

CHAPTER – VII
IMPACT OF DEFORESTATION ON
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE SELECTED
TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

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IMPACT OF DEFORESTATION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE SELECTED TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The impact assessment of the socio-economic status of the three selected tribal communities is attempted in this chapter on the basis of the primary data collected from Hill Pulayas (70 households) Mannans (40 households) and Muthuvan (20 households) settlements adding up to a total of 130 households located in the Devicolam taluk of Idukki District. The parameters employed for the analysis are land ownership, cropping pattern, income, employment, housing structure, literacy level, social organization, customs and rituals, health care and medicine and the degree of dependence on forests.

Land ownership

Land is a basic resource and one of the major sources of livelihood of the tribal in the study area. Land use changes had its impact on each tribal community in its own unique way. The Muthuvans are attached to the Reserve Forest without ownership of land, while the Hill Pulayas are partly landless and partly owners of tiny plots of land. A majority of the Mannans are owners of cultivable land.

Among the three communities, Hill Pulayas occupy land in the periphery of the Chinnar wild life sanctuary. Mannans are settled agriculturists. Muthuvans are the landless community. As they live within the Reserve Forest, they are not eligible for title deeds. For a comparative analysis, only the land possessing communities are taken into account, i.e. the Hill Pulayas and Mannans.

The size of land holdings per household of the Hill Pulayas and Mannans are given in Table 7.1

TABLE - 7.1

SIZE OF LAND HOLDINGS PER HOUSE HOLDS OF TRIBALS

Sl.No	Size of land holdings in (hectares)	Hill Pulayas No. of H/Hs	Mannans No. of H/Hs
1	No land	10 (14.28)	2 (5.00)
2	0-0.02	24 (34.28)	1 (2.5)
3	0.02-0.5	29 (41.42)	12 (30)
4	0.5 - 1.0	5 (7.14)	15 (37.5)
5	1.0 - 2.0	2 (2.85)	7 (17.5)
6	2.0 - 3.0	0	3 (7.5)
7	3.0 - 4.0	0	0
	Total	70 (100)	40 (100)

H/H - Household

Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage to total.

The land owned by Hill Pulayas, however, are without title deeds. Whatever land the Hill Pulayas possess is fenced off in and around their settlement. 41.42 percent own between 0.02 - 0.5 hectares of land, while 14.28 percent do not possess any land. 7.14 percent own more than half hectares of land. Thus, all the Hill Pulaya holdings fall within the marginal holdings category.

Mannans possess land with proper title deeds and 30 percent among them have holdings between 0.02 - 0.5 hectares, while 37.5 percent possesses between 0.5 - 1.0 hectares which come under marginal holdings. 17.5 percent have small holdings (1.0-2.0 ha) and 7.5 percent have semi-medium holdings (2.0 - 3.0 ha).

As can be seen from Table 7.2 both the Hill Pulayas and Mannans have inequalities in the land holdings, though comparatively the Hill Pulayas show lesser

TABLE 7.2
INEQUALITIES IN THE LAND HOLDINGS PER HOUSE HOLD
AMONG THE HILL PULAYAS AND MANNANS

Sl.No	Category	Size of land holdings	Hill Pulayas No of H/Hs	Mannans No of H/Hs
1	No land	-	10 (14.28%)	02 (5.00%)
2	Marginal holders	0.0 -1.0 ha	58 (82.84%)	28 (70.0%)
3	Small holders	1.0 - 2.0 ha	02 (2.88%)	07 (17.5%)
4	Semi-medium	2.0 - 4.0 ha	-	03 (7.5%)
5	Medium	4.0 - 10.0 ha	-	-
6	Large holders	10.0-50.0 ha	-	-
	Total		70.0 (100)	40.0 (100)

H/Hs - House Holds

Figures in Parenthesis represent percentage to total.

inequality. This is due to the fact that Hill Pulayas are basically marginal holders with less than half hectare of land when compared to the Mannans, who fall within the marginal, small, and semi-medium category of holders.

The non-tribal farmers who migrated into the forest regions had leased land from the tribals by advancing nominal amounts of money or by offering liquor or narcotics. They had also encroached upon tribal lands on large scale through physical threat and intimidation in the study area.

Cropping Pattern

The Hill Pulayas do not undertake cash crop cultivation like the Mannans, but they undertake homestead farming in the available land. 41.42% possess dry land between 0.02-0.5 hectares, while 7.4% engage themselves in homestead farming. Only 15.71% undertake paddy cultivation. Among the Mannans 30 percent own wet land in the category 0.02-0.5 hectares, 17.5 percent own 0.5-1.0 hectares and 7.5 percent possess more than 1 hectare of land.

