CHAPTER -IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF PALIYANS

The term Paliyan has been derived from the word Palaniyan, which in Tamil language means a man from Palani. The Paliyan originally belonged to the Palani Hills. They are also known as Palliyar, Palleyan, Palani Makkal, and Malai Paliyar and Devya Paliyar. The term Malai Paliyar means that they live on hills. They are one of the food gathering communities of Tamil Nadu. Thurston described them as nomads, who roam about in small groups in the forested gorges. They are distributed in of Maduari, Tanjavur, Pudukkottai, Tirunelveli and Coimbatore districts of Tamil Nadu. According to a story, the word “Paliyan” originated form Valli, a Paliya, one of the several wives of Subramania, son of Lord Siva. According to Luiz, the word is attributed to Palichaimmmal, a Paliya Goddess.

Population

According to 2001 census, the total population of the Paliyan Tribe in Idukki is 1709. Their population analysis shows that 56.72% are engaged in forestry, plantation etc, 34.41% workers are agricultural labourers, only 3.49% are cultivators and remaining 5.38% are in other services. These people are bilingual and use the regional language Malayalam apart from their mother tongue Tamil. Both the Malayalam and Tamil scripts are used by them. The Paliyan in Kerala speak a corrupted dialect of Tamil with many Malayalam words and usages.

The Paliyans were nomadic agriculturalists. They come to the Travancore forest area through the Kambum pass and settled down in different parts of the
Idukki district. Years back, the Kumily, Chakkupallam, and Anakkara villages were covered with thick jungles and were with hardly any human habitations excepting, of course, the nomadic tribes. Gradually, many from the nearby regions came in and occupied the virgin forest land for profitable cultivation, converting vast stretches of virgin forest areas into yielding, agricultural fields. The present position is that a few families posses large holdings of land, while many others have comparatively smaller holdings. Some of the earlier immigrants have planted coffee, tea, cardamom on extensive plots in these villages. The influx of population from time to time, together with the natural increase accounts for the present population pressure in the village. Due to that they are scattered in different areas of Idukki district. Government has liberally sanctioned “Pattayam” (Title deed) rights for these land-holders in some areas, and is collecting land tax from them accordingly. Housing Scheme through the Sub-plan strategy in some the Paliyan settlements have got houses and also construct latrine facilities and electrification.

**House Types**

Their settlement is called ‘Kudi”’. They used to live in temporary sheds of bamboo reeds, thatched with straw or leaves, appropriate to their nomadic life. Nowadays, they live in permanent huts, which are single roomed, with a rectangular floor plan. Doors are formed by plaiting split bamboo. An additional fire place is located in the middle of the floor. The roofing is formed of the leaves of the reeds abundant in the locality. They are self sufficient in the skills required for the construction of their huts, both men and women participating in the work.
Recently, the state Government had constructed some tiled houses with stone walls for them, typically with a room, a kitchen and a veranda.

**Household Articles**

Their utensils generally consist of aluminum vessels obtained from the nearby markets. Brass vessels (Venkalpana) are owned by some better off families. Still more affluent families have steel vessels, plates and tumblers. Most of them have a grinding stone (Ammikallu) used for powdering ragi, the mortar and pestle (Ural and Ulakka) serve to pound pulses and grains. A winnowing fan (Kidiyam) is used for further clearing of food materials and several types of baskets (Kutta) for storage. They use a bamboo or a reed mat (Payi or Parambu) for sleeping on. Some households keep furniture items like wooden cots, tables, and chairs. Transistor radios, Television and Tape Recorder are the proud possessions of a few.

**Implements**

For cutting and collecting minor forest produce, and generally for all work in field and forest, the axe (Kodali) and the bill hook (Vakkathi) are used. They have a spade (Manvetti) for preparing the soil for cultivation, and a sickle (Panneruval) for cutting reeds.

