The reality of human rights is that they are based upon equality of access to society’s resources and opportunities. Whenever there is unequal distribution of resources there is poverty. This would lead to a condition of denial of human rights. Therefore, it is important to analyse the social, economic and political life and status of the Adivasi communities in Wayanad district in the light of opportunities available to them in the various departments of their social life. In the words of Dr. B.R Ambedkar:

“We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life, which recognises liberty equality and fraternity as the principle of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense to divorce one from other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality, which means elevation of some, and degradation for others. On the economic plane, we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. In our social and economic life we shall, by reasons of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of our political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up”.

This chapter consolidates the responses of the survey conducted among the Adivasi communities in Wayanad district. A schedule containing 34 questions were
administered among the Adivasis to elicit responses. Of these, 21 have been included in Table forms. There are 3 Graph descriptions also. The rest are included as questions and answers straightaway in the Thesis. The survey was conducted in three blocks of Wayanad viz., Sultthan Bathery, Mananthavady and Kalpetta. A total of 750 respondents have been approached and contacted for survey. The entire data collected were edited for consistency and completeness. Thereafter, it was coded, processed, and tabulated by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results of the survey are discussed below.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Sample Adivasis

4.1.1 Age of the Respondents

Age is a major variable affecting the activities of a group. Young members are dynamic and active whereas aged members are slow and cautious in their action. Distribution of age of the respondents in each region is presented in Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>26-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>54 (11.7)</td>
<td>128 (27.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
<td>19 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>16 (8.4)</td>
<td>56 (29.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82 (10.9)</td>
<td>203 (27.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pearson Chi-Square 7.074 Df 6 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0.314

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage to total in respective rows

The age of the respondents interviewed varied from 17 to 73. Table 4.1 reveals that 291 (38.8 per cent) respondents belong to the age group 41-55, followed by 203 (27.1 percent) respondents, who belong to the age group 26-40. 82 (10.9 per cent) respondents are in the age group of below 25. The Chi-Square value is 7.074 at 6 degrees of freedom, which can be possible with a maximum probability of 0.314. Hence, the Chi-Square value is not significant at 5 percent level of significance, as the probability is more than 0.05. (Value of Chi-square =7.074 with P=0.314).
Table 4.2
Distribution of Sex of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>162 (35.2)</td>
<td>298 (64.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>38 (38)</td>
<td>62 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>63 (33.2)</td>
<td>127 (66.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>263 (35.1)</td>
<td>487 (64.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pearson Chi-Square 0.686  
Df  2  
Asymp. Sig. (2 sided) 0.709

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage to total in respective rows.

Table 4.2 explains sex wise distribution in the various regions of Wayanad. It reveals that majority of the respondents, that is, 487 (64.9 per cent) are women. This female domination is seen in all the three regions under study. Besides, the Chi-Square value shows that there is no dependence between the age of the selected respondents and their location, as the value of the Chi-square is not significant at 5 per cent level of significance. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no dependence between sex classifications of respondents among the regions concerned. (Value of Chi-square =0.686 with P=0.709)

4.1.2 Community

The sample is classified according to community in order to identify the variations within the regions and to know whether a particular community dominates among Adivasis. (details already stated in chapter-3) Table 4.3 below shows a two-way classification of respondents by region.

Table 4.3
Distribution of Respondents by Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paniya</td>
<td>Kurichia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>369 (80.2)</td>
<td>37 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>64 (64.0)</td>
<td>18 (18.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>158 (83.2)</td>
<td>16 (8.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>591 (78.8)</td>
<td>71 (9.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pearson Chi-Square 17.374  
Df  4  
Asymp. Sig. (2 sided) 0.002

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage to total in respective rows.
Table 4.3 is clear that 591 (78.8 percent) of the respondents belong to Paniya community and the percentage of Kurichia is 9.5 percent and 11.7 percent belongs to other communities. The Paniya are the largest single tribal community in Wayanad, forming 44.77 percent of the total tribal population of the district. Here it is evident that the Paniya community numerically dominates over all other communities in Wayanad. The Chi-Square value of 17.374 with 4 degrees of freedom is significant at 5 percent level of significance as the probability is 0.002. Hence, there is significant dependence between community composition of the Adivasis and their region. (Value of Chi-square = 17.374 with P=0.002)

4.1.3 Marital Status

Table 4.4 below shows the marital status of the respondents in three regions. From the table 4.4 it can be seen that bulk of the respondents (60.5 percent) are married and more or less the same rate is seen in this regard in all the three regions. Further, widowed and separated/divorced constitute 54 (7.2 percent) and 37 (4.9 percent) respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>134(29.1)</td>
<td>276(60.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathery</td>
<td>24(24.0)</td>
<td>61(61.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>47(24.7)</td>
<td>117(61.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>205(27.3)</td>
<td>454(60.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pearson Chi-Square 5.562 df 6 Asymp.Sig. (2-sided) 0.474

Note: Figures in bracket show the percentage to total in respective rows

Chi-Square test reveals that there is no significant dependence between the marital status of member respondents and their regions, as the value of Chi-Square is not significant at 5 percent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 5.562 with P=0.474)
As per the Wayanad district Report, there are 2099 Adivasi widows in Mananthavady block. Besides, there are 2871 Adivasi women (including the widows) and women having no marital status and who deserve special consideration. In the Sulthan Bathery block, there are 473 Adivasi women and 151 Adivasi men who are separated from the marriage relations. These include men and women in between the age 22-29. Altogether, there are 2398 Adivasi women including widows and unwed mothers in this block who deserve special consideration. In Kalpetta block there are 1727 Adivasi women including widows, having no marital status and unwed mothers. It is significant to note that most of such widows remain comparatively at young age and in most of the cases, the partners either died due to diseases or separated due to family problems such as adultery, addiction to liquor etc. This bad set up prevails among the Adivasi communities put their family life in peril. The Adivasi women folk are the worst sufferers. It shows the inaction or the inefficiency from the part of the women empowerment initiatives functioning under the state government among the Adivasis in Wayanad district, which necessitate serious review of the same at government level.

4.1.4 Educational Status

Kerala’s educational sector as a whole is marked by gross inequalities especially in the context of globalisation. Privatisation and commercialisation of education is hectically proceeding ahead. In this process, the marginalised sections of the population i.e. the Adivasi and Dalit sections are the worst affected. On the one hand there is a proliferation of high cost unaided schools, which generate students for the demands of the globalised economy, and on the other hand there are a large number of teacher less, roofless and wall less government and aided schools. Government schools are meant for those who unable to pay.

In this context education is another major issue confronting, the Adivasis of Wayanad. Illiteracy is rampant among the Adivasis who constitute 18.5 percent of the total population of Wayanad as per 2011 census. As per 1981 Census, Wayanad district had a total literacy rate of 58.33 percent and for the Adivasi population; it was a mere 20.74 percent. Within three decades that is by 2011, total literacy level for the district had grown to 89 percent while that of the Adivasi population had grown to 75 percent only (Census Report, 2011). Here it is pertinent to note that the total literacy rate of Kerala is 94 percent while that of the Adivasis in Wayanad district is only 75
percent. The difference between the ratios is 19 percent and which is one of the major reasons for their socio-economic backwardness. It has also improved by 5.62 percentage vis-à-vis non-Adivasi communities. The survey reveals that the literacy level of Adivasi communities of the district is 65 percent. However, category wise, there are remarkable differences. The communities with low economic background like Adiya, Kattunaickan and Urali Kuruma form the lowest in educational level.

The Paniya is the single largest Adivasi community in Wayanad district with 13871 members in Mananthavady block alone and they constitute 35 percent of the total population in the block of which 4498 are illiterates. Of the total illiterates in this block, the Paniya constitutes 40.36 percent. This shows the quantum of their backwardness.\(^5\)

Eventhough the tribal communities remain much behind the other communities of the district, majority of the members of the population can read and write. Survey data has revealed that 45 percent of tribals have formal schooling. But interestingly there is a significant section of population who can read or write though they have not been through a formal schooling process. This indicates the fact that the Total Literacy Programme has been to a certain extent effective in their case. Adivasi community members generally view modern education as desirable for better living.

The study has further revealed that there is 100 percent enrollment of Adivasi children in schools. However, the dropout rate among the Adivasi children in three blocks is one of alarming.

In Mananthavady block, 5358 Adivasi students have dropped out at different levels of their education. They constitute 53 percent of the total students in the block who continue their education. This is one of the fatal blows towards the educational development of the Adivasi students in Wayanad. The total number of students in this block who dropped out at the primary level comes to 2342 in which 1282 belong to Paniya, 471Adiya, 254 Kattunaikkkan, 281 Kurichia and 54 Vettukuruma. In secondary level, 1935 students have dropped out and it is interesting that the students who continue at this level is only 1268. In higher secondary level, 133 students have dropped their education, which constitutes 25.6 percent of the total students and only 519 students continue their education. Of the total degree students, 10 percent have
dropped their education at this level. Moreover, among 307 students who joined for Certificate Courses, 266 have dropped out and only 41 continue. Out of the 515 students who joined for Diploma Courses, 490 have dropped their study and only 25 continue. Further, of the total students (3275) in the Paniya community, 2147 students have dropped out their education. Here in this community the dropout rate is very high (65.56 percent). Of the total 3496 Kurichia students, 1591 have dropped out their education. (45.5 percent). Out of the total 2851 Adiya students, 946 have dropped out their studies. (33.18 percent).\(^7\)

The Adivasi population in the Sulthan Bathery block is 38434 in which there are 18773 males and 19661 females.\(^8\) Of the total population, 34604 are above the age of 5 in which 9719 are illiterates. Further, of the total illiterates in the district, 24.70 percent belong to this block. There are 8762 Adivasi students in this block at various levels of education in which 3875 (44.23 percent) belong to Paniya community. 88 percent of the students in this block go to school from their homes.\(^9\) This indicates the shortage of hostel facilities in this area. In this block, 3110 students have dropped their studies at different levels, majority of which are at the primary level (58.52 percent). A total of 1072 students (34.46 percent) have dropped their education at secondary level whereas at the higher secondary level, 188 students (6.04, percent) dropped their education. 30.27 percent students in higher secondary level and 16 students in graduation level, who left their studies, belong to this block.\(^10\)

In Kalpetta block there are 6846 Adivasi families and their total population comes to 29217 in which there are 14458 males and 14759 females. The Paniya community is the largest community in this block with 3951 members, which constitutes 59 percent of the population. There are a total number of 26347 Adivasis who are above the age of 5 in this block in which 6932 are illiterates. The total literacy rate of the block is considered as 73.69 percent, which is comparatively in a better position when compared to the district level literacy. There are 6306 Adivasi students in this block, who constitute 18.51 percent of the total students in the district. There are 4829 students at primary level, who constitute 76.57 percent of the total in the Kalpetta block. At secondary level, 713 students constitute 11.30 percent whereas at higher secondary level there are 316 students. It is worthy to note that altogether there are 115 graduates and 11 postgraduate holders in this block. However, there are
only 138-degree students and 6 post graduate students among the Adivasis which show that there is little progress at the higher education level among the Adivasis.  