Hill Pulayas cultivate low value homestead farming, seasonal and annual crops. The main crops grown by them in their homestead are sugar Cain, Mulberry, Tapioca. The crops are raised under rain-fed conditions. Seeds of local variety or indigenous seeds are used for sowing. They use only green manure. Agriculture among the Mannas is mainly rainfed. Due to the absence of proper irrigation facilities more than 40 percent of Hill Pulaya land remain unsuitable for a seasonal harvest. Cultivation of cash crops is prevalent among the Mannans. Application of Chemical fertilisers and pesticides is not a common practice as they are expensive, though a few use them occasionally. Returns from commercial crops in the dry land are low due to diseases which have affected the crops. Cultivators in the past included in their farming Kachil (*Dioscorea alata*), Chembu (*colacasia antiquorum*). They have shifted their attention from traditional crops to cash crops which indicates a progress in their social and economic outlook, a direct impact of land use, whereas the predominance of seasonal and annual crops among the Hill Pulayas is indicative of their subsistence nature.

Income

The principal source of income of the Hill Pulayas is from wage labours in the household sector (39.43%). Mannans earn 60.53% of their income from farming. Muthuvans earn 58.35% of their income from Non Wood Forest Products collection (NWFP). Hill Pulayas in the absence of proper land holdings, find employment on daily wage basis as an alternate arrangement. For the Mannans, the dominant sector source of income is land.

Income is calculated on the basis of seasonal wage employment. The wage rate prevalent at the time of survey (1998 – 1999) is taken into account. Table 7.3 depicts the mean annual income from different sources.

TABLE 7.3
CONTRIBUTION TO MEAN ANNUAL INCOME FROM DIFFERENT
SOURCES (% TO TOTAL)

Sl.No	Source of Income	Hill Pulayan	Mannans	Muthuvan
1	Farming	1.25	60.53	0.25
2	Agricultural labour	37.05	15.77	11.40
3	Forest plantation labour	22.22	5.45	20.00
4	Household labour	39.43	9.75	10.00
5	NWFP Collection	0.00	0.00	58.35
6	Others	0.5	8.50	0.00
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Primary data estimates

Employment

Hill Pulayas earn their livelihood by lending their labour on the fields of the non tribal and working in the Forest Department plantations, both for a daily wage. They had abandoned shifting cultivation long back. Scarcity of water enable them to undertake agricultural operations on a large scale. Added to this, the soil is not fertile enough for a good yield. Whatever little they cultivate is merely for their consumption.

Based on the employment pattern of the Hill Pulayas, a year can be divided into three periods, viz. Agricultural work period, unemployed period, and non agricultural work period. Figure 7.1 shows the employment pattern of the Hill Pulayas in the Champakkad and Kummittamkuzhy settlement. The shaded portions in the figure illustrates the availability of employment (English equivalent to the Malayalam months is given in parenthesis)

During the non agricultural period, Hill Pulayas work in the Forest Department plantations. They do not go for NWFP collection trade, but during difficult times they collect wild turmeric, ginger, Mullavallikizhangh etc. for their own self consumption. Hill Pulayas thus depend mainly upon their manual labour to earn their livelihood.

Figure 7.2 shows the employment pattern of the Mannans in Choorakkattankudy settlement. Mannans possess the land and they are the settled agriculturists. During the non-agricultural periods they work for plantation in the Forest Department.

Muthuvans do not possess land. They thus do not undertake agricultural activities of their own. A substantial portion of their income is generated through the collection of Non-Wood Forest Produces (NWFPs) which include, honey, medicinal plants, turmeric, soap nut etc. These are bought by the Girijan service co-operative societies or by the private traders. Collection of NWFPs being seasonal does not ensure them a steady income throughout the year. In addition to NWFPs collection, these people also work as agricultural labourers. The other able-bodied male members in the settlement also go for Forest Department work which includes fire-line work, plantation work, timber cutting and loading.

