and hence could have arisen due to change this analysis supports of null hypothesis of no in sample means. SO the Hypothesis is accepted.

i.e. There is a close association between the Freedom for Young Men and Women to Choose their Partners - Educational status

Hypothesise 1
Paniyas are one of the ancient homogenous tribal communities of South India. They belong to the Dravidian family.

This hypothesis is also accepted based on the findings from the table nos. 2.2.; 2.3.; 2.4.; 2.5.; 2.6.; 3.1.; 3.4.; 4.4.

Hypothesise 2
They have their own social life, customs and culture traditionally.
This hypothesis is also accepted based on the findings from the table nos. 5.7; 5.9; 5.11; 5.17; 5.18; 5.19; 6.5.

Chapter VIII
Conclusion, Findings and Recommendations

8.1. Conclusion
The researcher has been studying on the topic ‘Customs, Culture and Religion of Paniya Tribe and their Social Change’ for the last six years. The
objectives and the hypothesis of this study have been carried out successfully and it was proved to be correct. The personal experience with the Paniya people in the field study helped the researcher to understand some of their origin, development, culture, customs, religion, social changes, basic problems and challenges. Some of their present day’s problems which they are facing have been identified as landlessness, health problem, educational backwardness, unhygienic surrounding, population issues, exploitations, water problems, indebtedness, alcoholism, family issues, child labour, social discrimination, etc. The practical knowledge which the researcher gained through this study helped him to suggest some practical guideline for their improvement and upliftment. Generally they are being categorised them under socially, economically and educationally backward community. Some of their traditional culture and values indeed has surprised the researcher. This study helped the researcher to work on the various issues and challenges faced by their tribe in these days.

8.2. Major Findings

The followings are some of the major findings that the researcher observed through this study.

- The Paniyas are one of the ancient, homogeneous Dravidian tribe of South India. They have their own customs, culture and religion.
- They are socially organized under the leadership of *muppen* in their settlements, who is the ruler; and they are also organized into different clans or *kulam*. All the members of the tribe are expected to respect and value the traditions and customs.
- Many of them are very much influenced by the modern media especially T.V. that has made a lot of changes in their lifestyle.
- Among Paniyas the literacy rate is observed as very low when compared to state level. The younger generation is found going to schools, so the literacy rate is gradually found increasing in the last few decades. It was also noted that only few are reaching to the high school level.
- They have their own language called *Paniyabhasha*, mixture of Tamil and Malayalam languages. It is found closer to Malayalam language.
• When compared with the developments taking place in the world, the developments among the Paniyas are very slow. Unfortunately most of the government’s funds for developments are not reaching to them.

• The health conditions of the Paniyas are very poor. Many of them are suffering from anemic and dangerous diseases.

• There are many socio-religious and political organizations working among the Paniyas for their welfares.

• The status of the women is lowered in the recent years. It has resulted into many kinds of sufferings, discriminations, sexual harassments and exploitations, child labor, ill-treatments in the family and in the society.

• Paniyas are suffering from various kinds of social oppressions and exploitations. (economic, employment, educational, land, health, sexual, etc)

• Most of their traditional thatched houses are replaced with tiled and concrete roof houses by the different schemes and projects of the Government.

• Most of the people are having mud floor, they are comfortable with mud floor than cement floor. It was observed that some houses have tiled, asbestos and concrete roof but have mud flooring. Most of them feel mud flooring is better, cool and clean.

• It was observed that most of their houses are electrified according to the available records; unfortunately the power cut is there most of the time, very rarely power will be there. The concerned officers just give them electricity connection only to fulfil the Government records.

• It was observed that there is no toilet facility for most of the people. The Government agencies have built and given them public toilets in every settlement. Unfortunately there is no proper maintainance due the water problem. During the process of urbanization, the toilet facility problem is one of the major issues among them.

• It was also observed that these days majority of them are having nuclear type of family. The people feel that nuclear family is better, that it is easy to manage and maintain. The management of joint and extended
families these days are very difficult due to economic reasons, so that many are not favoring the joint and extended family system.

