Introduction

This chapter describes the changes in livelihood practices of local communities in Pulppalli village in Wayanad from the colonial - post colonial periods till recent times. Changes in the livelihood practices are analysed in relation to the periodical shifts in the livelihood base\(^4\) and *habitus*\(^5\) of the communities in relation to the changing political and economic dimensions of the local and the global. These two dimensions are found to be significant in creating changes in the lives and livelihoods of people in the long run.

Formation of a development space in the village is discussed here as an outcome of long-term historical changes and hence, a culmination of the interplay between the local and the global, diachronically and synchronically. It is a public space developed over a period, shared by individuals on the basis of their collective aspirations and action for development. In this historical process of creating a horizontal space of social interactions many settler communities hitherto known as ‘backward’ could emerge as active players in the making of such a development space. But, there are also *adivasi* communities like Paniyani our study village who have been excluded from taking an active role in this process and even in accessing the development space. This chapter tries to unravel the historical processes which caused changes in livelihood base, practices, and the *habitus* of the communities and the differential nature of their access to the development space.

As a background to the detailed ethnographic history of these processes, the chapter begins with a mapping of physical and population profiles of the village. This introductory section is expected to provide an overview of physical structure of the

\(^4\) Base is a bundle of resources by which communities organize their practices. Community is defined as real, on-the-ground associations and imagined solidarities that people experience (Gudeman 2000). Communities in our study context are the social groups based on caste and religion.

\(^5\) *Habitus* is understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks’ (Bourdieu 1977: 82-83)
village in terms of geographical features, infrastructure, climate, land use etc. and the short description of major communities and their present livelihood practices. This section is intended to provide the material conditions of Pulppalli village and the communities living there in relation to their differential access to various resources and livelihood options.

**Physical Profile of the Village**

Pulppalli is a typical Wayanad village Panchayat comprising of hill, slopes, valleys and forest. This area is surrounded by forest on three sides as its natural boundaries. Rivers *Kabani* on the western side and *Kannarm* on the eastern side geographically separate Pulppalli from other neighbouring villages. Our base study locale- Kappikkunnu- which is more or less representative of the whole village is one of the administrative wards of Pulppalli Panchayath and Kappikkunnu also represents the same physical features with forest cover almost on three sides.

Around 38% of the total area in Wayanad comes under forest, which is around 8% of the total forest in the state. Forests in Wayanad fall under three categories: (i) Plateau Deciduous; (ii) Tropical Evergreen; and (iii) Tropical Semi-evergreen. The most commonly found is Plateau Deciduous found at about 700-1000 meters above the mean sea level, mostly located on the eastern side of Wayanad. This area has a valuable belt of teak forests of which forest in Pulppalli area belongs. The tropical evergreen forests are found at a height of 3000 meters (Panchayat 1997).

Climate of Pulppalli is also reportedly different from the rest of Wayanad, dry and less availability of rain, comparable to the neighbouring Mysore plains of Karnataka state (Panchayat 1997). Though district-wise data show the decline in rainfall as a general trend across Wayanad, severity was more visible in Pulppalli during the early period of my field work.

Land use pattern in the village was dissimilar to the rest of Wayanad, with the intensified cultivation of cash crops like coffee, pepper, rubber, banana, and ginger. Wayanad justified its name as the lands of paddy fields until recently when massive
conversion of paddy fields began. With a high altitude, the district has a characteristic cultivation of perennial plantation crops and spices. The major plantation crops include coffee, tea, pepper, cardamom and rubber. Coffee-based farming system is a notable feature of Wayanad. Coffee is grown both as a pure crop and as a mixed crop along with pepper. Pepper, rubber and coconuts are cultivated on the top plateau and coffee is cultivated on the slopes. Paddy, banana, coconut and areca nut are cultivated mainly in the plains area. Pulppalli was particularly known for the intensive cultivation of commercial crops. Pepper mono-cropping was a widespread practice till recently in many of the areas in Pulppalli. In some parts of the village pepper is still cultivated as a single crop. Vast stretches of wet land which was traditionally used for paddy cultivation, has been widely converted for the cultivation of permanent and semi-permanent cash crops.

Another major characteristic physical structure of the location is the high density of roads, soled as well as metalled. Pulppalli Panchayat has the highest number and largest area of roads in the state. According to a Panchayat estimate, there are roads more than 200 km long. Economic and topographical reasons are cited for the high density of roads here. This is one area in Wayanad where hilly terrains are relatively less. This is also an area where heavy timber-logging is reported.

Currently there are four metalled roads in the study locale of which, one perceived by the people as the main road is connecting Pulppalli town to many important towns in the district. The other three roads are off-shoots to the interiors of the locality. Study locality is a constellation of a number of neighbourhoods which are now well connected by a number of small roads like a nerve system.

Different neighbourhoods are well connected by roads metalled or non- metalled. Mud roads are seen only in few stretches. Some of the special roads to the adivasi settlements constructed under tribal welfare schemes in the village Panchayat are non-metalled. One such road exists in the study village also. Our study locality is divided by three important parallel roads apart from the main road which touches these three roads at different points. Other roads are crisscrossing the area in
different directions. Boulder roads inside the forest are maintained by the Forest Department which are mainly used by *adivasis* in the interior settlements.

**Administrative units**

Under the state’s revenue system, the district is divided into revenue divisions, taluks and revenue villages, while under *the local self-government* the district comprises of statutory towns, development blocks and Panchayat. Pulppalli Panchayat, having 16 administrative wards is under a single revenue division consisting of 3 taluks and 48 revenue villages. The district has three development blocks: Mananthavady, Sulthan Bathery and Kalpetta and 24 Panchayats. Pulppalli village Panchayat comes under Sulthan Bathery block Panchayat, the head quarters of which lies around 20 kilometres away from the village in Sultan Bathery town. District headquarters is in Kalpetta town, about 40 kilometres away.

**Population**

According to the 2001 census, the total population in Wayanad was 6,72,128 of which male population was 3,41,958 and female 3,30,170. An important feature of the population profile of the district is that it stands first in the number of *adivasi* population among the districts in the state. 36% of the total *adivasi* population in the state belongs to Wayanad district (Census 2001).

This village Panchayat also shares the population characteristics of the region. In Pulppalli, the total number of population is 34293 of which 17425 male and 16868 female. Total number of *adivasi* population in the area comes to 7143 (Census 2001). In this Panchayat, there are people belonging to three major religions i.e. Hindus, Christians and Muslims. *Adivasis* are generally considered to be of Hindu
faith. Though Christianity is much more influential in this part of the region, conversion of adivasi or non-adivasi population has not been reported on any significant scale. In the study village, the total number of the population is 3051. Number of female population is 1487 and male 1564. The total number of tribal population in the village is 967 with 421 male members and 546 female members. Christians are 734 and Hindu Ezhava come to 527 (Survey data 2004).

**Profile of the Communities**

Communities in the village can be broadly classified into two categories, i.e. settler and native communities. This classification is mainly based on their relationship to the livelihood system of cash crop cultivation and modern development in the village. The same classification is found meaningful to the local population also. Settler communities are the major chunk of the population who migrated mostly from the southern districts of Kerala in connection with cash crop cultivation. Rest of the communities, who called themselves “the people of Wayanad” by asserting their identity as native people, include traditional cultivators and tribal or adivasi population.

Christians and Hindu Ezhava are the major settler communities in the village. There are also other OBC and upper caste communities among the settlers. They come to around 57% of the total population in the village. Christians are the majority with 24% of the total population, followed by Hindu Ezhava with 17%. Others constitute 16% of the total population (Table 1).

Among the native population, there are three non tribal cultivator groups generally known by the generic name Chetty, but divided in three different groups. They are
Wayanad Chetty who consider themselves as the people from Wayanad, Mandatan Chetty who are considered originally from Tamil Nadu and Idanadan Chetty from Karnataka. This differentiation is based mainly on the dialects they speak. While the Waynadan Chetty use Malayalam, the native language of Kerala, Mandatan Chetty are speakers of Tamil, and Idanadan Chetty, Kannada speakers. This is quite natural as Wayanad shares its boundaries with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Settled wetland cultivation in Wayanad is associated with the Chetty communities. Together, they constitute 12% of the total population in the village.

Rest of the communities among the native population are adivasis or tribal communities. Among the adivasis, there are significant differences based on their traditional livelihoods. Though Mullu-Kuruman belong to adivasi groups in the village they traditionally practiced cultivation and cattle rearing like Chetty communities and therefore, more proximate to the later in livelihood practices. They were also traditional shifting cultivators. Paniyan and Kattunayikkan are the two other tribal communities in the village who are considered traditional bonded labourers and forest gatherers; they had traditionally never occupied land for cultivation. Paniyans are the largest community among the adivasis in the village. Percentage of Paniyan and Mullu-Kuruman in the village is 19 and 7 respectively. Mullu-Kuruman comes to around 5% of the village population.

Settler population in the village is generally known among the other native communities as thaaze nattukar (people from low lands) or simply nattukar (plains-people). After almost three generations of migration, this categorisation is not at all
acceptable to the settlers. They refuse this kind of differentiation. Contrarily, most of the native people in the village assert this difference. They call themselves the Wayanattukar (people of Wayanad).

Wayanad is known today for the increased marginalisation of farmers and workers, but this perception has not made any changes to the internal division between settlers and natives on the basis of perceived identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Categories</th>
<th>Major communities</th>
<th>% to the total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settler communities</strong></td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindu Ezhavas</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native communities</strong></td>
<td><em>Chetty s</em> (Mandatan, Wayanadan, Idanaadan)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>tribal/avadi</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.1. Settler and Native Communities (Based on their population) In the village*

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6 Native classification is often sensitive and sometimes problematic. The region has witnessed alienation of *avadi* land on a massive scale over the years mainly due to encroachment by settlers. There is always a fear among a section of settlers who either encroached the land or bought it from second or third party about losing these lands. So the settler population do not want the label ‘outsiders’.
Native Communities - Adivasis in the village

Here, we focus on Paniyan community as the case of a marginalised *adivasi* group to see how they differentially negotiate with the historical changes in comparison to others, especially settler communities. Though the term *adivasi* means original inhabitants, all the population coming under it do not form a single homogenous category, in our study village as well as in Wayanad. The three *adivasi* communities in our study are, as noted elsewhere, Mullu-Kuruman, Paniyan and Kattunayikkan. These groups are different in terms of their livelihood practices as well as access to various resources. Among them Paniyan and Kattunayikkan are marginalised sections without landholdings and were traditionally bonded labourers and forest gatherers respectively. As we have seen, Paniyans are a numerically large *adivasi* community in the village.

In the following section, short descriptions are given on these three groups in order to understand the differences among the *adivasis* in terms of their livelihood trajectories.

*Mullu-Kuruman*

Unlike the other two groups, mode of living of Mullu-Kuruman has been substantially different for a long period owing to their possession of land and cattle. They did cultivation, especially shifting cultivation locally known as 'punam krishi'
and reared cattle in large numbers, probably in a later period under the influence of Chetty immigrants.

Kurumas enjoyed superior status in the traditional local life owing to their capability for cultivation, ability to undertake major hunting and exposure to other immigrant communities. Mullu-Kuruman considered themselves superior to Uralikuruma, Paniyans and Kattunayikkans and inferior only to Kurichiyas in Wayanad.

**Kattunayikkans**

Kattunayikkans are known as the ```traditional gatherers of Wayanad’’ as they depend mainly on forest products for the survival. Food gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping are their traditional occupations. Women also play different roles in agriculture, fishing, collection of fuel, fetching of potable water and participate in social affairs. In our village, though a few Kattunayikkans are land-owning cultivators, majority of them are now agricultural labourers.

Kattunayikkans have been often described as indigenous tribal people living in open spaces all day long, and sleeping round a lighted fire at night (Shashi 1995). Huts, even if they occupy, were of poor condition. They were long, but very low, and the floor is level with the ground. The sides were of flattened bamboo and the roof made with straw or grass. Often the Kattunayikkans lived under windbreaks resting against tree or in a hollow of trees.

According to descriptions, majority of Kattunayikkans subsisted on roots, herbs and honey available in the forests of the Western Ghats and consumed all kinds of flesh, but avoided eating beef and drinking alcohol.

In later period, settlers also started to use them as labourers especially for clearing the plots, for bringing building materials from forest and constructing huts. As said earlier, they are usually seen engaged in a variety of activities like gathering for consumption as well as trade, fishing, honey collecting, hunting etc (ibid). In general, they did not set out upon any one particular forest- based activity.
Origin myth of Paniyan traces their beginning to a mountain *ippi mala*. There was a brother and sister pair who came to this area from *ippi mala* whom they call *ippimala muthan* (grandfather) and *muthi* (grandmother), as the myth goes. These siblings, children of sky and earth, are considered their ancestors. According to the myth, as directed by an oracle from their gods on the mountain the pair mated and had children, giving birth to the lineage of Paniyas. Narrating this story of their origin an old *Paniyan moooppan* in the village remarked that they were in Wayanad since time immemorial. According to early literature, Paniyans are the erstwhile ‘bonded labourers’ in Wayanad (Panoor1971, Nair 1976, Aiyappan 1992). They were obliged to do agricultural work for a period of one year under the local landowners. Masters or land owners had every right to hand him over to others for a fixed price after the completion of the work in the respective year. This system was known as ‘vallippani’ and in some other parts as ‘kundelppani’(Nair 1976). Their cultural past before evolving the *vallippani* system is unknown and it has been reported that they were ‘domesticated’ by the local landlords after capturing them from their wandering life within the forest. But in my field study, such a representation of Paniyan bonded labour has been denied by both Paniyans and *Chettys*. Although everyone subscribes the existence of a bonded relationship between Paniyan and *Chetty* and the vertical nature of power relations in favour of *Chettys*, presenting it as a slavery system that once existed is considered unjust. It is in fact a perceptitional issue which we will discuss elsewhere.

In the colonial ethnographic reports the Paniyans are portrayed as a strange and indifferent group of people ‘naturally inferior’ to other groups and inherently carrying ‘mischievous instincts’ (Thurston 1907). According to Thurston’s description some of them had got exposure to the European estates where they got wages in cash.
It is only in the recent decades that they were completely freed from the bonded labour system\(^7\) and fully absorbed into the local labour markets. The formation of new settlements along with the immigration from southern Kerala and shrinkage of land restricted the mobility of Paniyans within the region and they were compelled to continue their stay within the settlement by ending the yearly shifts of labour.

**Chetty Communities**

The three types of Chetty communities in the village- Wayanadan, Idanadan, Mandatan- are considered early Hindu migrants who came in different points of time from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states, but there is no evidence for this other than their different dialects. But, many prominent members of the Wayanadan Chetty community do not consider themselves migrants. They believe they are indigenous to Wayanad.

Many among the Chetty community in the village now claim scheduled tribe status as they feel they are also indigenous to the region. Some of the local historians of the community challenge many references made by known historians alleging their position to be based on colonial historiography. They criticize the work of C. Gopalan Nair who was the sub collector of Wayanad who wrote a book in 1911 under the title ‘People of Wayanad’ at the direction of the British collector. In this book, he had described the Chetty communities as equal to Nair community in the plains. Krishnan Chetty, who is a retired state government official engaged in serious research on the history of his community and Wayanad region, challenges these assumptions\(^8\). Citing their own rituals and traditional practices Krishnan Chetty rejects any suggestion of Chetty having had any link with caste system or the

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\(^7\) Slave labour was legally abolished in the British period and a law was enacted in 1862. Kerala government enacted another law in 1962 which ensured 10 cents of land for each landless families including that of bonded labourers. But a diluted form of bonded labour was practiced in Wayanad till the late 1970s.

\(^8\) Construction of own histories by community according to the demands of present is some extent part of ‘invention of tradition’. This kind of construction is not some thing specific to Chetty community alone. I met one ‘progressive’ scholar activist in Wayanad who is an Orthodox Christian writing a book to establish a link between ancient Jewish population and Wayanad region through an ancient migratory route and want to dispute the division of native and settler population from a Christian perspective. But attempts like writing indigenous history of Chetty community provide more insights from an *emic* perspective about the community and its past.
mainstream Hindu pantheon which he contends, was introduced by Hindu colonialism represented by the Nair occupation of Wayanad. There was a loose concept of caste, but it was to maintain the purity of the group and not in any way connected to the production process. “If someone asks about my father, he was a Chetty, and about grandfather, he was also a Chetty, and so was his grandfather. That is why we (Chetty and Nair) did not intermarry. Kuruma and Paniyan did not have intercourse with our ladies and we did not do it with theirs too”, says he empathetically. According to him they lived toiling on the soil along with the Paniya, Kuruman and Kattunayikkan communities. Land did not belong to any individual, but only to the family. They had kept hundreds of cattle too. “We all worked in the fields. Our fathers, grand fathers, children, all together, along with Paniya, Kuruma etc. Our ladies did not work outside, they prepared food for us. If we did not work, Paniyans too had to starve,” he tries to portray an ideal situation where all the native communities co-existed harmoniously. However, he admits that they did not take food from Paniya, Kuruma or Kattunayikkan. However, to him, the differences and caste based exploitation in the region were the contribution of Nairs.\footnote{Historically a number of Nayar families were brought to Wayanad region according to the directive of Kottayam Raja by dividing the region into different Nadas (principalities). Though there are no traditional Nair families in the study village there was influence of the chieftain families in the respective Nadu. Those adivasis under the direct control of these Nair and other landlord communities in a rigid caste system transformed literally to ‘slave castes’, especially in the colonial period.}

Whatever may have been the historical facts about their past, Chetty communities might have been ‘tribalised’ to an extent, given the secluded situation of this community. In the case of our study village an ecological recess was evident with three sides of the village surrounded by forest and vast tracts of marshy field surrounded by the hills. There are other neighboring regions also like the Nilgiris here early Hindu migrants from the plains were `tribalised’ in many of their practices and native tribal communities were contrarily Hinduised through their livelihood interactions. Hierarchical division among the communities according to caste-based
social distances is a classical example of Hinduization processes over the years in both cases.\(^\text{10}\)

**Settler Communities**

Christians and Hindu Ezhavas are the dominant communities in the village. They are pre-dominant numerically as well as in terms of the possession of land which is the basic resources in an agrarian society. Christians in the village belong to different denominations including Syrian and Roman Catholic and other new evangelic groups like believers’ church, seventh day Adventists etc.,. However, Roman Catholic believers are predominant in the village.

Ezhavas are one of the other backward communities (OBC) of Kerala. They have emerged as a strong community in the short period of social transformation through embracing modernity and development in a rapid pace (Osella and Osella 2000). In the village, a number of Ezhava families have become successful in cash crop cultivation and further diversifying their assets and livelihood practices in the new economic avenues along with Christian community members.

These two communities are highly organized groups in the village. For the Christians, church is all powerful and the community is very cohesive with an efficient organizational order centered on church and with sound channels for internal communication.

Interestingly Ezhavas are now-a- days trying to follow the rigidity of the church by replicating its functioning through establishing a cohesive social organization through their community organization, SNDP (Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam) which was established by the spiritual leader and the social reformer Sree Narayana Guru. This organization has a strong influence among the Ezhava community in southern Kerala. Within the village to SNDP has established a good organizational hierarchy with a strong internal communication network.

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\(^\text{10}\) In the case of Nilgiri mountains native communities are emically perceived according to the social distance based on the acceptance of cooked food. Parallel to Wayanad experience there are also native communities like early Hindu migrants Badagas along with tribal communities Paniya, Kota, Kuruma etc. see. Paul Hockings 1998, Blue Mountains, OUP.
Among the other communities belonging to settler population in the village, there are a few households belonging to the Forward Caste Nairs, and some Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Other Eligible Castes (OEC). There are also a few households belonging to scheduled caste communities\(^\text{11}\). Families belonging to some of the Hindu communities in the village are not part of the settler population from southern Kerala. Elderly members in these few families, mainly from neighboring districts of Wayanad, reached here in the first half of the twentieth century to work as school teachers.

**Spatial Distribution of Communities**

Our base study village is comprised of four major kunnu (hills) that lay parallel, namely Karymbathi kunnu, Mundakutti kunnu, Kolarattu kunnu, and Kappikunnu. A ‘kunnu’ referred to the traditional neighbourhood comprised of generally landholding Chetty households and labouring Paniyan or other adivasi households based on a notion of territoriality. The place name prefixed with a Kunnu is the household name of traditional Chetty joint family in the study locale. Village was clustered around these Kunnu neighbourhoods unlike today’s dispersed pattern.

