

MATRI-PATRI CONTINUUM AND THE SOCIETIES IN CHIRAKKAL

The social transformations in north Malabar, specifically the transformation of the kinship pattern were facilitated by many factors, including the legislations concerned with inheritance pattern, succession and residence pattern. In addition, various reforms and agitations arisen from the society have actively contributed to replace the matrilineal system with the patrilineal one. Moreover, the attempts by the State to unify inheritance laws and practices have accelerated the change. Among these, the Marumakkathayam Act of 1933 was of crucial to the shift of property inheritance from one pattern to the other. The course of reforms and restructuring of the societal institutions were slow, but deliberate and uneven.

In fact, the shift mainly terminated the women centered cultural frame and made a cultural canvas, which is male oriented. Thus, the societal identity of Malabar, in general, changed as patrilineal. The factors underneath any change in the culture or society commence from within or interior to the societal framework. Patrilineality generally involves the inheritance of property, family names and residence patterns. Patrilineal household organisation is conceivably

not a pre-condition for the creation of the state of patriarchy. However, it predominantly facilitates the state of patriarchal domination. Moreover, patrilocal residence again makes the system patriarchal. Thus, patriliney encouraged many related societal frameworks and institutions.

According to Ember and Ember and Divale (http://www.iussp.org/Brazil2001/s10/S12_04_Das.pdf), traditionally, it has been assumed that in those societies, where married children live near or with kin, residence will tend to be patrilocal if males contribute more to the economy and matrilineal, if women contribute more.

In Chirakkal, different caste groups followed different descent systems. Among these, both matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems were common, and the inheritance of property was largely based on the descent systems operating among the particular groups. However, in both of these systems of matriliney and patriliney, family (both joint and nuclear) is the fundamental element and the power in each of these systems was enjoyed by the male members i.e., the *karanavar* and the father respectively.

It was mentioned in Govt. of India publication (1969), that until the passage of the Hindu Marriage Act in 1955, every Hindu was in theory free to marry a number of women....The observance of pollution at birth and death marks off the members of a kin-group, patrilineal as well as matrilineal. Complete pollution obtains among the closest relatives and others with whom the closest relatives depend based on kinship system. Broadly speaking, patrilineal relatives are regarded as closer than affinal or cognatic relatives among patrilineal castes; and matrilineal relatives are regarded as closer than patrilineal relatives among matrilineal castes.

It has been observed, however, that among the communities followed matriliney, a change had occurred towards patrilineal system of descent. There had been a general argument that patrilineal system tend to disfavour women in many respects. By limiting the tracing of kinship only through one parent, it actually subordinates the other. In a generous bilateral and bilineal system, the females get a full share of inheritance and in some respects that lie more or less intermediate between patriliney and complete bilaterality. But in an absolute and rigorous patrilineal system, women cannot customarily hold actual property. In such societies the practice of dowry or the paying of gifts can be seen. Kinship and Descent have significance when rights to succession, inheritance, or residence follow certain affiliation lines. Thus, the primary institutions are closely related to succession, property inheritance, residential arrangements and power structure. According to Dube, kinship is not to be viewed only as a moral code, it provides the organizing principles that govern the recruitment to and placement of individuals in social groups; formation of domestic groups and production units, residence after marriage, resource distribution, including inheritance, obligations and responsibilities in the business of living of individual members of the groups, position of women as indicated by their social identity, control over and access to resources, freedom of movement making, and, in a sense, autonomy (1992:99).

Govt. of India reported that among the highly westernized and urban sections, neolocality is coming to be the rule. But the establishment of a new home does not mean the severance of ties with kin-groups of the husband and wife.....in recent year's spatial mobility has increased considerably and young men have jobs away from their natal towns.... Nowadays, in urban areas, patterns of residence are changing towards virilocality if not neolocality (Both

moving to a new house)... The changes which have occurred in recent years have strengthened the father's position (1969).

The political, economic and ideological forces that were released during British rule brought about certain changes in the joint family system. Residence in the same village, absence of economic differentiation between the different members of the joint family and the difficulty of getting the caste or village Panchayat to agree to partition the joint family had been factors which kept the institution as a going concern. British rule altered that situation. The new economic opportunities which came through the link –up of the local economy with a much wider one increased monetization; and greater opportunities for trade and increased spatial mobility due to building of roads and railways led to the emergence of smaller kin groups. The Hindu Gains of Learning Act, 1930, declared that property acquired by a Hindu as a result of his education was his personal property, even though his education was paid for by his joint family (Govt. of India, 1969). Engels' (in Jones, 1994: 265) 'Theory of the Family' suggest that it was the rise of private property that marked the emergence of patriarchal relationships.

In addition, social reform movements, peasant agitations and the community organizations played a vital role in changing the social system of the area. These were some of the crucial measures in the protest of society towards democracy or egalitarianism and there by the exclusion of the old order.

A household is lodging or housing entity which includes every member who resides under one roof. The residents may be members of a nuclear family, or members of two or more families or any other faction of associated or unrelated people who share a common living space or a social unit composed of

those living together in the same residence. The concept of family is not the same as a household. A family consists of a household head with additional relatives who are allied to him or her. All the households are not families.

Table 3.1 Community wise distribution of population across Households

Communities	Number of Households	Males	M (Per-cent)	Females	F (Per-cent)	Total
Nayar	92	177	6.77	178	6.63	355
Thiyya	186	429	16.41	459	17.11	888
Vaniya	109	247	9.45	256	9.54	503
Maniyani	53	142	5.43	126	4.7	268
Pulaya	79	243	9.297	257	9.58	500
Marar	28	72	2.75	65	2.42	137
Varma	20	41	1.568	40	1.49	81
Valluva	8	19	0.727	27	1.01	46
Nambuthiri	5	16	0.612	13	0.48	29
Viswakarma	45	134	5.126	115	4.29	249

Chaliya	245	652	24.94	698	26.01	1350
Malayan	4	11	0.42	12	0.45	23
Muslim	126	431	16.5	437	16.29	868
Total	1000	2614	100	2683	100	5297

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

For the study, 1000 households of different caste groups have been surveyed, which comprises 2614 males and 2683 females (Table 3.1). In Chirakkal, the number of households and the population of Nambuthiris show the typical scattered nature of the community all over Malabar and the Pulaya mostly settled in various colonies in the village. The communities which are scattered in most parts of the village include Thiyya, Nayar, and Vaniya. Though, the Muslims are confined mainly in certain pockets, their presence in all the areas of the village show the current changes.

The residential locations of the Varma, Marar, Chaliya and the Valluva again show that their residence patterns in the traditional village social structure has not been changed much. The households of Varma, Nambuthiri and Marar are predominantly placed near to the temples. The Chaliya still continue with the '*theru*' settlement which is traditional in character. The households of Viswakarma and Pulaya are mostly found in the outskirts of the village, but the Malayan households are extremely scattered and are very few in number. The Valluva households are located near to the riverine areas, and the Thiyya households almost uniformly distributed. Thus, the households of different

communities in Chirakkal more or less show their traditional residential organisation in the village.

The residence forms a very important factor of any individual or community. The study has explored the traditional dimensions of household or residence pattern, and was made in the patrilineal, patriarchal context. The concept of gender has been taken as an important criterion in analyzing the gender norms in employment, inheritance, property and residence.

It has been found that among the communities surveyed, the ratio of male and female population is approximately the same, except in the case of Nambuthiri, Viswakarma, Marar, Malayan, Chaliya, Maniyani and Thiyya. The ratio of male- female population is 49.35: 50.65, i.e., almost equal in proportion (Table 3.1). From the survey it is seen that the Nambuthiri exhibited lowest population in the village, i.e., male population 16 and female population 13. The male- female ratio in the village under study indicates that it is not discriminatory to women and at the same time exhibits slightly higher female ratio as in the State of Kerala.

FAMILY ORGANIZATION

Family is the fundamental or elementary unit of social structure and organisation. Based on the composition of individuals, the institution of family usually takes different forms i.e., its form varies from culture to culture and society to society. According to Skinner, family system refers generally to the customary normative manner in which family processes unfold, namely the usual pattern of family practices and household dynamics, including the main elements of marriage form and preferences, succession, property inheritance,

residential arrangements, and power structure as a function of gender and age within the family (1997).

The family system and pattern are not static and undergoes changes. However, nuclear or elementary family is basic to all types of family organisation. The composition of family units in the present study is categorized as nuclear (complete and incomplete nuclear), nuclear family with dependents and extended family.

Nuclear family is defined simply as, the family in which parents and children living together under the same roof. Nuclear family forms when a couple live with or without unmarried children. The nuclear family constitutes the main form of familial organization in modern societies. When it changes from joint to nuclear, not only its structure and household configuration but also its function gets transformed. Incomplete nuclear family forms when either of the parents or child is not present.

Nuclear family with dependents indicates, the nuclear family with one or more unmarried, separated, or widowed relatives of the parents, other than their unmarried children. According to Kolenda (1987), an extended family is one, in which different generations of the same family share a common household and in addition to parents and children, it consists of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents etc. The extended family usually supports a large number of kin members. The responsibility for child care, old age care etc., are also shared by the family members. The extended family group consists of the parents, their children, the grandparents, and other family members. In short, the extended family consists of the nuclear family and their blood relatives. This type of family organisation also facilitated and supported old age and child care. The

extended family is the fundamental family group in most of the societies in Kerala.

Among the Nayar, Thiyya, Vaniya and Maniyani communities, the number of complete nuclear family is higher followed by extended family. But among the Pulaya, Marar, Viswakarma, Chaliya and Muslim, the number of extended families are higher followed by nuclear families.

Table 3.2 Types of Family in the surveyed Population

Community	Nuclear Family		Nuclear with dependents	Extended Family	Total
	Complete	Incomplete			
Nayar	38	8	21	25	92
Thiyya	65	42	26	53	186
Vaniya	43	26	10	30	109
Maniyani	22	10	4	17	53
Pulaya	16	12	5	46	79
Marar	8	6	1	13	28
Varma	5	7	1	7	20

Valluva	1	1	1	5	8
Nambuthiri	2	1	--	2	5
Viswakarma	15	12	2	16	45
Chaliya	78	33	25	109	245
Malayan	1	1	--	2	4
Muslim	35	15	8	68	126
Total	329	174	104	393	1000

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

It was found that the higher incidence of extended family organization among the Muslims have direct correlation with their earlier practice of matrilineality. In this village, all the communities are now following virilocal pattern except Mappila- Muslims. The dependents added to the nuclear family type are the kin of the wife rather than the husband, that is, the household is uterine¹⁸ based. Also, even in those cases in which a married son is working abroad, his wife usually shares a household with her parents. In general, parents and the married daughters share the same household. Thus, a widow or widower, shares a household with her daughter, daughter's husband, and their children even though they have sons. Thus, among the Mappilas, the percentages of extended families are also found to be higher next to joint families. Most of them prefer to live in matrilineal extended families during the early years of their life. In short, the post marital residences of Mappilas are always uxorilocal and the uxorilocal changes to neolocal and neolocal changes to uxorilocal during the 'development cycle' of the family. This can be

substantiated with family development theory proposed by Hagestad, which states that family relationships are not static but rather change over time....In family developmental theory, transitions are the shifts in roles and identities encountered with changes in developmental stages (in Ingoldsby, 2004).

