CHAPTER IX

Conclusion

Until the lion can tell his own stories, tales of the hunt will be told by the hunter.74

-Old African Proverb

This study intended to gain an insight into the perceptions and experiences of development of the Adivasis in Wayanad and their responses to state initiated development policies and programmes. By exploring the experiences of development of two different Adivasi communities, this study attempted to understand their differential development outcomes, the processes of marginalisation and the reproduction of historical advantages and disadvantages. When profit oriented economic rationality rules the entire world, the Adivasi world views pose a challenge by believing in the philosophy of living for the day respecting the limits of the earth. The Adivasi narratives affirm that the development policies and programmes envisioned for them by the state do not recognise or acknowledge their world views and epistemologies and only contribute to their marginalisation.

Schools and states’ various educational programmes not only assume inferiority of Adivasi culture and knowledge but are structures that actively reproduce Adivasis marginal positions in society. The Adivasi culture and languages are not recognised as official languages in school and their usage is labeled as ‘backwardness’. So Paniya and Kurichia children do not dare to speak in their own languages in school and also try to hide their natural identity by claiming the dominant Hindu religious identity within the classrooms. It appears that educational institutions run by religious agencies are together with the government in ‘redeeming’ Adivasi culture and helping them ‘merge’ with the

74 Taken from Lincoln and Denzin (2008)
‘mainstream’. As Sundar (2009) argues, the state’s acts of omission and commission are central to the enterprise of religious mobilisation in educational institutions.

The establishment of separate Model Residential Schools (MRSs), hostels or special schools for Adivasis does not address the issues of social and cultural alienation that they face without changing the dominant discourses on what constitutes legitimate knowledge and finding legitimate space for Adivasi perception and their knowledge within the formal curriculum. The mismatch between formal schooling and the everyday lives of Adivasi children resulting in their intrinsic exclusion is neither recognised nor addressed through the state’s policy reform processes. The National Curriculum Framework Review reports that the organisation of the Indian education system reflects clearly the caste, class and tribe stratified structure of the society, and its hierarchical ideology (NCFR 2005). The cultural hegemony of the dominant groups/classes, the identity as tribe, dominant, asymmetric gender constructions, the identity as slave caste in the feudal and colonial periods, and the complex interface of all these play their role in perpetuating inequality in the education of Adivasi children. Inequality ingrained in society gets transferred to the school through non-Adivasi teachers, and the school and the educational administration. The educational system has evolved a performance evaluation system entirely based on the non-Adivasi student's performance, to evaluate the Adivasi students.

The two communities, the Paniyas and the Kurichias cope with or resist the process of education in different ways. The Kurichia students are more resilient although they too experience exclusion and exploitation, but to a lesser degree. They respond differently due to their material, social and cultural advantages and the consequent assertion of power as a community. In the case of the Kurichias, their land provides them better economic security and social identity as it acts as a social, cultural and symbolic capital in the Wayanad context where Brahmin jenmis were considered the sole owners of the landed property. Also the landedness and subsistence built on it reduced the dependency of the Kurichias on dominant classes and the government, and provided them with better bargaining capacities unlike the totally dependent Paniya wage labourers. This provided Kurichia children better acceptability in schools located in their neighbourhoods. However, their generic identity as tribes gets crystallised in the broader context of
National citizenship beyond their locality even within Kerala. Both the communities undergo different degrees of violence and conflict that form their subjectivities differently interfering with their learning and curtailing their cognitive capacities.

Along with a critical understanding of social structures as well as their ideological reproduction through educational institutions, understanding the subjective experience of violence and exclusion in everyday schooling is very important to explain the differential educational experiences and outcomes among Adivasi communities. The responses of the communities reveal that systematic violence can cripple the individual’s and community’s ability to resist domination and even to access policies and programmes purported to ‘empower’ them such as schooling and education. In fact, in many ways, educational institutions and programmes meant for Adivasis exacerbates their marginality by rendering their knowledge and culture illegitimate and their bodies and subjectivities sites of overt and symbolic violence.

