The history of the Brahman community in Kerala is the history of the transformation of the indigenous society as a result of the contacts with and super-imposition of a more advanced material culture. This element worked as the agency which afflicted Kerala to Indian civilization reorienting the semi-tribal society and polity in Kerala on the classical Hindu lines . . . The success with which the Brahmans met in Kerala was the success of better agricultural techniques and better organising ability in a society which was yet to emerge from tribal status. With the growth of the Brahman settlements, the reciprocal cultural assimilation/acculturation was also started. Thus, the little communities were reoriented on Hindu lines.<sup>26</sup>

The agrarian system during this period was feudal in character<sup>27</sup> which overwhelmed the *Cera* monarchy by the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and ultimately the *Cera* territory was fragmented into several *desoms* and *nadus* after AD 1124. A number of small principalities emerged.<sup>28</sup> The network of Brahman settlement acted as one of the unifying forces in Kerala in the post *Cera* period. The settlements grew more powerful and began to amass larger extent of wealth and exert greater influence in society and polity. When the feudalistic agrarian system developed the land lord provided the tenants with

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<sup>26</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *op.cit.* p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *Peasantry Nationalism and Social Change in India*, Allahabad,1991, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> M.G.S. Nayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut, 1996, pp.90-105.



capital, seeds, bulls and wages. The role of the tribals in this agrarian system was that of an insignificant subject peasantry.<sup>29</sup>

By the early decades of 12<sup>th</sup> Century the centralised power structure of second *Cera* monarchy of Mahodayapuram collapsed and a bulk of minor principalities emerged and their lords engaged in quarrels to expand their territories and the period was characterised by frequent wars. The intermittent rivalry among the *nattu rajas* (native princes) caused the erratic flow of plainsmen to the various parts of Malabar. The new comers took over the fertile land and enslaved the tribals.<sup>30</sup>The same experience occurred in the district. Eranadu, in Malappuram district, was the more significant to the *nadu* divisions under the *Cera* kingdom. The chief of this *nadu* had his residence at Nediyruppu, near present day Kondotty in the district.<sup>31</sup>

A chaotic political situation existed all over Kerala till 18th Century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century many changes took place in Kerala's political sphere. In Travancore, Marthandavarma came to power and established centralised power suppressing the *Naduvazhis*. The same had occurred in Cochin also

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<sup>29</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>30</sup> William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol.1, reprint, New Delhi, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Vettatnad (Vettam) or Tanur Swarupam, and Parappanad were other swarupams in Malappuram district. Vettatnad comprised of parts of Ponnani and Tirur taluks. It included the places of Tanur, Trikkandiyur, Triprangode etc. Later Vettatnad accepted the suzerainty of the Zamorin. Parappanad lay to the north of Vettatnad and consisted of two parts, southern and northern. The former comprised of parts of Tirur taluk. The northern Parappanad or Beypore consisted of Panniyankara, Beypore and Cheruvannur in the Calicut district. The Raja of Parappanad also accepted the suzerainty of the Zamorin. K.V.Krishna Ayyer, *op.cit.*, p.1. Also see Kesavan Veluthat, "Formation of Agrarian System in Kerala" in P.J Cheria, ed., *Perspectives of Kerala History*, ,Voll, II, Part.II,Trivandrum,1999,p.68.

under Saktan Thampuran. Here, the lands and forests were fully under the state control and they found forest a source of resources.<sup>32</sup> The Government permanently settled the tribals on specific plots of land and shifting from place to place was prohibited.<sup>33</sup> They were permitted to cultivate land free of tax to an extent of 5/8 acres per head.<sup>34</sup> Deforestation continued widely. In Travancore up to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century about 4000 hector forest land experienced slash and burn cultivation. Within the very next twenty years it increased to 2000 hectares.<sup>35</sup> Besides, the tribals were permitted to collect the forest products for their bonafide agricultural and domestic purposes. Thus the tribals' right over land as well as the forest was reinstated. In return, the tribals had to provide their labour power for the various forestry activities such as collection of minor forest products, at prescribed rates or wages.<sup>36</sup> This was possible because in both Cochin and Travancore the forest belonged to the state and they could prevent the alienation of tribal land through legislations. But in the case of Malabar there was private forest and reserved forest and the British Government did not take such rules to protect the interests of the tribals in the forest. In this historical situation, it was very easy to amass the

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<sup>32</sup> C. Achutha Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Ernakulam, 1911, p. 249.

<sup>33</sup> V.Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, Trivandrum, 1906, Vol.iii, p. 474.

<sup>34</sup> *Report of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribe's Commission ,1960-61*,Vol.1,p.387.

<sup>35</sup> T.V. Achutha Warriar, *Gothra Sathyangal*, (Mal.), Thrisur, 2001, p.26.

<sup>36</sup> V.Nagam Aiya, *op.cit.*, p.474.

tribal lands to the outsiders. In Malabar region, the proportion of possessing of private lands was as high as 74% in Malappuram district.<sup>37</sup>

The spread of Mappilas into the interior regions and subsequent possession on lands also altered the tribal life and accelerated the process of tribal marginalisation. The advent of Portuguese and subsequent domination on the coastal areas of Malabar resulted in the migration of Mappilas into the interior regions of Malabar. Before the Portuguese arrival the economic and social life in the countryside of Malabar was dominated by the members of two high castes, the Nambudiri Brahmans and Nayars.<sup>38</sup> They had no involvement with commerce which was so important to its rulers. In economic terms, the Nambudiri Brahmans and Nayars were landlords and derived their primary income from agricultural land.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, the economic specialisation of the Mappila Muslims was mainly concentrated on trade and they naturally settled in the river sides and coastal areas<sup>40</sup> which would facilitate their trade where as the Nambudiris, Nayars and *Vyabaris*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> M.Kunhaman, "Tribal Economy of Kerala-The North-South Dichotomy", in T.K.Ravindran, ed., *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. VII, Trivandrum, 1980, p.258.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922*, New York, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>40</sup> Majority of them were living in Northern Kerala, especially in Calicut, Chaliyam, Parappanangadi, Tanur, Ponnani etc. The concentration of Muslim traders in these areas established the basic settlement patterns which shaped the growth of the Malayali Muslim population in later centuries. *Ibid.*, p.8. The Muslim traders took their earliest settlements at the places like Mambad, Areakode etc. on the bank of Chaliyar. William Logan, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p.13. Also see M.Gangadharan, *The Malabar Rebellion, 1920-22*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, University of Calicut, 1985.

<sup>41</sup> *Vyabaris* were also landlords, functioned as merchants but seem to have classified their commercial activities to internal trade.

were generally resident in the rural interior, as were the royal lineage in their private capacity.<sup>42</sup>

The Portuguese tried to monopolize the spice trade. They approached the officers of the Zamorin with a request to expel the West Asian Arab merchants from Calicut and stop trading with them promising to pay double the loss the Zamorin might suffer by preventing Moorish Muslims in this respect.<sup>43</sup> More over, to attain their purpose they did not hesitate to resort to many shameful deeds.<sup>44</sup> The Portuguese domination over trade and their traditional rivalry against the West Asian traders compelled the Mappila traders, who were collaborating with them, to move towards the interior regions. They firstly settled on the banks of Bharathapuzha, Chaliyar, and Kadalundipuzha as they favoured trading activities and agriculture. It was also a transition of Mappila Muslims from trade to agriculture. In Malappuram area, South Malabar in general, Muslims were tenant cultivators. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century a few of them became large tenants like Unnimutta Muppan of Nilambur and Athan Gurukkal of Manjeri.<sup>45</sup>

There is a story that supports the migration of Muslims to the interior areas of Malappuram district from coastal belts quoted in Stephen Dale as follows:

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<sup>42</sup> Stephen Dale, *op.cit*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>43</sup> Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum, *Tuhfathul Mujahudeen*, English Translation by S.Muhammed Hussain Nainar, Calicut, 2006, p.50.

<sup>44</sup> For details see *Ibid*, pp. 56, 57.

<sup>45</sup> William Logan, *op.cit*, Vol.I, p.23.

The Mappila protagonist was a man called Ali Marakkar, who was a soldier in the pay of the Brahman chief of the Malappuram area known as the Para Nambi.<sup>46</sup> Following a dispute between these two, the Para Nambi had killed Ali Marakkar and then according to the story, ordered that all the local Muslim tenants should be evicted from their lands. The Muslims then made a stand at the Malappuram Mosque, where at least forty-four were killed.<sup>47</sup>...Ali Marakkar's name, for it is not one which is common to the interior districts of Eralnatu, it is a name specifically associated with coast. Thus the name Marakkar was taken by seamen or by seagoing Muslim merchants and the Ali Marakkars of Malappuram had almost certainly come from the coast.<sup>48</sup>

The spread of Mappilas into the interior regions of Malappuram district was also favoured by the activities of Sufi *ulemas*. Mambram *tangal* and Kondotty Sheikh played a great role in this regard. Sheikh Muhammed Shah was said to have arrived at Kondotty and his descendants formed the only Sufi order in Northern Kerala. Their role as Sufi *sheikhs* was symbolised by the erection of the *takiya*, the building traditionally used as the centre for the activities of the order.<sup>49</sup> Later there emerged the famous Kondotty mosque which played a crucial role in spreading Islamic culture in these areas. In Nilambur, especially at Areacode the lower castes working under the Hindu

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<sup>46</sup> Para Nambi belonged to a Nambutiri Brahman Sub caste; the family were the subordinates or feudatories of the Zamorins of Calicut.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Dale, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* Many Marakkar families are found inhabiting, even today, in various parts of Malappuram district like Mampad, Kalikavu, Nilambur, Perinthalmanna, Malappuram, Kondotty, Thirurkad, Mankada, and in the border of Malappuram-Palakkad districts like Edathanattukara, Cheriparambu etc. It is noted that these families were the owners of vast lands and lived like land lords.

<sup>49</sup> Stephen Dale, *op.cit.*, pp.112-,114.

*jenmis* may be converted to Islam owing to the missionary activities of these Sufi saints.<sup>50</sup>

The Mappila penetration into the interior regions of Malappuram district affected tribals in two ways. First, in the areas dominated by the wealthy Mappilas the tribals were subjugated or enslaved. In the course of fieldwork it was informed by some elderly *Paniyans*, Nairs, and Mappilas of Nilambur area that in the past the *Paniyans* were either agricultural labourers or elephant workers under Nairs or Mappila *jenmis*. In this area tribes were treated as instruments of production that could be transferred, bought and sold along with land. Second, the tribals compelled to move to more interior areas as their habitats were dominated by the Mappila immigrants.

In the wake of Mysorean invasion of Malabar which began in 1766, the expansion of agriculture was accelerated by increasing migration of Mappila Muslims.<sup>51</sup> Eranad and Valluwanadu were the major centres of Mysorean domination.<sup>52</sup> Twenty years of Mysorean occupation had practically reduced the fertile country into a wilderness. The continuous warfare and military occupation compelled the peasantry class to take shelter in the forests.<sup>53</sup> Many Hindu *jenmis* who were land lords in the district fled to Travancore and it

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<sup>50</sup> The story regarding the origin of the name Chekkunnu hill, which described earlier, also indicates the activities of Sufi Saints in the area. Logan also mentions that a solitary Mussalman Fakir used to inhabit a tiger's cave in the Pandalur hill. See William Logan, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.9.

<sup>51</sup> A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mysore-Kerala Relations in the Eighteenth Century*, Trivandrum, 1975, pp.12, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Ferokabad, the head quarters of Tippu Sultan, was in Eranadu. For details see *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *History of Kerala*, Madras, 1959, p.388.

strengthened the pressure on cultivable land in Travancore. This increasing pressure on cultivable land was one of the historical reasons that led to the large scale migration to Malabar from Travancore since 1920s. More over the direct land revenue payments introduced by Tippu Sultan in Malabar provided additional incentive for the extension of cultivation and brought in more outsiders not only from Kerala plains but also Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.<sup>54</sup>

When Malabar was ceded to the British in 1792<sup>55</sup> the Nair *jenmis* who took asylum in Travancore had got an opportunity to return to their homeland in Malabar. Subsequently, the possession and control of land by the tribes had been transferred over to the Nair *jenmis*.<sup>56</sup> They possessed and controlled the lands in various parts of Malabar including Malappuram district. As the control over land came to the hands of the *jenmi,s* the tribes were forced to be the dependents of the landlords and were relegated into a position of servitude.<sup>57</sup> In the course of field work in the tribal areas of Nilambur, we came across the fact that about 98% of the *Paniyan* colonies in the area are situated along the side of paddy fields owned by the Nair families who were the land lords in the past. These Nair families were the *Mestris* (Supervisors) of Nilambur *Kovilakom* under whom the *Paniyans* laboured. It is found that

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<sup>54</sup> A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *op.cit.* p.148.

<sup>55</sup> Malabar was ceded to the English East India Company in 1792 by the Treaty of Sreerangapatanam with Tippu Sulthan. K.M. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

<sup>56</sup> M. Kunhaman, *op.cit.* p. 73.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

where there is a *Paniyan* colony there is also a Nair *taravadu* near by.<sup>58</sup> The *Paniyans* were actually agrestic slaves bought and sold with land to which they were attached as slave labourers.<sup>59</sup> Buchanan also attests this kind of *jenmi*-tribal relation. He observes that "The forests are divided into *puddies*<sup>60</sup> in which one or more tribe lived. Each *puddy* was the property of *jenmi*. The forest produce collected by the tribes were sold by the *jenmi* to the merchants called *Chetti* or *Mannadi*...If they collected more valuable items they were rewarded by their master."<sup>61</sup> It is found that the *Chettis* were powerful in Nilambur area, who were brought by the Nilambur *Kovilakom* from Tamil Nadu and settled in the area adjacent to the *Kovilakom* to enhance trade and business. Now this area is known as *Chettiyarangadi*.<sup>62</sup> More over, Nilambur Rajas were lords of the forest with command and control over the hill products.

The land belonged to the Nambutiris, who were in the apex of caste hierarchy and local chieftains had obtained *janmam* right on the land from Brahmin *janmis*. *Janmam* mean complete ownership over property. There were many kinds of *janmam* lands such as *taravad janmam* (owned by heirs);

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<sup>58</sup> The *Kovilakom* lands were auctioned to these Nair *jenmis* in which the *Paniyans* laboured. In the midst of the paddy field there was also, a *kalam*. *Kalam* was the farm house around which the labourers lived in small huts that made them available to the *jenmis* at any time required for work irrespective of day and night.

<sup>59</sup> For details see A. Aiyappan, *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Madras, 1948, P.98.

<sup>60</sup> *Puddies* were territorial divisions or assigned areas. For details see Francis Buchanan, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.383.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.383,384.

<sup>62</sup> Personal interview with Vijayavarma Thampuran, Nilambur *Kovilakom*, 6.10.2006.



*janmam* acquired by purchase from *taravad jenmis*, *government janmam*.<sup>63</sup>

The *government janmam* lands were formed by the British in order to overcome the claims of *janmam* rights of Nilambur Raja over large areas of land in Wyanad.<sup>64</sup> This claim of Nilambur Raja indicates that he had powerful control over the entire land of Nilambur area.

The British colonial invasion also began to penetrate into the tribal areas of Malappuram district in 1792 and a new era of tribal enslavement was started. It was with the introduction of new economic policies of the British, the empowerment of the tribals was abrogated in the area. The entire situation led to the land alienation in the forest areas and the tribal regions. Consequently, the tribals were converted to be a class of landless agricultural labourers.

The British colonial domination in the district also marked the starting of commercialisation of agriculture in the area. In 1840s the English East India Company started plantations in various parts of Malabar viz, Waynad and Nilambur. The British also started teak plantation at Nilambur. The first plantation was raised in 1842 in the forests lying to the west of Nilambur.<sup>65</sup> The teak plantation of the Nilambur Valley should be viewed in the light of the strategic significance of teak in those days. Teak wood was a better raw

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<sup>63</sup> T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences of Land Tenure in Kerala, 1850-1940*, Madras, 1970, pp. 25-36.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> K.V. Kunhi Krishnan, *Forest Policy and Administration in Malabar, 1800-1947*, Unpublished, Ph.D Thesis, University of Calicut, 1995, p.121.

material to the ship building industry, making of dockyard, railways etc. which played crucial role in the colonial exploitation. The Company also realised the commercial possibilities of timber that was tremendously found in the valleys of the Western Ghats. The commercial policies of the Company adversely affected the hill tribes. The success of the Nilambur plantation urged the British to make control over the forest area which was the traditional means of livelihood of the hill tribes. The tribes inhabiting in these forests subsist mainly on non-wood forest produces (n.w.f.p). When large tracts of forests were converted into teak plantation, the ecological equilibrium was totally upset. More over, the hill tribes were largely recruited as labourers in the plantations and thus they became bonded labourers<sup>66</sup>. The expansion of plantation sector led to the rising of the land values which encouraged land owners to sell their land to the planters. The planters purchased the lands from the land owners along with tribals who were living on it. They were practically slaves of the land owners. In some localities where the *jenmis* had sold the bulk of land and had consequently ceased to find regular employment for them; the tribals were taken to working on coffee estates.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the tribes like *Paniyans*, were released from agrestic slavery

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<sup>66</sup> P. Mohandas, *A Historical Study of the Colonial Investments in Malabar and Nilgiris in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Unpublished, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Calicut, 2005, p.160.

<sup>67</sup> Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. VI, reprint, Delhi, 1975, pp. 58, 59.

from paddy fields but became bonded labourers in the plantations on low wages.<sup>68</sup>

The British colonial government saw the forests an important source of revenue and export. They accused the shifting cultivations and collection of forest produces and regarded the tribals practically, as enemies of the forests. They completely ignored the fact that the forest was the original property of the tribals and they regarded it as a state property to be preserved and administered for the benefit of the state and not for a small and negligible minority like the tribals. More over, those tribals who protested against British colonial policies were treated as ‘Criminal Tribes.’<sup>69</sup> Thus, the British Government did not take any specific measures to protect the right of the tribals over forest and its produces, since the Government’s policy was one of isolation.

The British forest policy was inaugurated by the then Governor General Lord Delhousie in 1855 through a memorandum in forest conservation. In 1864 the British government passed the Forest Act and declared that any land covered with trees, bush wood or jungle as government forests. Thus, the state ownership over forests was declared.<sup>70</sup> The act restricted the collection of forest produce and adversely affected on the tribals' subsistence pattern of survival. In 1867, shifting cultivation was prohibited by

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<sup>68</sup> P. Mohandas, *op.cit.*,p183.

<sup>69</sup> K.V Kunnhi Krishnan, *op.cit.*, p.192.

<sup>70</sup> Baden Powell, *Forest Laws in India*, London, 1893, p. 226.

law with the excuse that it did much damage to the forests.<sup>71</sup> The forest Act of 1878 classified the forests as 'reserved forest', 'protected forests' and 'village forests'.<sup>72</sup> The Forest Resolution of 1894 further restricted the rights of the tribes in the use of the jungle and its produce.<sup>73</sup>

Thus British state control over the tribal homeland was fully established. In 1896 the British struck at the livelihood rights of the tribals by withdrawing the privileges given to them to collect and sell firewood and minor forest produce and the Forest Act of 1927 changed the rights of communities' into the privileges of persons; and this paved the way for the government of India to reduce the privileges into mere concessions' by the Forest Policy of 1952. The Indian Forest Act of 1927 was mainly aimed at increasing the revenue of the government conserving the forest resources for export. Tea, coffee, rubber and pine plantations were started by large scale cutting down natural forests in many hilly and mountainous regions.

The British colonial period was an ecological watershed in the sense that colonial policies destroyed the eco-friendly pattern of tribal existence, and traditional coherence with nature. The policies of industrialisation of the tribal areas and commercialisation of forests goods gradually led to the development of state monopoly over natural resources. The colonial state

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*

declared its ownership over land, forest and natural resources and this policy became the basis of British colonial rule in the forest or hilly areas.

The beginning of plantation and commercialisation of forest produces resulted in the decline of food gathering and food producing subsistence pattern of tribal life. More over the tribals were compelled to work in the plantation for low wages and they lost the chances controlling natural resources and of mobilisation. Lack of knowledge of governing resources in favour of modern technology which was used for exploiting nature for big industry and the market also led to the disruption of traditional livelihood.

The British colonialism did not spare the tribals but they were recruited to provide labour for the Forest Department and in the plantations due to their capacity for hard work and experience and knowledge of the forests. They were dispossessed of their forest lands and brought under the bonded labour system on hill estates by the state as well as the local *Jenmis*. Their land alienated and they sunk in debt and their lives were reduced to a sheer fight for survival. Their population being small and scattered in different parts of the district they were not able to organise themselves to resist their exploiters, instead, they were either enslaved or compelled to move further into the forests as in the case of *Cholanaickar* of Malappuram district.

The land revenue policies of the English East India Company articulated the position of feudal landlords as absolute proprietors of lands and

forests. The colonial system eroded the rights and privileges of the tribals as peasants. Thus, the colonial revenue regulations enforced restrictions on the use of lands by the tribals and strengthened the feudal system. The entire system resulted in a colonial mode of exploitation and adversely affected the process of peasantisation among the tribals. The tribal support to Pazhassi revolt of 1800-05<sup>74</sup> and the *Kurichia* revolt of 1812<sup>75</sup> in Waynad should be analysed in this historical background.

Thus, the British colonial policies adversely affected the tribal life in many ways. First, it led to the alienation of tribal land and lost chances of agricultural empowerment. Second, commercialisation of agriculture led to

<sup>74</sup> Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, a member of royal family of Kottayam in north Malabar, may be the first among the indigenous local rulers to rise in revolt against the English East India Company. He had helped the British against Mysoreans on the condition that the Company would return Kottayam to the Raja after the defeat of the invaders. But when Malabar was ceded to the Company in 1792 the East India Company declared that all the local Rajas and the people of Malabar will be under the control of the Company. This declaration was against the earlier agreement with Pazhassi. Moreover, discarding the claim of Pazhassi Raja the Company entrusted the duty of collecting rent from the peasants of Kottayam to the Kurumbranad Raja. This was the basic reason of the Pazhassi revolts in 1800-05. The enhancement of the land revenue and the powers given to the intermediaries to collect the land rent from the peasants paved way for the wrath of the local chieftains and common people as well. So the resistance of Pazhassi Raja was supported and led by the local chieftains like Kannothe Sankaran, Kaitheri Ambu and Edachena Kunkan and the tribal people of Waynad like Kurichiar and Kurumbar. The tribal people were gathered under the leadership of Thalakkal Chandu. The participation of the tribals in the revolt was mainly due to the discontent against the Company's newly introduced revenue regulations. Under the new system, the power to collect the land rent was entrusted to the intermediaries which led to the emergence of a new class of land owners, who denied the rights and privileges enjoyed by the tribals in the forests and wastelands.

<sup>75</sup> Kurichiar and Kurumbar, two tribes of Waynad, rose in revolt in 1812 as a protest against the British colonial policies and to protect tribal tradition. These tribals were leading a free life in the forests of Waynad hills. Traditionally they had been paying the tax in kind not in cash. But the then Malabar collector, Thomas Warden declared Government's policy of collecting the revenue from the tribals in cash rather than in kind. The interference in the peaceful eco-friendly life and the denial of freedom in the forest of the tribals urged them to protest against the British. The Pazhassi revolt had already provided them the initiative of struggle against the British.

the pauperisation of the tribals. Thirdly, the tribals were compelled to vacate their traditional habitat to the more interior forests. Fourthly, many of them were forced to be bonded labourers in British plantations. Fifthly, they were trapped in the rural debt on account of the dependence on market and its price mechanism.

The large scale migration from Southern Kerala and their settlement in the Nilambur valley was another form of non-tribal intrusion into the tribal areas which adversely affected the tribals' way of life intensifying the land problems. From early 1920s onwards individual farmers from different villages of Travancore started to move into the interior parts of Malabar and the flow of migration continued up to 1980 and altered the settlement pattern of the tribals in Malabar.<sup>76</sup> Acute shortage of food during the two world wars and the consequent hike in the price had compelled many small and middle peasants of Travancore to migrate to Malabar.<sup>77</sup> As the motive behind the migration was mainly of acquiring cultivable land most of the migrants settled down in the hilly areas of Malabar. In Malappuram district Eranad and Valluvanadu were the two active theatres of these developments.<sup>78</sup> The other reasons for the preference of hilly areas were, the coastal regions had long-

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<sup>76</sup> P.K. Michael Tharakan, "Dimensions and Characteristics of the Migration of Farmers from Travancore to Malabar, 1930-1950" in T.K. Ravindran, ed., *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol.5, Part II, Trivandrum, 1978, pp.287-305.

<sup>77</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *The Process of Tribal Land Alienation and Disempowerment in Wynad, Kerala*, Bangalur, 2006, p.7.