**Dress and Ornaments**

Luiz (1962) found a few primitive coverings among the Paliyan, made of tree bark and leaves. Nowadays, the men wear only a loin cloth (Mundu or Lungi) at home and at work but put on a shirt or vest when they go out for the occasions. The female wears a sari (Chela) in the same fashion as it is used in the Tamil
Nadu plains. The young Paliyan women put on a blouse (Chatta) and half-saris over their skirts. Young men sport shirts and pants

The women are very fond of decking themselves with ornaments made of aluminum, steel, glass, plastic, silver and gold, the purse and fancy determining the choice. The ear ring (Kammal), the nose ring (Mookuthi), the neck chains (Changala), finger rings (Mothiram), anklets (Kolusu) and glass bangles (Kuppivala) are standard, married women wear a toe ring (Minchi). The tali are the marital badge, usually worn on a string (Charadu).

**Food and Drink**

These people are non-vegetarians, but do not take beef and pork. Their staple food grains are rice and ragi. Roots and tubers like valli kizhangu, vettila valli kizhangu and mullu valli kizhangu are also eaten. They use flesh of animals like sabar, black monkey, wild boar etc. They consume all kinds of pulses and use ground nut oil and palm oil as cooking media. They also eat tubers, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products and drink black tea and black coffee. The men and women of this community consume alcoholic drinks regularly. They smoke beedis and cigarettes, and chew tobacco.

**Economic Activities**

The Paliyans were traditionally food gatherers, and wandered in the forest depending mainly on edible tubers, roots, wild fruits and honey. Now they are engaged in different occupations. The Paliyan inhabit thick forest areas of Thekkady and Kumily range. Thekkady Wildlife Sanctuary and the introduction of cardamom plantation have reduced their scope for food gathering. Now the
Paliyans have taken to settled life and have taken to various new economic activities.

The Paliyans living in Kumily are engaged in collecting firewood and honey from the forest and selling them in Kumily market. The Paliyan households in Kumily have acquired land in the reserve forest area, but ‘pattayam’ (right to ownership) has not yet been given to them. They enjoy the right to cultivation.

The Paliyans living in other settlements such as Chakkupallam, Puliyanmala and Anakkara are mostly employed in cardamom plantation as manual labourers. Some of them cultivate their land themselves. They grow cardamom, pepper, tapioca, paddy, beans, ginger, tea, coffee and turmeric on their land. In Chakkupallam and Anakkara settlement they are given title deed. They depend on market for their daily purchases and transact in cash. Child labour exists among them. Wages are paid in cash. The Paliyan are proficient in making baskets and mats cut from bamboo reeds. A few persons are employed in Government services as forest guards, watchmen, clerk, peons etc.

**Social Organization**

**Family**

Nuclear family is the basic unit of the Paliyan’s social organization. Father is the head of the family. Interpersonal relations are cordial among the family members. The Paliyan follows endogamy at community level. Both husband and wife are free to separate at their will. Inheritance is in the male line. If a deceased person has no sons, the property goes to the brother’s son (Iyer, 1936).
Marriage

Monogamy is generally practiced. Marriable age for a Paliyan girl is 18 years and that of a Paliyan boy is 22 years. Marriage between blood relations are not permitted, however, cross-cousin marriage are not encouraged. Parallel cousins are considered as own brothers or sisters. The negotiations are carried out between the parents of the boy and girl. The initiative has to come from the bridegroom’s side. If the boy and the girl like each other, marriage is fixed by the parents. In the past, marriages were performed mostly in the bridegroom’s residence. At present, it is performed in the bride’s residence. No dowry was given at the time of marriage. Now, those who are economically well off give their girls some ornaments, cloths and vessels. They follow patrilocal residence. Widow and widower remarriage is permitted.

Of late, there are many instances of intermarriage between Paliyan women and Christian, Gounder and Muslims men, which are tolerated. Marriages between Paliyan and Mannan (a neighboring tribal community) are also reported.

Religion

The Paliyans who are living in Kumily, Chakkupallam, and Vandanmedu Panchayats belong to Hindu religion. The Paliyan in Anakkara settlement were converted from Hinduism to Christianity. The Paliyan believed in the worship of tribal deities like Vanadevata, Mariamma, Karuppaswami and Kaliyamma. Mariamma is the popular deities among the Paliyans. Most of the Paliyans visit the Mariamma temple at Veerapandi in Cumbham taluk of Madurai District,
Tamil Nadu. Karuppaswami and Mariamma festivals are celebrated for three days with different traditional cultural programmes in the month of April – May.

