CHAPTER - II
CENSUS AND THE CONSTITUTION OF TRIBAL IDENTITY

This chapter is basically a reading of Census reports in order to understand how these reports, and occasionally colonial ethnography as well, through the ages constructed the people living in the hills as tribes. The classificatory practice employed had constructed them variously. Earlier their ritual practice had been observed and the colonial Census classified them on the basis of their ‘religious’ practice. Therefore, if the early Census reports treated ‘tribals’ as observants of animism, when we come to the Census of 1931 and 1941 their religious practice became ‘tribal’ and ‘primitive’ religion’. Through these classifications, the people living on the margins became tribals. The post-independent state uncritically accepted the identity given by the Census to the people living in the hills. But the change that the post-independent state brought in was that, they categorised them as ‘Scheduled Tribe’. All these identification and categorization have been legitimized by saying that all these were required for implementing special development programmes. In this chapter the present researcher will look into the changing pattern of the Census classification and the treatment of the tribals in the subsequent discourse of development.

‘Official’ classification and statistics

India is one of the few nations of tribal concentration and is also said to have the largest tribal population, next to Africa.¹ The pattern of distribution of tribal population across the country is extremely uneven. There are some

¹ A.R. Desai, Rural India in Transition, Bombay, 1979, p. 48.
states and minor territories with high concentration, some states with moderate and others with thin concentration of tribals in India.\textsuperscript{2} No community has been specified as a Scheduled Tribe in relation to the states of Haryana, Punjab and Union Territories of Chandigar, Delhi and Pondicherry.\textsuperscript{3}

However, regarding the local strength of the tribal population inhabiting India, there exist wide divergences of assessment by scholars. The total number of tribal communities in India as identified by K.S. Singh as part of his project "People of India" (1994) is 461, and about 172 are segmented. Many of these are as good as distinct category.\textsuperscript{4} Among them, there are certain tribal communities who have a low level of literacy, declining or stagnant population, a pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically more backward. Backwardness and primitive techniques are said to be intrinsic to tribes.\textsuperscript{5} On the basis of these criteria, 52 communities have been identified as primitive till the end of 5\textsuperscript{th} plan, 72 in the 6\textsuperscript{th} plan and 74 in the 7\textsuperscript{th} plan. 75 such groups in 15 states have been identified, and have been recognized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs).\textsuperscript{6} Five of them are in Kerala, such as the Cholanaikkan, Kadar, Kattunaikkan, Koraga and Kurumba.\textsuperscript{7} The situation of these tribals varies with every state as tribals and


\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Annual Report 2004-05}, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2005, p.35.

\textsuperscript{4} The total number of the tribes, their groups and segments including territorial units studied by K.S. Singh is 635. For more details see K.S. Singh, \textit{The Scheduled Tribes}, New Delhi, 2003, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{5} Shereen Ratnakar, \textit{The Other Indians-Essays on Pastoralist and Pre-historic Tribal People}, New Delhi, 2004, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{6} This term ‘primitive tribe’ was often used by western anthropologist to denote a primary aggregate of people living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a head man or a chief.

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Annual Report 2004-05}, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2005, p. 78.
primitive tribals.\textsuperscript{8} Though the tribal groups are numerous, their population comes to only over 8.34 crores, i.e., 8.2\% of total population of India\textsuperscript{9}. The most striking feature of this population is its enormous diversity.\textsuperscript{10} The area of this tribal population forms about 20\% of the country's total geographical area.\textsuperscript{11}

In India the tribals has been an object of academic and administrative discourse. They have their own rich culture and oral traditions and are ethnically and culturally distinct from the rest of the population, so as to deserve the status of a distinct social category. They live in forest areas, hills, and naturally isolated regions and are known as a rule by different names, either the people of forest and hills or the original inhabitants.\textsuperscript{12} In Indian academic and administrative discourse there are different names to denote tribes. It includes Vanyajati (caste of forest), Vanavasi (inhabitants of forest), Pahari (hill dwellers), Adimjati (primitive people), Girijan (hill dwellers), Anusuchit Jan Jati (scheduled tribe).\textsuperscript{13} As these communities are presumed to form the oldest ethnological sector of the population, the term “adivasi” has become common and this is the widely used term all over India. The ILO has classified these groups as “indigenous”,\textsuperscript{14} but they do not take into account the internal differences within the broad category of ‘tribes’. They, therefore,

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{8} Hoshiar Singh, \textit{Tribal Development Administration}, Jaipur, 1994, p. 29.
\bibitem{10} Dipankar Gupta (ed.) \textit{Anti Utopia – Essential writings of Andre Beteille}, New Delhi, 2005, p. 119.
\bibitem{12} L.P. Vidyarthi, \textit{et al.}, \textit{The Tribal Culture of India}, Delhi, 1976, p. 25.
\bibitem{14} Jacob John Kattakayam, \textit{Social Structure and Change Among the Tribes-A Study Among the Uralis of Idukki District in Kerala}. Delhi, 1983, p. 88.
\end{thebibliography}
extend the term ‘tribe’ to any group who lives in isolation and having distinctive cultural traits.

