CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter attempts to review the related literature and to present the rationale and objectives of the research study. The scope of this chapter is limited and the attempt is not to review the vast literature on tribal development but to elaborate on particular themes that help understand and explain the research problem. Different perspectives on core concepts such as tribe, development and tribal development are explored and an attempt is made to understand the tribal reality in the specific social context of Wayanad.

In the development discourse in India, tribes continue to be viewed as a monolithic category despite significant differences among different tribal groups. There is evidence of increasing socio-cultural historical and political differentiation among different tribal groups and there are regional variations in the development indicators of Scheduled Tribes across the country. For instance, literacy among tribal populations in the North Eastern region that have a predominantly large tribal population is relatively higher than that among other regions. The tribal development policies and programmes are centered on the homogeneity of tribal people and assume that they will develop and integrate into the ‘mainstream’.

There is a growing body of literature on the development of tribal communities in India. The various critiques of the current development model rooted in the modernisation paradigm have shown the contradictions inherent in the model including the state-initiated development for marginalised people such as tribal communities (Fernandes 1992; Pathy 1998; Roy Burman 2004). They argue that the state’s welfare policies for tribal communities and the oppressive and coercive measures against them operate in a manner that leads to not only the economic and political marginalisation of the tribal communities but also their social and cultural exclusion. Some of these discussions have been revisited recently in the context of the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and the Draft National Policy
for Tribal Communities, 2006. The bill and the policy are purported at undoing the historical injustice done to the tribal people in the name of development.

However, the definition of tribe itself is riddled with ambiguity; there is no homogenous community with special characteristics called tribes. To understand the concept of tribe and the way it is evolving, different views of anthropologists and sociologists are explored in the following section.

**Conceptualising Tribes**

The term ‘tribe’ is defined in numerous ways by different western and eastern anthropologists and sociologists but the different definitions may not capture the reality of the people that they represent. The different definitions have emerged with different purposes such as encyclopedic definitions, administrative definitions for surveillance and control, anthropological definitions for classification and analytical purposes and self Definitions for emphasising diversity and asserting identity.

The term ‘tribe’ originated around the time of the Greek city–states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The term and concept, ‘tribe’ is derived from a Latin root ‘tribuz’ meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped: any one of three divisions of the people representing the Latin, Sabine and Etruscan settlements or any of the later political divisions of the people (*Oxford English Dictionary*, p.1530; Roy Burman, 1994). Roy Burman observes that with the Romans, the tribe was a political division, while the Greeks seem to have equated it with their ‘fraternities’ at times, with geographical divisions at others. In Irish history, however, the term meant families or communities of persons having the same surname. Most of the anthropologists and sociologists of western origin use the term ‘tribe’ as in the latest edition of Oxford dictionary, a race of people, now applied specially to a primary aggregate of people in a primitive or barbarous condition, under a headman or chief. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘tribe, in anthropology, a notional form of human social organisation based on a set of smaller groups, having temporary or permanent political integration, and defined by traditions of common descent, language, culture and ideology.’

group usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organisation’ (Roy Burman, 1994:22). However, Roy Burman acknowledges that there is hardly any tribal community following these criteria (ibid).

**The Term ‘Tribe’ – a Colonial Construction**

The review of the various definitions of ‘tribe’ in the Indian context reveals that there is not much consensus on the definition but some anthropologists and sociologists trace their origin to the rise of colonialism. They viewed the term tribe as a colonial construction coined for administrative purposes. Ghurye (1959) elaborates on this by highlighting the census data on the tribes and various names that the British administrators gave to the tribes like ‘forest tribes’, ‘primitive tribes’ and ‘hill tribes’. According to Pathy (1992), before colonisation there was no equivalent indigenous word for the English term, ‘tribe’ and it was during the colonial expansion into the non-Aryan areas, that the tribe as a social category got crystallized as animist in India. Joshi (1998) too observes that the tribal, non-tribal categorisation did not exist in the pre-British era. Sharma and Oommen (2000) point out that several tribes were considered nations, peoples and kingdoms by the colonisers when they wanted to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with them. But the colonial subjugation transformed nations, countries, kingdoms and people into so called tribes. So it merely reflects the vocabulary of the colonial powers and prior to colonisation the term had no equivalent in Africa, Asia, Australia or America (Sharma and Oommen 2000). Xaxa (2005) too agrees that the term, ‘tribe’ is a colonial construction and before the colonial era, the use of a generic term to describe tribal people was absent. At the same time, Xaxa reiterates that tribe as a category and a point of reference may be treated as a colonial construction, but the image and meaning underlying the category did exist earlier (Xaxa, 2005). For instance, he points out that from the 16th century the term, ‘tribe’ was used to refer to communities that lived in primitive and barbarous conditions and the Sanskritic and Hindu religious texts and traditions described them in a similar fashion. Further, he notes that the precolonial portrayals like ‘dasyus’, ‘rakshakas’ and ‘nishadas’ conveyed the brutality attached to the concept tribe and their religion was described as animistic.

The term, ‘Scheduled Tribe’ is used as an administrative category of tribe and evolved from the British administrative system in India. According to this categorization, tribes
are only those who are included in the Scheduled Tribes list of the Constitution and it is
drawn from the colonial administration who prepared it through imagination and local
sterotypes (Pathy 1982). The Constitution has not specifically taken care to define a
Scheduled Tribe. The criteria followed in the Constitution for specification of a
community as a Scheduled Tribe are ‘indications of primitive traits, distinctive culture,
geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large and backwardness’
(Hooja 2004:19). However, in the modern development discourse, ‘tribes’ are only those
who are included in the Scheduled Tribe’s list of the Constitution of India. And one
remains a tribe only in the state where she or he is enlisted as a Scheduled Tribe. No
community is scheduled for the entire country. Therefore, a tribal community migrating
to another state where it is not scheduled loses its status and is not enumerated as such in
the census. India maintains a list of ‘Scheduled Tribes’ for constitutional protection of its
tribal people. A state-wise list of tribes was drawn and it was left to the Parliament to
determine the official list of the Scheduled Tribes from time to time. The constitutional
definition based on enumeration is quite different from the anthropological notions of a
tribe. Though it does not have much scientific basis, the term Scheduled Tribe ‘is linked
to the extension of administrative and political concessions and the exclusion and
inclusion of a particular group reflects political mobilization rather than a neutral
application of criteria’ (Xaxa 2003:376).

The Social Science Perspective

The social scientists of today have moved away from the British Anthropologists’ notion
of a tribe as an isolate, homogenous, autonomous social unit. The relation between tribes
and caste is one area of interest in tribal studies and research in social anthropology.
Surveying different literature, Chaudhuri (1982), highlights that in India there is a process
of gradual conversion of tribal people into caste. At the same time, he highlights the
reverse processes and various boundary maintaining mechanisms of tribes within the
dominant culture for retaining self identity. According to Menon (2003) there is mutual
influence of religion between the Hindus and tribal people in Kerala. For instance, there is
tribalisation of Hinduism by the adoption of deities and worship from the folk forms.
Menon points out that in India those who do not declare any notable religion is
considered legally a Hindu. But he stresses that the similarities in rituals and practices of
tribals and Hindus is because of their influence on each other. He also challenges the concept of Sanskritisation by indicating that there is tribalisation of Hinduism as there is also the indication of Hinduisation of tribals in the name of cultural enhancement. In an earlier study, Nathan (1997) highlights that in India, ethnocentrism denies the history of caste which is based on deep inequality in access to knowledge, productive resources and social status. In contrast, Nathan insists on the features of a tribal society that emphasise the relation of all members to production unlike the hierarchic exploitative production relations like the non producing professional priests and warriors in caste formations. While admitting some similar features of caste and tribe like endogamy, Nathan differentiates its function in the two communities, as endogamy is about maintaining a tribal identity in a tribal community but this notion of identity get transformed to purity, a hierarchical notion by relating it to the impurity of others in caste society. He notes that in sexual relations, while tribes forbade all relations from outside their specific group, caste purity permits taking women from more pure castes, but not giving women to less pure castes.

According to Pathy (1988), the state policies of assimilation and national integration contributed to the destruction of tribal identities and the tribal people were made subservient to the dominant sanskritic culture and a caste ridden social system began to get imposed on tribal people. As Xaxa (2005) points out, the view that tribes are Hindus has become popular among the right wing Hindu social and political activists. The Hindu organisations are trying to spread the belief that Adivasis are part of the Hindu religion by claiming that Hindus also worship nature (Sundar 2009). Sundar points out that the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA) of RSS in Jharkhand resists the terminology of ‘indigenous people’ and even ‘Adivasi’ and prefers to call them vanvasis to include them in the lowest rung of Hindu religion by describing the distinction between tribes and castes as a colonial product as stressed by many post colonial critiques. Even in Kerala, the VKA brand Adivasis as vanvasis and place them in the lowest rung of Hindu religion. In the eighteenth century writings on India, the term, ‘caste’ have often been used synonymously with tribe and later, for a long time, not synonymously but in a similar manner as in the phrase, ‘castes and tribes’, as if they were similar social groups. However, the recent movements for self-assertion and self-rule due to the threat posed to
tribal ways of living are a sign that there is not much base for including tribes in the caste structure.

