

STUDIES OF TRIBES IN KERALA: A TREND REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The literature on tribal cultures has always been a favourite subject for sociologists and anthropologists. Descriptions and understanding of tribes and their cultural institutions have been of immense help not only to learn about particular tribes but also to comprehend human culture in general. This is because tribal culture is considered to be indigenous and, perhaps, the prototype of the many evolved cultures. Emile Durkheim (1961) wrote his book, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, based on the insights he derived from the study of religious practices of the aboriginal peoples of Australia. The research studies on the social institutions of the tribals have made important contributions to our understanding of the development of human societies and organizations.

This literature survey is divided into a few sections. Some conceptual problems are discussed at the outset followed by some details about Kerala tribes including their names and size of the population. Then, encyclopedic and general books discussing the tribes are reviewed. The articles in these books give socio-economic details of the various tribes. In the next section, the various themes that are predominantly covered are taken up. Most frequently occurring issues are tribal economy, land ownership, kinship and marriage, and healthcare. Another section deals with studies on individual communities such as Kurichiyans, Paniyans, Cholanaickans, Kanikkars, Uralies and Muthuvans. A survey on the tribal literature in the vernacular constitutes another section. There are quite a number of popular books in Malayalam, though many of them are not written by trained social scientists. There are two geographical tribal areas in Kerala which have received a lot of attention. Books on these areas, namely Wayanad and Attappady, are separately mentioned. There is also a section on three chronological periods of the tribal literature. The last section of this survey examines the lacunae in the existing research and suggests issues

which deserve fresh sociological research. A good bibliography, though not exhaustive, is the last section in this survey.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

With a very limited research grant, all the libraries and research centres in Kerala could not be covered. The survey is limited to the literature found in the following libraries : Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies (CSES), Kochi; Kerala Institute of Research Training and Studies on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, (KIRTADS) Kozhikode; Institute for the Study of Dravidian Linguistics, Thiruvananthapuram; Department of Anthropology, Thalassery campus, Kannur University; Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; Loyola College, Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram; Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi; Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Rajagiri Institute of Social Sciences, Kochi. There are, I am sure, some unpublished M.Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations on the tribes in Kerala. Except for a few, they are not discussed in this literature survey. In future, a separate survey can be undertaken for unpublished sources.

TRIBES IN INDIA

Studies and researches on tribal people carry great significance for us as India has about 70 million tribals spread across its plains and hills. The majority of the indigenous people are found in the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan (Singh 1994:3). Some states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep are mostly inhabited by tribals. The size of the tribes in India varies considerably. Whereas Bhils and Santals run into millions, Bomdo, Haisa and Kongbo can be counted on one's fingers (ibid.).

The concept of tribe has never been properly defined with any precision. The term encompasses a wide variety of peoples at various stages of development. According to Jaganath Pathy (1999), the origin of the existing concept can be

traced to colonialism. Many tribes were once independent communities with whom colonialists concluded treaties. The concept of tribe emerged only after colonialism took root in Asia, Australia and America. India has the largest tribal population in the world. Yet, we too do not have a universally acceptable definition. Small size, emphasis on kinship relations, life in hill areas and forests, lack of a written language and native religion are the chief characteristics attributed to them. “These peoples in general are historically evolved entities and are biologically self-perpetuating, marked by certain common cultural features and are subordinated in several ways to the dominant society, its institutions and values”(Pathy 1999:103). In India, politics ultimately decides the tribal identity. K.S. Singh (1994:1) says that “a tribe is an administrative and political concept”. The President of India has designated some communities as Scheduled Tribes in each state. To drive the point home, one may refer to the recent agitation of Gujjars in Rajasthan for including them in the Scheduled Tribe category in Rajasthan. It may be noted that they are already in that category in the state of Himachal Pradesh. After accepting non-tribe status all these years, they now want a new designation by resorting to even violence. The most recent agitation (November, 2007) by the tea-garden labourers in Assam for Scheduled Tribe status is another glaring example. Ironically, they are called Adivasis in Assam without enjoying the designation of Scheduled Tribe, or even that of backward community. So too, anthropologists might consider certain communities as tribes, but the state may not confer them that status. Some tribes in Kerala such as Allar, Chingathan and Kalanadi are not listed as Scheduled tribes.