FIGURE - 7.1
EMPLOYMENT PATTERN OF HILL PULAYAS IN THE CHAMPAKAD &
KUMMITANKUZHY SETTLEMENTS

Sl.No	Employment Pattern	Mak-aram (Jan-Feb)	Kum-bham (Feb-March)	Meenam (March-April)	Medam (April - May)	Edavam (May - June)	Mid-unam (June-July)	Karka-dakam (July-August)	Chin-gam (August -Sept)	Kanni (Sept - October)	Thulam (Oct - Nov)	Vrichi-kam (Nov - Decem)	Dhanu (Dec - January)
I	Agricultural Labour												
II	Non-Agricultural Labour												
1	Forest Department Plantation Labour												
2	House hold Labour												
III	Unemployed Period												

Source: Primary data estimates

FIGURE - 7.2
EMPLOYMENT PATTERN OF MANNANS OF CHOORAKKATTANKUDY
SETTLEMENT

Sl.No	Employment Pattern	Mak-aram (Jan-Feb)	Kum-bham (Feb-March)	Meenam (March-April)	Medam (April - May)	Edavam (May - June)	Midh-unam (June-July)	Karka-dakam (July-August)	Chin-gam (August -Sept)	Kanni (Sept - October)	Thulam (Oct - Nov)	Vrichi-kam (Nov - Decem)	Dhanu (Dec - January)
I	Agricultural Labour												
II	Non-Agricultural Labour												
1	Forest Department Plantation Labour												
2	House hold Labour												
III	Unemployed Period												

Source: Primary data estimates

FIGURE - 7.3
EMPLOYMENT PATTERN OF MUTHUVANS OF KATTAMUDY SETTLEMENT

Sl.No	Employment Pattern	Mak-aram (Jan-Feb)	Kum-bham (Feb-March)	Meenam (March-April)	Medam (April - May)	Edavam (May - June)	Midh-unam (June-July)	Karka-dakam (July-August)	Chin-gam (August -Sept)	Kanni (Sept - October)	Thulam (Oct - Nov)	Vrichi-kam (Nov - Decem)	Dhanu (Dec - January)
I	Non Wood Forest Product Collection												
1	Honey												
2	Medicinal Plants												
3	Turmeric												
4	Soap nut												
II	Agricultural Labour												
III	Forest Department Plantation Labour												
IV	House hold labour												

Source: Primary data estimates

Figure 7.3 shows employment pattern of Muthuvans of Kattamudy settlement. As can be inferred from figure, household work is available throughout the year. The selected tribal communities depend mainly on land for their subsistence. Their traditional occupation of hunting, have lost significance.

Housing Structure

The housing conditions of the three selected communities were analysed with parameters such as roof, roof frame and room wall. Hill Pulayas live in single / double roomed huts thatched with grass supported by bamboo roof frames. Some walls are made of bamboo while some with mud. The floors are mainly bleared with mud. Ventilation is totally absent. Most of the Mannans live in concrete/tiled houses with sufficient plinth area. Majority of the Muthuvans live in houses thatched with leaves, walls made of mud and doors made of bamboo with little plinth area. They live in a medium of 1-2 room with no ventilation.

Hill Pulayas possess a high sense of cleanliness as they have come into the mainstream of life. Mannans also live in the same way, in their own land, and with the help of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe department many age old thatched houses have been replaced by the tiled structures. The Muthuvans live within the Reserve Forest leading a nomadic life.

It is seen that the houses of the Muthuvans are not strong structured and are just make-to-do, while the Mannans live in concrete structures and the Hill Pulaya Houses are slightly better than the Muthuvan houses.

Literacy level

Almost all the elders in the Hill Pulaya settlement are illiterate. They do not believe in being educated at this age. Facilities are ample to send their children to the nearby schools as the settlement is connected by road. These people, however, of late seem to be aware of the importance of being educated.

Among the Mannans greater importance is accorded to education now, than in the past. Almost all the school going age children are sent to school. Compared to the Muthuvans and Hill Pulayas, the literacy level among Mannans is high. Most of the Muthuvan members are illiterate. The children of school going age are idling in their houses. Very few children are sent to the Single School (Anganwadi) even though they are assured of their mid-day meal there. Table 7.4 reveals the literacy level of the three tribal communities.

TABLE - 7.4

LITERACY LEVEL OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Literacy level	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans
Literate	119 (36.39)	66 (44.29)	7 (11.86)
Illiterates	208 (63.61)	83 (55.71)	52 (88.14)

(119 out of the 327 Hill Pulaya population in the study area, 66 among the 149 Mannans, 7 among the 59 Muthuvans were literate)

Figures in parenthesis represent percentage to total

Being close to the educational institutions and being aware of the importance of education, only 36.39 percent are literate among the Hill Pulayas. Among the Mannans 44.29 percent are literate. Here most of the parents are also educated and hence they are able to guide their children. The Muthuvans are the most illiterate (88.14%) community which is suggestive of their backwardness. There are several

reasons attributing this. The most determinant factor is their lack of interest and motivation. Besides, inaccessibility isolates them and they prefer their carefree life. Even the older generation do not know the importance of being called as literate.