**Education**

Formal education is partly favoured by them. Students from this community drop out early from school due to economic backwardness. Paliyan literacy rate is at a very low level. Boys and Girls are sent to school but both dropouts from school after reaching primary or secondary level. Girls stay at home for taking care of their siblings when the parents go to work.

**Life Cycle Rituals**

**Child Birth**

In the past, the Paliyan used to make a separate hut called ‘vennapura’ for delivery. Nowadays, they use the health centre in their locality. They observe birth pollution for seven days. Thottilsastram is performed on the eight day of the birth of the child. On that day, the child is put in the cradle (Thottil) for the first time. Naming ceremony is not celebrated but name is given when the child is one or two months old and sometimes after a year. Cutting hair of the child for the first time is known as ‘Mudiyyeduppu’ and is generally done when the child completes one year. There is no puberty ceremony for boys.

**Puberty**

The puberty ceremony of the Paliyan is known as ‘Chadangu’, when a girl attains puberty she is secluded in a separate hut called ‘Vennapura’ and relatives are informed. Pollution lasts for 15 days. During this period, male members are
not allowed to go near vennapura. Generally, a purificatory bath is given on the 16th day. She is dressed in new clothes and returns to the hut carrying a pot (kudam) of brass/aluminium filled with water on her head. She prepares rice (pongal) in that pot which is distributed to everybody at that time. The ceremony is followed with a feast.

Death

The Paliyan’s burial ceremony is known as ‘ilavu’ among them. When a death occurs, the information is sent to all relations. When a person dies, the body is placed on a mat and is anointed with ash of cow dung. It is covered with a white cloth. A coin is kept in the centre of the forehead of the body which is given to the person who digs the pit for burying the body. When all the relatives arrive, the body is taken to the burial ground and bathed with seven pots of water carried by seven females. All the relatives put ‘Koddi’ over the body. The elder son carries a pot filled with water on his head and makes three rounds of the pit and on the third round the pot is thrown on the ground towards the direction of the feet of the body. Food is not cooked in the house when the death occurs. On the third day, the eldest son goes to the burial ground with milk and cow dung and smears cow dung over the graveyard and milk is sprinkled over it, which is called Munam Kuzhi Mezhukal, Death ceremony ends with this.

Social Control

Each settlement has a headman called ‘Kanikkaran or Vitu Kani’, assisted by the Valia Elandiri and Thandakkaran. The forest officials used to appoint another headman to look after specific duties pertaining to forest protection; this
officer was known as the Nattu Kani. The office of the Vitu Kani is hereditary, the eldest son succeeding to the post. Whenever a dispute came before the Kanikkaran, he would settle it after consulting his assistants. It was the vina mariyan’s responsibility to investigate, identify the offenders, and bring them before the kanikkaran. The Thandakkaran had to enforce the punishment awarded at the end of the proceedings.

**Health**

Tribal health problems should not be viewed in a purely technological frame, but should have a human perspective. Tribal communities in general and primitive tribal groups in particular, are particularly exposed and disease-prone, so they are not enjoying the basic health facilities. Globalization through its market mechanism has almost broken the backbone on indigenous health care and rise of price of drugs due to the deregulated pharmaceutical industry has made it unaffordable to the common man, particularly the tribal communities.

Health conditions of Paliyans are very poor due to the inaccessibility of medical and health facilities. Their attitude is favourable towards traditional and modern medicine and use of both. They favour family planning. Among Paliyan female population, the health condition is found to be deteriorating. Lack of health education is another problem among them. Being the most exploited, most neglected and most vulnerable with a high degree of malnutrition, morbidity and mortality, they are the people who need health care the most.

The government and non-government organizations have implemented some schemes for improving the health conditions of tribal communities.
Programmes under public health include mobile medical units, provisions of appropriate latrines, etc.

**Economic Change among Paliyans**

The modern history of the district starts with the advent of European planters to this region. In 1877, Kerala Varma, the Raja of Poonjar leased 227 sq. miles of Kannan Devan hills to John Daniel Manroe, a British planter.