It emerges that the state supported, hegemonic social and cultural constructions of knowledge negate the specific culture of the Adivasi communities. Instead of pluralising the learning spaces, the state, through its policies and programmes, tries to consolidate the inequitable monoculture by legitimising and reproducing the inequalities and dominant cultural practices. The education system and the pedagogic actions resist recognising and legitimising Adivasi knowledge, perhaps because it carries elements that contest the dominant mono cultural trends of society. Thus, trends like establishing model residential schools and hostels or incorporating a lesson on their slavery and exploitation or including one of their cultural programmes in the curriculum, or beginning an archery academy cannot solve the exclusion and marginalisation they face. A wide range of issues such as the cultural hegemony of the dominant groups/classes, their identity as tribe, gender, their identity as a slave caste in the feudal and colonial periods, and the complex interface of all these play their role in perpetuating inequality in the education of Adivasi children and this has to be addressed by remoulding the curriculum and pedagogy by giving space to Adivasis world views and epistemologies.
Cognitive violence is meted out to Adivasi children in their everyday schooling in subtle forms such as attributing genetic backwardness, poor IQ and learning capacities to them and considering them ‘lesser human beings’. The Kurichias as well as the Paniyas expressed in manifold ways that their cultural evolution is curtailed through today’s education, and that their knowledge of agriculture and their different culture which respects all life forms have no place in the education offered to them. A rich culture with pluriform expressions have no space to flourish. Thus, as they assert, without addressing the epistemic violence which exclude Adivasi world views, vast knowledge base and ways of knowing, there cannot be an educational development which is meaningful to Adivasis.

This monoculture trends however, are not limited to education alone but to the entire life situation of Adivasis and their habitats. For instance, the spread of monoculture cash crop and the resultant deforestation and degradation of environmental resources have far reaching effects on the indigenous knowledge systems as well as Adivasi survival and health. Chapter V discusses how resource depletion, knowledge depletion and the hegemonic interventions of the state are detrimental to their health and well-being. It emerges that Adivasi culture is against universal models or universal cause effect relations like that of the western medical model, which is centered on the antagonistic biological perception of health that negates the significant influence of culture and environment.

The Adivasis believe in several interpretations of the same reality and the context and the experience of the subject becomes the basis for their interpretations. Thus, in understanding health they include social, cultural, environmental and spiritual concerns along with biological interpretations of ill health. Their conceptualisation of health and illness encompasses land, environment, community, rituals and their spirituality and the disconnection with any of these areas cause imbalance and lead to ill health. The compartmentalised fragmented approach to health is alien to their culture and they point out the chances of objectification in this approach. While the dominant constructions of modern medicine alienate them from their culture and healing practices, the commercial trends destroy their wealth of herbs and clean and natural environment. Adivasi world
views are dominated by a ‘moral order’ encompassing the whole cosmos and is therefore superior to the ‘technological order’ which is bound by things. Adivasis thus put forth a critique of the superiority of a biomedical paradigm perpetuated and reproduced by state institutions through special support at the cost of other systems including their own Adivasi vaidyam (medicine).

Further, the unequal power relations in the health system become acute for the Adivasis as they experience double alienation. The world of medical knowledge is alien to them and at the same time, they experience the discriminatory social practices and alien cultural practices of the medical institutions. They experience discrimination in the same institutions which provide assistance to them. Their etiquette and social relations are described as ‘primitive’ and their rituals and spiritual healing practices are considered superstitions by the modern world of medicine. The Paniyas and Kurichias offer a strong critique of the modern medical system, which gives them aid on one side and marginalises them on the other. The Adivasis affirm that through their naturalistic and spiritual healing practices, they regain balance as individuals and as communities. They point out that their vaidyans and healers have proved that their herbal medicines can cure diseases that modern medicine cannot cure.

Even though Adivasis still hold strong faith in herbs to heal sickness, they acknowledge the diminishing sources of herbs through various development interventions and remain open to other systems of medicine. They are also aware that the lifestyles and food consumption patterns have changed and do not blindly believe that all poisons can be removed from their bodies through herbs. They acknowledge that they are facing new health risks, which were not common earlier and are thus open to other systems of medicine. They are pragmatic in choosing medical assistance according to their specific contexts.