The literacy level among the Mannans is the highest when compared to the Hill Pulayas and Muthuvans. This is attributed to Mannans being economically better off than the other two communities. Also, their contact with the outside world has instilled in them the need to be educated.

Social organisation

The traditional concept of joint family system among the Hill Pulayas and Mannans was prevalent in the past, but as a result of the deforestation and resultant contact with outsiders (non-tribal), the nuclear family concept has developed among them. For the Muthuvans, who used to lead a nomadic life, nuclear family concept does not exist.

Traditionally, all tribal communities had an administrative head, who was called the Moopan or Kanni (tribal chief) among the Hill Pulayas, Mannans and Muthuvans. However, the prevalence of nuclear families and individualism has reduced the importance of the tribal chief. The older generations in these settlements share the opinion that the very concept of a tribal chief will soon be fading out completely.

Customs and Rituals

The system of marriage among the three communities has been a significant change as far as the marriage age is concerned. Earlier marriage was conducted at fairly low age for both males and females. Today, the marriageable age is showing an upward trend. The Hill Pulayas and Mannans are aware of the minimum age of marriage, 21 years for males and 18 years for females, but the Muthuvans are not

aware about the marriage age. Dowry system was non-existent in the past, though there was exchange of gifts in the form of clothes and rice. Today, however, the evils of dowry system is common among them. Money plays an important role and an amount is fixed according to the status of the concerned family.

There is a marked increase in the number of festivals they celebrate. Today they partake in all festivals, such as the Arunakshi Amman Kovil festival at Marayoor, Thenkasinathan temple festival at Kovilkadavu held annually. The religious and cultural ceremonies of the tribals were in the past held in the forest and on common lands. The loss of these forest lands, combined with the forest laws and restrictions deprived them of their religious and cultural functions.

Health Care and Medicine

Most of the people in the Hill Pulaya settlement have two meals a day consisting of rice, sometimes, vegetables. Other items of their diet include tubers, roots, fruits, honey and occasionally meat too. In the earlier days, hunting birds and animals through special techniques was their sub-occupation to supplement their food. *Malnutrition, skin diseases, fever, dysentery, headache, vomiting etc.* are common among the Hill Pulayas. Personal hygiene is very low and washing of clothes is not a regular feature. Lack of timely medication inadequate financial aids and unhygienic surroundings are the major reasons for such a bad state of health.

The Hill Pulaya men wear shirt and dhoti which is a clear evidence of outside influence. Initially they used to wear only a loin cloth. The women too have changed their traditional attire, now they wear blouses and lungies and on occasions sarees too. The children are quite well covered now. The men used to wear brass and copper rings on their fingers and ears which is a rare sight now. The moopan (tribal chief), though still wears an ear ring made of copper and brass. Earlier the women used to

wear finger rings and bangles. Now the women wear only sparse artificial jewellery. The use of foot wear and cosmetics too is a common feature now.

Their regular diet includes rice, vegetables, fish, tea/coffee etc. Primary source of energy for cooking is fire wood and twigs which they collect as per their need. One of the major problems of the settlement is of liquor addiction. A considerable amount is spent on drinking and smoking.

Common health problems faced by the Mannans are malnutrition, skin diseases. Worm infections, diarrhoea and fever. In the past knowledge of medicinal herbs was existent and health problems were dealt with using herbal remedies. This knowledge however is now confined to the elders only. In case of illness today they avail of the modern medical facilities nearby.

Rice is the staple diet of the people here. Other food items in their diet include fish, meat, and vegetables. Rice for breakfast is a common practice. Among the Mannans also, specially among the older generation, the propensity to consume alcohol is quite high.

The health and hygiene conditions among the Muthuvans leaves much to be derived. Common health problems noted among them are diarrhoea, head ache, fever, intestinal, anaemia due to malnutrition and various other infections. Unlike in the past, there are very few tribal physicians or elderly people now with knowledge of herbal or traditional remedies. The basic factors responsible for the poor health conditions in the settlement are poor sanitation and unhygienic methods, lack of clean clothing. In addition to smoking and alcohol, chewing tobacco, irregular and untimely food habits etc. Lack of potable water is an added reason for poor health conditions.

