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EDITOR'S NOTE

The objectives of Tribal Research Institutes are manifold. The cultural peculiarities and the level of development attained by each community should be understood properly. The formulation, implementation of policies and evaluation programmes has also to be consonant with the genius and perception of various tribal groups. More than six decades of planned change have brought in many changes. The tribal landscape has metamorphosed. Visibly the infra-structural inputs have helped to reduce the 'geographical isolation' in one sense, but how far they have been psychologically integrated into the process of nation building needs introspection. So fresh studies covering all aspects of the present tribal life have to be undertaken to assess the situation and plan accordingly.

The ten research papers presented in this journal are to be viewed as an attempt towards this direction. Depicting the various dimensions of tribal life in Kerala is expected to enlighten all concerned in tribal development. A brief comment on the research papers runs as follows.

The policy spelt out in 1952, known as 'Nehruvian Panchasheel' among other things, is 'to encourage in every way their own traditional art and culture'. The first three papers relate to tribal arts. In the first paper of this issue of KIR-TADS Biannual, Dr. Deepesh V.K. describes news items relating to folklore find a place in mass media, particularly in newspapers. The main objective of this paper is to discover the folklores according to the perspectives of the folk society and to impress upon the introduction of a particular style or genre of Journalism, by name Folklore Journalism. He emphasises the need to bring to light the dangerous consequences when folklore is subjected to unsavoury reporting. He also mentions the need for Folklore Journalism as a means to understand folklore according to the attitude and approach of the folk towards it existing in a particular traditional and geographical limit. Through the second paper Dr. V.M. Unnikrishnan presents the problems in Mangala kali of Malavettuvan community. He argues that the songs narrate the history of their world and world view. This a paper based on Malvettuvans. He adds the conflicts the community had to undergo following a forced shift from a settled way of traditional life. The paper of Indu.V.Menon explores the traditional form of shamanic practices among Urali Tribes of Idukki district. She analyses the experiences of the shaman during shamanic initiation process which is believed to be influenced by a supernatural being. This paper concludes by saying that shamanism is not only to ward off the ailments of an individual, but also a social conscience.

The next three sets of papers cover the developmental aspects of the tribals in Kerala. VK Mohan Kumar in his paper Tribal Sub Plan: Rights and Promises details the salient features of Tribal Sub Plan. He argues that Trib-

al Sub Plan has not been understood the way in which it has been designed. Therefore the rights and promises given to the tribal people through the Constitutional scheme of 'Development' and 'protection' have not benefited them. It has in fact created imbalances within various communities of the Scheduled Tribe population of Kerala. Dr. Surjith M. in his paper enquires to identify the relation between the process of fiscal decentralization attempted in Kerala since the passage of 73rd constitutional amendment and its diverse development impact on Scheduled Tribe Population of Kerala mainly through Tribal Sub Plan Strategy. He argues that empirical evidences prove that no precepts produced any significant outcome in the lives of the deprived among the tribal groups like the Paniyan. He viewed that local government had not succeeded in incorporating the alternative paradigm in the lives of the disadvantaged sections of the Village society. He concludes that Decentralization is obviously no universal solution to development problems. The paper of Dr. Pradeepkumar K.S. tries to understand on the changing discourses on power amongst the tribal communities of the Kerala. He points out most of the tribal communities of the State have a high stake of normative and physical power in their traditional life, but many of them have lost a considerable degree of the same due to the wrong path selected by them/for them. Communities like Mannan are successful in retaining many of their age-old cultural traits and features while living as part of the village social system. He states that both the normative and physical aspects of power are equally important as far as the tribal communities of the State is concerned and their one aspect of power reinforces the other since the material conditions of a tribal population has a decisive role in defining their socio-cultural life and vice versa.

The traditional knowledge and wisdom of the tribes is to be preserved and documented. P.V. Mini in her paper examines the changing food habits of the scheduled tribe communities of Kerala along with the ecosystem in which they live in. The ethnic food of a community is determined by many things like geography, climate, occupation, flora and fauna of locality, daily consumption needs of the inhabitants, etc. The food habits of tribal population have been subjected to many changes due to many factors. The enforcement of forest laws and the depletion of flora and fauna in the forest areas have really affected considerably the traditional food habit system of the tribes. The ecological imbalance has become a great threat to the food security of the tribes. She maintains that the external factors have compelled to reduce their ethnic food from their day to day life.

The need of educating tribal children in their mother tongue upto the level of primary education has been widely accepted. Two papers deal with the study of the tribal languages. Darwin projects the peculiar features of Muthuvan language based on linguistics. He demonstrates that Muthuvan language has its own grammatical features as well as its own bunch of lexemes. In this language third person distinguishes masculine singular, feminine singular, epicene plural and neuter singular and plural. This paper proves that the

speech form of Muthuvan can be treated as a separate language. Dr. Syam S.K. explains the endangerment of tribal languages/Dialects of Kerala Tribes with special reference on Paniyan community. In his paper he points out the creation of a new script for Paniyan tribal language /Dialect as a tool for the remedy regarding the language endangerment.

The study of smaller communities is also relevant. K.P. Suresh introduces Wayanad Kadar, one of the smallest Scheduled Tribe community of Kerala. This paper explores the life and culture, social change, etc., of this community.

P.P. Sudhakaran reviews a book on 'Indiyale Adivasi Coridoril Sambavikkunnathu' (Malayalam) written by K. Sahadevan. This book discusses how the developmental programme implemented for the benefit of the Scheduled Tribe living in the North Eastern Area of India have resulted in their marginalisation. The author, with the support of authentic material evaluates the historical background and present situation to unfold the ground reality. It also examines very closely our concept of tribal development which became detrimental to their progress.

Academic insights with constant encouragement from Dr. S. Bindu (Director of KIRTADS) was instrumental in the realization of this project. Thanks to the administrative and academic staff members for their help to bring this volume in the present form. The services of Sandhya N (Selection Grade Typist) and Anoop V (U.D. Typist) who helped in type setting and C-apt, Kozhikode for printing are also acknowledged.

One again I thank one and all who have directly or indirectly supported this venture. It is expected that this Biannual would benefit the academic community and those who are concerned with tribal development.

*Mini P.V.
(Editor)*

‘WHEN FOLK PERFORMANCE BECOMES NEWS’ A PRELUDE TO FOLKLORE JOURNALISM

Dr. Deepesh.V.K.*

Abstract

The subject matter of reports in mainstream media often negate the independent existence and identity of local festivals and practices. A serious genre is not thought of so far, which can recognise the local identities according to the view points of the folk. The paper argues that the Journalist, the representative of the folk forsaking all the identities such as that of the representative of the Journalistic establishment, a cultural activist etc. should become a part and parcel of the folk and should behave as their spokesman airing their viewpoints through the mass media.

INTRODUCTION

Presently news items relating to folklore find a place in the mass media, especially newspapers - Folk Performances become a subject in almost all of the different genres of Journalism numbering approximately to fifty. In Art Journalism Panorama, news and features regarding folklores can be widely seen. Many Journalistic genres dwell upon Folk music, the scientific and rational strands of folklores etc. Apart from all these, folklore directly becomes the subject of news generation where their detailed descriptions are given. But folklores which are the organic presentation and reflection of the folk life have not been elucidated and enumerated according to the view points of the folk collectivity where they originated. No Journalistic Genre or style has been structured so far to present the folklores to the general public according to the distinctive nature or uniqueness of the folk society. The following are the reasons for the same.

1. This genre has not seriously been thought of
2. The general perspective of the Mass Media on the folklore was that of an aboriginal art, the relics of the activities of the illiterate ancient folk and which simulate the exciting interest of the present society.
3. Serious deliberations on who are to originate and carry out the discussion on the cultural context or tradition has not so far become live in the contemporary society.

In such a context, the aim of this write-up is to discover the folklores according to the perspectives of the folk society and to impress upon the introduction of

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a particular style or genre of Journalism, by name Folklore Journalism, as a means to translate or evolve such views on the reporting styles and modes. For arriving at a logical conclusion, the present day reporting of the folklores in the mass media are examined to expose their flaws and the lacuna necessitating the introduction of such a new style.

Folklore Reports in the Media

Folklore becomes news in different modes. Folklores have been classified as generative of news in regional, national and international level by the media. Here, the issues of such types of reporting are subjected to analysis.

The term '*Pooram*'¹ is very much familiar to the people of Kerala and their culture. This is a regional genre of folklore. This term is used in different folk meanings such as the Trichur Pooram, Pooram of Northern Kerala, the Zodiac Star of Pooram, Pooram of the Valluvanad region, Poorakkali, the food item by name '*Pooram*'⁵ and '*Poorada*'⁶ etc. and is therefore, representative of all and each of these types. In Malayalam language, the word pooram is sometimes used to mean 'abundance of any thing'. Of these, the Trichur Pooram with its different aspects such as the participation of large crowds, the presence of herds of caparisoned elephants, display of indigenous percussion performances, the unique rituals of flamboyant *Kudamattom*⁷ (Display of colourful umbrellas on elephants by two competing groups, the *Paramekkavu and Thiruvampady temples*) etc. is internationally popular and very famous. Like *Trichur Pooram*, *Thira*, *Theyyam*,⁸ *Kaliyattam*,⁹ *Kāliyāttam*,¹⁰ *Vela*¹¹ etc. can be included in the

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1. The Pooram is an annual festival, which is celebrated in temples dedicated to the goddess Durga or Kali, after the summer harvest.
 2. Thrissur Pooram is one of the most popular temple festivals of the South Indian State, Kerala. It is held at the Vadakkunnathan temple in Thrissur town every year on the Pooram day (Pooram star or asterism) of the Malayalam Calendar month of Medam (April - May).
 3. The Pooram festival begins with the Karthika asterism and concludes with the Pooram asterism of the month of Meenam, according to the Malayalam calendar (corresponding to the sun sign Pisces according to the Julian Calendar) to honour Kamadeva, the God of love.
 4. Poorakkali is a traditional dance ritual performed by men during the nine-day Pooram festival in Bhagavathi temples across North Malabar in the Kerala State of South India.
 5. Another powdery food item prepared from rice flour especially in the Valluvanad region of Kerala.
 6. A food item prepared in houses with rice flour as an offering to Kamadeva, the god of love.
 7. Kudamattam is one of the best display of Thrissur Pooram. Colour and display of these umbrellas over the top of the elephants are very beautiful and marvelous.
 8. Theyyam is a divine situational dance performance of northernmost Kerala. God is meant by the word 'Theyyam' (Daivam-God). Thira or otherwise Thirayattam is a ritualistic dance in the Hindu community of the Northern Kerala. The word can be taken to mean divine manifestation, divine vision, divine offering etc. Thira is widely performed in the Calicut district of Kerala. Many deity concepts in the form of Thira are live within the folk societies.
 9. The practice of performing Theyyam and Thira in the 'Kavus' and other places of worship is

festival¹² genre of the folklore. *Kāliyāttam* is the annual festival of the *Pisharikavu*¹³ Temple in the Quilandy Taluk of the Kozhikode District.

The media captions the *Kodiyettu* of Pisharikavu¹³ *Kāliyāttam* (the ceremonial announcement of the festival and the hoisting of the temple flag) as the 'Flag hoisted for the *Trichur Pooram* of Northern Malabar'. Instead of trying to detail the distinctive aspects of this temple festival, the media equated this entirely different genre of Folk Festival with an equally differentiated and regional festival of Trichur *Pooram*. *Trichur Pooram* is the general professional technical term employed by the members of the media to denote to all the different features and festivities of all the various regional festivals of Kerala. The news about all these are either equated with, chiselled out or elaborated to suit to the different rituals of *Trichur Pooram*.

The media intrudes into the cultural symbol or the unique traditional awareness of a particular region by employing such a nomenclature. By resorting to an entirely different genre to denote and describe a regional peculiar folklore festival, the media exhibiting scant regard to the regional differentiations and sentiments, becomes instrumental in the annihilation or alteration of a regional folk culture.

The performance of *Koothu*¹⁴ is also widely known throughout Kerala. The forms of *Chākyār Koothu* and *Nangyār Koothu* are the two items in the general cadre which were subjected to extensive study and research. These are considered to be the symbols of elite cultural affinities and appreciation. But,

generally denoted as Kaliyattam. Apart from the annually held Theyyam performance, the special ritualistic practice of holding the Theyyam once in many years is also called Kaliyattam.

10. The dance (Attam) of Kāli is the word meaning. *Kāliyāttam* is the annual ritual in Bhadrakāli temple, especially is those where the Śākteya system of worship is practiced. The ritual of *Kāliyāttam* of Pisharikavu is celebrated as a festival.
11. The festival conducted in the Kāvus and temples of central Kerala. It has been stated in 'Keralolpathi' that Vela festival was there in Kerala from the time of 'Parasurama'. Vēla is a system of worship of Bhadrakāli.
12. Festival is a situation abundant in rituals and entertainments.
13. Pishārikāvu temple is a temple located at Koyilandy, Kozhikode district, Kerala, India. The annual festival of Pisharikāvu is celebrated in the Malayalam month of Meenam. The festival is celebrated with pomp for 8 days. The 7th day is celebrated as 'Valiya Vilakku' and the 8th day as *Kāliyāttam*, on which days, the divine Nandakam sword is brought in procession around the temple (on the 7th and 8th day) on a fully decorated female elephant. The Malayala Manorama daily attributed *Kāliyāttam* to be the 'Pooram' of northern Malabar while the Mathrubhumi daily declared it to be the flamboyant umbrella display of festival upbeats (Kudamattam).
14. Some of the performing arts of India is denoted as 'Koothu'. Koothu can be observed to be performed as temple arts and rituals in Kerala. Chākyār koothu and Nangyār Koothu are temple arts, while Vannānkoothu, Malayakoothu, Ayyappan Koothu etc. are ritualistic performances.
15. Situated in the northernmost part of the Kannur district in northern Kerala.

Koothu genre, can be observed in different regions of Kerala - *Vannan Koothu*, *Malayakoothu*, *Ayyappan Koothu* etc. being some of them. As a pan-draavidian genre the traces of Koothu is seen even in Sangham literature also. The majority of such are performed by the men folk. But in the Thekkumpad¹⁵ region of Northern Kerala, the ritual performance known by the name Valli Koothu or *Deva Koothu*,¹⁶ the performers are the women folk. This ritual takes place in the Theyyakkavu of *Thekkumpat* in between *Theyyam* performances. And hence, the media reported this Koothu as the Theyyam performances by women. To those who are familiar with the different aspects of *Theyyam* and *Koothu*, the distinctive features are indicative of their independent nature and existence. Both these are different rites classified by the knowledge and experience of the folk society. This has been subjected to news by the media with a feministic point of view, disregarding the unique features and the traditional outlook. The media was prompted into this as they were oblivious of what constitutes and regulates a folk society and their complete lack of insight into the different aspects of the *Koothu* and *Theyyam*.

The '*Nāyattu*',¹⁷ a ritual in the folklore situation of Kerala society in their worship of gods, became a very controversial subject of discussion with the intervention of the media in the matter. From the ecological point of view, reports and features about animal hunting etc. will naturally get their space in news media, especially when the fear of the extermination of organic diversity looms large in the atmosphere. Accordingly, the '*Nāyattu*' and the *Bappidal*¹⁸ Ritual conducted as a Valedictory rite of the *Vayanaattu Kulavan Theyyam*¹⁹ of Northern Kerala became a cognizable criminal offence under the Forest Conservation Act. Titles such as '*Bappidal Rite: The Carcasses of Animals Hunted*

16. Devakoothu is performed in the Theyyakkavu Devasthanam of the place by name, Thekkumpad koolom. One among the many 'Koothus' performed by women. Nanyār koothu is another. Some Apsarases (nymphs) descended to the earth from heaven. They reached the Thekkumpad island and engaged in pleasantries. One of the nymphs was left behind in the island when others returned to heaven. This forlorn nymph prayed to Naarada and got back to the heaven. The theme of the koothu is the prayer of the nymphs and the blessings of Narada.
17. Nāyattu (Hunting) was a pastime and a livelihood of the ancient period. Now-a-days, it is a ritual (in our relevant situation). The practice of the deity going out for hunting and returning after hunting is a symbolic divine ritual, quite familiar to Keralites. Pallivetta, Mullakkal Pattu etc. are different versions of this folklore genre.
18. Bappidal is a ritual inevitable in the performance of the Vayanattukulavan Theyyam. Hunting is carried out as a part of the performance. Bappidal is the distribution of the meat of the hunted animals.
19. The Vayanattu Kulavan is believed to be born out of the thigh of Siva. Having lost his eyes for disobedience towards this father, the Lord Siva, he reached Malanad sporting false eyes and wielding a torch made out of bamboo cane.
20. The folk deity, Kandanar Kelan, conducts Bappidal and the very first portion is set apart for the deity, Kulavan. The Vayanattu Kulavan who reached Malanad on the instructions of the Lord Siva, is acquainted by Kelan. Kelan, who recognizes the divinity of Kulavan, reverentially

Down Confiscated'²⁰ appeared in Newspapers. Hunting of certain animals have been prohibited. But the news items were instrumental in considering the customary rites performed from time immemorial as acts of treason, homicide, cruelty and irrational beliefs by the general public. A whole northern Kerala society was caricatured as those of law breaking uncultured folks. This is the end result we get when a folklore rite is subjected to news generation without imbibing and understanding the cultural vicissitudes of the divine rites of a folk.

All these have been pointed out to bring to light the dangerous consequences when folklore is subjected to unsavory reporting. We cannot find fault with various journalistic genres subjecting folklore to present their perspectives on them as an academic approach and exercise. It actually is indicative of the organic existence and vibrancy of folklore. But when folklore is directly subjected to news generation, the feedback or the appreciation of the general public on the folk society is reprehensive and is quite negative. It is, therefore, essential to generate Folklore Journalism²¹ as a means to understand folklore according to the attitude and approach of the folk towards it existing in a particular traditional and geographical limit and to present such an attitude to the general public enabling them get an insight into the very essence of the rites as imbued by the traditional society.

Folklore Journalism

A folklore cannot be considered as mere art, game, music, recipe or rite. But it is interspersed with the traditional outlook, attitude and organic connection, the folk societies have with them. It is the traditional symbolic creative presentation of a folk society of their individuality and uniqueness inculcating in them the feeling of oneness, belonging and being. The folk should get primacy. This functional element differentiates one folk from another. The journalistic interpretation alienating a folklore genre from its live social context and the folk, is quite negative and reactionary as far as the folk society is concerned. Folklore should not be viewed as a mere folklore form but as the theme representing the folk and its traditional outlook evolved through years of their organic and unified existence. To undertake the task of understanding the message evolved through the life experiences of the folk in their course of organic existence and to present them to the appreciation of the general public based on the view points of the original source of their generation, should be the target of the new genre of Folklore Journalism. In such a situation, what is

addresses him as 'Thondachan' and is served with offerings with all humility. The custom of the Bappidal is dedicated to this meeting and reception. This News was reported by the Mathrubhumi Daily on 3rd May 2009.

21. Research on the theoretical analysis of the concept of Folklore Journalism is being carried out in the School of Folklore Studies, Calicut University, Kerala

important is not the ideology of the Journalistic establishment, but the outlook of the folk that should get primacy over everything else. This argument is the basis of Folklore Journalism.

Here, those who are instrumental in generating news on the basis of folklore (the Reporter, Editor etc.) should have a deep understanding of the subject. The Journalist, the representative of the folk forsaking all the identities such as that of the representative of the Journalistic establishment, a cultural activist etc., should become a part and parcel of the folk and should behave as their spokesman airing their viewpoints through the mass media. The duty of the Folklore Journalism is to translate and relocate the folklore which evolved in a cultural situation of the past where the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the past were instrumental in evolving them and help air such views making use of the dissemination structure of the mass-media, which is an invention of the new age, the cultural situation of the evolution of both of them being entirely diverse and diverging in nature. In such a genre, the notion that folklore can be reported according to the information and feed back a journalist gets just before or during its performance has to be discarded.

Folklore cannot be reported according to the usual journalistic style of collecting data of an incident from the scene of its happening and subjecting such details to the journalistic manoeuvres of news generation. What and how is a lore? What constitutes a folk? What are its various versions? What is the wisdom of the folk about the lore? What function does a lore carry out? What are the immediate and detailed context situation of the folklore? What is the depth of organic bond between the lore and the folk? The effectiveness of visual performance of the folklore, the varied interpretation of the folklore within the folk itself; how does the folk evaluate itself and the outside society through the lore; the vibrancy of the folk, outside intervention into the folklore; all these should form the basis of Folklore Journalism. Such data collection becomes difficult as the notions about the folklore rests deep within the unconscious mind of folk rather than in its superconscious psyche. Special training is a pre-requisite to reach upto it. Training enabling one to look upon the folk and the folklore through the view points of the lore and academic knowledge about folklore should be acquired by the journalist.

Conclusion

If the journalists understood that the scope of the interpretation of the folklore by the folk within itself formed the basis of its communication without and had resorted to and regulated its reporting accordingly, they would have been able to recognise Theyyam as Theyyam and Koothu as Koothu without mistaking their proper identities. The journalists as a whole should have the notion that the folklore is not a performing art, but the presentation of the cognizance of the folk of its unique identity. Folklore should be reported recognizing such a unique factor. Then Pooram would not be equated with *Kāliyāttam*

and vice-versa. There are two types of presentations: Firstly, one can be known and interpreted in its own scale and by its own measure and standard; Secondly, one can be equated with the other, can be compared and presented in terms of the other. When Kaaliyaattam was viewed on the basis of Pooram, the second type of reporting was resorted to. It is unethical and against the interests of the concerned folk. The folkloristic approach is to know a peculiar type by its own standards. Then, *Kāliyāttam* can be subjected to reporting on its own terms. Only if N?y?ttu is presented by the media as an annual worshipful act and according to the view points of the folk practising these rites, it being their attempt to project their collective traditional unique existence handed out to them by their ancestors, then only will the media succeed in reflecting its real purport.

Such a type of journalistic activity is being intended by Folklore Journalism. While arguments that the folk has got the right and authority over their folklore and the folklores are to be interpreted according to the view points of the folk gaining ground, the journalistic fraternity should adorn the role of a mediator by recognizing the folk through their folklore and by presenting the cultural awareness of the folk via different genres of journalism now flourishing within their ambit. *“Folklore Journalism is the collective representation of the folklore through the folk and folk culture as they get reflected in mass media, when they become subject matter of news”*.

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DEPICTION OF SOCIETY AND PROBLEMS IN MANGALAKKALI OF MALAVETTUVAN

Dr. Unnikrishnan V.M.*

Synopsis

Mangalakkali is considered as the traditional performance of Malavettuva of Kasaragod. Though the outsider or neighbouring communities treat the performance as the traditional art form of the community, the songs represent their past, experience and worldview. Songs of mangalakkali of Malavettuva are analysed in this paper. The paper argues that the songs narrate the history of their world and world view. The paper argues that the text is an evidence of the conflict the community had to undergo following a forced shift from a settled way of traditional life to the shifting cultivation.

Mangalakkali is the traditional art performance prevalent among North Kerala Tribal community known as Malavettuvan. They themselves refer to this performance as Kottumpattum, Thudikottikkali, Kottumkali etc. In North Kerala, there are other communities too, who perform Mangalakkali (eg: Mavilan, Pulayan). Usually it was being performed on the occasion of marriage. It lasts for a complete night. In addition to marriage it was performed on different occasions too (Eg: when a person takes charge as the headman - Kiran, when theyyam-like Kudiyakkoolie is performed)

This paper is based on Malavettuva's performance. Both ladies and gents take part in the performance. When the women perform, the group of men sings with thudi behind them. There is a healthy competition between male and female sides. The "new generation" uses it as an art form and they like to perform this in the public, meanwhile the importance given to this performance is diminishing these days.

There are two parts in Mangalakkali i.e, song and dance. In the songs, the first step is a prayer. The team bows their Guru and Karanavar and gets permission from them to start. The song is divided in to Bhoomi Vandanam-pattu, pandal pattu, Kodan pattu, Chalappattu, and koonthen pattu. The folk believes that these are basic songs which really existed years back. There are also plenty of new songs added to this song. Here in this paper the social problems depicted in these songs will be taken into consideration.

1. BHOOMIVANDANAM PATTU

The first part of this song declares that, we are a landless people . In the proceeding session this song enquires about the base of the earth. It is argued

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that "...the base is umbilicus... (navel), and its base is a stone seat, and its base is water and its base is a fountain..., finally conclude that the actual base is the utta changathi.

2. PANDALKALI PATTU

The new bride is invited to play the song in the pandal. The song is in a question-answer style. The questions of bridegroom's side is continuously answered in negative by the bride's side. The bride denies to come to the fore-front saying "... no dress to wear". However towards the end, the bride reaches the pandal where the marriage takes place and she is showered with turmeric mixed in water.

3. KODANKALI PATTU

The content of this song is about ornaments worn by kodan. The text doesn't explain anything about kodan. But folk believes that kodan is a bird who helped Hanuman to cross Lanka. In that way they have lost their beloved kodan. Some believe that kodan is Sampathi of Ramayana.

4. PURLI PATTU (Purli - Indian Myna)

The content of this song is narrative on child rearing. The question is asked by the Purli and the answer is this song. Part of the song is as follows "How to look after the children?" The purli lays eggs, in seven lands of the feudal. The egg is hatched and the small birds come out. The purli asks, "...how do I look after the birds?" The feudal advised purli, "you can take the tick on cattle of seven lands and also cow dung".

5. CHALA PATTU (Chala - Locust)

The structure of this song is the dialogue between Chala (locust) and the performing Male Vettuva. Where will you sit during harvesting the paddy?, Chala says, I will stay in the bamboo.. The dialogue continues "If the bamboo is cut?", "then I will sit on the jack tree". If the jack tree is cut? "I will sit in the mango tree". "If the mango tree is cut down?" "Then I will go to the Choolachi forest (Choola- Casurina tree.) and eat the choola fruit."

6. KOONTHENKALI PATTU

Koonthen bird and Koonthachy bird are considered as the male and female heads of the tribe. To the question "how to look after your question"... answer is "go and beg" The song depicts the lessons given to the children, particularly with regard to question of survival.

The above are the main contents seen in the basic songs of Mangalakkali. By repetition of lines and by adding common music of other ballads they extend the song. There are plenty of other songs too which are used to extend the length of song of Mangalakkali. The material for songs is related to the tribal life once they lived.

Let us make an attempt to analyse the Bhoomivandanam pattu. The song starts with lines referring to their landlessness. Then they enquire the base of life and finally declare that the final base is the bosom friend. To understand in detail, we have to understand the base of Malavettuva's past. In the forest and hill area they lived by collecting fruits and vegetables and hunting. When the landlords encroached their settled area they lost their traditional life-way.

The community was forced to do shifting cultivation and cattle rearing for the landlords. In other words they became slaves. Even now they recall the slavery, the lines referring to their relation with the Raja of Neeleshwaram raja clearly states that "...we are the slaves of Neeleswaram Raja, Karimbil Feudal, Kodoth Feudal " etc. When they became slaves, they had to fight against the feudal world view. For example feudal gets their right over land and resources by birth. (local word for feudalism is 'Janmitham'. Janmitham which means earn by janmam. i.e. getting ownership of something by birth). But Malavettuva's are against the idea of private property. This is one of the contradictions repeatedly appear in their songs.

In Bhoomivandanam pattu they enquire the base of land and reaches the conclusion that base is utta changathi. Friendship or companionship can not be by birth. But by work. In that sense it is the fight against the feudal world view. Friendship can not be attained on account of one's status or birth, nor can it be maintained. It can be attained and maintained only on account of one's deeds.

The main ideal of every song is to establish the fact that one should live by hunting, begging and food gathering. In Koonthen pattu one of the questions asked is about looking after the children. The answer is "...by begging". In the purli song it is the same question and the answer is "...by collecting tick on the cattle".

It is very clear that when they were forced to shift from hunting and gathering stage (free life in forest) to farming (shifting cultivation) and cattle rearing (as slaves) there were mental conflicts. The conflict on account of being forced to leave their traditional way of living and being forced to be slaves of the Raja. This is the subject matter of many songs of the community.

It can be seen that the community was forced to live as slaves of the local feudal families where as on the other side, the motive to live as hunter

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- i. Kiran is the status name given by Neeleswaram Raja to Malavettuva. He is the person who act as a mediator in between Malavettuva and Raja.
 - ii. Kudiyakkoolie is a special deity performed in the western ghat section Malavettuvas.
 - iii. A musical instrument.
 - iv. Departed for fathers and preceptors
 - v. Bhoomiyille, Bhoomiyille, Bhoomiyillathore...
 - vi. They are the famous feudals (Janmi) in their area.

(vedan) still continued to persist. The uncertainty as they shifted from their traditional way of life to modern way of life is clearly visible in their songs. In purli song the purli asks "...how can we survive by getting a small quantity of paddy (munnazhi nellu)?" This reflects the futility of hard work from morning through evening and gives the pathetic picture of the bird. Through the bird the Malavettuva represent themselves.

In chalappattu the uncertainty is clear. If the landlord (feudal) collects all livelihood like rice, bamboo, jack tree, mango tree etc. The specific question is "how will you survive?" The final answer is "...by eating choola fruit" (this refers to food collection in foraging in the forest); "...we will live in the choolak-kadu...". This is the depiction of their past life. To escape or to recall from the tyranny and uncertainty they recall their past life.

In all songs, symbols such as birds koonthen, purli, chala, kodan etc. stand to represent the life and culture of the community. The idea that the birds do not harvest, they eat whatever they get reflects in their songs. They are not worried about the future. They used to lead a free life. The symbols appearing in the songs represent the community and its motives.

The Malavettuva believes that they were descendants of a generation of a female child who was born to Shiva and Parvathy, when they were living as hunters (vedas) in forest. It reflects the freedom they enjoyed in the forest land. Forest, freedom and hunting are the main themes appearing in the songs of Mangalakkali. Still the Malavettuva dreams the beautiful period past full of freedom which they enjoyed. This is why still Mangalakkali exists and makes sense. However among the neighbouring communities the Malavettuva is known for their work-shyness. The community is blamed on account of their socio economic conditions. Such criticisms do not take into consideration the history of tyranny and trauma experienced by the community. The criticisms are made on the basis of world view of the neighboring groups, but the Malavettuvan have a different world view. It gets reflected in Mangalakkali.