The healing practices of the Adivasis are context specific. The Paniyas’ slave history and lack of access to herbs forced them to develop more spiritual healing practices as compared to herbal healing practices. In contrast, the Kurichias were able to continue their healing with more elaborate herbal medicines. Their small landholdings, access to
various resources and minimum government support helped them to hold on to their herbal healing practices along with spiritual healing.

From the analysis in the various chapters, it emerges that the Adivasis have a different world view. They do not bifurcate the sacred and the secular, the material and the cultural but seek harmony in the pluriform expressions of life. The human and the non-human world merges in the stories of their elders and through these stories, they teach their youngsters that nature and animals too have feelings and a consciousness like human beings and they learn to revere them all. A Paniya teacher conveyed that their stories and folk songs are fading from their memories and she cherished her childhood memories of her grandfather telling her these stories at bedtime. As Roy Burman (2010) points out, one common trait of Adivasi culture is their rootedness in the surroundings and their empathetic connection with the animate and inanimate world around them. The realm of the living and the departed unite in their ritual practices and the material world and the world of the spirits merge while subjectifying the god experience through their ritual practices. The ancestors are living spirits who have the power to bless and punish them. They believe in the energy emanating from the animate and the inanimate, from the spirits of the living and the dead, from their thoughts and emotions. Nature becomes an extension of their being and they move according to the natural cycle more than the time space concept of the modern world which indulges in rational calculations for the future and acts as the main pillar of capitalist progress.

The power structures as well as development discourse failed to perceive the cultural distinctiveness of tribal people and their embeddedness with land and nature. When the state and its hegemonic structures perceive land as a productive force with a commercial interest, tribal people hold a material and spiritual relationship with land and call it ‘mother’. Land becomes a prerequisite for them to receive blessings from their ancestors as it is perceived as the abode of their ancestors. The spiritual connection with land helps them to keep away from commercial interest and the profit motive and hold on to a moral economy which sustains nature as well as people harmoniously. Shah (2011) analyzes the indigenous politics, environmentalism and insurgency in the newly formed Jharkhand state and explores its limitations to address the issues of the Munda tribe and advocates
the need for a moral politics endorsed by the Munda spirits that is neither self interested
nor divisive, and which is reinforced by the values of egalitarianism, consensus in
decision making and mutual aid.

Thus, the inability of the Paniyas and the Kurichias to participate in the development
initiated by the government should be considered a form of epistemic violence. Unless
there is epistemic and cognitive justice, they will continue to remain at the periphery. In
the spheres of education and health and generally in the development discourse itself, the
state continues to negate the epistemic significance of tribal knowledge.

The Adivasis, especially the Paniyas, are facing a situation of second slavery as they
are still deprived of land and resources. Their labour and their women are exploited in
different ways through Kodagu labour, other forms of migrant labour and domestic
labour. Without addressing these core issues, the development programmes of the state
will remain ineffective. However, the Paniyas are well aware of these attempts and have
started problematising the development programmes and policies which deprive them of
their basic rights and continue to keep them in a dependent existence as wage labourers
without any protection. The Paniyas, especially some of the men folk, resort to
alcoholism and develop a defiant identity as they face increasing alienation and
dehumanisation. The Kurichias had minimum subsistence, which gave them basic
protection and as a result they experienced less alienation when compared to the Paniyas.
Their resistance towards the state and its development apparatus was found to be less. As
mentioned earlier, land acts as material as well as social and cultural capital for the
Kurichias and they accrue the benefits of their landedness. Their subsistence agriculture
gives them a sense of belonging that helps to consolidate their community ties with both
officials and non-Adivasis in the area. The Kurichia leaders used this symbolic and
cultural capital centered on land for asserting their identity, culture, politics as well as the
self sustaining systems of agricultural practices in Wayanad.

