

## The Primitive Tribal Groups of Kerala: A Situational Appraisal

Seetha Kakkoth

*Department of Anthropology, Kannur University Centre at Palayad, Thalassery, Kannur  
District 670 661, Kerala, India*

**KEYWORDS** Primitive Tribal Groups; Koraga; Kattunayakan; Cholanaickan; Kurumbar; Kadar

**ABSTRACT** Kerala is a homeland of a number of tribal communities. Thirty-six communities are listed in the Scheduled Tribes list of the State. Of them five tribal communities viz., Koraga, Kattunayakan, Cholanaickan, Kurumbar and Kadar have been categorized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) by the Government of India in 1976, based on the criteria of pre-agricultural level of technology, less than five per cent literacy, marginal or stagnant rate of growth etc. Socio-culturally, techno-economically, eco-demographically, educationally etc., these communities vary from one another and lay at different stages of development. The welfare programmes so far implemented haven't focused on the felt needs of the communities, hence could not yield the desired results. Thus, for the overall development of these communities, the study recommends tribe-specific action with the active participation of the community members.

### INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a homeland of a number of tribal communities. Majority of them inhabit the western slope of the Western Ghats. Thirty-six communities are listed in the Scheduled Tribes list of the State and their population according to 1991 census was 320967 (2001 census is not yet available). The Scheduled Tribes constitutes 1.10% of the total population of the State. The Government of India in 1976 have categorised 75 tribal groups/sections/ communities as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) based on the criteria of Pre-agricultural level of technology, less than five per cent literacy, marginal or stagnant rate of growth etc. The PTGs in India are seen distributed in 15 States/Union Territories. In Kerala there are five PTGs.

The five PTGs of Kerala are (1) the Koraga of Kasaragode district; (2) the Cholanaickan of Nilambur Valley, Malappuram district; (3) the Kurumbar of Attappady, Palakkad district; (4) the Kadar of erstwhile Cochin area; and (5) the Kattunayakan of Wayanad, Malappuram and Kozhikode Districts. These PTGs form only 5.3 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribes population of the State and their total population was estimated as 16678 in 1996-97 (Report of the Socio-Economic Survey of Primitive Tribes 1996-97 published by the Directorate of Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Thiruvananthapuram in August-2000). What follows here is a brief situational appraisal of these communities in the State.

Data for this paper was collected while

preparing the Action Plan for PTGs and also by taking part in the disease detection camp conducted by KIRTADS (Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Kozhikode) during 1997-2000. Data have also been collected from the secondary sources.

### 1. KORAGA

In Kerala, the Koraga population is distributed in Kasaragode and Manjeswar blocks. Their major stalk lives in the adjoining Karnataka State. They live mostly in rural areas and are distributed in 43 settlements. They speak a language close to Tulu and Kannada. Their population according to 1971, 1981 and 1991 Census was 724,1098 and 1651 respectively. Their population as per the Socio-Economic Survey of 1996-97 was 1349. A survey undertaken by KIRTADS for the Action Plan in 1997 has estimated their population as 1330, constituting 407 nuclear families living in 284 houses. Sex ratio among them is 1059.

There are many views regarding the origin of the term Koraga. Aiyyappan was of the opinion that the term *Kora* in Koraga denotes Sun (1948: 115) and Rao pointed out that Koragas were once Sun worshippers (1874). The Koraga were suffered from extreme untouchability in the past. In 1931 census they are reported as "caste which pollutes without touching but do not eat beef". They were treated as 'untouchables' than tribals even by Scheduled Castes (Vasudevan, 1998: 131). In earlier days they used to remove carcasses and ate carrion. Aiyyappan was of the opinion that

“the Koraga community although classed among the depressed classes, is so backward that no their tribe is in a more primitive stage than the Koraga (1948: 114-116).

The Koraga community in general is monogamous. The head of a hamlet is called *Gurukara*, who controls all socio-religious activities in a hamlet. The community is divided into two endogamous sub-divisions viz., Chappu Koraga and Kundu Koraga. Chappu Koraga live in forests whereas Kundu Koraga live in plains. In addition to this, there are 88 Koraga families living in Pavor colony, whose forefathers have embraced Christianity and are known as Christian Koraga.