The tribal population in India is distributed over 500 separate communities. Most tribal-inhabited areas are backward in economic development. However, their regions contain about 70 percent of India’s mineral resources (Pathy 2005: 37-38). The modern technology has enabled the state to exploit this wealth, thereby further paving way for the interference in the tribal way of life.

In spite of several protective measures for the non-alienation of tribal land, the exploitation continues.

TRIBES IN KERALA

As per the latest list of the Government of Kerala (2003), (Notified also in the Gazette of India dated 8.1.2003) there are 36 Scheduled Tribes in the state of Kerala. Their names are listed in Table 1. The total number of tribal groups is debatable. Luiz (1962) gives a list of 48 tribal communities. Somasekharan Nair (1976:14-15) estimates the number to be between 41 to 54.

Table 1: List of Scheduled Tribes in Kerala

No.	Scheduled Tribes in Kerala
1.	Adiyan
2.	Aranadan (Aranadan)
3.	Eravallan
4.	Hill Pulaya (Mala Pulaya, Kurumba Pulayan, Karavazhi Pulayan, Pamba Pulayan)
5.	Irulan, Irular
6.	Kadar (Wayanad Kadar)
7.	Kanikaran, Kanikar
8.	Kattunaykans
9.	Kochuvelan
10.	Koraga
11.	Kudiya, Melakudi
12.	Kurichan (Kurichiyan)
13.	Kurumans (Mullu Kuruman, Mulla Kuruman, Mala Kuruman)
14.	Kurumbas (Kurumbar, Kurumban)
15.	Maha Malasar
16.	Malai Arayan (Mala Arayan)
17.	Malai Pandaran
18.	Malai Vedan
19.	Malakkuravan
20.	Malasar

21.	Malyaln, Nattu Malayan, Konga Malayan (Excluding the areas comprising the Kasargode, Cannanore, Wayanad and Kozhikode Districts)
22.	Malayarayar
23.	Mannan (൬X) (to be spelt in Malayalam script in Parenthesis)
24.	Muthuvan, Mudugar, Muduvans
25.	Palleyan, Palliyan, Palliyar, Paliyan
26.	Paniyan
27.	Ulladan (Ullatans)
28.	Uraly
29.	Malavettuvan (in Kasargode and Kannur districts)
30.	Ten Kurumban, Jenu Kurumban
31.	Thachanadan, Thachanadan Moopan
32.	Cholanaickan
33.	Mavilan
34.	Karimpalan
35.	Vetta Kuruman
36.	Mala Panickar

There are, as per the 2001 Census of India, 3, 64,189* tribals in Kerala constituting 1.14 per cent of the total population (31,841,371) of Kerala. Among the tribal population, 180,169 are males and 184,020 are females. They have a literacy rate of 64.35 per cent, much above the literacy rate of even non-tribals in many states of India. Among the tribal population the majority, 1.48 per cent (Bhat and Bhargava 2005: 91-95) live in the rural areas and only 0.17 per cent live in urban areas. The size of the individual tribes varies considerably. Kochuvelan tribe with only 36 people altogether, Aranadan with 153 members. Maha Malasar with 116 souls and Malakuruvan with 260 members are indeed very small tribes. Paniyan is the largest tribe with a population of 81,940 constituting 22.5 per cent of the tribals in Kerala. The tribes with significant population are given in Table 2.

* The figures cited in this section are taken from Bhat, S.C. and K. Gopal Bhargava. 2005. *Land and People* Vol. 14 Kerala, Delhi. Kalpaz Publications p.p. 91-95.

Table 2: Numerically Significant Tribes in Kerala

Names	Population	Percentage
All STs	364,189	100.00
Paniyans	81,940	22.50
Kurichiyans	32,746	9.00
Malai Arayans	32,232	8.90
Kurumans	26,177	7.19
Muthuvans	21,266	5.84
Ulladan	16,741	4.60
Irular	12,038	3.30
Uraly	11,103	3.05
Kanikkar	10,325	2.83
All other tribes	11,96,21	32.79

Source: Bhat and Bhargava 2005 pp. 91-95

Table 2 reveals that 22.50% of all the tribal population belongs to Paniyans who are mostly found in Wayanad. The next significant groups are Kurichiyans, Malai Arayans and Kurumans with 9%, 8.90% and 7.19%, respectively.