According to Stone (1983), the following changes took place in family relationships during the transition from the traditional extended family to the modern nuclear one: First, the liberation from the control

exercised by the community and kin; second, the passage from a system of marriages agreed by the parents and based on social and economic interests to a system of spousal choice based on physical

¹⁸Kin of the wife is termed as uterine.

attraction and love; third, a change in the relationship between the spouses from coldness and distance to affective warmth, intimacy and erotic passion; fourth, the transition of the relation between parents and children from indifference to parental care and concern; and fifth, the increasingly egalitarian connotations of the relations between sexes and generations as well as the increasing autonomy of individual family members (in Kukreja, 2006).

Table 3.2 indicates that the number of nuclear families are on increase and in the words of William Goode, almost everywhere in the future, the predominant type of family will be nuclear in structure, made of parents and their unmarried children (in Kolenda, 1987). The studies of Desai (1964), Gore (1961), and Gough (1961) also reveal that nuclear family is functional for a modern urban industrial society.

In Chirakkal village, in the households of various caste groups, sons had separated from their parents within a few years of marriage. A sample of 200 households were selected on random basis to interpret the pattern of residence after marriage. The separation from the parental house took place especially, after eight years of marriage in 64 per cent of the families. 12 per cent of the sons out of the 200 households were still found to be living with their parents even after 15 years after marriage. A dominant section of the population argued that nuclear family system enhanced the status of female members.

In the surveyed population, highest proportion of extended families appears among the Valluvas. Among the Malayan, the proportion of nuclear and extended families found to be similar. The lowest proportion of joint families are found among the Nayar,. This shows the extent of change happened to the familial system among the Nayars of Kerala. According to Fuchs (1983), every where joint families are breaking up.... A growing individualism and independence are opposed to the survival of the joint family system. Young wives, more particularly if educated, are now less prepared to submit to the rule of their in-laws. The control of the young men over their own earnings gives them greater opportunity for independence. According to Dube (2001:228), diversity of occupations, migration, and professional considerations such as transfers and distance between place of work and residence often contribute to the breaking up of the joint family household.

Table 3.3 Family size in the surveyed Population

Community	No. of Persons in the family	Total number of families

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	
Nayar	62	20	7	3	92
Thiyya	135	44	5	2	186
Vaniya	75	28	2	4	109
Maniyani	36	15	2	--	53
Pulaya	39	30	10	--	79
Marar	18	9	1	--	28
Varma	16	3	1	--	20
Valluva	4	4	--	--	8
Nambuthiri	3	1	1	--	5
Viswakarma	26	13	6	--	45
Chaliya	146	88	10	1	245
Malayan	3	1	--	--	4
Muslim	40	66	18	2	126

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

Household size constitutes the number of individuals in households. Families with 1-5 members are more in number in the surveyed population followed by families with 6-10 members and lowest category is composed of

families having 16-20 members. Disintegration of joint family system and the present generation's preference to live in nuclear family favoured the above situation. Household size would change and get shaped according to the socio-economic factors prevailing in the society. It is seen that the household size of the Muslim community is reduced with the break down of joint families and the remaining few numbers of joint families show the remnants of matrilineal residence which was prevailed among the Muslims till recently. According to Dube, in villages, children who have grown up and have "a degree of economic self-sufficiency" break away earlier, presumably before the father's death and that a complete joint family of any type is rare (in Kolenda, 1987). Thus, in Chirakkal village, the study shows that out of the 1000 households surveyed, families with 1-5 and 6-10 members exceed in number when compared to other categories.

FAMILY AUTHORITY

Census of India defines the 'head of the household' as a person, male or female, who is recognized as such in the household. He/She is assumed to be the nodal one in income earning and enjoying authority in the management of household affairs(in Krishan,2007).

Here, head of the family is taken as the person provides support and authentically maintains the family affairs that are associated to him or his family. The head of the family is identified on the basis of Government supplied ration cards and on mutual accord of the family members. The designation head of family is functional, when the right to exercise family control and to support the dependent members is taken as part of one's responsibility or duty. According to the Zimbabwe Community and Household

Surveillance Report-2003, the head of the household is the primary decision-maker in terms of allocating the natural, human, and financial resources available to the household (<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2004.31may.pdf>).

One thousand households of thirteen communities were surveyed for the present study with a population of 5098 persons. The households of Pulaya, Valluva and Muslim are predominantly female headed. In the case of Malayan, both female and male headed families have the same proportion. However, the male members adorn the status of household head in rest of the cases.

The differences in power relations can be identified in aspects such as, participation in the fiscal activities by men and women, freedom for mobility within and outside the household, power to inherit the properties and involvement in decision making. These aspects also vary from society to society. Male and female headed households are mainly distinguished based on the authority or power in decision making and the independent economic status. The main reasons identified in the case of Pulaya and Valluva women are their involvement in economic activities for subsistence and personal earnings. In case of the Muslims, the female oriented ownership of property and overseas migration of male counterparts led to female headed households. Another fact is that, in case of the Nambuthiris, they absolutely follow male authority in decision making and executing power in the family. Their strict adherence to patriliney and patrilocal residence favoured their households to be patriarchal or male headed.

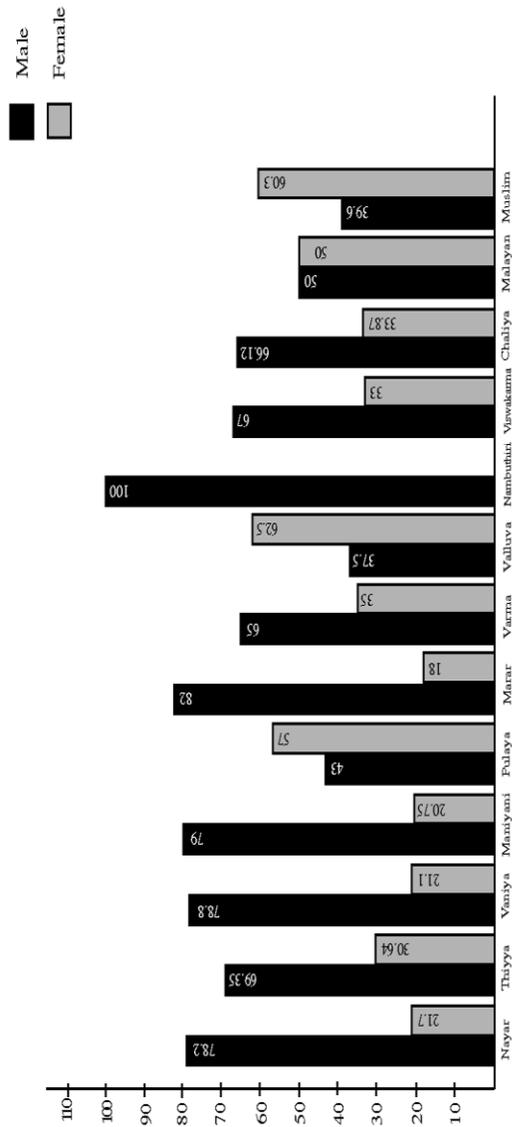
In this study, female-headed households are on increase, because of occupational mobility and educational attainment. Patrilineal household organization, actually, does not facilitate patriarchal domination. But the

patrilineal kinship, related institutions and cultural perceptions are acting as the reinforcing agents which along with the legal codes armored patriarchal supremacy with the judicial sway of the state. According to Ranjini (1999), many women at present have to perform professional as well as family roles without the necessary complementary charges in their role relations with other members of the family. In such a situation, employed women and housewives are the victims of conflicting role expectation from professional to domestic sides.

According to Jeffrey, it was since the nineteenth Century that women, especially the middle and upper classes, started improving their socio-economic status. Increased women's participation in jobs and in social and public activities, in making decisions and sharing in family management has increasingly become an accepted value (in Ranjini (1993)).

Jeffrey has pointed out that recent research and feminist scholarship in particular noted that the impact of colonization, the changes in land relations, commercialization of the economy, the growth and spread of

Figure 3.1 Classification of Family authority based on Gender



formal education provided the basis for the growth of public politics and the emergence of ideas concerning the distribution of wealth and power in Kerala. These developments, it was felt, prepared the ground for significant changes in the position of women in Kerala from 1880sto 1950s (in Velayudhan, 1999).

In the survey, the female household-heads mainly come under two broad categories- primarily, married women whose husbands are working abroad and secondly, widows.

Even today, in most of the families in Kerala, a widow was not generally permitted to stay and work in her deceased husband's house, though she has children and she would return back to her house after his demise. But in strict patrilineal societies like the Nambuthiri and Malayan, the woman resides in her husband's residence itself. The rights and privileges of married woman and her status as head of the family are thus, shaped by the marital status and motherhood.

In the words of Krishan (2007), female headed households emerge in areas of matriarchy or in situations of out migration or emigration of the male head or in the case of widowed, separated or single females.

DEPENDENCY STATUS

In this study the term dependency status is mainly used to denote the economic dependence. The ratio of dependency status among the communities show that the ratio of female dependency is much higher compared to male. The dependent populations mainly include older generation, disabled and

unemployed. In this village, the ratio of female dependency is much higher due to the state of unemployment.

Dependency is assumed to exist when an individual living in a family household is likely to be unable to support him or herself financially and is thus reliant on another usually resident individual(s) for the provision of his or her financial needs (meals, accommodation, and other expenses). As indicators of economic dependency two barriers to full-time employment are used: age and student status (<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf>). By considering the student status of persons below 24 years of age and their inability to support the economic requirements of studentship, the concept of economic dependency and the state of dependence is not applied over them in the study.

As per the Zimbabwe Community and Household Surveillance Report-2003, in demography studies, international practice and convention defines the dependency ratio as: $(\text{population} < \text{age } 15 \text{ and } > \text{age } 65 / \text{working-age population (age } 15\text{-age } 64)) * 100$ and a Disabled as a person who has a mental and/or physical impediment that prevents him/her from full productivity (<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2004.31may.pdf>).

Dependency status, again, indicates one's reliance upon their relatives, parents or guardian, husband, wife or children for their livelihood and education. The analysis of household-level dependency suggests that large numbers of females are relying largely on their relatives of various degrees.

Table 3.4 Dependency status of the Male and Female

Population (= and < 25 years)

Community	Male Dependents		Female Dependents	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Nayar	8	4.5	94	52.8
Thiyya	15	3.49	232	50.5
Vaniya	8	3.23	126	49.2
Maniyani	5	3.52	77	61.1
Pulaya	12	4.93	124	48.2
Marar	2	2.8	34	52.3
Varma	2	4.9	15	37.5
Valluva	1	5.26	14	51.9
Nambuthiri	0	--	8	61.5
Viswakarma	6	4.48	71	61.7
Chaliya	28	4.29	325	46.6
Malayan	0	--	5	41.7
Muslim	11	2.55	194	44.39
Total	98	43.95	1319	659.39

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

An Analysis of the degree of male and female dependency irrespective of economic status and caste hierarchy shows that the male members are the economically least dependent sections and the females rely more on their family members, especially their husbands.

The study indicates that the economic status of household affects the degree of disparity in production process and income generation. Dependency status is a derived variable and is derived from the following criteria of classifications, such as, age (childhood and old age), role in the family, health and occupational status. In addition to the student dependency, another major economic dependency is old-age dependency. There are many instances in which the aged persons use their assets and financial capability to make an independent living without relying on their children for economic purposes even in the old age and tend to be the head of the households. Some others become dependent due to economic and health disabilities. Because of all the above mentioned reasons, the pattern and types of family with dependent members varies across communities.