<sup>78</sup> Kozhikkode, Kurumbranad, Chirakkal, Kottayam and Waynad were the other major centres. For details see *Census Handbook*, Madras, 1951, p.5.

standing towns and villages with fairly dense populations and hilly regions had climatic and soil conditions conducive to the cultivation of different cash crops in which the migrants were interested.<sup>79</sup>

The worst aspect of this immigration was the intruders illegally occupied the land of the tribals and made them agricultural labourers<sup>80</sup>. The migration adversely affected the tribals by alienating them from their traditional lands and subjugating them for ruthless exploitation and placing them at an inferior social status.<sup>81</sup> In the course of fieldwork it was found that many tribal people who have been the wage labourers under new comers for decades were brutally exploited both physically and mentally.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the migration wave from the erstwhile Travancore and Cochin had abrogated the mobilization of the tribals, by encroaching upon their land holdings, appropriating them and employing them as wage labourers without decent wages. The new landed class treated them as mere slaves. Even the modesty of their women folk was looted. Their human rights were frequently violated by the police and administrators. The press and media always supported the dominant sections. In short, the proletarianisation of the tribals started from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century due to the British colonial policies was quickened by large scale migration of plainsmen from Travancore and Cochin

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<sup>79</sup> Michael Tharakan, *op.cit*, p. 289.

<sup>80</sup> M. Kunhaman, "Understanding Tribal Life", in P.N.Varughese, ed., *State and Society*, Vol.4, No. 2 Kottayam, 1983, pp. 77-78.

<sup>81</sup> P.T. Sebastian, *Christian Migration to Malabar*, Unpublished, Ph.D, Thesis, University of Calicut, 2002, p.328.

<sup>82</sup> Personal Interview with Neeli, Aranadan Colony, Vellikatta, Karulai, 01.03.06.



which began in 1920s. The process of migration also strengthened the dispossession, proletarianisation and pauperisation of the tribals.

The large scale migration of non tribals has radically altered the pattern of land holding, land use, labour opportunities and control over the local resources. A sizeable part of the lands cultivated by traditional *Jenmis* or land lords have passed on to the hands of settlers who were petty ryots. They are rarely in need of any hired labour. The transaction of land from landlords to the migrants, therefore, resulted in the displacement of tribals who were bonded labourers. The bonded labour<sup>83</sup> system was also known as *kundalpani* or *Vallipani* or *aandukettipani* or *Adimapani*. It is a kind of annual contract made between the tribal labourer and the land lord with a payment of advance of cash called *Talappattam* or *Nilpu panam*, 'retaining fee' or *Vallurkavu panam*. A. Aiyappan attests the recruitment of tribals like *Paniyans* and *Aiyans* as bonded labourers in Malabar at the time of *Vallur Kavuvu* or *Valliyoor Kavuvu* annual festival in Waynad. On this day, farmers and tribals of Waynad and other employers of labourers assemble there. They were found engaged in active negotiations with their prospective employers discussing the amount of advance to be paid for each group. The employers pay the *Paniyans* or *Adiyans* the advance of Rs.30 for a family and they sign a promissory note for

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<sup>83</sup> It was in the year 1960-61 that the term 'bonded labour' appeared in the report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As per the report, the system of bonded labour existed in some states such as Kerala, Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. In Kerala, the system was in force in the districts such as Cannanore, Kozhikkode, Malappuram and Palakkad. Government of India, *Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1960-61*, New Delhi, p.47.

the advance. The validity of the contract is one year i.e., till the eve of the next *Vallur kavu* festival. The money advanced is not usually repayable, but is only a guarantee of the service of the labourers for the year. After the annual harvest the bonded labourers were entitled to get a kind of bonus called *kundal*. A family received 250 *seers* of paddy. During this time the advance which was given to them in the beginning accounted against the *kundal*. A family was eligible to receive full *kundal* only if they had put in during this period, a sizeable number of working days, thereby clearing their dues in advance. Once the family had cleared the arrears and received the rest of the *kundal*, the family was free from the bond. Usually no family was able to pay back all advances taken and thus the whole family would remain bonded to the same master for years together. The labourers normally did not violate this tie by running away or by other means as they were afraid of the wrath of the *Valliyoorrkavu Bhagavathy* in whose name the transactions of advance and woes were effected.<sup>84</sup>

Malappuram district was one of the four strongholds of bonded labour system in Kerala. The tribals in the district were forced to labour under Nair or Mappila *Jenmis* of the region. The land and forest in the area were owned by Nilambur *Kovilakom* and private parties. The *kovilakom* lands were auctioned to these *Jenmis* in which the tribals especially *Paniyans* laboured. It is found that till recently, these *Jenmis* were the *mestris* (supervisors) of

<sup>84</sup> For details see A. Aiyappan, *op.cit.*, pp.98-100. Also see P.R.G.Mathur, *Trial Situation in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1977, pp.95-105.

various *kovilakoms* in the area. It is evident that about 98% of the *Paniyan* colonies in the district are situated along the side of paddy fields owned by the successors of these *Jenmis*. In the midst of the paddy field there was a *Kalam*.<sup>85</sup> *Kalam* was the farm house around which the labourers lived in small huts that made them available to the *jenmis* at any time required for work irrespective of day and night.

The first legislative measure for the prohibition of bonded labour in Kerala was 'The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1975'. The main aim of this act was to abolish the bonded labour system in the districts of Kozhikkode, Malappuram and Cannanore. The act abolished any payment of cash or any payment in kind under the bonded labour system.<sup>86</sup> The debtor or any member of his family shall not be bound or compelled to render labour or personal service after the commencement of the act.<sup>87</sup> Thus this act was the initial step to free the tribals from the yoke of bonded labour system. The very next year the Union Government enacted 'The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976'. The act says that on the commencement of this act, the

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<sup>85</sup> Cheerangam Kunji Muhammed, who had been estate supervisor of Nilambur *Kovilakom* from 1958 onwards, said that the *Paniyans* of Edivanna were labourers under Govindan Nair, the then *mestri* of Manjeri *Kovilakam*; the *Paniyans* at Peruvampadam colony were working in the *kalam* of Moideenkutty Haji (Mampad) of Manjeri *Kovilakam*. *Paniyans* of Ettapara were working in the *kalam* of Kanniyam Moideenkutty Haji after 1975 of Manjeri *Kovilakam*. The *Paniyans* of Athikkad colony (Chaliyar) were the labourers in the Kunnathachal *kalam* under Sankunni Menon, who was the *mestri* in the Thrikkalur devaswam land, Wandoor. The *Paniyans* of Adyanpara were working in the *kalam* of Nalakath Veerankutty. These landlords employed the *Paniyans* in the area for agricultural work with out giving decent wages. Personal Interview with Cheerangam Kunji Muhammed, Edivanna, 10.07.2006.

<sup>86</sup> *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1975, Section 2.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 3.

bonded labour system shall stand abolished and every bonded labourer shall stand free and discharged from any obligation to render any bonded labour.<sup>88</sup> The net result was the tribals who have been detained in civil prison were released from detention. By implementing the provisions of the Act, 823 bonded labourers were identified and released from bondage in Kerala. Out of 823 released bonded labourers 150 numbers were in Malappuram district and they were fully Scheduled Tribes.<sup>89</sup> The identified bonded labourers were rehabilitated in various projects in the districts of Waynad, Kozhikkode and Malappuram.<sup>90</sup> Chokkad colony was set up for rehabilitating the freed bonded labourers of Malappuram district. The tribal families were given land and houses. A co-operative society, viz., Kalkulam Girijan Service Co-operative Society was organised with the participation of tribals.

In short, The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Acts, of 1975 and 1976 have succeeded in liberating the tribals from the bonded labour system. But in fact the tribals of the district could not enjoy the benefits of the Acts completely because of its unscientific implementation. When they were rehabilitated they were actually transplanted from their traditional homeland. Traditionally each tribe has its own territory but in the colonisation scheme all

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<sup>88</sup> *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, Section 2.*

<sup>89</sup> Jose George and et al, *Tribal Development, Legislation and Enforcement*, New Delhi, 1994, p.193.

<sup>90</sup> These projects were started during 1979-80 period. Important among these schemes are Chokkad Colonisation Scheme (Malappuram district ), Collective Farm at Vattanchira (Kozhikkode district ), and Hamlet Development Scheme at Vaniyampuzha, Pocket Dairy project and Sugandhagiri Cardamom Project at Vythiri and Priyadarsini Tea Estate at Manantody (Waynad district ). *Ibid.*, pp.196, 197.

these rehabilitated tribes were supplied a common territory and forced to adjust in a congested area. Adequate lands for each tribe for homstead and agriculture were not supplied. More over, these tribals who have different customs and traditions could not accommodate with the new situation. It is evident that in the Chokkad colony, the houses for *Aranadans* are provided in isolation far away from other tribal communities in a locality which has been called *Aranadan-cheri*. Becasuse they are considered as polluting groups and treated as the lowest in the tribals' society.<sup>91</sup> Lastly, the Acts did not have any suggestion to control the private ownership over land and forest and to ensure tribals' control over forests and local resources.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Edgar Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 217.

<sup>92</sup> Census Report of 1961 attests the private ownership over lands and forests and its impacts on tribals in Nilambur area. The report says, "A good part of Nilambur village was said to be under private occcupation, particularly of a few lairds, during the past. Only a small portion was at that time under the direct control and possession of the Government. Even now, despite many changes, vast stretches of forests and other types of land are under the control of some of the land lords. Perhaps, there are not many silmilar parts in the state, where there are such extensive plots of forests and paddy fields under private possession. Formerly, the administration of these forest land and paddy fields was entrusted with a committee, consisting of representatives of the different families who jointly owned the plots. The functioning of the committee was rendered feeble, owing to the indifference and inefficiency on its part. Also the onset of individual interests, above that of the committee and its joint enterprise, had hastened its ineffectiveness. Then, in defiance of the committee and its rules, some members of the family of owners began to distribute in their individual capacity, some plots of these lands, to their minions on receipt of nominal moneterary gratifications. This act of the persons gathered wide popularity, since it inevitably meant an immediete financial bonanza to each of them. The result was that others also adopted an equally defiant attitude to the committee, and all began vying with each other in this business. Thus, the possession of a good portion of land was transferred to some people, who, in turn, sold their rights at prices then prevalent in the locality. This had evidently resulted in the immigration of a lot of people mainly Christians and a few Muslims, from other parts. This was said to be the history of the settlement of the different communities in this place, which was formerly occupied by only a few people including the tribes. The tribal people were formerly occupying the forest area, while remaining loyal to the land owners. They were mainly engaged in tilth and the collection of forest produces was entirely their prerogative. The influx of population, and the spread of agricultural activities, brought about much of deforstation. A good many tribal people were forced to

The Land reforms in Kerala aimed at abolition of landlordism. But it adversely affected the tribal people. When Kerala Government passed 'The Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963' the tribal land owner was ignorant of the provisions of the Act. As if in a hangover from the patterns of shifting cultivation a good portion of tribal holdings are left fallow. The tribal was induced to induct a non-tribal as a tenant cultivator. The non-tribal farmers who migrated into forest regions during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century had leased lands from the tribals by advancing nominal amounts of money or by offering liquor or narcotics. They had also encroached upon tribal lands on a large scale through physical threat and intimidation. The land reform legislations enabled such non-tribal immigrants to establish their ownership rights over such lands. When the tribals approached the court they were asked to produce documental evidence to support their claim over lands. As the tribals were illiterate they were ignorant of maintaining such documental evidences. As a result, they were converted into mere wage labourer of the immigrant non-tribal farmers.

In 1975 the Kerala Legislative Assembly passed Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Land) Act

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disown their agricultural plots and remain subservient to the land owners. They were then absorbed as agrestic serfs albeit with much of their reluctance in being so. But this new system was promising them a steady though meagre, sustenance. As there was hardly any choice left for them they were forced to accept the imposed terms and remain loyal to the lairds. However, some of the tribal people had escaped to the wilderness of the forest, and led a life anent their tradition." *Census of India 1961, Vol.VII, Kerala, Part VI H, Village Survey Monographs, Tribal Areas, New Delhi, 1974. pp.8,9.*

with the aim of preventing the alienation of tribal lands and restoring to the tribals' land that alienated from them with effect from January 1, 1960. Section IV of the Act says that any transfer effected by a member of a Scheduled Tribe, of immovable property possessed, enjoyed or owned by him, on or after the commencement this Act to a person other than a member of the Scheduled Tribe, without the previous consent in writing of the competent authority, shall be invalid.<sup>93</sup> The Act also provides provision for restoration of alienated lands and the Tribal Extension Officers in the I T D P, areas were assigned the duty of identifying cases of land alienation.<sup>94</sup> Five cases from Nilambur I T D P area are found reported.<sup>95</sup> The respondents of the five cases preferred appeal to the competent authority but the appeals were rejected. It reveals that steps for extending justice to the tribals were cleared by the competent authorities. But the follow up action to be taken by the concerned

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<sup>93</sup> Government of Kerala, *Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Land) Act, 1975*, Section, 4.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, Sections, 4, 5.

<sup>95</sup> One Burmi residing in Pullipadam village, Eranad Tauk in Nilambur ITDP area has alienated 1.99 acres of land to a non-tribal by some Saidali Vazhakunnu. A petition was filed by Burmi to the Sub Collector, Perinthalmanna through the tribal Extension Officer, Kalkulam. The matter was enquired into and revealed that the respondent Saidali Vazhakunnu had brought the 1 acre of land from the petitioner, Burmi for Rs.7500/. The petitioner had an outstanding debt of Rs. 5455/ in the Eranad Co-operative Agricultural Development Bank. The amount was paid by the respondent. Another case was filed by the Tribal Extension Officer, Kalkulam, for Devadas, a tribal residing in Pullipadam village, Eranad taluk. Devadas sold 15 cents of his land to Alungal Muhammed, the respondent for Rs.975/. Another case was the one petition filed by Mundathode Gangadharan in Pullipadam village, Eranad taluk in Nilambur ITDP area. The petitioner sold 5 acres of land to two persons- Ouseparambil Elikkutty and Kizhakkal Joseph. A total amount of Rs. 20000/ was paid for 5 acres. Another petition was filed by Thannikuzhi Adhikari Raman residing in Pullipadam Village, Eranad Taluk who sold 5 acres of land to the respondent Kottayil Bharatham for Rs. 24000/. See Jose George, *op.cit.*,pp.167-169.

department with the help of Revenue Department has not taken place. More over, the successive governments did not take any step to implement the law.

The *Kudikidappavakasam* (Hutment Rights Bill-1976) that granted ten cents of homestead to all hutment dwellers in Panchayat areas also did not benefit the Scheduled Tribes who were agricultural labourers. The tribal hutment dwellers stayed in homesteads of containing varying number of households under their chieftains in the property of a landlord. The allocations of ten cents of land under hutment rights were in most cases given only to the chieftains where as others were denied. The chief in turn had to share these meagre plots with his kin to create hutments. Many others were forcibly evicted and had to find place to put up houses in the forest boundaries, riversides or even on wayside wasteland. The redistribution of surplus land also did not benefit the tribals. Those who were allotted the wetlands did not have the means to procure seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and others who were allotted dry land lacked the basic skills to make it productive.

The forest policies of independent India also adversely affected the tribal life. The government of India faithfully continued the British Forest policy. The present forest policy was adopted by the Union Government in 1952. The following statement made at the time of launching of the New Indian Forest Policy of 1952 clarified the Government's stand regarding local needs:-



Village Communities in the neighbourhood of a forest will naturally make greater use of its products for the satisfaction of their domestic and agricultural needs. Such use, however, should in no event be permitted at the cost of national interests. The accident of a village being situated close to a forest does not prejudice the right of the country as a whole to receive the benefits of a national asset. The scientific conservation of a forest inevitably involved the regulation of rights and the restriction of the privilege of user depending upon the value and importance of the forest, however, irksome such restraint may be to the neighbouring areas.... While, therefore, the needs of local population must be met to a reasonable extent, national interests should not be sacrificed because they are not directly discernible, nor should the rights and interests of future generations be subordinated to the improvidence of the present generation.<sup>96</sup>

Thus 'The New Policy of 1952' stated that the claims of the communities living in and around forests should not override national interests. The tribal communities who regarded themselves as the lords of the forests were through a deliberate process turned into subjects and placed under the Forest department. The traditional rights of the tribals were no longer recognised as rights. In 1894 they became "rights and privileges" and in 1952 they became "rights and concessions." Now they are being regarded as "concessions."<sup>97</sup> The destruction of forests for the construction of roads,

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<sup>96</sup> Government of India, *Report of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, 1960-61*, New Delhi, p.129.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

building of irrigation, factories and other projects was justified in the name of the national interest. Tribals in the forest were discouraged from using the forest. The government tried to obtain more and more revenue from the forests. Within this policy tribals were treated as enemies of forest.

In 1960 the President of India appointed the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission under the Chairmanship of U.N.Dhebar.<sup>98</sup> The Commission analysed the forest policy and emphasised the importance of forest in the life of tribal people. It criticised the gradual expansion of government authority over the forests to the detriment of tribal life and economy. It noted the changes in the rights of the tribals on forests. The Commission regretted that the forest policy of 1952 and forest officials were reluctant to allow the tribals the exercise of their rights over forest lands and produce.<sup>99</sup> Tribal people who have occupied forests for centuries have enjoyed considerable privileges. The new forest policies adopted by the Union Government in the name of national interests ultimately have hit the tribals very hard. But the tribals still believe that forest is their natural habitat and that they have the right over it. "The forest not only satisfied a deep rooted tribal sentiment, but it provided essential food to them. They enjoyed the privilege and freedom of utilising the forests as they liked up to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Thereafter the people from outside moved into the forest and exploited the latter on commercial basis and conditions began to change. The Government started the gradual extension of the authority in the national

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.127,128.

interest and thus the process of reserving and protecting the forest areas by the government resulted in reducing the customary tribal control over them to mere concession.”<sup>100</sup>

After the sixty years of India’s Independence, the marginalisation of tribal communities still continued. Despite being the original inhabitants, even the Indian Constitution has marginalised the tribals by recognising them only as 'Scheduled Tribes' and not as *Adivasis*, meaning earliest inhabitants. It may be true that this constitutional status is given with the purpose of ensuring social equality by providing special concessions and aids. But in reality, their claim as original inhabitants is questioned. This type of recordial marginalisation was started by the British in 1891 census by terming them as *Vanavasi*. In the successive Censuses it varies to '*Animists*' (1901), *Hill Tribes* (1921), *Primitive Tribes* (1931), *Backward Classes* (1935) and *Tribe* (1941). It is an attempt to deny their distinctiveness and their history and culture and the special position they would have to be accorded as *Adivasis*, the original inhabitants.<sup>101</sup>

The age long tradition of the tribals is another barrier<sup>102</sup> which also arrests them in the hills and forests. They believe that forest has been their traditional homeland. They have a symbiotic relation with the natural settings.

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<sup>100</sup> N.K. Bose, *Report of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*, 1969-70, Delhi, p.68.

<sup>101</sup> Indian Constitution, Article 342.

<sup>102</sup> George M Foster discussed the cultural stability and change in the conception of 'barrier' and 'stimulants' or 'motivation'. He argues that there are various cultural, social and psychological barriers that promote the stable and static nature of culture of a group. See George M Foster, *Traditional Cultures and the Impact of Technological Change*, New York, 1965, pp. 64-176.

They have unique love for their traditional homeland, its forest, hills, rivers, animals etc. They have integrity of spirit deeper than conscious reasoning. They have been interacting with ecological system since time immemorial and their interaction with environment has been successful. In the past, these tribes were simply hunters and food gatherers. Each group had its own territory in which its members hunt animals and collect forest produces for exchange. Such a territory was often quite extensive because the survival of such a group mainly depends upon the produces that the nature offers. Their smallness in number makes them self-dependent in their territory. When self-dependency increases, a considerable decrease in the inter-dependency will also be occurred, which will naturally isolate the self-dependent. Redfield observes “the people of little community, who lived in hunting and gathering, produced so little food as they are indeed little. And they are pretty much isolated from one another and self-dependent”<sup>103</sup>

The marginalisation of the tribals should also be viewed in terms of their mental outlook, beliefs and tradition. Their beliefs and tradition are formulated according to these surroundings. In order to preserve their cultural identity and tradition they have developed the habit of withdrawal. As Kosambi observes, the tribal people who remain in the remote corners have developed some ideas, mental attitudes, superstitions, ritual customs, observances that prevent them from trying newer forms of life.<sup>104</sup> Self respect

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<sup>103</sup> Robert Redfield, *The Little Community*, Tenth Impression, Chicago, 1973, p.113.

<sup>104</sup> D.D.Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Calcutta, 1977, reprint, p28.

and trust are integral part of their culture. They are not ready to abandon their eco-friendly life. They believe that their gods and goddesses are seated there.<sup>105</sup> They are peace-lovers and consider outsiders as exploiters. Their traditional homeland has been their *janmam* land to which they have a symbiotic relation. A strange belief that exists among the *Kattu Paniyans* of Vettilappara is that if anyone dies among them they will vacate the house of the deceased and burn it. Many of their houses which are constructed by the Government are burnt according to this belief. Moreover, they believe that the real essence of culture lies in what they think and do their attitudes, their social forms and their religious beliefs. The belief in the superiority of one's culture and the eagerness to be closed to one's own culture, that is, cultural ethnocentrism, is a powerful one that makes a society static.<sup>106</sup>

### Summary

It is found that the unique geographical setting of Malappuram district is the basic reason of the tribal isolation in the district. The district surrounded by high hills and mountains with dense forest, laterite hills and long river system that made the region an area of isolation and to certain extent free from external impacts. The land forms, soil, climate, vegetation, flora and fauna, water etc act as the geographic environment in moulding up the tribal

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<sup>105</sup> In 1970-72 R.C Choudhary, the then District Collector, tried to rehabilitate the tribals of Appankappu, Pothukal Panchayath. But the tribals of Appankappu organised under their *moopan*, Mathan, and protested against the action and hesitated to vacate their traditional homeland as they believe that their gods are seated there. It is said that the term 'Appankappu' is derived from 'Appankavu' means seat of Appan or Muthappan. Personal interview with Avunjippurath Alavikkutty, Chalikkal, Pothukal, 16.05.2005.

<sup>106</sup> George M Foster, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

culture in the district. Geographically and even ecologically distinguishable region of the district provided a 'cultural area'<sup>107</sup> and the tribal culture has been derived from this particular geographical situation, that is, 'geographic determinism'.<sup>108</sup> The distinctive geographical and ecological characteristics of the area have conditioned the tribal system of production and technology, pattern of settlements, socio-economic structures, and religious beliefs. In short, the natural setting of Malappuram district has a crucial role in making the tribal communities in the district as 'an ecological system'.<sup>109</sup>

The nuclear zones of attraction developed on the banks of rivers. Here the earliest human settlements developed. When the area was occupied by the immigrants of advanced technology, the earliest inhabitants moved to the isolated zones. Advent of Brahmins was the initial stage of this process of tribal marginalisation. Gradually these nuclear zones emerged as powerful political centres with relatively stable state system. From time to time, the political powers in the nuclear zones expanded their sovereignty to the other regions of attractions which made the situation chaotic. The frequent conflict

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<sup>107</sup> Clark Wissler used the concept of 'culture area' as a tool for historical reconstruction firstly. He thought that basic units of culture were cultural traits, which cluster together to form culture complexes, and which in their turn cluster together in an area giving rise to a culture area. A culture area is a geographical area occupied by a group of people whose culture exhibits a significant degree of similarities with culture of each other as well as significant degree of dissimilarities with cultures of other. Clark Wissler, *The American Indian*, New York, 1922, p.218.

<sup>108</sup> Franz Boas developed this concept. He found that geographical setting of the area is a determining factor of moulding culture of a group of people. According to him, every culture is strongly influenced by its environment, that, some elements of culture cannot develop in an unfavourable geographical setting, while others may be advanced. Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*, New York, 1940, pp.255-256.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Redfield designated little communities as 'an ecological system' observing the influences of ecology on the culture of the little communities. Robert Redfield, *op.cit.* pp.17-31.

for expansion among these powers caused the erratic flow of plainsmen to the various areas of the district and the tribal people to the isolated pockets of Western Ghats. The process of marginalisation reached its zenith in all means during the British colonial period. The British land revenue and forest polices opened a new form of marginalisation of these tribals. The commercialisation of agriculture in the form of plantations transformed the tribals as landless wage labourers. The colonial penetration into the area was in the form of plantations which was also favoured by the geography of the area. Thus, it could be concluded that the large scale migration of non tribals resulted in the physical subjugation or isolation of the tribals and altered the pattern of land holding, land use, labour opportunities and control over local resources.