The geographical distribution of the tribal communities also deserves some attention. The bulk of them are found in the erstwhile Malabar province of Kerala, especially in the districts of Wayanad (37.36%), Palghat (10.89%) and Kasargode (8.33%), constituting 56.58% of the entire tribal population of Kerala (GOK. 2005: 344).

ENCYCLOPEDIA BOOKS

A.A.D. Luiz's book *Tribes of Kerala* (1962) is an authoritative account of 48 tribes, both scheduled and nonscheduled, of Kerala. Each tribe is separately discussed in terms of occupation, marriage, family and religion. It is an extremely useful work for all those who are interested in Kerala tribes. A brief outline of some of the tribes in Kerala can be found in Thurston's (1909) *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*. L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer's volumes (1909) titled *The Tribes and Castes of Cochin* constituted a pioneering work.

Detailed descriptions of the social organization of the Kadars, Malayans, Eravallens, Nayadis and of the Ulladans are found in these volumes. One can also learn about marriage, religion and rites of passage prevalent among these groups.

S.S. Shashi (1995) in his *Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes* devotes an entire volume on Kerala wherein most of the tribes are covered. S.M. Channa (2004) has published *Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes and Castes* which runs into 23 volumes. One can also refer to *Encyclopedic Profile of India Tribes* by Sachchidananda and Prasad (1996). P.K. Mohanti (2002) in his work *Development of Primitive Tribal Groups in India* gives brief notes on Kurumbar, Kadar, Cholanaikkan, Koraga and Kattunaikan. S.C. Bhat and Gopal K. Bhargava (2005) in their series on *Land and People* have a volume on Kerala. Chapter 5 of this volume gives an overall situation of the scheduled tribes including some statistical details. P.K. Sukumaran Nair (2003) gives some statistical data of the scheduled tribes in Kerala based on the 1991 Census of India. Forestry Information Bureau of Kerala Forest Department and Kerala Forest Research Institute (1994) have compiled *Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in Forests of Kerala: Facts and Figures*. Statistical data on these communities living in the Kerala forest areas are found in this compilation. Data regarding population size, education, employment, income, type of house construction and a host of other details are given in tables. It is interesting to learn that only 22.92% of the tribals in Kerala live in forest areas. In Wayanad where the largest number of tribals inhabits, only 8.81% of them have their habitations in the forests. P. Damodaran Nettoor (1974) has written a book in Malayalam wherein 48 tribes of Kerala are described.

The Encyclopedia of Dravidian Tribes (1996) is an extremely useful volume giving accounts of the social and material culture and religion of all the Dravidian tribes found in India and in the neighbouring countries. The volumes have essays on the constitutional provision regarding the tribes in India. Saksena and others (2006) discuss the economic and social development

of the tribes. Fuchs (1973) examines the aboriginal tribes of India. ICSSR survey (1972) discusses the available literature on the tribals. K.S. Singh's volumes (1972, 1982, 1994) give, valuable information on tribals including those of Kerala.

TRIBAL ECONOMY AND LAND OWNERSHIP

The most widely discussed theme is tribal economy, particularly related to land-alienation. Jos Chattukulam and M.S. John (2006) in their paper 'Issues in Tribal Development: The Recent Experience of Kerala' deal with land alienation, especially in Wayanad and Palghat districts. The majority of the tribals are landless. Over 82% of the tribal people are agricultural labourers. Fifty per cent of the Paniyans do not own any land. Those tribals who live below poverty line are 40%, and in Wayand, they constitute 60%. The Kerala Government enacted, The Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction of Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act, 1999, replacing an earlier Act. This legislation is intended to partially restore alienated land to the affected tribals. However, this Act too is mired in legal complications. There are unresolved legal issues in giving away forest land. The Wayanad tribals are now carrying out agitations and protest movements for restoration of land under various organizations, such as Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha, Adivasi Dalit Samara Samiti and Indian National Farmers Movement.

Sasikumar (2006) gives a very informative account of the land alienation among the tribals. He discusses various tribal movements for their land restoration, especially in the context of the police action at Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad. Bindu Ramachandran (2006) also examines the history of displacement of the tribals from their land in Wayanad and how it has led to identity crisis among the tribals.

Mohandas (1992) investigates the impact of new settlers who came to the Wayanad region. The alienation of the tribal lands that started after the arrival of the British in the region became widespread as a result of migrants

especially from Travancore. This period saw a revolution in the crop patterns and agricultural practices. New cash crops and the introduction of the wage system deeply affected the tribal population. Their self-reliant and nonmonetized economy was transformed into a dependent and monetized economy.