Of the total students, majority belongs to Paniya community with 3610. (57.25 percent), 341 at secondary level (47.82 percent), 90 at higher secondary level (8.48 percent) and 24 (17.3 percent) at graduate level. It is significant to note that the standard of education at higher level among the Paniya community has not improved in proportionate to their population. Besides, the dropout rate is also a big problem in this block.

The dropout rate of students at various stages of education in this block also is alarming. 2657 students have dropped their studies at various stages and this constitutes 42.13 percent of the total students who continue their studies. It is clear from the statistics that 1188 students have dropped their studies at primary level (44.71 percent), 1035 at secondary level (38.95 percent), 142 at higher secondary level (5.34 percent) and 23 at graduate level (0.87 percent). It is important to note that altogether 67 students have dropped their studies at graduate level in the district in which 23 students belong to this block (34.33 percent). Moreover, of the total 6 students who dropped their studies at postgraduate level, 3 belong to this block, is a matter to be viewed with serious concern. Besides, 76 students of the certificate courses and 113 of the diploma courses have dropped their studies. The dropout rate is high among the Paniya community in this block (1798 with 67.67 percent). Kurichia comes second with 432 (16.26 percent), Kattunaickan holds third position with 171(45 percent) and Thachanadan Mooppan with 101. (34 percent)

Wayanad is at the bottom of the educational map of the state, eventhough there are a large number of schools in the district. It is revealed that there are 301 schools in this district, consisting of 149 Lower Primary Schools, 79 Upper Primary Schools and 29 High Schools. It is quite ironical to see that Wayanad is the only Education District with one Deputy Director, one District Education Officer, and three Assistant Educational Officers. It has also a District Institute of Education and Training Center located at Sulthan Bathery. Besides, a Kendriya Vidyalaya and 8 CBSE Schools and one ICSE school are functioning in this district. Till 1990s higher education in Wayanad was a big problem. Most of the students had to go to adjacent districts for
higher education. Now the situation has changed as the district has six first grade colleges, two polytechnics, one Industrial Training Institute, four B.Ed centre and three Teacher’s Training Institutes. Besides, there is an Engineering College, a Veterinary College and Oriental School of Hotel Management for hotel management and catering studies. But these educational institutions and Training Centres could not uplift the educational status of Adivasis in Wayanad. This is because many of these government schools have only one teacher. There is also an absolute dearth of teaching aids in such schools. Faced with such a bleak infrastructural lacunae, it is natural that enrolled students quietly drop out. In the state as a whole, the drop out ratio has steadily risen in the last ten years. The survey reveals that poverty, low parental motivation, problems relating to syllabus, language, distance from school, health, lack of sensitivity from the part of teachers are the dominant causes behind the increasing dropout ratio and this becomes obvious from the dropout ratio of Dalit and Adivasi students which is disproportionately higher when compared to others.\textsuperscript{14} A comparative data with the rest of the state shows that the district is ranked 14\textsuperscript{th} in terms of urban population, 13\textsuperscript{th} in sex ratio, 12\textsuperscript{th} in good condition of houses, 14\textsuperscript{th} in telephone facility, 12\textsuperscript{th} in literacy etc. Adding fuel to the fire, today, about 35 percent of the population lives in abject poverty. The incidence of poverty coupled with socio-economic backwardness is higher among the Adivasi communities 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. The situation becomes worse during monsoon season.

Education is the most important factor for man’s socio-economic and cultural advancement in the modern world. The future of the Adivasis will depend much on the level of education. Educated persons can make use of the various facilities and benefits extended by different agencies and the government. The educational level of the Adivasis is depicted in the following table 4.5.
Table 4.5
Educational Level of the Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illiterates</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>107(23.2)</td>
<td>204(44.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>32(32)</td>
<td>32(32.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>46(24.2)</td>
<td>70(36.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185(24.66)</td>
<td>306(40.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pearson Chi-Square: 17.207 df: 6 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) 0.009

Note: Figures in brackets show the percentage to total in respective rows.

It is clear from the above table 4.5 that the percentage of illiterates among the Adivasis is very high, i.e. 24.66 percent. However, it is hopeful to note that 40.8 percent has primary education, 32.5 percent has acquired secondary education and 2 percent has acquired higher secondary education. It is to be specially stated here that a proportionate number of those students who get primary education do not go for secondary education because of the high rate of school dropouts. It can be seen that while illiteracy rate is greater in Sulthan Bathery that is (32 percent), simultaneously those who have secured secondary education is higher in Kalpetta. (35.8 percent) The Chi-Square value is seen significant at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is statistically significant dependence between educational status of respondents and their regions. (Value of Chi-square =17.207 with P=0.009)

A sharp decline in numbers of respondents going for higher levels of schooling is indicative of a sharp drop out rate at different stages of schooling. This is indicative of general trend, which has taken place over a period. Here the study reveals that there is a sharp decline in literacy at two stages – primary level and high school level. The reasons for drop out are also subjected to analysis. In most cases, the respondents selected are school dropouts and family heads. The gender status of the school dropout shows that out of the school dropouts, girl students constitute the majority. The dropout rate is very high among women headed households. The major reasons for school dropout identified in the survey are:-

1. Poverty and ill health in the families
2. Poor results in examinations
3. Long distance of educational institutions
4. Cumbersome journey
5. Poor background in families
6. Strange feeling
7. Child marriage
8. Lack of awareness
9. Lack of interest in study
10. Lack of economic support
11. Unattractive school curriculum

It is worthy to point out that the illiteracy rate of the parents of the students who dropped their studies comes to 37.77 percent. Moreover, 87.31 percent of them are agricultural labourers. Furthermore, monthly income of 45.53 percent of families of such school dropouts is below Rs. 5000.

Therefore, the inference from the above facts is that education being the cornerstone of man’s socio-economic and cultural development and progress has not been adequately rooted among the Adivasis in Wayanad as illiteracy is rampant in their regions. The dropout of students in all levels of their studies is so alarming which stands as a serious menace to their all round development.

4.1.5 Occupational Status

The occupational status of the Adivasis was also subjected to analysis. The distribution of sample according to their working status is presented in table 4.6. The most important factor that sustains the Adivasi community is the big avenues for employment for educated and qualified hands. Some communities like Kattunaickan are still at food gathering stage, while some other communities, having lost their land to settlers, are working as agricultural labourers. There has been a steep fall in the prices of hill produces like coffee, pepper, cardamom etc. Opportunities for wage labour are the most important factor in determination of the economic condition. It is in this background that the survey probes issues relating to employment and income.
Table 4.6

Working Status of Adivasis by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Agricultural workers</th>
<th>Forest workers</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>357 (77.6)</td>
<td>88 (19.1)</td>
<td>15 (3.3)</td>
<td>460 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>72 (72.0)</td>
<td>24 (24.0)</td>
<td>4 (4.0)</td>
<td>100 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>136 (71.6)</td>
<td>44 (23.2)</td>
<td>10 (5.3)</td>
<td>190 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>565 (75.3)</td>
<td>156 (20.8)</td>
<td>29 (3.9)</td>
<td>750 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data

Pearson Chi-Square: 3.835  df: 4  Asymp.Sig. (2-sided) 0.429

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Table 4.6 above shows that 75.3 percent of the sample Adivasis are agricultural workers whereas 20.8 percent of them work in connection with forests and 3.9 percent work in private and other government sectors. This shows that the number of Adivasis who work as agricultural workers are far higher than the number of forest workers and private sector employees and government servants. However, the regional dependence is statistically insignificant, as the value of Chi-Square is not significant at 5 percent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 3.835 with P=0.429). Almost all Adivasi communities except the food gathering communities like Kattunaickan have at least a small plot of land in which something is grown, very often tuber crops, spinach, vegetables etc. Of these, tuber crops particularly provide some type of emergency food reserve. Some communities like Mullu Kuruma and Kurichia own a piece of land and individuals may own land up to a few acres. It is generally assumed that Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) collection is a major economic activity of the Adivasis of Wayanad.

