

## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF PANIYA TRIBE

To get a clear idea of the socio-economic conditions of the tribals, a primary survey including 270 Paniya tribal households from Pulpally and Mullankolly villages of Sulthan Bathery taluk was carried out. In order to compare the human development of the tribals with the non-tribals, 100 households from the non-tribals were also taken. The sample families had 2430 members. Among this, 1870 were tribals and remaining 560 were non-tribals. This chapter discusses the demographic particulars pertaining to tribal families especially their market behaviour, work participation and sociological aspects.

Mainly five tribal communities have their origin in Wayanad. The Paniya tribe is numerically the largest among them. They are the largest scheduled tribes of Kerala also. They are mainly settled in Wayanad. A few of them are found in Malappuram, Kozhikode and Palakkad districts. The majority of the Paniya tribal population (71.95%) are found in Wayanad alone.<sup>1</sup> Even though Paniyas form the leading tribal community in Wayanad, they are the most backward in every respect. They are the downtrodden group holding very little land and having little amenities of life. Taking into account the various socio-economic indicators, Paniya tribe can be considered to be a better representation of the tribal population of Kerala. Hence we have taken Paniya tribe as the main focus of this study.

## 7.1 Paniyas

The etymological meaning of the term 'Paniya' indicates that they earn their livelihood from labour as the term 'Pani' in Malayalam means 'labour'. Thus the word 'Paniya' literally means 'labourer' or worker.<sup>2</sup>

### *i) Physical Appearance*

The colour of the Paniyas varies from dark to dark-brown. Thurston observes that they are 'dark skinned tribe, short in stature, with broad noses and curly or wavy hair'. They speak a debased form of Malayalam mixed with Tamil words.<sup>3</sup>

### *ii) Sub- divisions*

The Paniyas have two-sub division according to their dwelling pattern- Paniyas of the plain land having contact with own tribal people and those living in interior forests. The latter group is mainly found in Nilambur forests of Malappuram district.

### *iii) Dress*

Normally the Paniya settlements (padis) may be a cluster of a few huts (pire or chala consisting of five to 15 families). The dress of Paniya is simple and easily distinguishable from that of the other tribal communities. The males wear a long cloth (mundu) which is wrapped around the waist and a small mundu on the shoulders covering the body. The Paniya women (panichi) wear a long

cloth and a smaller one above the bosom through the ampits. A coloured scarf either red or black which they call 'aratti' is tied around the waist of woman.

#### *iv) Food*

Traditionally Paniyas were food-gatherers enjoying the freedom and self sufficiency of nomadic life in the interior forests. They used edible roots, leaves etc. They also used to eat small creatures like crabs by entrapping them. Although rice is their staple food, considerable quantities of wheat or ragi are consumed by the Paniyas. Tapioca, vegetables, animal flesh, fish, crabs and some varieties of roots and tubes are all included in their food items. Besides drinking tea or coffee, they are addicted to drinking toddy and some varieties of illicit alcoholic beverages.<sup>4</sup>

#### *v) Social customs*

Ear-boring ceremony is usually performed when the child attains the age of three. Both ear-lobes of the child are pierced with sharpened bamboo needles. A mixture of ginger oil and turmeric paste is used for healing the wound.<sup>5</sup> Paniyas consider the first menstruation of a girl as an indication that she has reached the age of puberty. During this period she is considered ritually impure and is prohibited from doing household duties. On the day of attaining puberty the girl is kept confined in one corner of the hut. On the seventh day a purification ceremony is observed.

*vi) Marriage customs*

The most common form of marriage among the Paniyas is marriage by negotiation. Other modes of acquiring mate for a young man include marriage by elopement and marriage by service. Marriage by negotiation is always accompanied by the payment of bride price by the bride groom. The initiative for entering into a marital alliance starts from the boy's side. It is a custom among the Paniya community that the husband has to make an annual subscription known as Thalapattam to his wife's parents on the Annual festival day, which is known as Uchal. If any husband fails to do so, the wife will be called back by her parents. The quantity is fixed as 30 kolagam (one kolagam is equal to 750 gram) paddy during the first year and 10 kolagam paddy in the subsequent years.

*vii) Funeral Rites*

The place of burial of Paniyas is usually near their padi. Mourning is observed by the members of bereaved family for seven days. The mourner (Noombukkaran) in the house is supposed to perform the rituals on the seventh day. He is not permitted either to take bath or eat fish or meat, during the customary mourning period. A ritual called 'Eyampula kayikkal' is performed on the seventh day.