The economy of Koraga is based on basketry, agriculture labour, laterate stone cutting, beedi rolling and wage labour. Almost 70 per cent members of the community members still subsist on basketry, even though these items are less demanded due to the introduction of plastic baskets. The rest 30 per cent resorted to agriculture labour, laterate stone cutting, beedi rolling and wage labour. The lion share of the money earned is spent for alcohol consumption. Both males and females are addicted to liquor, minor vices like betel chewing, smoking etc.

Almost 80 per cent of the colonies are provided with basic amenities like housing, drinking water, electricity, latrine etc. But the land allotted to them is barren or uncultivable and the houses provided are of poor standard. Though most of the colonies are provided with bore wells, water scarcity is acute during summer.

The literacy rate among the Koraga in 1996-97 was 54.07%. Though 42.3% families have school facilities within 1km radius, their dropout rate is reported to be higher. Only a dozen have successfully completed the school final. It is observed that Koraga having a distinct dialect faces language problem and many of them remain illiterate even after completing upper primary level.

The disease detection camp could identify many cases like tuberculosis, leprosy, cataract, jaunties, scabies, malnutrition, viral fever, typhoid, skin diseases, low birth weight of new borns etc., among this community. The health survey undertaken by KIRTADS and the Institute of Chest Diseases, Medical College, Calicut in 1997, have identified 70 TB patients among the Koraga. The survey has also revealed that the Koraga population is having TB infection rate of 60 per cent, whereas that of national rate is 30 per

cent. The suspected case of tuberculosis was referred to the taluk Hospital at Kasaragode. The confirmed cases are brought under recently implemented programme viz., RNTCP (Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme) and DOTS (Direct Observation Therapy- Short course). Tribal promoters are entrusted to give medicine to the patients.

To improve the health condition of the Koraga, Grama-Block-Jilla Panchayats, Social Welfare and Health Departments have jointly organised many programmes. They have conducted Health improvement classes followed by Health training classes, monthly routine immunisation programmes, disease detection camps, nutritional supplementary programmes etc. Mobile unit of the Health Department working at Kanangad, Kasaragode district pays monthly visit in all Koraga colonies. The doctors and social workers are of the opinion that the Koraga are superstitious and are reluctant to take medicine given by them. But the Koraga prefer private doctors at Dharmasthala, Karanataka, as they have more contacts with their counter-part in that State. They keep aloof from the other communities of the area and their participation in development activities is practically nil.

## 2. KATTUNAYAKAN (KATTUNAICKEN)

The Kattunayakan are distributed in Wayanad, Malappuram and Kozhikode Districts of Kerala State. 85% of this tribe lives in Wayanad district. They are also found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, the Kattunayakan are referred by different names like Kattu Naickan, Kattu Naicken, Kadu Kurumba and Jenu kurumba. (K.S. Singh, 1994:484). The Kattunayakan population according to 1971 and 1981 census was 5565 and 8803 respectively. The 1991 Census showed the population as 12155 consisting of 6271 and 5884 females. Sex ratio among them is 938.29. As per the Socio-Economic Survey of 1996-97, their population was 11871 with 5991 males and 5880 females.

The term Kattunayakan is derived from the words- *katu* (forest) and *nayakan* or *naicken* (lord), thus Kattunayakan literally means *lord of forests*. They are also referred as Jenu Kurumbar, Kattunayaken, Naicken etc. *Jenu* means ‘honey’ and *Kurumbar* means ‘hill man’. Thus, the term Jenu Kurumbar denotes honey-cutting lords of the hills (Thurston, 1909: 165). In Malayalam, they

are called as *Thenkuruman* (*then* = honey), which connotes their expertise in honey collection.

