CHAPTER - III

ADIVASIS OF KERALA - A PROFILE

The social and economic aspects of the life of a set of people have to be probed for a clear understanding of the extent of human rights denial among them. The Adivasis are divided into several communities and the customs and practices of each of them vary. Totally, there are 36 Adivasi groups in Kerala and each one is known by a particular name. All of them are marginalized groups and they fear extinction. Their socio-economic background and lifestyle are worthy of analysis to get a clear picture of the human rights scenario. This chapter narrates a profile of Adivasis in Kerala. Since the study concentrates on the state response in respect of the human rights violations among the Adivasis in Wayanad district, an attempt is also made in this chapter to give a special reference to them focusing on their socio-economic and cultural life.

3.1 Adivasis of Kerala

The Adivasis are an inseparable part of Kerala population and for that reason the state holds a unique position in the tribal map of India. They have a unique culture and civilisation of their own. Though the need for a clear classification of Adivasis in Kerala has been pointed out, it has not been attempted so far successfully. As per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 2002(Act 10 of 2003) vide Part-V11 Kerala-Second Schedule notified in the Gazette of India, dated 8th January, 2003, the government of Kerala has enlisted 36 Adivasi communities in the state as Scheduled Tribes.

Adivasi concentrations in the state are seen in the districts of Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikodu, Malappuram, Wayanad, Idukki, Palakkad and the north eastern parts of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts. As per 2011 census, the Adivasi population of these districts together constitutes 73 percent of the total Adivasi population in the state. According to the 2011 census, Kerala has a total population of 3, 34, 06,061 of which the population of Adivasi communities constitutes 4, 84,839 (1.45 percent).
3.1.1 Adiya

The word ‘Adiya’ or ‘Adiyan’ means “slaves” or “serfs” in Malayalam. The community is distributed in Wayanad district and the adjoining areas of Kannur district and Kodagu in Karnataka; concentrations is in Thirunelly, Thrissileri and Vemom villages of Mananthavady taluk.²

“A popular myth is that two babies stolen by a local tribe from the aryapa da and the vaniyapada (the Aryan and the Vaniya soldiers respectively), were the originators of the tribe- they were called paidal (=children) by their abductors. When the soldiers of the respective forces haunted around for the children, their abductors became panicky and approached all the Gods, Shiva, residing at Thirunelli, ultimately protected them by hiding them in a cave in the deep forests. The babies, when they grew up became the leaders, and taught them the sastra (oral tradition). The myth seems to be indicative of the fact that the tribal people were the original inhabitants who were acculturated in to the Aryan tradition by two young missionaries”.³

The presence of nattu muppan (chief of the tribe) in all-important meetings, discussions, religious rites, marriage functions and death ceremonies, is mandatory and necessary in this community. The office of nattu muppan is not hereditary. A person well versed in their sastra (sacred oral tradition) is usually selected as the chief of the tribe.

3.1.2 Aranadan

The Aranadan (plural Aranadar), who is also known as Eranadar is found in the Nilambur forest areas of Malappuram district. Their settlements are found scattered in Vazhikadavu, Edakkara, Aranadankaya, Kavalamukkatta, Telppara, Patakkarimpu etc of the Nilambur Forest Range.⁴ Their language is found to be a “mixture” of Malayalam, Tamil and Tulu. They had been living in caves. Nowadays they built huts called pandal.

The plains people treat them as the lowest among the forest tribes due to their food habits. Engaging in no form of food production, they depend fully on forest and forest produce for maintenance. They are omnivorous, mainly subsisting on roots, tubers, fruits and leaves. The Aranadar are snake catchers especially pythons. They collect its fat, which is supposed to be medicinal in the treatment of leprosy.
Owing to multi-sectoral development and the exorbitant exploitation from the migrants, made this tribal community detribalised and the victims of the violations of their basic human rights.

3.1.3 Irula

Many communities listed as Scheduled Tribes are designated “Irula”. The name indicates their very dark complexion.\(^5\) (irul= black, night darkness). The communities called Irula are found in the eastern half of the Attapady valley in Palakkad district of Kerala, They are also found in Gudalur, Coonoor and Kotagiri taluk of the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. Besides, a group among them identify themselves as “Urali” and is found in the area of the Sholayar and adjacent forest inhabiting community; in the Valayar across the Kerala –Tamil Nadu border in the Palakkad -Coimbatore district. This scattered community which is called Irula, may indicate that in very early times, their ancestors might have been autochthons in the entire peninsula.

After the formation of Kerala, a fresh team of in-migrants, mainly Christians from Central Kerala grabbed the better-watered hill slopes along the southern part of the Irula region. They introduced the drink habit (illicitly distilled) among the tribal communities through which they succeeded in alienating whatever land the Irula had. The land reforms laws to a little extent favoured those who are in possession of the land, and those with some sort of “title” on “registered paper” – the Irula had neither. The Irula have also been the worst sufferers of the consequences of the ecological destruction of the forest areas. As a result, their traditional hunting and food gathering habit have been lost to them, which lead to their detribalisation. Of all the communities in Attapady, the Irula are the most badly suffered community from the migrants whom they called “Vandevasi” (those who have come to stay), in contrast to Adivasi (the original inhabitants).\(^6\)

Thus, it is ironical that the Irula community also has become the victims of the human rights violations of the migrants from the plains, which resulted losing their right to live as human being with rights equal to the rest of the society.
3.1.4 Eravallan

Eravallan another Scheduled Tribe is also called Villu Vedan (hunters using bows and arrows). They are found in Chittur taluk of Palakad district. The word Eravallan is derived from beggar because some among them were professional beggars.

Their settlements are called ‘pathi’. The huts are of mud walls and thatched roof with palmyra leaves. Formerly the Eravallan were bonded labourers. However, with the implementation of the land reforms, the old feudal ties have broken down. Bonded labour is illegal, though some sort of informal bondage is still in vogue.\(^7\) As a result, this community also has become landless agricultural labourers. This led to their detribalisation and made them denying their basic right to live with their ethnic identity and traditional uniqueness.

3.1.5 Kadar

The word ‘Kadan’, in Malayalam means, the dweller in a forest. The Kadar may be considered as the best representative of the integrated food-gathering tribes of south India. In Kerala, they are found in Palakad and Thrissur districts.

After independence, the construction of huge reservoirs and the constitution of wildlife sanctuaries, their means of livelihood, has been severely curtailed. No longer is hunting, trapping and fishing allowed. The felt needs of the Kadar have expanded due to contact with outside populations like contractor’s labour, for the civil works, tourists and their touts. As a result from being self reliant, resourceful and independent community of forest inhabitants, the Kadar have become a \textit{lumpen} proletarian category dependant on odd jobs, exposed to decadence, and subjected to worst forms of exploitation. Moreover, the entire process of development is focused on the primacy of forest.\(^8\)

3.1.6 Wayanad Kadar

The Wayanad Kadar inhabit in Thariyode, Vellamunda, Meppadi and Pozhuthana villages of Wayanad district.\(^9\) They claim that they were the original ‘inhabitants’ of Wayanad, but their tradition shows that at best, they were only the ‘original in-migrants’. Anthropologists keep the view that “they were Nairs who accompanied the Kottayam Raja along with the Kurichia and assumed the name of
Kadar (forest men) as they settled in the forests”. This community constitutes a tiny group in the Adivasi population in Wayanad district.

3.1.7 Karimpalan

The Karimpalans, being a very small Adivasi community in Wayanad district are found in the Mananthavady block\(^{10}\). They are also found in Thaliparampu and Thalassery taluks in Kannur district.

3.1.8 Kanikkar

Kanikkar, popularly known as Kani, are found in extreme south India, around the Agastyakutam and Mahendragiri peaks of the Western Ghats in Thiruvananthapuram district and in Kollam district. However, in Kerala their main concentrations are in the Nedumangadu taluk. Their inhabited regions have been penetrated by the non-tribal populations at different times, and now, they are mostly confined to reserve forest areas. The Kanikkar believed to be the descendants of two hill kings, Veerappan and Sithangan, who migrated from the Pandya land beyond the Agastyakutam mountains under pressure from a superior force.\(^{11}\)

Nowadays Kanis are in constant touch with the plains people. New forest laws and rules and the development projects like construction of hydro-electric projects and roads and the presence of wild life sanctuaries provide the plains people to have more access even to their interior domiciles. Because of the continuous pressure of the settlers, a number of Kanis have been pushed further in to the interior part of the forest. The other Kanis live in the periphery of the forest adjusting themselves with the changed scenario. Hence, a distinction is made among the Kani community itself. Those who have retreated in to the interior forest are called Malamkani and those who live in the periphery are called Nattukani or Elakani. Therefore, this community also is victimised at the hands of the settlers.

3.1.9 Kochuvelan

The Kochuvelan are sometimes referred to as Ulladans, but have been enlisted separately among the Scheduled Tribes of Kerala. They are mainly distributed in the Ranny forest range of the Pathanamthitta taluk and in the adjoining areas of Kottayam and Idukki districts. There are several myths about their origin. One among is that
“this tribal community is the descendants of the ancestors of the famous god Ayyappan of Sabarimala. Another describes them as the offspring of a human figure who came out of a mud elephant made by Parvati and trampled upon by Lord Shiva. Yet another says that they were created by Lord Shiva to help Panchali, while in exile, to wash her clothes while in pollution”.  