It is also found that the age long tribal culture and tradition form another barrier which also arrests them in the hills and forests. Self respect and trust are integral part of their culture. They consider their culture and tradition as superior and to preserve them they have developed the habit of withdrawal. Their age-long isolation from the rest of the society curtailed their chances to be technologically developed. In short, their culture still represents a primitive level technology, arrested in its development mainly as a result of ecological factors of isolation, of some series of historical accidents, and also perhaps because of some traditional barriers.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Franz Boas proposed a three-fold method for the study of tribal culture. It is an investigation in connection with the geographical distribution, historical causes that led to the formation of culture, and to the psychological processes that were at work in their development. Franz Boas, *op.cit.*, p.276.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRIBES IN TRANSITION

Trapped in the geographical seclusion of dense forest and long rivers, the tribal communities in the district were cut off from the mainstream and direct forces of social changes. Naturally, their cultural ethos and material culture were different resulting in the formation of a distinct life ethnicity and identity. This ethnic identity is the base of their culture and it regulates their individuality, behaviour and pattern of life. It was a community within a larger community. Robert Redfield calls this type of group as 'Little Community'<sup>1</sup> of little tradition<sup>2</sup>. According to him, Little Community is a small group of individuals living together, which are having their own culture, and largely away from large complex culture<sup>3</sup>. He has opined that little communities or small communities have been a predominant form of human living through out the history of humanity.<sup>4</sup> These little communities are generally in a state of isolation and their culture and tradition are confined to this little or small

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Redfield, *The Little Community*, Tenth Impression, Chicago, 1973, pp.1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Redfield developed two concepts of great and little traditions to study a civilization. One was formal, written, literate and reflective few. On the other hand, another is informal, oral, illiterate and unreflective many. Redfield called the former as 'great tradition' and the latter as 'little tradition'. He observed that the great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples located at different places. These places were visited by peasants. He also observed teachers and priests are mediating between the two traditions. In addition, the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of unlettered in their village communities. Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture*, Chicago, 1973, pp.41-42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*



surrounding area which is called 'culture area'.<sup>5</sup> This particular geographical situation has been a determining factor of moulding the culture of these little communities, which is called 'geographic determinism'.<sup>6</sup> As S.C. Sinha has observed that, the tribals "are isolated in ecology, demography, economy, politics and other social behaviour from other ethnical groups. Such historical image differentiates the tribal communities from the non-tribals and provides tribal identity."<sup>7</sup>

They have been interacting with ecological system since time immemorial and their interaction with environment has been successful. In the past, these tribes were simply hunters and food gatherers. Forest has been their traditional homeland. Each group had its own territory in which its members hunt animals and collect forest produces for exchange. Such a territory was often quite extensive because the survival of such a group mainly depends upon the produces that the nature offers by itself. The forest dwellers found wild-growing fruits in trees and edible roots and tubers in the jungle to supplement their food. The forest also provided them necessary timber and bamboos for house building and for the manufacture of various implements. They also collected honey, medicinal herbs and other minor forest produces, which they could sell, or barter in the weekly markets or exchange centres. They hunted in the jungle and fished in the rivers that flow through their

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<sup>5</sup> Clark Wissler, *The American Indian*, New York, 1922, p.218.

<sup>6</sup> Franz Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*, New York, 1940, pp.255-256.

<sup>7</sup> S.C.Sinha, "Tribes Caste and Tribe Peasant Continuum in Central India", in *Man in India*, Vol, 45, Bihar, 1965, p.1.

habitat and could supplement their vegetarian diet with meat. Slash and burn cultivation was an integral part of the tribal economy. The tribes that preferred shifting cultivation deliberately chose hilly forest areas as their habitats. More over the shifting cultivators always lived with forest alone and found ample time and leisure to get away from the full routine of monotonous farm work through hunting or fishing or the collection of jungle produce. Thus, it could be assumed that, the tribal life was eco-friendly in character and was adjusted to the physical environment through the process of 'ecological adaptation'<sup>8</sup>. Redfield designated little communities as 'an ecological system'<sup>9</sup> after analysing the pivot role that ecology plays in moulding the personslity and identity of the little communities. The report of a Committee on Forest and Tribals by the Government of India states that the tribal communities "are not only foerst dwellers but also, for centuries, they have evolved a way of life which, on the one hand, is woven round forest ecology and forest resources, on the other ensures that the forest is protected against depredation by man and nature."<sup>10</sup> But now, a general restlessness is taking place among the tribals of the region as they are passing through a period of transition. Their tribal tradition is now losing its purity and originality and is either being dissolved into the mainstream or being swallowed by non-tribals. Their social, economic, religious and cultural aspects are undergoing changes and they face

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<sup>8</sup> Radcliff Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, London, 1976, p.9.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Rdfield, *op.cit* (n-1), pp.17-31.

<sup>10</sup> Government of India, *Report of a Committee on Forest and Tribals*, New Delhi, 1982, p.ii.

the problem of identity crisis. This transition is the net result of the increased contacts with the more advanced non-tribals and the consequent acculturation.

The process of cultural change through cultural contacts has been described as acculturation. Acculturation can be defined as “those phenomenon which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact.”<sup>11</sup> In the Indian context, the process of acculturation is reciprocal in nature. D.D.Kosambi states “acculturation in India was a continuous process extending over the millennia, very difficult to date for that very reason. It was not at base a violent action, since both the more advanced and less advanced elements in the formation of a new society borrowed from each other.”<sup>12</sup> D.N.Majumdar has referred to the concept of transculturation among the Hos of Singhbhum that reflects the reciprocal impact of tribal culture on the Hindu castes living in tribal villages.<sup>13</sup> M.N.Srinivas developed the concept of Sanskritization to denote the acculturation process among the Hindu castes in India. Sanskritization is a process whereby a low caste acquires a higher position in the caste hierarchy by adopting the customs, rites, beliefs and way of life of the ‘twice-born’ or dwija.<sup>14</sup> It represents cultural mobility within the framework of the established

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Redfield and Others, “Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation”, *American Anthropologist*, vol.38,1936,p.149.

<sup>12</sup> D.D.Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay,1990,p.50.

<sup>13</sup> D.N.Majumdar, *The Affairs of A Tribe: A Study in Tribal Dynamics*, Lucknow, 1950, p.3.

<sup>14</sup> M. N Srinivas, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South Indis*, Bombay,1952, p.30.

great tradition and the stratification system of caste. The sanskritization of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy. It normally presupposes either an improvement in the social or economic or political position of the group consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the great tradition such as pilgrim centres or monastery or proselytizing sect. He asserted that this concept of Sankritization is also applicable in relation to the tribes.<sup>15</sup>

McKim Marriott modified the great and little traditions of Redfield and argued that the twin concepts of “Universalization” and “Parochialization” are operating in the socio-religious systems of Indian villages.<sup>16</sup> According to him, the concept of Universalization refers to the “carrying-forward of materials which are already present in the little traditions which it encompasses.”<sup>17</sup> The opposite process, which of Parochialization, is defined as the “downward devolution of great traditional elements and their integration with little traditional elements. It is a process of localisation.”<sup>18</sup> These two processes are complementary to each other. The study of one in isolation of another is not possible to understand the Indian civilization as a whole. He is of the opinion that “an indigenous civilization is one whose great tradition originates by a

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<sup>15</sup> M.N.Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, New delhi,2004,p.7.

<sup>16</sup> McKim Marriott, a desciple of Robert Redfield, U.S.A, visited India and studied a village in Uttar Pradesh named, Kishan Garhi. He edited a book entitled *Village India: Studies in Little Community*.

<sup>17</sup> McKim Marriott, ed.,*Village India: Studies in the Little Community*, Chicago,1955, p.197.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

Universalization”<sup>19</sup>, while these great traditions are localised by Parochialization.<sup>20</sup> Finally, Marriott pointed out that these processes are by their nature, not restricted only to the Hindu culture, but are applicable to all other cultural dimensions of great and little traditions.<sup>21</sup>

Hinduisation is another traditional process of cultural change among the tribals. L.P.Vidyarthi attests that 89% of the tribals of India have acclaimed themselves under the fold of Hinduism.<sup>22</sup> G.S. Ghurye calls the tribals as ‘Backward Hindus’ after observing the impact of Hinduism on tribals.<sup>23</sup> Hinduisation is a continuous process of imbibing and borrowing Hindu cultural traits from the neighboring Hindus and accordingly the tribals gradually get accommodated in the larger society<sup>24</sup>. Bose calls this as ‘Hindu method of tribal absorption’<sup>25</sup> Hinduisation has been a dominant acculturative phenomenon among the tribes of Malappuram district. Though the tribals of the district have increased contacts with neighboring non-tribal people like Christians and Muslims, their relation to Hinduism is quite different. The

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.197.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

<sup>22</sup> L.P.Vidyarthi, *The Tribal Culture of India*, Delhi, 1976, p.455.

<sup>23</sup> G.S.Ghurye, *The Scheduled Tribes*, Culcutta, 1963,p.20.

<sup>24</sup> The reverse process is called tribalisation. S.L. Kalia described the process of tribalization occurring in Jaunsar- Bawar in Uttar Pradesh and in the Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh. According to this process, high caste Hindus temporarily resident among tribal people take over the latter’s mores, rituals and beliefs, which are in many respects antithetical to their own. S.L.Kalia, “Sanskritisation and Tribalization”, *Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute*, Chindwara (Madhya Pradesh), Vol.2, No.4, 1959, pp. 33- 43. In the process of tribalization, according to M.N. Srinivas, the representatives of the great tradition may succumb to the little tradition, which seems to have happened occasionally. M.N.Srinivas, *op.cit.*,(n-15), p.19.

<sup>25</sup> N.K.Bose, *Cultural Anthropology and Other Essays*,Culcutta,1953,p.63.

main reason for the tribal attraction towards Hinduism is that Hindu culture especially of the beliefs, rituals and ceremonies tend to be the modified forms of the tribal practices and tribal culture. Besides, the Hindus were the earliest immigrants to the area and from the very early periods, itself there have been several points of contact between the Hindus of the area and the tribal communities living within it. The cultural changes among the hill tribes of Kerala in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been described as follows: “The forest and hill tribes, however, are well known to be undergoing a slow process of Hinduizing or rather Brahmanization, as a result of their contact with the Brahmin customs of their neighbors in the plains, and to often pay a sort of reverence to the Hindu Gods while they simultaneously worshipping their original spirit deities”.<sup>26</sup> This is a process of transformation from isolation to assimilation.

The assimilation of tribal population into the mainstream has been taking place through out the period of history. The smaller tribal communities with primitive hunter gather life were the major victims of cultural domineering. Tribal communities with larger population and settled agricultural life could maintain their identity, to a great extent, because of their numerical strength and resultant adaptive ability. During the pre-historic period, the cultural transformation from hunter-gatherer to food producer was a slow process. The cultural transformation that took place in human history

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<sup>26</sup> *Census of India, 1901, Report, Vol. VI, Part I, Madras, p.39.*

during the last thousand years on earth was very fast “Ten thousand years ago, the entire population of the earth subsisted on hunting and gathering, as their ancestors had done since the dawn of culture. By the time of Christ, eight thousand years later, tillers and herders had replaced them over at least half of the earth. At the same time of the discovery of the New world, only perhaps 15% of the earth’s surface was still occupied by hunters and gatherers, and this area has continued to decline at a progressive rate until the present day, when only a few isolated pockets survive.”<sup>27</sup>

The period 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD was very crucial in the transformation of Kerala tribal society. It was during this period when Kerala coast witnessed the emergence of port-towns like Musriz because of the increased international trade by Greco-Roman merchants through the Red Sea. The chief items of exporting were mainly spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric and pepper. The steadily increase in demand for oriental spices and subsequent growth in maritime trade created the situation that required more labourers in collecting the hinterland resources. Such historical situation led to the movement of tribals from the eastern side of the Western Ghats to its west. With the increasing interest of foreign merchants in the resources of Kerala, the geographically isolated region from pan Indic influences, was ripe for change from primitive tribalism and nomadic past.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> George Peter Murdock, “The Current Status of World’s Hunting and Gathering Peoples” in *Man the Hunter*, R.B. Lee and Irven Devore, ed., Chicago, 1968,p.13.

<sup>28</sup> K.V.Suji, “Iron Age and the Beginning of Urbanization in Kerala” in *Souvenir*, South Indian History Congress XVIII Session, 1998, Kalady,p.127.

Agricultural produces and many other rich raw materials of the hinterland in Kerala formed the resource base for the growth of port-towns, especially of Musriz, in the pre-Christian era. It appears that the continuous interaction with the West Asian merchants in increasing trade and commercial use of Kerala ports perhaps culminated in the ascendancy of a chiefdom<sup>29</sup> in the megalithic society of Kerala.<sup>30</sup>

The history of tribal transformation in Malappuram district, Kerala in general, goes back to the period of Brahman migration to the area. The history of the Brahman community in Kerala is the history of the transformation of the traditional society because of the contacts with a group of advanced material culture. This element worked as the agency, which afflicted Kerala to a great tradition of Indian civilization reorienting the semi-tribal society, and polity in Kerala on the classical Hindu lines . . . The success with which the Brahmans met in Kerala was the success of better agricultural techniques and better organizing ability in a society that was yet to emerge from tribal status. With the growth of the Brahman settlement the reciprocal cultural assimilation/acculturation was also started. The non-Hindu society was reoriented on Hindu lines.<sup>31</sup> The process of tribal acculturation in the district

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<sup>29</sup> Elman R. Service presents five stages in the process of socio-cultural evolution. They are band, tribe, chiefdom, primitive state and modern folk society. Elman R. Service, *Profiles in Ethnology*, New York, 1978.

<sup>30</sup> It is evident that by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C, the territory has emerged into a kingdom and found mentioned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>Eedicts of Asoka as one of the important peripheral principalities of the Mauryan empire.

<sup>31</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, University of Calicut, 1978,p. 11.



was also intensified with the British colonial expansion in the region. The conversion of major areas of forest into plantation opened wide scope for external influence. “The symbiotic relationship suffered a setback during the colonial rule when forest was looked upon only as a source of maximization of profit and not as a vital link between human habitat and the larger environment.”<sup>32</sup> The large scale immigration of peasants from the plains of the Southern Kerala with advanced technologies and new methods of cultivation gave a new impetus to the process of acculturation. “The immigration adversely affected the tribals by alienating them from their traditional lands and by subjecting them for ruthless exploitation and placing them at an inferior social status.”<sup>33</sup>

The modern factors that are responsible for the tribal transformation include urbanization and industrialization, tribal development schemes, modern education, modernization of communication and administration, missionary activities and the like are of recent origin, and the external factors which do not emerge as a result of normal contacts of the tribal people with the non-tribal people of the area. The transformation of tribal life is taking place in different places of the district at different levels as a process of natural change as they are coming in contact with other communities and with the effect of the welfare measures. Within the last fifty years non-tribal

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<sup>32</sup> Government of India, *Report of a Committee on Forest and Tribals*, New Delhi, 1982, p. ii.

<sup>33</sup> P.T.Sebastian, *Christian Migration to Malabar*, Ph.D.Thesis, Unpublished, University of Calicut, 2002, p.328.

population influx has been taking place in the region. Virgin forests have been cleared for the planting of teak and rubber. The vast tribal habitat of the district, except a few, has been invaded by the advanced people with improved technologies who have settled there in large numbers. Many of the tribals are brought and rehabilitated in the countryside that also made them contact with the modernized. Penetration of tourists, administrative officers, missionaries and immigrants in the form of cultivators, planters, etc into the tribal areas accelerated the tribal contact with outside world.

Administrative headquarters, roads and communicative facilities in their areas have also facilitated the tribe- non-tribe interaction in all means. For the collection of daily useful goods and for the selling of forest produces they have to contact the modern exchange centres. In all these, the tribal people are in contact with the advanced people regularly. Such contacts are due to the improvement of communications, particularly the construction of motorable roads. In the past, communication between tribals and non-tribals was very difficult as the roads and other means of transport were inadequate. In the past, bullock-carts, buffalo-carts were used. A drastic change had occurred in the field of transport and communication in Malabar under Mysorean rule. Tipu Sultan, “the pioneer of roads in Malabar”<sup>34</sup> had constructed a vast net work of roads in Malabar including the hilly area.<sup>35</sup> No

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<sup>34</sup> Evans and Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Madras, 1951, p.267.

<sup>35</sup> Some of the important roads that had been built by Tipu are Calicut- Tamarassery, Battery- Kozhikkode, Malappuram-Tamarassery, Farook- Coimbatore, Chaliyam-Chettuvai etc. For more details, see *Ibid*.

part of Malabar was left without roads. The Tamarassery Ghat, up which a steep gunroad ran, was the meeting place of no less than four roads, two led, by different roads from Malappuram and two from Calicut, one following more or less the line of the present Mysore road and the other passing through Feroke and Chathamangalam. Feroke (Ferokeabad), Tipu's capital of Malabar, was connected with the Karukkur Ghat, by the road, which runs through Kondotty, Edavanna and Nilambur, and with Coimbatore.<sup>36</sup> These, roads facilitated easier travel and communication on an unprecedented scale via the Ghat. The British, with commercial interest, extended the Malappuram-Tamarassery road up to Nilgiri tea plantation and the railway line from Sornur to Nilambur teak plantation<sup>37</sup>. In 1910, Manjery Motor Service started from Manjery to Calicut connecting the hinterlands. However, at present by the development of modern means of transport and communication, the gap between the tribals and non-tribals has been reduced considerably. The non-tribal intrusion into the tribal areas as forest contractors, tourists, merchants and their visit to the tribal areas to collect the farm and forest produces from the tribals became common. In return, they catered to the daily needs of the tribals and provided a meeting place for interaction between the tribals and the non-tribals. The degree of interaction varies according to both topological and

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp268,269.

<sup>37</sup> The railway line connecting Kadalundi and Tirur was first opened for traffic by the Madras Railway company on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1861 and was extended to Kuttippuram on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1861. Sornur-Nilambur railway line was opened for traffic on February 1927. It passes through the eastern border of Malappuram district. Nilambur road, Vaniyambalam, Thuvvur, Melattur, Pattikkad, Angadippuram and Cherukara are the stations in the line in the district.

ecological factors. Small groups in remote areas are less likely to be affected by the contacts with outsiders than the rehabilitated. We can characterize them in the category of what A.L.Kroeber termed 'part- societies' with 'part-cultures' forming a class segment of a larger unit of civilization.<sup>38</sup>

Cities and towns are the focal points of cultural change. In this regard, Nilambur town and other minor towns like Edakkara, Chungathara, Vazhikkadavu, Moothedam, Karulai, Pookottumpadam, Kalikavu, and Karuvarakundu are the active centres of cultural interactions in the area. Historically, they were the early exchange centres, later emerged as towns. However, not all the tribals of the area have regular contacts with these towns they occasionally offer visits there.<sup>39</sup> Penetration of market economy and consumerism also intensified the tribal contacts with these urban centres. This urban-rural network<sup>40</sup> acts as a medium for the mutual communication of great and little traditions and of other cultural differences between and among tribes and non-tribes. The cultural innovations of these urban areas would naturally spread to the interior tribal areas. S.C.Dube observes that "The inspiration

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<sup>38</sup> According to Kroeber, the communities like peasants exist in an intimate relationship with cities and towns. They produce the material items they need for life but depend on markets to sell their forest produces and to buy items which they cannot produce themselves. A.L.Kroeber, *Anthropology*, New York, 1941, p.248.

<sup>39</sup> On the occasions like *Nilambur Pattu*, Onam, Vishu, Deepavali they come to the Nilambur town. The chief motives of their visit during these occasions except *Nilambur Pattu* are observing cinema and drinking alcohol.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Redfield referred to this process as 'folk-urban continuum'. According to him, in folk-urban continuum or folk urban dichotomy, folk society comes in contact with urban society and inherits certain characteristics, so a folk society has certain characteristics of urban. It is between illiterate and literate, between undeveloped and developed, between simple and complex societies. Robert Redfield, *op.cit.*, (n-1), pp.135-148.

and lead for modification in the traditional ways definitely come from the urban areas, brought in to the village community by semi-urbanized people or inspired by the example of urban relatives....The rural communities clearly take the lead from the urban areas, although not without hesitation, misgivings, doubts and an initial resistance.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, the presence of these towns is an important factor in determining the degree of acculturation that is taking place in the interior tribal areas.

The tribe, non-tribe interaction should be conceived as a socio-cultural process. The pattern of interaction has changed with increased communication. In some areas, the pattern of interaction is co-operative than competitive. Generally, the pattern of interaction seems to be exploitative though co-operation appears to be the general norm. Now the interaction is increasing as a socio-economic interdependency between the two. The resultant effect of these interactions is acculturation, especially in the field of material culture. The level of acculturation differs from tribe to tribe according to the rate of interaction with great tradition and modern culture. The rate of change is very high among the tribals inhabit in the main land or villages comparing to those live in the interiors of the forest.

Occasional instances like festivals, weddings, plays, dances, musical concerts, recitations, etc., have great role in accelerating tribal transformation.

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<sup>41</sup> S.C.Dube, *Indian Village*, London, 1955, pp.230-231.

These are called 'cultural performances'.<sup>42</sup> According to Milton Singer, each cultural performance has "a definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance."<sup>43</sup> In cultural performances, cultural traits are disseminated and transmitted through the 'cultural media'<sup>44</sup> of song, dance, instrumental music, verbal texts, plots and themes, the scene of the performance, etc. The festivals like Nilambur Pattu<sup>45</sup>, other temple festivals or *pooram* are the major cultural performances in Malappuram district that profoundly influence the culture of the tribals in the region. It is notable that Robert Redfield observed temples as the major centres where Great tradition is being cultivated and priests as the mediators between the Great and Little traditions.<sup>46</sup> Modern amenities like T.V, radio, telephone, electricity, roads etc. also facilitate these cultural exchange processes.

As a part of mainstreaming the tribals, the Government of India has been implementing various schemes and programmes since independence. Kerala has special departments to promote the welfare of the tribes. In 1975 the state has created a Department of tribal Welfare under a Director of the status of a senior officer of the Indian Administrative Service. All the

<sup>42</sup> Milton Singer, ed., *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, Jaipur, 1975, p.xiii.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Nilambur Pattu* is a well-known ancient festival held at the *Vettakkorumakan* temple at Nilambur Kovilakom in the month of February. *Vettakkorumakan* (*Kirata Moorthi*) is the deity of the tribals. The festival is celebrated as the festival of Eranad. People of all walks of life irrespective of religion, caste and community participate in the festival, which give it a secular tinge. Tribals of the area largely participate in the festival.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Redfield, *op.cit.* (n-2), pp.41-42.

programs of tribal welfare are administered by this department, which also run a tribal Research and Training Centre. Formerly the Department of Harijan Welfare was in charge of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. At present, in Kerala, there are seven<sup>47</sup> Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) offices and nine<sup>48</sup> Tribal Development Offices functioning well with the Government's special interests for the tribal population. Besides, KIRTADS (Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) functions at Calicut with the aim of encouraging researches and studies on the backward classes. ITDP Nilambur has been planning and implementing various schemes for the upliftment of the tribes in Malappuram district. Non-Government organizations (NGOs) devoted to this task have accelerated the Government's efforts.

The tribal development programmes also accelerate the detribalization process. Since Independence, the governments in both the Centre and the State have paid special attention to the upliftment of tribals and tribal areas. The Constitution of India has accorded them special status and legislations were enacted by the Government to protect the tribal's interest in the mainland as well as in the forest. Indeed the Constitution has included separate Schedule for this purpose. The major constitutional provisions include

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<sup>47</sup> They are Nedumangad, Kanjirapally, Thodupuzha (Idukki), Agaly (Attappadi), Nilambur, Kalpetta (Wynad) and Kannur.

<sup>48</sup> They are Punalur, Ranni, Muvattupuzha, Chalakkudi, Palakkad, Kozhikkode, Sulthan Bathery, Mananthody and Kasargode.

reservation of seats in the Union Parliament and State Assemblies, the Union and state bureaucracies and in the educational institutions run or assisted by the state. More over, lakhs of rupees are earmarked every year in terms of various schemes of housing, education, health, drinking water, electrification, sanitation, transport and communication etc. to raise the tribal people to the level of the advanced neighbors. Though only a small section of the community is the beneficiary of these schemes such programs have profound influence on the traditional way of life of the tribals.