Sanathanam Velluva (2006) examines the processes of change in settlement pattern, land acquisition, land degradation and land-use pattern in two villages of Agali and Sholayar of Attappady block of Palghat district. The tribal way of cultivation has been ruined because of the Malayalee and Tamil migrants. Irular, Mudugar and Kurumbar are the tribes found in the study area. According to the author, the *Vandavasi* (new settlers) are replacing *The Adivasi* (Ibid.: 81). As a result, the land-based resources of the indigenous people dried up, and many tribals were reduced to daily wage earners.

Kunhaman (1982a) gives a detailed history of the tribal economy especially in the Malabar region. Economic evolution and land ownership pattern are discussed. The same author (1981) examines land alienation in Attapady. He (1983) gives a summary description of the tribal problems related to land. The issues connected to their economic development are thoroughly analyzed in his book (1989), *Development of Tribal Economy*. Kunhaman (1982b) describes the bonded labour system among the tribals in Wayanad. C.V. Kumaran (1990) in his M.Phil. thesis examines Kerala Tribal Land Act with reference to Wayanad district. Nandi and others (1971) refers to the shifting cultivation and the occupation of toddy tapping among the Ulladans in Kottayam district. Viswambaran and Aravindakshan (1987) examine the agricultural situation of the Malayans in their colonies in Trichur district. Prakash (2002) in his Malayalam book describes the land alienation in Wayanad, Idukki and Attappady and also the sexual exploitation of the tribal women. According to him, The Kerala Government, particularly its forest department, has played a culpable and shameful role in dispossessing the tribals of their rights in the land. Prasanth (1985) examines land reforms and land distribution among the

scheduled tribes of Kerala. Mariamma J. Kalathil (2004) discusses alienation and degradation of land and consequent enslavement of women among the Irulars in Attappady.

There are some project reports and publications by the government of Kerala. Some of these may be mentioned here. *Socio-Economic Survey on Tribals* (Government of Kerala: [GOK] 1976-78) is a useful document. *Tribal Sub-Plan of Kerala* (GOK: 1975) gives details about tribal development outlays. *Integrated Tribal Development Project for Attappady* (GOK: 1976) discusses integrated development issues in Attappady. There is also an evaluation study of such schemes in Attappady (GOK: 1977). Another survey gives details about tribal land in Attappady (GOK: 1982). A third study in Attappady examines the issue of sustainable development (GOK: 1994). There is also a publication about Tribal Sub-Plan areas in Wayanad (GOK: 1976). A government report on the Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Research Studies on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS) lists the projects completed by the Institute on alienation of land, dairy development and so on (GOK: 1987). KIRTADS (1982) has also evaluated the integrated tribal development project in Attappady.

The Centre of Excellence attached to the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode has prepared a very useful report entitled 'A Situational Study and Feasibility Report for the Comprehensive Development of the Adivasi Communities of Wayanad (2006).

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Ehrenfels (1952) has made a detailed study on the practice of mother-right among the Kadar. Aiyappan (see Uma Charan Mohanti 1998) discusses marriage and matriliney among the Kurichiyans. Chacko Kannattumadi (1994) discusses the matrilineage along with family, marriage, puberty rites among the Kurichiyans. According to him, they are the *Namboodiris* among the tribals. They practise the principles of purity and pollution scrupulously. Aiyappan

and Mahadevan (1990) give details of Kurichiyans' matriliney. Their largest matrilineal joint family is situated at Kaniampetta village. It spreads over one and a half acres with 14 buildings. At the time of the study, there were 115 members with 31 independent rooms for married couples. Aiyappan (1998) has published a paper on the world view of the matrilineal Kurichiyans. Ravi Varma (2004) in his Malayalam book gives a journalistic account of the matrilineal tribes of Kurichiyans and Muthuvans. K. Panoor (1971) describes the marriage customs among the tribals found in Idukki district. The structure of marriage and family of Mala Ulladans is discussed by S. Nandi et al. (1971).