The colonial ethnographers who were engaged in studying ‘the culture and people of India’ used the term ‘tribe’ for the first time in the Indian context. This word had been used to categorise and classify a group of people living on the margins in the mainland. Looking at their everyday life, the colonial ethnographers called them primitive or barbarous communities. This usage conveyed their hatred and subjective interpretation of the early inhabitants of India.\(^{15}\) However the words such as savage, uncivilized, uncultured, pre-literate, non-literate, little community, animal-like, and aborigines were indiscriminately used to denote these communities. In fact, many of the so-called groups were the discursive construction of the colonial period and were defined as a people at an earlier stage of evolution of society. This gave a kind of moral tone that the tribals are yet to develop and become civilized.

In Indian languages, we do not have any synonym for the word 'tribe'. It is accepted that tribal-nontribal categorisation was not so predominant in pre-British India. With this background, when the British started studying India, they wanted to call Indian Society as a society of various tribes.\(^{16}\) In the beginning, the British could not study the tribe and paid not much attention to define the tribal society.\(^{17}\) This is mainly because of the size and variety of the tribal people in India. The tribe covers the widest range of variations in terms of race, religion and language as well as economic and political condition. In such a situation, anthropologists were anxious to have a standard

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definition of tribe. European anthropologists have, since the time of Lewis Henry Morgan, argued about the definition of tribe and little account has been taken of the tribal communities of India in their general debate over the definition.\(^{18}\) But after the period of Evan-Pritchard they have tried in a much more systematic way to provide a structural definition of tribe, particularly in the context of segmentary societies.\(^{19}\)

The tribal identity articulates and maintains itself most effectively through their cultural and religious rituals, customs, and practices.\(^{20}\) Since there are so much variations in the way of life and culture of the tribals, past and present, any attempt to classify them would remain arbitrary in the absence of a total understanding. Under this kind of conventional categorization certain groups of tribals in India were identified by the British administrators during the 19\(^{th}\) century. These administrator-turned anthropologists viewed tribal societies in the light of evolutionary theory.\(^{21}\) The ideal type of tribe is defined by the evolutionary school as "a socially homogeneous unit having its own dialect, political and cultural institutions and territory which isolate it from outside world."\(^{22}\) But most of the anthropologists and academicians, under the influence of their British counterparts, accepted this evolutionary concept of tribe.\(^{23}\) Since then, the Neo-evolutionist theory has on the other hand, tried to re-define the term 'tribe' as a concept for pre-state societies, with an economy based on the


\(^{20}\) Banu Dev Sharda (ed), Tribes Castes and Harijans-Structured Inequalities and Mobility, Delhi 1991, p. 30.

\(^{21}\) Vidyut Joshi, n. 16, p.16.

\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) L.P. Vidyarthi et al., n. 12, pp. 167-174.
domestication of plants and animals. But, a further refinement of such a classification has been discontinued for many decades in the past. Administrator – anthropologists could not comprehend the complexity of the tribal situation in India. Thus the traditional Indian society was a challenge to the British anthropological concept of tribe, whereas, the colonial concept of tribe was Euro-centric. This universally accepted concept of tribe was not applicable in the Indian context. The peculiar characteristic features of the Indian tribes, given by historical background, and their enormous diversities, make anthropologists differ from one another. Because of the differences among the tribal population dispersed across India, any preliminary generalisation is not always applicable to the Indian tribes. Yet, the term is widely applied to a great variety of people in many different parts of the Indian sub-continent. Most of the tribes in India live in hilly or forest terrain where population is sparse and communication difficult.

No doubt, ‘tribe’ is a colonial Anglo-Saxon word and was first used in Indian official reports which is more or less in agreement with the meaning given in Shorter Oxford Dictionary as, “any primitive or barbarous people

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26 It is the feudal and colonial background of the 19th century Europe that provided the basis for this concept.
under a chief.”  

The Census Commissioners, being anthropologists, have given their interpretation to the census reports they were preparing. Also, serious attempts have been made in their reports to establish a separate identity of tribal people referring to their religious and linguistic practices. The Census of British India was dominated by colonial views, and were not intended to understand the socio-economic condition of the people living in India. Their aim was to project India as an entity of castes and tribes. In response to the direction from the Government of India, most of the provinces and princely states appointed superintendents of ethnography, most of whom were members of the I.C.S.

It was in the census report of 1901 that an attempt was made to define tribes for the first time in contrast to castes. In terms of reviewing the colonial census interpretation, the establishment of British administrative system in India was remarkable with its permanent achievement of the decennial census, now more than a hundred years old, and the massive apparatus associated with the ethnographic mapping of the country. One of the most comprehensive sources of demographic, social, economic and educational data in India is the census which is conducted in every ten years. The census is of course, much more satisfactory than other sources available for the earlier period, though not so perfect in every sense. Thus the

successive decennial census operations resulted in the creation of an enormously complex system of categories for classifying people into castes, tribes, sects and occupation both in Kerala and India. Till 1901, the tribal people of Kerala were enumerated along with the Hindus as in the rest of India, and thereafter they were enumerated separately. But in the history of Indian census the year 1931 was notable in the sense that the government for the first time, used its data for determining the backward castes, because in the subsequent censuses, especially after independence, caste enumeration was given up, except for SC and ST. Even now we lack reliable and scientific data on the present socio-economic and educational status of the other backward people.