The NREGS and the promise of 100 days of wage work is a pittance to the Paniyas in
the midst of the trauma and violence they experienced. It emerges that the cultural
alienation of the Paniyas is more in NREGS than in other wage labour opportunities in
the locality, as it did not cater to even the food and firewood needs of the people. Again, it did not provide space for their creative participation incorporating their knowledge of the specific work undertaken. For instance, their knowledge and skills in paddy cultivation, forest regeneration and protection of ponds and river banks have been totally ignored while designing and implementing NREGS work. Thus, even in NREGS, Kurichias landedness provided them better creative involvement in decision making. Thus, the differential experiences of both communities in development indicate mainly the centrality of land in Adivasi life.

The Adivasis have a deep connect with land. Even after years of ‘mainstreaming’ and policies that alienate them from land and forest, their connection with land has not reduced. The Adivasi relationship with land is not just material but cultural and spiritual and they want to pursue a development which is different from that of dominant society. They never uttered the word ‘profit’ while discussing their land and agricultural practices, but criticised the non-Adivasi tendency to produce maximum profit at the cost of killing earth and its micro-organisms through uncontrollable use of chemicals and pesticides. Generally, words such as ‘market’ and ‘profit’ were absent in their vocabulary, unlike the non-Adivasis who invariably begin their conversation by saying, “Agriculture is not profitable today”. All their cultural and spiritual practices are tied to land. Moreover, they are not projecting a romantic relationship with land but their knowledge and wisdom about nature is contextual. It has been developed through years of observation and coexistence as they lived a life close to nature and made a living from the fruits of it. As a Kurichia Karanavan revealed, they still have knowledge of more than 50 indigenous seed varieties of paddy. A Paniya youth shared that her mother had knowledge about more than 80 varieties of leafy vegetables and edible roots; a Kurichia youth said that they had better knowledge than the forest officials about trees that can be grown in different parts of the Western Ghats according to the contours and altitude. The practical knowledge and wisdom they gained cannot be belittled. However, as this study has shown, development of modern science and technology excluded the Adivasis by labeling them ignorant and irrational and rejected the rich wealth of their traditional knowledge. The Adivasis are given little or no credit for their vast knowledge as their language is not domineering and
as their knowledge is subjugated by the colonial legacy and post colonial power structures.

Further, the Adivasi community is built around land which binds them instead of isolating them into private enclaves as in the case of other dominant cultures. They had customary laws for protecting land and for accessing its resources for the survival of the communities in the past. The tradition based on community stewardship made the caring of nature and the sharing of its produce easy and natural to them. At present, in Wayanad, Kurichia tharavads attempt to keep this community spirit alive through joint cultivation practices in their paddy fields and ritual practices around their kavu. The Paniyas keep this community spirit alive by sharing their small plots of land with other Paniya community members who do not have any land even for constructing a hut and by keeping at least a tree as a symbol of reverence and for ritual practices where they have no land for keeping a kavu. Trees symbolically represent the last frontiers of the Adivasis’ right for space and territory. However, keeping a patch of land barren or as kavu is considered foolish by the dominant capitalist culture and the big plantations are depicted as the glory of Wayanad as the cash crops guarantee foreign exchange for the state.

This study reveals that the development policies of the state strongly perpetuate the belief that private ownership is efficient and that state management is better, as according to them, it generates revenue, increases production and foreign exchange, and facilitates progress. The establishment of plantations and the establishment of private and state forests at the cost of community management are the best examples of this misleading notion. However, today Adivasis are forced to accept the law of private ownership of land. It emerges that their fight for private property (one to five acres of land) did not convey the urge for private accumulation and increased production, but focused on their need for security and survival. Through asserting their land rights, the Adivasis are seeking protection from the rage of the ‘masters’ who call them ‘thieves’ when they fetch firewood or an edible root from the ‘masters’ private property. Even though they are not for ‘isolated spaces’ and ‘private enclaves’, they are forced to abide by the Roman property laws which are grafted in the Indian soil by the colonial rulers as it is the only option left for them. The community rights promised in the Forest Act 2006 is a ray of
hope to assert their customary rights as it has legal sanction, though it has not materialised in Kerala till now. However, the Forest Right Act 2006 brought out through the people’s movement forced the state to acknowledge the need for community support especially Adivasi support in protecting forest resources. But the state refuses to impart the right to Adivasis while accessing their help to protect the forest and collect its resources that are sold through government cooperatives. Only the British law of land acquisition and private property laws are acceptable to the state and the territorial right or the customary right that people have enjoyed for centuries has been banned by an alien law. Varghese (1970) observes that British writers themselves acknowledged their unwise decision in considering the entire land of Malabar including waste land as private jenmam or government jenmam lands.