Informants:

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2. Santhosh, Kolathukadu, Parappa, Kasargode



THE SHAMANIC HEALING EXPERIENCES AND RELIGIOUS SYSTEM AMONG URALY TRIBES OF INDIA; A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The present paper examines the traditional form of shamanic practices among Urali Tribes and studies shamanism as a religious system and a healing practice. Uralies have a rich social and cultural heritage and an animistic religious life with their own dialect. They believe in Hill Gods, Sun, spirit and the ancestor souls. They also believe that ancestor worship helps them for their survival. In order to appeal to the deities, spirit and ancestors, they perform a series of shamanic rituals. The major shamanic practices are performed by their religious headman, the Pilathi and is known collectively as Cheppikkal or Eluppam kuth with a shamanic kit; Eluppam Petti (Eluppam box).

Keywords : Ancestor worship, Animism, Shamanism, Tribe.

This paper critically analyses the experience of a shaman during shamanic initiation process which is believed to be influenced by super natural being, the death and reincarnation experience of shaman, and the way the musical utterance and the rituals are performed. Also, it examines the psychological influence of 'Pilathi effect' on the members of the tribe and also explore how a common member of the tribe attains the stature; the Shaman/Pilathi. Additionally, it describes the methods by which they perform the folk curing and protection of agriculture and the contemporary understanding of Pilathi practices.

INTRODUCTION

Beliefs and rituals are complementary. Though they are not based on rationality, practicality and thought, such faiths and rituals have existed in the society for long. In the case of tribal communities, it became more and more complex and tangled. We could feel such faith based tribal religion and nature are hampering the social, political, economic advance of those tribal communities. When we closely examine the tribal beliefs and its patterns we find the interconnected dual aspects of animism and shamanism in it. Through the ages the simple word shamanism has transformed into a powerful concept, which even controlled and guided the lives of almost all tribes across the world. The word Shamanism is a Tungusics Evenki word which derived from the Sanskrit word samana or srmana which means wandering spirit or monk. Shamanism extends as persuasive ritual practices among Red Indians, Eskimos, Aborigines of Australia and all the Tribes of Asia, Africa and Europe. We have with us the archaeological evidence that shamanism existed

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even some 40000 years ago. It is an important field of study for a researcher of old and new religions. This aspect of study on shamanism heavily contribute to the domains of cognitive neuroscience, social psychology, ecological psychology and therapy. We don't have enough serious studies on shamanism among Indian tribes, especially in Kerala tribal social life. Among the three phases of research studies shamanism study was a medium to reveal the origin of tribal religion. The second phase collected ethnographic details from various cultures as an anthropological evolution. The third phase approach shamanism as a part of hermeneutical studies and interpret in a multicultural context.

Objective of the Study

To analyse the shamanic practice among Uraly tribe.

To explore the Shamanic initiation process

To analyse the shamanic practices and its importance in the society

Research problem

Though heavily influenced by the Hindu and Christian faiths most of the tribes in Kerala have their own in depth religious beliefs. We could figure this out in the cultural, socio-political and other aspects of their social and inner life. As notions and behavior of the tribal society are strongly based on such beliefs detailed studies and research on those beliefs are needed in order to list them from their social backwardness. The research on shamanism among the tribes of Kerala became relevant in these circumstances. Shamanism strongly prevailed among the tribes in the state. The Chat of the Kani Tribe, the Muramkulukk of Malayans, Bootha/ Pretha of Koragas and Eluppamkuthth of Uralys are the examples of the shamanistic practices among the tribes of Kerala. For such rituals the songs, hymns and dances are performed with the accompaniment in the midst of tribal musical instruments. At times floral carpets (Kalam) are made for exorcism.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Ancestor Worship

“The custom of venerating deceased ancestors who are considered still a part of the family and whose spirits are believed to have the power to intervene in the affairs of the living”

B. Animism

Animism is the belief that a spirit, soul or divinity resides within every object and the belief emphasis that all the natural elements in the world have a special spiritual significance

C. Shaman

“A shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of benevolent and malevolent spirits, who typically enters into a trance

state during a ritual, and practices divination and healing.”(Oxford Online)

D. Shamanism

The animistic practice of certain people in which mediation between the visible and spirit worlds is effected by shaman

E. Tribe

“A tribe is a collection of families, bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation.” (D.N.Majumdar,1962)

Method

Profile area of the study; Idukki

The present study focuses on *Idukki* District of Kerala which is known for its mountainous hills and rugged forest. Idukki is the second largest district and has an area of 4,479 KMs. The highest peak of South India and the largest arch dam in Asia is located in this district. The district headquarters is Painavu and the district is divided in to eight block panchayaths and four taluks. Idukki is the second largest Scheduled Tribe populated district with numerous tribal communities. The major communities are Hil Pulaya, Malai Arayan, MalaiPandaram, Mala Vedan,Mannan, Muthuvan, Ulladan and *Uralys*.



The People; Uralys

Among the eight communities this study was conducted among Uraly tribes. One of the least acculturated tribal group of Kerala they are cultivators who adopted slash and burn cultivation and food gathering as their early livelihood strategy. Now they have switched over to agriculture wage labour and settled agriculture. They live in about 33 settlements (kudi) of Idukki and there is a very small representation in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts. The etymology of the term Uraly is rulers (Ali or alunnavan) of the land (uru) .

“There are 2099 families and 7559 members in the Uraly community. Their population include 3848 males and 3711 females. As the male population outnumber the females, the sex ratio is 1000:964 which is a negative index of demographic growth. The family size is 3.60 as”(Scheduled Tribe Development Department, Kerala, Survey)

They have their own tribal religious system which is considered as unique. But a majority of them are Hinduized and a small population converted to Christianity.

The Methodology

For the present study two of the major Uraly tribal hamlets in Idukki district viz; Pattayakkudi and Inchapparakkudi were selected and this study used qualitative research methods and ethnographic design, in particular with case study design model. There are two phases in this study. In the first part data was collected through ethnographic technique like in depth interviews, informal and unstructured discussions and participant observation. In the second phase, for the effectiveness and for the cross site, comparative and multi unit analysis of the study, used two case situations of two different male shamans out of seven case studies. This case study process employed individual informant interviews and verbal enquiry. The researcher participated in six different shamanic practices, in two of them as patient and the others as observer.

Results and discussions

Believing that everything in the universe posses a soul/spirit and the souls have special spiritual significance and importance among the living. This can be defined as animism. Most of the tribes in the state follow a life based on this conviction. They assume that everything in nature has a soul. The earth, stones, the trees and every living things. They even believe that souls of dead prevail among them. So the ancestral worships are the common factors among the tribal communities in the state. They strongly believe that the souls of the ancestors can influence every walk of daily life from birth to death. They accept their presence in every rite passage. The souls of the ancestors accompany them in every activity from hunting to cultivation and things beyond their control as in rains and diseases. Both malevolent and benevolent souls are there. So to appease them is very important.

EB Taylor in his book Primitive Culture defines religion as “the belief in spiritual beings” and argued that this belief exists in all known societies. He defined animism as having two parts: belief in the human soul that survives bodily death and belief in other spirits, including deities. Tylor believed that animism was the foundation of all religions. H.Spencer also agrees to the point.

This process of magical rituals of summoning the souls can be called shamanism and the man who conducts the process is called a shaman. Plathi is the shamman among *Uralys*. He is also called as *Pilathi*. He holds an important position in the society as the tribal chief. *Plathi* is called often to solve a problem, to cast away calamities and diseases and to bring good fortune.

Uses of shamanism

1. Shamanism is used to cure ailments; both physical and mental.
2. Shamanism is used in all agricultural purposes like for crops, seed, for the protection of crops etc.
3. Against the wild animal.

4. For safe child birth
5. For Seducing.
6. For annihilating enemies.
7. To appease and to pacify all tribal and Jungle Gods, when the tribe is infected with natural calamities or disease.

Shamanic Initiations; Steps to Spirit Worship

While researching on these aspects I came across 7 different Shamans. These mundane tribals are picked all of a sudden to wear the mantle of a magic man. They seem to conceive the call of souls and Gods and are suddenly transformed to a Shaman. The process can be defined as a shamanic initiation. Now we can go through the various important spirits and souls invoked through the Shamans. Souls like Kannikal, Kandapiranikal, Velanmaar, Muththappan, Malamuthyamma, Munnodi, Purakodi sevakal, Pisachukkal, Kadavketti, Arukola, Chavaru, Kaduketti, Vanadevathammar, Nanchappan, Karanavanmar comes down for initiation process. The souls are from both genders. An interesting fact in Uraly community is that a female soul only deals with a male Shaman and the male soul only communicate with a female Shaman.

The Shamanic Journey Two Case Studies

Case #2: Kayppidikkal Thenan (80): This nonagenarian is the main Pilathi of Pattayakkudi, remote jungle settlement of Idukki, Kerala. He was transformed to a Shaman in his late teen. He had a dream in his 19th year. Kannimmar a group of Goddesses of hills selected him as the magic man through dreams. He was examined through various hardships to prove his mettle and was taken into the depth of the jungle for the shamanic practices. He was taught on every aspects of the Souls and various magical hymns and how to conjure, control and summon them. He was then initiated to the techniques of ailment cure, magic, other secret methods, tribal medicinal techniques etc. He then traversed in as a soul along a dark hot cave undressing his skin and born structure of mortality. He recalled his body was then fragmented and molten in order to be enclosed in a small mud vessel. Withstanding all the acute sufferings, pains, pangs and thirst the hill spirits put him back in the mortal form after seven days. All these days his body was in a state of high fever devoid of food and water. The body resurrected on the 7th day and he was transformed to the all powerful *Plathi*

Case #4: Kochu Pilla.(65) Though he is not a Pilathi in Uraly tribe, he holds a prominent position as a professional magic man. He too was initiated in to the dark world of magic by jungle spirits through dreams. He was carried to a deep ravine in the dense forest by the spirits. He had to face lot of hardship and trials to prove his worth in the ditch, slammed with poisoness snakes and crawling creatures. He felt he was suffering from burns and thrashes after

withstanding the ordeal he proved his mettle and the appeased spirit bestowed him with secret magical power. On that day onwards he became a Shaman

D. The Prowess of a Shaman

According to the belief, a shaman could summon and assemble all the spirits and souls in his command any time. They serve him and perform whatever he commands. The spirits; Velans will hold in the body of the Shaman as much time as he likes. It is supposed to be a difficult task to hold a spirit in the body of the Shaman. It needs strict codes and restraints. He should avoid the presence of impure women, filth and dirt, crossing the excrements should be avoided, indulging with women are prohibited and celibacy is a must. If one of these is violated a shaman will lose all his powers and control over the spirits.

E. Uraly Shamanic Ritual Practices

The shamanic ritual practices of the *Uraly* tribe is called *Eluppam Kuthth*. In this process the Shaman invokes the spirit in to a square shaped box known as *Eluppam Petti*. This process is called *Cheppikkal*. Lamps, *Kindi*; a unique shaped utensils to carry water, and bronze metal pieces are placed in the box which is made of fine reeds. Shaman shakes the box and calls upon the spirit to come down and settle in the box. This process of invoking the spirits or the calling down process is known as *Choothirakkal*.

When the tribes need the help of a shaman they approach him with offerings like wild ale, opium and money. When a man falls ill the tribe call for the help of a shaman. The patient is asked to sit before the shaman. He will light a bronze oil lamp (*Nilavilakk*) and begins *Eluppamkuthth*. Usually the process starts in the Dusk and the night. In the background of the harsh sounds of the metal inside the box the shaman invokes the spirit in flat, low toned chants, by shaking the box. Gradually the whole process gains momentum and the shaman behaves as though he is possessed. At this point of time all the spectators around should go inside the huts and close the door. They should put off the lights and should keep quiet. This proceeding is called *Kurikoottal*. When the spirits are about to descend the shaman goes into a trance. The spirit then converse with the magic man. The possessed shaman chanting magic hymns casts away the malady of the sick

F. The Techniques of Curing

Pilathi claims that the invoked spirits will do wonders in medicines given to the sick. Both medicines and magic are applied to cure the disease. The magical process called *Nellu niraththal* is done in between. The rice grain are collected in a flat faced *Muram*. The grains are put in the four corners of the holders chanting hymns and they assemble together. Then the Shaman picks the grain and when he gets the single grain the forecast is supposed to be a bad one. When he gets a couple the outcome will be fine. This ritual is known as *Kanivekkal*. The *Pilathi* will place these grain over the head of the sick and the family members.

He also ties a thread with turmeric paste around the waist of the sick person. At the end of the process the spirits are supposed to help to recover

Chakanappiya This term refers to a ill omen which happens while in the process of casting away the malady. When the lamps are blown out all of a sudden during the process it is termed as ill omen.

G. Shamanic Practice for Pregnant Women

It is believed that jungle demons and evil spirit easily see pregnant women. These bad spirits will make the delivery hard and even kill the mother and child. To avoid such calamities, shaman performs *Pettu Cheppiyoott*. This ritual is done normally in the seven and half months of pregnancy. Tents (temporary sheds) are erected and decorated with tender coconut leaves. Then the Shaman chants to invoke spirit with the help of *Eluppam petti*, the reed box. The pregnant lady is asked to sit inside a floral carpet and the magic man shakes the box just above her head to appease the spirit. During the process a coconut is broken to identify the gender of the child. A thread is placed on the coconut and the shaman moves the nut around the head of the pregnant lady and breaks it later. If it falls with an open face the child will be a girl or otherwise it will be a boy. The shaman wards off the bad spirits that possessed the pregnant lady and she provides offering to the Shaman.

H. Agricultural Practices and Shamanisam

Two rituals named as Kariyoott and Idicchoott are done related with cultivation.

Kariyoott: *Uralys* do their cultivation through the process burn and slash method or punam krishi. They will find a suitable spot in the forest and then clear it. Then they burn old leaves to ashes and spread these over the cleared ground. Then they toast the ground and cultivate. There are a lot of shamanic practices related with cultivation

Shamanic Practices for Better Yield.

The Tribals comes to the field cleared with fire wood. Everybody will then erect rice plants in the floor. *Pilathi* will then collect all these plants and chant hymns. Then rice is served in plantain leaves and the lamps with threads soaked in coconut oil are placed above it and are lighted. A cock sacrifice is done to appease the mother Goddesses Malamkurathi. Pilathi then perfoms a *Eluppamkuththu* for a great yield. He is sure that the spirits have come to eat and the process of sowing begins. It should be noticed that no kind of disturbances are allowed when the spirit descends to eat. One should not urinate in the standing posture or try to catch fish or crab during the process. Impure women are not allowed in the premises. The Shaman will make an imaginary boundary around the field then. It is believed that a magic fence made of the soul of ancestors and *Kannimar*, the jungle spirits ward off evil spirit. Then it is believed that no calamities caused by wild animals will hamper the farm. By observing strict code of conduct it is believed that the spirit will guard the agriculture for long

Shamanic Practices for Keeping the Grains

This process is called Kathiru polikkal. The Shaman starts to invoke the spirit by shaking the reed box, eluppam petti. He then commands to milk the left and right breasts of mother earth; Bhoomatha and the river Goddess Ganga Bhoopathi. Obliging to the commands the spirit milks the breasts and fill the grain with it. Then the rice ripens.

Pest Controlling Chants or Chazhi Manthrangal

The Shaman calls down the spirits to ward off the insects and pests which infects and invade the crops. He will avert these pests by magic crafts using different things taken from Snake wood trees (*Kanjiram*)

Harvesting Hymns

While applying the harvest hymns the spirits come down and enrich and multiply the grains as the waves in the sea.

i. Threshing Hymns

Once threshing hymns are performed spirits pile up the grains at the feet of the people who thresh. The grains from the field are supposed to be collected in the secret storage cabins of the elements namely earth, sky and water. The spirits collect this grain and store them there and deliver it in abundance while threshing.

Idicchoott

Idicchoott is a ritual process related with the slamming of the grain. The shaman makes a ritual stick called Attakkol by peeling the layer of bamboo reeds and wrapping it with turmeric paste. The Tribes see the first yield from the field and reach the abode of kani or Plathi. Then they separate the grain from the grass by a reed mat and a few males slams the grains and flatten it to make a dish of avil. The Shaman again collects the flattened grains (avil) to the mat. Then he invokes the soul of ancestors to consume the dish made of the new rice grains. The males who slam the raw grain then sit on the funnel shaped thick slamming stick and eat the dish with much reverence.

Kolu thodal

Pilathi then collects these fresh farm grains to a small flat faced folder and puts offerings in it. He then appeals to the spirit to take the offerings. This ritual is a form of thanks giving for guarding the farm from wild animals, pests, demons and evil spirits. This process will be repeated each year of farming.

Vavoott and Chathamoott

It is believed that all the ill fates and ailments in a house hold can be evaded if the souls of the ancestors are conjured and appeased. The death souls are known as *Malacchavar*. They are usually invoked during the month of July that is *Karckidaka vavu*

Shamanism Against Wild Animals

There are a number of shamanic magical rituals to ward off the threats of wild poisonous snakes, tigers and elephants. The spirits can hold a snake from its poisonous bite. By breaking a stick or placing a stone in a particular place it is believed that the serpent could not move further.

The approach of souls to ferocious tigers is quite different. The spirits make a big cage made of feathers of all varieties of birds in the world. Then they catch the cat and cage it and dispose it in a remote silver coloured sea in the western side during moon lit night. Each and every aspect of a tribal life is connected and controlled by the shamanic practices. The *Pilathi*; holds great control and mastery over the spirits and souls to ward off ailments and all fears.

The Sociological Analysis behind the Truth of Shamanism

When we analyse the process behind shamanism, its initiation and shamanic journey it is clear that spirit invocation can be a psychological disorder when approached in a scientific light. The mental imbalance is magnified in to a spiritually glorified and exalted position. We can define it as culture bound syndrome and Sociologist and psychiatrists define and assert it as a psychic malady. The tribal society see it in high esteem and reverence. Scientists say that fever, shivering and pain usually accompany such acts of delusion, visual and auditory hallucination, syncope, possession, trance stage which are all the traits shown by a possessed shaman. They experience a lot of physical and mental pain and exertions during the transformation process. Shaman thinks that his body is cut in to pieces by the spirits and melted to fit it in to a small mud vessel They simply don't know that this glorified agony is only a part of psychic disorder. The Tribes like Uralys, Adiya, kani and Malayans etc still believe that it is due to the interference of souls and spirits to cast away the animals and evil.

Conclusion

Apart from a curing method shamanic practices are rich tribal cultural symbols. It primarily works as a controlling device on the tribal social order. But it also possess myths, oral narratives, folklore and tribal knowledge and thus hold an important position in the society. *Pilathi*; the shaman with his powers maintain the peace and order in the society. He could call off the conflicts and strengthen the bonds. He has power to control a person as a tribal leader does. We know that the shamanism is not a religion. It's a practice or a method. But it sometimes elevates from its mere position of conjuring and exorcism to a strongly knitted belief. It heavily influences the *Uraly* religious structure as a part of animism. Shamanism not only wards off the ailments of an individual but of a social conscience too. It does it with the consent of a social conscience which is ready to oblige by its psychological power itself

List of Informants

Poomali Thevaki, Kayppitakkal Thenan, Damodaran, Gamgadharan, Kama-chi, Kocchupilla, Omana, Sunumon

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TRIBAL SUB-PLAN: RIGHTS AND PROMISES

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Abstract

Many ideas on Tribal Sub plan have been launched from the fifth five year plan to twelfth, starting from infrastructure development and income generating activities, and culminating now up to social justice and inclusive development. The TSP altogether has gone through eight five year plan periods and, as such it has metamorphosed and advanced much in identifying critical and major thrust areas for development. All these rights and promises given to the tribal people are even today relevant in one way or other. The present paper is an attempt to bring forth these issues and open it up for further discussion.

INTRODUCTION

The struggle for Indian independence also witnessed many social reformative movements. As a sequel to it, and being a developing nation, the framers of the Constitution has provided to secure to all its citizens, social, economic and political justice, liberty, equality, fraternity etc. In order to address the inequalities, the Constitution has ensured many safeguards like educational and cultural, social, economic, political, welfare, development, protection etc. for the speedy growth of the backward classes especially that of the Scheduled communities.

Admittedly, the Tribal population has been far behind development and hence the Constitution itself has taken special care to bestow dual status for them through the 5th and 6th Schedules. The 5th Schedule declared certain tribal concentrated areas, now spread over in nine States, as Scheduled Areas and the 6th Schedule covered a few Districts of the north eastern States treated as 'Autonomous District Councils'. Both the 5th and 6th Schedules have recognized the tribal culture and customary practices and given autonomy under varying degrees so as to control all their resources and also to adopt measures to protect themselves from all sorts of exploitation. Now the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act No. 40, 1996 (PESA) has been passed where the Grama Sabha became a supreme autonomous authority to manage their own affairs on development. These are the major rights given to the Tribal population.

When the objectives of resolution were tabled by Jawaharlal Nehru for discussion in the Constituent Assembly (1946), Jaipal Singh a noted tribal leader of Chotanagpur, reacted, among other things, "I take you all at your word that now we are going to start a new chapter, a new chapter of Independent In-

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dia, where there is equality of opportunity, **where no one will be neglected**” (emphasis added). This is the promise given to the adivasis of this nation.

Coming back to the planned development, the strategy has been through five year plans which started its functioning in the year 1951. It has been expected then that the general developmental programmes may benefit the backward communities including the Scheduled tribes. Up to the start of the fifth five year plan period, the development of the Scheduled Tribes in India, focussed on the formation of special multipurpose Tribal blocks, in tribal areas having more than 25,000 people as against norm of having 60,000 people in a block. An overview of the first four five year plans has realized the limitations of the national plan which necessitated in the formulation of a Tribal Sub-plan Strategy.¹

The Tribal Sub-plan (TSP) which started during the fifth five year plan (1974-1978) has been continuing in the current twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) also. Meanwhile, following the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution, relating to the democratic decentralization process, the Local Self Governments, has also been given the responsibility to plan, implement and monitor TSP. So from the ninth five year plan the LSG's has also come into the scenario. Many ideas on Tribal Sub plan have been launched from the fifth five year plan to twelfth, starting from infrastructure development and income generating activities, and culminating now up to social justice and inclusive development. The TSP altogether has gone through eight five year plan periods and, as such it has metamorphosed and advanced much in identifying critical and major thrust areas for development. All these rights and promises given to the tribal people are even today relevant in one way or other, because either it has failed at the implementation stage due to multiplicity of reasons or halfway through.

Therefore, the present paper is an attempt to bring forth these issues and open it up for further discussion.² Missing links if any, that came through sub-plan periods, can also be pointed to enrich the better understanding. It is hoped that such an exercise may help to rethink, reassess and redefine the Tribal sub plan strategy in the context of the present day situation which in turn may be useful both for the ‘agents of change’³ and the ‘target groups’ as well.

Tribal Sub Plan⁴

The sub - plan is an integral part of the national plan. In other words

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1. An expert committee setup by the ministry of Education and Social Welfare in 1972, headed by Professor (Dr.) S.C. Dude originally drafted a unique strategy known as TSP which is considered as a landmark shift in policy prospective.
 2. The author of this paper has intimate knowledge of the Tribal Development in Kerala for the last more than three decades under various capacities as trainer, researcher and resource person.
 3. Covers all officials, elected representatives, and all those connected with Tribal development directly or indirectly

it is a plan within a plan because the benefits are in addition to overall plan. A perspective plan prepared in consultation with all concerned stakeholders is absolutely necessary to solve lingering problems. The sub plan can be prepared at any level starting from the habitat, village or panchayat etc. and can get consolidated at the block, district, regional and state levels. The normative prescriptions can be relaxed. At the Integrated Tribal Development Project level (ITDP) community specific micro - plans can be prepared by taking into consideration of their, demographic, cultural peculiarities, socio- economic positions, vulnerability and indigenous technology. At the Grama Panchayat / Municipal level, ward-wise micro plan can help a lot to identify the disparities easily. Again within the Tribal Sub-plan there is provision to prepare sector -wise sub plan for children, youths, women, aged, differently abled etc. Education, health, livelihood means etc. are other major areas which demand a sub-plan within TSP. In short the sub plan is flexible in nature and can be tuned to suit any situation so as to ameliorate the existing or emerging problems.

Allocation of Resources

The fund allocation for TSP must be on population proportion basis. It has been directed that the funds are non-lapsable and non-divertible and punishment is imposed for malfeasance. There should be separate budgetary provision and head of account. The TSP funds are allocated from the following sources.

- a) TSP funds from State/UT plans and Central Ministries/Depts.
- b) Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP
- c) Grants under article 275 (i)⁵ of the Constitution to the States/UTS.
- d) Funds through Central Sector Schemes.
- e) Funds from centrally sponsored schemes
- f) Institutional finance.

It may be mentioned here that ‘The Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Corporation (TRIFED)⁶ introduced to give remunerative price for the forest agriculture produce, and the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC)⁷ to give credit support for employment generation and skill development have augmented TSP.

Besides the above sources, funds can be drawn or pooled from various missions, MLA & MP funds, and from any other governmental or non-govern-

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4. The vision and missions of the Tribal Sub Plan are spread in many policy documents of the planning commission of India (which is no more there at the centre as NITI Ayog came to existence since 2016)
 5. This is a special provision in the constitution allowing the flow of grants from the union to states on demand for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes.
 6. TRIFED Started the functioning in 1987 during the 7th five year period.
 7. NSFDC also started its functioning during the 7th five year place in 1989.

mental agencies. The 148 crores award of the 13th Finance Commission for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG'S)⁸ of Kerala has been an addition to the TSP.

Dissemination of Information

The TSP advocates for rights based approach. Then the major problem is that dissemination of information is not passed to the grass root level. The target groups should know about the safeguards guaranteed under the constitution, details of the various Acts promulgated, human rights, budgetary provisions, schemes offered, the possibility of convergence, news around them etc. The 'protection' cannot be operated from the law enforcing agency alone. The language or the dialect used by the Tribals vary from one another and continues to be a barrier for access to information. It can be solved if we build a youth leadership from among them who will act as either interpreters or catalysers. Before the launch of any programmes, information should go ahead to avoid confusion and rumour.⁹ All that has to be done is that the tribal population at all levels may be educated about their rights so that they can better exercise the provisions or schemes as and when required for them.

Area Development

The tribal areas have been geographically isolated and hence remained backward. The sub-plan aims at area development on par with the rest of the developed areas of the general population. The basic infrastructure like community centres, communication network, schools, health centres, rural electrification, drinking water conversion of dry toilets to wet toilets and other facilities may be provided for speeding up socio-economic development of the Tribal areas. In short the Tribal population can also have access to basic amenities and enjoy the quality of life.

In the case of the traditional forest dwellers, the area development should be attempted by taking into account of the ecological conditions. The forest policy lays stress on conservation and is against any move on ecological degradation. The Forest Rights Act,¹⁰ (FRA) has taken care to protect the interests of the forest dwellers and has also given them the responsibility for the protection and management of environment. These twin objectives have to be operated in the same field in a harmonious way. Therefore, the area development has to have a balancing approach between the conservation of ecological conditions and the enjoyment of the traditional forest rights of the people.

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8. There are five recognized PVTG's in Kerala viz Koraga, Kattunayakan, Kurumbar, Cholanaikan and Kadar.
 9. This is a principle adopted in all planned development all over the world. This has been followed earlier in Community Development Programmes by Govt. of India then.
 10. FRA-The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006; has stated in its preamble regarding the relevance of conservation and the livelihood of forest dwellers.

Social empowerment

The social empowerment area needs an indepth understanding of the cultural tradition of the tribal community. Enhancing capacity building in all sectors should be the prime motto. For instance educational complex, coaching cum guidance centre, good quality ITI, co-operative sector, one time support for degree colleges, residential schools, vocational training, home guard training etc. should be initiated. The Human Resource Development of the majority is very low and some of the ethnic groups have not produced a first generation of literate persons¹¹ so as to enable them as decision makers of their own future. Similarly the access to modern health facilities should be provided. The deficiency in nutritional status may be supplemented through Public Distribution System (PDS). Child care may be given utmost importance.

In the decentralization process there is enough space for active participation for the people in planning, implementation and monitoring.¹² But this has not happened the way in which it should be with a few exceptions. But if they are guided and trusted, they have proved their efficiency to prepare TSP.¹³ They should get an opportunity to observe and evaluate their own level of development. The institutional mechanism of conflict resolutions should be promoted.

There should be always a space to satisfy their felt needs. Above all serious attempts may be made to integrate them culturally, emotionally and psychologically into the mainstream and to voluntarily join in the process of nation building. It should be admitted that the mindset of the public should be changed in this regard.

Economic empowerment

The economic empowerment should emphasis on the elimination of exploitation, like land alienation, bonded labour in any forms and increase the assets like land purchase and conversion of forest village to revenue villages to attain a sustainable economic growth. Integrated multifaceted economic programmes should be drawn up to fortify the economic foundations. The programmes should have a direct bearing on increasing their livelihood means and standard of living. For this purpose family- oriented economic activities should be initiated.

The agriculture and allied activities are being reduced day by day and

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11. The Basic Data Collection of the Scheduled Tribes of Kerala, 2008; published the Scheduled Tribes Development (2012), Govt. of Kerala, has found that the illiteracy level of the Scheduled Tribal Communities of Kerala ranges from 40.45 % to 60.83%.
 12. The guidelines for preparation and implementation of the tribal sub plan by local self governments were detailed in GO (MS) No. 54/ 2003/ Planning dated 31-5-2003.
 13. The Wayanad District Panchayat (2013) and two Grama Panchayats (2015) in Wayanad Viz Meenangadi and Edavaka has prepared a model perspectives planning document for TSP, after consultations with Tribal Oorumooppans Tribal promoters etc. published by Kerala Institute for Local Administration (KILA), Trissur.

this area may be revitalized by providing minor and medium irrigational and power facilities, animal husbandry, dairying, poultry, fisheries, horticulture etc. The farmers may be trained to adopt new scientific methods to decrease human labour and increase production both for satisfying their food security and commercial purpose as well. The credit and marketing system may be provided to them.

The FRA has conferred the community rights for the forest dwellers for collection of non- wood forest produces and its sale through value added products.¹⁴ The PESA¹⁵ has given ownership of minor forest produces. Adequate support system may be provided to activate this venture. The small scale industry may also be promoted. Special training for skill development can be given.

The dependency syndrome may be reduced and create an atmosphere for their self development through choices open to them.

To sum up, the overall growth rate of the country should equitably reflect on the Tribal population.