Further, Bailey (1960) has taken a structural position in the definition of tribe. As he argues, caste society is predominantly hierarchical and tribal society is basically segmentary. He argues that the segmentary political system of the tribes represent a structure of a definite type. While emphasising the segmentary system of political relations among tribal people, he does not rejecting the process of integration and gradual conversion. He further points out that tribes are those who have direct command over resources, and their access to the product of the economy is not derived through the dependent status on others. However, Rao (1988) observes that Bailey gives importance to economy and power and he argues that it is not economic and political change alone but the total structure that needs to be taken into consideration while defining tribal people. Even though there is no consensus in seeing ‘tribe’ as ‘caste’, social scientists of today view tribal people in relation with non-tribal people. As Xaxa (2005) points out, majority of the social scientists see the difference between tribal and non-tribal people as one of structure. That is, tribes were seen as lying outside the structure of the larger Indian society and its civilisation but in constant interaction with them. In the social science perspective, the difference between tribes and other Indian population is accepted according to their distinct language, culture, custom, tradition and social organisation. They argue that these characteristics undergo change in the process of acculturation arising from their contact and interaction with non tribal people. Xaxa (2005) criticises this stand of social scientists pointing out the possibility of the tribes losing a distinct identity and space due to the process of social transformation. He maintains that the only option left to them is to maintain their identity as a caste within the hierarchical structure of the caste system.

There are comparisons of tribal and jati (caste) characteristics. Mandelbaum (1970) differentiates ‘tribal’ and ‘jati’ and observes that in tribal life, the societal links are based on kinship. Individual equality as kinsman is assumed in tribal societies. Lineage or clans are considered the chief corporate units for land ownership, defence, economic production and consumption. Each one enjoys equal rights even though there is some subordination by age and sex. But the age dependency and women’s dependency on men
is relatively less compared to jati society. In jati, members, especially of the higher rank hold different assumptions about kinship and society. There the higher jatis subordinate the lower jatis of labourers, artisans and sweepers and they assume inequality in society. For jati members, kinship is not important and they assume inequality in society insisting on non-kinship relations and hierarchical ordering. Jati people expect their village society to be culturally heterogeneous, each jati following a unique combination of customary practices, but tribes expect their society to be homogeneous, not necessarily heterogeneous. However, today tribal groups are heterogenous. For example, Meenas in Rajasthan is a highly developed group in terms of development indicators. The three large tribal communities in Kerala - Paniya, Kuricha and Malai Arayan report literacy rates of 48.5 per cent, 78.2 per cent and 94.5 per cent respectively. As Roy Burman (2003) points out the identity boundaries of tribal people are not always fixed but adjust to new needs and challenges.

According to Roy Burman (1994), in Indian languages including Sanskrit and Prakrit, ‘Jana’ was the term for tribe. He also mentions that there were ‘Janas’ or communities of people like the Savaras, the Kullatas, the Kollas, the Bhallas, the Khasis, the Kinnars and countless number of others whom today we designate as tribes, bearing almost the same recognizable names. Ray (1972) analyzes contextually the long list of janas in the epic Buddhist, Puranic and secular literature in early medieval times and points out that hardly any distinction was made between ‘what we know today as ‘tribes’ and such communities of people who were known as Gandharas and Kambojas, Khasas and Kosalas, Angas and Magdhas, Kurus and Panchalas’ (cited in Roy Burman, 1994: 27). However, there are also cautions against such identification by scholars, arguing that the notion of jana was more fluid, overlapping in many instances with other categories that would today be classified as non-tribes (Xaxa 2003, see also Roy Burman 1994). Further, Roy notes that janas with an egalitarian system were different from other communities only in the sense that they continued to remain outside the control of jati with a hierarchical system of social organisation.

It is a tradition among anthropologists to classify human societies according to their occupation and they classified tribes as hunting, gathering, pastoral nomads, settled agriculturists and so on, assuming that the most common occupations generate specific
forms of social relations and its ideological underpinnings (Roy Burman nd). But this kind of classification does not take care of the relationship of tribes with nature and of the total socio-political milieu in which the particular predominant occupation exists and so it becomes irrelevant (Roy Burman nd). Tribes have been seen not only in opposition to caste but also in opposition to peasants in several studies. However, Xaxa (2003) argues that many tribal groups in India have practised settled agriculture for generations and thus there is overlap between the category of tribe and peasant. This is true in the case of Kurichias and Mullukurumas in Kerala. They are traditional agricultural communities and can be categorised as peasant communities among tribes. Xaxa further points out that unlike the tribes in America, Australia and the Pacific islands, tribes in India lived in close interaction with larger society and civilisation. Even though the distinction between tribe and civilisation is maintained in the post colonial period, sociologists and social anthropologists have emphasised the mutual interaction and the political, economic and social linkages between tribal and non tribal groups. Thus, instead of the tribe-caste tribe-peasant dichotomy, the tribe-caste, tribe-peasant continuum is stressed to understand the dynamics of tribal society. However, Nathan (1997) points out that features such as cohesiveness, habitat, stress on clan structures, ethnicity bonds, higher position of women and strong sense of identity still exist and distinguish tribes from caste. He agrees that in the process of transition some qualities such as position of women has eroded, but still it is better than castes.

The Marxist theory views ethnicity in the evolutionary framework and argues that the world’s ethnic groups will ultimately merge into a greater working class brotherhood. In the same tradition, Lenin argued that with the economic development, ethnic resistance to assimilation or voluntary integration tends to disappear (Pathy 1988). However, Pathy (1988) points out that it is more reasonable to classify tribal people as ethnic groups rather than group them on the basis of religion, language, region or caste. For this argument, he highlights the fact that nearly half of the ethnic movements in India are led by tribal people. Dube (1977) also prefers to view tribe as an ethnic category characterised by common descent, corporate self-identity and a wide range of commonly shared traits and culture. Narang (1995) opines that whether the ethnic group be called a nation, nationality, a minority, a tribe, a community, a culture, a society or a people has become more of a political issue than a process of scientific enquiry. Chaudury and
Srivastava (2009) too corroborate that there is a decline in the studies of the tribe-caste continuum and there is an increase in the studies of tribal ethnicity during the last fifteen years. In the North East, they prefer the identity of an ethnic group and the term, ‘Adivasi’ is used to denote the migrants from Chota Nagpur. Other terms used for tribes were fourth world (Sengupta 1982) and tribes in transition (Desai 1969) etc. Another important discourse on tribal studies in international institutions is the concept of tribe as indigenous people.

**Indigenous People**

In the case of tribal people, there is a strong demand for self-definition and self-identification. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples has impressed upon the United Nations (UN) to recognise the right of the indigenous peoples to define themselves both in terms of an individual’s self identification as an indigenous person and the right of the community to define its members. The indigenous organisations today reject the artificial definitions put forward by national legislations in which they have not been directly involved. The International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) gives a more meaningful definition in today’s context: ‘As Adivasis, we are people with distinct historical, political and cultural identities. We are united by our histories as distinct societies, by our languages, laws, traditions and unique spiritual and economic relationships with our lands and territories’ (IWGIA, 2000:395 as cited in Mundu, 2004).

The Indian representatives in the UN working groups meeting in its 11th Session in 1993 argued that the term, ‘indigenous’ was not adequate for India. State Governments also refused to identify the existence of indigenous peoples in their states. The operational definition of the UN working group on indigenous populations, definition contained in the World Bank’s operational directive and the definitions of ILO are basically juridical and protective in nature. But the complexity and limitations in defining a ‘people’ in the changing context with few words leaves loopholes. According to Singh (1993), the definition of the term, ‘indigenous people’ is too restrictive as it does not reflect the specificities of many countries’ historical situations. So he is of the opinion that any new enlarged and universal definition of indigenous people should take into account the specialities of each country’s historical experience, its current ethno-social situation, its political system and so on. He points out that the term, ‘indigenous’ in the dictionary
ranges from ‘people originating from a country’ to ‘those people who are born in a particular region’ and then there are hardly any indigenous people in the world.

However, the term, ‘indigenous’ is controversial today as many groups such as Dalits, Chakma refugees and Mizos claim that they are also indigenous people. According to Shah (2011), ethnicity and indigeneity are political concepts and she notes that an essential notion of indigenous people is philosophically, anthropologically and historically problematic. However, instead of raising this contentious issue, India can call its tribal people, indigenous for achieving national and international rights and the term is more political than anthropological. Thus, instead of essentialising the term, ‘indigenous’ to denote tribal people, its relevance in their right’s context has to be emphasised.

**Adivasis: Tribal’s View of Themselves**

The term, ‘tribe’ in India was developed mainly for administrative and political purposes of surveillance and control and it was shaped and reshaped by the colonial and post colonial power structures. Even now the definition of tribe is controversial due to the socio-political consequences more than the existence of diverse theoretical perspectives and ideologies. Xaxa (2005) points out that the articulation of tribal identity is becoming a process directed from within the tribal community with the help of education and because of the threat posed to tribal ways of living by the dominant groups and demands imposed by development. As he points out instead of adopting the identity imposed on them by dominant groups, tribal people commence to reinforce their own tribal image and distinctiveness. In relation to non-tribal fellow human beings, tribal communities call themselves ‘Adivasis’ meaning the first or aboriginal dwellers.

Many Adivasi groups, however, hold their group names which basically mean ‘man’ (including both female and male) or ‘human being’ or ‘people’. For example, the Mikirs use Arleng, the Garos Mande, Bodos Kacharias and Koayens Singpho, Mundas use Horo, the Santhals Hor and Hos Ho. Also each Naga group still continues to have its own endonym. The Angami call themselves Tenjimia, Ao as Mezama, Sema as Semi and so on. Suffixes such as ‘mi’, ‘me’, ‘ma’ or ‘mia’ mean ‘men’ in their respective dialects. ‘Sopomi’ refers to men belonging to the Sopo ethnic group. The Oraon refer to themselves as Kurukh which etymologically means a man. The Koya call themselves...
Koitor meaning people in their own tongue. Similarly, Ho and Juang mean human being in contrast to the other inhabitants of the area, which surrounds them (Pathy 1998, Mundu 2004). All these names can be perceived as implications to their broader vision of an enlarged identity as ‘human beings’ which extends the social scientists efforts of categorising them according to external characteristics or geographical and historical factors.