The Kochuvelan community also has been ‘the victims’ of the overall development of the region. The enactment of several forest laws and the unscientific implementation of the same have further marginalised them, making them more and more dependent on wage labour under the in-migrant cultivators and the estate owners.

As a result, their right to life and livelihood has been mercilessly booted down by the persons with vested interest and also by those who are in power.

3.1.10 Koraga

Among the poorest of the poor, the Koraga are a Scheduled Tribe living in Peradal, Bela, Shiribagilu Koipady, and Enmakaje, Paivalika villages of Kasragod district and in the Kasargode Municipal area. They were considered as a depressed caste until 1956 and was scheduled as a Tribe in the Presidential Order of 1956. Unlike other tribal communities, they inhabit among the rest of the population without any geographical or physical separation.

There are a number of myths about their origin. One among them is that “there was a big flood and nothing survived except a youth and a maiden, who clung to a log of wood and drifted in to a cave. On the fourth day, God appeared before them and asked them about their relationship. They remained silent. God provided them with food and disappeared. He appeared again; asked the same question and received a reply that they were husband and wife. God blessed them and disappeared. The world was re-created and the couple produced three hundred children. God gathered them and divided them in to groups assigning to them various functions, thus creating the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, etc. Four boys and four girls remained; God told them that they would constitute the Koraga and the rest of the world would feed them. Ironically, those whom God thus favoured became the despised beggars of later days.”
3.1.11 Kudiya
The Kudiya, a Scheduled Tribe, are found mainly in the Coorg district of Karnataka. They are also known as Mala Kudiya and In Kerala, the Kudiya is known as Gowda, Malagudia and Malayagowda. Other synonyms are Malakudia, Malaikudi, Malayakudi etc. These people live on hilltops.\(^ {14}\)

3.1.12 Kunduvadiyan
The Kunduvadiyan, a tiny Adivasi group in Wayanad are found in the villages of Puthadi, Purakkadi and Pulpalli of the district. Their origin is not known. They claim that they are descended from a Nair Tarawad named Kunduvadi. There is also a legend current among them that they had migrated from a place called Kunduvadi near Pakkam in Wayanad. They claim that they are the uralanmar (trustees) of the Poothadi temple.\(^ {15}\)

The Kunduvadiyan are light to dark brown in complexion and have wavy hair. They have a tribal council with a headman (muppan). He is usually an elderly man acceptable in this capacity to the community. He is consulted before concluding a marriage alliance. His presence is expected at marriages and funerals. He may also serve as the community’s priest.

The language they speak is Malayalam but the dialect is virtually unintelligible to others. The incidence of ‘sickle cell syndrome’ is high among them. This disease is very common among the Adivasis in Wayanad, which prevails as a serious menace to their existence.

3.1.13 Kurichia
The Kurichia are the second largest Adivasi community in Wayanad district. “The key “emic” factor explaining the peculiarities of Kurichia life style is their exceptional honesty and truthfulness. Edachen Kungan and Thakakkal Chandu organised the Kurichia into raid of the military post at Panamaram on 11th October, 1802. They killed whole of the detachment including captain Dickenson and his lieutenant Maxwell. They obtained 112 muskets, six boxes of ammunition and Rs. 6000. All the buildings at the post were destroyed. Edachena Kungan remained as a faithful ally of the Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam dynasty till his end”.\(^ {16}\)
3.1.14 Kattunaickan

Kattunaickans are the Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) mainly found in Wayanad and Malappuram districts.

3.1.15 Mala Araya

The Mala Arayan is a scheduled Tribe mainly found in the Meenachil and Changanasseri taluks of the Kottayam district, Kerala. Though the Mala Arayan and the Mala Arayar are the two different communities in the lists maintained by the central and the state governments, they are the same community.\(^{17}\)

In the past, they were hunters of wild beasts with bows and arrows. They also collected minor forest produce. Now this has been changed and they have taken to settled agriculture.

3.1.16 Mala Muthan

The Mala Muthan \((\text{Mala Muthan})\) are found in the Nilambur, Mambad and Arecode villages of the Ernad taluk of the Malappuram district. They are also called Malakkaars and Malapanikkar, and they are one of the sub divisions of Malakkar who comprise them and the Malapanikkar. Mala Muthans were food gatherers and hunters in the past but had become shifting cultivators. They also earned their livelihood as farm labour and watchman, collecting forest produce to supplement their meager income.\(^{18}\)

The forest policy has largely affected their traditional economic organisation, making them experts in hunting and jungle craft obsolete. The shifting cultivation has been discouraged. Their believes do not allow them to domesticate the animals except dogs. Thus, they found it very difficult to adjust themselves to the socio-economic changes coming in the wake of “settler onslaught” and the various economic development programmes which the settlers pressurised the government to adopt in the area.

In fact, the right of this community to live in the society by equally enjoying the rights enshrined in the Constitution and also enjoying the resources is put under serious threat.

3.1.17 Mala Kurava

In Kerala, the Mala Kurava is found in Nedumangad taluk in Thiruvananthapuram district, and in some parts of Pathanamthitta and Kottayam
districts. They were formerly divided in to four branches called Kunta Kuravan, Pum Kuravan, Kakka Kuravan and Pandi Kuravan. Almost all the Kuravans of the country belong to the first of these sections.  

Eventhough they have been given a few houses by the government, but in most of the cases, both the houses and the plot in which it situates have been alienated to non-tribals. The government did not accord them any protection against such alienation, nor restored alienated lands to them despite the provisions of the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on transfer and Restoration of alienated lands) Act, 1975. They continue to be indebted to all categories of exploiters; lead among them is the local traders and moneylenders. Therefore, the human rights status of this community also remains to be very low.

3.1.18 Malasar

The Malasar are known by different names such as Malayar or Malai Arasar. They are mainly concentrated in Parambikulam area in Idukki district. The Malasar is the generic name for three groups of tribes as Maha or Malai Malasars, Macharivan Malasars and Nattu Malasars. They believe that they originally lived in Kongu Nadu, now comprised in Coimbatore district. They collect minor forest produce like honey which is hardly sufficient to meet their requirements. This shows that their right to livelihood, which is the very basic human right, is in challenge.

3.1.19 Maha Malasar

The Malasar is the generic name for the tribes known, as Maha Malasar or Malai Malasar, Malasar and Nattu Malasar are primitive Kattu Jathis (forest tribes) and early aboriginals of the Western Ghats. They are also found in Palakkad district.

The major economic activity of this community is the collection of minor forest produce like honey, white dammer etc., exchanging them with the dealers from the plains for food grains and clothes. They are also the victims of exploitation from the plains people and are the worst sufferers of their human rights.

3.1.20 Mala Pandaram

Malapandaram are found mainly in the hills of Achancoil, Pathanapuram, Naduvathumoozhy and Mannarappara forest ranges of the Pathanamthitta and Kollam districts of Kerala. The collection and sale of minor forest produce form the major economic activity for them.
Eventhough, some of the activities of the government have mitigated the severity of exploitation that they had suffered in the past, this community is still under the verge of the flagrant violation of their rights by the people in power and the rest of the society.

3.1.21 Mala Panikkar

The Mala Panikkars are distributed in the Nilambur, Mambad and Karikad villages of the Malappuram district. The name is believed to be derived from ‘Mala’ and ‘Panikkar’, meaning “hills labourers” or Mala Panikkar.

They speak Malayalam with a peculiar intonation, which makes it unintelligible to an ‘outsider’. They used to practice shifting cultivation in the past. At present, many of the men in this community have become expert woodcutters and agricultural labourers. Thus, they lost their traditional identity and have become marginalised in all sense.  

3.1.22 Mala Vettuvan

The Mala Vettuvans are found in the Thaliparambu taluk and are also distributed in the villages of Tadikadavu, Padiyur and Vayakara of Kannur district. The name Mala Vettuvan is the corruption of Vedan or Vettuvan and connotes that they were hunters. In the past, they used to be food gatherers and hunters as their name indicates. They form a small Adivasi community.

Nowadays, they have taken to agricultural labour though most of them own no land. Whatever, they have had, already been encroached upon by the non-tribal “settlers” who have swamped the area. Some who retain possession of their limited homesteads cultivate plantains, pepper and such other commercial crops there; they have learnt the techniques from the “settlers” and trade the produce through them, in which transaction, they are exploited.

3.1.23 Mala Veda

In Kerala, the Malavedas are found mainly in the Pathanamthitta district, and in the Thiruvananthapuram and Idukki districts. They were described as “wearing dresses of leaves”, and called by the neighbouring Kanikkar as ‘Tolvetan.’

Their traditional mainstay and hunting ceased to be viable decades ago with the decimation of the wildlife. They have become nomadic agriculturists. Nowadays,
the “settlers” have encroached the land and most of the Malavedan families have only their homesteads. They have been reduced to casual wage agricultural labourers. Eventhough government have allotted land to them for cultivation, but most of these have been encroached up on or otherwise alienated by the non-tribals and thereby their right to life and livelihood has been infringed.

3.1.24 Mala Pulaya

The Mala Pulayas (Hill Pulayas) are mainly found in the Devikulam taluk, in Idukki district. They are included in the Scheduled Tribe list of the state under the name, “Hill Pulaya.”

3.1.25 Malayalar

The Malayalar (malayalar) are a very small community found in the Aralam forest of the Tellicherry taluk, Kannur district. They were clever hunters who could use bows and arrows and muzzle loading guns effectively. They were also shifting cultivators. Those who lost their land holdings have become farm labourers.