*viii) Religion*

'Kuttichathan', 'Kuliyar', 'Kattu Bhagavathi' or 'Kali', 'Malakkar',

'Mariyamma' and 'Ayyappan' are the chief god and goddesses of Paniyas. Paniyas give offerings to their gods during rituals and festive occasions. They observe a number of festivals in different seasons. Some of these festivals are exclusively their own whereas some others are those which are regionally spread throughout the State. Onam and Vishu are also being celebrated by them. The festival celebrated in honour of 'Mariyamma' is conducted during the month 'Edavam' (May-June). The annual festival in the locality, viz, 'Valliyoorkavu Ulsavam' is another important occasion for festivity.<sup>6</sup>

#### *ix) Occupation*

Paniyas are primarily agricultural labourers but very few families possess land holdings. Traditionally they were engaged in bonded-labour (Kundal pani). Now-a-days the economy of Paniyas is well-knit with that of the non-tribal settlers who control their occupational pattern and thereby influencing their economic conditions. Since they are employed for agricultural operations like sowing and harvesting only, they have to remain as unemployed for a period of 3 to 4 months. A Paniya male gets Rs. 85 per day as wage whereas Paniya female gets Rs. 50 as wage. Wage in kind, that is in the form of paddy in exchange for labour is also prevalent in some interior parts of Wayanad. Hard physical works are usually done by male members, example, ploughing, ridge making etc. Light works like weeding, harvesting are done by women. Since the wage rate is very low as compared to that of other areas in Kerala, Paniyas

continue to be victims of the vicious circle of poverty.<sup>7</sup>

*x) Indebtness*

Often debts are incurred for meeting the expenses of marriage ceremonies, death rites etc. In other words, money borrowing is the major factor behind land alienation. The Paniyas have no other alternative but to borrow money to meet expenses in connections with social obligations. Many Paniyas who were interviewed said that despite higher wages than before in agricultural operations, today they could not repay the debts to their money lenders including their traditional land lords. The prevailing custom is that the tribals have to clear off their debts before transferring their allegiance to a new patron.

*xi) Community Life*

Among the Paniyas there exists the institution of headman known as 'Chemmi' who is obeyed and respected by all the members of the community. The office of the headman operates through a hereditary principle. But in the absence of a son, daughter's husband is selected to hold the office. The Chemmi presides over the council of elders which takes decisions on important issues. Moreover, he acts as the priest particularly during marriage, funerals etc. He is authorised to settle disputes, cases of theft, quarrels, sexual offences etc. Punishment is generally inflicted upon the offender by imposing fines varying according to the nature of the offence. The traditional role of headman as the

supreme authority has weakened over the years and is now reduced to the position of presiding over communal rituals and ceremonies.

In spite of a long period of bondage, the Paniyas at present are trying to retain many aspects of their music and recreational activities. It is true that the modern recreational avenues like watching cinema have contributed to changes in the socio-economic behaviour. Changes in the consumption habits have also taken place among them due to changes in economic pursuits. Despite governmental efforts for their economic upliftment, the Paniya community still continue to 'eke' out a miserable life in the midst of ignorance, indebtedness, ill health and above all unhealthy economic practices.

## **7.2 Type of the Family**

Paniya families are broadly classified into nuclear, joint and extended. Nuclear family consists of parents with two or three children. Joint family includes parents, grand parents and children. Extended family consists of parents, grand parents, uncle, aunts, sisters, brothers, children etc.

Based on the household survey conducted, the distribution of Paniya households by the type of the family is shown in the Table 7-1.

**Table 7-1**  
**Distribution of Paniya Households by the Type of the Family**

<i>Type of the family</i>	<i>Number of households</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Nuclear	185	68.52 %
Joint family	60	22.22 %
Extended	25	9.26 %
Total	270	100 %

*Source : Sample Survey*

The Table 7-1 shows that out of the 270 households surveyed 185 families are nuclear families (68.52%). Twenty five families were interested to live in a joint family set up. It forms 22.22 percentage of the total 270. The extended family consists of only 9.26 percentage of the total household surveyed. It is observed that the majority of Paniyas prefer to live in nuclear families.

### **7.3 Family Size**

The size of the family is a crucial factor in determining the well being of each and every individual. There is a marked difference between the size of the present tribal families and those in older days.

