CHAPTER IV

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND INDIGENOUS ATTRACTIONS OF WAYANAD
CHAPTER – 4

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND INDIGENOUS ATTRACTIONS

OF WAYANAD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Working Group for Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) within the structure of United Nations defines Indigenous people as:

‘Those having the historical continuity with their pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories who consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continuous existence as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system’.

For practical purposes the terms Indigenous people and Tribes are used synonymously. However, the finer distinction between the two is that the indigenous people may belong to some tribe or other in many cases while the tribal people living in a place may not be indigenous to a country or place of living. For instance, Afro-descended tribes in Central America, San or Maasai Tribes in Africa are literally not indigenous, but live there for longer periods. The Kukis in Manipur or the Luseis of Mizoram were migrated from South China and Chin Hills. Bodos of Assam are believed to have migrated from Bhutan.

The indigenous or native people of India are generally known as Adivasis, literally meaning original inhabitants. In the Indian context, scheduled tribes are also considered as ‘Adivasis’. According to Bijoy (2003), Scheduled Tribe (ST) is not coterminous with the term ‘Adivasi’. Scheduled Tribe is an administrative term used for purposes of 'administering' certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits for specific sections of peoples considered historically disadvantaged, less
privileged and backward. Adivasis in India include heterogeneous ethnic and tribal groups with different culture, language, beliefs and traditions. ‘Tribal people’ and ‘Indigenous people’ include all those communities. In India, the concentration of tribal people is found in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, north-eastern states, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India has the second largest tribal population next to the continent of Africa (Verna, 1995). The total population of Scheduled Tribes in India is 104,281,034 as per the Census 2011 which accounts for 8.6% of the total population of country with a decadal change of 23.7%. The population of scheduled tribes in the state of Kerala is 4,84,839 and has the decadal change of 33.1% which constitute only 1.45% of the total population of Kerala.

The district of Wayanad has the largest percentage of aboriginals in the state of Kerala. The tribes are the native inhabitants of the place for generations together and constituted majority till 1940s (about 60% of the population of Wayanad). But by 1971, their proportion in the total population of Wayanad had declined to 18%, due to heavy immigration of people from other parts of Kerala. As per census 2011, tribal population in Wayanad is estimated to be 1,51,443, which is around 18.53% of the total population. They comprise different sects like Paniyan, Mullu Kuruman, Kurichian, Kattunaickan Adiyan and Urli Kuruman. These communities are endogamous. There are differences among the communities in terms of economic activity, level of income, education, culture and involvement in various activities. They can broadly be categorized into agricultural laborers, marginal farmers and forest dependants (IIMK, 2006)

C. Gopalan Nair (1911), in his book ‘Wayanad- It’s people and Traditions', has classified the people of Wayanad into three major groups, namely ‘Chettis, Hill Tribes and Aborigins.’ The different subsets in each communities are;

**Chettis**
- Edanadan Chettis
- Wayanadan Chettis
- Mandatan Chettis
**Hill tribes**

- Kurichiyas
- Mullukurumbers
- Urals
- Kunduvatiyans
- Karipalans
- Kaders
- Pathiyans
- Uridavans
- Thachand Muppens
- Kalanadis

**Aborigines- Predial slaves**

- Adiyans
- Paniyas
- Pulayans

**Aborigines- Forest dwellers**

- Jain or then Kurumbers
- Kattunaykans

The basic data on tribal communities of Wayanad collected by Kerala Institute of Local Administration at Trissur published in 2011 further corroborates that Wayanad is home to adivasi communities like Adiyan, Kadar, Kattunaykan, Kurichiyan, Paniyan, Ulladan, Tachanadan moopan, Vettakuruman, Mullukuruman, and a few others.

The Table 4.1 reveals that Paniyan and Adiyan communities together form more than 50% of the total adivasis of Wayanad. They are bonded laborers. 13.7% of the adivasis are Mullu Kurumans and 16.5% are Kurichiyan. Kurichian and Mullu Kurumans are traditionally agricultural communities. Uralikurumans (4.2%) are traditionally artisans. Kattunaickans (11.2%) are primitive tribal groups and completely dependent on forest for livelihood.
Table – 4.1
Population of Adivasi Communities in Wayanad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>% of tribal population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>15333</td>
<td>69116</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adiyan</td>
<td>2570</td>
<td>11196</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kattunaickan</td>
<td>4354</td>
<td>17051</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Uralikuruman</td>
<td>1612</td>
<td>6472</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mullu kuruman</td>
<td>5100</td>
<td>20983</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kurichiyan</td>
<td>5779</td>
<td>25266</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>2931</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>35403</strong></td>
<td><strong>153181</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: KILA(2011)*

The block wise distribution of the tribes given in Table 4.2 gives a clear idea that Paniya tribe forms the majority among the adivasis of Kalpetta (45.2%) as well as Mananthavady block panchayat (36.5%). Kattunaickans and Kurichiyas are the second largest tribal community at Kalpetta and Mananthavady block panchayat respectively. Uralikurumans are the major tribal groups in the Sulthan Bathery block. Paniyas (41.5%) are the next largest tribal group followed by Mullukurumans (30%).

Table – 4.2
Block wise distribution of tribal families in Wayanad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Kalpetta</th>
<th>Manathavady</th>
<th>S.Bathery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kattunaickan</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kurichiyan</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mullu kuruman</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uralikuruman</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adiyan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: IIM Kozhikode, 2006*
4.2 THE CULTURAL ETHOS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Indigenous people or adivasis own a culture and tradition entirely different from other communities. The beliefs and rituals of each tribal group have their own traditional learning passed on from generation to generation. They hold their culture and art forms dearer to their heart and preserve them very proudly. Their art forms and formalities are very simple. The stories, songs, folklore and accumulated native wisdom constitute the real treasure and are emotionally connected to them.