The first political party that the tribal people formed in 1939 with a national perspective was called Adivasi Mahasabha. Nihar Ranjan Ray’s observation on the historical evolution of tribal identity is relevant; he maintains that every social organisation tends to create and evolve terms and concepts in its own language to explain and interpret itself in given times and situations, to suit its own aims and purposes, functions and exercises, ideas and aspirations (cited in Roy Burman 1994). Singh (1993) points out that the term, ‘Adivasi’ is more appropriate as it refers to the old settlers in the hills, forest and remote areas, of which tribal people form a significant part. The term, ‘Adivasis’ has widespread acceptance among the members of the tribal communities all over India, except in the North Eastern part of India. However, in the Indian context, their self identification as Adivasis is what they use to regain their lost identity and right over land and forest resources. It points to their distinct identity, history and culture in general and is useful for their mobilisation as a group. However, according to Shah (2011), being indigenous or Adivasi is a part of cultural politics as it is a powerful tool for the marginalised and dispossessed people to fight for their rights. She points out that we need to move beyond the sterile debate of whether the concept is relevant or not to a step forward to investigate how this new kind of cultural politics emerges and what are the process and shifts by treating it as an object of ethnographic and historiographic study.

**Tribes in Wayanad**

In Kerala, the highest concentration of tribal population is found in the northern district of Wayanad. It constitutes 37 per cent of the tribal population of the state and 17 per cent of the district population. Wayanad district is the abode of socio-economically and culturally different tribal communities like Paniya, Adiya, Kattunaikka, Kurichia, Mullukuruma and Mullukuruma.

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2. For example, in Arunachal Pradesh, tea plantation labourers from Chotanagpur call themselves Adivasis.
Uralikuruma. All these groups are included in the Scheduled Tribe category. Their development status in terms of land and livelihood, education and health vary significantly. The terms, Scheduled Tribe, tribal and tribal development remain as administrative categories and these terms are used by the tribal people in Wayanad in descriptions related to administrative purposes and accessing benefits from government institutions. In this study, the term, ‘Adivasi’ is used contextually and interchangeably. Their specific group names like Paniyas and Kurichias are used as a means to differentiate while describing their specific development experiences and outcomes even though they do not assert these group names always. The fluidity in using different terms actually represents the fluidity in their identity while they face multiple realities in their development experience and the confusion the researcher as well as people go through.

The word, ‘Paniya’ means worker and ‘Adiya’ means slave. They believe that these names are attributed to them by their feudal landlords who made them slaves. The word, ‘Kurichia’ they connect with their historical fight with Pazhassi and the authorship is attributed to Pazhassi by Kurichias. The inferiority they find in accepting names like Paniya and Adiya shows that these names have not emerged from their self definition. As Kunhaman (nd) notes, even the category names conveyed their inferior status in society and as he argues the etymology of names in India gives insight into the traditional social structure. However, in the study, if the State is the protagonist, the term used is tribe or tribal people and when the people become the central character, the term used is Adivasis, and when used to explain the different views, their category names like Paniyas and Kurichias are used.

In the Wayanad context, it is observed that a clear demarcation of ‘us’ and ‘they’ emerges when Adivasis describe non-Adivasis especially when they describe their marginality and exploitation from the dominant non-Adivasi society. This does not mean that they are isolated from the dominant society. They continuously interact with the non-Adivasi society in their day to day living. However, in India for years Adivasis lived in the forest and no authority can deny their right over forest and land on the basis of written documents. As elsewhere in India, in Wayanad too the Adivasi land where they buried their ancestors and the land they protected as sacred groves became the private property of non-Adivasi people. Their territories are also claimed by the State in the name of wild life sanctuaries, reserved forests or development projects such as plantations. Today, their
most crucial need is a collective as well as individual identity to achieve their lost culture, land, forest and power to self determination.

In Wayanad, with a historical and political consciousness tribal communities call themselves Adivasis in contrast to non-Adivasi fellow human beings who migrated into their homelands. At the same time each Adivasi group considers their *gothram* (clan) special and tries to maintain the purity of the clan through customary practices integral to their clan. For instance, Paniyas have their own ritual practices different from those of Kurichias. When Janu, the Adivasi leader in Wayanad formed ‘Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha’ an organisation engaged in fighting for land rights, she recognised this diversity as a distinct *gothram* alongside their assertive unity to fight against the forces that marginalise them. Even though each group has its own customs and rituals, Janu asserts: ‘All our songs, customs and medical practices were born from the system of life that we adopted as intimately related to the earth’ (Bhaskaran 2004: 49). In the book, *Mother Forest*, Janu says that the very existence and lifecycle of the Adivasis are bound to the earth more than those of non-Adivasi communities and she perceives the forest to be more than a mother who will never abandon them. Thus, separating Adivasis from their land and environment means separating them from their identity and culture.

However, in day to day life, Adivasis in the study area were not found asserting their collective Adivasi identity, or their specific Paniya and Kurichia identities. But they asserted the uniqueness of each group as united together with a special set of rituals and customary practices centered around land and environment. K.J Baby (1999) in his novel *Maveli Mantam* captures the Adivasi dream of a free existence devoid of *thamburakkanmar* (Adivasis call their jenmis *thampurakkanmar*) where they can freely enjoy the fruits of the earth. Thus, regaining their *Ippimala* (original representation of their territory) and getting rid of the clutches of exploitation is regaining their identity as Adivasis. K.J Baby’s (1993) play *Nadugaddhika* depicts Adivasi youth searching for ‘modern’ styles and identity when hunger, discrimination and desperate questions about their identity haunt them. As Bindu and Bindulakshmi (2004) points out Kurichias and their trend of Brahmanisation is also a claim of modernity and more power with the outside world but they do not disown their tradition and culture. For instance, Bindu and Bindulakshmi (2004) point out that *Malakkari* (Kurichia god) or other Adivasi gods are
not rejected outright but they are redefined by them. For instance, Kurichias describe *Malakkari* as *Upadevata*, or sub god who is worshipped as an incarnation of Shiva who is given the credit of ‘original’ god (ibid). Bindu sees this as a redefining of tradition rather than a rejection of tradition. However, reclaiming and asserting identity is part of their real development and the following section reviews some definitions and alternative articulations of ‘development’ before plunging into the concept of tribal development.

**Development**

Development has been defined in different ways ranging from a narrow focus on economic growth to expansion of human capabilities. There were various attempts to deconstruct the western concept of ‘development’ giving importance to local knowledge systems and world views of the marginalised groups. The definitions and different meanings attached to the term ‘development’ in different contexts are discussed in this section.

In independent India, the concept of development has a major thrust on economic growth, indicating an increase in per capita gross national product. The importance of social development and the interlinkage between social and economic development is stressed in different development discourses. Today, the development concept is applied to all fields of human endeavor and it is seen as an expansion of choice, an expansion of human capabilities, an expansion of freedom, participation and quality of life. It is closely linked with environment, poverty, equality, and the notion of the state and governance. There are different theoretical approaches to development such as evolutionary approach, modernisation approach, dependency approach and mode of production approach based on different disciplines.

Development is a term we use with different meanings in different contexts. The term, ‘development’ In biology, development combines two aspects, elaboration and unveiling to suggest a process from inherent potential to achieving the present state. Development is a stage of growth or maturation or advancement (Oxford English Reference Dictionary as cited in Gasper 2005). Quoting the evolutionary approach of Wolff and Darwin, Esteva (1992:8) observes: ‘Development describes a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete full fledged
form’. Thus, it meant a process of revealing or bringing out what is inherent in reality and it is a process of qualitative growth. The transfer of the biological metaphor to the social sphere occurred in the last quarter of the 18th Century.

In a historical sense, development is the unfolding of a necessary path of progress. Its usage has often combined ideas of necessity, influential change and fundamental improvement. With specific historic reference, development is described as a concept that emerged at the end of the Second World War. In this era, northern economic growth is projected as a model and the countries of the south and east tried to catch up with this model. There was a decline of colonialism and an intensified conflict between the capitalist and socialist versions of the economic growth model, but the flourishing of industrial economies prepared a base for neo colonialism (Gasper, 2005). Gasper highlights the hidden agenda of development, in the description of the southern hemisphere as underdeveloped areas and the neo-colonial concept of westernisation of the entire world. In this neo-colonial project, the cultural diversity of the people in the south is threatened and they ceased being what they were all in its diversity (ibid). Here development meant the movement from an inferior form or state to a superior form of state and it was used it in a transitive way. An attitude of ‘we develop you’ entered into the development scenario and the biological meaning started fading (ibid). Thus, as colonialism threatened the backbone of Indian cultural heritage and development, the westernisation development model succeeded in attacking the heterogeneous and culturally diverse economies of India.

In the 1950s there was an intense debate in India regarding the strategy of economic development in general and on how to break the vicious circle of poverty in particular. There were several view points to reach the goal. The Gandhian view favoured small scale industries and self reliance. Nationalist industrialists preferred rapid industrialisation through capital goods industries under the public sector, with supporting provisions for the small scale and cottage sector. The aim was rapid economic growth by increasing national per capita income, removal of poverty and misery, and raising the standard of living of the masses. Historically, the idea of development was mostly materialistic and objective and however, the onslaught of the fast paced, industrial model exploited nature and alienated different sections like the Adivasis from their natural habitat.
Economic Development

Peet and Hartwick (2005) build the connection between economics and development by highlighting economics as knowledge about the effective use of resources in producing the material basis of life, and development as the means for improving the conditions of life. They highlight the general idea that ‘development is fundamentally an economic process, economics has an abiding interest in development, and all theories of development have significant economic dimensions’ (Peet and Hartwick 2005:17). The emphasis on economic growth achieved a universal standard to national development. The United Nations Charter of 1945 proclaimed ‘a rising standard of living’ as the global objective. And the commercial outputs of goods and services within a country became the indicator for measuring the material well being. The per capita Gross National Product (GNP) as a national average became the indicator for measuring development. Thus, ‘Per capita GNP increasing annually at the rate of about 6 per cent (assuming a lower rate of population growth) became the measure of successful development in the post war era, in conjunction with increased industrialisation’ (Mc Michael 2000:27). Though per capita income is not the only indicator, it is the most significant single measure of comparison with other economies.