Distribution of Paniya households by the family size are shown in the Table 7-2.

**Table 7.2****Distribution of Paniya Households by the Family Size**

<i>Family size</i>	<i>Percentage of households</i>
2 to 4	39%
4 to 6	45%
6 to 8	10%
Above 8	6%
Total	100%

*Source : Sample Survey*

The Table 7-2 shows that 39 percentage of the Paniya households have a small family size with two or three children. Forty five percentage have family size up to 8 members. Only sixteen percentage of Paniyas have big size families. It is observed that majority of the people surveyed are middle aged couples who do not have any idea of reducing the birth rate. But it was observed that newly wedded couples are aware of the need of reducing birth rate.

#### **7.4 Head of the Household**

Recent trends in migration have changed the concept of the head of the family among the Paniyas. Traditionally, there was male domination in the Paniya families. However, of late, some radical changes have taken place in the traditional headship of the family. Owing to paucity of agricultural land and several other factors, family heads often leave their parent village seasonally and migrate to the place of their work. In their absence, for a major part of the year,

female members work as head of the family. There are several such female-headed families.

Head of the household's age is considered as a determining factor of economic status. Table 7.3 shows the distribution of households according to the age of the head of the household.

**Table 7.3**

**Distribution of Paniya Households, According to the Age of the Head of the Household**

<i>Age of the head of household</i>	<i>Number of house hold</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Below 30	60	22.22 %
30 to 40	120	44.44 %
40 to 50	50	18.52 %
50 to 60	30	11.11 %
Above 60	10	3.71 %
Total	270	100 %

*Source : Sample Survey*

The Table 7-3 shows that 22 percentage of the head of the family are in the lower age group (Below 30 ). Forty four percentage of the head of the households are in the age group of 30 to 40. Eighteen percentage are in the age group of 40 to 50. It is clear that 82% of the heads of the households are in the economically active age group. Only 3.71 percentage are in the age group of above 60. From the employment point of view it is observed that majority of the

heads are hardworking.

## 7.5 Socio-Economic Indicators

Occupational mobility is considered as a major factor which provides tremendous changes in the socio-economic life of the people. The occupational distribution of Paniyas is shown in the Table 7- 4 below.

**Table 7- 4**  
**Occupational Distribution of the Paniyas**

<i>Job</i>	<i>Percentage of people</i>
Owner cultivators	-
Casual Agricultural labours	90%
Self employed and private job	6%
Government and semi- government job	4%
Total	100 %

*Source : Sample Survey*

Above Table 7-4 shows a dismal picture of the occupational distribution of Paniyas. It is observed that ninety percentage of the Paniyas are casual agricultural labourers who depends on low wages and seasonal work. Majority of Paniyas are landless. No owner cultivator could be identified among the Paniya community in the survey. Six percentage of Paniyas were employed in private sector jobs. Paniyas participation in government jobs is very meagre (4%). This may be due to their low educational standard.

## 7.6 Income

Traditionally, the tribals earn their livelihood through agriculture. A new source of income besides land is employment in government and private sectors. Very few Paniyas are technically educated and only a limited number hold good jobs. The Table 7- 5 presents the annual family income of the Paniya working classes.

**Table 7 -5**  
**Distribution of Annual Family Income**  
**of the Paniya Working Class**

<i>Job</i>	<i>Annual family income (Rs.)</i>
Casual Agricultural labourers	8900
Self employed and private job	18000
Government and semi- government servants	36000

*Source :Sample Survey*

The Table 7-5 shows that annual family income of casual agricultural labourers were Rs. 8900. It is observed that 95% of the tribal workers were casual agricultural labourers. The Rural Development Department of Kerala have conducted a tribal family survey in 1992 in order to know the percentage of tribal families in Kerala which lies below the poverty line. The methodology adopted for this classification was, those families with annual family income below Rs.11,000 were to be considered as the family which lies below the

poverty line.<sup>8</sup> In the present study, the author has defined the poverty line in the same way as the Rural Development Department did in 1992(taken 1992 as the base year). According to this classification the casual agricultural labourer's families were lies below the poverty line. The income groups above the poverty line are government and semi-government servants and private firm employee which consists a very small percentage of Paniyas.

### **7.7 Housing**

A glance at the most conspicuous indicator of socio-economic status namely habitation and housing condition would provide a better understanding of the social life of Paniyas.