The conventional norms of the society set certain behaviour patterns for males and females, especially access to resources. It has been widely recognized that jobs to women are not an essential criteria for their living in the society. Like wise, living with one's daughter's family is not supposed to be a fair affair among the villagers, excepting the case of Mappila-Muslims. The parents prefer to live with their sons in their old age. This notion has aroused out of the thinking that it is difficult for the daughters to support their parents as she is also economically dependent due to unemployment. However, the enhanced involvement of women in paid employment and the interventions

imposed by *Kudumbasree* programmes have created a creative change in the outlook of the females and there by society.

The state of patriarchy has been considered as the prevailing manner of social organization in most of the societies. However, many societies have changed their outlook due to many reasons and tending towards a more egalitarian form due to the influence of educational, employment and social prestige. Actually, the patriarchal system do not support the social system, which are not egalitarian and repressive to women.

NAMING CONVENTIONS IN NORTH MALABAR

The social structure, family and kinship system of Malabar have been the areas embrace distinctiveness and occupy a remarkable place in historical, sociological and anthropological research. There is, no separate discipline that exists for the study of naming practices in a holistic manner- understanding their physical, social and cultural dimensions. However, Onomastics is the study of proper names of all kinds, including family names. There have been very few interdisciplinary studies attempting to understand the naming practices in the context of kinship structure, social system and gender dimensions.

A unique kinship system that existed among the dominant communities of Malabar a few decades back, was one in which the descent of a person was traced along the female line. The main operative component of this system was the institution, *taravad*. The term *taravad* usually used to denote the social reckoning in the *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) system. In most of the cases a surname or last name is a family name and it might be patronymic or

matronymic. In Kerala, the naming conventions vary greatly and are based on a variety of systems which vary from region to region and from caste to caste.

A name added to a given name is termed as surname and is always part of personal name. The name of the person's father, mother, husband, occupation, caste etc., are some of the factors influence the surname of a person. In north Malabar, after marriage, usually the family names of female members of Nambuthiri, Viswakarma, and Malayan get changes to husband's family name. Even today, the practice is as such continuing and a slight change happened in which some members began to use their husband's given name after marriage, instead of family names. Thus, it somehow replaces the father's given name or family name of her family.

FIGURE 3.2
GENEALOGY OF A CHALIYA FAMILY

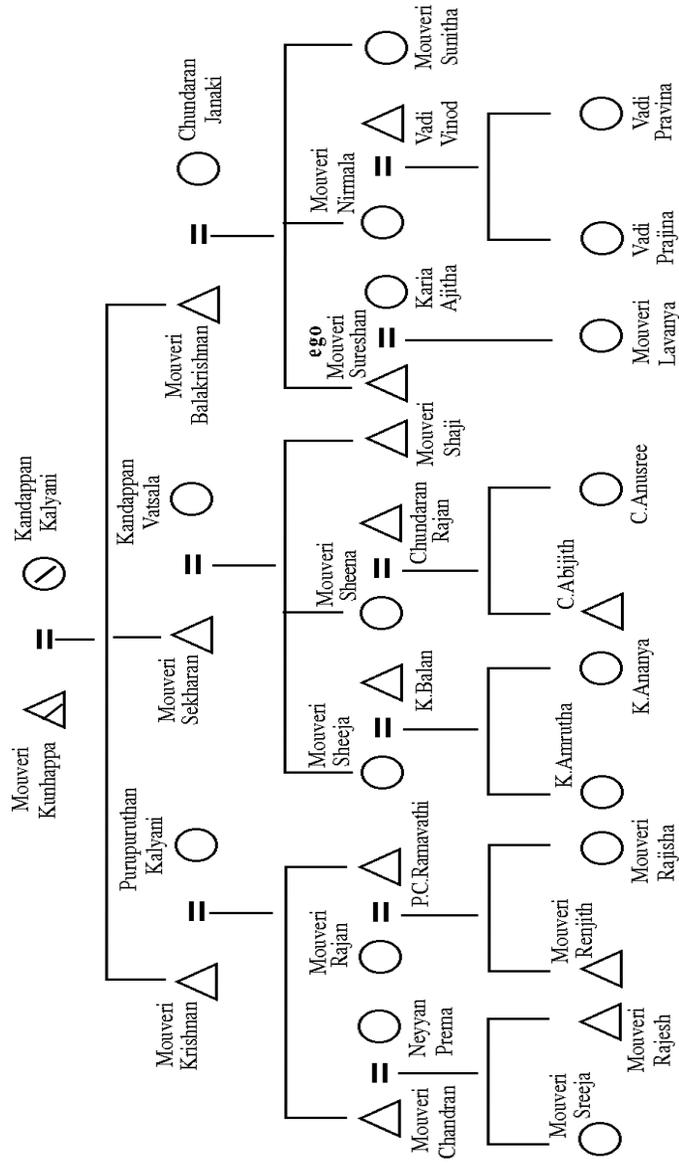


FIGURE 3.3
GENEALOGY OF A PULAYA FAMILY

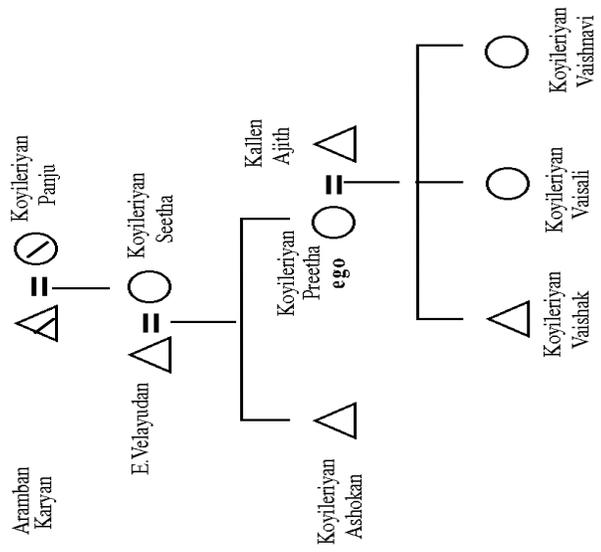


FIGURE 3.4
GENEALOGY OF A MUSLIM FAMILY

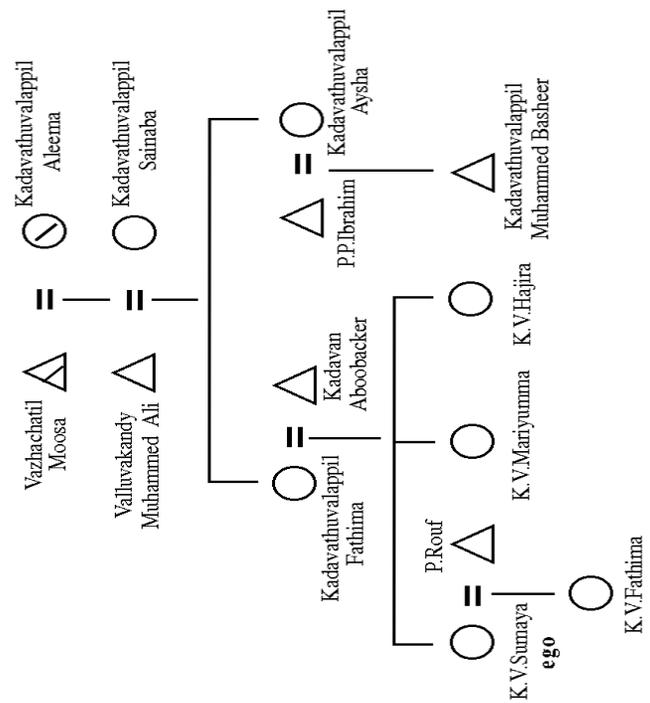
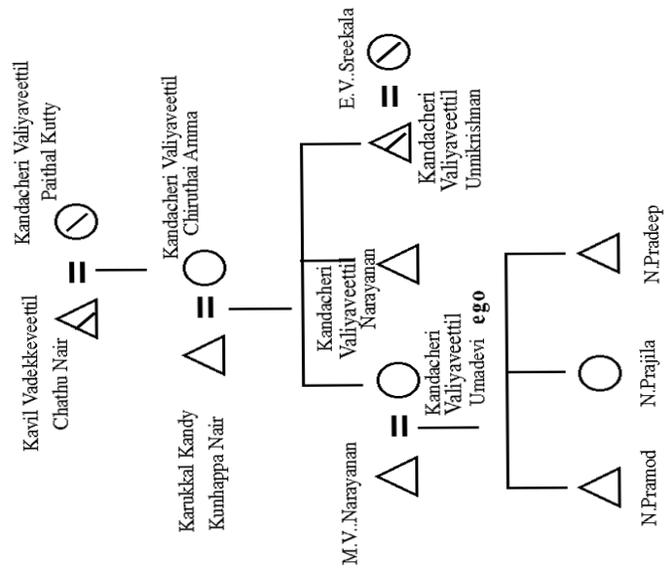


FIGURE 3.5
GENEALOGY OF A VANIYA FAMILY



The Matrilineal kinship system existed among some prominent communities such as the Nairs, Thiyyas, Muslims (Mappilas), Vaniyas, Chaliyas, etc. The people of north Malabar, especially in Chirakkal, usually follow their family name and most of the family names are of obscure origin, but many have association with geographical entity.

Generally, the Valluva use the house names (for children) of any of their parents. This was due to their strict non- adherence to a particular kinship pattern. During the death rituals and other observances, one's own children and sister's children have equal status. Traditionally, the Valluva hadn't had any property to inherit.

The surnames of Pulaya almost have the ending transliterated into english as yan or ian which denotes slavery. For instance, *Kallaen, Panayan, Aaramban, Ooramban, Thachan, Thalerian, Olannadiyan, Pongadan, Paramban, Koyilerian, Karakkadan, Pullen, Vellakudiyan, Aringalaen, Kallakudiyan, Edacherien, Chellerian* etc. Even after conversion to Christianity in some areas, the community members adhere to their tradition bound naming practices, which are matrilineally transmitted family names or clan names. Like wise, the surnames among the Chaliyas are also very much limited and strictly adhere to the following categories: such as, *Thekkan, Choran, Modathi, Chundaran, Chakkaramathan, Purupuruthan, Kollon, Mouveri, Cheran, Arayakki, Chingan, Chadayan, Pothan, Modon, Kadan, Koovva, Kopperi, Chatta, Arakkan, Vaadi, Neyyan, Koodali, Anchamkudi, Chemban, Kadathanadan, Annakottan, Pachiriyen, Koonan, Veliyambra, Vaarathan, Chenthamala, Pittan, Koyyodan, Kadachi, Parakka, Kindi, Panni, Eatta, Azhekkodan, Kuduvan* etc. Such rigid adherence to family names and continuity of surnames, generation after generation are discernible among the Chaliyas and the Pulayas and they still adhere to the surnames of the father.

Among the Vaniya, Pulaya and Valluva communities changes in the female surname convention began recently and the male predominance in naming practice got increased.

The surname conventions among the Viswakarma had been through male line and changes started in the present generation. However, the change was meager. Among the Chaliya, the surname inheritance are usually through male line, even though, they are considered as matrilineal. In the present generation also, the change has occurred very less. In fact, the surname conventions found among the Pulayas are amazing. They are found to be strictly following mother's line and known in terms of their respective *taravad* names even after conversion to Christianity.