Each tribal community possesses their own art forms. Their art forms are closely linked to nature. All their festivals and celebrations are accompanied with dance and music. The adivasi songs are classified into story songs, small songs, ritual songs, lullaby, dance songs and agriculture songs. Kurichiyan’s manpattukal (folk music) reveals their ancestor’s tradition of hunting. Vattakkali, Kolkali and daivamkanal are few common practices and rituals for communities like Paniyas and Kurumans. Daivamkanal is a ritual performed when there is any disease and for a solution to an ailment. Paniya songs and kurathinatakam (folk drama) are very popular. Thira is an important art form of Kurichiya. They sing different songs for different occasions like Harippatt, Mayilppatt, Manga ppatt, Pakshippattu, Nellukuttupatt, Teeppattu and Poopattu. Palliyar kali, Vedarkali, Kadarkali, Onakkali and Vattakali are some folk dances of the tribes of Wayanad. Tudy, tavil, Kuzhal Maram and Karivi are few important musical instruments used by them.

The material culture of adivasis of Wayanad includes agricultural instruments, household articles, hunting instruments and materials associated with art forms, plays, festivals and other activities. The material culture of different adivasi groups are evolved based on their way of life and activities. The hunting communities make bows and arrows. Agricultural communities make different tools used for cultivation and artist communities make variety of tools and accessories with bamboo and other items. The ornaments used by men and women are also different from one community to another.

Each adivasi group has its own language. Paniyas speak Paniya language, Kurichiyas speak Kurichiya language, Kurumas speak Kuruma language and so on. Many adivasi languages are a mix of Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada. The tribal languages are rich in song, folklore and stories.
Many of the customs and traditions of tribes are still practiced as their own. They live in colonies under the head called *moopan*. All the ceremonies in the community life from birth of a child till death are organized under his headship. They have deep religious faith. Each occasion is a social event and starts with offerings to God. All their rituals and customs are meaningful.

### 4.3 Paniyas

Paniyas, the scheduled tribe people are mainly settled in Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kannur, Malppuram and Palakkad districts of Kerala and also in the hill ranges of Gudallur and Nilgiris in Tamilnadu. Paniya is the largest tribal community in Wayanad forming 45.2% of the total tribal community of Wayanad. According to KILA (2011), the population of Paniya is 69,116 in Wayanad.

Etymologically, the name Paniya originated from the word ‘Pani’ which means work in Malayalam. Paniyn means one who earns livelihood from labour (P. Somasekharan Nair, 1981). People of this community are primarily labourers. In the ancient times, they worked as bonded labourers in Wayanad.

#### 4.3.1 Origin of Paniya Community

The origin of Paniya community is not so clear. But the dark skinned tribe with broad nose, thick lips and curly hair resembles the people of Africa. Many researchers have the opinion that Paniyas are believed to be of African origin descended from ancestors who were wrecked on the Malabar Coast (Rashmi, 2008). They speak a dialect which is Malayalam mixed with Tamil and Kannada called as *Paniya language*. This language has no script.

#### 4.3.2 Occupation

Paniyas of Wayanad were enslaved by the migrated Gowdas and Nair landlords of Wayanad (PRG Mathur, 1977). They were engaged to clear the forest for starting cultivation. The agrarian slavery continued for many years in Wayanad and they became labour tribes. Now they are primarily agricultural labourers and very few families possess land holdings. They are mainly employed for agricultural operations like sowing and harvesting. The gradual reduction in paddy cultivation has compelled them to look for
other livelihood options. Paniyas continue to be the victims of poverty, as whole of Wayanad is facing severe agrarian crisis and the farmers are not able to give continuous work to their labourers. With a consistent increase in the cost of living over the years, the life of Paniyas is becoming tough.

4.3.3 Religion

Paniyas have only a crude idea of religion. They worship clans and village deities. _Kuttichathan, Kuliyan, Kali, Malakkar, Mariyamma and Ayyappan_ are the chief Gods and Goddesses of Paniyas. They worship forest in the form of _Kadu Bhagavathi_. _Kulittharas or Daivasthanam_ is the worship place under the tree where Gods and Goddesses are placed in the form of stones (Panoor, 1963). The Head of the clan, _Mooppan_ offers prayers at _Kulittharas_. Paniyas give offerings to their deities during rituals and festive occasions. Some of their believes are associated with trees. _Valliyurkavu temple near Mannathavady_ and _Malakkari Devi Temple_, at Tonichal are the important places of worship for Paniyas.

4.3.4 Food

Paniyas collect food mainly from forests. They collect edible roots, tubes and leaves from the forest. They also eat animal flesh, fish and crabs which are normally smoked in fire. Rice is their staple food supplemented with ragi, bamboo sprout, bamboo rice, jackfruit and mangoes. With rigorous work schedule and healthy food habits, till recently they did not have any serious health problems other than some water born diseases spread during monsoon season due to water logging.

4.3.5 Costumes and Ornaments

The traditional costumes of Paniyas are very simple. Men wear one long cloth known as _mundu_ around the waist. Women wear sari (cela) around the waist, reaching down just above the knees and both ends were knotted at the right shoulder covering the breasts. A coloured scarf either red or black called _aratti_ is tied around the waist of woman. The women normally have long loose curly hair. The ornaments of paniyas are mainly made of stems and seeds. The necklaces and ear ornaments are made of various leaves and beads. They wear different types of necklaces, namely _Mutecculu, Kurikkale, Bellikkale and Tattikkale_. _Bellikkale_ is used as tali¹ (symbol of marriage). Panichis² wear

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¹ *A wedding symbol tied in a chain or string by bridegroom round the neck of the bride.*
more than twenty bangles on their wrists, tolbare on the upper arms and finger rings. The chains are of three types—Palukallu, Karinkallu and Talikallu. The chains are stringed with beads and coins. They wear nose ring and mookkupotti\(^3\) on the nose. Panichis do tattoo on their cheeks, nose and forearms.

**4.3.6 Celebrations**

A number of occasions are celebrated by paniyas around the year. Regional festivals like Onam and Vishu are celebrated by them with much fervour. The festival in honour of Mariyamma is celebrated during the Malayalam month of 'Edavam' (May-June). The annual festival at Valliyorkavu temple is another important occasion they celebrate.

**4.3.7 Social Customs**

There are several social customs which Paniyas hold dear to their heart even today. These social customs are unique. Starting from birth of a child till death, these occasions are events of get together for Paniyas. The elder member of the family names the child. After the naming ceremony, first feeding of the child with rice is performed in the temple.