In the past, when men used to wear only a loin cloth and women a coarse piece of cloth to cover themselves, now the men wear shirts with dhoti or lungi and the women wear lungis with blouses. The children too are considerably well covered. The women are still in the practice of wearing huge silver ear rings. Nose rings are worn by the elderly women even now.

Until recently health and hygiene used to be a major problem among all selected samples. The older generations among the samples share the opinion that the incidence of diseases has increased only in the recent years. This may be an exaggeration, keeping in mind their ignorance of diseases in the past and the prevalence of superstition. Increase in population is also a factor contributing to the worsening of hygiene.

A significant change is seen in all the three communities regarding their dressing habits. Barring the older generation, the others are today attired akin to the settlers. Dress consciousness had led to the shedding of their traditional attire. Another noticeable cultural change over the years is reflected in the trend for using modern names for the younger generations. The old names like Kali, Chirukandan, Adima, so typical of their culture, is being replaced by modern names, like, Mani, Rajan etc. This change is also a resultant of the contact with the outsiders (non-tribal).

Degree of dependence on forests

The degree of dependence of the tribals on the forests depend upon several factors. These factors include their socio-economic status, living conditions, cultural and religious norms, literacy level etc. However, the tribal communities which have gained access to the modern amenities have started adopting the new ways of life. The changes that took place in the vanishing forests and their activities over the

centuries have affected the extent of dependence on forests in terms of their dependence for food, household craft, fuel wood, fodder, medicines and NWFPs

The dependence of households is analyzed in terms of percentages which is categorized into five groups, which are, I = 75% - 100%, II = 50 - 75%, III = 25% - 50%, IV = 1% - 25% and V = No dependence each representing a degree of dependence. Table 7.5 shows the distribution of households as per their dependence on forest for food and household crafts.

TABLE -7.5
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS ON PER DEPENDENCE ON
FOREST FOR FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD CRAFTS

Item / Community/ Degree of Dependence	Food			Household crafts		
	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans
I (>75%)	0	0	1 (5)	0	0	20 (100)
II (50% - 75%)	0	0	11 (55)	0	0	0
III (25% - 50%)	0	0	3 (15)	0	0	0
IV (< 25%)	0	0	3 (15)	0	28 (70)	0
V (No dependence)	70	40	2 (10)	70	12 (30)	0

Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage to total.

As can be seen from table both the Hill Pulayas and Mannans do not depend on the forest for food. Eleven Muthuvan households depend on the forest for food to the degree of 50-75 percent while the rest depend less than 25 percent. This is

attributed to the fact that the Muthuvan live deep within the forest and thus naturally retain a few of their traditional means of living by the forest. Inaccessibility is another factor that forces them to look for edibles within their surroundings though once in a while when they come to the nearest township they do purchase a few basics like tea, sugar, rice etc. However both the Hill Pulayas and Mannans have gained access to modern amenities such as provision stores, ration shops etc and they do not depend on wild sources for food.

Again, among the Muthuvans dependence on the forest for household crafts is complete. Muthuvans live in single room huts thatched with grass and supported by bamboo frames. The walls too are made of bamboo and the floor is layered with mud. They get all the raw materials required for their huts from the forest itself. This clearly indicates that the Muthuvans have not given up their primitive style of living. Among the Mannans who live in the periphery of the forests, 28 families depend less than 25 percent on the forest for housing materials. Most of the Hill Pulayas live in field structures, while a few others, who live in thatched houses, purchase the required raw material.

The distribution of households in accordance to their dependence on forest for fuel wood and fodder is shown in Table 7.6

TABLE - 7.6
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AS PER DEPENDENCE ON
FOREST FOR FUEL WOOD AND FODDER

Item / Community/ Degree of Dependence	Fuel wood			Fodder		
	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans
I (>75%)	0	6 (15)	20 (100)	0	0	0
II (50% - 75%)	0	12 (30)	0	0	0	0
III (25% - 50%)	27 (38.57)	22 (55)	0	0	0	0
IV (< 25%)	43 (61.43)	0	0	5 (7.15)	8 (20)	0
V (No dependence)	0	0	0	65 (92.85)	32 (80)	20 (100)
Total	70 (100)	40 (100)	20 (100)	70 (100)	40 (100)	20 (100)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total