Surrounding each kunnu lay an area of large paddy fields. In the village, all the traditional Chetty houses overlook paddy fields and houses of the settled farmers mainly face towards the roads. Migrant farmers occupied mainly the garden-land, which had no importance in the Chetty scheme of agriculture. Tribal colonies, especially of Paniyas, are in the secluded locations of the village. These settlements are inside the forest (Table 3.2). Hardly any traditional huts are found in the tribal settlements as most have been replaced with the tiled and concrete structures

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\(^{11}\) Forward Caste (FC), Other Backward Caste (OBC), Other Eligible Caste (OEC) and Scheduled Caste (SC) are constitutional categories made in relation to reservation policy and positive discrimination.
constructed under the housing scheme carried out by the state government. The number of concrete houses has increased considerably across all sections of people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the settlement Colony</th>
<th>Name of the communities</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
<th>Erstwhile landlord communities</th>
<th>Forest Proximity (Y/ N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puthiyatam</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Idanatan Chetty</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thazhe kappu</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mele kappu</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kattunayikkan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paikkam moola</td>
<td>Kattunayikkan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurukkanmoola</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>Y*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mataparambu</td>
<td>Kattunayikkan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>Y*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athirattukunnu</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manalambam</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wayanadan Chetty</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangakanti</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mandatan Chetty</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These settlements are inside the forest.
After the colonisation of the settler communities physical characteristics of the locality were thoroughly changed with the introduction of new meanings for the spatial construction. Development of the local infrastructure in terms of the construction of roads, bridges, electricity and public utility centres such as schools and health centres reconfigured the spatial distribution of the communities.

Communities concentrated on both sides of the roads are mainly settlers. *adivasi* and other traditional land owning communities largely remain in their old settlements. Most of the early roads in the village were constructed by the settlers; in the later years many roads were built into the tribal settlements under different government schemes which were also utilised more by the settler population as their understanding of its utility was higher.

In our study locality on the sides of the main road are mostly the well-to-do households belonging to settler communities. Usually these pieces of land are more expensive than land in the interior village. Most of the occupants are relatively early settlers who could occupy such lands and some of the other households in the same route are of salaried groups who bought the plots paying the price in a later period. Those Chetty and *adivasi* neighbourhoods within the forest have poor connections to these main roads.

Well-to-do households situated on the sides of the main road in the locality are seen to have built strong brick walls alongside the plot, demarcating the boundary from the road and put up iron gates. Many households in the lower economic strata use a kind of thorny shrub fence for the same purpose. No *adivasi* household in the locality is found maintaining such walls, but some of them have tried to emulate the practice of fencing even though there are no roads at all.

*Natives and settlers- Identity and livelihood practices*
In this portion we try to make a comparison of present livelihood practices of three categories of communities i.e. settler, traditional cultivators and *adivasis*, by focusing on Christian and Ezhavas, *Chetty* and Paniyans respectively.

Cash crop cultivation is the base for most of the communities in the village for organizing their livelihood activities. Large section of settler communities and *Chettys* combine land and household labour in the production process, while *adivasi* Paniyans depend merely on their own labour in constructing their livelihoods. Currently, local people across these categories depend on cash income for a living, through their participation in the market ruled production process. Other two important sources of income-based livelihoods are non agricultural sector which includes temporary and quasi-permanent manual jobs, regular salaried employment and collection of forest produces. Here forest collection is the exclusive source of livelihoods for marginalized *adivasis* like Kattunayikkan.

It is possible to categorise three different sets of livelihoods on the basis of the major occupations from which income is derived, despite the various combinations of livelihood diversifications of people at the individual and household levels. According to this categorization of initial livelihoods, market oriented agriculture seems to predominate in the village. Following this is non – agricultural, formal employment. Next in importance is the marginal collection of forest produces. This is the income source exclusively for the forest dependent *adivasi* communities. However, within the village a few settler families are also seen combining agricultural and non agricultural livelihoods. Constant flow of money is found to be determining the stability of livelihoods in the village. It is meaningful to make a comparison of each set of livelihoods across the communities which would explain the differences with regard to the choices of living for settlers, *adivasi* and other natives, especially for *Chettys*.

**Table 3.3. Agrarian based livelihoods (Percentage distribution of workers according to community and main occupation)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Cultivators</th>
<th>Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As per this classification highest number of cultivators in the village belongs to Christian community. Meanwhile Paniyan community constitutes the largest chunk of agrarian workers in the village. Christians are making 41.3 percentages of total cultivators in the village. Ezhava community constitutes around 10 per centage of total cultivators in the village. As traditional wet land cultivators Chetty community has its members with 22 percentages of total cultivators in the village. In the case of Paniyas, though they are the second largest in population, in making a living by cultivation, they are far behind other populations. But, around 40 percent of the total agricultural workers belong to Paniyan community (Table 3.3).

Table 3.4 shows the participation of different communities in the livelihood activities in non-agricultural sector, mainly non agricultural manual labour. Timber trade is one of the major areas providing work in the non agricultural sector in the village. There are also drivers, carpenters, painters though not in significant numbers. Regular employment in the formal sector is another area other than agriculture to provide a stable income and relatively stable livelihood.

Table 3.4. Non-agrarian based livelihoods (percentage of community members having employment with fixed income)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Non-agriculture labour</th>
<th>Regular/salaried</th>
<th>Professional/technical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlers</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even though Christian community constitutes only about one-fifth of the workforce, they are the main contributors in the more stable sector like regular salaried employment, professional and technical jobs. In fact two-thirds of the professionals, 60% of the salaried class, are from this community.

As already noted, livelihoods that are forest-dependent are of least value. Traditional forest dwelling community, Kattunayikkan is involved in the forest related livelihood activities. In their case they live within the peripheries of the forest belt. They have been forest dwellers for a long time and are the only people depending on forest produce for a living. Agricultural labour is the only alternate occupation for the community. One speciality of this area is the possibility of a forest-based livelihood. Kattunayikkan is the only community having primary dependence on forest with the collection and selling of non-timber forest produces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Forest dependency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlers</td>
<td>Christians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5. Forest based Livelihoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Forest dependency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezhavas</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chetty s</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adivasis</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nair and Vinod (2007)
When we analyse the spectrum of communities and their livelihoods, we find that the Christian community has more livelihood options and Paniyas, the least. Ezhavas are also able to diversify their livelihood options, next only to Christians. But within the communities, households are differentially capable of making their options, though we don’t focus much on it here. Paniyans and Kattunayikkans are occupationally the least diversified groups in the area, having a nominal presence in the non-agricultural sector.

However, in the case of our village, these differences in making livelihood options at the level of communities or households are linked to various capabilities in accessing or not accessing resources like land, education, social and political networks which are acquired through long historical processes. The local-global dynamics played an important role in shaping the local history throughout the colonial and post colonial periods. Meanwhile, indigenous ecology and religion seemed to dominate the creation of a *habitus* for the local communities in pre–colonial periods. Income-based livelihoods in the village at present are the outcome of a long historical process with livelihood bases for the communities in different times.

**Livelihood Practices in the Pre-colonial Period**

Demarcation of historical periods using qualifiers like ‘colonial’ and ‘post-colonial’ etc. may be questionable in the case of Wayanad as its native people and nature had witnessed different movements of colonization in the annals of its history. From the perspective of local communities, they have seen forces of internal and external
colonialisms at different historical points if the nation state is taken as the unit of reference. However, in this study the term colonial explicitly refers to British colonialism which represents the genesis of the ‘global’ in our study context. It integrated the local population and resources with an international system of political economy. It introduced a governance system which laid the seeds of fundamental changes in the livelihood practices of the communities.

Writing the tradition of native communities may be problematic in the absence of a definite account of the local history prior to the colonial period. Many things viewed now as traditional in the ‘authentic’ texts and in the people’s versions of histories might be proved as something with recent origin in a deeper probe. ‘Invented traditions’ are the results of varied categories of perceptions among the local communities which may create pitfalls in the re-presentation of the past. In such a context, description of an ethnographic past of a community or region has its own limitations.

In the pre-British period, Wayanad became part of the Hindu Kingdom of Kottayam Malabar in the medieval period and hence under the control of a number of Nair chieftains. This was one of the defining moments of internal colonialism in its history which consolidated the pan-Hindu jaati (caste) based relations of production through the establishment of a caste based power structure even absorbing the local communities in its fold. In the case of this village such rigid caste structures are not reported in its early history. As an ecological recess, the village was insulated to an extent from the clutches of landlords and a rigid caste system. It remained as a low profile abode of Chetty and adivasi communities till the time of colonial expansion. Concept of caste-based social division on the basis of purity was loosely followed in the social life.

In the following section, we describe the traditional interrelationships among the native communities and the livelihood practices in detail. We try to trace out various social institutions –before the origin of local-global dynamics in the village– which controlled and mediated their social interactions and livelihoods. Many of these
traditional interrelationships have larger ramifications, as they are found influencing and shaping livelihood practices at present too.

**Native Communities in a Traditional Social Subsistence Space and Livelihood Practices**

People belonging to adivasi and Chetty communities in the village consider themselves as the natives of Wayanad as they share a common past in a closed ecological setting of forest and valleys of this region. Local life was with minimum external influences. Life in this period is viewed by Chettys and adivasis as a stark contrast with the lives of those communities who came from the plains in the late centuries and cleared the forest for converting it permanently for plantations. They make this kind of differentiation mainly within themselves; such distinctions are made very rarely in public. The settler communities enjoy a numerical dominance and clout in the village today and the ‘native’ populations do not wish to offend the ‘intruders’. However, privately they assert the difference very strongly since their livelihood practices have been dramatically changed after the ‘intrusion’ of others into their ‘native’ life.

Adivasis are considered more indigenous to the area as original inhabitants than those who arrived later. Though constitutionally and administratively they have been grouped as a single category, viz. ‘Scheduled Tribe’ (ST) population, they are socially, economically and culturally different in actual contexts. In our study area they are divided into three major sub-groups. Apart from Paniyas, Mullu-Kuruman and Kattunayikkan are the two other scheduled tribe communities in the village. Though it is not clear who came first to the region, researchers generally agree with the idea of the pre-existence of adivasis compared to other communities including
Chettys. But today, there is a consensus among these communities to perceive themselves as indigenous in comparison with the migrants from southern Kerala.

Paniyans are numerically the most predominant in the village than Kattunayikkans and Kurumas are consecutively in second and third positions in terms of their population. Remote history of these communities is too vague to trace the prehistoric livelihood practices in the area. In colonial and post independent anthropological writings Kurumas are represented as shifting cultivators, Kattunayikkans as forest gatherers and Paniyans mainly as bonded labourers.

**Social Organisation**

In the village, various communities were clearly linked to a livelihood system based on wet land paddy cultivation. There are three types of Chettys found in Wayanad as well as in our study area, as earlier noted. Chetty community was the originator of settled wet land cultivation of paddy. In our study village relationship between Chetty communities and Paniyanlabourers was at the core of the traditional livelihood system based on wet land cultivation.

A coherent social organization was the main feature of all the communities in the village. For the Wayanadan Chetty community, who is dominant in our village, there were five sthanikanamar (chieftains) as the headmen for the five naadu (areas) in the north east side of Wayanad region. Five nadu comprised of Cheeral, Kolappalli, Thomatt, Peruvakkott and Chethalayam. The eldest karanavar in a particular lineage in Cheeral naadu had played the role of chief headman of all these naadu. The community had a common body to discuss its internal affairs which was known as Kazhakam based at Cheeeral. This body, as a council of elders, could sort out the
differences and conflicts within the community. Chetty community in this village came under the purview of Chethalayam Chetty.

This naadu was further divided into different desams (locales) and desams into kunnu (hills). In our village, Kaappil was the main kunnu family and elder karanavar in that family had a special role in their life cycle rituals. He had to be first informed in case of marriage, death and other rituals. Eldest karanavar in the Paniyan family bonded to this particular Chetty family also was important for the rest of the Paniyan community in the village.

Everybody in the family took part in the production process and nobody disobeyed the decisions of elders taken in common interest. Issues within the community were dealt with at corresponding level i.e. naadus, desam, or kunnu. A dispute between the members in the same village was dealt with by the elders in the corresponding kunnu under the headship of a particular family karanavar. A dispute between the members belonging to different kunnu divisions were dealt with by the karanavars belonging to the corresponding Kunnu. Within the nadu division it was dealt with by a council of karanavars. In the village karanavar of kaappil family belonging to Kappikunnu (the name derived from Kaappil, the family name and Kunnu, the social division) neighbourhood was the head who handled the disputes between members in the village.

Paniyans were divided into different clans (kolam) though hardly anyone can identify it at present. Integration of Paniyan community into a valli system of production might have disintegrated their larger unit of social organization to a great extent. However families in each kunnu neighborhood in the village were related to each other by blood or marriage. Mostly, settlements of Paniyans were formed by a
kindred consisting of the members belonging to a patri-lineage and their affinal relatives. It might include brothers and sisters and their spouses and children. However, a mooppan (headman), normally the eldest in the lineage, was in charge of these families. Sometimes a mooppan could control two or three settlements across the kunnu neighbourhoods in the locality.

Within the community mooppan was the person who performed rituals during different ceremonial occasions like marriage, puberty, burial etc. They had to know long sequences of different categories of chants according to the contexts of ceremonies which were orally passed on through generations and learned by heart. The position of mooppan had to be recognized by corresponding Chetty families who brought them to work. In certain cases there might be a mooppan who was not ritualistically legitimised by the community, but assigned the status by the Chetty families. In such cases, that Chetty family was responsible to hire a ritually sanctioned mooppan from other villages during the ceremonies. They would bear all the expenditure – normally two sers of paddy, some oil, betel leaves and tobacco.

Mooppan was responsible for maintaining discipline among the members in family. It was told that nobody would disobey the commands of mooppan with regard to work and life. He was treated with utmost respect. He acted according to the ‘truth and justice’ of the community under the perceived surveillance of their god gulikan.

Yearly festival for making offerings to god gulikan for one week, known as theyyakkolu, was an occasion for asserting the internal order of the community. All the families and relatives would be invited for the occasion. It was conducted annually at the end of harvesting season normally in April. In the night a communal feast was served followed by dance and music in the night. The cost of the feast was met from a common pool from family members and relatives.

Interesting part of this festival with regard to their social organizations is an assembly on the last night. All the complaints and disputes were settled in this assembly. Those who were found guilty were punished by mooppan. He would use his bamboo staff on this occasion to beat the persons who were found guilty. It was his discretion to decide the severity of punishment. Young couple who had eloped
would be punished at this ceremony in order to legitimise their marriage. All the internal tensions and ill feelings among the community members in the village were supposed to be cleared in this night. The next day marked a new beginning for all the members.

‘Valli’ system of Agricultural Production

Though the history of Chettis’ arrival in Wayanad remains obscure they were people well equipped with the technical know-how of settled agriculture and they could ‘domesticate’ (the term was used by Thurston in his book) the Paniyan labour and engage them in paddy cultivation in the wetlands and dry lands. They possessed the pre-modern technology in carrying out the agricultural operations for which they had used locally available raw materials. Their simple but efficient technologies such as njavari, an instrument they used for ploughing the murky fields and kommakuda a special umbrella made out of palm leaves to cover the entire body of the worker while working on rainy days were appropriate for the local environment. Agriculture was a collective affair as acute natural hazards compelled them to lead a collective life.

Valli is grain of paddy which was cultivated in the typical marshy lands of the area. Chetty community used to manage the lands especially wet lands, and used Paniyan community to work on them. In return they were given paddy i.e. valli. So this system of production is locally known as vallippani (labour for valli) in contrast to koolippani (labour for wages) of modern times. Chetty communities and Paniyans in the village were interlinked through this specific system of agricultural production.

It was a labour tying mechanism to assure enough labour to undertake agricultural operations each year. On the day of Vishu, that marks the beginning of the agricultural year, karanavar (the elder uncle) in the Chetty joint family takes on Paniyan workers by giving them paddy, two-piece of clothes and essential condiments including oil. Once the Paniyans accept this customary contract they would not leave that particular family during that agricultural year starting from
*vishu* day in April to *uchhal*, the harvest day, in February. God-fearing Paniyan followed the system without much coercion as this adoption of labour was done with sufficient ritual accompaniment.

In this system, *Chettys* could extract the indigenous labour of *Paniyans* through a customary relationship which made possible the free flow of labour required for paddy cultivation and cattle rearing in those days. A *Paniyan* family is supposed to surrender their labour power to the ‘landed family’ who took them customarily for a period of year by providing shelter, food and other basic requirements. A *Paniyan* man along with his wife and children would work for them in the field as well at home for a period of one year.

In this subsistence economy Paniyan livelihood strategies centred mainly on the labour they provided to the *Chetty* households. Wage was given in paddy and not in cash. A male labourer used to get two *ser* (a local measurement) paddy and females one and half *ser*. At the end of the season each male and female worker was given one *pothi* (around 30 kg) paddy each. They were also free access to the vast tracts of forests, streams, and marshy fields in the surrounding areas where they could hunt small animals, collect nourishing vegetations and catch fishes.

During this contractual period, Chettis looked after the affairs of the dependent Paniyan families; food and shelter were provided; and two meals a day were given. On the special occasions like Onam and Vishu they were given *sadya* (feast), two pieces of cloth, oil and even liquor.

Besides the agricultural work, both male and female workers had also to do domestic works like collection of water and firewood, and wood cutting in the *Chetty* houses, though not cooking. Paniyan women were expected to do domestic works, like grinding of coffee beans, paddy etc, sweeping and cleaning around the homestead, collection of water etc. Paniyan men also had to do some other hard works like logging fire wood. Children also helped the elders in doing the household work.
While boys were made to graze the cattle, girls assisted their mothers in domestic works. *Adivasi* labourers were not allowed to enter the insides of the home, but had a designated space in the corner of the veranda. Women had to continue their work at home in the night too after the day’s drudgery as they had to prepare supper after grinding and husking the paddy they got as the wage for the day.

**Organisation of Labour**

*Chetty* joint family households, with a *karanavar* and extended family members, managed the vast tracts of wet lands in the village and converted it into paddy fields absorbing the Paniyanlabour into the production system along with their own labour. Land was under the possession of joint family households and elder persons in the matri-lineage who controlled the production processes.

The eldest male member played the dominant role in the matrilineal joint family system (*tharavad*). Younger male members in the family were expected to participate in the agricultural activities along with the Paniyan labourers. Female members were largely confined to play the roles within the domestic arena. They were not allowed to do any type of outside activities in the field. They were engaged mainly with the in-home duties like food preparation.

Women were expected to rise early in the morning and to clean the interior and surroundings of the house using a mixture of cow dung. Only after cleaning their body, they could enter the kitchen for making food. They were supposed to prepare food for the men who worked in the fields.
Usually, a settlement associated with Chetty family in the area comprised of a cluster of extended families of brothers and sisters. There was a strong association between the brothers-in-law among the Paniyan families involved in a valli system. A settlement may include the families including a person’s sister and spouse or his wife’s brother and his wife. Among the Paniyan families in the neighbourhood an older male in the lineage was assigned to mobilise the labourers required for cultivation. Usually it was through him that the Chetty Karanavars were able to appoint the labourers. Generally this person was addressed as mooppan by Chettys and Chemmi by Paniyas. This particular person’s position in the lineage as an elder man and some of the roles he played in the rituals associated with cultivation made this relationship sacrosanct and authoritative among the Paniyas. He was influential among the Paniyans with his close contact with Chetty headmen and the mooppans in other areas. Paniyans showed respect and fear towards their headman. Normally, each neighbourhood had its own Paniyan mooppan. Sometimes, a mooppan was in charge of more than one neighbourhood under the joint control of Chetty families in the corresponding Kunnu neighbourhoods.

Another interesting cultural means to organize the labour on a massive scale for completing planting of paddy seeds in the vast area of paddy lands in the village was known as kambalm natti. It was a festive mode of paddy planting. For completing the planting of paddy at a time, all the workers in the locality would be called to the fields. Hundreds of male and female workers would do the ploughing and planting work simultaneously with the accompaniment of music and dance as a group. Chetti landlords entrust Paniyan headman (mooppan or chemmi) for bringing the labourers. Mooppan would visit every Paniyan household in the locality and give some paddy in advance to ensure their participation.
This system of bonded labour was paternalistic rather than coercive. *Chetty* elders intervened in the conflicts among Paniyars. They were also responsible for the security and welfare of Paniyan labourers under their control. The incidents of the absconding of the Paniyan labourers were very common, especially when the relation between the cultivator *Chetty* family and labourer was not comfortable. He might end up with another family with whom he has a better relationship. It was not difficult for the first family to locate the absconder as they would not have fled very far. The `absconders’ once found were severely dealt with. So absconding did not mean fleeing away forever from the vicinity and it carried only a symbolic meaning, implying a public display of the relationship going sour. It also shows the flexibility of this system in the area.

If the *karanavar* in the second family was more sympathetic to this labourer he could decide to keep him by paying compensation to the first owner. There were such instances of absconding in the village too. In rare occasions, a labour could break the contract by paying back the compensation or service and join another kindred, mostly of his brother in law who had been working comfortably with another *Chetty* family in another place.