4.1.6 Status and Type of Residence

Availability of adequate infrastructure is an important index of the quality of life of the tribal population. Here, the position of the tribal population in terms of the availability of infrastructure like houses, electricity, drinking water, sanitary toilets and availability of public conveniences which get facilitate their entry into civil society are also analysed.
According to the nature of residential accommodation, the respondents' residence is classified into hut (thatched roof and muddy walls), kutcha (thatched roof and brick walls), pucca (tiled roof and brick walls) and concrete. Distribution of sample Adivasis based on the type of their residence is presented in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7
Type of Residence of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Hut</th>
<th>Kutcha</th>
<th>Pucca</th>
<th>Concrete</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>50(10.9)</td>
<td>225(48.9)</td>
<td>161(35.0)</td>
<td>24(5.2)</td>
<td>460(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>8(8.0)</td>
<td>52(52.0)</td>
<td>37(37.0)</td>
<td>3(3.0)</td>
<td>100(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>30(15.8)</td>
<td>99(52.1)</td>
<td>53(27.9)</td>
<td>8(4.2)</td>
<td>190(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88(11.7)</td>
<td>376(50.1)</td>
<td>251(33.5)</td>
<td>35(4.7)</td>
<td>750(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 7.936  df:6  Asymp. Sig. (2-sided): 0.234

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Table 4.7 above shows that of the 750 respondents, 376 (50.1 percent) live in kutcha houses. In Mananthavady block this rate is 48.9 percent whereas it is 52 percent and 52.1 percent in the Sulthan Bathery and Kalpetta blocks respectively. 251(33.5) respondents live in pucca houses however, in Kalpetta region this rate is only 27.9 percent when it is 37 percent in the Sulthan Bathery and 35 percent in the Mananthavady. It has also been found that 11.7 percent of the respondents live in huts and unsatisfactory living conditions and only 4.7 percent of the Adivasis live in concrete houses. Perhaps some improvements in the habitation of tribal population may be the effect of the decentralisation of planning process. Further, it is also found that there is no significant relation between the type of residence of the respondents and their location, as the value of Chi-square is not statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 7.936 with P= 0.234)

4.1.7 Source of Drinking Water

Wayanad district is one of the districts with highest rainfall. Yet this district has been facing drought in recent times, a phenomenon that is often attributed to the ecological degradation that the district has been going through. In this context, it is worth examining the sources of water for tribal population. Here it is to be noted that each family has more than one sources of water. Given the low rainfall, the
livelihoods of people in the regions are critically linked with the availability of water. In most of the cases, the proportion of area under irrigation is below 10 percent. The main sources of irrigation are wells and tanks which means that irrigation effectiveness is contingent upon the ability to manage water within the area. Cropping patterns at the household level are linked to access to and reliability of water. The scant water situation is reflected in the diversified cropping pattern in the areas. Wherever assured water is available, farmers prefer to grow paddy. The following table 4.8 gives a picture of the predominant source of water. Distribution of respondents according to the source of drinking water is shown in table 4.8 below.

### Table 4.8

**Source of Drinking Water of Respondents by region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Source of drinking water</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stream/River</td>
<td>Public well/Tap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>117 (25.4)</td>
<td>11(2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>35(35.0)</td>
<td>7(7.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>77(40.5)</td>
<td>9(4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229(30.5)</td>
<td>27(3.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 23.835 df: 4 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided):0.000

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

It is found out from the study that out of the 750 sample households, 65.9 (494 households) percent fetches water from private wells for their domestic consumption. The study in the three blocks reveals that 72.2 percent of the Adivasis from the Manathavady region use water drawn from private wells. This falls to 58 percent in the Sulthan Bathery block and 54.7 percent in the Kalpetta region. 35 percent of the respondents in the Sulthan Bathery region depend upon stream water for daily use. This percentage rises to 40.5 percent in the Kalpetta block whereas it is only 25.4 percent and 35 percent in the Mananthavady and Sulthan Bathery regions respectively. 27 (3.6 percent) respondents depend on public well or public tap for meeting their drinking water requirements. Water from wells appears to be the most enduring source of water. This is followed by two other sources – stream and river. After decentralised planning process was initiated, a number of water supply schemes have been
implemented. However, a large number of these schemes for water supply are either dysfunctional or left without proper maintenance. Therefore, focus should be on efficient utilisation of the infrastructure already created. The Chi-square test of dependence shows that there is significant regional dependence with regard to the source of drinking water,(from private wells-65.9 percent) as the value of Chi-square is significant at 5 percent level of significance.

4.1.8 Sanitation

Water supply and sanitation are the two sides of the same coin. Sanitary toilets, availability of electricity and drinking water are the important indicators of infrastructural facilities. Out of the 750 households covered in this survey, only 228 (30.4 percent only) households have sanitary toilets. This situation leads to constant outbreak of gastro intestinal diseases among the Adivasi communities. Under the People’s Planning Programme, a large sum of money was spent to construct safety toilets. However, here it is worthy to point out that neither the beneficiaries aware of such schemes nor the government properly utilises the funds for the purpose for which it was allotted. Moreover, most of the respondents keep the view that they are not getting the benefits of any such schemes.

According to the Wayanad district Report, in 135 Ooru of the Mananthavady block, there are no public toilets or domestic latrines. Altogether, there are 4576 houses having no toilets in this block, which constitute 44.47 percent. Most of such houses, which have no toilets facility, are in Thirunelli grama panchayat (52.5 percent) in this block. It is also reported that the domestic toilets are very unhygienic, dilapidated, roofless, wallless and having no water connection.16

There are 143 ooru in Sulthan Bathery block, which have no domestic toilets or public latrines. There are 3775 houses having no domestic toilet facilities in this block, which constitute 40 percent of the total Adivasi families. Most of such houses are in Sulthan Bathery grama panchayat.(56.87 percent). As in the case of Mananthavady block, almost all toilets are unhygienic, either roofless or wall less, dilapidated and having no water connection.17

There are 114 ooru and 3417 houses having no public toilets or domestic latrines in Kalpetta block which constitute 49.91 percent. In Pozhuthana grama panchayat in this block alone, there are 661 houses which have no domestic toilets
that constitute 73.36 percent. As has been said in the case of other two blocks, most of the toilets/latrines in this block are unhygienic, dilapidated, either roofless or wall less and having no water connection at all. This indicates towards their social backwardness when compared to the rest of the society.

The lack of proper sanitation leads to the spread of many diseases among the Adivasis particularly during monsoon season. The denial of these basic infrastructural facilities to the Adivasi communities is a clear violation of their human rights. Therefore, the very substance of the concept of human rights to lead a decent and dignified life is denied to the Adivasis in Wayanad. This further intensifies their social backwardness. It warrants a very serious and overall review of the government mechanisms in Wayanad.

4.1.9 Electricity Facility

Out of the sampled 750 households, only 335 have electricity connection i.e. 45 percent households are not electrified and they mostly depend on solar energy kerosene lamps etc.

As per the Wayanad district Report, 101 ooru in Mananthavady block are not electrified and in 4347 Adivasi houses, where electrification is already over, have not been given electricity connection. In Thirunelli gram panchayat alone, there are 3116 such houses, which constitute 57.28 percent. Here it is significant to note in this context that of the total Adivasi houses in this block, 10146 (98.61 percent) houses depend on firewood for cooking purposes.

In Sulthan Bathery block, there are 123 Adivasi houses (28 percent) which are not electrified. Even though 7706 houses (spread in 412 ooru) have been electrified in which 3889 houses have not been given electricity connection.

There are 736 such houses in Sulthan Bathery gram panchayat alone. Moreover, 9330 Adivasi families in this block are using firewood for cooking purposes.

In Kalpetta block, there are 3255 Adivasi houses spread in 82 ooru, which are not electrified. Of the total Adivasi houses, 82 percent use firewood for cooking. The denial of these basic rights of the marginalised Adivasi people in Wayanad constitutes utter violation of their human rights.
4.2 Economic Condition

Economic conditions refer to the conditions relating to income, expenditure, savings or borrowings. However, economic condition of any specified group can be studied only in relation to their social background. Similarly, to understand the social conditions it is essential to study the economic background, as both social and economic conditions are closely interrelated. To highlight the economic condition of the Adivasis, the present study covers variables like income, expenditure, savings, and borrowing and asset position.22

4.2.1 Income

Income is one of the prime determinants of the economic status of Adivasis. It also determines their relative living standard in the society. In the present study income of the respondent is identified under two heads viz., income from primary and income from secondary occupation.

There are three seasons of high employment. The best season is December-January. This relates to coffee plantation. Related other activities include mending of coffee plants, drying and curing of coffee and grinding it into powder. Next season is June-July and this relates mainly to crops like ginger, yam, etc. The third season is October and which relates to paddy. The area under paddy has been progressively coming down and consequently avenues for employment particularly for women have been got reduced.

Particulars regarding income from agriculture labour, which is the main work of the Adivasis in Wayanad, are given in table 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Income from Main work</th>
<th>Total (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to Rs 1000</td>
<td>Rs 1001-1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60 (13.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>1 (0.5)</td>
<td>23 (12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1 (0.1)</td>
<td>103 (13.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 31.024 df: 8  Asymp. Sig. (2-sided): 0.000

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.
Table 4.9 shows that the monthly income from primary work of majority of the respondents (77.2 percent) lies in the range of Rs1501-Rs.2000. It indicates that their average monthly income is Rs1750/-. The average monthly income of 103 (13.7 percent) respondents is Rs.1250/- and 60 (8.0 percent) of them get an average income of Rs.2250/-. It is observed that primary source of income of an Adivasi depends on the number of active days of work and the nature of land owned and the type of work undertaken by him. It is evident from the table that the average daily income of a respondent is very low even though they are working for 8 to 10 hours a day. Further, this low income of the respondents reflects their low standard of living and unsound financial status. Some intercommunity differences are obvious. For the Mullu Kuruma community, coffee season extends beyond January up to March. This could be due to the procurement and trading related activities on coffee, which they are known to be doing.

Out of the 750 sampled households, 280 households have given data on man-days of employment per month. In the above household’s average man-days of employment for men per month worked out to 8.8 days. In the same households, women have 3.9 days of employment per month and for children it is 0.13 days. This can be converted into money income.

The regional variation in this regard is highly significant; as the value of Chi-square is significant at 5 percent level of significance.

4.2.2 Income from Secondary Occupation

Measurement of income poses several conceptual problems. Almost all Adivasi communities except the food gathering communities like Kattunaickan have at least a small plot of land in which something is grown, very often tuber crops, spinach, vegetables etc. Of these, tuber crops particularly provide some type of emergency food reserve. Some communities like Mullu Kuruma and Kurichia own piece of land and individuals may possess land up to a few acres. Part of the return from land is sold into the market and part of it is used for self-consumption. It is difficult to separately account the money values of the agricultural produce used for self-consumption. As revealed, it is quite natural that every individual desires to engage himself in some subsidiary occupation to get more income in order to improve
his status and living standard. Particulars regarding the respondent’s income from subsidiary occupation as given below in table 4.10

**Table 4.10**

Income from Secondary Occupation of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Average income (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>214 (28.5)</td>
<td>1020.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>76 (10.1)</td>
<td>1526.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>112 (14.9)</td>
<td>949.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>402 (53.6)</td>
<td>3496.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey data*

Table 4.10 shows that out of the 750 respondents, 402 of them earn a monthly average income of Rs1165/- from secondary occupation. It is also found that an Adivasi of the Sulthan Bathery region earns a secondary income of Rs.1526.42 per month and the average earnings of Mananthavady and Kalpetta regions constitute Rs.1020.20/- and Rs.949.51/- respectively.