When the British decided to estimate Indian people on the basis of religious beliefs the question of the status of tribal religions also came up. Historically, the tribes in India have passed through a long process of evolution in their religion. Their beliefs are, therefore, transmitted by word of mouth and are passed on as tradition from generation to generation. So, without considering the oral traditions of the tribal people it is impossible to say anything conclusively about them. And the census commissioners did a perfunctory classification of their religion and hurriedly settled the matter. These are given in the table below.

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TABLE 1

Year and Categories under which the Tribes were enumerated by various Commissioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of the Census</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Name of the Commissioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>W. Plowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Aborigines</td>
<td>Sir Athelstain Baines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Animism</td>
<td>Sir Herbert Riseley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Animism</td>
<td>Sir E.A. Gait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Tribal Religion</td>
<td>J.T. Marten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Primitive Religion</td>
<td>J.H. Hutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Tribes</td>
<td>M.W.M. Yeatts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Scheduled Tribe</td>
<td>R.A. Gopala Swami</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports from 1881-1951

In 1871 census there was no census commissioner. In 1881 census was the first synchronous enumeration in which all hill tribes and forest tribes together categorised as 'aboriginals'. In 1891 the information on this people was collected in a single column of the scheduled headed "occupation or means of subsistence." Since the British ethnographers gave importance to religion in census interpretations, economic political and ecological factors were of secondary importance. "If a group could be shown to be clearly Hindu in its religious beliefs and practices, it was a caste, if it was 'Animist' it has to be treated as a tribe." It is established that 'animist' is

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42 Andre Betelle, Essays in Comparative Sociology, New Delhi, 1987, p. 64.
a favourite term used by the British administrators for the tribals. Thus the
religion of tribal people was included under the blanket term 'animism'. The
political implication of such usage is that the adivasis of India are still in its
first stage of human evolution. They are still to evolve and to become
civilized by practicing monotheistic beliefs. The process of enumeration in
colonial period began in 1806 and it gathered momentum in course of the
censuses of 1891 to 1941. In 1921, the heading of the religion of Indian
tribe was changed from Animism to Tribal Religion 'although' the authorities
were conscious of the short comings of the new exercise. J.T. Morten
observed that 'if the word Animism is vague in respect of what it cannnotes, the
word Tribal Religion is not any means definit in what it denotes. The
confusion created by scholars about the so-called 'Tribal Religion' could
hardly benefit the British, but, it benefitted the Christian missionaries. The
psychological wedge between the communities made their task of
proselifation easier. Then it is viewed that none of these enumerations tried
to determine their socio-economic status, but only wanted to separate them
from others. These census procedures started by the British were continued
by the India Government after independence. Since independence the
anthropologists were mainly concerned with identifying rather than defining a
tribe. There were discussions on the appropriate terms to be used for tribals
and whether the term 'adivasi' would give the erroneous impression of greater
antiquity than other groups . Although, the Indian Act of 1935 classified

44 Sometimes the colonial scholars used this term for the entire indigenous people
of India, ignoring the fact that many of these communities had led a civilized
life for millennia and had contributed to the formation of the world's most
ancient civilization.
Culcutta, 1923, pp. 110-111.
47 B.B. Kumar, *n. 15*, p. 35.
them as 'Backward Class' it was in the 1941 census that they were categorised as tribe.\textsuperscript{48}

In the post-independent period the question of who is a tribe and who is not had been taken up by the administration, not by social scientists.\textsuperscript{49} Thus any community which is listed in the schedule of the constitution as tribe is known as 'Scheduled Tribe' (hereafter ST) for the purpose of some special development programmes. But 'ST' is a concrete ensemble of persons recognized as such for operational purpose.\textsuperscript{50} For this purpose Scheduled Tribe should be demarcated not only with reference to their specific traits but also with reference to the ethnology and the stereotypes of the surrounding civilization.\textsuperscript{51}

Although the framers of the Indian Constitution addressed this problem, the Constitution has not defined ST except declaring that they are ‘the tribe or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities’.Article 341 and 342 of the Constitution provide that the President of India may, by public notification, specify such castes and tribes which shall for the purpose of the Constitution be deemed to be SC and ST in each State.\textsuperscript{52} The list of Scheduled Tribe is made out for each State and even

\textsuperscript{48} The term 'Backward' was first used as an official category in the Government of India Act of 1935 and changed to 'Scheduled Tribe' in the Indian Constitution (1950).

\textsuperscript{49} B.B. Kumar, \textit{n. 15}, p.2.