*Cycle of agricultural work and Subsidiary Livelihoods*

Wetland paddy cultivation was only one crop a year. Presence of deep marshy wetlands called *kollis* and continuous shallow rains were conducive to paddy cultivation. There were two prominent types of paddy cultivation. One is known as *naatti* as it is known elsewhere too, and other as ‘*podivitha*’. *Natti* was the cultivation done normally in marshy wet lands and *podivitha* was the type of paddy cultivation which was done either on the dry land or on the normal paddy field during the summer. Season for *naatti* was between the Malayalam months *edavam* and *chingam*.
(May–September). Harvest was in ‘thulam’ (October–November). Podivitha was done in the summer months kumbham and meenam (March–April) with the help of irrigation. They had used indigenous Wayanad variety of seeds. Even today aromatic gandhakasala variety of paddy are cultivated only by the Chetty community in Wayanad. They treat this particular variety of seeds as an identity marker and a Chetty tradition in paddy cultivation.

Though land was the major resource base in this livelihood system, concept of ownership of land was not much deep among the local people in those times. The availability of land resource in abundance made the competition for it virtually non-existent. There was open access to forest and other natural resources. Wet land was more important compared to the dry land. Dry land was also used for doing punam cultivation (shifting cultivation) of millets by Chetty and Kuruman communities.

Cultivation of tobacco was very popular in those days. It was also linked to their practice of large scale cattle rearing. They had specially set up a fenced area in round circle in the open field to keep their cattle in the night. This land became very fertile after a period with the cattle dung and suitable for the cultivation of tobacco. This cultivation was undertaken by the male members of the households with the minimal assistance of the workers. Tobacco was mainly for household consumption. But the surplus quantity would be transacted through barter system.

Coffee was introduced to the area only after 1870 when the British started plantation in the nearby region. They cultivated it randomly on the garden mainly for household consumption. Vegetables, mainly varieties of yams were also cultivated on the dry land. Besides, different kinds of banana plants were also cultivated on the dry land. Green chilly was cultivated as the interim crop in the wet lands. Pasture land became helpful for cattle rearing. Households were mainly on the hill slopes adjoined to wetlands.
Hunting was also not uncommon among the Chetty families. Trapping of tiger and killing it using their special spears had been an important sport in the olden times. A net made of certain creepers was set for the tiger when there was news about a tiger killing cattle or other domestic animals. All the people in the village would be informed and people would surround the forest where the tiger was supposed to have been spotted. Tiger-hunt was associated with certain rituals too. When the tiger got trapped in the net people who carry the spears would start to attack it. This particular event, a ceremonial hunting of tiger, is known as ‘narikkuthulsavam’. In every joint family household, they had the practice of keeping a variety of spears for this ceremony.

Small hunting was part of the life of all the communities. Deer, rabbit, wild poultry, and monkeys were the games they sought for. Hunted games were distributed among the households in the neighborhoods. Paniyan households got their share according to their household size.

The possibility for occupying limitless land, free access to nearby forests and the abundant supply of adivasi labour made possible the large-scale cattle rearing practiced once in the village. It also corresponded to the cultivation of paddy and tobacco by using cattle manure as the most effective ingredient of production. The use of cow dung as fertiliser and cattle ploughing were the reasons for cattle raising in large numbers.

Large numbers of cattle of Chetty households were kept in the open fields in the off-rainy seasons. The kraal was arranged with bamboo posts specially erected in a circular shaped fence. It was known as ‘petali’ and usually contained 50 to 100 numbers of cattle. In the rainy season they were kept in permanent sheds structured on the garden land. They used the local varieties of cattle exclusively for fertilizer and ploughing though their productivity was comparatively very low. They were considered immune to many of the diseases and very much adapted to the local environment. Milk products like ghee were transacted in return for goods like cloths from seasonal visiting vendors from the plains.
*Paniyan* children were employed in the cattle-grazing, but they never reared cattle or used milk or milk products, although milk and milk products were main components of *Chetty* diet. Excess milk is reported to have been poured out into streams. Cattle rearing complemented the agricultural practices. Cow dung served as the sole manure.

**Vertical Reciprocity**

The role of *Paniyans* as agricultural labourers (the vary name of Paniyan means “those who work”) was linked to their ability and skill in adapting and working on the local environment which was highly suspicious of outsiders in this agricultural system. But this role was also re asserted and reinforced through the ritually organised labour practices. Ritually sanctioned system of *valli* production became a natural order by its incorporation into their religious world through the position of *mooppan* as the intermediary between god and the community and Paniyan and *Chetty*. Labour was their sole resource, without the technological know-how of settled cultivation. Ritually sanctioned division of labour within the *valli* system might have gradually absorbed into a local version of division of labour on the basis of *Jaati* system.

*Chettys* did not eat food cooked by the *adivasis*, but accepted cooked food from Brahmins and Nairs, though they were not very much part of social life in this period. Interestingly, lack of commensality existed between adivasis. Kuruman did not take cooked food from Paniyans in the village, though they accepted it from *Chettys*. Paniyan and other *adivasis* accepted food from Kuruma and *Chetty* households. Most interestingly, Paniyanand Kattunayaka who were landless adivasi communities, avoided accepting food from each other (Table3.6).One of the traditional markers of social distance in Indian caste system has been lack of commensality or acceptance of cooked food by communities considered superior in caste ranking. For this feature to have crept into the tribes is interesting.
Prototype of an occupational division is also evident in the traditional life of the village. Chettys were the cultivators while Paniyandid agricultural works. Kuruman also did shifting cultivation and hunting. Kattunayikkan were known for their skill in collecting honey. Another adivasi community Uralis in the region prepared the implements using the technology of iron and prepared pottery items.

**Table 3.6 Social Distances in the pre-colonial village according to Commensality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Hierarchical order of acceptance of cooked food</th>
<th>Traditional livelihoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Hindus</td>
<td>Nairs</td>
<td>Local rulers/ cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(outside the village)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hindus</td>
<td>Chetty</td>
<td>Wet land Cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adivasis</td>
<td>Kuruman</td>
<td>Shifting cultivators, small hunters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paniyan-Kattu nayakan (do not accept mutually)</td>
<td>Bonded labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest Gatherers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source Field survey (2007)

Initial division of labour among the adivasi community may not have been on the basis of an ideology of casteism, but it was through the colonization of Hindu upper castes in the area that many features of caste system got enmeshed with the indigenous livelihood system. Because of this reason, many of the cultural forms presented as the markers of identity of local communities might actually have been the products of the medieval interactions among the communities based on the local variety of casteism.
Reciprocal exchange of produce existed between Chetty and other local communities. Whereas Paniyan exchanged their labour to *Chetty* for certain amount of paddy which was institutionalized later as *valli* system, Nayakan exchanged honey with Uralis who gave them iron implements and pottery goods. Reciprocal exchanges existed mainly for paddy which was cultivated by *Chettys*. However, such reciprocal relations were extremely fluid; there was no compulsion for any community other than Paniyanto provide services to *Chettys* in the village.

*Koozham kodukkal* was one kind of market interaction that existed in the area in which Kurumas played the role of intermediaries between *Chetty* producers and local market. Kuruman would collect unprocessed paddy after harvest from Chetty households to be sold in the markets 30 or 40 kilometers far from the village controlled by Muslim traders in those days. In return, they collected certain amount of processed paddy.

Within the village Chettys gave paddy to other communities for getting many services in return. They got labour from Paniyas, forest produces from Kattunayikkans and iron implements from Uralis, who were not inhabitants of the study village, but came from other parts of Pulppalli. For the *Chetty* community, they could use paddy as a means of getting services while for the receivers, paddy had subsistence value. This reciprocity among the community had a vertical order. Possession of paddy became a source of power for getting services from other communities.

*Local Perceptions*

Settlers in the village perceived the *valli* system as slavery in tune with some of the popular writings on Wayanad. But *Chettys* in the village strongly object to such a view about their past system of livelihoods. Basis for such an undisputed perception of settlers about Paniyansas mere slave workers (*adimappanikkar*) in this system was mainly due to paddy as the mode of wages. According to their perception ‘Chetty landlords’ exploited the Paniyansby tying them into servitude. One of the old settler
informants described it like this: “Before we came to this place there were only some Chettys and Paniyas. Paniyans were slaves to those Chettys. They were very much scared of outside people. They had to work day and night for their Chetty landlords. In return they earned only a handful of paddy. Paniyan men, women and children all surrendered their labour completely to those Chetty landlord families. Chetty families had every right to punish those who disobeyed them. Sometimes they can even kill…Often they were beaten up by the Chetty landlords…”

In most of the written accounts about the valli system, it has been depicted as a slave system associated with a famous Hindu temple-- Valliyoor kaavu (temple)-- about 25 kilometres away from the village. The vlliyoorkavu, which is a Hindu temple and a place for yearly congregation of all the adivasi and other Jaatis of Wayanad since generations was described more or less a slave market. Some of the popular writings about the tribal situation in Kerala also authenticated this version (Panoor 1967).

According to a popular version of slavery associated with this temple, there was a slave market in Valliyoor kaavu where large number of Paniyans and communities like Adiyas would assemble in large numbers during the festival season. The festival lasted one week. Chetty landlords would go there and buy Paniyan ‘slaves’. Local narratives in the village draw a picture that is close to the system of African slavery. This perception is clear from the title of a popular book written about adivasis in Wayanad, viz., ‘Keralathile Africa’ (Africa of Kerala). This image of slave market and slave labourers is very strong among the settler communities. However, such a version of slavery was subscribed to by only a few among the Chettys and adivasis of the area. Though the festival was important for both adivasi and Chettys and well
known among them, they do not agree that a slave market existed in Valliyoor Kaavu.

Local historians of Chetty communities in the village out rightly reject such a version of slavery. According to them, Paniyans had no skill or interests other than their labour to work in the marshy wet fields of the area. Paniyans were obedient workers and they had every freedom to leave the place if they did not like to work with a Chetty household. Absconding was very common in those days. According to a Chetty elder, Kottamarattil Krishnan Chetty who is 78 years old and a respected member of one of the Chetty tharavads in the locality, his community had special bondage with Paniyan families who worked on their fields. It was the duty of a karnavar (senior-most person) to look after the production process in his household. He made contact only with the senior person in the Paniyan families, addressed either as mooppan or jenmi which means head, in conducting the agricultural activities in different seasons. These elders were well respected in both the communities. Nobody dared disobey the instructions of the elders in his community or among Paniyas.

“We all were very obedient to our karanavar. Mooppan also drew this reverence among the Paniyans and all obeyed their directions. Mooppan of a Paniyanclan was very honest and obedient to the Chetty karanavar. They received orders from our karanavar and arranged the labourers and works accordingly. In reverse we could fulfil all their requirements. In those times we all led a humble living. There was no lavishness in our lives or theirs”.

Krishnan Chetty’s narrative is somewhat representative of his community.
Interestingly, Paniyan responses to the question of slavery are mixed ones. Differences in perceptions are largely based on generations. Older generation, although only a few of them who were really part of this livelihood system are still alive, is less critical of their old ways of life. Their experience of the past is largely encompassing. They do not talk merely about their labour surrendered to Chetty families, but also about the forest where they could enter freely, vast stretches of open areas where they could roam around and collect plants, endless marshy open fields where crabs and fish items were available in plenty etc.

Bellichi, an old Paniyan woman in her 90s who does not know her exact age, now stays with her grandchildren in Puthiyetam Chettyn neighbourhood where they have been coexisting with that family for at least four generations now. According to her, ‘that time’ was completely different. There was no scarcity for anything. Everything was in abundance.

“Now everything has changed. Nowhere you can go freely now. Even the climate is changed. Sun is too hot now. There was happiness on every faces on those days. is it life today? You have to beg in front of strangers... (In those days ) even a quick raid in the forest brought everything we needed. Besides, for our work they (Chetty family) would give us one ser paddy and each year two pieces of cloth. It was enough.... There were no hospitals and diseases too. We had medicines in the forest for all the diseases we knew. Now you have to run after the doctors in town hospitals for everything.”

But Gulikan, a 56 year old man who is a mooppan in Kappikkunu neighbourhood, though in name alone, says that Chetty karanavar in his neighbourhood was very
cruel. He remembers bitter childhood experiences and gives testimony that they could be beaten up by the masters even for small mistakes without considering their age or gender. If somebody felt that a Paniyan man did not properly respect him or his woman it was reason enough for punishment. Younger generation is very much critical about this old livelihood system. What one can find out from the youngsters is the reassertion of settler narratives on slavery. According to them, their forefathers were in fear and they feared all others.

Whatever may be the perceptional differences about this system, there are traces of the existence of a system of interdependence very much rooted not only in the collective memory of Chetty and Paniyan communities, but also in many current livelihood practices, which will be analysed elsewhere in the thesis. On the basis of the narratives of those who were either familiar with this system or have knowledge of this system, bond up interdependence was ritually sanctioned.

Among the Chettys, elder persons normally addressed as *karanavar* (great uncle in mother’s line) had played a role in economy and rituals. For example, even today an eldest in a local Chetty *tharavad* (matri-lineage) holds an important customary position in the local temple to conduct annual festival. In olden times as it is referred to, *karanavar* played a key role in organising the economy and livelihood activities. Within the families they controlled the distribution of harvested grain kept in a granary.

Among the Paniyas, an all-encompassing ritual world was very active under the supervision of *mooppan* who had endowed enormous authority in the life and livelihoods of the community. A division between the world of rituals and of
livelihoods was very bleak in their everyday life. Even today moooppan can display power in the ritual field given their religious and god-fearing nature without much authority in the social organisation. Current interpretations of slave system may not be justified in describing the interrelationship between Chettys and Paniyans in the village. Except those in the position of Karanavar, rest of the Chetty members had hardly any power in terms of possession of resources, except their own labour.

**Circumstantial Egalitarianism in an Ecological Recess**

Evidences from the past life in the village suggest that there was an egalitarian basis for the traditional life of the communities. Criteria of modern or even feudal societies in Kerala may not be enough to interpret their living. Entangled in the ecological recesses of the forest, valleys and hills, communities in the village did not have many options. A system of interdependence seemed to have developed out of this context from a compulsion for mutual dependence.

Chetty community had the indigenous technology for doing settled cultivation. They also worked in the fields. They could also extract the Paniyan labour who were very much adapted to the local ecology in order to carry out the highly labour-intensive agricultural practices. Deep marshy fields (known as *aathi* or *korava kandam*) were dangerous and strongly built. Paniyans had the skill and physique in order to work in these difficult terrains.

There is hardly any evidence found in the histories of the families about any surplus extraction from the production process beyond subsistence requirements. After harvesting, grain was shifted to specially made storage (*ara*). Chetty producers used it under the control of *Karanavar* for own consumption during rest of the year and also for exchange in return for Paniyan labour and various produces and services from other communities. They had to allot a share of it for the common ritual functions too.

A rigid caste system was not known to exist in such an ecologically difficult life-scape. Patterns of caste system in terms of division of labour among different tribal
groups and a vertical order of non acceptance of food do not seem to be similar to the feudalist caste hierarchy that existed in other parts of Kerala society. Such a system was introduced in the later period by Hindu rulers and re-asserted during the colonial period.

However, in this particular historical context, a value system or broadly a common *habitus* of the local communities in the village in olden times was based on a reciprocal / redistributive/ egalitarian livelihood system that stemmed from an ecological necessity. A compulsory circumstance of such a moral economy can be traced out from an ethnographic past of the local communities. But it was not stagnant. History played out over the centuries made a significant impact upon local life creating different livelihood trajectories for different communities. There were instances of pre-modern forces exerting pressure on the livelihood system of the village in the later decades especially in the early and late colonial periods. Direct penetration of colonial forces can be observed in the village through the introduction of new governance system and economy largely using the instruments of pre-modern structures.

**Changing livelihood practices in the early and late colonial periods**

King of Malabar Kottayam, popularly known as Pazhassi Raja who fought the British forces hiding in the forests of Wayanad, was killed by the British army in an encounter around six kilometres away from Pulppalli. Native communities like Kuruma and *Chetty* had helped Pazhasi Raja in his fight against the British. Kuruma members had involved directly in the fight with their archery skills of using bow and arrows. However, *Chettys* did not directly involve themselves in the struggle, but, according to local narratives, provided food grains to sustain Pazhassi and his supporters while in hiding.

British supremacy was established in Wayanad after the death of Pazhasi raja. Following this, the British government confiscated the entire region which was under
the king but controlled by some of the elite Nair families. The British surveyed the entire area and entrusted the vast area to the care of the very same families and gave them titles. The whole of Pulppalli region including some parts of the village also came under the control of a Nayar family who supported the British after the fall of Pazhassi Raja.

The British introduced a comprehensive system of revenue and forest administration in the area subsequently. It became the beginning of a series of colonial interventions into local livelihoods. Many new governmental practices like land surveys, land survey distribution, tax reforms, new procedure for local civil and criminal administration etc., were brought into the local life (Nair 2000, Logan 1995)

Introduction of commercial crops and the origin of larger plantations also happened parallel to this development. Cultivation of crops like coffee and pepper was one kind of plantation in the area, teak plantation in the forest being of another sort.

**Concept of Private Property**

After colonial land survey, land was divided into four categories: i) Titled Land for cultivators like Chettys for the area they had cultivated; ii) Revenue Land which lay in between the titled land without occupation; iii) Those surveyed land without occupation that became Private Forest, entitled in the name of big landlord families in the area; and iv) those areas that remained as un-surveyed that became reserve land. In the village there were titled lands owned by Chetty and Kuruman communities, revenue land and a small portion belonging to private land owned by landlord family in the area.
Legal ownership of private property in the modern sense along with the distribution of titles to the respective lands was introduced in the village as part of the new revenue administration by the British. In the land survey in our study village, only Chetty families and some Kuruman families occupied land in vast stretches for agricultural purposes. They had not possessed much dry land as their agricultural practices were confined mainly to wet lands in the area. Ownership of these lands was with the joint families under the control of a Karanavar.

The Paniyan communities in the village did not occupy lands for own cultivation, but worked in the lands of Chetty families who brought them for work. But they could use all the lands, including forest, wet and dry land for different purposes. They were never questioned if they did some cultivation on the dry land attached to their shelters for their own use. Similarly, they could also undertake some vegetable cultivation on the wet land when the land became seasonally free from main cultivation. They were also completely free to collect any vegetation. During these periods people in the village in general had in their menu a wide variety of leafy items from the fields. They could collect small types of fishes and crabs from the ponds and streams on the wet land.

Survey of the land resulted in differentiating and demarcating private and revenue land in the village. It created new physical and mental boundaries over the land. Land-owning communities also became vigilant about the scale of cultivation. Survey of land and fixation of tax according to the extent of land possessed and cultivation on it restricted use of land resources by the local cultivator families. The new tax policy also stopped the local cultivator communities from occupying vast
areas of land. The earlier practice was to tax only the produce. Later the system was changed and the land under possession began to be taxed\(^\text{12}\). As a result, Chetty cultivators stopped occupying more land than what they could cultivate. For communities like Paniyan, free and open use of land resources began to be restricted in the long run.

According to the fresh re survey carried out by the colonial government in the village, there were three types of land. One type was land with title mainly occupied by Poothadi and Kuppathottil Nair families, second type was reserved forest and third one was revenue land which lay in between the boundaries of those two titled lands. A number of Chetty and Kuruma families were also provided *patta* (title) lands in this area. Chettys and Kurumans occupied mainly wetlands, as they found not much interest in occupying dry land.

There were around 15 families who got *patta* for their land after the re-survey. Title was given for the land they cultivated, in the name of *tharavad karanavar* (head of the joint family). Thazekappil, Mele Kappil, Kottamarattu, Puthiyadam, Madavayal, Madaparambu were the important Chetty families who got title for their lands in the village. All the Paniyan settlements in the village belonged to the kunnu neighbourhood around these Chetty households.

*Marumakkathayam* (matri-lineage) was the system of inheritance among the Chettys in the earlier period. It helped them to tightly knit the families together and arrange them for production activities. But a transition from *marumakkathayam* to

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\(^{12}\) There was strong protest from the local communities in the region against this policy, especially from Kurumas who had earlier assisted King Pazhassi in his fight against the British. Male members belonging to Kuruma community started physically fighting the government revenue officials. However their protest was brutally crushed by the colonial force.
*makkathayam* (Patri-lineage) became evident in the family structure in the later colonial period as an impact of colonial policy to bring in new civil laws of inheritance. This subsequently led to the disintegration of *tharavads* and the fragmentation of land in favour of increasing private ownership.

Kuppothottil Nair family and Poothadi Nambiar family had been given titles to around 90,999 acres and 10035 acres of land respectively by the British government after the land survey. Private land, known as *janmam* land owned by these landlord families was given to the cultivators belonging to Chetty and Kuruman communities for rent.  

**Changes in forest-related livelihoods**

The forests of Wayanad came under the British rule after the fall of Pazhasi Raja. Captain Gibbs was appointed as the first District Forest Officer, Wayanad, whose office extended to the whole of Malabar including Palakkad. It was British planters who cleared the extensive areas for raising plantations of tea, coffee and pepper (Nair 2000). Two important development programmes during the British regime were the conversion of natural forests into forest plantations and the development of commercial plantations by clearing the forests.