In the economic growth model, the general assumption is that if growth occurs, then human development will automatically follow. Peet and Hartwick (2005) observe skeptically that this view of development means more of everything for everyone in the context of a lot more for a few. He also points out that when development basically means economic growth led by the elite, there still remains a progressive notion of improving the material life condition for many people through ‘trickle down’ from the rich to the poor and criticises the blind belief that the elite will push the engine of growth and development.

Adam Smith’s theory based on supply and demand and the notion of the invisible hand of the market which leads to the common good of all is now seen as a myth (Basu 2011). Basu argues that the economy must be viewed as embedded in society and politics and to actualise this, he suggests breaking away from the shackles of methodological individualism. Critiquing the economic rationality which is devoid of morality and ignores the role of culture and custom, he aspires for a world that is not merely efficient
as the free market economies aim, but is also fair and radically democratic. According to him, the form of capitalism that the world aspires to is a grossly unfair system and the vision of perfecting this system is a myth perpetuated in the interests of those who gain from the persistence of this unjust system. In this system, people perceive that redistributing wealth is wrong because the current distribution is the right one, forgetting the fact that it is an outcome of grabbing, lobbying and unfair accumulation. Challenging economic determinism, a new paradigm of development called human development, which puts people at the centre of development has emerged. In this paradigm, economic growth is treated only as a means and the quality of human life as the end.

**Human Development**

The term, ‘social development’ means development of society in its totality including its economic, political, cultural and other aspects. The UN General Assembly Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986, defined development as ‘a comprehensive economic social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting from it’ (Cheria, Petcharamesree and Edwin, 2004:33). This definition emphasises the interconnections between economic, social, cultural and political aspects of development. Social justice and basic needs are also emphasised. Thus, here human rights and development are not seen as distinct but one enhances the other and in this approach, non-discrimination to disadvantaged groups is given special attention.

Further, the global view of human development using demographic indices of the quality of life in different societies is presented by international organisations. In this global view, human development is measured by the Human Development Index (HDI) calculated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI measures development in terms of longevity (life expectancy at birth), knowledge (adult literacy and mean years of schooling) and income sufficiency (the proportion of people with sufficient resources to live a decent life) (Human Development Report 1994). However, the promoters of HDI themselves found it deficient as it cannot assess the deprivation of access to resources for material needs. Further, it is evident from the definition that using HDI for measuring development leads to a capitalist notion of development centered on
material progress, where the local knowledge systems, cultures and world views are not considered important in the definition of human development indicators. Existence of some material condition is conveniently defined as human development using a set of indices. Longevity of life is stressed but quality of life cannot be measured using these indices.

Further, human development is rendered a process and a level of achievement and in India, the Kerala Model of development is appreciated on this basis. Sen (1999) highlights ‘the eastern strategy’ of human development and argues that it has extraordinary social and demographic reach, in addition to its contribution to economic development and directly into the quality of life. Human development is presented by Sen through an internationally comparative level of deprivation, which determines how far from the most successful national case are the other countries.

The importance of education in economic growth and human development is not a new discovery; right from the classical economists, theorists have emphasised the role of skills in increasing production and specifically identified education not only as a target but also as an instrument of economic development. However, Rao (1966) points out that the relationship between education and economic growth received more attention during the post war period when economic historians and statisticians started exploring economic growth and perceived education both as a condition and stimulant for economic development. The ‘self discovering’ and ‘self fulfilling’ aspects of education were to enrich human development. This view is reflected in the Report of the Education Commission (1964 – 66) as it emphasises the link between education, national development and prosperity and the commission recommended a well defined, bold and imaginative educational policy for accelerating development. Education was expected to promote all types of human development outcomes. In this view education, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation complement each other so that investment in any one contributes to better outcome in others. More than just a source of knowledge, education promotes better hygiene and increases the use of health services. This is reflected in the observation of J.P Naik that ‘Education and development are not two different things but merely two sides of the same coin: education should lead to development and
development should create the motivation for education as well as provide the tools for it’ (cited in Joshi 1979:5).

The Human Development Report (HDR) 1990 affirms that ‘Human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices. In principle these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living’ (HDR 1990: 27). It extends its scope into additional choices ranging from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive and enjoying personal self respect and guarantee of human rights. The Millennium Development Goals of UN stress a vital commitment to promote human well being that entails dignity, freedom and equality for all people (HDR 2003). The goals also reflect rights to food, education, health care and decent living standards, as enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the report acknowledges the fact that the expansion of people’s participation in the decisions that affect their lives or increasing their civil and political freedom which is an important component in human development is not included in the Millennium Development Goals even though participation, democracy and human rights are projected as important elements of the Millenium Declaration. It is evident that the human development becomes functional only if people can participate in the decisions affecting their life. For instance, even though the international laws accepts the intrinsic connection between Adivasis and their territory, their lands have been taken away for development projects, their cultures are disregarded, their language, customs and local knowledge systems are overlooked. As long as they have not been given power for self determination in these areas, the Millennium Goals and human development plans remain a myth.

Development as Expansion of Human Capabilities and Freedom

Development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy to attain the objective that they have reason to value. And in this sense, the expansion of human capability can be broadly seen as the central feature of the process of development (Dreze and Sen 1995). Dreze and Sen perceived poverty as ‘capability deprivation’ related to economic, social and political issues, that is, lack of opportunity due to social constraints as well as personal circumstances. They criticise modern development
literature which places more emphasis on economic growth than expansion of human capabilities. According to Sen, a person’s capability is her or his set of attainable life-paths. So it extends from the economic sphere to the alternate combinations of functioning a person could attain, such as longevity of life, of what health quality, with what mobility and so on. Then the concept of capability cannot be limited to a skill, aptitude, strength or ability. It includes one’s options or opportunities. And the interactions of one’s capacities with the possibilities provided in a person’s environment generate a person’s capability (Gasper 2005).

Expansion of freedom is viewed by Sen (1999), as a primary end as well as principle means of development. According to Sen, freedom is essential for formulating well informed and widely accepted statements of purposes and priorities, and he stresses the freedom of public participation in particular. Freedom and democracy give space for exercise of free choice, regardless of the results. Freedom has instrumental importance and helps to attain other desired ends. For example, free discussion and choice in southern India led to larger and sustained decline in female fertility than compulsion in China has achieved (Gasper, 2005).

Education and health are seen as important promoting factors in the expansion of human capabilities and freedom. Intrinsically, health and education are valuable achievements in themselves as the opportunity to education empowers them for collective demands to resist oppression on the personal as well as collective levels and contributes to their well being, effective freedom and fuller development. Further, instrumentally it is valuable as it provides economic opportunities, for their well being. (Dreze and Sen 1995).

Development as Marginalisation

Marglin (1990) extends Sen’s (1987) distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value of the expansion of choice. Instrumentally, the expansion of choice is valuable since it allows the attainment of preferred choices and the intrinsic view is that welfare would be improved by the addition of new opportunities. But Marglin looks at the intrinsic and instrumental value of education critically and says that if the possibility of the traditional choice is removed, the possibility of the modern is not necessarily an enlargement of the
domain of choice and the preference argument has no meaning if the new choice set does not include the old ones. That is, the choice set shrinks in some dimensions even while it expands in others. In a way, preference of new choices over the old destroys the traditional knowledge and skills and in a way becomes a constraint for the development of one section of the people. However, it is worth discussing the scope of expansion of choice to the marginalised communities.

Contrary to the optimism of the earlier discussed development approaches, Marglin (1990) sees the development process as coercion as it is an assault on the autonomy of individuals and local groups. He argues that the transformation of work into its modern western form was the result of deliberate attempts to take control of process and product from the worker. In the same way, modern development projects based on the supremacy of science, technology and western capitalism, crush the resource base and knowledge systems of traditional societies. As Marglin points out development involves coercion when the environment is extracted more than its limit, compromising the needs of future generation and the need of a people dependent on nature’s resources. In a similar manner, Gasper (2005) points out that indigenous people’s land and resources were taken by the powerful for intensive use and profit with the support of the state and thus development policy involves conscious sacrifice of certain groups. Further, in development induced displacement, non financial costs such as destruction of culture and community life is overlooked.

In the modernisation approach, the concept of development denotes a transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into technologically advanced, economically prosperous and politically stable nations of the western world. A.G Frank, a leading critique of development economics and modernisation theory points out that attributing underdevelopment to traditionalism is a historical and political mistake and argues that the worldwide expansion of capitalism and the relationship of exchange and domination between the capitalist metropolis and its colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America resulted in the underdevelopment of these colonies (Frank 1979). Frank focused on the metropole-colony (center-periphery) relations to explain underdevelopment and argues that the same process of development in the western metropoles simultaneously perpetuates underdevelopment in third world colonies. According to Frank
‘underdevelopment was generated by the same process that developed the center; in particular underdevelopment in the periphery resulted from the loss of surplus that was expropriated for investment in the center’s development’ (Frank 1979). For real development, Frank suggests separation from the global capitalist system and argues that the degree of underdevelopment in Asia today is proportional to its degree of colonisation in the nineteenth century. According to him the most underdeveloped populations of India and South Asia were subjected to the most brutal colonial capitalist exploitation. China being a semi colonial country could progress incomparably after its liberation from capitalism and Japan’s industrial progress is attributed to its non-colonial status and to the absence of foreign investment in its development effort.