About 35 percent of the income of the families surveyed comes from their own agriculture. Interestingly only a very small portion of this is used for self-consumption and major part is produced for the market. A greater portion of income comes from wage labour in plantations, quarries, construction related activities, etc. It can also be noted that Adivasi families earn 22 per cent of their income from sale of Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). This is despite the several restrictions that have been imposed by the laws and the forest department on the gathering of NTFP.

**4.2.3 Expenditure Pattern**

Expenditure pattern is also considered as an active variable, which determines the economic status as well as the living conditions of the respondents. The more they spent for their requirements the better will be their standard of living. In the present study, expenditure of the respondents is classified into expenditure on essentials, expenditure on education and health care and expenditure on luxuries. This is given in Table.4.11 given below.
Table 4.11
Expenditure Pattern of the Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Essentials (Rs)</th>
<th>Medicine and education (Rs)</th>
<th>Luxuries (Rs)</th>
<th>Total (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>2114.31(85.09)</td>
<td>318.00(12.80)</td>
<td>52.43(2.11)</td>
<td>2484.74(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathy</td>
<td>2326.72(81.84)</td>
<td>440.47(15.49)</td>
<td>76.08(2.68)</td>
<td>2843.27(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>2016.36(89.19)</td>
<td>226.30(10.01)</td>
<td>18.00(0.80)</td>
<td>2260.66(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2152.29(85.10)</td>
<td>328.16(12.97)</td>
<td>48.84(1.93)</td>
<td>2529.29(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data
Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Table 4.11 above makes it clear that an Adivasi spends an average of Rs.2529.29/- per month; of which Rs.2152.29/- (85.1 percent) is spent for purchasing essential commodities, Rs.328.16/- (12.97 percent) for medicine and education together and Rs.48.84/- (1.93 percent) for luxuries. As far as the regional spending pattern is concerned, the respondents from the Sulthan Bathy region spend more when compared to that of the other two regions. Further, in the Kalpetta area, 89.19 per cent of the total expenditure goes to essentials and the share expenditure towards luxuries is only 0.80 percent, which is very low when compared to the other two regions.

4.2.4 Borrowings

An average Adivasi cannot maintain a satisfactory level of living standard with the small income that he earns from primary activity. Some of them can have relatively a minimum standard of living with the help of additional income that they earn through secondary occupations. Those who have inadequate level of income in aggregate will be forced to borrow from different sources to meet their requirements. The study found that some of the respondents borrowed from banks, from their societies, Self Help Groups (SHGs), friends and relatives, and even from moneylenders. The average borrowing of the respondents is presented in Table 4.12.
The Socio-economic life of Adivasis in Wayanad

Table 4.12
Borrowings of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No borrowing</th>
<th>Up to Rs 10000</th>
<th>Rs 10001-25000</th>
<th>Above Rs 25000</th>
<th>Total (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>97(21.09)</td>
<td>146(31.74)</td>
<td>198(43.04)</td>
<td>19(4.13)</td>
<td>460(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bethery</td>
<td>23(23.00)</td>
<td>34(34.00)</td>
<td>17(17.00)</td>
<td>26(26.00)</td>
<td>100(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>16(8.42)</td>
<td>26(13.68)</td>
<td>49(25.79)</td>
<td>99(52.11)</td>
<td>190(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136(18.13)</td>
<td>206(27.47)</td>
<td>264(35.20)</td>
<td>144(19.20)</td>
<td>750(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

The table 4.12 reveals that out of 750 respondents 614 (81.87 percent) have taken advances for various purposes. Regarding the extent of borrowing, it is to be seen that 52.11 percent of Adivasis from the Kalpetta region has borrowed more than Rs.25000/-. This type of heavy borrowing is very low in the case of Mananthavady region, which comes only to 19 (4.13 percent). As the table shows that only 18.13 percent (136) of them do not borrow money at all. By and large, the Adivasis of Wayanad district borrow money habitually for various purposes. This points towards the fact that a large majority of the Adivasis are financially very weak.

4.2.5 Asset Position

The size and composition of asset holding is one of the most significant factors in determining the economic status of Adivasis. Therefore, the asset position of the Adivasis is given below in table 4.13

Table 4.13
Average Asset Holding of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of asset</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mananthavady (Rs)</td>
<td>S.Bathery (Rs)</td>
<td>Kalpetta (Rs)</td>
<td>Average (Rs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landed property</td>
<td>12000</td>
<td>8500</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>8833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential building</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>3133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic articles</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>417</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19150</td>
<td>13550</td>
<td>10150</td>
<td>14283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data
The average value of asset holding of a respondent is worked out to be Rs.14283 /-. Table 4.13 above makes it clear that the asset holding status of Adivasis is generally very poor and pathetic. However, the position is better in the Mananthavady region when compared to the rest. The total value of assets held by a member respondent in this region is Rs.19150 /-. The region with lowest asset holding is Kalpetta with Rs.10150/-. 

4.2.6 Watershed Development and Livelihood Strategy

Improvements in financial capital are a reflection of improvements in the employment pattern and income, due to changes in cropping patterns, cropping intensities, and so on. Greater income from these activities creates the potential for more savings and consequently an increase in financial capital. However, such improvements are directly linked to access to water for irrigation purposes. Agricultural activities such as farm labour (own or hired) are the main activities in these blocks.

In order to realise the full potential of watershed development, pro-poor programmes that complement the benefits of watershed development need to be introduced. These programmes include horticultural and dairy development that would benefit from the improved resource conditions such as ‘in situ moisture’, grazing lands and water bodies. Households, in fact, seem to prefer these activities in the context of an improved resource base. Although some of these activities have been introduced recently, their success depends on infrastructure (transport, storage, markets) and credit (institutional finance) support systems as well as a conducive policy environment that is propitious for institutional evolution and development (collective systems, self-help groups, and so on). In the absence of an integrated view that includes resources, livelihoods, institutions and infrastructure, these programmes may not fulfill the objective of sustainable rural livelihood. Even the success of non-farm activities like petty business and services (often seen as an alternative to rural development) critically hinges upon the overall improvements in the rural livelihood (effective demand). As such, it can be concluded that watersheds development, where implemented effectively, will have a range of impacts upon the recipient regions, but these impacts are not as effective as they could be in terms of equity (with the better-off benefiting more) or sustainable livelihoods development. The full potential of
watersheds programmes will only be realised if they are linked to other activities needed to support livelihoods development (such as access to markets) and enhance equity (especially in terms of local level organisational development). More recent approaches to expanding the classic watersheds model and incorporating other aspects of development (sometimes called ‘watersheds plus’), are certainly a move in the right direction. Only time will tell whether the types of additional activities they are introducing are appropriate and sufficient to overcome the limitations of traditional watersheds development approaches. As part of infrastructural development of Primitive Tribal Group (Kattunaickans), the Soil Conservation Department has proposed to undertake the ‘in situ moisture’ project in Wayanad, which will generate employment opportunities to the Adivasis in the localities concerned.

4.2.7 Physical Capital

Physical capital is defined in terms of various assets of the households such as land, residential building, domestic articles, livestock and equipments and watershed works etc. at the community level. The community-based physical capital investment of the three blocks ranges from Rs 2500 to Rs 4750 per hectare. Some of the households own land in the sample blocks. The average ownership of land per household is 0.30 acres. The availability of irrigation enhances the asset position of the households, but the proportion of area irrigated is not more than 25 percent. Households have also invested in irrigation equipment like bore wells. There has been a substantial increase in the number of wells in all the blocks, although the sustainability of these wells is questionable in the absence of replenishing mechanisms.

As far as livestock assets are concerned, size of holdings at the household level has recorded a decline over a period of five years. This decline is prominent in the case of cattle rearing. As indicated earlier, livestock composition has substantially changed in all the three blocks.

4.2.8 Human Capital

As there is little or no change in the access indicators of human capital in the sample blocks (availability of and distance from school/hospital etc.) The expenditure towards education and health is the criterion to assess the impact on human capital. Expenditure on education appears to receive a higher priority than medical
expenditure in most cases. Only in the event of emergencies, households seem to spend more on medical treatment. Despite being remote and dominated by marginalised social groups, education is considered as more important among the respondents.

The economically advanced Adivasis spend now more on essential commodities and education. It is also true that medical expenditure per household has gone up. Increasing incidence of diseases and modern treatment has become more common among the Adivasis also.

### 4.2.9 Social Capital

It is rather difficult to assess the social impact of any programme, especially with short study periods. Social development is a long process and to capture social change in its totality requires a rigorous approach, which is beyond the scope of this study. It has become clear that there are strong social networks within the blocks, though there are no apparent changes in the recent years. Apart from the general support, households receive from their friends and neighbours, dependency for credit on friends and relatives is quite high in these blocks. Participation in self-help groups has increased in recent years. However, there is a general feeling that the cohesive and supportive nature of the communities is declining, which cannot be attributed to a specific programme like watershed development. Here, an attempt is made to assess the social impact in terms of migration and gender. Migration has a social impact on the household, but it also plays a vital role in developing social networks. Although equity issues also fall under social capital, here equity is discussed along with income strategies.24

### 4.3 Role of Women

The Scheduled Tribe women population in Wayanad comes to 77466 and male population comes to 75342. From this, it is clear that the females dominate over men in Wayanad. Of the total population, the Adivasi women population in Manathavadi block is 29.38 percent, 25.32 percent in Sulthan Bathery block, 19 percent in Kalpetta block, 19 percent in Pananmaram block and 1.97 percent in Kalpetta municipality.25

The Adivasi population in Manathavady block is 45122 in which there are 22308 males and 22814 females.26 In this block, women are the family head in 1935
Adivasi families which constitute 18.80 percent of the total such families which comprised of widows in 1560 families, there exists no marital ties in 303 families, unwed mothers in 72 families. This block contributes 29.19 percent of the total such families in the district.\(^{27}\)

The Adivasi population in Sulthan Bathery block is 38434 in which there are 18773 males and 19661 females.\(^{28}\) This block is also a female dominated block. In this block, women are the family head in 1691 Adivasi families which constitute 25.51 percent of the total such families in the district, comprised of widows in 1504 families, there exists no marital ties in 147 families and unwed mothers in 40 families.\(^{29}\)

The Adivasi population in Kalpetta block is 2959 in which there are 1428 males and 1531 females, which constitute 1.93 percent of the total Adivasi families in the district. In this block, women are the family head in 179 Adivasi families, comprised of 154 widows, 23 having no marital relations and 2 unwed mothers.