Following the implementation of the Act\(^\text{14}\), the Government imposed a number of restrictions on using forest resources (Chundamannil 1993, Amruth 2004). Forest

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\(^{13}\) From the interviews with Mr. Krishnan chetty and Mr. Krishnan Master

\(^{14}\) The Madras Forest Act of 1882 had detailed clauses for strict control over forest lands and resources. However, local people started to experience it much later.
was surveyed and boundaries were fixed in our study village also as per the colonial policy of conservation and utilisation of forest resources. The forest was clearly demarcated from the revenue and private land. It was in 1938 that resurvey was completed in the area.

The process of boundary demarcation was locally known as *jenta kettal* which was experienced in the local life symbolically as marking of new territorial borders that obstructs the natural movement of people and restricts their access and rights on forest, hitherto enjoyed by the indigenous populations. *Jenta* were boundary posts which were erected after separating clearly forest and non-forest areas. Many of the traditional rights of local people were curtailed and they had to confront new power structures which were till then alien to them.

A system of issuing special entrance pass for using the forest for grazing was introduced as part of the institutional interventions of the Forest Department in the earlier period of forest governance. Cattle grazers were supposed to show the tax payer’s receipt for grazing. Cutting down of bamboo for any purpose was also restricted by the Forest Department. Special permission was needed to cut down the bamboos which had many purposes in the local life including the construction of houses. Processed bamboo could remain undamaged for a long period, the availability of which was plentiful in the local forest. Hunting was also banned gradually.

In the day-to-day experiences of the local populations, confrontation with these new institutional structures was not so simple and direct. Officials of the Forest Department, mainly up to the ranger level, were mainly from the plains especially belonging to the upper caste Nair and Nambiar families. They established relationships with the local populations and mainly the Chetty households who served them during their visit to the area. They identified relatively well-to-do Chetty families in each locality where they were given food and shelter. Related to their
official duty, in the initial period they lacked basic facilities and had to walk all the
distance through the vast area of forest.

By providing good food and comfortable stay for these officials, host families could
draw favours and concessions with regard to the collection of bamboos, permission
for grazing and cultivation on wetlands under the possession of the Department. Rangers and foresters belonging to Nair/Nambiar families could enjoy certain levels
of command over the local populations. It was a continuance of hierarchical caste
order embedded within the fields of property and power relations.

Sometimes for some families such relations became more beneficial than small incentives. Family of Krishnan Chetty, 78, a retired headmaster from the local higher secondary school received such helps from some of their official guests. There was a Nair and a Brahmin (they are identified according to their caste affinity) officer who used to visit his family. When they came to visit the camp offices in the region, as it was very difficult for them to cover the whole area in one day due to lack of proper transportation, they used to spend their nights in his family. Though their house was not big enough, they had kept aside an attached space to the house for accommodating such official friends.

These two officers became good friends of his father. They had the habit of taking drinks. So they would bring chicken and liquor whenever they came to stay. His father was also a good hunter having possession of a gun. His mother specially cooked the game meat of deer etc. for serving the special guests. In the night there would be a lavish feast. It was friendship with these officers that helped him get higher education; they advised his father to send him for teachers’ training course. They provided all the facilities during his education in a far away town.

As described earlier, the Kattunayikkkan community had full access to the forest and they had the capabilities to survive within the forest without much vulnerability. They had greater adaptation within the forest than the rest of the village inhabitants, but new regulations and rules of colonial forest governance ended their free access to the forest forever.
However, it also opened new livelihood avenues for the community as the forest officials were compelled to seek the assistance of Kattunayikkan informants to gain accessibility to the difficult and alien terrains of forest resources. In return for introducing them to the secret routes inside the forest, these forest officials became the sources of information to many Nayikkkan informants about the outside world.

This direct relationship with the colonial administration helped them to informally maintain the forest based livelihood practices to an extent during the British period. A few of them were even given jobs as forest guards in later years.

**Commercialization of Forest**

Wayanad had very rich tropical forests, which was very famous for the availability of ‘rich’ and ‘royal’ trees like rose wood, sandalwood, teak etc. Clear felling of natural forest for constructing teak plantation was a major offshoot of colonial administrative policy grounded on the broader economic policies related to the imperial demands. Rampant commercialisation of forest resources was also a ‘contribution’ of colonial government. They replaced subsistence value of forest with market values by systematising the timber trade with the introduction of chain of depots and auction centres across Wayanad. They also introduced large scale commercial cropping of coffee from the 1840’s onwards. Large areas of natural forest were converted subsequently into monoculture commercial plantations. The introduction of tea estates in the early 20th century led to the disappearance of forest on a large scale. The great need of British forest officers to earn revenue and timber from Wayanad led to over exploitation of trees.

Within our village there is no forest cleared for teak or other plantations. But there are both types of plantation in adjacent areas, started in the late colonial period. This had constrained the free movement of *adivasis* through the forest. Movement of *adivasis* was controlled by their own understanding of territory marked by certain geography markers like river, streams or hills etc. Especially for Kattunayikkan, there were their own territories for limiting their gathering or small hunting in the old days.
But for Paniyas, such demarcations of territories are not known. In their narratives about the past they describe forest as a free space with unlimited freedom of movement. However, in short, there was no externally imposed order of territory on forest within the village in the pre-colonial era. But this freedom was curtailed along with the development of the plantations within the region.

**Introduction of Market Relations**

British colonisation of the area resulted in the development of new towns like Kalpetta and Mananthavadi. Expansion of plantations in the area caused large-scale labour inflows into Wayanad. Labourers belonging to untouchable castes from the plains of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were brought to the plantations on a large scale. This also caused the development of local township where a large number Muslim merchants from different parts of Malabar set up shops for trading food grains, condiments, cloths etc. and tea shops. This created a situation where personalised transactions among the households got weakened and local Chetty households started to depend on the local traders. Households established relationships with the local shops and they made transactions directly to the shops exchanging commodities, especially food grains for other items required for household consumption.

Meenagadi and Panamaram developed as two small towns accessible to the people of Kappikunnu in the early quarters of the 20th century. This reduced the importance of Mysore market in Karnataka. External contact with the Kerala plains gradually increased with the construction of new roads, which accelerated the exposure to the market places of Malabar. Changes of this kind that took place in Wayanad also
increased the demand for skilled persons like teachers, *vaidyans* (traditional ayurvedic practitioners), carpenters etc. However, pre-modern relations continued in the exchange of labour. For instance, the teacher who was allowed to stay with the major Chetty households in the area for teaching the lessons, mainly traditional Malayalam literature, to the children in their home surroundings was gifted with cloths, food grain, ghee and other available produces in return for the knowledge he imparted. Likewise, carpenters were made to stay at home for long periods to complete the work in exchange of goods

**Village Administration**

A new administrative mechanism for collecting tax and controlling the social life in the village life introduced by British was experienced by the people through the intervention of Poothadi Nambiar family, a family that held the formal right for the position of *adhikari*. The new governance structures for local administration had conferred much power to important local Nair families legitimising their customary feudal rights. Our village came under the Poothadi *amsam* (revenue village) and Veliyambam *desams* (sub-divisions of the village), with *adhikari* as the village headman assisted by an accountant (*menon*) and two helpers (*kolkar*).

*Adhikari* was a constituted position and the incumbent was authorized to intervene in all civil and criminal disputes and conduct revenue administration. Later, it became a hereditary position enjoyed by the upper caste and rich Nair families. If a suitable person was not available in that particular family, the position became open to members of other Nair/ Nambiar families. A written exam was made mandatory, but in reality it was a mere formality as people saw it.
On rare occasions, some Chetty men came into the positions of *menon* and *kolkar*. However, according to local Chetty elders, these people, especially *kolkkar* who played the role of policemen in those days, were feared. When they were seen in the vicinity of the village, family members, especially women, would withdraw into the houses. They allegedly beat people for flimsy reasons and put fear into them. People would give them food and whatever they wanted on demand. These *kolkar* passed on information about the village to *adhikari*.

*Amsam adhikari* or village headman was very powerful and people feared him. As an upper caste member he had all caste biases and values which he brought into his day-to-day interactions. All the civil and criminal disputes were sought to be solved in front of *adhikari*. He would call for the meeting of the parties concerned once a complaint was received from the aggrieved person. Both parties could bring enough people to the meeting where they could argue out their case with the support of facts and evidences. However, the final decision taken by *adhikari* was indisputable. This system of conflict resolution continued even after independence for quite some period.

The Paniyans did not face any problem with this new governance system since they had no land. By the end of the colonial period, village life had become more or less hierarchical. Within this new system of village administration, Chetty families were recognised as similar to ‘landlord’ families with more powers to *Karanavars* in the family. It became the responsibility of these *karanavars* to control the Paniyan workers. A vertical order of the transfer of power and legitimacy changed the manner of organisation of labour at the local level. Pressure form above passed on to
lower levels. Liberal arrangement of Valli system of labour changed into an enforced one. Disobedient workers were directly punished by the Chetty elders. Some of the Paniyans in the village made references to cruel karanavars in some of the local Chetty families. Such traces in their collective memory, especially in the youngsters, are the reasons for describing the old valli system as equal to slavery.

Differentiations based on the caste system are found here legitimised by the vertical flow of colonial power.

**Political Consequence: Nationalism and Political Movement**

One of the unintended effects of colonialism in this village is the emergence of a new group of people with increased political consciousness and education. Among the Chetty families in the village those who emphasised the need for educating their youngsters also were benevolent masters to the Paniyas. Two Chetty families in the village which are described as having been cruel to Paniyas in the later colonial period are now almost poor without much land or formal occupations. There was no single person in the family who got higher education. Getting Elementary School Leaving Certificate (ESLC) under the Madras state education board was considered an important achievement for the Chetty youth. Irrespective of gender, at least six young people belonging to Chetty families in the village, all relatives by blood or marriage, obtained this qualification.

With the emergence of nationalism, the local Chetty community members were drawn into its politics. The intersection of development and politics in a later colonial historical setting of the village is significant. The political scape of the
village changed dramatically after the ‘colonisation’ of settler communities. The following life story is illuminative of this.

Kottamarattil Krishnan Chetty, teacher in Waynad who passed ESLC and teachers’ training course and retired from a local school as head master. As noted earlier, he got assistance from some of the colonial officers, guest friends of his father, in completing his education. Education earned him many educated friends inside and outside the village.

When he was a student in school in Manthavadi where he was resident in a hostel, they raised the flag of the Congress Party inside the school and led a demonstration march. But he was caught by two policemen belonging to Nair community who were known to his father. They advised him not to participate in the independence movement as he was only a student. They said that it was his duty to fulfil his father’s dream and become an employed person. After getting a job he could continue politics. He took their advise and stopped politics. But after becoming a teacher in the school he became a member of the Congress Party and worked along with some of the educated youth from respected Nair families of the area.

Meanwhile, many other Chetty people in the village started working with political parties especially with the nationalist movement and the Congress Party. There were two Chetty households in the village which subscribed to the nationalist newspaper, Mathrubhumi. Kelu Chetty, father of Narayanan Chetty, 70 years, of Madaparambu family was one who filed paper cuttings on different issues. Though his father had no formal education, Narayanan Chetty got formal education and became a clerk in a local Bank. He continued there till his retirement.
Kelu Chetty actively associated with the Congress Party. Interestingly some members of Poothadi adikari family were local leaders of the party in the region. Most of the leaders who came to the area were from well to do Nair families within and outside Wayanad. Kelu Chetty worked with them and became the leader of the Congress Party in the village. They were active in the election campaign for Madras state assembly election conducted by the British government. Many leaders visited the village during this period. Even Narayanan Chetty’s mother had gone to Mananthvady, around 25 kilometers away from the village to cast her vote in this election which was won by the Congress Party.

Communities like Paniyan were not aware of any of these socio-political processes. They remained more or less as mere workers. No one in the village had any idea about such historical events. They were not benefited directly from politics or election in this period. But there was an indirect effect. A new school was set up in the present Pulppalli town by a group of people who were friends of Krishnan master. They were motivated by the ideals of Gandhiji for giving education to backward communities. Some Paniyans in our study village got primary education from this school in later years. Another effect of the nationalist movement was a campaign against casteism. It conscientised the Chettys to stop the practice of untouchability and practices like bonded labour which was already banned by the colonial government. However, these practices continued for some period even after independence as the communities like Paniyans remained helpless in the absence of choices for them other than depending on the valli system of livelihoods.
Yet another phase of major livelihood changes in the village happened along with the initial decades of independence which marked the historic migration from southern Kerala to Wayanad region. A shift from subsistence agriculture to export crop cultivation, typical to all other villages in the region, had coupled with the expansion of a governance system based on multi-party democracy safeguarding the interests of different segments of society hitherto excluded from the political processes. This happened within a development regime created by highly centralised planning and decision making process.

Livelihood Practices under Centralised State and Development

This section tracks the livelihood changes in the post independence period till the 1990s. As far as the study village is concerned migration of southern Keralites that started in the early 50s was the most important feature in relation to the livelihood changes in the period. Migration became a powerful agent for bringing in modernity and development in the area. Migration and changes that followed transformed the lives and livelihoods of native communities in the village beyond their imagination.

The 1950s became the watershed in the history of the village with the influx of the first set of *thaze nattukar* or people from the lower plains of Kerala into the area. This part of the region was known for large scale illegal encroachment of revenue and forest lands unlike in the eastern parts of Wayanad where initial migration had an official legitimacy as it was part of a ‘colonisation scheme’ implemented by the British government for resettling the army men fought in the Second World War.

The process of development in the village through which communities differentially acquired various resources is also important for our understanding of how the intensity of the direct interpenetration of the local and global reduced largely in this period with the new mediating structures of the nation-state and its development
apparatus coming into existence in powerful ways. However, a global agenda of development continued to play actively in more embedded and subtle ways at the local level under the elitist networks of bureaucrats, politicians and large farmers within a centralized regime. Global market for cash crops like pepper and coffee became more important as their cultivation with active support and mediation of the state became major sources of livelihood for the local people.

**In Search of Land**

**Migration from South Kerala**

Pulpalli was one of the geographically isolated areas unlike other centres of migration in Wayanad. It was surrounded by dense forest in the earlier period. So there was no pressure in the earlier phase of migration in the early 50s. Besides, the major chunk of land was either reserved forest or patta land attached to the landlord families and Pulpalli temple. There was also some portion of revenue land in the area. This was the area encroached by the initial migrants in our study village. Number of total migrant households in the area was very less. Around 30 families came to this area and encroached land in the initial period.

Two types of migrants are found in the village. One set of families came to the area in the 1940s and the early 1950s and occupied large areas – mostly 10 to 20 acres of land- which they could manage with their families. Division of land was based on a family unit which consisted of father, mother and children. But they came to the area in big joint families, although encroached the area as family units. There were around 30 such families, mostly Chrisitans. There were two Ezhava families also in the village belonging to the same category.

Flow of the other set of migrants, larger in numbers than the first category, started at the end of the 1950s and continued till the end of the ‘80s, though the peak was in the ‘60s. Period of arrival is an important factor in deciding the possession of land. Those who came at the end of the ‘60s became small cultivators who could occupy 3-4 acres of land. Those who reached the area in the 70s became mainly the attached labourers of large holders (Table 3.7). However, some families could expand their
possession by buying land from local Chettys or encroaching upon the land of adivasis. There were also cases of families who came in later years but with good amount of money and bought up land from those who had to sell their land in distress. But these are only exceptional cases.

**Table 3.7. Pattern of land occupation in different decades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Land (Acres)</th>
<th>Category of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-1950</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
<td>Large farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-60</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>Large farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-70</td>
<td>&lt; 5</td>
<td>Small cultivators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-80</td>
<td>&lt; 2</td>
<td>Small cultivators and workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field survey (2007)*

In our village, occupation of land was largely ‘illegal’ in nature. People themselves called it as ‘vettipitutham’ (winning over). A differentiation is made now between ‘vangiya bhoomi’ (purchased land) and ‘vettipidicha bhoomi’ (win over land) when people talk about the history of their land. Some families also bought land in addition to encroached land from local Chetty landholders who kept dry land unused. Some early ‘won-overs’ also sold out their land for a good price after putting in some initial work on it and developing it and used this money to buy new pieces of land in other parts of the village, thus becoming legitimate land owners rather than encroachers.

Even in the early 1950s, immigrant families had started to settle in Kappikunnu one by one, encroaching upon the revenue land. This is one of the earliest locations in Pulpalli region where migration took place initially. Unlike other forest-ridden parts
of Pulpalli, major portion of Kappikunnu belonged to revenue land where a number of Chetty and Kuruman households undertook cultivation. Rest of the area of Kappikunnu was under the possession of Pulpalli Temple, which was gradually handed over to the immigrants on lease.

Some of the early migrants moved towards the north–east parts of Pulpalli by the 1960s and started to encroach into the vast forest tracts under the possession of Pulpalli temple. Many others preferred to stay back here as they feared to move out from the revenue land and encroach *jenmam* (private) land, though the quality of the soil in Kappikunnu was relatively poor. By the mid 1970s, the inflow of people reduced considerably and by this time almost all the land had been occupied by the people.

Forest land which was encroached upon by migrants does not fall in our study village. 2-3 kilometers away from the village, a number of families had occupied a large tract of forest under the possession of Kuppathod Nair family who had donated their land to the local temple. Manager of the temple land belonged to Kuppathod family. He divided the land into small pieces of 2-3 acres to families for Rs 40 per acre. There was also an order from the Collector of Malabar to the temple authority to distribute lands to the poor peasants who migrated from the southern district in the wake of famine and poverty. But many of them encroached more lands and manipulated documents. But in the late '60s, the inflow of people increased considerably and they started large-scale illegal encroachments into the area, spreading over fourteen thousand acres of land in the Pulpalli region. Those portions of lands already transferred by the temple authorities were part of this area.

**State and Land Redistribution**

Kerala state and various political parties had played a major role in transforming land encroachment to legal ownership rights although initially there was no much
support from the state agencies. There was aggressive movement on the part of the people to get legal sanction for their encroached land.

It was in the sixties that on the plea of temple authorities the ruling Congress government set up a police camp on the site and started evicting the migrant occupants of the land. Those illegal migrants were largely poor cultivators. Though most of them belonged to Christian community, who traditionally supported the Congress Party, government was reluctant to allow the intrusion into the temple land mainly due to the influence of temple authorities on the government.

During this period, many huts erected by the migrants were set on fire by the police and temple authorities. Even temple elephants were used for eviction. At the local level, irrespective of the political affiliations, migrant farmers fought to get patta for the land they had encroached upon. After a series of deliberations in the forms of negotiation and protests they managed to get approval from the government. Political parties, especially the communist parties, and farmer’s organisations under the Christian church were instrumental in organising migrant cultivators against the eviction initiatives of the Government.

Communist leaders like A.K.Gopaln arrived on the spot and made inspiring speeches for stimulating the peasant protest. Many old people in the village remember his fiery speech and his angry outburst to the government: ‘why does god need land?’ This momentous speech of AK Gopalan was important in bringing the immigrants under the influence of the Communist Party. Most of the poor families who had possessed lands and set up huts raised red coloured flags, asserting their occupation over the land.

But even the communist government which came to power could not solve the issue on priority basis. One of the Ministers of State, a prominent leader of the Communist Party, provoked the local leaders by urging them to organize an aggressive movement instead of waiting for the mercy of the government. This was the reason why some of the local leaders of Communist Party in the area joined the left extremist group (its movement is known as Naxalism) to wage an armed struggle. Parameswaran who was a local leader of the Communist Party was one among the
delegates who visited the minister in the state capital. He also realized that there would be no decision without strong action from the people.

It was in this context that with the support of leaders like Kisaan Thomman, that Parameswaran and a group of Naxal activists attacked the police camp at Pulpalli and killed a policeman which later came to be known as the “Pulppalli station attack”. This created a panic situation in the area and the police suppressed the protest. However, this event speeded up a government decision to distribute the title for encroached lands. Migrant cultivators were given titles to their land following a blood-shed agitation against the government in Pulpalli.

Distribution of patta (title) to the encroached land became more or less a convention in the state after this incident. A new state-level political party, the Kerala Congress, was formed under the auspices of the Church, split out of the Congress Party, which stood with the Christian encroachers in later years. Organized encroachment in ghat/forest region by the small cultivators and subsequent distribution of patta to those lands became a political strategy to expand the base of the political parties, mainly of the Kerala Congress and its splinter groups.

After all the encroachments got legalized, people in this area now hold three types of patta land: (i) the old patta land that was distributed by the British government since the resurvey; (ii) the patta distributed by the state government for the encroached revenue land; (iii) the patta allotted to the land of the Temple which was already a jenmam (private) land owned by the Kuppathot Nair family. Farmers had no right to cut down the scheduled trees like teak, rose wood, etc., from the revenue land. But there was no such restriction for other types of land. For getting land people had to make a nominal payment separately for trees and land. Revenue officers would count the trees on the garden land to fix the amount. On many occasions farmers bribed the officials to get it fixed low.