FIGURE 3.6
GENEALOGY OF A NAMBUTHIRI FAMILY

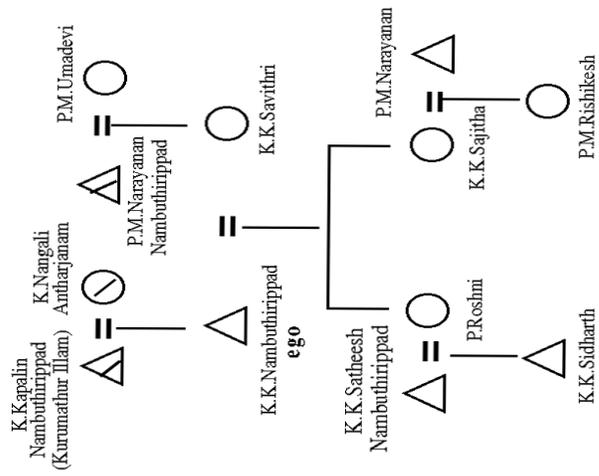


FIGURE 3.7
GENEALOGY OF A VISWAKARMA FAMILY

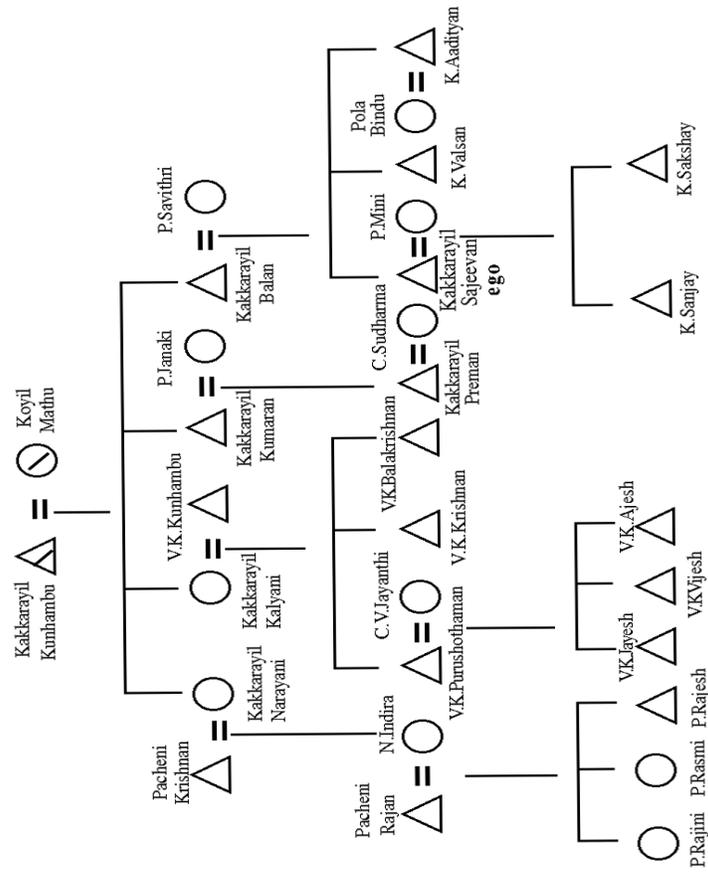
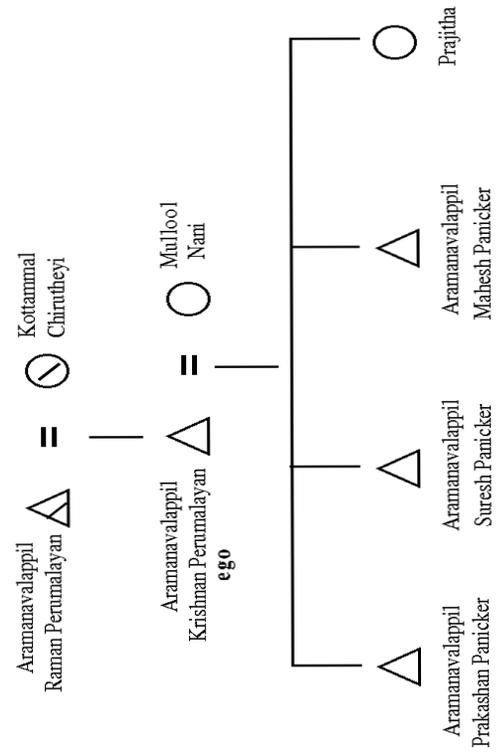


FIGURE 3.8
GENEALOGY OF A MALAYAN FAMILY



Until the early 20th Century, Kerala was predominantly an agrarian society and most of the surnames were based on their association with a particular area, farm or homestead e.g., Vadakkedath, Kandathil etc. The surnames followed by the castes of north Malabar became hereditary, because of the socio-cultural factors and social structure prevailed. The joint family name or the *taravad* names were usually adopted as surnames in north Malabar.

Caste names (Nambiar, Nayar, Varma, and Maniyani) are not surnames but suffixes to first names to indicate their community or caste. Another trend among the higher caste people until about two decades back that they were named in the 'Family name-Given name- Caste' format. Eg: *Thazhathu* Krishnan Nair, interpreted as Krishnan of the Nair Caste from the *Thazhathu* family. Bestowed titles or other honorifics denoting nobility is also common custom in the use of surnames. E.g.: Raja

The present trend is that family name is being taken as initials. The given name of a person also takes as initials in the next generation. But the caste name would not be taken as initials, yet. Generally in north Malabar, no formal surname is used, because the communities have certain conventions to follow its existing family or *taravad* name. But recently there has been a minor reversal of this trend in north Malabar.

Nowadays there is no customary rule regarding the use of titles. The recent advancement in this regard is wife or child takes the given name of the husband or father, or the first letter of father's name is used as initials instead of a surname. For example, Biju, son of Rajan, would be termed as R.Biju. This type of new add-ons in the society has resulted in the formation of a new pattern of naming system.

In general, before marriage, the girl uses her father's initial, but after marriage, she may choose to use her husband's name as initial. Of late the trend has changed and many women, especially those employed, do not change the initials, but continue with their father's name as initial. This is mainly for convenience, since legal documents and certificates bear the woman's father's name or initials. Changing a name legally is a cumbersome procedure, including announcing the proposed change in a newspaper and getting it published.

Much of these traditional naming patterns have now changed. The family names are typically not incorporated nowadays. The disintegration of joint families accelerated the change. The most common pattern nowadays is giving name to a child, followed by the father's given name (patronymic) or caste name. Sometimes both the father's and mother's given names are used as part of the naming practice. Traditionally, each community followed its own rules as to the use of surnames and was indicative of cultural pattern of his or her society. Many women choose to change their name when they marry. There are many reasons why women maintain their surname. One of these is the identity crisis women experiences when giving up their surname. Currently, surnames are conceded down to children exclusively through the male line.

During marriage fixation and marriage ceremonies, the role of uncle is very important showing the remnants of a past system. Uncle's wife is also important in ceremonious functions. In case, if the sister's husband is not a wealthy person, then wife's brother substantiates or offers help. So the group sentiments are still surviving even though the system got changed.

In most of the communities under study, it is clear that men are the earning members. Usually economic independence of male members in these

families ultimately led to a situation of male dominance in most of the situations. But recently female members are also engaging in economic activities, so the role of females in and out of the household increased, resulting in co-residence pattern.

In many societies organized matrilineally, the fact that women are channels of relatedness between men and does not mean that they benefit either economically or politically (Parkin, 2004)....Schneider in the 1960's and Strathern and others in the 1980's, have returned to the question of cognatic descent in addressing the assumption that kinship is necessarily bilateral because of its foundation in the biology of production (in Parkin, 2004).

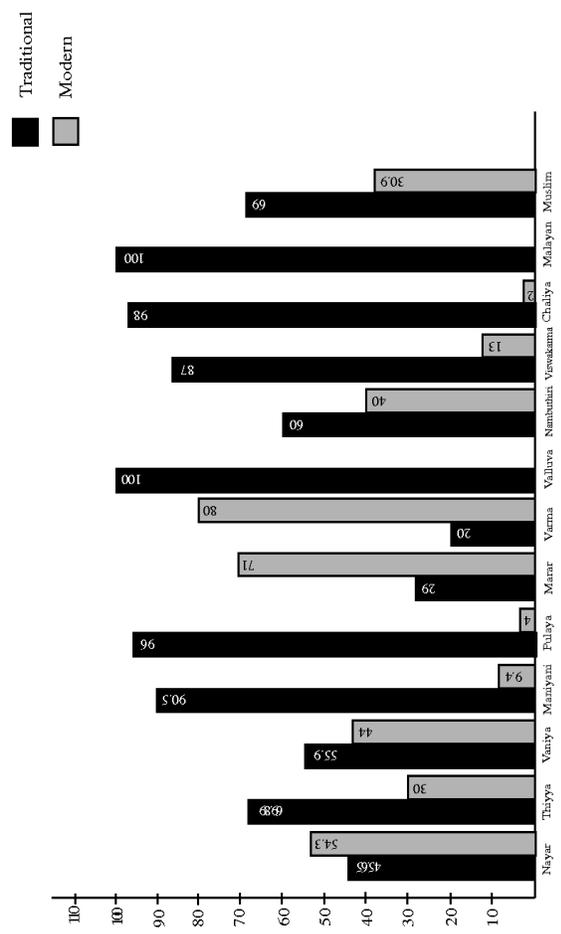
Even in matrilineal societies men are in control of affairs, while women are by no means denied influence in patrilineal ones. The difference between matrilineal and patrilineal thus lies in cultural particularities, not in either evolutionary history or the gender contrast....India still has clear categories of inheritance from mother to daughter, of clothes or ornaments that are not at all the product of modern legislation or conditions (Parkin, 2004)....In contrast to the bilateral family, lineages and kins ignore one side of the family.....In bilateral family again matrilineal and patrilineal family has got specific importance on special occasions. Several scholars have been greatly impressed by the fact that matrilineal and patrilineal systems adjoin each other. (in Parkin, 2004).

It has been a fact that matrilineal relatives and patrilineal relatives function differently during different occasions and both symbolize different dimensions of the social organization. The basis of matriliney and patriliney lies in different socio- cultural context.

Thus, in tracing one's descent system, the naming patterns would be very helpful. Various castes followed the custom of naming their children in a specific manner. However, most of the caste groups in Malabar consider women as an important member to carry over the *taravad* name/ lineage of the family.

It is seen that except two or three communities in the study, all others are following their mother's or father's *taravad* name for their newly constructed houses. In this study, the trend of giving modern name is mostly found among the Nayars, Marars and the Varma. This is mainly due to the emergence of new households with nuclear families with the disintegration of joint families. The nuclear families are not interested in giving old *taravad* names to their houses and also no existing system is there to retain the *taravad* names as such. However, the general trend

Figure 3.9 Household Names Across Communities



shows that the concept of *taravad* has not been disintegrated completely from the mind set of the older generation.

The surname conventions and household names have not changed proportionately. For instance, among the Varma, the surname conventions are retained as such, but the household names changed extensively. The Valluva and the Malayan have retained the traditional household names as such. The Chaliya and Pulaya predominantly follow their long-established household names, even though they live in settlements. As per the respondents, they started to use modern house names in order to identify the specific house easier. The houses of Marar, Varma, Chaliya, Pulaya, Maniyani etc., are found closer and the use of same house names would create confusion among the outsiders. This is one of the reasons for changing the traditional household name into modern category.