The state’s interventions indicate that it has not yet perceived the Adivasi traditions and customary rights or their material, cultural and spiritual connection with land an important factor. The land distribution process, which was forced by Adivasi struggles, does not take into consideration their world views such as community ownership of land even though it is stipulated in the Forest Rights Act 2006. The Adivasi agency affirmed on different platforms that it is necessary to establish the link between land ownership and Adivasi life and their development instead of sticking to the policy of assistance. Thus, it is all the more important to recognise the link between Adivasis landlessness and the history of state policies and the link between landlessness and their marginalisation. As Veena Das and others observed, the State’s violence can affect the subjectivities of the people. The State’s continuous violation of the promise of giving land to the Adivasis and the brutal suppression of their resistance through police force as described in the chapter on land has caused mistrust among the Adivasis. They may remain stateless within the state structures by not paying taxes and by not paying user fees to the state and to the agencies that looted all the natural wealth, which they had accessed freely for centuries.

However, the Adivasis assert that without addressing the issue of land, there cannot be any inclusive development. The Adivasi narratives reveal that they received land only through their continuous struggles and that too only in very few cases. The state’s land distribution plan still remains on paper and is confined only to five cents or ten cents per
family. Not only the capitalist producer but the state also perceives that land is only for productive purposes to make profit, and thus profit oriented development projects become the priority of the state.

The development experiences of the two communities affirm that the material, cultural, environmental, moral and spiritual factors are important in assessing their development trajectories and it is through their relation with land, their own land - common land and forest land - that they realise and reproduce their world views, epistemologies and community life. Alienating them from all these lands and denying them access are strategies that reproduce the structural inequality that marginalises them not only materially but also culturally and cognitively. In the following section, we revisit the theories that help explain Adivasi realities in the light of their experiences.

Ecological crisis is widespread and has become a global issue in current capitalist development. Finance capital continues its drive for profit and faster technology at the cost of environmental destruction. Modern science disregards traditional wisdom and knowledge about sustainable models and divides the whole complex reality into parts to control and establish power through technology. At this juncture, ecological Marxism explored by O’Connor (1998) and Foster (2001) looks critically into development projects and proposes self management and conservation more than accumulation and unending growth at the cost of human beings and nature. It believes in the production of life and regeneration of natural resources instead of surplus generation and thus reflects the Adivasi world views about nature partially. Thus, ecological Marxism helps to understand and analyzes Adivasi development as it promotes earth centered ethics and local sustainable models of production. Adivasis firmly believe that they cannot limit earth and its resources as ‘conditions for production’ as ecological Marxists formulate in their theories, and thus Adivasi world views go beyond the ontological and epistemological limits of ecological Marxism. However, as Roy Burman (2004) observes, as people having cultures permeated with closeness to nature and empathetic identification with specific forms of nature, one cannot avoid the vanguard role of Adivasis in the 21st century to protect nature as the working class had enacted in the 19th century.
Adivasi narratives reveal that there is need to move beyond the ecological Marxist perspective and draw attention to the cultural politics and the agency of the people involved in reproducing and challenging inequalities and exclusions around resources and world views. Polanyi’s (1964) concept of embeddedness in contrast to market commodification of land and labour contributes to the Adivasi vision of sociality and land relations. As Baviskar (1995) argues, there is need to move beyond the ecological consciousness and embrace the cultural traditions of Adivasis to develop a powerful visionary critique of development despite the contradictions embedded in their lived reality. Further, Baviskar (2008) unravels the cultural politics around natural resources and elaborates on how this affects the lives of the poor and backward classes. According to her, ‘a cultural politics of natural resources treats identities, interests and resources not as predetermined givens, but as emergent products of the practices of cultural production and reproduction’ (2008:7). In Wayanad, this role of Adivasis is crucial, because environmentalists and even KSSP, the most radical science wing, were against giving ecologically fragile land to the Adivasis (Chathukulam and Jose 2006). The non-Adivasi perceptions and land distribution processes in Wayanad reveal that the land, which was suitable for production or other purposes is not meant for Adivasis as they are ‘lazy’ and do not generate maximum profit or foreign exchange through the commodification of land.