Political empowerment

The vision envisaged under TSP can be fully realized if the tribals are also politically empowered. The decentralized system under the Local Self Governments, mainly through constitutional reservation system, have elected an array of leaders.¹⁶ It is a welcome step that the reservation is effected at all levels and positions on proportional representation basis.

In the traditional political system, each community has their own headman and other functionaries at the habitat level. This system has not been given due recognition. But since 2003, the headman is empowered to chair *oorukoottams*. The present arrangement allowing exclusive *Oorukkottams* to raise their 'choice' and 'voice' in the decentralized planning process in addition to the *Gramasabha, Wardsabha, Ayalsabha etc.* is intended to bestow, free and fair participation and to enjoy considerable autonomy.

The organic leadership sprouted from all ethnic groups should be given full opportunity to blossom. It has been observed that such leaders are spread in various forums and hence divided. A unity of elected, traditional and organic leaders will be able to exercise effective control over all the natural resources and TSP fund flow. In Kerala, the elected members of Tribal community

14. The amended rules of FRA 2012 issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has recognized the community rights.

15. PESA has endowed the Grama Sabha with powers, among the other things, the ownership of minor forest produce. But as of now as there is 5th Schedule Area in Kerala, the provisions of PESA cannot be invoked. The state has moved to the centre in 2015 for scheduling certain tribal dominated are in Kerala.

16. Currently at the Grama Panchayat level itself there are 244 elected ward members. 31 members are also elected for Block Panchayats, 6 members for District Panchayats and 15 members belong to Municipalities. It is seen a few tribal members are also elected from general wards.

or in their absence, tribal members working groups have already been given the responsibility to monthly monitoring of TSP programmes.¹⁷ Kudumbasree experiences have helped women to enter into political power. If PESA is implemented, the *Gramasabha* will become supreme to control and manage their resources based on tradition and customary practices.

Institutionalization

Gradually, an institutional framework is to be devised for their holistic and sustainable development. In this connection the Tribal Panchasheel policy enunciated by Jawaharlal Nehru (1952) has mentioned to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. The appointment of 1178 tribal promoters in Kerala can be seen as a move to realize the above dream. The PESA Act, 1996 coming under the 5th schedule of the Constitution, have already recognized a people centred approach where the Grama Sabha has full control and protections of their resources available to them. The *Oorukoottams* initiated by the Govt. of Kerala since 2003 and the *Ooru Vikasana Samithi* (OVS) of Attappady have much of the reflections of the PESA.

Personnel and administrative matters

The personnel policy¹⁸ for TSP has reiterated in the 12th five year plan document to sensitize officials detailed for serving in the tribal areas so that they became empathetic to the sensitivities of tribal lives and traditions. It is also directed that no post is left vacant in tribal dominated areas. The strengthening of implementing agency should be given importance for speedy time bound completion of developmental projects. Further young and efficient personnel should be posted in tribal areas.

The central ministry of Tribal affairs has recommended to prefer people from the tribal community itself and engage them in spreading educating, health, public distribution system etc. For instance plus two qualified tribal people can be posted in teaching primary classes.¹⁹

Monitoring and Research

The Sub-plan envisages continuous monitoring, evaluation, research and analysis. Intended and unintended developments of plan implementation has to be closely watched and corrective steps to be taken at appropriate time. The

17. Government of Kerala, as per GO (MS) No. 4/2016 LSGD dated 11.1.2016, has issued guidelines relating to planning in General and for TSP as well. This is a special provision brought to cover projects under TSP.

18. Besides the presence of Tribal promoters, there are fifty four Tribal Extension Officers, ten Tribal Development Officers, seven project officers of ST for ITDP'S, three Assistant Directors, two Deputy Directors, one Joint Director, One Director belonging to IAS Cadre, Senior Superintendents of Model Residential Schools, under wardens of Pre-metric hostel and many other subordinate both technical and administrative staff.

19. In the 12th Five Year TSP document issued by the Govt. of India, there is direction to do so.

traditional knowledge system of the community at the grass root level has to be recognized. At the same time they should be informed about the findings of the research and technological innovations in each areas. A social audit may be conducted to judge the developmental process. It is expected that a synthesis of traditional and modern knowledge systems would enable for better planning in future

Conclusion

An annual or a perspective document has to be called as a Tribal Sub plan, then it should cover all the above mentioned aspects in an integrated and holistic way. If different sectors are taken in a compartmentalized way, it may not become a tribal friendly plan document. Sometimes strict adherence to general prescriptions may turn a sub plan into a general plan and the result is simple rejection by the target groups, leading to wastage and exploitation.

The target groups if facilitated in the right direction, are capable of fixing priorities for planning. An empathetic approach to understand the tribal mind set is the need of the hour. That is accept them as human beings, then as fellow citizens and finally as right based beneficiaries of TSP due to historic reasons.

Over the years the developmental inputs have helped a section of the tribal population to became part of national life. But there are serious imbalances in growth rate among them and broadly formed into three layers.²⁰ The relevance of inclusive development appears here. It may be recalled here that the promise given was that no one will be neglected. The rights and promises of the TSP has not made any inroads to empower the vast majority ie to the lower middle and lower layers, and this issue has to be addressed urgently with a missionary zeal as they cannot wait further. Thus, the rights and promises are yet to be fulfilled. It is hoped better democratic thoughts and action of all concerned should be there to resolve the present situation at the earliest.

Separation and Isolation are dangerous theories and strike at the root of national solidarity. Safety lies in Union and not in isolation.

.....A.V. Thakkar Bappa

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20. U.N. Dhebar who chaired Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes commission appointed as per the provisions of the Article 339 of the constitution of India has commuted about four layers on the basis of the level of development of Scheduled Tribe Population in India in 1961.

DECENTRALIZATION DEVOLUTION AND THE MARGINALIZED THE CASE OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN KANNUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

The major argument in favour of democratic decentralization had been that it multiplies the participation possibilities of local communities, especially for the traditionally marginalized segment of the population, and it naturally brings positive outcomes in their social, political and economic fields of life. However, neither the theoretical studies nor the empirical evidences delivered clear evidences so far to substantiate the claim. In this context, the present paper mainly seeks to identify the linkage between the process of fiscal devolution attempted in Kerala since the passage of 73rd Constitutional Amendment and its manifold development impact on Scheduled Tribe population of Kerala mainly through Tribal Sub Plan Strategy.

Decentralization the transfer of political authority and financial resources to lower units of governance system has been a sweeping trend worldwide. In their quest for responsive, responsible and accountable public governance, a large number of countries have recently taken steps to re-examine the roles of their various levels of Government. This reexamination has resulted in a silent revolution that is slowly but gradually bringing about re-arrangement in governance (added) that embody diverse forms of supra nationalization, centralization and decentralization (Shah, 2006: 1) As for India is concerned democratic decentralization legislated through the Constitutional Amendments (73rd and 74th) in 1993 set the stage for creation of a newly decentralized system of local governance in rural India.

Democratic Decentralization in Kerala

Based upon the Constitutional Amendment Act 1993, the State of Kerala enacted the “Kerala Panchayat Raj Act” and “Kerala Municipality Act” in the year 1994 to introduce new system of local governance in Kerala. Both Acts envisaged transfer of a large number of powers and a huge local governance in Kerala. Both Acts envisaged transfer of a large number of powers and a huge volume of Financial resources of the State Governments to rural and urban local Governments in Kerala. Based on the latest local body delimitation status in the year 2015, there are total 1200 local Governments in Kerala, unlike almost all other States, most of the means and forces that improve the lives and livelihood of people are under the possession of local *District Co-ordinator, Kudumbashree- Kannur

Governments in Kerala. The movements that started since mid-1990s to strengthen and stabilize the decentralization has been got equal prominence

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in Kerala politics as that of the radical movement for the land reform (Namboothiripad, 2002:69). It has been further attested by Jain in the words that Kerala had taken the longest stride than any other State in putting Panchayati Raj in the ground, and more importantly in the hands of the people (Jain, 2005:3)

Scheduled Tribes in Kerala

The Scheduled Tribes are the ethnic minority groups in Kerala, constitute around 1.45% (Census, 2011) of the total population with a number close to five lakhs. There are 36 Scheduled Tribe Communities, presently living in different parts of the State, and each community possess distinct identify in Kerala social fabric. Though they are found in all the districts of the State, the intensity of their distribution is not uniform (Jancy, 2007; p-153). Wayanad is their heartland followed by Idukki and Palakkad. In short, the Western Ghats and its peripheries form their main abode in Kerala.

Rationale of the present study

In almost all indicators of development, the tribal people constitute the most under privileged section in Kerala society. Despite various welfare measures and constitutional protection, they had produced marginal impact on their socio-economic conditions. Increasing dissatisfaction with the equity effects of Government program has led both the political heads and development planners in the state to revisit the prevailing strategy for tribal development. Low performance of macro level programs convinced they that the new strategy ought to give an important role to local democratic institutions and; the enactment of decentralization Acts, 1994 provided manifold possibilities in the side of local Governments (LGs) for empowering deprived segments, including Scheduled Tribes, who have been living in the peripheries for long.

In the beginning of Ninth Plan (1996-97), State Government took a major policy decision to transfer one-half of the resources earmarked in the State budget under the head of Tribal Sub Plan to local Governments for preparing the local development plan by adhering the precepts of participatory planning methodology. Since then, not less than two percent of the State budget is set apart exclusively for tribal development under the head TSP every year. During the past three Five-Year Plans (Ninth to Eleventh), it was accounted that the more than 22000 cores rupees had been allotted to local Government's in preparing local development plan. Of this, more than one thousand core rupees were earmarked solely for tribal development under Tribal Sub Plan (GOK, 1997-98 to 2011-12). The underlying motive for this change of approach is rather straight forward :

- ❖ To empower the Tribes in the Socio-political and economic field.
- ❖ To formulate and implement projects and programmes related to the life improvement of the Tribes.
- ❖ To increase the local people's participation in the process of planning and

implementation and thereby to avoid the intervention of middlemen and to keep out the evils of corruption.

The process of decentralization of the political authorities and development responsibilities towards local Governments started since the beginning of Ninth Five Year Plan has so far been covered three Plan periods. An effort assumes great significance at this juncture, to understand the extent to which the objectives of this new initiative (Decentralization) had been realized, particularly with reference to the tribes, the most deprived section of the Kerala society.

Objectives: The present mainly looks into following three areas only:

1. To examine the extent of financial resources devolved to local Govt. under tribal subplan.
2. To identify the common investment pattern in Tribal development planning and to assess the utilization capacity of local Government.
3. To assess how far local did Governments succeed to make use of this new opportunity of fiscal decentralization to narrow down the development imbalance between Tribe-Non-Tribe population and across Tribes themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is essentially a micro-level study based on the epistemological tradition of social Anthropology. The study was mainly conducted using in-depth field Research using more open-ended methods like participant observation in its quasi form, Caste Studies, FGDs and Textual Analysis. This sort of study also requires quantifications and special attention was made on the judicious mix of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Universe of the Study

As already pointed out, the present attempt was mainly a micro level case study. To get rich and deeper understanding on the process and impact of Financial devolution and decentralized planning at micro level, efforts were made to elicit the story of a Tribal concentrated and Tribal headed Village Panchayat (During 2010-15) in Kannur District namely Kanichar; which is situated in the eastern highlands of Kannur District of northern Kerala.

The People Studied

The present study was mainly centered on two culturally divergent Tribal groups in the Gram Panchayat namely the Paniyan and the Kurichian. The socio economic and cultural life of the different Tribal groups in Kerala varies from Tribe to Tribe and region to region. They belong to different ethnic stocks, have different pattern of economy, technology and belief system and practices. These differences are applicable in every sense, to the life of the Kurichian and of the Paniyan. It has also to be pointed out the both are placed at two

extremes, in terms of socio-economic development indicators. The Paniyan are placed on the lowest rung whereas the Kurichiyans on the Highest rung among the Scheduled Tribes of Kerala. The great keenness to know how decentralization works among different segments of population among Scheduled Tribes moved this study into the direction involving these two groups in question.

Decentralized planning and Devolution in Kerala

Planning at any level without the necessary financial authority and resources is meaningless. Hence, prior to the description of development interventions, a vivid description is essential about the flow of financial resources from the State exchequer to local Government under different heads including Tribal Sub Plan. In the State, the fund for development planning is allotted to local Governments according to a well-designed formula made by the State Finance Commissions from time to time. Among the criterion, sixty-percentage weightage is given to population proportion and one-third to backwardness besides some incentives for tax effort (Oomen, M.A, 2004). According to the Third State Finance Commission recommendation, it was obligatory that each Financial Year during 2006-2011, the State Government should increase a minimum of ten per cent of the amount given in the preceding Year. To quote Kerala Economic Review (2007), during Ninth and Tenth Plan, the local governments allotted 11398 crore rupees as grant-in-aid for development Plan. In the Ninth Plan period, between 1997 and 2002, the local governments in Kerala were allotted over 4614 million rupees. The actual transfer during the Ninth Plan was 30 per cent of the State Plan as against the 2.35 per cent during the eighth Plan. In the Tenth Plan, development grant for local governments were increased to 6784 million rupees, which amounts to 27 per cent of the state plan. During the Eleventh Plan, the devolution of grant-in-aid (development Fund) was further increased to around ten thousand crores. It is estimated that in the last fifteen years more than twenty thousand crore rupees were actually developed to local governments under the plan grant for preparing local development plan.

Devolution, Utilisation and Financial Progress under TSP:

The Table. 1 shows the financial resources devolved to the gram panchayat under study (Kanichar) over the past three five year plans and the utilization of resources. These figures were collected from the budget documents of the state of Kerala appended for financial transfers to local governments of Kerala. The budget documents of last fifteen years period were subjected for examination and to assess the volume of financial resources developed to this panchayat for prepare local development plan including Tribal Sub Plan.

Plan Periods	Plan Allocation (in rupees)			Utilization of Development Grants (in %)			
	General	SCP	TSP	General	SCP	TSP	Total
9 th Plan	11092138	368235	2639674	91.0	84.0	83.0	89.0
10 th Plan	27687170	801000	4557330	76.0	75.0	74.0	77.0
11 th Plan	39813393	1867300	13335600	87.0	74.0	66.0	82.0
Total	7859270	3036535	20532604	84.0	75.0	70.0	81.0

Table 1: Distribution of development Grants Received and the Extend of Utilisation during the last Three Five Year Plan (1997-2012)

Source: Tabulated from State Budget documents and plan documents of Kanichar Village Panchayat

Table: 1 exhibit that during the last three Five Year Plan (ninth to eleventh), the village panchayat have received more than ten crores rupees from the state governments as Development fund (previously known as plan fund) for preparing local development plan under decentralized planning. As stated earlier, the fund was transferred under three different heads, General, SCP and TSP. Out of the total allotment, 77 per cent was for preparing general plan, 3 per cent Special Component Plan (SCP) for scheduled castes and the 20 per cent were exclusively for the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for scheduled tribe population. The fund flow follows the general pattern in the state, every plan period; the development grant marked a significant hike compared to previous plans. For example, in the Tenth Plan, panchayat received an increased allocation of nearly 150 per cent compared to the preceding ninth plan. During the eleventh plan, the hike in allocation was around 50 percent of the tenth plan.

Financial progress:

During the **Ninth plan** (1997-2002), the village panchayat has been allocated a little over 1.41 crore rupees for decentralized planning thanks to the momentous decision that had been taken by the then Left Democratic government in power in the year 1996. Out of this 78.7 per cent was in general category, 2.6 percent for SCP and 18.7 per cent were for Tribal Sub Plan. The total plan progress during this period was 89 per. The category wise analysis shows that 91 per cent of the general funds was utilized whereas in the case of SCP and TSP, the percentage was 84 and 83 per cent respectively. The above figure shows that the utilization of fund for tribal development was eight per cent lower than the village average.

During the **Tenth Plan** (2002-07), the village panchayat received more than 3.21 crore rupees as plan grant for decentralized planning and out of this, nearly 84 per cent was earmarked under general category and 2 per cent was for special component plan. The amount earmarked for Tribal Sub Plan was a little above 14 per cent of the total allocation. It was also seen that though the

general share has grown more than 100 per cent as compared to the Ninth plan, the corresponding growth in TSP was only around 70 per cent. A closer look into the budget documents revealed that in the initial year of 10th plan, the newly elected United Front Government had taken a policy change to withdraw the Tribal Sub Plan from local governments. Hence, in the year 2002-2003, the first year of the 10th plan, there was no allocation to local government under Tribal Sub Plan. This decision brought heavy protest and criticism from several corners and after marathon debates and discussions, the government had resume the TSP allocation to local governments since the financial year 2003-2004. The data on plan expenditure exhibit the following figures: the total plan expenditure during this period was 77 percent; twelve per cent lower compared to the Ninth plan. When looking into category-wise expenditure details, the data reveal that progress in general category was 76 per cent and the SCP and TSP were 75 and 74 per cent respectively. The overall performance was poor when compared to the preceding Ninth plan. The Tribal Sub Plan during this period also showed a dismal picture, the expenditure was around 10 per cent below when compared to the proceeding plan. Why did this happen? It requires detailed enquiry and investigation. One thing has to be noted here. This dismal show did not reflect the general trend in the state during those days. To quote the Kerala Economic review (2007) the average plan progress of local governments under decentralised planning during Ninth plan was 74.81 per cent. During Tenth Plan, the average plan expenditure was reported as 74.78 per cent. The data show that local governments in Kerala had maintained stability in the implementation dimension of decentralized planning. However, the Village under study was lagging behind the average performance of the state. The decrease was not only limited to the figure and percentage of expenditure but also to the vigour of the entire decentralised planning process. The initial enthusiasm existed among people for participatory planning was declining day by day. There were so many reasons behind this shift. The attitude of the local governments, to a greater extent, and the changeover of attitude by the newly elected government in the state against this movement lessened the enthusiasm among the masses. All these ultimately led to a situation as described by many in this field, “people’s planning sans people”.

During the **Eleventh Plan** period (2007-2012), the village panchayat has been allotted 5.5 crores rupees as development fund for decentralised planning. The category wise allocation of development grant was as follows: 72 per cent under general category, 3 per cent under SCP and 24 per cent under TSP. The TSP allocation was doubled compared to the preceding Tenth plan. Show that out of the total allocation in general category, 87 per cent of the fund was utilized and the plan progress of SCP was 74 per cent. The Tribal Sub Plan performance was recorded a mere 66 per cent of the total allocation.

Trend in Utilisation of TSP Fund against General plan

A close look at the financial performances under decentralized planning experiment in the study village elicits following general trends: The average utilization of plan fund was 81 per cent of the total allocation. The category wise utilization exhibits that the development intervention for weaker sections both scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes marked a lower turn out every time compared to the general plan. It has to be further explained that among the weaker sections, development initiative for scheduled Tribes recorded a further negative trend. The fifteen years (1997-2012) development experience under decentralized planning has brought forth a general pattern in the financial performance of village under study. There has been a big gap in the plan progress between the Tribal Sub Plan and the other two sectors, all through the last three five year plans. In the Ninth plan, the gap in the plan progress between the general plan and the TSP was as much 8 per cent and in the Tenth plan, the gap had been reduced to 3 per cent, mainly because of the lower allocation during the plan period, as mentioned earlier. In the eleventh plan, the gap between the general category and the TSP was again widened to 6 per cent.

The table.1 reveals that during the past three five year plans total money spent under TSP was around 1.22 crores rupees. The income expenditure statements showed an alarming rate of under-utilisation of resources earmarked for tribal sub plan.

A high stock of non-performing money was kept in the custody of panchayat and this trend was continuing every financial year. The field data also reveals that the low turnout was not limited to certain periods but it was the general trend over the past fifteen years since the beginning of the Ninth Plan. The entire low turn outs in financial progress highlight the systemic inefficiency inherent in local government for making use of the scarce resources and translate them in the lives of deprived through better outcome.

Macro Trend:

An attempt was also made to compare and comprehend the gram Panchayat trend with macro trend in the State and it also exposes the same trend. During the 11th Plan the overall average performance in the general category was around 79 percent whereas the average percentage of tribal sub plan was only around 71 percentages. Against this backdrop that Dr. Oommen (2009:84-85) observed, it is not inadequacy of funds but proper utilization resources that matters tribal development in Kerala.

What is gained from Decentralized Development?

It has also to be pointed out that mere stock- taking of the accounts of expenditure would not reflect the ground level reality of tribal livelihoods and it would give only misleading results. As Oommen(2009) observes, financial expenditure does not ensure corresponding physical achievements. This obser-

vation is very relevant with regard to the tribal people of Kerala. Since independence, thousands of crores of rupees have been spend in the name of tribes. The long figures shine in the pages of Kerala Economic reviews and other official literatures published each time. However, these figures seldom reflect the reality of tribal life in Kerala and same is the case with India. Therefore, the present enquiry intends to extend beyond the line of income and expenditure and to analyze the process and impact of decentralized planning in the lives of tribal poor of this Village. Therefore, the analysis must turn its direction to several other dimensions of decentralization process: the kind of development interventions undertake; How they were designed; to what extent people hold control over the planning and implementation; and what benefits (both in terms of development of people's empowerment) accrued from all these programmes. The first question seeks how far development interventions moved with aim to reduce the disparity in development between tribe- non tribe and between different tribal groups in this Village, and second question addresses the empowerment aspect. The assessment is done largely based on the strength of experience and insights emanated from the field study. Two things require explanation at the outset: the periodicity that underlies this exercise and the strategy of outcome assessment.

Periodicity:

As stated already, the Tribal Sub Plan under the decentralized planning was initiated in Kerala since the beginning of Ninth Plan. However, the data source was very scanty with regard to the individual activities undertaken over the Ninth Plan Period.

Strategy of Assessment:

It has already been noted that while development plans are prepared under TSP, local governments are bound to follow the basic strategy and approach envisioned in the guide lines specially made for local governments. In such a situation, any effort to assess the performance of local governments in the area of tribal development should be done based on the basic stipulation in the guide line. Therefore, the present assessment of the project effects of tribal sub plan is made along the lines of the basic provisions in the TSP strategy enumerated already.

Limitations in the Analysis:

The project documents reveals that during the past one decade, using financial resources other than tribal fund, the Village Panchayat has carried out a large number of projects (more than 850) which definitely provided public goods to society at large. The project effects must have spilled over to the tribal people also, and they must have been benefited from such interventions. Hence, to get a comprehensive understanding about the impact of decentralization on tribal people, the study must be undertaken holistically covering the entire development interventions in a particular region without segregating

the source or category of money spent. However, the scope of the present enquiry has been limited to the impact of the development intervention specially carried out for the tribal population using TSP share.

Development -Sectoral Experiences:

The panchayat implemented two types of projects (a) Community -oriented projects (b) Individual beneficiary projects. Community -oriented projects are meant for the entire tribal people living in a particular region, while the individual beneficiary projects are allotted to individuals, and their benefits accrue to the individuals only. All these projects were spread across three broad sectors economy, namely **production, service and infrastructure**. Hence, the present analysis is mainly done under these three major sub-heads of development. Table 5.4 presents the statistics of the developments projects undertaken in different sectors during the 10th and 11th Plan periods.

Sl. No.	Plan Period	Sectors						Implemented	ure (100%) (in Rupees)
		Production		Service		Infrastructure			
		No of projects	Expenditure	No of projects	Expenditure	No of projects	Expenditure		
1	10 th Plan	1	0.9	26	91.1	0	0	27	3364750
2	11 th Plan	0	0	48	89.6	4	11.4	52	8830012
Total		1	0.25	74	91.5	4	8.25	79	12194762

Table 2: Development projects under TSP and utilization by sector (2002-12)-
Source: Tabulated from the Plan Documents of Kanichar-2002-2012

Productive Sector:

As the guideline states, agriculture, animal husbandry, Irrigation, Industry, social forestry etc. are the important development areas, which are accounted as the major sub sectors of productive sector. To ensure, sectoral and regional balance as well as equity and social justice, uniform norms were laid down on how much amount should be allocated to each sector of the economy. It is mandatory that as per the general plan guideline, a minimum 30 per cent of the general plan fund must be earmarked for projects under productive sector. However, in the case of TSP, there was no such mandatory minimum provision for allocation in productive sectors. Local governments are freed to select projects under this sector. However, when looking at the TSP operational guidelines, the first priority was given for putting to optimum use the existing land in the possession of tribal people, giving priority to the locally relevant crops as decided by the tribal farmers. It necessitates a closer look in to the matter with the Development Plan. It has to be stated at the outset that initiatives were absolutely naught in real operation. There are ample evidences to state that the Village Panchayat had totally ignored the directions in matters related to the agriculture and productive sectors. As the Table 5.4 shows, only a single project under

the Tribal Sub Plan had been implemented in the productive sector over the entire ten- year period under consideration . The expenditure shows only thirty thousand rupees and it constitutes below one per cent of the Total expenditure under TSP during the last two Plan periods.

In addition to agriculture, productive Sector comprises some other development areas also. As mentioned already, animal husbandry, minor Irrigation, fisheries, Social forestry, and small- scale industries are the other important sub sectors included in this major sector. The Plan documents of last one decade revealed that no single projects were implemented in any of these areas.

Thus, it can be seen that productive sector got no prominence under Tribal Sub Plan. Allocation in productive sector was very meager. There was not a single effort on the part of local government to identify the potential schemes and beneficiaries under this sector to enhance the livelihood sources of the tribal people in this region. The local plan should change its focus by designing actions and interventions necessary to enable the entire tribal workforce in the Village to first maximize their earnings and employment from their existing avenues or source of work and employment and to facilitate the fullest use of the productive resources. A systematic Plan for land use, water use, labor-use, animal- resource use, etc., is yet to be in place under the process of decentralization.

Service Sector:

The general Plan guideline identifies mainly seven sub-sectors under the service sector. These include health, education, drinking water, electrification, housing, sanitation, social welfare, women and child development. All these sub sectors that come under the service sector have a vital role to play in up keeping the human development status of the rural community in Kerala.

A glance on the sector wise allocation shows that the Panchayat has given more attention to the Service sector to enhance the basic services provided to tribes through welfare-oriented programmes with special emphasis on housing. Table 5.4 shows that there were 79 projects implemented under Tribal Sub Plan during the last two plan period. Of these, 74 projects (94%) fall under Service sector. In terms of money spent in different sectors, the share of service sector constitutes 91 % of the total utilization of TSP. As mentioned at the beginning, service sector comprises mainly seven sub-sector, under its fold. The study reveals that the major concentration had been on four areas, namely, housing, electrification, sanitation and drinking water.

Housing:

Safe and secure shelter is one of the basic needs of the human being and right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right. For a citizen whether it is included among the tribes or non-tribes, owing a house provides significant economic security and dignity in society.

Sl. No.	Periods	Re	Total Expenditure	Housing Projects		% of Housing Expenditure	
33347501124 9150074.074,7					Amount Spent	Against Total	Against Total Expenditure 1
1219476211155775 23758830062.268.02 10th Plan 3364750		11 th Plan	8830012	7821025	12	5096800	57.70

Table 3: Housing Expenditure under TSP during 2002-2012

Source: Tabulated from Plan Documents of Kanichar Panchayath-2002-12

TSP Expenditure:

As seen in Table-4 during the period under consideration, more than seventy five lakhs rupees (constituting about 62 percent of the total expenditure under TSP and 68 percent of the expenditure under Service Sector) has been spent in housing sector. The huge investment of resources in the sub sector reminds the inadequacy of safe and secure shelter among them. During the last one decade, in Tenth and Eleventh Plans, 23 projects were implemented under TSP to cater the housing needs of the most vulnerable sections among the tribes, including the destitute families, widows, female headed tribal families, etc.. Poor people usually have bad housing and shelter with possible exceptions. What distinguishes the poor from the non-poor is sub-standard housing (Deepa, et al, 1999:4). Under this backdrop, a detailed qualitative analysis was also made to capture the presenting housing status of two Tribal Communities in this Village.

It is absolutely right in the case of Paniyan in the study village. The Paniyan settlements and residents are in most deplorable condition, and they are living in a noxious environment as compared to all other social groups in the village including the Kurichiyans. In all accounts, the Paniyan houses are more deplorable and overcrowded and lack basic amenities for leading a decent life as human being. The question remains why the Paniyan still lagging behind in the minimum access to assets such as housing, particularly in the background of TSP strategy under decentralized Planning.

Community Assets:

Besides housing, major focus in Service sector was building Community assets such as cultural centers at tribal hamlets. Three cultural centers were erected during the Eleventh Plan and 12.4 per cent of TSP fund had been utilized for this purpose.

Health:

In the health sectors also, certain interventions had been carried out and 5.3 per cent TSP fund expended. The lone action in this field was to conduct

medical camps, incorporating allopathic and Ayurveda systems, at remote tribal hamlets in this Village.

Education:

A major area to be focused in the Planning was on improving the quality of tribal education. The general Plan guidelines of Tenth and Eleventh Plan had articulated the need for expanding educational facilities and improving quality of education, as key instrument for achieving faster and inclusive growth. Over and over again TSP guideline also had emphasized its importance and insisted on the local government to pay attention to enhancing the human development of the tribes with focus on quality of education right from the pre-school up to the higher secondary, including providing placement in schools of repute, arranging for quality assurance, remedial teaching and re-education of failed students. However, the analysis of the past one decade's development efforts affirmed that all these have ended on paper. No sincere efforts were made on the part of the village Panchayat to provide any such services mentioned above to the tribal poor of this village. The plan documents reveal that during Tenth Plan no single projects were undertaken in education field. During the Eleventh Plan, a meager amount of 1.6% had been utilized in education. However, this meager amount was earmarked only for providing books, bags, and furniture. In a society where poverty is far more common than prosperity, one would expect certain attempts on the part of planners and local authorities on education. Nevertheless, no concerted was made by the Panchayat to provide better education or remedial education to tribal students and bring them par with the rest of the society

Though, the guidelines stipulate different interventions to be carried out in service sector, the experiences of this Village shows the major focus always been on housing at the expense of other areas within the service sector which had received only a negligible attention.

Infrastructure:

An attempt on the part of panchayat to minimize their TSP allocation in the infrastructure during the last two plans may be notable. As stated earlier, there were strict limitations to undertake projects in the field of infrastructure using TSP fund. As the guideline stipulates, the money spend for infrastructure should not exceed 25 per cent of the TSP allocation. In addition, no fund should be earmarked for roads. Only footpaths and footbridges were allowed. During the last two plans, the Gram Panchayat had taken utmost care to follow the stipulation in the basic guideline. Only 8.25 per cent of the TSP fund was utilized in infrastructure sector. Only projects footpaths and footsteps to tribal hamlets were undertaken. No roads were constructed using TSP fund.