Land Market
Market force played a decisive role in organising the movement of migrants from their original place of residence to this village. Pulppalli was not the first destination for many migrant cultivators. Most of them travelled a long distance and stayed at different points for different periods before they ended up in the village. In almost all the early cases of migration, the migrants had sold their lands at origin for a very good amount and come to Wayanad and bought mainly dry land, where ever they got it cheap. Personal network of migrants, who came mainly from certain areas in the southern districts, helped them find out about available land and they moved out from their home towns when they got information about better land at cheap prices.

Varghese, 78, who came from Eranakulam district in the late 40s had stayed in three such points. He came to Wayanad all by himself. Belonging to a trader family he fled from home while in his teens after a dispute with other family members. He first reached Balusserry, on the slopes of Wayanad hills on his way to Wayanad. He bought one acre of land there. Later, he sold that land and bought more land in the eastern uphill area of Wayanad. In the early fifties he reached the village and bought 5 acres of land from another migrant and encroached upon another two acres of land. Information about the possibility of encroaching in to more fertile land was the driving force for him.

Mundayam Parambil Narayanan, 85 years old now, had made such moves thrice. He had come to Wayanad along with his father and brothers, selling their original land. They first reached the northern side of Wayanad, bought some land and developed it. Then they brought the rest of the family, his mother and sisters. After settling their parents and sisters in this place, he and his brothers moved to another place and bought some land there. In the early 50s, he came alone to the present location and encroached around 12 acres of revenue land in the village.

In the case of Ramesh who is now one of the largest land holders in the village, his father and brothers bought land in the eastern parts of the neighbouring Kannur district adjacent to Wayanadan hills. Then he alone moved to Wayanad along with his wife and two sons and bought the temple land for cheap price. He could occupy about 20 acres of land.
In contrast to these in the sixties, many Chetty families sold their land to migrants at throw away prices as they did not have much exposure to land market. Moreover, they did not attach much value to dry land as they were mainly involved in wet land cultivation. Some of the Chettys were served self-brewed liquor by migrant cultivators who got their land for very low price. According to Chettys in the village, an elder uncle of a Chetty family in Thazekappil was a victim to this. He became addicted to liquor brewed by some of the migrant families in the village who initially served him liquor free of cost but once he became addicted, began to charge money. And gradually, he was reached a stage of having to sign documents in return for the liquor. Some of the family members now do not see anything wrong in the action of migrants, but they blame their uncle for having been unwise and ignorant. Similar experiences of losing land to people who offered drinks happened to some of the Paniyan families also in the village.

Knowledge about the market and exposure to the transactions had a major role in the initial occupation of the land in the village. Those who were well-informed about the availability of land and were strongly networked could easily access the land at cheap prices. Many of those who came later overcame their delay through many manipulative strategies in the market. Meanwhile, lack of market-based understanding of property relations and manipulative strategies made some of the Chetty and Paniyan families to dispossess their legally occupied land.

**Reciprocity, social networks and subsistence among the migrant families**

Except a few families, most of the migrants who came to the village at the end of the 50s and in the ‘60s were poor. They lacked resources unlike the ‘rich’ early migrant families to organize productive activities on land. Most of these poor migrants reached the area through the network of friends and relatives. The same networks helped them to survive in the initial days of migration. These networks within the village worked irrespective of the differences of caste and creed. The same networks helped them to organize labour for productive activities.

*Kootipani or mattal pani* (collective labour or exchange of labour) was born out of this context as a mechanism of labour reciprocity between networks. This helped to
ensure the required labour input at the crucial time of production activity. This mechanism became useful for all the productive as well as non-productive activities. All the families worked together to get rid of the initial difficulties. If a new house had to be built, groups of people in the locality and friends and relatives from other areas joined together. They collectively went to the forest to gather the required bamboo for making the wall. They pooled their work in constructing these mud polished bamboo houses. Food was prepared and served. No one expected any wage for their service. It was not money but labour power which helped them survive with loyal reciprocities.

Because of the lack of resources most of the settler cultivators did not start plantation of cash crops like coffee or pepper in the initial stage. They started cultivating food crops including grain, tubers and roots which secured their calorie requirements in the initial years. Tapioca was introduced in this area by the immigrant cultivators and which was widely cultivated on the garden land. Cultivation of paddy was limited as the possession of paddy fields were exclusively attached to the traditional paddy-cultivating communities. So they could compensate it with the cultivation of tapioca on the dry lands left uncultivated by the Chettys or encroached / purchased by the immigrants.

The first cash crop cultivated in the area was a type of grass (pullu) which was very common in some of the southern regions of Kerala such as Kothamangalam and Perumbavoor. They made aromatic oil out of this grass (pullenna) which was in good demand in the local market. Cultivation of this grass was wide-spread in the area. Brewing oil from this grass was a highly labour-intensive work for which also they used the reciprocal networks.

Another livelihood practice based on reciprocity was related to cattle rearing. There existed a practice of poor households adopting a calf from households having more calves, rearing them till they mature and return after its first delivery while retaining the newly bred ones. This was a wide-spread practice in the early period of settlement formation which however, declined gradually.
Thus, for the migrants in the early years of settlement in the village, old and new networks of relationships became most effective resources in a horizontal order, in contrast to the local patterns of vertical reciprocity among the native communities. A strong feeling as settlers worked explicitly above all other divisions like caste and communities among the migrants in their effort to overcome the struggles of relocating and establish a solid foundation for the new existence. Though collective actions were born out of the necessities of survival in a difficult and unfamiliar circumstance, memories of informants point to a spontaneity in those actions, indicating that it was no conscious strategizing, but was almost like a natural outcome.

**Shift to monetized regime and the emergence of a ‘pepper economy’**

Cultivation of food crops like tapioca and different kinds of tubers along with brewing of ‘grass oil’ made surplus income for many families given the market demand in the plain lands of Kerala. Those households which could make surplus from the cultivation of grass and tapioca subsequently turned to the other cash crops like coffee and pepper. This was mainly in the ’70s and by the end of the decade many families could develop good gardens especially of pepper.

State had extended full support to develop agriculture through its extension programmes and various schemes. Agricultural loans were disbursed in this period as part of the government policy for the development of agriculture. According to the local farmers, many of the loans sanctioned were for fertilizers. Government promoted the use of fertilizers to increase productivity. Agricultural stations distributed good quality pepper creepers for planting. Coffee Board, a central government organization to promote coffee cultivation in the country through extension services and marketing was very active in procuring coffee and imparting knowledge.

In most parts of the village, soil was so virgin and fertile that there was no need for artificial fertilizers. Cultivators mostly tried pepper as a mono crop which was very suitable for the soil and less labour-intensive, unlike coffee. The creeper also could give yield within five or six years. There was also coffee procurement monopoly of
the Coffee Board, besides people’s perception that they were being denied the price internationally determined. One of the reasons why people opted for pepper was the resentment they had with this state agency. Pepper had both domestic as well as international markets and they could easily access the trade networks of pepper through the local traders. This earned the village fame as the capital of pepper cultivation in the region in later years. Slowly a pepper-based economy was developed in the area. Cultivation of coffee was mostly intercropped with pepper. And, there were several plots with pepper mono-cropping.

Pepper was a crop which experienced fluctuations in its price. However, there were periodic booms in the pepper price. In the early 1980s, for instance, pepper got a good price in the market and many of the local farmers who could crop by this time benefited from the price. This is considered to have been the cause for pepper cultivation becoming so wide-spread across the region that it came to be referred to in Wayanad as the ‘Pulpalli Effect’. This boom helped the farmers to further invest and expand the cultivation of pepper. Those who had more assets and accessibility to different institutions could further make investments and expand the production till the late ’90s when a sharp decline was experienced in the production and price of pepper.

As for timber, there was no trade outside the government department in the initial stage. So, huge trees in the forest land in the village were reportedly burnt down by the people in order to clear the forest for cultivation. But later, once people started realising the demand for timber, they began to negotiate with the traders from neighbouring districts visiting the village regarding the value of trees on their plots. It was in the late ’70s that timber trade became rampant in the village. New roads were built in plenty to make the cultivators transport timber. Density of roads in the village was connected to the expansion of timber trade in this period. However, initially people did not get real value as they were in the receiving end of the negotiation with desperation for money.

Some of the settlers slowly started diversifying their livelihoods of cultivation and cattle rearing with petty trading. Some people opened tea shops too. Initial trade was
in the form of house-to-house selling of products. Some of them would go to the
distant town market and buy condiments and other materials in a bamboo container
and go around selling them as head-loads. After a period, some people opened shops
for such goods. People also started going to the nearby town which was developed
by that time with some shops and new building. The town shopping centre became
like a village centre with roads and transportation improving. Those who became
rich through pepper were the first people who invested in building and shops in the
town. Apart from the traditional wealthy people, and the early settlers who came
with money and bought land on a large scale, a new rich emerged: some settlers who
had been encroachers, but went into pepper cultivation and became rich due to the
boom in the price and productivity of pepper. Periodic repeat of boom in the pepper
price in the ’90s further strengthened their economic base and helped them further
diversify with the surplus from new investments.

Changes among the native communities
Though colonial government laid the infrastructural foundation to usher in new
forms of development through the introduction of a system of a new governance and
economy, it was the southern migration which brought in fundamental changes in the
livelihood practices of native communities like Chettys and Paniyans in the village.
A transition to cash crops among the native communities was also a result of the
changes. Shifting cultivation which fed the local adivasi for centuries came to an end
forever due to shrinkage following the occupation of dry land area by the settler
population. Millets like chama and ragi slowly disappeared from the diet of the
communities like Chetty and Paniyan. Although wetland cultivation of paddy
remained considerably prominent among all communities as subsistence as well as
commercial crop, focus was slowly shifted to dry land cash crop cultivation. This
shift had strong ecological dimension too which was also directly linked to the
subsistence practices of native communities, especially of adivasis. Even though the
area was an ecological recess from an etic point of view, it provided ample and
accessible resource for the material and emotional survival of the local communities.
Paradoxically, in their own perspective, it became an ecological cage for the *adivasis* after the influx and colonization of settlers.

**Disappearance of Vallippani and Emergence of a Labour Market**

Formation of a migrant settlement and the introduction of new production practices weakened the traditional labour arrangement like *Valli* system. Although it had been legally banned even in the colonial times, practically the system continued in the absence of any significant changes in the production relations at the local level. Greater influx of migrant cultivators decreased the availability of land and by the end of the ’70s Chetty monopoly in cultivation ceased to exist. Increased demand for free labour with regard to the intensification of cash crop cultivation and the political pressure against the valli system paved the way for a dynamic labour market.

However, *valli* system was not broken down naturally. There was a consistent pressure from the settler cultivators to release the possession of Paniyanlabour from the hold of Chetty cultivators. This social pressure resulted in a lot of manipulative strategies on the part of the migrant cultivators to get the control of cheap labour especially in the context of labour scarcity in the area.

Attempts to get the control of Paniyanlabour in the village drew a new field of power relations between chetty communities and settlers. There were no direct confrontations or explicit tensions between them. Although there was no organised effort on the part of settlers as a group to attract the Paniyanlabourers to them, the strategies adopted by settlers had a homogenous character.

Such uniformity in the strategies adopted by the settlers in absorbing the Paniyan labour into the production activities was not confined to this village alone, but common to the whole region of Paniyan habitation across Wayanad and the adjacent areas of neighbouring districts. A famous Malayalam novel ‘*vishakanyaka*’ written by a nationally acclaimed writer, S.K.Pottakad, on migration experiences based on field work in the same period in the northern border areas of Wayanad region depicts nicely the strategies which are reported to have been practiced in our study village also. A part of the novel depicts how one Paniyan along with his friends get lured into breaking a traditional relationship with a landlord to accept work offered
by a settler at alluring wages which was far higher than the prevailing wage. The settler, however, is reducing the wages after a couple of weeks, as the story goes. These were not merely figments of imagination; such stories are recalled by my informants.

Paniyans were extremely scared of the new people who were colonizing their surroundings. They never closely interacted with the settlers. According to elder Chetty informants, in the beginning, Paniyans used to hide if they accidentally encountered any settler. Settlers also corroborate such accounts of Paniyan fear and intimidation. They say that Paniyans were frightened by the stories about settlers that they were eaters of cows and even human beings. They could see it in the case of cows, which no Paniyan could ever imagine as food. As settlers were seen going to Chettys to take away their ailing or old cows for meat, this rumour was confirmed.

The distance from the settlers in some ways, brought Paniyans closer to their Chetty families. Perhaps it was this distance and revulsion of the Paniyans rather than their attachment to the Chetty landlords that the migrants had sought to overcome by strategizing even unethically.

Apart from introducing wage for work which was a new practice in the village, many settlers indulged in brewing liquor from locally available products. Many among them produced, distributed and consumed liquor lavishly. Luring the Paniyans to liquor became finally the fatal strategy for settler to break them away from their bond with Chetty community in the village and elsewhere in the region. Many Paniyan labourers were trapped in this strategy. A new addiction to alcohol which came to be more or less linked to Paniyan identity, was introduced among the Paniyans by settler communities through this practice of labour extraction.

There was also a strong political dimension to the disintegration of vallippani. Communist parties and activists in the village and region depicted it as system of feudal relations of slavery and bondedness. They threatened the Chetty families for following this kind of relations with Paniyans and asked them to give wage for their work. In some other parts of the Wayanad region, where Paniyans worked under mainstream Nair, Muslim and Jain landlords, where the system was more
exploitative according to accounts of Paniyan elders in those settlements, the opposition turned very aggressive. Story of Belli, 80 years, a Paniyan worker and mooppan from Panamaram region is a case in point. He got the title for his land from a Muslim landlord in the area after a series of confrontations including physical one between him and the son of the landlord and only after his case was decreed in his favour in the court of law with the support of Communist Party. In areas like Panamaram, Thirunelli, and Thrisilleri, Paniyans became activists of Communist Parties and groups. Such changes in other parts of Wayanad had made impacts in our village also.

The old system however, did not disappear overnight. Most of the Paniyan families retained their age-old relationship with Chetty families. Although Chettys stopped the practice of giving paddy as wage, many families in the village did not start giving their Paniyan labourers wages in cash immediately. Instead, they gave money to the shops from where Paniyan could buy certain amount of household items. Sometimes, they got goods on credit also; shop owners would give a receipt in a small piece of paper and Chetty family head would pay the amount. But this kind of practice, known as cheettezhuthu lasted only for a short while, as transition to a cash economy could not be postponed for much longer.

In the course of time Paniyan labourer was absorbed in the local market. Now they had more options. Some families did not go for outside work as they had enough work with their Chetty families. Some others diversified labour. Some, mostly older Paniyan couples who had been with Chettys since their childhoods, would go to Chetty families and others, mostly, youngsters started going to work with Christian and Ezhava families. By the beginning of the ’80s, some Paniyan families in the village started to attach themselves to certain settler, especially belonging to Christian, families. They were people who had started working for Chetty families in their childhoods including boys helping their fathers in cattle rearing and girls helping mothers in domestic work. Similar pattern of giving family labour was transferred to the settler families. In other cases, Paniyan children had taken their own decision to work for settlers even when parents continued to work for Chettys
This created a new division among Paniyan labourers: a category of workers who started working for the settler communities in their early childhood days and attached themselves to those families for many years have come to be known as *sthiram panikkar* (permanent workers). They earned more status than the other Paniyans (workers). The term *sthiram panikkaran* in due course came to carry with it greater prestige as well as greater exposure to material goods.

The case of Pathiyan, a 43 year old Paniya, who became a *sthiram panikkar* for a Chirstan settler family and left the village when he was 17 years old, although the rest of his family remained with their old Chetty family in the old neighbourhood is very illustrative. He was one of the first permanent workers from the area who went outside the village to work for a settler farmer. *Mothalali (the person who owns property)* was the term they used for those new settler masters, instead of *pappan* (kin term) with which they used to address their Chetty landlords. Once, when Pathiyan was idly standing around in town, *mothalali* approached him and asked whether he was interested to work for him and he went along on the spur of the moment. He did not ask permission from any one before taking that decision or think twice. It was a momentary decision. He worked for that owner for around 25 years. Most important effect of this kind of attached labour in this period was the introduction of wage in cash into their livelihood system.

Some of the old Paniyans remember the wage they got as cash: Rs.2 for women and Rs.3 for men in the place of one *ser* paddy for women and two *ser* paddy for men in the old system. In the old system measurement of paddy as daily wage was fixed to cover their subsistence. They also got additional quantities of paddy twice a year and also had the freedom to access other resources. Wage in cash, on the other hand, increased every year depending on the season and demand for labour. A competition among the settler households for securing required labour in the season was the mechanism for wage hike. In good seasons when price for the crops are on the increase or anticipated to rise, and production is better, demand for labour increased.
Other cultural and ecological dimensions of changes

In this process *adivasis* like Paniyan lost their own world without gaining a new one. Dispossession of the original resources, forest, grazing lands, streams, wet lands etc became critical in defining their livelihood trajectories and even deciding the nature of negotiations with the modern development space in later years. Although disintegration of *valli system* might have been an apparent case for a shift in the livelihood base, as a direct impact of changes, other cultural and ecological dimensions of changes in the livelihood practices of local communities cannot be seen in isolation. All these factors were mostly interconnected and interdependent.

As far as the Paniyans were concerned, disintegration of *valli system* also meant the disintegration of their social organization. During the period of *valli system* a social order was established through the control of elders. *Mooppanmar* (headmen) within the families and communities were important not only for organizing the production activities under the guidance of Chetty elders, but also for arranging the rituals and ceremonies in the community. Some of the *mooppanmar* were considered as the intermediaries between the community members and gods and spirits. Community members had feared spirits and gods a great deal. They annually performed special rituals under the blessings of *mooppanmar* in the households, ritual grounds and graveyards possessed by community as a whole. According to the aged Paniyan and Chetty members in the village there was a strong sense of discipline that existed in that period. There was no habit of drinking alcohol. Everybody obeyed *mooppanmar* in the respective families or village. Elders were respected. This sense of discipline and obedience was mainly drawn from their fear of the supernatural. Break up of the *valli system* and the penetration of market relations in the production activities broke the social organization of Paniyans too. Elders lost their superior role in taking decisions within family and community as young people started going for work for cash outside. Settlers normally encouraged the youngsters to question the authority of elders including *mooppanmar*. They were made ‘aware’ of the regressive role played by the elders in the community by guarding the old beliefs and superstitions. They were taught about the kind of slavery their fathers and forefathers had
undergone. Ultimately new generations among the Paniyans started looking down upon their own community and elders.

Ecological degradation followed by the changes had an adverse effect on *adivasi* life in the area with the destruction of common property resource which existed as a life supporting system hitherto for the indigenous people. Drastic changes in land utilisation practices and large scale clearing of forest resources has done irreparable damage to the local ecology. Widespread cultivation of crops like tapioca resulted in soil erosion. Encroachment of forest and deforestation also has made long-term changes in the local environment that the situation compelled the Chetty landowners to stop the practice of large-scale cattle rearing. According to some of the Chetty informants, some of the migrants would capture the cattle if they were found ‘trespassing’ the boundaries. Even theft cases involving settlers stealing cows were reported in those days, according to them.

There has been large-scale conversion of paddy land mainly due to the intensification of commercial cropping. Permanent conversion however, has been due to the cultivation, mainly of areca nut and coconuts. Once land got permanently converted, people also started intercropping with the cultivation of pepper and coffee.

One major impact of the changes in land utilization has been the drying up of paddy fields which has had a chain effect. When a plot is converted, it causes shortage of water, compelling the neighbour to follow suit. Many people in the area observe that the lowering of water level in ponds and wells is a consequence of land conversion.

Paddy conversion also resulted in the levelling up of the traditional water pits, locally known as ‘ooli’ used as water sources for domestic purposes by the traditional communities of the area, which were plenty in earlier days. Marshy paddy fields, once found commonly all around Wayanad, have almost disappeared from the area. These were also the traditional water pools that absorbed the streams from the forest valleys. Factors like changes in agricultural practices and climatic condition have contributed mutually in the drying up of ponds. Many such fields had been dried up artificially even in the initial phase of migration, by filling them up with the
leaves of teak tree as part of their attempt to domesticate the environment which they found alien and risky for agricultural work.

Native communities in the village largely abstained from these practices although in later years these became standard practices in the region. Still there are households belonging to the native communities, Chetty and Kuruman, though a few, who do not use fertilizers in their fields. Many of them still continue paddy cultivation on a wide scale though it does not yield much profit to them. Many Chetty households are not ready to convert the wet land simply on the ground of sentiments, not going by the economic rationale of the settler communities.

*Alienation of tribal land*

The inflow of the great number of in-migrants and their effort to grab land by any means for expanding the cultivation of cash crops was detrimental to the *adivasi*. Mostly, later migrants who were poor and did not get a chance to encroach upon revenue land in the village were the people who alienated the *adivasi* and Chetty lands through different means. As we have seen, home-made liquor was an important means to seduce the *adivasis* or Chettys to drop their soil for throwaway prices and sometimes free of cash. Paniyans in the village did not have the concept of individual property and commercialised cultivation was more or less unknown. They had also not attached much value in that period for occupying land individually.