\textsuperscript{50} T.B. Naik, "What is a Tribe, Conflicting definition," in L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.) \textit{Anthropology in India}, Allahabad, 1968, p. 493.

\textsuperscript{51} I\textit{bid}.

\textsuperscript{52} See the Article 341, 342, Constitution of India.
in respect of a State with reference to each district by the President in 1950 in consultation with the state authorities.\(^5^3\)

In 1951, the hill-tribes were enumerated on the basis of the 'Scheduled Tribes' Order issued by the President in 1950.\(^5^4\) It is also said that the President of India, in consultation with the Governors of the respective states is empowered to notify the 'Scheduled Tribe' and the Parliament is empowered to include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribe any community.\(^5^5\)

The SC/ST List Modification Order (1956) has noted that the listing and classification of tribal demography has suffered seriously, as a result of arbitrary criteria adopted for scheduling the tribe.\(^5^6\) Such arbitrary criteria are more conspicuous in the list of South Indian Tribes. Among them the differences of environment generate economic differences.\(^5^7\) Economically, therefore, the South Indian tribes are poor, and small, less sturdy and more primitive than the Northern tribes. A perusal of the tribal situations in different zones of India shows that the oldest existing race in the Indian


\(^5^4\) The Constitution – Scheduled Tribes Order 1950 (C-O-22) dated 6.9.1950. The main states comes under this order are, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

\(^5^5\) Article 342 of the Constitution, Article 341 also prescribed similar procedures for the notification of the scheduled castes (SC).


\(^5^7\) Ibid., p. 443.
peninsula is represented by the Dravidian Tribes. It is only 6 per cent of the tribal population spread over the southern part of India.

The above said discursive practice could be seen in Kerala as well. Among the tribes of southern India, Kerala is the best example for such complications of tribal classification and identification. The major tribal settlements in Kerala are in the Western Ghats, which is abode to many Dravidian tribal communities. In Malabar, the Ghats separate Kerala from Coorg, the Nilgiris, and Coimbatore by a continuous barrier from 2000 ft to 5000 ft high, and is interrupted by the 19 mile-wide Palakkad gap. As in other parts of Southern India, tribes in Kerala also are leading somewhat primitive ways of life.

The Tribal Communities of Kerala differ much from each other. These differences relate to various aspects of social organisation and means of subsistence. Then what is common among these tribes are their economic, educational and technological backwardness. It seems that the main aspects to understand these tribes of Kerala are that they have to be viewed as a group of people passing through a period of historical changes. As the tribal population in this state is small, scientific studies about a small tribe is likely

59 Satyasundaram, n. 11, p.329.
to be less interesting than that about a larger tribe.\(^{64}\) In this way the prerequisite for understanding the socio-economic condition of tribes in Kerala is a proper estimation and scientific classification. It is natural that experts in the field of ethnology would find many gaps and mistakes in their first attempt of this classification. The problems for making such a classification has already been there; because Kerala inherited its list of tribes from that in effect in the erstwhile Madras Presidency and the princely states.\(^{65}\) One significant point regarding this list was that several communities in the list relating to the state were not domicile of Kerala and many of similar tribes have existed in the neighbouring states. By this list no tribal community in any part of Kerala was categorised as a 'criminal tribe' in the pre-independent days.\(^{66}\)

Although anthropometric studies in Kerala had been started with Jagor and Koerbin prior to 1880, ethnographic accounts of the communities of the three regions, Travancore, Cochin and Malabar of Kerala were written under the aegis of the ethnographic survey of India, undertaken in 1901.\(^{67}\) There were difficulties in the categorisation of communities between Travancore and Cochin and it is said that the Cochin and Malabar Tribes came from

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\(^{64}\) A. Aiyappan, "Tribes in South India" in Devendra Thakkur et al. (eds.) Tribal Life in India, New Delhi, 1996, p.96.


\(^{66}\) If a local Government has reason to believe that any tribe, gang or class of persons, or any part of a tribe, gang or class, is addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences, it may, by notification in the local official Gazette, declare that such tribe, gang or class or, as the case may be, that such part of tribe, gang or class is a criminal tribe. Frederick S. Mullaly, Notes on criminal classes of the Madras Presidency, Government Press Madras, 1892, p.118. Madras Criminal Tribes Manual, Madras, 1927, p. 3.

\(^{67}\) K.S. Singh, n. 65, p.xix.
Coimbatore, Mysore and the Nilgiris.\textsuperscript{68} The tribal population of Kerala as recorded in the census from 1901 onwards, is shown below.

**TABLE 2**

**Region-wise and Total Tribal Population of Kerala**

(Numbers in Thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1951</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travancore</td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>27(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochin</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malabar</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>158</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources – Travancore and Cochin Census reports from 1901 to 1951

The generic name for tribes in the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin state was 'Kattu-jati' and in Malabar it was 'Kattukuruman', both the names connotes 'people of the forest'.\textsuperscript{69} The Commissioners of Scheduled Tribes of India have stated in the Report of 1955 that during the past decades the tribal population in the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin State had declined. The official explanation was that many tribes have not been enumerated.\textsuperscript{70} Though this is a correct finding, migration, conversion and perhaps even mortality too could be other probable reasons.