L.A. Krishna Iyer (1924) deals with the marriage customs among the Muthuvans. He (1994) has written also a paper on matriarchy. Kutty and Mukherjee (1952) study marriage and kinship among the Uraly. M.K. Nag (1954a) discusses family structure among the Uraly as well as among the Kanikkar. Susheela Devi (1950) describes kinship and family among the Paliyans of Kumali. Somasekharan Nair (1975) examines the kinship terms in the Adiya language. He (1976b) has also a paper to his credit on this subject in Malayalam. Usha (1998) discusses kinship terms in her Ph.D. thesis. Seetha Kakkoth (2006) discusses the customs of spouse selection in a tribal group. Vidyarthi and Ram (1976) examine the matrilineal practices among the Kanikkar, Kadar and Mannan.

HEALTH CARE

Vineetha Menon (1995) discusses health culture of the Kanikkars in her Ph.D thesis submitted to York University, Canada. She points out the conflict of interests that has arisen between the traditional and modern healthcare practices in the community. She gives an analysis of the indigenous and state-organized medical systems. There is an elaborate description of the reproductive health care practices of the community. The author argues for an integration of local and global systems of medicine as they are not isolated practices but interacting ones. Viswanathan Nair (1985) discusses tribal health and medicine in Kerala in his Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Calicut University. He (1995) describes

traditional healers among the tribes. P.R.G. Mathur (1995) considers the indigenous treatment for common sicknesses among the Irulars of Attappady. There are studies on the health practices of some other tribes also in the book edited by Viswanathan Nair (1995). Jose Boban (1998) in his book *Tribal Ethnomedicine, Continuity and Change* examines the concepts of disease and medicine among the Muthuvans and Mannans in Idukki district. Magical spells and techniques as well as modern medicine are practised by these tribes.

INDIVIDUAL TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

By far the most numerous studies are summary accounts of individual tribes dealing with all the aspects of their social organization. The main reason for this may be that most tribes are small in population lending little opportunity for thematic accounts. However, some tribes have received far more anthropological focus than the others. Let us have a look at some of these tribal studies.

KURICHIYANS

Kumaran (1976) has a monograph in Malayalam dealing comprehensively with the Kurichiyans. Aiyappan and Mahadevan (1990) deal with the ecology, economy and the matrilineal system of the community. P.R.G. Mathur (1985) has an article on the customary laws prevalent among them. Mohanti (1998) has edited and published two papers of Aiyappan on the Kurichiyans community. Chadopadhyay (1978) has a chapter on the social organization of the Kurichiyans in her book, *Tribalism in India*. Gopalan Nair (1911) gives an account of the community with special reference to matrilineality and superior status among other groups. They even had an armed conflict with the British in the early 19th century. Antony (1995) compares Kurichiyans food economy with that of the Paniyans. Chacko Kannattumadi (2003) has a book in Malayalam on the Kurichiyans tribe. He has discussed family, marriage, puberty rites and hunting expeditions. K. Panoor (1963) and Mavoor (1992) describe the community in their books.

PANIYANS

Aiyyappan has a paper on the marriage by elopement by the Paniyans [see Mohanti 1998]. P.K. Misra (1982) describes social mobilization among them. Kulirani (1984) gives an anthropological account of the Paniyans. Somasekharan Nair (1976a) has written a monograph on the community in Malayalam language. V. Nair (1993) has written on the Paniya women. Antony (1995) deals with the food economy of the Paniyans. Gopalan Nair (1911) gives an elaborate account of the Paniyas in Wayanad. Panoor (1963), Mavoor (1992) and A.R. Narayanan Nair (1980) give short descriptions of the Paniyans.

CHOLANAICKANS

P.R.G. Mathur (1977a, 1977b) has studied in detail Cholanaickans, a small tribe consisting of 320 souls as per the 1991 Census of India. He (1977c) devotes two chapters on Cholanaickans in his book *Tribal Situation*. Bhanu discusses the community's nomadic features (1982a) and again its economic organization (1982b). Bhanu's doctoral thesis was titled *Societal Development in a Pre-Agricultural Society : Cholanaickan, the Cavemen of Kerala* (1984). She has also published a monograph (1989) on this small community. Mohanti (2002) discusses this tribe as a primitive one along with the Kurumbar, Kadar, Koraga and Kattunaicken. P.K. Misra (2006) also refers to the community as a primitive tribe. Mavoor (1992) gives a short description of the community.