By the middle of the 18th century, there was an immigration of Chetties and Gowndans from the plains of the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu, who purchased forest lands for permanent cultivation and consequently a considerable spread of settled agriculture in the hilly lands of the region. The new comers confiscated the fertile regions and enslaved the tribals. Though land belonged traditionally to the people of the highest caste viz Nambudiri Brahmins Nattu Rajas had also obtained Jenmom rights in land from Brahmin Jenmis in return for the military service rendered by them. Most such Jenmom lands were in turn leased out on kanom tenure to persons belonging to the next highest castes, such as Nairs and Nambiars, who maintained close relations with both Brahmins Jenmis and Nattu Rajas. Some of the Kanomdars further sub-leased their lands under verumpattom tenancy to Ezhavas and Muslims. However, none of these groups engaged themselves directly in the arduous manual work involved in actual cultivation such as in ploughing, weeding and harvesting. Such manual work was done by communities still lower in the social and caste hierarchy such as Cheramans and hill tribes (Kunhaman, 2002).

The introduction of plantations in Idukki during the second half of the 19th century led however to a decline in slavery in Idukki. Extension of plantations and the increasing monetization of the economy of the region, reflected in rising land
values, encouraged some of the land-owners to sell parts of their land for the development of plantations and gradual reduction in the area of cultivated land (Mathur, 1977).

Roads and transport were opened, houses and factories built and production rose rapidly in the succeeding years. The Pallivasal Hydroelectric Project, in Idukki district, the first hydroelectric project of the state was initially constructed by the tea companies for the industrial use. Planters were the first migrants to the high range region covered by dense forest. Deforestation process starts in the high ranges with advent of the plantation history by the end of the 19th century. Vast area of evergreen forest was destroyed in connection with the construction of several hydroelectric projects, roads, factories etc.

The process of proletarisation was accelerated during the second, third and fourth decades of the 20th century following large scale immigration of plainsmen from Madurai and Thirunelveli into the Idukki region. They purchased land from the Jenmis, and this led to the emancipation of more tribal slaves. It should be noted in this context that landowners sold during this period not only the lands being cultivated for them by the tribals but also the lands hitherto cultivated by the tribals for themselves. This kind of transaction was quite easy as, in the absence of any cadastral survey and land records, the tribals were in no position to assert their rights on their lands. One notable feature of the Paliyan tribal people is that they lend their farm to the land lords and do manual labour in their own plots. There also took place large-scale encroachments by the new immigrants on tribal lands even without purchase of such lands. The tribals had to give in, as they were powerless against the new-comers who were economically
strong and politically influential. Non-tribal immigrants advanced loans to the Paliyans, with land as security, on usurious rates of interest, or leased tribal lands for varying periods and immigrants acquired tribal lands through cheating and by the use of force. These are the mechanism of dispossession of tribals from their land.

**Settlement of Paliyans**

The total population of the Paliyans was distributed in different settlements viz., Kumily Panchayat in Peermedu taluk, Anakkara and Kadasikadavu in Chakkupallam Panchayat and, Sivalingakudi and Pachupillakudi in Vandamendu Panchayat of Udumabanchola taluk of Idukki district in Kerala. It can be graphically represented.

![Fig: 4.1 Settlement of Paliyans](image)

In the settlement wise analysis, a large proportion (34.67%) of the Paliyan women was concentrated in the Kumily village and others are scattered in different areas of the Chakkupallam and Vandamendu Panchayat of Idukki
district. Among them 21.33 per cent of the respondents are from the Anakkara Panchayat, 17.33 per cent are from Chakkupallam Panchayat and the remaining respondents are from the Vandanmedu Panchayat of Idukki district. Pachupillakudi and Sivalingakudi are isolated Paliyan settlements in the Vandanmedu Panchayat. These settlements are facing many problems when compared to the other settlements of the Paliyans. Lack of infrastructure like education, health, communication, drinking water facilities etc. are the major problems faced by the Paliyans due to their geographical situation.