Among the Hill Pulayas 61.43 percent fetch firewood in the category of less than 25%. While 20 percent of the Mannans depend in the category 25-50 percent (<25%) on the forest for fodder, the rest do not have domestic animals. Only 7.15 percent of the Hill Pulayas depend on the forest for the same, whereas the rest of them depend on the market. Since the Muthuvans do not possess domestic animals due to constant threat from wild life, their dependence on forest for fodder is absolutely nil. Table 7.9 reveals the details of the dependence of the households on the forest for medicine and NWFPs

The Muthuvans depend on the forest completely for fuel wood. Living within the forest provides them with no other option but to depend on its resources. Though a few of them possess ration cards, given the choice of travelling all the distance

through the forest risking their lives in order to purchase kerosene they only would prefer fuel wood which is easily available. The Mannans too depend on forests for fuel wood as they live in its periphery, though in varying degrees. While 15 percent among them fully depend on the forests for fuel wood, 30 percent depend in the category 50-75 percent and the rest fall within the category 25-50 percent.

The Muthuvans depend on the forests completely for their health care and medicine as the modern facilities of medical science are not accessible to them. Another reason for this is the knowledge of medicinal plants that they possess through generations. This does not make them feel the need to understand the importance of timely medical care. The Mannans having accessibility to the medical centre and doctors have reduced their dependence on the forest considerably.

TABLE 7.7
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS ON PER DEPENDENCE ON FOREST
FOR MEDICINE AND NON WOOD FOREST PRODUCTS

Item / Community/ Degree of Dependence	Medicine			Non Wood Forest Products		
	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans	Hill Pulayas	Mannans	Muthuvans
I (>75%)	0	0	20 (100)	0	0	20 (100)
II (50% - 75%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
III (25% - 50%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
IV (< 25%)	0	0	0	0	8 (20)	0
V (No dependence)	70 (100)	40 (100)	0	70 (100)	32 (80)	0

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total

Hill Pulayas do not collect NWFPs due to the non availability of NWFPs. In the settled agriculturists, Mannans collect NWFPs only 20 percent while NWFPs collection forms the dominant source of income and employment for the Muthuvans and hence their dependence on the forest for the same is complete. A part of the collected produce is retained by them for their own needs while the rest of it is sold in the market. The economically better off among them collect NWFPs only for selling. The quantity collected by them depends on certain factors, of which the economic status of the households is the most important factor. While the poor among them tend to market larger share of the produce collected, the economically better off, market only a small share of the same. The sale depends on the type of produce.

Muthuvans who were traditionally honey collectors, food gathers and hunters, were forced to give up their nomadic way of life as a result of the deforestation and are faced with restrictions in their use of forest resources. They still depend on the forest for their various needs, though the dependence has reduced, compared to the past. Mannans, who were converted to the status of mere labourers as a result of deforestation have found considerable reduction in their dependence on the forest. Having come in contact with the settlers and being exposed to the different aspects of modern life such as education, employment etc, they depend on the outside world to meet most of their needs. Hill Pulayas, who came to possess low land, started the cultivation of suitable crops.

Among the three selected tribal communities only the Muthuvans depend on the forest for most of their needs indicating their still primal way of living and consequent economic and social backwardness.

Thus, a conclusion is arrived at that the Mannans are better off than the Hill Pulayas and Muthuvans when the socio-economic factors are taken into account.

This is attributed to the fact that they possess land which is the most important status determinant factor among the tribals.

Compared to other Hill Pulaya settlements, Champakad and Kummittamkuzhy can be considered better, as it possesses certain infrastructural facilities. The adjacent road enables them to be in constant touch with the people outside their own community. As a result of these interactions, their traditional culture has undergone considerable change. They have developed a tendency to depend on the government agencies for their development in all spheres of life. The extent of social participation of the total tribal people of the settlement is very high as they speak quite openly about their attitude towards government policies and officials. Exploitation still continues in one form or the other.

Due to the geographical isolation devices, and since they live on forest land where no developmental activities can be carried out for their upliftment, the Muthuvans are having certain advantages of keeping their nomadic way of life. Educationally, they are backward in spite of various schemes and motivations. They do not voice their grievances openly. The propensity to consume liquor is very high and good portion of their meagre earnings is spent on liquor. Various schemes of the ITD Projects are utter failure in the settlements because of its inaccessibility and lack of awareness of the people regarding the prevalent banking system and National Saving Schemes of the Government. The study of the problems reveals beyond doubt, the poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and general features of these people.

Based on the survey analysis, which highlights the present impact of socio-economic conditions of the three selected tribal communities, a few recommendations are put forth in the next chapter aimed to improve their living standards.