It has been noted that the parents, in general depending their sons and not daughters, for support in old age. According to their version, this is mainly due to the residence patterns and male being the potential earners in households. The daughters would have to leave the house after marriage and would rely upon their husbands for their necessities. In addition, the sons are responsible for performing ancestral rites of their parents. Therefore, in such a social system, son's roles and positions have more significance.

Table 3.5 Nature of Land ownership in the surveyed Population

Community	Ownership Pattern				Total
	Individual		Joint		
	Number of families	Per-cent	Number of families	Per-cent	
Nayar	63	68.48	29	31.52	92
Thiyya	112	60.2	74	39.78	186
Vaniya	75	68.8	34	31.19	109
Maniyani	37	69.8	16	30.1	53
Pulaya	34	43	45	57	79
Marar	15	53.57	13	46	28
Varma	18	90	2	10	20
Valluva	4	50	4	50	8
Nambuthiri	3	60	2	40	5
Viswakarma	24	53	21	47	45
Chaliya	118	48	127	52	245

Malayan	2	50	2	50	4
Muslim	44	34.9	82	65	126
Total	549	749.75	451	549.59	1000

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

In the case of Muslims, matrilineal elements still favour joint ownership of property. The Chaliyas lead settlement life and the Pulaya mostly live in colonies which again lead to jointness. But the property will be restricted in the hands of one or two individuals. Among the Malayan and Viswakarma, the ownership of property mainly restricted to the male heirs. The study shows that access to land and control over land in this village was strongly determined by customary inheritance practices. Such practices were largely firm by tradition, and determine the status of family heads which were generally favoured men over women. However, land rights and the status of women in the societies were supported with strong customary norms and practices.

Usually, women's privileges and control over land and other property is limited in most of the societies. Regarding the transitional membership of a daughter in the patrilineal family, Leela Dube comments, "Her (brides) living in the new home is in a way conditional, depending on 'proper' behaviour, efficiency in household work, amicable relationships, service to elders, husband's pleasure, the gifts that she brings, and perhaps her earning. It is not uncommon to be driven out of

the affinal home for serious as well as trivial reasons”(in Desai and Usha Thakkar, 2001). It is clear that, a girl enjoys remarkable freedom in her parental family and restrictions in certain aspects like decision making starts in the virilocal familial framework. The Mappila-Muslims of the area argue that they enjoy remarkable domestic freedom due to uxorilocality and matrilineal inheritance.

LAND POSSESSIONS

The land possessions (Table 3.6) of the communities show that the Nayars, Thiyya, Maniyani, Varma, Nambuthiri, Viswakarma and Chaliya possess land above 45 cents in the village. The land holdings of the Scheduled Castes especially, Pulaya, Valluva and Malayan predominantly have below 15 cents, only two of the Pulaya families have lands in between 16-35 cents. However, all the communities in the village predominantly possess 1 to 25 cents of land and the landless households are meager.

Nuclear family organisation and partition of property are the major reasons in the decrease of land possessions and these days the lack of parental land holdings pushes the youngsters to purchase lands with their own effort.

The Chaliyas mainly lead a settlement life. The clustered settlements of the Chaliyas are known as *therus*. The settlement life is identified as the reason for their adherence to traditional occupation of weaving. The Pulayas had been a landless agrestic group, but presently majority of them are beneficiaries of the *Laksham Veedu* Housing Scheme of the State Government. In this village there are five government housing colonies. Three are occupied by the Pulayas only and two constitute mixed category of different communities.

Table 3.6 Community wise Land Possessions

Community	Land Possessions (in numbers)								
	Nil	1-5	6-15	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+
Nayar	1	10	36	30	10	3	1	--	1
Thiyya	3	32	88	44	11	3	3	--	2
Vaniya	--	7	55	28	10	9	--	--	--
Maniyani	--	4	28	10	5	5	1	--	--
Pulaya	2	28	47	1	1	--	--	--	--
Marar	--	3	22	3	--	--	--	--	--
Varma	--	1	8	6	1	2	2	--	--

Valluva	--	2	6	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nambuthiri	--	--	3	1	--	--	--	--	1
Viswakarma	--	12	21	7	4	--	1	--	--
Chaliya	1	88	124	22	7	1	2	--	--
Malayan	--	2	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Muslim	3	35	57	25	2	4	--	--	--

Source: Researcher's field data from household survey

As far as the Valluva are concerned, they live in colonies especially near to riverside or on the banks of small tributaries. Their houses are known as *chala*. The term *chala* is mainly used to denote the house of downtrodden communities like Pulaya, Valluva etc. Earlier they do not have their own houses. After the introduction of Land Reforms Acts, they got independent land. Now they occupy lands which are not wide but around 1-15 cents. Since

they were the workers of the Muslims, their settlements are mostly found near to the Muslim dominated areas.

In every society the social structure and organization reflects the inheritance pattern, descent etc. The social structure of Kerala is immensely bound and related to village life. In a village one can observe people doing different occupations in which their traditional settlement pattern is a reflection of their adaptation to that social ecology. As a result, in the past one can assume the identity of the caste group by looking into the house structure, settlement pattern etc.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Attainment of status in the contemporary society is largely related to occupational and economic achievements. Occupational status and education are the main determinant factors for a woman in enhancing her status. Work participation of women in the present day society imparts space for them in the decision making process. Work participation rate is used to indicate the proportion of the working age population of both male and female- in the labour force.

In general, the working-age group includes people between the age group of 25-60, Students, retired persons, aged and housewives form the bulk of the non-labour force.

Female Labor Force Participation indicates the number of women in the work or employment force and the work participation rate indicates the share of the population prepared to work. In this study, 13.79 per cent of the women are

in the work force, compared to nearly 86.2 per cent of men. For the study, the work participation rates of males and females who have completed 24 years have been taken. A cross-cultural study conducted among the households reveal that employed women enjoy a high degree of authority and position in the households compared to the non-employed women. Nevertheless, the degree of power has not touched equivalency in family set up consistently. However, it is identified in general, that employed women take in greater power and decision making in domestic matters, by making economic contribution to household affairs, than home makers do. Out of the 100 married females selected on random basis (comprised of newly married and old), 13 per cent opined that subsequent to many years of stay in their husband's house facilitate most of them to put into words their views in decision making and 87 per cent were of the opinion that nuclear family imparts more power and standing to female members in decision making rather than joint family living. Earlier, the joint family living exerts more pressure to follow the traditional norms and customs prevalent in the society, especially the gendered division of role, status and work. Thus, the customs and practices prevalent in the society directly favour power and role to men in decision making. The study highlights that time, space, role and cultural norms play a vital role in determining the decision making and power in the household. As per the 'resource theory' of marital relations (in Ramu, 2003:129), power is generally associated with resources brought into a marriage by each spouse. The greater the resources, either spouse has in comparison to the other, the greater will be his or her marital power and the resources are usually economic in nature, namely, education, occupational status, and income...and Safilios-Rothschild (in Ramu, 2003:131) suggests that family power be understood in terms of its three components: authority; decision making by couples; and influence of one spouse over the other. Max Weber (1947:152) defines "power" as the probability that one actor within a

social relationship will be able to carry out his (or her) own will despite resistance or opposition in that relationship, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.

As pointed out earlier, gendered stratification in power and decision making prevails even at the family level. But its rigidity dissolves corresponding to the nuclearisation of the family, participation of women in income generation etc. Therefore, decision making in most of the dual- earner families (82 per cent) is found to be more or less egalitarian than families where the earner is only male members. According to the respondents, earning and educational status also have direct correlation with the involvement in decision making process. For instance, the Pulayas had traditionally been engaged in agricultural labour irrespective of gender. As per the respondents of older generation, the females also played a vital role in decision making. But on the other hand, among the Nambuthiris, the women were totally alienated from this sphere especially due to the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal residence and descent system. In the matter of residence selection among the Hindu castes, almost all the husbands prefer to live in their own households and living in their wife's house is considered by them as deprecating. It is only below 5 per cent of the male population not took it as a grievance matter. This authoritarian nature in living arrangements among the male members also show their dominance in decision making process. But small sections, which declare accommodative decision as per the convenience of the family members, especially females, were from dual- earner families. Accordingly, due to familial pressures, the males reached in consensus to live uxorilocally. Even in dual- earner families domestic division of labour found, however, a kind sharing of household tasks also augmented inherently. Nevertheless, the Mappila-Muslims prefer to live uxorilocally as per their conventional norms. Along with the residence pattern,

the rules of inheritance existed among them favours a sagacity of autonomy and security to the females. However, a small portion of them started their living patrilocally. The study highlights that the so called “resources” has an important role in determining the power in decision making. More than that, nuclear family system imposed the involvement of both husband and wife in the domestic decision making. It also implicates that all these things together position women from margin to centre.

WORK PARTICIPATION

Occupation is one of the main states or tenures of being occupied. It includes any activity or livelihood strategy in which a person is affianced. The Malayan, Viswakarma, Nambuthiri, Marar and Chaliya are the castes in Chirakkal still following traditional occupation.

In this study, an attempt has been made to analyse the involvement of males and females among various caste groups in diverse occupational categories. This is to analyse the gender disparity in the nature of work and participation in labour force of the society. In the patriarchal set up, household work is not been assessed and counted as a labour. Even though, there are studies (Geetha, 2006) which show that work participation of women not liberated them completely from their traditional sub-ordination. Nevertheless, participation in work could be regarded as an agent of change and key to liberation. But the notion of work varies from person to person, community to community and region to region. Regarding the work participation of women, three categories of women were selected irrespective of caste - those engaged in low- paying jobs, especially coolie and wage labourers, medium, working in private firms and those in the Government sector. Generally, economic

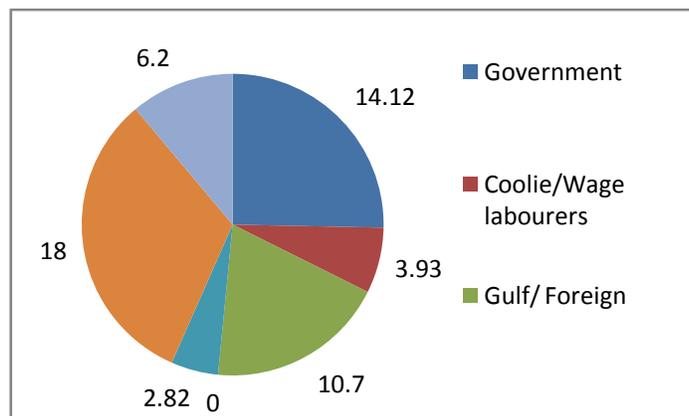
position and education are the criteria on which the status of women is assessed in the contemporary societies. These “resources” help to free them from the gendered culture of male dominance to a great extent. However, it varies from society to society and individual to individual. Occupation is thus, related to the status of a person. Traditionally, women were bound to household work, which was unpaid. But the attainment of education has changed the situation empowering them with new vision which is very much productive.

To make an analysis of work participation rate of women, the study also focused on the occupational status of working population of the area. The following are the general occupational categories recognized and framed from the sample population.