It is observed that due to the proximity to the forests most of the Paniyas live in rural areas. According to the 1991 census tribals in the rural areas constitute 96.5% of the total tribal populations. In order to get a clear picture of the habitation of the tribal society, we have classified the sample household according to the habitation namely rural, remote and very remote. This classification is based on the mode of transport available to the hamlet (rural by bus, remote by jeep, and very remote by foot alone).

Distribution of Paniya households by habitation is presented in the Table 7-6.

**Table 7-6**  
**Distribution of Paniya Households by Habitation**

<i>Habitation</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Rural	10%
Remote	35%
Very remote	55%

*Source :Sample Survey*

A good portion (fifty five percentage) of the tribals have to walk a long distance from their home to town in order to meet their daily requirements. Only ten percentage of the Paniya habitation have bus facilities. As far as accommodations are concerned, it is noticed that majority of the tribals have already given up their traditional hut or caves and live in government-built or self-built small houses.

Eighty percentage of the tribal houses are government - built and 20% of them are self-built. Due to inaccessibility, government could not build houses in certain areas. Paniya houses consists of one or two rooms. Majority of the tribal houses do not have separate arrangements for kitchen. Bedroom is used for cooking also. They are not aware of the use of gas and kerosine for cooking purposes. Majority of the Paniya houses (93%) are not electrified.

## **7.8 Health and Sanitation**

Health is an important determinant of a community's living status. Health

determines the mortality rate of different groups. Generally, the tribals are not much concerned about their health in the initial stage of the disease. They seek medical treatment only in the last stage.

During the field survey, it was observed that the majority of the Paniya houses appeared to be clean. But actually the tribals do not give much care for neatness and cleanliness. They do not give any importance to their daily bath. When the researcher enquired about this, majority of them stated that due to the acute shortage of water they could not keep themselves neat and clean. They are living in their unhygienic living conditions cause allergies and other diseases.

Major diseases common among the tribals are fever, T.B., heart diseases, body pain etc. Today, they have become more interested in allopathy medicines as they are looking for fast cure from their illness. It is noticed that dysentery is common among the tribal people. According to medical practitioners, it is mainly due to the bad drinking water.

It is understood from the sample survey that water scarcity is one of the major problems faced by the Paniyas. Sixty percent of this community depend on public taps for their water requirement. Thirty percent tribals use tub wells and five percent of them have their own well. But it is found that the public taps are very far from their habitats. As a result they have to walk quite a long distance to fetch water. It is also seen that five percent of the tribals take water

from 'Kani' (small pond), where the bathing of domestic animals and washing dresses are also carried out.

Clean environment is also essential for the well-being of any society. It is noted that tribals do not possess any separate arrangements for waste disposal. Only a low percentage of the households have toilet facilities near their house. Some of them use indigenous type toilets.

Health and life expectancy are related to each other. High life expectancy is an important indicator of development. As the tribals live in an unhygienic conditions, their life expectancy is very low (Fifty years).

### **7.9 Education**

Paniyas give very little importance to education. Most of them are not yet conscious of the benefits of education and consequent economic gains. There is a feeling among the Paniyas that, after education their children will become alienated from their family when they migrate to the towns for taking employment. Moreover, they believe that the educated children are reluctant to take up their traditional occupations.

It is found that the problem of illiteracy is acute among the Paniya community. The literacy rate of Paniyas was thirty five percentage. This low literacy is considered to be the root cause of their socio-economic backwardness.

Adult literacy rate vary among the tribals. It is observed that there are very few beneficiaries of the literacy mission. Few tribal parents are concerned about the schooling of their children. Now-a-days, the drop-out-rate is also high among them. The enrolment ratio of Paniya students are shown in the Table 7-7 given below.

**Table 7-7**  
**Enrolment Ratio of Paniya Students**

<i>Classes</i>	<i>Percentage of students</i>
Kindergarten (below age group 3 to 5)	15%
Primary school (5 - 9)	65%
Secondary school (9 - 13)	15%
Higher school (13 - 15)	5%

*Source :Sample Survey*

The Table 7-7 shows that the enrolment ratio of students (5-9 age group) is very high in the case of Paniyas, but the secondary and high school enrolment ratios of students are very low. This is mainly due to the high drop out rate of tribal students.

### **7.10 Social Awareness**

Mass media is an important means of creating social awareness among people. The Table 7-8 below furnishes the details regarding the subscription/

possession / use of various media by the Paniyas.

