Coimbatore peasants followed him through a mountain pass and discovered what was later to become the town of Ootacamund, then a Toda settlement.159

**Indigenous Groups**

British anthropologists such as W. Rivers first made the tribal groups of the Nilgiri Hills famous in the early 19th century. The different ethnic groups have become well known for their distinct Cultures and livelihoods, whilst maintaining key areas of inter-reliance. The main groups in the District are the Todas, Kota, Kurumba, Irula, Paniya, and Badaga, who tend to occupy different altitudinal locations, which accounts for some of their cultural distinctions.160

**Chapter II**

**TRIBALS OF THE NILGIRI DISTRICT**

The Nilgiri hills, is one of the smallest districts of Tamilnadu. Etymologically the word Nilgiri means Blue Mountains. According to 2001 census, the total population of the Nilgiri district is 7.64 lakhs peoples out of which the total Scheduled Tribes population was 28378, constituting 4.32 percent of the total general population. The Scheduled Tribe population in Nilgiri district is not evenly distributed in the six Taluk. 32.08 percent of them live in Pandalur Taluk; 24.10 percent of the tribes live in Kundha


Taluk; 9.27 percent of them live Udhagamandalam Taluk and remaining 6.96 percent live in Coonoor Taluk.\textsuperscript{161} In Tamilnadu, among the 36 scheduled tribes, the government of India identifies six communities as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas, and Kattunayakans.

All these six Primitive Tribal groups (PTGs) live in the Nilgiri district. Among them four Primitive Tribal groups (PTGs), Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas and Paniyas live exclusively only in the Nilgiri district. The other two Irulas and Kattunayakans live in Nilgiri district as well as other districts of Tamilnadu. The above-mentioned tribal groups along with the Badaga community are considered das indigenous groups of the Nilgiri district.\textsuperscript{162} Kurumbas and Irulas call their village \textit{Motta}, Toda-\textit{Mund}, Badagas-\textit{Hatti}, Kotas-\textit{kokai}.

\textbf{Badagas}

Badagas although far the most numerous, not being an aboriginal or jungle race, which will be devoted to an account of the primitive tribes, and to the rude stone monuments, of uncertain origin, which are found in various parts of the plateau.\textsuperscript{163} The Badagas are Hindus, chiefly of the Saiva sect, and are supposed to they emigrated to the Nilgiris form Mysore, about 300 years ago, after the breaking up of the kingdom of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{161} Jakka, Pathasarathy., \textit{Tribes & Inter Ethnic Relationship In The Nilgiri District}, Tamilnadu, Nilgiri, 2007, pp. 5.6.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9
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Vijayanagar. They are an agricultural race, and cultivate various cereals of rather a poor sort. They hold their hands under government at very easy rates, and of late years many of them have acquired considerable wealth, an own large herd of cattle. They pay a sort to tribute, in grain, to the Todas; their language is a corrupt from Canarese. Their individual socio-economic, socio-cultural mainly characterizes the tribal groups who are exposed to various environmental stresses and socio-biological set up. Hence, the health of these tribal groups is as such a function of the interaction between socio-cultural practices, genetic characteristics and the environment conditions. The widely varying prevalent health practices, use of indigenous herbal drugs, taboos, and superstitions are also responsible for determining the health behaviour and health status of the tribal groups.

Tribal Culture

“A culture that complex whole which is includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Culture also includes all the elements in man’s old endowment that he has acquired from his group by conscious learning or by a conditioning process – techniques of various kinds, social and other institutions, beliefs and patterned modes of conduct. Marriage is universal form that has been accepted by all. It varies from culture to culture.

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165 Johann Friedrich Metz., The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills: Their Social Customs and Religious Rites, 2nd (edn). Mangalore, 1864, p. 61.
and people to people. The commonly known forms of marriage are monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry.

**Todas**

The Toda are the original inhabitants of The Nilgiris Hills and they are one of the most picturesque tribes in India. Classically described as Patriarchal, the Todas actually possess some Patrilineal and matrilineal divisions they were undoubtedly polyandrous.\(^{166}\)

**Kotas**

The Kotas inhabiting Nilgiri district within a cultural frame work and they are strict followers of their culture. Both monogamy and polygamy form of marriage is practiced among them but most of Kotas prefer monogamy. Polyandry is not prevalent among the Kota people.

**Kurumbas**

Kurumbas are the least civilized group in the district and they mostly live in the hill slopes and feverish places. Alu Kurumba, Jenu Kurumba, Betta Kurumba, Uruli Kurumba and Mullu Kurumba, each group maintain different ethnic social organizations and social designs based on their living habitats. All these five groups follow endogamy to regulate their marriage systems and cross-cousin marriage is practiced except for

Mullu Kurumba.\textsuperscript{167} They follow monogamy form of marriage. Polyandry is forbidden, but polygamy is a status symbol.

**Irulas**

Irulas the second largest scheduled Tribe in Tamilnadu. In Nilgiri district, Irula are found in the lower regions of the hills. Irulas strictly follows community level endogamy i.e., marrying within their own community. They also prefer cross-cousin consanguinity. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Polygamy is sanctioned but polyandry is strictly forbidden.\textsuperscript{168}

**Paniyas**

The word ‘Paniyan’ means ‘\textit{servant}’ in both Malayalam and Tamil. They are the traditional farm laborers for Chetty (landowners) Property Owners. They do not easily mingle with other tribal communities of these areas.\textsuperscript{169} The Paniyas usually avoid marrying their cross cousins. Monogamy is the most common form of marriage, among Paniyas whereas, polygamy form of marriage is also found in few settlements in the

\textsuperscript{167} D. B . Kapp., \textit{The Kurumbas’ Relationship to the “Megalithic” Cult of Nilgiri Hills} (South India), Anthropos, Austria, 1985, pp. 493-534.

\textsuperscript{168} The Tribals included 200 Kurumbas, 50 Kurichiyars, 100 Panniyars and Pulayars, 50 “Chettys and Squatters, According to the Administrative Reports of Forests in Madras Presidency, 1861–1862, IOR: V/24/1281.

district. However, polyandry form of marriage is completely absent in Paniyan society. Levirate form of marriage is prevalent in both male and female.

**Kattunaikans**

This tribal community is also found only in Pandalur and Gudalur Taluk. They also had known as Kadu or Shola Nayakans. The Kattunayakans are unique endogamous tribe. In order to regulate their endogamy marriage system they have clan wise exogamy pattern and avoid marrying within clan. Cross-cousin consanguinity marriage is practiced and they prefer consanguinity of marrying maternal uncle niece.