Frank’s theory is criticised for its failure to specify the economics of surplus extraction, even though sometimes it is obvious like rent or profit to big corporations or interest for debt from banks. According to Amin (1997) the huge amount of surplus extraction by the center is responsible for the blocking of the development of the periphery. He rejects the trans nationalisation of production, capital and distribution and its legitimisation by institutions like IMF, World Bank and WTO. Amin criticises the development equation as expansion of market and the global hierarchy defined by its capacity to compete in the market. He describes this as an unequal fight as the centers use their ‘five monopolies’ - technological monopoly, financial control of worldwide financial markets, monopolistic access to the planet’s natural resources, media and communication monopolies, monopolies over weapons of mass destruction- for surplus extraction and hegemony over the periphery. However, treating the whole world as one system in its specific historical and geographical context is missing in this analysis.

Wallerstein (1979) explains development and underdevelopment using the world system theory. Within the world system there are three main economic zones: core, semi periphery and periphery. When there is a difference in the strength of the state machinery, the operation of unequal exchange is enforced by strong states on weak states. The core concentrates its resources on controlling the machinery. In a world economy, the cultural stratification between and within the core and periphery is a complex phenomena due to the absence of a single political system with concentration of vertical economic roles. So there will be pressures for cultural homogenisation. In the core states, the creation of
state machinery coupled with a national culture referred to as integration, serves both as a mechanism to protect disparities arising within the world system and as an ideological mask and justification for the maintenance of these disparities. Peripheral areas have a low degree of autonomy due to the neo-colonial situation. The semi-periphery helps to eliminate the political polarization between core and periphery by acting as an exploiter and exploited and thus partially repels the political pressures targeted towards the core from the periphery and makes the world system more stable (ibid).

According to Wallerstein (1974) one cannot study a part of the world in isolation from the whole. He suggests analysing the simultaneous mutual interactions of all parts of the world system at each point in historical time and the new way of surplus extraction based on more efficient and expanded productivity by means of a world market mechanism with the assistance of the state machinery. Thus, in a world system there exists extensive division of labour which is not functional but geographical. Thus, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world system. In some, it is ecological consideration but in most, it is a function of the social organisation of work, which magnifies and legitimises the ability of some groups within the system to exploit the labour of others to receive the larger share of the surplus. Wallerstein (1991) criticises developmentalism and modernisation theories and the concept of inevitable progress. He introduces timespace into the analysis of world system and explains how geography and chronology are critical to the understanding of social structure and historical transformation in its complexity. However, Smith (1990) stresses the importance of geographical space more than history and explains the uneven development between different sectors of an economy or between different regions of a country reflected in the persistent disparity of skills, wage rates and circulation of capital. Thus, in spacial terms, uneven development is associated with processes of unequal exchange between the core and periphery.

**Sustainable Development**

Economic growth based on capitalism and the resultant ecological crisis leads to the concept of sustainable development which emphasises protection of life opportunities of the future generation as well as the present generation and respect for the natural systems on which all life depends (HDR 1994). The word, ‘sustainable’ originates from the Latin
word, *sustenare* which means to hold up, to keep (Silverman 2009). In sustainable development discourse, natural resources are perceived as permanent assets of mankind and the argument for protecting it is based on the need to guarantee future generations the opportunities that previous generations have enjoyed. The Brundtland Commission Report (1987) defines sustainable development as development which meets the livelihood needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987, advocates economic growth which is equitable and environmentally sustainable. It acknowledges that the resource gap between nations is widening and that the decision making is dominated by industrial nations who use a greater portion of earth’s ecological capital. The ‘Rio Declaration on Environment and Development’ put forth the healthy and productive life of a human being in harmony with nature as the primary concern of sustainable development (Ahooja-patel 1995). However, as Chasek (2000) points out, despite all the efforts made at Stockholm and Rio and at national and local levels, the environment continues to deteriorate in many parts of the world and the social, economic, and technological trends are worsening the situation.

Giving central concern to the human being and nature, sustainable human development is defined as ‘development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that generates the environment rather than destroying it; that empowers people rather than marginalising them’ (Human Development Report 1994: iii). Sustainable human development in its principle gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and their participation in decisions which affect their life. While emphasising the renewal and regeneration of biodiversity, as well as the species richness for sustainable development, Shiva (2005) criticises privatisation of water, use of genetically engineered crops and Intellectual Property Right (IPR) monopolies. She criticises one outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the public/private partnership project entitled ‘Washing hands’. Their motto was saving life by reducing diarrhoeal diseases. But Shiva points out that Kerala which has the highest hygiene standard is selected for implementing this project is a clear indication that their project is not about ‘saving lives’ but merely about ‘selling soap’ (ibid). Further, the Kyoto protocol is projected as a protocol to fight global
warming and thus sustain earth and its life forms. On the contrary, the World Rain Forest Movement Bulletin Report (December 2005: 31), depicts the Kyoto Protocol and its Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a ‘notoriously cynical and vicious new arrangement and mechanism to convert the last frontier after the “commons”- the very air we breathe and live by – into a private, market driven “bazaar” of futures of enclosed atmospheric spaces’. Thus, even sustainable development projects carries forward an incomplete perception of poverty, environmental degradation and participation in the context of international trade and liberalisation policies. As Kelkar (2012) points out the issue of climate change is a livelihood issue and it disproportionately hurts vulnerable communities like Adivasis and specially their women as they are excluded from climate change policies.

Critics of development like Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies point out that the average index such as per capita income obscure inequalities among social groups and classes and rising consumption levels are not accurate measures for improvement in the quality of life. Intensive resource consumption such as of water, forest, land and other raw materials may compromise the quality of the life of traditionally resource dependent people or of the future generation. Mies (1993) criticises the accumulation model of development based on exploitation and colonisation. She shows the impossibility of such a model by pointing out that when the colony achieves a considerable standard of development, the industrial center reaches a more modern stage in terms of technological progress. However, the idea of inevitable progress and improving human capabilities and freedom does of course enhance production and material prosperity; but as Shiva and Mies argue, that achieving progress at the cost of vulnerable communities and nature cannot be compromised. Thus, the quality of human life also has to be improved and thus arises a moral responsibility to sustain the earth without damage and the need to listen and learn from local communities who are victims of big development projects.

The above discussion reveals the multi-dimensional nature of development. It emerges that instead of developing precise definitions of development, it is advisable to increase our sensitivity to the types and range of values and meanings attached to development without compromising the ethics of development. Further, it draws light into the detrimental effects and dehumanisation of the marginalised people in our country in
the name of development. Another important point that emerges in the development discourse is its thrust upon the negative impacts on vulnerable communities leading to deepening erosion of cultural identities, local knowledge systems and their moral values. For instance, the tribal communities are facing steady erosion of their life support systems such as land and other basic resources and their cultural diversity due to diverse experiences of modern development in India.

Further, due to the power relations underlying the concept of ‘development’, a deconstruction of development discourse using various critical perspectives is necessary to understand Adivasi reality. As Escobar (1992) points out the discourse and practice of development can lead us to alternate futures for the ‘underdeveloped’ as underdevelopment is a concept coined by the ‘first world’ about the ‘third world’. As highlighted by Gordon and Sylvester (2004) the images of deficiency and inferiority are enmeshed in the language of ‘underdeveloped’, ‘developing’ etc. and it empowers the developer. However, depicting Adivasis as ‘backward’ ‘primitive’ etc. originates from the same colonial power structure which depicts the local as inferior and the ways of the West development model as superior. As Marglin (1990) depicts the marginalisation due to development, in the Wayanad context too when the State and ‘mainstream’ society talk about ‘development’ and ‘progress’ of Adivasi communities through development aids, in practice they experience marginalisation due to their alienation from land, forest and natural resources. This clearly indicates the paradox underlying the concept ‘development’ and the need to deconstruct it to suit to the Adivasi context in respective regions. As Escobar (1995) points out at the local level, development debates are being contested and transformed by social movements and even though not able to make grand structural changes, helps in constructing identities and provide better autonomy through modifications in everyday practices and beliefs. In Wayanad context also Adivasi movements show a way forward asking questions such as, whose development? Development at the cost of whom? What is development and who has the power to define it? What follows is a review of different approaches to tribal development in the Indian context.

**Development in the Context of Tribes in India: Approaches and Debates**
In India, historically there have been three main approaches towards tribal communities, which shaped their development – isolation, assimilation and integration.

**Isolation, Assimilation and Integration Approaches**

The policies adopted by the British rulers were to isolate the tribes from the non tribal population and separate the tribal areas from the purview of the general administration as the dissonance on the issue of command over the habitat created conditions of direct confrontation in many areas. According to Misra (1993) this caused territorial segregation and created a conducive atmosphere for their economic and cultural exploitation which resulted in strife between tribal and non tribal communities. The colonial isolationist approach was not in any way to help the tribal communities but it was for smooth administration and to avoid dissonance when they were exploited (Narwani 2004) and to create few tribal elite to support the colonial policies (Misra 1993). The declaration of a few particular areas of tribal concentration as ‘Scheduled Areas’ and ‘Tribal Areas’ is an example of isolation. In the early periods of independence, the Government of India too adopted the policy of isolation.