As a part of compulsory education, educational institution or facilities from pre-primary onwards, are provided in tribal areas. Tribal children study in the educational institutions along with the children of advanced communities of great tradition. As Robert Rdfield observes, schools are the active theatres where Great tradition is cultivated and teachers are the mediating persons between the Great and little traditions.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, nowadays the more progressive tribal boys and girls are going to colleges for higher education. They are the better agents of modern life. Living among students of advanced communities they begin to hate their own way of life, and adopt whatever they find as the elements of modernity among their fellow students. When they return to their habitat, they become models for others to imitate. The vernacular taught is not the vernacular of the tribes, but that of the state. The medium of instruction is also the language of the state. If the

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<sup>49</sup> Robert Rdfield, *op.cit.*, (n-2), pp.41-42.



teacher is a member of the local tribe, he may use the tribal language in the class for convenience. The textbooks for teaching language and literature contain materials from the life of the advanced communities and have no reference to the tribal life or tribal ideas. Books on history only teach the history of the elite or advanced and totally ignore the achievements of tribal heroes and tribal life.

Christian missionaries have been the active agents of cultural change among the Indian tribals since the British rule. Their activities have profound influence among the tribals in the North-Eastern parts of India in the form of large scale conversion. However, in the case of the tribals in Malappuram district the impact of Christianity has been felt the least. The tribal conversion into Christianity or Islam is not reported.

### **MATERIAL CULTURE**

The material culture of the tribals in the district is rapidly changing. In the past, these tribals were hunters and food gatherers and lived in forest where they built small huts with forest wood. But now, as a part of the schemes for modernizing tribals, most of them are rehabilitated in the houses of modern types built by the government of Kerala. Most of these houses are electrified and many have the modern amenities like T.V, radio and telephone. A very few live in their traditional caves and houses. Destruction of forest has affected the traditional home construction. Their traditional household articles

are replaced by steel, aluminum, bronze, plastic, and fiber materials. In the past, earthen pots and bamboo were used for storing and cooking food. But today, they rarely use earthen pots. They do not make domestic utensils themselves but buy from markets. The market economy and consumerism have changed their life.

The changes in the acquisition of new habits and styles are noticed in their dress and ornaments. The old style of tribal dress and ornaments are now giving place to the new styles of cloths cut and stitched in urban style. Dress pattern of these tribals has changed to a considerable extent irrespective of group, age, sex and economic conditions. In the past, their men had only cloths around the waist down to the knee while the major portion of the body remained uncovered and their women had only a *chela*. But today, these tribes, even the primitive groups like *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan*, wear the modern dresses like shirts, mundu, pants, lungis, T-shirts, sarees, churidar, maxies, blouses of various colours. Most of them wear footwear when they go out. They are aware of the cleanliness and washing soap is largely bought from the market. All their dresses are bought from the market. Many tribal women use cosmetics due to the great influence of the modernity by contact with urban centres. In the past, both men and women used ornaments made by them, which include bangles, earrings, finger rings, necklaces and nose rings. Now traditional ornaments are used rarely even by old women. The ornaments of the new generation include bangles, ear-rings, finger rings, necklaces and

nose rings of gold, silver, glass and jade. This change is mainly due to the influence of market economy and lack of knowledge of the new generation about the technology of making the traditional cultural outfits. They also have watches. Those who wear their traditional mode of dress and ornaments are very few and majority of them come from the primitive tribal group viz, *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan*. The primitive fire making technology is prevalent only among the tribal communities like *Cholanaickan*, *Kuttunayakan*, and *Kattu Paniyan* who live in remote hilly areas.

The traditional food pattern of the tribals has also changed a lot. The modern food items have over powered the indigenous food articles. Formerly their staple food consisted of jungle roots, fruits, tubers etc. However, these days they prefer rice as their staple food. *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* still consume their food from jungle along with rice. They also engage in hunting and fishing though not regularly. The change in the food habit from natural rich protein to less nutritious one has reduced the resisting power of their body and became victims of many diseases. They also become unaware of the traditional medicinal practices due to large scale dependency on modern allopathic medicine. Smoking *beedi* and cigarette and chewing betel have been in vogue among almost all groups.

The important change in the economy of the tribals of the district is the transition from gathering roots, tubers, and wild fruits for consumption to the

collection of minor forest produces on a large scale for sale. This entry in to a cash economy has come about mainly by the activities of the Girijan Co-operative Marketing Society, an organization set up by Government for the benefit of tribal population where they are paid in cash and with that cash they buy grain for daily consumption. Urban commodities available in the markets improved the life style of these ethnic groups. Attraction towards urban consumerism and life style will naturally demand for more cash that obviously put pressure on the forest resource system. But the large scale deforestation has altered this resource system. Due to the frequent contact with the market and the non-tribals, their dependence on forest has changed. In the past, tribal economy was mainly based on agriculture and forests. Now collection of forest produces has become the primary source of income and wage labouring is only secondary. Only the tribals who still live in the interior forest have occasionally done hunting and fishing. Fishing habitats have developed as they mingle with non-tribal labourers engaged in forestry operations during the summer. It is Chaliyar that provided them fish.<sup>50</sup>

Due to the unauthorised alienation of tribal land and deprivation of tribal forestry right, entry in to the market economy etc, the tribal economy has been seriously affected. The large-scale immigration of non-tribal

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<sup>50</sup> There are various fishing techniques prevalent in the area. They are, *erupadakkam* or *thotta* that is, throwing cracker in to water firing when fishes gathered, especially in the night, in the interior areas it is called *thotta eriyal* or *thotta idal* means throwing *thotta*. Other methods are, *Minkudu* or *kuruthi* (placing bamboo net basket where water falls), fishing by poison, fishing using rod and line, fishing by bailing out of water, and picking fishes up using *choonda*.

peasants and subsequent pressure over land promoted a complete transformation in the tribal economy. The tribal mode of production<sup>51</sup> got impoverished and the shifting cultivation almost disappeared.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, they are not aware of the modern agriculture technology. The problems are also accelerated by the commercialization of agriculture by the British. Roads and modern communication facilities also favoured the penetration of market economy. Their old exchange system, the barter system, has completely disappeared and Girijan Co-operative society acts as an agent of exchange through market economy in the tribal areas.

Pastoralism is not found among the tribes of the district. A pastoral society relies more upon animal wealth than on agriculture production. Cattle rearing is not found practicing. At the same time, it is noted that these tribes do not engage in agricultural operations. Shifting cultivation was an integral part of their economy that existed up to the recent times. Now some tribes produce a few agriculture items like plantain fruit, coconut, areacanut, tapioca, and various kinds of tubers and roots for their daily needs and not for market.

Increased contact with non-tribals and the intensification of economic dependence on outsiders are undoubtedly leading to an erosion of the

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<sup>51</sup> Tribal societies are food-producing groups. Slash and burn cultivation involves the production of food without the intensive use of land, a large labour force and complex mechanized technology. Their technological implements or tools are simple and traditional. They are usually got from natural resources.

<sup>52</sup> K.K.N. Kurup, *The Process of Tribal Land Alienation and Disempowerment in Wynad, Kerala*, Bangalor, 2006, p.18.

cohesion of the tribal communities. The dominance of non-tribal settlers has virtually destroyed the self-sufficiency and freedom of actions of the tribals in their habitats and they no longer constitute a cohesive social entity. The belief in tribal tradition and their eagerness to maintain them tend to live in isolated communities separate larger communities, and wherever it is possible, they choose isolation. However, their isolation is not complete, because they are becoming a part of modern social and economic systems. Now and then, they visit some weekly markets and exchange centres for selling the forest produces and buying commodities such as salt, oil, rice, coffee, betel, *beedi*, alcohol etc. Gradually they have, to some extent, been sucked in to the money economy. Cash earnings also enable them to emulate some of the customs of the non-tribal people. This economic transformation or deprivation of traditional tribal economy is the basic factor that promotes cultural changes among the tribals in the district. In this way, we can describe this phenomenon as 'cultural osmosis'.<sup>53</sup>

## **SOCIAL MILIEU**

The social structure of the tribes is also changing. A tribe is composed of a number of component parts integrated in a particular manner. Each set of

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<sup>53</sup> Osmosis is a botanical term denotes the spontaneous passage or diffusion of water or other solvent through a semi permeable memberane. If a solution is separated from the pure solvent by a memberane that is permeable to the solvent but not the solute, the solution will tend to become more dilute by absorbing solvent through the memberane. Likewise, if two cultural groups with low and high cultural concentration exist in the same region, the groups with low cultural concentration will naturally absorb the cultural traits of the high groups.

components is usually based on particular principle and serves a particular need of the society. The culture of a tribe has a steel- frame over which the cultural traits adhere and produce its distinctive character. This steel-frame of a social structure is the rock- basis of the tribal culture. Whenever its framework is weakened or destroyed by external or internal forces, the social structure of the tribes will be disintegrated.

In the past, the tribals were strict followers of social customs and traditions. But now, it is seen in a state of decline and confusion. The tribe is divided into a number of clans or *gotras* each of which is again sub divided into a number of families. The principle that integrates the different members of each of these groups is blood relationship. All the members of a clan trace their descent from a common ancestor, which is one of the basic features of tribalism. The principle of blood relationship is the base of the family and which regulates marriage and sexual relations among the tribals. People of the same blood cannot unite in marriage and therefore, cannot indulge in sexual relations. Modern culture has affected the functioning of the principle of blood relationship and the clan system. In marriage customs, some changes occurred recently. Traditionally the tribes were endogamous but recently many of them seek exogamous marriage alliances. This transition from endogamy to exogamy is found among the primitive tribal groups in the district owing to the internal and external factors. In the case of *Cholanaickar*, they were the strict followers of endogamy till recently, it is mainly due to the paucity of

females<sup>54</sup> they have no choice in mate selection within their socially acceptable kin group. The aged people among these groups are complaining the selection of life partner from outside breaking the clan ties and regulations. The meagre demographic profile of the tribal communities limits the scope of the mate selection within the clanish groups. Among these communities, multilateral cross-cousin marriages are preferred to such alliances with any other kin relations. Hamlet exogamy is rarely observed.

In the past, marriage by capture usually occurred without previous agreement and nowadays the capture of the bride is frequently staged as a mere formality in order to avoid the expense of the wedding ceremonies. This change occurs due to the increase of the self identity of tribal women. The present market economy enables tribal women to earn though a small amount by selling forest produces and they become independent and more self-reliant.

Many Hindu customs in the tribal society have been noticed during the time of marriage ceremony as a result of large scale Hinduisation. It is also a process of Parochialization. Tying *tali* or a badge of marriage around the neck of the wife by the husband, *pudamuri*, i.e., tearing of a piece of cloth during the marriage etc. are the Hindu traditions. Some tribals in the district also began to observe the *Panigrahana* ceremony (the bridegroom is taking the hand of the bride), *Lajahoma* ceremony (the bride offering fried grains to the

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<sup>54</sup> According to the I.T.D.P Census of 2006, the sex ratio of Cholanaickan is 128:193.



bridegroom), *Saptapathi* ceremony (the bridegroom leads the bride for 7 steps around *agni* or *pitha* ) and *Grihapravesa* (the new couple is greeted with a lamp- *Nilavilakku*). These practices are not common among all tribal groups in the district.

The social order that used to regulate the interaction of tribes rooted in the same or related traditions, could not withstand the presence of intruders motivated by aims and an alien value system entirely distinct from those of the indigenous population. In some areas where the massive immigration of larger communities has caused complete fragmentation of the tribal communities, nothing is left of the latter's indigenous authority system. The effectiveness of traditional authority system has sharply declined and *Moopan* system has totally disappeared. Today, the erstwhile tribal heads have no power and their prestige and respect, which they used to enjoy, are gradually evaporating. The only two groups still follow the rudiments of little tradition are *Kattunayakan* and *Cholanaickan*. But their *Moopans* do not enjoy the power and respect that they enjoyed in the past. They are ineffective in imposing authority. They are not able to give any kind of effective leadership in dealing with non-tribes. There exists no mechanism to punish the erring members or social offenders within the community.

The major reasons for the break up of the traditional social system are, firstly, the commercialization of the tribal economy and subsequent

individualistic tendencies antagonistic to the traditional institutions. Because of the penetration of market economy, the economic differentiation between men and women is becoming compatible with the large-scale participation of tribal women in the economic activities. In the traditional economy, *Moopan* was a unifying force as a collector and distributor of forest produces. Secondly, the disappearance of traditional faiths and beliefs among the new generation. In the past, *Moopan* was considered as the custodian of the spirits and deities and it is believed that through the mercenary spirits he could inflict punishment in the form of accidents, health maladies, natural calamities, and induce sufferings. Therefore, the negation of his will invite the wrath of the ancestor spirits and deities. This belief helps him in controlling the community. The *Cholanaickan* headman command authority mainly because of the belief that disobedience can invite retributory punishment inflicted using command over spirits and deities by the *Chenmakaran*<sup>55</sup>; and thirdly, the *Moopans* have no power to enjoy superiority among their community as the tribal community has partly become a part of the universal community. Their role is decreasing due to the enormous increase in the bureaucracy and the increasing number of Government employees visiting tribal colonies and thus the headman is no longer an essential link between the colonies and the administrators. This change in the headman's functions seems to have a

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<sup>55</sup> N. Viswanathan Nair, Tribal Health and Medicine in Kerala: A Study in Interrelationship between Habitat, Health, Medicine, Society and Culture, Ph.D Thesis, Unpublished, 1985, p.58.

harmful effect on the sense of the responsibility of many tribal heads. No longer are they mainly concerned with the welfare of the entire community but they think primarily of their own short-term material advantages. Thus, it could be assumed that the changes in the social structure among the tribals of the district are not explicable only in terms of the concept of 'cultural borrowing' but rather in terms of economic factors.

In the past, almost all tribes of the district had followed matrilineal system and the head of the family, according to the system, was the *Karanavar*. He had the right to look after his nephews, nieces and sisters. If a niece became widow, it was the duty of the *Karanavar* to look after the children. The break up of joint family system is another factor that accelerated the disappearance of tribal social cohesion. The joint family system in the tribal society was very much conducive to the development of the habit of co-operation and discipline in the interest of the common good. Recently, married couples tend to set up their own households as early as possible, and the children of such nuclear families grow up in an atmosphere very different from that of the joint family of their ancestors.

## **RELIGIOUS MILIEU**

The acculturative process is highly profound on tribal religion. Traditionally, these tribals were the followers of animism,<sup>56</sup> shamanism,<sup>57</sup> polytheism, and naturalism (worship of nature) and worshippers of ancestor spirits. The traditional tribal religion has been evolved from the ardent relationship of the tribes with nature. Thus, they venerate the spirits of forests, mountains, rocks, rivers, lakes, even single trees and of the heavenly bodies, the Sun and the Moon. The tribals treat the supernatural forces, the spirit of the ancestor with fear and reverence. They believe in the existence of the soul after death and in the re-birth. In recent times, the ancient tribal faiths and forms of worship have more or less disappeared due to the large scale influence of great tradition. Majority of the tribes of the district have embraced the beliefs and customs of the great tradition. Rapid Hinduisation has been going on and a greater part of their faith and customs are Hinduised. Hinduisation is a process of acquiring the cultural traits of the neighboring Hindus. The tribes in the district have been influenced by certain tradition of

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<sup>56</sup> Animism is the belief in innumerable spiritual beings concerned with the affairs of human beings and capable of helping or harming men's interests. The theory believes that an immaterial soul (*anima*) is the principle of life. For animists, all spots and places are holy as they are the seats of spirits. Animals, plants, trees, ponds, rivers, stones, hills or mountains are all abodes of spirits. The dead are no exception to this rule as they still exist through soul or are reborn in the sake of offspring. Edward B. Taylor argues that, as the religion originated as beliefs in soul, animism was the ancient form of religion. As souls were numerous and worshipped in different occasions in the form of ancestor worship, this created belief in polytheism, which following the processes of cultural evolution, reached at a stage of monotheism, the great belief of civilized people. Edward B. Taylor *Primitive Culture*, London, 1871, p.81.

<sup>57</sup> The term *shaman* refers to a man or woman who serves a society as a part time religious practitioner. He is believed to have some supernatural powers to cause illness and death and to cure illness. Usually, a *shaman* is possessed by a spirit, but sometimes, he ritually commands a spirit helper. Elman R. Service, *op.cit.*, New York, 1978. pp.212-217.

the communities around them. The major neighboring communities in all the areas have always been Hindus. As a result, from the very early periods there have been several points of contacts between the Hindus of the area and the tribal community living within it. The nature and extent of contact vary from semi isolation to complete assimilation. Most of the tribes would like to introduce themselves as Hindus. They use Hindu names, visit Hindu temples and make offerings, worship Hindu gods, and celebrate Hindu festivals. Many of the tribals have no shrines of their own. They are not averse to pilgrimage to different pilgrim centres. They do undertake pilgrimage along with the Hindu co-labourers to Lord Ayyappa temple, Sabarimala, which is a major pilgrim centre of the Hindus. This pilgrimage practice developed among them probably because of the presence of a large number of Hindu forest labourers who undertake a Sabarimala pilgrimage. They also observe fast and ritual purity for 41 days like other pilgrims. It is believed that, the worshipping of this deity could ensure safety from wild animals and calamities. During the fasting period, abstinence of alcohol, avoidance of woman, vegetarianism etc are practiced. None of these tribal people read the Hindu sacred scriptures viz, Ramayanam, Maha Bharatha, Bhagavat Gita etc. At the same time, they cherish these Ithihasa tales heard from the temple storyteller. It does not prevent them from identifying with the local Hindus in religious life. We may describe this process as 'peripheral Sanskritization.' By adopting the customs

and practices of caste Hindus, the tribals acquire a kind of social recognition and become a part of caste hierarchical system.

It is evident that many tribals worship Hindu gods and goddesses like Rama, Krishna, Bhagavati etc. A story that exists among the *Paniyans* at Adyanpara regarding the footprints on the rock at Adyanpara waterfalls is as follows:

“These foot prints are of their god Rama. The hill near the waterfalls is the seat of Rama and when Rama was passing towards north he slipped on the rock.”<sup>58</sup> They consider this place as holy and until recently, they performed *pujas* there. The northern part of the waterfalls is called Ambumala. The *Paniyans* of Ambumala have a story regarding the origin of the name Ambumala. “Once *Valiya Thampran* (Rama) and *Chariya Thampran* (Lakshman) were hunting, the arrow of *Chariya Thampran* returned back while that of *Valiya Thampran* did not return. Then with the help of the *Paniyans*, they made a search for the arrow and they found it hanging on the top of the hill and the arrow later got changed into a piece of rock. Thus the hill came to be known as Ambumala.”<sup>59</sup> (In Malayalam, *ambu* means arrow and *mala* means hill). Both stories show light in to the Rama worship of *Paniyans*. It is noticeable that among the tribals, who were dependants of the

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<sup>58</sup> Personal Interview with Kuttan, *Paniyan* colony, Adyanpara, 22.05.05.

<sup>59</sup> Personal Interview with Velutha, Ambumala, 21-05-05.

upper caste Hindus and who had more acquaintance with great traditions, Hinduisation process is very dominant.

The tribal belief regarding the death and life after death is undergoing changes. Earlier they believed that death is caused by the acts of malevolent spirits. Now many of them have belief in *ayus* (life expectancy) and *vidhi* (fate), and in *swarga* (heaven) and *naraga* (hell) which will be rewarded as per the deeds of the persons. Faith in rebirth and reincarnation of soul into the tribal pantheon is the most important instance of Hinduisation among the tribals in the area.<sup>60</sup> Many of the tribals of the district consider the plants like *tulasi* (*ocimum sanctum*) and *pipal* (*ficus riligiosa*) tree as holy and many of them have a *tulasithara* in front of their houses where they offer poojas and perform *Vilakkuthelikkal* (lighting the lamp) regularly. Lighting *nilavilakku*, using spouted vessel, placing coconut halves, rice or paddy and burning incense near the corpse is a recent development. Tribes like *Mala Muthans*, draw circle with rice or paddy around the corpse. Recently the tribes of the district began to seek help of Brahmins for *Pujas* and ceremonies. Offering *Punyaham* (sacred water collected from temples) to the dying person and to the corpse before the funeral is also the influence of great tradition. These tribals had not celebrated the popular festivals like Onam and Vishu, but recently they began to celebrate them. Besides, they also came familiar with

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<sup>60</sup> Manjula Poyil, *Death, Funeral and the Ancestors Cult of the Dead and the Malabar Tribes*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, University of Calicut, 2006, p.410.

*Karkidakavavu*<sup>61</sup> and they make offerings to ancestors and pay visit to Hindu temples during these special occasions. Some of them were not aware of the Malayalam month *Karkidakam* nor did they have their own calendar.

Though the tribals of the district have increased contacts with neighboring non-tribal people like Christians and Muslims, their relation to Hinduism is quite different. Nilambur was one of the major pockets of Christian migration from Travancore even from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. But the constant contacts with these Christian settlers in the area have failed to make a considerable influence on tribal religion and no more conversion occurred. In the district, Muslims constitute a majority of the population, but the tribesmen hardly been converted to Islam. This is mainly due to the disinterest in getting converted among the tribals. However, certain traits of adaptation are visible. For example, *Cholanaickar* use the Arabic terms *Khabar*<sup>62</sup> for the grave and *Khabaradakkam* for funeral ceremony and *Paniyans* use the term *Mayyath*<sup>63</sup> for corpse. This is mainly because of their frequent contact with Muslims. Majority of the tribals in the countryside are familiar with Allah and Christ.

## **LIFE CYCLE**

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<sup>61</sup> The *vavu bali*, offered on New Moon days in the Malayalam month of Karkitakam, (July-August), is an important custom connected with ancestor worship.

<sup>62</sup> *Khabar* and *Khabaradakkam* are the two terms used by Muslims for grave and funeral ceremony respectively. In Arabic, the word *Khabar* means grave.

<sup>63</sup> Muslims use the Arabic term *Mayyath* for corpse. In Arabic, it means corpse.



Many significant changes are occurring in the life cycle rituals and ceremonies. Strict observance of the life cycle ceremonies related with puberty, pregnancy, birth and death, and annual festivals like *daivomkotuti*, *adiyanthiram* are some of the characteristics of tribalism. Now these ceremonies are not strictly followed by the tribals. The first reason is their poverty.<sup>64</sup> The ceremonies required huge financial expense, as most of them demand grand feast to the gathering. Secondly, most of the members of the new tribal generation are unaware of these customs and traditions. Thirdly, the educated tribal youth consider the observance of these customs and ceremonies futile. Fourthly, since most of their celebrations are connected with agricultural operations any fluctuations in this will also reflect on their rituals and ceremonies. All these aspects together with the fast percolation of the seeds of modernity wiped out the age old customs and traditions of the tribal society.

### **Summary**

The disappearance of tribal characteristics and consequent identity crisis is the most significant feature of the tribal scenario of the district. Tribal life was eco-friendly in character and was adjusted to the physical environment since time immemorial through the process of 'ecological

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<sup>64</sup> Report of the Committee on Tribal Economy in Forest Areas, 1967, states that the huge expense required for the observance of life cycle ceremonies is one of the major reasons of tribal indebtedness. ( Government of India, Department of Social Welfare, *Report of the Committee on tribal Economy in Forest Areas*, New Delhi, 1967, p.9.

adaptation'. The particular geographical situation of Malappuram district trapped the tribals in a state of isolation. Naturally, their cultural ethos and material culture were different resulting in the formation of a distinct life ethnicity and identity. This ethnic identity is the base of their culture and it regulates their individuality, behaviour and pattern of life. In order to preserve their cultural identity and tradition they have developed some habit of quiet withdrawal. Now, their social, economic, religious and cultural aspects are undergoing changes and they face the problem of identity crisis. This is a transformation from isolation to complete assimilation.

The factors that are responsible for the tribal transformation can be divided into two: traditional and modern. The traditional process is characterised by the impact of certain traditions of great communities on the tribals. These processes are explained in the concepts like Sankritization, Hinduisation, Universalization and Parochialization, etc. The modern factors include urbanization and industrialization, tribal development schemes, modern education, modernization of communication and administration, and the like are of recent origin, and the external factors that do not emerge as a result of normal contacts of the tribal people with the non-tribal people of the area.

The changes in the life style of tribal people have been caused by contacts with naturally more advanced and politically more powerful and

socially mobilized populations. These advanced people are the active agents of modernity. In those areas where there was a massive immigration of advanced populations, there occurred a complete decline of traditional authority system or control over resources because they increasingly began to depend on economic forces over which they had no control. The contact with modern advanced society is a dangerous one as it adversely affects the material culture, social, economic, religious and moral life of the tribal people. The eco-friendly peace-loving tribals are becoming the victims of the alluring evil habits of the affluent society. Their moral life is shattered. Liquor plays havoc on their moral concepts and health. They become diseased in body and mind.

The history of tribal transformation in Malappuram district, Kerala in general, goes back to the period of Brahman migration to the area. The history of the Brahman community in Kerala is the history of the transformation of the traditional society as a result of the contacts with a group of great tradition. With the growth of the Brahman settlements, the reciprocal acculturation process was also started. The non-Hindu tribal society was reoriented on Hindu lines. The process of tribal acculturation in the district was also intensified with the British Colonial expansion in the region. The conversion of major areas of forest into plantation opened wide scope for external influence. The large scale immigration of peasants from the plains of

the Southern Kerala with advanced technologies and new methods of cultivation gave a new impetus to the process of acculturation.