Eco feminists and feminist environmentalists recognise that women care for the environment more than men do due to their subsistence roles in the family. They believe in the ‘production of life’ rather than the ‘production of profit’ and this is especially true about Adivasi women. Adivasi women are more involved in subsistence roles of caring and nurturing than Adivasi men. The destruction of natural resources, their commons and land affect Adivasi women more as it affects their subsistence roles. For them fetching firewood, water and food items take longer hours and did not suffice for their day today needs. The economic contribution of women was appreciated when common resources were plenty. Today, women are entrusted with non-wage labour due to scarcity of wage labour. Women’s dependence on men has thus increased, which in turn, diminished their status and increased the violence towards them. Sanskritisation promotes the trend of
controlling women and confining them to the household. Among the Adivasis, religious identity has become a tool to claim modernity; patriarchal norms are inherent in modern religious identities rather than in Adivasi identity and lifestyle, which gives due respect to nature and women. However, assimilation into other religions is an ongoing process initiated by various religions through charity, preaching and training. It is initiated from within the communities for assuming a modern identity. As Dietrich (1988) points out, there is need to create a mode of production which does not exploit nature, women and labour. As a second step, she draws our attention to the need to understand the connection between ecological and cultural crisis caused by the development model which is neo colonial, capitalist and patriarchal and violent towards the material and spiritual survival of people. These theories help understand the plight of Adivasi women in Wayanad, the threat to their life and other ill effects of development.

When we actually analyze the subjective experiences, we understand the inability of the Adivasis to participate in the development programmes because of the violence inherent in state interventions. The indigenous methodology advocated by Smith (2005) enlarges the scope by looking beyond well defined models, prioritising practice based theories and by incorporating an inclusive theoretical perspective including the Adivasis own critique of development.

The colonial mindset of seeing Adivasis as primitive and backward is still alive in Wayanad, even though the term, ‘primitive tribe’ has been changed to ‘particularly vulnerable groups’ in official records. It is evident from their critique that the huge corpus of administrative machinery arranged for Adivasi development fails to recognise the pluriform expressions of their culture and they involve a piecemeal approach that scatters their energies and neglects the existential rights of the Adivasis. They plan top down development models that do not resonate with Adivasi culture and philosophy. Thus, if the world views and epistemologies of the Adivasis are not taken seriously and incorporated into all their developmental plans, they cannot come out of the deep rooted alienation they face and it will perpetuate their distrust in the state and its administrative machinery.
The government policies and programmes for tribal development based on different approaches during the colonial and post colonial periods have made the indigenous life support systems of Adivasis weak and fragile. The creation of ‘state’ during British rule and its consolidation in the post independent period used the tactics of scientific rationality and progress to expropriate the resource base of the Adivasis in the name of national development. India’s development is linked with Western industrialisation that relies to a great extent on the natural resource base on which the traditional communities depend for their survival. Thus, the experience with Adivasis led Elwin (ref) to advocate a strong isolationist approach. However, in the Wayanad context, they do not claim isolation but assert their identity, dignity and political sovereignty in ‘mainstream’ society through their movements for land rights and self rule. Assimilation and integration are buzz words to represent the state’s approach towards Adivasis. It emerges that the concepts of ‘social exclusion’ and ‘adverse inclusion’ that Xaxa and Nathan use for representing their reality are more appropriate to represent the present situation of the Adivasis in Wayanad. They are excluded in the decisions regarding their self development and exploited. Internal colonialism as well as involvement of the external agencies and state deprived them from their traditional resource base and majority of them are confined in government established ‘colonies’ depending on the dominant non-Adivasi majority for their survival. The dominant cultures in Wayanad still attribute an uncultured, primitive and backward identity to the Adivasis. The administrators who work for Adivasi development pose that they know better than Adivasis themselves about what is good for them and plan development programmes. What is happening as a result of all these dehumanising experiences and use of violence is the ethnocide of a distinct group of people. The lifestyle of the Adivasis is generally considered inferior and the administrative machinery that has been set up destroys all their traditional resources and choices in the urge for modern development. The presence and growth of a parasitic society around Adivasis is the reality in Wayanad today and the exploitation of Paniyas in Kodagu is a grave example.