Verrier Elwin considered tribes aboriginal people and sought to protect them from outsiders to save them from the onslaught of modern development and to improve their living conditions (Elwin 1964). Elwin advocated the ‘National Park’ approach to keep the tribal people in a wild and remote part of the country under the direct control of a Tribes Commissioner (Elwin 1964). He points out that the isolationist approach intended to give tribal people maximum freedom and power and envisioned to reinstate their old traditional tribal council and the headman and even suggested restrictions to settlers and missionaries from destroying their culture and quality of life. In his autobiography, he reveals that he is criticised for romanticising tribal culture even though his idea was to protect them through administrative reform. Highlighting the similarity between Hindu religion and animistic tribal religion, Ghurye (1959) argues that tribes are backward Hindus. Nathan (1997) maintains that calling tribes backward Hindus is a ‘nation building’ project which calls for the merging of all people into a Hindu Nation. Referring to Ghurye’s argument, Xaxa (2005) points out that the classification as backward Hindus was not based on field data but on inadequate and selective use of the comments and observations of the census commissioners and their dissatisfaction with the description of
tribes as animists. According to Rath (2006), Verrier Elwin insisted that the tribes should maintain a careful distance from the mainstream socio-political-economic system, which was however, not acceptable to Nehruvian patriotism and his nation building approach. Other Congress and nationalist leaders like Gandhi and A.V Thakkar also denied the tribal people a separate existence thinking that it may weaken the national solidarity (Rath 2006).

The question of how to incorporate tribes into Independent India was a crucial one at the time of independence. Ghurye promoted the assimilation policies which were supported by some of the nationalists. Inspired by Elwin’s approach of protection, Nehru formulated the ‘Panchasheel’ concept for tribal communities to develop according to their own genius, maintaining their culture and identity (Rath 2006). Xaxa (2005) observes that the provisions meant for the tribes in the Indian Constitution however point to an approach of integration rather than assimilation. The Constitution aims at bringing tribes closer to the larger Indian society. At the same time, the Constitutional provisions aim at protecting and safeguarding their language, culture and tradition and promoting them. According to Xaxa, integration provides space for diversity but assimilation entails that the small minority must give up its culture in favour of the dominant majority. Furer-Haimendorf (1985) pointed out earlier that the proponents of integration ignore the fact that there exists no homogeneous Indian society with a standard cultural pattern for tribal communities to merge with. According to him, the Indian society is diverse with its linguistic, religious and caste divisions and the tribal population is equally divided, and their heterogeneity extends to race, language, culture and diverse geographical environments and thus the idea of integration is confusing.

According to Roy Burman (2005), integration does not guarantee their development, but tribal communities have to integrate for their economic progress. According to him, different levels and different techniques of integration have to be adopted. He envisions integration beyond mere association and results from the interaction of two different social structures. Further, in an ideally integrated society, the structural relationship between the tribal communities and non tribal communities cannot follow any rigid pattern but is determined contextually. In the beginning, the development planning process was directed completely from the centre which did not evaluate the local realities
adequately while formulating the Constitutional provisions. However, some special care was taken about the protection and welfare of tribal people in the Constitution, which in Sharma (1995)’s view amounted to only ‘positive discrimination’. According to him, special provisions were made to ensure that the law and institutions must be adapted in keeping with the situation in tribal areas and the needs of the tribal community. But in the course of history, the adoption of an egalitarian constitution remained a dream. He observes that this is partly because of the difference of the local realities that prevailed in the tribal areas. He further points out that the laws, the institutions and even the Constitution itself is responsible for the deviations and in the name of national integration and public interest, the tribal people became more vulnerable to exploitation.

Some of the tribal leaders however perceived the approach of national integration as a way to superimpose an alien culture over tribal culture and they spread the spirit of revivalism (Misra 1993). Misra observes that the negligence and injustice tribal communities experienced in the forest policies and the resultant exploitation generated a strong sense of tribalism. At times, they were violent against the government and were opposed to the idea of being integrated with the rest of society, who were their exploiters. According to Misra the tribal policy in post Independent India was an extension of the paternalistic and protectionist policy adopted by the colonial regime and was not integrational in its spirit.

The administrative approach is closely related to the political approach of integration. Article 244 of the Constitution provides for the administration of the scheduled areas in accordance with the Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. The basic spirit of these special provisions is that, when an administrative and development system is adopted for Adivasi areas, the traditions of the Adivasi society should be accepted as a basis, and no outside system should be forced on them (Roy Burman nd). Article 244 (i) provides for a Fifth Schedule, which may apply in any state other than those states in North East India where a separate Schedule, namely the Sixth Schedule applies. According to the provisions of this schedule, the executive power of a state extends to the scheduled areas. Under the Fifth Schedule, the governor becomes the sole legislature of the scheduled areas, and a Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) is formed consisting of not more than twenty members of whom three fourths must be of the representatives of the
Scheduled Tribes in the legislative assembly of the state. If the president so directs, the Tribes Advisory Council may also be established in states without scheduled areas. However, even for the areas that are scheduled, the idea of administration was that these areas need only some extra financial investment to bring them up to the level of other areas in the concerned state (ibid). Sharma (1995) notes that the Fifth and Sixth schedules are also known as a ‘Constitution within the Constitution’ as the powers executed under this schedule are so extensive. However, people’s perceptions and their voices are not heard in macroeconomic planning and grand schemes and thus it did not help in the matter of self reliance and self management of the tribal people (Sharma 1995). The governors of the states have been given unlimited powers which could be utilised for preventing the mechanisms that harm the Adivasi interests articulated through the Tribes Advisory Councils (TACs). However, the experience reveals that TACs meet very infrequently and when they meet they are concerned with petty matters of local relevance rather than policy issues of general concern for the tribals (Roy Burman nd).

The central and state governments constituted vast machinery for tribal development administration. At the national level, the President of India is primarily responsible for safeguarding the provisions enshrined in the Constitution. He/She has to appoint the Director General for backward classes at the national level to investigate into all matters relating to tribal safeguards. At the state level, the Governor and on his behalf, the chief minister and welfare ministers are in charge of the special schemes to be implemented in the tribal areas (George and Sreekumar 1994). There are separate departments to look after the affairs of the tribal people in some states and in other states, the welfare department looks after the interests of the tribal people. The department is advised by the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC). The TACs and the Tribal Research Institutes frame the tribal policies and programmes (ibid). Though West Bengal does not have any schedule area, a Tribes Advisory Council has been established in this state according to the directions of the President. The tribal population in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal still remain outside the scheduled areas.

In Kerala, the Adivasi areas are not scheduled even though areas like Attappady and Wayanad can be scheduled using Constitutional provisions. This is because ‘Kerala has not taken steps to bring Adivasi villages or habitations under the V Schedule despite
recommendations from the Committee (Dilip Singh Bhuria Committee) constituted by the central government to formulate the new law for V Schedule’ (Bijoy, 2006:4). There are no criteria laid down in the Constitution about the principles on which areas are to be included in the schedule. There are very few scheduled areas where tribes are in majority. What has been followed is a now commonly accepted principle of preponderance of tribal population, reasonable size of the area, underdeveloped nature of the area and marked disparity in the economic standards of the people (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 1998 as cited in Hooja, 2004). Bijoy points out that ‘One of the terms of the agreement on 16 October 2001 between the Kerala government and the leaders of the Adivasi movements was to pass a cabinet resolution to bring Adivasi habitation in the state under the V Schedule. This has not yet materialized’ (Bijoy, 2006:4). In 1960, when the Dhebar Commission visited Kerala, the government ignored the struggle of the Adivasis and informed the Commission that the Adivasis were not marginalised in Kerala and that there was no need to include them in the Scheduled area. As a consequence, the provision of PESA (Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas) 1996, has been denied to Kerala. However, it resulted in the denial of Constitutional provision for self-governance available at least in law to the Adivasi villages of Kerala and affected their capacity for self-development negatively (Bijoy 2006). As Roy Burman (nd) points out, self-management cannot be imposed from above but to be nurtured from below through democratic process, and through an approach of self-assertion for the development of tribal communities. In this context, it is important to debate on who holds the power to include or exclude them and marginalise or develop them in the context of their struggle to assert their rights and establish their self-development.

**Tribal Rights and Development Discourse**

The ‘Panchasheel’ concept for tribal communities to develop according to their own genius, maintaining their culture and identity suggests that ideologically, the Nehruvian strategy of tribal development rejects an exogenous development model. Even though Nehru argued for promoting tribal genius, his anticolonial nationalism based on the western paradigm of development was not suitable for the tribal context and their self-initiatives in development. Roy Burman (nd), Baviskar (1995), Sharma (1998),
Kunhaman (2002), Xaxa (2003) and Fernandes (1992; 2004) criticise the project of national development, its legitimising tools, its imperialist development frame and the intensification of the victimisation of tribal communities. They question the rationality of the development approach which first impoverishes and displaces tribal communities through modern development projects of World Bank and multinational companies and then treats them as a burden waiting for aid and then uses the country’s resources to sustain their life. In this process, the local technology, culture and economy are delegitimised and through the new value system, culture is turned into a tool of colonialism to marginalise the tribal people (Fernandes 2004).

Baviskar (1995) points out the subordination of Adivasis by the State and she highlights their construction of ‘state as a thief’ looting their resource base, thereby contradicting the image of state as a benevolent provider. According to Sharma (1998), both the system and the development paradigm have to be challenged and reoriented. He observes that the resources on which people depend on for their living cannot be deemed to be property and argues that people have an inherent and inalienable right over the same as a means of livelihood which is superior to the state’s claim. He hopes that the tribal resistance movements for recapturing their resource base and cultural identity and the articulations and fights for self rule based on their consensus model may provide the thrust for a basic transformation which forces the ruling elite to shift from the obsession for production and economic growth to more humanitarian values. Sharma’s (1998) consensus model of decision making by tribal communities and the need for the rule of self determination over their resources; Kunhaman’s (2002) critique of depoliticisation in development process and his idea of the autonomous development concept of tribal communities; Roy Burman J.J’s (2005) concept of territoriality and self rule etc. are some of the alternate visions for a development model for tribal communities rooted in their culture. Kunhaman (2002) emphasises the neglect of community rights to land and other resources of tribal people in the modern global scenario. He questions the state’s business to be in the development of the subaltern but reiterates its responsibility for redistributing the assets and resources, a prerequisite for tribal self development. As Bijoy (2006) argues, tribal control over the local resources of their ancestral domain also led to the development of distinct and sound local self governing systems. Their critique of the exogenous development model brings forth the realisation that they cannot be
compensated for their traditional ways of living by developing and socialising them into consumerist values of the modern capitalist society and its market rationality.