**Table 7- 8**

**Distribution of Households According to the Possession /  
Use of Various Mass Media**

<i>Mass media</i>	<i>Possession / use of various media, Percentage of Paniya households</i>
Radio	50%
Newspaper only	10%
Newspaper and Radio	2%
Radio and T.V.	3%
Nil	35%

*Source :Sample Survey*

The Table 7-8 shows that thirty five percentage of the Paniyas do not possess or use any kind of communication media. It is noticed that a few of them possess radio, which is used mainly for hearing songs and the like and not for hearing news. Newspaper is very rare in tribal areas. Major source of social awareness is tea-shops where they spend a lot of time chatting about political and social aspects. For women, this chatting centers are neighbouring houses.

### **7.11 Decision Taking**

Decision taking on one's own can be considered to be a major indicator

of socio-economic advancement of any society. It is observed that eight percent of the sample population take self decision regarding any matter and forty percentage of them seek the help of political leaders and relatives and twenty percentage of them take decision with the help of 'samithi' which is constituted by some tribal people. We could also notice that majority of Paniya youths are not in favour of 'moopen's rule. They favour political parties, people's organisations etc.

### **7.12 Status of Women**

The social structure of the tribal society in Kerala centres around the family. In most of the tribal communities in Wayanad, Paniya in particular, the women enjoy equal social status with their menfolk. The women are the cornerstone of the social structure of tribal societies of Wayanad. The women shoulder heavy responsibilities like feeding, raising the family and maintaining social relations. When cash economy was introduced, women became the custodian of cash and controller of the household in majority of families.

### **7.13 Markets**

The traditional tribal society was predominantly a subsistence economy where people depend on the forest for their livelihood and were by and large very self sufficient. Barter economy existed there. Eventually, due to the population pressure in plains, the non-tribals forcefully evicted the tribals from their original

habitat. They were subjected to a great deal of exploitation by the non-tribals. Thus the tribals who occupied the position of the landlords in the society were brought down to the level of labourers. Even today, the products supplied by the tribals are sold out at low prices even though different types of co-operatives have been set up in tribal areas for the procurement of different commodities supplied by the tribals. The tribal people are exploited considerably in this manner too. Among the Paniya tribe of Wayanad, it is found that tribals have to buy even the basic necessities. But they purchase limited number of consumer goods for their daily use. It has been observed that government fair price shops are not sufficient to supply the commodities of minimum requirements of the tribal people. In Pulpally and Mullenkolly villages of Sulthan Bathery taluk, Wayanad, there is a flourishing consumer market for tribals and non-tribals.

In any society, there are mainly two markets : factor market and the product market.

### **7.13.1 Factor Market**

Factor market is defined as the purchase of sale of factors which are used in the production process, which constitute land, labour, capital and organisation. Let us give a brief account of the above factors.

i) *Land*

Traditionally 'land' in the wider sense has been considered as the pivotal point of the tribal economy of Kerala. However, the question of who owns the land does not arise among the tribals since land is commonly owned. In the slash and burn agriculture, each family within a tribal group used to be allocated an area by the headman, according to its needs and ability to cultivate. So long as the family remained within the tribal organisation and cultivated the plot, its occupancy or operational right over that plot remained undisputed. Thus the tribe as a whole retained the ownership right and the individual tribal family enjoyed the operational right.

The above mentioned type of an institutional arrangement was possible because land was not at all considered a limiting factor of production in the evolution of the tribal economy. Later, the tribal peasantry came to be divided broadly into two categories, viz, landed and landless. Landlessness - a problem unknown to their traditional society became a grim reality. Obviously the extent of landlessness varies from one place to another.

Distribution of Paniya households according to the possession of land is presented in the Table 7-9 below.

**Table 7-9**  
**Distribution of Paniya Households Surveyed According**  
**to the Possession of Land**

<i>Land</i>	<i>Number of households</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less than 1 Acre	80	79 %
1 to 3	30	15 %
3 to 5	10	6 %
5 to 10	-	-
10 to 15	-	-
15 above	-	-
Total	120	100 %

*Source :Sample Survey*

It is observed that out of the 270 house holds surveyed, only 120 households possess some land and 150 houses are landless. But the extent of land owned by Paniyas is very low. Among the 120 households with land, eighty households owned an extent of land varying from 5 cents to 20 cents. There is great inequality in the ownership of land holding of the non-tribals and the tribals. Fertile land is now mostly occupied by the non-tribals.