The changes in the tribal culture of the district are not only explicable in terms of the concept of 'cultural borrowing' but rather in terms of economic factors. Commercialization of the tribal economy and subsequent individualistic tendencies antagonistic to the traditional institutions, the economic differentiation between men and women is becoming compatible with the large-scale participation of tribal women in the economic activities. In the traditional economy, *Moopan* was a unifying force as a collector and distributor of forest produces. The transition from traditional economy to the market economy led to the break up of the traditional social structure. Moreover, the tribals do not strictly observe the life cycle rituals and ceremonies, as they required huge financial expenses, as most of them demand grand feast to the gathering. Thus, in the present context, the economic condition of the tribals is a determining factor in the maintenance of the tribal tradition, which Franz Boas termed as 'economic determinism'<sup>65</sup>.

The transformation of tribal life is taking place in different places of the district at different levels as a result of acculturation as they are coming into contact with the communities of great traditions and other communities and with the effect of the welfare measures. The level of acculturative process is very high among the tribals living in the main land or villages like

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<sup>65</sup> Franz Boas, *op.cit.*, p.256.

*Paniyans, Aranadans, Mala Panickan, Kuruman and Mala Muthans.* At the same time, the rate is very low among the *Cholanaickan, Kattunayakan* and *Kattu Paniyan* as they still live in the interiors of the forest. It means that the area of habitation is a determining factor of culture change.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Through the foregoing chapters we have made an attempt to trace out the ethnohistory of tribes in Malappuram district of Kerala. *Aranadan*, *Cholanaickan*, *Kattunayakan*, *Kuruman*, *Mala Muthan*, *Mala Panickan* and *Paniyan* are the Scheduled Tribes in the district. Their cultural aspects and traditions are outlined and a possible explanation to their isolated life is given. The changes in the social, economic, religious and cultural life of these tribals and the causative factors that promote changes are presented. Their past and present are depicted on the basis of the data collected through field work and the earlier ethnographic records.

The study leads us to certain conclusions. First, the tribes in the district and in the surrounding areas are the descendants of the early inhabitants of the land and they had a common ethnic homeland in the past; second, though the tribes in the district do share certain degree of similarity, they do not have common cultural pattern in all aspects of their life; third, two tribes, *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan*, are still primitive food gatherers and others are mainly wage labourers; fourth, disappearance of the tribal characteristics and the consequent identity crisis is the most significant feature of the tribal scenario of the district; fifth, many social institutions, customs and traditions exist in the Kerala society, had originated and existed among the tribes from

the ancient period itself; sixth, marginalization of the tribals took place due to the physical subjugation or isolation and the denial of control over capital and its distribution; and, seventh, mobilization of the tribals of the district, Kerala in general, is not possible in the near future.

It is found that the tribes that live in the district are the descendants of the early inhabitants of the land. Once they were the owners of the land. With the advent of people of advanced technology these early inhabitants were enslaved and many of them escaped into the interiors of the forest. Those who took asylum in the remote areas retained some of their traditions through the ages. Like the Nineteenth Century evolutionists, L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer and others used comparative method, for reconstructing the past of Kerala tribes through the use of living tribal people as examples of earlier stages. Following E.B. Tylor, early ethnographers in Kerala developed the 'concept of survivals' which became important in the evolutionary reconstruction of past societies. For Tylor, survivals meant vestigial patterns from the past which had lost their functions but had been carried on into a later stage of society by force of habit. Tylor took these survivals to indicate remnants from a past stage and proved that English society had passed through earlier, primitive stages.<sup>1</sup> The cultural traditions and life style of some of the tribal societies of Malappuram district are very similar to that of the cultural life of primitive tribes. According to D.D. Kosambi, the primitive survivals in the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward B.Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, London, 1871, p.p.1-28.

means of production can be used to trace out the pre-historic development in India.<sup>2</sup> He says that the pre-historic people were hunters and food gatherers and they found the thinner marginal jungle as the best localities where they are found today. In the very next food-producing stage, he continues, their cultivation was generally a shifting affair.<sup>3</sup> It is found that the tribals who live in the hills and forests, in the district, continued their life in hunting and food gathering. Even now, the tribes like *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* are hunters and food gatherers. Till very recent times, many tribals of Kerala practiced shifting cultivation or slash-and-burn method and they were culturally pre-neolithic.<sup>4</sup> In the course of time some of the tribes came down to the low lying areas and interacted with the people of the plains. However, most of them have led an isolated life in their traditional habitats without any contact with the outer world.

The survival of ancient tribal customs and traditions among the present tribals indicates that these groups were desocialised in some circumstantial exigencies. As they have been isolated and had no interaction with great tradition for centuries, their socio-cultural ethos remained unchanged. Various forms of worship, rituals, ceremonies, dances and some of the common

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<sup>2</sup> D.D.Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Calcutta, 1977, reprint, pp.40-45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*,p.44.

<sup>4</sup> A.Aiyappan regarded these tribes as Stone Age survivals according to the similarity in their socio-economic characteristics to the earliest Stone Age strata of Kerala population. A.Aiyappan, *The Personality of Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1982, pp.123, 124.



observances of the daily life of the present day tribals have its roots in the ancient tribal past.

The religious beliefs and practices of the tribals of the district are very similar to that of the ancient animistic beliefs.<sup>5</sup> They believe that, an immaterial soul (*anima*) is the principle of life. For animists all spots and places are holy as they are the seeds of spirits. Animals, plants, trees, ponds, rivers, stones, hills or mountains are all abodes of spirits. This belief is still prevalent among the tribals of the district. It is found that many gods and goddesses of these tribes are named after the name of the hills, places, natural objects and natural phenomenon. *Cholanaickan* worhsip *Maladaivam* (jungle god), who is believed to be omnipotent and omnipresnt, *Koolimladaivam* (the god of animals), *Thandanaadudaivam* (god of health and remover of illness like leanness), *Odakolli daivam* (god of health and remover of illness), *Manjaranadu daivam* (god of health and remover of chicken pox), *Cholassan daivam* (god of progeniture), *Arinjanadu daivam* (Protector of forest), *Ole devva*<sup>6</sup> (god of the river) and *Naadu devva* (god of the plain). The *Kattunayakan*<sup>7</sup> give divinity to the hills of their habitats. They also worship

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<sup>5</sup> Edward B.Tylor argues that as the religion originated as beliefs in soul, animism was the ancient form of religion. As souls were numerous who were worshipped on different occasions in the form of ancestor worship, this created belief in polytheism, which following the processes of cultural evolution, reached at a stage of monotheism, the great belief of civilized people. Edward B.Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.81.

<sup>6</sup> They believe that the deep tanks and pools in the river are the seats of *ole daivam* and they prevent their children to go there.

<sup>7</sup> L.K.A. Iyer called the *Kattunayakan* 'pure animist.' For details see L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1988, p. 296.

*Maladaivom* (hill god). Along with hills (*Malaidaivam*) Kurumar also give divinity to some animals like tiger and pig which is evident from their concepts of *Pulidaivam* (Tiger god) and *Pannidaivam* (Pig god). *Paniyans* of the area have given divinity to two huge stones called *Tampuratikallu* (Stone goddess, White colour) and *Tampurankallu* (Stone god, Black colour). They are situated near Mundry seed farm in Pothukallu Panchayath. The place is called *Thampuratikallu*. Till recently the *Paniyans* in the area were used to go there and perform *pujas* and offerings.

Worship of nature and natural objects, serpents and ancestral spirits are the other primitive religious practices prevalent among the tribals of Malappuram district. *Aranadans* believe that the Sun is the supreme god and the Creator. They call the Sun as *Pakal Muthappan* (grandfather of day-time) and the Moon as *Irava Muthappan* (grandfather of night) and believe that stars are the children of Sun. They start their day facing east and invoking Sun for luck.<sup>8</sup> Tree-worship is also prevalent. The origin of tree-worship in India can be traced back to the Indus Valley. In one of the sealings from Harappa, a tree enclosed by a railing is found.<sup>9</sup> Almost all tribals of the district consider the plants like *tulasi* (*ocimum sanctum*) and *pipal*<sup>10</sup> (*ficus religiosa*) tree as

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<sup>8</sup> Seetha Kakkoth, *Three Tribes of Nilambure Valley: A Study in Inter-relationship Between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, 2001, p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> John Marshall, ed., *Mohanjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. I, reprint, Delhi, 1973, p.65.

<sup>10</sup> It is evident that a seal carrying *Pipal* tree is excavated from Mohanjo Daro. Irfan Habib, *The Indus Civilization*, Aligarh, 2002, p.55.

pious and many of them have a *tulasithara* in front of their huts where they offer *poojas* and perform *Vilakkuthelikkal* (lighting the lamp) regularly. The tribes like *Aranadan*, *Mala Muthan* and *Mala Panickan* consider Punna tree (*malampunna- Calophyllum inophyllum*) as pious and its leaves are widely used in the life cycle rituals and ceremonies especially in the burial practices. This reverence towards trees obviously had roots in the naturalistic beliefs of earlier times. It is believed that from the very ancient period the tribals had highest reverence towards trees which provided them food and shelter and probably this reverence may be the origin of tree-worship.<sup>11</sup> Serpent-worship was another primitive custom which prevailed in the world in ancient time.<sup>12</sup> The belief in the serpents may have been originated from the tedious work of clearing the dense forests flooded with poisonous snakes in the early period. It is evident that *Cholanaickar* of Punchakolly and Chungathara ranges worship Serpent gods to ensure their safety while roaming in the forest.

Most of the tribals have strong belief in the ancestor spirit which is called *paina* among *Mala Muthans* and *Paniyans*, *peyi* among *Kattunayakans*, *nilalu* among *Cholanaickar* and *pretham* among *Aranadans* and *Mala Panickar*. They found their ancestor as their founding fathers and they are eulogized through burial rites, ritual offerings, folk tradition etc. They believe that the evil spirit is the cause of illness. Black magic is practiced as remedy.

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<sup>11</sup> James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Toronto, 1963, pp.399-420.

<sup>12</sup> It is suggested that its origin came from the Lower Euphrates among the people of Turanian. James Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Delhi, 1971, reprint, p.15

It is performed by a *shaman*<sup>13</sup> or *komaram* or oracle or teyyam dancer. It is these functionaries who act as intermediaries between clansmen and ancestors. *Daivam kotuthi* (Giving to god) or *aandaruthi* is an annual celebration observed by all tribes in the name of their ancestors every year.

The worship of Mother Goddess<sup>14</sup> is more significant among the tribes under study. The concept of forest goddess (*Kattu Bagavati*, *Kattilamma* etc.) is found prevalent among them. She is supposed to take rest for three months from the first of *Makaram* (January 15), on the expiry of which period the agriculturists disturb her (by beginning the ploughing and sowing operations) on the advent of the south-west Monsoon. *Uchal* is the name given to the period of three days when she is said to menstruate. During this period granaries and all receptacles of grain are shut up and they were confined to their huts. During this period paddy is not sold and no implement of husbandry is touched. The worship of *Kali* and *Bhadrakali* also have their origin from the worship of Mother Goddess.

It is found that all tribals of the district worship various goddesses and they also have the concept of Mother Goddess. *Aranadans* worship deities named *Thampuratti* (Mother deity) and *Malachi Daivom* (Hill goddess). They

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<sup>13</sup> The term *shaman* refers to a man or woman who serves a society as a part time religious practitioner. He is believed to have some supernatural powers to cause illness and death and to cure illness. Usually the *shaman* is possessed by a spirit, but sometimes he ritually commands a spirit helper. This is the ideology of Shamanism, another primitive form of religion. Elman R. Service, *Profiles in Ethnology*, New York, 1978, pp. 212-217

<sup>14</sup> The cult of Mother Goddess had prevailed in India in remote antiquity. See A.K. Sur, *Dynamics and Synthesis in Hindu Culture*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 1-14

also offer visit to Chembanthitta temple at Karulai, dedicated to Goddess *Bhagavathi*, regularly. Important Goddesses of *Cholanaickar* are *Vilakkatampurati* or *Koolitampurati* (the Idol of lamp, the mother Goddess and deity of dawn and light), and *Thalai daivam* (goddess of rain). *Cholanaickar* do not have an established temple. More over it is said that there is a separate holy place in the hill of Karulai range near Mancheeri, where they regularly perform rituals to appease their gods and goddesses. The supreme goddess of *Kattunayakans* is *Odithi*. The goddess *Mariamamma* is believed to be the curer of small pox. They have also belief in *Bhadrakali*. *Abba*,<sup>15</sup> the daiva festival of *Kattunayakans* is observed in the harvest season to appease their gods and goddesses. This may be considered as fertility cult.<sup>16</sup> *Kurumar* also have belief in *Kali* goddess. Both *Mala Panickan* and *Mala Muthan* worship goddess *Bagavati*. It is said that till recently they observe *uchal*. The goddesses of *Paniyans* are *Thampuratty* or *Kuli* (chief deity), *Mariamamma* (goddess of Rain), *Kattu Bagavati* (goddess of forest), *Kaattilamma*, *Kali* and *Bagavati*.

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<sup>15</sup> This is observed during the harvest seasons. They make a doll with ragi flour and assign a supernatural power to the doll. They also use rice (*achiri*), coconut (*tenginukkay*), banana (*bala bannu*), sand wick (*udu bathi*) and camphor (*duppa*) for rituals.

<sup>16</sup> The Mother Goddess is worshipped as goddess of fertility also. The belief in a goddess of fertility as a manifestation of the Mother Goddess is found in the Indus Civilization. According to John Marshall, "...the cult of the Earth or Mother Goddess is evidenced by a remarkable oblong sealing from Harappa on which a nude female figure is depicted upside down with legs apart and with a plant issuing from her womb. John Marshall, ed., *Mohanjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. 1, reprint, Delhi, 1973, p.52.

The worship of Mother Goddess indicates that these tribes are the descendants of early inhabitants of the land. The worship of the mother goddess is traced to the pre- Aryan cultures. Before the advent of Indo-Aryans speakers the Dravidian were the inhabitants of the land. Their goddesses were different from Indo-Aryan goddesses such as Saraswathi, Lakshmi, and Parvathi.<sup>17</sup> With the spread of great tradition of Hinduism, the religious ideology and mode of worship of indigenous communities began to change. Modern Hinduism is a mixture of pre-Aryan and Indo-Aryan practices moulded into a way of life, and *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* became the common heritage of the community. It is only possible to conjecture in the findings of archaeologists and the religious practices of aboriginals what the religion prevalent in India in pre -Aryan times was.<sup>18</sup>

The survival of traces of megalithism among the tribal people enables us to call them as the inheritors of the megalithic builders of Kerala. In the case of Kerala, the earliest historical evidence of human habitation available is of the megalithic builders. That is, the descendants of these early farming communities of Kerala are the present day tribals and this is evident from their surviving cultural traits. K.J. John argues that megalithic traces survive among the tribals and non tribal people in the forms of the ancestor worship, the practice of offerings to the ancestors and burial practices like the peculiar

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<sup>17</sup> M.S. Gopala Krishnan, "The Cult of the Mother Goddess" in Balaratnam, ed, *Anthropology on the March*, Madras, 1963.p.339.

<sup>18</sup> U.R.Ehrenfels and M.S.Gopalakrishanan, "The Mother Goddess" in *Triveni*, vol.XXIII, No.I, Masulipatanam,1952,pp.62-72.

kind of grave digging with a side chamber and deposition, construction of stone circles or making burial marks with stones over the graves.<sup>19</sup> He continues “The continuity of those aspects of megalithic culture centered on the cult of the dead is manifested in the surviving ghost worship and ritualistic ghost dances of the little communities of Malabar and in the burial customs of tribes in isolated areas in the Sahyadri ranges.”<sup>20</sup> It is found that all tribes of the district have great ancestors as their founding fathers and they are eulogized through burial rites, rituals, offerings, folk tradition etc. Construction of stone circles or making burial marks with stones over the graves is another peculiarity of megalithic burial practices. The erection of huge stones as in the past is not found among the tribes of Nilambur valley. At the same time, the practice of marking burial sites with one or two stones or to put a heap of stones over the grave is followed by many tribes in the area. The *Cholanaickar* of Karulai erect two small stones, one each on the head and foot portions to mark the site. But they have no habit of erecting huge stones like probably due to their nomadic nature of life and deforestation over the years. Deposition of belongings or dearest possessions of the deceased in the grave along with the dead body is another feature of the megalithic culture.<sup>21</sup> This practice is widespread among all tribes in the district. Belongings being buried include clothes, ornaments, betel box,

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<sup>19</sup> K.J.John, “The Megalithic Culture Of Kerala”, in V.N.Misra and Peter Bellwood, eds., *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific History*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.487-489

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*,p.487.

<sup>21</sup> B.K. Thapar, *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in India*, Paris, 1985, p.p.104-120.

knives, sickle, digging sickles, axes, bows and arrows, pottery, earthen pots, ornaments, coins etc. They are the grave goods of these tribals. The practice of deposition of various objects and belongings of the deceased with the dead presupposes a firm belief in the continuance of life or a virtual break-down of unhealthy morbid attachments among survivors.

The similarities in cultural traits and physical appearances of the tribes under study with that of the tribes inhabit in the adjacent areas suggest a common ethnic homeland to them. The tribal pocket of Nilambur comes under the tribal belt comprises of Nilgiris, Coorg, Waynad, Attapady, Parambikkulam, Cardamom Hills, and Anamalai Hills of Tamil Nadu. The above mentioned ancient cultural practices of the tribes in Malappuram district are also found in prevalence among the other tribals in the belt. The megalithic rudiments like the erection of burial stones and stone circles are still evident among them. The *Mala Arayans* of Travancore even today erect miniature dolmens for the dead.<sup>22</sup> They are reported to have been erecting it when a man dies an unnatural death.<sup>23</sup> The *Kurumbas* of Attapadi today worship menhir type idols in their shrines, which may have been the relics of their funeral memorials of the past.<sup>24</sup> The *Kader* of Erumappara who were resettled from Parambikulam some 30 or 40 years ago have stone circles

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<sup>22</sup> L.A.Krishna Iyer, *The Pre-historic Archaeology of Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1948, p.18.

<sup>23</sup> L.A.Krishna Iyer, *Kerala Megalithic and Their Builders*, Madras, 1967, p.51

<sup>24</sup> Manjula Poyil, *Death, Funeral and The Ancestors Cult of the Dead and the Malabar Tribes*, Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished, University of Calicut, 2006, p.424.



around three graves of their most respected ancestors.<sup>25</sup> The erection of dolmens and urn burial practices are still followed by the tribals in Waynad, Coorg and Nilgiris. At the same time, no tribes in the belt do not practice cremation, which clearly indicates that they are not Hindus, but are the followers of megalithic builders. The survival of these customs among the primitive tribes who inhabit in the Western Ghats lends support to the theory that there might have been a movement of Megalithic Iron Age people through out the area.

Most of these tribals were hunters and food gatherers in the remote past or recent past. The hunter-gathering habit of ancient tribals is still prevalent among the *Cholaniackan*, *Kattunayakan* and *Kattu Paniyan* in the Nilambur Valley. Like wise, most of the tribals in Waynad, Nilgiris, Attapady and Anamali Hills in Tamil Nadu are hunters and food gatherers and who live on what nature provide them. It is also evident that, till the very recent time, many tribals in the region practiced *punam* or slash and burn cultivation, the ancient mode of cultivation. In addition, these tribals have belief in spirit of deceased ancestors who are to be propitiated on all auspicious occasions for the well-being of the living, for the rich agricultural products and other prosperity in life.

As far as the languages of these tribals are concerned, their dialects are the admixture of Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu suggesting a common

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

linguistic homeland for the tribals connecting Nilambur, Attapady, waynad, Nilgiri, Coorg and Tamil Nadu. Many tribes of Malappuram district like *Aranadans, Paniyans, Kattunayakan, Kuruman* etc. are also found in other district of Kerala and in the adjacent states. They also speak the same language with regional variations.<sup>26</sup> Speaking about the physical appearances of these tribals, they share the common features of the Proto-Australoids. The Proto-Australoids noted for their long head, wavy hair, black colour, flat nose, dark skin and tall body. Due to the movement of the people in pre-historic and historic times, the original inhabitants dispersed into different regions where they got isolated as the result of geographical and historical reasons. There they developed independent cultural life. Historically, they are the refugees who took shelter in the jungles and in the course of centuries, lost their cultural paraphernalia and degenerated into their present state of cultural poverty. The present inhabitants in this tribal region can rightly claim the descendancy of the early inhabitants. Probably they were Dravidian speakers with Australoid physical features.

The ethnographic profile of the tribes of the district shows that though the all tribes of the district possess certain degree of similarity they do not have common cultural pattern in all aspects of their life. Each community has their own distinctive tradition, history and culture. All the tribals do not share common socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The characteristics of

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<sup>26</sup> M. Sreenathan, *Dravidian Tribes and Languages*, Kuppam, 2008, pp.35-60.

primitive way of life, habitation in remote and less accessible hilly areas, nomadic habits, etc. are not applicable to all tribes of the district. Many live in hilly tracts and forests, though some have been living with the non-tribals in the plains for centuries. The latter have become a part of the rural social hierarchy working as cultivators or agricultural labourers. At the same time, non-tribal households are also found in the midst of tribal settlements. They belong to shop-keepers, money lenders or cultivators. Those who live amidst the modernized heterogeneous communities have undergone a cultural metamorphosis over the years. *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* are the primitive tribal groups in the district and continue to retain their tribal characteristics. The process of acculturation seems to be very slow among them. They are hunting and gathering groups. *Cholanaickan* live in rock shelters (*alais*). It may be concluded that the different tribes in the district varied with ecology and tradition.

The area of habitation plays great role in moulding the life pattern of the tribals. According to the area of habitation the whole tribes of the district can be divided into three categories. First category is the tribes who live in the villages or countryside. All these tribes are living in the houses built by government as a part of rehabilitation. *Paniyan*, *Aranadan*, *Kuruman*, and *Mala Panickan* are the dominant part of this group. *Paniyans* are the largest single Scheduled Tribe of these groups. Most of their settlements or colonies are found along the fringes of paddy field where they laboured in the past.

This group has lost most their tribal characteristics and has become a part of the modernized heterogeneous communities. Most of them are wage labourers. Their dress and ornaments, house hold articles are completely of modern types. Most of their houses are electrified and have modern amenities as radio, television, telephone etc. These groups are “assimilated tribes”<sup>27</sup> whose culture has been completely assimilated by some other culture. The crucial problem of this group is social as they lost their tribal identity and we may call them ‘semi-tribals.’ Second category includes the tribes who live in the entrances or boundaries of the forests. This group is the largest. They are between the ‘devil and sea’. They are not fully integrated with the mainstream. Most of the tribes of the district except *Cholanaickan* and *Kattunayakan* come under this category. This category of tribes is “adaptive tribes”<sup>28</sup> whose culture is gradually adapting the modes of some other cultures. Third category is the tribes who live in the interiors of the forest. Two dominant groups of this category are *Cholanaickan* and *Kuttunayakan*. This category includes *Cholanaickan*, *Kattunayakan*, *Mala Muthan* and *Kattu Paniyan*. *Cholanaickan*, *Kuttunayakan*, and *Kattu Paniyan* are ‘primitive food gathering tribes’ while *Mala Muthans* are under the influence of modernism. All the tribes of the district have their own dialects which are the admixture of Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Tulu languages. They use their dialects only

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<sup>27</sup> D.N.Majumdar classified Indian tribes into two groups, assimilated tribes and adaptive tribes, on the basis of cultural change. D.N. Majumdar, *The Affairs of a Tribe: A Study in Tribal Dynamics*, Lucknow, 1950.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

to speak among themselves; with non-tribals they speak Malayalam. Their dialect has no script and is very difficult to grasp. Their younger generation use Malayalam and the medium of instruction in schools and communication is also Malayalam. Consequently, the present young tribal generation is unaware of their traditional language and thus the tribal dialect is under the threat of vanishing.