3.1.26 Mannan

The Mannans who belong to Scheduled Tribe community are found in Thodupuzha, Devikulam, Udumbanchola and Peermade Taluks of the Iduuki District. In the past, the economic activity of the Mannan community was centered round shifting cultivation. They collected minor forest produce like honey etc.

All these conditions have now changed. The government has declared most of the forest areas in their region at Thekkadi as Wild Life Sanctuary. They, now form part of the Periyar Project Tiger Sanctuary.

The forest officials have mercilessly put down the shifting cultivation by the tribal communities. The former are incapable of preventing large-scale encroachments on forestlands, poaching of protected wild life and stealing of valuable timber from even the core area of the forest lands, of which Mannan families had been in possession and enjoyment for ages. These lands were encroached upon, grabbed and alienated by the settlers and the greedy land grabbers. Tea, coffee and cardamom estates were formed by all sorts of entrepreneurs in the Mannan homeland, each of which deprived the right to their livelihood. The forest department also put an axe on the tribal right of the collection of minor forest produce.
3.1.27 Muduga

The Mudugar community is settled around the Malleeswaran Peak in Attapadi, Palakkad District. Until independence, the community was dependant on shifting cultivation, trapping of small animals and collection of minor forest produce.

The very foundations of their resource bases have been shattered now. The forests have been “nationalized;” shifting cultivation is severely put down. Hunting and trapping become severely punishable offences if done by the tribal people. The virtual disappearance of natural vegetation has destroyed the utility of the remaining forests as reservoirs of minor forest produce.29

As a result, this Adivasi community has also been compelled to take up agricultural labour under the ‘settlers’ exploitative attitude.

3.1.28 Mullu Kuruma

The Mullu Kuruma is a Scheduled Tribe found in the Wayanad district, Kerala and the adjoining areas of the Gudalur taluk, Nilgiri district and Tamil Nadu30.

3.1.29 Muthuvan

The Muthuvan (plural Muthuvar) is a Scheduled Tribe found in the Idukki district. The plains people refer to them as takappanmarkal. Their myths and remembered traditions lend credence to their belief that they originally lived in Madurai and later migrated to the hills of Kerala. According to one story, during their migration from Madurai to the cardamom hills, they carried the idol of the Goddess, Madurai Meenakshi, on their backs and hence got the name Muthuvar, which means those who carried (something) on their back. According to another version, they got the name because of their custom of carrying their children on their backs.31

The reservoirs formed by the various works on tributaries of the Periyar, and some portion of the Parambikulam reservoir impinge on Muthuvan homeland. The conversion of natural forests to monoculture systems with exotics like eucalypts has changed largely, diminishing the availability of the wild cardamom and other minor forest produce. There has been explosive intrusion of plains people under the cover of tourism during the recent years, leading to further ecological damage and destruction of forest. Thus, the Muthuvan community also is put under the banner of marginaliation.
3.1.30 Paliyan
The Paliyan are found in the Idukki district of Kerala, and in the neighbouring Madura and Ramanad districts of Tamil Nadu. Their main concentrations in Kerala are in the Peerumedu and Udumbanchola taluks. It is believed that their original home was in Gudallur, Madurai district. They had been migrated until half a century back and shifted their area of cultivation annually.

As shifting cultivation and other economic activities within the forest have faced with so many intricacies, they have turned to settled agriculture. Here also they are forced to confront the victimisation of the exploitation as most of the fertile land under their possession had already been passed in to the hands of the settlers and encroachers. This has led to their existence more sorrowful and pathetic.

3.1.31 Paniya
The Paniya community constitutes the largest single Scheduled Tribe in Kerala and. They are seen in twenty five panchayats and the municipality in Wayanad district and the neighbouring areas of Karnataka as well as the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu. They speak a language of their own which is identified to be originated from the South Dravidian family, closely related to Malayalam, with borrowings from Kannada and Tamil.

3.1.32 Pathiyan
The Pathiyans are distributed in seventeen settlements, in Noolpuzha, Sultan Bathery, Kindganad and Nenmeni villages of the Wayanad district. According to a tradition current among them, the name Pathiyan is derived from pathi (settled land). According to their own tradition, they had migrated to the present locations from Punat in Mysore. There is a washerman caste known by the same name (pathiyan) in the Travancore area. They have nothing to do with the Pathiyan of Wayanad.

3.1.33 Thachanadan Mooppan
The Thachanadan Mooppans (Thachanadans) form a small community with a limited geographical distribution in the Wayanad district and the adjoining corner of the Nilambur area of the Malappuram district. They inhabit mainly Meppadi, Mutttil and Amblavayal panchayats. They are also found in Kalpetta municipal area. The Thachanadans are believed to have migrated to Wayanad from a place called
Thachanadu. They claim that they are related to people called *kutar*, belonging to Nilambur. Their tribal name means leaders (muppan) of Thachanadu.  

3.1.34 **Urali Kuruma**

The Urali Kuruma (urali kuruma- singular; urali kurumar- plural) of Wayanad are one of the few tribal artisans in India.  

3.1.35 **Ulladan**

The Ulladans a Scheduled Tribe found mainly in Kottayam, Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts. In South of the Pamba river, they are known variously as Katan, Kattalan and Kochuvelan. They have similarities with the ‘Nayadis’ in Malabar. The Ulladans are being treated as low caste by the other tribes.  

3.1.36 **Urindavan**

The Urindavan are a very small community found in the Thirunelli and Pulpally villages of Wayanad. They were shifting cultivators in the past. Now they have taken to settled agriculture and are hardworking cultivators. The women are experts in making mats out of bamboos and reeds.  

3.2 **Wayanad District - A Profile**
Wayanad, one of the fourteen districts in Kerala, is situated in an elevated picturesque mountainous plateau in Western Ghats. It lies between north latitude “11 degree 26’28” and east longitude 75 degree 46’38” and 76 degree 26’11. Located at a distance about 76 kms from the sea shores of Kozhikode in the Western Ghats, this station is full of plantations, forest and wildlife. Wayanad hills are contiguous to Mundumala in Tamil Nadu and Bandhipur in Karnataka, thus forming a vast land mass for the wild life to move about in its most natural abode.

The district has been segmented into three block panchayats namely; Kalpetta, Mananthavady and Sulthan Bathery. On 1st July 2010 a new block panchayt (Pananmaram) was constituted. Thus at present Wayanad is divided into four block panchayats.

The district is divided into 25 panchayats and a municipality. Mananthavady, Vellamunda, Thirunelly, Thondemar, Edavaka, and Thavinhall spread in Manantavady block Panchayat and Meenangadi, Nemmeni, Ambalavayal, Poothadi, Sulthan Bathery, Noolpuzha, spread in Sulthan Bathery block Panchayat and Kottathara Vengapally, Vythiri, Muttil, Pozhuthana, Thariyodu, Padinarathara, Meppady and Muppainad-spread in Kalpetta block Panchayat and Panamaram, Poothadi, Mullankolli, Pulpally and Kaniyampatta spread in Panamaram block. Kalpetta, which is the only municipal town, in the district head quarters. The total Adivasi population in the district is 1,51,443. (Cessus Report, 2011) The block wise distribution of Adivasi population and percentage of each community in the district is shown in table 3.1.

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<td>13194</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>5580</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulladan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Moopan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimpalan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table 3.1 shows that Paniya is the largest Adivasi community in Wayanad with a total population of 69,116, constitutes 45.12 percent of the total Adivasi population in the district. In all four blocks and a municipality, they dominate over other communities. Kuricha is the second largest community with 16.49 percent and Kuruma holds third position with 13.70 percent.

The district has three revenue divisions (taluks) namely, Sulthan Bathery, Vythiri and Mananthavady under which there are 49 Revenue villages. They are Nenmeni, Ambalavayal, Sulthan Bathery, Kidanganad, Noolpuzha, Thomattuchal, Kooppadi, Cheeral, Purakoddi, Poothadi, Pulpally, Padichira, Irulam, Krishnagiri and Nadavayal which are in Sulthan Bathery taluk.

Kunnathidavaka, Achuram, Thariyodu, Kottathara, Kuppadithara, Padinjarathara, Choondel, Vengapally, Kavumandam, Pozhuthana, Kaniyampatta, Muttill North, Muttill South, Kottapady, Kalpetta, Muppainadu, Vellarimala, Thrikkaipatta are coming under Vythiri taluk.

Anjukunnu, Porunnoor, Nalloornadu, Mananthavady, Thirunelly, Payyambally, Trissilerry, Cherukattoor, Panamaram, Peryya, Thondernad Vellamunda, Thavinal, Edava, Valadu, and Kanhirangadu are coming under Mananthavady taluk.

Wayanad is the largest Adivasi populated district in the state. The total population in Wayanad district as per 2011 census is 8,17,420 of which 1,51,443 are Adivasis and they constitute 18.5 percent of the total Adivasi population in the district. It was 17.3 percent in 2001 with 1,36,062 Adivasis.(Census Report 2001) According to a survey conducted by the Department of Tribal Development in the year 2002, there were 26,466 tribal households in Wayanad. These households spread across four blocks-namely Kalpetta, Mananthwady, Sulthan Bathery and Panamaram.

According to the Wayanad district Report, the total Adivasi population in the district is 1, 52,808, of which 77,466 are females and 75,342 are males. The ST female-male ratio in the district is 1000:1028. There are 36,135 Adivasi families (households) in Wayanad. Moreover, a total of 373 members have newly joined the Adivasi population through inter-caste marriage, enhanced the total Adivasi population to 1,53,181. The table 3.2 below shows the block wise distribution of the total number of Adivasi families/population in Wayanad. 41
The above table 3.2 makes clear the block wise distribution of the Adivasi families in Wayanad. In all the four blocks and the municipality, the Paniya families/population dominate over others. The Kurichia and the Kattunaickan communities hold the second and the third position respectively.