**Fig: 4.2 Taluk-wise Distribution**

In taluk-wise analysis majority (65.33%) of the Paliyan women were located in Udumanchola Taluk and the remaining was in the Peermedu taluk of Idukki district.
**Peermedu Taluk**

Peermedu is a hill station in the state of Kerala. It is high in the Western Ghats, 915 meter/above main sea level and 85 km east of Kottayam on the way to Thekkady. The landscape of Peermedu includes spectacular waterfalls, open grass lands and pine forests. The area is very fertile and had until recently lush plantations of coffee, tea and cardamom. With a long history of spice growing, the area now concentrates on producing organic black pepper, white pepper, ginger and turmeric.

**Udumbanchola Taluk**

Udumbanchola is a taluk in Idukki district of Kerala. This is in the high-ranges. Nedumkandam is the major town and capital of the Udumbanchola taluk.

This taluk borders on Tamil Nadu state. This is the biggest taluk in Kerala state.

**Panchayat-wise distribution**

In this study field area was divided into three major Panchayats: Vandanmedu, Chakkupallam and Kumily.
The above diagram shows that 36.67 per cent of the respondents lived in the Vandanmedu Panchayat, 34.67 per cent of them are in the Kumily Panchayat and the remaining 28.66 per cent were in the Chakkupallam Panchayat of Idukki district.

**Vandanmedu Panchayat**

Vandanmedu is the wonderland of spices. The place hosts the world’s largest auction centres of cardamom. It is situated 20Kms off Thekkady.

**Chakkupallam/ Anakkara Panchayat**

Anakkara is one of the remote areas of the Udumbanchola taluk. Anakkara is one among the developed area in the district. Anakkara is a fast growing spice
tourism destination. A new survey is being conducted by Airports Authority of India for a Greenfield Airport at Anakkara. Majority of the people are Paliyans. They are mainly engaged in daily wages in the nearest cardamom plantation. In this area majority of the tribals are Christians. They are converted Christians who got some concessions from the missionaries.

Paliyan Settlement in Anakkara Panchayat

Kumily Panchayat

Kumily is a small town right on the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and also is a town in the Cardamom hills near Thekkady and the Periyar Tiger Reserve, in the Idukki District. It is a major tourist destination and a spices trading center. With nearby Periyar Tiger Reserve and Thekkady Lake, Kumily also has attracted tourist traffic. The famous pilgrim centre Sabarimala is 150 Km from Kumily Panchayat. A person from Tamil Nadu has to come to the Kumily Panchayat to reach Vandamedu, Anakkara and Sulthankad which are famous for the lush and rich cardamom plantations. The Kumily Grama Panchayat consists of 19 wards and a population of about 40000. Agriculture is the main source of income and majority of people are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Another main source of income is tourism.
Profile of Paliyan Women

The Paliyan women are among the most pampered of Indian tribal women. The Paliyan taboos on women are preventive, as the impurity of women, arising out of menstruation, child birth etc makes them unsuited for the Paliyan religious-ceremonial life. Among the Paliyans, in various aspects of social life, women enjoy status and freedom in the choice of a husband, pre-marital sexual license, seeking of divorce and so on. Many of them can divorce and remarry without social sanctions. The Paliyan woman, who is fond of ornaments and beads, has the right to spend her earnings on purchasing these ornaments and not to interfere with her husband. Their marriage is arranged on the basis of convenience, a girl is never married against her will, and in the husband’s home, the wife occupies a high position and her children are treated kindly. Paliyan men have become lethargic and easy-going. The major factor for this is the increased responsibility the females carry on their shoulders including the food production and marketing. As major contributors to the economic production, the Paliyan women have more control over the resources than men. These resources include land, agricultural production, family labour, and income. She has also control over the resources brought from her parental house such as cattle and jewels.

The Paliyan women also engage in basket making, mushroom cultivation, collecting forest produce etc, which yield income to family. Even though a Paliyan woman has some choice in choosing her mate, the power of decision making lies with the men of their family. Adult marriage among these tribals till very recently has been an important phenomenon. Majority of the Paliyan women’s age at marriage is between 17-20 years. The Paliyan women suffer from
the evils of child marriage and the problems associated with it. Some of the variables that determine the socio-economic profile of the Paliyan women are as follows:-

Age

Age is an important factor that determines the life span in the society. The age compositions of the Paliyan women are from 18 years onwards. In this study majority of the respondents were youngsters in order to identify the major influence of various welfare measures among the young Paliyan women.