The most significant feature of the tribal scenario of Malappuram district is the disappearance of tribal characteristics and the consequent identity crisis. In the past, as reported, the tribes were simply hunters and food gatherers. Forest has been their traditional homeland. Each group had its own territory in which its members hunt animals and collect forest produces. Such a territory was often quite extensive because the food gatherers hunt and collect only what they require. The forest dwellers found wild-growing fruits in trees and edible roots and tubers in the jungle to supplement their food. The forest also provided them necessary timber and bamboos for house building and for the manufacture of various implements. They also collected honey, medicinal herbs and other minor forest produces which they could sell or barter in the weekly markets or exchange centres. They hunted in the jungle and fished in the rivers that flow through their habitat and could supplement their vegetarian diet with meat and fish. Shifting cultivation was an integral part of the tribal economy. The tribes which preferred shifting cultivation deliberately chose for their habitats hilly forest areas of the plains of broad

river valleys to the plough cultivations. More over the shifting cultivators always lived alone with forest and found leisure to get away from the full routine of monotonous farm work through hunting or fishing or the collection of jungle produce. They required no cattle for ploughing and were thus less tied down to their homesteads and stables.

But now majority of the tribes have been deprived of their traditional way of life and sources of subsistence. The very basis of their economy has been destroyed by an abrupt prohibition of use of forest and its produce. Without sufficient preparation they have to face radical changes and to cop up with the new pattern of life. Due to the lack of adequate knowledge on the modern techniques and cultivation, the crops produced by them are meagre. Soil erosion, lack of adequate fields and irrigation facilities etc. further accelerated their problem. The subsistence of tribals is supplemented by forest produces and by hunting. As the large portion of the forest has been declared reserved forest, all their traditional rights have been deprived. Thus the jungle does not yield them the important subsidiary substance as it did in the past. Now their economy is based on wage labour and forests. Due to the unauthorized alienation of tribal land and deprivation of tribal of forestry rights, the tribal economy has been seriously deteriorated.

Many have lost their tribal character to a large extent owing to their large scale contact with non-tribal groups, though they are commonly kept at

a distance. But some have retained their nomadic and hunting habits and hesitate to give up their traditional way of life and identity. They have confined themselves to the forest and continue to live in predominantly tribal areas. Among them, their ancient mode of life still exists with minimum external influence than in the environment of a settled population. Though they are short in number they have no sufficient cultivable land due to the increasing deforestation and strict control over the forest by the forest department. The hunter-gathering societies are diminutive and wage labour is becoming their primary means of livelihood. *Cholonaickan* and *Kattunayakan* are the diminutive hunter gathering groups in the district.

Religion is an integral part of tribal life and plays a vital role in their socio- economic life. The traditional tribal beliefs are vanishing and most of the tribals claim that they are Hindus. Hindu deities and pantheons are worshipped and offerings are made. Religion controls their life pattern and individuality. One of the major reasons of the isolated life or anti-modern life patterns is religion. They assert that if they leave their traditional homeland, their gods and goddesses will be infuriated and they will fall sick. They believe that their traditional homeland is the seat of their pantheons. Tribal religion is clearly not as easily definable as Islam or Christianity and more over many tribal cults and practices are very similar to Hindu practices and thus, in modern times, it is difficult to discern tribal elements. They believe in ancestral spirit and their practices are reinforced by their illiteracy and

poverty. This may be one of the reasons for the unsanitary conditions and unhygienic practices. They believe that the diseases may be cured by magic spells and sorcery. The diseases caused due to the wrath of their deities and evil spirits are believed to be cured only by magical method. Therefore, sorcerer has always a great role in the day to day life of the tribals.

Monogamy is the common form of marriage in the present day tribal society. But cases of polygamy are also reported. Endogamous tribal rules are in gradual vanishing. The major reasons are disparity of sex ratio, unavoidable external contacts, ignorance of the new generation about the tribal traditions etc. The important phases in the life cycle of the tribals of the district are birth, puberty, marriage and death. The rites and rituals connected with each of these phase are observed very carefully. They are also very careful to observe *Daivomkotuthi* or *Adiyanthiram* every year. *Paniyans* observe *Daivomkotothi* regularly. All the tribes in the district bury their dead and no event of cremation is reported. But they are different in methods and rites. All tribes of the district except two, ie *Aranadan* and *Paniyan*, believe in life after death which is very extensively related to their burial practices

Many social institutions, customs and traditions exist in Kerala society had originated and existed among the tribes from the ancient period itself. Matrilineal system (*Marumakkathayam*) is one of them that deserve special mention. There are various views regarding the origin of *Marumakkathayam*



in Kerala. According to Prof. Elamkulam,<sup>29</sup> *Marumakkathayam* emerged in Kerala as the product of the compelling socio-economic forces caused by the Chera-Chola war in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He argues that the war brought about fundamental changes in the social structure of the people. Nayers went to war on a large scale. At this time the Nambudiris were being entrenched in authority. They contracted alliances with Nayar women and the matrilineal system came in to being. The political and religious dominance of Nambudiris, their rise to economic ascendancy as the landlords of Kerala and the introduction of compulsory military training leading to the formation of suicide squads or *chavers* during the war. This was the compelling circumstances which lead to the switch over from the patrilineal to matrilineal system of inheritance in Kerala.<sup>30</sup> K.P. Padmanabha Menon<sup>31</sup> says that patrilineal system was followed by the matrilineal system in Kerala and it is of recent origin due to some special circumstances. Among the Nayars, the major share of a man's self earned property is bequeathed to his children and the latter performed the funeral rites for their father. He argues that if Nayars were *Marumakkathayees* from the beginning, their children would not have performed these rites for their dead fathers. In no society did the practice exist of person having no right to the property performing funeral rites for a departed soul. So till the 14<sup>th</sup> century the system of inheritance in Kerala was

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<sup>29</sup> Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Trivandum, 1970, pp.297,298.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> K.P.Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, Ernakulam, 1929, p.86.

patrilineal. He continues that none of the foreign travelers who visited Kerala before the 14<sup>th</sup> century has stated anything about this system of inheritance. If they had felt anything strange about the customs of the people they would have recorded them.<sup>32</sup>

The present study reveals that matrilineal system (*Marumakkathayam*) is an integral part of tribal culture. In a matrilineal society, the kinship, descent and inheritance are traced in the female line.<sup>33</sup> But in the case of tribals, as there was no property concept among them, the property inheritance is less important. At the same time, many elements closely related to matrilineal system are prevalent among these tribes. The traditional celebration of girls' first menstruation (*Thirandukalyanam*) is a great joyful event in her life and her family. The celebration with rich arrangements, music and dance in the esteemed presence of their socio- religious heads and all tribes of the district and the great feast served to the gathering create a pride and self respect to the girl. The celebration proclaims that she has reached the full reproducing capability of her sex. *Thalikettukalyanam* has been observed among the tribes who follow matrilineal system. The respected and prominent position of the maternal uncle is also closely related with the

<sup>32</sup> Friar Jordanus, who visited Quilon in 1324 A.D, was the first foreign traveller to record the practice of matriliney among the kings of Kerala. "In this India never do the legitimate sons of great kings or princes or barons inherit the goods of their parents, but only the sons of their sisters." *Mirabilia Descripta* quoted by K. P.Pathmanabha Menon, *op.cit.*, p.282. It has been argued that the Alupas of South Canara followed matrilineal system up to the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and the *aliyasanthana* system (matrilineal system) was legally recognised

<sup>33</sup> Julius Gould et al., ed., *A Dictionary of the Social Science*, New York, 1969, pp. 416,417.

matrilineal tradition. Cross-cousin marriage - marriage between children of brother and sister- is another institution common to all tribes of the district. Among *Mala Panickan*, *Paniyans* the marriage negotiations are initiated by the relatives of girl and bride-price is given to the maternal uncle. Among the *Mala Muthans* and *Mala Panickans*, nephew has dominant role in the burial practices. He is the chief mourner and after the burial the *illom* is closed by him. He protects the members of the family of the deceased for seven days in his own house. On the seventh day, the nephew opens the closed *illom* and *Chemmi* distributes the household articles of the deceased among the family members and property<sup>34</sup> to his sister and their sons. The concepts of *tharavadu*, *illom* and observation of pollution etc. are also found wide following among the tribes like *Mala Muthan* and *Mala Panickan* of the district. These basic features of matrilineal system are still prevalent among these tribes. This is not because of any out side influence as they have been isolated in hills and forest for centuries and have their own rigid rules while dealing with outsiders. So it could be assumed that, matrilineal system was tribal in origin and it received a new impetus during the later years. It is evident that in the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> Century the *Marumakkathayam* system of inheritance was strictly followed among the aboriginal tribes in the hills of Waynad and other places.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Here property means the *illom*, and other earnings and belongings of the deceased not buried along with the dead body. The concept of land property is of recent origin among these tribes.

<sup>35</sup> Innes, *Gazetteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, Madrass, 1908, pp.25-27

Speaking on the marginalisation of the tribals, it may be concluded that the marginalisation of the tribals was the net-result of the physical subjugation or isolation and denial of ownership over resources and its distribution. It is found that the unique geographical setting of the district is the basic reason of the tribal isolation in the district. The district surrounded by high hills and mountains with dense forest, laterite hills and long river system that made the region an area of isolation and to certain extent free from external impacts. The land forms, soil, climate, vegetation, flora and fauna, water etc act as the geographic environment in moulding up the tribal culture in the district. The non-tribal intrusion into tribal habitats in circumstantial exigencies compelled the tribals to take shelter in solitude or to be subjugated. Advent of Brahmins was the initial stage of this process. It was followed by a chaotic political situation in which power was rested in the hands of Brahminical institutions. The processes of marginalization reached its zenith in all means during the British colonial period. The British land revenue and forest policies opened a new form of marginalisation of these tribals. The commercialisation of agriculture in the form of plantations transformed the tribals as landless wage labourers. The colonial penetration into the area was in the form of plantations which was also favoured by the geography of the area. Thus it could be concluded that the large scale migration of non tribals resulted in the physical subjugation or isolation of the tribals and altered the pattern of land holding, land-use, labour opportunities and control over local resources. It is

also found that the age-long tribal culture and tradition form another barrier which also arrests them in the hills and forests. Self respect and trust are the integral part of their culture. They consider that their culture and tradition as superior, therefore, they are eager to be closed to their own culture. This cultural ethnocentrism detains them in a state of isolation. Their age-long isolation from the rest of the society curtailed their chances to be technologically developed. So their culture still represents a primitive level technology, arrested in its development mainly as a result of ecological factors of isolation, of some series of historical accidents, and also perhaps because of some traditional barriers.

Independent India has been implementing a polethora of development programmes but the problems of tribals still remain unsolved. The constitution provides framework for the socio-economic development of the tribals. Article 46 of the constitution required both the central and state governments to prevent the exploitation of tribals and promote their development. Though such a policy is progressive, the government response towards the marginalisation of tribals is not changed. On the contrary, tribal communities are systematically displaced in the name of industrial projects, big dams, mining operations etc. The exploitation of forest officials, money lenders, intermediaries etc made their life move from bad to worse. The interference of political parties also accelerates the deprivation of the tribals from their lands and forests.

Tribal question is a burning question of the nation. The problems that these tribals face may hinder the all round development of the nation. As these tribals are the weakest and the most marginalised section of the society how can tribal mobility be realized is a matter of debate. India, Kerala in general, witnessed a lot of social reform movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These movements played a great role in mobilizing the depressed classes in Kerala. It is notable that the tribals of Malappuram district, Kerala in general, are not part of any social reform movements. It is a question why such a movement could not emerge from the tribals or why the social reformers or political leaders did not take the care of tribals on a prime consideration.

The reformers like Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Poykayil Yohannan, Pampady John Joseph, Ramaswami Naickar etc resorted to the eradication of the prevalent social evils and succeeded in promoting social mobility of many downtrodden communities. The leaders of these movements were very much bothered about their own communities and tried to formulate a sense of dignity and identity among their followers. These movements were primarily against casteism and denial of human rights. It was possible among these communities because they had lived among the heterogeneous and developed communities, got incorporated with the 'public sphere' and were highly aware of their own status. So the emergence of leaders was purely spontaneous without any outside compulsion. But the matter of tribals is just reverse. They

are social rejects, not as a result of casteism, untouchability etc. but because of isolation and marginalisation. The age-long isolation from the rest of the society is the basic reason for the tribal backwardness. They have no chance to mingle with the advanced societies and hence, no ambition to be mobilized. They have been exploited not by upper castes but by all the non-tribals like *janmis*, contractors, officials etc. So they have to fight against all these groups but it is not possible as they are socially stigmatized, economically deprived, educationally backward, geographically isolated, demographically dispersed and politically disunited. Moreover, the tribals of Kerala are very few in number and are scattered all over the state which has made it impossible for them to fight for the improvement in their socio-economic life as has been done by their counter-parts in Northern and North-Eastern India.

The community organizations like ‘Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam’ (SNDPY)<sup>36</sup>, ‘Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham’ (SJPS)<sup>37</sup>, ‘Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha’ (PRDS)<sup>38</sup>, and ‘Travancore Cherumar Maha Sabha’ (TCMS)<sup>39</sup> played a crucial role in organising and mobilizing the respective communities. Unfortunately, no tribal organization in Kerala could

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<sup>36</sup> Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam’ (SNDPY) was founded by Sre Narayana Guru in 1903 to uplift the Ezhzhavas of Kerala.

<sup>37</sup> Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham’ (SJPS) was founded by Ayyankali in 1907 for the upliftment of the Pulayas.

<sup>38</sup> Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS) was founded in 1909 by Poikayil Yohannan, a Paraya convert, to uplift the Paraya community. For details see K.T. Rejikumar, *Poikayil Sreekumara Guru Charithraruparekhayil*, Mal, Kottayam, 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Travancore Cherumar Maha Sabha’ (TCMS) was founded in 1921 by Pambady John Joseph, a Pulaya convert, to mobilise the Pulayas. For details see T.H.P. Chentharassery, *Pampady John Jooseph*, Thiruvalla, 1989.

succeed in bringing all the *adivasis* of Kerala under a single banner.<sup>40</sup> It is a difficult task to unite all the tribals in Kerala under a single head because each tribe follows their own culture and tradition. More over, the preference for group living, which is still predominant among them, prevents them to break the kinship ties. Thus, the solidarity among the tribals all over Kerala still remains unrealized. Even all the tribes of Waynad do not accept the leadership of C.K. Janu and M. Geethanandhan, the big figures of Kerala tribals in recent years. It could be suggested that, region-wise or tribe-wise unification programme will be better than state-wide one. It is evident that, even an outside reformer could mobilise these social neglects. The activities of Rev. Armand Jean Marie Jauffrineau<sup>41</sup> of Paris Foreign Missions deserve special mention in this regard. The Kurichias of Waynad were organised and mobilized under Jauffrineau, who laboured for the evangelization of these tribes from 1909 to 1923. He laid foundation of the settlement at Kaniambetta and engaged to find the lands necessary for cultivation, to get the jungle cleared and build temporary houses for them. When the Moplah Rebellion started in 1921 he gathered all the men who were excellent archers, divided them into four companies and drew up a plan of defence. These measures of

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<sup>40</sup> The tribal organisations such as ‘Wynad Adivasi Swayam Sevak Sangh’-WASSS (1963), ‘Kerala Girvarga Sangam’ (1973), Kerala Adivasi Samajam’ (1973), etc. are the best exmple but recently vanished. Also the existing organisations viz. ‘Rashtriya Mahasaba’, Adivasi Kshema Samthi’, ‘Vanavasi Sangam’, Adivasi Federation’ etc. have not yet been succeeded in uniting all the tribes of the state.

<sup>41</sup> See note on . Fr. A. Jauffrineau, K.E.P, in K. K. N. Kurup,” Christian Peasantry and Social Change in The Highlands of Malabar” in K. J. John, ed., *Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Calicut, 1981, pp. 323,324.



Jauffrineau paved way for the social mobility of the Kurichias in the later years. Unfortunately, this kind of reformers did not come forward to gather and organise the tribals of Malappuram district, Kerala in general so far. Moreover, no political parties cared to organise them and bring them to the mainstream. Even the Congress Socialists in the first half of the twentieth Century, who were busy in organising the peasants and workers on class basis, never cared for the tribals. After independence, till recently, no political party took the cause of the tribals of Kerala seriously as they are unable to become a vote bank. But in the case of Waynad, the tribals constitute 17% of the total population of the district and therefore they have a profound influence in determining the fate of political parties in the election. Realizing this fact, in Waynad, many political parties began to interfere in the tribal affairs and took initiative to organize them in recent years.

The only possible way through which the tribal mobility can be promoted is by imparting education. Needle less to say that education is an agent of socialization, a channel of mobilization and an instrument of social change. It is not desirable to account education merely as a means of livelihood but it should be perceived as a powerful weapon to liberate the tribals from ignorance and to strengthen their self confidence to fight against humiliation and exploitation. The educated group can act as a ‘creative minority’<sup>42</sup> having a deciding voice in determining the path of mobility. The

<sup>42</sup> Arnold Joseph Toynbee coined the term ‘Creative minority’. He describes the pivotal role of this group in the growth and development of a civilization. For details see

present day tribal scenario needs the emergence of such a group and articulation and modification according to the demands of the changing society. They have to play a dynamic role in enabling the tribals to have access to modern advancements. They have to spur the tribals into organized action to challenge the social discrimination, to mitigate their age-long deprivation and to inspire them to fight for social justice and privileges. They can have effective influence upon the course of tribals. This can be possible as they keep themselves abreast of the various schemes and plans launched by the Government for the upliftment of the tribals. They know what their community need. They turn out to be the viable unit of guidance and direction for their unschooled brethren.

As a pivot of the community, the core group can act as carriers of stimuli and communicators of new ideas. Being ahead of the rest of the community, they slowly act as torch bearers to guide their masses in embracing the new changes. As catalysts and sustainers in different types of organizations they should set the tone and determine the direction of changes. They can act as a link between the supplicants of the community members and the administrators. This creative minority within the tribal group should ensure socio-political unity among the tribals. Since they are minority, they have to shoulder a heavier burden of responsibility in the affairs and betterment of their own community. They can represent in the villages,

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A.J.Toynbee, *A Study of History*, New York, 1972.

Panchayaths and legislative assembly and to raise serious issues pertaining to land, housing, education, employment, agriculture etc. Such a group can provide charismatic leadership to the various associative activities and collective striving aimed at achieving the community goals.

The birth of such a group can be realized only through imparting them education and proper leadership training. But the attitude of many tribals towards education is not encouraging. Most of the tribal boys and girls study up to primary level and then begin to dropout. The large proportion of wastage and dropout can be explained in terms of the use of the children by their families for economic purposes. The parents expect immediate earnings from their children and have no patience to wait up to the time when their children become graduates and to attain job after a long duration of study. And most of the tribal youth have the responsibility to look after their family members where their parents do nothing for the family and spend all their earnings of the day for the consumption of alcohol. Those tribals who perform most of the tribal celebrations and festivals regularly in the occasion of birth, marriage, death, and the annual celebration, *Adiyanthiram* or *Daivomkotuthi* or *Aandaruthi*, require huge financial involvements.

Development programmes have forced the tribals to depend on others instead of making them self-sufficient. This is because of most of the tribals have a feeling that it is the duty of the government to provide them the

required material comforts and financial assistance even for medical treatment for fever and headache. It is to be realized that self-sufficiency cannot be promoted only through rehabilitation and colonization, but adequate fertile lands are to be distributed for each family not only for constructing huts but also for cultivation and required facilities should be provided. Moreover they should be trained in making huts and in adopting modern agriculture practices.

While striving for the mobility of the tribals due emphasis has to be given to their traditional values and historical experiences. Mobilization cannot be possible only through reservations in academic institutions, services and legislations. But the 'resource mobilization' is also to be ensured. Traditionally, forest has been their homeland and they found it as the main source of subsistence. So bringing them out of forests and rehabilitating in the colonies is just like 'bringing the fish out of water'. The rights over land and forest have to be re-instated and restrictions and regulations to collect forest produces have to be removed. Through resource mobilization, the tribals can attain self-sufficiency and gradually it will lead to the accumulation of 'economic capital'. A uniform policy for tribals of all zones may better be abandoned. The tribals of the region have their own problems and have their own ethno-historical continuity and they cannot be subjected to a blanket policy of all India level. For example, the *Adiyan* and *Paniyan* were agrestic slaves in the past and later became bonded labourers. Even, though they were agrestic slaves, they could live under the *Janmis* depending them and

fulfilling all their needs and requirements. Though they were bonded labourers their needs were satisfied and their problems were solved because they get enough food from landlord. The present generation of these groups were born and brought up in this historical experience and have not yet been nourished any quality of self-sufficiency. The problem of these less developed tribal communities of the state used to be taken up in an urgent priority basis. In view of their unique socio-economic and educational as well as other specific problems, community based schemes and programmes should be prepared. Instead of present colony system separate houses should be built for each family and the theory of 'one tribal family for ten no-tribal families' should be adopted. This will pave the way for the large scale contact with the heterogeneous communities having different cultural ways of life. Automatically a tendency to cope-up with them will be evolved. Segregation never leads them to progress and advancement. Any kind of development of such preliterate societies would not be practicable so long as the contact with them is not established. So assimilating tribals could be suggested instead of keeping them in isolation in their habitats in inaccessible hills and forests. But at the same time, assimilation to the broad social matrix without solving their own problems from inside and on the basis of their own life and culture is not a desirable one.

It could be suggested that the schemes for tribal development have to be prepared by social anthropologists in collaboration with other social experts. People's participation in planning and implementation of the

programmes is also to be ensured. The tribal welfare department should give up its policy of planning from the top. Moreover, to watch results of schemes, social anthropologists should play the role of a social physician who not only diagnoses and prescribes remedies but also follow up the treatment. Moreover, they also have to draw a consciousness among the tribals for a better world to live, instilling an urge within them to realize this consciousness as a fact of life and to drive them in the cultivation of an action-oriented psychology, that is, they can make their own destinies.