The district has a mixed population of Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. As per 1991 census, of the total population of the district, 50 percent belongs to Hindus, 26 percent Muslims and 23 percent Christians. Others including a small Jain community constitute the rest 1 percent. Until the arrival of the settler peasants from plains, Wayanad was essentially tribal. However, they form 17 percent of the total population of the district. It is the least populated district in Kerala after Idukki. The density of population in Kerala is 819 per sq. kilometers while it is only 369 for Wayanad. The Scheduled Tribes in the district account for 31.2 percent of the total tribal population of Kerala, which according to 2011 census is 4, 84,839.42

In ancient times, this land was ruled by the Raja of the Veda tribe. Some of the 20 different groups of tribes of Adivasis were expert rice cultivators. These Adivasi groups applied indigenous methods of eco-friendly cultivation of naturally evolved exotic varieties of paddy and thereby Wayanad came to be known as ‘Vayal
Nadu’ (land of paddy). Even now, a few of these varieties are cultivated in isolated small fields mainly by the Adivasis and the Jains. Another interpretation of the place name comes from the fact that during the military campaigns of Tipu Sultan, Wayanad was considered as the most important trade route linking the thriving spices area to seaports on the western coast and plain land routes in the peninsular hinterland. On this basis, it was called ‘Vazhi Nadu’, which means’ route land’. ⁴³

The important Adivasi groups in the region are Paniya, Adiya, Kurichia, Mullu kuruma, Ur.ali kuruma or Vettu Kururma, Kattunaickan or Ten Kuruma, Karimpalan and Wayanadan Kadar. Most of the tribes in Wayanad used to practice shifting cultivation, gathered food and were hunters. During the British rule, there was great improvement in transport and communications. At present the different Adivasi communities together numbering 1, 53,181 constitute more than 18.6 percent of the total population of Wayanad. ⁴⁴

In a relative sense, Wayanad is a thinly populated district. The waves of migrations from the land-starved central Travancore started during the Second World War when it was even more sparsely populated. But migration began before the mid 20th century, much before, the Jains, Gounders and Chettis had established themselves in Wayanad. Moreover, the Nair Chieftains, brought by the plain petty Kings and subsequently by Pazhassi Raja, had established themselves as feudal chieftains in the area. After the defeat and killing of Pazhassi Raja and his followers by the British and their feudatory allies and the subsequent suppression of the Kurichiar Rebellion, the British planters migrated to this region and established huge plantations- cultivating tea, pepper and coffee on a vast commercial scale. Interestingly, many of these planters were originally Calcutta based which resulted in many of these plantations being still registered with the Calcutta stock exchange. ⁴⁵

The history of the place is steeped in fabulous myths and legends. The whole region is replete with archaeological relics, still waiting to be fully deciphered. The most credible story seems to be that prior to the emergence of feudal relations of production in the area there was an autonomous tribal republic in place: this Adivasi democracy was overturned by a combination of rulers from the plains and the majority
of Adivasis were enslaved or subjugated by the victors. This is, of course, a classical model of how free people become enslaved and is a universal phenomenon.

It was much later that Pazhassi Raja, in his struggle for survival against colonialists, resorted to the jungles of Wayanad and waged a guerilla war against the colonial army with the support of a section of the Adivasis. He then introduced a fresh dose of feudal elements in to the social system of the place. Several of the Adivasis who valued their freedom more than anything else escaped into the dense jungles. This division between the freedom-lovers and the enslaved probably became the first serious schism among the original inhabitants. They were divided geographically and culturally over a period of several generations.

The British colonisers came to know about the terrain only with the aid of the Adivasis. The footpath from ‘Thamarassery churam’ to the heart of Wayanad was disclosed to them by an Adivasi chieftain named Karinthandan who, after his disclosure was treacherously killed by the Britishers themselves. Today there is a memorial raised for him at the entry point of Lakki di (a huge iron chain hanging from a giant tree, is believed to be tied his soul) that has become mere mythological but with the exact identity of Karinthandan remaining obscure has been interpreted differently by various writers. Whatever may be the mythological understones, one thing is clear that the Adivasis who knew the Wayanadan forests, and even now, hold the secrets of this fragile but dazzling place. It was by using them, the settlers who were the earlier colonialists, came to know about the place and was able to manage it. However, this relationship proved unequal to the core for the Adivasis.46

There were also other immigrants and those new immigrants came with the dried fish and dried tapioca and alien cultures. The priests and mullahs came there and established their vihars, churches, mosques and other institutions. They were very much influential and powerful and grew from strength to strength. They also came with new ideological and political trappings imported from the different socio-political moorings of Travancore and the trading cultures of Kozhikode and Thalassery. As a result, today the settler’s religious and cultural institutions and religious bureaucrats exercise decisive influence in Wayanad.
3.3  Adivasi Settlements in Wayanad

There are 11 Adivasi communities in Wayanad. They are the Paniya, Kurichia, Kurumar/Mullu Kuruma, Adiya, Vettakuruman, Katunaickan, Wayanad Kadar, Mala Araya, Karimpalan, Ulladan and Thachanadan Mooppan. Among the tribal communities of Wayanad those who were traditionally bonded labourers such as the Adiya and the Paniya, forest dependant community like the Kattunaickan and artisan community like the Uralikuruma are the most vulnerable sections of tribal communities. Traditionally cultivating communities like Mullu Kurama and Kurichia are comparatively in a better position than the rest of the tribal population due to the resource base.

There are 2167 Adivasi ooru (hamlets) in Wayanad district in which there are 535 in Sulthan Bathery block, 614 in Mananthavady block, 425 in Kalpetta block, 550 in Pananmaram block and 43 in Kalpetta municipality.\(^{47}\)

3.3.1  Paniya

The Paniya are the largest single Adivasi community in Wayanad. The community is spread over in all twenty-five panchayats and the municipality. (Kalpetta) It is the single largest Adivasi community of Kerala. This community is also found in some areas of Malappuram, Kannur and Kozhikode districts of the state. They are also found in Gudallur taluk of Nilgiri District, Tamil Nadu.

They constitute 45.12 percent of the total tribal population of the district and there are 15876 Paniya families (43.93 percent) with a population of 69116 (45.12 percent).\(^{48}\) In Mananthavady block, there are 3458 Paniya families (33.61 percent) with a population of 15876 (22.97 percent).\(^{49}\) In Sulthan Bathery block, there are 4269 Paniya families with a population of 17473. (45.40 percent of the total tribal population in this block)\(^{50}\). In Kalpetta block, they spread in 3951 families with a population of 17208 (58.89 percent of the total tribal population in this block).\(^{51}\) There are 16293 Paniyas in Pananmaram block panchayat (23.57 percent in this block).\(^{52}\) In Kalpetta municipality, there are 543 families with a population of 2266 (76.58 percent of the total Adivasi population in the municipality)\(^{53}\).

They speak a language of their own. It has been identified with that of the South Dravidian family, closely related to Malayalam; with borrowings from Kannada.
and Tamil.\textsuperscript{54} They are bilingual being conversant in the languages of the localities where they live. The word ‘Paniya’ means ‘labourer’ and they believe that their original occupation was agriculture. The Paniya till recent times represented the slavery, among which there were no free persons.

The Paniya are settled down happily in estates, living in a settlement consisting of rows of huts and detached huts, single or double storied, built of bamboo and thatched roof. During the hot weather, in the unhealthy months, which precede the advent of the south-west monsoon, they shift their quarters to live near streams, or in other cool, shady spots, returning to their head quarters when the rain set in.

There is a belief prevailing among the Paniya that they are gifted with the power of changing themselves into animals. There is also a belief prevalent among the Paniya dwellers in the plains that if they wish to secure a woman whom they lust after, one of the Paniya men gifted with this special power, goes to her at night with a hollow bamboo and encircles the house three times and the woman then comes out and the man, changing himself in to bull or dog, works his wicked will. The woman, it is believed, dies in the course of two or three days.\textsuperscript{55}

However, the studies conducted among them revealed that despite being the largest tribal community, they do not constitute a remarkable labour force in the plantation sector of the district today. Their involvement was mainly with paddy cultivation but the conversion of paddy fields for other crops has reduced employment opportunities among them. Wayanad, being an agricultural district, agriculture labour is the major occupation of the most of the Adivasi communities. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has benefitted the Adivasi communities in the district to a certain extent.

An important fact to be pointed out is that though the Paniya community is the largest Adivasi community of the state/district they do not have adequate representation in the local bodies, in the leadership of the political parties and in government service. Moreover, tribal rehabilitation projects of the government, intended mainly for the upliftment of the bonded labourers, have not provided much benefit for the Paniya community. This community almost entirely depends on agriculture labour for their livelihood. They are one of the most vulnerable sections of
the tribal communities of Wayanad. The survey conducted among them further revealed that this section has been detribalised considerably with the decline of the traditional community structure. Younger people of this group are assimilative in attitude and they positively respond to the welfare measures taken up by the government, other agencies and non-governmental organisations.