Table: 4.1 Age Composition of the Paliyan Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Composition</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority (49%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 21-30 years. 28 per cent were in the category of 31-40, 12.33 per cent of them are between the age group of 41-50 years, while least per cent were in the category of below 20 and above 60. In this study, the respondents were chosen from different age groups in order to identify the various aspects of their development.
Marital Status

Marriage is an important social institution in our society. Marriage is very necessary for a woman to conform to socially accepted traditions in the contemporary society. Marital status is an important variable for determining the nature of the family, relations and roles in the family structure. Marital status is a decisive factor in fixing the role and status of women in society. In this study majority of the respondents are married. The married women play a vital role within the family when compared to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>85.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital status of the Paliyan women shows that 85.67 per cent of them are married and only 2.33 per cent were unmarried. 8.67 per cent of the respondents are widowed, 2.33 per cent separated and only 1 per cent were divorced. In this study the analysis reveals that most of the married women have
more responsibility compared to others because of their dual work within the family and outside.

**Education**

The well being of the tribals is intimately linked with their educational status because education enables greater adaptability in changing social and economic conditions. Education is basically a means to realize and enhance one’s true potentiality, in its multiple dimensions. Formal education has been considered the most powerful instrument to bring social change and social progress in modern societies and it plays a vital role in a person’s career, occupation, marriage prospects, gaining economic stability, prestige and respect and ultimately in gaining the social status in a group or community. In all the educational schemes, priority was given to educational development of scheduled tribes. The main reason for the low spread of education among the Paliyan is the peculiar nature of their habitations. Majority of them were living in remote areas far away from educational institutions. The social and economic conditions prevailing in the tribal settlements are not conducive for studies. Moreover, the parents of the tribal children are generally illiterate. These are the reasons for low level of literacy among the Paliyans and that is one of the hindering factors for their development. The table (4.3) reveals the level of education among the Paliyans.
Table: 4.3

Educational Qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>52.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read &amp; Write</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great portion (52.67%) of the respondents were illiterate due to inadequate educational facilities and lack of awareness regarding the significance of education. 13.67 per cent of the respondents are high school educated, 20 per cent had primary level education and only one of the respondents had gone to college. The above table shows that the overall education level of the Paliyan women is very low. One of the major drawbacks for their adequate development is inadequate access of education, and lack of awareness, parent’s illiteracy, lack of infrastructure facilities and poverty are others.
Table: 4.4

School Going Children of the Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Going Children</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Studying</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>54.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority (54.33%) of the respondent’s children were not studying. 43.33 per cent of the children were studying due to their parent’s encouragement. They really felt that education is very necessary for the all round development of their future life. Hence they encourage them and provide necessary facilities for study. Among them 8 students were living in tribal hostel and all received the educational grant from the government. In this context the researcher applied Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory. The Paliya women provides their children with cultural capital by transmitting their attitude and knowledge due to the influence of current educational system. Only 2.33 per cent of the respondents were unmarried, so they belong to the not applicable category. In the Kumily settlement there is an option for education but the people do not utilize it. In the case of both the Vandanmedu and Chakkupallam settlements there are no adequate facilities for education. These settlements are far away from the educational institutions. Education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Paliyan women. This study shows that
generalizations regarding the educational and literacy attainment of the Paliyan women fail to capture the present educational practices.

**Occupation**

Occupation is a clear indication of social status of an individual in the overall contribution it makes to his physical, social as well as psychological aspects of life. Income is closely associated with occupations that determine not only the standard of living but also the economic position of an individual. The traditional occupations of the Paliyans are collection of minor forest produces. Food gathering, hunting and fishing supplement their income. Gradually their style of occupation was changed from hunting and gathering to wage labourers due to the new interventions. Many studies reveal that the interface with others will lead to change.