The sub-divisions of the Kattunayakan are the Cholanaickan and the Pathinaicken and they are separate endogamous groups. It is observed that the Cholanaickan live in the upper ghat section where the forests are wet evergreen in nature and Pathinaicken live in the lower semi-deciduous valley. The term Cholanaickan literally means the lords of ghat forests. They refer themselves as *Cholakkur* i.e., the people of the forest (Ananda Bhanu: 1989). The Pathinaicken call themselves, *pathikkur*. The term *pathi* literally signifies lower valley. The Kattunayakan, Cholanaickan and Pathinaicken speak the same language, which is akin to Kannada.

The settlement of the Kattunayakan is called *kudi*. Settlements are seen distributed inside the forests and in revenue land as well. The average number of household in a hamlet comes 10.6. Traditional huts are flimsy structure without platform. The walls are of bamboo wattle work with mud plastering inside and roof is thatched with grass.

The Kattunayakan subsist on food gathering, Non wood forest products (n.w.f.p) collection, landless agricultural labour, forest labour and small scale cultivation. Those who live in forest environment subsist on food gathering and n.w.f.p collection. The families live along with the rural population work as agricultural labourers and small scale cultivators.

Kattunayakan are endogamous in nature. Clan identity has not so far evolved to an apparent level. Nevertheless, territorial divisions are there which can be called as a form of clan. The leadership is seen in hamlet level and the head of the hamlet is called *moopan* by the community members and *mothali* by outsiders. *Moopan* plays an important role in all the religious and social functions of the hamlet. Kattunayakan believe in ancestral spirits. In addition to ancestral spirits they worship sylvan deities, Sun, Moon and local Hindu Gods. In all traditional hamlet, a small sacred hut called '*daivamana*' is seen and icons are kept in this '*daivamana*'. *Moopan* acts as a priest in the occasions like calamities and disease afflictions. Hindu Gods are also becoming familiar in their day-to-day life.

Succession or inheritance of property doesn't have much significance in the community as they led a nomadic life in the past. But in the case of leadership, when the *moopan* dies, his younger

brother takes the rein, and in his absence, the *moopan's* eldest son becomes the next *moopan*. The community follow patrilocal residence pattern.

The literacy rate of Kattunayakan in 1996-97 as the Socio-Economic Survey was 20.77 per cent. Ashram Schools are functioning at Noolpuzha, Wayanad district and Manjeri, Malappuram district, exclusively for the Kattunayakan, including the Cholanaickan and the Pathinaicken. However, Kattunayakan families living inside the forest remain apathetic in sending their children to school.

The Socio-economic survey of 1996-97 reported the prevalence of TB, sickle cell anemia, leprosy, cancer etc., among the Kattunayakan. The survey prima facie identified 38 TB patients and 4 leprosy patients among them. 52% Kattunayakan do not have health care facilities within 3kms.

Among this community, only a few families have made use of the financial support of Tribal Development Scheme and started rearing domestic animals and cultivating vegetables in their land. Some of them have been benefited by various housing schemes and it is found that the houses constructed for them are of low quality without considering their need based and ecological conditions. It is observed that this community is in a process of settling down in permanent abodes, shedding their nomadic tendencies. But the problem is a sizable proportion of their population is still residing in reserved forests and the forest laws do not permit for a permanent abode for them.

### 3. CHOLANAICKAN

The Cholanaickan, known as 'the Cavemen of Kerala', (Ananda. Bhanu, 1989) live in the upper Ghat section (*chola*) of the Nilambur Valley, Nilambur thaluk in Malappuram district. They are leading a semi-nomadic life in the forests and are having limited contact with the mainstream. As mentioned earlier, they have been considered to be an offshoot of the major Tribe Kattunayakan, whose centuries of geographical isolation in Nilambur forests resulted in the formation of two separate endogamous groups viz., Cholanaickan and Pathinaicken, with regard to their habitat. Separate census report of Cholanaickan upto 1991 were not available, since they had been included under Kattunayakan. They have been included in the Scheduled Tribes list of Kerala very

recently. The survey conducted by KIRTADS for the Action Plan estimated 365 Cholanaickan in 1998.