3.3.2 Adiya

The word “Adiyan” is used to denote a single individual; “Adiyar” being the plural. There are 11196 Adiyar who form 7.31 percent of the total tribal population of Wayanad. In Mananthavady block, there are 1953 Adiya families with a population of 8447. They are not found in Sulthan Bathery block and Kalpetta municipality. In Kalpetta block panchayat, there are 3 families with a population of 14.(0.04) There are Adiyars in Panamaram block(16.79 percent) They largely found in North Wayanad especially in Tirunelly, Trissileri and Vemom villages of Wayanad.

The word ‘Adiya’ means “slave” or “serf” in Malayalam; they used to be bonded labourers attached to landlords until recently. The community prefers to be known as “Ravuler”. In Kannada, it means “our people”. They call their wives “Ratti”. They are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Kerala. They speak a mixture of Tamil Canaries and Malayalam.

They accept all types of food and water from Marar, Musad, Varrier, Nambiar, Nair, etc., but not from Scheduled Tribes like Paniya, Uralikuruma, Mullu kuruma, Wayanad Kadar etc. These norms are rapidly changing. Studies show that they have access to public buildings, schools, temples, wells and other water sources like any other community in the district.

They do not call themselves “Adiya” but refer to themselves as ‘Ravuler’, meaning “human beings” in their language. The word “Adiya”, meaning “slave” in Malayalam, has been used by others when a reference is made to them, probably because they were until recently, bonded slaves. The bonding was by oaths taken at the annual festival at the Valliyooramma (Mother goddess) temple near Mananthavady. In return for a few rupees, the Adiya family would be sworn to serve the payer on his lands, for a full year.
The employer would provide the huts and food even when there is no work. With the passage of the Central Act on the Abolition of Bonded Labour in 1975, the system was gradually disappeared. Now the community is mainly engaged in casual agricultural labour, protected by the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. Their speech exhibits a number of peculiarities, which mark it off from Malayalam as well as from other tribal speeches in the region.

Like most of the Adivasi communities of Kerala, a survey reveals that Adiya are being detribalised as a response to the socio-economic transitions that the region is undergoing. The community members, especially the youths are exposed to modern education, political process etc. The members of this group freely interact with the non-tribes in the locality and are receptive to their food habits, dress habits, religious practices, language etc. Till the middle of the last century traditional community leadership had played a very decisive role in Adiya community. The role and functions of these traditional authorities have changed significantly of late.

3.3.3 Kurichia

There are 3419 Kurichia families in the district with a population of 25266. (33.23 percent of the total Adivasi population in the district) In Mananthavady block, there are 3419 families (33.23 percent), 38 in Sulthan Bathery block (0.40 percent), 1421 in Kalpetta block,(20.75 percent), 121 in Kalpetta municipality(1.09 percent) and 2571 in Panamaram block. (23.07 percent)

They are the first agricultural tribe to have settled in the district. They migrated to Wayanad plateau between the first and third centuries AD, when the caste system had not acquired complex forms, and represented the “unsanskritised” undifferentiated stock of proto-historic Dravidian speakers of Kerala comprising both Nairs and Ezhavas. They later claimed to be Nairs of the hills calling themselves “Kari Nair”. Many cultural traits, e.g. the forelock of hair, house pattern, ornaments, style of offerings, observances of purity, are clearly evident that they were close to the rest of Kerala community.

They used to observe untouchability with all except the Wayanadan Nairs. Paniya would pollute a Kurichia even at a distance of thirty feet, and are physically
and culturally different; they have their own language but the Kurichia speak a
dialect of Malayalam. The Adiya, another tribe of Wayanad, and the Paniya
address the Kurichia man as accan (= “father”) or pappan (= “elder”); the ‘Jen
Kurumba’ use the term of address as Muthappen (=grandfather), and the Pulaya
call them ‘Perumannom’ (‘great persons’).  

The community has their domiciles mainly located in Mananthavady,
Vythiri and Bathery taluks and forms 17.40 percent of the total tribal population of
the district. The community has tiny land holding, often joint, and agriculture is
their main economic activity.

Till recently the Kurichia were following the joint family system and
community heads had much authority and influence over its members. The
Kurichia are well known for their martial tradition. They valiantly fought in the
struggle against British regime led by the Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam Dynasty (of
Malabar) in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century. The Kurichia became tenants of the Nair feudal
lords of Wayanad and were obliged to perform various duties for them. According
to a story, they descended from Nair soldiers inducted from Travancore by Raja of
Kottayam in order to help getting Wayanad rid of wild beasts and unruly humans.
They were not readmitted to their caste as they had crossed the river, a taboo
among Nairs in those days. In the first decade of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, after the defeat
of Tippu Sultan, Pazhassi Raja rose in revolt against the British. He had to
withdraw to Wayanad, where the Kurichia under the leadership of Thalackal
Chandu opposed the British, baffling by their guerilla tactics and inspired archery
even the military genius Col. Wellesley, later and at Waterloo destined to conquer
Napoleon.

This community is claiming to have a higher status over the rest of the
tribal communities in Wayanad. The survey conducted among them shows that
many of the community members are actively involved in politics and have strong
political affiliation.

3.3.4. Mullu Kuruma (Kurumar)

There are 20983 Mullu Kurumas in the district. They constitute 13.70
percent of the total Adivasi population in the district. There are 28 families in
Mananthavady block with a population of 110. (0.27 percent), 3226 in Sulthan Bathery block with a population of 13194 (34.28 percent) and 486 in Kalpetta block with a population of 1956. (7.09 percent) There are 5580 Mullu Kuruma in Panamaram block. (15.02 percent)\(^6^2\)

This community is also found in the adjoining areas of Gudallur taluk of Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu. This Malayalam speaking community is believed to be the descendants of Vedars, the ancient rulers of Wayanad. Traditionally they were settled agriculturists. Today, a majority of them are marginal farmers and agriculture is their predominant economic activity. The Mullu Kuruma is one of the Adivasi communities in the state that has benefitted to a certain extent the welfare programmes of the state. It is found that many of the community members are active in the public life of Wayanad, and they even have representations in the Legislative Assembly of Kerala. The community has accepted modernity to a great extent and has detribalised fairly. In comparison with other Adivasi communities of Wayanad, they have better representations in the local leadership of the political parties, elected bodies and in government services.

The Malabar District Gazetteer has described them as one of the three subgroups of Kurumbas, the other two being the ‘Jen’ or ‘Ten (honey) Kurumbar’ (also called as Kadu or Shola Nayykkan) and Urali or Betta Kurumbars. ‘Kurumba’ as a collective term is used for the seven communities, viz., Alu Kurumbar, Palu Kurumbar, Muduga, Betta Kurumba, Jenu Kurumba, Mullu Kurumba and Urali Kurumba.

The Mullu Kuruma believes that their present name is a creation of the Nairs of Wayanad during the Nair supremacy. There is a story about them with respect to their name. They were once upon a time in enemical terms with the local Kings of Kottayam (North Malabar). Once the King invaded their homeland, but was defeated. Later by tricky stratagem, the King attacked and killed a majority of them and a few surrendered. The King then described them as Mullu Kurumba, meaning ‘thorn-like mischief makers’ (mullu = thorn; Kurumba = mischief maker). Being an agricultural community, they possess a variety of agricultural implements. Traditionally, the men grew their hair on the top of the head and
knotting it on the front left side. The generic word for their clan is kulam. Inheritance of property and succession to traditional offices is patrilineal. The Mullu Kurumba, even though considered as a sub tribe of the Kurumba are distinct, culturally and economically from others.  

3.3.5 **Urali Kuruma**

The Urali Kuruma (Urali Kuruma singular; Urali Kurumar plural) of Wayanad are one of the few tribal artisans in India. There are 6472 Urali Kurumar constituting 4.23 percent of the total Adivasi population in Wayanad. In the whole of South India, apart from the Kota of Nilgiris, they are the only tribal community, which pursued a wide variety of artisan occupations such as pottery, blacksmith, basketry, carpentry, etc. In the traditional aerial tribal economy of Wayanad, they were the artisans who supplied agricultural implements and earthenware to all the other communities. Their hand-made pottery, made without the potter’s wheel, was famous; they still possess the neolithic technology in this regard. However, today most of the community members are agricultural labourers. Only a negligible section of them has some land holding.

They are mainly found in Sulthan Bathery and Mananthavady blocks in Wayanad, with concentrations in Tirunelly, Panamaram, Poothadi, Noolpuzha, Mullankolli, Kaniyampetta, Ambalavayal and Nenmeni panchayats. They are not included in the Schedule of Tribes in Kerala, but enjoy the benefits under the category, “Kuruma” (other eligible community)

If Mullu Kurumar and Urali Kurumar live adjacent to each other, the other villagers referred to the former as Kuruman and the latter as Urali. They must not be confused with the Urali of Idukki, with whom they have nothing in common except the name. They themselves prefer to be known as ‘Betta Kuruma’ and speak a dialect of Kannada.

3.3.6 **Kattunaickan**

The population of Kattunaickan community in Wayanad comes to 17051 (11.13 percent of the total Adivasi population in the district). In Mananthavady block, there are 895 such families with a population of 3663.(8.70 percent), 1350 in Sulthan Bathery block with a population of 5123(13.31 percent), 496 in Kalpetta
The Kattunaickan community is classified as ‘primitive tribes’ or Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) by the government of India due to their isolative nature from the rest of the communities. This community, also known as ‘Thenu Kurumba’, was traditionally hunters and gatherers. Their main economic activity is the collection of Non-Timber Forest Produces. The community inhabits mainly in the area within the forests or in the fringes. A few of them are having marginal land holdings. The findings of the survey reveal that the members of this community who live within the forest are cultivators in the enclave allotted to them by the forest authorities. The decrease in the forest resources and lack of opportunities in the agriculture sector have adversely affected this community and made them one of the most vulnerable sections among the Adivasi communities in Kerala.