If we accept the dictums ‘No Narayana Guru No Ezhavas’, ‘No Ayyankali No Pulayas’, ‘No Ambedkar No Mahars’ etc., we can conclude that the social mobility of the tribals of Kerala will not be realized in the near future. This is because of the possibility for the emergence of such dynamic leaders, who emerged spontaneously for the upliftment of the respective communities, is absent among the tribals of Kerala. The only possible solution, it might be concluded, is that all the educated tribals of Kerala should be organized with a common aim irrespective of community, sex, region, and above all politics and religion. This group should be creative and objective in their thought and action. They should be trained in tribal history as Poikayil Yohannan and Pampadi John Joseph used Paraya and Pulaya history for the development of the Dalit identity.<sup>43</sup> Over and above, this

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<sup>43</sup> Poikayil Yohannan and Pampadi John Joseph resorted in tracing out the history of their respective communities and succeeded in creating Pulaya -Paraya identity respectively. For details see Poikayil Yohannan, “Once Upon a Time in Keralam” in Paul Chirakkode, ed., *Dalit Poems: a Study*, Kottayam, 1992; V.V Swami and E.V Anil ed., *Poikayil Appachante Pattukal (1905-1939)*, Mal, Kottayam, 2006; K.T.Rejikumar, *op.cit.*, and T.H.P. Chentharassery, *op.cit.*

organized movement should have an action plan for social transformation infusing the tribals with an identity. If such a 'creative minority' is successfully organized, the platform for tribal mobility in Kerala is also being prepared. The attainment of this mobility would depend upon the capacity of this group for rousing popular enthusiasm and the support they might receive from the depressed tribals. In the absence of a bond between this group and the masses, the aspirations and the interests of the tribals will tend to be ignored.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**ORAL TESTEMONIALS**

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>M/F</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Tribe/Community/Status</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Abdul Salam	M	26	Teacher, Tribal school	Cholarmala, Edavanna	09.03.06
2	Alavikkutty, Awunjippurath	M	60	Son of Mappila janmi	Chalikkal, Pothukallu	16.05.05
3	Babu	M	21	<i>Mala Muthan</i> , +2 student	Veetikkunnu, Nilambur	10.03.06
4	Balan	M	24	<i>Cholanaickan</i> , Forest guard.	Mancheeri, Karulai	01.03.06
5	Balan	M	38	<i>Paniyan</i> .	Ettapara, Pothukallu.	10.05.05
6	Beeran	M	50	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Panappoyil, Karulai	24.05.05
7	Bindu	F	17	<i>Kattunayakan</i> , +2 student	Appankappu, Pothukallu	08.05.05
8	Bindu	F	26	<i>Aranadan</i> , ITDP Promoter, Teacher	Vellikkatta, Karulai	18.05.05
9	Bindu.V.S	F	26	Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Pallikkuth, Chungathara	12.03.06
10	Bomman Chathan	M	71	<i>Kattunayakan</i> , Moopan	Appankappu, Pothukallu	08.05.05
11	Challan	M	60	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Panappuzha, Karulai	01.03.06
12	Chandan	M	85	<i>Paniyan</i> , Kalladikkaran	Pallikkuth, Chungathara	04.05.05
13	Cheera	F	49	<i>Aranadan</i>	Vallikkatta, Karulai	18.03.06
14	Chekku	M	65	Muslim Neighbour, <i>Paniyan</i> Colony	Padikkunnu, Nilambur	03.05.05
15	Chellan	M	64	<i>Cholanaickan</i> , Chenmakkarar	Mancheeri, Karulai	01.03.06
16	Chellan	M	42	<i>Cholanaickan</i> , Grave digger	Mancheeri, Karulai	01.03.06
17	Cheriyia Chairan	M	46	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
18	Cheriyia Raman	M	49	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05



Sl.No.	Name	M/F	Age	Tribe/Community/Status	Place	Date
19	Chirutha	F	53	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
20	Chirutha	F	48	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
21	Damodaran	M	29	<i>Paniyan</i>	Akampadam, Arangode, Chaliyar	22.05.05
22	Dasan. K.P	M	30	Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Vallappuzha, Chungathara	15.03.06
23	Elikkutty	F	68	Christian, Neighbour, <i>Kuruman Colony.</i>	Edivanna, Chaliyar	16.05.05
24	Geetha	F	22	<i>Paniyan</i> , Promoter	ITDP, Nilambur	12.03.06
25	Gopalan	M	46	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
26	Ibrahim Munderi	M	48	Muslim, Contractor	Munderi, Pothukallu.	09.05.05
27	Kadinji	M	37	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Cholarmala, Edavanna	09.03.06
28	Kalangodi	F	66	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
29	Kalyani	F	40	Peruvannan, w% Krishnankutty, <i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
30	Kalyani Chairan Raman	F	55	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
31	Kannan	M	80	<i>Aranadan</i>	Vallikkatta, Karulai	18.03.06
32	Kalari	F	52	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
33	Korman	M	66	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
34	Krishna Mohanan	M	28	Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Nelliyayi, Chaliyar.	14.03.06
35	Krishnsnkutty	M	55	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
36	Kunji Muhammed, Cheerangan	M	70	Muslim,Neighbour, <i>Paniyan Colony</i>	Edivanna, Chaliyar	16.05.05
37	Kuttan	M	70	<i>Paniyan</i> , Moopan,	Adyanpara, Chaliyar	17.05.05
38	Kutti Vallan	M	64	<i>Paniyan</i>	Peruvampadam, Chaliyar	17.05.05

Sl.No.	Name	M/F	Age	Tribe/Community/Status	Place	Date
39	Manni	M	35	<i>Paniyan</i>	Mailam,para	07.05.05
40	Manni Valiya Chelan	M	52	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
41	Mathan	M	60	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Panappoyil, Karulai	01.03.06
42	Mathan	M	44	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Karimpuzha,Mancheeri,Karulai	06.05.05
43	Mathan	M	80	Pathinaickan, Moopan	Thandankallu, Pothukallu.	11.05.05
44	Mathan	M	80	<i>Kattunayakan</i> , Moopan	Kumbalappara, Pothukallu	12.05.05
45	Mathi	F	57	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Panappoyil, Karulai	01.03.06
46	Mathi	F	70	<i>Aranadan</i>	Kottappara	18.03.06
47	Moideenkutty, Kanniyar	M	75	Muslim	Ettapara, Pothukallu	10.05.05
48	Moinkutty. V.P	M	40	Shopekeeper, Girijan Co-operative Society	Mancheeri, Karulai	01.03.06
49	Muhammed Mubarak.A.I	M	51	Research Officer, KIRTADS	Chevayoor, Kozhikkode	01.03.06
50	Nalanunni	M	28	<i>Mala Panickan</i> , Promoter, ITDP, Nilambur,	Kottepadam,Chungathra	05.05.05
51	Narayanan	M	24	Teacher,Tribal school, Alakkal	Alakkal, Edavanna	30.05.06
52	Narayanan, Kazhupally	M	76	Former Mestri, Kunnathachal Kalam of Sankunni Menon,Thrikkallur Devaswam	Athikkad, Chaliyar	18.05.05
53	Neeli	F	60	<i>Aranadan</i>	Vellikkatta, Karulai	18.05.06
54	Neeli	F	80	<i>Kuruman</i>	Parakkode, Chaliyar	15.05.05
55	Palan	M	70	<i>Kattu Paniyan/Kurinji Paniyan.</i>	Vettillakkolli, Chaliyar	21.05.05
56	Prasad	M	50	Nieghbour, <i>Paniyan</i> Colony	Mathilmoola, Chaliyar	18.05.05
57	Prasanth	m	28	Promoter, ITDP, Tribal Extension Officer	Edavanna	12.03.06

Sl.No.	Name	M/F	Age	Tribe/Community/Status	Place	Date
58	Pushpa	F	26	Teacher, Tribal school	Panapoyil	28.05.05
59	Radha	F	43	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
60	Rajan K.K.	M	38	Warden, Tribal hostel	Nellikulam	06.05.05
61	Rajan	M	20	<i>Mala Muthan</i> , SSLC Student	Mailadi, Nilambur	10.03.06
62	Ramadas	M	59	Peruvannan	Nilambur	20.05.05
63	Raman	M	39	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Peruvampadam, Chaliyar	16.05.05
64	Raman	M	65	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
65	Ramani	F	35	Nursery teacher	Appankappu, Pothukallu	08.05.05
66	Ramankutty	M	70	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Kottepadam, Chungathra	05.05.05
67	Ramesh	M	25	Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Nelliyayi, Chaliyar	20.03.06
68	Sainaba	F	68	Muslim, Neighbour, <i>Paniyan</i> Colony	Padikkunnu, Nilambur	03.05.05
69	Saji	F	26	<i>Mala Muthan</i> , ITDP Promoter	Nilambur	10.03.06
70	Sanjith	M	24	<i>Mala Muthan</i> , MA student (Anthropology)	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	10.06.07
71	Santha	F	22	<i>Kattunayakan</i> , Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Appankappu, Pothukallu	20.03.06
72	Santha Cherya Chairan	F	45	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
73	Sarada	F	45	<i>Mala Muthan</i>	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	21.05.05
74	Sathyanathan Tirumulpadu	M	75	Nilambur Kovilakom	Nilambur	26.10.08
75	Shyma	F	22	<i>Mala Muthan</i> , BSc. Nursing Student	Palakkayam, Chaliyar	10.06.07
76	Soma Sundaran	M	35	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Vadakkumpadam, Edavanna	09.03.06
77	Sreeja	F	25	Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Konnamanna, Chungathara	12.03.06

Sl.No.	Name	M/F	Age	Tribe/Community/Status	Place	Date
78	Sulaiman	M	53	Superintendent, ITDP	Nilambur	07.05.04
79	Sulojana	F	23	Aranadan, Promoter ITDP, Nilambur	Nedumkayam, Karulai	24.03.06
80	Swapna	F	25	Mala Muthan, TTC,BA holder	Peruvampadam, Chaliyar	16.05.05
81	T.T. Antony IAS	M		Director, KIRTADS	Chevayoor, Kozhikkode	10.03.05.
82	Thankachan	M	28	Christian, Neighbour,Paniyan Colony	Pallikkuth, Chungathara	04.05.05
83	Unneeran	M	44	Mala Muthan	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
84	Unnikrishnan	M	43	Teacher, Neighbour,Paniyan Colony	Mukkarshi, Nilambur	04.05.05
85	Valiya Chairan	M	70	Mala Muthan	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	22.05.05
86	Valiya Raman	M	90	Mala Muthan, Kothamakkaran or Chemmi	Vennekkode,Chaliyar	21.05.05
87	Velutha	M	85	Kattu Paniyan/Kurinji Paniyan, Moopan	Abumala, Chaliyar	21.05.05
88	Velutha Vallan	M	46	Paniyan, Komaram	Chalikkal, Pothukallu	16.05.05
89	Vijaya	F	35	Cholanaickan	Mancheeri, Karulai	01.03.06
90	Vijaya Varma Thampuran	M	81	Nilambur Kovilakom	Nilambur	26.10.08
91	Vijayalakshmi	F	40	Teacher, Neighbour,Paniyan Colony	Mukkarshi, Nilambur	04.05.05
92	Vinod	M	21	Mala Muthan, M.Com Student	Odakkayam, Mambad	11.03.06

APPENDIX II

**Tribal Settlements in Malappuram District-2006**

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
1	Kombankallu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Amarambalam
2	<i>Aranadankal</i>	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
3	Pattakarimbu	<i>Kattunayakan,Paniyan</i>	Do
4	Paramba	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
5	Ayyappankulam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
6	Pariyangad	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
7	Vazhimuchikkal	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
8	Veeralimundu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
9	Manupotty	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
10	Chelode	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
11	Pottikallu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
12	Vadakkemunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
13	Kanakkanchola	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
14	Puncha	<i>Aranadan</i>	Do
15	Chulliyode	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
16	Oleravattam	<i>Aranadan</i>	Do
17	Kavalamukkatta	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
18	Pathayappera	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
19	Puthiyakalam	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
20	Irivetti	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Areacode
21	Panthallur	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Anakkayam
22	Kunnathchal	<i>Paniyan</i>	Chaliyar
23	Athikkad	<i>Paniyan, Kattunayakan</i>	Do
24	Panapoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
25	Paingakaode	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
26	Vailasseri	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
27	Perumunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
28	Modavanna	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
29	Akampadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
30	Chettiyampara	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
31	Perumbathur	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
32	Adyanpara	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
33	Pilakalchola	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
34	Kombankolly	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
35	Vengad	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
36	Kanakuth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
37	Namburipotty	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
38	Chulliyode 4 Cent	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
39	Kallunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
40	Edivanna	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
41	Edivanna Kuruma	<i>Kuruman</i>	Do
42	Parakkode	<i>Paniyan, Kuruman</i>	Do
43	Palakkayam	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
44	Palakkayam	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
45	Peruvampadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
46	Peruvampadam	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
47	Thottapally	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
48	Kandilappara	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
49	Nayadamboyil	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
50	Valamthode	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
51	Ambumala	<i>Kattu Paniyan</i>	Do
52	Vennekode	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
53	Vennekode	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
54	Vettilakolli	<i>Kattu Paniyan</i>	Do
55	Cheekod	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Cheekode
56	Nelliyampadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Chokkad
57	Cheengakallu	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
58	Chenapadi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
59	Chokkad	<i>Aranadan, Paniyan, Kattunayakan, Mala Panickan, Mala Muthan.</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
60	Kattilepadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Chungathara
61	Vellampadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
62	Cheerakuzhi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
63	Konnamanna	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
64	Meleperumbiladu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
65	Thazheperumbiladu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
66	Kurathi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
67	Thalanhi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
68	Kuttimunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
69	Sulthanpadi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
70	Kunnath	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
71	Padinjattumpadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
72	Narampoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
73	Chathamunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
74	Thazhepallikuth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
75	Melepallikauth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
76	Kottepadam	<i>Paniyan, Mala Panickan</i>	Do
77	Kavumpadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
78	ThazheAmbalapoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
79	Mele Ambalapoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
80	Puthupariyaram	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do



<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
81	Mathayil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
82	Kanayamkai	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
83	Mangod	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
84	Chathamputhuvai	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
85	Mundapadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
86	Mundapadam	<i>Kuruman</i>	Do
87	Thekkumpadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
88	Vellimuttam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
89	Malamkundu	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
90	Thudimutti	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
91	Annadappu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
92	Churulipoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
93	Erumamunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
94	Kavungal	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
95	Party kummu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
96	Muppini	<i>Paniyan</i>	Edakkara
97	Pathiripadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
98	Aranadampadam	<i>Paniyan, Aranadan</i>	Do
99	Vellaramkunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
100	Mele Illikkad	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
101	Thazhe Illikkad	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
102	Theyyathumpadam	<i>Paniyan, Mala Panickan</i>	Do
103	Karunechi	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
104	Chularmala	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Edavanna
105	Veempunkuzhi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
106	Alangadi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
107	Odandappara	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
108	Adakkakundu	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Kalikavu
109	Adakkakundu	<i>Aranadan</i>	Do
110	Tharish	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
111	Mailampara	<i>Paniyan,Aranadan</i>	Karulai
112	Mundakkadavu	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
113	Valiyabumikuth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
114	Cheriyabumikuth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
115	Vallikatta	<i>Paniyan,Aranadan</i>	Do
116	Valiya ulli	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
117	Cheriyu ulii	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
118	Kotupara	<i>Aranadan</i>	Do
119	Palakunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
120	Koyalamunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
121	Nedunkayam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
122	Mancheeri/Chodalapotty	<i>Cholanaickan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
123	Pulimunda	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Karuvarakundu
1 24	Puttala	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
125	Nellikkalodi	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
126	Vazhakkilli	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
127	Madam	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Mampad
128	Karukachal	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 29	Ezhuthupura	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
130	Palaparamba	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 31	Kampanipadi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
132	Vadapuram	<i>Paniyan, Mala Panickan</i>	Do
133	Kampanikkunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 34	Edakkodu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
135	Amarappalam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
136	Palakkapoyil	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 37	Vazhakkunnu	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
138	Veetikkunnu	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 39	Mundamthode	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
140	Thannikkuzhi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 41	Pulluvari	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 42	Karikkattumanna	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
143	Malamkulam	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Manjeri

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
144	Cherur	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
145	Moothedam	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Moothedam
1 46	Melekarod	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
147	Thazhekarod	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
148	Varakkod	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
149	Kattadi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
150	Moochiparatha	<i>Paniyan, Kuruman</i>	Do
1 51	Marathikadavu	<i>Paniyan, Kuruman</i>	Do
152	Vadakkelay	<i>Kuruman</i>	Do
153	Thalippadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 54	Parakkai	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
155	Palangara	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
156	Eranthani	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 57	Cheerapadam	<i>Kuruman</i>	Do
1 58	Nellikuth	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 59	Poolakkappara	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
160	Uchakkula	<i>Paniyan, Kattunayakan</i>	Do
161	Puthuvai	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
162	Thekkadi	<i>Paniyan, Kattunayakan, Aranadan</i>	Do
163	Kallempadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Nilambur
164	Chellaserikunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
165	Varadempadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
166	Mutheri	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
167	Nallamthanni	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
168	Mukkarshi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
169	Chakkappalli	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 70	Vallappuzha	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 71	Padikkunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
172	Muthukkad	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
173	Eyyamala	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
174	Malachi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Pothukallu
175	Chempra	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
176	Thandankallu	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
177	Kuthirakulam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
178	Madnakkadu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
179	Chalikkal	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
180	Narangapoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 81	Thazhe thudimutti	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 82	Ettappara	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
183	Mukkam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
184	Anakkallu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
1 85	Velumpiyampadam	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
1 86	Kunipala	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
187	Chali	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
188	Appankappu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
189	Kavalapara	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
190	Vaniyampuzha	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
191	Iruttukuthi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
192	Tharappapotti	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
193	Kumbalapara	<i>Kattunayakan, Paniyan</i>	Do
1 94	Kadalipoyil	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
195	Kumankulam	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Thrikkalangod
196	Vendekumpoyil	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Urngatiri
197	Pottadi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 98	Cheenganippalli	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
1 99	Chekkunnu Mala	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
200	Kaliyangal	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
201	Kalakkapara	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
202	Panniyanmala	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
203	Alappara	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
204	Nelliyayi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
205	Kureeri	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
206	Kodampuzha	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tribe Inhabited</b>	<b>Panchayath/Village</b>
207	Odakkayam	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
208	Mailadi	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
209	Enthumpalli	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
210	Vazhakkad	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Vazhakkad
211	Punchakolli	<i>Kattunayakan, Cholanaickan</i>	Vazhikkadavu
212	Alakkal	<i>Kattunayakan</i>	Do
213	Ambalakkunnu	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
214	Ambalakunnu Muthuva	<i>Mala Muthan/Muthuvan</i>	Do
215	Iyamkuzhimukku	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
216	Puthiripadam	<i>Aranadan</i>	Do
217	Thekkukutti	<i>Kuruman</i>	Do
218	Vendekumpotti	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
219	Paralunda	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
220	Palakkuzhi Colony	<i>Paniyan</i>	Do
221	Marutha	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do
222	Karimpanthodi	<i>Paniyan</i>	Wandur
223	Vadakkumpadam	<i>Mala Panickan</i>	Do

## GLOSSARY

<i>Aadikkanatu</i>	: Diagnosis process to consult with spirits among the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Aaramravu</i>	: Sixth day night after the death happens which is found by the <i>Mala Muthans</i> dangerous.
<i>Aattamvaipu</i>	: Post burial ceremony of the <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Abba</i>	: Daiva festival of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Achcha</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer Tiyya men.
<i>Achi</i>	: Maternal aunt of the <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Adimapani</i>	: Bonded labour system existed in Malabr. It is also called <i>Kundalpani</i> or <i>Aandukettipani</i> or <i>Vallipani</i> .
<i>Adiyanthiram</i>	: Last rite or pollution ending ceremony.
<i>Alai/ Kallu alai</i>	: Rock shelter of <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Aliyasanthana</i>	: Inheritance in the line of nephews which prevailed in South Canara.
<i>Alla</i>	: Side cavity in the burial pit of the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Aluroopam</i>	: Household god of <i>Aranadan</i> .
<i>Amma</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to call Tiyya woman.
<i>Anauruva</i>	: Elephant god of the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Andaruthi</i>	: Annual ancestral propitiation ceremony.
<i>Anjaranadu daivva</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god.
<i>Aramula</i>	: Bamboo fire thong.
<i>Aranadan</i>	: A tribal group.
<i>Aranadan ceri</i>	: An isolated locality of <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Aranadathies</i>	: <i>Aranadan</i> women.
<i>Aranjithelu</i>	: Tree bark used to wear.
<i>Arathi</i>	: A long narrow piece of cloth of <i>Paniyans</i> tied around the waist.
<i>Ariyittunokkal</i>	: A magical performance in which rice counting is used to divine the supernatural cause of illness.
<i>Amsom</i>	: Village.
<i>Ashrama Vidyalaya</i>	: Special school for tribes.
<i>Attali</i>	: A <i>Paniyan</i> trance dancer.
<i>Attupunthayattu</i> <i>/Pudayattu</i>	: Pre-delivery ritual of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Atukari</i>	: Mid-wife.



<i>Avakashapanam</i>	: Tributary at the time of marriage negotiation of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Aval</i>	: Beaten rice.
<i>Ayyarukali</i>	: Folk dance of <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Badukka</i>	: A stick used by <i>Kattunayakan</i> for ceremonies.
<i>Bahtan</i>	: One of the two ancestors of <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Balabannu</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term for banana.
<i>Balikkarathi</i>	: Brother of dead person among the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Biida</i>	: Ritualistic instrument of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Cela</i>	: Female upper garment covering their breast.
<i>Charatukettu</i>	: Ceremony of <i>Mala Panickan</i> of tying a thread around the loin of the new born.
<i>Chavittikodukka</i>	: Customery practice selecting site for burial pit of the <i>Kurumar</i> .
<i>Chemmi/chenmin</i>	: Tribal head.
<i>Chenda</i>	: Musical instrument.
<i>Chenmakkaran/ tsenmakkaran/janmakkaran /sanmakkaran</i>	: The head man of the clan among the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Chenmam/tsenmam</i>	: Clan unit or the territory in which a kingroup of <i>Cholanaickan</i> roam about for collection, hunting and fishing over which they have exclusive economic rights.
<i>Chettan</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer male Christians.
<i>Chettathi</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer female Christians.
<i>Chidukandi</i>	: Customery practice of the <i>Paniyans</i> of making loud noise to drive out the spirit when carrying the corpse to the burial ground.
<i>Chinda</i>	: Loincloth of <i>Kuruman</i> to cover the waist.
<i>Chola</i>	: Stream or forest.
<i>Cholassandaivam</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of progeniture.
<i>Chooralkottai</i>	: Cane basket of <i>Cholanaickan</i> to collect forest produces.
<i>Chorunu</i>	: Naming ceremony among the <i>Kurumar</i> .
<i>Chootumani</i>	: Ear ornament of the <i>Paniyan</i> woman.
<i>Chova</i>	: Shelf of <i>Mala Muthans</i> made out of bamboo poles.
<i>Daivakkottai</i>	: Divine basket.
<i>Daivamkanal</i>	: Identification of supernatural causes of illness among the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Daivamkotuti/Kotuti</i>	: Annual celebration to propitiate the ancestral spirits.

<i>Daivamkutsal</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> magical function of encircling the grave and murmuring the reason of the death.
<i>Daivathe Vilikkal</i>	: Ancestor consulting ritual of the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Dakshina/Acharapanam</i>	: Bride price among the <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Dana salladu</i>	: Grain used by the <i>Kattunayakan</i> for the ceremony at the time of bearing the dead body to the burial ground.
<i>Danna</i>	: Illness.
<i>Desom</i>	: A subdivision of an <i>amsom</i> .
<i>Devvavalastatu</i>	: The consultation with spirit by the <i>Chenmakkaran</i> of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Doddapula</i>	: Pollution removal ceremony of <i>Kattunayakan</i> observed one month after the death.
<i>Duppa</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term for camphor.
<i>Edippiyodu</i>	: Forcible capture of the wife among <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Elamannamma</i>	: Goddess of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Eluthamma</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to call <i>Mullukurumba</i> .
<i>Ennu</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> wife.
<i>Ganda</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> husband.
<i>Gattilakka Sangali</i>	: Neck ornament of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Gudimma</i>	: A small leaf shelter erected for the confinement of a <i>Cholanaickan</i> woman.
<i>Gulikan/Kuli</i>	: Chief deity of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Gumma/Tindalpura</i>	: Special hut of <i>Kattunayakan</i> to seclude their menstruating girls.
<i>Idivettidaivam</i>	: God of lightening and thunder bolt of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Iittupura</i>	: Temporary hut of <i>Kattunayakan</i> for delivery.
<i>Illam</i>	: Lineage of <i>Paniyans</i> ; houses of <i>Kuruman</i> and <i>Mala Muthan</i> .
<i>Ippimala</i>	: A mountain near the <i>Banasura</i> peak of <i>Waynad</i> .
<i>Ippimala mayla</i>	: Mythical temple of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Ippimala muthappa</i>	: Mythical ancestor (Grand father) of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Ippimala muthassi</i>	: Mythical ancestor (Grand mother) of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Ippimala teyya</i>	: Mythical God of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Iravamuthappan</i>	: Name given to the Moon by the <i>Aranadan</i> .
<i>Ireli</i>	: Bamboo comb.
<i>Irupathietskalkampidiyam</i>	: Naming ceremony of <i>Mala Muthan</i> .
<i>Janmam</i>	: Absolute property right in land.
<i>Janmi</i>	: Non tribal landlord.

<i>Kadamkadan</i>	: One of the two moieties of <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Kadavu</i>	: River side from where the tribes usually taken bath.
<i>Kakkakanji</i>	: Rice placed at the grave offering to the spirit by the Paniyans.
<i>Kakkapula</i>	: Last post burial rite of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kala Gulikan</i>	: God of agricultural land of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kalauru</i>	: Zoomorphic spirit of oxen of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Kalayamvekkal</i>	: Ritual performed by the <i>Paniyans</i> at the time of delivery.
<i>Kali</i>	: Goddess of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kalladi/Kalladikkaran</i>	: Religious head or oracle of Aranadar, <i>Kurumar</i> .
<i>Kallumala</i>	: Stone necklace.
<i>Kalrupa</i>	: Twenty five paise.
<i>Kammili</i>	: God of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Kanakana/Mothal</i>	: Bride price among the <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Kanam</i>	: Land tenure system in Malabar.
<i>Kanam/Arupathinalu</i>	: Bride price among the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Karanavar</i>	: Eldest male member and the manager of the taravad.
<i>Karayma</i>	: Messenger who assists the <i>Paniyan</i> headman.
<i>Karidaivam</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of fortune.
<i>Karyamtheerkal</i>	: Divorce among the <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Kathi/Vaikathi</i>	: Knife.
<i>Kathukuthukalyanam</i>	: Ear piercing ceremony.
<i>Kattil</i>	: Bamboo bier of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Kattilamma</i>	: Goddess of forest of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kattu Bagavathi</i>	: Goddess of forest.
<i>Kayilu</i>	: Coconut shell with handle.
<i>Kettiyattam</i>	: A kind of trance performed by <i>Paniyans</i> to ward off the invasion of malevolent spirit.
<i>Kilukki</i>	: Musical instrument of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Kirikam</i>	: Endogamous moiety of the <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Kodali</i>	: Hand axe.
<i>Koima/Koyma</i>	: Hereditary headman and the sorcerer of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kolkaran</i>	: Executive functionary of Kuruma headman.
<i>Komaram</i>	: Oracle or Shaman.
<i>Kombuvala</i>	: Copper rings of <i>Mala Muthan</i> woman.