- It is noted that the families with 4 to 6 members are more in number.
- It was observed that majority of them are non-vegetarians. Since fishing is very common among them, they include fish and crabs in their daily food.
- Most of the people use firewood for cooking; which is the easily available fuel in their own locality itself. They go and collect the firewood from surrounding estates, fields and forests. They use it for economic reasons also.
- Mostly their ornaments are not attached with any religious faith. They wear the ornaments as part of their cultural tradition.
- It was observed that most of the breasts feeding women are not given any special diet. As a result their health is affected, both for mothers and babies. It was also noticed that only few educated and economically sound people in the colony give special care to the breast feeding women. They are given milky fruits, Papaya, yethakaya (kind of banana).
- Majority of them get married by love marriage. This may be due to the influence of the cinema, T.V. and other media.
- Most of the boys among the Paniyas get married between 21 and 25 years. It was observed that traditional customs are gradually changing due to the education and other awareness programs of NGO.
- Most of the girls among the Paniyas get married between 16 to 20 years. Traditional customs are gradually changing due to the education and other developments among them.
- Majority of them get married to their own tribe, only in rare cases, they marry with others. For this reason the community is mostly homogenous in its nature.
- It can be observed that the traditional way of mate selection is changing. Mostly the young men or women choose their own life partner. This reveals the influence of modernism on the Paniya society.
• It can be visibly noticed how much of the influence of Hinduism is on the Paniya community. In their traditional religion they are not following horoscope and astrology, but in the present day there are many who follow the horoscope and astrology. Majority of the people consider the family status in selecting the mate.

• It was observed that, mostly Paniyas conduct the marriage in their own house or in the house premises. The priest comes to the house and conducts the marriage. Since they don’t have established temple in all settlements, most of them conduct the rituals in their home itself.

• It is a notable feature that even now most of them are not practicing the dowry system.

• It can be observed that even now most of them are not practicing the bride price system. There are some who are still follow the tradition, they continue to practice bride price. It was found that this custom is vanishing from them gradually.

• It was observed that most of the Paniyas bury the dead body. Some practice the cremation only because of the influence or to please their Hindu masters or landlords with whom they are working or depending.

• It was observed that most of them believe that the reason for the sickness is due to violating the rules of nature. There are also people in the community who believe that sickness is due to the work of the evil spirits and breaking the taboo.

• It was observed that majority of the sick go to the hospital when they are affected by the sickness. There are also people who consult priest, medium and medicine man for sickness.

• It was observed that majority of them live in their own land where they have their own houses. Mostly the land is given by the Government, is about 3 to 5 Cents. It was also observed that only few people have their own agricultural land.

• It was observed that only few come to the level of P.D.C. / P.U.C., many dropouts due to various reasons.
• Most of the respondents have realized that formal education has direct link with socio-economic development. It was also observed that the people without formal education are been cheated and exploited by others.
• one of the major reasons for the drop outs is that their schools are far away from the colony.
• Most of them are living below poverty line. Generally their monthly income is between Rs. 500-1000. One of the main reasons for it is their irregular job.
• They have their own and exclusive religion with all its religious features, beliefs and practices.
• Paniya’s family, economy, relationships, arts, welfare, developments, politics, etc. are centered on their religious beliefs and practices.
• It was observed that majority of the Paniyas follows Paniya – Hindu religion. In this religion the elements of both Paniya and Hindu religion are found.
• It was observed that the socio-economic standards of the people who are converted to the other religious faith have remarkably improved. In the other religious faith there is much emphasis on education that may be a possible reason for this transformation.
• It was observed from the analysis of the primary data, that most of the people have converted to the new religion, are found to be very much satisfied and happy.
• It was observed that Paniya language has no script of their own, not many written books in their language. For this reason many of them are illiterate. Most of them use the state language as their language of education.
• Majority of them said that their festivals are associated with some kind of myths which are widely spread among them.
• It was observed that majority of them have undergone Sanskritisation, as a result of this there are number of Hindu influences found among their customs and culture.
• Paniya community is under the pressure and process of modernization and other influences. Their traditional customs, cultures and religions are found drastically changing.
• Some of the major factors of social changes are: religion, politics, philosophy, modernism, education, contextual issues and economic standard.
• It was observed that the major social problems among them are alcoholism. Most of the men get drunk in the evenings; and a good part of their income is being spent for drinking.

8.3. Recommendations

The followings are the some of the recommendation which the researcher has made on the basis of the study made on the topic ‘Customs, Culture and Religion of Paniya Tribe and their Social Change’. Through the study the researcher analysed the various factors and overall developments of the Paniya tribe in Kannur District of Kerala and the Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu. The following are some of the suggestion to enhance the living situations of Paniyas.

8.3. 1. Land for the Landless

Paniyas are generally termed as uneducated landless slave/ bonded labourers. Most of them are involved traditionally in the agriculture related works. Among them only 1.2 % are only having own land to do agricultural works, 69.1% of them are working in somebody’s land, not in their own land, 29.3% of them involved in other works (Data Highlight: The Scheduled Tribes Census of India 2001). Since most of the Paniyas have excellent traditional knowledge in agricultural matters, if they get their own land, surely they can cultivate vegetables, crops and other commercial trees like rubber, cashew nut, coconut etc. It is also a need that they must be given modern technological and scientific knowledge of cultivation. In this way they will be able to develop economically and socially. As several Governments came in to the power one after another, promising to allot agricultural land for the
tribals, it is still an unfulfilled dream for many of them. This is the only way to remove the poverty and exploitation from them. If the government provide at least 1 acre cultivatable land for each family, they will be able to cultivate and be self supporting. It was observed, in the present day many of them own only 1 or 2 or 3 cents of land where they have their home also.