**Fig: 4.4**

**Occupation of the Paliyan Women**

- Employed: 2.67%
- Coolie: 9.33%
- Unemployed: 0.67%
- Business: 0.67%
- Other: 85%
The occupational status of the Paliyan women indicates that the majority (85%) of them were coolies including workers in the plantation (tea, cardamom, and coffee), building and road construction etc. Among them most of the respondents are mainly engaged in the vermi-composting and mushroom cultivation. Only 9.33 per cent were unemployed (no specific work for earning including elderly persons). Only 2.67 per cent were employed (working in the unorganized sector), 2.33 per cent of them are involved in business (stationery store). Their main occupation was as coolies because their settlements are nearest to plantations like cardamom, tea, coffee estate etc. These are the available opportunities for employment. Those who belong to other category (0.67%) are engaged in embroidering, handicrafts, collection of minor forest product etc. Majority of the respondents in the Kumily Panchayat mainly engaged in the vermi-composting and collection of fire wood from the nearest forest area. In the Vandanmedu and Chakkupallam Panchayat the large portion of the respondents were engaged in plantation work through the influence of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

**Income**

Income plays an important role in determining the status of an individual. Good economic background ensures better nutrition, health care, education etc. In the case of tribals, the economic background is very poor in general, particularly among the Paliyan women. Since majority of them are living in most remote area of Idukki district they are lagging all the developmental measures.
Table: 4.5  Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income in Rs</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 100</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-300</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows the daily income of the Paliyan women through the various employments. It is clear that majority (60%) of the respondents belongs to the daily income category of Rs.100-200 because majority of the Paliyan women were mainly engaged as wage labourers. The amount of daily wage is limited within this category under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. 12.33 per cent of the respondents were belongs to the income category of Rs.200-300, are engaged in construction works and others. 22.67 per cent of them are engaged in tailoring, and so on. Only 5 per cent of the respondents were in business.

**Head of the Household**

In the Paliyan’s household, the male member is the head of the family but they accept could no responsibility to take care of their family due to lack of employment opportunities or alcoholism. Major proportion of the male members are alcohol addicts so they face economic barriers within the family. In that
situation the female member of the family play a vital role as care giver making money for the fulfillment the basic needs of family.

**Fig: 4.5 Head of the Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of the Respondents</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Paliyan tribal community majority (73.33%) of the family are headed by the male member of the family because patriarchal system was followed. Only 26.67 per cent of the families are headed by the female member due to the absence of spouse or separation. More male dominated families in the area to some extend led to women having withdrawn from the mainstream. Family is one of the social factors for the development of women.

**Housing**

In the 1960’s nine houses were sanctioned in the Kumily settlement and four in Chakkupallam settlement. In 1977, fifty houses were sanctioned, and the houses were planned with small veranda, kitchen and a single room. The Paliyans are aware of the development programmes implemented by the government for their social, economic and educational developments only through the local Panchayat. Gradually the sanctioned numbers of houses are increased due to the
influence of new development programmes. The nature of houses includes thatched, tiled and terraced, with two or three rooms. The Paliyan women have got houses through the different sources of housing schemes.

**Table: 4.6 Sources of Housing Schemes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Houses</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Sub-Plan</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indira Awaas Yojana</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Missionary</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>42.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 4:5 reveals that the number of houses was increased with various sources among the Paliyans. 37.67 per cent of the respondents acquire house from the local Panchayats under Tribal sub-plan housing scheme. Only 6.66 per cent of them are the beneficiaries under the Indira Awaas Yojana, the scheme of construction for the poorest widows and single women category. 13 per cent were the beneficiaries under the Christian Missionary, actively working in the Anakkara Paliyakkudi settlement in Chakkupallam Panchayat. A large portion (42.67%) of the respondents belonging to the ‘others’ category includes the houses constructed by their own effort with the support of housing loan scheme.
Health Condition

Kerala’s position in health care and longevity is commendable compared to any other state in the country. As far as the Paliyan women’s health is concerned, the position is distressing. The Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Tribal Sub-Plan and other plan provisions was utilized for running the health service institutions. The Primary Health Centre is only health delivery system for the Paliyan tribal community. The main problem confronting tribal Primary Health Centers is the scarcity of doctors and adequate number of paramedical staffs. Health extension work by the health service department is totally nil in the tribal area. The Paliyan women and children were faced with some health problems due to their malnutrition, poverty and lack of accessibility of health facilities.