Land alienation is a serious issue faced by the tribal population. The single crucial factor attributing to this menace is non-tribal encroachment besides pledging of the land to the non-tribals to meet the credit needs of the tribals.

ii) ***Labour***

Owing to the migration to plains and the partial breaking of isolation, the Paniya have taken agriculture as their major source of livelihood.

Broadly speaking, the Paniya tribe in Wayanad lacks the motivation for occupational change. It was observed that the tribal society supplies cheap source of labour to the non-tribals.

The distribution of daily wages of Paniyas is presented in the Table 7-10 below.

**Table 7- 10**  
**Distribution of Daily Wages of Paniyas**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Daily wage (Rs).</i>
Male	85
Female	55

*Source :Sample Survey*

There is a wide difference in the wages of tribals and non-tribals and also among the male and female labourers. Paniyas in government undertakings such as plantations and traditional units also face the same problem. So long as the question of wage difference exists, there can be no improvement in the economic condition of the Paniyas.

Work participation rate gives us a clear picture of the Paniya labourers.

Distribution of Paniyas by work participation rate is presented in the Table 7-11.

**Table 7-11**

**Distribution of Paniyas by Work Participation Rate**

<i>Total work participation rate</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
30.41	42.07	35.02

*Source :Sample Survey*

It is observed that Paniya women are very hard working like their men. In the 1991 census, work participation rate of Rural Indian was 37.68%. The male and female percentages were 51.56 and 22.73 respectively. The work participation rate for total working population in Kerala was 32.05% constituting 16.90% for female and 47.81% for male.

Taking into consideration the active participation of tribal people in plantations, industries, mines etc., the government should come forward to grant them incentives to work together with the non-tribal people and provide them reasonable wages. This will help a great deal to improve their lot.

**iii) Capital**

Capital in its broad sense means, investment in different sectors of the economy. Agriculture being the main occupation of the tribal population, the major part of investment goes to this sector. The major channels of investment

are irrigation, tractors and other machines, vehicle for transport and marketing of agricultural goods and provision of modern seeds etc. It was noticed that a small percentage of tribals make investments in these areas. The majority of tribals lack funds for investment. They seldom approach the government agencies for financial assistance in order to purchase these agricultural implements as they are already in debt. It was observed from the field survey that majority of the tribals, especially the Paniyas were not aware of the incentives provided by the various agencies like Krishi Bhavan, Blocks, and the like. Hence, the government and the voluntary organisations should provide them better employment opportunities and encourage them to make investments.

**iv) *Entrepreneurship***

Entrepreneurship is an occupational enterprise taken at a personal level. It involves risk, quick decision, innovative adaptation, continuous investment and above all a temperament for profit making and development. Its genesis lies in capitalism but it is also an instrument to provide new avenues to the under developed segments of the society.

The government and the voluntary agencies as agents of development, have a crucial role in leading the tribals along the road of entrepreneurship. Though, community development programmes do bring forth agricultural development, only through better entrepreneurship can the techniques of

agriculture be changed. Self employment generation programmes like TRYSEM and EAS has imparted training to several tribals below 35 years in the field of art, craft, tool and furniture making which provides them with income and employment.<sup>9</sup>

### **7.13 .2 Product Market**

Product market is another side of market participation where by the extent of purchase and sale of final goods in the market can be determined. Paniyas in Wayanad are basically farmers and daily wage earners. The major items of production and sale are agricultural products comprising rice, maize, ragi, vegetables, spices, minor forest products and furniture made of bamboo and wood. The transaction of goods within the tribe does not occur frequently. Tribal to non-tribal transaction is widely prevalent. The main items of purchase by the non-tribals from the tribals are honey, spices, medicines, bamboo, and other forest products. Paniyas depend on non-tribals for provisions and other food materials.

### **7.14 Expenditure Pattern**

Expenditure pattern of a society gives a clear picture of their economic status. Expenditure in terms of money determines how much amount of money is spent for various amenities of life. The Paniyas do not have any account of what they purchase or consume. A few things such as sugar, salt, beedi, tea,

liquor, fruits, milk, fish, medicine, etc are purchased from the market whenever required. No record of such expenditure is kept by them. However, a rough estimate of such expenditures was made for Paniyas in this study. It was found that 93 percent of the Paniya households spend more than 55% of their income on food. Apart from food, major portion of their income is spent on fuel, clothing and medicine. Since tribals spend major portion of their income for day to day necessities, their saving is very low.