8.3. 2. Employment Opportunities

Some of the traditional jobs of Paniyas are basket making, fishing, hunting, trees cutting, etc. These works have no much demand in these days as industries and modern equipments have replaced them. They also run short of the raw-materials for their traditional industries. Many Paniya youngsters are not getting the right job according to their skills. At this juncture the Government has to take necessary steps to provide employment opportunities for them. Some of the items which they produce have no market; there are also middle man’s exploitations. In this regard government and other social organizations has to make schemes and plans to find proper marketing, even to export some of their arts and handicraft items. This will surely help them to come out of their poverty and economical backwardness. Government must create some employment opportunity for them according to their traditionally inherited skills and talents.

8.3. 3. Improve Transport and Communication Facility

As many of their colonies are situated in remote places where they lack proper infrastructures and transport facilities. They have to depend on the nearby cities for anything and everything. Most of the places transportation and communication is an issue. They have to go to the near by town for medical, educational and any governmental assistance purpose. Lack of transport infrastructures and communication facilities also limit their knowledge of rights and benefits. In this way most of them are not aware and able to enjoy the rights and benefits. This causes them to deny the chances for good job, education and medical care. So it is an essential need that government and other social organizations look in to this matter to help and improve the road transport and communication facilities of their colony.
8.3. 4. Improve Basic Amenities

Paniyas generally do not worry about any such global issues or political issues, but they are only concerned about their survival issues such as housing, food and clothing. Once they were slaves under Janmis (Landlords) never had greed to acquire land or properties. They enjoyed whole forest and land, in the later period when Janmis sold the land in to the pieces to the migrants of south side, Paniyas were pushed in to colonies where 15 to 25 families lived in small places where they lack all basic amenities. Though Government provides many schemes for their basic needs unfortunately these are not becoming 100% reality for them. In this regard Government and NGOs should entrust on trustworthy organization in giving contract work for their development. If Paniya young men and women are trained in, house construction, they will be able to build houses for themselves.

8.3. 5. High Emphasis on Education

The literacy rate of Paniyas in Kerala is 49.5% against the state level of S.T. 30.7%. In Tamil Nadu the literacy rate of Paniya is 18.79% against the state level of S.T. 41.53%. Most of the paniyas are living in various kinds of deprivities (social, economical and political). Education is the only key solution which helps them to overcome all of these deprivities. Education needs to be highly emphasized among the Paniyas. More tribal schools, residential schools and industrial training schools need to be opened. Many Paniya children dropout from their schooling for the only reason of distance to the school and economic backwardness. It was also observed that one of the reasons for dropouts from the school is language issue, that they are forced to learn a foreign language which is Tamil or Malayalam even from the primary level. It is important to introduce Paniyabhasha as a teaching and learning language at least in the primary level. It is a difficult task to teach Paniya children, therefore the teachers also need to be given a special orientation. The teachers should be familiar with some of their cultural and social symbols of expressions.
When compared with the population and educational challenges of Paniyas, the openings and opportunities are very limited. So it is the need of the hour that both Government and NGOs should give strong emphasis on the educational development of the Paniyas. Since education is the root cause of all developments. In the public schools the Paniya children also face discriminations on the basis of colour, caste and economical status. So it is important to have school for Paniyas or tribals alone.

8.3. 6. Improve the Health Facilities

Most of the Paniyas are living in the below the poverty line, for this reason they are not getting the rich protein food items. They also live in an unhygienic atmosphere in the settlements as a result many of them suffer from various kinds of diseases and anaemic problems. Though there are several organizations working among them still there is no satisfactory development in their health related problems. There are many in the colonies addicted to bad habits such as alchoholism, drugs, smoking and chewing tobacco. This causes several diseases among them. There is a great need for good health service and awareness programmes among them. This can surely bring about a great transformation among them. There are many health clinics in their localities, but no sufficient doctors, medicines and medical facilities some of them are not approachable to the ordinary people. In some places the health centres and hospitals are very far from their settlement. It is a need of the hour to establish more health centres near to their dwelling place. It is also important to select, train and send tribal health workers to their area where they can make remarkable contribution to their own communities.