Eventhough females dominate over the males, the women empowerment and representation is very less in all respect among the Adivasis in Wayanad in proportionate to their population.

Adivasi women also work along with men in generating income. They work in agricultural related activities. They work along with men in agricultural related activities. Besides their main work, they engage in secondary occupations also. Most of their activities are domestic related. However, these works are not valued in terms of money. It must be pointed out that Adivasi women do not actively participate in public activities, as it is considered to be a male dominated field.

### 4.4 Social Condition

Social condition means the conditions pertaining to a society or a group in which social and community connections, living and working conditions, educational and cultural status are the major factors. It embraces relation of people in the society and how they live together as families, tribes, communities etc. The conditions essential for the social upliftment can be grouped as availability of general information, participation in cultural and political organisations etc.
Availability of general and specific information pertaining to the life and occupation of Adivasis is a significant factor in their social development. Environmental awareness is one of the important determinants of social status. The availability of general information can be tested by referring to the respondents’ habit of reading newspapers, periodicals, listening to radio programs and watching television.

4.4.1 Reading Habit

Distribution of Adivasis according to their habit of reading newspapers and periodicals is given below in table 4.14.

Table 4.14
Habit of Reading News Papers and Periodicals of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Reading Habit</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>60 (13.0)</td>
<td>351(76.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>21(21.0)</td>
<td>69(69.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>52(27.4)</td>
<td>110(57.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133(17.7)</td>
<td>530(70.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 24.936    df:4    Asymp.Sig.(2-sided):0.000

Note: figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Table 4.14 above shows that of the 750 sample respondents, 530 (70.7 percent) read newspapers occasionally. It implies that majority of the Adivasis do not have the regular reading habits. This is because of factors like lack of interest, lack of availability of newspapers, illiteracy etc. It is also found that 133 (17.7 percent) do have the regular reading habit whereas 87 (11.6 percent) never read newspapers. Further, it is observed that most of the readers are not daily subscribers of newspapers or periodicals. They read it from the nearby reading rooms or shops or neighbouring households. Chi-Square test indicates that there is dependence between the reading habits of the Adivasis with respect to the three regions, as the value of the Chi-Square is significant at 5 per cent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 24.936 with P=0.000).
From the above table it is clear that the Adivasis are aware of the social and political happenings in the state. Eventhough they do not regularly read newspapers, most of them occasionally read newspapers and periodicals. They are increasingly becoming conscious socially and politically.

4.4.2 Listening to Radio Programme

Distribution of sample respondents according to their habit of listening to radio programmes is given in table 4.15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Listening to Radio</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>151 (32.8) 232(50.4)</td>
<td>77(16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathery</td>
<td>34(34.0)   51(51.0)</td>
<td>15(15.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>61(32.2)   99(52.0)</td>
<td>30(15.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>246(32.8)  382(50.9)</td>
<td>122(16.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 0.334 df:4 Asymp.Sig. (2-sided):0. 988

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Of the 750 respondents, 246 (32.8 percent) respondents have the regular habit of listening to radio programme. They are more or less the same in number in all the three regions. However, 382 (50.9 percent) respondents listen to radio programme occasionally and their rate is in between 50 per cent to 52 percent in the three regions and 122 of them (16.3 percent) do not have this habit. The Chi-square test revealed that there is no dependence between the Adivasis’ habit of listening to radio programme and the different regions under study, as the Chi-square is insignificant at 5 per cent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 0.334 with P=0.988)

Contrary to popular notion, the Adivasi people are in the habit of listening to the radio. Naturally listening to the radio programme increases their general awareness. It will have its reflection in the various fields like social, economic, political, health and hygiene.
Distribution of sample respondents according to their habit of watching television is shown below in table 4.16.

**Table 4.16**  
Habit of Watching TV Programme of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Watching TV Programme</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>85 (18.5)</td>
<td>295(64.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathery</td>
<td>20(20.0)</td>
<td>58(58.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>36(18.9)</td>
<td>118(62.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>141(18.8)</td>
<td>471(62.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 1.605  df: 4            Asymp. Sig. (2-sided):0.808

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

The table 4.16 above highlights the fact that 62.8 percent of the respondent Adivasis watch television occasionally. The rate of occasional viewers is 64.1 percent in Manathavady, 58 percent in Sulthan Bathery and 62.1 percent in Kalpetta. There are only 18.8 percent regular viewers among the Adivasi community. Their rate is more or less the same in the southern and northern regions, but in the central region, it is 20 percent. It could also be seen from the table that 18.4 per cent of the total respondents do not watch television at all and their rate is greater in the central area and a little lower than the total in the south. Further, the Chi-square test shows that there is no significant relation between the Adivasis’ habit of watching television and the three regions, as the value of Chi-square is not significant at 5 per cent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square =1.605 with P=0.808)

By going through the above tables (4.16 and 4.17), it is clear that the number of Adivasi people who read newspapers, listen to radio programme and watch television are on the increase. However, it would take time for them to translate all these into a reality. This is because of their social and economic weaknesses.

**4.4.3 Participation in Ritual/Worship Activities**

Functions like religious ceremonies, funeral etc. are covered under religious activities. Participation in these activities helps in personality development and in
maintaining proper community and social connections. Responses regarding participation of the Adivasis in ritual activities are shown below in table 4.17.

Table 4.17
Participation in Religious/Ritual Activities of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Nature of Participation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>209(45.4)</td>
<td>219(47.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulthan Bathery</td>
<td>44(44.0)</td>
<td>54(54.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>91(47.9)</td>
<td>92(48.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344(45.9)</td>
<td>365(48.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 6.128  df: 4     Asymp. Sig. (2-sided): 0.190
Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

The above table 4.17 shows that 45.9 percent of the respondent Adivasis are regular participants in ritual activities and the same pattern is seen in all the areas. The number of occasional participants is a little higher than that of the regular participants (48.7 percent). The rate of non-participants is higher in the Mananthavady region when compared to the other two regions. The chi-square test reveals that there is no regional relationship in the Adivasis participation in religious activities, as the value of Chi-square is insignificant at 5 percent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square = 6.128 with P=0.190).

The 45.9 percent regular participation plus 48.7 percent occasional participation together comes to about 95 percent. Only 5.5 percent say that they do not participate in religious activities. However, it is clear that majority of the Adivasis are keen about maintaining good social relations.

4.4.4 Participation in Socio-Cultural Activities

Participation in socio-cultural activities is yet another active determinant of the social status of people. Distribution of sample Adivasis according to their participation in social activities is shown below in table 4.18.
Table 4.18
Participation in Socio-Cultural Activities of Respondents by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Participation in socio-cultural activities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>178(38.7)</td>
<td>243(52.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathery</td>
<td>46(46.0)</td>
<td>51(51.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>76(40.0)</td>
<td>74(38.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300(40.0)</td>
<td>368(49.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 32.550       df:4                 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided): 0.000
Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

The table 4.18 above shows that of the 750 respondents 368 (49.1 percent) Adivasis occasionally participate in socio-cultural activities. This rate is higher in the Mananthavady (52.8 percent) and Sulthan Bathery region (51 percent). However, it falls to 38.9 percent in the Kalpetta region. Forty percent of respondents opined that they are regular participants in socio-cultural activities. And this rate is high among the Adivasis of the Sulthan Bathery region and low in the Mananthavady region. It is also seen that 10.9 percent of the respondents do not participate in such activities and this rate is higher in Kalpetta block and very low in Sulthan Bathery block. The Chi-square test shows that there is dependence between the Adivasis' participation in socio-cultural activities with respect to the different regions as the value of Chi-square is significant at 5 percent level of significance. (Value of Chi-square =32.550 with P=0.000)

In any society majority of the people actively participate in social and cultural activities. The above table makes it clear that about half of the Adivasi population only occasionally participates in socio-cultural activities and their participation in socio-cultural activities is limited. The active participation will increase their self-respect and it is good for their future advancement. Increasing participation in these activities can help them to protect their human rights.
4.5 Political and Social Awareness

The political and social awareness of Adivasis in Wayanad is also subjected to analysis. The survey discussed the social and political awareness of the Adivasi community, their political affiliation, voting behaviour, political involvement and their involvement with decentralised planning etc. Questions were asked about the nature of their association with political parties and their attitude towards the new political movements emerging among them. The survey has revealed that most of the community members have sympathy towards political parties active in the locality. They share the view that the local leadership of the party with which they are affiliated is concerned about the tribal issues, but still they are not in a position to solve their problems by taking up at higher levels. They also share the belief that political affiliation is instrumental in raising their awareness on wider issues. The data gives an impression that contemporary political discourse in Kerala has deeply penetrated into the tribal communities and has influenced them considerably.

The study found that a majority of the Adivasi community members are not very sympathetic towards the alternative political movements emerging among them. Though the land struggle led by the Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS)(the movement led by C.K.Janu) was able to invite much public and media attention, the community members, it seems, do not have much sympathy towards it. Majority (62 per cent) of the respondents denounce such movements because of the confrontationist stand taken by them against the government. A few of them once sympathetic to the Gothra Mahasabha are now its strong critics and indict the leadership of the alternative movements for turning the agitations violent. They are also critical of the idea “occupation of reserved forests” as they feel that this would ultimately lead to heavy deforestation. Thus the data pertaining to political/social awareness indicate that the community members, cutting across ethnic boundaries, are politically conscious and contemporary political discourse has deeply influenced them.