In the context of this Village, it has also to be stated, in accordance with the Plan documents of ten-year periods, that no diversification of fund had

been noticed under TSP as some sections feared in Kerala in the early days of decentralization when deciding to transfer major share of Tribal Sub Plan resources to local governments.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present empirical exploration mirrors what is actually happening in a tribal Village of Kannur district in the days of decentralization and local democracy. The major argument in favor of decentralization of political and development powers was that the 'Empowered Deliberative Democracy' should produce superior outcomes to traditional 'Representative-techno-Bureaucratic Democracy' in promoting equity, improving the quality of citizenship and producing better outcomes of State (Isaac,). However, empirical evidences prove that no precepts produced any significant outcomes in the lives of the deprived among the tribal groups like the Paniyan. In the light of this study it can be Safely be stated that the various attempts in the last fifteen years to shape the decentralized planning process have resulted only in a mish-mash, particularly when concerns the life of the poorest of the poor among the tribal people. Though the volume of money expended each year and the number of development interventions increased enormously, they could not bring about corresponding positive impact in improving the minimum basics for leading a healthy and decent life for the most helpless and hapless sections among the tribal community especially the Paniyan, the numerically predominant tribal group in the Kerala society. Local government had not succeeded in incorporating the alternative paradigm in the lives of the disadvantaged sections of Village society.

The local government has adopted 'status-quoist' choices. The early assumption was that decentralized governance can lead to more flexible, innovative and creative administrative set up and it shall make use of the greater opportunities to test the innovations and to experiment with new policies and programs in selected areas. The ability of the local government to generate innovation, maximize public choices, and participation was argued as central to development of the locale. The detailed analysis of the plan documents of last two plan periods reveal that they were perpetuating stereotypes every year instead of inventing innovations through choices of tribal communities. Actually, in the name of development, what is seen is the 'development of under development', to use the concept of Andre Gunder Frank, through stereotypes.

To sum up, the present findings also supporting the arguments previously made by many in this field. Decentralization is obviously no universal solution to development problems. Reforms that may seriously redistribute wealth are dependent on several factors and, as Wildmalm(2008:51) observes, it is chiefly related to three factors namely, the delegations of power, a functioning civil service administration, and the local decision- making bodies that perform well.

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THE CHANGING DISCOURSES ON POWER AMONGST THE TRIBES OF KERALA

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Abstract

The change in the socio-economic and educational conditions of the tribal communities of Kerala are undergoing changes. Social control mechanisms of these communities have also undergone changes over the years. The paper is based on study among three communities Muthuvan, Paniyan, and Mannan of Kerala. The shift towards the cash crops make the community more individualised and many features of the traditional mechanism of social organization, such as savadi, vanished from many of the kudies Muthuvan. The Paniyan community which traditionally enjoyed high stake of power over their life community is devoid of command over material resources. Their social cohesion is also fast disappearing. The Mannan community of Idukki practiced shifting cultivation. Now they live very much as part of mainstream life without losing their cultural traits, including language, and authority over their life. Their educational attainment is also not effected by the practice of their language since many among them have achieved higher education and have reached at better positions in the Government service. The above mentioned aspects make it clear that almost all the tribal communities of the State have a high stake of normative and physical power in their 'traditional life' but certain communities like Mannan is successful in retaining a considerable amount of their power due to their strong social cohesion build around an elaborate social control mechanism, which is mentioned above.

Traditionally forest ecosystem along the eastern Western-ghat mountain ranges of the State is the main habitation area of the Scheduled Tribe¹ (ST) communities of the State. They did/do shifting cultivation, raised dwelling out of the locally available materials, and developed distinct beliefs, practices, and elaborate systems of social organizations, all in tune with nature. In short a life of more or less self-sufficiency and sustainability. Nevertheless, in course of time most of their traditional means of sustainable living were taken away due to one or the other reasons and they were forced to move in to the interior forest areas, most of which now fall under the category of Wild Life Sanctuaries and National Parks. However, a major chunk amongst them were not

1. The scope of the term tribe here is limited to the 37 Scheduled Tribe communities of the State.

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successful either in occupying new forest areas or to prevent the loss of their traditional habitats vis a vis self-sufficiency. All these clearly state that nowadays the quality of life and the socio-economic and educational attainments of the tribal communities and those within a particular tribal community are at varying levels. Along with these, the system of social control mechanisms, their context, nature and engagement of power within a tribal community has also undergone drastic changes. The paper focuses on the changing discourses on power amongst the tribal communities of the State.

The Context and Impulse of Power of the Tribal Communities

Power is a fundamental and basic entity in human life (Bierstedt, 1974: 221). It is the 'ability to coerce other individuals or groups to change their behaviour in some intended direction' (Dahl, 1969; Zanfman, 1974, c.f. Rubinstein, 1998: 990). Some scholars refer power as 'participation in decision-making', (Lasswell and Kaplan), while certain others define it as 'the capacity of an individual or a group of individuals to modify the conduct of other individuals', (Tawney), (c.f Murickan, 1991:3). For Murickan (1991:3) social power is 'the capacity of a person or a group to determine others behaviour backed with one's command over sanctions'. Thus, the notion of power encompasses a wide range of aspects and one can summarise it as the capacity to influence/modify the behaviour of other individuals and groups through the ability to control the physical and material resources.

Earle, (1994: 951) classifies the sources of power in to four, viz., social, military, ideological and economic. According to Beteille (1965: 143) physical force, economic, ritual and other sanctions have a decisive influence in determining power. However, Rubinstein (1998: 990-91) opines that 'It is the 'process' of living according to principle, not material force that produces power'. And this non-material aspect of power is usually described as the 'normative power'. It is this normative power that maintains the continuity of the way of life of Native Americans of the United States in the midst of hardships and prevents the extinction of the small minority populations throughout the world at the hands of the majority. All these reveal that the normative power rests on the socio-cultural life of the people, and is quite distinct from the physical power that depends on the management and control of the material resources. Thus, whatever may be the categorization normative power and physical power can be taken as the two major aspects of power of a community. It is in this context that the power scenario of the tribal communities is discussed in this paper.

Enforcement of sanctions in case of 'non-conformity' is the unique feature of the social power. Sanction means the denial of 'some valued object from the non-conformer'. The valued object includes group membership, respect, cooperation, affection, etc., The severity of sanction depends on the group cohesion of the community as well as its culture and its relevance. The ability to enforce sanctions has a directly proportional role upon the power base of the community.

Trajectory of Power amongst the Tribal Communities

Nowadays, majority of the hamlets of most of the tribal communities are situated as part of the village social system². Cholanaikkan community of Nilambur forest area in Malappuram district, who are leading an 'isolated' life within the dense forest, is a major exception to this. However, the hamlets of other tribal communities, barring mainly a few hamlets of the Muthuvan community are part of the village life even though some communities like Paniyan are more or less leading an 'isolated life' within the village social system. Nevertheless, it is mainly in the Muthuvan community that one can see the 'traditional life' along with the 'changing & changed life' at the present scenario. The geographically 'isolated' hamlets of the community situated at the interior areas of the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary of the Marayoor area in Idukki district showcases the community's traditional life while the hamlets at the Mankulam area of the district are very much a part of the village social life with only a few elements of their 'traditional life'.

Muthuvan Community of Idukki District

The major concentration of the Muthuvan community is in the Idukki district followed by Ernakulam and Thrissur districts. The community is mainly distributed in 110 settlements and their population in the state is recorded as 12305 (6273 Males and 6032 Females)ⁱ. Most of their settlements are either within or at the fringe areas of the forests that are variously categorised. Marayoor, Kanthaloor, Edamalakudiii, Adimali, Vattavada, Bison Valley, Chinnakanal and Mankulam Grama Panchayaths in Idukki district and Kuttampuzha, Grama Panchayath in Ernakulam district are the major habitation areas of the community. However, their way of life and socio-environmental conditions in the above mentioned areas are varying and a look at the contrasting scenario would give a clear picture about the changing power relations among the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in Kerala.

'Traditional Life' of the Community: Vellakkal kudi (hamlet) in Marayoor Grama Panchayath is around 15 K.Ms from the Marayoor town, and is situated within the Chinnar Wild Life Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is very close to the town and there is a mud road to the kudi but only one K.M of the road is in good condition and the rest of which is in a very dilapidated state. Hardly any vehicle goes to the kudi and the outsiders are not permitted to visit the kudi as it is situated within the dense areas of the Sanctuary. The kudi is situated at a high mountain slope and is around 1500 feet above sea level. They practice shifting cultivation and cultivate a wide variety of food grains that are used only for consumption. Ragi, Maize, Thina, Varagu, Chama Rice, Tomato, Carrot, Sweet Potato, Potato, Cheeni Vala, Toppi, Mocha, etc. are the important food crops

2. 1518 hamlets (31.88 %) out of the total 4762 hamlets of the tribal communities are situated in the forest areas, (GOK, 2013:174).

cultivated by the members of the kudi. Almost all the crops are cultivated in the same field, side by side, and many of the crops provide yield at different periods. Around 50 families are there in the kudi and they do shifting cultivation around 2000 acres of land. Agricultural operations are done together by all the kudi members. However, there is an understanding between the community members that a particular family take yield only from a particular portion of the agricultural land. Thus, one can assume that there is only a loose concept of family property among the members of the community. However, there is no clear cut demarcation between the lands of one family from the other. The slope of one side of the hill belongs to one family, while next to another. The entire cultivation is depended on rain water. They clear the shrubs and burn them during the months of March-April, and dig the soil and start cultivation by the months of June-July. They never use chemical fertilizers; charcoal and ash provide the necessary fertility to the soil. Same land is not cultivated in subsequent years and the cultivation resumes in a particular land only after a gap of seven years. Yield from shifting cultivation is enough to meet the food needs of the community members. They never sell the excess grains at the market for cash rather all the members of the community are ready to give the excess food grains in their custody to those in need.

Their houses are built out of the locally available materials. Wooden poles, mud, and grass are the only essential raw material for building a residential structure. Some of them use tin/asbestos sheets for thatching houses and use cement for plastering the walls owing to their contact with the mainstream. They erect large flat structures made of bamboo, wooden branches, grass, etc., close to the mud wall of the houses for protecting their houses from the fast moving wind and rain.

Almost all the works in the kudi, including the house building are done with the participation of the all the members of the kudi. And the society is also so organized to carry out the communitarian way of life. There are separate savadies (dormitories) in the kudi for the males and females, where their younger members before marriage and old age persons spend night. And there are separate leaders among the male and female youths and all the youths of the kudi are under their command. Kani and Thalaivar look after the entire affairs of the kudi. Elanthari (youths of savadi) under the command of Kani, Thalaivar and other elder members undertake most of the activities of the community such as house building, various activities of shifting cultivation, arrangements for rituals and ceremonies, etc. Thus, many aspects of the behaviour and life of the members of the community are controlled and decided by the community's own leaders such as Kani and Thalaivar.

A Multi Grade Learning Centre (MGLC) and an Anganwadi are working in the hamlet for the education of the children. Many children of the hamlet are known to pursue Upper Primary and High School Education at the nearby schools by staying at the hostels run by the Scheduled Tribe Development Department (STDD). They have a high self-esteem and consider themselves

as superior to other communities in the area, and follow strict rules of endogamy. All these reveals that the Muthuvans in Vellakal Kudi are more or less self-sufficient in almost all aspects, their culture, belief systems, agricultural practices are all intact. All these states that the Muthuvan community in their 'comfortable traditional life' enjoyed high normative and physical powers as they have an independent and distinct socio-cultural life and a more or less sustainable and self-sufficient sources of livelihood. Thus, the 'traditional comfortable living circumstances' gives the tribal communities of the State a high stake of power over its members.

The 'Changing Life' of the Community: Edamalakudi Panchayath encompasses 28 kudies of the Muthuvan community. All the kudies are in the forest area. There is no vehicle road accessibility to most of the kudies. One has to walk 10 to 15 KMs from the nearby vehicle road situated at Pettimudi, Nallamala in Tamil Nadu State, and Anakulam areas. They are used to rice and other food items of the mainstream. Puthukudi, (now popularly known as society kudi) and Parapayar kudi have societies/shops run with the assistance of the Government. The Panchayat building is situated at Puthukudi, while its office works from Devikulam, Munnar. The kudi also has a Lower Primary School and a Family Welfare Sub-Centre of the Health Department.

Many *kudies* do shifting cultivation only at a low extend. Cardamom is the main crop of the people. Most of the traditional shifting cultivated areas of the community are now replaced with cardamom fields. It is known that the cardamom plantations were started at the initiatives of the forest Department and later supported by the Scheduled Tribes Development Department (STDD). However, as the community members are more interested in cardamom plantation, where money motive and family ownership got prominence, shifting cultivation became ceased in many traditionally shifting cultivated lands as the cultivation practice lost significance in the changed situations. And at a certain point of time many such lands were taken over by the forest Department and there by the landholdings of the members of the community became diminished. The fall in price of cardamom at certain years along with crop failure compelled the members of certain kudies, such as Mulakuthara, Keezhpatham, and Nenmanal to turn to other cash crops such as areca, pepper, coffee, rubber, etc., for a living. It is known that usually community members borrowed money from the businessman of the nearby markets so as to meet the cost of seedlings, labour, fertilizers etc. for raising cash crops and as a result they have to give the entire yield to them for repaying the debt.

The shift towards the cash crops make the community more individualised and many features of the traditional mechanism of social organization, such as savadi, vanished from many of the kudies. Many day to day activities of the community members are not necessitating the support of the community as a whole and it in-turn limit the scope of the community's interference through Kani ad Thalaivar into the life and behaviour of it's members to a lesser level.

Thus, many hamlets of the community in Edamalakudiy Grama Panchayath has now lost many features of their age-old socio-cultural life and group feeling along with their economic and livelihood sustainability. All these diminish the normative and physical power of the community as a whole.

The ‘Changed Life’ at the Present Scenario: Nagamala³ kudi in Adimali Panchayath is around 15 KMs from the nearby town Mankulam. 10 K.M journey through mud road that goes through the forest having abundance of bamboo bring one to the kudi. The old Aluwa-Munnar road goes through the kudi. The kudi is not cut off from the mainstream life but it is a part of it. There are around 250 families in the kudi. Rubber, Plantain, Areca, Tapioca, Coconut, etc. are the major crops of the kudi. They do not practice shifting cultivation. The land holding of the families varies from 10 cents to 10 acres. The communitarian life has been lost. Each family has to look after its own affairs. Some of them give their land on lease while some sold a portion of their land to other members of the community as well as to members of other ST communities such as Malai Araya. Many of the community members depend on bamboo cutting for the industries, which is the wage labour available in the area for a living.

The traditional beliefs and practices of the community are changing very fast in the kudi. Now, around 50 families have embraced Christianity, absence of savadi, alcohol addiction, replacement of traditional houses with concrete structures, etc., are the major changes noticed among the community members. Each family of the community looks after its own affairs and do not seek /depend on the community’s support and opinion in deciding their family and personal matters. The above mentioned aspects of the changed life of the tribal community clearly state that their power status has been further reduced and now they have only a little control over their socio-cultural life and livelihood resources.

The above mentioned varying life circumstances of the Muthuvan community clearly state that many hamlets of the community have lost a considerable hold of their power while a number of hamlets of the community still hold many aspects of their power.

The Case of Paniyan Community

The Paniyan community of the State is mainly distributed in the Wayanad district and its adjoining areas in Kannur, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. They are one of the representatives of the socio-culturally, educationally and economically backward tribal communities of the State. Adiyam, Aranadan, Malavettuvan, Malai Vedan, Hill Pulaya, and Malai Pandaram are the other major representatives of the category. Centuries back the Paniyan community had been leading an independent life of shifting cultivators⁴, hunters and

3. Pseudonym

4. See GOI, (1961: 31)

gatherers⁵ prior to the arrival of the large scale migrations into their habitation area. And they probably enjoyed high stake of power at that time. The arrival of Jains⁶ (Gauder) from Karnataka, and Wayanadan Chetties from Tamil Nadu, dwelling of Nayar families brought by Kerala Varma Pazhassi Rajaiii towards the end of the 18th century⁷, British occupation of Wayanad after the fall of Tipu Sultan and their forest policies which banned 'Punam cultivation⁸', large scale migration to Wayanad from Travancore area started at the beginning of 1930's onwards⁹, etc., have altered the self-reliant traditional life of the Paniyan community to that of landless, agricultural labourers, living in congested and 'isolated colonies' with high rate of dependency on others for a living. Thus, at present the Paniyan community is devoid of command over material resources. Their social cohesion is also fast disappearing. All these adversely affect their power to control their life. Thus, traditionally the Paniyan community enjoyed high stake of power over their life but nowadays a major chunk of that power has irrevocably been lost to the community.

The Mannan Community of Idukki District

Mannan is a prominent tribal community of the Idukki district that lives in close proximity at many places with the Muthuvan community mentioned above. Legends show that they reached at their present place of residence from Madurai, Tamil Nadu through Kumli, a bordering place of Kerala State. Many of their earlier settlements were submerged with the construction of Mullaperiyar Dam. They practiced shifting cultivation. Now they live very much as part of mainstream life without losing their cultural traits, including language¹⁰, and authority over their life. Their educational attainment is also not effected by the practice of their language since many among them have achieved higher education and have reached at better positions in the Government service. Many of them are also active politicians of the major political parties of the State. All the above mentioned aspects clearly state that the community is successful in holding a considerable amount of power while living as part of the mainstream life.

The most important feature that helps the community to maintain its power while living along with the mainstream life is their elaborate system of social organization. Valiya Mooppan/Raja Mannan is the supreme head of the community. He is the final authority in all matters and is venerated by the

5. See Luiz (1962: 218)

6. The Jains reached Kerala during 8th century and their flow from Karnataka to Malabar became prominent in the 13th century.

7. For more see, Kurup, (1995:34)

8. A type of shifting cultivation

9. For more see, Varkey, (2005:188-193)

10. They speak a dialect, which is a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam.

community. Each koorra (kudi/ hamlet) has a headman known as kanikkaran. He is assisted by Valiya Kolanthari, Ilayavattom, Thannipatha, Thandakaran, etc. They practiced the marumakkathayam (succession through female line) system of inheritance. An elaborate ceremonial ritual called kanchivaippu/ kalavoottu is observed at each kudi, annually. And members of all the settlements used to attend the festival at a kudi, and all of them participated in the performance of aatt paatt/kooth, (traditional dance), throughout the night.

The demise of the Arayan *Valiya Mooppan* in 2012 and the subsequent identification of his successor and his reign as new *Valiya Mooppan*¹¹ invited great public attention. The district administration, peoples representatives including the Minister for the Development of the Scheduled Tribes, the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of the place and public in general participated in the ceremonies. The state Government also sanctioned a reasonable sum for the modification of the Royal House as well as to carry out the customary activities of the *Valiya Mooppan*. Medias gave wide publicity to the events. All these accord public acceptance to the unique practices and socio-cultural traits of the Mannan community. The *Valiya Mooppan* is now emerged as a special dignitary at many of the important public functions of the district as well as those in the neighbouring districts. A famous cine artist inaugurated the starting of the web site of the Valiya Mooppan at a function in Ernakulam, and he was also a special dignitary at a large national function conducted in Kozhikode Beach in 2016. All these events led to the reassertion of the culture, heritage, and power of the Mannan community and those of the tribal communities of the State in general in the present scenario.

In the light of the above mentioned facts in can be deduced that the recent events among the Mannan community reinforces their ‘economic, social and cultural capitaliv’, in the sense used by Pierre Bourdieu, to ascertain their space and power in the socio-cultural system of the State. It also adds to the ‘normative power’, of the community. It is through this normative power that the cultural traits and comfortable life of the community maintains its continuity over generations.

Conclusion

The above mentioned aspects make it clear that almost all the tribal communities of the State have a high stake of normative and physical power in their ‘traditional life’ but many of them have lost a considerable degree of the same due to the wrong path selected by them/for them. However, certain communities like Mannan is successful in retaining a considerable amount of their power due to their strong social cohesion build around an elaborate social control mechanism, which is mentioned above. In other words they are successful in retaining many of their age-old cultural traits and features while living as

11. Raman Raja Mannan is the present head of the community

part of the village social system. Only those interventions that help the overall well-being of the community in total are good. Further, both the normative and physical aspects of power are equally important as far as the tribal communities of the State is concerned and their one aspect of power reinforces the other since the material conditions of a tribal population has a decisive role in defining their socio-cultural life and vice versa.

The development programs and contact with the wider society have changed the traditional way of life of the tribal communities to a great extent. However, over the years, many tribal communities of the state are at the 'changing state' while others are already 'changed totally'. In any way both the above mentioned scenario are detrimental to the power status of the communities, their development and integration with the mainstream. Many aspects of the behaviour of the members of the tribal communities were decided and controlled by the community itself. But now the age-old communitarian way of life, means of social cohesion, and livelihood activities are changing fast in many of the tribal hamlets of the State. Earlier, a very close, intimate, immediate and personal monitoring of the community over the behaviour and life activities of the members of a tribal hamlet was possible and that gave a well-controlled and clearly defined way of life to them. The short-comings and other issues of such a well defined community life is a different issue but any how that gave a strong control to the tribal society over its members. Nowadays, many aspects of this control has been lost and at the same time a proper alternative mechanism and leadership to retain the social cohesion and concerns for the fellow community members' life has not yet emerged. As a result many of them have lost their sustainable source of livelihood, became addict to alcohol, and family issues that are common in the so called main stream societies have become rampant amongst the tribal families as well.

- i. Survey conducted by KILA and the Scheduled Tribes Development Department in the year 2008.
- ii. Edamalakudi is the only tribal panchayath in Kerala, where only the members of Muthuvan community are residing.
- iii. Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja belonged to the Western branch of the Kottayam Royal family.
- iv. In Bourdieu's terms the concept of capital denotes "the material and socio-cultural inheritance which forms the basis on which various social agents act in various fields in social space", (Callewaert, 2000:309).
- v. Several policies were implemented for the purpose of the development of the tribal communities of the country. Britishers were the first one who extent the arms of the government to the inaccessible tribal areas. They proposed the policy of isolation so that the tribes could be kept apart from the freedom movement. This policy received vehement criticism. Then came the policy of assimilation, and the advocates of this policy believed that the

tribal should not be kept in isolation, instead they should be assimilated with the main stream society. It would have become fatal for the tribe's as they would have lost their culture, tradition, beliefs, etc., Finally, came the policy of integration, and is based on the Tribal Panchasheel proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru. According Chaudari (2004), the above principle implied three goals; (a) culture specific and need based development programmes for the tribals, (b) participation of people in both planning and implementation, and (c) empowerment leading to the formation of self-identity and self-esteem.

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CHANGING FOOD HABITS OF SCHEDULED TRIBE COMMUNITIES OF KERALA

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Abstract

The ethnic food habits developed by the tribal communities through many trials and standardization are unique and today it is gaining popularity among the general population. The present paper focuses on the ethnic food habits of various tribal groups across Kerala. This paper elucidates the same through classification of food items and the way they are consumed. The central theme is about how the food habit of a particular community is largely dependent upon the geographical settings of that community. It could be understood that how the tribal people's food habits are fully derived from forest resources-both flora and fauna. Hence the present paper looks into the ethnic food habits of the tribal communities of Kerala along with the ecosystem in which they live in.

Keywords: *Bamboo rice-Belief system-diet-edible fruits-Ethnic-Food-legumes-Milletts and Cereals-Mushrooms-Roots and Tubers-Scheduled Tribe-taboo-Wild leaves*

INTRODUCTION

A group of people having a common heritage, occupying a particular territory, and having a distinct way of life and practices, is called as an ethnic community. Such ethnic communities have their own distinct cultural identity and way of life, common heritage, etc. Each tribe is conscious of its homogeneous ethnic identity. Tribal culture is distinct from others and it is characterised by its close association with natural resources. In the Indian subcontinent, the British were the first people who classified them as tribal communities according to their subsistence patterns. J.A. Bains, (the Commissioner of Census 1891), called the Tribes as "Forest Tribes". In the Census Reports from 1891 to 1947, classified them by various designations... "Animists", "Tribal Animists", Hill and Forest Tribes, "Primitive Tribes" etc. In the post -Independence period, the term "tribe" has undergone a drastic change. Under the Constitution of India, certain Tribes have been specified as Scheduled Tribes. Under the Constitution of India, certain Tribes have been specified as Scheduled Tribes.¹

The present paper focuses on the ethnic food habits of various tribal groups across Kerala. It also elucidates classification of food items and the way they are consumed. The central theme is about how the food habit of a particular community is largely dependent upon the geographical settings of that community. It could be understood how the tribal people's food habits are fully

1. (i) Traditional occupation of a defined geographical area (ii) Distinctive culture which includes language, customs, traditions, religious beliefs etc. (iii) Primitive traits depicting occupational pattern economy etc. (iv) Lack of educational and techno-economic development.

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derived from forest resources-both flora and fauna.

The way by which a culture obtains its food is called subsistence. In every society the pattern of subsistence depends upon the nature of the environment with which the people interact and on the availability of food. Subsistence pattern in the evolutionary sequence ranges from hunters and food-gatherers to settled agriculturists. Among tribal communities, subsistence pattern is based on definite geographical area. They subsisted on different combinations of shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering of forest products, all activities closely linked with forests. Their cultures fostered this close bond with nature while also emphasizing communal ownership and consumption,

METHOD OF STUDY

During my fieldwork among the Scheduled Tribe communities as part of various studies of the Department and my own personal interest, I visited most of the tribal settlements of Kerala. The dietary practices and history of practices related to subsistence and consumption were recorded during such research studies. Secondary sources like related books on this topic and published research papers are also used.

FOOD IN TRIBAL CULTURE

The ethnic food of a community is determined by many factors like geography, climate, occupation, flora and fauna of locality, daily consumption needs of the inhabitants, etc. Formerly the tribal communities depended only on non-wood forest produces for their entire food needs. The United Nations Report on tribal development brings it out and states that *“The tribal people in general derive either directly or indirectly substantial amount of their livelihood from the forests. They subsist on edible leaves and roots, honey, wild game and fish. They build their homes with timber and bamboo and practice cottage crafts with the help of local raw materials. They use herb and medicinal plants to cure their diseases and even their religion and folklore are woven round the spirit of the forests. Commercial transactions are predominantly by barter trade being left mostly to the outsiders who controlled the money economy”*.² It has been observed that the consumption of these wild edible plants increases their immunity and is also a good substitute for different nutritional components. Nutritional analysis of some selected wild edible species consumed by the Bodos tribes of Kokrajhar district of Assam shows that these wild edible plants could act as a good supplement for various nutrients like proteins, carbohydrates and micro nutrients.

The tribal populations are born and brought up in such an ecological and cultural background that they developed a peculiar tune of their own pattern with regard to food. One important aspect of their agricultural system is the

2. Childyal, V.C. (1982). Tribe and Forest in ‘Economy of the Tribes and their transformation’, Ed: K.S Singh. (ed), p.134-135. concept publishing company: New Delhi

mixed cropping system which enables them to cultivate cereals, leafy vegetables, pulses and oil crops in a given area depending on monsoon rain and to harvest different crops in different periods in a year to meet their food and economic requirements.

WILD ROOTS AND TUBERS

Edible roots, tubers and rhizomes of 24 wild plant species/varieties are eaten by the tribal communities in Wayanad. These species are still a major source of food for forest based communities like Kattunayakan and these serve as a 'life saving plant' group during periods of food scarcity (Narayanan et al., 2011). Wild roots and tubers constitute the major portion of diet of almost all tribal communities in their habitat. Most of the tubers were eaten throughout the year; some tubers were eaten during the monsoon and winter seasons. The wild roots and tubers found in forests can be classified into three major items i.e. medicinal, edible and toxic.

There is a season for collecting the roots and tubers. Usually they collect it during the Kanni, Thulam, Kumbham and Meenam months of the Malayalam calendar. They have the traditional knowledge to locate the places where tubers are available in the forest and also to identify them. The roots and tubers form the main food during lean seasons. Sometimes they have to dig eight to ten feet. The wild tubers are dug carefully avoiding damage to associated species. They cut these tubers into specific pieces cover it in warm ash or hot ash and keep fire coals above it. After some time they take out the baked tubers and consume it.

Among the tubers diascorea species is the most important one and the tribes of Kerala have different names. For example, the *Noora* species are known as 'Korana', '*Noorakorana*' and Hendikorana, among the Kattunayakan tribes of Wayanad district. They consumed the Korana either by boiling or using it to prepare as dish. But Noorakorana is prepared only by boiling while Hendikorana is prepared by roasting on fire. Although there is not much difference among these three varieties of tubers, the Kattunayakan community identifies it specifically and uses different techniques for its preparation as food.

To remove the irritable properties of the tubers, they are peeled, boiled in tamarind water and smeared with turmeric paste. Noora and Korana tubers have itching effects and it requires special cleaning methods. Kottanoora (*Discorea Hispidia*) and Salaglas (*Discorea Tomentosa*) are the two tubers used by the Kattunayakan community of Wayanad district. Of these, Kottanoora is deadly poisonous and its consumption can cause even death. But the Kattunayakans have developed a method of purifying to remove poisonous content of this tuber. Slice the Kottanoora and Salaglas tubers and cut them into small pieces and tie it in a white cloth and allow it to immerse in running water for twenty four hours and by this the tuber becomes poison free. The Salaglas tuber contains certain fiber and gum contents that when consumed in its raw form

by children, there is a possibility that it can block the oesophagus that leads to death by suffocation.

LEAFY GREENS

In non literate societies, technological knowledge of subsistence is retained in the minds of the living members of the group. “Knowledge of various plants-when they can be harvested, where they are found, which parts are edible and how they should be prepared and cooked- is acquired by children as they watch adults. Lévi-Strauss reports that small children may know the names and uses of hundreds of plants” (Levi-strauus:1966). Tribal people are always endowed with a deep knowledge concerning the use of wild plants as food.

This plant grows lavishly beside water springs in the forests, this leafy vegetable helps in increasing one’s digestive power and appetite. ‘These wild leafy vegetable plant species are rich in minerals. They may provide minerals like sodium, potassium, magnesium, iron, calcium, phosphorus and as well used as remedy for various diseases’ (Sangita Horo:2015).