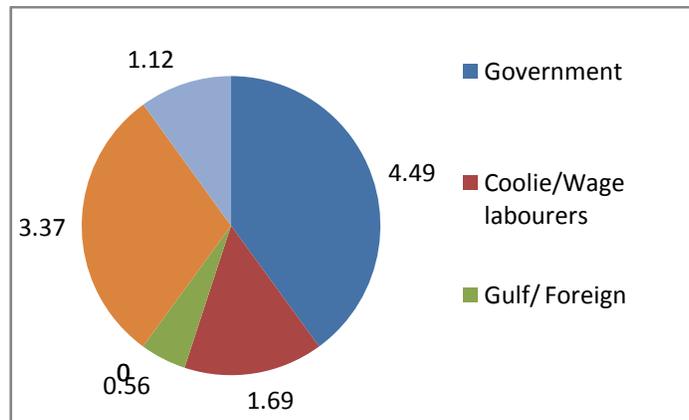
MALE-FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION RATES

Figure 3.10 NAYAR

MALE



FEMALE



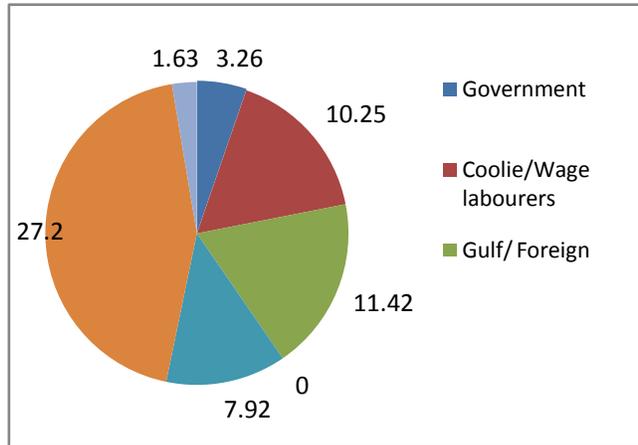
Work Participation rate- M: F- 55.77: 11.23

The Nayars were traditionally engaged in military service and were predominantly land owners. Their occupations were thus, part of the feudal system in Malabar.

Now they have adopted various kinds of jobs. Government Service is the predominant occupational category of females followed by private jobs. But males engaged mainly in private jobs followed by Government employment. The work participation rates of females are very low i.e., the ratio of work participation rate of male- female is 55.77: 11.23.

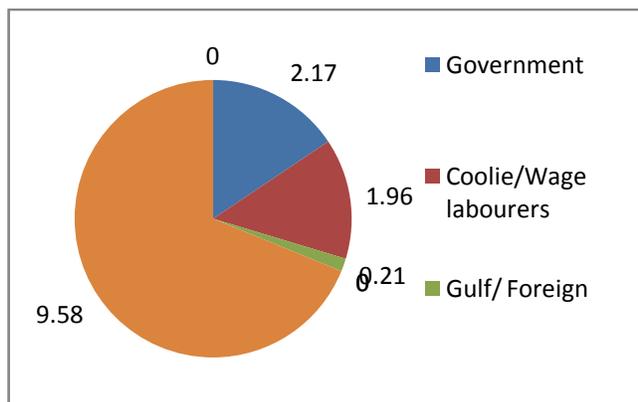
Figure 3.11 THIYYA

MALE



Presently, among the Thiyyas, males predominantly engaged in private/factory work followed by employment in Gulf/Foreign countries. The females mainly occupied in private jobs followed by Government Service and Wage labour and a negligible percent engaged in professional services.

FEMALE

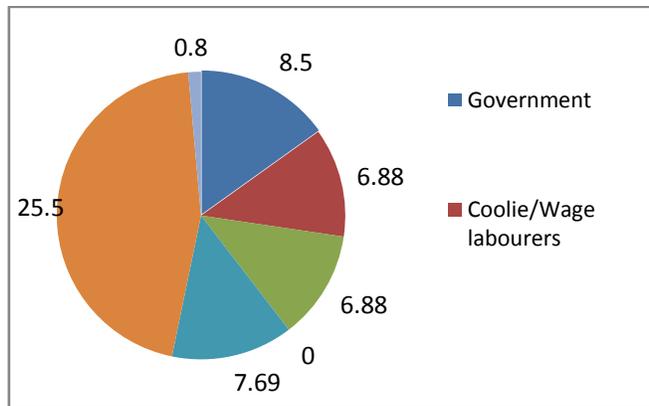


Work Participation rate- M: F- 61.68: 13.92

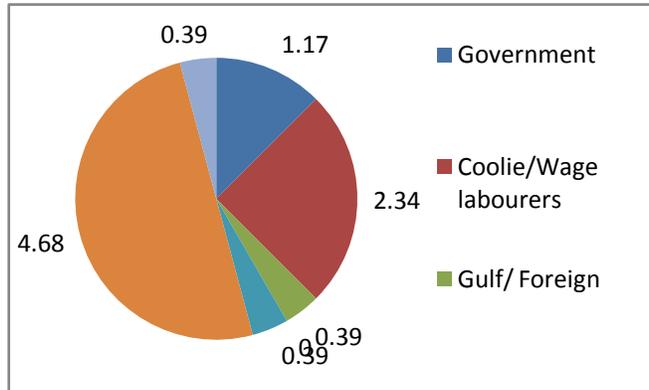
Toddy tapping was considered to be one of the main traditional occupations of the Thiyya community. However, presently nobody has engaged in the traditional occupation of the caste. The male-female work participation rate or labour force participation rate is 61.68: 13.92 i.e., female work participation rate very low.

Figure 3.12 VANIYA

MALE



FEMALE

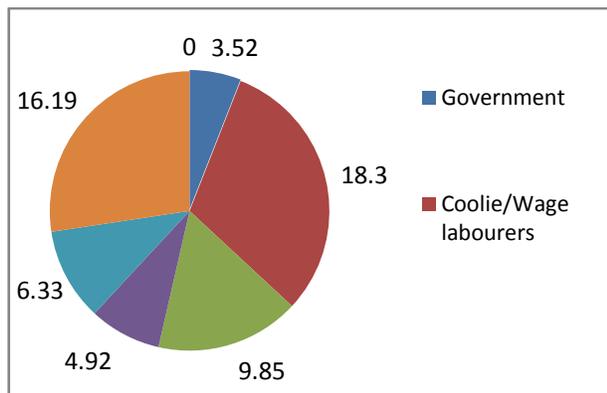


Work Participation rate- M: F-56.25:9.36

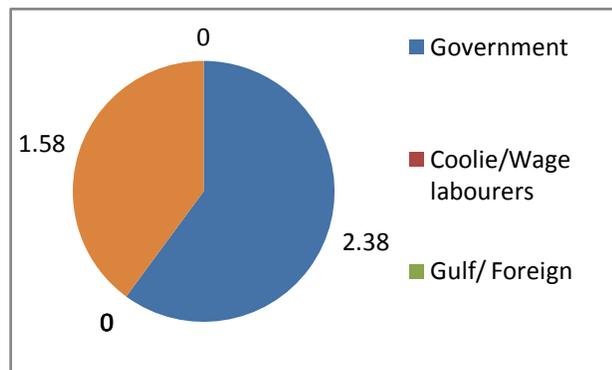
The Vaniya are traditional oil pressers and presently, nobody is engaged in their traditional occupation. Private/factory jobs are predominant and both males and females are employed in various sectors. The male-female work participation is in the ratio of 56.25:9.36.

Figure 3.13 MANIYANI

MALE



FEMALE

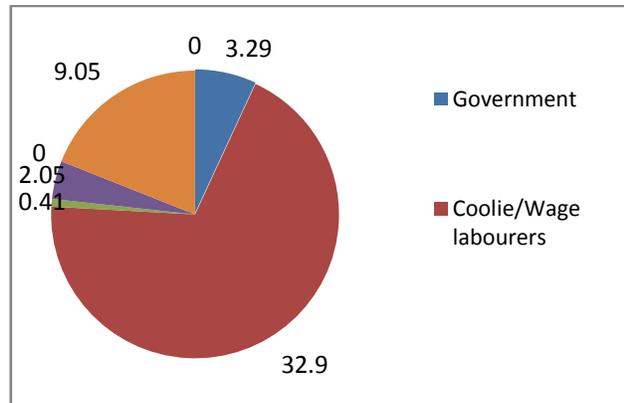


Work Participation rate- M: F- 59.11: 3.96

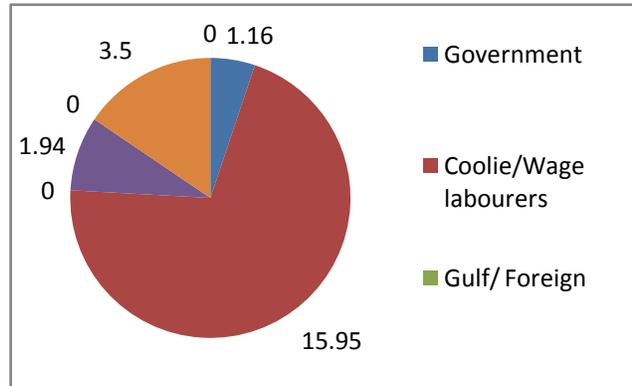
Masonry work is the traditional occupation of the Maniyani. Presently the female members predominantly pursue Government service followed by private jobs. The males have adopted coolie/ wage labour followed by employment in private firms /factory. A few of the males are also engaged in their traditional occupation. The male- female work participation rate is 59.11: 3.96.

Figure 3.14 PULAYA

MALE



FEMALE



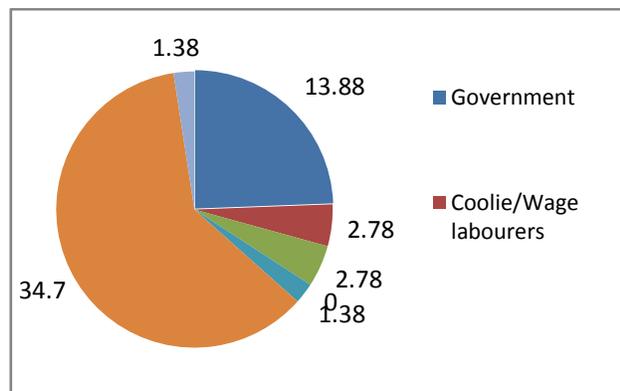
Work Participation rate- M: F- 47.7: 22.55

The Pulaya had been the traditional agrestic slaves or agricultural labourers. However, the women folk also engaged in inland fishing and mat weaving. Now they have adopted new occupations, predominantly wage labour

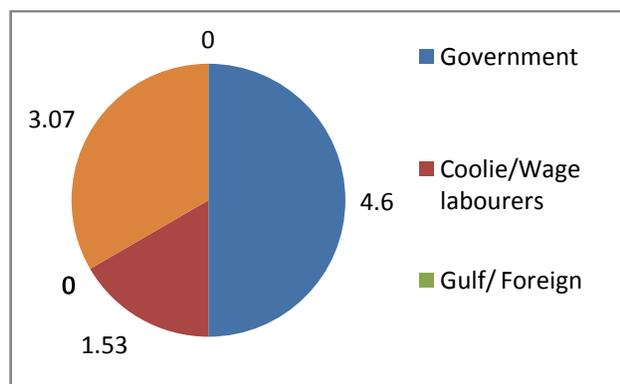
and other private sector jobs. It is seen that, the females are engaged as wage labourers' more than male members of the society. The work participation rate of males and females are in the ratio of 47.7: 22.55. Compared to other caste groups, the ratio of female participation among the Pulayas are much higher. It has been noted that traditionally the role of females in economic activities were much higher, and the same situation is continuing among the Pulaya.