KANIKKAR

L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer (1922) briefly describes the social structure of the Kanikkars. Nag (1954a, 1954b) studies the family structure and some demographic aspects of the community. Gnanambal (1954) describes their religious and magical practices. Vineetha Menon (1995) discusses the modern and traditional health culture of the Kanikars. Prema and Felsy (see Tiwari and Tripathi 1992: 152-168) in their article examine the food habits and the consumption pattern of the community. They again discuss nutrition and

health problems encountered by the Kanikkar women (Ibid: 245-258). Karunakaran (2000) has a book on the community in Malayalam.

URALY

Jacob John Kattakayam (1983) discusses the social structure and the recent changes among the Uraly of Idukki district. Their exploitation by others is also highlighted. In S.S. Shashi's encyclopedia (1995), there is a section on the community. Gnanambal deals with the funeral customs of the Urali (1955a) and their religious beliefs (1955b). She (1955c) describes also the magical rites connected with agriculture, puberty, pregnancy and treatment of diseases. Kutty and Mukherjee (1954) discuss the dual organization of the Uralis and also their marriage customs (1952). Sam Mohan Lal (1991) gives a descriptive analysis of the Urali dialect.

MUTHUVANS

Jose Boban (1998) has written a book on ethnomedicine among the tribes of Muthuvan and Mannan in Idukki district. P.T. Thomas (1952) describes the political affiliation among the Muthuva community. Their religion is also discussed by him in another paper (1954). There is a booklet on their dialect by Sakthivel (1978). Joshi (2001) has a Malayalam booklet on their language. There is a description of the community in a Malayalam book (Joy Thirumoolapuram (1981). L.A. Krishna Iyer (1937) discusses marriage customs of the Muthuvans.

Some other individual tribes that are studied are : Nayadis (Aiyappan, 1973), Paliyan (Susheela Devi 1950), Kadar (Ehrenfels 1952, 1948), Mala Arayans (L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer 1922), Mala Ulladans (Nandi et al. 1971) and Koragas (Vasudevan 1998).

TRIBAL STUDIES IN THE VERNACULAR

Fortunately, there are several publications on Kerala tribes in the Malayalam language. Though they are not written by trained social scientists, they certainly fulfill a valuable function by disseminating information on the tribals, often of their exploitation and of abject conditions among the Malayalee population.

It is, perhaps, Panoor who has started writing full length books on the tribal situation in Malayalam language. His two books *Keralathile Africa* (1963a) and *Keralathile America* (1963b) draw attention to the tribals and their exploitation by the mainstream people. His third book *Malakal, Thazhvarakal, Manushyar* (1971) consists of travel notes on some tribes. His fourth book (1990), *Sahyante Makkal*, deals exclusively with the exploitation of the Wayanad tribals by the non-tribals. Nettur Damodaran (1974) has published journalistic accounts of the tribals. There is a book on the Paniyar by Somasekharan Nair (1976). Balakrishnan Mangad (1976) has written a book on the Koraga tribe discussing their socio-economic situation extensively. Joy Thirumoolapuram (1981) has a book about Muthuvans and their life. Sukumaran Nair (1982) discusses some issues of the tribes. *Kanikkarude Lokam* describes social life of the Kanikkars (Sebastian: 1990). Karunakaran (2002) too has published a book on this community. A.R. Narayanan Nair (1980) discusses Paniyan, Adiyar, Pulayan and some others with an emphasis on their language

KIRTADS (2003) has published studies on the distinguishing features of a few communities. *Anyadheenapedunna Bhoomi* (Prakash: 2002) is about the land alienation among the tribals in Kerala. Kannattumadi Chacko (2002) has a book on the life of Kurichiyans. This book is a revised second edition of his earlier work on the same topic. Kumaran Vayaleri (1998) too has a monograph on the Kurichiya tribe. Ravivarma (2004) discusses matriliney among the tribes comparing it with such systems existing elsewhere. Somasekharan Nair (1977)

has discussed the dialect of the Paniyans. Joshi and others (2001a, 2001b) have booklets on Adiya and Muthuva dialects.

AREA STUDIES

There are two tribal dominated areas which have received the maximum attention. The first is the Wayanad district where 37.36% of Kerala tribals live. The district is inhabited by numerically preponderant tribes such as the Paniyans, and the Kurichiyas. The second is Attappady block in Palghat district where Irular, Kurumbas and Mudugar live in a compact area. Palghat district has within its borders 10.89% of the Kerala tribal population.