The problems for the correct estimation of tribes in Kerala was inter-censial fluctuation on account of conceptual ambiguity, inaccessibility of the tribal settlements, migrant nature of hill tribes, tribes in transition etc.\textsuperscript{71} Since the irregular movements in the growth of the tribal population in Kerala

\textsuperscript{69} A.A.D. Luiz, \textit{Tribes of Kerala}, New Delhi, 1962, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{71} M. Kunhaman, \textit{n. 36}, p. 28.
during this period, the main problem was not these fluctuations alone. The inherent limitation of the procedure adopted for enumeration in their case was also the exclusive reliance on the 'guesstimates' of officials.\textsuperscript{72} In Travancore and Cochin this was done with the help of Forest Department officials, whereas in Malabar the landlords have widely been involved in it.\textsuperscript{73} In some British provinces it was affected directly under the control of the Government of India by the various local administrators.\textsuperscript{74} Macgregor, Collector of Malabar, reports, the primary census throughout the district, with exception of municipalities and coolies in the coffee estates in Wynad, was commenced on 15\textsuperscript{th} March, 1871 and terminated in the end of the month. As regards hill tribes, there was only one enumeration which was conducted in the month of September. The data varying in different areas.\textsuperscript{75}

The tribes in Western Ghats are more vagrant than any other contiguous regions in India. Being a contiguous region, the vagrant tribes of the three states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.) cross the state boundaries and wander into the neighbouring forest in search for food,\textsuperscript{76} although numerically predominant tribes of Kerala had already given up their migratory life in the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Some tribes in Wynad are more vagrant. In this sense, it is to be remembered that the historical perspectives of tribes in Kerala are conceived not only from ecological situation of Kerala State but from the influence of neighbouring states. The

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p. 37.

\textsuperscript{73} Forest dwellers were employed in the extraction of forest products, so each DFO was supposed to know the numbers of tribals belonging to the area under his jurisdiction.


\textsuperscript{76} In Wynad there is a 'trijunction' in Noolpuzha panchayath where the borders of these three states meet together.
resemblances in their names with that of the tribes in the neighbouring states and cultural traits are the evidences. Due to close resemblance in their mode of life and their linguistic similarities even the officials in the Forest Departments have not always been able to distinguish them from belonging to one state or another. Another factor inhibiting mobilization in this area is that a culturally homogeneous tribe is often split up into sections by the state boundaries.\textsuperscript{77} For the purpose of correct enumeration of tribes in such areas the Government of India have supplied some guiding principles by which the problems of migrant nature has been solved.\textsuperscript{78} Although these tribes in Kerala have some resemblances to the tribes of the neighbouring states all these tribes speak some form of Malayalam containing features distinct from the regional dialect. So far no distinct tribal language has been recorded from Kerala, although the possibilities of the existence of distinct languages cannot be ruled out.\textsuperscript{79}

With the spread of transport and communications in the forest regions and increasing induction of more and more tribal areas into the official orbit after independence, the degree of accuracy in the enumeration of hill-tribes can be expected to have increased over time. By the estimation under such facilities ST consists of 35 tribes as per the Census 2001.\textsuperscript{80} A list of these tribes are given in Appendix I.


\textsuperscript{78} (1) Where a person migrated from the portion of the state in respect of which his community is scheduled to another part of the same state in respect of which the community is not scheduled, he will continue to be deemed to be a member of the ST, in relation to that state.

(2) Where a person migrates from one state to another, he can claim to belong to an ST only in relation to the state to which he originally belonged and not in respect of the state to which he has migrated.


\textsuperscript{80} Kerala Gazette, Vol.52, No.36, Sept.2007, presents a list of 35 tribes in Kerala.
These tribal people are unevenly distributed throughout the District of Kerala as given in Appendix II.

By this census, the total tribal population in Kerala is 3,64,189 i.e., 1.14% of the total population of 3,18,41,374 accounting for 0.71 percent of the total ST population in the country.\textsuperscript{81} These tribal sects are living in different parts of Kerala and each community is unique in every respect.\textsuperscript{82} Though the tribes are found in almost all the district of Kerala, there is no single tribal community that is found scattered throughout the State. This absence of spread of any single tribe over the whole region cutting across district boundaries may be due to the preference for group living which is still predominant among the tribal population, and also due to various factors hindering their geographical mobility such as illiteracy, low educational level and difficulty of terrain. They are also at different levels of socio-economic development and cultural scale. The nature of acceptability and assimilative power vary from tribe to tribe.\textsuperscript{83} Recent studies show that certain tribes like the Kurichias and Kurumans of Waynad possess these qualities.