There are four kalyanams (marriages) for paniyas. Katukuttukalyanam, Terandukalyanam, Kattukalyanam and Kettukalyanam. Kathukutthu kalyanam is ear boring ceremony for babies, both boys and girls. It is a two day celebration performed when the child attains three years. All the relatives come and bless the child. Sharpened thorns are used to pierce the ears. The elder members of the family, both from maternal and paternal side accept dakshina and bring the thorns close to child’s ears three times. Next day morning an elder person pierces the ear lobes with the sharpened thorn. Vegetarian feast is served for all. The function is accompanied by dance and drama to the beat of drums.

Terandu kalyanam is the celebration associated with girls’ attaining puberty. Within one or two weeks after attaining puberty, this function is arranged after consulting chemman (The head of the clan) and chemmi (wife of chemman). The whole night ‘thudy’ (a musical instrument used by tribes) is played and the next day morning the

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1. *It has been given great value and respect by both husband and wife.*
2. *A female member of Paniya community*
3. *Nose ring or nose stud worn by women*
invited people and the relatives feed the girl traditional dish, ‘puttu’ made of rice. In the evening, ladies of the family take her for purificatory bath, while the young men sing songs with drum. This function is celebrated to inform the society that the girl has attained the age for marriage. In the olden days, on the same day, the girl was proposed by interested families.

*Kattukalyanam* is a sort of love marriage. Sometimes, the girl is abducted by the boy and the elders will find them and would bring them back. The moopan asks the boy’s family to pay fine and formalizes the marriage which is followed by feast.

*Kettukalyanam* is the marriage performed in the traditional way where the brother in law of the boy goes and sees the girl first. Then the family members visit the girl's home and finalises the schedule of marriage. One bamboo stick and a little money are kept in front of the Gods. Later, the groom's side will gift jeweler and other ornaments to the bride. Firewood to girl’s father is given by the members of the groom's side as a token of confirmation. On the day of marriage, the day starts with *thudy*. Marriage is usually conducted during night time. Bridegroom takes firewood, paddy, cela(sari), coins, bangles, rings, etc. to bride’s home accompanied by friends and relatives. Folk dance and music form the essential entertainment aspect of the process of marriage of Paniyas. The traditional Hindu symbols of tali and nose rings as a mark of distinction of married women from the others.

*Aatt* is the custom of releasing all the evil spirits from the body of pregnant woman. *Neekkam Kazhikkal* is another occasion organised by parents for the health of children.

After the death of a person, it is customary that the body is washed in hot water and then covered with new white cloth. New cloth is worn only by the dead, (Sandhya Rashmi, 2008). On both the sides of the body they keep lamp, sandal wick, rice and coconut. Chemman measures six feet of land. After digging, again one more is dug opening towards east so that the body won’t be visible straight. On the third day of the
4.3.7 Art forms

Dance has so much of importance for Paniyas. All the celebrations end with feast followed by dance and thudy. They sing and dance together. They play musical instruments Kurumkuzhal, Para, cini, Tavil and Kokkara apart from thudy.

Paniyas dance in circles. Women in round step rhythmically, turn left and right with their hands released with a sound ‘how how’ (Rashmi, 2008). Men beat the drums. The dance continues throughout the night. Kulikettu is a kind of dance to please the evil spirits. They believe that all the miseries can be overcome by dancing in the form of kuli and giving sacrifices. Kulikettu is performed for women and children mainly for pregnant women. Meleri koottal is a ritual of giving offerings to cure the ‘possessing’ spirit. Daivamkanal is another important ritual dance for Paniyas. It is performed under the tree, believed to be the God’s seat. The dancer during this time behaves like God. Paniyas believe that Gods speak to them through the person. Cini and drums are played on this occasion.

Vattakkali is a folk dance played by Paniyas for entertainment. Paniyas in their traditional dress step according to the beats of musical instruments. Both men and women dance in different rounds.

There are many folk songs sung at different occasions like birth, marriage, death and during festivals (Robin.D.T, 1999). The songs usually are centered around the traditional activities like agriculture, hunting and other community rituals. Penappattu (ghost song), marriage song, kakkappattu (crow song), thudi song, panipattu (worker’s song), lullaby, magic song, okkalu (threashing out of paddy by using cattle) song, etc., are the main songs of Paniyas.

4.4 KURICHIYAS

Kurichiyas are another important adivasi community in Wayanad. They believe themselves as brahmins among the adivasis. Till a few decades ago, untouchability was practiced by them. Kurichiyas are mainly settled at Mananthavady, Vythiry and Kalpetta
Taluks in Wayanad. Kurichias are settled agriculturists and form about 7.38% of the total tribal population of the district (IIM, Kozhikode, 2006). Agriculture is their principal occupation. They follow joint family system and head of the family/ Taravadu\(^4\) is the most respectful person with authority over the family members. There were 148 Kurichiya families in Wayanad in the beginning of Twentieth Century (Gopalan, Nair., 1911). Later reduced to 108 and at present they number only 57 (Sheeba, K. A., 2012). They were in the forefront of the anti-British struggle led by the Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam Dynasty in the 18\(^{th}\) century. Kurichiyars are known for their prowess in martial arts. They are experts in archery too. They speak Kurichiya language, a hybrid version of Tamil and Kannada.

The name Kurichiyan was given by the Kottayam Raja to this community in appreciation of their expertise in archery. The name ‘Kurichiyan’ originated from the expression ‘Kuri-vechavan’ (Gopalan Nair, 1911). In Kannada, *Kuri* means *hill* and *chiyan* means people. Hence it is also believed that the name Krichiyan means one who lives in the hill areas (Nayam, 2008). Kuri also means sandal wood paste applied on forehead. Kurichiyars apply kuri on their forehead and chest as a custom. The name would have come from this custom too (keralatourism.org). Another view on the origin of the name Kurichiyn is from the Tamil word *Kurinchi* means hill country. The people who inhabited Kurinchi were known as *Kurinchiyar*. It is assumed that Kurichiyar is derived from Kurinchiyar (Ravivarma, 2004).