This community speaks a dialect of Kannada, but the younger generation is more conversant with Malayalam. The survey further shows that welfare programmes and schemes initiated and being implemented by the government do not have any impact on them and as such they remain not exposed to ‘modernity’ but still as ‘primitives’.

### 3.3.7 Thachanadan Mooppan

There are 390 families in this community in Wayanad. In Mananthavady block they constitute 0.24 percent of the population. In Sulthan Bathery block they form only 1.07 percent, whereas in Kalpetta block they constitute 4.11 percent. The male members in this community have 84.59 percent literacy. Moreover, they have got comparatively adequate representation in almost all levels of education in proportionate to their population.

### 3.3.8 Wayanad Kadar

In Wayanad district there are 174 families in this community. They are mainly concentrated in Mananthavady block (87 families) with 48.58 percent of
their total strength. In Sulthan Bathery block they form only 0.44 percent with 7 families whereas in Kalpetta block there are 80 families with 1.09 percent.

3.3.9 Mala Araya

There are 46 Mala Araya families in the district. Most of them are concentrated in Mananthavady block (33 families with 80.12 percent population). However, in Sulthan Bathery block there are only 3 families with 0.11 percent of population and the remaining in Kalpetta block with 10 families.

3.3.10 Karimpalan

In this community, there are 39 families (128 members with 0.43 percent) in which 5 families belong to Mananthavady block, 2 families (0.09 percent) are in Sulthan Bathery block and 32 families (128 members with 0.43 percent) in Kalpetta block.

3.3.11 Ulladan

In Wayanad district, there are 23 families with 94 members in this community (19.14 percent). In Mananthavady block, there are 4 families with 18 members (0.04 percent). In Sulthan Bathery block there is only 1 family with 4 members (0.06 percent). The remaining families are spread in different places in the district with one or another.

These communities are enlisted as Scheduled Tribes of Kerala. In the survey it is seen that the most of the community members are marginal peasants or agricultural labourers.

Of the above 11 Adivasi communities in Wayanad district, Paniya, Kurichia, Kurumar/Mullukuruma, Katunaickan, Adiya, Vettu kuruma are the major Adivasi communities. As per 2011 census, the Adivasi population in Wayanad has recorded an increase of 10.2 percent (from 1,36,062 in 2001 to 1,51,443 in 2011). The Paniya is the largest Adivasi community in the district. The majority of the Adivasi population in the district is concentrated in Mananthavady block (29.46 percent). Generally, females (76,967) dominate over males (74,476) because of their strength of population. (as per 2011 Census) However, among the communities like Kurichia, Wayanad Kadar and Karimpalan, the male population shows predominance over the females. Most of the Adivasi families belong to
Hindu religion (94.02 percent). Of the Adivasi population in the district, 32.45 percent constitutes children up to the age of seventeen. 59.79 percent is in between the age 18-59 and 7.76 percent is above 60. Moreover, 6.20 percent (9492) children are below the age of three.

Among the Adivasis, 45.18 percent are married. There are 6706 sub-families among the Adivasis in Wayanad, which constitute 18.56 percent of the total families. This indicates disorder among the Adivasi family system, which also prevents them from becoming self-reliant and attain recognition in the society. Further, there are 367 families, which are of inter-caste marriages.

Wayanad is famous for its cash crops like, coffee, cardamom, pepper, ginger and turmeric and the forest produces like honey and herbals. There are three Adivasi resettlements (colonisation) projects in Wayanad. They are Cheengeri (Ambalavayal grama panchayat), Sugandhagiri Cardamom Project (Pozhuthana grama panchayat) and the Pookkodu Diary Project. The Pookkodu Diary Project was started as a part of Western Ghats Development Programme. The functioning of Sugandagiri and Pookkodu projects was terminated. In matters of tribal administration and its welfare, there are tribal offices like Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Tribal Extension Office and ST Promoters in the district.

3.4 Political Economy of Adivasis

Wayanad is an agrarian district mixed with small holdings and large-scale plantations. Hence, agriculture plays a major role in the economy of Wayanad. Out of the total area of 2131 Sq. kilometer, 788 Sq.km, which form 37 percent, is occupied by forest. An area of 1142 Sq. kilometer is used for agriculture. It forms 54 percent of the total land area of the district. According to the Wayanad district Report, 2008, ninety percent of its working population is involved in agriculture or related activities. Moreover, the government of Kerala has identified Wayanad as a tourism district and tourism is an emerging sector in Wayanad.

During 1980s when the prices of pepper and coffee increased, Wayanad was experiencing prosperity. It is said that farmers with less than five acres of land were coming to the market with loads of pepper and coffee and returning with new
Mahindra jeeps. Jeeps and cars packed with cash-rich travellers were frequenting cities like Mangalore and Bangalore for drinking and ‘enjoying’. Once the crops were sold, the men were frequently away from home creating a curious and unhealthy sort of domestic anarchy. The large consumption reached an irrational high during this so-called golden age.72

The automobiles, electronic goods, liquor, gold and household appliances had acquired predominant place in their daily life. The very little of the cash received went into investment in agriculture, any sort of value adding activities or economic diversification. The urbanisation got a shot in the arm and urban real estate prices shot up. Here again the canalisation of surplus was mainly in the form of investment in trade, cinema theaters, taxis, three wheelers and hotels. The years of high income and profits were frittered away in conspicuous consumption.

During this golden period, Wayanad became the biggest market for Mahindra jeeps, which were being sold at a premium. Pulpally, the pepper haven came to be known as the ‘Dubai’ of India. A number of huge houses were constructed. However, they left ill maintained and falling apart as the owners are no longer in a position to maintain them. The fall in agricultural sector made deep cracks in the socio-economic foundations of Wayanad. This led to a rescission in all sectors in the society. Every nook and corner of the socio-economic activities of the district became weak and this situation made the survival of the people more crucial. Farmer’s suicide became a common phenomenon everywhere in Wayanad. All these adverse changes infinitely victimised the Adivasis, the most vulnerable population in Wayanad making the avenues of their survival more difficult. The employment opportunities enormously decreased leaving room for rampant poverty in Adivasi huts. The starvation deaths, diseases and such other calamities are widespread among the Adivasis. The table 3.3 below shows the employment status of the Adivasis of Wayanad.
The table 3.3 above shows the employment status of the Adivasis in the district. Of the total 36135 Adivasi families in the district, 31696 families are related to agricultural based occupation and such other occupations incidental thereto. Of the total families 29668 families (82.10 percent) are agricultural labourers, 1872 families (5.18 percent) come under marginal farmers, 156 families (0.43 percent) are forest dependants and others constitute 12.28 percent. These statistics depict the pathetic picture that how the masters of the forest, the Adivasis, have been converted to the mere agricultural labourers. Moreover, 391 families have no income. This points towards the social inability of the Adivasi people to use their manpower for their survival and empowerment.

In the absence of productive diversification of the economy, this dream-like situation was bound to face problems. Not even a single worthwhile value-adding unit came into being during this boom period. Moreover, for many years, it was tremendously an up-market situation. When the whole state was caught up in the
migration to the Gulf countries, Wayanad remained an exception mainly because it was not considered sufficiently attractive. Even today, out-migration to the Gulf countries remains on a low level from the district and it is mainly due the decrease of job opportunities in Gulf countries.

On any macroeconomic terms, the present hopeless situation was not a sudden development. On the other hand, it was steadily emerging ever since cash crops replaced food crops and ever since the growers had become market dependent with no control over the market forces.

It was only logical that the big traders catering to the corporate manufacturers monopolised the market and the situation has now reached the point where the monopoly buyers of the primary products can at their convenience create a glut or shortage in the market and thus effectively control the prices the growers receive. The introduction of future trading is bound to further complicate the situation for the primary producers.

One of the most crucial issues in Wayanad today is the credit market system. The production for the market simultaneously created a credit market and it is clearly shown by the number of bank branches for thousand of population. Wayanad is a district where banking has extensively developed. Kerala as a whole is a state where banking is very popular and this is mainly due to the predominant nature of the economy as a remittance economy. However, the out-migration from Wayanad is lowest among all the districts, which means that the development of banking network here is due to the development of the agricultural credit market. The co-operative societies as well as the self-help groups like Kudumbasree and Ayalkootam (the first is a collective of families and the second is a neighbourhood collective) are also no exceptions to the general rules of banking. Out of the total Adivasi families in Wayanad, 13389 families (37.5 percent) have credit liabilities and 4926 (52 percent) of such families are in the Sulthan Bathery block, 2772 (27 percent) in Mananthavady block, 2112 (31 percent) in Kalpetta block and 3548(41 percent) in Panamaram block. In Kalpetta municipality, 31 families are under credit liabilities. Most of the loans are availed from Kudumbasree units (31.22 percent), Co-operative banks (17 percent),
Nationalised banks (16 percent) and other private banks and such other private money lending institutions (30 percent).

Fifty percent of the above said loans availed by the members of the major communities such as Adiya, Paniya and Kurichia has been utilised mainly for their medical treatment, agriculture, daily expenditure etc. whereas the other communities like Kurumar/MulluKurumar spend the loan amounts for housing, animal husbandry, agriculture and also for education.