After the formation of Kerala State, various commissioners and experts have presented many lists of STs of the state. According to the SC/ST Modification Order 1956, there are 38 tribes in Kerala as given in Appendix III, which was the official list of the state, and it has included the names of the nomadic tribes often seen in the state. But A.A.D. Luiz has extended this list to 48 tribes by including the names of other ten, which have not been

\textsuperscript{82} Tribal Folklore - An Introduction. Trivandrum, 2005, p.6.
\textsuperscript{83} Amal Kumar Das, 'Spread of Appropriate level of Technology for Tribal Development' in George Pfeffer et al., (eds.), Contemporary Society; Tribal Studies, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1997, p. 65.
enumerated by the Government.\textsuperscript{84} Many of these tribes have not been enumerated in the censuses of 1921, 1931 and 1941, although their existence was known to the Government.\textsuperscript{85} But no official report states that any of these tribes have become extinct.

The tribal population of Kerala in 1956 was 1,34,757 i.e., 0.99 percent of the total population of the State.\textsuperscript{86} These people were much steeped in ignorance, superstition, illiteracy and poverty that no initiative could be expected from themselves for modernity.\textsuperscript{87} Though a list of STs was notified by the President under the Constitution, the enumerators appointed in Kerala for the census operation often faced the problem of identifying them and had difficulties particularly with the names of sub-tribes and their synonyms. There are similar tribes with different names, and different tribes with the same name. There are adequate guidance for the acceptance or rejection of claims, and the detailed ethnographic studies have helped to provide such guidance.\textsuperscript{88}

In the first census after independence some modifications have been made in the ST lists of Kerala. The Nayadis in Kerala were enumerated separately in the three regions and very strangely their names have been deleted from the list of tribes and added to the list of SC with no justifications whatsoever.\textsuperscript{89} The Eravallans (yaravalans) recorded in the former censuses

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\textsuperscript{84} The name of these 10 tribes are Allar, Chingathan, Kadar of Wynad, Kalanady, Kunduvadiyan, Malapanikar, Malavettuvan, Matha, Mavilan, Mullukuruman.

\textsuperscript{85} A.A.D. Luiz, \textit{n. 69}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{86} Kerala was the 12th State when listed in the order of the tribal population in 1956.

\textsuperscript{87} R. Ramakrishnan Nair, \textit{Social structure and Political Development in Kerala}, Trivandrum, 1976, p.9.

\textsuperscript{88} M. Kunhaman, \textit{op. cit.}, p.31.

\textsuperscript{89} The Census of India (1931) described the Nayadies as a wandering jungle tribe of Malabar. Whereas in 1941 classifies those in Cochin and Travancore as ST.
have been under-enumerated by the census. The Malakudies of Travancore are totally missing in the later reports.\textsuperscript{90} There was also a finding that the Malakudies are now known as Vishavans, and no explanation, has been offered for the change of name.\textsuperscript{91} The names of many tribes, such as Urali, Mannan, Malayan, Pulayan are included in the list of both SCs and STs in 1956.\textsuperscript{92} The Report of the socio-economic Survey of Tribe in Kerala, 1976-78, has mentioned that the Malayan do not posses the characteristics of tribe. Hence they can be excluded from the list of ST and retained in the list of SC. This double listing has led to confusion, caused the population estimates to be inaccuracy and created room for misuse of privileges and concessions. The generic term Hill Pulaya refers to three distinct tribes known as Matha pulayas, Karavazhi pulayas and Kurumba pulayas. Later it was corrected to omit these vague generic terms and insert the correct names of tribes.

It is also worthwhile to mention some other mistakes in scheduling the list of tribes in Kerala that have been continuing from 1951 onwards. There are duplication of some communities under different names, for example, Malayarayar (Malai Arayan) who were considered as two communities. The Malayadiyars (Malai adiyans), an existing tribe was not recorded in the later censuses, and also missing in the official list of ST in 1956.\textsuperscript{93} The tribes like Pallayan, Palliyan and Palliyar are considered as three different ST

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\textsuperscript{90} A.A.D. Luiz, \textit{n.} 69, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{92} Nattu Malayan, Kongu Malayan (excluding the areas comprising the Kasargod, Kannur, Wynad and Kozhikode Districts – Gazette, Vol. 52, No.36, 11\textsuperscript{th} September 2007).
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 4.
communities in Idukki district.\textsuperscript{94} It was only in 1971 census that they were enumerated separately. The commission of 1978 stated that these tribes are the same tribe and shown under different names. Though enumerated separately, they were listed as one tribe in 2001 census. Thus certain tribes given under different names are actually the same tribe. The name of the tribe Arandan was wrongly given to Arandan (Report 1978:96). This mistake was pointed out by the Evaluation Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri. K.K. Viswanathan.