Literature on tribal development shows that worldwide, a whole lot of territorial resources of the Adivasis were taken away in the name of development by the state,
powerful individuals, private enterprises and trans-national corporations. The commercialisation of forest lands, agriculture and other common property resources in Wayanad caused maximum damage to the Adivasis and they have nothing to fall back upon and depend totally on the market for their survival. They are displaced from their own cultures, community and knowledge systems and the alien values of the dominant societies are superimposed on them. This system has evolved from the colonial systems of production and appropriation and developed through the industrial capitalist system, which is projected as modern and efficient. Through this process, the collective rights of people and command over their resources are substituted by the supremacy of the market. These modern development programs are counterproductive and have resulted in the erosion of the resource base, knowledge and power to self determination of the Adivasis. As a whole, the process of development has destroyed their traditional social economic and cultural structure without offering a better alternative.

The model of development that is centralised, authoritarian and non-participative caused a breakdown of the traditional life support system. Through their lived experience, they realised that resistance is the only way to restore their rights as equal citizens of India. Through resistance they are not only asserting their rights but showing another path to development of community ownership, subsistence economy, participatory democracy, consensus model of decision making and so on. The capitalist model of development has marginalised the tribal people as the concentration of means of production continues to be in the hands of plantation owners, the rich peasants and the state. The political lethargy in distributing land to the Adivasis and the history of the Adivasi movement based on self assertion through land rights affirms that resistance is the only way to create a political will favouring the marginalised.

When we look at the livelihood issues and development scenario of Adivasis in Wayanad, we realise that they share issues similar to those of other Adivasis in India. The state, its administrative machinery and the dominant ‘mainstream’ society try to hegemonise the Adivasi mind to maintain their inferior position and powerlessness, as the Adivasi hamlets are internal colonies to exploit as cheap labour. In the modernisation
paradigm of development, they lose control over natural resources, land and livelihoods and along with that they lose their rich traditional knowledge.

The various development policies and programmes implemented for Adivasis in Wayanad failed as the Adivasi world views and epistemologies have been ignored in the process of planning. Thus, before addressing corruption, mismanagement and non implementation of the programmes, there is need to check how much each programme resonates with Adivasi world views. The tribal development programmes actually conceal and perpetuate their conditions of marginality by pacifying them and by destroying the unity among them with their piecemeal approach. The tribal movements in Wayanad continuously tried to reveal their critical position and dissatisfaction with the development envisaged by the state. Thus, tribal development in their viewpoint is nothing less than regaining the power to self determination and their right to forest, land and livelihoods. As their narratives reveal, the assimilation and so called integration approaches are tools for further exploitation. Self assertion through emerging movements is the alternative to rebuilding their socio economic political and cultural rights as Karlson (2000), Dietrich (1988) and Escobar (1992) point out.

Some Kurichiyas are better mobilised and hold onto their cultural identity as majority of them own land and are able to cope, resist and negotiate with the dominant development model compared to the Paniyas who resist or ‘wither’ away in the process of ‘development’. Kurichias’ landedness is the most important factor which gives them a superior cultural identity. The structures of inequality among different sections of tribal groups like the Paniyas and Kurichias are bound to produce and reproduce different levels of inequality. This is perpetuated in the asymmetries of modern development. Even the tribal development programs do not take into consideration their heterogeneity and the policies are designed and implemented without considering their specific contexts and subjectivities and both groups cannot participate in it equally.