All the *adivasi* families in the village got land after the land reforms by considering them as the tenants of Chetty landowners. Most of the Chettys removed their Paniyan families from the prime sites to corners of their plots as they feared losing their land. Heads of the each Paniyan settlement, in their capacity as the eldest members in the corresponding joint families in the settlements, got some plots around their huts after the reforms. Many of the settlements in the Chetty neighborhoods could maintain one to two acres of land. But it became fragmented in later years by distributing it among their joint family members to construct houses under government schemes. There are two cases in the village where 10-15 cents of additional land got alienated by the encroachment of poor settlers in the later years.
But there is an exceptional case of a Paniyan in the Karyampathi kunnu neighbourhood who maintained a relatively larger portion of land. He had occupied some portion of revenue land in addition to the land he got from Chetty families. His two sons inherited this property which came to around five acres of land.

There are a couple of large holders who are accused of inheriting a portion of adivasi land in the village Panchayt of Pulppalli. There is one case of a rich settler who encroached around one acre of land that was possessed by a Paniyan family years back. It is a land attached to one Paniyan settlement which has now become a congested ‘colony’ of Paniyas. Although this case of encroachment is widely known, the land ownership has already been legalized. A Paniyanmember in this settlement, whose father had the possession of the land, is now showing his anger by verbally abusing the family members of the settler family every night under the influence of alcohol. It has become a matter of joke for the people in that neigbourhood. Most of the other occupants of adivasi land in the village are now small farmers. The encroachments have been already legalized by successive governments. There are a couple of later migrants who in recent decades encroached on a few cents of the adivasi land but are under the fear of legal action. There are two such cases in the village.

Though encroachment in the initial decades had got legal validity, largely it was at the expense of the adivasis all over Wayanad. According to official accounts, which are available for the whole region, redistribution of land to the settlers alienated a vast area of land from the tribal possession. While 39.52 percent of the area transferred was in the form of cash sales to settlers, 28.23 percent was alienated through mortgages to the settlers. The settlers grabbed the 20.97 percent of the tribal lands through illegal encroachment. Of the total area alienated 2.42 was lost through share cropping, whereas 3.22 % was lost due to cash sales to persons other than settlers and tribals. Cash sales to tribals accounted for 1.61 % of the area (Mohandas 1986). According to Land Use Board data as on 30.11.96, in Wayanad, out of the total 3344 acres of land distributed, ST population got 1538 acres.
Marginalization of *adivasis* in the village was complete with the alienation of land and loss of common resources with which they had open access. Even the changes in the physical environment resulted in the distinct patterns of habitat. They were pushed to the corners and rehabilitated in exclusive settlements called ‘colonies’ in cheap quality houses constructed under government schemes. This shift from *paadis* (Paniyanterm for their traditional settlements) to rehabilitated tribal *colonies* (cluster of houses constructed under government schemes) has become instrumental in eroding the collective dignity of the Paniyas.

**Alienation from forest: loss of traditions**

One of the most important impacts of migration into the area was loss of traditional rights of *adivasis* on forest. This was besides degradation of forest due to the increased population pressure. Although the colonial government had legally brought in restrictions on forest use, *adivasis* could still manage to use it informally. Their forest practices had never made any changes in the physical structure of the forest. Unlike *adivasis* most of the migrants had no exposure to life associated with forest. Generally those people from plains were not sensitive to forest. Besides, massive clearing of forest on their encroached land was necessary to establish a successful cash crop cultivation system. The people who resided near forest areas who had started intensive commercial cropping began depending on forest for many farm and off farm requirements.

Besides, many among the settlers directly involved in illicit activities like felling of valuable trees, poaching of elephants and other animals, theft of sandalwoods to smuggle out, etc. In the post independence period, the Forest Department became the custodian of forest. It did not make any differentiation between the use of forest by *adivasis* and others. But in many cases in our village, department officials safeguarded the illegal activities of many settlers. There were cases of at least three persons in the village who became rich through illegal activities supported by forest officials according to the narratives of local people, which have become part of the local folklore. But *adivasis* were treated badly in the forest and often charged for theft by officials to cover up their illegal activities according to most of the *adivasi*
informants who are also traditional forest users. The state department is said to be corrupt and safeguarding the interests of a small section of settlers who abused the forest resources and became a hindrance to the genuine livelihood requirements of adivasis.

**Alcoholism**

As we have noted earlier widespread use of alcohol was a contribution of settler communities. Consumption of liquor was not new to the local population. Native communities were not fully unaware of making toddy. Some of the Chetty families in the village were known to make toddy from the palm, which was shared among the Paniyars too, but very limited in quantity as well as variety, once or twice a year during festive days. In the later periods, elder persons in the prominent Chetty families had the rare habit of buying bottled liquor from the local towns where shops were opened during the British period. Being expensive, younger members and labourers could rarely afford to have a taste of it.

But the situation changed when the settlers introduced the technology of brewing local arrack. We could see the political economy of spreading the culture of alcoholism among the native communities, especially among the Paniyas. Settlers made and used self-brewed arrack for many purposes: to resist the unfriendly climate, to earn money, to get free labour, and to occupy land by deception. Once they were able to make the labourers addicted, alcohol replaced the wage for labour. It was reported that many farmers in the area served it to the Paniyan labourers before the work season so as to extract the labour completely and make them dependent. Interestingly if tobacco was the symbol of attachment between Chetts, who cultivated it in their fields and made ritual transfer of a certain quantity of tobacco in each year when they get new Paniyan labourers or renew the bondage with old labourers according to the vally system, and Paniyas, alcohol became a new symbol of bond between settler communities, especially Christians, and Paniyas.
Genesis of development

This section looks into the processes through which the settler communities constructed the infrastructure of development on the basis of collective action and how this developmental infrastructure got transformed into individual resources. Infrastructure of development means the state measures and public organizations including land redistribution, increasing road connectivity, educational and health organizations, co-operatives, collective and political actions etc. In the case of our study village formation of resources for individuals and households were the outcome of their negotiation of this infrastructure. Thus, ability of the individuals to access and negotiate this infrastructure became a critical component in the process of negotiation of development over the years. Creation of different resources helped the people to further diversify their livelihood practices. However, there is a marked difference between the settler communities and *adivasis* in the village in acquiring major resources, land and education, mainly due to their disability in accessing the development infrastructure.

In the process, Christians and Hindu Ezhavas became dominant communities in the village. Dominance of these communities is understood in terms of their numbers and the extent of their social influence, derived from the possession of major resources, land and education. Although local history of their social living in the village does not go beyond the second half of the last century, they maintain overall supremacy in every walk of life.

Roads

Migration had marked the beginning of development in its modern guise in Wayanad as well as in our study village also. Stories of development successes were narrated often on par with the localised experiences of clearing the forest, creating a popular saying: “kaadu nadaya katha”, which means the story of how forest (kaadu) became
mainland (naadu). Protagonists of development became migrant communities in creating its infrastructure.

All the common roads in the village were constructed after the influx of settlers. Primarily, there were all forest paths. Also, Forest Department had built some roads for their exclusive use. When migrants reached the village, they initially built main road which connected their village and main town centers in the region through sramadanam (collective action giving free labour) under the leadership of local church and the involvement of people from all the neighborhoods.

Some of the villagers who participated in the work still remember the way all contributed to the work. Hundreds of people including women, children and the old, from all parts of the village as agreed upon assembled at a geographical point early in the mornings and proceeded to the site under the direction of local priests, in queue, carrying work implements like shovel and spade. Local leaders of political parties also actively took part in the action. They prepared food for all, for which people contributed their share, normally, tapioca. Plenty of pocket roads were built in the following years in every neighbourhood through sramadanam, mainly out of the requirement of the new economy that needed roads for transportation of timber and other commodities.

But the differential nature of proximity and access between settlers and adivasis to those new roads in each neighbourhood was evident. Communities concentrated on both sides of the roads were mainly settlers. adivasis and other traditional land owning communities largely remained in their old settlements. Most of the early roads in the village were constructed by the settlers. In later years many roads were built to the tribal settlements under different government schemes which were utilised more by the settler population as their interactions to outside world were more.

In our study locality the sides of the main road are presently occupied mostly by the well to do households belonging to settler communities. Usually these pieces of land are more expensive than other land in the interior village. Most of the occupants are relatively early settlers who could occupy such land and some of the other
households in the same route are of salaried groups who bought the plots by paying cash in a later stage. Those Chetty and *adivasi* neighbourhoods within the forest have poor connections to these main roads.

**Land**

Migrant population reached here to occupy land for cultivating cash crops. They mobilised themselves to get rights over the land from government. Hence land became a solid resource base for most of the settler families in the village. Along with the new practices of cash crop cultivation the focus was shifted from wet lands to dry lands. Possession of dry lands became more valuable than wet lands in the later years. It was the absence of any notion of possessing own land or doing cultivation of cash crops that stopped the *adivasis* from grabbing land in the initial period when land was available in abundance. In later years they lost whatever they had under the pressure of settlers who were aggressive and left no stone unturned to occupy the maximum area of dry land in the village. This created extreme disparities in the distribution of land among various communities, especially between settlers and *adivasis* (*Table 3.8*).

Around 63% of Paniyan in the village have virtually no land. They all possess houses constructed under government scheme. The land on which they constructed their houses does not belong to them. They got only the right for constructing house in the settlement where one or two acres of total land was rested upon an elder member. Five percent of the Paniyan families occupy land to the extent of 50 cents to one acre. This is mainly inherited land. Around 60% of Christian families hold more than one acre of land. But percentage of Ezhavas in the same category is 24%. Interestingly there is no Chetty household in the village without land below 20 cents. Nevertheless, it is justified given their tradition of wet land cultivation.
Table 3.8. Distribution of land across the communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land holding (in cents)</th>
<th>Paniyan</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Ezhava</th>
<th>Chetty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land less</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 10</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 50</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 100</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 – 200</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 – 300</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 – 500</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 &amp; Above</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nair and Vinod (2007)

Most of the families with smaller sizes of land possession—almost 8% of Ezhavas are also landless—are mainly later migrants who joined the ranks of the labour class in the village. There are also later migrants belonging to Ezhava community who came in search of work, and not land. However, land redistribution as an important process
and infrastructure of development made land into an effective resource for the communities except in the case of adivasis like Paniyan.

**Education**

Modern education had two streams of origin within the village. First stream represented charitable attempts by certain individuals and families. Even before the arrival of settlers there was a missionary-run elementary school near a cluster of settlements of native communities, 5-6 kilometers away from the study village. Another elementary school was started by a group of young educated nationalists under the leadership of local Nair elite under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi. It was a conscious attempt to provide education to tribal children in the area. There was only one teacher and around 12 students in this school, which was run in a thatched shed in the centre of the village, which later became a small town.

The second stream of education started with the migration. Settlers and their leaders took an active interest in bringing new educational establishments at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Initially they supported the school started by the Nair family in the village centre. Although it was started for educating tribal children, after the arrival of migrants it opened up to include children from settler communities also and became a school catering for all. People took active interest in promoting the school. Till a permanent school building was built, people, mainly settlers, put their collective effort in thatching the school building and giving other free services to the school. In later years through the active involvement of settler leaders the school got upgraded with secondary and higher secondary levels. In the meantime, another school was started by a settler in a plot gifted by another settler, which was later handed over to the local church.

Today there are a number of educational establishments from lower level to college levels, which came into existence under pressure and demands from the people. Community organizations like Christian church and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), a community organization of the Ezhavas that spearheaded a major social reform movement in Kerala, also manage a number of educational institutions in the area.
In the village, all the early large land-holder settlers had sent their children to school. There was no difference between Christians and Ezhavas among the settlers in this. Among the Christians, church played an important role in imparting the value of education. Immigrants from southern Kerala appear to have given utmost importance to education. This was mainly due to the relatively earlier exposure to the modernisation process in the erstwhile Travancore province from where the major migrant community of the Syrian Christians have come. Missionary activities have also influenced their attitude towards education as explained by the Christians families in the village. Even the first generation settlers belonging to Christians had ensured basic education to all their members.

The Ezhavas, another dominant community in the village, it was influenced by fellow Christians in imparting education to the young. SNDP played a role in conscientising the Ezhavas into giving education to children. Narayanan, an early migrant, had migrated with only three years of formal education, but he educated his two sons who became graduates, one taking up a job while the other decided not to look for jobs, but to join his father in agriculture. Narayanan was an active worker of the Communist Party of India who later he became active in the SNDP and became its office bearer in the village. His father, an illiterate, was also active in the SNDP in the pre-migration period. Naryanan recalls that his father got the idea of sending him to school due to his exposure to SNDP although he himself could not continue his formal schooling beyond the primary classes. Narayanan also used to attend the meetings of SNDP in his childhood days along with his father where much knowledge about the modern world was imparted. It was this knowledge that guided him in life, as Narayanan remembers.

Education had caught the imagination of the settler population even in the period of settlement formation in the village which helped them later in diversifying their livelihoods and in acquiring further socio-economic mobility. Accordingly, the number of people with jobs in non-agricultural sector and salaried employment increased among the Christians in the village. Modern education was one of the major determining forces in the ‘habitus’ of the settler communities.
The situation was very different among communities like Paniyan. Concept of modern education was nowhere in their worldview. Children continued to work in the fields or roamed around the forest along with their parents even long after the arrival of settlers in the village. Those Paniyans who worked as Sthirampanikkar in the settler households, especially of the Christians, were the first generation Paniyans who took active interests in sending their children to school. This too happened only in the late 1980s. Influence of settler families was critical in spreading awareness about education among Paniyas. Although the state facilitated education for adivasis through the Tribal Welfare Department by distributing financial assistance as scholarships for uplifting Paniyan children, it has not had much impact.

Today new generation of parents are well aware of the importance of education in helping them diversify their livelihoods. However, even now most of the Paniyan students in the village do not go beyond the 5th standard in school. A majority of them are illiterate, mainly due to their living conditions which do not allow them to pursue education with one-track mind. Irregularity in attendance and drop-out are commonly found problems of Paniyan children in the village.

There are a number of reasons for the Paniyan children’s irregularity in school. Many Paniyan children seasonally alternate their residence between mother’s and father’s natal households depending on the seasonal availability or non-availability of work for their parents in the respective neighborhoods. As traditionally they used to have bi-local residence, networks of brothers-in-law and their families play an important role in exploring and accessing work opportunities. This mobility and frequent shifts residence hinder many children’s regular school attendance.

Dropout is also a serious problem among the Paniyan children. Many among them lose interest in school due to various reasons, like the alien environment in the school which does not offer any immediate incentives and the temptation to go for work as it will bring money. Rajesh and Manoj, who are both 11 years old and staying in the same settlement, dropped out of school when they were in the fourth standard as they were beaten up by a teacher one day for some fault. They threw a
stone at her and ran away from the classroom, never to return to school. There was demand for their labour in the village to pluck areca nuts, collect pepper etc. When they are without work in the village, they sneak into the forest and roam around there, catching small birds. Their families are not keen to send them back to school as they earn money and take care of themselves. Both Rajesh and Manoj are outside parental authority as one is from a broken family with a deserted father and another with an alcoholic father and mothers in both cases are unable to exert any authority or influence on their children’s actions.

These are not exceptional cases in the village, but part of the general pattern. Development infrastructure in the village has not helped communities like Paniyanto use education as a useful resource helping them to increase their livelihood options. Meanwhile, settler communities with their early understanding of the importance of education in social mobility fully participated in developing and making use of the developmental infrastructure of education and became successful to an extent in turning education into an effective resource in order to diversify their livelihood practices and also trying for further socio-economic mobility.

**State, Collective Action and Party Politics**

Post independence state was not very friendly with the settler population in the village. State became more hostile towards the migrants when they started encroaching the forest land of Temple. Migrants, especially who came in the 1960s were poor, but outside the village, there was an impression of them being illegal and exploiting encroachers. Though majority of the Christian immigrants were supporters of the Congress Party in their places of origin, the party did not do anything to protect the interests of the migrants who encroached upon the temple land in the village, given the dominance of upper caste Hindu leadership in the region. Congress leader, M. Kelappan, who was known as Kerala Gandhi and a leader of freedom movement in Kerala referred to them as ‘a section of people from
southern Travancore with intrusive religious ideals who came to encroach the land of Hindu Temple'\textsuperscript{15} reflecting the sentiments of the Congress Party at that time.

Locally, all political parties supported the cause of migrants and they had even formed an organization at the local level to fight the state, but aversion on the part of the state leaderships drove these poor migrants into the fold of left extremists. This finally culminated in an attack on the police camp in Pulppalli and the assassination of a police man which gave an extremist label to the people of this village.

But once the encroachment got authorized by the state with distribution of title to the encroached lands, a new political process was set in motion at the local level. All the violent agitations and aggressive politics faded out in course of time. Local leaders from settler communities, especially from among Chirsitians, became influential in the state level politics as they emerged as a strong vote bank. Most of the leaders naturally, were with the Congress Party; it seemed a natural choice, with their Christian background. Slowly, this settler leadership replaced the upper caste Nair leadership and the dominance of the Chetty communities that existed in Wayanad and these new leaders began championing for the creation of an overall developmental infrastructure in the village.

This new political process took place alongside the introduction of a new state-initiated infrastructural development. There was a break as well as continuance in the process. New power relations emerged at the local level with the burgeoning of democratic institutions with new structures of governance, created by colonial modernity and later strengthened by the post-independent state, in which migrant population played a crucial role, both numerically and economically.

Even in the first election held for the local Panchayat in 1962, no Chetty or adivasi member got elected. Although the election was not contested on party basis, except for one member from the Jain community, all those who had been elected to the executive body of the Panchayat were from settler communities. Although the lone Jain community member became the President, he could not continue for long in the

\textsuperscript{15} Vadana Joseph, an early settler quote a newspaper report published by Mathrubhumi newspaper in 50s while recollecting the history of the settlement formation in Vijaya Higher Secondary school Silver Jubilee Souvenir , 1990.
chair. He resigned from the post citing the reasons on personal ground. After six months, a settler community member replaced him as the President of the Panchayat. The Panchayat ward, including our study area, was represented by a local Congress leader, member of an early migrant family in the village belonging to Christian community, having wider acceptance among the people.

In the 1970s, these settler leaders played a significant role in bringing in state institutions into the area in accordance with the interests of the then native leaders within the Congress Party. It created a new infrastructure of development, linked to the development of agriculture and tribal populations, local governance, credit supply, education and health. In this development of the development infrastructure, power was getting concentrated more and more in the bureaucratic structures.

The narrative of the establishment of the local public health centre provides a classic example of collective action co-ordinated by the local settler leaders. According to K.U.Mathai, one among those settler leaders who gave leadership for the collective action, there was an outbreak of diarrhea in the village in the early ’70s which killed many children and made people frantic and helpless. The two medical practitioners in the village could not bring the situation under control. The local leaders from the settler communities took initiative and organized a public meeting which collectively decided on sending a group of leaders to Kozhikode, around 50 kilometers away from the then district headquarters to meet the District Medical Officer (DMO). The group also visited important daily newspapers in the town to inform about the epidemic in the village. By the time they reached government guest house to meet the DMO, it was already night and the doctor refused to meet them, fearful of the rumoured Naxalite connection of the village. The group blockaded him and finally, the police were called in. After negotiations with the police and the DMO, they managed to get a team of health officials including the DMO to leave for the village the same night. With police escort, they arrived in the village by early morning and set up an emergency medical camp in the local school. It was this incident of co-ordinated local action under settler leadership that became instrumental in the establishment of a medical centre in the village.
Agricultural office in the area was locally known as “Elam (cardamom) Office”. Elam Office provided scientific knowledge and other services to local farmers. Regulated commodity market was also a feature of the period. Local merchants had a major say in the transactions in this market and in the case of crops like coffee, the government played a major role with its monopoly in the market. Coffee Board, a state institution, which developed elaborate and widespread bureaucratic structures became the sole agency for the procurement and sale of coffee in the area. It restricted the local farmers from free movement of the product with mechanisms like quality checks and delayed payments of prices.

What is significant about this period is the nexus that was created among the important families, mainly of early migrants, who had begun to amass wealth by this time, and the political leaders, especially of the Congress Party which was dominant in the village, and the bureaucrats. It was through these new ‘elite’ networks that programs were implemented and benefits distributed, especially those related to agricultural extension. The bulk of the other settlers who were the aspiring poor supported and tried to get benefits from this nexus through their favour. Most of them were scared of government officials and bureaucratic procedures due to ignorance and lack of exposure. Naturally, they became dependent on this local elites with new found money and power for recommendations for beneficiary schemes, introductions for bank loans, information about how to get access to various departments and officials, and other such newly formed necessities.

Among the native communities, only the adivasi Kuruma, got some access to these networks. This limited access to the Kuruma is linked to the policy of reservation in electoral bodies and government employment ensured to scheduled tribes in the Constitution of the country. A section of Kuruma, who were traditionally a landholding community and upper strata among the adivasis, naturally became beneficiaries of this policy. A Kuruma leader emerged from the village in the Congress Party during this period when a local Kuruma teacher was identified by some Congress leaders to contest under their banner to the State Legislative Assembly as the ward was a tribal reservation constituency and none other than a tribal could contest in the election from that constituency. This Kuruma teacher thus
became the local MLA affiliated to the Congress Party and through him, a major section of Kuruma community became supporters of the Congress Party.