At the same time some more tribal communities were put together under one name and thus the number of tribes was reduced. In Madras Census Report of 1901 the Kurumba and the Kuruba tribes have always been treated as the same tribe.\textsuperscript{95} But Thurston considered them as distinct tribes.\textsuperscript{96} Further he distinguished them from Jenu or Honey Kurumbans with the help of Mysore census report of 1901. A comparative study of Mysore and Madras census report of 1901 helped Thurston to make clear the identification problems of South Indian castes and tribes. The name of Kuruma is supposed to be the generic name for the Mullukuruman, and Uralikuruman. These are distinct tribes and deserve to be dealt with independently. In the Madras District Gazetteers-Malabar, on the basis of Madras Census Report of 1901, the tribe kurumbar or kuruman are sub-divided into Mullu (bamboo) Kurumban, Ten (honey) Kurumban also called Kadu or Chola Naykkans and Uralikurumbans.\textsuperscript{97} Luiz in his early list of tribals in Kerala has distinguished


\textsuperscript{95} Edgar Thurston, \textit{Castes and Tribes of Southern India}, Vol. I (Reprint), New Delhi, 1975, p.157.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid.}

between the Kurumbas and Kurumas, and Mullukurumas and Uralikurumans. Later Mathur in his studies of Wynad also says about these three endogamous groups (Ten Kurumans, Mullukurumans and Uralikurumans) as segments of the Kurumbas. In the present ST list of Kerala all Kurumans are grouped into one category without considering their distinctiveness. Mullukuruma and ten kuruma have their headmen with the title of Moopan and Mudali respectively conferred by their janmies, whereas the Uralikuruman of Wynad differed from other kuruman in having no headman. This Uralikuruman is also known as Vettakurumans. Thus the Kurumbas have a lot of history and legends in common with the Uralikurumas (Kurumbas) of South India. Ethnically they are the same race even though they have adopted diverse occupations, and made mutual claims of racial superiority. The name of 'Kuruma' seems to be applied to several different communities, some of whom are found in the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as well. It is said that many tribes in Kerala are known in neighbouring states in other names as given below.

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98 Luiz, n. 69, p. 111.
102 Luiz, n. 69, p. 117.
TABLE 3

Similar Tribes in the Neighbouring States of Kerala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of tribes in Kerala</th>
<th>Name of tribes in Karnataka</th>
<th>Name of tribes in Tamil Nadu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurumba (Attapadi)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Pal Kurumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullu-kuruman</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Mulla-kurumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kattunayikan</td>
<td>Jenu Kurumba</td>
<td>Kadu Kurumba/Kattu naickan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paniyan</td>
<td>Paniyerava</td>
<td>Paniyar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adiyan</td>
<td>Panjariyarava</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paliyan</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Palliyan/Palliyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urali Kuruman</td>
<td>Betta Kurumba</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the Census 1951 onwards, the Ullatans are classified into two categories, viz., (i) Ulladan (Hill dwellers) as ST, (ii) Ullatan as SC. But in 1981 census these two categories were together enumerated as ST. 103 Although many tribes like Cholanaickans, Pathinaikkans and Malamuthans are considered as tribes by the state, they have not been scheduled even in 1971 census. 104 Among these tribes the Cholanaikkans are one of the smallest tribal communities of Kerala receiving considerable attention at the national level. It is stated that the ethnographers failed to identify them as one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in Kerala. 105 The name of Cholanaikkans first appeared in the work of Thurston 106. But they do not appear in the official list of ST maintained by the Union, Kerala, Mysore and Madras.

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106 Edgar Thurston, n. 95, p. 176.
Governments, but the Kattunaikkan, a similar tribe in Wynad, has already been enumerated from 1951 onwards. Another scholar has identified the cholanaikkans as a distinct tribe in Kerala and said that it is a corrupted term of cholanaikkkan, shola or chola meaning kadu or forest.\textsuperscript{107} They are said to have migrated from the neighbouring forest of Mysore and are speaking a mixture of Canara and Tamil.\textsuperscript{108} This cholanaikkans have no knowledge of agriculture and they are not agricultural labourers. It is stated that they are the only tribe in Kerala which solely depend on a single economic specialization, i.e., food gathering.\textsuperscript{109} Another case which has added a lot of confusion is the clubbing together of two different tribes, largely found in Idukki and Palakkad districts, Muthuvan and Mudugar/ Muduga as one and the same. So the Mudugar as an alternative name for Muthuvan is incorrect.\textsuperscript{110} It is stated that they are distinct tribes and are to be listed separately, from 1971 census these two tribes have been enumerated as one and the same.\textsuperscript{111} If many of these errors are removed, we find more than 36 tribal groups, concentrated in different parts of Kerala.

The effective census procedures after independence with the purpose of understanding the socio-economic conditions of tribes did much help for correct enumerations in Kerala. One thing to be noted is that the census figures on the tribal population of Kerala cannot be relied upon for the study of socio-economic changes in this population prior to 1951.\textsuperscript{112} The 1961 census, first census after the formation of Kerala, went a long way in making up for the above mentioned deficiency by providing district-wise data. From

\textsuperscript{107} B. Anandabhanu, \textit{n. 94}, p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{109} Anandabhanu, \textit{n. 94}, p. 194.  
\textsuperscript{110} Luiz, \textit{n. 69}, p. 5.  
\textsuperscript{111} Census, 1971, as quoted in Mathur, \textit{n. 105}, p. 6.  
\textsuperscript{112} M. Kunhaman, \textit{n. 36}, p. 31.
then on there has been substantial improvement in the enumeration procedures adopted. In addition to tribe-wise presentation of figures in case of all persons belonging to any of the STs, it also contains a table giving social, cultural and economic features of each ST.\textsuperscript{113} One notable feature of this census is the number of ethnographic studies conducted concerning tribes in Kerala to improve the census procedures. The main studies were conducted during the directorship of N.K. Bose (1959-1961) and Dr. D.K. Sen (1964-1966) under the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI).\textsuperscript{114} But these studies could not be of much help in making a proper identification of the tribes in Kerala.