**4.4.1 Advent of Kurichiyas**

Kurichiyas are the earlier known inhabitants of Wayanad. History says that the Kottayam Rajas brought them to Malabar for fighting with the Vedar rulers. As per their tradition, if they leave their area, their caste men would not take them back. Hence they had to settle in the hilly areas of Wayanad and Kottatyam (Gopalan Nair, 1911). Another view is that Kurichiyas are the successors of Nairs who came from Kollam to help Pazhassi Raja in his revolt against British.

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\(^4\) Family house.
4.4.2 Kurichiya Society

Kurichiyas enjoy the highest status among all other tribal groups. They are the only tribal group who practiced untouchability. They won’t eat anything from the houses of other communities except Brahmins and Nairs. If they are visited by people of other community at home, the house is purified at the earliest.

Kurichiyas followed joint family system. Kurichiya society includes number of clans called taravad. A taravad is further divided into mittom. They follow a matrilineal system in descent and inheritance. Patrilineal relations exist among all married male members of the mittom where as, all married women of mittom hail from different taravad. After marriage woman had to move to her husband’s mittom. But a widow or divorced woman has to go back to her natal mittom along with her children (Sheeba K A, 2012). Each mittom was headed by Karanon. The Karanon of the principal mittom was the head of the taravad and is called Odayakkaran and his wife is known as Odayakkari. The Odayakkaran supervises the day to day activities of the tharavadu and organizes festivals, rituals and other important occasions. Odayakkari looks after the affairs of female members of taravad.

The changes in the socio-economic system in general led to large scale changes in the social practices of Kurichiyas. The joint family system gave way to nuclear families. The major social patters that exist now include the first group who still follow the traditional joint family system, the second group lives in separate houses and follows common ownership of property and the third group follows nuclear family system and individual property ownership. Excommunication was the punishment given to people for any violation of the rules of the community some of such excommunicated Kurichiyas converted into Christianity, became as pathiri kurichiyas and settled in Pallikkunnu.

Kurichiyas maintain their houses and surroundings very neatly. Each muttam has huge space around with trees surrounded by paddy fields. Rooms are built in the muttam on the four sides of the main ground called nadumuttam. A Kurichiya house normally has

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5 The lineage head of the Kurichiyas.
a number of rooms. Each family stays in one room. On the north side of the house, there is a special room called *teendapura*. After attaining puberty girls stay in this room till *tirandukalyanam*, the day of celebrating puberty. Another speciality is *nellukuttupura*, where kurichiya women pound paddy to remove husk and make rice (Chacko, 2000).

Kurichiya community follows *marumakkathaya*. Parents do not have any right on children once they are grown up. Maternal uncle has all the rights on them. After *tirandukalyanam* girls leave their parents and stay in mothers’s taravadu.

### 4.2.4 Occupation

Kurichiyas are basically cultivators. They mainly cultivate paddy and ragi depending on the water resources around. They have the expertise in wet and dry cultivation.

### 4.2.5 Religion

Kurichiyas are very religious. The religious beliefs of Kurichiyas are very similar to those of Hindus. They worship Hindu Gods namely Ayyappa, Ganapthy, Saraswathy and Guruvayoorappan besides Taravad deities. In every *mittom* there is a place to worship Taravad deities. They give offerings to the deity on every ceremonial occasion. They perform *pujas* and one among them dresses and acts as an oracle. *Malakkari* is their special deity. For them Malakkari is God Siva. In the Malakkari temple they worship Valliyurkavilamma, Karimbil bhagavathi and Muthappan.

The Kurichiyas perform *thira* after harvest. They believe in supernatural powers. The spirit of Odayakkaran who leads an ideal life during life time is worshiped as ‘Muni’\(^6\). The female spirits are known as ‘pena’. They celebrate all the festivals celebrated by Hindus. In all the temples of Wayanad both Nairs and Kurichiyas have equal rights.

### 4.2.6 Food

Ragi was the staple food of Kurichiyas until two decades ago. Bamboo rice, Bamboo sprout, fish, meat of hunted animals, roots, leaves, and crabs constitute their staple food. Earlier the meat of animals they hunt was the favourite food for them.

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\(^6\) A benevolent ancestral spirit of Kurichiyas
hunting is banned at present in the forests of Wayanad, the proportion of vegetarian food has increased unlike in the olden days. Intake of ragi is also reduced on account of converting cultivation into coffee, tea and pepper. (Nayam, 1995). Generally old men and women chew raw tobacco along with betel nut and leaves.

4.2.7 Costumes

In the earlier days, men used to wear one white cloth (Mundu) around the waist and another one to cover the shoulder. They used to have long hair tied with a knot called Kuduma. Wearing ear-stud called kadukkan was common. Women wear two white cloths: one around the waist and another one to cover the breast. Elder, ladies used to wear big ear-stud called thoda. Silver bangles and nose rings are also worn.

4.2.8 Celebrations

Kurichiyas celebrate both sowing and harvesting of paddy. On both the occasions, they invoke the God through special puja called daivamkanal. After the harvest they celebrate ‘Putharikkol’, a festival where a get together of all members of Taravadu is organised. Men bring meat of wild animals through hunting which is an essential component of the feast.

Hunting was not only a method of collecting food, but was also an occasion to celebrate. Thulampattu (10th day of Malayalam month Tulam Oct-Nov) is a special occasion for hunting. During Thulampattu, Ayudhapooja is performed for all the bows, arrows and other hunting instruments. For them hunting is a main ritual associated with all major functions and celebrations. Now hunting in the forests of Wayanad is strictly banned leading to a change in the food habits and the culture of the Kurichiyas. However, government now permits hunting only on ‘Thulampattu’ as a ritual.

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7 Identification of supernatural causes of an illness by possession of deity or a spirit. This ritual is common for most of the tribes in Wayanad like, Kurumas and Kurichiyans
Thira is another festival for kurichiyas. Like any other occasion, they get permission to celebrate tirayutsavam through daivamkanal. Male members of the community observe fasting before tira\textsuperscript{8}.

4.2.9. Social Customs

Child birth was overseen by an old lady known as vayatatti in the olden days. Making the new born baby hear the sound of propelling arrows with bow is an important custom for them. Tirandukalyanam, the puberty function is a grand celebration in the Kurichiya family. Men of the family go for hunting on the previous day of Tirandukalyanam. Women from the girl’s mother’s taravadu give her a bath and bring near nilavilakku\textsuperscript{9}. This is followed by Daivamkanal (God speaks through a person in the family). The feast includes hunted meat, toddy, rice and Chakkarachoru (rice with jaggery).