### **7.15 Cropping Pattern**

Tribal economy is primarily based on agriculture. This sector provides employment to more than half of the working population. Cropping pattern is the central element of agricultural land use. Expansion of irrigation facilities, introduction of high yielding varieties of crops, agricultural tools and machines, creation of a wide market and development of infrastructural facilities in the form of link roads influence the cropping pattern to a large extent. But it is the non-tribals who are more benefited from these kind of development in this area. It was observed in the survey that 90% of Paniyas are not aware of the modern agricultural development and practices. The main cultivation of non-tribals is paddy, which is considered as a modern crop by the tribals and now the tribals are slowly following the foot steps of the non-tribals.

## 7.16 Diet Pattern

Traditionally tribals were food-gatherers enjoying the freedom of wandering life in the interior forests. They eat edible roots, leaves, wild berries etc. They used to eat small animals by entrapping them. Recently, the tribals use different items of food which differ from season to season. In earlier times they used to shift areas depending on the availability of food. Their food habits were closely related to the rhythm of the seasons.

It is interesting to note that 75% of the Paniya people do not depend on home cooked food throughout the year. Instead, they purchase food from nearby hotels or tea stalls. Their reluctance to cook food at home and the preference for wayside eating cannot be attributed to any single reason.

It is clear from the study that the consumption pattern of Paniyas is closely tied up with the employment opportunities. Most of them consume food twice a day if work is available, otherwise only once a day. Their staple diet is rice like the non-tribals. If rice is cooked twice, the second time they prepare it as kanji.<sup>10</sup>

Three meals a day is something which they enjoy rarely. Usually on working days meals include early morning tea (without milk, most of the time without sugar also) and lunch. Normally they take rice with salt alone or salt and chilli or with 'yellow kari' which is prepared by using potato or papaya. The

vegetables they usually purchase are onion, potatoes, beans etc.<sup>11</sup> Diet profile of Paniya tribe is characterised by lack of milk and milk products. There exists a wide difference between the calorie intakes of tribals and non-tribals.

### **7.17 Leadership**

Good leadership is very essential for every society's advancement. Community Development and the Panchayati Raj are the two institutions to promote better living for the whole community which require active and enthusiastic participation of all. In other words, community development programmes cannot be successful without full participation of the people and proper leadership. Panchayati Raj is considered as an agency which stands for economic, social, political development and the discovery of new leaders.<sup>12</sup>

The political socialisation process among the tribals since independence have led to the emergence of new leaders. Of late, a limited number of important tribal political leaders like C.K. Janu, P. Mathavan, K. Narayanan etc. have come up in the Wayanad tribal belt.

Paniyas in Wayanad belong to different political parties like Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India. Indian National Congress is the dominant noticed party among them. Paniyas do vote regularly and majority of them are aware that it is their right to vote. In recent times Paniya youths are becoming more interested in party politics and they come forward

even to contest elections. But only limited seats are reserved for the tribals to contest elections while the non-tribals do contest in larger number of seats. Though the Paniyas generally show less interest in contesting elections, a large number of them regularly attend Grama Sabha meetings.

Paniya women are not generally attracted to politics due to their backwardness in all respects. It is observed that even the non-tribal women in these areas are reluctant to enter politics or take up leadership owing to their conservative outlook. As a result, tribal women participation is very low in local level administrative bodies like panchayat council, village council etc.

Owing to the economic and social backwardness of tribals, the tribal leaders are not in a position to play an equal role in party politics compared to the non-tribal leaders who are politically more active. Moreover, with the break down of tribal solidarity, tribal leaders are forced to depend upon the non-tribal people and leaders for their political survival.

Tribals have to go a long way mentally for their advancement. The changes that have taken place among these tribals are a matter of pride for our State. Even though, the economic programmes that we introduced so far have failed to bring about major changes in the tribal scenario, tribals believe that these programmes have contributed to a great extent in achieving their goals.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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9. Madhusudan Trivedi, *Entrepreneurship among the Tribals*, Printwell Publishers, Jaipur, 1994, p. 51.
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11. Piush Antony, *M.Phil Thesis Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*, 1995, op.cit., p.12.
- 12 Dravaikar Das, *Emerging Pattern of Leadership in Tribal India*, Mawak Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p 64.