**Parsis**

There were some 50 Parsis of the Nilgiris in 1901 a higher number than is usual in madras districts, And in Ootacamund near the army head quarters office is a Parsi place of burial. The tribes, isolated altogether, mutually interdependent yet culturally distance are simultaneously exposed to alien custom. The culture of each takes a different course of adaptation to the new circumstances. Our purpose is to indicate some reasons for these differences and, if possible, to discern certain general trends underlying the variant processes of acculturation. For many centuries, the tribes of the Nilgiri hills in South India were isolated from the people of the plains. The abruptness of the hills and the climate of the plateau discouraged any extensive contacts with was geographically

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170 Ibid., p. 23.
close to Hindu life but culturally remote from it. The Nilgiri folk lived in economic and social symbiosis, the Todas being pastoral people, the Badagas agriculturists the Kotas artisans, the Kurumbas food gatherers and sorcerers.\textsuperscript{172}

**Todas**

They are one of the communities of India. The pastoral Toda made the Nilgiri Hills of Tamilnadu their home. The Toda are notifies as a scheduled tribe in Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{173} They speak in Toda, a language of the Dravidian family of languages. They are conversant with the earlier and present lingua franca of the Nilgiris. They use the Tamil script.

**Origin of the Toda People**

The Todas considered as a group of the Proto-Aryans, who share a series of physical characters with the *Ainu* (ethnic group) of Japan. A few believe that they belong to the Indo-Afghan race, while some others think that they are Nordic. The Toda are tall-statured, longheaded people with a narrow nose form and their physical features conform to the Mediterranean type.\textsuperscript{174} The Todas are divided into five clans, namely: *Paiki*,

\textsuperscript{172} Rosairo, Antyde., *Tamil Folklore*, Orientalist vol-2, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, 1886, pp. 183-184.


\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p. 1145.
Pekkan, Kuttan, Kenna, and Todi. The term Paiki again among the Hale-Paikis of Naga, and the Kumara Paikas of North Kanara. The Hale Paikis of Manjarabad are called Devara Makkalu or children of god, and the paikis who take the lead among the Todas, for them the Palal or high priest is chosen, call themselves also Der Mokh, or children of God.175

Mode of life

A mund or mott is the term used to designate a hamlet or village by the Toda tribe. Each mund or hamlet usually composed about five buildings or huts, three of which are used a dwellings, one as a dairy, and the other of sheltering the calves at night. These huts or dwellings form a peculiar kind of oval pent-shaped construction, usually 10 feet height, 18 feet long, and 9 feet broad, the entrance or doorway into this building measures 32 inches in height and 18 in width, and is not provided with any door or gate, but the entrance is closed by means of a solid slab or plank of width from 4 to 6 inches thick, and of sufficient dimensions to entirely block up the entrance.176 Hides sliding door is inside the hut, and so arranged and fixed on two heavy stake buried in the earth, and standing to the height of 2½ to 3 feet, as to be easily moved back and forth. There are no other openings or outlets of any kind, either for the escape of smoke or for the free way in any way out of atmospheric are. The doorway itself is of such small dimensions, that, to

175 F. Metz., In The Tribes Inhabiting The Neilgherry Hills, Mangalore, 1864, p. 14.
affect an entrance, one has to go down on all fours, and even then, much wriggling is necessary before an entrance can be affected.\textsuperscript{177} The houses are neat in appearance thatch (roof), which renders them water-tight each building has an end walling before and behind, composed of solid bricks of wood, and the sides are covered in, but the pent-roofing which slopes down to the ground. The front wall or planking contains the entrance or doorway. The inside of a hut is from 8 to 155 feet square, and is sufficiently high in the middle to admit of a tall man moving about with comfort.\textsuperscript{178} On one side, there is a raised platform or pail formed of clay about two feet high, and covered with buffalo skins, or sometimes with a mat. This platform is used as a sleeping place. On the opposite side is a fire place and a slight elevation on with the cooling utensils are placed. In this, part of the building faggots of firewood seen piled up from floor to roof, and secured in their place by loops of rattan. Here also the rice-pounder of pestle is fixed. The mortar is formed by a hole dug in the found 7 to 9 inches deep, and rendered hard by constant use.\textsuperscript{179} The other household goods consist of three or four brass dishes or plates, several bamboo measures, and sometimes at hatchet.

**Todas Pastorals**

The Todas are a purely pastoral people. They have large herds of buffaloes, and depend for support on their produce, with the addition of the \textit{gudu}, which they levy in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{177} W.H.R. Rivers., \textit{The Todas.}, London 1906, p. 755.
  \item \textsuperscript{179} A.R. Walker., \textit{The Toda of South India: A New Look}, Delhi, 1986, p. 33.
\end{itemize}
kind from Badagas and Kotas. Labor of any kind they hardly ever attempt; indeed so entirely in comprehensible is the notion to them, that when on one occasion, an unlucky mistake about the ownership of some buffaloes committed and old Toda to jail, it was found impossible to induce him to work with the other convicts, and the authorities unwilling to resort to harsh measures, were compelled to save appearances by making him an overseer. The buffaloes only on green grass and water. The Todas stopped their nomadic pastoral life of pasturage of buffaloes on the Nilgiri hills.

a. Influx of immigrants

b. Extension of agriculture plantain activities by non-tribes into grazing lands

c. Promotion of tourism and development of Nilgiri upper plateau as a hill-station

The Todas due to these reasons switched over to stall-feeding and became permanent settlers in their clan, wise *munds*. A few settlements of the Todas, which remained as unoccupied, remained as pastoral heritage sites. Due to these changes, Todas started deriving income by selling raw milk, ghee, dung and also a buffalo or calf. Now a day, a Toda family with less than twenty buffaloes is considered as poor.

**Social Organization**

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181 H. Captain., *Congreve of The Madras Artillery*; Madras, 1847 pp. 77-146.

The social organization of any society involves mutual relations, obligation elements of ideal behavior, anticipated behavior and accrual behavior of community members. Thus, social organization is the network of relations existing among individuals and groups in a society. The Toda society is a Petri lineage a descent group whose membership is based upon a rule of patrilineal descent. Patrilineal decent is a cultural principle that automatically affiliates childbirth through his Male Ancestors.\(^\text{183}\)

The Toda community is divided into two endogamous groups, namely:

a. Tharthazoll

b. Theveioll

As per the Toda custom, the Toda women belonging to Theveioll avoids visiting to the Tharthazoll. The restriction is said to be due to the fact that on one occasion a Theveioll women, on a visit to a Tharthazoll mund, folded up a cloth, and placed it under her putkuli as if was a baby. When food was served, she asked for some mote food for the child, and on it, exhibited the cloth. The Tharthazoll, not appreciating the mild joke, decided degrade all Theveioll women. Even today, though the Todas belonging to Tharthazoll are eager to visit to the women belong to Theveioll, the Theveioll avoid visiting the Munds where Tharthazoll live.\(^\text{184}\)