The formal state policies and laws, administration and development from the colonial period onwards imposed its own outlook on the tribal people without considering the latter’s world views and knowledge systems. Tribal communities living in a land and natural resource based culture and history are pushed into a market culture which treats land, their resources, their identity and culture as commodities to be sold and leased (Fernandes et.al 1988, Fernandes 2008). Fernandes (2004) highlights the internal colonialism of dominant classes by monopolising culture, legitimising it and reproducing it, to describe the subaltern people without a history and culture. Pathy (1998) too observes that due to the contemporary imposition of supposedly universal development, implemented without any concern for the cultural, historical and ecological complexities prevailing in the tribal region and the reductionist world view of development practices have destroyed the physical, cultural and cognitive survival of the tribal communities. In this regard, Skaria (1999) argues that the indigenous notions of development got marginalised in the civilizing processes of colonialism and nationalism. For instance, the jangal and the jangali, once central to kinship and authority have converted into backwardness and wildness and against the nation to become modern.

While studying the plantations in Kerala, Philip (2003) tracks the nineteenth and early twentieth century practices of science in British colonial India and exposes the scientific modernity functioning at the level of everyday experience. According to her, the European liberal doctrine was not applied in the colonial context where racial differences naturalise class differences and thus legitimate the strict surveillance of the working population. She highlights how economics, science and religion supported each other and used as a political tool to strengthen the ‘colonial power’ and ‘their vision’ of modernity. So the conflict between pre-colonial tribal communities and colonial groups cannot be perceived as the war between the forces of irrationality and the enlightened rationality of scientific knowledge; it is a historically situated process of conflict between two rational systems of knowledge supported by unequal structures of economic, political, cultural and social practice. Economic modernisation and plantation agriculture marked a shift in agriculture from subsistence farming to capitalist peasant relations and it is assumed that
it will be accompanied by a shift from feudal to mobile free wage labour, but it did not materialise in the practical sense (ibid). However, the official record of this period reveals that the planter’s primary aim was sustained production for the global market. Plantation economy also had a huge impact on tribal groups who had freely used the forests and hills that were converted into ‘ordered productive landscapes’ (ibid).

The contrast between colonial construction and the Adivasi construction of knowledge and world views are explored in recent studies in other parts of the world. Surrales (2005) critically analyzes the modern way of describing reality by dividing it into subjective and objective. By highlighting the world views of Candoshi people of high Amazon, the author illustrates how indigenous discourse overcomes the subject object division or the division between society and nature by looking into their notions of environment, territory and space. Descola (2005) points out that viewing Amazonian Indians as primitive environmentalist and their holistic perception of the universe only as practical knowledge for ecological management does not do justice to their vast ecological knowledge and resilient cosmologies. While exploring their world views, the author clearly demarcates indigenous knowledge with the knowledge produced by the ecological scientists. For instance, in Amazonian and Canada’s sub-Arctic indigenous people’s world view, animals and plants form part of their community of ‘person’ and thus the author challenges the dualism underlying the western conceptualisation of culture and nature. Even though the bodily appearance changes, they believe in the essence of a spiritual kind common to all animate beings. Albert (2005) explores the interventions of development agencies and the counter development occurring among Amerindian societies in Amazonia to surpass states hegemonic and assimilationist aims.

In the Indian context, Padel (2009) and Padel and Das (2010) follow the method of social construction of knowledge and the institutions which are the centres of Adivasi culture to deconstruct the nexus of colonial values and its false objective rationality. However, by unraveling the spirit behind human sacrifice as a ritual of propitiation of earth, Padel (2009) affirms that Konds attribute great value and sacredness to human life than the colonizers who use coercive force to civilize the other cultures. Padel and Das (2010) in their study on aluminium mining in Odisha depict the opposition of Adivasis by corporate power which destroys their mountains, non renewable resources and their rich
culture and spirituality. They challenge the notion of the corporate which sees bauxite as dead matter to be exploited for profit and highlight the Adivasi notion of seeing it as something that should be preserved in the mountains to maintain the balance in nature and keep the earth fertile. However, Padel and Das (2010) point out that corporate and financial hierarchy merge with the hierarchies of administration and political parties while invading Adivasi resource frontiers for profit.

According to Xaxa (2003) the most serious impact of development is that it drastically altered the relationship of tribes with the natural environment and their resources such as land and forest. Xaxa sees the tribal community as an enormous storehouse of knowledge on world views and ways of life, and affirms that today tribes are occupying a greater space in the discourse on alternate development and in the protection of ecology and development. Tribal movements emphasize the need for an alternative model of development in which not only people’s participation and people’s power become central but also promotion and sustainability of life, both of human beings and nature, are given importance. They articulate culture, nature and material activity as an organic whole in their world view instead of dividing their social life into functional spheres such as the economy, polity, society, culture and so on. However, due to unequal power relations, they are made objects of knowledge and management and not given any credit for their ways of life and discourses emerging out of their resistance (ibid). The impact of development also has bearing on tribal women’s status and their unequal power relations in tribal society.

The better status of women in tribal society is critically examined in connection with their land rights by Kelkar and Nathan (1991). They trace witch hunting to the pattern of land ownership and argue that victims of witch hunting are tribal widows who had a life interest in their husband’s land. Also they highlight taboos against women ploughing or even touching the plough as key to establishing man’s right over land. They argue that such taboos in disguise are ways of establishing division of labour, which implies both a political hierarchy and a form of property. According to them, the division of labour is not biological or natural but a construction of society. For instance, they highlight that hunting of small game by women is common among foraging tribes including the Birhore of Jharkhand even though it is considered a male activity among tribes. They also
highlight the ritual called *jani shikar* (women’s hunt) of the Oraon, Munda, Santhal and Ho. Further, as Fernandes and Menon (1987) in an earlier study showed, the depletion of natural resources (land, forest, water) has negatively impacted women. According to Kelkar, Nathan and Fernandes (2003), before the introduction of state pressure on matrilineal societies gender relations were relatively equal in Adivasi societies. He notes that they enjoyed more freedom and power in decision making regarding the use of resources within the household and community due to their role in production, their special knowledge of forests and their place in the cultural and spiritual life of matrilineal communities. Further, in the context of development induced displacement, Fernandes (2006) examines the status of tribal women in terms of gender roles and rights and duties. He maintains that the relatively high status of tribal women is due to her access to an abundance of resources and the economic support that she gives to her family. In addition, as Xaxa (2001) highlights, tribal women are depicted as having higher social status than their counterparts in caste society, but the economic burden and workload of tribal women as well as their access to education, food and nutrition, modern occupation and political participation, especially in the modern context, have not been given much attention. However, when common resources are used for development projects and when displacement takes place, women lose her status in the family. He notes that when land for land is given as compensation, it is given in the name of man in past decades.

There are ethnographic studies on tribal communities in Wayanad describing their culture and socio-political organisation and supernatural belief system (Thurston 1907, Aiyappan 1992) but these studies seldom address their development experience. Panoor (1963) depicts the poor standard of living and slave-like existence and unemployment of Paniya people with a sympathetic attitude to call the attention of the government and civil society. However, these studies are descriptive and see tribal people from a colonial perspective rather than view them from the actor’s point of view. Mathur (1977) presents a general view of the tribal situation in Kerala by describing their landlessness, indebtedness and bonded labour. Kunhaman (1989) critically analyzes the inter regional variations in the socio-economic development of the tribal people in Kerala and the reasons for these variations. The limitation of this study is that it is not based on direct field work, but mainly on the data from the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala from 1965 to 1979. Antony (1995) explores the differential development status among the
Kurichiya and Paniyas, taking into account the difference in their diet profile, morbidity and mortality. She argues that the initial class position of each group has played a vital role in shaping their response to the modern economic situation and state sponsored development initiatives and highlights the feminisation of poverty among them. Aerthayil (2008) analyzes the impact of globalisation on the livelihood of the tribal people in Kerala. He has looked into their socio-cultural life, education, health, employment and livelihood and the challenges they face in the context of globalisation. The study emphasizes that globalisation has negative impacts on the life, livelihood and culture of the tribal people. Land distribution is suggested as a remedial measure to counter the effect of globalisation as they can cultivate the land for food crops. However, the tribal’s everyday experiences of the development discourse and the individual and collective responses to development are not part of these studies.

**Rationale of the Study**

The existing literature points out that bonded labour, colonisation and the plantation economy, non-Adivasi migration into Wayanad and deforestation are some of the historical reasons that have led to the marginalisation of Adivasi communities. The development discourse and the government welfare policies in post-independent India have further marginalised some of the Adivasi groups. Kunhaman (1989) exploring the inter-regional variations in development among the tribes of Kerala, argues that the general socio-economic conditions prevailing in different regions resulted in the differences and the Adivasi communities residing in the Malabar region, of which Wayanad is a part, became the least developed group among the Adivasi communities in Kerala. While the analysis of the historical forces that marginalised Adivasi communities are rich and nuanced, they do not carry the perceptions and views of the Adivasi communities themselves, their embodied experiences and their notions of development. Seen as devoid of any agency as a consequence of marginalisation, these analysis tend to deny Adivasi communities’ own critique of development and their everyday struggles.