4.5.1 Political Participation in Local Governance

The community members take part in local/general elections indicating political awareness among them. For most of the community members, the voting behaviour is determined by their political affiliation. However, for local body
elections candidates’ association with the community is the main criterion for voting. The community members generally agree that voting rarely helps in changing their situation, but they take part in the elections in the larger interest of the society. The data collected clearly shows that the communities have been well integrated into the political life of Kerala. The details of participation in oorukottam are given below in table 4.19.

Table 4.19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Nature of Participation in Oorukootams</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mananthavady</td>
<td>209 (45.4)</td>
<td>219(47.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SulthanBathery</td>
<td>44(44.0)</td>
<td>54(54.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalpetta</td>
<td>91(47.9)</td>
<td>92(48.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344(45.9)</td>
<td>365(48.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data.

Pearson Chi-Square: 6.128  df: 4  Asymp. Sig. (2-sided): 0.190

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages to total in the respective rows.

Table 4.19 given above reveals the fact that 95 percent (regularly plus occasionally) participates in the oorukkottam. Only 5.5 percent keeps away from these meetings. As far as the Adivasi population is concerned, the oorukkottams, which is the traditional Adivasi community council, is a very powerful forum. The Adivasis feel that they should actively participate in the oorukkottams. The social, economic and political life of the Adivasis is governed by the oorukkottams. Of course, the political preferences of the Adivasis may be influenced by the stand taken by the political parties also.

For the effective implementation of decentralised planning, government of Kerala had suggested the revival of ‘oorukkottams', the traditional Adivasi community council. It is the oorukkottams that identify local developmental issues, prioritise them and suggest feasible solutions. Also, it has to identify the beneficiaries of various developmental initiatives. The idea was to ensure the participation of the Adivasi communities in the utilisation of Tribal Sub-Plan funds allocated to the panchayats. The data clearly indicate that penetration of political discourse has
weakened the traditional leadership. The role and functions of these traditional authorities have changed remarkably and, they do not have any significant influence on community members now. Political leadership of the party has taken over most of the roles earlier performed by the traditional authorities. It indicates that the community members are not very enthusiastic about the ‘Community Council.’

4.6 Unwed Mothers

The enormous increase in the number of unwed mothers is the biggest social catastrophe in Wayanad. It is shocking to see that 392 women belong to that category. It includes 4 girls below the age of 17 and 26 women in between the age of 18-21. The Adivasi women folk comprised of unwed mothers, widows and divorcees raise a big question before the programmes and projects intending to ensure their empowerment, equality and social security. They constitute 6.26 percent of the population. 27.60 percent of the married women and 12.34 percent of the unmarried women are denied of family life.31

According to the Wayanad district Report, there are 163 Adivasi unwed mothers in Mananthavady block. In Sulthan Bathery block there are 102 unwed Adivasi mothers who constitute 26.02 percent of the total unwed mothers in the district.32 In Kalpetta block there are 35 unwed mothers comprised of 7 Adivasi girls who have not completed 21 years of age and 12 girls in between the age of 22-29. They constitute 9.66 percent of the total unwed mothers in the district. It is quiet shocking to see the increasing number of unwed mothers among the Adivasi communities in Wayanad. The women development initiatives, welfare programme and awareness camps undertaking by the Kerala Women’s Commission and such other government agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations are need to be seriously subjected for timely review.

It has been noticed during study that the Adivasi women who have been sexually exploited are not educated. Their male counterparts also exploit them. They are not aware of the rights of a woman. Some of the Adivasi women do not consider sexual violence as crime which requires punishment. News papers very often carry reports about the sorrowful plight of the Adivasi women. Lack of proper awareness and poverty together create a complicated situation for sexual exploitation on Adivasi women in Wayanad.
From the enquiries made it has become clear that the State Human Rights Commission does not exercise its statutory powers to collect details about cases of human rights violations especially in those relating to women. Even when some action is taken there is inordinate delay. Such delay always helps the guilty to escape unpunished.

The panchayat promoters and social workers informed that there are more than a dozen families itself in Paniya colony in Karimam panchayat near Pulpally town where one could see unwedded mothers. In such families, it could be seen many children below the age of 10 in the hut, their mothers were not inclined to mention the names of exploiters. Among the victims Usha, aged 30 (daughter of the late Potten and Karuppi), Santha aged 24 (daughter of late Uliyan and Karuppi), Thanka aged 20 and Sarada aged 18 (daughter of Karuppan and Komi) are the worst sufferers. Extreme poverty, lack of proper awareness and social backwardness are the major factors responsible for sexual exploitation among Adivasi women.

It is also noticed during discussions with several community members and social workers that in most of the cases of sexual offences, accused are either discharged or acquitted due to lack of proper evidence. It is also found that most of the prosecution witnesses always declared to be hostile either by coercion or by influence from the part of accused or relatives involved in the case. It happens frequently if the accused are from the outside community or influential person in the society. The courts are also to a certain extent helpless as the only option left with it is either to initiate penal proceedings as per provisions under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973( if the statement is made before a Magistrate) or to acquit the accused in the absence of evidence saying that the prosecution has failed to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt. It is also noticed that in some instances the accused express his willingness to marry the victim so that he former can escape from the penal liability that may be imposed up on him. Even then, the victim is not relieved of the plight as the marital relation is short lived.

4.7 Health

Over the decades, the state has adopted various structural and functional measures for the development of health sector in Wayanad. This has been reflected
The Socio-economic life of Adivasis in Wayanad

both in health programme implemented and the health infrastructure meant to deliver the services.

It is revealed in this context that another major issue the Adivasis of Wayanad are facing is in respect of health. The life expectancy of Adivasi communities is low with majority of the population belonging to the age group of 30-40. It is observed that only about 11 percent of the meagre monthly income of a family spends for medicines, which increases the morbidity rate among the communities, as they are incapable to spend more for diseases and save their life. Actual data on infant mortality rate is not available, but it has to be assumed that there should be high infant mortality rate among the communities, particularly among the vulnerable communities. Poverty coupled with genetic issues, high consumption of tobacco and alcohol, low nutritional intake, unhygienic surroundings and the exposure to chemical fertilizers and pesticides form the important reasons for the deteriorating health situation of the communities. In most of the Adivasi communities of Wayanad, there is high incidence of genetic disorders such as sickle cell anemia that are directly related to many diseases and low life expectancy.

*Sickle cell anemia* is an inherited disease in which red blood cells, normally disc-shaped, becomes crescent shaped. It is a crippling disease mainly affecting the Adivasis. Doctors who treat this disease do not guarantee a life span of more than 45 years to a patient. 33 This disease is widely seen among Adivasi children but a considerable degree among the adults too. The whole body shrinks up and immunity is lost. Physical and mental activism becomes severely handicapped and the children are not able to attend school regularly. As there is no special facility for these child victims, the latter lose their education. This disease is common among the Adivasis in the district.

4.8 Availability of Food

The scarcity of food is considered to be one of the major criteria of poverty. In order to understand the extent of the poverty among the Adivasis in Wayanad, their food intake is to be examined. There are about 850 families (2.35 percent) who are striving hard to get at least one-time meal a day. Among them, 646 families belong to agricultural labourers, 18 agricultural families, 12 families each who are the labourers of the forest region and the labourers working under the employment guarantee
scheme. However, 14572 (40 percent) families take food twice in a day. As regards the nutritive value of the food consumption is considered, 5773 Adivasi families come under malnutrition. Sixteen percent of the Adivasi families suffer malnutrition. In Mananthavady block there are 949 such families, 1867 in Sulthan Bathery block, 1260 in Kalpetta block, 1646 in Panamaram block and 61 families in Kalpetta municipality. Most of such families are the agricultural labourers. About 75 percent Adivasi families (27117) buy food from hotels and shops and 23.66 percent makes traditional food at homes. However, 0.66 percent collects food from others and 75 families get food under ‘Asraya Scheme’.

4.9 Unnatural Deaths

In Wayanad, 3998 Adivasis died within five years in which 7 were due to poverty. 1612 Adivasis died due to lack of proper medical treatment. (40.32 percent) Forty children below the age of three, 22 children in between the age 04-05, 72 children in between the age 06-14 were dead due to lack of proper treatment. Besides, 126 infants died due to lack of proper care, malnutrition etc in which 114 were below the age of one, is a matter of serious concern. 170 children who were not completed the age of 3 were also reported to be dead during this period. Of the total infants in the district, 22 percent died due to lack of proper care, malnutrition, lack of timely treatment and non-attendance. Thirty Adivasi women were dead during the course of delivery due to lack of proper treatment and care in which 19 were in between the age 15-29 and 11 were in between the age 30-44. Due to the over consumption of alcohol and drugs, 146 male Adivasis died. Twelve Adivasis were killed in the attack of wild animals. Of the total Adivasis who were dead, 2550 were males.

In 10069 Adivasi families there are children below the age of 5 in which children in 400 families were not taken immunity vaccination. The children in 1033 families are given vaccination only partially.

The rate of unnatural deaths among the Adivasi communities in Wayanad especially poverty deaths, infant mortality, death of children due to lack of proper treatment and care and delivery deaths, etc. are social catastrophes and serious violation of their basic human rights.
4.10 Preference for Medical Treatment

Since the Ninth Plan primary health centers are brought under the local bodies and basic facilities are made available for common diseases. When medicines are not available, doctors prescribe medicines from outside and the cost of which is met by the Tribal Development Department on production of bills. The major issue being faced by the Adivasi communities is that the primary health centres lack facilities for giving better and proper treatment. Respondent’s preferences for medical treatment are given below in table 4.20.

Table 4.20
Respondents Preference for Medical Treatment (Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government hospitals</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Centers</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Hospitals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile clinics</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers and Sub Centers</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>750</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 1

The table 4.20 above shows that most of the respondents prefer government hospitals. This indicates the fact that despite serious limitations in the health delivery system in Wayanad, Adivasis approach government hospitals mainly because of the fact that free treatment is available to them. Therefore, infrastructure facilities in respect of government hospitals are to be enhanced and made available to them in order to cope with the situation. It has been observed during the survey that majority of the respondents prefer allopathic medicines as it is evident that majority prefer
government hospitals. This is followed by ayurvedic medicines, tribal medicines and homoeopathic medicines. It is a shocking fact that the heath scenario of Adivasis in Wayanad depicts a miserable picture. This is to be analysed in view of the fact that in the district there are 142 allopathic hospital units in both government and private sectors. In addition, there are a total of 76 ayurvedic units and 74 homoeopathic units in the district.