Toda women take part in agricultural operations, tend cattle, collect fire, and fetch clean water. They participate in economic activities and observe rituals. The different life cycle rituals that are observed vary in details with groups and particulars.\textsuperscript{185} A pregnant woman is symbolically separated from the household during her pregnancy, as it entails pollution. The bow and arrow ceremony, a symbolic recognition of the social paternity of the child, is performed before the delivery. Despite the disappearance of polyandry, the observance of this ritual has persisted as a cultural survival.\textsuperscript{186} Traditionally the Toda pastoral, but of late about a quarter of them have taken up commercial agriculture, particularly the cultivation of vegetables like potato and cabbage. A few of them have leased out their land in lieu of a fixed amount of money payable at the time of the harvest.\textsuperscript{187}

**Religion**

Traditional Todas cosmology identifies two worlds: that of the living, ruled by the goddess Tökisy. There is no conception of an eternal Hell, but those who have led unmeritorious lives are said to suffer many indignities before they too eventually reach the other world. Pilgrimage to Hindu temples,\textsuperscript{188} Todas religion finds ritual expression principally in the cult of the sacred dairies and their associated buffalo herds. Buffalo are

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categorized as secular (the mainstay of the traditional economy) or sacred (with several gradations). For the latter, ritual surrounds every task of the dairyman: herding, milking, churning, and preparing ghee (clarified butter) from butter, as well as seasonal or occasional activities such as burning the pastures (now discontinued), naming a buffalo, giving salt to the herds, driving them to dry-season pastures, and rethatching or rebuilding a dairy building. Dairies, which Todas themselves identify as temples, are buildings kept in a state of ritual purity so that dairymen-priests (of comparable ritual purity) can process inside them the milk from associated herds of sacred buffalo. Ranked in a hierarchy, each grade of dairy has its associated grade of sacred buffalo and dairyman-priest. The higher the grade of a dairy, the greater is the need for ritual purity and the more elaborate the rituals that surround the daily tasks of the dairyman. Another category of religious specialist are the "god men," who in trance become mouthpieces of particular deities, frequently Hindu rather than Todas ones. Other deities, the "gods of the sacred places," represent the divine essences of the more sacred of the dairy complexes; they too are sometimes conceived anthropomorphically. Most modern Todas worship Hindu deities, displaying lithographic icons of Shiva, Vishnu, Murugan, Aiyappan, etc. in their homes and sometimes even keeping an elaborate "gods' room" such as one finds among the Hindu mainstream.

The Todas religion is the vaguest and smallest kind, some old men of a devout turn of mind make salam to the rising Sun (brish) and at some seasons to the Moon
(tiggal) and fast at eclipse, and occasionally they may prostrate themselves at the door of the Palthuchi (diary) but no one except the pujari attempts anything beyond this, he said “May all be well! May the buffaloes be well”. ¹⁸⁹

They believe in the existence of an invisible and supreme spirit, and in a future state, though this they seems to regard as one of a somewhat mundane character, in as much as buffaloes and abundance of are to be the portion of the faithful. ²⁵ They also pay reverence to though they do not worship, inferior objects, such as hills and forests and the rising sun, precisely as did the ancient Celts.

**Diary Temples**

The temple buffaloes are ranked according to the grade of the dairy-temple with which they are principally associated, with Todas concepts of ritual purity and pollution of vital importance in ranking both dairies and animals. In brief, the higher a buffalo's grade, the greater the care that must be taken to prevent its ritual defilement. Women may not milk a buffalo of any grade and nonprofessionals may only milk non-temple animals. Milk from temple buffaloes must be drawn by a Dairyman-Priest of appropriately high ritual status, and purity or else left for its calves to consume. ¹⁹⁰ Most of the Todas dairy-temples are half-barrel-shaped. There are only two remaining conical – and particularly sacred – dairies, termed poh. The majority of dairies have a front and a


rear room. The front room has a raised earthen platform on each side; these are the resting places for the dairyman and, if he has one, his Sacred Dairymen and Buffaloes assistant. Between, the two platforms is an earthen heart, not for cooking but merely for warmth. Certain appurtenances not associated with the dairy ritual are kept in this front room: a bamboo water vessel for the dairyman's ablutions, an axe for chopping firewood, the firewood itself, a woven cane basket for carrying rice or other food grains into the dairy, and the dairyman's secular clothing. Generally, the diaries are divided into an outer and an inner room, in the former of which the dairyman priest (Palol) usually sleeps and in the latter the churning and so on are performed. In this latter are kept the various vessels and churns; and those which are used to carry the finished product to ordinary mortals are kept rigorously apart from those which have direct milk. A special stream or special part of the common streams is carefully reserved for use in the diary, and when the priest is in the building, he must wear only a languti.

The inner room is the ritual heart of the temple. The sacred dairy equipment is stored in this room and the dairyman performs the most important duty of his office here: the churning of into butter and buttermilk. There are two principal areas within this most sacred inner room, corresponding to the two categories of dairy equipment. There is a raised earthen shelf on the right hand side as one enters the room, on which is kept the less-sacred of the dairy equipment, the er-tat-far, earthenware and bamboo vessels used

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to store and carry away the products of the dairy, vessels that the dairyman uses to cook his own food on a second hearth, to the left in this inner room. The fire sticks he employs to produce fire by friction because matches and lighters may not be used inside a dairy temple, and the dairy lamp. Some dairy-temples also possess ritual artifacts of the very highest sanctity. These are metal (iron, silver, and gold are reported) objects that are attached to the rear wall of the dairy's inner room and are covered with ferns to protect their purity.

Today, Todas have a number of gods and goddesses who are sometimes mentioned formal in formal or prayers sating their attributes and sacred activities. These Todas divinities are called by the Todas as gods of the mountains because most of them are believed to reside on particular Nilgiri peaks and in Shola forests. Todas do not worship idols or deities. The Todas women are allowed near their neither traditional diaries nor temples are they allowed participating in any religious rites. Todas have many rites connected with the sacred buffalo. Milking of these buffaloes, churning of the milk, preparation of ghee, etc. is the right of men. These rituals constitute Todas religion. Each

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193 W.M. Yeats William., Todas in Census of India vol. Xiv, Govt of India, Calcutta, 1903, p. 31.
of the temples is under the care of a priest or *poojari* who accepts the office as an act of self-discipline and renunciation.\textsuperscript{194}

**Todas and Sacred Buffaloes**

The relationship of the Todas to their buffaloes transcends mundane considerations of ownership and economic worth. They regard the buffalo as a special gift from the gods, particularly the greatest deity Goddess “Tokishy.” \textsuperscript{31} In Todas legends, buffaloes frequently talk and assume other anthropomorphic characteristics. One story putting foreheads together and mourning in the manner, Todas still observe at their funerals, while another tells how a buffalo once established a particularly sacred dairy-temple.\textsuperscript{195} Even Today, Todas credit of their buffaloes are almost human intelligence. Todas males' intense interests in buffaloes develop early in life. Small boys mold mud into buffalo images; construct model pens and dairies of sticks, stones, and mud; and spend hours at home in the hamlet or out on the grasslands absorbed in 'playing buffalo herding'. Another favorite pastime is fashioning buffalo horns, which often extend into adulthood. Todas men frequently pick up a forked twig or an old piece of wire and, more or less unconsciously, begin bending it into the shape of a pair of buffalo horns.\textsuperscript{196}