In Wayanad one finds that these collectives do not encourage the lower strata of Adivasis to join them because it is well-recognised that they are utter destitutes who will not be able to repay even the smallest of loans.

Despite some advances in social indicators since the last two decades, poverty remains as a major problem in Wayanad which is one of the most backward districts in the state. Wayanad is placed at the top in respect of poverty deaths and malnutrition. Due to malnutrition, the rate of infant death is very high in the district when compared to other districts in the state. Many cases of child deaths are reported in panchayats like Meppady in Kalpetta Block and Noolpuzha in Bathery block. It is quite shocking to see that of the 45 infant deaths in Wayanad during 2012, majority occurred among the Adivasi children.

A comparative data with the rest of the state shows that the district is ranked 14th in terms of urban population, 13th in sex ratio, and 12th in good condition of houses, 14th in telephone facility 12th in literacy etc. According to recent estimates, about 35 percent of the population lives in poverty today. Poverty incidence is higher among Adivasi communities in Wayanad and they fall significantly below the district average in terms of infant mortality, female illiteracy, child malnutrition, access to basic sanitation services and access to productive infrastructure.

In Wayanad, environmental pollution is alarmingly high when compared to other districts in the state. The basic requirements for the survival of human beings such as air, water and land are polluted due to the irrational and excessive use of chemicals and pesticides. Because of the growing environmental pollution, the very existence of life is challenged.
Regarding education, the major issue is the higher dropout at primary level, compared to the general population, low performance at schools, and lack of sensitivity to tribal situation from teachers, low results at SSLC level and low education attainment. In the survey, it came out that economic difficulties and poverty are the primary reasons for not continuing the school education. (35 percent) The second most important reason for dropout rate is disinterest in studies (14 percent). The distance of the school, need to look after the younger siblings, teaching practices etc. are other reasons for the increase in dropout rate. Of the total students, 14913 students who were studying in different courses have dropped out without completing the course. At present, 43 percent of such students have dropped out their courses without completing the same. Poverty in the family, bad result, long and tedious journey to educational institutions, adverse situation in home and seclusion are the major reasons for the high rate of dropouts. The survey has revealed that illiteracy among the tribal people is one of the primary reasons for the low social mobility and the capacity to utilise the government schemes. The need to provide quality education is very important for bridging the development gap between various tribal people in the region, and tribal people in general. The literacy rate among the Adivasis in Wayanad is 70.52 percent. The literacy rate of the male population is 76.97 percent whereas the female is 64.33 percent. Of the total illiterates, 15423 are in between the age of 22 -59. If the primary and general education can be made universal, the illiteracy among the Adivasi communities can be reduced to a large extent.

It is an admitted fact that infrastructure facilities contribute a lot for the overall development of an area. Availability of better infrastructure is considered to be an index of the quality of the life of the tribal population. The availability of the infrastructure like houses, electricity, drinking water, sanitary facilities and the proximity to the availability of public conveniences will enable them to live in a civil society. Education and health facilities also play significant role in forming a better civil society among the tribals. But this has not reflected in the increase of bus services. Though the infrastructure facilities apparently show the standard of living of the Adivasis, the inaccessibility due to long distance makes them not serving the purpose. Moreover, it is inadequate in all sectors while comparing it with the other
districts like Idukki, which occupies second position in respect of Adivasi population. However, in respect of places, which are closely connected to the daily life of an Adivasi, give a sordid picture. Hence, the difficulties in the day-to-day social life of the Adivasis in three blocks, which covered under the study, are also analysed.

There are 614 ooru (hamlets) in Mananthavady block. However, in this block, hostels for girl students are situated comparatively in distant places from their ooru (residence). In 199 ooru, girls have to travel more than 50 kilometers to reach to Model Residential School (MRS). All students both girls and boys have to undertake journey more than 50 kilometers to reach their respective post metric hostels.75

Moreover, the Adivasis have to cover a long distance for reaching their destinations in order to meet their daily requirements. For 99 ooru, in order to reach to the health sub centers for primary health care, 5 kilometers journey have to be undertaken. In 42 ooru, the Adivasis have to travel 5 kilometers to reach the ration shops. In 91 ooru, the distance to be covered is 5 kilometers to markets and stationary shops. The Adivasis in 540 ooru have to travel more than 5 kilometers in order to sell the forest produces excluding timber, which may be collected by them. Besides, there are more than 10 kilometers of distance from 152 ooru to PHC, from 339 ooru to CHC, from 413 ooru to District hospital, from 301 ooru to ayurveda hospitals and from 349 ooru to homoeo hospitals.76

In Sulthan Bathery block there are 535 ooru. There is a distance of nearly 3 kilometers from 31 ooru to Anganvadis. In the case of 226 ooru, the lower primary schools are situated nearly 3 kilometers away and same is the distance from 314 ooru to the upper primary schools. The high schools are also 3 kilometers away from 457 ooru and the same is the distance from 502 ooru to the higher secondary schools. The post metric hostels both for girls and boys are situated in far away places from all the 535 ooru in this block. It is important to see that this adversely affects the studies of the Adivasi students at higher levels. It is important to note that only in a few ooru where access to different centers for meeting their daily requirements is available. The distance to health sub centers from 12 ooru and the
medical stores from 10 ooru are more than 5 kilometers. In order to reach ration shops, the Adivasis from 116 ooru in this block have to travel 8 kilometers. The market places are more than 5 kilometers away from 383 ooru and more than 8 kilometers from 10 ooru. In health sector, the Adivasis suffer a lot. They have to travel more than 5 kilometers in order to reach PHC from 176 ooru and CHC from 333 ooru. The ayurveda and homoeo hospitals are situated in far away places from almost all ooru in this block. The malfunctioning of the institutions in the health sector under the government coupled with the inaccessibility due to long distance make the social life of the Adivasis more miserable, which amounts to the violation of their basic human rights.

Besides, the institutions which are essentially the integral part of the daily social life of the Adivasi people are also far away from their easy access. The distance to village offices from 355 ooru is 5 kilometers and from 167 ooru, it is 5-50 kilometers. From 13 ooru the distance is more than 50 kilometers. As regards post offices, from 493 ooru there is a distance of 5 kilometers whereas it is 5-50 kilometers from 32 ooru. From 10 ooru, the distance is more than 50 kilometers. With regard to police stations/police out post, there is a distance of 5 kilometers from192 ooru, 5-50 kilometers from 330 ooru and more than 50 kilometers from 13 ooru. The distance to veterinary hospitals from 318 ooru is about five kilometers, 5-50 kilometers from 203 ooru and from 14 ooru, the distance is more than 50 kilometers. The distance to Krishi Bhavan from 252 ooru is about 5 kilometers, 5-50 kilometers from 264 ooru and more than 50 kilometers from19 ooru. The distance to electricity offices (KSEB section office) from 114 ooru is around 5 kilometers whereas from 408 ooru, the distance is 5-50 kilometers. The distance from 13 ooru is more than 50 kilometers. With respect to water authority office, the distance from 80 ooru is about 5 kilometers, 5-50 kilometers from 435 ooru and more than 50 kilometers from 20 ooru. The distance to internet centers/Akshaya centers, the distance from 282 ooru is 5 kilometers, 5-50 kilometers from 237 ooru and more than 50 kilometers from 16 ooru.

The problem of long distance coupled with the tedious journey indicates the fact that there exists undue and inordinate delay in getting services to the Adivasis
from the aforesaid institutions under the government sector. This makes the social life of the Adivasis more pathetic.

There are 425 ooru in Kalpetta block. In 9 ooru, there is no culvert or walking bridge. There exists even no pathway in 36 ooru. There are Anganvadis in 23 ooru within one kilometer. This distance is seen at 2 kilometers and 6 kilometers respectively in the case of 184 ooru and 6 ooru. The students from 184 ooru and students from 203 ooru have to travel 2-5 kilometers and more than 5 kilometers respectively to reach the lower and the upper primary schools. The students from 311 ooru have to undertake journey of 2 kilometers to reach the nearest upper primary school. In the case of 79 ooru, the distance to the same destination is 5 kilometers. The Model Residential Schools (MRS) for boys in 370 ooru and girls in 316 ooru are available only at a distance of more than 10 kilometers. The pre metric hostels for boys in 262 ooru and girls in 266 ooru are situated more than a distance of 10 kilometers. The post metric hostels for both boys and girls are more than a distance of 50 kilometers. The distance from the ooru in this block to the nearest medical college is 75 kilometers and to the nearest engineering college is 30 kilometers.  

The ration shops in 301 ooru are situated at a distance of 2-5 kilometers. The Adivasis in 26 ooru have to travel a distance of more than 5 kilometers to reach to the nearby ration shops. In order to reach to the nearby village offices, a distance of 5 kilometers has to be covered from 265 ooru and in the case of 158 ooru the distance is more than 5 kilometers.

The above factors show that the lack of basic facilities for the Adivasis in Wayanad district in different walks of their social life make their daily life miserable and put them in a grim state of affairs and thus they become more socially downtrodden. This amounts to the utter denial of the basic human rights of the Adivasis to lead a decent and dignified life. For which the state has to find out permanent solution.