8.3. 7. Water Scarcity

Most of their colonies are affected by the water scarcity problem in the summer seasons. In some places they have to walk 1 or 2 kilometres to fetch water. In some places there is no drinking water facility, which also causes
several kinds of diseases. In some of their colonies there are bore-wells which are not in working condition, open wells are dugout but not maintained properly. There are natural water sources in some of their colonies which need to be cleaned and used profitably to the colonies. It is one of the important needs to make available drinking water facility in all their colonies.

8.3. 8. Conduct Community Awareness Programmes

Indian constitution guarantees so many rights to all citizens. Unfortunately Paniyas are not aware of their rights, for this reason they are suffering from various problems. They are being exploited, oppressed, suppressed and deprived. In this context there is a great need of social, health and constitutional awareness programme to be conducted among the Paniyas. This can be organized by arranging meetings, seminars and discussion classes on such issues which they are facing.

8.3.9. Government’s Direct Involvement in all Developmental Programmes

At present all developmental programmes are entrusted in the hands of middle man and contractors. They swallow much of the funds allotted for the community development. The work they do are also sub-standard. In this regard the researcher’s suggestion is to find out capable people from their own community and to train and involve them in the developmental activities of the Government.

8.3. 10. Developmental Plans Must be Planned According to the Local Context

The schemes and plans for the colonies are decided in the government offices and collectrates. Some of them may not be very relevant or applicable in the local situations. Because Paniya problems in all the colonies are not the
same. One should not ignore the fact that there are some local problems which will be faced specifically by the people of the particular colony. So the Government officers should plan the developmental programmes of a particular colony with the involvement of the tribal leaders of that colony.

8.3. 11. Self-Supported Projects and Schemes

A Chinese proverb says ‘If we give them fish everyday we have to give them a fish all their lives, but if you teach them to catch fish, they themselves will catch fish’. In the same way it is important to give them skills to stand on their own. It can be done by providing work opportunities, introducing micro finance, giving training to develop poultry farm or cattle farm or modern agricultural methods which will help them to support themselves and live. In order to create self-employment opportunities and enable the Paniyas to get into jobs, there is a great need to give training in vocational skills like computer application, house keeping, nursing, poultry, cattle farming, agro-service centre, hotel management and catering, fitter and plumbing, metal workers, veterinary workers, beautician, dietician, fashion designing, tailoring, carpentry, stone carving, etc. This will surely help them as many of them are unemployed because of their traditional jobs that have no place in the modern society.

8.3. 12. Encourage Tribal Medicines, Arts and Handicraft items

Traditionally they have valuable medicinal, arts and handicraft knowledge, which is being vanished away since there is no appreciation from the governmental authority and our people groups. Some of their products need to find proper marketing and its values need to be propagated among the people. Traditional medicinal knowledge of Paniyas are very valuable. These medicines need to be popularised and commercialized. So that there can be economical development. These medicines can be produced in large scale with the help of modern technology. Their medicinal knowledge need to be transferred to the next generation.
8.3. 13. Women Empowerment

The present days Paniya women are treated as subordinate to men. Mostly women are the sufferers among the Paniya community. They have the family burdens on their shoulders such as feeding the children, going for work and gathering food items. Men mostly drink and beat their wives and lead an irresponsible life. Giving more emphasis on women education, providing more employment opportunities, giving job oriented training, giving equal property rights along with men to women need to be considered. These may empower the status of the women in their society.

8.3. 14. Training Programme for Youth

Human power among the Paniyas is dynamic. many of their traditional jobs have no place in the modern period, it is good to gather the young men and women, give them job oriented short term trainings which will help them to stand by on their own. This will lead them in to all kinds of developments and will be able to come out of all kinds of exploitations.

8.3. 15. Effective Administration

Tribal Welfare Department needs to open offices nearby the tribal settlements for an effective administration. In this way their staff will be able to concentrate and carryout all developmental activities. So that the officers will be able to supervise the developmental activities closely.

8.3. 16. Preservation of Tribal Culture

Some of the valuable cultures and traditions of Paniyas need to be protected and preserved.

8.4. Some of the Prime concerns

The following are some of the prime concerns of the researcher regarding the overall progress of Paniyas.

• Improve the standard of living
• Remove the incidences of poverty death among Paniyas
• Improve the socio-economic status through various developmental and income-generating activities
• Improve the employment opportunities for educated youth of poor families
• Improve the educational status
• Improve the living conditions
• Universalisation of primary education
• Increasing the school enrolment rate
• Reducing drop out percentage
• Improve the literacy rate: General literacy and Female Literacy
• Improve the quality of teaching so as to develop the performance in competitive examinations
• Fulfil the housing needs by reducing the gap in the provision of basic amenities
• Provide opportunity to Paniya women to form Self Help Group
• Improving the health and nutritional status, Strengthening the basic amenities and infrastructural facilities in the SC and ST habitations
• Creating awareness on the schemes and their benefits