The Cholanaickan are distributed in various regions of the forest in territorial groupings, consisting of 2 to 7 nuclear families. Territory is called *chemmam* and the each *chemmam* has a headman called *Chemmakkaran*. Members of a *chemmam* are known after the territory. Like their main tribe, Kattunayakan, the Cholanaickan also believe in ancestral spirits and worship sylvan deities. In all traditional hamlet, a small sacred hut called '*daivapura*' is seen and icons are kept in this '*daivapura*' in '*daivakotta*' (bamboo basket made for the purpose). *Chemmakkaran* plays an important role in all the religious and social functions of the hamlet.

Inheritance of property doesn't have much significance in the community as they still lead a nomadic life in the forest. Action has been taken by Government, to settle down the Cholanaickan who are living in rock shelters (*alai*) or in open camp-sites making instant leaf shelters (*mana*) to permanent abodes. Though 50 per cent of them are provided with houses, they still continue their semi-nomadic life.

The Cholanaickan subsists on food gathering-hunting, collection of n.w.f.p and forest labour. Food gathering is a family activity. Hunting, fishing etc., are undertaken mainly in summer months. The n.w.f.p collected is sold through the Nilambur Pattikavarga Viakasana Society, functioning at Iyyamada, Nilambur. Wage labour is an emerging trend

Literacy among the Cholanaickan in 1996-97 was 9.17%. School facilities (except balwadies) are totally absent in their area and only a few has got through successfully in the school final examinations. An Ashram School is functioning at Majeri, Malappuram district, since 1993, for the Kattunaickan (including Cholanaickan and Pathinaicken) at Manjeri, Malappuram district. But this school is almost 50km away from the habitat of the Cholanaickan, Hence, parents show apathy in sending their children in this school and children accompany them in n.w.f.p collection. However, as a result of the continuous pressure from the part of the officials, more than a dozen Cholanaickan children are studying in this Residential School now.

The health survey undertaken by KIRTADS and Calicut Medical College, in 1997, has shown the presence of TB, leprosy, malnutrition, scabies,

fungel infection etc., among the Cholanaickan. Health care facilities are totally absent in Cholanaickan habitats. Actions are being taken for providing health care facilities to them.

#### 4. KURUMBAR

Kurumbar hamlets are distributed in Attappady area of Palakkad district. There are 18 hamlets and of them 12 are situated in Reserve Forests and the rest 6 are in Vested Forests. According to 1991 census, their population was 1820 and the socio-Economic survey of 1996-97 showed a population of 1602 souls. Their language is akin to Malayalam and Tamil.

Hamlet of the Kurumbar is known as *ooru*. Each *ooru* has a headman called *Oorumoopan*, who is assisted by *Bhandari*, *Kuruthala* and *Mannookkaran*. The *Bhandari* serves as a treasurer to social functions and the *Mannookkaran* is a traditional agricultural expert.

The Kurumbar subsist on shifting cultivation and non wood forest products. The collected non wood forest produces are sold through Kurumbar Girijan Service Co-operative Society. They cultivate seeds like redgram, ragi, chama, vegetables etc.

The nature of the ownership of land is communal. Almost 80 per cent of the community is provided houses. But the quality of the houses is of poor standard, hence they demand for new houses. 90 per cent of the Kurumbar hamlets covered by drinking water schemes, but the tribe resort to natural sources.

Literacy rate is estimated to be 32.36 per cent. Only 4% of the Kurumbar have high school facilities within 5km. Still 41% do not have primary school facilities within the radius of 5km. Because of this reason parents remain apathetic (and having financial problems too) in sending their children to primary school. There are 28 youths who have passed S.S.L.C. Three of them are now working as health volunteers. It is noted that health and personal hygiene of Kurumbar is very poor. Scabies, diarrhoea, whooping cough among children are reported from this community. Clandestine Ganja cultivation, addiction to liquor etc., hinder their progress.

#### 5. KADAR

In Kerala, the Kadar population is distributed in the Parambikulam, Kuriyarkutty, Nelliampathy and Kodassery forest areas coming under

Chittoor taluk of Palakkad district and Vazhachal, Poringalkuthu and Sholayar forest areas of Mukundapuram taluk of Thrissur district. They are also found in the adjoining Anamalai hill of Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu.