A comparative profile of Kerala and Wayanad is shown in table 3.4 below.
### Table 3.4- Comparative Profile-Kerala-Wayanad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kerala</th>
<th>Wayanad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>33406061</td>
<td>817420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population</td>
<td>15934926</td>
<td>31580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>28135824</td>
<td>645585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male literacy</td>
<td>6572473</td>
<td>328136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female literacy</td>
<td>7014031</td>
<td>317449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio (female per 1000 males)</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>1035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio (0-6 years) -female per 1000 males</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Castes</td>
<td>3039573</td>
<td>32578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Tribes</td>
<td>484839</td>
<td>151443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio (ST) (female per 1000 males)</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>1033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio (SC) (female per 1000 males)</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decadal population growth 2001-2011</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work participation rate</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-workers</td>
<td>21786998</td>
<td>477343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main workers</td>
<td>9329747</td>
<td>263445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women work participation rate</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>670253</td>
<td>52759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural laboures</td>
<td>10248883</td>
<td>332578</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census Report of India, 2011*

The table 3.4 above shows that in matters of Adivasi population, the district’s contribution is 1,51,443 (18.5 percent) while that of Kerala is 4,84,839 (1.45) percent only. The work participation rate of the district is 41.6 percent while that of Kerala is 34.8 percent. It is important to note that the rate of the participation of women workers is 26.8 percent in Wayanad while that of the state level is 18.2 percent only. Wayanad being an agrarian district contributes 52,759 cultivators (6.45 percent) of the total population in the district whereas at the state level it is 6, 70,253 (2.01 percent) of the total population in the state. Moreover, agricultural workers (332578) of the district
Adivasis of Kerala- a Profile

constitute 40.7 percent of its population. However, at the state level it is only 30.7 percent. Of the total Adivasi population in the district, males constitute 74476 and females constitute 76967.

Moreover, the total literacy rate in Kerala is 94 percent. The female literacy rate in the state is 96 percent and that of the male is 92 percent. Wayanad district is having a total of 89 percent literacy. Its male literacy rate constitutes 92.5 percent and that of female is 85.7 percent (Census Report of India, 2011).

According to the Census Report of 2011, the total literacy rate of the Adivasi population in the state is 75percent. The male literacy is 80.76 percent whereas the female literacy is 71.08 percent. In Wayanad district, the total literacy rate of the Adivasi population is 70.52percent. The male literacy rate is 76.97percent while that of the female is 64.33 percent.

Kerala’s economy is mainly based on agriculture and cash crops. Wayanad, purely an agricultural district with a granary of cash crops, has a unique place in the agricultural economy of the map of the state. Therefore, the backwardness of the district in any respect adversely affects the Kerala’s economy. It is also significant to note that 53.41 percent of the Adivasi population comes under the category of pure agricultural workers and the rest directly or indirectly related to agriculture or occupation incidental thereto.

3.5 Wayanad- the Green Paradise of Tourism

As far as Wayanad is concerned, it is a beautiful God’s own place with mountains, hills and forests. It is a district with scenic beauty, wild life and traditional monuments. Moreover, simplicity is a virtual still blossom from the mountainous horizon and from the green alluring vegetation. Altogether the district of Wayanad depicts the picture of a green paradise. Though the emerging tourism sector of Wayanad - that generate approximately Rs. 200 crores and expecting an annual growth of 12 percent predominantly rely on the natural capital of the district, there has not been any significant attempt from the sector to make this revenue beneficial for the local communities. Though the district revenue from natural capital utilisation through tourism forms a major component of the non-farm sector income for the district, the Adivasi communities forming more than 18.5 percent of the total population presently do not benefit from this in any significant way. Considering this
fact, a new natural capital utilisation strategy that would be beneficial for the Adivasi communities is proposed in the district with the possibility of 500 community members getting direct and another 2500 indirect benefit.

The geographical position of Wayanad is suitable for the infinite development of Tourism. But the tourism possibilities of the most gifted natural beauty of the district have not been fully explored yet. The picture would have substantially changed if the area was in a foreign country. Even in nineties, the Tourism Department identified the district as a tourism district. Being well connected by road to destinations like Mysore, Bangalore and Ooty and proximity to Kozhikode having air and railway connections make Wayanad a potential hub for tourism in South India. It is estimated that nearly 5 Lakh tourists are arriving in Wayanad annually. District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) has already identified locations like Lakkidi (Vythiri Panchayat), Pookot Lake (Vythiri panchayat), Soochipara water falls (Meppady panchayat), Kanthanpara water falls (Meppady panchayat), Meenmutty water falls (Muppainadu panchayat), Pakshippathalam (Thirunelly panchayat), Vellerimala, Ambukuthymala (Nenmeni panchayat) and the famous Kuruva Island.

The Wayanad District Tourism Promotion Council has prepared a vision document to develop all these tourist destinations by providing better infrastructure facilities. However, it is very important that the income derived from the promotion of tourism, should be utilised for the development of local communities. And it is necessary, while developing tourism, to maintain inter-generational equity.

It has been found that barring a few private ventures, most of the tourism related activities in the district lack sufficient management skills and sensitivity to local needs. Inter-generational equity is the principle of equity between people alive today and future generations. The implication is that unsustainable production and consumption by today's society will degrade the ecological, social and economic basis for tomorrow's society, whereas sustainability involves ensuring that future generations will have the means to achieve a quality of life equal to or better than today's. The utilisation of natural capital has not become an agenda before most of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. The developmental initiatives in Wayanad have not so far made any significant attempt to relate it with the potential openings it provides for the Adivasi communities. Therefore, it is suggested that the Panchayat raj institutions
must consider the promotion of tourism as one of their major activities and the income derived from it should be utilised for the developmental activities of the Adivasi communities. Tourism in Wayanad faces many issues such as lack of sensitivity to local needs and sentiments, lack of sound management techniques including monitoring mechanisms, nature seen as mere commodity, lacking a symbiotic approach, top-down approach in planning, exclusion of Adivasi communities, the actual custodian of the natural capital, exclusion of Panchayat Raj Institutions in management and planning process etc.

While analysing the tribal scenario in Wayanad, one will be constrained to arrive at a conclusion that they are striving hard even to maintain their existence. Absence of land for survival remains to be the grave issue, absence of regular income, poor health conditions and educational disadvantages are the other issues in the balance sheet. In short, they are completely discarded by every government. Their historical importance and unique cultural background are eclipsed by the modern hi-tech society. The contributions of the Kurichia community in the freedom struggle and its historical significance remain to be a legend in the celluloid only and nothing remains for the coming generation.

Wayanad presents a complex picture. Its class structure is not a linear one. In addition, the political forces reflecting the class structure are necessarily not amenable to simple equations. The Adivasis who were the majority of the population up to 1950’s are now being totally sidelined and marginalised. They have become strangers to the modern society. Deforestation is going on rapidly uprooting them from their traditional habitat and depriving their means of livelihood. A particular development paradigm is being challenged now. Therefore, the Adivasis, particularly in Wayanad, need much protection and special treatment as provided under the Constitution for such communities.

The Adivasi communities in Kerala especially in Wayanad have been deprived, displaced and dispossessed of their cultural and traditional rights under the cover of development of the regions originally inhabited by them. The detrabilisation and deprivation in respect of their right to life and livelihood constitute the violation of their human rights. To talk of rights, where the tribal people do not have rice, is an insensitive approach to the problem of human rights. The laws are put in place but the
implementing authority has grossly failed to harvest any result. The services of the Non Governmental Organisations like Shreyas, HILDA, Jwala, Solidarity, Fedina, Kanavu, Thudi Uravu etc are laudable. The Government may effectively utilise their services simultaneously by giving adequate encouragement and assistance to boost them up. The details of the meritorious services rendered by the above mentioned NGOs and social movements are elaborately discussed in chapter 5.

3.6 Developmental Initiatives by the State Government- At a Glance

Since the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956 the government has been spending sizable funds for the development of the Adivasi communities. The government had conceived large scale rehabilitation projects in order to address rampant poverty of the Adivasi communities in Wayanad. This included Sugandagiri Cardamom Project, Pookkot Diary Project, Priyadarshini Tea Estate, Cheengeri Coffee Project etc. Apart from the livelihood development projects, government had implemented large number of programmes for their health and education. However, majority of Adivasi children is not in schools and morbidity rate is still very high among the Adivasis of Wayanad. Inspite of the fact that the government did initiate several projects for promoting the wellbeing of the Adivasis many of them did not give the expected results. Here an overview of the Department level plan outlay and expenditure for 2012-13 needs mention.

The government evaluates the plan expenditure of departments on the basis of certain norms fixed by the Kerala Public Expenditure Review Committee and accordingly the various departments are classified in to ‘very poor’, ‘poor’, ‘good’ and ‘very good’. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Department is one of the departments which spent more than the plan outlay. The department had spent a total of Rs.81933.57 lakhs (111 percent) under Tribal Sub Plan through Local Self Government Institutions for the year 2012-13. The original plan outlay was Rs.73771 lakhs. Hence the department was classified as ‘very good’. In addition to this, the department had spent 83 percent of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) during the year 2012-13. The facts remaining so, the crucial question arises as to where does the funds go. As a matter of fact, the bad plight of Adivasis still remains intact. There is clearcut lack of coordination as far as the government projects are concerned.
END NOTES


3. Ibid.


6. Ibid.


41. Ibid.


47. Ibid., 27.

48. Ibid., 21.


50. Ibid., 260.

51. Ibid., 295

52. Ibid., 325.

53. Ibid., 358.


57. Ibid., 374.

58. Ibid., 223.


60. Ibid.


65. Ibid.


67. Ibid., 325.


69. Ibid., 32.

70. Ibid., 25.


76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., 263-265.

78. Ibid., 298-299.