The temple buffaloes are ranked according to the grade of the dairy-temple with which they are principally associated, with Todas concepts of ritual purity and pollution of vital importance in ranking both dairies and animals. In brief, the higher a buffalo's grade, the greater the care that must be taken to prevent its ritual defilement. Women may not milk a buffalo of any grade and non-professionals may only milk non-temple animals. Milk from temple buffaloes must be drawn by a dairyman-priest of appropriately high ritual status and purity, or else left for its calves to consume. The religion of Todas also involves ceremonies related buffaloes.

a. Naming buffalo

b. First milking of a temple buffalo

c. Giving salt buffaloes

d. Rituals for buffaloes

e. Calf sacrifice

f. Lighting the god’s fire

(ii) The Kotas

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197 Ibid., P. 19.
Next to the Todas in point to interest, and probably also in antiquity of race, as well as of settlement on the hills, stand the Kotas, though he two races have nothing in common either as regards physical development, countenance, usages, or dwellings.\textsuperscript{198}

The name is found variously spelt. *Kota, kotar, koter, kohatur*, the deviation is uncertain. *Kohata* or *Gohata*, cow killer, has been suggested, but this seems doubtful. The Todas call them *kouf*, or cow–people. They recognize no caste among themselves, but are divided into *keris* (streets), and men of one *Keri* must seek a wife in another.\textsuperscript{199} They are a very industrious tribe and devote themselves to agriculture and to various they excel as carpenters, smiths, tanners, basket makers. They are well formed of average height, not bad features and fair skinned.\textsuperscript{200}

The Toda and Kotas lived near each other before the settlement of the latter on the Nilgiri. Their dialects too betray a great resemblance. The Kotas are the only hill people who are not affair of the Todas, and they treat them occasionally even with bare courtesy, though, as a rule, a Kota, when meeting a Toda and Badaga, lifts both his hands to his face and makes his obeisance from a distance. They do also not, like the other hill tribes, greatly admire the mysterious power of witchcraft, with which the Todas are credited.\textsuperscript{201}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{198} W.Ross king., *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Shortts., *Account of the Tribes of the Neilgherry*, Madras, 1868, pp. 53-57.
\item \textsuperscript{201} Gustav Oppert., *On the Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsa or India*, Madras, 1894, p. 180.
\end{itemize}
Kotas lived in seven villages of 30 to 60 detached huts, at the center of Toda and Badaga spheres “the size of the Kota population is almost the same as that of the Todas.” They are artisans and musicians of the Nilgiri society. Though all classes look down on the Kotas, all agreed that they are excellent artisans. The Badagas invite Kota Musicians for their ceremonies and joyful events. They are skilled at blacksmithy, carpentry, rope, and umbrella making, gold and silver jewelry making, and are indispensable to other tribes.202

Marital system

A man may have more than one wife and so the Kota marital system includes true polygamy as well as fraternal polyandry. A woman lives only in the house of her legal husband and he is recognized as the father of the children these bears. The husband has precedence to his wife’s attention and favors. However, in the absence of the husband, any of his brothers have the right and the obligation to act in his stead. It is a right in the sense that a husband may not attempt to interfere and may not exhibit any signs of jealousy, when he finds so brother with his wife. It becomes an obligation when the husband is away from the village overnight. No woman will sleep alone in a house lest the sorcerers’ from the nearby Kurumba tribe find her an easy prey. Although any one of a man’s brothers may be the biological father of his wife’s child, only the husband is

202 Edgar Thurston., Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Cosmo publications Delhi, 1975, p. 7.
recognized as the sociological father. The kinship system further reflects the operation of the principle of fraternal equivalence. A man calls the child of his brother by the same terms as he uses for his own sons and daughters. This is true for the children of classificatory brothers as well as for the children of real brothers. In South India, polyandry is of especially frequent occurrence.

The historical aspects of Kota polyandry frame a significant problem. Before, the English came up to the Nilgiri plateau, its inhabitants were relatively isolated from the main currents of South Indian life. Contact with the people of the lowlands were few, since the honey up the hills was hard and hazardous. Soon after the Europeans discovered that the climate to the plateau was a life saving refuge from the fevers of the plains, roads and later a railroad were built. In the wake of the English came Tamilians and other lowland Hindus. Within the last fifty years, the advent of these newcomers has effected significant changes in the tribal culture. New deities have been adopted, new methods of cultivation practiced. It is striking that there has been no change in the practice of polyandry. Other of the tribal institutions, economic, religious, political, have been affected, yet polyandry flourishes with full vitality.

Religion Rites

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203 G.Mandelbaum David., Polyandry In Kota Society, Yale University, Yale, 1952, p. 87.
Their priests are of their own tribe. There are two to a village one called **Devadi**, whose office is hereditary. If the family fails entirely, recourse is had to inspiration for the choice of another. The **Devadi** appoints the second. Neither lives in the temple; they cool food before it at the feast of **Kamataraya**, and distribute it to the householders, sow and reap the first handfuls of grain at the proper seasons, and make the first obeisance other corpse at a funeral. The devadi is liable to be possessed by the deity. Generally, they recognize but one god, under the name of Kamataraya, and his wife, each represented by a thin silver plate. Traditions say of Kamataraya that perspiring profusely; he wiped from his foreheads three drops of perspiration and out of them formed the three most ancient of the hill tribesmen the Todas, Kurumbas, and Kotas. The chief Kota festival, however is the annual feast of Kamataraya, called Kamabata or Kamata. This lasts for about a fortnight. On the first evening, the priest lights a fire in the **swami** house, and then brings it to the principal street of the village where it is kept up during the whole of the feast. On the second day no work may be done, except digging clay and making pots but not particular ceremonies take place on this or the Three following days. On the sixth day men are sent to fetch bamboos and rattan, and on the seventh day the two

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temples are newly thatched and decorated; it's essential that this should be accomplished before nightfall.

The eighth and ninth days are spent in feasting. Contribution of grain and ghee are demand from the entire neighboring Badaga village and cooked in the enclosure of the temples. Only boiled grain, ghee and a sort of pea soup are eaten on this occasion. A portion is laid before the temple, then the priests eat and afterwards at the rest of the villagers all sitting in a row before the temple. The tenth day is passed in dancing the Kotas dress up to the occasion wearing the long robes and borrowing jewels of all sorts from the Badagas, who are obliged to propitiated their artisans by attending and contributing on this occasion. On the eleventh day, they decorate themselves with leaves, tie buffalo horns to their heads, and go through various appropriate pantomimes. The women also dance at this feast only; they sing at the same time, which is an improvement on the drum and horn accompanied of the men’s dancing. On the twelfth day they make a fire inside their temple, by drilling a pointed stick round and round in an hole in a piece of wood, bring a bit of iron, and go through the form of heating and working it up by way of asking ‘shastras’ and say to the god, “let all be well and prosper.”