Eventhough there are different types of health facilities available to the Adivasis, still it cannot be stated that the health facilities are adequate. The Adivasi population suffers from different types of ailments. This is mainly because of malnutrition, poverty, lack of pure water and lack of hygiene and very bad surroundings.

### Table 4.21

**Respondents Preference for Systems of Medicines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of treatment system</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allopathy</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>67.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayurveda</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>15.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal medicine</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homoeopathic medicine</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other items</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>750</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 2**

![Graph showing preference for different systems of medicines](image)
The Socio-economic life of Adivasis in Wayanad

The table 4.21 above shows that 67.73 percent prefer allopathy medicines. Only 5.33 percent prefer tribal medicines and 2.67 prefer homoeo medicines. This is because the Adivasis are of the view that allopathic medicines are more effective which helps for a speedy recovery from diseases. Hence, more attention should be given to make available to them qualitative medicines through an effective health delivery system.

4.11 Application of Chemical Fertilisers and Pesticides

It is also found in the survey that the application of chemicals in the case of cash crops like tea, pepper, ginger and bananas is higher than in the case of paddy. Wayanad is a good illustration for the indiscriminate and irrational application of chemicals and pesticides. Due to the change in the crop pattern, high input agriculture has become the major economic activity of the population. Often agricultural labourers are handling highly dangerous pesticides and chemicals without ensuring any safety measures. Here the intensity of chemical usage is compounded with the loan system. It is to be noted here that the banks themselves promote the use of chemicals by stipulating that half or even more of the loan amount is to be used to procure chemicals. In some cases the banks even supply the chemicals. Otherwise the purchase receipt has to be submitted and the banks verify the authenticity of purchases. Coupled with the belief that the more the usage of chemicals the more will be the output and hence income factor prompts the farmer to go to any extent in its application. The cumulative result is that the soil of Wayanad is saturated with deadly chemicals and this has killed the microorganisms in the soil and poisoned the water and air. Many of the chemicals used are notorious carcinogenic agents (e.g. Monsanto’s Round up) and is one of the principal reasons behind the widespread prevalence of killer diseases in the district. Many Adivasis working in tea and coffee estates are infected by these diseases easily. The poor plantation labourers and other agricultural workers, particularly the Adivasi workers, who are the poorest of the poor, find it very difficult to go in for proper treatment and the chances of them becoming the casualities is much higher.\(^{37}\)

For the Adivasis and plantation workers, empowerment rests on land redistribution, production, and marketing on co-operative basis. Without these basic changes, a lasting solution to the crisis will remain as distant as it is now. Producers
will have to be educated on the possibilities of value addition and diversification and eco-friendly, economical processes of production. Interest free loans organised on co-operative basis can be an important landmark in restructuring the credit market.

4.12 Alcoholism

Alcoholism is yet another issue to be considered on par with starvation and diseases which are common among the Adivasis and the consumption of which is high among the vulnerable sections. Tuberculosis is very common among them.\[^{38}\] Sustained malnutrition makes them unfit for work, which means further erosion of the means of living. Thus, the Adivasis of Wayanad is on the verge of extinction due to starvation, diseases and alcoholism. Chewing of tobacco and consumption of alcohol is high among the Adivasi communities, that too among the vulnerable sections. About 50 percent of the Adivasi families (18067 families) spend money for alcohol and drugs. 7021 such families (38.99 percent) spend 20 to 30 percent of their monthly income for such purposes. It is quite ironical to see that only about 11 percent of the monthly income spends for medical treatment while 20 to 30 percent of the same spends for alcohol and drugs. The Paniya, Adiya, Kattunaickkan and Vettu Kuruma communities are at the top in using alcohol and drugs.\[^{39}\]

On an average 15 percent of the total earnings per month is spent on this as per the survey. The community wise data shows that the poor segment of the Adivasis spend more on this. The high consumption of tobacco / alcohol coupled with low intake of nutrition causes a number of diseases. In another twenty years, these communities will vanish if serious corrective measures are not taken. Any lapse or delay in taking these measures will surely be putting axe on the very bottom of a unique culture and community. With the dominance of the settlers-economically, socially and politically-the Adivasis have become destitute and dispossessed from the means of production. Forest laws prohibiting them from hunting and food gathering, have exacerbated the situation further and they are facing starvation. A typical Adivasi colony in any part of Wayanad presents a sordid picture, where not even a single Adivasi is in good health.\[^{40}\]

4.13 Other Issues- At a Glance

Wayanad is placed at the top in respect of poverty deaths and malnutrition. Due to malnutrition, the rate of infant mortality is very high in the district when
compared to other districts in the state. Many cases of child deaths, occurred in panchayats like Meppady in Kalpetta block and Noolpuzha in Bathery block frequently. It is quite shocking to observe that, of the 45 infant deaths in Wayanad during 2012, majority occurred among the Adivasi children. Besides, the land issue is very severe in Wayanad next to Attapady in Palakkad district. In the case of infant mortality, malnutrition is found to be the major reason.

4.14 Institutional Mechanisms - A Review

4.14.1 Public Distribution System

The district has a public distribution system with 299 ration shops, for 146927 ration card holders. Apart from the ration shops the district has 19 Maveli stores, 21 Neethi stores and 4 Haritha stores. However, the case of Adivasi population is different.

In Wayanad 7672 Adivasi families have no ration cards. In Paniya community itself there are 4071 families having no ration card. This constitute 26 percent of the total Paniya population. 21 percent of the Adiya, 24 percent of Kattunaickan, 24 percent of Vettu Kuruma, 16 percent of the Kuricha and 16 percent of Mullu Kuruma have no ration cards. Of the ration cards, 53.36 percent of the Adivasi population comes under BPL category. This shows that the social security system and public distribution system in respect of Adivasi population in Wayanad is inadequate and creative efforts on the part of government socially and economically to empower them on a permanent basis are the only way out. But the successive governments of Kerala have not shown the political will to solve Adivasi issues as they do not constitute a vote bank. Politicians are only interested into coming power and once they come to power, they forget Adivasi issues.

4.15 Basic Facilities

4.15.1 Houses

Keeping a house of their own is a matter of identity and existence. Of the 36135 Adivasi families in the district, 85 percent has shelters. The remaining 15 percent (4000 families) have no houses. About 300 Adivasis reside with their relatives or in rented houses. Besides, about 1000 Adivasis reside in temporary sheds. In Paniya community, which is the largest community in the district, 2300 families have no houses. Of the families having no houses, 59.92 percent belong to this community.
There are 262 families in Adiya community, 423 families in Kattunaickan community, 268 families in Mullu Kuruma community, 411 families in Kurichia having no houses. The plinth area of the 29431 houses (91.9) percent is below 40 square meters. The floor area of 11982 houses is below 25 m². Besides, 12936 houses (40.04 percent) are in bad conditions. It is significant to note that the floor area of such 12478 houses comes below 40 m². The floor area of 97 percent of the 13584 houses of the Paniya community is below 40 m². Adiya community has 2308 houses in which 97 percent is below 40 m² whereas the Kattunaickan community has 3946 houses in which 97 percent is below 40m². About 19199 (59 percent) Adivasi houses in the district are in dilapidated condition. About 9081 Paniya houses (62 percent) are in dilapidated condition. Kitchen is not provided to 7927 (54 percent) houses. In 1572 houses, the area provided is insufficient to accommodate all the members of the family. 62 percent (1452) of the Adiya houses are in dilapidated condition. In 1520 houses, kitchen is not provided with. There are no houses for 1153 families in this community. (44.86 percent) In Kattunaickan community, 2651 houses (67 percent) are in dilapidated condition. Fifty eight percent of such houses have no kitchen. In 2557 houses, available space is not enough to accommodate all family members. In addition, 213 families are homeless. In Kurichia community, 2830 houses (52 percent) are in dilapidated condition. The Kitchen is not provided to 2171 houses. The Mullu Kuruma community has 1950 houses, which are in dilapidated conditions. It is highly significant to note that 30 percent of the total Adivasi houses in the district has only one room. About 14000 houses (40 percent) are not suitable for residence. Thirty-three percent houses (12123) are suitable only for temporary residence. Therefore, 16761 houses are to be newly constructed in order to rehabilitate the Adivasis who are homeless and reside in dilapidated houses. 46

It is important to note that housing is the main agenda of the government among the welfare activities for the Adivasis in Wayanad. However, the basic needs of these people such as availability of sufficient food and houses are denied to them. This is the violation of their basic human rights for the right to live and livelihood.

Regarding infrastructure facilities, railway facility is not available in this district. The nearest railway station is at Kozhikode, seventy-five kilometers west of Kalpetta, the district headquarters. Bus connection and telephone facilities are
available throughout the district. The district has a good network of village roads. However, Wayanad ranks much below state average in terms of communication facilities. The district has 0.2 kilometer long road for every square kilometer. A review of the institutions in Wayanad, which have direct link to the Adivasi population of the district, particularly the three Tribal Development Offices at Kalpetta, Sulthan Bathery and Mananthavady (which come under the Scheduled Tribe Development Department), panchayat raj institutions, forest department and education and health institutions, has revealed the following facts.

a) Aspirations of Adivasi communities are very high.

b) In the decentralised planning through oorukottams, basic issues like livelihood, health and education are not adequately addressed.

c) Here oorukottams, though conceptually a well thoughtout model for participatory planning, things are practiced as a ‘formality’ to be fulfilled for local planning.

d) Community members are not equipped with local level planning.