Leaves are collected in different seasons, cooked and eaten with their staple food. The Ulladan community of Aleppey district uses these wild edible plants in two ways. The fruits are eaten as raw on the spot itself and the unripe fruits of *Argyreia hirsuta* (Onappoo) are collected and brought back to their homes and cooked as vegetable. The leaves of *Ipomoea aquatica* (Water-spinach, Kozhuppa) are plucked, collected and roasted with chilly and salt. The roots of the *Ipomoea alba*, which grow on the coastal area, are collected, cooked and eaten. A review of literature shows that the tribals of Tripura use the twigs and leaves of *Ipomoea aquatica* to prepare a special dish called “Gudak”.

The Adiyar community of Wayanad district believes that the tender bamboo leaves helps to improve body weight and it has medicinal properties also. They use varieties of leafy vegetables like *Kakkachoppu*, *Churulichoppu*, *Uravalochooppu*, *Ayiviralu choppu*, *Thumba choppu*, *Bokkary chopopu*, *Karantachoppu*. The forest dweller Vettakuruman community use leafy vegetable items like *Kadukila*, *Mullancheera*, *Mathanila*, *Kattucheera* and *Ponkanniyila*. The numerically dominant Paniyan community of Wayanad collects the churulichoppu from the plain areas and then it is exposed to sunlight for some time, before they cook this item. They also use Thal (*Colacassia*) species like *Karinthal*, *Kollithal* and *Chembinthandu*. These items are cooked as a dry dish (*upperi*) and sometimes they prepare it with gravy (curry). The different varieties of *Keera leaves*³ (Amaranth species) are made part of staple food of Attappady tribes (Irula, Muduga and Kurumba). It has been found that almost all the tribal communities take the tender leaves of bamboo as a dry dish.

3. *Keera varieties:- Vellakkerai, Thoongakeerai, Chorakkerai, Karimkeerai, Mullukeerai, Gonikeerai, Pattukeerai, etc*

Usage of plants and number of wild edible plant varieties used by three tribal groups of Wayanad District

Sl.No.	Wild edibles	Kattunayakan	Paniyan	Mullukuruman
1	Leafy greens	35	71	21
2	Tubers and roots	25	15	6
3	Fruits and seeds	37	50	15
4	Total	97	136	42

BAMBOO RICE

It is a favorite ethnic food of almost all tribes either living inside forest or in the fringes of forests where bamboo clusters are found to be in plenty. The bamboo flowers after sixty years of growth, in the flowering season of the bamboo, this is an important ingredient. The seeds of the flower form the bamboo rice and it will wither away after sometime. So in order to collect the rice from the bamboo clusters, they clean the ground portion and spread either big leaves or cloths where the rice falls down. After collecting the bamboo rice, they pound it in small natural pits on the rocks in order to remove the husk and use it either to prepare rice gruel or to prepare other dry edible items. In fact bamboo rice is used as an alternate food in the place of rice.

MILLETS AND CEREALS

Millets are also called Ecological crops as they can bear large Environmental stress. Most of the tribes of Kerala use millets like Ragi or finger millet or African millet (*Eleusine coracana*-), Thina⁴ or foxtail millet (*Setaria Indica*), Varagu or kodomillet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), Chama or little millet (*Panicum Sumatrense*-) for food. Many varieties of ragi, chama, thina and varagu are cultivated in their mixed cropping pattern and consumed by them in their daily food. Cereals like rice⁵ (*Oryza Sativa*) and maize⁶ (*Zea mays*) are important ecological food security crops. They are known for their nutritional quality and can be an immediate subsistence for a nutritive scarce community.

4. Thina (Foxtail millet) is one of the world's oldest cultivated crops as a native of China. Foxtail millet is quite tolerant of drought. Due to its speedy growth, it can be grown as a short-term catch crop. Its granule is used for human needs, and as feed for poultry and cage birds. (Thina (Pandy) varieties among Attapady Tribes: *Karuppanidi*, *Chenthinappandi*, *Velleppandi*, *Vellemurippandi*, *Murippandi*, *Areppandi*, *Konneppandi*, *Karappakkannanpandi*).
5. Rice varieties:- *Karamodan*, *aearinellu*, *Pinchanellu*, *Kookanellu*, *Guddanellu*, *Valan Nellu*, *Puluthinellu*, *Vellaperuvazha*, *Thondi*, *Chennelu*, *Ovenpuncha*, *Velumbala*, *Ponnarimala*, *Kalladiyaran*, *Chomala*, *Chettuveliyar*, *Palveliyar*, *Kuttiveliyar*, *Mannuveliyar*, *Poothadikayama*, *Channa*, *Mulluchanna*, *Jeerakasala*, *Gandhakasala*, *Valicha*, *Kanalu*, etc,
6. Maize varieties:- *Makkacholam*, *Aricholam*, *Kukkiricholam*, *Thalavirichan cholam*, *Manjacholam*, etc.

Ragi is considered as their staple food. There are many varieties of ragi⁷ cultivated and consumed by the tribes of Kerala. Now among Attappady tribes like Kurumbas, Mudugas and Irulas consider ragi as their staple food. Ragi can be cooked into cakes, puddings or *porridge*. They prepare many food items from ragi like *ragi kanji*, *ragivada*, *ragiputt*, *ragiada* and *ragiuppumavu*, *ragiputtu* as their special snack. Kurichiyas of Wayanad also prepare many items from ragi. They prepare dosai, puttu and rotti from ragi. The Mannans of Idukki district used to take ragi gruel. Kurichiyas used to cut the stem of the ragi just before it gets ripened and steam it to extract the juice out of it and the same is mixed with honey to prepare a special food called Vellakatti. Studies have revealed that Ragi is a rich source of Calcium, Phosphorus and iron minerals, which keeps the body of pregnant, lactating woman and young children healthy.

MUSHROOMS

The tribes of Kerala consume more than twenty varieties of mushrooms. They have the traditional knowledge to differentiate between toxic and non-toxic mushrooms. Different tribes call the mushrooms under different names. Cholanaikkan (Nilambur, Malappuram) call it as alumbu, Kurumbar as *ambae*, Paniyar as *kumme*. They name the mushroom after the local place name or a local tree. They also consume the mushrooms grown on the ground, trees, small caves of trees, etc.. Mushroom curry is an important dish of Kanikkar. Another kind of preparation of mushroom followed by Kanikkar is that they mix mushroom with a nontoxic leaf and bake it. Mushroom curry is equated with meat curry. The Paniyas of Wayand have a special skill to identify non toxic wood mushrooms unidentified by other tribes. Mushrooms are mainly consumed at the time of rainy season.

Edible mushrooms are the fleshy and edible fruiting bodies of several species of fungi. Edibility may be defined by criteria that include absence of poisonous effects on humans and desirable taste and aroma. Some wild species are toxic, or at least indigestible, when raw. As a rule all wild mushroom species should be cooked thoroughly before eating. It is a low-calorie food usually eaten raw or cooked to garnish a meal. Raw dietary mushrooms are a good source of B vitamins, such as riboflavin, niacin and pantothenic acid, and the essential minerals, selenium, copper and potassium. Fat, carbohydrate and calorie content are low, with absence of vitamin C and sodium

LEGUMES

Seed, pod, or other edible part of a leguminous plant is used as food. There are many legumes with outstanding medicinal values. The local varieties are known by different names among tribes and this include *Thuvara*⁸ (*Pigeon*

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7. Ragi varieties:- Undaragi, Kongaragi, Cheevaragi, Kolanragi, Karavanaragi, Balaragi, Chunaragi, Saviriragi, etc
 8. Thuvarei varieties:- Siruthuvari, Bhoodathuvari, Vellathuvari, Thenathuvari, Kadekannan, Serunadan, etc

pea-Cajanus Indicus), *Avarai*⁹ (*Dolichos lab lab*), *Kadankodipayar*, etc. Dishes like *thuvarachaaru*, *thuvaraupperi*, *avaraupperi* prepared from green and dry seeds of *thuvara* and *avara*. Amaranth seeds, puffed and mixed with honey are highly relished by Muthuvans. Among Kurumbar amaranth seeds are ground to fine powder and with honey it makes a tasty food which is consumed on special occasions. Castor seeds are harvested and used for both domestic consumption and for market sale. The combination of crops with legumes also helps in nitrogen fixation, thus maintaining the soil fertility. Edible leaves of amaranth and seeds and pods of pulses are used for daily consumption. It may be noted here that millets and cereals are cooked as staples and legumes as curry and side dishes.

Some of the legumes are used in treating intestinal diseases and illness associated with rheumatism. *Makkuvalli* (*Entada rheedii*) is a creeper found along with big trees and it has a big seed and the membrane of the seed is removed and put in water overnight and the next day it is boiled along with rice. The Malayans of Thrissur district opine that this mixture is good in reducing back pain. Locally this seed is known by different names as *Makkumkai*, *Kakkumkai*, *Parandakai*, etc. among other tribes.

FRUITS AND HONEY

The tribal populations have identified a number of edible fruits found in the forest. Some fruits are found to be seasonable and in some areas it is abundant in nature. Small gooseberry, *Kattuthakkali*, *Manchunda*, *Viri*, *Poovam*, *Pali*, *Athi*, *Chadachi*, *Nelli*, *Perakka*, *Kattunjaval* etc are some of the common items collected by them as fruits. The Malayans usually collect fruits like *Chaekka*, *Kattuchambakka*, *Noolapaala*, *Mullambazham*, *Vallimanga*, *Ainichakka* from their forests. Fruits are eaten as raw as well as ripen form. Wild fruits, found in the jungle, were eaten (particularly by men) in times of food scarcity. The Paniyans of Wyanad have a method of keeping some fruit items for lean seasons. Among Mullukurumans the seeds of jack fruits are fried and powdered and relished as a food item during rainy days. For this they used to dry jackfruit and its seed under sunlight and consume the same during rainy season. Mullukuruma women widely collect wild mangos to prepare dishes like *Mangapuli*, which is used as a souring agent for their dishes .

The skill of the tribes to collect honey from very big trees is commendable. They collect variety type of honey from the forests such a *Karimthen*, *Vanthen*, *Cheruthen*, *Thoduthen* etc. Summer season is considered best for honey collection. The Kanikkar entertain guests with a special dish made of honey and *thina* powder. Some of them also keep gooseberry in honey and consume it as and when required.

9. *Avarai* varieties:- *Gujja avarai*, *Thaatta avarai*, *Sina avarai*, *Sene avarai*, *Palli avarai*, *Vella avarai*, *Kari avarai*, *Nanja avarai*, *Vetha avarai*, *Pulli avarai*, etc

MEAT

The food habits of the tribal population are associated with their environment and nature. They eat a variety of meat items including liver of peacock, tongue of Varanus, eggs of crocodile and birds, larvae of honey bees. The tongue of Varanus and meat of fruit bat was used to treat chronic asthma among tribes of Parambikulam wildlife Sanctuary. Rodents are also important meat animals in various parts of India (Mathur:1954). The behaviour and habits of animals, how to track them, how to use their bones and skin, how to make arrows or spears for the hunt, all are bits and pieces of the technology of tribal populations. It is on this technology that their livelihood rests, and all of it must be learned and passed on to the next generation in order for the group to survive.

In olden days most of the animals were hunted and eaten occasionally, usually two to three times in a month, a good source of protein in the daily diet. They dry the flesh of the animals in the sunlight and tie over their kitchen oven for drying it further. Later as per their need they take out the pieces and put the same for some time in hot water so that the unwanted elements go away from it and the same will be ready for cooking. They are found to be experts in bird catching by trapping. They trap forest chicks, pig, parrot, peacock, rabbits, etc and fire roast, prepare it as curry. Crab and tortoise were favourite items.

The Paniyan community roasts the crab on fire and mixes it with green chilly and consumes it as a side dish (Chammanthi). Crab is believed to be good for curing back and body pain. Tribal groups are also very fond of various kinds of insects like eeyal (*Microtermes obesi*), kadannal (*eumenes petetiolata*) etc. They remove the wings of the eeyals (winged white ants) and fry the same and consume it.

FISH

One of the favourite dishes of the tribes is fish which is available from the streams, forest brooks, small ponds, wetland fields etc. This was also an easily available source of food and it was the most common food item consumed by the tribal communities. Varieties of fish are available during the monsoon season or throughout the year. This is a major source of protein and calcium in the diet. They use different kinds of methods to catch the fish like clothes or arrest the flow of streams by constructing a temporary bund and apply mild toxic natural elements so that the fish slips into an unconscious state.

Fish is dried and kept in bamboo baskets, which remain for a long period. The Vettakuruman community of Wayanad district catch the fishes like kari-meen, valameen, vatten, cherumeen, etc. It has been found that the Paniyan community are experts in catching the fish with hand. They also eat a fish calls paral which other Tribes do not consume.

BELIEF SYSTEM AND TABOO

The belief system of tribal communities has a great control over their food habits. There are preferences and taboos¹⁰ in food practices. The Kattunayakan used to consume fish and meat without salt, but solely by fire roasting. The Kadar community believes that the meat of black monkey has many curative values. They also believe that the flesh of ant-eater is best for the human body and it gives energy to run fast like an ant-eater. Pregnant women are not allowed to take non-vegetarian food items. It is also believed that if animals are killed for eating, it will affect the new born babies. Most of the tribes do not take roots and tubers during rainy season and prefer to have leafy vegetables. It is believed that the roots and tubers will have a negative impact during rainy season. On festive and special occasions they offer liquor, fish and flesh of animals to their gods and goddesses. In the past, they preferred to have the flesh of animals by hunting and on certain annual festive occasions like *uchal*, it has been considered as a must to mark the fullness of the function.

CHANGING FOOD HABITS

Tribal habitats possess a rich diversity of tuber plants. But due to de-forestation, habitat destruction, introduction of exotic species, changes in climatic conditions etc. many plants which were common in the dense forest areas now have become rare, endangered and threatened. This is also one of the reasons for declining traditional knowledge on collection and utilization of wild plants in the State. So, efforts must be taken to conserve wild food plants and also the traditional knowledge for a sustainable management of biodiversity.

The enforcement of forest laws and the depletion of flora and fauna in the forest areas have really affected considerably the traditional food habit system of the tribes. The ecological imbalance has become a great threat to the food security of the tribes. Their traditional food resources have been eroded, other aquatic resources have also been depleted (fish, crab, etc) and lifestyle changes have decreased the time available for hunting, fishing and berry picking. The social changes have resulted in cultural changes too. The food habits of tribal population have been subjected to many changes due to many factors. Forest degradation and curtailed forest access has reduced the availability of natural foods on which they depended compelling the tribals, especially those in the upland, to depend more and more on purchased foods to meet their minimum survival needs.

It has been noticed that the traditional method of collecting food plants are in sharp decline. It is because of the lack of interest of younger generation to learn the skills from older people. Though, male and female members of parental generations are very knowledgeable about wild foods, they still prefer

10. The notion of taboo has a peculiar history: it was originally a Polynesian term referring to a ritual prohibition against contact with a thing, an animal, or a person

these food over the ones found in the local market rather than collection. The younger generation these days is attracted towards the food items available in hotels. The traditional knowledge system is being reduced and may become extinct sooner or later in the process of acculturation¹¹. In view of their habitat and dietary habits, indigenous people often distinguish themselves from other population groups. However the external factors have compelled to reduce their ethnic food from their day to day life.

The knowledge system of the tribes on their ethnic food is traditional and it is being transformed from one generation to another. It shows a collective behaviour of an ethnic group. Although there are changes in the food habits, the tribes try to stick on to it to a certain extent. The ethnic food has got wider acceptance among the public through the participation of the tribes in the exhibition cum sales *melas* conducted by KIRTADS and other organizations. The representatives of tribal communities like Mullukuruman, Vettakuruman, Irular, Kanikkar of different regions used to come forward and prepare ethnic food that is well appreciated by public. The public have already acclaimed the ethnic food items of tribes like *Karakundu appam*, *Kalluputtu Dosa*, *Marunukappi*, *Ragipakuvada*, *Thenil Chalicha Nellikka*, *Thenum Thenamaavum*, *Thumarakari*, *Chamapayasam*, etc. It may be noted that the acceptance of the ethnic food of the tribes is normally due to its medicinal values that enriches the good health of the country. Therefore, there is no doubt that the rejuvenation of the ethnic food pattern and practices by the tribal communities will benefit both the tribal and non tribal population.

Informants

N.Vellan, Nellarachal, Wayand

Mallankani, Kallar, Thiruvananthapuram

Somi, Begur, Wayanad

Suresh, Palode, Wayanad

Mayakrishnan, Manthimala Ooru, Attappady, Palakkad

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LANGUAGE OF MUTHUVAN - A LINGUISTIC STUDY

Dr Darwin L*

Synopsis

This paper tries to find out the phonological and brief morphological and kinship structure of the community. In the phonological structure Muthuvan community have five vowel phonemes and its length as well as 15 consonant phonemes. Germinated forms only seen in medial position. Phonemic and its sound position of initial, medial and final positions are clearly stated. Cluster forms of this language also mentioned with examples. Case structure, number and language identification factors also stated clearly.

The Muthuvan community is mainly concentrated in Idukki District and its contiguous hill areas of Eranakulam and Thrissur. The term 'Muduvan' is a synonym of 'Muthuvan' According to 2011 Census the population of Muthuvan community is 23746. They are a special tribe mainly living in the deep and dense forest inland of Devikulam, Adimali, and Nedumkandam block Panchayats. They are a special tribe mainly living in the deep and dense forest inland of Devikulam, Adimali, and Nedumkandam block Panchayats. They had been tamed by the mesmerism of nature and were forced to unite and co-operate with the natural phenomenon respectfully and living very typically with their own heritage. They drink water from the deep forest streams (brooks), eating wild roots and lead a simple life. They are exclusively different from the other factions of the tribes in many factors.

The community is known for its well marked social organisation. They have a system of chavadi (dormitories) in every settlements for both boys and girls separately. Traditional organic cultivation of Ragi and paddy is common among them. The wild varieties of Cardamom and Pepper are part of their economic base. They used to observe practices based on purity and pollution, which denied their female children the right to access formal education.

The lack of basic centres of health, education, and other facilities stop them to know about the necessities of life. Their economical, social and educational improvement is negligible and it has been a phenomenon for centuries. Almost 90% of the people live in bamboo huts. Their reluctance and refusal to social development has been little bit changed and they are being motivated continuously for a better life.

Muthuvan women are strictly prohibited to have any relationship with the outside world other than their bamboo huts. They are severely secluded in the huts not allowing even to talk to other men. Literacy is a difficult term for them and the knowledge for a good life is little that their present state in the latter half of the 20th century is not different from the fate of the first men.

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They begin consuming tobacco at an early age and more over their men are too much addicted to liquor and other intoxicants. They cultivate Ragi in their own farms. They have 3 to 10 acres of forest land for cultivation. But the unfortunate thing is that cardamom and other refined forest products they collect are being devalued and Muthuvans are being exploited by the mediators superbly. Their ignorance in the modern farming methods and their inability to invest money for agriculture are being exploited. They have been continuously left to suffer even though they work and toil. Their huts are very much congested and stay close to one another. Their lack of awareness in sanitation and health programs put them in a battalion of infectious diseases and this lead to the untimely death of Muthuvans.

Language of Muthuvan

Muthuvan Language is mainly spoken at idukky district of Kerala; especially on Devikulam, Adimali, and Nedumkandam block Panchayats of idukky district.

The Muthuva language has 5 vowel phonemes and 15 consonant phonemes and length is phonemic.

Vowel phonemes are

/ i , e , a , o , u /

Consonant phonemes are:

Stops are

/ p , t , R , T , c , k /

Nasals

/ m , n , N /

Laterals

/ l , L /

Flap

/ r /

Continuants

/ v , y /

Fricative

/ s /

Examples of vowel phonemes

/ i , e , a , o , u /

/ iRumalu / 'cough'

/ eRumaaTu / 'buffalo'

/ aRuvatu /	‘sixty’
/ oRumala /	‘turban’
/ uRunTakenku /	‘potato’

Consonants

Stops

/ p , R , c , k /	
/puuvu/	‘flower’
/ Ruuva /	‘rupees’
/ cuuTu /	‘hot’
/ kuuTu /	‘cover’
/ p , t , c , k /	
/piiTi /	‘beedi’
/ tii /	‘fire’
/ ciini /	‘cane sugar’
/ kiiri /	‘mongoose’

Nasals

/ m , n /	
/ maami /	‘aunt’
/ naayi /	‘dog’

Word medial position

Stops

/ p , t , R , t , c , k /	
/ ceelappaampu /	‘earthworm’
/ taattan /	‘grandfather’
/ paaRRa /	‘cockroach’
/ kaTTala/	‘cot’
/ maccam /	‘mole’
/ veLLakkannu /	‘white part of the eye’

Nasal

/ m, n , N /	
/ aama /	‘tortoise’
/ aana /	‘elephant’
/ aNali /	‘squirrel’

Laterals

/ l , L /

/ puli / 'tiger'

/ puLi / 'tamarind'

Continuants

/ v , y /

/ toovi / 'feather'

/ kooyi / 'hen'

Stop vs flap

/ R , r /

/ veRi / 'madness'

/ kerI / 'charcoal'

Stop vs continuants

/ maacam / 'month'

/ vaasalu / 'door'

Stop vs continuants

/ c , y /

/ maacam / 'month'

/ vaaya / 'plantain'

Word final

Nasals

/ m , n /

/ nimisam / 'minute'

/ manusan / 'men'

Cluster forms used in this language

The following cluster forms are used in this language.

-yt- > vaaytooTu 'lip'

-nk- > maankaayi 'mango'

-nt- > panti 'dtomsvh'

-nR > inRikku today

-mp- > aampeta 'man'

-nc- > kunci child

-ly- > kalyaaNam 'marriage'

-nt-	>	manti	‘monkey’
-kR-	>	sakRam	‘wheel’
-Rk-	>	maaRkaLi	‘name of a month’
-pl-	>	eeRopLeyin	‘aero plane’
-yn-	>	koynantu	‘butterfly’
-Rp-	>	pooRpa	‘sheet’
-Rs-	>	vaRsam	‘year’
-ns-	>	piinsu	‘beans’

The Muthuva have a dialect of their own, closely allied to Tamil, with the influence of Malayalam. The Muthuva language has some peculiar features. In this language there is no distinction between feminine singular and neuter. Eg. aval varuttu means ‘she is coming’ atu varuttu means ‘it is coming’. The future tense forms with no personal termination are frequently used as in Malayalam. Eg. atikkum, ‘will beat’, ootum ‘will run’ takkum ‘will stich’ etc.

This language has got eight past tense markers. They are / -tt-, -t-, -d-, -cc-, -R-, -nn-, -nt-, -in- /

/-tt-/ occurs

eTu + tt + een > eTutteen ‘(I) took’

/-T-/ occurs

keeT + T + een > keeTTeen ‘(I) heard ‘

/-D-/ occurs

kan + D + een > kanDeen ‘(I) saw’

/-cc-/ occurs

ta + cc + een > tacceen ‘(I) stiched’

/-R-/ occurs

Nin + R + een > ninReen ‘(I) stood’

/-nn-/ occurs

paRa+nn+aasu > paRannaasu ‘(It) flew’

/-nt-/ occurs

iru + nt + een > irunteen ‘(I) sat’

/-in-/ occurs

vaank + in + een > vaankineen ‘(I) bought’

The past tense marker /-in-/ freely varies with /-iy-/ with the same type of stem.

vaank + iy + een > vaankiyeen 'I bought'

In this language /-utt-/ as the present tense marker.

Eg. seyy+utt+een > seyyuteen 'I am going'

The number of future tense markers is three. They are /-pp-, -um, -uv- /

Eg. kee+pp+een > keeppeen 'I will hear'

viyy + um > viiyum "I will fall"

tirut + uv + een > tiruTuveen 'I will steal'

The pronouns are :

naan - 'I '
yanna - 'we ' (excl.)
namma - 'we'(incl.)
nii - 'you'
niinna - 'you'(pl)
avan - 'he'
aval - 'she'
avannu - 'they'
atu - 'it'

The personal markers are as follows

-een - 'I'
-oom - 'we'
-oom - 'we'
-aa - 'you'
-iiru - 'you'(pl.)
-aan - 'He'
-atu, o - 'she'
-aaru - 'they'

Case markers that occur in the language are

Accusative

/ -e /

en + e > enne 'him'

Sociative

/-oote/

avan + oote > avanoote 'him'

Dative

/-kku, -akku/

ava + kku > avakku her

seti + kku > setikku plant

Genetive

/-a/

raaman + a > raamana 'of rama'

Locative

/-il/

mala + il > malayil 'in the mountain'

tala + il > talayil 'in the head'

Instrumental

/-aale/

en + aale > ennaale 'by myself'

aval + aale > avalaale 'by her'

Vocative

The final vowel of the word will be lengthened.

Conclusion

The Muthuvan speech form can be considered as a separate language; it has its own grammatical features as well as its own bunch of lexemes. The peculiarities of this language is; there are 5 vowel phonemes and 15 consonant phoneme as well as length as phonemic. The contrastive distributions are given above. Around fifteen consonant cluster forms have been found in this language and there are no vowel cluster forms have found.

The present tense marker of this language is /-utt-/ and the future tense marker found in this language is /-pp-, -um, -uv-/. There are eight past tense markers have identified; they are /-tt-, -t-, -d-, -cc-, -R-, -nn-, -nt-, -in-/. Another peculiarity of this language is personal terminations. But in this language there is no distinction between feminine singular and neuter. Eg. aval varuttu means 'she is coming' atu varuttu means 'it is coming'. The personal markers of this language are

-een - 'I'

-oom - 'we'

-oom - 'we'

-aa	-	'you'
-iiru	-	'you'(pl.)
-aan	-	'He'
-atu, o	-	'she'
-aaru	-	'they'

It is a Dravidian Language. In this language third person distinguishes masculine singular, feminine singular, epicene plural and neuter singular and plural. In the case of phonology, there are no aspirated sounds have found, the case markers and personal pronouns are entirely different from other languages. Past tense markers are very different from other languages.

In this language third person distinguishes masculine singular, feminine singular, epicene plural and neuter singular and plural. According to these peculiarities, this speech form can be treated as separate language.

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INDEX

Song I

KannaaTi kannaaTi kaappanatte kannaaTi....
tiriśuura Cantayilu terenceTutta kannaaTi.....

English meaning:

Mirror..Mirror, a good mirror....

Selected mirror from the thrissur market....

Song II

caavale kooyekuukaate cantran vante utikkaate caavaaTi viiTTile kiTakkum
kuuci cannaa pattanaykum śantoośamma santosam.

English meaning:

Cock didn't cryout, moon didn't rise , chavaty's house people have very happy
and very happy.

Song III

aaTe unTe maaTe unTe aameem kulatte matale unTe
maacatulippaTTi vooRe mankiyala

English meaning:

Sheep is there, cow is there, tortoise is there, turmeric is there, turmeric with box.

Kinship terms used in the Muthuvan Language

/appel/	‘father’
/amme/	‘mother’
/taatten/	‘father’s father/mother’s father’
/paatte/	‘father’s father/mother’s father’
/taatti/	‘father’s mother/mother’s mother’
/paatti/	‘father’s mother/mother’s mother’
/veliyappen/	‘father’s elder brother’
/cuttiyappen/	‘father’s younger brother’
/veliyamma/	‘father’s elder brother’s wife’
/cuttiyamma/	‘father’s younger brother’s wife’
/maame/	‘mother’s elder brother’
/kuncimaama/	‘mother’s younger brother’
/maami/	‘mother’s elder brother’s wife’
/kuncimaami/	‘mother’s younger brother’s wife’
/kaiyya/	‘son’
/pella/	‘daughter’
/peeran/	‘son’s son/daughter’s son’
/peeratti/	‘son’s daughter/daughter’s daughter’
/merumaan/	‘daughter’s husband’
/aliyan/	‘wife’s elder/younger brother’
/eliyan/	‘husband’s elder/younger brother’
/moottappel/	‘father, father’s father’/‘mother, father’s father’
/mootta/	‘mother, mother’s mother’/‘father, mother’s mother’

Colour denoting terms in Muthuvan Language

/kalare/	‘colours’
/velle/	‘white’
/pacce/	‘green’
/niile/	‘blue’

/karuppa/	'black'
/sevappa/	'red'
/mance/	'yellow'

Climate denoting terms in Mutuvan Language

/mayakaalam/	'rainy season'
/veenakaalam/	'summer season'
/naranke/	'winter season'
/meneekaalam/	'winter season'

Days denoting terms in Muthuvan Language

/naattikelama/	'Sunday'
/tinkakelama/	'Monday'
/sovvakelama/	'Tuesday'
/botankelama/	'Wednesday'
/vyalakelama/	'Thursday'
/vellikelama/	'Friday'
/senikelama/	'Saturday'

Numbers denoting terms in Muthuvan language

/onre/	'one'
/rante/	'two'
/munnre/	'three'
/naale/	'four'
/ance/	'five'
/aare/	'six'
/cela/	'seven'
/etta/	'eight'
/empate/	'nine'
/patte/	'ten'



ഗോത്രവർഗഭാഷകളും പണിയൻ ഭാഷാ ലിപി രൂപീകരണവും

ഡോ. ശ്യാം. എസ്. കെ*

ആമുഖം

കേരളസംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ പട്ടികജാതി പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ സാംസ്കാരികവും, സാമൂഹ്യവുമായ, സാമ്പത്തികവും സാമൂഹികപരവുമായ ഉന്നമനത്തിനു വേണ്ടി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന കിർടാഡ്സ് വകുപ്പിലെ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രവിഭാഗം 2014-2015 വർഷങ്ങളിൽ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയെക്കുറിച്ച് വിശദമായ പഠനഗവേഷണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. ലിംഗിസ്റ്റിക് മൈനോറിറ്റി കമ്മീഷന്റെ 48 റഫറൻസ് റിപ്പോർട്ടുപ്രകാരം കേന്ദ്ര പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ മന്ത്രാലയത്തിന്റെ നിർദ്ദേശമനുസരിച്ച് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ ആവശ്യമായ നടപടികൾ നിർവ്വഹിക്കുവാൻ അറിയിച്ചതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ് പ്രസ്തുത പഠനം നടത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളത്.

കിർടാഡ്സ് വകുപ്പിന്റെ ഗവേഷണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗമായി, സംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷാപരമായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തുകയും അവയ്ക്ക് പരിഹാരമാർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ നിർദ്ദേശിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്ന പൊതുവായ ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടുകൂടി സംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷകൾ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനും അവയുടെ ഉന്നമനത്തിന് ഉതകുന്ന പദ്ധതി രൂപീകരണത്തിനുമായി വിശദമായ ഒരു പഠനം നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. വളരെ ബൃഹത്തായതും അതിലുപരി സങ്കീർണ്ണമായതുമായ ഒരു പഠനമായിരുന്നു അത്.