Although there were local leaders in the village in the Congress Party from Chetty community also, especially in the pre-independence period, with migrants becoming more powerful within the Party in the village, their role in local politics became considerably diminished though most of them continued to be the workers and sympathizers of the Congress Party. In the new context, they tried to use their old upper caste connections within the Congress Party outside the village and even region, and in various government departments. However, beyond a level they could not succeed in this due to the lack of exposure and networking within the political parties.

**Paniyanand Adivasi Development**

Though Paniyan was completely outside the political processes that took shape in this period, there were new state institutions exclusively made for the welfare of tribal populations that had a space for them. For instance, the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) was implemented in the 1970s with the objective of overall development of tribal populations. As per the ITDP, its offices functioned at the district/block level and village levels, under the overall authority of the state department. Tribal sub-plan was specially constituted and the amount was disbursed through the department intended for the creation of developmental infrastructure for tribal population.

A tribal extension office came into existence during the period in the village. A tribal co-operative society was also established for the procurement of forest produces collected by the tribal people and intended for the welfare of tribal populations. Tribal extension officers were mainly from other areas, even from outside the Wayanad region. Co-operative society was however, under the control of Kurumas. The local MLA from Kuruman community was instrumental in carrying out many projects in the area. The establishment of the tribal co-operative society was his contribution to this area. But there was no single person from the other tribal communities like Paniyan or Kattunayakan...
in the governing body of this Society. Most of the elected body of directors belonged to the MLA’s family or his community. Its first President was his brother who continued in that capacity for a very long time. Kuruma community hence emerged as a creamy section among *adivasis* in the area under the patronage of this particular MLA and the Congress Party. Whenever any reservation posts in the elected bodies had to be filled, someone from this community became the natural choice. Tribal Extension Office also functioned in close contact with the new class of leaders from this community. This exposure helped them grab most of the employment opportunities in the government sector.

There was a clear disjuncture between Paniyans and the processes of creation of development infrastructure in the early period in the absence of any influential leaders from this community and their lack of education. Collapse of their social organization had already discredited their traditional, community leadership. Absence of resources like land, education and political networks which were found to be critical in transforming the developmental infrastructure into individual resources, made the community extremely vulnerable in these changes in the village and the Wayanad region as a whole. Failure of the state and the community’s agency to organize collective action, which were the strengths of the settlers which had legitimized their new life worlds, and the settlers’ means to extract Paniyan labour into the extremely competent new production processes hindered the Paniyan from breaking into the closed and monotonous cycle of livelihood practices that opened up in the period of centralized development.

**Changes in the ‘90s and creation of a development space**

The 1990s witnessed extreme turbulences in the livelihoods of people belonging to all the communities in the village. The extremes were between the buoyancy followed by a price boom extended to almost an entire decade on the one hand and a fall in the prices of almost all the products at end of the decade on the other. Price for pepper and coffee shot up in an unprecedented way in the decade but plummeted at the end of the decade. Adding to the burden, the agricultural sector saw a drastic
decrease in productivity due to the increased use of chemicals, mainly an offshoot of the price boom, and a severe shortage in rainfall. Another significant factor of this period was the decentralisation program which deployed more money and power at the local level of governance which unleashed a new dynamics in the local politics.

For the local communities, the changes in this decade made visible the new political economy of increasing conflicts and competition. Money became the logic of individual actions and hence creating a monetary base for most of the livelihood practices was the crux of the new social mobility. Inter-household competition within the neighbourhoods for augmenting their resource base breached all limits of reciprocal understanding and collective action among households and families hitherto maintained in the village. But the crisis at the end of the decade urged them to reinvent the abandoned tradition of collective action based on a sense of reciprocity, but now with a monetary basis.

Formation of a development space was a culmination of the continuous processes of creation of developmental infrastructure and augmentation of individual resources. This creation of development space was interpenetrated with the above-described changes which have helped individuals and communities in varying degrees to enhance their capabilities to negotiate with the state structures at the local level which were formally becoming more people oriented. It means that by the end of the 1990s with the implementation of state decentralisation and the increased dynamics of market in the local life through the boom and fall in the cash crop prices and corresponding changes in commodity and labour markets an inclusive and participatory space has been created on the one hand and certain level of capability
has been formed for the local people to make individual choices based on self interests. Generally this public space of social interaction among the communities has been evolved over the years through these processes through the setting up and functioning of a series of organisations under both state and private ownership.

The 1990s have witnessed a proliferation in the local organisations with state decentralisation and participatory development. The functioning of these large number of public organisations under state and non–state actors enabled an increasing social space of horizontal interactions among individuals which in turn, also contributed to the creation of the development space in the village. Although functionally located at the levels of village and village Panchayath, most of them are embedded structurally at the regional, national, and global locations as well and the functioning dynamics of these organisations at these higher levels.

A number of community/public centres and organisations (Tables 3.9&3.10) exist within a two kilometre circumference of the village which have been found playing important role in the livelihoods of local communities. They are also treated here as part of the physical structure of the village. Developmental activities linked to the livelihood practices of people are mediated and carried out by these wide array of varied organisations which are controlled by governmental, non-governmental and sometimes private agencies. Listing of these centres and organisations will be helpful to understand the density of the developmental organisations with which communities in the village are exposed to interact in their day to day living.

There are certain centres within the village directly under the control of government department and local Panchayath like lower primary school, one common play school and another one exclusively for tribal children, a health centre with the service of a full-time nursing assistant and a literacy centre where school drop outs
and old people can continue their education informally and appear for secondary exam.

Some other centres for projects like check dam and drinking water supply are state-initiated but run by local people. There is a Public Distribution Shop owned by a private individual but running under government supervision and subsidy. Milk society is one of the most important organisations in the area with its head office very close to our study village. Run by an elected body, it collects milk from local people through five collection centres in the village and market them through local milkmen.

All the major political parties, like the Congress, Communist Party of India (M), Communist Party of India (CPI) and BJP have units and active workers in the village. There are trade unions and farmers organisation associated with each of these political parties. Each of these parties show their strength and influence in the respective neighbourhoods by putting up their party flags very high and decorating the area surrounding the posts. In two of the four junctions adjacent to the different neighbourhoods in the village these party flags fly high.

There are two farmers’ organisations which were formed in the wake of agrarian crisis in the region: Farmer’s Relief Forum (FRF) and INFAM. The former is an organisation largely confined to Wayanad region under the leadership of some farmers, whereas the latter a state wide organisation controlled by the church. Both organisations are very active in the village.

Besides, there are three major Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) undertaking different developmental as well as income generating activities. Two of them are directly under the control of Christian churches belonging to different denominations, while the third one is under the control of an individual. Area of activities of these three NGOs is mainly Wayanad district. There are also a couple of small groups with a few households, functioning occasionally and irregularly. All the NGOs active in the village have their offices in the town.

Internal organisations of various communities are also very strong and powerful in the village. SNDP for Ezhava, Church organisations for Christians, NSS for Nairs
and Chetty Service Society for Wayanadan Chettys are the common community organisations. They organise activities like micro credit, weekly meetings and prayer groups etc., besides their involvement in the life cycle rituals of community members.

There are important governmental organizations surrounding the village. Town junction is just two kilometeres away and most of these organizations are situated in the town. Role of local Panchayat has increased after decentralization in taking many administrative and development decisions directly affecting the livelihoods of local population. One can see a huge crowd throughout the day in the Panchayath premises.

There are other important government offices too in the town centre proximate to the village. Agricultural department deal with extension works related to farming and distribution of government subsidies mainly through local Panchayat. There is also Forest Department Office which is in charge of forest maintenance and protection. The tribal extension office which is nearly six kilometers away from the village is working in tandem with the local Panchayat in organizing tribal village councils (oorukoottam) and distributing benefits. There is also a tribal co-operative society which collects minor forest produce from adivsis, especially Kattunayakan.

Health and education are two other areas where maximum number of organizations and establishments in public and private sectors function in the region. Number of private schools and colleges has increased recently. There are health establishments both in private and public sectors. There is one community health centre in the region with in-patient treatment facility which is also the headquarter of the two primary health centres. There are also health service extension units. Primary health centres have limited number of beds for in-patients. There are two private hospitals in the town and around five dental clinics too. Besides, there are also seven doctors undertaking private practice in the region.
Banking sector is becoming important for all sections of people in the village. Dependence on banks is inevitable after the implementation of the micro-credit program in the village. Besides, workers in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), a scheme of the Government of India that guarantees minimum hundred days employment to one member of each and every family demanding employment, draw their wages through banks. There are three public sector banks and two co-operative banks which are functioning in very formal ways in providing credit and investment facilities. There are also Co-operative banks implementing innovative loan programs in the village. Four private banks in the village are having very informal arrangements which make available loans easily, which entices people, mostly the very poor and the illiterate, but charge high interests and are locally known as ‘blade companies’ indicating the cut-throat interest rates on loans and the ruthless treatment of defaulters.

**Table 3.9. Public organisation within the study village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the organization</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower primary school (Government run)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Free education with noon meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play School (Anganwadi) (Govt.) Common</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Free pre-primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free noon meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play School Anganwadi (Tribal, attached to settlement)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Free pre-primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free noon meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health centre (maternity centre) Govt. run</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Immunisation programmes, Awareness programme for women, Free first aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy centre (Govt. run)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continuation of complete literacy programme, SHG activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water supply (Govt funded)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Distribution of water under people’s/households’ committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check dam (Govt funded)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>For agricultural purpose and water conservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PDS (Public Distribution System) shops 2 Distribution of cereals, free supply of drain for tribal population

Milk society (Cooperative) 1 Collection centres; Distribution of subsidies

Political parties 3 CPI, CPM, Congress, BJP

Farmer’s organizations 4 INFAM, FRF, Karshakasangham

NGOs 3 Micro credit, Rain water harvesting, watershed projects, Organic farming

Recreation club 1 Sports and arts, reading room with newspapers and magazines

Organisations (intended for social and economic uplifting of various communities) 6 SNDP, NSS, Church, CSS, Regular meeting of members, prayers, SHG- micro credit activities

Source Filed survey (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the organization</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Local governance and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramasabha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation of the people/empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural office (yelam office)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extension services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extension services, oorukoottam (conducting meeting of exclusive meeting of tribal household members) Tribal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Forest management, administration Participatory management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal cooperative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Collection and selling of forest produces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police station</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing cooperatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marketing of agricultural products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Revenue administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.10 Public organizations Within the village Panchayat Source Filed survey (2007)
There is a recreation club in the village founded mainly by the settlers which has become a common place for people across the communities and political parties to come around for group activities. They organize sports and arts events during the

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16 Aided schools are financially supported by state government in disbursing the salary for staff, owned by private management. There are private schools mushroomed in the 90s, mainly English medium schools, owned and run by private management.
time of festivals, including that of Christian and Hindu, and some other important
days like the Independence Day. Office bearers of this club are mainly male
members belonging to settler communities. But people belonging to all communities
and categories participate in the annual events. Club has its own land and building
and a reading room with a couple of newspapers and magazines. However, *adivasi*
participation is very marginal in the activities of the club.

In the town there is a public library attracting large sections of educated people and
students cutting across communities. It has a good collection of books and internet
facilities in a new two-storied building built with government financial grant availed
through local MLA. They also keep a good reading room with a number of
Malayalam and English newspapers and magazines. They are also conducting career
guidance classes for young people and special seminars and talks on environmental
and other social issues. However, there is no *adivasi* presence in the reading room or
other activities of the library.

All the people in the village are linked to these organizations in one way or other,
though the social distance/access of the communities to them are widely varied. The
differential access is found on individual as well as community levels. At the level of
community, the difference is stark between *adivasis* and the others.

*Land to money*

In the 1990s, the forces of market and decentralisation have played a significant role
in creating a level playing field to an extent with money becoming the basis of social
interactions related to livelihoods. During this period, with regard to market, farmers
irrespective of early migrants or later migrants made benefits from the boom. Natural
fragmentation of land through succession of second generation had made a change in
status of some families as large holders to small ones. It was the easy conversion of
land into cash due to the incredible returns that raised the individual aspirations and
dreams which further accelerated the demand for shares from family which resulted
in the fragmentation of land and sometimes, family relations. Production of pepper
from even a small plot of land earned a lot of money when it fetched Rs.180-200 per
kg. It gave symbolically a superior status even to small holders who owned just 50
cents of land, during that period.

Flooding of money was not merely from the product market. Banks, both public and
private, and individual money lenders not only from Kerala, but also those traditional
lenders from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state became omnipresent pumping money
into local life. This encouraged the farmers to invest money in various agricultural
and non-agricultural enterprises.

As a new trend, many small-scale farmers too began investing money in ginger
cultivation in Kodagu region of nearby Karnataka state where fertile land was
available in large tracts. Production of ginger was highly vulnerable to market risks.
Some farmers faced the fate of the gold mine fortune hunters of the 18th century who
came from the West and ended their lives after making fruitless mining in the
Wayanad hills(Gopi M 2002) while some made huge benefits from the cultivation.

Story of a tutorial college teacher was often narrated in the village when they talk
about ginger cultivation. This person wanted to join a private higher secondary
school in the area. He was asked to give around Rs. 75,000 for the post by the school
management as a contribution to the school fund. This was a normal practice. He had
with him only Rs. 50,000. So he negotiated with the management, but in vain. Then
he decided to invest the money in ginger cultivation in Kodagu. He got a bumper
crop as well as a huge profit, which according to the local narrative, was four times
more than his investment. He became one of the important ginger cultivators in the
village. In another case, Raju and his brother, who were small-time brokers in cattle trade in Kappikkunnu neighbourhood, started cultivating ginger in Koadagu and earned huge profits. They turned to construction work, trading of spices etc in the following years. They shifted from the neighbourhood and bought a new plot near the town and constructed a huge house with a big compound wall and guarded by Alsatian dogs. People cite such examples of ordinary settlers who became rich through ginger cultivation. They have also stories of failed cultivators who committed suicide after becoming indebted following the huge loss in ginger cultivation in Kodagu.

Besides the ginger cultivation, large holders in the village transferred their money to non-agricultural sectors. Mr.Ramesh, one of the earliest settler families, invested money in constructing a tourist home and some buildings to lease out for trade. He started a cattle farm with all modern facilities and became one of the few large scale individual milk producers in the state. Narayanan’s family also constructed a building in the town for trading purposes. Buying jeeps became a craze in the village during the same period. There were newspaper reports of transporting jeeps to this area in bulk from Mahindra company showroom in Kozhikode in this period. Owing a jeep became a prestige symbol for most of the medium and large holders. Households in each neighbourhood competed to get an upper hand in this. Some households used these vehicles for their own purposes while others plied taxis employing drivers.

Large land holders were also capable of investing in agriculture. They started diversifying cash crop cultivation with planting of other high value cash crops like
vanilla and rubber. Most of the large holders in the village had diversified their
cultivation in this period. With the introduction new crops, mono cropping of pepper
and inter-cropping of coffee paved way for multi-cropping of more than two crops in
these gardens. By this period land as such became unimportant for most of the
farmers. Importance of land was considered purely in terms of the money it would
bring in. Over-use of fertilisers and pesticides on the soil became an inevitable
outcome of this process.

**Land to human resource**

Another area where farmers commonly made investments was in the education of
their children. Aspiration for education which was very much there even in the first
generation migrants, grew to new heights in this period. Intend on livelihood
diversification, people started sending their children to self-financing professional
courses inside and outside Kerala. Nursing, engineering, Masters in Business
Administration, animation, etc., were some of the courses chosen by the parents.
Elder son of Mundyamparambil Narayanan, an early settler in the village, who
taught his children up to graduate level, sent his two boys for an animation course
paying heavy capitation fees. A number of parents in the village sent their children
for nursing courses to Bangalore city. A local leader of the CPI(M) who was also a
small scale farmer sent his two children for engineering in self-financing colleges in
Banglore for which he collected some amount from a businessman by keeping his
land as collateral security. Except Paniyan and other marginal *adivasis*, all other
people spent money for education during this period.
Educating children in English medium schools became a norm even among the small-scale farmers. In the village a government school was started during the same period under pressure from local people. But interestingly no children from farmers’ families came to that school. Gradually it became a school for children from nearby Paniyan and other adivasi settlements. Meanwhile at least five new private English medium schools started functioning in the nearby town 2-3 kilometres away from the village. All the children belonging to settler families irrespective of their financial background sent their children to these new schools. Even in the first school in the village, where all the first generation migrants educated their children, number of students from settler families came down drastically. This school also subsequently got the image of an adivasi school where majority of the students were from Paniyan community and the working class families from among the settler communities.

**Housing**

Housing was another area where people spent money during this period. All the grass thatched houses in the village got transformed into tiled or concrete ones. Boom in the housing sector during this period was described by people in general as ‘there are no houses in the village that has not spent at least one sack of cement’. Among the settlers, houses were multiplied in each single plot by constructing new houses according to the number of married couples. Nuclear families became the norm and the basis of such a housing boom in the village during this period was individualisation. This was not new or introduced by the changes in this decade. Consciousness of individualism and nuclear family was prevalent among even the first generation migrants. Material circumstances became extremely favourable in
this period with the boom in the commodity and financial market and implementation of decentralisation programme which offered housing schemes for the poor sections of people.

**End of a period of buoyancy**

As already noted, the boom did not last long. By the end of the decade people started experiencing a downfall. Prices for pepper and coffee fell steeply. Although they had seen a fluctuation in the price for pepper in the previous decade also, it was for the first time that they had to face a steep fall after an unbelievable rise in the price, thanks to the increased exposure to international market.

Two other things which flared up their distress were severe shortage in the availability of rain and the dramatic reduction in the crop production. Though there was a reduction in the availability of rain over the years from 1990 onwards people in the village experienced a severe draught in the 2004 summer. Decline in the production was mainly due to the loss of soil quality and spread of pests and diseases. This was a result of over use of fertilizers and pesticides by the local farmers during the period of boom.

Most of the people in the village were on half-way from reaping the benefits of their investments. Large holders in the village were in a position to manage the downturn with their diversified activities. A few of them had emerged as really rich with no financial ramifications of this downfall to affect their base. Some of them turned to real estate business with a corresponding fall in the land price and the development of a tourism based economy in the region. The places closer to the forest were in good demand in the new situation. In the village, an old house on a *patta* land amidst
the forest was bought by a large farmer who turned business man to convert it into a tourist motel.

Vast segments of small holders, those who owned just two acres and below but had a status of farmers with good prices for their crops, became poor in the price crash. This group included all categories including early and later migrants, native communities like Chetty etc. Drastic reduction in the production severely affected even some of the large holders. Many poor farmers started going for manual works. Revival of collective practices like ‘koodippani’ or ‘exchange of labour’ was a major response among these ‘newly poor’ segments of population. But it was qualitatively very different from the practice we had seen in the initial period of migration. Earlier they reciprocated with free labour. But now, they reciprocated with corresponding monetary wage.

The situation can be illustrated with a case in one of the neighbourhoods in the village. Sabu and his wife Sheeba, both from early migrant families with large land holdings, together owned around three acres of land. Sabu had got two acres after his marriage as share from his family and Sheeba got one acre of land as dowry. Both of them have higher secondary level education. Sabu was also active in the Congress Party as an ordinary worker and associated with all other social activities including the functioning of the local club, temple committee, community organisation (SNDP), etc. He was a farmer and employed Paniyan labourers from his neighbourhood for doing all his farm work. He cultivated mainly pepper and coffee on the dry land and seasonally, paddy and ginger on 50 cents of wet land.
They have two children and Sabu wants to give them useful professional education which would give them good opportunities in the job market. He gave the children, elder boy and girl, English medium education in the private sector. Sabu and his wife considered education of their children as the most important thing in their life. He wanted to get his boy into an engineering course. His daughter wants to become a media professional. Price boom inspired them to cherish these dreams. He modified his old house during this period. He used to do ginger cultivation also in the same period in leased-in lands. He took most of the household decisions in consultation with his wife. She managed the household and farm-related day to day works. Sabu dealt with selling of produces, buying of agricultural inputs, and children’s education besides his other social activities.

The distress period doomed their ways of living. The immediate step they took in the context of price crash was to stop hiring labour. They decided to work on their farms themselves. But certain works like planting and harvest of paddy and ginger necessitated additional labour. Both of the cultivations demand a long cycle of labour-intensive activities from clearing and preparing the field to harvesting. By this time within the village a network of self-help groups had formed in the context of decentralisation. In their neighbourhoods also they started interacting with self-help groups supported by local panchayath and other NGOs also. Neighbours found a new space of interaction within these groups. There were also other families in the neighbourhood in similar situation who finally came together to meet their requirements. Intervention of SHGs reinvented the tradition of kootippani in finding a solution for this labour shortage. Hence Sabu and Sheeba found some families in
the neighbourhood with whom they could workout a relationship. In the new form of
kootippani they exchanged the labour not for free but for normal wage. But they
would not sell their labour in the open market. They took up work for wage limited
within three –four families. In the case of Sabu there were three families included in
the network. Husband and wife from each of these families took part in the
koodippani. Children also started to help Sabu in doing agricultural work after their
school time. His wife started to keep additional cows and selling milk to local co-
operatives. Sabu and Sheeba joined the micro credit activities of SHGs. They joined
the collective farming through SHGs putting their share as labour and sometimes, in
cash.