4.16 Adivasi Communities: The Present Scenario

Over the past half-century the habitat of Adivasi communities has undergone drastic changes. In this process, they have lost much of the control over their land and forests. Traditional bondages have ceased to exist and thus employment opportunities have come down. Liberalisation of the state economy has resulted in drastic fall in the price of cash crops, which in turn reduced the employment and income of the agricultural sector. This has affected the livelihood of Adivasi communities. Due to large scale immigration of settler farmers from central Travancore, the demographic profile of the Wayanad district has undergone changes. Adivasi communities which once constituted a majority of population of the Wayanad district are now marginalised and reduced to mere 17 percent of its total population. The study has tried to obtain information on various facets of the state of affairs of Adivasi communities in Wayanad. This includes population trends, education, health, livelihood and views on politics and governance etc. In this survey, the unit of enumeration was the household. The Adivasi population is relatively young. This could be due to high birth and death rates. There is a sharp fall in the population above the age of 60. The result
is low dependency ratio. Despite the relatively easy access to schools, the dropouts from school are very high. Dropout is sharp at primary and high school levels. Reasons for such high dropout rate warrant serious attention. A variety of reasons like financial problems and health problems are noticed. Many students seem to have difficulty with the curriculum. A gender dimension is visible in the educational attainments. In the survey, it is seen that there are more number of female illiterates than males.

The survey also tried to find out the nexus between life and health related problems. Morbidity ratio for the group surveyed is 7.8 percent. In other words, for every 1000 population 78 persons are sick. Due to this high level of morbidity, life expectancy is reduced. This explains the steady decline in the numbers of respondent population as age progresses. Adivasi communities rely almost completely on public health centres and governmental hospitals for medical aid. Tribal medicine is resorted to only in a very limited way. Focus should be on quality of delivery of health services. Among men, more deaths are taking place during ages 40-50, and the proportion of unnatural deaths is high.

The study reveals that the officials who supervise the workers exploit not only women but even their daughters, leading to unwed pregnancy. Married women sacrifice their chastity to please the lust of the supervisory staff.

4.17 Major Areas of Human Rights Violations
4.17.1 Sexual Exploitation

In the study, it has become clear that sexual exploitation on Adivasi women has increased. Admittedly, there are hundreds of unwed Adivasi mothers in Wayanad particularly in Thirunelly and Noolpuzha panchayats. Some of the Adivasi women do not believe that sexual violence over their womanhood is a penal offence which warrants criminal action. Of the total criminal offences registered during 2008-2009, 40 percent are related to sexual offences like molestation and rapes on Adivasi women. These offences are registered mostly in Mananthavady, Ambalavayal, Noolpuzha, Meppadi, Kalpetta, Padinjarethara, Thirunelly, Pulpally, Vythiri and Thalapuzha police stations. Another fact, which has been revealed by the survey, is that violence against women is one of the most crucial social mechanisms by which
women are compelled into a troubled and subordinated position in the society. The condition of Adivasi women in Kerala is in a deplorable state.

The study reveals that the most important issues, which are being faced by the Adivasi communities in Wayanad, are related to that of their right to live and livelihood, landlessness, land alienation, health, education, deprivation of forest rights due to de-forestation, sexual exploitation, environmental pollution and bonded labour.

The key issues observed in respect of the right to live and livelihood of the Adivasis in Wayanad during the course of this study are the low family income, small size of land-holding and landlessness, land alienation etc. The agriculture sector faces serious problems. The conversion of paddy fields for alternative crops has reduced employment opportunities in this sector. The need for Adivasi labour was considerably reduced owing to change in the crop pattern. The entry of large number of non-tribals in to the labour market, decline of price for cash crops which resulted in the reduction of hired labour, reduced need for traditional skills, non availability of alternative skills, and dwindling of Non Timber Forest Produce further made the Adivasis life miserable.

Regarding health, the key issues observed are lack of food, low family income, high morbidity, high infant mortality, low life expectancy, and genetic disorder like sickle cell anemia, cancer, tuberculosis, low nutritional intake, poor hygienic conditions, inadequate preventive measures, inadequate public delivery system and high consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

It is found in the survey that the Adivasis are considered to be one of the most deprived populations. Among the Adivasi families, cases of hunger deaths and exploitation could be seen. Even in normal period, only 33 percent of the households take food thrice a day as required by normal standard and calorie intake. 54 percent of the households eat twice in a day and seven households (4 percent) get food only once in a day. The condition is worse during lean months.

High incidence of mortality of infants and children in the age-group of 0-5 years is the reflection of low accessibility to health care, pregnancy problem associated with ill health of mother, malnourishment of mother and other deprivations. The mortality of infants and children is high in Wayanad. Nearly 23 percent of the
households in which infants’ death occurred. It is very high and even unacceptable by the health standards of Kerala. Nearly half of the households experienced such mortalities. More than 8 percent have experienced the death of three or more children.\(^{49}\)

The prevalence of high incidence of genetic disorders among the Adivasis in Wayanad has long perplexed the medical practitioners. Indeed the incidence of sickle cell syndrome is alarmingly high with 4 percent of the households have members suffering from these disorders.\(^{50}\) Another disease widely seen among the Adivasis is cancer and tuberculosis\(^{51}\). Lack of a medical college or such medical institution is yet another issue. The average life expectancy of an Adivasis in Wayanad is 40-45 years. From the group discussions among the respondents, it is revealed that untouchability, which is a social evil, still exists in Wayanad. It is a curse to the God’s own country. The approach and attitude of the general public towards the Adivasi communities is negative in matters of the growth and development of their social relations and this is another reason for their separation from the main stream of the society.

4.18 Landlessness and Land Alienation

The Economic Survey report says that the Tribal Resettlement and Development Mission identified 22052 landless tribal families and 32131 families with less than one acre of land.\(^{52}\) The highest number of landless tribes is found in Wayanad district with 60.32 percent of the total followed by Palakkad with 24.44 percent. Even if some landless Adivasi families have been rehabilitated by allotting land in Sugandhagiri and Pookkodu, the same is neither cultivated nor suited for making any kind of improvements.

Therefore, the land which is the base of the existence of Adivasis as human beings in the society still remains as the grave issue among them in Wayanad. The denial of property especially a piece of land to live is definitely a denial of human rights. This is very much true of the Adivasis of Wayanad where a majority of them do not possess land for themselves. Therefore, being the core issue among the Adivasis, the question of their landlessness and alienation of land gained momentum. As stated earlier the land alienation has caused a serious menace to the very existence of Adivasis. Their long pending struggle for the land and matters connected therewith necessitate a detailed discussion and hence done in Chapter- 5.
4.19 Status of Adivasi Today

The Indian Constitution provides certain rights and privileges to STs so as to bring them up to the level of other traditionally privileged class. After independence and with the introduction of adult franchise, community development programme and panchayat raj, there was radical change in power structure of Scheduled Tribes. The availability of the Constitutional provision under Article 243-D provides reservations for SCs and STs in case of seats in the panchayats also. However, their status still remains pathetic and deplorable.

The survey, which has been undertaken to bring to light the real social life situation of the Adivasis, has revealed the following factors. These revelations make it clear how poor are their surroundings and why human rights violations are so common feature of Adivasi life in the Wayanad district.

First, the education, health and hygienic conditions are very poor in the district. The life expectancy rate is also very low among the Adivasis.

Second, women are largely illiterate among the Adivasis. Therefore they are exploited even sexually by their male counterparts and officials. Similarly violence against Adivasi women are also on the increase.

Third, there is a very large school dropout rate among the Adivasi students. This is a great hindrance for their general progress.

Fourth, there is large-scale landlessness and land alienation among the Adivasi population, which is the foremost issue among them. The governments in power do not show the necessary political will to provide them land, restore the alienated lands, and implement legislations made for this purpose. This has resulted in deep protest among the tribal population all the time.

Fifth, eventhough there is an increasing political consciousness among the Adivasis, they have not been able to organise themselves into a political force. By closely analysing the socio-economic life of the Adivasis in Wayanad, it has become abundantly clear that there is no congenial atmosphere for the rightful enjoyment of human rights. The availability of human rights ought to help a set of people to lead a happy and dignified life. However, in Wayanad these rights are more often violated than observed. The response of the state in all these situations is almost feeble and
quite inadequate. The same is the reason for the pathetic socio-economic and cultural backwardness of the Adivasi population in Wayanad. Unless and until the conditions improve socially and economically, the Adivasis will not be able to enjoy their basic human rights.

Sixth, the upliftment and development of Adivasi communities particularly in Wayanad is not an easy task as the question involves multi dimensional issues connected with their anthropological foundations, ethnic base social, economic, cultural, political, identity crisis etc. Co-ordinating these issues and putting them on a common platform is a task and as such taking into account all these aspects, a case work approach is feasible.

Despite being marginalised in many ways, the survey among Adivasi communities has revealed a high level of political consciousness. An apparently contradictory situation seems to prevail. On one hand, Adivasi communities are conscious of the fact that the higher echelons of political leadership do not adequately listen to them. On the other hand it is seen that almost all of them are participating in the electoral process. Adivasi communities have their views on many contemporary issues including views about the movement led by C.K. Janu. Adivasi communities show a clean preference against regional parties and a marked preference for national parties. The fact that the Adivasi communities that face social exclusion can think of democracy and political participation in broadest terms, gives a ray of hope for the future of these communities.
END NOTES


4. Ibid., 261.

5. Ibid.,261.

6. Ibid.,231.

7. Ibid., 239-240.

8. Ibid.,260.

9. Ibid., 271.

10. Ibid.,274.

11. Ibid.,294-303.

12. Ibid.,304.

13. Ibid., 307-308.


17. Ibid., 282.

18. Ibid., 317.

19. Ibid., 250.

20. Ibid., 283.

21. Ibid., 318

23. The ‘Watershed Development Programme’ is a hydrological unit which is draining to a common outlet, undertaken by the Soil Conservation Department, government of Kerala, and is being effectively implemented in the state including Wayanad.


27. Ibid., 225.

28. Ibid., 260.

29. Ibid., 262.

30. The participatory development model now practiced for utilising Tribal Sub Plan(TSP) funds allotted to the local bodies is based on *Oorukoottam*, settlement council. Since 2003-04 it has become mandatory that all tribal development programme of the state have to be implemented through the participatory exercise i.e. *Oorukoottam*, the settlement groups.


35. Ibid., 82.

36. Ibid., 73.


38. Ibid., 165.


40. Ibid., 73-82.

45. Ibid., 83.
46. Ibid., 84-85.
47. District collector (Wayanad), in face to face with the Researcher, November, 20, 2008.