രീതി ശാസ്ത്രം

വിവരണാത്മകവും വസ്തുനിഷ്ഠവുമായ ഗവേഷണ പ്രവർത്തന സമ്പ്രദായമാണ് ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. ഫീൽഡ് സ്റ്റഡിയിൽ 49 ചോദ്യങ്ങൾ അടങ്ങിയ ഒരു ചോദ്യാവലിയായിരുന്നു ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ഏകദേശം 200 ഓളം ആവേശകരമായ നിന്നും ചോദ്യാവലി ശേഖരിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. കൂടാതെ ചോദ്യാവലി ഓരോ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗഭാഷയിലെ ജനങ്ങളിലും എത്തിച്ച് അവരിൽ ചോദ്യങ്ങൾ ചോദിച്ച് ഉത്തരമെഴുതി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്ന രീതിയാണ് ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ ചെയ്തത്. പ്രസ്തുത പഠനത്തിൽ നിന്നും പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷകളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനെക്കുറിച്ചും ഏതൊക്കെ ഭാഷകൾ നാശോന്മുഖമായ്ക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നുവെന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചു.

പ്രശ്നത്തിന്റെ പ്രസ്താവന

പല ഭാഷകളും നാശോന്മുഖമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഭാഷയുടെ വിനിമയ സമ്പ്രദായം പൂർണ്ണമാകണമെങ്കിൽ വായ്മൊഴിയും ലിഖിതസമ്പ്രദായവും ആവശ്യമാണ്. പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾക്ക് തനത് വായ്മൊഴി ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും ലിഖിത രൂപമില്ല. അതായത് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗഭാഷയ്ക്ക് സ്വന്തമായി ലിപി ഇല്ല. വായ്മൊഴിയായി മാത്രമാണ് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾ തലമുറകളിലൂടെ കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഒരു ഭാഷയുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിന് വായ്മൊഴി മാത്രം പോരാം ലിഖിതരൂപം കൂടെ വേണം. ലിപി ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ അവിടെ സാഹിത്യം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ സാഹിത്യവും സംസ്കാരവും രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുവാനും അത് ഭാഷയുടെ വളർച്ചയെ സഹായിക്കാൻ ഉതകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ എല്ലാ ഭാഷകൾക്കും തനത് ലിപി ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ ഒരു പരിധി വരെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളെ നമുക്കു സംരക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും. മറ്റു സമുദായങ്ങളെ അപേക്ഷിച്ച്

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ഗോത്ര വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ ഇപ്പോഴും തനതായ പൈതൃകവും സാംസ്കാരികമായ ഉന്നതിയും ഭാഷാപരമായ സവിശേഷതകളും നിലനിർത്തുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന് വെളിപ്പെടുന്ന വിരളമായുള്ള പഠനങ്ങളെ നടന്നിട്ടുള്ളു. പലരും ഗോത്ര സമുദായക്കാരുടെയും ഗോത്ര പൈതൃകങ്ങളെയും സംസ്കാരങ്ങളെയും അവരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷകളെയും തൊട്ടും തലോടിയും ഉപരിതലം മാത്രം പറഞ്ഞ് പോയതല്ലാതെ അവരുടെ ഭാഷാപരമായ ഉന്നമനത്തിനും നശിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതും നാശോന്മുഖമായതും നാശത്തിന്റെ അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ഭീഷണിയുടെ വക്കു വരെ എത്തിയതുമായ ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗങ്ങളെ നിലനിർത്തുന്നതിന് എന്തു ചെയ്യാമെന്നുള്ള വഴികളെ പറ്റിയും പ്രതിപാദിച്ചു കണ്ടിട്ടില്ല.

പഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി

വേൾഡ് അറ്റ്ലസ് ഓഫ് ലാംഗ്വേജ് എൻഡേജർമെന്റ് (World Atlas of Language Endangerment (WALE)) നാശോന്മുഖമാകുന്ന ഭാഷകളെക്കുറിച്ച് നടത്തിയ പഠനങ്ങൾ ഏവയെങ്കിലും ഞെട്ടിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ഇതിൽ നാശോന്മുഖമാകുന്ന ഭാഷകളെക്കുറിച്ച് വളരെ സൂക്ഷ്മതയോടെ വ്യക്തമാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈയൊരു സാഹചര്യത്തിലാണ് പ്രസ്തുത പഠനത്തിന്റെ പ്രസക്തി. ഭാഷയുടെ വിനിമയസമ്പ്രദായം പൂർണ്ണമാകണമെങ്കിൽ വായ്മൊഴിയും ലിഖിത സമ്പ്രദായവും ആവശ്യമാണ്. പഠനത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി ശേഖരിച്ച വസ്തുതകൾ വിശകലനം ചെയ്തതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലുള്ള വിവരങ്ങളാണ് തുടർന്ന് വിവരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. അവയിൽ നിന്നും പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗക്കാരുടെ ഭാഷകളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനെക്കുറിച്ചും ഏതൊക്കെ ഭാഷകൾ നാശോന്മുഖമാകുന്നുവെന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നതാണ്. പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ തനത് ഭാഷ ഇന്ന് അന്യം നിന്നു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഇത്തരത്തിൽ അവരുടെ ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് മൂല്യചൂടി സംഭവിച്ചാൽ അവരുടെ വിലപിടിപ്പുള്ള നാട്ടറിവുകൾ അടുത്ത തലമുറകളിലേക്ക് കൈമാറപ്പെടാതെ പോകും. ആയതിനാൽ ഇത് സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട ചുമതല എല്ലാവർക്കും ഉണ്ട്.

ആദിവാസി ഗോത്ര സമൂഹങ്ങൾ

ഇന്ത്യയിൽ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമൂഹങ്ങൾ പ്രധാനമായി വടക്കുകിഴക്ക് പ്രദേശങ്ങൾ, പടിഞ്ഞാറ്, വിന്ധ്യ-സുൽപൂര മലനിരകൾ, പടിഞ്ഞാറേ തീരത്തുള്ള മഹാരാഷ്ട്ര, ഗുജറാത്ത്, രാജസ്ഥാൻ മേഖല, ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യൻ ഗിരിവർഗ്ഗ മേഖല എന്നിങ്ങനെ നാലായി തരം തിരിക്കാം. ഇതിൽ ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യൻ ഗിരിവർഗ്ഗ മേഖലയിലാണ് കേരളത്തിലെ പട്ടിക ഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമൂഹങ്ങൾ അധിവസിക്കുന്നത്.

ഭാരതസർക്കാരിന്റെയും കേരളസർക്കാരിന്റെയും കണക്കനുസരിച്ച് പട്ടികഗോത്ര വർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ പട്ടികയിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ട 37 പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗക്കാരുണ്ട്. തിരുവനന്തപുരം മുതൽ കാസർഗോഡുവരെ വിവിധ പഞ്ചായത്തുകളിലെ വിവിധ ഊരുകളിൽ അവർ ഉൾപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. 2011 സെൻസസ് പ്രകാരം കേരളത്തിലെ പട്ടികഗോത്ര വർഗ്ഗ ജനസംഖ്യ 4,84,839 ആണ്. ഇത് കേരളത്തിലെ ആകെ ജനസംഖ്യയുടെ 1.45 ശതമാനത്തോളം വരും.

ഭാഷ

മനുഷ്യന്റെ സാംസ്കാരികവും, പൈതൃകവുമായുള്ള വളർച്ചകളിൽ മാത്രമല്ല മറ്റൊരു വിധത്തിലുള്ള വികാസത്തിനും ഭാഷ വളരെ പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ഘടകമാണ്. ഭാഷ ഒരേ വിധത്തിൽ നിലനിൽക്കുന്നില്ല. കാലാന്തരത്തിൽ അത് പലവിധ മാറ്റങ്ങൾക്കും വിധേയമാകുന്നു. അത് തലമുറകളിൽ നിന്നും തലമുറകളിലേക്ക് കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. ഭാഷ എന്നു പറയുന്നത് ഒരു ജനതയുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ജീവനാഡിയാണ്. ഒരു ജനതയുടെ ഭാഷയുടെ രൂപാന്തരണം അവരുടെ പൈതൃകത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണ തോതിലുള്ള പരിണാമ പരിക്രമണ വിന്യാസത്തെ ആശ്രയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇതിൽ പരിണാമക്രിയ നടന്നിരിക്കുക ചുറ്റും അവർ

ആശ്രയിക്കുന്ന പാരിസ്ഥിതിക ചുറ്റുപാടുകളെ അപേക്ഷിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഭാഷയുടെ സ്പഷ്ടമായുള്ള വ്യതിയാനം മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ മുൻതലമുറകളിലെ ഭാഷാ പ്രയോഗം മനസ്സിലാക്കിയാൽ മതിയാകും. ഭാഷയുടെ വിനിമയ സമ്പ്രദായം പൂർണ്ണമാകണമെങ്കിൽ വായ്മൊഴിയും ലിഖിതസമ്പ്രദായവും ആവശ്യമാണ്.

ഗോത്ര സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷ

ഫീൽഡ് സ്റ്റഡിയിൽ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ പദസമ്പത്ത് ശേഖരിച്ച് വിശകലനം ചെയ്തതിൽ നിന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത് വയനാടൻ കാടർ, കുരിച്യർ, തച്ചനാടൻ, മലയാൻ, മലയരയർ തുടങ്ങിയ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് മലയാള ഭാഷയുമായി പൂർണ്ണമായും സ്വാധീനമുണ്ടെന്നാണ്. തമിഴ് ഭാഷയുമായി പൂർണ്ണതോതിൽ ബന്ധമുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ മഹാമലസർ, ഇരവാലൻ എന്നിവരാണ്. മലയാളവും തമിഴും കലർന്ന ഭാഷാഭേദം സംസാരിക്കുന്നവർ ധാരാളമാണ്. കാണിക്കാർ, ഊരാളി, കാടർ, മലൈപണ്ടാരം, മലവേടർ, മലസർ, പളിയൻ, മുതുവാൻ എന്നിവർ. തുളു ഭാഷയുമായി ബന്ധമുള്ളത് കൊറഗ, മാവിലൻ എന്നിവരാണ്. തമിഴും തുളുവും ചേർ ഭാഷയാണ് മുഡുഗർ സംസാരിക്കുന്നത്. കന്നടഭാഷയുടെ സ്വാധീനം പൂർണ്ണമായുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗം അടിയാൻ ആണ്. മലയാളം, കന്നഡ, തമിഴ്, ഈ മൂന്ന് ഭാഷകൾക്കും സ്വാധീനമുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ മുളളുക്കുറുമരും ഇരുളരും ആണ്. തമിഴ്, മലയാളം, തുളു എന്നീ ഭാഷകൾക്ക് സ്വാധീനമുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾ സംസാരിക്കുന്നത് പണിയരാണ്. കാട്ടുനായ്ക്കൻമാരുടേയും വെട്ടക്കുറുമരുടേയും ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് മലയാളം, തമിഴ്, കന്നട, തുളു എന്നീ നാലു ഭാഷകളുടേയും മറ്റ് ചില ദ്രാവിഡ ഭാഷകളുടെയും സ്വാധീനം നേരിയ തോതിലേങ്കിലും ഉണ്ട്.

ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ, നിലവിൽ ഉപയോഗിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന 37 പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗത്തിന്റെ തനത് ഭാഷയെ നാല് വിഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഭദ്രമായ ഭാഷകൾ, ഭദ്രമല്ലാത്ത ഭാഷകൾ, നാശോന്മുഖമാകുന്ന ഭാഷകൾ, നാശമായ ഭാഷകൾ എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണ് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളെ തരം തിരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. ഇതിൽ ഇരുളർ, പണിയർ, കാണിക്കാർ തുടങ്ങിയവരുടെ ഭാഷയായി പരിഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഭദ്രമല്ലാത്ത ഭാഷകളായി മാവിലൻ, അടിയാൻ, കുറുമർ, മുതുവാൻ, വെട്ടക്കുറുമർ തുടങ്ങിയ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷകളെയാണ് കണക്കാക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. കരിമ്പാലർ, മുഡുഗർ, കൊച്ചുവേലൻ (ഉള്ളാടൻ) കുറുമർ, മലവെട്ടുവൻ, മലപുലയൻ, കാട്ടുനായിക്കൻ, മലൈപണ്ടാരം, മലവേടൻ, മലയാൻ, പളിയൻ, ചോലനായ്ക്കൻ, ഊരാളി, കാടർ, മലസർ, വയനാട് കാടർ, അരനാടൻ, മഹാമലസർ, കൊറഗ, മലപണിക്കർ, മലയരയർ, ഇരവാലൻ, തുടങ്ങിയ പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ സമുദായങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഷയെ നാശോന്മുഖമായികൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഭാഷയായി കരുതപ്പെടുന്നു.

നാശമായ ഭാഷകൾ

ഗവേഷണത്തിൽ നാശമായ ഭാഷകൾ ഇല്ല എന്നാണ് മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ സാധിച്ചത്. World Atlas of Language Endangerment (WALE) ഇന്നത്തെ നാശോന്മുഖമാകുന്ന ഭാഷകളെപ്പറ്റി വിശദമായിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു പഠനം നടത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. എല്ലാ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾക്കും അവരുടെ തായുള്ള സംസ്കാരവും പൈതൃകവും ഉണ്ട്. എന്നിരുന്നാലും പലപ്പോഴും അവർ വളരെയധികം സമ്പർക്കം ചെയ്യുന്നത് മറ്റ് ദ്രാവിഡ ഭാഷകളായ മലയാളം, തമിഴ്, തുടങ്ങിയ ഭാഷകളാണ്.

ഒരേ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ തന്നെ കേരളത്തിന്റെയും തമിഴ്നാട്ടിന്റെയും അതാത് അതിർത്തികളിൽ കാണപ്പെടുന്നു എന്ന് നമുക്കറിയാം. അപ്പോൾ ഇവരുടെ ഭാഷകളിലും ആ സ്വാധീനം കാണാൻ പറ്റും. ഇത്തരത്തിൽ ഈ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾക്ക് ലിപി ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ മലയാള ഭാഷയിലാണോ അതോ, തമിഴ് ഭാഷയിലാണോ

ലിപി ഉണ്ടാകേണ്ടത്? വളരെ പ്രസക്തമായ ചോദ്യമാണിത്. അതോ അവരുടെ സംസ്കാരത്തിൽ ഉന്നത നൽകി ഒരു പുതിയ ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യകത ഉണ്ടോ? ദ്രാവിഡഭാഷകളുമായി ബന്ധമുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾ പൂർണ്ണമായി ദ്രാവിഡഭാഷയിൽ വരുന്നതാണെന്നുള്ളതിന് ഒരു തർക്കവുമില്ല. കാരണം പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ സംസാരിക്കുന്ന ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് ദ്രാവിഡ ഭാഷയുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം തന്നെയാണ്. കേരളത്തിലുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗത്തിന് മലയാളം നന്നായി മനസ്സിലാവുകയും നമ്മൾ പറയുന്ന മലയാളഭാഷ മനസ്സിലാക്കി അവരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയിൽ നന്നായി തിരിച്ച് മറുപടി പറയുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. 200 ഓളം ആവേശകരമായ നിന്നും ഫീൽഡിൽപോയി വിവരങ്ങൾ ശേഖരിച്ചതിനാൽ അത് നന്നായി മനസ്സിലായതാണ്. അവരുടെ സംസ്കാരത്തിൽ ഉന്നത നൽകി ഒരു പുതിയ ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യകത ഉണ്ടെന്നുള്ളതാണ് ഫീൽഡ് സ്റ്റഡിയിൽ നിന്നും വിദഗ്ദ്ധപ്രായത്തിൽ നിന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ സാധിച്ചത്. ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ പല സമ്പ്രദായിക സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ അവർ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന നാടൻ പാട്ടുകളും അവരുടെ കലകളും സാംസ്കാരിക പൈതൃക ചിട്ടവട്ടങ്ങളും നശിച്ചുപോകുന്നുണ്ട്. അവരുടെയും കേരളത്തിലെയും വരും തലമുറയിലെ ജനങ്ങൾക്കും ഗവേഷകർക്കും വേണ്ടി, ഇത് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തി വയ്ക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യകത വളരെ വലുതാണ്.

പക്ഷേ ദ്രാവിഡിയൻ ഭാഷകളിൽ രേഖപ്പെടുത്താനല്ലാതെ ഒരു ലിപിപോലുമില്ലാത്ത അവരുടെ ഭാഷകളിൽ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന്റെ സങ്കീർണ്ണത ഏവർക്കും മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ പറ്റുന്നതാണ്. ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ തനത് സംസ്കാരവും പൈതൃകങ്ങളും കലകളും സാമ്പ്രദായിക രീതികളും മറ്റൊരു ഭാഷയിൽ നിന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കേണ്ടി വരുന്നത് ധർമ്മികമായ ഒരു അധഃപതനം തന്നെയാണ്. അവർക്കു വേണ്ടി മാത്രം ഏറ്റവും എളുപ്പത്തിൽ എഴുതി പഠിക്കാവുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ പുതിയ ഒരു ലിപി നിർമ്മിക്കേണ്ടതും ആവശ്യമാണ്. മലയാളം പഠിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികൾ മലയാളം പഠിച്ചു പിന്നെ മറ്റുള്ള ഭാഷ പഠിക്കുന്നത് പോലെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളിലുംപ്പെടുന്ന കുട്ടികളും ആദ്യം അവരുടെ തന്നെ തനത് ഭാഷയിൽ പ്രാഥമിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നേടിയശേഷം പിന്നീട് മലയാളം, തമിഴ്, വിദേശ ഭാഷകൾ എന്നിവയിൽ പഠനം നടത്തേണ്ടതാവശ്യം. എല്ലാ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾക്കും ദ്രാവിഡ ഭാഷകളുമായി വളരെ ബന്ധമുണ്ട്. ലിപിയും, സാഹിത്യവുമുള്ള പല ഭാഷകളും നാശത്തിന്റെ വക്കിലേയ്ക്ക് വീണുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ ഒരു ലിപി പോലുമില്ലാത്ത പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനെക്കുറിച്ച് പറയാൻ തന്നെ സാധ്യമല്ല. പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ തനത് ഭാഷകളെ കൂടുതലായി ഉപയോഗത്തിൽ വരുത്തി മാത്രമേ നമുക്കു പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗഭാഷകളെ നിലനിർത്താനും വളർത്താനും സാധിക്കുകയുള്ളൂ.

പണിയൻ

കേരളസംസ്ഥാനത്ത് ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ ജനസംഖ്യയുള്ള പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗമാണ് പണിയൻ. പണിയെടുക്കുന്നവർ എന്ന അർത്ഥത്തിലാണ് 'പണിയൻ' എന്ന പേര് ലഭിച്ചതെന്ന് ചിലർ പറയുന്നു. 2001 സെൻസസ് പ്രകാരം കേരളത്തിലെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്ന ജനങ്ങളുടെ ജനസംഖ്യ 3,64,189 ആണ്. അത് 3.18 കോടി മൊത്ത ജനസംഖ്യയുടെ 1.14% ആണ്. 2011 സെൻസസ് പ്രകാരം കേരളത്തിലെ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്ന ജനങ്ങളുടെ ജനസംഖ്യ 4,84,839 ആണ്. ഇതിൽ പുരുഷൻമാർ 2,38,203 ഉം സ്ത്രീകൾ 2,46,636 ഉം ആണ്. പണിയൻ സമുദായത്തിന്റെ ആകെ ജനസംഖ്യ 88,450 ആണ്. അതിൽ പുരുഷൻമാർ 42,775 ഉം സ്ത്രീകൾ 45,675 ഉം ആണ്.

കേരളസംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ വയനാട് ജില്ലയിലാണ് ആണ് ഇവർ മുഖ്യമായും അധിവസിക്കുന്നത്. വയനാട് ജില്ലയെ കൂടാതെ കോഴിക്കോട്, കണ്ണൂർ, മലപ്പുറം ജില്ലകളിലും ഇവർ വസിച്ചുവരുന്നു. കേരളത്തിലെ ഒട്ടുമിക്ക പണിയൻ സമുദായാംഗങ്ങളും അധിവ

സിക്ക്ന ഉരുകളിൽ നടത്തിയ പഠനത്തിൽ നിന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചത് വളരെ പ്രായം ചെന്ന ആളുകൾ സംസാരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഇപ്പോഴും പണിയൻ ഭാഷ തന്നെയാണ് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതെന്നാണ്.

പണിയൻ ഭാഷ

പണിയൻ സമുദായത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ട മറ്റുള്ളവരോടും അവർ തനത് ഭാഷ മാത്രമേ സംസാരിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂ. എന്നാൽ 30 മുതൽ 50 വയസ്സു വരെ പ്രായമുള്ളവർക്ക് രണ്ട് അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്. തനത് പണിയ ഭാഷ നിലനിർത്തണമെന്നും മറ്റ് തദ്ദേശീയ ഭാഷകളും കൂട്ടികളെ പഠിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നും ആണ് ഇവർ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെട്ടത്. ഇവരുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ പ്രധാനമായും കൂട്ടികളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന് തനത് ഭാഷ പ്രാഥമികമായി പഠിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നും പിന്നീട് അവരുടെ പണിയ ഭാഷയുമായി പ്രാദേശിക ബന്ധമുള്ള മലയാളത്തിൽ പഠിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നും ക്രമേണ മറ്റു ഭാഷകൾ കൂടി പഠിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നും പറഞ്ഞു. പുതിയ തലമുറ (15-30 വയസ്സ്) തനത് ഭാഷയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കണമെന്നു പറയുന്നുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ അവർ അവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ മാത്രമേ തനത് ഭാഷ സംസാരിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂ. അങ്ങനെ സംസാരിക്കുമ്പോൾ പോലും വളരെ വലിയ തോതിൽ അവർ മലയാളം സംസാരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

പുറത്ത് പോകുന്ന സമയത്ത് മലയാളം മാത്രമേ സംസാരിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂ. കൂട്ടു കാർക്കൊപ്പം പുറത്ത് ഉള്ള സമയത്ത് അവർ അവരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷ പറയുന്നു. പണിയൻ ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് അതിന്റെ തനത് സ്വഭാവത്തിൽ നിന്നും വളരെയധികം മാറ്റം സംഭവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആയതിനാൽ എത്രയും വേഗം അതിനെ നിലനിർത്തുന്നതിനു ആവശ്യമായ ലിപി സമ്പ്രദായം ദ്രുതഗതിയിൽ കൊണ്ടു വരേണ്ടതാണ് എന്നും പറയുന്നു. പണിയരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് പ്രാദേശികമായി മലയാളം, തമിഴ് തുടങ്ങിയ ഭാഷകളുമായി വളരെ ബന്ധമുണ്ടെന്ന് പഠനത്തിൽ കൂടിയും പലവിധ അഭിപ്രായപ്രകടനങ്ങളുടെ വിശകലനത്തിൽ കൂടിയും സംവേദന സംവാദത്തിൽകൂടിയും മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചു.

പണിയരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയിൽ ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കുമ്പോൾ അത് എങ്ങനെ രൂപീകരിക്കണം എന്നുള്ള കാര്യത്തിൽ വളരെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ട് തോന്നിയിരുന്നു. ഈ ലിപികൾ മലയാളത്തിൽ ആണോ വേണ്ടത് അതോ തമിഴിൽ ആണോ വേണ്ടത് എന്നുള്ള കാര്യത്തിൽ ആണ് കൂടുതലും ചിന്തിക്കേണ്ടി വന്നിരുന്നത്. പണിയൻ സമുദായാംഗങ്ങൾ കൂടുതലായും മലയാള വാക്കുകൾ ആണ് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതെന്ന് പഠനത്തിലൂടെ മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു. മലയാളത്തിലാണോ തമിഴ് ഭാഷയിലാണോ അതോ മറ്റേതെങ്കിലും ഭാഷയിലാണോ ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കേണ്ടത് എന്നുള്ള കാര്യത്തിൽ ഒരു തീരുമാനം എടുക്കാൻ വളരെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുണ്ടായി. പണിയരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് ഒരു ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കുമ്പോൾ അത് ആ വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്ന ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് വളരെയധികം പ്രയോജനപ്പെടണം എന്ന ഒരു ലക്ഷ്യം മനസ്സിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. പണിയർക്ക് മാത്രം, അവരുടെ സംസ്കാരികമായ പൈതൃകം കാത്തു സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനും ഈ ലിപി, അവർക്കു മാത്രം സ്വന്തമായി തീരണം എന്നും ഞങ്ങൾക്കു മാത്രം സ്വന്തമായ ഒരു ലിപി വേണമെന്നും അത് മറ്റുള്ള ഏത് ഭാഷയേക്കാളും എഴുതാനും മനസ്സിലാക്കാനും പഠിക്കാനും എളുപ്പമാകണമെന്നും ഉള്ള അവരുടെ അഭിപ്രായം വ്യക്തമായി മനസ്സിൽ വച്ചു കൊണ്ട് അവർക്കായി അവരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് അവരുടേയായ ഒരു പുതിയ ലിപി തയ്യാറാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചതിന്റെ ഫലമാണ് ഈ പുതിയ പണിയൻ ഭാഷയിലുള്ള ലിപി.

ഈ ശ്രമകരമായ ഉദ്യമത്തിന് നിരവധി ഗവേഷണ പഠനങ്ങളുമായും മറ്റ് ലോക ഭാഷാലിപികളുമായും വളരെയധികം താരതമ്യപഠനങ്ങൾ നടത്തേണ്ടതായി വന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. മൈസൂരിലെ സെന്ററൽ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ലാംഗ്വേജസ് എന്ന സ്ഥാപനം തമിഴ്നാട്ടിലെ പണിയൻ സമുദായത്തിനു വേണ്ടി ഒരു പുസ്തകം പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. ആ പുസ്തകം പരിശോധിച്ചപ്പോൾ അറിയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞത് തമിഴ്നാട്ടിലെ തമിഴ്

ഭാഷാ സ്വാധീനമുള്ള പണിയൻക്കുവേണ്ടി അവർ നിർമ്മിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ലിപി തമിഴ് ഭാഷയിലെ ലിപിയാണ്. ഒരു വിഭാഗം ജനതയ്ക്ക് അവരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയെ മറ്റൊരു ഭാഷയിലെ ലിപി കൊണ്ട് പ്രതിനിധീകരിക്കുന്നതിലെ ഔചിത്യമില്ലായ്മ മനസ്സിലാക്കുകയും അതിനാൽ പണിയരുടെ തനത് ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് ഒരു പുതിയ ലിപി നിർമ്മിച്ചിരിക്കേണ്ടതാണെന്നും അത് എന്നനേയ്ക്കും നിലനിർത്തേണ്ട ഒന്നാണെന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കിയതിന്റെ ഫലമാണ് ഈ ലിപി.

ഈ ലിപിയുടെ സഹായത്താൽ പണിയൻ സമുദായത്തിലെ ജനങ്ങളുടെ സംസ്കാരികപരവും പൈതൃകപരവും കലാപരവുമായ എല്ലാവിധ പാരമ്പര്യ ഘടകങ്ങളുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കുമുതകുന്ന ഒന്നായി അത് ഉയരും. അത് വരും തലമുറയിലെ കുട്ടികൾക്ക് വളരെയധികം ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുകയും, അവരുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസപരമായ ഉന്നമനത്തിനു ലക്ഷ്യപ്രാപ്തി ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്നും നിസ്സംശയം പറയാൻ സാധിക്കും.

പണിയ ലിപി

ഫീൽഡ് സ്റ്റഡിയിൽ നിന്നും ലഭിച്ച പദസഞ്ചയം വിശകലനം ചെയ്തതിൽ നിന്നും പണിയ ഭാഷയിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന സ്വര-വ്യഞ്ജന ശബ്ദങ്ങളെ വേർതിരിക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചിരുന്നു. അവ താഴെ കൊടുക്കുന്നു. പണിയ ഭാഷയിൽ 10 സ്വര ശബ്ദങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്.

ഹ്രസ്വം		ദീർഘം	
അ	മ	ആ	മമ
ഇ	ശ	ഈ	ശശ
ഉ	ഛ	ഊ	ഛഛ
ഒ	ഈ	ഓ	ഈ
ഏ	ല	ഔ	ലല

പണിയ ഭാഷയിൽ 19 വ്യഞ്ജന ശബ്ദങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ട്.

പ ബ ത ദ റ ട ച ക മ ന ന ണ ണെ ണെ ല ഉ റ വ യ ???