The population of Kadar in Kerala, according to the 1981 Census was 1120 and that of 1991 Census was 2021. The Socio-Economic Survey of 1996-97 has estimated 1472 Kadar population, consisting of 744 males and 728 females; and the survey conducted by KIRTADS for the Action Plan estimated 460 Kadar families in 1999. Their language is close to Dravidian language, Tamil, and is locally known as *kadar bhasha* which has no script (K.S. Singh, 1994: 450).

Kadar society is monogamous and follows hamlet exogamy. Each hamlet has a headman called *Moopan*, who controls the socio-political matters of a hamlet. The community contains seven clans, which are named after the original settlement. They prefer cross-cousin marriage. But, instances of polygamous marriages are reported. Marriage by service and the custom of bride price are prevalent. The Kadar society is patrilineal. They believe in ancestral spirits and bury the dead.

Small scale hunting and food gathering are the traditional occupation of the Kadar. Now many of them have become settled cultivators, agricultural labourers, basket makers, mat weavers etc. Those who collect non wood forest produces are sold through Pattikavarga Service Co-operative Societies, functioning at Thekkady, Sholayar, Palappally and Nelliampathi. Kadar are experts in elephant catching and rope making.

The literacy rate of Kadar in 1996-97 was 40.79%. Among them, 12 have passed the school final examination, one has got through TTC and one is studying for Pre-Degree. Five persons have got salaried jobs like village man, forest watchman, tribal school teacher etc. Kadar families lack school facilities within 5km. It is observed that the lack of educational facilities within the walkable distance is the main hindrance for the educational development of this community.

The Kadar are distributed in 15 settlements. Except the settlement viz., Kalchadi, all other settlements are provided with houses. 95 per cent of the Kadar leads a settled life. Almost all colonies are provided with open draw wells. But these wells are unusable due to various reasons and the inmates still depend on river water.

None of the colony is provided with PHCs.

Only an Ayurvedic dispensary is functioning at Kuriyakutty settlement. The health survey conducted by KIRTADS and Medical College, Thrissur in 2000 March, have revealed the presence of TB, anemia, scabies, malnutrition etc., among the Kadar population. Health care facilities are lacking in remote Kadar settlements.

## ANALYSIS

### *a. Distribution and Population Trends:*

Among the PTGs, the Kattunayakan is having the largest population size and have a wide range of geographical distribution. The Koraga, Cholanicken and Kurumbar are located in single districts viz., Kasaragode, Malappuram and Palakkad respectively. Kadar population is seen in two districts viz., Palakkad and Trissur. The Cholanaickan and a section of Kadar live in interior forests, while Korga reside in the midst of rural population. The distribution of PTGs in Kerala is given in Table 1.

The total population of the PTGs as per 1961, 71, 81 and 91 Census records 6411, 8728, 12687 and 17647 respectively and which show an increasing trend in the PTGs population (See Table-2 & Fig. 1). The Socio-Economic survey of 1996-97 estimated their total population as 16678 (this survey has not covered the entire population of the PTGs in the State). Considering the period from 1981 to 1991, the decadal growth rate of PTGs is 13.90%, which is far below than that of the Scheduled Tribes of the State (22.75%).

According to the Socio-Economic survey, all PTGs, except the Koraga (1007), are having low female sex ratio and the lowest is reported among the Cholanaickan (864). The survey has also reported that Koraga, Kattunayakan, Kurumbar and Kadar show an increasing trend in their population size, whereas the population of the Cholanaickan is decreasing. But the survey undertaken by the KIRTADS has revealed that the population of the Cholanaickan is not decreasing, but almost remaining stagnant.