But what is the most important thing is that they did not disrupt the education of their
children. Their son passed plus two level of schooling with good marks. He got
admission for a degree course in a science subject in the nearby college. Although he
could not make it for engineering, Sabu has not given up that idea. Their daughter is
also continuing her education in higher secondary class. Although they made cuts in
the labour and other input costs, in the intake of calorie foods like meats, the
consumption of liquor, shopping, etc., and almost given up using gas stove for
cooking, watching movies in theatres, dining out etc., he has not compromised on the
children’s education. He had some loans from the local banks which were overdue.
He struggled hard to make both ends meet.

In this distress situation, adding to his burden he was charged with a police case for
illegally cutting down the teak trees from his own garden. His family got title for the
revenue land from which they had no permission to cut down the teakwood. Those
trees were marked and entitled to government. He wanted to escape from the indebtedness by selling these trees. But someone in the neighbourhood informed the police and they came in the night when he tried to load it. The timber has been left on the road-side to rot. He has found a job as a driver in a carrier lorry having national permit and is moving between states. He goes off from the house often and leaves his wife to manage the agricultural and other household works on her own. Although Sabu does not get much time to work for club, party or community organisation they maintain close contact with all the useful networks which are very much linked with various activities of their SHGs too.

Paniyan workers stopped working for Sabu after a while. They started complaining against him for not giving their wage even if they worked for reduced wage. Gulikan from Puthiyedam neighbourhood is a usual worker for Sabu said that they could not trust him any more as he cheated them by not distributing their wage for long days. Everyday at the end of the work Sabu used to postpone their payment.

“He repeated this repeated for some days. But he gave us one time meal, but what is the use with out money. We get free rice so it is not difficult for us to get one time meal. So we stopped working for him. We will not work there any more even he offers higher wage”. Guikan asserts.

Another major response from the local people to distress was migration to distant places within and outside the state and sometimes to other countries also. Although international migration is a major phenomenon in the state, generally it did not happen in the whole region in a big way. But there are people in the village, mainly from rich Christian families who have migrated to US and Europe. But the members
of poor and medium families started moving out from the village only after the price crash. They are going mainly for manual jobs. In the first stream of distress led migration one set of people including some young people belonging to farmers’ households went to Thirupur in Tamil Nadu for working in garment factories. However, most of them did not continue their work more than six months as working condition and wage were bad. Though this migration did not help them find meaningful livelihoods, they continued their movement moving to neighbouring districts for doing non agricultural works like driving, construction work etc. Some women from the village moved out for doing domestic work in migrant households where elderly people are left behind in their own. The men find it very difficult to find any jobs due to absence of skills. There are a number of cases of women working in the Gulf countries as maids from Christian as well as Chetty households. Chrisitians have wider networks for making such movements possible. Chetty women, who are considered as earnest and sincere in their working, are getting chances through their exposure to some of the migrant families.

Case of James 38 years and Leena, 32, is a good case in understanding the emerging phenomenon of gulf migration. Leena who holds educational qualification at higher secondary level left to gulf where her brothers are working. They have 50 cetns land got as a share from James’ father, who was an old settler with four acres of occupied land which he later distributed to his four sons including James, worked for wage in koodippani after the collapse of market. They have two children and they made all their efforts including going for more collective work like koodippani, SHG activities, etc., to continue life as usual. Leena got a visa arranged by her brothers in
the gulf in 2006 for the post of a ‘sales girl’. To quote James to see how James describe their condition,

“it is a good opportunity for us to escape from this struggling. Though her brothers are eager to bring me there what can I do? I don’t know anything other than a job of cultivator. What I am going to do there with shovel? We were not eager to continue our education. We hoped that we could flourish more doing agriculture. If I had done any vocational training I would have been in gulf. Now I look after my children. They are small and want to meet their mom. Still I manage it. Now I am learning driving and once I complete it I will also go to the gulf. Then she can come back and look after the children”.

However, some of his ‘envious’ neighbours say that his wife is working as a house maid and hence makes money.

But for younger generation, situation is different from these ‘family men’. Educated youth, male and female, especially belonging to settler households now see migration as a generational continuity as hired through blood and want to move out wherever they can go to work which would increase their social mobility. This is quiet un-similar with the whole Kerala situation where migration is a source of upward mobility.

Reena, the eldest among three daughters of a small-scale cultivator household, reached Andhra Pradesh using the contact of a distant relative and joined as a teacher in a pre-primary school. School owner, who is also from Kerala, pays her Rs.1500 per month as salary besides food and accommodation. Her father, an ailing cultivator, and mother, who is working as an agricultural labourer, explains that
though the amount is less, she is no more a ‘burden’ to them and whatever she is earning can be saved for future. Accordingly, this job also gives an exposure and experience for her to explore other opportunities. And back at home there is nothing much left to be offered. There are also households from which girls have moved to the more remote areas like Punjab and Rajasthan.

Most of the households from which the girls are moving out belong to the Christian community, thanks to the wider net work of migrant relatives and friends and above all the institutional presence of the Church in the parting as well as in the landing areas. Strong ethos of self-dependency and reliance also works as a springboard for such migratory shifts.

Affluent local youth creates a new social space of international connections, networks and identity in their efforts to migrate. Local internet café is an assembling place for many of these young people. Internet has become a source of information and connections for those aspiring for international migration. They prepare resume and application to various posts sitting and chatting in a cafe owned by a young man belonging to a large holder Ezhava community. It is a practice for local Christian youth to indicate their religious background in their resume or applications to be uploaded to western countries. They would use standard phrase like “I belong to an ancient aristocrat Syrian Christian family in Kerala” in their resume which they create in group and send it from café. They make sarcastic comments to each other over their poor condition of living when their grandfathers reached in the village.

Nursing is an attractive job for many girls who are aspiring for migration. It is the first preference of parents in the village when they pick up a course for their
children, especially for girls. There are a number of cases of parents in the village who have sent their children to self financing colleges even in the period of distress either by selling their properties or borrowing land from private people by giving their house or land as collateral. There are also cases of some of the nursing colleges in Bangalore arranging loans for these students. There are agents who attract the parents and students for these courses. It is the hope that their children would get a good job abroad that encourages these parents to take risks even in the wake of a grim economic situation.

Insistence of settlers in providing professional education to their children, even if it was expensive has reaped benefits for many families in the context of distress. In the family of Narayanan, one of the oldest settlers belonging to Ezhava community, who provided education to his sons up to degree level even in the 1970s, his grand children got admission for an expensive animation course during the period of distress. After passing out the course the boy immediately got a job in a MNC in Bangalore, the major IT hub of the country. By this time, the second grandson also joined for the same course and his brother helped him to find a job in Bangalore.

There is a clear trend among the farmers in the village to shift their children from agriculture to other skilled jobs. No farmer in the village likes to see his son take up agriculture as the sole source of income. Majority of them think that there is no future in agriculture alone. Their experience in this decade of boom and doom with an extremely fluctuating market has strengthened this conviction. Now-a-days, the state is also envisaging a future for the region in tourism and IT-based services. There is a consensus about this irrespective of the political cleavages.
Local Panchayath President, a local leader of Communist Party of India (M), talked about his vision about the village in a spirited way. He says that considering the geographic and climatic proximity of this place to Bangalore, there was a great chance for developing this area into one of the subsidiary IT hubs as growth in Bangalore and nearby Mysore would soon reach an optimum level of development. Panchayath and parents give utmost attention to the education of children and so the local human resource can be used for the growth of this sector. According to his dream about the development of the village, tourism is also an important sector which will bring growth and prosperity to the people if they properly make use of the potential of natural environment.

Re-invention of collective action and decentralised state

The tradition of collective action was reinvented in the context of distress from the period of settlement formation in the village. Basically there are state supported and state-independent collective actions but made use of by people in general. State in this period with its new forms of decentralised structures provided the local people with a support system for organising such collective practices within their neighbourhoods. New mantra of decentralisation and participatory development enabled to create a new social space for collective action, especially for those who have become poor materially and symbolically in the context of distress.

State support which made changes in the livelihood practices during the period helped to create an enabling environment for collective action through decentralised structures of governance and implementation of various programmes. Introduction of participatory bodies by facilitating common space for face to face interaction of
people in the neighbourhoods cutting across different social categories and formation of self-help groups for facilitating various collective economic activities fulfilled an indigenous demand for the creation of such a common space. But economic distresses shifted the realm of competition between the households within the neighbourhoods from a consumerist space to a collective space. So people now try to re-assert their social and political networks within and beyond their neighbourhoods related to various collective actions.

Governmental and non-governmental actors are often overlapped in facilitating many livelihood activities, especially at the realm of SHGs. Kootippani or collective farming which has been resurfaced under SHGs are supported by local Panchayat and non-governmental organisations. We have seen in the case of Sabu how they are working in new labour arrangements in the wake of economic distress.

There was another form of collective action that took shape in the region based on people’s mobilisation in order to safeguard the interests of farmers by pressuring the state to take relief measures and stopping the state agencies from taking any kind of loan recovery actions. New organisations which had become active in the context of distress like INFARM and Farmers Relief Forum became very popular among the farmers during the period of distress.

**Impact of Changes in the 1990s among Paniyan**

All these changes were significant for Paniaya families in the village too. Penetration of market relations and money into the day-to-day living of Paniyan workers was a direct impact of these changes. A new generation of Paniyans had greater exposure to money-based relations rather than kind-based. They started
sharing a consumerist space along with all other communities in the village. The community was also exposed to decentralised state structures in the same period with the introduction of *oorukootham*, an exclusive village council for *adivasis* and tribal promoters as the indigenous intermediaries between the state and the *adivasis*. These exposures gave a new kind of self assertion in local relations among the younger generation which was often perceived by others as ‘aggression’ or ‘arrogance’ on the part of the Paniyas.

During the period of boom in this decade there was a greater demand for labourers as farmers started diversifying and intensifying their activities in and beyond the village it was during these days that they started doing ginger cultivation in the Kodagu district of Karnataka. Even the marginal farmers were capable of employing labourers for their work. This led to a shortage in the number of workers in the village which was filled by migrant workers from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state. This resulted in an increase in the number of migrant workers that led to the creation of new settlements of Tamil workers in the area. A significant presence of Tamil workers in the area was seen in the three newly started theatres that showed exclusively Tamil movies, but following the distress these theatres closed down as the Tamil migrant workers returned due to lack of labour.

Extreme demand for labour in this period introduced new practices like contracting, piece rating, labour migration etc among the Paniyas. Contracting enabled their movement beyond the traditional boundaries of neighbourhoods in search of work. There were some areas outside the village where many families hold pepper plantation in 10 or 12 acres and there was greater demand for labour. The owners
would give contract to some persons, mostly settler workers who can mobilise labour, for undertaking their farm work in stipulated time. In one of the village neighbourhoods, Joseph who was a labourer himself became such a contractor who took orders from these areas through personal contacts and mobilised Paniyan workers from his neighbourhood. They were offered fixed wage for certain amount of labour measured either by area or by the amount of produce. So members from two –three Paniyan families including women and children would accompany him for work. Though this kind of day-to-day movement breaking the traditional and local boundaries of labour movement was a new experience for many in the neighbourhood, and this became a regular livelihood and social practice for some of them over the years.

Abundance of work made many of the younger generation workers to bargain for wage. Older generation had no mechanism earlier for the collective bargaining or wage negotiation. During the boom period they got unparalleled wages also. The money wage (other than food) that stood far below Rs 50 in the 1980s rose to Rs 100 for male workers and Rs. 60 for females and further rose to Rs 125 and Rs. 80 respectively by 1997-98. Price boom did not result in any asset intensification for Paniyas, but it became instrumental to a certain extent for a self-realization of their labour power. Notwithstanding that, increase in wage did not inspire them to provide good education to their children. Many boys and girls discontinued their education and joined the army of workers. Even a price boom did not help them nurture a habit of savings.
Meanwhile consumerist tendencies crept in at great speed into the Paniyan life. Hotel, bar, toddy shops, film theatre, and petty garment shops became main locations where they spent almost all that they earned. Most of the younger generation female workers stopped the collection of tubers and roots from the forest and catching the small fishes and crabs from the fields which came to be perceived as disgracing practices by them. Eating out in hotels became very common. The most important impact was spending on liquor which increased manifolds as new bar attached hotels were opened in the town and it became fashionable for young people to go there and have drinks on a regular basis. Government’s ban on arrack also pushed them into more expensive or even illicit liquor.

There is a bar attached hotel, a toddy shop and a government owned foreign liquor shop that they have access to. During the period of boom, going to this hotel where settlers also thronged in the evenings gave many young Paniyans in the village a false sense of equality. The bar room in this hotel located in the centre of the town is fully crowded in the evenings. People belonging to all categories come here and it became a public space of consumption without any discrimination attached. Major portion of the money the Paniyansearned in the boom was squeezed up by the hotel which was owned by a new rich settler in the village. Compared to most small towns elsewhere in Kerala, this hotel is somewhat big, with special rooms for private dining and stay.

The period of distress reversed the trend. When farmers stopped wage labour by cutting down their agricultural works and substituting family labour for hired labour, workers also started to experience the heat. Tamil workers left the area and all three theatres were closed down in following years. Paniyans lost jobs even in their own
neighbourhoods when small scale farmers started Kootippani. Many large holders in the area deliberately started employing settler workers instead of Paniyas, especially younger generation who had shown ‘arrogance’ during the price boom period. For many settlers Paniyans became a last resort. Most importantly wage came down to Rs 80 for male workers and Rs.60 for female workers. However, Paniyans continued to be the source of cheap and flexible labour in the ginger fields in many parts of the Karnataka districts as labour was in shortage in the vast fields under the scorching sun in the remote areas of Karnataka.

Period of distress introduced relatively new practice of share cropping between Chetty farmer and the Paniyan labourers. Interestingly, most of the Chetty farmers in the village could maintain trustworthy relationship with at least one Paniyan family in their neighbourhoods during the periods of price boom and distress. During the period of distress Chetty farmers also cut down on many agricultural works. Some of them cut down two-time paddy cultivation into one-time. Those farmers who did not do two-time cultivation showed willingness to give their land to their jobless Paniyan workers for share cropping. According to this practice of share cropping, land owner gave seeds and fertilisers and workers provided labour. Produce was divided equally between them. Most of the Chettys in the village were willing to give their land for share cropping only to their own Paniyan labourers. This was mainly due to their lack of trust on settlers who they feared would misuse land. The age old relation between Chetty and Paniyan community gained continuity in this distress-driven share cropping.
Struggle for land by *adivasi* communities especially under *Adivasi* Gothra Mahasabha, a vanguard organisation led by a *adivasi* woman leader, C.K Janu, reached its climax during the period of distress. Sudden exposure to a vibrant market and a consumerist space followed by distressing fall in works and wages was an unparalleled experience for the community as a whole. Newly found thrust for land was a result of this collective experience which inspired them to encroach on the government owned plantations and forest lands as part of their agitation during this period. Demand for land was raised by *adivasis* themselves for the first time in the history of Wayanad and many families from the village took part in the agitation and collective encroachment.

**Discussion: Changes in livelihood practices and the meaning of development space**

In the context of our study village, creation of a development space is the sum total of the historical changes in relation to the political and economic processes at the global and the local levels. Since its inception from the colonial period, interplay of global and local has been the underlying force in creating changes in the livelihood practices. This process as carrier of modernity and development evolved through the interaction of colonial and post colonial states and people has resulted in creating a horizontal space of interaction inclusive of the wider spectrum of population within various communities. This has become contemporarily a space shared by individuals with collective imagination for development, basically constituted by a triad of getting own land, ‘good’ house, and education to children, and their capability to aspire and achieve it.
Changes in the livelihood practices at local level are basically linked to the developmental aspirations of the communities. During this period colonial extraction of resources was the major factor carrying implications for the development of adivasi communities. Changes in local governance and economy in the colonial period made benefits for a few on the basis of Jaati relations. It did not largely affect the nature of local horizontal reciprocity though it created more rigid and jati based system for adivasis.

Immigration of settlers marks the beginning of development in modern guise in the village. Their entry into the area clearly made a shift from wet land based paddy cultivation to the cultivation of plantation crops on the basis of their new developmental aspirations. They were the people from south Kerala with good understanding of commercial cropping, monetary value of land, modern education, health care practices etc. Collective action, both political and social, of settler communities laid out the infrastructure of development in the village in the formative period of new settlement for a better living with regard to better connectivity, health and education. New settler leadership emerged in the process of making a democratic state by transferring power from upper caste Nair and some of their local Chetty subordinates in the colonial times to elite settler groups in the post independent period. This was also the beginning of a process of vertical reciprocal relations of a traditional kind prevalent among the native communities in the village to a more horizontal reciprocal relation among the individuals.

_Paniyan Exclusion_
There was a complete exclusion of Paniyan community in the village from accessing this development space. Absence of critical resources like land and education and their inability to aspire for acquiring those resources marginalised them in getting to play an active role in this new process of the making of development under state and collective action. Now the question arises: is it because of the absence of these resources that they lacked the aspiration for development? Or, is it the absence of aspirations that caused the lack of resources? There are contradictory perceptions among the people especially among settlers and *adivasis* themselves on this.

According to the general perception among the settlers in the village, this inability is intrinsic to the Paniyan community who they consider, are lazy, passive and over-pampered by the state. Among the Paniyans themselves, interestingly, there are two types of perceptions. Many among them criticise the state for its failure to provide them with land and accuse the settlers for alienating their traditional habitat. This perception is not based on their understanding of modern development, but its focus is more on their alienation from resources. But younger generation of Paniyans has now started criticising their forefathers for lacking ‘consciousness’ about their lack of progress. They accuse their forefathers for not having had the foresight to occupy land when it was in abundance in their time. Going by the rules of private property land ownership pattern, they now imagine that all the land now occupied by settlers should have belonged to them including even forest which they feel they lost due to ignorance or lack of consciousness (by which they mean lack of education of the community).
In the strong system of vertical reciprocity between Chett and Paniyan communities labour was the sole livelihood base for Paniyansin maintaining their daily subsistence. They were not very much aware about the land as a livelihood base even in that system. A shift in the livelihood base from wet land cultivation to cash crop plantation cultivation marked also a shift in the local power relations. Settler strategies to control the Paniyan labour was also part of underlying power struggles at the local. Though settlers became the vanguard for modern development in the village, and in the process, instead of breaking the structure of vertical reciprocity they transformed it into the new livelihood system of cash crop cultivation. They used various manipulative strategies to maintain the Paniyan community as a cheap source of labour without making much damage to their understanding based on vertical reciprocity even in a newly developed market scenario in the village. That is why many among the young Paniyan now talk critically about the lack of ‘patham’ (colloquial usage for Sanskrit word ‘bodham’ which means consciousness) of their predecessors. This critical perception of a past emerges from a new sharing of the settlers’ understanding of development. Mobilisation from below for land was a major political ingredient of development in the history of Kerala in general and in the case of region and village also to an extent. Lack of mobilisation among the Paniyan community to demand for land until recently may perhaps, have added to that self-criticism. This critical look on why they remain excluded, at least among a section of Paniyas, has now become the foundation for their claims over the development space also.
In the case of our village, decentralisation and the extreme economic changes in the decades have further widened the spectrum of development space in order to create developmental aspirations across the settler and *adivasi* communities. The recent time has witnessed aggressive movements for land by *adivasis* in the region with active involvement of Paniyans in the study village. Most of them in the village have successfully freed themselves from the shackles of vertical reciprocity derived from the principles of a caste centric *habitus* and a few of them have started trying to negotiate horizontal networks of reciprocity, though without much success.

The disjuncture between Paniyans and the creation of development infrastructure was mainly due to the absence of organized leadership and collective action, and the resources like land, education and political networks which were found to be critical in transforming the developmental infrastructure into individual resources for others. Failure of state and collective action, which legitimized the new life worlds of settlers, and the settler strategies to extract Paniyan labour into extremely competent production process not only hindered Paniyans from breaking the closed and monotonous cycle of livelihood practices, but also pushed them into the position of marginality which became the major disposition of their *habitus* in the period of centralized development.

However, accelerated interpenetrations of local and global in the recent years which became instrumental in creating a development space at the local shared by different communities with a common development - *habitus*, have created new livelihood options among Paniyans too. But for them, success or failures in the process of adopting new practices based on new understanding of the world will be determined by the course of struggles they carry forward in their everyday livelihoods. It is imperative to see whether these changes are capable of creating an agency for