Kurichiyas observe talikettukalyam before puberty. All the girls of the family (mittam) are brought together and God Malakari appears in person. This God puts tali on each girl. Next day they go to the temple and receive holy water from there. Marriage is permitted only after talikettu Kalyanam. It was considered as an opportunity for parents to select the future life partners for their children. Now this system is on the way out from the community.

Marriage is normally arranged by the head of the family. On the day of fixing the marriage, the close relatives move to bride’s house with six copper rings, gold tali, two white cloths, one colour cloth, betal leaves and aracanuts for the bride. When bride’s uncle receives the betal leaves and nuts from bridegroom’s uncle, marriage is considered as confirmed. Marriage is performed under the close supervision of maternal uncles from

\textsuperscript{8} A popular ritual form of worship of North Malabar in Kerala. People consider the performer himself as God and seek blessing from him.

\textsuperscript{9} An oil lamp considered as auspicious and used for all religious and ceremonial occasions. The Nilavilakku is integral to all rituals and ceremonies in a traditional Hindu family in Kerala.
both bride and bride groom side. After this the older members from bridegroom’s family with two male and two female members bring the bride and declare the marriage.

Kurichiyas bury the dead. An arrow is also buried with the body of male and a scythe with the body of female. The elder members act as priests. Seven day pollution is observed in the family. Funeral ceremony is organised on any day convenient in the year (C. Gopalan Nair, 1911). Once in a year ancestors are offered with meat and toddy.

*Noolukettikkodukkukal* (tying of charmed thread) was a healing method practiced by the Kurichiyas from very early times. This technique was practiced by the Kurichiyas as a healing technique to keep away the malevolent spirit from the patient. *Japichukodukkukal* was also prevalent among the Kurichiyas as one of the techniques in ritual healing. After reciting mantras, *mantravadi* (the man who performs rituals) gives the ashes to the patient. Sometimes ash is applied on the forehead of the patient or is given by dissolving in water to drink.

*Vazhipaduvekkal* was an offering given to deities and ancestral spirits. The Kurichiyas believed that *Vazhipaduvekkal* protect them from the misfortunes caused by the anger of deities and ancestral spirits.

### 4.5 KURUMAS

Kurumas are a dominant Scheduled tribe in Wayanad. There are mainly three groups of Kurumas namely *Mullukuruman, Then Kuruman(Kattunayakan)* and *Urali kuruman*. They are spread over Sulthan Bathery and Kalpetta taluks in Wayanad. Mullukurums are basically cultivators and hunters. *Then kurumas* are honey gatherers. They depend on forest for their livelihood. *Uralikurumans* are weaving community among the tribes.

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10 A ritual healing method of Kurichiyan in which magic spell is made over water or on edible objects for charming and is given to the patient
4.5.1 Mullukurumans

Mullukurumans are one of the original inhabitants of Wayanad. They form 13.7% of the total tribal community of Wayanad. Community living is traditionally followed by this group.

4.5.1.1 Origin of Kuruma Community

Mullukurumans are mainly found in Wayanad. They are also seen in the Nilagiri district of Tamil Nadu. Mullukurumans are believed to be the earlier known settlers of Wayanad. According to the local belief, Mullukurumans consider them as the followers of Kirathan (the Bhottams), the attender of God Siva during his hunting in the earth. This community is believed to have originated at Puthadi in Wayanad. According to anthropologists, Mullukurumans belong to Australoids.

There is a mention about the existence of Kuruma community during the New Stone Age period. Faucett (1901) and O.K. Johny (2008) noted that ‘the subscription on the Edakkal caves about Kudumbia rulers might have been the handwork of Mullukurumas of Wayanad.’ There is also a mention that ‘Kurumban’ would have originated from the word *Kudumbi.* It is believed from the history that Kurumas are the descendants of Kudumbiyil rulers who are followed by Veda rulers. Arippan and Vedan were the last rulers of Veda kingdom. While Mullu Kurumans are believed to be the successors of Arippan, Uralikurumans are believed to be the successors of Vedan.

4.5.1.2 Occupation

Mullukurumans initially hunted animals in the forest for their food prior to their settlement as farmers. Majority of Kurumas continued to cultivate lands while a few of them are manual labourers. Their agricultural practices are in harmony with nature. The present Kuruma generation is educated and many are into government jobs. They have better representation in politics and elected bodies compared to other tribal communities.

11 One of the major racial division spread through Indonesia, Australia, New Guinea, Andaman Islands, Bangladesh and India. They are described as people with dark skin and with wavy hair.
4.5.1.3 Religion

Mullu kurumans worship Vellakkaliappan as the creator and Twaruvattamma as the mother goddess. They also worship Brahma as Munikkalan Kalyar, Vishnu as Bhoothalan Kalyar and Siva as Bennattan Kalyar. They consider owl, the companion of Vellakkaliappan as Pottan theyyam. The religious beliefs of Mullukurumans are as per the dictates of Hinduism. They worship Poothadi daivam, Pakkam Daivam, Pullimkarimkali, Makkalkkala and Ilamkuravan.

4.5.1.4 Food

The ethnic food of Kurumas is very unique. Ragi and rice are the principal food grains used. They use gandhakasala rice for preparing their dishes. Puttu and dosa made by gandhakasala rice are very special for them. They consume varieties of leaves as their food. Bamboo rice is also used to prepare various dishes. Basically Kurumas are non-vegetarians. They relish meat of hunted animals in their feast. Burned chicken is another special dish for them.

4.5.1.5 Costumes

The male Kurumas wear Panchi and Karikka. Hair knot towards the left is known as Kuduma and is common for elder male members. They also wear ear studs, coir cap and silver bangle. Women wear cloths called chuttukambi and Velukambi. They wear Pootuvala on the left hand. Tholanthi is the ornament worn on the right hand below the elbow and Chembadam below that. Katala and Kathumara are the important ornaments that adorn the ears of women. Ear boring ceremony is performed as a community event. Elder members of the community always carry a small knife with them.