*b. Education and Literacy Rate:* As per the socio-Economic Survey, the literacy rate of the PTGs of the Kerala in 1996-97 was 26.10%. The highest literacy rate is reported to be among the Koraga (54.07%) and the lowest is among the Cholanaickan (9.17%) (see Fig. 2). Though literacy rate of Koraga is high, the quality of education received is poor. It is observed that only 28.05% of the PTGs have school facilities within the

**Table 1. Distribution of PTGs in Kerala**

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name of the PTG</i>	<i>Name of the district</i>	<i>Name of Taluk</i>	<i>Name of village</i>	<i>Jurisdiction of Project Officer (PO) / Tribal Development Officer (TDO)</i>
1	Koraga	Kasaragode	Kasaragode	Kasaragode, Pulikoor Perdala, Bela, Nirchal, Kadambar, Meenja, Bayar, Ballur Kodalamogaru, vorkadi, Paivalike Chidumbala, Kayyar Markala, Bambrana Ednad, Mangalpadi Natanika, Padre, Enmakaje, Koyipadi	TDO, Kasaragode
2	Kattunayakan		Mananthavady	Panamaram Vellamunda Trissileri Thirunelli	
			Sulthan Bathery	Ambalavayal Noolpuzha Poothadi Pulpalli	
		Wayanad		Padichira Irulam Pumkkadi Krishnagiri Nadavayal	PO/TDO Wayanad
			Vythiri	Thariyode Chunda	
		Malappuram	Nilambur	Karulai Vazhikadavu Amarambalam Chokkad Moothedam Edakara Akampadam	PO, Nilambur
			Kozhikode	Kozhikode Maruthamkara Kodencheri Thiruvambadi	TDO, Thamarassery
3	Cholanaickan	Malappuram	Nilambur	1. Karulai 2. Vazhikadavu 3. Amarambalam	PO, Nilambur
4	Kurumbar	Palakkad	Mannarkad	Pudur Padavayal	PO, Attappady
			Chittoor	Parambikulam Muthalamada	TDO, Palakkad
5	Kadar	Palakkad		Kairadi Nooradi Ponkandam	
		Trissur	Mukundapuram	Pariyaram Kodakara	TDO, Muvattupuzha

radius of 1km. School facilities are totally absent in the Cholanaickan area. High School facilities are not available to Kurumbar and Kadar within the radius of 5km.

An analysis of the educational aspects reveal that distance of school, apathy of parents,

financial backwardness, medium of education, lack of motivation etc., are the main reasons for the educational back of the PTGs in Kerala.

**c. Occupation and Income:** The economic activities of these PTGs vary from food gathering-hunting to cultivation. Cholanaickan, Kadar and

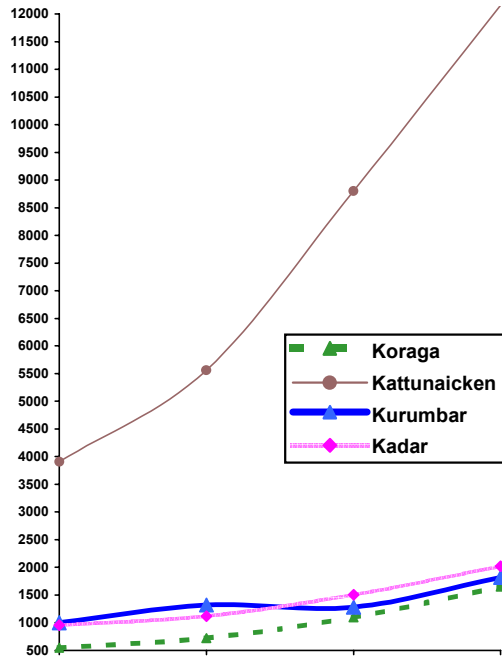


Fig. 1. PTGS- Population Trend from 1961-1991 Census Figures

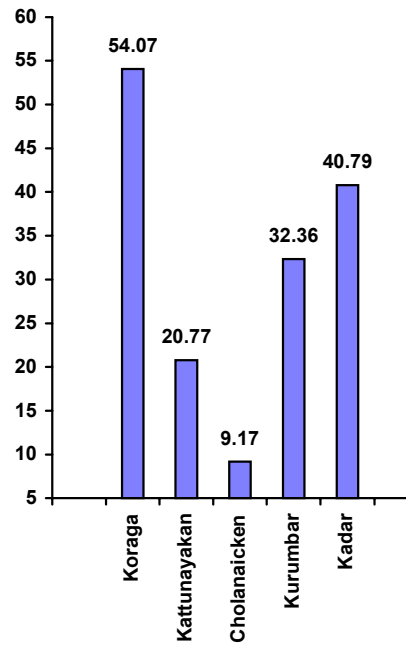


Fig. 2. Litteray rate of PTGs (As per the Socio-economic Survey of 1996-97)