ഉച്ചാരണസ്ഥാനം > ഉച്ചാരണ രീതി		Bilabial ഓഷ്ഠ്യം	Labiodental ഓഷ്ഠ്യദന്ത്യം	Dental ദന്ത്യം	Alveolar വർണ്ണ്യം	Retroflex മുർദ്ധന്ത്യം	Palatal താവല്യം
Stop സ്വർഗ്ഗം	Voiceless ശ്വാസി Voice നാദി	പ ബ		ത ദ	റ	ട	ച
Nasal അനുനാസികം		മ		ന	ന	ണ	ഞ
Lateral പാർശ്വീകം					ല	ള	
Flap പ്രവാഹി					ര		
Continuant പ്രവാഹി			വ				യ

അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ	പണിയലിപി	സ്രോതസ്സ്
ക	Δ	[Paniya]
ച	ച	[Malayalam]
ട	ട	[Malayalam]
ത	ത	[Malayalam]
പ	□	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ങ	0	[Harappa]
ണ	ണ	[Malayalam]
ഞ	ൺ	[Tamil]
ന	Ξ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ന	Ξ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
മ	μ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ദ	ദ	[Malayalam]
ബ	Б	[Lucida Sans Unicode Cyrillic]
യ	У	[Lucida Sans Unicode -Latin]
ര	Π	[Greek]
ല	ഛ	[Paniya]
വ	വ	[Malayalam]
ള	Л	[Tamil]
ഠ	ഠ	[Malaya-lam]
ഞ്ച	δ	[Greek and Coptic]
ട	Ξ	[Malayalam]
ഘ	Ξ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
മ്പ	Б	[Meiry-cyrillic]
ക	Δ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ച്ച	ച	[Meiry]
വ്വ	വ	[Malayalam]
ഞ്ഞ	ꞥ	[Magneto-latin]
ന്ത	ന്ത	[Malayalam]
ത്ത	ത്ത	[Malayalam]
ങ്ങ	∞	[Harappa]
ള്ള	匕	[kangxi radicals]
ക്ക	က	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ണ്ണ	ണ്ണ	[Malayalam]
ല്ല	ഴ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
യ്യ	У	[IPA]
മ്മ	പ	[created]
ന്ന	Ξ	[Lucida Sans Unicode]
ണ്ട	ൺ	(Neolithic Europe)

പണിയ ഭാഷാലിപി രൂപവൽക്കരണം

അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ	പണിയലിപി	സ്രോതസ്സ്
അ	ʌ	[IPA]
ആ	ʌ̄	[IPA]
ഇ	ɪ	[Morda]
ഈ	ī	[created]
ഉ	ɯ	[IPA]
ഊ	ū	[IPA]
എ	ɤ	[Leelawadee-Thai]
ഏ	ɛ̄	[Leelawadee-Thai]
ഒ	o	[Lucia sans Unicode-latin]
ഓ	ō	[Lucia sans Unicode-latin]

സ്വരങ്ങൾ
കൂട്ടക്ഷരം

ക	Δ	കെ	െΔ
കാ	Δo	കേ	േΔ
കി	Δɪ	കൈ	ൈΔ
കീ	Δī	കൊ	ൊΔo
കു	Δɯ	കോ	ോΔo
കു	Δū	കൗ	ൗΔo
കൃ	Δy	കം	ംΔo

ഉദാ:

ഇത്തരത്തിൽ സ്വരാക്ഷരങ്ങൾക്കും വ്യഞ്ജനാക്ഷരങ്ങൾക്കും കൂട്ടക്ഷരങ്ങൾക്കും ഒരു പുതിയ ലിപി രൂപീകരിക്കുകയാണിവിടെ ചെയ്തത്. എല്ലാ ലിപി രൂപീകരണ ഗവേഷണങ്ങളും തദ്ദേശീയ ഭാഷകളിൽ തന്നെ, ആ ലിപി തന്നെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചു പട്ടിക ഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളെ അതിൽ തന്നെ, അതിന്റെ ഒരു ഭാഗമാക്കി മാറ്റിയപ്പോൾ ഇവിടെ പണിയൻ ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് മലയാളത്തിന്റെ ലിപി അധികമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കാതെ പുതിയ ഒരു ലിപി നിർമ്മിക്കുകയാണുണ്ടായത്. അതുവഴി പണിയർക്ക് സ്വന്തമായി അവരുടേത് എന്നവകാശപ്പെടുവാനായി ഒരു ഭാഷ അങ്ങനെ സാധ്യമായിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഒരു പക്ഷേ ഇന്ത്യയിൽ നടന്ന എല്ലാ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകളുടെ ലിപി നിർണ്ണയ പഠനത്തിലും ഇങ്ങനെ എല്ലാ ലിപികളിൽ നിന്നും ഉള്ള ഒരു പ്രാതിനിധ്യ രൂപീകരണ സമ്പ്രദായം ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല എന്ന് പറയാം. ഇതിൽ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ വരുത്തിയ ഒരു മാനദണ്ഡം മുൻപ് പറഞ്ഞത് പോലെ പണിയർക്ക് പുതിയ ലിപി പഠിക്കുമ്പോൾ മറ്റേത് ലിപി പഠിക്കുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ എളുപ്പമാകണം എന്നുള്ളത് തന്നെയാണ്. അങ്ങനെ അവരെ നിലവിൽ ഉള്ള ഒരു ഭാഷയ്ക്കു കീഴെ തള്ളിപ്പോയ അവരുടേയ്ക്കു ഒരു ലിപി എന്നവകാശപ്പെടുവാനായി ഈ സംരംഭം ഉതകുമാറാകട്ടെ എന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. തുടർന്ന് ഈ ലിപി വച്ച് പര്യേതര ഭാഗങ്ങൾ നിർമ്മിക്കുകയും, നിഘണ്ടുവും, മറ്റ് അവർക്ക് വേണ്ട പഠന സാമഗ്രികൾ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടതും ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ്. വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിലെ അധ്യാപകർക്ക് ഈ ലിപിയിൽ മേൽ ഒരു പരിശീലനം കൊടുക്കുകയും വേണം. ഇനിയുള്ള മൂപ്പത്തി ആറു ഗോത്ര വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടേയും ഭാഷയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ ഇത്തരത്തിൽ ഒരു ലിപി ഉണ്ടാക്കുകയോ, അതോ ഒരു യൂണികോഡു സമ്പ്രദായം ഈ വിഭാഗത്തിനാകമാനം രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുകയോ ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ്.

ഉപസംഹാരം

ചോദ്യാവലി മുഖേന വിവിധ പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗക്കാരിലും ഭിന്ന വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ തലത്തിലും പുതിയ തലമുറ (15-30 വയസ്സ്), യുവജനങ്ങൾ (30-50 വയസ്സ്) വളരെ പ്രായം ചെന്ന ആളുകൾ (50 വയസ്സിനു മുകളിൽ) എന്നീ ഭിന്ന പ്രായത്തിലുള്ള സ്ത്രീ-പുരുഷന്മാരിൽ നിന്നും വിവരശേഖരണം നടത്തുക വഴി പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷകൾ തനത് രൂപത്തിൽ ഏതൊക്കെ വിഭാഗങ്ങൾ ഇപ്പോഴും ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് എന്നും അത്തരത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗക്കാരിൽ നിന്നും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസപരമായും പ്രായപരമായും പ്രദേശികമായും ലിംഗപരമായും ഉള്ള വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ ക്രോഡീകരിക്കുവാനും കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇത്തരത്തിൽ പുതിയതായി നിർമ്മിച്ച പണിയ ലിപികൾ പണിയ സമുദായത്തിനു വേണ്ടി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടത് വളരെ ആവശ്യമാണ്. അതിന് ദീർഘ വീക്ഷണത്തോടുകൂടിയുള്ള വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പരിശീലന പദ്ധതി തയ്യാറാക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. അതിന് MRS സ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾ വഴി ആന്ത്രോപോളജി, ലിംഗിസ്റ്റിക്സ്, സോഷ്യോളജി ഗവേഷകർ ഓരോ തനത് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗ ഭാഷയും എടുത്ത് അതാത് വിഭാഗത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട കുട്ടികൾക്ക് പ്രാവീണ്യം നൽകാനായി ഉള്ള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിക്കേണ്ടതായട്ടുണ്ട്. പട്ടികജാതി പട്ടിക വർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ ഉന്നമനത്തിന് വേണ്ടി ഗവേഷണം ചെയ്യുന്ന കേരള സർക്കാർ വകുപ്പായ കിർടാഡ്സ് പട്ടികഗോത്രവർഗ്ഗത്തിൽ പെടുന്ന കുട്ടികൾക്കു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള തനത് ഭാഷയിൽ ഉള്ള പഠാവലികളും മറ്റും നിർമ്മിച്ച് അതുപയോഗിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുള്ള പരിശീലനപരിപാടികൾ ആസൂത്രണം ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്.

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വയനാട് കാടർ

സുരേഷ് കെ പി

വയനാട് ജില്ലയിലും കോഴിക്കോട് ജില്ലയുടെ ചില ഭാഗങ്ങളിലും അധിവസിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ചെറുഗോത്രസമൂഹമാണ് വയനാട് കാടർ. വയനാട് കാടർ എന്നാണ് ഇവർ ഔദ്യോഗികമായി അറിയപ്പെടുന്നതെങ്കിലും പ്രാദേശികമായി ഇവരെ കാടർ എന്നും വിളിക്കാറുണ്ട്. വയനാട്ടിൽ മാത്രം നിവസിച്ചുവരുന്ന ഒരു ജനവിഭാഗമായതിനാലാണ് ഇവരെ വയനാട് കാടർ എന്ന് വിളിച്ചുവരുന്നത് എന്നാണ് വയനാട് കാടരെക്കുറിച്ച് പഠനം നടത്തിയ എ.എ.ഡി. ലൂയിസ് അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഈ ഗോത്രവിഭാഗത്തിന് പാലക്കാട്, തൃശ്ശൂർ ജില്ലകളിൽ വസിക്കുന്ന ഗോത്രവിഭാഗമായ 'കാടർ' വിഭാഗവുമായി ബന്ധമില്ലെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

1947 ൽ മദ്രാസ് ഗവൺമെന്റ് വയനാട് കാടരെ 'പ്രാക്തനഗോത്ര' വർഗമായി കരുതി പട്ടികവർഗ ലിസ്റ്റിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ 1950 ലെ പട്ടികജാതി പട്ടികവർഗ ലിസ്റ്റിൽ നിന്നും വയനാട് കാടരെ ഒഴിവാക്കുകയാണുണ്ടായത്. പിന്നീട് 1986ലെ സർക്കാർ ഉത്തരവ് പ്രകാരം വയനാട് കാടരെ കേരള സംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ ഒ.ഇ.സി (പട്ടികവർഗം) ലിസ്റ്റിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, പട്ടികവർഗലിസ്റ്റിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്താനായി ശുപാർശ ചെയ്യുകയും ചെയ്തു. തുടർന്ന 2002 ലെ പട്ടികജാതി പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ ഭരണഘടനാ ഭേദഗതി ഉത്തരവ് പ്രകാരമുള്ള ലിസ്റ്റിൽ വയനാട് കാടരെ പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ വിഭാഗത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്.

വയനാട് കാടരിൽ ചിലർ, തങ്ങൾ കോട്ടയം രാജാവിന്റെ പടയാളികൾ ആയിരുന്ന നായർ വിഭാഗത്തിന്റെ പിൻമുറക്കാരാണെന്ന് അവകാശപ്പെടുന്നു. എന്നാൽ വയനാടൻ കാടുകളിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞുവന്നിരുന്ന ഒരു ആദിമ സമൂഹമാണ് തങ്ങളെന്നും മറ്റു ചിലർ അവകാശപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. മുൻകാല പഠനങ്ങളിൽ പലതും വയനാട് കാടർ ഒരു ആദിമഗോത്ര വിഭാഗമാണെന്നാണ് അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നത്. വേട്ടയാടലും മാറ്റുകൃഷിയും നടത്തിവന്നിരുന്ന ഈ ജനവിഭാഗം കുടിയേറ്റ ജനതയുടെ ആഗമനത്തോടെയും വികസന പദ്ധതികളുടെയും ഭാഗമായി നാമമാത്ര കർഷകരും കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളികളുമായി മാറിയതായി മനസ്സിലാക്കാം.

അധിവാസകേന്ദ്രങ്ങൾ

വയനാട് ജില്ലയിലെ വെള്ളമുണ്ട, പടിഞ്ഞാറന്തറ, തരിയോട്, പൊഴുതന, പിണങ്ങോട്, എടവക, തൊണ്ടർനാട് എന്നീ പഞ്ചായത്തുകളിലും കോഴിക്കോട് ജില്ലയിലെ കോടങ്ങേരി, കൂടരഞ്ഞി പഞ്ചായത്തുകളിലുമാണ് വയനാട് കാടർ താമസിച്ചുവരുന്നത്. ആദ്യകാലങ്ങളിൽ ഇവരുടെ വാസസ്ഥലങ്ങൾ മലയുടെ താഴ്വാരങ്ങൾ, വനപ്രദേശങ്ങൾ എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിലായിരുന്നു. തരിയോട് പഞ്ചായത്തിലും സമീപ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും കൂട്ടമായി താമസിച്ചുവന്നിരുന്ന ഇവരെ ബാണാസൂര ഡാമിന്റെ നിർമ്മാണത്തിന് വേണ്ടി കുടി യൊഴിപ്പിക്കുകയും വയനാടിന്റെ പല ഭാഗങ്ങളിലായി പുനരധിവസിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അതോടുകൂടി ഇവരുടെതായ ഗോത്രജീവിതത്തിൽ വ്യാപകമായ തോതിൽ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സംഭവിച്ചു. 2000ൽ കിർടാഡ്സ് നടത്തിയ പഠനമനുസരിച്ച് ഇവരുടെ ആകെ ജനസംഖ്യ 720 ആണ്. അതിൽ 371 പുരുഷൻമാരും 349 സ്ത്രീകളുമാണുള്ളത്. എന്നാൽ 2008 ൽ പട്ടികവർഗ്ഗ വികസന വകുപ്പ് നടത്തിയ അടിസ്ഥാന വിവരശേഖരണ പ്രകാരം 673 ആണ് ഇവരുടെ ആകെ ജനസംഖ്യ. 2011 സെൻസസ്സിൽ ഇവരുടെ ജനസംഖ്യ പ്രത്യേകം

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രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടില്ല.

വയനാട് കാടർക്ക് അവരുടെതായ പ്രത്യേക വാമൊഴിരൂപങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. മലയാളത്തിന്റെ ഒരു പ്രാദേശിക വകഭേദമായിരുന്നു അത്. മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ പുരുഷൻമാർ കാതിൽ കടുക്കൻ അണിയുകയും, തലമുടി നീട്ടി വളർത്തി, ഒരുവശത്ത് കെട്ടിവെയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നു. സ്ത്രീകൾ കാതിൽ ഓല കൊണ്ടുള്ള തോടയും കഴുത്തിൽ മുത്തു കൊണ്ടുള്ള മാലയും അപൂർവമായി വളകളും അണിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. മൂക്കുകുത്തു സമ്പ്രദായം ഇവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നുവെങ്കിലും മോതിരം ഇവർ അണിഞ്ഞിരുന്നതായി അറിയുവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല.

ഉപജീവന മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ

മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ വയനാട് കാടർ മുത്താറി കൃഷി ചെയ്തും കാട്ടുകിഴങ്ങുകൾ ശേഖരിച്ചും മൃഗങ്ങളെ വേട്ടയാടിയുമാണ് കഴിഞ്ഞുവന്നിരുന്നത്. കാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും തേൻ ഇഞ്ചു, ചീനിക്ക, പഴങ്ങൾ, തുടങ്ങിയവ ഇവർ ശേഖരിച്ചിരുന്നു. തേൻ നാലുതരത്തിലുണ്ടെന്ന് ഇവർ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയിരുന്നു. പെരും തേൻ, പുറ്റ് തേൻ, കോല് തേൻ, ചെറുതേൻ എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണ് അവർ തേനിനെ തരം തിരിച്ചിരുന്നത്. വലിയ മരങ്ങളിൽ തൂങ്ങി കിടക്കുന്നതിനെ 'പെരും തേൻ' എന്നും മരത്തിന്റെ ദ്വാരങ്ങളിൽ കാണുന്ന തേനീച്ചകളെ 'ചെറുതേൻ' എന്നും പറായിലോ പുറ്റിലോ കാണുന്ന തേനീച്ച കൂടുകളെ 'പുറ്റ് തേൻ' എന്നും മരത്തിന്റെ കൊമ്പിൽ കാണുന്ന തേനീച്ച കൂടിനെ 'കോല് തേൻ' എന്നും അവർ വിളിച്ചിരുന്നു.

കാട്ടുകിഴങ്ങുകളായ നൂറ, നാര, കുരണ്ട, കാട്ടുകാച്ചിൽ തുടങ്ങിയവയും പഴങ്ങളായ കാരക്കായ്, കൊട്ടപ്പഴം, ചളിർക്കായ, ഓലമ്പഴം എന്നിവയും ഇവർ കഴിച്ചിരുന്നു. ചെമ്പോക്കായ്, പാറോക്കായ് തുടങ്ങിയ പഴങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന മാനുസങ്ങളിൽ ഇവർ ബെളഞ്ഞിക്കോൽ¹ മരത്തിൽ കുത്തിവെയ്ക്കുന്നു. പഴം തിന്നാനായി വരുന്ന പക്ഷിയുടെ ചിറകിലും ദേഹത്തും ഈ പശകമ്പുകൾ തട്ടുമ്പോൾ പക്ഷികൾ താഴെ വീഴുന്നു. ബെളഞ്ഞിക്കോൽ കൂടാതെ അമ്പെയ്തും, കെണി വെച്ചും ഇവർ പക്ഷികളെ പിടിക്കാറുണ്ട്.

മൃഗങ്ങളെ വേട്ടയാടുവാനായി ഇവർ കൂട്ടമായിട്ടാണ് പോയിരുന്നത്. വേട്ടയ്ക്ക് പോകുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് തന്നെ കാരണവരും മറ്റു പ്രായം ചെന്ന പുരുഷൻമാരും ചേർന്ന് നായാട്ടിനുള്ള ദിവസം നിശ്ചയിക്കുന്നു. ആ ദിവസം വേട്ടയ്ക്ക് പോകുന്നവർ മുൻകൂട്ടി നിശ്ചയിച്ച സ്ഥലത്ത് എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നു. അതിന് ശേഷം ആളുകൾ അമ്പും വില്ലുമായി കാട്ടിലേക്ക് പോകുന്നു. നായും ആളും ചേർന്ന് കാടിലൂടെ നായയുടെ കഴുത്തിൽ ഒരു മണി കെട്ടിയിരിക്കും, ഇത് നായ എത്തുന്ന സ്ഥലം മനസ്സിലാക്കാനും മണിയുടെ ശബ്ദം കേട്ട് മൃഗങ്ങൾ കാടിന് പുറത്ത് വരാനും വേണ്ടിയായിരുന്നു. കാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും ചാടി വരുന്ന മൃഗങ്ങളെ അമ്പെയ്യാനായി വേട്ടക്കാർ തയ്യാറായി നിൽക്കുന്നു. അമ്പെയ്ത് മൃഗത്തെ വീഴ്ത്തിയ ആൾ തന്റെ അവകാശം ഉറപ്പിക്കാനായി മൃഗത്തിന്റെ ഒരു ചെവി ചെത്തിയെടുക്കുന്നു.

നായാട്ടിന് പോകുന്നതിന് മുമ്പായി ഇരയെ ലഭിക്കാനായി ഇവർ 'തമ്പായി'²ക്ക് നേർച്ച കൊടുക്കുന്നത് പതിവായിരുന്നു. മലക്കാരിക്കും നെഗലിനുമായിരുന്നു³ ഇങ്ങിനെ നേർച്ച കൊടുത്തിരുന്നത്. വേട്ടയാടൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ് അവർ കാട്ടിൽ തന്നെ തീകൂട്ടി ഇറച്ചി ചുട്ട് തമ്പായിക്ക് കൊടുത്തിരുന്ന രീതിയുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. കമ്പിൽ കോർത്ത് ചുട്ടെടുക്കുന്ന ഇതിനെ കോലിറച്ചി എന്നാണ് പറയുന്നത്. കാട്ടിൽ വെച്ച് തന്നെ ഇവർ വേട്ടയാടി കിട്ടിയ

1. കോളിമരത്തിന്റെ പശയിൽ മുക്കിയ കുർപ്പിച്ച മുളംകമ്പുകൾ
2. ദൈവത്തിന്
3. മരിച്ചുപോയ കാരണവരുടെ ആത്മാവ്

മൃഗത്തെ വീതം വെച്ചിരുന്നു. അമ്പെയ്ത വൃക്തിക്ക് മൃഗത്തിന്റെ തലഭാഗം കൊടുക്കുന്നു. ബാക്കി എല്ലാവർക്കുമായി വീതിച്ചെടുക്കുന്നു.

മീൻകൂട് ഉപയോഗിച്ചാണ് ഇവർ മീൻ പിടിച്ചിരുന്നത്. മഴക്കാലത്താണ് ഇവർ ഇത് ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ഓടയും മുളയും കൊണ്ട് നിർമ്മിച്ച കൂട്ടിൽ മത്സ്യങ്ങൾ കയറിയാൽ അവയ്ക്ക് പുറത്ത് കടക്കാൻ കഴിയാത്ത വിധത്തിലായിരുന്നു കൂട് നിർമ്മിച്ചിരുന്നത്. വേനൽക്കാലത്ത് നഞ്ച് കലക്കിയുമാണ് ഇവർ മത്സ്യം പിടിച്ചിരുന്നത്.

മുത്താറി കൃഷിയായിരുന്നു ഇവരുടെ പ്രധാന ഉപജീവനമാർഗ്ഗം മേടമാസത്തിന് മുമ്പ് കാട് വെട്ടിത്തെളിച്ച് തീയിട്ട് വൃത്തിയാക്കുന്നു. നിലം ഒരുകുറിയ ശേഷം വിത്ത് കൊത്തുന്നു.⁵ മുത്താറി വിതയ്ക്കുന്നതിന് കാരണവരാണ് നേതൃത്വം കൊടുക്കുന്നത് പുതുമഴയോടു കൂടി മുത്താറി മുളച്ചു പൊങ്ങുന്നു. കളയെടുക്കുന്ന രീതി നിലവിലുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. തുലാം മാസമാകുമ്പോൾ കതിർ മുറിച്ചെടുക്കുന്നു. മുത്താറിയിൽ കതിർ തിന്നാൻ വരുന്ന പക്ഷികളെയും മൃഗങ്ങളെയും അമ്പെയ്തും അടിച്ചിൽ⁶ വെച്ചുമാണ് ഇവർ പിടിച്ചിരുന്നത്.

രണ്ടുതരം മുത്താറി ഇവർ കൃഷി ചെയ്തിരുന്നു. 'മുതുവിള' ഇത് പൊക്കം കുറഞ്ഞ തരം ചെയ്തിയാണ്. മീനം, മേട മാസത്തിൽ ആണ് ഇത് വിതയ്ക്കുന്നത്. ചിങ്ങമാസത്തോടു കൂടി ഇവ കൊയ്ത്തിന് പാകമാകുന്നു. 'ഇളവിള' പൊക്കം കൂടിയ തരം മുത്താറി ചെയ്തിയാണ്. മീനം, മേട മാസത്തിലാണ് ഇത് വിതയ്ക്കുന്നതെങ്കിലും ധനു, വൃശ്ചികമാസത്തിലാണ് ഇത് കൊയ്ത്തിന് പാകമാകുന്നത്. മുത്താറി വിളഞ്ഞുവരുമ്പോൾ കതിർ മാത്രം മുറിച്ചെടുക്കുന്നു. ഇങ്ങിനെ മുറിച്ചെടുത്ത കതിർ ഉണക്കി സൂക്ഷിച്ച് ആവശ്യം വരുമ്പോൾ കതിർ ചവിട്ടി മെതിച്ച് മുത്താറിയെടുത്ത് പൊടിച്ച് പലഹാരങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാക്കി കഴിക്കുന്നു. ഓട (ഇറ്റ) മുള എന്നിവ കൊണ്ടുള്ള കൊമ്മയിലാണ് ഇവർ മുത്താറി, ചാമ തുടങ്ങിയ ധാന്യങ്ങൾ സൂക്ഷിച്ചുവെച്ചിരുന്നത്.

സമൂഹഘടന

വയനാട് കാടർക്ക് പതിനെട്ട് തറവാടുകൾ നിലനിന്നിരുന്നതായി കാണാം. എന്നാൽ ചില മുൻകാലപഠനങ്ങൾ ഇവർക്കിടയിൽ പത്ത് തറവാടുകൾ നിലനിന്നിരുന്നുവെന്ന് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആദ്യകാലങ്ങളിൽ ഇവർക്കിടയിൽ കൂട്ടുകൂടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥയാണ് നിലനിന്നിരുന്നത്. കുടുംബ കാരണവർ ആയിരുന്നു കാര്യങ്ങൾ നിയന്ത്രിച്ചിരുന്നത്.

ചേനിയൻ തറവാട്, കല്ലൻതരയൻ, മാവിലിയൻ, പിലാച്ചേരി, ചേമ്പിയൻ, എളയെട്ടിയാൻ, ചീക്കണ്ണിയാൻ, ചെമ്പ്രേൻ, മാങ്ങോടൻ, പാലോടൻ, ചപ്പേതറവാട്, ചെല്ലാട്ട്, കരണശ്ശേരി, അമ്മാറക്കുന്ന്, കെളക്കോടൻ, നെടുംതൊടിയൻ, കാണിയൻ, നിട്ടുംങ്ങോടൻ എന്നിങ്ങനെ പതിനെട്ട് തറവാടുകൾ ഉണ്ട്. തൊണ്ടർകോട്ടയിൽ തിറളത്സവം നടക്കുമ്പോൾ മണിക്കുന്ന് മലയിൽ 18 കാരണവർമാർക്ക് ഇവർ കള്ള് (മദ്യം) വെച്ചുകൊടുക്കാറുണ്ട്.

മാതൃദായക്രമം നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന ഒരു ഗോത്രവിഭാഗമാണിവർ. മരുമക്കത്തായ സമ്പ്രദായമാണിവർ തുടർന്നുവന്നത്. അമ്മയുടെ തറവാടിനെയാണ് ഇവർ ബന്ധുതറവാടായി കരുതുന്നത്. ഈ തറവാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും അവർക്ക് കല്യാണബന്ധം അനുവദനീയമായിരുന്നില്ല. ബന്ധുതറവാടിനെ ഒരു കുടുംബമായാണ് കണക്കാക്കിയിരുന്നത്. ചങ്ങാതി തറവാട്ടിൽ

4. ഈങ്ങളത്തോല്, കാരക്കായ് തുടങ്ങിയ വിഷക്കായ ചതച്ച് വെള്ളത്തിൽ കലക്കുന്നു
5. മുത്താറി വിത്ത് വിതച്ചതിന് ശേഷം മണ്ണ് അതിന് മുകളിൽ ഇടുന്നു.
6. ഒരു തരം കെണി
7. ധാന്യങ്ങൾ സൂക്ഷിക്കാനായി ഇവർ തന്നെ മെടഞ്ഞുണ്ടാക്കുന്നത്.

നിന്നും വിവാഹബന്ധം അനുവദനീയമായിരുന്നു. ചേനിയൻ തറവാടിന്റെ ബന്ധുതരവാടാണ് പിലാച്ചേരി; ചേനിയൻ, തറവാടിന്റെ ചങ്ങാതി തറവാടുകൾ കാണിയൻ, ചെമ്പ്രേൻ, കൊളക്കോടൻ എന്നിവയാണ്. ഒരു കുന്നിൽതന്നെ ഒന്നിലധികം തറവാടുകൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഒരു തറവാട്ടിൽ മുതിർന്ന ആളിനെയാണ് കാരണവരായി തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തിരുന്നത്. കാരണവർക്കായിരുന്നു തറവാടിന്റെ മുഴുവൻ അധികാരവും. കുടുംബത്തിലെ ജനനം, വിവാഹം, മരണം തുടങ്ങിയവയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട ചടങ്ങുകൾക്ക് നേതൃത്വം കൊടുത്തിരുന്നത് കാരണവർ ആയിരുന്നു. എങ്കിലും പ്രായമായ പുരുഷൻമാരുമായി കൂടിയാലോചിച്ചായിരുന്നു കാരണവർ തീരുമാനങ്ങൾ എടുത്തിരുന്നത്. മറ്റു ഗോത്രവിഭാഗങ്ങളിലെ മൂപ്പന്റെ അധികാരത്തിന് സമാനമായിരുന്നു കാരണവരുടെ അധികാരങ്ങൾ, മലദൈവങ്ങളായ കരിയാത്തനേയും മലക്കാരിയെയും കൊണ്ടുനടന്നിരുന്നത് കാരണവർ തന്നെയായിരുന്നു.

ഒരു തറവാട്ടിലെ കാരണവർ മരിച്ചാൽ അടുത്ത ആളിനെ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കാനായി മരണാനന്തര കർമ്മങ്ങൾക്ക് ശേഷം ഒരു ദിവസം നിശ്ചയിച്ച് ആ ദിവസം എല്ലാവരും തറവാട്ടിൽ ഒത്തുകൂടുന്നു. എല്ലാവരും കൂളിച്ച് വന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥനാപൂർവ്വം നിൽക്കുന്നു. ആ അവസരത്തിൽ അതിൽ ആർക്കെങ്കിലും 'നെഗലു' പ്രവേശിക്കുന്നു. നെഗല് കൂടിയ ആൾ ഉറഞ്ഞുതുളളി കുടുംബത്തിലെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ ചോദിച്ചറിയുകയും, കൂടി നിൽക്കുന്നതിൽ കുടുംബത്തിലെ കാര്യങ്ങൾ നോക്കി നടത്താൻ പ്രാപ്തിയുള്ളതും കൂട്ടത്തിലെ പ്രായം ചെന്നതുമായ ആളിനെ അടുത്ത കാരണവർ ആയി നിർദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നു. കാരണവരെ തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ അയാൾ ആ കുടുംബത്തെ (തറവാടിനെ) ഒന്നിപ്പിച്ച് കൊണ്ട് പോകണം. മലക്കാരിയുടെ കോന്തല് കൊണ്ടുനടക്കണം. വിശേഷദിവസങ്ങളിൽ വെളിച്ചപ്പാടായി നെഗലിനേയും മലദൈവത്തെയും വിളിച്ചുവരുത്തണം. ഓരോ കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്കും (തറവാടുകൾക്ക്) ഓരോ അതിർത്തി നിശ്ചയിച്ചിരുന്നു. ആ അതിർത്തിക്ക് അകത്തുള്ള പ്രകൃതി വിഭവങ്ങളുടെ അധികാരം ആ തറവാടുകാർക്ക് മാത്രമായിരുന്നു. ആ നിയമം തെറ്റിയാൽ അവർ തമ്മിൽ ഏറ്റുമുട്ടലുകൾ പോലും നടത്തിയിരുന്നു.

ആചാരാനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങൾ

വയനാട് കാടർക്ക് ജനനം, വിവാഹം, മരണം തുടങ്ങിയവയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട പലതരം ആചാരങ്ങൾ നിലവിലുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഇന്നും പല ചടങ്ങുകളും ചില വ്യത്യാസത്തോടെ നടത്തിവരുന്നുണ്ട്. ഗർഭിണിയായിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ ഭർത്താവിന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ തന്നെയാണ് താമസിക്കുന്നത്. പ്രസവമടക്കുമ്പോൾ ഗർഭിണിയെ 'തീണ്ടാരിപ്പുര' യിൽ താമസിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. അവളുടെ സഹായത്തിനായി കുടുംബത്തിലെ പ്രായംചെന്ന സ്ത്രീകൾ കൂടെ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. കുഞ്ഞ് ജനിച്ച വിവരം അറിയിച്ചിരുന്നത്, പെൺകുട്ടിയാണെങ്കിൽ കിണ്ണം മുട്ടിയും ആൺകുട്ടിയാണെങ്കിൽ ചെണ്ടകൊട്ടിയോ കൂക്കി വിളിച്ചോ ആയിരുന്നു. ഏതാണ്ട് മൂന്നാഴ്ചയോളം അമ്മയും കുഞ്ഞും തീണ്ടാരിപ്പുരയിൽ തന്നെ കഴിയുന്നു. അതിന് ശേഷം അമ്മയേയും കുഞ്ഞിനേയും കൂളിപ്പിച്ച് വീട്ടിൽ കയറ്റുന്നു. ആ ദിവസം അടുത്ത ബന്ധുക്കളെ വിളിച്ച് സദ്യ നടത്തിയിരുന്നു.

'പേരു വിളിക്കൽ' ചടങ്ങ് നടത്തിയിരുന്നത് കഞ്ഞിന് ആറ് മാസം പ്രായമാകുമ്പോഴാണ്. കുഞ്ഞിന് ഒരുവയസ്സ് പ്രായമാകുമ്പോഴാണ് 'കാത് കുത്ത് കല്യാണം' നടത്തിയിരുന്നത്. അച്ഛനോ അമ്മാവനോ ആണ് കുഞ്ഞിന് കാത് കുത്തിയിരുന്നത്. മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ ഓടകൊണ്ടുള്ള സൂചിയായിരുന്നു ഇതിന് വേണ്ടി ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ആൺകുട്ടികളു

- 8. മലക്കാരിയെ കൊണ്ടു നടക്കൽ
- 9. ആർത്തവകാലത്ത് സ്ത്രീകൾ താമസിക്കുന്ന കുടിൽ

ടേയും പെൺകുട്ടികളുടേയും കാത്ത് കുത്തണമെന്നത് നിർബന്ധമായിരുന്നു. ആൺകുട്ടികൾ മുളങ്കമ്പും പെൺകുട്ടികൾ പനയോലയോ തോടയോ കാതിൽ അണിയുന്നു. കാത്ത് കുത്ത് ദിവസം ബന്ധുക്കളെ വിളിച്ച് സദ്യകൊടുക്കുന്നു. ഒന്നാം വയസ്സിൽ കാത്ത് കുത്തിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ തിരണ്ടു കല്യാണത്തിന് കാത്ത് കുത്തേണ്ടത് നിർബന്ധമായിരുന്നു.

ഋതുമതിയായ പെൺകുട്ടി കാട്ടിൽ പോയി ഒളിച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്നു. മുതിർന്ന സ്ത്രീകൾ ഇതറിഞ്ഞ് അവളെ കാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും കുട്ടികൊണ്ടുവന്ന് പ്രത്യേകം തയ്യാറാക്കിയ മുക്കലിയിൽ¹⁰ കൊണ്ടുനിർത്തുന്നു. ആ കുട്ടിയെ ഏഴ് ദിവസം വരെ ആ കുടിലിൽ തന്നെ താമസിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. കുട്ടിനായി പ്രായം ചെന്ന സ്ത്രീകളുമുണ്ടായിരിക്കും. ഏഴാം ദിവസം രാവിലെ കുട്ടിയെ കുളിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനായി സ്ത്രീകൾ കൊണ്ട് പോകുന്നു. കുട്ടിയെ ആരും കാണാതിരിക്കാനായി തൊപ്പിക്കുടയും തലയിൽ മുണ്ടും ധരിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടാകും. കുടാതെ കുട്ടിയുടെ കൈയിൽ ഒരു അരിവാൾ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. കുളികഴിഞ്ഞു കുട്ടിയെ കോടിമുണ്ട് (പുതുവസ്ത്രം) ഉടുപ്പിക്കുന്നു. കുട്ടിയുടെ അമ്മായിയാണ് (മാമി) ഈ കോടിമുണ്ടു കൊണ്ടുവരേണ്ടത്.

കുളിച്ച് ശുദ്ധിയായ കോടിമുണ്ട് ഉടുത്തു വരുന്ന കുട്ടിയെ വിളക്കിന് ചുറ്റും വലം വെയ്ക്കുന്നു. വലം വെയ്ക്കുന്നതിനായി അഞ്ചോ, ഏഴോ മുതിർന്ന സ്ത്രീകളുമുണ്ടായിരിക്കും. വിളക്കിനടുത്തായി കുട്ടിയെ പലകയിൽ ഇരുത്തി കാരണവരും മുതിർന്ന സ്ത്രീകളും നെല്ലെടുത്ത് കുട്ടിയെ അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. അതിന് ശേഷം വീട്ടിനകത്ത് കയറ്റുകയും, തെരണ്ട് കല്യാണത്തിന് വിളിച്ചുവരുത്തിയ ബന്ധുക്കൾക്കും വീട്ടുകാർക്കും സദ്യ കൊടുക്കുന്നു.

വിവാഹചടങ്ങുകൾ

മുൻകാലത്ത് വയനാട് കാടർ മരുമക്കത്തായ സമ്പ്രദായമായിരുന്നു തുടർന്നു വന്നിരുന്നത്. അതിനാൽ അമ്മാവന്റെ മകളെ (മുറപെണ്ണിനെ) യാണ് ഭൂരിഭാഗംപേരും വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചിരുന്നത് മുറപെണ്ണി ഇല്ലാത്ത അവസരങ്ങളിലോ, മറ്റൊരുമകിലും കാരണത്താൽ മുറപെണ്ണിനെ കല്യാണം കഴിക്കാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത അവസരങ്ങളിലോ മറ്റു തറവാടു കളിൽ നിന്നും വധുവിനെ സ്വീകരിച്ചിരുന്നു. വിവാഹം ഉറപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് ദൈവത്തിൽ നിന്നും സമ്മതം വാങ്ങുന്ന 'ദൈവത്തിനെ വിളിക്കൽ' ചടങ്ങ് നടത്തിയിരുന്നു. നെഗല് (പൂർവ്വികരുടെ ആത്മാവ്) ആ കല്യാണത്തിന് അനുവാദം നൽകിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ ആ പെൺകുട്ടിയെ ഒഴിവാക്കുകയും, തടസ്സം അറിഞ്ഞശേഷം, അതിനുള്ള പരിഹാര കർമ്മങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തതിന് ശേഷം കല്യാണം നടത്തുന്നു.

കല്യാണദിവസം വരന്റെ കാരണവന്മാരും മുതിർന്ന സ്ത്രീകളും പുരുഷന്മാരും വധുവിന്റെ ഇല്ലത്തിൽ (വീട്ടിൽ) കല്യാണവസ്ത്രങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് പോയി വധുവിനെ കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നു. വരന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ നിന്നും കൊണ്ടുപോകുന്ന പുടവ(മുണ്ടു)യാണ് വധുവിനെ ഉടുപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. കല്യാണപെണ്ണിനെ അണിയിച്ചൊരുക്കി പന്തലിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നു. തലയിൽ ഒരുപട്ട്¹¹ തലയ്ക്ക് മുകളിൽ ഒരു മേലാപ്പ്¹² എന്നിവ ഉണ്ടാകും. അതിന് ചുറ്റുമായി സ്ത്രീകൾ പാട്ടുപാടി നൃത്തം വെയ്ക്കുന്നു പന്തലിന് ചുറ്റും പഴുത്ത വാഴക്കുല ഉയരത്തിൽ കെട്ടിതൂക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ടാവും. പാട്ടുപാടി സ്ത്രീകൾ പഴക്കുലയിൽ നിന്നും പഴങ്ങൾ പഠിച്ചെടുക്കുകയും. താഴെ വീണ പഴങ്ങൾക്ക് മുകളിൽ അവർ നൃത്തം

10. കുടിലിൽ
11. ചുവന്ന തുണി
12. നീളമുള്ള തുണി

വെയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. പാട്ടും കളിയും ഏറെ നേരം നീണ്ടുനിൽക്കുന്നു. ഭക്ഷണം കഴിച്ചതിന് ശേഷം വധുവിനെയുംകൂടി വരന്റെ വീട്ടുകാർ മടങ്ങുന്നു. അതിന് മുമ്പായി 'അമ്മമുത്തച്ചിപണം'¹³ കൊടുക്കുന്നു. മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ 16 അണയായിരുന്നു അമ്മ മുത്തച്ചി പണമായി കൊടുത്തിരുന്നത്.

വിവാഹ ദിവസം വരൻ സ്വന്തം വീട്ടിൽ തന്നെയാണുണ്ടാവുക. മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ താലികെട്ടു ചടങ്ങ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. വധുവിനെ വരന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ കയറ്റുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് വരന്റെ ബന്ധുക്കളിൽപ്പെട്ട സ്ത്രീ കല്യാണപ്പെണ്ണിനെ ചുമലിൽ ഏറ്റി കത്തിച്ചുവെച്ച വിളക്കിന് ചുറ്റും വലം വെയ്ക്കുന്നു. മൂന്ന് തവണ വലം വെച്ചതിന് ശേഷം വധുവിനെ ഒരു പലകമേൽ ഇരുത്തുന്നു. കല്യാണചെറുക്കൻ (വരൻ) പന്തലിൽ തന്നെയിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടാവും. വധുവരൻമാരെ കാരണവൻമാർ അരിയും മഞ്ഞൾപൊടിയും തലയിൽ വെച്ച് അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു. അതിന് ശേഷം വധുവിനെ വീട്ടിനകത്ത് കയറ്റുന്നു. വരന്റെ വീട്ടിലും പാട്ടും കളിയും ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. കോൽക്കളിയും പാട്ടുമൊക്കെ കഴിഞ്ഞ് ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുന്നു. കല്യാണംകഴിഞ്ഞ് ഏഴാം ദിവസം ചെക്കനും കൂട്ടരും പെണ്ണിന്റെ വീട്ടിലേക്ക് വിരുന്നിനായി പോകുന്നു. ആ ദിവസം പെണ്ണിന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ താമസിച്ച് പിറ്റേദിവസം അവർ മടങ്ങുന്നു.

ബഹുഭാര്യത്വം അപൂർവ്വമായി നിലനിന്നിരുന്നു. വിധവ വിവാഹം, വിവാഹ മോചനം തുടങ്ങിയവ അനുവദനീയമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ വിവാഹ മോചനത്തിന് നെഗല്/വെളിച്ചപ്പാട് സമ്മതം കൊടുക്കണമായിരുന്നു. അന്യസമുദായങ്ങളുമായുള്ള വിവാഹബന്ധം അംഗീകരിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല. അങ്ങിനെ കല്യാണം നടന്നതായി കാരണവൻമാർ അറിഞ്ഞാൽ അവർ 'കഞ്ഞികുടി' നടത്താൻ തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നു. സമുദായത്തിൽ നിന്നും വിചാരണ ചെയ്ത് പുറംതള്ളുന്ന രീതിയായിരുന്നു ഇത്.

മരണാനന്തര ചടങ്ങുകൾ

തങ്ങളുടെ കുടുംബത്തിൽ ആരെങ്കിലും മരിച്ചാൽ ബന്ധുക്കളെ വിവരമറിയിക്കാൻ പോകുകയും ബന്ധുക്കൾ വതിന് ശേഷം മാത്രമേ ശവസംസ്കാരം നടത്തുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. ബലിയിടുന്ന പതിവ് ഇവർക്കിടയിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. ശവശരീരം മറവ് ചെയ്യുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് എണ്ണ തേച്ച് കുളിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. സ്ത്രീകളാണ് മരിച്ചതെങ്കിൽ കുളിപ്പിച്ചതിന് ശേഷം കണ്ണെഴുതി പൊട്ട് തൊടുവിടുകയും, കോടി മുണ്ട് ഉടുപ്പിച്ച് പായയിൽ കിടത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

വയനാട് കാടരുടെ താമസസ്ഥലത്തിനടുത്തായി 'ചുടല'¹⁴ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. മറവു ചെയ്യാനായി ഇവരുടെ ആൾക്കാർ തന്നെയാണ് കുഴി എടുത്തിരുന്നത്. ഒരാൾ താഴ്ചയിൽ കുഴികളെടുത്ത് അതിനകത്ത് മൃതദേഹം വെയ്ക്കുന്നതിനായി ഒരു അറയുണ്ടാക്കുന്നു. മൃതദേഹം തെക്ക് വടക്കായിവെച്ച് പനയോല, കമ്പുകൾ തുടങ്ങിയവ വെച്ച് മറയ്ക്കുന്നു. പിന്നീട് കുഴി മുടുകയും അതിന് മുകളിലായി ഒരു തേങ്ങ ഉടച്ചുവെക്കുന്നു. തലഭാഗത്ത് തേങ്ങാമുറിയിൽ തിരികത്തിച്ചുവെയ്ക്കുന്നു. പുരുഷനാണ് മരിച്ചതെങ്കിൽ ശവമടക്കിയതിന് ശേഷം മുകളിൽ അമ്പ്കുത്തിവെയ്ക്കുന്നു. സ്ത്രീയാണ് മരിച്ചതെങ്കിൽ കുഴിക്ക് മുകളിൽ അരിവാൾ വെയ്ക്കുന്നു. പുതിയൊരു മൺപാത്രത്തിൽ വെള്ളം നിറച്ച്, തലയിൽ ഏറ്റി മരിച്ചുപോയ ആളിനെ സ്മരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഏഴ് തവണ പ്രദക്ഷിണം വെച്ച് എല്ലാവരും 'അരി ചർത്തുന്നു'.¹⁵ അതിന് ശേഷം കുടം ഉടച്ച് എല്ലാവരും ചുടലയ്ക്ക് പുറത്ത്

13. അമ്മമാർക്കും പ്രായമായ സ്ത്രീകൾക്കും വധുകൊടുക്കുന്ന പണം
14. മൃതദേഹങ്ങൾ മറവു ചെയ്യുന്ന സ്ഥലം
15. അരി എറിയുന്നു.

കടക്കുന്നു. ശവമടക്കിയ ദിവസം ‘ചുടലക്കാളി’¹⁶ അവിടെ കാണുമെന്ന് അവർ കരുതുന്നു.

ശവമടക്കിയ ശേഷം പുഴയിൽ കുളിച്ച് ശുദ്ധിയായിവരുന്നു. കുളി കഴിഞ്ഞ് കത്തിച്ച് വെച്ച വിളക്കിനെ വന്ദിച്ചാണ് വീട്ടിൽ കയറുന്നത്. ആ ദിവസം ആരും ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കാറില്ല. പതിനാറ് ദിവസം ‘പൊല’¹⁷ ഉണ്ടാവും. 16 ാം ദിവസം അടിയന്തിരം നടത്തുന്നു. അന്ന് വീടും പരിസരവും ശുദ്ധിയാക്കി എണ്ണതേച്ച് കുളിച്ച് എല്ലാവരും വരുന്നു. ചങ്ങാതി തറവാട്ടിലെ ആൾക്കാരാണ് എണ്ണകൊണ്ടുവരേണ്ടത്. പുല തീരുതിന് മുമ്പായി ആരും എണ്ണതേച്ച് കുളിക്കുവാൻ പാടില്ല എന്ന നിയമമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

മരണപ്പെട്ടതിന്റെ 16ാം നാളാണ് മരിച്ച വ്യക്തി കാരണവൻമാരുമായി കൂടുന്നതെന്നാണ് ഇവരുടെ വിശ്വാസം. അടിയന്തിര ദിവസം ഇവർ സദ്യ നടത്തുന്നു. അന്നേ ദിവസം മീനോ ഇറച്ചിയോ വേണമെന്ന് നിർബന്ധമായിരുന്നു. തറവാട്ടിലെ കാരണവരാണ് മരിച്ചതെങ്കിൽ അടിയന്തിരത്തിനു ശേഷം ദൈവത്തെ/നെഗലിനെ വിളിച്ച് അവർ പുതിയ കാരണവൻമാരെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നു. അതിന് ശേഷം പുതിയ കാരണവരുടെ കീഴിലാണ് കാര്യങ്ങളൊക്കെ നടത്തിയിരുന്നത്.

വിശ്വാസങ്ങൾ

വയനാട് കാടരുടെ കുലദൈവം കരിയാത്തനാണ്. കരിയാത്തനെ കൂടാതെ കാളി, മലക്കാരി, ഭഗവതി തുടങ്ങിയ മലദൈവങ്ങളേയും ആരാധിച്ചുവരുന്നു. മരിച്ചുപോയ കാരണവൻമാരെ നെഗലായി സങ്കല്പിച്ച് ഇവർ കൊണ്ട് നടക്കുന്നു. മല ദൈവങ്ങളെ കൂടിയിരുത്തിയ തറയെ ‘തടങ്ങായി’ എന്നാണ് പറയുന്നത്. തടങ്ങായിൽ പാലുള്ള മരങ്ങളായ പാല, പ്ളാഡ്, അരയാൽ എന്നിവ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. ഒരു തറവാട്ടിൽ ഒരു തടങ്ങായിയാണുണ്ടാവുക.

മലക്കാരിയേയും കരിയാത്തനേയും കൊണ്ടുനടക്കുന്നത് വയനാട് കാടരും കുറിച്ചുരുമാണ്. മലക്കാരിക്ക് വേണ്ടിയുള്ള പൂജാകർമ്മങ്ങൾനടത്തുന്നതും ഇവരാണ്. ഈ കർമ്മങ്ങൾ നടത്താനായി ഇവരിൽ ചിലർ കോമരമായി¹⁸ നിൽക്കുന്നു. മലക്കാരിയെ കൂടിയിരുത്തിയ കാവുകളിൽ കോമരം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കും. മലക്കാരിയെ കൂടിയിരുത്തിയ കാവുകളിൽ കോമരം തുള്ളാനായി കാടരെ വിളിക്കുന്നത് പതിവാണ്. പ്രായം ചെന്ന കാരണവന്മാരാണ് വെളിച്ചപ്പാടായി പോകുന്നത്. വെളിച്ചപ്പാട് പട്ടുടുത്ത് വാളും പിടിച്ച് ഉറഞ്ഞുതുളളുന്നു.

വർഷത്തിലൊരിക്കൽ കുുംഭമാസത്തിൽ ‘വെച്ചുട്ട്’¹⁹ നടത്താറുണ്ട്. തടങ്ങായിൽ കരിയാത്തന് ഇളനീർകുല, മലക്കാരിക്ക് ഇറച്ചിയും മീനും നെഗലിന് ചോറും കറിയും വെച്ച് വിളമ്പുന്നു. എല്ലാവരും ശുദ്ധിയായി വന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. ഈ സമയം കാരണവർക്ക് നെഗല് കൂടുകയും അവർ ഉറഞ്ഞുതുളളി കൽപന പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. കർക്കിടക വാവ്, തുലാം പത്ത്, അസുഖം വരുമ്പോൾ, വേട്ടയ്ക്ക് പോകുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ്, തുടങ്ങിയ അവസരങ്ങളിലായിരുന്നു. ഇവർ ദൈവത്തെ വിളിക്കൽ നടത്തിയിരുന്നത്. ഇതിനായി തേങ്ങ, മലർ, അരി, വെറ്റില, അവൽ, പഴം, അടക്ക, നാണയതുട്ടുകൾ തുടങ്ങിയവ ആവശ്യമായിരുന്നു. കാരണവർ തേങ്ങയും അരിയും മറ്റു സാധനങ്ങളും വെച്ച് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. പ്രാർത്ഥന നീണ്ടുപോകുമ്പോൾ കാരണവരിൽ നെഗല് വന്നു ചേരുന്നു.

- 16. മലദൈവം
- 17. അശുദ്ധി
- 18. വെളിച്ചപ്പാട്
- 19. ദൈവത്തിന് കൊടുക്കൽ

കാരണവർ കൂടുംബത്തിനുള്ള വിഷമങ്ങൾക്ക് പരിഹാരം നിർദ്ദേശിച്ച് കൂടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾക്ക് അനുഗ്രഹം നൽകുന്നു. അൽപ സമയത്തിന്ശേഷം കാരണവർ സാധാരണ നില കൈവരിക്കുന്നു.

സാമൂഹ്യ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ

വയനാട് കാടരുടെ ഗോത്രസവിശേഷതകൾ നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന ജീവിത രീതിയിലും ആചാരാനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളിലും വളരെയേറെ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സംഭവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇന്ന് ഈ ജനവിഭാഗം അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന പ്രധാന പ്രശ്നം ജനസംഖ്യപരമായ കുറവാണ്. 1947 ൽ മദ്രാസ് ഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ 'പ്രാക്തന' ഗോത്രവർഗത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന വയനാട് കാടരെ 2002 ലെ പട്ടികജാതി പട്ടികവർഗ ഭരണഘടന ഭേദഗതിയുടെ ഭാഗമായി കേരളത്തിലെ പട്ടികവർഗ ലിസ്റ്റിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ നീണ്ടകാലം യാതൊരുവിധ സഹായങ്ങൾ ലഭിക്കാത്തതിനാലും വയനാട്ടിലേക്കുള്ള വ്യാപകമായ കുടിയേറ്റവും വനനിയമങ്ങളും വികസന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും കാരണം വയനാട് കാടർക്ക് തങ്ങളുടെ ഗോത്രജീവിതക്രമം നിലനിർത്താൻ കഴിയാതെയായി. ഇന്ന് ഇവരിൽ ഭൂരിഭാഗം ആളുകളും കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളികളാണ്. നാമമാത്രമായി ചെറുകിട കർഷകരും ഉണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ഏറെപ്പേർക്കും പട്ടയം ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. ഭൂമി അന്യായീനപ്പെട്ടതിന്റെ രേഖകൾ ഇവരുടെ കൈവശമുണ്ട്.

ഇവരുടെ വിവാഹരീതികളിൽ കാര്യമായ മാറ്റം വന്നിരിക്കുന്നു. അന്യസമുദായങ്ങളുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം കാരണം താലികെട്ട് ഇവരുടെ പ്രധാന ആചാരമായി മാറി. മുൻകാലങ്ങളിൽ നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന പെൺപണ സമ്പ്രദായത്തിന് പകരമായി സ്ത്രീധന സമ്പ്രദായവും ഇവർ അംഗീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. മാതൃദായക്രമം നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന ഈ വിഭാഗം ഇന്ന് പിതൃദായക്രമമാണ് തുടർന്നുവരുന്നത്. കൂട്ടു കൂടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥ തകരുകയും അണുകൂടുംബ വ്യവസ്ഥയിലേക്ക് മാറുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അന്യസമുദായവുമായുള്ള വിവാഹബന്ധം ഇവരുടെ മതപരമായ വിശ്വാസത്തിലും കാര്യമായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വരുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇവരുടെ ആചാരങ്ങളെല്ലാം ഹൈന്ദവ വത്കരണത്തിന് വിധേയമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. മുൻപ് തുടർന്നുവന്നിരുന്ന മലദൈവ വിശ്വാസം ഇല്ലാതായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയും ഹൈന്ദവ ഭക്ഷത്രങ്ങളെയും ആരാധന മുർത്തികളെയും ഇവർ ആരാധിച്ചു വരികയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

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പുസ്തക നിരൂപണം

“ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസി കോരിഡോറിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്നത്” - കെ. സഹദേവൻ

പി പി സുധാകരൻ*

ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസികളുടെ ജീവിതത്തെ കൃത്യമായ വർഗ്ഗബോധവും ചരിത്ര വീക്ഷണവും കൂട്ടിക്കലർത്തി എഴുതിയ ജീവചരിത്രപ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള രചനയാണ് ‘ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസി കോരിഡോറിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്നത്’ എന്ന പുസ്തകം. ഗ്രന്ഥകാരനായ കെ. സഹദേവൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ 30 വർഷം ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസി ജീവിതത്തെ സൂക്ഷ്മ നിരീക്ഷണം നടത്തുകയും അവരിൽ ഒരാളായി ജീവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തതിന്റെ അനന്തര ഫലമായിട്ടാണ് പുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ രചനതന്നെ സംഭവിച്ചത്.

ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ആധിപത്യത്തിന് മുമ്പും ആധിപത്യകാലത്തും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യപൂർവ്വ ഇന്ത്യയിലും ആദിവാസി ജീവിതത്തിനു സംഭവിച്ച മാറ്റങ്ങൾ വസ്തുനിഷ്ഠമായിതന്നെ ലേഖകൻ ഇതിൽ പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സ്വാശ്രയ-സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് മാനസിക കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകളുള്ള ജനവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ ഇടയിൽ മുതലാളിത്ത-ഉപഭോഗ സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ആധിപത്യം അവനെ അടിമത്തത്തിലേക്ക് നയിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത് വ്യക്തമാക്കപ്പെടുകയാണ്.

ഇന്ത്യൻ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമര ചരിത്രത്തിലെ അറിയപ്പെടാത്ത അധ്യായങ്ങൾ തുറന്നു തരുന്ന പുസ്തകവും കൂടിയാണിത്. ആദിവാസിമേഖലകളിൽ നടന്ന കൊളോണിയലി സത്തിനെതിരെയുള്ള പോരാട്ടവും അതിന് നേതൃത്വം നൽകിയ ധീരദേശാഭിമാനികളുടെ ചരിത്രവും ഒരു പക്ഷെ വാമൊഴിയായി നശിച്ച് പോകുമായിരുന്നു. പ്രസ്തുത ചരിത്രത്തെ പുറം ലോകമറിയുന്ന വരമൊഴിയിലൂടെ ചരിത്രമാക്കി മാറ്റാനും ഗ്രന്ഥകാരന് കഴിഞ്ഞു.

സ്ത്രീസ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം ഹനിക്കപ്പെടുകയും അതിക്രമത്തിനിരയാകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന വർത്തമാന കാലത്ത് സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് തുല്യപദവി ലഭിക്കുന്ന ആദിവാസി സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ കഥ ഏറെ പ്രചോദനമാണ്. ആദിവാസി മേഖലയിലെ സാമൂഹിക ക്രമങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് - സാമ്പത്തിക അവസ്ഥയെക്കുറിച്ച് ഗൗരവമായ പഠനമാണ് ഈ പുസ്തകം നൽകുന്നത്. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ 70-ാം വാർഷികം ആഘോഷിക്കുമ്പോഴും ദളിത്-ആദിവാസി ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അടിച്ചമർത്തലുകളും പ്രക്ഷോഭങ്ങളും ഗൗരവത്തിലെ ഊനയിലും ഹരിയാനയിലും നാം കണ്ട് കഴിഞ്ഞതാണ്. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനന്തര ഭാരതത്തിൽ പോലും ആദിവാസികളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ കാര്യമായ പുരോഗതി വരാതിരിക്കാനുള്ള കാരണത്തെ പുസ്തകത്തിൽ സവിസ്തരം പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന് മുമ്പും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനന്തരവും ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസി മേഖലകളിൽ നടപ്പിലാക്കിയ നിയമപരിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾ ആദിവാസി ജീവിതത്തെ സ്വന്തം വാസസ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് കൂടിയിറക്കപ്പെട്ടതിന്റെ കണ്ണീരിന്റെ കഥ കൂടിയാണ്. പ്രകൃതിവിഭവങ്ങളുടെ ചൂഷണത്തിനായുള്ള മുതലാളിത്തത്വരയുടെ രക്തസാക്ഷികളായി ആദിവാസി ജീവിതങ്ങൾ മാറി. വൻകിടപദ്ധതികൾക്ക് വേണ്ടി കൂടിയൊഴിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ആദിവാസികളുടെ ഔദ്യോഗിക കണക്കുകളുടെ പൊള്ളത്തരം ഈ പുസ്തകത്തിലൂടെ വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. അവരെ പുനരധിവാസിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനോ ജീവിതം കരുപ്പിടിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനോ വേണ്ട ഒരു പ്രവർത്തനവും ഭരണകൂടത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗത്ത് നിന്ന് ഉണ്ടാകുന്നില്ല എന്നതിന്റെ ഭീദിതമായ അവസ്ഥയും പുസ്തകം വരച്ച് കാട്ടുന്നു. വൻകിട പദ്ധതികൾക്കെതിരെ ആദിവാസി വിഭാ

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ഗങ്ങൾ ഒന്നിച്ച് നടത്തിയ പോരാട്ടത്തിന്റെയും പോരാട്ട വിജയത്തിന്റെയും കഥകൾ കൂടിയാണ് 'ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ആദിവാസി കോറിയോറിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്നത്' എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിലൂടെ കെ. സഹദേവൻ തുറന്നിടുന്നത്.

ജാതി-മത ബന്ധങ്ങൾക്ക് സാമൂഹികജീവിതത്തിൽ വലിയപ്രാധാന്യം കൽപ്പിക്കാത്ത ആദിവാസി ജീവിതത്തെ മതവൽക്കരിക്കുന്നതിന് നടത്തുന്ന ശ്രമങ്ങളെ ലേഖകൻ അപഗ്രഥിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ആദിവാസി മേഖലകളെ ഹൈന്ദവത്കരിക്കുന്നതിനും വർഗ്ഗീയവൽക്കരിക്കുന്നതിനും നടത്തുന്ന ശ്രമങ്ങളെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യകതയും പ്രത്യേകം ഏടുത്തുപറയുന്നു.

GDP യിൽ രാജ്യപുരോഗതിയുടെ കണക്കുകൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച് സൂപ്പർ പവർ രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെ പട്ടികയിൽ ഇടം പിടിക്കാൻ ഭരണാധികാരികൾ വെമ്പൽ കൊള്ളുന്ന വർത്തമാനകാലത്ത് ഇന്ത്യയിലെ 8 ശതമാനത്തിലധികം വരുന്ന ആദിവാസി-ഗോത്ര ജീവിതത്തിന് സംഭവിക്കുന്ന മാറ്റങ്ങൾ പഠനവിധേയമാക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. പ്രകൃതിയെ നശിപ്പിച്ച് ഉപഭോഗവസ്തുവായി മാത്രം കാണുന്ന മുതലാളിത്ത നശീകരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെയുള്ള ഒഴുക്കാണ് പ്രകൃതിസംരക്ഷണം ജീവിതചര്യയാക്കി മാറ്റിയ ഗോത്രവിഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ ജീവിതം എന്ന് ഈ പുസ്തകം നമ്മെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ഈ മേഖലയിൽ തുടർപഠനം നടത്തുന്നവർക്ക് തീർച്ചയായും ഈ പുസ്തകം പ്രചോദനം നൽകും.