Table: 4. 7 Availability of Primary Health Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Health Centre</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>41.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-availability</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>58.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table reveals that majority (58.67%) of the respondents suffer in the absence of the basic health care facilities in their settlement. Only 41.33 per cent of the respondents have the basic health care but the fully satisfied with the available health facilities from the nearest Primary Health Centers due to the insufficient infrastructure facilities and other medical and Para medical staffs. ASHA workers are providing the basic health awareness classes regarding the promotion of mother and child health among the Paliyans. In addition to these, various voluntary organizations conducted special awareness classes for health, nutrition etc. Very small per cent of the Paliyan women are the beneficiaries of ‘Sampoorna Sujithuavam’ scheme under Kudumbasree programme. The researcher has found that the presence of social capital through social networks and communication has increase the quality on health among Paliya women to some extent.

**The Development Experience**

Infrastructure consists of a residential basic school, nursing school, lower primary school and a craft centre. Most of these facilities are provided at Kumily Panchayat, the most accessible centre. The facilities are shared with members of the Mannan community, who also live in the same locality. However, the pressures of non-tribal populations, heterogeneous in cultural composition and aggressive in economic exploitation of the weaker sections, have succeeded in nullifying the efforts of the tribal community. Government agencies have so far been unable to protect the tribal communities adequately against the socio-economic onslaughts of the new comers. The rigours implementations of the forest laws are very stringent against the members of the tribal communities.
Deprived of free access to the forest hemmed in by a heterogeneous crowd, they were alienated their lands and the Paliyan are being rapidly ‘proletarianized’.

The Paliyans of the Anakkara settlement, who mainly have embraced Christianity, have a missionary society which has undertaken some developmental activities. There is a lower primary school providing free education in Tamil medium. Twenty five houses have been built; the society has been supplying one pair of dresses among the widows, and the children at Christians. The society has innovated savings schemes, with 33 Paliyan people having opened savings accounts in the local post office. Their attitude is favorable towards traditional and modern Medicare and use both. Their attitude is favorable towards family planning. Drinking water is available within locality, and its sources are dug well and piped water.

**Conclusion**

This chapter mainly analyzed the socio- economic background of the Paliyan women on the basis of different variables. The settlement of the Paliyan is located in three panchayats viz., Kumily, Vandanmedu and Chakkupallam Panchayats in Idukki district. This study found that majority (49%) of the respondents belongs to the age category of 21-30 years. 21-30 years is considered as young category as they are the productive group. Marital status of the Paliyan women shows that 85.67 per cent of them are married and they have more responsibility than others. They rare children take care of other family members and earn money as supplement of income to the family. Majority (52.67%) of the respondents were illiterate. But they encouraged their children’s education. 43.33 per cent of the respondents’ children were going to school. It shows the overall education level of the Paliyan women is in a very poor condition due to inadequate facilities for education, economic backwardness, ignorance regarding
the significance of education etc. This will lead to more marginalization from the general public.

The occupational status of the Paliyan women indicates that the majority (85%) of them are coolies. They are mainly engaged in wage labours (coolies) because of their settlement are nearest to plantations like cardamom, tea, coffee estate and other building construction sites. A great proportion (60%) of the respondents belonged to the income category of Rs.100-200. Majority of the respondents in the Kumily Panchayat were mainly engaged in vermi-composting and collection of fire wood from the nearest forest area. In the Vandanmedu and Chakkupallam Panchayat the large portion of the respondents were engaged in plantation work due to the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. Majority (73.33%) of the family are headed by the male member of the family because patriarchal system was followed among the community. The health conditions of the Paliyan women are very poor. Because their settlements are situated away from hospital and health centres except the Kumily Panchayat, the tribals are not able to make use of available medical facilities. Housing facilities are considerably better due to the influence of the local Panchayat. Construction of houses and latrines, establishment of the water supply schemes, construction of roads etc are the programmes implemented by Panchayats. From the above analysis the researcher connected with the theory of social and cultural capital. Due to the intervention of government programmes to facilitated the respondents for collective action, generated by network of relationships and changing their life style.