<i>Kontai</i>	: A basket work protection from the rain, a substitute for umbrella is made up of split reeds interwoven with arrow roof leaves.
<i>Koolimaladaivam</i>	: God of animals of the <i>Cholanaickans</i> ,
<i>Koolithampurath</i>	: Goddess of the <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Kootupattikkal</i>	: Magical power of <i>tsemmakaran</i> of <i>Cholanaickar</i> to punish the trespassers of their <i>tsemmam</i> .
<i>Kudumba</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> family.
<i>Kovilakom</i>	: A place of royal families in Malabar.
<i>Kudamani:</i>	: Anklet.
<i>Kuduma</i>	: Earring of <i>Mala Muthan</i> men.
<i>Kulitara</i>	: Resting place of <i>Gulikan</i> , or <i>Kuli</i> , Chief deity of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kumbil</i>	: Small leaf shallow plate.
<i>Kummali</i>	: Segregating hut for women at their periods.
<i>Kundalpani</i>	: System of bonded labour.
<i>Kurukkal</i>	: Term used by the <i>Mala Panickans</i> to call the <i>Mappila</i> Landlords.
<i>Kusu erika</i>	: Child birth among the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Kuthamuram</i>	: Winnowing basket.
<i>Kuttachi</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer female <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kuttam theerkuka</i>	: Post burial offering of coins by the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kuttan</i>	: <i>Paniyan</i> Moopan or village head.
<i>Kuttanbala</i>	: Bangle of <i>Paniyan</i> Moopan.
<i>Kuttichathan</i>	: God of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kuttivellan</i>	: God of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Kuttu</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer male <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Madali/Mothali</i>	: Family head of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Made</i>	: Side cavity of <i>Cholanaickan</i> grave.
<i>Makkathayam</i>	: System of inheritance through sons.
<i>Mala</i>	: Hill.
<i>Malachidaivam</i>	: Hill goddess of <i>Aranadan</i> and <i>Paniyan</i> .
<i>Malakki/ Kalan</i>	: Term used by the <i>Mala Muthans</i> to call angel who takes the soul. <i>Malak</i> is a Quraanic term which means angel.
<i>Malapanikkathy</i>	: <i>Mala Panickan</i> woman.
<i>Mamen</i>	: Mother's brother, uncle.
<i>Mana</i>	: Leaf shelter of <i>Cholanaickan</i> and <i>Kattunayakan</i> .

<i>Manasarasadu</i>	: Purificatory function in connection with puberty rite of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Manjaranadudaivam</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of health.
<i>Maranapula/Kakaapula</i>	: Post burial rite of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Maravi</i>	: A shallow wooden basket used by the <i>Paniyans</i> for mining gold.
<i>Marippedukkal</i>	: Taking the corpse to the burial ground among the <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Marippu</i>	: Term used by the <i>Mala Muthans</i> and the <i>Paniyans</i> to refer the dead body.
<i>Mariyamma</i>	: Goddess rain of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Mariyan</i>	: Clan god of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Marumakkathaya</i>	: Law of inheritance through female lines.
<i>Melikkarathi</i>	: Daughter of the sister of the deceased among the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Modali/Mothali</i>	: Family head of <i>Paniyans</i> and <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Moopan</i>	: Tribal head.
<i>Morad</i>	: <i>Mala Muthan</i> settlement or village.
<i>Mudathali</i>	: Marriage badge among the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Mude/Maduva</i>	: Marriage among the <i>Kattunaykans</i> .
<i>Midupadam</i>	: Funeral cloth of <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Mundu</i>	: Cloth covering the upper parts of the body.
<i>Munnayikkaran</i>	: Elder son in law among the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Muram</i>	: Bamboo shallow basket.
<i>Murulu</i>	: Ear ornament of <i>Paniyan</i> woman.
<i>Muthan</i>	: Old man.
<i>Muthanbhasha</i>	: Language of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Muttarukkal</i>	: Ritual performed before doing anything to remove the disturbances.
<i>Naalpathatuka</i>	: Naming ceremony of the <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Nadudaivam</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of plains.
<i>Nadus</i>	: Territorial divisions of local chieftains.
<i>Naduvazhis</i>	: Local chieftains.
<i>Naicaknbhasha</i>	: Language of <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Nali</i>	: Wooden measuring jar of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Nalivekkal</i>	: Magical practice of consulting an oracle to understand the cause of death among the <i>Aranadan</i> , <i>Kattunayakan</i> and <i>Paniyan</i> .

<i>Nambutiris</i>	: The Malabar Brahmins.
<i>Nammaliedathi</i>	: Goddess of small pox of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Nammilichi</i>	: Clan god of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Narda/Nardmeevad</i>	: Puberty rite of <i>Kattunayakan</i> . It is also called <i>irandukalyanam</i> .
<i>Natturajas</i>	: Native princes.
<i>Nikalattam</i>	: Ecstatic dance performed by <i>Paniyans</i> for appeasing ancestral spirit.
<i>Nilalu</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> term for spirit.
<i>Nilamburpattu</i>	: Ancient festival held at Nilambur kovilakom during February.
<i>Noottonnu</i>	: Ceremonial puja performed by <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Odakollidaivam</i>	: God of health of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Oddalayaruthu</i>	: Term to refer conception among <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Ode</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer the male <i>chettis</i> .
<i>Odimarichil</i>	: Magical practice of changing one person himself to an animal.
<i>Odithi</i>	: Goddess of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Odiyan</i>	: Supreme god of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Oduthi</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer the female <i>chettis</i> .
<i>Oge</i>	: Term used by <i>Kattunayakan</i> for smoke.
<i>Ole</i>	: Ear ornament of <i>Paniyan</i> woman.
<i>Oledevva</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of streams or rivers.
<i>Oothividuka</i>	: Ritual performed by the <i>Mala Panickans</i> in connection with divorce.
<i>Oppamaladu</i>	: Cohabitation among the <i>Cholanaickans</i> .
<i>Otha</i>	: Bamboo.
<i>Othachi</i>	: Midwife among the <i>Cholanaickans</i> .
<i>Paina</i>	: Spirit of the dead among the <i>Paniyans</i> , <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Pakalmuthappan</i>	: Name given to Sun by <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Palan</i>	: One of the two moieties of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Pandal</i>	: Temporary hut for ceremonies.
<i>Pandam</i>	: A substitute for torch. It is formed by rags dipped in oil and wound round the end of a stick.
<i>Paniyathi</i>	: <i>Paniyan</i> woman.
<i>Paniyan:</i>	: A tribal group.
<i>Pantheerappanmaru</i>	: Twelve mythical ancestors of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Parai</i>	: Bamboo basket of <i>Cholanaickan</i> to gather food.

<i>Paramban</i>	: One of the two moieties of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Paricha</i>	: Bier of the <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Pathinanchadal</i>	: Pollution removal ceremony after delivery of the <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Pathy</i>	: Foot of the hills.
<i>Perikkala</i>	: Ritual observed by the <i>Paniyans</i> to remove the disturbances of evil spirit to the pregnant woman.
<i>Pettichi</i>	: Mid wife of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Pettikayanth appa</i>	: <i>Aranadan</i> girl who attains puberty.
<i>Peyi</i>	: <i>Paniyan</i> term for evil spirit.
<i>Pidichukodukka</i>	: A physical maneuvering made by massaging the temple region by the <i>Cholanaickan</i> to cure disease.
<i>Pirannal adiyanthiram</i>	: Birth day celebration of the <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Pire</i>	: Hut of <i>Kuruman</i> and <i>Paniyan</i> .
<i>Pochumundu/thorthu</i>	: Loincloth of <i>Kurumar</i> to cover the upper parts of the body.
<i>Ponnum neerum kodukka</i>	: The rite of offering the last drops of water to the dying person among the <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Pontali</i>	: Silver necklace of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Ponthakettu</i>	: Temporary leaf shelter of <i>Cholanaickan</i> to seclude the menstruating woman.
<i>Poonikottai</i>	: Basket of <i>Cholanaickan</i> to collect forest produce.
<i>Potten thiruvadi</i>	: Chief deity of <i>Mala Muthan</i> and <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Pthinaickan</i>	: A group of tribes inhabit in the foothills.
<i>Pudamuri</i>	: Marriage in nirth malabar by presenting a cloth by the bride groom to the bride.
<i>Puddies</i>	: Territorial divisions or ascertained areas of forest under the landlords.
<i>Puja</i>	: Religious ceremony.
<i>Pula</i>	: Pollution
<i>Pulakuli adiyanthiram</i>	: Death pollution removal ceremony of the <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Puliuru</i>	: Zoomorphic spirit of tiger of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Pullali</i>	: Chief deity of <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Pullane chouttu</i>	: Feeding ceremony.
<i>Pyara alai</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> rock shelter where the naming ceremony is observed.
<i>Sanchali Karuppan</i>	: Chief deity of <i>Kurumar</i> .

<i>Sasthramnokkal</i>	: <i>Paniyan</i> custom to find out the reason of illness or death.
<i>Sattaibadi</i>	: Bier of the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Savam</i>	: Term used by the <i>Mala Muthans</i> to refer the dead body.
<i>Savu</i>	: Death among the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Savu chela</i>	: Funeral cloth of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Savundi</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> graveyard.
<i>Shimmalachi</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> name to call the goddess, Parvathi.
<i>Takiya</i>	: Building traditionally used as the centre of the activities of Sufi order.
<i>Tali</i>	: Neck ornament of tiny plate of gold, an emblem of married state.
<i>Tambra</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer Nair.
<i>Tambratti</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer Nair woman.
<i>Tampurattikallu</i>	: A white huge stone at Pothukallu which is given divinity by the <i>Paniyan</i> tribe.
<i>Taravad</i>	: Matrilineal joint family.
<i>Tenginukkay</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term to refer coconut.
<i>Tera/ Nootukal</i>	: Bride price among the <i>Kurumar</i> .
<i>Tettu</i>	: Wrong actions in the ceremony among the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .
<i>Tettubekka</i>	: Payment of fine imposed to alleviate mystical retributive punishment by the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Thadi</i>	: Corpse of the <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Thalai daivam</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> god of rain.
<i>Thalikettukalyanam</i>	: A mock marriage ceremony of fixing marriage before attaining puberty.
<i>Thaliyam</i>	: Chief priest or ritualist of <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Thampurankallu</i>	: A dark huge stone at Pothukallu which is given divinity by the <i>Paniyan</i> tribe.
<i>Thampuratti</i>	: Mother deity of <i>Aranadans</i> .
<i>Thandanadu daivam</i>	: God of health of <i>Cholanaickan</i> .
<i>Tharavattukaran</i>	: Headman of the <i>Mala Panickan</i> .
<i>Thazhuthal/thaithal</i>	: Bamboo mat.
<i>Thinka</i>	: <i>Cholanaickan</i> woman at their periods.
<i>Thirandukalyanam</i>	: Puberty ceremony.
<i>Thirandukuli</i>	: Purificatory bath of a tribal girl who attains puberty.
<i>Thudi</i>	: Musical instrument.



<i>Thulasithara</i>	: Mud raised place where <i>tulasi</i> is planted.
<i>Toppisallada</i>	: Puberty purification ceremony of <i>Kattunayakan</i> .
<i>Tuchala</i>	: Special hut for delivery of <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Ulakka</i>	: Pestle.
<i>Undu bathi</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> term for sandwich.
<i>Unjar</i>	: Finger ring of <i>Kattunayakan</i> woman.
<i>Uralu</i>	: Mortar.
<i>Urastatu</i>	: Simple diagnosis process in the consultation with spirit among the <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Uriidal</i>	: Ritual of <i>Mala Panickans</i> in connection with puberty.
<i>Uttu</i>	: Feast.
<i>Vaalemude Ethan</i>	: <i>Kattunayakan</i> name to call the god Siva.
<i>Valiyakakkapula</i>	: Death pollution removal ceremony of the <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Vallikkammal</i>	: Earring of <i>Mala Muthan</i> woman.
<i>Vangar</i>	: Chain of <i>Kattunayakan</i> woman.
<i>Varijin</i>	: Assiastant of <i>Kuruman Moopan</i> .
<i>Vayarukanal</i>	: <i>Mala Panickan</i> ceremony of visiting the pregnant woman.
<i>Velichappadu</i>	: Religious functionary of <i>Paniyans</i> .
<i>Vennathi Mattu</i>	: Cloth washed by the washer woman necessary for removing death pollution among the <i>Mala Panickan</i> and <i>Mala Muthans</i> .
<i>Vettakkorumakan</i>	: Jungle god of the tribes.
<i>Vilakku thampuratti</i>	: Supreme goddess of <i>Cholanaickar</i> .
<i>Vilakkuthelikkal</i>	: Lighting lamp.
<i>Villian</i>	: Sacred specialist of <i>Mala Panickans</i> .
<i>Virika</i>	: The adult male who dies before marriage among the <i>Kattunayakans</i> .

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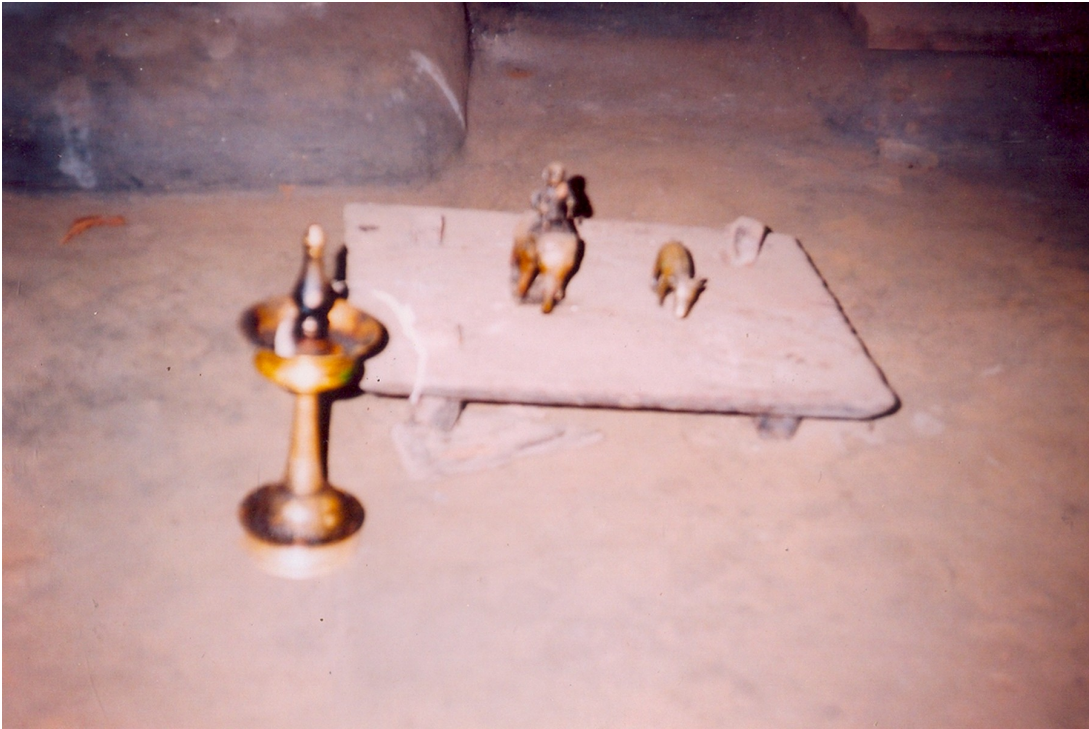
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**Paniyan Idols**



**Rock Shelter – Kattu Paniyan, Vettilakkolly**



**Kattu Paniyan couple – Ambumala**



**Paniyan with *Thudi***



**Badal School – Adyanpara**



**Daivakkottai – Kattunayakan**





**Kattunayakan Family**



**Idols of Paniyans**

## Muttarukkal - Kattunayakan







**Cholanaickan making kottai**



**Cholanaickan habitat**



**Cholanickan cutting beard by sharp bamboo piece**



**Kattunayakan – Nalivekkal**



**Cholanaickan making fire**



**Makibary alai**



**Inside view of Kattunayakan shrine**



**Kattunayakan settlement - Kumbalappara**



**Kattunayakan Moopan - Kumbalappara**



**Meenkoodu**





**Ritualistic instruments of Kattunayakans**



**Bomman Chathan – Kattunayakan Mooppan- Appan Kappu**



**Thulasithara**



**Kuruma Woman**



**Kattunayakan Woman**



**Rock shelter - Cholanaickan**



**Inside view of Kattunayakan shrine**



**Daivathani - Karulai**



**Cholanaickan**



**Cholanaickar**



**Cholanaickan Family**



**Mala Muthans - Palakkayam**



**Paniyan Hut**



**Remnants of Thampurattikallu**



**Thampurankallu**



**Vettakkorumakan Temple - Nilambur**



**Remains of Kareeri Temple - Karulai**











**Erumadam**



**Kattunayakan Mana**



**Rock shelter- Kattunayakan**



**Kattunayakans gathering forest produces**



**Classroom – Badal School, Cholarmala**



**Pathinaickans**



**Pathinaickan Women**



**Kuttan – Adyanpara**





**Kilukki**



**Kattunayakan - Singing folk song**



**Kattunayakan shrine**



**Cholanaickan**

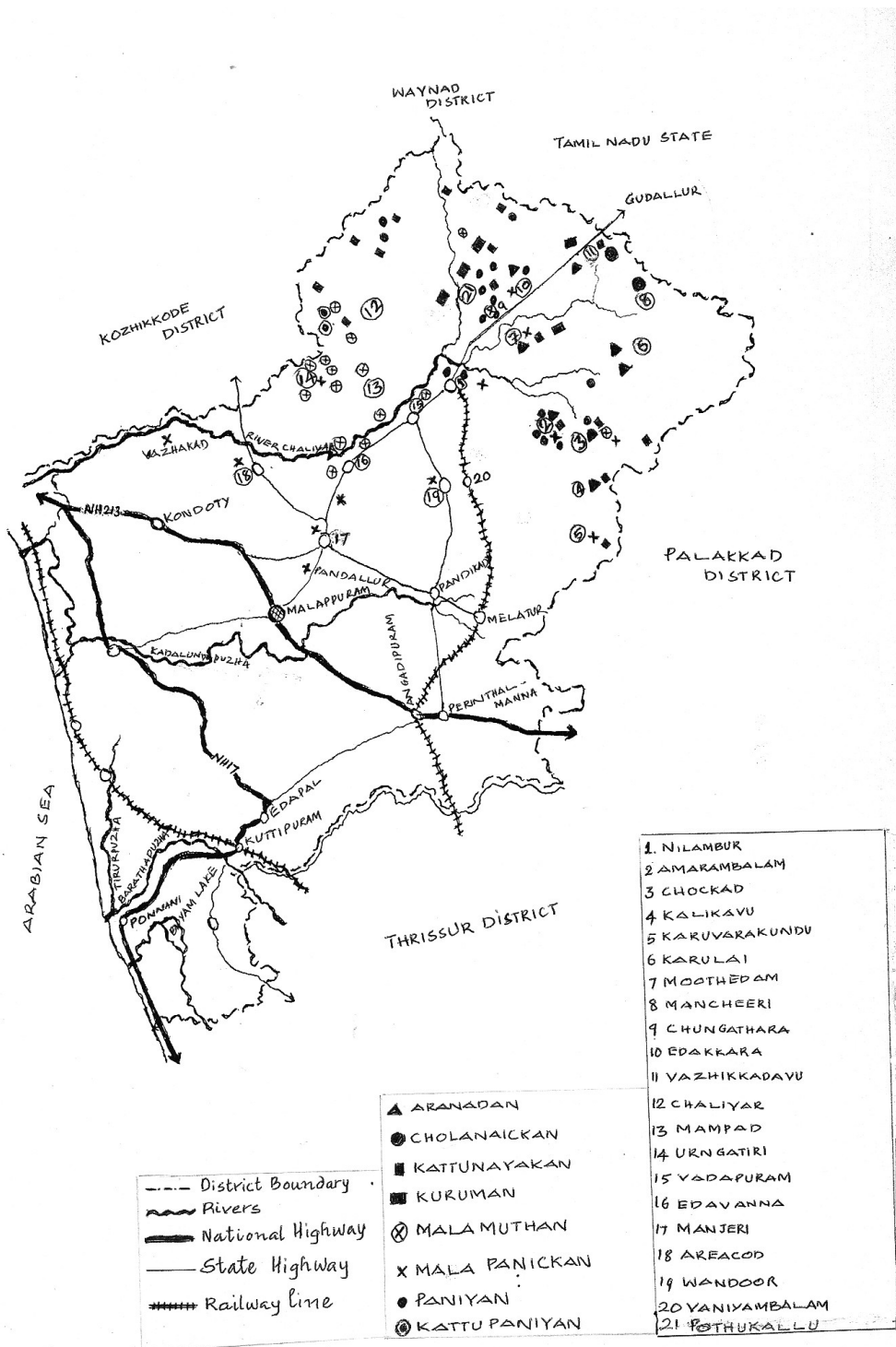


**Picturistic instruments of Paniyans**

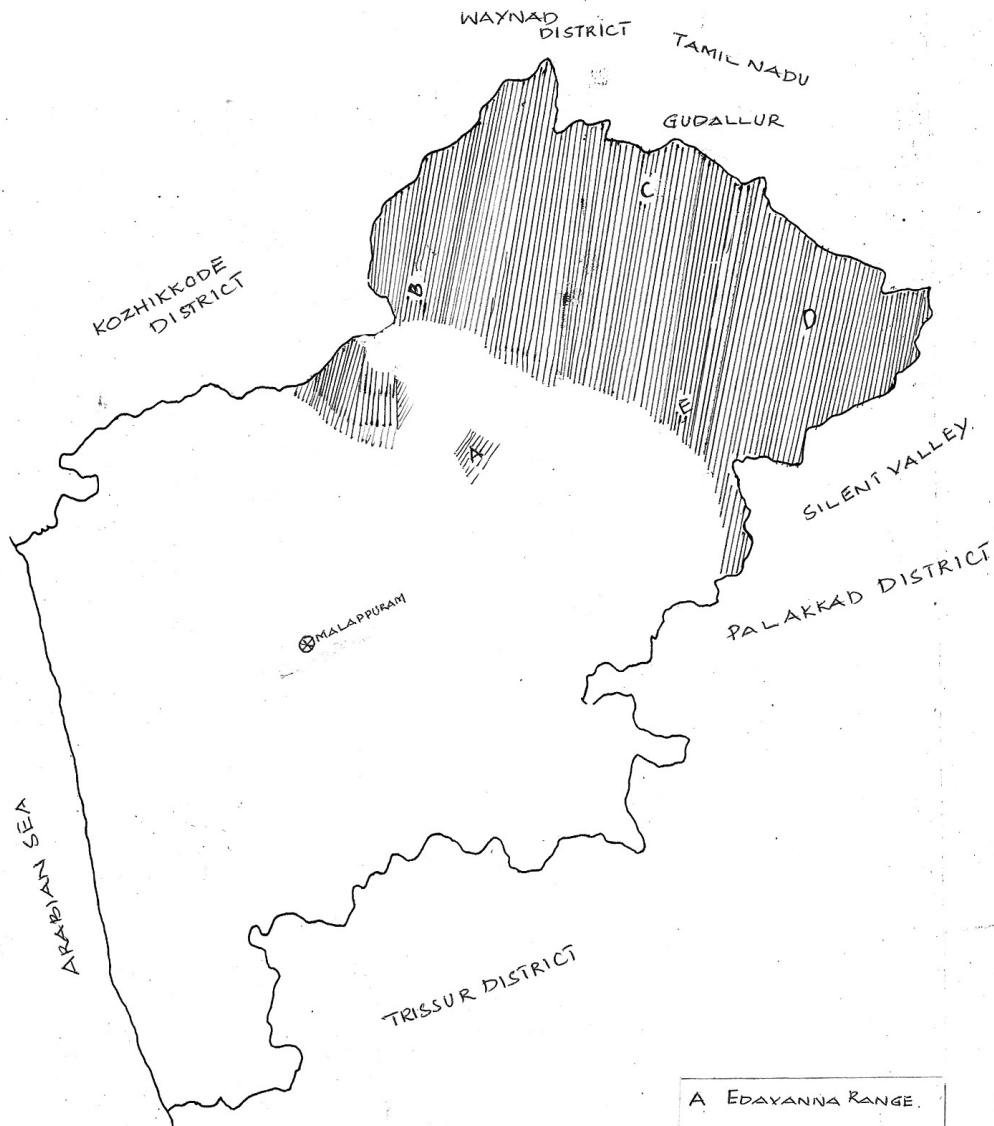


**Daivakottai**

# Map of Malappuram District showing the Tribal Settlements



# Map of Malappuram district showing the Area of Tribal Settlements



- A EDAYANNA RANGE.
- B NILAMBUR RANGE
- C VAZHICKADAV RANGE
- D KARULAI RANGE
- E KALIKAVU RANGE.

# Map of Kerala State showing the Location of Malappuram District