Figure 3.15 MARAR

MALE



FEMALE

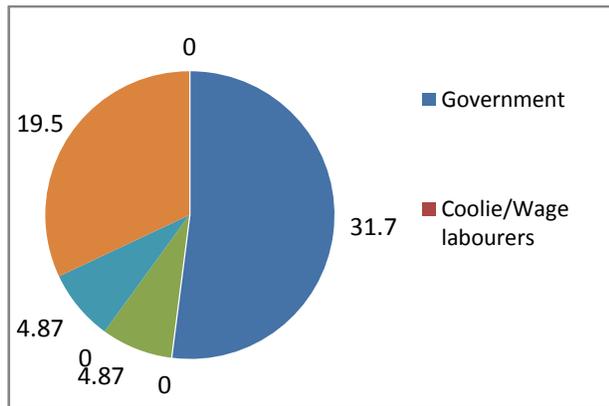


Work Participation rate- M: F- 56.9: 9.2

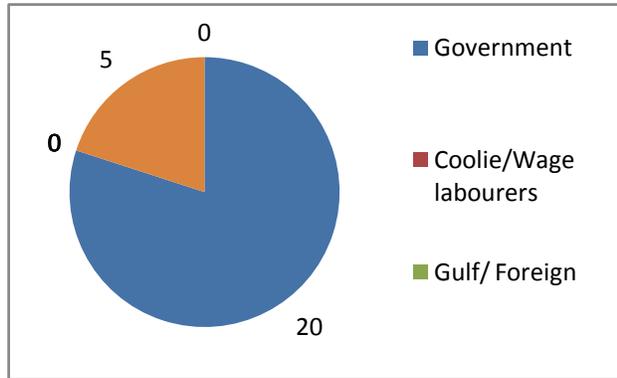
The Marar are mainly a landowning community. Some of them continue their traditional occupation of drum-beating in temples (Singh, 1998). The study shows that females follow principally Government jobs followed by private jobs while the males are predominantly engaged in private jobs followed by Government jobs. Some of the members are engaged in their traditional occupation on seasonal basis. The male-female work participation rate falls in the ratio 56.9: 9.2.

Figure 3.16 VARMA

MALE



FEMALE

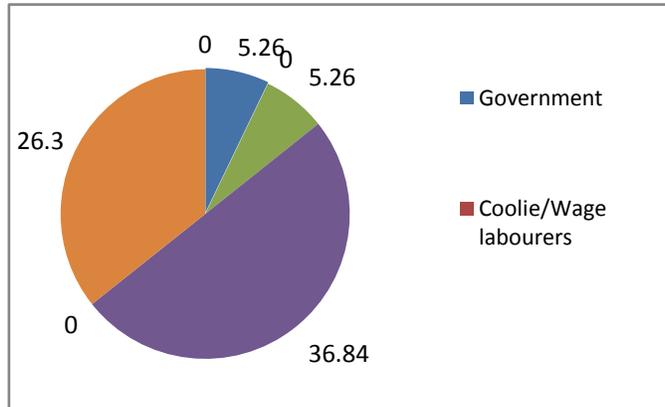


Work Participation rate- M: F- 60.94: 25

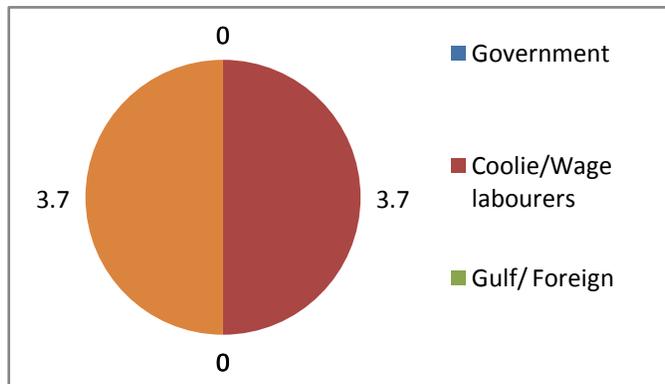
Traditionally the Varma had been a ruling caste group and landlords. Now the males and females of this community follow predominantly Government jobs, followed by Private /Factory jobs. Nobody from this community is found engaged as wage labourer. The male-female work participation ratio is 60.94: 25.

Figure 3.17 VALLUVA

MALE



FEMALE

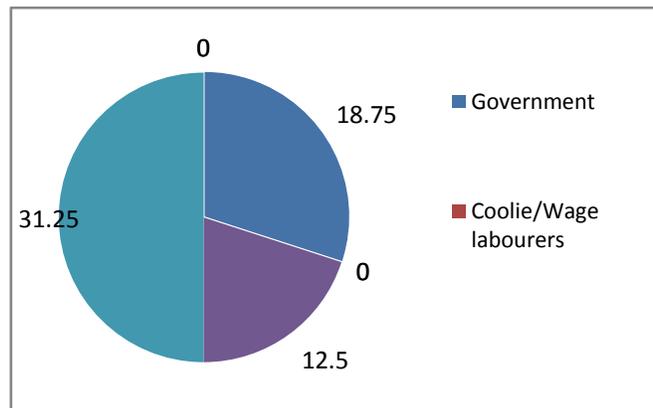


Work Participation rate- M: F- 73.66: 7.4

The Valluva community of Kerala is traditionally engaged in inland fishing and their secondary activities include spinning of fish nets, marketing of fish and small scale agricultural activities for their neighbouring people. The male members of the Valluva community still follow traditional occupation followed by private jobs and the females mainly engaged in wage labour and Private /Factory jobs. The male-female work participation rate is 73.66: 7.4.

Figure 3.18 NAMBUTHIRI

MALE



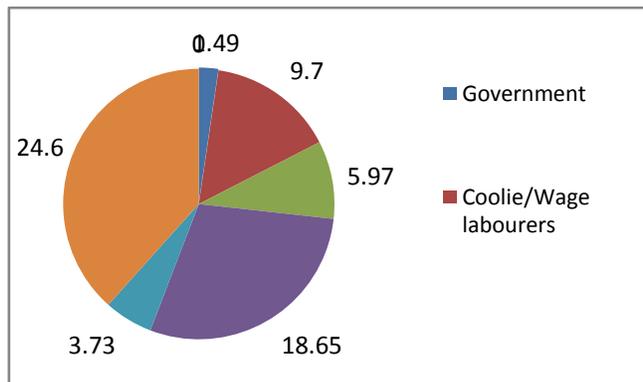
Work Participation rate- M: F- 62.5:0

The Nambuthiris are concerned with priestly tasks and followed patrilineal system. It is seen that a majority of the surveyed population is doing business or are self employed followed by government jobs. 12.5 per cent of the males are still engaged in traditional occupation. However, the female members of the surveyed population of Nambuthiris are not engaged in any of the paid jobs.

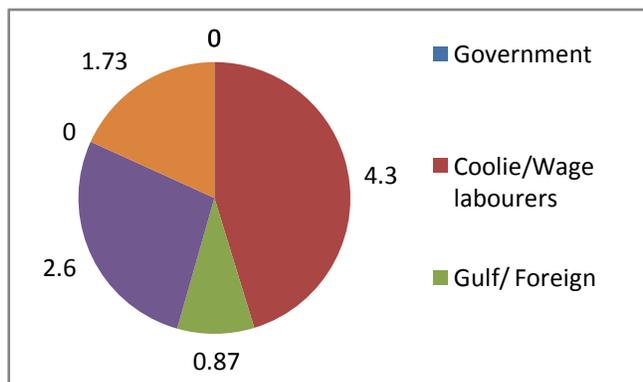
A great disparity in work participation is found in the case of Nambuthiris and the work participation of the females remained as zero.

Figure 3.19 VISWAKARMA

MALE



FEMALE



Work Participation rate- M: F- 64.14: 9.5

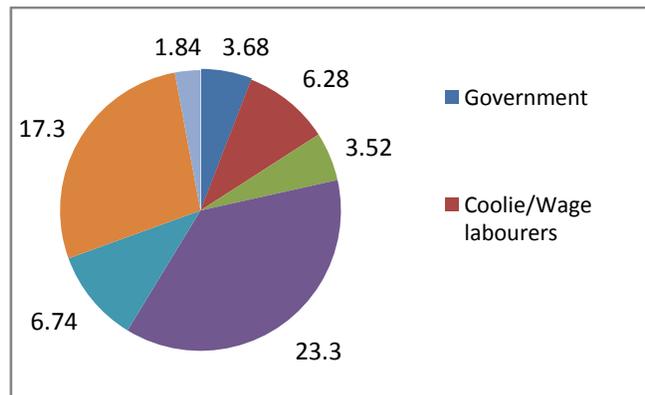
The Viswakarma includes five categories of communities engaged in goldsmithy, blacksmithy, carpentry etc. Traditionally, the females were not engaged in any kind of work outside, but assisted the male members in their

work. But today, both males and females are engaged in their traditional occupations.

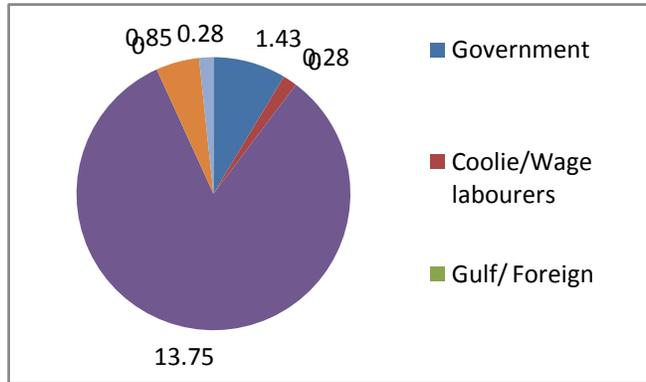
However, the representation of male members is more in Private/ Factory jobs and the females predominantly engaged in wage labour followed by traditional occupation. But, the work participation rate of females among the Viswakarma is very low i.e., 64.14: 9.5 ratio.

Figure 3.20 CHALIYA

MALE



FEMALE

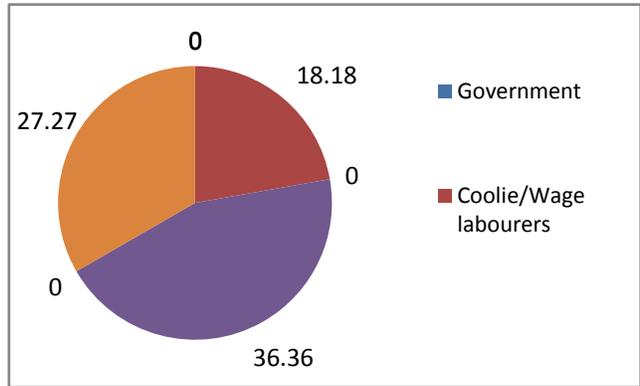


Work Participation rate- M: F- 62.66: 16.59

The traditional occupation of the Chaliya is weaving and they still continue the traditional occupation. But the method of production and service has changed from the earlier method. Both male and female members of the Chaliya community predominantly follow their traditional occupation. The male-female work participation rate is 62.66: 16.59.