4.5.1.6 Celebrations

Kurumas celebrate Vishu (April) and Onam (Aug-Sep) like any other Keralite. Ucharal is a two day festival celebrated in the Malayalam month of Kumbham (Feb-Mar). Tulappath is the harvest festival of Kurumbers. Karkkidakam (Aug-Sep) is celebrated by all the members of a Kudy to give offerings to ancestors. They offer chicken, dosa and toddy to please the souls of their ancestors. Other traditional festivals include Velapitt and Uchal.
4.5.1.7 Social Customs

Kurumas live in colonies. A kudy is a cluster of Kuruma houses at a particular location. A kudy may include up to hundred houses. But they would not call them as houses. For them there is only one house in a Kudy namely Daivappura, or Arukal veedu for the worship of gods and goddesses. There are six pillars to support this house, hence the name Arukal veedu (House with six pillars). All the rituals of a kudy are performed here. The elder male member is the head and called moopan or Porunnavan. A group of fifty kudy (Thara) is headed by Talachil Moopan with the support of Nalappady moopan.

In the olden days Kuruma women used to deliver children at husband’s house itself. Third day after the delivery of the baby is celebrated as vavily. Then onwards the child becomes the member of the community. Pulikkachal is the ritual performed for the good health of mother and child.

After the first birthday of the child, the head of the child is tonsured and the hair is offered to God. Ear boring is done for both boys and girls. Like all other tribal communities, Kurumas also celebrate the puberty function of girls. For seven days immediately after attaining age, the girl can neither touch the earth nor face elder family members. On the seventh day, after the ritual bath, she is served with variety of sweets like neyyappam, karakundu, kallupittu, dosa etc.

Kuruma community is divided into four kulams, namely vadakku kulam, venkala kulam, villippa kulam and Kadika kulam. As per their tradition, those who belong to the same kulam can not marry each other. The boy’s relatives reach the girl’s house with betel leaves and aracanut. If they are satisfied, the marriage is declared in a small ceremony attended by neighbours. As the symbol of the engagement, both bride and bridegroom wear peacock feather. Mullukurumans give bride price. On the day of marriage, bride’s uncle welcomes the bridegroom’s relatives by giving vettiladakka (betel leaves and aracanut). Kolkkali and Vattakkali, the famous folk dances of Kurumbers entertain them all on the day of marriage. On the seventh day, new couple goes to bride’s house with 100 dosappittu (dish prepared with rice). This feast is known as

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12 The room considered as sacred, located at the central portion of the tribal colony of Mullukurumans, which is used for the socio-religious and ancestral worship places.
pittuvirunnu. Again after seven days they are back to bridegroom’s house with 97 dosas. Marriage of Kurumas is a grand ceremony with lot of rituals and practices. Even today they strictly follow all the rituals associated with marriage.

Kurumas bury the dead. The body of the dead person is kept on the daivappura for some time and after bath the body is taken to the cemetery by sons and other close relatives. Ladies and children normally do not go to cemetery. A bow and arrow are kept near the tomb of a male and sickle at the tomb of female. Funeral ceremony is observed within eleven days of the death. For the peace and remembrance of ancestors, they pay tribute on the day of Vishu and Utchal.

4.5.2 Urali Kurumans

Uralis of Wayanad live in colonies, known as Uralipadies in the places namely, Muthanga, Naikkatty, Kuppady, Ambalavayal and Munnanakkuzhi. Their principal occupation is cutting trees and sale of firewood. Hence they are also known as Vettukurumans or Bettu kurumans (Vettu means ‘to cut’) (Nayam, 2008). Ur means village or place of living and ali means ruler. Hence, Urali literally means ruler of an area or village. They speak Urali language, which is a dialect of Kannada. Their houses are called padis which are low in height and are very clean inside. The urali padis are divided into Jammias based on the location. For each jamma, there is one motali to take care of judicial matters. Wide range of decisions related to farming and occasions like marriage, adiyanthiram, etc are made under the supervision and control of motali.

4.5.2.1 Occupation

Uralis are artisan community engaged in basket making and pottery. They mainly use bamboo and make baskets in different shapes for agriculture, household and ornamental purposes. They make ploughs and Knives like blacksmiths. They are experts in making umbrellas of screw pine leaves which were widely used in the early years during monsoon season (C.Gopalan Nair, 1911). Their homes also reveal their artistic skills displayed in the tools and equipments they use. They collect bamboo from the forest and make small plaits to make walls for the houses. They catch fish from rivers.
They also have expertise in trapping and taming wild elephants. They are mainly engaged in cutting trees in the koopu, where cutting of trees is permitted by the government in the forest. Center of their padi has a temple called chittalipura which has only a roof with no walls

4.5.2.2 Religion

Uralis worship the nature. They consider sun as the father and moon as the mother of all the creations. They are known for superstitious beliefs. They also worship Betta Chikkamma, the goddess protecting them from all the disasters (DIET, 2008). Similarly, they also worship ancestral spirits.

4.5.2.3 Food

Uralis favorite dishes are made of ragi and millet. They also eat rice and edible roots. They never hunt animals for food, but cook vegetables cultivated by themselves.

4.5.2.4 Costumes

Women wear a long white cloth (mundu) above the waist and a kacha around the breast. Men wear only one white mundu. All men bore the ears and all females bore ears and nose and wear studs. Women also wear aluminum finger rings and toe rings. They make their ornaments themselves.

4.5.2.5 Celebrations

They play flute and drum during festivals. The "Uch-alkali" is played in the month of February where some men dance while some beat the drums and play the flute. An old man in the group performs rites to their deity 'Bettu Chikkamma'. Women are not allowed to participate in theses ceremonies.

Daivathinukodukkal (gifting to God) is a special ritual performed in association with all the important occations of Uralis. It is normally done in daivapura. They also celebrate Tulappathu and Vrishchikappath. Onam and Vishu are common celebration for them too. Men and children dance with musical instruments like Dahaval (chenda) and Kalale (Kuzhal). Ladies clap hands and play in rounds with rhythmic steps (Kaikottikkali).
4.5.2.6 Social customs

After the birth of a child, on the seventh day, they clean the home. There is a ritual called *daivathinukodukkal* with a theme that the child is gifted to the God. This function is celebrated by a feast with rice and chicken to all. Prior permission from the head of the community is obtained to celebrate the event. Anyone can finalise the name for the baby. The names of the Gods in local dialect are given to the children.