Table 2: Population trends of PTGs from 1961 -1996

Name of the PTG	Census-1961	Census-1971	Census-1981	Census-1991	1996* (Socio-economic Survey) (Sex ratio)
Koraga	548	724	1098	1651	1349 (1007)
Kattunayakan	3907	5565	8803	12155	11871 (981)
Cholanaicken	Estimated along with the Kattunayakan.				384 (864)
Kurumbar	999	1319	1283	1820	1602 (952)
Kadar	957	1120	1503	2021	1472 (978)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6411</b>	<b>8728</b>	<b>12687</b>	<b>17647</b>	<b>16678</b>

\* The survey did not cover the anticipated 5% PTGs found dispersed mainly in the adjoining districts of the PTG area.

a majority of Kattunaicken and Kurubar are n.w.f.p collectors and food gatherers. Kurumbar also do cultivation. Koraga mainly depend on basketry. Those who collect n.w.f.p items are transacted with the tribal co-operative societies of the respective area for cash and condiments. Since the amount paid by the societies is below than the market value, the community members prefer to give these items to non-tribals for better price. All these communities face the problem of seasonal unemployment and the Tribal co-operative societies has not yet taken any ameliorative measures towards this. It is estimated that

99.75% of the PTG families are living below poverty line and the annual income of the 98.3% of the total PTG families is below or equal to Rs.5000/- (Socio-Economic survey: 1996-97).

**d. Infrastructure Facilities:** Land, House, Road, Power and Drinking water:

34.32% PTGs are landless as per the Socio-Economic survey. Among the PTGs, Cholanaicken live in the interior forest owned by the Forest Department. Along with Cholanaicken, Kadar and Kattunayakan also face high level landlessness. Land allotted to Kurumbar and Koraga are barren or uncultivable. It is observed that land has been

merely allotted to the communities without providing any proper training in management and utilization of the land.

Though almost 52% PTGs are provided with houses, these are of low quality with inadequate sanitation facilities. It is a fact that Eco-climatic condition and attitude or notion of the communities is totally ignored while constructing houses.

Almost 60% of the PTGs have motorable road within the radius of 5km. When compared to other PTGs, the Cholanaickan hamlets are away from motorable road. As per the survey report, 83.74% families have no power connection in the habitat/settlement in which they live. Power supply totally lacks in Cholanicken and Kurumba settlements. My study on Pathinaicken (a section of Kattumaicken) of Nilambur forests has shown that they were provided with solar lamps. But these lamps became non-functional owing the improper handling of lamps by the inmates. In the case of drinking water, Kadar faces acute problem of drinking water, followed by the Koraga. Cholanaickan still depend on streams.

*e. Health and Diseases:* Both health facilities and health status of the PTGs are seen quite below average. Only 1.33% of the PTGs have Primary Health Centres (PHCs) within their vicinity. The worst sufferers are the Cholanaickan, Kurumbar and Kadar.

117 deaths have been reported from the PTGs during 1995-96 (Table 3). Maximum number of deaths has been occurred among the Kattuna-

yakan and major causes of deaths are due to T.B and viral fever.

The morbidity pattern of the PTGs is given in Table 4. It shows that T.B is reported from all PTGs, except Cholanaickan and Sickle Cell anemia is seen among the Kattunayakan only. High prevalence of T.B is noted in Koraga. Anemia is observed among almost all women and children. Analyses revealed that Changes in the ecosystem, economic activities and food habits; lack of job opportunities, deforestation, non-tribal influx, alien-culture contact etc are the main reason for the increase in the morbidity rate among the PTGs.