Aiyyappan and Mahadevan (1990), Antony (1995), Centre of Excellence (2006) Government of Kerala (1977, 1982, 1994), Kulirani (1984), Kumaran (1990), Kunhaman (1982b), P.R.G. Mathur (1911), Bindu Ramachandran (2006) and many others have studied Wayanad tribes.

Alexander (1950), Government of Kerala (1976), Hoeschele (1998), Kapp (1989), KIRTADS (1982), Kunhaman (1981), Mohandas (1992), Pillai and Others (1991), Zvelebil (1988), Mariamma J. Kalathil (2004), P.E. Usha (1998) are among those who contributed to tribal studies in Attappady.

CHRONOLOGICAL PERIODS

The writings on the tribes in Kerala may be grouped into three chronological periods: The literature that appeared before 1947, the publications from 1947 to 1976 and from 1977 to the current year. Though these periods are purely arbitrary, we may designate them as pre-Independence, formative and contemporary (consolidating) periods. Roughly, 10% of the literature covered in this survey belongs to the pre-Independence period. The prominent contributors during this period are L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, (1909, 1922). L.A. Anantha Krishna Iyer (1924, 1934, 1937, 1944), Edgar Thurston (1903, 1907, 1909) and C. Gopalan Nair (1911). They were the founding fathers of the tribal research in Kerala. They gave a general view of some tribes in

Wayanad, Cochin and Travancore areas. Besides writing about Mala Arayans, Muthuvans, Paniyans and Kurichiyans in general, they also dealt with specific topic such as, religion, kinship and matriliney.

Professor A. Aiyyappan began his anthropological research during this time (1937) and, in fact, he has written on tribes in all these periods mentioned in the preceding text (1948, 1990, 1992).

In the formative period, Gnanambal wrote about Urali and Kanikkar tribes (1954, 1955), Ehrenfels studied the Kadar of Cochin (1952), A.R. Kutty and B.B. Mukherjee (1952, 1956) and M.K. Nag (1954a, 1954b) discussed the Uralis and the Kanikkars. Nandi et al. (1971) wrote about the culture of Mala Ulladans, and Thomas (1952, 1954) studied the Muthuvans. The most notable contribution during the formative years was made by A.A.D. Luiz (1962) discussing the social organization of 48 tribes in Kerala. The publications in Malayalam too made its appearance during this time. K. Panoor wrote three books (1963a, 1963b, 1971). Nettur Damodaran (1974), Somasekharan Nair (1976) and Balakrishnan Mangad (1976) are the others who published books on the tribes. About 25% of the surveyed literature belongs to the formative period, whereas the bulk of the writings appeared during the contemporary period. Many of the authors and the topics discussed in this period can be found in the survey presented in the text. Nevertheless, it may be commented that the contemporary period has not been consolidating enough. Much emphasis was given on land and economy; studies on the tribal specific features such as kinship, marriage, religion and social organization do not seem to be adequate.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

This literature review calls for certain overall comments. There is no doubt that a large number of studies exist about four lakh tribal population distributed over 36 scheduled tribes. The tribal people constitute only 1.14 per cent of the total population of Kerala. Unlike in the North-East India where the foreign

missionaries and administrators started tribal studies, in Kerala, it is the regional scholars who contributed to the development of researches on the tribal population.

Some of the distinguishing features of the tribes are their strong kinship organization, religious practices and social structure with an emphasis on social equality. The review reveals that anthropological and sociological studies on these areas are inadequate. This certainly is a lacuna in the existing literature. Of course, most encyclopedias and general books give a survey of the tribes. These surveys should serve as the starting point for deeper and rigorous researches on the communities. The available literature shows that this transition has not unfortunately taken place in a substantial way. Of course, there are some rigorous studies undertaken by Jose Boban, J.J. Kattakayam, Vineetha Menon and Kunhaman to name a few. There are adequate studies on the question of land and economic development. More grants may be generally available to study the development spectrum. But funds should be made available for quality researches on the social and kinship organization and religion of tribes. Studies on tribal village organization are woefully inadequate. Though land alienation is well studied, there is no adequate research on the land ownership and structure of property rights among the tribals themselves.

Topics such as urbanization, gender, education, assimilation and detribalization need to be explored. More researches on the preceding subjects are essential to get a better understanding of the tribal way of life, before the tribal culture vanishes or is vanquished by the forces of modernization.

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