Marriage is celebrated in a simple way. The boy’s parents go and see the girl. At the girl’s house, the elders and the Motali finalise the marriage and fix the date for the marriage. Before marriage *manimala* (a chain made by uralis out of aluminium in the shape of pearl) is made. The *manimala*, along with a *white cloth* and *glass bangles* are taken to daivapura. All the ladies are blessed by Motali. The bride’s hand is given to bridegroom’s parents. All are served with betel leaves and aracanuts.

The body of the dead person is washed with turmeric water and each of the assembled, pour little turmeric water in the mouth of the dead. The various things and accessories used by the person are also buried along with his body. All the members participated in the death ceremony take bath and stay that night in *Chittalippura*. The seventh or ninth day is celebrated as *adiyanthiram*. The favourite dishes of the dead are cooked for that day and consumed as a token of honouring the departed soul.

4.5.3 KATTUNAYKAS

The name kattunaykas means *heroes of the forest*. They are migrants from Karnataka. They are a race without a history that lived in the mountain slopes in the olden days. They are at present settled in *Ponkuzhi, Kuminji, Marod, Odappallam, vadakkanad, Tenkuzhi, Kannarampuza, marakkadavu, Ashramakkolly, Cheppila, Bassankolly, Vedamkadu, Chetalayam, Kurichiyad, Pathiri, Perikkalloor, Veliyambam, Pakkam*, etc. Kattunaykas live very close to nature. They never indulge in acts which damage the forest and nature. They collect forest products like honey, spices and herbs without harming the nature.
They live in Padis (Group of houses) under the supervision of mutali, the eldest man of the padi. They speak a dialect which is a mixture of Kannada and Tulu.

4.5.3.1 Occupation

They are traditionally honey gatherers. A special pooja is performed under the tree from which honey is collected to satisfy the God. For this special pooja, they offer coconut, betel leaves, aracanut, tobacco and arrack to the God. They also collect Kaalpasam from teak trees using knife which is used to make paints. Goosberry, wild tamarind, Kurumtotty, Padathaly, tubes and other medicinal plants are collected from the forest for sale for their livelihood. Of course, times have changed and at present they do not completely depend on forest. Majority of them turned agriculture labours. They spend most of their time in the forest collecting fire wood and other forest based food items.

4.5.3.2 Religion

Religion, as an organization has not evolved among Kattunaykas. They worship animals, birds, trees and snakes. They are strong believers in black magic and sorcery (Nayam, 1995). They worship ancestors and also Hindu deities such as Vishnu, Siva and Bhagavathi. They generally do not believe in life after death.

4.5.3.2 Food

They are fond of wild tubes and fruits. Varieties of leaves are included in their food. Honey is one major item of their food. Earlier they used to kill and eat rabbits, deer and pigs hunted in the forest.

4.5.3.3 Costumes

Kattunaykans used to wear leaves and barks of trees earlier. In the modern days, ladies wear white long cloth called chela from the shoulder to knee. Men wear mundu. Ladies wear aluminum rings and bangles. They wear nose studs and colourful glass bangles also. They make big ear studs out of coconut leaves.

4.5.3.4 Social Customs

Gumma is the ritual associated with the occasion of attaining puberty among girls. This is also known as manavattikalyanam. The girl is shifted to a hut made of grass and other medicinal leaves. On the seventh day called Motha humma, the girl is brought out
of this hut after the ritual bath in turmeric water wearing new dress and ornaments. She gives *dakshina* to the elders. This is followed by a feast.

The marriage system of Kattunaykans is very different from others. They marry among the blood relations. On the day of betrothal, the bridegroom gifts a chain of black pearls to the bride. The marriage is confined with a celebration marked by music and dance. *Vattakkali* and *Aattakkali* are the famous tribal dance forms of Kattunayakas.

The news of death is first informed to Motali. The funeral starts only after Motali touches the head of the body. Motali identifies and suggests the place to bury the body. They make pier out of bamboo to carry the dead body. After the burial of the body, all of them leave the place without looking back. Seventh day is observed as *adiyanthiram*.

The other tribal communities of Wayanad include, Adiyans, Tachanad moopans, Wayanad kadar, Karimpalar and ulladan. Majority of them are marginal peasants or agricultural labourers.

### 4.4 INDIGENOUS CUISINES

Adivasis of Wayanad are unique in their food habits also. Now a day they are constrained to change their food habits largely due to the restrictions in collecting forest products owing to the new forest laws and regulations. However, they love their ethnic dishes which are very healthy. In the olden days, adivasis completely depended on the forest for food. Different varieties of tubes, leaves and fruits were collected from the forest and consumed. They also used to eat the flesh of crab, frog, fish, tortoise, and other hunted animals also. Bamboo spurt, bamboo rice and ragi are their stable food. The communities like Thenkurumans consume honey in good quantity. They cook special dishes with wild mushroom also. The change in the times coupled with new regulations related to conservation of forests brought changes in their food habits. It may be noted that hunting is not permitted now.
It is interesting to note that adivasi food habits are very healthy. It is not surprising that their healthy food habits keep them away from very common ailments like cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetics, cancer, dental problems, etc. However, of late, because of the changes the incidence of some of these diseases is on the higher side.

The ethnic food of Wayanad tribes is a major attraction for tourists. The ethnic food stalls that spring up during tribal fests and other tourism promotion activities in Wayanad register good sales. One could see huge crowds at these stalls. Sri Vellan who was awarded the tribal ambassador of Wayanad by Kerala Samskarika Samithi has popularised the ethnic food of Mullukuruman by putting stalls at different festival venues. The Kalluppit made of gndhakasala rice, payasam made of bamboo rice, ragi ada, tapioca and fired chicken are some of the popular dishes that enjoy good patronage. These tribal dishes are so popular that some of them also figure in the menu of star hotels in Kerala.

4.5 INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of Wayanad also has an indigenous touch. Distinct architectural styles may be seen in the existing tribal villages of the region. The tribal huts are the best examples of indigenous architecture of Wayanad. Each tribal community builds their huts in a unique fashion. Communities like kurichiyas have huge family house called Taravad which stands as a testimonial for their wonderful planning and designing. Daivapura (an exclusive building to perform pooja) of each community is also constructed in unique style.