Figure 3.21 MALAYAN

MALE

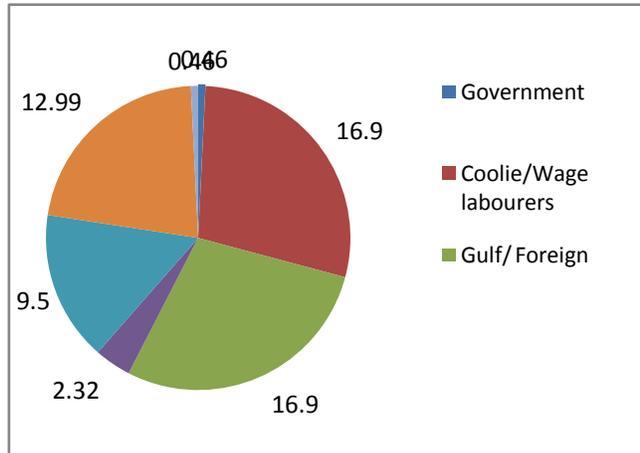


Work Participation rate- M: F- 81.81: 0

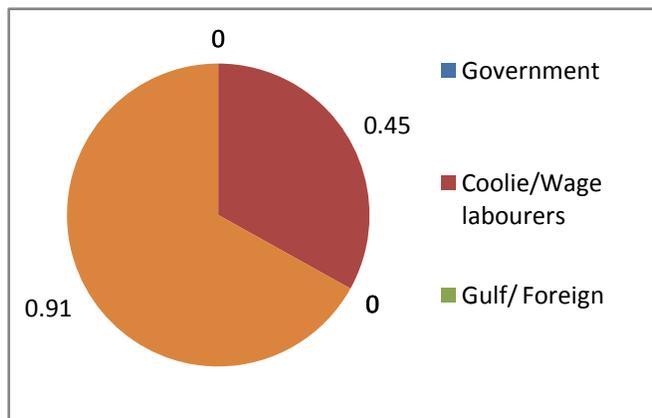
The Malayans still follow their traditional occupation. Both males and females of the community had separate traditional occupations. They are described by Thurston (1909) as a devil-dancing community with the spirit (*bhuta*) worshipping cult famous in the area. Devil dances, *theyattam* and *thirayattam*, are the traditional dance forms performed by men. Their women serve as midwives (*vayattatti*) to other communities in their village (Singh, 1998). In the surveyed population, the males do traditional occupation followed by private jobs. As a result, great disparities are there in the work participation rate. The male-female work participation rate is 81.81: 0. This is supporting the fact that in strictly patrilineal and patriarchal societies, females are not encouraged to carry out paid works.

Figure 3.22 MUSLIM

MALE



FEMALE



Work participation rate- M: F- 59.53: 1.36

The traditional occupation of the Mappila is trade, business, agriculture and service (Singh, 1998). The females predominantly do Private/Factory jobs followed by wage labour. Employment in Gulf countries and wage labour/coolie are the predominant jobs of males followed by private jobs. The

ratio of male-female work participation is 59.53: 1.36. Among the Mappila-Muslims also the work participation rate of females tends to be very low.

As per the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Labour-force participation rate refers to the number of people in work and unemployment and those seeking work, as a proportion of a specified baseline population. The work participation rate may vary according to how the pedestal group is distinct from the rest of the group and defined. Here, the total adult population over 25 years, and the working-age population are taken as the pedestal group.

In this study, it is found that female labour force participation rates are markedly lower than male rates among the Nambuthiri, Malayan and Muslims. The highest percentage of female work participation is found among the Pulaya, Varma and Chaliya communities. Actually, paid work and unpaid work is central in the social construction of gender. Traditionally, a woman's role mainly confined at home, by building concern of the family unit and managing the domestic sphere. Thus, most of the women involve in the sphere of unpaid work and face marginality in various spheres of life. Men's contributions in unpaid work are relatively insignificant. Changing social attitudes, nuclear family system, education etc., enabled women to enter the world of public and paid jobs, even though, these are not yet reached on equal basis. However, the settlement of work and family responsibilities for both women and men will ensure a gender balanced society.

In a 20-page report to the two-week session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says unpaid work at household level, including care giving, remains "invisible and unmeasured"... He also says that gender inequality and discrimination contribute to the continuing imbalance in the division of labour between

women and men and perpetuate stereotypic perceptions of men as breadwinners and women as caregivers (<http://southasia.oneworld.net/todaysh headlines/household-work-remains-invisible-and-unmeasured>).

The continuation of this situation in the coming decades would create a gender balanced society. Gough (in Singh, 2002) states that the opening up of wage and salary work for some women, and of female school education, appear to have brought a general disappearance of both taboos and formal privileges in relation to kins women, involving both a decline in the sexual connotations of womanhood and an increase in feminine freedom.

There are several reasons behind the rise in female work force participation rate. Educational attainment of girls is one of the prime reasons behind it. More over, to meet the day to day requirements of the nuclear family and education of the children, again ensured the role of women in the work force. Further, changing attitudes of the society about the earnings and role of women made them to enter into the labour market. Women's work participation rates vary widely from caste to caste or community to community. In fact, women's employment or occupational status would depend upon a number of factors. The move up in women's work participation rate or employment is one of the most important social, cultural, and economic trends of the present day society. The increasing proportion or rate of women doing remunerated jobs has transformed gender relations. More over, it has transformed the notions of family and residence patterns, and is a prime means of women's advancement toward gender equality in the work force. The increase in women's labour force participation has been an input on the way to gender equality both at residence and in the workplace. Antecol (2000) finds that culture plays a role in

explaining inter-ethnic variation in the gender gap in labor force participation rates (LFPR) (<http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/berger/pdf/sexroles>).

The occupational classification system used in this study consists of seven specific occupational categories for employed people and arranged as major occupational groups. The major occupational groups thus divided are Government employees, Coolie/Wage labourers, people doing traditional Occupations, Self employed/Business, Private sector employees, Professionals and people who are working abroad.

Occupational segregation by gender is an extensive way to express the male and female dominated jobs. It also refers to the manner in which some jobs are dominated by men, and some other jobs by women. Generally, occupational selection is one of the important causes for creating gender gap. The last few decades have witnessed remarkable decline in gender inequality, especially by the rise of egalitarian views on gender roles and the narrowing down of traditional gender gaps in decision making and labour force participation.

The Pulayas of Kerala have been a downtrodden caste group and still their position is not much improved both economically and educationally. The Pulaya women had traditionally been engaging in physical labour outside the home mainly in agricultural work. They had enjoyed the same freedom as men in most of the aspects; and their economic power is significantly greater than women in other caste groups. They typically played a decisive role in the economic affairs of the household and in decision making. In comparison to other cultures, it was a distinctly attenuated group. Saradmoni in her study of the Pulayas in Venganoor, has noted that their weak economic base and limited opportunities to break away from the existing set up keeps them poor and

backward (in Nair and Menon, 2007). But the involvement in the paid jobs, the varying forms of division of labour and there by the regularly occurring economic processes and educational attainments have redefined the role of women in the society.

The Muslims of the area enhanced their social status through finding job opportunities in Gulf countries. The position of Thiyya is far better because of employment diversification and educational achievements. The Chaliyas are still following their traditional occupation and in the surveyed population, 23.3 per cent males and 13.75 per cent females are still engaged in traditional weaving. The Malayan are also following their traditional occupation and 36.36 per cent males are involved in it. In the case of Viswakarma 18.65 per cent males and 2.6 per cent females are also engaged in their traditional occupations.

Based on an intensive study of married “working parents”, Hochschild identified three types of marital role ideologies: the traditional, the egalitarian, and the transitional. The traditional wife has less power than her husband and identifies with her activities at home rather than on her job. The egalitarian ideology actually prescribes the spouses should be equally powerful at home, and that they should be and equally invested in their jobs. There were different versions of the egalitarian view, with different ideals for the degree to which people should be invested in their home lives and in their jobs. Most of the people that were interviewed for the study, however, had some form of a transitional ideology. These ideologies represent some point along the continuum from the old (traditional) ideology to the new (egalitarian) ideology. In the transition, the wife’s identity involves her work at home and on the job, and the husband’s identity is based more on his job than his wife’s is on hers. The transitional ideologies varied in particulars, such as the degree of investment of the husband in family matters (in Kramer, 2004).

The transitional ideologies of matrilineal and patrilineal systems and authority in fact shows that some elements of these systems are not suited to the changing socio-cultural scenario. The concept of matri- patri continuum can be therefore, a phase of socio-cultural change and it is possible that a stage may reach where both parents and kindreds will have the same importance, i.e., bilateral-bilineal system, in the matter of succession, inheritance and so on. In bilinear system of family descent, blood relatives and privileges of inheritance through both male and female ancestors are of equal importance. Bilateral-Bilineal system of inheritance ensures a symmetric society. More than that, at family level, equal role status of males and females facilitates egalitarianism and is supposed to promote social and economic prosperity.

To understand the opinion regarding decision making power within the family, 100 respondents, both males and females, especially adolescents were taken on random basis as the sample group. As the respondents were asked to express their opinions regarding parental decision making, 51 per cent of them implied for father's authority, 22 per cent for mother's, 22 per cent reported that they would like to exercise the role of both mother and father and 5 per cent replied vaguely. This indicates the view of the situational satchet, experience and the gendered nature of the family set up. It could well anticipate that in egalitarian families both the parents present equally powerful but divergent roles. Thus, some social structural bias operates in the society in terms of gender. Engels, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* suggests that early human societies were egalitarian... He suggests that for women to reclaim their humanity, they would have to necessarily enter the realm of social production... Engels argues that modern industrial production which requires women's labour as well as men's would prove advantageous to

them, since it would give them economic independence and, more important, a re-organization of the household (in Geetha, 2006).

The stages of cultural development could be modeled as,

Stage I. Co-existence of matriliney and patriliney, in which, matrilineal and patrilineal system existed during the same time among various communities. Socio- cultural changes emphasis on the changes due to change in kinship structure.

Stage II. Dominance of Patrilineal system, it is the stage in which, in addition to the inheritance pattern, male domination or power predominates in the society. In this system, the father is the head of the family and men have authority over women and children. In this system locality and resources are under the control of men. The locality actually denotes an area and the resources are mainly restricted to the area. Many feminist researchers have endorsed patrilocality with the subordinate status of women.

Stephanie Coontz and Peta Henderson stress the importance of patrilocality for decreasing the status of women (<http://www.bridgew.edu/SoAS/jiws/nov04/NancyJaystheory.pdf>). Thus, the gendered space also creates status inequality. The social system as it operates at present is a modified form having incorporated elements of patriliney over the years. The tendency is towards patrilocal residence, patrilineal pattern of inheritance and parental control of children which are part of this change.

Stage III. Bilateral-Bilineal system, is supposed to be the most feasible form or most fitting model. In this system, both males and females are of equally important. In the words of Dube (2001:246), bilaterality seems to enshrine the principle of flexibility... in such societies, sex roles are more fluid.

Male dominance or male oriented inheritances of property and rights in societies have regularly been recognized as a particular state affecting largely women's status especially, social, economic, religious and political. Actually, male dominance was the net result of patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence and men's control of economic resources. While in matriliney, children are considered to be in various way incorporated to their mother's brothers, rather than their father's.

Among the Nambuthiris, even though patrilineal joint family system has broken down, they still follow the same inheritance pattern, in which the property is passing from father to son, not to daughter. But the inheritance pattern of matrilineal communities totally disintegrated. Feudalism also favoured matrilineal system in Kerala; however, the disintegration of feudalism favoured the decline of joint family.

Basically, the concept of pure matriliney is a conceptual one. Thus, for model building, pure matriliney and pure patriliney has been taken as the two extreme ends. The rights and privileges that a child acquires in a system such as rights related to property, residence, naming conventions etc., were on the basis of membership and descent.

In short, the entry of females in to the labour market would support their autonomy and liberation in the society. Accordingly, in the contemporary society, more than that of kinship principles, ego based kindred relations, gendered roles and principles have inherently been acquiring an important place.