Birth and Marriage Ceremony

209 Hockings., Rain, God and Unity among the Kotas in Blue Mountains Revisited: Cultural studies of the Nilgiris, Delhi, 1997, pp. 231-92.

During a woman’s pregnancy, the husband leaves his hair and nails uncut. Three houses built for women to occupy after the birth of children, or at other times when they considered unclean. Immediately after birth, the mother, and child are removed to the first hut, a temporary erection of bough called vollogudu, from vollu inside and gudu nest, where they remain for thirty days. The second and third months are spent in two permanent huts called telulu. A woman with her first child, on leaving the vollugudu for the first telulu, must make seven steps backwards among seven kind of thorns strewed on the found. Some Kothagiri, however have only the vollugudu in which the women remains for a month, and he treading on thorns takes place, when she leaves the vollugudu to return home. This is Mamul, no other reason is of course discoverable. On leaving the second Telulu, the mother generally goes to a relative’s house for three days; if this is not convenient, she returns home. Her husband purifies the house on her return by sprinkling it with cow-dung and water. On the seventh day after this, a feast is given to the relatives; the child is fed with congee and the paternal grandfather names it.

When a boy is from 15 or 20 years old, his parents ask in marriage for him some girl of six or eight. If her parents’ consent to the betrothal the boy with his parents goes to their house, salutes the boy bowing his head and clasping their feet, and presents them with a Birianhana of gold and ten or twenty rupees amongst well-to-do Kotas some

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jewels are presented to the girl at this time. This ceremony is called bali med -deni, from bali, bracelet, and med-deni, when the girl becomes of age, she is sent at the request of the boys relations to his father’s house, a feast is given with music, and the bridegrooms mother ties on the tali, in this case a silver necklace made by Kotas. In some places the bridegroom goes to the bides house and presents there with the tali, two madige or brass armlets, and a Bali or bracelet.

The Kotas marry only one wife, unless she should be barren, when they may take another. In this case, the two wives live in the same house. Widows may remarry. Kotas profess to have no traditions of any kind. They even pretend ignorance of the story of Koten, though it is evident from their manner that they do know it. Some declare that they were born on these hills, others that the inhabitants of each Kothagiri came from a different part of the neighboring plains.

Social life

The social organization of any society involves mutual relation obligations, elements of idea behavior anticipated behavior and accrual behavior of the community members. Thus, social organization is the network of relations existing among individuals and groups in a society. The Kota society is a partilineage descent group whose membership is based upon a rule of matrilineal descent is a cultural principle, which

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automatically affiliates a child at birth through his male ancestors. As with other tribal societies, Kotas do not have separate social divisions based on territorial or occupational levels. However, Kotas have a unique social feature of \textit{keri} (street) system that regulate their marriage alliances. \textit{Keri} in Kota dialect literally means a street. According to Kota informants, since quite a few Kota persons in each settlement bear similar names, it is easy to identify a person when the name of his or her \textit{keri} is prefixed to this name. Thus, the social organization has developed among the Kotas in such a way that, a \textit{keri} corresponds to a clan, and the members of a \textit{Keri} itself has become a social grouping of kinsmen$^{215}$.

\textbf{Music}

Instrumental tunes, or \textit{kol} of the Kotas differentiate, mark and partially constitute ritual occasions. There is a repertoire for dancing, a repertoire for funerals and a repertoire for \textit{god}.$^{216}$ Each is characterized by broad stylistic features, but the criteria for distinction between repertoires are to a greater extent contextual and singular (piece by piece) than they are musical. Within each repertoire, a particular tune may be associated with a particular action (in a funeral, for example, one tune is associated with lifting and carrying the bier to the cremation ground).$^{217}$ In general, the ways in which the structure

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$^{216}$ Hanchett, Suzanne., \textit{Coloured Rice: Symbolic Structures In Hindu Family Festivals.} Delhi, 1988, p. 34.

of instrumental melodies co-articulates with ritual structures can be analyzed as a system of indigenous classification in and of itself.\textsuperscript{218} One of the two basic rhythmic patterns, each of which may be elaborated in different ways, accompanies melodies. In Kolme -1 the rhythms are called \textit{ca da da k} (ordinary variety’) and \textit{tirugana da k} (‘turning dance variety’). Unlike the complex rhythms performed for various occasions by \textit{Paraiyaror Cakkaliyarensemble}s on the plains in Tamil Nadu, rhythms performed by Nilgiri tribes are not used to differentiate ritual occasions—although they do differentiate dances.\textsuperscript{219}

\textbf{(iii) Kurumbas}

The Kurumbas or Kurumans are found in southern part of India in the states of Tamil Nadu. They are referred in the names of Kurumbas, Kurumbar, and Kurumban but in Tamil Nadu states per his list of Scheduled Tribes, they are referred as Kurumbas that too particularly those who are living only in Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, Kurumbas are found only in the district of Nilgiris. This community people prefer to call themselves as kurumbas.\textsuperscript{220} They generally however, say they have no caste, but are divided into \textit{bigas} or families, which do not intermarry. Kurumbas in the state of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[218]{Roderick Knight., \textit{Tribal Music of India: The Muria and Maria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh.} Madyapradesh, 1983, p. 428.}
\footnotetext[219]{B. Emeneau, Murray. \textit{Kota Texts. 4 parts.} Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1944, p. 6.}
\footnotetext[220]{Jakka Parthasarathy., \textit{Kurumbas of the Nilgiri District.} HADP publication, Ooty 2008, p. 10.}
\end{footnotes}
 Kerala. The synonym names for the word Kurumbas are multiple and varying with different spellings. In Kerala, the kurumbas are popularly known as:

- Kurumba Puliys
- Mala Puliys
- Hill puliys
- Pamba Puliys

In Karnataka, the kurumbas are referred as

- Kurumba (in Coorg district)
- Kurumbas

In Tamilnadu, early writers as referred the kurumbas:

- Kurumbas
- Pallavas
- Kadu kurumbas
- Kurumans

Thus, the above mentioned many names created a lot of confusion in tribal identity of a particular tribal community living in three adjoining states in southern part of India. Sometimes variations of nomenclature occur without any clear indication whether they refer to different groups of people or they are alternative terms used one and the same
group tribal people living in different regions.\textsuperscript{221} The Kurumbas or Kurubas are the modern representatives of the ancient Kurumbas or \textit{Pallavas}, who were once so powerful through Southern India, but very little trace to their genesis now remains. In the seventh century, the power of the Pallava kings seems to have been at its zenith; but, shortly after this, the Kongu Chola and Chalukya chiefs succeeded in winning several victories over them. The final overthrow of the Kurumba sovereignty was effected by the Chola king name Adondai about the seventh or eighth century C.E., and the Kurumbas were scattered everywhere. Many fled to Mysore, representatives of this ancient race are now kurumbas are more advanced, and are usually shepherds and weavers of coarse woolen blankets.\textsuperscript{222}