The Kurichiyas and Paniyas do not want to own a common Adivasi identity, but their common struggles are centered on their land and resources in which both communities share different degrees of marginalisation. Their struggles are not identity struggles in the
true sense. What they want to affirm is not their Adivasiness or indigenousness, but they want to affirm their cultural and political rights to live a decent life. So in their struggle, they claim a pan Adivasi identity; in their everyday life, they chase the modern identity to escape the humiliations they face. They do not want to essentialise their Adivasiness, but want to claim back the land and resources that they lost by acknowledging and fighting against their marginality. Their narratives clearly indicate that they are aware of the second phase of slavery that they are getting into, which is crucial even though it is not visible like the first phase of slavery in the feudal period. More than physical brutality, the epistemological violence leads to their exclusion and marginalisation. Their struggle and initiatives to get out of their marginality by acknowledging and arresting the growth of multiple processes of marginalisation is important in the discourse of development.

Further, their land struggle clearly indicates the gap between the state’s perception of development and the Adivasis own perceptions. The Paniyas and Kurichias expressed that land is the most important asset for their cultural assertion and self development and the struggles reported by them are mostly around land. Initiatives such as erecting the monument of Thalackal Chandu by the Kurichias to reclaim their leadership in the anti-colonial struggle in Wayanad, and mobilisation to erect the monument of Paniya Mooppan Karinthandan who disclosed the route from Thamarassery to Wayanad and was brutally killed by the British colonizers, are all part of rewriting the colonial history in Wayanad and reclaiming their identity. As Das et al (2001) have shown, when official history erases their great contributions against the colonial forces, the present generation uses its collective memory to rewrite history and challenge the officially constructed version.

In the context of dysfunctional *Oorukoottams*, the Adivasis in Wayanad demand PESA, which is within the limits of constitutional provisions, at least to enter into a dialogue with the dominant world views and to create a small space for their world views. The state is indifferent towards implementing PESA and thereby acknowledging the voice of the Adivasis and their minimum needs, which is land. The struggles of the Adivasis in Wayanad demand a different state and governance which involves less state intervention, more autonomy and self determination.
The Adivasis are the ones who articulated the intrinsic value of the earth and its resources when they came into conflict with the colonial power. Their fights were centered on *jal, jangal, jamin* and if others joined them in this struggle, neo-liberal colonialism and exploitation could have been blocked by the dawn of independence. While other freedom fighters fought against material slavery, the Adivasis recognised the cognitive slavery in implanting a British developmental model with its land laws and positivist epistemology. They spread this message to the rulers in the national and international arenas through the indigenous working group and this group contributes a great share to decolonise development. A transition from state domain to community domain of resources and knowledge is most important for the minimum survival of Adivasis today.

A reconstruction of Adivasi ideology and assertion of their rights is possible in the framework of another pattern of development, which asserts their agency, pluriformity of different cultures and their specific contexts. The lived ideology of the Adivasis and their world views certainly bring forth a development discourse to save their own lives as well as the life of the entire world. The sacred and the secular, the material and the cultural coexist in their world views unlike modern ideology which treats religion, economy, politics and law as separate entities. All forms of cognitive and physical violence can be reduced by incorporating Adivasi world views and epistemologies. As Smith (2005) advocates, an indigenous methodology that takes a critical position for decolonising Adivasi knowledge and wisdom is essential in the Wayanad context. Without giving due recognition and promotion to the epistemological meaning attached to land by Adivasis, there is no possibility of giving them historical and cognitive justice. As Smith points out, decolonising methodologies, which give due importance to culture, values and behaviour, are essential in knowing the life world of the Adivasis. Smith stresses the pluriformity and diversity and the need for resistance to incorporate Adivasi epistemologies. She affirms their need to survive, to work out Adivasi ways of knowing, to reflect, to preserve and protect, to defend and attack, to have a social system that enables them to do things. However, as Adivasis affirm through their narrations and struggles, land rights and self determination are a must in challenging their marginalised position and in occupying
central roles in their self development. It emerges that without addressing the cognitive injustice of epistemological colonialism imposed upon the Adivasis, there will be no development that is equitable and just in resource sharing as well as in knowledge creation.