### CONCLUSION

It is seen that socio-culturally, technoeconomically, eco-demographically, educationally etc., the PTGs of Kerala vary from one another. Their population ranges from 365 to 12155. Among these communities, Kattunayakan are numerically dominant and have a wide range of geographical distribution; whereas the Cholanicken have the lowest population size. The habitat of Cholanaickan and a section of Kadar are interior forests, while Koraga live in the midst of rural population.

The economic activities of the PTGs differ from hunting-gathering to cultivation. For instance, Cholanicken and Kadar subsist mainly on food gathering, hunting and n.w.f.p collection. Kattunayakan are agricultural labourers and n.w.f.p collectors. Kurumbar still do shifting cultivation, whereas Koraga are experts in basketry.

Educationally, these PTGs lag far behind the other Scheduled Tribes of the area. In the sphere of health, malnutrition and communicable diseases are reported from all these communities. High prevalence of TB is reported from Koraga. Most of the PTGs do not have health care facilities within their vicinity. Infra-structural facilities provided to them are insufficient also.

To conclude, it has been seen that the PTGs of Kerala are lying at different stages of socio-

**Table 3: No. of deaths in the last one year preceding the survey date 1996-97**

Name of the PTG	No. of Death	Reasons
Koraga	7	Oldage, TB, Viral fever
Kattunayakan	82	TB, Heart attack, Fever, Suicide, Stomach pain etc.,
Cholanaickan	1	Arthritis
Kurumbar	5	TB
Kadar	22	TB, Accident etc.,
Total	117	

**Table 4: Morbidity Pattern among the PTGs in the last one year preceding the survey date 1996-97**

Name of the PTG	TB	Cancer	Sickle cell anemia	Leprosy	Skin Disease	Hepatitis	Fever	Others	Total
Koraga	11							5	16
Kattunayakan	38	3	5	4		4		29	83
Cholanaickan				1				1	2
Kurumbar	2								2
Kadar	4	2		5				4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>118</b>

economic development and their problems also vary from one another. Plethora of development programmes so far implemented could not target the felt need of the PTGs, hence failed to yield the desired result. Thus, it is suggested that tribe-specific welfare programmes with the active participation of the beneficiaries should be undertaken for the overall development of the PTGs in Kerala.

### REFERENCES

- Action Plan for Cholanaickan Development.* 1998. Kozhikode: KIRTADS.
- Action Plan for Koraga Development. 1999. Kozhikode: KIRTADS.
- Aiyappan, A. 1948. *Report on the Socio-economic Condition of the Aboriginal Tribes of Province of Madras.* Madras: Govt. Press.
- Bhanu, B. Ananda. 1989. *The Cholanaickan of Kerala.* Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India.
- Census of India. 1991. *Series-12. Kerala.* New Delhi: Govt. of India..
- Kakkoth, Seetha. 2001. *Three Tribes of Nilambur Valley: A Study in Interrelationship Between Habitat, Economy, Society and Culture.* Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation submitted to the University of Calicut, Kerala.
- Luiz, A.A.D. 1962. *Tribes of Kerala.* New Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.
- Report of the Socio-Economic Survey of Primitive Tribes-1996-97.* 2002. Thiruvananthapuram : Directorate of the Scheduled Tribes Development Department.
- Sachchidanada and R.R. Prasad (Ed.). 1996. *Encyclopaedic Profile of Indian Tribes. Vol. I & II.* New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- Singh, K.S. 1994. *The Scheduled Tribes. People of India, National Series Vol. III.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Thurston, E. 1909. rpt.1975. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India.* New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.
- Vasudevan, C. 1998. *Koraga: The Forgotten Lot.* Trichur: The Ethos.
- Viswanathan, Nair N. 1985. *Tribal Health and Medicine in Kerala: A Study in Inter-relationship between Habitat, Health, Medicine, Society and Culture.* Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation submitted to the University of Calicut, Kerala.