Most of the studies on Adivasi communities in Wayanad (Aiyappan and Mahadevan 1990, Antony 1995, Centre of excellence 2006 etc.) understand Adivasi communities’ present situation broadly within a developmentalist perspective. Questions such as ‘whose development’ and ‘development at the cost of whom’ are asked to highlight the point that
the economic and social growth has bypassed Adivasi communities and the need to redefine what constitutes Adivasi development. Kunhaman (2007) points out that during the Ninth Five Year Plan, Kerala experienced the highest rate of income growth and in the same period the largest number of starvation deaths occurred among the Adivasis. The recent assertion of Adivasi identity, demand for their ancestral land and self rule in the historic Adivasi mobilisation at Muthanga in Wayanad district is seen as challenging the dominant Adivasi development discourse.

While the socio-political and cultural ‘exclusion’ is acknowledged as a universal feature of tribal life, the everyday experience of their ‘exclusion’ may differ among tribal communities. This is reflected in the differential development status and the socio-economic stratification among them. Existing research attributes these differential development outcomes to certain historical advantages and disadvantages. How do these differences play out differently in the life of different Adivasi communities are not explored in these studies.

The literature reviewed shows that studies focusing on Adivasi women’s status in Kerala are rare. The studies on Adivasi communities do not discuss women’s social status, their decision making roles and the emerging modern patriarchal trends in their society which restricts their freedom and power. In the post independence period, Adivasi groups such as the matrilineal Kurichias have experienced tremendous changes in the women’s ownership of property, in their lifestyle and social roles as well as in their living and making of culture. The resource depletion and landlessness affect Paniya women more severely than their men and also the Kurichia women.

The homogeneous development policies and programmes for Adivasi communities which are heterogeneous and the impact of these policies and programmes on their socio-economic, cultural and political organisation and development are not sufficiently explored in these studies. While sharing the same geographical region, and confrontation with landlords, colonial rulers, market, settler farmers and independent state, the Adivasi groups trace a history of different trajectories of development. Even though a strong stream of historical continuity can be traced in their differentiation, Adivasi communities are treated by the State as homogenous and static with little or no differentiation among the different groups, a trend which began with the colonial anthropological constructions.
Among the Adivasi communities in Wayanad, the Kurichias were skilled in martial arts and were known as a warrior community. They still observe touch pollution against all castes and communities. Paniyas were food gatherers, who later became bonded and agricultural labourers (Mathur 1977). Kurichias and Kurumans are traditionally land owning communities. Kurichias followed matriline and continue to have joint families and joint land ownership and this helped them to save their land from alienation. On the contrary, Paniyas have a history of being bonded labourers with no history of land ownership except access to common lands in earlier times. For the purpose of this study, two larger Adivasi communities, with contrasting development status and historical features have been selected: Paniyas, bonded and landless with low educational and health status and Kurichias, matrilineal, landed and with relatively better educational and health status.

Objectives

General Objective

In the context of development (viewed in terms of modern education, health, employment and land ownership) of Adivasi communities in Wayanad, the present study attempts to analyse the experiences and responses of two Adivasi communities with contrasting development status. The general objective of the study is to understand the perceptions and subjective experiences of development among different Adivasi communities and to analyze the role of historical, structural and agential factors in shaping them.

Specific Objectives

1. To understand Paniyas’ and Kurichias’ access to land, forest and other material resources.
2. To analyze how the two select Adivasi communities perceive and utilise development programmes for education, health and employment.
3. To understand and analyze Adivasi communities’ perception of the idea of development vis-à-vis that of the State.
4. To analyze Paniyas’ and Kurichias’ everyday experience of the development process and their individual and collective struggles over the years.
5. To examine the position of women in the two communities and to analyze the consequences of development on gender relations.

6. To explain the differential development trajectories of two Adivasi groups within a region.

The main assumptions of the study are:

- Adivasi communities may have their own perceptions and experiences of development
- There are inter and intra Adivasi variations in these perceptions
- The different perceptions and experiences of development may be shaped by structural factors
- Their perceptions and experiences may be shaped by specific socio-economic and geo-political histories of the area and people
- They experience ‘state initiated development’ as marginalisation.

Based on the above assumptions, a qualitative methodology was adopted for the study giving importance to perceptions and experience of Adivasi communities. Since marginalisation is both an objective and subjective reality, this in-depth study attempted to understand this process not only in the socio-cultural and historical contexts but in the everyday lived experiences of the Adivasi communities. This study envisions following an approach that presumes the agency to the subject who is at the receiving end of assistance from state and development agencies. Departing from the top down development models and discourses, this study take a stand that Adivasis are the authors of their ‘development’ experience. And ‘others’ can become sensitive to their values and world views while representing their reality.

Owing to the influence of dominant ideas of ‘development’ among Adivasi communities and the prevalence of stereotyped constructions of Adivasi reality by non-Adivasi communities, this study demands immersion into the culture and everyday life experience of the Adivasi communities to elicit a perspective of the subject. The logic of inquiry in this research study is qualitative since the study unravels people’s perspectives and experiences, giving emphasis to the processes and the responses of the individuals in
their specific contexts. The ethnographic method has been found to be the most appropriate qualitative method to achieve the above objectives.

**Thematic Areas**

As the studies on tribal people in different parts of India reveal, the condition of tribal communities cannot be conceptualised as a low stage or a slow process of development. In many countries of Asia, Adivasi’s resources are not managed in a way to promote their livelihood, local accumulation and development and this becomes the essence of their marginality (Nathan, Kelkar and Walter 2004, Kunjaman 2007). The subsistence oriented economies of Adivasis are brought under commodity forms of production with the dislocation of original accumulation and global flows with the neo-liberal privatisation of their economies that has resulted in their marginality (Bijoy 2001, Nathan, Kelkar and Walter 2004). They become marginal even in their world views and cultures, being stigmatised as primitive by the dominant, being politically voiceless due to their minority status, being dispossessed of their commons, being workers and investors in the labour markets, and being consumers and tax payers. Nathan and Xaxa (2012) use the term ‘adverse inclusion’ along with social exclusion to denote the increasing adverse impacts of development initiatives like mines and industries which increases the gap between dominant classes and Adivasis. Thus, Xaxa situate Adivasi deprivation in the larger context of political economy. As he argues marginalisation of Adivasis is a relational outcome of their land and resource alienation. As Xaxa, Kunhaman, Roy Burman, Fernandes, Nathan, Kelkar, Walter and Baviskar maintain, in the context of tribal communities elsewhere, the development project seems to exclude and alienate tribal communities, it may be more appropriate to conceptualise their lived reality as a process of deprivation and marginalisation. Rather than development, material deprivation and cultural marginalisation are two important features in the history of tribal development in India.

As the review of literature on tribal development shows, some studies do stress on tribal self development and the importance of their own knowledge and discourses on development and view the state’s responsibility as redistribution of resources in an equitable way. There is a slow shift visible in the recent literature on tribal development. The earlier work on tribal reality mostly relied on colonial records and official narratives.
More recent studies have begun to give importance to their everyday experience to understand tribal reality. Both the individual agency in the everyday experience as well as the collective agency in the social movements are important in their identity formation as well as in deciding development experience. The critical analysis of broader historical, cultural and structural processes is important to understand the reality holistically and to support and supplement the understanding emerging from the community and its social actors.

Tribal movements emphasise the need for an alternate model of development in which people’s participation and people’s power become central, in which promotion and sustainability of life, both of human being and nature are given prime importance. A reconstruction of Adivasi ideology and assertion of their rights is emerging in the framework of another pattern of development. History reveals that people’s resistance is necessary to make the government machinery function in favour of deprived people.

Thus, in understanding the development experience of Adivasi communities in Wayanad, the following four themes gain importance and they are analyzed in the subsequent chapters.

**Material Deprivation and Cultural Alienation**

Material deprivation and cultural marginalisation are two important aspects of tribal development and these two features are explored in the context of development. The aspect of material deprivation is discussed in greater detail in the chapters on land, employment and livelihood while the aspect of cultural alienation is explored in detail in the chapters on education and health.

**Social and Cultural Reproduction of Marginality**

The chapters on education and health analyzes in detail the social and cultural reproduction of inequality and marginality and symbolic violence exerted in subtle ways to perpetuate the inequality and discrimination through schools and health care institutions. The chapters also explore the multitudinal ways in which Adivasi world views, knowledge and epistemologies are made illegitimate.
Subordination and Resistance

With reference to Wayanad, the Adivasis are exposed to state violence of extreme situations as well as the embedded violence of every day practice and these are delineated to understand the different types of social suffering as well as the differences experienced by Paniyas and Kurichias in their marginalisation process. All the subsequent chapters discuss not only the means and methods of subordination, but also Adivasi strategies of resistance.

Agency and Social Movements

Paniyas and Kurichias offer a critique of development through their enormous suffering and resistance to build their life as well as to bring forth a different vision of the world. They emphasise a moral, need based subsistence economy over the want based profit oriented economy of modernisation in the context of general erosion of resource base of the Adivasis. In the context of Wayanad, Paniyas and Kurichias were critical towards the dominant Kerala culture and the modern development experience. Their land struggles were crucial in challenging the Kerala model and its development patterns with homogenising trends, neglecting the cultural diversity and Adivasi world views. In the midst of capitalist economies which tear apart Adivasi identities, they are found resisting, negotiating or demanding for better treatment from the state and its development apparatus. Muthanga struggle was the culmination of these resistance movements where they proclaimed that they need a different development framework to save their lives and the lives of the people on earth. Adivasis proclaimed at Muthanga ‘our culture and world views are different from the dominant culture and world views of Kerala’. The assertion of their subjectivities through social movements and demands for their rights become the core of their responses to modern development. Their individual struggles are discussed in all the chapters, their collective struggles are discussed mainly in the chapter dealing with the historical and socio-political contexts.