Etymologically, Kurumba means one who tends sheep. Though there are some Kurumba living in the plain areas of the state, they have not been notified as a Scheduled Tribe. Only those living in the Nilgiri district of Tamilnadu are included in the list of the Scheduled Tribes.\textsuperscript{223} That, the Kurumba or Kuruba are there modern representatives of the ancient Kurumba or Kuruba are the modern representatives of the ancient Pallavas, who were once powerful throughout Southern India. They live on hilly terrain covered by

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{222} Edgar Thurston., \textit{Op.cit.}, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Census Report.}, \textit{Government of India, Madras.}, 1891, p. 241.
\end{flushleft}
forests. It may be noted that the community under discussion differs in many ways, especially in their customs, from the Kurumba who inhabit the plains.\textsuperscript{224}

They are Alu kurumbas, Mudugas, Betta kurumbas, Jenu kurumbas, Mullu kurumbas, and Urali kurumbas; the Alu Kurumba speak their own dialect called as “kurumba bashe”; Jenu kurumbas, and Betta kurumbas speak Kannada dialect, whereas Mullu Kurumbas speak Malayalam as their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{225} The Kurumba settlement is a mottam, represents a cluster of 15 to 20 houses or hunts in small hamlets. All the Kurumba divisions follow the custom of burial with elaborate funeral rituals, which differ according to sex, age, and rank. The Mullu Kurumbas follow the matrilineal rule of inheritance and succession. The kurumbas were hunters traditionally, shifting cultivators, effective sorcerers but now they have accepted variety of income generative economic activities.\textsuperscript{226} They recognize a village tribal council headman, who presides over the Kurumba tribal council. They were animists, how they believe in Hindu religion and worship different god and goddesses under small shrines inside the forest. Only the Alu kurumbas have inter ethnic relationship with Todas, Kotas, and Badagas.\textsuperscript{227} In describing, the traditional inter symbiotic relationship between these communities. Jenu Kurumbas and Betta kurumbas both speak Kannada as their mother tongue live in their

settlement as neighbor and both have very good relationship with wild life and forest produce. Jenu Kurumbas are experts in collecting wild honey and Betta Kurumbas are experts in taming elephants. They even share the same territory for economic activities. They share and divide the territory for forest produce collection and in marketing their collected goods. They maintain ritualistic distance. Jenu and Betta kurumbas have their own priests but not worship the same gods and goddesses. Outsiders observing the cultures of the two communities think that, there are no differences between them and is in fact one tribal community. Perhaps more important is the nature of social intercourse. Kurumbas are often called from their jungle homes to Minister to Kotas and Badagas.  

(iv) Irulas

The Erula or Irula are found in southern part of India in the states of Tamilnadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. In Karnataka, they are referred as Irulas or Irulan but in Tamilnadu as per the list of Scheduled Tribes. They referred as Irula and the same time in the list of approved Primitive Tribal’s groups of Tamilnadu by the government of Tamilnadu and the Government of India the same community is referred with different spelling as Irulas, in Tamilnadu in the districts of Kanchipuram, Thiruvallur, Villupuram, and Vellore they prefer to call themselves as Irulas. They also called Eral or Pooosari, while their

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neighbors refer to them as Eralollu, Irulas, Shikari and Poojari. Thurston mentioned the *Kasuva or kasuba* as a sub caste of Irula. In Tamilnadu, they are settled in the Nilgiri, Coimbatore, South Arcot and North Arcot districts. Their total population is 105,757 (1981 census) though they are a rural community a good number of them are returned from urban areas.⁴¹ Edgar Thurston described Irulas of Nilgiri districts in their book *Castes And Tribes of Southern India* (Vol.II) that,

“The name Irula , in fact means darkness or blackness(irul) whether in reference to the dark jungles in which the Irulas who have not become domesticated by working as contractors or coolies on planters estates, dwell or the darkness of their skin, is doubtful. Though the typical Irula is dark skinned and Platyrrhine(broad nose), possessed skins of markedly paler hue, and leptorhine noses, the language of the Irulas is a corrupt from of Tamil. The Irulas will not eat the flesh of buffaloes or cattle, but will eat sheep and goat, field rats, fowls, deer, pig hares, jungle fowl, pigeons and quail. Irulas of Chengleput, North Arcot and South Arcot as Irulas or *Villains* (bowmen), who have settled in the town of Chengleput, about fifty miles distance from Madras, have attained to a higher degree of civilization than the jungle Irulas of Nilgiris, and defined, in the census report 1901,as a semi-Brahmanished forest tribe, who speak a corrupt Tamil”.


Social organization

Social organization of the network of relation existing among individuals and
groups in a society. The social organization deals primarily in social organization of any
society, mutual relations, obligations elements of ideal behavior, anticipated behavior and
actual behavior are all included. Generally, the tribes form a small community of their
own in particular territory. Their relations are direct and intimate.\footnote{P. Hockings., in *Review of Blue Mountains*, Journal of the American Oriental Society 112 (1) 1992, p.153.} Their organization is
commonly seen in their social design. In Nilgiri district, Irulas are found in the lower
region so the hills. Based on the direction of the residence settlements and territory, the
Irulas is divided into different social divisions.

The Irulas

Southern Irulas                                           Northern Irulas
(mudumar)                                                (kasuvas)

Vette Kadu Irulas

Bette kadu     Ooru

Irulas                                           Mele Nadu Irulas

Mode of life

They live, like Kurumbas, in *mottos* on the slopes and at the base of the hills.

Round about their houses they cultivate a patch of land, scratching the soil with a hoe,
and sowing tenne ragi, or kire, holding in some cases pattas from government. They pay no gudi to the Todas. Quantities of plantain trees seem to be their delight, and form quite a forest round the villages under Rangaswami peak. In some instances, Irulas and Kurumbas live together in one motta, and their habits of life are identical. Each motta has a burial ground. They put in the ground with the body the cloth commonly worn by deceased, and some rice, and with a rich man, sometimes an axe. They have no commemorative ceremony. They frequently attend the Metabolism market, and barter jungle produce for salt, tobacco, and cloths, etc. the walls of their houses are made of split bamboos. They possess all the musical instruments known on the hills, except the Kota horn, and amongst themselves, they dance to the sound of the clarinet and drum as vigorously as any of the other tribes; but unlike the Kurumbas, they do not attend and play at the Toda or Badaga Ceremonies. The Irulas belong to the Vedars or hunting people. They seem to have been the most important of the wild tribes. Their language is a dialect of Tamil.