It is high time that the tribal architecture is preserved as it is fast replaced by concrete buildings. Issues of preservation could be addressed effectively, to begin with, by selecting a few tribal villages and developing them as model tribal villages.

4.6 HANDICRAFTS AND SOUVENIRS

A trip to Wayanad is not complete and fulfilling without the visitors buying souvenir items that bear the stamp of indigenous culture. Tourists shopping around,
picking up indigenous artifacts is the common sight everywhere at the tourist destinations of Wayanad.

Wayanad enjoys a pride of place with respect to the handicrafts made of coconut shells, canes, wood and bamboo. There are many craft shops managed by local women Self Help Groups for selling souvenirs and handicrafts. Bamboo products are found abundantly in Wayanad. Uravu, a nonprofit organization in Wayanad encourages craftsmanship of the tribes by assisting them in promoting and marketing the native wisdom and acumen in making handicrafts. Uravu helps them market these products through their sales outlets at Thrikkaipetta and near the Pookot Lake. The handicraft products include kitchen utensils, ornaments, decorative showpieces, furniture and other office items made of bamboo and canes. Indigenous forest products of Wayanad collected and processed by tribes directly from the forests like wild honey, gooseberry, bamboo rice, wild turmeric and variety of herbs have their own aura and appeal.

Apart from the handicrafts and forest based products, tourists also purchase coffee powder, tea dust of different flavors, spices like pepper, cardamom, natural cosmetic products and herbal medicines.

4.7 INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATIONS

The conservation and sustainability of indigenous people and wildlife are the two areas about which the public needs to be sensitised. Indigenous people cannot be isolated from nature. Forest is the very basis of survival for them. Indigenous people hold different sets of beliefs and traditions. However, the common factor that binds them together is the bond with nature and the environment. Indigenous people and the nature are inextricably linked. Nature, forest and everything in it forms an integral part of their life. They connote aesthetic and spiritual values. Their perception of forest is quite different from others. The knowledge and wisdom acquired through centuries of interaction with wild life and forest contribute to their distinct cultural and spiritual identity.
Interpretation is an individual activity aimed at drawing meanings and relationships to people and the places they visit and things they see there. The local guide plays an important role in this context. An effective guide obviously helps enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the environment and various natural and cultural experiences. Indigenous wildlife tourism in Australia, for instance, evolved and sustained on the strength of indigenous people acting as local tour guides. Needless to say that people with local knowledge and a passion for the place can best interpret wildlife. The tourists’ demand for more interactive wildlife tour could be fulfilled apart from empowering indigenous community by enabling them to participate in the tourism promotion activity of their own place. Indigenous people have an added advantage in putting the place specific and environment specific issues in a better perspective compared to non-indigenous guides.

A non-indigenous guide's knowledge on wildlife is always learned, and their approach is adoptive, whereas for aboriginals, each tree, animal, bird and the environment is part of their life. They have many stories to tell about each and every spot in the forest. They enjoy and are excited to share their experiences and association with forest with anecdotes and unforgettable events and encounters. Indigenous people live in and learn from nature and hence their interpretation on nature is more authentic. The folklore, myths and rituals related to nature give a fairy and novel excitement for visitors. As a result, tourist satisfaction is enhanced which translates into a positive attitude towards indigenous people. Hence, indigenous interpretations of wildlife and myths about the origin of the community and their beliefs form an interesting tourist attraction for indigenous tourists visiting Wayanad.

4.8 ETHNO MEDICINES

Ethno medicine or tribal medicine is a system of medical beliefs and practices of tribes evolved in their cultural and ecological environment. Research on tribal medicines reveals that tribal people have very effective methods of treatment for various ailments (Viswanathan, 2008). They collect wide variety of herbal, animal and mineral substances from their habitat to prepare medicines. The person who practices and administers native medicine for various deceases and ailments is called Tribal Healer or Herbalist. Tribal healers belong to different tribal communities like Kurichiyas, Mullukurumans, Paniyas
and Kattunayckas and are spread across the district. This knowledge is passed on to the next generation. They consider the medicinal knowledge as sacred. There are generalists who treat many diseases and specialists who treat for snake bite, bone fracture, jaundice, etc.

The tribal healers strictly hold the tribal religious dictum. They acquire the knowledge from elder members of the family. Only persons of right character, conduct, and sound mind are trained. Even after acquiring the knowledge, they are not supposed to treat till his/her mentor’s death.

Tribal medicine is a unique indigenous contribution to Wayanad which is now used by even the non tribal people also. The effectiveness of tribal medicine is known to the natives of Wayanad and hence the local non tribal communities also prefer tribal medicine for the diseases like fracture, jaundice and snake bite.

Medical tourism is an emerging type of tourism and growing fast in the last few years. It is no surprising that Kerala has emerged as a major centre for medical tourism in India with age old traditional/native system of medicine like Ayurveda, Unani and Sidha. Indigenous or tribal medical system which could be termed as ethno medicine offers excellent opportunities to promote Special Interest Tourism in Wayanad.

4.9. CONCLUSION

Tourists are always excited to know about the indigenous culture, traditions and art forms of a region. Visit to any place cannot be a fulfilling exercise without experiencing the native attractions. The concept of Responsible Tourism, which is the hallmark of the recent policies of Kerala Tourism, lays more emphasis on providing indigenous experience to tourists and bringing economic benefit and empowerment to the local community.

Responsible Tourism activities have been launched at Wayanad on 1 Sep, 2008 by department of Tourism, Government of Kerala. It is heartening to note that the project was launched at Vythiri village in Wayanad. Various units of making paper bags and
handicrafts, ethnic food corners, cultural (Tribal) activity groups etc., formed part of the project. The local community involvement was appreciated and encouraged.

Though the importance of the native attractions of Wayanad has been appreciated and acknowledged widely, but need to be explored fully. The challenge lies in presenting the culture in the form of a product or service and markets it. Designing indigenous products require special expertise and systematic effort with commitment is required to showcase the strengths of indigenous tourism products to the world.

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