In the 1961 census, out of the total 48 tribal communities only 35 were 'ST' and the rest were Denotified Tribal Communities.\textsuperscript{115} The total population of Kerala in this census was 1,69,03,715 and as many as 2,12,762 belonged to the category of ST, i.e., 1.25\%. The available censuses data can also be used for analyzing the geographical distribution or district-wise population in Kerala, particularly in the period following the formation of Kerala state.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{115} Denotified Tribal Communities are the Tribes who have not been classified as ST.
TABLE 4

District-wise Distribution of the tribal population in Kerala
Census from 1961 to 1971

(In Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kannur</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Trissur</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Alleppey</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Quilon</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KERALA</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A significant fact which emerges from a study of the District-wise figures of STs in Kerala (1961 census) is that Kannur District comes first among the districts in the number of ST population, whereas Kozhikode district comes next. These two northern most districts account for more than 50 per cent of the state tribal population in 1961 and 1971 censuses. Of all the districts in Kerala, tribals are numerically dominant in Kannur, Kozhikode, Palakkad and Idukki during the 1961 and 1971 censuses.

Thus an officially approved list, tribe-wise and district-wise, and detailed ethnographic studies of 1961 might have been expected to facilitate a

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better coverage and a high degree of accuracy in the enumeration of tribes in 1971. In Kerala the population of ST were 269, 356, which constituted 1.26 percent of the total population of the state. In this sense the problem has not been solved fully since there are many listings of STs in Kerala and it remained unabated till 1976. In 1971 census 38 tribes were reported by, Kerala Government, whereas another scholar has given another list of ST and viewed that some tribes were not included in this list. Some others also have to be excluded from the list, if so there would be 45 tribes in Kerala. Dr. Somasekharan Nair also enumerates the STs in Kerala to be in between 41 and 54. In such a situation many of these communities were included in the SC/ST Amendment Act of 1976, by which in Kerala there are 68 SC and 35 ST communities. Thus the 1971 list was modified in 1976. A notable change in this direction was the Pulayas, a tribe, numbering 85,098, in the 1971 census, was detribalized in 1976. This led to the reduction of tribal population from 1.26 percent in 1971 to 1.03 percent in 1981. Till 1971 the pulaya community has been notified as an ST under the name of Hill Pulaya. The Kurumba Pulaya are also notified as an ST under the name of Hill Pulaya. Then the Kurumba pulaya and Karavazhi pulaya were clubbed together to form the Hill pulaya.

There had been some attempts to omit such vague generic terms and insert the correct names from 1961 census. The official explanation for these

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118 Report on Socio-economic survey of tribes in Kerala 1976-78, Trivandrum, 1979, Sept., p. 64
120 P. Somasekharan Nair, Paniyar, Kottayam, 1976, p. 18.
121 K.S. Singh (ed.), n. 65, p. 2.
omissions in case of Pulayas was that unlike the tribes, the pulayas constitute
a single community that is found scattered throughout the state.\textsuperscript{124} The Report has not mentioned the political pressure that forced to make such a shift in the list. The political pressure from North Malabar forced the government to state that the pulayas did not rightly come under the tribal classification and so they should be removed from the tribal list but retained in the list of SC. In the light of the Report, it is known from the enquiries of the commission, with the officers of Harijan Welfare (H.W), Tribal Welfare Department (T.W.D) and persons engaged in the social work among the SC/ST, that the tribes like Kochuvelan, Kondakapus, Kondareddy, Kota and Maha Malasar, do not exist in the state.\textsuperscript{125} But even at present census they are enumerated as Kochuvelan (36-M-20, F-16) Kondakapus (12-M-3, F-9), Konda reddy (377, M-192, F-184) Kota (40-M-20, F-20) and Maha Malasar (116, M-64, F-52) (census 2001). Thus the existing list of ST in the state can be much simplified by eliminating the names of nonexisting tribes from the list and also bracketing the different names of the same tribes.

The Report of 1976-78 has also mentioned some tribes which have not attained any progress in spite of various concessions allowed and they are only less than 30 percent literate by the 1971 census. They include Paniya, Aranadan, Kattunaykkans, Adiya, Irular, Kurumba, Koraga, Malasar, Mannan, Muthuvan, Eravallan etc.\textsuperscript{126} The provision in the constitution for periodical revision in ten years was used for this re-scheduling. This period of ten years was set initially to achieve the goal, but as the problem was deep-rooted and many-faceted it was extended by ten years every time after the expiry of the period.


\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.