**Religion**

They are following of Vishnu under the name of Rangaswami (peak). On the top of Rangaswami’s peak they have two temples consisting of circles of rough stones, each enclosing an upright stone, the larger called Dodda(great) among the smaller

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Chikka(little) Rangaswami. The latter has not been longest up; they say he was but lately born.\textsuperscript{237} In addition, Irula Poojari lives near the temples, and rings a bell, when he performs Puja to the gods. He wears the Vishnu mark on his forehead. His office is heredity, and he is remunerated by offerings of fruit and milk from Irula worshippers every year about sowing time there is a large feast at the temples, which is attended by the Badagas of the surrounding district, who bring offerings of plantains and milk to propitiate the Irula god.\textsuperscript{238} No animal sacrifices are performed there. They do not know the difference between Siva and Vishnu. However, describe the Irulas as a distinct and no peaceable tribe. At all events, there is no reason to suppose that they were ever anything but a jungle race, and it is that they have no traditions of their own.\textsuperscript{239}

**(v) Paniyas**

The term Paniyan may have been derived from the word ‘\textit{pani}’ meaning work and the term means the workers, as opposed to the proprietors. Thurston (1909) mentioned that when the coffee planters from outsider were settling in the area, they purchased settling in the area; they purchased land along with the Paniyan living there, and utilized their services.\textsuperscript{240}

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\textsuperscript{237} Luiz., \textit{Tribes of Kerala}, New Delhi 1962, pp.52-58.

\textsuperscript{238} \textit{Ibid.}, p.70.

\textsuperscript{239} E..Thurston., \textit{Caste and Tribes of Southern India},Madras1909, pp.372-91.

They are preponderantly a rural community with only 78 persons returned from urban sectors. The Paniyan speak Malayalam among them and uses the same language of inter group communication. The script used for writing is Malayalam. The Paniyan are dark skinned, longheaded people of short stature with wavy or curly hair and show a broad nose form.\textsuperscript{241} About the Paniya language, the encyclopedia stated that the Paniya language is marked by a basic unity, even though marked by considerable regional variation. In Paniya language, the vowel system does not exhibit much difference from that of Malayalam.\textsuperscript{242}

Social Organization

The Paniyan social organization is commonly, seen in their social design. As mentioned earlier, in Nilgiri district, Paniyans are found at foothills in the Taluks of Pandalur and Gudalur. The Paniyans do not have broad sub-groups or internal subdivisions. They do not use any surname or title to their names. The Paniyan community self-perception at Pandalur and Gudalur Taluk level is high when compared to neighbouring tribes like Kurumbas and Kattunayakans of Nilgiri district. The Paniyans are not aware of Varna system and does not recognize Hindu Varna system among them.\textsuperscript{243} They followed endogamy marriage system; the Paniyas have matrilineal descent


\textsuperscript{242} Jakka Parthasarathy., \textit{Paniyas of the Nilgiri District of Tamilnadu.}, HADP publication, Ooty, 2003, p.16.

\textsuperscript{243} \textit{Ibid.}, p.27.
groups called *Illam* or *kulam*. They are followed unilateral descent, which, is referred as unilineal descent that is traced unilaterally through the mother, thus the rule of decent becomes matrilineal.

Monogamy is the most common form of marriage found among the Paniyas of Nilgiri district. There is no restriction for a man to marry more wives, polygamy form of marriage found in the settlements like *Manumala, Kutheravattam* and *Pathimoola*.\(^{244}\) Polyandry (the marriage of one women with two men at the sametime) form of marriage is completely absent in Paniyans society. Levirate form of marriage of which when a man dies, his kin group replaces him with another male as spouse for the widow, is also prevalent among the Paniyans.\(^{245}\) Symbol of marriage are glass bangles, Tali, finger rings, earrings, and new clothes. Before, marriage bridegrooms father must give to the bride’s father the following thing: one Saree, strings of white beads, finger ring along with a bottle of coconut oil, comb, and mirror. The bride’s father must give to the following things: two under wears of readymade garments or a cloth for loincloth, leather belt, copper wrist, metal bangle, knife and finger rings. The most important bride-price called *arupthinalikanam* is given be the bridegroom to the bride’s father. This contains payment of 64 Rs.16 in coins along with 1 *pothi* or 40 kgs of paddy. After the marriage, husband has to pay Rs. 31 to his wife’s father once in a year under recall of the wife by her parents. The husband may have to pay off the arrears and bring her back. In some


cases, failure of *thalapatham*, may lead to separation of husband and wife. After the marriage, the ceremony law of residence is Neolocal, and sometime avunculocal\textsuperscript{246}. Divorce is permissible in the Paniyans society. Divorces are frequent among the Paniyans and the reasons for divorce are incompatibility, adultery, not paying *Thalapatham* money and even of carelessness or little love.\textsuperscript{247} Party, either husband or wife can divorce by approaching the Paniyan tribal council called *kothani* if husband asks divorce; he has to pay half of the marriage expenditure to his wife’s father as compensation. After divorce declaration in the *kottani*, children and liability of father. If the children are liability of father. If the children are below the age of 3, then up to 5 years of age, divorced mother has to keep her children and afterwards, children will of the their fathers house, though he is living with other wife. In tribal community, the principle links for the whole society are based on kinship. Kinship system may include socially recognized relationship based on supposed as well as genealogical ties. The members of the Paniyan community of Nilgiri district are tied together in groups by various types of bonds of which the linear decent and marriage ties are important. The types of relationship thus built up are as follows

1. Consanguine one between parents, children and succeeding generation, and

2. A final relationship between spouses and their relatives on either side.

The kinship terminology of the Paniyas may be divided mainly into two systems:


\textsuperscript{247} Madhusudan Trivedi., *Entrepreneurship among the Tribals*, Jaipur, 1994, p.51.
1. Classificatory kinship and

2. Particularizing to descriptive kinship terms

A few kinship reference terms are given below to understand kin relations consist of the interacting roles that are customarily ascribed to the different statuses of relationship by Paniyans.\(^{248}\)

**Religion**

They worship Kuzhiyan, kali, Tamburatti, and Sivan. 1981 census records 99.39 percent of the Paniyans as follows of Hinduism.\(^{249}\) The Paniyans belief system clearly refers to as a religious behaviour relating to the supernatural beings. Their supernatural beings have names, have a separate identity and the Paniyas pray them customarily to get a source of power and to fulfill their belief needs. The supernatural beings worshipped by the Paniyans are divided into two categories

a. Ancestral spirits    b. Tribal deities

Gudalur and Pandalur region of Nilgiris district are still animists, who believes in spiritual beings. The spirits they believe are the souls of people that continue after death and they may dwell in animals or places, which move or wander freely within or outside the settlement. For their spirits of the deceased ancestors, and for their non-human spirits, the Paniyans have many temples and shrines, consists of layers of stones under trees.

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Usually at the food of a tree, they place stone and pebbles and on this they place share less boulders, each one of this deity are identified by name of each spirit and offer food and prayers. These deities are stone images of the spirits are the source of the inner power to the Paniyans. The Paniyan women are very much interested in dance of the music of drums and pipes. Their movements of hands, legs, and hips with the rhythms of the Paniyans music are impressive. Most of the Paniyan Songs are pertained to invoke their ancestral spirits and deities. The reasons vary from poverty and indebtedness; conflict within the family or its break–up due to migration by some members; alcoholism; chronic stress due to insecure and impoverished livelihood conditions; feelings of alienation or loneliness; lack of psycho social solidarity or community feelings-all by-products of the present–day living conditions.

(vi) Katttunayakans

The term Kattunayakan has been derived from the words kadu meaning forest and nayakas, meaning leader of headman. The Kattunayakan or Kattu Naickan is found in southern part of India in the states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala. Based on declining or stagnant extreme backwardness, the government of India categorized these Kattunayakan community people as one of the primitive tribal groups.

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251 Ibid., p.50.
in the states of Tamilnadu in the name of Kattu Nayakans and Kerala in the name of Kattunayakans.254

Social Organization

In Nilgiri district, Kattunayakans are maintaining their strict social organization within their territory. As a social group, under the category of ‘primitive tribal group’ their social activity is linked closely with their forest habitat. While describing the social activities of the Kattunayakans,255 Nurit Bird-David said that,

“Rarely does the observer see the adult residents of one hamlet gathered together. The spatial distribution of huts in the hamlet does not call for it, nor do those subsistence activities which naikens are engaged. During the evening, having eaten their evening meal, couples most often sit near their own separate fires. Their children sit with them or, occasionally, visit other fires, or play in between the huts with their mates. During the night, the members of each nuclear family sleep all huddled together on one mat near their fire in morning, couples independently leave for the forest or the plantation and in the former case, and their young children accompany them. Those remaining in the hamlet (e.g) old people, new mothers, or couples who do not go to work that day- may spend the latter part of the morning sitting all in one space somewhere in between their huts. Their spatial distribution then may well accord with that of the huts in the hamlet,

255 Ibid., p.41.
namely, individual and couples sit at a distance from each other, facing in different
direction. They do not gossip with each other, and usually the intermittent verbal
exchange between them consists of infrequent reference to here-and–now happenings
purposeful conversation, when necessary usually takes place in the evenings when
individuals leave their fires for a short while and visit other fires. The Kattunayakan
particularly male persons suffix to their name Nayakan or Naickan community self-
respect in at Nilgiri hills level in high by comparing them neighbouring tribal groups like
Paniyans, Mullu Kurumbas, Betta Kurumbas, and Jenu Kurumbas. They do not have any
relationship with Kattunayakans of plains villages of other districts. Kattunayakans
community divided into three clans. They are

1. Karungali

2. Kuligali

3. Kaligali

Within clan, they avoid to marry. The Kattunayakans belong to Karungali clan are
all brothers and they can marry the Kattunayakans belong to either Kuligali or
Kaligali clan.257

Religion

Kattunayakans are remained as semi animists’ interior region of the forest, but a few Kattunayakans who are nearby other community houses are accepting other religions pattern of the basis of Hindu concept as well as Christian concept. Even the 69% of the Kattunayakans are already adapted Hindu pattern of deity cult.\textsuperscript{258} The Kattunayakans were in the practice of worshiping these things in open-air places without shelter or shade. Slowly they stated identifying a place as sacred and erected untouched stones and started relating these stones with the dead Kattunayakan people names. They started referring these places as deivamane or deiva gudi. The person who is interested in deivamane, they selected him as a priest called by them as deiva poojari. Gradually they constructing four walls around Deivamane and covering roof with grass, established a temple, and stated calling it as deiva bhadra gudi.\textsuperscript{259} A few names of these gods and goddess are Guligan, Kuttichathan, Bommadeva, Kuttan, Kuttathi, Muthappan, Karidan, Bejjalibada, Manjaloda, etc. the tribal council head of respective sacred places decides the worship pattern of these gods and goddesses.\textsuperscript{260} The headmen will also act as medicine men. The headmen and priest a few Kattunayakans have become experts in performing black magic by using peacock eggs, dry nuts, porcupine stings and the black rabbit.

\textsuperscript{260} A.Aiyappan., \textit{Anthropology On The March}, Edited By Bala Ratnam, An SSA publicaion, New Delhi,1963, pp.29.
Some black magic practitioners of the Kattunayakans are also learned to use mantras voice pollution words to invite spirits to do effective sorcery.\textsuperscript{261}

They celebrate festivals like \textit{Onam, Vishu Kannada Sankranti} etc., but they like to celebrate annual festival referred by them as \textit{Adiyantiram jatre}, which reflects their oral tradition. They celebrate this fair in the month of March-April.\textsuperscript{262} Thus, the oral tradition of the Kattunayakan may not allow them to adapt any alien rituals because their religious belief system is embedded with a cultural reasoning upon cognitive thinking and the members of Kattunayakan group in a small territory share their perception strictly.

\textbf{Tribals Population}

The Dravidian tribes of Nilgiri areas are observed to have special skills used for the benefits of the whole community. They are found complementing one another in various ways. The Collier’s Encyclopedia describes on that as: “Kotas serve to the other tribes as artisans; the Todas specialize in raising buffaloes, the Kurumbas, noted for their power as sorceress, have a hunting economy and acts as priest and musicians for neighboring tribes; the Badagas are farmers who rely upon neighboring tribes for their implements and for musicians and witch doctors; and the Irulas, like the Kurumbas are hunters.” (Collier’s Encyclopedia, 1966.) The Nilgiris is the home of three major Dravidians tribes namely the Todas, the Kota and the Kurumbas. There are other tribes

\textsuperscript{262} W.Francis., \textit{Op. cit.}, pp.128.
also found in these districts. According to the 1991 census, the total scheduled tribe population in this district is 25,048, which constitute 15.98% of the total tribal population of the state.

The Kurumba houses known as "GUDLU" are temporary constructions in the forests. The traditional occupation of the Kurumbas is food gathering, like collection of honey and forests produce. They are also cultivating millets like ragi and samai on a small scale mainly on hill slopes and mountain ridges. Honey fetches considerable remuneration for the Kurumbas. It is relished much by the public. Honey is collected mostly in the summer months from the cliffs, rocky crevices and the branches of giant trees. The supplement their usual diet with ample quantity of honey. Kurumbas are known to possess keen eyesight, gained possibly from constant watching of the honeybee to the hives. Now, they are mainly engaged in agriculture and those who do not own lands work as casual agricultural labourers. The Kurumbas are hard working people, but the economic condition of the Kurumbas is very poor.

Chapter III

KURUMBAS OF THE NILGIRI DISTRICT

Kurumbas of Nilgiris fall into several categories and live mostly on the bordering slopes of the district. These habitations are usually suffixed with the terms of kombi (or kombai) and Oor (or Ur) the religion of Alu Kurumbas is essentially an ancestor cult. The peaks of the hills surrounding their settlements are identified with certain deities.